Alignment in Kurdish:
a diachronic perspective

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Contents

Abbreviations

A	Subject of transitive verb
A_{PAST}	A of past tense verb form
A_{PRES}	A of present tense verb form
ABS	Absolute
ACC	Accusative
Adj	Adjective
ADP	Adposition
Bad.	Badīnānī (dialect of the Northern Group, North Iraq)
CLC	Clitic
COP	Copula
DEF	Definite
Det.	Determiner
DIR	Direct (case)
DIREC	Directional
DOM	Differential Object Marking
EXCL	Exclamatory
FUT	Fut
GEN	Genitive
IMP	Imperative
IND	Indicative
INDEF	Indefinite
INTERR	Interrogative
IRR	Irrealis
IZ	Izafe particle
IZF	Feminine Izafe particle
IZM	Masculine Izafe particle
IZP	Plural Izafe particle
Kurm.	Kurmanji (main dialect of Northern Group)
LOC	Locative

Abbreviations (cont.)

MED	Medium (Middle Voice)
MHG	Middle High German
m. k.	*manā kartam* (construction)
NEG	Negation
NCS	Non-Canonical Subject
NHG	New High German
NP	Noun phrase
N	Noun
O	Object of transitive verb
O_{PAST}	O of past tense verb form
O_{PRES}	O of present tense verb form
OBL	Oblique
PL	Plural
PLUP	Pluperfect
PP	Prepositional phrase
PST	Past
PTCPL	Participle
PROG	Progressive
RECIPR	Reciprocal
REFL	Reflexive
s	Singular
S	Subject of intransitive verb
SAP	Speech Act Participant
TAM	Tense, Aspect and Modality
V	Verb
VP	Verb phrase
1s/2s/3s	First person singular/Second .../Third ...

Map showing approximate location of Kurdish speakers (from Allison 2001)

Chapter 1

Introduction

In 1995, when I first began to learn Kurdish, my interest was captivated by the feature commonly referred to as ergativity in the past tense of transitive verbs. Although it was familiar to me in an abstract fashion from the linguistic literature, actually using a language with that particular feature is a very different matter. However, at a fairly early stage I came to the conclusion that ergativity in Kurdish was a largely superficial phenomenon, something manifested in the morphology, but without apparent ramifications for the syntax. The earlier stages of my thinking on the subject were summed up in Haig (1998). On the analysis embodied in that paper, Kurdish syntax wound up looking very much like that of its close relative, Persian: a fairly unremarkable Indo-European nominative/accusative alignment, but unlike Persian, cross-cut by ergative alignment in morphology in the past tenses. While the analysis offered in my earlier paper is still tenable as a synchronic description of the 'standard' versions of Kurmanji (see Section 1.1 on language names), it left a central issue unresolved: How did a language with seemingly unremarkable nominative/accusative syntax acquire morphological alignment bluntly at odds with its syntax? This book represents an attempt to answer that question.

Tackling the issue of ergativity in Kurdish from a diachronic perspective has turned out to be a daunting task. Ideally, it would have involved comprehensive coverage not only of the considerable number of Kurdish languages, but also of the attested earlier stages of these languages, and of the related Iranian languages. To forestall any false expectations, it has not been possible to achieve anything approaching this ideal. In particular, there is a dire lack of systematic evaluation of the attested Middle Iranian languages.

Obviously a more representative corpus of languages is required before firmer conclusions can be drawn. However, what this study lacks in breadth is partially compensated for by depth. While large-scale check-list typologies are invaluable for certain purposes, I believe that much can be induced through the careful inspection of individual languages, the intra-language variation, and most particularly, through the investigation of the constructions under consideration in running texts. As Allen (1995:452) stresses, one cannot reconstruct syntax merely by "strip-mining descriptive studies for facts". It is one of the main tenets of this study that discourse factors have shaped the development of alignments in various ways, and these can only be observed by investigating connected narrative texts rather than isolated examples in grammars. To this end, I have paid particular attention to analysing text material from Kurdish, rather than merely repeating what is stated in the grammars.

Kurdish provides an excellent starting point for such an undertaking. The various dialects/languages have been comparatively well-documented, and within the Kurdish languages themselves, a broad range of alignment types is attested.[1] That internal variation may provide valuable insights to diachronic change is clearly recognized by Harris and Campbell (1995:12): "A fruitful and often overlooked source of reliable data in diachronic syntax is found in dialectal differences." In particular, the text material available for Kurdish is far broader than that found in the corpora of older stages of the languages, because it includes extensive documentation of naturally spoken language, and in many cases can be supplemented by information from native speakers. The written records from older periods, on the other hand, often represent highly marked and often conservative varieties and registers, leading to considerable difficulties in interpretation. I nevertheless stress that the results presented here are to be considered as hypotheses, to be validated or invalidated against more extensive data from Iranian. Despite their limitations, the value of such hypotheses is considerable. They permit one to define a research goal in the form of a set of questions, thereby narrowing the scope of the data to be investigated. And they permit the results to be integrated into more general theories of alignment change. In principle,

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[1]Bynon (1979:211) draws attention to the same point. However, her conclusion that the variation found within the Kurdish languages can be interpreted in the form of a diachronic progression from ergativity to accusativity is an over-simplification, based on a reductionist view which assigns the Central Kurdish languages to an 'accusative' type. Discussion of these matters is deferred to Chapters 7 and 8.

the amount and the nature of data available is unlimited; without some pre-formulated and testable hypothesis to guide our investigation, we would not progress beyond documentation. In this book then I will be examining a cross-section of past tense alignments, focussing primarily on Kurdish, but supplemented with data from other Iranian (mostly West Iranian) languages and older stages of Iranian, with the aim of formulating some hypotheses on the paths of development that may have led to the current situation.

Alignment, and alignment changes, (see Section 2.1 for definitions) have been the subject of intense investigation in general and historical linguistics over the past three decades. The Kurdish case is, at first sight, comparatively well known. In particular, two short papers by Bynon, Bynon (1979) and Bynon (1980), are regularly cited. Although Bynon's papers are actually based on very little primary data, most historical linguists since have been content to accept her account (see Chapter 8 for references and discussion). Beyond that, there has actually been very little research within general and historical linguistics dedicated specifically to alignment changes in Iranian.[2] This is all the more surprising given that the other well-documented case of alignment change in Indo-European, the rise of ergativity in Indo-Aryan, continues to attract intense attention from linguists of all persuasions.[3] Almost 20 years ago Bossong (1985:118) stressed that (my translation) "the problem of ergativity [in Iranian] is in need of thorough analysis", but little progress has been made in that direction since. It is thus high time that the Iranian case was reassessed against more extensive data, and in the light of more recent theoretical developments regarding alignment shifts. In particular, the claims of Nichols (1992) on alignment as a diachronically stable genetic trait need to be evaluated against the Iranian data.

Of course one can legitimately query the necessity for developing any kind of 'explanation' for ergativity, be it diachronic or otherwise. Ergativity is merely one of several possible constellations that are attested in the case marking and agreement patterns of different constructions in different languages. Languages with ergative alignment are, even if statistically a minority among the world's languages,[4] undeniably viable linguistic systems,

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[2] Dorleijn (1996) is a notable exception, but she is largely concerned with the loss of ergativity in the Northern Group only, rather than the earlier developments that led to ergativity in Kurdish generally—see Section 4.5.

[3] See for example Peterson (1998), Bubenik (2001), Butt (2001), Deo and Sharma (Forthcoming), and references therein.

[4] The figure generally cited is that ergative languages make up around a quarter of the

acquired and deployed by millions of native speakers and often of consider-
able historical depth and stability. Yet, as Lazard (1999:372) notes, ergativity
"still appears to be felt as somehow deviant and bizarre [...] Why should
ergativity need an explanation, while accusativity does not need one?" Af-
ter all, noone attempts to justify, explain, or trace the source of accusative
alignment in, for example, Germanic. So why all the fuss?

   Although I share the spirit of the views outlined in the preceding para-
graph, when one surveys the Iranian languages as a whole, there are strik-
ing differences in the way alignment has developed in constructions asso-
ciated with different tenses. First of all, consider the alignment of clauses
in the present tenses. Here we find the dull monotony of accusative align-
ment throughout all the Iranian languages. For the purposes of this study,
accusative alignment can be characterized by the following three features,
whereby A is the abbreviation for transitive subject, O for transitive object
and S for intransitive subject (see Section 2.2.2 for a detailed discussion of
these terms):

1. Both S and A take the same case form, which is the formally least
   marked case available in the system.

2. Finite verbs agree with their S or A in person and number, if they agree
   with anything.

3. The O carries some additional formal marker distinguishing it from S
   and A.

Examples from Persian (own knowledge) illustrating accusative alignment
are:

(1)   *man ruznāme-rā   mi-xān-am*
      1s   newspaper-ACC PROG-read:PRES-1s

      'I(=A) am reading the newspaper(=O)'

(2)   *man xaste-am*
      1s   tired-(COP)1s

      'I(=S) am tired'

Here we find the familiar unity of S and A in case and agreement, and the
distinct additional marking of O, typical of all Indo-European languages of

world's languages (Dixon 1994:2).

Europe. These features characterize the alignment in present tenses, not only of most (all?) modern Iranian languages, but also of the attested earlier stages of these languages.[5] In other words, accusative alignment in the present tenses is both diachronically stable, and, across the three parameters mentioned above, shows virtually no variation across the family. We have thus little reason to suppose that any significant changes have happened here over the past 2500 years, and probably much longer, as the same bundle of features characterizes the present tenses of most other modern Indo-European languages, suggesting a common trait of considerable time depth.[6]

When we turn to the past tenses of transitive verbs, however, the contrast could not be greater. Past tense alignments range from accusative, as in Persian, to ergative, as in the Northern Group of Kurdish, with a large number of intermediate types not readily amenable to classification. In later chapters I will be looking closely at some of the non-accusative alignments found. As preliminary illustration of how much variation can be found even within one and the same Iranian language, consider the following, from the Baraki-Barak variety of Ōrmuṛī (Kieffer 2003:186). Kieffer notes that in the past tense of transitive verbs, three constructions are "in competition". The following sentences all express 'I took the knife' (glosses added, only the variants with definite Direct Object are given here):

(3) *ku   čåku-m algǫ́stók*
    ACC:DEF knife-1S take:PST

(4) *ku   čåku algǫ́stók-am*
    ACC:DEF knife take:PST-1S

(5) *az ku   čåku algǫ́stók*
    1S ACC:DEF knife take:PST

Ōrmuṛī is unusual in that it has innovated a new Accusative marker, *ku*, which is prenominal (either proclitic or prepositional) and is used to mark

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[5]The only significant complications concerns the marking of the Direct Object: Many languages permit alternative case forms (Differential Object Marking, cf. Bossong 1985). Thus in Persian, the O may, depending on pragmatic and semantic factors, be expressed without the Accusative marker *-rā*. But as far as verb agreement and the common case form of S and A are concerned, alignment in the present tenses is uniform throughout.

[6]The view that accusative alignment was predominant in Proto-Indo-European is articulated by Kurzová (1999:502). Some scholars, however, argue for an active (i. e. split or fluid-S system) in at least part of the Proto-Indo-European grammar, see Drinka (1999) and Comrie (2001) for critical discussion and references.

the O (if definite) in all tenses. The past tense verbs are generally unmarked for person (although in (4) there appears to be agreement with the A; Kieffer considers this to be the result of a syntactic calque from neighbouring Iranian languages which have a similar construction). The A can be expressed either through a special clitic, as in (4), or it may be via a free pronoun in the Direct case. In the closely related dialect of Kāṇigrām, matters are further complicated by the existence of agreement in gender between the O and the verb (Kieffer 2003:187).

One could of course introduce further entries to the catalogue of alignment types to capture data such as in (3–5). For example, as the marking of O may be affected by Differential Object Marking, it is possible to include the resulting alternation as an additional form of alignment, as advocated for example by Lazard (1997:262). Dorleijn (1996) finds that all 12 logically possible combinations of case marking of A and O and agreement on the verb are attested in her Kurdish data, theoretically giving rise to a further 10 or so alignment types. Bubenik (1989) and Payne (1980) introduce additional subtypes motivated by data from various Iranian and and Indo-Aryan languages. The problem with such taxonomic approaches to alignment is that they leave unanswered the fundamental question of which features should be considered relevant for determining alignment (for example word order, gender agreement, adpositional vs. suffixal case etc.). Until these questions are answered, we are likely to experience an inflationary development in alignment types. I will therefore not extend these taxonomies with further sub-types, but will refer collectively to non-accusative alignments, covering all those that do not comply with accusative alignment discussed above. Rather than stressing the differences, the point that needs pressing home is simply that, unlike transitive verbs in present tenses, the past tenses of Iranian transitive verbs show a bewildering array of alignments, often with considerable differences within a language or a group of closely related languages.

The same phenomenon of alignment variation characterizes the past (or perfect) tenses in Indo-Aryan. As Masica (1991:343) laconically notes, "a number of NIA languages have tinkered with their inherited ergative". More recent surveys, such as Deo and Sharma (Forthcoming) also stress the remarkable cross-language differences in past tense alignment patterns in Modern Indo-Aryan. Iranian languages too have evidently 'tinkered' with the alignment of their past tenses, leaving a legacy of variation in the modern languages. To return to Lazard's point above, it is not ergativity in Iranian as such that requires explanation. Apart from the Northern Group of Kurdish,

and Pašto, I am unaware of other Iranian languages that have a 'pure' form of ergative alignment. Thus the emphasis on ergativity evident in the more recent literature on Iranian syntax is actually quite unjustified. What is required is an account of the commonalities behind the variation; in diachronic terms, an account of the developments that led Iranian languages to spawn such a remarkably varied litter of alignments in a comparatively short time span. From a typological perspective, it is unusual to find such variation in such a fundamental and central area of morphosyntax, that of the case marking of core arguments and their cross-referencing patterns in the clause, an area where we would normally expect a reasonable degree of intra-language stability (and indeed, we find the expected stability in the present tenses of these languages). In this sense, then, there is something 'bizarre' about past tense alignments in Iranian languages: their diachronic instability. It is that which makes them intrinsically worthy of study, not the mere existence of ergativity, and it is the variation in the synchronic stages that requires a diachronic explanation. I therefore entirely concur with the spirit of the remarks in Lazard (1999). Ergativity is a symptom, rather than a cause, hence the title of this book refers to alignment, rather than ergativity.

The book is organised as follows. In Chapter 2, I introduce the most important theoretical concepts around the topic of alignment, based on work in language typology: transitivity, alignment, and voice. Chapter 3 gives an overview of current approaches to diachronic syntax and outlines the assumptions behind the present study. Chapter 4 is the first data-related chapter, examining alignment in the Northern Group of Kurdish. The focus is on deviations from canonical ergativity, and the ways they may have arisen. Chapter 5 tackles one of the most frequently-discussed empirical issues in Iranian syntax, the interpretation of the Old Persian data, and how it relates to the emergence of ergativity. Chapter 6 focusses mostly on Badīnānī, a dialect of the Northern Group which has previously been neglected in the literature on alignment, but which which has preserved some archaic syntactic features of considerable relevance for evaluating theories on the emergence of ergativity. In Chapter 7, the languages of the Central Group of Kurdish are examined, which are characterised syntactically by a different type of agreement in past transitive clauses (clitic agreement). Chapter 8 draws together the various strands of the study, leading to the formulation of hypotheses regarding the diachronic development.

1.1 The Kurdish languages

Table 1.1 gives a highly simplified overview of the Iranian language family, with only a selection of the better known languages and language groups shown—detailed and accessible accounts are available in Sims-Williams (1998) and Schmitt (2000). A fundamental distinction is generally drawn between West and East Iranian languages, but it is uncertain whether Old Persian and Avestan should be considered to be the respective predecessors of these two branches. Traditionally, an additional distinction is drawn among the West Iranian languages between Northwest and Southwest Iranian. However, as Paul (1998a) shows, the distinction is not a matter of clear-cut genetic grouping, but involves a continuum of overlapping areal and genetic isoglosses. On

Table 1.1: Overview of the Iranian languages (simplified)

HISTORICAL STAGES	MAJOR ATTESTED LANGUAGES	
Old Iranian	Old Persian (6–4c.BC);	Old Avestan, Younger Avestan (12c.–6c.BC, dating is controversial)
	Western Iranian	**Eastern Iranian**
Middle Iranian (4/3c.BC–8/9c.AD)	Middle Persian, Parthian	Sogdian, Khotanese
Modern Iranian	Persian Kurdish Baluchi etc.	Pashto Pamir Ossetic etc.

the traditional view, Kurdish is considered to belong to the Northwest Iranian group of Iranian languages (Blau 1989). Although 'Kurdish' is regularly used in the sense of a genetically-defined branch of (North) West Iranian, in actual fact, the precise basis for such a genetic classification is extremely thin. As MacKenzie (1961b:72) writes:

> In short, apart from this *č*- and the treatment of *šm* and *-xm* I
> can find no feature which is both common to all the dialects of

> Kurdish and unmatched outside them. To isolate Kurdish convincingly, therefore, would seem to entail comparing it with at least each West Ir. dialect, listing the common and divergent features. For practical purposes, however, taking Kurdish as 'that which is generally recognized by Iranists as Kurdish', it is necessary only to consider for comparison its immediate neighbours, past and present.

The sub-classification of the languages and dialects generally subsumed under the umbrella of 'Kurdish' is equally problematic. The following rough sub-grouping, "based on a combination of genetic relationship, geographic proximity, and ethnic identity" (Windfuhr 1989b:294), represents a reasonably widely accepted consensus within Iranian studies:

Northern Group comprises two major dialects:

> – Kurmanji (Kurm.), spoken by the Kurds of Turkey, Eastern Syria and the Caucasus, and parts of Iran.
> – Badīnānī (Bad.), spoken in North Iraq around the townships of Zakho, Dohuk, Amadiye, and in scattered regions of ex-Soviet Transcaucasia.

Central Group spoken between Rowandiz and Suleimaniye, Iraq, with the dialect of the latter township having some prestige as a written language, and including Mukri in Western Iran.

Southern Group poorly and variously defined as a genetic unit, spoken in Iran around Sanandaj.[7]

Residual Languages Two further languages spoken in the Kurdophone area, Gūrāni, spoken in Iran and Iraq, and Zaza(kī), spoken in headwaters of the Euphrates in Turkish Anatolia, are frequently subsumed

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[7]The Southern Group is the weakest link in any classification of Kurdish languages. As MacKenzie (1961b:79) notes, the languages of this group probably "differ almost as much from one another as they do from their northern kin." Fattah (2000) presents a more recent overview of this group; the position of Lakki is controversial; Windfuhr (1989b) considers it part of the group, while Fattah (2000:55–62) refers to it as a 'Kurdish dialect', but but apparently not part of the Southern Group proper. Another problematic case is the position of Lor(i) (and indeed the precise demarcation of the term). Blau (1989) includes a sub-group of Lor, that of Pošt-e Kuh, in the Southern Group. Windfuhr (1989b) also refers to an idiom of this area, but as a dialect(?) of 'Lakki'.

under the label 'Kurdish'. According to most scholars of Iranian languages, however, they are genetically more closely linked to each other than to the languages of the Kurdish group, and should not be included among them.

It should already be apparent that the term 'Kurdish' is extremely problematic. It is used in a loose way to refer both to a 'language', as one expects of a word with the *-ish* suffix. Yet it is also a cover term for what is, on most counts, a group of related languages, hence presumably a genetic unit. In the latter technical sense, it might be preferable to refer to *Kurdic*, a term that can be found in some publications. I will nevertheless continue the somewhat sloppy usage of the term 'Kurdish' that has become entrenched in most of the literature, but the dual nature of the term needs to be borne in mind. And of course, the term *Kurdish* carries connotations of ethnic and political identity, whether real or imaginary, which do not always coincide with the compartmentalization that the linguists impose.

1.2   Sources and conventions

The data for this investigation comes from both published materials—texts and grammars—of several Iranian languages and dialects, as well as spoken texts from the Northern Group and Central Groups of Kurdish recorded by the author over a period of some five years, mostly working with migrant Kurds in Germany. Details on the sources ar provided in the relevant chapters. A more immediate problem concerns the means of transcribing or transliterating the languages cited, particularly as this study is also intended to be accessible to scholars who are not specialists in Iranian languages. The Kurdish languages themselves, where they are written, use three different alphabets, and several sub-variants exist of each alphabet, which immediately raises practical problems. The solution adopted here is a compromise one. The guiding principle has been to provide examples in the Roman-based transcription used in the original sources, with some exceptions discussed below. The downside of this procedure is that data from one and the same language may differ in transcription, depending on the source used. However, the alternative procedure, i.ė. creating a common transcription applicable to all the languages, would have involved making numerous, and often arbitrary, decisions regarding the phonologies of the individual languages. I have

therefore stuck wherever possible to the systems used by the individual authors. Some concessions have nevertheless been made, largely for technical reasons. Texts transcribed in, for example Eilers (1976), contain up to three diacritics on the vowels (e. g. for length and stress). I have reduced these to two. Where an original transcription has been modified, this is noted in the text.

For data from Kurmanji of the Northern Group, a different procedure has been pursued. Here, all examples are given in the Roman-based orthography originally developed by the Bedir-Khan brothers in the 1930's, and promulgated in the journal *Hawar*, referred to henceforth as the *Hawar*-orthography. Over the past decades, a more or less standardised written version of Kurmanji based on the language of *Hawar* has been emerging (cf. Matras (1989) for more detailed coverage, and Haig and Matras (2002) for an overview). There has been some criticism of this writing system by Western scholars, who bemoan its apparent lack of phonetic accuracy (Chyet 2003:viii–ix). Consequently, several scholars have chosen not to use the standard orthography, but some form of phonetically more detailed system. The issues involved are highly contentious, and it is worthwhile dwelling on them here. There are three reasons why I have decided to use the *Hawar*-orthography in the present study.

The first reason is that it is a serious misconception to raise phonological precision to the prime gauge of merit for a writing system. The *Hawar*-orthography is not primarily designed as a system to represent the phonology of Kurmanji for those who do not know the language. It is designed as a system primarily intended for use by native speakers to convey meaning. Although these two aims are not mutually exclusive, they are nevertheless very different, and result in differing measures of phonological precision. A system that is designed to convey meaning must ultimately achieve only one end: a maximally unambiguous representation of each individual lexical item, and the relevant inflectional information. To do so it could, in principle, use entirely arbitrary combinations of, say, 10 digits, each of which would have to be learned by rote (to become fully literate in Chinese in fact involves learning several thousand signs largely by rote, although the characters themselves do have a certain amount of internal structure which aids the process). In practice, most orthographies actually incorporate information on the phonology of the language, and this is undoubtedly an excellent and useful compromise, particularly for the acquisition of literacy. But for the literate native speaker, such information is to a certain extent redun-

dant: once she has correctly identified a particular lexeme in a text, then
she already knows its pronunciation because its phonology, like its meaning,
is part of the lexical entry she has stored. It is therefore no surprise that
most practical writing systems diverge to a considerable extent from the
phonemic ideal. To take for example one criticism regularly directed at the
Hawar-orthography, namely its failure to distinguish between the aspirated
and unaspirated voiceless stops and affricates. In the *Hawar*-orthography,
both members of these pairs are written with the simple letters <p,t,k,ç>.[8]
Although native speakers readily produce, and perceive the aspirated/non-
aspirated (ejective/non-ejective) distinction, its functional load in the system
is extremely low. A small number of minimal or near-minimal pairs is regu-
larly cited in support of the distinction and its phonemic status, but only in
the most contrived of contexts could genuine ambiguity arise. The situation
is in fact entirely comparable to that in English with regard to the distinc-
tion between /θ/ and /ð/: although any phonological description of English
assigns these two sounds to two distinct phonemes, the writing system lumps
both together under the digraph <th>. And this is an entirely satisfactory
solution, because the functional load of the distinction is virtually nil. (Al-
though complaints on the shortcomings of English orthography are legion, it
is notable that noone has seriously suggested that we need to distinguish /θ/
and /ð/ in writing.) Furthermore, even those who insist on orthographically
reflecting the aspirated/non-aspirated distinction in Kurdish have reached no
consensus on how this is to be done in practice—there is not even agreement
as to which member of the pair should carry the diacritic (cf. for exam-
ple the differences between Rizgar (1993) and Chyet (2003) in representing
the aspirated/non-aspirated distinction). Note finally that a writing system
that espouses to be phonemical immediately runs into difficulties when faced
with regional variation in pronunciation. A looser and more flexible system
is much more efficient as a cover-system across large geographic areas. As
MacKenzie (1961a:45) correctly points out, the *Hawar*-orthography does not
accurately represent the phonology of any one dialect, but rather "the high-
est common factor" across the phonologies of the Northern Group dialects.
It is precisely this design feature which is behind the remarkable success of
the *Hawar*-orthography as a practical writing system.

   The second reason for using the standard orthography where possible is

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[8]The pair of sounds associated with the symbol <ç> are often considered to differ in
the feature [±ejective] rather than aspiration—see Kahn (1976) for phonetic analysis.

that it renders this study more readily accessible to native speakers. I have often found that native speakers, even those who are literate in their language, have considerable difficulty deciphering texts transcribed by orientalists.

The third reason is that the present study is concerned with syntax, not phonology. For example, no syntactic rule is dependent on the aspirated/non-aspirated distinction in phonology. And no book on English or French syntax gives examples in a phonemic transcription rather than in the accepted orthography.

Like any young orthography, the *Hawar*-orthography has experienced its teething problems. But for the purposes of the present study, the advantages outlined above far outweigh the disadvantages of the system. Thus examples from the Northern Group of Kurdish, unless taken from the transcriptions of dialects outside Turkey and the Caucasus, will be given in this form.

Chapter 2

Theoretical preliminaries

2.1   Alignment

Alignment refers to specific constellations of the formal properties of clauses. The term is used here in the sense of Nichols (1992:65) as a cover term encompassing different alignment types such as ergativity, accusativity, active (split or fluid-S) etc. For the purposes of this study, alignment is concerned with the following three broad parameters:

Case The case marking of core arguments, restricted here to just subjects and direct objects (see below).

Agreement The formal means of cross-referencing core arguments outside of the NPs coding those arguments.

Syntactic processes Syntactic rules which make reference to certain core arguments to the exclusion of others.

The agreement parameter can, in many cases, be equated with agreement patterns on the verb. However, a number of Kurdish languages have a type of agreement which is not restricted to the verb itself. Therefore, agreement must be considered in a broad sense of replicating inflectional categories relevant to an argument (person and number) in some constituent of the clause outside of the argument NP itself. As far as syntactic processes are concerned, languages differ widely in the extent to which they have such argument-specific rules at all, and there is often considerable disagreement on the interpretation of the relevant data. Typical processes are Equi-NP

deletion in various types of construction, relativization, or control of reflexive pronouns. The latter plays a crucial role in the Kurdish languages. For some languages, constituent order must also be taken into consideration, but I believe it is of minimal significance in determining alignment in Iranian and will not consider it further. Alignment is a cover term primarily for a **dimension of cross-language variation**, within which different languages take different positions. However, one and the same language can have different alignment patterns, depending for example on tense/aspect, or the type of arguments concerned (alignment splits, see below.)

Terms such as 'ergative', 'accusative', 'active', 'split-S, fluid-S', 'double oblique', 'tripartite' etc. refer to specific values within the alignment dimension. The point is worth making, because the terminology within this area is unfortunately anything but consistent. Alignment has been used in the sense I use it here, but often other terms are used. For example Payne (1997) discusses this bundle of phenomena under the cover-term of 'grammatical relations'. But as the term is frequently used to refer to individual relations, e.g. subject, I feel it is inappropriate here. Often one particular type of alignment is taken as the cover term. For example Dixon (1994), despite its title *Ergativity*, is a book largely concerned with non-accusative alignments of various types, of which ergativity is but one. The massive over-usage of the term 'ergativity' is unfortunately endemic. For example, the three Ōrmuṛī constructions discussed in the last Chapter (3-5) are treated in Kieffer (2003) under the heading of 'Ergative construction', although not one of them actually conforms to any of the standard definitions of ergativity. It is important to have a neutral cover-term for all the variants attested in the languages of the world, but distinct from any of them. One of the few authors to consistently draw this distinction is Lazard (1998), who uses the term 'actancy', and refers to distinct 'actancy schemata' in much the same manner that I use 'alignment' and refer to different 'alignments'. Obviously the choice of terminology is in part merely a matter of taste; I have nevertheless opted for the term 'alignment' because the different patterns concerned can literally be considered different types of 'aligning' one relation to another.

2.2 Transitivity

Standard definitions of the commonest alignment types are framed in terms of three apparently primitive relations,[1] which were introduced earlier with the symbols S, A and O, following Dixon (1994):

>   S=Subject of intransitive verb
>   A=Subject of transitive verb
>   O=Object of transitive verb

The symbols S, A and O correspond to S, A and P in Comrie (1978), or X, Y and Z in Lazard (1998). My choice of S, A and O is entirely arbitrary, dictated by mere force of habit. Although Dixon (1994) refers to S, A and O as "universal syntactic-semantic primitives", it is evident that they are based on something more primitive, namely the distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs. The entire construct of S, A and O is in fact completely dependent on the existence of a fundamental difference between two types of verbs; without it, S and A can no longer be distinguished and the whole enterprise would sacrifice much of its cross-language validity. It is therefore not surprising that Dixon (1994:6) categorically states:

> All languages distinguish between clauses that involve a verb and
> one core noun phrase (intransitive clauses) and those that involve
> a verb and two or more core NPs (transitive clauses, including
> ditransitives as a subtype).

No meaningful discussion of alignment types is possible without some closer attention to the more fundamental distinction between transitive and intransitive. A more precise definition of S, A and O, tailored to meet the demands of this study, will be provided in Section 2.2.2.

Transitivity is one of the many notions that contemporary linguistics has inherited from traditional grammar, and it has survived the transition remarkably well. Almost all modern grammar theories make some reference to transitivity, and it has been found relevant in the description of a vast number of typologically and genetically diverse languages. Transitivity can be considered as a characteristic of events, of entire clauses, or of individual lexical items. Indeed, the term has become so broad in its application that

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[1]For critical discussion of the 'universal' status of S, A and O see Mithun and Chafe (1999).

it is impossible to formulate a simple definition that would cover all its uses (but see Kittilä (2002) for a recent typological survey).

A number of authors have attempted to define transitivity in language-independent or universalist terms. The guiding assumption is that because so many languages distinguish between transitive and intransitive constructions (at least somewhere in the grammar), the distinction must be rooted in universal cognitive or pragmatic factors. The problem arises from the fact that different languages make transitivity distinctions in different manners, and that the distinctions they draw do not always coincide. In other words, two different languages may treat semantically equivalent expressions differently on this parameter. This problem can be illustrated with the following simple example, where a Turkish sentence (6a) is given along with its English translational equivalent (6b):

(6)   a. *Nurhan Sevgi-yi   bekli-yor-du*
        Nurhan Sevgi-ACC wait-PROG-PST(3S)
    b. Nurhan was waiting for Sevgi

If we take as a formal test for a transitive verb in English its ability to enter the syntactic frame NP-V-NP, then the verb *wait* is not transitive, because its (optional) complement is a prepositional phrase. For Turkish on the other hand, if the criterion for transitivity is ability to govern an accusative object (cf. Haig 2001b), then the verb *beklemek* 'wait' is transitive. This is of course the classic problem faced by typology: languages carve up what is a presumably universal conceptual space in different ways. Furthermore, the verbs of one and the same language may refer, approximately, to 'the same' event, but profile different aspects of that event. Mosel (1991b) remarks on the two German verbs *speisen* 'dine' and *essen* 'eat', both of which refer to the consumption of food, yet require different types of argument structures.

One way of accounting for the observable cross-language diversity is to postulate a prototypical transitive event, from which other events may diverge to varying degrees. On this approach, languages will differ to the extent that they allow less than prototypically transitive events to be encoded in the same manner as the prototypically transitive event. An attempt to characterise the "prototypical transitive event" is found in Givón (1990:555–556), who identifies the following "core features of transitivity":

Agent: The prototypical transitive clause involves a volitional, controlling, initiating, active agent, one that is responsible for the event, i.e. its salient cause.

Patient: The prototypical transitive event involves an inactive, non-volitional, non-controlling patient, one that registers the changes-of-state associated with the event, i.e. its salient effect.

Verb: The prototypical transitive clause involves a compact (non-durative), bounded (non-lingering), realis (non-hypothetical) verb and tense-aspect-modality. It thus represents an event that is fast-moving, completed and real, i.e. perceptually and cognitively salient.

An unfortunate feature of Givón's wording is the confusion of distinct levels: it is not clear whether he is concerned with clauses as linguistic units, or with events in the real world, or with our (non-linguistic?) perception of events.

Another attempt at a semantic characterisation of transitivity is Wierzbicka (1988:345). According to Wierzbicka, the "prototypical transitive sentence has two predications, which can be separated from each other". This is illustrated with the following example:

(7) a. John killed Harry
     b. Harry died (because)
     c. John did something to him

This characterisation is considerably more flexible than that of Givón: there is no reference to agentivity, to affectedness of the patient, to mood, or to aspect. On both accounts, clauses such as *John saw Harry* are clearly non-prototypical, because nothing actually happens to Harry. *The good results pleased Harry* on the other hand would not be a prototypical transitive event in Givon's terms. But it is uncertain whether it would comply with Wierzbicka's; that rather depends on how one interprets Wierzbicka's expression "do something to".

The problem with universalist approaches to transitivity is that despite the claims for their principled independence of formal properties of morphosyntax, they inevitably make some reference to such language-specific coding properties. Perhaps the most practicable definition of transitive verb is that proposed by Andrews (1985) or Lazard (1997). These authors assume that languages will have lexical verbs which express something like a prototypical transitive event. They then propose that the grammar (case marking etc.) regularly associated with such verbs be taken as the benchmark for defining a transitive verb. The standard example is a verb such as 'kill'.

A clause expressing such an event can be termed a 'basic transitive clause', following Kittilä (2002:74). In effect, this definition simply states that a transitive clause is that type of clause sharing the same argument structure as a clause with a verb like 'kill'.

2.2.1   Lexical transitivity

For the purposes of this study, I will be defining two types of transitivity, both framed in terms of observable formal features of the language.[2] The first type is **lexical transitivity**. The second is **clausal transitivity**, discussed at the end of Section 2.2.2.

Lexical transitivity refers to a feature inherent to individual verb lexemes *qua* lexemes. Although it is part of the lexical specification of individual items, its presence can only be determined by specific morphosyntactic patterning accompanying those items when they are deployed in actual clauses. It can be considered analogous to the feature of gender on nouns, which likewise is inherent to individual noun lexemes, but manifests itself primarily in agreement with that noun in phrases (Corbett 1991:3–6). Lexical transitivity is thus a feature that divides the lexicon of verbs into two classes (with the possibility of further sub-classes available). It is particularly clearly articulated in head-marking languages such as Kartvelian languages, where verbs cross-reference several arguments with a variety of different affixes, thus providing the formal means for dividing the verbal lexicon into distinct classes. Elsewhere similar features are found, as in for example Jaminjung (non-Pama-Nyungan, Australia). Here transitive verbs take one set of pronominal prefixes while intransitives take another (Schultze-Berndt 2000:85). Likewise, for Saliba (Western Oceanic, easternmost parts of Papua New Guinea), Margetts (1999:42–45) draws a distinction between "root-valence", a property of individual verb roots, and clause-level transitivity.[3] In English, the basis for assigning individual verb lexemes to a transitivity class is somewhat less clear, because so many verbs have both a transitive and an intransitive usage (*break, pour, boil* etc.) But English is typologically unusual in this respect (Haspelmath 1993). The bulk of this study is concerned with transitivity in

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[2]For a very similar approach to transitivity, likewise tailored to suit an Iranian language, but using different terminology, cf. Paul (1998b:97).

[3]Margetts (1999) distinguishes a third type, that of "word-level transitivity", referring to the transitivity of actual verb forms instantiated in texts.

this sense of the word, and where the term 'transitivity' is not qualified, it is to be understood in this sense.

For the Kurdish languages under consideration here, there is fortunately not too much debate regarding the transitive/intransitive distinction. The primary defining feature of a lexically transitive verb is **the existence of changes in alignment (i. e. patterns of case assignment and agreement) which are dependent on the tense of the verb concerned**. I will refer to this as **tense-sensitive alignment**. A lexically transitive verb will show some consistent differences between the alignment associated with it in the present tenses, and that associated with it in another tense. That could mean accusative in the present and ergative in the past, or accusative in the present and any one of the various non-accusative alignments in the past. An intransitive verb on the other hand shows no such alternation; it has a single alignment in all tenses. Thus transitivity for Kurdish is best defined with reference to the feature of tense-sensitive alignment, a property present in one class of verbs, and entirely lacking in another.[4] While tense-sensitive alignment is sufficient as a formal criterion to define lexical transitivity in Kurdish at least, it should be emphasised that the class of transitive verbs is not semantically arbitrary. It includes also those verbs expressing what was discussed above as a 'prototypical transitive event', but it also includes many others, for example *dîtin* 'see'.

The above definition of lexical transitivity breaks down for languages like Persian which have lost tense-sensitive alignment altogether. For these languages, the definition of lexical transitivity must be framed in terms of the **potential ability to assign a special case, generally termed the Accusative**—cf. the Accusative marker *-rā* in (1) or *ku* in (3). I stress here 'potential ability' to assign the Accusative because in many of the Iranian languages, the argument concerned can occur without the marker, depending on the factors such as definiteness and topicality (Differential Object Marking). Therefore, this definition of transitivity must be expressed in terms of a potential inherent to the verb, rather than actual realisations in clauses.

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[4]A small number of indeterminate verbs are of course found. In the Northern Group of Kurdish, the verbs *zanîn* 'know' and *lîstin* 'play' exhibit some variation with regard to the transitive/intransitive distinction.

2.2.2   Core arguments

The notion of core argument has a long tradition in almost all grammar theories. Equally extensive is the literature on inconsistencies and overlaps found in attempts to define core arguments, and to distinguish them from non-core arguments of various types. For the Iranian languages under consideration, core arguments can be defined using the following criteria. Note that not all of these criteria are necessary for all languages, but at least two apply to any of the languages under consideration here. Core arguments:

1. are marked by the minimal case-forms available in the language (either zero, or synthetic case forms, inherited from the Old Iranian system, or mono-syllabic suffixes, clitics, or adpositions; see Chapter 8);

2. are the sole constituents formally affected by tense-sensitive alignment;

3. are the sole constituents formally affected by any voice processes in the language concerned;

4. have maximally one exponent each in any one clause.

It will be noted that for most languages, NPs expressing what are commonly referred to as Indirect Objects are not core arguments; for others they are arguably so. The issue of whether Indirect Objects are core arguments or not will be discussed on a language-specific basis at various points in the study.

We are now in a position to provide a more rigorous definition of S, A and O than the one introduced at the beginning of Section 2.2:

– Intransitive verbs (in the sense defined above) take a single core argument, which we will refer to as S.

– Transitive verbs have two core arguments, referred to as A and O respectively.

As for identifying which is A and which is O, it is generally sufficient to use the criterion of 'potential control', and 'affectedness': that NP encoding the entity with the most control over the event, and which is least affected by it, is the A. It need not be semantically agentive; it could for example be an Experiencer. The disparity between the semantics of agentivity and the coding of A is considerably larger when we consider the case of complex predicates below.

It will be noted that the above definitions of transitivity and core arguments make no mention of, for example, the presence of two arguments in a clause as a defining feature of transitivity. There are good reasons for not making such criteria central in defining transitivity. The first is that throughout the Iranian languages, constituents whose reference can be assumed to be known to the interlocutors are regularly omitted. Whether arguments are overtly expressed, or omitted, is mediated by pragmatic rather than grammatical features and as such is irrelevant for a definition of transitivity that aims at characterising a particular class of lexemes. Nor does the definition have much to say on semantics, apart from the fact that the basic transitive clause is linked to certain semantic features. But the main reason for detaching the definition from the surface syntax of actual clauses is that the feature of transitivity, as defined above, remains invariable regardless of the context or the entire meaning of a particular clause. As an example of how far lexical transitivity and the semantics of actual clauses can diverge, consider the following clauses from the Northern Group of Kurdish containing the transitive verbs *dan* 'give' and *kirin* 'do, make':

(8) *wî   jî   can   da*
    3s:OBL and spirit give:PST

    'He too died' (lit. ...gave (up) spirit) (Haig 2002a:18)

(9) *Bihar-ê   dest pê   kir-i-ye*
    spring-OBL hand to.it do:PST-PTCPL-3s

    'Spring has begun' (lit. Spring has put hand to-it) (Haig 2002a:18)

In both of these examples the A is in the Oblique case, but if these clauses were transposed into a present tense, A would assume the Direct case. In other words, the verbs concerned display tense-sensitive alignment and are hence transitive on our definition. Semantically of course there are probably few less transitive events than a person dying, or the onset of spring. In these examples, and countless others, we find that the verbs concerned have combined with other lexemes to create more or less conventionalised complex predicates (see Haig (2002a) for discussion of complex predicates in Kurdish). Yet their lexical transitivity remains stubbornly persistent in that in past tenses, they require a different case of the A. Of course one might wish to expand the definition of transitivity to include 'passivisability'. On this test, the above examples would fail. But recall that the term transitive, in the

sense of lexical transitivity, targets the **lexeme** *dan* 'give', rather than the entire complex predicate.

Other examples show that the presence or absence of an overt O has no effect on the lexical transitivity of the verb:

(10) *min   xwar-i-ye*
      1S:OBL eat:PST-PTCPL-3S

      'I have (already) eaten'

(11) *jinik-ê   got: . . .*
      woman-OBL say:PST:

      'The woman said: . . . ' (Hawar Vol. 1:184)

Thus lexical transitivity is a remarkably stable feature of individual verb lexemes. It is nevertheless useful to complement the definition of lexical transitivity with some notion of clausal transitivity, which takes into account certain features of an entire clause. Unlike lexical transitivity, clausal transitivity must be considered a graded phenomenon. There are fully transitive clauses, less transitive clauses, and fully intransitive clauses, with any number of fine intermediate shades in between. Clausal transitivity is of course reminiscent of Hopper and Thompson (1980)'s graded notion of transitivity, but most of the parameters considered there are not relevant for the Iranian data.[5] The presence of absence of clausal transitivity must be established on the basis of the individual clause, and includes a mix of syntactic and morphological features. For the Iranian languages under consideration here, it suffices to define clausal transitivity in terms of the presence of an **individualised, definite O** in the clause. On this count, the clauses in the preceding four examples have low levels of transitivity, because they do not contain an individualised, definite O. Low levels of clausal transitivity will turn out to be relevant in describing, for example, certain types of deviant agreement patterns in Section 4.6.

2.2.3   Alignmnent types

In theory, there are as many different alignment types as there are possible combinations of agreement patterns, case marking, and syntactic rules (see

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[5]See Chui (2003) for empirical evidence against Hopper and Thompson's claims regarding the correlation between backgrounding/foregrounding and levels of transitivity.

Lazard (1998:23) for a summary of different possibilities based only on case and agreement). In practice, most of the attested alignment types world-wide cluster around three or four variants. The best known are:

Accusative (also known as Nominative/Accusative, also as Accusativity). Accusative alignment requires S and A to be treated, in terms of case marking, agreement, and syntactic processes, identically, while O behaves with respect to at least one parameter differently.

Ergative (also known as Ergative/Absolutive, or Ergativity). Ergativity aligns O and S together, while A is treated distinctly.

Split-S, Fluid-S (also known as Active type). Split-S means that the S category is divided; one part behaves on the alignment parameters like A, while the other is similar to O. The division of S into two subcategories is generally semantically-based, depending on factors such as control and agency, but there are invariably some mismatches. Fluid-S refers to the existence of intransitive verbs whose S is labile; depending on contextual factors it may follow the A or the O pattern.

It is well-known that different sub-domains of a grammar may exhibit different alignments, giving rise to alignment splits of various types. The most widely-known is (misleadingly) termed 'split-ergativity', by which is meant that one part of the grammar has ergative alignment while others have accusative alignment (misleading because ergativity is not split; the alignment across the language as a whole is). In fact, probably no language has a non-accusative alignment throughout; ergative or active alignment will manifest itself in certain sub-domains, for example certain tense/aspect values. But even where it is found, it is often only reflected in the morphological alignment parameters, but not in syntax. Given the range of different mixes that are attested, it makes little sense to characterise entire languages as 'ergative' etc. From this it follows that global typological predictions that are framed in terms of a putative class of 'ergative' languages are likely to be of limited validity (cf. pertinent criticism of some of the more fanciful speculations on the characteristics of languages defined by alignment type in Drinka 1999). Specific alignments characterise certain **constructions** within a language, rather than an entire language.

2.3   Voice

Voice refers to productive morpho-syntactic processes in languages for changing the way verbs link core arguments to semantic roles. Generally, voice processes can either increase or decrease the number of core arguments associated with a particular verb. Passive, for example, will usually reduce the number of core arguments by one, while causative and applicative will increase it (Payne 1997:172).[6] In the present context, we will be concerned with the passive voice.

Passive can, as a rough approximation, be defined as a process that deletes an A or an S from the argument frame of a verb. If the original verb was transitive, then the original O becomes effectively a new S of a derived intransitive verb. Passive is **marked** voice; it stands in opposition to the most basic form of the verb, generally termed the active (voice). These simple facts can be illustrated using data from Turkish, where case-marking provides a reliable indication of syntactic function:

(12)   **Active verb form**

Serdar   su-yu   iç-ti
Serdar(:NOM) water-ACC drink-PST(3s)

'Serdar drank the milk'

(13)   **Passive verb form**

su   (Serdar tarafından) iç-il-di
water(:NOM) (Serdar by)   drink-PASS-PST(3s)

'The water was drunk / has been drunk (by Serdar)'

It will be observed that the passive verb form carries an additional morpheme, the Passive suffix *-il*, thus it is formally more marked than the active. Furthermore, the A of the active verb is no longer a core argument but can only be incorporated into the phrase by means of a complex (borrowed) postposition *tarafından.* Such an Agent-phrase has no morphological and no syntactic subject properties, and is entirely optional; in natural spoken language, such

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[6]It would probably be wise to distinguish terminologically between 'meaning-preserving' voice processes, primarily involving a change in perspective on an event (e.g. passive), and meaning-changing voice processes, such as causative, which code a different, though related, event to that expressed by the base verb—see Bybee (1985).

Agent-phrases are rare and represent an innovation, probably due to European influence. The original O, however, now has no Accusative case marker and is, on both morphological (case and agreement) and syntactic grounds the subject of the passive clause. As such, it behaves in an identical manner to the S of an basic intransitive clause, as in:

(14) **Basic intransitive clause**

> *su ak-ıyor*
> water(:NOM) flow-PROG(3s)

> 'The water / Water is flowing'

Superficially, the passive clause with an overt A in (13) appears to correspond to our definition of ergative construction: the semantically non-controlling entity, the O, controls verb agreement and is in the nominative case, just as the S of the basic intransitive clause in (14). The 'A', on the other hand, is marked differently from both. However, it would be premature to claim that (13) is an ergative construction. The main reason for not doing so is that the passive construction is evidently a marked construction, overtly and regularly derived from an unmarked active.

Unfortunately, in a number of languages, distinguishing passives from ergatives is a good deal less straightforward than in the Turkish case just mentioned. For example, linguists have argued for decades on the passive or non-passive nature of certain constructions in Austronesian languages, in particular languages of the Phillippines. Iranian languages are also a case in point, as we shall see. Typologists faced with these issues have come to accept that in classifying a given construction as either passive or ergative, it is more fruitful to consider the distinction as a continuum rather than two discrete categories. Thus there are several logically distinct dimensions along which a particular construction can be evaluated as passive or not passive. Following Comrie (1988), the four relevant dimensions for identifying passives as opposed to ergatives are introduced below (my terminology differs somewhat from Comrie's). For each of the four parameters, the prototypically **passive** value is given:

1. **Argument structure of the verb form:** A passive verb form licenses a single core argument, a Patient or Theme.

2. **Syntactic status of Patient/Theme:** The single core argument is a full subject, i. e. possesses all of the subject properties generally associated with the subject of an active intransitive verb in the language.

3. **Systemic status of the verb form:** Within the paradigmatic system of verb forms available in the language, a passive verb form is the marked member of a voice opposition, contrasting with the unmarked active and derivable from it via a productive morphosyntactic process.

4. **Syntactic status of Agent-phrase:** The Agent-phrase is optional; the construction is fully grammatical without it. If present, it has peripheral syntactic status, i. e. few if any syntactic rules make reference to it.

The English passive construction illustrated in (15) shows all four features of the prototypical passive:

(15)   The church was built (by Jakob VI) in 1567.

The syntactic status of the Patient/Theme NP is in no doubt. It is Subject, evident for example in the agreement in number with the predicate (contrast *The churches **were** built*). Likewise, the NP *the church* can be seen to control coreferential deletion under coordination, as in:

(16)   The church$_i$ was built in 1567 but $\emptyset_i$ burned down in 1974.

The third parameter concerns the systemic status of the verb form within the entire system of verbal oppositions available in the language. For English, it is generally accepted that a verb form such as *was built* represents the formally marked member of an active/passive opposition, contrasting with the form *built*. It is marked in the sense that (i) an additional morpheme (*was*) is required; (ii) in terms of text frequency; and (iii) in terms of productivity: all verbs have an active form, but not all have a corresponding passive (e. g. so-called unaccusative verbs such as *fall, die, flow* etc.). Finally, the syntactic status of the *by*-phrase in (15) is peripheral. It is obviously optional, i. e. can be omitted without affecting the grammaticality of the clause. While an Agent is implied by the semantics of *build*, it is not required by the syntax of the passive verb. In the terms of Comrie (1988:12–14), the Agent-phrase

displays a low degree of "integration into clause syntax". There are few, if any, syntactic rules which make direct reference to it.

Let us briefly consider one of the best known cases of an ergative construction, that of Dyirbal (Dixon 1972). In the construction under consideration, the A is in an oblique case, Ergative, the O is unmarked (Absolutive). The verb shows no agreement with core arguments. An example is the following (the digraph <dj> is used here to indicate a laminal stop, for which Dixon uses a different symbol):

(17) *balan   djugumbil baŋgul   yaɽa-ŋgu balgan*
      class2:NOM woman   class1:ERG man-ERG hit

      '(The) man is hitting (the) woman' (Dixon 1972:59)

(17) appears in many respects to be the functional equivalent of its English translation. However, it differs from the English construction in some crucial respects. First, the O, rather than the A, controls various syntactic processes, which I will not go into here (see Dixon (1977:367–376) for a useful summary). Second, the A can be omitted, giving the clause a generic sense, often translateable with a passive in English:

(18) *balan   djugumbil balgan*
      class2:NOM woman   hit

      '(Someone) is hitting the woman, the woman is being hit' (Dixon 1972:70)

(17) differs from (18) only in the presence vs. absence of the A *baŋgul yaɽa-ŋgu*. Furthermore, I have already mentioned that it is the O rather than the A which controls most syntactic processes, such as coreferential deletion in coordination. Given just these facts, one is tempted to interpret (17) as a passive: the O is the subject, and the A is merely some kind of peripheral *by*-phrase equivalent. Indeed some linguists have opted for precisely this analysis (see Comrie (1988) for discussion). But there are other facts which militate against such an analysis. First, despite its omissability, the A can control certain syntactic processes in Dyirbal, for example coreferential deletion when the verb is modified via the suffix *-ŋura* (Dixon 1972:77–79). More important, however, is the fact that the construction in (17) is the **unmarked voice** in Dyirbal, contrasting with the marked anti-passive. Referring back to our four parameters, we can sum up the arguments as follows:

Parameter 1: The construction is either passive or ergative, depending on how we evaluate the ommissability of the A as a indication of non-core status.
Parameter 2: The O comes close to full subject status, sharing most, but not all, the properties of an intransitive subject.
Parameter 3: The construction is ergative, not passive, because the verb is unmarked.
Parameter 4: The decision again depends crucially on how one weights the ommissability of the A, and certain facts of clause combining.

Thus the picture is far from clear. Nevertheless, Dixon (1972), and most linguists since, have opted for an ergative analysis, rather than a passive one, implying that in practice, the systemic status of the verb form (Parameter 3) is afforded the most influence (see Dixon (1977) for an explicit statement to this effect). But as Dixon (1977) himself notes, Dyirbal represents one end of a continuum of maximally ergative languages, where the unmarked ergative construction approaches the marked passive construction of other languages.

2.3.1   The optionality of the A

One of the striking features of the ergative construction in Dyirbal is the ommissability of the A, shown above. This is a feature of the ergative construction in other languages, for example Samoan (Oceanic). Mosel and Hovdhaugen (1992:104) characterise "ergative verbs" (essentially equivalent to transitive verbs) as follows:

1. Ergative verbs do not distinguish between active and passive voice.

2. The argument expressing the actor (the ergative noun phrase or its pronominal equivalent) is always optional.

The following examples illustrate the optionality of the A: (see Mosel (1991a:182–184) for further discussion of the optionality issue):

(19)   *Na sasa e   le   teine le   maile i   le   lā'au*
       PST hit   ERG ART girl   ART dog   LOC:DIREC ART tree
       'The girl hit the dog with a stick' (Mosel and Hovdhaugen 1992:416)

(20) *Na sasa le   tama*
      PST hit   ART boy
      'The boy was hit' (Mosel and Hovdhaugen 1992:415)

Contrasting the optionality of the O with that of the A, Mosel (1987:458) notes that a clause such as the last one is fully grammatical, even in isolation. With no additional cues from the context, it is simply interpreted as 'the boy was hit', 'someone hit the boy'. However, without the O, the clause is not readily interpretable. A clause such as:

(21) *'Ua fasi e   le   tama*
      PERF hit   ERG ART boy
      'The boy hit' (Mosel 1987:458)

requires additional contextual information on who was hit before it can be interpreted (see Mosel and Hovdhaugen (1992:700–704) for more recent discussion of the contrast in optionality between A and O).[7] Again, from an Indo-European perspective one might be tempted to analyse the constructions shown as passives, and the A phrase would then be a peripheral type of *by*-phrase. But on the basis of extensive syntactic analysis, Mosel and Hovdhaugen (1992) conclude that the construction is better considered an active one, an ergative construction, and the A, despite its optionality, is a core argument. An important factor in the analysis is the fact that (19) is the unmarked type of expression for transitive predications—in fact in Samoan, there is no active/passive distinction. Another Oceanic language with similar characteristics is Tuvaluan. Besnier (2000:126–129) notes that the A of **any** transitive verb can be omitted, although the factors which lead to omission are varied. In the case of both Oceanic languages, however, the scholars concerned all concluded that the constructions under investigation should be analysed as ergative, rather than passive, despite the optionality of the A. In all cases, other factors, in particular the systemic status of the verb form (marked vs. unmarked) and the syntactic status of the A weigh more heavily.

The existence of languages where the A is systematically optional casts considerable doubt on traditional notions of 'transitivity'. For a language like Samoan, where an A argument is always optional, the question can legitimately be asked whether there is a lexical class of transitive verbs (earlier

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[7]See Croft (2001:273) for discussion and references on this type of contextually-determined omission.

terminology referred to 'ergative verbs') in Samoan at all? (assuming for a moment that 'verb' is a relevant lexical category in the language; the issue remains unresolved). In Mosel (1991a:187), it is suggested that what are generally termed transitive verbs in Samoan are "mono-valent verbs, as they only require the absolutive argument (O)." In terms of number of required arguments, then, 'transitive' verbs do not differ from 'intransitive verbs' in this language. The basis for the distinction is to be sought in the existence of a particular type of construction, the ergative construction, in which only verbs of one class, let us call them transitive, may occur (but need not). The point of this example is to demonstrate that an optional A, in English and many familiar languages considered the hallmark of a passive construction, can also be part of the unmarked means of expressing two-participant constructions. It is doubtful therefore whether the optionality of an A should be afforded much weight in characterising a construction as ergative, or passive. As we have seen, for Dyirbal and for the Oceanic languages Samoan and Tuvaluan, an optional A is characteristic of the unmarked constructions for expressing two-participant events. Yet none of the scholars quoted have seen fit to define these constructions as 'passive'. These issues will emerge as highly relevant for the discussion of the origins of ergativity in Old Persian in Chapter 5.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter, a number of interrelated concepts have been introduced and defined. A summary of the most important is as follows:

Alignment A cover term for different combinations of case and agreement patterns. Cross-linguistically well-attested alignment types are accusative, ergative, or split-S.

Transitivity Refers here primarily to properties of **individual verb lexemes**. The defining feature of transitive verbs in Kurdish languages is that they trigger case-sensitive alignment, that is, alignment differs from one tense to another. In addition, a graded notion of **clausal transitivity**, primarily based on semantic and formal properties of the O in a particular clause, is relevant in some contexts.

Core arguments Core arguments are expressed by the minimal formal case markers available in a given language. They express S, A and O. In

some languages, an Indirect Object may be a core argument, in others it is not.

Voice Productive processes which alter the mapping of semantic roles onto core arguments.

Passive A voice process involving the deletion of an A and the advancement of an O to the S of a derived intransitive verb. Passive voice is a marked form of the verb, i.e. the existence of a passive implies the existence of an unmarked active.

Chapter 3

Diachronic syntax: models and metaphors

In diachronic syntax, as in any scientific endeavour, the choice of theoretical framework will have a profound influence on the type of questions asked, and consequently, the results achieved. A good example of how theory determines practice is the following quote:

> Language change is **by definition** a failure in the transmission across time of linguistic features. Such failures, in principle, could occur within groups of adult native speakers of language, who for some reason substitute one feature for another in their usage, as happens when new words are coined and substituted for old ones; but in the case of **syntactic and other grammatical features**, such innovation by **monolingual adults** is largely unattested. Instead failures of transmission seem to occur in the course of **language acquisition**; that is, they are failures of learning. (Kroch 2001:699, emphasis added.)

This particular definition of language change is largely dictated by certain assumptions that underly generative grammar, the theoretical framework from which it stems: Assumption (a): language (competence) is an essentially autonomous, modular computational system; the only option to accomodate significant change in the system is in the transmission of the system from one generation to the next. Thus the locus of language change is first language acquisition. Assumption (b): lexicon and grammar are fundamentally

distinct, hence mechanisms that lead to change in the lexicon will be fundamentally different to those that apply to the grammar. Assumption (c): language competence is ideally reflected in the mind of monolingual speakers.

It is evident that this definition of language change significantly restricts the range of phenomena to be investigated, and profoundly affects the type of explanations likely to be proposed. Assumptions (a) and (b) run counter to most functional/typologically based theories of grammar, e.g. Role and Reference Grammar (Van Valin and LaPolla 1997) or Radical Construction Grammar (Croft 2001). According to the latter, grammar is neither fully autonomous, nor can it be neatly detached from the lexicon. Thus from the very outset, scholars working within these theories are following a distinct agenda from that defined in the above citation. As for the third assumption, which effectively rules contact-induced change from the scope of language change, I will be discussing that in more detail below. Although probably the majority of historical linguists would not share the reductionist views evident in the above quote,[1] there is nevertheless a widespread tendency to exclude certain types, or sources, of change from the study of language change 'proper', reflected in a common terminological distinction between 'internal' and 'external' factors, a distinction not maintained in the present work (see below). Given the vagaries accompanying the enterprise of historical syntax, particularly in a time depth of more than two millennia, we would be well advised to bear in mind the limitations of the endeavour at the outset. The following quote, where the messy, unpredictable, and multivariate causes of change are highlighted, is entirely appropriate:

> Language and speech are highly complex entities in which a multiplicity of factors interact in very complex ways. Some of these factors are structural, some are psychological, and some are social. Two or more factors may converge to favor the occurrence of a change, or they may conflict and tend to cancel each other out. Factors no doubt differ greatly in strength and are in any case ultimately subject to the whims and vagaries of individual

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[1]Early criticism of generativist approaches to language change, in particular the focus on first language acquisition and the corresponding conviction that change will tend to be sudden, is found in Samuels (1972:112–114). More recent discussion is available in Harris and Campbell (1995:33–45), and Croft (2000:57–59), who argues against the 'fixed adult grammar hypothesis'. Critical and detailed reappraisal of generative claims on English historical syntax are found in Allen (1995). For a balanced overview of the arguments, see Vincent (2001).

> speakers and the accidents of the social history of language use. Consequently, any syntactic change will represent the vector sum of a variety of different pressures, some of which we may be able to isolate and some of which may remain forever beyond our grasp. (Langacker 1977:99–100)

It is important to bear in mind the highly speculative nature of diachronic syntax. Even the comparatively recent history of intensely studied and well-attested languages such as English remains highly controversial. On the assumption that the relevant data is the totality of utterances made in the language(s) concerned, it is patently obvious that we are able to access at best a miniscule fraction of the relevant data, and our hypotheses are no more than that: unproven theories.

3.1 Metamorphosis and replacement

Sound change has been the longest and most intensely studied area of systematic language change, and, among more tradionally-minded historical linguists at least, it continues to enjoy pride of place as the primary diagnostic in establishing genetic relationships among languages. It is therefore understandable that many of the assumptions and methods that gained currency in the study of sound change have been, albeit implicitly, transferred to other realms of language change. Most textbooks on historical linguistics begin their surveys of types of language change with sound change,[2] and the reader is left with the distinct impression that sound change provides in some sense a model for language change in general.

Sound change is often portrayed in a deceptively orderly manner. For expository purposes, let us consider a highly simplified example from the Northern Group of Kurdish. In the dialects of Turkey and the Caucasus (Kurmanji), a long [u:] corresponds to a long [i:] in the Badīnānī dialect. Some examples are given in Table 3.1, where the *Hawar*-orthography is used for the sake of simplicity. Such a state of affairs is generally described in terms of a change of one element into another, i.e. x becomes y, or simply x→y. In the above example, if we assume that the Badīnānī form is the innovation,[3] we can represent this process as in (22).

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[2]Cf. for example Antilla (1972), Hock (1992), Crowley (1992), McMahon (1994) or Campbell (1999).

[3]A gross oversimplification, of course. The real issue is not which 'turned into' the

Table 3.1: Vowel changes in the Northern Group

KURM.	BAD.	GLOSS
dûr	dîr	'far'
bû	bî	'was'
mû	mî	'hair'
kûvî	kîvî	'wild', 'wild goat'
gûzan	gîzan	'razor'

(22)   u:→i:

This rule gains a little more substance through the existence of a variety of
Badīnānī in which the words in concerned have [y] rather than [i:], which
appears to represent a phonetically plausible intermediate stage between [i:]
and [u:]. We can therefore breakdown the change shown (22) into two smaller
changes, involving distinctive features. First, there is a shift from [-front] to
[+front], yielding [y]. Then there is a shift from [+round] to [-round], yielding
[i:]. We have then an apparently neat example of a change in the form of a
single segment, which, via a series of intermediate stages, eventually becomes
a phonetically (and in this case phonemically) distinct segment. I will refer
to changes of this kind as **metamorphosis**, or metamorphic change.[4]

   In sound change, the vast majority of attested changes appear to be
metamorphic, or can at least be described in these terms (e. g. the fusion of
two or more segments, or the loss of a segment as a change to 'null'). The
major debate in sound change has in fact not been whether such a conception
of sound change is meaningful, but whether or not sound change is 'regular',
i. e. whether all the relevant sounds are affected by the rule. It is worth
briefly touching on that issue here, as it is, in principle at least, relevant for
the discussion of all types of change—see Ross and Durie (1996) for a more
detailed discussion. If we assume that a sound change will take some time
before (a) all members of the speech community adopt the new forms, and

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other, but which historical source and process can be reconstructed that accounts for both
forms.
   [4]In fact the areal distribution of these two variants has blurred, with the î-variant
also extending into dialects of Turkey and the Caucasus, and vice versa. As the Kurdish
population has been traditionally mobile, and in the past decades has become vastly more
so, dialectal isoglosses are generally breaking down.

(b) all the lexical items containing the relevant segments are affected (lexical diffusion), then we must reckon on any sound change taking a significant period before it has reached completion, both in the sense of (a) and (b). Furthermore, if we assume that sound change is, at least in part, motivated by particular social factors, then it is reasonable to assume that the spread of the sound change will also be, at least in part, dependent on the continuing existence of the social factors that favoured it. Now speech communities are not always socially stable, so it is not unreasonable to assume that upheavals in the social stratification of a speech community (through for example a shift in power between rival clans, influence from a dominant neighbouring community, migrational movement causing splits in the community etc.) may slow down or even stop the spread of a sound change. In other words, one might assume that sound change is, all other things being equal, regular; but in a natural speech community and over a significant time span, all other things never are equal. Another reason for the well-attested non-regularities in sound change is that at any given time, several sound changes may be operating and may in fact be in competition. Both of these explanations are valid on the assumption that sound change does not suddenly apply to all the relevant segments, but requires a certain time frame. If we are prepared to accept that, then it follows that within that time frame the other conditioning factors, both extra-linguistic and phonological, will continue to shift, hence opening the possibility of incomplete changes.[5] The real time dimension in sound change, and indeed in any language change, leaves the trajectory of the change vulnerable to the vagaries of social change. For example, the cataclysmic events in North Iraq over the past two decades have led to the abandonment of many rural settlements, a massive exodus of Kurdish speakers from the area, and a massive influx of non-Kurdish speakers into the area. It is difficult to imagine how language changes that may have been underway during this period should have reached completion in all sectors of the language community. The case of the Iraqi Kurds may be an extreme one but the simple fact is that speech communities are not always socially stable over time. Language change cannot therefore be entirely divorced from social factors.

Let us leave aside the issue of the regularity of sound change and return to the processes involved. Traditionally, discussions of sound change

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[5]See Phillips (2001) for the influence of token frequency on lexical diffusion of sound change.

invariably include reference to an apparently aberrant type of sound change, namely analogy. Analogy is supposedly aberrant because, unlike regular sound change, it is restricted to specific environments, usually defined in terms of morphological structure. Thus analogy cannot be reduced to the kind of blind application of a phonological rule which characterises regular sound change. Let us take a look at a text-book example of analogy (cf. Trask 1996:108–109). In pre-Classical Latin, intervocalic /s/ developed into /r/, a sound change that was apparently quite regular. This change resulted in stem alternations in certain paradigms, for example *honōs* 'honour (Nom. Sing.)' and *honōres* 'Nom. Pl.', where the stem-final consonant alternates between /-s/ and /-r/. Now in classical texts, the corresponding forms are *honōr* and *honōres* respectively, thus restoring uniformity in the stem-final consonant. It is possible to interpret this change as a partial reversal of the original rhotacism, resulting in a levelling out of irregularities in the paradigm. From this perspective, the process is essentially a kind of sound change. However, there is an alternative view. The process did not primarily involve the stem final consonants. Rather, it involved the generalisation of one **entire stem**, previously restricted to certain cells of the paradigm, to the entire paradigm. Comparable examples of this type of change are the well-known shifts in the stem vowels of irregular verbs in Germanic and Romance. In German for example the plural and singular forms of certain verbs had different stem vowels in the past tense: MHG *greif* third person singular past of 'grasp' versus *griffen* third person plural past. In NHG, all forms of the past have a single stem vowel (*griff, griffen* etc.) Here again we have a comparable example to the Latin one: the stem from one part of a paradigm spreads to others in the same paradigm.

Now although both the Latin and the German examples involve stems which are phonologically very similar (differing in only a single segment), I suggest that phonological similarity is by no means a necessary precondition for such shifts. The point may become clearer when we consider another example: In the Badīnānī dialect of Kurdish, the second person singular present tense forms of the verb *çûn* 'go' are as follows:

(23)   Present tense forms of the second person singular 'go' in Bad.:

Present Indicative	Present Subjunctive	Imperative
di-ç-î	*bi-ç-î*	*bi-ç-e /her-e*

It is evident that all forms are based on a stem -*ç*-, with the exception

of the imperative, where a suppletive stem *her-* also occurs (see MacKenzie 1961a:185). However, when we move further North into the Southeast of Turkey, the picture changes somewhat. The corresponding forms from Southeast Turkey are given in (24):

(24) Present tense forms of the second person singular 'go' in Southeast Turkey:

Present Indicative	Present Subjunctive	Imperative
di-ç-î	*her-î*	*her-e*

Here the suppletive stem *her-* has extended its distribution. From being merely a variant of the Imperative, it is now the usual form, and has also taken over the Subjunctive.[6] Finally, in the Erzurum dialect from the North of the Kurmanji speech zone, the picture is as follows (cf. Haig (Forthcoming a) for details of this dialect):[7]

(25) Present tense forms of the second person singular 'go' in Erzurum

Present Indicative	Present Subjunctive	Imperative
ter-î (<*di-her-*)	*her-î*	*her-e*

In this dialect, and indeed in the majority of dialects spoken on the Northern and Western peripheries of the Kurdish speech zone, **all** forms of the present tense of 'go' are formed from the stem *-her-*. The changes are summed up in the Table 3.2, which shows only the stems. This change, or bundle of changes, involves the extension of the *-her-* stem into other environments previously occupied by the *-ç-* stem. As such, I believe that it is perfectly comparable to the example of Latin *honōr* given above: here too a stem from one part of a paradigm is extended to another part of a lexically related

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[6]In the emergent written language, the more conservative forms based on the stem *-ç-* continue to be used, and there is in fact quite a lot of variation in the speech of Kurds from areas such as Mardin. According to Wurzel (1997:71), the forms based on *-her-* are those used in "colloquial speech" (unfortunately, the table she gives to illustrate this point has the relevant categories mixed up, so that it must be interpreted with caution).

[7]The form *di-her-* for the present indicative from 'go' can in fact still be heard in some areas, and is attested in the texts of Lescot (1940). The phonological development from *di-her* to *ter-* is an example of a well-attested phonological process in Kurdish, by which an initial unstressed sequence *dih-* becomes *t-*, e.g. *tê* 'comes' from *di-hê* (see MacKenzie (1961a:185) for forms of 'come' with the stem *(h)ê-*), or *tev* from *dihev* 'together'.

Table 3.2: Successive replacement of the present stem of 'go' in Kurm.

	Ind.	Subjunct.	Imper.
Bad.	*-ç-*	*-ç-*	*-ç-/her-*
SE Turkey	*-ç-*	*-her-*	*her-*
Erzurum	*-her-*	*-her-*	*her-*

paradigm. But it is unlikely that any linguist would describe the change from a presumed earlier present indicative stem *-ç-* to the current *-her-* in terms of sound change, except in the trivial sense that all changes in linguistic form are necessarily changes in phonological shape. The point of this diversion is that supposed examples of sound change through analogy, such as the Latin example discussed above, can in fact be viewed as examples of change of quite a different order. They are not examples of metamorphosis, of one element changing into another. They are examples of the **replacement of one entire morph in a particular environment by another, from a semantically closely related environment**. In the case of the Latin example, the two morphs concerned happen to differ from each other in just a single segment, making it possible to describe the change in terms of a metamorphosis of one sound into another. However, as the Kurdish data reveal, phonological proximity is not a necessary precondition for this type of change. More important is semantic proximity. I will refer to this type of change as **replacive change**: replacive change involves the spread of one meaningful element into a structurally defined environment previously occupied by a semantically-related element.

Another example of replacive changes in morphology is from Turkic. In Uzbek, the simple past tense is formed with a suffix *-gan* (Sjoberg 1963:99). In modern Turkish, the semantically corresponding tense form is created with a suffix *-di* (vowel-harmonic variation in the suffixes is of no concern here). Compare the respective forms in Uzbek and Turkish for the third person plural past:

(26)   a.   *kel-**gan**-lar* (Uzbek)
        b.   *gel-**di**-ler* (Turkish)
             '(they) came'

The Uzbek suffix, *-gan*, is in fact a participial suffix, and is also used in this

function. Its reflexes are used as participial suffixes in many other Turkic languages including Turkish. Two points need to be stressed in connection with the above examples. First, the replacing morphemes have semantic and functional overlaps with the replaced ones. For example, in the case of the participial suffix in (26), a clause such as 'he is (the) one who has arrived', with a participle in predicative function, can under certain discourse conditions come very close in meaning to 'he has arrived'. The Iranian languages are replete with evidence of erstwhile participles becoming tensed forms of finite predicates. Thus suffix replacement will certainly depend on some degree of semantic and functional overlap of the suffixes concerned. Following Evans and Wilkins (2000:550) I will refer to contexts where the distribution of the replacing and replaced morphemes overlap as **bridging contexts**. Thus a change of meaning from meaning A to meaning B is facilitated through the existence of "a regularly occurring context" in which the B meaning is "implicated, but not yet lexicalized". Although the concept of bridging context was developed to account for semantic change in the lexicon, in principle it is applicable to the type of changes in the grammar discussed here, and incidentally provides a further reason not to overstress the distinction between lexicon and grammar.

The second point to emerges is that in the related languages or dialects concerned, the constructions display the same essential shape, i. e. the inflected word form itself and its semantics remain constant. This is an example of what I will term **constructional persistence**, by which is meant that a construction will tend to retain its basic form irrespective of the etymologies of the lexical and grammatical items that come to carry it. I will return to this point in more detail in Section 3.3.

In fact, replacive changes of this type are rife in morphology. A simple example is the English gerund in *-ing*, which took over the functional domain of the old participle in *-inde* (phonological similarity obviously eased the shift in this case). Nau (1995:20) discusses changes in the Present Indicative paradigm of Finnish *olla* 'be'. The spoken language displays a markedly different paradigm from the standard language: The third person plural form *ovat* is replaced by the third person singular form *on*. Another example comes from person agreement markers in colloquial Turkish. In the standard language (St.Tu.), the set of person agreement markers used in the past tense are distinct from those of the present (continuous). But in the colloquial spoken language, the past tense forms are regularly used in the present continuous as well. Table 3.3 shows the relevant forms for the verb *gelmek*

'come' in the first and second person. The colloquial forms have undergone a

Table 3.3: Persons markers in the past and present tenses (Turkish)

	St.Tu.Present	St.Tu.Past	Coll.Tu.Pres.
1PS	gel-iyor-um	gel-di-m	gel-iyo-m
2PS	gel-iyor-sun	gel-di-n	gel-iyo-n

reduction of the progressive suffix *-iyor*, leaving it vowel-final *-iyo*, to which the same person markers are now attached as are found in Standard Turkish past tense verbs. This is not mere phonological attrition, because in the interrogative form of these verbs, the pattern used with the Standard Past tense is also found. In the example, the interrogative particle is in bold type:

(27)   a. St.Tu.Pres: gel-iyor **mu**-sun? 'are you coming?'

        b. St.Tu.Past: gel-di-n **mi**? 'have you come?'

        c. Coll.Tu.Pres: gel-iyo-n **mu**? 'are you coming?'

It can be seen that the order of person marker and interrogative marker *mu/mi* in the present tense of Colloquial Turkish (c) corresponds to that of the past tense of Standard Turkish (b), rather than the present (a).

   Another area where grammatical morphemes are remarkably mobile is within paradigms of personal pronouns—at least in modern Indo-European languages. In particular, the second person forms, presumably because they are used as terms of address and are therefore particularly prone to socially-driven changes, have been replaced in several languages (cf. Braun (1988:57–59) for examples and discussion). Thus the German pronouns *Ihr, er/sie, Sie* have been used at different times for different politeness values in the second person. In Columbian Spanish, what is the second person plural familiar form in Spain, *vosotros*, is not used in this function; the form *ustedes* occurs, previously a polite form of the second person plural.[8] It appears to be quite natural for forms that are semantically related to 'step into' the cells of forms that have become lost, or socially downgraded. What remains, for the most part, intact, is the fundamental system of oppositions laid down in the paradigm.

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[8]I am grateful to Consuelo de Vengoechea for pointing this out to me.

None of the changes discussed so far are amenable to description in terms of metamorphic change. The changes in the Latin and German verb forms are traditionally described in terms of 'analogy', but it is less clear whether the Uzbek example, or the changes in the functions of the personal pronouns can be meaningfully described in this way. I suggest that in fact changes of this sort are rather common. Furthermore, to describe a subset of them as analogy appears to miss the larger point: what we find in all cases is that meaningful elements can undergo a shift in distribution. This kind of change is what I refer to as replacive change. From this perspective, analogy is merely one sub-set of the much larger class of replacive changes, and it appears to me rather arbitrary to treat analogy as a category in its own right.

It is notable that replacive changes do not fare well in much of the literature on language change, where metamorphic change remains the dominant paradigm. For example in the brief overview of morphological change given in Haspelmath (2002:51–57), four different mechanisms are discussed: pattern loss, coalescence, analogical change, and reanalysis, of which coalescence is considered to be the most common. All are treated as forms of metamorphic change, although as I have suggested above, at least some cases of analogy can fruitfully be considered replacive changes. Lüdtke (1989:133), who explicitly excludes shifts between competing forms from the domain of "language change proper" (see below), suggests that there are three "obviously universal quantitative processes" involved in change: shrinking, accretion and merger. It is hard to see how, for example, the change of form in the present indicative stem of Erzurum Kurdish 'go' shown in Table 3.2 can be accommodated within this framework.

I believe the emphasis on metamorphic change to the detriment of replacive changes is a regrettably reductionist view point, for the following three reasons. First, the empirical evidence from changes which cannot meaningfully be described in terms of a metamorphic change; second, the focus on metamorphic change makes grammatical change look in some sense quite different from the other major area of language change, the change in the meanings of words; third, the emphasis on metamorphic change obliges us to consider changes through language contact as in some sense 'abnormal' or 'external'. The first of these points has been discussed sufficiently. Let me now take up the second, according to which semantic change, change in the meanings of words, is quite distinct from structural change.

If replacive changes involve shifts in distribution of meaningful elements, then they must also involve a shift in the semantics of those elements. I

would suggest that a prerequisite for a morpheme to encroach into the distributional environment previously occupied by a distinct morpheme is some degree of polysemy of the encroaching element, or at least a potential for the encroaching morpheme to develop polysemy. That polysemy of grammatical morphemes can lead to changes in their meaning, and hence their distribution, is hardly news. A good example from New Indo-Aryan is the function of the erstwhile common feminine gender suffix *-ī* (<OIA *-ikah*) which now denotes "a *smaller* object", for example Hindi *kaṭorī* 'small bowl' vs. *kaṭorā* 'bowl' (Masica 1991:91). But once we accept that replacive change involves polysemy, extension of distribution, and ultimately, semantic change, then it is evident that this is essentially the same set of factors that characterises changes in word meanings, i. e. semantic change. Both processes can be linked ultimately to polysemy, a feature not only of lexical but also of grammatical morphemes. Consider a well-known example: German *Bein*, cognate with English *bone*, means not 'bone', but 'leg'. The German word has undergone a change in meaning (reflexes of the old meaning are evident in German words such as *Gebeine* 'skeleton', *beinern* 'made of bone', *Schienbein* 'shin'). And the polysemy leading to the change in German is preserved in Danish, where cognate *ben* means both 'leg' and 'bone'.

Semantic change of this type is of course accompanied by a shift in distribution—different collocations for example. Such processes are endemic in language, and even if they are as yet comparatively poorly understood, this does not mean that the paths of semantic change are entirely arbitrary, or that it is impossible to develop predictive theories of semantic change (see for example Wilkins (1996) for semantic change of body-part terms). Given that free lexical morphemes display polysemy, and are subject to semantic change, and given that the distinction between lexical and grammatical meaning is gradual rather than absolute, it should come as no surprise to find that grammatical morphemes may shift their distribution and their meanings. That free lexical morphemes undergo semantic shifts more freely than bound grammatical ones may be related to the highly restricted distributions of grammatical morphemes, and the fact that they constitute a much more tightly constrained system of oppositions than lexical morphemes. But I would argue that the difference is one of degree rather than kind. It is only through a replacive perspective on language change that the commonalities between 'semantic change', and for example, changes commonly referred to as 'analogy', become evident. And, as many authors now stress (cf. for example Croft 2001 and Goldberg 1995), syntactic constructions can be treated as

meaningful in their own right, in which case they will also display polysemy, the prerequisite for replacive change.

The second advantage of viewing language change from a replacive rather than a metamorphic perspective is that it allows change through language contact to be more readily integrated into the model than is generally done. It is commonplace in discussions of language change to distinguish between 'internal' and 'external' factors, whereby language contact belongs to the external factors—which apparently require quite distinct explanation. Such a view is evident in the quote at the beginning of this chapter from Kroch (2001), who restricts the notion of change to processes involving 'monolingual' speakers. A particularly explicit statement on the distinction between internal and external factors stems from Lüdtke (1989:131). Lüdtke suggests that "shift, switching or conflict between different norms current among a population", as well as "external interference (such as loan, syntactic or semantic calque etc.)" and "internal interference" (e. g. any form of conscious language planning) should be excluded from the study of language change. In his opinion, the linguistic investigation of language change should be primarily concerned with the "normal course" of events, i. e. "the set of language-changing events that would happen anyway, even if the language community in question were left in isolation". In a similar vein Wurzel (2003:207) develops a theory of language change in which system-internal markedness relations play a crucial role. But the predictions made by the theory are considered to hold only for "grammatically" conditioned change, while "sociolinguistically" conditioned change is explicitly excluded. Linguists such as Wurzel and Lüdtke can be considered to represent an extreme structuralist view of change, which basically works on the assumption that it is necessary to examine change in a kind of laboratory situation, where language structure can be divorced from its speakers, and the system-internal forces driving change can be isolated and identified. The contrast between this perspective on language change and that developed by Labov over the past decades could not be more extreme. According to Labov (1982:20), "change implies variation; change *is* variation". For Labov, it is precisely extra-linguistic factors, social variables, which are at the heart of change, in other words just those factors that structuralists seek to exclude.

In view of the extensive empirical support for the social causes of language change (Labov 2001), the extreme structuralist view appears scarcely tenable. Yet certain observable facts of language change do in fact lend credence to the belief that system-internal factors determine paths of change

to some extent independently of social factors. The main evidence in support of this position comes from the comparison of changes in related languages across large time spans (i e. at least 500 years). It is often observable that related languages undergo remarkably similar structural changes, even when they are spoken by geographically diverse populations living under very diverse social conditions. The development of alignment in Iranian is a case in point, as we shall see. The inevitable conclusion that one can draw from this state of affairs is that the changes concerned, assuming they are not due to chance coincidence, must be rooted in structural features of the common ancestor language—for that is the sole factor common to all the populations concerned. There is thus a paradox here: on the one hand, it is possible to observe in real time how social factors influence language change. On the other hand, from a comparative and historical perspective, there appear to be changes which have swept through entire language families, regardless of the social conditions under which the various populations have lived. In Chapter 8, these issues are broached once more in connection with the summary of alignment changes.

But in evaluating individual changes, it is extremely difficult to distinguish internal factors from external factors. When evaluating data retrospectively, the evidence at our disposal represents the **results** of various processes; the causes of, and the course of development that led to those results often lie beyond our grasp. Nau (1995) argues convincingly that the distinction between internal and external factors is impossible to maintain, and leads to entirely circular argumentation. In practice, there is no fully reliable, independent, means of deciding retrospectively whether an attested change is due to 'internal' or 'external' factors.

Consider two simple examples of structural change. The first is taken from New Zealand and Australian English. In colloquial speech, many speakers use a form *youse* [yu:z] for the second person plural personal pronoun. It appears that they have applied the plural *-s* to the singular pronoun *you*. Such a change is quite remarkable, because it introduces an agglutinative type of number inflection into the personal pronouns, although English otherwise completely lacks such features in its pronouns. Presumably this is due to analogical extension, the extension of a morphological pattern to include words not previously displaying it. But as it does not involve language contact, nor does it seem to have been imposed 'externally' on the speech community, one must conclude that it is an example of change proper, i. e. 'internal' change. Thus it falls squarely in the domain of language change 'proper'.

The second example involves the complementizer *ki*, which is originally of Persian origin, but has been borrowed into several genetically diverse languages in the Near East, for example Turkic and Kartvelian languages (Haig 2001a:201). On the internal/external distinction, this latter change must be considered 'external', because it involves language contact. But in what sense is it more 'natural' for speakers to apply inflectional morphology to entirely new word classes in the same language (i.e. English *youse*) than it is for bilingual speakers to adopt constructions, or morphemes, from one of their languages and deploy them in the other? Given that the majority of humans are bilingual, and many examples of borrowing grammatical morphemes are attested in the histories of the world's languages (Curnow 2001), it seems unnecessarily reductionist to exclude them from the study of language change, or to consider them in any sense less 'natural' than other types of change. A broader view of language change, where replacive change is afforded due consideration alongside metamorphic change, can accomodate 'borrowing' as a shift of distribution.[9] Indeed, given the difficulties inherent in distinguishing languages from dialects, whether the shifting element comes from within the same variety of a language, or from a different variety of that language, or from a different dialect (see Section 3.4 for an example from dialectal German), or from a different language altogether, can hardly be raised to a defining criterion for 'internal' vs. 'external' language change.

A somewhat different form of reductionism is pursued by those scholars who claim that the focus of diachronic linguistics should be restricted to the innovation itself, rather than its propagation (cf. the critical discussion in Vincent 2001:8–9), because the latter is inevitably mediated by social and extra-linguistic factors. In practice, I believe such a distinction is impossible to maintain: the data that historical linguistics are obliged to deal with are always, in part at least, the result of the propagation process. It is some level of propagation which ensures survival, hence attestation of forms in texts.

The examples of replacive changes provided so far have all involved primarily morphology, and the reader may well be questioning the relevance of the concept of replacive change for syntax. The reason for the focus on morphology has been largely for expository purposes; because grammatical

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[9]See Croft (2000), who draws a terminological distinction between 'interference' (i.e. involving language contact) from 'intraference' (alternatives from within the same language), but stresses that the underlying mechanisms involved in both cases are probably not very different. Harris and Campbell (1995) also afford 'borrowing' due recognition as one of the major forces behind syntactic change.

morphemes tend to belong to closed sets of items, with relatively strict distribution, it is comparatively straightforward to detect a shift in distribution. For syntax, this is not so readily apparent. First of all, it should be obvious that a replacive view of change in syntax is really only compatible with a construction-based view of grammar, i. e. on the assumption that syntactic constructions have a degree of autonomy, and carry meaning in themselves (Goldberg 1995, Croft 2001). In a rule-based view of grammar, constructions are secondary; what changes are rules, and constructions will change in accordance. Thus it is not surprising that approaches to diachronic syntax, such as Lightfoot (1999), which advocate rule-based systems of grammar do not have much to say on replacive changes in syntax.

But on the assumptions of construction grammar, we can assume that constructions are not only meaningful in themselves, but will also display constructional polysemy. Thus in principle at least they will subject to replacive changes in a similar manner as other meaning-bearing items of language. Actually the existence of constructional polysemy and with it, the fact that there is semantic and distributional overlap among constructions (i. e. a degree of constructional synonymy) is not particularly popular. In general, a difference in structure is considered to involve a difference in meaning. Strictly speaking, that is true. Probably very few, if any, constructions are truly identical in all aspects of denotational and conotational meaning, and linguists are often in a position to identify these differences. But the impact of such finer points of constructional meaning in the rough-and-tumble of normal interaction is perhaps less than linguists believe. Take for example the two possessive constructions in modern English, *the destruction of the city* vs. *the city's destruction*. It is certainly true that the two are not identical in distribution, and hence differ in some way in meaning. But it is equally true that there are contexts where they are practically interchangeable. And it does not seem all that far-fetched to imagine a future variety of English in which only one of them is used in all contexts, and the other disappears altogether. German has an even greater variety of possessive constructions and it is noticeable that various varieties of German use only a subset of the historically available choices. Such examples could readily be multiplied. For although different constructions will generally differ in some respect in their meaning, the fact of polysemy means that there will also be overlaps, and this is the prerequisite for replacive change. Kroch (2001) recognizes the possibility of alternative constructions in syntax and its potential danger for generative theories of language change. His solution is perfectly

consistent with the rule-based view of grammar: The existence of alternative constructions implies the existence of alternative grammars. Speakers who deploy alternative constructions have thus internalized more than one grammar. Although this is entirely consonant with the generative framework, I do not find it an attractive solution, nor a necessary one.

In this section I have briefly contrasted metamorphic and replacive processes in language change. The former involves a fundamental change of form; one form 'changes into' another, for which the paradigm example is sound change. Replacive change on the other hand involves an extension of distribution among meaningful elements such that one element comes to occur in the environments previously occupied by another. Examples of replacive changes can be found in morphology, where they often go under the rubric of 'analogy'. However, I consider analogy to be merely a subset of the much broader category of replacive changes. I should emphasise that both types of change are well-known and regularly discussed in the literature; my main point here is to advocate a shift in perspective, whereby replacive changes are no longer the marked or in some sense marginal type of language change, but arguably the normal state of affairs. My reasons for this are that a shift in this direction immediately brings the study of structural change closer to that of semantic change, in that both involve shifts in distribution, and it also allows us to incorporate 'borrowing' more readily into models of language change.[10] Finally, I have pointed out the relevance for this view of change for syntactic change. Other scholars have articulated similar views, albeit with different terminology. Particularly relevant is the notion of 'extension' outlined in Harris and Campbell (1995) as one of the three major mechanisms of syntactic change. For morphological change the terms 'exaptation' (Lass 1990) and 'hermit crabs' (Heath 1998) have been applied. Exaptation covers cases where morphology that has become redundant through changes in the system (e. g. a loss of gender) can be redeployed to express different categories. Exaptation is slightly different to the cases I have been discussing because the redundant morphology actually creates new constructions, rather than replacing morphology in existing constructions. Heath's 'hermit crab' metaphor on the other hand, illustrated with Uto-Aztecan data, comes very close to the notion of replacive change discussed here—I will return to Heath's arguments below. More recently

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[10]Although of course a borrowed element may in fact not replace anything, but be used alongside indigenous elements. Thus borrowing is not always accompanied by replacement.

Croft (2000) has developed a theory of language change where the prime mechanism is selection of alternatives. Obviously within such a framework, replacive changes can be much more readily accomodated.

3.2   Grammaticalization and reanalysis

Within non-generative approaches to language change, the two most widely-invoked mechanisms of syntactic change are grammaticalization and reanalysis. Both can be considered types of metamorphic change. Grammaticalization is informally defined as the process by which linguistic items become increasingly grammatical, and correspondingly less lexical. It affects the items concerned along several distinct parameters, for example (see Lehmann (1995:123) for more detailed discussion):

bondedness: the extent to which a particular element is phonologically integrated into a host element. A suffix, for example, is more strongly bonded than a clitic.

paradigmaticity: the extent to which an element stands in systematic opposition to a (small set of) functionally comparable elements, i. e. the extent to which it can be considered part of a paradigm;

syntagmatic variability: the degree of positional freedom an element has (obviously this correlates negatively with bondedness)

Grammaticalization has traditionally been considered a gradual process, and one that is unidirectional. A major focus of interest in grammaticalization research has been establishing clines or paths of grammaticalization, the typical sequence of stages that can be observed across languages in the emergence of grammatical categories. One cline, which we will discuss in Section 3.3, concerns the development from a lexical item via a postposition to a case marker. Among case markers, local or semantic cases develop into structural cases, but not the other way round. Other well documented clines include the development from auxiliary verbs to tense and aspect markers, for example Spanish future tense markers from auxiliary *habere*, cf. Haspelmath (2002:53), or the development of a form of a verb for 'say' into a general quotative particle or a complementizer, or the development of verbs for 'give'

into markers of Indirect Objects. In all cases, the path from lexical to grammatical (or grammatical to more grammatical) involves a decrease in lexical content of the item concerned.

The cross-language evidence that has been marshalled to illustrate grammaticalization is impressive, and far too extensive to be surveyed here.[11] Nevertheless, grammaticalization has also been the target of considerable criticism. The major issue of contention is to what extent grammaticalization can be considered a phenomenon in its own right, a theoretical primitive from which other features of language, and language change, can be predicted. Critics of grammaticalization suggest that grammaticalization simply refers to a cluster of observations which in fact flow from more basic principles of change. On this view, grammaticalization, while useful as a cover term for a bundle of frequent changes found in languages, has little theoretical import in its own right and is better seen as an epiphenomenon.[12] The issues at stake go beyond the scope of this chapter, and as the entire discussion has regrettably acquired a thick and inpenetratable "ideological crust" (Vincent 2001:3), I will avoid a commitment at this point. It is a grave error to believe that any of the available theories can, in their present form, account for all instances of syntactic change. In fact, most of the theories posit at best a particular **perspective** from which to view change. A particular perspective may highlight some aspects of a particular process, but it may also leave others outside one's field of vision. I will illustrate this with an example from Iranian below.

The second major type of metamorphic change is reanalysis. Reanalysis involves a change in the structural interpretation of a linguistic expression that leaves, at least initially, the surface form of the expression unchanged.[13] Reanalysis can involve, for example, a shift in constituent boundaries. A well-known example, given here with simplified orthography, is the change from Old English *a natter* to its Modern English equivalent *an adder*. Here the construction consisting of Det.+N remains constant, but the boundary

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[11]See for example Hopper and Traugott (1993), Lehmann (1995), Bybee et al. (1994) or Heine and Kuteva (2002) for rich documentation.

[12]For criticism of grammaticalization see Newmeyer (1998:Chap. 5), Heath (1998) and Campbell (2001). The postulate of unidirectionality has also been the subject of some controversy. However, although counter-examples do exist, they are certainly rare, and as a robust tendency, unidirectionality still requires explanation.

[13]For extensive discussion of reanalysis see e. g. Langacker (1977) and Harris and Campbell (1995:esp. chap. 4)

between the two constituents has shifted: the original first segment of the noun is now interpreted as part of the determiner. Note that in spontaneous connected speech, there is practically no difference between *an adder* and *a nadder* (syllabification remains identical). But the reanalysis had consequences for the form of the noun **outside** the construction, which is now vowel-initial, demonstrating that speakers do indeed interpret the sequence differently.

Reanalysis is of theoretically greater interest when the reinterpretation involves not only boundary shifts, but also the nature of the morphosyntactic categories and the relationships between them. In other words, when the construction is assigned a new structure by the reanalysis. Another example from morphology is the English word *grovelling*. In the sixteenth century it was an adverb meaning 'on the ground, in an abject manner'. Etymologically, it contained the adverbial suffix *-ling*. However, the word was reanalysed as an *-ing* form of a verb, and thus gave rise to a new verb, *to grovel* (Sheard 1954:85). In this example, not only have the internal constituent boundaries shifted, but the constituents themselves have been 're-labelled'. An example of reanalysis from syntax is the development of so-called impersonal constructions in Spanish, which emerged through the reanalysis of a middle construction. This is illustrated below, following the analysis of Detges and Waltereit (2002:152–153):

(28)   *se=vende   cerveza en el   patio*
       [MED=sells]$_{VP}$ beer   in the courtyard
       'Beer is sold in the courtyard'

According to Detges and Waltereit (2002), the clitic Medium particle is reanalysed as an enclitic impersonal pronoun, 'someone':

(29)   *se=vende   cerveza en el   patio*
       [someone=sells beer]$_{VP}$ in the courtyard
       '(Some)one sells beer in the courtyard'

Reanalysis is ubiquitous at all levels of linguistic organisation. It is certainly related to processes such as back-formation, which can be considered to be the productive extension of a reanalysis, and indeed to Volksetymologie, where speakers assign novel lexical interpretations to segments of a word (e. g. Modern English *crayfish* comes from Old French *crévice*; English speakers construed the second syllable as a meaningful element). There can be little doubt that reanalysis represents a powerful catalyst in language change.

A major source of controversy in recent literature concerns the relative status of reanalysis and grammaticalization. Some authors claim that the two are fundamentally distinct, and can thus proceed independently of each other. Haspelmath (1998) goes further in claiming that grammaticalization is the more fundamental mode of change. Other authors take a different stance, suggesting that reanalysis is the major source of change (Harris and Campbell 1995). It is certainly true that many instances of change involve, at some stage in their development, both mechanisms. Take for instance the emergence of a new set of modals in colloquial English, *wanna, gonna* etc. Obviously these have developed from the construction *want, going*+[*to*+Inf.]. The original verb infinitive marker *to* has fused with the finite verb, a process that belongs in the realm of grammaticalization. But the entire construction has also been reanalysed: *to* is no longer perceived as part of the infinite complement, but as part of the modal verb, hence leading to a boundary shift. Another example is the change that English *while* has undergone. Previously it was solely a lexical item meaning 'a period of time'. In Modern English, it can now be used as a (co-)subordinate conjunction (*while he was sleeping* . . .). This could be viewed as grammaticalization (progression from lexical to grammatical), but Harris and Campbell (1995:89) cite it as an example of reanalysis, i. e. a change in category. Unfortunately, the debate revolving around the relative importance of grammaticalization and reanalysis is fraught with terminological and conceptual confusion (see Detges and Waltereit (2002) and Vincent (2001) for some clarification). However the issue is resolved, it does not directly impact on the present study.

Both grammaticalization and reanalysis focus on changes internal to a particular construction or morpheme. In other words, the perspective from which change is viewed is primarily focussed on individual items rather than their distribution. The changes discussed in Section 3.1, however, lie outside the domain of grammaticalization and reanalysis. Thus a theory of syntactic change with a primary focus on metamorphic changes will tend to play down, or simply ignore, changes of this kind.

3.3 Constructional persistence

In this section I will introduce the concept of **constructional persistence** and discuss its relevance for language change. The concept is not new; it has been around in various garbs for some time. However, I believe that the

dominance of metamorphic theories of language change has led to it losing
its central position in theories of language change. Constructional persis-
tence can be defined as the continuing existence of the formal and semantic
framework of a particular construction throughout the history of a language
or language family. By formal framework I mean the categories of the con-
struction's constituents, and their linear order relative to one another. This
framework or template is, in principle at least, independent of the etymologies
of the morphemes realizing the individual constituents of the construction.

We have already encountered examples of constructional persistence in
Section 3.1. A good example is the finite form of the past tense in Turkish
and Uzbek in (26), repeated here for convenience:

(26)   a.   *kel-**gan**-lar* (Uzbek)

         b.   *gel-**di**-ler* (Turkish)

               '(they) came'

Related languages often display parallel constructions, but with distinct mor-
phemes. An example from Germanic is the parallelism in word formation
between words consisting of a preposition and a verb stem (or derivative of
one). Table 3.4 gives some examples from Swedish and German.[14] It is evi-

Table 3.4: Parallel word-formation in Germanic

Swedish	German	gloss
efterbilda	*nachbilden*	'copy, imitate'
efterfråga	*Nachfrage*	'inquiry, demand'
eftersmak	*Nachgeschmack*	'aftertaste'
efterspel	*Nachspiel*	'sequel, (legal) consequences'
eftergiven	*nachgiebig*	'indulgent'

dent that we are dealing with the 'same' construction in both languages, but
the first element has an entirely different etymological source (Swedish *efter*
and German *nach*). Another example from Germanic is the periphrastic pas-
sive. Danish, English and German all have productive passives of the form
Aux.+Past Participle, but the sources of the lexical verbs filling the auxiliary
slot are quite different (English *be*, German *werden* and Danish *blive*). It can

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[14]I am grateful to Klaus Geyer for discussion of these forms with me.

of course be argued that such recurrent patterns are the result of cultural pressure, of borrowing. But the simple fact remains that such recurrent structural templates are extremely common among related languages, regardless of how they arise. Finally, the example of colloqiual English pronoun *youse*, discussed in Section 3.1 can also be seen in this light. In certain varieties of North American English, a different form for the second person plural pronoun has developed, *y'all*. This form has an entirely different genesis to *youse*: it is the result of the fusion of the pronoun with the quantifier *all*, in other words, a case of grammaticalization. But the two forms *youse* and *y'all*, which presumably developed independently and via entirely different mechanisms, converge precisely in their function in the system of oppositions in the pronouns. It is almost as if the language were struggling to remedy a deficiency in the pronoun system brought about by the loss of the singular/plural distinction in the second person. What is important is the result, not the mechanism employed to achieve it.

Now the existence of instances of constructional persistence in related languages does not, in itself, appear to be relevant to language change but rather to structural stability over time. However, if we accept that constructional persistence is an intrinsic aspect of language, and that different languages can to some extent be defined by the different types of constructional persistence they display, then it is evident that constructional persistence can be invoked to **explain** some instances of change. Let me illustrate this with an example from the Iranian languages.

One of the most regularly-cited examples of grammaticalization comes from Iranian languages: the history of the Modern Persian accusative case marker -*rā*. Hopper and Traugott (1993:157–160) outline the development as follows:[15] In Modern Persian, definite Direct Objects are obligatorily marked with the suffix *rā*:

(30) *ketāb-rā mi-xān-ad*
      book-ACC PROG-read:PRES-3S

      '(S/he)'s reading the book'

The ancestor of the Accusative marker was a noun meaning something like 'reason, aim'. In Old Persian it is attested as a postposition, *rādiy*, meaning

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[15]Hopper and Traugott base their discussion on Bossong (1985). A more detailed account of the Middle Persian stage, with a number of complications not noted by Bossong (1985), is now available in Paul (2003).

'on account of, by' (Skjærvø 1985:215). Later, in Middle Persian, the same
postposition came to be used as a marker of Benefactive and Indirect Ob-
ject. Sporadic cases of its use to mark definite direct objects are, according
to Bossong (1985:58), also attested. In New Persian, however, it has come to
be the obligatory marker for definite Direct Objects (though its earlier Bene-
factive function is preserved in some lexicalized items, such as *če-rā* 'why?').
Phonologically, this item has undergone reduction from Old Persian *rādiy* to
New Persian *rā*. Semantically and functionally, it has undergone a change
from lexical item, to postposition with mixed semantic and syntactic func-
tions, to a purely structural case indicating a particular grammatical relation
(albeit interlaced with its pragmatic function as a marker of definiteness).

From the perspective of grammaticalization we have the history of a sin-
gle morpheme, its trajectory through grammatical space during which it
undergoes both semantic, phonological and distributional changes. While
there is no denying that the bundle of changes undergone by this particular
morpheme is highly typical of similar developments in many different lan-
guages, there is nevertheless something which this account crucially misses,
and which is arguably more fundamental. Consider for a moment what has
not changed in this particular development: a construction involving a noun
phrase with an overt marker indicating Accusative case. Let us refer to it
as the Direct Object Construction. An example from Old Persian is the
following:

(31) *pasāva   adam* **kāram** *frāišayam Bābirum*
      thereupon 1s   army:ACC send:PST:1S to.Babylon

     'Thereupon I sent **an army** to Babylon' (Kent 1953:DB III,84)

Now consider how the Old Persian Direct Object Construction has changed
its outward form. First of all, the Accusative case—as a distinct morpho-
logical marker — disappeared. Towards Middle Persian, its place in the
construction was being taken over by the reflex of what had once been the
Genitive/Dative case. Later, this too was lost, and the function of Object-
marker was then taken by the postposition -*rā*. This had previously marked
Indirect Objects, a function it had adopted after the loss of case marking in
this function (see above). We can therefore see the change from Old Persian
to Modern Persian also in terms of three distinct **replacive** changes, all of
which served to preserve the basic form of a particular construction: The old
Accusative was replaced by the old Genitive, which in turn was replaced by
the postpositional Dative marker, -*rā*. Thus the grammaticalization of *rā* is

simply the most recent link in a chain of changes which drew successive morphemes into the function of Direct Object marker.[16] The development of the Direct Object Construction is summed up in Table 3.5. The constructional

Table 3.5: The Iranian Direct Object Construction

OLD PERSIAN	NP+ACC
MIDDLE PERSIAN	NP+OBL(<Old Persian GEN)
NEW PERSIAN	NP+-*rā*

perspective allows us to see a possible motivation for the changes, namely in terms of constructional persistence. The process can be explained along the following lines. Among the case markers of any language, it is the markers of structural case which are generally of the least phonological substance. It is thus not surprising that the first cases to be lost in the general breakdown of the Iranian case system were the Accusative and the Dative. The old Genitive case took over the function first of the old Dative (see Section 5.4) and finally also that of the old Accusative (in fact it became a marker of general Oblique case in many Iranian languages).

When a case marker is lost, its function will often be covered by a semantically close marker—this is the essence of syncretism. One of the most detailed examinations of changes in the English case system, Allen (1995:162), describes syncretism in precisely these terms:

> [. . .] when syncretism takes place, it proceeds (at least sometimes) not by massive confusion of forms, but by encroachment of one form into the functional territory of another.

Thus when the Old Persian Accusative was lost, it did not mean that the category of Direct Object was lost. Instead, the functionally and semantically closest member of the remaining case system, the one that at that stage expressed Indirect Objects (etymologically the Old Iranian Genitive) took over the Direct Object function. And when that case marker was lost, it was

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[16]More recently grammaticalization theoreticians have begun to stress the constructional perspective in grammaticalization, so the differences in perspective discussed here are no longer as incommensurable as they may once have been—see Croft (2000:33).

again the Indirect Object marker (at that time $r\bar{a}$) that stepped in.[17]

From this perspective, we are not dealing primarily with the element -$r\bar{a}$ inexorably traversing a particular grammaticalization pathway. Rather, we have a language struggling to maintain a particular construction, Direct Object+Case Marker, in the face of phonological attrition. We also have a motivation for the change in the form of pull-factors, external to the element -$r\bar{a}$ itself. It is merely one link in a chain shift that affected several of the markers for syntactic functions throughout the history of Persian, drawing them successively closer to the Direct Object function. Perhaps the most compelling evidence in favour of this way of looking at the changes comes from the fact that in some modern Iranian languages, the Accusative marker is **not** cognate with $r\bar{a}$, but has quite a different source, for example a preposition *az* (e. g. Bartangi, Pamir sub-group, see Payne 1980) or *ku* from Ōrmuṛī (see (3) in Chapter 1). Common to all these languages is a particular construction; the etymological origin of the case-marker, however, is quite different.

There is a solid case for recognizing some notion of constructional persistence as one of the factors mediating the type of changes that a grammatical system can undergo. One question that is immediately posed by this perspective is: Why should the Persian Direct Object Construction display constructional persistence, while, for example, the English Direct Object has simply discarded any overt signal of case (apart from in pronouns) in the course of its development from Old English? The simplest answer to this is that the constructions which display persistence over extensive periods differ from language to language, and from language family to language family. In fact, identifying such differences can be seen as a powerful diagnostic in defining a genetic type, and is therefore of considerable interest in its own right. There are obvious links to other attempts to define languages in terms of a structural blueprint, which mediates the types of change which a lan-

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[17]Note that in syncretism, as in other types of replacive change, a measure of semantic proximity between replaced and replacing element is necessary. When a case marker is lost through phonetic attrition, its function cannot be taken over by just any case marker. For example, if an Accusative marker is lost, it is highly unlikely that the Comitative would expand its function to cover the functional range of the old Accusative. Rather, we will tend to find a structural case such as the Nominative or Dative taking over the Accusative function. Just how one defines the notion of 'semantic proximity' that mediates syncretism is a matter of some debate (but see for example Luraghi (2003) for discussion relevant to semantic cases). But empirically, it is well-established that certain types of syncretisms occur over and over again, while others are virtually unattested.

guage will undergo.[18] I will nevertheless not pursue the implications of this
here, deferring further discussion until Chapter 8. Heath (1998:750–757),
drawing on data from Uto-Aztecan, also argues forcefully for a 'pull-chain'
mechanism which ultimately motivates grammaticalization. In fact, as Heath
(1998:755) notes, although it is well known that successive cycles of grammat-
icalization often appear to renew an inherited structure, the potential role
of the inherited structure as an explanatory force behind grammaticalization
has not been afforded due recognition in the grammaticalization literature
(cf. Heath (1998) for further references). The main point of this diversion is
that viewing changes such as the developments of -*rā* from a constructional
perspective opens up a research agenda that differs in significant ways from
that pursued in grammaticalization or reanalysis, and, incidentally, provides
a framework for explaining unidirectionality.

3.4   The challenge of variation

A distinction is often drawn in linguistics between a synchronic and a di-
achronic approach. On this view, generally attributed to Ferdinand de Saus-
sure,[19] it is desirable to distinguish the study of a particular language state,
existent at a specific time, from the study of changes in a language through
time. Primacy, so the structuralist dictum, should be afforded to the former,
and indeed, it is the comprehensive analysis of the synchronic state which is
the prerequisite for the diachronic study of change. Investigating change, on
this view, can in fact be reduced to investigating a sequence of states. I will
refer to this view of language history as the salami-metaphor: the history
of a language is conceived of as a sequence of thin slices, each of which is,
in principle, isolatable. A recent reformulation of this view is the following
(Schwarze 2001:147):

> In analyzing linguistic change, two kinds of hypotheses can be
> posited with respect to the available data: a) hypotheses about

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[18]Consider for example Wurzel's *strukturdefinierende Eigenschaften*, a concept devel-
oped for inflectional morphology but in principle applicable to other areas of grammar
(Wurzel 1988).

[19]Others, most notably Hermann Paul, had made suggestions along similar lines which
predate Saussure. In fact, the interpretation of Saussure's famous dichotomy is consid-
erably more complex than the oversimplification presented here—see Koerner (1973:263–
310) for extensive discussion.

synchronic states s_1, s_2, ...s_n that are temporally ordered; b)
hypotheses about the processes leading from each state s_i to its
successor s_{i+1}.

There are of course numerous problems with this view, and indeed many
linguists prefer to abandon a strict distinction between diachrony and syn-
chrony altogether. Perhaps the single most damaging factor is the blunt fact
of variation in any language community. The evidence amassed by scholars
such as Labov show that at any given time in a speech community there is
variation in the sound system, in the lexicon and in the grammar. A speech
community contains numerous sub-groups, who deploy language, like other
facets of human culture, in ways that will underscore their group identity,
forge solidarity with other members of their group, and distinguish them-
selves from other groups within the same speech community. In the case of
larger speech communities, dialectal variation can be extreme and indeed,
linguists are forced to admit that it is not possible to distinguish between
dialects and languages. Thus the slices of the salami are not stable in them-
selves; each slice contains its own cross-section of potential change, and, to
take the metaphor further, may even blend sideways with a neighbouring
salami. An additional problem concerns the thickness of the slice: there is
ample evidence that languages can change in the course of a person's lifetime.
So just how 'thick' can a slice be in order to qualify as a 'synchronic state'?

Of course most linguists are fully aware of the empirical difficulties with
such a simplified view of language history. It is generally argued that the
synchrony/diachrony distinction is merely a methodological simplification,
just as Chomsky's ideal speaker-hearer in a homogenous speech community
(from which the salami-metaphor ultimately follows) is but a methodolog-
ically justifiable idealization, an abstraction that allows the investigator to
cut through much irrelevant detail and tackle the central issue of language
competence. It is nevertheless worth dwelling on some of the difficulties with
the salami-metaphor here, not the least because although most of them have
not been solved, a good deal of work in historical linguistics continues to op-
erate as though language history can be meaningfully viewed in this manner.
Let me begin with an example from syntax, taken from a recent detailed
and reliable documentation of a regional German dialect, Hetzlerisch, spo-
ken in a village in East Frankonia (Geyer 2003).[20] I am concerned here with

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[20]I am very grateful to Klaus Geyer for drawing this data to my attention and for
discussing the finer points of interpretation with me.

the variation in the expressions of Goal and Direction, here loosely termed Directionals.

In Standard German, Directionals are often expressed using a PP with a preposition such as *in* 'in(to)' or *auf* 'on, up', which govern (here) the Accusative case. In addition, a clause-final directional particle may also be used, although its presence is in part determined by semantic and dialectal factors. Examples for Standard German Directionals are the following:

(32)   *Sie geht in   die   Kirche (hinein)*
      she goes PREP ART:F:ACC church (DIREC)
      'She goes inside the church'

(33)   *Sie geht auf   den   Dachboden (hinauf)*
      she goes PREP ART:M:ACC attic   (DIREC)
      'She goes up to the attic'

We will refer to this as Construction A, and informally characterize it as in (34):

(34)   Construction A: VERB   PREP.+NP$_{ACC}$ (Directional Particle)

In Hetzlerisch, speakers of the older generation (60–70 years, let us refer to them as Generation 1), use a different construction (examples given in a standardized orthography, without the intonation contour):

(35)   *gee   amål   nauf dë   dil   ...*
      go:IMP one.time PREP ART:F:DAT attic
      'Just go up to the attic' (Geyer 2003:ex. 4–40)

Another example is the following (note that *in* is not a preposition here, but the masculine singular Dative article):

(36)   *më geed nai   in   himl*
      one goes PREP ART:M:DAT heaven
      'One goes into Heaven' (Geyer 2003:ex. 1–27)

The Directional construction regularly found in the speech of Generation 1 can be characterized as follows:

(37)   Construction B: VERB   PREP.(*nauf/nai*)+NP$_{DAT}$

The Construction B differs markedly from Construction A: The prepositions used are distinct, and require the Dative as opposed to the Accusative. Furthermore, in (37) no directional particle is possible.

Younger speakers of Hetzlerisch (30–40 years, the children of Generation 1, i. e. Generation 2) use Construction A:

(38) *di   bum   sen hald in/in   di   viëdschafd nai   …*
      the youths are just PREP/repetition ART:F:ACC pub   DIREC

'The youths just went into the pub' (Geyer 2003:ex. 9–9)

The correlation between the two construction types (34) and (37) and the two generations of speakers is highly significant. The figures given in Table 3.6 were supplied by Klaus Geyer (p.c.).[21] It will be noted, however, that

Table 3.6: Distribution of directional constructions across two generations in Hetzlerisch

	CONSTRUCTION	
	Constr. A (=34)	Constr. B (=37)
Generation 1	2	10
Generation 2	13	2

speakers of both generations **can** use either construction, i. e. the distribution is not exclusive; on occasion, speakers of either generation can use either construction.

Interpreting the current situation in Hetzlerisch is a relatively straightforward matter, because it is possible to directly observe the language patterns of the speech community, to conduct follow-up investigations, to discuss particular forms and usage *in situ* with native speakers, and to access the neighbouring dialects. Obviously conditions of this sort are the exception rather than the rule in historical linguistics. But the situation itself, that of a local dialect under pressure from a closely related, but more prestigious dialect, is hardly unusual for the languages of the world, and probably not unusual throughout the history of language. In other words, the type of variation and its (not perfectly neat) distribution across different generations, is probably a fairly typical example of variation in a natural speech community. Now turning to the constructions themselves, it seems unlikely that they are derivationally related, i. e. it makes little sense to attempt to derive one from

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[21]The figures do not include the non-interpretable examples of Directionals, for example those containing a place name or a pronoun (these do not have articles), or those where the Directional expresses a Path, but not a Goal.

the other via some type of rule, or to assume any common deep structure. Rather, they appear to be synonymous variants, choices available to speakers which they may deploy—albeit unconsciously—to assert and reinforce their social position relative to other persons in the speech community.

Let us assume for a moment that the Hetzlerisch described above has a written form which largely reflects the speech of the elder speakers. Hetzlerisch texts, then, would only contain Construction B, given in (37). Let us further assume that at some point in the future, in a hypothetical Future Hetzlerisch, Construction A, outlined in (34) and currently used by younger speakers, becomes the sole variant available in the speech community. Now suppose that we do not have access to the relevant socio-linguistic data, and that comparative data from neighbouring dialects is not available. A historical linguist attempting to analyse the diachronic syntax of Hetzlerisch would be obliged to base her analysis on the attested texts from Old Hetzlerisch, in which only the Construction B is found, and the evidence from the hypothetical Future Hetzlerisch, in which only Construction A is found. What could the linguist conclude from this? There are several conclusions that could be drawn, but the one that I suspect most would initially draw is that the Construction B had, in the course of time, 'changed into' Construction A. One might of course consider the possibility that the Construction A already existed at the time of the first Hetzlerisch texts and later came to oust Construction B (in this case, the correct conclusion), but in the absence of positive evidence for such a hypothesis, it would remain pure speculation.

I do not believe that such a state of affairs is far-fetched. In fact, I believe it is commonplace. The attested historical texts of a given language provide at best a narrow cross-section of the available variation in the speech-community, at worst it represents a highly marked, often extremely conservative and formulaic variant of the language, far removed from the contemporary vernacular (cf. the discussion on the Old Persian data at the beginning of Chapter 5). When texts from different historical stages are compared, the unspoken assumption is generally that the later texts represent in some sense a continuation of the earlier. Thus Hopper and Traugott (1993:2) refer to language change as "the set of changes linking a synchronic state of a language to successive states **of the same language**" (emphasis added).

But what is "the same language"? What historical linguists usually work with are, in an Indo-European context at least, texts, the choice and availability of which is dictated entirely by extra-linguistic factors. To believe that the selection of texts available at one point in time happens to reflect

the exact sub-set of variants also found in texts from a couple of centuries
earlier is in most cases an act of faith, and of convenience. From this it follows
that in many cases, the data will be insufficient to enable one to distinguish
the outcome of a metamorphic change in syntax from a replacive one, such
as that possibly underway in contemporary Hetzlerisch. As a consequence,
it is quite probable that many of the structural changes that are claimed to
have occurred need not be changes of structures, i. e. metamorphic changes,
but shifts in the distribution of variants (be they socially, regionally or oth-
erwise distributed). Unfortunately, the salami-metaphor, built into many
approaches to language change, works on the assumption of a sequence of
homogeneous language states, hence favouring metamorphic explanations
over replacive ones from the outset. The cumulative effect of our inability
to distinguish retrospectively between metamorphic and replacive changes
in syntax will be a tendency to **exaggerate the extent of metamorphic
change in the syntax of a given language**.

Of course one can object that it is simply unrealistic for historical lin-
guistics to even attempt to incorporate the full spectrum of social, regional
or other types of variation, and indeed the available data are in most cases
quite inadequate to reconstruct the whole picture. The salami-metaphor is
then simply the best compromise available, and provides a framework, how-
ever simplified, in which analyses can be formulated. After all, most work in
the various schools of generative grammar implicitly adopts the myth of the
homogeneous speech community, and there has been considerable progress
in linguistics working on this assumption. The salami-metaphor is merely
projecting this view into the diachronic dimension. However, I believe that
this assumption is fundamentally flawed. Generative grammarians working
on modern living languages rely heavily on native-speaker intuitions to un-
derpin their analyses; they do not generally rely on the evidence from texts.
Historical linguistics on the other hand is, at least in the Indo-European con-
text, basically a variety of corpus linguistics. Furthermore, the available texts
are mostly quite clearly from different varieties. The texts, then, are pure
'performance', sullied by the errors, inconsistencies and lapses which genera-
tive grammar has generally sought to bypass. It is questionable whether the
evidence gleaned from a corpus of highly heterogenous texts can meaning-
fully be analysed using the same assumptions and methodology applied to
the study of synchronic grammar, where primacy of evidence is afforded to

grammaticality judgements of native speakers.[22]

Note that the above position is not to be considered a wholesale endorsement of the views of Andersen (1989:12), who attempts to reduce all 'change' to competing variants, with one eventually replacing another. On this view "nothing strictly speaking changes into anything else". I believe that a subset of changes can in fact be reasonably described in terms of a metamorphic change, as most theories continue to do. The issue at hand is simply that such changes by no means exhaust the possibilities, and by excluding other types of change, either by discarding them as the result of 'external' factors, or simply ignoring the possibility of such processes, we may be severely distorting our view of syntactic change.

3.5 Summary

This chapter introduces a fundamental distinction between metamorphic changes and replacive changes. The paradigm example of metamorphic change is sound change. I suggest that there is a tendency to over-extend the notion of metamorphic change into morphology and syntax, while replacive change has been neglected. Replacive changes can be seen in morphology, for which some types of analogy can be considered examples, and is possibly still commoner in syntax. Replacive changes do not necessarily involve any changes in individual elements themselves, but involve changes in their meanings and distribution. The force behind replacive change in morphology is polysemy, just as it is in in the lexicon: polysemy means overlaps in distribution, which are the starting points of distributional (i.e. collocational) changes.

The whole issue of language change is rendered vastly more complex by the existence of intra-language variation. Intra-language variation is the normal state of affairs for natural languages, but reliance on an over-simplified 'salami-metaphor' of language history has led to its impact being strongly underestimated. Although in most cases we have insufficient evidence of the range of variation that existed at any given time, observation of existent languages leads to the conclusion that there will always have been considerably more variation than is attested in the preserved texts. Thus for any particular case of apparent change, the possibility that we are not dealing with a

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[22]On the methodological problems involved in interpreting grammaticality judgements see Schütze (1996).

metamorphic change, but rather with sideways shifts in the distribution of different variants—in effect, replacive changes—needs to be borne in mind. An important area where replacive changes can be fairly readily observed is in language contact. Indeed, one of the advantages of increased emphasis on replacive changes as opposed to metamorphic changes is that it permits language contact to be incorporated into a more general view of language change. Given the omnipresence of language contact and its undeniable effects on the development of languages, this is surely to be preferred to those approaches which would seek to distinguish between 'internal' and 'external' factors in language change. Finally, in connection with replacive change in general I briefly introduced the notion of constructional persistence. Genetically related languages are to a certain extent characterised by structures which may exhibit considerable chronological stability. Certain types of change can be interpreted as changes which preserve such language-specific structures by replacing their component parts with semantically-related elements from outside the original construction.

Chapter 4

The Northern Group

4.1 Introduction

In terms of number of speakers, the Northern Group is the largest group of Kurdish dialects. It comprises a reasonably homogenous bundle of dialects spoken in North Iraq, parts of Syria, Iran, Turkey, and the ex-Soviet Union, with the largest number of speakers being in Turkey. Many speakers have since left their ancestral homelands (estimates are as high as one third) for the large metropolitan centres of the Near East (Baghdad, Damascus, Tehran, Istanbul etc.) as well as Western Europe, in particular Germany. Accordingly, the sources of language data are extremely varied.[1]

Perhaps the most important isogloss within the Northern Group separates the dialects of North Iraq, here collectively termed Badīnānī, from the dialects of Turkey, Syria and the Caucasus. In referring to the latter I will occasionally make use of the term Kurmanji (also written Kurmanjî, Kurmanci, Kurmancî). It should be borne in mind that many authors use Kurmanji as a cover term for the entire Northern Group. However, I adopt the terminology of MacKenzie (1961a) in referring to the entire group as the Northern Group. As far as I can assess, there is full mutual intelligibility between Badīnānī and neighbouring Kurmanji dialects. Thus the dialect border is more of a continuum than a sharp break, although the political divisions that accompany it may have led to greater diversification. However, Badīnānī differs from the dialects of Turkey and the Caucasus in some rather subtle facts of

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[1]For a general overview of sources see Haig and Matras (2002); for recent discussion of the internet as a source of linguistic data see Haig (2002b).

its syntax, features that I believe are particularly relevant to an assessment of the development of ergativity in the Northern Group. For this reason I devote Chapter 6 to these aspects of Badīnānī syntax. This Chapter is based on what has provisionally been termed the *Hawar*-standard, as codified in Bedir Khan and Lescot (1970), a variety which reflects most closely the Kurmanji of southeastern Turkey around the areas of Cizir (Turkish Cizre) and Botan. While most written sources tend to orientate themselves towards the *Hawar*-norm, there are also a number of sources based on the spoken language, which show some interesting deviations from the *Hawar*-norm, and in keeping with the aims of this study, I will be drawing on a number of them here (for example Makas (1897–1926 [1979]), Le Coq (1903), Kahn (1976), Ritter (1971), Ritter (1976), Haig (Forthcoming b) and Haig Forthcoming a). In terms of alignment, the sources cited above actually show relatively little variation, although for reasons that will be discussed below, connected natural discourse contains comparatively little hard facts on case and agreement morphology in past transitive constructions. For the case system, the most dramatic changes have been recorded by Dorleijn (1996), which are discussed in Section 4.5.

The Northern Group has attracted most attention from syntacticians, probably because it exhibits what appears to be a fairly pure version of morphological ergativity in the past tenses, a mirror image of the accusativity of the present tenses. Furthermore, the syntax of the Northern Group is uncluttered by the pronominal clitics that render the syntax of the Central Group so complex (see Chapter 7 for details). Thus the Northern Group is an ideal place to begin an investigation of the non-accusative alignments in Kurdish.

4.2   Overview of the morphosyntax

In this section a brief overview of the most relevant aspects of the morphosyntax is given. Although there are a number of useful pedagogical and descriptive studies on the Northern Group, there is as yet no comprehensive treatment of the syntax. The following sketch draws on several of the available studies and on my own previous work.[2] Obviously no more than a

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[2] Descriptions of the grammar of the Northern Group can be found in, among others, Justi (1880), Kurdoev (1957), Bedir Khan and Lescot (1970) (available in German and Turkish translations), MacKenzie (1961a) and Blau (1975) (Badīnānī only) and Badıllı

simplified sketch can be provided here, based on the written standard and ignoring much regional variation.

The syntax of the Northern Group is neither consistently head-modifier, nor modifier-head. In the clause, it is generally predicate-final, although Indirect Objects and Goal arguments systematically follow the predicate, unless they are introduced by an adposition (but in Badīnānī, post-predicate PPs are quite frequent). In the noun phrase, the order of constituents is head-modifier, where modifiers can be attributive adjectives or possessors, but demonstratives and quantifiers precede the head. The morphology is weakly agglutinative, both prefixing and suffixing, with some fusional properties. Nouns, verbs and adjectives can be distinguished as major lexical classes on the basis of formal properties. The inflectional categories of the noun are case, gender and number. Those of the verb include mood, polarity (negative/affirmative), person and tense. Adjectives are non-inflecting.

4.2.1 Inflectional categories of the noun

4.2.1.1 Gender

Nouns have inherent gender, either masculine or feminine. When nouns denote entities that have a biological gender, grammatical gender is predictable from the biological gender, thus *ap* 'uncle', *bra* 'brother', or *law(ik)* 'boy, son' are all masculine, while *xuşk* 'sister' or *keç* 'girl' are feminine. With inanimates, gender assignment is not predictable.[3] The most interesting feature of gender is the existence of common gender. All words referring to humans and higher mammals, but which do not imply a particular biological sex, e. g. *hesp* 'horse' (either male or female), *zarok* 'child' or *heval* 'friend' (male or female), can be inflected as either masculine or feminine, depending on the meaning intended in a specific context.[4] When a generic meaning is implied,

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(1992). Overview articles can be found in Haig and Matras (2002) and Haig and Paul (2001). Pedagogical studies include Blau and Barak (1999), Wurzel (1997) and Rizgar (1996).

[3]There are some morphological regularities; derived (abstract) nouns in *-î* are always feminine, as are the infinitives of verbs. Some semantic tendencies have been observed, and are often repeated in pedagogical works, but in general, they do not advance beyond a heterogenous list of categories appended with a longer list of exceptions.

[4]A very similar system is reported for Chechen, where gender assignment for nouns is normally fixed, but the gender "of any noun referring to a human is fluid if it can be used to refer to either sex." (Nichols 1992:130)

the default gender appears to be masculine (see Haig (2004) for details). I interpret these nouns as being underspecified for gender. Gender is not visible on bare nouns, but manifests itself in the form of the Izafe partikel (see Table 4.5) and in the case endings (Table 4.1). Gender is thus closely linked to case in Kurdish.

4.2.1.2 Definiteness

There is a two-way distinction in the nominal morphology between indefinite singular, and definite singular/generic, with the former being marked via a suffix *-(e)k* (both genders). Thus definite nouns are formally unmarked, and only context distinguishes them from the generic use: *gundî* 'the (contextually recoverable) villager', or 'villagers as a class'. In the plural, there is an ending *-in* occasionally used to indicate indefinite plural, but in most contexts the definite/indefinite distinction is not drawn in the plural. In some dialects there is a tendency to extend the use of the demonstratives beyond a deictic function towards a more general definite article function.

4.2.1.3 Number and case

The Northern Group distinguishes plural and singular, and has a two-term case system, Direct (unmarked) and Oblique. In the Direct case, nouns and demonstratives do not have a distinct plural form, thus *ew* (Demonstrative) can mean 'that' or 'those', depending on the context. In the Oblique case, however, all nouns have a uniform plural form shown in Table 4.1.

As far as use of the cases are concerned, the Oblique case is used for:

> the complements of adpositions
> possessive modifiers in Izafe constructions
> post-predicate Goal arguments or Indirect Objects
> temporal adverbial expressions
> O of a present tense verb
> A of a past tense verb

The Direct case is used elsewhere. The forms of the cases depend on both the gender and number of the noun concerned, and on the presence or absence of a determiner (either a demonstrative, or 'each', or an indefiniteness suffix *-(e)k*). Case marking for all feminine singular, all plural, and all determined nouns is stable across the Northern Group, with only minor phonological

variation (e. g. the deletion of the final *-n* of the plural Oblique). For mascu-line nouns with no determiner, however, there is significant regional variation in the forms used. Three main patterns are found:

1. Suffix *-î*: *hesp-î* 'horse-OBL'

2. Raising of stem vowel (Umlaut): *hêsp*

3. No overt signal of case: *hesp*

The distribution of the three patterns corresponds roughly to a geographical South-North cline: the dialects of North Iraq (Badīnānī) have variant 1, the dialects of southeastern Turkey have variant 2, while the dialects of the North, e. g. that of the Erzurum district, have the 3 variant. Stem-vowel raising only affects the short vowels rendered orthographically here as <a> and <e>. In dialects with stem-vowel raising, masculine nouns that do not contain such a vowel, and are not accompanied by a determiner, thus have a single invariant form in the Direct and Oblique (e. g. *gund* 'village', DIR and OBL). In fact, many dialects have a mix of the three variants. In particular, I am unaware of any dialect which consistently applies variant 2 (Umlaut) to **all** the relevant masculine nouns. Instead, there tend to be different groups of nouns associated with the Umlaut pattern in different dialects. Table 4.1 sums up the facts so far.

Table 4.1: Case morphology in the Northern Group

		Masc.	**Fem.**	**Pl.**
No determiner	**Dir.**	-∅	-∅	-∅
	Obl.	-î; -∅; Umlaut	-ê	-a(n)
After Indef. Suffix *-ek*	**Dir.**	-∅	-∅	-∅
	Obl.	-î	-ê / -î	–
With Dem. or Interrog.	**Dir.**	-∅	-∅	-∅
	Obl.	-î	-ê	-a(n)

Semantic cases (Instrumental, Goal, Source, Comitative etc.) are ex-pressed through a variety of adpositions. There is a basic set of preposi-tions common to all the dialects of the Northern Group: *ji* 'from', *li* 'in', *bi*

'through, with'. They are often combined with post-NP particles to produce additional meanings, giving rise to what are traditionally termed circumpositions, for example *ji* NP *re/ra* 'to'.[5] In the examples, both elements of the circumposition are glossed simply ADP. There is considerable areal variation here, again with a North-South cline. The dialects of the South use more prepositions. For example, the common form for 'to, for' in Badīnānī is the preposition *bō*. In dialects of Southeast Turkey, on which Standard Kurmanji is largely based, circumpositions are used: Standard Kurmanji *ji te re/ra* 'to, for you'. In colloquial speech, this form is often phonologically reduced to [ʃtera], through assimilation of the preposition to the noun/pronoun (ʒə+te > ʒte > ʃte). Finally, in some dialects of the North and West of the Northern Group we find simply *te ra* 'to, for you'.[6] In some earlier sources (Soane 1913), *-ra* is described as a case suffix, as it still is by some Soviet Kurdologists.

The personal pronouns of the first and second person have suppletive forms for Direct and Oblique. There is some dialectal variation in the forms of the personal pronouns, in particular the second and third persons (the latter essentially demonstratives), but it is irrelevant for the present purposes. Only the most important variants are given in Table 4.2 below.

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[5]Obviously a further grammaticalisation of the form noted for Early Judaeo-Persian *az . . . rā* 'on behalf of, concerning' (Paul 2002b:185).

[6]Regularly found in, for example, the texts in Džalil and Džalil (1978a) and Džalil and Džalil (1978b). See Haig (Forthcoming b) for discussion of the Tunceli dialect, where the postposed form is regularly used. Bossong (1985:115, fn.109) suggests that the diachronic trend throughout Iranian is a drift towards suffixation in expressions of case relations; a development in the opposite direction is, according to Bossong, not attested.

Table 4.2: Pronouns in the Northern Group

		Sing.	Pl.
1. pers.	**Dir.**	*az*	*em*
	Obl.	*min*	*me*
2. pers.	**Dir.**	*tu, to, tı*	*hûn, hing*
	Obl.	*te*	*(hi)nga, we*
3. pers.	**Dir.**	*ew*	*ew*
	Obl.	*wî*(masc.),*wê*(fem.)	*(e)wan*

4.2.2 Inflectional categories of the verb

Finite verbs inflect obligatorily for tense and person. Tense is primarily expressed through the basic present/past opposition of the two stems. Table 4.3 gives the stems for some of the most frequent verbs in the Northern Group. It will be seen that there is no straightforward rule for deriving one stem from the other, at least with these highly frequent verbs. Verbs obligatorily agree with one argument (there are no clitic pronouns in the Northern Group) by a suffix on the verb stem. The corresponding person agreement suffixes are given in Table 4.4. In addition, verbs may take one of several prefixes expressing Mood, Aspect and Negation. In general, only one of these prefixes is permitted with the present stem, while the past stem supports, for example, the combination of Negation and Progressive prefixes. The commonest prefixes are given below, with a very much simplified description of the semantics:

Progressive: *di-* (with the present stem, the meaning is 'Indicative')

Negation: *na-* (with the past Indicative, and present Irrealis: *ne-*)

Irrealis: *bi-* (used to express conditionals, future time, imperatives, i. e. all manner of propositions whose actual implementation the speaker is uncertain of)

In addition to these prefixes, there is an intriguing clitic particle, *(w/d)ê* which, in conjunction with an Irrealis form of the verb, indicates future time reference. I say 'intriguing' because this particle does not occur on the verb

Table 4.3: Common verbs in the Northern Group

Past stem	Present stem	Meaning
bû-	*b-, ∅*	'be, become'
kir-	*k-*	'do, make'
got-	*bêj-*	'say'
da-	*d-*	'give'
çû-	*ç-, -her-*	'go' (cf. Table 3.2)
hat-	*-ê-, wer-*	'come'
dît-	*bîn-*	'see'
ke(w)t-	*kev-*	'fall'
mir-	*mir-*	'die'
kuşt-	*kuj-*	'kill'
girt-	*gir-*	'take, hold, get'
xwar-	*xw-*	'eat'
avêt-	*avêj-*	'throw'

itself, but generally clause initially. Standard treatments of Kurdish grammar say it affixes to "the subject" (Wurzel 1997:79). Although this is correct for the majority of instances, it fails to account for a number of examples, such as the following:

(39) *Sibehê*   ***wê*** *hakim ser-ê*   *min*   *jê*   *bi-k-e*
      in.the.morning FUT Prince head-IZM 1S:OBL from.it IRR-do:PRES-3S

      'In the morning the Prince will cut off (lit. make from-it) my head' (Lescot 1940:4)

(40) *"kiye?"*   ***dê*** *bêj-e*   *di-ya*   *min*
      "who is it?" FUT say:IRR:PRES-2S mother-IZF 1S:OBL

      ' "Who is it?" my mother would say ...' (Cewerî 1986:62–63)

Thus the Future particle does not always attach to the subject. A more insightful description is that the Future particle is generally a second-position clitic, which in many cases means that it will immediately follow the subject. But when, as in the above examples, the subject is displaced from clause initial position, the clitic does not follow it. Its position is determined by the prosody of the entire clause, rather than being linked to the subject.

Table 4.4: Verbal agreement suffixes in the Northern Group

		Pres.	**Simple Past**
Sg.	1	*im*	*-im*
	2	*-ī*; Imperative: -e/-∅	*-ī*
	3	*-e(t)*	*-∅*
Pl.	1	*-īn/-in*	*-īn/-in*
	2	*-in*	*-in*
	3	*-in*	*-in*

4.2.3 The Izafe construction

Like most West Iranian languages, Kurdish languages are characterised by a particular type of complex NP, referred to here as the Izafe construction. The defining feature of the Izafe construction is a vocalic particle linking the head noun to a modifier which follows that noun. The Izafe particle itself goes back to an Old Iranian relative particle, and in the Badīnānī dialect of the Northern Group, the Izafe particle still introduces what are, in effect, relative clauses (see MacKenzie (1961b:80), and Chapter 6). In the dialects further to the North, however, the Izafe particle has becoming increasingly 'suffix-like'. In fact, most standard treatments of the Northern Group discuss the Izafe particle under the morphology of the noun. However, I believe this is mistaken, mainly because a noun may be followed by more than one Izafe, in which case each modifier is preceded by an Izafe-particle:

(41)   *Bi*   *şeş hejmar-**ên** Hawar-ê*   ***ên** pêşîn*
      through six number-IZP Hawar-OBL IZP last

      'Over the last six numbers of (the journal) *Hawar*' (Hawar Vol. 1:263)

In this example, both the genitive attribute *Hawar-ê*, and the adjectival modifier *peşîn* are preceded by the plural Izafe particle. If the modifier preceded by the Izafe is a noun or pronoun, it will take the Oblique case, as in *Hawar-ê*.

Most authors draw a terminological distinction between the first and the second Izafes in examples such as (41), e.g. Blau and Barak (1999:37), who refer to the second instance of Izafe as "l'Izafe tonique". However, functionally, and phonologically, the two are so similar as to make the distinction

largely superfluous. Furthermore, the Izafe can actually precede a modifier without any overt head noun, giving the sense of 'the one ...': *ya min* 'that of me', '(the one) which is mine'. For the purposes of this study I assume a single Izafe particle, rather than treating one as a suffix of the noun, and inventing alternative labels for the others. The Izafe is an element of a particular construction, rather than being part of the morphology of the noun.[7] In the Northern Group (unlike the Central Group), the Izafe particle has variant forms depending on the gender, number and definiteness of the head noun. Table 4.5 gives the relevant forms in the *Hawar*-norm, while examples of Izafe constructions are provided below.

Table 4.5: The Izafe particle in the Northern Group

	Masc.	**Fem.**	**Pl.**
Bare noun	-(y)ê	-(y)a	-(y)ê(n)
After Indef. Suffix -ek	-î	-e	–

(42) *pere   xulam-ek-î   qenc e,   lê   axa-k-î*
money servant-INDEF-IZM fine   COP:PRES:3S but master-INDEF-IZM
xirab e
poor COP:PRES:3S
'Money is a fine servant, but a poor master' (Hawar Vol. 2:1050)

(43) *şev-a   tarî de evar-ê   de kifş   e*
night-IZF dark ADP evening-OBL ADP evident COP:PRES:3S
'The dark night is evident in the evening' (Hawar Vol. 2:1050)

(44) *Mamoste-yên ko   giş tirk bû-n*
teacher-IZP   COMP all Turk COP:PST-PL
'The teachers, who were all Turks ...' (Hawar Vol. 2:748)

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[7]It can in fact be viewed as the head of that construction, projecting to a specific type of phrase, the Izafe Phrase. The arguments in favour of such an analysis are: the Izafe is the locus for the expression of gender and number; it permits a unified account of Izafes with and without an immediately preceding head noun; it is congruent with the historical origins of the Izafe as a complementizer, arguably also the head of its phrase. However, I will not pursue the implications of this analysis here.

(45) *min   ji   di-ya   xwe   re   got*
     1S:OBL ADP mother-IZF REFL ADP say:PST:3S
     'I said to my mother' (Hawar Vol. 2:854)

(46) *kûçik del-a   xwe   kir   nav   ling-ê xwe*
     dog   tail-IZF REFL do:PST:3S between leg-IZP REFL
     'The dog put its tail between its legs' (Hawar Vol. 2:855)

A crucial aspect of the Izafe construction is that case distinctions are neu-
tralised on any noun qualified by an Izafe-phrase. Thus a noun followed by
an Izafe particle is always in the Direct case, regardless of the function of
the entire NP in the clause. It has been argued (e.g. Schroeder 1999) that
the constraint on expressing both the Izafe particle and case on a noun is
due to a low-level constraint on suffix-stacking. In other words, the presence
of an Izafe particle precludes a case marker, presumably because there is a
restriction on the number of suffixes a noun can carry. However, apart from
the fact that the Izafe is best seen not as part of nominal morphology, this
account fails to explain why the expression of case is not possible even on
those nouns where case is not expressed through suffixes, but through Um-
laut (recall the discussion in connection with Table 4.5). For example, in
Standard Kurmanji, the word *şivan* 'shepherd' has the Oblique form *şivên*,
with raising of the final vowel. Now consider the following forms of this word:

> *şivan-ê me* 'our shepherd' (Direct+Izafe)
> *cem şivên* 'to the shepherd' (Oblique)
> *cem şivan-ê me* 'to our shepherd' (Oblique+Izafe)

For the last of these three forms, the 'slot competition' account leads us
to expect **şivên-ê me*, with simultaneous expression of both Oblique case
and the Izafe particle. But this is not a grammatical form in the Northern
Group. Thus the constraint on expressing case inside an Izafe construction
cannot be attributed to mere phonological incompatibility. It must operate
at a more fundamental level of the grammar, although to my knowledge, a
satisfactory account has yet to be put forward. Note that in another closely
related language, Zazaki, Izafe constructions do vary in form according to
their external case relations (Paul 1998b). One might wish to interpret the
lack of case/Izafe interaction as a step away from fusional to agglutinative
case marking—see Chapter 8 for further discussion.

One very important consequence of the invariant forms of Izafe constru-cions is **to lower the functionality of case marking** in distinguishing arguments. In transitive clauses where both A and O are Izafe construc-tions, only word order distinguishes A from O (likewise, the tense of the verb has no effect on case marking in such clauses):

(47) a. *bav-ê   min   di-ya   min   na-bîn-e*
          father-IZM 1S:OBL mother-IZF 1S:OBL NEG-see:PRES-3S

          'My father (can't) find/see my mother'

      b. *di-ya   min   bav-ê   min   na-bîn-e*
          mother-IZF 1S:OBL father-IZM 1S:OBL NEG-see:PRES-3S

          'My mother (can't) find/see my father' (constructed example)

4.3 The canonical ergative construction

Throughout the present tense, and with all intransitive verbs, alignment is accusative. Both S and A are in the Direct case, the verb agrees with them in person and number, while O is in the Oblique and does not affect agreement on the verb. The facts are uncontroversial; in the interests of brevity, constructed examples are given. The examples could have been given using full NPs rather than personal pronouns, but with personal pronouns, the case and agreement morphology is clearer (for a fuller account see e.g. Haig (1998)):

(48) **Present intransitive**

      ez kurd-im
      1S Kurd-COP:PRES:1S

      'I am Kurdish.'

(49) **Present intransitive**

      tu kurd-î
      2S Kurd-COP:PRES:2S

      'You are Kurdish.'

(50) **Present transitive**

      ez te   di-bîn-im
      1S 2S:OBL IND-see:PRES-1S

'I see you.'

(51) **Present transitive**

tu min   di-bîn-î
2S 1S:OBL IND-see:PRES-2S

'You see me.'

In past transitive constructions, however, a reversal of case and agreement patterns is found. The A is in the Oblique, the O is in the Direct, and the verb agrees with the O. The following examples give the past tense clauses corresponding to (50) and (51) respectively:

(52) **Past transitive**

min   tu dît-î
1S:OBL 2S see:PST-**2s**

'I saw you.'

(53) **Past transitive**

te   ez dît-im
2S:OBL 1S see:PST-**1s**

'You saw me.'

Because A and O vary in their morphology according to the tense of the verb, it is useful to draw a terminological distinction between the A of a present tense verb form and that of a past tense verb form, and a corresponding distinction for O. In what follows, I will refer to A_{PRES}, O_{PRES}, A_{PAST} and O_{PAST} where the distinction is relevant. Theoretically, one could also distinguish between an S_{PRES} and an S_{PAST}. However, alignment in past intransitive constructions remains identical to alignment in the present, so we are justified in maintaining a single S category:

(54) **Past intransitive**

ez zarok bû-m
1S child COP:PST-1S

'I was (a) child.'

For the purposes of this study, I will refer to constructions such as (52) as **canonical ergative constructions**. Canonical ergative constructions are characterised by the following three features:

1. The A_{PAST} is in the Oblique case

2. The O_{PAST} is in the Direct case

3. The verb agrees with the O_{PAST}

The canonical ergative construction is then, in terms of case marking and agreement, the mirror image of the accusative construction illustrated above.

4.3.1   The syntactic subject

In our discussion of alignment so far, only properties which involve overt morphological expression have been considered: case and agreement. If we were to define grammatical relations solely in these terms, we would be obliged to conclude that a transitive construction in the present tense had a different subject to the corresponding clause in the past tense. Thus in the examples repeated from above, in the present tense the A_{PRES} would be subject on the grounds of agreement and case, while in the past tense, the O_{PAST} would be subject:

(55) ***ez*** *te*   *di-bîn-**im***
      1S 2S:OBL IND-see:PRES-1S

      'I see you.'

(56) *min*   ***tu*** *dît-**î***
      1S:OBL 2S see:PST-**2S**

      'I saw you.'

However, in some languages there also exists a level of grammatical organisation which is not (necessarily) signalled by segmental morphology, but which nevertheless permits us to establish grammatical relations. Closer examination of Kurdish syntax reveals that A_{PRES} and A_{PAST}, despite having different morphological marking, have a number of properties in common. Furthermore, these properties are also shared by the S. Thus on the basis of these properties it appears that the Northern Group has a bundle of properties that link S with A (past and present), to the exclusion of O. It is the existence of these properties that permits us to define a relationship

of 'subject' in the Northern Group. In the terminology of Dixon (1994), a
subject relationship established largely on syntactic criteria is a 'pivot', but
I will continue to use the term 'subject', or 'syntactic subject' here in the
sense of Dixon's 'pivot'. Syntactic criteria for establishing subjecthood have
been discussed at length in many works (for recent discussion see for example
Van Valin 2001:40–59). Here I will be briefly discussing a sub-set of those
criteria, concentrating on those with direct applicability to Kurdish of the
Northern Group.

4.3.1.1   Constituent order

In all tenses, the unmarked order of constituents is SV, or AOV, regardless
of the tense of the verb. To the extent that constituent order is relevant
for defining grammatical relations, then, it appears that we can identify the
clause-initial position with the grammatical relation of subject. There is
some flexibility in word order, with fronting of an O being possible, as in:

(57) **Ev erd** *hukumet-ê*   *da-ye*   *me*
      this land government-OBL give:PST-PERF:3S 1PL:OBL

      '**This land** the government gave to us' (Cewerî 1986:13)

A post-predicate (afterthought) position of an A is also possible. But there
does not appear to be any significant difference in the types of word order
pattern found with an A_{PAST} and an A_{PRES}. Clause-initial position can
therefore be considered a weak diagnostic for subjecthood (weak, because it
can be violated), and it appears to unite A_{PAST} with S and A_{PRES}.

4.3.1.2   Control of corefential deletion

Kurdish has practically no non-finite syntax. Texts consist of a loose sequence
of finite clauses, often with no formal indication of the relationships that hold
across clauses. There is therefore no comparable structural counterpart to
English constructions with raising verbs such as *seem*, or control verbs such
as *begin, promise, be able* etc. The Kurdish equivalent of the latter involves
two finite clauses, the second being in the subjunctive mood (glossed IRR):

(58) *kes-ek*   *ni-kar-e*   *şer-ê* *wê* *bi-k-e*
      person-INDEF NEG-be.able:PRES-3S war-IZM 3S:OBL IRR-do:PRES-3S

      'No one is able to defeat her' (lit. ... (that he) might do war of her)
      (Lescot 1940:40)

Notably, in such constructions, the subject pronoun is usually omitted in the
second clause. With verbs such as 'want', pronoun deletion might be used
as a subject diagnostic, differentiating between a construction *I want [to go]*
from one like *I want [you to go]*. In fact, when the subject of the second
clause is coreferential with that of the first, pronoun deletion is usually the
pattern found:

(59)   *ez di-xwaz-im   bi sal-an   bi   te re   bi-jî-m*
       1S IND-want:PRES-1S for year-PL:OBL ADP 2S ADP IRR-live:PRES-1S

       'I want/have wanted for years to live with you' (Aydogan Undated)

In this example, the two clauses share a subject, thus it is deleted in the
second clause. In the following example, the subject of the second clause is
different to that of the first, hence there are overt pronouns in both clauses:

(60)   *tu di-xwaz-î   ez=ê   jî   qal   bi-k-im*
       2S IND-want:PRES-2S 1S=FUT too speech IRR-do:PRES-1S

       'You want me to talk (about it) too' (Bozarslan Undated)

However, while coreferent pronoun deletion with *xwastin* 'want' is undoubt-
edly the rule in the present tense, in the past tenses, a complication arises.
The verb *xwastin* 'want' (with the regional variant *xwestin*) is lexically tran-
sitive, hence it requires an Oblique subject in the past tenses. The clause
dependent on *xwastin*, however, is always in the subjunctive mood, and the
subjunctive mood is (generally) based on the present tense of the verb. Thus
we have a conflict of tenses when *xwastin* is in the past tense. In such cases,
even under referential identity, the **form** of the pronouns would be different
(the first Oblique, the second Direct). And here, the tendency is for the
second pronoun to be retained, as in (glosses adapted):

(61)   **min**   *di-xwest*   **ez** *her-im*   *mal-ê*
       1S:OBL PROG-want:PST(3S) 1S go:IRR:PRES-1S home-OBL

       'I was wanting to go home' (Matras 1997:627)

(62)   **min**   *xwest*   **ez** *otomobîl-a xwe   bi-firoş-im*
       1S:OBL want:PST(3S) 1S car-IZF   REFL IRR-sell:PRES-1S

       'I wanted to sell my car' (Cewerî 2001)

However, pronoun retention in the second clause is not a rigid rule. Examples
with pronoun deletion are the following (glosses adapted):

(63) **min** *di-xwest* ∅ *av* *vexw-im*
1S:OBL PROG-want:PST(3S) ∅ water drink:IRR:PRES-1S

'I was wanting to drink water' (Matras 1997:627)

(64) **min** *ne-di-zanî* ∅ *nav-ê* *xwe* *bi-nivîs-im*
1S:OBL NEG-PROG-know:PST(3S) ∅ name-IZM REFL IRR-write:PRES-1S

'I did not know how to write my name' (Şemo 1977:23)

Matras (1997) investigates pronoun retention in such constructions and reveals an exceedingly complex interplay of different factors determining the deletion or retention of the pronoun. For example the transitivity of the second verb, the presence or absence of an overt complementizer (*ku*), the control semantics of the matrix verb.[8] Perhaps the most important factor, however, is grammatical person: with third person singular subjects, pronoun deletion appears to be the rule across all tenses, when the matrix and dependent verbs are semantically tightly integrated, as in *destpêkirin* 'begin' and *xwastin* 'want'; when the two clauses are semantically more loosely connected (e. g. with *zanîn* 'know'), this does not necessarily hold. Consider the following examples:

(65) **wî**$_i$ *di-xwest* ∅$_i$ *mekîna-k-ê* *bi-kirr-e*
3S:OBL PROG-want:PST(3S) ∅ car-INDEF-OBL IRR-buy:PRES-3S

'He wanted to buy a car' (Matras 1997:629)

(66) **wî**$_i$ *di-xwest* ∅$_i$ *her-e* *mal-ê*
3S:OBL PROG-want:PST(3S) ∅ go:IRR:PRES-1S home-OBL

'He wanted to go home' (Matras 1997:629)

(67) **keçik-ê**$_i$ *ne-kar-î* ∅$_i$ *ew ragir-e*
girl:OBL NEG-be.able:PST(3S) ∅ 3S lift.up:PRES:IRR-3S

'The girl was unable to lift him up' (Bozarslan Undated:6o)

There are two reasons for the greater propensity to omit third person singular pronouns. First, as Matras (1997) notes, the Oblique and the Direct forms in the third person singular have, in some spoken varieties, merged. Thus there is no clash of form. I believe that the more important factor, however,

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[8]Matras suggests that pronoun deletion is more likely when both verbs have the same transitivity, but I have been unable to confirm this effect. This requires a more extensive and systematic investigation.

is that with a third person subject, the agreement markers on the first and
second verbs are congruent. Agreement on the verb *xwastin* is generally zero,
i. e. third person singular (arguably, the verb 'agrees' with the second clause,
or it has default third person zero agreement). Likewise, the present tense
verb that follows has third person singular agreement. There is good evidence
from other parts of the grammar (see Section 4.6) that sequences of same-
subject verbs are preferred when their agreement patterns are congruent.
If not, then an overt pronoun is required, as in the first person examples
discussed above .

In sum, coreferential deletion clearly is determined by an S or an A, but
the facts are rendered a little more complex by the constraints on deleting
pronouns that do not have the same case form as their antecedents. Of
course this is a very general trait, observable for example in expressions such
as German *mit mir oder ohne mich* 'with me or without me'. In English,
this can be reduced to *with (me) or without me*, with deletion of one of
the coordinate pronouns. But in German, because the two pronouns have a
distinct form (*mir* vs. *mich*), deletion of a pronoun is less readily acceptable.
This is then a more general, and possibly universal, trait of the grammar
which happens in Kurdish to affect patterns of coreferential pronoun deletion.
It should not, however, be considered as strong evidence against the subject
relation. And in any case, there is no evidence from Kurdish that an O
argument can control coreferential deletion (Matras 1997). Thus Kurdish
can be said to have a (weak) linking of S and A for coreferential deletion,
both with 'want' and 'begin' types of predicate, as well as in looser types
of coordinate clauses (indeed, it probably makes more sense to consider the
former merely a sub-group of clause coordination).

4.3.1.3   Control of reflexives

Another criterion for establishing the grammatical relation of subject is con-
trol of reflexive pronouns. For Kurdish, at least of the Northern Group, this
turns out to be by far the most robust indication of syntactic subjecthood.
The facts are as follows. In addition to the personal pronouns given in Table
4.2, there is also a non-inflecting reflexive pronoun *xwe / xwa / xô*. Like the
other personal pronouns, it can be used both as an NP, an argument of a
verb. Or it can be used as the modifier in an Izafe-construction, where it ex-
presses the possessor. The rules for using the reflexive pronoun rather than
a personal pronoun can only be stated with reference to the grammatical

relation of 'subject'. The rule is stated informally in (68):

(68) Use *xwe* instead of a personal pronoun when the intended reference of *xwe* is identical to the syntactic subject of the first verb dominating *xwe*

As with other diagnostics for the syntactic subject, the rules governing the reference of *xwe* apply in all tenses, hence are impervious to the case form of the syntactic subject. Consider (45), repeated here for convenience. Because the possessor of *diya* is coreferent with the syntactic subject *min*, it is only possible to use *xwe*:

(45) *min   ji   di-ya   **xwe** re   got*
      1S:OBL ADP mother-IZF REFL ADP say:PST:3S

      'I said to my mother'

If this clause were to be transposed into the present tense, thereby causing a change in the case form of the subject (from *min* to *ez*), it would not affect the rule requiring *xwe* as the possessor:

(69) *ez ji   di-ya   **xwe** re   di-bêj-im*
      1S ADP mother-IZF REFL ADP say:PRES:1S-1S

      'I say to my mother'

In both of these clauses, the use of the personal pronoun *min* as a possessor (*diya min* 'my mother') would be ungrammatical.

Xwe can occur as possessor in an Izafe construction, as in the above examples, or in argument function, as in the following example, this time from Badīnānī:

(70) *čo   darva w   **xô** hāvēta t   bīrē-da*
      went outside and REFL threw PREP well-LOC

      '(She$_i$) went outside and threw **herself**$_i$ into the well.' (MacKenzie 1962:314)

However, the rule requiring coreference with the synactic subject precludes *xwe* occurring in subject function itself (but see below).

The domain within which the reference of *xwe* is defined is strictly local, namely the immediately dominating predicate. In the following example a main verb *xwastin* 'want, request' is followed by a subordinate clause with a different subject. The constraints on the reference of *xwe* do not carry over from the main to the subordinate clause:

(71) *min*ᵢ *jê*   *xwast*   *ku*   *wer-e*   *mal-a*
      1s:OBL from.him want:PST(2s) COMP come:IRR:PRES-3s house-IZF
      min   / **xwe*
      1s:OBL / *REFL

      'I asked him to come to **my** house' (Abdullah Incekan, p.c.)

The only way of rendering the intended meaning is to use the personal pro-
noun *min* as the possessor of *mal*. If *xwe* were used here, it would be in-
terpreted as coreferential with the subject of the immediately dominating
verb, here *were*, yielding 'to his house'. The strictness with which these rules
are observed is considerable, and has been underestimated even by experi-
enced researchers. The following example is from the text collection in Lescot
(1940):

(72) *Carkê bav-ê*ᵢ   *wê*   *nerî*   *go*   *kîz-a*
      When father-IZM DEM:OBL(fem.) see:PST COMP girl-IZF
      wîᵢ   *hat*
      DEM:OBL(masc.) come:PST

      'When her father*ᵢ* saw that **his***ᵢ* daughter had arrived ...' (Lescot
      1940:8)

In the notes accompanying the text, Lescot (1940:246) corrects the use of
the possessive expression *kîza wî*, stating "Il faudrait: *kîza xwe*". But he
is mistaken; the text is fully correct as it stands. The possessor must be
the third person, rather than the reflexive, because it is part of the subject
NP. As mentioned, the domain is the immediately dominating verb, in this
case the verb *hat* 'come', of which *kîza wî* is the subject. Lescot apparenty
believes that because this verb is subordinate to the first verb *nerî* (semanti-
cally at least it is, and in the French translation the two are linked to a single
clause), then it is the first verb that determines the reference of pronouns in
both clauses. But this is not the case; the relevant domain is the immedi-
ately dominant verb. Control of reflexives cannot cross clause boundaries in
Kurdish.

     Note finally that it is grammatical relations, rather than linear prece-
dence, which determines the reference of *xwe*. Even if the pronominal el-
ement occurs **before** the subject, if the coreference condition is met, then
xwe is still required, giving rise to instances of backward control such as the
following:

(73) *Di biçûki-ya* **xwe**$_i$ *da* **min**$_i$ *ji çîrok-an hez*
ADP childhood-IZF REFL ADP 1S:OBL PREP story-OBL:PL liking
di-kir
PROG-do:PST(3s)

'In **my** (=self's) childhood **I** was fond of stories' (Blau and Barak 1999:160)

There is one area of uncertainty in the usage of *xwe*.[9] When the subject NP consists of parallel NPs, the first may treated as a 'subject' for the purposes of control of *xwe*:

(74) *Divê ez û bira-yê xwe bi-zewic-in*
it.is.necessary 1S and brother-IZM REFL IRR-marry:PRES-3PL

'My brother and I will have to marry' (lit. It is necessary I and brother-of-self marry) (Zinar 1988:102)

However, it is also possible to find the personal pronoun used instead of *xwe* in such contexts. There is also a tendency in the western dialects to overgeneralise *xwe* to include coreference with a topic, rather than a subject. A typical example is the following (transcription adapted):

(75) *Şêx Mus axa-yê eşîret-ek-î bû, pismam-ê* **xwe**
Sheikh Mus Agha-IZM tribe-INDEF-OBL COP:PST(3s), cousin-IZM REFL
... baqil bû
... intelligent COP:PST(3s)

'Sheikh Mus was the Agha of a tribe, **his** nephew [...] was (very) intelligent' (Le Coq 1903:3)

Here *xwe* refers back to the subject of the preceding clause, Sheikh Mus. The dialects of Southeast Turkey and Iraq would not use *xwe* in this context, but the Oblique personal pronoun *wî*, in accordance with the rule (68).

4.3.1.4 The passive

Voice is crucial in defining grammatical relations because voice processes involve a shift in the mapping of gramatical relations to semantic roles. Indeed,

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[9]See Bedir Khan and Lescot (1970:110–114) for the most useful discussion of variations on the usage of *xwe*. Dorleijn (1996:56) found the use of *xwe* in her data conformed to the general rule outlined above.

in some theories, the presence of a passive voice is taken as criterial for the existence of a grammatical relation of 'subject' (Siewierska and Bakker 2004). In the Northern Group, there is a reasonably productive passive, though restricted to transitive verbs, based on the intransitive verb *hatin* 'come' coupled with the infinitive. The passive involves the following processes: The syntactic subject is deleted,[10] and the O advances to the subject of the passive construction. Examples are the following (data based on examples in Rizgar (1996:222), slightly modified):

(76) **Active, present**

> *em   vê   av-ê   ve-di-xw-in*
> 1PL DEM:OBL water-OBL PREV-IND-eat:PRES-1PL

> 'We (can) drink this water'

(77) **Passive, present**

> *ev   av   t-ê   ve-xwar-in*
> DEM water IND-come:PRES(3S) PREV-eat-INF

> 'This water is drunk (i. e. is drinkable)'

Precisely the same processes applies to past tense verb forms. The different morphology of A and O in the past tense is irrelevant for the application of the passive:

(78) **Active, past**

> *me   ev   av   vexwar*
> 1PL:OBL DEM water drink:PST(3S)

> 'We drank this water'

(79) **Passive, past**

> *ev   av   hat   vexwar-in*
> DEM water IND-come:PST(3S) drink-INF

> 'This water was drunk (i. e. was drinkable)'

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[10]In the emergent language of the press, agented passives are possible, using a variety of adpositions to code the agent phrase, but they are restricted to the formal written form and need not concern us here.

The passive in the Northern Group manipulates the grammatical relation of subject, and is insensitive to the morphology. It is thus further evidence for the existence of a grammatical relation of subject in the Northern Group.

The passive construction is an extension of an initially restricted construction with the verb for 'come' and a deverbal noun. Support for this view comes from the fact that in some dialects, the infinitive form of the verb is generally in the Oblique case, as in *hat kuştin-ê*(OBL) 'was killed'. Literally the construction means 'came to being-killed'='was killed'. Both the post-predicate position of the infinitive, and its Oblique case are suggestive that it was, at least originally, a Goal argument of the verb *hatin* (cf. *hatin mal-ê* '(they) came home-OBL').[11] In fact, elsewhere in Kurdish the infinitive plays practically no role in the syntax. For many verbs, an infinitive is not attested in actual usage and the use of the infinitive as citation form of the verb is mere convention. I would suggest therefore that the 'passive' is in fact no more than the verb 'come' coupled with a derived verbal noun, which through force of convention is generally called the infinitive. The passive sense of the infinitive is a relic of the participial origins of the past stem, on which the infinitive is based. However, as mentioned, in the emergent language of the press, the construction has been greatly expanded and is used with great frequency (see Haig (2002b) for discussion).

4.3.2 Summary of the ergative construction

The ergative construction in the Northern Group appears to be a purely morphological phenomenon, manifested in the case marking of core arguments, and the agreement markers on the verb. On these criteria, S and O_{PAST} align together, to the exclusion of A_{PAST}. The evidence from syntax (constituent order, coreferential deletion, control of reflexives and passivization) all converge on confirming the existence of the grouping of A_{PAST} and S in the syntax, in much the same way as A_{PRES} and S do. In other words, across both tenses, S and A consistently align together and control certain syntactic processes. Although not all criteria provide equally clear results, it is certainly the case that, with the exception of the complications in coreferential deletion, the ergative morphology of the past transitive constructions is irrelevant for the syntax, which remains accusative throughout. There

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[11]Comparable to the German pseudo-passives of the form *zur Anwendung kommen* 'to usage come', i. e. be used.

is no evidence that an O_{PAST}, despite its Direct case and control of verb agreement, has any syntactic subject properties.

4.4   Deviations from canonical ergativity

It will be recalled that the canonical ergative construction is defined by three properties, repeated here for convenience:

1. The A_{PAST} is in the Oblique case

2. The O_{PAST} is in the Direct case

3. The verb agrees with the O_{PAST}

However, not all past transitive constructions conform to this pattern. From a diachronic perspective, the language internal variation can give valuable insights into the type of developments into, and away from, ergativity, and for this reason they are investigated in some detail in the next two sections. Unfortunately, there are practical difficulties involved in establishing the kind of variation found. The main difficulty is that in natural texts, **very few constructions can be found which display overtly and unambiguously all three features of the canonical ergative construction**. This is particularly true of the spoken language. For example, in one of the most reliable transcriptions of a spoken Kurdish narrative, the story recounted in Kahn (1976:133-147), I obtained the following figures:

Number of transitive past verb forms: 210 (± 5, some forms are unclear)
Number of clauses displaying all the features of the canonical ergative constructions: 9 (± 1)

Thus of the clauses which could potentially provide information on case marking and agreement, only around 5% actually supply all the necessary information. I obtained similar figures (less than 10% ergative constructions with unambiguous case marking from past tense transitive clauses) from the first 60 pages in Lescot (1940), which are also based on traditional spoken narratives but have normalised orthography and have been edited to conform to the written standard—see Section 4.5.1 for further discussion of these figures. I have seen no evidence that other texts, or regional variants, differ significantly from these proportions. In other words, the canonical ergative construction so popular in descriptive grammars and pedagogical works is,

in natural discourse, a rare bird. There are several factors contributing to the paucity of canonical ergative constructions:

1. Ergative constructions are restricted to the past tense. In some narratives, particularly those collected by myself from the Erzurum dialect, the speaker uses the present tense almost throughout.

2. Second, it will be recalled that case marking is neutralised in the presence of an Izafe construction—see (47). Thus the actual case marking of the arguments is often obscured.

3. Third, in connected discourse, core arguments are often deleted if they are deemed recoverable by the speaker, again rendering the case marking invisible (see below for extensive examples of zero-anaphora).

4. Fourth, when A and O are both third person singular or plural, it is impossible to determine which controls agreement.

5. Fifth, many masculine nouns cannot express case distinctions (see discussion in connection with Table 4.1), and in some dialects, there has been syncretism of Direct and Oblique cases for second and third singular pronouns (cf. Dorleijn (1996) for information on second singular and Matras (1997) for third singular).

Outside of grammar books, then, the canonical ergative construction with all constituents overtly and unambigously expressed, is unusual. For this reason it is difficult to glean sufficient and reliable information on the variation found simply from texts. Nevertheless, certain types of deviation are found in texts, particularly in agreement patterns (these are of course generally visible, unlike the case marking) and I will be concentrating on these. One of the striking features of the attested variation is the degree to which case and agreement phenomena are dissociated. That is, both case marking and agreement can vary, to some extent, independently of one another. It is therefore practicable to treat these two aspects of ergativity in two distinct sections, although this should not be taken as implying that there is no interdependence between case and agreement.

4.5   Case

Case marking in canonical ergative constructions is shown in (80):

(80)   A-OBL   O-DIR   Verb-Agrees with O

In general, the texts I have investigated largely conform to this case marking pattern, but as mentioned in the preceding section, clauses with both core arguments unambiguously case-marked are actually quite rare. The available texts therefore provide relatively little information on this topic. The richest source of data on variant case marking is Dorleijn (1996), who documents a remarkably rich spectrum of deviant case marking. However, there are certain drawbacks with her data. Most of it is based on elicitations of isolated sentences, and on translations of sentences from Turkish (she is centrally concerned with Turkish influence on Kurdish). But the danger that her informants (mostly Turkish/Kurdish bilinguals, including a Kurdish 'semi-speaker') may have been replicating Turkish structures, thereby producing utterances that differed from natural spoken Kurdish, cannot be ignored. Furthermore, the fact that isolated sentences were used leads to a quite unnatural concentration of sentences with two overt core arguments. In connected discourse, transitive clauses generally do not contain more than one full NP (see below). And patterns of pronoun deletion do have an effect on case marking and agreement, as will be shown in Section 4.6. Finally, she concentrated on the variety of Diyarbakır, which apparently displays some important differences to other varieties of the Northern Group. For example, she concludes that constituent order has a significant effect on case marking and agreement patterns (Dorleijn 1996:91–92), suggesting that fronting of an O "has repercussions for verbal agreement" and is generally not found with pronouns. This observation is not borne out in texts, as in for example:

(81)   *hûn min anî-n*
        2PL 1S   bring:PST-PL

       'I brought you' (Lescot 1940:34)

Here the O is a pronoun, it is fronted, yet the verb shows regular ergative agreement with it. For these reasons I will base my discussion on what is attested in the available texts, rather than on Dorleijn's findings, but I will be relating them to her conclusions at several points.

4.5.1 Double Oblique construction

One type of deviant case marking found in some texts is the double Oblique construction, in which both A and O are in the Oblique case. Examples are the following:

(82)   *Gundi-**yan**   **wan**   bizor   ji   hev   kir*
      villager-PL:OBL 3PL:OBL with.difficulty from each.other do:PST(3S)

      'The villagers pulled them apart with difficulty' (Baksî 1991:31)

In this example, the verb remains in the unmarked third person singular, although both core arguments are plural. Generally in such constructions, the verb remains in the unmarked form:

(83)   *Îşev   **min keç-ek-ê**   di   xewn-a   xwe   da*
      last.night 1S:OBL girl-INDEF-OBL ADP sleep-IZF REFL ADP
      di-dît
      PROG-see:PST(2S)

      'Last night I saw a girl in my sleep (=dreams)' (Zinar 1988:103)

(84)   *Qe   **min wan**   anî-ye   diny-ê?*
      INTERR 1S:OBL 3PL:OBL bring:PST-PERF(3S) world-OBL

      'Have I (not) given birth to them?' (Baksî 1991:33)

These examples should suffice as exemplification (further examples are provided in Matras (1997:620–621), and among the elicited data in Bulut 2000:155–158). Of the deviations in case marking found in the texts considered, the double Oblique, or more generally, an Oblique marked O_{PAST} (with a deleted A_{PAST}) are the only ones to reach any level of significance. There can be little doubt that in the Northern Group, the commonest language-internal deviation from the canonical ergative system involves putting the O_{PAST} into the Oblique case. Dorleijn (1996:118) also discovered that among the deviant case marking patterns found in her data, clauses with an Oblique marked O_{PAST} make up the majority. From a total of 1342 past transitive constructions considered, some 58% had an Oblique O_{PAST}. Of these, well over half have an Oblique A_{PAST} as well, yielding a double Oblique construction, while the rest have a Direct A_{PAST}. In over one third (approx. 38%) of Dorleijn's entire data, A_{PAST} and O_{PAST} are in the same case form.

A change which leaves A and O morphologically undistinguished would appear rather unmotivated from a functional perspective. A number of au-

thors have stressed that the primary function of a case system is a **discriminatory** one. This view is widely held in typology, and has been particularly influential in the analysis of alignment systems. Comrie (1978) suggests that the discriminatory function of case marking is behind the global predominance of accusative and ergative systems: Among the many possible alignment types, they are the only two which draw a distinction between A and O (a tripartite system does as well, but is less efficient in that it needs three cases instead of just two). The following more recent statement of these views stems from Payne (1997:140), Payne uses 'P' where I use 'O':

> The most important distinction to make among A, S, and P is between A and P. This is because A and P are the only arguments (among these three) that are instantiated in the same clause, and it is very important from the point of view of communication to identify which argument is acting upon which other argument. On the other hand, the two other distinctions, S vs. A and S vs. P, are communicationally irrelevant.

Bossong (1985:116–119) argues that maintaining the discriminatory function of the case system is a major force in shaping the diachronic developments of case systems in Iranian. Systems where A and O (or A and definite/specific O) are identically case marked are, apparently, diachronically unstable.

The problem with this line of argumentation is that if such systems are communicatively inefficient, and if languages change in ways that eliminate such malfunctions, then it is hard to see how such systems could have arisen in the first place, particularly if they arose from the more 'efficient' ergative system, where A and O are distinguished. Furthermore, double Oblique systems are solidly attested in other Iranian languages (cf. Payne (1980) and Lazard 1997). The change from ergative to double Oblique cannot be a side-effect of phonological attrition either, because it involves the addition of phonological material, the extension of the (marked) Oblique case into a context where it was previously not found (the O_{PAST}). It seems therefore a particularly odd change, and suggests that there must be other forces at work besides maintaining maximal efficiency in terms of discriminatory function.

The most likely motor of change is the tendency to level out the differences in alignment between the past and the present tenses. As Dixon (1977:389) puts it,

> [...] the morphological and syntactic systems of a language will

> always tend to change in order to become more congruent one
> with the other.

There are several possible aspects to the pressure to maintain congruence between grammatical subsystems. One is the pressure to maintain what Slobin (1986) refers to as a canonical sentence structure across as many major constructions as possible. In other words, there is a tendency to use the unmarked form of simple, finite, present declarative clauses in a maximum number of other contexts. In the case of Kurdish and other languages with split ergativity on a tense/aspect basis, there are two distinct clause patterns which must be acquired and deployed, depending on the tense. We might therefore expect changes to move in the direction of levelling out the differences between the two. [12] Let us briefly consider how such changes might occur. Table 4.6 contrasts the case marking system of the past and the present tenses in the Northern Group. On the assumption that a change

Table 4.6: Case marking, past and present transitive clauses

	A	**O**
Present	Direct	Oblique
Past	Oblique	Direct

will, initially at least, affect one core argument at a time, there are two possible changes which could affect the past tense:[13]

(a) the A_{PAST} could become Direct;
(b) the O_{PAST} could take the Oblique case.

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[12]Harris and Campbell (1995:258–264) discuss this tendency under the label of the 'Complementarity Principle', more specifically, the 'First Condition' on complementarity. According to this principle, a change is likely to occur that will result in one and the same grammatical relation being marked identically across different constructions.

[13]Theoretically of course the case marking in the **present** tense might change to bring it into line with the past, e.g. the A_{PRES} might become Oblique. But changes of this nature are, to my knowledge, unattested throughout Iranian. We can therefore assume that it is the past which will adapt itself to the present, rather than vice versa. This is understandable from markedness considerations, and also from the fact that alignment in the present tense matches up with alignment in all intransitive clauses, in the sense that S and A_{PRES} (syntactic subjects) receive a unified case form.

As we have seen, change (b) is the only one I have encountered in actual texts. A comparison with the data in Dorleijn (1996:118) supports this finding. The two changes are distributed in her data as follows:[14]

(a) A_{PAST} in the Direct case: approx. 11%
(b) O_{PAST} is Oblique: approx. 89%

Closer examination of Dorleijn's (a) examples, where both A_{PAST} and O_{PAST} are in the direct case, shows that in "virtually all instances" (Dorleijn 1996:122), one of the core arguments is third person singular, where expression of case is irregular anyway, and a clear distinction between Direct and Oblique is not always possible.[15] Thus the number of such examples is quite possibly even lower.

Given that both the O_{PAST} to Oblique and the A_{PAST} to Direct change achieve a partial levelling out of the differences between past and present tenses, the obvious preference for the former is clearly in need of explanation. This is especially so when we realise that the change in the A_{PAST} from Oblique to Direct would involve the loss of a marker, presumably therefore on phonological grounds the more likely change. The reason for the preference for the change in the form of the O_{PAST} is I believe to be sought the distribution of arguments in actual discourse. As mentioned above, past transitive clauses with two overt arguments, both carrying case marking, are very rare in discourse. When a core argument is expressed in a past transitive construction, however, it is overwhelmingly the O_{PAST}, and not the A_{PAST}. The following figures were obtained from the texts in Lescot (1940), based on a count of all past transitive verb forms between page four and page 60:[16]

Total number of verb forms counted: 437
Of these, 139 contained an overt A_{PAST}, i.e. approx 30%

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[14]Dorleijn reports that in her total data, 43.5% of the clauses exhibited one of the two possible changes (the rest remained unchanged ergative, or underwent changes to both A and O). The figures given show the percentage that these two changes account for within that 43.5%.

[15]One example (Dorleijn 1996:121) contains the A_{PAST} *seg* 'dog', treated by Dorleijn as a Direct case. But in some dialects of Turkey, this masculine noun simply does not have a distinct Oblique form.

[16]The major difficulty in evaluating the Kurdish data in this respect is deciding on the status of the commonest transitive verb, *gotin* 'speak'. It is lexically transitive, but it generally lacks a NP object. Furthermore, it often functions merely as a kind of discourse particle, with a vague sense of 'and (they) say' In my counts, I did not include *gotin*.

Clauses without an overt A_{PAST} had either no overt core arguments, or only an O_{PAST}. Thus around 70% of transitive past clauses are of the form (O)V, and in fact, I believe this is the commonest pattern in the present tenses too, although I have not done the counting to prove this. It is evident then that it is the case of O_{PAST} which is most frequently manifested in actual discourse. Thus bringing it into line with the form of the O_{PRES} is the single change that will achieve the maximum levelling out of past and present clauses in actual discourse: we arrive at a common surface form for the majority of transitive clauses in both tenses: O-OBL V. Putting the A_{PAST} into the Direct case, however, would contribute far less to achieving parallelism between past and present tenses, because the A is most commonly deleted anyway. The reasons for the greater frequency of A-deletion over O-deletion are to be found in cross-language patterns of argument structure, discussed in Section 4.7.

Across actual discourse, a double Oblique system brings past and present tense transitive clause alignment very close to one another. Furthermore, danger of ambiguity is highly unlikely, as only few clauses contain two overt arguments. On the assumption that changes in the case system will proceed one at a time, there is no other single change in the case system that would achieve a greater convergence of clause patterns in the past and the present tenses in actual discourse. Whether this is in fact the entire explanation is probably questionable, but I believe that it is an important contributing factor. Whatever the reasons, we can state one strong tendency of change in case alignment in past transitive clauses: the first change to occur is that the O_{PAST} goes into the Oblique case.[17]

I have suggested that the importance of the discriminatory function of case marking, at least as a factor in shaping the direction of diachronic change, has been overestimated (for further arguments against the primacy of the discriminatory function in case marking, see Arkadiev 2004). The commonest change attested leads to a situation in which A_{PAST} and O_{PAST} are not discriminated. What appears to be more important is achieving a unified canonical form of the transitive clause across both tenses. The change from ergative to double Oblique brings the two tenses, in terms of the actual case marking patterns attested in natural discourse, remarkably close through just one change in the morphology. Of course case marking is not isolated from

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[17]However, it must be mentioned that in Badīnānī, there is a 'tendency' to put the A_{PAST} into the Direct case (MacKenzie 1961a:153, 194), while no examples of an Oblique O_{PAST} are mentioned by MacKenzie for this dialect. This may be related to developments in the neighbouring dialects of the Central Group, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

other aspects of alignment, in particular agreement. In the following section patterns of change in agreement are investigated.

4.6   Agreement

In a canonical ergative construction, the verb agrees with the O_{PAST} in person and number. In what follows, I will concentrate on what appears to be the most widely-spread type of deviation from the canonical form of agreement (indeed, it is arguably a regular part of ergativity in the Northern Group), that of agreement with a plural A_{PAST}. As will be seen from Table 4.4, verbal agreement in the plural is *-in* for all persons (with the exception of Badīnānī, where a distinct form *-în* is used with the first person plural). In other words, in the plural, person distinctions are neutralized and a single suffix codes the meaning plural. Thus a plural O_{PAST}, regardless of its person, should be accompanied by the ending *-in* on the verb. In many instances, this is indeed the case. The descriptive studies mentioned in fn. 2 supply ample (isolated) examples of plural agreement with the O_{PAST}. Examples from texts are the following:

(85)   *Rovî qas-ek*   ***çav-ên xwe*** *firikand-in*
       fox   moment-INDEF eye-IZP   REFL rub:PST-PL

       'The fox rubbed **his eyes** for a moment' (Bozarslan 1982:45)

The O can trigger agreement even if it is not actually present in the clause, as in:

(86)   ***tişt-ên*** *ku*   *wî*   *di-got-in*
       thing-IZP COMP 3S:OBL PROG-say:PST-PL

       '**The things** that he used to say' (Cewerî 1986:53)

An example contrasting a plural O_{PAST} (87a) with a singular O_{PAST} (87b) is the following:

(87)   a.   *(Gava dibê şev) bavo* ***kinç-ên*** *stûr li xwe di-kir-**in**,*
            (In the evening)   father clothes-IZP thick on REFL PROG-do:PST-PL

            '(In the evening) father would put on warm **clothes**,'

       b.   ***çift-a***   *xwe di-**girt***
            shotgun-IZF REFL PROG-take:PST(3S)

            'take his (double-barreled) **shotgun** . . .' (Şemo 1977:39)

Despite the apparent clarity of the rules regarding verbal number agreement, all texts examined contain numerous counter-examples. The majority of counter-examples occur in examples where the syntactic subject (the A$_{PAST}$) has been deleted due to discourse considerations. A typical example is the following:

(88) *Lê gundî$_i$ geriya-n   ne-geriya-n, $\emptyset_i$ Siyabend*
     But villager(PL) look:PST-PL NEG-look:PST-PL $\emptyset_i$ Siyabend

     ne-dît-in
     NEG-see:PST-PL

     'But (although) the villagers$_i$ looked and looked, (they$_i$) did not see(PL) Siyabend' (Zinar 1988:44)

In the second clause, the A$_{PAST}$ has been deleted because it is coreferent with the subject of the preceding verbs. Although the O$_{PAST}$ is unambiguously singular (the proper noun *Siyabend*), the verb does not agree with it, in violation of the agreement rules for the canonical ergative construction. Instead, verbal agreement is with the plural A$_{PAST}$. Examples of this type are rife throughout the Northern Group, both written and spoken. Examples from a variety of sources are given below:

(89) *di-çû-n   taştê,   xwar-in, vegeriya-n   li   cih-ê*
     PROG-go:PST-PL breakfast eat:PST-PL return:PST-PL PREP place-IZM

     xwe
     REFL

     '(they) went to breakfast, ate(PL), returned to their place' (Makas 1897–1926 [1979]:11, transcription simplified)

In these examples, the pronoun is deleted through the entire sequence of clauses, a typical pattern in connected discourse. The transitive verb *xwarin* should, according to the rules of ergative agreement, agree with an implied singular object, 'breakfast', but instead it is plural.

(90) *hemen   li wêderê suwar bû-n   hat-in   pirs*
     immediately there   mounted become:PST-PL come:PST-PL question

     kir-in   got-in
     do:PST-PL say:PST-PL

     'There (they) immediately mounted (their horses), came, asked, said ...' (Le Coq 1903:43, transcription simplified)

In this example the transitive verbs *kirin* and *gotin* are plural, although there is no obvious plural O that they are agreeing with. In the following examples, there are overt O's ('the girl', 'a room', 'a short distance'), obviously singular, yet the transitive verbs still agree with the (deleted plural) A_{PAST}:

(91) *kičiḱ girt-**in**   ô   kuš't-**in***
      girl   take:PST-PL and kill:PST-PL

      '(They) took the girl and killed (her)' (MacKenzie 1962:358)

(92) *šawē   manzil-ak   ǰudā   dā-**n**   a tatô w   tamô*
      at.night room-INDEF separate give:PST-PL to Tato and Tamo

      'At night (they) gave Tato and Tamo a separate room' (MacKenzie 1995:27)

(93) *roj-a   ewil mesafe-yek-e   piçûk di-bir-**in***
      day-IZF first distance-INDEF-IZF small PROG-take:PST-PL

      'On the first day, (they) would take (travel) a short distance' (Şemo 1977:32)

These examples should suffice as illustration. In fact, as far as I can ascertain, all dialects of the Northern Group exhibit deviations from the canonical ergative construction involving plural agreement with an A_{PAST}, albeit with varying frequency from dialect to dialect. According to MacKenzie (1961a:193), such deviations in agreement patterns are rare in Badīnānī, the sole example cited by him being (91), from the Zakho dialect of Badīnānī. This impression is confirmed by the texts of Blau (1975), also Badīnānī, where such deviations are likewise rare.[18] However, other sources on Badīnānī contain numerous examples, e. g the following:

(94) *Se û   biçîk-êt gund-   li   gurg-î   kum   bî-n*
      dog and small-IZP village-OBL ADP wolf-OBL together become:PST-PL

      *û   gurig di   selk-ê   da   kušt-**in***
      and wolf   ADP basket-OBL ADP kill:PST-PL

      'The dogs and small (children) of the village surrounded the wolf and **killed(pl)** the wolf in the basket' (Şirîn 1996b:3)

Thus there seems little doubt that Badīnānī dialects also show evidence of deviant plural number agreement, although it occurs under more restricted circumstances than in the dialects further North.

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[18]But not entirely absent, cf. *oldaş-a got-in* 'the friends-OBL said-PL' (Blau 1975:176).

Although absence of an overt plural A_{PAST} in the clause, as in the preceding examples, seems to be a conditioning factor,[19] examples can even be found where an overt A_{PAST} is present:

(95) *Dîsa **wan** yek bi yek Orhan hembêz kir-**in***
again 3PL:OBL one.at.a.time Orhan embrace do:PST-PL

'Again they embraced Orhan one after another' (Cewerî 1986:67)

(96) ***Herdu heval-ên** Sîdar got-**in***
both brother-IZP Sîdar say:PST-PL

'Both of Sîdar's brothers said ...' (Cewerî 1986:50)

However, by far the more widespread pattern is that plural agreement with an A_{PAST} is restricted to clauses where there is no overt A_{PAST}. In what follows, I will refer to this type of deviant agreement as **A-dominant plural agreement**, because it is the A rather than the O which determines agreement on the verb.

4.6.1 A-dominant plural agreement in the literature

Although A-dominant plural agreement is a feature of all varieties of the Northern Group, it has received very little attention in the sources on these languages. Recent textbooks such as Barnas and Salzer (1994) and Rizgar (1996) treat agreement in the ergative construction as if it were fully in compliance with the canonical ergative construction. Yet the texts in these very books contain examples of A-dominant plural agreement:

(97) ***wan** şîn-ek-e giran girt-ibû-**n***
3PL:OBL mourning-INDEF-IZF heavy take:PST-PLUP-PL

'They had engaged in a solemn mourning' (Barnas and Salzer 1994:141)

Blau and Barak (1999:67–68) briefly mention that regional deviations from the canonical ergative construction can be found, citing Dorleijn (1996), who suggests that they are particularly common in the Diyarbakır variety (see below), but they do not note the importance of plural agreement. Kurdoev (1978:186–187) also notes the existence of cases of agreement with an A_{PAST}, but does not offer any explanation. In most general sources, the assumption

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[19]According to Dorleijn (1996:146), deletion of a plural A_{PAST} **always** leads to plural agreement on the verb, but this does not apply to Badīnānī.

is that the canonical ergative construction is the norm, and any deviations must be explained in terms of regional variation, or simply incorrect usage. For example, in Chyet (2003), the numerous cases of A-dominant plural agreement in the example sentences receive a "[sic]" from the dictionary compiler (five instances on page 124 alone!). Yet the sheer frequency, and the cross-regional distribution of such examples demands a more satisfying explanation than simply sloppy usage. It is quite possible that they may not be deviations, but a rule-based component of agreement for the ergative construction in the Northern Group.

To my knowledge, only two sources devote any type of explanation to the phenomenon. Wurzel (1997:118, fn. 1) states that 'sometimes' a plural ending is added to the verb to "avoid repetition of the (A_{PAST}) pronoun" (my translation). There is a germ of truth in this explanation, as we shall see in Section 4.7.1. The most extensive discussion is from Bedir Khan and Lescot (1970:314). They note explicitly that A-dominant plural agreement is "une importante et fréquente exception" to the canonical ergative construction, and formulate two conditions under which it occurs, which can be summed up as follows:

(98)   a. If the A_{PAST} expresses a vague sense of 'they' (cf. German *man*, French *ils, on*), i.e. does not refer to a specific and fully identifiable person or group of persons, and if there is no overt A_{PAST} NP in the clause, then the verb will usually carry plural agreement.

       b. If there is an overt, plural A_{PAST} in the phrase, but it is 'fairly distant' ("assez éloigné") from the verb, the verb may also carry plural agreement, even when the O is singular.

An example illustrating (98a) is the following:

(99)   *Osman axa   hebs   kir-in*
       Osman Agha imprisonment do:PST-PL

       '(They) jailed Osman Agha' (Bedir Khan and Lescot 1970:314)

As far as (98b) is concerned, a great deal depends on how one defines 'fairly distant', and how one defines clause (in the French original *phrase*). An example provided by Bedir Khan and Lescot (1970) is the following (glosses simplified):

(100) a. *xortên   ko hînî   xwendin û   nivîsandin dibûn*
          young.people who learning.of reading   and writing   were

b. *dihatin û   li   qeydeyên zimanê xwe dipirsîn*
came   and about rules.of   language self enquired

c. *gramer-ek   di-xwest-in*
grammar-INDEF PROG-want:PST-PL

(a) 'The young people who had learned to read and write
(b) came and enquired about the rules of their language
(c) (they) **wanted(pl)** a grammar' (Bedir Khan and Lescot 1970:315)

This seems to me quite comparable to the examples listed above, where the A_{PAST} is discourse deleted. In fact I believe it is reasonable to consider both the generalisations expressed in (98) as manifestations of a single, more general principle, formulated as follows:

(101)   **The Distance Principle**
The likelihood of A-dominant plural agreement increases with increasing distance between the overt A_{PAST} and its verb.

An impersonal 'they/someone' reading is achieved generally in Kurdish (i. e. in both past and present tenses) by omitting the pronoun altogether, and putting the verb into plural. In such cases, there simply is no overt A anywhere, so this can be interpreted as the maximum possible distance from the predicate. Furthermore, there are numerous intermediate stages, where a group of persons is implied by the context, but not necessarily precisely specified (servants, villagers, soldiers, the authorities etc.) In such environments, part way between a truly impersonal and merely a distant A_{PAST}, agreement is also with the implied A_{PAST}. An example of this kind of half-way context may be helpful at this point.

The following clause comes at the end of a passage in which the narrator describes a conversation he has with an officer of the Russian army. The officer, impressed by his knowledge of several languages, offers him a job as an interpreter for the army, which the narrator accepts:

(102)   *Fermendar emir da   ku   çekê   eşkerî li min **k-in***
Commander order gave that uniform army   on me   put-PL

'The commander gave order that (they) **put-PL** an army uniform on me' (Şemo 1977:48), glosses simplified.

The verb under consideration here is *kin*, a plural form of the verb *kirin* 'do, put'. Now there is no overt plural subject which can be considered to have triggered the plural agreement. Nevertheless, we can guess from the

broader context who must be implied: the soldiers whom we assume will be accompanying the Commander. But the soldiers are not explicitly mentioned in the preceding context. So is this an example of an 'impersonal they', or a 'discourse deleted they'? My own conviction is that the impersonal usage blends into the other, less distant types, with no clear line of demarcation. I prefer therefore to see the 'impersonal they' use of the plural marker, and its use in clauses where a discourse-recoverable A_{PAST} has been deleted, as manifestations of one and the same principle, the Distance Principle, rather than as distinct categories. The existence of numerous examples such as (102) render a strict binary categorisation difficult to maintain.

The Distance Principle could, in theory, be made more precise through empirical investigations along the lines of those summarised in Givón (1983:13), where the distance between two occurrences of coreferential arguments is measured in terms of "number of clauses to the left". However, it is currently not possible to determine the exact measure of 'distance' required before A_{PAST} agreement overrides canonical ergative agreement.

But distance is not the only factor involved in A-dominant plural agreement. A crucial issue is person of the O_{PAST}. In general, the verb will always agree with the O_{PAST} when it is either first or second person singular (SAP, Speech Act Participant). Thus a clause such as '(they) saw me/you' will, even if the A_{PAST} is deleted, still agree with the O_{PAST}:

(103) *van   zarok-ên   te   ez rezîl   kir-**im***
       DEM:OBL:PL children-IZP 2S:OBL 1S disgrace do:PST-1S

       'Those children of yours disgraced me' (Metê 1998:99)

A further factor is the semantics of the verbs. Several very common verbs, despite being lexically transitive, do not normally take any overt O NP. The commonest by far is *gotin*. It often introduces direct speech, which takes the form of a finite clause (usually without a complementizer). Whether this clause can be considered the 'object' of the verb is debatable, and even if it can, it is not entirely clear what person/number value it should have (presumably third person singular?). As it turns out, this verb is extremely prone to A-dominance in agreement. For example, stories often begin with *digotin* '(they) say(PST-PL)'. In fact, in many texts number agreement with *gotin* is generally A-dominated throughout, suggesting that in this respect, *gotin* is becoming more like an intransitive verb:

(104) *Hinek-an   jî   di   dil-ê   xwe de   di-got-**in***
       some-PL:OBL too ADP heart-IZM REFL ADP PROG-say:PST-PL

'And some would say to themselves: ...' (Cewerî 1986:16)

Another verb that is prone to A-dominance is *dîtin* 'see' in the sense of 'realise, notice', where its complement is often a clause rather than an NP.

The interaction with person, and with verb semantics, are suggestive of a second, competing principle at work in determining the controller of agreement. It appears that agreement with the O_{PAST} is most likely when the O is maximally salient. By 'salient' I mean **closest to a prototypical NP in form, and maximally high in animacy**. The following hierarchy seems to be applicable:[20]

(105) **Saliency hierarchy of Objects**
SAP > definite Pl. non-SAP > definite Sing. non-SAP >
indefinite > generic > clause / incorporated O

The relevant generalisation is:

(106) **The Saliency Principle**
The likelihood that a verb will agree with a plural A_{PAST} increases with decreasing salience of the O of that verb, where salience is defined in (105)

Thus a verb with an SAP Object is least likely to agree with a plural A, while one without an NP Object (for example, a verb introducing direct speech) is very likely to agree with a plural A. One can of course see this in terms of a **decrease in transitivity** along the lines of Hopper and Thompson (1980), with verbs of speech moving towards the intransitive end of the scale.

Although the Distance Principle (101) and the Saliency Principle (106) are useful heuristics in predicting the probability of A-dominance in number agreement, they are not to be understood as a water-tight set of rules. Their value resides in the fact that they explicitly identify factors that are relevant in determining agreement patterns on the verb, and they permit some predictions to be made, which may well be relevant for the diachronic issues. For example, on this account, the prototypical case of A-dominant plural agreement would have a maximally distant (e.g. impersonal) plural A, and a non-NP O. The best candidates for this type of construction are

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[20]An 'incorporated O' is the nominal element of certain types of complex predicate, for example *baz* in the expression *baz dan*, lit. 'jump give'='jump, run away'. Such elements have lost their argument status entirely, but the verb retains its lexical transitivity—cf. the discussion in Section 2.2, and in Haig (2002a).

verbs of speech, or thinking, used in the sense of 'it is said/believed' etc.
As far as I am aware, this is precisely the context where **all** dialects of the
Northern Group do indeed exhibit A-dominance in plural agreement. One
might well speculate that the spread of A-dominant plural agreement has
advanced progressively up the scales, so that now even an A that is overtly
present in the clause may trigger it, and an overt O may be overridden for
agreement purposes. Some dialects, particularly those to the North, often
do have A-dominant plural agreement in these environments. In fact it is
almost the rule whenever the O_{PAST} is relatively low in saliency (i. e. third
person singular or lower):

(107) *Wexta **kewotk-a** zîn-a nazik dît-in*
When pigeon-PL:OBL Zîn-IZF delicate see:PST-PL

'When the pigeons saw the delicate Zîn' (Džalil and Džalil 1978a:46)

Why should it be agreement in plural number of all things that is so prone
to A-dominance? Examination of longer stretches of connected discourse
reveals that plural number agreement with an O appears to be rather labile
anyway. Consider the following stretch of narrative, with a sequence of past
transitive verbs (in bold type):

(108) a. *pîrejin ra bû, der keft,*
old.woman got.up went.outside

  b. *çû sûkê.*
went to.market

  c. *Çu tiştê muhtac bo xo **kirî,***
nothing(?) things necessary for self bought(3s)

  d. *li piştê hemala **kir** û **îna** mala xo.*
on back porters put(3s) and brought(3s) to.house.of self

  e. ***Da-ne** ber Xace Mehmûdî*
placed-3PL in.front.of Xace Mehmûd

  f. *Alîk da dewarê wî*
Fodder gave horse.of him

  a) The old woman got up, went out,
  b) went to market
  c) **bought-sg** the things needed
  d) **put-sg** (them) on the back of (some) porters and **brought-sg**
  them back to her house

> e) **placed-pl** (them) in front of Xace Mehmûd
> f) gave fodder to his horse ... (Blau 1975:102, transcription modified)

In lines (c) and (d), the verbs *kirî* 'bought' and *kir* 'put' are singular, although the implied O (the things bought) is plural. Yet in line (e) the verb *dane* 'gave' has a plural ending, presumably to indicate that it was several things that the old woman placed in front of Xace Mehmûd. It is almost as though the speaker felt it necessary to remind the hearer at that point that there were a number of items involved. Thus there is obviously a weak connection between the O and the verb in terms of number agreement, allowing a certain amount of choice in when plurality of the O is to be overtly expressed.

The inevitable conclusion from these facts is that plural 'agreement' in the past tenses is not solely determined by grammatical factors ('Agreement with O_{PAST}'), but that semantics and pragmatics also play a role. Note that there is a single unified plural ending, *-in*, for all persons. Thus in terms of formal distinctions, the plural is underspecified for person.[21] Developing on these ideas, we can re-state the agreement facts for past tense transitive verbs as in the form of a feature matrix, based on just three features:[22] On

Table 4.7: Revised account of agreement with past transitive verbs

Agreement suffix:	*-im*	*-î*	*-in*	*-∅*
First person O	+	−	−	−
Second person O	−	+	−	−
Plural	−	−	+	−

this account, only three features are relevant for verbal agreement: first and second person of the O, and plural (of either A or O). Third person singular (traditionally assigned a -∅ 'suffix') is simply lack of agreement, or alternatively, not first/second person, and not plural. This accounts for all of

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[21] With the exception of the Badînânî dialect, where a distinct ending *-īn* for the first person plural is maintained. One might speculate whether the finer formal differentiation of plural marking in Badînânî is a reason for its greater consistency in agreeing with the O_{PAST}.

[22] See Dorleijn (1996:130–135) for similar proposals on the possible shape of the agreement system.

the facts discussed above, as well as the facts covered in the traditional account. It is therefore preferable to the traditional 6-way distinction repeated earlier in this chapter. It is also a plausible intermediate stage before the double-oblique construction (see below), where verbs show no agreement.

4.6.2   Summary of agreement

While according to standard descriptions of the Kurmanji syntax, which assume the canonical ergative construction, agreement in past tenses is the mirror image of that in the present tenses: it is determined entirely by grammatical features of person and number on the O_{PAST}. Closer inspection shows that this is not the case. I proposed a simplified model of agreement for past transitive clauses, according to which just three values are relevant; first person of the O, second person of the O, and plural with either A or O. 'Third person singular' is simply the absence of any of these values, basically a lack of agreement.

The issue of when a past tense verb agrees with a plural A_{PAST} was examined in some detail. I identified two principles relevant here: the Distance Principle (distance between the last overt mention of the A_{PAST} and the verb), and the Saliency of the O: highly salient Os tend to determine agreement on the verb; less salient Os can be overridden by a plural A.

As we have seen above, the plural ending may reflect plurality of the A as well as the O. Thus the plural ending expresses a vaguer notion of plurality, not strictly determined by person, and crucially, not strictly determined by the grammatical relations of A and O. I believe that an adequate account of plural agreement in the Northern Group must abandon the notion of 'agreement' in the strict sense of 'obligatory cross-referencing of grammatical features', and accept that number agreement is a looser kind of reference tracking device, where pragmatic and semantic factors combine.

4.6.3   Diachronic implications

While the breakdown of agreement pattern is generally taken as part of the global demise of ergativity in Kurdish (Pirejko (1963), Dorleijn 1996), it has not been sufficiently recognized that A-dominant plural number agreement is fundamentally different. It is not merely a regionally restricted, perhaps contact-induced, occasional breakdown, but a relatively systematic process

that occurs, albeit with different frequencies (Badīnānī has the least examples) in all attested varieties of the Northern Group. Therefore, any explanation of A-dominant plural agreement in terms of a symptom of the breakdown of ergativity must somehow account for the fact that it is so regularly encountered across geographically very diverse dialects. Such an explanation would need to draw on universal semantic or pragmatic factors in order to explain the cross-dialect regularity. Yet to my knowledge, there is no plausible reason why ergative agreement should begin breaking down in the plural rather than say, first person singular, third person plural, or any other part of the agreement system. While I cannot rule out the possibility of independent typological support for such a state of affairs becoming available, it is nevertheless worthwhile considering other alternatives. The most obvious means of accounting for the consistency of A-dominance in plural agreement across the dialects is that it is not evidence of a change in progress, but reflects a characteristic of the common Kurdish proto-language.

Is there any evidence in favour of such a claim? Given the lack of records for the immediate ancestors of the Northern Group, this question cannot be answered with any certainty at present. Some facts are nevertheless worth recalling. First, plural agreement with verbs is often semantically rather than grammatically determined in Kurdish in both tenses.[23] Examples such as the following are typical for Kurdish:

(109) *her yek-î   cigar-ek   vêxist-in*
       each one-OBL cigarette-INDEF light:PST-PL
       'Each one lit a cigarette' (Cewerî 1986:4)

Although *her yekî* is grammatically singular, it can be construed as semantically plural in that it implies more than one person, and it is the semantics that evidently trigger the plural ending on the verb.[24] Thus semantic plurality tends to take preference over grammatical singularity generally in Kurdish. For earlier stages of Persian Lazard (1963:455–460) discusses in detail the complex factors that influence number agreement on the verb in texts from the 9–11 C.AD. Thus the phenomenon of semantic factors taking

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[23]See Mann (1906:CV) for Mukri (Central Group), and Hadank and Mann (1930:159–172) for Gurani, and more general discussion.

[24]Actually the plural marker in (109) is open to another interpretation: It could be construed as semantic agreement with the O, *cigarek*, which, although grammatically singular, has in this context a plural reading. Such examples are by no means rare, and illustrate some of the difficulties in interpreting the data on agreement.

precedence over grammatical factors in number agreement with the verb is well attested in related languages.

The second piece of evidence in support of seeing A-dominance in agreement as an old, common Kurdish feature, rather than an innovation hailing the breakdown of ergativity, comes from earlier stages of Iranian. Heston (1976:164–166) notes for Early New Persian, Pahlavi, Sogdian and Khotanese that a third person plural verb without an overt subject can be used to express an impersonal 'they', often with the implied reference of servants or attendants. The 'they' construction is reported to be particularly frequent with verbs of speech (Heston 1976:226,fn. 10), just as it is with Kurdish *gotin*. Strikingly, the construction is used in Pahlavi and Sogdian with the "passive-preterite" constructions, one of the predecessors of the ergative construction. Heston (1976:177–178) cites a Pahlavi example with plural agreement with an A_{PAST}, in precisely an environment where the A_{PAST} is not present in the clause itself, but must be recovered from the preceding context. The parallels to the Kurdish examples of A-dominant agreement with plural in sequences of same-subject clauses is remarkable. Heston does not draw the parallels to the 'impersonal they' construction, but I believe they cannot be denied. The impersonal they construction is merely the extreme case of distance between an overt plural A_{PAST} and the verb. Despite differences between the individual languages, the commonalities are undeniable: plural agreement with an A, which is not overtly present in the clause (and may in fact have no specific reference), commonest with verbs of speech and naming. These factors are all typical of A-dominant plural agreement in Kurdish. In Badīnānī, it appears to be restricted to these contexts, but in the rest of the Northern Group it is found in a much larger range of contexts. Although none of the languages investigated by Heston (1976) is a direct ancestor of Kurdish, the existence of plural agreement with an A_{PAST} in these languages, and in Kurdish, seems to much of a coincidence. One can speculate that it began with verbs of naming, and in impersonal 'they' constructions, and has spread to include other verbs, and contexts with a personal, albeit deleted A_{PAST}.

4.7   Clause linkage strategies, and agreement

A statement of the agreement rules solely in terms of the intra-clausal grammar is inadequate. In this section I will show how factors shaping the way

sequences of clauses are linked in discourse also interact to co-determine the type of agreement found in past transitive verbs.

There is a strong cross-language tendency for subjects to be omitted when they are highly topical. Thus in sequences of clauses with coreferential subjects, the subject in the clauses following the first mention are generally omitted. Givón (1983:17–20) claims that zero anaphora is the most favoured strategy for coding continuous topics (in most cases, equivalent to grammatical subjects). Kurdish is an excellent example of a language that makes copious use of zero-anaphora to code coreferential subjects—see for example the sequence of clauses with common deleted subject in (108). We can formulate this tendency as follows:

(110) **Delete Common Subjects**
If a clause has the same subject as the immediately preceding clause, delete the subject pronoun.

While much of Kurdish discourse conforms with (110), there is a second principle at work which tends to counteract it. In sequences of same-subject clauses, particularly when the subjects are deleted, there is a strong tendency to avoid discordant agreement patterns on the verb. Now in the present tense, where verb agreement is always with S or A, any sequence of same-subject clauses will always have identical agreement, regardless of the transitivity of the verb. But as soon as past tense verb forms are involved, in Kurdish, a potential problem arises. This can be illustrated using an English example:

(111) I_i sat down and $\emptyset_i$ ate breakfast

In the Kurdish translation of this sentence, the verb *sat*, being intransitive, would agree with the S, thus having first person singular agreement. But the verb *ate*, being transitive, and in the past tense, does not agree with its A, but with its O. Thus it would have third person singular agreement (with *breakfast*). In Kurdish, the result is a sequence of clauses with the same syntactic subject, but with discordant agreement markers on the verb.

In Section 4.3.1.2 we have already examined clause coordination in similar combinations and seen that deletion of the second pronoun is possible. But what is generally avoided is sequences with zero-anaphora in the second clause **and** discordant agreement on the verbs. As Matras (1997) notes, what we generally find is that the pronoun is retained when a discordant agreement pattern is involved. Thus in a sense, pronouns are retained, in violation of (110), in order to avoid sequences of same-subject clauses with both discor-

dant agreement and zero anaphora. We can formulate this tendency in the form of a second principle:

(112) **Avoid Discordant Agreement Sequences**
       Avoid sequences of same-subject clauses, with deleted subjects but with non-equivalent (i. e. discordant) agreement markers on the verb.

The relevant sequences that potentially lead to violations of this tendency in Kurdish are shown in Table 4.8. Of these possibilities, type 4 is difficult to

Table 4.8: Discordant agreement constellations

	Clause 1	Clause 2	
1.	A_{PAST}	S/A_{PRES}	I wanted to go / to drink milk
2.	S	A_{PAST}	I came and drank the milk
3.	A_{PAST}	S	I drank the milk and went
4.	S/A_{PRES}	A_{PAST}	(pragmatically unlikely)

envisage, and 3 is very rare, so that I have insufficient data to draw any clear conclusions. The subsequent discussion will therefore concentrate on the first two. Type 1 is extremely common, in particular with the verb *xwastin* 'want', lexically transitive in Kurdish (see above). Because the clause following the verb is in the present subjunctive, whenever the verb *xwastin* appears in the past tense, a conflict of agreement is certain to occur, so pronoun retention is common. Example (62), repeated here for convenience, demonstrates this:

(62)   *min   xwest   **ez** otomobîl-a xwe   bi-firoş-im*
       1S:OBL want:PST(3S) 1S car-IZF   REFL IRR-sell:PRES-1S

       'I wanted to sell my car' (Cewerî 2001)

It will be seen that although the two verbs share a common subject, they have distinct agreement values. In such cases, the Principle of Common Pronoun Deletion is violated, and an additional pronoun is retained in the second clause.[25] We can refer to this as the **pronoun insertion strategy**.

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[25]Matras (1997:642) suggests that such sequences are more readily tolerated when the second verb is intransitive, because the second verb carries an agreement marker that correctly reflects the person/number of the subject, the problem is less acute. However, this also applies to examples such as (62). The effect of transitivity of the second verb on patterns of pronoun retention has yet to be fully understood.

Although it is widely used in cases such as (62), it invokes a certain cost, in that the resultant structures run counter to the strong tendency to delete common subjects (110).

In case number 2. above, where an intransitive verb is followed by a transitive one, a different strategy may be employed, one which respects both the Principle of Pronoun Deletion, and that of Avoiding Discordant Agreement. In order to understand this strategy, it is useful to look first at an unproblematic case of clause linkage, involving a sequence of two intransitive verbs:

(113) $\boldsymbol{Ez}_i$ *rabû-$\boldsymbol{m}$* $\emptyset_i$ *çû-m* *nik* *mela-yê*
      1S get.up:PST-1S $\emptyset_i$ go:PST-1S PREP Mufti-OBL

      'I$_i$ got up and $\emptyset_i$ went to the Mullah' (Bozarslan Undated:58)

Here the first singular pronoun is in the Direct case and the verb *rabûm* agrees with it. Likewise, the following verb shows an identical agreement pattern, and the pronoun is deleted. Thus this sequence satisfies both the Principle of Pronoun Deletion, and the Principle of Avoiding Discordant Agreement. But when the second verb is transitive, and in the past tense, there is a problem, because the two verbs would not have the same agreement pattern. Particularly with the intransitive verbs *çûn* 'go', *hatin* 'come' or *rabûn* 'get up', what often happens is that the Oblique pronoun required for the A$_{PAST}$ of the **second** clause is placed at the beginning of the entire sequence, and the first verb is put into the default third person singular form. The following example is from the same text as (113):

(114) $\boldsymbol{min}_i$ *rabû* $\emptyset_i$ *ber-ê* *xwe* *da* *nik* *miftîyê*
      1S:OBL get.up:PST(3S) $\emptyset_i$ head-IZM REFL give:PST(3S) PREP Mufti-IZM
      Diyarbekir
      Diyarbakir

      'I got up and $\emptyset_i$ headed (lit. gave my head) to the Mufti of D.' (Bozarslan Undated:59)

This strategy appears to leave an Oblique pronoun, *min*, as the subject of an intransitive verb, *rabû*, which clearly violates the clause-internal grammar of Kurdish. But it achieves a remarkable gain in terms of the grammar of clause linkage, because it leaves both verbs with third person singular agreement, and permits pronoun deletion in the second clause. This strategy is briefly mentioned by Blau and Barak (1999:67) (although they suggest that it is

restricted to the verbs *hatin* 'come' and *çûn* 'go', which is not the case).
They provide further examples, such as the following:

(115) ***te**$_i$ hat   ∅$_i$ xwarin da   me*
       2S:OBL come:PST(3S) ∅$_i$ food   give:PST(3S) 1PL:OBL

       'You came and gave us food' (Blau and Barak 1999:67)

(116) ***min**$_i$ çû   ∅$_i$ cot-ek   sol   li bazar-ê kirî*
       1S:OBL go:PST(3S) ∅$_i$ pair-INDEF shoe at market buy:PST(3S)

       'I went and bought a pair of shoes at the market' (Blau and Barak
       1999:67)

Blau and Barak (1999) suggest that in such contexts, the verbs *çûn* and *hatin*
"behave like transitive verbs". However, the more important point appears
to me not that they 'take an Oblique subject', but rather that the entire
sequence of clauses is treated as a single unit in terms of case assignment. For
this reason I will refer to this strategy as the **verb serialisation strategy**,
because it subordinates the case and agreement alignment of the intransitive
verb to that of the transitive verb.

The verb serialisation strategy is predominantly used with first and second
person subjects,[26] where a conflict of agreement patterns would arise. With a
third person singular subject, both the initial intransitive and the subsequent
transitive verb usually carry third person singular agreement (or, in the case
of the past transitive verb, no agreement) which do not appear to clash,
hence permitting juxtaposition of the clauses with pronoun deletion in the
second, and no further adjustment:

(117) *feqîr **çû**   ji xwe re   nan **anî***
       poor go:PST(3S) ADP REFL ADP bread take:PST(3S)

       'The poor (man) went (and) took bread for himself' Lescot (1940:38)

The motivation for verb serialisation is to be sought in the principles deter-
mining patterns of clause linkage, described above, to which clearly clause-
internal grammar can be sacrificed. The serial verb strategy is also attested

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[26]One of the four examples cited by Blau and Barak (1999) involves a preposed third
person singular Oblique subject. I have also come across such an example: *Ewî jî hat, bi
edeb kumê xwe rakir ...* 'He(OBL) too came, ∅ raised his hat politely ...' (Şemo 1977:22).
However, this strategy is undoubtedly much more frequent with first and second person
subjects. The example just cited may in fact result from the widespread collapse of the
third singular and third oblique forms of the pronoun in dialects of the North and West.

in other Iranian languages, for example Balochi (a simplified gloss has been added):

(118) **_kiṭagā_**   *šu, dān git,   ārt*
        grasshopper:PL:OBL went grain bought brought

'The grasshoppers(OBL) went, bought grain and brought (it)' (Korn Forthcoming, citing Farrell 2004)

Here the common subject is in the Oblique case, as required by the second and third (transitive) verbs, but not by the first. Commenting on this and similar examples, Korn notes that the first verbs can be interpreted as a kind of converb. This is precisely what is suggested by the label 'verb serialisation strategy'.

Note finally that the verb serialisation strategy is not the only solution found in intransitive-transitive sequences. Probably commoner is the pronoun insertion strategy mentioned above:

(119) *em rabû-n   û **me**   rê şaş   kir*
        1PL get.up:PST-PL and 1PL:OBL way confused do:PST(3S)

'We set off and **we** got lost' (lit. confused the way) (Ritter 1971:10, transcription modified)

It is probably significant that in this example the two clauses are linked by the conjunction *û* 'and'. The verb serialisation strategy is not possible when the two clauses are separated by a conjunction, at least I have found no counter-examples in texts to this generalisation in texts. This would also tie in with the observations of Matras (1997) that the use of an overt clause linker reduces the degree to which sequential clauses are fused together, and hence increases the likelihood of pronoun retention.

The third strategy for adjusting clauses to comply with the principles of clause linkage is to **adjust the agreement of the second clause**, bringing it into line with that of the preceding one. This strategy is restricted to plural number agreement, but it is extremely common there, and in probaby most dialects it now has the status of a rule. Typically, this occurs in sequences of intransitive-transitive clauses, that is type 2. above. Numerous examples of this type have already been provided, though not from the perspective of clause linkage. A particularly clear example is (94), repeated here for convenience:

(94) *Se û biçîk-êt gund-   li   gurg-î   kum   bî-n*
      dog and small-IZP village-OBL ADP wolf-OBL together become:PST-PL

      û   gurig di selk-ê   da   kuşt-in
      and wolf adp basket-OBL ADP kill:PST-PL

      'The dogs and small (children) of the village **surrounded(pl)** the
      wolf and ∅ **killed(pl)** the wolf in the basket'

Examples of this type are rampant throughout Kurmanji, and require no
further illustration here.

4.7.1   Summary of clause linkage and agreement

In this section I have attempted to describe certain types of agreement as
compromise solutions in response to the pressures of discourse structure, and
the demands of clause-internal grammar that demand certain constellations
of case and agreement. The relevant principles for discourse are the following:

(120) **Delete Common Subjects**
       If a clause has the same subject as the immediately preceding clause,
       delete the subject pronoun.

(121) **Avoid Discordant Agreement Sequences**
       Avoid sequences of same-subject clauses, with deleted subjects but
       with distinct agreement markers on the verb.

In some contexts, the two principles are in competition with each other, and
in competition with the demands of clause-internal grammar. The three
'compromise' strategies attested are:

1. Pronoun retention. Satisfies the demands of clause-internal syntax,
   satisfies Avoid Discordant Agreement, but violates Delete Common
   Subjects.

2. Verb serialisation. Satisfies Delete Common Subjects and Avoid Dis-
   cordant Agreement, but violates clause-internal grammar.

3. Adjustment of verb agreement. Satisfies Delete Common Subject and
   Avoid Discordant Agreement, but violates clause-internal grammar.

While this is far from being a comprehensive account of the interaction of agreement and clause linkage, it represents a further development of the ideas in Matras (1997) in that it identifies additional factors and allows the formulation of certain predictions. Obviously such an account could be further formalised in an Optimality Theory framework, but for the present, this level of formality is sufficient. Notice how the intuitive remark of Wurzel (1997), quoted above, that verbs are put into the plural to 'avoid repetition of the pronoun', is precisely in the spirit of this account. Put into the above terms, it can be re-phrased as: Adjustment of verb agreement satisfies Delete Common Subjects.

4.8 Summary of alignment

Despite the ergative morphology, Kurdish has a robust category of syntactic subject based on the union of S and A, i.e. typical accusativity across both tenses. The only sullying factor is a certain reluctance to delete pronouns when they would be in different cases, but this is a more general characteristic which should not be taken as evidence for syntactic ergativity. On most standard accounts, the canonical ergative construction appears to be a mirror image of the accusative construction. However, closer examination of actual texts, and of the range of variation found, reveals a number of subtle differences. As far as case marking is concerned, the—presumably archaic— features of A_{PAST} in the Oblique case and O_{PAST} in the Direct are surprisingly stable throughout the Northern Group. Where instability occurs, it is the Direct marking of the O_{PAST} which is most vulnerable to change. The commonest development is one which leads to an Oblique O_{PAST}, hence a double Oblique construction. From a 'discriminatory' perspective on case marking, such a development is hard to explain. However, I have suggested that the prime motor of change is not preserving the discriminatory function, but maintaining (or re-establishing) a common canonical clause structure across the past and the present tenses. The minimal change necessary to achieve a high degree of uniformity in actual usage is to put the O_{PAST} into the Oblique case.

The differences between the present and past tenses are most striking in the area of verbal agreement. Agreement in the past transitive construction is not simply 'agreement with the O_{PAST} in person and number', in the way that agreement in the present tenses is with S and A. The clearest area of

difference is the manner in which number is reflected on the verb in the past tenses. Throughout the Northern Group, number agreement can be either with the O_{PAST}, or with the A_{PAST}, depending on the factors Distance and Saliency of the O_{PAST}. I term this A_{PAST} dominant plural agreement. This is obviously quite different to number agreement in the present tenses, which is exclusively with the A. I have argued that agreement in the past tense only consistently recognizes three values: first person O, second person O, and plural. In this sense, it is already impoverished, and less 'grammatical' than that of the present tenses, where agreement distinguishes overtly three persons, and consistently reflects the person of the A_{PRES} only, regardless of any other factors. In the past tenses, the tendency is for agreement to atrophy, so that for some dialects it has been claimed that past transitive verb forms show no agreement, as in the Diyarbakır dialect investigated by Dorleijn (1996). The lability of agreement patterns in the past tense allows discourse factors to impose on clause-internal grammar, and as we have seen, the latter may be sacrificed to satisfy the demands of clause linkage.

As for the chronology of these developments, I have suggested that at least as far as A_{PAST} dominant plural agreement is concerned, it may well reflect an older, common Proto-Kurdish characteristic rather than a new development, because comparable phenomena can be found in much earlier stages of Iranian. This explanation would account for the distribution of A_{PAST} dominant plural agreement in certain contexts throughout the Northern Group. If that is the case, the agreement pattern of Kurdish never was **fully** ergative.

Chapter 5

Alignment in Old Persian

Ideally, a theory of alignment change in Kurdish would be based on an exhaustive investigation of all the Iranian languages, at all stages in their attested histories. However, in view of the time depth of attestation (at least 2500 years), the large range of individual languages scattered across geographically disparate areas, and the controversies surrounding much of the genetic sub-grouping within Iranian, such an undertaking lies outside the scope of this book. This is particularly true in view of the guiding principle behind this study, namely that alignment shifts are grounded in discourse, and to understand them involves a thorough investigation not only of grammars, but of coherent running texts. What will be attempted in this chapter is a detailed investigation of one comparatively well documented and understood stage of Iranian, that known as Old Persian. The language embodied in the text corpus we refer to as 'Old Persian' is not a direct ancestor of Kurdish, so attempting to link the Old Persian data directly to the Kurdish data is a highly speculative enterprise. But in the absence of any data on the predecessors of Kurdish in the Old Iranian era, the data from Old Persian nevertheless represents the best available indirect source. I believe that a good deal can in fact be inferred from the Old Persian data, and that it provides sufficient substance to formulate a hypothesis on the emergence of certain alignment types. That in itself is a step forward, because it leads to claims which are testable against future studies based on data from other branches of Iranian.
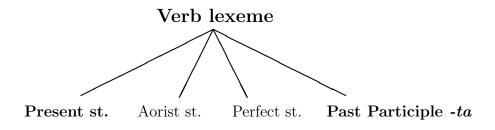
5.1   From resultative participle to finite verb

Tense-sensitive alignment is attested in all branches of the Iranian languages,
and in most of the Indo-Aryan languages as well. Even where a modern lan-
guage displays accusative alignment throughout, such as Persian, it can often
be demonstrated to have passed through a stage of tense-sensitive alignment.
It is therefore evident that the phenomenon must have its origins in common
Indo-Iranian.

   The roots of the development are generally linked to changes in the system
of verb morphology. The Old Iranian verb preserved most of the categories
reconstructed for Indo-European. A verb lexeme had, ideally, four stems (or
rather three, plus a participle in *-ta*, formed directly from the root and hence
placed here on the same level as the stems). The stems formed the basis for
further verbal categories, e. g. active and passive forms, distinct moods, and
of course person paradigms, which need not concern us here. In Old Persian,
the Perfect stem was already almost defunct (Drinka 2003:83, fn.5). Thus
at this stage already the verbal system had become simplified in compari-
son to what can be assumed for earlier stages of Iranian and Indo-European
generally. In the transition to Middle Iranian, the aorist stem went out of
use, leaving the (West Iranian) verbal system based on a single fundamen-
tal opposition between forms based on the present stem, and those based
on the participle.[1] This duality, with language-specific variations, is charac-
teristic of all the daughter languages and is ultimately at the heart of the
alignment mismatches in Iranian languages. With considerable simplifica-
tion, these developments are summed up in Figure 5.1.   Now unlike the
verb forms based on the present stem, the participle itself is not a fully ver-
bal form. It is essentially a deverbal adjective with resultative semantics,
and I will follow Nedjalkov (2001) in using the term 'resultative' participle
to refer to these verb forms. Such participles are often termed 'passive', or
'perfect', or 'passive perfect', but I believe the confusion here is not merely
terminological: the participles need to be distinguished terminologically from
various types of finite verb forms which more genuinely fit the definition of
passive discussed in Section 2.3—more on this in Section 5.3. The same par-
ticiples are of course used in periphrastic passive **constructions** in many
Indo-European languages, but it is a grave error to confuse the verb form

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[1]In East Middle Iranian, e. g. Sogdian, additional stems can be identified (Sims-
Williams 1989:187).

Figure 5.1: Overview of Old Iranian verb formation; forms that survived in Western Middle Iranian in bold type

Verb lexeme

Present st. Aorist st. Perfect st. **Past Participle *-ta***

itself with a functional description of a particular construction (to which, for example, an auxiliary verb also usually belongs). Thus in referring to these verb forms **as particular forms**, derived (be it inflectionally or derivationally, cf. Haspelmath 1996) from a particular verb lexeme, I will refer to them as resultative participles, or simply participles.

Although participles are forms of verb lexemes, and are traditionally considered a part of the paradigm of a verb, it is notable that they are both formally and semantically on the periphery of the verbal paradigm. Diachronically, participles often come adrift from their original verbal origins and develop a life of their own. In German some participles still survive from verbs that have otherwise gone out of use, for example *befangen*, *auserkoren*, or *verschollen*. Persian *xaste* 'tired' could also be mentioned. In other cases, the once irregular verbs may regularise, but the irregular participles continue to be used as adjectives after the rest of the verb paradigm has regularised: *molten*, the old participle of *melt*, or *sodden*, the old participle of *seethe*, or *shaven* from *shave* etc. Often participles lexicalize to become adjectives, e. g. English *tired, worn* etc. These erstwhile participles are now almost indistinguishable from other adjectives, and can be for example coordinated with them (e. g. *tired and thirsty, worn and dirty* etc.). In the case of *tired*, a comparative form *tireder* is now found. In Turkish, old participles

in *-Ik*, such as *del-ik* 'pierced' (also as a noun 'hole'), from *delmek* 'pierce', are now simply adjectives and nouns, but the resultative sense of the original verbal base is still evident. In Russian, resultative participles (but not active participles) have both a long and a short form, as do adjectives. Compare attributive use of the participle in **vypolnennyj** *plan* 'plan which has been fulfilled' (long form) with the short form in predicative function: *plan* **vypolnen** 'the plan has been/is fulfilled'.[2] Examples of resultative participles developing into adjectives could be multiplied at will.

The starting point for the development is the syntactic intransitivity of the participles, coupled with their stative/resultative semantics, features which bring them close to many simple adjectives. Thus resultative participles tend to have overlapping contexts with adjectives, and often share their morphological properties. One important context is in predicative function, where, like adjectives in many languages, they will often require the additional support of a copular verb. And again, like predicatively-used adjectives, whether with or without a copula, such predicatively-used participles are generally incapable of governing a direct object, i.e. they cannot assign Accusative case. Thus when used as predicates, they are invariably **intransitive**. These characteristics largely apply to the participles of Old Iranian, which Skjærvø (1985:223) notes were "probably originally only intransitive, denoting state." When used predicatively, such participles will assign a subject role to that NP coding the entity which has undergone the process or event expressed by the basic verb. Thus *this shirt is ironed* implies that the shirt has undergone the process of ironing. For participles derived from transitive verbs, the syntactic subject inevitably corresponds to the direct object of the base verb. For participles from intransitive verbs, it will correspond to the subject of the base verb.

These facts can be summed in the following three properties, which provide a minimal and informal specification of the **inherent lexical properties** of the *-ta* participles in Iranian:

1. In terms of temporal reference, they are **resultative**.

2. In terms of semantic roles, they are **patient or theme oriented**.

3. In terms of argument structure, they are **inherently intransitive**, in that they are incapable of assigning Accusative case.

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[2]I am grateful to Stephan Schnell for advice on the Russian examples.

These three properties have had far-reaching consequences for Iranian syntax. For although the participial forms were subsequently integrated into verbal paradigms, and came to inflect for person and mood in a manner that largely parallels the forms from the present stem, their patient-orientation, and their intransitivity, has been remarkably persistent (in the sense of Hopper and Traugott 1993). Indeed, I will claim that the intransitivity of participles has persisted in some Iranian languages down to the present.

Essentially then, the problem faced by the Iranian languages was that the sole verb forms available to express events in the past were inherently intransitive verbal adjectives. These had to express all types of propositions — including those normally expressed by the active forms of transitive verbs. The phenomenon commonly referred to as ergativity in the past tenses of languages like the Northern Group of Kurdish can be most fruitfully viewed as one means of adapting the **clausal syntax** to permit the expression of a two-participant event with a **lexically intransitive** predicate (cf. the discussion in Section 2.2.1 on lexical and clausal transitivity). In other words, it is one means of expressing two arguments in the clause, but without assigning the Accusative case. The inability of resultative participles to assign accusative case is not restricted to the Iranian languages, but is common throughout Indo-European. In the Germanic or Romance languages, for example, the problem has largely been solved by coupling the participle with a *have*-auxiliary, which is capable of assigning accusative case. In the East Middle Iranian language Sogdian, a similar construction is found in the past tenses, where the verb *ðār-* 'have' is used as an auxiliary in combination with the participles (Sims-Williams 1989:189).

5.2 The *manā kartam* construction

In the preceding section we briefly discussed the lexical semantics of the participles on which past tense verb forms in Iranian languages are based. In general, these issues are relatively straightforward, and the properties of such participles are remarkably consistent throughout Indo-European. However, the nature of the **syntactic structures** into which the Iranian participles were integrated has been the subject of intense controversy. In this chapter, I will first be reviewing some of the claims that have been advanced, before going on to propose some alternatives. The discussion will focus on the evidence from the attested Old Persian corpus.

Old Persian refers to a corpus of texts dating from 6–4c. BC, recorded in cuneiform inscriptions. The longest texts, the Behistān inscriptions, are generally accompanied by translational equivalents in Elamite and Accadian, in some cases also by a version in Egyptian hieroglyphics. The language itself is considered to have been spoken in southwestern Persia and was presumably the vernacular of the rulers of the Achaemenian dynasty, whose deeds are recounted in the inscriptions. According to Schmitt (2000:30–31), however, Old Persian played no role in the administration of the Empire. The linguistic interpretation of the attested Old Persian texts is rendered more straightforward by the fact that, unlike for example most Avestan texts, the inscriptions are available to us in their original form, i. e. they have not been passed down through a series of copyists. Nevertheless, three main difficulties remain: First, the corpus is quite restricted in size. Second, the cuneiform script coupled with damage to parts of the inscriptions renders some passages difficult to interpret. Finally, the texts are written in a stylised and formulaic register. As Schmitt (2000:30) notes, the inscriptions were not intended primarily to be read—some were inscribed in cliff faces too high to be read, or built into the foundations of buildings. The main purpose of the inscriptions appears to have been representational rather than communicative. This raises doubts as the extent to which the syntax of the inscriptions will reflect the syntax of 'normal' spoken language. Clearly then, when interpreting the syntax of Old Persian, a good deal of caution is required. Despite these difficulties, most previous research on the evolution of tense-sense alignment in Iranian has taken as its starting point certain features of Old Persian.

My presentation of the material is based on the version of the text corpus in Kent (1953). Although Kent's readings of the text have in some cases since been superseded (cf. for example Brandenstein and Mayrhofer (1964), Schmitt (1990) and Schmitt (1999) for more recent interpretation), for the sake of consistency, all examples follow Kent's transcription and system of cross-referencing, unless indicated otherwise. Thus I continue to write *kartam* instead of the now more usual *kr̥tam*. Where more recent scholarship has shown Kent's readings to be mistaken, supplementary notes and references have been added. The examples have been supplied with a highly simplified morphological glossing: only those inflectional categories considered relevant for the syntactic analysis of each example have been included. Furthermore, both active Aorist and Imperfect are given a unified gloss as PAST, because the difference in meaning is slight and does not appear to be relevant here (see Kent (1953:90–91) on the use of the two tenses).

Much of the discussion on the emergence of ergativity and related constructions in Iranian has focussed on Old Persian constructions such as the following:

(122)   *ima tya*   ***manā kartam** pasāva yaθā xšāyaθiya abavam*
       that which 1S:GEN do:PTCPL after   when king   become:PST:1S

       'This (is) that (which) **was done by me** after (I) became king' (Kent 1953:DB I,28–29)

This particular phrase, with minor variations, is repeated in the texts at least twenty times, suggesting a strongly formulaic character. I shall refer to constructions of this type as **m. k. constructions**. The m. k. construction consists of:

1. a subject NP, in the nominative case (here the 'relative article' *tya*, Nominative Neuter Singular)

2. a NP in the Genitive case expressing an Agent (here *manā* 'first person singular Genitive')

3. A resultative participle in *-ta*, here *kartam*, from *kar-* 'do, make', carrying Nominative Singular Neuter ending in agreement with *tya*.

Optionally, the construction may be extended with a form of the copula verb *bav-*. An example with the copula (showing its suppletive present stem) is the following (on the form of the pronoun, see below):

(123)   *utā=maiy*   *aniyasçiy vasiy **astiy***   *kartam*
       and=1S:GEN much   else   COP:PRES:3S do:PTCPL

       'and much else was done by me' (Kent 1953:DB IV,46)

However, it is unclear what factors influence the presence or absence of the copula.

Another possibility for expressing the Agent-phrase was through a clitic form of the Genitive pronoun, as in (124):

(124)   *avaθā=**šām***   *hamaranam kartam*
       thus=3PL:GEN battle   do:PTCPL

       'thus **by them** battle was done' (Kent 1953:DB III,18–19), cf. also DB III,40, 47–48,63–64,68–69;DB II,27,42,47,56,98

We will examine the precise nature of these constructions in more detail
below. For the time being it suffices to note that, just as in the ergative
construction in Kurmanji (Section 4.3), the Agent of (122) is in an oblique
case, and the verb form agrees with the Subject (semantically a Patient).
According to Benveniste (1952/1966), the claim that the ergative construc-
tion in modern Iranian goes back to the Old Persian m. k. construction was
first put forward by W. Geiger in 1893, and has generally been accepted by
scholars of Iranian languages since. In other words, it is generally assumed
that the m. k. construction is in some sense the direct precursor of the later
non-accusative alignments in modern Iranian languages. This is an assump-
tion that I will adopt in what follows, but it should be evident that, given the
restricted nature of the Old Persian text corpus, and what was said in Chap-
ter 3 concerning reconstructing syntax in general, this assumption is at best
an informed guess, largely adopted through lack of practicable alternatives.

5.2.1   Previous interpretations of the *manā kartam* construction

There are two distinct interpretations of the m. k. construction in the liter-
ature: the possessive interpretation, advocated by Benveniste (1952/1966)
and Anderson (1977), and the passive interpretation put forward by, among
others, Cardona (1970), Statha-Halikas (1979), and Skjærvø (1985). The
latter view has, at least terminologically, now been largely accepted in Ira-
nian philology (cf. Bynon (1979), Bynon (1980), Payne (1980), Payne (1998),
Bubenik (1989)) and in historical linguistics generally, e. g. Harris and Camp-
bell (1995:243–244). In fact, reducing the issue to two apparently incompat-
ible alternatives, i. e. passive vs. possessive, is a gross oversimplification, as
will become apparent.

5.2.1.1   The possessive interpretation (Benveniste 1952/1966)

Benveniste's article is perhaps the most widely-cited contribution to the de-
bate on the m. k. construction. In evaluating his proposals it should be noted
that the bulk of the article is concerned with broader parallels between pos-
session and passive from a cross-language perspective, for which the Iranian
data is quoted as supportive evidence. His claims on Iranian take up just four
pages, and are of a brief and programmatic character. Essentially, Benveniste
claims two things: (i) the m. k. construction displays clear parallels with the

possessive construction, which also involves a fronted Genitive: *manā pitā* 'my father' (cf. 122). The parallels also extend to the use of a clitic pronoun to express the possessor. Compare the use of the clitic pronoun =*taiy* 'second person singular' to express a possessor in (125), and the clitic pronoun =*šām* 'third person plural' expressing Agent in (124), a phrase attested many times in the corpus and repeated here for convenience:

(125) **Possessor as clitic**

*utā=**taiy**   tauhmā vasiy biyā*
and.also=2S:GEN seed   much may.be

'and may you have much seed' (lit: 'and may your seed be much/to you may be much seed') (Kent 1953:DB IV,75)

(124) **Agent-phrase as clitic**

*avaθā=**šām**   hamaranam kartam*
thus=3PL:GEN battle   do:PTCPL

'thus **by them** battle was done'

Largely on the basis of these parallels, Benveniste suggests that the m. k. construction is essentially possessive in nature. He draws further parallels to comparable structures in other Indo-European languages (e. g. the Latin *mihi est* type), concluding that the m. k. construction is "un parfait *actif* d'expression *possessive*" (Benveniste (1952/1966:180), original emphasis).

Note that in Benveniste's formulation the term 'active' already occurs, and this leads us to Benveniste's second claim: (ii) The m. k. construction is not a passive. The argumentation in support of this claim is runs as follows. According to Benveniste, a construction can only be considered 'passive' if the verb form is clearly marked morphologically as a passive. In fact, Old Persian did have such verb forms:

(126)   *upariy avām θikām hadiš **frāsahya***
        on   that   rubble palace construct:PASS:PST

        'On that rubble the palace **was constructed**.' (Kent 1953:DSf,27)

In order to avoid confusion, I will refer to passive verb forms of this type as **synthetic passives**, i. e. finite verb forms with overt passive morphology distinguishing them from the active forms of the same verb lexeme. These are to be distinguished from participles, which **can** be employed in constructions

with passive meaning, but are not (originally at least) finite verb forms. Now when Old Persian synthetic passives occur with an overt Agent-phrase, it is marked with the preposition *hačā*. According to Benveniste, this makes the Agent-phrase with *hačā* a defining feature of the passive construction in Old Persian. Therefore, because the apparent Agent-phrase in the m. k. construction is not of this type, but a Genitive, as in (122), the m. k. construction cannot be considered a passive.

There are several immediate difficulties with Benveniste's claims. For a start, it is unclear in what sense the m. k. construction is 'possessive'. Semantically, it does not express 'possession', at least not in the narrower sense of the word, but quite simply 'completion of an activity'. Now the links between perfective aspect and possession are pervasive, and have been discussed in connection with the rise of *have*-perfects many times. Likewise, the link between expressions of possession and expressions of agentivity are widely attested—cf. for example Allen (1964). Benveniste went on to note historical parallels in the expression of possession and the development of the perfect tenses in many languages, and these certainly appear well-founded. However, his blunt statement that the m. k. construction 'is' possessive was bound to evoke negative reactions, in particular as he makes no effort to define just what he means by a possessive construction, nor what the term 'active' denotes in this context. The point that Benveniste was really making is not so much that the construction 'is' possessive; rather, the point is that the use of the so-called 'Genitive' (a misnomer, as I will argue in Section 5.6) in the m. k. construction parallels its use in possessive constructions. And in this respect, I believe he is fully correct; these issues will be dealt with in some detail below. However, the bulk of the criticism against Benveniste's proposals has been less concerned with the issue of possession, but has targetted his claims regarding the non-passive nature of the m. k. construction, to which we will now turn.

5.2.1.2   The passive interpretation: Cardona (1970), Statha-Halikas (1979), Skjærvø (1985)

Benveniste's claim that the m. k. construction is not a passive has been subject to considerable criticism. One argument against Benveniste comes from Cardona (1970). He points out that, contrary to Benveniste's second point above, synthetic passive verbs in Old Persian (cf. ex. 143) can in fact take

an Agent-phrase in the Genitive, for which Cardona cites a single example.[3] According to Cardona, this means that the m. k. construction shares the same form of the Agent-phrase with the genuine passive, hence invalidating Benveniste's main line of argument. But as Statha-Halikas (1979) has pointed out, the form of the Agent-phrase is not a particularly good basis for establishing the status of any construction. Agent-phrases may take several different forms, even in one and the same language. They often correspond to some form of oblique phrase used in other constructions—consider for example the numerous functions of English *by*, German *von, durch*, French *par* etc. Thus just because some passive clauses have an Agent-phrase in the Genitive, as does the m. k. construction, it does not necessarily follow that the m. k. is a passive. Rather, it is only evidence that the Genitive case may fulfill multiple functions in different constructions — see Section 5.6.

The most telling evidence in favour of a passive interpretation of the m. k. construction comes from the fact that participial constructions occur in Old Persian **without** any form of overt agent at all. This point is made most clearly by Skjærvø (1985), who draws attention to examples of participial constructions such as the following:

(127) *xšaçam tya   hacā amāxam taumāyā **parābartam**   āha*
       kingdom which from our   family   taken.away:PTCPL bePST:3S

       'the kingdom which **was taken away** from our family' (Kent 1953:DB I,61–62)

(128) *vasiy aniyašciy naibam **kartam** anā Pārsā*
       much other   good   do:PTCPL in Persepolis

       'much other good (construction) **was built** in Persepolis' (Kent 1953:XPa,13–14)

(129) *. . . tya bardiya **avajata***
       . . . that Smerdis slay:PTCPL

       '. . . that Smerdis **had been slain**' (Kent 1953:DB I,32)

In these constructions, the participle in *-ta* is used predicatively, in (127) with additional copula support (*āha* 'was') and in (128) and (129) without the copula. Essentially, we appear to have a construction identical to the

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[3]One other example of this construction, with almost identical wording, is attested in Old Persian.

m. k. construction in (122) and (124), but with no overt indication of an Agent.

Schematically, we can present the two attested types of Old Persian participial constructions as follows:

(130)   Agentless and agented participial constructions in Old Persian:

  a. X (is) done   [cf. (127)]

  b. by me X (is) done   [= the m. k. construction, cf. (122)]

Constructions of type (a) are the translational equivalents of passives in better-known languages. Furthermore, the existence of these constructions demonstrates that the Agent-phrase in the m. k. construction (b) **must be considered facultative**. This property apparently makes the construction resemble a passive even further. Furthermore, the (a) type is attested with a variety of different verbs in Old Persian, whereas the (b) type is attested with only a single verb, *kar-* 'make, do' (Skjærvø 1985:219).[4] The (a) type is also solidly attested in Vedic and Avestan, as well as in other branches of Indo-European (Statha-Halikas 1979:355–356). From this perspective, the m. k. construction (b) is merely the agented version of the quite unremarkable analytic passive construction in (a). Benveniste's focus on the (b) construction, to the exclusion of (a), appears therefore quite unwarranted.

Skjærvø (1985:218) goes on to conclude that, contrary to Benveniste's claims, the m. k. construction shows all the features generally associated with an Agented passive construction:

> 1) the predicate is a form of the verb with passive meaning, 2) the direct object of the corresponding active structure becomes grammatical subject of the passive one, 3) the grammatical subject of the corresponding active structure if present in the passive one, becomes agent and is usually marked by a special morpheme [. . .].

Skjærvø (1985:217) also rejects Benveniste's claims regarding the possessive nature of the construction. His reasons for doing so are (a) because "*manā*

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[4]The example with the reconstructed participle *xšnūtam* 'heard', quoted by Benveniste (1952/1966:178) and repeated by Statha-Halikas (1979:350), is, according to Skjærvø (1985), not reliable. However, there is another candidate for an m. k. construction with a different verb, which Skjærvø (1985) does not mention: DSf,19–20, with the participle *framātam* from 'command'.

kartam obviously functions as a verbal clause in O[ld] P[ersian], not a noun clause", and (b) because they ignore the non-Agented—and patently non-possessive—constructions discussed above in connection with (130a). This latter claim appears to be based on the conviction that a possessive construction is necessarily based on a NP, a proposal that is scrutinised in Sections 5.7 and 5.8.

Terminologically at least, the verdict passed in Iranian studies is that the m. k. construction originates in a passive. This view has had far-reaching consequences. In fact, it is fair to say that the assumption that the origin of the m. k. construction is a passive essentially pre-determines the formulation of theories accounting for the alignment shifts in Iranian. In the next section, we will briefly examine the mainstream view of the emergence of ergativity within typology.

5.3   Explanations in typology: The 'transfer of subject properties' view

Any account of the alignment shifts in Iranian requires the reconstruction of a series of steps that (a) are empirically well-grounded, i. e. supported by the available evidence in the relevant languages; (b) are conceptually plausible in that only steps that comply with established principles of grammatical and semantic change are involved; (c) fulfill the requirements of maximal generality and economy required of scientific theories. On the assumption that the m. k. construction was an agented passive, the fact requiring explanation is how a passive construction developed into an ergative one.

From this perspective, two interrelated processes must be assumed. First, a shift in the status of the Agent-phrase. It will be recalled from Section 2.3 that in a prototypical agented passive, the Agent-phrase is an optional, peripheral constituent to which few if any syntactic rules apply. In other words, it is only minimally integrated into the syntax of the clause (Comrie 1988). The A of a prototypical ergative construction on the other hand is a core argument of its clause, and will ideally control several, if not all of the syntactic properties generally associated with subjects in the language concerned. However, as noted earlier, along the four parameters discussed there exist numerous intermediate stages between a prototypical passive and a prototypical ergative. For example, although Samoan is analysed as having

an ergative construction, and the A is duly characterised as a core argument, it is nevertheless not prototypically 'core', because it is optional, and because it is not favoured over other arguments in controlling certain syntactic processes (Mosel and Hovdhaugen 1992:717). A diachronic corollary of the typological continuum between passive and ergative constructions is the assumption that passives can, through a series of gradual changes, evolve into ergatives. Such a change must involve (among other things) two components. First a shift of subject properties, away from the Patient/Theme argument of the passive clause to the A of the ergative construction. Second, a change in the markedness of the verb form. In the passive construction, the verb is the marked member of a voice opposition. In the ergative construction, it is the unmarked, active form of the verb. Schematically, and somewhat simplified, these two processes are summarised in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Two dimensions of the passive-to-ergative change

	PASSIVE $\implies$	ERGATIVE
STATUS OF AGENT-PHRASE	Peripheral, no syntactic rules make reference to it	Core argument, at least some syntactic rules must be formulated with reference to A
MARKEDNESS OF VERB FORM	Marked member of a voice opposition (implies the existence of an unmarked active voice)	Unmarked verb form (no corresponding lesser-marked verb form in the system)

    The most detailed account of changes along these lines is Estival and Myhill (1988). Like much work in diachronic syntax, their account draws ultimately on the insights of Keenan (1976). Keenan investigated the properties of NPs traditionally termed 'subjects' in a wide variety of languages, and found that there was in fact no single defining feature that would account for subjecthood cross-linguistically. On this basis he compiled a catalogue of some 30 properties, each of which appeared to be relevant in defining 'subject' in at least one language. The properties were divided into two broad classes: coding properties and behavioral properties. Coding properties are formal

properties reflected in overt morphological marking, such as case marking and agreement patterns. For example, it can be claimed that in German, subjects exhibit the following coding properties: They are in the Nominative case, reflected in the form of accompanying determiners, and they determine the agreement on the verb in person and number. It might of course be argued that agreement should be considered a behavioral rather than a coding property because of its syntactic dimension. However, standard accounts (Cole et al. 1980) consider agreement in languages like German to belong to the coding properties, because it involves formal expression through bound morphology, and I will continue traditional usage here in assigning agreement to the coding properties rather than the behavioral properties.

Behavioral properties on the other hand refer to the behavior of particular NPs with regard to syntactic processes, for example deletion in imperative constructions, raising, accessibility to relativization, or coreferential deletion in coordinate clauses. Keenan's multi-factorial approach paved the way for a crucial insight: the properties of subjecthood need not necessarily all coincide on a single NP in a particular clause; instead, they may be spread across two (or perhaps more) NPs. We have already encountered examples of such spread subjecthood in the Kurmanji ergative construction presented in Chapter 4. The O controls agreement on the predicate, a typical coding property of subjects, while the A controls the reference of reflexives, a typical behavioral property of subjects.

The implications of this approach for diachrony were articulated with particular reference to ergativity by Comrie (1978), and by Cole et al. (1980) from a broader perspective. Cole et al. developed a theory according to which subject properties could gradually transfer from a subject to a non-subject NP, and the latter would eventually then become the full subject of the construction under consideration. Much of the empirical support for this notion, which I will refer to as **transfer of subject properties**, stems from the Germanic languages, which have since become a textbook example for the transfer of subject properties.[5] Cole et al. also formulated principles of syntactic change which they considered to be universal. The most important of these claims are that (a) the acquisition of subjecthood always begins with an NP with **no** subject properties (Cole et al. 1980:742); and (b) syntax before morphology, that is, the transfer of subject properties begins with behavioral

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[5]More recently, however, Eythórsson and Barððal (2003) have questioned Cole et al.'s interpretation of the Germanic data.

properties, and is then followed by coding properties. In other words, no case is attested of a language where a non-subject acquires the coding properties associated with subjects of that language before it has acquired the behavioral properties associated with subjects. Thus the diachronic acquisition of subjecthood encompasses a fixed developmental sequence.

Estival and Myhill (1988) developed a more general theory for the emergence of ergativity, essentially drawing on the notion of transfer of subject properties sketched above.[6] A broad synopsis of this view is given below (here I use the terms 'syntactic subject properties' for 'behavioral properties', and 'morphological subject properties' corresponds to 'coding properties'). The division of the process into single stages is largely for the sake of clarity; it should not be understood as implying the existence of a specific number of discrete steps in the process:

Stage 1
A deverbal adjective with resultative/passive sense acquires the ability to take an Agent-phrase:

the window was broken ⇒ the window was broken by me

Stage 2
The Agent-phrase, presumably via some form of topicalisation, begins to acquire syntactic (i.e. behavioral) subject properties. Likewise, the deverbal adjective acquires some of the properties of a finite verb form (integration into tense/aspect oppositions, expression of mood etc., no longer reliant on copula support etc.):

by me—the window (was) broken

Stage 3
The Agent-phrase acquires more syntactic subject properties, concommitantly the O loses them (control of reflexives, coreferential deletion, target of imperatives etc.).

Stage 4

by-me the window broken

is now the formally and pragmatically unmarked way of saying 'I broke the window'. The A NP has full syntactic subject properties, and may acquire some morphological ones (e.g case and agreement).

After Stage 4 has been reached, a further possible step is that the O NP acquires overt Object-properties, for example Accusative case marking. In

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[6]Estival and Myhill (1988) claim that **all** ergative constructions evolved from passives, a claim that has since been refuted (Dixon 1994:189).

that case, the final outcome is a Nominative-Accusative construction.

Estival and Myhill (1988:478) cite the Iranian case as "the only historically documented example of the full development [. . .] from passive to ergative and then accusative". For the authors, it is thus beyond doubt that the m. k. construction is an agented passive, hence at Stage 1. Stage 4 would be represented by, for example, the ergative construction in Kurmanji (4.3. The secondary development at Stage 4, the acquisition of **morphololgical** subject properties by the A, is represented by Persian (cf. exs. (1) and (2) in Chapter 1).

The scheme outlined above is conceptually elegant, and is congruent with a view of syntactic change as a gradual process involving small but incremental steps. Although not all scholars adopt the 'transfer of subject properties' terminology, essentially the same processes are assumed, and the origin is considered in all cases to be an agented passive. For example Harris and Campbell (1995:243–245) refer to the changes in terms of a reanalysis, (in keeping with the major thesis of their book, according to which reanalysis is the primary mechanism of syntactic change). Thus on their account, the passive m. k. construction is 'reanalyzed' as an ergative construction. More specifically, two rules are introduced: "a new rule of case marking for the past tense system only (case assignment has been reanalyzed as ergative)", and a new rule of agreement, again for the past tense system, according to which past tense verbs must agree with their "absolute arguments" rather than with their "subjects". This account leaves open the relative chronology of these changes, and aside from re-phrasing the observed changes in terms of two reanalyses, adds little of substance to the discussion.

In his brief discussion, Payne (1998:556) characterizes the development as follows:

> The reinterpretation of these constructions as active rather than passive, and the collapse of the genitive and dative into a single oblique case, gave rise to ergative constructions in which the original passive agent was reinterpreted as an A in the oblique case, while the original passive subject was reinterpreted as an O in the absolute case. The verb agreement was then also oriented towards the O [sic, presumably A is intended here, G.H.].

Although the terminology may differ, most scholars assume that the ergative construction emerged from an agented passive construction. As for the details of the later developments, they are content to adopt some version of the

'transfer of subject properties' account, although notably, few have chosen to verify this assumption on any but the small number of regularly cited examples.

Nevertheless, although the transfer of subject properties is an undeniably attractive framework for describing the putative change from passive to ergative, it also suffers from some significant drawbacks, summarised in Section 5.9. But before any theories on the development of ergativity in Iranian can be evaluated, it is necessary to assess the evidence relevant to the fundamental claim, namely that the predecessor of the ergative construction, the m. k. construction, really was an agented passive. Regrettably, the conclusion that the m. k. construction 'is' a passive has not been accompanied by any particularly clear statement on just what constitutes a passive in a given language. In Section 2.3, I outlined an approach to this problem according to which the passiveness of a particular construction can be more precisely evaluated. Passiveness is, on this view, a particular value on each of the following four parameters, which I repeat here for convenience:

1. **Argument structure of the verb form:** A passive verb form licenses a single core argument, a Patient or Theme

2. **Syntactic status of Patient/Theme:** The single core argument is a full subject, i. e. possesses all of the subject properties generally associated with the subject of an active intransitive verb in the language

3. **Systemic status of the verb form:** Within the paradigmatic system of verb forms available in the language, a passive verb form is the marked member of a voice opposition, contrasting with the unmarked active and derivable from it via a productive morphosyntactic process

4. **Syntactic status of Agent-phrase:** The Agent-phrase is optional; the construction is fully grammatical without it. If present, it has peripheral syntactic status, i. e. few if any syntactic rules make reference to it

Let us consider how the m. k. construction rates along each of these parameters. According to the first parameter, it is undeniably passive. But that follows from the lexical semantics of resultative participles, outlined in Section 5.1. On the second parameter, the m. k. construction is also arguably a prototypical passive, although it is difficult to assess whether the Patient/Theme

controls syntactic subject properties—see Section 5.9.1. However, the first two parameters alone are **not** sufficient to identify a passive verb form, because on these two parameters, active forms of unaccusative verbs such as *fall* or *die* would also qualify as 'passives'. Potentially more interesting are the parameters three and four, which we will examine in turn.

5.4 Participles in Old Persian

In this section, the evidence relevant to the third parameter mentioned above, that of the systemic status of the verb form, is evaluated. Before doing so, it is advisable to examine the Old Persian participles from a somewhat broader perspective, because in fact they cannot be simply equated with the finite verb forms of Old Persian. At this stage of Old Iranian, they still retain much of their 'participial' flavour, although the developments that led to their subsequent 'verbalization' (Estival and Myhill 1988) are already apparent.

5.4.1 Participles and the adjective-verb squish

Participles such as *kartam* in (122) occur in a number of constructions typical for this type of participle throughout Indo-European. Thus Kent (1953:90) simply states that the participles in Old Persian "have no peculiarities of syntax." According to Kent, they are used as attributive adjectives, e. g. *šiyātiš* **axšatā**[7] 'happiness **unbroken**' (DPe,23). They also occur in what is traditionally termed 'apposition', as in the following example with the participle *marta*, from the verb *mar-* 'die':

(131) *hauv utā jīva   šiyāta bavatiy utā **marta**   artāva bavatiy*
        he   and living happy becomes and die:PTCPL blessed becomes

        '...and he becomes happy alive and becomes blessed (when) **dead**' (i. e. 'as one who is dead') (Kent 1953:XPh,54–56)

Another example of an appositive function of a participle is the following, in which the participle *dītam*, from *dī-* 'deprive', is in apposition to the Accusative object *Gaumatam*:

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[7]Participle from *xšan-* with a privative prefix *a-*.

(132) *hya avam Gaumātam   tyam magum   xšaçam* ***dītam***
who that   Gaumata:ACC which Magian:ACC kingdom deprive:PTCPL
caxriyā
make:OPT:PERF

'. . . who might make that Gaumata the Magian deprived of the king-
dom' (Kent 1953:DB I,49–50)

In (131) and (132), the participles *marta* and *dītam* are indeterminate be-
tween an adjectival and a nominal reading. The latter could be interpreted
as 'one who is deprived', i. e. in a nominal sense, or simply 'deprived', i. e. ad-
jectival. In fact, participles are also used in functions which are quite clearly
nominal, as in the following, where *kartam* from the verb *kar-* 'do' has the
more concrete sense of 'work', and furthermore, heads an object NP, governed
by the finite *akunavam* 'did':[8]

(133) *yātā* ***kartam*** *akunavam*
until work   do:PST:1S
'until (I) did **the work**' (Kent 1953:DNa,51), cf. also XPh,45–46

In the following example, the participle is translated with 'building':

(134) *mām   pātuv   hacā vispā gastā uta=maiy   **kartam***
1S:ACC may.protect from all   evil   and=1S:GEN **building**

'may (he) protect me from all evil, and my building'[9] (Kent 1953:A²Sd,4)

Compounds based on *kartam* also occur as nouns:

(135) *vasiy tya   duškartam āha*
much which ill-done   be:PST:3S

'much which was ill-done / much ill-done was' (Kent 1953:DSe,31–
32), here the participle is arguably an adjective

Similarly, the (uncertain) *dastakartam* 'handwork' in DSe,42–43. Another
participle with a clearly nominal meaning is *dātam* 'law', the participle from
dā- 'give':

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[8]The form here resembles the Sogdian 'potentialis' (Sims-Williams 1989:189), where a
participle combines with a form of 'do' (Sogdian *kun*) or 'be, become'. It remains to be
seen whether this expression can be interpreted in the same light.

[9]The translation is from Kent (1953). It would not seem unreasonable to translate here
not with nominal 'building', but with a more verbal sense 'that which I have done/built',
in which case the phrase after *uta* would be a perfectly normal m. k. construction, with a
clitic Agent-phrase. The translation 'building' is presumably motivated by the preceding
context, where 'palace' occurs.

(136) *dātam tya   manā*
      law   which 1S:GEN

      'law of mine, my law' (Kent 1953:DNa,21), cf. also DSe,37–38

It is fairly obvious, particularly in the latter example, that such forms are the result of sporadic lexicalisation, a process which participles are clearly prone to, but which is by no means exclusive to participles.

As far as these non-predicative uses of the Old Persian participles is concerned, none of the examples suggests that they are significantly different from comparable participles in many Indo-European languages. Of greater interest is the use of participles in predicative function. We have already encountered such examples in the m. k. construction, both with and without an overt Agent-phrase (cf. (129) and (122) respectively). But the predicative use of participles is also attested with participles from intransitive base verbs. The first example involves two participles, *hagmata*, from *ham-gam-*[10] 'come together, assemble', and *paraitā*, from *para-ay-* 'go forth':

(137) *pasāva   hamiçiyā   hagmatā   paraitā*
      thereafter rebels:NOM:PL assemble:PTCPL:NOM:PL go.out:PTCPL:NOM:PL

      patiš   Dādaršim hamaranam cartanaiy
      against Dadarshi   battle   do:INF

      '...thereafter the rebels assembled (and) came out against Dadarshi to join battle' (Kent 1953:DB II,32–33), cf. also DB II,38,43,52,58

At least the second participle in (137) appears to function as an independent predicate.[11] Kent (1953:90) refers to *paraitā* as a "predicative noun in the nominative without the copula, serving as a finite verb". The reference to the nominative case is important: the two participles are both Nominative Plural, agreeing with the Nominative Plural *hamiçiyā* 'rebels'. Thus we have forms which, according to morphological criteria (nominal gender marking, case) are nominal. According to syntactic and functional criteria, they share similarities with finite (in the sense of independent) verb forms, heading their own (small) clauses. The verbal character is further emphasised by the ability to govern a prepositional phrase, *patiš Dādarši* 'against Dadarshi'.

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[10]Cf. Kent (1953:36–37) on the phonology of *hagmata-*.

[11]On Kent's translation, both participles are independent predicates ('assembled (and) came'), although one might wish to consider the first as some form of subordinated participial phrase 'having assembled', or 'as an assembled (group)'.

Examples of this type bear witness to the emergence of the participles as finite verb forms in Iranian languages. Presumably, this usage grew out of the appositional function discussed above: (137) could be interpreted in the sense of 'the rebels (are) having-assembled (and) having-come out against Dadarshi', from which the finite interpretation 'the rebels assembled and came out' can be readily inferred. The verbal sense of the participles would be reinforced by the omission of the copula, a frequent pattern in equational clauses in Old Persian. Compare for example expressions such as the following, with no overt copula:

> *adam Dārayavauš xšāyaθiya vazraka . . .* 'I (am) Darius (the)
> great king . . .' (DB I,1)
> *iyam Pārsa* 'this (is the) Persian' (DN,minor inscriptions)
> *manā pitā Dārayavauš* 'my father (was) D.' (XPf,16–17)

Another factor that would favour the reinterpretation of appositive participles as finite verb forms is the pervasive omission of topical NPs. An appositive participle could thus be readily interpreted as an independent predicate with a deleted 'subject', something I will also suggest is relevant in later languages (see Section 6.5.2).

A further indication of the increasingly verbal sense of participles is particular word order patterns. Kent (1953:95) states that "a predicate noun or adjective stands between the subject and the verb, unless the subject follows the verb", the latter being a pragmatically marked word order. Thus the normal order of constituents in a clause with a nominal or adjectival predicate is:

(138)   Subject   Noun/Adjective   (Copular-verb)

Two exceptions to this tendency noted by Kent involve participles (which Kent equates with "predicate adjectives") which **follow** the copular verb:

(139)   *aniyašciy vasiy astiy   kartam*
         much   other COP:3S do:PTCPL

         'much other (work) was done' (Kent 1953:DB IV,46–47)

In this example, the copula+participle complex resembles most closely an analytical verb form, in effect a periphrastic passive, as is for example assumed for Avestan by Skjærvø (1985:213). From such a construction it is but a small step to constructions without a copula, where the participle apparently serves as a finite verb, as in (128), repeated here for convenience:

(128)   *vasiy aniyašciy naibam kartam   anā   Pārsā*
       much other   good   do:PTCPL DEM:LOC Persepolis:LOC

       'much other good (construction) was built within this (city) Persepolis'

(140)   *ava ahyāyā   dipiyā   naiy nipištam*
       DEM DEM:LOC inscription:LOC NEG inscribe:PTCPL

       'that which in this inscription has not been inscribed' (Kent 1953:DB IV,47)

According to Skjærvø (1985:217), the participle in examples such as these can "on no account [. . .] be a mere verbal adjective, but clearly belongs in the system of the O[ld] P[ersian] finite verb." (original emphasis)

   In sum, we have seen that the participle, defined morphologically as a specific form in the verbal paradigm, has a number of apparently diverse syntactic functions. Participles occur as the heads of NPs, as adjectival modifiers in NPs, and as predicates. As such, they are a classic case of a 'noun-adjective-verb squish' category. In terms of inflectional categories, however, the Old Persian participle retains the nominal properties of gender and case agreement with its antecedent. The interpretation of participles, particularly when they occur in predicative positions, is extremely difficult. In such contexts they can, according to the context, be considered (a) predicate nouns, (b) predicative adjectives, or (c) verb forms. It is doubtless the availability of the latter interpretation which allowed them to gain a foothold as the functional (and later formal) equivalent of finite verbs. However, their adjectival/nominal origins are still abundantly evident in Old Persian.

5.4.2   The systemic status of participles in the Old Persian verb system

Having examined participles from a broader functional perspective, it is now necessary to focus on their predicative usage, and in particular, their status within the system of oppositions that made up the Old Persian verb system (i. e. parameter three from Section 5.3. The analysis of Skjærvø (1985:221) will serve as the basis for the discussion. Skjaervø's interpretation of the available Old Persian voice and tense distinctions is summed up in Table 5.2. It is important to note that the Old Persian tense system reflected in the corpus is "in a state of transition" (Skjærvø 1985:218); the

Table 5.2: The systemic status of participles in Old Persian

TENSE	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
PRESENT	+	+
IMPERF.	+	+
HABITUAL PAST	+	−
COMPLETED PAST	+	+
PERFECT	**m. k. construction**	

old Aorist and Perfect tenses were already largely defunct and were increasingly replaced by periphrastic constructions. The terms 'Habitual Past' and 'Completed Past' are from Skjærvø (1985). They describe possibilities available in Old Persian over and above the more widely recognized tenses Aorist and Imperfect.

Table 5.2 shows that for the present and imperfect tenses, both passive and active forms are attested. Likewise, Skjærvø (1985) finds a passive equivalent for the 'Completed Past'. For the (rare) 'Habitual Past', the only attested verb forms are active. But when we turn to the Perfect, the sole representative of this category is the participle used in the m. k. construction (with or without the copula). And the participle does service both in simple, apparently active clauses (i. e. with a participle based on an intransitive verb: *is gone*), and in apparently passive clauses (i. e. based on a transitive verb). In other words, at this point in the verb system, there simply is no active:passive opposition. Speakers (or writers) who wished to express events in the Perfect had no choice but to use the participles. Skjærvø (1985:222) himself concludes that there is no active:passive opposition in the perfect, but rather one of participles with an agent versus participles without an agent.[12] Note that this conclusion contradicts Skjaervø's earlier claim, quoted above, that the m. k. construction "has all the marks usually associated with [agented] passive structures". I would argue, based on the typological framework sketched in Section 5.3, that it lacks at least one, that of being the marked member of a voice opposition. And from a typological per-

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[12]Skjaervø (1985:222) in fact refers to this opposition as "transitive:intransitive", whereby transitive means with an Agent-phrase, and intransitive without one. But this is a purely syntactic distinction; the verb form itself remains unaffected by the presence or the absence of an Agent-phrase.

spective, it is typical of resultative participles to be voice neutral (Nedjalkov 2001:931).

Thus in terms of our third criterion, then, the m. k. construction falls short of a prototypical passive, because it does not contrast with an unmarked active. However, like many distinctions, this one too does not always permit perfectly clear-cut divisions. It could, for example, be argued that the m. k. construction does in fact contrast with an unmarked active, namely the Imperfect. For example, a construction widely attested in Old Persian is the following:

(141) *ima tya adam **akunavam***
       this which 1s   do:PST:1S

       'this is that (which) I did' (Kent 1953:DB IV,5–6)

It will be noted that (141) is largely parallel with (122), both verb forms being inside relative clauses, and both expressing a similar content. Kent (1953:88) interprets (122) as the passive version of (141), although strictly speaking, the tenses are different. How one interprets these facts will depend crucially on which categories are to be stipulated within which markedness relations are to hold. If we were to collapse the two categories of Perfect and Imperfect into a broader, semantically based category of 'Past', then we would find that the m. k. construction does indeed contrast with active verb forms (this is the standpoint adopted by Bynon 1980:152). The functional parallels between participial constructions and various types of finite active constructions in fact go even further:

(142) a. (Aorist)

       *avaθā hamaranam **akumā***
       then   battle   do:AOR:1PL

       'then (we) made battle' (Kent 1953:DB I,90)

   b. (Imperfect)

       *avadā hamaranam **akunauš***
       there   battle   do:IMPF:3S

       'there (he) made battle' (Kent 1953:DB II,23)

   c. (Participle, cf. (124))

       *avaθā=šām   hamaranam **kartam***
       thus=3PL:GEN battle   do:PTCPL

       'thus by them battle was done'

In (142), three distinct tenses are found all expressing, as far as one can tell, essentially the same temporal meaning. And the m. k. construction in (c) would appear to contrast with the Active Aorist and Imperfect, so there is an opposition after all.

However, if these three denote approximately the same event (ignoring the difference in Person), then one can justifiably ask what motivation there is for considering the (c) version the passive version of the others? It could equally represent a stylistic variant, perhaps reflecting finer aspecto-temporal distinctions, rather than a voice distinction. And if a voice distinction was intended, why could one not have used the available Passive Imperfect. In other words, although the m. k. construction occurs in an identical environment to the other two, it is by no means clear that they contrast in voice rather than in something else.

It will be evident that the issue of the systemic status of the verb forms in the m. k. construction is highly convoluted. However, it remains indisputable that within the tense identified as Perfect, there was no formal voice contrast available on the verb forms, a fact which Skjærvø (1985) recognizes quite clearly. Independently of Skjærvø (1985), Lazard (1984:242) comes to a similar conclusion:

> Le cas du participe en -*ta* est tout différent [from that of the synthetic passive, G.H.]. Dans le tour qui constitue le nouveau parfait, le parfait vivant (*manā krtam*), il ne s'oppose a rien: il n'est donc ni actif ni passif; ou plutôt, puisqu'il est seul et conséquent non marqué au point de vue de la diathèse, il se range du côté de l'actif, terme non marqué de l'opposition de diathèse.

Thus far as the systemic status of the participles are concerned, both Skjaervø and Lazard converge in their verdict that the m. k. construction is essentially voice-neutral. In fact, an adequate terminology does not seem to be available to express the relationships concerned. One solution, introduced by D.N. MacKenzie, is to refer to the distinction between an m. k. construction with and one without an Agent-phrase as the Agentless versus Agential construction, an opposition which MacKenzie considers fundamental for the later languages, and which in principle is applicable to the state of affairs in Old Persian as well. This terminology has the advantage of avoiding the connotations of transitive vs. intransitive, or active vs. passive, neither of which capture the relationships correctly—we return to this in the discussion of Kurdish in the next chapters.

When evaluating the markedness relationships, the diachronic dimension also needs to be borne in mind. The data given in (142) demonstrate nicely the beginnings of the collapse of the verb system. For apparently, even in Old Persian the three forms participle, Aorist and Imperfect had already converged functionally to a large extent. This is precisely what one would expect to have happened, given that later, the Aorist and Imperfect disappeared altogether and the participle took over all past expressions. Presumably the demise of the Aorist and Imperfect was a gradual process, perhaps proceeding lexeme for lexeme, and it must have been accompanied by a corresponding expansion of the functional load of the participles, leading to overlapping distributions such as that shown in (142). Within such a transitional system, symmetrical markedness distinctions may simply not have been available. It is probably arbitrary to attempt to identify a particular point during that— probably long—transitional process in which the participles ceased to form an opposition with the other forms. Nevertheless, for the later stages of the transition, in which the participles gradually emerged as the dominant form for all past contexts, it is clear that they cannot be considered the marked members of a voice opposition, hence the m. k. construction falls short of a prototypical passive on this count.

5.5 The Agent-phrase in the *manā kartam* construction

Of the four parameters for identifying passives listed in Section 5.3, the most controversial is the syntactic status of the Agent-phrase (in what follows I will occasionally abbreviate Agent-phrase to 'A', which should not be taken as a commitment to the core argument status of the phrase). If the A can be shown to be a peripheral element, to which no syntactic rules make reference, then we would have strengthened the case for treating the m. k. construction as a passive. If, on the other hand, it can be demonstrated that the Agent-phrase possesses at least some properties of a core argument, then the passive interpretation is weakened. These issues have received virtually no attention in the relevant literature up to the present. They are also rendered more speculative by the sketchy and formulaic nature of the attested texts; it is simply not possible to apply a kind of check-list approach for argumenthood to arrive at a simple yes/no answer. The m. k. construction occurs in only a

small number of highly repetitive and formulaic contexts, rendering sophisticated syntactic tests difficult to apply.[13] It will therefore be necessary to examine the entire construction as well as closely related constructions in some detail, before evaluating it in the light of findings from typology.

The first point to note is that the A of the m. k. construction is optional; participles occur without any form of A in Old Persian, as examples such as (129) demonstrate. For Statha-Halikas (1979) and Skjærvø (1985), the optionality of the A has been implicitly taken to imply a peripheral syntactic status, and the A has essentially been equated with the Agent-phrase of more familiar passive constructions, such as the *by*-phrase in English. But this is a very Euro-centric viewpoint. As we have already observed in the discussion in Section 2.3.1, there are languages (e. g. Samoan) where an A is optional, yet experts on the relevant languages have nevertheless chosen to analyse the A as a core argument, rather than as some form of peripheral constituent. From a typological perspective, then, optionality of the A is a necessary condition for peripheral syntactic status, but not a sufficient one. We will therefore ignore the optionality of the Agent-phrase and concentrate on other evidence that may give us some more reliable indication of the syntactic status of the A.

5.5.1   Clitic and non-clitic Agent-phrases

The Agent-phrase can be expressed in two ways. First, through an NP in the Genitive case. We will refer to this type as a **non-clitic A**. Second, it may be expressed in the form of a clitic pronoun, usually attached to the first constituent of the clause. I will refer to this type as a **clitic A**.

5.5.1.1   The non-clitic A

Only two forms are attested as non-clitic As: The first singular pronoun in the Genitive,[14] as in *manā* in (122), repeated here for convenience:

(122)   *ima tya*   **manā** *kartam*   *pasāva yaθā xšāyaθiya abavam*
        that which 1S:GEN do:PTCPL after   when king   become:PST:1S

        'That which was done **by me** after I became king'

---

[13]Schmitt (1999:103) suggests that all m. k. constructions occur in relative clauses. However, examples such as (124) are not relative clauses.

[14]There are two instances of this pronoun in what appears to be the accusative *mām* (A³Pa,26). These are discussed in below.

The second attested type of non-clitic A is the phrase =*maiy piça* 'my father', which will be discussed in connection with (175) below. Otherwise, non-clitic As are not attested.

5.5.1.2   The clitic A

The second type of Agent-phrase is the clitic pronoun (see Section 5.6.1 for details on cliticization). An example of a clitic A is (124), repeated here for convenience:

(124)   *avaθā=**šām**   hamaranan kartam*
       thus=3PL:GEN battle   do:PTCPL

       'thus by them battle was done'

According to Skjærvø (1985:219), the sole attested examples of clitic As involve either =*šām*, as in (124), or first person singular =*maiy*, as in (123), repeated here for convenience:

(123)   *utā=**maiy** aniyasçiy vasiy astiy   kartam*
       and=1S:GEN much   else   COP:PRES:3S do:PTCPL

       '. . . and much else was done by me'

Table 5.3 sums up the facts so far. Note that all Agent-phrases, with the possible exception of =*maiy piča*, discussed in connection with (175) below, express pronominal, and generally highly topical referents. This is rather a surprising finding given that cross-linguistically, the general function of a passive is to background a non-topical Agent; this issue is taken up in Section 5.9.1. However, as the texts deal mostly with the deeds of the narrator, the concentration of first person forms may be an artefact of the subject matter.

Table 5.3: Attested forms of the A in the m. k. construction

Non-clitic A	Clitic A
manā (122)	=*šām* (124)
=*maiy piça* (175)	=*maiy* (123)

5.5.2   The Agent-phrase in synthetic passives

Benveniste (1952/1966) pointed out that the Agent-phrase in the m. k. con-
struction was a Genitive, whereas the Agent-phrase of a synthetic passive
in Old Persian was a prepositional phrase with *hacā*. For Benveniste, this
meant that the m. k. construction could not be a passive. Unfortunately,
Benveniste did not get his facts entirely right. As it turns out, at least one
example of a synthetic passive with a Genitive Agent-phrase is attested (see
Cardona (1970) and Skjærvø (1985:214) for further discussion):

(143)   *avaiy Ūvjiyā   arikā   āha   uta=šām   Auramazdā naiy*
         those Elamites faithless COP:3PL and=3PL:GEN Ahuramazda NEG

         ayadiya
         worship:PST:PASS

         'those Elamites were faithless and **by them** Ahuramazda was not
         worshipped.' (Kent 1953:DB V,15–16)

Compare (143) with the following, in which the synthetic passive verb form,
ayadiya 'was worshipped' occurs without an Agent-phrase:

(144)   *yadāyā paruvam daivā ayadiya   . . .*
         where   previously Daivas worship:PST:PASS

         'where previously the Daivas were worshipped . . . ' (Kent 1953:XPh,39–
         40)

It would seem that the Genitive in (143) encodes a clearly peripheral *by*-
phrase type of constituent.[15] Benveniste also neglected to mention that syn-
thetic passives could have an Agent-phrase with the postposition *rādiy* 'on
account of' (see Skjærvø (1985:215) for the relevant examples). Later schol-
ars were quick to point out these oversights, and in consequence, Benveniste's
proposals lost much of their credibility. However, it is less clear to me to what
extent they invalidate Benveniste's broader claims. Let us briefly recapitu-
late the available evidence from Agent-phrases with synthetic passive verb
forms in Old Persian. First, we know that an agent could be expressed with
the preposition *hacā* followed by an Ablative. An example is the following:

(145)   *tya=šām   **hacā=ma** aθahya*
         that=3PL:GEN from=1S:ABL command:PST:PASS

         'what was said to them **by me**' (Kent 1953:DB I,19–20)

---

[15]See Lazard (1984:243–244) for discussion of the pragmatics of these examples.

However, note that this preposition is attested only in combination with the verb form 'was commanded', and it is not unreasonable to link this particular verb with the ablative sense of the preposition *hacā*. Kent (1953:87) implies just this when he refers to the Ablative expressing, for example, the person "from whom commands proceed (=agent)". In other words, the use of *hacā* could be interpreted semantically, i. e. as linked to the meaning of this particular verb, rather than as a general marker of Agents with passives. Second, we know that the postposition *rādiy* is attested in Agent-phrases, although according to Skjærvø (1985:215), there is some dispute regarding the agentive reading; an alternative (rejected by Skjaervø) is the reading 'on account of'. Third, the Genitive can be used, as in (143), for which again only a single verb is attested.

All in all, the evidence relevant to agented synthetic passives is thin. However, if we consider that even in the small number of agented passives attested we find **three distinct means of coding the Agent**, I believe we can conclude that in Old Persian, the expression of the Agent with synthetic passive forms of verbs was only very weakly grammaticalized, that is, it seems likely that semantic or other factors may have been involved in the choice of forms.

The situation could be considered similar to that found in modern English with the adjective *different*, where we find three types of complement: *different to; different from; different than,* and in addition, the adjective can be used without any complement and the object of comparison is left unstated (*he has a different car now*). The choice of complement is in part determined by stylistic or dialectal factors, in part by denotational semantics. It would be difficult to say that this is a single construction, or that it is four distinct constructions. Rather, we must accept that no single combination has yet become conventionalised, nor have the three options become consistently associated with different meanings. I believe this is analogous to the situation encountered with the Agent-phrases of synthetic passive verb forms in Old Persian: As in most older stages of Indo-European, agented passives were extremely rare (cf. Hettrich 1990). In Old Persian, the possibility of extending the synthetic passive was available, but the means for doing so were still subject to semantic and perhaps stylistic variation. To the extent that speakers or writers clearly had some choice of how (and whether) they expressed an Agent-phrase, examples such as (143) had not acquired the status of syntactic constructions.

Now contrast this situation to that obtaining in the m. k. construction. Here we find consistently only a single means of coding the A, namely with the Genitive. The fact that the Genitive also shows up with the synthetic passive, as in (143), is of less significance. Rather than telling us something about the m. k. construction, it merely highlights the fact that the functional range of the Genitive is quite considerable, as we shall explore below. A much more telling piece of evidence would have been if we had found an m. k. construction with a different type of A (e. g. with the preposition *hacā*). Significantly, this has not been forthcoming. Thus the A of the m. k. construction is expressed **consistently** with a particular case form, while the Agent-phrase of a true passive verb has three different possibilities, two adpositional and one case form.

In general, we can conclude that the Agent-phrase of the m. k. construction is more tightly grammaticalized than the Agent-phrase of the synthetic passives. There are two reasons for this: First, the synthetic passives show greater variation in the form of the Agent-phrase, as discussed above. Second, a case form such as the Genitive can be considered more grammatical (in the sense of Hopper and Traugott 1993) than an adpositional phrase. In this sense, then, Benveniste was right to point out the differences in the Agent-phrase between the m. k. construction and the synthetic passive, and right to draw a fundamental distinction between the two types of construction.

5.6   The Genitive case in Old Persian

We have etablished that the A of the m. k. construction has a comparatively consistent form, involving case rather than an adpositional phrase. But this alone does not bring us much closer to assessing the syntactic status of the A. As already mentioned, the restricted nature of the corpus make the usual syntactic diagnostics of limited applicability. We can, however, approach the problem from a different angle, that of the function of the Genitive case in Old Persian. In the analysis of case systems, it is commonplace to draw a distinction between structural (also termed grammatical, or syntactic, or core) and semantic (also termed concrete, or peripheral) cases. The former are restricted to the expression of grammatical relations, such as Subject, Direct Object, and Indirect Object (Blake 1994:32–34). Because they are primarily linked to grammatical relations, structural cases do not have a one-to-one correspondence with semantic relations, but may, depending on the context

(and the language) express a variety of different semantic relations. Semantic cases, on the other hand, express more directly specific semantic roles, such as Instrument, or Location. The number and nature of the cases assigned to each category will vary from language to language. In languages with rich case systems, such as the Daghestanian language Bagvalal, researchers may posit as many as five structural cases (Kibrik 2003:40), elsewhere there may be fewer. Of course the distinction between structural and semantic case carries both terminological and conceptual problems with it, and it is seldom possible to divide the cases of a given language neatly into two compartments. Nevertheless, the existence of overlaps and multiple memberships does not render the distinction in itself invalid, and in general it has proved sound enough to be applied to a large variety of languages.

For Old Persian, the question to be addressed in this section is: What is the status of the Genitive case vis-á-vis the structural/semantic distinction? To tackle this question it will be necessary to investigate (a) the function and status of NPs in the Genitive case, and of clitic pronouns, when they occur **outside** the m. k. construction; (b) the case system itself as a synchronic system of oppositions, and (c) the diachronic developments of the case system before and after the Old Persian period. The relevance of this approach is that if it can be demonstrated that the Genitive is a structural case, this is at least suggestive of a core function for the A in the m. k. construction.

When compared with the oldest attested Indo-Aryan sources, the case system of Old Persian is characterized by considerable syncretism. Most notable is the loss of the Dative case, the functions of which were taken over by a form which was, etymologically, the Genitive. Within the context of the Old Persian case system, however, the label 'Genitive', with its connotations of adnominal usage and a core semantic meaning of possession, is misleading, as I will show below.

Let us begin with an overview of the attested case distinctions in Old Persian. The picture is complicated by the fact that nouns belong to different declensional classes, which in turn do not always realise the same set of case distinctions, and the exponents of a particular case may differ from class to class. Table 5.4 follows the standard description of Brandenstein and Mayrhofer (1964). It gives the case forms for five different types of nominal: (i) Nouns continuing the Indo-European -*u*- and -*ū*- stems (apparently only sparingly attested in plural forms; the *a*-stems (<Indo-European *o*-stems) are more richly represented in the plural); (ii) nouns with -*ā* stems; (iii) the case forms of the demonstrative *iyam* 'this' (in three genders); (iv) the case

forms of the first person pronoun; (v) the case forms of the third person pronoun (only the full forms of the pronouns are given here—the clitic forms are discussed in the next section). Not all of these draw the same set of distinctions, as can be seen from the Table. However, as far as I can ascertain, there is no other domain of the nominal lexicon in which a greater number of case distinctions is drawn, so the Table may be considered to give a reasonably accurate picture of the maximal possible case distinctions drawn in Old Persian. It will be seen from Table 5.4 that the *-u-/-ū* stems show a

Table 5.4: The Old Persian case system

	Idg.-*u*- -*ū*-	-*ā*	‘THIS’ M.	F.	N.	1.PERS.	3.PERS.
SG. Nom.	-uš	-ā	iyam	iyam	ima	adam	hauv
Acc.	-um	-ām	imam	imām	ima	mām	–
Inst.	-uvā	-āyā	anā	–	–	–	–
Abl.	-auš -auv	-āyā	–	–	–	–	–
Gen.	-auš	-āyā	–	–	–	manā	–
Loc.	-auv -avā	-āyā	–	ahyāyā	–	–	–
PL. Nom.	–	-ā	imaiy	imā	–	yayam	–
Acc.	–	-ā	imaiy	imā	imā	–	–
Inst.	–	–	–	–	imaibiš	–	–
Gen.	-ūnām	–	–	amāxam	–	–	–
Loc.	–	-āuvā	–	–	–	–	–

robust system, which, apart from the loss of the Dative (see below) comes close to what can be assumed for Indo-European. All six cases are formally distinguished (or five, depending on how one interprets the two forms for the Ablative; arguably, the Locative/Ablative distinction is partly neutralised). However, in the other types of noun shown, the number of formal distinctions drawn is notably fewer. For example, there does not appear to be any other part of the grammar where a formal distinction between Ablative Singular

and Instrumental Singular is maintained (although of course the relevant forms may well have been present, but simply not attested in the corpus). Thus this distinction and with it, the justification for assuming two distinct cases in Old Persian—ignoring for a moment the comparative evidence— appears to rest solely on the paradigm of this declensional class. The forms of the -*ā* stems show the most extensive syncretism, with a single form for Instrumental, Ablative, Genitive and Locative. The table shows further that these cases are not distinguished (or at least not attested) in the available forms of the proximal demonstrative either.[16] The constellation found in this declensional class evidently foreshadowed the later developments in the case system towards Middle Persian, where a single Oblique case is attested (cf. discussion in Section 8.2).[17] Schmitt (1999:99–104) interprets some of the forms found in Late Achaemenian texts as evidence for the collapse of the case system well before the Middle Persian period. In other words, the case system sketched in Table 5.4 can be considered to be a fairly conservative version. At any rate it is evident that what is traditionally termed the Genitive case already had in Old Persian a much broader range of functions than its name would suggest.

5.6.1 Cliticization

In Old Persian, a number of different words could be realised as clitics—see Kent (1953:96–97) for an overview. Of these, the ones that are of focal interest in the present connection are the oblique forms of the personal pronouns (clitic forms of the Nominative do not exist). Table 5.5 gives an overview of the attested clitic forms of the personal pronouns.[18] Oblique pronouns stand for given, in the sense of discourse-recoverable, referents (hence pronouns, rather than full NPs). They could either appear as full NPs (e. g. first person singular genitive *manā*) or as the corresponding clitic =*maiy*. The choice of full versus clitic pronoun is presumably driven by discourse considerations,

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[16]These distinctions are also not attested for the Old Persian relative article *hya*. The distal demonstrative (masculine) *ava*, however, did distinguish an Ablative *avanā* from an Genitive *avahyā*.

[17]In the plural no Ablative is recorded, and the form given in the table as Instrumental covered functions normally associated with the Ablative—cf. Kent (1953:82).

[18]Kent (1953) assumes the existence of Ablative clitics for the third person singular, but they are not mentioned in Brandenstein and Mayrhofer (1964), hence not included in the Table.

Table 5.5: Pronominal clitics in Old Persian (Brandenstein and Mayrhofer 1964:66–67)

	SING.			PLURAL		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
ACC.	=mā	–	=šim =dim	–	–	=šiš =diš
GEN.	=maiy	=taiy	=šaiy	–	–	=šām
ABL.	=ma	–	–	–	–	–

but the restricted and highly stylized nature of the corpus makes it impossible to make firm predictions (see below). It is important to note that only oblique (i. e. non-nominative) forms of the pronouns are subject to cliticization. Nominative forms, if they are introduced into a passage for the first time, appear in a full form. Otherwise the normal pattern is for them to be omitted, that is, Old Persian made widespread use of zero-anaphora for nominative pronouns. The identity of the relevant person was of course normally cross-referenced through agreement on the predicate, something that was not available for the oblique pronouns.

Cliticization of pronouns has both syntactic and phonological dimensions; here we are primarily concerned with the latter. The general rule for cliticization in Old Persian is that clitics attach to the first word of the clause or phrase which they are syntactically constituents of, regardless of the syntactic category of that word (i. e. a Wackernagel position). An example of the first person singular genitive clitic attached to a demonstrative[19] is the following:

(146) *aita=maiy Auramazdā dadātuv*
       this=1S:GEN Ahuramazda may.give

       'may Ahuramazda give this to me' (Kent 1953:DNa,53–55), cf. also DPd,23–24; DPh,8; DNa,50–51,54–55

An example of the same clitic, this time attaching to a full NP (a proper name) is the following:

(147) *Auramazdā=maiy   upastām abara*
       Ahuramazda=1S:GEN aid   bear:PST:3S

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[19]See Kent (1953:85) on the demonstrative *aita-*.

'Ahuramazda bore **me** aid' (Kent 1953:DB I,87–88)

Examples with third person clitics attached to adverbs are the following:

(148) *avaθā=**šaiy** aθaham*
thus=3S:GEN say:PST:1S
'thus (I) said **to him**' (Kent 1953:DB II,30)

(149) *avaθā=**šām** aθaham*
thus=3PL:GEN say:PST:1S
'thus (I) said **to them**' (Kent 1953:DB III,85)

Accusative pronouns may also cliticize, as in the following examples:

(152) *pasāva=**dim** manā frābara*
after.that=3S:ACC 1S:GEN bestow:PST:3S
'after that (he) bestowed **it** on me' (Kent 1953:DNa,33), cf. also DB I,60–61; DPd,7–8,13–14; DNa,33

(150) *kāra hya Aθuriya hau=**dim** abara yātā Bābirauv*
people which Assyrian DEM=3S:ACC brought to Babylon
'The Assyrian people—it brought **it** to Babylon' (Kent 1953:DSf,32–33)

The latter example shows that cliticization is sensitive to syntax rather than pragmatics. The phrase *kāra hya Aθuriya* is a fronted topic, external to the clause, and is thus not treated as a first constituent for the purposes of cliticization. The Accusative clitic attaches to the first grammatical constituent of the clause, the subject pronoun *hau*. Hale (1988:35–36) give further examples of 'parenthetical' constituents which are ignored for the purposes of clitic placement.

Cliticization of the sort illustrated in the preceding examples is restricted to Genitive and Accusative pronouns. As far as the Ablative clitic is concerned, it is solely attested as a clitic with the preposition *hacā*, as in *hacā=ma* 'from me' (Kent 1953:97). This type of clitic is an example of what is commonly referred to as a 'simple clitic' (Zwicky 1977). The cliticized element is phonologically weakened, and amalgamates with a host, but it appears in the same linear position that the corresponding nonclitic element would have taken. The Accusative and Genitive clitics on the other hand are not simple clitics, because they undergo movement to a special syntactic

position, distinct from the expected position of the corresponding nonclitic elements. They are examples of what Zwicky calls 'special clitics'. The first important point to be made with regard to Wackernagel-cliticization, then, is that it is a regular syntactic rule of Old Persian which applies solely to Genitive and Accusative personal pronouns. We can formulate a cliticization rule something along the following lines:

(151)   **Cliticization Rule:** Pronominal Genitives and Accusatives may cliticize, in which case they land on the first constituent of the clause headed by their governing predicate.[20]

Now the existence of (151) is highly significant for evaluating the syntactic status of Genitive NPs. If we recall the characterization of a prototypical Agent-phrase given in Section 5.3, one of the most prominent properties is that " few if any syntactic rules refer to the A (agent phrase)." (Comrie 1988:16). But as we have seen in this section, the Genitive As in the m. k. construction **are** subject to a major syntactic rule, that of cliticization. In other words, the rule given in (151) defines a class of cases to which the Accusative and the Genitive belong, to the exclusion of other cases or adpositional phrases. This is a strong argument for treating the Genitive as a structural rather than a semantic case, and hence for not considering the Agent-phrase of the m. k. construction to be a peripheral constituent.

5.6.2   Valency-bound versus Free Genitives

5.6.2.1   Valency-bound Genitives

The examples of clitic Genitives in (146)–(149) will already have alerted the reader to one of the most frequent functions of the Genitive, namely expressing the Indirect Object. In these examples, the Genitive can be considered required by the valency of the verb, on the fairly reasonable assumption that verbs meaning 'give' and 'say' are lexically specified to govern Recipients and Addressees respectively. I will refer to Genitives in these functions as **Valency-bound Genitives**, in contrast to the Free Genitives discussed in

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[20]For Accusative clitics, we would expect the relevant major constituent to be the VP, not the clause. However, as Hale (1988:29) shows, Accusative clitics in Old Persian can also cross the boundary of the VP leftwards to the clause boundary, possibly following a topicalization process which puts them outside of the VP. As I am primarily concerned with Genitive clitics, this issue does not directly impact on the argument developed here. Below I will argue that the relevant constituent is the clause, not the VP.

the next section. Valency-bound Genitives encode primarily Indirect Objects and can thus arguably be considered exponents of a structural case. The following examples demonstrate non-clitic Genitives in Indirect Object function:

(152)   *pasāva=dim*   ***manā*** *frābara*
        after.that=3S:ACC 1S:GEN bestow:PST:3S

        'after that (he) bestowed it **on me**' (Kent 1953:DNa,33), cf. also DB I,60–61; DPd,7–8,13–14; DNa,33

(153)   ***manā*** *hau=diš*   *frābara*
        1S:GEN it=3PL:ACC bestow:PST:3S

        '**on me** he bestowed them'[21] (Kent 1953:DSs,6–7)

(154)   ***manā*** *bājim*   *abarā*
        1S:GEN tribute bear:PST:3PL

        '**to me** (they) bore tribute' (Kent 1953:DB I,19)

5.6.2.2   Free Genitives

In the preceding examples, we can assume that the Genitive encodes a core argument, one that is licensed by the lexical semantics of the verb, and is subject to major syntactic rules. However, Genitives show up in a variety of other functions, many of which cannot be linked to an argument position of the verb. I will refer to them collectively as **Free Genitives**. Free Genitives can be classified as Benefactives, Malefactives, Goals and Experiencers (on Genitives as Possessors, see Section 5.7). Examples of Benefactives and Malefactives are the following:

(155)   *ava=**maiy*** *visam ucāram*   *āha*
        that=1S:GEN all   successful be:PST:3S

        'all that was successful **for me**' (Kent 1953:DSj,4), cf. also DSl,4–5

(156)   *ava=**taiy***   *Auramazdā ucāram*   *kunautuv*
        that=2S:GEN Ahuramazda successful may.make:3S

        'that **for thee** may Ahuramazda make successful' (Kent 1953:DB IV,76)

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[21]In this example the clitic is not in the expected Wackernagel-position; I have no explanation for this.

(157) *imā dahyāva   tyā   **manā** patiyāiša*
       these province:PL which 1S:GEN come:PST:3PL

       'these (are) the provinces which came unto **to me**' (Kent 1953:DB
       I,13,18)[22]

(158) ***aniyahyā** asam frānayam*
       rest:PL:GEN horses buy:PST:1S

       '**for the rest** (I) bought horses' (Kent 1953:DB I,87)

(159) *hya šiyātim   adā   **martiyahyā***
       who happiness create:PST:3S man:GEN

       'who created happiness **for man**' (Kent 1953:DNa,3–4)

The following two examples illustrate Malefactive usage:

(160) *Auramazdā=**taiy**   jatā   biyā*
       Ahuramazda=2S:GEN smiter may.be:3S

       'may Ahuramazda be a smiter **unto thee**' (Kent 1953:DB IV,78–79)

(161) *ava=**taiy**   Auramazdā nikatuv*
       that=2S:GEN Ahuramazda may.destroy:3S

       'that may Ahuramazda **for thee** destroy' (Kent 1953:DB IV,79–80)

It needs to be emphasised that classifying Free Genitives as Benefactives,
Recipients etc. is merely a taxonomic exercise, with little explanatory power.
Many of the actual manifestations of the Genitive defy simple classification
in terms of semantic role, a fact which I believe is extremely significant.
Consider for example the following:

(162) *imā dahyāva tyai=**šām**   adam xšāyaθiya abavam*
       these countries which=3PL:GEN 1S   king   become:PST:1PL

       'these are the countries **of/to/for which** I became king' (Kent 1953:DSm,5–
       6), cf. also XPh,14–15

It is not clear whether the clitic Genitive here should be classified as a Bene-
factive, a Possessor, or something else.[23] The common denominator among

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[22]Schmitt (1990:11–12) confirms the reconstruction of the verb form.

[23]According to the traditional analysis of this clitic (e. g. Kent (1953:68) and Bran-
denstein and Mayrhofer (1964:69), *tyaišām* is the "genitive plural" of the relativizer, and
fills the appropriate slot in the paradigm given for this pronoun. However, looking at the

Free Genitives is best seen in terms of a negative criterion: the Genitive is not bound to the argument structure of the predicate. Thus in (162), the predicate is *abavam*, a form of 'be, become', which does not regularly require a Genitive complement. The following examples also have the copula, this time in combination with an adjective *azdā* 'known'. The Free Genitives express Experiencers, or perhaps Cognizers:

(163) **karāhyā** *naiy azdā abava*
       people:GEN NEG known be:PST:3S

       '(it) was not known **to the people**' (Kent 1953:DB I,31–32)

(164) *ada=**taiy**   azdā   bavātiy*
       then=2S:GEN known be:PRES:3S

       'then (it) is known **to you**' (Kent 1953:DNa,43)

Although the primary definition of Free Genitive is in negative terms, it is possible to provide it with some additional semantic substance. As we have seen, Free Genitives cover a broad spectrum of semantic roles. Rather than simply listing them, it is more insightful to assume an essentially vague semantics, but clustering around the notion of Benefactive. Free Genitives are open to a number of different construals, depending on the semantics of their clause. Consider for example the following:

(165) *adam=**šām** patiyaxšayaiy*
       1S=3PL:GEN rule.over:PST:1S

       'I ruled over them' (Kent 1953:DNa,18–19)

It can be argued that the verb 'rule over' simply 'requires' a Genitive complement, i. e. to treat it is an example of quirky case marking, comparable to

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examples in context, it is evident that this is not the only possible analysis. It could be argued that the form arises through an identical process to that discussed above: cliticization of the Genitive to the clause initial constituent, in this case the relativizer introducing the clause. Exactly the same process can lead to forms such as *tya=maiy* 'which=to/me' (as in ex. 180), or *tyai=šaiy* 'which=to him' (DB I,57–58). Rather than consider *tyaišām* as part of the paradigm of forms of the relativizer, it could be perhaps more accurately, and economically, interpreted as the product of the regular cliticization process, i. e. the result of a syntactic rule. A preliminary search for the attested analogous forms of the demonstratives, *avaišām* and *imaišām*, using a digital form of the Old Persian corpus, showed that in context, the two forms found could also be interpreted as the result of cliticization of the pronouns. However, this will require more thorough investigation than is possible at present.

the use of the Dative with verbs like *helfen* 'help' in German (Kent 1953:80). But I think the more appropriate explanation is to consider the verb intransitive, and the Genitive as a Free Genitive. It is thus merely exploiting the fundamental vagueness of the Genitive. Semantically, we have an identical 'micro-role' to the Genitive in (162), that of 'those under the rulership', or 'for whom it is ruled'. Thus there is no necessity to postulate a particular type of Genitive complement just for this verb. Rather, it is merely another instantiation of the Free Genitive.

5.6.3   Summary of the Genitive

Genitive pronouns, like Accusative pronouns, are subject to cliticization, defined in (151). Cliticization is a syntactic process, operating within a syntactically determined domain on certain formally-defined elements (Genitive and Accusative pronouns). Thus if we were to use (clause-level) cliticization as a language-specific diagnostic for defining a set of structural cases, then we would be obliged to group Genitives and Accusatives together, as opposed to Ablatives or Instrumentals. As far as the function of the Genitive is concerned, a distinction can be drawn between **Valency-bound Genitives** required by the argument frame of the verb, which case code the grammatical relation of Indirect Object, and **Free Genitives**, which are not licensed by the argument frame of the verb and express a broad range of semantic functions clustering around the notion of Benefactive. While it is possible to describe the functions of the Genitive in the form of a list,[24] I suggest it is more meaningful to attempt to characterize a core meaning. A first approximation for those examples where the Genitive expresses a [+human] referent, is given in (166):

(166)   The Genitive expresses the most saliently affected human entity in an event outside of the Subject and the Direct Object

I should stress at this point that the distinction between Valency-bound and Free Genitives is primarily a terminological one. I am not convinced that it is relevant for the grammar of Old Persian, that is, I doubt whether it is possible to find morphosyntactic processes or rules which are sensitive to the distinction. For example, the cliticization rule applies across the board to **all** Genitives, regardless of whether they are valency-bound or free. And in

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[24]Kent (1953:80–81) actually lists 11 different uses of the Genitive, though he concedes that they cannot always be clearly distinguished from each other.

many cases, it is a matter of interpretation whether we wish to describe a particular Genitive as a Benefactive, or as, for example, a Recipient. Thus there is a measure of overlap between the two. It may in fact be more insightful to assume a single category of (Free) Genitive, which extends to express Recipients and Addressees (Indirect Objects)—I will explore this avenue in the following sections.

It should be clear by now that the label 'Genitive' is, from a functional point of view, a misnomer. The bundle of functions it fulfills most clearly parallels the Dative of many languages. The label 'Genitive' is justified largely on etymological grounds: it is, formally, the reflex of an older Genitive case. But with the loss of the Dative as a distinct morphological category, the functional domain of the Genitive expanded to encompass the old Dative functions, which in Old Persian actually arguably outweigh the Genitive function of Possession (and indeed, it may not be meaningful to separate the two). What tends to be forgotten is that the choice of label for a particular suffix is quite arbitrary. In the later developments, all other non-nominative cases where lost and their functions were duly absorbed by the etymological reflex of the Genitive, which functionally became merely a general Oblique case. At what point in this development one chooses to abandon the label 'Genitive' in favour of, say, 'Oblique' is entirely a matter of taste and tradition. As it stands, tradition dictates that in Old Persian, the label Genitive is used, while for Middle Persian the label 'Oblique' is favoured.

We are left then with the conclusion that the Genitive case straddles the distinction between structural and semantic cases, as it displays properties common to both. Taken together, these facts conspire to make the Agent-phrase of the m. k. construction look less peripheral than we would expect of the Agent-phrase of a prototypical passive construction.

5.7 Possession: Adnominal Genitives versus Free Genitives
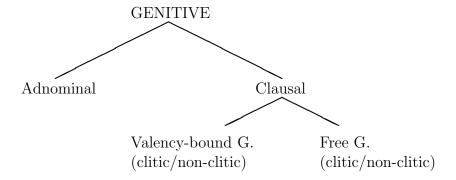
It will be recalled that Benveniste's central claim was the m. k. construction was a 'possessive'; in this section we will explore the interrelationship of the semantic notion of possession and the Genitive case. All examples of the Genitive examined so far involve Genitives as clause-level constituents, either as arguments of the predicate, e. g. Indirect Objects in (152) and (153),

or as Free Genitives, not linked to an argument position of the verb, but undoubtedly clause-level constituents. However, Genitives apparently also appear as subconstituents of NPs, where they express Possession:

> *manā pitā* 'my father' (Kent 1953:DB I,4)

> *manā badaka* 'my subject' (Kent 1953:DB II,19–20)

This type of construction comes closest to what would expect from a 'Genitive' case: it codes an adnominal constituent expressing a Possessor. Following widespread typological practice (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2001), I will refer to this type of Genitive, in contradistinction to the clausal types discussed previously, as **adnominal Genitives**. Adnominal Genitives are subconstituents of a NP, the head of which is the Possessed. The various functions of Genitive examined so far can provisionally be summed up as follows:

GENITIVE

Adnominal   Clausal

Valency-bound G.   Free G.
(clitic/non-clitic)   (clitic/non-clitic)

Note that this mode of presentation simply clarifies the relations of the terminological distinctions to one another. As mentioned, I am not convinced that the **grammar of Old Persian** strictly observes a distinction between Free and Valency-bound Genitives.

A final syntactic possibility is for the Genitive to follow the Possessed, linked to it by (a form of) the relative article *hya*. An example of this usage is found in (136). Another example is the following:

(167)   *karā   hya   manā*
        people which 1s:GEN

        'people which (are) of me' (=my people) (Kent 1953:DB II,27)

However, this construction offers several different interpretations. One is that the Genitive is in fact a clausal Genitive inside a relative clause with a zero copula: 'the people [who (are) to-me]'. Alternatively, one can interpret the relative particle as a morpheme linking an adnominal attribute to its head. In later West Iranian, this is precisely what happened, and constructions such as (167) became the normal means of expressing adnominal possession (see end of this Section).[25]

Finally, we can note that Possessors could also occur as predicative complements to intransitive verbs, such as 'become' and 'be called':

(168) *pasāva dahyāuš* **manā** *abava*
       after   province 1s:GEN become:PST:3s

       'afterwards the province became **mine**' (Kent 1953:DB V,13–14)

(169) *avam   kāram   Bābiruviyam jatā   hya   **manā** naiy*
       that:ACC army:ACC Babylonian   smite:IMP:2PL which 1s:GEN NEG
       gaubātaiy
       call:MED:3s

       'smite that Babylonian army that does not call itself (=is not called) **mine**' (Kent 1953:DB III,85–86), cf. also DB II,21,84

In the present connection, the most crucial type of possession is the predicative statement of Possession. Here, the Possessor is profiled as the central participant, about which the predicate makes a statement. In a language such as English, the Possessor is coded as the canonical subject of a special verb, *have*. Old Persian had no lexical verb for 'have', the closest being *dar-* 'hold' (cf. (171) below). In predicative expressions of possession, the copula was used and the Possessor appears as a Genitive:

(170) *utā=taiy   taumā mā biyā*
       and=2s:GEN family NEG may.be:3s

       a. 'and may family not be to/for you'
       b. 'and may your-family not exist' (Kent 1953:DB IV,58–59), cf. also 73–74

This example, and indeed most comparable examples (see below), offers at least two distinct structural interpretations: The (a) interpretation sees the

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[25]But cf. Haider and Zwanziger (1984) for some critical qualification of the view that the modern Izafe-construction emerged from copula omission in relative clauses.

Genitive as a clausal constituent, comparable to the Free Genitives discussed above. Interpretation (b) is an expression involving an Adnominal Genitive; the Genitive would be here a subconstituent of an NP headed by *taumā* 'family'.

Although both readings appear superficially equally plausible, there is good reason to reject the Adnominal Genitive reading (b). It will be noted that in (170), the Possessor is expressed as a **clitic** on the first constituent of the clause. Now if we assume that clitics move to the first constituent of their phrase, then the clitic Genitive in (170) must have originated as a **clausal constituent**, not an adnominal constituent. I will therefore assume that the Possessor-Genitive in (170) is structurally fully parallel to the Free Genitives discussed above, for example (155), repeated here for convenience:

(155)   *ava=**maiy**   visam ucāram   āha*
          that=1s:GEN all   successful be:PST:3s

          'all that was successful **for me**' (Kent 1953:DSj,4), cf. also DSl,4–5

In (170), the structure is 'for you — family may not be', while in (155) we have 'for me — all was successful'. Semantically, the notion of Possession can reasonably be considered an extension of the Benefactive meaning of the Free Genitive, and indeed, as was noted in connection with (162), in many cases it is difficult to draw a clear dividing line between Possessives and Benefactives.

I would therefore argue against postulating an 'adnominal Possessive' use of the Genitive, preferring to interpret it as the contextual exploitation of the vague semantics of the Free Genitive. Apart from the advantages in terms of economy, the Free Genitive interpretation provides a perfectly natural explanation for the cliticization of the Genitives, without having to explain how an adnominal constituent is first moved out of its NP and then cliticized to the first constituent of the clause: The clitic never was a constituent of an NP, but a free Genitive, a clausal constituent.

If one accepts the existence of possessive Free Genitives in Old Persian, then a number of examples of apparent adnominal Genitives immediately become open to a different reading. Consider (171), given with Kent's translation (the transcription of the name *Aspačanā* follows Brandenstein and Mayrhofer (1964) rather than Kent):

(171)   *Aspačanā vaçabara   Dārayavahauš xšāyaθiyahyā isuvām*
        Aspathines bow-bearer Darius:GEN   king:GEN   battle-axe:ACC
        dārayatiy
        holds

        'Aspathines, bow-bearer, holds the battle-axe **of Darius the King**'
        (Kent 1953:DNd)

On Kent's reading, the Genitive here is adnominal, i.e. we have a structure as follows:

(172)   (Aspathines)$_{SUBJ}$ ((Darius King)$_{GEN}$ battle-axe)$_{NP:ACC}$ (holds)$_V$)$_{VP}$

But equally plausible is a reading with a free Genitive along the following lines:

(173)   (Aspathines)$_{SUBJ}$ (Darius ...)$_{GEN}$ ((battle-axe)$_{OBJ}$ (holds)$_V$))$_{VP}$

This interpretation has the advantage of leaving the intended reading as regards the Benefactive vs. Possessor reading vague (in fact, the context implies that both are intended), and it permits us to postulate a unified structure for both (171) and the so-called 'Benefactives' etc. discussed above. Consider a further example, where both an Adnominal or a Free Genitive would be possible interpretations:[26]

(174)   *pasāva   diš   Auramazdā **manā** dastayā   akunauš*
        afterwards 3PL:ACC Ahuramazda 1S:GEN hand:DAT do:PST:3S

        'afterwards Ahuramazda put them in **my** hand' (Kent 1953:DB IV,35)

On the approach developed here, the Genitive in both (173) and (174) is a Free Genitive. On the Free Genitive account we interpret the Genitive as an External Possessor, a phenomenon widely attested in the languages of Europe. Compare (174) with a comparable expression in German, where the Possessor is expressed with a free Dative: ... **mir** *in die Hand*. The typological parallels are discussed in detail in Section 5.8.

Let us consider now the m. k. construction (175), the sole attested example where the Agent-phrase is not pronominal:

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[26]In Kent's rendering of (174), the third person plural accusative clitic *diš* is written separately from the preceding word, a fact which clearly runs counter to our expectations. This clearly requires verification against more recent text interpretations, but does not immediately impinge on the arguments at hand.

(175) *yaθā adam xšāyaθiya abavam   vasiy tya fraθaram*
       when 1S   king   become:PST:1S much which excellent
       *akunavam **tya=maiy piça**   kartam   āha ava adam*
       make:PST:1S that=1S:GEN father:GEN do:PTCPL was that 1S
       apayaiy
       protect:PST:1S

       'when I became king I built much that was excellent. What had been
       built **by my father**, that I protected ...' (Kent 1953:XPf,36–39),
       cf. also 47; XPa,19–20

The standard interpretation is to take *=maiy* as an adnominal Genitive to
piça (which itself is in the Genitive due to its function as Agent-phrase here).
But again this account leaves open the question as to why the apparently
adnominal Genitive *=maiy* has cliticized to an element outside of its phrase,
namely the relativizer. It is a general principle of cliticization, noted by
Zwicky (1977), that clitics move to a position within the phrase of which
their source is a constituent (usually to the margins of these phrases). The
problem with the clitic *=maiy* in (175) is that it cliticizes to the **clause-
initial** element, indicating that its source is a constituent of the clause, not of
an NP. An alternative analysis would be to consider the source of the clitic
as a Free Genitive (functionally an external possessor, see below) to *piça*,
yielding something like:

     which=to/of me   by-the father   was built

Note that this structure can perfectly well be rendered into idiomatic English
with *What father built me ....* This leaves of course the exact relationship of
the clitic's referent to the NP *piça* essentially vague, but that is quite typical
for the Genitive, as we have seen. The following example can be analysed in
a similar fashion:[27]

(176) ***yaθā=maiy** pitā   Darayavauš gāθavā   ašiyava*
       after=1S:GEN father Darius   throne:LOC go:PST

       'after **my** father D. went from the throne (=died)' (Kent 1953:XPf,32–
       34)

On the analysis pursued here, this can be interpreted as:

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[27]According to the more recent interpretation of Schmeja (1982), this example would be
more appropriately translated with 'went to the place (=throne) of the Gods', i. e. with a
Goal reading of *gāθavā*. This does not affect the reading of the Genitive, however.

after=to me/of me   father   left the throne

Again, the parallels to Free Datives in languages like German are striking, as in the following example of colloquial German:

(177)   **Ihm**   *ist der*   *Vater*   *gestorben*
      3S:DAT is   father die:PTCPL

      'His father died' (lit. to-him is father died)

Other examples of possessive Genitives are open to a Free Genitive rather than an adnominal interpretation:

(178)   *hakaram=**maiy*** *ušiyā*   *gāθavā hištanti*   . . .
      now=1S:GEN   understanding:PL place   place.itself:PRES:PL

      'now **my** understanding (=*Auffassungsvermögen*) finds its place . . .' (Schmitt 1999:DNb,35–35, p. 29), Schmitt's reading supersedes that of Kent (1953)

(179)   *Auramazdā* **θuvām**   *dauštā biyā*
      Ahuramazda 2S:ACC(?) friend   be:IRR:3S

      'may Ahuramazda be a friend unto **you**'[28] (Kent 1953:DB IV,74–75)

(180)   . . . *utā=**maiy*** *xšaçam*   *utā tya=maiy*   *kartam*
      and:1S:GEN   kingdom:ACC and that.which=1S:GEN do:PTCPL

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[28]The second person pronoun is in fact formally identical with the Accusative of the pronoun. Syntactically, however, an Accusative is difficult to justify. Furthermore, a free Genitive form of the second person singular is to my knowledge not attested elsewhere in Old Persian. It seems therefore not improbable that the Genitive and the Accusative were no longer actually formally disinguished in the free forms of this pronoun, i. e. we have a single general 'oblique' case, a development that would anticipate well attested later changes throughout the grammar. This account would square up with the apparently deviant 'Accusative' forms of the first person singular found in Late Achaemenian texts, which occur in syntactic environments where a Genitive would be expected—cf. the discussion in Schmitt (1999:99–104). I do not think one should expect full parallelism in the case distinctions expressed in the free and clitic pronouns. It is quite possible that the process or syncretism among the case forms of the pronouns did not proceed fully in tandem, that is, the clitics may have preserved a distinction longer than the free pronouns, or vice versa. Likewise, it is quite possible that the Accusative form survived among the free pronouns, whereas the Genitive survived among the clitics, but this must remain at present a hypothesis to be investigated against more comparative data. However, the point remains that if no contrasting Genitive form of the second person pronoun is attested, then an Accusative-Genitive syncretism specific to the free form of the second person singular pronoun is a possibility that cannot be rejected out of hand.

'(may Ahuramazda protect) **my** kingdom and that which was built by me' (Kent 1953:XPb,39–30)

I would go as far as to suggest that adnominal Genitives were in fact the exception in Old Persian. Many of the standard examples cited for adnominal Genitives can in fact be treated as Free Genitives when the context is taken into consideration. Consider the following, a typical phrase from the genealogies:

(181)   *manā pitā   Vⁱstāspa*
         1s:GEN father V.

         '(says D. the King:) my father (was) V.' (Kent 1953:DB I,4), translation from Kent

Rather than interpreting *manā pitā* as a NP, as was suggested above, *manā* could be construed as a free Genitive, yielding: 'to-me (the) father (was) V. '. Likewise, the phrase *manā badaka* 'my subject' is also open to a different interpretation, when the context is taken into account:

(182)   *Vidarna nāma   Pārsa manā badaka*
         Vidarna by.name Persian 1s:GEN subject

         'A Persian by name Hydarnes, my subject' (Kent 1953:DB II,19–20), translation from Kent

Kent translates Possessor and Possessed with an appositional phrase. But the entire example could be considered an independent clause with zero copula: 'A Persian by name H. (was) subject to me', leaving the Genitive *māna* as a Free Genitive, perfectly comparable with the other examples above.

It is only when taken out of context that sequences of words such as *manā pitā* and *manā badaka* appear to be straightforward NPs; when one considers them in context, and in comparison with the majority of Genitives, it becomes clear that they are open to a different structural interpretation; I see no reason to favour the adnominal interpretation over the others. In fact, in terms of overall simplicity of the system, the clausal one is clearly preferable because we arrive at a single type of Genitive for all the attested examples. Now considerations of simplicity and economy are not necessarily the most reliable guides in historical reconstruction, so I would not like to commit myself wholesale to the clausal analysis at this stage. However, historically the adnominal Genitives have disappeared entirely in some West Iranian languages, their functional role now filled by the Izafe-construction, the precursor of which we have seen in (167). Even if a phrase

such as *manā pitā* 'my father' genuinely did contain an adnominal Genitive, such constructions were probably declining. For example in the Pahlavi and Early New Persian texts (pre 1000AD) examined by Heston (1976:19–24), the prenominal Genitive, although attested, is much less frequent than the Izafe-construction. The suggestion that I am making is simply that already in Old Persian, the demise of the adnominal Genitive may well have already been well under way. Interestingly, the best candidates for adnominal Genitives in Old Persian are in expressions of quantity, e. g. partitives such as *māhyā* '(14 days) of the month', where the Genitive expresses a non-human entity. Whether animacy played a role in the changes here would require further investigation. Finally, we have to admit the possibility that in Old Persian, adnominal Genitives and Free Genitives were quite simply indistinguishable in many contexts, for example in the preceding two examples, and it was this structural ambiguity which paved the way for a wholesale reanalysis in the direction of Free Genitives.

Before closing this section, it is necessary to discuss the proposals of Hale (1988), who argues that some instances of the Genitive that I would consider Free Genitives are better considered Adnominal Genitives. Two of the relevant examples are the following (the translations follow Kent 1953):

(183) *hya adadā šiyātim* **martiyahyā**
       who created happiness:ACC man:GEN
       'who created happiness **for man**' (Kent 1953:DNb,1–2)

(184) *adam niyaçārayam* **kārahyā** *abicariš gaiθāmcā māniyamcā*
       I   restored   people:GEN pastures and herds household slaves
       vⁱθbišcā
       houses
       'I restored **to the people** the pastures and the herds, the household slaves and the houses' (Kent 1953:DB I,64–65)

It will be seen that Kent interprets the post-predicate Genitives as free Genitives, a Benefactive and a Recipient respectively. Hale, however, suggests that this reading is misguided. Instead, he believes that both should be interpreted as adnominal Genitives, yielding for example for (183) 'created man's happiness'. The justification for this move runs as follows: According to Hale, there were three processes by which elements could be extracted from the Old Persian VP: Topicalization, which leaves a constituent in clause-initial position; Wackernagel cliticization, which we have discussed above and

which, according to Hale, also involves movement out of the VP; and a process referred to by Hale as 'secondary topicalization', by which is meant that constituents occur post-predicatively. The latter term is unfortunate—such post-predicate elements in verb-final languages are more commonly referred to as 'afterthoughts'. Crucially, Hale claims that each process can only affect a single constituent, i. e. only one constituent can be topicalized, cliticized, or moved into afterthought position. On the basis of this 'one constituent only' rule, Hale claims that the Genitives in (183–184) cannot be independent constituents, but part of the post-predicate NPs, hence adnominal Genitives.

While the 'one constituent only' rule appears to be well-founded for cliticization, and possibly for topicalization, there are in fact no independent grounds for assuming it to hold for the afterthought position. In some other verb-final languages which permit post-predicate elements, for example Turkish or Persian, no such constraint holds. Although it is the case that most actual instances of afterthoughts involve a single constituent, in these languages there is no strict rule of grammar that prevents more than one constituent occurring post-predicatively, if the right discourse conditions apply. Thus there appears to be no sound motivation to dismiss Kent's interpretation of the Genitives in these and comparable examples. And Hale's interpretation of the Genitive as adnominal must still explain the fact that in (183), the Genitive appears after its Possessed, while in (184) it appears before it. If they were both adnominal Genitives, we could expect a more rigid order.

The main drawback with Hale's proposals is his extremely broad notion of 'VP' which includes not only Direct Objects, but also Benefactives and other oblique objects, and prepositional phrases. The notion of Free Genitive being developed here, however, leaves the Free Genitives **outside** the VP; the Free Genitive is a clausal constituent, but not necessarily an argument of the verb. If we accept this characterization, then we have no difficulty explaining why the Free Genitive cliticizes to clause-initial position rather than to the edge of the VP. Hale's insistence on counting the Free Genitives as part of the VP brings further difficulties in the interpretation of clauses such as the following:

(185)   *tyām   manā Auramazdā frābara*
        which:ACC 1s:GEN Ahuramazda bear:PST:3s
        'which Ahuramazda bore to me' (Kent 1953:DPd,7–8)

Now according to Hale, the Genitive *manā* has been moved out of the VP, but it cannot have been topicalized (I can only presume that Hale considers

tyām to be topicalized, and further topicalization would be ruled out by
Hale's 'one constituent only' rule; given that *tyām* is bound to sentence-
initial position anyway, I find this line of argumentation obscure, but see no
other explanation for Hale's proposals). Hale (1988:33) goes on to suggest
that the position of *māna* "can only be explained if we take the form to be
enclitic (it is outside the VP but not in a topicalized position)". Thus it
has undergone cliticization rather than topicalization. But there appears to
be no independent grounds for assuming that *manā* is a clitic—in fact the
distinction between full form and clitic is consistently observed in the corpus,
and it seems quite arbitrary to declare some examples of the full forms of
the pronouns to be enclitic just to save a postulated rule of the grammar.
In fact, there is simply no necessity for such ad hoc solutions if one adopts
the notion of Free Genitive, which are not constituents of the VP, and which
enjoy a considerable measure of word order freedom.

5.7.1 Summary of Possession

In Section 5.6 I developed the notion of Free Genitives, clause-level con-
stituents which are not licensed by the predicate but are nevertheless subject
to the syntactic rule of cliticization, and express a variety of semantic roles
clustering around the Benefactive. In this section, I suggest that in fact
many of the instances of 'Possessive' Genitives should be interpreted as Free
Genitives, where the Possessor meaning is a natural extension of the vague se-
mantics given in (166). I further argued that many of the apparent examples
for adnominal Genitives can be interpreted as Free Genitives. For example,
a sequence such as *manā pitā* need not necessarily be interpreted as a NP
with a prenominal Genitive, i.e. the Modifier-Head type discussed in Paul
(2002a:76); in some contexts, it can be considered as a Free Genitive which
happens to precede a noun, i.e. the two are distinct constituents. The in-
terpretation can only be arrived at through examination of the entire clause.
The main argument for such an interpretation comes from the behaviour of
the Genitive under cliticization. If this is correct, then the shift that led
to the Izafe construction as the main means of coding adnominal Possessors
in later stages of Persian was underway in Old Persian, because adnominal
Genitives were already in competition with both Free Genitives, and with
the earliest precursors of the Izafe construction. The more important point,
however, is that it is not necessary to posit an additional 'Possessive' sense
of the Free Genitive; the Possessive sense is a possible reading, arising from

overlaps with the Benefactive sense.

5.8   External Possession in Old Persian

In the preceding section I argued for a Free Genitive, as opposed to an adnominal Genitive, interpretation of the Possessor in examples such as (174), repeated here for convenience:

(174) *pasāva   diš   Auramazdā **manā** dastayā akunauš*
       afterwards 3PL:ACC Ahuramazda 1S:GEN hand:DAT do:PST:3S
       'afterwards Ahuramazda put them in **my** hand'

A construction like (174), typically involving inalienable possession, is widely attested among the modern languages of Western Europe. Following Payne and Barshi (1999b), I will refer to them as **External Possessor Constructions** (EPCs). According to Haspelmath (1999:109), an EPC involves a possessive modifier that "does not occur as a dependent constituent of the modified NP, but NP-externally as a constituent of the clause." Examples of EPCs from Czech are given (from Fried (1999:473), the glosses have been simplified):

(186) *Petr   zryl   **Honzovi**   zahradu*
       Petr:M:NOM dig.up:PST:M Honzovi:DAT garden:ACC
       'Peter dug up **Honza's** yard'

(187) ***Petrovi** se rozbilo   auto*
       Petr:DAT   break.down:PST:NEUT car:NEUT:NOM
       '**Peter's** car broke down'

The parallels between Old Persian examples such as (174) and the EPCs of many languages of Western Europe are considerable, and add significant typological weight to the Free Genitive analysis for Old Persian. Some of the relevant features of EPCs in modern languages are as follows (Haspelmath 1999):

  1. The case most commonly found for External Possessors is the Dative, i.e. the case used to express the Indirect Object in the language concerned. As we have seen, this applies to the Old Persian Genitive, which, historically took over the functions of the old Dative (in fact, one could argue that the Old Persian Genitive **is** the Dative).

2. Semantically, Haspelmath (1999:126) establishes the typical range of polysemy for Dative cases, mostly in European languages. The resulting 'semantic map' covers the following categories: Predicative Possessor, Direction, Recipient/Addressee, Experiencer, Benefactive, External possessor and Judicantis.[29] With the exception of Judicantis, for which I have as yet found no example in Old Persian, this list could be applied verbatim to the Old Persian Genitive.

3. According to Haspelmath (1999:113), External Possessor Constructions are favored if the Possessor is further to the left in the following hierarchy (essentially one version of the Animacy Hierarchy):
1/2.person pronoun > 3.pers. pronoun > proper name > other animate > inanimate
It will be recalled that the majority of constructions interpreted above as Free Genitives involved pronouns. I am unaware of any examples of Free Genitives with inanimate, or for that matter with non-human referents.

Fried (1999) develops an account of the semantics of external possessors in Czech which squares up remarkably closely to that of the Old Persian Free Genitive, as characterized in (166). For Fried (1999:500), the crucial factor is "a particular kind of affectedness, here called 'interest',". A similar picture can be traced throughout the typological contributions to Payne and Barshi (1999a).

The most difficult issue with regard to External Possessors remains, however, unresolved: Their syntactic status. Payne and Barshi (1999b:3) sum up the dilemma inherent in the evaluation of External Possessors as follows:

> Thus, despite being coded as a core argument, the [Possessor] is not licensed by the argument frame of the verb root itself—and herein lies the intrinsic fascination of EP constructions.

More recently, König (2001:977) commenting on the question of the syntactic status of External Possessors concludes:

> No convincing and generally accepted solution, however, has so far been offered for the problems raised by the existence of external possessors for syntactic theory. In particular, external posses-

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[29]The Dative of 'judgement', typically associated with words such as 'enough', or 'too'.

> sor constructions challenge the notion that clause-level syntax de-
> pends directly on the argument structure or valence of individual
> verbs, a notion that is part of many syntactic theories. Various
> syntactic, semantic and pragmatic explanations have been offered
> for the apparent mismatch between the argument structure of the
> verb and the extra ('unlicensed') argument found in external pos-
> sessor constructions, none of which provides a convincing solution
> for all problems [. . .].

The evidence from typology thus reinforces the impression gained from
our assessment of the Free Genitives in Old Persian: a precise characteriza-
tion of their syntactic status remains frustratingly elusive—the more so given
the lack of native speakers, and the restricted nature of the attested data.
Nevertheless, there seems little doubt that we are dealing with essentially
the same phenomenon, i. e. that Old Persian can be considered to have made
widespread use of EPCs.

5.8.1   From Possessor to Agent: Benveniste reconsidered

The Genitive in the m. k. construction is best interpreted as a Free Genitive,
hence it was open to a broad range of semantic interpretations, including
Possessor. On this point, I concur with Benveniste (1952/1966). However,
it does not follow from this that the construction 'is' possessive. Rather, a
possessive reading is simply one of the readings which the polysemy of the
Free Genitives permit, along with, for example, Benefactive or Experiencer
readings. In the context of a m. k. construction, the Free Genitive was con-
struable as an Agent. It is notable, however, that the function of Agent is **not**
one of the semantic functions of Free Datives listed by Haspelmath (1999)
above. How, then, did the Free Genitive of Old Persian come to express an
Agent? There are two main reasons why one can assume that this is indeed
what happened. First of all, we have seen that the Genitive expresses not
only Benefactives and Possessors, but also Experiencers, as in (164). Now
the conceptual proximity of Experiencers and Possessors to Agents is well-
documented, and can be considered to represent a relatively minor extension.
When we return to one of the commonest types of m. k. construction, (124),
repeated here for convenience, it is easy to get a feel for how the shift from
a possessive to an agentive meaning could have come about:

(124)   *avaθā=**šā́m**   hamaranam kartam*
  thus=3PL:GEN battle do:PTCPL

  'thus **by them** battle was done' (standard interpretation)
  'thus their battle was done' (External Possessor interpretation)

Thus the use of the Free Genitive to express the A may quite possibly have originated in a Possessive reading, as Benveniste suggested. As noted above, the m. k. construction is only attested with a single verb form, the participle of *kar-*, so we might reasonably assume that the extension of the Free Genitive to express Agents was initially restricted to perhaps just this lexeme, and in only a small number of collocations. But it would have represented the thin end of the wedge, from which it expanded to an increasing number of verbal lexemes.

Further evidence in support of Free Genitives as Agents is provided by comparative evidence, in particular from the work of Hettrich (1990) on Agent-phrases in the oldest attested Indo-European texts. As Hettrich notes, Proto-Indo-European probably had no 'passive' in the sense of a verbal category exclusively dedicated to passivization. Rather, there was a Middle voice, or Medio-passive, which covered a broader range of meanings than simply passive, including for example reflexive and medium. However, they could be interpreted as a Passive under certain conditions. For example, Sanskrit *bharatē̆* could be interpreted as '(he) carried for himself', or '(he) was carried off' (Hock 1992:347).

Alongside these medio-passives based on finite verb forms, the earliest attested Indo-European languages also used various forms of non-finite verb forms in analytical passive constructions, for example verbal adjectives in **-tó* such as those used in the Old Persian m. k. construction. An example of a construction with a verbal noun from Vedic Sanskrit is the following:

(188)   *ná́ te dā́māna ā́dábhe*
  NEG deine Gaben vereiteln.VERBALNOUN:DAT

  'Deine Gaben können nicht vereitelt werden (Nicht (sind) deine Gaben zum Vereiteln)' RV 8,21,16 (Hettrich 1990:58)

It is extremely important to emphasise that, despite some semantic overlaps with the finite Medio-Passive forms, the analytical passives with non-finite verbs are a totally distinct type of construction. Now such constructions often expressed not merely a state, but also implied a notion of obligation, ability or necessity, as in the example above. And in many of the oldest at-

tested sources, it was possible to express the Obligee (i.e. the person under obligation to carry out the action expressed by the verbal noun) overtly in the clause. The normal case for the Obligee was the Dative. The following example contains the Latin *gerundivum*, historically related to the *-ta* participles of Old Persian:

(189)   *adeundus* **mihi** *illic   est homo*
        go:PTCPL 1s:DAT there is   man

        '**I** must go to the man there' (Hettrich 1990:13), Plaut.Rud.1298

Another example, this time from Old High German with an infinitive as verb form, is the following:

(190)   **uns**   *sint kind   ze bëranne*
        1PL:DAT are   children to bear

        'to-us are children to bear (i.e. '**we** can bear children') (Hettrich 1990:13)

Hettrich (1990:7–8) notes that generally, Agented passives of any description were very rare in the earliest texts. However, they were considerably more frequent in conjunction with analytical passive-like constructions such as those just illustrated than with finite passives of the Medio-Passive type. Hettrich quotes figures from the comedies of Plautus, in which just five Agent-phrases are found with passive verbs in *-r* (e.g. *laudatur*), whereas in the same texts, analytical passives (of the type *laudatus est*) occur with Agent-phrases 28 or 30 times. Similar proportions are reported for Hittite, Tocharian and Vedic (cf. Hettrich (1990:8–9) for further references, and Luraghi (2003:65) for Ancient Greek). These differences are too great and too consistent across the various languages to be pure chance, and further underscore the fundamental difference between the analytical and the finite passive forms— which of course reinforces one of Benveniste's central claims, namely that the m. k. construction needed to be distinguished from a synthetic passive.

   A survey of the oldest attested sources leads Hettrich to conclude that the 'normal' case for Agentive constituents in analytical passives was the Dative. Of course the Dative in such constructions was optional. Such expressions could have served merely to express a general condition of obligation, possibility etc. If, however, the condition of obligation etc. was considered to apply to a specific person or entity, that person was expressed in a Dative NP. As Hettrich (1990:12) puts it, the Dative "is not part of the valency of the verb" (my translation). Because of the high degree of similarity in

the construction, and the fact that it is attested across so many old Indo-European languages, Hettrich (1990:14) assumes that it reflects a "syntactic type" that must have been present in the proto-language. On Hettrich's view, the use of the Dative in this type of construction is an extension of the Benefactive/Malefactive function of the Dative, well attested in all the relevant languages. Thus he does not assume a distinct 'Agent-function' of the Dative case; rather, the Dative covers a wide array of meanings, referred to by Hettrich as a 'dative continuum' (Hettrich 1990:23). The precise interpretation of any particuluar instantiation of the dative therefore emerges from the construction in which it occurs.[30] The parallels to the semantics of the Free Genitive in Old Persian hardly need to be repeated.

Hettrich's conclusion that the Dative is the original case for Agent-phrases is of course not the only possible one. In particular, a number of scholars have argued for the Instrumental. There are strong semantic grounds for favouring the Instrumental—metaphorical shifts between Instruments and Agents are quite regular and are reflected in, among other things, the widespread syncretism between Ergative and Instrumental cases in many languages, particularly in Australia.[31] In particular, the use of the Instrumental for Agent-phrases in Indo-Aryan has led some scholars to postulate the Instrumental as the original case for Agent-phrases in Indo-European, a view which Cardona (1970) implicitly supports. Hettrich argues at some length against this view, mainly on the grounds that the Instrumental is only attested in this function in Indo-Aryan (Hettrich 1990:17). It is particularly relevant in the present connection to note that in the Rig Veda, just two examples of a Dative-agent are found in conjunction with a *Verbalnomen*, both of them involving an enclitic Dative pronoun (first and second person respectively), a remarkable parallel to the widespread use of clitic pronoun Agents in Old Persian. Hettrich (1990:18) considers these to be relics of an older usage, which were retained longer than the full-NP Datives because there was no clitic Instrumental pronoun in the first and second person. Thus Hettrich

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[30]Unfortunately, Hettrich says little on the syntax of the Dative in such constructions. Thus we do not come any closer to the issue of the syntactic status of these Free Datives. The Old Irish example quoted by Hettrich (1990:13, ex.(18)) contains a form of reflexive pronoun which appears to be controlled by the Dative. However, this must be checked against the original sources.

[31]See Stolz (2001) for a survey based on a sample of 122 languages. Interestingly, although Instrumental and Agentive markers are often identical, such formal identity is vastly more frequent outside the Indo-European languages than within them.

accounts for Instrumental in Indo-Aryan as an innovation specific to this branch of the family, rather than a reflex of Proto-Indo-European. On this view, the Instrumental would have gradually replaced the Dative, whereby the final contexts to be affected were the clitic pronouns of the first and second person.[32] Hettrich's argumentation provides strong support for the position developed above regarding the nature of the Agent-phrase in Old Persian, but obviously the data is open to several different interpretations, and it is beyond the scope of the present work to pursue such weighty issues of Indo-European reconstruction. Nevertheless, the fact that the oldest attested stages of several branches of Indo-European contain constructions involving optional Datives expressing Agents in combination with a non-finite verb form is surely significant, and provides the most obvious source for the Free Genitive with the Old Persian m. k. construction.

5.9   Summary of the revised proposals

Although the evidence from Old Persian morphosyntax reviewed in this chapter is too thin for any water-tight conclusions, I believe there is sufficient substance to enable me to formulate a proposal for the emergence of ergativity in Iranian which differs significantly from the widely-held 'transfer of subject properties' account discussed in Section 5.3. Ultimately, the choice of explanation will, in the absence of more substantive comparative data, reduce to assessing the relative probability, parsimony, and typological plausibility of the available proposals.

First, following Hettrich (1990), I will assume that in pre-Old Iranian there existed constructions involving non-finite verb forms, where an Obligee could be optionally expressed with the Dative case. I will also assume that at this stage, External Possessor Constructions were also possible, involving a Dative Possessor. There seems little reason to doubt that such constructions displayed a similar array of formal and functional properties to the External Possessor Constructions of many modern languages of Europe. The Dative Possessor would have been essentially a Free Dative, not required by the argument frame of the verb, but nevertheless exhibiting argument-like characteristics, including perhaps subject properties. With the loss of the Iranian Dative as a distinct morphological category, the Genitive case took over the Free Dative functions, giving rise to what I have described in Section 5.6 as

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[32]See also the discussion on the Ablative in Vedic in Hettrich (1990:34–40).

Free Genitives. Concomitantly, adnominal Genitives were becoming increasingly rare; where the Possessor was human, most Possessor Constructions can be interpreted as examples of clausal possession with a free Genitive.

With the demise of the finite past tense forms Aorist and Perfect, resultative participles became the sole carriers of the meaning 'Past tense'. However, the participles **retained their lexical intransitivity**, i. e. the inability to assign accusative case. Because the Free Dative/Genitive already expressed Obligee, Possessor, Benefactive, and Experiencer, an extension to Agent reading is quite plausible, and indeed Agent meanings already overlapped with Possessor readings in some cases, as shown. Just how and when such an extension occurred, or whether it arose through the ambiguity of an External Possessor Construction (e. g. 'their battle was fought' → 'they joined battle'), or whether a Benefactive reading was the source, is currently impossible to ascertain. The m. k. construction was not therefore an agented passive, but an intransitive clause to which an optional Free Genitive could be added, just as Free Genitives could be added to a number of other types of clause. Because in later stages of Iranian no other productive means of expressing two-participant events in the past tense was available, the m. k. construction with a Free Genitive became the regular means for doing so.

Let us briefly consider how the above account differs from 'transfer of subject properties' view. According to the latter, the m. k. construction is an agented passive, and the Genitive phrase is simply a peripheral *by*-phrase equivalent, which in the course of time becomes increasingly integrated into the clausal syntax. The arguments against an agented-passive interpretation can be summed up as follows:

1. **The Genitive exhibited properties of a structural case** The Genitive was the normal case for Indirect Objects, which is highly suggestive of a structural case. Furthermore, even in its Possessor or Benefactive readings it was subject to the Cliticization Rule in (151), a fact which again brings the Genitive closer to the undeniably structural Accusative case. As Benveniste (1952/1966) pointed out, one would in fact have expected a true *by*-phrase to have had an adpositional form (notwithstanding the arguments of Cardona (1970), see Section 5.5.2), and indeed adpositional Agent-phrases are well attested. Finally, we should note that typologically, the Dative (for this is what the Old Persian Genitive functionally was) is scarcely attested as the Agent-phrase

with a passive (Kazenin 2001:903–904).

2. **No corresponding active form** The participle on which the m. k. construction was based does not correspond to any particular unmarked 'active' verb form (Section 5.2). As such, the m. k. construction can be considered voice-neutral.

3. **Lack of empirical evidence documenting intermediate stages of a transfer of subject properties** In later stages of Iranian past tense verb forms exist which still have the resultative, and hence intransitive reading associated with the participles of Old Persian. Yet in the same languages, the same verb forms can occur with an A which apparently has subject properties (see next Chapter). What this suggests is that the A was simultaneously optional, yet if present controlled subject properties. If that is the case for later stages of the language, then it is quite possible that this was in fact the state of affairs from the outset.

4. **Lack of evidence for the development of Agent-phrases to ergative subjects elsewhere** Among the modern Iranian languages surveyed by Bossong (1985), it is notable that where a language has an ergative construction in the past, the A is almost always marked with a reflex of the old Genitive. The postposition *rādiy*, for example, is not attested as the source of an Ergative marker anywhere (Bossong 1985:118).[33] Nor to my knowledge did the preposition *hačā* ever develop into an Ergative marker. In other words, although adpositional Agent-phrases of are attested in Iranian, none of them ever developed into an Ergative subject.

5. **Pragmatics of the m. k. construction** The attested examples of agented m. k. constructions in Old Persian are pragmatically atypical for passive constructions. The A is invariably definite, almost always pronominal and high in topicality. In some contexts the construction appears to be interchangeable with genuinely active constructions—see (142) and the next Section.

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[33]A possible exception to this claim is Baloči, where the Oblique marker *-a* may be a reflex of *rā<radiy*. However, the source of the Baloči Oblique has not yet been fully clarified (Agnes Korn, p. c.).

5.9.1 Subject properties of the Agent phrase revisited

Assuming that the source of the A of the m. k. construction was a Free Genitive raises an intriguing possibility. Cross-linguistically, the comparable Free Datives of many languages display subject properties to varying degrees (cf. the contributions in Aikhenvald et al. 2001). It is therefore possible that the Old Persian Free Genitives may already have had some subject properties. As mentioned, the available examples do not permit a clear-cut answer to the question of the subject-status of Free Genitives. Indeed, even in well-attested living languages the issue of the subject properties of Free Datives is often open to considerable controversy. However, if one considers examples such as the following in context, the discourse status of the A in the m. k. construction appears hardly compatible with what one expect from a syntactically peripheral Agent phrase:

(191) a. *avaθā=šam hamaranan kartam utā*
    and=3PL:GEN battle do:PTCPL and

   b. *avam Vahyazdātam agarbāya   utā*
    that Vahyazdata take.prisoner:PST:3PL and

   c. *martiyā tya=šaiy fratamā anušiyā āhata*
    men who=3S:GEN foremost followers were
    agarbāya
    take.prisoner:PST:3PL

   (a) 'then battle was fought **by them**$_i$'
   (b) 'that Vahyazdata – (they$_i$) took prisoner and'
   (c) 'the men who were his foremost followers (they$_i$) took prisoner'
   (Kent 1953:DB III,47–49)

In (191a), the Agent is expressed as a pronominal clitic, typical of a m. k. construction. In the following two clauses, the same referent is expressed through zero-anaphora. In fact, the two subsequent clauses appear to be examples of coreferential deletion in coordinate clauses, a phenomenon highly typical of syntactic subjects. The Agent-phrases of passive clauses, on the other hand, are incapable of controlling coreferential deletion (Kazenin 2001:912). Consider in this connection (122), repeated here for convenience:

(122) *ima tya **manā** kartam pasāva yaθā xšāyaθiya abavam*
   that which 1S:GEN do:PTCPL after when king become:PST:1S

   'This (is) that (which) was done **by me**$_i$ after ($\emptyset_i$) became king'

Here too the A of the m. k. construction is resumed via zero-anaphora in the following phrase. In (192), we have a semantically very similar sequence of clauses with the difference that the first clause is not an m. k. construction but an active one with a subject in Nominative (*adam*):

(192) *ima tya* **adam** *akunavam vašnā   Auramazdāha hamahyāyā*
       that which 1s   do:PST:1s   by.favour of.Ahuramazda same
       θarda pasāva yaθā xšāyaθiya abavam
       in.year after   when king   become:PST:1s

       'This (is) what $\mathbf{I}_i$ did by the favour of A. in one and the same year after $\emptyset_i$ became king' (Kent 1953:DB IV,3–5)

It will be seen that in both examples the pronoun is omitted in the second clause. Thus apparently either a Free Genitive or a Nominative subject can control zero-anaphora. However, I would not like to read to much into examples like this at this stage, because it is uncertain whether subject omission in Old Persian is grammatically or pragmatically driven. Evidence from later stages of Iranian show that NP-deletion is in part pragmatically determined (see Section 6.5.2). However, it should be clear that pragmatically, the A of (191a) is topical enough to serve as the start of a deletion-chain, just as the Nominative subject of (192) is.

Semantically and pragmatically, the attested m. k. constructions square up well with what Lazard (1998:237) suggests is the typical constellation found in 'Canonical two-actant (accusative or ergative)' constructions: "Agent and object firmly individuated. Process completed". Mithun (2004) also discusses cross-linguistically observable pragmatic and semantic preferences in the type of NP which can be a grammatical subject, what Mithun refers to as "cross-linguistic subject selection tendencies". She sums them up in the form of the following four hierarchies:

1. First person > Second person > animate > inanimate
2. Semantic Agent > Semantic Patient
3. Given > New
4. Identifiable (definite) > Unidentifiable (indefinite)

Mithun (2004) provides examples from languages in which such tendencies are grammaticalised. For example, in Yana (Hokan stock, California) there is a regular passive construction, but it cannot be used when the Agent is first or second person. Now in English, a sentence such as *She was hit by*

me, which selects a third person subject and puts the first person Agent into a *by*-phrase, is certainly pragmatically odd, but nevertheless grammatical. In Yana, on the other hand, this event must be expressed with an active construction in which the first person Agent goes into the subject role (*I hit her*. Conversely, when the first person is Patient (*She hit me*), a passive construction is used: *I was hit by her*. In other words, the category of person dictates the choice of subject, and the passive construction serves the purpose of maintaining the assignment of first/second person to the subject role.

Looked at in this light, the m. k. construction (at least the attested examples) appear pragmatically highly marked: in all examples, it is an NP that is maximally high on the subject selection hierarchies that is downgraded to an apparently peripheral syntactic function. It seems odd that in Old Persian we should find a 'passive' reserved solely for such constructions where the Agent is maximally definite etc., when these are, from a typological perspective, precisely the constructions typically expressed through active clauses.

It is therefore conceivable that the A of the m. k. construction already had some syntactic subject properties in Old Iranian. Although the available data do not provide unequivocal support for this analysis, it is equally true that the data are insufficient to dismiss it out of hand. But assuming that the A of the m. k. construction already had some subject properties seems in fact no less likely than the proposal that a NP with no subject properties gradually developed them. On my account, we would have a state of affairs whereby Free Genitives would have had syntactic subject properties anyway, and this state of affairs was maintained when they were used to express the Agent with the m. k. construction. The latter account is, in terms of simplicity, surely preferable because we would actually have less to explain. If the construction was in fact even at this stage more ergative than passive, then major internal restructuring is no longer necessary. What changed in the subsequent development would then be not so much the construction-internal grammatical relations, but the **functional load of the construction itself**: from being just one of several possibilities to express past transitive constructions, as illustrated in (142), it became the sole available one following the collapse of the verb system. The subject properties of the A, however, may have been present from the outset. On this view, the claim of Cole et al. (1980:742) that the acquisition of subject properties always begins at a stage in which "the NP in question shows no subject properties." is open to question. Typological support for the analysis just sketched comes from modern Iranian, in particular Kurdish languages—the relevant data will be presented in the

following chapter.

So was the m. k. construction a passive or a possessive? The answer is neither one nor the other. As Lazard (1984:243) puts it, reducing the choice to these apparently mutually incompatible alternatives is "une fausse alternative". To the extent that a simple participial construction such as (128), repeated here for convenience, is considered a passive, then the m. k. construction was **based on** a passive:

(128)   *vasiy aniyašciy naibam kartam   anā Pārsā*
          much other   good   do:PTCPL in   Persepolis

          'much other good (construction) **was built** in Persepolis'

But, as argued extensively in Section 5.2, this type of participial construction is not a passive of the same order as the synthetic passives. One can equally see (128) as simply an intransitive sentence with an adjectival predicate, because, strictly speaking, there is no corresponding unmarked active verb from in the perfect tense. And as I have argued extensively above, there are good reasons to reject the claim that the Genitive A that could, optionally, occur with these verb forms was merely a syntactically peripheral *by*-phrase equivalent.

As far as the possessive claim is concerned, the more accurate statement is that the A of the m. k. construction is an exponent of the Old Persian Free Genitive, which was massively polysemous. The construction was not **exclusively** used to express Possession, but it was one of the readings available, along with Benefactive, Experiencer, Goal etc. Semantically, it was the polysemy of the Free Genitive which permitted an agentive reading in the m. k. construction; syntactically, it was the argument status of the Free Genitive which provided the catalyst for the transition to full subjecthood. And from the perspective of the language system as a whole, it was the later unavailability of lexically transitive verb forms in the past tense that led to the extension of the construction.

Chapter 6

Badīnānī

Badīnānī (to be distinguished from Behdīnān, an Iranian language/dialect of Iran, see Windfuhr 1990) is the term loosely applied to the southernmost dialect of the Northern Group of Kurdish, spoken around the townships of Zakho, Dohuk, Amadiye and Akre (see Map at the beginning of the study). Lexically, and in the basic features of its morphology Badīnānī is undeniably a member of the Northern Group (and mutual intelligibility with the dialects of Southeast Turkey is high). Like the other dialects of the Northern Group, Badīnānī completely lacks the pronominal special clitics which are characteristic of all other West Iranian languages known to me, and which play such a central role in alignment patterns in the Central Group of Kurdish (see Chapter 7). Although spoken Badīnānī has been admirably documented in MacKenzie (1961a), MacKenzie (1962) and Blau (1975), those who have investigated ergativity in the Northern Group, e.g. Bynon (1979) or Dorleijn (1996), have taken the descriptions of 'Standard Kurmanji' as representative of the Northern Group as a whole. As a result, certain aspects of Badīnānī syntax have been ignored. This Chapter will focus on those aspects of Badīnānī syntax which differ significantly from the syntax of the rest of the Northern Group. I will suggest that precisely these features are rather archaic, and as such, provide vital evidence towards reconstructing the diachronic syntax of the Northern Group, and indeed contribute significantly to our knowledge of the emergence of ergativity in Iranian in general.

6.1   Fronted Obliques

Like the other members of the Northern Group, Badīnānī also exhibits an
ergative construction comparable to that illustrated in Section 4.3. How-
ever, Badīnānī also has a number of other constructions which are no longer
possible in the dialects of Turkey and the Caucasus (or at best preserved in
isolated idiomatic phrases). I believe that these constructions represent an
important link in reconstructing the development of ergativity in Kurdish.
The key notion involved in these constructions is that of Non-Canonical Sub-
ject.

6.1.1   Predicative Possessive constructions

Throughout Kurdish, simple assertions of existence are expressed with a
particle *ha-/he-* plus a form of the copula *būn* (often treated as a monomor-
phemic verb *hebūn*):

(193)   *mirôv-ak   ha-ya*
        man-INDEF:SG existent-COP:PRES:3S

        'There is a man' (MacKenzie 1961a:191)

(194)   *l zamānakī mirôv-ak   ha-bô*
        at.a.time   man-INDEF:SG existent-COP:PST:3S

        'Once upon a time there was a man' (MacKenzie 1962:284)

In Badīnānī, such existential predicates can be extended via the addition of
a **fronted Oblique** (the Oblique being the etymological reflex of the Old
Iranian Genitive):

(195)   *naqlakē* **ḥā́k̇im-ak-ī̄**   *sē   kuṝ ha-bô-n.*
        at.a.time prince-INDEF:SG-OBL three son existent-COP:PST-PL

        'Once **a prince** had three sons' (lit. once to-a-prince three sons
        existed) (MacKenzie 1962:320)

(196)   **ta**   *qalam ha-ya?*
        2S:OBL pen   existent-be:PRES:3S

        'Have **you** got a pen?' (lit: to-you is there a pen?) (MacKenzie
        1961a:191)

(See also the description of this type of possessive construction in Şirîn 1996a:30–31). Such constructions (*mihi est*) are widespread in many languages, and are generally considered to have been characteristic of the earliest stages of Indo-European (cf. for example Drinka (1999:472) and Bauer 1999:592); they are certainly characteristic of the older attested stages of Iranian. From the point of view of syntactic typology, a crucial issue is the syntactic status of the fronted Oblique Possessor. In the available texts no examples were found with a reflexive pronoun, which could have provided the most reliable indication of subject status (it is a somewhat unnatural construction to elicit: 'He has his (own) house' would be considered communicatively fairly redundant). However, examples such as the following are at least very suggestive that the fronted Oblique is potentially a controller of coreferential deletion across coordinate clauses:

(197) *Ha-bī*   *ẖākim-ak,*   *sē*   *kur ha-bī-n*
     existent-COP:PST:3S prince-INDEF:SG, three son existent-COP:PST-PL
     gal   kičak
     with daughter

     'There was a prince, (he) had three sons and a daughter'
     (lit. A prince$_i$ was (and) $\emptyset_i$ three sons and a daughter existed)
     (MacKenzie 1962:348)

Here the subject of the second clause, semantically the Possessor, appears to have been deleted under coreference with the subject of the initial existential construction. This might of course be pragmatically-driven omission of a highly topical constituent. Or it may be nascent subjecthood.[1]

6.1.2 Experiencers

A very similar combination of additional fronted, but non thematically-licensed Oblique NP with an intransitive predicate can be found in certain expressions of sensory perception, generally involving a body-part term. The commonest expression of this type is *čav ka(f)tin*, lit. 'eyes fall', i.e. 'catch sight of':

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[1]Lazard (1984:243) briefly comments on the striking similarities between the possessive and the ergative constructions, basing his comments on what appears to be Badīnānī data. As far as I am aware, Lazard's comments have not been taken up in the relevant typological literature.

(198) *waxt-ē* ***min*** *čav* *dôtmām-ā xô* *kaft-in*
       time-OBL 1S:OBL eye:PL cousin-IZF REFL fall:PST-3PL

       'When **I** caught sight of my cousin' (lit. When to-me eyes fell on my
       cousin) (MacKenzie 1962:286)

Crucially, the fronted Oblique in (198) is demonstrably a syntactic subject
because it controls reflexive *xô*. The verb, however, continues to agree in
person and number with the Theme argument, *čav*.[2] An expression with a
different body-part term is the following:

(199) ***min*** *dil* *pē̄* *s̤ot*
       1S:OBL heart for.it burn:PST:3S

       '**I** felt sorry for it' (lit. to-me heart for-it burned) (MacKenzie 1962:252)

Finally, (200) involves the cleft-type constructions, to be discussed in Section
6.3, hence there is what appears to be an Izafe linking the Oblique to the
rest of the expression:

(200) ***min****-ē̄*   *gu lē̄*
       1S:OBL-IZM ear on.it

       'I was listening to it' (lit. to-me who ear (was) on it.) (MacKenzie
       1961a:207)

Constructions of sensory perception such as the preceding ones involve what
was referred to in Section 5.8 an External Possessor (the fronted Oblique NP).
External Possessor Constructions are most frequent with body-part terms,
and often express idiomatic meanings: in (198), for example, eyes do not
literally 'fall'. Elsewhere, the possessor is expressed adnominally through an
Izafe construction:

(201) *bāb-ē̄*   *wān*   *mir*
       father-IZM 3PL:OBL die:PST

       'Their father died' (lit. father-of them died), not **wan bāb mir*
       (MacKenzie 1961a:175)

In the rest of the Northern Group, the Izafe construction is overwhelmingly
preferred for all expressions of possession.

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[2]Plural number is not overtly signalled on bare nouns in the Direct case, cf. Section
4.2.1.3.

6.1.3 Needers and Wanters

Badīnānī has a verb *vyān*, which is intransitive and basically means 'be necessary'. It is regularly used with a fronted Oblique 'Needer' and a Direct 'Needed', rendering the sense 'need/want', as in:

(202) *ama   hasp   na-vē-n*
      1PL:OBL horse:PL NEG-be.necessary:PRES-3PL

      'We do not want horses.' (lit. to-us horses are-not-necessary) (MacKenzie 1961a:192)

Often the 'Needed' is not a NP but a clause, as in:

(203) *min   t-vē-t   az bi-č-im-ava*
      1S:OBL IND-be.necessary:PRES-3S 1S IRR-go:PRES-1S-ITERAT

      'I want to go back' (lit. to-me is necessary I go back') (MacKenzie 1961a:192)

Note that it is the needed entity which governs agreement on the verb:

(204) *ta   **az** na-vē-**m***
      2S:OBL 1S NEG-be.necessary:PRES-1S

      'You do not want **me**' (MacKenzie 1961a:192)

Fronted Needers/Wanters control the reference of reflexive *xô*, as shown from the following example (elicited during my own field work):

(205) ***min**   t-vē-t   hesp-ē   **xô***
      1S:OBL PROG-be.necessary:PRES-3S horse-IZM REFL

      '**I** want/need **my own** horse' (and noone else's)

As we would expect, the Fronted Oblique can also control coreferential deletion, as in the following (transcription follows the source):

(206) ***min**$_i$ d-vê-t   Ø$_i$ bi-ç-im   mal-ê*
      1S:OBL PROG-be.necessary:PRES-3S Ø$_i$ IRR-go:PRES-1S house-OBL

      '**I** want/need to go home' (Şirîn 1996a:18)

Again we have here an identical syntactic configuration to the constructions discussed above: An intransitive predicate, of which a Direct NP is the morphological subject, to which a fronted Oblique is grafted. The fronted Oblique, however, controls syntactic subject properties.

6.1.4   The Non-Canonical Subject Construction

We have seen that Badīnānī makes use of optional fronted Obliques in three types of construction: predicative expressions of possession, with certain expressions of sensory perception involving body-part terms, and with the verb *vyān* in expressions of necessity and desire. In some of these, notably the expressions of sensory perception, it can be demonstrated that the fronted Oblique is a syntactic subject. I believe we are therefore entitled to consider these as examples of Non-Canonical Subject (NCS) Constructions. Schematically, the NCS Construction in Badīnānī can be displayed as follows:

(NP_{OBL}) NP_{DIR} $\text{V-}_{INTRANS}$ [Dir. NP controls agreement on V.]
                                                            [Obl. NP controls reflexives]

The semantics of the Non-Canonical Subjects in Badīnānī display the typical features found to recur in similar constructions cross-linguistically. Shibatani (2002) lists the following semantic expressions found cross-linguistically to use Non-Canonical Subjects:

1. Possession/Existence

2. Psychological states

3. Visual/auditory perceptions, including the notion of 'appearance, seeming'

4. Necessity and wanting including the notion of obligation ('must')

5. Potentiality, including the ability and the notion of permission ('may')

6. Some other uncontrolled states of affairs (e. g. 'finding something,' 'remembering,' 'forgetting')

With the exception of Potentiality, this list is a reasonably accurate account of the various types of Non-Canonical Subject in Badīnānī treated above.[3]

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[3]In Badīnānī, expressions of ability are based on the verb *şîan*, which does not require a Non-Canonical Subject (Şirîn 1996a:51).

6.2 The ergative construction

6.2.1 Agentless constructions

At first glance, Badīnānī appears to have straightforward case of ergativity in the past tenses, along the lines of the system outlined in Section 4.3. However, closer examination of the data shows that there are some subtle differences. The most striking feature is the existence of past tense verb forms, formally identical to those found in the ergative construction, but used in contexts in which the precise identity of the Agent is not recoverable. The following examples illustrate this phenomenon:

(207)   *az **darmān kir-im***
        1s medication do:PST-1S
        'I **was treated**' (lit. 'I was medication-done') (MacKenzie 1962:286)

(208)   *waxt́-ē   r̄ûništ́ī-n-a   xārē, ẓad **īnā***
        time-OBL sit:PST-PL-DIR down, food bring:PST:3S

        'when they sat down, food **was brought**' (MacKenzie 1962:322)

(209)   *pišt́ī min   maḱtab xalās kir-ī,   t́amām bī̄,   az*
        after 1SOBL school   finished do:PST-PTCPL, complete be:PST, 1s
        ***t́a'īn   kir-im**   mu'allim*
        appointment do:PST-1S teacher

        'After I had finished school, it was over, I **was appointed** a teacher' (lit. 'I was appointment-done a teacher') (MacKenzie 1962:364)

(210)   *aw   har sē   diz **bir-in**-a   lālī*
        DEM all   three thief take:PST-PL-DIREC before

        'those three thieves **were taken** before (him)' (MacKenzie 1962:260)

(211)   *bāp̄īr-ē   ma   sar-ā   bāp̄īr-ē=ngô   l   baẖašt-ē*
        ancestor-IZP 1S.OBL head-IZF ancestor-IZP=2PL from paradise-OBL
        ***hāvēt**-a   darē*
        throw:PST-DIREC outside

        'Our ancestors **were thrown** out of paradise on account of your ancestors' (MacKenzie 1962:248)

For MacKenzie (1961a:193), these are all examples of agentless passives, and in all cases, the most natural translation is with an English agentless passive.

It is important to note that the **approximate** identity of the Agent can usually be inferred from contextual and encyclopaedic knowledge. For example, in (207) it will be the doctor that the speaker has visited. In (208) one can assume that the food is brought by servants attending the guests, although these are never explicitly mentioned in the text. But of course precisely the same can be said of most instances of agentless passives in English: an Agent is implied, and in many cases the approximate identity can be inferred. But this type of contextual construal needs to be clearly distinguished from zero anaphora, the discourse-driven omission of previously introduced referents (although drawing the distinction between zero-anaphora and construal based on contextual and encyclopaedic knowledge is not always straightforward, as we shall see below).

In Badīnānī, this type of usage is in fact very rare. The above examples are the only clear-cut cases I have come across.[4] As for the other dialects of the Northern Group, constructions such as (208) are completely absent; a past verb form of an ostensibly transitive verb will always be interpreted as active and transitive. An A_{PAST} can be omitted, but only through the normal processes of zero-anaphora. These examples are therefore not representative for the typical usage of past transitive verbs. The more common type does have an Agent.

6.2.2   Agented constructions

Far more widespread than the agentless uses of past tense verb forms is their usage with an A_{PAST}, essentially creating a fully-fledged ergative constructions. Compare (212) with (209), repeated here for convenience:

(209)   **Past form of *kirin*, no A recoverable:**

pišt͛ī min   makt͛ab xalās   kir-ī,   t͛amām bī,   az
after 1SOBL school   finished do:PST-PTCPL, complete be:PST, 1S
t͛a'īn   kir-im *mu'allim*
appointment do:PST-1S teacher

'After I had finished school, it was over, I **was appointed** a teacher' (lit. 'I was appointment-done a teacher')

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[4]One of the examples listed by MacKenzie (1961a:193) probably requires a different interpretation—cf. the discussion in connection with (244) below.

(212) **Past form of *kirin*, overt A$_{PAST}$:**

az maǰbôr bī-m, **ḫukmat-ē** *az taʿīn* *kir-im*
1s obliged be:PST-1s, government-OBL 1s appointment do:PST-1s

. . . I was obliged (to go), **the government** appointed me . . . ' (MacKenzie 1962:364), [cf. (209)]

In both examples, an identical verb form is used. However, in (212) the clause is extended with an overt A in the Oblique case (*ḫukmat-ē*).

In most respects, the ergative construcion complies with the description of the canonical ergative construction of the Northern Group given in Section 4.3. The A$_{PAST}$ controls the most important syntactic subject property, namely the reference of reflexive *xwe* (or the dialectal variant *xô*). The following example is typical:

(213) **bālīl-ī** *ḱēťik-ak* *kir-a* *ta* *barīḱ-a* **xô-dā**
Bahlul-OBL cat-INDEF do:PST-DIREC PREP pocket-IZ REFL-LOC

'**Bahlul**$_i$ put a cat in **his**$_i$ pocket.' (MacKenzie 1962:322)

Now the A$_{PAST}$ can often be deleted through the normal process of coreferential deletion, but in such cases it remains syntactically active and capable of binding a reflexive, as in (214):

(214) *čo* *darva* *w* **xô** *hāvēta t* *bīrē-da*
went outside and REFL threw PREP well-LOC

'(She) went outside and threw **herself** into the well.' (MacKenzie 1962:314)

Note that in (214) we find an identical verb form to that in (211). But while the latter was interpreted as an agentless passive, there is no doubt that the former must be considered an active, ergative construction.

6.2.3 Summary of the ergative construction

We have seen that in Badīnānī the following construction types with past tense forms of transitive verbs are attested:

1. Agentless, and apparently intransitive, clauses—cf. (207)–(211).

2. With an overt (or regularly deleted) A$_{PAST}$ in the Oblique case, which controls subject properties such as control of reflexive *xô*—cf. (213).

Such constructions fulfill all of the criteria usually advanced for erga-
tivity.

The situation obtaining today in Badīnānī actually reflects quite closely what
is attested for Old and Middle Iranian: an (originally) participial verb form,
based on a transitive verb, can appear both with or without an overt A_{PAST}.
The A_{PAST} takes the Genitive (Old Persian), or its etymological reflex, the
Oblique (Bad.). Recall for example the agentless use of the participle in Old
Persian, repeated here as (215):

(215) *xšaçam tya   hacā amāxam taumāyā **parābartam**   āha*
       kingdom which from our   family   taken.away:PTCPL be:PST:3S

       'the kingdom which **was taken away** from our family' (Kent 1953:DB
       I,61–62)

Here the participle is merely an intransitive predicate, entirely in keeping
with what one would expect from the inherent lexical specification of the
participle. But of course it could be extended with an oblique A_{PAST}, as in:

(216) *ima tya   **manā kartam** pasāva yaθā xšāyaθiya abavam*
       that which 1S:GEN do:PTCPL after   when king   become:PST:1S

       'This (is) that (which) **was done by me** after (I) became king' (Kent
       1953:DB I,28–29)

Both types of construction continued to be found in later stages of Iranian,
for example in Middle Persian (3C.BC–8/9C.AD):

(217) *paymōxt   hēnd*
       clothed:PTCPL be:PST:3PL

       '(they) were clothed' (Sundermann 1989:152)

Citing Middle Persian examples, Paul (2002b:162) contrasts the agentless use
of such past tense verb forms with their agented versions:

(218) *hrēstagān … kušt   he-nd*
       disciples   … kill:PTCPL COP-PL

       'The disciples … were killed'

(219) *u=t   kušt   he-m*
       and=2S:CLC kill:PTCPL COP-1S

       'And you killed me'

Note the clitic Agent in the latter example, giving rise a structure essentially identical to the Old Persian *manā kartam* construction illustrated in Chapter 5.

In Early Judaeo Persian (8–12 C.AD), examples of past tense verb forms with a passive sense are also attested:

(220) *cyst*   *w'z*   *cy*   **grypt**
what.is and.from what take:PTCPL

'what is (it) and from what **has (it) been derived** (lit. 'taken')?' (Paul 2002b:162, glosses added)

For Early New Persian (pre-1000AD) Heston (1976:167) notes the existence of what she refers to as an "adjectival passive", consisting of the familiar participle plus a form of the copula. She interprets it as a "nominal clause" which "simply uses a participle instead of an adjective or adverb" as the copula complement:

(221) *pyš*   ˈ*zyn* ˈ*ydwn* **gfth**   **bwd**
before this thus   say:PTCPL COP:PST:3S

'Before this thus (it) was said' (Heston 1976:167, glosses added)

However, an ostensibly identical construction also occurred with an overt Agent:

(222) *kh*   *d*ˈ*r*ˈ *bn*ˈ *krdh*   ˈ*st*
which Dārā built do:PTCPL COP:PRES:3S

'...which Dārā has built' (Heston 1976:168, glosses added)

The latter construction, however, apparently is more common with the short form of the copula as opposed to the full form in *bwd* in (221).

The coexistence of these two constructions, both based on a formally identical verb form, is a recurrent feature of the Iranian languages. In fact Phillott (1919) commenting on Persian generally notes that the original participle+copula *nwšth* ˈ*st* can mean either '(it) is written' or '(he) has written'.[5] The fact that one verb form fulfills two functions, an agentless passive and an active transitive, has led to the terminological confusion surrounding the issue, with different authors referring to the same constructions as passive, ergative, or agential. Paul (2002b:162, fn.4), discussing the situation

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[5]Quoted in Heston (1976:227,fn. 16); Phillott (1919) was not available to me at the time of writing.

for Early Judaeo Persian, considers that the terms 'passive' and 'ergative' can be used "more or less synonymously". Although this may not appear to be a very satisfactory position, it is probably a fair reflection of the messy indeterminateness of the linguistic categories concerned—a situation that remained so for many centuries. The typological perspective shows that it is not necessary to force a particular construction into either a passive, or an ergative category, as we saw in Chapter 2.3. And the history of the Iranian languages shows that such indeterminacy need not be just a brief transitional phase, but can characterise a language for a considerable period.

The Badīnānī data discussed here show that in principle, the duality of these forms has endured down to the present (cf. MacKenzie (1961b:80), who stresses the continuity from Old Persian down to Badīnānī in this respect). Agentless usage of past transitive verbs is also found in some other modern languages, for example Zazaki (Paul 1998b:95). However, it must be stressed that in Badīnānī the intransitive use of the participle is now very rare. But there can be little doubt that Badīnānī constructions such as (208) are the final remnants of an earlier common Iranian construction, rather than an innovation restricted to Badīnānī. The latter possibility would also run counter to the general line of development throughout the Iranian languages, which has been in the direction of abandoning such constructions.

The implications of this state of affairs for diachrony are considerable. For in Badīnānī we find both the presumed origin of the ergative construction, i. e. a participial verb form which has retained its passive sense, side by side with a fully-fledged ergative construction. But crucially, **nowhere do we find evidence of an intermediate stage involving an agented passive**, that is, nowhere do we find a construction in which the A is expressed through some kind of peripheral *by*-phrase equivalent. If the diachronic development towards ergativity had originated with an agented passive, then surely we could have expected to find, somewhere, reflexes of such a structure. But what we actually find is either an intransitive construction with **no A at all**, or we find a construction with an A_{PAST} that is clearly a syntactic subject. While the apparent contradiction of **simultaneous optionality** and **core-argument status** of the A_{PAST} has posed a descriptive problem for Indo-Europeanists (hence the confusion of terminology in Iranian studies around the terms 'passive', 'intransitive', 'agential' etc.), it is a well-attested feature of ergative constructions elsewhere—cf. the discussion on Samoan in Section 2.3.1.

Badīnānī also offers us a possible explanation for the fact that the A_{PAST} is both (a) facultative, and (b) a syntactic subject. These are the two features that characterise the Non-Canonical Subject Construction discussed earlier. I believe it is reasonable to consider the ergative construction to be an extension of the Non-Canonical Subject Construction. The conceptual proximity of Experiencers, Possessors and Agents is well attested, so that semantically, such an extension is well-motivated. Furthermore, many of the verbs which are, formally, transitive, do not require agentive As, but Experiencers (for example *dītin* 'see'). Thus on the assumption that the NCS Construction of Badīnānī is likewise an archaic feature, it is a reasonable assumption that the NCS Construction was involved in the emergence of the ergative construction.

6.3 Further evidence for lexical intransitivity

Further evidence that the Badīnānī past tense verb forms have retained some of their participial character, hence are still lexically intransitive, comes from the use of such verb forms as modifiers in what appears to be an Izafe construction. Again, this particular construction is not attested elsewhere in the Northern Group outside of Badīnānī. Basically, the construction takes the outward form of an Izafe-construction, i. e. a NP. A head noun is linked to a modifier with the Izafe-particle (which agrees with the head noun in number and gender). The modifier looks like a relative clause. The construction can be rendered schematically as follows:

(223) NP-Izafe   non-verbal predicate(+copula)

It is important to note that the type of predication permitted in the second part of the construction is highly constrained: Only intransitive predicates expressing a state or location are found, usually the copula. Now although the entire sequence appears to be an Izafe construction, it functions in discourse as a simple clause, that is, it makes an assertion and has illocutionary force. MacKenzie (1961a:205) in fact treats it as a distinct tense/aspect, expressing "the sense of a state or action in progress". Some examples follow:

(224) *az-ē   musāfir-im*
       1S-IZM traveller-COP:1S

       'I am (temporarily) a traveller, i. .e at this moment' (lit. I, **who** am a traveller) (MacKenzie 1961a:206)

(225)   *Xatûn-a min*   **ya** *l hîvî-ya*   *te*
        lady-IZF 1S:OBL IZF at expectation-IZF 2S:OBL

        'My lady is waiting for you (at this moment)' (lit. my lady – **who**
        (is) at your expectation) (Blau 1975:106)

(226)   *Gir̂kek-ê*   *l wêrê hey*
        hill:INDEF-IZM at there existent:COP:3S

        'There is a hill there' (lit. a hill – **which** is there) (Blau 1975:100)

(227)   *Qelem-ê ilser mêsê*   *ye*
        pen-IZM on   table:OBL COP:2S

        'The pen is on the table' (Unger 1994: ex. (6a))

Although the above examples all appear to express clauses rather than NPs,
in some cases, a NP-reading is quite natural. The context of the following
examples makes it clear that they must be interpreted as NP+Relative clause:

(228)   *aw*   *tišt́-ēt*   *binē bax̱rē-dā*
        those thing-IZP under sea:OBL-LOC

        'those things **which** (are) at the bottom of the sea' (Not: 'Those
        things are at . . . ' (MacKenzie 1961a:204)

(229)   *aw*   *x̱ākim-ē* *t sindôkē-dā*
        that governor in chest:OBL-LOC

        'That governor **who** (is) in the chest.' (Not: 'The governor is in . . . '
        (MacKenzie 1961a:204)

It is, incidentally, another archaic feature of Badīnānī that the Izafe particle
is used to introduce relative clauses, again a feature that is reminiscent of
the function of its ancestor, Old Persian *hya*.

I noted above that is almost always a state predicate with a locative or
existential sense. Now it turns out that precisely in this environment the
participial verb forms also occur:

(230)   . . . *'či*   *bīa?'*   *Gôt-ē:*   *'sindôk-ā škāndī'*
             what happened? say:PST-to.him chest-IZF   break:PTCPL

        '. . . 'what happened?' (He) said to him: 'The chest **has been bro-
        ken into**.'' (MacKenzie 1962:258)

In (230), there can be no doubt that the phrase *sindôk-ā škāndī* has illocutionary force (it is the answer to the question 'what happened'). A sentential reading is therefore mandatory, and is reflected in MacKenzie's translation. Formally, however, it has the form of a NP+Izafe with an adjectival modifier, here a past tense verb form. MacKenzie (1961a:188, 210) in fact treats such expressions as a particular tense of the verb (Perfect Indicative II). I prefer to stress the parallels with the constructions involving state predicates discussed above. Here again we find the categorial indeterminacy of the past tense verb forms, the participle–finite verb squish discussed in Chapter 5 for Old Persian.

There can be little doubt that such constructions did indeed originate with an Izafe-construction. Presumably the development would have involved fronting a topic, about which the original relative clause makes a statement. In effect, there must have been some type of cleft construction. Taking (226) as an example, the development concerned must have been:

It's a hill (which is) over there → there's a hill over there.[6]

It is also relevant to note that this construction only occurs in declarative, affirmative clauses. This is precisely what one would expect if the construction originated from a cleft: A sentence like *It's a hill (which is) over there* is pragmatically far more likely than *It's a hill (which is) not over there*, or even **It's a hill (which) is it over there?*. Cross-linguistically, this kind of development is well-attested. Trask (1996:135) discusses the development of copulas in Mandarin and Hebrew from erstwhile "demonstratives or pronouns used in a linking function". A more fitting characteristic of the Izafe-particle would be hard to find. Such linking elements resumed a topic, along the lines of:

John — who's/he's at home → John is at home.

That something along these lines is behind the Badīnānī constructions just discussed seems highly likely. Although the Izafe is not a copula (Kurdish already has one) in these construction it must now be considered as some kind

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[6]The only literature I am aware of on this construction is an unpublished manuscript, Unger (1994). Unger argues that the Izafe marker is indeed an Izafe marker (as MacKenzie (1961a), not cited by Unger, had pointed out 30 years earlier) and goes on to suggest that the NP preceding the Izafe is a topic. Obviously this would tie in with my diachronic explanation in terms of a cleft origin.

of clausal operator, giving a finite clause a particular tense/aspect value.
Thus MacKenzie (1961a:188,205–207) lists constructions such as (224) as
a type of tense. Like the Hebrew and Mandarin developments (see Trask
(1996:133–135) for references), the development involves the reanalysis of a
Topic-Comment type of construction, with a resumptive pronoun/demonstrative
in the Comment, into a simple clause, with the Topic now a subject and the
erstwhile nominal resumptive element reanalysed as some form of clausal
operator.

   Nevertheless, the dividing line between the NP-reading and clausal read-
ing is not always clear. Consider the following:

(231) . . . *dīt*   *ẖākim-**ê**   *ākrê yê* *r̄ûništī l sar taxtê*   *xô*
             see:PST:3S governor-IZM Akre:OBL sitting at   throne-IZM REFL

       (a) (he) saw [(that) the Governor of Akre (was) sitting on his throne]$_S$
       (b) (he) saw [the Governor of A. **who** (was) sitting on his throne]$_{NP}$
       (MacKenzie 1962:248)

Here the construction following the verb *dīt* could be construed either as
a complement clause (a) or a NP complement (b). From the context it is
simply not possible to decide either way. It is of course likely that these
are typical bridging contexts providing the pathway for the development
from a nominal to a clausal reading of such constructions illustrated in (226)
etc. above. It is notable that the construction has travelled farther along the
path to sententiality, at least in some dialects. In the data of MacKenzie
(1961a), the Izafe-particle inflects for gender and number just like the Izafe-
particle in an Izafe construction. However, in the Badīnānī variety described
in Şirîn (1996a:40), the gender distinction is apparently not observed. Thus
instead of three choices of particle (masculine singular, feminine singular,
plural), only two are available, singular and plural. This is further evidence
that the nominal nature of the construction is increasingly being lost, because
the Izafe particle is losing distinctions that are required of it in the regular
Izafe construction.

   In sum, it is undoubtedly the case that the past 'tense' forms formed from
transitive verb forms in Badīnānī have retained traces of their participial
origins, evident both in their use as simple intransitives with passive sense in
examples such as (208), and in their usage in the cleft-type constructions such
as (230), which clearly evolved from an earlier attributive usage. As such,
the existence of this pocket of archaic usage must be considered a significant
stroke of good fortune for any attempts to reconstruct the development of

ergative alignment in the Northern Group, because it represents a very clear link with the state of affairs that obtained in earlier stages of the language family.

6.4 Non-Canonical Subjects and ergativity

In Sections 6.1.4 and 6.2.3 I argued that Badīnānī has a particular type of construction, the Non-Canonical Subject Construction. This construction involves a fronted Oblique coupled with an intransitive predication, the latter consisting of a Direct NP and an intransitive predicate. A good example of this type of construction are predicative expressions of possession: to-me X exists. I then went on to suggest that the ergative construction should be seen as a sub-type of the Non-Canonical Subject construction. It too consists of fronted Oblique, arguably optional, and a verb form which is also—arguably—intransitive. The paradox inherent in such constructions is that although the fronted Oblique is not licensed by the intransitive predicate, it nevertheless exhibits subject properties.

However, there are undoubtedly fine distinctions among the different sub-types of Non-Canonical Subject Construction. One important parameter of variation involves the degree of optionality of the fronted Oblique. In possessive constructions, it is obviously optional; without a uniquely identifiable Possessor, the expression can be interpreted as simply an existential. In expressions of sensory perception, it is obligatory because the body-part term necessarily implies the existence of a Possessor. With the past tense verb forms, constructions without a uniquely identifiable Agent are possible, as in (208), but they are unusual. In most cases, an Agent is either overtly present or discourse-recoverable and syntactically active. But it should be noted that graded optionality of Non-Canonical Subjects is a cross-linguistically widespread phenomenon—cf the contributions in Aikhenvald et al. (2001). In his detailed discussion of such constructions in Japanese, Shibatani (2001:338) concludes that "many of the predicates that are said to call for non-canonical coding patterns do in fact function as intransitive predicates." Tied to the graded optionality of such items is the whole issue of their subjecthood. I suspect that an answer framed in terms of a binary opposition subject vs. non-subject, would be a gross oversimplification. Indeed, the continuing debate on the status of such 'Non-Canonical Subjects' in numerous well-studied languages testifies to the difficulties inherent in such an

'all-or-nothing' approach (cf. for example the on-going debate on Japanese, Shibatani (2001) and (Kishimoto 2004)). As Comrie (1989:110) puts it, in many instances it is simply "pointless to expect a clear cut answer to the question 'What is the subject of this sentence?'".

Non-Canonical Subject constructions, including the ergative construction, represent in a sense the blending of clausal and lexical transitivity. Consider for a moment the constructions based on the verb *vyān* 'be necessary', discussed in Section 6.1.3. Although, as far as I can ascertain, the Needer/Wanter is an obligatory constituent of the clause, I would nevertheless not wish to call the **verb itself** transitive, because the two arguments it requires (the Needer and the Needed) are not marked in the same manner as those of a canonical transitive verb in the present tense (cf. the definition of transitivity in Section 2.2). Thus I prefer an approach which sees verbs such as *vyān* 'be necessary' as lexically intransitive, while the presence of the fronted Oblique with these verbs is handled by a more general feature of the syntax, a constructional rule which provides for the extension of certain verbs under certain semantic conditions with a Non-Canonical Subject. This account assumes that not all of syntax is derivable from the argument structures of verbs, but rather that constructions are the relevant units (see Goldberg (1995) for an extended defence of this position). In other words, Badīnānī syntax is characterized by a particular construction, the Non-Canonical Subject Construction, in which various verbs participate.

This line of argument can be applied to the ergative construction in Badīnānī. I would suggest that the ergative construction is in fact a a subtype of the Non-Canonical Subject construction. The fronted Oblique is optional, it is a syntactic subject, and the verb form is, if we take its participial origin seriously, lexically intransitive. Furthermore, I claim that the affinity between the A of the ergative construction and the Non-Canonical Subjects of, for example, possessive constructions, is evidence of a diachronic pathway, with the latter being prior. The fascinating point about the Badīnānī data is that a situation is preserved here which largely parallels what can be traced back as far as Old Persian.

However, despite my emphasis on the unity of the NCS Construction in Badīnānī, the sub-constructions I have discussed, for example the ergative construction or possessives, in fact differ in subtle ways, as one would expect from their different semantics. And diachronically, at least in the rest of the Northern Group, they have parted company. In the dialects of Turkey and the Caucasus, Non-Canonical Subjects as Possessors, Experiencers, or

Needers/Wanters have disappeared almost entirely. The sole remnant of the NCS Construction in these dialects is the ergative construction. And within the ergative construction, the A has grown closer to canonical subjects in that they are (a) obligatory, and (b) have begun to acquire morphological subject properties (see Section 4.6). In other words, the general trend in the Northern Group is towards abandoning the NCS Construction, leaving the ergative construction 'stranded', the sole instance of a Non-Canonical Subject in the dialects concerned. This fact has clouded the origins of the ergative construction in the dialects of Turkey and the Caucasus. It is only when the Badīnānī data are taken into consideration that the links between the ergative construction and the other types of NCS Construction are thrown sharply into profile.

6.5 Paths to ergativity

The claims so far amount to seeing the ergative construction as an extension of the Non-Canonical Subject Construction, which I assume was more widespread at earlier stages of the language. For Possessors, that appears to be beyond doubt; all four Iranian languages examined by Heston (1976) from the period 5–10c.AD use fronted Oblique NPs to express the Possessor in predicative expressions of possession. Nevertheless, in most of the Northern Group, this state of affairs has not survived. Rather, the ergative construction has outlived all other types of Non-Canonical Subject Construction. It is worth asking the question as to why this should be the case.

The most obvious reason is that in the case of the ergative construction, there was no readily available paraphrase, as there was with Possession, Sensory Perception and Obligation. The latter three are also restricted to a small number of lexical verbs, whereas the ergative construction is used with all past forms of transitive verbs. To express two-participant events in the past tense, there simply is no widely available alternative strategy. Thus on the assumption that, for whatever reason (perhaps areal pressure; according to Haspelmath (1999), the presence of, for example, External Possessors appears to largely areally determined) the Northern Group began a development in which Non-Canonical Subjects were generally abandoned in the language, it is not particularly surprising that the ergative construction should have outlived the others. In the course of this development, the A of the ergative construction has become increasingly 'canonical', and indeed

the entire construction appears syntactically to be largely the equivalent of a genuine transitive clause, with the exception of the morphology of case and agreement. It can, for example, also be passivized (see Section 4.3.1.4). Although it is impossible to reconstruct with any precision the course of these developments, I will briefly look at two facets of the developments which I believe were instrumental in the process. The first concerns the construction briefly discussed in Section 6.3, where participles occur together with an Izafe particle.

6.5.1   From nominal to verbal syntax

In Section 6.3, I introduced a construction unique to Badīnānī, involving an NP linked to an intransitive predicate with an Izafe-particle. Outwardly, such constructions resemble a complex NP with a relative clause. However, functionally they are independent clauses with illocutionary force. In such cases, the initial NP functions as what appears to be the subject of the 'clause'. An example is (225), repeated here for convenience:

(225)   *Xatûn-a min*   ***ya*** *l* *hîvî-ya*   *te*
          lady-IZF   1S:OBL   IZF   at   expectation-IZF   2S:OBL

          'My lady is waiting for you (at this moment)' (lit. my lady - **who** (is) at your expectation)

I have suggested that this construction originated through a cleft construction, something like: (It's) my lady who is waiting for you → My lady is waiting for you. In modern Badīnānī, the use of the Izafe particle has become obligatory in declarative existential constructions (data from own field work):

(232)   *du* *sêv*   ***wêt*** *livirê he-in*
          two   apple:PL   IZP   here   existent-COP:3PL

          'There are two apples here'

As with other types of existential, this can be extended with a fronted Oblique to yield a possessive reading:

(233)   *te*   *du* *sêv*   ***wêt*** *he-in*
          2S:OBL   two   apple:PL   IZP   existent-COP:3PL

          'You have two apples'

Note that the Izafe follows the Possessed, here *sêv*. Literally, and somewhat clumsily, the construction can be rendered as 'to you (are) apples, which exist'.

Although I cited examples from MacKenzie (1961a) and MacKenzie (1962) of predicative possession without the Izafe-particle, e. g. (193), in the dialect of my informants (from Zakho), the Izafe-particle is obligatory in declaratives of the present tense. This is also the situation reflected in Şirîn (1996a:30–31). Whether this represents a dialectal difference, or whether it is the result of changes (MacKenzie's data were gathered 50 years ago) is impossible to say. But whatever the reasons, the erstwhile Izafe-particle is now firmly grammaticalized as a clausal operator in (at least some dialects of) Badīnānī.

In a manner entirely parallel to (233), fronted Obliques can be preposed to phrases consisting of a NP followed by an Izafe and a past tense verb form. Consider the following examples:

(234) *min šīv=ā lēnāy*
   1S:OBL supper=IZF prepare:PTCPL

   'I have prepared supper' (MacKenzie 1961a:211)

(235) *... Xodê ṟizq-ê min yê înaye mala te*
    God:OBL fate-IZM 1S:OBL IZM place:PTCPL house-IZF 2S:OBL

   'God has placed my fate in your house' (Blau 1975:102)

(236) *min qebḫet-ek ya kirî ...*
   1S:OBL bet-INDEF IZF do:PTCPL

   'I have placed (done) a bet ...' (Blau 1975:104)

(237) *ma čēčik vēkṟā yēt kirī-n*
   1PL:OBL whelp together IZP do:PTCPL-PL

   'We have whelped together' (MacKenzie 1962:254)

(238) *min galak xēr yā l vē çēlē dītī*
   1S:OBL much good IZF from DEM:OBL cow:OBL seePTCPL

   'I have seen(=experienced) much good from this cow' (MacKenzie 1962:250)

(239) *min kič-ā xô yā dā-ē*
   1S:OBL daughter-IZF REFL IZF give:PTCPL-to.him

   'I have given him my daughter' (MacKenzie 1961a:163)

In (234)–(239), the Izafe-particle follows what is semantically a Theme or
a Patient argument. Thus we appear to have a NP linked to a participial
modifier: in (234) 'the prepared supper', in (236) 'a bet placed' etc. However,
as has already been discussed, these phrases are functionally not NPs but
fulfill the function of finite clauses, i.,e. they express propositions, rather than
establish reference. As far as the role of the fronted Obliques is concerned,
they are in all cases semantically an Agent or Experiencer. Furthermore,
they appear to be syntactic subjects, as evident from the use of reflexive *xô*
in (239).

The most plausible path for the emergence of such constructions involves
factors which are by now familiar. For ease of exposition, I will apply the
analysis to (234), but it can readily be applied to the other examples. The
core of the construction is a complex NP, consisting of a NP linked to a a
participial modifier via an Izafe-particle. This is essentially the same con-
struction as is attested in (230). Thus we have an NP 'food (that is) prepared,
prepared food'. To this phrase a fronted Oblique is added, parallel to the
fronted possessors illustrated above, yielding the following analysis:[7]

(240)   to/for me (is) [supper prepared]
        = I have prepared supper.

As discussed above, the development has resulted in a reanalysis of the old
relative particle (cf. Old Persian *hya*), which is now a clausal operator in
Badīnānī expressing a particular tense/aspect value, and arguably, affirma-
tive (here too, as in the other types mentioned, the construction is only
possible in affirmative clauses). Thus we find the following contrast between
an affirmative clause with an Izafe-particle, and a negative one without it:

(241)   *te*   *nan-***êt***   *pe̤htî-n*
        2S:OBL bread-IZP bake:PST:PTCPL-3PL

        'You made bread(PL)' (Şirîn 1996a:41)

---

[7]The parallels to the development of the English *have*-perfect are remarkable. Accord-
ing to Trask (1996:137–138), the English perfect arose through reanalysis of a possessive
involving, among other things, a change in the status of a participle: From an adnominal
modifier (*I have fish (as) caught*, where *caught* is an attribute to *fish*) it became a part of
the predicate. The difference to the Kurdish case lies in the way the Possessor/Subject
is coded: In English, as the Nominative subject of a verb *have*, in Kurdish as a fronted
Oblique Possessor.

(242)   *te*   *nan*   *ne*   *pe̤htî-ye*
        2s:OBL bread NEG bake:PST:PTCPL-3S
        'You did not make bread' (Şirîn 1996a:41)

Syntactically, these constructions are ergative constructions, displaying the same constellation of case and agreement, and the same degree of subjecthood of the A. The fascinating point about them is that they display probably more clearly than in other part of the grammar known to me the pervasive parallels between Agents and Possessors, the parallel stressed by Benveniste (1952/1966) but since discounted in most mainstream work on diachronic syntax. It is not unreasonable to see here **one** of the origins of the ergative construction itself in Kurmanji—at least no more unreasonable than any of the other proposals that have been put forward. The important points to recall are that this particular development depends on two prerequisites. First, that the verb forms have participial characteristics, hence permitting them to occur in an environment typical for existential and state predicates. Second, that fronted Obliques can regularly be combined with such intransitive predications, and will be syntactic subjects when they are.

6.5.2   Discourse pressure towards reanalysis as ergatives

Ergative constructions do not occur in isolation. They are normally part of a coherent stretch of discourse, embedded in a chain of propositions that together constitute a text. There is good reason to believe that characteristic features of Badīnānī discourse have shaped the development of the ergative construction from a Non-Canonical Subject Construction to a more grammaticalized transitive clause. In this Section I will briefly present some evidence in favour of this view.

As already discussed in Section 4.5.1, Kurdish makes extremely extensive use of zero-anaphora. Kurdish is what one could term a 'constituent drop' language: NPs whose reference is discourse recoverable are freely omitted, i. e. Kurdish discourse has very low 'lexical density', to use the terminology of Bickel (2003). A weak S/A pivot does exist, so that omission of arguments is to some extent predictable from grammatical factors, but it may be overridden by semantic and pragmatic inference. Consider the following short text extract (glosses simplified):

(243)   a. *čo   d   s̲indoqêda*
             went into box

         b. *derê   wê qilf   **kir** u*
             door-of it   locked did and

         c. *kilîlk' kire d   berîka   xoda*
             key   put into pocket-of self   (Blau 1975:106)

A free translation of (243) into idiomatic English would be:

   (a) '(**He**) went into the box,
   (b) (**she**) locked the door of the box and
   (c) put the key into **her** pocket'.

Notice that between (a) and (b) there is a change of subject. But there is no overt signal of the change, nor is it reflected in the agreement morphology. One can only infer it from the context: the woman is outside the box, and prior to entering the box, the man had agreed to let himself be locked in by the woman. Examples such as this one demonstrate that a zero-subject **cannot** automatically be interpreted as the result of coreferential deletion. Rather, non-overt subjects are the norm, and recovering their identity is achieved through a mix of semantic, pragmatic and syntactic knowledge.

   The lack of a strict constraint on coreferential deletion in Badīnānī opens up another possible interpretation of (243). Recall that past tense verb forms can have a passive reading. Given that fact, the first two clauses of (243) could be interpreted along the following lines:

   (a') (He) went into the box,
   (b') the door **was locked** (up)

Now given what was said about the labile nature of the past tense verb forms in Badīnānī, a passive interpretation of the (b) clause cannot be dismissed out of hand. However, in this case, the meaning of the (c) clause (and the presence of the reflexive in it) strongly militate against the passive interpretation. But grammatically, it is certainly possible. In fact, potential ambiguities of this sort are very common. The following example, again from Badīnānī, is instructive (glosses simplified):

(244)   a. *rožakē   r̄ā bôn, gôt́ī:*
             one.day got.up, said:

         b. *"am dē   čīna   paz̲ā   l   čyāy."*
             "we FUTPRTCL will.go to.sheep in mountain"

    c. *r̄ā bôn, čôna čyāy,   paz̧ā,*
       got.up, went to.mountain, after.sheep,

    d. *sē   paz̧   kuštin*
       three sheep killed (MacKenzie 1962:320)

The clause under consideration is (244d). In MacKenzie (1961a:193), this clause is cited—with no accompanying context—and listed under the 'passive' usage discussed in Section 6.3 above. MacKenzie's translation of the clause in isolation is as follows:

(245)   Passive translation of (244d): 'three sheep were killed'

But when one considers the foregoing context to this example, it is evident that an active translation along the following lines would be contextually more appropriate:

(246)   Active translation of (244d): '(they) killed three sheep'

And in the translations provided with the actual text, MacKenzie opts for the latter translation (in fact this passage occurs on two occasions in the text collection, and in both MacKenzie provides an active translation). In other words, when taken in isolation, the clause is interpreted as an agentless passive, exactly comparable (208) etc. above, but in context, it is interpreted as an active, where the A has been deleted through coreferential deletion. MacKenzie does not comment on the disparity between the two interpretations, yet it illustrates beautifully the point being made here.

    On the assumption that (a) originally, such past tense forms were, as forms in isolation, in fact indeterminate as to the distinction transitive/intransitive (cf. Section 6.2.3), and (b) topical and readily-recoverable referents tend to be omitted in connected discourse (cf. 4.6, it is easy to see that the kind of indeterminacy reflected in (244d) must have been a commonly recurring one in discourse. Schematically, we have render the kind of contexts in which this would occur as follows:

(247)   The men sat down,   tea drank, . . .

This would be open to two distinct interpretations:

(248)   The men$_i$ sat down,   tea   was.drunk$_{Vintr}$ . . .

(249)   The men$_i$ sat down, $\emptyset_i$ tea   drank$_{Vtr}$ . . .

However, I believe that discourse pressure will favour the latter interpretation: Agentive participants will tend to be topical, and discourse will tend to map a chain of events instigated by such participants (i. e. there is a tendency for contiguous clauses to share the same active participant, in many languages a subject). In fact it is an extremely well-documented cross-linguistic tendency that the A of a transitive clause is most often definite, hence discourse recoverable. In that case, in accordance with the normal pattern of zero-anaphora in Kurdish, it will be omitted. As Du Bois (1987) has pointed out, the statistically vastly preferred option is to have a full NP in the O role, while the A is pronominal, or omitted. The reason for this is that new participants, which are generally coded as a full indefinite NP tend to be introduced into discourse in particular syntactic functions, more specifically as S or O (*once upon time there was **a king*** etc.). Indefinite As however, which would be coded as full NPs, are statistically dispreferred.

More generally, it is well-known that clauses rarely have more than two NPs as core arguments. Newmeyer (2003:686) presents a summary of the relevant figures from a variety of languages and sources, for example (see Newmeyer (2003) for references):

– In Chamorro (Austronesian) only 10% of transitive clauses have two lexical arguments.

– In Hebrew (Semitic), 93% of transitive clauses lack an overt subject

– French (Romance) only 3% of clauses contain lexical (as opposed to pronominal) subjects

The net result of these tendencies is what Du Bois refers to as Preferred Argument Structure: In transitive clauses, definite, hence pronominal or deleted, As tend to combine with indefinite, hence full NP Os. In a language like Kurdish that makes widespread use of zero-anaphora, the typical constellation for a transitive clause in connected discourse is thus:

(250) $\emptyset_A$ Full NP$_O$ Verb

Kurdish too largely complies with this cross-language tendency. In Section 4.5.1 I discussed the figures for the realisation of different arguments in past transitive clauses, based on a count of texts in Lescot (1940). Around 70% of such clauses lack an overt A (and of those overt As, around 30% are pronominal). Thus the statistically preferred form for past transitive clauses

in Kurdish discourse complies with the scheme given in (250). This is of course the form of clause found in the final clause of (244). There is thus good reason to favour the active interpretation of that clause, '(they) killed three sheep'.

The preferred surface manifestation for transitive clauses in discourse, (250), converges precisely with the form of a passive:

NP(Patient/Theme)+Verb.

And as we have seen in connection with (208) above, the passive reading is also available in some contexts. However, universals of discourse structure will tend to favour the active reading, and indeed in the Northern Group outside Badīnānī it is the only possible one. But the surface conflation of the deleted-A version of the transitive clause, and the normal version of the agentless passive may well have been instrumental in the increasing reanalysis of the agentless passives into actives. Once such clauses became locked into a discourse sequence, the empty argument position could be reinterpreted as a discourse-deleted topic, in line with the apparently universal tendency to maintain same-subject sequences in discourse (compare the widespread use of the anti-passive in Dyirbal to permit coreferential deletion of S and A in consecutive clause sequences). Schematically, the reanalysis I am suggesting can be portrayed as follows. Any surface sequence such as:

$$[\text{S/A}_i \quad \text{V}]_{clause\ n} \qquad [\text{S}_j \quad \text{V}_{PTCPL}]_{clause\ n+1}$$

Can, under favourable contextual conditions, be reanalysed as:

$$[\text{S/A}_i \quad \text{V}]_{clause\ n} \qquad [\emptyset_i \quad \text{O}_j \quad \text{V}_{TRANS.PST}]_{clause\ n+1}$$

The claim I am making can be summed up as follows: Kurdish, and possibly Iranian in general, tends to omit subject NPs, when they are deemed discourse recoverable. Given that the past tense forms of transitive verbs were, historically at least, ambivalent with regard to an active or a passive reading, when such a verb form occurred in connected discourse without an overt A, there would have been many contexts in which the gap could be interpreted as an A deleted due to discourse recoverability, rather than as a fundamental intransitivity of the verb—cf. MacKenzie's two readings of (244) above. The transitive reading, with a discourse-deleted A, would receive weight from the

fact that omission of As is the normal pattern in discourse, a tendency that appears to be almost universal. Thus once incorporated into connected discourse, it is only natural that such clauses were often interpreted as basic transitive clauses.

In the other dialects of the Northern Group, past tense forms of transitive verbs only allow the active interpretation. Consider the following sequence from the Erzurum dialect of Turkey:

(251)   a. *dibê:*   *"brayê mi   jî   qêmišî   mi nebû,*
            and.says: "brother-of me and pitilessness-of me not-was,

        b. ***ez ne kušt-im,***
            I   not kill:PST-1S

        c. *li ser vē   kanîyê* ***hîšt-ime"***
            at   this well   leave:PST-1S

            (a) (she) says: my brother did not do pitilessness-of-me
            (b) **I not killed**
            (c) at this well **left:1s** (Haig Forthcoming a, glosses simplified)

Although it would appear that a passive interpretation of (b) and (c) is possible ('I was not killed, I was left here'), intensive discussion with a native speaker (the grandson of the speaker) has left me in no doubt that (b) and (c) are to be interpreted as active clauses with a discourse-deleted A, i. e. 'My brother took pity on me, **he** did not kill me, **he** left me at this well.' Discussion of similar examples has, up until now, always lead to the same result.

6.6   Summary of the evidence

In this Chapter I have concentrated on those characteristics of Badīnānī syntax which differ significantly from the other dialects of the Northern Group and which I believe to be particularly relevant for reconstructing the development of ergativity in the Northern Group. The most revealing feature is that past tense verb forms have retained clear traces of their participial origins. This is evident in their usage as intransitive predicates, semantically equivalent to an agentless passive (Section 6.3) and in the reanalysed Izafe constructions, discussed in Section 6.5.1. The second strikingly archaic feature of Badīnānī syntax is the retention of Non-Canonical Subjects in a variety of constructions: Possession, Sensory Perception, and Necessity. I

have argued that the emergence of ergativity in Kurdish must be linked to the more general feature of Non-Canonical Subjects. However, whereas the other types of Non-Canonical Subjects have disappeared elsewhere in the Northern Group, they have survived in Badīnānī, which thus provides us with a window through which to view the past developments.

The significance of the Badīnānī data for the diachronic analysis cannot be overstated: Non-Canonical Subjects are characterised by the apparently paradoxical features of being facultative, non-thematic constituents, and at the same time controlling syntactic subject properties. If they are present, they are syntactic subjects, if absent, the clause receives a different, intransitive reading. This is precisely what can be said about the ergative construction in Badīnānī, and appears to be true of Middle Persian as well. Thus there is no need to postulate a gradual process by which a peripheral 'Agent-phrase' acquires subject properties—and no evidence that such a process ever occurred. In Badīnānī we find that a simple intransitive use of the participle co-exists with a full ergative construction, where the A is a syntactic subject. But nowhere do we find any evidence of the intermediate stages that an account in terms of a 'transfer of subject properties' surely implies.

My main disagreement with the transfer of subject properties concerns the earliest stage postulated by Cole et al. (1980), who claim that the process begins with a NP with **no** subject properties. But the Badīnānī data show that an alternative scenario is perfectly possible: an existent Non-Canonical Subject construction may be extended, in which case the subject properties of the fronted Oblique are already present from the outset, because they are part of this particular construction. This appears to me the more plausible scenario, particularly in view of the lack of convincing evidence that the Agent was ever merely a *by*-phrase equivalent. Unfortunately, due to the lack of data for the crucial stages between Old and Middle Iranian, it is not possibly to directly verify these claims. But working on the Uniformitarian Hypothesis (Comrie 2001:33), according to which that which we find in today's languages will not be impossible in historical earlier stages, the Badīnānī data do provide evidence that the scenario I have suggested is certainly a possible one. This account is also preferable on grounds of economy because there is actually less change to be explained. The main change was not within the structure itself, but in the distribution of a particular structure.

Nevertheless, the notion of a gradual acquisition of subject properties retains its validity for later stages in the development. It can for example

be shown that the ergative construction in the dialects of Turkey and the Caucasus are moving to bring them more closely into line with fully transitive constructions: The A_{PAST} is obligatory, agreement with the O_{PAST} is in some contexts overridden by agreement with the A_{PAST}. Finally, we have seen that the O_{PAST} goes into the Oblique case in some dialects. With the exception of rare cases of agreement with a plural A_{PAST}, Badīnānī does not exhibit these features. Rather, the ergative construction in Badīnānī more strongly retains the characteristics of a Non-Canonical Subject construction. Thus the change between Badīnānī and the rest of the Northern Group can be described in terms of a change from non-canonical to canonical subject.

I have also discussed the importance of discourse factors in paving the way towards a fully transitive, active ergative construction, where the A is obligatory and controls all subject properties. The pattern of zero-anaphora in Kurdish coupled with a universal tendency for As to be definite leads to a situation in connected discourse where any transitive verb (past or present) will regularly appear without an overt A, leading to a preponderance of clauses with the form NP V. This is of course the same form that an intransitive verb, or an agentless passive would have, thus providing a bridging context for the shift in interpretation from agentless passive to transitive with an omitted A.

Chapter 7

The Central group

7.1   Introduction

It has been claimed that the Central Group of Kurdish is characterised by a "loss of the ergative construction", and (at least some of the languages of this group) are now essentially nominative/accusative (Bynon 1979:223–224, Bynon 1980:159). However, such a view represents an oversimplification in two respects. First, given the lack of attestation of the older direct ancestors of these languages, the assumption that they have passed through a genuinely ergative stage is purely hypothetical, hence it is probably premature to talk of a 'loss' of ergativity. Second, as has already been pointed out, the classification of alignments in terms of a binary distinction Ergative vs. Accusative does not do justice to the Iranian data. The conclusion that the Central Group is 'not ergative' does not justify classifying these languages as accusative. In fact, the Central Group displays the familiar phenomenon of **tense-sensitive alignment**: Alignment in present tenses is straightforward nominative/accusative, while the alignment of transitive clauses in the past tense diverges significantly from that of the present tenses. To what extent the past tense alignment in the Central Group can be considered ergative is an issue to be discussed at the end of this chapter.

According to MacKenzie (1961a), the Central Group comprises the following dialects (adopting MacKenzie's conventions for transcription, given in approximate South-to-North order):

Suleimani
Wārmāwa
Bingird
Piždar
Mukrī
Arbil
Rewandiz
Xōšāw

My description is based on the comparatively well-described Suleimani dialect, but is supplemented with data from neighbouring dialects. The differences between the syntax of the Northern and that of the Central Group largely flow from a single feature of the morpho-syntax: the presence of clitic pronouns used to cross-reference arguments in the Central Groups, and the complete absence of such clitics in the Northern Group. In the Central group these clitics play a pivotal role as overt exponents of core arguments in the syntax, and indeed throughout the West Iranian languages generally they are used to varying degrees to express different types of arguments. Understanding the syntax of the Central Group is primarily a question of understanding the clitic system. Although MacKenzie himself stresses that the distinction between the Northern and Southern Groups is in fact more of a continuum than a sharp break, the presence vs. absence of the pronominal clitics is a fairly well-defined isogloss, suggesting that the clitic system is either preserved in its entirety, or lost entirely. How, why, and when the Northern Group lost all trace of such clitics is, in my opinion, one of the key questions for the diachronic syntax of Kurdish.

7.2   Overview of Suleimani morphosyntax

The Central Group of Kurdish shares several broad features with the Northern Group outlined in Chapter 4. The most important commonalities are:

– **Lexicon** The Central and Northern groups share around 80-90% of their basic vocabulary

- **Izafe-construction** All Kurdish dialects share the basic features of the Izafe-construction

- **Dual-stem system in the verbs** Both groups have two distinct stems for each verb

- **Constituent order** Both groups have a predominantly predicate-final constituent order in the clause, although it is quite flexible. There is regular use of post-predicate slot for Goal and Indirect Objects

- **Subordination and embedding** Like the Northern Group, the Central Group lacks non-finite verbal syntax; clause linkage involves sequences of finite clauses, often with no formal indication of subordination save a non-indicative mood on the 'subordinate' clause

- **Case and gender** All Kurdish dialects have maximally two gender and two case distinctions (reduced in some dialects)

The major structural features distinguishing the Northern Group from the Central (and Southern) Group the are the existence in the latter of a definiteness suffix (in Suleimani -*aka*), and a set of enclitic personal pronouns. Both features are discussed in the next section.

Turning now to Suleimani as a representative of the Central Group, we should note that there is no grammatical case, and no grammatical gender. Nouns appear in a uniform case (ignoring the Vocative), formally equivalent to the Direct Case of the Northern Group. There is also only one set of personal pronouns in Suleimani (see Table 7.1). The form of the first person singular pronoun is etymologically that of the Old oblique (*(a)min*), rather than of the Old Iranian Nominative form represented by Old Persian *adam* or Avestan *azəm* respectively. Thus while the Northern Group still has *ez* (1s:DIR) vs. *min* (1s:OBL), Suleimani has entirely lost any reflexes of the Direct form. However, other closely related dialects of the Central Group have a Direct/Oblique case distinction in both nouns and pronouns, and it is consequently noted in some examples. Perhaps surprisingly, the presence or absence of a case distinction does not appear to have a major impact on the syntax; closely-related dialects may have preserved case in some environments, while others have lost it entirely, apparently without further consequences for the syntax. This is an interesting fact in itself, given the importance often attached to case marking in syntactic change (cf. especially Lightfoot 1999:Ch. 5).

The lack of grammatical gender means that there is a single form of Izafe-particle in Suleimani, *-ī/-y*:

(252)   *kič-ēk-ī*   *zōr ǰwān*
        girl-INDEF-IZ very beautiful

        'a very beautiful girl (fem.)' (MacKenzie 1962:14)

(253)   *dēw-ēk-ī*   *gawray*
        demon-INDEF-IZ great

        'a great demon (masc.)' (MacKenzie 1962:16)

An important feature throughout the Central and Southern Groups is the existence of a definiteness suffix, in Suleimani *-aka*. Suleimani also has a plural suffix, *-ān* (etymologically identical to the plural oblique suffix of the Northern Group, *-a(n)*). The plural suffix is used mainly in combination with the definiteness suffix, yielding a composite ending *-akān* (<*-aka+-ān*).

7.2.1   Pronouns and verbal agreement

The full forms of the personal pronouns in Suleimani are given in Table 7.1 (cf. MacKenzie 1961a:73). As mentioned above, these forms are possible for

Table 7.1: Personal Pronouns in Suleimani

Sg.	1	*min*
	2	*tō*
	3	*aw/am* (identical to the distal demonstratives)
Pl.	1	*(h)ēma*
	2	*ēwa*
	3	*awān*

all syntactic functions (e. g. S, O_{PRES}, O_{PAST}, A_{PRES} and A_{PAST} functions). However, as the object of prepositions, a clitic form of the pronoun is more usual (see below).

In the present tense, and for all intransitive verbs, verbs agree with the appropriate S and A via an agreement suffix on the verb stem. There are two paradigms of verbal agreement suffixes, the use of which is determined by the tense of the the verb form. I will refer to them as Set 1 and Set

2 (but note that the exact function of Set 2 agreement suffixes is complex and controversial, see below). The forms of the suffixes are given in Table 7.2 (cf. MacKenzie 1961a:89,95). The past tense forms of transitive verbs

Table 7.2: Verbal agreement suffixes in Suleimani

		Set 1 (S/A$_{PRES}$)	**Set 2** (S$_{PAST}$; sometimes O$_{PAST}$)
Sg.	1	*im*	*-im*
	2	*-ī(t)*;-a/-∅ (Imp.)	*-ī(t)*
	3	*ē(t)/-ā*	*-∅*
Pl.	1	*-īn*	*-īn*
	2	*-in*	*-in*
	3	*-in*	*-in*

may also agree with an O$_{PAST}$, in which case the appropriate Set 2 suffix from Table 7.2 is used. However, as the rules determining agreement in past tense transitive constructions differ significantly from those for the present tenses they will be treated separately in connection with the clitics in the next section. In addition to the past forms mentioned in Table 7.2, a Perfect Indicative is also found, based on a secondary participial stem ending in *-uw*, to which the person endings of the enclitic copula are added. In terms of the agreement constellation found, such compound tenses behave largely in the same manner as the simple past tense, i. e. verbal agreement is with S or an O$_{PAST}$ (subject to the conditions discussed below).

Examples illustrating the person/number suffixes in various functions are provided in the following. Examples (254) and (255) show agreement with an S$_{PRES}$, (256) demonstrates agreement with an A$_{PRES}$, while (257) and (258) illustrate agreement with an S$_{PAST}$:

(254) *min a-č-im*
       1s   PROG-go:PRES-1s
       'I am going' (MacKenzie 1962:4)

(255) *ēm … a-č-īn*
       1PL   PROG-go:PRES-1PL
       'we (will) go' (MacKenzie 1962:10)

(256)   *tō čī   a-ka-y   lēra?*
        2s what PROG-do:PRES-2s here

        'what are you doing here?' (MacKenzie 1962:4)

(257)   *wałłāhī, xēr   hat-uw-īn*
        by.God   in.peace come.PST-PTCPL-1PL

        'By God, (we) have come in peace' (MacKenzie 1962:10)

(258)   *tō la kø bu-y?*
        2s where be:PST-2s

        'Where have you been?' (MacKenzie 1962:18)

In terms of verbal agreement, it should be evident that in the present tense, and for all intransitives, Suleimani alignment is essentially identical to that of the Northern Group, and indeed the morphemes concerned are clearly cognate with the appropriate verbal agreement markers in the Northern Group (cf. 4.6). As far as the case parameter is concerned, Suleimani differs from the Northern Group through the absence of morphological case marking. However, as mentioned above, other members of the Central Group have preserved case distinctions in at least parts of the nominal lexicon, so that in general, it can be stated that alignment in the present tenses and with intransitives is identical across the Northern and Central Groups.

7.2.2   Pronominal clitic pronouns: overview

Simple examples of argument cross-referencing such as those illustrated in (254)–(258) are in fact quite hard to come by. Most clauses contain, in addition to a verbal agreement marker, at least one exponent of a set of pronominal clitics. The grammar of pronominal clitics is the most complex feature of Kurdish grammar. Although MacKenzie (1962) provides a detailed description of the clitics, his mode of presentation and terminology remain somewhat impenetrable (MacKenzie was of course not primarily concerned with syntax), which is perhaps one reason why Kurdish clitics have received virtually no attention outside of Iranian studies (but see now Stilo, Ms.). My aim here is to provide a more systematic and transparent account of Kurdish clitics, focussing on their function as a means for argument cross-referencing, before proceeding to evaluate the diachronic implications. Table 7.3 illustrates the forms of the pronominal clitics. These forms are best con-

Table 7.3: Pronominal clitics in the Central and Southern groups

Sg.	1	$=(i)m$
	2	$=(i)t$; dialectal also $=u(w)$
	3	$=\bar{\imath}, =y$; in the Southern Group: $=(i)\check{s}$
Pl.	1	$=m\bar{a}n$
	2	$=t\bar{a}n$
	3	$=y\bar{a}n$

sidered clitics rather than suffixes because (i) they co-occur with hosts of different categories (nouns, prepositions, verbs); and (ii) may stack up after inflectional suffixes and other clitics in a manner not possible for suffixes in Kurdish (but see Section 7.3.1).[1] Nevertheless, they also show some properties not at all expected of clitics and in some environments, it is probably reasonable to consider them as suffixes. However, the issue of clitic vs. suffix will not directly impinge on the argumentation here, and I will not pursue it further.[2] A question that will be pursued below concerns the functional status of these elements, i. e. whether they are pronouns, or agreement (see Corbett (2003) for discussion). For the time being, we will assume that, despite some phonological similarities with the verbal agreement suffixes, the clitics constitute a distinct paradigm, and stand in a relation of complementary distribution to the verbal agreement suffixes (although towards the end of this chapter I will have cause to qualify this view). Hence I will maintain a consistent terminological distinction between **pronominal clitics** (or clitic pronouns), abbreviated CLC in the glosses, and **(verbal) agreement suffixes**.

Pronominal clitics are used to express a nominal constituent in a number of distinct syntactic functions, which are listed below (the term 'Indirect Affectee' comes from MacKenzie (1961a) and refers to Benefactives, Indirect Objects, or other saliently affected participants not covered by S, A or O):

1. the Possessor of a Possessed NP

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[1] For example, the clitic pronouns usually follow the clitic $=(\bar{\imath})\check{s}$ 'and, also', evidently cognate with *jî* (same meaning) of the Northern Group. See MacKenzie (1961a:128) for examples.

[2] see Everett (1996), who argues that the distinction is entirely superficial.

2. the object of a preposition
3. an Indirect Affectee
4. an O_{PRES}
5. an A_{PAST}

Of the functions listed, the first four are facultative in the sense that the NP concerned can be expressed with a full NP, in which case the clitic is not used. In other words, in these functions, speakers have a choice, presumably determined by stylistic and pragmatic factors, of whether they use the clitic form or a full NP. In the function of A_{PAST}, however, the clitic is obligatory: every single past transitive clause must contain a clitic referring to the A_{PAST}, regardless of whether the A_{PAST} is additionally present as a full NP or not. Thus it is important to distinguish the first four functions of the clitics from the final one. The first four of these functions are illustrated below, while a discussion of the final function is reserved for the following section (and see Section 7.2.3 for the rules of clitic placement).

7.2.2.0.1   Adnominal Possessor

(259)   *ay   šah=im*
        EXCL king=1S:CLC

        'O my King' (MacKenzie 1961a:81)

(260)   *kirās-aka=t*
        shirt-DEF=2S:CLC

        'your shirt' (MacKenzie 1961a:80)

(261)   *xušk-ī   dāk-ē=m*
        sister-IZ mother-OBL=1S:CLC

        'the sister of my mother' (MacKenzie 1961a:80)

(262)   *aɣa-ka=tān*
        Agha-DEF=2PL:CLC

        'your(PL) Agha' (MacKenzie 1961a:81)

7.2.2.0.2   Object of a preposition

(263)   *lē=t   mumbārak bē*
        for=2S:CLC fortunate   IRR:be:PRES:3S

        'May (it) be fortunate for **you**' (MacKenzie 1961a:77)

7.2.2.0.3 Indirect Affectee

(264) *hata mumkīn=**mān**   abē*
       up.to possible=1PL:CLC may.be:3s

       'As far as (it) may be possible **for us**' (MacKenzie 1961a:78)

7.2.2.0.4 Direct object in present tenses (O$_{PRES}$)

(265) *bi=**y**-xō-n!*
       IRR=3s:CLC-eat:PRES-3PL

       'eat(PL) **it**!' (MacKenzie 1961a:94)

(266) *da-**t**-ba-m*
       FUT=2s:CLC-take:PRES-1s

       'I will take **you**' (MacKenzie 1961a:77)

The following short text illustrates four pronominal clitics in various functions (indicated by the bracketed numbers), and provides some impression of their pervasiveness in actual discourse:

(267) *na-**w(1)**-kuž-im,   ałqa-yak   a-ka-m-a*
       NEG-2s:CLC-kill:PRES-1s ring-INDEF PROG-do:PRES-1s-DIREC
       *gø=**t(2)**   a=**t(3)**-ka-m   ba 'abd-ī   xo=**m(4)***
       ear=2s:CLC PROG=2s:CLC-do:PRES-1s to slave-IZ REFL=1s:CLC

       '(I) shall not kill **you(1**=variant of =*t*), (I) will put a ring in **your(2)** ear and make **you(3) my(4)** slave ' (MacKenzie 1961a:76)

Clitic (1) is an O$_{PRES}$ clitic, attaching to the negation marker of its governing predicate. Clitic (2) is a possessor clitic, attaching to its possessed. Clitic (3) is again an O$_{PRES}$ clitic, this time attaching to the TAM-prefix on the verb, while clitic (4) is another possessor clitic, attaching to the reflexive pronoun. The rules determining clitic placement are discussed below.

7.2.3   Clitic placement

The facts of clitic placement in Suleimani are complex; they cannot be accounted for in purely syntactic terms, or in purely prosodic ones.[3] In this

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[3]The present account of clitic placement differs from that proposed in MacKenzie (1961a:cf. esp. 76–81), but I believe accounts more economically for the same data, and captures the generalisation that syntactic phrases are crucial domains in clitic placement.

sense, there is a clear difference to clitic placement in Old Persian, discussed in Section ch5clitic, for which clitic placement can be described with a fair degree of reliability in terms of a Wackernagel-position. Thus the Old Persian clitics frequently affixed to a clause-initial complementizer (e. g. *utā* 'and'), as they still did in Middle Persian. But this option is not available in Suleimani. Indeed, the rightward shift in clitic placement from the Old Iranian Wackernagel position to a later position in the clause appears to be a common West Iranian phenomenon; I am unaware of any of the modern languages which consistently allows complementizers to host pronominal clitics.[4] In this sense, the general drift parallels that postulated for Romance (see Vincent 2001:30–31), from clause-initial to verb-adjacent (see also Franks and King (2000) for Slavic data on the distinction between clause-initial and verb-adjacent clitics).

In Suleimani, the general rule for clitic placement is that **clitics attach to the leftmost constituent of their phrases**. For Possessor and prepositional object clitics, the host is thus the possessed NP or the preposition respectively. Note that these two types of clitics are arguably simple clitics rather than special clitics; they occupy the position that the corresponding non-clitic element would. For the objects of prepositions, however, there are complications. They often detach from the prepositions and move to another element. Contrast the following two examples, apparently semantically identical (own field work):[5]

(268)   a. *min īš   a-k-am   bo=tān*
            1s   work PROG-do:PRES-1s for=2PL:CLC

            'I work for **you**(PL)'

        b. *min īš=tān   bo a-k-am*
            1s   work=2PL:CLC for PROG-do:PRES-1s

            'I work for **you**(PL)'

This type of alternation is quite common, and there are several ways of in-

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[4]In the East Iranian language Rošani (Pamir Group), special clitics originating from the copula are possible in clause-second position (Payne 1980:159). Whether they affix to complementizers is not clear from Payne's discussion. It is notable that in Kurdish too clitics with TAM values occur earlier in the clause, as in the 'future particle' discussed in Section 4.2.2.

[5]The speakers who kindly supplied the information are a married couple, in their late 30's, who were born in Suleimaniye and spent most of their lives there. They have been living in Germany for the last six years.

terpreting it. Perhaps the simplest is to consider that in (268b), the 'preposition' is an emergent preverbal-particle (historically, prepositions are one of the sources of preverbal particles throughout Indo-European), thus creating essentially a new verb. The clitic in (268b) is then a straightforward example of the Indirect Affectee usage, expressing Benefactive or Possessor. A similar explanation can be offered for the position of the clitic in (274). However, the complexities involved go beyond the scope of the present discussion.

For clitics cross-referencing an O_{PRES}, essentially the same principle applies: the clitic attaches to the leftmost-element of its phrase, the VP. Now of course the O_{PRES} clitic is optional; if the O_{PRES} is overtly realised in the clause as a full NP, then no clitic is possible. In that case, the normal structure is simply (A) O V, with no clitic. But when the O is not realised as a full NP we have (A) V, leaving the predicate itself as the leftmost-element of the VP, and the O_{PRES} clitic duly attaches to the predicate. Within the predicate complex, the following hierarchy of landing sites is found:

(269)   Preverbal-particles etc. > Preverbal TAM/Negation > Verb stem

The preferred landing sites within the predicate are preverbal particles, including the nominal components of complex predicates (cf. Haig (2002a) for discussion of such constructions). Otherwise, the clitic attaches to the preverbal TAM, as in (266), or negation markers. Several examples illustrating O_{PRES} clitics within the predicate complex are found in (265)–(267). If none of the preceding slots are available, the clitic follows the verb stem. Although I have not come across any examples of the latter position from the Suleimani data,[6] it is certainly possible in other languages with a similar system, for example Gurani (Residual Group, see Section 1.1 , the transcription has been simplified):

(270)   *bärä=š,   tâ bûär-im*
        get:IMP=3S:CLC so IRR:eat:PRES-1PL

        'get **it**, so (we) may eat (it)' (Hadank and Mann 1930:321)

For the O_{PRES} clitics, then, clitic placement can be described with reference to syntactic phrases. The relevant domain for defining cliticisation is the VP, and the clitic attaches to the left-most element of that domain.

Turning finally to clitic Indirect Affectees, a purely syntactic explanation runs into difficulties. The class of Indirect Affectees encompasses a fairly

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[6]Probably due to the fact that present tense verb forms usually have a TAM prefix which outranks the post-verbal slot as host.

heterogenous mix of Benefactives, Goals, External Possessors and so on, in
fact covering a similar range of functions to the Old Persian Free Genitives
discussed in Section 5.6 in some detail. That should not of course come as
a surprise, because of course the Free Genitives of Old Persian could also
be expressed through pronominal clitics, and it is reasonable to assume that
MacKenzie's class of Indirect Affectees is a reflex of the Old Persian Free
Genitive. And exactly the same issue is raised once again regarding the
syntactic status of such elements: are they arguments or adjuncts? If they
are arguments, then we would expect their clitic forms to attach to the first
available element of the VP, as do the O_{PRES} clitics just discussed. In fact,
this is generally the case, with the added proviso that if the verb concerned
is intransitive, the S is also a potential host. Examples of clitic Indirect
Affectees are given below:

(271)   *malā**=yān**   pīšān   a-dā*
        mullah=3PL:CLC showing PROG-give:PRES:3S

        '(He) points the mullah out **to them**' (MacKenzie 1961a:78)

(272)   *hatā mumkīn**=mān**   a-bē*
        until possible=1PL:CLC PROG-be:PRES:3S

        'As far as may be possible for **us**' (MacKenzie 1961a:78)

(273)   *tinu=m-a*
        thirst=1S:CLC-COP:PRES:3S

        'I am thirsty' (lit. **to-me** thirst is (MacKenzie 1961a:103)

(274)   *zōr**=it**   čāka dagał da-ka-m*
        much=2S:CLC good for   FUT-do:PRES-1S

        '(I) will do much good **for/with you**' (Mukri, MacKenzie 1961a:79)

7.3   Past transitive constructions

Constructions involving a transitive verb in a past tense have a different syn-
tax to other kinds of clauses in Suleimani. I will follow MacKenzie (1961a) in
treating them as a distinct construction, with a distinct syntax to the present
tense transitive clause (MacKenzie (1961a) reserves the term 'Agential con-
struction' for constructions of this type). In the past transitive construction,
pronominal clitics cross-referencing the A_{PAST} play a crucial role. Although

the same set of clitics is used as those already discussed (cf. Table 7.3), and they reflect the same features (person and number), there are important differences. The first point is that whereas all clitics illustrated so far are optional in the sense that they are only required if the corresponding full form is not overtly expressed in the clause, every single past transitive construction requires an A_{PAST} clitic, regardless of whether the A is realised elsewhere in the clause. Consider (275), where the lexical A_{PAST}, *duxtōr* 'doctor' is present in the clause:

(275) *duxtōr ḫālan   ōtōmbīl=ī̄ girt*
       doctor immediately car=3S:CLC take:PST

       'The doctor immediately took a car' (MacKenzie 1962:50)

Despite the presence of the lexical A_{PAST}, a pronominal clitic is still required. The same is true even if the A_{PAST} is a personal pronoun, as in (276):

(276) *min šart=**im**   kird-uwa   łagal xwā*
       1S bond=1S:CLC do:PST-PTCPL with God

       'I have made a bond with God' (MacKenzie 1962:22)

Note that there is no **general** constraint on A_{PAST} clitics attaching to pronouns. If the relevant constituent (see below on clitic placement) happens to be a pronoun, the the A_{PAST} clitic will attach to it, as in (277):

(277) *min=**it**   da   ba arzā*
       1S=2S:CLC give:PST to ground

       '(if) **you** throw me to the ground' (MacKenzie 1962:22)

The conclusion that must be drawn is that the A_{PAST} clitic in fact exhibits both the features of an agreement marker, i. e. it cross-references a Controller, as in (276), and is prosodically dependent rather than independent. But at the same time it also behaves like an independent pronoun. As Corbett (2003) points out, the distinction between agreement markers and pronouns is often a gradual one; the A_{PAST} clitics of Suleimani are a case in point. Below I will point out features of the A_{PAST} clitics which bring them closer to a canonical form of agreement.

The second major difference between A_{PAST} clitics and the others concerns the facts of clitic placement, and the possibilities of combining clitics and agreement suffixes (see Section 7.2.3). As far as clitic placement is concerned, it was suggested above that the general rule is that a clitic is hosted by the leftmost-element of its phrase. Now if the A_{PAST} is considered to be a

'subject', then presumably the relevant immediate phrase is the clause, thus
we should expect the clitic to occur at the beginning of the clause. But, as
already seen in (275), this is not the case. In fact, the A_{PAST} clitics follow
approximately the same pattern as the O_{PRES} clitics: they attach to the first
available constituent of the VP. In (275), this is the O_{PAST} *ōtōmbī*. In many
cases, the first element of the VP is the verb itself. In that case, the hierarchy
of landing sites given above in (269), and repeated here, is valid:

(269)   Preverbal-particles etc. > Preverbal TAM/Negation > Verb stem

Crucially, an A_{PAST} clitic can **never attach to the lexical A_{PAST}**. Thus
in (275) it would be impossible to attach to *duxtōr*. On the assumption that
the relevant domain for the clitic is the VP, this fact is of course predictable.
These general principles can be illustrated using the following examples:

(278)   *kič qisa-**y**   na-kird*
        girl talk-3S:CLC NEG-do:PST:3S

        'The girl did not talk' (MacKenzie 1962:56)

(279)   *sar-**im**   hał birī,   tamāšā-**m**   kird*
        head-1S:CLC up   take:PST looking-1S:CLC do:PST:3S

        '(I) raised my head and looked ...' (MacKenzie 1962:56)

(280)   *šart-**mān**   kird   lagał yaktirī*
        condition-1PL:CLC do:PST:3S with   RECIPR

        'we made a bond with one another' (MacKenzie 1962:60)

As far as the placement of the clitic within the predicate is concerned, the
following examples illustrate the application of the hierarchy (269) given
above (examples from MacKenzie 1961a:79):

(281)   a.   *r̄ā=**m**   kird*
             running=1S:CLC do:PST:3S

             'I ran away' (Clitic on preverbal particle)

        b.   *na=**m**-a-kird*
             NEG=1S:CLC-PROG-do:PST:3S

             'I used not to do (so)' (Clitic on negation prefix)

        c.   *a=**m**-kird*
             PROG-=1S:CLC-do:PST:3S

             'I used to do (so)' (Clitic on TAM prefix)

d. *kird=**im***
do:PST:3S=1S:CLC
'I did (so)' (Clitic on verb stem)

7.3.1 Clitic/suffix interactions

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the A$_{PAST}$ clitics is their interaction with agreement suffixes. It will be recalled from Section 7.2.1 that the verb usually agrees with a core argument: in present tenses, the S or A, and in past tenses, the S or the O$_{PAST}$. The forms for the latter form of verbal agreement were given as Set 2 in Table 7.2. In Table 7.4, some of the Set 2 suffixes forms are shown together with the past tense of the verb *hāt-* 'come' (MacKenzie 1961a:95).

Table 7.4: Intransitive past tense verb agreement

Sg.	1	*hā́t-im*	'I came'
	2	*hāt-ī̆(t)*	'You came'
	3	*hāt-∅*	'He/she/it came'
Pl.	3	*hāt-in*	'They came'

The same set of verbal agreement markers is used with transitive past verbs to cross-reference the O$_{PAST}$. Consider the following examples, where the O$_{PAST}$ is cross-referenced by the appropriate form of the verbal agreement suffix, while the A$_{PAST}$ is cross-referenced through a clitic pronoun on a prior constituent:

(282) *bāŋ=yān   kird-**im***
call=3PL:CLC do:PST-1S

'They called **me**' (MacKenzie 1961a:109)

(283) *na=m-d-sand-**in***
NEG=1S:CLC-PROG-take:PST-3PL

'I was not taking **them**' (Fattah 1997:219)

Based on this limited data, one might conclude that the past tenses of transitive verbs regularly agrees with the O_{PAST}, using one of the Set 2 suffixes. However, when a transitive past predicate is the first element of a sentence, and when the predicate consists only of a verb stem without any preverbal elements, a conflict arises: As noted above, it is a rule of Suleimani syntax that all past transitive clauses must contain a clitic exponent of the A_{PAST}. At the same time, we have seen that the verb agrees with the O_{PAST} through a verbal agreement suffix. But in the situation just mentioned, only one slot is available for both markers, namely after the verb stem. On the assumption that the verbal agreement suffix is a suffix, and the the A_{PAST} marker is a clitic, one could reasonably expect to find that the clitic would attach outside the suffix. Unfortunately, this is not the case. It is most often the supposedly clitic A_{PAST} marker which attaches directly to the verb stem, while the O_{PAST} agreement suffix follows it:

(284)   *sand=im-in*
        take:PST=1S:CLC-3PL
        'I took them' (Fattah 1997:220)

The dilemma posed by this state of affairs is that, in terms of mobility (i.e. ability to attach to hosts of different categories), the A_{PAST} markers are clearly clitic-like, while the O_{PAST} marker is suffix-like (restricted to the verb stem). Yet when the two compete for the verb-stem slot, the A_{PAST} marker affixes directly to the stem in a very suffix-like manner, while the O_{PAST} marker follows it in a very un-suffix like manner.

   To my knowledge there has been no attempt to formulate a principled account of argument cross-referencing in past transitive constructions. Fattah (1997:220–221) attempts to explain the positioning of the A_{PAST} marker in terms of left-most nodes in the in a tree-structure representing the verb, its internal arguments and additional functional categories such as Tense, Negation or Aspect. If the direct object is realised in the clause, it will host the A_{PAST} marker, and so on. While this approach accounts for a fair number of examples, it is really little more than a restatement of the rules given above, and does not advance our understanding of the construction. Furthermore, it does not address the issue of why a supposedly clitic element should oust a suffix, as in (284). Finally, it ignores some added twists to the system, which are described by MacKenzie (1961a:112–113). It turns out that the order of argument cross-referencing markers is not **always** verb-A-O, as in (284). Instead, it interacts with the person of the arguments. The relevant person

categories are SAP vs. non-SAP (Speech Act Participants=first and second person, non-SAP=third person), whereby non-SAP is further divided into singular and plural. Ignoring some wrinkles in the system due to phonological factors, and dialectal variation within the Central Group (cf. MacKenzie (1961a:112–114) for details), the general rules for ordering the A_{PAST} and O_{PAST} markers when both appear on the verb stem are summed up in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5: The order of argument cross-referencing markers

| | | O_{PAST} is: | |
		SAP	non-SAP
A_{PAST} is:	SAP	A-O	A-O
non-SAP(Pl.)		A-O	A-O
		O-A	O-A
non-SAP(Sg.)		O-A	O-A

Essentially, the information given in Table 7.5 can be expressed with the following rule: When the A_{PAST} marker refers to a SAP, it will always precede the O_{PAST} marker; otherwise, it follows the O_{PAST} marker. However, as Table 7.5 shows, there is an area of indeterminacy. When the A_{PAST} is third person plural, both possible orders are permitted. For example, 'they saw me' could be either *dī-yān-im* (A-O), or *dī-m-yān* (O-A) . The A-O alternative is the commoner of the two options (MacKenzie 1961a:114).

Thus the ordering of argument cross-referencers on the verb is not entirely dependent on the syntactic function of the arguments, but interacts with the category of Person. From a cross-linguistic perspective, such an interaction is well-attested, in particular in so-called inverse systems. Nichols (1992:66) discusses related phenomena under the term "Hierarchical alignment":

> Access to inflectional slots for subject and/or object is based on person, number, and/or animacy rather than (or no less than) on syntactic relations.

Thus we find in Suleimani a pocket of what is, according to Nichols (1992), a cross-linguistically rare alignment type. The agreement facts of Suleimani of

course reflect a well-known typological generalisation, noted for example by
Croft (2001:318–319): The typologically least marked constellation of A and
O is when A is a SAP and O is a non-SAP, in Croft's notation SAP→non-
SAP (SAP acts on non-SAP).[7] When these conditions are met in Suleimani,
the A_{PAST} clitic appears to act as a suffix rather than a clitic.

But argument cross-referencing on the verb can be further complicated
by the presence of a marker cross-referencing 'Indirect Affectees'. The facts
are as follows. An Indirect Affectee can be expressed with a full form (NP
or pronoun), in which case no additional cross-referencing is necessary. An
example with a free form of a personal pronoun is the following:

(285)   *la*   ***emā**=y*   *sand-in*
        from 1PL=3S:CLC take:PST-3PL

        'He took them from **us**' (MacKenzie 1961a:114)

Cross-referencing of Indirect Affectees is thus not obligatory. However, it is
available as an alternative to the full NP or pronoun showed in the preceding
example. There are two possibilities. Either the Indirect Affectee is realised
as a clitic pronoun following, for example, a preposition:

(286)   *lē**=mān**=ī*   *sand-in*
        from=1PL:CLC=3S:CLC take:PST-3PL

        '(He) took them from **us**' (MacKenzie 1961a:114)

Or the Indirect Affectee can be cross-referenced on the verb. In that case, it
takes the form of a **Set 2 verbal agreement suffix** (cf. Table 7.2) rather
than a clitic pronoun. Thus in (287) the Indirect Affectee is cross-referenced
with the appropriate form of the verbal suffix *-īn* rather than the correspond-
ing pronominal clitic *=mān*:

(287)   *awān=ī*   *lē*   *sand-**īn***
        3PL=1S:CLC from take:PST-1PL

        'He took them from **us**' (MacKenzie 1961a:114)

The latter type of cross-referencing is also attested with External Possessors,
as in the following (these examples demonstrate that the Indirect Affectee
category of Suleimani covers a similar range of functions as the Free Genitive
of Old Persian, likewise subject to cliticization):[8]

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[7]This is of course a restatement of parts of the hierarchies of subject selection, discussed
in Section 5.9.1 in connection with the choice of subjects for passive constructions.

[8]Example (288) is puzzling; one would have expected the verbal agreement suffix to
have been plural rather than singular. However, MacKenzie (1961a:131) notes that a plural

(288)   *bačk-ak-ān=ī*   *a-xward-∅-**im***
       child-DEF-PL=3S:CLC PROG-eat:PST-3S-1S

       'It used to eat **my** children' (lit. '**to me** it ate the children' (MacKenzie 1961a:115)

(289)   *šēt-aka*   *das=ī*   *gazī-∅-**im***
       madman-DEF hand=3S:CLC bite:PST-3S-1S

       'The madman bit **my** hand' (lit. '**to me** the madman bit the hand' (MacKenzie 1961a:115)

As was illustrated in connection with Table 7.5, both an O_{PAST} and an A_{PAST} marker may co-occur on the verb. And in addition to these two, a verb can even cross-reference the Indirect Affectee as well:[9]

(290)   *dā-m-īt-in=ē*
       give:PST-1S-2S-3PL=DIREC

       'I gave you to them' (MacKenzie 1961a:116)

The Indirect Affectee marker generally follows any cross-referencing markers on the verb. In other words, the usual order is (cf. the discussion in connection with Table 7.5):

(291)   a. When the A_{PAST} is a SAP: A-O-Indirect Affectee (cf. ex. 290)

       b. When the A_{PAST} is third person singular: O-A-Indirect Affectee

MacKenzie (1961a:116) notes that "the connexion between the Indirect Affectee ending [...] and the verbal stem is tenuous". For example, the directional particle (cf. fn. 9) may intervene between it and the verb stem, as in:

(292)   *dāw-it-īn=**ē**-n*
       give:PST-2S-1PL=DIREC-3PL

       'You have given us to them' (MacKenzie 1961a:116)

O_{PAST} is generally reflected by the zero third person singular suffix on the verb—this point is taken up below.

  [9] The final *=ē* in (290) glossed here as DIREC, is analysed by MacKenzie (1961a:123) as the 'absolute' form of the preposition *a* 'to'. For the present purposes it suffices to note that the clitic is regularly attached to verbs of speech and giving, although its semantic contribution to the verb remains unclear.

However, In actual usage, forms with three overt argument cross-referencing markers on the verb are, as MacKenzie (1961a:116–117) notes, very unusual. Two factors conspire to reduce the complexity of such forms in discourse. First, the preponderance of third person singular for the O_{PAST}, for which the corresponding suffix is -$\emptyset$. Likewise, a third person singular Indirect Affectee would also be expressed by a zero marker on the verb:

1. *dā-$\emptyset$(2)-y(1)-m(3)-ē*(DIR) 'He(1) gave it(2) to me(3)'

2. *dā-m(1)-īt(2)-$\emptyset$(3)-ē*(DIR) 'I(1) gave you(2) to him(3)'.

The second factor is that there is often an overt constituent preceding the verb to which the A_{PAST} clitic can affix.

In many cases, both factors combine, as in the following, where the A_{PAST} clitic (1) attaches to an overt Direct Object NP, and the O_{PAST} is third person singular:

(293)   *søŋ=ī*   *dā-$\emptyset$-m*
        oath=3S:CLC(1) give:PST-3S(2)-1S(3)

        'He(1) administered an oath(2) to me(3)' (MacKenzie 1961a:117)

In sum, the apparently straightforward system of two distinct sets of cross-referencing markers, the agreement suffixes and pronominal clitics, each with their own non-overlapping functions, is obviously an oversimplification. A number of different factors interact in shaping the form and linear order of the markers concerned, leaving the resultant system probably the most complex aspect of Kurdish morphosyntax. In this section, I have merely presented some of the relevant data, following largely MacKenzie's presentation and analysis. However, there are alternative ways of accounting for this data, which will be discussed in the following section.

7.3.2   Polysemy of agreement markers

The view that the Set 2 agreement suffixes are primarily for cross-referencing the O_{PAST} is clearly in need of revision. We have observed that an Indirect Affectee can also be reflected through such a suffix, as in (287), repeated here for convenience:

(287)   *awān=ī*   *lē*   ***sand-īn***
        3PL=1S:CLC from take:PST-1PL

        'He took them from **us**'

Here we have the form of the verbal agreement suffix, but the function is not O$_{PAST}$. It is Indirect Affectee. In fact, when an Indirect Affectee is cross-referenced on the verb, it **always** takes the form of the verbal agreement suffix rather than the (expected) pronominal clitic. Now of course it is possible in (287) to unambiguously identify the suffix for Indirect Affectee as being from Set 2, rather than being the (expected) corresponding form of the pronominal clitic. However, for first person singular, the forms of the Set 2 suffixes and the pronominal clitics are, at least to judge by the level of phonetic detail provided in the available descriptions, phonologically identical. Given the possibility that the Set 2 suffixes can express an Indirect Affectee, demonstrated by (287), other examples turn out to be open to a similar interpretation. Consider (288) and (289), repeated here for convenience:

(288) *bačk-ak-ān=ī*   *a-xward-∅-**im***
       child-DEF-PL=3S:CLC PROG-eat:PST-3S-1S

       'It used to eat **my** children' (lit. '**to me** it ate the children'

(289) *šēt-aka*   *das=ī*   *gazī-∅-**im***
       madman-DEF hand=3S:CLC bite:PST-3S-1S

       'The madman bit **my** hand' (lit. '**to me** the madman bit the hand'

My glossing of these examples follows MacKenzie's analysis, according to which these forms contain the zero exponent of the Set 2 suffixes, cross-referencing the O$_{PAST}$, and a clitic pronoun, cross-referencing the Indirect Affectee. However, it seems to me that it is equally possible that there is no exponent of the O$_{PAST}$ in these examples; rather, the Indirect Affectee is expressed through a Set 2 suffix, affixing directly to the verb stem. In support of this argument, recall that that the O$_{PAST}$ suffix in (288) should be plural *-in*, rather than zero. MacKenzie (1961a:131) attributes the general failure to agree with a plural O$_{PAST}$ to the use of the singular (zero) agreement suffix in such environments. Now there are also other conditions under which the verb does not agree with an O$_{PAST}$. This is the case when the O$_{PAST}$ is realised in the clause as a personal pronoun, and the A$_{PAST}$ clitic attaches to it. Under these conditions, the verb takes the 'zero-marking', as it would with a third person singular O$_{PAST}$:[10]

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[10]A further example of this constellation is provided by (277) above.

(294)   *min(2)=it(1) dī-wa-∅*
        1S=2S:CLC   see:PST-PTCPL-3S
        'You(1) have seen me(2)' (MacKenzie 1961a:75)

(The same proposition could be expressed without the free pronoun, in which case we would have, in accordance with the rules outlined above, both arguments cross-referenced on the verb.)

MacKenzie (1961a) interprets all such instances as the use of the third person zero agreement marker (Set 2). Yet it seems to me that the zero is doing perhaps more work than is justified. The more likely explanation is that agreement with the O_{PAST} is eroding, and in many environments is supplanted by agreement with a different constituent, either an A_{PAST}, or an Indirect Affectee. Thus I do not believe it is possible in all environments to decide whether a particular suffix 'is' a pronominal clitic, preceded by a zero-suffix, or whether it is an agreement suffix fulfilling the function of a pronominal clitic. Note that in the dialects of Piždar and Mukri, the first person plural forms of the pronominal clitics (in most dialects $=m\bar{a}n$) are often replaced by a form *-in*, clearly reminiscent of the corresponding Set 2 agreement suffix. In other words, the distinction between pronominal clitics and agreement suffixes has blurred, both functionally and phonologically.

I maintain that in a number of environments it is questionable whether a zero-suffix should be postulated. Rather, it appears that the O_{PAST} is simply not cross-referenced at all, and the suffix has been co-opted to express either an Indirect Affectee or an A_{PAST}. We have already discussed such a mixed-agreement system in connection with the plural agreement in the Northern Group (Section 4.6). Here we find the regular use of the plural verb agreement suffix *-in*, traditionally termed agreement with an O_{PAST}, used to cross-reference an A_{PAST}. Essentially, we appear to have a similar phenomenon here, with the difference that matters are greatly complicated by the existence of the pronominal clitics.

In terms of its participial origins, the O_{PAST} is obviously the original controller of agreement on the verb. But the general trend appears to be towards weakening or abandoning O_{PAST} agreement on the verb. We have already seen that the past transitive verb in several Iranian languages no longer agrees with anything in past transitive constructions (cf. the double-oblique construction discussed in Section 4.5.1). Gurani, not generally considered Kurdish but closely related and, crucially, exhibiting essentially the same system of obligatory pronominal A_{PAST} clitics in the past, shows no

agreement with the O$_{PAST}$. Compare the following examples, where the verb remains in a single form despite different persons of the O$_{PAST}$ (transcription simplified):

(295) *ämin tû=îm   kûawä   dî*
      1s   2s=1s:CLC at.mountain see:PST

      'I saw **you** on the mountain' (Hadank and Mann 1930:296)

(296) *ämin=shân dî*
      1s=3PL:CLC see:PST

      'They saw **me**' (Hadank and Mann 1930:296)

(297) *shümä čísh-tân   dî?*
      2PL   what=2PL:CLC see:PST

      '**what** did you(PL) see?' (Hadank and Mann 1930:296)

Note that in Gurani, a past **intransitive** verb still agrees with its S, as in:

(298) *här sékîân mírd-in*
      each three   die:PST-3PL

      'All three died' (Hadank and Mann 1930:157)

We can assume that between the stage where the agreement is with the O$_{PAST}$, and where agreement is with nothing, intermediate stages must have existed. During such stages, it is also reasonable to assume that changes of agreement patterns could have been mediated by factors such as Person and Animacy. For example, in the dialect of Bingird, O$_{PAST}$ agreement with a third person plural argument depends on Animacy, as in:

(299)   a. *ćand wułāx-ī ćāk=ī   bō kiŕī-**n***
           some horses-IZ good=3S:CLC for buy:PST-3PL

           '(He) bought(PL) some fine **horses** for (him)'

       b. *ćand šīr-ī   ćāk=ī   bō kiŕī*
           some sword-IZ good=3S:CLC for buy:PST

           '(He) bought(SG) some fine **swords** for (him)' (MacKenzie 1961a:131)

In sum, the agreement rules for past transitive verbs are clearly complex. While it is true that under certain conditions, the verb agrees with its O$_{PAST}$, on closer examination, the number of 'exceptions' to this rule, and the patterns of variation found in closely related languages are such that it casts

doubt on whether such a rule should be the basis of the description. Suleimani has clearly moved on to a more complex mixed system of agreement, where both the A_{PAST} and an Indirect Affectee may take precedence over the O_{PAST} agreement.

In running texts, past transitive verb forms that appear to 'agree' with the A_{PAST} are in fact quite common, in particular verbs of speech: *wut-ī* '(he) said', where the A_{PAST} clitic attaches directly to the verb. In languages with a similar system of clitic cross-referencing, the frequency of past tense verb forms carrying only an A_{PAST} marker is higher. A count of approximately 700 words of Gurani revealed that of the 55 exponents of an A_{PAST} clitic, 29 attached to the verb itself.[11] In some cases, the A_{PAST} marker attaches to the verb stem even though there is an earlier constituent to which it could attach (glosses and transcription simplified):

(300)   *î   häkâyätä päî înäyä âwírd=**im***
        this story   for this   bring:PST=1S:CLC

        '**I** brought this story (forward) for this (reason)' (Hadank and Mann 1930:314)

Thus in discourse, it appears that in some languages, despite an essentially O_{PAST} pattern of verb agreement, A_{PAST} agreement is actually quite common. It is quite likely that the languages further South from Suleimani are closer to the agreement pattern of Persian, and that the shift involves increasing frequency of the A_{PAST} marker on the verb itself. But again, to validate this requires detailed investigations of the languages and dialects of the Southern Group and neighbouring dialects.

The facts of Suleimani suggest an old layer of verbal agreement with an O_{PAST}, reflecting the participial origins of the verb forms. But it is becoming increasingly overlaid with a more recent system of verb agreement with the A_{PAST}. There are several related factors involved. First, the general rightward drift of the clitics away from the clause initial Wackernagel position towards the verb. Second, the zero-form of the third person O_{PAST} verbal suffix, which in a sense 'leaves the verb open' to accepting A_{PAST} markers. Third, in terms of obligatoriness, cross-referencing the A_{PAST} actually outranks cross-referencing the O_{PAST} in Suleimani; there are environmnents, in which an O_{PAST} marker can be absent, yet **all** past transitive clauses require an A_{PAST} marker. Finally, there are discourse and person effects which

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[11]Based on a count of three short stories (VII–IX) in Hadank and Mann (1930:311–316).

favour certain combinations in transitive clauses. Whether the system is moving towards (a) a shift in function of the original verbal agreement suffixes towards adopting a new function (A_{PAST} cross-referencing), or whether (b) the pronominal clitics are actually replacing the verbal agreement markers, or (c) both processes simultaneously (as I suspect), remains to be investigated.

7.4 What is alignment in Suleimani?

As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, according to Bynon (1979), Suleimani is not ergative, but accusative. If that were the case, we could expect a consistent grouping of S and A in morphology throughout the grammar. I assume, following the arguments put forward by Friend (1985), that Suleimani is syntactically accusative; I have seen no evidence that would cast doubt on that conclusion. Thus the question of alignment is solely concerned with morphological parameters of case marking and agreement. Furthermore, we only need concern ourselves with the past tenses, because the present tenses are uniformly accusative throughout Kurdish.

Let us begin with case. As was mentioned above, Suleimani has no morphological case. In terms of case marking, then, Suleimani is neither Accusative nor Ergative. We thus have an example of the typologically unusual 'neutral' system, which has S_{PAST}, A_{PAST} and O_{PAST} (henceforth in this section simply S, A and O) in a single case form. The following sample sentences were supplied by Sorani native speakers (see fn. 5):

(301) *min hāt-im   bō erā*
       1s   come:PST-1s to here
       'I came here.'

(302) *ewā hāt-in   bō erā*
       2PL come:PST-2PL to here
       'You(PL) came here.'

(303) *min ewā=m   bīnī*
       1s   2PL=1s:CLC see:PST
       'I saw you(PL).'

(304) *ewā min=tān   bīnī*
       2PL 1s=2PL:CLC see:PST
       'You(PL) saw me.'

As can be seen, the pronouns have a single form in S, A or O function. As far as agreement patterns are concerned, there are differences between S and A:

1. The S is obligatorily cross-referenced on the verb with a verbal agreement suffix

2. The O is—in these examples at least—not cross-referenced. However, under certain conditions (discussed above), the O is cross-referenced by an agreement suffix on the verb, a suffix which shares the form of those used to cross-reference the S.

3. The A is obligatorily cross-referenced via a pronominal clitic on the first available constituent of the VP.

Bynon (1979) interprets this state of affairs as grouping S and A together, because in both cases, agreement is obligatory. The similarities that group S and O together, on the other hand (the formal identity of the agreement marker), are discounted because (Bynon 1979:220)

> [...] such an analysis fails to take account of the fact that in the transitive past (which, unlike the situation in Kurmanji, is not of course ergative) they [=the Set 2 suffixes, G.H.] fulfil exactly the same functions as are performed in the present tenses by set C [=the pronominal clitics, G. H.] namely that of direct and indirect object (noun phrase governed by preposition).

In other words, apparent O-agreement in the past tenses is a kind of optional object-cross referencing, rather than true agreement. This conclusion is apparently inevitable because "nowhere else in Suleimaniye is there any overt agreement of the verb with the logical object" (Bynon 1979:221). Of course given what we know of these languages, we would not expect to find such agreement anywhere but in the past tenses, which are, as I have repeatedly noted, fundamentally different from the present tenses.

Equating the facts of S-agreement with A-agreement appears to be quite an arbitrary decision, which simply brushes aside the considerable differences: the fact that A-agreement is generally a clitic, most usually attached to a position before the verb, and with some forms quite distinct from the agreement suffixes, must surely be of some consequence in the final analysis. I would nevertheless agree that there is a discernible trend towards

A-agreement supplanting O-agreement in the Central group generally, but in Suleimani, the process has not reached completion.

Bynon is committed to the view that past tense verbs do not agree with the O, stating in her later paper that the past tense of transitive verbs are "uninflected for person or number, as if the zero suffix marking agreement with the third person singular logical object had been extended to all persons and numbers" (Bynon 1980:159). Again, while I am sympathetic towards the view that agreement in past tenses is not, or no longer, uniformly with an O_{PAST}, traces of O_{PAST} agreement are nevertheless still evident, as in examples such as (282) and (283), repeated here for convenience:

(282) *bāŋ=yān   kird-im*
       call=3PL:CLC do:PST-1S

       'They called me' (MacKenzie 1961a:109)

(283) *na=m-d-sand-**in***
       NEG=1S:CLC-PROG-take:PST-3PL

       'I was not taking **them**' (Fattah 1997:219)

MacKenzie's own formulation of the facts is quite different. According to him, an O_{PAST}

> is always manifested in a verbal ending of the appropriate [past] tense. [...] It is, however, an over-simplification to state that the verb 'agrees' with such a Direct Affectee [=O_{PAST}, G. H.], as is demonstrated by the frequent intrusion of the Agential [=A_{PAST}, G. H.] suffix between verbal stem and personal ending. (MacKenzie 1961a:110)

The claim that the O_{PAST} is "always" expressed on the verb is obviously too strong—cf. the preceding examples. It can only be maintained by postulating zero-agreeement suffixes in many instances, some of which appear quite arbitrary. For example, MacKenzie (1961a:75) interprets (294) as exhibiting zero agreement with the O_{PAST} because, according to him, the O_{PAST} is treated "as if it were a noun" (rather than a first or second person pronoun). Such an analysis, though (trivially) impossible to disprove, seems unnecessary.

The truth lies somewhere between the standpoints of MacKenzie and Bynon. Remnants of the O_{PAST} agreement with the verb are clearly evident, but the entire agreement system is no longer determined by syntactic

function. In fact, Suleimani agreement provides a fascinating test case for illustrating the difficulties of establishing the alignment pattern of a language. The decision as to whether it is ergative or accusative in the past tenses depends entirely on whether we wish to afford more weight to the criterion of 'obligatoriness' of agreement (in which case A_{PAST} agreement patterns with S agreement, and the construction turns out as accusative), or whether the forms of the agreement morphemes themselves receive primacy (in which case S agreement patterns with O_{PAST} agreement, and the construction turns out to be morphologically ergative). As we have seen, the issue of form is by no means straightforward, with one and the same set of agreement suffixes also used to express Indirect Affectees (and arguably even A_{PAST}). How the conditions (word order, Person, Animacy) are to be incorporated within such a characterization, and to what extent dialectal variation is relevant, are issues for which I have no simple solution. But the questions raised are instructive from the point of view of theories of alignment, and demonstrate how patently inadequate a simple binary classification in terms of ergative vs. accusative is. Herein lies the main weakness of Bynon's account. Because she is committed to the view that Suleimani has "totally lost" ergativity (Bynon 1980:159), while Kurmanji is fully ergative, then it follows that the past tense constructions in the two must be "structurally quite different" (Bynon 1980:158). But as shown above, it is by no means justified to claim that Suleimani has lost all traces of ergativity. I prefer to see the system of Suleimani as neither ergative nor accusative, but the result of a series of ongoing historical processes interacting on the complex clitic system. Just how such processes may have proceeded is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 8

Broader issues

In the preceding chapters a considerable amount of data from Kurdish languages and some of their relatives has been presented. In this Chapter I will be drawing together the various strands in an attempt to formulate a coherent view of the diachronic developments behind the various alignments in past transitive constructions in Kurdish. I stress once again that the contents of this Chapter are to be considered hypotheses, based on as yet incomplete data. Nevertheless, it is possible already to suggest significant improvements on some of the hypotheses that have been proposed in the literature, and it is to be hoped that the current ones will stimulate further progress in the field.

8.1 Bynon's claims: a reassessment

Within general linguistics, the first and (until now) only research dedicated to alignment in Kurdish from a diachronic perspective is that of Theodora Bynon (Bynon 1979, Bynon 1980). Bynon (1980) is the main source on Kurdish quoted in influential studies of alignment and historical linguistics such as Dixon (1994) and Harris and Campbell (1995). It is thus a landmark article, that requires careful assessment. In what follows, all page references refer to Bynon (1980), unless indicated otherwise.

Bynon (1980) assumes, following Cardona (1970), that the origin of the ergative construction was a passive (see discussion of these issues in 5.2.1). This assumption has a profound influence on the subsequent argumentation. For, on her view, a passive involves a "topicalisation of the logical object"

(153). And in general, this would have been reflected in word order patterns, because as a rule, "topic precedes comment" (159). This leads Bynon (159) to the conclusion that:

> simple transitive sentences in (early) Middle Iranian might ideally have looked as follows:
>
> Present: agent + object + verb
>
> Past: object + agent + verb

According to Bynon, at this (hypothetical) stage, the past tense construction would have been both morphologically (case and agreement) **and** pragmatically a passive, in that it involved topicalisation of the Object.

There are serious problems with this account. The main one is simply that constructions of the sort Bynon postulates for the 'Past' are simply not regularly attested, even in Old Persian. In Section 5.9.1, I pointed out that the *manā kartam* construction is, from the point of view of pragmatic structure, **not** a typical passive. It is not used to topicalise an O. Now the impression that it is may arise from the particular type of construction in which many *manā kartam* constructions occur, namely as relative clauses. To repeat the now familiar example from Chapter 5:

(122) ***ima tya***   *manā   kartam   pasāva yaθā xšāyaθiya abavam*
       that which 1s:GEN do:PTCPL after   when king   become:PST:1s
       'This (is) that (which) was done by me after (I) became king'

Superficially, one might claim that this construction serves to topicalise 'that which was done', and indeed, that is probably the case. But it is not the *manā kartam* construction which achieves the topicalisation, but the relative clause construction within which it is embedded. The proof of this is provided by the fact that essentially the same topicalisation is achieved in an active construction, as in the following, likewise repeated from Chapter 5:

(141) ***ima tya***   *adam* ***akunavam***
       this   which 1s   do:PST:1s
       'this is that (which) I did'

The other examples of *manā kartam* constructions in Old Persian cannot in any meaningful way be characterised as strategies for topicalising the O (cf. the examples with 'battle was done by them', 'they joined battle'). Nor to

my knowledge does Middle Iranian show any evidence that the *manā kartam* construction was later used primarily as a means for topicalising, involving regular fronting of the O. Generally, the A_{PAST} was present as a clitic, and usually clause initially. There is simply not a scrap of empirical support for the structure proposed by Bynon for (Early) Middle Iranian. Bynon then notes that this apparently passive construction did not change in terms of its morphological marking formally from Old Persian down to Middle Persian (153). But its status did change, for, with the loss of the other past tense verb forms, it became the unmarked form for the past tense. This shift of markedness was accompanied by a shift in topic assignment, and hence of word order: the Agent became the Topic, giving rise to the word order found in both tenses in the Northern Group, A O V. So much for the pre-Kurdish developments; let us turn to the developments within Kurdish itself.

Bynon (1980) treats the distinction between the Central Group, with clitic marking of the A_{PAST}, and the Northern Group without such a feature, as fundamental. Her explanation for the clitic-type of cross-referencing runs as follows. The clitics are obviously the continuation of the clitics also used to cross-reference an A_{PAST} in Middle Persian, thus there is no particular problem with explaining their presence in the Northern Group. Of more interest for Bynon are the rules regarding clitic placement, which were discussed in detail in Section 7.2.3, and will only be briefly recapitulated here. Bynon states that the general rule is that the clitic attaches to the first constituent of the clause (155–156). She also notes that the clitic is necessary even if the A_{PAST} is present as a noun or pronoun in the clause. But crucially, when the A_{PAST} is present in the clause (generally in clause-initial position), the clitic does not attach to it. Contrast the three clauses in (305), all of which render the statement 'I killed the dog' (slightly adapted from MacKenzie (1961a:108), in collaboration with a native speaker):

(305)   a. *sag-aka=m   kušt*
             dog-DEF=1S:CLC kill:PST

        b. *min sag-aka=m   kušt*
             1S   dog-DEF=1S:CLC kill:PST

        c. **min=im sag-aka kušt*
             1S=1S:CLC dog-DEF kill:PST

It will be seen that the pronominal clitic cross-referencing the A_{PAST} is obligatory, even in the presence of an overt A_{PAST}. But the overt A_{PAST} itself cannot serve as a landing site for the clitic, as shown by the ungrammatical-

ity of (305c). The inability of the A_{PAST} to act as a host, even when it is the clause-initial constituent, is, according to Bynon,

> a direct violation of the rule stated above whereby the clitic at-
> taches itself to the first constituent of the sentence. It would
> seem, therefore, that the nominal and pronominal agents have to
> be excluded from this rule.

Bynon then goes on to note that an overt A_{PAST}, if present, is in the Direct case. Or rather, **can** be in the Direct case (157). For apparently,

> in the Sorani group the direct case is in free variation with oblique
> case in this function. (157)

But in one dialect which has retained the Oblique/Direct distinction, Mukri, the A_{PAST} is apparently in the Direct case. According to Bynon, these two facts, the Direct case of the A_{PAST} (in Mukri), and its apparent non-integration into the clause (it cannot serve as a landing site for the clitic) provide "the key to the problem as a whole" (157). She assumes that Mukri has retained the "earlier state of affairs", and the Direct marking of the A_{PAST} in Mukri is a reflection of its original status as **Topic**. This also explains why it is ignored for the purposes of clitic placement: it is not a grammatical constituent of the clause. Consider the following clause (from Mann (1906:lxxxvi), transcription simplified):

(306)   *kuräkä   añgustîläkâ=î halgirt*
        the.boy(DIR) ring=3S:CLC   take:PST
        'The son took the ring'

Bynon, following Mann (1906:lxxxvi–lxxxviii), interprets this as:

(307)   The son (Topic) — the ring was taken by him.

This, according to Bynon, is ultimately the source of the construction in the Southern Group. In fact, such "double-subject" constructions are widespread in West Iranian languages. Paul (2002a:77) notes for Persian the existence of this type, and they are extremely widespread throughout the languages I have examined. However, it is notable that in this construction, the clitic pronoun resumes the fronted NP not as an Agent-phrase of a passive, as in Bynon's interpretation of (307), but as the Possessor. Examples are rife in the texts of MacKenzie (1962), and in the Gurani texts of Hadank and Mann (1930). The following will suffice for illustration:

(308) *am pāšā-ya   waǰāx=ɩ̄   kör a-bē*
       DEM Pasha-DEM hearth=3S:CLC blind PROG-be:PRES:3S

       'That Pasha — **his** hearth is blind (i.e. he has no children)' (MacKenzie 1962:4)

Returning now to Bynon's account, if Mukri really does represent the original state, with the A_{PAST} as a fronted Topic, hence in the Direct case, the question arises as to why in most other dialects of the Central Group which have a case distinction, such fronted elements are often in the Oblique. Bynon's answer to this question runs as follows (157):

> [...] the simplest hypothesis is that Mukri has retained the earlier state of affairs, the situation in Sorani then being readily explainable as the result of levelling, be this internal (between the transitive past and all the other sentence types) or be it external (between the northern and the southern dialects).

This view seems to imply that originally, the A_{PAST} was in the Direct, and and the Oblique A_{PAST} of some of the dialects of Sorani is an innovation. MacKenzie's opinion on the distribution of cases is rather different. He notes that in Sorani, "there is a general tendency, though varying in effect from one function to the next, for the Direct case form of a noun to replace the Oblique" (MacKenzie 1961a:57). Nevertheless, in Sorani an A_{PAST} "frequently appears in the Oblique case" (MacKenzie 1961a:109). Thus MacKenzie interprets the data as reflecting a diachronic development according to which the (original) Oblique tends to be replaced by the Direct. Obviously this tendency is diametrically opposed to that of Bynon, according to which an original Direct is replaced by an Oblique through 'levelling'.

    Bynon's account, although elegant at first sight, suffers from serious weaknesses. First of all, the explanation in terms of 'internal levelling' lacks any justification. There is no other construction in Sorani in which an Agent is regularly put into the Oblique, so it seems quite odd to explain the Oblique case of the A_{PAST} as modelled on some other construction in the language. As we have seen, the developments in the case system that can be motivated by internal modelling involve the O_{PAST} going into the Oblique (see Section 8.2). Second, with regard to interference from the Northern Group, this is of course a possible source, but it remains pure speculation, and as far as I am aware, is unparalleled in Iranian as a contact-induced change. Finally, all the evidence from other languages, and from older stages of Iranian, point

in the direction of the Oblique as the original case of the A_{PAST}. The question that needs to be asked is then not why in Sorani the A_{PAST} is often in the Oblique, but why in Mukri it is regularly in the Direct case. As for the failure of the A_{PAST} to accept the clitic, there are other reasons which need to be considered. For example, it will be recalled that precisely the same set of clitics are still used to express the possessor when they attach to a noun phrase. If the possessive sense inhered to the clitic pronoun, then it would be felt to be quite incompatible for it to attach to the A_{PAST}, because it would result in semantically incompatible constructions (i.e. *I=of me* etc.)

Bynon's topicalisation-account has a further, undesirable consequence. Because in the Northern Group the A_{PAST} is unquestionably, and historically, in the Oblique, she is obliged to assume a very different type of construction for the Northern and Southern Groups:

> Despite certain superficial similarities, transitive past tense constructions with nominal or pronominal agent are thus structurally quite different in the north[ern Group, G.H.] and the south[ern Group, G.H.].

The explanation for the divergent development she offers is in terms of different word-order rules in the two groups. I will not delve into these explanations, partly because I am frankly unable to follow the line of argument presented on p. 158, but mainly because they appear entirely superfluous. In Section 8.3 I will be presenting a brief synopsis of some alternative proposals.

Let us briefly return now to the evidence for the Topic-status of the A_{PAST}. Recall that the primary argument for it, along with the Direct case in Mukri, is that it cannot serve as the landing site for a clitic pronoun. This suggests that it is outside the scope of the grammatical clause. However, this argument is undermined by the following example, quoted by Bynon herself, from Sorani:

(309)   a. *min xwardin-akān=im   xwārd*
            1s   food-DEF:PL=1S:CLC eat:PST

            'I ate the food(s)'

        b. *xwardin-akān* **min** *xwārd=im-in*
            food-DEF:PL   1s   eat:PST=1S:CLC-3PL

            'The food(s) – I ate them'

In (309a), we have the familiar situation that the A_{PAST} clitic attaches to the O_{PAST}. (309b) on the other hand is a pragmatically marked variant with

topicalisation of the O_{PAST}. Now this example does demonstrate that the pronominal clitic cannot affix to a Topic, but it also shows that the pronoun A_{PAST} is not necessarily a clause-external Topic, but can be integrated into the clause, while a different element is the topic. Bynon draws the following conclusion:

> From this we must deduce that a syntactic analysis has taken place in the south consisting in[sic] the integration of the topic into the sentence proper as the grammatical subject and the functional demotion of the clitic which formerly performed this role to the status of an apparently redundant echo of the subject. This reanalysis was not, however, accompanied by any formal restructuring so that the rules of clitic placement still accord exceptional treatment to the agent-subject. (158)

The argumentation here seems unnecessarily convoluted, and indeed, quite circular. For it was the inability of the A_{PAST} to take the clitic pronoun which first suggested its topical status. Now we find that the A_{PAST} is not a Topic, yet it still cannot host the clitic pronoun. Rather than seek an alternative explanation for the non-hosting of the clitic, a syntactic reanalysis is 'deduced', according to which the A_{PAST} has lost its Topic status, but the pronominal clitic apparently still treats it as a Topic.

At this point I will briefly sum up the major drawbacks with Bynon's proposals. First, the assumption that the origin of the ergative construction was a passive leads Bynon to the quite unjustified conclusion that the original construction must have involved topicalisation of the O. Thus additional unnecessary rules are introduced to account for the shift in Topic assignment. The topicality account then leads to the equally counter-productive assumption that the situation in Mukri, where the A_{PAST} is normally in the Direct case, must represent the original state of affairs for the Central Group. The use of the Oblique for the A_{PAST} in other dialects of the Central Group is then explained in terms of 'levelling'. As mentioned, I believe the historical development is quite the converse; it is Mukri that has innovated—more on this in Section 8.2. Finally, the topicalisation account is over-worked as an explanation for the failure of the A_{PAST} to host a clitic—even when it is, by Bynon's own admission, now a syntactic subject. This line of thought also leads to the Northern and Central Groups requiring fundamentally different historical pathways.

Although Bynon's study is a pioneering piece of research, which applied the (at that time) emergent study of alignment from a typological and diachronic perspective to the Kurdish data, it suffers from a lack of data, being based largely on grammars rather than texts. Had Bynon also taken the Badīnānī data into account (Chapter 6), she could hardly have maintained the account she proposed. Likewise, closer attention to the pragmatics of the *manā kartam* construction in actual texts, rather than relying on isolated examples, would have disposed of the topicalisation view. There is thus good reason to reconsider the issue against more extensive data. In Section 8.3, I will suggest an alternative scenario, based on the data presented in this study.

8.2   Case

It will be recalled from Chapter 2 that there are two morphological parameters for establishing alignment in a given language: the case marking of the core arguments S, A and O, and the means for cross-referencing core arguments. I have generally treated these two parameters separately, partly for ease of exposition, but also because, to a quite remarkable extent, the two can develop independently of one another. The developments in the agreement marking patterns are, however, considerably more complex because of the interaction of distinct, though phonologically very similar, sets of agreement markers. For this reason, I have chosen to concentrate on the area of case marking of nominal constituents and attempt to pinpoint some of the possible pathways along which case marking systems have evolved from Old Iranian down to the present. The investigation of agreement patterns must be postponed for future research.

The case systems of Iranian languages from Old Iranian to the present have undergone extensive restructuring, generally leading to a decrease in the number of morphologically marked case distinctions available on nouns. However, in some languages, the loss of the inherited cases has been followed by a renewal of the case systems, with innovated case markers from a variety of sources once again giving rise to more finely differentiated systems. In this section, I will be concerned solely with the overt morphological marking of core arguments (S, A and O). Although the results of the changes in the case system appear at first sight to be extremely heterogenous, on closer examination it emerges that most of the changes fall into a small number of

categories. This fact allows us in turn to draw some conclusions regarding the processes leading to the current case systems, and to make some predictions on the possible—and impossible—outcomes of those processes.

For Old Persian, we can assume the following system (see Section 5.4 for details):

Table 8.1: Core arguments and cases in Old Persian

S	Nominative
A_{PRES}	Nominative
O_{PRES}	Accusative
A_{PAST}	Nominative (with finite verbs) / Genitive (in the m. k. construction)
O_{PAST}	Accusative (with finite verbs) / Nominative (in the m. k. construction)

Now throughout Iranian, the case marking of S and of A_{PRES} has remained stable, continuing the Old Persian Nominative. In what follows, I will therefore be solely concerned with the marking of A_{PAST}, O_{PAST} and O_{PRES}, for reasons that will become clear.

In Western Middle Iranian, the Old Iranian system had become drastically simplified. The interpretation of the data is controversial, so in what follows, I will give a simplified account based on Sims-Williams (1981) and Skjærvø (1983). The two authors deal with Manichaean Middle Persian (Sims-Williams 1981) and Inscriptional Middle Persian, Inscriptional Parthian and the Pahlavi Psalter (Skjærvø 1983). In the languages considered, there was a maximum distinction between an Oblique and a Direct case, but it was not instantiated on all nouns. Skjærvø (1983:49) notes that in his corpus, the Oblique/Direct distinction is drawn on SAP pronouns (second singular only in Inscriptional Parthian), in certain kinship terms ('father', 'mother', 'son', 'daughter'), and in the plural of all nouns and adjectives. In Manichaean Middle Persian, the distinction is attested for the first person singular, and for certain kinship terms (Sims-Williams 1981:166). Skjærvø (1983:174) notes that inanimates are generally "indeclinable", regardless of syntactic function.

As far as the function of the Oblique case is concerned, it appears that it was used for A_{PAST}, and—in some instances—for O_{PRES} (Skjærvø 1983:177). It is evident that here a fairly clear reflection of ergative case marking has been retained, with the characteristic Oblique form of the A_{PAST}, and pre-

sumably Direct marking of the O_{PAST} (I have been unable to discern whether this is regularly the case). With all due caution, given the difficulties of interpretation, we can summarise this as follows, bearing in mind of course that the case distinctions shown are only drawn on a subset of the available nouns (e. .g. plural nouns, SAP pronouns, kinship terms). It will be seen that

Table 8.2: Core arguments and cases in Middle Persian

A_{PAST}	Oblique
O_{PAST}	Direct (?)
O_{PRES}	Direct/Oblique (both attested)

the distribution of case across core arguments shown in Table 8.2 comes very close the case marking found in the canonical ergative construction of the Northern Group of Kurdish, with the complication that the case marking of the O_{PRES} does not appear to be uniform. However, given what we know about the origins of the ergative construction (at least as far as case marking is concerned), and the existence of ergative alignment in some modern languages (e. g. the Northern Group of Kurdish; see MacKenzie (1961b) for discussion of the historical relationship of the ancestors of Kurdish to Middle Iranian), it seems reasonable to assume that the Middle Iranian system shown in Table 8.2 is a descendent of the familiar ergative alignment, shown in Table 8.3. I will work on the assumption that Table 8.3 represents schematically

Table 8.3: Core arguments and cases: Presumed original system

A_{PAST}	Oblique
O_{PAST}	Direct
O_{PRES}	Oblique

the predecessor of the West Iranian languages, although I certainly concede that the examples of Direct marking of the O_{PRES} attested in some Middle Persian texts poses difficulties.

8.2.1   Case marking and animacy

The Middle Persian data serve as an ideal introduction to a vital factor in case-marking distinctions, which I will refer to here as 'animacy'. Animacy is

used here in the broad sense of Comrie (1989) to subsume a number of properties, both semantic and pragmatic, that can characterise an NP. Typically, these features can be arranged into a hierarchy, or hierarchies, which provide a framework for formulating explanations for the architecture of grammatical systems cross-linguistically. A recent and empirically well-founded version of an animacy hierarchy is the following, (1,2,3 refer to first, second and third person pronouns):

(310) **The Animacy Hierarchy** (Corbett 2000:91)
       1 > 2 > 3 > kin > human > animate > inanimate

The crucial point to bear in mind when discussing animacy and grammatical relations is that the two are, in principle, logically independent. The A of a transitive verb can be a SAP, animate or inanimate etc. Although there are clear statistical tendencies favouring certain combinations, discussed at various points in this study, in principle, the two can be examined separately.

The hierarchy given in (310) was established for predicting the presence of plural marking in the languages of the world. The simplest generalisation is that if a language draws a formal distinction between singular and plural (or between dual and plural) at any point on the hierarchy, then it will draw the same distinction at all positions to the left of that point. The hierarchy both predicts the most frequently found places for plural, namely the first and second persons, and also defines impossible languages (for example a language that marked number in inanimate nouns, but not in kinship terms).[1] Note that the hierarchy does not imply that a language must make any plural distinctions; some languages are claimed to lack distinct plural forms altogether, even in the first and second person pronouns (Corbett 2000:50–51).

Obviously aspects of the hierarchy given in (310) would also be relevant to the distribution of Oblique case marking in Middle Persian: as mentioned, the Direct/Oblique distinction is found in first and second person pronouns (forthwith SAP pronouns), in kinship terms, but not with inanimates. For Iranian, Animacy has proved highly relevant for various parts of the grammar, but there are language-specific complications (see esp. Bossong (1985) for a detailed discussion of different dimensions of animacy). As far as the

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[1]Such typological generalisations are seldom free of counter-examples: the English second person pronoun *you* does not distinguish singular and plural, but the third persons (*he, she, it vs. they* do. Interestingly, non-standard varieties of English regularly innovate forms to counteract this exception—recall the discussion in Chapter 3 in connection with *y'all* and *youse.*

distribution of Oblique case marking is concerned, the following factors appear relevant in Iranian, with the values to the left being higher in animacy in all cases:

1. First person > second person > non-SAP
2. Among non-SAP constituents, the following distinctions are relevant:

   (a) Definite > Indefinite
   (b) With overt plural marking > without overt plural
   (c) Kinship term > animate > inanimate

The most surprising factor is the relevance of plural marking (not to be confused with semantic plurality) for case on **non**-SAP nouns and pronouns.[2] In the Middle Persian data just discussed, the presence of an overt plural marker implies a distinct form of the Oblique, and this holds true for other languages as well (at least in those languages which have an Oblique form anywhere). The facts surrounding the plural seem to represent a peculiarity specific to the Iranian languages, which will require a historical explanation.

  A good illustration of the relevance of animacy in case marking is found, for example, in the eight Pamir languages discussed by Payne (1980). Despite striking differences in the case systems, it is nevertheless possible to draw some general conclusions. The most obvious is that if there is a Direct/Oblique distinction anywhere, then it is always found with the SAP pronouns. In some of the languages (e.g. Rošani), it is additionally present with "the human interrogative pronoun, and all forms of the demonstrative" (Payne 1980:153). Here obviously definiteness is crucial. Finally, we can mention Sarykoli, where a Direct/Oblique distinction is available on nouns, but "it is made in the plural only" (Payne 1980:171), again underscoring the interdependence of overt plural marking and case distinctions. As one would expect, there are complications. For example, in Šuɣni (Payne 1980:168–169), the second person singular is apparently not differentiated for Direct/Oblique, although demonstratives are (a collapse of the Direct/Oblique form of the second person singular is also noted for some varieties of the Northern Group of Kurdish by Dorleijn (1996), though the details are uncertain). However, it is possible that a new Oblique marker, the preposition

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[2]It is particularly odd that in Bartangi (Pamir sub-group, see Payne 1980:161–162) distinct plural forms of SAP pronouns are not necessarily case marked, but non-SAP forms are.

az/as, may be used with the second person; Payne does not provide the relevant examples.

For Kurdish of the Northern Group, we have seen that the only nouns not to distinguish case are certain masculine nouns in certain dialects. But in plural, case is always distinguished, as it is in the presence of a demonstrative. The Suleimani dialect of the Central Group appears to have lost the Direct/Oblique case distinction altogether, but it can be argued that it is maintained with all pronouns through the use of the pronominal clitics, which express the Oblique functions of the pronouns. Despite the existence of some inconsistencies, there can be little doubt that animacy is extremely relevant for accounting for the distribution of case-marking phenomena.

8.2.2 Case marking of core arguments

Having briefly discussed animacy, we will now turn to the issue of how case markers are distributed across core arguments. Before doing so, it is necessary to introduce a further distinction to the Direct/Oblique opposition that is characteristic of most of the New Iranian languages. In Kurdish, and those languages briefly looked at above, the Oblique case is a reflex of the Old Iranian Genitive suffix (or a reflex of a near relative of that suffix). I will refer to this type of Oblique marker as an **inherited Oblique**. However, numerous Iranian languages use markers of different provenience for at least some of the functions previously filled by the inherited Oblique. Consider the case-marking of core arguments in New Persian, shown in Table 8.4. Functionally,

Table 8.4: Core arguments and cases in New Persian

A_{PAST}	Direct
O_{PAST}	-$r\bar{a}$
O_{PRES}	-$r\bar{a}$

the marker -$r\bar{a}$ shares some features with the inherited Oblique case, most notably, both code the O_{PAST}. One might therefore assume that the shifts in the case system from Middle to New Persian proceeded along the lines that the old Oblique case was phonologically eroded and was replaced by the innovated marker, and in that process, some changes in the functional distribution occurred. However, despite the apparent similarities between

the inherited Oblique and the innovated -*rā*, the two need to be fundamentally distinguished. I will henceforth refer to markers such as Persian *rā* as **innovated Obliques**. Innovated Obliques can be either postpositional, as in Persian -*rā*, or prepositional, as in Ōrmuṛī *ku* (discussed at the beginning of Chapter 1), or *az/as* in several of the Pamir languages discussed in Payne (1980). Here I am less concerned with the etymological origins of these markers (these matters are discussed at length in Bossong 1985) than with their morpho-syntactic properties.

Unlike the inherited Oblique, innovated Obliques are essentially agglutinative in character, that is, they have phonologically uniform exponents across the entire nominal lexicon, including pronouns (barring low-level assimilatory phonological processes). The inherited Oblique forms of the pronouns, on the other hand, may be suppletive, as in Kurdish (Northern Group) *ez* vs. *min* (first person singular), or have different forms according to gender and number (Northern Group, to some extent Zazaki also). The most important differences and commonalities between inherited and innovated Obliques are the following:

1. Inherited Obliques are fusional, and are expressed on the nominal head of a NP; innovated Obliques are agglutinative, and are expressed at the boundary of a NP.

2. Innovated Obliques are more prone to Differential Object Marking than inherited Obliques (Bossong 1985).

3. Inherited Obliques may code the Possessor in an Izafe-construction. Innovated Obliques seldom do.

The different origins of the Oblique markers clearly leaves its imprint on the way they function in the synchronic system of grammar, so the need to maintain a distinction is motivated by more than just etymological considerations.[3]

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[3]Like most distinctions, the Innovated vs. Inherited distinction has an area of overlap. In some languages, the inherited Oblique has developed some of the formal properties listed above typical of innovated Obliques (e. g. a uniform shape, which also applies to SAP-pronouns—cf. Bossong (1985:35) on Iškašimi.) This also appears to have happened in Gurani, where an etymologically inherited Oblique has acquired features typical of the innovated Oblique. Consider the Direct/Oblique forms of the SAP pronouns: *ämin/ämin-î; tû/tû-î* (Hadank and Mann 1930:117).

Returning to our investigation of case marking of core arguments, we can now distinguish three distinct types of case marker in the various functions, namely inherited Oblique, innovated Oblique, and Direct. Theoretically, then, languages could exhibit a large number of distinct combinations across the different syntactic functions. But in practice, the number of different combinations attested is quite constrained, suggesting that the diachronic processes that led to the current patterns have unfolded according to some quite specific principles. In what follows, I will present some tentative proposals on how these changes may have come about. The data comes from the Kurdish sources used throughout this book and from the studies of Bossong (1985) and Payne (1980), which provide valuable surveys of case marking in about 15 New Iranian languages. The sample is a purely convenience-based one, with no claim at being representative, and the proposals made are accordingly tentative at this stage.

There appear to be two broad paths of development down which languages may progress in the course of the changes in their case-systems (with regard to the core arguments). I will refer to languages of the first path as the **Oblique retaining** languages, and the second group as the **Oblique abandoning** languages. The endpoint of both developments can be the same, and I would not rule out the possibility that the two paths intertwine, but there appears to be a reasonably clear difference in the first steps, which to some extent determine the further path of development. I will begin with the a brief examination of the Oblique retaining development. The main evidence for this path comes from the Pamir languages investigated in Payne (1980), but Kurdish of the Northern Group appears to have taken a similar development. Table 8.5 overleaf, where OldObl=Inherited Oblique, and NewObl=Innovated Oblique, shows attested states of different languages which I believe are involved in this development. Note that the presence of an Oblique in one of the rows does not imply that all NPs in this function are marked Obliqe; the Oblique appears in the Table whenever a subset of NPs regularly occurs in the Oblique in this function, whereby the subsets are determined according to animacy distinctions (for example SAP pronouns, all deictics etc.) The individual stages, with examples of languages and dialects, are discussed below.

Table 8.5: The Oblique retaining path

	Original	1	2	3
A_{PAST}	OldObl	OldObl	OldObl	Dir
O_{PAST}	Dir	OldObl	New/OldObl	(New?)OldObl
O_{PRES}	OldObl	OldObl	New/OldObl	(New?)OldObl

Original state This pattern reflects the presumed ancestor, and is of course maintained in the Northern Group of Kurdish (Section 4.3), also in Pashto (East Iranian, Skjærvø 1989:397).

Pattern 1 This pattern is found in Rošani (Payne 1980), and Jaghnobi and Tâleši (Bossong 1985:17–19). In the Diyarbakır dialect of the Northern Group of Kurdish, it is apparently now the norm (Dorleijn 1996). The extent to which the Oblique is used for the O_{PAST} may again vary with animacy: the higher the O_{PAST} in animacy, the greater the likelihood of Oblique marking.

Pattern 2 Jazguljami has an Oblique A_{PAST}, but the O_{PAST} is marked with an innovated Oblique, the preposition *ž-/š-*. There is an additional innovated Oblique that may combine with the first, although the exact conditions for the use of the combined preposition are unclear. In the "upper dialect" of Waxi, a weakened version of this system is found: an A_{PAST} is only in the inherited Oblique when it is a SAP pronoun (Payne 1980:180). Finally, younger speakers of Rošani (see next Pattern) may also replace the inherited Oblique in the O_{PAST} with an innovated Oblique (Payne 1980:161).

Pattern 3 Found in the speech of "the younger generation" of Rošani speakers (Payne 1980:161). The main difference to Pattern 1 is the use of the Direct case for the A_{PAST}. It is not clear from Payne's data whether this pattern also occurs with an innovated Oblique. In Iškašmi, however, all Os are in the Oblique and "optionally the suffix *-(y)i*" (Payne 1980:177–178).

The three patterns capture in a fairly rough manner what appear to be the main clusters found. The left-to-right order is intended to reflect the hypothetical diachronic development (Payne also assumes that Pattern 1 is

the oldest among the attested ones, though he approaches the data from a different perspective). There are cases that do not fit any one exactly. For example, in Bartangi, the case marking of the A_{PAST} shows "free variation" between the inherited Oblique and the Direct (Payne 1980:162). This can be interpreted as an intermediate stage between Patterns 2 and 3, and in fact, such intermediate languages are particularly interesting as they may provide confirmation for the hypothesized diachronic developments.

To sum up, the Oblique retaining path can be characterised by an initial stage involving the extension of the inherited Oblique to the O_{PAST}. After that, different options are available. Whether the loss of the Oblique in the A_{PAST} necessarily **follows** the introduction of the innovated Oblique, as in the data so far, is impossible to say. But it appears that once the step towards extending the inherited Oblique has been taken, there is no going back to a Direct-marked O_{PAST}.

The Oblique-abandoning languages have a very different point of departure for the changes in the case system. The hallmark of these languages is that, unlike the Oblique-retaining languages, the initial development is the **loss of the inherited Oblique in the A_{PAST}**. This development is typical for the Central and Southern Group of Kurdish. The attested patterns are as follows, again arranged in what I assume to be the diachronic progression from left to right, with the assumed original state on the extreme left. This state is of course still attested in the Northern Group, and in Zazaki. Discussion and examples of the original patterns are given below.

Table 8.6: The Oblique abandoning path

	Original	1	2	3	4
A_{PAST}	OldObl	Dir/OldObl	Dir	Dir	Dir
O_{PAST}	Dir	Dir(?)	Dir	Dir/NewObl	NewObl
O_{PRES}	OldObl	OldObl	Dir	NewObl	NewObl

Pattern 1 The dialect of Awroman regularly uses the inherited Oblique in the O_{PRES} function for definites. However, it is only rarely used on the A_{PAST} function, apparently only when the A_{PAST} expresses an inanimate such as 'heat', 'hunger', obviously an unusual combination (MacKenzie 1966:51). Apart from the weakening of the inherited Oblique in the A_{PAST}, the original case marking pattern is largely in-

tact. Mukri has gone a step further in that the inherited Oblique in the A_{PAST} has been abandoned altogether (Mann 1906:L–LI).

Pattern 2 This is illustrated by the Suleimani dialect of the Central Group of Kurdish, where all trace of the inherited Oblique has been lost, and no innovated Oblique has entered the system (see Chapter 7). Languages showing a transition from Pattern 1–2 are the *Tâjîk-Mundarten* described by Mann (1909): The Oblique case has been lost throughout, with the exception of the personal pronouns. However, the Oblique and Direct forms of these pronouns are "frequently mixed up" (Mann 1909:21, my translation), particularly in the A_{PAST} function. It is reasonable to see here the final stages towards complete loss of the old case distinctions.

Pattern 3 A fairly well-documented case of this pattern is Gazi, a Northwest Iranian language. The inherited Oblique is entirely absent, but an innovated Oblique, related to Persian *-rā* is used in O_{PRES} function only (although younger speakers apparently occasionally extend its usage to the O_{PAST}, Stilo Forthcoming and Don Stilo, p.c.). I will discuss this pattern below.

Pattern 4 Natanzi, geographically and genetically close to Gazi, has a similar system to Gazi except the innovated Oblique is regularly used with a (definite) O_{PAST} (Bossong 1985:43). Sivandi goes a step further in using the innovated Oblique also with an indefinite O_{PRES} and O_{PAST} (Bossong 1985:49). Prominent languages of this type are also Persian, and the majority of the Southern Group of Kurdish as described in Fattah (2000).

As the name implies, the characteristic of this group of languages is their abandonment of the inherited Oblique. This survey of the attested variation suggests that the abandonment of the Oblique follows a regular sequence: it is abandoned first in A_{PAST} function, and later in O_{PRES}. However, the abandonment of the inherited Oblique is generally accompanied by the adoption of an innovated Oblique. At present it is not clear just how the two processes are chronologically linked. From the limited data available to me at present, it appears that the inherited Oblique is generally abandoned before the innovated Oblique enters the system, but I suspect that more extensive

investigation will uncover temporal overlaps in the two processes, particularly as the adoption of an innovated Oblique often appears to be accelerated through language contact.

What determines whether a language will proceed down the Oblique retaining or the Oblique abandoning paths? It cannot be solely determined by the genetic grouping, for as we have seen, the Northern Group of Kurdish, which are West Iranian languages, pattern with several East Iranian languages in being Oblique retaining, while the Central Group of Kurdish is Oblique abandoning. One possible correlate is the presence of clitics cross-referencing the A_{PAST}. In languages where such clitics are obligatory, for example the Central Group of Kurdish, or Gazi, it has been suggested by Don Stilo (p.c.) that these clitics fulfill the function of case markers, because they usually affix to the O_{PAST}, in a sense 'marking' it as a direct object. Likewise, of course, they provide a means for identifying the A_{PAST}. Thus from a discriminatory perspective on case marking, such a system is fully viable. This might explain the divergence between the Northern Group, which is Oblique-retaining, but lacks pronominal clitics, and the Central Group, which is Oblique-abandoning, but has obligatory pronominal clitics for the A_{PAST}. Other factors may of course be at work in determining the fate of the inherited Oblique. For example the extent to which the inherited Oblique was perceptually and articulatorily salient, and transparent, that is, uniform in its phonological shape, and readily segmentable. The greater its saliency and transparency, the more likely it would have been extended to novel environments. However, this is a matter which only historical phonology can clarify.

Finally, I should briefly mention the case of Gurani, a West Iranian language of uncertain genetic relationship to Kurdish. Here we have in effect the mingling of the Oblique-retaining and the Oblique-abandoning pattern, but the reason for it appears to be fairly straightforward: In Gurani, there is an inherited Oblique, but it behaves in many respects like an innovated Oblique (cf. fn. 3). It is similar to the inherited Obliques of the Oblique-retaining languages in that we find it still used in the A_{PAST}, and it is also used for O_{PAST} and O_{PRES}. Superficially, we have a kind of double Oblique system, similar to Pattern 2 in Table 8.6. But on other counts, it is atypical of these languages: the Oblique is **not** used in the A_{PAST} with SAP pronouns (Hadank and Mann 1930:145), although that is precisely the environment where we find the inherited Oblique in the Oblique-retaining languages. The explanation for this state of affairs is as follows: the SAP pronouns of Gu-

rani have actually lost the old (suppletive) Direct/Oblique distinction (they now have an invariable stem). To these stems is affixed an Oblique marker, which, etymologically, is the old Oblique suffix used on nouns. But the pronoun system treats it as an innovated Oblique, hence it is not used in A_{PAST} function.

The preceding discussion has uncovered some fairly broad tendencies that appear to shape the way the marking of core arguments develops diachronically. The following points summarise these developments, and are offered here as hypotheses to be tested in more extensive investigations:

1. An innovated Oblique always enters the system in the O_{PRES} function, before spreading to the O_{PAST}. If this is true, then it should not be possible to find a language with an innovated Oblique in the O_{PAST}, but not in the O_{PRES}.

2. An innovated Oblique never extends to encompass the A_{PAST}. In other words, the innovated Oblique does not simply replace the inherited Oblique in all functions. A possible exception to this generalisation is Baloči, which has a clearly innovated Oblique and another Oblique marker, the origin of which is not clear (Agnes Korn, p.c.).

3. The developments can be roughly divided into two types, the Oblique-retaining and the Oblique-abandoning type. In the first type, the decisive first step is that the inherited Oblique is extended to the O_{PAST} function. In the second, the first step is that the inherited Oblique is abandoned in the A_{PAST} function.

4. The decisive first steps are irreversible. No language is found which can be shown to have extended the Oblique to the O_{PAST} function, and then abandoned it again. Nor are any languages found which have abandoned the Oblique in the A_{PAST} function, and then reinstalled it there.

5. Both paths may end with fully accusative alignment, involving an innovated Oblique in the O_{PAST} and O_{PRES}, but the sequence of changes that lead to this result will have been different. Thus the Pamir language Orošori (Payne 1980:166–168) has accusative alignment throughout all tenses, the O being marked with an innovated Oblique. On the surface, then, it appears to have an identical alignment to Persian,

which also uses an innovated Oblique to mark the O in all tenses. However, when one considers the alignments in closely related languages, it can be surmised that the two languages arrived at their accusative alignments via different sequences of changes. Further evidence of the different pathways is that the inherited Oblique case is still present in Orošori in the SAP pronouns and the demonstratives, which distinguish two distinct forms. In Persian, on the other hand, no nouns or pronouns have preserved the distinction. Thus the comparative perspective can uncover divergent diachronic processes which a standard 'taxonomy of alignments' approach (see Chapter 1) would miss.

6. The inherited Oblique is maintained longest with nouns high in animacy, typically the pronouns (Gurani appears to be an exception, see above). Likewise, the innovated Oblique is introduced into the system first with nouns maximally high in animacy. Thus the innovated Oblique is often found initially only with pronouns, or definites, or in Early Judaeo Persian, with animates (Paul 2002b). These two features can lead to double-marking of high-animacy nouns, with both an inherited and an innovated Oblique.

In Section 8.1, I discussed the proposals of Bynon (1980). Among them was the claim that the lack of an Oblique in the A_{PAST} function in Mukri was the original state, and other dialects of the Central Group had reinstalled the inherited Oblique in this function. In the light of what can be inferred on possible developments in the case systems, such a development appears to be quite implausible. And in fact, when we take other languages such as Awromani into consideration, the Mukri case emerges as a language that has progressed further than Awromani in the abandonment of the inherited Oblique in the A_{PAST}, but has retained it in the O_{PRES}, precisely what the above scenario predicts.

On the perspective offered here, the various alignments that have been postulated for Iranian, e.g. double Oblique, ergative, neutral etc. actually emerge as epiphenomena, more or less arbitrary combinations that arise through the interaction of the dual diachronic processes: the loss, or change of distribution, of the inherited Oblique, and the penetration of the system by an innovated Oblique. Depending on the respective timing of the processes, and depending on whether the language is a Oblique-retaining or Oblique-abandoning language, numerous different alignments emerge. But they are nothing more than brief snapshots that may in fact obscure the

larger picture. From a macro-perspective on the long-term developments in the family as a whole, it is undeniable that the ultimate destination of these developments is levelling out the alignment mismatch between the past and the present tenses, with the present tense providing the model. However, the complexity, and persistence, of the intermediate stages has been seriously underestimated. Still, as I hope to have shown in this section, at least with regard to the case system, it is possible to tentatively identify some principles of change.

8.3   A possible scenario

How did the non-accusative alignments in the past tense transitive constructions of Kurdish develop? Let us suppose that the construction did originate in something like the *manā kartam* construction, discussed in Chapter 5. I have argued extensively in Chapters 5 and 6 that the m. k. construction was not a prototypical passive. The simpler assumption is that it was based on an external Possessor construction, as was proposed by Benveniste (1952/1966). If that was the case, then we can assume that the Agent was **already a Topic**, a feature typical of external Possessors cross-linguistically, and it may also have controlled subject properties. Although the Old Persian data do not provide positive proof of this, there is nothing I can see in the data that would disprove this interpretation. And the data from Badīnānī show quite clearly that such external possessors can quite well be syntactic subjects. The assumption that the Agent of the m. k. construction was already topical in Old Iranian has considerable advantages over the alternatives. For example Bynon (1980) takes the passive origin to its logical conclusion and assumes that the Patient of the m. k. construction must have been Topic, hence clause initial. To account for the later developments, she is then obliged to postulate a change of word-order accompanying the topicalisation of the Agent—a change for which no empirical evidence exists. Furthermore, the external Possessor, being already topical, is closer to subjecthood. Thus explanations in terms of a transfer of subject properties have less work to do, because the relevant NP at the starting point of the development was close to subjecthood anyway.

In Old Persian, there were two mutually exclusive possibilities for expressing the A_{PAST}: either as a free Genitive, or as a pronominal clitic. It was not possible to express both together, or at least such a possibility is not

attested. In Middle Persian, the m. k. construction basically existed in much the same form it had in Old Persian. The main difference was that the verb form had lost more of its participial character (gender agreement etc.), and of course the functional load of the construction in the system: It was now the sole means for expressing two-participant propositions in the past tenses. The cross-referencing of the Agent through a clitic was extremely frequent (obligatory?). Thus the pronominal clitic cross-referencing the A_{PAST} was now an integral part of the construction, rather than an optional variant.

Essentially this construction has survived in the Central Group of Kurdish. The main difference is that a nominal or pronominal A_{PAST} can optionally be added to the construction. This can be interpreted as emphasis, topicalisation, or some form of double-subject construction. If we assume the existence of Non-Canonical Subjects, which would have been Oblique, then there is little difficulty explaining such fronted elements in the Oblique. In fact, they may even remain in the Oblique when they are post-predicate afterthoughts (MacKenzie 1961a:109). As we have seen, in these languages there has been a trend towards abandoning the Oblique case, and it is lost earliest in the A_{PAST} function. Thus we find languages like Suleimani and Mukri, where the A_{PAST} is Direct, and others such as the Bingird dialect have maintained the Oblique marking of the A_{PAST}. A second change must also have occurred, although its significance is uncertain: the rules for clitic placement have altered, so that the clitic can no longer attach to a complementizer or coordinating conjunction. Rather, it moves closer to the verb. I suggest that the most simple rule is that it affixes to the first constituent of the VP.

Other languages outside Kurdish, such as Gazi, have also basically retained the Middle Persian construction, with obligatory cross-referencing of the A_{PAST}. They have progressed further in that they have entirely abandoned the inherited Oblique, and partially introduced an innovated Oblique (see preceding section). On the whole, retracing the syntactic development of the past transitive construction in the Central Group is less problematic, as the basic core of the construction attested in Middle Persian is still discernible. What is not clear to me is how this construction developed further towards the New Persian one, and to some of the languages of the Southern Group of Kurdish, both of which are characterised by the complete loss of the pronominal clitics cross-referencing the A_{PAST}.

Let us turn now to the Northern Group. Here the developments have taken quite a different turn. The key issue is when, and how, the Northern

Group completely lost the A_{PAST} pronominal clitics. It needs to be emphasises that they did not merely lose pronominal clitics for cross-referencing the A_{PAST} (as for example Persian did). Rather, they lost all trace of pronominal clitics anywhere in the grammar, save some fossilised third person singular forms fused to prepositions. The Northern Group are also Oblique-retaining languages, unlike their southern relatives. The inherited Oblique has remained stubbornly in place in the A_{PAST} function, and has spread in several dialects to include the O_{PAST} function. One might wish to invoke contact influence for the loss of the clitics—Turkish lacks pronominal clitics for cross-referencing arguments entirely,[4] but the data on Armenian, Arabic, Aramaic and other contact languages needs to be evaluated before such an account has any substance. Nevertheless, other authors have noted an areal distribution of clitics for cross-referencing arguments among the Indo-Aryan languages (Emeneau 1965), so an areal explanation cannot be discounted entirely.

The simplest, and empirically soundest explanation for the data in the Northern and Central Groups is to assume the following ancestor for past transitive clauses in a putative proto-Kurdish:

(311) **Assumed common Kurdish past transitive construction**
       (A-OBL)   O-DIR=PRONOM.CLC V_{PAST}(agrees with O)

The Oblique A_{PAST} would of course have been optional. This construction is still attested in the Central Group, for example in the Bingird dialect (the directional particle on the verb in this example is of no import):

(312) *xwā-y*   *kur̄=ī*   *dāwat=ē*
       God-OBL son=3S:CLC give:PST=DIREC

       'God(A) had given him(=DIREC) a son(O+Clitic cross referencing A).' (MacKenzie 1962:148)

What can be clearly seen here is the Oblique form of the A_{PAST}, and the pronominal clitic cross-referencing the A_{PAST}.

The Northern and Central Groups each maintained one part of the construction, while abandoning another. The Northern Group lost the pronominal clitic, but maintained the Oblique form of the A_{PAST}. This is part

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[4]The possessive suffixes of Turkish are, on all the usual parameters, suffixes, not clitics. The evidence for their suffix status is the fact that they exhibit allomorphy beyond mere vowel harmony (third person *-sI* vs. *-I*), they are followed by other suffixes in the word, the case suffixes, and they are not free with regard to selection of a host, or position in the clause.

of a general drift in these languages to cast off all special clitics for argument cross-referencing. The Central Group on the other hand maintained the pronominal clitics, but has largely abandoned the Oblique of the A_{PAST}, and indeed, has largely abandoned the inherited Oblique as a morphological category entirely. Again, it has been shown that the loss of the Oblique case is a typical more general feature of the Central Group. Looked at in this light, the differences between the two groups are perhaps less than has been claimed, and can be readily explained on the assumption of the common structure given in (311). The relative chronologies of these events, however, remains to be accounted for.

8.4 Alignment and drift

Opinions differ on the diachronic stability of ergativity. Bossong (1985:118) states that "it is generally well-known that ergativity is often unstable" (my translation). For Nichols (1992:181) on the other hand, the dominant alignment of a language, including ergativity, is a stable feature that provides a reliable indication of genetic relationships. However, the difference is in part due to Nichols' use of the term dominant alignment, which refers primarily to morphological patterns. As we have seen in Chapter the discussion on Suleimani in Section 7.4, the traces of morphological ergativity may be very slight, and some authors may choose to ignore them in classifying the alignment of the language. Thus weighing up the relative stability of any particular alignment will depend crucially on how alignment is defined.

Definitions of alignment are often framed with reference to 'grammatical relations', for which terms such as 'Subject', 'Object' and 'Indirect Object' are a convenient means of reference. But the Iranian data have taught me to mistrust the convenient shorthand. One of the key lessons from Iranian, and indeed just from Kurdish, is the numerous in-betweens. How are we to define the grammatical relation of Non-Canonical Subject, a category obviously present in Badīnānī? Is the Genitive/Dative of Old Persian a core case or not? Can Benefactives be meaningfully distinguished from Indirect Objects in Old Persian? At what point does a participle, a verbal adjective, become a finite intransitive verb, or a finite transitive verb? Is the agreement with the A_{PAST} in Suleimani a mere clitic, or is it already an agreement suffix for the 'Subject'? The problems multiply when we extend the investigation to include texts with dialectal and regional variation, which demonstrate

the fuzzy nature of all the familiar categories. In fact, the whole story of the non-accusative alignments in Kurdish is replete with non-canonical categories: subjects which are only partly subjects, agreement which is not fully grammatically determined, verbs which are both transitive and intransitive. This is perhaps one reason why the variation found in the constructions are so great, and why it is impossible to frame a simple description of the changes in terms of the familiar categories.

The diachronic counterpart of the fuzzy categories and intra-language variation found in non-accusative alignments in Kurdish is their instability. Nevertheless, the changes found are, from a long-term view, not random. Taken cumulatively, they all work in the direction of eroding ergativity in the past tenses by bringing them into line with the accusativity of the present tenses. Looked at in this light, we might wish to adopt Sapir's term 'drift': the notion that a language, or language family, is to some extent locked into a predetermined developmental path, which will shape its structure. Now the notion of drift has never been particularly clearly formulated, and some scholars have dismissed it entirely. Lightfoot (1999:209), criticises attempts to explain long-term changes in Indo-European as follows:

> [...] the fallacy is in requiring a principled explanation for such large-scale change taking place over such a long period. What's wrong with a series of coincidences, or a series of independent events? Why should we believe that this is the only way that history could have progressed?

Lightfoot goes on to ridicule "mystical" explanations for other large-scale changes, such as the shift from one word order type to another:

> This raises the question of how a child attains a language which is exactly half-way between the subject–verb–object and the subject–object–verb types; how does she know whether this is a subject–verb–object language changing into a subject–object–verb, or vice versa? How does she know that her generation must push the language a little towards, say, an[sic] subject–verb–object type? It seems that the only conceivable answer is to postulate a racial memory of some kind, such that the child knows that this is a subject–verb–object language changing towards subject–object–verb.

For Lightfoot, for whom language change, like language itself, is something primarily seated in the brain of the individual, the phenomenon of large scale change following a common path across hundreds of generations is indeed a paradox. But it nevertheless exists. Consider for a moment the Iranian languages. At some point during, or prior to, the Old Iranian stage, the verb system began to break down, leaving participles as the major carriers of past tense meanings. That particular change triggered off a series of changes in the syntax of all the descendent languages, although over the course of time the speakers became separated by thousands of miles, and came to speak mutually unintelligible languages. Now at any given point in that time span, speakers had no conception of how the language had been centuries before, nor how it would be centuries later. Yet the cumulative effect of dozens of generations were, despite the many differences of details, remarkably similar: non-accusative alignments throughout the past tenses. No language community I am aware of reversed the shift; no language community by-passed it. This was, it seems "the only way history could have progressed". It cannot be the result of a "series of coincidences or a series of independent events".

The kind of parallel developments observable in related, but geographically isolated languages (compare the double-Oblique construction in one of the most geographically western languages, Kurmanji Kurdish, with the double-Oblique in the eastern languages of the Pamir group) is precisely what Sapir must have envisaged with the term 'drift'. To be fair, the thrust of Lightfoot's criticism is directed at typologists who have proposed certain universals of change apparently independent of genetic relations. The two issues need to be extremely carefully distinguished. The type of drift I am referring to can be defined as a set of structural changes common to all members of a group of related, but geographically separate languages, and unique to those languages. The point about this kind of drift is that it occurs independently of social conditions: all languages undergo the changes concerned, regardless of where and by whom they are spoken. Thus the sole trigger for such drift phenomena are to be sought in structural features of the common proto-language, as these are the only linguistic features demonstrably common to the languages concerned. In order to trigger a large scale series of changes, independently of social conditions, such features must be fairly fundamental ones. The trigger for the drift to non-accusative alignments in the past tense of Iranian languages, for example, is a case in point. In fact its roots must lie even further back than Proto-Iranian, because non-accusative alignments in past and perfect tenses/aspects are typical of the Indo-Aryan languages

as well. Thus the structural catalyst for the development must have been common to Proto-Indo-Iranian. One can only speculate on the nature of the feature(s) that led to such cataclysmic changes across such a large and diverse group of languages.

This study has been concerned not with the catalyst for the emergence of non-accusative alignments in Iranian, but for the development of the structures that resulted. The general trend is clear: Over a couple of thousand years, the non-accusative constructions have been working themselves out of the family, though the means to do so have not always been identical in different branches of the family. Translated into the terms introduced in Section 3.3, non-accusative alignments lack constructional persistency. When the morphemes that held the various constructions together disappeared, they were not replaced, as we saw in Section 8.2.

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