Christian and Western Jewish Dialects of NENA

Moving further westwards into the Jewish NENA dialectal landscape, we encounter the Jewish dialects, known as *lishana deni* ‘our language’, such as ‘Amedia, Betanure, Dohok and Zakho, and the Jewish Barzani cluster, both west of the Great Zab river. Since they share numerous features with the local Christian varieties, against their Trans-Zab peers, they are studied alongside the Christian dialects of NENA. The distribution of major clusters in NENA dialects is displayed in Map 3 below. Apart from the core of the Christian, i.e. Assyrian or Chaldean, communities in Southeast Turkey, Northwest Iraq and Norwest Iran, there are four clusters of Christian dialects:

- **Western:** Christian villages near Cizre, Şırnak and Pervari in the Şırnak and Siirt provinces of Turkey, south of the Bohtan river;
- **Southern:** Christian—mainly Chaldean and Syriac Catholic—communities on the Nineveh Plains near Mosul, such as Alqosh, Telkepe (Tall Kayf), Baghdeda (Qaraqosh) and Karamlesh;
- **Eastern:** Christian—mainly Chaldean—communities in the Arbel governorate of Northeast Iraq, including Shaqlawa, ‘Ankawa and Koy Sanjaq;
- **Southeastern:** Christian varieties of Sulemaniyya (Khan 2004a) and Sanandaj—also known as Senaya, Kurdish Sine (Panoussi 1990)—in Iranian Kurdistan.

Since many of these dialects are still in need of documentation and the data from those that have been documented are not fully publicly accessible, we will not be able to offer a full picture in this chapter. Importantly, considerable mixing has taken place among speakers since they left their original towns. As a result of displacement, several communities came to interact with speakers of dialects they otherwise would not have interactions with in their original homeland. Southeast Turkey, especially the Hakkari province, and Northwest Iraq used to consist of several densely populated areas with tribal affiliations, such as:

- the Atrush area, near Dohok, including Azakh, Hermashe and Ten;
- the Şapna Valley, including C./J. ‘Amedia, C./J. Aradhin (Krotkof 1982), C. Bebede, C. Dehe and C. Mangesh (Sara 1974);
- Lower Barwar, i.e. C. Barwar (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a) and J. Betanure (NW Iraq; Mutzafi 2008a);
- Upper Barwar, i.e. Qodshaneş (Talay 2008)
- the Hakkari province of Turkey: Upper/Lower Ṯyari, such as Ashitha, Bne-

- Matha, Bne-Lagippa, Bne-Rumta and Walto, as well as Tal, Tkhuma, Challa, Baz, Jilu, Gawar and Sat (Talay 2008);
- Timurnaye, Şaranaye and other communities in the Van province of Turkey (Nolduz and Albak).

Many of these communities originating in SE Turkey found refuge in Iraq, e.g. in Nahla along the Khazir river near Aqrah, and the Khabur valley in NW in Syria after World War I (Talay 2008, 2009). These dialects often preserve archaisms, and are closely related to C. Jilu (SE Turkey; Fox 1997) in the north and J./C. Nerwa (NW Iraq; Talay 2001). The western dialects in NW Iraq, such as Zakho (Hoberman 1993) and Peshabur (Coghill 2013), are somewhat distinct from these. The originally SE Turkish dialect of Marga is closely related to these varieties, possibly due to displacement from Turkey to Levo, NW Iraq.

In the northwestern periphery in the Siirt provinces of SE Turkey, there once was a cluster of Christian dialects in Artun (Hertevin, Turk. Ekindüzü; Jastrow 1988), Umra (Dera, Turk. Dereköyü; Hobrack 2000) and Jinnet (Turk. Bağpınar). These typically exhibit a uvular /ħ/ where other dialects have velar /x/ (Talay 2009, 44), e.g. Umra *ħzeli* 'I saw'. A few villages in Borb-Ruma (Bohtan, Fox 2009) share with Jinnet the pronunciation of /o/ instead of /a/ in stressed open syllables, but not the uvular /ħ/, i.e. *xmora* 'doney' like *ħmora* against *xmara* elsewhere, while Artun has uvular /ħ/ but not /o/, i.e. *ħmara*. Furthermore, there used to be communities around Mount Judi (Cudi) in the Şırnak province, such as Haşşan (Hassane, Turkish Köşreli; Jastrow 1997; Damsma forthcoming), Beşpen (Sinha 2000) and Harbole.

In most cases the Jewish and Christian communities, even of the same towns, still maintained rather different dialects. National borders do not necessarily coincide with dialectological borders. Some of Christian dialects near Rewandiz, such as Diyana (Napiorkowska 2015), bear a strong resemblance to the Christian dialects of Iranian Azerbaijan, and C. Sulemaniyya in NE Iraq shows close affinity with C. Sanandaj in W Iran. The dialects in the 'Aqrah (Akre) district constitute a small, separate cluster that has distinctive preverbal progressive particles, similarly to J. Barzan, J./C. Shaqlawa, J. Dobe, J. Arbel and C. Koy Sanjaq further east in Iraq (Mutzafi 2004b).

Unsurprisingly, the literature presents diverging views on the characterization of the alignment patterns in the aforementioned NENA dialects. Doron and Khan (2012) consider the majority of these dialects in question to show a type of extended ergative, arguing they have extended the L-suffixes to all transitive verbs (*q̣il-li* 'I killed', *qim-li* 'I rose'). Similarly, Mengozzi (2002b, 45, fn. 144) refers to the same phenomenon as theoretically "post-ergative" and Barotto (2015) as marked nominative. Except for Coghill (2016), verbal forms like *q̣il-a-*

le and *q̄t̄al-le* are referred to as ergative constructions, especially in contradistinction to passive constructions (e.g. Khan 2016:723), and the L-suffixes as markers of the ergative subject. By contrast, the other verbal person marking strategies in most of these dialects are subsumed under accusative alignment in Barotto (2015) and Coghill (2016), primarily because they parallel the morphosyntax of *q̄t̄al-*.

Mengozi (2005) and Barotto (2015)¹ point to a “decay of ergativity”, leading to a gradual replacement by novel accusative constructions reminiscent of Kurdish (Dorleijn 1996). Mengozi (2002b, 46 fn. 147), without going into detail, suggests a few factors that are key to the alignment variation, which can be summarized as follows: system-internal pressure from the main inflectional system (*q̄t̄al-*), morphological disambiguation, the order of A and P (“actant order”), tense-aspect distinctions, and pragmatics. My own more detailed research confirms that these are indeed important factors, but, on closer examination, do they promote accusative alignment? Haig (2008) demonstrates that cross-system harmonization has affected the alignment systems in Iranian. To what extent do we observe this in these NENA dialects, and, what patterns unfold as a result? And to what extent does it make sense to treat part of their morphosyntax as (extended) ergative, as some scholars have claimed? These are the central questions of this chapter.

In addressing the issue of alignment identification, it may be worthwhile to reiterate that, in our approach, ergative alignment hinges on the grouping of S with P in some morphosyntactic way. Thus, while the *q̄t̄il-a-le* verbal forms tend to be taken for granted as ergative and L-suffixes as markers of the ergative subject contrasted with *q̄t̄al-* or the passive, if there is no grouping on any level for S and P, it makes no sense to speak of ergativity. By the same token, verbal person markers, such as the L-suffixes, are not considered to have inherent syntactic role marking properties associated with a particular alignment pattern. Thus when so-called ‘ergative L-suffixes’ or ‘markers of the ergative subject’ are extended, this does not mean that ergativity is also extended. At the same time there are constructions that may seem to be simply accusative at first face value and have been analyzed as such, because they are analogical or based on *q̄t̄al-*, but, in fact when one considers them in relation to intransitive constructions, these cannot be unambiguously subsumed under accusative alignment.

¹ Cf. Khan (2013) and Coghill (2016).

Alignment typology studies similarities and/or differences, focusing on the *relationship* between s and p or a, and not a given transitive or intransitive construction *per se*. This is also what makes such a study especially complex for NENA dialects, since this relationship is not always symmetric (either synchronically or diachronically) and it is difficult to make generalizations. Constraints and conditions may not be equally relevant to all grammatical functions nor equally relevant to all dialects. We will divide these into clausal and verb-related factors (i.e. tense-aspect) and argument-related factors (e.g. third vs. non-third person, full nominal vs. pronominal), always in some way involving at least p.

In considering tense, aspect and mood, sharp distinctions of the kind that contrast past and present or imperfective and perfective cannot always be maintained in NENA. Both simplex and compound verbal forms can be used to express various situation types and clausal properties. For example, the compound 'perfect' may also be used to express narrative perfective past in certain dialects, thereby functioning similarly to *qəṭal-le*. For practical reasons, however, I will refer to the simplex forms as the preterit and the compound verbal forms as the compound perfect, reflecting different construction types.

With respect to argument-related properties, the cross-indexing of the object is always conditioned in NENA dialects. There is no difference across dialects in this respect, but there are considerable differences in the morphological marking and affix order of the transitive constructions.

4.1 Preliminary Notes on Morphosyntax

4.1.1 *Person Marking in Transitive Perfective Past Constructions*

While prepositional pronominal objects are common in Trans-Zab Jewish dialects, most NENA dialects prefer to express pronominal objects via verbal affixes. In a few dialects in the (north)west, pronominal objects are also expressed independently by means of prepositions. As we will see in this chapter, these independent object pronouns have a different status in the system than those in Trans-Zab Jewish dialects.

4.1.1.1 *qam-qəṭal-le*

Among Christian dialects of Northern Iraq and *lishana deni* Jewish dialects, the so-called *qam-qəṭal*-construction is by far the most common expression for verbal forms in the perfective past containing two dependent person markers. The TAM marker *qam-* and its dialectal variants, e.g. *qəm-* ~ *kəm-* (various), *qa-* (C. Koy Sanjaq), *tam-* (C. Sulemaniyya and Sanandaj), *gəm-* (C. Peshabur), *gəb-*

(C. Mar Yaḳo), are simply prefixed to the *qaṭəl*-verbal form like other preverbal TAM modifications, for example:

(1) **The *qam-qaṭəl*-preterit** (J. Dohok; Molin 2021)

- a. *k- šaql-i-la*
 IND- take_{IPFV-A:3PL-P:3FS}
 'They take her.'
- b. *qam- šaql-i-la*
 PFV- take_{IPFV-A:3PL-P:3FS}
 'They took her.'

Although it is based on *qaṭəl*-, it is equivalent to *qṭil*- in the expression of the perfective past when both A and P are expressed in verbal person marking. This is illustrated by J. Dohok below:

(2) **J. Dohok** (NW Iraq; Molin 2021)

- ʔan qṭəl-lu ʕamma-u-ʔəsri naše,*
 DEM:PL killed:PFV-A:3PL hundred-and-twenty people:MPL,
qam-qaṭl-i-lu
 PFV-kill-A:3PL-P:3PL
 'They killed a hundred and twenty people, they killed them.'

A similar preverb *qam*- occurs in other varieties, where it expresses the indicative-progressive, cp. (Mutzafi 2002a, 70)

- J. Bejil (NW Iraq) *qam-pātəx-Ø* 'He is opening'
 C. Bedyal (NE Iraq) *mə-k-pātəx-Ø* 'He is opening'

These indicative-progressive preverbs should not be conflated with the perfective past preverb *qam*-, which is confined to transitive perfective past constructions and presumably not historically related to the above progressive marker. One may compare this to the Arabic preverbs *qad*- in Classical Arabic and *qa(d)*- or *da*- in Baghdadi Arabic, which are also not historically related, e.g. (Rubin 2005, 33–34, 136–137)

PAST/PERFECT	<i>qad</i>	< * <i>qdm</i> 'go/do before'
PRESENT/PROGRESSIVE	<i>qa(d)</i> -	< * <i>q'd</i> 'sit'

Although the historical background of the perfective past preverb *qam-* is shrouded in mystery, two possible candidates have been suggested, namely (i) the verb *qdm* ‘go before’² and (ii) the verb *qym* ‘stand up’.³ The first, **qdm*, ‘He went before’, which could explain the variant *tam-* of the preverb in C. Sanandaj and C. Sulemaniyya, e.g. *tam-* < *ṭam* < *qṭam* < *qḏam* ‘He went before’. The same shift could be observed in the related preposition **qodām* ‘before’, which has the various reflexes *qa-*, *ka-*, *ta-* and *ṭa-*⁴ in NENA dialects. The second etymology, **qym*, parallels the possible grammaticalization of the indicative preverb *k-* from **qā'em-* ‘standing’, the original active participle of the same verb, and coincides with variants *kām-* < **qām-* in, for instance, Christian dialects of the Nineveh Plains. Moreover, Pennacchietti (1994, 269–270, 276–277) maintains that the *qam-qatəl*-preterit spread from the Nineveh Plains in Iraq into the west and northeast of the NENA-speaking area, which could even point to Arabic influence.

None of these suggested etymologies, however, explain why the above construction is favored for the transitive perfective past. Fassberg (2015) is a notable exception and offers the following account. The original /m/ of the preverb is historically related to the augment of stem derivations II and III. This seems to me a plausible explanation why the distinction between stem I and II verbs, for instance, is neutralized in the *qam-qatəl*-preterit as well as why there is a close link with transitive coding. The initial /m/- of derived forms, e.g. II **mpalət-Ø-la* ‘He brings her out’, coincides with the final /m/ of the preverb *qam-*, e.g.

$$qam + mpalət-Ø-le = qa-m-palət-Ø-la$$

The preverb *qam*, therefore, serves as a transitivizer alongside a preverbal TAM-marker, since the original transitivizer *m-* would have been extended through analogy to stem II verbs to the transitive verbs belonging to stem I. It extended in this particular construction, presumably because of their matching vowel templates, e.g.

$$\begin{array}{ll} \text{II } *mpalət-la & : \text{ I } *qatəl-la, \\ \text{II } qa-m-palət-la & : \text{ I } x = qa-m-qatəl-la \end{array}$$

2 See Maclean (1895, 82), Rubin (2005, 34), Khan (2008a, 80).

3 See Pennacchietti (1997), Fassberg (2015), Khan (2021).

4 Possibly through misperception even *ṭla-* < **qḏā* < **qḏām*.

Be that as it may, the cross-dialectal distribution and morphosyntax of *qam-qaṭəl-le* as a transitive perfective past construction, which are further discussed in § 4.4.5, have important repercussions for how one understands the alignment in these dialects.

4.1.1.2 Prepositional Object Marking

In dialects in the west and north of the NENA-speaking area, it is common for speakers to employ prepositional object pronouns instead of or alongside the aforementioned *qam-qaṭəl*-preterit,⁵ e.g.

- (3) C. Upper Ṯyari (Waḻto, SE Turkey; Talay 2009, 34.12)

prəm-le 'əll-e did-e
slaughter_{PFV-A:3MS} OBJ-3MS POSS-3MS
'He killed him.'

Apart from ('əll)-, these prepositions are often the same as the marker of goals or recipients, such as *qa(d)-* 'to, for' in (4) below, characteristic of Christian dialects in Iranian Azerbaijan. An unusual preposition is (5) ('əb)- 'in, at; with; against' found in a few Judi dialects (SE Turkey) and in Hakkari, presumably also derived from its goal marking function 'at', as it is used in ditransitives, for example, in C. Lewen, SE Turkey (Talay 2009, 112.37). Prepositions can be extended with the linker *d-* or the independent possessive pronominal base *did-* or *diyy-* depending on the dialect, e.g. *qa-diy-⁺ux* in (4).

- (4) C. Sardarid (NW Iran; Younansardaroud 2001, 205, 232.4, transcription modified)

may xzi-lə qa- diy-⁺ux
who see_{PFV-A:3MS} OBJ- LK-2MS
'Who saw you_{MS}?' (lit. Him saw to-you_{MS})

- (5) C. Gaznakh (SE Turkey; Gutman 2015, 315, glossing adapted)

nšiq-li biy-ux
kiss_{PFV-A:1SG} OBJ-2MS
'I kissed you_{MS}.' (lit. Me kissed at-you_{MS})

⁵ This is similar to the Trans-Zab Jewish varieties, see § 3.1.2.2.

4.1.1.3 Primary and Secondary L-suffixes (L₂-sets)

The at least originally independent prepositional pronouns can become increasingly dependent on the verbal base *qtil*- and end up as a dependent series. The (ʔə)l-series usually attach to a preceding verbal form, e.g.

	[V	A	P]		
C. Asitha ⁶	<i>xzé</i>	<i>-le</i>	<i>-llən</i>	<	<i>xze-le</i> + <i>ʔəll-ən</i>
	'He saw us.'				
C. Upper Tyari ⁷	<i>xzé</i>	<i>-li</i>	<i>-llehe</i>	<	<i>xze-li</i> + <i>ʔəll-ehə</i>
	'I saw them.'				

The resulting dependent person markers can become morphologically indistinct from L-suffixes in numerous dialects, except for the third persons, where a distinction may be observed, for instance in the dialects of the Hakkari province,⁸ e.g. (Talay 2011, 56–57) respectively:

	[V	A	P]	
(most)	<i>xzé</i>	<i>-le</i>	<i>-le</i>	'He saw him .'
Upper Barwar	<i>xzé</i>	<i>-le</i>	<i>-lu</i>	
Tal	<i>xzé</i>	<i>-le</i>	<i>-lew</i>	
Baz	<i>xzé</i>	<i>-le</i>	<i>-ləv</i>	

Where the respective allomorphs of the secondary L₂-suffixes are identical to the primary L₁-suffixes, I will treat these as an instance of a single set of L₁-suffixes. This stacking of L-suffixes, discussed further in §4.4.3. will thus be treated as a construction distinct from the prepositional pronominal objects.

4.1.2 *The Copula and Compound Veral Forms*

4.1.2.1 The Copula

The form and syntax of the copula is highly diverse across these varieties of NENA. In contradistinction to the Trans-Zab Jewish varieties, the basic copula is often mobile and does not occupy a fixed clause-final or post-predicate position. The forms vary considerably across the NENA dialects, as illustrated in (6).

6 SE Turkey, Borghero (2006, 193).

7 Walto, SE Turkey, Talay (2009, 34.19).

8 This also applies to some SE Trans-Zab Jewish dialects such as Saqiz, see §3.1.2.2. and §3.3.1.2.

(6) The basic copula

	C. Artun (SE Turkey; Jastrow 1988)	J. Dohok (NW Iraq; Molin 2021)	C. Urmi (NW Iran; Khan 2016)	C. Sanandaj (W Iran; Panoussi 1990)
3ms. <i>ile</i>		<i>ile, -le</i>	<i>ilə, -lə</i>	<i>-le</i>
3fs. <i>ila</i>		<i>ila, -la</i>	<i>ila, -la</i>	<i>-la</i>
3pl. <i>ini</i>		<i>ilu, -lu</i>	<i>ina, -na</i>	<i>-ilu</i>
2ms. <i>ihat</i>		<i>wət</i>	<i>ivət, -ət</i>	<i>-yet</i>
2fs. <i>ihat</i>		<i>wat</i>	<i>ivat, -ət</i>	<i>-yat</i>
2pl. <i>əhton</i>		<i>wetun</i>	<i>itun, -tun</i>	<i>-iton</i>
etc.		etc.	etc.	etc.

Reduced variants of these forms can become identical to the L-suffixes and E-suffixes, respectively. The ramifications of this for the alignment in indicative present clauses has not been addressed in the literature, but deserves further investigation. In some dialects, such as Jewish *lishana deni* varieties, the third person copula forms can be morphologically identical to the L-suffixes, but remain distinct only by not affecting the stress of their host. Compare J. Dohok *góra-le* 'He is a man', which is *góra* 'man' without the copula, and *gor-á-le* 'she marries him', which is *gór-a* 'she marries' without the L-suffix.⁹ Molin (2021), who—as far as I am aware—is the only one who has raised this issue so far, points out that third person subjects of such intransitive clauses, i.e. *-le* 'he is', is expressed in a similar way to the object of corresponding transitive clauses, i.e. *-le* 'him', both expressing the indicative present. Christian dialects in NE Iraq in particular, such as Hawdiyan, have a pre-predicate /l/-copula identical with the L-suffixes, e.g. C. Hawdiyan *le ʔətya* 'He has come'.

Khan (2001, 2012) maintains the NENA third person copula forms that betray an /l/-element are diachronically related to the L-suffixes via a presentative construction **ʔ-le* 'behold, him',¹⁰ where *ʔ* is a fossilized 3fs. pronoun, e.g. **hī* 'she', as in the deictic copulas like *hawle* 'here he is' < **hā-ʔaw-le* 'behold that, him'. Other scholars (Retsö 1987, 220; Rubin 2005, 45) trace *ʔile* 'he is' back to **ʔt-* 'there is'¹¹ and **-le* 'to him', similarly to the predicative possessor *ʔat-le* 'he

9 Contrast with Turoyo *gáwro-no* 'I_M am a man' and *goráš-no-le* 'I_M pull him'.

10 It seems plausible to me that the third person plural forms in some NENA varieties, such as *-ni* in C. Artun (Hertevin, SE Turkey), are ultimately cognate with Turoyo *-ne*, both going back to a third person pronoun, and not presentative/deictic.

11 This existential used to inflect for person, gender and number by means of pronominal suffixes in Syriac, e.g. *ʔt-ēh* 'she is', cp. *nehz-ēh* 'he may see her'. This etymology certainly holds for Turoyo *kāt-* in the relative copula, e.g. *d-kāt-yo* 'that he is' < **d-kīt* 'that there is'

has'. This etymology is reminiscent of the verb-like expression of ability in several dialects, which would have undergone the same phonetic development, e.g. *'ibe* 'he is able' < **'it-* 'there is' and **-be* 'in him'.¹² In some dialects, such as C. Peshabur, the past third person copulas are almost identical to the inflection of the predicative possessor, compare *wā-le* 'he was' and *lay-wā-le* 'he wasn't' with *'ət-wā-le* 'he had' and *lat-wā-le* 'he hadn't' (Coghill 2013, 44–45).

Furthermore, according to Khan, the /w/ or /y/-elements in at least the first/second persons in NENA possibly betray relics of the pronouns **hu* 'he' or **hi* 'she'. It cannot be excluded, however, that the variation in the respective dialects may simply have developed via different strategies that resolve hiatus in the spread of the initial *'i-* to the entire paradigm, as for instance in the second person forms:

				C. Artun	C. Marga	C. Baghdeda
(7)	2ms.	<i>*'i-ət</i>	<i>/ṛi-ət/</i>	> <i>ihət</i>	<i>iwət</i>	<i>iyət</i>
	2fs.	<i>*'i-at</i>	<i>/ṛi-at/</i>	> <i>ihat</i>	<i>iwat</i>	<i>iyat</i>

This is similar to the spread of the initial /'a/ to the entire paradigm of independent pronouns in analogy to 1sg. *'ana*, compare:

				C. Artun	C. Marga	C. Baghdeda
(8)	2ms.	<i>*'a-ət</i>	<i>/ṛā-ət/</i>	> <i>'ahət</i>	<i>'ayət</i>	<i>'ahət</i>
	2fs.	<i>*'a-at</i>	<i>/ṛā-at/</i>	> <i>'ahat</i>	<i>'ayat</i>	<i>'ahat</i>

The initial vowels, i.e. /i/ for the copula and /a/ for the equivalent independent pronoun, incidentally serve to inflectionalize pronouns, where the initial vowel can be considered a base with suffixes, e.g. *'i-hət*, *'a-hət*. Glides that are inserted to resolve a hiatus can vary between /y/ and /w/ elsewhere in Northeastern and Central Neo-Aramaic dialects as well as in Kurdish (Hasan and Rasheed 2016). In C. Borb-Ruma (Bohtan, SE Turkey; Fox 2009, 23) the sequence /oə/ even fluctuates between *ohə*, *oyə* and *owə*, e.g.

- (9) **Borb-Ruma** (Bohtan, SE Turkey; Fox 2009, 23)
 2ms. **'a-ət* */ṛā-ət/* > *ohət* *oyət* *owət*

and *yo* 'he', which contains the same original existential *kit* 'there is' as the predicative possessor, e.g. *kət-le* 'he has'.

¹² Similarly, Turoyo *ki-be* 'I am able' < **kīt-be*.

A historical connection with the verb *hwy* ‘be’ cannot be altogether excluded, however. The analogy to this verb arguably played a role in the inflectionalization of pronominal copulas, which was facilitated by the phonetic correspondence of /w/ to the second radical of *hwy* (Khan 2001 and elsewhere). We cannot preclude that past tense copula forms like C. Marga *wewa* ‘He was’, *wiwa* ‘They were’, which inflect like ‘be’, i.e. *hawewa*, *hawiwa*, respectively, could have been derived directly from this verb; similarly, the negated copulas, such as C. Marga *lawe* ‘he is not’, *lawi* ‘they are not’, are presumably derived from the verb ‘be’ *le hawe*, *le hawi*, respectively.¹³

Finally, the first and second person forms of the basic copula can also be phonetically reduced with loss of the glide, resulting in forms that closely approximate the E-set, as illustrated below for C. Barwar. Such allomorphs of the copula will be referred to as secondary E-suffixes or E₂-set. When they are identical to the primary E-suffixes, it becomes debatable whether they still comprise a distinct set.

(10) C. Barwar (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a, 181–182)

	BASIC COPULA	SHORT COPULA	E-SET
1ms.	- <i>iwən</i>	- <i>in</i> , - <i>en</i>	- <i>ən</i>
1fs.	- <i>iwən</i>	- <i>in</i> , - <i>en</i>	- <i>ən</i>
1pl.	- <i>iwəx</i>	- <i>ix</i> , - <i>ex</i>	- <i>əx</i>

4.1.2.2 Compound Verbal Forms

Contrasting with Trans-Zab Jewish varieties of NENA, simplex and compound verbal forms follow the same pattern in the majority of NENA dialects. Jewish dialects to the west of the Greater Zab river, for instance, group s and A both in the simplex form based on *qtil*-, i.e. the preterit, and in compound forms based on *qtila*, i.e. the compound perfect. The same holds for the majority of Christian dialects, although, here, the copula freely cliticizes to the resultative participle. Compare the following 1ms. forms of the *q-y-m* ‘rise’ and *q-r-š* ‘pull’:

(11)	J. Betanure (NW Iraq) (Mutzafi 2008a)		C. Barwar (NW Iraq) (Khan 2008a)	
	SIMPLEX	COMPOUND	SIMPLEX	COMPOUND
tr.	<i>grīš-li</i>	<i>iwən grīša</i>	<i>grīš-li</i>	<i>grīšē-wən</i>
intr.	<i>qim-li</i>	<i>iwən qima</i>	<i>qim-li</i>	<i>qimē-wən</i>

13 Similarly, the Turoyo 3sg. form *-yo* presumably arose in analogy to its past pendant *-wo* ‘he/she/it was’ < **hwo* ‘he was’, a direct reflex of the 3ms. suffix-conjugation of *hwy*.

The deictic and relative copula never cliticize, so that the compound verbal forms for C. Barwar in (10) above correspond to the following constructions using the deictic copula. The enclitic copula forms can also be phonetically reduced, ending up identical with the E-set, illustrated for C. Barwar below.

(12) C. Barwar (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a)

	BASIC	SHORT	DEICTIC
tr.	<i>grīš-əwən</i>	<i>grīš-ən</i>	<i>holi grīša</i>
intr.	<i>qīm-əwən</i>	<i>qīm-ən</i>	<i>holi qīma</i>

A discussion of the manifold ways whereby pronominal objects can be expressed in these compound verbal forms can be found in § 2.2.5. The fact that a NENA dialect uses one strategy in the compound verbal form, i.e. the compound perfect, does not entail that it uses the same strategy in the simplex verbal forms, i.e. the preterit, and *vice versa*. Thus in C. Marga, illustrated below, the compound verbal form combines with the *ʔall*-series, but this is not attested for the simplex form.

(13) C. Marga (SE Turkey)

	SIMPLEX		COMPOUND	
tr.	<i>grīš-ux-le</i>	'He pulled us.'	<i>hole grīš-əllan</i>	'He has pulled us.'
intr.	<i>qəm-le</i>	'He rose.'	<i>hole qīma</i>	'He has risen.'

The deictic copula can also be combined with forms based on *qtil*- and develop into the expression of the perfect, similarly to the compound verbal forms based on the resultative participle. Thus Western, Eastern and Southeastern Christian dialects as well as Jewish Barzani and Western Trans-Zab Jewish dialects use a preverbal TAM-marker to indicate a distinction between preterit and perfect, such as *hule* in C. Haşsan¹⁴ and *gi*- in C. Sanandaj below. Forms like *hule* go back to a fossilized third person form of the deictic copula.¹⁵

(14) C. Haşsan (SE Turkey) C. Sanandaj (W Iran)
(Damsma forthcoming) (Panoussi 1990)

	PRETERIT	PERFECT	PRETERIT	PERFECT
tr.	<i>qṭəl-li</i>	<i>hule qṭəl-li</i>	<i>qṭel-li</i>	<i>gi-qṭel-li</i>
intr.	<i>qəm-li</i>	<i>hule qəm-li</i>	<i>qem-li</i>	<i>gi-qem-li</i>

14 3fs. and 3pl. can still optionally show agreement, e.g. *hule ~ huna grāš-na* 'They have pulled' (Damsma forthcoming).

15 Similarly to *lā* in J. Arbel, Ruwanduz and Rustaqa, and *nā* in J. Dobe, see § 3.4.2–3.4.3.

The majority of dialects patterns like the above, where simplex and compound verbal forms, i.e. preterit and realis perfect, are neatly symmetric in *s* and *A*-marking.

4.1.3 *Prepositional Marking of Agents*

Another important contrast with the Trans-Zab Jewish varieties is that a few dialects in Northwest Iraq and Southeast Turkey can employ the preposition (*'əl*)/*l*- and its allomorphs to introduce the agent. This can be used only when the agent is not additionally expressed by the *L*-suffixes in the preterit or the copula in the compound perfect. By way of illustration, the following alternation in (15) shows the correspondence of *A* in (15a) expressed by the *L*-suffix to the agent expressed by the preposition *'əl*- in (15b).

(15) **C. Azakh** (NW Iraq)

a. *dewa xil -i -le*

wolf:MS- eat_{PFV} -P:3PL -A:3MS

'The wolf ate them.'

b. *'ərwe xil -i 'əll-ew*

sheep:PL eat_{PFV} -3PL DAT-3MS

'The sheep have been eaten by it_M (i.e. the wolf).'

Constructions like (15b), which betray relics of a former historical relationship between the *L*-suffixes and the preposition *l*-, are not common to all *NENA* dialects. As far as we can tell from the dialects thus far documented, those *NENA* dialects that have constructions like (15b) in their repertoire always mark *s* and *A* by means of *L*-suffixes. On the other hand, constructions like (15b) do not occur in the Trans-Zab Jewish varieties of *NENA*.

Some dialects may allow the same alternation only in a compound verbal form, e.g.

(16) **C. Mar Yaqo** (NW Iraq)

'ərwa haydo-le xila l-dewa

sheep:MS DEIX-3MS eaten:MS DAT-wolf:MS

'The sheep has been eaten by the wolf'

This obviously raises questions about the status of the patient and agent in these constructions and their relationship to the passive voice, to which we turn in the following section.

4.2 Ergative or Passive? Agents in and out of Focus

Doron and Khan (2012) argue that the dialects that group s and A by means of the L-suffixes still manifest a type of ergativity called ‘extended ergative’.¹⁶ Their main argumentation is that the syntactic and morphological markedness of the L-set point to traces of an earlier ergative type, similarly to the Southeastern Trans-Zab Jewish varieties.

An agentless preterit or *q̄til*-form¹⁷ occurs sporadically in dialects in Northwest Iraq and Southeast Turkey, which is reminiscent of the passive, e.g.

- (1) a. *xabuše xil-i-le*
 apple:PL eat_{PFV}-P:3PL-A:3MS
 ‘He ate the apples.’
- b. *xabuše xil-i(-Ø)*
 apple:PL eat_{PFV}-3PL
 ‘The apples were eaten.’

Moreover, third person enclitic copulas may also be omitted entirely, so that the participial inflection is the only remaining agent or subject coding in compound perfects (Khan 2008a, 669–671), for example:

- (2) C. Barwar (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a, A31:4)
q̄til-a xá-neriye
 killed:RPP-MS a-goat:MS
 ‘The male goat has been killed.’
 lit. ‘X (is) killed a goat’

In addition, the agent can be introduced by the dative preposition (ʾəl)- ‘to, for’, which is comparable to agent complements in passives. The same kind of predicate in (2), for instance, is compatible with agent complements, such as

- (3) C. Barwar (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a, A23:15)
xmare ho-la xil-e l-dewe
 donkey:PL DEIX-A:3FS eaten-A:PL DAT-wolf:PL
 ‘The asses have been eaten by wolves.’ (ibid. A23:15)

¹⁶ Cf. Mengozzi (2002b, 45, fn. 144), Barotto (2015) and Khan (2017).

¹⁷ See Gutman (2008).

After a study of the morphological markedness of these constructions in such dialects, we examine the possible omission of the L-set and copula. We will discuss these agentless verbal forms in relation to ergativity and the passive voice along a continuum (Comrie 1988) and in the light of passive and anticausative voice constructions in NENA. In leaving the agent unexpressed, the question arises whether the construction is morphosyntactically still transitive or not.¹⁸ Is the patient-like argument in (1) and (2) an instance of s or p? After having decided on that, we can address the question whether this should be analyzed as either ergative or passive, and in case we cannot decide, this phenomenon might not be classifiable using these categories.

4.2.1 *The Importance of Zero*

4.2.1.1 Typological Markedness

In linguistic typology, alignment patterns are further distinguished by overt vs. zero marking.¹⁹ Various scholars²⁰ have argued that the ergative and accusative alignment systems each have their own unmarked case, which often has no overt nominal marking.

Functional typologists presuppose symmetric or asymmetric functional relationships between form and function. When at least one of the arguments in the transitive counterpart, i.e. A/P, is treated similarly to s, the relation between form and function is symmetric for an alignment system, where the morphologically and functionally unmarked properties of the form associated with s also apply to the argument, i.e. A/P, with which it is morphosyntactically grouped.²¹ There are, however, also divergent patterns that lead to asymmetry, which are considered 'marked'.

The unmarked case is expected to be the nominative (s=A) for an accusative case system and the absolutive (s=P) for the ergative counterpart. Functionally, the unmarked case, i.e. nominative/absolutive, is used as the citation form, is more likely to be obligatory and express the topic of equational sentences, while the marked case, i.e. accusative/ergative, is more likely to be optional and have various additional functions, such as temporal or locative expressions or marking of goals or instruments (Dixon 1994; cf. Handschuh 2015). Formally, if an argument involves zero nominal coding, i.e. $\emptyset$, this is most likely the one grouped with s, i.e. nominative/absolutive, since it is more economical to overtly mark the isolated role (Comrie 1978).

18 Cf. Keenan and Dryer (2007, 330).

19 See Dixon (1979, 1994), Croft (1988, 2001, 138–146).

20 See *inter alia* Tsunoda (1981), Comrie (1989), Lazard (1998).

21 This does not apply to tripartite (s≠A≠P) or horizontal alignment (s≠A=P).

TABLE 22 Zero vs. overt case coding in the accusative type

	Nominative (S=A)	Accusative (≠P)	Gloss
Classical Arabic	<i>bayt-un</i>	<i>bayt-an</i>	'a house'
Gəʿəz	<i>bet-Ø</i>	<i>bet-a</i>	'house'
Harar Oromo	<i>sáree-n</i>	<i>sáree-Ø</i>	'dog'

SOURCE: FOLLOWING TABLE 4.3 IN CROFT (2001, 139). HARAR OROMO DATA FROM COMRIE (2005, 398, ORIGINAL SOURCE CITED THEREIN)

TABLE 23 Distribution of zero vs. overt case coding in the ergative type

	Absolutive (S=P)	Ergative (≠A)	Gloss
Tongan	<i>'a he talavou</i>	<i>'e ha talavou</i>	'a young man'
Yup'ik	<i>nuna-Ø</i>	<i>nuna-m</i>	'land'
Nias	<i>n-asu</i>	<i>Ø-asu</i>	'dog'

SOURCE: TABLE FROM CROFT (2001, 140), SLIGHTLY ADAPTED, AND NIAS DATA FROM HANDSCHUH (2015, 31, EMPHASIS MINE, ORIGINAL SOURCES CITED THEREIN)

Table 22 offers examples from Classical Arabic and Gəʿəz, i.e. Classical Ethiopic, which both have an accusative case system. The nominative and accusative may be equally unmarked formally, as displayed for Classical Arabic. The formally unmarked case in Gəʿəz is the expected nominative. The reverse situation would be a marked nominative, a distinct subtype of accusative alignment, where P lacks overt coding and is used in citation. Comrie (2005, 398) offers an example from Harar Oromo, i.e. Cushitic, Ethiopia, represented schematically in the last row of Table 22.

This would be exactly the reverse in an ergative case system, illustrated by Tongan (Polynesian, Tonga) and Yup'ik (Eskimo, Alaska) in Table 23. The accusative and ergative alignment types are mirror each other in terms of markedness. Marked absolutive is thus far only found in Nias (Malayo-Polynesian, Indonesia), illustrated by the last row in Table 23, where it is the A that lacks overt coding and is used in citation (Handschuh 2015, 31).

TABLE 24 Marked intransitive/transitive alignment types

	MARKED NOMINATIVE			MARKED ABSOLUTIVE		
	S	A	P	P	S	A
NOMINAL MARKING	m	m	o	m	m	o
VERBAL PERSON MARKING	o	o	m	o	o	m

Markedness in verbal person marking is defined in terms of trigger potential and possible zero realization.²² It is the presence of a person marker that correlates with the least marked argument. P is not overtly expressed in accusative verbal person marking, while A is not overtly expressed in ergative verbal person marking. In Classical Arabic, for example, full nominal P's do not trigger cross-indexing. In Gə'əz, indexing of full nominal P's is conditioned, i.e. differential, while indexing of S and A is obligatory.

Conversely, obligatory indexing of A, but optional verbal person marking of P and S would be marked in an ergative agreement system. In phonological form, the set of indexes that more likely includes zero morphemes is S and A in the accusative type and S and P in the ergative type. Thus if indexing of P does occur, zero morphemes would be marked for the accusative grouping, while zero morphemes in the set of agent indexes would be marked in the ergative counterpart.

The marked patterns are given in Table 24 above, where 'o' represent the absence and 'm' the presence of overt marking (following Haspelmath 2005b).

It is the argument that is *not* grouped with S in marked systems that has zero nominal marking, but greater trigger potential for verbal person marking. One can observe how, strictly in terms of markedness, the P of the marked nominative exhibits the same properties as the P of the ergative and the A of the marked absolutive the same as the A of the accusative (both are outside of the gray area). In this sense, the marked alignment types are neither typically accusative nor typically ergative. The groupings, however, are clearly identifiable, and, for this reason, one tends to subsume 'marked nominative' as

22 See Dixon (1994, 67–68), Croft (1988, 2001, 140–141).

a subtype under accusative alignment (A=S≠P) and ‘marked absolutive’ under ergative alignment (A≠S=P).

4.2.1.2 Ergative-Like Markedness in NENA?

In line with Dixon (1979), Doron and Khan (2012, 231–233) analyze the verbal person marking as given for dialects such as Jewish Challa and ‘Amedia as ‘extended ergative’. Relative markedness plays an important role in Dixon’s (1979, 1994) approach to ergativity. In his view, P is ideally most marked in accusative systems, and A in ergative systems. Dixon (1979) introduced the term “extended ergative” to describe a case system, where the case-marker of A may be extended to all instances of S against P that is functionally and morphologically the default form.²³

- (4) **J. Challa** (SE Turkey; Fassberg 2010)
- a. *nšiq -a -le* (transitive)
see_{PFV} -P:3FS -A:3MS
'He saw her.' (lit. Him saw she)
- b. *dməx -le* (intransitive)
sleep_{PFV} -S:3MS
'He went to sleep.' (lit. Him slept)

Here *p* (i.e. the E-set) is less marked, while *s* is more marked like *A* (L-set). Similarly, Mengozzi (2002b, 45, fn. 144) refers to this pattern as theoretically “post-ergative”, although he admits “it cannot be regarded as ergative in itself”. Thus, the notions of ‘post-ergative’ or ‘extended ergative’ are mainly diachronically motivated and presumes that these dialects were once ergative, but have extended the L-suffixes that mark the agent to all intransitive verbs, thereby aligning *A* with *s*. Barotto (2015) suggests that we could also consider the type of inflection in these dialects a kind of ‘marked nominative’.

Later on, Dixon (1994, 64) preferred the less confusing label “marked nominative” over “extended ergative”, because the morphological distinction between *s* and *p* is clearly not typical of an ergative type. Moreover, *p* need not be unmarked, even when a formally ergative case-marker of *A* extends to *s*. For example, in the upper dialect of Waxi, an Iranian Pamir language described by Payne (1980, 180–181), the special marker of *A* not only extends to *s*, but *p* also has developed a dedicated case marker.

23 Cf. Payne (1980) for parallels in Eastern Iranian.

Synchronically, anything related to ‘nominative-accusative’ is preferable to ‘extended ergative’ or ‘post-ergative’ to characterize this system. The obvious reason for this is that the defining characteristic of an ergative system, namely that *s* and *P* are somehow treated alike, is not observed.²⁴ Adopting the term ‘ergative’, then, is rather misleading, at least from a synchronic perspective.

Moreover, it is often overlooked that Dixon (1994, 67–68) first and foremost applies these markedness principles to *nominal marking* and is reluctant to extend this to verbal person marking. For, as explained in the previous subsection, if *P* has less or no trigger potential for overt agreement as opposed to *s* and *A*, this is considered typical of accusative agreement. The reverse holds for a ‘marked nominative’ agreement system where *s* and *A* are not overtly indexed, but only *P* is. It is clear that these NENA dialects are typically accusative in this respect, since they exhibit differential object indexing ($A=S \neq P$). It is the indexing of *P* that is more restricted and context-dependent against the indexing of *A* and *s*, which is also morphosyntactically grouped by means of the same set. These dialects, then, cannot be considered ‘marked nominative’ in this sense.

There is only one respect they could be: at the same time, Dixon (1994, 68) considers the paradigm that has most zero realizations an unmarked instance of the expression of *s*. Cross-linguistically, it is third person (singular) agreement marking that tends to be zero, especially in *s* and *A* role (Siewierska 2004, 24, 2005). This would be the 3ms. form of the E-set in NENA, which expresses *P* in the preterit in these dialects. Remarkably, the phonologically identical form is used for the inflection of intransitive verbs. Thus, this agreement system is only arguably ‘marked nominative’ in terms of possible zero realizations, since the L-set has no equivalent zero morpheme, e.g. J. Challa (SE Turkey; Fassberg 2010)

<i>grəš-Ø-le</i>	‘He pulled him.’	:	<i>dmax-le</i>	‘He slept.’
<i>xze-Ø-le</i>	‘He saw him.’	:	<i>se-le</i>	‘He came.’

What is clear, however, is that ergativity in the strict sense of argument groupings ($A \neq S = P$) does not characterize the pattern in (4) above.

24 Cf. Hoberman (1989, 91, fn. 2). See also Coghill (2016, 61–62) who arrives at a similar point of view.

TABLE 25 Passive vs. ergative

	Prototypical passive	Prototypical ergative
a) Subject properties of the patient	The patient has all or at least more behavioral properties of s than the agent	The patient has no or at least fewer behavioral properties of s than the agent
b) Integration of the agent in clausal syntax	The agent is indexed by the verb or obligatorily expressed to no, a minimal or at least lesser extent	The agent is indexed by the verb or obligatorily expressed to a maximal or at least greater extent
c) Relative markedness	Non-basic voice: less frequent, less productive, more complex, and more restricted.	Basic voice: more frequent, more productive, less complex, and less or not restricted.

BASED ON COMRIE (1988)

4.2.2 *On Agent (De)focusing and Passive Typology*

4.2.2.1 Passive-Ergative Continuum

Constructions can be characterized in terms of a continuum and considered passive-like or ergative-like. Comrie’s (1988) criteria for the passive-ergative continuum are paraphrased in Table 25 above. The criteria allow for intermediate cases. Which criterion has greater weight, must be weighed on language-internal grounds.²⁵ Moreover, they are not sufficient conditions for considering a construction passive- or ergative-like, but rather constitute a continuum. That is, we do not always have to decide whether a construction is ultimately either passive or ergative; it could just as well be somewhere in between. The criteria are treated briefly below in the reverse order c)–a).

Generally speaking, a voice opposition is a requirement for a passive, as entailed by criterion c). In terms of voice, the passive is “less frequent, functionally specialized, not fully productive” *vis-à-vis* the active counterpart (Haspelmath 1990, 27). An ergative construction, being transitive, functions similarly to the active voice of an accusative type.²⁶

25 From a diachronic point of view, the criteria may be ambiguous as well. For example, if the ergative transitive construction is ultimately passive in origin, there may well have been a point where c) the markedness opposition was lost.

26 s-like behavioral properties, such as equi-NP deletion of P in languages like Dyirbal, are rather passive-like, but irrelevant to languages where ergativity is only manifested morphologically and not in syntactic behavior. See Keenan and Comrie (1977), Comrie (1988,

The passive voice itself has not been uncontroversial, but it is generally characterized in terms of prototypicality, i.e. a relative degree of passive-likeness,²⁷ which includes a special intransitive verbal form (Keenan and Dryer 2007). The main pragmatic function is said to be to defocus the agent (Shibatani 1985, 2004, 2006, 248) as a result of inactivization (Haspelmath 1990). Cross-linguistically, the passive is a rather infrequent phenomenon (Siewierska 1984, 23), and its functional distribution differs widely across languages.

Nevertheless, interestingly, from a purely constructional perspective, passives are a rather uniform phenomenon. The subdued agent shifts in argument status from a core argument (A) to a peripheral one (OBL) or complete omission, while the patient is the s of the passive (Haspelmath 1990, 27).²⁸ Thus typically, in a passive construction, the P argument of the transitive construction is expressed as s in the intransitive construction, and A of the corresponding transitive construction, if expressed at all, is realized as oblique. The passive voice, therefore, is semantically transitive, but morphosyntactically intransitive.

It is the second criterion, however, that allows for most ambiguity. To what extent is the agent dispensable in languages like an oblique argument? The omission of A can still yield well-formed sentences where languages otherwise exhibit an ergative pattern.²⁹ Samoan, for instance, allows the absence of agent coding for most transitive verbs, such as ‘hit’ in (5) below (Mosel and Hovdhaugen 1992, 104). The agent of the corresponding active transitive clause is omitted in (5b), and the resulting construction is similar to the passive in that an impersonal agent may still be implied. The agent is thereby more loosely integrated in the clause and can be freely omitted and unspecified, much like oblique agents in the passive, but there is no special verbal morphology indicating a voice shift.

- (5) **Samoan** (Polynesian, Samoa; Mosel and Hovdhaugen 1992, 416, 421; glossing adapted)

[V] [ERG→A] [P]
 a. *Sā sasa e le teine Ø le le maile.*
 PST hit ERG the girl ABS the dog
 ‘The girl hit the dog.’ (specified agent)

12–15), Givón (1995, 256–267). Cf. Section 2.3. on syntactic ergativity and syntactic behavioral properties.

27 E.g. Givón (1984, 164), Shibatani (1985, 2004), Payne (1997, 204).

28 Cf. Siewierska (1984, 256), Dixon (1994, 146).

29 Cf. Keenan (1976, 313), Comrie (1988, 18–19).

- b. $\begin{array}{ccccc} [\text{v}] & & [\text{s/p?}] & & \\ \text{S}\bar{a} & \text{sasa} & \emptyset & \text{le} & \text{le maile.} \\ \text{pst hit} & \text{abs} & & \text{the dog} & \\ \text{'The dog was hit.'} & / & \text{'Someone hit the dog.'} & \text{(unspecified agent)} & \\ \text{(lit. Dog hit)} & & & & \end{array}$

Naturally, the coding is indistinct from the *s* in intransitive constructions, such as 'fall' in (5c), because of ergative alignment:

- c. $\begin{array}{ccccc} [\text{v}] & & [\text{s}] & & \\ \text{S} \bar{a} & \text{pa}'\bar{u} & \emptyset & \text{le} & \text{teine} \\ \text{PST} & \text{fall} & \text{ABS} & \text{the} & \text{girl} \\ \text{'The girl fell.'} & \text{(Mosel and Hovdhaugen 1992, 108)} & & & \end{array}$

Alternations of the kind in (5a) and (5b) would be a type of referential reduction of the agent, i.e. unspecified agent deletion, where possibly some impersonalization of the agent is intended.

Some properties of the transitive counterpart, however, are retained in intransitivization. This is generally true for impersonal subject or unspecified agent constructions that are similar to passives. Languages may employ a non-referential dummy subject, such as German *man* or French *on*, instead of a passive. Alternatively, the active verbal form and the coding of the agent and patient do not change, but the referentiality of A is reduced to a third person morpheme.

Complete omission of the agent (or subject) is also possible, while retaining some of the transitive coding (Givón 1990, 581–583). The unspecified agent is simply omitted or expressed as dummy NP or third person morphology. Ute, a Uto-Aztecan language, allows the agent/subject of any verb to be omitted (Givón 1990, 583). This is distinct from the passive prototype in that P retains object coding, and the agent cannot be expressed as oblique, for example:

- (6) Ute (Uto-Aztecan, United States, Colorado; Givón 1990, 581, glossing slightly modified)
[A]	[P]	[V]	
a. <i>ta'wá-ci</i>	<i>siváqtu-ci</i>	<i>pa xá-puga</i>	(active)
man-SUBJ	goat-OBJ	kill-TENSE	
'The man killed the goat.'			

- [A] [P] [V-PASS]
 b. Ø *siváqtu-ci* *paâá-ta-pûga* (passive)
 goat-OBJ kill-PASS-TENSE
 ‘Someone killed the goat.’ / ‘The goat was killed (by someone).’

Givón (1990, 581) shows that (third person) plural agreement of the agent can still be retained in the agentless construction. Some residual reference to the agent is maintained, so that (5d) effectively means ‘Some persons killed the goat’.

- [A] [P] [V-A]
 c. *ta’wá-ci-u* *siváqtu-ci* *paâá-qa-âa* (active)
 man-SUBJ-PL goat-OBJ kill-PL-TENSE
 ‘The men killed the goat.’

- [A] [P] [V-A-PASS]
 d. Ø *siváqtu-ci* *paâá-qa-ta-pûga* (passive)
 PL goat-OBJ kill-PL-PASS-TENSE
 ‘Some persons killed the goat.’ / ‘The goat was killed (by some persons).’

A transitive interpretation with implied third person plural reference is also possible in past tense constructions in Badini Kurdish (Haig 2008, 262–268). In Northern Kurdish, a special so-called ‘oblique’ case expresses A in the past tense, while the verb agrees with P. In the Badini dialect A can also be omitted, but is contextually recoverable, yielding clauses that are still interpretable as transitive:

- (7) **Badini** (Northern Kurdish, Northwest Iranian; MacKenzie 1962, 320; Haig 2008, 267; glossing modified)
 (Ø) *sê paz kuşt-in*
 (A:PL) three sheep killed-3PL
 ‘They killed the sheep.’ / ‘Three sheep were killed.’

The possible omission of the agent, therefore, is not a decisive criterion for the distinction between active ergative constructions from passives. Nevertheless, if a language employs ergative agreement, it is the patient that is marked with s-like agreement in both the passive and ergative (Givón 1990, 597–599). When the agent manifests itself in agreement, we more clearly diverge from the passive prototype. Agreement, if obligatory, unifies s and A, and sets s and A apart from other grammatical functions (P, T, R, OBL), where agreement is usually

optional and sensitive to definiteness, animacy, and other factors relating to prominence.

Thus in both the ergative and passive prototypes, the full nominal agent may be left unexpressed without agreement on the verb. In the passive prototype, the agent typically does not trigger agreement nor is the coding of the patient expected to be sensitive to differential object-like factors. Nevertheless, there are cases where some referential properties of the agent may be retained in impersonal/unspecified agent constructions, which, though defocusing the agent, treat the patient like an object.

4.2.2.2 Optional Focal Agent Marking

Overt nominal marking can also have pragmatic conditions that are the very opposite of the passive, namely agent focalization. Overt and zero nominal marking of A can alternate in a type of optional ergative case marking. Overt nominal marking of A serves to contextualize unexpected arguments pragmatically and tends to be grammaticalized for agent focus and/or inanimate arguments.³⁰

Several languages, especially of Australian languages, show special A-marking that is conditioned by role discrimination, animacy and focus. Overt nominal marking is employed to express the unexpectedness of the agent. Thus, the ergative alignment (A≠S=P) is optional and found for the focal counterpart only.

Moreover, Siewierska (2004, 160–162) observes that some languages may omit verbal person marking of A when A is focal. The Australian language Konjo, for example, employs dependent person markers for A only when it is not in focus, while the focalized A lacks agreement. The indexing of A is absent when A is focalized by means of fronting to preverbal position, and A may be additionally marked ergatively by *i-* (Friberg 1996, 142–147), for example:

- (8) **Konjo** (Austronesian, South Sulawesi; glossing adapted to Siewierska 2004, 160)

	[A-	v	-P]	[A]	[P]	
a.	<i>Na-</i>	<i>kanre</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>Amir</i>	<i>loka-ku</i>	(unmarked)
	3A-	eat	-3S/P	Amir	banana-1	
	'Amir ate my banana.' (Friberg 1996, 141)					

30 See Givón (1985a), McGregor (2006, 2010), Fauconnier (2011a, 2012), Fauconnier and Verstraete (2014). This can also extend beyond a TAM-based split (Verbeke 2013a).

- [(ERG→)A] [V -P] [P]
 b. (I-)ali ang-kanre -i lamejaha-ta (focal)
 A-Ali TR-eat -3S/P sweet potatoes-2
 ‘(It is) Ali (who) ate your sweet potatoes.’ (Friberg 1996, 146; answer to
 ‘Who ate my sweet potatoes?’)

When we turn to NENA, it will become apparent that the passive-intransitive, unspecified agent constructions and optional agent marking are all connected with the agentless preterit, the omission of verbal person marking for A licensing different interpretations and construction types.

4.2.3 *Passive-Like Properties and Anticausatives*

In some languages where ergative morphosyntax predominates (such as Lezgian, Haspelmath 1993a), there is no distinction in verbal morphology between verbs that freely omit the agent and spontaneous events. This also applies to the SE Trans-Zab Jewish varieties of NENA for several weak verbs, but for most verbs a special verbal base is used in the intransitive valence pattern against the transitive, e.g. *pəlt-a-le* ‘He took her out’ vs. *plīt-a* ‘She went out’. As shown in Section 3.5, these verbal constructions with the E-suffix should be analyzed as inchoative, the E-suffix expressing s, whereas A is expressed by the L-set in the causative counterpart.

In the dialects concerned in this chapter, s and A arguments are always treated alike. Verbs generally alternate in valency by means of causativization. The transitive verb is modified by means of a distinct stem derivation of the verbal root, such as *plīt* ‘move out’ (stem II against I):

- (9) C. Upper Tiyari (SE Turkey; Talay 2009, 6.25)
 a. *pləṭ-le* (stem I, inchoative)
 go.out_{P_{FV}-S:3MS}
 ‘He went out, left.’
 b. *mpolṭ-a-le* (stem II, causative)
 II:take.out_{P_{FV}-P:3FS-A:3MS}
 ‘He took it_F out.’

A few verbs, such as ‘break’ and ‘open’, which are well-known to be labile in languages of the world are also so in NENA (Mengozi 1998).³¹ The coding of s and A does not diverge for labile verbs, such as ‘open’, e.g.

31 Cf. Göransson (2015) and Khan (2016:397–402).

(10) C. Urmi (NW Iran; Khan 2016)

	[S]	[V	-S]	
a.	⁺ <i>tarra</i>	<i>plax</i>	<i>-le</i>	(inchoative)
	door:MS open _{PFV} -S:3MS			
	'The door opened.'			
	[P]	[V	-P	-A]
b.	⁺ <i>tarra</i>	<i>plax</i>	<i>-Ø</i>	<i>-le</i> (causative)
	door:MS open _{PFV} -P:3MS -A:3MS			
	'He opened the door.'			

A sentence like (10) is thus ambiguous.

Object indexing can serve a discriminatory function in valency alternations for verbs.³² The cross-referencing of P definitively distinguishes between an intransitive or transitive valence pattern.³³

(11) C. Marga (SE Turkey)

	[V	-S]	[S]	
a.	<i>qte</i>	<i>-la</i>	<i>šas-ew</i>	(inchoative)
	cut _{PFV} -S:3FS fever:FS-his			
	'His fever stopped.'			
	[V	-P	-A]	[P]
b.	<i>qəty</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-le</i>	<i>šas-i</i> (causative)
	cut _{PFV} -P:3FS -A:3MS fever:FS-my			
	'He stopped my fever.'			

If no patient index is present and the gender and number of the patient and agent are identical, only the word order potentially discriminates between the transitive and intransitive valence pattern. In the intransitive valence pattern in (12a) below, the verb follows S. In the transitive valence pattern in (12b), the verb precedes P.

(12) C. Barwar (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a, 756)

	[S]	[V	-S]	
a.	<i>bəta</i>	<i>tlix</i>	<i>-le</i>	(inchoative, S-V order)
	house:MS destroy _{PFV} -S:3MS			
	'The house collapsed.' (lit. The house destroyed)			

32 Cf. Mengozzi (2006).

33 Cf. Givón (1976, 168).

	[V	-P	-A]	[P]	
b. <i>tlix</i>	-Ø	- <i>le</i>	<i>bɛɛta</i>		(causative, V-P order)
	destroy _{PFV}	-P:3MS	-A:3MS	house:MS	
	'He destroyed the house.'				

A causal phrase may also be added to the inchoative/anticausative verbs and is introduced by the source preposition *mən*- 'from', such as *mən 'ilāha* 'by/because of God' in (13) expressing the cause of *lqy* 'get punished', intransitive counterpart to transitive stem II *lqy* 'punish' (Mutzafi 2008a, 360):

- (13) **J. Betanure** (NW Iraq; Mutzafi 2008a, 314-571)
[V-S]	[OBL]
<i>lqe-lox</i>	<i>mən 'ilāha</i>
be.punished _{PFV} -S:2MS	from God
'You _{MS} have been punished by God.' (lit. You punished by God)	

To some extent, rearranging the word order of transitive valence patterns is sufficient to obtain an agent defocusing effect similar to a passive. Thus, postverbal position reduces the salience of the agent, while the preverbal definite patient controls agreement on the verb, e.g.

- (14) **C. Shaqlawa** (NE Iraq)
[P]	[V-	-P	-A]	[A]
<i>'urba</i>	<i>xil-</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-lu</i>	<i>dewe</i>
sheep:FS	eat _{PFV}	-A:3FS	-P:3PL	wolf:PL
'The sheep was eaten by wolves.' (lit. The sheep the wolves ate)				

The passive voice is more typically expressed by various dedicated passive voice constructions in NENA dialects. These include:

- Impersonal 'they' passive
- Auxiliary 'come' and infinitive³⁴
- Auxiliary 'become' and resultative participle
- Auxiliary 'be'/copula and resultative participle

Dialects may employ multiple passive voice constructions. Overt expression of the agent is rare, especially in type b) based on the infinitive. If the agent is

34 This is a pattern replication from Northern Kurdish (Badini). In Kurdish, the infinitive is based on a past stem (like Aramaic *qtil-*) and can have an inherently passive meaning.

overt, it tends to be expressed by means of several prepositions, particularly (ʔəl)l- which otherwise also marks the recipient, and *mən* ‘from’, for example:

- (15) C. Baghdeda (Qaraqosh, NW Iraq; Khan 2002a, 383)

[S]	[AUX-S	RPP-S]	[OBL]
<i>pəsra</i>	<i>pəš-le</i>	<i>xil-a</i>	<i>l-kalwə</i>

meat:MS become_{PFV}-S:3MS eaten-MS DAT-dogs
 ‘The meat was (lit. became) eaten **by dogs**.’

- (16) C. Aradhin (NW Iraq; Krotkoff 1982, 106.118)

[AUX-S	V-S]	[OBL]	
<i>t-pāyəš-Ø</i>	<i>dīš-a</i>	<i>mən</i>	<i>anne nāše</i>

SUBR-become_{IFV}-S:3MS trodden -MS from DEM:PL people
 ‘(My house) is being (lit. becomes) trodden **by these people**.’

- (17) C. Baz (Maha xtaya, SE Turkey; Mutzafi 2000, 311)

[S]	[RPP-S	-S]	[OBL]
<i>kawdanta</i>	<i>mxé-ta</i>	<i>-la</i>	<i>l-mār-aw</i>

she-mule:FS hit:RPP-S:FS -S:COP:3FS DAT-master:MS-her
 ‘The she-mule has been (lit. is) beaten **by its master**.’

The resultative participle agrees with the subject in gender and number. Type d), the copula with resultative participle, is not productive in every dialect, as it has also grammaticalized into a compound perfect. Thus, such forms can have only an agent orientation,³⁵ e.g. C. Shaqlawa (NE Iraq),

*pəşra xil-ele*³⁶ ‘He has eaten meat’, not **‘The meat has been eaten’
 (lit. He is eaten meat)

There can be morphological overlap between the prepositional object of the compound perfect and the agent complement of type d) passives. Forms like *qṭil-ε-le* ‘He is killed’ and *qṭila winwa* ‘I_M was killed’ could equally mean ‘He has killed’ and ‘I_M had killed’ when they combine with a nominal object, for example in C. Ashitha (NW Iraq; Borghero 2006, 176), illustrated below. The orientation of the participle is distinguished morphologically. In the patient-oriented, i.e. passive, construction, the copula follows the participle, and the

35 Cf. Khan (2016:403) on C. Urmi.

36 *xil-ele* < **xila-ile*.

'*əll*-series denoting the agent remain separate. In the agent-oriented, i.e. active, construction, the '*əll*-series attaches immediately to the participle, denoting p.

(18) C. Ashitha (SE Turkey; Borghero 2005, 334–336)

ACTIVE		PASSIVE	
[V-P-A]		[V-S]	[OBL]
a. <i>q̣ṭil-əlla-le</i>		c. <i>q̣ṭil-ε-le</i>	<i>'əlla</i>
killed:MS-DAT:3FS-COP:3MS		killed-MS-COP:3MS	DAT:3FS
'He has killed her .'		'He was killed by her .'	
[V-P]		[V-S]	[S]
b. <i>q̣ṭil-əlle</i>	[A] <i>winwa</i>	d. <i>q̣ṭil-a</i>	<i>winwa</i>
killed:MS-DAT:3MS	PST:COP:1MS	killed-MS	PST:COP:1MS
'I _M had killed him .'		'I _M had been killed by him .'	

Remarkably, in several other NENA dialects, a construction similar in morphology to (18d) would correspond to the active (see § 2.2.5.2), e.g. C. Harbole (SE Turkey; Khan personal communication)

holi q̣ṭila 'əlle 'I have killed him'

The most common type of passive in NENA, however, is the impersonal/unspecified agent construction based on the non-referential third plural. The coding does not change with respect to the active voice, but the referentiality of the agent is reduced by using the 3pl. The patient is highly topical. An example is given below from the Christian dialect of Aradhin (NW Iraq). Here the demonstrative *āwa* refers back to *bərzara* 'seed', and the verbal form *šawq-ī-le* is indistinct from the active, but the referential reduction of the agent indicates a type of passivization. The higher topicality of the patient also manifests itself in the differential indexing.

(19) C. Aradhin (NW Iraq; Krotkoff 1982, 76.27, transcription adapted)

pāyīš-Ø *bərzara dax* *+barzare š-šišme* *daqīqa u*
 remain_{IPFV}-3MS seed:MS like seed:MS LK-sesame tiny:MS and
šawq-ī-le *āwa* *mən čēri* *hul baher*
 store_{IPFV}-A:3PL-P:3MS DEM:MS from autumn till spring
 'The seed remains small like sesame seed, and **it is stored** (lit. they store
 it_M that one) from fall to spring.'

Such agentless constructions can parallel the constructions above, but they are not typically intransitive. Unlike Trans-Zab Jewish varieties, a spontaneous reading is only available for verbs that inflects like A. This is illustrated by the following examples from Jewish Betanure for the verb *pq* 'burst'. Both the specified agent acting on a patient in the transitive valence pattern in (20a), and the subject of the intransitive valence pattern of the spontaneous event in (20b) are expressed by means of the L-set. When the agent is unspecified, however, the patient in (20c), may also be encoded by means of the E-set, exactly like P in (20a).

(20) J. **Betanure** (NW Iraq; Mutzafi 2008a)

- a. *pqi²-a-lu* (causative, specified agent)
 burst_{PFV}-P:3FS-A:3PL
 'They burst it_F.'
- b. *pqe²-la* (inchoative, spontaneous)
 burst_{PFV}-S:3FS
 'It_F burst.'
- c. *pqi²-a* (impersonal, unspecified agent)
 burst_{PFV}-3FS
 'It_F was burst (by sb.).'

Although it involves no special verbal morphology, the agentless construction resembles a passive. The patient is topicalized to preverbal position like s, and the agent is postverbal and prepositional, compare:

(21) J. **Betanure** (NW Iraq; Mutzafi 2008a, 274.450, 286.487)

- a. *ħambašāya xil -ā -le 'e-ʔazza*
 ogre:MS eat_{PFV} -P:3FS -A:3MS DEM:FS-goat:FS
 'The ogre ate **that** goat.'
- b. *ʔrwe xil -i l-dewe*
 sheep:PL eat_{PFV} -3PL DAT-wolf:PL
 'The **sheep** were eaten by wolves.'

In Jewish 'Amedia, the patient NP, if made explicit, is regularly put before the verb like s (Hoberman 1989, 111–112). Unlike example (21b) above, when a topical patient occurs in preverbal position, no overt expression of the agent is possible.

The referentiality of the patient can also be reduced. In C. Barwar, the agentless preterit can lack indexing of the patient altogether, and the preverbal position of the patient is typical of the s of inchoatives (Khan 2008a, 750), compare:

(22) C. Barwar (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a, 749–750; cf. Doron and Khan 2012, 231)

[s]	[v]	
a. 'o-bɛta	tlix-le	(inchoative, agreement)
the-house	destroy _{PFV} -S:3MS	
'The house collapsed.'		
b. baxta	qtil(-Ø)	(agentless, no agreement)
woman	kill _{PFV} (-3MS)	
'A/the woman was killed.'		

Thus the patient-like subject of the inchoatives (e.g. *tlix-le* 'it collapsed', *pqe'-le* 'it exploded') is treated as more agent-like than the patient of the agentless construction. At first glance, this may seem rather unexpected, since subjects of inchoatives are by definition least agent-like. The degree of saliency on the part of the patient could be expected to be higher for an anticausative intransitive type than for a passive, since the agent is not in view even implicitly in a spontaneous event (Croft 2001, 317). While this seems to hold for the South-eastern Trans-Zab Jewish varieties, e.g. *pəqy-a* 'it_F exploded', this principle is not reflected in the person indexes in the dialects discussed here, e.g. *pəqe-la* 'it_F exploded'.

On closer examination, however, agentless constructions can have certain properties that set them apart from passives.

4.2.4 Ergative-Like Properties

There are a number of reasons to analyze agentless preterits as truncated *qtil-a-le* forms, rather different from the seemingly identical intransitive verbal forms in SE Trans-Zab Jewish dialects of NENA. The patient retains certain object properties that set it apart from s. What we do not find is overt verbal *and* overt nominal marking of the agent³⁷ or independent prepositional agents and dependent L-suffixes, e.g.

- **l-kalwe xil-a-lu 'Dogs ate it_F.'
- **lali xil-a-li 'I ate it_F'.

37 This occurs productively in Turoyo, see §5.1.2.

The absence of overt A agreement on transitive *qtil-a-le* forms is permitted in the case of a strong implication of the agent in the immediate context. This absence is apparently obligatory to facilitate a particular focal status of the agent nominal, reminiscent of optional ergative marking. At the same time, not all agents are always compatible with agentless verbal person marking, which resembles the impersonal/unspecified agent constructions. This, as we have already observed,³⁸ is where passive and ergative can be difficult to tell apart. The special treatment of A in the preterit may be considered a type of ergative grouping ($S \neq A$) with respect to trigger potential of agreement. When we examine the full expression of A, this will provide further evidence for treating at least some of such agentless clauses as active-transitive and thus ergative rather than (impersonal) passive.

4.2.4.1 Referential Continuity

Agentless *qtil*-forms can be analyzed as truncated transitive constructions. In J. Zakho, this construction can entail an implicit reference to a third person (especially plural) agent just like the overt counterpart (Gutman 2008). Similarly in other literary varieties of NENA, lack of indexing of A is confined to the third person plural,³⁹ as illustrated in the following examples, where the agent reference is clear from the immediate context:

(23) C. Ashitha (Literary, SE Turkey; Polotsky 1996, 17, transcription mine)

[V	-S _i]	[V-P	-A _i]	[P]	[V
<i>te</i>	<i>-lay</i>	<i>šqil-a</i>	<i>(-Ø)</i>	<i>baxta</i>	<i>b-xurṭūṭa w-zəl</i>
come _{PFV}	-S:3PL	take _{PFV} -3FS	(-3PL)	woman:FS	by-force and-go _{PFV}
-S _i]					
<i>-lay</i>					
-S:3PL					

'They came, **took the woman** by force and went.'

This also occurs in the recently documented dialect of Marga (SE Turkey). Two constructions alternate in the same story one after the other in the immediate context. In (24a), there is no indexing of A in the second verb, while it is expressed in (24b). In theory, one could interpret both as impersonal passives, i.e. They put/took her = She was put/taken.

38 See § 4.1.2.

39 Polotsky (1996, 17–18). All of his examples, are also confined to third person patients.

(24) C. Marga (SE Turkey)

- a. *mot -a -wa -ney l-xaş-ət dāware ʔu-nubl -a*
 put_{P_{FV}} -P:3FS -PST -A:3PL on-back-of mule:PL took_{P_{FV}} -3FS
-wa(-Ø)
-PST(-3PL)
- b. *mot -a -ney l-xaş-ət dāware ʔu-nubl -a -ney*
 put_{P_{FV}} -P:3FS -A:3PL on-back-of mule:PL took_{P_{FV}} -P:3FS -A:3PL
 'They put her on the back of a mule and took her along'

Sabar (1976, 48 fn. 101) considers such constructions a stacking of preterit forms in which only one of them takes L-suffixes, much like a serial verb construction. Nevertheless, the null marked agent can also be co-referential with *qatəl*-constructions (Polotsky 1996, 18), as illustrated in (25) below for J. 'Amedia.

(25) J. 'Amedia (NW Iraq; Hoberman 1989, 111; glossing adapted)

- min ʔid-i šlip-a(-Ø) g-əmr-i raḥt-ela*
 from hand-my draw_{P_{FV}}-3FS(-3PL) IND-say_{1P_{FV}}-A:3PL big:FS-she.is
 '(There was also a ring_F on my hand;) **they drew it_F** from my hand, **they said** (lit. say): It_F's big.'

A similar phenomenon is recorded for the enclitic copula.⁴⁰ It is not uncommon for the third person enclitic copula to be absent in transitive compound perfects, so that only participial agreement expresses A. The binding of the object pronominal in forms like *qtəlt-əlle* and *qtəlt-əbbe* denoting 'She has killed him' gives sufficient clarity to omit the agent copula. In general, a verbal form in the immediate vicinity takes the argument coding to introduce the referent, as for instance in the following example. It is not clear whether it is also possible for the first and second person copulas to be omitted. The /l/-based copula of the third person thus behaves similarly to the L-suffixes.

(26) C. Lewen (SE Turkey; Talay 2009, 102.28)

- qım -ele awa šqil-u (-Ø) o-naša*
 risen -S:COP:3MS DEM:MS taken-P:MS (-A:3MS) DEM:MS-man:MS
mənn-u o-tərjumman w tiw-a (-Ø) go ...
 with-him DEM:MS-translator:MS and seated-S:MS (-S:3MS) in
 'He rose (and) took that man with him, that translator, and sat down in (his car).'

40 Cf. Khan (2008a, 670).

Unlike the compound perfect, however, the agentless preterit is always transitive. Thus one does not find truncated intransitive preterit counterparts to *tiwa* above, i.e. ***tiw-Ø* for ‘They sat’. The trigger potential for s and A is thus the same for the copula in the compound perfect, but not for the L-suffix in the preterit.

4.2.4.2 Full Expression of the Agent

The overt expression of agent NPs can be indistinct from the transitive counterpart. An example from Gutman’s (2008) discussion of such forms in J. Zakho is given below. A zero-marked full nominal agent *xūrāse* ‘his friends’ is present, but the verb *fhm* ‘understand’ expresses agreement only with the patient:

(27) J. Zakho (NW Iraq; Gutman 2008, 74)

[A] _i	[V-P]	[P]	[V-A] _i
<i>xūrās-e</i>	<i>fhm-a-(-Ø)</i>	<i>zāya</i>	<i>ū-ngəz-lu ...</i>
friend:PL-his	understand _{PFV-3FS(-3PL)}	matter:FS	and-bite _{PFV-A:3PL}
‘His friends understood the matter, and bit (their lips).’			

Remarkably, the word order is A-V-P, as expected for a transitive clause.

In the following example from C. Marga, the full expression of the agent *qaša* ‘priest’ for *mburxan* ‘I_F was wedded’ is postponed to the next clause, even when it is clear from the context that this is also the agent of the preceding event denoted by the agentless construction. The construction, then, seems similar to the English gerund, i.e. ‘Ø_i Having wedded me, the priest_i went off.’

(28) C. Marga (SE Turkey)

[A] _i	[V-P]	[S] _i	[V-S]
<i>bas</i>	<i>Ø mbúr-x-an(-Ø)-u</i>	<i>qaša</i>	<i>xəš-le</i>
only	bless _{PFV-1FS(-3MS)-and}	priest:MS	go _{PFV-S:3MS}
‘The priest only wedded me and went off.’			
lit. ‘Only wedded me and the priest went off.’			

Thus while the intransitive verb *xəš-le* ‘went off’, as shown in (28), obligatorily shows a subject index from the L-set, an agent index can be absent on the preceding transitive verb with referential continuity, where the E-set expresses the patient. While s and p are evidently not grouped in phonological form, i.e. L-set vs. E-set, one could argue that this is an ergative grouping (A≠S=P) in terms of trigger potential: s and p trigger overt agreement, but A does not.

4.2.4.3 Focal Marking of the Agent

The restriction to third person (plural) agents does not appear to apply absolutely in contrastive focus (Gutman 2008, 75). In C. Artun (Hertevin, SE Turkey), independent personal pronouns appear to be compatible with truncated *q̄til*-forms, e.g.

(29) C. Artun (Hertevin, SE Turkey)

[A]	[V-P]	[P]
a. <i>man gniw-a</i>	<i>čant-i?</i>	
who steal _{PFV} -3FS	bag:FS-my	
'Who has stolen my bag?'		

[A]	[V-P]	[P]
b. <i>ahət gniw-a</i>	<i>čant-i?</i>	
you:SG steal _{PFV} -3FS	bag:FS-my	
'Have you _{SG} stolen my bag?'		

The more common forms would obviously be *gniw-a-le* and *gniw-a-loh*, respectively. Lack of overt agreement, however, is compatible with focal agents that are non-prepositional, which clearly indicates that the agentless form is not typically passive.

Movement of the object and agent to preverbal position can also express focalization. Thus in the following example from J. Zakho, the agent NP *kalwe* is non-prepositional, yet the verb agrees only with the fronted object:

(30) J. Zakho (NW Iraq; Sabar 2002, 193)

[P]	[A]	[V-P]
<i>xula dunye</i>	<i>(Ø-)kalwe</i>	<i>xil-a(-Ø)</i>
Q world:FS	dog:PL	eat _{PFV} -3FS
'Is it so that the world was eaten by dogs (or: The world,— dogs ate it _F)?'		

Agent verbal person marking is necessarily absent in NENA dialects that mark the agent by the preposition (*ʔal*)- in order to focalize it. Synchronically, the L-suffix is a verbal person marker, yet, diachronically, it is derived from the same preposition that introduces NPs and independent prepositional pronouns. Earlier grammatical treatments of mainly literary Neo-Aramaic⁴¹ mention the use of this preposition, and, on its function, Rhétoré (1912, 220) already remarked

41 E.g. Rhétoré (1912, 220), Goldenberg (1992, 120–121), Pennacchietti (1994, 278, fn. 71).

that such prepositional marking is used to express the agent more assertively in the dialects of the Nineveh Plains and conveys agent focalization, e.g.

lāli qṭilā 'It is *I* who killed her', lit. '*Me* she was killed'

Jastrow (1988, 152.432, 156.499) records several examples in the C. Artun dialect (Hertevin, SE Turkey), where the agent is marked by *l-*, e.g.

- (31) C. Artun (Hertevin, SE Turkey; Jastrow 1988, 152.432, 156.499)
l-ēt'-aḥ l-dewe ḥellek l-naše qṭellek
 NEG-know_{IPFV}-A:1PL DAT-wolves eat_{PFV}:3MS DAT-people kill_{PFV}:3MS
l-debbabe ḥellek
 DAT-bears eat_{PFV}:3MS
 'We do not know whether (it was) wolves (who) ate him (i.e. Joseph), people (who) killed him or bears (who) ate him.'

An equivalent construction where A is both prepositional *and* indexed on the verb is so far unattested for NENA. The absence of the L-suffix licenses its prepositional expression and its focalization. To illustrate, in C. Marga, the prepositional agent, such as 'allī 'by me' in (32b), can be contrasted with the L-suffix, such as *-li* in (32a). Only a form with overt agent agreement, such as *griš-a-li*, however, may freely combine with an independent *non-prepositional* personal pronoun 'ana, cp. (32d).

- (32) C. Marga (NW Iraq)
- a. ('ana) *griš -a -li*
 (I) pulled_{PFV} -P:3FS -A:1SG
 'I pulled her.'
 - b. 'allī *griš -a*
 me pulled_{PFV} -3FS
 '(It was) I (who) pulled her.' / '(It was) By me she was pulled.'
 - c. **'ana *griš -a*
 **I pulled_{PFV} -3FS
 Intended: 'I pulled her.'
 - d. **'allī *griš -a -li*
 **me pulled_{PFV} -P:3FS -A:1SG
 Intended: 'I pulled her.'

The speakers of C. Marga favor the prepositional agent in preverbal position. In fact, in the rare occurrence of two full NPs, the patient precedes the agent, i.e. *xmarta 'alli qṭil-a* '(It was) I (who) killed the she-ass', rather than *'alli xmarta qṭil-a* or *xmarta qṭil-a 'alli*.

These prepositional agents can alternate with L-suffixes, while the remaining verbal predicate is not interpretable as intransitive. Thus, *lā xzē-Ø l-nāšā* in (33) below taken from early NENA poetry is not interpretable as intransitive i.e. 'What did not appear to anybody' but only transitive like the following *xzē-Ø-lē* 'He saw', which does have agreement.

- (33) Early C. Alqosh (Literary, NW Iraq; Mengozzi 2002a, 12 28.31c)

mā d-lā xzē-Ø l-nāšā xzē-Ø-lē
 what SUBR-NEG saw_{P_{FV}-3MS} DAT-anyone saw_{P_{FV}-P:3MS-A:3MS}
 'He saw what **nobody** saw / was not seen **by anybody**.'

The agentless form can imply a certain degree of subordination to or interdependency with another verb that does take overt agreement. Mengozzi (2002b, 36) mentions several examples, where an active interpretation is also favored for prepositional agents. In the example below, the L-suffixes continue the same reference of the prepositional agent. They all belong to the third person plural:

- (34) Early C. Alqosh (Literary, NW Iraq; Mengozzi 2002a, J6 142.79d)

šqil-Ø l-māl[ā]'xē_i w-nube-Ø-lay_i drē-Ø-lay_i b ...
 take_{P_{FV}-3MS} DAT-angel:PL and-carry_{P_{FV}-3MS-3PL} put_{P_{FV}-3MS-3PL} in
 'He_j was taken **by angels_i** (or: **Angels_i** took him_j) and (**they_i**/*he_j) carried him and put him in (Gehenna).'

While the position of the prepositional agent is not completely fixed, its typical preverbal position signifies an increase in prominence of the *l*-marked argument. Its association with the agent function is peculiar to its combination with *qṭil*-based morphology. At the same time, a full nominal patient typically precedes it, so that the favored order for this construction is P-A-V.

A similar phenomenon is found in compound verbal forms, where preverbal focalization usually occurs via a pseudo-cleft sentence. As mentioned elsewhere, the prepositional object and agent complement are expressed by the same preposition. The argument orientation is neutralized for the Christian dialect of Aradhin (NW Iraq; Krotkoff 1982). Binding of *l*-marked pronominals to the participle is only possible in their object function, e.g.

(35) C. Aradhin (NW Iraq; Krotkoff 1982)

A-ORIENTATION	P-ORIENTATION
a. <i>ile</i> <i>qṭil-a</i> <i>əlla</i>
COP:3MS killed-MS DAT:3FS
'He has killed her .'	c. <i>qṭil-a</i> <i>əlla</i>
killed-MS DAT:3FS
'He was killed by her .'
b. <i>iwən</i> <i>qṭil-əlla</i>
COP:1MS killed:MS-DAT:3FS
'I have killed her .'	

When the agent is prepositional, as shown in (35c), the copula has to be omitted (Krotkoff 1982, 34, 39), and the patient has to be third person, so that constructions of the following type do not occur:

- d. ***ile* *qṭila* *əlla* 'He was killed by her.'
 ***iwən* *qṭila* *əlla* 'I was killed by her.'

When, however, the agent is in focus, such as *əlli* in (35e) below, the third person masculine singular copula is present as a focus marker and denotes an expletive subject only ('It is X who ...'):

- e. *əlli-le* *wid-a*
DAT:1SG-COP.3MS done-MS
'It is *I* (who) did it_M.'

Krotkoff (1982, 34) states that his informants' interpretation fluctuates between active and passive. The first interpretation readily applies to independent person markers with agent focus occurring in preverbal position. This would otherwise be reserved for the unmarked independent person markers, i.e.

- āna iwən wid-əlle* 'I (am the one who) did it_M'

For the agent to be prepositional and focal, then, the copula must be omitted and the object cannot be prepositional.

Similarly in C. Barwar, the agent is expressed by the preposition (*'əl*)-, such as *l-dabba* 'by the bear' below. In terms of word order, the agent may be put before the verb, but will not precede the topical patient:

(36) C. Barwar (NW Iraq)

- a. *xabuša šmoqa l-dább-εle xil-a*
 apple:MS red:MS DAT-bear:MS-COP:3MS eaten-MS
- b. **l-dábbā xabuša šmóq-εle xil-a*
 DAT-bear:MS apple:MS red:MS-COP:3MS eaten-MS
 'The red apple has been eaten **by the bear**.' (Khan 2008a, D2:65)

There is, however, an unusual feature in the marking of the agent in this type of construction. When it is fronted to preverbal position, the preposition *l-* may be absent (Khan 2008a, 752). The remaining agreement, therefore, is controlled by the patient, while the agent remains unmarked, such as *babi* 'my father' in (36c) below.

- c. *'ayya yalaxta (Ø-)babi-la zqir-ta*
 DEM:FS handkerchief:FS father:MS:my-COP:3FS woven-FS
 'This handkerchief has been woven (**by**) **my father**.' (Khan 2008a, A37:12)

All else being equal, then, none of these features are typical of agents in NENA in general, and yet neither is it typical of prepositional arguments. These prepositional agents are restricted to constructions, where the remaining agreement is controlled by the patient. The fact that the agent is focalized and not obligatorily prepositional makes it less like passive and more like ergative morphosyntax.

4.2.4.4 Differential Object Marking

Finally, the same sensitivity to definiteness for objects may also be found for the patient in the agentless *qṭil*-form. This is for instance found in Christian Barwar. The indexing of the patient is conditioned by definiteness; contrast (37a) and (37b) below, compared with (37c) and (37d).

(37) C. Barwar (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a, 749–750; cf. Doron and Khan 2012, 231)

- a. *baxta qṭil-a* (definite patient)
 woman kill_{P_{FV}-3FS}
 'The woman was killed.'
- b. *baxta qṭil* (indefinite/definite patient)
 woman kill_{P_{FV}}
 'A/the woman was killed.'

c. *q̣til-a-le* *baxta* (definite patient)
 kill_{P_{FV}-P:3FS-A:3MS} woman
 ‘He killed the woman.’

d. *q̣til-le* *baxta* (indefinite patient)
 kill_{P_{FV}-A:3MS} woman
 ‘He killed a woman.’

Similarly, the truncated transitive form may be person-restricted like the corresponding full transitive⁴² in dialects such as C. Barwar (Doron and Khan 2012, 232–233) and possibly also J. Zakho (Gutman 2008). This resembles the object indexes, compare:

- (38) C. Barwar (NW Iraq; cf. Khan 2008a, 749–750)
 ***griš-ax-Ø* ‘They pulled us.’ / ‘We were pulled.’ (non-third person)
 ***griš-ax-le* ‘They pulled us.’
 griš-a-Ø ‘They pulled her.’ / ‘She was pulled.’ (third person)
 griš-a-le ‘They pulled her.’

C. Barwar thus treats the patient in the truncated *q̣til*-construction like P rather than s (Khan 2008a, 750). This does not apply to all dialects; in J. Betanure, a town in the Barwar region, the truncated form is compatible with first/second person patients, whereas the full form is not:

- (39) J. Betanure (NW Iraq; Mutzafi 2008a, 68)
 griš-ax-Ø ‘We were pulled.’ (non-third person)
 ***griš-ax-lu* ‘They pulled us.’
 griš-a-Ø ‘She was pulled.’ (third person)
 griš-a-lu ‘They pulled her.’

In conclusion, while the agentless form may in itself be a rather marked construction in these dialects, it can be used as a truncated transitive construction. The verbal person marking can essentially only be treated as ergative in terms of trigger potential for a limited set of arguments (third person, definite NPs).

42 This does not apply to all dialects, for example J. Betanure *griš-ax* ‘We were pulled (= Somebody pulled us)’ (NW Iraq; Mutzafi 2008a, 68). The restriction also does not apply to Trans-Zab Jewish varieties in general, compare J. Sulemaniya *griš-ax* ‘We got pulled’ (NE Iraq; Khan 2004a), where the construction is intransitive.

Ergative verbal person marking ($A \neq S = P$) is not identifiable on the basis of other criteria (affix order, morphological marking).

4.3 Verb-Related Factors: Grammaticalization of Resultatives

Southeastern Trans-Zab Jewish varieties of NENA are the only dialects that have grammaticalized the original resultative-stative construction of *q̄til-* combined with E-suffixes to the expression of the perfective past.⁴³ A few Christian dialects of NENA as well as Jewish varieties other than Southeastern Trans-Zab have maintained this construction in the resultative or perfect. Novel compound perfects have largely replaced such simplex constructions in yet other dialects. These compound perfects, though originally resultative, have fully grammaticalized transitive coding; the respective outcome differs from dialect to dialect, however. There is a noteworthy tendency to harmonize the transitive verbal person marking of such compound verbal forms with that of *qaṭəl-*.

4.3.1 Tense-Aspect Associated Person Marking: *s* and *A*

Christian varieties in general and Jewish dialects in the West exhibit relics of a former distinction between the resultative or perfect and preterit in the inflection of *q̄til-*. Mengozzi (2002b, 38–39, 2005, 249–250; 2012), for instance, shows that the usage of E-suffixes to mark the subject co-existed alongside L-suffixes in the earliest Christian NENA textual witnesses in North Iraq (17th century), illustrated below.

(1)	<i>su-li</i>	‘I became old’	(preterit)
	<i>sîw-en</i>	‘I have become old’	(perfect)

The earliest Jewish NENA texts also retain examples of this type, e.g.

<i>’əty-a sâ’əd</i>	‘The hour has come.’	(Sabar 1976, fn. 56)
<i>la snîq-Ø</i>	‘It isn’t needed.’	(Sabar 2002, 242a)

Indeed, there are traces of such dynamic-stative subject marking in the spoken dialects as well. Typically in *lishana deni* dialects like J. Betanure, for instance, only the intransitive verb *pyš* ‘remain’ retains an *s_p* form expressing a perfect, e.g. (Mutzafi 2008a, 68).

43 See § 6.1.2. for a discussion.

šop-ad kepe lá-piš-Ø 'No trace of stone has remained.'

The same formation of the verb *ʒl* 'go', e.g. *zil-a* 'She is gone', has grammaticalized into a proximative auxiliary 'be about to' in the Christian dialects of the Nineveh Plains from its resultative sense 'be gone to'.⁴⁴ In Jewish Barzani (Mutzafi 2002a), such forms are found for the modal auxiliary *mšy* 'be able', e.g.

(2)	<i>mše-li</i>	'I was able'	(preterit)
	<i>mšil-ən ~ ħmil-ən</i>	'I _M am able'	(present)

In Christian dialects, such active-stative s-marking is still productively found in the western periphery, such as C. Artun (Hertevin, SE Turkey; Jastrow 1988):

(3)	<i>dməḥ-li</i>	'I fell asleep'	(preterit)
	<i>dmih-en</i>	'I have fallen asleep'	(perfect)

In C. Artun, the transitive counterparts are essentially differentiated by a pre-verbal TAM-marker (*hole*), optionally added to intransitives:⁴⁵

- (4) C. Artun (Hertevin, SE Turkey)

	PRETERIT	PERFECT
tr.	<i>qṭəl-li</i>	<i>holi qṭəl-li</i>
intr.	<i>qəm-li</i>	<i>(holi) qim-ən</i>

On closer examination, the E-suffixes are, to some extent, compatible with transitive verbs and transitive coding in C. Artun (Jastrow 1988, 58). In elicitation, speakers find the E-suffixes acceptable for certain transitive verbs, but not all of them, e.g. *susa rkiw-ən* 'I_M have mounted a horse', *la mir-ən* 'I_M haven't said', *la ħil-ən* 'I haven't eaten', but not ***ptih-ən* 'I_M have opened'. Further research is required to examine their distribution and to assess whether this is merely contextually restricted or whether there is a categorical lexical restriction. In addition, C. Artun speakers also employ compound verbal forms, where the deictic copula is inflected and the participle agrees with s/A as opposed to the invariant 3ms. form *hole* used to express the perfect with *qṭalle* or the progressive with *qəṭəl-*, e.g.

44 See Borghero (2008, 85), Coghill (2010, 375), Noorlander (2017). Cf. Rhétoré (1912, 156).

45 This is comparable to J. Rustaqa (NE Iraq), see § 3.4.3.

<i>hol-ən</i>	<i>šətya</i>	‘I _M have drunk’
<i>hole</i>	<i>šte-li</i>	‘I have drunk’
<i>hole</i>	<i>šat-ən</i>	‘I _M am drinking’

A similar opposition exists further west in the Bohtan region (Fox 2009). The difference between preterit and perfect is entirely based on the set of person indexes attached to *q̣til-*. The L-set marks the preterit against the E-set for the perfect, both marking s and A:

(5) **C. Borb-Ruma** (Bohtan, SE Turkey)

	PRETERIT	PERFECT
tr.	<i>q̣təl-li</i>	<i>q̣til-ən</i>
intr.	<i>q̣əm-li</i>	<i>q̣im-ən</i>

Thus the default expression of s is identical to A in at least the preterit. An active-stative or rather dynamic perfective-stative resultative opposition in at least subject indexes exists throughout the NENA dialectal landscape.⁴⁶ Even the earliest documents from Iraq (Mengozzi 2002b, 38, 2005) bear witness to active-stative subject marking, whereby *q̣til-* could be used as a base for either L-suffixes expressing the dynamic perfective past or E-suffixes expressing a resultative-stative that eventually developed into a perfect. The difference lies solely in the set of person markers to express s. It is plausible that this co-existed in all dialects,⁴⁷ but was gradually lost and replaced by either preverbal TAM-marking, i.e. *hole q̣əm-li*, or a compound verbal form based on the resultative participle, i.e. *qime-wən*.

4.3.2 *Transitivization of Compound Verbal Constructions*

The compound perfect based on the resultative participle goes back to a resultative construction. A resultative is a verbal construction typically derived from telic verbs that expresses an acquired state: a state that implicitly results from a previous event and directly or indirectly affects a subject (Nedjalkov 1988, 2001;

46 This includes the Trans-Zab Jewish varieties discussed in the previous chapter. See § 6.1.2. and Noorlander (forthcoming) for further argumentation.

47 See § 6.1.2. Noorlander (forthcoming; cf. Goldenberg 1992) considers the verbal systems in SE Trans-Zab Jewish varieties to be innovative and also originating in such active-stative subject-marking. That is, originally resultative intransitive *qim-ən* ‘I am arisen’ existed alongside *q̣əm-li* ‘I rose’ from the beginning. The former grammaticalized into a preterit *qim-ən* ‘I rose’ and replaced *q̣əm-li* in these dialects, possibly due to convergence with local Iranian languages.

Haspelmath 1994). Resultatives are, strictly speaking, voice-neutral (Nedjalkov and Jaxontov 1988, 16) and can be patient-oriented, subject-oriented and agent-oriented. Subject orientations for result states are found for intransitive verbs, e.g. J. Dohok

<i>wən</i>	<i>tiwa</i>	'I _M am seated'	(lit. 'am sat')
<i>wan</i>	<i>skənta</i>	'I _F live'	(lit. 'am settled')

The predication of a result state is also found for transitive telic verbs that typically form agent orientations in resultative constructions, such as *dwq* 'hold', *šql* 'take', *hwš* 'wear, put on', *t'n* 'carry', *lyp* 'learn' (Noorlander forthcoming).⁴⁸ In J. Dohok, for instance, the resultative participle is mostly entirely confined to such possessive-like transitive verbs in this usage alongside intransitive verbs, e.g. *'ana heš wən dwiqa laxma bət-idi* 'I am still holding (lit. held) bread in my hand'.

In several NENA dialects, the agent orientation is available for virtually all transitive verbs in the expression of the perfect and perfective past. The possible connotation of an anterior change of state in the implied event leading to the result restate in resultatives is made explicit in the perfect, compare English resultative *He is gone* and perfect *He has gone*, and the resultant state in the present is absent in the perfective past. The aspectual opposition between the intransitive stative-resultative and transitive perfect also correlates with their integration into the verbal system.⁴⁹ Thus for example, in C. Shaqlawa (NE Iraq), *pəšra xil-ele* (< **xila-ile*) can have only a dynamic agent orientation denoting 'He has eaten meat', not **'The meat has been eaten'.

Certain typical change-of-state verbs belonging to stem 1, however, are essentially voice-neutral in their resultative construction in several NENA dialects. Virtually any telic transitive verb is ambivalent, expressing both a dynamic-transitive perfect and stative-intransitive resultative. The orientation (subject/agent/patient) has to be contextualized. This is illustrated in the following examples from Christian Barwar.

48 See also Kapeliuk (2008). Cf. Nöldeke (1868, 308, § 150).

49 See Kapeliuk (2008). Cf. Mutzafi (2004a, 105–109), Khan (2008a, 653–659).

(6) C. Barwar (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a)

BASIC			DEICTIC	
<i>q̣ṭil</i>	-ε	-le ⁵⁰	<i>ho-le</i>	<i>q̣ṭil-a</i>
killed	-MS	-COP:3MS	DEIX:COP-3MS	killed-MS
a. 'He has killed.'			c. 'He has killed.'	(A, dynamic)
b. 'He is killed.'			d. 'He is killed.'	(S, stative)

The basic copula is generally enclitic, following the participle. It may also alternate with an independent deictic copula. The forms with the deictic copula are mainly used to express the perfect and pluperfect (Khan 2008a, 673–675). What applies to the construction based on the deictic copula, as illustrated in (6c) and (6d), generally also applies to other tense and modal categories based on the auxiliary *hwy* 'be'.

Speakers use different strategies as to how to resolve the ambiguity in orientation, namely the relative position of the copula, preverbal marking, the presence of an object and, finally, a greater degree of integration into the verbal system through adaptation of the unmarked transitive coding of *qaṭal*-; each of these will be examined in turn below.

4.3.2.1 Copula Position

Some dialects, mainly those in NW Iraq, can differentiate between a dynamic-transitive perfect and stative-intransitive resultative by the relative position of the basic copula. If the copula precedes the participle, the orientation is ambiguous, but when it follows, the construction is always intransitive. Thus in Jewish Betanure, for example,⁵¹ postverbal position of the copula is impossible for the agent orientation:

(7) J. Betanure (NW Iraq; Mutzafi 2008a)

COP	PRED	PRED-COP	
<i>'ile</i>	<i>šqil-a</i>	<i>šqil-a-yle</i>	
COP:3MS	taken-MS	taken-MS-COP:3MS	
a. 'He has taken.'		c. **'He has taken'	(dynamic)
b. 'He is taken.'		d. 'He is taken.' (only)	(stative)

⁵⁰ *q̣ṭil-ε-le* = *q̣ṭil-a* + *-ile*.

⁵¹ Cf. J. Challa (Fassberg 2010, 117).

4.3.2.2 Preverbal Marking

By contrast, dialects like C. Koy Sanjaq (NE Iraq; Mutzafi 2004b) make a distinction by adding an invariant preverbal modifier (*lā*) to the stative-intransitive resultative, where in the case of the third person the copula is absent:

(8) C. Koy Sanjaq (NE Iraq; Mutzafi 2004b)

(stative)	(dynamic)
<i>lā</i> PRED(-COP)	PRED-COP
a. <i>lā skār-ta(-Ø)</i>	c. <i>skār-t-ela</i>
PVB lost-FS	lost-FS-COP:3FS
‘She has lost.’	‘She is lost.’
b. <i>lā skār-t-ewan</i>	d. <i>skār-t-ewan</i>
PVB lost-FS-COP:1FS	lost-FS-COP:1FS
‘I _F am lost.’	‘I _F have lost.’

4.3.2.3 Object Marking

The ambiguity in orientation can also be remedied by the presence of an object. When the object is pronominal, it is expressed by attaching a pronoun of the *ʿall*-series. This is given for Christian Barwar below. The enclitic copula denoting A is attached to the preceding participle, and the *ʿall*-set denoting P is attached to the copula. If the copula is deictic and precedes the participle, the patient person form attaches immediately to the participle itself:

(9) C. Barwar (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a)

BASIC	DEICTIC
a. <i>qṭīl -e -l -alle</i>	b. <i>ho-la qṭīl-alle</i>
killed -A:PL -A:COP:3 -P:3MS	DEIX-A:3PL killed:NONFS-P:3MS
‘They have killed him .’	‘They have killed him .’
(lit. They is killed him)	

The agent-marking enclitic copula is completely mobile and can move to the front, e.g. *ku-t-ile qṭīl-alle* ‘Each that **has** killed him’ (Khan 2008a, A24:43). The *ʿall*-series regularly attaches to the participle when the copula precedes it. Only when the copula is third person, and thus in form similar to the L-suffixes, it may also follow this series or be omitted entirely (Khan 2008a, 285, 782–783). A 3ms. form can therefore occur in the following forms (see further next subsection):

[V	-P]		
<i>q̣ṭil</i>	<i>-əlle</i>		'He has killed him.' (lit. He is killed him)
[V	-P	-A]	
<i>q̣ṭil</i>	<i>-əlle</i>	<i>-le</i>	
[V	-A	-P]	
<i>q̣ṭil</i>	<i>-ele</i>	<i>-le</i>	

When the clause contains two full NPs, the A function of the noun is typically indicated by agreement. When the gender and number differs between the arguments, the verbal construction always agrees with A as it does with s, and the respective roles are clear, for example:

[A]	[COP-A]	[RPP-A]	[P]
c. 'aw-naša	ho-le	dwiq-a	baxta
DEM-man:MS	DEIX-A:3MS	seized-A:MS	woman:MS
'The man has seized the woman.' (Khan 2008a, 657)			

When the patient is differentially marked, this will automatically disambiguate between the roles of the arguments. Differential object marking can be via indexing, i.e. the 'əll-series, or via prepositional marking, e.g. the dative preposition *ʔla-*, for example:

[A]-[COP:A]	[RPP:A-P]	[P]
d. 'at-it	<i>q̣ṭil-əlle</i>	<i>xuwwē</i>
you-A:2MS	killed-A:MS-P:3MS	snake:MS
'Are you (the one who) has killed (lit. him) the snake?' (Khan 2008a, A24:45)		

[A]	[BE:A]	[RPP-A]	
e. <i>awwa</i>	<i>xuwwē</i>	<i>t-awe-Ø-wa</i>	<i>q̣ṭil-a</i>
DEM:MS	snake:MS	FUT-be _{1PFV} -A:3MS-PST	killed-A:MS
[DOM→P]			
<i>ʔla-bron-i</i>			
DOM-son:MS-my			
'The snake would have killed my son .' (Khan 2008a, A9:6)			

The coding of either role may be completely absent, in which case the roles have to be inferred from the context. This applies when the two referents belong to the same gender and number and when the patient is not differentially marked. In (12a) below, the status of the argument *bron-i* is ambiguous,

since no object is present, while, in (12b), an object is present. Both arguments are morphologically unmarked (ms.), but it is pragmatically obvious what their respective role is, i.e. a human agent as opposed to a fruit.

(10) C. Barwar (NW Iraq)

- a.

[S/A]	[COP]	[RPP]	
<i>bron-i</i>	<i>ho-le</i>	<i>xil-a</i>	

 (ambiguous)

son:MS-my DEIX-3MS eat:RPP-MS

'My son has eaten'

'My son is/has been eaten (by sth.)' (Khan 2008a, A18:2)

- b.

[A]	[COP]	[RPP]	[P]	
<i>xon-ux</i>	<i>ho-le</i>	<i>xil-a</i>	<i>xabuša</i>	

 (active)

brother:MS-your:MS DEIX-A:3MS eat:RPP-MS apple:MS

'Your_{MS} brother has eaten an apple.' (Khan 2008a, 678)

The A argument regularly precedes the verb. The P argument, however, may be fronted, yielding the reverse word order:

- c.

	[P]-[COP]	[RPP]	[A]	
c. <i>la</i>	<i>xawx-εle</i>	<i>xil-a</i>	<i>xon-i</i>	

 (fronted object)

NEG peach:MS-COP:3MS eaten-MS brother:MS-my

'No, a peach my brother has eaten.' (Khan 2008a, 678)

Word order, then, may be an important clue, but it is not definitive. Without the presence of an agent in (12c), the clause *la xawxε-le xila* could mean 'A peach is/has been eaten' or, in theory, 'A peach has eaten'.

4.3.2.4 Adaption to Transitive *qaṭəl-*

Across NENA dialects, contracted forms may alternate with uncontracted forms that are indistinct from the E-set. The contracted past perfect *qṭil-in-wa* 'I_M had killed' of the uncontracted *qṭila win-wa* 'I_M had killed' in C. Ashitha, for instance, parallels the E-suffix with anteriority affix *-in-wa* in the past habitual *qaṭl-in-wa* 'I_M used to kill' (Borghero 2005, 332). The structural cohesion between the verb and the enclitic copula is virtually on the same level as that of the core verbal system.

The effects of cross-system harmony are evident in the inflection of compound verbal forms. The transitive *qaṭəl-*construction serves as the unmarked model. The convergence of compound and simple verbal constructions is motivated by the morphological identity that results for reduced forms of the orig-

inally enclitic copula and 'all-series. The latter merge with the E-set and L-set of the *qaṭal*-constructions, but the convergence is only partial. The incidental outcome is a special treatment of transitive verbal clauses.

The transitive realis perfect and progressive is regularly formed by the copula and 'all-series in NENA dialects. The coding of A and P by means of reduced variants, however, is partially merged with the E-suffixes and L-suffixes, for example in C. Barwar. The resultative participle expresses agreement with the agent like the subject, whereas reduced variants of the copula that are virtually identical to the E-set denote the agent. The patient can be expressed by L-suffixes or 'all-series, markers attached to these reduced variants. Forms like **qṭila-iwət 'alle* 'You_{MS} have killed him' have evolved through contracted forms like *qṭil-ət-alle* into *qṭil-ət-le*.⁵² The reduced enclitic copula is morphologically near-identical to the E-set and could hardly be considered a separate set, for example:

(11) **Perfect with reduced copula** (C. Barwar, NW Iraq; Khan 2008a, 180, 280–281, 284)

	PERFECT		COPULA	E-SET
2ms.	<i>qṭil-ət-le</i>	'You _{MS} killed him'	<i>-iwət</i>	<i>-ət</i>
2fs.	<i>qṭilt-ət-le</i>	'You _{FS} have killed him'	<i>-iwat, -iwət</i>	<i>-at</i>
2pl.	<i>qṭile-tu-le</i>	etc.	<i>-iwetu, -iwitu</i>	<i>-itu</i>
1ms.	<i>qṭil-ən-ne</i>		<i>-iwən</i>	<i>-ən</i>
1fs.	<i>qṭilt-ən-ne</i>		<i>-iwan, -iwən</i>	<i>-an</i>
1pl.	<i>qṭil-ax-xe</i>		<i>-iwəx</i>	<i>-əx</i>

As seen in (11), the forms of the reduced copula are virtually identical to the E-set except for the third person. The third person copula can follow the 'all-series, precede the L-set denoting the object or be omitted altogether. Their forms are identical to the L-suffixes, but when the affix order shifts to that of the present, P is expressed by means of L-suffixes as in the present.

	[V	-P	-A]		COPULA	L-SET
3ms	<i>qṭil</i>	<i>-alle</i>	<i>-le</i>	'He has killed him'	<i>-ile</i>	<i>-le</i>
3fs.	<i>qṭilt</i>	<i>-alle</i>	<i>-la</i>	'She has killed him'	<i>-ila</i>	<i>-la</i>
3pl.	<i>qṭil</i>	<i>-alle</i>	<i>-la</i>	'They have killed him'	<i>-ila, -ilə</i>	<i>-la, -lə</i>

52 The same holds for C. Ashitha (SE Turkey), see Borghero (2005).

	[V	-A	-P]		COPULA	L-SET
3ms	<i>q̣ṭiḷɛ</i>	<i>-le</i>	<i>-le</i>	'He has killed him'	<i>-ile</i>	<i>-le</i>
3fs.	<i>q̣ṭilṭɛ</i>	<i>-la</i>	<i>-le</i>	'She has killed him'	<i>-ila</i>	<i>-la</i>
3pl.	<i>q̣ṭile</i>	<i>-la</i>	<i>-le</i>	'They have killed him'	<i>-ila, -ilɛ</i>	<i>-la, -lɛ</i>

Non-reduced variants of the copula are used when no coalescence occurs, for example in the present and past tense:

(12) **E₂-set and copula alternations** (Khan 2008a, 189–190)⁵³

E ₂ -SET		COPULA	
<i>priqṭ-ən</i>	~	<i>p̣riqṭɛ-wən</i>	'I _F have finished'
<i>p̣rixṭ-ən-wa</i>	~	<i>p̣rixṭɛ-wənwa</i>	'I _F had flown'

Where the copula is independent, such as the negative copula or deictic copula, the reduced variants are not used:

(13) **C. Barwar** (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a, 284, 286)

<i>l-ən q̣ṭiḷ-əlle</i>	'I _M have not killed him'	(negative)
<i>ho-n q̣ṭiḷ-əlle</i>	'I _M have killed him'	(deictic)

The enclitic copula and the (ʔal)/- series are hardly distinguishable from the E-set and L-set. Their inflection strongly resembles that of *qaṭəl-*. Compare the following transitive forms based on *q̣ṭila* and *qaṭəl-*:

(14) **C. Barwar perfect and imperfective** (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a, 280–281, 284)

	PERFECT		: IMPERFECTIVE
2ms.	<i>qṭiḷ-ət-le</i>	'You _{MS} killed him.'	<i>qaṭḷ-ət-le</i> 'You _{MS} kill him.'
2fs.	<i>qṭiḷṭ-ət-le</i>	'You _{FS} have killed him.'	<i>qaṭla-t-le</i> 'You _{FS} kill him.'
2pl.	<i>qṭiḷe-tu-le</i>	etc.	<i>qaṭli-tu-le</i> etc.
1ms.	<i>qṭiḷ-ən-ne</i>		<i>qaṭḷ-ən-ne</i>
1fs.	<i>qṭiḷṭ-ən-ne</i>		<i>qaṭla-n-ne</i>
1pl.	<i>qṭiḷ-əx-xe</i>		<i>qaṭḷ-əx-xe</i>

Presumably, originally uncontracted forms like **q̣ṭila-iwət ʔalle* 'You_{MS} have killed him' evolved via contracted forms like *q̣ṭiḷ-ət-əlle* into *q̣ṭiḷ-ət-le* in analogy to the *qaṭəl-* in Christian dialects like Barwar.⁵⁴ If we consider the E-suffixes

53 Third person forms do not show this same alternation, e.g. *p̣riqṭɛ-la* 'She has finished' and *p̣rixṭa-wawa* alongside *p̣rixṭɛ-yawa* and *p̣rixṭɛ-wa* 'She had flown'.

54 The same holds for C. Ashitha (SE Turkey), see Borghero (2005).

-a and -i as expressions of gender in *qaṭəl-*, then they pattern exactly like the gender agreement of the resultative participle *qṭila*,⁵⁵ so that we obtain the following parallel:

	<i>qṭila</i>		<i>qaṭəl-</i>
MS	<i>qṭil-Ø-</i>	:	<i>qaṭl-Ø</i>
FS	<i>qṭil-t-</i>	:	<i>qaṭl-a-</i>
PL	<i>qṭil-e-</i>		<i>qaṭl-i-</i>

The same is true for the past tense with -wa-, compare:

	PERFECT		IMPERFECTIVE
(15)	<i>qṭil-t-ən-wa-le</i>	:	<i>qaṭl-á-n-wa-le</i>
	'I _F had killed him.'		'I _F would kill him.'

The stress pattern between the two forms is still distinct in C. Barwar. The participle *qṭila* still carries the main stress, treating the affixes like clitics.⁵⁶

The processes of analogy and phonetic erosion can lead to considerable mixing. Khan (2008a, 284) shows that the reduced variants of the E₂-series, for instance, can combine with either the 'əll-series or L-suffixes, i.e. *qṭil-ən-əlle* or *qṭil-ən-ne* for 'I_M have killed him'. Even the third person copula set, namely fs. -ila, ms. -ile, pl. -ilɛ, may be, though rarely is, fully expressed before the L₁-suffixes e.g. *qṭilte-la-le* (< **qṭilta* + -ila + -le) 'She has killed him'. The resulting third person indexes are morphologically identical, leading to a phonologically non-distinct verbal person marking pattern identical to the L-suffixes:

	A/S (PARTICIPLE)	A/S (< * COPULA)	P (< * 'əll-)
ms.	<i>qṭile-</i>	-le	-le
fs.	<i>qṭilte-</i>	-la	-la
pl.	<i>qṭile-</i>	-le, -la	-le, -la

The third person forms derived from 3ms. -ile, 3fs. -ila and 3pl. -ilɛ are different, but also follow the V-A-P affix order of *qaṭəl-*. They are reduced to əl- before object suffixes in the transitive present perfect and also found in the past, with

55 Note that this agreement is absent in the corresponding analytical progressive based on an indeclinable verbal noun *qṭala* (Khan 2008a, 287), e.g. *qṭal-ət-le* 'You_{fs} are killing him'.

56 Complete convergence between the compound perfect and progressive with *qaṭəl-* occurs in Jewish Urmi, see § 3.1.3.3.

-*wa*- between A and P, thereby merging the transitive coding partly with *qaṭəl*-, for example:

	PERFECT		IMPERFECTIVE
(16)	<i>qṭil-təl-le</i>	:	<i>qaṭl-a-le</i>
	'She has killed him.'		'She kills him.'
	<i>qṭil-təl-wa-le</i>	:	<i>qaṭl-á-wa-le</i>
	'She had killed him.'		'She used to kill him.'

Furthermore, the analogy between *qaṭəl*- and the compound verbal constructions creates an interesting split between transitive and intransitive constructions. This is illustrated by the pluperfect in C. Barwar below. Every verb *without* object indexes can freely use the full form of the past copula, but a verb *with* object indexes adapts to the past *qaṭəl*-,⁵⁷ for example:

- (18) **Split in transitivity coding** (Khan 2008a, 190, 284–286)
a. [-P]	<i>príxa-wət-wa ~ príx-ət-wa</i>	'You _{MS} had flown'
[P: fNP]	<i>pṭíxa-wət-wa (tāra)</i>
~ <i>pṭíx-ət-wa (tāra)</i>	'You _{MS} had opened (a door)'
[P: PRO]	<i>pṭíx-ət-wa-le</i>	'You _{MS} had opened it _M '

These constructions therefore make a subtle difference between clauses with only full nominals and independent pronouns and clauses with dependent person markers. There is a fundamental distinction between A with and A without a P index. The omission or independent expression of P favors a different construction. The verb adapts morphologically to the inflection of *qaṭəl*- particularly when P is a dependent person form.

Moreover, the difference between intransitive and transitive coding is even stronger for third person referents, where A can display special properties distinct from s. They are as follows:

b. [-P]	<i>príxta-wawa</i> ⁵⁸ ~ <i>prixte-wa</i>	'She had flown'
[P: fNP]	<i>qṭílt-əl-wa (gawra)</i>	'She had killed (a man)'
[P: PRO]	<i>qṭílt-əl-wa-le</i>	'She had killed him'

57 Only an intransitive verb can take a reduced form of the past copula, cf. *príxewa* 'He had flown', *príxətwa* 'You_{MS} had flown' (Khan 2008a, 190).

58 Also *prixte-yawa*.

While, third person copula forms are reduced to *-əl-* before *-wa-* and/or an L-suffix, this the same agent marking *-əl-* is analogically restored for transitive verbs without an object index. Hence, one obtains the form *q̣ílt-əl-wa* instead of *q̣ílt-a-wa* on the basis of *q̣ílt-əl-wa-le* for *q̣ílt-a-wa* 'alle. Such object indexes are absent, for example, in contexts, where P is an indefinite full nominal:

- (19) *ʔay šwíq -t -əl -wa majma tama*
 she left:RPP -A:FS -A:3 -PST tray there
 'She **had left** a tray there.' (Khan 2008a, A4:53)

And nevertheless, we do not find this morphology on an intransitive verb, so that forms like ***p̣ixt-əl-wa* for 'She had flown' are impossible. Here, s is treated differently from both A and P.

In conclusion, A is treated remarkably different from s, and while this is exactly what we would expect for an ergative pattern (see § 4.4.1.1.), namely a higher degree of morphosyntactic transitivity triggering marking of A distinct from s, we do not observe morphological ergativity. Gender and number participial agreement always groups s and A. In phonological form, indexing is also accusative for first/second persons but varies for the third person: s, A and P can be either identical to each other or distinct from each other. Verbal person marking involving both A and P is prone to approximate that of the more frequent, unmarked transitive *qaṭəl-* forms due to cross-system harmony, and, consequently, only transitive clauses are treated differently. This cross-system harmonization is also observed in transitive perfective past clauses, which is the topic of the next section.

4.4 Argument-Related Factors: Harmonizing the Object

In the majority of dialects, NENA speakers have multiple strategies for transitive verbal person marking (Pennacchietti 1994).⁵⁹ The inverted perfective past construction *q̣ílt-a-le* is generally person-restricted. Several constructions listed in (1) below serve as alternatives for *q̣ílt-a-le*, which will be discussed one by one in the subsequent sections.

59 See Mengozzi (2012) for the distribution of these forms in early Christian poetry written in the NENA of Iraq, dated from 17th to 20th century.

TABLE 26 Transitive constructions that parallel *qaṭəl-*

Alternative I: prepositional object	e.g. ‘You saw me’	<i>grəš-lox ’alli</i>
Alternative II: L-suffix + L-suffix		<i>gráš-lux-li</i>
Alternative III: L-E-suffix + L-suffix		<i>gráš-l-ət-ti</i>
Alternative IV: <i>qam-</i> + <i>qaṭəl-</i>		<i>qam-garš-ət-ti</i>
<i>qaṭəl</i>	e.g. ‘You see me’	<i>k-garš-ət-ti</i>

Dialects can use more than one of these strategies. Ditransitive constructions presumably served as a model for alternatives I–II, since this is to what they are confined in several other dialects. Alternatives II–IV, and presumably to some extent also Alternative I, are attempts to harmonize at least the object marking in analogy to *qaṭəl-*. The absence or presence of an additional object index, therefore, is central to our discussion, and its presence may even affect the marking of A. The differences in coding strategies incidentally result in person splits, often third vs. first/second, as well as splits between clauses containing full nominal objects and pronominal objects.

4.4.1 Person-Role Constraints

4.4.1.1 Ergativity, Co-argument Sensitivity and Person-Role Associations
The *relative* ranking of A and P on a prominence scale can be a determining factor for alignment splits, also known as “hierarchical alignment” (Siewierska 2003, 2004, 55). Not merely one argument type, but both a particular argument type, i.e. 1st/2nd vs. 3rd person or pronoun vs. full NP, and associated role, i.e. A vs. P or R vs. T, are higher or lower in ranking. Such hierarchy effects show cross-linguistic tendencies for treating clauses differently when either A or P is higher in prominence (and balanced rankings as possibilities in between).

Person role inverse constructions are, among others, a typical trait of Native American languages and a few Tibeto-Burman languages (e.g. DeLancey 1981). The construction where A outranks P along the prominence hierarchy is called ‘direct’, while constructions that deviate from this are called ‘inverse’, and this is highlighted by special verbal morphology. DeLancey (1981, 642) offers the following example from Jyarong, a Tibetan language, spoken in the Sichuan Province of China, where ergative case morphology and verbal person marking are conditioned by the highest person reference. The ergative postposition, *-kə* in (1b), occurs only when A is of lower ranking in person than P. The third person does not trigger agreement, only the non-third person (*-ng*). At the same time, the verb indexes the highest ranking person and takes a special, so-called

inverse form (*u-*) to indicate that the patient is associated with the highest ranking person instead of the expected agent, i.e. P outranks A in person.

(1) **Jyaron**g (Tibeto-Burman, Sichuan, China; DeLancey 1981, 642)

[A: 1] [P: 3] [V-A: 1]

a. *nga mə nasno-ng* (A > P)

I he scold-1st

'I will scold him.'

[A: 3] [P: 1] [V-P: 1]

b. *mə-kə nga u-nasno-ng* (P > A)

he-ERG I INV-scold-1st

'He will scold me.'

Witzlack-Makarevich et al. (2016) argue that what has been called hierarchical alignment does *not* represent a single special alignment type, but represents two basic alignment types conditioned by particular referential properties. Following previous literature, they distinguish between hierarchical agreement and co-argument sensitivity. In co-argument sensitivity, the properties of another argument determine the marking of a particular grammatical function. Importantly, this is first and foremost a construction-specific property and not necessarily the morphosyntax nor alignment pattern as a whole.⁶⁰ In this different approach, the system above is not a hierarchical type, but one that can be characterized as either ergative or non-ergative depending on the properties of *either* or *both* arguments. Thus in the example of Jyaron above A is only overtly marked ergatively when P is first/second person; otherwise the marking is neutral. They also mention that P can be marked accusatively only if A has certain properties, for example only when A is third person in Ik, a Kuliak language (Nilo-Saharan, Uganda); otherwise it is marked in the nominative. In Finnish, P is only overtly marked accusatively when A is a full nominal; otherwise the marking is neutral. Comrie (1975) argues that nominal marking in languages like Finnish serves to discriminate arguments, distinguishing A from P. It is the presence of full nominal As that trigger distinct coding of P, in order to distinguish P from A.

Languages with ergative alignment can also show differences in the morphosyntax of clauses where the referentiality of the patient is reduced. The

60 Compound verbal forms also show these effects of co-argument sensitivity with respect to person in J. Koy Sanjaq, see Subsection 3.4.4., and gender in J. Sulemaniyya, see Subsection 3.4.6.

antipassive is a case in point, which expresses the agent distinctly from the ergative and is typically used when the object is less individuated (Hopper and Thompson 1980).⁶¹ Similarly, Dalabon, an Australian language (Northern Territory), is reported to manifest only overt (ergative) case-marking of A when A and P are of equal ranking in animacy (Silverstein 1976, 129; Comrie 1978, 386–387). A few languages with ergative morphosyntax employ the ergative case only when a full nominal object is expressed (Woolford 2015, 509–513). In fact, several languages that exhibit ergative morphology only mark the agent distinctly when a *definite* object is present. When the object is indefinite, the verbal person marking is distinct from intransitive clauses. In Selayarese, an Austronesian language of the Selayar Islands in Indonesia, for instance, a special set of agent prefixes is used only when the object is definite, while A is marked indistinctly from s by means of suffixes in the corresponding clause with an indefinite object; contrast *ku-* in (2c) below with *-a* in (2b) and *-i* in (2a) and (2c).

- (2) **Selayarese** (Austronesian, Indonesia; Mithun 1991, 171, 175, glossing modified)

[V-S] [V]

- a. *máŋe-i n-río* (s of intransitive)

go-3:S INTR-bathe

‘He went to take a bath.’

[V-A] [P]

- b. *m-máli-a sápo* (P is indefinite, A=S)

INTR-buy-1A house

‘I bought a house.’

[A-V-P] [P]

- c. *ku-hállî-i sapó-ñjo* (P is definite, P=S)

1:A-buy-3:P house-the

‘I bought the house.’

The properties associated with A and P, therefore, are pertinent to such alignment splits. Haspelmath (2007), following Zúñiga (2002), distinguishes the following four major possible combinations of person and associated A or P role rankings:

61 See Subsection 3.5.2.

Similarly, (4c) is not necessary when T is a full nominal, such as *zuze* ‘money’ in (4d) below. The L-suffix on the verb expresses R, as the dependent person marker becomes available:

	[V	-A	-R]	[T]	
d. <i>b</i>	<i>-yaw</i>	<i>-ən</i>	<i>-nax</i>	<i>zuze</i>	(R > T)
	FUT	-give _{IPFV}	-1MS	-2FS	money
	‘I _{MS} will give you _{FS} money.’				

Languages naturally differ in this respect: first/second dependent person markers are, for instance, impossible to cluster in French (***Elle te me donne*), while Spanish allows, but disfavors such clusters.⁶³ But where T outranks R in person, both languages favor a prepositional R, like J. Dohok above. We could expect the same to apply to languages where person-role constraints occur in monotransitive clauses such as the NENA varieties, which we discuss in the next section. An important difference, though, is that the co-occurrence of first/second person themes and recipients in ditransitive clauses is generally pragmatically restricted, but this is much less the case in monotransitive clauses. While ditransitive clauses, like *He showed me to you*, may well be restricted or impossible in a language, there is no reason this should equally apply to equivalent monotransitive clauses, like *I saw you*. Nevertheless, there are languages where such combinations of dependent person markers cause the same restrictions.

Thus, Haspelmath (2007) argues that when P outranks A on the prominence hierarchy and thereby a crossing association of role and argument ranking applies, a more complex construction tends to be used. The so-called canonical pattern represents a harmonic person-role association. Clustering associations are balanced, but not ‘canonical’. They are considered less harmonic, while the crossing association, i.e. P > A, is completely disharmonic, and therefore the more disharmonic a person-role association, the more likely the construction will involve special verbal morphology, overt marking of the A function and/or independent person markers (Haspelmath 2007).

4.4.1.2 Person-Role Constraints in Transitive Verbal Forms

The transitive perfective past constructions express various person splits in NENA. The E-suffixes used to express P in *qtil*-constructions are restricted in the vast majority of dialects. There seems to be at least a patient-related person scale peculiar to the verbal person marking of *qtil*-, and the restriction on

63 See Haspelmath (2004b) and Bonet (2008) for a discussion.

patient-marking appears to follow a hierarchy from 1,2 $\supset$ 3ms. $\supset$ 3pl. $\supset$ 3fs. There are indications we are dealing with a gradual loss of a particular paradigm.⁶⁴

Complete marking of all persons is found only in a few Christian and Jewish dialects in NW Iraq, such as C. Umra d-Shish, C. Bebede, J. 'Amedia, J. Aradhin and J. Barzan, as well as SE Turkey, such as J. Challa, C. Ashitha, C. Harbole, C. Marga, C. Billin and C. Bne-Matha, and Christian varieties of Hawdiyan (NE Iraq), Urmi and Salmas (NW Iran).⁶⁵ It is also documented in the earliest NENA literature, such as Jewish texts from Nerwa (15th–16th c. NW Iraq; Sabar 1976). Except for J. Nerwa and Challa, speakers of these NENA dialects, especially the younger generation, have alternatives to express transitive perfective past clauses. The further southeast, the more likely a dialect will not have a full paradigm and, if it all, only a person-restricted form.

We should take into account that, when a particular paradigm can or cannot be elicited, this does not always indicate whether a speaker uses this or not. A linguist may well not be able to elicit a particular form of *q̄til-*, but then stumble upon it in a text (see below). Moreover, when speakers become puzzled during elicitation, this does not always mean they cannot deal with such forms in a clear context and more routine-driven usage. Another factor to take into account is that language attrition may also affect production and simplification of forms.

Constructions like *q̄til-a-le* are thus confined to the third person in the vast majority of dialects, so that forms like ***q̄til-ax-lu* 'They killed us' do not occur. This does not necessarily mean all these dialects once had a full paradigm, though. It does indicate that a particular combination of dependent person markers is disfavored or categorically disallowed.⁶⁶ There is no such constraint in the same sequence of morphemes attached to *qaṭal-*, where these roles follow the unmarked affix order (e.g. *°našq-at-te* 'You_{FS} kiss him'). The restriction minimally targets the first and second person in their P function. Thus, if P references the highest ranking person, it cannot be marked by means of the E-series and must be marked differently, for instance independently of the verb, yielding a split in the marking of persons.

Generally speaking, while the ranking of the A role, which is expressed by means of the L-set, is not relevant in all dialects, relative ranking of persons

64 For the gradual loss of these forms in early Christian poetry, see Mengozzi (2012).

65 Maclean (1895, 135–139) also mentions the Christian dialects of Tkuma, Upper Tyari and Shemsdin in SE Turkey and Alqosh in NE Iraq.

66 For a generativist perspective on this person-role constraint in NENA, see Doron and Khan (2012).

does seem to play a role. In her description of the NENA (Judi) Christian dialect of Beşpen (SE Turkey), Sinha (2000, 142) mentions that, apart from the third person markers, only the first masculine singular is attested in the P function. In her text sample, she records the following forms with a 1ms. E-suffix marking the object.

(4) **C. Beşpen** (SE Turkey; Sinha 2000, 182.10, 192.65)

- a. *ala hiw-ən-ne-ž danye*
 God:MS give_{PFV}-P:1MS-A:3MS-ADD world
 ‘God gave **me_M** the world (i.e. I was born).’
- b. *qəm-lə mət-ən-nehen b-gawəd tarzyuta*
 rise_{PFV}-S:3PL put_{PFV}-P:1MS-A:3PL in-inside.of tailoring
 ‘Then they put **me_M** inside the tailor’s workplace.’
- c. *lá- mšoder-ən-nehen l-nawba plax-li tama*
 NEG II:send_{PFV}-P:1MS-A:3PL to-patrol work_{PFV}-S:1SG there
 ‘They didn’t send **me_M** on patrol. I worked there.’

Similarly, the first plural E-suffix is used sporadically in a Lower Tyari dialect (SE Turkey). Talay (2008a, 317–318) does not mention this, but it is undoubtedly also an exceptional case in an otherwise person-restricted construction, for example:

(5) **C. Sarspido** (Lower Tyari, SE Turkey; Talay 2009, 142.29)

- a. *siq-la axni šqil-ix-la mən tama*
 go.up_{PFV}-S:3FS we take_{PFV}-P:1PL-A:3FS from there
 ‘She came (and) took **us** away from there.’
- b. *moṭ-ix-la l-qaşra diyy-a*
 bring_{PFV}-P:1PL-A:3FS DAT-castle POSS-3FS
 ‘She brought **us** to her castle.’

Interestingly, what these sporadic exceptions have in common—and what I believe is not incidental, but possibly could be—is the fact that P outranks A, i.e. the person-role association is crossed. One possibility to consider here is obviously that third person will be more common in narrative texts in any case and the inverted *qṭil*-construction serves particular discourse functions in narrative chains of events. Nevertheless, there are reasons to think such examples are not incidental. Elicitation from a Christian speaker from Bne-Matha (SE

Turkey) revealed that he accepted such clauses with lower ranking As, but not with higher ranking As. e.g.

<i>xəzy</i>	<i>-an</i>	<i>-na</i>	'She saw me _F '	(crossing)
** <i>xəzy</i>	<i>-at</i>	<i>-ti</i>	'I saw you _{FS} '	(clustering II)

Recently, Khan (2016_{II}:248–249) came to the same conclusion regarding C. Urmi (NW Iran), given that most of his informants more readily accept third person agents rather than first and/or second person ones, e.g.

<i>xəzy</i>	<i>-ən</i>	<i>-nə</i>	'He saw me _M '	(crossing)
(**) <i>xəzy</i>	<i>-ən</i>	<i>-nux</i>	'You saw me _M '	(clustering II)

Informants for C. Marga (SE Turkey) similarly become puzzled by higher ranking persons in both A and P function, but the crossing situation ($P > A$) is perfectly acceptable in narrative texts.

These observations indicate that when P outranks A in person, *q̄til-a-le* seems to be more acceptable in several dialects, whereas when both A and P are non-third person, the construction is avoided altogether. If this is correct, the reference of A is significant, and the relative ranking may have contributed to the conventionalization of the person split in NENA dialects. The prominence scale, however, does not account for this, as it is the crossing situation that is more acceptable than the clustering II situation where both arguments rank high on the person scale. After all, when both A and P rank low and are thus equally potentially ambiguous, the *q̄til-a-le* is generally available, e.g. C. Urmi:

xəzy -a -lə 'He saw her'

Moreover, one would expect that when P outranks A in topicworthiness, verbal morphology other than the canonical ranking, i.e. $A > P$, would be favored, but this is not the case, the harmonic and disharmonic person-role associations have the same coding strategies e.g. C. Urmi

xəzy -a -li 'I saw her'

Be that as it may, another conceivable reason why the inverted forms are disfavored could be the V-P-A affix order that stands out with respect to the dominant morphosyntax of *qaṭəl-*. While affix order is likely to be involved in the cross-harmonization, V-P-A order *per se* does not seem to be a problem for speakers. It is the inversion between *qaṭəl-* and *q̄til-* in particular that is dis-

favorable by speakers, not V-P-A order *per se*. Evidence for this comes from the compound verbal forms. In C. Shaqlawa, for instance, the V-P-A order is available for all persons in both the compound progressive and compound perfect, e.g.

(6) C. Shaqlawa (NE Iraq)

[V -P -A]

- a. *b-gráš* -ux -iwan
in-pulling -2MS -COP:1FS
'I_F am pulling you_{MS}'

- b. *gráš-t* -ux -iwan
pulled-FS -2MS -COP:3FS
'I_F have pulled you_{MS}'

The inverted *q̣til*-form, however, is limited to third person feminine singular objects, e.g.

[V -P -A]

- c. *griš* -a -le
pull_{PFV} -3FS -3MS
'He pulled her'

- d. ***griš* -at -ti
**pull_{PFV} -2MS -1SG
Intended: 'I pulled you_{MS}'

In addition, the *'all*-series may cliticize to the preceding form of the infinitive or resultative participle, occurring before the copula. The resulting relative V-A-P order of dependent markers mimics that of *qatəl*- and is distinct from that of the equivalent compound verbal constructions, e.g. C. Ashitha *q̣til-əllən-ile* 'He killed us', that follow the same pattern as that of *q̣til-ax-le* 'He killed us' (Borgero 2005, 197).

The rather unrestricted usage of *q̣til-a-le* occurs only when s and A are grouped systematically in some way (e.g. *dməx-lan* 'We slept': *nšiq-ax-lu* 'They kissed us').⁶⁷ There is thus far not a single dialect where forms like *q̣til-ən-nux* are common within coherently ergative verbal person marking, while it does

67 Cf. Golbenberg (1992, 125).

occur in coherently accusative ones like Jewish Challa. Nevertheless, there is no direct connection between its restricted usage and ergativity. The person-role constraint occurs in all dialects irrespective of alignment.⁶⁸ Indeed, as we will see, it is not ergativity in itself that is being avoided, but rather the parallelism with the unmarked *qaṭal*-constructions that is favored for transitive clauses in general.

4.4.2 *Alternative 1: Independent Object Pronouns*

Dialects differ in the way and the extent to which they express pronominal objects independently. There are several dialects that, like the Trans-Zab Jewish varieties of NENA (see § 3.1.2.2.), use independent prepositional pronominal objects as an alternative to the dependent E-set. Hence, although the independent object person markers are optional in other clauses, they are necessary in *qṭil*-constructions to refer to at least the first and second person in person-restricted contexts. This suggests that the wide array of object sets does not have the same status for each inflectional system. The independent object person markers are mainly acceptable in *qṭil*-based morphosyntax and are favored as an alternative to the E-suffixes dialects with person-restricted constructions. Finally, if pronominal objects are based on a preposition, this need not necessarily but sometimes may also entail that definite nominal objects are also differentially marked by means of this preposition. The nominal marking, therefore, is similarly accusative or otherwise neutral, i.e. flagging is absent altogether.

4.4.2.1 Another Series of Person Markers

While unmarked independent personal pronouns are generally used to express S and A, they are not ‘subject’ pronouns in the strict sense (see § 2.3.1.2.), as they can express other grammatical functions as well, namely P. If they do so, they generally require additional person marking on the verb, such as (8a) in C. Barwar. It is rarely the case, however, that both A and P are expressed by such unmarked pronouns, and in my interaction with speakers in northern Iraq this has never been accepted upon elicitation. Example (8b) below from C. Barwar is a notable exception.

68 It is always found in Trans-Zab Jewish varieties, and it is also found in compound verbal constructions that pattern accusatively, cf. § 3.3.1 and § 3.3.2.

- (7) **C. Barwar** (NW Iraq; Khan 2008a, 881, transcription slightly modified)

[V-A-P] [P]
 a. *qa-t-nabl-an-ne* 'ap-'aw
 to-SUBR-take_{IPFV-A:1MS-P:3MS} ADD-he
 'so that I take also *him*.' (lit. I take him also he)

[A] [P] [V-A]
 b. 'ana 'ati bay-ən
 I you:SG want_{IPFV-A:1MS}
 'I want you.'

Such independent pronouns can also serve to mark P in *qtil*-based constructions:

- (8) **C. Hawdiyan** (NE Iraq)

'ana xz -ən -nux ju-bazar
 I see_{PFV} -P:1MS -A:2MS in-market
 'You saw *me* at the market.' (lit. Your saw I at the market)

Nevertheless, it is more common for speakers to resort to prepositional object pronouns, like the 'all-series, especially when other means to express a pronominal object are unavailable, e.g.

- (9) **C. Ashitha** (SE Turkey; Borghero 2006, 192)

xze-li 'əll -ax
 see_{PFV-A:1SG} OBJ -2FS
 'I saw *you*_{FS}.' (lit. Me saw to-you_{FS})

- (10) **C. Sardarid** (NW Iran; Younansardaroud 2001, 205, 232.4, transcription modified)

a. +avva purəq-lə qa yala mən mota
 DEM:MS II:rescue_{PFV-A:3MS} DOM boy:MS from death:MS
 'He saved *the boy* from death.' (lit. Him saved to-boy)

b. may xzi-lə qa- dīy-⁺ux ju pəlxana?
 who see_{PFV-A:3MS} OBJ- LK-2MS in work
 'Who saw *you*_{MS} during work?' (lit. Him saw to-you_{MS})

Several NENA dialects employ prepositional pronominal objects⁶⁹ as an alternative to the dependent E-set or as the only means to express pronominal objects in the preterit. The areal distribution of this is presented in Map 4 at the end of this chapter, including the Trans-Zab Jewish dialects, discussed in Chapter 3. Prepositional objects are thus not only found in the Trans-Zab Jewish varieties of NENA, but also in Jewish Barzan, C. ‘Ankawa, Western Christian varieties in SE Turkey and Northern Christian varieties in NW Iran. The use of the inverted preterit alongside this strategy becomes less common towards the east. In C. Sardarid (NW Iran; Younansardaroud 2001), the preposition *qa-* is the only means to express pronominal objects in the preterit. Contrasting with the Trans-Zab Jewish dialects, however, such prepositional objects are only common for the perfective past, and not readily available for *qaṭəl-*, where L-suffixes are used instead.⁷⁰

4.4.2.2 Splits in Ditransitive Clauses

The independent pronominal objects are ultimately derived from goal markers. In *lishana deni* dialects like J. ‘Amedia, where independent pronominal objects are avoided, a prepositional object is used with certain verbs as an alternative to *qṭil-a-le* to express the goal or recipient, such as the addressee of *’mr* ‘say’:

(11) J. ‘Amedia (person-unrestricted, NW Iraq; Greenblatt 2011, 336.8, 336.5)

- a. *mir- ət -ti*
 say_{PV} -R:2MS -A:1SG
- b. *mər -ri ṭaṭ-ux*
 say_{PV} -A:1SG R:to-2MS
 ‘I told you_{MS}’

The same pattern is found for *qaṭəl-* where *ṭaṭ-* is an alternative to the L-suffixes, respectively

- g-emər-Ø -re ‘He tells him’*
g-emər-Ø ṭaṭ-u

69 See § 4.1.1.2.

70 An extreme opposite case are the Jewish dialects in Iranian Azerbaijan that freely express the pronominal object independently for all verbal constructions treating them like full nominal objects, e.g. *əll-án dah-i-wa* ‘They would beat us’, *əll-i əmbəl-lu* ‘They took me’ (Khan 2008b, 300, 445); see Subsection 3.1.2.

Generally speaking, it would seem that if a dialect tolerates, uses or favors independent pronominal objects, it will tend to avoid this for *qaṭal*-constructions, the Trans-Zab Jewish dialects being a noteworthy exception.⁷¹ This can even lead to the differential treatment of the theme-object in ditransitive constructions. Khan (2016_{II}:385), for instance, observes for C. Urmi that the person markers based on the preposition *qa-* mark the recipient throughout the system, but they only mark the patient in *qtil*-based constructions and, importantly, they can never mark the theme of ditransitive verbs.

This can be contrasted with C. Ashitha. Consider the following examples in (12). The prepositional argument in (13a–c) does not express the theme, but the recipient irrespective of person, NP type or TAM.

(12) C. Ashitha (SE Turkey; Borghero 2006, 200–202)

	[V-A	-T]	[ʔall→R]
a.	<i>yawəl-Ø</i>	<i>-lux</i>	<i>ʔall-a</i>
	give _{IPFV} -A:3MS	-T:2MS	OBJ-3FS
	'He gives you _{MS} to her.'		
	[V-T	-A]	[ʔall→R]
b.	<i>hiw-at</i>	<i>-la</i>	<i>ʔall-e</i>
	give _{PFV} -T:2FS	-A:3FS	OBJ-3MS
	'She gave you _{FS} to him.'		
	[V-A]	[ʔall→R]	[T]
c.	<i>hiw-le</i>	<i>ʔall-i</i>	<i>mexulta</i>
	give _{PFV} -A:3MS	OBJ-1SG	food:FS
	'He gave me food.'		

Nevertheless, *ʔall-* is not the only preposition used to indicate recipients. The preposition dedicated to the recipient can vary freely within a single dialect. When one of these prepositions is also dedicated to the patient (and possibly the theme), another preposition *ṭla* lends itself to further differentiation in C. Ashitha:

	[V-T	-A]	[ṭla→R]
d.	<i>hiw-a</i>	<i>-li</i>	<i>ṭlal-əxu</i>
	give _{PFV} -T:2FS	-A:3FS	to-2PL
	'I gave it _F to you _{PL} .'		

71 See footnote above.

When the *'əll*-series is combined with a *q̣til*-form, it can also mark the theme in C. Ashitha. The recipient is marked differently by another preposition, in this case *ʔla*-:

	[V-A]	[<i>'əll</i> →T]	[<i>ʔla</i> →R]
e.	<i>hiw-le</i>	<i>'əll-a</i>	<i>ʔlal-ux</i>
	give _{PFV} -A:3SG	OBJ-3FS	to-2MS
	'He gave it _F to you _{MS} .'		

What we do not seem to observe in C. Ashitha are examples like the following, where the theme and recipient are marked by the same preposition:

		[<i>'əll</i> →T]	[<i>'əll</i> →R]
f.	<i>**hiw-le</i>	<i>'əll-a</i>	<i>'əll-ux</i>
	give _{PFV} -A:3SG	OBJ-3FS	OBJ-2MS
	'He gave it _F you _{MS} .'		

Such a double object construction with two identical independent object person markers is avoided. This differentiation in the coding of the recipient seems to be a feature peculiar to the preterit. Indeed, *q̣aʔəl*-forms do not seem to combine with the *'əll*-series in such constructions at all, so that

***yawəl-Ø əll-a ʔlal-ux* 'He gives her to you_{MS}'

is not possible. The following diverging patterns unfold for ditransitive constructions based on *q̣aʔəl*- against those based on *q̣til*- in C. Ashitha:

	A	O	R
<i>yawəl-</i>	-E	-L	<i>'əll-/ʔla(l)-</i>
<i>hiw-</i>	-L	<i>'əll-</i>	<i>ʔla(l)-</i>
<i>xze-</i>	-L	<i>'əll-</i>	

The perfective past is therefore characterized by a type of differential marking of R. In C. Van (Hawshesur, SE Turkey), the same preposition *ʔla*- dedicated to R in Ashitha is used to express P in the preterit, like R. This can even be used to express T, though the latter is rarely expressed as pronoun, but if it is, R must be marked differently, e.g.

(13) C. Van (Hawshesur, SE Turkey; Noorlander field notes)

- [V-A] [tla→P]
 a. *gzi-l* *tal-ox*
 see_{PFV-A:3MS} OBJ-2MS
 'He saw you_{MS}.'
- [V-A] [tla→R] [T]
 b. *məgzi-l* *tal-i* *ktava*
 show_{PFV-A:3MS} OBJ-1SG book:MS
 'He showed me the book.'
- [V-A] [tla→T] [ʔal→R]
 c. *məgzi-l* *tal-i* *ʔal-ox*
 show_{PFV-A:3MS} OBJ-1SG on-2MS
 'He showed me to you_{MS}.'

All of this points to a constructional split between *qaṭəl-* and *qṭil-* in the treatment of independent pronominal objects. The L-suffixes are still favored as object indexes in *qaṭəl-* and the independent prepositional pronouns as recipient markers, whereas independent prepositional pronominal objects are more readily available in *qṭil-* and tend to be blocked from the recipient function in clauses with two pronominal arguments.

4.4.3 Alternative II: Stacking of L-suffixes

Stacking of L-suffixes in constructions like *xzé-le-la* 'He saw her' is attested in several NENA dialects, presented on Map 5 at the end of this chapter, which are the Jewish dialects of Azerbaijan,⁷² such as J. Urmi, and Christian dialects in Turkey, including the so-called *h*-dialects Umṛa (Hobrack 2000), Jinnet (Noorlander field notes) and Artun (Hertevin, Jastrow 1988) as well as Borb-Ruma (Bohtan; Fox 2009), Haşşan (Hassane, Jastrow 1997), Beşpen (Sinha 2001), Harbole (Khan field notes) and dialects in the Khabur valley originating in Turkey (Talay 2011, 63).⁷³ It is arguably analogical to the same use of L-suffixes in *qaṭəl-*,⁷⁴ and the basis for this analogical extension would have been

⁷² See § 3.3.2.1.

⁷³ The third person objects can have distinct morphemes in some dialects, resulting in an accusative pattern, see § 4.1.1.3. It also occurs further to the west in Turoyo and Mlaḥsó, discussed in Chapter 5.

⁷⁴ Cf. Pennacchietti (1994).

ditransitive constructions, presumably in order to neutralize object marking across *q̄t̄il-/q̄at̄al-*.

Coghill (2016, 64–65) subsumes patterns with constructions like *q̄t̄ál-la-le* ‘She killed him’ in NENA under accusative alignment because of the fixed V-A-P affix order and because the second L-suffix occupies a slot distinct from the first. There are nevertheless a number of reasons to still consider the stacking of L-suffixes to be a type distinct from the rest and not simply accusative. I would be reluctant to consider a potentially English pattern like *Her saw her* and *Her slept* to be simply the same as *She saw her* and *She slept*? Though the fixed word order would contribute to argument discrimination, clearly not the identical morphological marking. Thus, although the fixed affix order in this construction in NENA helps distinguish A from P,⁷⁵ it should not be subsumed under accusative alignment in terms of morphological marking.

Other viewpoints found in the literature are ambiguous. Barotto (2015, 242–243), for instance, considers this a system that “tends towards accusative alignment”, since the L-suffixes “function as accusative markers” alongside “a marked ergative subject”. Similarly, Khan (2017, 891) speaks in terms of “ergative verbs”, where the pronominal object is expressed “by attaching a second L-suffix after the L-suffix that expresses the ergative subject”. Both point to the fact that the inverted preterit is generally limited to the third person, as would be predicted for the ergative type according to the prominence hierarchy. The person restrictions on the inverted preterit, however, should not be considered evidence of ergative alignment in accordance with the prominence hierarchy. The second L-suffix is conditioned by the higher ranking properties of the object, while the L-suffixes denoting s and A are obligatory for agreement in general. This point has been raised repeatedly: due to differential object marking, the trigger potential is primarily accusative in all Neo-Aramaic dialects, even for the inverted preterit, albeit limited to the third person.

4.4.3.1 From Ditransitive to Monotransitive Verbs?

As will be shown, the properties of the second L-suffix are indeed similar to those of the L-suffix added to the *q̄at̄al*-base.

Constructions like *xz̄é-le-la* ‘He saw you’ are restricted to recipient-like arguments in several Jewish and Christian varieties,⁷⁶ also indicated on Map 5, e.g.

75 See § 2.3.2.3. for why affix order is not considered a determinant of argument grouping in this approach.

76 See Noorlander (2021).

hú -li -lax 'I gave to you_{FS}'

One finds such stacking also in *qaṭəl-* at least in the Jewish *lishana deni* varieties, e.g. Zakho (NW Iraq; cf. Cohen 2012, 163–165) and Dohok (Molin 2021) as well as in the Christian dialects in Turkey, such as Artun (Hertevin, SE Turkey; Jastrow 1988, 63), Marga (SE Turkey) and the Khabur valley (Talay 2008, 316). They regularly allow such stacking of L-suffixes in a double object construction for the themes that refer to the third person. The first L-suffixes always denote the theme, the second one always the recipient:

(14) J. Dohok (NW Iraq)

[-A -T -R]
bə-yāw -ón -nu -lox
 FUT-give_{IPFV} -1MS -3PL -2MS
 'I_M will give them to you_{MS}.'

Christian dialects like Marga and Jewish *lishana deni* dialects, such as Dohok, Zakho and 'Amedia, can also avail themselves of a similar construction, where the *qṭil*-form of the ditransitive verb takes two L-suffixes. The supplementary L-suffix can be used to encode only R. It can never encode T or P; compare:

(15) Stacked L-suffixes (J. Dohok, NW Iraq; cf. Hoberman 1989, 108–109)

- a. *hu-le -li*
 give_{PFV}-A:3MS -R:1SG
 'He gave to me (R).'
- b. ***hú-le -lu*
 give_{PFV}-A:3MS -T:3PL
 'He gave them (T) (to sb).'
- c. ***šme'-lu -li*
 hear_{PFV}-A:3PL -P:1SG
 'They heard me (P).'

In person-unrestricted constructions, as those found in J. 'Amedia, the stacked L-suffixes are used with ditransitive verbs as an alternative to *qṭil-a-le*, to express the goal or recipient, such as the addressee of *'mr* 'say':

TABLE 27 Imperfective–perfective parallelism of object marking L-suffixes

	A	R		A	P
<i>qaṭəl-</i>	E <i>yaw-a</i> ‘She gives	L <i>-lux</i> (to) you _{MS} ’	::	E <i>qaṭl-a</i> ‘She kills	L <i>-lux</i> you _{MS} ’
<i>qṭil-</i>	L <i>wál-la</i> ‘She gave	L <i>-lux</i> to you _{MS} ’	:: ::	L <i>qṭál-la</i> ‘She killed	L <i>-lux</i> you _{MS} ’

DATA BASED ON DAMSMA (FORTHCOMING)

- c. *mór* *-re* *-la* *lal-an* (ditransitive)
say_{P_{FV}} -A:3MS -T:3FS R:to-1PL
‘He told it_F to us.’ (lit. Him said her to-us)

s, A, P, T and R are therefore morphologically neutralized in systems like the one exemplified for C. Haşşan above. The object-marking L-suffixes neatly align with each other across the *qaṭəl-* and *qṭil-* constructions. Compare the forms in Table 27 above. The arrow indicates the direction of the analogy from *qaṭəl-* to *qṭil-*. The parallel would have been first available in the person indexes denoting the recipient and then extended to all objects.

It seems plausible, therefore, that *xzé-le-la* ‘He saw her’ at least partly developed in analogy to the *qaṭəl-* forms, where the L-suffixes specifically mark objects and spread from ditransitives to monotransitives.

4.4.3.2 Agent Marking Sensitive to Aspect

When we turn to Christian dialect of Borb-Ruma (Bohtan, SE Turkey; Fox 2009), marking s and A by means of the same set as P is part of an additional tense-aspect sensitive constructional split. The E-set is used to mark the realis perfect for both intransitive and transitive verbs, for example:

- (18) C. Borb-Ruma (Bohtan, SE Turkey; Fox 2002, 72, 73.3, 2009)
a. *qəm-li* ‘I got up, rose.’ (L-set)
b. *qim-ən* ‘I_M am up, have risen.’ (E-set)
c. *ğze-Ø-wa xa xalma* ‘He had seen a dream.’ (E-set)

The L-set is used as object indexes in the perfect:

- d. *ǵz-ən-na* (< -ən + -la) 'I_M have seen **her**.'
 e. *mutw-əx-la* 'We have put **her**.'

Objects are regularly marked by the L-set in both *qaṭəl-* and *qṭil-* based verbal forms in the Borb-Ruma dialect, e.g.

- f. *xoz-ən-na* (< -ən + -la) 'I see her.' (present)

Indeed, the E-set never marks the object; it only expresses s and A. Even the third person forms that would express the object in the majority of NENA denote the agent (Fox 2009, 52–54):

- g. *ptix-i-le* 'They have opened it_M.'
 (≠ **'He has opened **them**')

Christian Borb-Ruma is unique in this respect: the person-role inversion is totally absent and the choice of inflection for subject agreement is completely tense-aspect-sensitive, treating both intransitive and transitive verbs alike. No person-role split exists, because there is no role inversion: the *qṭil*-perfect patterns exactly like *qaṭəl-*.

The object marking is stable throughout. The two subsystems are represented in (19) and (20) below.

(19) **Preterit: Neutral morphological marking**

- a. *qəm-li* (intransitive)
 rise_{PFV-S:1SG}
 'I rose.'
- b. *ǵzé-li-la* (transitive)
 see_{PFV-A:1SG-P:3FS}
 'I saw **her**.'

(20) **Realis perfect: Accusative morphological marking**

- a. *qim-en* (intransitive)
 rise_{PFV-S:1MS}
 'I have risen.'

- b. *gʒ-ən-na* (transitive)
 see_{PFV-A:1MS-P:3FS}
 'I_M have seen her.'

Object marking has been levelled in C. Borb-Ruma, while maintaining the aspectual distinction in subject and agent indexes between *qṭil-ən-na* 'I have killed her' and *qṭəl-li-la* 'I killed her'.

Therefore, while using the L-set for P throughout seems to be primary, this incidentally leads to the identical marking of S, A and P by means of the same set in the perfective past, where only the affix order serves to discriminate grammatical functions.

4.4.4 *Alternative 111: Mixing of L- and E-suffixes*

The stacking of L-suffixes in the preterit neutralizes grammatical distinctions, with S, A and P all being marked by means of the same L-suffixes. Some Christian dialects in SE Turkey, most notably Artun (Hertevin; Jastrow 1988), but also Umṛa (Hobrack 2000) and Jinnet,⁷⁸ use a distinct set to mark A. Since this is modelled on the E-set in transitive *qaṭəl*-based constructions, Coghill (2016, 64–65) subsumes this under accusative alignment, while Barotto (2015, 224–245) and Khan (2017, 891) argue for partial adaptation to accusative alignment for the first and second person. In fact, observing that “ergative” L-suffixes mark S, Barotto (2015, 244) maintains the “3rd person shows the higher degree of ergativity”, and, similarly, Khan (2017, 891) maintains the L-suffixes of the 3rd person reflect the ergative subject. The special suffixes used for the first and second person are considered to reflect a tendency towards accusative alignment in accordance with the prominence hierarchy.

By contrast, I will demonstrate that this morphology cannot be simply regarded as an accusative type of verbal person marking. In fact, the partial convergence with the transitive *qaṭəl*-model incidentally results in special marking of A and thus ergative alignment, albeit confined to the first and second person rather than the third, and conditioned by the presence of a co-argument, namely an object index; both contrary to the expectations of the prominence hierarchy. Finally, none of these varieties seem to have additional flagging of definite objects, so that the nominal marking pattern is neutral.

78 See Pennacchietti (1991; 1994, 274–275) and Mengozzi (2012, 31) for examples throughout literary texts from NW Iraq, which suggest that this construction is not necessarily a recent development and used to be more common.

TABLE 28 Three types of transitive perfective past constructions

<i>qtil-</i>	P	A	
E-SET + L-SET	$[-1,2;3MS]$ -E	$[1,2]$ -L	<i>baḥti ḥəzy-a-li</i> 'I saw my wife.'
<i>qtil-</i>	A	P	
L-E-SET + L-SET	$[+1,2]$ -L-E	$[1,2]$ -L	<i>ḥzé-l-ən-na baḥtoḥ</i> 'I _M saw your _{MS} wife.'
L-SET + L-SET	$[-1,2]$ -L	$[1,2]$ -L	<i>ḥzé-le-la baḥtoḥ</i> 'He saw your _{MS} wife.'

DATA BASED ON JASTROW (1988) AND NOORLANDER FIELD NOTES

4.4.4.1 Multiple Transitive Constructions

There are several constructions available and each of them person-restricted: a typical inverted *qtil*-construction confined to third person Ps (*ḥəzy-a-le* 'He saw her'), stacking of L-suffixes confined to third person As (*ḥzé-le-la* 'He saw her') and a mixture of the two confined to first and second person As (see Table 28 above). The argument belongs to a particular person category and this absolute ranking determines the choice of construction. Only A and P are affected, while s is not. In actual transitive clauses, different combinations of person markers are possible.

First of all, object indexes from the E-set are limited⁷⁹ to 3pl. and 3fs. in C. Artun, for example:

[V(-P)-A] [P]
(21) *ḥze-li baḥta*
'I saw a woman.'

(22) *ḥəzy-a-li baḥti*
'I saw my wife.'

79 They can also mark the subject in the realis perfect (e.g. *dmih-en* 'I have slept'), see § 4.3.1.

Forms like *hze-le* can mean only ‘He saw’, not ***hze-Ø-le* ‘He saw **him**’. Jastrow (1988, 63) states that *qtil-a-le* is mainly used in differential object indexing in P-V word order; nevertheless, this form is certainly not excluded to this postverbal position. Clauses that omit P or include full indefinite nominal ps are treated similarly to intransitive clauses. Definite NPs like *bahti* ‘my wife’ above may be indexed by means of the E-set, reflecting an accusative pattern.

Secondly, additional L-suffixes express P for all persons, e.g.

- (23) *hze-le-le* ‘He saw **him**.’
hze-le-li ‘He saw **me**.’

Remarkably, the person restriction on stacking of L-suffixes in monotransitive verbs is also found ditransitive verbs. Two consecutive L-suffixes are also employed in ditransitive constructions other than *qtil*-. Thus, unlike the majority of NENA dialects, C. Artun allows stacking in *qaṭal*- as well as the imperative, e.g. *hal-le-li* ‘Give **them** to me’ (*hal* ‘give!’ + *-lehən* ‘them’ + *li* ‘me’). This is limited to a third person theme index and parallels the restriction to third person agents immediately following *qtil*-. (24) offers a schema for comparison.⁸⁰

- (24) C. Artun (SE Turkey; Jastrow 1988, 63)

a. <i>hze</i> see _{PFV}	[A] [3] -le A:3 PL	[P] [1,2,3] -li P:1 SG	‘They saw me.’
	[T] [3]	[R] [1,2,3]	
b. <i>hal</i> give:IMPV	-le T:3 PL	-li R:1 SG	‘Give them to me!’

In light of this, it would seem that at least for C. Artun, stacking of L-suffixes is principally avoided depending on person reference and not a particular participant role by itself, since this is disfavored for both themes as well as agents in combinations of dependent person markers.

For first and second person agents, C. Artun blends the L- and E-suffixes to a separate set, which we shall refer to as the *L-E-suffixes*, for example:

80 In other contexts, R is expressed by means of the preposition (*la*)- ‘to, for’, e.g. *mat'en-nen-na lal-ew* ‘I_M loaded it **for him**’ (Jastrow 1988, 112.59).

- (25) *hʒé-l-áh-lehon* 'We saw you_{PL}' (***hʒe-lan-lehon*)
hʒé-l-át-ti 'You_{MS} saw me' (***hʒe-loh-li*)

A closer examination reveals that the expression of A differs for the non-third person forms, but is partly identical to *qaṭəl*-. The shape and order of the E-suffixes (such as *-ən* 1MS) followed by L-suffixes (such as *-lah* 2FS) are exactly the same (e.g. *-ən-nah* < *-ən* + *-lah*), but an /l/-element intrudes between the *qṭil*- and person marking. We can schematize this as follows:

- (26) *haz* *-ən* *-lah* *hazənnah* 'I_M see you_{FS}'
 IPFV A P
 BASE- E-SET L-SET
 PFV- ↓L↓- A P
hʒe- *l-* *ən* *-lah* *hʒélənnah* 'I_M saw you_{FS}'

This transitive perfective construction therefore shows a peculiar case of blending of both the E- and L-suffixes to what we could term 'L-E-suffixes'. These 'L-E-suffixes' are of a binary 'L-' and 'E-' nature; they can be treated either like E-suffixes or like L-suffixes. They generally align with the L-suffixes, where they pattern like stacked L-suffixes, where *-wa* is inserted before the L-suffixes to form the plupreterit, e.g.

- (27) **L-E suffixes after past convertor** (Jastrow 1988, 61)
hʒe- *-wa* *-le* *-la* *hʒéwalela* 'He had seen her'
 BASE -PAST -L(-E) -L
hʒe- *-wa-* *-l-ən* *-la* *hʒéwalənnə* 'I_M had seen her'

Occasionally, however, they align with the E-suffixes in *qaṭəl*- where they precede *-wa*-:

- (28) **L-E suffixes before past convertor** (Jastrow 1988, 62)
haz *-ən* *-wa* *-lah* *hazónwalah* 'I_M saw you_{FS}'
 BASE (L)-E -PAST -L
hʒe *-l-ən* *-wa* *-lah* *hʒələnwalah* 'I_M had seen you_{FS}'

The L-E-series are possibly an attempt to harmonize argument encoding across transitive constructions. This also includes the predicative possessor, also marked by L-suffixes in NENA dialects. The same L-E-set is employed, if an L-suffix indexing the object possessum follows, e.g. *lát-la haye m-tu məndi* 'She has no knowledge about anything', *lát-l-áh-le (lát-lan + -le) haye* 'We have no

knowledge of that' (Jastrow 1988, 66–67). Similarly, intransitive verbs that take a B-series of affixes derived from the preposition *b-* follow this pattern, e.g. *nṭár-r-án-be* 'I_M looked at him'.

The same L-E-suffixes also occur in the deictic copula based on *ho-* to express an observable result state, e.g. *ho-l-ən tiwa* 'I_M am seated', corresponding to both *ho-li tiwa* and *how-ən tiwa* in other NENA varieties. This is the only context where they can occur with the object affix.

4.4.4.2 Ergativity and Split Agent-Marking

Speakers of Artun thus make use of several constructions to express the perfective past. The three that include a pronominal object are sensitive person-role effects. The L-E-suffixes occur only together with object indexes. They cannot be used to encode S or A without an index of P. Constructions like ***dməḥ-l-ən* 'I_M slept' with subject coding instead of simply *dməḥ-li* are impossible. Agent coding without a patient index is not possible either: ***ḥze-l-ən (ḥá)-baḥta* 'I_M saw a woman'. When there is no patient index, S and A are treated alike by means of the L-suffixes (*dməḥ-li*, *ḥze-li*). When P is indexed, however, the whole construction changes depending on the person of P and/or A.

Dialects like C. Artun, therefore, not only have a person-driven differential marking of P (*gniw-a-li* 'I stole it_F' vs. *ḥzé-la-li* 'She saw me'), but also a person-driven differential marking of A (*ḥzé-le-la* 'He saw her' vs. *ḥzé-l-ən-na* 'I_M saw her'). The use of the E-set as patient indexes for third person forms (*gniw-a-le* 'I stole it_F') mirrors its incorporation as agent indexes in the L-E-set for first and second person forms (*ḥzé-l-ən-na* 'I_M saw her').

Consequently, while the convergence with the *qaṭal*-construction is evident,⁸¹ this leads to an unmistakably ergative alignment pattern due to the special marking of A, to illustrate:

(29) Ergative pattern for non-third person reference in C. Artun (SE Turkey; Jastrow 1988)

a. *dməḥ-leḥon* (intransitive)
 sleep_{PFV-S:2PL}
 'You_{PL} fell asleep.'

b. *ḥzé-l-áḥ-leḥon* (transitive)
 see_{PFV-A:1PL-P:2PL}
 'We saw you_{PL}.'

81 See Pennacchietti (1994). Barotto (2015, 244–245) and Coghill (2016, 63, 65), subsume Artun (Hertevin) under dialects with accusative alignment.

The L-series groups *s* and *p* ergatively, while the L-E-series only marks *A*. Neutral morphology would be found in most other contexts, where *s*, *A* and *p* are all marked by the L-set (*hze-le-la* ‘He saw her’).⁸² In C. Artun, then, the ergative alignment in the preterit is sensitive to the person reference of *A*,⁸³ which only incidentally emerges due to cross-system harmonization.

This cross-system harmonization is only partial in closely related dialects in Turkey, starting with the third feminine singular. One can already observe the convergence in C. Borb-Ruma, where a shift from *a* to *o* occurs in the 3fs. L-suffix, when another L-suffix marking *p* is added, i.e. *xze-la* ‘She saw’ → *xze-lo-le* ‘She saw him’. This shift incidentally also occurs in the corresponding *qaṭal*-form, e.g. *xazy-a* ‘She sees’ → *xazy-o-le* ‘She sees him’. This is because stressed *á* in an open syllable shifted to *o* in C. Borb-Ruma. The same phenomenon exists in Jinnet, but, here, the second person singulars are harmonized, so that *hzi-lo-le* ‘She saw him’ occurs beside *hzi-lət-ti* ‘You_{MS} saw me’. The dialects of Umṛa did not undergo the vowel shift, but the second person singulars do have a special marker in the transitive preterit, e.g. *hze-lət-ti* ‘You_{MS} saw me’, similarly to Jinnet. This could indicate that the harmonization was triggered by an analogy between the 3fs. L-suffix *-la* and the 3fs. E-suffix *-a*, the first could be analyzed as composed of an *l*-element and the E-suffix, i.e. *xze-l-a-le* ‘She saw him’.

4.4.5 *Alternative IV: qam-qaṭal-construction*

The convergence with or analogy to the unmarked transitive *qaṭal*-inflection is complete in the so-called *qam-qaṭal*-formation, which is by far the most common cross-dialectally.⁸⁴ Essentially, the *qam-qaṭal*-construction is an attempt to maintain the L-suffixes for the primary set for object indexes similarly to the alternatives II and III. Since this transitive verbal form is completely based on *qaṭal*-, Barotto (2015, 240–241) and Coghill (2016, 64–65) subsume this under accusative alignment, and, though not stated explicitly, Khan (2017, 891–892) mentions this in his discussion of a shift towards the accusative type. Chyet (1995, 245) adopts the term “pseudo-ergative” to refer to the dialects that use the *qam-qaṭal*-preterit. He prefers this term, because transitive and intransitive verbs are treated differently.

82 This is apart from the alternative pattern for 3fs. and 3pl. where *p* may be marked by the E-set (*hazy-a-le* ‘He saw her’).

83 By contrast, the ergative alignment found for the preterit in Jewish Trans-Zab dialects is sensitive to the person reference of *p*; see § 3.3.1.1.

84 On the distribution of this construction in Christian poetry of Iraq, see Mengozzi (2012, 33).

As we will see, however, the main distinction is not between transitive and intransitive verbs *per se*, but the presence or absence of two dependent person markers in transitive verbal person marking. Moreover, for similar reasons to the L-E-series discussed in the previous sections, one cannot regard this type as simply showing accusative morphology because its inflectional morphemes attach to *qaṭəl*-. Alignment is identified primarily on the basis of a relationship between s and another argument. The relationship between *qam-qaṭəl*-constructions and intransitives makes sense only when one considers it part of the system of the perfective past together with *qṭil*-. Although the *qam-qaṭəl*-stem is based on the transitive morphosyntax of *qaṭəl*-, it is confined to transitive perfective past clauses and functions as the equivalent to *qṭəl-le* with an object index. Thus, as we will see, *pace* the aforementioned authors, this relationship incidentally leads to an additional distinction between s and A but overlap between s and P. Consequently, this is best understood as a type of ergative verbal person marking, which, in turn, is conditioned by the presence of a co-argument, namely an object index.

4.4.5.1 Two Basic Transitive Constructions

The *qam-qaṭəl*-construction (see § 4.1.1.1.) is found in the majority of Jewish and Christian dialects, which otherwise group s and A in the preterit by means of the L-suffixes, and it serves to indicate the preterit of transitive clauses with an object index without inversion (*qaṭəl-A-P*). It alternates and competes with the inverted preterit based on *qṭil*- (*qṭil-P-A*). We can refer to the two types as *qam-qaṭəl-le* and *qṭil-a-le*, respectively. Map 6 at the end of this chapter shows the areal distribution of the relevant splits between *qam-qaṭəl-le* for at least the first and second person and person-restricted or unrestricted *qṭil-a-le* in the various NENA dialects surveyed here. Whereas person-unrestricted constructions, as those found in J. ‘Amedia, would seem to have two constructions that co-vary, *qam-qaṭəl-le* is in complementary distribution with *qṭil-a-le* in person-restricted constructions. The person restriction confines *qṭil-a-le* to third person objects in, for instance, J. Zakho (NW Iraq; Cohen 2012), so that constructions like ***qṭil-ax-lu* ‘They killed us’ do not occur, but the *qam-qaṭəl*-formation is required instead, e.g. *qam-qaṭl-i-lan*.

Furthermore, *qṭəl-Ø-le* ‘He killed **him**’ cannot be interpreted as having a zero morpheme expression for the 3ms. object in several dialects, such as C. Baghdeda (Qaraqosh, NW Iraq; Khan 2002a, 140) and C. Aradhin (NW Iraq; Krotkoff 1982, 28). The *qam-qaṭəl*-preterit is the only means to express a 3ms. object, which marginalizes *qṭil-a-le* even further, for example C. Aradhin

3fs.	<i>xəzy</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-li</i>	'I saw her'
3pl.	<i>xəzy</i>	<i>-i</i>	<i>-li</i>	'I saw them'
3ms.	<i>qam-xāz-</i>	<i>ən</i>	<i>-ne</i>	'I saw him'

In fact, ***q̣ıl-a-le* is completely obsolete in numerous dialects, including C. Nerwa (NW Iraq), C. Koy Sanjaq (NE Iraq) and C. Sanandaj (W Iran), where the *qam-qaṭəl*-construction is the only means of expressing transitive verbal person marking in the perfective past, i.e. *qam-xaz-ən-na* 'I saw her', but ***xəzy-a-li* is impossible.

The two transitive preterits correlate with respect to the person-role constraint and are at the same time paradigmatically linked. *qam-qaṭəl-le* is a transitive perfective past construction dedicated to mark the object differently for dialect-dependent reasons.

A number of scholars, namely Hoberman (1989, 52–53) for J. 'Amedia (NW Iraq), Fox (1997, 83) for C. Jilu (SE Turkey), Cohen (2012, 238) for J. Zakho (NW Iraq) have argued that *q̣ıl-a-le* is favored in the differential indexing of object NPs, while *qam-qaṭəl-le* is largely confined to the expression of pronominal objects.⁸⁵ This can be illustrated by the following sentences from J. 'Amedia:

(30) J. 'Amedia (NW Iraq; Hoberman 1989, 186.3)

	[V-S]	[S]	[V- A	-P]		
a.	<i>te-le</i>	<i>bab-e</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>qam-xaze</i>	<i>-Ø</i>	<i>-le bə-bxaya</i>
	come _{PFV} -S:3MS	father-his	and	PFV-see	-A:3MS	-P:3MS in-crying
	'His father came and saw him crying.'					
	[V	-P	-A]	[P]		
b.	<i>xze</i>	<i>-Ø</i>	<i>-le</i>	<i>bron-e</i>	<i>bə-bxaya</i>	
	see _{PFV}	-P:3MS	-A:3MS	son-his	in-crying	
	'He saw his son crying.'					

Thus *qam-qaṭəl-le* is not always used in the same contexts, as illustrated for J. 'Amedia below.

(31) J. 'Amedia (NW Iraq; adapted from Hoberman 1989; Greenblatt 2011)

	<i>q̣ıl-le</i>	<i>qam-qaṭəl-le</i>
a.	<i>šmī'-a-lu</i>	c. <i>qam-šam'-i-la</i>
	'They heard her.'	

85 Cf. also Cohen (2012, 238) for J. Zakho.

TABLE 29 Distribution of *qam-qaṭəl-le* and *qṭil-a-le* within texts

	J. ‘Amedia		J. Betanure		C. Barwar	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
<i>qam-qaṭəl-le</i>	103	76	218	71	234	70
<i>qṭil-a-le</i>	33	24	94	29	101	30
TOTAL	136	100	308	100	335	100

- b. *šmi²-a-lu baxta*
‘They heard the woman.’
- d. (**)*qam-šam²-i-la baxta*

This suggests that, when both are available, *qam-qaṭəl-le* is only secondarily included in the differential indexing of definite NPs.

A more recent description of J. ‘Amedia (Greenblatt 2011), however, indicates that both forms can be used in differential object indexing. Thus, both preterits are used in differential object indexing and their distribution seems to be free, except for the following factors. Noorlander and Molin (2020) show that about 25–30% of the transitive preterits involve *qṭil-a-le* against about a 70–75% majority of *qam-qaṭəl-le* in narrative texts from J. ‘Amedia (Greenblatt 2011),⁸⁶ J. Betanure (Mutzafi 2008a) and C. Barwar (Khan 2008a), as shown in Table 29 above. This is irrespective of person restrictions, since J. ‘Amedia shows no person restrictions. These are indications that a verbal paradigm is gradually being replaced by another.

This replacement can presumably be attributed to the influence of Iraqi *koine* in some Christian communities. Among my younger informants of C. Marga (SE Turkey), who have grown up in Iraq, *qam-qaṭəl-le* is preferred in general, while older informants originally from Turkey prefer to use *qṭil-a-le* for all persons. The same seems to hold for other villages, e.g. C. Bebede (NW Iraq), where the younger speakers favor *qam-qaṭəl-le*.

The *qam-qaṭəl*-preterit does not appear to be combinable with prepositional arguments that take s-like subjects. Forms like ***qam-ra²əš-Ø ²abbi* ‘He noticed me’ do not appear to be possible, only *r²əš-le ²abbi* ‘He noticed me’. Consequently primary transitive verbs, such as *xzy* ‘see’, are treated differently:

86 This also includes first and second person objects in J. ‘Amedia.

(32) J. Zakho (NW Iraq; Cohen 2012)

	[V	-S]	[OBL]		[V	-A	-P]
a.	rʔəš	-le	ʔabbi	b.	qam-xaze	-Ø	-li
	'He noticed me.'				'He saw me.'		

Clauses with an indefinite full NP, therefore, are indistinct from intransitive predicates, to illustrate:

	[V	-A]	[full NP]
c.	xze	-le	xmara
	'He saw a donkey'.		

Such sensitivity to transitivity is largely morphological and lexical.

It is noteworthy that dialects tend to favor *qtil-a-le* for intransitive verbs with a dummy, non-referential object that display transitive morphology, e.g. *ʔriq-a-le* 'He fled (lit. fled it_F)' (Noorlander and Molin 2020). It has been reported that such verbs are not always excluded altogether from the *qam-qatəl*-formation, such as J. Zakho *qam-gamš-ī-la* 'They smiled', lit. 'They smiled (lit. it_F)' (Cohen 2012, 142). Nevertheless, Noorlander and Molin found no such examples in the texts for J. 'Amedia, J. Betanure, C. Barwar, C. Urmi and C. Marga. Moreover, *qtil-a-le* is by far the more common expression for object indexing of the reflexive pronoun *gyan-*. This seems to be the source of the dummy 3fs. object coding, e.g. *ʔriq-a-le* 'He fled (lit. fled it_F)', originating in *ʔriq-a-le gyan-e* lit. 'He fled himself'.

Similarly, ditransitive verbs, such as *ʔmr* 'say', are used differently in these dialects. The dialects without person restrictions, like J. 'Amedia, freely use the E-suffix to express also recipients of the first/second person, e.g. *mīr-ət-ti* 'I told you_{MS}'. In person-restricted constructions this would not be possible, and alternative expressions must be used, e.g. J. Betanure *mār-ri ʔtalox* 'I told you_{MS}'. Consequently, ditransitive constructions like *qam-ʔamr-ən-nox* 'I told you_{MS}' are less common than the free form *mār-ri* in such dialects, because only the latter combines with prepositional objects.

4.4.5.2 Ergativity and Split Agent-Marking

The *qam-qatəl-le*-construction is the most extreme case of adapting transitive coding to the *qatəl*-model of unmarked transitive clauses. There is a constructional split between clauses where all arguments are marked by dependent person markers and those where only A is dependent. Full nominal objects are thus treated differently. Like the L-E-series discussed in the previous section, this does not lead to accusative person marking, but arguably something closer to ergative morphology.

A fundamental difference between the two type of preterits is that *qam-qaṭəl-le* obligatorily takes patient indexes, while *qṭəl-le* need not, as the following examples show: (33e) P is not expressible, (33f) is omitted or (33g) its referentiality is reduced to an indefinite NP, so that *qam-qaṭəl-le* cannot be used.

(33) J. 'Amedia (NW Iraq, person-unrestricted; adapted from Hoberman 1989)

<i>qṭəl-le</i>	<i>qam-qaṭəl-le</i>	
a. <i>dməx-lu</i>	e. <i>**qam-damx-i</i>	(no P)
'They went to sleep.'		
b. <i>xəl-lu</i>	f. <i>**qam-ʾaxl-i</i>	(implicit P)
'They ate.'		
c. <i>xil-i-lu xabuše</i>	g. <i>**qam-ʾaxl-i xabuše</i>	(indef P)
'They ate apples.'		
d. <i>xil-i-lu</i>	h. <i>qam-ʾaxl-i-lu</i>	(pron P)
'They ate them .'		

There is no *a priori* morphological reason why objectless forms, like ***qam-ʾaxl-i* 'They ate', or intransitive verbs, such as ***qam-damx-i* 'They slept', should be avoided. The *qaṭəl*-form without an object L-suffix ('*ʾaxl-i*-' 'They eat') could, in theory, serve as base for any similar perfective derivation (*qam-ʾaxl-i* 'They ate'), but it is not readily used as such. Polotsky (1961, 21 fn.), referring to C. Urmi, mentions that such objectless forms sporadically do occur. It seems that such forms occur alongside another *qam-qaṭəl*-construction that does have object coding, e.g. *qam-doq-a* (Ø) *l-ḥa mənne qam-maḥy-a-lə l-arra* 'She seized one of them (and) hit him to the ground' (C. Urmi, Socin 1882 67.10; transcription simplified). Examples such as these indicate the possibility of omitting an object suffix at least when implied in the immediate context, but they are not possible for a corresponding intransitive valence, when the patient is unexpressed (e.g. ***qam-ʾaxl-i* 'They ate').

qam-qaṭəl-le, then, is a transitive perfective past construction dedicated to two dependent person markers, serving as a device to mark the object differently in the preterit. Thus, *qam-qaṭəl-le* constitutes an integral part of the paradigm of *qṭəl-le*, just as much as *qṭil-a-le*. *qam-qaṭəl-le* is not an integral part of the other inflections based on *qaṭəl*-, but should be considered a separate stem for transitive coding as a suppletive alternant of *qṭil*-. Transitive clauses involving transitive verbal person marking are thus treated differently from intransitives. This affects transitivity alternations: compare the verb *pṭx* 'open' in (34a) and (34b) taken from the closely related dialect of Betanure. *qṭəl-le* always expresses the intransitive valence pattern, while *qam-qaṭəl-le* is used when the same referent *tar'a* 'the door' is indexed differentially.

(34) J. Betanure (NW Iraq; Mutzafi 2008a, 256.399, 266.426)

	[S]	[V-S]		
a.	<i>tar'a</i>	<i>p̄tax-le</i>		(intr., <i>q̄til</i> -pret.)
	door:MS	open _{PFV} -S:3MS		
	'The door opened.'			
	[P]	[V-A-P]		
b.	<i>tar'a</i>	<i>qam-pātx-i-le</i>	<i>ṭal-u</i>	(tr., <i>qam</i> -pret.)
	door:MS	PFV-open _{IPFV} -A:3PL-P:3MS	DAT-3MS	
	'They opened the door for him.'			

The *qaṭal*-base is the lesser marked for TAM of the two inflectional bases, while *q̄til*- is more marked for such properties. The presence of *qam*- as well as two distinct verbal person markers of A and P indicates that the clause is transitive as well as perfective past. This is consistent with the tendency for agreement affixes to become devices to differentiate between intransitive and transitive verbs (Givón 1976, 168). In NENA, the TAM-marker *qam* is thus specified for perfective pastness as well as two-argument clauses. Prioritizing the transitive morphology of *qaṭal*- comes at the cost of indirectly also affecting the encoding of A in the same paradigm, just like the L-E series in C. Artun.

The distinction between transitive and intransitive clauses is even more conventionalized in varieties, where ***q̄til-a-le* is completely absent.⁸⁷ The perfective TAM-marker *qam*- is combined with *qaṭal*- as the *only* expression of the perfective past with a P index. A form like *xze-le* 'He saw' cannot be combined with an object person form of any kind (neither E-set, ***xəzy-a-le*, nor L-set, ***xzé-le-la*), but shifts to a form like *qəm-xaze-Ø-le* 'He saw him' instead. We can illustrate this system with the following examples from C. Nerwa (NW Iraq):

(35) C. Nerwa (NW Iraq)

	[V-S]	[S]		
a.	<i>dmax-la</i>	<i>baxta</i>	'The woman slept.'	(S = L-set)
	[V-A]	[P: fNP]		
b.	<i>xze-le</i>	<i>xa baxta</i>	'He saw a woman.'	(A = L-set)
	[V-A-P]			
c.	<i>qəm-xaze-Ø</i>	<i>-li</i>	'He saw me.'	(P = L-set)

87 cf. Mengozzi (2002b, 42).

- d. *qəm-xaze-Ø -la* 'He saw **her**.'
- e. *qəm-xaze-Ø -la baxti* 'He saw **my wife**.'

Although *qam-qaṭal-le* is obviously partly parasitic on the morphosyntax of *qaṭal-* due to its inflectional base, there is a conspicuous morphosyntactic division in the inflectional paradigm of the perfective past based on the transitive coding, which, strictly speaking, does not unambiguously select a particular set of grammatical functions, but a combination thereof. The L-set is used to mark S and A for a *qṭil*-based form only and at the same time only P for a *qam-qaṭal*-based form. It is the A that is treated differently in a particular context, while S and P remain unaffected. We can approach the split between the two preterits from the perspective of co-argument sensitivity (Witzlack-Makarevich et al. 2016). The morphosyntax splits along two distinct constructions, of which one is associated with A in the presence of an object index, i.e. *qam-qaṭal-le*, and another with all other clause types. The L-suffixes serve to signal the more salient argument in both constructions. As *qṭal-le* is confined to clauses with *one* dependent person marker and *qam-qaṭal-le* to clauses with *two* dependent person markers. There is a neat split between accusative and arguably ergative alignment due to special marking of A, which, in turn, is conditioned by referential properties of P.

This is precisely what we would expect for an ergative pattern (see § 4.4.1.1.): a higher degree of morphosyntactic transitivity, namely the presence of a type of object, triggers distinct marking of A, illustrated in Table 30 below. When there is no object agreement or P is low in ranking, such as indefinite full nominals, S and A are grouped together accusatively by means of the L-set, hence *dməx-le* and *qṭal-le*. The P role is isolated in not being coded overtly on the verb. When there is morphosyntactically a pronominal object and/or P is high in ranking, such as first/second person and definite full nominals, S and P are arguably grouped together ergatively by means of the L-set, hence *dməx-lux* 'You_{MS} slept' and *qəm-xaz-ax-lux* 'We saw you_{MS}'. The A function is isolated in being coded by the E-set (*qəm-xaz-ax-lux* 'We saw you_{MS}'). What is grouped together in both domains, is marked by the L-set.

Furthermore, a few dialects on the Nineveh Plains, such as C. Telkepe, combine differential object indexing with differential object flagging, as illustrated in (36) below. Here, the *qam-qaṭal*-construction is also invoked when the object requires prepositional marking. This differential treatment of P in flagging thus combines with a special construction, which incidentally also results into special indexing of A distinct from S, so that the nominal marking is accusative, but the cross-indexing is ergative in its morphology.

TABLE 30 Verbal person marking alignment in the preterit for *qam-qaṭəl-*

ACCUSATIVE	[P = full NP]	intr.	<i>qṭil-</i>	S L-set	P ∅
		tr.	<i>qṭil-</i>		
ERGATIVE	[P = pronoun]	intr.	<i>qṭil-</i>	S L-set	P L-set
		tr.	<i>qam-qaṭəl-</i>		

- (36) **C. Telkepe** (NW Iraq; Coghill 2010, 231, glossing slightly modified)
- a. *gorv npəl -lə* (s)
man:MS fall_{PFV} A:3MS
‘The/a man fell.’ (lit. Him fell)
- b. *qṭəl -lə gorv* (A and indef. P)
kill_{PFV} A:3MS man:MS
‘He killed a man.’ (lit. Him killed a man)
- c. *kəm-qāṭəl -∅ -lə ta- gorv* (A and def. P)
PFV-kill- -A:3MS -P:3MS DOM man:MS
‘He killed the man.’ (lit. He killed him to-man)

In conclusion, the complete adaptation of transitive verbal person marking from *qaṭəl-* into the perfective past results incidentally in the special treatment of clauses where both A and P are dependent person markers, i.e. cross-indexes. The resulting ergative person marking is similar to the L-E-series of Artun (Hertevin) (see § 4.4.4) and manifests ergativity under conditions opposite to those found in the Southeastern Trans-Zab Jewish varieties (see § 3.3.1.), namely, in this case, higher ranking persons.

4.5 Conclusion: Cross-System Harmonization

It is a common assumption⁸⁸ that NENA started out with an ergative alignment pattern in the perfective past. The dialectal microvariation is said to display a development from ‘split ergative’ in the direction of fully accusative alignment, as predicted by the prominence scale, which is grounded on the functional view of typology that, in an alignment split conditioned by referential properties, lower ranking arguments will pattern ergatively, but higher ranking ones will not (Silverstein 1976; Dixon 1995, 83–94). Thus, where there is a person restriction, some Aramaicists tend to attribute this to ergativity, and where the morphology is adjusted to the ‘imperfective’ transitive morphosyntax of *qaṭal*-, they speak of a shift towards accusative alignment.

The basic assumptions that the inverted *qṭil-a-le* is an ergative construction—because of a presumed coherent ergative original—and that constructions that are influenced by *qaṭal*-, by definition, display accusative morphology have obscured clearly observable facts about NENA alignment typology. After all, when alignment is identified on the basis of the similar or distinct treatment of S, A and P, *qṭil-a-le* cannot be simply characterized as ergative, nor the L-E-series in C. Artun (Hertevin) and the *qam-qaṭal*-construction as accusative. If this is correct, this has important repercussions for how the NENA data are to be understood typologically as well as historically. If these strategies to adjust the morphology to that of the unmarked morphosyntax incidentally lead to ergative verbal person marking, they cannot be said to promote accusative morphological alignment nor to comply with the prominence scales for alignment splits. The ergative morphological marking is thus an incidental outcome of dialect-specific contingencies, where the NENA microvariation is driven by other factors such as cross-system harmonization, and not by the prominence hierarchy.

In the end, S, A and P may each ‘lead a life of their own’ in NENA. Variation and change, therefore, are strictly based on the interaction of intransitive constructions and transitive constructions by means of verbal person marking, nominal marking, independent pronouns and system-internal factors, which are largely independent of how one classifies the entire arrangement as a whole. Overall, it is not always possible to group S, A and P in a general and/or coherent fashion. The same person marking sets can express the very opposite grammatical function depending on the dialect, e.g. Borb-Ruma *qṭil-i-le* ‘They have killed him’

88 See Section 1.5. and Mengozzi (2005), Khan (2007a; 2017), Doron and Khan (2012), Barotto (2015, 237).

vs. the rest of NENA *q̣til-i-le* 'He killed them'. Sometimes originally independent sets of person markers can hardly be kept apart from the dependent markers, because they have almost entirely fallen together by phonological changes.

All of the dialects discussed in this chapter group *s* and *A* in some respect, and when dialects use *q̣til-a-le* for transitive coding alongside *q̣ṭal-le* for transitive and intransitives alike, no ergative grouping is manifested in phonological form. *P* (i.e. the E-set) is distinct from *s* and *A* (i.e. the L-set). Person marking syntax is in general non-distinct from the corresponding *q̣aṭal*-constructions apart from the role reference inversion.

Indeed, it is the role reference inversion that tends to be avoided for dependent first and second person markers, irrespective of alignment type. System-internal factors particularly target transitive verbal person marking and incidentally result in the special treatment of transitive verbal person marking. Several constructions, listed in Table 31 below, serve as alternatives for *q̣til-a-le*, displaying an increasing adjustment to the unmarked morphosyntax of *q̣aṭal*.

These transitive constructions appear to have one basic principle in common: they make the pronominal object that occurs in postverbal position the regular expression of object indexes, which in the case of the L-suffixes becomes the same throughout the verbal system. This is modelled on the unmarked verbal forms based on *q̣aṭal*-, while maintaining whatever coding of the agent adjacent to the verbal base, i.e. V-A-P affix order. The transitive coding becomes closer to the more basic and dominant morphosyntax of *q̣aṭal*- in increasing adaptation of the verbal coding of *A* and *P*.

However one would analyze these constructions in terms of alignment, a higher degree of morphosyntactic transitivity triggering marking of *A* distinct from *s* is evidently not what we would expect for an accusative pattern. As it is only two-argument verbal person marking that is affected, the intransitive constructions remain independent of this cross-system harmonization. This was also observed for the compound verbal forms in dialects where the copula and 'all-series fall together with the E-suffixes and L-suffixes in transitive clauses with two dependent person markers. Similarly, the resulting alignment patterns in the simplex verbal forms, i.e. perfective past and/or perfect, are thus the incidental outcomes of this harmonization of transitive clauses with two cross-indexes across the system as a whole. Yet it would be misleading to say that such system-internal pressure from the main inflectional system therefore also results in the demise of ergativity. As we have seen, it is not ergativity or any other alignment type in itself that is being avoided, but rather the parallelism with the unmarked *q̣aṭal*-constructions that is favored for transitive clauses in general and first/second person *As* in particular.

TABLE 31 Transitive constructions that parallel *qatəl-*

	P	A		'You _{MS} saw me'
<i>q̣ṭil</i>	-E	-L	inverted role marking	<i>grīš-ən-nux</i>
		A	P	'You _{MS} saw me'
<i>q̣ṭil</i>		-L	PP	prepositional object <i>grəṣ-lux 'əlli</i>
<i>q̣ṭil</i>		-L	-L	stacking of L-suffixes <i>grəṣ-lux-li</i>
<i>q̣ṭil</i>	-l	-E	-L	mixing <i>grəṣ-l-ət-ti</i>
<i>q̣ṭil</i>	-E	-L		transitive realis perfect (= 'You _{MS} have seen me') <i>grīš-ət-li</i>
<i>qam-qatəl</i>	-E	-L		perfective past preverb <i>qam-garš-ət-ti</i>
<i>°qatəl</i>	-E	-L		unmarked verbal inflection (= 'You _{MS} see me') <i>°garš-ət-ti</i>

An additional complicating sociolinguistic factor in Iraq that one has to consider is dialect mixture due to displacement. New generations of speakers are adapting their speech to Iraqi *koine*, which favors the *qam-qatəl*-construction, or alternatively use prepositional objects. Areal factors are also to be considered, since it is possible the person-role constraints in the perfective past and their relationship to the affix order are due to parallels in neighboring Iranian languages, reflecting distinct contact situations in the history of the NENA dialects. A case in point is the inverted *q̣ṭil-a-le*, which parallels the same inversion of person markers and V-P-A order in Gorani (Stilo 1981), presumably an old contact language of at least some of the NENA varieties, whereas relatively more recent contact languages are notably different. Central Kurdish, for instance, exhibits V-A-P order, except for the combinations where A is third person (Mackenzie 1961, 113; Öpengin 2013). A systematic study could reveal whether there is a connection with similar preferences in NENA dialects. Also the fact that the agentless *q̣ṭil*-construction and prepositional agent constructions are interpretable as transitive is possibly at least partially due to influence from the Badini Kurdish agentless and ergative constructions (Haig 2008,

262–268), although, of course, the intransitive constructions in these dialects of NENA are rather distinct from Kurdish.

The agentless *qtil*-forms could be considered a restricted type of ergativity for definite nouns in trigger potential only, though, since the absence of agent indexing seems to be pragmatically conditioned, its distinction from the impersonal passive is not always clear. The truncated transitive *qtil*-form is not typically passive, presumably because the patient indexes are the same for the object in the fully transitive coding, but distinct from *s*. The pragmatically conditioned agentless coding correlates with agent focalization and prepositional marking, which is not only an important difference from the majority of NENA, where agent agreement is obligatory, but also from the Southeastern Trans-Zab Jewish varieties, where the same morphological marking expresses fully intransitive morphosyntax.

Meeting NENA from the west on the other side of the river Tigris, we will see in the following chapter that the Neo-Aramaic dialects of Ṭur ‘Abdin are typologically distinct from all these NENA dialects, in showing both ergative verbal person marking and (optional) ergative prepositional marking, but they do have features in common with the Western Christian dialects of NENA as well as, interestingly, the easternmost outposts of NENA, namely the Trans-Zab Jewish subgroup.

MAP 4 The distribution of prepositional pronominal objects alongside the inverted preterit
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MAP 5 The distribution of *qāl-le-li* (neutral) alongside *qāl-a-le* (inverted preterit)
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MAP 6 The location of NENA dialects that have the *qam-qatal*-construction
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