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Soggetti	Iranian languages - Verb Iranian languages - Ergative constructions Iranian languages - Transitivity Iranian languages - Tense
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Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [339]-358) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Introduction -- Aims and assumptions -- The Iranian languages -- Alignment in the Iranian context -- Constructions and syntax -- Old Iranian -- The Mana Kartam construction -- Implications for diachronic syntax -- What is a passive? -- Re-assessing the M. K. construction -- The semantics of the genitive -- Summing up the alternatives -- Conclusions -- Western Middle Iranian -- Middle Iranian -- Past transitive constructions -- The case system -- Case and person -- Pronominal clitics -- Clitics expressing core arguments -- Past transitive verbs -- Summary of Middle Iranian -- Case systems in West Iranian -- Introduction -- Three processes -- Innovated object markers -- Inhalt -- The tatic-type languages -- Explanations for change -- Case and animacy -- Towards a solution -- Summary of case -- Kurdish (northern group) -- Introduction -- Overview of the morphosyntax -- The canonical ergative construction -- Deviations from canonical ergativity -- Summary of deviations -- Evidence from Badynany -- Summary of the northern group -- The central group -- Introduction -- Suleimani morphosyntax -- Past transitive constructions -- Aligning case and agreement -- Summary of the

central group -- Desire, obligation, possession, and ergativity --
Conclusions -- A brief synopsis -- Areal pressure and alignment
change -- Alignment in Indo-European -- On explanations for change
-- Appendices -- Case in Old Persian -- Changing rules of clitic
placement.

Sommario/riassunto

The Iranian languages, due to their exceptional time-depth of attestation, constitute one of the very few instances where a shift from accusative alignment to split-ergativity is actually documented. Yet remarkably, within historical syntax, the Iranian case has received only very superficial coverage. This book provides the first in-depth treatment of alignment change in Iranian, from Old Persian (5 C. BC) to the present. The first part of the book examines the claim that ergativity in Middle Iranian emerged from an Old Iranian agented passive construction. This view is rejected in favour of a theory which links the emergence of ergativity to External Possession. Thus the primary mechanisms involved is not reanalysis, but the extension of a pre-existing construction. The notion of Non-Canonical Subjecthood plays a pivotal role, which in the present account is linked to the semantics of what is termed Indirect Participation. In the second part of the book, a comparative look at contemporary West Iranian is undertaken. It can be shown that throughout the subsequent developments in the morphosyntax, distinct components such as agreement, nominal case marking, or the grammar of cliticisation, in fact developed remarkably independently of one another. It was this de-coupling of sub-systems of the morphosyntax that led to the notorious multiplicity of alignment types in Iranian, a fact that also characterises past-tense alignments in the sister branch of Indo-European, Indo-Aryan. Along with data from more than 20 Iranian languages, presented in a manner that renders them accessible to the non-specialist, there is extensive discussion of more general topics such as the adequacy of functional accounts of changes in case systems, discourse pressure and the role of animacy, the notion of drift, and the question of alignment in early Indo-European.
