

The European project SLUW: a short overview

PAOLA COTTICELLI - FEDERICO GIUSFREDI
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI VERONA

Aim of the European project SLUW, that received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 655954, is to investigate the syntactic structure of the Luwian language. The syntagmatic systematization in the theories developed in the 1960s and the computational modeling of the linguistic phenomena that made our approach suitable for this investigation have been preceded by analytical studies on word-order, case-functions, morphological units and phrases. In historical linguistics, and in particular in the field of Indo-European studies, research focused on the sentence as the main object of the syntactic theories has been carried out in the 1970s. The early studies in Indo-European syntax were also aimed at enhancing our understanding of the syntactic structures of the Anatolian languages, and triggered an increasing scientific interest for the investigation of historical syntax.

While several descriptions (cf. Viti 2015) tend to represent the historical syntax of Ancient Indo-European as non-configurational, the project that we are presenting aims at producing a description of the syntactic patterns of the attested Luwian sentences, by highlighting functional and grammatical marked and unmarked schemes. As already noted in the first publications appeared or about to appear in the project's framework (Giusfredi 2015, Giusfredi and Cotticelli-Kurras in press), the description of syntactic structure – even for languages that apparently differ from the modern ones that have been generally studied by the formal syntacticians – cannot and should

not neglect a phrase-structural approach. The perspective of the project is internal to Luwian and to the Ancient Anatolian language-group, with no systematic attempt at generalizing the results to comply to a Universal Grammar framework. Due to the peculiarities of the Anatolian clause-architecture, this *caveat* is especially relevant with respect to the functional hypotheses of syntactic cartography (cf. the summary by Cinque and Rizzi 2009, with references to the history of studies), which, in our opinion, should not be forced onto the properly available data.

Among the peculiar patterns of Luwian phrase-structure that are being investigated, in the preliminary publications (Giusfredi 2015, Cotticelli-Kurras and Giusfredi in press, Giusfredi in press) it was possible to highlight: the peculiar strategies of verbal frontings marking topic-changes (Giusfredi and Cotticelli-Kurras in press) and occurring at the end of inscriptions when scribal signatures are inserted; the syntactic nature and behaviour of demonstratives that act as NP-governed adjuncts and not as determiners (Giusfredi in press); and a theory, anticipated in Giusfredi and Cotticelli-Kurras (in press), according to which the Anatolian inter-phrasal syntax required a clause-internal left-peripheral topic-position to be filled by an overt non-null constituent: either a new topic or, when the main topic is inherited from the previous context, a grammaticalized element usually described as a “connective”, e.g. Hittite *nu*, *s(u)*- or *ta* and Luwian *a*-.

A complete description of the syntactic structures of Luwian will be provided in a monograph at

the end of the project. Even without committing to a pre-constituted framework, we hope that our results will help integrating the traditional perspectives on historical syntax with the phrase-structure models of the structural analysis.

REFERENCES

Cinque, G. and Rizzi, L., 2009, The Cartography of Syntactic Structures, in Heine, B. and Narrog, H. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Analysis*, Oxford, OUP, pp. 51-65.

Giusfredi, F., 2015, Phrase Structure and Ancient Anatolian Languages, in Proceedings of the Second Italian Conference on Computational Linguistics, pp. 146-149.

Giusfredi, F., in press, The Position of Determiners in Ancient Greek and Luwian: between syntax and information flow, in press in *Folia Linguistica* 2017.

Giusfredi, F. and Cotticelli-Kurras, P., in press, in "100 Jahre Entzifferung des Hethitischen", Proceedings of the Arbeitstagung of the Indogermanische Gesellschaft, Marburg, 2015.

Viti, C., 2015, *Variation und Wandel in der Syntax der alten indogermanischen Sprachen*, Bern, Narr.