

## Proto-Indo-European Syntax and its Development

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## **Volume 75**

Proto-Indo-European Syntax and its Development

Edited by Leonid Kulikov and Nikolaos Lavidas

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# Proto-Indo-European Syntax and its Development

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## Preface

The last decades have been marked by an increasing interest in the study of the archaic syntax of Indo-European languages and, gradually, in the reconstruction of the main features of Proto-Indo-European (PIE) syntax. Suffice it to mention, among many others (in chronological order) Watkins (1964, 1976), Lehmann (1974), Kortlandt (1983), Hettrich (1990), Giannakis (1997), Bauer (2000), Luraghi (2004, 2012), Boley (2004), Barðdal & Smitherman (2009), Barðdal & Eythórsson (2012), and Barðdal (2013), adding much to our knowledge based on such seminal works on ancient Indo-European syntax as Delbrück (1893–1897) and Hirt (1934–1937). Although for some scholars the very possibility of syntactic reconstruction remains dubious, numerous studies have appeared reconstructing a variety of basic elements of Proto-Indo-European syntax based on evidence available particularly from ancient and/or archaic Indo-European languages. Such aspects of the proto-language as ergative/active alignment, basic word order, and subject and object marking have given rise to lively discussions among Indo-Europeanists, typologists and syntacticians. Furthermore, the possibility of an efficient lexically blind system of syntactic comparison, the parametric comparison method, was first suggested in Longobardi (2003), Guardiano & Longobardi (2005).

These and other related subjects constitute the range of topics that are addressed in the chapters collected in the present volume. These chapters were first published in the special issue of the *Journal of Historical Linguistics* 3:1 (2013): “*Proto-Indo-European Syntax and its development*”. The special issue and, accordingly, the present book volume originate from the Workshop “PIE Syntax and its Development” held April 1–2, 2011 at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece) and arranged as a part of the 20th International Symposium on Theoretical and Applied Linguistics.

The idea of this workshop was to bring together scholars interested in these and related problems and to shine new light on current research into ancient Indo-European syntax. Special attention was paid to the development of the hypothetical reconstructed features within the documented history of Indo-European languages. Accordingly, the issues addressed in the papers presented at the workshop and now collected within the present book include the following:

- Is syntactic reconstruction possible?
- Which syntactic features can be reconstructed?
- Modern approaches to the analysis of the archaic Indo-European syntax and to syntactic reconstruction
- Proto-Indo-European syntactic reconstruction and its contribution to linguistic theory
- Transitivity, voice, middle, stative and related categories in early/late Proto-Indo-European and ancient Indo-European languages
- Word order and its evolution in Proto-Indo-European and Indo-European
- Relative clauses and other types of subordinate clauses in Proto-Indo-European and their evolution
- Syntax of non-finite forms (infinitives, converbs, etc.)

The contributors offer a systematic presentation of many aspects of Proto-Indo-European syntax and its development, such as reflexivity and middle voice, in particular, in Hittite and Baltic languages (Cotticelli Kurras & Rizza), indirect speech in Greek and the dichotomy between main and subordinate clauses in Indo-European (Fykias & Katsikadeli), word order and verb-finality in Proto-Indo-European (Hock), phraseological verbs in Hittite and a restructuring approach (Koller), encoding the passive pattern in Indo-European languages and reconstruction of voice in Proto-Indo-European (Kulikov & Lavidas), and the historical classification of Indo-European languages based on syntactic structures (Longobardi et al.).

Cotticelli Kurras & Rizza explore the typological parallelism between the constructions employed to express the category of the reflexive in Hittite and the development of a verbal strategy to mark reflexivity in the Baltic languages. They claim that the set of endings of the Anatolian middle displays the reflexes of the reconstructed endings of the ‘stative’, while the endings of the middle in other Indo-European languages represent an innovation.

Fykias & Katsikadeli analyze the emergence and diachronic development of subordination phenomena in the domain of finite and infinitival clauses that serve as complements of verbs of speaking and knowing. They focus in particular on the development and distribution of subordinating conjunctions, person shift, mood shift, and tense shift in the history of Greek. The authors interpret these developments in light of contemporary syntactic theory.

Hock shows that there is strong evidence in favor of the hypothesis that the unmarked word order of Proto-Indo-European was verb final (*pace* Pires & Thomason 2008, who questioned the fruitfulness of Indo-European syntactic reconstruction): the earliest attestation of Indo-European languages overwhelmingly have a verb-final order; the Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) reconstruction receives



support from phonological and prosodic changes in finite verbs. Hock argues, however, that Proto-Indo-European was not a “strict SOV” language: SOV languages only have the order Relative Clause (RC) — Correlative Clause (CC) but for Proto-Indo-European we must reconstruct both RC–CC and CC–RC orders; all of the early Indo-European languages can have a verb-initial word order.

Koller provides a new syntactic analysis of the Hittite phraseological construction involving the verbs *pai-* ‘go’ or *uwa-* ‘come’ and a second finite verb. He proposes that a restructuring approach to the phraseological construction in Hittite can account for most of its major features: the position of the enclitics, the restriction to a single subject, and the lack of an overt complementizer introducing the embedded clause.

Kulikov & Lavidas examine various aspects of the reconstruction of the passive in Proto-Indo-European, foremost on the basis of evidence from Indo-Aryan (Early Vedic) and Greek branches. The authors analyze the contrast between non-specialized and specialized markers of the passive in Early Vedic and Greek. They furthermore show that the two branches, Indo-Aryan and Greek, instantiate two basic types of the development of transitivity oppositions and system of voices: the syncretic type found in many Western branches, including Greek, and the anti-syncretic type attested in some Eastern branches, in particular in Indo-Aryan.

Longobardi et al. apply various quantitative tools to parametric data, providing additional evidence for traditional genealogical groupings and confirming the unstable character of taxonomies that previous comparative methods have challenged. Furthermore, the authors focus on and account for two peculiar instances within the (traditional) genealogical classification of Indo-European languages: the outlier position of Bulgarian within Slavic and the peculiar position of Farsi within Iranian.

A number of chapters not only discuss evidence from ancient and modern Indo-European languages, but also offer valuable observations and generalizations related to the historical linguistics and language change (see Lavidas 2009 on the relation between modern syntactic approaches and Indo-European historical linguistics). The editors are very confident that a diachronic typological approach can be successfully applied to a number of linguistic categories (see Kulikov 2010 for details of such an approach, guidelines, and a tentative typological questionnaire that can be used for a coherent study of transitivity and valency-changing categories in a historical perspective). This approach, which is still in its infancy, will undoubtedly reveal new features and aspects of linguistic phenomena that were not systematically studied in earlier scholarship. As one of the guest-editors of this issue has argued (Kulikov 2010), further research in this domain should be based on evidence from languages or language families that are textually well-documented over a sufficiently long period of time (around 1000 years or more).

Consistently and coherently presented diachronic evidence can further be used for outlining some sort of family (group) ‘portrait’, or profile, of a linguistic category in this language group or family (for instance, a portrait of voice or case in Indo-European, Germanic, or Semitic etc.), tracing it from the earliest attested ancient languages or reconstructable proto-languages (Proto-Indo-European, Proto-Germanic, Proto-Romance / Vulgar Latin, or Proto-Semitic, etc.) onward to its reflexes in the daughter languages.

Altogether, diachronic typology will open new perspectives for research in the field of historical linguistics, linguistic typology and syntax, thereby providing new insights for Indo-European reconstruction and the study of Proto-Indo-European and other proto-languages.

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April 2013 – March 2015

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