

Paola Cotticelli-Kurras (ed.)

Metalanguage, glossing and conceptualization in the grammars of the Middle Ages

CONTENTS: *Paola Cotticelli-Kurras*: Metalanguage, glossing and conceptualization in the grammars of the Middle Ages. Introduction / *Laura Biondi*: *Artes lectoriae* e ortografie del latino. Grammatica, retorica, teologia nei secoli XI–XIII / *Paola Cotticelli-Kurras*: The metalanguage of clause structure in Medieval grammars: What about dependent clauses? / *Francesca Cotugno*: Metaphors in Medieval metalanguage. The body in the parts of speech / *Margherita Farina*: The integration of the category of *arthron* in the Syriac grammatical tradition / *Frédéric Lambert*: Phrasis entre rhétorique et grammaire. De Denys d’Halicarnasse aux commentateurs byzantins / *Anneli Luhtala*: Alternative approaches to syntactic analysis in Ancient rhetoric and dialectic / *Costantino Marmo*: Syntax in the first two commentaries on Martin of Dacia’s *Modi significandi* (1280s–1290s) / *Chiara Martinelli*: Reflection on syntax in Medieval grammars. Francesco da Buti’s Contribution / *Lucio Melazzo*: A few thoughts on *copula* in Peter Abelard / *Stella Merlin*, *Alfredo Rizza*: Alcuin — a dialectic practice of grammar / *Castrenze Nigrelli*: Searching for syntax in the Early Medieval commentaries on Donatus / *Diego Poli*: Syntactic instances in the Old Irish glosses

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Paola Cotticelli-Kurras

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Introduction

This volume contains the papers presented at the workshop with the title “*Grammars, Metalanguage, and Glossing on the model language as reflection on the target language in the Middle Ages*” held during the ICHoLS XV congress 2021.¹

Aiming at filling the gaps in the history of linguistics and reviewing some positions that no longer correspond with the state of the art, the workshop intended at assessing the analysis of the field of syntax, which, contrary to what one may find in literature, belonged to the speculation on language and to the field of interplay of grammar, rhetoric, logic even in the earliest phases of the modern age. The research carried out on the glosses, seen here as a cognitive reflection, as well as on the work of the *Modistae* and of the scholastic philosophers and grammarians, demonstrate a special interest in the interclausal roles of the *partes orationis*. The study of the Anglo-Saxon and Irish glosses, of the Irish grammar, of the late medieval grammatical treatises, of Dante's thoughts on the role of grammar and vulgar Italian is the premise for an alternative assessment of the linguistic and rhetoric historiography that does not deny the centrality of syntax in the modern age. Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* (1304–05) offers the peculiar perspective on “*gramatica*” as a teaching instrument, able to counter the use of vulgar typical of everyday life. Grammar is thus a product that exists outside of the space-time dimension, while the *volgari* of the Romance languages are part of the transitions of history and human nature as the limit of the ontological transcendence of the cognitive sphere that God granted to the human beings (Poli

¹) Despite the fact that the ICHoLS XV congress has been held in remote mood, the two workshops ‘*The meaningful communicative exchange in the Middle Ages and in the Modern Age*’ and the ‘*Grammars, Metalanguage, and Glossing on the model language as reflection on the target language in the Middle Ages*’, both organized by P. Cotticelli-Kurras as a part of a project funded by the Italian Research and University Ministry, *Parts of speech meet rhetoric*, Project PRIN 2017, SH5, Nr. 20172F2FEZ, took place in presence at the University of Verona, on 21–24 August 2021. The workshop entitled ‘*The meaningful communicative exchange in the Middle Ages and in the Modern Age*’ has been published in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft* 33.1 (2023).

2002, 2005, 2013, 2016). These works help us understand the importance of the production of grammars and the implicit nature of the transition from the speculation on Latin — a metagrammar — to the reflection of single languages. This process started with the production of glosses but soon evolved into a study of the elements that form the clause. Within the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the study of the Harley manuscript testifies in a parallel manner as in the Irish environment the refined glossary tradition intertwines and contributes to completing the framework of the studies subtended to enlighten the grammatical, rhetorical and logical-syntactic doctrine (Melazzo 2018). For the Irish tradition (see Poli 2002, 2006, 2013), this phase is documented first by the corpus of glosses used by Thurneysen (1901; 1946) to redact the first grammar of that language. He followed a path that helped the monks speculate on the way their native language worked, using Latin as a metalanguage of reference. Diego Poli dedicates in this volume an important essay to the Irish glosses and from the perspective of their contribution to the collection of syntactic instances following the Carolingian and Irish tradition represented in the Saint Gall school and pointing out the glossing technics. The article is framed in an overall picture of the scholarship in syntactic studies of the Late Latin and medieval tradition. It offers a fine analysis of passages from Donatus to Isidore, from Priscian to Sedulius Scotus, dealing with the numerous definitions of syntactic terms and metalinguistic issues. The path of the identification of the source, or, in cases where there is more than one glosses, of the sources, from which the single lemma has been taken, is the only one that can lead to a complete understanding of linguistic data contained in the manuscript.

The studies undertaken on the glosses seen as a reflection on the target language, contributed not only to syntactic reflection, but also to morphological aspects, demonstrating a special interest in the interclausal roles of the *partes orationis*. Francesca Cotugno illustrates the peculiarities of the grammar by Virgilius Maro in which she shows how the metaphoric power is acting in the formation of a metalanguage whose development makes use of comparison to the functions of the body parts.

A founding element for the formation of the Roman-Barbarian Europe, the rebirth of Humanism proposes in a continuous fashion the importance of the metalinguistic dimension that accompanies the investigation on the linguistic structure of a native language, using categories that were created for Latin and now for Greek. To this point, Frédéric Lambert offers here an *excursus* on the history of the term *phrase* and its uses from the etymological origin Greek φράσις through its field of employment from the rhetoric to the syntax, the reciprocal influences from the Antiquity to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, until the Modern Age. Lucio Melazzo provides a study on the term *copula* which was missing in the Greek grammar, though it has been rendered through ἄρθρον, and whose creation is attributed to Abelard. The author focusses on the uses of *copula* by Garland the Computist in his *Dialectica*. The concept of *copula* is probably going back to some premises by Ammonius Hermiae handed down by Boethius.

A result was the grammatical description and systematization that permitted the creation of new *termini technici* and a better articulation of the theoretical analysis of grammatical categories and syntactic functions. Relevant is also the fact that, within a

tradition based on the exposition of a part-of-speech based grammar, according to the models offered by Priscianus and Donatus (*Minor*), as the contribution by Castrenze Nigrelli on the conjunctions shows, one can find, from the Scholastic and until the modern age, works that include a discussion of syntax only, and other works that dedicate whole sections to syntactic functions. Stella Merlin and Alfredo Rizza present a discussion about some relevant works by Alcuin which represent the melting point of the Priscian's and Donatus' tradition, focusing on his pedagogical grammars. The authors considered Alcuin's definition of *oratio*, the role of *dictio* within his grammatical analysis, finally the judgement of the well-formed sentence, expressed by *vox constructa*, preluding Boethius' definition of *oratio*, which is composed by *dictiones*, and can be *perfecta* or *imperfecta* (see also the analysis by Cotticelli-Kurras of analogous terms and definitions in later medieval authors).

Coming back to the definition of *oratio* in textbooks, especially Anneli Luhtala dedicates her contribution to an overview of the different statements about the concept of 'basic clause' from the Latin Antiquity, through the Apollonic-Priscianic tradition until Martianus Capella.

Chiara Martinelli provides an example of such studies dealing with the grammar by Buti (1324–1406), the *Regulae*, which is dedicated to the syntactic functions of the parts of speech as a medieval case syntax, on the one side, and, on the other, highlighting the properties of infinitives employed also in argument function as subordinated clauses and participles, especially the absolute ablative. Laura Biondi gives an articulated contribution to the study of some aspects of systematization in writing according to the *regulae* (rules), the *correctio* (improvement) as basis for the understanding of morphology and derivation processes also in a didactic perspective.

Costantino Marmo highlights some syntactic aspects presenting the two first commentaries on the work *Modi significandi* by Martin of Dacia which represents a milestone in the history of the medieval grammaticography. Though their attribution is uncertain, Marmo proposes to ascribe both to Simon of Dacia, basing his opinion on the discussion of some key concepts, such as *constructio* and *congruitas*. It is certainly a task of this project to identify a taxonomic and distributional value for the different recurring terms, considering the development of the growing specific syntactic metalanguage. In fact, the final goal of the work is understanding the correct interpretation of the terminology, as one can do for Priscianus passage (*Instit. gramm.*, XVII, 1, Keil 1859: 108, 1–4), in which the concept that Priscianus renders by “*ordinatio[ne] sive constructio[ne] dictionum*” going back to Apollonius corresponds to a hierarchic and non-paradigmatic order of constituents within the clause.

The premodist and modist grammars footed in the study of the ancient grammarians, when trying to enucleate for each one the meaning of *syntaxis*, *synthesis*, *logos*, *syndesmos*, *arthros*, or again *elocutio*, *sententia*, *ordo*, *ordinatio*, *dispositio*, *constructio*, *concordia*, among others. Paola Cotticelli-Kurras deals with the main clause constituents and with the rules governing the grammatical clause, on the one side, and, on the other, with some special cases of constructions with infinitives, or relative clauses, or subordinated ones. This work represents the first insight of a reflection on the possibility to admit the subordinating function of conjunctions and other elements. Regard-

ing this point, we wish to remind to one of the earliest grammars written in a language other than Latin: the one by Antonio de Nebrija (1492). In this work, there is a section dedicated to syntax, the fourth one, entitled “*Sintaxi & orden de las partes de la oración*” (§ 201), with important considerations expressed by new labels in the language that is creating them, in this case *aiuntamiento*, *orden*, *concordia* and *concierto*, i.e. the corresponding verbs *aiuntar/concertar*. Nebrija’s grammar testifies their descriptive power in linguistic terms. Nebrija exposes therefore the concepts of the relationships between parts-of-speech in a syntagmatic way, countering the description that he gives in the first three sections where the paradigmatic order is the rule. Such later examples represent the traces of a hidden tradition from the Middle Ages onwards in that kind of grammaticography which provided adequate explanations for syntactic matters. It is noteworthy underlining the continuity of the tradition that other categories of the syntactic domain such as agreement and valency provided and which have been quoted by Nebrija (“*De la construcción de los verbos después de sí*” §§ 207–208), as well as government (discussed in the same chapter where agreement is treated).

The contribution by Margherita Farina shows as a witness from a non-European tradition how grammatical and terminological traditions could spread out and be welcomed by foreign traditions. The example of the translation into Syriac of the *Téchne Grammatiké* in the 6th century provides through the analysis of the concept and function of Greek ἄρθρον that the metalinguistic tradition based on the underlying morphological features could constitute the basis for the anchoring of the syntactic tradition in Syriac.

On the other hand, the paper by Velizar Sadovski provides one of the first historiographic effort to describe Slavic grammars basing on the Late Latin and medieval tradition of Priscian and especially Donatus and their commentaries, which had a large circulation in other parts of Europe, such as the Slavic tradition. Further sources for such Slavic grammaticographical tradition were the influence coming from the Greek and Byzantine tradition (Choirobiskos) and those of the grammaticography of modern languages, such as German. The author focuses on the development of such Western tradition on the Early East Slavic grammars and syntactic description (also through the Ruthenian tradition), especially on Meletij Smotryckyj’s *Grammatiki slavénskija pravilnoe sintagma* (1619) in the early 17th century, dealing with the *syntaxis regularis* and the *syntaxis figurata*. Sadovski shows how the spread of the medieval culture could offer a common culture basis for the linguistic knowledge.

The study of the Anglo-Saxon and Irish glosses, of the Irish grammar, of the late medieval grammatical treatises, of Dante’s thoughts on the role of grammar were the premises for an alternative assessment of the linguistic and rhetoric historiography that does not deny the centrality of the role that syntax has in the contemporary age. Nicola Santoni dealing with the rhetorical tradition in Bologna in the 12th and 13th century shows how even in the *artes dictandi* syntactic aspects were a matter for rhetorical treatises and offered a intertwining of consideration on syntactic constructions (e.g. the ablative absolute and participles, here again!, passive and active constructions), and the *vitia dictaminum* best represented by the *amphibologiae*, as well as metalinguistic

issues regarding verbs such *rego*, *coniungo*, or concepts such as *commutatio*, *retransi-*

tió. The volume aims at assessing the witness of syntactical thoughts present in the field of syntax in the medieval grammars and commentaries, the speculation on grammar as an independent discipline as the key to reach the contents of the high literature and the religion. Despite of the alternation of the prominence of logic, rhetoric or grammar in the considered centuries, the linguistic thought seems growing through the interplay of all these forces, grammar, rhetoric, logic not only in a chronological tradition from the Antiquity until the earliest phases of the modern age but also in a geographical expansion of such a tradition. Finally, the methodologies, combined with each other, can provide a sample of the different syntactic categories, to be examined and studied in different works and traditions of medieval Europe, within the process that brought to the separation of syntax from rhetoric and logic. This effort contributed to enlarge the repertoire of the terms for the formation of the metalanguage of linguistics and to promote the linguistic thoughts.

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