

Subject, Object, and Verb in Urartian: Prologue to Typology

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Language typology, long important as a source of material and insights for the formulation of language universals, now exercises also a considerable influence on the direction taken in many specific language studies¹. In an Ancient Near Eastern context in particular, language typology has a potential importance as a source of constraints on grammatical hypotheses for given sets of data, and of heuristic suggestions and ranking of hypotheses for areas where hypotheses are especially undetermined by the data as understood². Other functions might be added to this list. For example, it has long been realized that individual languages do not exist in a vacuum, and that long-term contact can sometimes result in distinctive convergences in a given geographic area, the shape and determinants of which are being investigated in a number of recognized convergence areas (*Sprachbunde*) in the world³. The question must eventually be raised thus whether Ancient Western Asia, which surely represents an area of cultural convergence, also constitutes in any sense a linguistic area – whether there is not after-all some nongenetic sense to be made out of the old, intuitively applied designation “Asiatic language”. Finally, reversing expected roles, one cannot reject a priori a fourth conceivable function: it is at least possible that languages such as

1. See the recent survey in William Croft, *Typology and Universals*. Cambridge 1990.

2. These two functions have been admirably described for Hurrian by Frans Plank, “Das Hurritische und die Sprachwissenschaft”, *Xenia* 21 (1988) 69-94, where he uses for them the terms *Kontrolle* and *Lenkung*. For studies of various aspects of the typological trait ergativity cf. the two studies edited by Frans Plank, *Ergativity: Toward a Theory of Grammatical Relations*. London 1979 and *Relation Typology*. Berlin 1985. Note also M. L. Khacikjan, “On the Typology of the Hurro-Urartian Verb”, in M. A. Dandamayev et al. (eds.), *Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honor of I. M. Diakonoff*. Warminster 1982, pp. 165-168.

3. For a more recent area partially overlapping the Near East (and in particular that part of it formerly occupied by Hurrian and Urartian) cf. Colin Massica, *Defining and Linguistic Area: South Asia*. Chicago 1976. Also *idem*, *The Indo-Aryan Languages*. Cambridge 1991.

Hurrian-Urartian, possible or probable isolates attested at a great time depth, may have something to contribute to the range of possible linguistic diversity.

Certain kinds of linguistic features lend themselves more easily to cross-linguistic comparison. One important feature of this sort, after ergativity traits and morphological-process type, and which is also one of the first areas exploited in the "new typology", is word order⁴. Urartian is in fact no stranger to typological studies based on word order. It was included, along with Hurrian, in the language sample used in Joseph Greenberg's first set of implicational universals of word order⁵. In this work Urartian was confidently assigned to the "Subject-Object-Verb" class of languages – a classification that carried with it a number of typological implications; and the classification was subsequently incorporated into more extensive surveys⁶.

Typological implications aside, however, a simple SOV classification does not square with the information, limited as it is, about Urartian word order contained in the standard treatments⁷:

Das Subjekt intransitiver Sätze ... folgt oft, wenn auch nicht regelmässig, seinem Verbum nach ... Das transitive Subjekt geht seinem Verbum fast stets voran⁸.

Gewöhnlich steht beim trans. das Subjekt vor dem Verb, aber gewöhnlich nicht unmittelbar; das Objekt aber steht zwischen ihnen beiden ... Bei den Intrans. steht dagegen das Prädikat vor dem Subjekt ... Aber es gibt auch Ausnahmen von diesen Regeln⁹.

Hurrian and Urartian have a dominant word order which is characteristic for languages of an ergative structure: a) S-(O_{tr}-)O₁-V_{tr} for the ergative construction ... b) S-V_{intr} for the absolute construction ... However cases of expressive inversion are not rare: O-S-V_{tr} ... S-V_{tr}-O ... V_{tr}-S-O ... V_{intr}-S are very widely attested in Urartian ...¹⁰.

The claim, then, apparently being made about Urartian is the following: Urartian has a fair amount of freedom in word order, but two word orders, a transitive and an intransitive, predominate.

(1) S(subject) O(object) V(erb) / E(rgative) A(bsolute) V(erb)
 V(erb) S(subject) / V(erb) A(bsolute)¹¹

4. "Modern" interest in typology (frequently projected as the more empirical front in the quest for language universals) can be conveniently dated from the seminal article of Joseph Greenberg, "Some Universals of Grammar with Particular Reference to the Order of Meaningful Elements", in Joseph Greenberg (ed.), *Universals of Grammar*. MIT 1963, pp. 73-113.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

6. John Hawkins, *Word Order Universals*. New York 1983, pp. 287 and 340. Russell Tomlin, *Basic Word Order: Functional Principles*. London 1986, p. 250. Note that Hurrian and Urartian are inexplicably characterized as "Afroasiatic" by Hawkins. Hurrian and Urartian have not been fortunate in their treatment in non-specialist publications; in Philip Ross, "Hard Words", *Scientific American* 264/4 (April, 1991), p. 138, they are depicted as being at least as unrelated (or related!) as Hattic and Etruscan, whereas they are at least as closely related as any two major branches of Indoeuropean or Semitic.

7. Note that of the major studies of Urartian grammar, several make no direct statement on the subject, in accordance with their morphological-phonological orientation: I. I. Meščaninov, *Grammatičeskij stroj urartskogo jazyka*. Moscow 1958-1962; Warren Benedict, *Urartian Phonology and Morphology*. Ann Arbor 1958; I. M. Diakonoff, *Hurrisch and Urartäisch*. Munich 1971.

8. Johannes Friedrich, "Urartäisch", in J. Friedrich et al. (eds.), *Altkleinasiatische Sprachen*. Leiden 1969, pp. 45f. Note that in his earlier treatment, *Einführung ins Urartäische*. *MVAG* 37 (1933), Friedrich made no direct statement about word order.

9. G. A. Melikišvili, *Die Urartäische Sprache*. Rome 1971, p. 73.

10. M. L. Khačikjan, *Xurritskij i urartiskij jazyki*. Erevan 1985, p. 126. Where the ellipses "..." all contain examples from both Hurrian and Urartian, except for the last.

11. We will henceforth use both the subject/object and the ergative/absolute dichotomies, with the understanding that in an intransitive context absolute = subject, while in a transitive context absolute = object. Note incidentally that this state of affairs renders impossible any simple linear word-order formula covering both transitive and intransitive sentences of the type covering both transitive and intransitive sentences of the type (a), as for Sumerian, or (b), as (conceivably) for Hurrian:

a. S (O) V / E (A) V
 b. O (S) V / A (E) V

If true, this claim is not a trivial one, and its empirical basis deserves examination. Leaving aside for the moment the typological implications, we will try in this short exploratory study to examine on a simple quantitative basis, the evidence for word order in Urartian, limiting ourselves for the time being to the position of the verb and its two principal arguments, subject and object (ergative and absolutive)¹². The study is based on a survey of all the clauses containing a finite verb in the inscriptions collected in UKN I¹³ (which itself contains more than four-fifths of all usable Urartian material), the primary object being to determine how many syntactically distinct configurations there are in this corpus – upon which then further linguistic inferences might be made.

An initial problem is that of deciding what, given the formulaic nature of the Urartian inscriptions, is to be counted as a separate occurrence of a configuration. This arises from the fact that throughout the time span of Urartian writing, a king's building activities or annual military campaigns are described largely in terms of a single framework of formulae involving a relatively limited number of verbs. For this investigation, in order to avoid giving undue weight to mere repetitions of formulae, most global statistics will be given both in terms of total number of clauses and in terms of what will be referred to as "syntactic frames" – that is, the occurrence of a specific form of a verb together with a specific and distinct configuration of verb form and principal arguments (subject, direct object, indirect object) together with any optional adverbial or oblique complements¹⁴. For example, corresponding to eleven occurrences of clauses containing the formula "The ruler(s) built the temple(s) for the God, Haldi", there are the four syntactic frames:

(2)	a. (Adv.)	N- <i>ie</i>	N- <i>še</i>	N	<i>šid-išt-u-ni</i>	(5x)
		Dative	Subject	Object	V ("built")	
	b. Adv.	N- <i>še</i>	N- <i>ie</i>	N	<i>šid-išt-u-ni</i>	(1x)
	c.	N- <i>ie</i>	N	N- <i>še</i>	<i>šid-išt-u-ni</i> (Adv)	(4x)
	d.	N- <i>ie</i>	N- <i>še</i>	N	<i>šid-išt-u-ali</i>	(1x)

Frequency citations will be given in terms of the formula: "word-order-type frames / occurrences". For example, in terms of subject and object word order (obviously other syntactic categories could be taken into account) these eleven clauses would be registered as follows:

- (3) SOV 3/7 ("3 frames: a, b, and d, for a total of 7 occurrences")
 OSV 1/4 ("1 frame: c, for a total of 4 occurrences")

Once a count of frames and occurrences has been made it becomes possible to give a preliminary impression of the amount of diverse syntactic material in the Urartian corpus. The count of reasonably well-understood clauses containing a verb in the UKN corpus is:

(4)

	TOTAL	MOST FREQUENT
VERBS	101	19
FRAMES	350	25
OCCURRENCES	1345	604

12. Note that in this limited investigation, we are not presupposing any answer to the questions such as whether there is such a thing as "a basic word order", or whether every language has a basic word order in the same sense. Certainly the Urartian evidence seems to point more to an indefinitely subdividable continuum rather than a limited inventory of rigid types.

13. G. A. Melikišvili, *Urartskie klinoobraznye nadpisi*. Moscow 1960. UKN II, VDI (1991), is not used in these statistics.

14. There is naturally a certain element of subjective judgement here as to what clauses are complete or intelligible enough to be included, what constitutes a clause, the syntactic analysis of the clause, etc. For the very simple level of analysis involved here however I believe that, although judgements about individual passages might differ, any independent count based on the same material would yield a comparable general statistical outline. Note that some inscriptions contain or consist of literal repetitions of a clause or set of clauses (e.g. UKN 4-10, 13, 71). In all these cases the repeated clause is only counted once per inscription.

It can be seen from this that the twenty-five most frequent frames account for close to one-half the occurrences. This means that in any given text, on a average of about half the material will consist in an occurrence (with different names and places) of one of a couple dozen formulaic frames. On the other hand, the high-frequency frames only account for less than seven percent of the total of frames. Concretely this means that even though, when one works with Urartian inscriptions, one has the impression that the same material occurs again and again, this impression is only half-right, and that in the non-repeating half there is ten times as much material – hopefully enough to support some more or less justifiable conclusions about the nature of Urartian word order.

The global picture now can be given in table (5). In this table only the occurrence and position of S and O are taken account of. A number-set in parentheses is a subtotal of the number above it, and represents the number of instances where the word order in question is contained in a relative clause.

(5)

INTRANSITIVE					
with S	SV: 34/127 (7/39)			VS: 17/74 (0)	
with NULL	V: 27/150 (0)				
TRANSITIVE					
with S,O	SOV: 49/187 (12/68)	OSV: 23/36 (4/5)	SVO: 10/36 (2/25)	VSO: 4/27 (0)	OVS: 2/3 (1/2)
with S	SV: 16/48 (8/37)			VS: 2/2 (0)	
with O	OV: 102/410 (7/32)			VO: 42/170 (0)	
with NULL	V: 22/75 (0)				

It is important not to try to read too many typologically significant generalizations directly from a set of raw numbers such as (5). However these figures, in conjunction with some other data from the corpus, do seem to suggest a certain image of the word order properties of Urartian.

1. In the first place, although some word orders seem more common, and perhaps more basic, than others, there *is* a pervasive variation, and a good deal of freedom in Urartian word order. This is best illustrated by the direct correlation that exists between the frequency of occurrence of a verb and its liability to be involved in word order variation. The 79 verbs that occur in non-varying word orders account for 356 occurrences (an average of 4.5 occurrences per verb), while the 32 verbs that occur in varying word order have 764 occurrences (23.9 per verb on the average). In other words, the more the corpus expands, and the more occurrences per verb are registered, the more variation one can expect. The data are given in table (6).

(6)

		Number of verbs	Number of occurrences	Average occur./verb.
NON-VARYING	Intrans.	11	54	4.9
	Trans.	68	302	4.4
VARYING	Intrans.	4	147	36.7
	Trans.	28	617	22.0

2. A second obvious conclusion that can be read immediately off the statistics of (5) is that the transitive subject tends overwhelmingly to precede the verb. Much less clear from (5) is the extent to which the intransitive subject participates in the same tendency. There is a tantalizing similarity in the proportions between intransitive SV/VS and transitive OV/VO.

However it would certainly be no easy matter to determine what if any statistical significance could be attached to this similarity. What is at stake here is the extent to which transitive object and intransitive subject are being treated in parallel fashion in this particular area of syntax. For the moment probably the safest conclusion is that on the discourse level at least, similar tendencies are perceptible in the two cases¹⁵.

3. Returning to the statistics of (5), one can see that almost all relative (i.e., *ali-/ahu-*) clauses are verb-final (SOV, SV). Note for example the contrast between:

- (7) a. *ar-(i)tu-me* DINGIR.MEŠ-še *pisu[še* UD.MEŠ-za]šili
give-they-me gods-erg joy days many
The gods gave me joy of many days. (UKN 264, 30f)
- b. *alu-š-me* LUGAL₂.TU-*hi tarae ar-u-ni*
who-erg-me kingship great give-trn-he+it
Who gave me a great kingship. (UKN 276 ob. 23 f.)

Virtually the only systematic exception to this are (S)VO relative clauses in which the verb is a verb of speaking, and the object is a sentential complement as in the frequent construction:

- (8) *alu-še uli-še ti-u-li ieše ini pili ag-u-bi*
who-erg other-erg say-trn-modal I-erg this canal lead-trn-I+it
Whoever else will say "I laid out this canal". (UKN 44,9)

Here the principle: "verb-last in relative clause" conflicts with a virtually exceptionless principle: "main-clause precedes subordinate-clause". For what it is worth, under this heading I might mention that verb-final order is almost always the rule in negative contexts, and in negative-passive context marked by the stative-passive suffix *-ur*, as in the common phrase:¹⁶

- (9) *ui giei ištini šid-a-uri*
not pro there build-int-stat
Nothing was/had-been built there. (UKN 78, 2 etc.)

4. In main clauses however, it is not the case, contrary to what might be implied by Greenberg's SOV classification, that Urartian rigorously favors a verb-last configuration. Apart from the cases where V, for whatever reason, is followed by S or O, Urartian quite freely allows the V to be followed by an adverbial constituent. In almost half (253 out of 537) of the cases where there is an adverb, and the verb is not followed by S or O, an otherwise possible verb-final configuration is avoided by putting the adverb after the verb.

5. Nevertheless it is the cases that when the transitive subject is present, the object precedes the verb. That this is the unmarked order is shown by the fact that the great majority of exceptions are motivated (by discourse or semantic factors), and hence not basic but marked. Of the 14/63 cases where VO obtains in the presence of S, 12/61 are seen to have a fairly straight-forward syntactic motivation, either by to-the-front movement of verb+dative-enclitic (4/5 cases) or modal verb (1/23), as in:

15. There has been in fact a great deal of attention paid recently to the discourses-level representation of basic relational typologies such as ergativity. Cf. John DuBois, "The Discourse Basis of Ergativity", *Language* 63 (1987) 805-855.

16. In 18 occurrences of the negative *ui* (at least 14 of which, incidentally co-occur with the *-uri* construction), there is only one passage where the negated verb does not come last in its clause, and this is a variant of the formula cited in (10): UKN 128 A2 19 *ui giei šid-a-uri ištini*. Note that the "*šida(g)uri giei*" cited in the German version of Melikišvili (1971, p. 61) is a misprint for "*giei šida(g)uri*", cited correctly in the Russian version (Melikišvili 1960, p. 72).

(10) a. ar-u-me meše¹⁷
 give-trn-me tribute
 He gave me tribute. (UKN 155 E 54)

b. tur-i/e-ne-ne ^dHaldi-še ^dIM-še ^dUTU-še DINGIR.MEŠ *mani*
 destroy-modal-he-him DN-erg DN-erg DN-erg gods him
 May Haldi, Teiseba, Sivini, (and all) gods destroy him. (UKN 37 15f)

Or by placement after the verb of such "heavy objects" as conjoined noun-phrases (4/7 cases):

(11) *Menua-še Išpuini-hi-ni-še šidišt-u-ni e'a É.GAL e'a URU*
 Menua-erg Išpuini-adj-det-erg build-trn-he+it and palace and city
 Menua son of Išpuini built both a palace and a city. (UKN 78 3)

Or subordinate clauses as already seen in (8) above (3/26 cases).

6. On the contrary, when an explicit transitive-subject noun-phrase is not present, the object noun-phrases have a greater likelihood of following the verb (recall 2. and footnote 15). It can be seen from the tabulation in (5) that 44% of the frames have VO in the absence of an explicit transitive subject noun-phrase, while only 17% have VO in the presence of such a noun-phrase.

7. This links up with the fact that when a sentence does not begin with a transitive subject, there is a tendency for all arguments (intransitive subject, object, adverb) to follow the verb; i.e., for the clause to be verb-initial. The figures for intransitive and transitive clauses are surprisingly close: 54% and 45% respectively. The observations in 2., 6., and 7. together are an interesting even if only grossly statistical indication of the extent to which intransitive subject and object are syntactically identified in this ergative language – but only to the extent that their surface structure is analogous; i.e., where transitive subject is not present. (Note that no such identification obtains for transitive and intransitive subject in corresponding cases where O is not explicitly present). The principle seems to be: "In the absence of Ergative, verb-first is a favored target". There is however a small but potentially significant difference between intransitive configurations and transitive configurations which cannot be ignored. This difference is even clearer when we consider only the arguments intransitive-subject and object (in the absence of transitive subject) with intransitive and transitive verbs respectively. Disregarding relative clauses (since they tend heavily to be verb-final), we find almost twice as many OV as VO, whereas (corrected for relative clauses) SV splits about evenly with VS, with even an apparent slight edge for SV.

8. Looking now at the intransitive, in spite of the apparent preponderance of SV over VS, examination of cases in detail reveals that where SV occurs, a large number of cases can be motivated (discourse initial position, topic-change, negative-passive contexts). In cases where no motivating factors are present, however, by and large VS occurs. For example, of the four most frequent intransitive verbs, one of them, *ušt-* "go" occurs in SV configurations only when it occurs in the first of a series of formulaic clauses used to describe military campaigns, otherwise it is invariably VS¹⁸. The beginning of UKN 39 1-7 is typical:

17. Note also (8) above. A couple of interesting facts are worth pointing out here. The first person dative enclitic *-me* occurs 43 times in the corpus, 33 times as a verbal enclitic. In almost all (41 out of 43) of its occurrences the word to which it encliticizes occurs in initial position in its clause (preceded only in a couple of cases by the conjunction *e'a* "and, as"). This may be some indication that proto-Urartian had, like Hurrian, enclitic subject/object pronouns with a tendency to occur in sentence-initial position. In Urartian these enclitics tended to become verbal suffixes, and when they referred to intransitive subject or transitive object became incorporated into the verbal suffix system. *-me*, although it followed the tendency to associate with the verb, failed to become integrated into the inflectional system. It retained however its tendency to occupy clause-initial position, even to the extent of overriding more typical word-order patterns. In order to firmly establish this hypothesis one would have to bring to bear evidence about the problematic third person dative *-ni*, and comparative evidence from Hurrian.

18. Note that inscriptions or sections of inscriptions rarely begin with the verb *mun-*.

- (12) *Haldi-ni ušt-a-bi masi-e-ni šuri-e(-ni)*
 H.-det come-int-he his-dat-det weapon(s)-dat(-det) ...
Haldi-ini-ni ušmaši-ni ušt-a-bi Menua-ni Išpuini-hi
 H.-adj-inst power-inst come-int-he M.-det I.-adj
 Haldi set forth with his weapons ...
 By the power of Haldi Menua son of Ispuini set forth.

Here the first SV clause represents one instance of a frame which accounts for 37 of the SV occurrences in the corpus. The next occurrences of *uštabi* however is in the expected VS frame. Two other high-frequency intransitive verbs, *nun-* “come” and *ulušt-* “precede” take VS, except in a minority of cases perhaps involving foregrounding of the subject. This seems fairly clearly to be the case in UKN 155 C 28 (// 156 C 28), where, after a long enumeration of captives and booty we have:

- (13) *ina-ni LUGAL₂-e nun-a-bi*
 this-det king-dat come-int-he
 ... [list]: (All) *this* came to the king.

Note however the close parallelism between an introductory formula for campaigns which occurs frequently in the inscriptions of Menua (UKN 38 3, 30 8, 36 6, 41 9) and once in an early part of the annals of Argišti (first year?: 128 B1 32):

- (14) *Haldi-ini-ni ušmaši-ni ušt-a-bi RN ul+ušt-a(i)-bi Haldi-ni*
 H.-adj-inst power-inst set+out-int-he RN precede-int-he H.-det
 By the power of Haldi RN set out. Haldi preceded (him).

And a variant which replaces it in two later campaigns of Argišti (UKN 127 I 20, 128 A2 7):

- (15) *Haldi-ini-ni alšu+iši-ni ušt-a-bi RN Haldi-ni ul+ušt-ai-bi*
 H.-adj-inst greatness-inst set+out-int-he RN H.-det precede-int-he
 By the greatness of Haldi RN set out. Haldi preceded (him).

Finally, *man-* “be”, which, it should be noted, is idiosyncratically conjugated like a transitive, occurs somewhat more often in VS outside of negative contexts. Note in particular that when a so-called gapping construction occurs with *man-*, the resulting configuration is V S X S (where “X” marks the gap), thus verb-first:

- (16) *manu Išpuini kuruni Menua kuruni*
 be I. mighty M. mighty
 Išpuini is mighty, Menua (is) mighty.

9. The transitive cases are harder to motivate, and apparently more stylistic in nature. However, examination in detail of four high-frequency verbs seems to show that, other things being equal (and they frequently are not), the O will occur before the V. Factors influencing the reverse range widely. Some are syntactic. Note the instructive contrast between two instances of “I appointed a governor there” with OV, versus two of “I appointed PN governor” with VO – where we might suggest, with some hesitation that “PN king”, with an explicit subject and predicate nominal, may count syntactically as a full (subordinate) clause, and hence follows the main clause.

- (17) *ter-u-bi PN EN.NAM*
 set-trn-I+him [PN [governor]_{NP}]_S (UKN 264 7, 42 A 11f)
 EN.NAM *ed/sia ter-u-bi*
 [governor]_{NP} there set-trn-I+him. (UKN 265 4, 128 B1 17)

Elsewhere it is very hard to disentangle lexical and stylistic factors. Note in any case that instances of VO are not evenly distributed across the verbal lexicon. 71 of the 170 occurrences of VO are accounted for by the verb *kar-* "conquer" in the three frames *kar-u-bi/ni/ali* GN (GN) "I/he destroyed the GN/GN's" (versus only one occurrence of a OV for this verb). Moreover another 31 of the VO are accounted for by the verb *hai-* "plunder" in an analogous set of frames (but *hai-* also has 28 occurrences in OV frames). But on a stylistic/formulaic level note that many instances of "I/he conquered/plundered GN" with VO are preceded by "I/he set out for GN" as in:

- (18) *ušt-a-di Babilu-ini ebani-edi ha-u-bi Babilu ebani*
 set+out-int-I B.-det land-dir plunder-trn-I+it B. land
 I set out for Babylon. I plundered Babylon. (UKN 155 A 4f)
- (19) *ušt-a-di Arquqi-ni ebani-edi kar-u-bi Arquqi-ni ebani*
 set+out-int-I A.-det. land-dir conquer-trn-I+it A.-det land
 I set out for Babylon. I conquered Arquqi. (UKN 155 F 22)

So that one is continually struck in Urartian texts by the parallel sequences V N V N, where the syntactic relation between V and N are quite different.

The primary, and simplest, conclusion to all of this is, I believe, that Urartian word order shows a number of tendencies reflecting lexical, syntactic, semantic, and discourse contexts. Since the extant corpus is quite limited on all these levels (discourse of monumental inscriptions), there is every reason to believe that a less monolithic corpus could display even more variability. The claim that Urartian has SOV word order is true only to the extent that when the verb is transitive, and both the subject and the object are present, they tend in fact to occur in the order S, O, V. This may or may not be sufficient to qualify SOV as the "basic word order" for Urartian – basically the answer depends in part on a general theory of word order, and in part on the extent to which Urartian otherwise "behaves" like other languages labeled SOV. In any case Urartian clearly is not SOV in the straightforward way that, say, Sumerian is. The extended characterization summarized in (1), with a special provision for intransitive clauses, is certainly more adequate, and suggests for Urartian a status as a language with a special sort of bipolar word order. In table (5) and observations 1. through 9. we have been able to show, even with the limited corpus we have to deal with, how Urartian navigates between these two poles along pathways defined by transitivity, ergativity, stylistic parallelism, etc. This fluidity, perhaps provides a fruitful starting point for a determination of the typological status of Urartian, and its participation in any area of convergence of linguistic form.