Whereas the syntax of Sardinian has been described and analysed synchronically by several authors (most importantly by Jones 1993 in his *Sardinian Syntax*, for the dialect of Lula), an adequate and comprehensive description and analysis of the historical dimension of Sardinian syntax is still missing. Wagner’s (1950) history of the Sardinian language, for example, handles syntax on just 16 pages. More detailed descriptive observations on the syntax of Medieval Sardinian can be found in Blasco Ferrer (1984, 2003, among others). The few publications I know which really go deeper into historical investigation of Sardinian also with respect to syntactic analysis and thus represent first steps to a comprehensive view of Sardinian syntax in diachrony, are 1) Virdis (1995-1996) and 2) Lombardi (2007): both are data-driven, both are mainly concerned with word order patterns and the position of clitic elements, and both, for their analysis, apply insights of a theoretical approach influenced by generative grammar.

The available data and the research literature just mentioned show that the main basic features of Medieval Sardinian are:

(1) a. the null-subject-property  
   b. basic unmarked VS (and VSO) order (thus V1)  
      (contrary to Blasco Ferrer 2003:222, who opts for basic SVO)  
   c. neither V2-properties nor V2-effects  
   d. the validity of the Tobler-Mussafia-Law  
   e. a high frequency of clitic doubling

Further well-known properties of Medieval (and Modern) Sardinian are differential object marking, the inflected and the personal infinitive, focus fronting (also of predicative elements), as well as some idiosyncrasies in the complementiser and particle system (and some others), which will be mentioned but not be the main focus of discussion here.

The aim of this paper is to describe and analyse the word order patterns and information structural correlates of Medieval Sardinian syntax in a cartographic framework (cf. Rizzi 1997, Benincà 2004), combining it with a minimalist approach; I will start from the two articles mentioned above and integrate more data from recent editions of medieval documents (mainly the *Condaghes*, see references). It will be shown, as in *nuce* has been already done by Virdis (1995-96, 2000, 2002), but in an out-dated framework, that all preverbal constituents in Sardinian are either in a Topic or a Focus position (with further refinements as to contrastivity, cf. Lombardi 2007) and that it is the canonical, unmarked position of the subject where it is first merged. The features of Medieval Sardinian as given in (1) account for this analysis.

The most important changes from Medieval to Modern Sardinian, then, consist in the fact that the Tobler-Mussafia-Law, as in other Romance languages, became inoperative, cf. (2a) vs. (2b) (for Sardinian, cf. Lombardi 2007, Virdis 2000), that enclisis to infinitives is ruled out now, cf. (3a) vs. (3b) (for an analysis, cf. Virdis 2002:388), and that, similar to Italian, in Modern Sardinian one of either the subject or the object has to move out from its base position (cf. the Subject-in-Situ-Generalisation put forward by Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou 2001), thus blocking VSO orders, an order, which in Medieval Sardinian (as in Modern
Spanish or Romanian, but not in Italian, cf. also Giurgea & Remberger in press) was still possible (cf. Virdis 2000:34), cf. (4a) vs. (4b):

(2) a. Medieval Sardinian

\[(X)\text{ verb-clitic, } *\text{clitic-verb}\]

\[
\text{Et ego andaivi [...] e no mi la voluit dare.}
\]

And I-TOP go-PAST.1SG-CL.LOC and not CL.1DAT CL.F.ACC want-PAST.3SG give-INF

'And I went there [...] and he didn’t want to give her to me.'

(Condaghe di San Pietro di Silki, 98, following Virdis 2000:523)

b. Modern Sardinian

\[\text{clitic-verb, } *\text{verb-clitic}\]

\[
\text{Bi soe andadu. 'I went there.'}
\]

CL.LOC be-1SG go-PRTC

(3) a. Medieval Sardinian

\[\text{infinitive-clitic}\]

\[
\text{... pro iudikare-mi-nde ...}
\]

for-to judge-INF-CL.1ACC-CL.PART

(cf. Crestomazia XIX 348.15, Blasco Ferrer 2003:219)

b. Modern Sardinian

\[\text{clitic-infinitive}\]

\[
\text{... pro lu faghere ...}
\]

for-to CL.ACC do-INF

(4) a. Medieval Sardinian

\[\text{Vidit iuige custa carta ...}\]

see-PAST.3SG judge this document

'The judge saw this letter...'

(Condaghe di Santa Maria di Bonarcado, 132, following Lombardi 2007:138)

b. Modern Sardinian

\[\text{*At bidu Petru custa littera.}\]

have-3SG see-PRTC P. this letter

References


**Texts / Editions**


