

LUCIEN VAN BEEK, LUK HUITINK

Ancient Greek

Morphosyntactic Structures – Part 5: Constituent Order and Information Structure



Universiteit
Leiden



Roadmap

- Word Order
- Prepositives/Postpositives
- Constituent Order
- The Periphery of the Clause

Word Order

- Greek as a language with a ‘free’ word order:
SOV – OSV – SVO – OVS – etc. all occur
- But not anything goes!

Prepositive words

- Articles (ὁ, ἡ, τό, etc.)
- Prepositions (ἀμφί, ἀνά, ἀντί, etc.) (occasionally postpositive: τοῦ θεοῦ πάρα ‘from the god’)
- Some connective and question particles (ἀλλά, ἀτάρ, ἤ, καί, οὐδέ, οὔτε, τοίγαρ; ἄρα (= ἦ ἄρα), ἦ
- Negatives (οὐ, μή) precede the verb or NP over which they have scope
- Subordinators (ἐπεί, ὅτε, ὅτι, ὡς, etc.) and relative pronouns (ὅς, ἣ, ὅ) head their clause

Postpositive words

- Many connective, attitudinal and scope particles: αὖ, γάρ, δέ, μέν, μέντοι, οὖν, τε; δή, που, τοι; γε, περ;
- The modal particle ἄν
- Non-contrastive personal pronouns: μοι, σοι, με, σε, etc.; οὐ, οἱ, ἐ (μιν), σφων, etc.
- Non-nominative forms of αὐτός (when they function as third person personal pronouns);
- Indefinites like τις (not τίς), ποτε (not πότε), που (not ποῦ), etc.

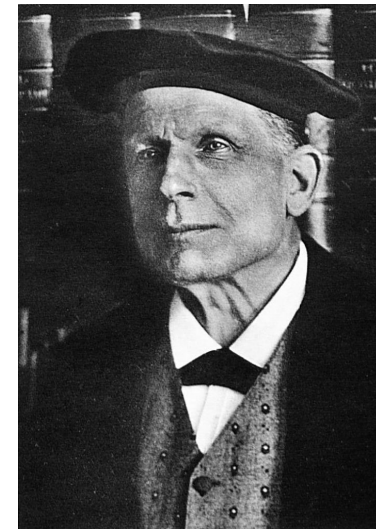
Wackernagel's Law

πολλά τε γάρ μιν καὶ μεγάλα τὰ ἐπαίροντα καὶ ἐποτρύνοντα
ἦν. (Hdt. 1.204.2)

For the reasons that impelled and encouraged him were many and great.

καὶ οὐ μόνον ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τὰ ποιοῦντά με ἀγωνίζεσθαι τὸν
ἀγῶνα τοῦτον. (Isae. 2.43)

And these are not the only things which impel me to engage in this lawsuit.



Constituent Order

- Asserted and Presupposed Information

Whom did John hit?	John hit <u>Peter</u>
Who hit Peter?	<u>John</u> hit Peter
What did John do?	John <u>hit Peter</u>
What happened?	<u>John hit Peter</u>

- The asserted information is called the **focus** (either **narrow** or **broad**), the presupposed information is called **topical**; part of it takes up the **topic** position.

Narrow and Broad Focus Constructions

(Contrastive Topic) **Narrow Focus** **Verb** (Given Topic) (Rest)

ποῖ τοῦτον ἔλκεις;
εἰς ἐμαυτῆς_{NARROW FOCUS} εἰσάγω_{VERB}. (Ar. *Eccl.* 1037)

Where are you dragging him off to?
I'm taking him to my place.

Narrow and Broad Focus Constructions

(Contrastive Topic)	Broad focus		(Rest)
	Broad Focus I (= Verb)	(Given Topic)	Broad Focus II (=Other Focal Material)

οὗτος, τί ποιεῖς ἐτέον, οὐπὶ τοῦ τέγουσ;
 ἀεροβατῶ καὶ περιφρονῶ τὸν ἥλιον BROAD FOCUS (Ar. *Nub.* 1502–3)

You there, on the roof, what on earth are you doing?
 I'm air-walking and contemplate the Sun.

Topics: Given, Contrastive

- Given topic

... ἐπεθύμησε_{BROAD FOCUS I} ὁ Δαρεῖος_{TOPIC} τείσασθαι Σκύθας_{BROAD FOCUS II}
(Hdt. 4.1.1) Darius desired to punish the Scythians.

Topics: Given, Contrastive

- Contrastive Topic

Xenophon tells how Greek soldiers hunt several animals:

στρουθὸν_{TOPIC} δὲ οὐδεὶς_{NARROW FOCUS} ἔλαβεν_{VERB} (Xen. An. 1.5.3)

An ostrich, however, nobody managed to catch.

- Presentational Sentences ('all new')

ἦν δέ τις Ἀπολλοφάνης Κυζικηνός, ὃς ... (Xen. Hell. 4.1.29)

There was a certain Apollophanes of Cyzicus, who ...

The Periphery of the Clause

(Theme) (Setting) Clause (with focus, topic, etc.) (Tail)

χαλεπὸν | θεῶν παρατρέψαι νόον | ἄνδρεσσιν ἐπιχθονίοις_{TAIL} (Bacch. 5.94–6)
It is difficult to turn aside the purpose of the gods, for mortal men.

Πρόξενος δὲ καὶ Μένων_{THEME}, ἐπεὶπερ εἰσὶν ὑμέτεροι μὲν εὐεργέται, ἡμέτεροι δὲ
στρατηγοί_{SETTING}, πέμψατε αὐτοὺς δεῦρο. (Xen. An. 2.5.41)
As for Proxenus and Meno: since they are your benefactors and our generals, you
should send them here.

καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἐπορᾷ μιν ἐξιόντα (Hdt. 1.10.2) And the woman — she sees him leave!