Word Order Change and Stability in Ancient Greek

Dag Haug

University of Oslo

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- But what exactly is surface word order?

Surface word order

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- order of major constituents on the sentence level
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- But if the surface word order is described in terms of grammatical relations, but the word order system works on another basis, the correlation between the two will be less direct.

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- How can we 'capture' this change, and in particular the change in VO/OV-preference

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  - all in all this favours SOV word order

Surface word order in CG

SOV	44.5%
SVO	20.8%
OSV	15.0%
VOS	7.1%
VSO	6.7%
OVS	5.8%

Table: *Word orders in classical Attic according to Ebeling, FS Gildersleeve*

SOV	44.5%
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- rather we will see whether a pragmatic approach can also apply to NT Greek and what the differences are
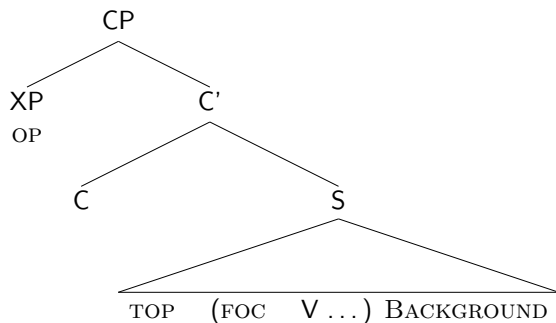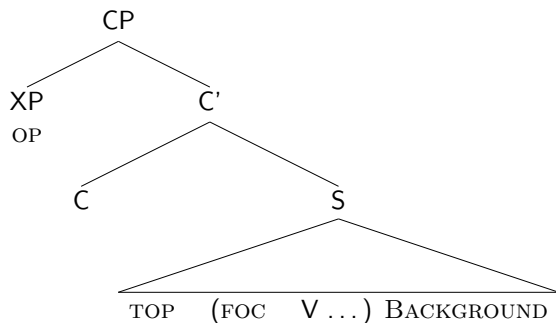
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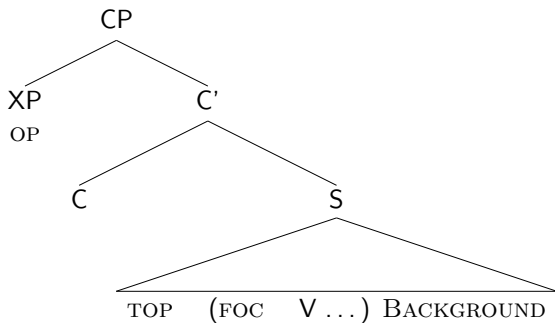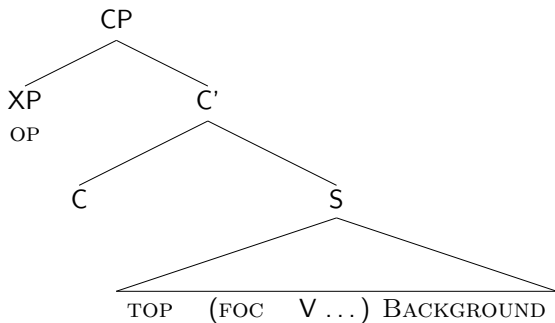
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- CP-adjunction as well?

What's going on in the 'background field'?

	Shortest	Longest	Equal
Subject	19	13	15
Object	51	5	10

Table: Gospels

	Shortest	Longest	Equal
Subject	7	0	1
Object	13	0	3

Table: Paul

Background field and preverbal field compared

	Shortest	Longest	Equal
Object	194	41	39
Oblique	132	26	39

Table: Objects and obliques in the background

	Shortest	Longest	Equal
Object	4	9	14
Oblique	3	10	5

Table: Objects and obliques in the preverbal field

Surface word order in diachrony

SOV	44.5%
SVO	20.8%
OSV	15.0%
VOS	7.1%
VSO	6.7%
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Table: *Word orders in classical Attic*

SVO	52.9%
SOV	20.2%
VOS	9.3%
VSO	8.5%
OVS	4.6%
OSV	4.5%

Table: *Word orders in NT main clauses*

Possible interpretations

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- If the underlying word order system is not (completely) describeable in terms of grammatical relations at all, it is possible that the system is the same and the variation in the order of grammatical relations is due to other changing parts of the system

Comparing the authors

order	all	Matt	Mark	Luke	John	John2	Paul
SVO	52.9%	72.3%	61.9%	58.6%	46.9%	30.6%	33.2%
SOV	20.2%	12.9%	16.5%	14.2%	25.4%	5.6%	34.1%
VOS	9.3%	5.5%	8.3%	8.8%	10.9%	11.1%	11.8%
VSO	8.5%	5.0%	10.3%	9.7%	7.5%	33.3%	6.1%
OVS	4.6%	2.5%	1.0%	3.6%	3.5%	19.4%	8.3%
OSV	4.5%	2.0%	2.1%	5.1%	5.7%	0.0%	6.6%
n	1123	202	97	331	228	36	229
clauses	11404	2160	1385	3671	2000	396	1792
%	9.8%	9.4%	7.0%	9.0%	11.4%	9.1%	12.8%

Word orders visualized
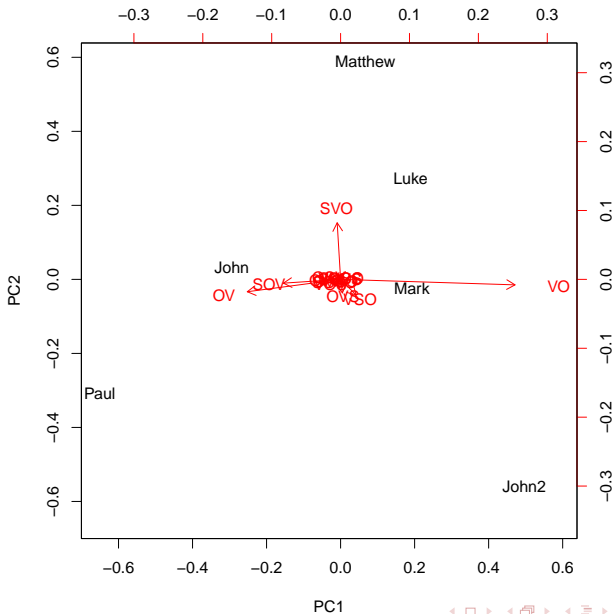
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- Paul, and to some extent John, patterns closely with CG
- As we will see, Paul patterns with CG in other respects too
- The other evangelists clearly put the object after the verb much more often, and are also different from CG in other respects
- So I will use Paul and the Gospels as representatives of the old and the new system respectively

Explaining word order

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- In the following I focus first on the (relatively concrete) notion of contrast, how this influences the position of the direct object
- Then we will look at where weak, backgrounded objects (3. personal pronoun) appear, and how this influences the position of the direct object

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- For simplicity, I will refer to these here as 'contrastive NPs'

The data

	Paul		Gospels	
Pattern	Subject	Object	Subject	Object
OSV	17.6%	5.9%	2.6%	28.9%
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Visualizing the distribution of 'contrastive' NPs

Paul

Gospels

Position relative to sentence

Position relative to verb

SOV
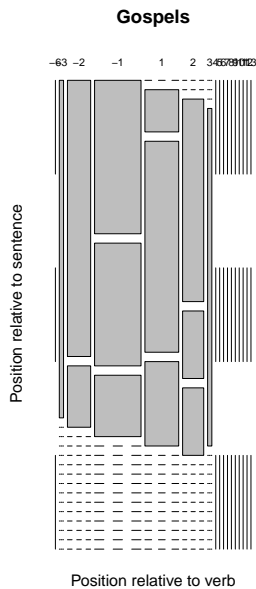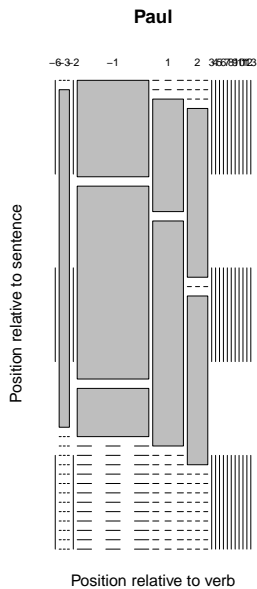
- Focus on the subject in the gospels

(1) *kai gar hoi amartôloi tous agapôntas autous agapôsin*
     and for the sinners   the loving   them   love
     Even the sinners love the ones who love them

SOV

- Focus on the subject in the gospels

(3) *kai gar hoi amartôloi tous agapôntas autous agapôsin*
and for the sinners   the loving   them love
Even the sinners love the ones who love them

- In Paulus the contrast, if any, is on the object

(4) *ho de   theos kai   ton kurion êgeiren*
the PTCP god   even the lord   wake up
God even woke up the lord

- 'Contrastive NPs' are overrepresented as subjects in Paul

(5) *kai ekeinos arnêsetai êmas*
    even he   will deny us
    Even he will deny us

OSV and OVS

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- In Paul, the subject tends to be contrastive, and in the Gospels the object tends to be contrastive in these constellations

- Subject focus in Paul

(6) *to de auto kai umeis khairete kai sunkhairete moi*
   the ptcp same too you rejoice and rejoice with me
   You too should rejoice and rejoice with me over this

Functions of the word orders - OSV

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- Object focus in the Gospels

(9) *touton ho theos arkhêgon kai   sôtêra upsôsei*
    this one God leader and   saviour made
   God made this one the leader and saviour

(10) *tauta panta elalêsan ho Iêsous en parabolais tois okhlois, kai*
      this all   said   Jesus   in parables to the crowds, and
      khôris parabolês ouden elalei autois
      without parables he   said nothing to them
      Jesus told all this in parables, and without parables he said nothing

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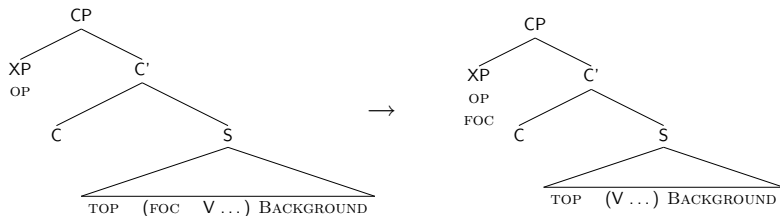
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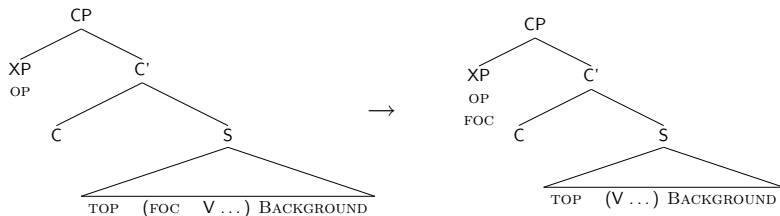
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- The preverbal position no longer expresses narrow focus

# Changes in the pronominal system

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- Prodropping of arguments become much less common

Text(date)	Atts./Words	Freq. (‰)
Herodotus(5 BC)	631/189489	3.33
Xenophon(5-4 BC)	733/321305	2.28
New Testament(1 AD)	867/107232	8.09

The rise of *autos* and the post-verbal object
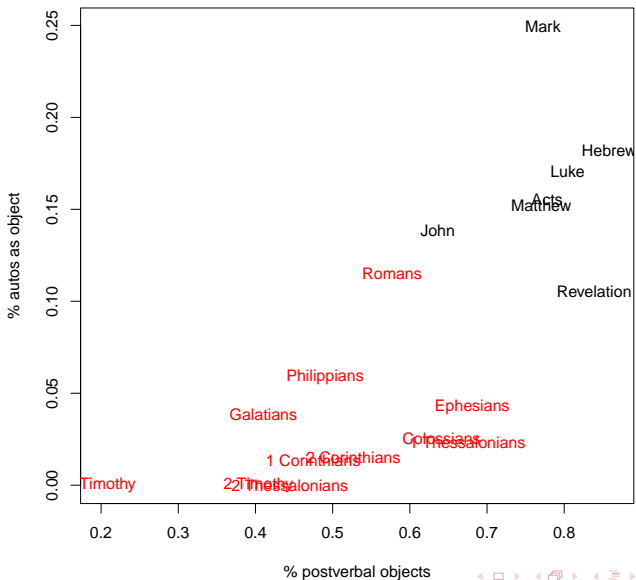
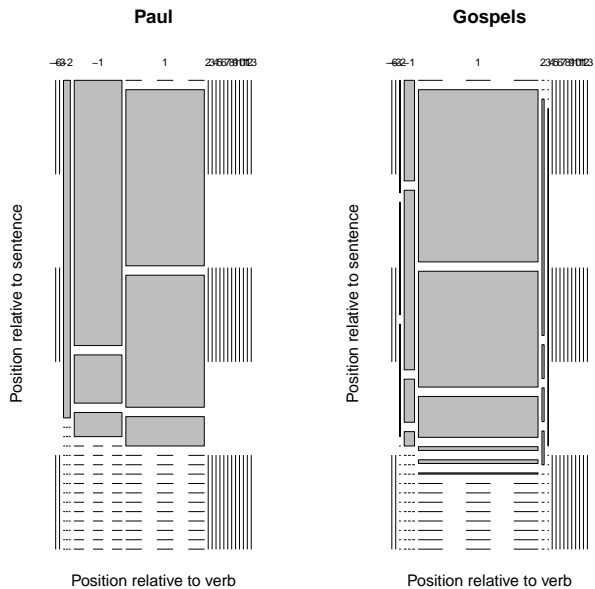- So there is a correlation between the loss of prodrop/use of *autos* and the rise of the post-verbal position of objects in general

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More on *autos*

- So there is a correlation between the loss of prodrop/use of *autos* and the rise of the post-verbal position of objects in general
- It could be the case that normal objects analogically follow the pattern *autos*
- But where does *autos* occur?

The position of *autos*

Paul

Gospels

Position relative to sentence

Position relative to sentence

Position relative to verb

Position relative to verb

The position of *autos*

- *autos* moves away from the pre-verbal position in the Gospel authors

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The position of *autos*

- *autos* moves away from the pre-verbal position in the Gospel authors
- this could be due to the general loss of second position phenomena in later Greek
- perhaps also the loss of the preverbal focus position influenced the position of *autos* by no longer providing a strong word to attach to

Conclusions

- Firm evidence for two changes:

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    - Contrastive elements start to appear in clause-inital position instead of preverbally
    - 3. person pronouns start to appear (almost) exclusively post-verbally
- Both these changes may have conspired in favour of the VO surface word order, the first one by leading to more verb-initial focus domains and the second by more general analogy

Slides available at
http://www.hf.uio.no/ifikk/proiel

Data from the PROIEL corpus
http://foni.uio.no:3000