Word order and information structure in New Testament Greek

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This dissertation examines word order variation in the Koine Greek of the New Testament Greek in a variety of domains: declarative clauses, questions and relative clauses. In particular, I examine the way in which word order corresponds to information structure.

It is argued that although New Testament Greek shows a variety of possible permutations of the sentence elements subject (S), verb (V) and object (O), in declarative clauses, questions and relative clauses, the word order is not free. Rather, it is partly governed by phrase structure and partly by information structural considerations such as Topic and Focus. This is manifested in all of the domains investigated. I argue that the basic word order is best described as VSO with an SVO alternative basic word order. Marked clauses, such as SOV, OVS, OSV and also some SVO clauses involve topicalization or focus movement of the arguments.

This thesis is of interest to syntacticians who are interested in word order and the syntax-pragmatics interface as well as to historical linguistics and classics scholars.