

Adverbial Participial Clauses in Koiné Greek: Grounding and Information Structure¹

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The paper begins by distinguishing adverbial participial clauses² in the Greek New Testament that have the same subject as their nuclear clause from those that have a different subject (§1). It then notes that pre-nuclear participial clauses typically are backgrounded with respect to the nuclear clause, whereas post-nuclear ones often fall within the focal domain of the nuclear clause (§2). Most participial clauses make comments about topics (they have predicate focus), but some arethetic (they have sentence focus) (§3). The final section considers the significance of variations in constituent order within participial clauses.

1. Case

Most adverbial participial clauses in the Greek New Testament are in either the nominative or the genitive case.

Nominative participial clauses (NPCs) almost always have the *same subject* as their nuclear clause. In (1), the subject of both the NPC (1a) and the nuclear clause (1b) is ‘they’.³

- (1a) Ἀκούσαντες δὲ
having heard.NOM DM
- (1b) κατενύγησαν τὴν καρδίαν...
3P.were pierced the heart
‘Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart...’ (Acts 2:37 NRSV)

The subject of a **genitive** participial clause (traditionally called a ‘genitive absolute’—GA)⁴ typically “is not identical with the subject of the leading verb” (Healey & Healey 1990). In (2), the subject of the GA (2a) is ‘they’, whereas the subject of the nuclear clause (2b) is ‘the priests and the captain of the temple guard’.

- (2a) Λαλούντων δὲ αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸν λαὸν
speaking.GEN DM they.GEN to the people
- (2b) ἐπέστησαν αὐτοῖς οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ ὁ στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ...
3P.approached them the priests and the captain of the temple
‘While they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard ... came up to them...’ (Acts 4:1, reordered NIV)

¹ This paper was presented at the International Conference on Discourse and Grammar ‘Illocutionary force, information structure and subordination between discourse and grammar’, which took place at Universiteit Ghent, Belgium in May 2008. Parts of the paper are based on Levinsohn 2000:181-87, where adverbial participial clauses are referred to as “anarthrous” (i.e., without an article before the participle).

² “Adverbial clauses are employed to provide the situational context for the event or state that is described in a main clause” (Whaley 1997:247). They express “an additional statement which does not form an essential part of the verbal notion of the main verb” (Healey & Healey 1990). This paper does not consider participial clauses that are used adjectively (attributively) or as a verbal complement. Healey & Healey discuss ways to distinguish the adverbial and adjectival uses of Greek participial clauses.

³ The case of the participle and its subject is marked as follows: ACC accusative; DAT dative; GEN genitive; NOM nominative. Other abbreviations used in the glossing of the examples are: ADD additive, DM development marker, 3P third person plural, 3S third person singular. NIV is the New International Version of the Bible in English (1993). NRSV is the New Revised Standard Version (1990).

⁴ I follow Healey & Healey in using the term absolute even when “used in a non-absolute sense” (Sim 1995:41), as in example 2, where the genitival subject of the participial clause is involved in the action of the nuclear clause.

The GA is used 336 times in the Greek New Testament.⁵ Only six do not manifest a change of surface subject between the GA and the nuclear clause, and five of them involve changes in the *role* of the subject between experiencer and agent.

Thus, in (3), the role of the subject changes from experiencer to agent.⁶

- (3a) μὴ δυναμένου δὲ αὐτοῦ γνῶναι τὸ ἀσφαλὲς διὰ τὸν θόρυβον
not being able.GEN DM he.GEN to know the definite due to the noise
- (3b) ἐκέλευσεν ἄγεσθαι αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν.
3S.ordered to be brought him into the barracks
'and since he could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that he (Paul) be taken into the barracks.' (Acts 21:34, modified NIV)

In addition to nominatives and genitives, adverbial participial clauses may also be in the dative or the accusative case. When in the **dative**, the subject of the participial clause is typically dative in both clauses. In (4), for example, the subject of 'having embarked' is referred to as αὐτῶ 'he.DAT' in both (4a) and (4b):

- (4a) Καὶ ἐμβάντι αὐτῶ εἰς τὸ πλοῖον
and having embarked.DAT he.DAT into the boat
- (4b) ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ.
3P.followed him the disciples his
'And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him.' (Matthew 8:23, NRSV)

Accusative participial clauses occasionally occur when its subject is in the accusative case in the nuclear clause. In (5a), the participle ἐλθόντα 'having come' is in the accusative, as is the pronoun αὐτὸν in (5b) whose referent was the subject of the participle.

- (5a) καὶ ἐλθόντα εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν
and having come.ACC into the house
- (5b) προέφθασεν αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων...
3S.anticipated him the Jesus saying
'And when he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking....' (Matthew 17:25, NRSV)

In both (4) and (5), the subject of the participial clause is different from that of the main clause. However, accusative and dative participial clauses also arise when the construction requires the subject to be in that case, in which case the subject of the two clauses is usually the same.

This is illustrated in (6). The subject of the nuclear verb ἐγένετο 'it happened' is an infinitival clause, so the subject of the infinitival clause (αὐτήν 'her') is in the accusative. The subject of both the participial clause and the infinitive are the same.

- (6a) ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἀσθενήσασαν αὐτήν
3S.happened DM in the days those having become.sick.ACC she.ACC
- (6b) ἀποθανεῖν
to die
'About that time it happened that she became sick and died.' (Acts 9:37, adapted from NIV)

In (7), the subject of the nuclear verb ἐγένετο 'it happened' is again an infinitival clause, with its subject (με 'me') in the accusative (7d). The sentence contains a dative participial clause (7b) and

⁵ Healey & Healey's total was 313. When two or three GAs are contiguous in the same sentence, they counted them as single occurrences. I interpreted one of their examples as the complement of a perception verb.

⁶ In some manuscripts, the GA of 3a is changed to a NPC: μὴ δυναμένου... (not being able—αὐτοῦ is omitted). In the remaining instance, the subject of the GA is different from that of the immediately following subordinate clause, even though it is the same as that of the nuclear clause.

a GA (7c), both with the same subject as (7d). As in (3), the role of the subject changes; this time, from agent (7b-c) to experiencer (7d).

(7a-b) Ἐγένετο δέ μοι / ὑποστρέψαντι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ
 3S.happened DM I.DAT / having returned.DAT to Jerusalem

(7c) καὶ προσευχομένου μου ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ
 and praying.GEN I.GEN in the temple

(7d) γενέσθαι με ἐν ἐκστάσει
 to become me in trance

‘It happened that, after I had returned to Jerusalem and while I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance’ (Acts 22:17, adapted from NRSV)

Participial clauses in the dative and accusative are relatively infrequent in the Greek New Testament. Consequently, the rest of this paper concentrates on participial clauses in the nominative and, especially, the genitive.

2. Grounding and pre-nuclear versus post-nuclear participial clauses

All the adverbial participial clauses in examples (1)-(7) preceded the nuclear clause, though they may follow it. However, their grounding status vis-à-vis the nuclear clause is usually different in the two positions.⁷

The information conveyed in a **pre-nuclear** participial clause is typically *backgrounded* vis-à-vis the information in the nuclear clause (Healey & Healey 1990). In (1) (above), ‘they heard (this)’ (1a) relates to contextually established information and is backgrounded with respect to the new event ‘they were cut to the heart’ (1b). In (2), ‘they were speaking to the people’ (2a) relates to contextually established information and is backgrounded with respect to the new event ‘the priests and the captain of the temple guard ... came up to them’ (2b). In (3), ‘he could not get at the truth because of the uproar’ (3a) relates to contextually established information⁸ and is backgrounded with respect to ‘he ordered that he be taken into the barracks’ (3b). And so on!

In contrast, the information conveyed in a **post-nuclear** participial clause is often *part of the focal domain* of the nuclear clause. In (8), the post-nuclear NPCs (8c) describe the manner in which the action of the nuclear verb (‘came’) was carried out and, as the context (8a) confirms, are a focal part of the comment about ‘the Son of Man’.

(8a) ‘For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon”’

(8b) ἦλθεν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
 3S.came the son of the man

(8c) ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων,
 eating.NOM and drinking.NOM

‘The Son of Man came eating and drinking’,

[‘and they say, “Here is a glutton and a drunkard...”] (Matthew 11:18-19 NIV)

Similarly, in (9), the post-nuclear GA (9c) states the circumstances under which the speaker will return and is a focal part of the assertion.

⁷ Adverbial GAs may be perfective (traditionally called ‘aorist’), imperfective (‘present’) or perfect. The majority are imperfective, whether pre-nuclear (144/279) or post-nuclear (37/57). 126 perfectives are pre-nuclear and 16 are post-nuclear. 9 perfects are pre-nuclear and 4 are post-nuclear. Since the aspect of the GA therefore does not determine whether it is pre- or post-nuclear, I do not discuss aspect in this paper.

⁸ The previous sentence read, ‘He was inquiring who he was and what he had done. Some in the crowd shouted one thing; some, another.’

- (9a) ‘When they asked him to stay longer, he declined. But on taking leave of them, he said,’
 (9b) Πάλιν ἀνακάμψω πρὸς ὑμᾶς
 again I will return to you
 (9c) τοῦ θεοῦ θέλοντος
 the God.GEN being willing.GEN
 ‘I will come back if it is God’s will’ (Acts 18:21 NIV)

Nevertheless, exceptions to this distribution are found. For example, a pre-nuclear participial clause may be the “narrow focus” (van Valin 2005:71) of a proposition with identificational articulation, especially if it has imperfective aspect. When this happens, the information in the participial clause is non-established, whereas that of the nuclear clause is established.⁹

This is illustrated in (10). ‘I write these things’ is established information. In turn, the pre-nuclear NPC ‘not shaming you’ (10a) provides the focal point of contrast with ‘admonishing’ (10c).

- (10a) Οὐκ ἐντρέπων ὑμᾶς
 not shaming.NOM you
 (10b) γράφω ταῦτα
 I write these things
 (10c) ἀλλ’ ὡς τέκνα μου ἀγαπητὰ νουθετῶ[ν].
 but as children my beloved admonishing.NOM
 ‘I write these things not to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children’ (1 Corinthians 4:14, adapted from NIV)

Conversely, post-nuclear GAs sometimes present information of secondary importance, when compared to that of the nuclear clause, especially if they have perfective or perfect aspect. (11) is part of a court scene and introduces Paul’s response to charges that have just been brought against him. The governor’s invitation to him to speak (11b) is of secondary importance, when compared to his speech.

- (11a) Ἀπεκρίθη τε ὁ Παῦλος
 3S.answered ADD the Paul
 (11b) νεύσαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος λέγειν,
 having nodded.GEN to him the.GEN governor.GEN to speak
 ‘Paul replied, when the governor motioned for him to speak’ (Acts 24:10, reordered NIV)

In the Greek New Testament, up to seven participial clauses may precede and be backgrounded with respect to their nuclear clause, as (12) shows. The information in the pre-nuclear NPCs (12a-g) is backgrounded vis-à-vis the foreground event described in (12h).

- (12a) καὶ γυνὴ οὖσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος δώδεκα ἔτη
 and woman.NOM being.NOM with flow of blood twelve years
 (12b) καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἰατρῶν
 and many things having suffered.NOM by many physicians
 (12c) καὶ δαπανήσασα τὰ παρ’ αὐτῆς πάντα
 and having spent.NOM the with her all
 (12d) καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα
 and nothing having benefited.NOM

⁹ Such an ordering constitutes a violation of the “Principle of Natural Information Flow” (Comrie 1989:127f). When this principle is adhered to, then the non-verbal constituents of the proposition are ordered so that those that convey (more) established information are placed before those that convey non- or less established information.

- (12e) ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ἔλθοῦσα,
but rather into the worse having come.NOM
- (12f) ἀκούσασα περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ,
having heard.NOM about the Jesus
- (12g) ἔλθοῦσα ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ὀπίσθεν
having come.NOM in the crowd behind
- (12h) ἥψατο τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ.
3S.touched the garment his
'(a) Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years.
(b) She had endured much under many physicians, (c) and had spent all that she had;
(d) and she was no better, (e) but rather grew worse. (f) She had heard about Jesus,
(g) and came up behind him in the crowd (h) and touched his cloak' (Mark 5:25-27 NRSV)

3. Articulations (Focus domains)

NPCs typically have **topic-comment** articulation (predicate focus), the topic being the same as that of the nuclear clause. See, for example, the NIV translation of (12b-g) above. (12a), however, is **thetic** (sentence focus).

260 of the 336 **GAs** have topic-comment articulation (predicate focus). The norm in GAs is for the genitival subject to be explicit. See (2a) and (3a) (the topical subject is an independent pronoun), as well as (11b) (the topical subject is an articular noun phrase). Only rarely is the topic implicit in a GA (12 instances in the UBS text)¹⁰.

However, 76 of the GAs are **thetic**. (13a) is an example (13b is a pre-nuclear NPC).¹¹

- (13a) Γενομένης δὲ ἡμέρας
having become.GEN DM day.GEN
- (13b) ποιήσαντες συστροφὴν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι
having made.NOM conspiracy the Jews.NOM
- (13c) ἀνεθεμάτισαν ἑαυτοὺς
3P.bound with oath themselves
'When it became day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath'
(Acts 23:12, modified NIV)

Lambrecht (1994:145) would also classify the GA of (14b) as **thetic**, since the subject is focal. However, since the referent of αὐτῷ 'to him' is topical (see the NIV translation 'he owned'), I prefer to say that such constructions have "experiencer predicate focus" (Levinsohn 2009:23).¹²

- (14a) 'Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement),'
(14b) ὑπάρχοντος αὐτῷ ἀγροῦ
belonging.GEN to him field.GEN
(14c) πωλήσας
having sold.NOM

¹⁰ Even in some of these instances, a topic pronoun in the genitive is present in certain MSS. See, for example, Καὶ ἐλθόντων [αὐτῶν] πρὸς τὸν ὄχλον (and having come.GEN [they.GEN] to the crowd) 'And when they came to the crowd' (Matthew 17:14, modified NRSV).

¹¹ (9c) might be **thetic**, too ('if GOD wills'). However, the presence of the article allows it to be read as a comment about God as topic ('if God WILLS'). Section 4 discusses participial clauses in which the verb is not initial.

¹² (14c) is a pre-nuclear NPC.

- (14d) ἤνεγκεν τὸ χρήμα...
 3S.brought the money
 ‘sold a field he owned and brought the money...’ (Acts 4:36-37 NIV)

On rare occasions, a NPC has identificational articulation (narrow focus). In (15a), for instance, the narrow focus, τί ‘what’, is found within the NPC, not the nuclear clause.¹³

- (15a) Διδάσκαλε, τί ποιήσας
 teacher what having done.NOM
 (15b) ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω;
 life eternal I will inherit
 ‘Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ (Luke 10:25b NRSV)

4. Constituent order variations and Dik’s template

In most of the above examples, the participial clause began with the participle and was followed by the subject. For instance, 212 of the 336 GAs in the Greek New Testament place the subject after the participle. This is to be expected, as Koiné Greek is a VS/VO language.¹⁴

Nevertheless, subjects and other constituents may be placed before a participle, as (9c), (12a-b) and (12e) show. Such variations in constituent order may be related to a template proposed by Simon Dik (1989:363), which has turned out to be particularly applicable to VS/VO languages.

Dik’s template is: **P1 P2 V Other**, where
 position P1 can be occupied by one or more TOPIC constituents,¹⁵ and
 position P2 can be occupied by a FOCUS constituent.¹⁶

I first illustrate instances in which one or more topical constituents occupy the P1 position, before considering ones in which the P2 position is occupied by a focal constituent.

(16b) illustrates the placing of a topical subject in the P1 position to signal a switch of attention from ‘the men sent by Cornelius’ (16a) to Peter.¹⁷

- (16a) ‘While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate. They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.’
 (16b) **P1**

τοῦ δὲ **Πέτρον** διενθυμουμένου περὶ τοῦ ὄραματος
 the.GEN DM Peter.GEN reflecting.GEN on the vision

¹³ It is noteworthy that, in the corresponding reply (τοῦτο ποίει / καὶ ζήση, ‘This do / and you will live’—Luke 10:28b), a NPC is not used.

¹⁴ I consider a language to be of the VS type if it is common in narratives (spoken or written accounts “of connected events in order of happening”—Oxford English Dictionary) for topical subjects that are expressed with nouns or noun phrases to follow the verb (see also Longacre 1995:332).

¹⁵ “A referent is interpreted as the topic of a proposition if in a given situation the proposition is construed as being about this referent, i.e. as expressing information which is relevant to and which increases the addressee’s knowledge of this referent” (Lambrecht 1994:131).

¹⁶ The focus of a proposition is “that part which indicates what the speaker intends as the most important... change to be made in the hearer’s mental representation” (Dooley & Levinsohn 2001:62; see Lambrecht 1994:213).

It does not follow from Dik’s template that VS/VO will be the most common order in a text or even a language. The template allows, for example, that it be the norm for P1 to be occupied by a topical subject.

¹⁷ In the examples of this section, constituents that occupy the P1 position are underlined, while those that occupy the P2 position are bolded.

- (16c) εἶπεν [αὐτῷ] τὸ πνεῦμα...
 3S said to him the spirit
 ‘While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you.’ (Acts 10:17-19 NIV)

Although topical subjects of pre-nuclear GAs sometimes occupy the P1 position to signal a switch of attention, as in (16b), their referent is more often the subject of the *previous* independent clause (27 out of 46 instances). Since a pre-nuclear GA anticipates a switch of subject in the *following* nuclear clause, the subject of the GA may be thought of as a **foil** for the following subject (a foil is “anything that serves to set off another thing distinctly or to advantage by contrast” —Oxford English Dictionary).

(17) is typical of this pattern. The GA follows a reported speech and its subject acts as a foil for the one introduced in the nuclear clause (νεφέλη φωτεινὴ ‘a bright cloud’ —(17b)).

- (17a) **P1**
 ἔτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος
 yet he.GEN speaking.GEN
- (17b) ἰδοὺ νεφέλη φωτεινὴ ἐπεσκίασεν αὐτούς,
 behold cloud shining 3S.overshadowed them
 ‘While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them’ (Matthew 17:5a NIV)
 (‘He was still speaking when a bright cloud enveloped them’)

On 9 of the 27 occasions that the subjects of the GA and of the previous independent clause are the same, a pre-nuclear reference to the previous event also occurs. This is seen in (18b), where ‘these things’ refers to the previous events. The subject of the GA again acts as a foil for the one introduced in the nuclear clause (ἄγγελος κυρίου ‘an angel of the Lord’ —(18c)).

- (18a) ‘Her husband Joseph ... planned to dismiss her quietly.’
- (18b) **P1 P1**
 ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος
 these things DM he.GEN having considered.GEN
- (18c) ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου κατ’ ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ
 behold angel of lord in dream appeared to him
 ‘But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream’ (Matthew 1:19-20, NRSV)

On two occasions, a spatio-temporal expression occupies the P1 position. In (19a), the locative adverb ἐκεῖθεν ‘from there’ refers to the location of the previous events. Once again, the subjects of the GA and of the previous independent clause are the same.

- (19a) **P1**
 Ἐκεῖθεν ἐξελθόντος αὐτοῦ
 and from there having gone forth.GEN he.GEN
- (19b) ἤρξαντο οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι δεινῶς ἐνέχειν...
 3P.began the scribes and the Pharisees terribly to be hostile
 ‘When he left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile....’ (Luke 11:53, modified NRSV)

I turn now to focal constituents that occupy the **P2** position for contrastive or emphatic prominence.

Inthetic constructions, it is common for the element being introduced to occupy the P2 position. In (20b), for instance, the preposing of ὀψίας ‘evening’ emphasises the lateness of the hour and, therefore, the need for decisive action (contrast (13a) above).

(20a) ‘When he landed, he saw a large crowd; he had compassion on them and healed their sick.’

(20b) **P2**

ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης
evening.GEN DM having become.GEN

(20c-d) προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ / λέγοντες...
3S.came to him the disciples saying.NOM

‘When it was **evening**, the disciples came to him and said, [“This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food”].’ (Matthew 14:14-15, modified NIV)

(12e) (repeated below) is a topic-comment structure in which a focal constituent occupies the P2 position for contrastive prominence.

(12d) καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα
and nothing having benefited.NOM

(12e) **P2**

ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ἔλθοῦσα,
but rather into the worse having come.NOM

‘instead of getting better, (e) having rather grown **worse**’ (Mark 5:26c-d, modified NRSV)

Firbas (1964) argues that, when a comment contains more than one constituent, one of them may carry “a higher degree of communicative dynamism” than the others. Heimerdinger (1999:167) calls such a constituent the “dominant focal element” (DFE). In the case of (12e), the placing of εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ‘into the worse’ before the participle identifies that state as the DFE.¹⁸

(12b) is similar; πολλὰ ‘many things, much’ is the DFE of the comment ‘having endured **much** under many physicians’.

In (21b), only part of a constituent is placed in the P2 position. The context records that the magistrates ordered them to be beaten (21a). (21b) describes the fulfilment of this order, with the one piece of brand-new information, πολλάς ‘many’, preposed for emphasis. The rest of the constituent, πληγὰς ‘blows’, is in its default position after the verb and subject.

(21a) ‘and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten’

(21b) **P2**

πολλάς τε ἐπιθέντες αὐτοῖς πληγὰς
many ADD having inflicted upon.NOM them blows

(21c) ἔβαλον εἰς φυλακὴν
3P.threw into jail

‘After they had flogged them **severely**, they threw them into prison’ (Acts 16:22b-23a, modified NIV)

(22a) provides a further example in which only part of a constituent is placed in the P2 position. This time, the participial clause is a GA and the genitival subject (αὐτοῦ ‘he’) separates the two parts of the focal constituent (τοσαῦτα ... σημεῖα ‘so many signs’). This ordering of non-established and established information (a violation of the Principle of Natural Information Flow—see footnote 8) probably adds to the emphasis given to τοσαῦτα ‘so many’ (Werth 1984).

¹⁸ I am treating μᾶλλον ‘rather’ as a connective.

- (22a) **P2** (established)
Τοσαῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ σημεῖα πεποιηκός ἐμπροσθεν αὐτῶν
 so many DM he.GEN signs having done.GEN before them
- (22b) οὐκ ἐπίστευον εἰς αὐτόν,
 not 3P.were believing in him
 ‘Though he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him’
 (John 12:37 NRSV)

In independent clauses, it is not uncommon for both the P1 and P2 positions to be occupied (see Levinsohn 2000:37). In participial clauses, in contrast, such a pattern seldom occurs.

(23a) is one of only four GAs in which both positions are occupied. The topical subject, ‘he’ (the son), occupies the P1 position to act as a foil for the switch to the father (see discussion of (17)). The complement μακρὰν ‘far’ then occupies the P2 position to emphasise how far away the son still was when the father saw him (and rushed to meet him).

- (23a) **P1 P2**
 ἔτι δὲ αὐτοῦ μακρὰν ἀπέχοντος
 still DM he.GEN far being away.GEN
- (23b) εἶδεν αὐτόν ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ
 3S.saw him the father his
 ‘But while he was still **far off**, his father saw him...’ (Luke 15:20c-d NRSV)
 (‘He was still far off when his father saw him...’)

(24b) is similar, except that two focal constituents are preposed for contrastive prominence (see further below).

- (24a) ‘Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised [implied: by God],’
- (24b) **P1 P2 P2**
 τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ ἡμῶν κρεῖττόν τι προβλεψαμένου,
 the God.GEN for us better something having foreseen.GEN
 ‘since God had planned **something better for us**’ (Hebrews 11:39-40a, modified NRSV)

The order of the non-verbal constituents in (24b) above conforms to the Principle of Natural Information Flow. The referent of the first constituent is the most established (God, who gave the promise mentioned in (24a)). ‘We’ have not been mentioned in the immediate context, but the referents are the writer and his readers. ‘Something better’ is truly non-established information.

Although it is rare for both the P1 and the P2 positions to be occupied in the same participial clause, on occasion the nuclear clause begins with a constituent in the P1 position, which is then followed by a GA whose P2 position is occupied. (25) exemplifies this pattern. The subject of the nuclear clause, ἡ θάλασσα ‘the sea’ occupies the P1 position, to signal a switch of attention from the previous topic, Jesus. In turn, position P2 of thethetic GA is occupied by ἀνέμου μεγάλου ‘a strong wind’ (for emphasis).

- (25a) ‘...and Jesus had not yet come to them’.
- (25b) **P1 P2**
 ἡ τε θάλασσα / ἀνέμου μεγάλου πνέοντος / διεγείρετο.
 the ADD sea wind.GEN great.GEN blowing.GEN 3S.was being roused
 ‘Furthermore, the sea, because **a strong wind** was blowing, was becoming rough’ (John 6:17d-18, modified NRSV)

(26a) begins with a temporal phrase in the P1 position, which sets the scene not just for the followingthetic GA, but also for the next several sentences. The P2 position of the first GA (26b) is occupied by πολλοῦ ὄχλου ‘a large crowd’ (again, for emphasis).

- (26a) **P1** **P2**
 Ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις πάλιν πολλοῦ ὄχλου ὄντος
 in those the days again large.GEN crowd.GEN being.GEN
- (26b) καὶ μὴ ἐχόντων τί φάγωσιν,
 and not having.GEN anything 3P.might eat
- (26c) προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς μαθητὰς
 having called.NOM the disciples
- (26d) λέγει αὐτοῖς...
 3S.says to them
 ‘During those days **a large crowd** again gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said...’ (Mark 8:1, modified NIV)

(27) is an intriguing example because ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ‘their conscience’, which occupies the P1 position, is in the nominative case and is the subject of the nuclear verb οἰκοδομηθήσεται ‘will be bolstered’. Notwithstanding translations such as ‘since their conscience is weak’ (NRSV), it is not the subject of the GA ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος ‘being weak’ (ἀσθενοῦς ‘weak’, in the P2 position, contrasts with ‘knowledge’).

- (27a) ‘For if someone sees you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol,’
- (27b-c) **P1** **P2**
 οὐχὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ / ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος οἰκοδομηθήσεται
 not the conscience his weak.GEN being.GEN 3S.will be bolstered
 ‘might his conscience, since he is **weak**, not be bolstered [to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols]?’ (1 Cor. 8:10, adapted from NRSV)

The final set of examples illustrate adverbial participial clauses that relate to matrix clauses that are themselves *subordinated* to another nuclear clause.

In (28b), the nominative participle ἐρχόμενος ‘coming’ precedes the matrix verb of the clause subordinated by ὡς ‘as’.

- (28a) ‘Now his elder son was in the field;’
- (28b) καὶ ὡς ἐρχόμενος ἤγγισεν τῇ οἰκίᾳ,
 and as coming.NOM 3S.drew near to the house
- (28c) ἤκουσεν συμφωνίας καὶ χορῶν,
 3S.heard music and dancing
 ‘and, when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.’ (Luke 15:25b NRSV)

In (29), the GA precedes the matrix clause subordinated by ὅπως ‘so that’. The topical subject of the GA τῆς ἀνακρίσεως ‘the investigation’ occupies the P1 position before the verb to signal a switch of attention from ‘I’ (29a).

- (29a) ‘Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa,’
- (29b) **P1**
 ὅπως τῆς ἀνακρίσεως γενομένης
 so that the.GEN investigation.GEN having happened.GEN
- (29c) σχῶ τί γράψω•
 I may have something I may write

‘so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write’ (Acts 25:26b, NRSV)

Finally, in (30c), a pre-nuclear NPC with the P2 position occupied is itself the focus of an infinitival clause whose verb is established information (compare (10)).

(30a) ‘And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites;’

(30b) ὅτι φιλοῦσιν
because 3P.love

(30b) **P2**
ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς καὶ ἐν ταῖς γωνίαις τῶν πλατειῶν ἑστῶτες προσεύχεσθαι,
in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets standing to pray
‘because they love to pray standing in the synagogue and at the street corners’ (Matthew 6:5, modified NRSV)

5. Conclusion

This paper has shown that participial clauses may have topic-comment orthetic articulation (predicate or sentence focus). Furthermore, nearly all the variations in constituent order that occur in independent clauses in Koiné Greek are also found in adverbial participial clauses. Thus, non-verbal constituents are found not only after the verb, but also in the P1 (topic) or P2 (focus) positions before the verb. There are even a few participial clauses in which both the P1 and the P2 positions are occupied.

The only variations in constituent order that I have not yet noted are unambiguous examples of the postposing of the verb for focal prominence (Levinsohn 2000:36).¹⁹

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¹⁹ For an ambiguous example, see (9c) ‘if God **wills**’.