

**Understanding Latin word order:
Re-assessing the role of information structure**

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My overall aim is to further our understanding of variable constituent order in Latin, with special reference to the role of information structure. I will start the talk by reviewing some earlier work of mine on the composition of the Latin left periphery. I provide evidence for a dedicated topic and focus position, with the former systematically preceding the latter. These findings point towards a strong connection between syntax and information structure, as in Rizzi (1997).

But what about the middle field, the VP and the right periphery? In the functionalist literature on Latin (Panhuis 1982; Spevak 2010), as well as in the generative analyses of Devine & Stephens (2006; 2019), information structure is considered to govern word order variability in the entire sentential domain. In contrast with those two traditions, in the second half of the talk I will suggest that below the left periphery, information structure is only one among many factors determining variable word order. Focusing in particular on object placement (OV vs. VO; DO-IO vs. IO-DO), I will present quantitative corpus data showing that in comparison with structural persistence ('priming'), prosodic weight and syntactic complexity, information structure is only a relatively weak predictor for word order.