Journal of Linguistics (2026), **62**, 633–660
doi:10.1017/S0022226725100959

Journal of Linguistics
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Old Spanish and the Split V2 hypothesis

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Received: 15 January 2024; **Revised:** 03 September 2025; **Accepted:** 06 September 2025

Keywords: adverbials; enclisis; EPP; external merge; Old Spanish; V2

Abstract

This paper uses Old Spanish as a case study to argue that verb-second (V2) syntax is not monolithic but instead involves a split between external merge (EM) and internal merge (IM) into the C-system. Building on Holmberg's (2020) findings on Swedish, it demonstrates that the enclitic and proclitic patterns in Old Spanish finite main clauses serve as diagnostics for whether a V2 constituent reaches the preverbal field via EM or IM, reflecting a broader distinction between formal V2 and scope/discourse-related V2. The high frequency of enclisis in Old Spanish suggests a predominance of EM-driven V2, in contrast to Holmberg's assessment of Swedish, where EM-driven V2 is claimed to be more restricted.

The paper proposes a mixed model of V2 syntax, integrating EPP-driven merge into Spec-FinP (Haegeman 1996) with interpretively motivated Criterial movement (Rizzi 2006; Samo 2019). Residual V2 reflects the resilience of the interpretive component, with its assumed Spec-head configuration (Poletto 2000) reinterpreting verb movement to Fin^0 as movement to the Criterial head. The model provides a new perspective on the interplay between formal and interpretive aspects of V2 syntax, with implications reaching beyond Old Spanish.

1. Introduction

This paper advocates a 'split' generative model of V2 (or 'verb-second') syntax, distinguishing between external merge (EM) and internal merge (IM) into the C-system. Building on Holmberg's (2020) analysis of Swedish – a strict V2 Germanic language – it examines data from Old Spanish, which, despite its relatively flexible left periphery, arguably reveals structural patterns that may be latent in stricter V2 languages.[1]

Traditionally, analyses of Germanic V2 posit that the 'V2 constituent' – the element immediately preceding the finite verb – reaches its surface position via IM (Haegeman 1996; 2012; Roberts 2004; Holmberg 2015; Hsu 2017; Catasso 2024). However, Holmberg

[1] Notwithstanding the position adopted here, the typological status of Old Spanish has traditionally been a subject of debate. While this paper, along with Fontana (1993), Poole (2013, 2017) and Wolfe (2015, 2016a), supports its classification as a V2 language, others, including Rivero (1993), Sitaridou (2019) and Batllori and Sitaridou (2020), argue against this view.

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(2020) argues that certain constituents in Swedish, specifically 'as-for' phrases and adverbial clauses, can be externally merged directly into the V2 position. Supporting data (Holmberg 2020: 47) are provided in examples (1) to (3), where *så* (cognate with English *so*) appears as an optional element inserted immediately after a non-argumental V2 constituent.

(1) Vad *sina/hans$_i$ hundar beträffar (så) har han$_i$ dom alltid med sig.
what his.REFL/his dogs concern SÅ has he them always with SELF
'As for his dogs, he always takes them along.'

(2) När Anna$_i$ var klar (så) gick hon$_i$ hem.
when Anna was done SÅ went she home
'When Anna was done, she went home.'

(3) Hon$_i$ gick hem när Anna$_{*i/j}$ var klar.
she went home when Anna was done
'She$_i$ went home when Anna$_{*i/j}$ was done.'

The ungrammaticality of the reflexive possessive *sina* in (1) suggests that the V2 constituent *vad hans hundar beträffar* cannot originate from a TP-internal position and hence must have undergone EM into the C-system. Similarly, in (2), reconstructing the adverbial clause into TP results in a binding violation, as shown in (3), indicating that it too must have been externally merged into the left periphery.[2]

[2] Holmberg (2020: 60) treats Swedish as representative of Germanic V2 as a whole, raising the question of whether the patterns he identifies can be generalized to other Germanic languages. Adverbial clauses appear capable of functioning as V2 constituents in most, if not all, Germanic V2 languages (Holmberg 2015: 348). Moreover, the binding violation highlighted by Holmberg has cross-linguistic import, extending even to non-V2 languages like English, as illustrated in the gloss for (3).

The case of 'as for' phrases is more complex. Danish unsurprisingly patterns with Swedish, as seen in example (i), while German examples like (ii) show that such phrases can occupy the V2 position in that language as well. Conversely, the obligatory V3 order in Dutch examples such as (iii) suggests that equivalent phrases in Dutch cannot function as V2 constituents.

(i) Hvad angår ulven, så er den tilbage igen.
what concerns wolf.DEF SÅ is it back again
'As regards the wolf, it's back again.'

(ii) Was den Wolf betrifft, sind sich (Supplied by Danish colleague)
what the wolf concerns are.3PL REFL
die Betroffenen eigentlich einig.
the affected.parties actually in.agreement
'As regards the wolf, the affected parties are actually in agreement.'
(*Neues Land*, https://neuesland.at/wassernot-auf-almen-steigt/).

(iii) Wat betreft Miekes schoonvader, ik geloof
what concerns Mieke's father-in-law I believe
dat ze hem zelf niet zo mag.
COMP she him herself not so likes
'As for Mieke's father-in-law, I believe that she doesn't really like him herself.'
(De Vries 2014: 353)

An anonymous reviewer suggests that Holmberg's Swedish data might involve merge into a higher structural layer, potentially with ellipsis, as proposed by Samo (2019: 146–158) for Case Hanging Topics in German.

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EM into the V2 position is also robustly attested in Old Spanish, where finite pronominal enclisis serves as a primary surface diagnostic. Enclisis occurs in a subset of the contexts in which the Germanic languages display V2, but it is widely assumed to be incompatible with an internally merged preverbal field, which instead triggers proclisis (Fontana 1993; Rivero 1993; Benincà 2006; Mackenzie 2019). The basis for this assumption – both theoretical and empirical – is developed in detail in Section 2.3; for now, examples (4) and (5) illustrate the contrast. In (4), enclisis follows postulated EM of the adverb *desi*, a strongly clause-initial, non-argumental element. By contrast, (5) displays proclisis, since *assi* is an object complement and hence must have undergone internal merge from within the *v**P domain.

(4) ℭ desi dixo les assi nuestro sennor.
& so spoke.3S them.DAT thus our lord
'And so our Lord spoke to them in the following way.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 273r)

(5) & assi lo otorga iosepho.
& thus it confirms Josephus
'And Josephus confirms it was so.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 13v)

According to Bouzouita (2008: 238), enclisis accounts for 75% of finite cliticization in main clauses in thirteenth-century Spanish ($N = 2026$). Since enclisis is incompatible with IM, this prevalence indicates a dominant role for EM in Old Spanish V2 clauses containing clitics. Assuming similar behaviour in non-clitic contexts, V2 in Old Spanish must primarily involve EM, contrasting with Holmberg's (2020) account of Swedish V2, which posits EM for just the two above-mentioned categories, viz. 'as for' phrases and adverbial clauses. However, while Holmberg (ibid. 60) concedes that EM of non-clausal adverbials into the V2 position cannot be ruled out on empirical grounds, robust evidence illustrating precisely that operation is readily available in Old Spanish. This suggests that the IM–EM distinction may be more pervasive in V2 systems than previously assumed. For Old Spanish specifically, it relates to a distinction that has received increasing attention in the literature: between scope- or discourse-driven V2, on the one hand, and more purely formal or EPP-driven V2, on the other. This contrast has been influential in recent work, but how best to capture it within the formal architecture of V2 syntax remains far from settled.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 spells out the split model of Old Spanish V2, explaining (in Subsection 2.3) why its two components correlate with enclisis and proclisis respectively. Section 3 summarizes IM-driven V2 patterns in Old Spanish. Section 4 examines EM-driven V2, drawing on enclisis and additional diagnostics. Section 5 looks in more detail at adverbial V2 structures. Section 6 discusses broader theoretical implications.[3]

However, as shown in (iv), such hanging topics cannot occupy the V2 position in German, distinguishing them from Holmberg's elements.

(iv) *Seinen neuen Aufsatz habe ich den gelesen.
his new article have I it read
Samo (2019: 147; my gloss)

[3] With the exception of examples (28) and (37), which are drawn from fourteenth-century copies, all Old Spanish examples and quantitative data cited in this paper are based on thirteenth-century manuscripts. The linguistic

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2. The Basic Model

2.1. Formal V2

Due to its V2 characteristics, Old Spanish is typically viewed as differing from modern Spanish in terms of the position of its inflectional licensing site. In the modern language, this site is analyzed as T^0, whereas for medieval Spanish, a higher, C-related position is often proposed (Benincà 2006; Wolfe 2015, 2016a; Poole 2017). I assume this position to be Fin^0, following Haegeman's (1996) proposal that Fin^0 in V2 languages has INFL-like properties. In this framework, the V2 constituent necessarily merges into Spec-FinP to satisfy an EPP condition on Fin^0.[4] Like the classical EPP on T^0, this condition is primarily formal and can be satisfied by an expletive if necessary (Roberts 2004). Holmberg (2020) further demonstrates that the condition can be satisfied through either IM or EM, the latter correlating in Old Spanish with enclisis (see Section 2.3 for detailed motivation of this claim).

Thus the proposed analysis adopts Haegeman's fundamental insight (1996: 144) that Fin^0 in V2 languages is an Agree head, a C-related analogue of T^0 in English-type languages. It therefore probes φ-features rather than Criterial ones, and hence cannot license topic, focus or quantificational readings, which are associated with higher Criterial projections in the left periphery. However, XPs externally merged into Spec-FinP are not semantically vacuous; while they do not convey discourse-related interpretations, their surface position can still contribute to clause-level meaning. In this respect, Fin resembles Rizzi's Mod projection, which hosts constituents that are neither topics nor foci but are nonetheless 'prominent' – that is, interpreted as satisfying an EPP-related prominence requirement (Rizzi 2004: 242). On this view, merge into Spec-FinP plays a dual role: it satisfies a formal EPP requirement and simultaneously enables a constrained interpretive effect – pragmatically inert, but semantically contentful. Section 5 examines this interaction in the context of adverbial licensing in Old Spanish, though the same mechanism plausibly extends to all externally merged XP categories.

In languages lacking an EPP on Fin^0 (e.g. Modern Spanish), such XPs are likely instead to be merged into higher left-peripheral projections like FrameP (Benincà and Poletto 2004), given that V2 effects such as subject–verb inversion are not enforced in such contexts. The contrast with Old Spanish confirms, therefore, that FinP can function as a default host for available, independently derived XPs – especially those not selected by the verb – whenever the EPP on Fin^0 is active. This allows these constituents to participate in clause structure without altering its propositional core.

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examples come from a variety of prose text types, including narrative, legal and didactic/scientific works. The language exhibits remarkable consistency across these manuscripts, offering a reliable representation of the syntax of the period. Codex details for the cited examples are provided at the end of the paper. The fine-grained quantitative analysis of the preverbal field in enclitic structures, referenced in Subsections 2.1 and 4.1, is based on the *General estoria I* manuscript (c. 1272; 535,516 words). In contrast, the coarser-grained data cited in Subsection 2.3.2 are drawn from the thirteenth-century portion of the Old Spanish Textual Archive (OSTA) (see note 14).

[4] Relatedly, the V2 constituent or its null copy in Spec-FinP is widely assumed to create a barrier to further movement into the C-system, known as the Bottleneck (see e.g. Catasso 2024). However, Samo (2019, 2020) calls this assumption into question on theoretical grounds and, as mentioned in note 11, a strict Bottleneck is difficult to motivate empirically in Old Spanish.

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Under these assumptions, the earlier example (4) can be seen as being derived as in (6); that is, without IM of the V2 element:[5,6]

(6) [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ & [$_{\text{FinP}}$ desi [$_{\text{Fin}}$ dixo les] [$_{\text{TP}}$ ~~dixo~~ ~~les~~ assi nuestro sennor]]]

As implied by the above discussion (see also Section 5 below), the V2 constituent *desi* in the above example is unmarked in scope-discourse terms, reflecting a purely formal V2 structure characteristic of the medieval language. Batllori and Sitaridou (2020) argue that Old Spanish lacks formal movement into the C-system altogether, interpreting this as evidence against a V2 grammar. In contrast, the present analysis concludes that formal V2 in Old Spanish crucially involves external merge (EM) into Spec-FinP. Accordingly, given the proposed correlation between EM and enclisis, the typology of formal V2 constituents can be reconstructed from the distribution of enclisis. Table 1 presents this typology, along with the proportion of enclisis associated with each constituent type. This enclisis-based typology is exemplified, quantified and mapped to further diagnostics in Section 4. The data for Table 1 derive from an exhaustive analysis of finite enclisis in the thirteenth-century historical work *General estoria I*.[7] As Sitaridou (2011) observes, this text is well-suited to reconstructing thirteenth-century Spanish syntax. Its copy date (1272) falls within the work's composition window (1272–1284), suggesting that it faithfully reflects the original language. Moreover, its direct and relatively informal prose style enhances the likelihood that it captures authentic spoken usage.

As in Germanic V2 (Holmberg 2015: 353), a small minority (5.6%) of the enclitic clauses captured in Table 1 are V1. In these cases, EPP on Fin^0 can be assumed to be satisfied covertly. For example, Fontana (1993) and Wolfe (2015) analyze such cases as being instances of Narrative Inversion, which Holmberg (ibid.) suggests could involve a 'covert temporal adverbial particle' in initial position.[8]

It is also striking that by far the most frequent V2 constituent in Table 1 is the coordinating conjunction, typically represented in the manuscripts by the Tironian *et* (here shown as the ampersand '&'). This differs from modern Germanic V2 languages, where a coordinating conjunction such as *und* 'and' cannot serve as the V2 constituent (Holmberg 2015: 375). However, as Poletto (2005: 227–234) shows for Old Italian *e*, clause-initial conjunctions in

[5] Wolfe (2015, 2016a) argues that the V2 constituent and finite V in Old Spanish raise ultimately to Spec-ForceP and Force^0, respectively. However, that approach is not directly compatible with the explanation for the enclisis–proclisis alternation advanced in 2.3.1, which implicitly requires finite V in EM-driven V2 NOT to be attracted by a head merged above Fin^0.

[6] The postverbal subject in Old Spanish V2 structures can potentially be analyzed as occupying a position in the *v**P periphery, rather than Spec-TP (cf. Belletti 2004), in line with the language's null subject properties (see Wolfe 2015: 137, note 7, who observes that 49.69% of Old Spanish matrix clauses feature null subjects). Example (6) in the main text may illustrate such a low subject position, given the subject's placement to the right of the adverb *assi*.

Relatedly, a reviewer suggests that in cases where the postverbal subject was analyzed as structurally high, it might be expected to block A-bar movement to the left periphery through intervention. According to Chomsky (2008: 152), however, high subjects are attracted by T's Agree feature, whereas fronted XPs are attracted by C's Edge feature (interpreted here as shorthand for any of Rizzi's Criterial features). If this is correct, a postverbal subject ought not to block movement of another XP into the left periphery, given that intervention effects arise only when two goals compete for the same probe. Consistent with this prediction, no evidence of relevant intervention effects is attested in the Old Spanish data: clauses with fronted XPs and proclisis freely allow postverbal subjects.

[7] Imperatives are excluded from the survey as they occur disproportionately in V1 clauses and hence would be liable to skew the data towards that specific context.

[8] Wolfe (2015: 142) links the relative availability of V1 in Old Spanish to the proposal that the language was a Force-V2 language. For the reason given in note 5, however, that approach is not adopted here.

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Table 1. Enclisis in (non-imperative) finite main clauses (data from *General estoria I*, 1272; 535,516 words)

V2 constituent	Tokens of enclisis (N=4377)	Share of total
Coordinating conjunction	2707	61.8%
Adverbial clause	575	13.1%
Dislocated argument	437	10.0%
Adverb	233	5.3%
Non-argumental PP	134	3.1%
Vocative expression	44	1.0%
V1 clauses	247	5.6%

early Romance often functioned not as true coordinators but as expletive elements merged in the CP domain to satisfy a formal requirement. Diagnostics include their appearance clause-initially even when no coordination is present, their ability to introduce embedded infinitival and gerundial clauses, their frequent use after a full stop and the fact that they disappear in modern translations of the same texts. The distribution of Old Spanish '&' conforms to this pattern and, within the Fin-based approach adopted here, it can be analyzed as an externally merged filler in Spec-FinP that satisfies the EPP on Fin^0, rather than as a genuine coordinator. This view is consistent with Wolfe (2015: 135), who argues against the traditional treatment of Old Spanish *et*-initial clauses as V1 clauses.

Finally, it is worth noting that the preverbal elements listed in Table 1 can co-occur within the preverbal field, as illustrated in (7). In this example, a dislocated 'subject' (in bold) precedes an adverbial clause (in italics).[9] By definition, a dislocated 'subject' is not the syntactic subject but a DP coreferential with the null subject (see Villa García 2019, Barbosa 2009). This arrangement closely resembles clitic left dislocation with a null clitic.

(7) **El padre** *pues que perdio ell enbargo.*
the father since COMP lost.3S the reticence
dixo les assi.
spoke.3S them.DAT thus
'The father, after he lost his reticence, (he) spoke to them as follows.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 314r)

[9] Dislocated 'subjects', as illustrated in example (7), are aggregated with dislocated 'objects' in Table 1, both being DPs that are coreferential with a syntactic argument and correlate with enclisis. In the case of dislocated 'objects' any accompanying enclitic pronoun, if it is accusative in case, is necessarily resumptive (interpreted here as clitic left dislocation, though see Bouzouita 2014 for potential indeterminacy vis-à-vis left dislocation). In contrast, proclisis with left-peripheral object DPs (or the simple absence of clitic resumption) diagnoses A-bar movement, as seen in examples (14) and (20), where the clitics are non-resumptive with respect to the fronted object. Although the issue is beyond the scope of the paper, these data implicitly support an EM analysis of CLLD rather than a movement-based one, as proposed, for example, by Lee (2016). Regarding diagnostics for EM in DPs analyzed as dislocated ('subjects' or 'objects'), the key markers are enclisis (example (31)) and the additional criteria outlined in Subsections 4.2 to 4.4: compatibility with recomplementation (e.g. *Calixto* in example (36)), the ability to function as the initial element in a V3 structure (example (7)) and incompatibility with long movement.

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The adverbial clause in (7) is the V2 constituent and should be analyzed as undergoing EM into Spec-FinP, as per the paradigm in (6). The dislocated 'subject' occupies a higher, externally merged Spec, potentially inside the Frame field of Benincà & Poletto (2004).[10] If such a dislocated 'subject' were the ONLY preverbal element, however, it would have to merge into Spec-FinP to satisfy the EPP on Fin^0. In that case, as shown in (31) below, enclisis arises, indicating that the XP does not undergo further movement. This confirms the observation made earlier in this subsection that both Fin and Frame can host externally merged constituents not implicated in the core propositional content of the clause. In non-V2 languages Spec-FinP may be bypassed altogether, but in V2 languages the EPP forces its activation.

2.2 Scope/discourse-related V2

In addition to the purely formal paradigm based on EM, as illustrated in (6), Old Spanish also exhibits structures where the V2 constituent undergoes IM into the C-system. This movement consistently correlates with a scope- or discourse-related interpretive effect. Many of these structures persist in the modern language as residual V2, retaining their interpretative function (see Leonetti & Escandell Vidal 2009, Jiménez Fernández 2015). Examples (8) and (9) – the first from Old Spanish and the second from Modern Spanish – illustrate a well-documented instance of this phenomenon. Quer (2002) refers to this as Quantificational QP-fronting and argues that the fronting operation imbues the QP with a 'focus-affected' reading in the sense of Herburger (1997, 2000). In both examples, the fronted QPs are shown in bold.

(8) **muchas batallas** feɤist. e **mucha sangre** espandist delant mj.
many battles made.2s and much blood spilled.2s before me
'You fought many battles and spilled much blood in front of me.'
(*Fazienda de Ultramar*, fol. 48v)

(9) **Muchas vitaminas** debe de tomar.
many vitamins must.3s of take.INF
'He/she must take lots of vitamins.'
(Quer 2002: 258; my translation)

Mackenzie & Wurff (2012) analyze Old Spanish examples similar to (8) in terms of a so-called Quant-Criterion – analogous to the traditional *wh*-Criterion – whereby a [+Quant] feature on C attracts a quantified object into its Spec. Reinterpreting their analysis within the framework of the Spec-head or Criterial Theory of V2 (Poletto 2000: 89; Samo 2019),

[10] In the analysis of Fontana (1993), all enclisis-selecting preverbal elements – in other words, all the constituent types listed in Table 1 – are externally merged outside the core CP. Given the strong preponderance of enclisis in main clauses, this would imply that the majority of such clauses were structurally V1 clauses rather than V2 clauses. This is not impossible theoretically, especially given the likely VSO order of early Old Spanish and of proto-Romance more generally (see Bossong 2006 for Old Spanish; Dardel 1996, Salvi 2004, Wolfe 2016b and Ledgeway 2017 for proto-Romance). There would, however, be a certain tension with Fontana's leading claim, namely that Old Spanish was a V2 language. Mackenzie (2019) addresses this tension by distinguishing between true V2 and accidental or fortuitous V2, the latter corresponding to the enclitic structure discussed here. In light of the findings in Holmberg (2020), Mackenzie's 'accidental V2' is more appropriately analyzed as EM-driven (true) V2.

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example (8) appears at first glance to involve the configuration shown in (10), where the [+Quant] feature is licensed in Rizzi's Focus head, as per the licensing typology of Rizzi (2004: 243).

(10) $[_{\text{FocP}}$ QP $[_{\text{Foc}}$ $V_{\text{FIN}}]]$

However, this analysis is more appropriately applied to the residual V2 structure observed in (9), as the Spec–head paradigm cannot be fully generalized in Old Spanish. This limitation arises because the medieval language permits multiple A-bar movements, as demonstrated in (11), which displays a characteristic Spec–Spec–head linear sequence.[11] The two Specs are highlighted in bold and italics, respectively.

(11) Et **este ruego & esta razon** *nunca* quedaua anthipater
and this plea & this cause never ceased.3S Antipater
de contender con arectes […]
from argue.INF with Aretas
'And this plea and cause Antipater never ceased to press upon Aretas.'
(*General estoria V*, fol. 138r)

Here, the fronted object *este ruego & esta razon* is implicitly discourse-given and is thus naturally analyzed as occupying Spec-TopP (cf. Wolfe 2015: 139), while the raised negative adverb *nunca* is appropriately placed in Spec-FocP, following the licensing typology proposed by Rizzi (2004: 243). Under a Spec-head analysis, therefore, the structure would be as in (12):

(12) $[_{\text{TopP}}$ este ruego & esta razon $[_{\text{FocP}}$ nunca $[_{\text{Foc}}$ quedaua] …]]

The difficulty with this analysis is that the final position of the finite verb seems arbitrary. If it can raise to Foc^0, then in principle it could just as well raise to Top^0. One possible solution to this problem arises from the proposal in Samo (2022), according to which there is parametric variation as regards whether a given Criterial head triggers verb movement, but finite V always raises to the highest verb-movement–triggering head. Applied to (12), however, this would entail that in Old Spanish Top^0 never triggers verb movement, while Foc^0 consistently does – an asymmetry that is difficult to reconcile with the fact that both projections invariably show surface adjacency (ignoring clitics) between their specifier and finite V when they occur in isolation (see (8) above and (20) below). A more data-consistent assumption, therefore, is that Criterial heads in Old Spanish are uniformly inactive for verb movement: they attract phrasal constituents but do not serve as landing sites for the verb. On this view, the finite verb remains in Fin^0, its inflectional licensing position, and its observed adjacency with the Criterial specifier reflects surface

[11] Both specifier positions are filled by IM, given that object fronting and negative fronting consistently correlate with proclisis. Therefore, examples like (11) suggest that Old Spanish did not exhibit a strict Bottleneck effect. Instead, constraints on movement to the left periphery in Old Spanish seem to reflect featural relativized minimality (Rizzi 2004), as proposed by Samo (2019, 2022) for V2 structures more generally. From that perspective, (11) is possible because the two fronted constituents are licensed by features from distinct classes – one being a topic and the other a negative quantifier.

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linearity rather than a Spec–head configuration.[12] Under this view, the QP-fronting in (8) can be analyzed as in (13):

(13) [$_{\text{ForceP}}$ … [$_{\text{FocP}}$ muchas batallas [$_{\text{Foc}}$] [$_{\text{FinP}}$ ~~muchas~~ ~~batallas~~ [$_{\text{Fin}}$ feɔist] [$_{\text{TP}}$ … ~~feɔist~~ … [$_{v\text{*P}}$ ~~feɔist~~ ~~muchas batallas~~]]]]]

This representation also takes into account the assumed merge requirement on Spec-FinP. Thus, while the Criterial head Foc^0 attracts the QP directly from *v**P, the EPP feature on the Agree head Fin^0 (see Section 2.1) also attracts the same XP into Spec-FinP, where it receives a null spellout. In other words, in scope- or discourse-related V2 the initial XP participates in two separate chains: a Criterial chain and an Agree chain, much as *who* in English subject questions is simultaneously part of both an A-chain (to Spec-TP) and an A-bar chain (to Spec-CP) – see Chomsky (2008: 149–150).[13] This dual-chain structure contrasts with purely formal V2, where the initial XP participates only in a single-membered Agree chain.

For the reasons that are advanced in Section 2.3, the dual chain structure triggers proclisis rather than enclisis, if a weak pronoun is present. This is exemplified in (14) below, which features a quantificationally fronted QP (in bold) and a proclitic pronoun (in italics).

(14) **mucha gloria** *les* fizo el sennor con la su alta grandez.
much glory them.dat did.3s the lord with the his high greatness
'The Lord in his greatness imbued them with much glory.'
(*General estoria IV*, fol. 273v)

In summary, Old Spanish V2 represents a composite of two distinct mechanisms: purely formal V2 and scope/discourse-related V2. Purely formal V2 targets Spec-FinP (an A-position in all but name) and exhibits default enclisis. In contrast, scope/discourse-related V2 targets higher, Criterial projections, such as Spec-FocP, and the cliticization pattern is proclisis rather than enclisis. This empirical duality mirrors the theoretical divide between the formal/FinP approach to V2 (Haegeman 1996; Roberts 2004) and the

[12] An alternative analysis of the multiple preverbal Specs in (12) would be to treat Old Spanish Topic on a par with Samo's (2022) Mod in V3-permitting Romansh varieties (see also Samo 2019 on Kashmiri Topic), namely as an active criterial head that licenses a topical XP but does not itself trigger verb movement. This would yield a straightforward Criterial-style account of the observed word order. As noted in the text, however, such an approach leaves unexplained the fact that both Topic and Focus in Old Spanish invariably appear adjacent to the finite verb when they occur in isolation. Moreover, the particular V3 order predicted by this analysis for Romansh, viz. XP–subject–verb (Samo 2022: 158), is unattested in Old Spanish under Criterial movement to Spec-TopP: subject–verb inversion is consistently required, whether there is single or multiple A-bar movement (see (20), for example). For these reasons I do not pursue the Romansh/Kashmiri type of analysis here, although it remains a logically coherent alternative.

[13] Chomsky (2008: 149–150) argues that *who* in English subject question participates simultaneously in an A-chain, formed by attraction to Spec-TP via φ-Agree, and an A-bar chain, formed by attraction to Spec-CP via an Edge Feature. Only the A-bar chain surfaces with a pronounced copy, owing to 'the usual demand of minimal computation' (Chomsky 2008: 150). The Old Spanish case in (13) is directly analogous: the initial XP participates both in an Agree chain (via Fin^0) and a Criterial chain (via Foc^0). More generally, whenever an initial XP has undergone IM for topic or focus/quantificational licensing, it simultaneously participates in two chains – an Agree chain headed by a silent copy in Spec-FinP, and a Criterial chain headed by a pronounced copy in the relevant Criterial Spec.

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Spec-head/Criterial approach (Poletto 2000; Samo 2019). The underlying data pattern is presented in greater detail in Sections 3, 4 and 5.

2.3. Enclisis as an EM diagnostic

A central claim of this paper is that the enclisis–proclisis alternation in Old Spanish finite main clauses reliably distinguishes between external merge (EM) and internal merge (IM) of the preverbal constituent. This correlation is not stipulated but derives from Shlonsky's (2004) account of clitic placement, which in turn provides a theoretical foundation for Benincà's (2006) observation that proclisis in Old Romance reflects A-bar movement into a Criterial position. While Benincà identifies this position as Spec–FocP, the present analysis does not hinge on that specific label. Crucially, the proposed diagnostic is empirically robust: familiar A-bar constructions such as *wh*-movement and focus fronting consistently co-occur with proclisis and are categorically incompatible with enclisis, as confirmed by corpus data (see Section 2.3.2). This empirical asymmetry supports the conclusion that enclisis signals the absence of a Criterial chain and thereby serves as a diagnostic for EM into the preverbal field.

2.3.1. The core mechanism

Following Shlonsky (2004), I assume that enclisis represents the default cliticization pattern cross-linguistically, consisting in adjunction of the finite verb (V_{FIN}) to the clitic within a designated functional head. On this view, proclisis is not (or not always) the structural inverse of enclisis but rather a cover term for a set of language-specific operations whose surface output places the clitic to the left of V_{FIN}. These operations are triggered only when adjunction of V_{FIN} to the clitic would cause a derivational crash. In this sense, proclisis functions as a repair mechanism – not a target output, but a derivational contingency that arises when the default enclitic configuration cannot be generated.

In Old Spanish, the most plausible analysis posits that cliticization (i.e. adjunction) occurs in Fin^0 after the φ-features of V_{FIN} have been valued. Accordingly, in structures that require no further feature checking – most notably those with an empty or externally merged preverbal field – enclisis is possible, hence obligatory. However, on Shlonsky's (2004) view, adjunction of V_{FIN} to the clitic creates a morphologically complex head whose features are too deeply embedded to be probed by a higher functional head. This renders A-bar configurations problematic for enclisis, as the Criterial head is assumed to attract both the fronted XP and a corresponding feature on V_{FIN} – a feature that becomes inaccessible once adjunction has occurred, for the reason just outlined.

Notice that the derivation cannot be salvaged by reversing the sequencing of the derivational steps, given that adjunction in Fin^0 is a strictly local operation and hence necessarily precedes the remote operation of feature checking by the higher, Criterial head. In such cases, therefore, proclisis emerges as a repair configuration, preserving the visibility of V_{FIN}'s features to the higher head.

As for the derivation underlying proclisis, the most plausible analysis for Old Spanish is that the clitic raises above FinP, perhaps to a Spec position as the head of an otherwise empty XP. This prevents adjunction and preserves the visibility of V_{FIN}'s features to any higher Criterial head. Empirical support for this looser structural relationship between the proclitic pronoun and the verb comes from the well-attested phenomenon of interpolation (see Mackenzie 2019: 108–115 and references cited there), whereby elements such as the negative

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adverb *non* – or, less frequently, the subject – can intervene between a preverbal clitic and its associated verb. While not conclusive in isolation, this pattern is consistent with an analysis in which proclisis does not involve head adjunction and thus permits intervening material.

2.3.2. Empirical support

The theoretical link between IM and proclisis is strongly corroborated by quantitative corpus evidence. In a 3.5-million-word sample from the Old Spanish Textual Archive (OSTA; Gago Jover and Pueyo Mena 2020),[14] automated searches identified 24,846 tokens of finite pronominal enclisis – but none occur in clauses containing familiar A-bar movement structures such as *wh*-movement or focus fronting.[15] *Wh*-movement, in particular, systematically co-occurs with proclisis, as illustrated by the bold and italicized elements in examples (15) and (16), with no enclitic counterparts attested.[16]

(15) & **que** **prouecho** *nos* es de auer uencidos los barbaros.
& what benefit us.DAT is to have defeated the barbarians
'What use is it to us to have defeated the barbarians?'
(*Estoria de España I*, fol. 113r)

(16) Dixo=l alexandre **como** *lo* faras.
said.3S=him.DAT Alexander how it do.FUT.2S
'Alexander said to him, "How will you do it?"'
(*General estoria IV*, fol. 235v)

A similar pattern is observed with focus fronting, a structure widely assumed to involve A-bar movement rather than EM into the left periphery.[17] Example (17) illustrates proclisis

[14] OSTA provides semi-palaeographic transcriptions of all major literary, historical, legal and scientific works written in Old Spanish. The subcorpus used for this study comprises the entirety of OSTA's thirteenth-century section, which includes 31 manuscripts containing 52 Old Spanish texts and totalling approximately 3.5 million words. While the texts are too numerous to list here, they can be identified through OSTA's *Tabla códices* (codex directory) and *Tabla obras* (text directory), accessible at the two URLs below:
https://nextcloud.oldspanishtextualarchive.org/index.php/apps/onlyoffice/s/M8tSrmtjopeEcJS
https://nextcloud.oldspanishtextualarchive.org/index.php/apps/onlyoffice/s/cjyee9FqPE55PQQ

[15] Full search protocols, query strings and replication instructions for the corpus results reported in this section of the paper are available in a public OSF repository: https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/RYKFN.

[16] The same appears to be true in those modern Ibero-Romance languages, such as Portuguese and Asturian, which retain finite enclisis – see Shlonsky (2004).

[17] In the terminology of Bianchi et al. (2015) – see also Jiménez Fernández (2015) – fronted foci in Old Spanish are typically associated with either contrastive or mirative readings. Sitaridou (2011) argues that fronted foci in Old Spanish may also encode new-information focus. However, as Mackenzie (2019: 53–56) suggests, some of the examples cited by Sitaridou could alternatively be interpreted as instances of what he terms 'affective focus' (cf. Hernanz 2001), which corresponds to mirative focus in the framework of Bianchi et al. In general, as in the modern standard language, new-information focus in Old Spanish tends to appear in clause-final position, where the relevant DP naturally receives the nuclear stress (Zubizarreta 1998). This is exemplified by *los nuestros sanctos* in (i):

(i) Ca assi ueemos que=lo fizieron & lo fazen los nuestros sanctos.
for thus see.1PL that=it did.3PL and it do.3PL the our saints
'For in this way we see that our saints did it and continue to do it.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 36v)

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in this context in Old Spanish, with the focused constituent in bold and the relevant clitic in italics. The (contrastive) focal reading is reinforced by the negative coda *& no en encubierto* 'and not in secret.'

(17) Ca el juyzio que es cosa muy derecha
for the trial which is thing very upright
manifiestamientre *se* deue dar. & no en encubierto.
openly REFL must give.INF & not in secret
'For a trial, which is a very upright thing, must take place openly and not in secret.'
(*Libro de las leyes*, fol. 48v)

Establishing that enclisis is incompatible with focus fronting is methodologically difficult, because focus is an interpretive feature that cannot easily be targeted by automated searches. However, no instances of finite enclisis were found in constructions where a cliticized finite verb is followed by a negative coda, as in (17), supporting the hypothesis that enclisis is systematically excluded in such contexts. This is consistent with Sitaridou's (2011: 173) observation that the focus–proclisis linkage in Old Spanish 'enjoys global consensus' and Benincà's (2006) view that enclisis in Old Romance is the reflex of an empty FocP.

Additional evidence linking A-bar movement to proclisis comes from cases of long-distance movement out of CP, a traditional hallmark of A-bar movement (Cinque 1990). Old Spanish manuscripts provide numerous examples where long movement co-occurs with proclisis on matrix verbs, as shown in (18) and (19), with the long-moved element in bold and the relevant clitic in italics.[18] By contrast, no instances of long movement co-occurring with enclisis on matrix verbs were found in OSTA, suggesting a fundamental incompatibility between long-distance movement and enclisis in Old Spanish.

(18) toda quanta bien andança auien.
all what good fortune had.3PL
por su sentido *les* dizie que uinien a ella.
by their sense them.DAT said.3SG COMP came.3PL to it
'All the good fortune they enjoyed, it was by their own good sense, he told them, that they attained it.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 18r)

(19) Rey **sanos** *me* semeian que estan.
king unbroken me.DAT seem.3PL COMP are.3PL
'O king, they [the seals of the temple] seem unbroken to me.'
(*General estoria IV*, fol. 70v)

The verbal action referenced in the embedded clause has already been mentioned or implied in the preceding discourse, as indicated by the anaphoric pronoun *lo*. Therefore, the new information is supplied by the embedded subject *los nuestros sanctos*. In the framework of Belletti (1999, 2004), the latter element occupies a low (*v**P-internal) focus position.

[18] The plural agreement manifested by the matrix verb *semeian* in (19) is presumably an error on the part of the copyist, given that A-movement of the (null) subject from *semeian*'s finite complement – a full CP – would be impossible under standard assumptions. The extraction of the adjective *sanos* from the same complement is of course unproblematic, given that this involves A-bar movement rather than A-movement.

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In sum, the extensive textual evidence strongly supports the conclusion that A-bar movement chains are incompatible with finite pronominal enclisis in Old Spanish. This suggests that whenever enclisis appears in finite clauses, any specifiers in the C-system must be externally merged, reinforcing the validity of enclisis as a reliable diagnostic for identifying EM-driven structures.

3. IM-Driven V2 in Old Spanish

This section summarizes and exemplifies the well-known patterns of scope- and discourse-related V2 in Old Spanish, highlighting the mandatory use of proclisis in these structures (see Fontana 1993; Sitaridou 2011; Mackenzie & Wurff 2012; Wolfe 2015; Mackenzie 2019; Batllori & Sitaridou 2020). Drawing on the 75%-to-25% enclisis-to-proclisis ratio reported by Bouzouita (2008: 238; N = 2026) for the thirteenth century, IM-driven structures are estimated to account for approximately one-quarter of the V2 grammar's output during that period.

The patterns comprising this output can be classified into five categories as follows:

(i) Anaphoric fronting (also known as Resumptive preposing)
(ii) Quantificational QP fronting
(iii) Predicate fronting
(iv) Adverb fronting
(v) (Remnant) *v*P fronting

The first two categories generally target Spec-TopP and Spec-FocP, respectively, while the remaining three can target either projection depending on their interpretive properties. Mackenzie (2019: 26–27) notes that patterns (i) to (iv) persist as residual V2 constructions in modern Spanish. Subsection 2.2 above provides detailed examples of category (ii), while examples of the other four categories are presented below, with the fronted element and the clitic highlighted in bold and italics, respectively.

Anaphoric fronting:

(20) Et **esta carrera** *les* demostro dios
and this path them.DAT demonstrated.3S God
pora saber cierta mientre las cosas que demandauan.
to know.INF certain -ly the things which sought.IPFV.3PL
'And this path God showed them so they might know with certainty the things they were seeking.'
(*Libros del saber de astronomía*, fol. 17v)

Predicate fronting:

(21) dixo el nuestro sennor a samuel **grief** *me* es por que […]
said.3S the our lord to Samuel grave me.DAT is for COMP
'Our lord said to Samuel, "This is irksome to me because …"'
(*Fazienda de Ultramar*, fol. 32r)

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Adverb fronting:

(22) mas fiziestes lo contra dios & **bien** *lo* oyo el.
but did.2PL it against God & well it heard.3S he
'But you did it against God and he heard it well.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 170v)

(Remnant) *v*P fronting:

(23) **Trabaiar** *se* deuen los clerigos en seruir a dios
work.INF REFL must.3PL the clerics in serve.INF ACC God
quanto pudieren.
as.much.as can.3PL
'Clerics must apply themselves to serving God as far as they can.'
(*Libro de las leyes*, fol. 44v)

Another empirical hallmark of these structures is that the fronted constituent can be extracted from an embedded CP, a standard diagnostic for A-bar movement (see Section 2.3.2). In the examples below, the extracted V2 constituent is highlighted in bold, and the CP from which it is extracted is italicized.

Anaphoric fronting:

(24) E **este reconnoscimiento** fallamos *que ouieron primeramientre;*
and this recognition find.1PL COMP had.3PL first
Adam & sus fijos Caym & Abel.
Adam & his sons Cain & Abel
'And we find that Adam and his sons Cain and Abel were the first to experience this realization.'
(*Libro de las leyes*, fol. 104v)

Quantificational QP fronting:

(25) ca **tantos dias** dizen *que les fizieron sofumerios*
for as.many days say.3PL COMP them.DAT made.3PL incense.burning
& sacrificios quantas mansiones a la luna
& sacrifices as mansions has the moon
'For they say that they burned incense and made sacrifices to them for as many days as the moon has mansions.'
(*General estoria IV*, fol. 16v)

Predicate fronting:

(26) ⁊ maguer que era yerma estonces
& although COMP was.3S barren then
poblada dizen *que es agora.*
populated say.3PL COMP is now
'And although it was empty at that time, they say it is populated now.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 159v)

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Adverb fronting:

(27) & **assi** quieren *que los caten los omnes.*
& in.this.way want.3PL COMP them watch.3PL the men
'And they want men to look at them in the same way.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 250r)

(Remnant) *v*P fronting:

(28) Et **tomar** dezimos *que sse deue en esta guisa en la*
and collect.INF say.1PL COMP REFL must.3S in this manner in the
hueste o en el lugar o el Rey ffuere
army or in the place where the king is.SBJV
'And we say that it must be collected in this way when the king is at war or in some other place.'
(*Espéculo*, fol. 56r)

As the exemplification indicates, one component of the Old Spanish V2 system comprises a range of A-bar movement structures that target either Spec-TopP or Spec-FocP. The involvement of IM in these structures is evidenced by the obligatory use of proclisis when the finite verb is associated with a weak pronoun and by the extractability of the V2 constituent from an embedded CP. Additionally, similar to *wh*-fronting and focus fronting, nearly all of these movement structures persist as residual V2 in later stages of Spanish, highlighting the pragmatically marked or semantically driven nature of the movement operation. This contrasts sharply with the interpretatively inert structures of formal V2, where merge into the C-system serves a purely structural function – satisfying EPP on Fin^0 – without additional interpretive content.

4. EM-Driven V2 in Old Spanish

This section explores the less well-studied pattern where the V2 constituent is externally merged directly into its surface position. Subsection 4.1 provides examples and quantitative estimates, while Subsections 4.2–4.4 discuss three additional diagnostics that complement the primary one based on enclisis. Subsection 4.5 concludes with a summary of the data.

4.1. Externally merged V2 constituents and their rates of occurrence

As outlined in Section 2.1, the typology of externally merged V2 constituents in Old Spanish is inferred from the distribution of enclisis. Table 1 in Section 2.1 defines this typology, identifying six categories of preverbal constituents, which are exemplified below (in bold) with enclitic pronouns (in italics). Table 2 provides estimates for the occurrence rates of these categories in the V2 position of main clauses in thirteenth-century Spanish. These estimates reflect the proportion of enclitic tokens for each category (as detailed in Table 1) and are adjusted using the 75%-to-25% enclisis-to-proclisis ratio reported by Bouzouita (2008: 238, N = 2026) for main clauses of that period. This ratio serves as a proxy to distinguish formal V2 constructions (involving EM) from scope- or discourse-related V2 constructions (involving IM) in main clauses. Separate estimates are provided for 'all main clauses' and for

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Table 2. Externally merged V2 constituents: estimated occurrence rates in thirteenth-century Spanish

	Occurrence in main clauses	
V2 Constituent	All main clauses (N=4337)	Referential V2 clauses (N=1423)
Coordinating conjunction	46.4%	
Adverbial clause	9.8%	30.3%
Dislocated argument	7.5%	23.0%
Adverb	4.0%	12.3%
Non-argumental PP	2.3%	7.1%
Vocative expression	0.8%	2.3%

'referential V2 clauses', i.e. those in which the V2 position is occupied by an overt referential element (excluding both the covert adverb associated with Narrative Inversion and the conjunction marker).

Coordinating conjunction:

(29) **Ꝟ** dixo *me* Grabiel. Este es Aroho.
& said.3S me.DAT Gabriel this is Enoch
'And Gabriel said to me, "This is Enoch."'

(*Estoria de España I*, fol. 169r)

Adverbial clause:

(30) & **maguer que=lo ellos fazien**.
& although COMP=it they did.IPFV.3PL
mando *lo* el Rey a-los de su casa & de su regno
ordered.3S it the king to-those of his house & of his kingdom
'And although they were already doing it, the king mandated it to his household and his kingdom.'

(*General estoria I*, fol. 212r)

Dislocated argument:

(31) **El Rey** otorgo *les* aquello que=l demandauan
the king granted.3S them.DAT that which=him.DAT asked.IPFV.3PL
'The king (he) granted them what they asked of him.'

(*Estoria de España I*, fol. 178r)

Adverb:

(32) & **estonce** deue *lo* el obispo recebir.
and then must.3S it the bishop receive.INF
'And in that case the bishop must accept it.'

(*Libro de las leyes*, fol. 90v)

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Non-argumental PP:

(33) Et **por esto** metieron *le* muchos sabios en cuenta
and for this put.3PL him many wise.PL in account
de-las prophetas que prophetizaron sin libro.
of-the prophets who prophesized.3PL without book
'And for this reason many wise men viewed him as one of the prophets who prophesized without a book.'

(*Poridat de las poridades*, fol. 1r)

Vocative expression:

(34) **Sennor** pido *te* por merced que non sea assi.
Lord ask.1S you.DAT by mercy COMP not be thus
'Lord, I ask you as a favour that it not be so.'

(*General estoria I*, fol. 64v)

4.2. Compatibility with recomplementation

As discussed in Section 2, enclisis serves as the primary diagnostic for external merge (EM) into the V2 position. Additional evidence comes from the correlation, first identified by Fontana (1993), between a constituent's ability to co-occur with pronominal enclisis and its capacity to appear in the recomplementation position, i.e. sandwiched between two iterations of the complementizer *que* at the beginning of an embedded clause. According to Shlonsky (2004: 344), the first *que* realizes the Force head, while the second realizes the Fin head. Villa García (2019) further demonstrates that the second *que* imposes locality restrictions, blocking movement and preventing elements from crossing it. As a result, the intervening constituent must be externally merged, as internal merge (IM) would violate these locality constraints. Fontana (1993: 163–169) had already observed this phenomenon, proposing – prior to Rizzi's split CP hypothesis – that the element between the two instances of *que* is externally merged as the sister of CP.

The following examples illustrate recomplementation for each of the constituent types listed in Section 4.1 (with the relevant item shown in bold), excluding the coordinating conjunction and vocatives. The coordinating conjunction is excluded due to the requirement for the intervening element in the recomplementation structure to carry descriptive content, inherently ruling out expletive elements and Boolean operators. Vocatives, meanwhile, are confined to main clauses, whereas recomplementation is, by definition, an embedded structure.

Adverbial clause:

(35) e mando=l el nuestro sennor que **quando viniesse a-l agua**
and ordered=him the our lord COMP when came.3S to-the water
que todos fincassen los ynojos e beurien de-l agua
COMP all.PL rest.on.3PL the knees and drink.3PL of-the water
con las bocas como canes
with the mouths like dogs

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‘And our Lord commanded him that when he came to the water, all should kneel and drink from the water with their mouths like dogs.’

(*Fazienda de Ultramar*, fol. 33v)

Dislocated argument:

(36) ℨ cuenta otrossi. Que **Calixto** que se trabaiaua
& says also COMP Callisto COMP REFL fought.3S
de estoruar le & deffender=se d-el quanto podie.
to impede him & defend=REFL from-him as.much.as could.3S
‘And he also says that Callisto (she) fought to hold him off and defend herself from him as much as she could.’

(*General estoria I*, fol. 268v)

Adverb:

(37) Et diz que **agora** que non es al si non recodimiento
and says COMP now COMP not is other if not distillation
de-la uoz & de-l sueno que faga qual quier cosa.
of-the voice & of-the sound which makes which ever thing
‘And he says that, now, that she is nothing but the distillation of the voice and of the sound that anything makes.’

(*General estoria II*, fol. 120r)

Non-argumental PP:

(38) Pero dize alli plinio que **en Siria** que a leones negros.
but says there Pliny COMP in Syria COMP have.3S lions black
‘But Pliny says in that place that in Syria there are black lions.’

(*General estoria I*, fol. 250v)

A related phenomenon is the overt realization of a single complementizer in main clauses. As with the lower *que* in recomplementation, elements that other diagnostics suggest are externally merged into the left periphery appear before this overt complementizer, whereas items that undergo IM are spelled out to its right. *Desi*, the most frequent enclisis-triggering adverb (see Table 4 in Section 5), exemplifies the first case in (39), while the argumental PP *de njnguno* (‘of nobody’) in (40) illustrates the second.

(39) & **desi** que mouio guerra sobrello.
& then COMP moved.3S war upon.it
contra aquell Alarigo Rey de los godos.
against that Alaric king of the Goths
‘And then he started a war over it, against the aforementioned Alaric king of the Goths.’

(*Estoria de España I*, fol. 153r)

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(40) & mato muchos sin cuenta […]
& killed.3S many without count
que **de njnguno** auje piadat.
COMP of nobody had.3S pity
'And he slaughtered indiscriminately … he took pity on nobody.'
(*General estoria V*, fol. 96r)

Like the lower instance of *que* in recomplementation, the single *que* in (39) and (40) appears to impose a locality constraint, preventing IM across it. As a result, EM is the only mechanism that allows an item to be positioned in the preceding structural space.

4.3. Compatibility with V3

An additional empirical signature of EM-driven V2 in Old Spanish is that the V2 constituent can also occur in V3 structures, merged to the left of the V2 position (cf. Fontana 1993: 114). This matches Holmberg's (2020) findings for Swedish, where 'as-for' phrases can be externally merged EITHER into Spec-FinP as the V2 constituent OR into a more peripheral outer topic position, preceding an alternative V2 constituent. Analogous findings are reported by Vance et al. (2010) – albeit within an ostensibly movement-based approach – who show that in Old French and Old Occitan, fronted subordinate clauses play a central role in distinguishing V2 from V3 orders. Example (41) illustrates the V3 pattern for Swedish (where EM of the position 1 element is assumed):

(41) Vad vargen beträffar, nu är den tillbaka igen.
what wolf.DEF concerns now is it back again
'As for the wolf, now it's back again.'
(Holmberg 2020: 46)

Examples (42)–(44) illustrate the same pattern in Old Spanish, involving an adverb, a non-argumental PP and an adverbial clause, respectively. Each of these elements can be assumed to merge into a high clausal layer, such as the Frame field. In these examples, the V2 element arises through internal merge: Quantificational QP fronting in (42) and (43) and Adverb fronting in (44). Consequently, the cliticization pattern is proclisis rather than enclisis. Externally merged items are highlighted in bold, while internally merged ones are italicized.

(42) ℣ **desi** *tanto seruicio* le sopo fazer Moysen
& so so.much service him.DAT knew.3S do.INF Moses
que=l porfijo Jetro
COMP=him made.son.in.law.3S Jethro
'And so Moses was able to serve him so well that Jethro made him his son-in-law.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 145v)

(43) & **por esta razon** *algunos dias* se adormecie
& for this reason some days REFL slept.IPFV.3S
en el logar o estaua librando los pleytos.
in the place where was.3S adjudicating the lawsuits

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'And for this reason, some days he would fall asleep in the place where he was adjudicating lawsuits.'

(*Estoria de España I*, fol. 74r)

(44) Ca **pues que es obra de caridat**;
For since COMP is work of charity
primeramientre la deue omne fazer assi mismo.
firstly it must.3S man do.INF to.himself same
'For since it is a work of charity, men must do it to themselves in the first instance.'
(*Libro de las leyes*, fol. 30v)

The placement of the expressions in bold outside the V2 position highlights their syntactic independence from the rest of the clause. This is consistent with the assumption that these constituents are directly merged into the left periphery, rather than being derived through movement from within TP.

4.4. Incompatibility with long movement

A final piece of evidence for the EM-based analysis of enclisis-triggering preverbal elements comes from long movement, i.e. extraction from an embedded CP. The availability of such movement has long been recognized as a hallmark of A-bar dependencies (Cinque 1990), distinguishing operations driven by Criterial features (*wh*-movement, focus fronting, topicalization) from Agree- or EPP-related processes such as passivization and subject raising. Although this distinction is usually framed in terms of A-bar versus A-movement, the exclusion of long movement follows equally where no movement takes place. This helps explain the contrast in (45): while the *wh*-adverb *when* can be extracted from the embedded clause (45a), the non-*wh* adverb *yesterday* cannot (45b) – unless corrective focus or topicalization is applied, which upgrades it to an A-bar dependency.

(45) (a) When did María say they went to the climbing gym ~~when~~?
(b) *Yesterday María said they went to the climbing gym ~~yesterday~~.

This contrast makes the broader point that only elements capable of A-bar movement can undergo long extraction. It follows that items which resist extraction from an embedded CP cannot, when surfacing to the left of the finite verb, have reached that position by internal merge: if internal merge were an option for them in the matrix, it should be available uniformly across clause boundaries. The fact that, as shown in Section 2.3.2, long movement in Old Spanish is compatible only with proclisis and never with enclisis therefore further confirms that the preverbal items that trigger enclisis (listed in Section 4.1) are externally merged in their surface position, rather than raised from a lower position within the clause.[19]

[19] This refers to the occurrence of such items in pragmatically neutral utterances. As noted in the text, focus – being attracted by a Criterial head – can rescue an otherwise unviable A-bar chain. Accordingly, an element that typically triggers enclisis (and is therefore externally merged in neutral contexts) could, if assigned focus, surface instead as a proclisis-selecting, A-bar–moved element.

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Table 3. EM-driven V2 versus IM-driven V2

Variable	EM-driven V2	IM-driven V2
Clitic placement	Enclisis	Proclisis
V2 constituent occurs in recomplementation	Yes	No
V2 constituent can also be a V3 constituent	Yes	No
V2 constituent can be extracted from CP	No	Yes
Scope–discourse interpretive correlate	No	Yes

4.5. Data summary

Table 3 summarizes the key distinctions between externally and internally merged V2 elements, structured around the five core variables central to this paper's analysis (further discussion of the 'scope–discourse interpretive correlate' variable is provided in Section 5 below).

The most straightforward explanation for the contrasting data matrices in the table is a derivational one, based on whether the V2 constituent is externally or internally merged. Holmberg's (2020) findings for Swedish make this unsurprising for adverbial clauses, which he recognizes can be externally merged into Spec-FinP. What is particularly striking, however, is that non-clausal adverbials – including both adverbs and non-argumental PPs – follow the same pattern.[20] In other words, they are genuine V2 constituents but consistently meet the diagnostics for EM. This outcome is not predicted by Holmberg's approach, which, as he acknowledges (ibid. 60), is based on a priori reasoning rather than empirical evidence. In light of this, the next section considers non-clausal adverbial constituents in more detail.

5. Adverbial V2

Based on enclisis, the items listed in Table 4 are identified as the most frequently occurring externally merged V2 adverbs, accounting for 80.3% of the 233 adverb tokens documented in Table 1 (see Section 2.1). These adverbs meet all the EM diagnostics outlined in Section 4 and are pragmatically inert, functioning neither as topics nor foci. In particular, *desi*, the most frequent V2 adverb by a considerable margin, often exhibits a quasi-expletive quality akin to the use of English *so* in informal contexts (see (4) for exemplification).[21]

Holmberg (2015: 372) notes that adverb-initial sentences are often 'virtually identical in terms of semantics and pragmatics to their counterparts where the adverb is in post-V2 position.' The items in Table 4 exemplify this observation. For instance, *agora* 'now' appears in the V2 position in (46) but is TP-internal in (47), with no discernible difference in interpretation.

[20] In the present paper, the term 'adverbial' (used as a noun) should be understood as referring collectively to adverbs, adverbial locutions and non-argumental PPs.

[21] In this respect, it resembles the Old Italo-Romance V2 particle *si*, which Poletto (2005) analyses as an expletive and Wolfe (2021: 241) suggests may be externally merged in Old Venetian and Old Piedmontese. In Poletto's analysis, the expletive *si* merges into Spec-FocP. If this merge operation establishes a Criterial configuration, it could account for why *si* appears to trigger proclisis (ibid. 226) rather than enclisis.

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Table 4. Most frequent enclisis-triggering adverbs and locutions (data from *General estoria I*, c. 1272)

Item	Meaning	Tokens (N=233)	Share of total
desi	then, so	92	39.5%
sobresto	at that	16	6.9%
aun	still	15	6.4%
empos esto	after this	14	6.0%
agora	now	13	5.6%
despues	afterwards	13	5.6%
despues desto	after this	10	4.3%
si non	otherwise	7	3.0%
en cabo	in the end	7	3.0%

(46) & agora dyo uos el criador tierra
& now gave.3S you.PL the creator land
que non laʁrastes en ella
which not laboured.2PL on it
'And now the creator gave you land on which you did not labour.'
(*Fazienda de Ultramar*, fol. 30r)

(47) ℜ finco nos agora de dezir
& remain.PST.3S us.DAT now of speak.INF
de los comienços de los otros tres.
of the beginnings of the other three
'And now it has fallen to us to speak of the beginnings of the other three.'
(*General estoria IV*, fol. 252v)

A similar pragmatic inertness is observed in the related category of non-argumental PPs. These elements exhibit significant lexical diversity, making them less amenable to tabulation compared to individual adverbs. However, one generalization that can be made is that these PPs are never part of the main predication, serving instead to contextualize it. Reflecting their syntactic detachment, they are often followed in manuscripts by a semicolon or full stop, signalling an intonation break. This contrasts sharply with the A-bar moved constituents discussed in Section 3, which rarely show such punctuation. Representative examples involving enclisis (shown in italics) are given in (48)–(51), with the relevant PPs highlighted in bold.

(48) Mas **en los otros sacrifficios dessa fiesta misma**;
but in the other sacrifices of.that festival same
ayudauan *le* los otros como oyredes.
helped.IPFV.3PL him the others as hear.FUT.2PL
'In the other sacrifices of that ritual, the others helped him as you will hear.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 243r)

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(49) Et **por segurança desto & por firmedumbre de seer guardado**.
and for assurance of.this & for firmness of be.INF kept
dixo *les* como les daua en sennal
said.3S them.DAT how them.DAT gave.IPFV.3S in sign
el so arco que paresce enel cielo enel tiempo lluuioso.
the his rainbow which appears in.the sky in.the weather rainy
'And as a guarantee of this and assurance that it would be kept, he told them how he gave them his rainbow as a sign, which appears in the sky during rainy weather.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 15r)

(50) ⁊[22] **sobre todas estas fortalezas que auie en aquella uilla**
& around all these fortresses that there.were in that city
yuan *les* ya llegando ayuda alos de Merce
were.3PL them.dat already bringing help to.those of Meroë
muchas yentes de amas las ethiopias.
many persons from both the Ethiopias
'And around all these fortresses in that city, many people from both Ethiopias were already bringing help to the people of Merce.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 141v)

(51) ⁊ **dela uenida de xpisto a adelant**.
& from.the coming of Christ to onwards
cuentan *se* las estorias por los annos. delos cesares
count.3PL REFL the histories by the years of.the Caesars
& delos emperadores de Roma & por la su era.
& of.the emperors of Rome & by the their era
'And from the coming of Christ onward, history is dated by the years of the Caesars and the emperors of Rome and by their era.'
(*General estoria I*, fol. 122v)

Rizzi (2004) argues that pragmatically inert left-peripheral adverbials undergo Internal Merge (IM) into Spec-ModP. However, the motivation for this movement is unclear, as these adverbials are, by definition, neither topics nor foci but simply 'prominent' (ibid. 239). While Rizzi does not explicitly define prominence, he links it to the 'interpretive import' of an EPP feature (ibid. 242). Given that Spec-FinP in V2 languages is already available as an EPP position, it seems more appropriate to analyze Old Spanish adverbials as merging into Spec-FinP rather than Spec-ModP. In this framework, Spec-FinP in Old Spanish assumes the role Rizzi attributes to Spec-ModP, eliminating the need to posit an additional projection.

As discussed in Section 4, most V2 adverbials in Old Spanish are merged externally rather than internally. The alternative argument, favouring internal over external merge, hinges on the assumption that the TP-internal hierarchy of adverbials must be preserved when adverbials appear in the left periphery – an effect taken to imply that such adverbials must have moved from within TP. Rizzi (2004) and Samo (2022: 154) indeed interpret certain distributional patterns of adverbials as intervention effects, concluding that some

[22] The turned ampersand represents a capital Tironian *et.*

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adverbials must be internally merged due to locality constraints. However, both authors allow that adverbials may be externally merged into higher clausal layers under appropriate interpretive conditions. Samo (2019), in particular, suggests this is possible in elliptical structures, where the adverbial may originate from a higher, independently derived clause (see also Catasso 2021). The Old Spanish data discussed here suggest that adverbials can be externally merged directly into the V2 position without such ellipsis, while still participating in the adverbial hierarchy. This does not contradict Rizzi's and Samo's accounts, but rather expands the empirical picture, suggesting that under certain diachronic or typological conditions, the adverbial hierarchy may be established through external merge at the CP level. The present paper therefore adopts this broader scenario, grounded in the Old Spanish evidence.

6. Conclusions: Implications for V2 Typology

This paper has argued that V2 syntax in Old Spanish is a composite system integrating both formal V2 and scope/discourse-related V2. Formal V2, driven by external merge (EM), targets Spec-FinP, functioning similarly to an A-position. In this configuration, enclisis is the default, with the finite verb adjoining to the clitic. In contrast, scope/discourse-related V2, driven by internal merge (IM), targets Criterial projections such as FocP. The head–head feature attraction associated with Criterial movement blocks adjunction, resulting in proclisis.

The high frequency of enclisis in Old Spanish main clauses suggests that EM-driven V2 predominates in its syntax, ostensibly in contrast to Germanic V2 languages like Swedish, where IM is assumed to be the primary mechanism and EM is said to play a minimal role (Holmberg 2020). The present paper suggests that this apparent discrepancy may reflect an underappreciation of EM's role in adverbial V2, stemming from the absence of an equivalent diagnostic to enclisis in the Germanic languages. Without such a diagnostic, Holmberg (2020) falls back on an earliness principle according to which the fact that preverbal adverbials COULD originate in TP means they MUST do so. In contrast to this somewhat inconclusive argument, Old Spanish provides clear evidence that EM of adverbial elements into the V2 position is the norm rather than the exception. In the absence of counterevidence, there is no compelling reason to exclude a similar reliance on EM in Swedish or other V2 languages. Therefore, given the ubiquity of adverbial V2 in fully developed V2 systems, the proposed derivational split between EM-driven and IM-driven V2 could be an essential feature of V2 typology.

The approach advanced in this paper dovetails with the traditional distinction between generalized (full) V2 and residual V2. Generalized V2 often lacks an interpretive correlate (Holmberg 2015: 371–372), while residual V2 consistently carries semantic or pragmatic significance, as evidenced in modern English (Sailor 2020), Spanish (Leonetti & Escandell Vidal 2009) and Italian (Cinque 1990). Within the split V2 model proposed here, residual V2 arises from the persistence of the scope/discourse component after the formal, EPP-driven component has been lost. Such residual V2 is realized through a Spec-head configuration (Poletto 2000; Samo 2019), which, in the proposed framework, is interpreted as a structural reanalysis triggered by the parametric loss of generalized T-to-Fin movement.

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For Spanish, this loss can perhaps be dated to the fifteenth century, when finite enclisis entered its terminal decline (Bouzouita 2008: 240).[23] From that point onwards, new generations of speakers were compelled to reinterpret pre-existing V2 word order in the primary linguistic data using mechanisms compatible with a non-V2 grammar. One such mechanism is finite verb movement to the Criterial head, delivering Criterial adjacency (Samo 2022), which does not in principle require an underlying V2 grammar. The availability of this mechanism ensured the survival of the majority of the phenomena discussed in Section 3, in which the V2 word order was interpretively motivated. In contrast, where the old V2 order was purely formal, lacking any interpretive correlate, the relevant patterns could not be sustained in the post-V2 grammar. As a result, formal manifestations of the medieval V2 system – those involving the conjunction marker, adverbial clauses, dislocated DPs or specific classes of adverbials – gradually disappeared.[24]

Future research should undertake cross-linguistic comparisons between Old Spanish and other Romance and non-Romance V2 languages to assess whether EM-driven V2 operates in similar ways across languages or constitutes a unique feature of Old Spanish's historical syntax. Re-examining the role of adverbial elements in other V2 languages could further clarify the scope of the EM–IM derivational split identified here in Old Spanish.

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Acknowledgements. I would like to thank the three anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and suggestions, which have greatly improved the clarity and scope of this paper. Any remaining errors are my own.

Competing Interests. The author declares none.

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[23] T-to-Fin movement and finite enclisis correspond in principle to different parameters. However, both are characteristic of the medieval language and their joint disappearance heralds in part the emergence of the modern variety, perhaps illustrating the notion of 'cascading parameter changes' advanced by Roberts (2007: 351).

[24] See Foulet (1921: 346) for an implicitly functionalist take on this approach. See Wolfe (2022, 2024) for an analysis of the process in terms of a shift from maximally general operations to more specialized ones.

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Cite this article: Mackenzie, Ian. 2026. "Old Spanish and the Split V2 hypothesis." *Journal of Linguistics*. 62, 633–660. doi:10.1017/S0022226725100959

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