

Mesoclis in Old Occitan



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ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the intriguing phenomenon of mesoclis in Old Occitan. Mesoclis, the insertion of an object clitic pronoun within the verbal form rather than before or after it, is explored particularly within the context of future and conditional tenses. While mesoclis is evidenced in both the future and conditional tenses in Old Catalan and Old Spanish, in Occitan, it is exclusively observed in the future tense. Notably, all clitics may feature in this construction, with a higher prevalence observed in the first person singular, especially with class I verbs. Furthermore, there appears to be a lexicalized association with verbs of speech, likely due to discourse-related factors. This investigation not only sheds light on the differential grammaticalization between the future and conditional tenses but also unveils an intermediate stage in their grammatical evolution, bridging the gap between Catalan and French linguistic contexts.

KEYWORDS

grammaticalization; future; mesoclis; Occitan; Romance

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1 INTRODUCTION

Mesoclis is the fact of placing a clitic pronoun (object or indirect object) not before the verb (proclisis) or after the verb (enclisis), but right in the middle of the verb. It is sometimes said that the clitic is placed between the stem and the inflectional ending. Mesoclis is attested in modern Romance languages only in Portuguese in futures (Crysmann, 1997; Luís & Spencer, 2005), and in Spanish varieties in the imperative (Harris & Halle, 2005; Manzini & Savoia, 2011), but it was also largely present in medieval Romance, including Portuguese, Spanish, and Catalan (Anipa, 2000; Batllori Dillet, 2011, 2012; Bouzouita, 2011; Graham, 2018). In these languages, scholars sometimes talk of an analytic future, because the future seems to appear in such constructions as formed by an infinitive and forms of the auxiliary 'have', contrasting with the usual, synthetic forms of the verb. I refrain from using the term 'analytic future' here for reasons explained in section 3.2.

In this article, I study a small corpus of known attestations of mesoclis in Old Occitan. I analyse data drawn primarily from the only available searchable electronic corpus for Old Occitan: COM2 (Ricketts, 2005). The corpus collates all verse literature written in Occitan from its origins to the end of the 15th century. As such, it includes the whole corpus of lyric poetry from the troubadours, as well as longer narrative and didactic poems, and theatre. There are obvious limitations with this corpus, some due to the choice of texts included, and some due to the technical apparatus of the corpus itself. The fact that it is restricted to verse can sometimes cast doubts on the reality



of phenomena: were they induced by the necessity to rhyme, or by the fixed syllable length of Occitan verse? Fortunately, at least the second possible doubt can be eliminated in that all mesoclitic forms have the same length in syllables as would have a proclitic and a synthetic verb form. In addition, the majority of attestations are not placed in rhyme position. In order to ascertain that the phenomenon occurred in prose too, I have supplemented the corpus with attestations found in one of the translations of the New Testament in prose. The other limitations due to the type of texts are the relative absence of Gascon in the corpus, and the fact that a number of troubadours included in the corpus wrote in Occitan as their second language, thus opening the door to possible interlinguistic interferences. The second type of limitation is more problematic, the corpus being a simple plain text searchable database, with absolutely no markup beyond proper names: it is impossible to search for a given tense, or a word class, or even for inflected forms of the same word, only specific strings of texts are accepted (i.e. full words, and words starting or ending with a specific string of letters, with the possibility of searching for two co-occurring words at some distance). This means that extracting a corpus of mesoclitic futures and conditionals is tricky: one has to search specific endings on one word (*-ar*, *-ir*, *-re*, *-er*), and pronominal forms co-occurring with it. The very many searches one has to perform result in a lot of data noise that then needs to be removed manually.

The first section briefly examines mesoclisism in other (medieval) Romance languages. Based on a corpus of more than 200 attestations, I study a number of parameters for mesoclisism in Old Occitan. In a section about the morphology of mesoclisism, I analyse first the fact that it is truly a case of clitic placement, not an analytic construction, before ruling out the only three attestations of mesoclisism in the conditional as due to language contact. I look at what person and number combinations are attested, noting a pre-eminence of 1SG. I then examine in turn the lexical verbs that enter this construction, and their inflection class structure. In the next section, devoted to the syntax of mesoclisism, I examine what pronouns enter into the construction, before analysing the role played by polarity and the dispreference for clitic first placement. I also consider possible cases of a formulaic use of mesoclisism. The last section discusses a number of analytical results, before I draw some conclusions.

2 MESOCLISIS IN MEDIEVAL ROMANCE

Mesoclisism is attested in medieval Romance languages mostly in the languages of the Iberian Peninsula, including Spanish, Catalan, and Portuguese, in forms of both future and conditional tenses (Crysmann, 1997; Anipa, 2000; Batllori Dillet, 2011, 2012; Bouzouita, 2011; Enrique-Arias & Bouzouita, 2013). For those languages, researchers often use the term ‘analytic future’ for forms of futures with mesoclisism, because here the future seems to be an analytic construction with an infinitive and auxiliary ‘have’, including pronouns in between the two elements, in contrast to the more usual, synthetic future. I show below that this term, while it may be appropriate for Spanish, is probably not appropriate for Occitan.

The alternation between synthetic and analytic forms of futures and conditionals has to do with the etymological origin of the future and conditional in Late Latin, as they formed from a periphrasis involving a lexical verb in the infinitive followed by the auxiliary *HABERE* in the present for the future, and in the imperfect for the conditional (see Esher, 2012 for a reassessment). For the future, the original periphrasis is:

- (1) *cantare* *habeo*
 sing.INF have.1SG
 ‘I have to sing > I will sing’

The periphrasis originally had a meaning of obligation: I have to sing. This meaning implies some futurity of the event being reported, and from there the periphrasis developed into a fully fledged future tense (future in the past for the conditional). The process of grammaticalization also implied a more rigid word order with the infinitive coming first, and the progressive phonological reduction of the finite auxiliary inducing a process of univerbation: from a construction initially made up of two words, it ends up as a single word inflected for number and person of the subject, with a distinctive stem for the future and conditional. But univerbation was maybe not complete in all cases, in particular those involving a clitic complement when clitics could be placed right after the original infinitive. Cases of mesoclitisis would thus be a construction that in some ways resisted the grammaticalization of these tenses, and that could have fossilized in an alternate, analytic construction.

Mesoclitisis has been well studied in medieval Ibero-Romance. There it seems to be a relatively frequent construction, compared to its relative rarity in Occitan sources. Thus, in medieval Spanish, in the sole text of *Cantar de Myo Çid*, 81.8% of futures are synthetic, and 18.2% are analytic, the proportion of analytic conditionals being slightly lower at 10.8% (Batllori Dillet, 2011, p. 7). This construction, in both Old Spanish and Old Catalan, is not compatible with negation (Graham, 2018; Sentí & Bouzouita, 2022). In Catalan as well, mesoclitisis is possible with both futures and conditionals. In Old Catalan at least, where the future and conditional seem to be more advanced in terms of grammaticalization than Old Spanish, forms with mesoclitics appear in the same syntactic contexts as forms with enclitics, mainly “i) those that appear with the verb in the first position (P₁), ii) paratactic clauses, iii) after a vocative, and iv) in coordinated adversative clauses after the conjunction *mas* or *però* ‘but’” (Sentí & Bouzouita, 2022, p. 61). In the same contexts in Old Spanish, only mesoclitics, not enclitics, appear before the 15th century, which is the main argument that prompts Sentí & Bouzouita (2022) to consider that the future and conditional are less grammaticalized in Old Spanish than in Old Catalan. I return to this point regarding the place of Occitan in a cline of grammaticalization in section 5. Some of the contexts for appearance of mesoclitisis in Old Catalan do not seem to be perfectly parallel in Old Occitan. In particular, an initial position of the verb in the clause does not seem to prompt mesoclitisis in a systematic way as it does in Old Catalan (see section 4.3 below).



3 MESOCLISIS IN OLD OCCITAN: MORPHOLOGY

Mesoclisism is also attested in Old Occitan (Jensen, 1994, p. 243). The first thing to note is the rather limited occurrence of mesoclisism: the COM2 corpus includes 214 examples, with only three in the conditional, to which one can add about twenty examples found in prose texts, all in the future. Forms with proclitics on the contrary are much more common, probably in the tens of thousands of examples in the COM2 corpus. It thus seems that mesoclisism is a rarer phenomenon in Occitan than it is in Old Catalan and Old Spanish (compare, e.g., Batllori Dillet, 2011; Sentí & Bouzouita, 2022). This seems in line with a continuum of use, noting that Old French has no example of mesoclisism in the documented period: Old Occitan is probably at an intermediate stage in the loss of the possibility of mesoclisism.

3.1 THE PROBLEM OF MESOCLITIC CONDITIONALS

In Old Catalan and Old Spanish, mesoclisism is possible with both the future and the conditional. It seems though that mesoclisism is less common with conditionals at least in Old Spanish, although the number of attestations is still relatively high (Batllori Dillet, 2011). The COM2 data on Old Occitan show a marked difference with Catalan and Spanish in that mesoclisism with conditionals is vanishingly rare: out of 214 attestations of mesoclisism in COM2, only three are with conditionals. The three examples are shown in examples (2) to (4):

(2) **dar la m' ia,** don m' es bel
 give 3FSG 1SG COND.3SG of.which 1SG be.3SG nice
 'he would give it to me, which fills me with joy' (PC 319 003 031)

(3) no· us plac per c' **aucir m' en ia**
 not 2PL please.3SG for that kill 1SG PART COND.3SG
 'it does not please you, because it would kill me' (PC 434a 050 066)

(4) **sentir n' ia** dolor
 feel PART COND.3SG pain
 'he/she would feel pain from it' (PRO 1686)

All three attestations are with 3SG verb forms, and include a conditional desinence, not a form of auxiliary 'have'. There may be a slight problem with these attestations. In medieval times, Occitan was a language of culture and literature that was used in Occitan speaking areas, but also more widely, particularly in the Iberian peninsula and Italy. This means that a number of texts collated in the COM2 corpus come from authors whose first language was not Occitan. Interestingly, for all three attestations, the author of the text is known. The first author, Paulet de Marselha, spent considerable periods of time in Catalonia at the Aragon Court, and may have been influenced by Catalan. The other two authors, sometimes considered to be the same person, Cerveri de Girona and Guilhem de Cervera, are Catalan authors writing in Occitan. The fact is that mesoclisism with conditionals is widely attested in Catalan (Sentí & Bou-

zouita, 2022). The conjunction of this fact with the life of the authors, and the very low number of attestations in Occitan, seems to point towards a contact phenomenon, where some authors transferred the possibilities of Catalan to their Occitan texts, although it may not have been possible to use mesoclisism with conditionals in Old Occitan. In this context, it seems better to consider that Old Occitan only allowed mesoclisism with the future tense.¹



3.2 A TRUE MESOCLITIC

The first question one can ask of the data is to know whether the forms show a synthetic future, which finds itself separated by the insertion of a mesoclitic, or whether this is still somehow a verbal periphrasis composed of an infinitive and the auxiliary ‘have’, which happens to place the clitic pronoun in front of the finite form. It proves difficult to determine which is the case.

The first element of proof regards the form of the infinitive with respect to the future stem. In reflexes of the Romance first and fourth conjugations, the identity between the infinitive and the future stem is maintained. But this is not the case in a number of verbs in the reflexes of second and third conjugations, where the stem of the future and conditional has changed (Esher, 2012). I show below in section 3.4 that reflexes of such verbs are not found with mesoclisism in Old Occitan, which could be an indication in favour of either possibility.

The second element of proof, in favour of a true mesoclitic, has to do with the form of the endings of the synthetic future tense as compared with auxiliary ‘have’. As the synthetic future in Romance developed from a periphrasis including the auxiliary ‘have’ in the present and an infinitive (Esher, 2012), there is still robust identity between forms of the auxiliary in the present tense and future endings in persons of the singular as well as the 3PL (Esher, 2018). This identity is not present in the 1/2PL endings, where futures end in 1PL *-em*, 2PL *-etz*, instead of auxiliary form *avèm* and *avètz*. The quality of the vowel is different, with a mid-closed vowel in the future desinence, but a mid-open vowel in the auxiliary present tense, although this fact cannot be used as diagnostic for medieval texts where degree of opening is not noted for mid-vowels. Future tenses with mesoclisism in the 1/2PL are never found with form of the auxiliary ‘have’, but instead only with forms identical to the endings *em* (9 examples in the corpus) and *etz* (19 examples in the corpus), as shown in examples (5) and (6):

- (5) **tornar nos n’ em**, que ben es de sazo
 come.back 1PL PART FUT.1PL because well be.3SG of season
 ‘we will come back, because it is the season’ (DEB 1842)

1 The situation was different in Gascon, where, as noted by Felip Biu (p.c.), mesoclisism was perfectly possible with conditionals, and is attested in the *Récits d’histoire sainte* in Béarn. For the most part, the COM2 corpus lacks texts in Gascon. It is also possible that the greater proportion of enclisis in Gascon varieties may favour the occurrence of mesoclisism, including at a later period. I must for now leave Gascon varieties for future inquiry.



- (6) e **far n' etz** sotil polvereta (RAC 2374)
 and make PART FUT.2PL fine powder
 'and you will make a fine-grained powder out of it'

The forms *em* and *etz* are attested in isolation in Old Occitan outside the realm of mesoclisism, but they are forms of the auxiliary 'be', not of auxiliary 'have'. In order to consider that future tenses with mesoclisism in the 1/2PL are periphrases, one would have to posit an auxiliary alternation depending on person and number, which makes little sense considering the etymology of the forms. I thus take it that examples in the 1/2PL instantiate a structure as shown in example (7), with a mesoclititic in the middle of the synthetic verbal form, rather than the structure in (8) with a periphrastic expression including auxiliary 'have':

- (7) STEM + CLITIC + DESINENCE

- (8) *INFINITIVE + CLITIC + AVER

As is shown below, the fact that the stem is always chosen among those which maintain an identity with the infinitive could lead one to think otherwise, but evidence from endings is conclusive. This is a marked difference with a number of attestations in Spanish, where the finite form of the construction indeed seems to be a form of the auxiliary 'have'.

3.3 PERSON AND NUMBER

All combinations of person and number are attested in the corpus, albeit with an interesting distribution. Examples 9-15 show all these possible combinations, with example 9 and 10 exhibiting a 1SG form (in verse and in prose), example 11 a 2SG, example 12 a 3SG and examples 13-15 displaying the plural persons.

- (9) Ez ieu **dir vos ai** la fazon
 and 1SG say 2PL FUT.1SG the way
 'and I will tell you how it is' (JAU 10555)
- (10) "...**far vos ei** pescadors d' omes"
 do 2PL FUT.1SG fishermen of men
 '...and I will make you fishers of men' (Mt 4,19)
- (11) dis Jaufre, "**laiszar m' as** dormir?
 say.3SG J leave 1SG FUT.2SG sleep
 'Jaufre says: "will you let me sleep?"' (JAU 3384)
- (12) e **laiszar m' a** tot son estar
 and leave 1SG FUT.3SG all his fortune
 'and he will leave me all his fortune' (FLA 3380)

- (13) e poish **tornar nos n' em** per aquel eish sender
and then go.back 1PL PART FUT.1PL by that awful track
'and then we will go back along that awful track' (CCA 200 145)
- (14) e vos **dar n' etz** a cels qu' en auran
and 2PL give PART FUT.2PL to those that PART have.FUT.3PL
gran mester
big need
'And you will give some of it to those that will have the greatest need of it'
(CCA 200 122)
- (15) vencutz si er qu' **aucir m' an** li sospire
defeated thus be.FUT.1SG because kill 1SG FUT.3PL the sighs
'Thus I will be defeated because sighs will kill me' (PC 155 022 013)

Table 1 compiles the number of attestations of mesoclisism for each person and number combination, and indicates the percentage of total attestations for which each combination accounts:

Person	Number	%
1SG	113	53.55
2SG	8	3.79
3SG	41	19.43
1PL	9	4.27
2PL	19	9.00
3PL	21	9.95
TOTAL	211	100.00

TABLE 1. Person and number of future forms with mesoclisism

It is very clear from these figures that the majority of examples occur in the 1SG (53.55%). The next main use is in the 3SG, which is more expected considering the narrative nature of a large number of texts in the corpus. The main use as 1SG may have to do with the lyric nature of a number of texts, but only 39 out of 113 attestations in 1SG are from lyric texts (i.e. 34%). The 1SG is more common in lyric texts, as it forms 63% of examples in such texts in the corpus of mesoclisism. But this is not enough to explain the whole skewing of the data. On the contrary, the skewing points towards discourse oriented factors in the use of mesoclisism.

3.4 INFLECTION CLASS

Another factor that can be examined is the inflection class of the verb entering into a future construction with mesoclisism. Table 2 synthesizes the findings in this respect, with the total number of examples for each Romance class, as well as the number of different lexemes for each class:



Class	N	Lexemes
Class I	132	60
Class IV	20	10
Class III	59	6

TABLE 2. Inflection class of verbs in a mesoclitic construction in the future tense in COM2

Unsurprisingly, a majority of examples belong to the first, productive, larger class of verbs, for which there is also no stem alternation in the future (Esher, 2012). One can group together verbs of the first and fourth classes, as neither present stem alternations in the future. For both these classes, the mean number of occurrences for an individual lexeme is around 2. This means that mesoclitisis is attested for a large number of lexemes in these classes. The situation is markedly different for verbs of the third class, where examples are limited to six verbs, of which three are attested only once. The bulk of examples involve the verbs *far* ‘do, make’ (28 times), *dir* ‘say’ (24 times, including one in the form *dizer*), and marginally *creisser* ‘grow’ (3 times). These verbs present an identical characteristic, in that the stem used to form the future and conditional is always identical to the infinitive. That seems indicative of an additional restriction in the use of mesoclitisis with futures: only verbs whose future and conditional stem is identical to the infinitive can enter the construction. This makes it rather different from Ibero-Romance equivalents. It also automatically rules out the possibility of mesoclitisis being present in compound tenses (anterior future for instance), as auxiliaries do not present a future stem that is identical to the infinitive.

There is one possible counterexample to this rule, in an early text, for the mesoclitic future of the verb *dir* ‘say’ in the *Canso de Santa Fe*, where it has the form *dizer*, as shown in example (16):

- (16) **Dizer vos ei** d’ aqelz pagans
 say 2PL FUT.1SG of those pagans
 ‘and I will tell you about those pagans’ (CSF 110)

If this is indeed an example of the verb *dir*, it would be an example of a different future stem, which would make up forms of the type **dizerei*. Unfortunately, there are no synthetic forms of futures or conditionals for this verb in this text, but there are two attestations of the infinitive, including one as a complement to a modal *voler* ‘want’, as shown in examples (17)–(18):

- (17) **Dizer vos voill,** enant qe· m paus
 say 2PL want.1SG before that 1SG.REFL stop.1SG
 ‘I want to tell you, before I stop...’ (CSF 454)

- (18) Ella parled, e saub l’ o **dir**
 she speak.PST.3SG and know.PST.3SG 3SG 3NSG say
 ‘She spoke, and she knew how to tell it’ (CSF 230)

There is thus, in this early text, some variation as to the form of the infinitive, which could be exploited for metric purposes in these cases. Only one other text in COM2 attests a form of the infinitive in *dizer*, in the *Disticha Catonis* (examples 19–21): in this text, there are no infinitive forms of the type *dir*, and the future of this verb is always built on the form *dizer*.

- (19) se ll' aus **dizer** bon sen
 if 3SG hear.1SG say good sense
 'if I hear him/her speak good sense' (DIS2T 478)
- (20) ni ja no· n **dizera**
 and.not already not PART say.FUT.3SG
 'and already he/she will not say anything of it' (DIS2M 021)
- (21) no· t **dizera** de non
 not 2SG say.FUT.3SG of no
 'he/she will not say no to you' (DIS2T 668)

It seems relatively safe to conclude that only verbs with a future stem identical to the infinitive can enter the mesoclitic construction in Old Occitan.

4 MESOCLISIS IN OLD OCCITAN: SYNTAX

Regarding the syntax of mesocclisis, there are three factors to take into account. The first is the type of clitic that can enter into the construction (for which all but one clitic type is attested), and the fact that clitic combinations can also be found. The second one has to do with polarity: there are no examples of negation together with mesocclisis in the future. Finally, it has been suggested that mesocclisis could derive from a syntactic ban on clitics in the first position of the clause, for which evidence has to be examined outside of the mesoclitic construction, namely from cases of proclisis. I examine these in turn in the following subsections.

4.1 CLITICS AND GROUPS OF CLITICS

Concerning the clitic pronouns which can appear in the mesoclitic construction, there does not seem to be any difference with proclitics: all possible pronouns are attested with mesocclisis, except one, as shown in Table 3, together with the number of occurrences for each.

In the majority of cases the pronoun is a third person pronoun. But, as expected from the fact that verb forms are mainly in the 1SG, second person pronouns are also well represented in the corpus (15 for 2SG, 50 for 2PL), clearly taking part in a system of address from the writer to the reader/listener. Examples (22) to (25) show examples of pronouns in the first and second person in both the singular and the plural.



1SG	m	32
2SG	t	15
3SG.OBJ	l'	63
3SG.IOBJ	li	3
3PL.OBJ.M	los	3
3PL.OBJ.F	las	1
3PL.IOBJ	lur, lor	2
1PL	nos	3
2PL	vos	50
PART	n'	25
LOC	hi	1

TABLE 3. Mesoclititic pronouns in COM2

- (22) per que conosc qu' **aucir m' a** plenamen
 for that recognise.1SG that kill 1SG FUT.3SG fully
 'by which I understand that he will kill me fully' (PC 106 001 034)
- (23) et aissi om **apellar t' a**
 and here someone call 2SG FUT.3SG
 'and here you will be called' (QVC 1620)
- (24) **iurar nos em** ensems
 swear 1PL FUT.1PL together
 'we will swear to each other' (PGN 2374)
- (25) **amar vos ay**
 love 2PL FUT.1SG
 'I will love you' (PC 461 101a 027)

Third person clitics are more diverse in form, distinguishing both case and gender in addition to number. Direct object clitics are shown in examples (26) (singular, episcene as prevocalic), 27 (masculine plural) and 28 (feminine plural):

- (26) e **torcar l' as**
 and torch 3SG FUT.2SG
 'and you will torch him/her' (EPL 137)
- (27) **Nuri los ay** de fals potage
 nourish 3MPL FUT.1SG of fake soup
 'I will feed them fake soup' (MSP 6030)
- (28) Dagobertz, cant **plorar las au**
 Dagobert when cry 3FPL FUT.3PL
 'Dagobert, when they will cry for them...' (VSE 1679)

Indirect object clitics do not distinguish gender, in the singular (example 29) or in the plural (example 30) :

(29) e **mostrar li ai** enaissi
 and show 3SG.IO FUT.1SG around.here
 ‘and I will show him here’ (JAU 7610)

(30) **membrar lor an** li filh e li fraire
 remember 3PL.IO FUT.3PL the son and the brother
 e.l parent
 and.the family
 ‘the sons and the brothers and the extended family will make them remember...’ (CCA 177 019)

Finally, there are so-called adverbial pronominals, or the partitive *ne* (example 31) and locative *i* (example 32) which also occur in this position:

(31) e vos **dar n’ etz** a cels qu’ en auran
 and 2PL give PART FUT.2PL to those that PART have.FUT.3PL
 gran mester
 big need
 ‘And you will give some of it to those that will have the greatest need of it’
 (CCA 200 122)

(32) en aiga e **mesclar hi etz**
 in water and mix LOC FUT.2PL
 ‘in water, and you will mix into it...’ (RAC 3490)

The only clitic which is not attested in the corpus is the neutral object pronoun *o*, used to pronominalise genderless controllers including clauses and predicates. It is difficult to know whether the absence of mesoclitic neuter pronouns is due to a principled linguistic reason, or whether it is just an artefact of the relatively small dataset available from the COM2 corpus.

It is not only sole clitics that are attested with mesoclisism: there are also plenty of attestations of groups of clitics, as shown in examples 33–40 which illustrate the range of possible clitic combinations attested in the corpus:

(33) mais vos plaz, **mudar la m’ ai** eu
 more 2PL please.3SG move 3FSG 1SG FUT.1SG 1SG
 ‘If it pleases you more, I will move it’ (FLA 3536)

(34) aloen, et **onher l’ en etz**
 aloe and grease 3SG PART FUT.2PL
 ‘...aloe, and you will cover it with it’ (RAC 3018)





- (35) **semblar li n' a** pus fera
 seem 3SG.IO PART FUT.3SG more wild
 'will seem wilder to him' (BRV 34206)
- (36) e **liurar lo m' etz** a· N Chabert
 and deliver 3SG 1SG FUT.2PL to sir C
 'and you will deliver him for me to Sir Chabert' (GDB 924)
- (37) m' as quist et **donar lo t' ai**
 1sg have.2SG asked.for and give 3SG 2SG FUT.1SG
 'You have asked me and I will give it to you' (PC 457 021 002)
- (38) e **dar lur n' a** tan con volran
 and give 3PL.IO PART FUT.3SG much as want.FUT.3PL
 'and he will give them of it as much as they will want' (TEN 2285)
- (39) pebre mout e **mesclar n' i etz**
 pepper much and mix PART LOC FUT.2PL
 '...a lot of [black] pepper and you will mix it into it' (RAC 2460)
- (40) **tornar nos n' em,** que ben es de sazo
 come.back 1PL PART FUT.1PL because well be.3SG of season
 'we will come back, because it is the season' (DEB 1842)

4.2 NEGATION

Another fact to note with respect to syntax concerns polarity. Graham (2018, p. 195), surveying older studies by Company Company, finds that, in Old Spanish, mesoclisism seems to be incompatible with the presence of sentential negation: "No instances of analytic future or conditional were found following negation" (Graham 2018, p. 195). This fact is confirmed by the Occitan data collected to date: there is no example of negated future verbs with mesoclisism, whereas plenty of examples can be found with proclisis, as can be seen in example (41) with an indirect object, and example (42) with a neutral direct object:

- (41) Que ja non li **ausarai...** (PC 366 002 019)
 that already NEG 3SG.IO dare.FUT.1SG
 'That I will not dare [to tell] him...'
- (42) ja non o **celarai** (PC 293 032 038)
 already NEG 3SG.N conceal.FUT.1SG
 'now I will not conceal it'

Negation in Old Occitan has a fixed preverbal position, and cannot move from it: it is thus not very surprising that negation does not move into a mesoclitic position in the middle of the verb form, and that only pronouns can do so. At this period, it is prob-

able that negation still bears stress; phonological reduction of negation only occurs many centuries later (Bach, 2023). The fact that, phonologically, object clitics appear as enclitics to the negative particle, rather than proclitics to the verb, may explain why, when negation is present, clitics do not move to within the verb form, as in examples such as (43) and (44). Negation, at least phonologically but maybe also syntactically, seems to attract clitic complements to the verb. This is evidence that in Old Occitan, the negative particle *non* is not a clitic.

- (43) que no· us en **desdirai** de ren
 that NEG 2PL PART contradict.FUT.1SG of nothing
 ‘that I will not contradict you in anything’ (JAU 8320)
- (44) no· m **descargarai** del fais
 NEG 1SG unload.FUT.1SG of.the burden
 ‘I will not set down my burden’ (PC o8o 009 004)

4.3 A FIRST POSITION BAN FOR CLITICS (ROBERTS 2016)?

It has been proposed that mesoclisism may arise from a ban on clitics appearing in the first position of the clause. As stated by Roberts (2016, p. 798), “the clitic precedes the infinitive just when it would not come first in the string. This is another case of the Tobler-Mussafia effect”. Some researchers have found that for Old Spanish, the loss of that ban and the loss of mesoclisism seem to co-occur, in the sixteenth century (Lema & Rivero, 1991). This assumption does not seem to be borne out by Old Occitan data though. Mesoclititic futures do sometimes seem to occupy the first position in the clause (although they are more commonly preceded by a particle), as can be seen in examples (35) and (40) above. But for robust positive evidence, one should turn to cases of futures with proclitic pronominal complements in order to check whether it is possible for such forms to occupy clause-initial position in Old Occitan. It is impossible to check all the occurrences of futures for the whole period, but perfectly possible and sufficient to check them in a sample of texts: I here concentrate on two narrative verse texts from the 12th and the 13th century, the *Roman de Jaufré* (JAU) and *Flamenca* (FLA), which both present cases of mesoclititic futures. These texts contain the following attestations of futures with a proclitic pronoun in initial position (I do not gloss these examples because they only show the initial position of the clitic):

- (45) vos **amarai**, ses totz enjantz, (JAU 4568)
- (46) n'**aurai** merce, mas non estiers, (JAU 1172)
- (47) vos **darai** armas e destrier (JAU 649)
- (48) vos **dirai** novas veramentz. (JAU 4732)
- (49) vos **dirai** de so que·m queres/. (JAU 4979)



(50) m'acordarai ab Don Justi, (FLA 3374)

(51) vos farai ara gran honor/, (FLA 7517)

These examples show that, in texts where mesoclisism is known to occur, there is no ban on complement clitics appearing in the first position of the clause, which means that this explanation is not operative for Old Occitan. Note that if the clitic had to be prevented from appearing in the first position, one could also resort to enclisis rather than mesoclisism, as is attested in both texts in examples (52) and (53):

(52) Dirai vos o, e non m'es bel; (JAU 956)

(53) Dirai vos o, bel sener Dieus (FLA 5056)

4.4 SOME CASES OF LEXICALISATION?

Some verbs tend to be used more frequently than others in a mesoclitic construction, as shown in section 3.4 for a number of verbs including *far* 'do, make', *dir* 'say', but also verbs from class I such as *contar* 'tell' (5 times). It seems thus that verbs of saying may be more frequently used in such constructions. This fact seems to be in keeping with findings for other Romance varieties. Batllori Dillet (2012) indicates that "concerning Old Spanish, Fernández Ordóñez (2008-2009) explains that it is used to address a potential reader, sometimes preceded by a topicalized constituent, marked as [TOP] by her". Mesoclisism would thus be used most commonly to address the reader/hearer of the text directly, which can be seen in Batllori Dillet's (2012) Spanish example:

(54) [TOP Agora] **dezirvos emos** de una laguna que fallaron ...
 'Now we will tell you about a lake that was found...' (Old Spanish, cited in Batllori Dillet, 2012)

Examples of a similar type are found in a range of Occitan texts, particularly in narrative texts rather than lyric poetry, as shown in examples (55)-(59):

(55) E **dir t' ai** per que o fazia
 and say 2SG FUT.1SG for that 3SG.N do.IMP.3SG
 'and I will tell you why he was doing it' (VSE 1907)

(56) Ez ieu **dir vos ai** la fazon
 and 1SG say 2PL FUT.1SG the way
 'and I will tell you how it is' (JAU 10555)

(57) e **dir vos ai** breumen
 and say 2PL FUT.1SG briefly
 'and I will tell you briefly' (LGR4 226)

(58) E **dir vos ai** .i. pauc, si no vo· n enojatz
 and say 2PL FUT.1SG a little if NEG 2PL PART be.bored.2PL
 ‘and I will tell you a bit, if you are not bored’ (NDH 579)

(59) E **contar vos ai** de Jaufre
 and tell 2PL FUT.1SG of J
 ‘And I will tell you about Jaufré’ (JAU 10129)

5 DIFFERENTIAL GRAMMATICALIZATION OF PARALLEL STRUCTURES

Senti & Bouzouita (2022) proposed a cline of grammaticalization for the future and the conditional in Old Catalan and Old Spanish. For these authors, grammaticalization is more advanced in Old Catalan. It seems to be the case that the grammaticalization of the future and the conditional from original periphrases is even more advanced in Old Occitan, as there is much less occurrence of mesoclisism in the language (at least if one does not include Gascon), and moreover, that mesoclisism is already no longer possible with the conditional, which can be considered to be fully grammaticalized by that stage. In Old French, the process seems more advanced still: textual attestation begins earlier than for some other varieties, but mesoclisism is never attested as a possibility (see the absence of any reference to mesoclisism in, e.g., Buridant, 2019). This cline is not entirely surprising, in the sense that there is often a progressive change of features in Romance between French and Spanish, going through intermediate stages in Occitan and Catalan, both of which often present characteristics of both Ibero-Romance and Gallo-Romance. Some researchers have also talked about some languages as more grammaticalized than others, in the sense that grammaticalization processes seem to occur more quickly in some varieties than others, and often a similar cline of languages as the one seen for future and conditional is noted in these studies (see, e.g., De Mulder & Lamiroy, 2012; Lamiroy & Pineda, 2017), although those studies do not generally take into account Occitan varieties.

The case of Old Occitan is interesting in that it reveals an asymmetry between the future and the conditional with respect to the pace of grammaticalization, for what are really two parallel structures based on the same constructional schema and initially only differing in the tense of the auxiliary. This adds further evidence to a growing body of research that indicates that, at least in Occitan, the two tenses do not have as tight a bond as was initially thought because of sharing, in most cases, their stem allomorphy as opposed to other stems in the paradigm (see Maiden, 2018, p. 263–272). This is in particular the case concerning inflectional endings, which depart very early on from forms of the verb ‘have’ in the imperfect in the case of the conditional (Esher, 2018, 2022), but retain a formal identity between desinences of the future and the present of the verb ‘have’ in at least four person number combinations (singular + 3PL) in most modern Occitan varieties, an identity that in some varieties is also used productively in analogy. Thus, even parallel structures can have their own pace of grammaticalization. One could also wonder whether the (surprising) patterns of stem distribution asymmetry between the future and the condi-



tional observed in some Occitan varieties (Esher 2012, 2015) might find explanation in such a differential grammaticalization process. In most (Western) Romance languages, there is a systematic identity between the stem used in the future and the stem used in the conditional, as is the case for example in French (see Esher, 2012). In a number of varieties of Occitan this identity is broken, in particular by sound change, but a sound change that is not general in these varieties, but only limited to the conditional tense. This is the case for *r*-less conditionals in Occitan: varieties where the future keeps the etymological /*r*/ of the infinitive but the conditional does not (Esher, 2015). It might be going too far, but such examples are reminiscent of how, in terms of form, further grammaticalization often involves further phonological reduction, of a type that is restricted to the construction at hand and not a general sound change in the language.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In this article I established a number of important and novel facts about mesocclisis in Old Occitan, which in turn illuminate the pace of grammaticalization of the future and conditional in Occitan relative to each other, and to future and conditional forms in other Romance languages.

The first specific finding is that mesocclisis is only attested in the future, if one excludes marginal cases probably due to the influence of Catalan: in Old Occitan, the conditional seems to grammaticalize more quickly and more fully than does the future, and does not allow mesocclisis.

Regarding the morphology of mesocclisis, I show that in Old Occitan, the structure is a true case of mesocclisis, with a clitic fracturing the inflected form, and not an analytical construction involving an infinitive and an auxiliary with the clitic proclitic to the auxiliary (or enclitic to the infinitive), as seems to be the case in Old Spanish for example. The construction is limited to those verbs where the stem of the future is identical to the infinitive. This causes a certain skewing in the inflectional classes that can participate in the construction, mainly the first, open class which does not present stem alternations in the future and conditional, and a very restricted number of verbs in class III. There is a clear bias in favour of the 1SG for this construction: more than half of the corpus attestations are examples of a 1SG future. This bias is only partially due to the type of text (lyric poetry), and mostly has to be attributed to one of the possible pragmatic uses of the construction, particularly in narrative: as a means for the narrator to address the reader/hearer directly, outside of the narration.

Regarding syntax, all types of clitic complements are shown to be possible in mesocclitic constructions, except the neutral object clitic *o*, although it is still unclear whether this is an effect of the small size of the corpus, or whether it is motivated by a linguistic principle. As in Old Spanish and Old Catalan, the construction is never attested with the negative particle *non*. I identify attraction of clitics by negation in Old Occitan as a possible explanation, which will be explored in further work. I also critically examine and ultimately reject a hypothesis attributing mesocclisis to the ban on clitics appearing as proclitic with verb initial sentences: although this hypothesis

partially explains the data in Catalan (Sentí & Bouzouita, 2022), it is shown to be invalid for the Occitan data.

The corpus of mesoclisism studied here shows a clear asymmetry in the pace of grammaticalization of the future and the conditional, confirming other studies on these two screeves, and is a possible explanation for the occurrence in modern varieties of stem asymmetries between the future and the conditional, due to a more advanced grammaticalization of the latter. In a comparative view, and for this sole feature, Occitan is shown to be in between Catalan and French in terms of the pace of grammaticalization of the future and conditional, refining the grammaticalization cline suggested in Lamiroy & Pineda (2017) by adding a position for Occitan. Further analysis of the features used in such studies (auxiliaries, past tenses, mood, demonstratives, etc.) will provide additional confirmation of the position of Occitan along the Romance continuum.

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