

The Department of Linguistics
is pleased to present

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speaking on

Clitic position and clause structure in Old Occitan and early Old French

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1:20 - 3:00 PM

in HUM 1 - 202

Abstract:

I discuss two incompletely understood cases of word order variation involving the placement of object/adverbial clitic pronouns in two closely related Gallo-Romance varieties, Old Occitan (OOc) and Old French (OF).

The first case, apparently limited to OOc, involves affirmative matrix declaratives with a preverbal subject. As seen in (1a) and (1b), in this context, object/adverbial clitics appear either in preverbal position (1a) or postverbal position (1b) with no apparent change in meaning (finite verb in SMALL CAPS; clitic(s) in **bold**).

- (1a) E.N Constantis **s'en** ANET.
'And Sir Constantine left.' (OOc; *Razo* of 80,20 & 80,32, §8; Boutière 1964: 92)
- (1b) E.N Guilhem ANET **s'en**.
'And Sir Guillaume left.' (OOc; *Razo* of 208,1, §34; Boutière 1964: 3)

The second case, attested in both Old Occitan and early Old French (prior to ca. 1200), concerns coordinated affirmative verb-first declaratives. Again, object/adverbial clitics can appear preverbally (2a-b) or postverbally (2c-d), with no apparent change of meaning (coordinated clause underlined).

- (2a) É li poples ápluvéit de tutes parz é fud é se TENEIT od Absalon.
'And people came in large numbers from everywhere and were with and stood with Absalom.' (early OF; *Li quatre livre des reis*, Curtius, 1911: 86)
- (2b) Adonc lo baiza e l'ABRASSA.
'Then she kissed him and embraced him.' (OOc; *Flamenca* 2961)
- (2c) Or ne fera mes plus; trop a avant alé, E PESOT li que tant en aveit trespasé.
'From now on, he will not do more; he went too far, and he regretted having gone that far.' (early OF; *Becket* 1020)
- (2d) Illi l' Janet esgardar e TROBET lo passat.
'She went to look at him and found him deceased.' (OOc; *Douceline*; Gout 1927: 46)

Arguing against previous accounts that suggest that this variation in clitic position is random (e.g., Jensen 1994; Romieu & Bianchi 2002) or simply a case of regional variation (e.g., Hinzelin 2007), I appeal to properties of the verb-second grammar of medieval Gallo-Romance, as well as notions of information structure and discourse coherence, to suggest that the position of the clitic reflects different clausal structures. The choice of clause structure, in turn, reflects discourse-pragmatic and semantic distinctions. Analyses are based on extensive analyses of five OOc texts and twenty early OF texts.