Language Optionality and Variation
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Optionality and Variation: Verb-Movement in Old Spanish

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Abstract This chapter tackles the question of optionality and variation from the perspective of V(erb)-movement in Romance. After presenting the patterns of verb placement found in modern Spanish, we investigate V-movement in non-V2 embedded environments in old Spanish texts. In addition to filling a gap in the literature, where to date only main clauses have received extensive attention, this study develops a powerful heuristic to assess whether superficial instances of variation constitute a genuine instance of resetting of the V-movement parameter, or whether different causes (viz., a stylistic choice) should be invoked.

Keywords Verb-movement. Optionality. Old Spanish. Adverbs. Negation. Auxiliary selection. Participle agreement. DOM.

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1 Introduction

While much attention has been paid to varying patterns of V2 in early Romance, very little is known about verb placement in non-V2 contexts.[1] Here, we address this gap by investigating Verb-movement (V-mvt) across several old Spanish texts. The reasons why this language represents an interesting case study are twofold. First, modern peninsular Spanish exhibits a very low setting of the V-mvt parameter (Schifano 2018, § 3.13), yet no studies have asked whether this is the continuation of a conservative feature or an innovation. Second, modern Spanish shows superficial optionality in verb placement with respect to some low adverbs. However, speaker judgments reveal this optionality is only apparent, inasmuch as V(erb)-Adv(erb) strings represent pragmatically-marked orderings. As such, they are not the output of an optionally higher setting of the parameter, but are derived via focalization of the adverb (Schifano 2018, § 5.1.2; 2026, 525). This raises the question whether the same apparent optionality is observed in earlier stages and, if so, how it is to be analysed. A comparative investigation of two 13th-century and one 15th-century Spanish texts addresses this empirical gap, combined with an assessment of a number of morphosyntactic phenomena typically correlated with a low setting of the V-mvt parameter (Ledgeway 2020a; 2022), which prove crucial in interpreting an apparent anomalous case of optionality in one of the texts.

2 V-Movement in Modern Romance: Types and Correlates

Romance was traditionally assumed to display V-to-I movement in contrast to languages like English (Emonds 1978; Pollock 1989), with the finite lexical verb climbing over VP-adverbs like *souvent/often* in French but not in English.

(1) French
a. Jean fume souvent (*fume).
English
b. John (*smokes) often smokes.

However, a more nuanced cartographic mapping of the internal structure of IP (cf. Cardinaletti 1997; 2004), culminating in Cinque's

1 We dedicate this chapter to Anna Cardinaletti whose rigorous and insightful work has profoundly advanced and enriched our understanding of syntactic structures and variation.

(1999) seminal work, allows us to investigate the specific landing site of the verb. By comparing the placement of the finite indicative lexical verb with respect to a wide range of adverbs located in the Higher and Lower Adverb Spaces (HAS/LAS; Ledgeway, Lombardi 2005, 83), four different types of 'default' V-mvt can be identified in modern Romance: high, medial, low and very low.[2]

Table 1 Romance V-mvt

high	French, Occitan, Gascon, Romanian$_2$
clause-medial	northern regional Italian, northern Italian dialects
low	European Portuguese, southern regional Italian, southern Italian dialects
very low	Spanish, Valencian Catalan, Romanian$_1$

Here we focus on very low movement in Spanish. Modern Spanish is a very low-movement language where the finite verb in the indicative leaves the *v*-VP, obligatorily occurring to the left of *completamente* (2a) marking the right margin of the LAS, but does not climb higher within the LAS as shown by its position to the right of *casi* (2b). The postverbal placement of low adverbs in the high portion of the LAS is also admitted (cf. bracketed option in 3), but produces a pragmatically-marked interpretation of the adverb (Schifano 2018, § 3.1.3; 2026, 525). Superficial orders such as *conoce ya* are not therefore indicative of a higher case of V-mvt, but represent the output of focusing the adverb in accordance with its marked interpretation. The variation exemplified by (3) is therefore only an apparent case of optionality.

(2) peninsular Spanish

a. Entiendo completamente (*entiendo) lo que dices.
understand.1SG completely the which say.2SG

b. Sergio (*se equivoca) casi se equivoca.
Sergio almost REFL= err.3SG

(3) peninsular Spanish

María (conoce) ya conoce esta historia.
María already know.3SG this story

These distinct settings of the V-mvt parameter do not represent isolated choices, but entail cascading effects manifested in a number of related morphosyntactic phenomena. Glossing over

2 Cf. Schifano 2015; 2018; Ledgeway, Schifano 2022; 2023a; 2023b; forthcoming a.

details, a broad distinction can be drawn between high-movement varieties of the northern Romània and low-movement varieties of the southern Romània (Ledgeway 2020a; 2022). The former, illustrated by languages such as French, typically combine a high setting of the V-mvt parameter with: (i) retention of non-veridical V-to-C movement (4, 6); (ii) subject clitics (5a) and a dedicated preverbal subject position (5b); (iii) availability of (discontinuous) postverbal negation (5b); (iv) HAVE-BE active-stative split in perfective auxiliation (5b, 6); (v) absence of active participle agreement with in-situ objects (6).

(4) French
Vient-il?
come.3SG=he

(5) (spoken) French
a. *(je) /*(tu) dors /*(il/elle) /*(on) dort
I= you.SG= sleep-1~2SG he/she= one sleep.3SG
/*(vous) dormez /*(ils/elles) dorment (Fr.)
you.PL sleep.2PL they.M/F sleep.3PL
b. Le roi (n') est pas arrivé (/*le roi).
the king NEG be.3SG NEG arrive.PTCP the king

(6) French
As-tu écrit/*-e la lettre?
have.2SG=you.SG write.PTCP.MSG/FSG the.FSG letter.F

Conversely, southern varieties such as Spanish and southern Italian dialects combine a low setting of the V-mvt parameter with: (i) absence of V-to-C movement (7); (ii) differential object marking (DOM) (7) and lack of a dedicated preverbal subject position (8); (iii) Stage I negation (8); (iv) absence of active-stative auxiliary split (9); and (v) active participle agreement with in-situ objects (10).

(7) Spanish
¿Tú has (*tú) visto a Juan?
you.SG have.2SG you.SG see.PTCP DOM Juan

(8) Spanish
No se comieron los niños el pastel.
NEG REFL= eat.PST.PFV.3PL the children the cake

(9) Spanish

¿Has	escrito	la	carta?	/ He	llegado.
have.2SG	write.PTCP.MSG	the.FSG	letter.F	have.1SG	arrive.PTCP

(10) Scorrano, southern Italian dialect (Musio 1995)

Aggiu	nnutti	ddo	chili.
have.1SG	bring.PTCP.MPL	two	kilos.M

If the above correlations are correct, a change in the setting of the V-mvt parameter should trigger a cascading effect on the related morphosyntactic phenomena just highlighted. Significantly, these expectations are borne out by several case studies. On the one hand, many Gallo-Romance varieties underwent an endogenous resetting of the V-mvt parameter from low to high, triggering a concomitant shift from Stage I negation to Stages II/III (Ledgeway, Schifano 2023a; 2023b). Similarly, when Rossellonès Catalan moved from a low to a high setting of the V-mvt parameter under the influence of neighbouring French, this was accompanied by a concomitant shift to Stage II/III negation, the development of a French-style active-stative split in perfective auxiliation, a loss of DOM, and a shift towards a rigid word order where all subjects surface preverbally (Ledgeway, Schifano, forthcoming a). On the other hand, Greek varieties spoken in the extreme south of Italy underwent a mirror-image change, moving from a high to a lower setting of the V-mvt parameter triggered by contact with surrounding low-movement southern Italo-Romance varieties. In this case, too, the expected concomitant effects obtain: absence of Stage II/III negation, southern-style patterns of auxiliary selection, reanalysis of an underlying formal syncretism in first- and second-person pronouns as the surface output of DOM, and the lack of a dedicated preverbal subject position (Ledgeway, Schifano, forthcoming b).

In sum, the above correlations provide us with a powerful tool to identify genuine cases of resetting of the V-mvt parameter. Accordingly, when discussing patterns of verb placement across old Spanish, we shall also assess these related phenomena, which prove instrumental in revealing how a case of apparent optionality in V-mvt is, in fact, an illusion.

3 Verb-mvt and Correlates in Old Spanish

To address the research questions in §1, we examined the semi-paleographic transcriptions of three old Spanish texts from the *Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies*: *Biblia Romanceada* (13th c.),

Estoria de Espanna (13th c.), and *Atalaya de las corónicas* (15th c.).[3] For each of these we searched patterns of V-mvt, negation, active perfective auxiliary selection, participle agreement, and DOM. In relation to V-mvt, we manually searched for a selection of high and low adverbs across the entirety of all three texts.[4] The search was restricted to non-V2 embedded contexts featuring a complementizer, followed by an overt (pro)nominal preverbal subject and a finite verb form, either directly preceded or followed by a relevant adverb. In the case of transitive predicates, instances of anteposition of full DP objects were excluded. Below we present the results for each of the phenomena across the three texts.

3.1 *Biblia Romanceada*

A pre-Alfonsine translation, the *Biblia romanceada* (henceforth *BR*) is one of the earliest extant Castilian Bibles produced around 1250 (Enrique-Arias 2010, 15). In terms of default V-mvt, *BR* represents a clear case of a low-movement grammar: 31 out of 48 placements involving a relevant low adverb exhibit the order Adv-V (11a). For the remaining 17 opposite orderings (11b), their relatively low frequency matches the situation in modern Spanish (§2). Thus, it is reasonable to extend the same analysis to *BR*, interpreting such orders as involving adverb focalization rather than the output of an exceptional higher placement of the verb. As expected, low V-mvt is accompanied by strict Stage I negation (12).

(11) *BR*, 197r-a

a.	assi	que	los	sacerdotes	ya	no	fazien
	so	that	the	priests	already	not	do.PST.IPFV.3PL
	los	sacrificios					
	the	sacrifices					

BR, 260r-a

b.	ca	yo	fago	siempre	lo	que […]
	that	I	do.PRS.IND.1SG	always	that	which

3 Cf. https://www.hispanicseminary.org/t&c/bib/index-en.htm, https://www.hispanicseminary.org/t&c/ac/index-en.htm, and https://www.hispanicseminary.org/t&c/cro/index-en.htm.

4 The data reported below only include results for low adverbs, as the number of suitable high adverbs in the texts examined is extremely limited and our focus was on determining the positioning of the verb within the LAS. Note that our corpus also includes subject relative clauses, traditionally argued to be a very common structural environment for so-called Stylistic Fronting. Reasons of space prevent a discussion of the possible implications for a low V-mvt analysis and why we consider them a suitable testing environment (but see Ledgeway, Schifano 2023a, 161-2).

(12) *BR*, 51r-a

por	uentura	non	uea	con	sos	oios
for	luck	not	see.PRS.SBJV.3SG	with	his	eyes

Turning to auxiliary selection, *BR* exemplifies an early active-stative stage where transitives/unergatives (13a) select HAVE and unaccusatives (13b) BE in line with the behaviour observed across medieval Romance (Ledgeway 2012, § 7.3.1.1). As expected, a minority of unaccusative predicates (6 out of 27) exhibit HAVE (14), an incipient change which will eventually lead to generalized HAVE in modern Spanish. Relatedly, the only numerically sufficient pattern of active participle agreement we could extract from the same selection of examples involves in-situ DP objects (15) where agreement remains robustly attested (19 out of 25 examples), exemplifying an early stage consistent with a low-movement grammar.

(13) *BR*, 265r-a

a.

ha	parido	el	ninno
have.PRS.IND.3SG	give.birth.PTCP.PFV	the	child

BR, 265r-a

b.

es	nacido	ombre	en	el	mundo
be.PRS.IND.3SG	be.born.PTCP.PFV	man	in	the	world

(14) *BR*, 261v-b

auie	ya	estado	en	el	sepulcro
have.PST.IPFV.3SG	already	be.PTCP.PFV	in	the	tomb

(15) *BR*, 285r-a

ya	perduda	auiemos	toda	esperança
already	lose.PTCP.PFV.FSG	have.PST.IPFV.1PL	all	hope

Finally, DOM in *BR* also complies with the expectations of an early southern Romance text. This marking is already very robustly attested with kinship terms (16a) and proper names (16b) surfacing in 16 out of 21 examples, but remains unstable with specific, animate lexical DPs (12 DOM vs 19 non-DOM), as illustrated in (17), in accordance with a restricted distribution widely observable across conservative stages of Romance.[5]

5 Cf. Ledgeway 2022; 2023a; 2023b; 2023c.

(16) *BR*, 51v-b

a.	ante	que	el	ninno	sepa	llamar	a	so
	before	that	the	child	know.PRS.SBJV.3SG	call.INF	DOM	his
	padre	e	asu	madre				
	father	and	DOM.his	mother				

BR, 49r-b

b.	los	que	desampararon	a	dios	
	those	who	abandon.PST.PFV.3PL	DOM	God	

(17) *BR*, 52r-a

a.	maldizra	a	su	rey				
	curse.FUT.3SG	DOM	his	king				
BR, 51r-a								
b.	ui	el	rey	sennor	de	las	huestes	
	see.PST.PFV.1SG	the	king	lord	of	the	armies	

In conclusion, *BR* is a 'well-behaved' example of an old Spanish text. First, it clearly exhibits a low setting of the V-mvt parameter. Diachronically, this is expected given that (late) Latin already displayed low V-mvt in embedded clauses (Ledgeway 2012, 182, 219), making a sudden resetting to a high-movement option unlikely. Second, the expected morphosyntactic correlates of a low V-mvt setting are all present: Stage I negation, early weakening of active-stative auxiliation, active participle agreement with in-situ objects, and a robust distribution of DOM with nominals situated at the topmost part of the animacy and specificity hierarchies. Finally, a further remark about participle agreement is in order. Modern Spanish and other low-movement Romance languages, such as (varieties of) Romanian, do not display active participle agreement with in-situ objects. Far from being an exception to the correlation between a low setting of V-mvt and participle agreement, this state of affairs straightforwardly follows from the fact that (most) active participles in these varieties exceptionally have to raise to a position adjacent to the auxiliary (Schifano 2018, § 5.2.2.4) which places them outside of the local agreement configuration with the object (Ledgeway 2020a, 55, 58). All things being equal, the agreement patterns observed in *BR* should therefore follow from a lower placement of the participle in this earlier diachronic stage. Indeed, this is shown by examples such as (18), where interpolation of material between the perfective auxiliary and the active participle, largely disallowed in modern Spanish (Schifano 2018, 87; 2026, 525-6), indicates a lower participle placement licensing the local configuration required for the agreement.

(18) *BR*, 261v-b

auie	ya	estado	en	el	sepulcro
have.PST.IPFV.3SG	already	stay.PTCP.PFV	in	the	tomb

3.2 *Atalaya de las Corónicas*

At this point it is instructive to compare the patterns in *BR* with a much later work, the *Atalaya de las corónicas* (henceforth *AC*), a historiographical compilation composed by the royal chaplain Alfonso Martínez de Toledo in the mid-15th century (1443-54). Beginning with V-mvt, *AC* shows continuity with *BR*, inasmuch as Adv-V orders of the verb such as (19a) remain the most frequent (14 out of 20). This again suggests a pragmatically-marked, viz., focalized, interpretation of the adverb in the small number of reverse orders attested in our corpus (19b).

(19) *AC*, 221r

a. […]

que	los	de	las	aldeas	avn	non	legauan
that	those	of	the	villages	still	not	arrive.PST.IPFV.3PL

AC, 119r

b.

por	que	el	arc'obispo	sabia	ya	que	[…]
for	that	the	archbishop	know.PST.IPFV.3SG	already	that	

As expected, negation continues to be at Stage I (20), with no signs of incipient grammaticalization of postverbal elements. Similarly, auxiliary selection in *AC* still displays a robust active-stative alignment (21a-b), though cases of unaccusative HAVE such as (22) show a modest increase in line with its future generalization.

(20) *AC*, 9v

los	Ricos	non	se	quieren	con	los	pobres	ygualar
the	rich	not	REFL=	want.PRS.IND.3PL	with	the	poor	make.equal.INF

(21) *AC*, 16r

a.

lo	quel	enperador	le	auia	dado
the	that=the	emperor	him.DAT=	have.PST.IPFV.3SG	give.PTCP.PFV

AC, 49r

b.

era	venido	nueua mente	de	la	corte
be.PST.IPFV.3SG	come.PTCP.PFV	again	of	the	court

(22) *AC*, 192r

avn	que	auia	venido	tarde
even	that	have.PST.IPFV.3SG	come.PTCP.PFV	late

This incipient extension of HAVE goes hand in hand with the observed patterns of active participle agreement. Agreement with clitic objects has already become unstable in *AC*, witness the presence of 10 examples with agreement (23a) and 10 without (23b), an oscillation occasionally attested even within the same sentence (23c). The ongoing loss of agreement is even clearer with relativized objects (7 with agreement vs 31 without) and in-situ DPs (9 with agreement vs 31 without), as shown by (24) and (25), respectively.

(23) *AC*, 176r

a. los auia dados a otros
them.ACC.MPL= have.PST.IPFV.3SG give.PTCP.PFV.MPL to others

AC, 225v

b. gelos auia dado en
him.DAT=them.ACC.MPL= have.PST.IPFV.3SG give.PTCP.PFV.MSG in
cassamiento
marriage

AC, 196v

c. su padre la auia ordenado &
his father her.ACC= have.PST.IPFV.3SG order.PTCP.PFV.MSG and
dada
give.PTCP.PFV.FSG

(24) *AC*, 236v

a. muchos lugares de los que el Rey auia
many place.MPL of those that the king have.PST.IPFV.3SG
deixados tomados
leave.PTCP.PFV.MPL take.PTCP.PFV.MPL

AC, 11r

b. todos los lugares que auia tomado
all the place.MPL that have.PST.IPFV.3SG take.PTCP.PFV.MSG

(25) *AC*, 51v

a. auian fechos conc'ilios en toledo
have.PST.IPFV.3PL do.PTCP.PFV.MPL council.MPL in Toledo

AC, 12v

b. hunalia […] auia fecho
Hunila have.PST.IPFV.3SG do.PTCP.PFV.MSG
sus amistades
his friendship.FPL

The distribution of DOM is also in line with low V-mvt; it is fully established with kinship terms (26a) and proper names (26b) (present

in 21 out of 22 examples), though still unstable with specific, animate lexical DPs (27) (10 DOM vs 9 non-DOM).

(26) *AC*, 206v

a.	el	Rey	don	pedro	auia	muerto	a
	the	king	Don	Pedro	have.PST.IPFV.3SG	kill.PTCP.PFV	DOM
	su	hermano					
	his	brother					

AC, 8v

b.	sienpre	temieron	a	Dios
	always	fear.PST.PFV.3PL	DOM	God

(27) *AC*, 11v

a.	veyendo	venir	al	enperador
	see.GER	come.INF	DOM=the	emperor

AC, 10r

b.	vissto	commo	auian	vencido	los	vaundalos
	see.PTCP.PFV	how	have.PST.IPFV.3PL	win.PTCP.PFV	the	Vandals

In conclusion, *AC* shows that, in the passage from the 13th to the 15th century, Spanish continues to exhibit a low setting of the V-mvt parameter. Superficial strings including a verb followed by a low adverb are attested, but they continue to represent a minority of cases as part of a marked focalization option. In terms of alignment, *AC* still exemplifies an early active-stative stage, but, as expected, there is an increase in the number of attestations of HAVE in unaccusative contexts as the language moves towards its modern pattern. Analogously, active past-participle agreement with pronominal and DP objects shows unmistakable signs of weakening: in terms of V-mvt, this indicates that the participle is starting to move to a position adjacent to the auxiliary outside of the immediate local agreement configuration with its object. Indeed, although a few cases of interpolation are still attested, they are much more restricted than in *BR* occurring almost exclusively with *mal* 'badly' in line with an archaicizing formulaic usage.

3.3 *Estoria de Espanna*

We conclude by examining the *Estoria de Espanna* (henceforth *EE*). Like *BR*, the *EE* was composed in the 13th century, but, unlike the former, it belongs to the production undertaken under the direction

of Alfonso X, in whose scriptorium a new 'Alfonsine norm' was being fostered.[6]

Our expectation is that *EE* should exhibit a predominance of Adv-V orders in accordance with the low setting already identified in the 13th century for *BR* (§3.1) and which continues through the 15th century (cf. *AC*, §3.2) up until modern times (§2). However, out of 34 examples involving a finite indicative lexical verb and a low adverb, 19 exhibit V-Adv order (28a) in contrast to 15 examples of Adv-V (28b). Significantly, 4 of the latter examples include a formulaic use of *numqua* 'never' and are all concentrated in the same folio (90r), suggesting that their frequency might even be lower than what the raw numbers at first suggest.

(28) *EE*, 124r

a. los monges que morauan ya por tierra de
the monks that dwell.PST.IPFV.3PL already for land of
Egypto
Egypt

EE, 169r

b. Sepas que este angel nunqua riso
know.PRS.SBJV.2SG that this angel never laugh.PST.PFV.3SG

While in both *BR* and *AC* orders such as (28a) are also attested, they represent a minority, supporting the claim they are pragmatically-marked focalizations of the adverb rather than the output of an optionally higher V-mvt grammar. In *EE,* by contrast, these same orders are dominant. This would suggest that *EE* exemplifies a variety of old Spanish at least optionally characterized by a higher setting of the V-mvt parameter. Before considering this hypothesis, we first complete our investigation by considering the behaviour of those morphosyntactic phenomena that above were observed to correlate with V-mvt.

Beginning with negation, *EE* exemplifies a rigid Stage I variety.

(29) *EE*, 3r

nos non queremos fablar de los otros linages
we not want.PRS.IND.1PL talk.INF of the other lineages

6 Cf. Cano Aguilar 1989; 2010, 173-5; 2022, 7-8; Fernández-Ordóñez 2004; 2008-09. Cf. also `https://www.patrimonionacional.es/en/colecciones-reales/history-spain-e1?utm` (last accessed: September 2025).

As for auxiliary selection, we observe an active-stative pattern with transitives/unergatives selecting HAVE and unaccusatives BE (30). Our sample does not include any instances of unaccusative HAVE, suggesting that the active-stative alignment is still very robust in the Spanish of this text. Regarding participle agreement, the only robust pattern which can be extracted from our sample involves in-situ DP objects, most of which (10 out of 14) exhibit agreement, witness *destroida* in (30).

(30) *EE*, 14v

les	contaron	cuemo	annibal	auie		
them.DAT=	tell.PST.PFV.3PL	how	Hannibal	have.PST.IPFV.3SG		
destroida	ya	Siguença	e	que	era	
destroy.PTCP.PFV.FSG	already	Sigüenza.FSG	and	that	be.PST.IPFV.3SG	
partido	ende					
leave.PTCP.PFV	thence					

Finally, the distribution of DOM matches that found in *BR*: it is robustly attested with pronouns (31) (38 out of 41 cases), kinship terms and proper names (32) (21 out of 33 cases), and is also gaining ground with specific, animate lexical DPs (31) (18 out of 28 cases).

(31) *EE*, 10v

mato	a	el	e	a	todos	sos	caualleros
kill.PST.PFV.3SG	DOM	him	and	DOM	all	his	knights

(32) *EE*, 4v

mato	otrossi	a	busilis
kill.PST.PFV.3SG	also	DOM	Busilis

In sum, all the phenomena reviewed for *EE* comply with the expectations of a 13th-century Spanish text, with the apparent exception of V-mvt as revealed by the remarkably high proportion of V-Adv orders. One possible interpretation is to postulate that such strings are the output of a high(er) V-mvt grammar. Accordingly, *EE* could be interpreted as the manifestation of a transitional phase in the history of Spanish, where the original low-movement pattern is in competition with an innovative higher setting. On this view, the apparent optionality exemplified in (28) is the output of grammars in competition (Kroch 1994). However, various arguments undermine this possibility. Diachronically, Spanish is set to remain a low-movement language, witness the evidence of the 15th-century *AC* (§3.2) and modern Spanish (§2), making a transitional high stage in the 13th century very unlikely. Indeed, our investigation of a contemporary

but, crucially, non-Alfonsine text (viz., *BR*), provides independent evidence of the expected low setting. To this, we can add the results from two further 14th-century texts, namely, *Libro del cauallero Çifar* (c. 1300-1305)[7] and *El libro del los enxiemplos del Conde Lucanor et de Patronio* (1335).[8] Both display a low setting of the V-mvt parameter, with Adv-V orders significantly outnumbering the reverse order (16 out of 22 in *Çifar* and 11 out of 16 in *Lucanor*), a pattern that also continues into the 15th century *AC*. In short, the continuity observed across texts from the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries underlines how the V-Adv patterns of the Alfonsine text should not be considered a genuine manifestation of an optionally high-movement grammar. Indeed, if *EE* were the manifestation of a transitional stage of V-mvt towards a higher setting, we would expect at least some incipient manifestations of Stage II negation, witness the early history of Gallo-Romance and the more recent history of Rossellonès Catalan (§2;).[9] In the same vein, an ongoing resetting towards high V-mvt should also be accompanied, at the very least, by an incipient retreat of DOM, as clearly witnessed once again in Rossellonès Catalan. This is not the case in *EE* where, if anything, DOM shows signs of further extension.

EE cannot therefore instantiate a stage of old Spanish where V-mvt was optionally higher. How should we then account for the observed V-Adv orders, the high incidence of which rules out a derivation via adverb focalization yielding pragmatically-marked (and hence *a priori* less frequent) orders? One possibility is that such orders represent a deliberate, artificial stylistic choice. It is well known that Alfonso and his collaborators championed a distinctive variety of Castilian, making a fundamental contribution to the emergence of a new Spanish norm. This included the incorporation of specific stylistic choices, not only lexically and morphologically, but also syntactically (Fernandez-Ordoñez 2008), some of which were non-Castilian dialectal features which would not make their way into the later Spanish norm (Cano Aguilar 1989, § 5; Fernández-Ordóñez 2004, § 3). A case in point is interpolation between a preverbal clitic and its verbal host. Generally, it is difficult to pinpoint the dialectal origin of many of Alfonso's linguistic choices, partly because of the linguistic plurality of his scribes and collaborators and the multiple layers of production and revision (Fernández-Ordoñez 2004, 403), and partly because the Alfonsine prose corpus does not seem to privilege any one dialectal model (Fernández-Ordoñez 2004, 408-9). However, in relation to interpolation, a western (406-7), and more specifically Galician (Chenery 1905, 50), influence has been invoked since

7 https://textred.spanport.lss.wisc.edu/chivalric/texts.html.

8 Cf. Knust, Birch-Hirschfeld's (1900) edition.

9 Cf. Ledgeway, Schifano 2022; 2023a; 2023b; forthcoming a; forthcoming b.

interpolation was extremely productive in old Gallego-Portuguese (Martins 1995; 2005), with related configurations surviving into modern Galician (Álvarez et al. 1995).

Returning to the unusually frequent V-Adv orders in *EE*, 10 out of 19 feature the adverb *siempre* 'always', implying that the overwhelming evidence for an allegedly high-movement grammar comes from this single adverb. Crucially, in medieval Gallego-Portuguese the adverb *sempre* could either precede or follow the verb (Fiéis 2010). Combining this fact with the independent evidence of a western syntactic influence on Alfonsine prose by way of very frequent interpolation, it is legitimate to speculate that the high incidence of V-*siempre* orders is not the genuine output of a high V-mvt grammar, but another deliberate stylistic choice which gives the text a distinctive western, or better Galician, flavour.[10] The plausibility of this hypothesis is reinforced by other cases, not limited to Alfonsine production, where writers deliberately adopt syntactic options reflecting different diaphasic, diatopic or diachronic varieties. One example is the deliberate use of (S)OV order observed in main clauses of Classical Latin, an artifice notably employed by Caesar, who Linde (1923, 154) characterizes as 'fanatical' about verb-final order. As pointed out by various authors (cf. Ledgeway 2012, 42), this reflects a deliberate stylistic choice that artificially replicates an earlier OV stage of the language rather than the genuine output of a head-final language.

In conclusion, *EE* apparently diverges from the other 13th-century text (cf. *BR*) in that V-Adv orders are the most frequent. While it is tempting to interpret this as the reflex of an ongoing resetting of the V-mvt parameter from low to high, this interpretation is untenable for two principal reasons. First, the diachronic evidence reveals a language in which low V-mvt has remained stable over the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries to the present day. Second, none of the morphosyntactic phenomena otherwise correlated with high V-mvt are attested. Combining these considerations with the notoriously stylistically and diatopically marked nature of some of the linguistic choices of the Alfonsine prose corpus, it is legitimate to interpret the high frequency of V-Adv orders (most of which include *siempre*) as a marked stylistic choice, most probably an imitation of an early Gallego-Portuguese model.

10 Both interpolation and V-*siempre* orders were grammatical in old Spanish such that the influence of western (viz., Galician) models simply increased the frequency of two already existing patterns.

4 Conclusions

Our analysis of three old Spanish texts has shed new light on apparent instances of optionality, and hence variation, in V-mvt. Taking the patterns of modern Spanish as a starting point, we first investigated V-mvt in *BR* and *AC*, where we observed a majority of low placements accompanied by the expected distribution of several correlated morphosyntactic phenomena. The continuity observed between the 13th and the 15th centuries suggests that the numerous V-Adv placements noted in our third text, Alfonso's *EE*, represent an anomaly. Rather than the optional output of a transitional high-movement grammar, such orders represent a stylistically-marked choice, most probably under the influence of Gallego-Portuguese models. Indeed, this is consistent with the adoption of diatopically marked features observed elsewhere in Alfonsine production. The differential distribution of a series of morphosyntactic phenomena known to correlate with low and high V-mvt was shown to offer us a key diagnostic tool in distinguishing genuine outputs of a low-movement grammar from instances of superficial stylistic variation. This highlights the heuristic value of the approach adopted here in which V-mvt is not conceived as an isolated parameter, but as the catalyst for series of cascading effects, opening new avenues for investigating the still understudied word-order patterns of embedded clauses in early Romance.

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