# Auxiliary encliticization in 16th century Romanian: restrictions and regularities

Rodica Zafiu

University of Bucharest &
"Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti" Institute of Linguistics
rodica_zafiu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on a specific case of variation between the (dominant) *auxiliary-main verb* order and the *main verb-auxiliary* order. By analyzing a corpus of 16th-century texts, we describe certain regularities displayed by the encliticization of the participle and the infinitive in the Romanian compound past and periphrastic future, respectively (a phenomenon traditionally described as 'auxiliary inversion'). We aim at offering a set of reliable data about the relation between participle/infinitive fronting and the main vs. embedded status of the clause. The corpus investigation demonstrates that in the 16th century the encliticization of the auxiliary is very rare in subordinate clauses. In the 16th century, auxiliary encliticization mainly functions as a focalization strategy (as demonstrated by Alboiu & Hill 2012), but the alternation between a preverbal and post-verbal auxiliary can be also interpreted as a marker of solidarity between some syntactic blocks (free relatives/*if*-clauses – main clauses, coordinated main clauses).

Keywords: auxiliary, word order, 16th-century Romanian, subordination, focalization

## 1. Preliminaries

In 16th-17th-century Romanian, the placement of the (main) verb with respect to clitic auxiliaries and to clitic pronominals, but also the word order of other less grammaticalized forms and constructions (e.g. tense, mood and aspect periphrases or passive periphrases) display a high degree of variation.[8] It is only recently that this phenomenon – partially similar to old or modern phases of other (Romance, Slavic, etc.) languages – has been noticed and has become an object of inquiry for which some explanatory hypotheses have been put forward.

In what follows, we focus on a specific case of variation, produced by the fronting of the participle in the Romanian compound past, and by the fronting of the infinitive in the periphrastic future; this phenomenon – which we will label as *encliticization of the auxiliary*[9] and which can be alternatively described as postposition of the main verb or, traditionally, as 'auxiliary inversion' – appears in alternation with the *auxiliary-main verb* order. Our approach will be rather empirical, aiming at offering a set of reliable descriptive data without intending to opt for a theoretical explanation; nevertheless, we will advance a historical hypothesis about the origin and the functions of this particular type of word order variation.

[8] Dragomirescu (2013) establishes a strong correlation between auxiliary inversion, pronominal encliticization and some types of scrambling (discontinuities in the auxiliary-verb sequence).

[9] The clitic status of the auxiliary in old and modern Romanian is generally accepted. We will also use the term *fronting,* but more cautiously, because it can produce the false impression that the fronted verb always appears in the first position in the clause.



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

By choosing the compound past and the most grammaticalized form of the future, we have decided to treat only the simplest and the most frequent inversions. The auxiliary of the conditional is rarely encliticized in the 16th century (*ai vedea* AUX.COND.2SG see.INF / *vedeare-ai* see.INF AUX.COND.2SG 'you would see'; more details in Zamfir 2007: 364-366), as are the auxiliaries of the multiple auxiliary forms (*au fost dat* have.3SG=PL been done/ *fost-au dat* been have.3SG=PL done, cf. Zamfir 2007: 164-165);[10] inversion is not frequent for the other future periphrases, which show a lower degree of grammaticalization (Zamfir 2007: 302-303). In order to capture a well delimited area of the variation, we will not discuss passive inversions (*vindecat fu* cured was.3SG '(he) was cured', $CC^2$.267) or the pronominal clitic position with respect to simple or compound verbal form, even if they show similar patterns (*bucură-se* enjoys-SE '(he) enjoys', $CC^2$.395, *făcutu-l-au* made-CL.DAT.3SG=have.3SG≡PL '(they) have made it', $CC^2$.412, *deşchide-le-se-va* open.INF=CL.DAT.3PL=SE=will '(it) will be opened to them', $CC^2$.429).

The two constructions under scrutiny seem to have a very similar, perhaps identical distribution in the texts. The variation was at its peak in the 16th century, gradually declining; in present-day Romanian, the encliticized auxiliary is restricted to conditional greetings or imprecations, the other occurrencies being obsolete (Zafiu 2013: 42).

Unfortunately, in the few texts of the 16th century (consisting mostly of translations, partially heterogeneous from a linguistic point of view), the phenomenon is not equally distributed.[11] Therefore, our investigation will focus on two representative texts, which allow for relevant statistical verifications: the full corpus of original 'non-literary' documents (mainly letters and juridical acts) of the 16th century (DÎ) and the most extensive collection of sermons of the century, a translated text, but one that is written in a very fluent and homogenous language ($CC^2$). References to other texts from our extensive corpus will be made when necessary.

It is possible that the alternation between fronting and non-fronting cannot be explained by a unique rule or principle; however, we believe that it depends on certain syntactic and pragmatic restrictions and that it reveals certain regularities. In what follows, we will try to approximate an important factor of regularity: the main vs. subordinated nature of the context.

## 2. Historical data and theoretical explanations

The two relevant structures are the compound past in (1) and the 'will'-future in (2).

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | au | venit | vs. | venit-au |
| | have.3SG=PL | come.PPART | | come.PPART-have.3SG=PL |
| | '(he) has came / came' | | | |
| (2) | va | veni | vs. | veni-va |
| | will.3SG | come.INF | | come INF-will.3SG |
| | '(he) will come' | | | |

[10] Dragomirescu's quantitative investigation reveals that the conditional inversion is absent from many texts and very rare in the others; only the compound past and the 'will'-future provide significant data (Dragomirescu 2013: 230-231).

[11] For instance, there are non "inversions" in Prav. 1581 (Rizescu 1971: 84), but they are very frequent in PS and $CP^1$ (Zamfir 2007: 302).



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

Both are already grammaticalized in the 16th century, the period from which the earliest attested texts of Romanian are preserved. Even if the future is in competition with other patterns, the periphrasis formed by the verb 'will' and the infinitive of the main verb is the most frequent and stable[12], and therefore 'will' can be considered an auxiliary.

## 2.1. Statitistics

Auxiliary placement is a striking feature which was obviously reported by the philological studies and historical grammars of Romanian (Densusianu 1975 [1901–1938], Rosetti 1978, etc.). For instance, Densusianu notices the frequency of the forms and the variation of the two orders (Auxiliary-Verb, Verb-Auxiliary) in the same context.[13] In most cases, the description has not been followed by any explanation; most probably because the phenomenon was interpreted as the preservation of a Latin particularity (Meyer-Lübke 1900: 806).

A recent statistical investigation conducted by Dragomirescu (2013)[14] shows that the proportion of variation was largely in favour of the *Auxiliary-Participle/Infinitive* order, both in original texts (DÎ, T XVI) and in translations (PO):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| in DÎ | Aux-Part: 629 | Part-Aux 72 |
| | Aux-Inf: 247 | Inf-Aux 18 |
| in T XVI | Aux-Part: 126 | Part-Aux 27 |
| | Aux-Inf: 297 | Inf-Aux 27 |
| in PO | Aux-Part: 621 | Part-Aux: 31 |
| | Aux-Inf: 822 | Inf-Aux:163 |
| in CL | Aux-Part: 6 | Part-Aux: 11 |
| | Aux-Inf: 34 | Inf-Aux: 5 |
| Total: | Aux-Part: 1382 | Part-Aux: 141 |
| | Aux-Inf: 1400 | Inf-Aux: 213 |

The quantitative study does not confirm certain previous allegations about the high frequency of the inversions;[15] the contrast with the present-day word order renders the presence of the inversions more striking, but in fact the percentage is rather low (about 10%), even in the attested period of the major spread (see also Zamfir 2007: 302).

## 2.2. Cross-linguistic context

Auxiliary postposition was present in Latin (Meyer-Lübke 1900: 806) and was preserved in early stages of many Romance languages; for example, this accounts for the

[12] For the anteriority of the future formed with 'will' and the infinitive, see Caragiu-Marioţeanu (1969: 268). For the other future periphrases, see Zamfir (2007: 219-248).

[13] He mentions "la postposition fréquente de l'auxiliaire"; "il arrive très souvent que cette construction se croise dans une même phrase avec celle où l'auxiliaire précède l'infinitif ou le participe passé" (Densusianu 1975: 726). Cf. also Guţu Romalo (1968: 430) for the future forms, Costinescu (1981: 147-148).

[14] We have completely omitted from the results in Dragomirescu (2013) the low percentage of dislocated (Aux...Inf and Aux... Part) forms. The main figures are confirmed by Pană (2013).

[15] For example, Densusianu (1975: 564): "L'auxiliaire (placé la plupart du temps après le participe passé)"; see also Rosetti (1978: 564), who mentions in passing that the auxiliary of the future is "generally postponed" ("De obicei, formele auxiliarului sînt postpuse verbului").



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

grammaticalization of the auxiliary enclitic forms, which became verbal endings for the future and conditional in French or Italian.

In Slavic languages in general and in Old Church Slavonic in particular, auxiliary postposition was very well represented, both for the present perfect and for the periphrastic future. The present perfect, which was made up of the resultative *l*-participle and the present tense of the auxiliary 'be' (Migdalski 2006: 20-23), often occurred in the "inverted" structure, displaying auxiliary encliticization. The same form of variation occurred for the periphrastic future, made up of an infinitival form of the main verb and 'want' in the present, a form not fully grammaticalized (Vrabie 1975: 134, Lunt 2001: 154, Migdalski 2006: 23). It is important to notice that the components of the two tenses are the same as in (Old and Modern) Romanian. Phrase-initially, the participle precedes the auxiliary; "phrase-internally, word order is free" (Huntley 1993).

Pancheva (2008) makes a quantitative study of the Part-Aux order in Old Church Slavonic, by using biblical translations which were not influenced by Greek (where Aorist was the prevailing form). Her final statistics show a well-balanced proportion: the Aux-Part order is only slightly higher than the Part-Aux order: 59% vs. 41 %. Pancheva mentions that the proportion is radically changed in Modern Bulgarian, where the Aux-Part order is dominant: 97% vs. 3%. The quantitative data leads to a correction of some traditional descriptions of Old Church Slavonic. These seemed to privilege the Part-Aux order, which was considered "normal", even if they were in competition with the Aux-Part order (especially in relative clauses) (Vrabie 1975: 131).

Historical data suggest that the postposition of the auxiliary in Old Romanian could be explained as the convergence between an inherited possibility and the result of language contact (Sandfeld 1930: 149-150). In many other cases, the Slavic influence determined the conservation of some inherited characteristics of Romanian, simply because the Slavic pattern was similar to the Latin one.[16] The direct contact with South-Slavic languages and the cultural influence of the Old Church Slavonic probably reinforced the Latin pattern of auxiliary encliticization, determining its longer preservation.

## 2.3. Current analyses

Participle/infinitive fronting was traditionally described as a type of stylistic inversion, often in the form of a chiasmus (Drăganu 1914: 134-135, Frâncu 1997: 172).[17] Inversion was subsequently explained as a manifestation of Wackernagel's law (Wackernagel 1892), which prevented clitic placement in the sentence-initial position (Frâncu 2009: 113, 123). More precisely, the Tobler – Mussafia law (Tobler 1875/1912, Mussafia 1888; see also Hirschbühler & Labelle. 2000) was invoked, as it was considered to be more appropriate in the description of the early stage of the Romance languages. In many articles, Rivero (1991, 1993, 1994, etc.) explained, in a generative framework, the phenomenon of participle/infinitive preverbal placement, under the formula *long head movement* (LHM); she mentioned the 'residual' inversions in present-day Romanian. For Rivero (1994; 86), "present Rumanian differs from

[16] The idea is expressed by Sandfeld (1930: 147, 150), in connection with the Romanian vocative forms, the reflexive construction, etc.; the same position about the vocative is expressed in Niculescu (1965: 26-29).
[17] Stylistic inversion is not necessarily a literary pattern. Present-day Romanian uses a particular chiasmus for emphasis in swearing: *Ducă-se să se ducă!* 'go.SUBJ.3=CL.REFL SUBJ CL.REFL go.SUBJ.3' /'He can go to hell'.



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

Slavic and Old Romance in that LHM is optional"; "Rumanian does not have full LHM, which gives it an unclear status typologically".

Recently, Alboiu & Hill (2012) verified the validity of the main previous hypotheses and concluded, on the basis of a 17th-18th-century Romanian corpus, that an influence of Wackernagel's law cannot be proved (nor the possibilities of treating Romanian as a V1 or V2 language); instead, they state that the inversions are basically focalization strategies.[18]

## 3. Restrictions on variation

We will take into account three situations of variation in auxiliary placement in 16th-century Romanian. The auxiliary can be: (a) obligatorily encliticized (3.1); (b) obligatorily pre-verbal (3.2); (c) in free variation (3.3).

The only situation in which the auxiliary is obligatorily encliticized is when the verb occupies the first position in the sentence. Encliticization is frequent in main clauses with topicalizations and focalizations and as the first member of a coordinated structure.

### 3.1. Obligatory main verb-AUX

The *clause-initial* position of the verb entails the encliticization of the auxiliary and of the pronominal clitics. The rule is applied in original texts, as well as in translations:

(3) Pusu-ne-am şi degetele mai jos (DÎ.V.1576)
put.PART=CL.REFL.ACC.1PL=have.AUX.1PL also fingers.DEF more low
'We also put our fingers below'

(4) Scris-am eu, Ion (DÎ.VIIIb.1592)
written=have.AUX I Ion
'I, John, wrote this'

(5) Adusu-o-au Stoica (DÎ.XXXVI.1600)
bring.PART=CL.ACC.F.3SG=have.3SG Stoica
'Stoica brought her'

(6) Grăi ei Isus: "Învie-va fratele tău" (CC$^2$.98)
said CL.DAT.F.3SG Jesus resurrect.INF=will brother.DEF your
'Jesus said to her, «Your brother will rise again»'

(7) "Aduna-voiu[19]", zise, "acolo grâul mieu şi bunătatea mea" (CC$^2$.449)
store.INF=will.1SG said.3SG there grain.DEF my and goodness.DEF my
'there I will store all my grain and my goods he said'

[18] "What E[arly] M[odern] R[omanian] has is encliticization on verbs, arising from syntactic triggers. We identified these triggers as being the focus feature with operator properties, encoded high in the left periphery of clauses which, in certain contexts, trigger verb movement above the location for clitics" (Alboiu & Hill 2012: 25).

[19] The forms of the lexical verb (which are identical with the auxiliary) can appear at the beginning of the sentence: *Voiu să văz* 'I want to see' (CC2.493).



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

The rule, even if strictly applied[20], is not relevant for explaining the presence of inversion, because the verb initial position is extremely rare in texts, the large majority of the auxiliary encliticizations occurring in other contexts.

Out of a total of 694 occurrences of the Inf-Aux structure in CC[2], only 24 are in absolute initial position (3,46%). We included in the class of verb-initial contexts verbs which appear in direct speech after a vocative or in contaminated constructions introduced by the conjunction of the reported speech, as in (8).

(8) amu zice **că** "striga-vor cătră mine (...)"[21] (CC[2].382)
so says that shout.INF=will towards me
'so he says that «they will shout towards me (...)»'

In determining the initial position, there is a controversy about the additive coordination marker *şi* (Alboiu & Hill 2012); due to its adverbial nature (indicated by its presence in correlatives, *şi... şi,* and by its use as a discourse connector), we prefer to treat it as a cause-internal "full" element. Therefore, the verb is not in first position after *şi* (see also Croitor in this volume, and infra, 3.3.2).

3.2. Obligatory AUX-main verb

Auxiliary postposition is generally blocked by negation (Avram 1999: 98; cf. Rivero 1991). There is no example of negative marker followed by an auxiliary inversion in DÎ and CC[2]. However, we can identify the structure in another text (*Codicele Bratu*):

(9) **Nu lăsa-se-va** sufletul lui în Iad (CB.22)
not let.INF-CL.ACC.3SG-AUX.3SG soul.det his in Hades
'His soul will not be abandoned to Hades'

It is in the same text where Alboiu & Hill (2012: 16) found examples of postverbal pronominal clitics: *nu ciudireţi-vă* 'don't wonder' (CB.356); also: *să nu împarţă-se* 'don't separate' (CB.6); in other 16th-century translations, the order of their equivalent forms is the regular one: *nu vă mirareţi* 'don't marvel' (CPr), *să nu vă despărţiţi* (CPr) 'don't separate'.

*Codex Bratul* has the particularity of being a literal translation, using the didactic pattern of the alternation between fragments in Slavonic and their Romanian translation. The anomalous particularity is very likely to be a simple imitation of the Slavic word order.[22]

Pancheva (2008: 327) shows that in Old Church Slavonian "Neg-Part-Aux orders are attested, in contrast to the modern languages", cf. Willis (2000: 327-328):[23]

[20] The only apparent exception, in CC[2]: 441 is probably the result of a syntactic misinterpretation. The text should be segmented in a different manner (which better corresponds to the specific marks in the original Cyrillic text and to the Biblical text): instead of *am adaus cătr-înşii. Va zice Domnul* 'I added to their benefit. God will say...' we propose the interpretation: *am adaus. Cătr-înşii va zice Domnul (...)* 'I added. Towards them will God speak...'

[21] The quotation marks are certainly introduced by the editor, but they correctly signal the hybrid construction of the "bound direct speech".

[22] Example (9) translates a Slavonic fragment that displays the order *Negation-Verb-Reflexive Clitic*.



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

(10) ne **moglъ** bi tvoriti ničesože
no can.PART be.AUX do.INF nothing
'he couldn't do anything' (example from *Codex Marianus*, apud Pancheva 2008)

Therefore, we assume that the examples in *Codex Bratul* do not contradict the validity of the generalization that restricts auxiliary inversion to affirmative sentences (stated for modern Romanian and Bulgarian by Rivero 1994: 92).

3.3. Free variation

"Free variation" is possible only in main clauses; in subordinate clauses, we can find many situations in which auxiliary encliticization, even if not excluded, is in fact very rare.

The auxiliary is frequently encliticized in main clauses, when the first position is occupied by another constituent (11-16) as an effect of topicalization or focalization. The fronted constituent can be an argument – a direct object (examples 11-13), the subject of an existential construction (14), etc. – or an adjunct (15, 16).

(11) *Pocaianie* **dăruit**-au lor (CC$^2$, 13)
repentance given=have they.DAT
'He gave to them repentance'

(12) *Aceasta moşia* vândut-am noi de bunăvoia noastră (DÎ, XIII, 1595–1596)
this land.DEF sold=have we by willingness our
'We willingly sold this land'

(13) *Păharul amu ce eu am a bea,* bea-l-**veţi**, şi *cu botejunea*
cup.DEF so which I have to drink, drink=CL.ACC.3SG=will and with baptism.DEF
*ce eu m-am botezat,* botezatu-v-**aţi**. (CC$^2$.88)
which I CL.REFL.ACC.1SG=have baptized baptized=CL.REFL.ACC.2PL=have
'The cup that I must drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized'

(14) *Bucurie* fi=va la ceriu de om păcătos ce se pocăiaşte! (CC$^2$.VI).
joy be-will at heaven of man sinner who repents
'There will be joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents!'

(15) *Însă nu aşa prost* dat-au noao împărţirea darurilor (CC$^2$.95)
but not so trivial given=have us.DAT distribution.DEF gifts.GEN
'But he gave us the gifts in not a trivial way'

(16) *Şi într-aceaea Mihaiu vodă* luat-au steagul de la turci (DÎ, XVIII*, [1599])
and in-that Michael prince taken=have flag.DEF from Turks
'And then Prince Michael took the flag from the Turks'

[23] Lunt (2001: 160) notices that the reflexive clitic **sę** immediately follows the verb, even when it is in the negative form (*ne divi sę* "do not be surprised"); however, he considers that in this case **sę** behaves "more like a particle".



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

It is possible to have more constituents preceding the verb, as in (17-18).

(17) *Atunce derepţii* lumina-se-vor ca soarele, iară *păcătoşii*
then righteous.DEF shine=se=will like sun.DEF and/while sinners.DEF
*supt soare cu ce-au luat* chinui-se-vor (CC2.602)
under sun.DEF with what=have taken torment=SE=will
'Then *he righteous will* shine *like the sun, and the sinners will be tormented under the sun with what they have taken'*

(18) *Domnul Dumnezeu, tot-ţiitoriul, în multe chipuri de scripturi şi de învăţături*
Lord God almighty in many kinds of scriptures and of teachings
dat-au oamenilor săi: *întâi lu Moisi proroc leagea veache iudeilor*
given=have people.DEF.DAT his first to Moses prophet law.DEF old jews.GEN.DEF
dat-au; *iară noao, creştinilor, Hristos, mântuitoriul nostru, a sa*
given=have and us.DAT Christians.DAT.DEF Christ saviour our A his
*bunăvestire, sfânta evanghelie*, datu-o-au a patru evanghelisti:
good-news holy.DEF gospel given=CL.F.SG.ACC=have A four evangelists
lu Matei, lu Marco, Lucăei şi lu Ioan (CC$^2$.II)
of Matthew of Mark Luke.GEN and of John
'God Almighty transmitted to his people many kinds of scriptures and knowledge: first he gave to the prophet Moses the old law of the Jews; and to us, the Christians, Christ our Saviour gave the good news, the holy gospel of four evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John'

On the other hand, inversion does not seem to be compulsory when the verbal form is preceded by a topicalized/focalized constituent:

(19) Şi *cu ranele lui noi toţi* ne-am vindecat (CC$^2$.II)
and with wounds.DEF his we all CL.REFL.ACC.1PL=have healed
'and by his wounds we all are healed'

Variation exists in the same context, at a small distance:

(20) a. La sfârşit voiu **grăi** limbilor (CC$^2$.234)
at end will.1SG speak nations.DAT.DEF
b. La sfârşit **grăi**-voiu spre limbi (CC$^2$.234)
at end speak=will.1SG towards nations
'At the end I will speak to the nations'

The large majority of the encliticized auxiliaries illustrate this situation. The rate of 96,54% cases in which the verb is not placed initially includes also the clauses where the first position is occupied by a conjunction, a discourse connector, a negator, a relative or an adverbial clause.

In coordinated main clauses, auxiliary postposition is very frequent, especially in the first clause:



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

(21) Aşa şi noi, de ne *văm smeri*, **înălţa-ne-văm şi**
so also us if CL.REFL.1PL will humble raise=CL.REFL.1PL=will and
ne **văm spăsi** (CC$^2$.95)
CL.REFL.1PL will save
'The same for us, if we humble ourselves, we will be *raising* up and we will be saved'

(22) iară ale meale năravure urâtu-le-**aţi şi** le-**aţi lepădat** (CS XIV, 112r)
and my bad habits hated=CL.3PL=have and CL.3.PL=have condemned
'and you hated my bad habits and you condemned them'

(23) Toţi amu învie-i-va Dumnezeu într-aceaia zi fricoşată
all so resurrect=CL.3PL=will God in-that day terrible
**şi**-i va aduna (CC$^2$.29)
and=CL.3PL will gather
'God will *resurrect* everyone that terrible day and he will gather them'

Croitor (this volume) describes the most frequent pattern of "asymmetrical coordination", [verb + (+clitic) auxiliary] *şi* [(clitic +) auxiliary + verb], and accounts for it by a interacting factors: a secondary phase of Tobler-Mussafia law, a focalization strategy and stylistic reasons (chiasmus).

Less frequently, coordination can display also "symmetrical patterns": verb + auxiliary (24) or auxiliary + verb (25) in both (or more) clauses:

(24) când scaunele se vor pune şi cărţile se vor **deşchide** şi judecătoriul
when thrones.DEF SE will set and books.DEF SE will open and judge.DEF
nefăţarnic va **şedea** (CC2.27)
honest will stay
'when the thrones will be set and the books will be opened and the honest judge will stay'

(25) atâta amu mai vârtos împlea-se-va şi limpezi-se-va şi de destul
so therefore more fill=SE=will and clear=SE=will and enough
**vărsa**-se-va şi nesfârşit pururea fi-va şi nescăzut (CC2.108)
flow=SE=will and endlessly forever be=will and non reduced
'so it will fill more, and it will become clearer and it will flow enough and it will be forever and will never decrease'

The coordination between a first clause with Aux-Part/Inf order and a second clause with Part/Inf-Aux order, as in (26), is extremely rare. This form of variation is present in the coordinations with more than two members, in which the chiasmus segments and ranks parts of the sentence (27):

(26) cu o sută de ori va priimi şi viaţa de veac dobândi-va (CC$^2$.220)
with one hundred of times will receive and life.DEF of eternity obtain=will
'he will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life'



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

(27) Atunce ceriul va peri, şi lumea toată aprinde-se-va **şi** se va topi ($CC^2$. 27)
then heaven will perish and world.DEF all catch-fire=SE=will and SE will melt
'Then heaven will perish, and the world will catch fire and melt'

The predominant pattern may be residual (in a strictly Tobler-Mussafia phase, the conjunction occupied the first position in the second clause, and the Verb-Aux order was not necessary) or it may suggest that coordination is in fact similar to subordination. The clause introduced by *şi* behaves in some respects like a subordinated clause.

## 4. Inversion and subordination

Auxiliary encliticization was described by Rivero (1994) (under the label LHM) as a root-phenomenon. The restriction of the phenomenon to main clauses is perfectly true for the present-day Romanian; but in the 16th-century language we can notice some differences. The Part/Inf-Aux order may also appear in subordinated/embedded clauses, but these cases are very rare. Moreover, the subordinated clauses which admit auxiliary encliticization correspond to the 'weak' type of subordination proposed by Haegeman (2012).

Notice the result of a limited quantitative study in CC2: we have looked at the distribution of the forms *voi(u)* (1sg), *veri* (2sg), *veţi* (2pl), representing approximately 20% of the occurrences of the future auxiliary in the text. The frequency of future auxiliary encliticization is higher than the average of the period (see *supra*, 2.1).

Total: 405 Aux-Inf: 282 (69,63%) Inf-Aux 123 (30,37%)

| | Aux-Inf | Inf-Aux |
|---|---|---|
| in main clauses: | 146 | 117 |
| in subordinate clauses: | 126 | 6 |

### 4.1. Relative clauses

In general, the auxiliary is not encliticized in relative clauses. This ban is almost general in DÎ and $CC^2$, but less regular in other 16th-century texts. The main clause may present inversion (28-33) or not (34); in the first situation, the result is a chiasmus.

(28) carei **vor căuta afla**-vor (...), şi cine ce va ceare
who will seek find=will.3PL and who what will ask
da-i-se-va ($CC^2$, V [introduction])
given=CL.DAT.SG=SE=will
'they who will seek will find (...) and who will ask will receive what they ask for'

(29) e cine se va pleca de sine **înălţa**-se-va ($CC^2$, 1)
and who SE will humble of himself exalt=SE=will
'and whoever will humble himself will be exalted'



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

(30) ce-am fost datori să facem, **făcut**-am (CC$^2$, 10)
what=have been compelled SĂ do.SUBJ.PRES.1.PL done=have
'what we had to do, we did'

(31) cine-au **văzut** amu fiiul, **văzut**-au părintele (CC$^2$.201)
who=have seen therefore son.DEF seen=have father.DEF
'they who saw the son, saw the father'

(32) după dusul mieu întra-voru lupi grei întru voi, cei ce
after departure.DEF my enter=will wolves fierce among you these that
nu vor **cruţa** turrma (CV.11r)
not will spare flock.DEF
'after my departure fierce wolves will enter among you, not sparing the flock'

(33) Iară ce **va grăi, scrie** şi faci pentru nevoia noastră giupânul Bruni,
and what will say write and do for necessity our master Bruni
noi **ţine**-vom (DÎ, XCII, 1593)
we obey=will
'and what master Bruni will say, write and do for our necessity, we will obey'

(34) ce vor vrea să caute, ei vor afla (CC$^2$.VIII)
what will want SĂ seek they will find
'what they will want to search, they will find'

And again, some exceptions appear in CB:

(35) cela ce fost-au purtătoriu (CB.10)
that who been=have guide
'that who became a guide'

(36) Nu putem amu noi ce **văzut**-am şi ce auzit-am a nu grăi (CB.40)
not can therefore we what seen=have and what heard=have to not speak
'for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard'

CB remains an example of literal translation, whereas the few exceptions we find in CC$^2$ are revealing. They display a type of auxiliary encliticization which seems to be provoked by the same focalizations/topicalizations as in the main clauses:

(37) Cine *amu* *împreună cu viaţa* *aceasta* iubit-au dulceaţa (CC2.412)
who therefore together with life.DEF this loved-have pleasure.DEF
'who loved the pleasure that accompanies the life'

This suggests that the low rate of inversions depends on the limited use of focalizations in subordinate clauses.



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

4.2. Conditionals

Inversion is regularly avoided in the protasis of the conditional period. Very few of the inversions in $CC^2$ occur in that context, in a conditional clause introduced by the conjunctions *de* or *să*. By contrast, the apodosis often displays the inversion, whether the verb is placed initially in it (38-41) or not (42-43):[24]

(38) de veri creade, vedea-veri slava lu Dumnezeu ($CC^2$, 99)
if will.2SG believe see=will.2.SG glory.DEF of God
'if you believe, you will see the glory of God'

(39) de **văm lăsa** oamenilor greşalele lor, **lăsa**-va şi noao
if will.1PL forgive people.DAT.DEF trespasses.DEF their forgive=will.3SG also we.DAT
greşalele noastre părintele nostru den ceriu ($CC^2$.40)
trespasses.DEF our father our from heaven
'if we forgive others their trespasses, our heavenly Father will also forgive us'

(40) Să **veţi lăsa** oamenilor greşalele lor, **lăsa**-va şi voao
if will.2PL forgive people.DAT.DEF trespasses.DEF their forgive=will.3SG also you.DAT
tatăl vostru den ceriu greşalele voastre ($CC^2$.40)
father your from heaven trespasses.DEF your
*'if* you *forgive* the trespasses of others, your heavenly *Father will* also forgive you'

(41) să **văm ţinea** pizmă spre fraţii noştri, **ţinea**-va şi
if will.1.PL hold grudge against brothers. DEF our hold=will.3SG also
Dumnezeu spre noi ($CC^2$.42)
Got against us
'if we hold grudges against our brothers, God will hold grudges against us'

(42) De **veţi asculta** pre mine, dulceaţa pământului mânca-**veţi**! ($CC^2$.65)
if will.2.PL obey me sweetness.DEF land.GEN.DEF eat=will.2PL
'If you will obey me, you will eat the good of the land'

(43) E să **văm da** vas mic, puţinea bunătate priimi-**văm** ($CC^2$.351)
and if will.1PL give pot small little goodness get=will.1PL
'And if we provide a small pot, we will get little good'

However, auxiliary encliticization is not compulsory for the apodosis which contains the future:

(44) Iară de **văm lăsa**, el **va lăsa** şi noao (CC2.42).
and if will.1PL forgive he will forgive also us.DAT
'And if we forgive, he will also forgive us'

[24] The examples display only future inversion, because the past tense does not appear in the conditional period. The symmetrical construction with future both in protasis and apodosis is frequent, even if there are many other possibilities (other types of future, conjunctive, imperative, etc.).



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

The temporal clause preceding the main clause has a similar structure, where it is possible to find, beside future inversion, inversion in the compound past:[25]

(45) Eu când mă voiu întoarce, **plăti**-ţ-voiu (CC2.443)
I when CL.REFL.1SG will return pay=you.DAT=will.1SG
'When I came back, I will pay you'

(46) Şi cându se-au **făcut** acesta zapis fost-au mulţi oameni
and when SE=have done this document been=have many persons
buni dimprejurul locului (DÎ, XII, 1595–1596)
good around place.GEN.DEF
'And when the deal was sealed, there were a lot of honest people from around'

The conditional concessives and the unconditionals may display the same pattern, but the examples which contain the future tense or the compound perfect in both clauses are rare; in (47), the compound perfect in the subordinate clause corresponds to a future in the main clause:

(47) să va **şi muri**, viu va fi (CC$^2$.102)
if will even die alive will be
'even though he dies, he will be alive'

(48) Şi s-ai dobândit, să n-ai dobândit, fi-va amu aorea
even if=have.2SG got if not=have got be=will.3.SG sometimes
bine (CC$^2$.356)
fine
'even though you got it or not, it will be fine sometimes'

In all these situations, the main clause may display either the order Part/Inf-Aux or (less frequently) Aux-Part/Inf.

Other regularities, too complex to be dealt with here, concern interrogatives (yes-no vs. partial questions) and reported speech.

We hypothesize that the syntactic pattern of inversion changed its primary function (dependent on the Tobler-Mussafia law), becoming not only a focalization means, but also an additional subordination or correlation marker, almost specialized for some type of constructions (*if*-clauses, free relatives, coordination, etc.).

Moreover, encliticization may indicate the presence of some relevant differences between various types of embedded clauses or between various types of connectors in 16$^{th}$ century Romanian.

[25] Exceptions are on p. 419, 512.



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

## 5. Conclusions

The corpus study demonstrates that in the 16th century the auxiliary encliticization is blocked by the negation, and it is enforced by the sentence initial verb. It appears very rarely in subordinate clauses, and frequently in main clauses when another constituent is fronted. The alternation between preverbal and postverbal auxiliary, in the chiasmus-type construction, can be interpreted as a marker of correlation/solidarity between syntactic blocks.

## Sources


CB 1559-1560 Alexandru Gafton (ed.). 2003. *Codicele popii Bratul.* Iaşi: Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza". http://media.lit.uaic.ro/gafton.

CC[1].1567–8 Coresi, *Tâlcul Evangheliilor*. In Vladimir Drimba (ed.), 1998, Coresi, *Tâlcul evangheliilor şi molitvenic românesc*, 31-187. Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române.

CC[2] 1581 Sextil Puşcariu & Alexie Procopovici (eds.). 1914. Diaconul Coresi, *Carte cu învăţătură*. Bucureşti: Atelierele Grafice Socec & Co.

CL 1570 Alexandru Mareş (ed.). 1969. *Liturghierul lui Coresi*. Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R.1969.

CP[1] 1577 Stela Toma (ed.). 1976. Coresi, *Psaltirea slavo-română (1577) în comparaţie cu psaltirile coresiene din 1570 şi din 1589*. Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R.

CPr 1566-1567 Ioan Bianu (ed.). 1930. *Lucrul apostolesc tipărit de diaconul Coresi.* Bucureşti: Cultura Naţională.

CS 1580-1619 Gheorghe Chivu (ed.). 1993. *Codex Studzanus*. Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române.

CV 1563-1583 Mariana Costinescu (ed.). 1981. *Codicele Voroneţean.* Bucureşti: Minerva.

DÎ 1521-1600 Gheorghe Chivu, Magdalena Georgescu, Magdalena Ioniţă, Alexandru Mareş & Alexandra Roman-Moraru. 1979. *Documente şi însemnări româneşti din secolul al XVI-lea.* Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române.

PO 1582 Viorica Pamfil (ed.). 1968. *Palia de la Orăştie (1581-1582).* Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R.

Prav. 1581 I. Rizescu (ed.). 1971. *Pravila ritorului Lucaci*. Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R.

PS 1573–1578 Ioan-Aurel Candrea (ed.). 1916. *Psaltirea Scheiană comparată cu celelalte psaltiri din secolele al XVI-lea şi al XVII-lea*. Bucureşti: Atelierele Grafice Socec & Co.

T XVI 1560-1582 Emanuela Buză, Gheorghe Chivu, Magdalena Georgescu, Ion Gheţie, Alexandra Roman-Moraru & Florentina Zgraon (eds.). 1982. *Texte româneşti din secolul al XVI-lea*. Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R.


## References


Alboiu, Gabriela & Virginia Hill. 2012. Early Modern Romanian and Wackernagel's law. *SKY Journal of Linguistics* 25. 7-28




BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

Avram, Larisa. 1999. *Auxiliaries and the structure of language*. Bucureşti: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti.
Caragiu-Marioţeanu, Matilda. 1969. Verbul. In Alexandru Rosetti, Boris Cazacu, Ion Coteanu (eds.), *Istoria limbii române*, II, 254-279. Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R.
Costinescu, Mariana. 1981. Studiu lingvistic. In *Codicele Voroneţean*, edited by Mariana Costinescu, 89-213. Bucureşti: Minerva.
Croitor, Blanca. 2014. Asymmetric coordination in Old Romanian. (this volume)
Densusianu, Ovid. 1975 [1901–1938]. *Opere*, II, *Histoire de la langue roumaine*, ed. by Boris Cazacu, Valeriu Rusu & Ioan Şerb. Bucureşti: Minerva.
Dimitrescu, Florica (ed.). 1978. *Istoria limbii române.* Bucureşti: Editura didactică şi pedagogică.
Dragomirescu, Adina. 2013. O schimbare parametrică de la româna veche la româna modernă în sintaxa formelor verbale compuse cu auxiliar. *Limba Română* 62(2). 225-239.
Drăganu, Nicolae. 1914. *Două manuscripte vechi: Codicele Todorescu şi Codicele Martian. Studiu şi transcriere.* Bucureşti, Leipzig & Viena: Socec & Sfetea, Otto Harrassowitz & Gerold.
Frâncu, Constantin. 1997. Sintaxa. In Ion Gheţie (ed.), *Istoria limbii române literare. Epoca veche (1532-1780),* 147-174, 347-376. Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române.
Frâncu, Constantin. 2009. *Gramatica limbii române vechi (1521-1780).* Iaşi: Demiurg.
Guţu Romalo, Valeria. 1968. Le futur en roumain aux XVIe-XVIIIe siècles. *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique* 13(5). 427-431.
Haegeman, Liliane. 2012. *Adverbial clauses, main clause phenomena, and composition of the Left Periphery.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hirschbühler, Paul & Marie Labelle. 2000. Evolving Tobler-Mussafia effects in the placement of French clitics. In Steven N. Dworkin & Dieter Wanner (eds.), *New approaches to old problems, Selected Papers from the LSRL XXIX Parasession.* 165-182. John Benjamins: Amsterdam.
Huntley, David. 1993. Old Church Slavonic. In: Bernard Comrie &, Greville G. Corbett (eds.), *The Slavonic languages*, 125-188. London - New York: Routledge.
Lunt, Horace G. 2001. *Old Church Slavonic grammar*, 7th revised edn. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
Meyer-Lübke, Wilhelm. 1900. *Grammaire des langues romanes*, III. Paris: Welter.
Migdalski, Krzysztof. 2006. *The syntax of compound tenses in Slavic*. Utrecht: LOT.
Mussafia, Alfredo. 1888. Enclisi o proclisi del pronome personale atono quale oggeto. *Romania* 27. 145-146.
Niculescu, Alexandru. 1965. *Individualitatea limbii române între limbile romanice. Contribuţii gramaticale*. Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifică.
Pană, Cristina Nicoleta. 2013. *Particularităţi sintactice ale topicii verbelor auxiliare din limba română veche.* Master's thesis, Universitatea din Bucureşti.
Pancheva, Roumyana. 2008. Head-Directionality of TP in Old Church Slavonic. In Andrei Antonenko, John F. Bailyn, Christina Y. Bethin (eds.), *Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics 16: The Stony Brook Meeting, 2007*. 313-332. Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications.
Rivero, María-Luisa. 1991. Long head movement and negation: Serbo-Croatian vs. Slovak and Czech. *The Linguistic Review* 8(2-4). 319-351.



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)

Rivero, María-Luisa. 1993. Long Head Movement vs. V2, and null subjects in Old Romance. *Lingua* 89. 217-245.
Rivero, María-Luisa. 1994. Clause structure and V-movement in the languages of the Balkans. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 12. 63-120.
Rizescu, I. 1971. Studiu de limbă. In *Pravila ritorului Lucaci*, edited by I. Rizescu, 35-155. Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R.
Rosetti, Alexandru. 1978. *Istoria limbii române. De la origini pînă în secolul al XVII-lea*, second edition. Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică.
Sandfeld, Kristian. 1930. *Linguistique balkanique. Problèmes et résultats.* Paris: Champion.
Tobler, Adolf (1875/1912) *Vermischte Beiträge zur französischen Grammatik*. Erste bis fünfte Reihe. Leipzig: S. Hirzel.
Vrabie, Emil. 1975. Verbul. In Pandele Olteanu (ed.), *Slava veche şi slavona românească,* 106-148. Bucureşti: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică.
Wackernagel, Jacob. 1892. Über ein Gesetz der indogermanischen Wortstellung. *Indogermanische Forschungen* 1. 333–436.
Willis, David. 2000. Verb movement in Slavonic conditionals. In Susan Pintzuk, George Tsoulas & Anthony Warner, *Diachronic syntax: Models and mechanisms.* 322-348. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Zafiu, Rodica. 2013. Mood, tense, and aspect. In Gabriela Pană Dindelegan (ed.), *The grammar of Romanian,* 24-65. Oxford: Oxford University Pres.
Zamfir, Dana-Mihaela. 2007. *Morfologia verbului în dacoromâna veche (secolele al XVI-lea – al XVII-lea),* II. Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române.



BDD-A20997 © 2014 Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-13 14:56:11 UTC)