1. INTRODUCTION

- Italy today - rich linguistic diversity within a relatively small geographical area (see among very many others (Sorrento 1950; Rohlf's 1969; Benincà 1994; Maiden 1994; Parry & Maiden 1997; Poletto 2000; Poletto 2002; Kayne 2005; Kayne 2000; Kayne 2005; Ledgeway 2000; Ledgeway 2016a; Ledgeway 2016b; Damonte 2005; Damonte 2010; D’Alessandro, Ledgeway & Roberts 2010; Cruschina 2012; Tortora 2013; Benincà, Ledgeway & Vincent 2014; Schifano 2015; Schifano 2018)) among very many others.
- Important points of continuity between the Old Italo–Romance varieties can be merged in a structurally higher position that where they are base-generated (cf. also Manzini & Savoia 2003; 2010 and Damonte 2010 amongst many others).
- Internal mergers and foci may target a rich field of positions in the Topic–Focus field depending on syntactic and pragmatic status (Quer 2002; Frascarelli & Hinterhölzl 2007; Cruschina 2012).
- Increasing body of evidence that declarative verb movement may target a range of head positions in the C-domain (Poletto 2000, 2002; Wolfe 2016; Greco & Haegeman 2020).
- This insight may shed light on the Old Italo–Romance particle si

- ST is derived from Latin sic: “thus, so, like this” and is found across a range of early Romance texts in both Italo–Romance and Gallo-Romance.
- Discussed by a range of linguists and philologists throughout the 20th century (Sorrento 1950: 25–91; Schiaffini 1954: 283–297; Rohlf's 1969: 760), but there is still no uniformly accepted analysis of its function or distribution.
- Almost all linguists working on ST in Italo–Romance or elsewhere have acknowledged that its distribution is linked to other aspects of left-peripheral syntax (Benincà 1995; Ferrari & Goldberg 2002; Poletto 2005; Ledgeway 2008; Wolfe 2018a; Wolfe 2020a; Meklenborg 2020a; Meklenborg 2020b).
- In this talk I’ll suggest that that the articulated mapping of the left periphery as in (1) can shed new light on ST’s function and distribution other aspects of the clausal syntax of the Old Italo–Romance varieties.
- Empirical focus today: Old Sicilian, Old Neapolitan, Old Venetian, and Old Piedmontese.
2. (VERY BRIEF) BACKGROUND

- Sti has amassed a truly enormous literature, but certain analyses are particularly prominent.
- Lots of traditional scholars have focussed in particular on sti’s role after an initial clause such as (2c) where it is analysed as akin to a resumptive pronoun (Schiaffini 1954: 285–97; Rohhls 1969: 760; Caprio 2010).
  - Whilst cases like these account for some of the data (see Tables 1-4 below), it is arguably better to have an account which can also capture the data where sti occurs with an initial clause alongside its other uses, which it includes ability to stand in initial position (3).
  - Recent work has improved our understanding of the syntax of resumptives which occur after constituents classically considered ‘clause-external’ (De Clercq & Haegeman 2018; Meiklenborg 2020a), so a simple classification of sti as an element occurring after initial clauses should not be considered in any way a final analysis.

(3) Si viti molte fontane de diversi colori
si see.1SG.PST many fountains of diverse colours
‘I saw many fountains of different colours’ (Old Venetian, Brendano 232)

- Prominent recent analysis – sti is a phrasal category which can satisfy the V2 constraint, assumed to be operative in all varieties considered here.
- Benincà (2004: sec. 5.3) and Poletto (2005; 2014: 27–33) suggest that sti occupies a position within the Focus layer.
  - Ledgeway (2008: 447): location in Focus jars with the frequent claim that sti has a role in encoding Topic-continuity (see also Fleischman 1990 and Wolfe 2018a on Old French).
  - This proposal would entail sti never co-occurring with focal XPs.
    - Ledgeway (2008: 449–50) shows this is incorrect for Old Neapolitan
    - Wolfe (2018a: 350–54) shows that the prediction also does not hold for Old French.
  - Summary – link between sti and V2 is attractive as sti is lost from the Old Romance varieties at the same time as V2 but its location in the Focus layer is a theoretical and empirical problem.
- A third analysis – Ledgeway (2008) on the basis of Old Neapolitan and also Meiklenborg (2020b) for Old French – sti is not a phrasal category satisfying the part of the V2 constraint requiring movement or merger of a constituent in the left periphery but a head and an alternative to V-to-Fin.
  - True that sti shows many of the properties of a highly grammaticalised element and would thus be a classic case of Spec-to-Head reanalysis (Van Gelderen 2008; Van Gelderen 2009a; Van Gelderen 2009b).
  - But there is an issue – verb-subject inversion structures standardly analysed as reflexes of V-to-C movement (4). Although some of postverbal subjects could feasibly be in a v\-internal position there is a growing body of evidence that a postverbal Spec\-TP position was active in a wide range of early Romance varieties, meaning that the verb has to have been merged in a C-related Head (Salvesen & Bech 2014; Wolfe 2018b: 27–8; Wolfe 2020b).

(4) Et intandu si incunmininzau la bactagla
and then sti begin.3SG.PST the battle
‘And then the battle begun’ (Old Sicilian, Enea VII, 137)

3. THE OLD ITALO-ROMANCE DATA

3.1. Old Neapolitan

- Different task for Old Neapolitan than for the three other varieties examined here.
- Ledgeway (2008; 2009) has already analysed the distribution of sti, so its inclusion here is so that a sample of the Neapolitan data can be analysed in the same way as that for the other varieties included.
- 200 sti-clauses were extracted from the OV1 database from the 14th-century prose text, the Libro de la destruccion de Troya (henceforth Troya). See Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Sti in Old Neapolitan</th>
<th>Sti-Initial</th>
<th>Matrix</th>
<th>Embedded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- By far the most frequent pattern for sti is to be preceded by two or more constituents (5), offering evidence for the rich left-Peripheral structure assumed for Old Neapolitan by Ledgeway (2007; 2008; 2009).
- The second most frequent context for matrix sti is to be preceded by an initial subject as in (6). This is important – co-occurrence of sti with a subject DP is relatively rare in the well-studied (later) Old French system (Fleischman 1991; Wolfe 2018a: 345).

(5) a. In chili tiempi tucto lo puupolo de Thesalia, per una
cruel infirmitate che a loro sopvenevne, si
moirio die.3SG.PST si
in those times all the people of Thesalia died through a cruel illness that befell them
b. Ancora chisto Hercule, secundo che dice la ,
still this Hercules according what say.3SG the
ystoria e se e ey convenevole
history and an INF plausible
tiempo che vippe si se n de
time that live.3SG.PST SI REFCL CL

‘In those times all the people of Thesalia died through a cruel illness that befell them’ (Troya 49)
• ‘Still Hercules, according to what the history says and what is credible, in the time that he lived, went…’ (Troya 41)

(6) Questa citate si era molto bellesema
this city si be.3SG.PST very beautiful
‘This city was very beautiful’ (Troya 55)

• If SI typically encodes Topic-continuity (Benincà 1995: 333; Salvi 2002: 378) or same-subject reference (Fleischman 1991), we might expect it to occur exclusively with null or highly topical subjects. Is this the case?

• As noted by Ledgeway (2008: 443–444), we find cases where a focal subject, which categorically does not encode old information, precedes SI in the corpus:

(7) E multi altri nobili uomini de lo mundo si nce so’
and many other noblemen of the world SI CL be.3PL state venire
be.say.PTCP come.say.PTCP
‘And many other noblemen of the world had come…’ (Troya 59)

• We also find that other argumental XPs such as locative PPs (8) and DP objects (9, 10) can precede SI.
  o Object + SI orders are significant as this pattern is heavily restricted in Old French (Marchello-Nizia 1985: 158).
  o Compare (8) which is already active in the discourse with focal (9, 10, where both DPs refer to constituents not previously mentioned in the text.

(8) Et in chiesta insula de Colcos sì regnava uno re che
and in this island of Colcos SI reign.3SG.PST a king that
se clamava Oetis
say.3SG.PST Oetis
‘And a King named Oetis ruled reign’d in this island of Colcos’ (Troya 50)

(9) et omne thesaur e l’altra cose si nce
and all treasure and the other things SI IND.PTCP levaro
take.3PL.PTCP
‘and they took all the treasure and other things’ (Troya 102)

(10) e terrimoti orribile sì faceva
and earthquakes horrible SI make.3SG.PST
‘and she could bring about terrible earthquakes’ (Troya 56)

• A highly productive pattern across many Medieval Romance varieties is the co-occurrence of a clause or other ‘clause-external’ element before SI.

• Here we see Old Neapolitan SI’s occurrence with an initial clause as well as with scene-setting adverbials (11):

(11) a. E, voltandose ad Hector, sì le diceva
and turn.PROG.REFL.CL to Hector SI him.CL say.3SG.PST
‘And turning to Hector, he said to him…” (Troya 88)

b. allora sì nce regnava questo re Laumedonta
then SI PART.CL reign.3SG.PST this king Laumedonta
‘Then this King Laumedonta reigned’ (Troya 54)

• In contrast to other Medieval Romance varieties where SI is either absent or heavily restricted in embedded contexts (Marchello-Nizia 1985: 15; Lemieux & Dupuis 1995: 96), embedded SI accounts for 18% of the sample (see also the data in Ledgeway 2008: sec. 4.1.2.3):

(12) la quale lo re Priamo sì la consece
that the which the king Priam SI it concede.3SG.PST
‘…which King Priam agreed to’ (Troya 193)

3.2. Old Sicilian

• Old Sicilian – 200 SI-clauses extracted from the Libro de la dialogo di sancta Gregoria (henceforth Gregoria), also a 14th-century prose text.
  o This text has recently been analysed as showing the V2 property (Wolfe 2015; Wolfe 2018b: chap. 3).

• The main findings on the distribution of matrix SI appearing in Wolfe (forthcoming) are in Table 2:

Table 2. SI in Old Sicilian

| St-Initial | 0 | 0% |
| Subject | 72 | 36% |
| DP Object | 5 | 2.5% |
| Prepositional Phrase | 21 | 10.5% |
| Adverb | 7 | 3.5% |
| Adverbial Phrase | 0 | 0% |
| Clause | 9 | 4.5% |
| Si Third or More | 85 | 42.5% |
| **Total** | 200 | 100% |

• There is a degree of continuity with Old Neapolitan:
  o Orders where SI is preceded by multiple left-peripheral constituents are the dominant pattern as in Old Neapolitan:

(13) a. et pir li lacrimsi soy, Deu si avj...
and through the tears his God SI have.3SG
‘And through his tears, God has…’ (Gregoria 35)

b. Lo abbate, audendo o si, lla saluato...
the abbot hear.PROG this SI CL greet.3SG.PST
‘Hearing this, the abbot greeted him…” (Gregoria 15)

• Like Old Neapolitan but unlike Old French, SUBJECT + SI orders are a fully productive pattern in the corpus.
  o But in contrast to Old Neapolitan, all 72 subjects are already discourse-ACTIVE in the sense of Lambrecht (1994).
o See (14) for examples with a demonstrative determiner or a pronominal subject, which is typical of the corpus:

(14) a. chisto **monaco** sì trovao uno grande serpente...
   this *monk* sì *find.3SG.PST* a big *snake*
   Lo serpente sì llo secutao
   the *snake* sì *CL* *follow.3SG.PST*
   ‘This monk found a great snake… The snake followed him’ (Gregoriu 11)

b. et illu sì prise lu cavallu
   and he sì *take.3SG.PST* the horse
   ‘And he took the horse’ (Gregoriu 31)

• Five examples show direct objects preceding sì, but these constituents appear topical rather than focal and refer to an entity already mentioned in the preceding portion of text (15).

• Conclusion – preverbal Information Focus is licensed in Old Sicilian (Cruschina 2011; Wolfe 2018b: chap. 3) but is incompatible with sì.

(15) a. et chesta tentacione sì lo face
   and this *temptation* sì *CL* *do.3SG.PST*
   And this (type of) temptation happened…’ (Gregoriu 12)

b. e kista parte sì tene tuctu
   and this part sì *keep.3SG.PST* all
   ‘and all (...) kept this part...’ (Gregoriu 77)

• Final point – clauses or scene-setting adverbials, which lexicalise Benincà & Poletto’s (2004) Frame-field can also precede sì, but to a limited extent (16/200 cases of sì):

(16) a. et partendusj da Runa, sì vinne ad...
   and *leave.PROG=REFL.CL* of Rome sì *come.3SG.PST* to
   ‘And leaving Rome, he came to...’ (Gregoriu 37)

b. Et tando sì disse lo frate allo serpente
   and then sì *say.3SG.PST* to the brother-the *serpent*
   ‘and then the brother [monk] said to the serpent...’ (Gregoriu 12)

• We saw above that in Old Neapolitan embedding of sì is fully productive (18%) of the data collected.

• A search of the OVI database for the particle sì in Gregoriu reveals only two instances in the first 200 clauses analysed (cf. 17).
   o This suggests that Old Sicilian is more like Old French than Old Neapolitan.
   o In Old French sì is rarely embedded in certain, typically early, texts and entirely absent in others (Marchello-Nizia 1985: 15; Lemieux & Dupuis 1995: 96)

(17) ...lu qualj sì succexi a sanctu Benedictu in lu
   the which sì *succeed.3SG.PST* to Saint Benedict in the
   regime of the monastery
   ‘Who succeeded Saint Benedict in the running of the monastery’ (Gregoriu 37)

3.3. Old Venetian

• Since Benincà’s (1983) work on the Lio Mazor text, Venetian data have been used extensively in studies of Old Italo-Romance syntax (Vanelli 1987; Benincà 1995; Benincà 2004; Benincà 2006; Wolfe 2018b: chap. 3; Poletto Forchishing; Poletto and Wolfe forthcoming).

• For this reason, the corpus here are extracted from the Navigatio Sancti Brendani (henceforth Brendani) which has not typically been discussed in the literature.
   o In the whole text there are 127 instances of sì and their distribution is shown in Table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matrix</th>
<th>Embedded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SI-Initial</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Et + Sì</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP Object</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional Phrase</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb Phrase</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sì Third or More</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total | 122 | 100% | 5 | 100% |

• The dominant Old Venetian pattern is for sì to be preceded by a subject, which we saw with a lesser frequency in Neapolitan and Sicilian.
   o These SUBJECT + Sòrds show subjects which are either pronominal (18),
     discourse-OLD (19), or encode an entity we can analyse as forming part of the common knowledge of the speaker-hearer (20) (cf. Ariel 1988).
   o No cases are found with initial objects (in contrast to Sicilian and Neapolitan).

(18) Et elo sì li rresse in questo muodo
   and sì *CL* *respond.3SG.PST* in this way
   ‘And he respond to him in this way’ (Brendano 190)

(19) Questa osica sì aveva
   this *bird* sì *have.3SG.PST*
   ‘This bird had...’ (Brendano 136)

(20) E Dio sì disse
   and God sì *say.3SG.PST*
   ‘And God said’ (Brendano 224)

• In contrast to Old Neapolitan, where sì-initial clauses are not generally found, and Old Sicilian where both sì-initial clauses and ET + Sì clauses are (near)-absent, these configurations make up nearly a third of occurrences of sì:

(21) Sì viti molte fontane de diversi colori
   sì *see.1SG.PST* many *fountains* of diverse *colours*
   ‘I saw many fountains of different colours’ (Brendano 232)

(22) e sì monta su la so nave con li suo
   and sì *climb.3SG.PST* in the *his* *boat* with the *his*
brothers

‘And he climbed into his boat with his brothers’ (Brendano 264)

- St-third or greater cases make up a lesser proportion of the data than they do in either Old Neapolitan or Old Sicilian, but still constitute 18.9%.

(23) E como fo pasado li tre dì, in ora and as be.3SG.PST pass.3PFC the three days in hour de meza terza si venne una osiela forte volando of mass third SI come.3SG.PST a bird strong fly.PROG

‘And as the three days had passed, at the time of the third mass, a bird came, flying hard.’ (Brendano 136)

- We also find a range of scene-setting elements such as clauses and adverbials, which can either be the sole constituent before SI (24) or precede (cf. 23 above):

(24) e como lo ave complido de cantar la canzon, si parlà

‘And once it had finished the song, it spoke…’ (Brendano 246)

- Embedded SI is licensed (25), but Table 4 suggests it is more restricted than in Old Neapolitan:

(25) e devé saver che uno agnolo de Dio, meraveioso da veder, si varda questa isola see.INF SI si guard.3SG this island

‘And you should know that a lamb of God, marvellous to behold, guards this island’ (Brendano 44)

3.4. Old Piedmontese

- Table 4 shows all instances of SI in the Sermoni Subalpini, a 13th-century Piedmontese text (Parry 1998: 94–5; Delfuoco et al. 2005):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. SI in Old Piedmontese</th>
<th>Matrix</th>
<th>Embedded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SI-Initial</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ET + SI</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP Object</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional Phrase</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverbial Phrase</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clause</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI Third or More</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The dominant pattern is for SI to occur in a clause introduced by the coordinator ET (26), in complementary distribution with an initial subject. We also find SI in co-occurrence with an initial subject (27) and in cases where it is in absolute initial position of the clause (28).

(26) a. E si lo temptè per vana gloria and si CL tempt.3SG.PST through vain glory

‘And he tempted him through vain glory’ (Sermoni 276)

b. Apres zo si ven una grant compaigna d’angeil, after this SI come.3SG.PST a great company of angels e si comenceren a cantar and SI begin.3PL.PST to sing.INF

‘After this a great company of angels came and they began to sing’ (Sermoni 273)

(27) Aquesta passiun si est de la bestia this passion SI be.sg of the beast

‘This passion is beastly’ (Sermoni 265)

(28) Sì ven la bona femena que vos savez si come.3SG.PST the good woman that you know.2PL

‘The good woman that you know came’ (Sermoni 225)

- We find a single instance of an initial subject constituting Information Focus (cf. the question-answer pair in 29).

- There are no cases of SI being preceded by an object DP, and a single case of SI preceded by an indirect-object PP.

(29) Or qual pera li trovarem sotto lo pe?

now what stone CL find.1PL.FUT under the foot

Calcedoni, qui à pali color, si à tel Calcedoni which have.3SG pale colour SI have.3SG such vertù que…

virtù that…

‘Now which stone do we find under his foot? Calcedoni, which has a pale colour and such virtue that…’ (Sermoni 248)

- Remaining data – scene-setting adverbials or clauses (30), cases where SI is third or more in the ordering (found across all the Italo-Romance texts considered in this talk) (31), although these represent the smallest proportion of any texts considered.

(30) a. Cum el of zo dit, si conduist lo when he have.3SG that say.3PFC SI lead.3SG.PST the rei ultra lo flum king beyond the river

‘When he said this, he took the king beyond the river’ (Sermoni 227)

b. Or apres si dit que now after SI say.3SG that

‘Soon afterwards he said that…’ (Sermoni 108)

(31) Or quest bon hom, qui avia questi trei ami, si now this good man who have.3SG.PST these three men SI era…
‘Now this good man who had three friends, was…’ (Sermoni 238)

- Embedded st is found, but only marginally like Old Sicilian and Old Venetian. Embedding accounts for 10/259 occurrences of st within the text (3.9%):

(32) ki dit in Actibus Apostolorum que, quant nostre Seignor who say.3SG in acts apostles that when our Lord montò en cel, si veneren doi ioven homen vesti go-up.3SG.PST in sky si come.3PL.PST two young men dressed de drap blanc of cloth white ‘...who says that in Acts of the Apostles, when our Lord went up into the sky, two young men dressed in white cloth came...’ (Sermoni 240)

4. SI AND THE LEFT PERIPHERY

4.1. General descriptive points

- Given that these texts come from four distinct varieties of the Extreme South, Upper South, Northwest, and Northeast of the Italian Peninsula, it’s unsurprising that there is variation in the texts.
  - As mentioned in §1, there are two important points of background to this:
    - Increasing consensus that Old Italo-Romance varieties show various points of variation in their left-peripheral syntax, even within a particular region (see the contributions in Garzonio (ed.) forthcoming on the syntax of the Veneto in the medieval period).
    - Growing body of work suggesting that st is definitely not a homogeneous entity (pace Benincà 1995, 2004; Fleischman 1990) either diachronically or across varieties (Wolfe 2018a, 2020a, forthcoming; Meklenborg 2020a, 2020b, forthcoming).
  - Although we have to approach small-scale corpus work with a healthy degree of caution, some revealing generalisations emerge from the data presented so far which suggest that the data concerning st are systematic points of variation.

4.2. Empirical generalizations

- Old Italo-Romance st is readily compatible with left-peripheral verbal arguments to some degree.
  - All varieties show st co-occurring with one or more of a preverbal subject, DP object, or selected PP object.
  - This sets Old Italo-Romance varieties apart from Later Old French (post-1180), where st can only be preceded by an initial clause, scene-setting adverbial, or a Clitic Left Dislocation structure (Salvesen 2013; Wolfe 2018a).
  - Takeaway – st’s interaction with lower Topic-Focus field projections is a point of variation (Benincà & Poletto 2004 and Poletto’s 2014 ‘operator layer’).
  - From Tables 1-4 and the discussion in Section 3 we see that all varieties permit st’s co-occurrence with clauses or scene-setting adverbials.

  - Takeaway – st can be preceded by constituents in this field universally across Medieval Romance in contrast to the lower portion of the C-layer.

- Further points of variation
  - Orders where st is third or more in the linear ordering are considerably more frequent in the two Southern Italian Dialects than in the Northern Italian Dialects.
    - Following Benincà (2004, 2006) and Wolfe (2018b), this may not be linked to the syntax of st per se, but the fact that V3* orders are more frequent in Southern Italian Dialects in general.
  - st’s ability to be the sole constituent in a V2 clause:
    - Entirely absent in the matrix samples of Sicilian and Neapolitan texts.
  - Embedded st constitutes a far larger proportion of the data for Neapolitan than in the other three varieties (compare this with the exceptionality of embedded st in the Old French literature, e.g. Marchelatto-Nitza 1983:Chapter 2).

- Syntax-pragmatics interface:
  - Topical subjects – pronominal and lexical – found in all the varieties we have considered.
  - Topical objects are only licensed in Neapolitan, Sicilian and Piedmontese; in the latter case only PP-objects.
  - Informationally focussed subjects are licensed in both Piedmontese and Neapolitan.
  - Informationally focussed objects are only found in Neapolitan, as already reported by Ledgeway (2008: 449–450).
  - This is schematised in Table 5, where we can develop an implicational hierarchy of the types of constituents that may co-occur with st within a given system:

Table 5. Constituents Resumed by st

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause Type</th>
<th>Adverbial Type</th>
<th>Topic Type</th>
<th>Focus Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neapolitan</td>
<td>Neapolitan</td>
<td>Neapolitan</td>
<td>Neapolitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmontese</td>
<td>Piedmontese</td>
<td>Piedmontese</td>
<td>Piedmontese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sicilian</td>
<td>Sicilian</td>
<td>Sicilian</td>
<td>Sicilian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venetian</td>
<td>Venetian</td>
<td>Venetian</td>
<td>Venetian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Towards a formal analysis (preliminary)

- Tempting to derive all the patterns in Table 5 from independent properties of the left periphery for each variety, but this probably isn’t the whole story.
  - For example, Old Piedmontese is shown in Wolfe (2018b: 44) to license informationally focussed direct objects in the Sermoni Subalpini, which we have seen do not co-occur with st.
  - Old Sicilian, likewise, licenses informationally focussed subjects and objects (Cruschina 2011) but not with st.
• Proposal: the constituents co-occurring with $\text{st}$ are not determined by whether projections in the Topic-Focus layer are activated in the languages in question, but rather the position in which $\text{st}$ is merged.
  o Old Italo-Romance – $\text{st}$ can either be merged in SpecFinP and preceded by constituents in the Frame, Topic, and Focus fields or in a lower specifier position within the Topic-layer, where it is preceded by Topics and Foci.
  o In the latter case we would have to assume movement from SpecFinP to SpecTopP to avoid the generation of unattested SI-FOCUS-V orders.

(33) $\text{[Frame [Adv/Clause[SpecSetting [Focus [Topic[Subj, TopicObj, $\text{St}$_{focus} Focus[Subj, FocusObj {[ma, ma, $$V$$] [TP - ...] } ]]]]]}$

  o In these texts there appears to be no Italo-Romance analogue to Later Old French system where $\text{st}$ can only be preceded by scene-setting clauses and adverbials and has grammaticalised upwards to SpecForceP (Wolfe 2018a; Wolfe 2020a).

(34) $\text{[Frame [Adv/Clause[SpecSetting [Focus, $\text{St}$$_{top}$ [Force $V$] [Topic $\text{Force} [\text{Fac} [\text{TP} [\text{TP} - ...]]]]]]}$

• Old Neapolitan shows the most widespread distribution of embedded $\text{st}$ (cf. §3.1). Is this related to its first-merged position?
  o Looking at (33) it could be: Ledgeway (2005: 380–389) amongst others – Old Italo-Romance complementisers can be merged in several left-peripheral head positions (Force, Top(ic), Foc(us) and Fin).
  o Prediction: the lower $\text{st}$’s position in the left periphery, the more likely it will be able to appear in an embedded clause. All things being equal, Old Neapolitan $\text{St}_2$ could readily be embedded under all but a complementiser in Fin.
  o By contrast, outside of Old Italo-Romance we predict that Later Old French $\text{St}$ in SpecForceP is incompatible with embedding. With a small number of exceptions, this prediction also holds (Marchello-Nizia 1985: 13; Lemieux & Dupuis 1995: 96; Ferraresi & Goldbach 2002: 11, 2003: 113)

• But is the position of $\text{st}$ within the C-layer the only factor affecting its distribution?

• Holmberg (2020) – $V$2 can only be satisfied by internal merge.
  o ‘all the categories in the left periphery that satisfy $V$2, including various adverbs, particles, and operators, can alternatively be spelled out within IP, while no categories that occur in the left periphery and do not satisfy $V$2 are alternatively spelled out in IP (Holmberg 2020:41).
  o The particle $\text{si}$, which shows certain similarities with $\text{st}$ is included in this analysis and reaches the $V$2 bottleneck via movement (Meklebor 2020a).
  o However, Holmberg accepts that there are exceptions to this generalisation which raises an interesting question – could the move vs. merge distinction for $V$2-satisfaction be subject to crosslinguistic variation?

• Returning to $\text{st}$, here is what we find in the data:
  o Old Neapolitan, Old Sicilian (SIDs) – $\text{st}$ not typically found in initial position.
  o Old Venetian, Old Piedmontese (NIDs) – $\text{st}$ found in initial position.

  o Old French – $\text{st}$ found in initial position – a ‘northern’ Romance variety in the terms of Ledgeway (2012) and Zamboni (2000).
  o Suggests that $\text{st}$ can satisfy the $V$2-related Edge Feature only in northern varieties but not in southern ones.
  o Suppose that in Old Neapolitan and Old Sicilian $V$2 is – in line with Holmberg (2020) only satisfied by an internally merged constituent.
  o It follows that $\text{st}$, a base-generated particle, would not be able to satisfy $V$2 in the absence of another constituent in the left periphery.
  o This is precisely what we see in the data.
  o In contrast, if, in the two Northern Old Italo-Romance varieties, $V$2 can also be satisfied by external merge (i.e. base-generation), $\text{st}$ is predicted to be able to occur in initial position in the absence of other constituents.
  o This is also what we find.
  o One independent piece of evidence for this comes from the left-peripheral syntax of Italo-Romance varieties today.

  o Southern Italo-Romance – a wide variety of operations which target the Topic and Focus layer via internal merge, including various types of focus fronting an topicalization which can plausibly be analysed as internal merge (Cruşchini 2006; Cruşchini 2012: chap 3; Mensching & Remberger 2010; Ledgeway 2010b)
  o Subject to internal microvariation, this is not the case in Northern Italo-Romance varieties –licensing of both Information and Contrastive Focus is restricted and the topics are plausibly analysed as base-generated (Paoli 2003; Paoli 2010).
  o This split is seen as a significant part of the North/South Italo-Romance divide in Ledgeway (Forthcoming). If the proposal here is correct, this split in the class of $V$2-satisfiers foreshadows the emergence of a merge vs. move split in Italo-Romance today.

5. CONCLUSION

• The distribution of $\text{st}$ across four early Italo-Romance vernaculars is far from uniform.
  o But widespread use of $\text{st}$ does constitute part of the bundle of features which are points of continuity across early Italo-Romance varieties (cf. Benincà 2004, 2006).
  o The proposal outlined today is that the most significant of the distributional differences between the four varieties considered can be understood as the result of two converging factors:
    o The height at which $\text{st}$ is merged within the extended C-domain, and
    o Whether both externally and internally merged constituents, or internally merged alone, can act as $V$2-satisfiers.
  o The second of these two questions may have important ramifications for the left-peripheral syntax of Italo-Romance and Romance in general today.

REFERENCES