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**The V2 Conspiracy Revisited**  
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**Aim:** To address the following questions concerning V2 in Germanic:

- (Qa) How old is the V2 phenomenon?
- (Qb) What is the earliest distribution of V2?
- (Qc) How did V2 develop?
- (Qd) To what extent has V2 been lost?

**(Qa-b) Age and earliest distribution of V2?**

**V1:** Parallels in other IE languages

- Various subtypes of V1: (a) a well-defined set of non-declarative clauses, including commands, questions, complementizerless conditional and concessive clauses, and (b) certain declarative clauses, in particular the so-called Narrative Inversion (NI), e.g. in ON-Icel (1) and Old English (2) (Sigurðsson 1994, Önnersfors 1997; cf. Mörsjö 2002 for Modern Swedish)

- (1) ...**sá** Eiríkr þá engan sinn kost annan en flýja land. ON-Icel  
saw Eiríkr then no self choice.acc other than flee country  
'Eiríkr then had no other choice than to flee the country.'  
(Nygaard 1906:348)
- (2) **hæfdon** hi hiora onfangen ær Hæsten to Beamflote come. OE  
had they their received before Hæsten to Benfleet come  
'They had received them before Hæsten came to Benfleet.'  
(*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Parker), A.D. 894)

**V2:** Innovation in Gmc vis-a-vis other IE languages (but cf. Celtic, Old Romance)

Is this innovation (a) Common Gmc, (b) common North-West Gmc, (c) NGmc-Continental WGmc, or (d) independent in NGmc and (continental) WGmc?

- Answer:
  - (i) Common Gmc: *wh*-questions, definite subjects (point (a))
  - (ii) NGmc-Continental WGmc (Old English being a special case!): V2 in all other types of main clauses (point (c))
  - (iii) NGmc: V2 in embedded clauses (generalized V2) (point (d))

Claims about the nature of the origins of V2

- Phonological (Wackernagel 1892, Kuhn 1933, Hock 1986, Anderson 1993...)
- Syntactic, emerging in certain constructions (*wh*-questions, fronted negation...) and generalized in all main clauses (Kiparsky 1995 [1989], Eythórsson 1995, 1996, Fuss 2003...)
- Contact with a non-Gmc./non-IE language? (Vennemann 2003...)

**NGmc and continental WGmc**

Full V2 is attested already in the earliest prose texts from Old Norse-Icelandic (NGmc)

- (3) **Ásu dóttur sína gipti hann Guðrøði konungi.** ON-Icel  
 Ása daughter self.acc married he Guðrøðr king.dat.  
 ‘He gave his daughter Ása in marriage to King Guðrøðr.’  
 (Nygaard 1906:354)

The same V2 pattern is the norm in Old Saxon (verse) (4a) and Old High German (verse and prose) (4b)

- (4) a. **Gabriel bium ic hetan.** OS  
 Gabriel am I called  
 ‘I am called Gabriel.’ (*Heliand* 120)
- b. **wela gisihu ih in dinem hrustim.** OHG  
 well see I on your armour  
 ‘I see well on your armour.’ (*Hildebrandlied* 46)

Exceptions in poetry and prose translations (OHG Isidor): metrically conditioned, archaisms, translation effects...

Ergo: Full main clause V2 is already there in NWGmc-Continental WGmc

But what about Early Runic, Old English and Gothic?

**Early Runic / NGmc** (Eythórsson 2001)

- Subject-object- verb: suggests non-V2 and OV order in VP.

## Early Runic

- (5) **Gallehus gold horn 2 (K43, A23)**  
**ek hlewagastiz holtijaz horna tawido** ER  
 I Hlewagastiz Holtijaz horn made  
 ‘I, Hlewagastiz Holtijaz, made the horn.’

Note: alliteration, metre, poetic diction can affect word order.

- (6) **Einang stone (K63, A20)**  
**...daga<s>tiz runo faihido** ER  
 (I + name) rune painted.1sg  
 ‘(I), ...dagastiz, painted the rune.’

- Subject-verb-object: ambiguous between V2 and VO (could be both), but against OV (although rightward extraposition of the object is a possibility).

- (7) Kjølevik stone (K75, A38)  
 hadulaikaz ek hagustadaz **hlaaiwido** magu minino ER  
 Hadulaikaz I Hagustadaz buried son my  
 ‘Hadulaikaz. I, Hagustadaz, buried my son.’

Further examples: Rö stone (II) (K73, A26), Reistad stone (cf. K74, A41), Tune (III) (cf. K72, A27), Gummarp stone (K95, A116), By stone (K71, cf. A111).

- (Object-)verb-subject pronoun: indicating V-to-C (V2, V1).

- (8) Sjælland bracteate 2 (I) (K127, cf. A71)  
 hariuha **hait-ika** farawisa ER  
 Hariuha am-called+I knowing-danger  
 ‘I am called Hariuha, the one who knows danger.’
- (9) Noleby stone (II) (K67, A46)  
**toj-eka...** ER  
 make+I  
 ‘I make...’
- (10) Lindholm amulet (cf. K29, A17)  
 ek erilaz sa wilagaz **hat-eka** ER  
 I runemaster the deceitful am-called+I  
 ‘I (am) the runemaster. I am called the Deceitful One.’

Assuming that *ek erilaz* ‘I (am) the runemaster’ is a nominal clause.

- (11) Stentofthen stone (I) (K96, A119) [II?]  
 hidezruno <ru>no **felAh-ekA** hederA EN  
 bright-runes.gen sequence.acc.sg commit+I here  
 ginoronoz  
 mighty-runes.acc  
 ‘The sequence of bright runes, mighty runes, I commit here.’
- (12) Ellestad stone (K59, A114)  
 ekA sigimArAz Afs<A>kA **rAisido-ka** stAinA (?) EN  
 I SigimArAz one-found-free-of-guilt raised+I stone  
 ‘I (am) S., one found free of guilt. I raised the stone.’

- Object-full NP subject-verb: counter-evidence to V-to-C?

- (13) Stentofthen stone (I) (Marstrander 1953, cf. K96, A119)  
 niu hA-borumz niu ha-gestumz EN  
 nine high-sons.dat (?) nine high-guests.dat (?)  
**hAþuwolAfz gAf j**  
 HAþuwolAfz gave year  
 ‘To nine high-sons, to nine high-guests, HAþuwolAfz gave a year  
 (= good harvest).’

- (14) Istaby stone (K98, A117)  
 Afatz hAriwulafa hAþuwulafz hAeruwulafiz EN  
 after HARIwulafz.acc HAþuwulafz HAeruwulafiz  
**warAit** runAz þAiAz  
 wrote runes these  
 ‘After HARIwulafz, HAþuwulafz HAeruwulafiz wrote these runes.’

#### Summary on Early Runic / NGmc

- (15) SOV (non-V2, OV): 2 (+)  
 S-IO-V-DO: 2  
 “SVO”: 6 (+)  
 (O-)V-S(pron.): 5  
 O-S(NP)-V: 2

Ergo: Evidence for V2 in topic-initial and subject initial clauses. But also examples of non-V2 (SOV, OSV).

#### Scholarly opinions on the syntax of Early Runic

Antonsen (1975) divides the runic corpus into Northwest Gmc (NWGmc) and NGmc, sometimes offering readings/interpretations which are different from Krause.

(16)	NWGmc	NGmc	Total
SOV	22	3	25
SVO	8	10	18
VSO	4	1	5
Total	34	14	48

According to Antonsen, there was a “**dramatic change**” in word order from NWGmc to NGmc. NWGmc is supposed to have been **predominantly SOV**, while NGmc was **predominantly SVO**. “The preponderance of evidence points to the unmarked order head + modifier...” With a few exceptions, “...the phrase structure rules point to a language with S+O+V order...” Regarding NGmc: “...there has been a breakdown in the old ordering.”

Braunmüller (1982) adheres to the readings of Krause, and does not make a distinction between NWGmc and NGmc.

(17)	SOV	15 (18)
	SVO	36 (42)
	VSO	2 (3)
	Total	53 (63)

Braunmüller concludes that **SVO was the dominant** order in Early Runic (and in Old Gmc in general). The occurrence of SOV orders is assumed to be an **archaism surviving from Proto-Gmc**.

- Ramat (1998:412): “Some of these [OV] characteristics... have now disappeared in all the Gmc languages, and for each, numerous counterexamples can be quoted from as far back as the oldest attestations; but it is really the **cumulative evidence** they provide which allows us to conclude that Gmc must have had an **OV phase**...”
- Nielsen (2000): “The word-order of Early Runic appears to be in a **transitional state**, in which an **older OV layer** is being **replaced by a younger one** with features characteristic of VO typology: indications of the latter are the use of especially adjectives and possessive pronouns as postmodifiers and the preference of prepositions to postpositions – in addition, of course, to a shift of the position of the verb from after to before the direct object of the sentence. The most significant, inherited OV features are (besides the position of the verb) the



### Gothic

WL clitic particles (in complementary distribution with non-clitic complementizers): conjunctive/emphatic (*uh*), interrogative (*u*), conditional (*ba*)... (Eythórsson 1995, 1996, Ferraresi 1997...)

- Generally the WL clitics occur after the first prosodic word (pword, ω)

- (21) a. þat-uh samo jah þai waidedjans ... idweitededun imma Goth  
 this-CL same also the bandits insulted him  
 ‘And the bandits ... insulted him in the same way’ (Mt 27:44)  
 b. ga-u-laubjats...  
 P-CL-believe  
 ‘Do you believe...’ (Mt 9:28)

However, the construction type: ‘but’–S(def.NP)–V-CL (“emphatic” function of *uh*?)

- (22) ip Iesus iddj-uh Goth  
 but Jesus went-CL  
 ‘But Jesus went’ (Lk 7:6)

Only definite and specific indefinite (*sums* ‘some’, *anþar* ‘other’) **subjects** to the left of *uh* (**no** non-specific indefinites)

- (23) sumai-h qepun þatei sunjeins ist Goth  
 certain.ones CL said that good is  
 ‘And certain ones said that he is good’

- WL clitic particles lost in North and West Gmc
- *Wh*-clauses and negation: some evidence for V2

Ergo: evidence for Gothic *wh*-questions and definite subjects? Gothic still preserves WL clitics; unclear that this is connected to V2...

### Interim conclusions:

- (Qb) What is the earliest distribution of V2?  
 Partial (Gothic, Old English); possibly optional after topics (Early Runic) (?)
- (Qa) How old is the V2 phenomenon?  
 Partial V2 in Old English: incipient V2 or loss of full V2? If the latter were true so it must have happened very early (cf. Kroch and Talor: two strands – southern and northern); so full V2: an innovation in North and continental West Germanic

### Next question:

- (Qc) How did V2 develop (further)?
- (i) V2 generalized in all types of main clauses (topic-initial and subject-initial: how did that happen?)

- \$64000 question: Is there any evidence bearing on how the partial V2 was expanded and generalized to all main clauses and from there to embedded clauses?
- Generalized V2: triggered by phonology?

### Independent vs. Dependent clauses

Distinction in Gmc alliterative poetry (including NGmc skaldic/eddic poetry; cf. Kuhn 1933, Árnason 2002...):

(24) **independent** = unconnected main clauses – **dependent** = connected (main and subordinate) clauses (cf. Vedic, Ancient Greek)

(25) Reiðr **var** þá Vingþórr / er hann **vaknaði** ON-Icel  
 angry was then Thor when he woke  
 ‘Thor was angry when he woke up’ (Þrymskviða 1, 1-2)

NB. in the poetry V2 may occur either after the first phrase or the first word (breaking up constituents)

(ii) V2 generalized in embedded clauses in North Germanic

### V-adv order (V-to-I) in subordinate clauses

Innovation in NGmc (cf. also Yiddish)

Two examples in early NGmc

- Subject gap in subject relative clauses (OV or Stylistic Fronting?)

(26) a. Stentoften stone (III) (K96, A119)  
 sA þAt **bAriutiþ** EN  
 this.nom.m this.acc.n breaks  
 ‘...who breaks this.’

b. Björketorp stone (III) (K97, A120)  
 sAz þAt **bArutz** EN  
 this.nom.m+rel.part this.acc.n breaks  
 ‘...who breaks this.’

Compare ON-Icel

(27) Sá svarar, er hann **leiddi** inn. ON-Icel  
 the one answers rel.part him.acc lead inside  
 ‘The one who lead him inside answers...’  
 (Nygaard 1906:379)

Final question:

(Qd) To what extent has V2 been lost? (Main clause V2 remarkably stable)

Loss of embedded V2 (“V-to-I” or “V-to-C” after non-bridge verbs) in Mainland Scandinavian (Platzack 1988, Vikner 1995...). Important: “V-to-I” does not necessarily entail V2 (cf. English: John still hasn’t read this book)

- (28) Jeg tror at Jens ikke **har** læst bogen Dan  
 I believe that Jens not has read the.book  
 ‘I believe that Jens not has read the book’

Variation in Modern Faroese (loss of embedded V2 among some speakers; Vikner 1995, Thráinsson et al. 2004...)

- (29) a. ?Eg eri keddur av, at Jógvan **hevur** aldri lisið bókina Far  
 I am sorry of that Jógvan has never read the.book  
 b. Eg eri keddur av, at Jógvan aldri **hevur** lisið bókina  
 I am sorry of that Jógvan never has read the.book  
 ‘I am sorry that Jógvan has never read the book’

V3 in certain embedded clause types in Icelandic (marginal) (Angantýsson 2001)

- (30) Það er nú það sem ég ekki **veit** MIcel  
 it is now it that I not know  
 ‘That’s something I just don’t know’

Absence of main clause V2

- V3 in Icelandic main clauses (marginal)

- (31) Ég bara **veit** það ekki. MIcel  
 I just know it not  
 ‘I just don’t know.’

- *wh*-questions in North Norwegian (e.g. Tromsø dialect; Vangsnes 2004 etc.)

- (32) Ka du sa? NorwTroms  
 what you said  
 ‘What did you say?’

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