Clitic pronouns in Romance

Clitic object pronouns in Spanish and Romance.

"The current syntactic order in Romance languages is SUBJ:VERB:COMP. However, the 'clitic' object pronouns of Romance languages are prefixed to the verb, as e.g. in Spanish:"

(1) yo compré los libros  yo los compré
   I bought the books   I them bought
'I bought the books'  'I bought them'
(Givón 1971:396)

The explanation, of course, lies in the earlier SOV word order of Romance.

Parallels to this are found in the fact that (Givón 1971:396) "many bound morphemes in Romance appear as verb suffixes, when clear evidence exists to suggest their having arisen from main verbs. Thus, for example, the future marker in Spanish is cognate of the verb 'have', as is seen in the two paradigms below:"

(2) yo hé  'I have'          yo comprar-é 'I will buy'
tu hás  'you have'          tu comprar-ás 'you will buy'
el há   'he has'             el comprar-á  'he will buy'
nosotros hemos  'we have'   nosotros comprar-emos  'we will buy'
ellos hán  'they have'      ellos comprar-án  'they will buy'

Compare also the preterit and the imperfect tense-aspect markers of Romance, again illustrating from Spanish: (Givón 1971:397)

Preterit:

(3) compr-é  'I bought'
    compr-as-te 'you bought'
    compr-ó   'he bought'
    compr-amos 'we bought'
    compr-aron 'they bought'
Imperfect:

(4)  compr-aba  'I was buying'
     compr-abas  'you were buying'
     compr-aba  'he was buying'
     compr-ábamos  'we were buying'
     compr-aban  'they were buying'

However, the Spanish future marker from ir 'to go' is much more recent and thus found before, not after, the main verb:

(5)  yo voy a comprar  'I'm going to buy'
     tu vas a comprar  'you are going to buy'
     el va a comprar  'he is going to buy'