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Negation and OV order in Late Middle English¹

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Optional OV order in Later Middle English (LME) has given rise to conflicting theoretical accounts. Earlier analyses postulating movement to AgrOP or alternative base orders are found to be inadequate to deal with the occurrence of OV in non-literary LME; in a large database of 15th century private familial correspondence, residual OV order is found to have been productive only with negated objects. Multiple subject constructions with *there* expletives showed the same restriction. These phenomena are accounted for by postulating overt Neg Movement (Haegeman 1995) as a permitted option in LME. In this framework, it is argued that LME showed a mixed typology having both Neg movement and a null Neg operator. LME had three ways of satisfying the NEG Criterion (Haegeman 1995): Merge *not* in Spec NegP, coindex [OP]_i...[XP(Neg)]_i, and Move XP(Neg) to Spec NegP. Modern English has only the first two. The distribution in this period of negative concord with *not* is shown to support our analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

Although normally considered to be an SVO language (van Kemenade 1987, Stockwell & Minkova 1991, Fischer 1992, Kroch & Taylor 1997), Late Middle English (LME) showed apparent remains of earlier OV order, as noted by van der Wurff (1997) and Roberts (1997):

- (1) ȝif thei thise degrees knowyn Jacob's well 21, 17 (a. 1440)
 if they these degrees know² (cited in van der Wurff 1997: 486)
- (2) I may no rest haue a-mongys ȝow MKempe A 122, 19–20 (1438)
 I may no rest have amongst you (cited in Roberts 1997: 425)

These alternated with predominantly VO structures.

In Ingham (1998) we analysed a large database of English familial correspondence of the 15th century, and found many instances of OV in

[1] I am especially grateful to two anonymous *JL* referees for their many helpful and challenging comments on earlier versions of the paper. It also benefited from comments by participants at the November 1998 Conference on Negation at the University of Salford, where aspects of this study were presented.

[2] Pre-15th century examples are provided with a word-for-word gloss and translation into present-day English. 15th century examples are provided with a version in present-day English spelling.

auxiliated clauses where the object NP is negated, as in (2) above.³ Otherwise, however, OV was almost non-existent. Instances of OV with a single verb, as in (1), were not found. In this study we seek to provide an appropriate syntactic analysis for residual OV order in non-literary LME, on the basis of these findings.

We also relate OV remnants to another syntactic construction which has been lost in present-day English (henceforth PDE), the apparent multiple subject construction found in *there*-expletive sentences such as (3) and (4).

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| (3) Ther mai no man kepe a fals law
there may no man keep a false law | LS 21 (a. 1400) |
| (4) For ther shall noon be saved
for there shall none be saved | MES 113, 19 (a. 1400) |

We shall refer to such examples as embraciated subject constructions (including expletive passive as in (4)). Here, the associate subject directly follows the finite auxiliary and precedes the non-finite lexical verb, just as with OV structures in auxiliated clauses such as (2). We have not been able to find a satisfactory existing account of embraciated subjects in later Middle English. Our investigation of non-literary English prose of the 15th century shows that the associate subject in such expletive constructions was almost always negated, as with residual OV.

The analysis that we propose to account for both residual OV and embraciated subject constructions is one in which optional movement of a negated NP took place to Spec NegP, following the theory of Neg movement of Haegeman (1995). This accounts for the optional appearance of negated NPs but not of other NP types in the ‘non-canonical’ argument positions shown in (2)–(4), while excluding structures such as (1), which by the 15th century were no longer productive. In order to bring out this parallelism between non-canonical subject and object constructions, we first consider modern Scandinavian languages displaying constructions analogous to those we have noted above in LME. We briefly survey the debate over the position of objects in Middle English in section 3, and in sections 4–5 we present our findings on the distribution in the Paston correspondence data of object NPs and associate subject NPs respectively. Thereafter in sections 6 and 7 we adopt the Neg movement theory of Haegeman (1995) as an explanatory framework for these findings, relating them also to the change in Middle English sentence negation proposed by Frisch (1997). Finally, in section 8, we suggest how the optionality of Neg movement can be integrated into a theory of constituent movement in which overt raising of constituents to

[3] A tendency for objects to be negated in OV examples found in 15th century prose was noted independently by van der Wurff (1997b).

functional positions requires that the functional head in question bears a uniformly strong feature.

2. QUANTIFIED ARGUMENTS IN MODERN GERMANIC VO LANGUAGES

The empirical problem that we shall need to deal with in our analysis of the LME residual OV and multiple subject constructions referred to earlier is the strong semantic restriction involving negation that was found to obtain. Some modern Germanic VO languages are known to license argument NPs in non-canonical positions under certain semantic conditions. This phenomenon occurs with subject and with object NPs in somewhat varying ways, as discussed by researchers such as Falk (1989), Christensen (1991), Holmberg & Platzack (1995), Vikner (1995), Bobaljik & Jonas (1996), and Jonas (1996). Icelandic has both transitive expletive (including expletive passive) constructions:

- (5) *það hafa nokkrar kökur verið bakaðar fyrir veisluna.*
there have some cakes been baked for the party
'Some cakes have been baked for the party.' (Jonas 1996: 181)
- (6) *það grefur kona gröf i gardinum.*
there digs a woman a grave in the garden
'a woman digs a grave in the garden.' (Falk 1989: 47)

NPs in such expletive sentences are usually indefinite, as in (5)–(6). In Jonas's (1996: 170) analysis of multiple subject constructions, indefinite Associate Subjects raise out of VP to Spec TP, with the expletive *að* appearing in Spec AgrSP:

- (7) *það maladi_i utlendingur_j husið_k [VP stundum [VP t_j t_i t_k rauðt]].*
there painted a foreigner the house sometimes red
'A foreigner sometimes painted the house red.'

(Note that in (7) the object NP *husið* has also moved out of VP by Object Shift.) However quantified associate subjects may remain in VP (Jonas 1996: 170–171, fns. 5, 6), as in:

- (8) *það maladu_i husið_j [VP aldrei [VP neinir studentar t_i t_j rauðt]].*
there painted the house never any students red
'No students ever painted the house red.'

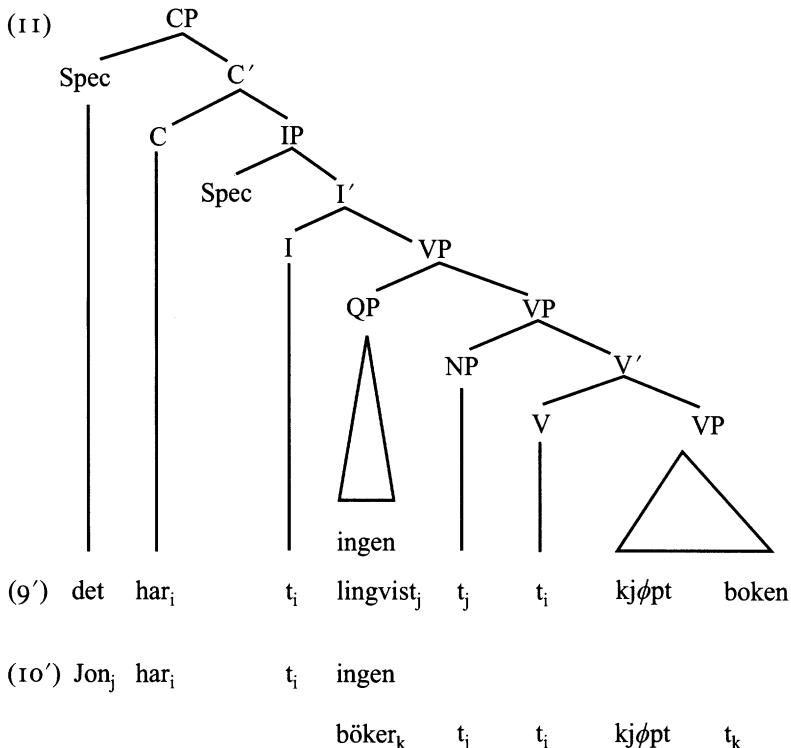
In Norwegian negated NPs, both subject and object, may appear between a finite auxiliary and a lexical verb (Christensen 1991). Indefinites and other non-quantified NPs are excluded in this position, however, cf.:

- (9) *Det har ingen lingvist/*en lingvist kjøpt boken.*
there has no linguist/*a linguist bought a book

- (10) Jon har ingen böker/* en bok kjøpt.
 John has no book/ a book bought

According to Christensen (1991: 152, fn. 12), OV with non-negative quantified objects is of doubtful acceptability, except when they are associated with a negative adverb. In Norwegian it therefore seems that the OV phenomenon is to a large extent linked to negation.

Christensen assigned the same clause structure to pre-verbal negated objects and associate subject NPs, by positing adjunction to VP of the negated NP as is shown in (11):



There are aspects of Christensen's account which raise further issues. Quantifier-raising conveniently handles the negated NP cases in Norwegian but incorrectly predicts that sentences with raised non-negative quantified NPs should also be acceptable. Also, it is not clear why in Christensen's (pre-Minimalist) account these NPs should undergo overt quantifier-raising. In current Minimalist terms (Chomsky 1995) overt movement is motivated by a strong feature on a head to whose specifier movement occurs, but it is not

clear how such an analysis could go through here. Holmberg & Platzack (1995) prefer to analyse Icelandic constructions analogous to (9') as retaining their subject NP in Spec VP, rather than postulate quantifier raising. Jonas (1996), on the other hand, posits a split INFL for Icelandic; the associate NP may raise to Spec TP, but remains in Spec VP if quantified (Jonas 1996: 171, fn. 6).

At this point in the present study the differences among these various analyses are perhaps less crucial than the fact that, in contemporary SVO languages, under certain semantic conditions an object NP may precede a lexical verb, and a subject NP may likewise appear in a post-finite position in a transitive expletive construction. We consider that the LME phenomena may best be understood in relation to these facts about contemporary languages, and that residual OV with a negated object, as in (2), had little to do with OV order in the earlier history of English. Existing analyses of OV order in LME, as we shall see below, concern themselves principally with the survival of OV sentences such as (1) after the Old English period but do not offer an account of why only OV sentences such as (2) remained productive.

3. EXISTING ACCOUNTS OF OV ORDER IN PRE-MODERN ENGLISH

We have been unable to find detailed treatments of associate NPs, embraciated or otherwise, in the history of English.⁴ OV order in Middle English, however, has produced a sizable recent literature which we shall now briefly survey. Approaches to Old English within a generative paradigm (see, for example, the survey in Denison 1993) have tended to assume that until about the end of the 12th century English was underlyingly OV, with various rules of extraposition to account for the many examples of VO order, but from then on underlying order was VO. Pintzuk's (1996) 'double-base' analysis proposes that Middle English continued for some while to have both OV and VO as underlying orders. Van der Wurff (1997a) and Roberts (1997), drawing on the universal SVO hypothesis proposed by Kayne (1994), maintain that sentence constituent order in English has always been VO, even in the Old English period, and that OV was derived by a scrambling process, which declined in frequency – for putatively extra-grammatical reasons – as the Middle English period progressed. Roberts (1997: 408–409) offers the following examples of OE object scrambling (labels and brackets as in original):

[4] It is interesting to note that in Visser's (1963–73: 52) rather brief discussion of expletive *there* sentences the earliest example of an associate subject with a transitive verb, dated 1387, is negative.

Here, object NPs are analysed as having scrambled to an AgrOP projection. One such projection is available preceding the finite V *wold* in (11), and another preceding the non-finite V *begietan* in (12). Raising of object NPs to AgrOP can be handled in terms of feature-checking: object scrambling in OE was associated with a strong N feature on AgrO (Roberts 1997: 420). After case inflection on nominals declined in earlier Middle English, the strong feature on AgrO was lost, leading to the demise of object scrambling.⁵

Roberts (1997: 425, fn. 7) recognises the existence of ‘residual’ OV in LME, but does not offer an account of it other than suggesting that it may be the ‘diachronic residue of OE verb-raising’. He also notes that it seems to be restricted to preceding a non-finite V.

Van der Wurff (1997a) tackled an aspect of LME OV order which is of particular relevance to current Minimalist investigation. Alternations in syntactic construction such as the variation in object position found in Middle English pose a challenge to a theory of syntax in which the positions of argument NPs are handled in terms of feature-driven movement to functional positions (Chomsky 1993, 1995; Kitahara 1997). On the minimalist assumptions stated in Chomsky (1993, 1995), if a constituent of a given type has strong features, it should move out of its initial ('merged') position, whereas if it has weak features it should not move overtly. Against this background, the optionality of OV in late Middle English has been handled by van der Wurff (1997a) in terms of raising to AgrOP, within a global economy framework (Kitahara 1997) in which constructions involving equal numbers of elementary operations are optional alternatives. Van der Wurff's analysis thus succeeds in accounting for the optionality of constructions involving leftward displacement of an object NP such as (1) and (2) above.

However, considerable uncertainty surrounds the evidential status of the OV phenomenon itself. Van Kemenade(1987) appears to regard the incidence of OV order in later Middle English as essentially negligible. Roberts (1997) calls it ‘restricted’ whereas Pintzuk (1996) and van der Wurff

[5] See Weerman (1997), however, for evidence from Dutch that the loss of case inflections does not necessarily lead to the loss of OV order.

(1997a) argue that it was still productive. In the face of these conflicting views, it seemed important to consider what factors may have given rise to such sharply divergent assessments of the phenomenon in question. One factor must be the diversity of source materials, in terms not only of dialectal variation (see, for example, Kroch & Taylor 1997) but also of stylistic and register differences such as those between verse and prose. In this connection we note that the majority of van der Wurff's (1997a) OV examples were taken from verse even though two-thirds of his samples were prose. It seems to us that to take verse or even literary prose source material as evidence for the state of core syntactic rules in English of the 15th century requires some justification. Cases of OV order can be found in 20th century verse, and of lexical verb movement in mid-19th century prose, e.g.:

- (14) Silence invades the breathing wood
Where the drowsy limbs a treasure keep W. H. Auden b. 1907
- (15) I doubted not that I might one day, by taking a long voyage, see with
my own eye... C. Bronte b. 1816

To dismiss these as merely archaisms which fail to represent the contemporary state of English syntax inevitably raises the question of whether examples of OV in late Middle English should not also be considered as archaisms unrepresentative of their period.

In addition, Middle English literary prose was often translated from French or Latin, so that OV order in such English translations may be directly calqued on the original, as illustrated in (16).

- (16) ðat ðai ne han nouȝt her bodyes filed Apoc 3, 6 (a1380)⁶
que cil qui n'unt lur cors soulie
'that those who have not defiled their body'

In order to ascertain the status of OV in speakers' grammars it would be theoretically desirable to access a variety that is as close as possible to (some dialect of) the spoken vernacular of the period in question. A challenge for much of Middle English linguistic studies is that non-literary prose is relatively sparse. By the 15th century, however, researchers are no longer obliged to depend heavily on literary materials. Several collections of private correspondence exist which in some respects are not wholly dissimilar from

[6] On the other hand we find evidence that translators at other times actually changed French NegOV to VONeg, as in (i).

(i) or though he be founden and wil fynde no borowes
ou tut seyt il troue e ne voillie plegge trouer [French original]

Source: 'The domus Day of Gippeswich'. In: *The Black book of the admiralty*, ed. by T. Twiss, Longman: 1873, p. 43.

spoken language. That is, they were ephemeral, featured interaction between individuals who were quite well-known to each other, and were composed without substantial planning, at least on the evidence of frequent statements to the effect that the letters were ‘written in haste’. The English of such private correspondence seems likely to have been closer to the vernacular syntax of the period than was the English of contemporaneous literary authors.

The best known of these collections is that of the Paston family, which spanned all but the first quarter of the 15th century.⁷ A database was accordingly set up consisting of 665 letters published in Davis (1971) dated between 1425 and 1503. They comprised letters written to or by members or agents of the Paston family.⁸ The syntactic position of all object NPs in relation to a theta-selecting lexical verb was noted, and was categorised according to NP type (pronoun, ordinary NP, negated NP or quantified NP). We looked additionally at other 15th century English familial correspondence – the Stonor, Cely and Plumpton collections. In contrast to the Paston correspondence, these offered little or no data prior to 1460, so we have concentrated here on the Paston data as they better represent the 15th century period as a whole. Examples of the constructions studied are found in these other collections, although they seemed considerably rarer, in keeping with the finding in Ingham (1998) that they were less frequent in the later than in the earlier Paston correspondence .

4. PREVERBAL OBJECT NPS IN PASTON

We summarise here our analysis of the Paston data, which is more fully presented in Ingham (1998). The clear indication was that OV order was productive only as long as the object NP was negated and occurred in embraciated position, i.e. between an auxiliary and a lexical verb, as in (17) and (18).

- (17) I wyll no thyng grawnt with-out the vnder-shreves assent
 PL 59, 15 (1461)
 I will nothing grant without the undersheriff's assent

[7] Davis (1971) makes the point that some of the letters, especially those of female members of the Paston family, were actually written by scribes. We do not believe that this affects the validity of such data; as Davis (1954: 121) observes: ‘The letters of the women [...] can probably be trusted, since they were presumably dictated, to preserve the words and even the syntax of their authors’.

[8] This total excluded items which we did not believe should be considered to represent private correspondence: wills, proclamations, inventories and suchlike. Letters included in the database were written either by or to members of the Paston family or their agents. However, letters by and to members of the aristocracy were excluded on the grounds that the social distance involved may have favoured non-vernacular effects, especially greater self-monitoring of language.

- (18) for I may no leysour haue PL 182, 48 (1465)
 for I may no leisure have

These alternated with the construction in which object NPs appeared in their canonical PDE position, as in (19) and (20).

- (19) ȝe wyl make none end with here PL 128, 9 (1448)
 ye will make none end with her
- (20) I kowd have noo leysure PL 402, 8 (1479)
 I could have no leisure

Several dozen OV examples such as (17)–(18) were collected from a substantial number of correspondents or scribes, over a period spanning most of the 15th century. OV order with pronouns and ordinary NPs was negligible⁹ or non-existent, respectively.

The negated NPs found in embraciated position displayed very substantial lexical variety, consisting of the following:

- (21) none leisure, no sight, no more days, none surety, none undersheriff ne
 none other officer, no knowledge, no manner answer, no cause, no
 bodily harm, no people, no remedy, no letter, no leave, no deed

That is, the negated object NPs in this construction were not restricted to a small set of pronouns such as *none* or *nothing*. The NegOV phenomenon thus cannot be dismissed as a marginal construction found only with a small set of fixed items.

Negated OV never occurred with a simple verb group, cf.:

- (22) Sche had no tydyngys but gode yett PL 131, 113 (1449)
 she had no tidings but good yet
- (23) for in good feyth I had no leysere PL 81, 24 (1452)
 for in good faith I had no leisure

There were a few tokens of OV with quantified objects, but the syntax of quantified objects appears to need separate treatment. Quantified object NPs were freer in structural position than negated object NPs. For example, they could intervene between a single tensed verb and the subject NP:

[9] Aside from an isolated case having a formulaic character (*God me help*), pronominal object NPs were never found preceding the lexical verb.

- (24) yif ye any thyng doo in this mater to the pleasir of my lordes
 PL 908, 11
 if ye anything do in this matter to the pleasure of my lords

Negated objects did not appear in this configuration.

A few cases of quantified objects in embraciated position were found, but appeared to be unproductive, occurring only with the quantifying pronouns *any*, *anything* and *aught*, rather than with a full NP. This was not the case with negated objects, as we saw above. In frequency terms there was certainly a very sharp difference. Quantified objects remained in situ well over 90% of the time in the periods sampled (Ingham 1998). With negated objects, however, movement was actually the preferred form in the earlier part of the data. Out of 34 clauses occurring between 1425 to 1455 having an auxiliary and a lexical verb with a negated object NP, a substantial majority (65%) showed OV order.

In the last thirty years of the Paston data a clear shift occurred away from OV with negated objects in the sentence-brace construction, which accounted for only 24% of the 25 tokens identified from 1476 onwards. It thus appears that negated OV was in sharp decline in the later part of the 15th century. Nevertheless, our analysis of the Paston correspondence shows that the construction was still highly productive in the first half of the 15th century, at least in this register and in this region.¹⁰

The incidence of OV order that we have reported in the Paston data is not satisfactorily handled by the various diachronic accounts that were reviewed above. The ‘double-base’ hypothesis of Pintzuk (1996) certainly allows for the possibility of OV order surviving sporadically until the 15th century, but gives no reason to suppose that it would remain a productive option only in negative sentences. The AgrOP analysis offered by van der Wurff (1997a) fares no better, for the same reason that raising of non-negative object NPs would be predicted, but was found to be either non-existent (ordinary NPs) or negligible (quantified pronouns).

The account of Roberts (1997), on the other hand, gives no reason to suppose that OV surface order would remain productive at all, even with negative NPs in embraciation contexts. We therefore need an analysis of surface OV in LME that can successfully account for the persistence of surface OV specifically as a property of negated objects in auxiliated clauses.

[10] It is interesting to note the common occurrence of NegOV in the Book of Margery Kempe (a 1438), dictated to a scribe by a woman who was a native of north Norfolk. The existence of a distinct dialect in the Norfolk area in late medieval English is discussed in Beadle (1991). Kristensson (1994) states that Norfolk had a large population of Scandinavian origin, reflected in personal and place names not found elsewhere in south-eastern England. One might therefore speculate that the higher incidence of NegOV that we found in the Paston correspondence than in the Stonor correspondence was a dialectal preference.

We turn to this in section 6. First, however, we consider the results of an analysis of associate subjects in the Paston data, which reveal a strikingly similar phenomenon to what we have identified with OV, and which in our view provides motivation for the unified treatment of non-canonical negated arguments that we offer.

5. ASSOCIATE SUBJECT NPs

Constructions with expletive *there* in the Paston data, discussed in Ingham (1997), showed that surface strings were quite commonly found with an auxiliary and a lexical verb, and between them an embraciated negated NP bearing the external argument role of the lexical verb, e.g.:

- (25) There wull noman gewe so myche for them PL 209, 12 (1471)
 there will no man give so much for them
- (26) Ther shal no thyng hurte hym PL 643, 24 (1461)
 there shal nothing hurt him

Cases of embraciated subject NPs other than negated NPs co-occurring with expletive *there*, as in ***There shall a man come from London* (** = unattested) were virtually non-existent.¹¹

Over 30 examples of embraciated subjects with a *there* expletive were collected in the Paston correspondence, not counting a few where it was unclear whether *there* was an expletive or a locative adverbial. The productivity of this construction cannot be doubted. Although *no man* was by far the most common type of negative subject, others included *naught*, *nothing*, *no conclusion*, *none of them*, *no defaut*, *no folks*, *no writ*, *no money*, *no creature* and *no assise*. As with negated objects, this lexical variety argues against treating the phenomena purely in terms of formulaic language.

In clauses with finite auxiliaries the *there* + negated subject construction was actually the preferred option up to the last third of the 15th century, on the basis of our sample. In letters written between 1425–1465, 29 clauses were identified having a negated subject NP, a finite auxiliary and a non-finite lexical verb. Of these, 19 (66%) had expletive *there* and a post-finite subject,

[11] A single example of an non-negative subject NP was found together with expletive *there* and the *have* auxiliary, rather than a modal:

(ii) There hath Perauntes wife written to me PL 271, 67 (1472)

We doubt that this example represents a productive possibility at this time, especially since *there* sentences in Middle English as well as in PDE (Milsark 1974) normally have indefinite subjects, rather than a definite NP as in (i).

while only ten (34%) had the PDE order with no expletive and the negated subject NP in pre-finite position.

The constructional similarity with preverbal negative objects is quite compelling. The negated constituent appears embraciated between the finite auxiliary and a non-finite lexical verb. Again, in the earlier period the negated subject NP showed a strong preference for the immediate post-finite position, as with negated objects at this time. Furthermore, in the last quarter or third of the century we find associate subjects becoming much rarer (Ingham 1998), as with preverbal objects.

As noted above, Christensen's (1991) quantifier-raising account of associate subjects in Norwegian, if applied to the Paston data, would make the incorrect prediction that non-negative quantifiers should have occurred in associate subject NPs, e.g. ***If there should any man come from London...* No such cases were found. This gives rise to the same split patterning between negated NPs and other NPs that we observed with objects. We shall now present a structural analysis of sentences with non-canonical negated subject or object arguments that will account for the observed parallelism.

6. A NEG MOVEMENT ANALYSIS

In the theory of sentence negation proposed in Haegeman (1995), sentential negation is represented universally by the projection of NegP. Even where there is no overt sentential negator (as, for example, in the LME examples (19)–(20) and (22)–(23) above), NegP is still projected, with a Negative operator in Spec NegP. Languages universally obey a NEG criterion, which may be conveniently stated as:

(27) *Neg criterion*

A Neg head must be in a Spec-Head relationship with a Neg operator and vice versa.

Haegeman (1995) argues that languages vary parametrically according to whether, like German, Dutch and West Flemish, they have Neg movement, i.e. movement of a negative constituent to Spec NegP, or whether – like English – they have a null negative operator in Spec NegP. According to Haegeman, a NegP constituent containing a null Negative operator enters into the structure of English sentences with sentential negation lacking the Negative operator *not*, e.g.:

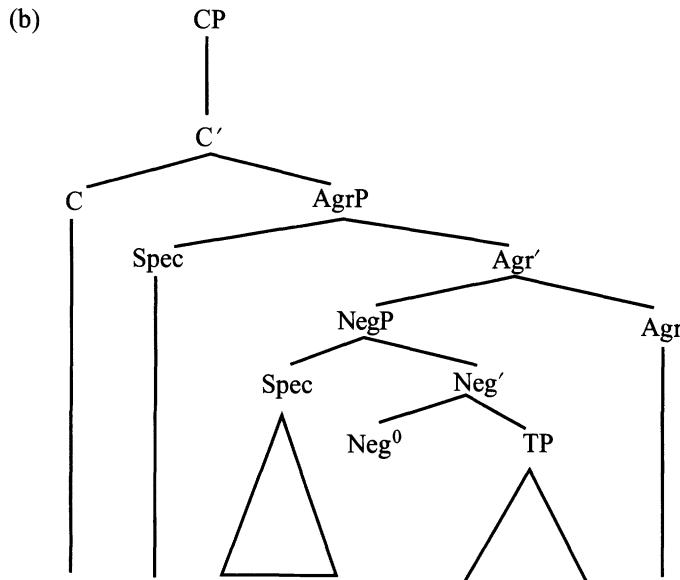
- (28) You must [_{NegP}OP_i Neg⁰] contact nobody_i. (our example)

The operator chain formed by $OP_i \dots nobody_i$ allows the null Negative operator to be identified. West Flemish, however, does not permit a null Negative operator, but requires an overt negative XP to appear in Spec of NegP for a sentential negation reading to be available. This can be seen if we compare a negative clause containing a negated XP with its affirmative counterpart.

- (29) da Valere me niets ketent (en-) was
 that V. with nothing pleased NEG was
 'that V. was pleased with nothing' (Haegeman 1995: 130)

Sentence (29) is analysed in terms of movement of the negated XP *me niets* to Spec NegP from an underlying position in which it is a complement of the adjective *ketent*, seen in an affirmative sentence such as (30a).

- (30) (a) da Valere [ketent me zenen kado] was
 that V. pleased with his present was
 'that V. was pleased with his present' (Haegeman 1995: 130)



- (30') da Valere **me niets_i** ketent _{t_i} (en-) was
 that V. with nothing pleased was

The negative XP *me niets* moves overtly to Spec NegP from its underlying position shown by t_i . If *me niets* does not move, the sentence cannot receive a sentential negation, and the negative prefix *en-* is impossible, as is shown in (31).

- (31) da Valere ketent me niets (*en-)was
 that V. pleased with nothing was
 'that V. was satisfied with having nothing' [rough paraphrase – RI]

Ouhalla (1997) presents a somewhat different operator-variable analysis of negation, based on negation in Moroccan Arabic and other languages, in which he argues that sentence negation always involves a negative operator which must bind a variable, given the ban on vacuous quantification (Chomsky 1993). The variable appears in Spec NegP (Ouhalla 1997: 231). Unlike the analysis of Haegeman (1995) the Neg operator is spelled out as a particle which appears in Neg⁰.

Assuming with Haegeman (1995) and Ouhalla (1997) that sentential negation is obligatorily projected as NegP, the non-canonical positioning of many negated argument NPs in the Paston data can be handled uniformly by proposing that they were able to move into Spec NegP. If the negated NP was an object,¹², movement would be string-vacuous with simple verb groups lacking an auxiliary.¹³ With complex verb groups, however, the moved object NP would show up in embraciated position. Adopting the structural analysis of clauses with complex verb groups used by Christensen (1991) and Haeberli

[12] Given the clearly SVO structure of LME, we do not adopt the analysis of negated object NPs put forward for an SOV language such as West Flemish by Haegeman (1995: 250) in order to account for normal OV order with non-negated objects in this language.

[13] In principle one might find evidence of leftward movement of a negated Object over adverbs left-adjoined to VP. Unfortunately, the only adverb used with any frequency in negative clauses was *yet*, which as far as one can tell seems generally to have been right-adjoined in the Paston data, e.g.:

(i) John Russe myght not be spoke wyth yit (ii) As ferthforthe as I kan vndyrstand yet...	PL 177, 19 (1464) PL 321, 17 (1464)
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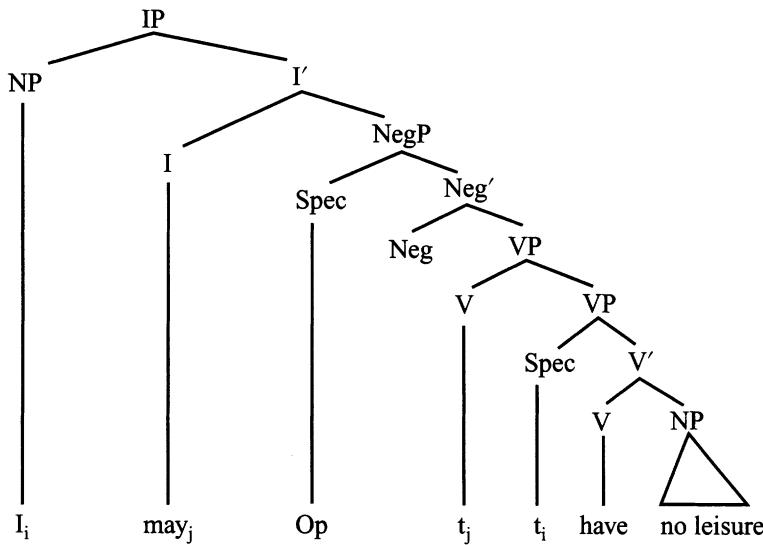
This means we cannot assume Neg movement in cases such as example (22) above, or (iii) below.

(iii) They sped no partycular mater yet	PL 573, 5 (1454)
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NEGATION AND OV ORDER IN LME

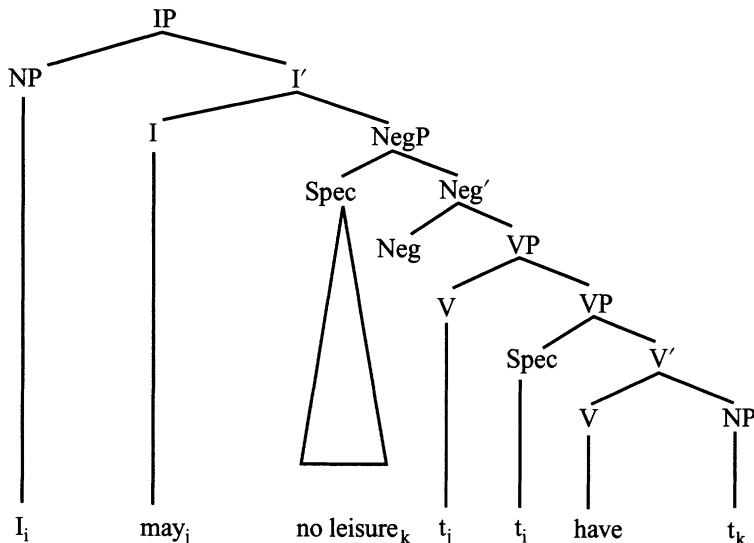
& Haegemann (1995), we posit the following structure for auxiliated clauses with a negated object in situ:

(32)



A raised negated object NP thus had the following structure:

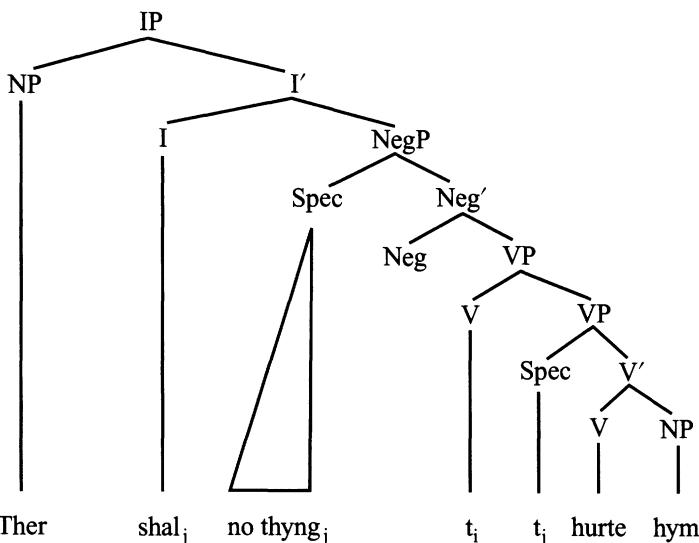
(33)



The absence of pre-finite negated objects in the Paston data follows immediately from the structural position of NegP as a sister of INFL. It is now apparent why residual OV remained only with postfinite objects (Roberts 1997) in auxiliated clauses: there was no NegP projection higher than INFL by late Middle English, to which a negated object could have moved to produce OV order in non-auxiliated clauses.

If the negated NP was a subject, it moved either to Spec IP, as in PDE, or else to Spec NegP, producing a construction where the associate subject followed the finite verb, with expletive *there* inserted to fill the external subject position (Spec IP):

(34)



An alternative analysis whereby *no thyng* appears in Spec VP (Holmberg & Platzack 1995) would be inadequate, since passives with a negated surface subject NP and expletive *there* were quite common. (35)–(36) illustrate.

- (35) that there shall no defaute be founde in here PL 190, 72 (1465)
that there shall no default be found in her
- (36) ȝf there xulde no thyng be don for your fadyr PL 238, 12 (1478)
if there should nothing be done for your father

In these examples negated subjects cannot be in Spec of the lexical VP, on the standard assumption that passive raises the surface subject NP from the complement of the lexical V to Spec of a functional projection.

Although the VP headed by passive *be* would not normally be considered a landing site of constituent movement in a Principles & Parameters theory, one might perhaps argue that passive *be* stood in some kind of functional projection, thus allowing the passive subject to raise to its Spec, rather than to Spec NegP. However, negated subjects also appeared in *there* expletive sentences with verbs that on the basis of their auxiliary selection properties we may take to have been unaccusative at this time (Radford 1997: 394–395), e.g.:

- (37) Ther shold nomore com wyth hym but Hegon PL 131, 47 (1449)
there should no more come with him but Hegon
- (38) Ther xuld non go out of this lond PL 221, 32 (1475)
there should none go out of this land

In such cases there is no functional projection for an auxiliary between the modal and the lexical verb. We take it, therefore, that the negated subject must have raised out of VP into Spec NegP, and apply the same analysis to the expletive passive cases such as (35)–(36).

Let us now turn to the nature of the movement operation that raised negative XPs to Spec NegP. We argue that it was one of three ways in which LME was able to satisfy the Neg criterion. Following Haegeman (1995) we assume that LME needed to satisfy the Neg criterion within some functional projection whose head had a [+Neg] feature. In PDE this is CP or a projection within the finer structure of CP (Rizzi 1997); negated adverbials move there if the C head carries a [+Neg] feature, as in (39).

- (39) On no account must John go.

Negated adverbials *in situ* are generally unacceptable in PDE, cf. *John must go on no account. As noted by Stockwell (1981: 585), however, the satisfaction of the Neg criterion in LME was clearly differed somewhat from PDE insofar as inversion was not obligatory in such cases. In the Paston correspondence data we were unable to find any cases where a negated XP stood clause-initially, followed by an inverted auxiliary, as in the PDE sentence (39).¹⁴

We therefore propose that NegP behaved as a landing site of movement in

[14] Instances were found of an initial negated adverbial:

(i) And jn no wyse I kwd not getyn no grawnth of here PL 128, 26 (1448)

But the auxiliary is uninverted in this example, so the negated adverbial can be taken as left-adjoined to IP.

LME as one way of satisfying the Neg criterion. This option is no longer available in PDE, which instead uses CP as the landing site of Neg movement. The other two ways in which the Neg criterion was satisfied involved either a null Neg operator, or the insertion of the overt Negative operator *not*, both of which methods are still available in PDE. In the next section we look in more detail at how these three kinds of sentence negation operated in LME.

7. NEGP IN LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH

In section 6 we proposed that negated pre-verbal objects in LME appeared in Spec NegP rather than in AgrOP, arguing that the NegP analysis also accounts for associate subjects in 15th century non-literary English. In this section we shall present further corroborating evidence to support our analysis. This concerns the distribution of the sentence negator *not* in constructions with negated subject NPs and negated object NPs respectively.

Following Haegeman (1995:180) and others we take it that in PDE the sentence negator *not* appears in Spec NegP, as it has done since later Middle English. Frisch (1997) documents how sentence negation in Middle English changed from being predominantly expressed by *ne*+V[finite] to V[finite]+*not*. According to his analysis, *ne* was the head of NegP in early Middle English; when verbs raised through NegP to INFL, they carried *ne* with them. In later ME *ne* was eroded and the negator *not*, originally an adverb, came to be generated in Spec NegP.

In Paston little use was made of *ne* as a sentential negator and there were no clear uses of *do* support in negation contexts (cf. Rissanen 1991). The early Modern English pattern of V[finite]+*not* is ubiquitous. *Not* appeared fairly commonly in negative concord (NC) sentences, e.g.:

- (40) I kowd not gette no grawnt of hym PL 147, 7 (1453)
I could not get no grant of him
- (41) Thei shall not set ought no plow to till there londe PL 200, 10 (1469)
they shall not set out no plough to till their land
- (42) He wold not lete it in nowyse lesse than v mark PL 147, 3 (1453)
he would not let it in no wise less than five marks
- (43) He wold not fals his promise for noman alyve PL 331, 7 (1469)
he would not false his promise for no man alive

When negated constituents were post-verbal the grammar allowed both NC with *not* and sentential negation by negated XPs alone, both with negated objects (see (19)–(20) above) and with negated adjuncts, as in (44)–(45).

- (44) They shold proced no ferther
they should proceed no further PL 338, 22 (1470)
- (45) It schuld contynew no wyle
it should continue no while PL 420, 26 (1489)

Negated adjunct phrases could also appear in embraciated position, just as could negated subjects and objects. (46)–(48) illustrate.

- (46) He will no forther meddil in the werde
he will no further meddle in the world PL 488, 5 (1449)
- (47) He shold in no wyse fayle to be wyth yow
he should in no wise fail to be with you PL 380, 12 (1478)
- (48) I myght no otherwice do
I might no otherwise do PL 614, 43 (1460)

Of course, the negated elements here could be analysed as medial adjuncts left-adjoined to VP. However, a very striking restriction was in evidence when a negated XP, whether object or adjunct, was in embraciated position, as are the adjuncts in (46)–(48) and the objects in (17)–(18) above. In such cases *not* was categorically absent; strings such as ***I cannot no letter write* or ***He would not for no man alive false his promise* were never found. This was apparently not due to some surface constraint on the immediate co-occurrence of two negative elements, as shown by examples such as (49) and (50).

- (49) She had neuer non avayle ther-of
she had never none avail thereof PL 788, 15 (1471)
- (50) He knew neuer no tytle nor entrest
he knew never no title nor entrest PL 782, 72 (1478)

Since both negated objects and negated adjuncts were in parallel distribution with the sentence negator *not*, we therefore contend that the most parsimonious analysis of sentences such as (46)–(48) is that, like embraciated objects, they involved movement to NegP, rather than being left-adjoined to

VP. In other words, the Neg criterion in LME could be satisfied by movement to Spec NegP, rather than by movement to Spec CP, as in PDE.

Intriguingly, negative concord was not found with negated subject NPs; strings such as ***No man will not help them* or the equivalent expletive construction ***There will not no man help them* were totally absent. Co-occurrence of a sentence negator and a negative subject XP is hard to rule out on more general grounds: in earlier Middle English co-occurrence of the sentence negator *ne* and a negated subject was perfectly possible:

- (51) ðar neh ne mihte nan liviende man gan Lamb. Hom 43
 which near NEG might no living man go
 ‘near which no living man may go’
- (52) ðæt na mon ne mei tellen Lamb. Hom 53
 that no man NEG may describe
 ‘that nobody may describe’
- (53) No man ne mai folȝe me Trin. Hom 295
 no man NEG may follow me
 ‘Nobody may follow me.’

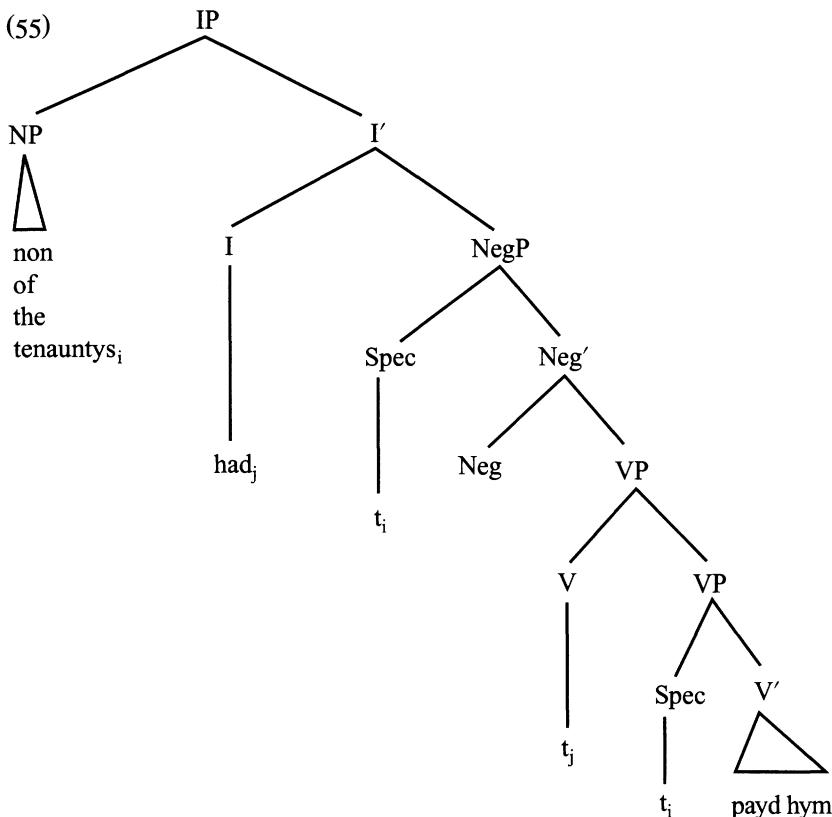
Examples (52) and (53) show that the EME sentence negator *ne* could occur within the c-command domain of a negative constituent. Hence we cannot rule out instances such as ***None man might not follow me*, or ***There might no man not follow me* as c-command violations. Such instances, as we have noted, are nevertheless completely absent from the Paston data.

Our analysis provides a straightforward derivational account of these systematic gaps in the negative concord data. A raised Neg XP and the negator *not* could not both occupy the same Spec NegP.¹⁵ In the case of raised object NPs and adjuncts, and embraciated subject NPs, *not* and the raised XP appear to have been in parallel distribution. With subjects that raised to Spec TP as in (54)

- (54) For non of the tenauntys had payd hym PL 179, 18 (1465)
 for none of the tenants had paid him

We assume that the negated subject NP raised first to Spec NegP, i.e. the intermediate trace in the NP-chain *Non of the tenauntys...t_i...t_i* shown in the structure in (55).

[15] As pointed out by an anonymous referee, this requires that LME independently excluded adjunction to NegP, unlike West Flemish (Haegeman 1995).



In this position, the trace of the moved NP would block the appearance of sentence negator *not*, thus explaining the absence of NC constructions such as ***None of the tenants had not paid him*.

We have identified cases where sentence negation was expressed by form chain with null operator and negated XP, but so far only with adjuncts and objects, i.e. (19)–(20) and (44)–(45) respectively. The claim we are making in this study predicts the existence of the second type of sentence negation in expletive sentences with a null operator coindexed with a postverbal subject (passive or unaccusative) remaining *in situ* in VP. These were indeed found, and are given in (56)–(58).

- (56) There is payd no more feez out of non of the maneris

PL 55¹, 47 (1456)

there is paid no more fees out of none of the manors

- (57) That ther was made non ende therin
that there was made no end therein

PL 789, 5 (1476–7)

- (58) He hathe promysyd that ther schall come non PL 238, 25 (1468)
 he has promised that there shall come none

We claim that these parallel the null Neg operator constructions with negated objects, such as (32), for example. The parallelism is shown below:

- (59) I may [Op_i Neg⁰] have no leisure_i. (object in situ)
- (60) that ther was [Op_i Neg⁰] made non ende_i therin (expletive passive)
- (61) That ther schall [Op_i Neg⁰] come non_i (expletive with unaccusative)

In short, the NegP analysis accounts well both for a wide range of attested patterns of negative elements found in LME and for systematic gaps that we observed in their distribution. LME residual OV is thus integrated into a theoretically motivated and empirically substantiated analysis of the syntactic properties of LME negation, as well as the syntax of certain expletive constructions.

8. THE OPTIONALITY OF NEG MOVEMENT

Let us now turn to the issue of how the optionality of negated OV can be handled within an economy framework (Chomsky 1993, 1995). We take it that movement to Spec NegP was a form of A' movement in LME, as discussed by Haegeman (1995: 258 ff). We observe next that optional movement is not uncommon with A' movement cross-linguistically. In colloquial French, for example, *wh*-movement is optional, with *wh*-elements able to remain in situ:

- (62) (a) Tu prends quel train demain?
 you take which train tomorrow
 'Which train are you taking tomorrow?'
 (b) Quel train tu prends demain?
 which train you take tomorrow
 'Which train are you taking tomorrow?'

In colloquial French, therefore, a sentence may contain a *wh*-constituent, but the *wh*-criterion does not necessarily oblige this constituent to move.¹⁶ Given this kind of optionality with A' movement, we may expect to find languages in which another criterion, the Neg criterion, may but need not be satisfied by overt syntactic movement.

[16] For Haegeman (1995: 102) cases such as (62a) escape the general requirement for the *wh*-criterion to be satisfied at S-structure: the sentence 'has the structure of a declarative and becomes interrogative at the interpretive level' (*Ibid.*). In the present research we cannot similarly argue that a sentence such as *I see no ships* becomes negative only 'at the interpretive level', since we follow Haegeman's (1995) claim that NegP is always syntactically projected in sentential negation.

Neg movement was just such an optional process in LME. Within the framework of Haegeman (1995), the optionality of displaced constituents in LME can be handled by positing that a Neg operator could optionally be inserted in Spec NegP. If it was, no movement of the negated XP occurred. If it was not, the negated constituent moved to satisfy the Neg criterion. Unlike in PDE, the Neg criterion could be satisfied by overt syntactic movement to Spec NegP.

We might now enquire how the optionality of Neg movement in LME comports with Minimalist assumptions on constituent movement. We propose that the Neg head was strong, requiring a constituent bearing a [+Neg] feature to appear in Spec NegP in order to check the strong Neg head feature at spell-out. We have seen that there were three ways in LME for this checking operation to be implemented. The overt negator *not* could be merged in Spec NegP with or without negated argument or adjunct constituents elsewhere in the sentence. Or its null counterpart could be merged in Spec NegP, thus forming a chain [OP]_i...[XP(Neg)]_i. The third possibility was for a negated XP (subject, object or an adjunct) to move to Spec NegP. The optional OV order found in LME auxiliated clauses was thus a sub-case of Neg movement, as is the appearance of negated associate subjects in multiple subject constructions.

Haegeman (1995) draws a distinction between languages which permit null Neg operator in sentence negation, such as PDE, and those which have Neg movement, such as West Flemish. LME was a language which was typologically mixed, permitting a null Neg operator as does PDE, but also permitting the movement of a negated XP as in Haegeman's analysis of contemporary Germanic languages such as West Flemish. The Neg criterion could be satisfied by a null Neg operator even when there was a negated XP elsewhere in the numeration. Alternatively, if the numeration lacked a null Neg operator, an XP bearing the feature [+Neg] would raise to Spec NegP to satisfy the Neg criterion. The alternation found in the position of negated XPs in LME can thus be handled in terms of the alternative offered in UG between moving a negated constituent to Spec NegP, or leaving it in situ and inserting a null operator in the numeration.

9. CONCLUSION

Unlike other types of preverbal object construction found earlier in Middle English, embraciated negated objects appear to have remained productive to the end of the ME period in non-literary prose. We have offered an account of this phenomenon which integrates it within the overall picture of sentence negation in late Middle English, following the theory of sentential negation put forward in Haegeman (1995). The alternation in the position of negated elements described here is not unexpected from the point of view of

Haegeman's account of West Flemish, given the close historical connection between English and Dutch. The negation constructions investigated here provide in our view a further link between earlier stages of English syntax and the syntax of Germanic languages which we think adds to our understanding of the changing position of English within syntactic typology. Middle English, in common with other Germanic languages, possessed a means of forming sentence negation – Negative movement – which it has since lost.

Although we have assumed that the underlying nature of English syntax by the 15th century was SVO, we do not favour any particular view of its nature in earlier Middle English. However, the findings of the present work, showing that object raising to AgrOP was no longer a productive part of English syntax by this time, have implications for that issue. We believe that it strengthens the argument for saying that the demise of object raising – or alternatively the demise of an optional OV base (Pintzuk 1996) – should be associated with the loss of strong noun case morphology in earlier Middle English (cf. Roberts 1997), rather than seeing the disappearance of object raising as linked to the loss of verb movement (van der Wurff 1997a). Verb movement was categorical in the 15th century English investigated here. The persistence of residual OV with negated objects in LME is not a problem for the loss of case morphology account, as negated objects did not move to NegP for case reasons. The non-negative OV instances found in literary texts of the 15th century may fairly confidently be taken to be stylistic relics, at least on the basis of the non-literary data studied here. The productive cases of OV we have found in non-literary LME were not, it seems, survivors of earlier surface OV order in English, but instances of Neg movement that could apply equally at this time to XPs having the grammatical function of subject or adjunct.

A diachronic issue which we leave to further research is when overt movement to NegP ceased to be a possibility in English syntax. There are indications from the familial correspondence we have studied that it was tending towards disappearance even in the late 15th century. The timing of its loss, and an explanation for it within an overall account of ongoing changes in English negation, remain to be properly established.

KEY TO MIDDLE ENGLISH SOURCES

- 'Apoc': *An English 14th century apocalypse version with a prose commentary*. Edited from MS Harley 874 by E. Fridner. Lund Studies in English, 29.
- 'Lamb. Hom': *Old English homilies and homiletic treatises of the 12th and 13th centuries, with introduction, translation and notes by Richard Morris*. EETS, OS No. 23, 1868.
- 'LS': *Lollard sermons*. Edited by G. Cigman, EETS OS 294, 1989.
- 'MES': *Middle English sermons*. Edited by W. Ross, EETS OS No. 209, 1940.
- 'PL': *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century edited by N. Davis*. Oxford University Press, 2 vols., 1971.
- 'Trin. Hom': *Old English Homilies of the Twelfth century edited, with introduction, translation and notes, by Rev R. Morris*. EETS OS No. 24, 1873.

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