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# Syntactic change and borrowing: The case of the accusative-and-infinitive construction in English

Olga Fischer

## 1. Introduction

In the history of practically every language we come across syntactic constructions that were once foreign to that language but which were (or are) common constructions in other languages with which the language in question was in contact. In studying such syntactic innovations linguists may, and often have, come to the conclusion that a change was brought about by “syntactic borrowing”. Cases in point in the history of English are the use of the absolute participle (the dative absolute in Old English) in imitation of the Latin *ablativus absolutus* (cf. Blatt 1957: 50; Sørensen 1957: 133, 141–142); the introduction of the expanded form *beon* + present participle in Old English (due to Latin, according to Raith 1957 and in the main also Mossé 1938); the employment of subjectless relatives in Middle English (ascribed to French by, among others, Fisiak 1977: 256); the development of periphrastic *do* (due to Celtic according to Preusler 1938, 1939–1940), etc. In most of these presumed cases of syntactic borrowing, however, there is hardly a consensus of opinion on whether the new construction is indeed caused by borrowing or by some other factor or factors or a combination of these. Most linguists, for example, may agree on the first case mentioned above (but cf. Mitchell 1985: § 3825 ff.). The other examples given might well raise doubts. This certainly seems to be the case for the idea that Celtic was responsible for the introduction of periphrastic *do* (cf. Ellegård 1953: 119–120; Visser 1963–1973: 1495–1496; but then again see Poussa 1990).<sup>1</sup> It seems clear that syntactic borrowing is no easy matter to establish, and that in many, if not most, cases, other factors are at least co-responsible for the introduction of a new construction. It is difficult not to agree with Sørensen (1957: 132) that “it is usually impossible actually to *prove* that a syntactical loan has taken place, apart, of course, from cases where a word-by-word translation creates syntactical innovations in the translated version”.

In order to gain more insight into the phenomenon of syntactic borrowing and its interrelations with other causes of language change, I will investigate one such case in the history of English, i. e., the introduction of the so-called “learned” accusative-and-infinitive construction, which according to most investigations is due to Latin. The case will be presented in detail in section 2. First, I will consider some of the theoretical issues underlying syntactic borrowing.

### **1.1. Prerequisites for syntactic borrowing and types of borrowing**

It almost goes without saying that for all kinds of borrowing (except to a certain extent lexical borrowing) a certain length and intensity of contact is crucial. This is true both for oral contact and for the written type of contact. As far as English is concerned, Latin, Celtic, Scandinavian, and French seem to fulfill these particular conditions and are, not surprisingly, often mentioned as possible causes/sources for changes that have taken place in the periods relevant for these contacts.<sup>2</sup> What is of interest here is how far the type of contact affects the kind of influence a language may have had on English. A distinction that seems particularly relevant is whether the contact was of an oral or a written nature. In the latter case the influence would have been mainly literary and would show up initially only in the written language. It is probably easier to establish this kind of borrowing than borrowing taking place via oral contact. This is because i) we only have written data from these older periods and ii) changes which are the result of oral contact tend not to show up in the written record until quite a bit later, so that it becomes more difficult to establish the exact circumstances under which borrowing took place.<sup>3</sup>

A factor that plays a more important role in written than in oral borrowing is the element of prestige (which, at the same time, brings in other, stylistic, factors). This in turn may influence the way in which a foreign syntactical form is diffused. Romaine (1982: 212) writes, quoting from a paper by Naro and Lemle, that natural syntactic change “tends to sneak through a language, manifesting itself most frequently under those circumstances in which it is least noticeable or salient. ... syntactic change actuated by learned reaction or hypercorrection [i. e. cases of prestige borrowing] would work in the opposite way, i. e. would manifest itself first in the most salient environments”. It would be interesting to see how far this hypothesis applies to the diffusion of the accusative-and-infinitive construction in English.

Another problem involving the recognition of syntactic borrowing is the question of how one can distinguish whether a syntactical point of agreement between two languages is due to influence or to parallel development. Blatt (1957: 38 ff.) has set up a number of criteria which may be of help in settling this point: i) Does the new construction fit the syntactic system of the adopting language at all or is it quite alien to it? ii) Has the new construction supplanted another (indigenous) construction (in which case Blatt thinks foreign influence is more likely)? iii) What is the frequency of the construction in translated/learned texts as compared to original literature?

## **1.2. The permeability of the syntactic component**

Another question that has to be asked is, how likely is it that one language borrows a syntactic construction from another, or, in other words, how susceptible is the syntactic component to foreign influence? Opinions seem to diverge rather on this point. Birnbaum (1984: 34) writes:

.. the most commonly held view is that syntax is indeed highly permeable as compared to, at any rate, phonology and morphology. By the same token, the vocabulary of a language, like syntax, frequently absorbs, in the course of its evolution, a great many foreign lexical elements.

This is followed by a list of references to linguists who subscribe to this opinion. Birnbaum, thus, puts the syntactic level on a par with the lexical level as far as permeability to foreign influence is concerned. Danchev (1984: 50), looking at the influence that translations may have on syntactic change, seems to be of a similar opinion:

It is generally recognized today that interlingual interference operates on all language levels and that the syntactic component is particularly susceptible to foreign influence, in its permeability second only to the lexicon.

However, the opposite opinion is also often encountered. Aitchison (1981: 119 ff.) gives the reader to understand at various points that lexical elements are far more easily borrowed than syntactic ones:

..., detachable elements are the most easily and commonly taken over — that is, elements which are easily detached from the donor language and which will not affect the structure of the borrowing language. An obvious example of this is the ease with which items of vocabulary make their way from language to language ... (Aitchison 1981: 120).

When less detachable elements are taken over, they tend to be ones which already exist in embryo in the language in question, or which can be



accepted into the language with only minimal adjustments to the existing structure (Aitchison 1981: 123).

See also Aitchison (this volume). A similar view is held by Sørensen (1957: 133):

But the comparison with loan-words halts, for syntactical loans are not adopted in the same way that loan-words are. Constructions completely foreign to the receiving language have no possibility of gaining a footing in it; it is a necessary condition that there should exist in the receiving language certain innate tendencies and possibilities with which the foreign idiom does not clash.

Similar caution with respect to syntactic borrowing is expressed by Bock (1931: 116) and Lightfoot (1981 b: 357). The contributions by Giacalone Ramat and Mithun (this volume) also show that for syntactic borrowing to take place the “prospective loans must be compatible with the structure of the target language” (Mithun, this volume) or that “an internal pathway [will] channel the realization of change” (Giacalone Ramat, this volume). It is perhaps not remarkable in this light that most of the accounts of alleged borrowings described in Weinreich’s (1953) study of languages in contact concern the lexicon, the morphology, and the phonology, and not the syntax.

A closer look at the examples of syntactic borrowing given by Danchev (1984) shows that all but one are instances of what I would call superficial syntactic borrowing.<sup>4</sup> They concern the borrowing of idiomatic phrases (p. 51) and of prepositions in prepositional phrases (pp. 51–53). These borrowed items are very close to lexical items; they refer to specific concepts rather than imitating syntactic structures in another language. In Aitchison’s sense, they are “detachable elements”, i. e., they do not affect the structure of the language. The presence of conceptual or cognitive meaning is indeed what constitutes the difference between lexical and syntactic borrowing. Lexical items are borrowed precisely because they carry cognitive meaning. They represent conscious entities for a language user, who may therefore feel a conscious need to borrow such items. This need is usually external. It may be for reasons of prestige, or because he looks for new items in order to achieve greater expressiveness, or because there happens to be a cultural gap in the vocabulary of his own language. Only in some cases will the need be internal or structural, i. e., when a true lexical gap in his vocabulary exists. In the case of syntax, the borrowing will usually not be conscious (unless perhaps when it is for reasons of prestige – see also below), and therefore will be likely to

happen when the language has a structural, internal need for the foreign construction. Even then the foreign construction must not be too different from native structures, otherwise the borrower would be likely to be conscious of it, which would probably cause him – subconsciously – to reject it (cf. the above remark by Romaine that “syntactic change tends to sneak through a language”). This “structural need”, therefore, does not involve cultural gaps, which is the most frequent reason for lexical items to be borrowed.

In this light one might well wonder whether the adoption of a foreign construction is ever the cause of a syntactic change (except in cases of prestige, but when we often find that the foreign construction is not a permanent addition to the language, cf. the use of the “learned” accusative-and-infinitive construction in Dutch and German, popular during the Renaissance and the Classical Age but dropped soon after, and also the short-lived existence of Latin-inspired “double-gapped relatives” in English, as described by van der Wurff 1988). If there was indeed a structural need in a language that would cause a foreign construction to be adopted, it might be more correct to see the process of borrowing as a mechanism rather than as a cause, i. e., as a way in which a particular problem can be solved. The cause would then have to be found in the linguistic situation that created the need. Beside this there is a third, intermediate possibility, in which syntactic borrowing is neither purely a cause nor purely a mechanism. Aitchison (1981: 127) describes this as an accelerating agent which utilises and encourages trends already existing in the language. It remains to be seen into which category the case of the “borrowing” of the accusative-and-infinitive construction fits, to which we will now turn.

## 2. A case-history: The accusative-and-infinitive construction in English

### 2.0. Introduction

In this section, I will consider the introduction of the accusative-and-infinitive-construction (henceforth aci [*accusativus cum infinitivo*]) in English. It has generally been agreed by linguists in the past and today that the so-called “learned” variety of the aci construction entered English as

a borrowing from Latin.<sup>5</sup> By the learned variety the construction is meant as used especially after *verba sentiendi et declarandi*, i. e., of the type,

- (1) ...[I] was advised to give the kids what they wanted unless I wished my son to be socially ostracised. ... (LOB corpus, r05–20)

The “learned” aci is different from the “ordinary” aci construction (cf. Blatt 1957: 66) in that in the former type the NP (*my son* in [1]) which is syntactically the object of the matrix verb (the pronominal substitute for *my son* would be *him*, not *he*) does not receive its semantic function (in terms of Chomsky 1981, its thematic role) from the matrix verb *wish* but from the infinitival construction *to be ostracised*. In the “ordinary” type (i. e., after perception verbs and causatives) as in

- (2) *I let him go*  
*I see him come*

*him* is semantically as much object of the matrix verb as it is subject of the infinitive, *I see him* – *he comes*.<sup>6</sup>

A first look at the data from both the Old and the Middle English period seems indeed to confirm the idea that the learned aci construction is of foreign import, in contrast to the ordinary aci. In both the Old and Middle English periods the aci construction after perception verbs and causatives is extremely frequent and occurs in all types of prose and poetry, original as well as translated works. There is no doubt that this construction is native to the language. It is moreover a common construction in all other known Germanic languages. The “learned” type of aci, however, does not occur at all in Old English, except in glosses and other rather slavish translations from Latin such as Bede and Wærferth (for some explainable exceptions, see Fischer 1989). In Middle English it begins to occur with any frequency only at the end of the period and more often in formal and/or translated prose than in the usually more colloquial poetic texts.

However, it has also been remarked that the structure of English was ripe for the reception of the learned aci construction in the Middle English period. This would explain why the construction begins to appear in late Middle English outside Latin-influenced texts, which was never the case in Old English, nor for that matter in other Germanic languages like German and Dutch (cf. Krickau 1877: 15; Bock 1931: 116). A number of factors are said to be responsible. Thus, the loss of distinction between the dative and the accusative case, the attrition of the verbal inflective

system, the optionality of the complementiser *that*, and a few other factors have very likely smoothed the path for the aci construction in English (for a full account of the literature, see Fischer 1989). Warner (1982: 134), approaching it from the opposite direction, shows that the first “genuine” aci constructions closely resemble already existing structures in English: “The change [i. e. the new aci types] appears first where ‘least salient’, or where only a ‘minimal alteration’ of previous structures is involved.” In both cases we might expect the gradual introduction of the “foreign” aci construction: i. e., where the language system affords a small opening (as a result of change in the system itself) and/or where the foreign aci can be adapted to resemble the existing structures as much as possible.

In two recent papers (Fischer 1989, 1991) I examined another factor that may have influenced the introduction of aci constructions into English, viz., the change in word order from basically SOV in Old English to SVO in Middle English. I would now like to work out the ideas presented in these two papers in more detail by looking at the complete spectrum of complementation structures of verbs that are associated with aci-type structures, such as perception verbs, causatives, and “persuade”-type verbs, and by tracing the behaviour of these verbs all through the Middle English period up to the time at which we see the introduction of the genuine or learned aci type, i. e., the infinitival construction after *verba sentiendi et declarandi*.

## 2.1. The data

For this purpose I have collected all the instances in which these verbs occur in a number of chronologically ordered texts. The choice of texts was rather narrowed down by the time factor. In order to examine the data within a reasonable space of time, I had to restrict myself to texts which were available on computer tape and which were codified so that I could elicit the necessary information from them fairly quickly. The following texts have been used:<sup>7</sup> from the second half of the thirteenth century, the alliterative poem Layamon’s *Brut* (the more archaic Caligula ms., ll.1-8650, 75,500 words, edited by Brook – Leslie 1963, 1978); from the late fourteenth century the poem *Confessio Amantis* by John Gower (complete, 207,300 words, edited by Macauley 1900–1901); from the last three quarters of the fifteenth century a collection of letters and documents belonging to the Paston family (235,300 words, edited by Davis 1971). I was able to complement these texts by a fourth one from

the third quarter of the fifteenth century, i. e., Malory's *Morte Darthur* (edited by Vinaver 1967, 336,700 words) for which a complete concordance was available. From the first three texts I have extracted all the required instances by means of the Query programme (cf. Meys 1982; van der Steen 1982).<sup>8</sup>

These four texts together present a fairly satisfactory chronological overview, but they are not homogeneous as far as genre is concerned. However, stylistically the texts are fairly close. None of the texts are direct translations from Latin or French. Although the first two are poetry and the last two prose, they can all be described as informal and relatively colloquial. The only exceptions are certain parts of the *Paston Letters* which consist of wills, indentures, and other formal documents. Constructions found in these sections will in some cases have to be considered separately. For a discussion of the style question in relation to syntactic change, see also Gerritsen (this volume). Concerning genre, the texts of Layamon, Gower, and Malory form a close unit in that they are all works of fiction, all three with a historical bias. Gower's *Confessio Amantis* stands out a little bit in that it is more overtly didactic in nature than the other two. The *Paston Letters*, as a collection of mainly private letters and documents, is a somewhat strange mixture of genres and rather different as a whole from the other texts. The question arises whether the *Paston Letters* can be fruitfully compared to the other three texts.

### 2.1.1. Problems of genre and style

It is well known that genres are not clearcut and that texts that appear to be of two completely different genres may well have many lexical and syntactic features in common. In order to get some grip on the genres represented by our four texts, I will be using a typology of text types that has been set up for present-day English by Biber — Finegan (1987). I work from the assumption that by and large the lexical and syntactic features that Biber — Finegan distinguish in order to establish salient text types for present-day English will be applicable to Middle English texts. The authors distinguish nine clusters of text types on the basis of a factor analysis, where each factor (there are three in all) represents a number of linguistic features which share a common communicative function.

In their scheme, the three Middle English fictional texts fall squarely within the cluster "Imaginative Narrative" (Biber — Finegan 1987: 39).

The *Paston Letters*, as we have already seen, a mixture of two genres, belong to a certain extent to clusters 2, 6 and perhaps also 8, all related to "Exposition": of a formal nature (2), an informal nature (6) and formal accompanied by narration (8). At the same time, since it concerns more or less spontaneous letters written between intimates, it exhibits features of clusters 3 and 7, "Informational-Interactional" and "Interactional Narrative" respectively.

Having roughly established to which clusters the different texts belong, we can now look at the factors underlying these clusters, i. e., at what this clustering means in terms of differences in linguistic features. Each factor represents a scale with two poles, which are described as follows:

Factor 1: interactive vs. edited

Factor 2: abstract vs. situated

Factor 3: reported vs. immediate

Figure 1 gives the plot of the factor score of Layamon's *Brut*, Gower, and *Malory*, indicated by F (Fiction) and the factor score of the *Paston Letters* indicated by L (Letters) 1 and 2, where L1 represents the factor analysis for expository texts and L2 that for interactive texts.<sup>9</sup>

With the help of table 1, we can now read what the scores in figure 1 mean in terms of linguistic features. As for factor 1, we note that there is not a lot of difference between the fictional texts and the expository parts of the *Paston Letters*, but clearly the more spontaneous parts of the *Letters* are highly interactive. This is indeed clear from the high

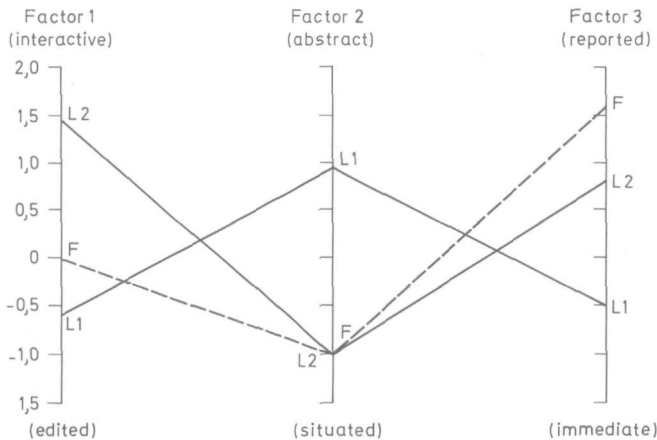


Figure 1. The factor scores for the texts in the Middle English corpus.

Table 1. The factors represented by their linguistic features (from Biber – Finegan 1987: 28)

Features	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 2			
Features with positive weights greater than .35	questions	.79	nominalizations	.74	past tense	.89
	<i>that</i> -clauses	.76	prepositions	.61	3rd ps pronouns	.61
	final prepos.	.68	specific		perfect aspect	.47
	proverb do	.67	conjuncts	.61		
	contractions	.67	agentless			
	<i>I/you</i>	.62	passives	.60		
	general hedges	.61	<i>by</i> -passives	.47		
	<i>if</i> -clauses	.57	<i>it</i> -clefts	.45		
	WH-questions	.52	split aux.	.42		
	pronoun <i>it</i>	.49	attitudinal			
	other subordin.	.48	disjuncts	.35		
	specific		(word length)	.40		
	emphatics	.46				
	demonstrative <i>be</i>	.42				
	WH-clauses	.41				
	general					
	emphatics	.41				
(present tense)	.42					
(infinitives)	.35					
Features with negative weights greater than .35	word length	-.71	place advbs	-.57	present tense	-.62
	type-token		time advbs	-.55	adjectives	-.40
	ratio	-.65	relative pron.			
			deletion	-.50		
			subordinator			
			that deletion	-.42		
			(3rd person pronouns)	-.35		

frequency of questions and *wh*-clauses in general in the data of the *Letters*, but this does not show up after the *aci* verbs under discussion here: there is not a higher frequency of *wh*-clauses in the *Paston Letters* than in the other texts.<sup>10</sup> The same is true for *that*-clauses; they are not more frequent in the *Paston Letters* after *aci* verbs.<sup>11</sup> Also the use of infinitival constructions after *aci* verbs is, overall, not higher in the *Paston Letters*; indeed, with the perception verbs *see* and *hear*, and the verbs *bid* and *make*, it is noticeably lower. Only *cause* and *desire* seem to have a somewhat stronger preference for infinitival complementation in the *Paston Letters*. A very clear difference is the regular use of the present tense and the high frequency of *I/ye*. The only way in which this affects our investigation is

in the relatively frequent use of an imperative construction especially after the verb *pray*,

- (3) a. *I prey zow fore-3ette no3th to brynge me my*  
 'I pray you forget not to bring me my  
*mony ... (PL 18,15)<sup>12</sup>*  
 money'  
 b. *I preye write to myn modre of your owne*  
 'I pray write to my mother of your own  
*hed ... (PL 79,1–2)*  
 head [accord]'

It is just possible that these represent bare infinitival rather than imperative constructions. However, since the bare infinitive is never found where an imperative is out of the question, i. e., in clauses such as (4 a–b)

- (4) a. ... *þat blyssyng þat I prayed zoure fadir to gyffe*  
 ... 'that blessing that I prayed your father to give  
*zow þe laste day ... (PL 30,3)*  
 you the last day ...'  
 b. ... *and than he answereth and prayeth me no more to*  
 ... 'and then he answers and prays me no more to  
*speke of that mater ... (PL 88,56–57)*  
 speak of that matter ...'

where the subject is neither *I* nor the addressee *you*, it is far more likely that instances such as those illustrated in (3) are indeed imperatives.

Two final points which show the *Paston Letters* to be indeed more interactive than edited will be mentioned here although they have no serious consequences for the study of the verbs under discussion. The first is the high frequency of the pro-verb *do*. I have counted 226 instances (this is about 27% of the total number of occurrences of full verb *do* in the *Letters*) as against only 91 in *Gower* (ca. 17%), 189 in *Malory* (ca. 11%) and 29 in the shorter text of the *Brut* (ca. 7%). The second concerns a minor lexical difference not included in Biber – Finegan's list. The "interactive" parts of the *Paston Letters* have a much smaller number of perception-verb constructions than the fictional "edited" texts. The total occurrence of *see* is only 177 in the *Letters*, as against 669 in *Gower* and 1191 in *Malory*, even though these three texts do not differ much in length. Moreover, the greater majority of *see* forms in the *Letters* do not convey physical perception but rather the meaning of "to visit" or "to see (un)to", etc. The total number of instances of *hear* (including *hear*



of) in the *Paston Letters* is 121, as against 417 in *Gower* and 335 in *Malory*.

Concerning factor 2, it is clear that the more official, documentary parts of the *Paston Letters* differ greatly here from both the actual letters and the fiction. In particular, agentless passives and *by*-passives are frequent in these documentary sections. This may have an important effect on *aci* complementation as well. The Appendix shows that the use of a passive infinitive is clearly more frequent after the verbs *do*, *let*, *cause*, *desire*, and *grant* in the *Paston Letters*. On the other hand, after the verbs *command*, *make*, and *suffer*, *Malory* shows a higher number of passive infinitives. At the other end of the scale it may be noticed that the fictional texts show a higher rate of *that*-deletion after the verbs *see* and *hear* and *Gower* also after *grant*.

For the last factor, factor 3, the *Paston Letters* are again clearly different from the fictional texts, but here there do not seem to be any linguistic features that are relevant to this study.

Finally, it should be remarked that as far as Latin (or French) influence is concerned, this is likely to be present in the official language used in the legal, documentary parts of the *Paston Letters*. This will have to be taken into account in the analysis of the data below.

## 2.2. The “ordinary” *aci* construction: Causatives and perception verbs

In order to gain an idea of what kind of verbs belonged here in the Middle English period, I have consulted the lists of *aci* verbs provided by Visser (1963–1973: 2250–2337). We will first consider here the so-called “pure” causatives included in Visser’s class II: verbs of causing. The relevant verbs for our corpus are *let*, *do*, *make*, and *cause*. Beside these causatives we find a number of verbs that have gradually developed into causatives or partly causatives: *haten* ‘to command’, *bidden*, and *suffren*. In Visser these are given under class VIII (verbs of ordering, etc.), classes IV (verbs of inducing, etc.) and VIII, and class V (verbs of allowing, etc.), respectively.<sup>13</sup> For the perception verbs I have decided to consider only the central ones *see* and *hear*, since the other verbs occur too seldom in the corpus to be very useful. The list of verbs with all the relevant syntactic information will be found in Appendix A.

### 2.2.1. The central causative verb: The case of *let*

The verb *let* (< OE *lætan*) can scarcely be called a full verb anymore in Middle English. Whereas in Old English, *lætan*, in the sense of ‘allow’, still occurs in a double NP construction or with a NP and finite clause,

this is no longer the case in our Middle English corpus. Its occurrence as a full verb, without a (non-)finite complement, is highly restricted, as the figures in the Appendix show. All full-verb occurrences of *let* concern a combination of *let* and a particle, or *let* used idiomatically with a noun (e. g., with *blood* or *tears*), or *let* used in a sense different from ‘allow, cause’. This shows that *let* cannot really be said to occur anymore by itself. Two of the reasons why *let* was gradually reduced to more or less auxiliary status may have been the rivalry of another full verb, i. e., OE *lettan* ‘to hinder’ (OE *lettan* and *lætan* had become similar in many of their present-tense forms by the Middle English period), and the more frequent uses of *lætan* as a full verb in the narrower senses of ‘leave’ and ‘lend’. What we see then in Middle English is that *let* ‘cause, allow’ has become quite separate from other full verb uses of *let*. Full-verb *let* appears in completely different complementation structures:

(5) *let* + adverb:

*A-nan swa þe dæi wes a-gan; swa heo zetæn openeden/  
‘Anon as the day was gone; so they gates opened/  
letten ut cnihtes; bigunnen muchele fihtes* (Br 2879–80)  
*let out knights; began great fights*  
‘As soon as the day had passed, they opened the gates, let out the knights, and began great fights’

(6) *let* + noun:

*Tho was ther manye teres lete, ...* (CA 2: 3228)  
*Then was there many tears let*  
‘Then many tears were shed there’

(7) *let* ‘leave’(i) + *to*-infinitive:

*Forthi to speke thou ne lete, ...* (CA 6: 450)  
*Therefore to speak you not leave*  
‘Therefore you do not stop speaking’

(ii) + *that*-clause:

*Ye wolden for noght elles lete, That I ne scholde*  
*you would for nothing else leave, that I not should*  
*be your wif* (CA 1: 3366–67)  
*be your wife*

‘You would do everything in your power for me not to become your wife’

## (iii) + NP object:

... *Thei bothe tornen hom ayein Unto Cartage and*  
 ... They both turn home again to Carthage and  
*scole lete* (CA 7: 2234–35)

school leave

‘They both go back again to Carthage and leave school’

(8)

*let* ‘hinder’

(i) + (*for*)*to*-infinitive:

... *þey schal not me let so for to do* (PL 415,16)

... they shall not me hinder so for to do

‘they shall not stop me from doing so’

(ii) + NP object:

... *but raþer þey wold spend mony to lette*

... but rather they would spend money to hinder

*it* (PL 37,12)

it

‘but they would rather spend money to prevent it’

(9)

*let* ‘to rent, hire out’

(i) + NP object:

*I pray yow help to lete it aswell as ye can, rather*

I pray you help to let it as well as you can, rather

*to hym þanne a-nother man ...* (PL 72,93–94)

to him than another man

‘I pray you will help me to let it as well as you can, sooner to him than to another man’

(ii) in passive:

... *it is laten for xxij li. by yere, ...* (PL 282,15)

... it is let for 22 pounds per year

Thus, *let* ‘allow, cause’ distinguishes itself from the other verbs *let* in that i) it never occurs without a clausal complement, ii) the clausal complement is always non-finite, iii) the infinitive is always bare.<sup>14</sup>

This consistent use of the bare infinitive further marks the near-auxiliary status of *let* in Middle English. In Old English the bare infinitive was the rule in the complementation of most verbs.<sup>15</sup> In the course of the Middle English period the majority of verbs changed over to a *to*-infinitive complement (for this development see especially Bock 1931), with the exception of the modal auxiliaries, aspectual auxiliaries like *gan*, and the perception verbs. This development therefore, as it were, left *let* isolated from the full verbs.

Next, we will look at the various types of infinitival constructions in which *let* ‘cause, allow’ occurs. Four different syntactic types may be distinguished:

- (i) the “subject” construction  
V + NP<sub>s</sub> + infinitive:
  - (a) NP<sub>s</sub> = animate (cf. [10])
  - (b) NP<sub>s</sub> = inanimate (cf. [11])
- (ii) the “object” construction  
V + NP<sub>o</sub> + infinitive (cf. [12])
- (iii) the “pure” infinitive construction  
V + (passive) infinitive (cf. [13])
- (iv) the passive-infinitive subject construction  
V + NP<sub>s</sub> + passive infinitive (cf. [14])

Some examples:

- (10) a. *Let hym let his master know þat ...* (PL 37,35–36)  
Let him let his master know that ...  
b. *I prai the let me noght mistime Mi*  
I pray you let me not mis-time my  
*schrifte, ...* (CA 1: 220–221)  
confession
- (11) a. *Hew down this tree and lett it falle* (CA 1: 2834)  
Cut down this tree and let it fall  
b. *...& heo letten heom to; gæres liðen* (Br 925)  
and they let them to; darts go  
‘and they let their darts go towards them’
- (12) a. *heo nom Æstrild & Abren; & lette heom*  
they took Æstrild and Abren and let them  
*ibinden* (Br 1244)  
bind  
‘they took Æstrild and Abren and had them bound’  
b. *Anon he let tuo cofres make Of o semblance and*  
Anon he let two chests make of one appearance and  
*of o make* (CA 5: 2295–2296)  
of one fashion  
‘At once he had two chests made, similar in appearance and design’
- (13) a. *This Leonin let evere aspie, And waiteth after gret*  
This Leonin lets ever spy, and waits after great

- beyete; Bot al for nocht, ... (CA 8: 1432–1434)*  
 profit; but all for nothing  
 ‘This Leonin had [her] watched all the time and was hoping  
 for great profit, but all in vain’
- b. *þe king lette blawen; & bonnien his ferden (Br 4016)*  
 the king let blow; and assemble his army  
 ‘the king let the trumpets be blown and his army be assembled’
- (14) a. *If that my litel Sone deie, Let him be beried in my*  
 If that my little son dies, let him be buried in my  
*grave Beside me, ... (CA 3: 292–294)*  
 grave beside me
- b. *I pray yow let thys be sped in all hast*  
 I pray you let this be done in all haste  
*possybyll (PL 339,62–63)*  
 possible

### 2.2.1.1. *Let and the subject construction*

The examples in (10) and (11) show that the subject NP is placed between the matrix verb and the infinitive. This is the normal, base-generated position for the NP, whether nominal or pronominal, animate or inanimate. All other positions for the subject are derived. Thus, we regularly find V-infinitive-NP<sub>s</sub> and NP<sub>s</sub>-V-infinitive orders. The subject NP is moved to final position when the NP is a so-called heavy constituent (15) or when it is a clause (16).<sup>16</sup>

- (15) *Heo letten to-gliden; gares swiþe scarpe. heo qualden*  
 They let go darts very sharp; they killed  
*þa Frensce (Br 877–878)*  
 the French
- (16) *... Let nevere thurgh thi Wraththe spille<sup>17</sup> Which*  
 ... Let never through your anger destroy whom  
*every kinde scholde save (CA 3: 342–343)*  
 every nature should spare  
 ‘Never let your anger destroy anyone whom every human  
 being should spare’

The subject NP is moved to the left before the matrix verb when it is topicalised or *wh*-moved. No examples were found of the latter:

- (17) *On he sette ana fla; & he feondliche droh. & þa*  
 On he set an arrow, and he strongly drew and the  
*fla lette gliden; bi Corineus siden.* (Br 730–731)  
 arrow let go by Corineus' side  
 'He set an arrow on and he drew with strength and let the  
 arrow go by Corineus' side'

In the oldest text, Layamon's *Brut*, we also find examples of NP<sub>s</sub>-V-infinitive where the NP<sub>s</sub> is a pronoun. In these instances the pronoun has been moved to a clitic position. Clitic movement was a regular feature of Old English, but it gradually disappeared in the Middle English period (cf. van Kemenade 1987). In the *Brut*, the pronoun already normally appears in the base-generated position. Only in four of the seventeen instances in which a pronoun occurs is the pronoun moved to a clitic position. (18) shows the pronoun in clitic position, (19) in base-generated position.

- (18) ... & *zirne þe liues grið that þu mid griðe*  
 and beg of-you of-life peace that you with peace  
*me leten uaren forð toward Rome.* (Br 5377–5378)  
 me let go forth toward Rome  
 'and beg of you grace of life that you will let me depart with  
 peace towards Rome'
- (19) & *let heom tilien þat lond* (Br 8413)  
 and let them till the land

The other, later texts show no vestiges of clitic movement.

The V-NP<sub>s</sub>-infinitive construction is common with all aci verbs (except *ask*), as the Appendix shows.

### 2.2.1.2. *Let* and the object construction

In object constructions in Old English, the object NP is usually placed between the matrix verb and the infinitive. This was the base-generated position in a language that was still basically SOV.<sup>18</sup> As in the case of the constructions discussed in section 2.2.1.1., the NP could be moved to preverbal position when it was a clitic pronoun or when it was topicalised. Likewise, it would move to post-infinitival position when the NP was "heavy" or a clause. Again, as we have seen above, cliticisation of the object pronoun was already no longer the rule in the earliest text of our corpus. Of the object pronouns in the *Brut*, seventeen occur in base-

generated pre-infinitival position, nineteen in cliticised preverbal position. It is interesting to see that in at least two cases<sup>19</sup>, the parallel, but slightly more modern version of the *Brut*, the *Otho* ms., has placed the pronoun in non-clitic position:

- (20) *oþer he heom lette quic flæn* (Caligula 3199)  
 or he them let quick flay  
*oþer cwick he lette heom flean* (Otho 3199)  
 or quick he let them flay  
 ‘or he let them be flayed alive’

(Cf. also Caligula/Otho 6345.) Cliticisation with *let* does not occur in the other three texts although there seems to be one exception in *Gower*:

- (21) *Bot Jupiter the glorious, ... Vengeance upon this cruel*  
 But Jupiter the glorious vengeance upon this cruel  
*king So tok, that he fro mannes forme Into a wolf*  
 king so took that he from man’s form into a wolf  
*him let transforme* (CA 7: 3360–3364)  
 him let transform  
 ‘But the glorious Jupiter took such vengeance upon this cruel  
 king that he had him changed from a man into a wolf’

It is likely, though, that the topicalisation of the constituent *into a wolf* has also attracted *him* into topic position; these two constituents form a unit in that they are both members of the small clause dependent on *transform* (for small clauses, see Stowell 1981).<sup>20</sup>

In the course of the Middle English period certain changes take place which directly affect the base position of the object NP in this construction. The gradual change from SOV (in Old English) to SVO (in Middle English)<sup>21</sup> will eventually force the infinitival object to change from a pre- to a post-infinitival position. This change can be very clearly traced in our corpus. To show these developments in some detail, I will consider the use of the V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive construction not just after *let* but also after the other aci verbs in the corpus.

### 2.2.1.2.1. Changes in the object construction after aci verbs

When we consider the V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive construction occurring after aci verbs in the *Brut*, the NP<sub>o</sub> still regularly precedes the infinitive except, as we have seen, when the NP<sub>o</sub> is either a pronoun/topic or a heavy constituent/clause. After the verbs *see*, *hear*, and *bid* there is no exception

to this rule.<sup>22</sup> After *haten*, five out of the eleven cases have V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order when there can be no question of movement. After the verb *let*, the number is even higher for the *Brut*: fifty of the ninety-six instances have V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order with the NP base-generated in that position.

In the three later texts we see a gradual reduction of the pre-infinitival position. With the verb *see*, the V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive construction soon becomes rare. It still occurs four times in *Gower* but not at all in the *Paston Letters* and in *Malory*.<sup>23</sup> It is not replaced by the V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> construction, as in the case of *let*, presumably because the *that*-clause, already a frequent alternative, could be used instead. The four instances in *Gower* are of interest because at least three of them are misinterpreted by the editor:

- (22) a. *And now to loke on every side, A man may se the*  
 And now looking everywhere, a man can see the  
*word divide, The werres ben so*  
 world divide, the wars are so  
*general ... (CA Prol. 895–897)*  
 general  
 ‘And now a man only has to look around him and he will see  
 the world divided, wars being so common’
- b. ... *This queene unto a pleine rod, Wher that sche*  
 ... This queen onto a field rode, where she  
*hoved and abod To se diverse game*  
 stayed and waited to see various games  
*pleie (CA 6: 1847–1849)*  
 play  
 ‘This queen rode into a field where she stopped and waited to  
 see various games be played’
- c. ... *and sih my colour fade, Myn yhen dimme ...*,  
 ... and saw my colour fade, my eyes grow-dim,  
*and al my face with Elde I myhte se*  
 and all my face with old-age I could see  
*deface (CA 8: 2825–2828)*  
 “deface” [disfigure]  
 ‘and [I] saw my colour fade, my eyes grow dim and I could  
 see all my face being disfigured by old age’

(The fourth instance, Prol. 880, also involves the verb *divide*.) The verbs *divide* and *deface* are marked by the editor as being intransitive in these cases. He gives no explicit reference to the status of *pleie* in line 1849.



The verb is given as both transitive and intransitive in the glossary. However, when *pleie* is used intransitively, it always has an animate subject. In (22 b), therefore, *pleie* must be transitive and *game* object. The likelihood that *divide* and *deface* are intransitive is very slight. For *divide*, the *Oxford English Dictionary* only gives the intransitive (reflexive) reading from 1526 onwards, while for *deface* it gives no intransitive reading at all. In the other two cases in which, according to the editor, these two verbs are used intransitively, they follow the verbs *bidden* and *maken*.<sup>24</sup> After these aci verbs a V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive analysis is again equally possible. It seems that the editor has been influenced in his interpretation of these cases by his Modern English intuitions, where the only infinitival construction possible with *see* is the V-NP<sub>s</sub>-infinitive construction.

It is not unthinkable that the gradual loss of the V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive construction after aci verbs was in some cases furthered by the fact that a number of verbs could be both transitive and intransitive so that original NP<sub>o</sub> constructions could easily be re-analysed or re-classified as the, by now more current, V-NP<sub>s</sub>-infinitive construction. I found quite a number of such ambiguous examples especially after the verb *let*.<sup>25</sup> Of extremely frequent occurrence here is the verb *blow*. It may not be too bold to state that *blow* acquired its intransitive sense of ‘to emit a sound’ – which only became current in Middle English – because of its frequent use in constructions such as (24).

- (23)       ... *sir Tristram harde a grete horne*  
               ... Sir Tristram heard a great horn  
               *blowe ... (MA 729,17)*  
               blow

It is presumably still only transitive in the *Brut* because all four aci constructions with *blawen* show V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order rather than V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive:

- (24)       *He lette blawwen bemen; and nam al þa burhwes*  
               He let blow trumpets; and took all the boroughs  
               *þa weoren on his broðer londe (Br 2227–2228)*  
               that were on his brother’s land  
               ‘He caused the trumpets to be blown and took all the strong-  
               holds that were on his brother’s land’

The V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive construction after the verb *hear* dwindles too. The picture is somewhat obscure in that, in the majority of instances I have found, the NP object is a clause. This automatically entails move-

ment of the object to post-infinitival position. However, in *Gower*, we only find three V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive constructions — all with a pronoun — and two V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> ones (against zero in the *Brut*), where the position of the object NP is not due to a movement rule. In the *Paston Letters*, one example was found (PL 32,3) but in *Malory* there are no longer any V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive constructions. As in *Gower*, the new V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order is not frequently attested either. I have come across only one example in the *Paston Letters*, none in *Malory*; the finite clause complement may have been used instead (cf. *see*).

After causative *do*, the development is clear. In *Gower* we still find six V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive orders (three with pronouns, three with nouns) but also five with non-moved post-infinitival NP<sub>o</sub>. In the *Paston Letters*, we only have five examples of the old order (all pronouns) as against forty-eight examples of V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> with a non-moved NP. In this text even pronouns now occur there, for example:

- (25) *I pre yow, yf ye dor tak yt uppe-on yow, þat ye*  
 I pray you if you dare take it upon you that you  
*wyl weche-safe to do mak yt a-yens ye come*  
 will vouchsafe to do make it by-the-time you come  
*hom; for I hadde neuer more nede þer-of þan I haue*  
 home; for I had never more need thereof than I have  
*now, for I ham waxse so fetys þat I may*  
 now, for I am grown so elegant that I can  
*not be gyrte in no barre of no gyrdyl þat I*  
 not be girded in no bar of no girdle that I  
*haue but of on* (PL 125,13–16)  
 have except one

‘I pray you, if you can take it upon you, that you will be kind enough to have it made by the time you come home; for I had never more need of it than I have now, for I have grown so “elegant” that no girdle that I possess fits me, except one’

(See also PL 125,12; 130,31; 180,93, etc.) In *Malory*, causative *do* is rare and only occurs in combination with *make*. All six recorded cases, however, are instances of V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> with a non-moved object.

With causative *do* (and also *let* and *make* — see below) the change-over from pre- to post-infinitival object NP is much clearer than with the perception verbs because here there is no viable alternative in the form of a *that*-clause (or any other finite complement). *That*-clauses are non-existent or rare after causatives. No examples at all are found after

let; only two after *do*, both in *Gower*; after *make*, seven examples have been attested in *Gower* but most of these could, and presumably ought to, be interpreted as consecutive clauses:

- (26) a. *Anon the wylde loves rage, In which noman him*  
 Anon the wild love's rage, in which no one himself  
*can governe, Hath mad him that he can noght werne,*  
 can rule, has made him that he cannot refuse,  
*Bot fell al hol to hire assent* (CA 1: 2620–2623)  
 but [he] fell all wholly to her will  
 'All at once the wild passion of love, in which no one may rule himself, has made him such that he cannot refuse; he had to do what she wanted'
- b. *For of Uluxes thus I rede, ... His eloquence and his*  
 For of Ulysses thus I read, his eloquence and his  
*facounde Of goodly wordes whiche he tolde, Hath*  
 facundity of gracious words which he spoke, has  
*mad that Antenor him solde The*  
 made that Antenor him sold the  
*toun, ...* (CA 7: 1558–1563)  
 town  
 'For I have read about Ulysses that his eloquence and his gracious use of words had forced Antenor to sell him the town'

None are found in the *Paston Letters*, and only one dubious case in *Malory*:

- (27) ... *Merlion dud make kynge Arthure that sir Gawayne*  
 ... Merlin did make king Arthur that Sir Gawain  
*was sworne to telle of hys adventure ...* (MA 108,26–27)  
 was sworn to tell of his adventure  
 'Merlin caused King Arthur to make Sir Gawain swear that he would tell of his adventure'

In the C text, the verb *make* has been replaced by *desire*, with which a *that*-clause is quite regular.

Only with the new causatives *cause* and *suffer* (both borrowed from French in the late Middle English period) do we see an occasional *that*-clause. The infinitival object construction is rare here too. No examples have been found after *suffer*. Only one instance was found after *cause* in *Gower* and one in the *Paston Letters*, both with a post-infinitival non-moved NP.

Next, we come to *make*. *Make* is a late developer as a causative. It does not occur at all as such in original Old English, nor in the *Brut*. In the other texts of the corpus, it is more frequent in the subject than in the object construction. In *Gower* it occurs only three times in an object construction. Moreover, all three cases resemble the ambiguous cases discussed in (22), in which the pre-infinitival NP could be interpreted as both object (of a transitive verb) and subject (of an intransitive verb). The dictionary still classifies all three verbs as transitive.

- (28) ... *That if the lawe be forbore Withouten*  
 ... That if the law is not-applied, without  
*execucioun, It makth a lond torne up so*  
 execution, it makes a country turn upside  
*down* (CA 7: 3080–3082)  
 down  
 ‘... that, if the law is not applied, not carried out, it causes  
 havoc in a country’

(The other two instances are found in 3: 822 and 4: 2844.) In the *Paston Letters* there are no instances of the object construction after *make*. In *Malory* there are thirteen instances, all with V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order, of which one is a clause and twelve are non-moved NPs.

Finally we return to *let*. We have seen that in the *Brut* this verb already shows a high frequency of the new object order, V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub>. In *Gower* only seven examples preserve the old order (four pronominal, three nominal objects), sixteen have the new order – without movement being involved –, while nine have this order with a moved NP object. In the *Paston Letters* only nine cases are found, but all nine show the new order with a non-moved NP. The change is even clearer in *Malory*. All 149 instances have the new order, with 119 involving a non-moved object NP.

The relatively high frequency of post-infinitival object order after *let* in the *Brut* needs further investigation. *Let* is also the only verb that allows a post-infinitival subject when this subject is neither a heavy constituent nor a clause. Some examples:

- (29) a. *Cnihtes fused me mid; leteð slæpen þene*  
 Knights come me with, let sleep the-ACC  
*king* (Br 368)  
 king  
 (cf. Otho 368:

- Cniptes comeþ mid me let þane king slepe)*  
 knights come with me let the-ACC king sleep
- b. *Heo letten gliden heora flan & þa eotendes*  
 They let glide their arrows and the giants  
*flu3en* (Br 924)  
 flee  
 ‘they let fly their arrows and caused the giants to flee’

That this is not an order typical only of poetry must be clear from these examples from *Malory*,

- (30) a. *And so they let ren their horsis* (MA 658,23–24)  
 And so they let run their horses  
 ‘And so they let their horses run’
- b. *Lette go my hande* (MA 86,26)  
 let go my hand  
 ‘Let my hand go’

A tentative conclusion that could be drawn from the above facts is that *let* seems to have a slight preference, in comparison with other causatives and perception verbs, to occur on the immediate left of the infinitive without an intervening NP. What might be the reasons for this? I would like to suggest some possible causes: 1) *Let* occurs more often than the other verbs with an infinitive only (see section 2.2.1.3.). When there is no NP, infinitive and matrix verb are normally found next to one another. 2) *Let*, more than the other *aci* verbs became “auxiliarised” in the Middle English period (see section 2.2.1.). With “true” auxiliaries (modals, inchoatives, etc.) the most usual position of the infinitive was immediately after the auxiliary. In subject constructions the infinitive already followed the auxiliary in the Old English period, because with an auxiliary the subject of the infinitive has to be PRO; it cannot be a lexical subject:

- (31) *þat boa sculde fallen; fader & his moder. þorh*  
 that both should fell; father and his mother through  
*him heo sculden dei3en* (Br 143–144)  
 him they should die  
 ‘who would slay both his father and his mother; through him  
 they would die’

The tendency for the auxiliary and the infinitive also to stick together in object constructions (V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive) is already clearly present in the

*Brut.*<sup>26</sup> With pronouns we usually find NP<sub>o</sub>-V-infinitive order, with nouns V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub>:

- (32) a. *Wel ich hit may suggen* (Br 494)  
 Well I it may say  
 ‘Well I may say it’  
 b. *þine sustren scullen habben mi kine-lond* (Br 1545)  
 thy sisters shall have my kingdom

We see a similar tendency for auxiliary and past participle to appear together rather than separated:

- (33) a. *þat child was ihaten Brutus* (Br 151)  
 that child was called Brutus  
 b. *þa þat iherde his kun (...) þat he þe flo*  
*heuede idrawn* (Br 162–163)  
 had drawn  
 ‘When his kindred heard that ... that he had drawn the arrow’

What I am suggesting, then, is that *let*, in its process of “auxiliarisation”, may have followed the common pattern of the auxiliaries.

There is no evidence for early Middle English that *let* + infinitive could be looked upon as an idiomatic unit which would account for the non-separation of matrix verb and infinitive.<sup>27</sup> This seems indeed a later development that becomes visible only in *Malory*. It may well be the last convulsion of *let* + infinitive order – which was clearly an odd customer within the syntactic system – before the construction falls into final disuse (in present-day English only a few idiomatic phrases have survived, such as *let go*, *let slip*, *let see*).

The frequency of the use of *let* + infinitive is also increased by the fact that in the course of the Middle English period there seems to be a tendency for causative *do* to be reinforced by *let*, at least in certain texts, presumably to distinguish causative and periphrastic uses of *do*. In these cases *let* functions as matrix verb and *do* as infinitive. Fifteen such combinations have been found, for instances, in *Gower*. In all instances except one, *let* and *do* are found consecutively. This phenomenon again stresses the auxiliary nature of *let*.

### 2.2.1.3. *Let* and the “pure” infinitive construction

More than any other *aci* verb, *let* occurs with an infinitive only. In the earliest text of the *Brut*, we come across a fair number of such examples, nine in all. In all cases, although there is no explicit NP, it can be said

that the NP is implicitly present. In four instances, it is the subject NP that has been omitted, since the infinitive is an intransitive verb, for example:

- (34) *Lette þe king gan awal; & lude clepien ouer-al.*  
 Let the king go on-wall and loudly call overall  
*and seide þat Leir kin; icume wes to*  
 and said that Leir king come was to  
*londen* (Br 1820–1821)  
 land  
 ‘The king let [people] go on the wall and loudly proclaim everywhere and [they] said that king Leir had come to this land’

In the other five cases a transitive verb is used so that there is, in fact, neither a subject nor an object:

- (35) *þa lette þe king blawen; & beonnede his*  
 then let the king blow and summoned his  
*eorles* (Br 8282)  
 earls  
 ‘then the king let [heralds] blow [trumpets] and summoned his earls’

The omission of the object NP is quite common and can be seen everywhere from Old English to present-day English. Leaving out the subject in this way is not possible in present-day English. In Old English it was fairly usual for the subject NP to be left out with causative verbs provided this subject was non-specific.

The use of *let* + infinitive decreases in the later texts (only two instances in *Gower* and none in the *Paston Letters*)<sup>28</sup>, but picks up again in *Malory*. There it is presumably due to a new development, already referred to at the end of the previous section, i. e., the “idiomatisation” of *let* + infinitive, because *Malory*’s twenty-six examples involve only a very small number of infinitives, mainly *be* and *see*, and to a lesser extent *blow* and *ordain*.

It is noticeable that this pure-infinitive construction is far more frequent with *let* than with any other aci verb. Beside the thirty-seven cases attested with *let*, none were found with *see* and *hear*, none with *do*, one with *make*, seven with *bid* (also an archaic verb, used with infinitive only in the *Brut*), two with *suffer* and two with *cause*.

2.2.1.4. *Let* and the passive-infinitive subject construction

The use of the passive infinitive after *let* is a new development which starts in the Middle English period. There are a few examples of *letan* + passive infinitive in Old English but they can all be ascribed to Latin influence (cf. Callaway 1913: 120 ff.). The passive infinitive only becomes common at the end of the Middle English period. As far as *let* is concerned, I have attested just one instance in the *Brut*, and here the passive infinitive is stative. In other words, the past participle resembles an adjective and the whole construction could therefore be interpreted as a subject construction (as described in section 2.2.1.1.), with *be* as copula followed by an adjective:

- (36) *þa lette he his crihtes; dæies & nihtes.*  
 then let he his knights day-GEN and night-GEN  
*æuere beon iwepned;* (Br 8155–8156)  
 ever be weaponed  
 ‘then he caused his knights always to be armed, day and night’

In *Gower*, we come across six examples of the passive infinitive. Of these, one is clearly stative – the past participle even has adjectival form (4: 3221) – one may be stative (1: 1254) and four are non-stative. An example of the latter:

- (37) *Bot of o thing I schal thee preie, If that my litel*  
 But of one thing I shall you pray if my little  
*Sone deie, Let him be beried in my grave Beside*  
 son dies let him be buried in my grave beside  
*me* (CA 3: 291–294)  
 me  
 ‘But I would ask you one thing, if my little son dies, let him be buried in my grave, beside me’

In (37) the reference is clearly to the future and *be beried* should be looked upon as a future activity rather than a state.

The passive infinitive increases enormously in the *Paston Letters*, where no less than forty-two examples have been attested. Of these the greater majority is non-stative, none are clearly adjectival:

- (38) *I prey yow let them be sealyd and sent me by*  
 I pray you let them be sealed and sent to-me by  
*Radley wyth the deedys ther-in.* (PL 349,8–9)  
 Radley with the deeds therein



All these passive infinitives occur in the informal letters, not in the official documents; they are therefore part of the colloquial, intimate style of the letters.

Why this sudden increase in the use of passive infinitives after *let*? It seems to me that this can only be linked to the very clear reduction of the object construction in these same *Letters*. Only nine such constructions occur as against 226 subject constructions. Compare these numbers to the occurrences in the *Brut* and *Gower*:

Subject construction:	<i>Brut</i> : 48	<i>Gower</i> : 62
Object construction:	<i>Brut</i> : 96	<i>Gower</i> : 34
Passive-infinitive subject construction:	<i>Brut</i> : 1	<i>Gower</i> : 6

Why is it that the subject constructions, with both active and passive infinitives, begin to dominate, while the object constructions fade out? In section 2.2.1.2.1., we have already seen that there was a problem with these object constructions. The original V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive order was no longer acceptable once the base order had changed from SOV to SVO. The new order that emerges — V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> — seems also not entirely satisfactory, seeing that it is being (partly) replaced by a passive infinitive.

The problem with the new post-infinitival order is that it is rather the odd one out in the grammatical system. This V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order is common with true auxiliaries such as modals, etc., where the subject of the infinitive is an empty non-lexical element, PRO (for the term, see Chomsky 1981). With the modals, infinitival PRO is always coindexed with the subject of the matrix (= modal) verb. This is not the case with *aci* verbs like *let*. Here we also have a non-lexical subject of the infinitive, PRO, but this PRO is arbitrary in reference. Another point is that *aci* verbs like *let* occur in a rival construction where the infinitive does have a separate lexical subject, i. e., the subject construction, a construction in which the modals cannot occur.

These above two factors and the increasing obligatoriness of a syntactic subject in Middle English (cf. note 28) must have initiated the move towards a unitary (subject) construction. In some cases, as we have seen above, the infinitive used in the “old” object construction was interpretable as both transitive and intransitive. In that case, the change-over to the subject construction could be smoothly made. In other cases, a passive-infinitive subject construction could be resorted to.

This fairly straightforward hypothesis seems to become quite overturned when we look at the figures for *Malory*:

Subject construction:	229
Object construction:	149 (all with V-infinitive-NP <sub>o</sub> base order)
Passive-infinitive subject construction:	19

Although there are a fair number of passive infinitives, the object construction still dominates. The only explanation for this state of affairs can be that in Malory's dialect *let* + consecutive infinitive had very much become an idiomatic phrase. It is here that we have seen a large number of "pure" infinitive constructions after *let* (cf. section 2.2.1.3.), and it is also here that we have seen a relatively high number of instances of *let* + infinitive order even in the V-NP<sub>s</sub>-infinitive construction, where it normally does not occur:

- (39) a. *lette go myn hande* (MA 86.26)  
 b. *And so they let ren their horsis* (MA 658,23–24)

*Malory* also provides us with some neat parallel examples that show that the object construction and the passive-infinitive construction were semantically very close.

- (40) a. i *the two kynges lette departe the seven hondred*  
 the two kings let split-up the seven hundred  
*knyghtes* (MA 23.9)  
 knights  
 'the two kings let the seven hundred knights be split up'  
 ii *So he let his oste be departed in six*  
 So he let his army be split-up into six  
*batayles* (MA 621,26)  
 battalions  
 b. i *Than kyng Arthure lette sende for all the children that*  
 Then King Arthur let send for all the children that  
*were born in May-day* (MA 55,19–20)  
 were born on May Day  
 'Then King Arthur let all the children be sent for who were  
 born on May Day'  
 ii. *And this lord, sir Ector, lete hym be sent for for to*  
 And this lord, Sir Ector, let him be sent for to  
*come ...* (MA 10,40–11,1)  
 come  
 'And let this lord, Sir Ector, be sent for ...'

- c. i *So kyng Arthur lette bury this knyght*  
 So King Arthur let bury this knight  
*rychely, ...* (MA 80,21)  
 richly  
 ‘Thus King Arthur had this knight buried richly’
- ii *Take the knyght and lette hym be buried in an*  
 Take the knight and let him be buried in a  
*ermytage* (MA 119,5–6)  
 hermitage

Another interesting example comes from *Paston Letter* 42, of which we have three versions, a rough draft, a second draft, and a fair copy. In the rough draft we come across the phrase *and cause þe pese to kep* ‘and cause the peace to keep’ (1.16). In the second draft and fair copy this has been changed to *and cause the peas to be kept* (11.35 and 57 respectively). The semantic closeness of the constructions allows the syntactic replacement of one by the other, since communication was not endangered.

#### 2.2.1.4.1. The new passive infinitive with the other *aci* verbs

The idiomatisation of *let* referred to above does not seem to occur with the other causative verbs<sup>29</sup>, and we see that here *Malory* does follow the trend sketched above.

	<i>do</i>	<i>make</i>	<i>suffer</i>	<i>cause</i>
Subject construction:	7 <sup>30</sup>	122	76	35
Object construction:	6	13	—	—
Passive-infinitive subject construction:	—	19	9	3

It is not surprising that in our corpus the object construction does not occur at all with the recently introduced French verbs *cause* and *suffer*. These verbs only became current when the object construction was already on its way out.

Developments in the complementation of perception verbs are perhaps somewhat different in that in this case the original object construction could be replaced by finite complements, which had always been in use side by side with the non-finite complements (I am ignoring possible subtle semantic differences at this stage). Eleven examples of a passive infinitive have been found after *see* (of these, five are bare<sup>31</sup> and six have

a *to*-infinitive) and none after *hear*. I will discuss the complementation of these two verbs separately.

After *see* the passive infinitive is less rare in our corpus than one would perhaps have expected, considering the possibility of replacement by a finite clause and the fact that the older object construction was not very frequent. As we have seen (section 2.2.1.2.1.) there is only one dubious example of the object construction in the *Brut*, plus one instance that is ambiguous between a subject and an object construction. In *Gower* there are four straight examples and nine ambiguous ones. No examples, not even ambiguous ones, were attested in either the *Paston Letters* or in *Malory*. One of the reasons for the fair number of passive infinitives after *see* may be the frequent occurrence of past-participle complements with *see* (in contrast to *hear*). Formally, the introduction of the passive infinitive would therefore have meant only a small change to an already existing structure.

It is interesting to notice that the passive-infinitive construction that occurs after *see* is not in all cases simply a replacement of the old object construction. One of the essential characteristics of the older, active, infinitival construction (both of the subject and the object type) is that there must be identity of tense domain between infinitive and matrix verb; in other words, the physical perception itself and the activity expressed in the infinitive must take place simultaneously (for more details, see Fischer 1989). Simultaneity is also present in the new, passive construction as can be seen in *I saw the cat be(ing) run over by a car*. However, simultaneity is no longer a necessity in the new passive constructions.<sup>32</sup> In *Gower*, for instance, all five instances of the passive infinitive after *see* refer to a (possible) future activity. To accentuate the break between the tense domain of the matrix verb and that of the infinitive, two instances even have the infinitive marker *to*, which never occurs in the active infinitive construction with *see*.<sup>33</sup> Some examples:

- (41) a. ... *And sein, it thoghte hem gret pite To se so*  
 ... And say it seemed them great pity to see so  
*worthi on as sche, With such a child as ther was*  
 worthy one as she, with such a child as there was  
*bore, So sodeinly to be forlore.* (CA 2: 1239–1242)  
 born, so suddenly to be destroyed  
 ‘And [they] said that it seemed to them a great pity to see so  
 worthy a woman as she was so suddenly be destroyed together  
 with the child that was born to her’

- b. *And thereupon to make an ende The Souldan hise  
 And thereupon to make an end the Sultan his  
 hostages sende To Rome, of Princes Sones twelve:  
 hostages sent to Rome, of Princes' sons, twelve:  
 Whereof the fader in himselve Was glad, and with the  
 whereof the father in himself was glad, and by the  
 Pope avised Tuo Cardinals he hath assised With  
 Pope determined two cardinals he has appointed with  
 othre lordes many mo, That with his doghter  
 other lords many more, who with his daughter  
 scholden go, To se the Souldan be  
 should go to see the Sultan be  
 converted (CA 2: 631–638)  
 converted*

'And thereupon, to conclude this, the Sultan sent his hostages to Rome, twelve Princes' sons; and the father was glad of this, and he has appointed two Cardinals, approved by the Pope, and many other lords who should accompany his daughter to witness the conversion of the Sultan'

We also see that in these constructions the meaning of *see* may change from one of physical perception to one of mental perception ("experience") or to the meaning 'to see to', 'to make sure that'. In this latter meaning the verb *see* comes very close to a causative. It is possible that this too may have stimulated the development of the passive infinitive after *see* (for other such cases, see also [60] and [62 b] in section 2.3.).

The development after the other perception verb *hear* is in some ways rather different from that after *see*. As with *see*, finite complements may have taken the place of infinitival ones in some cases. However, with *hear*, there are no examples of the new passive-infinitive construction at all in the corpus. At the same time the old object construction remains quite common. This seems in conflict with our hypothesis. When we take a closer look at these object constructions, however, it is found that they are of a very restricted nature at the end of the Middle English period. In the *Brut*, and to some extent also still in *Gower*, all orders are represented, and the object could be a clause, a noun, or a pronoun. In the *Paston Letters* and *Malory*, the object is always a clause – which comes naturally in final position. If it is not a clause (in about one third of the cases – see Appendix), it is an element that is co-referential with a clause, especially the element *as*,

- (42) *Custans Mak and Kentyng wold a dysavowyd here*  
 Custans Mak and Kenting would have disavowed their  
*swtys rytz fayn þe last hundred, as I*  
 suits very gladly at the last sitting of the Court, as I  
*herd sayn of rytz thryfty men; (PL 131,7–9)*  
 heard say by very worthy men

Obviously, these clausal constructions could never be replaced by passive-infinitive constructions.

A certain amount of idiomatisation has occurred with *hear*, too, which may account for the continuing presence of the object construction (cf. *let*). This started much earlier than with *let* (not surprisingly, perhaps, when one considers the far greater restrictions on the kind of infinitive that could go with *hear*). In the *Brut* all but one instance of the infinitive following *hear* concern the verbs *say* (twelve instances) and *tell* (three). In *Gower*, all but three concern the verbs *say* (fourteen), *tell* (seventeen), and *divise* 'tell' (six). In the *Paston Letters*, the infinitive has become restricted to *say* (twenty-nine examples) with only one exception. The same holds true for *Malory*: *say* is used throughout.<sup>34</sup> *Hear say* and *hear tell*, moreover, have remained idiomatic phrases up until the present day.

Finally, something must be said about the stylistic connotations of the new passive-infinitive subject construction after causatives and perception verbs. I have already mentioned that all occurrences after *let* are incurred in informal style. The instances with *see*, *make*, and *suffer* are also found exclusively in informal texts. The situation is different after *cause* and *do*. Of the eleven occurrences with *do*, seven occur in the formal documents of the *Paston Letters*, the other four are informal (three in the *Letters*, one in *Gower*). Of the nineteen passive infinitives after *cause*, eight occur in formal sections of the *Letters*, while eleven are informal (eight in the *Letters*, three in *Malory*).

### 2.2.2. Conclusion

I have tried to show in the previous sections that the emergence of a passive-infinitive construction after causative verbs may well be a consequence of the change in basic word order that took place in the course of the late Old English/early Middle English period. This change in word order did not interfere with the original subject construction but caused havoc in the object construction. It made the old V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive order

next to impossible, since in the new SVO order the NP before the infinitive would be looked upon as a subject rather than an object.

The consequences (or remedies used) in this situation were the following: i) In some cases, the infinitive could also be interpreted as intransitive (or was re-interpreted as intransitive) so that the "old" object construction became a subject construction. ii) In some cases, the old object construction could be replaced by already existing finite complements. This possibility, however, was generally only available for the perception verbs because the causative verbs (with the exception of the new causatives *cause* and *suffer*, although even here the number is extremely small) never allowed a finite complement. iii) We see a development towards V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order. Although this is a natural development given the new SVO order, it clashed with other syntactic patterns in the system: a) This order is typical of auxiliary verbs which seem in this period to begin to claim an exclusive right to it, especially the pattern with a bare infinitive (which was also the usual infinitive after most causatives). It should be noted that this also includes the pattern that develops for periphrastic (auxiliary) *do*. b) The new V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order also clashes with the pattern that is most frequent with causatives and perception verbs and that is the V-NP<sub>s</sub>-infinitive pattern of the subject construction. Consequently, it became natural, if not necessary, for a new V-NP<sub>s</sub>-infinitive construction to develop that could take the place of the old object construction. This then was the subject construction with a passive infinitive.<sup>35</sup>

How far this new subject construction can also be said to have been influenced by Latin patterns is still a question that needs to be addressed. I have looked at the rise of the passive infinitive in the history of English elsewhere (cf. Fischer 1991). There I have come to the conclusion that the appearance of passive infinitives in Middle English is mainly due to two factors: i) The replacement of the bare infinitive by the *to*-infinitive in most infinitival constructions. This enabled the Old English bare passive infinitive to spread to positions from which it was barred before. ii) The need to replace a number of Old English active-infinitive constructions that had only an object but no subject, due to changes elsewhere in the grammar. Latin influence was discarded as a causatory factor although it could, to some extent, have shown the way in which the original active infinitive could be adapted (i. e., as a mechanism, not a cause). Even this is not very likely, however, in that a number of the active infinitives replaced by passive ones had no comparable passive construction in Latin itself.<sup>36</sup>

In the following section, we will have a look at other passive-infinitive complements that became current after a different class of aci verbs in the late Middle English period.

### 2.3. The passive infinitive after “persuade”-type verbs

As with the causatives, I have consulted Visser’s (1963–1973) list of aci verbs in order to pick out the “persuade”-verbs relevant to our period and to this investigation. Thus, I have only investigated those verbs that could be suspected to occur with a passive-infinitive construction because they occur with one in Visser or in the corpus itself. The verbs comprise the following three of Visser’s classes: IV, verbs of inducing etc. (pp. 2270–2290), here represented by *ask*, *ordain*, *pray*, *require*; V, verbs of allowing etc. (pp. 2290–2298), represented by *grant* and *license*; VIII, verbs of ordering etc. (pp. 2302–2307), represented by *charge*, *command*, and *order*. I have also included the verbs *desire* and *warn*. The first, although classified by Visser as a “verb of wishing”, clearly also functions as a “verb of inducing” in the late Middle English period. The second is classified by Visser as a “verb of saying”, but its complement structures in Middle English make clear that it shares more features with the verbs of classes VIII or IV above.

Although the subject or aci construction after “persuade”-verbs on the one hand and causatives and perception verbs on the other look the same on the surface, they are syntactically rather different. The arguments are by now well-known and described in most transformational-generative handbooks. Briefly, they concern i) the lack of paraphrase between active and passive constructions with verbs like *persuade* but not with *see*, etc., ii) the possibility of a double object construction after *persuade* but not *see*, iii) the existence of selection restrictions between the matrix verb and the following NP with *persuade* but not *see*, as illustrated in (43).<sup>37</sup>

- (43) i/a. *I persuaded a specialist to examine John* ≠  
 b. *I persuaded John to be examined by a specialist*  
 c. *I saw a specialist examine(-ing) John* =  
 d. *I saw John be(ing) examined by a specialist*  
 ii/a. *I persuaded John to give the lecture*  
 b. *I persuaded John that he would give the lecture*  
 c. *I saw John give the lecture*  
 d. \**I saw John that he gave the lecture*



- iii/a. \**I persuaded a house to be built (by John)*  
 b. *I saw a house be(ing) built (by John)*

These syntactic criteria also apply to the “see”- and “persuade”-verbs in the Old and Middle English periods (for an overview, see Fischer 1989).

Given the syntactic nature of the “persuade”-verbs, especially the strong bond (both syntactic and semantic) between the matrix verb and the following NP, it is not surprising that, what I have termed the object construction (described in section 2.2.1.2.) does not occur with “persuade”-verbs, in either Old, Middle, or present-day English,

- (44) \**I persuaded a house to build*  
 \**I persuaded to build a house*

As Los (1986) has described it, “persuade”-verbs are “interactive” verbs (unlike “see”-verbs): their nature requires interaction between their subject and their object or “recipient”. For that reason, both subject and object need to be animate and both need to be present on the surface. Los (1986: 42) further remarks that the infinitival phrase must express “an action that can be executed or in some way controlled by the recipient”. This additional requirement shows also how the causatives clearly differ from “persuade”-verbs, in that with causatives the “recipient” typically does not control the action expressed by the infinitive.

When we consider the list of “persuade” verbs in Appendix B, we note that quite a few of them seem to occur after all in object constructions, that is, in constructions where there is a matrix verb, an infinitive dependent on it, and a NP object of the infinitive. A closer look, however, shows that these are rather different from the typical object constructions after perception verbs and causatives (but cf. the discussion of the verb *command* below and note 40). Some examples:

- (45) a. *Who that only for Cristes sake Desireth*  
 Who only for Christ’s sake desires  
*cure forto take, ... (CA Prol.: 291 – 292)*  
 charge [of a parish] to take  
 ‘Who only desires to take charge of a parish for the sake of Christ’
- b. *Neuerthelesse, I assayed hym iff he wolde, iff nede*  
 Nevertheless, I appealed to-him if he would, if need  
*hadde ben, gyvyn me a xij monyth lenger respight,*  
 had been give me a 12 months longer respite,

*whyche he grauntyd to do.* (PL 286,11–13)

which he granted to do.

‘Nevertheless, I appealed to him whether he would, if the need should arise, give me twelve months longer respite, which he granted to do’

- c. *Than was she hevye and wroth that hir chyldirne*  
Then was she vexed and angry that her children  
*sholde nat rejoyse the contrey of Lyonesse, wherefore*  
would not enjoy the country of Lioness, wherefore  
*this quene ordayned for to poyson yong*  
this queen planned to poison young  
*Trystrams* (MA 373,16–19)  
Tristram

- d. *Bot over this nou wolde I preie To wite what the*  
But next-to this now would I pray to know what the  
*branches are of Avarice, ...* (CA 5: 1964–1966)  
subdivisions are of Avarice

In all the examples in (45), the subject of the matrix verb and the subject of the infinitive have the same referent. In other words, these constructions have a controlled PRO and not an arbitrary PRO as was the case with the object constructions after causatives and perception verbs. The constructions in (45) therefore resemble the infinitival constructions after auxiliary verbs. This also explains why there was no need for these constructions to disappear as was the case with the object constructions after causatives and perception verbs.<sup>38</sup>

That the above “persuade”-verb constructions appear in (45) without a recipient is in itself remarkable. As I said above, with “persuade”-verbs the recipient must normally be present. We indeed do not find constructions of type (45) with the verbs *charge* and *warn* in our list. This list, however, is rather unrepresentative of prototypical “persuade”-verbs in that all the verbs in the list are selected for the very reason that they share a feature with the causative verbs discussed earlier, i. e., the use of a passive-infinitive construction. I will try to show that the “persuade”-verbs in the list follow the causatives in this respect because they already resemble the causatives in other ways. Before I proceed to discuss the similarities between these verbs and the causatives, I will take a more detailed look at the behaviour of the verb *command*.

*Command* is a perfect example of a “persuade”-verb developing more and more into a pure causative. In this it is not alone. In other languages,

too, we can see a similar development. A good example is Latin *iubeo*. From a verb meaning ‘to order’ in classical Latin, it came to be used as a pure causative in late Classical and especially in Medieval Latin. More or less the same has happened with OE *hatan* ‘to command’. At first it began to appear in constructions without a recipient, later it showed up in idiomatic phrases like *he hateþ gretan*, where the meaning of “ordering” is bleached to something like “he lets greet”.<sup>39</sup> OE *biddan* follows a similar development. *Command*, too, differs from the other “persuade”-verbs in our list in that it quite regularly occurs in object-constructions in Middle English where the non-lexical subject of the infinitive is not a co-referential PRO but an arbitrary PRO as in the causative constructions.<sup>40</sup> The *MED* gives as many as seven examples of this in its entry for *command*, the first one from the early fourteenth century, when the verb began to be current in Middle English. An example from the corpus is:

- (46) ... *therefore the lorde commaunded to sle hym, and for*  
 ... therefore the lord commanded to kill him, and for  
*thys cause ys he slayne* (MA 811,20–21)  
 this cause is he slain  
 ‘therefore the lord commanded him to be killed, and for this  
 reason he was killed’

Just as with the causatives, these object-constructions became awkward within the late Middle English syntactic system. Unlike with the causatives, a *that*-clause could (and did) replace these ill-fitting constructions. Here again *command* proves itself to be not a proto-typical “persuade”-verb in that it occurs in Middle English in NP + *that*- as well as *that*-clauses (cf. condition [43 ii]; for the actual data, see the Appendix).

In spite of the possibility of a *that*-clause, we also regularly begin to find the passive-infinitive subject construction after *command*. The *MED* gives as many as six examples, the first one from the end of the fourteenth century, and therefore clearly later than the object constructions. I believe it is the (acquired) causative character of this “persuade”-verb that made this development possible. Some examples from the corpus are:

- (47) a. *And as for all oþer erondys that ye haue commandid*  
 And as for all other errands that you have commanded  
*for to be do, þey shall be do als sone as þei*  
 to be done, they shall be done as soon as they  
*may be do.* (PL 148,17–18)  
 can be done

- b. *And whan he had used hit he ded of hys crowne and  
 And when he had used it he did off his crown and  
 commaunded the crowne to be sett on the  
 commanded the crown to be set on the  
 awter (MA 908,11–12)  
 altar*

Another quite usual way to avoid the syntactical problem of the object construction in late Middle English was to put in the recipient even though the person remains unspecified in the further narrative and/or not particularly relevant to what the action focusses on:

- (48) *He [Sir Cadore] alyght off his horse and toke hym  
 He alighted from his horse and took him  
 in his armys and there commaunded knyghtes to kepe  
 in his arms and there commanded knights to keep  
 well the corse. Than the kynge craked grete wordys  
 well the corpse. Then the king uttered great words  
 on lowde and seyde, ... (MA 215,6–8)  
 aloud and said, ...*

The *knyghtes* mentioned here are not further specified and also play no further role in the discourse. Thus, in *Malory*, we quite often find *command* combined with the general word *men* or *knights* as a recipient, while, for instance, in the older text the *Brut*, the equivalent of the verb *command* (*haten*) is never found with an unspecified recipient, the object construction being employed instead. A comparison of the Caligula manuscript with the less archaic Otho manuscript is interesting again here. In two instances, the Otho manuscript has replaced the object construction: once by inserting a recipient (1.4801), once by altering the construction (1.5405).

Before we leave *command*, one other interesting development must be noted. Out of the total of five cases of *command* + infinitive in the corpus, as many as three seem to avoid too stark a use of arbitrary PRO. Consider the examples in (49):

- (49) a. *Or elles that hir list comaunde To rede and  
 Or else that her pleased [to] command to read and  
 here of Troilus ... (CA 4: 2795–2796)  
 hear of Troilus*

'Or else [when it happens] that it pleases her to command someone to read [to her] about Troilus and to hear about Troilus'

- b. *the same Ser John, (...) wold haue on will mad the same Sir John would have one will made and wrete after þe effecte of the seid apoyntementes and written according to the said provisions touching the fundacion of þe colege aswell as the touching the establishment of the college as well as the seid other maters not declarid in his intent and will said other matters not declared in his intent and will acordyng, comaundid to haue it so ingrosid and corresponding commanded to have it so engrossed and wrete ...* (PL 60,83–91)

written

'the same Sir John wished to have a will made and written according to the said provisions concerning the establishment of the college as well as the aforementioned other matters which were not declared in his will, [and he] commanded it to be so engrossed and written ...'

- c. *Than sir Trystrams commaunded to have his horse Then Sir Tristram commanded to have his horse upon the londe. upon the land*

'Then Sir Tristram commanded his horse to be brought upon the plain'

In the first example, the subject of the first infinitive is PRO<sub>arb</sub>, but of the second it can only be a co-referential PRO. In the other two examples the verb *have* is used/inserted. This makes it possible to interpret the non-lexical subject of the infinitive as coreferential with the matrix subject. However, an interpretation with PRO<sub>arb</sub> is also possible when we read *have* in (b) as meaning 'to cause' and in (c) as 'to bring'.

When we look at the other "persuade"-verbs in the list, we note that they too share syntactic similarities with causative verbs. At the basis of this usually lies the fact that the verb semantically, at least in some of its connotations, partakes of the nature of a causative. Sometimes one finds examples of contexts where the verb (as with OE *hatan*) is used almost as a pure causative, as for instance in (50), with *ordain*. This example is taken from the *MED*:

- (50) *In the kyttynge ... beware of þe veyne þat norisshep*  
 In the cutting       beware of the vein   that feeds  
*ham aboute þe fote, for þat ordeineþ ofte grete*  
 those around the foot, for that causes   often great  
*bledynge and grete perille (? c. 1425 Chauliac (2) 117/1)*  
 bleeding and great danger

In almost all cases the “double” nature of these verbs is clear from the fact that they appear with *that*-clauses (i. e., without a recipient) as well as with NP + *that*-clause complements (see Appendix). The only exceptions seem to be *require* and *warn*, which in the corpus only occur with NP + *that*-clauses. The first is probably due to an accidental gap in our data, since the *MED* quotes quite a few examples of *require* followed by *that*. The *MED* cannot yet be consulted on *warn*; the *OED* gives only one example of *warn* followed by a *that*-clause from 1440 (s. v. *warn* 4b). Marginal cases one way or the other seem to be *ordain* and *charge*; the former occurring only once with a NP + *that*-clause, against sixteen with *that*, the latter occurring twice with a *that*-clause, as against thirty-four cases of NP + *that*. It is clear that *ordain* must be placed at the causative end of the scale, while *charge* lies towards the “persuade” end. The use of imperative constructions, too, is more natural with a “persuade”-verb than a causative. Again this shows that *charge*, *pray*, *require*, and *warn* are closer to “persuade”-verbs than to causatives.

As far as the animate vs. inanimate distinction is concerned (cf. condition [43 iii]), almost all the verbs are more definitely “persuade”-like. Only *ordain* occurs once<sup>41</sup> in an inanimate subject construction in the passive, thus again showing its relative closeness to a causative:

- (51) *Also I wull that from the day and tyme that I am*  
 Also I will that from the day and time that I am  
*beried vnto the ende of vij yeres than next folowyng*  
 buried until the end of seven years then next following  
*be ordeyned a taper of wexe of a li to brenne*  
 is ordained a candle of wax of one pound to burn  
*vpon my grave ... (PL 230,42–44)*  
 upon my grave  
 ‘Also I will that orders are given for a candle of wax of one  
 pound to burn upon my grave from the moment that I am  
 buried until the end of seven years following my burial’

One example occurs after *command* too, but this seems highly dubious:

- (52) *Whan the recluse herde his name she had grete joy of*  
 When the recluse heard his name she had great joy of  
*hym ... And than she commaunded the gatis to be*  
 him ... and then she commanded the gates to be  
*opyn* (MA 905,10–13)  
 open[ed?]

It is much more likely, given the context, that *opyn* is not an adjective but a past participle, which turns (52) into a passive-infinitive construction, where the subject, of course, is as a rule inanimate.

I would like to conclude this section on the “persuade”-verbs with a review of the main points and some brief remarks. What we have seen is that a number of “persuade”-verbs, which are not pure “persuade”-verbs but can be semantically and syntactically placed on a cline somewhere between pure “persuade”-verbs and causatives, follow the development of the causatives in allowing passive-infinitive subject constructions. In one or two cases (i. e., *command* and possibly *grant*) these may replace older object constructions (containing PRO<sub>arb</sub>) just as was the case with causatives. In most cases, however, there were no object constructions to be replaced; these verbs probably followed the example of the causative verbs because they exhibited causative features in other parts of their system.

The appearance of passive-infinitive subject constructions after “persuade”-verbs is syntactically more remarkable and innovative than their appearance after causative verbs. After causatives, aci constructions were already common and the passive-infinitive construction simply constituted another type of aci construction not much different from the active-infinitive construction (i. e., the subject-type). After “persuade”-verbs, however, only control structures were current: true aci constructions did not occur there. Thus, we see an extension of the aci construction to a different class of verbs.

Finally, it is important to note, also in connection with the verbs to be discussed in the next section, that these new (passive infinitive) aci constructions occur in formal as well as in informal texts. The occurrences in *Malory* are all informal, as one would expect. Of the instances in the *Paston Letters*, five occur in formal documents and eight in informal letters.

#### 2.4. The “learned” aci construction: “expect”-type verbs

It is now time to look at the spread of the so-called learned aci construction, the construction that is supposed to have arisen in late Middle English/early Modern English under the influence of Latin. I have again

gone through the corpus to establish the type of complement constructions (finite as well as non-finite) that occur after verbs that could be classified as typically “learned” aci verbs, i. e., the so-called *verba sentiendi et declarandi*. I have checked only those verbs that are contained in Visser’s list of learned aci verbs, and which, according to Visser, began to appear in aci constructions before or around the period over which our corpus extends.<sup>42</sup> Full details are given in Appendix C.<sup>43</sup>

No examples of the learned aci construction have been encountered in the *Brut*. In *Gower*, only one certain instance has been attested, after the verb *witan*:

- (53) ... *The mor me thenketh that I winne, And am the*  
 ... The more me seems that I win, and am the  
*more glad withinne Of that I wot him sorwe*  
 more glad within of that I know him sorrow  
*endure* (CA 2: 257–259)  
 endure  
 ‘The more it seems to me that I am winning, the more glad I  
 am at heart because I know that he is suffering’

This is an interesting example. In Old English, *witan* is one of the few verbs of mental perception that allows an aci construction in original Old English (i. e., in English not directly influenced by Latin). In Fischer (1989: 199–202) I argued that the use of the aci after *witan* (and also after OE *findan* and a few other verbs) is to be accounted for by the fact that these verbs were really verbs of physical perception, which always allowed the “ordinary” aci behind them. This would mean that (53) is a relic from Old English and not to be counted as an example of the new learned construction. Notice also the use of the plain infinitive here – just as in Old English – whereas the learned construction as a rule has the *to*-infinitive.

The other aci examples in *Gower* (eight in all) are all ambiguous types. In each case, a different analysis is to be preferred. In the example with *deem* (54) – an example of a second passive – the infinitive must very likely be interpreted as tertiary, expressing purpose/result (for the use of the term, see Jespersen 1940: 277 ff.), especially since *Gower* only uses the verb *deem* in the full sense of ‘to judge’. The semantically weakened sense of ‘to think’ is not yet attested in *Gower*:

- (54) ... *Atteint thei were be the lawe And diemed forto*  
 ... Convicted they were by the law and judged to



*honge and drawe, And brent and with the wynd  
hang and draw and burned and by the wind  
toblowe* (CA 8: 1947–1949)

blown-away

‘They were convicted by the law and were condemned to be  
hanged, drawn and burned and blown away by the wind’

The seven remaining examples concern cases where the infinitive may also be a subjunctive form with the complementiser *that* left out. The intervening NP is a nominal phrase so that we cannot see whether it has nominative or oblique case:

- (55) a. *And that I trowe be the skile, Whan ther is  
And that I trust be the reason, when there is  
lacke in hem above, The poeple is  
fault in those above [the rulers], the people become  
stranged to the love Of trouthe, in cause of  
estranged to the love of truth, because of  
ignorance* (CA 5: 1888–1891)  
ignorance
- b. *... in here avys Thei wene it be a  
... in their opinion they think it be a  
Paradys* (CA 1: 501–502)  
paradise

The reason why a subjunctive interpretation is preferable here is that with all the verbs in question (*suppose, trow, ween*) the construction with zero *that* is extremely frequent, while with two of the verbs (*suppose* and *trow*) an infinitive construction is not attested at all in the corpus. In the example with *trow*, moreover, the matrix verb is not really part of the clause but functions more as a kind of interjection.

In the *Paston Letters*, thirteen possible instances of aci constructions have been attested. Of these, five or possibly six should be discounted. One concerns a reflexive construction:

- (56) *... that namyth hym-self Paston and affermith hym  
... that calls himself Paston and affirms himself  
vntrewely to be my cousyn* (PL 2,4–5)  
untruly to be my cousin

and five are of the type discussed in (55). One of these might be a true aci construction because the oblique form *yow* rather than *ye* has been used:

- (57) *Item, ye make yow sywerere than I deme yow*  
 Item, you make yourself more-secure than I deem you  
*be, for I deme þat here frendes wyll nott be content*  
 be, for I deem that their friends will not be content  
*wyth Bedyngffeldys sywerté nore yowrys* (PL 300,18–19)  
 with Bedingfield's security nor yours

*Yow* is found for *ye* sporadically in the *Paston Letters*. According to Mustanoja (1960: 125), *ye* remains the prevailing form in the nominative until the middle of the sixteenth century; this letter is dated 1476.

The other seven, genuine, *aci* constructions are all, except two, found in formal, legal documents. According to Davis (1971: xxii, xxxv), these were not formulated by the persons concerned and were usually in the hands of professional clerks. In such cases, influence of Latin is to be expected, since these clerks were trained to write also in Latin (cf. Fisher 1977). Some examples:

- (58) a. ... *know ye me the seid John Paston, knyght,*  
 ... know you me the said John Paston, knight,  
*feithfully to promytte and graunt by thiez presentes*  
 faithfully to promise and grant by the present  
 ... (PL 260,13–14)  
*document*  
 '... trust me, John Paston, knight, to faithfully promise and  
 grant by the present document ...'
- b. *Therefore the said reuerent fader relesseth and*  
 Therefore the said reverent father surrenders and  
*quietclaymeth by thiez presentz to the said John*  
 renounces by the present document to the said John  
*Paston mmm marc. by reason of the bargayne*  
 Paston 4000 mark on account of the agreement  
*allegged to be made bitwene the said John Fastolf*  
 asserted to be made between the said John Fastolf  
*and the said John Paston, squyer.* (PL 253,33–36)  
 and the said John Paston, squire
- c. ... *where the seid Ser John, more largely*  
 ... where the said Sir John, more comprehensively  
*expressyng the seid will and entent, deliuerid your seid*  
 expressing the said will and intent, delivered your said  
*besecher possession with his owne handes, declaryng to*  
 besecher possession with his own hands, declaring to

*notabill personys there the same feffement to be mad*  
 notable persons there the same feoffment to be made  
*to the vse of the seid Ser John as for terme of his*  
 for the use of the said Sir John for the term of his  
*lif only, ... (PL 60,57–61)*

life only

‘Where the aforementioned Sir John, more comprehensively specifying the before-mentioned will, delivered [it] into the possession of your petitioner personally, proclaiming to notable persons there the making of the same feoffment for the use of the aforementioned Sir John for the term of his life only’

The first instance where the aci occurs in informal language is with the verb *acknowledge*:

- (59) *Brodere, I recomawnde me to ʒow after all dew*  
 Brother, I recommend me to you according to all due  
*recomendacions, &c. Az fore Hew Fennys obligacion,*  
 recommendations, etc. As for Hugh Fenn’s obligation,  
*ʒeluerton knowlacheyd it to be Sire John Fastolfe*  
 Yelverton acknowledged it to be Sir John Fastolf  
*is dede opynly in pe Eschekere, ... (PL 118,1–3)*  
 his[s] deed openly in the Exchequer

The construction involves the copula *be* and is in fact an elaboration of a common construction after *acknowledge*, i. e., that with a double object or an object followed by an adjective or past participle (the latter also occurs in the *Letters*). Because of this the aci construction could presumably also occur in more informal texts.

The other instance where the aci occurs in an informal letter is with the verb *adventure*:

- (60) ... *the weche xx<sup>ti</sup> marke she hath delyuerd to me in*  
 ... the which 20 marks she has delivered to me in  
*golde for you to haue at your comyng home, for she*  
 gold for you to have at your home-coming, for she  
*dare not aventure her money to be brought vp to*  
 dare not adventure her money to be brought up to  
*London for feere of robberyng it is seide heere that*  
 London for fear of robbing, it is said here that

*there goothe many thefys be-twyx this and  
there go-about many thieves between this and  
London, ... (PL 156,7–10)*

London

'and these twenty marks she has given to me in gold for you to have when you come home, for she dare not risk having her money brought up to London for fear of robbery; it is said here that there are many thieves around between here and London'

It is interesting to note that this is a construction with a passive infinitive. Notice too that the meaning of *adventure* approaches that of a causative here: the verb could easily be replaced by *let* without much loss in the sense of the text. This probably accounts for the use of an aci construction in this instance.

The occurrence of the learned aci in *Malory* seems to be limited to eight cases at the most. Again, most of these have to be discounted for various reasons. Three involve the verb *dread*. They all contain a reflexive pronoun and an infinitive that must probably be interpreted as tertiary:

- (61) ... *for of your helpe I had grete mystir; for I drede  
... for of your help I had great need, for I fear  
me sore to passe this foreste. (MA 307,7–8)*  
[me] sorely to pass-through this forest

Three examples (with *trow*, *understand* and *ween*) are again of the type illustrated in (55). That leaves us with just two examples:

- (62) a. ... *but they wepte to se and undirstonde so yonge a  
... but they wept to see and understand so young a  
knyght to joupaté hymself for their  
ryght (MA 380,9–10)*  
right
- b. ... *and in lyke wyse may ye do, and ye lyst, and  
... and in like wise may you do, if you please, and  
take the quene knyghtly away with you, if so be  
take the queen knight-like away with you, if so be  
that the kyngge woll jouge her to be  
that the king will judge her to be  
brente (MA 1173: 3–6)*  
burnt

‘... and you may do the same, if you wish, and take the queen with you, like a knight should, if it happens that the king will condemn her to be burnt’

In (62 a) the use of the aci may be explained by the fact that *understand* is preceded by a verb of physical perception which probably triggered the use of an aci construction. (62 b) can be explained in two possible ways. We may analyse the infinitive as tertiary, as we have done in (54), or we can ascribe the use of the passive infinitive in this aci construction to the clearly causative character of *judge*. Unlike *deem* in (54), *judge* can easily be replaced here by *cause* or *let*.

We may conclude, then, that there are two types of aci constructions after “expect”-verbs. There are, on the one hand, the five examples found in formal documents in the *Paston Letters*, written by clerks who were trained in Latin and French as well as English, and, on the other hand, five non-ambiguous examples found in informal language in all three texts of the corpus. The use of the aci in informal discourse can be linked to i) the influence of physical perception verbs (i. e., [53] and [62 a]), ii) the occurrence of many ambiguous constructions where the difference between a subjunctive and an infinitival form cannot always have been clear (i. e., [57]), iii) an elaboration of an already existing structure involving only minimal change (i. e., [59]), and iv) the influence of the causatives that had developed a passive-infinitive subject construction for intrasystemic syntactic reasons (i. e., [60] and very likely [62 b]).<sup>44</sup>

### 3. Syntactic innovation: Borrowing and other factors

#### 3.1. The aci construction in Middle English: Conclusion

We have followed the path of the aci construction in the history of English in some detail. The aci construction was native to Old English after perception verbs and causatives. Apart from the regular type of aci construction (what I have called the subject construction), these two classes of verbs also allowed a construction in which the accusative part of the aci (i. e., the matrix object that functioned simultaneously as infinitival subject) was missing, and in which only the object of the infinitive was present (I have termed these object constructions). Positionally, at least in the Middle English period, this infinitival object usually occupied the same place in the clause as the accusative subject.

Whereas in Old English both constructions occurred freely, this was no longer the case in Middle English. Due to the change in basic word order from SOV to SVO taking place in the late Old English/early Middle English period, the object construction – with V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive order – began to disappear.

This word-order change created, so to speak, a structural gap. Other ways had to be found to express the “old” object construction. In section 2.2., the strategies that were followed were explored. These strategies need not have been identical for the two classes of verbs involved. For the perception verbs, a possibility existed that was not available for the causatives, i. e., the use of a finite instead of a non-finite complement. Whether this strategy was indeed frequently reverted to is difficult to determine. The data in the corpus do not show a spectacular increase in finite clauses, although after *see* there is definitely a rise.<sup>45</sup> Also, the very small number of actual object constructions in the earliest texts may be an indication that the structural gap was not so large here. Another interfering factor for this strategy may have been the fact that the finite and non-finite constructions may not have been as nearly synonymous semantically as to make the change-over communicationally acceptable.<sup>46</sup>

After causatives, the developments are clear. The strategy of replacement by a finite complement was ruled out due to their complete non-occurrence. The old object construction gradually disappeared and was at first replaced by a new object construction with V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order. This strategy was probably the easiest option in that it involved very little change. After all, in most clause types the object already followed the finite verb, and even in infinitival complements extraposed objects were regular when they were clausal or involved a heavy NP. Still, the new V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order proved not to be entirely satisfactory. It upset the balance of the syntactic system in other ways. First of all, syntactic subjects were becoming more and more obligatory, and, secondly, the order matrix verb - (bare) infinitive (most causatives took a bare infinitive at this stage) became more and more the special prerogative of auxiliary verbs. In this light, it is not surprising that *let* preserved the V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> object construction longer than any other causative because of all the causatives it was most like an auxiliary. Preservation was also made possible here by the fact that later on idiomatisation set in, presumably as a result of the isolated position that this construction had now begun to take.

The next strategy, therefore, veered towards the still current subject construction. This could be achieved in various ways depending on the

circumstances,<sup>47</sup> all of which have been attested in the corpus. i) The transitive infinitive became intransitive, resulting in the object becoming subject. ii) A (usually non-specific) subject was inserted. iii) The object was turned into a subject by the use of a passive-infinitive construction.

In this study, the main emphasis was on this last development. Once passive infinitives had become current with causatives, they also began to appear after verbs that belonged to a different class but which shared a number of features (this varied per verb) with the causatives. In this way “persuade”-verbs acquired the *aci* construction, a construction that had not been possible with them before. The earliest instances appear at the end of the fourteenth century, clearly later than the passive-infinitive construction after causatives. They occur in formal as well as informal style; in the corpus most are found in the informal texts.

This, then, was the situation at the time when “learned” *aci* constructions from Latin began to appear in formal, Latin-influenced texts. It is clear from the corpus that far fewer of these learned *aci* constructions are found and that they are still highly restricted in style; in the corpus they mainly occur in the writs, wills, indentures, etc., of the *Paston Letters*.

The question to be addressed now is what causatory factors are involved in the introduction of the new *aci* constructions after “persuade”-verbs, on the one hand, and after *verba sentiendi et declarandi*, on the other. The data (differences in style, frequency, and syntactic type) suggest that these two cases have to be treated separately. I have tried to show that the use of the *aci* construction after “persuade”-verbs is an extension of the passive-infinitive subject construction after causatives. The earlier appearance of this construction after causatives has been shown to be linked to the existence of a structural gap, which itself was the result of a change in the grammar elsewhere. It seems clear that the rise of the passive infinitive after causatives has to be ascribed to internal factors. The new *aci* construction after “persuade”-verbs is, therefore, partly due to analogy (also an internal factor) insofar as it follows the pattern of the causatives. Partly, it is also due to the the same factor that caused the new construction after causatives in that a few “persuade”-verbs also had old-type object constructions (i. e., *command* and *grant*) that had to be replaced. Influence of Latin syntax seems not so likely in this case, particularly since most instances of the construction occur in informal texts. Absolute proof is not possible, of course.

The situation is different with the *aci* constructions found after *verba sentiendi et declarandi*. Here the majority of the examples are found in highly formal documents where not just the *aci* but also other syntactic

features remind us of foreign (Latin and French) syntax.<sup>48</sup> There can be no doubt in this case that Latin had an influence on the use of the aci. However, Latin was not the only causatory factor. A few aci constructions in this type were also found in informal texts. We saw that in the case of *deem* (cf. [57]), for instance, other internal factors such as the loss of distinction between nominative and accusative case and between the present subjunctive and the infinitive played a role. Likewise in the case of *adventure* (cf. [60]), the factor of analogy (the pattern – a passive infinitive – resembles that set by the causatives) must have been present. In yet another case, with the verb *acknowledge* (cf. [62c]), the aci construction was a slight adaptation of an already existing structure.

It is possible to distinguish two separate developments here, that involve the same class of verbs, one of them native, and one of them foreign. However, this is probably too sharp a division. It is unlikely that the two developments did not influence one another.<sup>49</sup> When we take a closer look at the aci's used in the formal texts, we note that even these resemble the informal aci's in some respects. Four of the five aci's make use of a passive infinitive (the exception is *know* in [58a]), while the matrix verb has in all four cases a definite connotation of causation. Warner (1982: 147–157) noted too that the “learned” aci's appear especially in structures where the aci “has a ready analogy to some other structure which ‘excuses’ it” (p. 150), such as second passives, other movement structures, NP + to be + predicate etc. Warner, however, still sees Latin as “the external model” for this type of aci. On the basis of the data investigated here, I would like to suggest that the pattern of the causatives (i. e., the passive-infinitive subject construction) provided another (internal) model for the development of the learned aci's.<sup>50</sup>

### 3.2. Some general conclusions

It is now time to take up some of the general issues mentioned in the introduction. In the light of the interpretation I have given of the rise and spread of the aci construction in English, I would like to reconsider what was said in section 1 about i) the type and diffusion of syntactic change, ii) Blatt's criteria intended to help settle a presumed case of syntactic borrowing, and iii) the permeability of the syntactic component.

(i) Although the spread of the aci construction to the *verba sentiendi et declarandi* has usually been ascribed to Latin and consequently seen as a change that was activated by learned reaction, it is clear that it does not follow the path described by Romaine, i. e., that this change tends to



“manifest itself first in the most salient environments” (cf. section 1.2.). It seems clear now that the new *aci* after “persuade”-verbs must be seen as a “natural” change. It “sneaked” through the language in that it is a more or less natural extension of the passive infinitive that came into use after causatives. The *aci* construction after *verba sentiendi et declarandi* joined this development from there, at the same time being reinforced by the use of it in formal texts on the basis of a Latin external model. But even these Latin *aci*’s mould themselves on the already established pattern, and thus the *aci* was able to establish itself firmly in the syntax of English, in contrast to constructions that were introduced purely for matters of prestige, which, as was stated in section 1.3., do not normally seem to be able to acquire a permanent position in the syntactic component.

It should also be noted that the diffusion of the change is gradual. Thus, in spite of the fact that this change (at least the first stages of it) could be called a “necessary” change in terms of Lightfoot (1979, 1981 a: 90), it is not one that takes place radically or all at once. Bennett (1981: 119) would describe the initial stages of this change as a strategic change. It is a change in which speakers switch from one strategy to another to express a particular meaning, in this case from the object construction to the passive-infinitive subject construction. Strategic changes are necessarily gradual according to Bennett (1981: 126) because:

Abrupt strategic change would involve a speech community’s switching “overnight” from one strategy for expressing some meaning to another. As communication between generations must be preserved, such a situation is out of the question.

In the further stage of its development, the necessary change became an optional one in the sense that it opened up possibilities for other verb categories to follow the same pattern. This trend was then reinforced by the external model provided by Latin so that what was merely optional became almost inevitable. In the words of Fischer – van der Leek (1981) the language learner will not only “choose the simplest possible grammar [which lies at the bottom of Lightfoot’s radical, necessary change], he will also tend to exhaust the possibilities offered to him”.

(ii) Looking at Blatt’s criteria again (cf. section 1.2.) the first and the third turned out to be definitely useful, but I have my qualms about the second. Blatt believed that foreign influence is more likely when a construction supposed to be of foreign origin has supplanted the indigenous one. Although the passive-infinitive *aci* construction after causatives has

indeed supplanted the native object construction, it is highly unlikely that Latin influence has to be assumed here. At the later stage, when there is indeed Latin influence — in the borrowing of the *aci* after *verba sentiendi et declarandi* — there is no question of supplanting; the finite complements they could have supplanted remain in use alongside the new non-finite ones.

(iii) Concerning the permeability of the syntactic component, we clearly have to make a distinction between surface-syntactic features close to the lexical level, and syntactic features that affect the basic structure of the language, involving such things as case, word order, government, etc. (cf. also Birnbaum 1984: 41). In the first case it is probably correct, as was stated by Danchev (1984), that the syntactic level is as susceptible (or almost as susceptible) to foreign influence as the lexical level. In the second case, however, as the instance of the spread of the *aci* has shown, foreign influence alone is unlikely to have any effect whatsoever. The introduction of the learned *aci* construction in English was favoured by all sorts of internal developments. It is not surprising, then, that this *aci* established itself in English, but not finally in, e. g., German or Dutch (for which a similar amount of Latin influence existed), where these favourable circumstances were not present.

Appendix A

Verb (cat. in Visser)	cor- pus	full verb	subject constr.		∅ inf	to inf	for to inf	ing	obj- ect con- str.	V + NP + inf	V + inf + NP		NP + V + inf		∅ inf	to inf	for to inf	pure inf	pass inf subj const
			an.	in- an.							cl.	rest	pron	wh topic					
<i>bid</i> <sup>2</sup> IV + VIII	Br	36	24		23	1			2	2					x			7	1
	CA	60	67		47	14	6		11	4		6		1	9	1	1		
	PL	5	24		23	1													
	MA	2	21		18	3													
<i>do</i> II	Br	376	7			x													
	CA	531	33	5	13	12	13		19	6	2	5	2	4	x				1
	PL	829	20		14	5	1		56	5	1	48		2	x				10
	MA <sup>4</sup>	1446	7		1	6			6 <sup>3</sup>			6			x				
<i>cause</i> II	CA	13	2			x			1			1				x		1	
	PL	8	58	3		58	3		1			1			x				16
	MA	16	35					x										1	3
<i>haten</i> VIII	Br	11	32		x				11	4		6		1	x				
	CA	1	all other instances of 'hoten' in CA involve the meaning 'to be called'																
<i>let</i> II + V	Br	9	33	15	x				96	23	4	50	19		x			9	1
	CA <sup>4</sup>	20	24	37	60	1			32	7	2	16	1	6	x			2	6
	PL	11	213	13	225	1			9			9			x				42
	MA	23	216	13	x				149			25	119		5	x		26	19
<i>make</i> II	Br	122																	
	CA	503	93	13	62	27	17		3	3					x			1	2
	PL	574	36		10	26													3
	MA	906	119	3	23	96	3		13		1	12			5	8			19
<i>suffer</i> V	CA	42	13	2	7	7	1												1
	PL	—	13	1		x													2
	MA	55	76			x												2	9
<i>hear</i> I	Br	71	1		x				12	2	6		3	1	x				
	CA	286 <sup>5</sup>	29	3	29	1		2	31	3	9	2	7	10	x				
	PL	41 <sup>5</sup>	6		x				26	1	18	1		6	x				
	MA	158 <sup>5</sup>	65	4	x				35		27			8	x				
<i>see</i> I	Br	49	9	(1)	x				1?						x				
	CA	390	46	29	67	1?		16	4						x				5
	PL	126	2		1			1											2
	MA	709	175	23	171	4		23											4

Notes to Appendix A

1. This category contains the following subtypes indicated by square brackets:

[a] equivocal between a subject and an object construction, i. e., the verb may be transitive as well as intransitive; [b] equivocal between an imperative and a bare-infinitive subject construction; [c] hybrid of the type: *she hath do slain him, I have herd you seid* with a past participle instead of the expected infinitive; [d] equivocal between periphrastic and emphatic *do* and its some cases also causative *do* (if the latter, the construction would be an object construction); [e] equivocal between a bare-infinitive subject construction and a (*that*)-clause; [f] hybrid of the type: *he now late toke Roger Cherche* with a past tense form instead of the expected infinitive; [g] equivocal between a bare-infinitive object construction and a construction with past participle.

Appendix A (continued)

	to inf	for to inf	past partic. verb + NP obj. + adj.	that cl.	NP + that cl.	(that) cl.	NP + (that) cl.	how cl.	NP + how cl.	wh-/ if cl.	NP + wh/ if cl.	pro- verb DO	hybrid/ equivocal <sup>1</sup>	sec- ond pass.	imper- ative
	x			28	22	10							1[a]		1
				2											
					6										
					1								3[b]		2
												26			
x				2								91	2[c]	1	
1	9											227	3[c]	1	
					1							189	41[d]		
			1	1											
	15	1	1	1	2										
	x				1		2								
				3	3										
x			1										9[a]		
x													7[a]		
41	1		1										4[f]		
													2[a, g]		
			24												
		1	4	111	5?	2?							4[a]	4(1)	
	x		2	56											
	x		6	201	1?								4[g]	3	
x					2					1					
	x													1	
	x				1										
				4	13			1	3	1	1				
			1	2		2		13	4	16			5[c]		
			1					1		1					
				13		1		8		4			8[a]	1	
				6	1				2	2	2		1[a]		
3	2		20	39 (15) <sup>6</sup>	26		28	1	23	6	24	4	9[a]		
x			10	4 (1) <sup>6</sup>	24	1?	1		2		4				
	x		63	26	66	3	50		66		3		3[c, e]	1?	

Notes to Appendix A (continued)

- The count does not include *bid* in the sense of "to say one's prayers".
- All these examples are marked by an *extra* causative verb.
- Combinations of *let* and *do* are also found. In *Gower* there are fifteen examples of constructions with *let do*; in *Malory* there are three examples of constructions with *do let*.
- Instances of *to hear of* are not included. In *Gower* and the *Paston Letters* I have not counted the bare infinitive form here. This would have taken too much time since this form is also used for the personal pronoun *her* and the place adverb *here*.
- The instances in brackets represent examples with present participles instead of adjectives.



Appendix B (continued)

0 inf	to inf	for to inf	past partic.	verb + NP obj. + adj.	that cl.	NP + that cl.	(that) cl.	NP + (that) cl.	how cl.	NP + how cl.	wh-/ if cl.	NP + wh/ if cl.	pro- verb DO	hybrid/ equivocal <sup>1</sup>	sec- ond pass.	imper- ative
						1			1		1	2				
					4				2	6	26	19				
	x								2	2	22					
					1	2			3	11	29	117				
						3										
	x				11	1							1[a]	5	(1)	
					2	20							7[a, b]	1	1	
					2	1										
		x			1	4							1[c]	3		
	x				8	3									4	
	x				13	18	1	4					1[d]	2		
					2	2						1		1		
					2	1	3									
	x				6	1							1[c]			
					1	1		1			1					
	x															
					7						2				1	
	x				5											
					4	1		1			1				6	
					29	33	8	1		1				8[a, e]		1
					9 <sup>3</sup>	145	8	1						331[a, b, e, f]		2
					6 <sup>3</sup>	44	3							97[a, b, f]		2
	x				7								1[a]	2		
	x				18								43[a, b]	2		
					3				1							
	x				3										2	2
					10			13		1						1

Notes to Appendix B

- 1. This category contains the following subtypes indicated by square brackets:
  - [a] equivocal between an imperative and a bare-infinitive subject construction;
  - [b] equivocal between an imperative, a bare-infinitive subject construction, and a (that)-clause;
  - [c] hybrid: that-clause and to-infinitive combined;
  - [d] hybrid: combination of the infinitival marker to and a finite verbal form;
  - [e] equivocal between an imperative and a bare-infinitive object construction;
  - [f] hybrid of the type: *I pray to Jesu preserve you and yours*.
- 2. The count does not include *pray* in the sense of "to say one's prayers".
- 3. The NP *God* or *to God* is frequently found as a kind of interjection between *pray* and the clause.

## Appendix C

Verb (cat. in Visser)	cor- pus	no. (if lim.) <sup>1</sup>	type of inf.			predicate			clause					aci	type	instances found
			∅	to	for to	adj.	p.p.	NP	that	(that)	if	how	wh-			
<i>accord</i> XI	CA			x					x			x	x			
	PL								x							
	MA			x					x							
<i>adventure</i> VI	CA	2		x	x											
	PL	1												1	p. inf. <sup>2</sup>	156,8
	MA	3		x												
<i>affirm</i> XI	CA								x							
	PL					x			x					1	refl.	2,4–5
<i>allege</i> XI	CA															
	PL													2	p. inf. <sup>2</sup>	252,20, 253,35
<i>assure</i> XI	CA			x					x							
	MA			x					x							
<i>avaunt</i> XI	CA								x							
	PL	1														
<i>believe</i> IX	CA			1					x							
	PL								x							
	MA								x							
<i>compre- hend</i> IX	CA															
	PL															
<i>condemn</i> XI	PL	1														
<i>confirm</i> XI	CA	3														
	PL	1														
	MA	3						x								
<i>cover</i> VI	CA															
<i>declare</i> XI	CA										x	x				
	PL								x					1	p. inf. <sup>2</sup>	60,59

## Notes to Appendix C

1. If no number is given in this category it is implied that the verb in question appears a fair number of times in each given corpus. When all the categories are left blank for a given verb, the verb appears with or without a NP object but never with any type of clausal (finite or non-finite) complement.
2. p. inf. = passive infinitive
3. ambig. = the construction is ambiguous. This means that the construction may be interpreted as an aci or otherwise; e.g., as a subjunctive with the complementiser *that* left out, as a tertiary infinitive, etc. (see section 2.4.).
4. Only with the adjective *lyvyng*.
5. Only with *for NP*.
6. *Say* occurs in addition with clausal complements introduced by NP *that*, (*un*)to NP *that*, NP (*that*) and with indirect speech.

Appendix C (continued)

verb cat. in issuer)	cor- pus	no. (if lim.) <sup>1</sup>	type of inf.			predicate			clause					aci	type	instances found
			∅	to	for to	adj.	p.p.	NP	that	(that)	if	how	wh-			
em I	CA							x		x		x	1	ambig. <sup>3</sup>	8: 1948	
	PL		1			x		x	x			x	1	ambig. <sup>3</sup>	300,18	
	MA		x			x		x	x							
eny XI	PL	2														
eise I	CA			x								x	x			
	PL															
	MA							x				x				
read II	CA							x								
	PL															
	MA			x				x	x				3	refl. p	142,33; 299,4; 307,8	
uess IX	CA					x							x			
old X	CA					x	x	x								
	PL					x	x	x								
	MA					x	x	x	x					x		
dge X	CA	2														
	PL	1														
	MA							x					1	p. inf. <sup>2</sup>	1173,5	
now X	CA					x			x	x	x	x				
	PL					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1		260,13	
	MA					x <sup>4</sup>		x <sup>5</sup>	x	x		x				
ac)/know- dge IX	PL	4		2			x		x		x		1		118,2	
retend XI	PL	3		2												
rove I	CA					x			x	x		x				
	PL					x			x				1	ambig. <sup>3</sup>	8,32	
	MA		x			x			x	x		x				



## Appendix C (continued)

Verb (cat. in Visser)	corpus	no. (if lim.) <sup>1</sup>	type of inf.			predicate			clause					aci	type	instances found
			∅	to	for to	adj.	p.p.	NP	that	(that)	if	how	wh-			
say XI <sup>6</sup>	CA								x	x		x	x			
	PL			x					x	x	x		x	1	p. inf. <sup>2</sup>	97,21
	MA			x					x	x		x	x			
suppose IX	CA								x	x			x	1	ambig. <sup>3</sup>	8: 1236
	PL			x					x	x				2	ambig. <sup>3</sup>	77,145; 273,9
	MA			x					x	x						
surmise IX	MA	1														
think IX	CA		x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x			
	PL			x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x			
	MA			x	x	x			x	x			x			
throw IX	CA								x	x				1	ambig. <sup>3</sup>	5: 1888
	PL			x					x	x				1	ambig. <sup>3</sup>	354 a,12
	MA								x	x				1	ambig. <sup>3</sup>	279,3
trust IX	CA															
	PL								x	x						
	MA			x	x				x	x						
understand IX	CA								x	x		x	x			
	PL					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
	MA								x	x		x	x	2	ambig. <sup>3</sup>	380,9; 1212,20
ween IX	CA		x	x	x	x				x		x		5	ambig. <sup>3</sup>	1: 502; 1603; 2607; 5: 439; 8: 1511
	PL		x	x					x	x						
	MA			x		x			x	x				1	ambig. <sup>3</sup>	465,20
wit IX	CA				x	x			x	x	x	x	x	1		2: 259
	PL								x	x	x	x	x			
	MA						x		x	x		x	x			

## Notes to Appendix C

1. If no number is given in this category it is implied that the verb in question appears a fair number of times in each given corpus. When all the categories are left blank for a given verb, the verb appears with or without a NP object but never with any type of clausal (finite or non-finite) complement.
2. p. inf. = passive infinitive
3. ambig. = the construction is ambiguous. This means that the construction may be interpreted as an aci or otherwise; e.g., as a subjunctive with the complementiser *that* left out, as a tertiary infinitive, etc. (see section 2.4.).
4. Only with the adjective *lyvnyng*.
5. Only with *for NP*.
6. *Say* occurs in addition with clausal complements introduced by NP *that*, (un)to NP *that*, NP *(that)* and with indirect speech.

## Notes

1. For divergent views on the introduction of the expanded form in Old English see, e. g., Nickel (1966) and Mitchell (1985: §§ 682–701); for divergent views on subjectless relatives, see Phillipps (1965), Erdmann (1980), and van der Auwera (1984).
2. There are a considerable number of studies on the type of contact that existed between English and these languages. E. g., for Latin, Blatt (1957); for Celtic, Poussa (in press); for Scandinavian, Poussa (1982) (also for French) and Hines (forthcoming); for French, Berndt (1965); and see also general histories of the language, especially Leith (1983). The measure of length and intensity of contact is different for each language but the linguistic efficacy of the contact is never disputed except in the case of Celtic. Only recently new evidence has emerged, provided mainly by archeologists, place-name scholars and historians, that the contact was more intense than hitherto usually assumed; cf. Poussa (1990).
3. The oral contacts between the Anglo-Saxons on the one hand and the Celts and the Vikings on the other probably led to a process of pidginisation, in which it is even more difficult to unravel the separate strands and to establish what influenced what. Whether the contact between the Normans and the English also involved pidginisation is a more disputed point. What is certain is that in the latter case a great deal, if not most, of the influence was indeed cultural, unlike in the case of the Celtic and Scandinavian contacts.
4. The one exception concerns the change from impersonal to personal constructions in Middle English. Many explanatory studies of this change have appeared which do not involve recourse to foreign influence, see, e. g., McCawley (1976); Fischer – van der Leek (1983, 1987); Seefranz-Montag (1983); Anderson (1986); etc.
5. Cf. Krickau (1877: 4, 34), Jespersen (1905: 127), Callaway (1913), Bock (1931: 217–226), Sørensen (1957: 138–140), Mustanoja (1960: 526–527), Scheler (1961: 92 ff.), Lightfoot (1981 a), etc. Some dissenting voices are Zeitlin (1908) and possibly Visser (1963–1973). For a discussion see Fischer (1989).
6. This distinction (i. e., between “ordinary” and “learned” aci) is also made by Bock (1931: 220): the aci’s after causatives and perception verbs constitute a class separate from the class in which he includes the aci after verbs of saying and thinking (his classes II and III respectively). Jespersen (1940: 277 ff.) does not distinguish these two types, but places them both in one group (i. e., his type I) to set them off from the “persuade”-type constructions; he analyses the former all as NP<sub>s</sub>-V-(NP<sub>o</sub>-inf) constructions and the latter as NP<sub>s</sub>-V-NP<sub>o</sub>-(PRO-inf) – PRO being the non-lexical subject of the infinitive, co-referential with NP<sub>o</sub>. It should be noted that also in most standard generative accounts, no distinction is made between the types illustrated in (1) and (2). As in Jespersen, (1) and (2) are set off against the “persuade” type of constructions;

the former fall under the heading of exceptional case-marking or S-bar-deletion verbs, while the latter are termed object-control verbs (cf. Chomsky 1981). In much of the older literature all three types of structures are generally referred to as *aci* constructions.

7. These texts were made available by the Oxford University Computing Service. I would like to thank Professor Norman Davis for giving me permission to use the transcript of his edition of the *Paston Letters*. I also wish to thank Iskandar Serail and Pieter Masereeuw of the Department of “ $\alpha$ -Informatica” of the University of Amsterdam for converting these tapes so that they could be read by the Query programme (see below).
8. This statement needs to be qualified somewhat. In most cases I have been able to trace all the different forms of a lexical item, helped by the elaborate glossaries provided in the editions of Macauley (for *Gower*) and Madden (1847) (for the *Brut*). In the case of the *Paston Letters*, this was not so easy; first of all because there is as yet no glossary available, and secondly, as is to be expected in a collection of private letters, because the spelling is at times highly idiosyncratic. However, in spite of the fact that I may well have overlooked a few items here and there, I do not think that it in any way impairs the overall picture that I will present below.
9. To work out the factor score for L1, I have used the genres “Professional Letters” and “Official Documents”, which come closest to this aspect of the *Paston Letters*. The genre “Official Documents” comprises fifty percent in cluster 2, thirty percent in 6, and twenty percent in 8. I have taken the mean factor score for these three clusters. The same has been done with the genre of “Professional Letters”, which includes forty percent to cluster 2, and thirty percent to 6. The other thirty percent come under cluster 3, which is accounted for in L2. The mean of these two factor scores is the one presented under L1. To work out the mean factor score for L2, the factor score for cluster 3 is weighted double against the factor score for cluster 7 because 3 also contains the genre “Professional Letters”.
10. All information about the type and frequency of complement structures of *aci* verbs in the corpus will be found in the Appendices.
11. The verb *pray* may look like an exception; it has a very high occurrence with *that-*, *NP + that-*, and *(that)-*clauses compared to the other texts, but then the verb *pray* is overall more frequent in the *Paston Letters*, due, no doubt, to the interactive nature of this genre.
12. References to the texts of the corpus are as follows: Layamon’s *Brut* will be referred to as Br, followed by the line number(s); Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* will be given as CA, followed by the book number and the line number(s); the *Paston Letters* will be PL, followed by the number of the letter and the line number(s); Malory’s *Morte Darthur* will be MA, followed by the page and the line number(s). The spelling of the texts is closely adhered to, except in the *Brut*: every <: > has been replaced by <; > for the sake of convenience.

13. Visser is not very consistent in his classifications. He places the verb *let*, for instance, in both class II and class V, reflecting the development of *let* from an "allow" verb to an almost pure causative, but he does not do the same for the three verbs mentioned above even though they are also clearly used as causatives. Moreover, his classification is not very precise. He characterises class IV (verbs of inducing) for instance as follows: "Although these verbs are also verbs of causation, they have not been discussed in section 2068 [i. e., in class II], since in them the idea of causation has a connotation of a more strenuous putting forth of power, physical or mental, towards the reaching of an end" (Visser: 2270).
14. There are only three exceptions to the third distinction. One occurs in *Gower* (5: 4024) and two in the *Paston Letters* (416,21–22 and 141,4–5). The example from *Gower* ... *Hir char sche let awai to gon*, ... is difficult to analyse. It may mean, "she let her chariot go away", but equally possible is: "she left her chariot to go away", which would explain the presence of *to*. If *let* is used as a causative, the use of the directional adverb may have prompted the *to-* rather than the bare infinitive. Of the two occurrences in the *Paston Letters*, the first concerns a construction with two infinitival complements where only the second one is accompanied by *to*. This is a well-known phenomenon in Middle English: there seems to be a tendency for increased infinitive marking when the infinitive becomes separated from the verb that governs it (for a full discussion see Fischer in press). This might also explain the *to*-infinitive in Letter 141, where the subject of the infinitive, placed between *let* and the infinitive, is of a compound nature and consequently rather long. Moreover, this *to* was only "crowded in later" according to the note in Davis' edition.
15. Cf. Bock (1931). Callaway (1913) shows that in early Old English even a tertiary infinitive (i. e., an infinitive not directly dependent on the matrix verb, usually expressing strong purpose) could be expressed by the bare form of the infinitive.
16. Cf., e. g., van Kemenade (1987: 39 ff.).
17. *Spille* can be an intransitive as well as a transitive verb in *Gower*. If transitive, it may also be an example of construction-type (ii), the object construction. I will come back to these cases below.
18. For the view that Old English is basically a SOV language in spite of the regular appearance of SVO and other orders on the surface, see Hiltunen (1983), Koopman (1983, 1985), van Kemenade (1987) and others (see also note 21).
19. In quite a few other cases, the text in the Otho manuscript is missing or has otherwise been altered.
20. The only other instances where preverbal placement of the pronoun occurs in the corpus outside the *Brut* is in *Gower* after the verbs *do* and *hear*. *Do*: it is difficult to decide whether the two cases found here are instances of

cliticisation (the pronoun is otherwise found between the matrix verb and the infinitive). In (5: 862), the pronoun could also be topicalised, while in (7: 1783) *do* may have been used as a periphrastic verb rather than a causative. After *hear*, preverbal placement of the pronoun occurs seven times but only in the phrases ... *it herde seyn*/... *it herde tellen*. Perhaps these instances should be seen as fossils rather than active cases of cliticisation (see also the discussion of “idiomatisation” on p. 49).

21. There seems to be general agreement that Middle English is a SVO language. Even if Old English was not basically a SOV language, as some linguists believe, the existing Old English texts make clear that in infinitival constructions – with which we are concerned here – the object would regularly precede the verb on which it was dependent, even when it was nominal.
22. The verb *do* occurs as a causative only in V-NP<sub>s</sub>-infinitive constructions in the *Brut*, the verb *make* does not yet occur as a causative “auxiliary” in this text. I have only attested one example of a V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive construction after *see* and this one is highly dubious because the infinitive is probably intransitive (Br 2332).
23. There is one dubious case in *Malory* on p. 701,8:

*and ellis shall there no knyght se that lettir opyn*  
and else shall there no knight see that letter open

It is more likely that *opyn* must here be interpreted as a past participle, and the construction therefore as a passive-infinitive subject construction, because of the total lack of V-NP<sub>o</sub>-infinitive constructions after *see* in *Malory*.

24. The examples in question are:
  - (i) *Awey, thou blake ymage, Which ... makst al the worldes*  
Away, you black image, which ... makest all the world's  
*lyht deface ...* (CA 4: 2842–2844)  
light disfigure
  - (ii) *God bad the rede See divide* (CA 5: 1661)  
God bade the Red Sea divide
25. After *let*, nine were found in the *Brut*, seven in *Gower*, two in *Malory*; after *hear*, eight in *Malory*; after *make*, four in *Gower*; after *bid*, one in the *Brut*; after *see*, one in the *Brut* and nine in *Gower*.
26. The exception is the modal verb *willen*, but this is in many ways still used as a full verb.
27. In the *Brut* and *Gower*, the infinitive following *let* can be any verb. Only a few verbs occur more than once after *let*, such as *gliden* and *blawen* in the *Brut*, *make* and *sende* in *Gower*. There is clearly no fixed pattern here.
28. This links up with other syntactic developments in Middle English, especially the increasing obligatoriness of a subject in Middle English as compared to Old English (for this development see, e. g., Fischer – van der Leek 1983, 1987).

29. *Do* still has a fair number of object constructions with V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order in the *Paston Letters*. We cannot speak of idiomatisation here because *do* occurs with all kinds of infinitives. At the same time, we see an increase in passive-infinitive *do* constructions in the *Paston Letters*, but this is not as spectacular as with *let*. The reason for the preservation of the V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order must be linked with the rise of periphrastic *do*. It has to be remembered that, as a causative, *do* was already fighting a losing battle against periphrastic *do*. Causative *do* + infinitive + NP<sub>o</sub> could not go on existing: this order became reserved for periphrastic *do* (at least in positive clauses). At the same time, however, the occurrence of this particular construction with periphrastic *do* may have preserved this same order somewhat longer for causative *do*.
30. In *Malory*, *do* is already used as a periphrastic verb. As a causative it has come to the end of the road. It still occurs seven times in the subject construction where it is sufficiently different from periphrastic *do* (i. e., it has *do* + NP<sub>s</sub> + infinitive rather than *do* + infinitive order, and it is also marked off by the use of the *to-* rather than the bare infinitive in six of the seven cases). In the object construction causative *do* no longer occurs by itself (it would be indistinguishable from periphrastic *do*). In all six attested cases it is accompanied by another causative such as *make* or *let*.
31. The two bare infinitives from the *Paston Letters* (77,83 and 204,20) are ambiguous in that the infinitives could also be subjunctives with the complementiser *that* left out. However, since *that* is never, except once, left out after *see* in true finite complements in the *Letters*, it is likely that these two cases concern infinitives rather than subjunctives.
32. That simultaneity is no longer a necessity is probably related to the syntactic break that occurs between the matrix verb and its object as soon as a passive construction is used. Whereas in the active construction the NP object is as much an argument of the matrix perception verb (its object) as it is of the infinitive (its subject), in the passive construction it becomes closely linked only to the infinitive (see also the discussion in section 2.0.).
33. There seems to be one exception to this rule in *Gower*, but it is likely that in this case *see* is construed with an object NP that is itself accompanied by a *to*-infinitive which has the function of a relative clause:

*Thus for I se no medicine To make an ende of mi*  
 Thus, for I see no medicine to put an end to my  
*querele, My deth schal be in stede of*  
 complaint, my death shall be instead of  
*hele.* (CA 4: 3566–3568)  
 health

34. This presumably means that the eight ambiguous cases that have been found in *Malory* after *hear* (i. e., ambiguous between a subject and an object construction — see note 25) must be interpreted as subject rather than object

- constructions, because object constructions, as we have just seen, seem to have become entirely restricted to *hear say* + clause.
35. We have seen that in the case of *let* “idiomatisation” made it possible to preserve the object construction (i. e., the new V-infinitive-NP<sub>o</sub> order) somewhat longer. Most of these idiomatic combinations disappeared in the course of the Modern English period with a few exceptions like *let go* and *let slip*.
  36. E. g., for the construction “it is to be praised” from earlier “it is to praise”, Latin never employed a passive infinitive but always a gerundive. Also the passive infinitive that begins to occur in early Middle English dependent on nouns has no Latin equivalent. I am grateful to Louk Meier of the Medieval Latin Department of the University of Amsterdam for providing me with the necessary information on these constructions.
  37. The fourth criterion, the possibility of *there*-insertion with verbs like *see*, but not with *persuade*, is not relevant for the period under discussion.
  38. I described these reasons in section 2.2.1.4. Even though there was no need for the object construction to disappear after “persuade”-verbs because, like auxiliaries, they have controlled infinitival PRO, the developments in Modern English show that after many “persuade”-verbs this construction did in fact disappear. Thus, it no longer occurs, according to the *Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, after *grant*, *ordain*, and *pray* (of the verbs that occur in our list). It is still current after *desire* and *require*, but note that these verbs are semantically very close to modal auxiliaries expressing “will” and “need” respectively. It seems, then, that the prototypical controlled infinitival PRO construction (i. e., the one that occurs with auxiliaries) has been and still is monitoring the formation of infinitival constructions – without a lexical subject – with other verbs.
  39. For more details and evidence concerning the causative nature of OE *hatan* see Royster (1918).
  40. As I said above, none of the “persuade”-verbs in the list (apart from *command*, discussed separately here) appear in a PRO<sub>arb</sub> construction. There is, however, one other exception and that is the verb *grant*. Of the fourteen times that it occurs in an object- or “pure” infinitive-construction (i. e., no NP involved at all), there are two examples, both in the *Paston Letters*, where *grant* occurs or may occur with PRO<sub>arb</sub>. The first instance is certain:

*And at euyn a sertyn man suppyd wyth me and*  
 And in the-evening a certain man supped with me and  
*tolde me þat þe patent grantyt to closse but a*  
 told me that the patent granted to enclose only a  
*perch on bred, and that I had clossyd more*  
 perch [c. 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> yards] in width, and that I had enclosed more  
*þan þe grant of þe patent is, as men*  
 than the grant of the patent is, as people

*seyd* (PL 23,9–11)  
said

The other instance is not so clear,

*and þis day we haue grant to haue þe good owthe of  
and this day we have granted to have the goods out of  
Barmunsey* (PL 86,13)  
Barmunsey

From the context it seems that *grant* here means “agree” rather than “permit”, which would make PRO, the subject of the infinitive *haue*, co-referential. On the other hand, the context does not completely rule out the sense of “permit”, which would turn the infinitival construction into a PRO<sub>arb</sub> construction.

41. There is one other, more dubious, instance in *Malory*:

*And bycause that she demed that sir Launcelot loved quene  
And because she deemed that Sir Lancelot loved queen  
Gwenyver paramour and she hym agayne, therefore dame  
Guinevere sexually and she him in-return, therefore Dame  
Morgan ordayned that shyld to put sir Launcelot to a  
Morgan planned that shield to put Sir Lancelot to a  
rebuke ...* (MA 555,5–8)  
rebuke

For *that shyld* one should really read “Sir Trystram (bearing the shield)”, cf. p. 554,11 ff.

42. The category of *verba sentiendi et declarandi* comprises the following four classes in Visser, all of which, if chronologically relevant, have been checked in the corpus: VI, verbs of wishing, etc. (pp. 2298–2300); VII, verbs of liking, etc. (pp. 2300–2302); IX, verbs of mental perception (pp. 2307–2318); XI, verbs of saying and declaring (pp. 2323–2336).
43. On this occasion, to save time and space, I have only indicated the type of complementation structures that these verbs appear in. It did not seem necessary to record the number of instances of each type as I have done with the causatives, the perception verbs and “persuade”-verbs, since we are now interested only in the presence of *aci* constructions, not in how they developed. There is no evidence that the *aci* construction after *verba sentiendi et declarandi* developed as a result of a structural need as was to a greater or lesser extent the case with the other verbs.
44. It is possible that even with some of the learned *aci* constructions the connotation of causation may have played a role. Note that causation is not wholly absent in examples (58 b) and (58 c), and also in letters 97,21 and 252,20.
45. The number of occurrences for the *Paston Letters* must be discounted for the reasons discussed in section 2.2.1.
46. For the semantic differences between finite and non-finite perception verb complements in present-day English, see especially van der Leek – Jong (1982).



47. Style does not seem to be an important criterion here. All three strategies are found in both formal and informal texts.
48. These are, e. g., length and highly complex structure of the sentences; the clear preference for hypotaxis rather than parataxis; the absence of anacolutha; the liberal use of absolute constructions, and of infinitival constructions in the place of relative clauses; the very explicit anaphoric references (*the seid*), etc.
49. This is also stressed by Mithun (this volume), who shows that internal and external factors are difficult to disentangle because “syntactic change is so often the result of their interaction”.
50. He has not considered separately the use of *to be* as an auxiliary of the passive.

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