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THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN *TO* AND BARE INFINITIVAL COMPLEMENTS IN LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH*

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1. *Data base and focus of the present investigation*

In this paper I will be concerned with the difference in usage in late Middle English between the plain or bare infinitive on the one hand and the (*for*) *to*-infinitive on the other. With respect to examples like (1) and (2), especially when ~~45~~ has often been said that "the choice of the form of the infinitive is largely dictated by metrical considerations" (Karttunen & Mustanoja 1958:179; cf. also Ohlander 1941:66). they come
from
poetical
kx5,

- (1) And slepyng in hir barn upon a day, / She *made to clippe* or shere
his heres away, / And *made* his foomen al his craft *espyen*.

(Monk 2064-2067)¹

- (2) a Wherefore I *thynke* out of this land *to wende*. (Shipman 1311)

b ... but softly / By nyghte into the town she *thenketh ride*.

(TC V 1153-1154)

In other words, what is implied is that the *to*- and the bare infinitive exist in free variation after certain verbs, with metre as the only (non-linguistic) conditioning factor. I find it difficult to accept this kind of free variation. Just as phonetic variants which are at first thought to be free are usually found to be conditioned in some way or other (for a historical example, cf. Toon 1983;

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¹ The references to Chaucer are all taken from *The Riverside Chaucer* (general editor L. D. Benson). The *Canterbury Tales* are referred to by the name of the narrator of each tale; BD stands for *The Book of the Duchess*, HF for *House of Fame*, TC for *Troilus and Criseyde*, LGW for *The Legend of Good Women*, RR for *The Romaunt of the Rose*, and Bo for *Boece*. The references from the *Paston Letters* are to Davis (1971) by page and line.

consider also Labov's work on 'change-in-progress', where variation is usually found to be constrained either sociolinguistically — especially in his earlier work — or phonetically, e.g., in Labov 1992), and just as synonyms are never really pure synonyms, in the same way I would like to believe that these variants are linguistically or sociolinguistically motivated, if only we dig deep enough. Why otherwise, one may wonder, would there be a choice (which a poet *may* make use of for metrical considerations) in the first place? It has to be noted furthermore that the same variants also occur in prose, albeit not as often. The lower frequency of these variants in prose, however, may be due to the often more formal, and stylistically more homogeneous nature of Middle English prose.²

My main interest will be the infinitives that occur in the complements of verbs because *variation is a relatively frequent phenomenon there in comparison to the infinitives in other grammatical functions* (more about this in section 2). I will not be concerned with the difference between the *to*- and the *for to*-infinitive. First of all, the differences between these seem to be linguistically less interesting than between bare and (*for*) *to*. *For to* operated in the standard language for only a relatively short time; it never stayed there long enough to acquire its own separate niche.³ Secondly, because this topic has already been researched in more detail by Quirk & Svartvik (1970), for both poetry and prose, and by Warner (1982:115-133), for prose only.⁴ Whenever in this paper I refer to the *to*-infinitive, I also silently include the *for to*-infinitive. In

² As will become clear in this paper, the bare infinitive is used to describe actual events and direct participation in these events by the speaker/subject. It is for this reason that the bare infinitive occurs less often in expository texts, sermons, formal reports etc., and more often in, e.g., letters, stories and narrative poems.

³ See Mustanoja (1960:514). Its first occurrences are found early in the Middle English period, and it already begins to lose ground in the 14th century. For statistical evidence, see also Manabe (1989:177ff.).

⁴ Although Quirk & Svartvik (1970) look at the uses of the bare infinitive too, they do not find any conditioning factors, apart from grammatical function (see their table 2 and Section 2.1 of this paper) for the difference in usage between the bare and the (*for*) *to*-infinitive. Although in their conclusion they mention separation from the finite verb as a factor in the choice of infinitive marker, table 8 — to which they refer — makes clear that it is only the use of *for to* as against *to* / zero which is statistically significant here. Jack (1991:325) observes that there is no evidence that separation played a role in early Middle English texts. Another study that looks at the distribution of *for to* in late Middle English is Manabe (1989). Apart from possible metrical influence (the *for to* infinitive in subject and object position is clearly more frequent in Chaucer's verse than in his prose, cf. table 24, p.181), the author finds that *for to* is influenced stylistically in that it occurs in about fifty percent of cases "before or after (the) word(s) containing the same spelling (and sound) as the initial [sic] *f* of *for to*" (p.184). It is highly unlikely that this observation has any relevance, however, since Manabe allows for these *fs* to occur in almost any position in the clause (i.e., one, two or even five words away from *for to*) and also in any position in the word (initial, medial, final), as his examples make clear.

addition, I will also leave coordinated infinitives out of the discussion, mainly because the linguistic factors responsible for the form of the second infinitive are of quite a different nature from the factors influencing the form of the first. For more work done in this area, consult Ohlander (1941), Warner (1982) and Jack (1991:332-333).

As a source of data I have taken the complete works of Chaucer and the *Paston Letters*.⁵ (In some cases I also refer to data from other Middle English works where these were available from previous study.⁶) There are practical as well as theoretical reasons for this choice. Both *Chaucer* and the *Paston Letters* are easily accessible since there is a concordance available of the former and a computer readable version of the latter, on which a search program can be used, such as in my case Query.⁷ Further, I wanted to compare poetry and prose concerning the behaviour of infinitives. In addition, the difference in time (late 14th century and second half of the 15th century) is of interest; I will come back to this below. Ideally, of course, poetry and prose from both periods should have been considered, but there was not time to look in detail at such a large amount of data. This means, however, that this case study must be considered a preliminary investigation, and that the conclusions based on it should be treated with some caution.

2. *Previous scholarship on the subject*

2.1 *The role played by grammatical function*

A number of conditioning factors were noted by linguists in the past with respect to the use of the infinitive marker in Middle English. For our purposes only one of these factors is relevant, that of grammatical function.⁸ The relations between grammatical function and infinitive marking have been set out in Table 1. The contents of Table 1 is based on research carried out by Callaway

⁵ This investigation had been executed before the Helsinki corpus of older English had become available. Although this corpus would have provided a convenient variety of text types, the amount of text for each genre is limited. Since the distinction between bare and (*for*) to infinitives is found most clearly in narrative texts of a colloquial nature (cf. note 2 above), a selection of these texts from the Helsinki corpus would not have provided enough examples.

⁶ These concern data in Fischer (1992). The Middle English works concerned are *Lazamon's Brut* (the Caligula ms., II.1-8650) (ed. Brook & Lesley 1963, 1978), Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (ed. Macauley 1900-1901) and Malory's *Morte Darthur* (ed. Vinaver 1967).

⁷ For more information on Query, see Meijs (1982) and van der Steen (1982). I am grateful to the Oxford University Computing Centre for providing me with the text of the *Paston Letters*, and to the late Professor Davis for having given me permission to use it, and to Iskandar Serail for converting it to the Query format.

⁸ Others mentioned are reduced infinitive marking in coordination, separation of infinitive from the matrix verb, and the degree of 'intimacy' between matrix verb and infinitive (see Ohlander 1941; Kaartinen & Mustanoja 1958:181; Warner 1982:129ff.; Jack 1991:332-335). Although the notion of 'intimacy' may seem intuitively correct, no measurements of 'intimacy' have been given, which makes it less useful as a linguistic criterion.

(1913) and Mitchell (1985 §§957-961, 1535-1554) for Old English; Sanders (1915) and Jack (1991) for early Middle English; and Kenyon (1909), Kaartinen & Mustanoja (1958), Quirk & Svartvik (1970), and Warner (1982) for late Middle English; the third column presents the situation in Present-day English. A language stage is marked as taking zero or/and *to* whenever that is the rule with only very rare exceptions (many of which are moreover doubtful cases). *Zero* in brackets indicates that there is only a small portion of examples showing this; in other words *to* is the norm.⁹ As I have already stated in Section 1, I have not taken coordinate infinitives into account because the presence of zero / (*for*) *to* is there conditioned by other factors. Most of the rare instances of a *to*-infinitive after modal auxiliaries, for instance, occur in the second, coordinate infinitive (cf. Ohlander 1941). When the first infinitive after a modal verb contains *to*, the modal is invariably still a full verb (e.g., *cunnen* in the sense of "know", *willen* in the sense of "wish, want"), and the complement is linguistically a control or *aci* complement (cf. Warner 1982:117).

A zero-infinitive occurs somewhat more regularly in what looks like subject position, but in almost all cases this infinitive is found with an impersonal verb. Since impersonal verbs can occur without a syntactic *nominal* subject (cf. Elmer 1981:61ff.), the plain infinitival phrase, too, must presumably be looked upon in these cases as an object rather than a subject. At the beginning of the Middle English period the plain infinitive occurs as regularly here as the marked infinitive (cf. Einenkel 1891:84; Kenyon 1909:120n.1; Sanders 1915:37). With the disappearance of impersonals and the introduction of the formal subject *hit*, the *to*-infinitive becomes more frequent. Kaartinen & Mustanoja (1958) only found the *to*-infinitive in their London prose corpus (15th century).

According to Visser (1963-73 §901) the uninflected infinitive was the rule in subject position, later to be replaced by the *to*-infinitive. Mitchell (1985 §1537n.40), however, shows that Visser is quite plainly wrong for Old English, and Bock (1931:129ff.) presents a convincing argument why it is indeed

⁹ The adverbial adjunct in Old English is also marked as taking (zero) and *to*. The status of zero marked adjuncts is not very clear. Callaway (1913) distinguishes between final and other adverbial functions. Many of the uninflected final infinitives after verbs of commanding and requesting may well be examples of predicative infinitives, as he admits himself (p.133), and some of his examples after verbs of movement are hardly final. Thus, his example from *Beowulf* (p.134), ... *Gewitað forð beran wæpen ond gewædu*, does not mean "go forth in order to carry (your) weapons and equipment" but rather, "go forth *carrying* [...]". The examples in Jack (1991:326) of zero adverbial infinitives are also all of this type. Concerning the other adverbial uses of the infinitive, only the causative infinitive allows zero marking, but most of these cases (and there are not very many) are doubtful (see Callaway 1913:160-161; and cf. Mitchell 1985 §959).

function of the infinitive	form of the infinitive zero vs. (<i>for</i>) <i>to</i>		
	OE	ME	PrDE
subject	zero ¹⁰ /to	(zero)/to	to
subject complement	to	to	to
object complement			
after control verbs ¹¹	zero/to	zero/to	(zero)/to
complement of modal auxiliaries	zero	zero	zero
AcI complements ¹¹	zero/(to) ¹²	zero/to	(zero)/to
noun modifier	to	to	to
adjective modifier	to	to	to
adverbial adjunct	(zero)/to	to	to
absolute infinitive	to	to	to

Table 1: *The use of the bare vs. the (for) to infinitive in Old, Middle and Present-day English*

the *to*- rather than the plain infinitive that occurs here first: he shows how the subject infinitive developed from an adnominal infinitive. Visser is probably led astray by the general encroachment, noted in the literature, of the *to*-infinitive upon the domain of the bare infinitive in Middle English (see also below).

¹⁰ But see below on the special status of these zero infinitives.

¹¹ The terminology used here varies for almost every author. The object complement after control verbs is called both 'objective infinitive' and 'predicative infinitive' in Callaway (1913:28ff, 89ff); 'object' in Kaartinen & Mustanoja (1958:184); 'transitive verb complement without a subject' in Quirk & Svartvik (1970:396); and simply 'complement' in Kenyon (1909:88). AcI complements are referred to as 'predicative infinitive with accusative subject' in Callaway (1913:107); 'predicative accusative' in Kaartinen and Mustanoja (1958:182); 'transitive verb complement with a subject' in Quirk & Svartvik (1970:396); and 'object infinitive' in Kenyon (1909:100). Here I have followed the more lucid and fairly widely accepted Generative Grammar terminology. Examples of control verb complements are,

- (1) a I command him_i [PRO_i to go]
b I_i promise (him) [PRO_i to come]
c John was asked [what PRO_{arb} to do]

An example of an AcI complement is,

- (2) I believe [this to be true]

The difference between the two types of construction is that the subject of the infinitive in (1) is an empty pronoun (PRO) which is controlled either by a NP in the matrix clause ((1a) and (b)) or has no antecedent in the clause (1c); in the latter case, the pronoun is said to be arbitrary in reference. The construction in (2) has its own infinitival subject. Verbs with AcI complements are usually referred to as 'exceptional case marking verbs' or 'S-bar deletion verbs'.

¹² Most of the rare occurrences with a *to*-infinitive in Old English can be explained away or are rather late, cf. Callaway (1913:119-120).

The data for early Middle English as investigated by Jack (1991:317-318) are somewhat surprising in that they show a (slight) increase in the use of the bare infinitive as subject, as compared to Old and late Middle English. It is likely, however, that the reanalysis of the adnominal infinitive into a true subject infinitive (as noted above) is the cause of this (see also Fischer forthcoming b).

2.2 *Research questions emerging from previous discussions*

Two questions emerge from this survey, a central one and a subsidiary one:

- (i) Why is it that only in the object complement of verbs, both forms of the infinitive appear in Middle English, and what motivates this selection?
- (ii) Why does the bare infinitive disappear from the complements of most verbs and become the almost exclusive prerogative of the (modal) auxiliaries, the causatives *make* and *let* and the direct perception verbs? (This change can already be seen in the *Paston Letters*, cf. the Appendix.)

I think it is worthwhile to consider the possibility that these two questions are actually related. If we can find a system behind the Middle English distribution of zero and *to* object complements, we may also have an answer to the subsequent diachronic development. In this paper I will only be interested in the first question. The second (in combination also with the first) will be dealt with in Fischer (forthcoming a). It will be clear that I am not satisfied with the usual way in which the distribution of zero and *to* is explained within Middle English verbal complementation. The choice is commonly said to be lexically determined (cf. Warner 1982) or arbitrary (Ohlander 1941:58), which boils down to the same thing (anything relegated to the lexicon is not seen as systematic or structural and, therefore, in that sense arbitrary). If it is said to be lexically determined, we also forgo any attempt to explain variation within contexts featuring one and the same lexical verb unless we distinguish two lexical entries for these verbs (where verb x_1 selects zero and verb x_2 *to*), but this of course provides no solution either. Jack (1991:336-337) is the only study with a different approach. He, too, notes exceptions in the choice of the infinitive which are insufficiently explained by the criteria of what he calls 'contextual utility' and 'syntactic function', but he accounts for these *diachronically* (and not synchronically, as Ohlander and Warner do). He refers to the fact that the infinitival system was in a state of flux at the time due to the erosion of the prepositional character of phrases with *to*+infinitive: the *to*-infinitive was taking the place of the plain infinitive, while at the same time the *for to*-infinitive was replacing the old *to*-infinitive. I do not believe Jack is correct in this. If the

choice of *to* and zero was indeed subject to speakers' uncertainty at a time of change, there is no explanation for the fact that the semantic distinction between *to* and zero was preserved throughout, as the investigations for Present-day English by Mittwoch (1990) and Duffley (1992) have made abundantly clear (for more discussion, see Fischer forthcoming a).

3. Discussion of the data

3.1 General factors influencing infinitive marking

To get a good idea of the forces at work behind the choice of zero vs *to*, I have looked at the complementation patterns of all the verbs that are listed in Kenyon (1909:90-98; 102-108) as taking zero- as well as *to*-infinitives (I have also investigated the complements of perception verbs even though Kenyon does not give them as taking both types of infinitive). The results of this survey are given in the Appendix.¹³

When I compared the zero-infinitival complements with the marked complements, I noticed a number of factors that seemed to play a role in the choice between zero and *to*. In a small number of cases the choice between *to* and zero did not seem to matter. Possibly these examples might still be explainable if more context had been provided. However, Bolinger (1968:122-123) already remarked concerning the rather similar contrast between (*for*) *to* and *-ing* constructions in Modern English: "It should go without saying that potential contrasts are not always operative contrasts. It is enough that the resources are there, part of the speaker's competence, to be used when he needs them" (see also Bolinger's examples (17) and (18); cf. also Jørgensen 1982:59-60). A list of the factors found is given in (3).

- (3) (i) the activity expressed in the infinitival clause is or is not simultaneous with that of the matrix verb (presence/absence of identity of tense domain)
- (ii) the activity expressed in the infinitival clause is or is not directly perceivable
- (iii) after causatives, the *to*-infinitive is used when the causation is in some way not direct, either because (a) the subject of the matrix verb (the causer) does not concretely cause what is expressed in the infinitival clause, or (b) because the subject/causer is inanimate and

¹³ For each verb I have counted the number of instances in which the verb appears without a clausal type of complement (column 1), and with (the following columns). I have indicated in the columns the form in which the infinitive appears, and the different types of complement with which it occurs. The survey purports to be complete, except that I have not included two specific forms of the verbs *hear* and *see*: i.e., *here* and *sey*. This was done to save time, so that I would not have to check too many doublets with the adverb *here* and the verb *say* respectively.

- as such more of an instrument than a cause, or (c) what is caused is a process in which the causee himself takes/must take an active part
- (iv) in *general* contexts, i.e., when the infinitival clause does not express an actuality, the *to*-infinitive is the rule
 - (v) the zero infinitive is the rule in 'irrealis' constructions
 - (vi) the *to*-infinitive is the rule when the infinitive or the matrix verb is in the passive form

I will discuss these factors one by one and illustrate them from the data collected.¹⁴ After that, I will try to find a common denominator behind the various factors and show how the choice between zero and *to* can be understood syntactically (see Section 4). Generally, it can be said that the zero infinitive indicates a direct relationship between what is expressed in the matrix verb and the infinitival complement, whereas the *to*-infinitive characterises an indirect relationship.

3.1.1 *Factor (i): (Non-)simultaneity of tense domains*. The activity expressed in the infinitival clause is or is not simultaneous with that of the matrix verb. In the latter case, the *to*-infinitive expresses purpose or expected result, contrast (4a,b) to (c,d).

- (4) a Til Custance made hire [Hermengyld] boold, and *bad* hire
wirche / The wyl of Crist ... (Man of Law 566-67)
- b And byd hym that, .../ He take up Seys body the king/ ... *Bid*
hym *crepe* into the body/ And doo hit goon to Alcione ... (BD
141-145)
- c God *bad* us *for to wexe* and multiplie; (Wife of Bath 28)
- d Also I *prey* yow *to foryeve* it me/ Al have I nat set folk in hir
degree ... (Gen. Prologue 743-44)

Whereas (4c) expresses a general command about our *future* task as human beings, (4a) stresses the immediate taking into effect of *wirche*. Here *bad* is almost a causative (and perhaps best translated as "had her work"). It is clear from the context that Custance enables Hermengyld to perform the will of Christ by making her *boold*. The similarity of *bid* to a causative in these cases is also clear from (4b) where *bid crepe* is used parallel to *doo hit goon*. (In some examples *bid* (+ zero infinitive) is indeed almost an auxiliary as in, *I bid wisshe yow namore sorwe* (TC II, 406).) In (4d), the non-simultaneity of *prey* and *to foryeve* is clearly implied. Chaucer asks his readers/listeners to forgive him if he has not treated the pilgrims correctly. Since he has not yet arranged

¹⁴ In quite a number of cases more than one factor may be held responsible for the choice of the infinitive, where relevant this is indicated in the text (a combination of factors can presumably only strengthen the choice of marker).

the pilgrims, they can only forgive him *after* they have heard/read this. Factor (iv) also plays a role in this last example (see below).

Another interesting pair is (5a,b),

- (5) a And yf he wolde ought by hys sort it preve/ If that I lye, in
certain I shal *fonde* / *Distorben* hym and plucke hym by the
sleve,/ Makynge his sort ... (TC IV 1401-1403)
b And everich in the beste wise he kan,/ *To strengthen* hire shal
alle his frendes *fonde*; (Man of Law 346-347)

In (5a), the identity of tense domain between *fonde* and *distorben* is made clear by the parallel infinitive *plucke*. Criseyde [*I*] describes what she will do if her father [*he*] tries to show by auguries that she lies. She will do her best preventing him (*fonde* *distorben*) from making his 'sort' by grabbing his sleeve. Quite clearly the 'grabbing'-part describes in more detail what she will try and do; *plucke* and *fonde* *distorben* all belong to the same time-frame. In (5b), however, *everich* ("every one") of the supporters of the Sultan's mother in the tale will *try* (i.e., "persuade") their friends to *strengthen* ("support") her. Clearly the activity expressed in the infinitive is consecutive to that of the matrix verb (for this last example, see also the discussion under factor (iii)).

The difference in tense domain is sometimes indicated by temporal adverbs (as in (6a,b), *sone*, *nevere mo*) or by other indicators of future time (6c,d),

- (6) a But to the pitouse goddes everichone/ Ful tendrely he preyde
and made his mone,/ *To doon* hym sone out of this world to
pace, (TC IV 949-952)
b ... but sey wherfore/ It is; for sith that day that I was bore, I
nas, ne nevere mo *to ben* I *thynke*,/ Ayeyns a thing that
myghte the forthynke. (TC II 1411-1414)
c Ther he is now [i.e., in heaven], God *leve* us *for to meete*
(Prioress 683)
d How that the pope ... / *Bad* hym *to wedde* another if hym
leste (Clerk 741-742)

In (6c), the coming to heaven is still clearly future, and so is the (possible) marriage in (6d). Factor (i) plays a role with most verbs in the list but is less obvious with causatives¹⁵ and the verb *wenen*. I will come back to this below.

3.1.2 *Factor (ii): (non-)direct perception*. The activity expressed in the infinitival clause is or is not directly perceivable. This factor, of course, concerns in

¹⁵ Duffley (1992:19-20), who makes a distinction between two meanings of the to-infinitive depending on the type of matrix verb, also notes that after causatives and verbs of achievement the infinitive is 'understood to be realized' rather than 'non-realized or yet to be realized' as is usual after other verbs taking a to-infinitive.

the first place the complements of perception verbs. With the exception of *seen*, no *to*-infinitives are found after perception verbs.¹⁶ Instead of the *to*-infinitive a *that*- or *how*-clause is found. In all the examples the bare infinitive clearly describes the subject's sense impression, i.e., that which he registers without necessarily being consciously aware of what he perceives (cf. van der Leek 1989). The infinitives, therefore, always convey sound ('sing', 'roar', 'tell', 'say' etc.) or a concrete activity, something that can be seen or felt (see (7)).

- (7) a Tho *saugh* I in an other place/ *Stonden* in a large space./ Of
hem that maken blody soun ... (HF 1237-1239)
- b Ther *saugh* I *pleye* jugelours, (HF 1259)
- c Y *saugh* him *carien* a wynd-melle ... (HF 1280)

In that light it is not surprising that a considerable number of bare infinitives after perception verbs in Chaucer are found in the parts of Chaucer's dreamvisions (i.e., BD, HF, LGW, RR) where the I-figure (i.e., both the dreamer and the reporter of the dream) simply reports what he has registered with his senses.¹⁷ When the perception is not direct or when Chaucer wants to emphasise that the subject goes further than mere registration, i.e., he interprets what he sees, we invariably find a finite clause,

- (8) a "Wyf," quod this markys, "ye han *herd* er this/ My peple sikly
berth oure mariage ... (Clerk 624-625)
- b And if that he [i.e., the speaker's guardian angel] may *feelen*,
out of drede./ That ye [her husband Valerian] me *touche*, or
love in vileyney, ... (Second Nun 155-156)
- c And next that *sawgh* I *how* Venus./ Whan that she sawgh the
castel brende./ Doun fro the heven *gan descende*, ...
(HF 162-164)

In the last example, it becomes clear from the subclause in l.163 that the speaker goes beyond sense impression, he realises why Venus comes down to earth.

The only three cases where a *to*-infinitive follows *seen* (in (9), not noted by Kenyon) are very interesting since all of these are directly related to medieval ideas about predestination as described by Boethius.

¹⁶There is one example in Gower,

Bot yit *herde* I no pipe there / *To make* noise in mannes Ere (CA VIII 2675-76)

It is possible that the separation of the matrix verb and the infinitive plays a role here, especially since the infinitive is positioned at the beginning of a new line. More likely perhaps is that the infinitive should be interpreted as a relative clause "a pipe with which a noise can be made".

¹⁷ Out of the total of 97 bare infinitives after *seen* in Chaucer, 27 are found in the dreamvisions. The figures are less spectacular after *heren* (which, not so remarkably, shows that (poetic) dreams are more of a visionary than an auditory experience); 15 out of the 102 examples appear in dreamvisions.

- (9) a "for certeynly, this wot I wel," he seyde,/"That foresight of di-
vine purveyaunce/ Hath *seyn* alwey me *to forgon* Criseyde,"...
(TC IV 960-962; and again in 977)
b And yif thou seist here that thilke thing that God *seeth to betide*,
it ne may nat unbytide ... (Bo V pr.6 162-163)

The reason why a *to*-infinitive rather than a bare infinitive or a finite clause is used here is because there are two worlds: God's world, in which any event — whether past, present or future — is perceived by Him directly, and our world, where the event that is seen lies in the future. The whole problem of predestination and free will is thus nicely captured by Chaucer in his subtle use of *to*: a *that*-clause would have made the perception too indirect, and therefore less dramatic, while a zero infinitive would have been fine for God but not for the world in which the poem is situated.¹⁸

3.1.3 *Factor (iii): (in)direct causation.* After causatives (the verb *let*, a special case, will be considered below), the *to*-infinitive is used when the causation is in some way not direct, for instance when (a) the subject of the matrix verb (the causer) himself does not concretely/directly cause what is expressed in the infinitival clause. A very clear example of this is (10),

- (10) For which he [Nero] in a bath *made* hym [Seneca] *to blede*/ On
bothe his armes, ... (Monk 2509-2510)

because we know indeed that Nero did not kill Seneca with his own hands, but pressed him into committing suicide. This difference may also account for the *to*- and the zero-infinitive after *make* in (1). Delilah does not herself cut Samson's hair. In the Vulgate (Judges 16:19), we read ... *vocavitque tonsorem et rasi* ..., "and [she] called a barber and [he] cut ...". This accounts for the use of the *to*-infinitive in the first line. The bare infinitive is used in the next line because Delilah directly enables Samson's enemies to 'espyen al his craft' by opening the tent for them where the shorn Samson lies. Another way of explaining the difference between *make to* and *make zero* in (1) will be referred to below (see the discussion of (36)).

(b) Indirectness may also be due to the fact that the subject/causer is inanimate and as such more of an instrument than a cause. Thus, both the instances in Chaucer where the subject of *helpen* is inanimate have a *to*-infinitive,

¹⁸ I do not think that the use of the *to*-infinitive after *see* in these examples plays the same role as it does in Present-day English, where the *to*-infinitival complement expresses a proposition, in contrast to the bare complement which registers a sense impression (cf. van der Leek 1992). The role of *to* seems to be to highlight the fact that the perception is direct (after all God is the subject, the one who perceives), but that our human nature precludes us from seeing it at the same time.

- (11) Al be I nat the first that dide amys,/ What helpeth *that to don* my blame away?(TC V, 1067-68)

(The other instance is Melibee 1444, where the subject is Fortune.) Examples with other verbs are,

- (12) a But natheless, if thou wene sikerly that the *biwreiyng of thy conseil to a persone wol make thy condicion to stonden* in the better plyt, ... (Melibee 1145-50)
 b Wyn maketh man to *lesen* wrecchedly/ His mynde and eek his lymes everichon. (Summoner 2054-55)
 c Love, that knetteth lawe of compaignie,/ And couples *doth* in vertu for to dwelle. (TC III 1748-49. cf. also TC V 1394)

(c) Finally, there may be indirectness because what is caused is a process in which the causee himself takes/must take an active part, i.e., the causee is animate and represented as highly 'volitional' as in (13),

- (13) a But swich a nede was to preye hym thenne,/ As for to bidde a wood man for to renne! (TC II 1553-54)
 b Tho rowned she a pistel in his ere,/ And bad hym to be glad and have no fere. (Wife of Bath 1021-1022, cf. also Knight 1386)

That an active role of the object of the matrix verb (the causee) is required in connection with a *to*-infinitive is also clear from some other, non-causative examples, such as (5b) above, where the *frendes* themselves must provide the support, and (14),

- (14) a There have I taught hem to be charitable. (Summoner 1795)
 b And to be glad they often hire besoughte. (TC IV, 725)

where the objects *hem* and *hire* must be willing to be *charitable* or *glad*. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that when the infinitive consists of *be* + adjective, expressing a state of mind (*glad*, *murie*, *blithe* etc.), the infinitive is almost invariably *to* in the corpus. The few exceptions that I have found, can be explained by their context. Consider, for instance, (15):

- (15) A feeste he [Balthasar] made unto his lordes alle,/ Upon a tyme and bad hem blithe bee; (Monk 2191-2192)

In this situation, King Balthasar does not ask his guests to be glad, he expects them to be; the guests, in other words, are not given a choice (contrast this to (13b), where the situation is open). A similar case is found in (16),

- (16) She taketh hym by the hand .../ And bad hym been al hool, ... (Merchant 2005-2007)

As in (15), the phrase is used in polite conversation, it is something that you wish upon the receiver, who is not himself actively involved.

When the causee is animate but does not (or cannot) play an active part (i.e., he is represented as very low on the volitionality scale), a bare infinitive occurs,

- (17) a Therefore his maister yaf him acquitance and *bad hym go*
(Cook 4412)
b And that thow *me bisoughtest don* of yoore,/ Havyng unto
myn honour ne my reste/ Right no reward, I dide al that the
leste (TC V 1734-1736)
c Now, lady bryght, .../ ... so *techeth me devyse*/ Som joye
of that is felt in thi servyse (TC III 39-42)

In (17a), having been dismissed by his master the subject really has no choice but to go. In (17b), Pandarus makes clear that he did everything Troilus wanted without any regard to his own person, so, as it were, by switching off his own will. In (17c), Chaucer depicts himself as a humble *clerk* (his usual posture), who has no feeling for the affairs of lovers, so Venus must describe their plight for/through him.

3.1.4 *Factor (iv): non-actuality*. In general contexts, i.e., when the infinitival clause does not express an actuality, the *to*-infinitive is the rule. This is for instance the case when the speaker uses a simile (as in (13a)), or when the subject issues a general order or comment valid for all times, as in (18) (contrast this with (4a), where *wirche* only refers to that particular instant), and (19),

- (18) Seynt poul, .../ He *bad* th'appostles *for to wirche*,/ And
wynnen her lyflode in that wise, (RR 6662-6663)
(19) a A wyf! a, Seinte Marie, *benedicite*!/ How myghte a man han
any adversitee/ That hath a wyf? .../ If he be povre, she
helpeth hym to swinke. (Merchant 1337-1342)
b Daun Salomon, as wise clerkes seyn,/ *Techeth* a man *to kepen*
his tonge weel. (Manciple 314-315)¹⁹

The context may also suggest non-actuality when some modal element is present (e.g., when the subjunctive is used, as in (6c) above and (20)), or when there is an *if*-clause as, for instance, in (19a) and (4d) above, and (21).

- (20) But now *help* God *to quenchen* al this sorwe! (TC III 1058)
(21) Be-cause he held a corte here we *mad* hym *hold* corte at
London, and so shall we *make* the *to hold* a corte at Ipysweche

¹⁹ Example (19b) is similar to Dutch examples containing the verb *leren* 'teach'. This Dutch verb can also take both types of infinitives as in Middle English. In (19b) only the *te* 'to'-infinitive would be possible, whereas in an actual, particular situation the bare infinitive is more likely to occur, as in *Hij leert zijn zoon fietsen*, 'he teaches his son cycle'. Interesting, too, is that the *te*-infinitive is again more usual (cf. factor (iii)), when the subject is inanimate, *Dit leert je je mond te houden* 'This teaches you to keep your mouth shut'.

wyth-owt thowe wolt pay vs þe rent and ferme.
(PL 173.4-8)

Similarly, non-actuality may be present when the infinitive expresses an activity which is not to be expected in the context,

- (22) Thise wordes seyde he for the nones alle./ To help his frend,
lest he for sorwe deyde;/ For douteles, *to don* his wo *to falle*./
He roughte nought what unthrift that he seyde./ But Troilus .../
Took litel heede of al that evere he mente ... (TC IV 428-433)

The context makes clear that it is unlikely that Troilus' wo will falle because he is not even listening.

3.1.5 *Factor (v): irrealis*. What is very striking is the absence of the *to*-infinitive in 'irrealis' (or counterfactual) expressions like *wende have done* "thought he had done" and *need not have done*.²⁰ In the *Paston Letters* the verb *need* is always followed by the *to*-infinitive except in this one case. Compare,

- (23) a ... and þanne he *nedyd* neuer *to drede* hym ... (PL 79.14)
b ... ye *nede* not a *go* [= have gone] to London, ye myght haue
had an ende at home. (PL 417.21-22)

This is curious because, as we have seen in the discussion of factor (iv), non-actuality normally induces the appearance of the *to*-infinitive. There may be more than one reason for the use of the zero-infinitive here. Most of these irrealis expressions concern modals which as a rule only take the bare infinitive ("might have", "should have" etc.). *Wenen* and *neden* may have adopted the bare infinitive on analogy of these cases. Secondly, and more importantly I think, the essence of these expressions is that they convey what should properly have been done or what was *actually* thought (*need*, as we have seen (note 20) is a special case), but which for some reason or other fell through or turned out to be not true. In other words, the bare infinitive does express a form of actuality here, 'subjective actuality'. (24a) and (24b) give a nice illustration of the subtle differences that are possible,

²⁰ I consider *need not have done* an irrealis expression in the same category as *could have*, *might have done* etc., even though semantically it looks rather different from the others. Irrealis expressions usually convey that something *could*, *should* etc. have happened but that that something did not actually happen. With *need not* it is the reverse, due to the negative nature of the phrase. The happening has actually taken place but this time it is the need of it that is denied. Thus, as in the other irrealis expressions, there is a tension between what is desirable and what is actual. Duffley (1992:99ff.) describes the use of *to* vs zero after *need* in Present-day English in different terms but it comes down to the same thing: "All the uses of *need* and *dare* as full modal auxiliaries [i.e., construed with a bare infinitive] involve therefore a non-assertive quality whereby the needing or daring are not asserted but denied, questioned, conceded, represented as mere possibilities rather than as real events" (p.103).

- (24) a He *wende have copen* by his felawe John,/ And by the
millere in he creep anon, ... (Reeve 4259-4260)
b And loved well to have hors of prys./ He *wende to have* re-
proved be/ Of theft or moordre if that he/ Hadde in his stable
ony hakeney. (RR 1134-1137)

(24a) is such an irrealis, the subject, the student Aleyn, really thought he had crept back into his and John's bed (but, it turns out to be the Miller's bed). Thus, the bare infinitive describes the actual content of the thoughts in Aleyn's mind. In (24b), however, the subject thinks that he *may* be reproved for having such a base beast in his stable, and it is indeed possible that this may happen. It is no true irrealis; the *to*-infinitive expresses not the subjectively actual realisation of the activity indicated by the infinitive (as in (24a)), but only the possibility in the subject's mind of its being realised some time in the future.

3.1.5 *Factor (vi): passive constructions.* After the verbs *do* and *make* (not after *let*²¹) the *to*-infinitive is the rule when the infinitive is in the passive form in the Paston Letters (cf. the more or less identical pair in (25)), and also when the matrix verb is passive,²² as in the expression, *it is done me to undirstond*, which occurs five times in the *Paston Letters*.²³

- (25) a ... the seid Jenney *ded arest* the seid Calle for a thef, ...
(PL 65.48-49)
b ... he *dyde* Dabeneý *to be arestyd* for mayntenynge ...
(PL 181.19-20)

The exclusive use of the *to*-infinitive after *do* in these cases is striking because the *to*-infinitive is never found with active *do* in the *Paston Letters* (except in (37), discussed below). The connection between passives and a preference for *to*-infinitives is also noted for Present-day English (see, e.g., Lind 1983:271-272; Mittwoch 1990:118ff., Duffley 1992), but only with respect to matrix verb passives (for more discussion, see Fischer forthcoming a).

In texts where active causative *do* does regularly occur with *to*, it is quite possible that a separate factor is responsible for its occurrence. I have noted

²¹ After *let* the passive infinitive is always bare, except for the one case given in (34) (and see also the discussion of example (36)). The fact that it is a passive may have eased in the use of *to*, but a more influential factor may have been the fact that it is a coordinate infinitive.

²² There is only one apparent exception to this after *do* (there are ten — including the second passive — instances with *to*):

... where-fore it is ryght wele *do* his person *be ponysshed* as it pleaseth you. (PL 49.22-23)

It is unlikely, however, that *do* is an infinitive here (after adjectives — *wele*, in the present case, as we have seen in Table 1, the *to*-infinitive is the rule). If we must interpret *do* as a past participle, then the complement could be a (*that*)-clause as well as a bare infinitive. The former seems more likely.

²³ These passive constructions are too rare in Chaucer to draw any conclusions from them.

elsewhere (Fischer 1992) that the presence of *do* + *to*-infinitive in a text correlates with the presence of periphrastic *do* in the same text; in other words, *to* serves to set off the causative cases of *do* against the periphrastic ones which always have the bare infinitive.²⁴ In connection with the regular use of the bare infinitive after causative *do* in the *Paston Letters*, it is to be noted that this text contains no clear (i.e., unambiguous) cases of periphrastic *do* (see also Davis 1972), whereas periphrastic *do* and (active) causative *do*+*to*-infinitive do occur in Chaucer.

3.2 Other evidence for a distinction between *to*- and bare infinitives

Having discussed a number of general factors that play a role in the choice between *to* and zero, I would now like to make a few remarks which do not represent 'factors' like the above but which may contribute to a better understanding of the differences between the two categories.

There are a considerable number of what I shall call hybrid examples of the type illustrated in (27),

- (27) ... for in gode feyth I *have do sowte* all the shopis in this town
and here is right febill cheys. (PL 149.8-9)

They occur regularly after *do* (3 in Chaucer, 3 in the *Paston Letters*), *hear* (17 in Chaucer), *let* (4 in the *Paston Letters*), *make* (2 in the *Paston Letters*) and in Malory also after *see*. The past participle (instead of the infinitive) is only used when the matrix verb is in the perfect. This seems to me to indicate that simultaneity or identity of tense domain plays a role here too: the action of the matrix verb is already past, and thus the activity of the complement, normally conveyed in an infinitive, takes on the form of the *past* participle to match the perfective aspect of the matrix verb.²⁵

In quite a number of cases (fifteen of the thirty-one verbs in the corpus), verbs that possess the possibility to appear with a zero-infinitive, also appear in constructions where the complement consists of a NP plus an adjective, as in,

- (28) The blood was fled for pure drede/ Doun to hys herte, to *make him*
warm. (BD 489-490)

²⁴ Malory (and other Middle English texts) use also other ways to distinguish the two *do*'s. Malory always adds an extra causative verb (i.e., *make* or *let*) when *do* alone could be interpreted also as a periphrastic verb (cf. Fischer 1992). This again shows the strong need for a distinction.

²⁵ A similar phenomenon can also be seen in Dutch. In (1a) the resultative aspect of the activity expressed in the infinitive can be underlined by using the past participle (b) rather than the infinitive, (1) a Hij kwam aanlopen "He came walk [INF]"
b Hij kwam aangelopen "He came walked [PP]"

Mittwoch (1990:125) also notes a connection between small clauses (i.e., a complement consisting of NP – AP or two NPs) and the occurrence of bare infinitives (see further section 4).

Often a translation into Present-day English shows the difference between the infinitives: the plain infinitive being frequently translatable by an *-ing* construction (or a preposition + gerund), and the *to*-infinitive remaining as it is. Thus, (29) is best translated as “he doesn’t *think of sharing* it with any one”, describing the usual thoughts of a miser, while (30) means “I *think/intend* never more *to be* against something ...”.

(29) Hym [the miser] hadde lever asondre shake./ And late alle his
lymes asondre ryve./ Than leve his richesse in his lyve./ He
thenkith parte it with no man; (RR 5392-5395)

(30) ... but sey wherfore/ It is; for sith that day that I was bore, I
nas, ne nevere mo *to ben* I *thynke*./ Ayeyns a thing that myghte
the forthynke. (TC II 1411-1414)

It sometimes happens that Present-day English has preserved the distinction, as is the case with *help* (cf. (31), and (19a) and (20) above).

(31) a O ye Herynes ... Megera, Alete, and ek Thesiphone/ ... This
ilke ferthe book me *helpeth fyne*, ... (TC IV 22-26)

b Lat kutte hem of, I wol thee *helpe* hem *carie*. (Pardoner 954)

Present-day English employs *help* + zero-infinitive when the subject itself is (perceived to be) involved in the act of ‘helping’; otherwise, or in neutral instances, *to* is found (cf. van der Leek 1989; Mittwoch 1990:116-117; Duffley 1992:23-29). In the case of *fonden* (see (5) above), the zero-infinitive is best translated by *try and ...* (or *try ...ing*) rather than *try to ...*, where *and* illustrates the simultaneity of the two actions and *to* indicates a shift in time.

In quite a few instances in which the zero-infinitive is employed, it is possible to replace the matrix verb by causative *let*, a verb which as a rule has only the zero-infinitive. This is so for the examples in (32), (4b) above and (41) below.

(32) a But half deed, with hir nekke ycorven there./ He *lefte* hir *lye*, ...
(Second Nun 353-354)

b This olde Pandion, this kyng, gan wepe/ For tendernesse of
herte for to *leve*/ His doughter *gon*, and for to yeve hire leve;
(LGW 2279-2281)

It is notable too that *let* and *leve* are often found as variants in the different mss. of Chaucer (e.g., TC I 2623, TC II 1500, TC IV 924 etc.).

I have already argued elsewhere (Fischer 1992) that the reason why *let* normally takes the plain infinitive (unlike the other causatives) is because it had developed in the Middle English period into almost a pure auxiliary. All the instances in the corpus in which *let* occurs followed by an infinitive (741 in all)

have a bare infinitive with only six exceptions. When *let* occurs with a *to*-infinitive, it is either used as a full verb, in the sense of "allow" (33); or it is followed by a passive infinitive (34); or *to* can be interpreted as a prefix or particle of the infinitive, so that the infinitive is in fact bare, as in (35),²⁶ (for another exception see (38) below),

- (33) "How shal I do? Whan shal she come ayeyn?/ I not,allas, whi
lete ich here *to go*; (TC V 225-226)
- (34) ... but *let* it passe, and neuer more *to be spokyn of* ...
 (PL 416.21-22)
- (35) Whan Habradate was slayn, his wyf so deere/ Hirselves slow,
 and *leet* hir blood *to glyde*/ In Habradates woundes ...
 (Franklin 1414-1416)

This leaves only example (36),

- (36) The cause itold of hire comyng, the olde/ Priam, the kyng, ful
 soone in general *let* her-upon his parlement *to holde*,
 (TC IV 141-143)

Although *to-healden*, unlike *to-gliden* in (35), is not attested in Old English, still such a prefixed verb could provide the explanation for this otherwise singular exception. A verbal adjective *to-heald* "leaning, inclined", is recorded for Old English. If we accept **to-healdan*, the particle *to* could have reflexive or passive meaning, a meaning often found with other prefixed *to*-verbs in Old English (e.g., *to-fleogan* "to be broken", *to-flowan* "to be melted, separated", *to-stregdan* "to be scattered", etc). Note that *to holde* in (36) does have passive sense. In these constructions active infinitives were replaced by passive ones in the course of the Middle English period (see Fischer 1991). The passive sense of *holde* may also be responsible for *to* since (formally) passive infinitives, as we have seen, as a rule take *to*. The *to*-infinitive after *make* in (1) above could also be explained in this way since *clippe* is likewise an infinitive that will later become passive in form.

Two last remarks. In the case of some verbs, such as for instance *reden* and *demen*, it is unlikely that there really was a choice, as Kenyon (1909) suggested in his list, because all possible instances of bare infinitives can also be interpreted as finite clauses with the complementiser *that* left out.

Finally, it should be noted that separation of the matrix verb and the infinitive (cf. note 18) does not seem to be an important factor in the choice of

²⁶ A similar case is found after the verb *seen* in, *swiftly I me spedde/ .../ To seen this flour to sprede* (LGW G 200-202). *To-gliden* and *to-sprede* are both used regularly in Old English; for a Middle English instance of *to-gliden* (cf. Lazamon's *Brut* II.877-878). The use of *to* as a detachable particle (a relic from Old English) is often missed by editors of Middle English texts. Thus, neither Davis (1979) nor Benson (1988) note the verbs *to-gliden* and *to-sprede* in their glossaries.

marker. The only instance in my data which definitely seems to belong here is (37), and possibly also (38), although in the latter example *to* was only "crowded in later" according to Davis' note; moreover, *let* can also be interpreted here as a full verb in the sense of "allow".

- (37) And if it plese not yow to speke to hym ther-of, þat it plese yow
to *don* Jon Paston or Thomas Playter or sume othyr þat ye thynk
þat cane vndyr-stonde the mater *for to speke* to the seyd Hwe of
Fen ther-of in hyr name, ... (PL 157.20-23)
- (38) ... that she wold not ne nevyr was avysyd noþer to lete þe Lord
Maleyns ne non oþer *to have* ther intentys as for þat mater whyll
þat she levyth. (PL 141.4-5)

4. The 'system' governing the choice of zero and *to*

Most of the factors discussed in Section 3.1 are semantic factors. It is these factors, I believe, that govern the choice of infinitive marker. Since these factors are not tied to one verb but seem to pertain to all or almost all verbs that offer a choice in infinitival complement (between bare and *to*), we would lose in explanatory force if we relegated the choice of marker to the lexicon, as has been done up till now. To strengthen our case it would be helpful if we could reduce the rather large number of factors in Section 3.1 to one basic one, and if it could be shown that the differences in semantic structure parallel a difference in syntactic structure. Below I will try to give a graphic realisation of what I perceive to be the differences between zero (39) and *to* (40).

(39)

one event (same tense domain)

(40)

two events (related but not simultaneous)

What I have tried to represent is this. In (39) a matrix verb followed by a bare infinitival complement expresses *one* event in which the subject of the matrix

verb is directly involved (whether as a causer, a perceiver or something else depends on the lexical nature of the verb). The subject has, therefore, direct perception, or directly influences or participates in what happens. A matrix verb followed by a *to*-infinitival complement, as in (40), contains two separate events. Because the matrix subject is part of one event and the infinitival complement part of the other, it can therefore not be directly involved. In the case of causatives, this means that there is another link in the causal chain between causer and causee; in the case of verbs like *fonden*, *helpen*, *prayen*, *techen*, etc., it means that the matrix subject has no direct means of effecting the results stated in the complement. That is why in an example like (41),

- (41) Anon he [January] *preyde* hire [May] *streden* hire al naked;
(Merchant 1958)

preyde has become almost a causative. We know, from the context, that her undressing is indeed considered to be unavoidable. In line 1961, we read *And she obeyeth be hire lief or looth*. The old man January sees his young bride May as his possession, with which he can do what he likes because *we have leve to pleye us by the lawe* (l.1841). Clearly, in the text, (41) cannot be followed by, "but she refused to do it". In other words, there is an entailment relation; what is denoted by the infinitival complement is true for the sentence as a whole. In (42), however,

- (42) And to thise clerkes two he [Nero] *gan to preyen* / *To sleen* hym
and to girden of his heed, ... (Monk 2545-2546)

The 'clerks' can still refuse Nero an easy death and walk out on him. Nero is presented as having no control over the actions of the *clerkes*, unlike January over May.

When we look at recent literature concerning the distribution of bare and *to*-infinitives in Present-day English, it is found that similar factors play a role. Mittwoch (1990) shows that causative and perception verb complements which take a bare infinitive, denote an event in the narrow sense, i.e., "processes that culminate in end-point [...] and achievements" (p.105); also, that there is no potential for independent temporal specification and that an entailment relation exists between what is expressed by the matrix verb and by the bare complement. Duffley's (1992) study of the infinitive stresses that the bare infinitive always indicates that the event expressed is coincident with the matrix verb, while the *to*-infinitive expresses a subsequent event. Thus, he writes that with bare infinitives "no room is left for the non-realization of the infinitive event" (p.82), whereas, when "compliance is not taken for granted, *to* is used in order to 'futurize' the infinitive event's actualization, i.e., to evoke it as something which the person receiving the request may or may not decide to do" (p.83).

Formally, the difference in semantic structure is expressed by the absence or presence of *to*. It would be elegant if we could consider this *to* also marking a difference in syntactic structure, in other words to envisage an iconic relationship between the two. In the literature, there has been and still is a dispute about the syntactic status of infinitival complements. There seems to be more or less general agreement about the syntactic structure of 'persuade'-verb complements and 'believe'-type complements. The former are analysed as the complements of object control predicates, and the latter as exceptional case marking clauses. Object control predicates as in,

- (44) I persuaded him_i [PRO_i to go to the cinema with me]

take an S-bar complement, or in more up-to-date terms a CP, which has an empty subject, PRO, coreferential with the matrix object. In Chomsky (1981), exceptional case marking clauses were said to have S-bar complements, in which the S-bar, including the COMP position, was deleted in order to allow the matrix verb to govern the subject of the infinitive. Nowadays the tendency seems to be among GB linguists to take an INFL-headed S (an IP, see, e.g., Bennis & Hoekstra 1989:124ff.) or an S containing an INFL (see Radford 1988:320) and not S-bar as the complement of 'believe'-verbs.

The position was, and is, far less clear with respect to the bare infinitival complements following perception verbs and causatives. In the past they have been analysed as Equi-verbs (Rosenbaum 1967, Fiengo 1974, Harbert 1977) to show their closeness to 'persuade'-verbs, and as S-bar verbs with an empty COMP (cf. Kayne 1981, and see also Lightfoot [1991:87-88]: an INFL-headed S-bar without a lexical head) or with S-bar deletion (Chomsky 1981) because of their similarity to 'believe'-verbs. Historically, there is good reason to accept (cf. Fischer 1989) that these verbs taking bare infinitival complements are different from both 'persuade'-verbs and 'believe'-verbs. In Old English the 'persuade'-verbs as a rule govern a dative (animate) object, not an accusative; the causatives and perception verbs govern an accusative (animate or inanimate), while AcI-type verbs like 'believe' are not attested in original Old English.

For all these reasons (their history; their formal surface difference: the absence of *to*; the fact that they are neither completely like 'persuade'-verbs nor like 'believe'-verbs), I would like to argue that these bare complements have a different syntactic structure, and propose, as some others have done (e.g., Bennis & Hoekstra 1989:124-130), that they are small clauses. This would mean that they lack both the C and the I node: they take VP as their complement.

This gives us the following possible structures, which I believe also hold for Middle English: (45) for control verbs, (46) for 'believe'-verbs, and (47) for verbs taking a bare infinitival complement. (The position of the matrix subject is not really relevant here, but I am assuming the VP-internal subject hypothesis.)

It is clear from these structures that the semantic difference which I represented in (39) and (40) is reflected in the syntactic structure. In (45) and (46) the *to*-infinitival complement (the non-finite V) has no direct relation with the matrix verb because of an intervening maximal projection (CP, IP). There is no such barrier in (47), so that there is a direct relation between the non-finite V and the matrix VP there. The absence of the INFL node in (47) also shows that the non-finite V cannot have a time-reference independent of the matrix verb, in other words, the activities expressed by matrix verb and infinitive must be simultaneous.

The interpretation of bare infinitivals as small clauses also links up nicely with the fact noted above (see (28)) that the same verbs that take bare infinitival complements regularly appear with nominal complements, i.e., small clauses.

5. Conclusion

Above, I have tried to show that the distribution of *to* and zero was not arbitrary in late Middle English. Previous research had already indicated that the most important determining factor was grammatical function. However, this did not explain the use of both *to* and zero in verbal complementation. The factors that I have described in the previous section make it reasonable to assume that there was a semantic distinction underlying lexical variation, and that this distinction was made syntactically explicit by the presence or absence of the marker *to*. Why *to* was used in this way, and why the distinction between *to* and zero became eroded or at least severely limited in later English is a question I would like to reserve for another occasion.

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SUMMARY

The aim of this paper is to investigate the difference in usage between the bare or zero infinitive and the marked or (*for*) *to* infinitive in late Middle English. It has been generally recognised that grammatical function plays an important role here, but it does not explain the variation in infinitive marking when the infinitive functions as a verbal complement. According to most historical linguists of English, the choice of marker here is lexically determined (and therefore syntactically arbitrary), or influenced, in the case of poetry, by metrical considerations. This study is part of a larger project, which will be concerned not only with the distribution of the infinitival forms in Middle English, but also with the changes that they have undergone in the course of time. Here we will concentrate on the late Middle English distribution. It will be shown that there are structural factors (mainly of a semantic nature) that determine the form of the infinitive in verbal complementation. These factors are found to be similar to the ones that play a role in infinitive marking in Present-day English.

RÉSUMÉ

Le présent article a pour objet de notre l'étude de la différence d'usage entre l'infinitif simple et l'infinitif marqué (*for to*, *to*) en moyen anglais tardif. Il est généralement admis que la fonction grammaticale joue ici un rôle important, mais celle-ci n'apporte aucune explication à la variation dans le marquage de l'infinitif lorsque celui-ci est complément verbal. Selon la plupart des chercheurs dans le domaine de l'histoire de l'anglais, le choix d'un éventuel marqueur est déterminé lexicalement (soit de façon arbitraire au niveau syntaxique), ou alors il est influencé, dans les textes en vers, par des considérations d'ordre métrique. La présente étude se situe dans le cadre d'un vaste

projet qui porte non seulement sur la distribution des formes de l'infinitif en moyen anglais, mais également sur les changements que ces dernières ont subis au cours des siècles. Nous nous penchons ici sur la distribution en moyen anglais tardif. Nous démontrerons l'existence de facteurs structuraux (surtout d'ordre sémantique) qui déterminent la forme de l'infinitif-complément verbal. Ces facteurs s'avèrent être semblables à ceux qui jouent un rôle dans le marquage des infinitifs en anglais d'aujourd'hui.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Zweck dieses Artikels ist, den Unterschied im Gebrauch zwischen dem reinen Infinitiv und dem markierten Infinitiv (mit *for to*, *to*) im späteren Mittelenglischen zu untersuchen. Die Sprachforscher sind sich darüber einig, daß die grammatische Funktion hier eine wichtige Rolle spielt, aber diese Funktion erklärt nicht die Variation in der Markierung des Infinitivs, wenn dieser eine verbale Ergänzung ist. Für die meisten Linguisten, die sich mit der Geschichte des Englischen befassen, ist die Wahl eines etwaigen Merkmals lexikalisch bestimmt (und daher syntaktisch gesehen willkürlich), oder, wenn es um poetische Texte handelt, von metrischen Faktoren beeinflusst. Unsere Untersuchung ist ein Teil eines umfangreicheren Projektes, das nicht nur die Distribution der Infinitivformen im Mittelenglischen umfaßt, sondern auch die Veränderungen die im Laufe der Zeit aufgetreten sind. In diesem Artikel beschäftigen wir uns hauptsächlich mit der Distribution dieser Infinitiv-Konstruktionen im späteren Mittelenglischen. Wir werden zeigen, daß es strukturelle Faktoren gibt (meist semantischer Natur), die die Infinitivform als verbale Ergänzung bestimmen. Es erweist sich, dass diese Faktoren denjenigen ähnlich sind, die in der Infinitivmarkierung im heutigen Englischen eine Rolle spielen.

verb	corpus	full verb	zero inf.	to-inf.	for to inf.	pres. part.	that-clause	(that)-clause	how-clause	if/wh-clause	so/as-clause	small cl.: NP+adj/pp	hybrids	imperative	others
peynen (refl.)	Ch	x	1	15	3										
	PL	not present													
preyen	Ch	53	5	53	8		74	19		3	13	imp/0inf/(that) 65	65	24	
	PL	13		121	4		155	9				imp/0inf/(that) 331	331	2	
reden	Ch	18	1?	5	1		8	5				1	0inf/imp 7	3	
	PL	not present													
seen	Ch	874	97	3		15	95	38	45	47		85			unclear 2
	PL	126 ⁸	3			1	25	1	2	4		15			
suffren	Ch	128	16	25	5		10	1				4			
	PL	-		16											second passive 1 (+to)
techen	Ch	78 ⁹	3	7	3		8		6	3					
	PL	not present													
thinken	Ch	187	6 ¹⁰	23	3		73	93	16	7		35	0inf/(that) 3		+ direct speech 43
	PL	33		16	1		122	100	1	1		60	0inf/(that) 2		
usen	Ch	x	1	6	4										
	PL	not present													
wenen	Ch	47	24	24	9		106	28				11	0inf/(that) 4		
	PL	3	1	2			8	11							

notes

- This concerns HF 40. Some mss. have 'causeth hem avisions', others have 'causeth hem (to) have visions'. Since cause never has the bare infinitive, the former seems the more correct.
- This includes the occurrences of the pro-verb do.
- In these 8 cases the infinitive is really a subject complement.
- That introduces more of a resultative clause in these instances.
- Other mss. have a to-infinitive here (TC I 980).
- In all infinitive constructions after kepen, kepen is used in the sense of 'care'.
- The infinitive is really an adjunct in both cases.
- In most instances see is not used as a true perception verb.
- This includes examples with a double NP.
- Two of these (TC I 294, LGW 1976) concern the impersonal verb.