Verbal complementation in early Middle English: How do the infinitives fit in?
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Verbal Complementation in Early ME:
How Do The Infinitives Fit In?

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1. Introduction

In Old (OE) and Middle English (ME), there was a good number of verbs that allowed both a bare and a marked infinitive (marked by to, later also for to). In earlier studies (Fischer 1995, in press), I have looked at the factors that influenced the choice of infinitives in late ME. My suggestion there was that the variation in infinitival form is not a purely lexical matter (which would make the choice largely arbitrary), nor is it essentially influenced by metrical considerations; rather, the syntactic-semantic context of the infinitive determines its shape, i.e. transitivity and the (in)directness of the relation between matrix verb and infinitive play a decisive role. For this paper I have two objectives. First of all, I would like to find out how far the above factors were also relevant in the early ME period. Secondly, I am especially interested in the status of the to-infinitive (when not otherwise indicated the to-infinitive includes the one with for to in this paper). Jack (1991:336) writes that to a large extent the variety between to- and bare infinitives in early ME can be ascribed to the changes taking place at that time. He recognizes a kind of grammaticalization process (and this is traditional, see Fischer forthcoming a), in which the semantically bleached to-infinitive slowly replaces the bare infinitive. In other words early ME infinitival variation is the result of diachronic "fuzziness". I do not think that this was the case. In this paper I will give further confirmation of the idea (expressed in Fischer 1995, in press) that bare and to-infinitives retained separate meanings all through. In addition, I hope to show that ME to-infinitives interrelate with that-clauses, in a way which contrasts them with the bare infinitives, and that the gap left by the loss of bare infinitives was not simply filled by to-infinitives, as is generally believed.
In section 2, I will first take a look at what has been said in the literature about the differences between the various finite and non-finite verbal complements. The question here will be: what is the (synchronic) relationship between the various types of complement, what determines their use, and what changes are there diachronically that may have influenced these relationships? After that I will consider in detail some data from the early ME period (section 3). I have extracted my data from the Helsinki corpus. All the verbs that potentially take both types of infinitives were considered, while the finite complementation types with which they occur were also checked. Due to lack of space, I will here concentrate on the causatives and a few verbs like helpen and bidden that are close to causatives. These verbs, however, display characteristics and tendencies which were found to hold for all the verbs collected. I will conclude (section 4) with a very brief suggestion about the syntactic status of the infinitive both before and after ME.

2. Previous literature: the choice in complementation types

Visser (1963-73) and Mitchell (1985), as is perhaps to be expected, are mainly descriptive, i.e. their main concern is to list which verbs take to, which zero and which both; and to enumerate the other possible structures. Mitchell has nothing to say about the variation between infinitival complements and that-clauses (in §§668;966;1929), except in §1992, where he remarks that accusative and infinitive (aci) constructions and that-clauses are used when "the speaker and performer are different ... When they are the same, the simple infinitive is the alternative" (presumably the "simple infinitive" may be a bare (his own example in §1992) as well as a to-infinitive). His remarks thus seem to indicate that apart from this purely syntactic factor (i.e. whether the subclausal subject is lexical or PRO), there is no difference between these constructions. Writing on the variation between to and bare infinitives in §2984, he mentions that he does not wish to enter the discussion for lack of space, but that the difference "can be a matter of importance". Here he refers to two papers of his in Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, which however turn out to deal with purely text-editorial matters. In §1549 Mitchell refers to the links that Callaway (1913:60-71) perceives between bare infinitival complements and matrix verbs taking accusative case, and between to-infinitives and verbs taking genitive, dative or a prepositional phrase. He promises the reader that he will "take issue with [t]his classification" in §3723. However, in this paragraph, Mitchell does not go into Callaway's highly interesting suggestions about linkage at all. Finally in §3735, Mitchell
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refers to Bock's (1931) idea that "the presence or absence of to with the infinitive denotes a different degree of closeness in this relationship" but he notes that the actual verbs are impossible to classify according to Bock's scheme, and in §3736 Mitchell finds himself "hopelessly lost".2

Visser is much clearer in his rejection of the possibility of the to/zero variation expressing any difference. In §177 he writes, "to ... which already in the earliest examples is void of the original meaning of direction or purpose, and is nothing but a meaningless infinitival proclitic" (and again on p.1372 with reference to begin plus to or zero). Like Mitchell, he classifies matrix verbs semantically and merely notes whether they occur with to or zero or both. Van der Gaaf (1904:54), writing only on pencan, is of the same opinion, "the two constructions [i.e. with and without to] were felt to be perfectly synonymous".

Warner (1982:117) notes that the contrast between to and zero is "apparently structural" after the core modals, viz. those verbs that later develop into the category Aux. Elsewhere the selection of either to or zero is "a result of the lexical preference exercised by the matrix verb" (p.123). In other words, after matrix verbs other than (pre-)modals, there is no systematic choice. As far as I can make out, Warner does not comment on any systematic differences/similarities between that-clauses and infinitival complements.

More recent studies that follow this line of argument are Molencki (1991) and Kageyama (1992). Molencki sees no systematic/semantic difference between bare infinitives, to-infinitives and that-clauses, as can be deduced from the following quotes.

Wilnian often occurred with the inflected infinitive and in my opinion the underlying structure was identical for both types of infinitival complements, ... The choice between the two OE infinitives probably had no semantic consequences here. (p.133)3 ... Comparing now the S-structure of finite and non-finite complementation [i.e. the that-clause and bare infinitive respectively] of the verb wilnian we can see that their respective representations look basically the same. This identity of syntactic structure corresponds to the semantic identity. The main surface differences between the two types are brought about by the feature [Tense] in the lower clause. (p.135)

Molencki does not accept identity of structure for the so-called pre-modals. When they are used as auxiliaries (i.e. with epistemic sense), he recognizes a straight VP complement, i.e. COMP is not present. Concerning the so-called aspectualizers, they follow the other matrix verbs in taking a COMP-headed complement, with surprisingly enough the exception of onginnan,
As for onginnan, the more plausible solution would be to have in the OE lexicon two homophonous verbs, viz. onginnan₁ compatible with infinitives and meaning "to begin" and onginnan₂ followed by finite CCs [complement clauses], which has the meaning of Mod.E "to endeavour". These two verbs would thus have two different underlying structures of their respective complements, which would reflect the semantic difference. (p.142)

It seems then that Molencki's conviction begins to waver when it comes to some verbs. He becomes also more hesitant further down the same page when he writes "there are a great number of other verbs which seem to take both finite and non finite CCs indiscriminately and no difference in meaning can be detected without a native speaker" (emphasis added).

Kageyama (1992:91) rejects "the standard assumption that finite clauses and to-infinitives are isomorphic with respect to internal phrase structure" as far as OE is concerned. I think he may well be correct in this. He gives three arguments why OE to cannot fill a tense position, as it is said to do in Modern English. The first two concern the impossibility of the OE infinitive to appear in perfect or progressive form, and to take the finite negative marker ne (101). I cannot concur with his third reason, however. He refers to the fact that in Modern English to is said to carry the meaning of "unrealized future" and is thus different from bare infinitives. He continues, "such a meaning does not particularly characterize OE to-infinitives as differentiated from bare infinitives, because both types of infinitives may be used almost interchangeably in verb complementation with control structures" (p.101; and see also p.103 where the two infinitives are said to have an "identical AGRP structure" only with bare infinitives the AGR position is lexically null, whereas with to-infinitives it is filled by to). I will argue below that that-clauses can replace to-infinitives but not bare infinitives in early ME (and presumably this goes for OE as well), and that therefore to and bare infinitives cannot be equivalent. I will also discuss how this relates to the possible presence of Tense.

Van Gelderen (1993:134-37) argues quite differently from Kageyama. She believes that to-infinitives have a CP structure in OE (so are like that-clauses), that to conveys tense but that the tense features occur on the verb and not in COMP. In ME, she argues, to-infinitives become TPs (new developments, such as ECM constructions, show this), thus allowing the matrix verb to govern the infinitival subject. Bare infinitives can be both CPs and VPs. They are CPs when they are extraposed or undergo Verb-raising. As far as I can make out this proposal is not supported by further evidence and seems indeed to go right against the grain since the usual idea is that Verb-raising in OE involves VPs (or
IPs) and not CPs (see e.g. van Kemenade 1985). When they are VPs, the 
[-tense] feature is directly selected, i.e. their tense is dependent on the matrix 
verb. Van Gelderen's proposal entails that one cannot systematically distinguish 
bare from to-infinitives because bare infinitives can be both the same as to-
infinitives (i.e. when they are CPs) and different (when they are VPs).

Van Kemenade (1993:146) rejects the idea that OE to-infinitives are nouns. 
Instead, she analyses to-infinitives as CPs (or IPs) and bare infinitives as VPs. To 
in the to-infinitive is interpreted as a preposition designated an INFL marker 
(p.149) so that it can both assign case to the infinitive as well as allow the 
infinite to have an object preceding it.4 If to is in INFL, as proposed by van 
Kemenade, presumably it carries tense distinctions. She also notes (p.148) that 
"when the infinitive is governed by an objective (...) case marker, the infinitive is 
governed and to-insertion is not triggered", i.e. making a distinction between 
direct government (no to) and indirect government. It is somewhat surprising 
therefore that she denies for OE that "There is [a] temporal difference between 
them [i.e. to- and bare infinitives], so that it is hard to see how the relation 
between V + to-infinitive is semantically less direct than that between V + bare 
infinite" (p.147), as I had suggested for late ME (in Fischer 1995, this first 

The only Unguists who clearly oppose the identification of the OE bare and 
to-infinitives are Callaway (1913) and Bock (1931); Anderson (1993) seems to 
belong here too,5 and to some extent (structurally) also van Kemenade (1993). 
As indicated above, Callaway sees a link between matrix verbs taking dative 
case (or a PP) and those taking to-infinitives, and between verbs taking 
accusative case and the use of bare infinitives, thereby linking the infinitives to 
the different case-semantics of dative and accusative. Bock (1931:220) notes 
that the relationship between the matrix verb and the to-infinitive is less strong 
(more indirect) than that between matrix verb and bare infinitive, and that this 
distinction cuts across lexical classes, i.e. the distinction exists even if one and 
the same verb takes both bare and to-infinitives. For all other traditional 
linguists this variation within one verb is precisely the reason why they think to-
and bare infinitives are the same, i.e. it is just a matter of idiosyncratic lexical 
selection.
3. Complementation types in early ME

3.1 General

I considered all the verbs that in Callaway (1913), Kenyon (1909) and Sanders (1915) are shown to be verbs that can take both bare and to-infinitives, plus the verbs that developed this variation later, viz. the perception verbs. A comparison with Jack's (1991) data is illustrative, because the Helsinki data indicate that there is no decrease in bare infinitives between period M1 (concurrent with the period Jack studied) and M2; in fact rather the opposite (see Table 1). On the other hand, the increase in bare infinitives in M2 is a slight distortion. In my opinion it is largely due to the greater presence of direct narrative texts in M2 (such as Havelok, King Horn, The Romance of Sir Beues of Hamtoun etc.; for the list, see Kytö 1991:11). I have shown (in Fischer 1995) that bare infinitives are more frequent variants in colloquial, direct narratives. Moreover, these texts also show a higher frequency of verbs (usually) taking the bare infinitive such as causatives and perception verbs.

Table 1: Form of infinitival complements in ME.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zero</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>1221</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(41%)</td>
<td>(56%)</td>
<td>(72%)</td>
<td>(64%)</td>
<td>(42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for)to</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(59%)</td>
<td>(44%)</td>
<td>(28%)</td>
<td>(36%)</td>
<td>(58%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The nature of the texts also accounts for the quite high number of bare infinitives found in Chaucer, but it is clear too that we can see a change in percentage between M2 and Chaucer. The Paston Letters contains less direct narrative in comparison to Chaucer, and this explains to some extent the higher ratio of to compared to zero.

Although these figures do not present a very clear trend, it can be concluded that the ratio between bare and to-infinitives starts to change only in the late ME period. (As stated above the lower ratio of zero in Jack's corpus and the M1 period are not really representative because they contain little to no direct narrative.) In other words, before that time, the situation is still relatively stable. This makes it difficult to use the change from zero to to as an explanation for
the variation in use between zero and to for the early period, as Jack has done. The increase that he notes in the early ME use of the to-infinitive compared to OE usage (1991:325) is not so much the result of bare infinitive becoming to, but rather of that-clauses being replaced by infinitival complements. For this spectacular increase in ME, see especially Manabe (1989:21ff). Manabe shows that verbal infinitival complements increase more than threefold between the OE and the late ME periods compared to the use of finite clauses in the same position. Since there is a link between that-clauses and to-infinitives and not between that-clauses and bare infinitives, as I will show below, this would explain the dramatic increase in to-infinitives referred to by Jack.

3.2 Discussion of the data

The factors that I found to play a role in late ME also turn out to be important for the early ME data. Generally, it can be said that the zero infinitive indicates a direct relation between what is expressed in the matrix verb and the infinitive, whereas the to-infinitive characterizes an indirect relationship.

Table 2: The component parts of the transitivity notion (from Hopper and Thompson 1980:252).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>LOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. PARTICIPANTS</td>
<td>2 or more participants, A and O</td>
<td>1 participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. KINESIS</td>
<td>action</td>
<td>non-action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. ASPECT</td>
<td>telic</td>
<td>atelic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. PUNCTUALITY</td>
<td>punctual</td>
<td>non-punctual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. VOLITIONALITY</td>
<td>volitional</td>
<td>non-volitional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. AFFIRMATION</td>
<td>affirmative</td>
<td>negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. MODE</td>
<td>realis</td>
<td>irrealis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. AGENCY</td>
<td>Agt high in potency</td>
<td>Agt low in potency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. AFFECTEDNESS OF O</td>
<td>Obj totally affected</td>
<td>Obj not affected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. INDIVIDUATION OF O</td>
<td>Obj highly individuated</td>
<td>Obj non-individuated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Fischer (in press), I refer to the ideas expressed by Callaway (1913), who saw a systematic relation between the form of the infinitive and the (nominal) cases that a matrix verb selects. I related this further to ideas of transitivity worked out by Hopper and Thompson (1980) and Plank (1981; 1983) showing that the choice of the form of the infinitive and of case are both conditioned by
the transitivity of the clause. Relevant factors, therefore, are Hopper and Thompson's parameters involving the degree of transitivity that may be expressed in the clause. These are reproduced in Table 2 above.

Not included in this table is the (non-)simultaneity of the activities expressed in matrix and infinitival clause (the first factor in Fischer 1995), because Hopper and Thompson's examples are all monoclausal. This factor, however, is closely related to parameter G, MODE. MODE refers to the distinction between realis and irrealis, between an action which did/does occur and one that did/does not, or one that is presented as occurring in a non-real (contingent) world. Obviously, a future activity is also presented as not (yet) occurring.10

3.2.1 Helpen

The verb helpen occurs three times with a bare infinitive and twelve times with to (including two for to's). The three bare ones are given in (1).

\[(1) \text{a. And seide, "king þe wise./ ȝeld me mi seruise./ Rymenhild help me winne;/bat þu noȝt ne linne./ And i schal do to spuse/ Þi doȝter ...} \] (MX/2 Horn: 59)11

\[\text{b. "Pe duk Hirtan .../ Robbed my make Blasfame .../ She is my quene, Ich hire chalenge./ Of pis despyt helpe me avenge!"} \] (M2 Kyng Alis.: 407)

\[\text{c. Now went Porus, so J fynde,/ Wip Kyng Alisaundor ouere al Ynde,/ To shewe hym þe merueiylges/ Of men, of bestes, of oper þinges./ And helpen wynne vnnder his honde/ Alle þe naciouns of þe londe.} \] (M2 Kyng Alis.: 291)

The first examples are both imperatives, in which the object (me) is highly individuated (parameter J) and the (non-expressed) subject high in potency (parameter H). An imperative also typically refers to the present; to the immediate enactment of the activity commanded. In (1c) again both subject and object are animate, and the phrase helpen wynne refers to an actual situation which has already been fully effected.

In the examples with a to-infinitive, on the other hand, the matrix verb helpen is typically found in the subjunctive (2a), or accompanied by a modal (2b) (three instances), or a negator (2c) (i.e. they are low on parameters F and G),

\[(2) \text{a. Ant Iesu Crist ... leue ham swa hare heorte halden to him; þet hare flesches eggunge ... ne wori hare heorte wit ... & helpe ham swa in him to hehin} \]
toward heouene; aþet ha beon istihe þider ...

(M1 Hali Meiðh.:24)

b. and he [Mordred] wolde Childriche; þeouen of his riche.\al biþeonde þere Humbre; for he him scoldhe helpel to ðihten wið his æme; Arðuren kinge./

(M1 Layamon :740)

c. "Ah forði þet te lare þet heo me learden limpeð to idel ʒeʃt ant falled to biþete [ant] to wurðschipe of þe worlde, ne ne helped nawiht ʒeʃt eife lif to habben, ..."

(M1 Seinte Kat.:26)

An interesting example is (2d), where the object of the matrix verb is a reflexive pronoun, so not very high on parameter J (see also Hopper & Thompson 1980:277, where they mention specifically that clauses with a reflexive object "typically display features associated with lower transitivity").

(2) d. Helped ow wið ower ahne swinc se forð se se eauer mahen to schruden ow seoluen & feden ʒef neod is.

(M1 Anc. Wisse:216)

Also affecting the parameter of MODE is the presence of an if-clause, making the situation non-real or not yet real (4 exx, and see also (2d)),

(3) ʒef him [a stag] þat biforn teð bilimpes for to tirʒen./ Alle ṣe oðre cumen mide./ & helpen him for to herien./ Beren him of ʒat water-grund/ Up to ʒe lond al ʒeiiland sund

(M2 Bestiary:10)

There are to-examples related to parameter H; they are low in AGENCY because they have an inanimate subject (3 exx),

(4) Acc þu shallt findenn þatt min word./ Eʒʒwher þær itt iss ekedd./ Maʒʒ hellpenn þa þatt redenn itt/ To sen & tunnderrstanndenn / All þess te bettre

(M1 Orrmulm Prol.1.47) (and see also (2c))

There are three cases of helpen followed by a that-clause. In all cases they show the same characteristics as to-infinitives, i.e., subjunctive (5a), if-clause (5b) and negative, modal (5c),

(5) a. "For þe loue of sein Mahoun./ Be þe rop glid bliue adoun/ And help, þat þis þef wer ded!"

(M2 Beves of Hamt.:84)

b. "... Nu þu miʒt vs slen & binde./ Ore honde bihynde./ Bute ʒef hit beo þi wille./ Helpe þat we ne spille."

(MX/2 Horn :13)
c. Send me þi sonde i culurene heowe. þe cume me to helpe. þt ich mi meiðhad mote wite to þe unwemmet

(It is also possible that helpe is a noun in the last example.)

Finally, one of the to-infinitives does not have a subject of its own, in other words the subject of the matrix verb and the infinitive are identical. As Jack has shown (1991:321) the to-infinitive is usual in these cases (Jack, however, offers no explanation for this). The reason for this must be parameter A, PARTICIPANTS. Since only one participant is present as an argument of the matrix verb, very little transfer can take place, i.e. transitivity is low:

(6) þet oðer [command] is do þine elmesse of þon þet þu maht ifordiþen ... wrecche men sceos and claðes and herburye. and to seke gan. and þa deden helpen to buriene and helpen heom mid þon þe þu maye.

Another example of this may be (3). It is not clear whether the italicized him is the object of helpen or of herien: "they help him to pull" or "they help to pull him".

3.2.2 Bidden/beden

Although these two verbs are etymologically distinct, they begin to merge in early ME due to their similarities in sense (both may convey an order) and form. For that reason I will treat them as one verb (cf. also Jack 1991:338, note 16) and refer to them both as bidden. The most typical infinitival construction with this verb (as with other verbs used as causatives) is the zero infinitive (39 instances). This is not surprising in terms of parameters H and I. The subject of this verb is always animate,12 most often someone in command, a king, queen, pope etc, in comparison with whom the object of bidden is usually totally affected since an animate object lower in rank than the subject does not normally have the opportunity to exercise his own will, especially in the Middle Ages. The following examples illustrate this,

(7) a. Somme he kytt of þe arme./ Somme þe heued, and dude hem harme./ He bad his folk fiȝten hard./ Wiþ spere, mace, and wiþ swerd,

b. So lay þat child to middel-nicth./ þat Grim bad Leue bringen licþ/ For to don on his clopes
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In these examples we see orders from king to soldiers, husband to wife, and father to sons respectively. It more or less follows from the low AGENCY of the object that what is commanded is also actualized, and this is indeed the case as is clear in all examples from the (further) context. The low AGENCY/INDIVIDUATION of the object becomes even more striking in those cases where the object of \textit{bidden} is not mentioned at all, even though (s)he must be clearly present to execute the order. All these infinitives are bare without a single exception,

(8) a. He se wrað þt for-neh wod ha walde iwrðen. \textit{bed bli}-[\textit{liues coste keasten}}

\begin{verbatim}
hire i cwalm-hus. ant swa me dude sone.
\end{verbatim}

(M1 \textit{Margarete}:66)

b. \textit{Eleusius þe hwile lette his men makien a muche fur mid alle. & \textit{bed binden}} hire swa þe fêt & te honden. & keasten hire into þe brune cwic to forbearnen. As ha lokede up. & seh þis lei leiten ...

(M1 \textit{Seinte Iul.}:59,61)

Again it is clear from the context that in all instances the action is actualized (there is an entailment relationship, cf. Mittwoch 1990:112). In (8a), we are told \textit{swa me dude sone}: in (8b), it is clear that the saint in question is actually in the fire because in l. 665 an angel comes down from heaven to quench it and Juliana steps out \textit{unhurt}. In all cases (but see below) the infinitives confer activities and not states (cf. parameters B (KINESIS) and D (PUNCTUALITY)).

There are only seven cases in which a \textit{to}-infinitive is used with \textit{bidden}. All these instances can be explained with reference to Hopper & Thompson's parameters. There is one in which only one participant is present making any transferral impossible (cf. (6) above),

(9) \textit{3ef bisch[ol]p kimeð to seon ow; hihið sone towarth him. ah sweteliche bisecheð him 3ef he bit to seon ow [ i.e. if he asks to see you]; þt 3e moten þer onont halden ow towarth him; as 3e habbeð idon & doð to alle oðre.}

(M1 \textit{Ancr.Wisse}: 34)

Another reason for (9) to have a \textit{to}-infinitive may be the presence of the \textit{if}-clause, which indicates a not-yet-actual situation. There is one more instance where \textit{bidden} is used with an \textit{if}-clause, and here too the \textit{to}-infinitive is found,
(10) Ac me ne auh to bien hersum bute of gode. 3if mann hat oðer bitt senne to
donne, þar to ne awh me naht to bien hersvm.

(M1 Vices&Virt.:109)

Note that the implication of the whole sentence is also negative: one must
never do sin. Negative context as a pointer to non-actualization is likewise
found in two other instances with to-infinitives,

(11) a. *Bad he non him water to fet.* Ne fro b[r]igge to bere þe mete./ He bar þe
turues, he bar þe star,

(M2 Havelok :31)

b. *In toward ower woued ne beode ze namon for te bihalden.* ah 3ef his
deuotiuin bit hit & haued grant; draheð ow wel inward. & te ueil adun toward
ower breoste.

(M1 Ancr.Wisse:34)

It should be noted moreover that the advice given in (11b) is all part of an if-
situation. The author of the Ancrene Wisse tells the three sisters what they might/should
do in a given situation. There is one negative clause, similar to (11a), which
unexpectedly has a bare infinitive,

(12) He kam to þe welle, water up-drow./ And filde þe[r] a michel so – / Bad he
non ageyn him go,/ But bitwen his hondes he bar it in,/ A[l] him one, to þe
kichin.

(M2 Havelok:30)

Presumably in an actual situation like (11a) and (12), there is a choice in
infinitives. The difference with (11b) is that in (12) you can actually see Havelok
not wanting any help; the negative is part of the actual context. The negative is
clearly heavily stressed as can be seen from the contrast described in the text
"But betwen his hondes he bar it in, a[l] him one." There is no such explicit
contrast in the description of (11a). Mittwoch (1990:107-8,116) notes that with
bare infinitival complements there is very little potential for negation (none after
perception verbs, marginal after causatives). But a negative is clearly possible in
those cases like (12) where a contrast is implied. In *I saw him not do it*, it is
implied that you saw someone not do what he was in fact supposed/expected to
be doing. The last three cases in which a to-infinitive is used are,

(13) a. *Ride vpe tueye wolpakces. chapmen as hii were./ To þe west gate ouer þe
brugge. & þe porters bede./ To late in tueie wolmongers. hor chaffare in to
lede.*

(M2 Rob. of Glouc.:741)
b. þe bailif hii [the clerks] *bede ofte* . *to graunti* bor solas ./ To pleie & vndó þat ʒat . ac vor noʒt it was.

(M2 Rob. of Glouc.:742)

c. þær [in heaven] eow nan wiðerweardness ne deræd ... for þam þe ʒe lustlice mine æ & mine lare heolden, & alle þe ðing þe ic eow *bead to* healden.

(MX/1 Bodley Hom.:126)

In the first two instances, the subject is clearly less agentive/potent than the matrix object because it is up to the porters to admit the clerks dressed up as *chapmen*, and to the bailiff to grant them *solas*. It is clear, moreover, in (13b) that the request is not actualized: *ac vor noʒt it was*. In (13c) the infinitive is a stative verb and the context shows that the text refers to future actualization, to life after the Day of Judgment. Although it was mentioned above that a *to*-infinitive is triggered by a negative, there are four "negative" cases of *bidden* found with a different type of complement. Once (in *Holy Rood*:30) the writer has preferred a finite clause to a *to*-infinitive, which is in itself no surprise, because the *that*-clause shares typical characteristics of the *to*-infinitive, such as a stative verb and an adverbial referring to the future. In the other three negative cases *bidden* is used with a bare infinitive. However, in these examples *bidden* has to all intents and purposes become a modal, which presumably explains the presence of the bare infinitive,

(14) a. "And now þe meste wreche of alle/ Wip a strok me dop adoun falle,/ Bidde ich neuer wip Iesu speke./ Boute ich þer of may ben awrcke!"

(M2 Beves of Hamt.:83)

b. Of þe mete for to telle/ Ne of þe win *bidde I nout dwelle:/* þat is þe storie for to lenge / It wolde anuye þis fayre genge.

(M2 Havelok:47)

(The third instance is in *Havelok*:69.)

Smithers (1987:132), in a note, comments on this strange use of *bidden*, which he translates with "wish". He suggests influence from French, and ultimately Latin for this idiom, which always appears with a negative. Example (14a), moreover, is part of an asseverative phrase, in which case the bare infinitive is the norm in the corpus (see (15) for more instances). Just as with imperatives (see above (1a and b)), the strength of the phrase lies in accepting the activity expressed as real, because otherwise the asseveration has no power (cf. also the use of bare infinitives in irreals constructions for this same purpose, in Fischer 1995).
(15) "Ya, sire, that I ne leye oth!/ Yif Y, louerd, a word leye./ Tomorwen do me hengen heye!"

(16) a. Kyng Philippe þat was his lorde/ Girde hym wip riche swerde,/ And saf hym þe coleee ariðth,/ And bad he shulde be gode kniðth.

b. me walde leggen on hire leofliche bodi. 3cf ha to þe reues read ne buhe ne ne beide. [M]eiden qð he Margarete. 3et ich bidde & bodie. þi tu wurche mi wil & wurðgi mine maumez.

In (16a) a modal is used (shulde) and the infinitive is stative; in (16b) wurche is a subjunctive, moreover it is clear from the context that the activity will not be actualized; after all the subject is a saint, who will not, of course, give in to the request of a heathen tyrant. This contrasts starkly with bare infinitives (as in (7)), where modality is not present; in fact, we usually find clear pointers to the actuality of the event such as locative adjuncts of place or time (the bold italicized phrases in (17)),

(17) a. And [Tholomeus] cleped Alisaunder "Antygon"./ And bad hym wende wip hym onon./ And rouned wip hym a grete while./ Ac al þat was for gyle!/ After þis queynt rouning./ Alisaunder spedde in þis doyng.

b. Hie died him arst haben reuhøe of him seluen, and ðanne of his nexten, of alle ungølimpes ðe him for his sennes to-cumeð.

The situation with respect to the other causative "command"-verb haten is very similar, but will not be further discussed here for lack of space.

3.2.3 Don, leten, maken

The situation is somewhat different with the pure causatives (i.e. those without a "command"-sense) don, leten and maken. Unlike the "command"-causatives,
"bidden and haten, which possess inherent potentiality, pure causatives possess inherent actuality. In other words, the activity expressed in the infinitive cannot refer to a future or potential event when the matrix verb is not inherently potential. Duffley (1992:19-20) makes a distinction between verbs of "desire", "endeavour" and "command", where the use of to turns the infinitive into a non-realized event (he later (p.145) terms this "subsequent potentiality"), and verbs of achievement and causation, where the infinitive event is understood to be realized ("subsequent actualization" p.89). The bare infinitive in both cases expresses "coincident actualization" (p.89). With reference to the causatives this means that the bare infinitive marks the actual producing of some effect, whereas the to-infinitive is more indirect, it denotes that something is caused which provokes a further effect (cf. Duffley (p.58) on the difference between Present-day English make and cause). Thus, in terms of PARTICIPANTS (parameter A) and ASPECT (C), causatives are always highly transitive, because there are always two participants present (the causer and the causee, the latter does not have to be lexically expressed) and the causative itself is inherently telic.

It is not surprising therefore to find fluctuation in the use of the infinitive in early ME with causatives, especially in those cases where the causee is animate and may be depicted as a partial causer in the causation-chain. This is especially clear with the verb maken.15 There is a large number of examples in one of the Saints' Lives (Juliana), where the devil boasts about all the evil deeds that he has made/caused men (to) do on earth. Here we find the bare, the to-infinitive as well as a finite clause being used. Presumably the difference depends on the interpretation of how much power the devil had over his "victim". It is interesting to see that there is almost free variation in the choice of complements between the two manuscripts here, Bodl.34 and Roy.17A XXVII. The most common construction (sticking to Bodl.34, the best manuscript) is the bare infinitive/past participle small clause. I consider these to be essentially the same since the past participle, like the bare infinitive, expresses "a perfective view of the realization of an event" (Duffley 1992:18). It is therefore not surprising that when the small clause is extended with ben, this is also bare.16

(18) a. ant ich hit am þt makede nabugodonosor. þe kene king of caldey makien þe maumez igoten al of golde.
(M1 Seinte Iul.:33; MS Roy. has also bare inf. and past part.)
b. & ich hit am þt makede caym þe acursedæ acwalde his brôðer abel.
(Ibid:33; MS Roy. has a to-infinitive)
c. Ant ich hit am þet makede sein iuhan þe baptiste beon heafdes bicoruen. & seinte stephene isteanet.

(Ibid:35; MS Roy. has past part. without beon)

d.i. And ich hit am þt makede to ontenden ierusalem. & godes deore temple to driuen al to duste.

(Ibid:35; MS Roy. has a bare inf.)

d.ii. Ant ich makede þe cniht þe purlin godes side wið scharpe speres ord.

(Ibid.:35; MS Roy. has that-clause)

As I said, the only difference between the examples in (18) is the interpretation of the role of the causee; the examples all do involve actual situations in which, as we have seen, a bare infinitive in principle fits. When other factors are involved the choice of to or zero seems clearer,

(19) for nis me neauer wel ne nes; bute hwen ich makede moncun to wurche to wundre.

(M1 Seinte Iul.:33)

In (19), Belial, the devil, refers to a general situation, to present as well as past (*nis me neauer wel ne nes*; MS Roy. even uses a present tense here, *makie*, but has a bare inf.), and in this case the *to*-infinitive fits well. In (20) in the same text, the subject, *vnselij-sið "unhappy fate"*, is inanimate, which turns the causee into more of an active participant himself,

(20) ah nat i hwel vnselij-sið makede me her to sechen. bute mi muchele unselhðe sohte þe to seonne.

(M1 Seinte Iul.:41; MS Roy. has a *forte* inf. here)

In all the other examples with *maken* and an inanimate subject (it occurs five times more), the infinitive has *to* (a *that*-clause is used once, in *Vices & Virt.*:109). There seem to be two exceptions to this (one with a bare infinitive (21), and one with a past participle in *Hali Meidh.*:12), but in these instances the object of what is caused is also inanimate, so that it cannot play an active role, which makes the bare infinitive again the more logical choice,17

(21) hwet is win in wunde; *Win maked wunde smerte. Ah þe smertinge clenseð þe wunde; ... Al so hali scrift bið in [ure] wunde hwan we scule festen ...*

(M1 OE Homilies:83)

Note also in (21), that the first part of the sentence is used as a metaphor to assert the truth of the second part. In other words the metaphor must be understood as actual(ized) in order to create the effect sought after. We saw in (19) and in the example in note 17, that in a general, non-actual situation, the
to-infinitive is preferred. That this is clearly a pattern may be deduced from other similar instances given in (22),

(22) a. þen þt he [þe feont] makeð men þt ahtæ to wite wæl þt ha beoð bieþetene & iborene ant ibroht forð þurh þe heouenliche feader to makie swucche maumez...

(M1 Seinte Kat.:22)\(^\text{18}\)

b. Ich habbe iblend men & ibroken ham þe schuldren. & te schonken. i fur iwarpen ham & i water. & hare ahne blod ich habbe ofte imaket ham to spitten & to speowen.

(M1 OE Homilies:43)

A non-actual situation is also inferable from a good many examples in the Saints' Lives where the devU, or some other bad soul, announces what he wUl make a saint do, but where it is quite clear that the saint, by the very fact of being one, will never do these things (23a), or where it is clear (as in (23b)) that the devil has realized that he has failed in his purpose (ah ich am aueallet).

(23) a. Sare þu hauest me ouercumen. ant heo [Sarah] him [the devil] ondswerede. þu lihest qo ha ful þing. nawt ich ah haueð iesu crist mi lauerd. lo þe sweoke hu he walde makien hire aleast [finally] to leapan in to prude. ah ha wes wel war prof & turnde al þe meistrie to godes strengðe.

(M1 Ancr.Wisse:121)

b. Ich [Belial] wende iwis to leade þe into þine ealdrene lahen. & makie to leauen þe luue of þi lauerd. Ant feng on to fondin þe. ah ich am aueallet.

(M1 Seinte Iul.:37)

Finally, a bare infinitive is the rule when the activity expressed in the infinitival complement cannot be volitional (i.e. the transfer between matrix verb and infinitive is direct) as in,

(24) a. & ladde him vpe þe tour an hei. & made him huppe to grounde./ He hupte & debrusede. & deide in an stounde.

(M2 Rob.of Glouc.:738)

b. Ac sir tomas torbeuille. & ofier ssrewen mo./ Wende vp & wip strengpe. made him out go.

(M2 Rob.of Glouc.:738)

This is of course especially clear when, in addition, the object is inanimate. In that case, too, the bare infinitive is always found,
4. Concluding remarks

I think that the verbs that I have looked at so far show certain differences and similarities that can be related, in different ways for the different periods, to the notions of Tense and Case. I have tried to capture this in Table 3. Thus, for early ME (and I suggest also for OE) to-infinitives and that-clauses are semantically similar, even though one is [+tense] and the other not, while bare and to-infinitives are semantically different even though they are both [-tense]. It is clear that in my story the loss of case is to a large extent responsible for the later shift, i.e. the to-infinitive comes to be associated with tense to uphold the semantic distinction with bare infinitives.

Table 3: The relation between bare, to-infinitives and that-clauses in OE and ME.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OE/early ME</th>
<th>tense</th>
<th>case</th>
<th>(in)direct relation/degree of transitivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bare infinitives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+ (acc)</td>
<td>direct/high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to-infinitives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+ (dat/PP)</td>
<td>indirect/low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that-clauses</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>indirect/(low)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>late ME/early ModE</th>
<th>tense</th>
<th>case</th>
<th>(in)direct relation/degree of transitivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bare infinitives</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>direct/high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to-infinitives</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>indirect/low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that-clauses</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>indirect/(low)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My proposal in fact entails that in OE and early ME the infinitives are still largely nominal (a view I did not hold in my earlier work). The problem with this is that they do in fact, of course, exhibit verbal characteristics too, such as their ability to take an object (this in itself makes their move towards clausal status understandable). How the nominal status of infinitives in the early period must be structurally represented is problematic and has been for generative linguists for a long time. No satisfactory analysis so far has been suggested (the same problem arises with the Dutch te-infinitive, cf. Zwart 1993:98ff.). My tentative proposal would be to take to as a preposition and the to-infinitive as a
unit. I do not think that *to* is a preposition and simultaneously a functional category present in INFL, as suggested in van Kemenade (1993), nor part of the AGRP (Kageyama 1992). To see the *to*-infinitive as a PP is the simplest way to account for the similarity between it and the dative case. I am not yet clear as to what to do with the objects of the infinitives. I tentatively suggest that they might receive (inherent) case from the infinitives, which are nouns, just as in OE and early ME it was still possible for other nominal categories (NP and AP) to assign case (see Ohkado 1990). The idea that the infinitives could assign inherent case in OE would link up nicely with the fact that passive infinitives are not found in OE (except after modals, cf. Fischer 1991), and begin to occur regularly only after 1300. In other words, a passive infinitive became possible only when inherent case was replaced by structural case as one of the results of the "verbalization" of the infinitive.

**Notes**

1 I would like to thank Donka Minkova and Peter Lucas, who at the conference drew my attention to the possibility of metrical influence in my examples. We came to the provisional conclusion, however, that metrical influence cannot be proven because (i) romances like *Havelok* and *King Horn* are metrically a problem in any case, they are not very regular, (ii) one can find as many examples where a left-out *to* makes the line indeed more metrical (e.g. (7c), (12), (14a)), as examples where the line would have been improved if *to* had been inserted or omitted, which of course strengthen my case (e.g. (3), (7a), (11a)), or where it makes no difference (e.g. (7b)). I am very grateful to Willem Koopman and Bettelou Los for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper, and to George Jack for pointing out a number of problems in my examples. Finally, I would like to thank Mark Janssen for making such a neat job of my tables.

2 It is this persistent attempt at classification which causes both Mitchell and Visser to be lost. They do not realize, as Bock and Callaway did, that the form of the infinitive is not tied to a particular semantic class of verbs, but cuts across these classes. Since verbs can be used in different senses, this should not come as a surprise.

3 Both infinitives are headed by COMP, but in both cases COMP is empty and is [-tense]. So *to* is not in COMP, as it is usually interpreted to be in Modern English, but is part of the infinitival VP. This is essentially also van Gelderen's (1993) proposal for OE. *To* is seen as part of the VP in OE and early ME. It only comes to occupy the COMP position (in van Gelderen's more up to date generative version this is the TP position) when *to* is able to move
away from the infinitive, as happens when split infinitives and Exceptional Case marking (ECM) constructions begin to occur, both in late ME.

4 Van Kemenade's proposal for OE is rather similar to Bennis and Hoekstra's proposal for Dutch (1989:139ff). They, too, suggest that te (the cognate of to) is in INFL and they, too, assume that the infinitival verb is raised to INFL to be joined with te. They do not discuss the oddness of a V to I movement in non-finite clauses (nor does Kageyama 1992:98, who raises V to to in AGRP), but van Kemenade does. This oddness is indeed one of the reasons for Zwart (1993:98-105) to reject this more or less standard analysis of te in Dutch. He shows that the presence or absence of te in Dutch depends on other syntactic relations, that the true tense element is the inflectional ending of the infinitive (-en) and that te is not a tense element and therefore not in INFL. He also rejects the interpretation of te as an infinitival marker, although his evidence here seems less strong, based as it is on a number of peculiar dialects of Dutch and on coordination phenomena about which I do not always have the same intuitions as Zwart (see Fischer forthcoming b). It seems that, whatever interpretation one gives of to/te, its status and position remain problematic.

5 His wording is quite careful: "But certain trends suggesting functional differentiation and thus categorial distinctiveness for the two infinitives emerge from a consideration of their attested distribution" (Anderson 1993:12).

6 Although Jack (1991:320-25) has looked at all the verbs taking infinitival complements and not just at those showing variation, his results can be compared with mine since most of the verbs taking infinitival complements do show variation. The ones that take only bare infinitives have been discounted (the modals) or counted (the perception verbs) in both cases. The imbalance that exists between the two lists is caused by the fact that (i) Jack has also included the verbs that take only the to-infinitive, (ii) Jack has only considered prose. This no doubt explains the higher number of to-infinitives in Jack. I am of the opinion, however, that in order to get a true picture of the use of bare and to-infinitives in ME, one must include poetry. I have defended this position in some detail in Fischer (1995).

7 The periods I have looked at in the Helsinki corpus are the ones termed M1 and M2 by the editors (see Kyto 1991:10-11). M1 spans the period 1150-1250, M2 the period 1250-1350.

8 In the Chaucer and Paston Letters corpus, the verb (be)ginnen was not included. This will influence the number of occurrences but not the percentage since in Chaucer both infinitives are used about equally with this verb and in the Paston Letters the verb does not occur very often with an infinitive.

9 This is corroborated for one verb (pencan) by van der Gaaf (1904). He writes (p. 54), "in early ME no preference is shown for either construction ... The construction with uninfl. inf. became less and less usual during the 14th century ... During the 15th century it became
obsolescent. Indeed, the bare infinitives I have encountered in the Paston Letters are almost without exception after verbs that still take a bare infinitive in Present-day English.

10 In Fischer (in press) I discuss the link between these studies of transitivity with studies involved with the form of the infinitive in Modern English (e.g. Mittwoch 1990 and Duffley 1992). Since these are concerned only with infinitives, they do go into the question of differences in tense. Mittwoch writes about bare infinitives that they lack, in contrast to to-infinitives, the potential for independent temporal specification. Similarly, Duffley notes that "to situates the bare infinitive's event as an after-position with respect to something else" (p.17).

11 In the references, I have given an abbreviated text title; the number refers to the page. For more bibliographical information on these editions see the section Editions used and Kytö 1991. A * before the edition cited indicates that I have used a different edition from the one used in Kytö. M1 or M2 at the head of the references indicates the period (cf. note 7).

12 There is just one exception in the corpus, in the Ormulum. The subject is lott (it occurs twice, cf. Holt 1878:15, 18). In both cases it can be said that lott, although inanimate, is still high in potency because it has the power to decide what will happen in a human's life.

13 This may not always seem so at first sight, consider for instance,

Seint Thomas ... gostliche fram heouene a-liȝhte,/ And bad him beo stif and studefast:
  to holde up þe churches riȝhte, (M2 South Engl. Leg.:446)

but it is clear that beo stif and studefast must be interpreted as an activity, as becomes evident from the next line, where it is shown what Saint Thomas wants (Saint) Edmund to do.

14 Contrast this example with,

He sette him [Horn] on a stede whit:/ Þer nas no knijt hym ilik./ He smot him a litel wiȝt/ And bed him beon a god kniȝt. (MX/2 Horn 29)

Here the situation is presented as less open than in (16a). We already know that the subject is a good knight (he is the typical hero of romance, the knight of the title, and cf. also the first lines), and therefore there is no doubt as to the future that he will be a good knight. The use of the bare infinitive with be followed by an AP or an NP is exceptional in the corpus (as also noted in Fischer 1995, but consider the exceptions discussed there) because it functions as a stative verb and usually the subject of the be-predicate is represented as an agentive, volitional being.

15 Don and leten are more auxiliary-like than maken (for evidence of the auxiliary-like behaviour of leten, see Fischer 1992:39-42). The auxiliary-like nature of causative do is shown by the fact that the periphrastic verb do almost certainly developed out of it, possibly
via a perfective sense (see Denison 1985). This auxiliary-like behaviour may be the reason why the to-infinitive is much less frequent here than with maken.

16 An additional, very cogent reason why be must be bare here is that in both the examples in which it occurs ((18c) and in MS Roy.), be is the auxiliary of the passive. The subject of be, therefore, cannot possibly be agentive or volitional.

17 There is one more example with both an inanimate subject and object, which however has a to-infinitive,

Mohōe fret te clades. & cwalm sleād þet ahte; ant tah nane of þeos ne makie to forwurden weole þer ase muchel is, eauer se þer mare is, se ma beoð þet hit wastið.

(M1 Hali Meīdh.:15)

The presence of the negative here, and the general application of what is said, probably led to this choice.

18 It rather looks as if the restrictive relative clause in (22a), which turns the object of the causative verb into as yet not identified persons, is also responsible for the use of an indirect (i.e. a to-infinitive or that-clause) construction. There are four more cases in the corpus with such a restrictive relative clause, and in none of them is a bare infinitive found. Two instances with a to-infinitive are to be found in Layamon,

Arður sende sonde; 3eond al his kine-londe/ and to cumen alle hehte; þat quic wes on londe/ þa to uīhte oht weoren; wepnen to beren (M1 Layamon:756)

The other one is on the same page in 1.14221. Contrast this with the very similarly worded example in 1.14311, where no restrictive relative is present and the bare infinitive is used. Another example may be the one given in note 17.

19 I will present my views on this in more detail in Fischer (forthcoming b).

Editions Used
(for fuller references see Kyto 1991)

_Holy Rood: History of the Holy Rood-Tree ed. Napier. 1894. EETS os 103._
VERBAL COMPLEMENTATION IN EARLY ME

References


_____. (1995) "The Distinction between Bare and To-Infinitival Complements in Late Middle English". Diachronica 12.1-30. (An earlier version of this appeared in DWPELL 25 (1992.).)

Forthcoming a. "The Grammaticalisation of Infinitival to in English Compared with German and Dutch".

Forthcoming b. "The Status of to in Old English To-Infinitives: A reply to Kageyama".


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