## Old French negation, the Tobler/Mussafia law, and V2

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The seemingly irregular behaviour of the Old French negative marker *ne* was observed by Skårup (1975), among others. By the Old Romance Tobler/Mussafia law (Fontana 1993), a pronominal clitic in 12th century Old French could not stand in clause-initial position, but was enclitic on the verb:

(1) Coroce **se** il dunques cascun jor ?                                                    *CommPsia1a*, 123

Negator *ne* counted as clause-initial, allowing a pronominal clitic to stand in preverbal position, and also occurred with null subjects:

(2) D. Pur quei distrent il dunc si obscurement ? M. **Nel** durent pas faire altrement.

*Elucidaire*iii, 74

In these respects it behaved as a clause-initial XP in Skårup's 'initial zone' of the clause (a.k.a. Spec CP). However, it could not trigger VSpro order, as clause-initial XPs normally did, and indeed allowed an XP preceding it to trigger VSpro order:

(3) Ke si cum il chaïrent par nul amonestement, issi **ne** durent **il** resurdre par nule aïe.

*Elucidaire*iii, 15

Unlike other constituents that satisfied Tobler/Mussafia and saturated V2, *ne* co-varied positionally with the finite verb, and thus was not a syntactically independent constituent.

In 13th century Old French, these conflicting properties were resolved when *ne* ceased to saturate V2 and to allow null subjects (Skårup 1975). In the present paper, the formal properties of Old French negative clause structure are examined in order to account for this change. Zeijlstra (2004:168-9), following Haegeman (1995), distinguished weak (French, Slavic) from strong (Italian, Spanish) preverbal negative markers: the former are base-generated in vP, as clitics on the verbal complex, and raise to NegP with the verb, where their [uNeg] feature is checked by a null Neg operator. The latter are base-generated in NegP and themselves carry an [iNeg] feature

Old French had an [iNeg] negator *non*, but finite clauses were normally negated by the [uNeg] item *ne*, which we take to been checked by a null NegOp in Spec NegP throughout the Old French period. The diachronic changes observed with *ne* are to be linked to changes in the structure of declarative clauses. In early Old French, all declarative clauses had V -> C (Labelle & Hirschbühler 2005) but in later Old French SVX declaratives were IPs/TPs (Vance 1997). The Tobler-Mussafia requirement also disappeared in the 13th century: *ne* + V ceased to move to C then, unless a fronted XP occupied Spec CP.

Negative declarative clause structures exhibited both types envisaged by Zeijlstra, the minority [iNeg] type remaining unchanged:

(4) [CP non   est [TP ce ~~est~~ [NegP ~~non~~ [vP ~~est~~ la premiere fois que...      ]]]]          *Artu* 20

However, the majority type with *ne* lost the earlier structure with T -> C:

(5) [CP nel durent [TP ~~nel durent~~ [NegP Op ~~nel durent~~ [vP pas [vP ~~nel durent~~ faire altrement ]]]]
*Elucidaire*iii, 74

Only the structure lacking T -> C was retained in 13th century prose:

(6) [CP    [TP il ne receut [NegP Op [vP pas [vP ~~ne receut~~ le sacrament     ]]]]
*Elucidaire*iii, 15

This structure accounts in addition for adjunction to TP in negative declaratives with the polarity adverbs *ja* and *onques*, noted by Ingham (2005, 2010, submitted).

The development of negative clauses during Old French is then discussed in a broader diachronic perspective, taking account of earlier and later changes, and of possible substrate and superstrate influences.