

THE ORDER OF DATIVE AND ACCUSATIVE OBJECTS IN OLD ENGLISH AND SCRAMBLING

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O. Introduction

The surface word order of Old English shows a wide range of patterns, which has led earlier scholars to believe that word order was very free (see e.g. Quirk - Wrenn 1955). Practically all recorded word orders are found in almost all types of clauses, though not with the same frequency (see Mitchell 1985: §3887ff for an overview). Close analysis, however, has shown that there is in fact much more regularity than was assumed at first and that there are well established patterns in Old English. To mention a few: the finite verb is virtually always near the front of the clause in main clauses, usually in second position; SOV patterns in main clauses are frequent when O is a pronoun; VS occurs characteristically (though not exclusively) in main clauses; constructions involving adjective + infinitive show variation, but within certain well-defined limits (see Van der Wurff, forthcoming).

In this paper I intend to summarize briefly the main mechanisms which generative grammarians have proposed to account for the OE surface word orders in Government Binding theory (§1). Then I shall concentrate on constructions involving two objects (one dative and one accusative) to see in how far we can say anything about the order in which these objects are found. This involves a brief discussion of the most likely underlying order of the objects (§2), followed in §3 by a discussion of the rule (Scrambling) which could be responsible for the surface patterns that occur, with a brief discussion of Scrambling facts in Dutch, while in §4 evidence is put forward that the result(s) of Scrambling can be seen elsewhere in Old English as well, followed in §5 by the conclusion.

1. Underlying word order and some rules

Within generative grammar there has been some discussion about what the underlying word order is. There is now a fairly general consensus that OE had underlying SOV order¹ (see van Kemenade 1987 for an extensive discussion). This must be regarded as the basic order from which all surface word order patterns must be derived in various ways. For main clauses the most important rule is a V2 (Verb Second) rule along the lines of similar proposals for some modern Germanic languages such as German and Dutch. The effect of this rule is that the finite verb in main clauses usually ends up in second position:

- (1) *He tæhte þa langlice geleafan þam folce* (ÆLS (Thomas) 244),
 he taught then for a long time the faith the people
 'for a long time he taught the people the faith'

Main clauses with a pronominal object frequently show SOV order. The analysis proposed by van Kemenade (1987) in which pronominal objects are seen as clitics provides a good explanation for their different syntactic behaviour in this respect (see also Koopman 1990) and make it possible to retain the V2 analysis².

A second rule which affects main clauses mostly is Topicalization³.

- (2) *þæt deð God to tacne eallum monkyne* (Or 1.7.38.35)
 that does God as a sign for all mankind
 'that God does as a sign for all mankind'

Many sentence elements can be topicalized. Typically the finite verb should follow the topicalized element immediately, though pronominal subjects are usually found before the verb. Again their clitic nature provides the explanation here. It should however be noted that the expected order does not always occur:

- (3) *þa medomnesse ðære strengio se salmscop ongeat* (CP 14.85.22)
 'the excellence of the strength the psalmist acknowledged'

¹ The reference system to the Old English texts is the one employed by the Old English Concordance (Healey – Venezky 1980), unless otherwise stated. Line references are to the concordance quotation in which the text cited is found. The concordance uses the following editions for the major texts: ÆCHom (for vol. i a different text was used but pagination and line references are to Thorpe 1844, vol. ii Godden 1979); ÆHom (Pope 1967-1968); ÆLS (Skeat 1881-1890); CP (Sweet 1871); Or (Sweet 1883); Bede (Miller 1890-1898), and GD (Hecht 1900-1907).

² There are also main clauses with SOV order where the object is nominal. These can presumably be handled by saying that the V2 rule is not an obligatory rule.

³ Subordinate clauses with topicalization are rare. Van Kemenade (1987) claims that there is no Topic position in subordinate clauses, yet there are examples that seem to contradict this: *On þisse hysene is gecyþed þæt eallum geleafullum mannum englas þegniap* (HomS10 (BiHom3) 140). Most of these clauses come after verbs of saying/reporting etc. and can perhaps best be interpreted as main clauses of some kind or as direct speech. I cannot deal with this problem here.

Our rules predict that the finite verb should come after the topicalized object. As far as I can see this is a serious problem for the V2 analysis, but it is not inconceivable that a reasonable solution can be found and I shall leave the matter here.

A third rule is Extraposition, which affects main clauses as well as subordinate clauses. In main clauses with V2 we cannot always recognize extraposed elements because the VP is no longer clearly marked, but the effects of Extraposition can be clearly seen in main clauses with two verbs:

- (4) *Se mæssepreost sceal mannum bodian þone soþan geleafan*
 (ÆLet 2 (Wulfstan 1) 175)
 The masspriest must people preach the true faith
 'The masspriest must preach the true faith to the people'

In (4) the non-finite verb *bodian* remains in the original clause final position and the object *þone soþan geleafan* has been extraposed. In subordinate clauses Extraposition can more easily be seen because there are more SOV patterns. In (5) one object is clearly extraposed:

- (5) *þæt we ure ælmeßan sellan earmum mannum* (Hom M5 (Willard) 9)
 that we our alms give poor people
 'that we should give our alms to poor people'

The examples I have given so far all involve extraposed objects, but extraposition of other sentence elements, in particular PPs, is frequent.

In subordinate clauses V2 cannot apply because the COMP position to which the verb must move is already occupied by a complementizer. We can therefore expect many clauses with SOV order, or more precisely with the finite verb near the end of the clause, and of course these occur. However, there are also clauses with the finite verb near the front of the clause. In some of these we can assume that Extraposition is responsible but this option is clearly not available when we have two verb forms of which the non-finite verb is found in clause final position. Consider (6):

- (6) *gif se sacerd ne mæg ðam læwedum mannum larspel secgan*
 (ÆCNom ii. 41.306.66)
 if the priest not can the lay people homily say
 'if the priest cannot say a homily to the lay people'

The position of the finite verb cannot be its original clause final position, because that is marked by *secgan*. Van Kemenade (1987) has argued that we are dealing here with VPR (Verb Projection Raising), a form of V-Raising in which not only the verb but also its projection is raised⁴. 'Normal' V-Raising

⁴ It has been argued by Pintzuk (1988) that we must also have a V to INFL rule in subordinate clauses and she may well be right. As this does not really affect my argument in this paper I shall stick with VPR.

can account for the verbal clusters in subordinate clauses (see also Koopman 1990).

Coordinated main clauses occupy a position halfway between main clauses and subordinate clauses. They show characteristics of both. They can have a Topic position just as main clauses, they can show the clitic positions of main clauses, but they can also show the SOV patterns and even sometimes the verb clusters (non-finite-finite) of subordinate clauses (see Stockwell-Minkova 1990).

The set of rules briefly discussed above accounts for the position of the finite (and non-finite) verb in main and subordinate clauses, topicalized sentence elements in main clauses, and extraposed elements in main and subordinate clauses. The clitic behaviour of (most) pronouns shows up in their different syntactic behaviour. In this way we can deal with a large part of OE syntax, though there are still some problems to be resolved. Note that so far we haven't really said anything about the position of clause element in relation to each other, nor have we said anything about clauses with two objects, to which I shall turn next.

2. The order of DAT and ACC objects

We have seen above that there is good reason to treat pronominal objects differently. They can often be regarded as clitics and can show up in different positions from nominal objects. When we want to discuss the underlying order of objects we should therefore restrict ourselves to nominal objects alone.

In generative grammar there is one underlying order. In this particular case there must be one order of DAT and ACC nominal objects. Whatever that order turns out to be, the surface patterns must be derivable from it by some rule.

It is not at all easy to decide what the underlying order is. First of all not all clause types are helpful. For instance, main clauses generally show the working of the V2 rule. When such a clause has a DAT and ACC nominal object they will follow the finite verb, but we cannot be certain that they are still within the VP, as one object (or even both) could have been extraposed. Consider (7):

- (7) *He sealde þam geswenctum mannum reste* (HomU 9 (VercHom 4) 166)
'he gave the oppressed people rest'

The surface order of the objects could be the result of Extraposition of *reste*, in which case we do not really know where it was moved from:

- (8) He sealde, [_{VP} ?[*t_j*] þam geswenctum mannum ?[*t_j*] [*t_i*]_{VP}]
[*reste_j*]

Such clauses do not really tell us anything about the underlying order of the objects. The only cases that can help us are clauses where the objects are still

within the VP. This puts certain limitations on the material. Only subordinate clauses with the objects before the verb or main and subclauses with two verbs in which the objects are in between the verbs can be used as evidence, as illustrated below:

- (9) *þæt he þon biddendan ece lif forgeafe* (Hom S8 (B1 Hom 2) 100)
that he the asking eternal life gave
'that he gave eternal life to those who asked'
- (10) *Swa sceal ælc gesceadwis lareow opene lare & swutole ðæm ðiestrum modum bodian* (CP 63. 461. 3)
thus must every wise teacher open doctrine & clear the dark minds preach
'Thus every wise teacher must preach open and clear doctrine to the dark minds'

In all I have found 340 clauses that fall within this category⁵. The objects in them show the following distribution:

(11)	DAT-ACC	ACC-DAT	
	203 (60%)	137 (40%)	340 (=N)

On the basis of these figures we could perhaps conclude that the underlying order is DAT-ACC, but note that the distribution is not particularly clear cut, and fairly close to an equal distribution, given the numbers involved. It is not the case that one order really dominates. Very revealing too is that a similar exercise for Ælfric shows 37 DAT-ACC (46%) vs. 44 ACC-DAT (54%), and we could decide that Ælfric had ACC-DAT as the underlying order. Clearly just looking at the numbers will not get us very far, and another approach should be used.

It is not my intention to discuss in detail what evidence can be brought to bear on the problem (see Koopman 1990). I shall just summarize the main thrust of the argument here. Hoekstra (1989) has shown that interesting conclusions about the double object construction in Modern English can be drawn from binding properties. Asymmetry between direct and indirect objects will appear when some form of binding is concerned (binding relies on c-command):

- (12) a. *I showed the professors each other's students*
b. **I showed each other's students the professors*
- (13) a. *I gave back every owner his car*
b. **I gave back its owner every car*

Hoekstra (1989: 75) remarks about (12) that 'the IO can bind (into) the DO but not the other way round'. This looks promising, but the nature of the examples is such that we cannot expect to find many of them in Old English. There are

⁵ See Koopman (1990) for further details.

none which involve reciprocals of the type illustrated in (12) as far as I could establish⁶ and just two of the type of (13) with 'every':

- (14) *þa dældon ða cwelleras Cristes reaf on feower, heora ælcum his dæl* (ÆCHom ii. 14. 1. 145. 236)

then divided the executioners Christ's garments into four,
to each of them his part

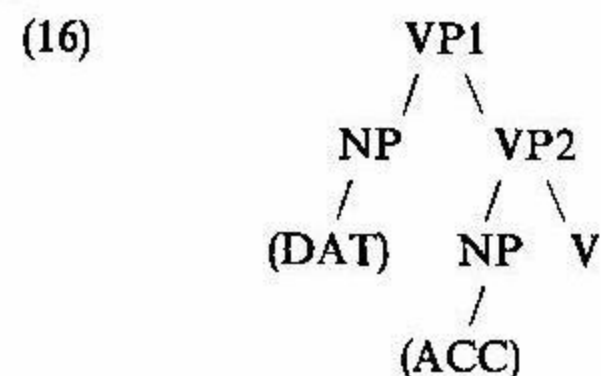
'Then the executioners divided Christ's garments into four,
to each of them his part'

- (15) *Hi gesettan eac þa þære sunnan and þam monan, and þam oðrum godum, ælcum his dæg ...* (ÆHom 22. 166)

they assigned also then the sun and the moon, and the other
gods, each his day...

'Then they also assigned to the sun and the moon, and the
other gods, each its day...'

(15) shows that the DAT NP binds into the ACC NP. As binding depends on a c-command relation, the DAT NP (*ælcum*) is higher in the tree than the ACC NP (*his dæg*). Unfortunately these two examples occur in main clauses and we cannot be absolutely sure that the object NPs still occupy their original position within the VP. Binding facts elsewhere show that there are 20 cases of the DAT NP binding the ACC NP. All of these involve possessive pronouns and occur in verb-final subordinate clauses. There is only one where it is the other way round, and that is in a main clause, where we cannot be sure that the objects are still within the VP. It seems therefore reasonable to follow Hoekstra's arguments and to conclude that the underlying order is DAT-ACC:⁷



3. Scrambling

Having established the most likely order of the objects, the next task is to account for the surface word order patterns that occur. I shall do this primarily for the type of clauses illustrated in (9) and (10). In other clauses the working of

⁶ Old English does not have a specific reciprocal pronoun. Instead reciprocity can be expressed in a number of ways (see Mitchell 1985: §279-88).

⁷ It could be argued that 'flat' structure of the VP would result in the same binding facts, as both DAT and ACC NP would c-command each other. However, given the evidence available it seems unlikely that the VP had such a flat structure. See Koopman (1990) for more details.

such rules as V2, Topicalization, and Extraposition, all of which move certain elements from their original position, and which are independent of what happens within the VP, tends to obscure the effects of Scrambling, if it takes place at all in those cases. We are often not in a position to observe it exactly.

In Dutch (and German) there is a variety of word order patterns that are often claimed to be the result of Scrambling (see Den Besten *et al* 1988, Den Besten - Rutten 1989, and Grewendorf-Sternefeld 1990). Consider (17) and (18):

- (17) a. *omdat ik gelukkig de krant niet gekocht heb*
b. *omdat ik de krant gelukkig niet gekocht heb*
'because I fortunately didn't buy the paper'

- (18) a. *dat hij alleen zijn vader zulke dingen durft te vertellen*⁸
b. *dat hij zulke dingen alleen zijn vader durft te vertellen*
'that he dares to tell only his father such things!'

Only some of the possibilities are illustrated here. Scrambling is a rule which in Dutch only affects arguments and moves them to an adjoined non-argument position (see Den Besten-Rutten 1989 for more details). Let us see how Scrambling can help us explain the Old English surface word order patterns with two objects. Consider (19):

- (19) *se þe healf his æhta þearfum dælde* (ÆCHom i. 8. 130. 34)
who half his possessions poor gave
'who gave half his possessions to the poor'

With an underlying DAT-ACC order, the ACC object (*healf his æhta*) must have been scrambled to the left of the DAT NP (*þearfum*). Similarly in (20):

- (20) *He þa se sacerd þæt ðam munece sæde* (LS35 (VitPatr) 89)
he then the priest that the monk said
'then he, the priest, said that to the monk'

It should be noted that (20) is a main clause with the verb in final position, which occurs occasionally. We can thus be sure that the objects are still within the VP. An example in a clause with two verb forms is given in (21):

- (21) *ðonne he nyle ða hisne oðrum eowian ða he mid ryhte eowian sceal* (CP 59. 449. 29)
when he not-wants the example others show that he properly
show must
'when he does not want to set the example to others that he
properly ought to set'

In the examples given so far to illustrate Scrambling it is the ACC object that is scrambled and there are just the two objects within the VP. What happens

⁸ Example taken from Den Besten - Rutten (1989).

when other elements are present in the VP? Some possibilities are illustrated below:

- (22) *Ac gif we þa mirran gode gastlice geoffriað*
(ÆCHom i. 7. 118. 17)
but if we then myrrh God spiritually offer
'but if we offer myrrh to God spiritually'
- (23) *þæt hi heora cild mid gramlicum wyriungum deofle ne betæcon*
(ÆCHom ii. 2. 17.196)
that they their children with cruel curses devil not deliver
'that they do not deliver their children to the devil with
cruel curses'
- (24) *þæt hy þa teoðunge gode glædlice syllan* (ÆHom 31. 99)
that they tithe God gladly give
'that they gladly give the tithe to God'
- (25) *þæt ge Ongolþeode ætgædre mid us Drihtnes word bodige*
(Bede 2. 2. 102.14)
that you the English together with us God's word preach
'that you will preach God's word together with us to the English'
- (26) *þæt heo earmum nan þing mid unrihte ne benamen*
(LS 29 (Nicholas) 157)
that they poor people no thing with evil not deprived
'that they would not deprive poor people evilly of anything'

(22)-(26) show cases with adverbials or PPs. In (22) the ACC object (*þa mirran*) has been scrambled to the left of the DAT object, but *gastlice* occupies a position adjacent to the verb. Similarly in (24). In (23) the ACC object (*heora cild*) is now separated from the DAT object by a PP. In (25) the surface order is DAT-ACC, but there is a PP in between, and in (26) there is a PP next to the verb. Here is an example involving two verb forms:

- (27) *þæt we magon þam scolierum rumlice gecyðan*
(ByrM 1 (Crawford) 52. 36)
that we are able the students these things at length explain
'that we are able to explain these things at some length to students'

It is not immediately clear how we can account for all these possibilities. The clue lies in what position we think PPs and adverbs occupy in deep position. If they are in VP initial position, then we must assume that both objects can be scrambled (see (22)). However, there is no extensive study available for the syntactic behaviour of adverbs or PPs in OE⁹. Before such information becomes available it is impossible to solve some of the problems illustrated above, and we must leave the question open whether *both* objects can be scrambled (but see below).

⁹ Mitchell (1985; § 3942) calls for a detailed analysis of the syntactical behaviour of adverbs. See Gardner (1971) for some information on PPs.

Den Besten – Rutten (1989) remark that only arguments can be scrambled, and that indefinite, non-specific NPs cannot be scrambled. The first point is somewhat difficult to establish for OE, but the second point can be investigated. If we are correct in assuming that the underlying order is DAT-ACC, then in clauses where the objects are still within the VP we should not find examples of ACC-DAT order with an indefinite, non-specific ACC NP. The material presented in Koopman (1990) largely bears this out, though it is not as clear-cut as we would like.

4. Scrambling and Verb Projection Raising (VPR)

So far all the examples I have given illustrate Scrambling within the VP. Is there any evidence that Scrambling can move elements out of the VP? In Dutch there is some evidence that Scrambling can also sometimes move arguments out of an embedded clause into the matrix clause (Den Besten – Rutten 1989):

- (28) a. *dat ze geprobeerd heeft Jan een nieuwe taak te geven*¹⁰
b. *dat ze Jan geprobeerd heeft een nieuwe taak te geven*
'that she tried to give John a new task'

As far as I am aware no such thing occurs in Old English, but is there evidence to suggest that movement out of a VP is a possibility? Consider (29) and (30):

- (29) *þæt he eall his megen wolde mannum miðan* (LS3 (Chad) 4)
that he all his power wanted men conceal
'that he wanted to conceal all his power from men'
- (30) *Gif þu þam arleasan nelt hys arleasnyse secgan*
(ÆAbusMor 265)
if you the wicked not want his wickedness say
'if you do not want to say his wickedness to the wicked person'

These two subordinate clauses are interesting for two reasons: 1. the two objects are found separated by the finite verb, while the verb forms show the typical 'brace' construction, and 2. as the examples make clear the objects can be found in both orders, therefore one of them at least must have moved away from its original position.

Constructions such as (29) and (30) occur in all the major texts I have investigated and are frequent enough to suggest that we are dealing with a genuine OE construction. They differ from the usual 'brace' pattern in subordinate clauses in that the finite verb does not follow the subject immediately. In between subject and the finite verb we can find adverbs ((31), prepositional phrases (32)), pronominal or nominal NPs ((33) and (29)), and various combinations ((34):

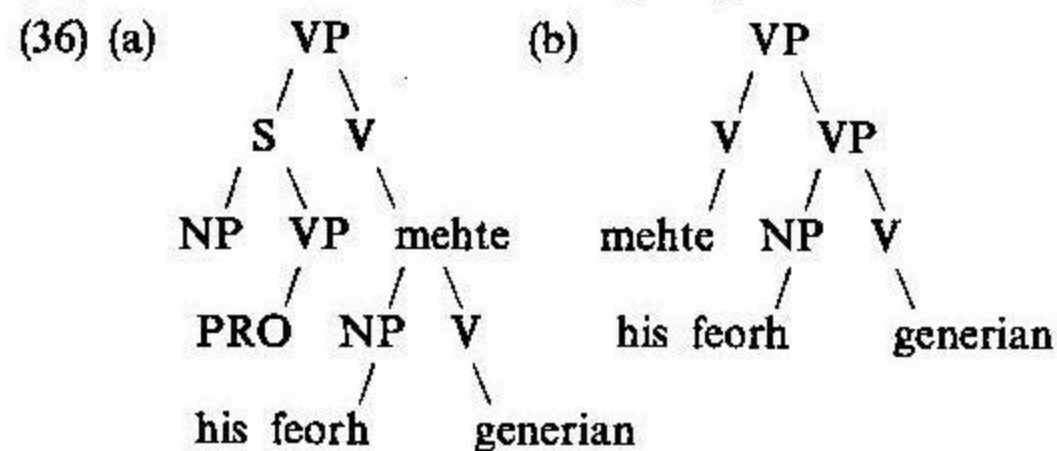
¹⁰ Adapted from Den Besten – Rutten (1989: 13).

- (31) *se ðe æfre wile us mannum mildsian* (ÆHom 16. 47)
 he who ever wants us men show mercy
 'he who always wants to show mercy to us men'
- (32) *þe on þæm munte wæron mid godes fingre awritene*
 (ÆHom 22. 2114)
 'which on the mountain were by God's finger written
 'which were written on the mountain by God's finger'
- (33) *ðæt we hie sculon eac milde mode lufian* (CP (Cotton) 33. 222. 5)
 that we them must also with mild heart love
 'that we must also love them with mild heart'
- (34) *ðæt hie hiora ða nænne dæl noldon on hiora agen geðiode wendan* (CPLetWæf 36)
 that they of them then no part not wanted into their own language translate
 'that they then did not wish to translate any part into their own language'

The finite verbs involved are not just the 'modals', but also *beon*, *weorþan*, and *habban*. How should we analyse such constructions? Assuming that the verbal cluster is in clause final position underlyingly, the finite verb must have been moved, but to which position? The only position available is INFL, but we can hardly claim that it would explain the examples given above, as the position of the finite verb is not constant. The other approach, and in my view, the correct one is to claim that we are dealing with cases of VPR (Verb Projection Raising) (see van Kemenade 1987). V-raising is a phenomenon accepted for Old English, VPR is similar to V-Raising in that a lower verb is raised to a position where the higher verb is, but VPR takes along the verbal projection, i.e. the VP. This accounts for such subordinate clauses as in (35):

- (35) *þæt he mehte his feorh generian* (Or 48. 18)¹¹
 that he could his life save
 'that he could save his life'

(35) is derived in the following way:



¹¹ Quoted from Van Kemenade (1987).

I have argued elsewhere that auxiliary verbs also participate in the raising process (Koopman 1990). To account for cases such as (29) there are two options open:

1. VPR takes along only part of the VP and leaves behind the rest. What is behind turns up in surface structure to the left of the finite verb. If this is the correct approach we must explain why the surface order of the VP elements is not always the one assumed as underlying order. The raising process seems to take along different parts of the VP. Thus in (29) the ACC object is apparently left behind, whereas in (30) the DAT object is left behind. Assuming that the raised structure is one constituent, and not a discontinuous structure, there must have been some restructuring before VPR took place. Scrambling could be responsible for the restructuring: (29) results if the ACC NP is scrambled to the left of the DAT NP out of the VP.¹² VPR then takes along V + DAT NP. The derivation is illustrated below, in which (37) is the structure resulting from Scrambling. When VP1 is raised to the right of the higher verb (*wolde*) we get the surface order in (38):¹³

- (37) *þet he [S eall his megen_{SCR} [VP1 mannum [VP2 t_{SCR} miðan]]] wolde*
 (38) *þet he eall his megen_{SCR} wolde [mannum t_{SCR} miðan]*

We get (30) when the DAT NP is scrambled out of the VP. VPR then raises VP1 to the right of the higher verb:

- (39) *Gif þu [S þam arleasan_{SCR} [VP1 t_{SCR} [VP2 hys arleasnyse secgan]]] nelt*
 (40) *Gif þu þam arleasan_{SCR} nelt [t_{SCR} hys arleasnyse secgan]*

Note that such a derivation for (30) implies that the DAT NP must be scrambled out of the VP, and that therefore *both* objects seem to be able to undergo scrambling. Alternatively we would have to say that VPR can take along VP2 and not just VP1, but this might be difficult to maintain for clauses with just one object. I would therefore be inclined to assume that both objects can be scrambled out of the VP and by implication that both objects can be scrambled within the VP.

2. The second option is to claim that VPR always takes along everything and that elements are scrambled out of the VP after VPR has taken place. For (29) we would get the following derivation:

- (41) a. *þet [S he [VP1 mannum [VP2 eall his megen miðan]]] wolde*
 b. *þet he wolde [VP1 mannum [VP2 [eall his megen miðan]]]*
 c. *þet he eall his megen_{SCR} wolde [VP1 mannum [VP2 t_{SCR} miðan]]]*

Which of these options should we choose? It seems to me that option 1 should be adopted for the following reasons: a. Den Besten-Rutten (1989) claim that

¹² Note that when Scrambling is a VP internal affair we get the surface order as in (21).

¹³ I have only specified what seemed absolutely necessary for my discussion here.

elements are first scrambled out of the clause before extraposition takes place (see also Weibelhuth – Den Besten (1988). This can be made visible for Dutch. In the case of OE we cannot positively prove it, but it seems best to adopt this as well. b. In the discussion on Scrambling it is generally assumed that only arguments can be scrambled, and that there are often restrictions on the type of argument that can be scrambled. If we adopt option 2 we must allow non-arguments to be scrambled as well, such as adverbs and PPS and this does not seem attractive.

We have seen above that Scrambling allows us to deal with the different orders in (29) and (30). Recently Van der Wurff (1990) has argued that in (42) *in him* has been moved out of the infinitival clause:

- 2(42) *næs me næfre gyt in him ieðe to wunianne*
 (HomU9 (VercHom 4) 252)
 not-was me never yet in it easy to live
 'it has never yet been easy for me to live in it'

As *in him* is an argument, the movement can be explained by Scrambling as well and provides further support for our analysis.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have looked at the underlying order of DAT and ACC objects in double object constructions and concluded that there is reasonable evidence to suggest that the underlying order is DAT-ACC. A rule (Scrambling) to move the ACC object was found to be responsible for some of the surface word order patterns. There is also evidence to suggest that in fact both objects can be scrambled. Old English appears to observe the usual restrictions on Scrambling, though the evidence is not completely clear-cut and further work is needed here. Finally I have argued that certain patterns in subordinate clauses with two verbs are best analysed as involving scrambling out of the VP followed by Verb Projection Raising. At least one other construction supports a Scrambling rule which can move arguments out of the VP as well as moving them within the VP.

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