

WORD ORDER CHANGES IN EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH  
SOME EVIDENCE AGAINST THE CONSERVATISM OF  
SUBORDINATE CLAUSES<sup>1</sup>

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OE is usually characterised as having a rich morphology and a free word order, whereas ModE is said to have very little morphology but a strict word order. As far as the free word order for OE is concerned I will have to modify this characterisation considerably. Otherwise it is fairly accurate in its generality. Furthermore, it is generally assumed that the necessary changes that turned OE syntax into ModE syntax first affected main clauses and from there percolated down to subordinate clauses. Hock (1986: 332), for instance, notes:

It took several additional centuries before the word order of the main clause was obligatorily extended to dependent clauses. This relative *resistance to change* is consonant with a widely noted tendency for dependent clauses to be more 'conservative' than main clauses in syntactic change. (his emphasis).

This view, that subordinate clauses have a more conservative word order than main clauses, has recently been challenged, by Stockwell and Minkova (in press), who argue that the ModE SV syntax was established in subordinate clauses sometime between 1200 and 1300, but it was not fully implemented until well after 1400 in main clauses. Main clauses in Chaucer still show a consistent V-2 syntax whereas in Wycliffe main clause syntax is mainly SV as in ModE.

In this paper I shall test the claim that subordinate clauses were not conservative but rather the leading domain in the change to ModE word order. I shall do this by looking at one particular manuscript that stands at a turning point in the history of the English language. This is the *Ancrene Wisse* or the *Anchoresses Rule*, a treatise written by an anonymous 13th century cleric for three anchoresses to give them guidelines on how they

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<sup>1</sup> Robert P. Stockwell and Susan Wright read earlier drafts of this paper and provided very helpful comments. They should not, of course, be held responsible for its contents.

should organise their spiritual and daily life. The manuscript enjoyed a wide circulation throughout the 13th century and it survives in 18 different copies of varying quality. According to the most widely accepted opinion the original version is dated at around 1222, the Corpus version at 1228—30, and the actual Corpus MS, which I use as my basic source, almost immediately afterwards. As to the dialect, it is generally agreed that it must be West Midlands, possibly from Herefordshire. (cf. Dobson 1962, 1966 and 1967). This manuscript is said to be the first extensive prose text in Middle English. It is of course a truism that language change is gradual. Language systems do not change overnight, and we therefore have to expect features that we usually associate with OE side by side to those we associate with ME.

Before I can outline the extent to which the word order patterns in the *Ancrene Wisse* are still OE, it is necessary to briefly outline the situation in OE. I have indicated above that the widely believed notion of 'free word order' in OE can no longer be supported. It is mainly the research by Kemenade (1987) which shows that OE word order patterns can be accounted for with fairly strict rules. The underlying word order is assumed to be SOV, that is verb-final, in all clauses. This order is reflected directly in the majority of the subordinate clauses. In OE, as in Modern Dutch and Modern German, subordinate clauses tend to have the verb in final position. The numerous exceptions in which elements appear after the finite verb in subordinate clauses are accounted for on the basis of three right-movement rules. Extraposition moves an S or a PP to the right periphery of the clause. Heavy NP shift moves an NP of above average complexity to the right periphery. This is of course not a hard and fast criterion, and indeed it seems the case that in the course of time increasingly lighter elements were allowed to follow the finite verb in subordinate clauses. The third movement rule is right dislocation, which moves an NP to the right periphery but leaves a copy pronoun in the original position in the clause. The following are relevant examples. The ModE ones are from Stockwell and Minkova (in press), the OE ones from Kemenade (1987: 39, 40).

- (1) A hotel [ $t_1$ ] was left unoccupied [ $S_1$  that could have housed all the homeless in Los Angeles]
- (2) He repeated his account [ $t_1$ ] to the police [ $pp_1$  of the main events that day]
- (3) I left [ $t_1$ ] to my son [ $NP_1$  more money than he had ever seen]
- (4) He<sub>1</sub> never cleans his room ( $NP_1$  that son of mine)
- (5) same men cwepaþ on Englisc þæt hit [ $t_1$ ] sie [ $NP_1$  feaxede steorra]  
some men say in English that it is long-haired star  
'some people say in English that it is a long-haired star'  
(Parker 892)
- (6) æfter disum gelamp þæt micel manncwealm [ $t_1$ ] becom [ $PP_1$  ofer

after this happened that great pestilence came over þære Roamanisce leode  
the Roman people  
'then it happened that a great plague came over the Roman people'  
(AHTh, II, 122, 15)

In example (1) a relative clause has undergone Extraposition. The trace [ $t_1$ ] marks its original position. In (2) it is a prepositional phrase that is extraposed. (3) is an example of a Heavy NP Shift. There is some controversy whether Extraposition and Heavy NP Shift are different or not. On the face of it, in both cases a heavy constituent, S, PP or NP, is postposed to the right periphery of the containing constituent (cf. Kemenade 1987: 40—41). (4) is an example of a right dislocation. The constituent that has undergone a rightward movement has left a copy pronoun in its original position. Examples (5) and (6) illustrate NP shift and PP Extraposition in OE. The NP in (5) is not particularly heavy. This suggests that Heavy NP Shift is a possible way for language change to enter the system. In the course of the OE period, increasingly lighter and lighter NPs were allowed to undergo what used to be a Heavy NP Shift. I shall come back to this suggestion below.

Thus, in OE, subordinate clauses generally have verb-final word order. The apparent counterexamples can be explained on the basis of movement rules which can be independently motivated and which have counterparts in modern Germanic languages.

In main clauses, SOV must also be assumed to be the basic or underlying word order. Here, however, two movement rules apply in almost all cases. A verb fronting rule moves the finite verb into the INFL position at the front of the clause. In subordinate clauses this position is occupied by a subjunction and cannot function as a landing site for the finite verb. Hence the rule cannot apply in subordinate clauses. The landing site is available for the finite verb only in main clauses. Verb particles or infinite verbs, however, are left behind in their original position at the right periphery of the main clauses and separated from their verbs.

Furthermore a topicalisation rule moves one clause argument, such as subject, object or adverbial to the topic node at the left periphery of the topmost S node. This rule, too, cannot apply to sub clauses because they do not have the required landing site, i.e. a topic node.

These rules apply not only to OE but also to Dutch and German. There is, however, a decisive difference between OE on the one hand and Dutch and German on the other. In OE argument pronouns, that is pronouns in subject position (e.g. *heo*), in object position (e.g. *ham*) or in adverbial position (e.g. *þær*), have to be treated as clitics unless they are topicalised. They are adjoined to the left of INFL, that is to say to the left of the finite verb. There they create the impression of free word order to the unwary observer. The finite



verb in main clauses will be preceded by at most one single nominal NP and a variable number of pronominal NPs. The first NP, whether pronoun or full NP, will always be the topic followed by one, two or zero clitics. Pronouns thus do not count in establishing V-2 word order unless they are topicalised. There are of course exceptions to these word order rules, but they are surprisingly few and far between. The V-2 word order of OE main clauses is clearly more than just a 'tendency' as it is still sometimes maintained (Mitchell 1985: § 3929).

This view of OE word order patterns represents a clear break with the traditional view, which maintains that OE has a relatively free word order. Therefore the old question as to when the OE word order patterns gave way to more modern ones attains a new significance.

This brings us back to our text, the *Ancrene Wisse*. Kubouchi (1975) has tried to establish its modernity in terms of word order patterns by counting all the patterns that would be possible today in relation to those that would be ungrammatical in ModE. This way of looking at things has a notable history. Mitchell (1964) used this method in refuting claims about the modernity of the final continuations of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, i.e. the *Peterborough Chronicle*, written some 50 to 100 years earlier than the *Ancrene Wisse*. However, this procedure is less than reliable because word order patterns that can be found in this text might have been used then for entirely different reasons than they are used in ModE. What on the surface appears as SVX may of course be an example of SV syntax just as well as of V-2 syntax. It is therefore necessary to ask the further question, would the patterns have been possible in OE?

Kubouchi analysed parts 6 and 7 of the *Ancrene Wisse*. He notes that of the 424 main clauses in these two parts 89 per cent are still possible today; of the 551 subordinate clauses 91 per cent; of the 158 main clauses introduced by *ant* and *ac* 89 per cent; and — significantly — of the 84 main clauses preceded by an adverb only 44 per cent. This gives the impression that in this EME text only some ten per cent of all clauses appear in the old fashioned OE syntax with the one exception of the main clauses introduced by an adverb. As in OE, these clauses force — in his terminology — a 'subject verb inversion'.

Manabe (1979) establishes a different criterion of syntactic modernity by comparing non-finite clauses with those finite subordinate clauses that can enter into a functional contrast with the non-finite clauses. He analyses the history of the English language over seven centuries from c. 900 to 1600 and finds that there is a steady increase in the percentage of the nonfinite clauses from less than 14.7 per cent in the English of Alfred's time to more than 53.8 per cent in the 16th century (Manabe 1979: 10 and 138). According to this variable, the language of *Ancrene Wisse* shows considerable differences to the language of the Alfredian corpus. The percentage of non-finite clauses

is 31 per cent and thus already more than twice as high as in the Alfredian corpus (1979: 53).

In the following I shall have a look at all the attested clauses of parts 6 and 7 of *Ancrene Wisse* and establish not whether they are possible ModE word orders but whether they can be explained in terms of the OE word order patterns as outlined above.

Among the main clauses, which are neither preceded by a conjunction nor an adverb there is no example of a word order pattern that would not have been possible in OE according to the rules outlined above. A few examples will illustrate this point<sup>2</sup>

- (7) [<sub>s</sub> peos preo Maries] bitacnið preo bitternesses. (SVO, *AW* 1409)  
These three Maries signify three (types of) bitterness.
- (8) [<sub>n-0</sub> Aromaz] [<sub>sc1</sub> me] makeð of myrre & of rechles (OSV, *AW* 1601)  
One makes spices..., i.e. Spices are made of myrrh and incense.
- (9) [<sub>s</sub> Crist] [<sub>oc1</sub> hit] wat (SOV, *AW* 1815)  
Christ knows it.
- (10) [<sub>p-0</sub> pis] dude [<sub>s</sub> ure lauerd] us þe... (OVS, *AW* 2407)  
Our Lord did this to us, who...

In (7), a nominal subject precedes the finite verb. This looks like a ModE SV pattern, but it also accords with the OE word order patterns as outlined above. The subject is topicalised and therefore in front of the finite verb, and there are no pronoun arguments, which could be cliticised. In (8) the finite verb is preceded by a nominal object in topic position and a cliticised subject pronoun. This pattern would not be possible in ModE, but it accords with the OE V-2 pattern because clitics do not count as occupying their own position. In (9), the finite verb is preceded by a nominal subject in topic position and a cliticised object pronoun, which is again in accordance with the OE V-2 pattern. In (10) there is only one pronoun, which precedes the finite verb. It is the object pronoun, but in this case it is not cliticised. As it is the only argument in front of the finite verb, it must be in topic position. Here it counts as occupying its own position, and the finite verb is in second position as required.

As predicted by OE syntax, there are no examples of the order subject-nominal object-finite verb. Of the above examples, it is of course only the

<sup>2</sup> References are to page (first two digits) and line (second two digits) of Geoffrey Shepherd's edition (1985), which uses the MS Corpus Christi College Cambridge 402 (MS CCCC 402). The following labels are used for the clause arguments: S: subject, n-0: nominal object, p-O: pronominal object, cl: clitic (irrespective of function), A: adverbial, SC: subject complement. Only the relevant arguments are labelled in each case.



pattern in (7) which is still possible today. These examples emphasise the necessity to establish the modernity of word order patterns not just in terms of potential ModE patterns but also in terms of possible OE patterns. So far there is no evidence that the author of *Ancrene Wisse* used anything different from a truly OE grammar as far as word order patterns are concerned, in spite of the fact that many of the attested patterns are also possible ModE patterns.

The main clauses introduced by the conjunctions *ant* and *ac* are treated separately because in OE they regularly take subordinate word order, a fact for which nobody really has a satisfying explanation, but in the *Ancrene Wisse* there is very little difference between these clauses and other main clauses. There are 112 main clauses introduced by *ant* and 46 by *ac*. All of them can be analysed as V-2 as far as they actually conjoin complete clauses and not just VPs.

The main clauses introduced by adverbs are more interesting. According to Kubouchi's modernity criterion, this is by far the most conservative type of clause. There are 84 main clauses of this type, 41 have the word order AVS. This is ungrammatical in ModE, but it is the expected OE V-2 order. A nominal subject NP has to follow the finite verb if the topic node is already filled by an adverb. 37 main clauses introduced by an adverb have the pattern ASV. This pattern is the one that is still grammatical in ModE. However, if the subject is a pronoun and therefore cliticised in front of the finite verb, it also conforms to the OE V-2 pattern. This is the case in 25 out of the 37 ASV patterns. The adverb is topicalised, whether it is a pronoun or a nominal NP, and it is followed by the cliticised subject. The finite verb, then, appears in second position as predicted by the OE V-2 patterns.

However, there is one example of a pronominal subject following the finite verb and there are twelve examples of a nominal subject preceding the finite verb in clauses with an adverb in topic position. These are illustrated (by examples (11) and (12))

(11) [A Of bitternesse inwið] segge [s we] nu sumhwæt. (AVS, *AW* 1403)  
We will now tell something about the bitterness within.

(12) [A þurh Maries bone wes, ed te neoces, weater iwent to wine, þet is to understonden, þurh bone of bitternesse þet me dreheð for Godd], [s þe heorte þe wes weattri, smechles, ne ne felde na sauur of Godd namare þen i weater], schal beon iwent to wine, ... (ASV, *AW* 1519)

Through Mary's petition, at the wedding feast, water turned into wine, that is to say (i.e. to be understood), through the petition of the bitterness which one endures for God, the heart, which was watery, tasteless, and did not feel the savour of God any more than in water, shall be turned into wine.

In (11) the subject pronoun is not cliticised. It appears not before but after the finite verb. But no explanation can be offered for this pattern. It appears that cliticisation, though the norm in OE, was not obligatory. The main point about cliticisation is not that it must occur, but that if it does, which normally is the case, it does not affect the basic word order count. Example (12) is exceptional in that the adverbial at the beginning of the clause is very long. There are in fact two adverbials, the second of which is a rewording of the first. It seems plausible to suggest that the writer somehow lost track and started afresh with the nominal subject of the clause. It is moreover reasonable to expect such a complex subject with its own modification in the topic position.

Notice that two rather different conclusions follow from examples (11) and (12). (11) represents a pattern that would not be possible in ModE (i.e. AVS). It is therefore unlikely that it is indicative of an innovative pattern. Its clash with the word order rules for OE as set out above only indicate that these rules were not specific enough in respect of the extent to which cliticisation is obligatory or not. (12), on the other hand, would be a possible ModE pattern (ASV) and thus could be a true innovation. But it could also be an indication that the OE rules as formulated above are not watertight, or — as I have tried to argue — it could be a violation of strict OE rules because of communicative reasons.

The other eleven examples of a finite verb preceded both by an adverbial and a nominal subject (An-SV) are similarly possible innovations. They violate the OE V-2 pattern, but they lead the way towards ModE SV patterns. Of course we have to tread carefully with any claims as to violations of OE patterns. It might always be the case that our understanding of OE is too poor, that we overgeneralised in setting up the rules, and above all that what is true for one variety of OE may not necessarily be true in every detail for some other variety.

There are eight different adverbs which appear in the twelve cases of An-SV. I shall illustrate two of them which are also attested in the regular OE V-2 pattern AVn-S.

(13) [A alswa] [s þe þreo Maries] bohten deorewurðe aromaz his bodi forte smirien. (ASV, *AW* 1407)

in the same way, the three Maries purchased precious spices in order to anoint his body.

(14) [A Alswa] is [s þis scheld, þet is, þe crucifix], i chirche iset... (AVS, *AW* 2301)

In the same way, this shield, that is, the crucifix, is set in the church

(15) [A For þi] [s Crist] luueð mare (ASV, *AW* 2321)

Because Christ loves more.

(16) [A for þi] seið [s seinte Pawel], ... (AVS, *AW* 0311)

because St Paul says...



Examples (13) and (15) seem to be fairly clear examples of V-2 violations because a nominal subject precedes the finite verb in spite of the fact that the first clause position is already occupied by an adverb. There are two patterns of An-OSV (1637, 2510), both of which have a cliticised subject but a full object NP, and one pattern of An-OVS (2031) with a full object NP. Thus there are altogether fifteen examples of apparent V-2 violations.

Clauses introduced by *for* enjoy a special status. As many as 29 per cent appear in word orders that would not be possible today. The percentage of possible modern word orders for *for*-clauses is considerably lower than that for all other types of clauses with the exception of main clauses introduced by an adverb. Kubouchi (1975: 22), who also noticed this discrepancy, does not offer any explanation apart from pointing out that it 'might arouse a doubt about the status of *for* in our corpus'. This comment recalls a similar observation made by Mitchell, who reports three *for* clauses in Continuation I and 18 in Continuation II of the *Peterborough Chronicle*. All three examples in Continuation I have modern word orders, a result that must be attributed to chance. In Continuation II, ten out of the 18 clauses are in modern word order patterns, that is 56 per cent. He concludes that 'the variations ... probably reflect the doubt about *for*'s status. Is it an adverb, a coordinating conjunction, or ... a subordinating conjunction?' (1964: 134)<sup>3</sup>.

He then dismisses this question as of no real importance and maintains that the essential point of interest is the emergence of *for* as a clause connector.

Among the seventeen *for*-clauses with obsolete word order there are no clear instances of verb-last word orders. All of them have the finite verb in second position. Seven of these clauses have a finite full verb in second position preceded by something other than a subject. They are illustrated by examples (17) to (19).

(17) ...; for [A swa] deð [s moni gentil mon þe is uncuð in uncuððe]. (AVS AW 0734)

for so does many noble man who is unknown in a strange land

(18) For [n-0 pilgrim] eileð [s monihwet]. (OVS AW 0438)

for many things afflict the pilgrim

(19) ...; for [sc swuch] wes [s Godes deað o þe deore rode], pinful & schentful ouer alle oþre (AVS AW 0712)

for such was God's death on the dear cross, painful and shameful above all others

In excerpt (17), the finite verb is preceded by an adverb. In (18) the object of the clause is preposed, but the verb still appears in second position before

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed argument about the status of *for* clauses in the *Ancrene Wisse* see Jucker (in press).

the subject. And in (19) it is the subject complement that is given clause-initial position. In all these cases the word order very strongly suggests that these are main clauses. The punctuation supplied by Shepherd underlines this interpretation. In two of the above cases, he separates the *for*-clause from its preceding clause by a semi-colon, and in one case it is given as a new sentence.

There are five instances of *for*-clauses with obsolete word orders that have an auxiliary verb in second position. The latter two patterns would be unacceptable in Modern English because the subject appears between the auxiliary and the main verb.

In two instances the finite verb is preceded by a pronoun object as illustrated by (20).

(20) ...; for [s ha] [oc1 hit] mot buggen wið bitternesse wiðuten (Sp-OV AW 1606)

for she must buy it with outward bitterness

The object in this case has to be interpreted as a clitic attached to the left of the finite verb and not affecting the word order. Hence it constitutes a straightforward example of verb-second word order, even though it is now an obsolete pattern.

In three instances the finite verb appears clause-finally, as illustrated by (21) and (22).

(21) ...; for [n-0 þet oðer] [s ha] mot leten (OSV AW 2915)

for she must leave the other one

(22) ...; for [A swa] [sc1 he] [oc1 hit] walde (ASOV AW 2410)

for he desires it like this

In both cases both the subject and the object of the clause appear before the finite verb. (21) has got a nominal object which is topicalised and precedes the cliticised subject. In (22) both the subject and the object are cliticised and are preceded by a topicalised adverb. Thus, on the basis of the word order facts, *for* is quite unambiguously a coordinator, even though there is evidence that *for*-clauses can precede the clauses they are linked with, which is a characteristic feature of subordinate clauses but prohibited in coordinate clauses<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Silvia Adamson (personal communication) suggests that the fact that *for* as a conjunction only appeared in the 12th century (as pointed out above, it is almost nonexistent in the *Peterborough Chronicle* Continuation I, but has several occurrences in Continuation II) accounts for its non-subordinate word orders and its lack of subjunctive. Thus it might have been a subordinator in spite of the word order facts and modality because the traditional, i.e. OE, ways of marking subordination were no longer available in the 12th century.



To summarise the facts about the main clauses in the *Ancrene Wisse* there are 242 main clauses without a preceding adverb or conjunction, 84 with a preceding adverb and 218 main clauses preceded by a conjunction. Of these 544 main clauses only 15, or just under 3 per, cent violate the OE V-2 pattern as formulated above.

I now turn to the subordinate clauses. It is of course more difficult to ascertain subordinate status because deviations from the verb-last constraint are built into the grammar. I have mentioned the three rightward movement rules which at all times in OE accounted for various elements to the right of the finite verb. For this reason I have to alter my tactics. Instead of asking whether there are patterns that violate the V-2 constraint, I shall now ask whether there are patterns that still rely on the OE SOV pattern in order to be analysable. This is closer to Mitchell's and Kubouchi's question about modernity, but I will analyse in particular the obsolete patterns.

In many instances, it is impossible to establish which rule produced one particular pattern. A subordinate clause that consists of a subject and a verb only may equally have been produced by an underlying OE verb-last order as well as an underlying ModE SV order. The conjunction *þah* ('although'), which is a prototypical subordinator, may serve as an example. Its status as a subordinator is fairly clear because clauses introduced by *þah* can either precede or follow the clause they are linked with and because they regularly have a verb in subjunctive mood. Only two out of twenty-one instances appear to have a clear verb-last word order, whereas all the others have the finite verb in second position. The two exceptions are given in (23) and (24):

(23) ..., þah [s ha] [A her] þolien, (SAV AW 0732)

although she suffers here

(24) ..., þah [s he] [A hehe] sitte, (SAV AW 1202)

although he sits aloft

In both instances it is a pronominal adverb that precedes the finite verb. If they are analysed as OE clitics, the positions of the finite verbs are both the second and the last position of their respective clauses. Hence it cannot be decided whether they were generated by a verb-final or a V-2 rule.

I have pointed out the range of elements that can appear at the right periphery of subordinate clauses after the finite verb. These are PPs and Ss which can be subject to Extraposition, and heavy NPs which may undergo Heavy NP Shift. To the extent that lighter NPs could be moved across a finite verb to the right periphery, the verb-last rule in subordinate clauses became softened. The ultimate test is, then, whether even pronouns can undergo what initially was a Heavy NP Shift. There are 129 instances of subordinate clauses with a pronominal object. Only 13 of them have the object in preverbal position rather than following the verb.

(25) Lokið nu [A hu witerliche] [s ure laured seolf] [oci hit] witneð (ASOV, AW 0802)

Look now how certainly our Lord himself bears witness to it.

(26) oðer þe hali halhen, [s þe] bohten [p-o hit] se deore (SVO, AW 0922)  
or the holy saints, who bought it so dearly

(27) mi Godd, mi deorewurðe feader, hauest tu al forwarpe me, þin anlepi sune, [s þe] beatest [p-o me] se hearde? (SVO, AW 1112)

my God, my dear Father, have you all abandoned me, your only son, (you,) who beat (2nd sg) me so hard?

As we can see in (25) the object pronoun appears before the finite verb, whereas in (26) and (27) it has undergone Extraposition. In 90 per cent of all subordinate clauses with a pronominal object, the object is extraposed. The OE rule Heavy NP Shift is weakened to such an extent that these clauses must be reanalysed as V-2 or SV. Extract (25) is a clear case of a verb-final pattern because the finite verb is preceded by two nominal arguments apart from the cliticised object pronoun.

The following are again clear cases of verb-final word order patterns.

(28) & talde him þet his deore spuse se swiðe murnede efter him þet [s heol] [A wið uten him] [n-o delit] nefde i na þing. (SAOV AW 1134)

and told him that his dear bride mourned exceedingly for him, that she had no delight in anything without him

(29) zef [s ei mon] [n-o eani swuch þing] ortrowi bi him, he is mare mat þen þeof inume wið þeofðe (SOV AW 1824)

If any man suspects him of any such thing, he is more confounded than a thief captured with (his) theft

(30) Of þeo [s þe] [n-o hare curtles] toteoreð o þisse wise, seið Ysaie, ... (AW 0933)

Of those who tear their tunics in this way, Isaiah says, ...

(31) Ich chulle, for þe luue of þe, neome þet feht up o me & arudde þe of ham [s þe] [n-o þi deað] secheð (AW 2130)

I intend, (in return) for your love, to take that struggle upon me and set you free of those who seek your death.

All these examples clearly have a verb-last word order. The finite verb is preceded by more than one argument which cannot be interpreted as clitics. Either they are full nominal NPs or they are not attached to the left of the finite verb. In (28) to (30), the finite verb is not the last element of the clause because the Extraposition rule has applied as outlined above. All four examples would of course be clear violations of the ModE SV pattern.

In conclusion, all the main clauses of the analysed parts 6 and 7 of the *Ancrene Wisse*, with very few exceptions indeed, can be accounted for on the basis of OE word order patterns. Pronominal arguments that are not

topicalised must be analysed as clitics. Under such an analysis 97 per cent of all main clauses have V-2 word order.

Thus a child learning EME at the time when the *Ancrene Wisse* was written (on the not unproblematic assumption that its language is somehow representative of the normal language available to a child for the purpose of language acquisition) had available a lot of evidence for the OE V-2 patterns in main clauses. There was very little evidence if any at all to force a reanalysis on the part of the child in the process of language acquisition.

In the subordinate clauses, on the other hand, the hard and fast evidence for verb-last was disappearing fast. Even pronouns were regularly subject to Extraposition. This is not consistent with the OE syntax for subordinate clauses and made it possible for subordinate clauses to be reanalysed as SV patterns.

Thus there is indeed evidence in the EME text *Ancrene Wisse* to support Stockwell and Minkova's claim that the word order changes were leading in the subordinate clauses rather than in the main clauses.

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