Clitic Climbing in Infinitival Constructions
of Middle French*

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0. Introduction

In Old French, the object pronoun appears as a weak form before the main verb in the infinitival non-prepositional structures (1), but most often it appears as a strong form before the infinitival verb when the structure is prepositional (2). In Modern French, the pronoun appears as a weak form before the infinitival verb in both prepositional and non-prepositional structures (3a, b). However, when the main verb is a causative verb or a verb of perception, the pronoun still climbs in the main clause in Modern French (4). The system of the object clitic placement seems to have begun to change during the Middle French period (the XIVth, XVth and early XVIth centuries). I will examine the position of the clitics in the infinitival constructions, with the exception of the causative constructions, during this period.

(1) Mes ele ne la pot voir
But she not her can to-see
"But she cannot see her"
((La Chastelaine de Vergi, 729), cited by Raynaud de Lage 1975: 55)

(2) Ne fina hui de moi proier au lonc du jor
(3:sg)not ceased today to me to-beg all day
"He did not cease to beg me during all day"
((id., 126-7), ibid.)
(3) a. *Mais elle ne peut la voir*
   But she not can her to-see
   “But she cannot see her”

b. *Il ne cessa de me prier*
   He not ceased to me to-beg
   “He did not cease to beg me”

(4) *Il la fait manger à Marie*
   He it makes to-eat to Mary
   “He makes Mary eat it”

The Middle French data used for this study were collected from two texts both entitled *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*. The first one was written between 1505 and 1515 by Philippe de Vigneulles, a draper from the city of Metz in Lorraine, and the second one was written by an anonymous author who collected tales at the court of the duke Philippe de Bourgogne. This latter text was written in Burgundy, a region at the south-west of Lorraine around 1462. I used a concordance established by Paul Hirschbühler of the University of Ottawa for the first text and a concordance established by Marc Wilmet of the Université Libre de Bruxelles for the second text. In total, 2199 occurrences of object pronouns of an infinitival verb were found: 1046 in Vigneulles’ text and 1153 in the anonymous text.

Analyses such as those of Rizzi (1978) and Burzio (1986) proposed to explain clitic climbing in Italian by an optional restructuring rule which creates a verbal complex with a main verb and its infinitival complement, whereas analyses such as Pearce (1985) for Old French suggested an explanation based on the type of subcategorization of the main verb. I would like to propose an alternative line of explanation based on the properties of the INFL node in French.

1. **Non-prepositional Complements**

I will first examine the constructions in which the main verb takes only a non-prepositional complement. Some verbs take a non-prepositional or a prepositional complement. For instance, the verb *désirer* is used with the prepositions *à, de* or without preposition. These verbs will be examined in sections 3 and 4.

Following Kayne (1989) who adopted the framework of Chomsky (1986), I would like to propose that clitic climbing in Old and Middle
French depends on the fact that INFL of the infinitival clause L-marks VP. This L-marking would neutralize the barrier status of VP. Thus, it would allow the object clitic, an X° element, to be extracted out of VP and be attached to INFL, another head, and then moved by a head-to-head movement in the main clause (5). Only the lexical categories have the property of L-marking. INFL of the infinitival clause has this property only if the Agreement node is marked for the feature [+pron] as in the pro-drop languages. This feature has the effect of making INFL a lexical category. In Modern French, INFL of the infinitival clause cannot L-mark VP since the Agreement node does not have the feature [+pron]; consequently, the object clitic cannot climb in the main clause in Modern French.

(5)  
\[ \text{il les pourroit sauver} \]

he them could to-save

“he could save them”

\[ \text{[IP [i, les, pourroit, [VP t, [CP t, [IP [i, t, [VP sauver t]]]]]]} \]

(Anon. *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*: 398/51)

However, it remains to be understood why the clitic should obligatorily climb before the main verb in Old French. If INFL L-marks VP, both constructions should be allowed; for instance, in Italian, clitic climbing, which only occurs with a certain class of main verbs, is optional. Pearse (1985, this volume) proposed that, in Old French, the object clitic should be attached to INFL [+tense] to which it is syntactically enclitic. The feature [+tense] would be absent in non-prepositional complements which she analyzed as VP complements and the clitic would have to move before the tensed main verb. But, for the Middle French period, this hypothesis will not explain why the object clitic can sometimes appear before an infinitival verb in the main clause (6). Moreover, cases where the clitic appears before the infinitival verb can be found in Old French although they are rare (7).

(6)  
\[ \text{sans se pouvoir ravoir} \]

without herself to-be-able to-free

“without being able to free herself”

(Anon. *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*: 275/81)

(7) a. ...que je ne soy les nombrer

...that I not know them to-count

“...that I cannot count them”

((Joinville, *Histoire de Saint Louis*, 43), cited by de Kok 1985: 127)
b. *osa il bien entrer en champ et se y dared he well to-enter in the field and himself there*  
*combaire*  
to-fight  
“he well dared to enter in the field and fight there”  
(((Philippe de Novare II, XI), cited by Foulet 1982: 143)

c. *se Dieux ne vos i eust amené por la*  
if God not you there had brought for it  
*mener a chief*  
to-carry-through  
“if God had not brought you there to carry it through”  
(((La Queste del Saint Graal 39, 28), cited by Moignet 1984: 356)

Some other factors should also be considered. At least during the early Old French period, a weak form of an object pronoun could not appear at the very beginning of the clause nor after coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. This constraint is known as Wackernagel’s Law. I would like to propose that a similar constraint existed for the infinitival constructions in Old and Middle French. Weak pronouns could not appear in the initial position of a subordinate clause and thus had to move in the main clause. Rivero (1986) also made a similar remark for Old Spanish. This constraint probably applies in Phonological Form. However, strong pronouns are not subject to this restriction. They are found before the infinitival verb even if they are less frequent in this context during the Middle French period (8). We might suggest that the strong pronoun, which behaves as a full phrase, can be adjoined to VP or IP.

(8) *car le Roy veult soy acquicter envers*  
since the king wants himself to-repay towards  
tous  
everyone  
“since the king wants to repay everyone”  
((Jouvencel), cited by Martin and Wilmet 1980)

2. **Non-prepositional Complements and Semantic Classes of Verbs**

Marchello-Nizia (1979) noted that the weak pronoun began to appear regularly before the infinitival verb at the end of the XIVth century, mostly in
contexts where clitic climbing was difficult to apply. For example, in (9),
the clitic cannot appear before the main verb because of restrictions on the
cooccurrence of clitics. In French, the object clitics me, te, se, nous and
vous cannot appear in a clitic string with a member of their own group or
with the clitics lui and leur.

(9) S’il vous plaisoit me faire l’honneur...
If it to-you pleased to-me to-make the honor...
“If it pleased you to make me the honor…”
((Les XV joies de mariage, p. 86), cited by Marchello-Nizia
1979: 192)

It is true that the long movement of the clitic is the most frequent case
in Middle French. However, most of the occurrences of the clitic before the
infinitival verb collected in my study are not triggered by constraints on the
cooccurrence of clitics. Moreover, the main verbs allowing the clitic to
appear before the infinitival verb can be grouped into specific semantic
classes.

In non-prepositional infinitival constructions, only 2% of the clitics in
Vigneulles’ text appear before the infinitival verb (11/602) and in the
anonymous text, these appear in 5% of the occurrences (34/674). If we do
not consider (a) cases where the main verb is also found with a preposition
during this period (for example, penser is also used with de according to
Godefroy 1880, although this verb is always used without preposition in
Vigneulles’ text), or (b) cases where the clitic cannot appear before the
main verb because of restrictions on the cooccurrence of clitics as in (9), or
finally (c) cases where the pronoun is repeated (ex.: mais toutesfois n’en
pouvoit ladite femme en savoir la verité (V: 37899/72/08) “but the aforesaid
woman could not know the truth”), the main verbs listed in (10) allow the
clitic to appear before the infinitival verb in both Middle French texts
studied.

(10) List of the main verbs which allow the clitic to appear before
the infinitival verb in both texts of Les Cent Nouvelles
Nouvelles:
(The letter (V) refers to Vigneulles’ text and the letter (A)
to the anonymous text. Numbers in parentheses for Vigneulles’ text refer to the line of the concordance, the
number of the tale and the number of the line. Numbers in
parentheses for the anonymous text refer to the number of
the page and the number of the line.)
a. **Opinion and declarative verbs:** *aimer mieux* “to prefer” (6 occ.-A), *connaître* “to know” (1 occ.-V), *cruiser* “to believe” (1 occ.-V / 4 occ.-A), *dire* “to say” (1 occ.-V)

ex.: *cruant* le confesser a son curé believing it to-confess to her parish-priest “believing she was confessing it to her parish priest” (A: 16/527)

b. **Impersonal verbs:** *faillir* “to have to” (1 occ.-V), *sembler* “to seem” (1 occ.-V / 1 occ.-A), *valoir* “to be worth” (1 occ.-V / 4 occ.-A)

ex.: *et luy sembloit l’ avoir autre fois* and (3:sGIMP) to-him seemed him to-have another time
*veu* seen “and it seemed to him that he had seen him before” (V: 68041/84/80)

ex.: *il faudroit le dire à vostre mary* it would-have-to it to-tell to your husband “it would have to be told to your husband” (V: 72494/45/84)

c. **Modal verbs:** *aller* “to go” (1 occ.-A), *devoir* “must” (1 occ.-A), *oser* “to dare” (1 occ.-A), *pouvoir* “can” (3 occ.-A)

ex.: *car il va se coucher* since he goes himself to-lie-down “since he will go to bed” (A: 213/205)

ex.: *je ne puis vous entretenir maintenant* I not can you to-talk now “I cannot talk to you now” (A: 271/101)

d. **Volitional verbs:** *vouloir* “to want” (1 occ.-A)

ex.: *quand il fut où lieu ou l’on vouloit le* when he was at the-place where they wanted him
*avoir* to-have “when he was at the place where they wanted him to be” (A: 495/91)
The list in (10) is composed of declarative verbs and verbs of opinion (aimer mieux, connaître, cuider and dire) and impersonal verbs (falloir, sembler and valoir). Modal verbs allowing the clitic to appear before the infinitival verb were absent from Vigneulles’ text but were found in the anonymous text (aller, devoir, oser and pouvoir). Finally, in both texts, except for one instance of vouloir appearing in the construction without clitic climbing, no occurrences of clitics before an infinitival verb were found when the main verb is a verb of volition (ex.: mander, quérer).

I would like to propose that the presence of the clitic before the infinitival verb in examples such as those in (10) is caused by a gradual weakening of the restriction on the presence of weak forms of the pronouns at the beginning of a subordinate clause. In fact, if we disregard for the moment the examples with modal verbs which were only found in the anonymous text, this change seems to have appeared earlier with some semantic classes of verbs. On the basis of both texts analyzed, the presence of the clitic before the infinitival verb started to be allowed in constructions of which the main verb was declarative, impersonal or of opinion.

In general, main verbs which do not allow the clitic before the infinitival verb are control verbs such as vouloir, namely with a CP boundary. The clitic must then climb in the main clause since it is the initial element of the subordinate clause. However, verbs of opinion such as croire (or cuider in Old and Middle French) and impersonal verbs such as sembler are often analyzed as verbs with deletion of CP. We might suppose that, when the main verb allows the deletion of CP, the main clause preceding the clitic can be analyzed as the first element. The presence of the clitic before the infinitival verb would then be allowed since it would be in second position.

Another kind of explanation could be proposed. We may consider, following Raposo (1985), that an operator TENSE is located in the head of CP with epistemic and declarative verbs such as penser, croire and dire; the complement clause forms a temporal domain independent from that of the main clause when this operator, which is distinct from the feature [±tense] of the subordinate clause, is present. We may suggest that this operator forbids the clitic from climbing by delimiting a scope over the infinitival clause, or as Kayne (1989) proposed, by its presence in the head of CP since clitic climbing is a head-to-head movement. It would mean that clitic climbing would have never been permitted for these verbs in Old French. In fact, several epistemic and declarative verbs are also used with a preposition which blocks clitic climbing.
The modal verbs would have been more resistant to adopt the construction without clitic climbing because no such TENSE feature would have been in COMP. In fact, verbs such as *devoir, pouvoir* and *vouloir* were used in aspectual phrases to indicate the future in Old French (11) and also in Middle French (12), more or less like *aller* in Modern French.

(11) a. Vespres aproche, li solaus *dut cliner*
   The-evening comes, the sun was-going to-set
   “The evening came, the sun was going to set”
   ((*Ami et Amile*, 579), cited by Ménard 1976: 133)

b. *Chaoir voloit del destrier arabi*
   To-fall (3:SG) was-going from-the horse Arab
   “He was going to fall from the Arab horse”
   ((*Raoul de Cambrai*, 3528), cited by Ménard 1976: 133)

(12) *le pere et la mere en deurent mourir*
the father and the mother of-that were-going to-die
*de dueil*
from grief
“the father and the mother were going to die from grieving for that”
((*Le livre du chevalier de la Tour Landry pour l'enseignement de ses filles*, p. 185), cited by Marchello-Nizia 1979: 328)

The verb *cuider* was also used in aspectual phrases. In fact, in both Middle French texts analyzed, it seems that when the main verb *cuider* has a “full” meaning, either construction, with or without clitic climbing, is used (13a, b). But, when this verb has an aspectual meaning, the construction with clitic climbing is favored (13c).

(13) a. “to believe”:
   *cuidant le confesser a son curé*
   believing it to-confess to her parish-priest
   “believing she was confessing it to her parish priest”
   (A: 16/527)

b. “to believe”:
   *qui la cuidoit retenir*
   who her believed to-keep
   “who believed he would keep her”
   (A: 196/153)
c. "to be about to":

\textit{toutes fois qu' elle la cuidoit noer il levoit la}
each time that she it was-about to-tie he raised the
teste
head
"each time she was about to tie it, he raised his head"

(V: 70405/88/49)

The facts found for Middle French share many similarities with those found in Italian by Napoli (1981). She grouped a number of Italian verbs into three classes: those she found, either in literature or in speech, with clitic climbing, those that allow clitic climbing but on which her informants disagree, and those her informants consistently reject. The verbs which allow clitic climbing in both Middle French texts are the same as those for which Napoli's informants agree on the possibility of clitic climbing, for instance modal verbs such as dovere / devoir "must" and potere / pouvoir "can", and verbs such as tornare / revenir "to return", valere / valoir "to be worth, merit" and volere / vouloir "to want". In both texts of \textit{Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles}, the verbs for which no occurrences of clitic climbing were found are verbs for which Napoli's informants reject restructuring or disagree on its possibility, for instance the impersonal verb sembrare / sembler "to seem" and the declarative verb dire / dire "to say".

Finally, according to Lemieux (1987), most of the verbs which still showed a variation between the construction with and without clitic climbing during the XVIIth century are modal, aspectual or movement verbs.

For all these reasons, the modal verbs in the anonymous text are peculiar since some examples are found in which the clitic may appear before the infinitival verb. We would have expected them to appear only in constructions with clitic climbing as is the case with the volitional verbs (ex.: mand-der). The Sweetser edition of the anonymous \textit{Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles}, which I used, is based on a manuscript which was corrected here and there during the XVIIth century. Unfortunately, there is no mention of where these corrections were made and it is possible that some of these peculiar examples were introduced at this time. Moreover, the Sweetser edition is based on one of two manuscripts of the anonymous text of \textit{Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles}. These two versions of this text were copied from an original manuscript which has been lost. Comparison with the other manuscript of the anonymous text, the Vérand edition which was published in 1486, shows that some cases for which the clitic does not climb in the
Sweetser edition present clitic climbing in the Vérard edition. For instance, the Sweetser edition has *car il va se coucher* (A: 213/205) “since he will go to bed”, where the Vérard edition has *car il se va coucher* (p. 250). These differences suggest that the variation observed between both constructions could have also included the modal verbs for some speakers. However, no such differences are found when the main verb is a verb of opinion or an impersonal verb. For instance, occurrences of the clitic before the infinitival verb found in the Sweetser edition with the verb *cuider* also appear in the Vérard edition.

3. Prepositional Complements

The object pronoun does not usually move to the main clause when the infinitival complement is introduced by a preposition, but contrary to what is found in Modern French (3b), a strong form is used in Old French (2).

However, the prepositions *à* and *de* do not always block the long movement of the clitic which thus appears as a weak form before the main verb. St-Amour (1983) and Pearce (1985) remarked that *de* seems nevertheless to be most often used in the construction without clitic climbing in Old French. Similarly, in both Middle French texts, the verbs with a complement introduced by the preposition *de* less often permit the pronoun to appear before the main verb than the verbs with a complement introduced by the preposition *à* (2% (9/530) vs. 53% (63/120)). For instance, in (14), the prepositional complement is introduced by *de* and the object pronoun appears before the infinitival verb, whereas in (15), the complement is introduced by *à* and the pronoun climbs to the main clause.

(14) *j'ay deliberez de toy faire marchans*
I have decided to you to-make merchant
“I decided to make a merchant out of you”
(V: 120088/28/50)

(15) *Et les femmes se veoient et cuidant de Symon*
And the women that seeing and believing about Symon
*que se fut le Cordellier, le prindrent à blasmer*
that it was the Cordellier, him started to to-blame
“And the women, seeing that, and believing that Symon was the Cordellier, started to blame him”
(V: 72229/33/34)
CLITIC CLIMBING IN MIDDLE FRENCH

In fact, verbs used with à and found with clitic climbing in both texts of Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles also permit it in Italian, according to Napoli’s (1981) results, for instance avere a / avoir à “must”, cominciare / commencer à “to begin”, sapere / savoir (à) “to know” and venire (a) / venir (à) “to come”. Verbs used with de and found without clitic climbing in both Middle French texts are verbs which do not admit restructuring in Italian or on which informants disagree. For instance, the following verbs do not allow clitic climbing in Italian and in Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles: commandare / commander de, à “to command”, consigliare / conseiller de “to advise”, dubitare / douter (de) “to doubt”, prometere / promettre (de, à) “to promise” and vantarsi / se vanter de “to boast”. The preposition à is mostly used with the aspectual verbs whereas the preposition de seems to be mostly used with verbs of influence.

I would like to propose that the preposition à is usually in the position of specifier of CP. The preposition à in this position would not block clitic climbing and (16a) is similar to (16b) with a non-prepositional complement. This hypothesis would explain why the clitic can climb before a main verb such as savoir which may take an indirect interrogation (16c, d). Because the WH-word is in the position specifying CP, the head of CP is still available for the head-to-head movement of the clitic.²

(16) a. *qui luy sceut à dire qui estoit ce messire*  
who to-him was-able to to-tell who was this Mister Massue

Massue

“who was able to tell him who was this Mister Massue”  
(V: 78107/82/102)

b. *mais ele ne lor sot dire qui ele estoit*  
but she not to-them was-able to-tell who she was

“but she was not able to tell them who she was”  
((Aucassin et Nicolette XXXVI, 7), cited by Pearce 1985: 135)

c. *il ne se savoit a quoi tenir*  
he not himself knew to what to-stand

“he did not know where he stood”  
((La Mort Le Roi Artu, 19, 55), cited by Kunstmann and Dubé 1982: 1502)
d. *l'on ne la savoît comment trouver*
   they not it knew how to-find
   "they did not know how to find it"
   (A: 504/52)

A preposition such as *de* in the head position of CP would block clitic climbing (14). The clitic cannot move before the main verb but it should be able to appear as a weak form before the infinitival verb. However, only a strong form, and not a weak form of the pronoun can precede the infinitival verb in Old French ((2) = *ne fina hui de moi proier*). I would like to propose that the restriction on the presence of the clitic at the beginning of the subordinate clause holds in Old French.

4. **Weakening of the Restriction in Prepositional Complements**

In Middle French, there is an increasing use of the weak form of the pronoun before the infinitival verb in the prepositional complements ((14) vs. (17)). We might suppose that the constraint on the presence of weak pronouns in the initial position of the subordinate clause gradually weakened during the Middle French period.

   (17) a. *elle n' avoir cause de se douloir de luy en ce cas*
      she not had reason to herself to-complain of him in this case
      "she did not have a reason to complain about him in this case"
      (A: 471/44)

   b. *il ne demourra gueres à t’ enferrer*
      he not will-wait long to you to-make-love
      "he will not wait long before making love to you"
      (A: 456/58)

In fact, this restriction seems to have weakened earlier depending on which element was in CP. In non-prepositional complements, as we have seen, only 2% of clitics in Vigneulles’ text and 5% in the anonymous text appear before the infinitival verb and clitic climbing is the most frequent case. In prepositional complements, the pronouns *me / moi, te / toi* and *se / soi* show a variation between the strong and the weak forms when they appear before the infinitival verb. The proportion of weak forms for these
pronouns in this context is 49% (68/139). When a complement is introduced by que, the pronouns almost always appear as a weak form before the tensed subordinate verb in Middle French.

Because of the weakening of this restriction, some of the verbs, used with à, which only allowed the construction with clitic climbing in Old French according to Pearce (1985), started to accept both constructions in Middle French. For instance, with the verb savoir, only clitic climbing is found in Old French (16b, c) although both constructions appear in Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles ((16a, d) vs. (18)). The verb avoir à also allows clitic climbing in Old French (19a), but in the anonymous text, it is found in both constructions (19b, c).

(18) a. elle ne sçavoir auquel se tenir
she not knew to-which herself to-stay
“she did not know with which one to stay”
(V: 111854/58/44)

b. si ne sçavoir comment les oster
and not (3:so) knew how them to-take-off
“and he did not know how to take them off”
(V: 74645/7/01)

c. Et la nonnain, qui fut autant ou plus
And the nun, who was as-much or more
effrayée que luy, ne sceut si tost se
frightened than him, not was-able that early herself
mettre au chemin
to-put on-the road
“And the nun, who was as much or more frightened than him, was not able to go away fast enough”
(A: 308/117)

(19) a. Bertran vo nies les avoir a guier
Bertran your nephew them had to to-guide
“Bertran, your nephew, had to guide them”
((Le charroi de Nîmes 1297), cited by Pearce 1985: 127)

b. le cas que j’ay a vous descripre
the case that I have to to-you to-describe
“the case I have to describe to you”
(A: 422/5)
c. *de ce que je vous ay a dire*
   of what I to-you have to to-tell
   “of what I have to tell you about”
   (A: 224/292)

Finally, the fact that the weak pronoun may be separated from the
infini-val verb by negation elements or by adverbs in Middle French
suggests that it is not a verbal clitic and I would like to propose that it is
attached to INFL (20). De Kok (1985) remarked that interpolation of
adverbs between the pronoun and the infinitival verb was allowed until the
end of the XVIIth century. We may suppose that the attachment of the
pronoun to the infinitival verb became obligatory when INFL ceased to L-
mark VP.

(20) a. *faisoient semblant de le non croire*
   (3:pl) pretended to him not to-believe
   “they pretended to not believe him”
   (A: 263/61)

b. *Neanmoins, deliberait de les bien servir*
   Nevertheless, (3:sg) thought to them well to-serve
   “Nevertheless, he thought about serving them well”
   (V: 74790/26/32)

c. *Promist aussi, s’il ne retournoit de bref, de*
   (3:sg) promised also, if he not returned soon, to
   *luy souvent escripre*
   to-her often to-write
   “He promised also, if he did not return soon, to write often
to her”
   (A: 344/31)

We may remark that the construction in which an adverb of negation
follows the infinitival verb was accepted during the XVIIth century, accord-
ing to de Kok (1985) (ex.: *de ne se haaster point*). This may suggest that the
infini-val verb also had the possibility to move to INFL during a certain
period.
5. Conclusion

In conclusion, contrary to the analyses which suggest that the possibility for a clitic to move before the main verb is due either to a restructuring rule or to a double subcategorization of the main verb, the hypothesis proposed here considers that clitic movement depends on the properties of the INFL node. In Old and Middle French, INFL of the infinitival clause L-marks VP. Since the clitic cannot be the first element of a subordinate clause, it must move to the main clause. If this movement is blocked, the pronoun appears as a strong form before the infinitival verb. This constraint is weakened in Middle French, first in constructions in which the main verb does not have an aspectual or modal reading. Later, the loss of the property of L-marking VP by INFL of the infinitival clause blocked the long movement of the clitic.

Notes

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1. We remark the absence of liaison between *le* and *avoir*. Such cases are often found before an infinitival verb but also before a tensed verb in Middle French (ex.: *madame se alla mettre dedans le liet* (A: 75/80) “Madame went to bed” / *depuis ne se osa veoir entre gens* (A: 406/122) “since then, he did not dare seeing other people”), although the presence of liaison is the most frequent case in both contexts. The absence of liaison may be due to an orthographical convention since the use of the apostrophe was not consistent during this period (cf. Beaulieux 1967). However, de Kok (1985) suggested that the change in the pronoun system was gradual, from a disjoint stressed pronoun before the infinitival verb to a conjoined pronoun either stressed or unstressed to finally only a conjoined unstressed pronoun. According to the hypothesis I have proposed, the pronoun *le* in (10d) could be analyzed as a stressed conjoined pronoun, a case which we expect if the weakening of the constraint was gradual.

2. Another solution would be to analyze the preposition *à* as a dummy preposition associated with aspectual verbs. In fact, when *à* introduces the infinitival complement of a main verb which is not aspectual or modal, clitic climbing is usually not allowed (ex.: *la servande promist à le faire* (V: 73032/72/25) “the servant promised to do it”).
References


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