

V2 in Middle English and Scandinavian-English Contact

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Outline

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1. **V2 Languages vs. Non-V2 Languages**
 - ◆ Modern English
 - ◆ Modern Icelandic

2. **The verb-second (V2) constraint in Middle English**
 - Kroch & Taylor (1997), , Haeberli (1999, 2002), Trips (2002), Speyer (2008, 2010)
 - Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2)
 - Northern ME (pure V2) vs. Southern ME (OE-style V2)

3. **Dating Northern V2: Lindisfarne Glosses**
 - Kroch Taylor & Ringe (2000)

1. V2 vs. non-V2 Languages

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Modern English:

Sentence without object-fronting:

(1) My cat, Viola, is very picky. She never eats the first treat she sees. She looks at the first, she sniffs the second, but she eats the third.

Sentence with object-fronting (and no V2):

(2) ...She looks at the first, **the second** she sniffs, and **the third** she eats.

V2 vs. non-V2 Languages

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Modern Icelandic:

(this will be the same in Danish, Swedish, Norwegian)

Sentence without object-fronting:

(3) Hún lítur á fyrstu kexkökuna, þefar af þeirri næstu en borðar þá þriðju.

“She looks at the first, sniffs the second, and eats the third”.

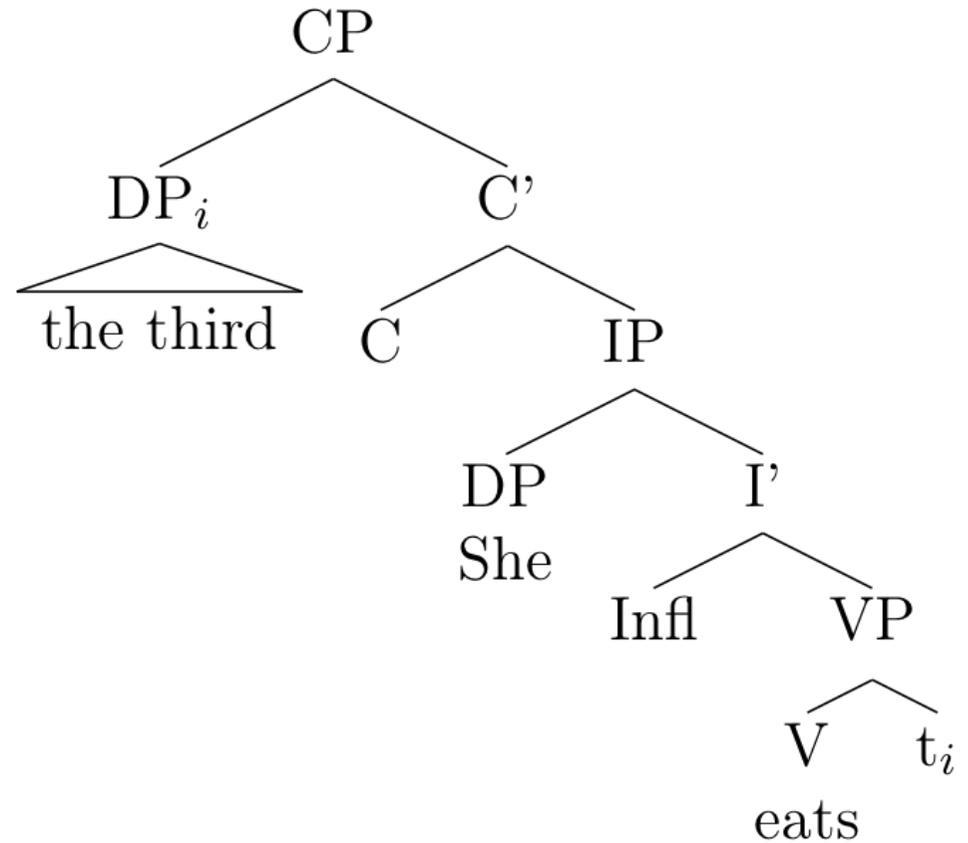
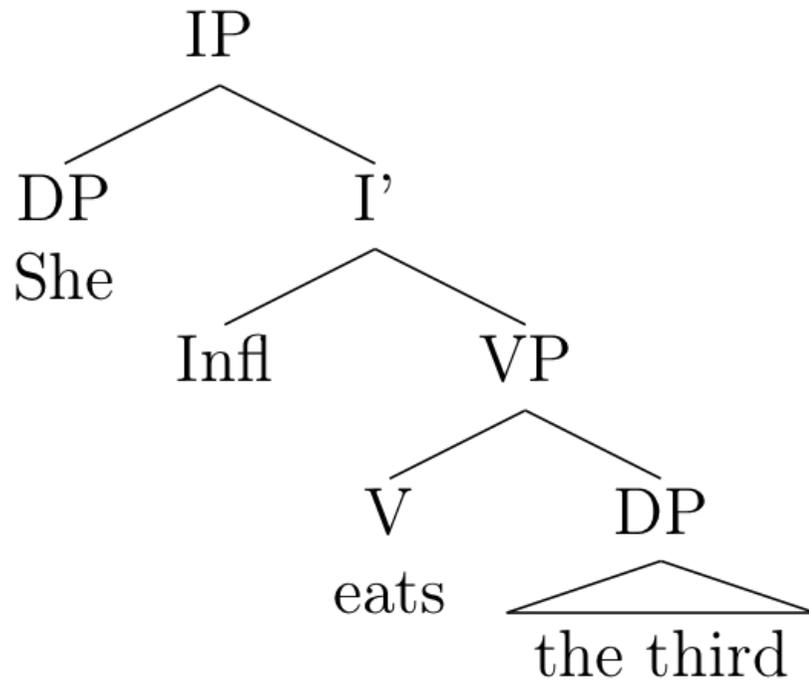
Sentence with object-fronting and V2:

(4) Þá þriðju borðar hún

The third **eats** she

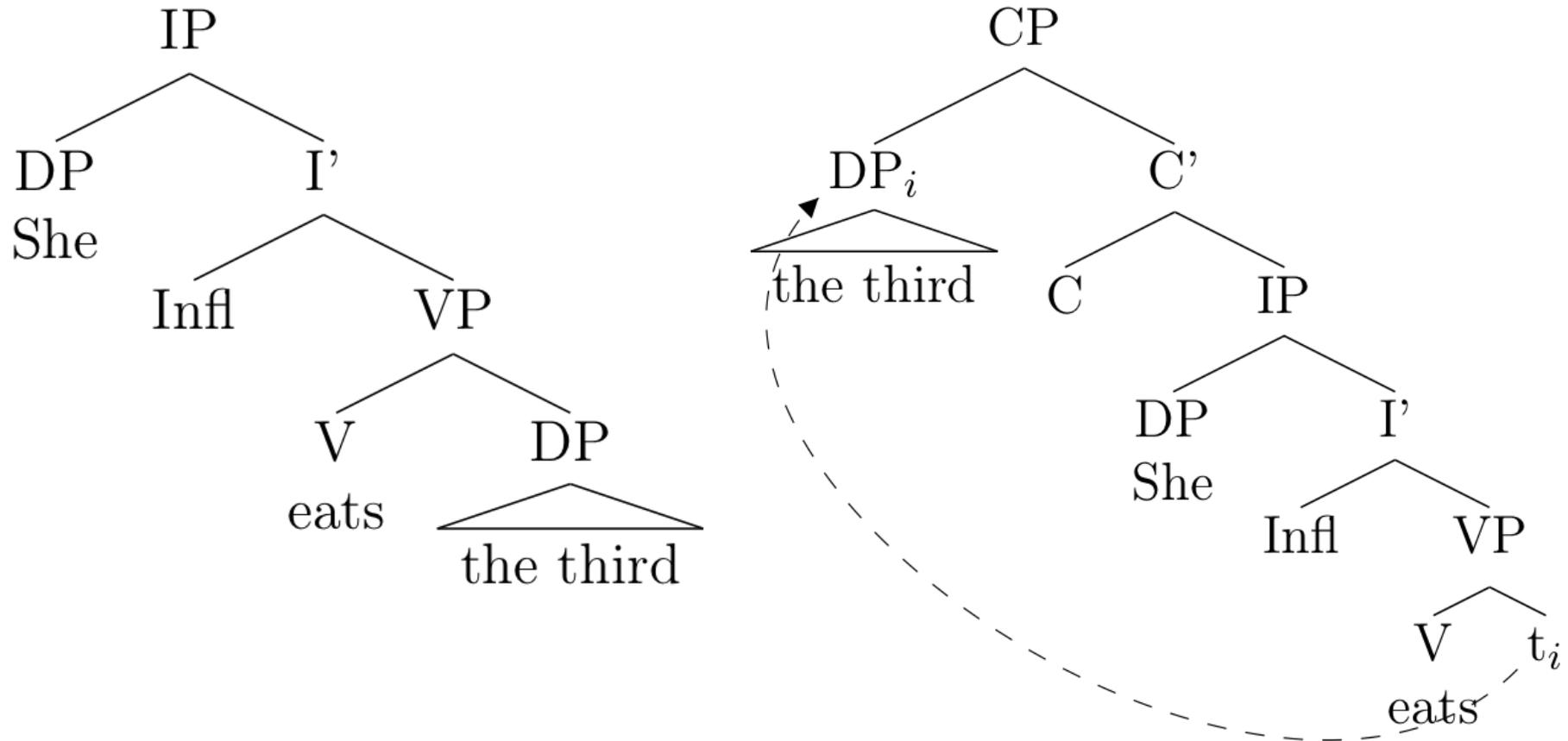
Non-V2 Language

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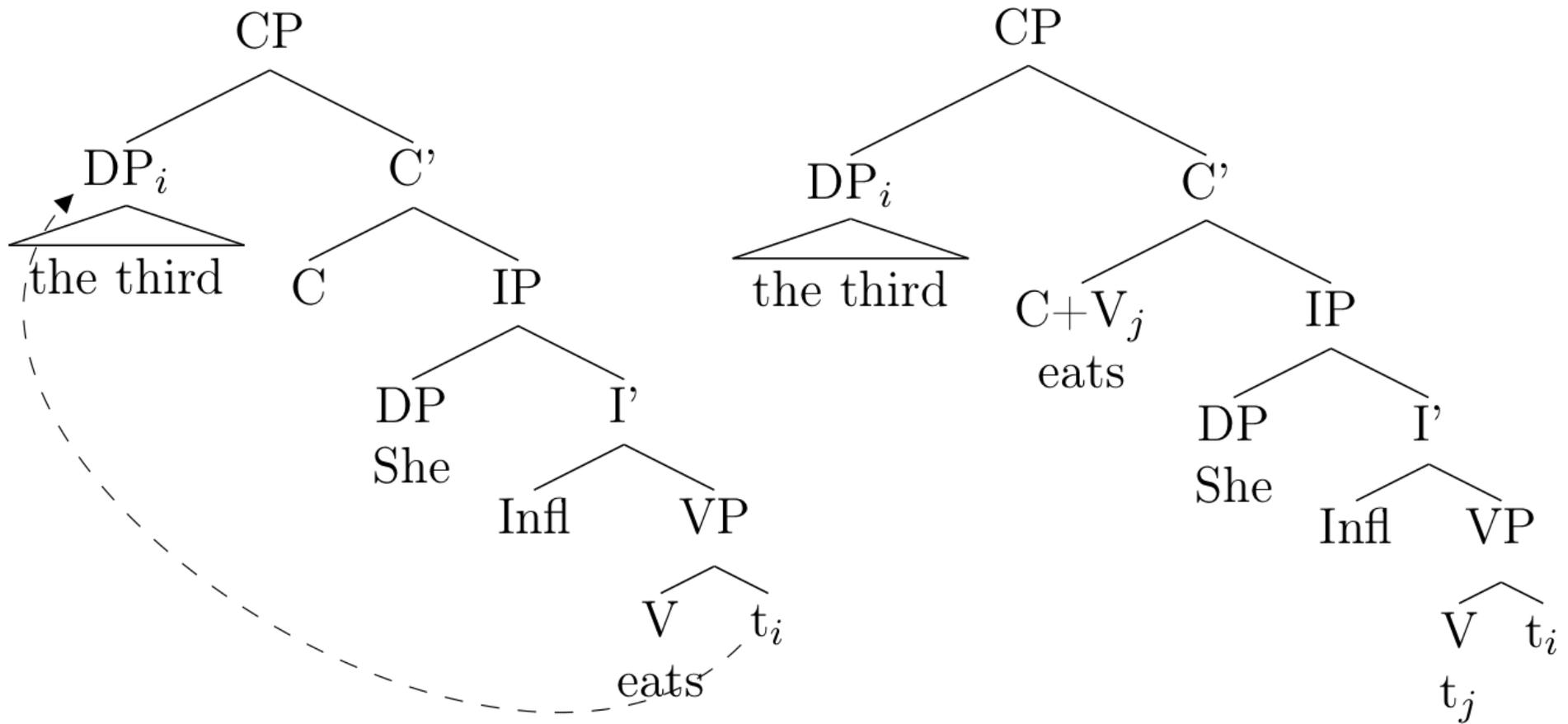
Non-V2 Language

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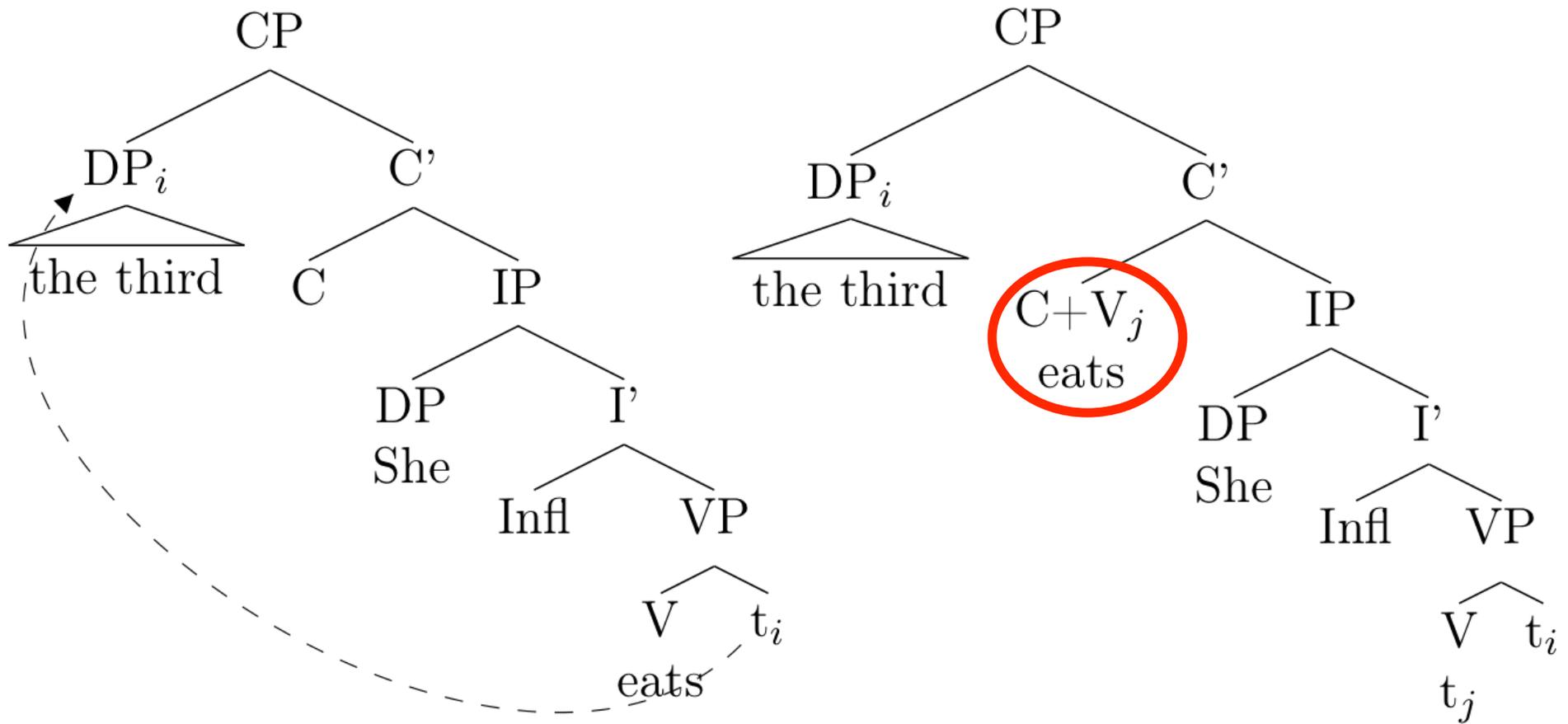
“Pure” V2 Language

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“Pure” V2 Language

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OE System

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Object-fronting with pronominal subject; pronoun subject precedes the verb:

- (5) Ond eallum þam dagum ... **he** afæste to æfenes
And all.DAT those.DAT days.DAT he fasted till evening
“and he fasted all days (except Sundays), till the evening”
(Bede’s *History of the English Church*, 11th c.)

Old English Quasi-V2

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Object fronting with non-pronoun subject; non-pronoun subject follows the verb:

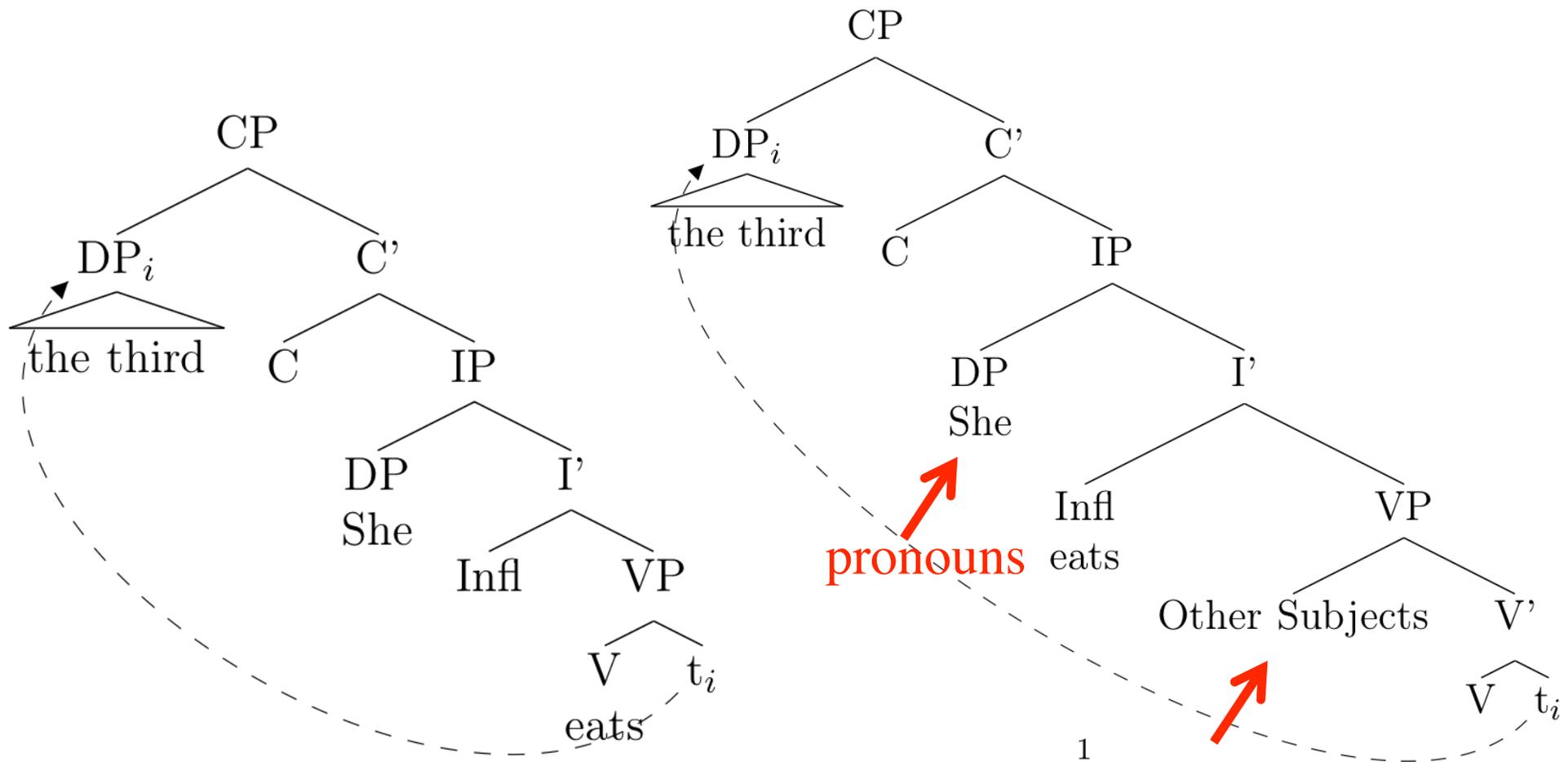
(6) þone wæterscipe beworhte **se wisa cyning Salomon**
the conduit built the wise king Salomon

“The wise King Salomon constructed the conduit”

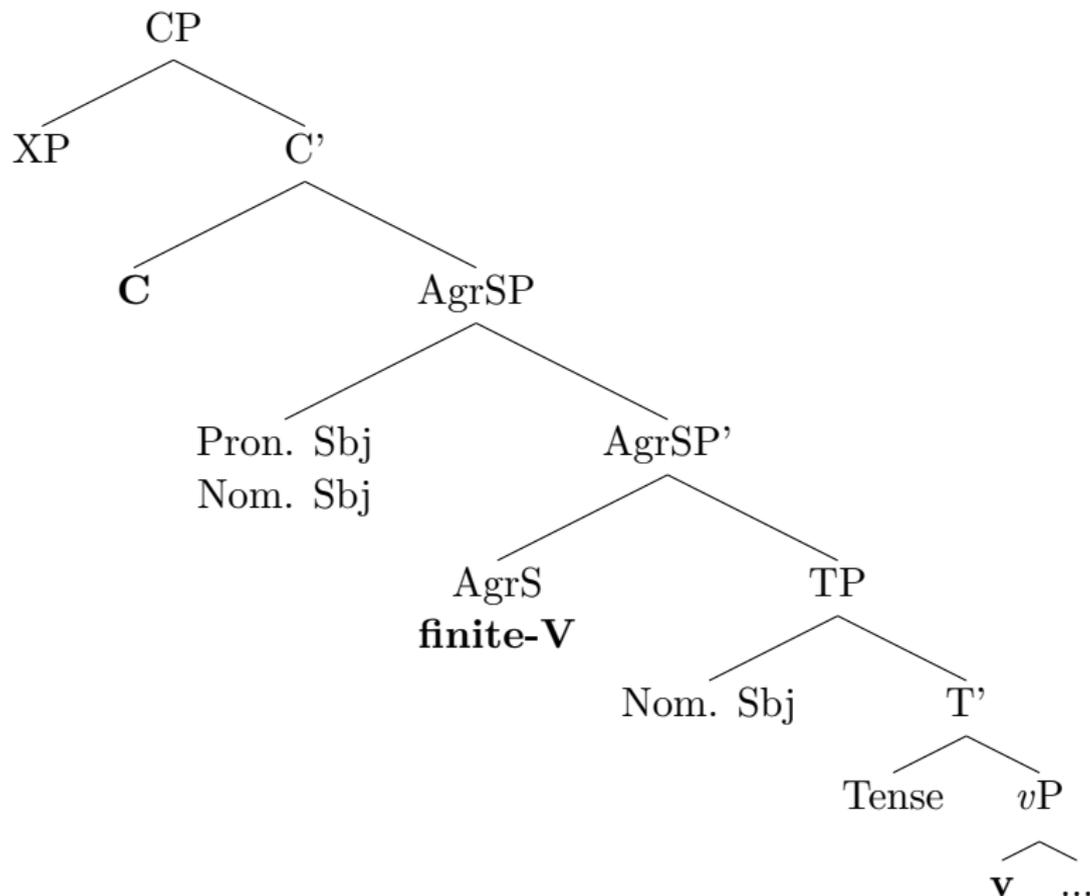
(*Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies*, 10th c.)

Old English Quasi-V2

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Two Subject Structure for Late OE



Prosodic Issue

- Speyer (2010) shows that a prosodic constraint (avoid accent clash) is responsible for the frequent use of the low subject position in Old English when something is topicalized.
- V2 orders prevent a clash between an accented subject and an accented fronted XP, but prosodically weak subjects (i.e. pronouns) do not create this problem.
- This is still true in modern English; 90.5% of topicalizations occur with pronominal subjects (based on Gregory Ward's collection of examples; see Speyer, 2010)

Prosodic Problem with Topicalization (Speyer, 2008, 2010)

- (17) **The first group** she'll feed mouse chow, **the second** she'll feed veggies, and **the third** she'll feed junk food.
- (18) ? **The first** Caitlin will feed, **the second** Joe will feed, and **the third** Maggie will feed.
- (19) ?? **Joel_i** Caitlin will pay t_i , **Bob_j** Joe will pay t_j , and **Ann_k** Maggie will pay t_k .
- (20) ??? **Joel_i** Caitlin will pay t_i 10 dollars, **Bob_j** Joe will pay t_j 15 dollars, and **Ann_k** Maggie will pay t_k 20 dollars.

Prosodic Issue

- Because of the prosodic problem:
 1. Even though OE syntactically allows V3 orders with both pronoun and nominal subjects, you hardly ever see them with nominal subjects.
 2. Later on, in ME, the low subject position is lost, so the V2 optional order was lost, leading to a decline in the overall rate of topicalization in English.

Evidence from York Corpus of OE Prose (Taylor et al., 2003)

- The finite verb has moved leftward, stranding the particle, and a nominal subject precedes it.

(21) Ac þære ilcan niht... wulfas atugan þa stacan
 And the.DAT same night wolves drew the pin
 up
 up

“The same night, wolves (= devilish persons) drew up the pin.”

(Orosius, 10th c.)

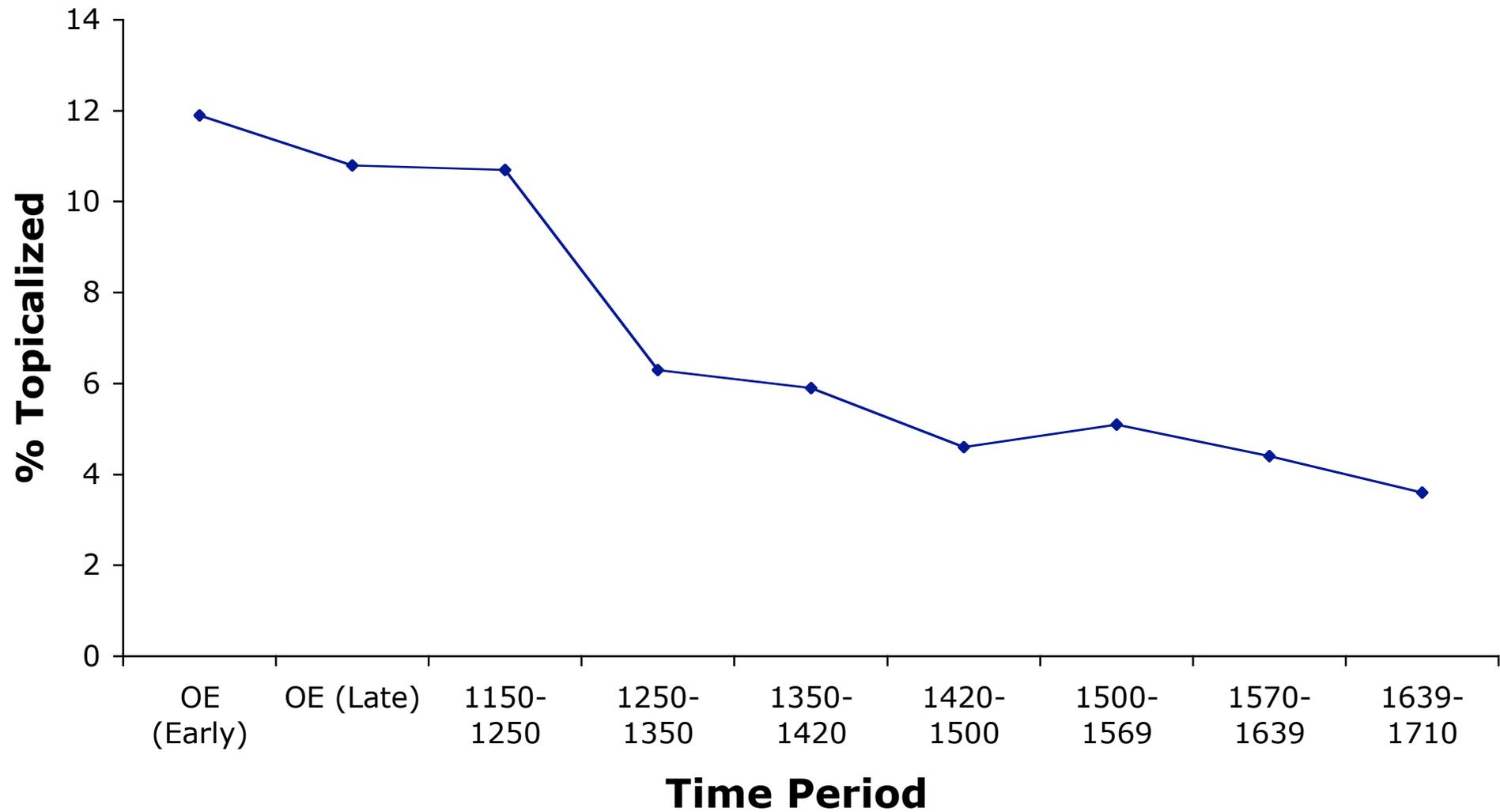
(22) æne se geatweard læt in
 this.ACC the gatekeeper let in

“The gatekeeper let in this one.”

(Wulfstan’s Gospels, 11th c.)

Direct-Object Topicalization

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3. V2 and Language Contact

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- Southern ME dialects are more conservative, preserving OE system more.
 - ▣ Also conservative in phonology, morphology.

- Northern ME dialects are heavily influenced by the Scandinavian settlement in Northern England (beginning c. 9th century)
 - ▣ “Pure” V2 languages, like Norwegian and Icelandic.
 - ▣ **Interference** from a pure V2 native language led to a pure V2, Scandinavianized English dialect.
 - ▣ Also in phonology, morphology, lexicon.
 - ▣ These northern features eventually spread southward to give us modern English, e.g. “get”, “egg”.

V2 in Middle English

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- Two different types:
 - Old English Quasi-V2 (V-to-I/T plus two subject positions)
 - Northern Pure V2, general V-to-C
 - diagnostic: Subject pronouns, whether they occur before or after a tensed verb

- Two syntactic ME dialects:
 - Northern (or, Scandinavian)
 - Southern
 - dialect mixture

The Northern and Southern V2 dialects

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Old English/Southern-ME (V-to-I) V2:

Inversion with non-pronominal subjects:

(7) & of heom twam is **eall manncynn** cumen

And from them two is all mankind come

“All mankind has come from those two.”

(Wulfstan’s Homilies, 11th c.)

(11) þær wearþ **se cyning Bagsecg** ofslægen

there became the king Bagsecg slain

“The King Bagsecg was slain there.”

(Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Parker, date = 871)

OE/Southern V2 Cont.

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No inversion with pronominal subjects:

(8) *Ælc yfel he mæg don*

Each evil he may do

“He can do each evil”

(Wulfstan’s Homilies, 11th c.)

(9) *Tegenes ure emcristene we sulle laden ure lif;*

Toward our fellow-Christians we should direct our life

“We should direct our lives toward our fellow Christians”

(Trinity Homilies, date = 1225)

Northern V2

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Northern Middle English (V-to-C) V2:

Inversion under V2 with pronominal (clitic) subjects
(as in modern Scandinavian, among others)

(10) Mi scole wil **i** stablis to godis seruise.

My school will I establish to God's service.

“I will establish my school for the service of God.”

(Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet, date = 1425)

(11) Rihtuis ah **he** at be...

righteous ought he to be

“He should be righteous”

(Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet; date = 1425)

Texts

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- Northern:
 - ▣ Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet
(1425; W. Yorkshire, geographical isolate)

 - ▣ The Ormulum
(1200; Lincoln, Danelaw, mixed area)

 - ▣ Mirror of St. Edmund, Thornton ms. (1350; mixed, copy of a Southern text by a Northerner)

Texts

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- Southern/Midlands:
 - Trinity Homilies (1225; Southeastern)
 - Vices and Virtues (1200; Southeastern)
 - Katherine Group (1225; West Midlands)
 - Ancrene Riwe (1230 ; West Midlands)
 - Mirror of St. Edmund, Vernon ms.
(1350; mixed, copy by a Southerner)



Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet

Katherine Group,
Lambeth Homilies

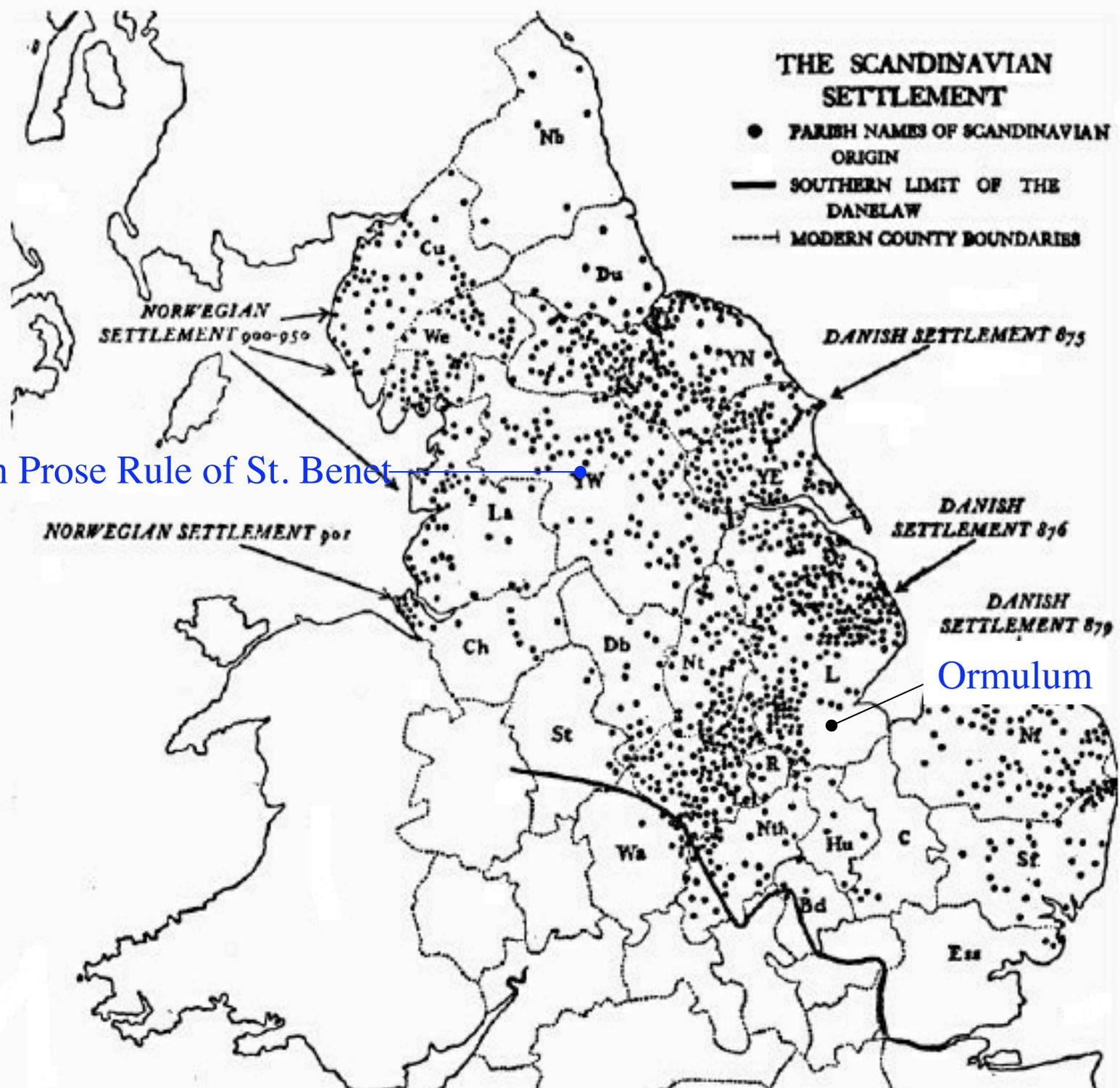
Ancrene Riwe

Ormulum

Trinity Homilies

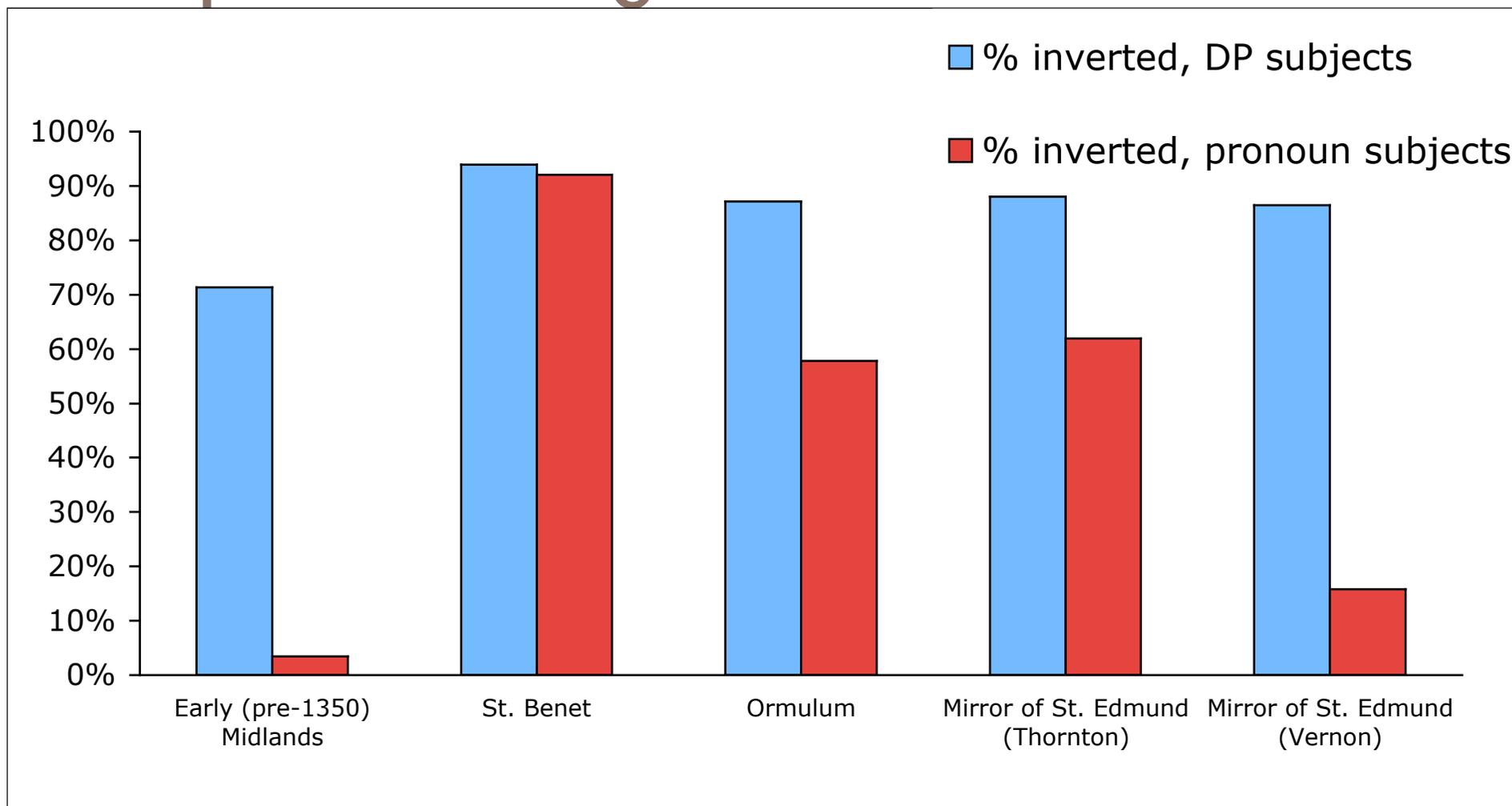
Vices and Virtues



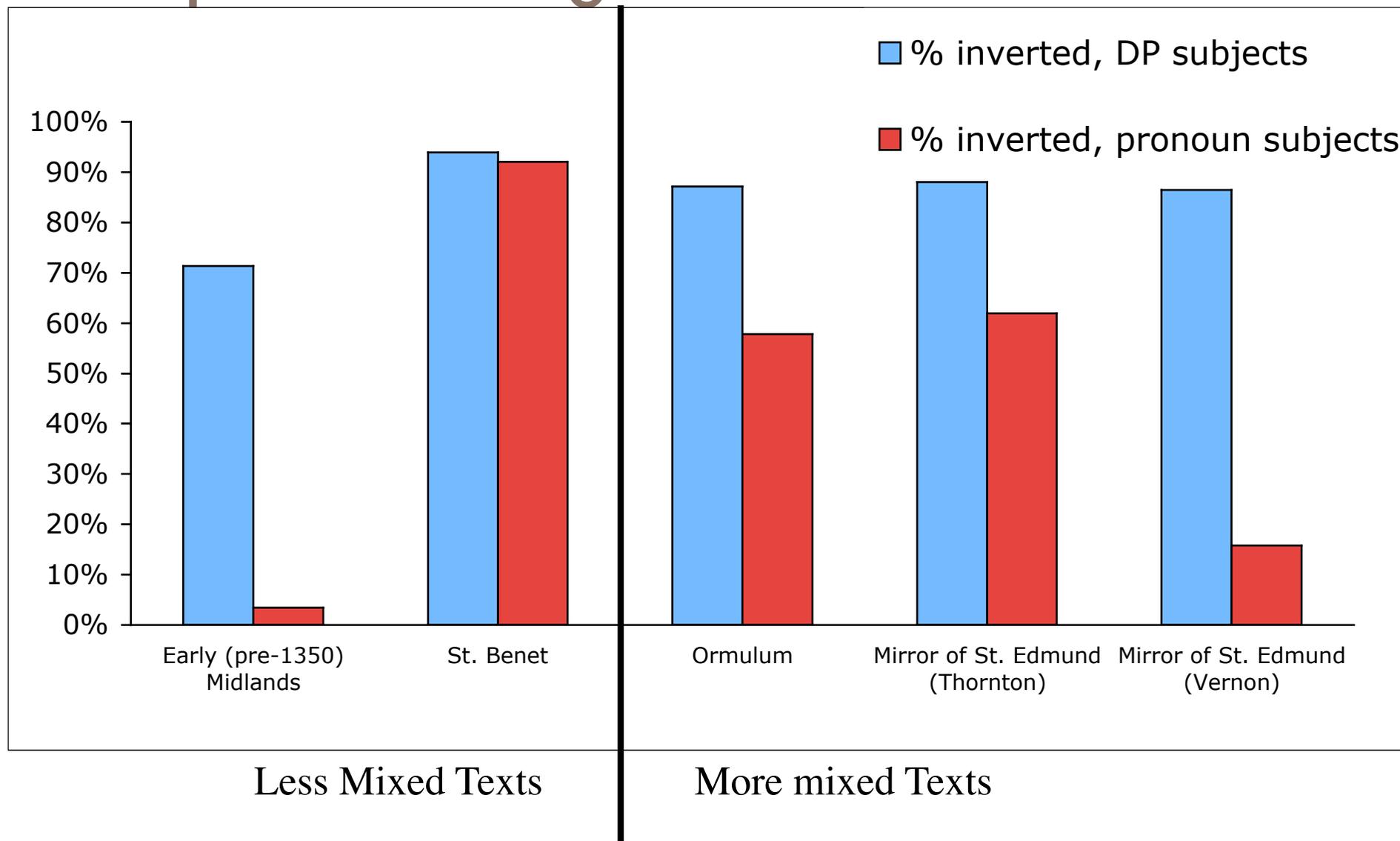


Northern Prose Rule of St. Benet

Subject-Verb Inversion Under object-fronting



Subject-Verb Inversion Under object-fronting



3. Dating Northern V2

- Clear dialect difference:
 - Northern V2 has pronoun subjects after the verb, Southern V2 has them before the verb.
 - In Middle English, the dialects are in contact and the systems mix, especially in the north of the Midlands.

- Can we now see how far back the Northern V2 system goes?
 - Very difficult, because there is very little text from north of Mercia (roughly middle Midlands) until around 1400.
 - One sizeable text from the right place and time is the 10th c. Lindisfarne glosses.
 - A Northumbrian Late OE gloss on the Latin (Vulgate) Lindisfarne Gospels, which was written by Aldred (d. 968) probably in Chester-le-Street after the community moved from Holy Island.

Lindisfarne Glosses

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- The gloss is not the kind of evidence we want, because it is a word-by-word translation of the Latin.
 - ▣ Much of the syntax is not Old English, because the gloss follows the order of Latin words rather than flowing as running OE prose.

- However, luckily for us, Latin is a *pro-drop* language; it frequently omits the Subject of the sentence.
 - ▣ Kroch, Taylor, & Ringe (2000) exploited this property of the Latin, investigating what the OE does when the Subject is missing
 - ▣ OE was not a *pro-drop* language, which means that the glosser inserted a pronoun Subject in the gloss when the Latin subject was missing.
 - ▣ Since there is no guide from the Latin, the pronoun Subject must be placed in the position that Aldred's grammar dictates.
 - ▣ Our main diagnostic for the V2 dialects: whether the pronoun subject is before or after the verb.

mondon *7* *retunung*
homicidium & sedi

507 ad ad *per*
tionem missus fuerat

in capite tynne
in carcerem

donec *bedon*

quem perhibebant

don *shiel* *iec* *valde*

in hunc uenotmadit

to pillo *hropu*

uoluerunt eum

7 *mid dy* *selueddon* *hine*

Cum ducerent eum

50 snippedon t

appropinquauerunt

yumne *yimon*

simonem querentem

cymnyce

cymmen de

ccxxi

th cccxxxi

th ccumii

q xxxii

Lindisfarne Glosses

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LATIN: dominum deum tuum adorabis

LINDISFARNE: drihten god ðin worða ðu

WEST SAXON: drihten þinne god ðu geead-metst. 'You will worship the Lord your God.' (Luke 4.8)

(All 3 translations are late 10th c.)

LATIN: oculos habentes...

LINDISFARNE: ego habbað gie

WEST SAXON: eagan ge habbað

'Having eyes, you will not see' (Mark 8.18)

Lindisfarne Glosses

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- When the same sequence of phrases (with fronted element) appears in the WS Gospels and the Northumbrian glosses, the latter invert pronoun and verb 5/58 times (WS = 0/58).

- Where the exact sequence does not occur in the WS Gospels, there are 14/82 possible inversions in Northumbrian.
 - ▣ Kroch, Taylor, & Ringe (2000) exploited this property of the Latin, investigating what the OE does when the Subject is missing
 - ▣ OE was not a *pro-drop* language, which means that the glosser inserted a pronoun Subject in the gloss when the Latin subject was missing.
 - ▣ Since there is no guide from the Latin, the pronoun Subject must be placed in the position that Aldred's grammar dictates.
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