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'Always' and 'never' in Late-Middle-English sentences

1 Introduction

The placement of adverbial constituents in the various stages of the history of English seems to be a rather complicated issue, both in terms of adverbial base position(s) and in terms of surface positions, which may be influenced by various factors. Trying to detect any regularity in these positions can easily lead to the question to what extent otherwise similar adverbials follow a similar pattern. The present paper will focus on two such constituents, *always* and *never*, and their positioning in the same Late-Middle-English text, *Le Morte Darthur,* by Sir Thomas Malory (1405-1471). Their similarity lies in the fact that both are adverbs expressing frequency. Their meanings are exactly the opposite, however this difference also points to a further similarity between them, which sets them apart from all other frequency adverbs: i. e., they represent the two extremes of the frequency scale. Nevertheless, this difference in meaning (positive vs. negative) is a fundamental one and we will see that certain grammatical differences may be explained as the result of this semantic difference. All in all, on the basis of the data (consisting of 87 clauses with *always* and 717 clauses with *never*) a common base position for the two adverbials may be suggested, while the surface variation in most cases can plausibly be explained. The positional variety displayed by these two adverbs in the corpus is illustrated below[1].

2. *Always*

2.1 Overview of the positions of *always*

(1) *but **alweyes** quene gweneuer praysed syr kay for his dedes*
　　but always Queen Guenever praised Sir Kay for his deeds
(2) *and syr Florence with his C knyghtes **alwey** kepte the stale and foughte manly*
　　and Sir Florence with his hundred knights always kept the stand and fought manly
(3) *and he rydeth **alwey** Inuysyble*
　　and he　rides always invisible
(4) *for I wylle **alweyes** flee þt noble kynge*
　　for I will always flee that noble knight
(5) *Thenne the quene hadde　**alweyes** a lytel brachet with her*
　　then the queen　had　always　a　little　brachet　with her
(6) *therfor kepe wel the scaubard **alweyes** with yow*
　　therefore keep well the scabbard always with you
(7) *thenne he wente vp vnto the roche and fonde the lyon whyche **alwey** kepte hym felaushyp*
　　then he went up onto the rock　and　found the lion　which always kept　him fellowship
(8) *and **alweyes** to doo ladyes damoysels and gentylwymmen socour vpon payne of dethe*
　　and always　to do ladies and damosels and gentlewomen succour upon pain of death
(9) *and here shalt thou swere vpon my swerd to bere it **alweyes** vpon thy back*
　　and here shalt thou swear upon my sword to bear it always upon thy back

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[1] The original Middle-English sentences are followed by word-by-word translations in Modern English spelling. Archaic words (such as *thou*) are often kept. A full translation is given only when the meaning of the sentence cannot be easily guessed on the basis of the word-by-word translation.

(10) *All these with many other were **alweyes** about Arthur day and nyghte till the feste of*
　　all these with many other were always about Arthur day and night till the feast of
　　Pentecost
　　Pentecost

(11) *Thenne the lady of the lake that was **alwey** frendely to kynge arthur she vnderstoode by*
　　 then the lady of the lake that was always friendly to King Arthur she understood by
　　her subtyl craftes that kynge arthur was lyke to be destroyed
　　 her subtle crafts that King Arthur was likely to be destroyed

(12) *ye shal haue homage & feaute of me & an C knyghtes to be **alweyes** at your*
　　 you shall have homage and fealty of me and one hundred knights to be always at your
　　commaundement
　　commandment

(13) *and it shalle be **alweyes** at your commaundement*
　　and it shall be always at your commandment

(14) *Bothe I and these fyue honderd knyghtes shal **alweyes** be at your somons to doo you*
　　both I and these five hundred knights shall always be at your summons to do you
　　seruyse as maye lye in oure powers
　　service as may lie in our powers

(15) *but **alweyes** he was meke & mylde*
　　but always he was meek and mild

(16) *But Merlyn wold lete haue her no rest but **alweyes** he wold be with her*
　　but Merlyn would let have her no rest but alweys he would be with her
　　'But Merlyn would let her have no rest but would always be with her.'

The examples above show that *always* occurs in the text in the following positions:
Initially, before subject and verb, as in (1); after the subject but before the verb, as in (2); after a finite verb, as in (3) and (4); in the latter case, if there is an object, *always* can precede or follow the object, as in (5) and (6), respectively. In relative clauses, *always* usually follows the (subject) relative pronoun directly, as in (7). *Always* may occur both pre- and post-verbally if the verb is non-finite, as shown by (8) and (9). However, if the verb (finite or non-finite) is *be, always* has a strong tendency to be positioned after *be* (examples (10) – (13)) but it may also occur between a finite verb and non-finite *be*, as in (14) or even clause-initially, as in (15) and (16).

2.2 Analysis

At first sight, the listed examples suggest that almost anything was possible; still there are clearly observable tendencies or, at least, preferences, which may serve as starting points in the quest for some kind of system. As for *always* (87 occurrences), the majority of occurrences (nearly three quarters) are in main clauses, in which there seem to be two main types. If the verb is *be*, the adverb is almost always positioned post-verbally, a situation very similar to the present-day one, except that the tendency in the late-Middle English text (unlike today) often, though not always, applies to the combinations of non-finite *be* with finite verbs such as *shall* or *have* as well — cf. (13) and (14). In the case of other verbs, the usual place for *always* seems to be the initial position (as in (1), for example), which may be regarded as fronting (which, in turn, suggests that *always* is used by Malory primarily for reasons of emphasis), but it is a type of fronting which hardly ever triggers inversion. Quite precisely, there is only one sentence in the corpus with inversion triggered by *always* (see (17) below)*,*

though the number of sentences with initial *always* is around forty. Remarkably, there are many other fronted adverbials in the text which are followed by inverted subject-verb order. A few examples are below:

(17) *and alweyes mayst thow beholde whether we sytte here or not*
    and always mayest thou behold whether we sit here or not
(18) *Thenne in alle haste came Vther with a grete hoost*
    then in all haste came Uther with a great host
(19) *After the deth of the duke more than thre houres was Arthur begoten*
    after the death of the duke more than three hours was Arthur begotten
(20) *with hym rode syr kaynus his sone & yong Arthur that was hys nourisshed broder*
    with him rode Sir Kaynus his son and young Arthur that was his nourished brother
(21) *Also in Irland were two or thre kynges and al were vnder the obeissaunce of kyng Arthur*
    also in Ireland were two or three kings and all were under the obeisance of King Arthur

In the case of finite subclauses, *always* usually occurs after the finite verb, especially, but not exclusively, if the verb is *be*. In other cases, *always* may occasionally be positioned clause-initially or, in relative clauses, after the (pronominal) subject. The latter clause type is especially remarkable because it is in relative clauses that the developing division between clauses with *be* and clauses with other verbs resembles the modern system most clearly, as shown by (7) and (11). Non-finite clauses with *always* are too rare in the text to point to any serious conclusions but even here there seems to be a tendency to have *always* before the *to*-infinitive, while in the only sentence where the non-finite verb is *be, always* follows the verb. Cf. (8) and (12).

However, finite clauses are numerous enough to allow some speculation on the base position and the probable movements of *always*. Though there are often clear quantitative differences between the occurrences of the adverb in this or that position, simply counting these may not lead to any satisfying results. For example, in finite clauses, most occurrences of the adverb are clause-initial. Nevertheless, if we accept this position as base position, we are still left with a considerable number (nearly one fifth of the total number) of occurrences elsewhere, even if clauses with *be* and relative clauses are excluded as separate groups. Moreover, these occurrences include various different positions (such as after the subject but before the verb; after the verb but before the object; after the object), which would require explanations for the "lowering" of the adverbial to different landing-places.
On the basis of subordinate clauses (often supposed to be less susceptible of word order variation than main clauses), supported by the case of *be*-clauses as well, the base position for *always* is likely to be the position after the finite verb. While this would explain most of the *be*-clauses and most of the subordinate clauses, the other surface positions need to be accounted for. The frequently occurring clause-initial position, i.e., the fronting of the adverbial, which by the 15th century had had a long history in English (especially in main clauses, which is the case here as well) may be explained as a device of emphasis. The high frequency of fronting in the case of *always* may require some further explanation but it is worth remembering that the examined text reflects one person's style and the word *always* by its meaning appears to be suitable for introducing emphasis or a certain dynamism into the literary text. It must be noted that *Le Morte Darthur*, after all, is a very dramatic and eventful ("dynamic") story. The connection with this dynamic effect may also explain why the fronting of *always* tends to be avoided when the main verb is *be*, i.e., when the meaning of the verb itself is not dynamic but frequent with words expressing actions. In other words, this

seems to be based on stylistic, rather than strict grammatical considerations, which is all the more likely, since *always* does happen to be raised in some, though rather few, *be*-clauses and this suggests that there is no real grammatical blocking here. Some textual evidence that *always* is used as an emphatic device may be found in (22) below:

(22) But **alwey** *the xj Kynges with her chyualrye* **neuer** *torned bak*
　　 but always the eleven kings with their chivalry never turned back

In this clause, the two adverbials, *always* and *never,* are in a clear semantic conflict, unless fronted *alwey* is interpreted as a word of emphasis somewhat detached from the original meaning. This seems to be the only way to accept (22) as grammatical.
　　After this we are left only with 11 clauses to account for, out of 80 finite clauses containing *always*. Three of these are relative clauses, in which *always* follows the subject-pronoun directly, i.e., it is in pre-verbal position. If we accept that relative clauses form a separate group, which, to a degree, anticipates the present-day distribution of *always*, we can account for these three clauses and are left only with a single problematic one, which in fact follows the SVA order of the non-relative clauses. The table below illustrates the situation:

Be-clauses: S(pron) + *be* + *always* (Cf. (11).)	Non-*be*-clauses: S(pron) + *always* + V (Cf. (7).)	Problem (1 clause): S(pron) + V + *always*
(23) *by the medowe oughte to*　 By the meadow ought to *be vnderstande humylyte and* be understood humility and *pacyence tho ben the* patience those are the *thynges* **whiche ben alweyes** things which are always *grene and quyck* green and quick	(24/A) *And soo within a lytel*　 and so within a little *whyle they mette with sire* while they met with Sir *Launcelot* **that alweyes had** Lancelot that always had *dame Bragwayn with hym* Dame Bragwayn with him (24/B) *for that knyghte nor*　 for that knight nor *hors was neuer fourmed* **that** horse was never formed that **alwey myght stāde** *or endure* always might stand or endure	(25) *With that she sente a*　 with that she sent a *currour of hers* **that rode** courier of hers that rode **alweye** *with her for to knowe* always with her for to know *the trouthe of this dede* the truth of this deed

Therefore, although three out of eleven clauses have been accounted for, in return we have clause (25), which is problematic because instead of following the pattern of other relative clauses it follows the more general pattern.
　　The other 8 clauses to be accounted for are of three types. One type (including three clauses) is illustrated by (26) below, but cf. also (13):

(26) *and it shall be* **alweyes** *as fresshe as it is now*
　　 and it shall be always as fresh as it is now

Here the problem is that *always* does not follow directly the finite verb but rather it is after the non-finite one. Unfortunately, the number of clauses with combinations of finite and non-finite verbs is rather small in the corpus and they include occurrences of *always* both before

and after the main (or non-finite) verb. Cf., for example, (4) and (14). What is remarkable still is that the type of (26) occurs exclusively with *be* as a main verb, therefore this seems to be the more restricted type. We may perhaps suspect here a situation of conflicting interest: while *always* ought to be placed (in general) after the finite and before the non-finite verb, non-finite *be* (perhaps due to its special status as a linking verb of little semantic content) may have an unusually strong "attachment" to its head, which is in conflict with the positional claims of *always*.

The second type requiring some explanation includes the following three clauses:

(27) *Soo that he bare with hym **alweyes** tylle hys dethe daye in tokenynge to thynke on his*
   so that he bare with him always till his death day in token(ing) to think on his
   faders dethe
   father's death
(28) *and putte hym **alweyes** a bak*
   and put him always aback
(29) *therfor kepe wel the scaubard **alweyes** with yow*
   therefore keep well the scabbard always with you

These are the sentences in which *always* does not directly follow the verb. (27) is not a real problem, insofar as it does not really conflict with other word orders in the corpus: here the object is fronted and the verb is followed by several adverbials, whose relative order can not be the concern of the present examination. In (28) and (29) (or (6) — repeated here for convenience) the object appears between the verb and *always*. This is in contrast with other clauses (such as (5) above) in the corpus, in which the object is ordered after *always*. Another example besides (5) is below:

(30) *kynge Mark cast **alweyes** in his hert how he myght destroye syr Tristram*
   King Mark cast ('schemed') always in his heart how he might destroy Sir Tristram

How is the relative ordering of the two post-verbal constituents decided? At least one part of the answer may be the type of object the clause contains. On the one hand, the object of (28) is a pronoun, while the object of (29) is non-pronominal. On the other hand, all the clauses in which *always* comes before the object have non-pronominal objects. It may also be added that among the non-finite clauses of the corpus those containing post-verbal *always* as well as an object, pronominal objects directly follow the verb (thus come before *always*), as shown below:

(31) *but at this tyme I must nedes departe bysechyng **yow alwey** of your good grace*
   but at this time I must needs depart beseeching you always of your good grace
(32) *and here shalt thou swere vpon my swerd to bere **it alweyes** vpon thy back and neuer to*
   And here shalt thou swear upon my sword to bear it always upon thy back and never to
   reste tyl thou come to quene Gueneuer
   rest till thou come to queen Guenever

The examples point to the probability that pronominal objects are not easily separated from their verbs (except for reasons of object fronting), while in other cases *always* tends to come before the object. This explains the ordering of the object and post-verbal *always* in all the

clauses of the corpus except for (29). Interestingly, in the latter, there are again several adverbials and the object is in fact preceded by one, though it is not *always* but *well*.

There are two more finite clauses in the corpus unaccounted for: they are the (non-relative) clauses in which *always* is found between the subject and the verb. (Here (2) will be repeated as (33).)

(33) *and syr Florence with his C knyghtes* **alwey** *kepte the stale and foughte manly*
     and Sir Florence with his hundred knights always kept the stand and fought manly

(34) *& so they sette a pauelione ouer the stone & þᵉ swerd & fyue* **alwayes** *watched*
     and so they set a pavilion over the stone and the sword and five always watched

This position for *always* is, of course, rather similar to the present-day one but in *Le Morte Darthur* it is an infrequent positioning (except in relative clauses as discussed above). It clearly must be one of the possibilities in late-Middle-English (after all the present-day situation must have started somehow) but whether it is merely a stylistic variation or something else is not easy to guess on the basis of two occurrences. Altogether there are only 5 clauses: (25), (27), (29), (33) and (34) out of a corpus of 80 finite clauses in which the placement of *always* has not been systematically accounted for, where one must resort to the stylistic or psychological considerations of the author.

3. *Never*

3.1 Overview of the positions of *never*

(35) *alle men that beheld hym sayd they sawe* **neuer** *knyghte fyghte so wel as Arthur dyd*
     all men that beheld him said they saw never knight fight so well as Arthur did
     consyderyng the blood that he bled
     considering the blood that he bled

(36) *for suche another despyte had I* **neuer** *in my Courte*
     for such another despite had I never in my Court

(37) *In this countrey sayd syr Marhaus cam* **neuer** *knyghte syn it was crystened but he fonde*
     in this country said Sir Marhaus came never knight since it was christened but he found
     straunge auentures
     strange adventures

(38) *And yf I leue hym now perauentur I shalle* **neuer** *mete with hym ageyne*
     and if I leave him now peradventure I shall never meet with him again

(39) *Now shalle I* **neuer** *reste tyl I mete with tho kynges in a fayre feld*
     now shall I never rest till I meet with those kings in a fair field

(40) *for soo foule ne shamefully dyd* **neuer** *woman rule a knyghte as I haue done you*
     for so foul nor shamefully did never woman rule a knight as I have done you
     'because so cruelly or shamefully never did a woman rule a knight as I have done to you

(41) *hit was* **neuer** *the custome of no place of worship that euer I came in*
     it was never the custom of no place of worship that ever I came in

(42) *Thus was gauayne sworne vpon the four euuangelystes that he shold* **neuer** *be ageynst*
     thus was Gawaine sworn upon the four Evangelists that he should never be against

lady ne gentilwoman
lady nor gentlewoman

(43) *there were **neuer** knyghtes sene fyghte more fyersly than they dyd*
there were never knights seen fight more fiercely than they did
(44) *for shame stryke **neuer** a Knyght when he is at the erthe*
for shame strike never a knight when he is at the earth
(45) *and **neuer** haue I loued lady nor damoysel tyl now in an vnhappy tyme*
and never have I loved lady nor damosel till now in an unhappy time
(46) *and **neuer** it was by thy force*
and never it was by thy force
(47) *I **neuer** deffended þt none*
I never defended that none
'I never denied that to anyone'
(48) *I rebuked hym **neuer** for no hate that I hated hym but for grete loue that I had to hym*
I rebuked him never for no hate that I hated him but for great love that I had to him
'It was never because of hate but great love that I rebuked him'
(49) *I counceylle you **neuer** to obey the Romayns*
I counsel you   never to obey the Romans
(50) *and soo by their comynal assente promysed to syr Marhaus **neuer** to be foes vnto kynge*
and so by their communal assent promised to Sir Marhaus never to be foes unto King
Arthur
Arthur

The positions of *never* found in the text are illustrated above. *Never* typically occurs after the finite verb, regardless whether the verb is *be* or not, as in examples (35) to (44). Some variation can be found when, due to a fronted constituent, the subject-verb order before *never* is inverted (examples (36), (37), (39) and (40)), since, though the verb precedes *never*, the subject may be on either side of it. (Cf. (35) and (37) or (39) and (40).) Another position is when *never* itself is fronted (either with inversion following or without), examples (45) and (46). Other (less frequent) positions in finite clauses (SAV and SVOA) are illustrated by (47) and (48), respectively. In non-finite clauses, such as (49) and (50), *never* is positioned before the verb. In addition to these, *never* like *always*, occurs in subjectless or verbless clauses but the main positions are the ones listed above.

3.2 Analysis

This time the corpus is much larger than in the case of *always*: *never* has more than seven hundred (717) occurrences in *Le Morte Darthur*. Since *always* and *never* are semantically related adverbs, it can be reasonably expected that their treatment in terms of positioning will at least partly overlap. Indeed this is the case to a considerable extent. As it has already been mentioned, in finite clauses the most frequent position of *never* by far is the position after the finite verb and before the non-finite one if there is a non-finite verb in the clause. This means (and here seems to be a difference between *always* and *never*) that *never* does not occur after a non-finite verb the way *always* does in, e.g., (13), not even when the non-finite verb is *be*. This post-finite-verb position is amply illustrated by (35) – (44) above.

It has been mentioned that in some clauses the verb and *never* are separated by the subject, i.e., when subject-verb inversion occurs (e.g., because of a fronted constituent) but there are also clauses in which the subject appears after *never*: in spite of the inversion, *never* directly follows the verb. (36), (37), (39) and (40) above illustrate this variation. Here we can observe a rather consistent tendency: On the one hand, if the subject is pronominal, it will be positioned directly after the verb and before *never*. On the other hand, if the subject is not pronominal, it will be preceded by *never*, with the single exception of (53).

(51) *& ellys **shall we neuer** matche hem*
     and else shall we never match them
(52) *but suche shame **had neuer man** as I had this day with the thre bretheren*
     but such shame had never man as I had this day with the three brothers
(53) *And for the dethe of my noble sone syre Lamorak **shalle my herte neuer be** gladde*
     and for the death of my noble son Sir Lamorak shall my   heart never be glad

As it is, (53) does not seem to fit the pattern; later, however, we will see that it may not be truly irregular after all.

In the case of *always*, the post-finite-verb position seemed to be a probable base position, from which the adverbial might move to other positions with the possibility of plausible explanations. As for *never*, on the basis of the proportion of this position in the corpus, as well as on the basis of the above analysis of the positions of *always*, the same post-finite-verb position may reasonably be supposed to be the base position again, at least as a starting hypothesis. Since other positions of *never* can also be found, now we must see to what extent they can be derived from the hypothetical (i.e., post-finite-verb) base position.

There are a few clauses in which *never* does not directly follow the verb but rather the object after it. See, e.g., (48) above or (54) and (55) below:

(54) *I calle **my selfe neuer** the more coward though syre Launcelot gaf me a falle*
      I call myself never the more coward though Sir Lancelot gave me a fall
(55) *for I knewe **hym neuer** yet*
      for I knew him never yet

In all but one of these cases the object is a pronoun. This supports the explanation already referred to with regard to *always* in section 2.

As (45) –(47) indicate, *never*, like *always*, may also move upwards, i.e., towards the beginning of the clause. Like *always*, *never* is often fronted, i.e., it appears before the subject. The fronted adverbial may or may not be followed by subject-verb inversion. (45) and (46) are examples of this difference, some further examples are below.

(56) ***neuer** had I soo grete nede of no knyghtes helpe*
     never had I so great need of no knight's help
(57) *but **neuer they coude** here of hym*
     but never they could hear of him
(58) *and **neuer man myghte** haue grace to knowe hym*
     and never man might have grace to know him

Throughout the whole text, inversion appears to be a frequently used but seemingly optional structure. We have already seen that the presence of pronouns may result in changes in the

surface order of clause constituents; still it is impossible to apply this explanation here, since most subjects are pronominal after *never* in both the inverted and the non-inverted structures of the corpus. In fact, the non-pronominal subjects after fronted *never* are regularly found in non-inverted structures. It is rather conspicuous; after all, while pronouns may be said to cliticize onto their verbs and move along with them (as described, e.g., in Fisher et al 2000:118-120), non-pronominal subjects cannot be expected to do so. (In the case of fronted *always*, there seems to be practically no inversion but negative *never* does trigger it in a number of clauses – the structure has even survived in present-day English; therefore it is a rather intriguing question why we find no inversion in many other cases.) Some of these clauses, however, suggest an explanation which concerns the function of *never*. Sometimes, as in (58) or in the examples below, it seems that *never* may be interpreted as a negative determiner (synonymous with *no*):

(59) *& **neuer creature** coude make hyr mery*
    and never creature could make her merry
(60) *for **neuer** Crysten kynge had **neuer** soo many worthy men at this table as I haue had ...*
    for never Christian king had never so many worthy men at this table as I have had

In (60), *never* occurs twice. Multiple negation is not infrequent in *Le Morte Darthur* — cf., e.g., (47). What is unusual still is the fact that the same negative word is used twice in the same clause but in different places; therefore it is not typical double negation, nor simply the typical stylistic reinforcement by repetition. However, the double use of *never* is quite understandable if the first *never* is a determiner, while the other one is an adverbial. Then the clause can be regarded as a regular doubly negated Middle-English clause. (On Middle English negation cf., e.g., Blake 1992.) This will also explain why there is no inversion after the first *never*: simply because it is a determiner. Furthermore, a new examination of the "deviant" (53), (see above) as well as its regular counterparts, namely, (36), (37), (39), (40), (51) and (52), may reveal a similar correspondence there: *never* standing before (rather than after) the non-pronominal subjects (in inversion), as in (37), (40) and (52) may at least often be argued to be a determiner, not an adverbial. At the same time, pronominal subjects, which are always before *never* cannot take determiners. Nor can the phrase *my herte* in (53), since it already contains a determiner, therefore this subject logically follows the pattern of pronominal subjects by not admitting *never* between the (inverted) positions of verb and subject.

    Never also occurs after the subject and before the verb, as in (47) above or in (61) below.

(61) *Also I charge the syre Damas vpon payne of deth that thow **neuer** destresse no kny tes*
    also I charge thee Sir Damas upon pain of death that thou never distress no knights
    erraunte that ryde on their aduenture
    errant that ride on their adventure

Some of these clauses are relative clauses (cf. the discussion of relative clauses above), e.g.:

(62) *I thanke hym of his curtosye and goodenes that he wold take vpon hym suche labour for*
    I thank him of his courtesy and goodness that he would take upon him such labour for
    *me that **neuer** dyd hym bounte nor curtosye*
    me that never did him bounty ('generosity') nor courtesy

Other clauses of this order include other types of subordinate clauses or even main clauses. This preverbal position seems to be something like an alternative base position insofar as there appears to be no clear explanation for the choice of this or the post-finite-verb position — apart from the author's decision. Though the situation may remind us of the present-day system, in reality they are fundamentally different: while present-day *never* (similarly to *always*) is normally placed after the operator (if an operator is present) and before any other verb; in our Late-Middle-English corpus *never*, though most often placed after the finite verb, may sometimes occur before it, even when the verb is *be*, *have* or a modal, as the examples below show:

(63) *for the moost party of your barons of your realme knewe **neuer** whos sone ye were*
     for the most part of your barons of your realm knew never whose son you were
(64) *I shalle **neuer** foryeue you that trespas*
     I shall never forgive you that trespass
(65) *hit was **neuer** the custome of no place of worship that euer I came in*
     it was never the custom of no place of worship that ever I came in
(66) *that I **neuer** sawe Knyghte doo so merueyllously as he hath done these thre dayes*
     that I never saw knight do so marvellously as he has done these three days
(67) *And by no meane she **neuer** coude gete his loue*
     and by no means she never could get his love
(68) *I **neuer** was wrothe nor gretely heuy with no good Knyghte*
     I never was wroth nor greatly heavy with no good knight

       Finally, *never* occurs in a number of non-finite clauses as well, in which it is invariably before the (non-finite) verb.

(68) *Here I ensure yow by the feithe of my body **neuer to departe** from yow whyle my lyf*
     here I ensure you by the faith of my body never to depart from you while my life
     lasteth
     lasts

Other examples are (49) and (50) above. This position is quite in accordance with the occurrence of *never* between the finite and the non-finite verb in finite clauses. Altogether the fact that this positioning is more frequent and consistent (both in the finite and non-finite clauses) than in the case of *always* may be connected to the negative meaning of *never*, which is practically used in place of *not* or, rather, as an emphatic form of *not*; after all the latter would normally be placed in the same post-finite-verb, pre-non-finite-verb position.

(70) *Thenne there were somme other Barons that counceylled the Kynge **not to doo** soo*
     then there were some other barons that counselled the king not to do so
(71) *therfor thou were better **not to come** within this castel*
     therefore thou were better not to come within this castle

4 Summary

Above is a case study concerning the variability of adverbial placement in Late-Middle-English. The data show that although the number of possibilities may at first appear to be

confusingly large, clear preferences for certain positions can be detected and a considerable portion of positional deviations can be systematically accounted for. It has been argued that both adverbials have their base positions after the finite verb. Variations may be due to a number of factors (supported by various examples in the corpus), including emphasis (in the case of fronting) and grammatical factors, such as pronominal vs. non-pronominal subjects and objects, clause type (relative clauses) and even the possibility that *never* may have functioned both as and adverbial and a determiner with the necessary result of different positioning.

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