The syntax of Latin negation

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(i) Latin negation in light of Romance Despite the considerable cross-linguistic variation displayed within Romance in the syntax of negation, formal research could establish some firm points. In particular, a generalization of relevant diachronic import has emerged: the continuations of Latin *nōn*, present in all standard Romance languages (e.g. It. *non*, Sp. and Cat. *no*, Fr. *ne*, Rom. *nu*), are located before the projection in the TP-area where the inflected verb lands (Infl), and after the subject, where also pronominal clitics attach (Zanuttini 1997, Rowlett 1998, Ledgeway 2012, Poletto 2014). Post-verbal negative markers are innovations resulting from Jespersen's Cycle and taking place independently in the different languages. Also indefinites interacting with negation (n-words and negative polarity items) are subject to extensive and often language-specific lexical renewal (Martins 2000).
Here I address the following question: is it possible to trace back this pre-Infl position for the negative marker to Latin, and thus treat it as a common inherited feature in Romance? I show that the position of Classical Latin *nōn* can indeed be analyzed as pre-Infl, like that of its Romance continuations. However, I also argue that the Classical Latin negative marker is best analyzed as sitting in a specifier position, and that only later, in Late Latin, it becomes the head of a NegP projection. This change is connected to the general diachronic process leading from a Double Negation language to the Negative Concord systems of Early Romance, and also correlates in interesting ways with the shift from OV to VO.
(ii) In **Classical Latin** (CL) there is a one-to-one correspondence between overt expression of negation and presence of a semantic negation operator. Negation is either marked by the negative marker (NM) or by a negative indefinite (NI) (1a) (*nemo* 'no one', *nihil* 'nothing', *nullus* adj. 'no'). With multiple negatively marked elements a Double Negation (DN) reading results (1b) (colloquial varieties sporadically show emphatic readings, Molinelli 1988).

(1) a. ***neminem*** *reperies* *qui* *neget*
noone:ACC find:2SG who:NOM deny:3SG
'you will not find anyone who would deny it' (Cic. Verr. 2.2.152)
b. *aperte enim adulantem* ***nemo*** ***non*** *videt*
blatantlyin.fact flattering:ACC noone:NOM not see:3SG
'no one does not recognize someone who is blatantly flattering' (Cic. Lael. 99)

I adopt Zeijlstra's (2011) analysis for NIs, according to which the lexical entry of NIs is syntactically complex and can be decomposed into two elements: a negative operator and an indefinite, spelled out as a single unit but able to take scope independently. In Negative Concord (NC) languages, instead, n-words (e.g. It. *nessuno*, Sp. *nadie*, Fr. *personne*, Rom. *nimeni*) do not introduce a negative operator: they carry a [uNeg] feature which has to enter an Agree relation with the [iNeg] negative marker in NegP, if c-commanded by it (Zeijlstra 2004). Latin NIs always result in the insertion of a negative operator, independently of position; as a fact, they mostly end up preceding the finite verb, above negation.
(iii) As for the **negative marker**, *nōn* regularly precedes the finite verb, i.e. in analytical forms (2a) it appears immediately before the auxiliary, not before the participle (cf. Kühner-Stegmann II.1,818). Devine & Stephens (2006: 183), Danckaert (2012a: 23), (2012b) locate the position of Latin *nōn* above Inflection, Latin being an Infl-final language (2b).

(2) a. *Romanus* *equitatus* *ipsum* *quidem* *regem* *Elatiae*
Roman:NOM cavalry:NOM himself:ACC then king:ACC Elatea:GEN

adsecutus ***non*** *est*
reached:PTCP not is:3SG
'but the Roman cavalry did not reach the king of Elatea himself' (Liv. 36.19.10)

b. unmarked order with negation: **S O Participle(V) - *non* - Aux(Infl)**

I follow Danckaert's (2012a: 310-313, 2012b) analysis for the Infl-final surface order of Latin: according to Danckaert, CL satisfies the EPP requirement of TP by moving the (remnant) v/VP to a specifier of a projection in the split-TP that has to be higher than NegP. In turn, NegP is argued to be higher than the Infl part of TP. This yields Infl-final word orders, assuming independent V-to-Infl in synthetic forms, and derives the position of the NM between the lexical verb and the auxiliary in Infl in analytic forms.

(3) (Danckaert 2012a: 313): $[_{SubjP[EPP]}\ [_{VP}\ S\ O\ V\ ]\ [Subj^0\ [_{NegP}\ Neg^0\ [_{TP}\ T^0\ t_{VP}\ ]\ ]\ ]\ ]$

However, unlike Danckaert (2012a,b), who treats *nōn* as the head of a NegP, I argue that *nōn* sits in a specifier attached to a projection in the TP-area, above the landing site for the inflected verb. This safeguars Zeijlstra's 2004, 2011 generalization, according to which negative X^0 are predicted not to be available in non-NC languages, and is diachronically more plausible than a post-Infl analysis, given FOFC (Biberauer, Holmberg, Roberts 2014).
A specifier status is diachronically expected for the product of a recent Jespersen's Cycle: *nōn* < *nĕ* + **oinom* = *ūnum* 'not (even) one' (cf. Fruyt 2011: 708-723). Moreover, *nōn* is not a clitic: it counts as 'full word' for second-position phenomena (Spevak 2010: 16), and is not necessarily adjacent to the finite verb. It can also adjoin to other phrasal elements in elliptical constructions (*vel adest vel non* 'either he comes or he does not' Plaut. Miles 1019), but this test may be inconclusive, since *nōn* can also serve as answer to a question (Merchant 2006). Tests related to verb movement are also difficult to apply, since in prohibitions, i.e. the clearest potential case of V-to-C, a different modality-sensitive negator *nē* appears.
(iii) Late Latin In LL the NM *nōn* stays in the same pre-Infl position in the TP-area; however, it is reanalyzed as a head, following the structure-minimizing tendency known as Spec-to-Head principle (van Gelderen 2004). In a simple negation reading, the [iNeg] Neg^0 becomes incompatible with NIs in its c-command domain, since they bring about a negative operator of their own. It can only license NPIs, and this situation prompts the grammaticalization of new [uNeg] n-words. This reconstruction is supported by the fact that 'old' NIs become rarer and, despite the general drift towards VO (Ledgeway 2012), object NIs consistently surface pre-Infl, in order not to conflict with the new [iNeg] head.

Selected references: Danckaert, L. 2012a, *Latin embedded clauses*. Benjamins. **Danckaert**, L. 2012b, The decline of Latin VOAux: Neg-incorporation and syntactic reanalysis. Presentation at DiGS 14, Lisbon. **Devine**, A. & **Stephens**, L. 2006, *Latin word order. Structured meaning and information*. OUP. **Ledgeway**, A. 2012, *From Latin to Romance*. OUP. **Martins**, A.M. 2000, Polarity Items in Romance: Underspecification and Lexical Change, in Pintzuk, Tsoulas, Warner (eds.), *Diachronic Syntax. Models and Mechanisms*. OUP. **Molinelli**, P. 1988, *Fenomeni della negazione dal latino all'italiano*. Florence: La Nuova Italia. **Poletto**, C. 2014, Negation, ms. for *The Oxford Guide to the Romance Languages*. OUP. **Rowlett**, P. 1998, *Sentential negation in French*. OUP. **Spevak**, O. 2010, *Constituent order in Classical Latin prose*. Benjamins. **Zanuttini**, R. 1997, *Negation and clausal structure: A comparative study of Romance languages*. OUP. **Zeijlstra**, H. 2004, *Sentential negation and Negative Concord*, PhD thesis Amsterdam. **Zeijlstra**, H. 2011, On the syntactically complex status of negative indefinites, *Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 14, 111-138.