

THE HISTORY OF SOME GREEK NEGATIVES: PHONOLOGY, GRAMMAR AND MEANING*

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In this paper, the history of the Greek negatives οὐ and μή is considered, from their Indo-European origins to Modern Demotic Greek. The pattern of changes is explained as a series of weakenings and strengthenings, on the phonological as well as on the syntactic and semantic levels. The argument includes brief discussions on the formation of compound negatives, the modern disjunctive negative δὴ and a number of related grammatical and semantic questions. Finally, comparisons are drawn with the Romance languages and some recently advocated word-order typological explanations for changes in negation patterns are rejected.

The study of negation has recently been augmented by work of a typological nature. On the one hand, Payne (1985) has shown that there is almost no category which cannot in some language take on an explicitly negative form and function and that a combination of historical changes — in both «articulations» — can substantially change the way in which negation is grammaticalised from one period of a language's history to another. On the other hand, changes in Romance of a similar nature to those in Greek have been explained by some linguists (for example, Harris 1978: 118) as dependent upon larger-scale changes in word order. In this paper, some developments in the principal Greek negative markers are considered and an alternative approach is preferred which lays emphasis on a combination of phonological and syntactic/semantic factors which lead to a series of weakenings and re-strengthenings. In conclusion, some comparisons with Romance are considered.

We begin with some basic distinctions: between qualitative and quantitative negation and between sentential and constituent negation. A simple expression of negation like *not* is labelled qualitative (following various philosophers and linguists, ultimately back to Kant, but not necessarily accepting the wider consequences of this approach; cf. Moorhouse 1959: 9ff., Jespersen 1917: 69ff. and the references given there), while

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those which assert negation over a particular domain, like *nowhere* (over the domain of space) or *never* (over the domain of time) and are often morphologically compounds, are known as quantitative.

Whereas this contrast is semantic, that between sentential and constituent negation is also syntactic. A sentential negative denies the entire proposition expressed by the sentence or, better, the relation between the contextually bound and free portions of the sentence (Payne 1985: 199)¹, as in:

(1) I have not read Homer.

Constituent negation, on the other hand, is restricted to its particular constituent. With *not* restricted to its clause in (2), there is no explicit contradiction:

(2) I am not here to waste my time, but to read Homer.

Quantitative negation (especially when a negated universal quantifier is involved) can nevertheless also be sentential, as in:

(3) Nobody visits Cambridge in February.

This fact, together with the fact that sentential and constituent negation often share the same forms, makes easy the historical realignment of the boundaries between the types of negation, as we shall see in the case in Greek.

We can conveniently begin our treatment of negation in Greek by examining what similarities exist with English. First, Greek has inherited the same negative prefix on adjectives and adverbs as we find in English *unhappy*; in Greek this appears as the *alpha privativum* ἀ(ν)² in, for example: ἀδύνατος «impossible», as opposed to δυνατός «possible». We shall, however, concentrate in this paper on the Greek expressions which correspond to the English qualitative negative *not*, the quantitative *nobody* and the interjection *no*.

An interesting feature of Greek negation in which it differs from the usage of, for example, the modern Germanic and Romance languages is the existence of two distinct qualitative negatives which are (in their Classical Greek forms) οὐ and μή. The relevant distinction is summed up well in Mirambel's description of οὐ as «objective» and μή as «subjective» (Mirambel 1947). Thus, οὐ negates facts, μή negates wishes, commands and so on. Since there is not a one-to-one correspondence between grammatical mood and illocutionary force, we do not find that οὐ and μή occur only with the indicative and non-indicative respectively, although this tends to become the case, for example in relative clauses, as early as the time of the New Testament (Blass et al. 1961: 220ff., and cf. section V). Nevertheless, the distinction between οὐ and μή (or their direct descendants) survives from earliest times to Modern Greek³.

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1. The distinction between the contextually bound and free portions of a sentence is determined pragmatically; usually, but not always, the subject is contextually bound. Jespersen's use of the term «nexal negation» makes a similar point (1917: 42 ff.).
 2. Since all three written accents have been used in Modern Greek until very recently, they are written here throughout.
 3. Linear B, which represents the so-called «Mycenaean» dialect of Greek dates probably from the thirteenth century B.C., some five or six centuries before our next oldest source, the

The bulk of this paper is concerned with the principal changes in Greek negation excluding those which are primarily the result of the restructuring of the modal system and particularly the loss of the infinitive and the optative; see Mirambel (1947) and, for a more radical approach to the development of the modal system in the modern language, Mackridge (1985: 102).

I

There is nothing unusual about monosyllabic qualitative negatives being replaced by stronger quantitative forms (cf. Section VI). We shall argue, however, that the particular sequence of changes in Greek can in part be explained as the consequence of the phonological properties of the ancient Greek οὐ and μή; we thus begin our study of these words by examining their etymologies.

On the basis of evidence from most of the daughter-language groups of Indo-European, including Indic, Italic and Balto-Slavic, we reconstruct for the parent language a negative particle **ne*. This, however, is not found in Greek, except for the *alpha privativum* prefix derived from the zero-grade **n̥* together with a few compounds with the lengthened-grade prefix *νη-*, found principally in Homer and Hesiod, for example: *νηῖς* «unknowing» and *νήπιος* «infant» which survives into later Greek.

Instead of a reflex of **ne*, in Greek we find the etymologically puzzling οὐ. Several different conjectures have been made: the simplest, though least verifiable, is that of Wackernagel (1924: 256ff.) who suggests that it derives from a pre-Indo-European interjection.

Turning to explanations within Indo-European, the most usual of these compares οὐ with a variety of forms in other daughter-languages, for example: Skt. *ava* «down», Goth. *ut*, Lat. *au-* «away from» (cf. Chantraine 1968: s.v.). However, it is hard to see how Latin *au-* is to correspond to Greek οὐ. Moreover, these forms are not negatives at all, but rather prefixes of separation; the Greek form which corresponds to these is not οὐ but rather the αὐ- found in *αὐχάττειν* «retire» (Hesychius). Although prepositions of separation can come to have a negative sense in composition, like *ἐξυπνος* «awake» (from New Testament Greek onwards), from *ὑπνος* «sleep», we have no evidence in Indo-European of any other primary negative particle being derived in this way.

Better perhaps is Meillet's (1929) comparison with the Armenian negative *oç* and the OCS privative *u-*. The Armenian *çis* is an indefinite particle, from the Indo-European **k^w-4* from which the *o-* can then be isolated. This does not directly suggest an Indo-European origin for the -κ of οὐκ, which usually appears in Ancient Greek instead of οὐ before an unaspirated vowel which is not separated from it by a pause. Before an aspirated vowel, the form οὐχ is usual and Frisk (1932) has suggested that οὐκ and οὐχ derive from the emphatic forms οὐκι and οὐχι which lose their final -i by elision. However, we have no comparable evidence for the loss of final -i and we should perhaps

Homeric epics. The basic pattern of negation in Mycenaean was probably the same as in Homer and the evidence can occasionally be useful, but our few inscriptions include no context where we should expect to find μή.

4. Albanian *nuk* appears to be derived from **neuk* by metathesis of **neku* and thus offers no help here (cf. Mann 1974:200).

remember here that οὐκῖ and οὐχῖ are standardly given different etymologies, with οὐκῖ related to *k^wj (though not directly, for we should then expect οὐτι, which exists as a distinct word) and οὐχῖ to be compared to the emphatic Skt. suffix *-hí*. In any case, the order of explanation here is contrary to expectation, as *í* in Indo-European is commonly a suffix. So οὐ may be related to an Armenian form, which also allows a consonantal suffix; it appears, however, that the Indo-European evidence can help us little more than that.

The etymology of the subjective negative μὴ is much simpler; we can readily compare it with Skt. *ma* (Skt. has the equally unproblematic *na* as its objective negative).

A significant difference between οὐ and μὴ lies in their accentuation and we shall argue that an appreciation of the reasons behind this will have important consequences for understanding changes in the Greek negative system, even in the period after the change from a pitch-accent to a stress-accent⁵. We need to remember that our evidence for accentuation comes from the system of diacritics devised by Alexandrian scholars to aid the correct pronunciation of the Homeric poems. They were not written in the Classical period nor by most scribes until about the tenth century (Reynolds and Wilson 1974: 9); sometimes the written accents do not reflect later changes in the spoken language (cf. Trypanis 1960). We can nevertheless expect the written accents of Ancient Greek to correspond to some kind of phonetic reality.

The form οὐ is conventionally written without an accent except in prepausal position where it is oxytone (rising tone). We have already noticed that this position is unusual in that here οὐ does not take either κ or χ before a vowel. The form μὴ is written oxytone in all positions. However, the ancient grammarians did not observe this difference and it may be no more than an orthographic convention employed to distinguish οὐ from οὔ. All the examples of words lacking accents are monosyllables with initial vowels (cf. Postgate 1924: 62f., Allen 1973: 249). Although the texts are far from clear, it seems that both Herodian and Hippias held οὐ to be consistently oxytone. Their remarks are usually found in the context of a comparison with οὔ «where», which is always perispomenon (rising-falling tone), so we might feel entitled to interpret «oxytone» in this context as meaning «not perispomenon». This is not as unreasonable as it may appear, since as οὐ is at least sometimes genuinely oxytone, it is perhaps better described as «oxytone» than as a member of any of the other classes distinguished by the ancient grammarians, enclitics like τις or atonics like ἐκ.

There is, however, some good evidence that οὐ was not usually oxytone. It behaves exactly like the atonic εἰ when followed by ἔστι as, οὐκ ἔστι, εἰ ἔστι, where ἔστι, in the sense of «is», is enclitic. The conjunction ἀλλά «but», which is in Ancient Greek phonetically atonic despite the written accent (as is clear when the final -α is lost in elision with a following vowel), behaves in the same way: ἀλλ' ἔστι. Similarly, we find οὐκέτι rather than *οὐκετι «no longer», where the same argument should apply, even though ἔτι is not enclitic and can even appear in Homer separated from οὐ (e.g. *Il.* vi.501).

The pair of conjunctions οὐκοῦν and οὐκουν, «therefore» and «therefore not» have perhaps not been satisfactorily explained. Denniston (1954: 430ff.) observes that the

5. This change starts as a result of the contact of Greek with speakers of stress-accent languages, perhaps as early as the middle second-century BC (cf. Gignac 1976:325). It must have started well before the fourth century AD (cf. Allen 1973:268 ff., 1974: 119f.).

earliest evidence is for the negative form in interrogative clauses. Subsequently, a milder (positive) interrogative οὐκοῦν is adopted and its use is later extended to declarative sentences, while Dennison finds only one example of the declarative negative. If these conjectures as to the order of development of the forms are correct, then they cause us no problem, since the contrastive sense of the positive form is clearly indicated in its accentuation.

However, οὔτις «no one» presents only a superficial difficulty; here, the accent of the enclitic τῖς is allowed to fall back onto οὐ. This happens also in εἶ τῖς and need not of course be explained as evidence that οὐ is oxytone here, but rather as an indication of the weakness of τῖς as an enclitic. We ought to admit the possibility of accentuation by degree. The name Οὔτις (Hom. *Od.* ix.336, 369 etc.) is perispomenon according to the («final trochee») rule for a disyllabic noun of its type, while the pronoun οὔτις is still accented as a compound (Allen 1973: 241). Odysseus' escape from the Cyclops was due in no small part to his knowledge of Greek phonology.

The form οὔτε similarly presents no difficulty. In Mycenaean we find *o-u-qe*. Although by convention *o-u* and *o-u-ki* are written attached to the following word, it is clear that from the phonological point of view composition has not yet taken place. If it had, what we should expect to find is **o-u-ke* since by this time the inherited labiovelar has become a velar by dissimilation after /u/ as in *qo-u-ko-ro* «herdsman», from **g^wouk^wolos* (Classical βουκόλος) (cf. Lejeune 1972: 45).

We have still to explain the accentuation of οὐ in clause-final position. Here, it is important to note when *ou* can appear finally. We find, for example:

- (4) τί δ' οὔ;
- (5) σὺ μὲν διδάσκαλος εἶ, ἐγὼ δ' οὔ.
- (6) βούλονται μὲν, δύνανται δ' οὔ. (Thuc. vi.38.4)

Most obviously, in all these cases, whether there is an ellipsis or not, final οὐ is emphatic. Since initial position is usually the most emphatic in Ancient Greek (cf. p. 18), most of all in the earliest texts — and we find a very high proportion of negatives in initial position in Homer (see Moorhouse 1959: 71, 89ff.), emphasis in final position not unreasonably requires special accentuation. This is not difficult to accept if we concede that the accentuation of οὐ is a matter of degree. This also explains why it is not too surprising that οὐ is the only non-conjunction to appear unaccented in initial position, even when enclitics like φημί «I say» and ἔστι become accented in this position (e.g. Hom. *Il.* ii.350, vi.152).

As Moorhouse shows (id.: 26), οὐ is here behaving like the forms which in Early Greek are in transition from independent adverbs to unaccented prefixes and proclitic prepositions. Compare the following:

- (7) κατὰ δάκρυ χέουσα (Hom. *Il.* i.413)
- (8) ἔχεν κάτα γαῖα μέλαινα (Hom. *Il.* ii.699)

with the compound verb καταχέω. Only in (8) does κάτα have a real accent of its own (for the spurious accent on κατά, compare ἀλλὰ above); in this case, it follows the verb and is thus still fully independent, since κάτα would have to become a preverb before univerbation could take place⁶. Given that οὐ generally precedes the verb, the ellipsis of

6. There is no earlier stage of Greek in which the negatives followed the verb. The analogy with

the verb as in (5) will simply count as a special case of prepausal position. It should now be clear that the variation in the accent of οὐ is to be explained in terms of a scale from independence to proclitic: the more independent οὐ is, the more features of an oxytone it displays; and the more proclitic, the closer it resembles an atonic.

How does μὴ behave? Again, the answer is rather simpler than that for οὐ. It is always accented (like Skt. *mā́*) which suggests that it is more independent than οὐ. Inscriptions in the Cyprian syllabary, in which word division is usually marked, show both οὐ and μὴ joined to the word that they follow, for example: *melusai* (679.28)⁷ and *ovokareti* (= οὐ γὰρ ἔτι, «for no longer») (685.3). This is not, in fact, a counterexample as syllabic scripts often do not allow monosyllables to stand alone. Equally, both οὐ and μὴ usually become monosyllabic in poetry in synizesis with a vowel, for example: ἦ οὐκ (Hom. *Il.* v. 349), μὴ οὐ (strong negative) (Soph. *OT* 332), ἐγὼ οὐ «I not» (Ar. *Eq.* 340). With μὴ, but not οὐ, we also find prodelision of a following vowel, as in μὴ ἴγώ.

As we have already noticed, οὐ appears as οὐκ or οὐχ before a vowel. This strongly suggests that (at least) in these cases οὐ was considered phonologically as part of the following word if the usual rules of Ancient Greek phonotactics, which do not permit /k/ to appear in word-final position, apply to indeclinable particles like οὐ. When οὐ appears (accented) before a pause, it can never take a final κ or χ, as it cannot be proclitic in this position. Μὴ, on the other hand, never takes an additional consonant, except in the compound μηκέτι «no longer», where the /k/ is clearly present on the analogy of the objective οὐκέτι. The existence of μηκέτι nevertheless reminds us that there is no phonotactic reason why μὴ could not take a /k/ or /k^h/ word-finally and we surmise that μὴ is considered to be more independent than οὐ.

The conclusion which we should draw from the phonological evidence is that both οὐ and μὴ can vary in their degree of phonological independence, but that οὐ has a greater tendency to be proclitic. In a few cases, οὐ is felt to be so closely attached to the following word that it effectively becomes a prefix, with a consequent semantic change; for example: οὐκ ἔῶ «I forbid» (literally: «I do not allow»). These forms often retain οὐ even when the syntax of the construction requires μὴ (e.g. Lys. xiii.62).

The unmarked position for both οὐ and μὴ as sentential negatives is initial in early Greek, becoming preverbal during the Classical period (cf. p. 17 above) Constituent negatives usually precede their constituent, although in all cases the full inflectional system permits a highly flexible word order, which is much exploited in the literary and rhetorical works which predominate in our corpus (cf. Moorhouse 1959: 69ff.). Nevertheless, syntactically too, μὴ is often more independent than οὐ on account of the contexts in which it can occur, notably in prohibitions; note that μὴ on its own means «don't!» throughout the history of Greek. Moreover, as the subjective negative, μὴ is the marked form; this is particularly clear in contexts where both οὐ and μὴ are possible, but with different meanings, as in the constituent negation of participles. Compare the simple οἱ οὐ βουλόμενοι «those who do not wish» with the generic οἱ μὴ βουλόμενοι «those who are not such as to wish».

adverbs/prepositions cannot, therefore, be carried to a conclusion and does not provide evidence for larger-scale word-order changes (cf. Section VI).

7. References are to Schwyzler (1923).

Despite the phonological differences between the qualitative negatives, we find considerable symmetry in the ancient compounds of οὐ and μή. The best evidence for the common claim that μή creates all its compounds on the analogy of οὐ is μηκέτι. In Homer, composition is not universal and we find, for example, οὐκ... ἔτι. Both οὐτις and μήτις «no one» both occur from earliest times, but οὐτις occurs in composition more often than μήτις (Autenrieth 1877: svv.). We can thus develop the bare analogy argument and hold that οὐ is the more advanced in forming compounds and that μή follows its example.

Both οὐδὲ and μηδὲ are common in Greek from earliest times; the original usage as a simple conjunction «and (but) not» confirms the etymology as οὐ/μή with the conjunction δέ, which though not enclitic, is always found in second place⁸. The accentuation of οὐδὲ/μηδὲ is as we would expect. Both are common, including in the sense of «not even», in Ancient Greek from Homer onwards: note particularly οὐδ' ἥβαιόν «not even a little» (Hom. *Il.* ii.386) where it qualifies an adverb.

The usual Homeric expression for «no one» is οὐτις/μήτις. The forms οὐδαμὸς/μηδαμὸς, formed from οὐδὲ/μηδὲ and ἄμῶς, an old word meaning «one» are claimed as early forms by the grammarians Apollonius Dyscolus and Herodian and we find the plural forms of these in Herodotus (e.g. # i. 18, 24, 143, 144 etc.) and the adverbs οὐδαμὰ/μηδαμὰ and οὐδαμῶς/μηδαμῶς «not at all» regularly in Classical Greek. Since ἄμῶς does not survive, the connection between these negatives and «one» becomes less obvious. This matters less in the case of the adverbs than of the pronoun: while οὐδαμὸς/μηδαμὸς are not found in Classical Greek in the singular, a considerable number of adverbial compounds are created, especially in the fourth century.

Classical Greek does not use οὐτις/μήτις for «no one», but rather οὐδεις/μηδεις (except for some occasional poetic examples, the adverbial οὐτι, and the phrase μήτι γε «much less», for example in Demosthenes). The forms οὐδεις/μηδεις are compounds of the emphatic οὐδὲ/μηδὲ and the numeral εἷς «one» which is perispomenon and as such is much more heavily accented than the enclitic τισ, which serves in Ancient Greek as a kind of indefinite article. The change of accentuation to oxytone in οὐδεις/μηδεις is probably a matter of retraction *simpliciter* (Postgate 1924: 29), rather than because they are proclitic (*pace* Hatzidakis 1907: 156, who is here guilty of an anachronism). These forms hardly ever occur in the plural and clearly fill the gap left by οὐδαμὸς/μηδαμὸς. There is one occurrence of the dative οὐδενί in Homer (*Il.* xxii.459) in a very emphatic position in the last line of a speech:

(9) ἀλλὰ πολὺ προθέεσκε τὸ δν μένος οὐδενί εἴκων.

and only one of μηδέν, as a neuter accusative singular in:

(10) ὁ δ' ἀναίετο μηδέν ἔλεσθαι. (*Il.* xviii.500)

where it is the direct object of ἔλεσθαι. The other examples of οὐδέν are all adverbial

8. *Pace* Brugmann 1913: 610, who prefers to connect these words with Skt. *ned*, despite the absence of Greek primary negatives which derive from the Indo-European **ne*; see Moorhouse 1959: 14. It is anyway clear from the treatment of these words in Greek that they were considered to be derived from οὐ/μή and δέ.

(*Il.* xxii.332, xxiv.370 and *Od.* iv.195). In each case, οὐδὲν stands for the expected οὐ...τι, as an internal accusative.

At this stage, οὐδὲν/μηδὲν are pronominal with four of the six uses (ignoring repetitions) being internal accusatives. This is significant: οὐδὲν did not begin as an adverbial expression (*pace* Psychari 1889: XXIXf.) and it is only in the classical period that the process really begins which leads to the development of οὐδὲν as adverbial, at which stage (rather than earlier) μηδὲν is by analogy also used adverbially.

Some phrases with οὐδὲν as an internal accusative became fixed, like οὐδὲν φροντίζειν «think lightly of» and οὐδὲν λέγειν «talk nonsense», common in Plato. The use of οὐδὲν with comparatives, like οὐδὲν ἥττον is frequent in the Classical period, but is not found in Modern Greek (cf. p. 24 and Section II). There are a substantial number of Classical examples of οὐδὲν varying from those which are close to being direct objects to those which are indisputably adverbial. Some are collected by Jannaris (1897: 425f.), but with little consideration of the differences between the various types. We shall consider some of these as exemplifying the syntactic and semantic developments, but they will not necessarily be in chronological order.

In (11):

(11) μηδὲν φοβηθῆς. ([Aesch.] *PV* 127)

μηδὲν is simply a direct object. In (12) it seems to be an internal accusative:

(12) μάτην γὰρ οὐδὲν ὠφελῶν. ([Aesch.] *PV* 343)

Aristophanes, whose comedies are usually held to be closer than most Classical literature to the spoken language, offers several good examples. Consider:

(13) οὐδὲν ἄρα γρίφου διαφέρει Κλεώνυμος. (Ar. *Vesp.* 20)

This is one of several cases of the use of an internal accusative with verbs of difference and similarity. We then find οὐδὲν with verbs which can hardly be said to take an unexpressed internal accusative, like οὐδὲν ἦλθε (Ar. *Nub.* 537f.) or:

(14) ὄρχούμενος τῆς νυκτὸς οὐδὲν παύεται. (Ar. *Vesp.* 1478)

on which the scholiast comments:

(15) ἀντὶ τοῦ οὐ.

(he also cites *Il.* i.412). We even find οὐδὲν used more freely, some distance from the verb which it negates, as in:

(16) καίτοι Καρυστίοσι γε οὐδὲν τούτου εἵνεκα τοῦ κακοῦ ὑπερβολὴ ἐγένετο. (Hdt. vii.112.3)

The explanation which we favour for the fourth-century BC development of the alternative forms οὐδεῖς/μηδεῖς (the «theta forms») is essentially that of Meillet (1935: 277ff.) and is itself a good example of the type of changes for which we are arguing. He claims that they are created as a result of the re-division and subsequent re-compounding of οὐδὲ/μήδε and εἶς; the theta /t^h/ is due to the then current aspirate-assimilation rule (but see also below). We find this view preferable to that of Jannaris (1897: 170), who argues that οὐδὲ/μηδὲ and οὔτε/μήτε had become so confused with each other that «no one» became expressed by compounds of οὔτε/μήτε. This is anachronistic; the loss of

the distinction between οὐδέ/μήδε and οὔτε/μήτε is much later: we find it for example in the sixth-century Johannes Moschos (Mihevc-Gabrovec 1960: 83), but certainly not in the classical period. Even if we accept that the absence of variation between οὐδέ/μήδε and οὔτε/μήτε at this time is only due to scribal correction of the manuscripts in accordance with the expected form, it is surprising on this view that the other οὐδέ/μηδέ compounds are not replaced even in part by compounds of οὔτε/μήτε. Moreover, apart from examples of οὐδ'..εἰς separated by the particle ἄν we have a passage of Aristophanes with both this form and οὐδ' εἰς, not so separated and not compounded:

- (17) οὐδ' ἄν εἰς θύσειεν ἀνθρώπων ἔτι
οὐ βούν ἄν, οὐχὶ ψαιστόν, οὐκ, ἀλλ' οὐδέ ἐν. (Ar. *Plut.* 137f.)

(cf. D. XVI.i, iv). We also have two curious early philosophical fragments in containing the form δέν:

- (18) καὶ κ' οὐδὲν ἐκ δενός γένοιτο. (Alcaeus fr. 76)
«And nothing would come from *nothing*.»

- (19) μὴ μᾶλλον τὸ δέν ἢ τὸ μηδὲν εἶναι. (Democritus fr. 156)

While (18) probably adds nothing to our argument and may even be the result of a scribal error, (19) suggests that original οὐδεις/μηδεις could be reanalysed other than as compounds of οὐδέ/μηδέ in the classical period, so that any free variation between οὐδέ and οὔτε is unlikely to be reflected in the theta forms (cf. Meillet 1935: 277). Rather, the creation of the theta forms (our first evidence is an Attic inscription dated to 378 BC) was motivated by the semantic weakening of οὐδεις/μηδεις and facilitated by the loss of the identification of οὐδεις/μηδεις with οὐδέ/μηδέ. The theta forms predominate from the beginning of the third century BC to ca. 60 BC, after which the original forms begin to be restored and these predominate once again from the third century AD, although texts, especially the papyri, show as ever considerable variation. The range of analogous compounds, including ἐξουθενεῖν «set at nought», enjoy an equally brief life.

The change back to the original forms is hard to explain; even the Atticists were rarely able to achieve such strong reverses, despite the second-century grammarian Phrynichus' strictures (Phrynichus 160) against the theta forms. We might suspect that the theta forms were never as predominant in the spoken language as the written evidence suggests or that the variation is simply orthographic. Alternatively, the loss of these forms could be seen to represent the increasing influence of Ionic on the emergent *Koine* at the expense of Attic. However, Meillet, who advances this view and who additionally claims that the theta forms were «élégante<s>» (1935: 279), gives examples from such distant parts of the Greek world as Herculaneum and Pergamum. It appears that there is still something here to be explained.

Better perhaps is an explanation which postulates that the creation of the theta forms coincides with the beginning of the major sequence of phonological changes which includes the change from dental stops to fricatives. This group of changes cannot be dated precisely (see Browning 1983: 25ff.) but they took place over a long period from the third century BC to the third century AD or later. The date for the development of the fricatives is usually given as the first century AD, although there are a few hints at an earlier date in some dialects (Palmer 1980: 178). If our view here is correct, it

provides evidence for an early date in Attic. The sound which resulted from the conjunction of the voiced dental of οὐδ' and the aspirate of εἰς may have differed from the pure stop plus aspirate of οὐδ' εἰς sufficiently to prompt the use of an alternative character, without being phonetically identical to the voiceless aspirated dental [tʰ]. Once the phonological changes were further advanced and the unaspirated voiced dental stop /d/ had become a fricative [ð], then the fricative in the theta forms would merge with it as the same phoneme and could reasonably be written with the same character.

Of fundamental importance in the post-classical history of negation are the change from a pitch-accent to a stress-accent, the loss of vocalic quantity distinctions and the changes which eventually make εἰ, ἦ, ι, οἰ, υ, υἰ converge as the high front vowel /i/. One of the consequences of these changes was that the terminations of most present indicatives became identical to the corresponding present subjunctives and the desire to avoid ambiguity would have acted against any trend to generalise either οὐ or μή to all contexts.

The replacement of οὐ/μή by οὐδὲν/μηδὲν continues in the New Testament, although the examples there are confined largely to those which can be explained as internal accusatives. Of course, we would not expect the distribution of οὐδὲν/μηδὲν in this sense to be equal across all the books of the New Testament: Luke, for example, predictably prefers the Classical οὐ. In Mark, we find:

(20) οὐκ ἀποκρίνεται οὐδέν. (Mk. xiv.60)

This example is interesting because it follows the text-book form for quantitative negation in Classical Greek, that is the simple negative first followed by the compound negative, with negative concord. Equally according to the text-books, the reverse order of negatives destroys concord and produces an emphatic affirmative and this is the case even in New Testament Greek, which is generally held for the most part to reflect the usage of the spoken language. We cannot date precisely the change which leads to negative concord with this word order too, although it has certainly taken place by the time of Johannes Moschos (Mihevc-Gabrovec 1960: 82); the semantic distinction between the two orders naturally collapses in favour of concord when οὐδὲν/μηδὲν can be more freely substituted for οὐ/μή, and this will have an analogous effect on other compounds.

Other internal accusative uses of οὐδὲν/μηδὲν in the New Testament include:

(21) Ἰουδαίους οὐδὲν ἠδίκησα. (Acts xxv.10)

and again with expressions of difference:

(22) αἰτείτω ἐν πίστει μηδὲν διακρινόμενος. (Jas. i.6)

and frequently with the verb ὠφελῶ; this is close to being a fixed expression in the New Testament:

(23) Χριστὸς ὑμᾶς οὐδὲν ὠφελήσει. (Gal. v.2)

The dearth of the more adverbial usages of οὐδὲν/μηδὲν in the New Testament well illustrates the point which remains valid until the modern period, that, although οὐ requires strengthening and μή follows by analogy, no one pair of forms prevails⁹. From

9. In the Classical period we also find local adverbs serving a reinforcing role:

the New Testament increasingly οὐδέ, οὔτε, οὐδέπω literally «not even yet» and οὐχι (I Cor. v.12, cf. Section II) and some of their subjective equivalents¹⁰ are also used as strengthened forms of οὐ/μή. For example:

(24) οὐδὲ φόβει σὺ τὸν Θεόν; (Luke xxiii.40)

(cf. οὐδέπω for οὐπω in John xx.9 with Pallis 1929: *ad loc.*). We also find οὔτε in this sense:

(25) εἰ οὖν οὔτε ἐλάχιστον δύνασθαι. (Luke xii.26)

In the post-Classical period οὐ/μή and οὐδὲν/μηδὲν all continue in use with little consistency, although οὐδὲν eventually prevails over οὐ, already weak and weakened still further by the change to a stress-accent (cf. p. 16 and n. 5). This affects μή much less as it is phonologically stronger, partly on account of its initial consonant and partly for the other reasons which we have discussed.

Johannes Moschos often has οὐδέ (never οὐδὲν) for οὐ, though he does have μηδὲν for μή in prohibitions (Mihevc-Gabrovec 1960: 83). This exemplifies the confusion between the variety of words now sufficiently weakened in sense to be able to be used as qualitative negatives. Moreover, we find οὐδέ and οὔτε used indiscriminately by Moschos for «neither...nor» where Classical Greek would always have the pair οὔτε...οὔτε. We might conjecture that the accentuation of these had by this time coincided on the first syllable (cf. Modern οὔτε), although of course the written accents would conform to the Classical standard and it would be useful to have a metrical study like that of Trypanis (1960) on the accentuation of ἵνα in Romanos, which shows the stress to have been on the second syllable despite the written diacritic. More interesting is the reinforcement of οὐδὲν, μηδὲν, οὐδέ and οὐκ by the adverb ὅλως «completely» (cf. Section IV).

The first example of δὲν (ignoring (18) and (19) above) is sixth century AD:

(26) ὁμος δὲν ε ἀμαρτιε υμον εσιν. (P.Oxy. 1874.13)
«Nevertheless your sins are nought.»

The whole passage is colloquial. Several other innovatory forms are found, for example modern τριάντα «thirty» for the ancient τριάκοντα. This is the period in which the general loss of pretonic initial vowels began (see Browning 1983: 57f.) and this approach is preferable to Jannaris' view (Jannaris 1897: 426) that the initial οὐ- of οὐδὲν is lost because the word becomes proclitic and the only reason that μηδὲν did not behave in exactly the same way was the need to retain the distinction between objective and subjective negation. Rather, μή was strong enough to obviate the need for μηδὲν, which reappears later in the specialised sense of «zero». Moreover, the marginal Pontic dialect has the form δέν, but in its original (and so not especially proclitic) sense of «nothing» (see Dawkins 1937). The changes took many centuries to achieve completion: some ten centuries after Johannes Moschos, the grammarian Nicolaos Sophianos (1977: 249)

οὐ γάρ ἐσθ' ὅπου μ' ὀλεῖς (S. OT 448).

(for other examples see Fraenkel 1916:26 ff.)

10. Although μηδέπω etc. are rather different; see Section V.

includes in his list of negative expressions οὐ, οὐδέ, οὐδέν and δέν¹¹. This can be explained partly as the usual consequence of the tendency (to which written texts are especially subject) to archaism, specifically to the continued and frequent presence, even in the twelfth-century demotic Prodrōmus, of the simple negative οὐ. Thus, it is only in the later fifteenth-century manuscripts where δέν begins to appear. The subjective negative is established in Prodrōmus as μή, with only an occasional example of μηδέν, for example:

(27) ψωμῖν μηδέν τὸν δώσουν. (iii.42)

Even monosyllabic δέν is stronger than οὐ and, over time, δέν and μή become of equal phonological weight: in the later manuscripts (cf. Hatzidakis 1918: 4) we find δὲ for δέν before a voiced consonant (cf. τὸ for τόν, the masculine accusative singular of the definite article) and more interestingly μῆν for μή non-finally before a vowel or voiceless consonant. This is interesting because whereas τὸν and δέν lose an inherited /-n/ in certain environments, μή gains a consonant which it never previously had¹². This indicates that both the objective and subjective negatives are at last phonologically equal forms of the shape CV(n). Modern Southern Italian dialects of Greek, however, often treat the initial consonant of δέν as weak, either assimilating it to the preceding consonant or omitting it altogether (see Rohlfs 1930: 186)¹³, this does not happen to μή — presumably for the predictable phonological and syntactic reasons — but at least the phonological differences between δὲ(v) and μῆ(v) are significantly fewer than between ancient οὐ and μή.

The modern usage can be seen emerging from what we have seen in Prodrōmus. We find:

(28) δὲ θέλω.

(29) δέν εἶναι τὸ βιβλίο μου.

(30) οἱ μή διανοούμενοι.

(31) κι ἄς μῆν ἔρθουν.

Now, although we have shown that οὐδέν replaces οὐ, we do not find δέν standing in Modern Greek in every context in which an objective negative is required and Classical Greek had οὐ. Nor is Hatzidakis (1918: 5) quite correct in claiming that δέν corresponds distributionally exactly to the sum of the ancient adverbial or quasi-adverbial uses of οὐδέν. For Ancient Greek, as we saw above, negates comparatives with οὐδέν, which is not reflected in the modern language.

The usual Ancient Greek (objective) constituent negative is οὐ as in:

(32) ἔρχεται οὐχ ὡς φίλος, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἀπολύη ἡμᾶς.

In Modern Greek, however, we find in this context ὄχι, to which we must now turn.

11. Derivative forms like μηδενάς «no one» are found in the seventeenth century, at least in Cretan comedy.

12. Classical μῆν is, of course, a distinct word.

13. An example is ε σε πήρα for δεν σε πήρα «I did not take you» from the dialect of Apulia (G. Aprile, *Calimera e i suoi traudìa* p. 17, cited in Kontosopoulos 1981:86).

II

The negative *ὄχι* corresponds to English «No!» in answering questions, although some northern dialects use *δέν* (Hatzidakis 1918: 5). It is also used in lexical and phrasal constituent negation, as:

(33) *ὄχι ἐγώ, ἀλλ' ἐσύ.*

(34) *ἔπρεπε ὄχι νὰ εἰδοποιήσω, ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν νὰ πάρω τὴν ἄδειά του.* (Karagatsis, cited in Mackridge 1985: 245)

and can stand for a constituent as in:

(35) *Θέλεις ἢ ὄχι;*

Given the use of *ὄχι* in these contexts, the derivation from the ancient interjection and emphatic *οὐχι* seems plausible and its extension to constituent negation is not problematic. We noted above that *-χι* is an inherited suffix. Although there is one ancient example of *μηχι* and many, down to the modern dialects, of *ναιχι* «yes indeed», the suffix is not productive and there are no compounds of *οὐχι*. The form *οὐκί* is found in Homer (*Il.* xv.137) (perhaps *metri gratia*) as an emphatic in tragedy, comedy and prose (especially Plato) and in the New Testament. We have examples from papyri for the six or so centuries surrounding the birth of Christ.

The serious problem is how to explain the shift of accent and the change of the vowel quality. The *οὐ* of *οὐχι* is a genuine diphthong in origin, but by the Classical period had acquired, the value /u/ (cf. Allen 1974: 72ff). In the second century AD we find it often written *ο-* never *ω-*, but not often enough to suggest that the sound has actually merged with /o/, but rather that it has become the monophthong /u/ (Gignac 1976: 325ff.). This phone could not be written as *υ*, which instead represents /y/. Literary evidence is unhelpful on this point and our evidence for *ὄχι* is limited until the modern period, though it does appear in Sophianos' list (1977: 249). In short, we can provide no sure explanation of why we find *ὄχι* alongside *οὔτε* (although note Cretan *οὐχί*, used to call away animals; see Hatzidakis 1918: 5). There may have been a long intermediate period of free variation¹⁴.

The accent of *οὐχι* may have moved to the initial syllable (there are few parallels, compare *ἀκόμη* «still» from earlier *ἀκμήν* and *ἔτσι* «thus» from *οὐτωσί*, although we should note the marginal Pontic forms *κί*, *οὐκί* etc (Dawkins 1937, Kontosopoulos 1981:14), where the original accentuation of *οὐκί* is retained. Since these forms which correspond in sense to standard modern *δέν* are only in Pontic (Hatzidakis 1918: 5), they must be old and the change in accent to that of *ὄχι* could have happened elsewhere early in the mediaeval period. Our earliest attestation of *ὄχι* could have happened elsewhere early in the mediaeval period. Our earliest attestation of *ὄχι* may be in the fifteenth-century Escorial manuscript of the romance *Lybistros and Rodámne*.

14. It might not be too outrageous nevertheless to suggest the possibility of some influence from Turkish *jo* «no» here. The upwards movement of the head which accompanies *ὄχι* is often claimed to be Turkish in origin and, although contrary to the usual reluctance of speakers to borrow basic vocabulary from other languages, it is very easy to imagine the advantage of using a word for «no» which was readily understood by the Turkish occupiers.

Hatzidakis derives ὄχι from ἐγὼ οὐχί, which would account for the accentuation. Since /o/ is stronger than /u/ in the Modern Greek «vowel hierarchy»¹⁵ we would expect to find /o/ here. The fact that we find *o* rather than *ω* may be of no more than orthographic interest. Nevertheless, if Hatzidakis' suggestion were correct, (and there is no evidence that ἐγὼ appeared with especially high frequency before οὐχί) then we should certainly expect some, perhaps dialectal, forms like γόχι to appear; we cannot of course adduce Mariupol dialect *jo* (Dawkins 1937) which reflects a borrowing from Turkish¹⁶. It remains that there is no satisfactory account of the change from οὐχί to ὄχι from within Greek.

III

Although it generally prevails, the objective/subjective distinction between οὐ and μή is lost in the constituent negation of infinitives (for as long as they survive) and participles, with some examples as early as Plutarch and with the trend increasing from the New Testament onwards (Blass et al. 1961:220ff., Sophocles 1900: sv.). Generalisation of one of two parallel forms, even within a restricted domain, is common but we might expect the unmarked form to prevail. Although there are always counterexamples in the Byzantine and later mediaeval period, the trend is visible in Moschos, especially after verbs of saying or feeling (Mihevc-Gabrovec 1961:84). We could of course explain this syntactically as a trend towards identifying subordinate clauses as subjective. Jannaris (1897:43) suggests that οὐδέν is inappropriate as a negative of infinitives and participles and this seems true, but we would argue that the reason is as much phonological as syntactic and semantic. The form οὐδέν is at this early stage too strong phonologically to act as the negative part of a complementiser. On the analogy of subjective subordinate clauses μή is adopted. Finally, in support of this we note that Moschos uses μηδέν for μή in prohibitions, but not before infinitives or participles (Mihevc-Gabrovec 1960:83). The same is true of Prodromus; in:

(36) μηδέν μεμαθηκότες. (i. 253)

μηδέν is the direct object.

IV

When οὐδέν/μηδέν replace οὐ/μή, the gap for «no one» is filled first, for example by Moschos by οὐ... τις (separated), with which we can compare his frequent use of indefinite expressions (for example: τίποτε «in no way»). Here, Jannaris (1897: 355f.) may be right to argue that τις, becoming prepositive, is now sufficiently phonologically strong to stand independently. We have some possible cases of τις prepositive, for example:

15. In Modern Greek, the «vowel hierarchy» determines which of two juxtaposed vowels can (optionally) be lost; the hierarchy is determined by the quality of the vowels, rather than by accent of the order in which they occur. The order is (with the leftmost phoneme prevailing over those to its right): /a/ /o/ /u/ {/e/, /i/} (cf. Mackridge 1985:33f.).

16. See note 14.

(37) τίνες κοσμικοί... (Moschos, ed. Miele 1951: ch. 8)

The question is whether there are enough examples of prepositive τίς early enough to account in this way for the widespread use of οὐ...τις. There are a few further examples:

(38) τίς τῶν πατέρων. (Anastasio of Sinai 27)

probably to be dated about the same time as Moschos, but few of these are indisputably early enough to be significant.

Jannaris' argument certainly works for the forms for «no one» derived again from εἷς (which is always prepositive), this time prefixed by κᾶν, which survives into the modern language, as κανείς «no one», and so on. The prefix κᾶν is derived from the conjunction καί, in its intensive sense «even» and ἄν which was originally a conditional particle. The form κᾶν appears frequently in Plato and the New Testament and soon becomes simply an emphatic form of the intensive καί. A good example of καί and the indefinite is found in Moschos:

(39) καί μίαν ὄραν οὐκ ἐνδίδει μοι. (3033B)

The form κανείς is already weakened so as sometimes to require strengthening by adverbs like πόσως «how much so». In Modern Greek κανείς is normally only used as an adjective qualifying count nouns which have already been mentioned or as a non-neuter pronoun «no one»; «nothing» is expressed by τίποτα which is a variant of τίποτε, itself a reinforced form of τι.

Although many of the original indefinite functions of κανείς and τίποτε are taken over in the modern language by κάποιος and κάτι respectively (for which compare the interrogative forms ποιός and τί), κανείς still usually requires an explicit negative to be present when it is used in a negative sense (see Mackridge 1985: 231). Where the negative is not required, as in the answer to questions like:

(40) ποιός θέλει; - κανείς.

there is still no ambiguity. In simple terms, we could consider the answer as containing an ellipsis of δέ θέλει since κανείς cannot be followed by a verb with affirmative sense (though cf. p. 231 on κανείς *after* its verb). However, given the origins of κανείς, it may be more accurate to assume a pragmatic development in which the use of κανείς implies that no more definite answer can be given and so the answer must be negative.

Similarly καθόλου and διόλου, originally used in the positive sense «absolutely» (from Demosthenes onwards, and still in this sense in Prodrōmus) came to be used exclusively in a negative sense and so, as the answer to a question, do not need any further explicit negative (cf. ποτέ «some time» and see Roussel 1922: 268f. for some other positive words used negatively in demotic literature; he includes ψυχή, used like French *personne*).¹⁷ Sophianos' list of negative words includes οὐδαμῶς, οὐδέποτε, οὐδόλως, οὐδέψυχα, οὐδεπόσως and πόσως.

17. See Section VI.

V

In Classical Greek, verbs of fearing, caution and so on take a subjective construction with the complementiser μή, usually translated as «lest». This is a virtual rather than an explicit negative and a special semantically weaker but phonologically fuller form μήπως «lest in a way» is found frequently instead of μή from the New Testament onwards (Blass et al. 1961: 220ff.) and, for example, in Moschos (Mihevc-Gabrovec 1960:106). With the verb of fearing omitted, the modern sense of «(I wonder) whether» or even just «perhaps», can easily be implied and this sense of μή is found as early as Plato and of μήπως and μήποτε as early as Aristotle.

VI

The conclusion of our investigation into Greek negatives is that the best explanation of the principal developments is in terms of a series of weakenings and re-strengthenings, both phonological and syntactic/semantic. No large-scale changes of word order are apparent.

It is quite possible, although difficult to prove, that the Greek changes were influenced by similar changes in Latin and its Romance descendents, as for example is held to be the case with the development of the periphrastic verbal forms. We complete this paper by considering some aspects of negation in Romance.

The French *ne...pas* construction is one example of a cognate accusative becoming an (at first emphatic) negative in its own right (cf. Harris 1978: 25f. and, for a list of such expressions dating back to Classical and Vulgar Latin, Bourciez 1946: 119, 271 and for the English parallel *not*, from *no whit* see Jespersen 1917:9ff.). The adoption of this usage in French was gradual: *pas* is already adverbial in Old French, while *point* and *mie* are still primarily substantival (Price 1962); *pas* predominates in Modern French. We do not, however, find the word for «nothing» in this role in Romance (nevertheless compare Old Latin *ne oinom* > Classical *non* and German *nicht*, originally «nothing» later «non»; Wackernagel 1924: 252f.).

The internal accusative *pas*, originally used with verbs of motion naturally comes in object position in Old French, which is a SVO language. It is phonologically stronger than the original preverbal negative *ne* and when, as has been gradually happening since the sixteenth century (Ashby 1981), *ne* is lost *pas* is established as the sole negative marker in its constructions. From a strict typological point of view, this change is difficult to explain (Harris 1978: 26) as VO languages should have preverbal sentence qualifiers, including negatives. Before considering how the typologist might attempt to resolve the problem, we shall first consider a set of explanations for the French evidence which is consistent with the argument which we have been advancing for Greek.

Ashby (1981), in a corpus-based study, identifies some of the factors which determine whether *ne* is retained in contemporary spoken French. Among these, phonological considerations are important, as in Greek, and *ne* is most likely to be retained postpausally and when adjacent to a nasal vowel. Semantic features of the second part of the negative often determine whether *ne* is retained: the stronger the negative force of the second part, the less, *ne* seems to be required. Thus, *ne* is often lost in *jamais* and *rien* clauses but retained in «weak» negative *que* and *plus* clauses; *que* and *plus* still have non-negative uses, whereas *rien* and *personne* are now exclusively negative. *Jamais* and *aucun* (with its non-negative literary use of which Greek *κατέϊς* in this sense is probably

a calque) are intermediate cases. These changes from non-negative to negative senses can of course be compared with Greek καθόλου and διόλου. The degree of «negativeness» of individual negative markers measured in these ways is a major consideration in determining the presence or absence of (what is, in another guise) «double negation» both in French or in other Romance languages, although a language may generalise one pattern throughout (cf. Posner 1982).

The evidence from Greek adds strength to a phonological and syntactic/semantic weakening and re-strengthening account of the development of negation in Romance. The gradualness of the changes is consistent with this approach and it is arguably simpler than the typological explanation of Vennemann (1974: 366ff.) which treats the negatives (in their surface realisation) as adverbs changing from preverbal position in a SVX system to postverbal in a SXV system. Equally, even if Kayne (1975:92 ff) is correct in his formal claim that French is in the process of changing from SVO to VOS we can still reject Harris (1978: 118) view that the French negative, considered in its Deep Structure realisation as a sentence qualifier is undergoing a transformation as a direct result of the putative wider change. In fact, if (as Kayne here suggests) the verb group in colloquial French is to be treated as a single unit consisting of subject pronoun, verb and clitic object pronouns, an external (and therefore stronger) position for the negative would be all the more likely to predominate.

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