JIHOČESKÁ UNIVERZITA V ČESKÝCH BUDĚJOVICÍCH

FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA

ÚSTAV ANGLISTIKY

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

Adjective Positions in Old English and Middle English Homilies and Sermons

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Jana Kozubíková Šandová, Ph.D.

Autor práce: Bc. Alexandra Ilićová

Studijní obor: uCJL – uAJL

Ročník: 4.

2023

I confirm that this thesis is my own work written using solely the sources and literature properly quoted and acknowledged as works cited.

České Budějovice 28.7.2023

_____

Alexandra ilićová

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Mgr. Jana Kozubíková Šandová, Ph.D.,

for her guidance in the process of writing this thesis, for all her insights, for her patience and for kind words of encouragement.

Abstract

The thesis is focused on the variability of adjectival position in noun phrases in the Old English and Middle English periods, which is analyzed on the textual samples of six Old English and Middle English homilies and sermons. It describes these texts with regards to their general characteristics and focuses on the grammatical changes that occurred in the Old English and Middle English periods, especially with regards to leveling of inflectional endings and the gradual loss of strong and weak inflection. Subsequently, it focuses on the interplay of the factors of adjective position, strong or weak inflection (particularly in Old English), definiteness or indefiniteness of the noun phrase, and meaning. It also explores the connection of adjective position and information structure of the texts. It devotes brief attention to two cases of similarity between adjective placement nowadays, and in the past.

Keywords: adjective position, noun phrase, Old English, Middle English, strong inflection, weak inflection, definiteness of the noun phrase, meaning, information structure

Anotace

Práce je zaměřena na variabilitu pozice adjektiv v substantivních frázich ve staré a střední angličtině. Tato problematika je zkoumána na podkladu šesti staroanglických a středoanglických homílií a kázání. Práce nejprve popisuje tyto texty s ohledem na gramatické změny, které se v období staré a střední angličtiny udály, se zaměřením na ztrátu flektivních koncovek a ústup silné a slabé deklinace. Dále se v rámci substantivní fráze zaměřuje na souhru faktorů, kterými jsou adjektivní pozice, silná a slabá deklinace (především ve staré angličtině), určitost a neurčitost substantivní fráze a význam. Práce se také věnuje spojení mezi pozicí adjektiv a informační strukturou textu. Práce se krátce věnuje dvěma případům podobnosti pozice adjektiv v substantivní frázi v minulosti a dnes.

Klíčová slova: pozice adjektiv, substantivní fráze, stará angličtina, střední angličtina, silná deklinace, slabá deklinace, určitost a neurčitost substantní fáze, význam, informační struktura

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

No language in the world is completely immune to language change. Some languages change little, some change much; and the English language has changed significantly over the past centuries.

One of the areas of relatively recent interest is the question of position of adjectives in the Old English and Middle English periods. Adjectives in Old English and Middle English could be placed prenominally, postnominally, or ambilaterally with respect to the noun they modified, and the variability of position gave rise to the question whether the choice of position could have been governed by an identifiable set of rules or tendencies.

In an attempt to find an answer to this question, several linguists conducted research in this area, and they came up with various theories and propositions; among them was Olga Fischer, the pioneer in this area of research.

These researches have usually been conducted in large-scale settings with extensive use of various linguistic corpora; and they produced generalizing results. However, fewer studies have been conducted in context of more narrowly focused research samples, which would allow for more detailed observations about adjective position in context of different literary genres.

One of the major well-preserved literary genres from the Old English and Middle English periods are religious writings, particularly homilies and sermons, and they have become the focus of this thesis.

The aims of the thesis are to find out whether there can be any connections between adjective position and the Old (and Middle) English category of strong or weak declension, between adjective position and definiteness of the noun phrase, and adjective position and differences in meaning. On top of that, another area of interest is whether and how adjective position influences information structure of the examined texts.

In order to conduct the research, 598 noun phrases modified by at least one adjective were collected from six textual samples of homilies and sermons from the 9th to 15th centuries, and they were analyzed with regard to the above-mentioned aims.

The first six chapters of the thesis contain information of theoretical character, useful to understand the topic of adjective position in the Old English and Middle

English Periods. These include information about periodization, Old English and Middle English noun phrase, and brief attention is devoted to Present-Day English as a tool for reference. Next, attention has been devoted to general principles of textual information structure. The last theoretical chapter is aimed at the description Olga Fischer´s theory and findings about the variability of adjective position, and at providing basic information about homilies and sermons.

The next part of the thesis is devoted to the conducted research in terms of methodology, followed by a description of the analyzed texts in terms of the most prototypical grammatical shifts and changes in the area of the noun phrase.

Chapters 9 and 10 are then devoted to the main part of the research; that is, to the analysis of the noun phrases and adjectives in terms of the above-mentioned aims. A brief closing chapter is devoted to some possible observations about Present-Day English use of adjectival position in the light of the past developments.

2 Periodization

The views about periodization of the English Language sometimes vary, which is the result of the fact that different approaches to it can be adopted.

The beginning of the Old English period can be dated back to the very beginnings of the presence of the English language on the British Isles at around 450 A.D., when the Germanic tribes of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes brought it there, and this period stretches for several centuries (Lass 41-42).

Based on differences in approach, the framing event for the transition between the Old English and the Middle English period is sometimes considered to be the Norman conquest in 1066; in other words - the year which marked the beginning of Norman rule in Britain. However, this date is, from a linguistic point of view, an external history milestone (Gelderen 10) which does not reflect the fact that it takes a much longer period of time for any language changes to become apparent (Blake 1).

From the point of view of the internal history of the English language, it seems that the Old English period can be considered to last much longer - up to the year 1150, based on the fact that some of the prominent texts of the English language, like the *Peterborough Chronicle*, shows distinct marks signifying significant consistent changes within the language system. (Gelderen 10).

The year 1150 is going to be used as the milestone dividing the Old English and Middle English periods. However, the adoption of any particular date does not mean that the Old English system abruptly disappeared, rather, it gradually evolved into the system of the Middle English period (Gelderen 10). The evidence for this fact is going to be shown in this thesis.

The duration of the Middle English period can also be considered to be a matter of opinion. It stretches across the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries, and is sometimes considered to end with the beginning of the printing press in Britain in 1476 (Crystal, *Cambridge Encyclopedia* 56). While the introduction of this great invention undoubtedly brought and facilitated the spread of many changes, from the point of view of internal history of the English language, a later date, the year 1500 is going to be considered as the end of the Middle English period because it is a date by which some of the major changes occurring in the Middle English period had taken place. The year

1500 is therefore also considered to be the beginning of the Early Modern English Period (Gelderen 10).

By the 18th century, English reached its Late Modern stage, during which, for example, the old third person forms such as *cometh, loveth* fell out of common use as well as the pronouns *thou* and *thee*, which remained in use particularly in religious language (Barber 211).

Finally, the latest, contemporary stage of development of the English language is called Present-Day English, and is dated since the beginning of the 20th century till today.

3 Old English Noun Phrase

Old English noun phrases in many ways resemble Present-Day English ones - there were, sorted by the usual order in which they appeared: (1) determiners including quantifiers, demonstrative and possessive pronouns, numerals, the semi-determiner *oþer* (PDE: other) (2) modifiers, and (3) genitive nouns followed by (4) head. Although a noun phrase with all the slots simultaneously occupied is not attested (Fischer et al. 46) an example of an Old English noun phrase could be: *monige oþre cyninges þegnas* (many other of-king thanes, PDE: many other thanes of the king) (example taken from Fischer et al. 46).

3.1 Head

In Old English, the noun - the head of the noun phrase and its governing element, was inflected, which means the expression of "the relation of words in a sentence largely by means of inflections." For this reason, it is more similar to Latin (Baugh 63-64), present-day German, or even to Slavic languages, including Czech.

There was a case system generally comprising four cases: nominative, genitive, dative, and accusative (Baugh 65).

Old English also distinguishes singular and plural number, and three grammatical genders (masculine, feminine, and neuter), which do not have to always correspond with the natural gender of the objects they denote (*mægden* - "girl" is neuter, *wīfmann* - "woman" is masculine, etc.) (Baugh 63-64).

3.2 Determiners (Demonstratives and Articles)

As for determiners, it is vital to mention the function of some of the most distinct elements of Present-Day English, which are demonstratives and articles.

Old English has no dedicated definite article in the contemporary sense, however, the demonstrative pronoun *se* (*þæt, seō*) and *þes* (*þis, þēos*) fulfil its function, covering the contemporary range of use of *the*, *this*, and *that* (Quirk and Wren 69-70), as in *Her on þysum geare for se micla here, þe we gefyrn ymbre spræcon...* (PDE: In this year went the great army which we spoke about before...) (example taken from Quirk and Wren 69). Although the functions of Present-Day English *the* and Old English *se* and

þes overlap, it is not possible to expect them to be used in every case in which Present-Day English would require it. In Old English, in fact, their usage was not strictly necessary, as in *āhton wælstove gewald* (PDE: ...had (the) mastery of (the) battlefield) (Quirk and Wren 71, example ibid.)

Concerning the indefinite article as we know it, it is (as well) hard to find a direct equivalent to the Present-Day English indefinite article *a*. In most cases, *ān* usually occurs as a numeral and just as *sum* (some) it denotes, as Quirk and Wren put it, "a ´strong indefiniteness´", in the sense of "´a certain´", such as *þær is mid Estum ān mægð* (PDE: among the Estonians there is a certain tribe), or *þā stōd him sum mon æt* (PDE: then there stood by him a certain man) (71, examples ibid.).

Most often, indefiniteness was, in fact, expressed by zero article, similarly to Present-Day English plural: *There were cars outside* (Quirk and Wren 71), therefore it is possible to find *on ∅ beorg* (PDE: onto a mountain), *to ∅ wæfersyne* (PDE: as a spectacle), and *∅ holtes on ende* (PDE: at the edge of a wood) (examples taken from Mitchell and Robinson 107). Nevertheless, mainly in late Old English, there are rare instances where *ān* seems to fulfill the function of the indefinite article in the contemporary sense, e.g., *hig worhton... āne anlīcnesse of āre* (PDE: they made a statue of brass) (Quirk and Wren 72, example ibid.).

3.3 Modifiers

The third significant element of the noun phrase, and the last one to discuss, are the modifiers. Old English adjective system and adjectival features are discussed in more detail in the section *3.5 Old English Adjectives.*

3.4 Definiteness and Indefiniteness of the Noun Phrase

Similarly to the Present-Day English situation, Old English noun phrases were recognized as grammatically definite if they contained "personal or demonstrative pronouns, nouns with unique reference, such as proper nouns, and nouns with a possessive demonstrative determiner." (Hogg 171).

3.5 Old English Adjectives

Old English adjectives could be, just as nowadays, both attributive: *ealde menn* (PDE: old men) and predicative: *Se mann is eald.* (PDE: The man is old.) (examples adapted from Mitchell and Robinson 30).

They agree with the noun in number, gender, and case. Together with other Germanic languages (such as Dutch, German, and Swedish) Old English developed a distinct feature - there are two sets of declensions - strong and weak (Algeo and Pyles 97), and therefore two sets of case endings.

The adjective *gōd* (PDE: good) can be used as a typical example of adjectival inflection (for a more detailed explanation of the inflectional paradigm see for example Quirk and Wren 31-33).

It declines as follows in the strong and weak declensions:

Strong Declension					
	Sg.			Pl.		
Case	M	F	N	M	F	N
N.	gōd	gōd	gōd	gōd-e	gōd-a	gōd
G.	gōd-es	gōd-re	gōd-es	gōd-ra	gōd-ra	gōd-ra
D.	gōd-um	gōd-re	gōd-um	gōd-um	gōd-um	gōd-um
A.	gōd-ne	gōd-e	gōd	gōd-e	gōd-a	gōd
I.	gōd-e	-	gōd-e	-	-	-
Weak Declension						
	Sg.			Pl.		
Case	M	F	N	M	F	N
N.	gōd-a	gōd-e	gōd-e	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-an
G.	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-ra (gōd-ena)	gōd-ra (gōd-ena)	gōd-ra (gōd-ena)
D.	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-um	gōd-um	gōd-um
A.	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-e	gōd-an	gōd-an	gōd-an
I.	-	-	-	-	-	-

(Both tables adapted from Baugh 66.)

3.5.1 The Use of Strong and Weak Declensions

The use of strong and weak adjectival forms depends on the particular situation in which the adjective is used (Mitchell and Robinson 31).

3.5.1.1 Strong Declension (Indefinite Declension)

Strong forms of adjectives (the strong declension or indefinite declension) were generally used when "no attempt was made to specify and particularize the item modified" (Quirk and Wren 68). Therefore, the strong forms of adjectives can be found when they are not preceded by (a) any of the two demonstratives (*se, þes*) (Quirk and Wren 68) nor by (b) possessive pronouns (Baugh 66). Strong forms normally also appeared if (c) the adjective was used predicatively (*ðā wurdon hī ... drēōrige*, PDE: Then they became sad.) (Quirk and Wren 68, example ibid.), and (d) when the adjective was superlative without being accompanied by a demonstrative - in these cases, it was usually used in the nominative case in predicative function as a copula (*þæt ... land is ... brādost*, PDE: The land is widest) (Quirk and Wren 69, example ibid.).

3.5.1.2 Weak Declension (Definite Declension)

The weak declension was, in contrast to the strong one, used as the "specifying and particularising form (...), usually signifying that the item modified is the one expected" in a given context "or the one referred to just previously (*se foresprecena here* ´the above mentioned force´)" (Quirk and Wren 68).

Weak forms of adjectives were commonly used (a) after demonstratives (*under þām cealdan wætere*, PDE: under the cold water) (Quirk and Wren 68, example ibid.), (b) possessives (*mit his micclan werode*, PDE: with his large force) (Quirk and Wren 69, example ibid.), (c) in comparative adjectives (*þā wǣron ǣðger ge swiftran ge unwealtran*, PDE: they were both faster and steadier (Quirk and Wren 69, example ibid.), and (d) in superlative adjectives, which were usually accompanied by a demonstrative (*þone mǣstan dǣl*, PDE: the largest part) (Quirk and Wren 69, example ibid.), superlative adjectives in *-ma* were always declined weak (Campbell 261). The weak declension was also common with (e) the vocative (*Beōwulf leōfa*, PDE: dear Beowulf) (Quirk and Wren 69, example ibid.).

4 Middle English Noun Phrase

Morphologically, the nature of a large part of the linguistic change of the English language can be described as "a general reduction in inflections" (Iglesias-Rábade 85). The inflectional levelling took place partly because of phonetic changes, and partly due to the occurrence of linguistic analogy. The oldest traces of these changes can be found in 10th-century manuscripts and by the 12th century, they are generally considered to have been carried out (Baugh 190). As a result, the Old English endings marking person, number, case, and gender underwent so significant changes in pronunciation that their distinctive value (and ability to carry linguistic information) was lost (Iglesias-Rábade 85).

4.1 Head

The above-mentioned changes strongly manifested in the noun. The word *mūðum* (PDE: to the mouths) can serve as an example. The final *-n* was eventually dropped while at the same time, "the vowels *a, o, u, e* in inflectional endings were obscured to a sound, the so-called ´indeterminate vowel´, which came to be written *e*, (less often *i, y, u*, depending on place and date). As a result, a number of originally distinct endings (…) were reduced generally to a uniform *-e*, and such grammatical distinctions as they formerly expressed were no longer conveyed" (Baugh 190).

Iglesias-Rábade presents an example of these changes in the word *dōm* (PDE: doom, judgement):

Changes in Nouns from Old English to Middle English			
Singular			
Case	**OE**	**late OE / early ME**	**Late ME**
N	Dōm	dōm (-e)	doom (-e)
G	dōm-es	dōm-es	doom-es
D	dōm-e	dōm-e	doom (-e)
A	Dōm	dōm (-e)	doom (-e)
Plural			
Case	**OE**	**late OE / early ME**	**Late ME**
N	dōm-as	dōm-es	doom-es
G	dōm-a	dōm-e	doom-es
D	dōm-um	dōm-en	doom-es
A	dōm-as	dōm-es	doom-es

(Table adapted from Iglesias-Rábade 88)

From the table it is apparent that the variety of inflections gradually decreased until, by late Middle English, there were generally two types of endings left: *(-e)*, which was not pronounced, was used for all singular cases except for the genitive, and -*(e)s* became to be used for the genitive singular and all plural cases (Iglesias-Rábade 89).

The decay of the Old English system is also apparent in changes regarding grammatical number and gender. The new endings in word forms such as the feminine *hond-es* (PDE: hands), *soul-es* (PDE: souls), and masculine *ston-es* (PDE: stones), *hom-es* (PDE: homes) could no longer be used as gender markers since -*es* became to be commonly used for genitive singular, and all plural cases. The gender system adapted to this situation and a new system of distinguishing gender emerged: animate nouns which could be in some way ascribed to the male or female sex adopted male or female gender, while inanimate nouns started to be associated with the neuter (Iglesias-Rábade 93-94).

4.2 Determiners (Demonstratives and Articles)

The changes and shifts in the English language system also caused developments in the usage of determiners and articles.

Old English had a fully inflected system of two demonstrative pronouns *se* (*þæt, seō*) and *þes* (*þis, þeōs*) which to a certain degree fulfilled the function of contemporary definite article, as well as Present-Day English "this" and "that".

During the Middle English period, *se* (nom. sg. masc.) and *seō* (nom. sg. fem.), by analogical processes, changed to *þe* and *þeō* to correspond with other forms of the demonstrative (that also began with *þ*). After that, the inflectional forms were abandoned, at first in Northern and East Midland dialects. Instead of them, the indeclinable *þe* began to be used. By the mid-13th century, the indeclinable variants were used in the majority of cases.

The other demonstrative fulfilling certain aspects of the present-day definite article was *þes*. Just as with *se*, most of the inflectional forms of this pronoun were abandoned during the Middle English period. In the 13th century, the nom. sg. neuter form *þis* prevailed over the other inflectional forms of the demonstrative, and the plural form *þise* - "these" was formed as well. These two forms started to be used for nearby

objects. Through various processes, *þæt* became to be used as "that", and *þose* as "those" for distant objects. (Iglesias-Rábade 58-59) Both *þis* and *þæt* and their plural variants were commonly used as demonstratives equivalent in character to the definite article (Iglesias-Rábade 60-61).

The Old English *ān* "began to be used with a generic meaning indicating any member of" a "species or class" (Iglesias-Rábade 57), which happened at the end of the Old English period. The usually used form changed to *an(e)* or *on(e)* and the inflected variants of *ān* eventually fell out of use. A similar process happened with Old English *sum*, which was also used to individualize and generalize; however, in the transitional period from Old English to Middle English, *an(e)* became the preferred variant and started to be used as the indefinite article (Iglesias-Rábade 57).

4.3 Modifiers

Just as in the chapter on the Old English noun phrase, Middle English adjectives and the changes they underwent during this period, are discussed in a separate chapter - chapter 4.5 *Middle English Adjectives.*

4.4 Definiteness and Indefiniteness of the Noun Phrase

As for the definiteness of the noun Phrase in Middle English, there was development and continuation from the Old English period; therefore, what was said about the definiteness and indefiniteness of the noun phrase and the possibility of their identification in the Old English period, can be largely assumed to be applicable event the period of Middle English.

The largest changes can be seen in two aspects: Firstly, as described above, with the gradual development of the demonstratives and the definite article, a major change can be seen in the fact that a definite noun phrase could be now begin to identified identified by the use of the definite article. Analogically, indefinite noun phrases in the Middle English period could be identified by the newly formed indefinite article.

Secondly, as the distinction between a strong and a weak adjective based on the inflectional endings gradually became difficult, distinguishing the indications of definiteness of indefiniteness of a given noun phrase based on this parameter stopped being readily available (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 252).

4.5 Middle English Adjectives

The same phonological changes that were in operation during the transition from Old to Middle English and that caused the changes in Old English nouns, were also vital in the transition of the adjective system to the Middle English period.

The endings *a, o,* and *u* were leveled to *e.* Subsequently, the nom. masc. sing. and nom. mas. pl. were applied to all the remaining cases which meant that the formal distinction based on the inflectional endings was lost (Iglesias-Rábade 105-106).

From the chart below it is obvious that the final stage of the process had the following results:

Results of changes in the adjectival system from Old English to Middle English		
	Declension type	
Cases	**Strong declension**	**Weak declension**
Singular (all cases)	god	god-e
Plural (all cases)	god-e	god-e

(Iglesias-Rábade 107)

In Old English, as it is explained in the chapter *Old English Adjectives,* adjectives could belong to the strong or weak declension in dependence on whether they were used in the context of a definite or indefinite noun phrase. With the loss of case and gender markings, the distinction between strong and weak adjectives eventually decayed as well, and the result of this process was "a simple opposition between forms with and without *e*" (Blake 114-115).

The strong forms (without an ending) appeared in singular predicate adjectives (e.g. *it was old*), after indefinite determiners, such as in: *a good wyf* (PDE: a good wife), *many a fals flatour* (PDE: many false flatterers), and in other cases in which no determiner was used (Blake 115-116, examples ibid.).

The weak forms (with an *-e*) could be found for example after definite determiners, such as in in *the cold-e steele* (PDE: the cold steel), *this good-e wyf* (PDE: this good wife), and with vocatives: *O fals-e mordrour* (PDE: Oh deceitful murderer) (Blake 115, examples ibid.).

In late Middle English, the pattern eroded further. Longer adjectives became mostly ending-less; the distinction between adding or omitting *-e* remained preserved usually in monosyllabic ones. However, the evidence from the use of adjectives in poetry shows that it could be omitted where it suited the poetic patterns. This signifies that the systemic distinction based on the presence or absence of *-e* in adjectives disappeared by the end of the 14th century (Blake 116).

5 Present-Day English Noun Phrase

Many centuries of language change have left us with a major difference in the shape of the English language now and in the past. For this reason, it is beneficial to leave history behind for a while, and at least briefly review the present-day English situation, which can can serve as a useful point of reference.

In Present-Day English, just as in the past, a noun phrase typically can consist of four major components: (1) determiner, (2) premodification, (3) head noun (pronoun), (4) postmodification and complementation (Biber 574). Of these four elements, the category of modifiers, particularly adjectives, is the one most interesting with regards to adjective position in Present-Day English.

5.1 Present-Day English Adjectives

Among the basic characteristics of adjectives belongs their ability to appear in three syntactic positions: (a) attributive (*An angry customer*), (b) postpositive (*There is someone angry shouting in the street.*), and they can also be (c) predicative (*The customer is angry.*) (Huddleston and Pullum 528).

Within regard to position within the noun phrase, adjectives in Present-Day English appear in preposition much more commonly than in postposition (Huddleston and Pullum 528).

Postposition of adjectives in Present-Day English is severely restricted. However, even nowadays, there are certain aspects worth at least a brief exploration.

As a general rule, adjectives can appear in this position especially (Biber 519): (a) if the head noun is indefinite, such as *no one, anything, somebody*, etc. (*Is there anyone competent in this house?*). (Biber 519). (b) Postposition is customary with certain phrases, like *pure and simple* (*the truth pure and simple*), and *net* and *gross* when mentioning exact amounts (*It was two hundred pounds net.*) (Quirk 419).

(c) Adjectives are also postposed in some cases if they are complemented, such as by a prepositional phrase (*These are the people chosen for the job.*) or to-infinitive clause (*The exercise easiest to complete was the first one.*). However, it is also possible to prepose the adjective and leave only its complementation in postposition (*The easiest exercise to complete was the first one.*). Generic non-restrictive clauses can be

postposed as well (*Soldiers timid and cowardly don't fight well.*), although premodification is more usual (Quirk 420).

(d) Postmodification also occurs in noun phrases with heavy adjectival modification (*James now wants a sofa much more comfortable than the previous one.*) (Biber 519).

(e) Adjectives ending in *-able* or *-ible* can be postmodified under certain conditions, namely when the head noun is modified by "another adjective in the superlative degree" (...) "by *only*, or by the general ordinals *last*, *next*, etc.", (*the best use possible, the best person available, the only actor suitable*) (Quirk 418-419). Some of them can be placed both attributively and postpositively and in dependence on their position, they display variation in meaning: they "retain the basic meaning they have in attributive position but convey the implication that what they are denoting has only a temporary application." (*visible stars* versus *stars visible*; *navigable rivers* versus *rivers navigable*) (Quirk 419).

(f) In adjectives beginning with *a-* and in adjectives *absent, present, concerned,* and *involved*, postposition is also usual when they express temporary features (e.g., *the appointed time* versus *the time appointed*) (Quirk 419).

(g) Adjectives are postpositive also in several fixed expressions, mostly legal: *heir apparent, attorney general, notary public, president-elect,* etc. (Biber 519). According to Quirk et al., the postpositive set expressions are a feature of neo-classical style based on Latin (Quirk 419). Notably, expressions with customary postposition seem to express a certain degree of uniqueness and therefore definiteness. The effect of postposition in these instances is that of drawing more attention and of marking them as unique and singular (in contrast to the more usual preposition); therefore, it can be argued that postposition (or, in general, the position of adjectives in a noun phrase) in some cases certainly plays an important role even in Present-Day English.

6 General principles of Textual Information Structure

In writing, as well as in speech, it is important to organize information in such a way that is "adapted to fit the requirements of communication", in other words, that makes the text coherent, stylistically appropriate to a given situation, that emphasizes the most important parts, and that facilitates the understanding of the text in an effective way for the receiver (Biber 896).

For effective communication, there are several universal interconnected governing principles which then influence the arrangement of clausal elements in any given text, such as: 1) information flow and given versus new information, 2) focus and emphasis, 3) contrast, and, finally, 4) the principle of weight (Biber 896).

6.1 Information Flow

In most situations, clauses (and clausal elements) do not stand alone and isolated - on the contrary, they usually are set in a wider context of already known information, either through common knowledge, information all the participants in a communication are familiar with, or through previous parts of communication (Biber 896).

To facilitate understanding, each clause also usually in some way refers back to these pieces of information (which can be called *given*) and it reveals *new* information as well. It is important to point out that in communication, it is preferred for the already known information to be at the beginning of a clause, and to raise the information load towards the end of a clause (even though, for various reasons, it is certainly not true that every English clause is necessarily ordered in this way); this is called the *information principle* (Biber 896). Therefore, in the clause *Inside the house Mr. Summers found a family of cats shut in the bathroom.*, it can be assumed that the identity of Mr. Summers and the house are already known to the receiver (because they probably had been mentioned in the preceding discourse), while the cats and their presence in the bathroom of the house are the new pieces of information. (Biber896, examle ibid.).

6.2 Weight

Another principle governing the distribution of elements within clauses is the principle of **end-weight**, which stands for the tendency to place heavier clausal elements (e.g. complex structures with multiple premodifiers and postmodifiers) towards the end of clauses.

This principle in many cases complements the information principle, "since heavy elements also carry a substantial new information load" (Biber 898), and it "eases comprehension by the receiver, who does not then have the burden of complex information from earlier in a clause in short-term memory while processing the remainder" (Biber 898).

6.3 Focus, emphasis, contrast, and intensification

Clauses usually have a point of focus (the part of the clause with prominence and emphasis). In congruence with the information principle and the principle of end-weight, "the general principle governing the placement of focus is that of *end focus*, i.e. that focus is normally placed on the last lexical item of the last element in the clause". For example, this would mean "bathroom" from the example sentence above (Biber 897). Clauses also can acquire more than one focus (double focus), especially in situations when there is a locative adverbial placed before the subject, as in *Inside the house, ...* (and with long subject phrases, and non-restrictive modifiers; dependent clauses also often have their own focus) (Biber 897). Generally, the points of highest prominence can be often found at the beginning and at the end of a clause.

Additionally, points of focus can be contrasted: *It was in the **bathroom** where Mr. Summers found a family of cats, not in the **living room*** (Biber 898, example ibid.).

All in all, by briefly describing some of the preliminary principles of textual information structure, it is clear that there is a number of elements that play an important role in organizing any given body of text. Furthermore, these principles come into contact with the grammatical principles of English word order.

6.4 Word Order

Word order in the Old English period would most commonly be more free than Present-Day English one due to the fact that inflections were helpful in determining the syntactic roles of clause elements with less dependence on the position of the element in the clause, than nowadays (Fischer et al. 46).

For example, it was possible to say: *se cyning hæfde micel geþeaht* (PDE: the king held a great council), and also: *micel geþeaht hæfde se cyning*, in which *se cyning* remains the subject of the sentence, but due to a change in word order more emphasis is put on "the king". In Present-Day English, however, the latter arrangement would be impossible to use, as "(a) great council held the king" could more probably be used in a situation in which the king could have been held hostage, not the one who arranged the council to be held. (Barber 126, examples ibid.)

Later, in Middle English, in congruence with changes in other areas of the language system, word order in general became more important because of the decay of inflections which "were increasingly incapable of showing which noun was the subject of the sentence, and which the object" (Barber 170). The S-V-O word order, well known to Present-Day English speakers, gradually took over and became dominant. Together with word order, prepositions also gained importance because because they would become used to express some of the syntactic relationships formerly expressed by inflections (Barber 180-181).

7 Adjective Position in Context of Previous Research

7.1 General overview

The question of Old English and Middle English adjectival position has been an issue with great potential for linguistic discoveries but, up until recently, was under-researched. The variability in adjectival position was traditionally noted but often just briefly explained by reasons such as less rigid word-order, as in Brook´s *Introduction to Old English* (qtd. in Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 252). This situation changed when Olga Fischer, a Dutch linguist, turned attention to the issue and published a series of several articles on the topic. Other linguists gradually followed suit and nowadays there are studies by several other linguists and also theses devoted to adjectival position in Old and Middle English.

Dagmar Haumann, a professor of English linguistics at the University of Bergen, contributed to the research area by publishing two articles – a 2003 study *The postnominal 'and adjective' construction in Old English*, and a research paper from 2010 called *Adnominal Adjectives in Old English*. Other researchers in this area include Maciej Grabski, Kristin Bech, and Agnieszka Pysz.

From recent academic research, one of the notable papers is Rita Halvorsen´s master´s thesis called *Adjective Position in Old English from a micro-level perspective.* A valuable contribution to the field of study can be found in her detailed analysis of some of the previous adjective position theories (Halvorsen V).

7.2 Olga Fischer´s Research

Fischer´s thorough research covers both Old and Middle English periods, and her research is going to serve as a theoretical basis and a reference point of the following analysis. For this reason, her theory deserves special attention and explanation.

7.2.1 Theory of Adjectival Position

Fischer notes that the possibility of adjectives being preposed or postposed is present in more languages than just Old (and Middle) English - even nowadays, the variability can be found for example in contemporary Greek, Spanish, Italian (e.g. "Adjective in Old English" 4-6; "Iconic Perspective" 254-257), and Dutch (e.g. "Adjective in Old English" 3-4; "Iconic Perspective" 250-251).

Based on the research of other linguists, Fischer found out that in these languages, there are certain patterns in the use of preposition and postposition (see her articles, e.g. "Adjective in Old English" 3-6; "Iconic Perspective" 254-257) and that they are "conditioned by a number of syntactic, semantic and discourse/pragmatic factors" ("Developments" 2).

After Fischer discovered the existence of these patterns, she asked two questions: firstly, what motivates this distinction between preposition and postposition and secondly, do these patterns operate in Old (and Middle) English also?

A possible explanation lies at the core of the connection between the operating principles of languages and the human mind. Fischer′s vantage point here is that language and the mind are interconnected and that therefore certain principles of how languages work can have their origin in the cognitive processes of the human mind ("Iconic Perspective" 254). Because of this, she introduces the principle of iconicity.

The principle of iconicity gets manifested in the fact that whatever comes first in a linear sequence, influences our perception and interpretation of what follows (Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 254), (such as the first impressions bias or the power of prejudices in the field of psychology, that have been well known and well described). Therefore, if an adjective comes first in a noun phrase, it "modifies our perception of the head noun:" it gets connected to the following noun (the adjective on its own, without its head noun, would not form a meaningful "chunk of information" in the discourse), and "together they constitute one information unit, which can be in some respects described as similar to a compound (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 255). If, on the other hand, the adjective comes second, the noun which has appeared before it "gets processed first, and functions as a chunk of information by itself". The adjective "forms a separate information unit", and therefore provides *additional* (emphasis original) information about the noun (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 255). The term "compound-like" cannot be understood in the usual sense of a modern lexicalized compound. What

is meant is rather that, as Fischer presents in the examples of *a blackbird* and *a black bird*, the compound noun makes us see the adjective as an inherent part of the noun, while in the second case, *a black bird*, we know that there is a bird which happens to be black (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 255, note 3).

At the same time, Fischer mentions the fact that not all languages share the same word classes - while all of them have nouns and verbs, not all of them have adjectives. In such languages, the adjectival function therefore gets to be expressed by nouns and verbs or by "'nounids'" and "'verbids'" - "items which share many characteristics with nouns and verbs" ("Iconic Perspective" 254).

As evidence of the above-mentioned claims, Fischer provides several examples: In Dutch, (her mother tongue), the adjective usually precedes the noun. However, there are situations in which the adjective follows. She noticed that there are certain differences between a preposed and a postposed adjective in the example of (1) *een gezond broodje* - a healthy (roll of) bread and (2) *een broodje gezond* - a (roll of) bread healthy. The differences between them perceived by Dutch speakers were that the postposed order was felt to have originated from a prepositional phrase "*met gezonde ingredienten*" (with healthy ingredients), that the postposed adjective gave an extra piece of information about the noun and that it could be, in a way, contrastive. ("Adjective in Old English" 3-4).

As for contemporary Greek, Fischer drew information from the research of Melita Stavrou, a Greek linguist. According to her, Stavrou argues that in Greek, there are "subtle semantic and pragmatic differences" between preposed and postposed adjectives ("Adjective in Old English" 4), and therefore, as is shown in *Adjectives in Modern Greek*: (3) *Katharise ena milo kokino* (he / she peeled a red apple) and (4) *Katharise ena kokino milo* (he / she peeled an apple red) are not the same. According to Stavrou the pre-head adjective is perceived as a ""pre-existing... or defining property"" of the noun, while the post-head adjective denotes a ""(perhaps temporary) possession of a property"" (qtd. in Fischer, "Adjective in Old English" 4). Furthermore, there is a connection with indefiniteness of the noun phrase - as long as the noun phrase is indefinite, both preposition and postposition is possible; when the noun phrase is definite, adjectives can only be preposed, postposition is impossible. (qtd. in Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 256). Stavrou also argues that the postposed adjective, in fact, serves as a secondary predicate - therefore, that it operates with predicative force rather than attributive (qtd. in Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 256). This corresponds with the

fact that in some languages, as mentioned above, adjectives may have a clearly noun-like or verb-like nature. Based on her findings, the interpretation of example (4) in contrast to example (3) could be that *He / she peeled an apple* <u>*which was red*</u>. Here it becomes obvious that the information about the colour of the apple becomes more prominent and more exposed to contrast (maybe there were other apples on the table which were green but the person chose to peel the red one), and also the predicative nature of the adjective becomes more clearly visible.

In Spanish (based on the research of Dwight Bolinger and his *Linear modification* and *Adjectives in English: Attribution and Predication*r), a similar situation can be found: (5) *un hermoso edifico* (a beautiful building) is different from (6) *un edifico hermoso* (a building beautiful) (qtd. in Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 255). In example (5), the topic of the sentence is simply a "beautiful building" - beauty is its inherent, or inbuilt quality; in the second, the beautiful building is contrasted with others that are not (qtd in Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 255).

As for Italian, Nigel Vincent (in accordance with the other linguists´ findings) noticed in his *La posizione dell´ aggettivo in italiano* that the preposed adjective is "an inseparable part of the head". In other words, the piece of information the adjective carries does not create a separate chunk of information. The postposed adjective, on the other hand, behaves differently - while the preposed adjective can be described as "thematic" with respect to the noun it modifies, the postposed adjective takes on a rhematic function . Fischer also therefore connects rhematic adjectives with new information, and thematic adjectives with given information (qtd in Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 257).

Before closing this section, and having been acquainted with Fischer´s terminology, it is vital to note several facts about it that may help understand her theory better. Fischer makes clear that the terms she uses - *thematic*, *rhematic*, *given*, and *new* etc. are used rather loosely. What Fischer means by them is that the term *thematic* is applied to adjectives which add "least to the advancing process of communication (it is nonsalient)", while *rhematic* is used when Fischer´s talks about situations in which the adjective "adds extra information (it is salient)" ("Adjectives in Middle English" 256), (emphasis mine). As well as that, Fischer´s usage of the terms *attributive* and *predicative* might be slightly confusing as they are strongly tied with Present-Day English usage. However, in Old English, the attributive and predicative function was more transparently tied with "the informational value conveyed by the adjective, that is,

'given' versus 'new', or 'theme' versus 'rheme'. In Old English, there is still a more transparent relation between form and function" (Fisccher, "Status of Postposed Adjective" 256).

All in all, preposed adjectives can be therefore described as: attributive, thematic with respect to their head nouns, and expressing given information. The postposed adjectives, on the other hand, are then predicative, rhematic, they express additional or new information, and they can be contrastive. With this in mind, Fischer applied these factors specifically to Old and Middle English.

7.2.2 Old English Adjectives

Fischer subsequently applied the general principles of adjectival position to the Old English adjectives based on her belief that the characteristics of adjectives in the above-described languages can be found in Old English as well ("Iconic Perspective" 257) and that adjectival position is iconically motivated in Old English, too ("Developments" 2-3).

The situation in Old English regarding adjectives was more complex than nowadays. As has been already described, there were several main variables at play within the noun phrase in creating its meaning: (1) definiteness and indefiniteness of the noun phrase, (2) strong or weak declension of the adjective, and (3) the adjective position itself: adjectives could precede the noun (this was most frequent), follow it, or appear on both sides (if there were multiple adjectives). Fischer also includes the parameter of (4) the "role the AP plays in terms of information structure (theme vs rheme or given vs new information" ("Developments" 1).

According to Fischer, it is an established fact that "strong adjectives are usually found when there is no determiner present, or with an occasional indefinite article (an or sum, which is not fully an article yet in Old English), while weak adjectives typically occur after a demonstrative functioning as a "'budding'" definite article ("Adjective in Old English" 8). Because the strong adjectives carry the full linguistic marking as opposed to the weak ones, a connection was usually made with the principle of economy: "when there is no other defining element, the strong adjective ending is useful because it is distinctive of case and gender (unlike the weak adjective), while such a distinctive ending in a weak adjective is not useful because case and gender are already

clear from the preceding demonstrative pronoun" (Fischer, "Adjective in Old English" 8).

However, Fischer found examples in Old English prose which call for a further explanation because they violate this rule ("Iconic Perspective" 253). Therefore, a further explanation was needed. Fischer draws from the research of Karl Brunner who in his *Die englische sprache* pointed out that there might be a connection with what the articles stand for: definiteness or definiteness itself; or, in other words, the weak adjective is associated with given information (qtd. in "Adjective in Old English" 8-9), and the strong one with new information (Fischer, "Adjective in Old English" 9).

It is therefore apparent that Fischer makes the connection as follows: weak adjectives are connected with definiteness, and therefore with given, or known information ("Adjective in Old English" 21), and always occur in definite noun phrases (Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 258). Strong adjectives, on the other hand, are connected with indefiniteness, and therefore with new information (Fischer, "Adjective in Old English" 21).

In the next step, the previous piece of information can be linked with observations about adjective position: strong adjectives can be both pre- and postnominal, while weak adjectives are prenominal, rarely postnominal (Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 249).

If the iconic principle is now taken into account, the puzzle pieces start to come together: "in the Old English system *new* information (which usually entails indefiniteness) was conveyed by the use of the strong adjective prenominally or by the use of a strong adjective in postnominal position. When the adjective contained given information, it would precede the noun and be weak" (Fischer, "Developments" 3-4).

As for the verbal and nominal nature of adjectives, Fischer found out that the theoretical basis for her research proves to be true as well. As has already been said, the weak adjective is placed almost always before the noun and occurs in a definite noun phrase (therefore conveying given and thematic information). The iconic function of these adjectives lies in the fact that they modify the noun and they function together with the noun phrase as a kind of a "compound" (see the chapter on adjective position in general).They operate with attributive force and are close to the noun category (Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 258).

Strong postnominal adjectives, on the other hand, are not an inherent part of the noun phrase; they act as secondary predicates (Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 257),

whose ordinary position would be after a noun phrase followed by copula (Fischer, "Adjective in Old English" 16), and therefore they are very close to the verb category. Based on the principle of iconicity, they are rhematic.

When strong adjectives appear prenomianlly, Fischer argues that they are rhematic, too. Here she points out that the adjective may have been stressed (and, therefore, stress as an iconic device took precedence over syntactic position. Without native speakers, of course, this is difficult to prove.) ("Iconic Perspective" 257).

To summarize Fischer´s research on Old English adjectives, her findings indicate this: the iconic principle seems to be the underlying motivator for variation in adjective position in Old English. The adjective could be either prenominal or postnominal. Prenominal weak adjectives carried given information, they were inseparable heads of the nouns they modified. They operated with attributive force, and were closer to the nominal category. Postnominal adjectives were usually strong; they formed a separate, additional (new) unit of information. They operated with predicative force, "behaved like predicates" and were closer to the verbal category. Instances, when strong adjectives appeared in prenominal position, Fischer explains by the use of stress – Fischer presumes that they conveyed additional information and were predicative just as postnominal strong adjectives, but the iconic principle operated on the basis of the phonological device of stress ("Iconic Perspective" 271).

7.2.3 Middle English Adjectives

The Middle English system, as has been mentioned, underwent significant changes and simplifications: the loss of grammatical inflections, grammaticalization of the determiner system, and fixation of the word order belong among the most important ones (Fischer, "Developments" 7-8).

As described, in Old English "*new* information (which usually entails indefiniteness) was conveyed either by the use of a strong adjective prenominally or by the use of a strong adjective in postnominal position. When the adjective contained *given* information, it would precede the noun and be weak" (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 256). It also applied that typically, the Old English adjectives "in a definite NP conveyed given information and an indefinite NP new information" (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 256). For definiteness or indefiniteness, however, there

was not always a clear grammatical marker present because the use of determiners was not necessary. For this reason it was the interplay of the (in) definiteness of the noun phrase, strong or weak declension, and position, that conveyed the pieces of information important in the discourse (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 256).

However, with the changes in the language system, this "symbiosis" of parameters was thrown off balance (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 256). In a simplified way, the shift in a system according to Fischer (in other words, some of the most important changes) can be described like this:

Because of the decay of adjectival inflections (and thus the gradual loss of inflections of strong and weak adjectives), the distinction between them became difficult (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 256, note 6). The process of the gradual fixation of word order also influenced the system. As the majority of adjectives already appeared in preposition, this position became stronger over time (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 261). And with the emergence of the new determiner system which could signify both definiteness and indefiniteness, and therefore given versus new information, there was less and less need to keep the preposed versus postposed distinction (Fischer, "Developments" 29). As a result, the situation in the language system shifted significantly towards the way we know it nowadays.

7.3 Genre differentiation in Context of Previous Research

The research of Olga Fischer and other linguists has been often based on large bodies of texts of mixed genres (see e.g. Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 285), which allows them to analyse a large variety of samples. The results of the work of these researchers then provides a basis for subsequent more narrowly focused studies.

From previous research, there is data available to indicate that there may be certain genre differences, especially with regard to the distribution in adjectival position or with regard to frequency of adjectival modifiers: Rita Halvorsen in her diploma thesis found out that an Old English medical handbook *The Leechbook* contained a notably higher number of postmodifiers than *The West Saxon Gospels* and *The Peterborough Chronicle*. (Halvorsen 96-97).

David Crystal states that "continuity between Old and Middle English is mainly to be seen in texts of a religious, political or administrative character" (Crystal, "Middle

English"), and as, according to him, one third of the surviving body of religious texts are homilies (Crystal, "Middle English"), homilies and sermons (a genre very close to homilies) appear to be a very interesting material for investigating the continuity of language change.

A homily was characteristically employed during the religious service after reading a passage from the Bible (qtd. in Foley 157), frequently a passage from the Gospels. The texts survived in so-called homiliaries or sermoniaries, which were collections of homilies addressing the given gospel passage read during the servic or elaborating on the sense of religious holidays and seasons. In course of the Middle Ages, the popularity of the genre of homily decreased and sermons, a type of more elaborated instructional preaching, became prominent (qtd. in Foley 157).

Although the genres of homily and sermon were slightly different from each other, from the description of their purpose, several common characteristics are evident: they are connected with orality (their main original purpose being to be heard by the audience), explanatory, as they elaborated and reflected a given topic, and exhortative in nature, as their ultimate purpose would be to relate the given theme to the listeners in such a way as to leave a deep and lasting impression about the topic spoken about.

Whether and how these characteristics are apparent in the realm of adjectival modification, is going to be evaluated in the following chapters.

8 Methodology

The first step in the process of the research - the choice of suitable sample material, was constrained by the availability of texts in the corpora used for the analysis, which were *The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE)* for the Old English period, and *The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2)* for the Middle English period, which were accessed through the interface *KonText* provided on-line by *The Institute of Czech National Corpus*. A sister corpus these two corpora is *The Helsinki Corpus of English texts*, a textual diachronic corpus to which the two annotated corpora are related (and which is freely available on-line in a XML edition).

Texts contained in these corpora are labeled by time period to which they are assigned. They are coded with letters "o" or "m" which stand for Old and Middle English, respectively, and (with texts about which this piece of information is known) by a number or combinations or numbers from 1 to 4.

In YCOE, there are four time periods: o1 (for texts whose date of origin can be placed up to the year 850), o2 (850-950), o3 (950-1050), and o4 (1050-1150). In PPCME2, this pattern was also followed and texts are divided into these four time periods: m1 (1150-1250), m2 (1250-1350), m3 (1350-1420), and m4 (1420-1500).

If the date of original composition is earlier than the date of the preserved manuscript, the texts are assigned a combined code, e.g. o23, m23 etc. The basic information on the period of origin of texts was taken from the *The Helsinki Corpus of English texts* and from the two above mentioned annotated corpora.

For the analysis, only prosaic texts were chosen, in order to avoid possible influence of poetic principles on the arrangement of noun phrase elements.

The earliest homiletical writings available in the YCOE corpus are *The Blickling homilies*. The homilies are assigned the code o23. The period o3 is represented by *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies I*.

From the PPCME2 corpus, as a representative of period m1, a homiletical collection called *Kentish homilies*, was included into the analysis. In the textual file is included a homily called *Sermo in festis Sancte Marie Virginis* and an excerpt of a translation from the *Elucidarium* by Honorius of Autun, which is classified neither as as

a homily nor a sermon, but as a religious treatise. However, for the fact that the excerpt from the *Elucidarium* is very similar to homilies both thematically and in its instructive and explanative nature, and as *Sermo in festis Sancte Marie uirginis* is cited in the corpus manual to be the earliest evidence of Middle English texts (Information on Cmkentho-M1) - which seemed important to compensate for the lack of an available textual sample from the period o4 - including the textual file in the research sample was felt to be an acceptable compromise.

The period m2 is represented by *Kentish sermons,* an English translation from a French translation of originally Latin text written by Maurice de Sully (a French bishop of Paris) (Information on Cmkentse-M2). The period m3 is the first period for which sermons become available in the corpus (while homilies are no longer provided). As a representative of this period, the *Wycliffite sermons* were chosen, and a sermon is a representative of the latest Middle English period m4, as well; it is *Sermo die lune in ebdomana Pasche* by Richard FitzJames.

The texts, has has been said above, were accessed through the online interface *KonTex*t provided by the *Czech National Corpus.* Within the interface, it is possible to perform advanced searches using the query language CQL. To obtain the texts, the following queries for an advanced search were constructed:

List of Queries constructed for YCOE and PPCME2	
Text	**Query**
York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose **(YCOE)**	
Blickling Homilies	[tag=".*"]within <doc doefilenum="T04360" /> [tag=".*"]within <doc doefilenum="T04380" />
Ælfric's Catholic Homilies I	[tag=".*"]within <doc doefilenum="T02050" /> [tag=".*"]within <doc doefilenum="T02060" />
The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English **(PPCME2)**	
Kentish Homilies	[tag=".*"]within <doc id="CMKENTHO" />
Kentish Sermons	[tag=".*"]within <doc id="CMKENTSE" />
Wycliffite Sermons	[tag=".*"]within <doc id="CMWYCSER" />
Sermo die lune in ebdomana Pasche	[tag=".*"]within <doc id="CMFITZJA" />

The queries stand for commands to search for all tagged items in all positions within the text identified either by the *Dictionary of Old English* file number (DOE) for Old English texts, and by Document ID for Middle English texts. With the *Blickling Homilies* and *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies I,* two searches needed to be performed as each homily within these collections has a separate identificator.

8.1 The Samples

The goal for the next step was to gather one hundred relevant noun phrases modified by at least one adjective from each textual sample, and analyse them in terms of their position, definiteness or indefiniteness, strong or weak declension, and in terms of their relationship to meaning within the noun phrase and meaning within the broader context of the texts.

This was achieved with the exception of the *Kentish Sermons,* where for insufficient length of the textual sample only ninety-eight noun phrases were included in the analysis.

KonText interface offers a simple, yet effective and useful tool, which is to download texts as a XML file. Within these files, through a conditioned search, the positions of words tagged in the texts as adjectives were identified and marked. In YCOE and PPCME2, the tags for adjectives are the following: /ADJ, /ADJR (comparative adjective), and /ADJS (superlative adjective). In addition to it, the texts in YCOE are marked for case: ^N, ^G, ^D, ^A, ^I (therefore, e.g. /ADJ^G, /ADJS ^N, etc.).

Subsequently, determiners and pronouns were searched for and marked, which created easily identifiable patterns of noun phrase heads with the determiners, pronouns, and adjectives they govern.

The analysis was done for each sample individually, as it would ensure a greater accuracy of analysis in context of the text. As an example, not all cases in which an adjective was adjacent to a noun it was a part of the same noun phrase. This was the case for example in *Sermo die lune* in *this valyaunt/ADJ knyghte/N stronge/ADJ &/ hertely comfortid* (CMFITZJA,A4R.46) (PDE: this valiant knight strong and heartily comforted), where the noun phrase head appears to have two adjectival modifiers - one preposed (*valyaunt)* and one in postposition (*stronge*). This, however, is not the case

when the broader context is considered, as this passage is in fact a passage in which God speaks to a Biblical figure, and the passage is a part of direct speech: *Be thou sayth god vnto this valyaunt/ADJ knyghte/N stronge/ADJ & hertely comfortid* (CMFITZJA,A4R.46). After adding interpunction: *"Be you," said God unto this valiant knight, "strong and heartily comforted."*, it becomes clear that there is in fact just one adjectival modifier connected with the head *knight*, which is the preposed one, and *strong* is a subject complement governed by the verb *be*.

8.2 Treatment of individual cases

There were also several cases which needed to be searched for in addition to words tagged as adjectives, or, on the other hand, excluded:

8.2.1 Ordinal numerals

Ordinal numerals in both corpora are tagged as adjectives. However, in the analysis of noun phrases, these cases were excluded; for example in Biber et al., they are regarded as a separate category, within the context of a noun phrase considered to be determiners (Biber 90).

8.2.2 *Self*

Cases where *self* appears in the Old English texts are tagged as adjectives in YCOE, regardless of its use within the texts. For this reason, it was necessary to sort these cases individually. Most often, *self* is used in context of a reflexive pronoun, e.g. *Þeos þrynnes is an God: þæt is se fæder & his wisdom of him sylfum æfre acenned.* (cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:179.17.20). (PDE: This trinity is one God: that is the father, and his wisdom of himself ever produced...). These cases were excluded.

In PPPCME2, *self* is tagged as a noun. These cases were excluded, as this tag is commonly applied in contexts where *self* is used as a reflexive pronoun as well (as in the example above). However, there are several cases in which *self* is labeled as adjective. These cases were included in the noun phrase analysis, because here *self* appers to be used adjectivally, as in *ealla þa ilca heo dyde synderlice & furðerlucor þone ænig oðer, na on ænigen oðren lytlen, ac on þan sylfen Godes Sunen.* (CMKENTHO,137.82), (PDE: all the same she did specially and more prefectly than

any other, not to any other children, but to the self God´s son.), where the phrase is used within the context of Mary taking care of somebody most special (thus *self*) - Jesus Christ.

8.2.3 Substantival use of adjectives & ellipsis

Across all the texts, there is a number of cases in which the adjective is used substantively, as in *se blinda* (coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:15.23.198) (PDE: the blind man), *to sike* (CMKENTSE,216.49) (PDE: the sick), or the head noun is elided, e.g.: *þære toweardan [tide]* (coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:15.1.169) (PDE: the future [time]). These cases, tagged as adjectives, were not included in the noun phrase analysis, as it cannot be determined whether they are preposed or postposed (for more detail, see Fischer, "Developments", p. 3).

8.2.4 Ambiguity between adjectives and quantifiers

In Old and Middle English, *lytel* (*litel*) could mean both *little* (as in PDE *She had little money left.*) and serve as a quantifier, and as well be used as an adjective (e.g. PDE *There was a little girl.*). For this reason, it is often difficult to distinguish between them. In YCOE, all cases are tagged as quantifiers regardless of their use. Because of this, the cases were sorted manually, based on the context of their use and classified as adjectives when it seemed to be the most probable option. In PPCME2, the adjectival cases of *lytel* are distinguished; there the tagging is respected.

Old English *micel* (*mycel*) is very similar to *lytel* - it could mean both *much*, *many*, or great, and in YCOE all cases are tagged as quantifiers. For this reason, *micel* was also analyzed and sorted based on its context.
In PPCME2, Present-Day English *much, more, most, less,* and *least,* are also treated as quantifiers, unless they are preceded by a determiner, when they are used as complements, or when they are found in connection with other adjectives. For this reason, the instances of their use were also individually sorted and considered.

8.2.5 *Oþer*

Oþer (*other*) is labeled as adjective in YCOE as well as in PPCME2. However, because of its borderline properties and because of the fact that is can be considered a

semideterminer (see the chapter on Old English noun phrase), these cases were excluded from the analysis.

8.2.6 Participial adjectives

Participial adjectives in both corpora are tagged as participial forms, and the adjectival forms are not distinguished from the verbal ones. For this reason, these adjectives are generally not tagged /ADJ but /VAG (present participle), and /VBN (passive participle). Possible adjectival forms tagged as /VAG and /VBN have not been included in the analysis.

8.2.7 Proper names

Proper names sometimes needed to be searched for separately, for example in instances such as these: *se/D Halge/NPR Gast/NPR* (PDE: the Holy Spirit): in PPCME2 the adjective "holy" was not tagged as adjective but as a personal name, as opposed to YCOE, in which *se/D^N halga/ADJ^N gast/N^N* was tagged as an adjective.

8.2.8 Miscellaneous notes

Cases taken to be subject and object complements were excluded from the analysis; also several noun phrases had to be excluded for the reason of uncertain translation.

In *Kentish sermons*, the title for God written *godalmichti* was not included in the one hundred samples of noun phrases from this period because of the unusual way in which it was written.

As a general rule, if an ambiguity did not seem to be possible to be resolved, such cases were excluded from the analysis.

9 Adjectives in Old English and Middle English Religious writings

The names of the analyzed texts have already been mentioned in the previous chapter. There are six of them in total: *The Blickling Homilies, Aelfric's Catholic Homilies, Kentish Homilies, Kentish Sermons, Wycliffite sermons* and *Sermo die lune in ebdomana Pasche*. These texts, spread across (roughly) six centuries, present a sample of the development of the English language.

9.1 *The Blicking Homilies*

From the *Blicking Homilies*, the one hundred noun phrases were obtained from two separate homilies; namely, the second homily *Dominica prima in quinquagesima*. and the third homily *Dominica prima in quadragesima*. (Because the beginning of the first homily is lost, it was not included in the analysis).

The *Blickling Homilies* are taken to be a representation of the language of the 9th century (Morris VI), which places their date of origin approximately two hundred years before the Norman conquest of 1066 and well within the bounds of the Old English period.

Linguistically, the characteristic features of Old English are clearly present, and the nouns and their modifiers are inflected for number, gender, and case:

1) *hæþnum/ADJ^D mannum/N^D* (coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:15.7.173)
(PDE: to heathen men) - dat. pl. masculine

2) *eces/ADJ^G lifes/N^G* (coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:15.28.207)
(PDE: of eternal life) - gen. sg. neuter

Also, the strong and weak inflection of adjectives is easily identifiable, as is visible in comparison between the two cases of the same noun and its adjectival modifier, used in the genitive case:

3) *eces/ADJ^G lifes/N^G* (coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:15.28.207)

(PDE: of eternal life) - gen. sg. neuter, strong adjectival declension

4) *þæs/D^G ecan/ADJ^G lifes/N^G* (coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:17.49.221)

(PDE: of the eternal life) - gen. sg. neuter, weak adjectival declension

The presence of inflection, as has been stated in the chapter on word order, goes hand in hand with the possibility of less rigid word order, due to the fact that syntactic relationships between different clausal elements are expressed through inflection (Fischer et al. 46), which is undoubtedly the case in the *Blickling Homilies.* This is very well visible in the example of the genitive case, which is frequent and expressed through inflection:

5) *His þegnas wæron þagyt **flæsclices/ADJ^G modes/N^G***

(coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:17.37.212)

(PDE: His servants were then of-fleshly mind)

6) *þonne we/ beoþ mid mycclum hungre **yfelra/ADJ^G geþohta/N^G** abisgode*

(coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:19.80.245)

(PDE: when we are with great hunger of-evil thoughts occupied)

Overall, the *Blickling Homilies* are a typical representant of the Old English language system.

9.2 *Ælfric´s Catholic Homilies I*

Ælfric´s Catholic Homilies I, a collection of homilies ascribed to one of the prominent authors of the Old English period, can be set at the end of the 10th century (Hill 37), about a century later than the Blickling Homilies.

The one hundred noun phrases were excerpted from the first two homilies from the textual file, which are Primus sermo de inicio creaturae and Nativitas Domini; and the homilies represent the second and the last examined sample before the transition into the Middle English period.

Structurally, the relationship in the noun phrase is still governed by inflection and the principles mentioned for the agreement of noun, gender, and case, as well as the presence of strong and weak inflection still generally apply as shown above in the *Blickling Homilies:*

7) *se/D^N ælmihtiga/ADJ^N scyppend/N^N*
(cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:180.38.43)
(PDE: the Almighty Creator) - n. sg. masculine, weak adjectival inflection

8) *yfelum/ADJ^D geearnungum/N^D* (cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:183.122.121)
(PDE: for evil merits) - d. pl. feminine, strong adjectival inflection

This high similarity of the texts, unsurprisingly, demonstrates an expected continuity of the Old English language, rather than contrast. As it is expected, the major developments and disturbances are yet to come.

9.3 *Kentish Homilies*

These changes, on the other hand, become very apparent and prominent in the next sample - the *Kentish Homilies.* The textual file in the YCOE corpus from which the one hundred noun phrases were obtained is comprised of a homily called *Sermo in festis Sancte Marie virginis*, a translation from an originally Latin sermon; and as has been mentioned, from an excerpt from an originally Latin treatise *Elucidarium* (Information on Cmkentho-M15).

For its early date of composition, cited by the corpus to fall between the years of 1108 to 1122 (Information on Cmkentho-M1), the homily is of special interest, because it can provide information about the transitional period between the Old English and Middle English periods:

The language of this textual sample is noticeable for several reasons - most prominently for the fact that some of its features evidently still point back to the language of the Old English period but others clearly show signs of a major shift that has taken place.

As for vocabulary, it is still very much Germanic, as is apparent from the opening words of the homily:

9) *Se godspellere Lucas sæigð on þyssen godspelle, þt se Hælend com into sumen cæstele, & sum wif hine underfeng into hire huse, þære wæs to name Martha.* (CMKENTHO,134.5)

(PDE: The evangelist Luke says in this gospel, that the Saviour came into some village and some woman received him into her house, that /=she/ was called Martha.)

However, it is apparent that changes have already started to take place. In the following example, it is well visible that in some noun phrases, the Old English endings were still recognizable and created interesting combinations:

10) *heo of þan/D ilcan/ADJ Halgen/NPR(adj) Gaste/NPR wearð bearneacninde* (CMKENTHO,138.102)

(PDE: she of the same Holy Spirit was made-pregnant)

While the determiner *þan* and the first adjective *ilcan* are still declined according to the Old English system, the second adjective *Halgen* already shows signs of the levelling of sounds described in the chapter on Middle English grammar, as it ends with *-en* instead of *-an*, typical for Old English weak inflection.

Occurrences such as these, in fact, are not unique to this text, as is evidenced by Iglesias-Rábade, who also notes the presence of remnants of inflection in determiners (Iglesias-Rábade 96-97), while the noun is already void of inflection.

 In several other instances, the weak Old English ending *-an* is, just as in the previous example, present in the changed *-en* form:

(11) *on/P his/PRO$ cildlicen/ADJ unfernysse/N* (CMKENTHO,137.87)

(PDE: in his childhood′s infirmity)

(12) *to/P þære/D eadigen/ADJ Marien/NPR Cristes/NPR$ moder/N* (CMKENTHO,134.17)

(PDE: to the blessed Mary, Christ′s mother)

In other cases, however, it is apparent that the erosion of distinctness of endings is already underway, as in a large number of cases the adjectives show clear preference for the ---*e* endings, regardless of its singular (13), plural, or whether there is a degree adjective (14):

(13) *emb/P þa/D uterlice/ADJ þing/NS* (CMKENTHO,136.70)
(PDE: about the external things)

(14) *Maria/NPR hæfð/HVP gecoren/VBN þt/D betste/ADJS dæl/N*
(CMKENTHO,134.16)
(PDE: Maria has chosen the best part)

The above-mentioned particularities, however, do not signify that the Old English system has disappeared. On the contrary, it was still in place, albeit in a slightly different form, as is apparent from the fact that the strong versus weak adjective distinction was still generally (though not always) maintained: singular strong adjectives were reduced to an ending-less variant; and singular weak and all plurals carried the *-e* ending:

(15) *anlypig/ADJ þing/N* (CMKENTHO,134.15) - singular, strong declension
(PDE: only thing)

(16) *hindre/ADJ geðanca/NS* (CMKENTHO,143.238) - plural, strong declension
(PDE: anxious thoughts)

(17) *Godes/NPR$ ungeseowenlicne/ADJ Sune/N* (CMKENTHO,136.79) -
singular, weak declension
(PDE: God´s invisible Son)

(18) *hire/PRO$ agene/ADJ breostes* (CMKENTHO,137.81) - plural, weak
declension
(PDE: her own breasts)

9.4 *Kentish Sermons*

The date of composition of *Kentish Sermons* is cited by the corpus creators to be placed at around 1275 (Information on Cmkentse-M2), which makes it about one hundred to one hundred and fifty years distant from the *Kentish homilies*.

The textual sample consists of five sermons shorter in character: *Sermo in die epiphanie, Dominica secunda post octavam epiphanie, Dominica tercia post octavam epiphanie, Dominica quarta post octavam epiphanie, Dominica in sexagesima, .*

As for the number of collected noun phrases, there are only ninety eight instead of one hundred (due to the fact that this was the maximal amount of relevant samples which were possible to be obtained).

In contrast to *Kentish Homilies,* in which the vocabulary found was still predominantly Germanic, there is a significant contrast regarding the language used: *Kentish Sermons* are the first text of the six analyzed texts which is more easily recognizable to a present-day reader, with obvious French influence. (In fact, as has been already mentioned in the chapter on methodology, the sermons are translated from the French language (Information on Cmkentse-M2).

The following sequence can serve as a good example of the typical features of this textual sample:

(19) *We redeth i þo holi godespelle of te dai ase ure louerd godalmichti ibore w as of*
ure lauedi seinte Marie i þe cite of bethleem (CMKENTSE,214.6)
(PDE: We read in the holy gospel of today as our Lord God Almighty born was of our lady Saint Mary in the city of Bethlehem)

As for the declension endings, the situation is in many ways similar to the situation described in the *Kentish homilies,* however, several new tendencies appear. The influence of French described above did not stay contained solely in the area of vocabulary: as new words started to appear, it, of course, included adjectives as well. These adjectives, however, brought with them structures foreign to the original Old English balanced system. Therefore, among the one hundred phrases, it is possible to find these instances:

(20)   *glorius/ADJ miracle/N* (CMKENTSE,215.31)

(PDE: glorious miracle)

(21) *verray/ADJ prest/N* (CMKENTSE,215.35)

(PDE: true priest)

(22) *cuuenable/ADJ yeftte/N* (CMKENTSE,215.34)

(PDE: proper gift)

A common feature of these adjectives of foreign origin is their relatively more difficult manipulability within the (now simplified) situation in the declension system.

Glorius could be, and was, also used in a variant that contained *-e* at the end: *þilke gloriouse/ADJ processioun* (CMAELR3,58.1012) (PDE: the-same glorious procession); there the possibility for distinction between strong and weak declension became maintained. The adjective *cuuenable* is attested only once in the whole PPCME2 corpus, but it seems that other adjectives with the *-able* ending (e.g. *comfortable, irresistible*) are hard to be found in the variant *-abl*.

In other words, some of the adjectives of foreign origin adapted to the English system and were able to take up the simplified declension forms. Other adjectives, however, kept their foreign from without the possibility of expressing declension.

The fact that these adjectives were able to enter into the language system and keep their original foreign form might be, in fact, an indication that the strong and weak declension was no longer strictly required in the language system because it was becoming more and more heavily dependent on word order (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 282), rather than on the declension system.

9.5 *Wycliffite Sermons*

The date given for *Wycliffite Sermons* is approximately the year 1400 (Information on Cmwycser-M3). This means that *Kentish sermons* and this textual sample, *Wycliffite Sermons*, are set about one hundred and thirty years years apart in time. The one hundred noun phrases were obtained the first four sermons, *Dominica prima post festum sancte Trinnitatis, Dominica secunda post festum Trinitatis, Dominica tercia post festum sancte Trinnitatis* and *Dominica quarta post festum sancte Trinnitatis.*

In certain respects, these texts seem to be an example of continuation of tendencies already indicated in *Kentish Sermons,* however, apart from the presence of adjectives of foreign origin, as already shown, there is another tendency connected with the decay of the inflectional system, (present already up to certain degree in the past texts as well).

It was shown that there might be "cracks" and shifts in the system, based on the presence of adjectives of foreign origin with foreign endings, for which it is sometimes difficult to get adapted into the English language system *(e.g. cuuenable)*. However, significant changes were going on in the area of all adjectives, not only the "problematically adaptable" ones. It is still true that the general rules for the placement of endings for the strong and weak inflection seem to be maintained, as in:

(23)   *precious/ADJ foode/N* (CMWYCSER,223.11)
(PDE: precious food) - singular, strong declension

(24) *preciouse/ADJ cloþis/NS* (CMWYCSER,223.9)
(PDE: precious clothes) - plural, strong declension

However, there are several cases such as these:

(25) *a/D voyde/ADJ place/N* (CMWYCSER,230.135)
(PDE: a void place)

(26) þese/D secler/ADJ prelatys/NS (CMWYCSER,232.161)
(PDE: these secular prelates)

These two instances might be an indication that the distinction between the endingless variant and the variant with *-e* seems to become blurry. In *a voyde place*, there should be no ending as the presence of the indefinite *an* indicates an indefinite noun phrase, and the noun is singular. On the other hand, the adjective *secler* in *þese secler prelatys* should, as a general rule, contain an *-e* ending because the adjective can be found in a definite noun phrase and is in plural, but it does not.

Based on Blake, this might be an indication of the fact that the distinction between weak and strong form has, by this time, lost its prominence (116). Therefore,

the use of the strong and weak declension might have come to be used more or less conventionally instead of the purpose of grammatical rule.

9.6 *Sermo die lune in ebdomana Pasche*

Robert FitzJames´ *Sermo Die Lune in Ebdomana Pasch*e is the last textual sample, and a late one. The date of its origin can be places at around 1495 (Information on Cmfitzja-M4).

In many respects, this texts in a testament to the process of changes which have occurred in the past centuries, and it is an example of a language system prepared to enter its next stages.

An important feature of this text is the word order following the S-V-O pattern familiar to us:

(27) *This Joyous trouth conteyneth in itself two partyes* (...) (CMFITZJA,A2R.7)
(PDE: This joyous truth contains in itself two parts...)

(28) T*hyse Wordes ben conteyned in the xxiiij. chapytre of Luke., and rad in the/ holy gospel of/P this day.* (CMFITZJA,A2R.5)
(PDE: These words have been contained in the 23rd chapter of Luke, and read in the holy gospel of this day.)

The example (28) shows the genitival of-construction expressed through the preposition *of* instead of inflection, and the results of the changes which have occurred in the determiner *þes*, exemplified by the use of *this* and *thyse* for singular and plural, respectively.

The distinction between strong and weak adjectives is still formally apparent and both variants still appear. However, apart from this trace of the older system, situations, in which the adjective is of foreign origin (29), or the adjectival ending has changed so much that they no longer would easily express the simplified strong or weak adjective dichotomy found in earlier periods of Middle English, are frequent (30), (31), (32):

(29) *peasyble/ADJ possession/N* (CMFITZJA,A3V.35)

(PDE: peaceful possession)

(30) *the/D holy/ADJ gospel/N* (CMFITZJA,A2R.5)

(31) *heuenly/ADJ chirche/N* CMFITZJA,A3V.39

All of these characteristics, in summary, seem to indicate that the English language system at the end of the 15th century was ready to enter a new era of Early Modern English period.

10 Adjective Position and Meaning

The question of adjectival position within the noun phrases is closely connected with the question of meaning of the given noun phrase. To consider some of its aspects, it is, at first, important to note that for the purposes of clarity the Old English and Middle English periods are going to be treated somewhat separately. This, however, does not mean that the tendencies described do not exist on a continual scale of development.

10.1 Distribution of Adjective Position

As has already been stated, adjectives in Old and Middle English could appear prenominally, postnominally, or ambilaterally with regard to the noun they modify. All of these three positions have been found within the five hundred and ninety-eight noun phrases examined.

Out these 598 noun phrases, 571 were preposed, 26 adjectives could be found in postposition, and there was 1 case in which the adjectives were found ambilaterally.

Regarding the distribution of these overall results, in the *Blickling Homilies*, the first sample, preposed adjectives were found 93 times, the remaining 7 cases were cases of adjectival postposition.

In the next textual sample, *Ælfric′s Catholic Homilies I*, there were 92 preposed adjectives and 8 postposed; the results being very similar to the *Blickling Homilies*.

As for the Middle English texts, the ratio begins to shift slightly in *Kentish Homilies*, where preposition could be found in 97 cases, postposition only in in 3 cases. In *Kentish Sermons*, preposed adjectives were found 92 times, and postposition 6 times (out of the total ninety-eight samples). In *Wycliffite Sermons*, there were 98 preposed adjectives, 1 instance of ambilateral placement, and only 1 postposed adjective. In the last text, *Sermo die lune in embdomana Pasche*, 99 adjectives are preposed, and only 1 case of postposition can be found.

The results can be summarized in the following table:

Distribution of Preposition and Postposition in the Textual Samples				
Textual sample	**Period**	**Preposed adjectives**	**Postposed adjectives**	**Ambilateral adjectives**
The Blickling Homilies	o2	93	7	0
Ælfric's Catholic HomiliesI	o3	92	8	0
Kentish Homilies	m1	97	3	0
Kentish Sermons	m2	92	6	0
Wycliffite Sermons	m3	98	1	1
Sermo die lune in embdomana Pasche	m4	99	1	0

10.2 Adjectives and Meaning in the Old English Texts

Adjective position, especially in Old English, was just one of the factors influencing meaning of any given noun phrase. There were two other factors at play: definiteness of the noun phrase and strong or weak declension (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 256)

In her research, Fischer found typical patterns of co-ocurrence of these three factors: most typically (and in connection with the principle of iconicity explained in previous chapters),

(1) preposed adjectives would be weak and definite; and would express given, thematic, or non-salient information. (2) Postposed adjectives would be most typically strong and indefinite; these would express new, rhematic, or salient information about the noun they modify ("Adjectives in Middle English" 257)

These are, however, only the most prototypical combinations possible, by far not the only ones. (3) It would also be common for preposed adjectives to be strong and indefinite, and in this case the would express new, rhematic (salient) information (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 257) based on the presupposition that in these instances, the adjective is phonologically stressed (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 271).

(4) Preposed adjectives were also found in a combination with weak declension in an indefinite noun phrase, these Fischer considers to express given information (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 257). (5) Postposed adjectives could also be weak and found in a definite noun phrase, where it would convey given, thematic, non-salient information.(Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 257).

(6) The sixth combination attested by Fischer is the combination in which the adjective is postposed and strong, and is found in a definite noun phrase. Here it conveys new, rhematic, or salient information (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 258).

10.2.1 Preposed Adjectives

The combinations described above (patterns 1, 3, and 4) are found in the research results concerning preposed adjectives.

10.2.1.1 Pattern (1)

As for pattern (1), in the *Blickling Homilies,* of all of the 93 preposed adjectives, 62 are weak and definite. In *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies I,* of all the 92 preposed adjectives, preposed adjectives, 43 are weak and definite.

According to Fischer, this position is the position most protoypical for weak adjectives because of the fact that due to principle of iconicity ("Iconic Perspective" 271), these adjectives do not convey information with a special contrast or emphasis; on the other hand, they convey known and non-salient information.

This explanation might be plausible in instances such as these:

(1) *Hwæt we nu gehyrdson* **þis/D^A halige/ADJ^A godspel/N^A** *beforan us rædan* (coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:15.28.206)
(PDE: What we have now heard /in/ this holy gospel read before us...)

Because the gospel is *holy* (sacred, set-apart, and special), the adjective *holy* does not add any important, contrastive, or new information.

10.2.1.2 Pattern (3)

Pattern (3) is also very common in the textual sample. In the *Blickling Homilies*, of all of the 93 preposed adjectives, 30 noun phrases are representatives of pattern (3). In *Ælfric´s Catholic Homilies I*, 40 noun phrases are preposed, strong and indefinite.

(2) *His þegnas wæron þagyt flæsclices/ADJ^G modes/N^G, & næron mid gastes mægene getremede.*(coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:17.37.212)
(PDE: His disciples were then of-fleshly mind, and were not with Spirit´s might confirmed /=made firm/.)

In instances such as in example (2), stress might be a plausible explanation for this pattern. The sequence of text is found in the context of Jesus telling his disciples that he must be arrested and crucified; but his disciples do not understand, why. They are not yet able to see that his death is necessary as a payment for sin, that he, Jesus, innocent God´s son, needs to die for the guilty, to pay the penalty for them. They do not understand it because their thinking is still fleshly - influenced by the principles of the fallen world, and not from the Holy Spirit, which would help them understand.

Hence, they were then of *fleshly mind (*as opposed to spiritual). Here phonological stress (emphasis) seems to be very probable.

Of course, on the other hand, this is a pattern in which its functionality within the textual samples seems to be most difficult to prove because there are no native speakers of Old English anymore, as also Olga Fischer points out ("Adjectives in Middle English" 259).

10.2.1.3 Pattern (4)

Pattern (4) is, in comparison to the previous two, much less common. In the *Blickling Homilies*, it is not attested at all, in *Ælfric´s Catholic Homilies I*, only 1 instance is found of all the 92 noun phrases:

(3) *he þæt God gesceop to mæran/ADJ^D engle/N^D þone þe nu is deoful* (cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:180.57.55)
(PDE: he that God created /as an/ excellent angel, is now devil)

Here the unusual combination of a weak adjective *mæran* and indefinite noun phrase in a contrastive setting (satan´s original beautiful form contrasted with his new evil nature), might seem slightly confusing at first. However, it might be explained by the fact that an *angel* might have been, in mind of the author (and possibly in the mind of the receivers, too), firmly connected with beauty and excellence. The adjective in itself therefore does not express any information salient for the discourse.

.

10.2.1.4 Other Patterns of Adjectival Preposition

Apart from above-mentioned patterns, the results of the analysis showed 1 instance of another pattern of adjectival preposition in the *Blickling homilies*, which is a preposed strong adjective found in a definite noun phrase:

(4) *Hælend him to cwæþ, Loca nu; þin/PRO$^N agen/ADJ^N geleafa/N^N þe hæfþ gehæledne. (*coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:15.24.200*).*
(PDE: Saviour told him: "Look now, **your own faith** has healed you.")

This rare case can be found in the context of a situation in which a blind man has received healing from his blindness. The blind man believes, and Jesus acknowledges his faith through the above-mentioned words.

The use of a personal pronoun together with a strong adjective might be explained with connection to the fact that *þin* and *agen* in this context work together as an intensifying unity, which is mentioned also by Fischer (Fischer, "Adjective in Old English" 19).

In *Ælfric´s Catholic Homilies I*, this pattern can be found 6 times. Among these instances belong 2 with the adjective *agen* in contexts similar to the one just mentioned, and also, interestingly, 2 instances that are very similar in nature:

(5) *hu he on ðisum/D^D dæigþerlicum/ADJ^D dæge/N^D on soðre*
*menniscnysse acennyd wæs (*cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_2:190.1.315)
(PDE: how he in this of-this-day day was in true humanity born)

In a way similar to *þin agen geleafa*, in the example *on ðisum dæigþerlicum dæge*, *dæigþerlicum* seems to form an intensifying unity with *ðisum*, in order to emphasize the the fact that the given day is the anniversary of Christ´s birth. This might be the reason why the adjective does not behave in prototypical way.

10.2.2 Postposed Adjectives

As for postposed adjectives, all the patterns, the most prototypical (2), as well as the more rate patterns (5), and (6), were found in the research results.

10.2.2.1 Pattern (2)

According to Fischer, postposed strong indefinite adjectives are adjectives most prototypical with regard to their rhematicity, or informational salience (in other words, it is their most "natural" position in Old English) ("Adjectives in Middle English" 257).

In the Blickling Homilies, there are no examples of this pattern, but there are 3 instances in *Aelfric´s Catholic Homilies I:*

(6) *hi nabbað nænne lichoman. ac hi sindon ealle gastas/N^N swiðe/ADV strange/ADJ^N ./, &/CONJ mihtige/ADJ^N &/CONJ wlitige/ADJ^N* (cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:179.24.28)
(PDE: ...they have no body. But they are are all spirits very strong, and mighty, and beautiful)

(7) *Þa wearð God to ðam swiðe gegremod þurh manna mandæda þæt he cwæð þæt him ofþuhte þæt he æfre mancyn gesceop. Ða wæs hwæþere an/NUM^N man/N^N rihtwis/ADJ^N ætforan Gode.*
(cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:185.179.184)
(PDE: then was God with them very angered for man´s evil deeds so that he said he was sorry that he ever mankind made. Then was there one man righteous before God, who was called Noe.)

(8) *& hit oferstah ealle duna wearð ða ælc/Q^N þincg/N^N cuces/ADJ^G adrengt.*(cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:185.193.201)
(PDE: and it /the Ark/ rose above all hills and all things living drowned)

In light of Fischer´s theory, example (6) can be interpreted as an emphasis on the fact that angels, even though they do not have a body like humans do, are not in any way inferior, in fact, they are very all very *strong, mighty, and beautiful.*

As for example (7), there is wicked mankind in contrast to one man who is not wicked; who, on the contrary, is righteous in God´s eyes, thus, contrast is clearly visible in this case too.

In example (8), a similar pattern can be found, and not only that, but also a striking stylistic contrast expressed by the words *living (cuces)* and *drowned (adrengt* placed next to each other.

10.2.2.2 Pattern (5)

Pattern (5), in other words, the combination of a postposed adjective which is weak and definite, is also to be found within the examined sample. In the *Blickling Homilies*, postposed weak definite adjectives can be found 7 times, while in *Ælfric´s Catholic Homilies I* there are 2 instances of this combination.

(9) *Men/N^N ða/D^N leofestan/ADJS^N. smeagað þysne cwyde: & mid micelre gymene forbugað unrihtwisnesse*
(cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:189.289.309)
(PDE: Men the dearest, meditate /on/ this discourse, and with great attention avoid unrighteousness)

The example presented above, found in this marginal pattern, is, in fact, highly prominent within the context of adjectival postposition in the homilies and sermons. Of all the 15 cases of postposition in the two old English texts, 9 times it is represented by this expression (or by its very slightly modified form).

According to Olga Fischer, who used the example of this pattern in the noun phrase *þeowa clæna* (PDE: a female-servant clean), a formulation found in religious writings, the adjective, despite the fact that it is postposed, does not express new information. The expression *þeowa clæna* is used as a title of idiomatic nature, in the given context as an expression of humility and obedience ("Adjectives in Middle English" 257).

The example of use in the Old English homilies and sermons, as well as *þeowa clæna,* is very similar to the one presented by Fischer. As well as Fischer´s example, no

new information is actually expressed by the adjective, as the whole noun phrase, *men ða leofestan*, is actually a fixed form of address to the receivers of the text.

10.2.2.3 Pattern (6)

The last pattern, pattern (6), in other words, the combination of postposed strong adjectives which are definite, can be also attested. In the *Blickling Homilies*, there are no examples, but in *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies I*, there are 3.

Fischer found that this pattern carries a rhematic adjective, the example being *þone ilcan ceaddan yungne* (PDE: the same Chad young), which appears in context of refering to a person when he was young (as opposed to now, when he no longer is considered young) ("Adjectives in Middle English" 257).

Provided that we consider a personal name (in this case, *God*) as a definite reference (based on Hogg 171), the most common example is:

(10) *An angin is ealra þinga þæt is **God/NR^N ælmihtig/ADJ^N**.*
(cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:178.4.4)
(PDE: There is one beginning of all things, that is God almighty.)

With regard to thematicity or rhematicity, the case can be considered to be somewhat borderline - in this example, the noun phrase appears at the beginning of a homily which continues with the enumeration of all the things God created on the Earth; thus God *who is **almighty*** - his strength and power could be emphasized here. On the other hand, *God almighty* is a part of a fixed expression - a title for God, frequently found in the research sample, whether in the postposed variant, or in preposition (*almighty God*). The interpretation therefore remains slightly unclear.

10.3 Adjectives and Meaning in the Middle English Texts

In the previous chapters, some of the changes which began to occur in the Middle English period were touched upon in the continuity of the six Old English and Middle English texts. Due to these gradual but significant changes described in them, a relative difficulty arises when an attempt at a generalized analysis of meaning of the noun phrases in Middle English is attempted: This difficulty lies in the fact that the

system, relatively stable and predictable in the Old English period, was becoming less and less stable and less predictable by the measures of the Old English system.

As it was shown, the distinction between strong and weak adjectives in the texts was still maintained, however, it is disputable up to what point it was due to the fact that it was felt to be binding as a rule of grammar, and when the usage became more or less a convention that would gradually disappear altogether.

10.3.1 Preposed Adjectives

For the reason that the topic of the Old English system in Middle English texts was already touched upon the previous chapters, general attention in this chapter is going to be focused on several examples of the system which was newly emerging, and examined on the samples of adjectives untypical for the old system (i.e. foreign endings, or endings such as *-y* in *holy* - OE *halig*), which were gradually becoming more common.

These instances begin to appear commonly in the second Middle English text - in *Kentish Sermons*, and can be found throughout *Wycliffite Sermons* and *Sermo die lune in Ebdomana Pasche*.

The adjective *holy*, because it is common in the examined samples, proves to be a good specimen for examination of the interplay of position, definiteness, and meaning.

Its ending, which has evolved from the Old English *halig*, as has been mentioned, was no longer as easily manipulable as in some other adjectives, for which it would have been easier to keep their more typical form. These more prototypical adjectives seem to often have a consonant in the last position, such as *god, riht, yfel* (PDE: evil).

As for *holy*, in these three above mentioned texts, no distinction between strong and weak declension is attested.

The fact that declension has ceased to be expressed in this particular case might indicate that the meaning of the noun phrase (definite or indefinite, given or new information) would have to be expressed though means more familiar to Present-Day English users.

(11) *And so priue vndurstondyng of **this/D holy/ADJ gospel/N** ys algate soth*
(CMWYCSER,227.67)

(PDE: And so personal understanding of this holy gospel is always true /the gospel is true/)

(12) *Ihu s the sone of Josedech. was in his tyme conuenyently named Ihu s.y e helper & sauer of the people of god per sacram obediencia. by **holy/ADJ obedience/N*** (CMFITZJA,A4V.62)

(PDE: Jesus /=Joshua/ the son of Josedech was in his time conveniently named Jesus /=Joshua/ the helper and saver of the people of God par sacram obediencia, by holy obedience.)

(13) *Abrahmys bosum ys clepyd a plase of rest þat **holy/ADJ soules/NS** resteden inne byforn Cristes assencion.*

(PDE: Abraham´s bosom is called a place of rest that holy souls rested in before Christ´s coming.)

These three examples might show three potential variations in meaning of the noun phrase.

In example (11), we can see the noun phrase *this holy gospel* in context in which the author of the sermon refers back to the passage from the Bible which is thematized in the sermon and which is needed to be understood. Example (12) shows the adjective *holy* in context of a mere indefinite specification of the quality of obedience. Example (13) is used in context of an explanation, and here, there is a slight possibility that it might be considered contrastive, because the context of the passage is the distinction between the rich man who went to hell, and a poor man Lazarus went to rest to a place traditionally called Abraham´s bosom, where holy souls rested, but wicked souls did not.

These three examples might prove that declension is (at least in some cases) no longer necessary to express slight modifications of meaning formerly co-expressed by declension.

To express them, instead, the distinction between a definite and an indefinite noun phrase can be indicated with the help of a determiner; and in case that the meaning of the noun phrase in example (13) was meant to be contrastive, it would be most probably expressed through phonological stress, which is the prevalent means for

highlighting new, important, and contrastive information even nowadays (Ficher 2001 271).

10.3.2 Postposed Adjectives

The exact numbers of postposed adjectives found in the four Middle English texts have been stated at the beginning of this chapter: 3 instances can be found in *Kentish Homilies*, 6 in *Kentish Sermons,* 1 instance in *Wycliffite Sermons* and 1 instance in *Sermo die Lune;* their tendency to become gradually more rare is visible from the statistics. Those instances, in which preposed adjectives were found, according to Olga Fischer, can be ascribed to various influences and tendencies ("Adjectives in Middle English" 267).

The results of the analysis of the Middle English noun phrases show that the following factor seems to be significant regarding the samples found in postposition: it is the fact that adjectives in postposition could appear in fixed expressions (Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 267).

This tendency has already been shown to some degree in the subchapters on patterns (5) and (6) in the Old English period and it turns out that it prevails in the Middle English period over any other possible parameter.

Of all the 11 postposed adjectives found in the four Middle English textual samples, 8 cases are used in a noun phrase used as a name, or in an expression which has become fixed. An example of the most prominent one is the following:

(14) *Nu lordinges ure lord **god/NPR almichti/ADJ**. þat hwylem in one stede. And ine one time flesliche makede of watere wyn* (CMKENTSE,218.90)
(PDE: Now, lords, our Lord God almighty, who, while /he was/ in one town, physically made wine of water...)

It is probably not surprising for the expression *God almighty* to be found multiple times in texts concerned with the matters of faith. From a linguistic point of view, however, it might be a very different matter as it could be an indicator of an interesting tendency: Due to the gradual diminishing importance of postposition as a systemic feature of expressing meaning in the context of given information versus new

might have "freed" the slot for postposition for other distinctive uses, some of which might be found even nowadays.

Apart from the adjectives found in fixed expressions, there are two more interesting cases of postposition worth being noted. Both can be found in the two latest textual samples (in *Wycliffite Sermons* and in *Sermo die lune in ebodmana Pasche*), and they are the following:

(15) *But þe lord was wroth wiþ þe excusacion of þese beden foolys, and bad his seruaunt wenden owt into **stretys/NS of/P þe/D cite/N more/ADJR and/CONJ lesse/ADJR**, and bryngon into þis feste þese þre maner of men*
(CMWYCSER,230.122)
(PDE: But the lord was angry with the exuse of these three invited fools, and bade his servant go out into streets of the city greater and smaller)

(16) *Shortly/ADV rehercyd/VAN ./. eccl/NPR iastic/NPR ./, the/D .xlvi./NUM chapitre/N Ihu/NPR s/NPR naue/NPR sayth/VBP he/PRO **successour/N vnto/P Moyses/NPR strong/ADJ in/P werre/N &/CONJ bataylle/N***
(CMFITZJA,A3R.31)
(PDE: Shortly summarized, Ecclestiacus, the 46th chapter, calls Jesus /=Joshua/ Naue successor unto Moses strong in war and battle.)

An easily observable characteristics of these two examples is the fact that in both of them, the postmodified adjectives do not stand alone in the position of a postmodificator; in fact, they are a part of heavier modification. In case of *stretys of þe cite more and lesse* there is an of-construction which in the Old English period would be expressed by declension, and this would have been the case also with *vnto Moyses* in *successour vnto Moyses strong in werre & bataylle*.

These two cases are almost strikingly similar to examples of Present-Day English noun phrases, in which heavy modification or complementation of the adjective is a factor influencing adjective placement in favour of postmodification (Biber 519 - see the section on adjectival postposition in Present-Day English noun phrase).

10.4 A Short Summary of Findings

At the end of the chapter, it is now time for a short summary of how adjective position relates to other important elements.

The results show an overall much higher number of adjectival premodifiers in the Old English and Middle English texts. The diminishing number of postposed adjectives indicates a decreasing tendency for their occurrence in the Middle English period.

The results seem to confirm the clear tendency found also by Olga Fischer for prenominal modifiers to prevail, and for the gradual disappearance of postposed adjectives in Middle English ("Adjectives in Middle English" 282).

As she explains the lower prevalence of postposed adjectives by factors such as the fixation of word order, grammaticalization of the definite and indefinite article as opposed to the more free use of demonstrative determiners, and loss of inflections (Ficher 2006 282), it is interesting to see the drop in the number of postposed adjectives in last two examined texts, in which these changes (some of which were touched upon in the previous chapter), undoubtedly gain momentum.

10.4.1 Adjective Position and Declension

The possible relationship between adjective position and declension (especially in Old English) has been thoroughly described in the previous chapters. The results of the research seem to indicate that declension was one of the major factors co-creating meaning of the adjective, and that weak declension prototypically might be connected with given information and preposition, according to Fischer´s theory about the principle of iconicity ("Iconic Perspective" 271), based on the fact that there were instances in pattern (1) and (2) in which the adjectives showed prototypical behaviour described by Fischer ("Adjectives in Middle English" 257).

The research has also shown that weak declension does not automatically stand for definiteness nor preposition, nor does strong declension automatically stand for indefiniteness, or postposition, as several pattern were identified where strong adjectives entered various other combinations.

In Middle English, the simplified form of strong and weak declension was still present, however, its use was gradually becoming obsolete, and a new system, in which declension did not need to be used at all, was emerging. This system would later prevail and become the basis for Present-Day English system.

10.4.2 Adjective Position and Definiteness

The exploration of adjective position in context to meaning has simultaneously shed light on some of the possible aspects of relationship between adjective position and definiteness.

The most prototypical position for expressing definiteness seems to be preposition, and postposition seems to be most strongly connected with indefiniteness. This applied especially with regard to Old English, as in Middle English the situation changed.

In Middle English, the category of preposed adjectives broadened to express a wider array of possible meanings, definite and indefinite, which happened as a result of far reaching shifts and changes in the language system. However, it remained true that postposition still could be used in indefinite settings.

In conclusion, it is important to say these two mentioned protoypical positions were by far not the only ones possible, and from the research results it is apparent that preposition does not automatically stand for definiteness and postposition for indefiniteness, as both preposed and postposed adjectives can be strong and weak with connection to various other factors, such as inflection, phonetic stress, convention, and idiomaticity (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 278).

10.4.3 Adjective Position and Meaning

Adjective position and meaning is the last major relationship combinations touched upon in this chapter. The results seem to show that the relationship between adjective position and meaning is dependent on multiple factors, and that meaning is co-expressed through various combinations of the above mentioned factors of declension, and of definiteness of the noun phrase. The research has shown that in congruence with Fischer´s observations about the most protoypical thematic and rhematic patterns of adjectival use in noun phrases, in Old English, the most prototypical pattern for rhematicity was the combination of a postposed, strong adjective in an indefinite noun

phrase, or preposed strong adjective in an indefinite noun phrase (presumably stressed) (Fischer, "Iconic Perspective" 271). The prototypical pattern for thematic adjectives was a preposed weak adjective in a definite noun phrase.

In Middle English, the system began to shift closer towards Present-Day English use, and a wider array of meaning could be expressed through preposition. Postposed adjectives, however, still could be used in rhematic settings, and idiomatic use has also come into play.

11 Adjective Position and Information Structure of the Texts

No element or any piece of discourse stands isolated, and therefore adjective position is also connected with the principles of information structure of the text.

Homilies and sermons share several prominent characteristics across all the Old English and Middle English texts:

Generally, the structure of both homilies and sermons is centered around interpreting Biblical passages - narrations and events. Frequently, these are passages from the Gospels. A frequent theme in the examined textual samples is the birth of Jesus Christ, the miracles he performed, and narrations about Jesus´s mother Mary. The homily *Primus sermo de inicio creaturae* found in *Ælfirc´s Catholic Homilies I*, and the last sermon - *Sermo die lune in ebdomana Pasche* - differ somewhat from this usual pattern, because there there the themes are drawn more extensively from the Old Testament.

The length and scope of the sermons generally varies, and ranges from relatively short texts, found for example in *Kentish Sermons*, in which the first sermon *Sermo in die epiphanie* consists of 1075 tokens in the corpus (this means including interpunction), while *Sermo die lune in ebdomana Pasche*, the longest and presumably most elaborate sermon, has 6 776 tokens, and therefore is roughly six times longer.

Overall, the texts are very carefully structured, undoubtedly for the receivers of the text to be able to process the information as easily and smoothly as possible. This structure usually consists of a narrative passage recounting an event of the Bible, and an explanatory passage that follows. Frequently, we can find a very prominent narrative voice, typically in second person plural, in these explanatory passages:

(1) *Hwæt we nu gehyrdon þis halige godspel beforan us rædan, & þeh we hit sceolan eft ofercweþan, þæt we þe geornor witon þæt hit us to bysene belimpeþ eces lifes.*(coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:15.28.206)

(PDE: Look, we now heard this holy gospel read before us; and yet, we should afterwards repeat it, /so/ that we then better understand that it serves for us /as/ an example of eternal life.)

The address in plural undoubtedly also stresses the fact that these exhortations are applicable to everyone - to the receivers of the text as well as to the one who speaks.

The individual thematic blocks often divided with references to the chapters of the Bible:

(2) *Thyse Wordes ben conteyned in the xxiiij. chapytre of Luke. and rad in the holy gospel of this day.* (CMFITZJA,A2R.5)

Last but not least, one of the devices used for connected the above mentioned passages and introducing new topics are rhetorical statements or questions, which the author of the homily presents, and then answers:

(3) *Sume ungelærede mænn wundrigeð, hwæt þiss godspell belimpe to þære eadigen Marien Cristes moder, & hwi man æt hire þenunge geræde þiss godspell, ac us þincð, þt hit rihtlice to hire gebyreð, beo þan þe ure larðeawes us doð to understandene.* (CMKENTHO,134.17)

(PDE: Some unlearned men wonder, what this /passage of the/ gospel means /= how it relates to/ the blessed Mary Christ´s mother, and why at the service devoted to her /we/ read this gospel, but we think that it rightly to her related, as our teachers want us to understand.)

This general characteristics of the genre of homilies and sermons makes it obvious that it was very important for the textual structure to be well organized, and that there were many functional devices within the text which helped to organize the information smoothly and effectively with regard to information flow.

When adjectival position within the noun phrases contained in these texts comes into play, it creates a very interesting and highly complex question of the relationship between these factors.

Some of the tendencies and possible links between these elements are going to be explored on several examples already used and in the previous chapter on adjective position and meaning. But, while in the previous chapter these examples were examined from the point of view of their meaning mainly in the narrower context of the noun phrase, now they are going to be examined from the point of view of the broader perspective of their function within the texts.

11.1 Adjectives and Information Structure in the Old English Texts

In the previous chapters it has been shown that adjective position is in a multifaceted relationship with definiteness and especially in Old English with adjectival declension. All of these three factors are dependent on each other and appear in certain (more or less frequent) patterns and combinations.

11.1.1 Preposed Adjectives in Old English

In Old English, there were four attested patterns of combinations of adjective preposition, noun phrase definiteness, and declension.

11.1.1.1 Pattern (1)

The first pattern, pattern (1), consists of a preposed weak adjective in a definite noun phrase. The reference of the adjective to the noun was thematic (non-salient). (In other words, the answer to the question: "does the adjective convey new, important, or contrastive information with regards to the noun?" would be: "No.")

As an example, the following passage was used:

(4) *Hwæt we nu gehyrdon þis/D^A halige/ADJ^A godspel/N^A beforan us rædan* (coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:15.28.206)
(PDE: What we have now heard /in/ this holy gospel read before us...)

This example, taken from the *Blickling Homillies*, is a part of a passage which connects the reading of the Gospel with the discourse that is going to follow, and therefore, it is an important connection point. The audience would have heard the Gospel passage, and now the homily refers to this event through this expression.

11.1.1.2 Pattern (3)

Pattern (3), in other words, preposed strong adjective in an indefinite noun phrase,
was determined to possibly represent a rhematic adjective in this example:

(5) *His þegnas wæron þagyt **flæsclices/ADJ^G modes/N^G**, & næron mid gastes mægene getremede.*(coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:17.37.212)

(PDE: His disciples were then of-fleshly mind, and were not with Spirit´s might confirmed /made firm/.)

This passage is taken from a sequence in which the disciples cannot yet understand the reason why Jesus must suffer, because their mind is yet *fleshly*, and not changed by the Holy Spirit. The adjective is therefore salient and contrative, and it carries an important piece of information.

After examining this example, it becomes obvious that here the noun phrase functions slightly differently than in the previous one instance: because it carries salient information, it is an important "node" in the text, a point of focus, which then serves as a venture point for other information to follow.

11.1.1.3 Pattern (4)

A representative of pattern (4) is the following:

(6) *he þæt God gesceop to **mæran/ADJ^D engle/N^D** þone þe nu is deoful*
(cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:180.57.55)
(PDE: he that God created /as an/ excellent angel, is now devil)

In the chapter on adjective position and meaning it was stated that this minor combination of a preposed weak adjective in an indefinite noun phrase can be explained by the fact that the notion of *angel* could have been connected with beauty by default in the mind of the author of the homily, and therefore, the reference of the adjective is thematic, or non-salient; in other words, it does not share any important characteristics about the noun.

From the point of view of information structure of the text, this example seems to be very similar to *this halige godspel* from pattern (1) because just like there, it is obvious that *mæran engle* connects two part of the discourse: the previous sequence, in which the devil´s origin was already discussed (his original beauty and goodness), is summarized: *he þæt God gesceop to mæran engle* and then used for connection with the infromation following: *þone þe nu is deoful.*

11.1.1.4 Other Patterns of Adjectival Preposition

For preposed Old English adjectives, one more pattern was attested, and it was represented by the following example:

(7) *Hælend him to cwæþ, Loca nu;* **þin/PRO$^N agen/ADJ^N geleafa/N^N** *þe hæfþ gehæledne. (*coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:15.24.200*).*
(PDE: Saviour told him: "Look now, your own faith has healed you.")

The example consists of a preposed strong adjective in a definite noun phrase. This combination was taken to be somewhat untypical for the fact that *agen* seems to form a unity with the pronoun *þin.* Here the function of the noun phrase also seems to be connective: Jesus in his speech refer back to the previous events (when the blind man believed), and also points towards the result of the whole narration, the blind man´s healing.

11.1.2 Postposed Adjectives in Old English

11.1.2.1 Pattern (2)

Postposed adjectives in the Old English period were attested in three patterns. The first one, pattern (2), can be seen as the most protoypical pattern for postposed adjectives from the point of view of their rhematicity. It consists of a postposed adjective declined according to the strong inflection, and can be found in an indefinite noun phrase:

(8) *Þa wearð God to ðam swiðe gegremod þurh manna mandæda þæt he cwæð þæt him ofþuhte þæt he æfre mancyn gesceop. Ða wæs hwæþere* **an/NUM^N man/N^N rihtwis/ADJ^N** *ætforan Gode.*
(cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:185.179.184)
(PDE: then was God with them very angered for man´s evil deeds so that he said he was sorry that he ever mankind made. Then was there one man righteous before God, who was called Noe.)

From the narrower viewpoint, it was determined that the adjective *rihtwis* is clearly salient with respect to its head noun, *man*, because it carries an important piece of information: there was one man that God decided to spare, whom the author of the homily calls *righteous before God*. From the point of view of textual structure, we can see that the noun phrase plays a very important role in the discourse. It is a major "node", a major point of focus, it and serves as a venture point for the unfolding of the story of the Flood.

It is also very similar to the preposed pattern (3), where the adjective is preposed, strong, indefinite, and rhematic, and where it serves as a venture point to further explanation and unfolding of the discourse.

11.1.2.2 Pattern (5)

Pattern (5), in other words, postposed weak and definite adjectives were represented by the following example:

(9) ***Men/N^N ða/D^N leofestan/ADJS^N. smeagað þysne cwyde: & mid micelre gymene forbugað unrihtwisnesse***
(cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:189.289.309)
(PDE: Men the dearest, meditate /on/ this discourse, and with great attention avoid unrighteousness)

In this instance, the function of the noun phrase is slightly different from the other examples. Here, it neither serves as a point of reference (e.g. *this halige godspel*), nor as a venture point for new information (e.g. *one man rihtwis ætforan Gode*), but as a form address, it is a tool of connection between the text and its receivers.

It exploits the prominent position at the beginning of the clause where it can catch the reader´s or listener´s attention. It belongs among the most prominent and most frequent cases of noun phrase postmodification within the research sample.

It is also very characteristic of homilies and sermons as it alludes strongly to the orality of the genre.

11.1.2.3 Pattern (6)

The last pattern of postposition, in the previous chapter labeled as pattern (6), is

(10) *An angin is ealra þinga þæt is **God/NR^N ælmihtig/ADJ^N**.*
(cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:178.4.4)
(PDE: There is one beginning of all things, which is God Almighty.)

Here, the adjective is postposed, strong and definite. Depending on the reading (as stated in the previous chapter), it can be seen both as thematic (as a fixed expression), or rhematic (the beginning of all things is God *who is almighty*, because he created all things). From the point of view of the textual structure, however, the noun phrase is clearly rhematic. It is found in the prominent position at the end of the clause, and creates rheme of the clause; in other words - here again, it is a vantage point used for the unfolding of the following discourse, in which the enumeration of all thing which God created, is given.

11.2 Adjectives and Information Structure in the Middle English Texts

In the previous chapter, it has been shown that in Middle English, the category of adjectival preposition gradually broadened to be able to express a wider array of meanings without the help of declension, and that preposition overall became more frequent than postposition. The following exploration is going to focus on the ways in which these newly emerging adjectives could have interacted with the broader information structure of the texts.

11.2.1 Preposed Adjectives

The previous chapter provided these three examples of the adjective *holy* in different settings:

(11) *And so priue vndurstondyng of **this/D holy/ADJ gospel/N** ys algate soth*
(CMWYCSER,227.67)
(PDE: And so personal understanding of this holy gospel is always true /=the gospel is true/)

(12) *Ihu s the sone of Josedech. was in his tyme conuenyently named Ihu s.y e*
helper & sauer of the people of god per sacram obediencia.by **holy/ADJ**
obedience/N (CMFITZJA,A4V.62)

(PDE: Jesus /=Joshua/ the son of Josedech was in his time conveniently named
Jesus /=Joshua/ the helper and saver of the people of God par sacram obediencia,
by holy obedience.

(13) *Abrahmys bosum ys clepyd a plase of rest þat* **holy/ADJ soules/NS** *resteden*
inne byforn Cristes assencion.

(PDE: Abraham´s bosom is called a place of rest that holy souls rested in before
Christ´s coming.)

Example (11) is a representation of a definite noun phrase, in which the
reference is very similar to the one in pattern (1) of preposed adjectives in Old English:
Hwæt we nu gehyrdon þis halige godspel beforan us rædan
(coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:15.28.206). The adjective itself is not salient for the
discourse (the quality of the noun does not play any important role, nor is it stressed or
contrasted). However, just as in Old English pattern (1), the noun phrase is a part of a
clause in which *this holy gospel* is used as a reference point - it points back to the gospel
reading, and also, here slightly indirectly, it prepares ground for a new topic, which is
going to follow.

Example (12) is slightly specific, because it serves as an appositive clause to the
Latin expression *par sacram obediencia*. The Latin phrase and its English translation
therefore create one unity. In context of the sermon, this noun phrase can be considered
rhematic - the argument of holy obedience is one of the central arguments through
which this Old Testament figure is likened to Jesus Christ.

The sample can also serve as an example of clausal emphasis because it further
highlights and elaborates on the previous Latin expression, and it slows down the flow
of the discourse - the receiver needs a longer processing time to absorb this important
piece information twice, and, therefore, the likehood that he or she will remember it,
increases.

The last example, example (13), is a representation of a noun phrase in which
the adjective could be meant to be rhematic with respect to the noun phrase (in this case
through contrast - only *holy souls* rested in Abraham´s bosom, not all souls).

From the point of view of textual information structure, we can see that the noun phrase tends to be rhematic, too. It is fronted to the prominent position at the beginning of the clause, and also it serves as a reference point for the following information.

11.2.2 Postposed Adjectives

As for adjectival postposition in Middle English, it has been already stated that there was a tendency for it to become more and more obsolete. However, the instances that have remained, have been illustrated by the following examples:

(14) *Nu lordinges ure lord **god/NPR almichti/ADJ**. þat hwylem in one stede. And ine one time flesliche makede of watere wyn* (CMKENTSE,218.90)
(PDE: Now, lords, our Lord God almighty, who, while /he was/ in one town, physically made wine of water...)

(15) *But þe lord was wroth wiþ þe excusacion of þese beden foolys, and bad his seruaunt wenden owt into **stretys/NS of/P þe/D cite/N more/ADJR and/CONJ lesse/ADJR**, and bryngon into þis feste þese þre maner of men* (CMWYCSER,230.122)
(PDE: But the Lord was angry with the excuse of these three invited fools, and bade his servant go out into streets of the city greater and smaller and bring to the feast these three kinds of men)

These two cases have shown that with regards to the narrower view of thematicity versus rhematicity within the noun phrase, example (14) is an example of a case in which the adjective cannot be considered to be salient; here it has become a part of a fixed expression, similar to the (somewhat borderline) case of pattern (6) in Old English: *An angin is ealra þinga þæt is God ælmihtig* (cocathom1,ÆCHom_I,_1:178.4.4). Within the broader context of the text, the noun phrase might be considered thematic too, because the salient information of the clause is the miracle of turning water into wine.

Example (15), an example of a heavily postmodified noun phrase, on the other hand, serves as a point of emphasis within the broader context of the text, which is the

parable about a feast to which foolish men refuse to come, and therefore he sends out a servant to go in the streets of the city and invite other people instead of them. The expression *stretys of þe cite more and lesse* slows down the passage of the text through the unusual word order that makes the information harder to process.

Within the context of the noun phrase, the adjective might not be considered very salient - some streets in each city or town are usually smaller, and some larger. From the point of view of information structure of the text, however, this expression serves as a device emphasizing the thoroughness with which the servant was supposed to search.

11.3 A Short Summary of Findings

This selective exploration into the possible connections between adjective position and information structure of the texts shows possibilities for wide variation in use. The examination of the results seems to indicate the following pattern:

In the Old English period, both preposed and postposed adjectives could be thematic or rhematic in dependence on the interplay of position, declension, and definiteness of the noun phrase, and it has been mentioned, these three factors together helped co-express the meaning of the adjective in context of the given noun phrase (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 256).

The analysis seems to indicate that the rhematic patterns - pattern (3), in other words, preposed strong indefinite adjectives, and patten (2) - postposed strong indefinite adjectives, show rhematicity also within the information structure of the text, and bring new impulses into the discourse.

Thematic patterns (the remaining ones), on the other hand, seem to serve more like firm reference points, as the cohesive matter that holds the discourse together, and some of their functions might be to refer back to information known and familiar to us.

In Middle English, the feature of the Old English system were still in place but over time, preposition became the dominant position to all adjectives, and, as Fischer recounts, phonological iconicity took over to help distinguish important information (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 258).

It can therefore be said that in Middle English, preposition became the encompassing position for adjectives regardless of the function in the discourse.

Postposition, too, could carry elements which were considered important to the discourse, as well as elements which tended to be thematic.

The answer to the question whether adjective position is in any relationship to discourse function therefore seems to be that the relationship is complex and depends upon multiple factors. But generally, it seems that the defining element is not adjectival position alone; rather adjectival position in context of meaning, and often also in connection to stylistic purposes, which determines the function and use of the given noun phrase in the discourse.

12 Adjective Position in the Past and Today

In the previous chapters, adjective position was examined from the point of view of the past developments. It is now time to at least briefly touch upon some of the features found in the Old English and Middle English periods which can be traced to present times, especially with regard to adjectival postposition.

From the results of the analysis, it has become obvious that there is a traceable tendency Old and Middle English adjectives to gradually become less frequent, which is so even now (Huddleston and Pullum 528), as has been described more systematically in the chapter on Present-Day English noun phrase.

It has already been mentioned that some of the similarities in adjective placement in favour of postposition can be found in cases when there is a heavier modification present in the noun phrase (Biber 519). Within the research sample, this can be traced back to the Middle English period, where instances such as this one (already more thoroughly examined in previous chapter) appear: *But þe lord was wroth wiþ þe excusacion of þese beden foolys, and bad his seruaunt wenden owt into stretys/NS of/P þe/D cite/N more/ADJR and/CONJ lesse/ADJR, and bryngon into þis feste þese þre maner of men* (CMWYCSER,230.122).

Another interesting phenomenon are idiomatic expressions. Fischer has noted their presence in connection with Middle English and has mentioned the fact that idiomaticity plays a role in the expression *God almighty* ("Adjectives in Middle English" 278). This expression can be found in the research sample as well, as has already been noted. The fact that this expression has fossilized and is widely used even today (Fischer, "Adjectives in Middle English" 278) might indicate an interesting feature of adjective postposition, which is the fact that that the motivation for placement of idiomatic expressions postnominally might partly be motivated by principles other than thematicity or rhematicity of the expression, rather, it might be the need or desire to use the less frequent, and therefore more "exotic" position to express distinct meanings, as can be seen in the Present-Day English expressions *attorney genera*l, *heir apparent*, or *president-elect*. Although these particular expressions might have been adopted into English later and based on Latin (Quirk 419), the principles behind their adoption into the English language might have been similar to the postposed expressions already attested in the examined periods of Old and Middle English.

In summary, the research results indicate the fact that there might be a continuation of certain uses of adjectival position even nowadays.

13 Conclusion

It is now time to conclude and summarize what has been found out about the positions of adjectives in homilies and sermons of the Old English and Middle English periods.

At the beginning of this thesis, it was stated that adjective position in Old and Middle English texts has recently attracted attention. This is undoubtedly true, as is evident from the research of Olga Fischer, who has devoted a series of several articles to the problematics. In connection with the principle of iconicity, Olga Fischer described the most common patterns of use of adjectives in different positions.

The main aims stated at the beginning of this thesis have been the following: to find out whether there can be any connections between adjective position and the Old (and Middle) English category of strong or weak declension, between adjective position and definiteness of the noun phrase, and adjective position and differences in meaning. On top of that, another area of interest was whether and how adjective position influenced information structure of the examined texts.

In order to find out the answers to these questions, 6 prosaic textual samples from the Old English and Middle English periods were chosen for the analysis from *The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE)*, and *The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2)*: these were the *Blickling Homilies*, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies I*, *Kentish Homilies*, *Kentish Sermons*, *Wycliffite Sermons*, and *Sermo die lune in ebdomana Pasche*. From these six texts, 598 noun phrases modified by at least one adjective were gathered and analyzed.

From the analysis, a tendency for the overall prevalence of preposed adjectives has been found. Of the 598 examined Old English and Middle English noun phrases, 571 were preposed, 26 adjectives could be found in postposition, and there was 1 case in which the adjectives were found ambilaterally). Also, it became evident that there was a tendency for gradual disappearance of postposed adjectives in the Middle English period.

The research has shown that in the Old English period, the relationship between adjective position, declension, definiteness of the noun phrase, and meaning was complex, and meaning was co-expressed with the help of different combinations of these features.

In the Middle English period, with the breakdown of the declension system, the situation began to change, and a new system began to emerge, a system in which the Old English parameter of declension gradually ceased to play a functional role.

As for the relationship between adjective position within the noun phrase and information structure of the texts, the examples presented in this thesis showed that in the Old English period, there was a connection between thematicity or rhematicity of the adjective from the point of view of its more narrow meaning within the noun phrase, and its thematicity or rhematicity within the texts. Their function in the text, therefore, is not dependent solely upon position.

Some of the uses of the noun phrases have been distinctive for the purposes of homilies and sermons, such as forms of address or the fixed expression *God almighty*, which can be found in speech even nowadays.

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Ælfric. "Ælfric´s Catholic Homilies." *The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose,* Department of Language and Linguistic Science, University of York. *Český národní korpus*, www.kontext.korpus.cz

"The Blickling Homilies." *The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose.* Department of Language and Linguistic Science, University of York. *Český národní korpus*, www.kontext.korpus.cz

FirzJames, Robert. "Sermo die lune in ebdomana Pasche." *The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2),* 2nd edition. Department of Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania. *Český národní korpus*, www.kontext.korpus.cz

"Kentish Homilies." *The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2),* 2nd edition. Department of Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania. *Český národní korpus*, www.kontext.korpus.cz

"Kentish Sermons." *The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2),* 2nd edition. Department of Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania. *Český národní korpus*, www.kontext.korpus.cz

"Wycliffite Sermons." *The Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English (PPCME2),* 2nd edition. Department of Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania. *Český národní korpus*, www.kontext.korpus.cz

Secondary Sources

Hogg, Richard M. *The Cambridge History of the English Language*.vol 1, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Blake, Norman. *The Cambridge History of the English Language*.vol 2, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Algeo, John, and Thomas Pyles. *The Origins and Development of the English Language,*6th editon, Cengage Learning, 2010.

Barber, Charles et al. *The English Language. A Historical Introduction*, 2nd edition, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Baugh, Albert C. *A History of the English Language*. 2nd edition, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957.

Biber, Douglas et al. *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written Englis*h. Pearson Education Limited, 1999.

Campbell, Alistair. *Old English Grammar*. Oxford University Press, 1959.

Crystal, David. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Crystal, David. "Middle English." British Library, 31 Jan. 2018, www.bl.uk/medieval-literature/articles/middle-english. Accessed 17 July 2023.

Fischer, Olga. "Developments in the Category Adjective from Old to Middle English", 2004. *ResearchGate*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254764669_Developments_in_the_category_adjective_from_Old_to_Middle_English. Accessed 19 July 2022.

---. "On the Position of Adjectives in Middle English." *English Language and Linguistics*, vol. 10, no. 2, 2006, pp. 253-288, DOI: 10.1017/s136067 4306001924. Accessed March 7 2023.

---. "The Position of the Adjective in Old English.", January 2000, *ResearchGate,* www.researchgate.net/publication/254783071_The_position_of_the_adjective_ in_Old_English. Accessed July 10 2022.

---. "The Position of the Adjective in (Old) English from an Iconic Perspective." *The Motivated Sign*, Jan. 2001, pp. 249–276., https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/ 3289328/ 16123_182966.pdf. Accessed 7 March 2023.

---. "The Status of the Postposed 'and-adjective' Construction in Old English: Attributive or predicative?" *Analysing Older English*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 251-284. https://vdoc.pub/download/analysing-older-english-26tkrkqi4vn0. Accessed 20 July 2022.

Fisher, Olga et al. *Syntax of Early English.* Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Foley, Edward. *A Handbook for Catholic Preaching.* Liturgical press, 2016.

Gelderen, Elly van. *A History of the English Language.* John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006.

Halvorsen, Rita." *Adjective position in Old English from a micro-level perspective."* 2020, Supervisor Kristin Bech, *University of Oslo, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages.* , *DUO vitenarkiv,* https://www.duo.uio.no/handle/10852/80518?show=full. Accessed 6 July 2022.

Huddleston, Rodney - Geofrey K., Pullum, et al. *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Iglesias-Rábade, Luis. *Handbook of Middle English*. LINCOM, 2003.

"Information on Cmkentho-M1." Information on CMKENTHO-M1, www.ling.upenn.edu/hist-corpora/PPCME2-RELEASE 4/philological_info_files/cmkentho-m1.html. Accessed 19 July 2023.

"Information on Cmkentse-M2." Information on Cmkentse-M2, www.ling.upenn.edu/hist-corpora/PPCME2-RELEASE-4/philological_info_files/cmkentse-m2.html. Accessed 19 July 2023.

"Information on Cmwycser-M3." Information on Cmwycser-M3, www.ling.upenn.edu/hist-corpora/PPCME2-RELEASE-4/philological_info_files/cmwycser-m3.html. Accessed 22 July 2023.

"Information on Cmfitzja-M4." Information on Cmfitzja-M4, www.ling.upenn.edu/hist-corpora/PPCME2-RELEASE-4/philological_info_files/cmfitzja-m4.html. Accessed 22 July 2023.

Lass, Roger. *The Shape of English*. J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1987.

Hill, Joyce. "Ælfric: His Life and Works." *A Companion to Ælfric,* Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan, Brill, 2009, pp. 35-69.

Mitchell, Bruce, and Fred C. Robinson. *A Guide to Old English*. 5th edition, John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 1992.

Morris, R. *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century*. Trübner &CO., 1880.

Quirk, Randolph. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. Longman, 1985.

Quirk, Randolph, and C. L. Wren. *Old English Grammar*. 2nd edition, Methuen & CO

    Ltd, 1957.

"XML Helsinki Corpus." *XML Helsinki Corpus Browser*,

    helsinkicorpus.arts.gla.ac.uk/display.py?fs=100&what=index. Accessed 27 July

    2023.

Appendix - List of Analyzed Noun Phrases

List of all Noun Phrases Used for the Analysis	
Noun phrase	**Adjective position**
The Blickling Homilies (period o2)	
men/N^N þa/D^N leofestan/ADJS^N	postposed
þisse/D^D ondweardan/ADJ^D tide/N^D	preposed
ealle/Q^N þa/D^N halgan/ADJ^N gewreotu/N^N	preposed
hæþnum/ADJ^D mannum/N^D	preposed
sum/Q^N blind/ADJ^N þearfa/N^N	preposed
myccle/Q^A menigo/N^A	preposed
Hælend/N^N se/D^N Nazarenisca/ADJ^N	postposed
hluddre/ADJ^D stefne/N^D	preposed
þin/PRO$^N agen/ADJ^N geleafa/N^N	preposed
þis/D^A halige/ADJ^A godspel/N^A	preposed
eces/ADJ^G lifes/N^G	preposed
his/PRO$ ða/D^A heardan/ADJ^A bendas/N^A ,/	preposed
flæsclices/ADJ^G modes/N^G	preposed
þæs/D^G heofonlican/ADJ^G gerynes/N^G	preposed
þon/D^I heofonlicon/ADJ^D weorce/N^D	preposed
þæs/D^G heofonlican/ADJ^G gerynes/N^G	preposed
men/N^N þa/D^N leofestan/ADJS^N	postposed
his/PRO$ þa/D^A mycclan/Q^A miht/N^A	preposed
Eal/Q^N þis/D^N mennisce/ADJ^N cyn/N^N	preposed
þæs/D^G heofonlican/ADJ^G leohtes/N^G	preposed
eallum/Q^D geleaffulum/ADJ^D monnum/N^D	preposed
godum/ADJ^D dædum/N^D	preposed
þæs/D^G ecan/ADJ^G lifes/N^G	preposed
Halige/ADJ^N gewreotu/N^N	preposed
þæm/D^D godum/ADJ^D men/N^D	preposed
þæm/D^D ecean/ADJ^D leohte/N^D	preposed
ure/PRO$ tydran/ADJ gecynde/N	preposed
þæt/D^N heofonlice/ADJ^N leoht/N^N	preposed
þyssum/D^D menniscan/ADJ^D cynne/N^D	preposed
þæs/D^G ecan/ADJ^G leohtes/N^G	preposed
þæs/D^G ecan/ADJ^G leohtes/N^G	preposed
his/PRO$ agenra/ADJ^G synna/N^G	preposed
þæs/D^G ecan/ADJ^G leohtes/N^G	preposed
eglum/ADJ^D mode/N	preposed

inneweardre/ADJ^D heortan/N^D	preposed
þa/D^A flæsclican/ADJ^A willan/N^A	preposed
þa/D^A ungereclican/ADJ^A uncysta/N^A	preposed
mislicum/ADJ^D geþohtum/N^D	preposed
yfelra/ADJ^G geþohta/N^G	preposed
þa/D^A þusendlican/ADJ^A cræftas/N^A	preposed
seo/D^N mennisce/ADJ^N gecynd/N^N	preposed
seo/D^N godcunde/ADJ^N meht/N^N	preposed
þære/D^D menniscan/ADJ^D gecynde/N^D	preposed
þære/D^D godcundan/ADJ^D miht/N^D	preposed
þa/D^A menniscan/ADJ^A gecynd/N^A	preposed
ece/ADJ^A lif/N^A	preposed
Men/N^N þa/D^N leofestan/ADJS^N	postposed
þyses/D^G lænan/ADJ^G welan/N^G	preposed
þyssa/D^G eorþlicra/ADJ^G geofa/N^G	preposed
þæm/D^D gastlicum/ADJ^D þrymmum/N^D	preposed
se/D^N rihta/ADJ^N geleafa/N^N	preposed
þæt/D^A gastlice/ADJ^A leoht/N^A	preposed
lichomlicum/ADJ^D eagum/N^D	preposed
se/D^N gesenelica/ADJ^N lichama/N^N	preposed
seo/D^N ungesynelice/ADJ^N sawl/N^N	preposed
seo/D^N ungesynelice/ADJ^N sawl/N^N	preposed
þære/D^D ilcan/ADJ^D eorþan/N^D	preposed
men/N^N þa/D^N leofestan/ADJS^N	postposed
þæm/D^D nehstan/ADJS^D dæge/N^D	preposed
þisses/D^G menniscan/ADJ^G cynnes/N^G	preposed
godum/ADJ^D dædum/N^D	preposed
*medmycelne/ADJ^A innoð/N^*	preposed
þære/D^G a/ADV^T clænan/ADJ^G fæmnan/N^G	preposed
þa/D^A ilcan/ADJ^A gecynde/N^A	preposed
welige/ADJ^A yldran/N^A	preposed
þæm/D^D unlædum/ADJ^D Iudeum/NR^D	preposed
bradre/ADJR^A hand/N^A	preposed
þæt/D^A heofenlice/ADJ^A rice/N^A	preposed
heora/PRO$ unrihtum/ADJ^D gestreonum/N^D &/CONJ gitsunga/N^D ,/	preposed
þære/D^D biteran/ADJ^D æfeste/N^D	preposed
þem/D^D unclænan/ADJ^D firenluste/N^D	preposed
ece/ADJ^A forwyrd/N^A	preposed
ure/PRO$^A dæghwamlican/ADJ^A synna/N^A	preposed
soþre/ADJ^D hreowe/N^D	preposed
seo/D^N soþe/ADJ^N hreow/N^N	postposed
þa/D^A geworhtan/ADJ^A synna/N^A	preposed
þære/D^D soðan/ADJ^D hreowe/N^D	preposed
ece/ADJ^A blisse/N^A	preposed
þæt/D^N unasecgenlice/ADJ^N wræc/N^N	preposed
þæt/D^N ungeendode/ADJ^N wite/N^N	preposed

þon/D^I ecan/ADJ^D cwealme/N^D	preposed
ece/ADJ^N blis/N^N	preposed
þæt/D^N ungeendode/ADJ^N rice/N^N	preposed
heofonlicum/ADJ^D gastum/N^D	preposed
þy/D^I unarimedan/ADJ^D weorode/N^D	preposed
haligra/ADJ^G martyra/N^G	preposed
Men/N^N þa/D^N leofestan/ADJS^N	postposed
þa/D^A halgan/ADJ^A ceastre/N^A	preposed
hea/ADJ^A dune/N^A	preposed
idel/ADJ^A wuldor/N^A	preposed
Men/N^N þa/D^N leofestan/ADJS^N	postposed
halige/ADJ^N fæderas/N^N	preposed
se/D^N egeslica/ADJ^N domes/N^G dæg/N^N	preposed
ece/ADJ^A lif/N^A	preposed
ure/PRO$ tyddran/ADJ^G gecynde/N^G	preposed
þon/D^I ecan/ADJ^D life/N^D	preposed
elne/Q^D gastlices/ADJ^G mægenes/N^G	preposed
þære/D^G soþan/ADJ^G lufan/N^G	preposed
þære/D^G Halgan/ADJ^G þrynesse/N^G	preposed
þam/D^D langan/ADJ^D wræce/N^D	preposed
Ælfric′s Catholic Homilies I (period o3)	
God/NR^N ælmihtig/ADJ^N	postposed
se/D^N halga/ADJ^N gast/N^N	preposed
an/NUM^N ælmihtig/ADJ^N God/NR^N	preposed
gastas/N^N swiðe/ADV strange/ADJ^N ./, &/CONJ mihtige/ADJ^N &/CONJ wlitige/ADJ^N	postposed
agenne/ADJ^A cyre/N^A	preposed
Gode/NR^D ælmihtigum/ADJ^D	postposed
ðam/D^D fægeran/ADJ^D hiwe/N^D	preposed
laðlicum/ADJ^D deoflum/N^D	preposed
þam/D^D ælmihtigum/ADJ^D Gode/NR^D	preposed
se/D^N ælmihtiga/ADJ^N scyppend/N^N	preposed
ðæt/D^A ece/ADJ^A fyr/N^A	preposed
se/D^N ælmihtiga/ADJ^N God/NR^N	preposed
wlitegum/ADJ^D engla/N^G gecynde/N^D	preposed
agenne/ADJ^A cyre/N^A	preposed
ðam/D^D yfelan/ADJ^D ræde/N^D	preposed
se/D^N yfela/ADJ^N ræd/N^N	preposed
mæran/ADJ^D engle/N^D	preposed
ða/D^A miclan/Q^A upahefednysse/N^A &/CONJ wiðerweardnysse/N^A	preposed
mære/ADJ^N engel/N^N	preposed
ðam/D^D heofonlicum/ADJ^D weorode/N^D	preposed
se/D^N eorðlica/ADJ^N man/N^N	preposed
swa/ADV lytles/Q^G þinges/N^G	preposed

þære/D^D eaðelican/ADJ^D gehyrsumnysse/N^D	preposed
ðis/D^A lytle/Q^A bebod/N^A	preposed
cuce/ADJ^A nytenu/N^A	preposed
atelic/ADJ^N sceocca/N^N	preposed
his/PRO$ agenes/ADJ^G willes/N^G	preposed
yfelum/ADJ^D geearnungum/N^D	preposed
Ða/D^N deadan/ADJ^N fell/N^N	preposed
þæt/D^A eaðelice/ADJ^A Godes/NR^G bebod/N^A	preposed
clæne/ADJ^N nytenu/N^N	preposed
ðan/D^I ecan/ADJ^D life/N^D	preposed
agenne/ADJ^A cyre/N^A	preposed
ecere/ADJ^D wununge/N^D	preposed
se/D^N ylca/ADJ^N God/NR^N	preposed
agenne/ADJ^A cyre/N^A	preposed
myslicum/ADJ^D leahtrum/N^D	preposed
an/NUM^N man/N^N rihtwis/ADJ^N	postposed
þære/D^D miclan/Q^D nywelnysse/N^D	preposed
ælc/Q^N þincg/N^N cuces/ADJ^G	postposed
synderlice/ADJ^A spræce/N^A	preposed
se/D^N soða/ADJ^N scyppend/N^N	preposed
þone/D^A soðan/ADJ^A God/NR^A	preposed
Noes/NR^G yltstan/ADJS^D suna/N^D	preposed
þæt/D^N hebræisce/ADJ^N folc/N^N	preposed
þam/D^D healican/ADJ^D fæder/N^D	preposed
drium/ADJ^D fotum/N^D	preposed
heofenlicum/ADJ^D hlafe/N^D	preposed
þam/D^D clænan/ADJ^D mædene/N^D Marian/NR^D	preposed
ælcum/Q^D eorðlicum/ADJ^D fæder/N^D	preposed
þone/D^A ylcan/ADJ^A sunu/N^A	preposed
Seo/D^N halige/ADJ^N moder/N^N Maria/NR^N	preposed
drium/ADJ^D fotum/N^D	preposed
blindum/ADJ^D mannum/N^D	preposed
rihtne/ADJ^A gang/N^A	preposed
Deade/ADJ^A men	preposed
godum/ADJ^D weorcum/N^D	preposed
þæt/D^N iudeisce/ADJ^N folc/N^N	preposed
ðam/D^D Iudeiscan/ADJ^D folce/N^D	preposed
his/PRO$ agenum/ADJ^D deaðe/N^D	preposed
þæra/D^G Iudeiscra/ADJ^G manna/N^G	preposed
twegen/NUM^N gelyfede/ADJ^N men/N^N	preposed
þam/D^D miclum/Q^D węrede/N^D	preposed
þa/D^A ilcan/ADJ^A lare/N^A	preposed
soðne/ADJ^A geleafan/N^A	preposed
þam/D^D ilcan/ADJ^D lichaman/N^D	preposed
rihtwisum/ADJ^D mannum/N^D	preposed
þa/D^A manfullan/ADJ^A deofle/N^A	preposed
ðam/D^D ecan/ADJ^D fyre/N^D	preposed

Men/N^N ða/D^N leofestan/ADJS^N	postposed
þæt/D^A ece/ADJ^A lif/N^A	preposed
ðære/D^D godspellican/ADJ^D endebyrdnysse/N^D	preposed
ðisum/D^D dæigþerlicum/ADJ^D dæge/N^D	preposed
soðre/ADJ^D menniscnysse/N^D	preposed
ðam/D^D ælmihtigan/ADJ^D fæder/N^D	preposed
se/D^N romanisca/ADJ^N casere/N^N	preposed
galileiscum/ADJ^D earde/N^D	preposed
iudeisre/ADJ^D byrig/N^D	preposed
hire/PRO$ frumcynnedan/ADJ^A sunu/N^A	preposed
micelne/Q^A gefean/N^A	preposed
micel/Q^N meniu/N^N	preposed
heofenlices/ADJ^G werodes/N^G	preposed
godes/ADJ^G willan/N^G	preposed
Mine/PRO$^N gebroðra/N^N þa/D^N leofestan/ADJS^N	postposed
ure/PRO$^N hælend/N^N Godes/NR^G sunu/N^N efenece/ADJ^N &/CONJ gelic/ADJ^N his/PRO$ fæder/N^D	postposed
þisum/D^D dæigþerlicum/ADJ^D dæge/N^D	preposed
cynelic/ADJ^A gafol/N^A	preposed
swa/ADV micelre/Q^D sibbe/N^D	preposed
þam/D^D heofenlicum/ADJ^D cyninge/N^D Criste/NR^D	preposed
his/PRO$ heofonlice/ADJ^A rice/N^A	preposed
menniscum/ADJ^D gecynde/N^D	preposed
swa/ADV micel/Q^N getel/N^N	preposed
haligra/ADJ^G engla/N^G	preposed
þæs/D^G heofonlican/ADJ^G cyninges/N^G	preposed
ecere/ADJ^D eadignysse/N^D	preposed
þæs/D^G ecan/ADJ^G fæder/N^G	preposed
his/PRO$ halgan/ADJ gelaðunge/N	postposed
estfullum/ADJ^D mode/N^D	preposed
iudeisc/ADJ^N land/N^N	preposed
ðu/PRO^N wacost/ADJS^N burga/N^G	preposed
Kentish Homilies (period m1)	
þa/D lichamlice/ADJ behefðen/NS	preposed
anlypig/ADJ þing/N	preposed
þt/D betste/ADJS dæl/N	preposed
Sume/Q ungelærede/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
þære/D eadigen/ADJ Marien/NPR Cristes/NPR$ moder/N	preposed
þt/D synderlice/ADJ unwæmme/ADJ mæden/N Maria/NPR Cristes/NPR$ moder/N	preposed
sum/Q heh/ADJ stepel/N	preposed
unwinen/ADJ gewinne/NS	preposed
þt/D synderlice/ADJ mæden/N Marie/NPR Cristes/NPR$ moder/N	preposed

unwæmmes/ADJ mægeðhades/N$	preposed
strangen/ADJ cæstelwealle/N+NS	preposed
nan/Q lichamlic/ADJ galnysse/N	preposed
nan/Q ungelefed/ADJ hæmeðe/N	preposed
eadmede/ADJ mægeðhad/N	preposed
clæne/ADJ eadmodnysse/N	preposed
mægðen/NS eadige/ADJ	postposed
heh/ADJ mæden/N Godes/NPR$ moder/N	preposed
eadmode/ADJ moder/N Godes/NPR$ þinen/N	preposed
sunderlic/ADJ '/'' cæstel/N	preposed
synderlic/ADJ '/'' cæstel/N	preposed
þone/D ilca/ADJ sune/N	preposed
se/D ilca/ADJ cæstel/N	preposed
þt/D geswyncfulle/ADJ lif/N	preposed
þt/D ece/ADJ lif/N	preposed
þa/D lichamlice/ADJ behefðen/NS	preposed
þa/D uterlice/ADJ þing/NS	preposed
þa/D inweardlice/ADJ þing/NS	preposed
hire/PRO$ agene/ADJ innoðe/N	preposed
ateorigendlicen/ADJ reafe/N	preposed
Godes/NPR$ ungeseowenlicne/ADJ Sune/N	preposed
clænen/ADJ &/CONJ unbesmitenen/VAN lichame/N	preposed
uterlicen/ADJ mete/N oððe/CONJ drænce/N	preposed
hire/PRO$ agene/ADJ breostes	preposed
þan/D sylfen/ADJ Godes/NPR$ Sunen/N	preposed
leofne/ADJ gyst/N	preposed
his/PRO$ cildlicen/ADJ unfernysse/N	preposed
þt/D Judeisce/ADJ folc/N	preposed
hire/PRO$ swylcne/ADJ Sune/N	preposed
þære/D godcunden/ADJ strængðe/N	preposed
þan/D lichamlicen/ADJ geswynce/N	preposed
þære/D eadigen/ADJ Cristes/NPR$ moder/N Marien/NPR$	preposed
Marthan/NPR$ geswyncfulle/ADJ wica/N	preposed
þære/D eadige/ADJ cwen/N	preposed
se/D Halge/NPR Gast/NPR	preposed
þas/D hecsten/ADJS mihte/N	preposed
þan/D ilcan/ADJ Halgen/NPR Gaste/NPR	preposed
mænnisc/ADJ Lichame/N	preposed
þæs/D sylfen/ADJ Hælendes/NPR$	preposed
se/D rihte/ADJ spryng/N	preposed
Anlypig/ADJ þing/N	preposed
Marthen/NPR$ geswyncfulle/ADJ wica/N	preposed
þt/D seleste/ADJS Marien/NPR$ dæl/N	preposed
þære/D Judean/ADJ ehtnysse/N	preposed
Marthen/NPR$ geswyncfulle/ADJ lif/N	preposed
ecere/ADJ blisse/N	preposed

þt/D seleste/ADJS dæl/N	preposed
þære/D ærre/ADJR dohter/N	preposed
his/PRO$ agene/ADJ dohter/N Mariæn/NPR	preposed
Jacob/NPR se/D læsse/QR	postposed
þære/D forme/ADJ dohter/N	preposed
Jacob/NPR se/D myclele/ADJ	postposed
þæs/D læsse/QR Jacobes/NPR$ moder/N	preposed
þæs/D mare/QR Jacobes/NPR$ moder/N	preposed
hefigteme/ADJ þing/N	preposed
An/D lytel/ADJ synne/N	preposed
his/PRO$ agene/ADJ gewille/N	preposed
agen/ADJ cyre/N	preposed
þan/D yfela/ADJ mannen/NS	preposed
þa/D lyðere/ADJ mæn/NS	preposed
þa/D gode/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
þan/D gode/ADJ mannen/NS	preposed
þa/D yfela/ADJ mæn/NS	preposed
þa/D gode/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
sum/Q god/ADJ mann/N	preposed
genoge/ADJR welen/NS &/CONJ æhte/N	preposed
sum/Q yfel/ADJ mann/N	preposed
þan/D gode/ADJ mannen/NS	preposed
þa/D ateorigendlice/ADJ þing/NS	preposed
þa/D heofonlice/ADJ welen/NS	preposed
þan/D gode/ADJ mannen/NS	preposed
þa/D lyðere/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
oðre/OTHER gode/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
sume/Q yfele/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
manig/Q yfel/ADJ mann/NS	preposed
manig/Q god/ADJ mann/NS	preposed
sum/Q god/ADJ mann/NS	preposed
sum/Q lyðer/ADJ mann/NS	preposed
lytle/ADJ hwile/N	preposed
þa/D yfele/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
þa/D gode/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
þan/D swicolan/ADJ middenearde/NPR	preposed
lang/ADJ lif/N	preposed
þa/D yfela/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
goden/ADJ þeawen/NS	preposed
sume/Q arlease/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
Þa/D arlease/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
Yfele/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
hindre/ADJ geðanca/NS	preposed
gode/ADJ mænn/NS	preposed
yfele/ADJ mannen/NS	preposed

Kentish Sermons (period m2)		
þo/D holi/ADJ godespelle/NPR	preposed
seinte/NPR Marie/NPR	preposed
alle/Q þo/D wyse/ADJ clerekes/NS	preposed
glorius/ADJ miracle/N	preposed
glorius/ADJ seywinge/N	preposed
þet/D holi/ADJ godespel/NP	preposed
verrene/ADJ londes/NS	preposed
cuuenable/ADJ yeftte/N	preposed
þo/D ialde/ADJ laghe/N	preposed
verray/ADJ prest/N	preposed
biter/ADJ þing/N	preposed
þe/D gode/ADJ beleaue/N	preposed
þe/D gode/ADJ cristenemannes/ADJ+N$	preposed
Si/D gode/ADJ beleaue/N	preposed
þo/D gode/ADJ Manne/N	preposed
god/NPR almichti/ADJ	postposed
god/ADJ gold/N	preposed
holy/NPR gost/NPR	preposed
onlepi/ADJ god/NPR	preposed
god/ADJ gold/N	preposed
gode/ADJ werkes/NS	preposed
si/D gode/ADJ biddinge/N	preposed
þo/D gode/ADJ cristenemanne/ADJ+N	preposed
þo/D gode/ADJ werkes/NS	preposed
þo/D ilke/ADJ þinges/NS	preposed
þo/D wrichede/ADJ flessce/N	preposed
þo/D ileke/ADJ þinges/NS	preposed
yure/PRO$ erþliche/ADJ godes/NS	preposed
Gode/ADJ belaue/N	preposed
holy/ADJ urisun/N	preposed
gode/ADJ werkes/NS	preposed
þo/D holi/NPR gost/NPR	preposed
þo/D ileke/ADJ þinges/NS	preposed
þo/D ileke/ADJ þinges/NS	preposed
þo/D ilek/ADJ þinkes/NS	preposed
þo/D ilek/ADJ þinges/NS	preposed
Þet/D holi/ADJ godspel/N	preposed
seinte/NPR Marie/NPR	preposed
seinte/NPR Marie/NPR	preposed
þet/D beste/ADJS wyn/N	preposed
þet/D beste/ADJS wyn/N	preposed
se/D euele/ADJ xpisteneman/ADJ+N	preposed
se/D euele/ADJ xpisteman/ADJ+N	preposed
þo/D euele/ADJ werkes/NS	preposed

alle/Q oþre/OTHER euele/ADJ deden/NS	preposed
godes/NPR$ oghe/ADJ mudh/N	preposed
yemere/ADJ werkes/NS	preposed
yemer/ADJ iwil/N	preposed
god/NPR almichti/ADJ	postposed
þo/D euele/ADJ manne/N	preposed
good/ADJ man/N	preposed
euel/ADJ man/N	preposed
Þet/D holi/ADJ godspel/N	preposed
þo/D newe/ADJ laghe/N	preposed
þet/D formeste/ADJ sarmun/N	preposed
þo/D senuule/ADJ men/NS	preposed
þo/D litle/ADJ sennen/NS	preposed
þo/D grete/ADJ sennen/NS	preposed
gode/NPR almichti/ADJ	postposed
þo/D litle/ADJ sennen/NS	preposed
holi/ADJ chereche/NPR	preposed
diadliche/ADJ senne/N	preposed
diadliche/ADJ senne/N	preposed
diadliche/ADJ senne/N	preposed
gode/NPR almichti/ADJ	postposed
none/Q euele/ADJ werkes/NS	preposed
none/Q euele/ADJ iwil/N	preposed
diadliche/ADJ senne/N	preposed
gostliche/ADJ helþe/N	preposed
þe/D holi/ADJ godspelle/N	preposed
a/D great/ADJ tempeste/N	preposed
gret/ADJ drede/N	preposed
gode/ADJ beleaue/N	preposed
litle/ADJ beliaue/N	preposed
si/D vaire/ADJ miracle/N	preposed
good/ADJ iwille/N	preposed
þe/D holi/NPR writes/NPRS	preposed
diadliche/ADJ senne/N	preposed
þo/D holi/ADJ godespelle/NPR	preposed
se/D gode/ADJ man/N	preposed
gode/ADJ beleauee/N	preposed
mani/Q god/ADJ man/N	preposed
griate/ADJ luue/N	preposed
seinte/NPR Marie/NPR	preposed
þet/D heþen/ADJ folk/N	preposed
god/NPR almichti/ADJ	postposed
þo/D heþen/ADJ men/NS	preposed
þo/D gode/ADJ men/NS	preposed
diuers/ADJ wordles/NS	preposed
god/NPR almichti/ADJ	postposed
no/Q diadlich/ADJ senne/N	preposed

greater/ADJR strengþe/N	preposed
greater/ADJR hete/N	preposed
þise/D griate/ADJ bunte/N	preposed
þet/D holi/NPR writ/NPR	preposed
longe/ADJ liues	preposed
gode/ADJ men/NS	preposed
diadliche/ADJ senne/N	preposed
***Wycliffite Sermons** (period m3)*	
a/D riche/ADJ man/N	preposed
a/D spiritual/ADJ wit/N	preposed
a/D riche/ADJ man/N	preposed
preciouse/ADJ cloþis/NS	preposed
worldly/ADJ men/NS	preposed
precious/ADJ foode/N	preposed
a/D poore/ADJ man/N lyeng/VAG	preposed
sore/ADJ buyles/NS	preposed
the/D riche/ADJ mannys/N$	preposed
riche/ADJ mennus/NS$	preposed
pore/ADJ men/NS	preposed
Þis/D ryche/ADJ man/N	preposed
holy/ADJ soules/NS	preposed
riche/ADJ men/NS	preposed
þe/D riche/ADJ man/N	preposed
pore/ADJ men/NS	preposed
contrarie/ADJ vertues/NS	preposed
This/D riche/ADJ man/N	preposed
holy/NPR writ/NPR	preposed
this/D riche/ADJ man/N	preposed
sotyl/ADJ and/CONJ medful/ADJ werkys/NS	preposed
þe/D riche/ADJ dampnyd/VAN man/N	preposed
ryht/ADJ iugement/N	preposed
this/D dampnyde/VAN riche/ADJ man/N	preposed
a/D muche/Q voide/ADJ place/N	preposed
strengure/ADJR wille/N	preposed
þer/PRO$ owne/ADJ wille/N	preposed
þe/D riche/ADJ man/N	preposed
here/PRO$ wykkyde/ADJ lyf/N	preposed
þis/D riche/ADJ dampned/VAN man/N	preposed
dede/ADJ men/NS	preposed
dede/ADJ men/NS	preposed
a/D new/ADJ lawe/N	preposed
newe/ADJ miraclys/NS	preposed
þe/D false/ADJ Iewes/NPRS	preposed
false/ADJ pruyde/N	preposed
ryche/ADJ men/NS	preposed

lustful/ADJ lyf/N	preposed
myhty/ADJ men/NS	preposed
longe/ADJ peynes/NS	preposed
ioyful/ADJ blisse/N	preposed
þis/D riche/ADJ man/N	preposed
priue/ADJ vndurstondyng/N	preposed
this/D holy/ADJ gospel/N	preposed
a/D gret/ADJ soper/N	preposed
thys/D grete/ADJ soper/N	preposed
the/D grete/ADJ mangery/N	preposed
þe/D laste/ADJ mete/N	preposed
þe/D laste/ADJ mete/N	preposed
a/D gret/ADJ soper/N	preposed
þe/D laste/ADJ goode/N and/CONJ best/ADJS	ambilateral
other/OTHER trewe/ADJ seruauntes/NS	preposed
þese/D newe/ADJ ordres/NS	preposed
þe/D riht/ADJ weye/N	preposed
prowde/ADJ men/NS	preposed
worldly/ADJ lordschipe/N	preposed
worldly/ADJ heynes/NS	preposed
worldly/ADJ goodes/NS	preposed
suche/SUCH worldly/ADJ men/NS	preposed
fleschly/ADJ synne/N	preposed
pore/ADJ 230/ men/NS	preposed
an/D vncurteys/ADJ fool/N	preposed
stretys/NS of/P þe/D cite/N more/ADJR and/CONJ lesse/ADJR	postposed
pore/ADJ feble/ADJ men/NS	preposed
pore/ADJ blynde/ADJ men/NS	preposed
pore/ADJ lame/ADJ men/NS	preposed
suche/SUCH bodyly/ADV pore/ADJ men/NS	preposed
his/PRO$ grete/ADJ almes/N	preposed
a/D voyde/ADJ place/N	preposed
þe/D laste/ADJ dayes/NS	preposed
a/D priuat/ADJ religioun/N	preposed
þe/D brode/ADJ weye/N	preposed
myhty/ADJ men/NS	preposed
þis/D streyte/ADJ wey/N	preposed
false/ADJ prestis/NS	preposed
synful/ADJ men/NS	preposed
a/D good/ADJ lord/N	preposed
trewe/ADJ prestes/NS	preposed
secler/ADJ lordys/NS	preposed
synful/ADJ men/NS	preposed
þese/D secler/ADJ prelatys/NS	preposed
comun/ADJ maner/N	preposed
þis/D heuenly/ADJ leche/N	preposed

þese/D synful/ADJ men/NS	preposed
prowde/ADJ prelatys/NS	preposed
his/PRO$ general/ADJ lordschipe/N	preposed
heþen/ADJ men/NS	preposed
dyuerse/ADJ statys/NS	preposed
false/ADJ vndyrstondyng/N	preposed
a/D sykur/ADJ desert/N	preposed
þis/D loste/ADJ schep/N	preposed
o/ONE synful/ADJ man/N	preposed
gostly/ADJ trees/NS	preposed
a/D syker/ADJ place/N	preposed
hys/PRO$ grete/ADJ vertu/N	preposed
trewe/ADJ knytus/NS	preposed
a/D wis/ADJ womman/N	preposed
þis/D loste/ADJ dragme/N	preposed
his/PRO$ resonable/ADJ creatures/NS	preposed
þese/D false/ADJ pharisees/NPRS	preposed

Sermo die lune in ebdomana Pasche (period m4)

the/D holy/ADJ gospel/N	preposed
in/P englyssh/ADJ tonge/N	preposed
The/D same/ADJ Ihu/NPR s/NPR (nyghynge/VAG)	preposed
This/D Joyous/ADJ trouth/N	preposed
this/D poore/ADJ collaco/N n/N	preposed
The/D same/ADJ Ihu/NPR s/NPR	preposed
the/D same/ADJ Ihu/NPR s/NPR	preposed
the/D same/ADJ Ihu/NPR s/NPR	preposed
this/D same/ADJ Ih/NPR s/NPR	preposed
full/ADJ reste/N	preposed
shorte/ADJ labour/ADJ	preposed
eternall/ADJ reste/N	preposed
holy/ADJ scrypture/N	preposed
noble/ADJ memory/N	preposed
grete/ADJ praysyng/N	preposed
the/D same/ADJ Ihu/NPR s/NPR	preposed
The/D same/ADJ Jhesus/NPR	preposed
the/D same/ADJ Ihu/NPR s/NPR	preposed
perfyte/ADJ obedyence/N	preposed
his/PRO$ grete/ADJ wysdom/N	preposed
saynt/NPR Jerom/NPR	preposed
the/D grete/ADJ myghte/N	preposed
very/ADJ Ihu/NPR s/NPR	preposed
the/D same/ADJ boke/N	preposed
this/D myghty/ADJ prynce/N	preposed
the/D hyghe/ADJ co/N maundement/N	preposed
the/D grete/ADJ power/N	preposed

successour/N vnto/P Moyses/NPR strong/ADJ in/P werre/N &/CONJ batoylle/N	postposed
grete/ADJ name/N	preposed
grettest/ADJS name/N	preposed
sharpe/ADJ &/CONJ fyry/ADJ arowes/NS	preposed
This/D myghty/ADJ prynce/N	preposed
the/D hyghe/ADJ co/N maundement/N	preposed
the/D grete/ADJ myghte/N &/CONJ power/N	preposed
peasyble/ADJ possession/N	preposed
saynt/NPR Jerom/NPR	preposed
euery/ADJ cytee/N	preposed
the/D spirytuall/ADJ regaly/N	preposed
heuenly/ADJ chirche/N	preposed
this/D noble/ADJ prynce/N Ihu/NPR s/NPR Naue/NPR	preposed
laudable/ADJ memory/N	preposed
dyuers/ADJ causes/NS	preposed
his/PRO$ grete/ADJ myghte/N and/CONJ power/N	preposed
this/D valyaunt/ADJ knyghte/N	preposed
y/D e/D ryght/ADJ honde/N	preposed
the/D lyfte/ADJ honde/N	preposed
y/D e/D same/ADJ boke/N	preposed
the/D ryght/ADJ waye/N	preposed
the/D ryght/ADJ way/N	preposed
laudable/ADJ memory/N	preposed
the/D grete/ADJ preest/N	preposed
This/D grete/ADJ preest/N	preposed
the/D highe/ADJ co/N mau/N dement/N	preposed
This/D grete/ADJ preest/N	preposed
holy/ADJ obedience/N	preposed
his/PRO$ grete/ADJ &/CONJ myghty/ADJ power/N	preposed
grete/ADJ honour/N	preposed
theyr/PRO$ laste/ADJ kynge/N	preposed
streyte/ADJ captiuyte/N	preposed
Cristis/NPR$ te/ADJ porall/ADJ natiuyte/N	preposed
thyse/D greate/ADJ preestis/NS	preposed
grete/ADJ zele/N	preposed
deuowte/ADJ obedyence/N	preposed
deuowte/ADJ obedyence/N	preposed
deuowte/ADJ obedience/N	preposed
almyghty/ADJ god/NPR	preposed
his/PRO$ temporall/ADJ A5V/ natiuyte/N	preposed
due/ADJ obedyence/N	preposed
this/D materyall/ADJ Temple/N	preposed
holy/ADJ body/N	preposed
holy/ADJ temple/N	preposed
his/PRO$ holy/ADJ body/N	preposed
holy/ADJ temple/N	preposed

the/D olde/ADJ testament/N	preposed
precyous/ADJ Jewels/N &/CONJ tresours/NS	preposed
the/D finall/ADJ &/CONJ finall/ADJ but/P on/ONE chapitours/NS	preposed
y/D e/D same/ADJ temple/N	preposed
many/Q grete/ADJ thynges/NS	preposed
holy/ADJ cristen/ADJ doctours/NS	preposed
saynt/NPR Jerom/NPR	preposed
his/PRO$ holy/ADJ presence/N	preposed
his/PRO$ holy/ADJ vyrgyn/N &/CONJ moder/N	preposed
his/PRO$ holy/ADJ moder/N	preposed
this/D holy/ADJ hous/N	preposed
this/D grete/ADJ preest/N &/CONJ bysshop/FW Ihu/NPR s/NPR Josedech/NPR	preposed
his/PRO$ holy/ADJ &/CONJ zelose/ADJ obedyence/N	preposed
longe/ADJ tyme/N	preposed
fals/ADJ ydoles/NS	preposed
lost/VBN theyr/PRO$ due/ADJ obedience/N	preposed
almyghty/ADJ god/NPR	preposed
the/D wyckyd/ADJ lawes/NS	preposed
This/D grete/ADJ preest/N &/CONJ bysshop/N	preposed
the/D true/ADJ prynce/N &/CONJ seruaunt/N	preposed
this/D holy/ADJ bysshop/N	preposed
almyghty/ADJ goddys/NPR$	preposed
the/D spedy/ADJ buyldynge/N	preposed
the/D newe/ADJ buyldynge/N	preposed
this/D holy/ADJ werke/N	preposed
this/D holy/ADJ Jh/NPR s/NPR	preposed
grete/ADJ voys/N	preposed

(All the noun phrases including their part-of-speech tags were taken from the corpora *YCOE* and *PPCME2*).