

*Adjective position in Old English from a  
micro-level perspective*

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# Abstract

The Old English noun phrase displays more variation in word order than its Present-day English equivalent. This study aims to investigate the internal word order of Old English noun phrases, with a view to identify the factors which determines the placement of adjectives. The data for this study is obtained by annotating 400 noun phrases from three texts: the *West-Saxon Gospels*, the *Leechbook* and the *Peterborough Chronicle*. The texts are taken from the YCOE corpus, and the noun phrases to be investigated are stored in a database, *NPEGL* (Noun Phrases in Early Germanic Languages), which is being created for the project *Constraints on syntactic variation: noun phrases in early Germanic languages*.

The position of the adjectives in the annotated phrases is analysed in relation to previous research, and theories of adjective placement, particularly those of Fischer (2000, 2001, 2006, 2010), Haumann (2003, 2010), Grabski (2017) and Bech (2017, 2019). There are differing views concerning the distribution of adjectives, and some of the accounts show opposing views, as in the case of Fischer (2000, 2001, 2006, 2010) and Haumann (2003, 2010). The analysis of adjective position in the annotated phrases thus centers on properties in their schemes, as these are often used in the investigation of OE adjective placement.

The study shows that there is variation in the distribution of noun phrases in the three texts. There are more modifiers in the *Leechbook*, which is ascribed to the need for more detailed descriptions in a medical text. The occurrence of postnominal modifiers is significantly lower than that of prenominal modifiers, and most of the postnominal modifiers occur in the *Leechbook*. All texts have occurrences of stacked adjectives, which show that adjectives are recursive in Old English, although this is disputed by some scholars. The analysis show that the findings do not consistently corroborate Fischer's (2000, 2001, 2006, 2010) and Haumann's (2003, 2010) schemes.





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## List of Abbreviations

Adj	Adjective
OE	Old English
PDE	Present-day English
YCOE	The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose

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# 1 Introduction

Old English noun phrases display more variation in word order than its Present-day English equivalents. This is particularly true of modifiers, such as adjectives. Apart from their occurrence in prenominal position, they also occur in postposition directly following a head noun or a head noun and a coordinating conjunction. Unlike Present-day English, the postnominal adjectives also did not appear predominantly in set expressions.

Moreover, when there is more than one adjective in the noun phrase, the adjectives may be linked with the conjunction *and* in both pre- and postposition. Or they may be placed on either side of the noun. Adjectives also occur in a row, but to a different extent than in Present-day English. In addition, not all types of adjectives appear to be equally recursive.

Although clausal word order has traditionally been the focus of word order studies, several studies have looked at the position of adjectives in the noun phrase (Fischer 2000, 2001, 2006, 2012; Pysz 2007; Haumann 2003, 2010; Sampson 2010; Grabski 2017; Bech 2017, 2019). Currently, there is also an ongoing project *Constraints on syntactic variation: noun phrases in early Germanic languages*<sup>1</sup>, which investigates the variation in noun phrase word order in the old Germanic languages.

To account for the variation in adjective position, previous studies have examined various noun phrase constructions, such as that of adjective + Noun, Noun + adjective, and phrases with a coordinating conjunction. There are differing views among scholars (Haumann 2003, 2010; Fischer 2000, 2001, 2006, 2010; Grabski 2017; Bech 2017, 2019) concerning the distribution of adjectives. In this respect, Fischer and Haumann are often cited, as their point of view are rather opposite. Fischer (2000, 2001, 2006, 2012) was the first to do a major study on adjective position in Old English. In her view, it is the inflectional forms of the adjective, i.e. strong and weak, and the properties they denote, which account for the observed variation in phrasal word order. Haumann (2003, 2010), on the other hand, takes position as her point of departure. To her, it is the pre- and postnominal position which denote distinct properties, irrespective of adjectival inflection. Strong adjectives in preposition thus display the same features as weak prenominal adjectives.

Grabski's (2017) extensive corpus study investigated the position of adjectives in OE prose. As his framework, he applied the factors thought to account for adjectival position found in other studies, such as that of Fischer and Haumann. His findings, on the whole, did

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/research/projects/noun-phrases-in-early-germanic/>

not support the division of adjectives according to inflection, pace Fischer or position, pace Haumann. Instead (among other things), his data show a correlation between adjectives with a complement and postposition, which would make Old English similar to Present-day English by placing longer or heavier elements at the end. As part of a study of Old English noun phrases in their context, Bech (2019) discusses the different schemes, concerning adjective position, as posited by Fischer and Haumann. Bech discusses the terminology employed, before examining adjectives in coordinated constructions by employing examples from two texts in the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose* (Taylor et al. 2003, henceforth YCOE). What the investigation shows is that neither Fischer's nor Haumann's scheme can account for the position of adjectives in the phrases examined.

With the different perspectives on adjective position in mind, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate the internal word order of Old English noun phrases, by examining four hundred phrases from each of the three texts, the *West-Saxon Gospels*, the *Leechbook* and the *Peterborough Chronicle*. The texts are taken from the YCOE corpus, and the noun phrases to be investigated are stored in a database, *NPEGL* (Noun Phrases in Early Germanic Languages), which is being created for the project *Constraints on syntactic variation: noun phrases in early Germanic languages*. The aim is to explain the distribution of Old English adjectives in these phrases from a micro-level perspective, in relation to theories and results of previous research. It is hoped that the investigation of word order in the phrases may contribute to the identification of the factors which determine the placement of adjectives. In this respect, the thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What is the distribution of noun phrase word order in the three texts?
- 2) If there are differences in word order, what causes them?

The thesis does not search for every occurrence of a specific noun phrase construction, such as the adjective + Noun + adjective construction. Instead, the data is obtained by annotating the first four hundred noun phrases from a particular part of the texts (cf. section 4.3). This entails that there may be more instances of a construction which is not included in the thesis, and which may have contributed to the explanation of word order variation.

The noun phrases in the *NPEGL* database are selected according to a priority scale in relation to their interest to the project *Constraints on syntactic variation: noun phrases in early Germanic languages*. Thus, there may be phrases applicable to the thesis, which are not annotated for use in the project. However, of the 1200 phrases annotated for this thesis, I have



not encountered any example of a noun phrase which may be useful, but which is not annotated for the project.

The thesis is divided into six main parts. Section two provides an outline of the noun phrase in Present-day English and in Old English. The emphasis is on word order, but also on inflection in the case of Old English, and the paradigms for the weak and strong declension are illustrated in this section. At the end of the section, there is a part on the stacking of adjectives in Old English, from the perspective of various scholars.

The previous research on adjective position, outlined in the introduction, is further elaborated on in section three. It starts with Fischer's more than decadelong investigation of Old English word order, and how she sees inflection as the decisive factor for the variation in adjective position. A more in-depth account of Haumann's opposing view that word order is dependent on adjectival position follows. Also, in this section, is an account of Grabski's findings in relation to the research of Fischer and Haumann. His consideration of Latin as a possible influence on adjective placement, is commented on. The section concludes with a further account of Bech's discussion of Fischer's and Haumann's schemes, with emphasis on the terminological issues. A closer look at the examination of noun phrases in context, in the same study is also provided.

Section four provides an account of the three texts as well as the annotation procedure, i.e. the scheme on which the annotation of the noun phrases for the thesis and the project is based. Challenges encountered in annotating the phrases is also related in this section.

The data collected for this thesis is analysed and discussed in relation to previous research in section five and in section six. In section five, strong and weak adjectives in preposition are examined. There is also an account of the occurrences of stacked adjectives.

Strong adjectives in postposition are examined and discussed in section six, while section seven provides a conclusion based on the analysis in section five and six, and it also makes suggestions for further research.

## 2 The structure of the noun phrase in English

### 2.1 The noun phrase in Present-day English

This section provides an outline of the noun phrase in Present-day English (PDE). The focus is on phrases with a noun as head. Table 2.1 displays its main components, among them various types of modifiers.

**Table 2.1. Modifiers in the noun phrase in Present-day English**

Determiners	Premodifiers	Head noun	Postmodifiers
the	industrially advanced	countries	
a	small wooden	box	that he owned
a	market	system	that has no imperfections
the	new training	college	for teachers
the		patterns	of industrial development in the U.S

(slightly adapted from Biber et al. 1999: 574)

The major types of premodifiers are adjectives, participles and nouns, as can be seen from table 2.1. *Small wooden box* represents adjectival modification while *industrially advanced countries* and *new training college* illustrate participial modifiers i.e. *-ed* and *ing*-participles. *Market system* is an example of modification by a noun. Postmodifiers, on the other hand, consist mainly of various types of clauses such as the relative clauses in table 2.1. and *of-prepositional phrases* (Biber et al. 1999: 574–575, 588).

However, adjectives also occur as postmodifiers, as in the fixed expressions *attorney general* and *heir apparent*. Some adjectives often appear in postposition such as *involved* and *available* in *of the people involved* and *the only details available*. In addition, heavy adjective phrases are also postposed, as in *a lounge not much bigger than the one we've got now*. Adverbs may also modify nouns, as in *the nearby guards* and *a block behind* (Biber et al. 1999: 519, 575).

As seen in table 2.1. (cf. *small wooden box*), a noun phrase can consist of more than one premodifier although this is less frequent. Up to three and four premodifiers may occur as in the *greatest British theoretical physicist* and *naked, shameless, direct, brutal* exploitation. Often, in cases like these, the head noun is not modified directly by all the components. Some of them modify each other instead (Biber et al. 1999: 597). Table 2.1. also shows that a noun

phrase can have both pre- and postmodifiers as in *the new training college for teachers* and in another example with only adjectives *a great student, dedicated, hardworking and ambitious* (Biber et al. 1999: 519).

## 2.2 The noun phrase in Old English

OE nouns are categorized as either masculine, feminine or neuter depending on the demonstratives *se*, *seō* and *þæt*. Nouns which require a form of *se* are masculine, whereas *seō* and *þæt* signal a feminine and a neuter noun, respectively. Adjectives agree with the noun in relation to gender, case and number, except in the case of genitive complements. In addition, adjectives also inflect either strong (indefinite declension) or weak (definite declension). The strong declension is used for predicative adjectives as in *ðā wurdon hī ... drēorige* ‘then they became sad’ and when they occur without any preceding components such as demonstratives or possessives as in *ceald water* ‘cold water’ (Quirk and Wrenn 1955: 19, 68). Table 2.2. shows the paradigm for strong declension according to gender, number and case of a given noun.

**Table 2.2. Strong adjective declension**

	<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>	<b>Neuter</b>
<b>Singular</b>			
Nominativ	eald	ealdu	eald
Accusative	ealdne	ealde	eald
Genitive	ealdes	ealdre	ealdes
Dative	ealdum	ealdre	ealdum
Instrumental	ealde	...	ealde
<b>Plural</b>			
Nominativ	ealde	ealde, -a	ealdu
Accusative	ealde	ealde, -a	ealdu
Genitive	ealdra	ealdra	ealdra
Dative	ealdum	ealdum	ealdum

*Note:* Long-stemmed adjectives have no *u*-ending in the feminine nominative singular.

Long-stemmed adjectives have no *u*-ending in the neuter nominative and accusative plural.

(based on Hasenfratz and Jambeck 2011: 168)

Adjectives inflect weak in the following cases:

(1) after demonstratives such as *se* ‘the’, *þes* ‘this’, as in *se ælmihtiga God* ‘the almighty God’ (OEng.820.898) and *on þissum ærestan læcecræftum* ‘in these first leechcrafts’

(OEng.776.608). Substantival adjectives also inflect weak as in *ofer þa godan* ‘on the good’ (OEng.627.584).

(2) after possessives such as *min* ‘mine, my’, *eower* ‘your’ as in *min se gecorena sunu* ‘my beloved son’ (OEng.169.080) and in *eower heofonlica Fæder* ‘our heavenly father’ (OEng.388.370).

(3) in the comparative and superlative forms as in *þā wæron ægðer ge swiftran ge unwealtran* ‘they were both faster and steadier’, (Quirk and Wrenn 1955: 69) and in *se betsta læcedom* ‘the best leechdom’ (OEng.026.089). As regards the superlative form, adjectives may also inflect strong after copular verbs as in *þæt ... land ... is ... brādost* ‘the land is widest’ (Quirk and Wrenn 1955: 69).

(4) when used as a vocative i.e. in addressing someone as in *lēofan men* ‘beloved people’, (Quirk and Wrenn 1955: 69).

(5) after a genitive phrase as in *þæs cyninges untruman bearne* ‘the king’s sick child’, (Quirk and Wrenn 1955: 69)

In addition, all ordinal numerals (apart from *oðer*) also inflect weak as in *þriðdan dæl* ‘third part’ (OEng.693.367).

The paradigm for the weak adjective declension is shown in table 2.3.

**Table 2.3. Weak adjective declension**

	<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>	<b>Neuter</b>
<b>Singular</b>			
Nominative	ealda	ealde	ealde
Accusative	ealdan	ealdan	ealde
Genitive	ealdan	ealdan	ealdan
Dative	ealdan	ealdan	ealdan
<b>Plural</b>			
Nominative	ealdan	ealdan	ealdan
Accusative	ealdan	ealdan	ealdan
Genitive	ealdra, -ena	ealdra, -ena	ealdra, -ena
Dative	ealdrum	ealdrum	ealdrum

(based on Hasenfratz and Jambeck 2011: 171)

Compared to the strong adjectival declension the form of the adjectives displays a higher degree of syncretism. The adjectives thus carry less of the grammatical information than their

strong counterparts. Instead gender, number and case are expressed by the form of the demonstrative and noun.

### 2.2.1 The position of adjectives

As in PDE, the OE adjectives are mostly prenominal ((Mitchell 1985: §159), but there is also variation in the order of the adjectives in the noun phrase, as will be outlined in this section. A more detailed account will follow in section 3. Since adjectives are commonly preposed, a single adjective usually occurs in preposition to the head noun. It may, however, also occur in postposition (Mitchell 1985: §160), as in (2.1).

- (2.1) *Wyr̥c eagsealfe **drige*** OEng.499.513  
Work eye-salve dry  
'Work a dry eye salve'  
(Cockayne 1865: 37)

In the case of postposed adjectives, Mitchell (1985: §160) writes that 'it is not always clear whether we have to do with an attributive, predicative, or appositional use'.

There is also variation in adjective placement when there is more than one adjective in the noun phrase. In such phrases, the adjectives may occur in either pre- or postposition, and they may be linked by a conjunction (Mitchell 1985: §§166–168). The examples in (2.2) and (2.3) illustrate this kind of adjective placement.

- (2.2) *þa **yfelan ofsetenan** wætan* OEng.334.886  
the evil misplaced humours  
'the evil misplaced humours'<sup>2</sup>  
(Cockayne 1865: 25)

- (2.3) *ða maðmfatu, **gyldene and sylfrene***  
the costly-vessels, golden and silvern  
'the costly vessels golden and silvern'  
(Mitchell 1985: §168)

In addition, there are instances of noun phrases with both prenominal and postnominal adjectives, as in (2.4), and phrases with a conjunction preceding the second adjective, as in (2.5). To Mitchell (1985: §§169–170), the construction in (2.5) is seemingly more frequent.

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<sup>2</sup> Cockayne translates *ofsetenan* as 'misplaced'. Bosworth-Toller translates it as 'repressed'.

- (2.4) *cærenes godne bollan fulne* OEng.791.075  
 boiled-wine good bowl full  
 ‘a good bowl full of wine’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 25)
- (2.5) *mycel gyld and hefelic* OEng.666.155  
 great payment-of-money and heavy  
 ‘a heavy and severe tax’<sup>3</sup>  
 (Garmonsway 1954: 215)

### 2.2.2 Stacking of adjectives

Related to adjective placement is the question of whether OE adjectives are recursive as seen in the examples of PDE noun phrases in section 2.1. According to Spamer (1979: 243, 246), they are non-recursive. To him, the Old English noun phrase consists of a modifier (adjective, demonstrative) + adjunct + noun. Adjuncts can also modify a noun. Often, they are nouns themselves, as in PDE *stone wall*, but not always. In another of his examples, *an eminent Shakespearean critic*, *Shakespearean* is an adjunct despite of the adjectival suffix. Spamer (1979: 242–243) explains this by the function it has in the noun phrase, but also by its position, as he sees adjuncts as being like ‘the first part of a compound noun’. Thus, they must appear next to the noun. Moreover, unlike adjectives, adjuncts cannot be modified by other elements. They are also declined weak, whereas adjectives are declined strong (Spamer 1979: 242, 246).

In Spamer’s (1979: 243–244) view, the OE noun phrase could have no more than one prenominal adjective. If there are more, they are usually conjoined by the conjunction *and*, as they cannot be stacked. This, however, does not pertain to adjuncts which are recursive according to Spamer (1979: 243–244).

Fischer (2000: 169–171) takes Spamer as a point of departure. She also sees adjectives as non-recursive in Old English, but not for the same reason. To her, the strong adjectives, which she sees as predicative (cf. section 3.1), are parallel and so one adjective cannot modify another. Weak adjectives also appear to be non-recursive in her view, even though she does see weak adjectives as adjunctive generally, i.e. like the first part of a compound noun (cf. Spamer). Nevertheless, to her, their compound-like character means that they are not easily stacked. However, her study reveals instances of stacked adjectives of both strong and weak

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<sup>3</sup> *Mycel* and *hefelic* can be translated by several words and these are used in Garmonsway’s (1954) translation.

inflection. The most frequent occurrence is that of two strong pronominal quantifiers, as in (2.6).

- (2.6) *Ænig oðer sceat*  
any other tribute  
'any other tribute'  
(Fischer 2000: 164, her example (4 a))

Such instances are explained by the first quantifier resembling an indefinite determiner which means that the following element will always be declined strong. The second quantifier may be closer to an adjective. Moreover, Fischer (2000: 169, 171) seems to view quantifiers as an exception to strong adjectives being non-recursive. There are also instances of two strong adjectives preceding the noun. In most cases the second adjective denotes a nation or a material such as *brettisc* 'British' and *rigenre* 'of ashwood', as in (2.7).

- (2.7) *of surre rigenre grut*  
from sour rye-made groats  
'from sour rye-made groats'  
(Fischer 2000: 165, her example (6 b))

Since the second adjective is denominal, Fischer (2000: 172) posits that it is their noun-like features which enables them to be stacked. Other occurrences of stacked adjectives are not easily explained like the ones in (2.8) and (2.9).

- (2.8) *Swa beorht scinende steorra*  
such bright shining star  
'Such (a) bright shining star'  
(Fischer 2000: 172, her example (17 a))

- (2.9) *on þam æftemestan mæran freolsdæge*  
on the after-most well-known festival-day  
on the after-most well-known festival-day  
(Fischer 2000: 173, her example (18 b))

As regards (2.8), she proposes that Latin influence or the occurrence of a participial adjective may account for the two pronominal adjectives. In the case of (2.9), *æftemestan* 'after-most' may be like an ordinal numeral rather than a weak adjective (Fischer 2000: 173).

In a later article on adjective position in Old English, she explicitly expresses that neither strong nor weak adjectives are recursive. Whether they appear in pre-or postnominal position, two adjectives cannot be stacked. One adjective is always postposed, as in (2.4), or they are linked by the conjunction *and* as in (2.5). The reason why neither can be stacked is as previously posited, due to their verbal (predicative) and nominal character respectively (Fischer 2001: 258).

There are also scholars who are of a different view. Mitchell (1985: §173) remarks that a sequence of adjectives without a conjunction seems to occur more frequently in modern English. But as his examples demonstrate (cf. §167), he acknowledges that such sequences occur in Old English too.

That instances of adjective clusters also appear in Old English, is corroborated in Pysz's (2009: 213–216) syntactic study on pre- and postnominal adjectives in Old English. A search in the 100 texts of the YCOE corpus for phrases with two adjectives and a noun occurring next to each other yields several instances. In total, the search retrieved 100 phrases with two strong preposed adjectives as illustrated in (2.10) and 103 with two weak preposed adjectives as illustrated in (2.11).

(2.10) *rice hæþene men*  
rich heathen men  
'rich heathen men'  
(Pysz 2009: 214, her example (269 a))

(2.11) *se earma synfylla man*  
the poor sinful man  
'the poor sinful man'  
(Pysz 2009: 214, her example (270 b))

Based on the empirical data, she refutes the accounts of Spamer (1979) and Fischer (2000, 2001) on adjective stacking. As the data shows, attributive adjectives, both weak and strong, can be stacked. To Pysz (2009: 216–218, 220–221), the attributive nature of prenominal adjectives allows them to be stacked. Syntactically, she sees them as adjuncts to NP<sup>4</sup>, an element which in her framework of generative grammar is inherently recursive. Postnominal adjectives, on the other hand, cannot be stacked due to their predicative nature, and their syntactic status as reduced relatives would also prevent their stacking.

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<sup>4</sup> Adjectives are seen as adjuncts to NP (noun phrase), i.e. they are attached to the maximal projection of the phrase, cf. Pysz (2009: 145–147) on the syntactic status of adjectives as adjuncts.



Pysz (2009: 216–217, 219), furthermore, poses the question of the number of adjectives which may appear in a row. Since prenominal adjectives are seen as adjuncts, there is in theory no limit to their number. Any number of adjectives may be generated. Nevertheless, on the surface, limitations seem to exist, and she relates this to the number of adjectives it is possible to process. Moreover, in Old English, phrases with more than three prenominal adjectives appear to be non-existent, which is odd as this is not the case for Present-day English. Pysz (2009: 219) therefore posits that it may be due to a limited amount of data. Even though the extant texts do not contain any phrases with more than three prenominal adjectives, it does not entail that Old English grammar could not generate them.

A comparative study by Bech (2017), focuses on adjectives occurring in the Adj + Adj + Noun construction in Old English and Old Norwegian. The study, based on data from the YCOE and the Menotec corpus, shows that the Adj + Adj + Noun construction is among the most frequent in both languages. Old English prenominal adjectives can thus be stacked, but the study also looks at which types of adjectives occur in this construction as Bech (2017: 12) posits that the stacking of descriptive adjectives is disallowed in Old English.

In most cases where two prenominal adjectives occur in a row, one of them is more like a determiner such as *ilca* ‘same’ and *oðer* ‘other’ as in (2.12) and (2.13). The second adjective is often descriptive.

(2.12) *se ylca arwyrða wer*  
 the same honourable man  
 ‘the same honourable man’  
 (Bech 2017: 12, her example (33))

(2.13) *oðrum langsumum spræcum*  
 other lengthy speech  
 ‘other lengthy speeches’  
 (Bech 2017: 12, her example (34))

Adjectives of origin, classifiers, such as *heofenlica* ‘heavenly’ and *Romaniscan* ‘Roman’ are also frequent in phrases with two prenominal adjectives. These are illustrated in (2.14) and (2.15).

(2.14) *se gooda heofenlica fæder*  
 se gooda heavenly father  
 ‘the good heavenly father’  
 (Bech 2017: 13, her example (35))

(2.15) *þære halgan Romaniscan cirican*  
the holy Roman church  
'the holy Roman church'  
(Bech 2017: 13, her example (36))

On the other hand, phrases where two descriptive adjectives qualify the noun are rare. Only eight such instances occurred in the study. One of them is shown in (2.16).

(2.16) *þa clænan mildheortan men*  
the clean mildhearted men  
'the clean mildhearted men'  
(Bech 2017: 14, her example (48))

While Old English allows more than one prenominal adjective, this does not seem to apply to the descriptive ones as they are not frequent in the Adj + Adj + Noun construction. She also posits that noun phrases in general may not have two descriptive adjectives (Bech 2017: 5, 12–16).

## 3 Previous research

### 3.1 Word order variation and adjectival inflection (Fischer)

In several studies, Fischer (2000, 2001, 2006, 2012) looks at the various positions of the adjective in Old English with a view to account for the variation in word order. She observes that adjectives occur in different positions, i.e. pre- and postnominally, and that postposed adjectives are mostly strong, like the postnominal adjective *unateallendlice* ‘uncountable’ in (3.1).

- (3.1) *het heanric þam se fæder becwæð gersuman unateallendlice*  
was-called Henry to-whom the father left treasures uncountable  
‘who was called Henry to whom the father left uncountable treasures’  
Fischer (2001: 249, her example (1b))

Adjectives in preposition, on the other hand, inflect weak or strong depending on the noun phrase being definite or indefinite, as shown in (3.2) and (3.3).

- (3.2) *þa forlet he þone læmnan ofn ðæs mænniscan lichoman*  
then left he the clay oven of-the human body  
‘then he left the clay oven of the human body’

- (3.3) *genim grene rudan twa hand fulle*  
take green rye two hands full  
‘take green rye two hands full’  
Fischer (2001: 249, 269 her examples (1a) and (27a))

To Fischer (2000: 153, 2001: 250), definiteness and declension then seem to be related to position. Thus, she aims to investigate how these factors account for the variation in adjective position, and how position relates to iconicity, as seen in Bolinger’s (1952) concept of linear modification (Fischer 2001: 249–250). In addition, she seeks to find out whether there is a difference in meaning between adjectives in pre- and postposition.

Bolinger (1952: 1117) applies the concept of linear modification to account for adjective position. Fischer (2000: 157) sees iconicity in relation to his theory, as the proposition that the first element in a sentence has an impact on the interpretation of the following. She illustrates this by his examples from Spanish *un hermoso edificio* ‘a beautiful building’ and *un edificio hermoso* ‘a building which is beautiful’. In the former example, the adjective modifies the entire phrase as it is the first element. Beauty therefore denotes an

inherent trait of the noun. In the latter example, the adjective does not modify the whole phrase but rather splits it. This means that the adjective no longer denotes an inherent property of the noun. Instead it expresses a contrast between a building which is beautiful and the ones not so.

Before closely examining OE adjective phrases, she looks at adjectives in a couple of modern languages, Greek and Italian, as they too show variation in adjectival position (Fischer 2000: 155–156). Modern Greek displays differences in what is expressed by the pre- and postnominal position of the adjective. In this respect, Fischer (2000: 157) refers to Stavrou, who says that in preposition, the Greek adjectives denote a characteristic of the noun, while transient properties are expressed by the postposed adjectives. Moreover, postnominal adjectives only occur in indefinite noun phrases, unless, syntactically, the adjective is an object complement (Stavrou 1996: 83–84 in Fischer 2000).

Concerning Italian, a study by Vincent of Italian adjectives shows that the prenominal position corresponds to the theme whereas the postnominal position corresponds to the rheme. Adjectives in preposition are always dependent on the head and so can never have an independent syntactic function. The postposed adjectives, however, “are always rhematic with respect to the noun”, and thus convey new information (Fischer 2000: 158). Vincent’s proposition therefore relates to Stavrou’s account of Greek adjectives, in that postnominal adjectives act as object complements, or secondary predicates. And that the distinction between theme and rheme essentially conveys the features, i.e. inherent and transient, conveyed by the adjectives in Greek definite and indefinite noun phrases (Fischer 2000: 159).

In view of the above, it seems possible to Fischer that OE adjectives may also be contrastive, display a difference between given and new, and that position and declension may be interrelated. Therefore, she seeks to examine what the weak and strong adjectives represent in Old English (Fischer 2000: 159).

Regarding inflection (cf. tables 2.2 and 2.3, section 2.2), Fischer (2000: 160) finds that the difference between weak and strong adjectives is related to what Strang (1970: 301) has termed *the principle of economy*. Weakly inflected adjectives combine with the demonstrative pronouns, and so weak adjectival endings are less marked than strong ones. As case and gender are encoded in the demonstrative, these need not be reflected in the weak adjectival endings. Strongly inflected adjectives, on the other hand, usually occur without a determiner (or with the indefinites *an* ‘one’ and *sum* ‘some’). Thus, strongly inflected adjectives show

both case and gender, which serve a purpose when these features are not conveyed by a preceding element (Fischer 2000: 159–160).

However, the difference between strong and weak adjectives goes beyond the purely economical, as in poetry OE adjectives, both strong and weak, occur without a determiner. What is represented by weak and strong adjectives themselves, therefore ought to be examined. Fischer thus posits (2001: 252–253) that weak adjectives are thematic and convey already known or given information, whereas strong adjectives are rhematic and convey new information. Her view is based on Brunner (1962), who sees weak adjectives as individuating, and strong ones as generalizing. To him, this entails that weak adjectives characterize an entity and they also refer to what is already known information. He does not elaborate on the strong generalizing adjectives, which he contrasts with the weak ones (Fischer 2001: 253, 2000: 161).

In order to investigate the Old English adjective phrases, Fischer (2000: 167, 177) uses two corpora, the *Helsinki Corpus* and the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*. One of her findings is that quantificational adjectives and adjectives ending in *-weard* (cf. section 4.2.5) frequently occur postnominally even if there are no other adjectives in the noun phrase, as in (3.3) and (3.4).

(3.3) *Pæt hi hyra æhta ealle beceapedon*  
that they their possessions all sold  
'that they sold all their possessions'

(3.4) *Pa wilnode ic indium innanwearde to geseonne*  
then wanted I India inner to see  
'then I wanted to see the India inner'  
(Fischer 2000: 167, her examples (9a) and (9b))

As regards adjectives ending in *-weard*, Fischer (2000: 179; 2001: 269) writes that they are special because of their regular appearance in both pre- and postnominal position as well as in predeterminer position. Moreover, the meaning of the adjective is related to position. Postnominally, adjectives ending in *-weard* (cf. section 4.2.5) denote a direction or a location as in (3.4) and in that respect they resemble adverbials. In preposition, they denote a feature of the noun, as shown in (3.5).

(3.5) *gif we hine biddað mid inneweardre heortan*  
 if we him pray with sincere heart  
 ‘if we pray to him with [a] sincere heart’  
 (Fischer 2001: 269, her example (26))

Negated adjectives are also found to be more frequently postposed, and more so than those which are not negated. Moreover, in a phrase with two strong adjectives, the negated one tends to be postposed, as in (3.6) Fischer (2001:263–264).

(3.6) *mid soðum geleafan untweogendum*  
 with true faith staunch  
 ‘with true staunch faith’  
 (Fischer 2001: 264, her example (17 c))

In a later article, (Fischer 2001: 270) also associates postposition with temporary features rather than permanent ones. A colour adjective *grene* ‘green’ was found to denote a transient feature postnominally but a permanent or inherent feature in preposition, as demonstrated in (3.6) and (3.7).

(3.6) *nym betonican swa grene*  
 take betony still green  
 ‘Take betony still green [fresh]’

(3.7) *Gif man scyle mucgwyr̄t to læcedome habban þonne nime þa readan*  
 if one must mugwort as medicine have then take the red  
*wæpnedman & þa grenan wifmen to læcecrafte*  
 for-men and the green for-women as remedy  
 ‘if one must have mugwort as [a] medicine,  
 then take the red for men and the green for women as [a] remedy’  
 (Fischer 2001: 269–270, her examples (27 e) and (27 b))

In postposition, the meaning of *grene* is ‘fresh’ or ‘freshly picked’ and so it denotes a transient property of the noun. In preposition, the same adjective refers to a plant, i.e. to green mugwort. Thus, *grene* denotes an inherent property in this instance.

In addition, the data also showed that the postnominal adjectives were mostly declined strong, except in two instances. Weakly declined adjectives in postnominal position only occurred after a repeated determiner (Fischer 2000: 168). There were also no instances of weak adjectives being modified by the adverbs *swiþe* ‘very’ or *ful* ‘very’ (in the *Dictionary of Old English*). Strong adjectives, on the other hand, were regularly found to be modified by *swiþe* when they occurred in predicative position, in indefinite expressions and in

postnominal position. Thus, instances such as *he wæs swiþe eald* ‘he was very old’ and *swiþe eald man* ‘a very old man’ occurred, but not *se swiþe ealda man* ‘the very old man’ (Fischer 2000: 168). There was only one exception in her findings, *his ful leof fæder* ‘his very dear father’, which may be due to *ful* ‘very’ originally being an adjective (Fischer 2000: 168–169).

Fischer (2000: 170) thus posits that the strong adjectives are predicative adjectives whereas the weak ones are adjunctive (cf. Spamer 1979: 242). As predicative adjectives they would appear after a copula or after a noun, as a subject or object complement, providing new and extra information about the noun. Weak adjectives (being adjunctive), however, would be attributive and provide known information. To Fischer (2000:170), this is in accordance with how Bolinger (1952) views the two positions. When more than one position is possible, prenominal adjectives change the category of the noun, while the postnominal adjectives add information which is not perceived as an inherent part of it. In this respect, postnominal adjectives appear to be more verb-like and so can be modified by the same elements as verbs. This provides an explanation of why it is only verbs and strongly inflected adjectives that are modified by adverbs in Old English.

What emerges from her investigation, then, is that it seems like position and (in)definiteness are interrelated. Adjectives are weakly inflected when they occur in definite noun phrases. They are attributive due to their nominal character and thus they are also thematic. According to Bolinger’s concept of linear order, the prenominal position also means that they convey given information. The strong postposed adjectives on the other hand, convey new information, which makes them rhematic in relation to the noun. They occur in indefinite noun phrases and are predicative in nature. To Fischer (2001: 257), strong preposed adjectives are also rhematic, but in this case it is due to stress. In prenominal position “phonological iconicity takes precedence over linear (syntactic) iconicity” (Fischer 2001: 257). Since there are no native speakers of Old English, however, it is not possible to know for certain if the strong, preposed adjectives were truly stressed (Fischer 2001: 271).

### **3.2 Properties of pre- and postnominal adjectives (Haumann)**

In her study of adnominal adjectives, Haumann (2010: 54) employs comparative and theoretical studies to investigate their position. She aims to show the non-randomness of adjective position, which she relates to “interpretive and functional differences between

prenominal and postnominal adjectives” (Haumann 2010: 54). These differences are not seen as being linked to adjectival inflection.

Adnominal adjectives have generally been viewed as being flexible with regard to position, as they can be both pre- and postnominal as well as ambilateral. However, they are usually preposed and thus seen as attributive. They are inflected for gender, number and case in accordance with the inflection of the noun. Since there were no articles, adjectives were thought to inflect weak or strong instead. Thus, definiteness was expressed by the weakly inflected adjectives and indefiniteness by the strongly inflected ones (Haumann 2010: 53–54). According to Haumann (2010: 55), postposed adjectives always have strong endings (but see Fischer 2001: 266) and can appear in both definite and indefinite noun phrases, as in (3.8) and (3.9) respectively:

(3.8) *& wende þæt hit hel wære be ðam tintregum unaræfnendlicum*  
and I-imagined that it hell were by the tortures unendurable  
‘and I imagined that it was hell by the unendurable tortures’

(3.9) *And eac her syn on earde leodhatan grimme ealles to manege*  
And also here be on earth persecutors hostile entirely too many  
‘and also there are all too many hostile persecutors here on earth’  
(adapted from Haumann 2010: 55, her example (6a) and (6b))

In (3.8), the postnominal adjective inflects strong despite the presence of a demonstrative *ðam* ‘the’. Thus, in her view, postnominal adjectives do not indicate (in)definiteness like the prenominals do because they inflect strong whether the phrase is indefinite or not (Haumann 2010: 55).

Whether an adjective precedes or follows the noun is also linked to inflection. While the weakly inflected adjectives can only occur prenominally, this does not pertain to the strongly inflected ones, which can be both pre- and postposed. Therefore, prenominal adjectives inflect weak or strong depending on the noun phrase being definite or indefinite (definiteness sensitivity). In postnominal position, however, all adjectives are strong as they are not sensitive to (in)definiteness in this position (Haumann 2010: 55–57). Based on this, Haumann (2010: 57) views the variation in adjective position as not being random but as an “interplay of adjectival and nominal properties”.

Haumann (2010: 60) posits that variation in adjectival word order can either be studied from the perspective of inflection or from that of position i.e. pre-and postnominal including definiteness sensitivity. As opposed to Fischer, she takes position as her point of



departure. In her view, pre- and postnominal adjectives are clearly distinctive, but this is not due to inflection. By looking at several positional parameters: attributive/predicative, given/new information, individual-level/stage-level reading and non-restrictive/restrictive reading, Haumann (2010: 60–61, 67) accounts for how weak preposed adjectives systematically differ from the strong postposed ones. Furthermore, she also examines the strong prenominal adjectives in relation to their postnominal counterparts.

With respect to the attributive/predicative parameter, weak adjectives are generally viewed as being attributive according to Haumann (2010: 61), but there is less certainty about the strong ones, as shown in (3.10) and (3.11):

(3.10) *þa gemette he gebeoras bliðe at þam huse*  
 then met-he companions merry at the house  
 ‘then he met his merry companions at the house’

(3.11) *& wende þæt hit hel wære be ðam tintregum unaræfnendlicum*  
 and I-imagined that it hell were by the tortures unendurable  
 ‘and I imagined that it was hell by the unendurable tortures’  
 (Haumann 2010: 61, her examples (23a) and (23b))

In view of these examples, Haumann (2010: 62) refers to Mitchell (1985: §160), who sees postnominal adjectives as attributive. He finds, however, that their use in each case, i.e. as attributive, predicative or appositional can sometimes be uncertain. Moreover, the strong inflection can make postnominal adjectives “seem predicative to some readers” (Mitchell 1985: §168). Fischer (2000: 170), Haumann (2010: 62) remarks, expresses a different view, since she sees OE strong adjectives as predicative or that they all originally were so. Haumann (2010: 62) seems to agree as regards strong postnominal adjectives being predicative. As both postposed adjectives and the ones occurring after a copula have the strong inflection, it is indicative of the postnominal adjectives being predicative themselves.

Haumann (2010: 62) further links the distinction between the attributive and predicative parameters in relation to adjective position to the parameter of given and new information. With reference to Fischer (2001), she sees attributive adjectives as providing given information, because they can only occur in noun phrases which are definite and thus also thematic as *feondlican* ‘hateful’ in (3.12).

(3.12) *Georius þa befran þone feondlican casere*  
 George then questioned the fiendish emperor  
 ‘then George questioned that hateful emperor’  
 (Haumann 2010: 62, her example (25a))

Strong adjectives on the other hand, add or provide new information about the noun such as *iungne* ‘young’ in (3.13).

(3.13) *se geara mid þone ilcan Ceaddan iungne*  
 who long-ago with that same Chad young  
 ‘who long ago, when Chad was young, had separate cloisters’  
 (Haumann 2010: 63, her example (26b))

That weak adjectives are attributive and the strong ones predicative are evidenced from how they are interpreted regarding the properties individual-level (inherent) and stage-level (transitory) properties. On this view, Haumann (2010: 63) refers to several scholars, among them Bolinger (1967). The difference between weak and strong adjectives in this respect is illustrated in (3.14) and (3.15).

(3.14) *se mæra cyngc, hæfde funden his wif*  
 the great king had found his wife  
 ‘the great king had found his wife’  
 (adapted from Haumann 2010: 63, her example (27a))

(3.15) *Hinguar ure cyning, cene and sigefæst on sæ and on lande*  
 Hingwar our king, bold and victorious on sea and on land  
 ‘Hingwar our king, bold and victorious on sea and land’  
 (adapted from Haumann 2010: 63, her example (28a))

In (3.14), the attributive adjective *mæra* ‘great’ denotes an inherent or permanent property of the noun, while the predicative adjectives *cene* ‘bold’ and *sigefæst* ‘victorious’ in (3.15) denote temporary properties of the noun.

Haumann also sees a distinction between the weak and strong adjectives regarding the parameters of non-restrictive reading and restrictive reading. In this respect, the weak preposed adjectives are non-restrictive as they provide a characterization of the referent of the noun as in (3.12). Here *feondlican* ‘hateful’ is a characteristic of the emperor. The strong postposed adjectives, however, are restrictive in that they identify the referent of a noun from

other referents. Unlike the weak adjectives they denote a property of the referent that contrasts with that of other referents. *Unaræfnendlicum* ‘unbearable’ in (3.11) is not a characterization of the tortures (*tintregum*), rather it denotes a contrast between tortures, i.e. the endurable and the unendurable ones (Haumann 2010: 64).

A last difference which Haumann (2010: 65) remarks upon is Fischer’s (2000, 2001) observation that strong postnominal adjectives can be modified by degree elements such as *swiðe* ‘very’ and *swa* ‘thus, so’, whereas weak prenominal adjectives cannot. The differing properties between adjectives which are weak and preposed and those that are strong and postposed are summarized in the following table:

**Table 3.1. Properties of adjectives in pre-and postposition**

Weak inflection Prenominal position	Strong inflection Postnominal position
Attributive	Predicative
Given information	New information
Individual-level reading	Stage-level reading
Non-restrictive reading	Restrictive reading
No degree modifiers	Degree modifiers

(quoted from Haumann 2010: 66)

Thus, to Haumann (2010: 66–67), the properties in table 3.1 show what the weak and strong adjectives represent. But matters are not so straightforward, as strong adjectives can also be preposed in indefinite noun phrases. If the properties of strong adjectives (cf. table 3.1) are perceived as inherent, they would pertain to both pre- and postnominal strong adjectives, according to Haumann (2010: 67, 70). This would mean a contrast in properties between the prenominal strong adjectives and the prenominal weak ones. However, based on empirical data, she finds that this is not the case as demonstrated by the examples in (3.16) to (3.18). The contrast is between the strong pre- and postposed adjectives, which only share the property of adverbial modification. Prenominal strong and weak adjectives, on the other hand, display the same properties. They both denote given information, inherent properties of the noun (individual-level reading) and are non-restrictive, as can be seen from examples (3.16) and (3.17).

(3.16) & *ofslogon anne giongne Brettisc monnan, swiþe æþelne monnan*  
 and killed one young British man very-much noble man  
 ‘and they killed a very noble young Briton’

(3.17) *Leofe dohtor þes iunga man is forliden*  
 dear daughter this young man is shipwrecked  
 ‘dear daughter, this young man is shipwrecked’  
 (adapted from Haumann 2010: 68, her example (39a) and (41a))

The preposed strong adjective *giongne* ‘young’ in (3.16) and the preposed weak one *iunga* ‘young’ in (3.17) are characterizing features of the respective nouns. To be young is here a characteristic of the man. The strong postnominal adjective *iunga* in (3.18), on the other hand, displays the opposite properties (cf. table 3.1).

(3.18) *se geara mid þone ilcan Ceaddan iungne*  
 who long-ago with that same Chad young  
 ‘who long ago, when Chad was young’  
 (adapted from Haumann 2010: 68, her example (40a))

In this case, as can be seen from the context, the adjective refers to a temporary feature of *Ceaddan* ‘Chad’, i.e. it refers to a feature that no longer pertains to him. Moreover, in (3.18), the adjective expresses a contrast between Chad when he was young and Chad when he was old. In that respect, the adjective is restrictive because it identifies the referent of a noun from other referents unlike the adjectives in (3.16) and (3.17). Here, the adjectives refer to inherent features of the nouns, and thus *anne giongne Brettisc monnan* ‘a young Briton’ in (3.16) cannot be contrasted with *anne ealdne Brettisc monnan* ‘an old Briton’. The adjective *giongne* does not identify the referent of the noun *monnan* from other referents. Therefore, the adjectives in (3.16) and (3.17) are non-restrictive (Haumann 2010: 68–69).

Based on data such as those in (3.16) to (3.18), Haumann (2010: 69–70) maintains that position remains the decisive factor concerning the properties of weak and strong adjectives, pace Fischer. The adjectives in (3.16) to (3.18) show that irrespective of inflection, prenominal adjectives display given information, individual-level properties, are non-restrictive and cannot be modified by degree elements. Moreover, prenominal adjectives are always attributive. Conversely, postnominal modifiers are predicative. They convey new information, stage-level properties, are restrictive and may be modified by degree elements. Haumann (2010: 70) thus posits that the pre- and postnominal position denote two ‘distinct structural domains’ with particular features pertaining to each of them.

To sum up, Fischer (2000, 2001, 2006, 2012) and Haumann (2003, 2010) provide a rather opposing account of adjective position in OE. Adjectival inflection, weak and strong, is Fischer's point of departure, while Haumann's is position, pre- and postnominal. To Fischer, strong pre- and postposed adjectives convey the same features, i.e. they are predicative, convey new or additional information and are rhematic. In preposition, strong prenominal adjectives are predicative because they are stressed. In Haumann's account, it is the prenominal strong and weak adjectives which display the same features. Thus, the prenominal strong adjectives are attributive, convey given information and denote individual-level (inherent) properties of the noun. In addition, they are also non-restrictive. Postnominal strong adjectives on the other hand, are restrictive. Moreover, they are predicative, convey new information, and denote temporary properties. As regards the strong postnominal adjectives, there is thus less difference between Haumann's and Fischer's scheme. Fischer's view of weak adjectives is also more in line with Haumann's. Weak prenominal adjectives are adjunctive (cf. section 2.2.2), which means that they change the category of the noun. They mostly occur in definite noun phrases (cf. section 2.2), and thus they are thematic and convey given information. In the next sections, the researchers investigate adjective position, in relation to Fischer's and Haumann's schemes.

### **3.3 A corpus study of adjective position in Old English (Grabski)**

In Grabski's (2017) extensive corpus (YCOE) study, he investigates the position of adjectives in OE prose. His study focuses on adjectives occurring in four constructions: Adj + Noun, Noun + Adj, Adj + *and* + Adj + Noun and Adj + Noun + *and* + Adj. This section only looks at the constructions with a single pre- or postposed adjective in relation to his findings, as the coordinated constructions are not part of the current thesis.

The aim of Grabski's study is to consider the factors which may have an influence on adjective position and to look at the differences between adjectives in pre- and postposition. As his framework he applies the factors thought to account for adjectival position found in other studies. In particular, he looks at the properties individual-level (inherent features) and stage-level (temporary features), as well as the properties restrictive and non-restrictive as posited by Haumann (2010) and Fischer (2000, 2001), who refers to individual-level/stage-level as inherent and incidental properties (Grabski 2017: 53–54, 113).

In addition, he also considers Latin as a possible influence on adjective position, as this has been noted by other scholars (Mitchell 1985; Fischer 2001). For this reason, the

*Leechbook* is not included in his study, as it is difficult to determine the original source for the various remedies. He controls for Latin influence by analyzing the postnominal adjectives separately in the translated and the non-translated texts. The prenominal adjectives are analyzed together in both translations and non-translations, as Latin is not seen, by any author, to influence the preposition of adjectives. Preposed adjectives are very frequent, and so it seems native to OE to place the adjectives before the noun (Grabski 2017: 45, 51, 57).

As part of his investigation of adjective position, Grabski (2017: 51–53) classifies the adjectives according to the characteristics found in previous research, in particular Fischer (2000, 2001) and Haumann (2010). Postposed adjectives are seen as more verbal than nominal by Fischer, and thus they express adverbial features, i.e. circumstantial and therefore transient features, and they take complements (prepositional phrases, genitives). The verb-like adjectives are therefore divided into three main categories. 1) Adverb-like adjectives, which denote such things as time and direction. 2) Adjectives governing complements. 3) Stage-level adjectives, which denote a temporary or transient feature. The examples in (3.22) - (3.24) illustrate the respective categories. In (3.22) – (3.24), the adverb-like adjective *ufonweardum* ‘top of the wall’ denotes a location. The adjective *mihtig* ‘mighty’ in (3.23) governs a prepositional phrase and in (3.24), the adjective *seoc* ‘sick’ denotes a temporary feature.

(3.22) *ðam walle ufonweardum*

the wall top-of

‘top of the wall’

(Grabski 2017: 52, his example (5))

(3.23) *witega mihtig on spæce & on weorce*

prophet mighty in words and in deeds

‘a mighty prophet in words and in deeds’

(Grabski 2017: 52, his example (6))

(3.24) *se cyng seoc*

the king sick

‘the sick king’

(Grabski 2017: 53, his example (9))

Adjectives and participles are examined separately in Grabski ‘s (2017: 48, 53–54) study because he aims to present the most detailed account of adjectival modification. Like adjectives, participles are also verb-like and denote incidental features. When he presents

overviews of his findings, both participles and adjectives are referred to as adjectival modifiers.

Non-verbal adjectives are categorized as individual-level and refer to inherent properties rather than to temporary ones (Grabski 2017: 54), as shown in (3.25).

- (3.25) *þæt wif gewittig*  
the woman wise  
'that wise woman'  
(Grabski 2017: 54, his example (12))

Grabski (2017: 64–65) starts by looking at phrases with a single postposed adjective. Postnominal adjectives have always been of interest to scholars, but as Grabski (2017: 64) notes, there are few instances of single postposed adjectives. In his study, only one percent of the adjectives are postnominal. Of the postnominal adjectives in the translated texts, the majority displays verb-like features. Adjectives and participles denoting temporary features (stage-level) are the most frequent, followed by adverb-like adjectives and adjectives with a complement. Thus, the postposition of the adjectives can be explained by their verb-like nature. Moreover, only in two instances, is Latin found to be the only cause of postposition (Grabski 2017: 86–89). In the non-translated texts, most of the adjectives display verb-like features as well. Of these, it is again prototypical adjectives and participles with a stage-level reading which most often occur in postnominal position. Thus, the postposition of these adjectives in the non-translated texts is due to their verb-like nature. Unlike the translated texts, there is a higher percentage of non-verbal adjectives, i.e. individual-level adjectives (denoting inherent features) in postposition. Most of them occur in Ælfric's texts, where the adjectives occur in phrases with premodification of the noun, or with further modification of the adjectives themselves. Grabski (2017: 96, 106–107) thus finds that the postposition of non-verbal adjectives may be due to further modification of the adjectives, or to the avoidance of stacked adjectives in preposition (cf. section 2.2.2).

Grabski (2017: 113, 170) then turns to examine single preposed adjectives and participles, according to Fischer's and Haumann's account of adjective position. The adjectives are discussed in relation to declension and the properties individual-level/stage-level and restrictive/non-restrictive. The large number of examples from the corpus investigation enables Grabski (2017: 113, 121–122) to question the accounts of Fischer and Haumann on empirical grounds. In Haumann's view, adjectives which denote an incidental feature (stage-level) only occur in postposition. Stage-level adjectives are never preposed. In

Fisher’s view, the verb-like properties of the strong postposed adjectives, also pertain to the strong preposed adjectives.

In the sample of prenominal adjectives, Grabski (2017: 113–114) finds that strong prototypical adjectives are mostly individual-level. But there are also occurrences of strong prenominal adjectives, as in (3.26). Concerning the prenominal participles, there are more occurrences of strong prenominal participles which are stage-level, as in (3.27), than those which are individual-level.

(3.26) *middre þære bremelþyrnan*  
in-the-middle of-that bushes  
‘in the middle of the bushes’

(3.27) *astrehtum lichaman*  
outstretched bodies  
‘outstretched bodies’  
(Grabski 2017: 114–115, his examples (67) and (65))

Grabski (2017: 113) observes that this is contrary to Haumann’s view, according to which stage-level adjectives should only occur in postnominal position. He also supports his findings with an examination of adjectives ending in *-weard*. Such adjectives resemble adverbials, i.e. they are verbal in nature and thus are often postposed (cf. example 3.22). Of the total of 136 occurrences of such adjectives in the corpus in prenominal position, he found that 77 of them were adverb-like, denoting temporary qualities. To Grabski (2017: 115–117) this shows that preposed adjectives and participles also display verb-like properties (stage-level). This questions Haumann’s account of pre- and postnominal adjectives as displaying distinct features.

His study also examines adjectives in relation to the properties restrictive and non-restrictive (cf. section 3.2). As regards this feature, the study shows that more than half of the preposed adjectives and participles investigated are restrictive, as illustrated in (3.28). The adjectives in the example are needed to refer to the two kinds of garments (Grabski 2017: 120–121).

(3.28) *Ne dep witodlice nan man niwes claðes scyp on eald reaf*  
Not does truly no man new cloth-GEN patch on old garment  
‘Truly no one puts a patch of new cloth on an old garment’  
(Grabski 2017: 120, his example (82))



These findings contrast with Haumann's proposal that only strong postnominal adjectives are restrictive. Grabski (2017: 121) thus finds it problematic to assign specific properties, such as individual-level/stage-level and restrictive/non-restrictive, to pre- and postposed adjectives.

Concerning Fischer's account of adjective position, Grabski (2017: 122) questions her proposal that all strong adjectives denote temporary features because of their verb-like nature, and that, in addition, they are salient. By salience, Fischer (2001: 265) means that the strongly inflected adjectives provide new information, which is used in the further discourse, and so the adjective is said to be discourse manipulable. With respect to temporary features and salience, Grabski (2017: 122) thus wonders if there is a contrast between strong and weak adjectives in relation to these properties.

His study shows that most of the strong prenominal adjectives in his sample denote inherent features, as shown in (3.29). In that respect they differ from their strong postnominal counterparts, which mostly denote transient features (Grabski 2017: 122–123).

(3.29) *linenum reafe*

linen coat

'linen coat'

(Grabski 2017: 122, his example (84))

Moreover, his findings show occurrences of weak adjectives and some weak preposed participles denoting temporary features. Additionally, he also looks at the 77 instances of adjectives ending in *-ward*. Most of them are weak since they follow a determiner.

Moreover, they are adverb-like and thus they do not denote a quality of the noun, as Fischer proposes with regard to prenominal adjectives ending in *-ward*. Therefore, based on his results, Grabski (2017: 123, 125) finds that weak and strong adjectives do not differ along the lines of temporary and inherent features, as posited by Fischer.

The distinction salient/restrictive and non-salient/non-restrictive are the terms Grabski (2017: 130) employs in his analysis of restrictivity in relation to Fischer. Strong adjectives are salient/restrictive to Fischer (2001: 265–267) because they convey new information, which is used (built upon) in the further discourse. The strong inflection is also seen as more marked than the weak, and contributes to the salience of strong adjectives. The weak adjectives on the other hand, are perceived as non-salient, as the weak inflection is less marked, and thus they denote already known information, which do not contribute to the further discourse (Grabski 2017: 125–126, 130). As Grabski (2017: 128) finds it difficult to determine whether an

adjective is important to the further discourse or not, he decides to count an adjectives as salient if it is restrictive, i.e. if the absence of the adjective changes the meaning of the phrase. What his study reveals is that nearly half of the weak preposed adjectives in his sample are restrictive, as well as some of the participles, and thus they are salient like the strong adjectives. Conversely, there are instances of strong preposed adjectives and participles, which are non-restrictive and non-salient. Therefore, the strong and weak adjectives are not seen to strictly conform to Fischer's proposed dichotomy of salient and non-salient properties (Grabski 2017: 128–130).

With reference to the pre- and postposition of single adjectives, Grabski (2017: 170–171) therefore concludes that prenominal position is more versatile and considerably more frequent than postposition. Preposed adjectives do not conform to properties such as individual-level and stage-level, pace Haumann, but may denote either. Moreover, modifiers which display verb-like features may generally be found in postposition, but adjectives in preposition may also be verb-like. Thus, there are no functions which only pertain to the postnominal position, apart from the ability of postposed adjectives to govern complements. In this respect Grabski's (2017: 171) data shows a correlation between complex phrases and postposition.

### **3.4 Old English noun phrases in a contextual perspective (Bech)**

Adjective position is also examined in a recent study by Bech (2019). In her study, she looks at adjective placement in relation to previous research by Fischer (2000, 2001, 2006, 2012) and Haumann (2003, 2010). In particular, she discusses the different schemes that Fischer and Haumann employ to account for adjective position, including terminological issues related to the schemes. She also examines adjective position in examples from two texts in the YCOE corpus, *Cura Pastoralis* and the *West-Saxon Gospels*. The examples, i.e. adjectives occurring in two specific constructions, Adj + *and* + Adj + Noun and Adj + Noun + *and* + Adj are studied in their context and in relation to Fischer's and Haumann's schemes (Bech 2019: 15, 45).

After providing an outline of Fischer's and Haumann's account of adjective position, Bech (2019: 23) turns to a discussion of the terminology. To her, the terms employed are problematic, because they are not clearly defined. For example, an adjective is seen as either attributive or predicative, depending on inflection (Fischer) or position (Haumann). In Fischer's case, this entails that all strong adjectives are predicative and, as such, they display

new information, are rhematic and constitute a separate syntactic unit. To determine whether an adjective conforms to Fischer's scheme (cf. section 3.1) then, poses a problem, as the definition of predicative also entails other properties in her scheme (new, rhematic). In addition, whether an adjective is seen as predicative also depends on inflection.

As regards the features given versus new information, Bech (2019: 24–25) finds that they have not been defined by either Fischer or Haumann. Fischer (2006) writes that she uses the terms given/new and the related topic/comment, topic/focus and theme/rheme interchangeably and in a general way but acknowledges that they do not denote the same. However, no further definition of the terms is provided, and so to test whether an adjective is given poses a problem. Haumann (2010) sees given and new in relation to attribution and predication as well as to inflection. Weak adjectives thus express given information, while new information is expressed by strong adjectives, but givenness itself is not defined.

Individual-level/stage/level or inherent and temporary is mostly applicable to Haumann's scheme, as Bech notes (2019: 26) that Fischer does not refer to these in later articles on adjective position. What she sees as problematic with the use of these terms is that it is not clear whether they apply to all types of nouns. As adjectives for which the distinction may not be applicable, she specifically mentions nouns that are unchangeable, such as *whetstone*, and non-concrete nouns like *will* and *understanding*, which have a temporal or eventive meaning (Bech 2019: 26–27).

With reference to the properties restrictive and non-restrictive, Bech (2019: 27) writes that Fischer does not comment on the difference between them, other than briefly mentioning contrast in relation to restrictive interpretation. In Haumann's proposal (2010), according to Bech (2019: 27), weak and strong prenominal adjectives are non-restrictive as they do not express a contrast, but a quality of the noun, and so they cannot identify a referent from other referents. Strong postnominal adjectives, on the other hand, are restrictive as they express a contrast and thus can identify the referent of a noun from other referents. However, Bech (2019: 27–28) finds that not all the examples provided corroborate her view, as in (3.30).

(3.30) & *wende þæt hit hel wære be ðam tintregum unaræfnendlicum*  
and I-imagined that it hell were by the tortures unendurable  
'and I imagined that it was hell by the unendurable tortures'  
(Bech 2019: 28, her example (10))

Tortures are generally held to be unendurable and thus it is hard to see how it can be contrasted with endurable tortures. Therefore, the adjective cannot be restrictive in this case,

as it does not limit the set of referents. In addition, the text (Bede) the example is taken from does not make any mention of endurable tortures.

By using examples from two texts (*Cura Pastoralis* and the *West-Saxon Gospels*), Bech (2019: 15–16) shows exactly in which way Fischer’s and Haumann’s schemes are problematic. She chooses to focus on adjectives occurring in two constructions Adj + *and* + Adj + Noun and Adj + Noun + *and* + Adj as they are viewed differently by Fischer and Haumann. The examples in (3.31) and (3.32) are from the *West-Saxon Gospels*.

(3.31) *þu goda þeow & getrywa*  
you good servant and true  
‘you good and true servant’

(3.32) *getrywe & gleaw þeow*  
faithful and wise servant  
‘faithful and wise servant’  
(Bech 2019: 36–37, her examples (16) and (17))

In (3.31), both adjectives are weak because they are vocatives. Bech (2019: 36) writes that according to Fischer (2001) a postnominal adjective are weak because it does not provide new information. Fischer thus relates weak inflection to given information. However, given adjectives are not always declined weak, as attested by the examples Bech (2019: 30ff) analysed from *Cura Pastoralis*. In (3.31), the adjectives convey given information since the servant is addressed as a good and true servant, and because the context tells that such a characteristic is in line with his previous actions Bech (2019: 36)

With respect to Haumann’s scheme, the adjectives in (3.31) can be seen as denoting permanent features of the servant, and thus they are individual-level. As regards restrictiveness, the weak declension would mean that they are restrictive according to Fischer’s scheme, while preposition means that they are non-restrictive in Haumann’s scheme. Bech (2019: 36–37) posits that it depends on how they are interpreted. They may be viewed as characterizing the servant, and so receive a non-restrictive interpretation, but they may also express a contrast as the chapter is about the good and not so good servants. In that respect, the adjectives are restrictive, as they refer to a set of servants the good and the bad, and not to servants in general.

The adjectives in example (3.32) are reminiscent of those in (3.31), but here they are declined strong. Since this is the first description of servants as *faithful* and *wise*, the adjectives may be said to provide new information, which would fit with Fischer's scheme. The topic of the chapter, however, is not about good and evil servants, as is the case in example (3.31). This chapter is about being prepared for the coming of the Lord, and thus to Bech (2019: 37) its topic is about being faithful to God. As the example shows, it poses a problem to use properties such as given and topic interchangeably, because they may not denote the same thing. Bech (2019: 37) also observes that the weak adjectives in (3.31) and the strong in (3.32) should convey completely opposing features in Fischer's view. However, she does not find that the differences between the examples can be accounted for by the opposite properties of Fischer's scheme. For Haumann, on the other hand, there should be no difference in how the adjectives are interpreted as they are all prenominal. But the adjectives in (3.32), unlike those in (3.31), are more likely to be restrictive, as they contrast with the evil servants in the following verses.

According to Bech (2019: 38–39, 45) however, the analysis of all the examples shows that Fischer and Haumann's generalizations are unable to account for adjective position in every instance. It seems like OE adjectives cannot consistently be explained in terms of either this or that feature. She also finds the adjectives 'elusive' as to why they appear in the various positions. In that respect she refers to Grabski (2017) where he suggests that the default construction is Adj + Noun + *and* + Adj whenever there are two adjectives present. This, he relates to an avoidance of heavy elements in the language something which corroborates Mitchell (1985) and is also supported by Bech (2019: 45).

## 4 Texts, annotation procedure and annotation process

### 4.1 The texts

#### 4.1.1 The West-Saxon Gospels

As the title indicates, the *West-Saxon Gospels* (henceforth *WSG*) are translated from Latin into the vernacular. It mainly consists of the four gospels written in the West-Saxon dialect. The text used in this thesis is taken from a new edition (1970) of Skeat's (1871–1878) *The Four Gospels in Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian and Old Mercian Versions* (cf. YCOE's information on the texts). The original manuscript for his reproduction is Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 140 which, according to Ker (1957: xvi, xx) was written between the year 1000-1050. Skeat (1871:vi), however, in his preface to *St. Mark's Gospel*, concludes that it was written about the year 1000.

A note (in Latin) in *St. Matthew's Gospel* informs us that “I, Ælfric<sup>5</sup>, wrote this book in the monastery at Bath and gave it to Brihtwold the prior” (Skeat, 1871: v). Ælfric thus seems to be the translator, but Skeat (1871: v) refers to him as a scribe. Liuzza (2000: 100, fn 1) agrees in noting that Ælfric is more likely to have been a scribe. According to him, authorship of Old English texts is often anonymous, and he believes the same pertains to the Gospels. In her study of *St. Matthews Gospel*, Grünberg (1967: 367–368) also dismisses Ælfric (i.e. Ælfric of Eynsham as the translator partly on account of the vocabulary.

According to Ker (1957: 48) the handwriting differs in each of the Gospels but for one exception. Parts of St. Mark's chapter 12, i.e. verses 26–38, have the same handwriting as that of the Gospel of Luke. Liuzza (2000: 102, 107, 119) supports Ker's view that *WSG* can be attributed to more than one person. Among other things, he relates this to the vocabulary used in each gospel. When OE has synonyms for a recurring word, the same synonym is always used in one part but not in another. Furthermore, Liuzza (2000: 107, 119) also finds that his study of lexis and grammar corroborates Drake's (1894) view that there is a difference between Mark and Luke on the one hand and Matthew and John on the other, as well as a lesser difference between the latter two. In addition, Liuzza (2000: 107, 119, 153) observes that the translation of Matthew chapters 1–20 and that of 21–28 differ considerably. Also, the orthography differs between chapter 9 verse 27 to chapter 12 verse 21 and chapters 21–28,

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<sup>5</sup> The reference is not to Ælfric of Eynsham. *St. Matthew's Gospel* is not thought to be attributed to him (cf. Grünberg 1967: 367–368).

and that of the other chapters in the gospel. Thus, Matthew may previously have been copied by two scribes, and then the spelling variation has been preserved in consecutive exemplars.

With respect to the translation, it may be seen as literal whilst also being idiomatic. The translation employs a ‘sense for sense’ and ‘word for word’ approach. However, some stylistic variations occur as the translators had some freedom in their work. This pertained to less significant matters such as which of two synonyms to use to render a word in Latin and to the positioning of modifiers (Liuzza 2000: 50, 99). As for the Latin work underlying WSG, it is not known whether it stems from one text only or from several gospel-books (Liuzza 2000: 48–49).

### 4.1.2 The Leechbook

Three volumes containing medical texts in Old English were published around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by T.O. Cockayne (Cameron 1993: 30). He had done a formidable job of collecting as many of them as possible in his work *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England* (Cameron 1993: 30; Meaney 1984: 235). One of the medical texts in Cockayne’s work is the *Leechbook*, commonly known as Bald’s *Leechbook*. This text is taken from the London, BL, Royal 12. D. xvii manuscript. The manuscript contains a compilation of medical remedies. Two of its three parts constitute Bald’s *Leechbook*. A colophon in the manuscript, written in Latin, states that “Bald owns this book, which he ordered Cild to write” (Cameron 1993: 30), hence the name. Whether Cild was the compiler or the scribe is unknown. The remaining part forms a separate work referred to as *Leechbook III* (Cameron 1993: 30–31).

Of the extant works on medicine written in Old English, the manuscript containing the leechbooks is the oldest one. It is probably from the mid tenth century and was written at Winchester (Cameron 1993: 30). According to Cameron (1993: 30, see also Meaney 1984: 236), the manuscript was presumably “a copy of a lost exemplar which may have been composed about fifty years earlier in the last years of the reign of Alfred the Great”.

The first part of Bald’s *Leechbook* is about external ailments or diseases and displays the usual manner of arranging the illnesses from head to foot. The second part is about internal illnesses, possibly making Bald’s *Leechbook* the only one to separate external and internal diseases. Much of the material in Bald’s *Leechbook* are from Greek, Roman, North African and Byzantine sources. There is a more extensive use of Latin sources in the second part than in the first. The first part blends Mediterranean and native material. To which degree

native material was used in the compilation is difficult to estimate, since the only surviving work older than Bald's *Leechbook* is *Leechbook III* (Cameron 1993: 42–44).

From the content of the book and the way it is presented, it is not unlikely that the compiler was a physician. The way material is taken from different sources or various chapters of the same source and made into coherent pieces of writing, indicates someone of medical knowledge. Moreover, his writing was designed in a manner to best facilitate the use by other physicians (Cameron 1993: 44).

As mentioned above, the content of the *Leechbook* comes from various sources. These sources were primarily works written or translated from Latin. The Anglo-Saxons in general did not have sufficient knowledge of Greek to be able to use Greek medical texts. However, the texts were available to them either through the translation of complete works or through epitomes or summaries. They were also available in medical compilations in Latin (Cameron 1993: 65). The following paragraphs provide information on some of the sources with examples of their use in the *Leechbook*.

One of the translated works is that of Oribasius. Alongside Cassius Felix of Numidia and Alexander of Tralles he was a key figure in the transmission of Galen's classical medicine. His works, *Synopsis* and *Euporistes*, were translated twice at the end of the sixth or at the beginning of the seventh century. *Synopsis* and *Euporistes* are derived from his compilation, the *Medical Collection*, written during the years 355–60 (Cameron 1993: 67).

In a long extract primarily of remedies for abdominal ailments, Cameron (1993: 77–79) shows the parts of *Euporistes* which were selected for the *Leechbook* (the second part). A couple of the lines from the *Leechbook* reads: "If the faeces are too few, take the herb which in the south is called turpentine, as much as an oil berry (i.e., olive); give it when he wishes to go to bed". The corresponding part in *Euporistes* reads: "... but if the belly is constipated, Chios turpentine the size of an olive is to be given to be swallowed when going to bed" (Cameron 1993: 77–78). The Anglo Saxons also had knowledge of the *Historia naturalis* by the encyclopedist Pliny the Elder, whose works were widely known. The part of *Historia naturalis* containing medical texts could often appear as separate works such as the *Medicina Plinii* and *Physica Plinii* (Cameron 1993: 69–70).

There are some remedies in the *Leechbook* taken from *Physica Plinii* in the same chapter as that referred to above. The *Leechbook* has only four of Pliny's remedies and the first one reads: "For disease and pain of the belly: Linseed rubbed or beaten, a bowl full, and two of sharp vinegar, boil down together, give to the sick one to drink after the night's fast".



The remedy in Pliny reads: “Again: give to the fasting sufferer one-half pint of linseed bruised in one pint of strong vinegar and boiled thoroughly; it helps wonderfully” (Cameron 1993: 78–80).

Another medical work in Latin called *Herbarium Apulei* (*Herbarium Apulei Platonici traditum a Chirone Centauro, magistro Achillis*), may date from the fourth century or the sixth at the latest. It also exists in an expanded version, the *Herbarium complex* (Cameron 1993: 68). Evidence shows that the Anglo-Saxons knew of this work in the eighth century or even before that. It consists of additional texts on medicines from plants and animals and was later translated into Old English (Cameron 1993: 59).

A remedy from the chapter on abdominal afflictions shows that the *Leechbook* also borrowed from the *Herbarium*: “Again: Hart’s marrow melted, give to drink in hot water”. The remedy in the *Herbarium* reads: “For pain of the intestines and if there are cramps, Melted hart’s marrow, give to drink in hot water, it heals wonderfully” (Cameron 1993: 78–80).

### **4.1.3 The Peterborough Chronicle**

*The Peterborough Chronicle*, spanning the years 60 BC (BCE) –1154 AD (CE) is, unlike the previous ones, not a Latin translation (Bergs and Skaffari 2007: 5). It is part of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (henceforth the *Chronicle*), which tells of events and people at the time of the Anglo-Saxons and the Anglo-Normans. The *Chronicle* consists of seven interrelated manuscripts and a fragment referred to as H. The manuscripts are labelled from A to G where E is the *Peterborough Chronicle* (Higham and Ryan 2015: 271, 275). Since the *Peterborough Chronicle* is found in the Bodleian MS. Laud Misc. 636, it also goes by the name of the *Laud manuscript* (Bergs and Skaffari 2007: 6).

All the manuscripts originate from a single work produced in 890, which has not survived. The work is usually associated with King Alfred and his literary projects and is known as the *Alfredian Chronicle* or the *Common Stock* (Higham and Ryan 2015: 272). However, it is not known who the initiator was (Bergs and Skaffari 2007: 6). The *Common Stock* contains an historical record for the years 60 BCE to 891 CE, relating in particular how Wessex became powerful and the dynasty which emerged from it. When the writing of the *Common Stock* was completed, it was copied and probably distributed through the religious centres (Higham and Ryan 2015: 272–273).

One such copy is called the *Northern Recension*, from which stems the E manuscript along with D and F. The *Northern Recension* dates from the tenth or early eleventh century and contains the added material of a Preface to Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Northern annals, the account of the reign of King Æthelred, and annals on the opening years of Cnut's reign (Home 2007: 15). Even though the name implies that it was written in the north, this may not be the case. It could be due to a desire to include the northern region in the *Chronicle* at this point in time (Higham and Ryan 2015: 275).

Scholars have found that the manuscript was written by two scribes. Based on palaeography, Clark (1970: xv) views the text as consisting of three parts. The first encompasses the entries from 1070 to 1121. As evidenced by the handwriting and the ink, this part was written by a single scribe. In the subsequent part from 1122 to 1131 however, there is more variation, making this part look as if it was written in six blocks: "1122; 1123; 1124; 1125-1126/11; 1126/12-1127; 1128-1131" (Clark 1970: xvi, xxv). Compared to the previous entries, there is more change in both the ink (its colour), and in the writing style (its appearance). The greater variation seen has meant that some scholars attribute this section to more than one scribe (Irvine 2004: xviii-xix). Clark (1970: xvi) does not share this view and posits that it was written by a single person, the writing of a chronicle being more likely to be left to one scribe only. Her view is supported by Ker (1957: 424-425), who posits that the entries are written by the same person, but at different times.

From the forms of the letters, all the entries from 1070 to 1132 were penned by the same man. Not until the last part, spanning from 1132 to 1154, does a change in scribe occur, as evidenced by the difference in handwriting (Clark 1970: xvi-xvii).

## **4.2 Annotation procedure**

In relation to the project an annotation scheme was developed by one of its participants Alexander P. Pfaff. It is used as a guideline for tagging the noun phrases of all the various languages of the project. The following sections provide a description of how phrases are annotated according to the scheme. Emphasis is put on the parts which are most applicable to the thesis, but a full account of the annotation procedure is found in the *NPEGL Annotation Manual*<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> The annotation manual will be available when the project is finished.

The manual provides several examples to facilitate the annotation. Most of these are in Modern English. The examples in the thesis are therefore taken from the three texts where possible. When there are no relevant examples in the texts, I have quoted those used in the manual. The same also pertains to the figures or screenshots used for illustration. They mostly reflect those in the manual but show Old English noun phrases instead. I have usually kept the captions for each figure as they provide the best description. This has also been done in order to make it easier to find the same figures in the online manual (when it becomes available), for those wishing to consult it.

## 4.2.1 The noun phrase – the IXP

The noun phrases to be tagged are referred to as IXPs, an acronym for *IndeX Phrase*. This is because every phrase has its own identification number in the database. The various properties and categories to be annotated for each IXP are displayed in the annotation interface in figure 4.1.

DB item id OEng.663.673

Context & snið þæt heafod, | lege on. | Wið heafodwærce genim efelastan, | gecnua on ceald wæter, | gnid between handum

Corpus unit id colaece,Lch\_II\_[1]:1.7.1.47

Gender Neu

Number Sg

Case Acc

Grammatical function Arg.ofP

Referential status

Segmentation [ceald]ceald [wæter]wæter

Create Markable

Annotation   ceald Md.Aj Pos

wæter N.C Tang.Subs

Degree of interest Green

Verified Partially

Comments

Figure 4.1. Annotation interface (annotated IXP)

Information about the language of the IXP is generated automatically, as is the unique database number. The database number or ID can be used to search for or retrieve phrases via a search interface. Every IXP is displayed in its textual environment. Since most of the IXPs for Old English are retrieved from the YCOE corpus, the unit id provides information about where in the corpus it is located (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 5–6).

## 4.2.2 Global properties

The next part of the annotation interface is shown separately in figure 4.2. It displays the so-called *Global Properties*, as generated for the IXP *þæt sar* ‘the sore’. These properties are applied to every IXP, and as can be seen, some of the properties, i.e. case and grammatical function have already been assigned.



Figure 4.2. Global properties of the IXP

For all properties assigned to a noun phrase there are three labels. The first is long and self-explanatory such as the label *Modifier*. The second is an abbreviation *Mod* (henceforth <Mod> as in the manual). Both the long and abbreviated form denote the object itself, while the third label *Md* is a path notation. It refers to the main category and subcategories which the object is part of (see fig. 3). When annotating an IXP, the abbreviated labels like <Mod> are shown in the interface and the selection is made from one of these. Once the respective label has been selected, it is the path notation labels which are displayed and stored in the database as shown in figure 4.3. The path notation shows that the lexical (*Lx*) adjective *wearmum* ‘hot’ is a subtype of the category *Adjective* (*Aj*) which is a subtype of the general category *Modifier* (*Md*). Prototypical (*Pro*) is one of the subtypes of the category of lexical adjective <Lex> whose path notation is *Lx* (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 7–8, 16, cf. also section 4.4.5).



Figure 4.3. Labels after annotation: Path notation

The property labels for gender and number are never annotated automatically for the Old English phrases, since YCOE does not have them. The values masculine, feminine or neuter must be applied to every phrase and are determined by way of morphology. A phrase is annotated as either singular, dual, or plural. Morphological criteria are also used to establish number. When it is not possible to decide gender and number a label <Undec> (undecidable) is available for use (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 20–21).

Case has already been assigned to the IXP in YCOE. A noun phrase is thus displayed as being in the nominative, accusative, dative, genitive or instrumental case. It may occur that case needs to be supplied or changed. In these instances, case is determined by morphology and syntax. The label <Obl>, *Case cannot be decided from form or context* is applied when case cannot be determined. This may be due to syncretism and other instances where it has not been possible to establish case (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 11, 20–21).

Grammatical function is commonly generated for each nominal phrase, but not always. The grammatical function assigned to a phrase depends on its syntactic role in the clause. Below is an overview of the syntactic functions which are most relevant for the thesis. It is based on a similar one in the manual and provides an overview of the various grammatical labels applicable to the IXP (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 12, 21–22).

Grammatical function	Abbreviated grammatical function	Path notation
Subject of verb	<Sub>	Arg.ofV.Sb
Object of verb	<Obj>	Arg.ofV.Obj
Complement of preposition	<OfP>	Arg.ofP
Argument of noun	<OfN>	Arg.ofN
Predicate with copular verb	<Cop>	Pred.Cop
Predicate in other contexts	<Other>	Pred.Oth

An IXP can be an argument <Arg> of another constituent in the clause. When it is the subject of a verb it is annotated using the label <Sub> As an object of a verb, direct or indirect, it is

labelled <Obj>. The label <OfP> is applied when the IXP is part of a prepositional phrase as in *to þam castele* ‘to the castle’ (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 22–23).

A noun can also be part of a bigger noun phrase, as shown in figure 4.4. In this case, the noun phrase *senepes sædes* ‘of mustard seed’ is dependent on the head noun *cucler* ‘spoon’ in the bigger IXP *senepes sædes cucler fulne* ‘a spoon full of mustard’.

The screenshot shows a list of grammatical and referential tags on the left, each with a red 'X' and a blue pencil icon:

- Gender Mas
- Number Sg
- Case Acc
- Grammatical function Arg.ofV.Ob
- Referential status
- Segmentation [senepes sædes]# [cucler]cucler [fulne]ful

Below this list is a 'Create Markable' button and an 'Annotation' section with a dropdown arrow. The annotation section contains three rows of text with corresponding red 'X' and blue pencil icons:

- senepes sædes GenP Oth
- cucler N.C Tang.Obj
- fulne Md.Aj.Lx.Pro Phys/Dim, Str, Pos

At the bottom, there are three more tags with red 'X' and blue pencil icons:

- Degree of interest Green
- Verified Partially
- Comments

Figure 4.4. Annotation of a dependent genitival noun phrase

Such nominal phrases are mostly genitival and there are two ways of labelling them. As part of the bigger IXP, they are not tagged for the global properties such as the head noun *cucler* ‘spoon’. Instead, they receive a category label of *Genitival phrase* <GenP>, as shown in figure 4. If the phrases, however, are of interest to the project, according to the set criteria, they are labelled *argument of noun* <OfN>. In this case, they are annotated for the global properties, as illustrated in figure 4.5. This entails that they have two entries in the database, i.e. one entry as part of a bigger IXP, and then another one as an IXP in its own right (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 12, 14, 23).

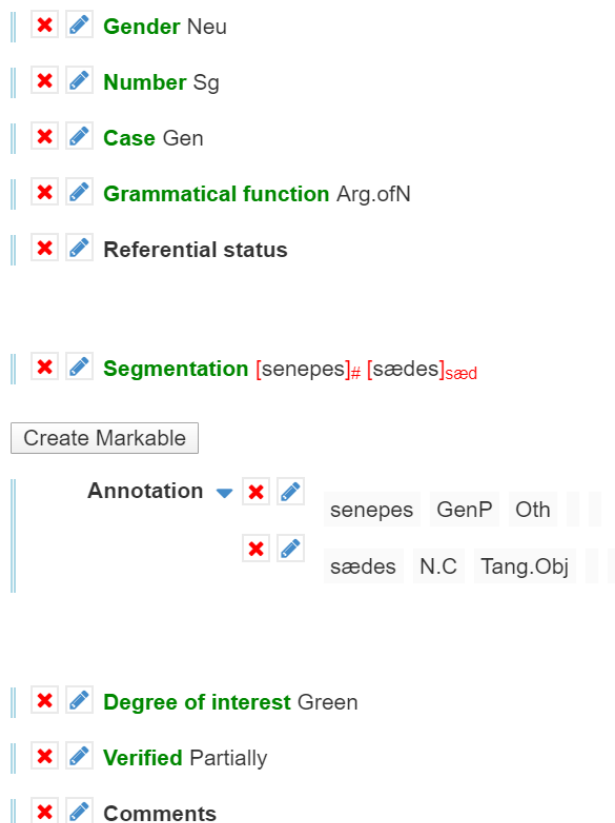


Figure 4.5. Annotation of a dependent genitival noun phrase as an IXP

Nouns can also have the syntactic function of predicate. In these instances, they are either annotated as <Cop> or as <Other>. The former label is used when an IXP occurs after a copular verb. In cases with a proper name, it is the name which is annotated as the predicate such as in *the man's name is John* or *John is the man's name* (NPEGL Manual 2019: 25). An IXP can also be tagged as predicate in clauses with no apparent copular verb, in which case the latter label, <Other>, applies. The manual refers to these predicates as “secondary predicates”. Such predicates occur “with verbs like *to consider, to make, to elect*” as in the example quoted from the manual, *We made him a rich man* (NPEGL Manual 2019: 26).

The next section of the annotation interface, shown in figure 4.6, is the “Segmentation Field” (NPEGL Manual 2019: 7). It displays and creates the components of an IXP which can be annotated (see fig. 4.7).

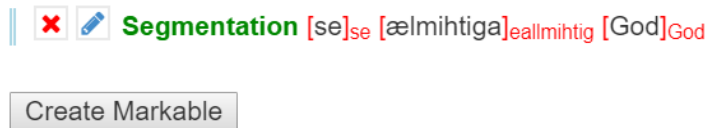


Figure 4.6. Components of an IXP with lemmas

Depending on the text, some lemmas have already been generated, but mostly they are supplied by the annotator. The words and phrases which require no lemmatization are marked with a # tag.

### 4.2.3. Category labels of nouns

In addition to the property and grammatical labels described above, every IXP and its components are also assigned a category label and a semantic feature (*NPEGL Manual 2019*: 14, 18). The part of the annotation interface called the “Categorial Specification” field displays the category labels and features to be selected (*NPEGL Manual 2019*: 7). Beginning with the category labels, figure 4.7 illustrates the category and subcategory labels of an IXP.

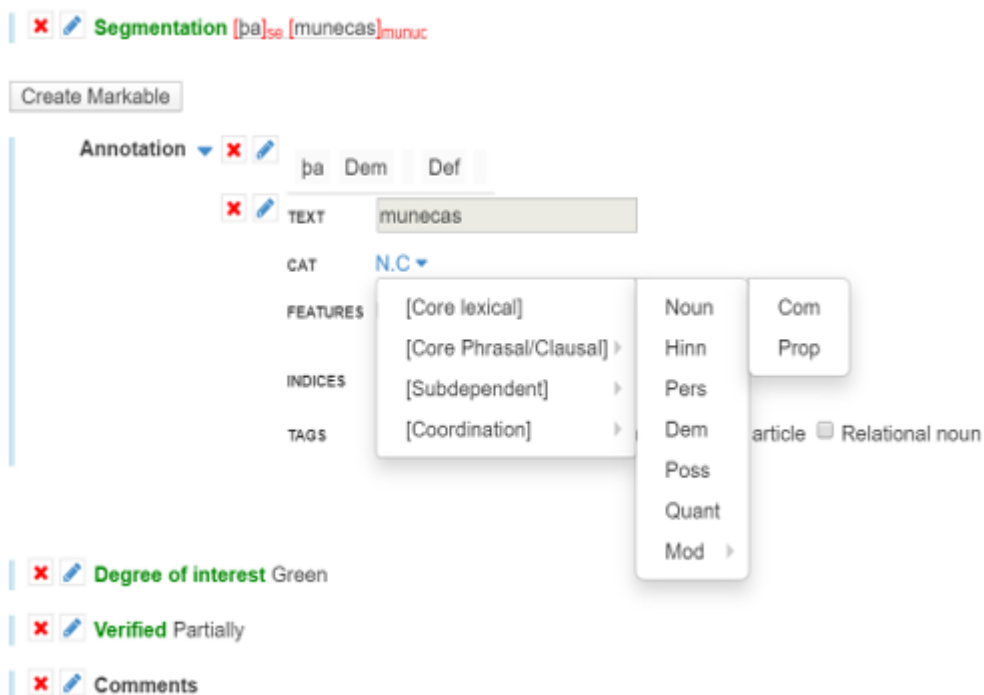


Figure 4.7. Labels during annotation

The head noun of a phrase, in this case *munecas* ‘monks’, is assigned the category label <**Noun**>. A subcategory label <**Com**> or <**Prop**> is also applied depending on the noun



being a lexical (common) noun or a name (proper noun). Names of people, gods, countries and towns etc. will thus be assigned the label <Prop>. In the case of *God/god*, it is annotated as a proper noun if it is spelled with a capital letter in present-day English. If it is not, it is annotated as a common noun. A complex noun, like *Tower Bridge* can denote a proper name. Such phrases, however, are not annotated as proper nouns since *Bridge* is a lexical word and not a name (*NPEGL Manual 2019: 31–32, footnote 9*).

#### 4.2.4. Semantic features of nouns

An IXP which has been assigned the category label <Noun> is also annotated for a semantic feature or property. According to the manual, a semantic property is “a (simplistic) ontological classification of entities denoted by the head noun” (*NPEGL Manual 2019: 32*). A noun can thus receive the following main features: *Animate*, *Tangible* and *Abstract* as shown in figure 4.8 (*NPEGL Manual 2019: 18*).



Figure 4.8. Semantic features of nouns

Nouns that denote an animate entity can be annotated as either *Human individual*, <Indiv>, *Human collective term*, <Collect> or *Other animate* <Other> (*NPEGL Manual 2019: 18*). A noun is labelled as <Indiv> when it refers to people such as *woman*, *father*, *child* and *brother*. It is also used about “nouns denoting professions, human do-ers and be-ers – in the broadest sense” like *soldier*, *monk*, *king* and *disciple* (*NPEGL Manual 2019: 33*). Mythological creatures such as *god*, *demon*, *devil* are also labelled as <Indiv> (*NPEGL Manual 2019: 33*). The label <Collect> on the other hand is used for institutions such as *army*, *administration*, *church*, and for group nouns such as *crowd*, *people* and *clergy*. In the case of other animates, i.e. non-humans, the label <Other> is applied. This pertains to animals, including mythological ones.

A noun can also be tagged as *Tangible object* <Obj> or *Tangible substance* <Subs>. Nouns receiving the former label are countable and inanimate. They denote a wide range of

items from *plants, buildings, books* and *body parts* to geographical objects such as *river, mountain* and *city*. Astronomical objects also belong here. Tangible but non-countable nouns referring to substances such as *water, wine, fire,* and *food* are labelled as <Subs>. The same pertains to nouns denoting a location or a geographical entity (non-countable) such as *earth, sea* and *sky* (NPEGL Manual 2019: 34).

Nouns can also be assigned the semantic feature *Dynamic* <Dyn> or *Other abstract* <Other> (NPEGL Manual 2019: 18). The latter feature, as implied by its name, is applicable to nouns which denote all kinds of abstract expressions, measurement, terms, ideas and locations. Examples of these are *day, mile, disease, honour* and *heaven*. Moreover, the label is used when none of the others apply (NPEGL Manual 2019: 35–36).

In addition to a semantic feature a noun can receive one of four tags displayed in figure 4.9.

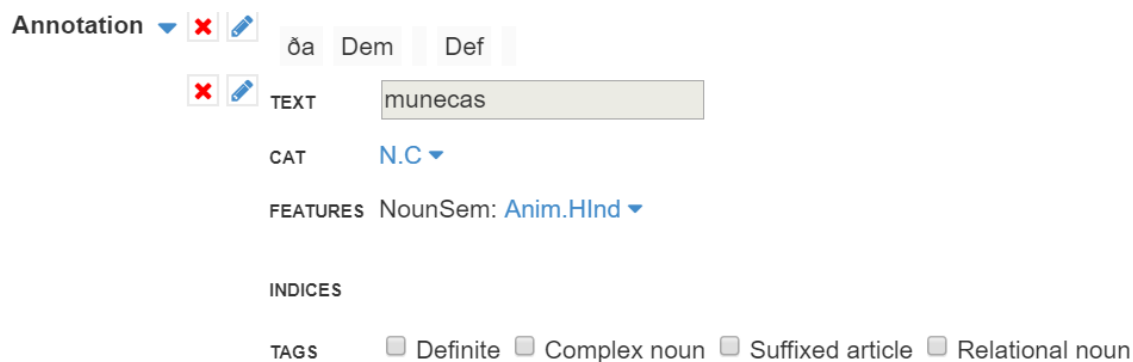


Figure 4.9. Nominal tags

The most relevant tag for this thesis is the *Relational noun* tag, <Rel> (NPEGL Manual 2019: 17). Such a noun “determines a relationship between two individuals (entities), and requires a complement, which is a genitival noun phrase, a possessive, certain PPs [prepositional phrases], or a thematic adjective” (NPEGL Manual 2019: 37–38). Unless these criteria are met, the noun will not be tagged as relational. Nouns denoting humans will often have this tag since they represent one of the participants in the relation. *Father, child, enemy, king* and *bishop* are examples of relational nouns. Furthermore, nouns which denote a part or feature of someone or something such as *body parts, colour* and *page* (of a book) are also labelled <Rel> (NPEGL Manual 2019: 38).

#### 4.2.5 Category and subcategory labels of adjectival modifiers

The nouns are not the only items which are assigned a category label. They are also applied to other elements of the noun phrase. <Mod> *Modifier* is the category label applied to the

adjectival modifiers (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 15, 45). In addition, they will also be assigned the label of the subgroup to which they belong. There are three such subgroups: *Positional predicate* <**Posit**>, *Numeral or weak quantifier* <**Num/WkQ**> and *Adjective* <**Adj**> (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 46). Positional predicates are not traditionally viewed as a category of its own, and thus they are explicated in the manual (cf. *NPEGL Manual* 2019: 46–49). They have the same gender, number and case as the noun they modify, and they are often found in postnominal position (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 48). Examples of modifiers which belong to this subgroup are *middle*, *across* and *along*. Old English compound adjectives like *neopanweard* ‘low in position’ are also labelled as <**Posit**>. These types of adjective have a part denoting a location, *neopan*, and an adjectival stem *weard* (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 46).

The subcategory of *Numeral or weak quantifier* is more self-explanatory than the former. Given the name it is not surprising that this label applies to weak quantifiers and cardinal numerals. Old English *fela* ‘many, much’ and *manig* ‘many’ are labelled as *Weak quantifier* <**WkQ**>, whereas *þreo* ‘three’, *twentig* ‘twenty’ and *þusend* ‘thousand’ receive the label *Numeral* <**Num**> (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 16, 50).

The last subcategory of modifiers *Adjectives* <**Adj**> is divided in two, namely *Functional adjective* <**Func**> and *Lexical adjective* <**Lex**> (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 16, 51). Each of these are again divided into further subcategories. As opposed to the lexical modifiers, the functional ones are more determiner-like in that they do not provide descriptions or characterizations. The three subcategories of functional adjectives are *Defective adjectives* <**Defect**>, *Determiner-like adjectives* <**Deter**> and *Ordinal numerals* <**Ord**> (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 16, 51–53).

Adjectives which only have a comparative or superlative form or both, like the Old English *neahst* ‘next’, are annotated as <**Defect**>. Included in this subcategory are the adjectives for *left* and *right*. Adjectival forms such as *better*, *worse* however, are annotated as lexical adjectives. The next label <**Deter**> (*Determiner-like*) is descriptive of these types of adjectives. Old English *ilca* ‘same’, *oðer* ‘other’ and *swilc* ‘such’ are examples of adjectives which will have this label. The last of these labels <**Ord**> is applied to the ordinal numerals such as *þridda* ‘third’ and *fifta* ‘fifth’ (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 16, 52–53).

The Lexical adjectives are also divided into subcategories: *Present participle* <**PresP**> *Past participle* <**PastP**>, *Other derived adjective* <**Deriv**> and *Prototypical adjective* <**Proto**> (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 16, 51). Every participle modifying a noun will be labelled as either <**PresP**> or <**PastP**>. This also pertains to participle forms for which no verb exists

e.g. *so-called*. The label <Deriv> is assigned to adjectives which are derived by applying a suffix such as *-lic* in *heofonlic* ‘heavenly’. What can be said to be typical adjectives such as *gód* ‘good’, *yfel* ‘evil’, *ceald* ‘cold’ are labelled as <Proto>. Additionally, adjectives such as *un-ethical* (prefixed adjectives), *lightblue* (compounded adjectives) and adjectives which do not belong to any of the other categories, receive the same label (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 53–54).

#### 4.2.6 Features of modifiers – declension and degree

Like the nouns, modifiers can also be annotated for various features. One of these is declension. All modifiers can be tagged as having a *Strong* <Strong>, *Weak* <Weak>, *Unspecified (undecidable)* <Undec> or *Zero* <Zero> declension (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 55). Type of inflection can be determined by way of morphology (inflectional endings) and syntax. When it is not possible to decide which type of inflection is applicable, the modifier is labelled as <Undec> (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 55–56).

As many modifiers are gradable, they can also be annotated for degree i.e. as positive, *Pos*, comparative, *Comp* or superlative, *Super*. Defective adjectives are also annotated for degree as are modifiers which only have a positive form such as the cardinal numerals (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 16, 57).

#### 4.2.7 Semantic features of lexical adjectives

The assignment of a semantic feature or a lexical class is only applicable to the lexical adjectives. There are altogether seven various features and classes available, as displayed in figure 4.10.

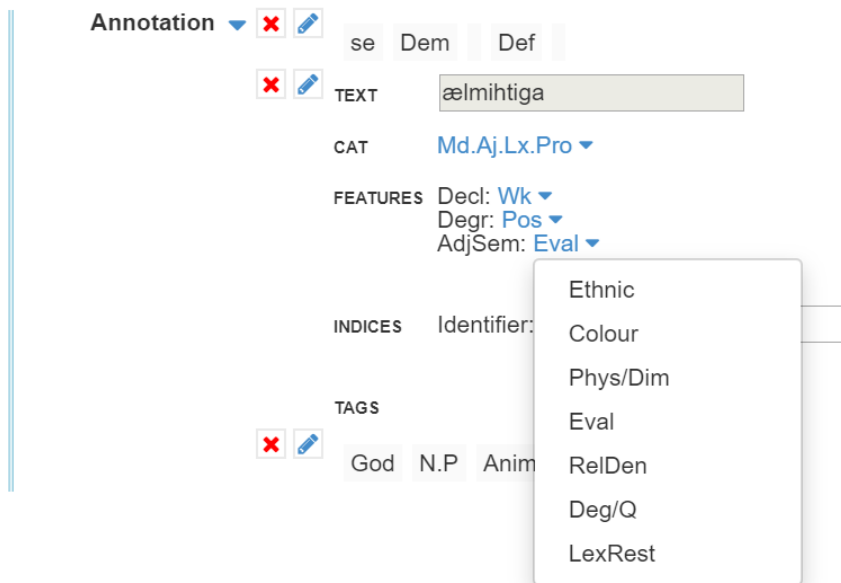


Figure 4.10. Semantic features for lexical adjectives

An adjective is only annotated for one of these values. Thus, the list of values works in a descending order, like a decision tree. When more than one value applies, the one appearing first is selected. For example, if the label <Ethnic> applies, it is not necessary to consider any of the other labels. Many of these labels are rather self-explanatory, but as they are frequent and essential to the thesis a brief description follows. Adjectives which refer to ethnicity / ‘nationality’, ‘affiliation’ or origin are annotated as <Ethnic>. For example, Old English *Galileisc* ‘Galilean’ and *Frencisc* ‘French’ and will all be annotated as <Ethnic> (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 18, 57).

The label <Colour> is used for colour adjectives and adjectives associated with colour such as *painted*, *gilded* and *blue-eyed*. Adjectives which denote “visual surface patterns” like *chequered* and *striped* are also labelled the same (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 18, 58).

As the label <Phys/Dim> implies, it is applied to adjectives that either refer to some physical aspect of the noun or to a spatio-temporal one (dimension). *Hat* ‘warm’, *full* ‘full’, *drige* ‘dry’, *geong* ‘young’ are annotated as <Phys/Dim>.

Adjectives annotated as <Eval> provide a description or assessment regarding various aspects of the noun such as appearance, mental state, attitude and the likes. *Gód* ‘good’, *yfel* ‘evil’, *wis* ‘wise’, *meahtig* ‘powerful’ and *hreowlic* ‘wretched’ are all examples of evaluative adjectives (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 18, 58).

The next label <RelDen>, *Relational/denominal adjective*, denotes a class of adjectives which are often denominal and provides a classification of the noun rather than a description. They can often be expressed by a genitive phrase, and when in doubt, the manual

provides further criteria to identify and tag these types of adjectives (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 59–60).

Adjectives which refer to “degree or quantification of sorts” are annotated as **<Deg/Q>** *Denoting degree or event quantification*. Thus, *manigfeald* ‘manifold’ and *unatellendlic* ‘innumerable’ are tagged as **<Deg/Q>**. As regards the adjective *full* ‘full’, it is annotated as **<Deg/Q>** or **<Phys/Dim>** depending on the head noun. When the noun refers to a container of some sort the adjective is labelled as **<Phys/Dim>**. However, when it refers to the extent of something as in *full force*, the adjective is labelled as **<Deg/Q>** (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 60–61).

**<LexRest>**, *Other classes of lexical adjectives* is applied to adjectives which cannot be tagged according to any of the labels above. Participles and “adjectives expressing (non-) identity (similar, different)” are annotated as **<LexRest>** (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 61).

Some modifiers are harder to categorize as belonging to a specific category. A few modifiers such as *micel* ‘great, much, many’ are thus only labelled as **<Mod>**. The same pertains to *self* ‘self’ and to *an* ‘one’ when it means ‘alone’. However, they will be annotated for inflection and degree (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 62).

Modifiers can also receive a numeral value i.e. any integer which is inserted in the indices field displayed in figure 4.11. This happens only in the case where it is modified by another element such as an adverb.

✖ ✎ Segmentation [swiðe]# [mycelne]<sub>micel</sub> [sceatt]<sub>sceatt</sub>

Create Markable

Annotation ▼ ✖ ✎ swiðe Mdmd 1

✖ ✎ TEXT mycelne

CAT Md ▼

FEATURES Decl: Str ▼ Degr: Pos ▼

INDICES Identifier: 1

TAGS ✖ ✎ sceatt N.C Abst.Oth

Figure 4.11. Modificational index for (adjectival) modifier

In the noun phrase in figure 4.11, *swiðe mycelne sceatt* ‘very heavy tax’, the integers (co-indexation) show that the adverb *swiðe* ‘very’ and the modifier *mycelne* ‘heavy’ are one constituent. Such co-indexation only occurs when the adjectival modifier has a complement, or is modified by an adverb, as illustrated in figure 4.11 (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 62, 79-81).

### 4.3 Annotation process

The nominal phrases studied in this thesis come from a database, NPEGL (*Noun Phrases in Early Germanic Languages*), which is being created for the project *Constraints on syntactic variation: noun phrases in early Germanic languages*. The project is concerned with variation in noun phrase word order in Old English, Old Norse (Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian), Old Swedish, Old High German, Old Saxon, and Gothic.<sup>7</sup> The data obtained by annotating the noun phrases in the various languages will be used to identify limitations on word order.

The database contains noun phrases from all the texts included in the project. For Old English, the texts are mainly taken from the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose* (Taylor et al. 2003, henceforth YCOE). Not all phrases stored in the database are of equal interest to the aim of the project. The phrases have therefore been assigned a “Degree of Interest” in accordance with a “priority scale” found in the manual. Phrases which consist of a “head noun plus at least one adjective” are at the top of the list (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 7, 19). Such phrases have a “Degree of Interest” set to “Green” (see fig. 1). All the phrases used in this thesis have been tagged as “Green”.

Since the phrases to be tagged were already in the database, there was no need to identify or select the ones to be used in the thesis. Thus, I used the database to annotate 400 noun phrases from each of the texts presented in section 4.1. The phrases from the *West-Saxon Gospels* are from chapter three of *St. Matthew’s Gospel* and onwards. In this case, the text was taken over from another annotator, who had annotated the first chapters. Since none of the phrases had been annotated in the *Leechbook*, the noun phrases investigated in this thesis are from the beginning of the first part on external ailments. The phrases from the *Peterborough Chronicle* start from the entry for 1083, as the following entries appeared to contain several modified noun phrases.

The *West-Saxon Gospels* and the *Peterborough Chronicle* were chosen, as they represent a translated and a non-translated text, respectively. Although Grabski’s (2017) study

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/research/projects/noun-phrases-in-early-germanic/>

shows that Latin has no significant impact on phrasal word order in the constructions examined, it still seems wise for a small-scale study to include both types of texts. In the case of any Latin influence, it will not be relevant for all the texts. The decision to include the *Leechbook* was because it contains various adjective constructions.

There have been some challenges in annotating the various phrases. For obvious reasons, the annotation manual cannot provide examples of every phrase to be annotated in each text. Rather it contains examples of the most typical phrases encountered, and so from these examples one knows how to annotate similar ones.

One of the things which was difficult to decide on was the semantic feature of nouns and adjectives (cf. section 4.2.4 and 4.2.7). As regards the nouns, words that are less frequent or commonly used nowadays were harder to classify, such as *ælmesse* ‘alms’. Here the difficulty was to determine whether the semantic feature of *ælmesse* should be annotated as *tangible object* <Obj> or as *other abstract* <Other>. Since it denotes something that can be given away, it is not unreasonable to believe that it comprises one or more items, which are tangible and countable. Thus, it may be classified as *tangible object*. On the other hand, the label <Other> also applies since the verse (and further context), from which the phrase is taken, does not state or describe what the alms consist of. In that case, the noun denotes a meta-term, and should be labelled as <Other>. The phrase was eventually annotated as <Other>, and the decisive factor was that the content of *ælmesse* was not specified.

Like *ælmesse*, the semantic feature of *fulluht* ‘baptism’ also caused some deliberation on my part. Very few of the nouns annotated for the thesis belonged to the semantic category of *dynamic* <Dyn> entities. What this meant was that the labels which were less frequently used were sometimes forgotten about. Thus, they did not come to mind when there was a noun which did not seem to fit any of the other labels. Initially, *fulluht* was thought to belong to the rest category <Other>. It did not denote anything tangible or a substance, so the labels *tangible object* <Obj> and *tangible substance* <Subs> were excluded. The label <Dyn> *dynamic denotation* denotes events and actions amongst others, but as mentioned this label was not on my mind at that time. Instead, the focus was on the more abstract level of a baptism, i.e. that it denotes something beyond the mere event or action itself (cf. Matthew 3.11). In that case, *fulluht* would be a meta-term, like *ælmesse* and receive the same label <Other>. However, *fulluht* was annotated as <Dyn> *dynamic*, as the emphasis was put on the nouns reference to an event which was localizable in time.



Nouns (countable) referring to geographical or topological objects also posed some difficulties regarding the appropriate semantic feature. According to the annotation manual, such nouns are classified as *tangible object* <Obj>. Nevertheless, it was sometimes difficult to decide whether a geographical object should be viewed as tangible. Thus, there was some uncertainty about the semantic property of nouns such as *rice* ‘kingdom’, *ende* ‘border’<sup>8</sup> and *sægemære* ‘seacoast’. The same also pertained to proper nouns such as *Galileam* ‘Galilee’, which refers to a region. It was not clear whether it referred to something tangible or whether it rather belonged to the category of <Other>. After some considerations, the phrases were tagged as *tangible object* <Obj>, because of their reference to geographical entities.

The semantic features of adjectives were also problematic at times. As seen in section 4.2.7, there were several features to choose from and more than one might apply. Even though the first applicable feature should be chosen in such cases, uncertainty about the most appropriate one might still occur. In the case of *superne wermod* ‘southern wormwood’ it may denote a plant from a particular region and so be labelled <Ethnic>. Or it may be said to denote a type of wormwood and thus the label <RelDen> would apply. *Superne* could therefore be annotated as either, but as <Ethnic> appeared before <RelDen> in the scheme it was labelled as such.

To find the right lemma for certain words could also be tricky if spelling variations did not come to mind. In the phrase *medemne weastm þære dædbote* ‘fruit meet for repentance’, the lemma for *medemne* ‘meet, fit’ was *medume*. For the phrase *ðin fōt* ‘your foot’, the question was which of the possessives to use as lemma. In the case of possessives, such as *his* ‘his’ and *hire* ‘her’, the same form is retained regardless of gender, number and case. Other possessives like *mīn* ‘my, mine’ and *þīn* ‘your, yours’ are inflected according to the declension of the head noun. The lemma for the possessives is therefore not the same. While the non-inflected ones have the lemma *hē* ‘he’, the inflected ones, like *min* ‘my’, *ūre* ‘our, ours’ have the lemma *þīn* ‘your’ (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 43–44).

Occasionally, the category of a phrase posed some difficulty too. Since the annotation manual could only have a limited number of examples, it could be challenging to categorize a phrase which was not exemplified. One of these was *agenum* ‘own’ in the phrase *þinum agenum eagan* ‘thine own eye’. Based on the examples available for each category, it was not

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<sup>8</sup> The King James (1611) Bible has *border* in this phrase from Matthew 4.13. Bosworth and Toller translate the same word as *outermost part, boundary of space*.

immediately clear which one *agenum* belonged to. It turned out that *agenum* was to be categorized as a determiner-like adjective <Deter>, like *ilca* ‘same’ and *oðer* ‘other’.

In the *West-Saxon Gospels*, there is a phrase *þan toweardan yrre* ‘the wrath to come’. The adjective *towewardan* ‘future, that is to come’ resembles a positional predicate <Posit> like *neoþanweard* ‘low in position’ (see Section 4.2.5). At first, it was therefore annotated as such. Adjectives in *weard* are of interest to the project as they tend to appear in postposition. Thus, occurrences of these adjectives were noted. What caused the categorization of *towewardan* to be reconsidered, was the weak *-an* ending of the adjective, as positional predicates are usually declined strong (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 46–48). In this case, *towewardan* is not a positional predicate. Here, the *weard* part is related to a German verb, *werden* ‘to become’, and as such the appropriate category is *derived adjective* <Deriv>. Subsequently, a note has been left in the comments field of the annotation interface.

The annotation of each text itself somehow appeared to require a different mindset. To begin with, there was a difference in vocabulary. As mentioned above, words that were less frequent or common nowadays seemed harder to annotate regarding semantic features. While the *West-Saxon Gospels* can be said to convey its message through a third person narrator, the *Leechbook* often used imperatives such as *wið heofod wærce genim hāmwyrt niþewearde* ‘for head wark, take the lower part of homewort’. What this meant was that the ease and speed experienced in annotating one text was not automatically transferred to the next. First it was necessary to ‘adjust’ to a different narrative.

## 5 Analysis and discussion

### 5.1 Distribution of modifiers

The annotation of the 1200 phrases from the three texts, 400 from each text, showed that 333 of them contain one or more modifiers. The distribution of these phrases across the texts is displayed in table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Noun phrases with one or more modifiers in each text**

	Number of modifiers
<i>West-Saxon Gospels</i>	73/400 (18.3%)
<i>The Leechbook</i>	141/400 (35.3%)
<i>The Peterborough Chronicle</i>	119/400 (29.8%)

Of the 400 phrases annotated in the *West-Saxon Gospels*, 73 (18.3%) contain at least one modifier. This means that it has the lowest number of modifiers compared to the other two texts. The 400 phrases from the *Leechbook*, on the other hand, contain the highest number of modified noun phrases. With 141 (35.3%) such phrases there are twice as many as in the *West-Saxon Gospels*. The *Peterborough Chronicle* also contains more modified noun phrases than the *West-Saxon Gospels*. 119 (29.8%) of the 400 annotated phrases contain one or more modifiers. With respect to the number of modified phrases, the *Peterborough Chronicle* is thus more similar to the *Leechbook*.

It is probably the difference in text types which may account for the distribution of modified noun phrases. The *Leechbook*, being a medical text, can be used as a guide in the treatment of various ailments. It is therefore essential that the remedies it contains provide detailed descriptions such as in the remedy for an eye condition: *eft to miclum eagece cropleac niopowearð & witmæres wyrt niopowearð cnua on wine. Læt standan twa niht*, ‘again, for much eye ache, pound in wine the nether part of cropleek and the nether part of Wihtmars wort, let it stand two days’ (Cockayne 1865: 33). For this remedy it seems to be important to use the appropriate part of the plant and to leave the concoction for exactly two days. The *Peterborough Chronicle* is concerned with the record of events and people among others. Like the *Leechbook* some descriptions can be expected as in the characterisation of people. *Earm* ‘poor’ and *wrec* ‘wretched’ are words that are often used about humans such as the monks being attacked in their own church in the entry for 1083: *þa wreccan munecas lagon onbuton þam weofode. & sume crupon under. & gyrne cleopedon to Gode his miltse*

*biddende*, ‘the wretched monks lay round about the altar and some crept underneath, crying aloud to God, desperately imploring his mercy’ (Garmonsway 1954: 215). Unlike the other two texts, detailed accounts may be of less importance to the purpose of a religious text such as the *West-Saxon Gospels*. Descriptions of its various people and events are not equally essential to the message. As a religious text one of its aims may be said to provide guidelines on a Christian conduct and these may not be more effectively conveyed by using more modifiers. In the passage advising against seeing the mote in a brother’s eye but not the beam in one’s own, the size and type of the mote and beam are of no importance. Rather, as the text says: *la þu liccetera, ado ærest ut þone beam of þinum agenum eagan & behawa þonne þæt þu ut ado þæt mot of þines broður eagan*, ‘thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye’ (King James Bible 1611: 2026). This is not to say that the *West-Saxon Gospels* do not provide any descriptions. They may be meaningful in a religious text too. However, a text containing more descriptions seems to indicate a higher number of modifiers.

## **5.2 Position of the adjectives**

### **5.2.1 Prenominal adjectival modifiers**

As seen in section 2.2.1 on the noun phrase in OE, modifiers are predominantly preposed, the usual pattern being that of ‘adjective + noun’ (Mitchell 1985: §172). This has also been corroborated in recent research. Grabski’s (2017) corpus study (YCOE) investigated the position of adjectives in OE prose (cf. section 3.3). His study shows that a single adjective usually precedes the noun. A total of 99% (30,000 instances) of the phrases with a single adjective conforms to this pattern. This, Grabski (2017: 170) notes, is in line with what Sampson (2010) found in her corpus study of modifiers in verse and prose. In the phrases modified by an adjective in her prose sample, 97.5% contain a prenominal adjective (Sampson 2010: 101–102).

The present study shows that 293 of the 333 modified noun phrases have a single preposed modifier, i.e. in 88% of the phrases. Thus, in this respect, the findings correspond largely to that of Grabski (2017) and Sampson (2010). Of the phrases with a single preposed modifier, 22 of them are excluded from the analysis in this section, because they contain numerals whose type of inflection (weak or strong) cannot be determined. Apart from the numeral *án* ‘one’, which declines both weak and strong (and so is included in the study), all

other numerals are annotated as undecidable (i.e. neither weak nor strong) in the *NPEGL* database (cf. section 4.2.6), since it is difficult to tell whether numerals display weak or strong inflection. Table 5.2 shows the numbers of noun phrases in each text with a single prenominal modifier (numerals excluded).

**Table 5.2. Noun phrases with a single prenominal modifier in each text**

	<b>Prenominal modifiers</b>
<i>West-Saxon Gospels</i>	68/73 (93.2%)
<i>The Leechbook</i>	101/141 (71.1%)
<i>The Peterborough Chronicle</i>	102/119 (85.7%)

In the *West-Saxon Gospels*, 68 of the total of 73 modified phrases in the text have a single prenominal modifier. Thus, nearly all the modified phrases in this text contain a preposed adjective (cf. table 5.1). The two other texts also display a high number of such modified noun phrases. In the case of the *Leechbook*, 101 of the 141 modified phrases consist of only one prenominal modifier. The numbers for the *Peterborough Chronicle* are 102 phrases with a single premodifier out of a total of 119. This indicates that there is more variation in the position of adjectival modifiers in the latter texts.

With reference to the placement of modifiers in the noun phrase, it may be instructive to examine the types of adjectival modifiers that appear in the three texts. Both scholarly literature (Mitchell 1985; Quirk & Wrenn 1955) and various studies (Fischer 2000, 2001, 2006, 2012; Sampson 2010; Grabski 2017) remark on the occurrence of certain modifiers in either pre- or postnominal position.

As seen in section 3, both declension (Fischer 2000, 2001) and position (Haumann 2010) are thought to convey specific properties. To Fischer adjectives display the same features in pre- and postposition. Haumann, on the other hand, proposes that prenominal adjectives, whether weak or strong, show the same properties. Weak and strong prenominal adjectives in the texts are therefore examined separately, in this study, in order to see how they may relate to the features posited (by Fischer and Haumann). The number of weak and strong prenominal modifiers in the texts is shown in table 5.3. As can be seen from the table, there are overall more strong than weak prenominal modifiers in all texts. While the difference in the number of each type is less pronounced in the *West-Saxon Gospels* and the *Peterborough Chronicle*, the *Leechbook* shows a substantially higher amount of strong prenominal modifiers. In addition, it also has the highest number of prenominal strong modifiers overall.

**Table 5.3. Weak and strong prenominal modifiers in each text**

	<b>Weak modifiers</b>	<b>Strong modifiers</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>West-Saxon Gospels</i>	27 (39.7%)	41 (60.3%)	68
<i>The Leechbook</i>	17 (16.8%)	84 (83.2%)	101
<i>The Peterborough Chronicle</i>	43 (42.2%)	59 (57.8%)	102
<b>Total</b>	87 (32.1%)	184 (67.9%)	271

In the following sections, the prenominal modifiers in the texts are examined in relation to the properties individual-level and stage-level, in Haumann's scheme (cf. section 3.2). This means that the modifiers are examined to see if they denote either inherent/permanent features (individual-level) of the noun or transient/temporary (stage-level) features. Previous research has often investigated these properties, as they are thought to influence adjective position, (cf. section 3). Haumann, in particular, relates the properties to position, while Fischer relates them to declension. Thus, the investigation of individual-level and stage-level properties in this thesis, is hoped to shed light on which factors govern adjective position.

## 5.2.2 Weak prenominal modifiers in the West-Saxon Gospels

The *West-Saxon Gospels* has the lowest difference in number between weak and strong prenominal modifiers. Most of the modifiers belong to the category of derivative and prototypical adjectives (cf. 4.2.5 section). For an explanation of the various categories and subcategories of the adjectival modifiers, an overview is given in section 4. The weak preposed adjectives are shown in table 5.4.

Table 5.4. Weak prenominal adjectives in the *West-Saxon Gospels*

Categories	Word	Count
<b>Adjectives functional</b>		
Defective	<i>ytera</i> 'outmost', <i>swiðra</i> 'right (hand)'	5
Determiner-like	<i>ilca</i> 'the same'	2
<b>Adjectives lexical</b>		
Past participle	<i>gesceosan</i> ( <i>gecorena</i> ) 'beloved'	1
Derivative	<i>tóweard</i> 'future, that is to come', <i>Galileisc</i> 'Galilean', <i>gástlic</i> 'pertaining to the spirit', <i>heofonlíc</i> 'heavenly', <i>morgenlíc</i> 'morning, of-tomorrow', <i>manifeald</i> 'manifold, abundant', <i>dægwhamlíc</i> 'daily'	10
Prototypical	<i>hálig</i> 'holy', <i>gód</i> 'good', <i>nearu</i> 'narrow', <i>yfel</i> 'evil, corrupt' <sup>9</sup> , <i>wís</i> 'wise', <i>dysig</i> 'foolish, unwise', <i>uncléne</i> 'unclean, impure'	8
Modifier	<i>lytel</i> 'little'	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>27</b>

<sup>9</sup> *King James Bible* (1611) translates *yfel* as both 'corrupt' and 'evil' in Matthew 7.17–18.

In the sample of weak prototypical adjectives, the context shows that all of them refer to a permanent feature of the noun. In the case of *hálig* 'holy', it refers to the holy city of Jerusalem, as seen in (5.1).

- (5.1) *Ʒa gebrohte*<sup>10</sup> *se Deofol hine on Ʒa halgan ceastre* OEng.108.294  
 then brought the devil him into the holy city  
 ‘Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city’  
 (King James Bible 1611: 2016)

*Gód* ‘good’ and *yfel* ‘corrupt’ are contrasted in Jesus’ warning of false prophets. Prophets are known by their fruit, and so they are likened to trees with good and corrupt fruits. Good trees cannot have corrupt fruits and corrupt trees cannot have good fruits. It is thus evident from the verses that *gód* and *yfel* denote inherent features of the trees, as seen in (5.2).

- (5.2) *Ne mæg Ʒæt gode treow beran yfle wæstmas* OEng.673.640  
 not can the good tree bring-forth evil fruit  
 ‘A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit’  
 (King James Bible 1611: 2027)

The same also pertains to the adjectives *wís* ‘wise’ and *dysig* ‘foolish, unwise’. They are used to refer to the ones who pay heed to Jesus’ words and act accordingly, and those who do not. The attentive ones, i.e. the wise, are like a man who builds his house on solid ground. The house still stands in stormy weather. For those who just listen, but do not act in accordance with Jesus’ words, they are like a foolish man who builds his house on sand. During a storm, the house falls. Again, the adjectives denote a permanent property, as shown in (5.3) and (5.4).

- (5.3) *Ʒam*<sup>11</sup> *wisan* *were se*<sup>12</sup> *his hus ofer stan getimbrode* OEng.970.622  
 the wise man who his house upon rock built  
 ‘a wise man, which built his house upon a rock’  
 (King James Bible 1611: 2027)

- (5.4) *Ʒam*<sup>13</sup> *dysigan* *men Ʒe*<sup>14</sup> *getimbrode his hus ofer sandceosel* OEng.579.263  
 the foolish man who built his house upon sand  
 ‘a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand’  
 (King James Bible 1611: 2028)

<sup>10</sup> King James Bible (1611) translates *gebrohte* as ‘taketh up’ in Matthew 4.5.

<sup>11</sup> King James Bible (1611) translates the definite article *Ʒam* as ‘a’ in Matthew 7.24.

<sup>12</sup> King James Bible (1611) translates *se* as ‘which’ in Matthew 7.24.

<sup>13</sup> King James Bible (1611) translates the definite article *Ʒam* as ‘a’ in Matthew 7.26.

<sup>14</sup> King James Bible (1611) translates *Ʒe* as ‘which’ in Matthew 7.26.



The two remaining prototypical adjectives *nearu* 'narrow', and *unclæne* 'unclean, impure' also denote inherent or permanent features. These examples indicate that weak prenominal adjectives refer to characteristics of the noun. In this respect, they corroborate the views of both Fischer and Haumann. Recall from section 3.1 how weak adjectives convey already known or given information, according to Fischer, and that they change the category of the noun (Bolinger 1952). A man is not just a man, he is a wise man as seen in (5.3). Haumann's proposal that weak prenominal adjectives provide given information, as they can only appear in definite noun phrases, also finds support in these examples. All the modifiers appear in definite expressions. Moreover, they also conform to Haumann's interpretation of prenominal modifiers as individual-level, i.e. they denote inherent properties (cf. section 3.2).

In the category of derivative modifiers, there are more adjectives which refer to permanent features, such as *Galileisc* 'Galilean'. Certain adjectives, such as this, cannot denote anything but an inherent feature. The adjective *gástlic* 'pertaining to the spirit' denotes a characteristic of *þa þearfan* 'the poor', as shown in (5.5).

(5.5) *Eadiga synt þa gastlican þearfan forþam hyra ys heofona rice* OEng.579.263  
 blessed are the spiritual poor for theirs is the kingdom of-heaven  
 'blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'  
 (King James Bible 1611: 2019)

As regards *heofonlic* 'heavenly', it does not denote a property in this context, as shown in (5.6). Instead, it appears to refer to the residence of God.

(5.6) *Eornustlice beoð fulfremede swa eower heofonlica Fæder is fullfremed* OEng.388.370  
 therefore be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect  
 'be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect'  
 (King James Bible 1611: 2022)

With respect to the other derivative adjectives, several of them are not classifiable as either individual-level or stage-level. They cannot be said to denote neither permanent nor temporary features. *Tóweard* 'future, that is to come' is rather an expression of time, as Grabski (2017) also noted in his study. And the same pertains to *morgenlic* 'morning, of-tomorrow'. Both *manifeald* 'manifold, abundant' and *dægwhamlíc* 'daily' refer to quantity, and as such are not very descriptive, and thus they do not denote a property of the noun.

Adjectival participles are verb-like in Fischer's view (cf. section 3.1), and as such they denote non-inherent features. Grabski (2017) also notes that past participles often refer to temporary features. His study, however, also shows some occurrences of weak prenominal

participles with an individual-level reading. In the case of the past participle *gesceosan* ‘beloved’, it appears to denote a permanent feature. After Jesus is baptized, a voice from heaven is heard referring to him as *min se gecorena sunu* ‘my beloved son’, as demonstrated in (5.7). Here, *gecorena* ‘beloved’ refers to how God sees his own son.

- (5.7) *Her*<sup>15</sup> *is min se gecorena sunu on þam me gelicode* OEng.169.080  
here is my beloved son in whom me pleased  
‘This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased’  
(King James Bible 1611: 2016)

The adjective *lytel* ‘little’ occurs in a context where Jesus talks about the law, and where the permanence of the law is emphasized. Therefore, to break even the least commandment, *læstum bebodum*, is serious. In this context, *lytel* ‘little’ appears to denote a permanent feature, as shown in (5.8).

- (5.8) *Eornostlice se ðe towyrpð an of þysum læstum bebodum* OEng.253.525  
therefore he who breaks one of these least commandments  
‘Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments’  
(King James Bible 1611: 2020)

Of the defective and determiner-like adjectives, none of them denote a property. Recall from section 4.2.5 that defective adjectives are derived from adverbs or prepositions and denote location.

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<sup>15</sup> *King James Bible* (1611) translates *hér* as ‘this’ in Matthew 3.17.

### 5.2.3 Weak prenominal modifiers in the Leechbook

The sample from the *Leechbook* has the smallest number of weak prenominal adjectives. Since the text contains many descriptions (cf. section 4.2.5 section), it is not surprising that most of the adjectives belong to the subgroup of prototypical adjectives, as shown in table 5.5.

Table 5.5. Weak prenominal adjectives in the *Leechbook*

Categories	Word	Count
<b>Adjectives functional</b>		
Defective adjectives	<i>ufera</i> 'upper'	1
Determiner-like	<i>ilca</i> 'the same'	1
Ordinal numerals	<i>árest</i> 'first', <i>þridda</i> 'third'	2
<b>Adjectives lexical</b>		
Past participle	<i>cúp</i> ( <i>cúþesta</i> ) 'approved'	1
Prototypical	<i>reád</i> 'red', <i>sár</i> 'sore', <i>smæl</i> 'small', <i>hál</i> 'hale, sound', <i>yfel</i> 'evil', <i>untrum</i> 'infirm', <i>hol</i> 'hollow', <i>gód</i> 'good', <i>cyperen</i> 'coppery'	12
<b>Total</b>		17

Of the prototypical adjectives, several denote the name of a plant or herb. Both *reád* 'red', *smæl* 'small' and *hol* 'hollow' are all part of a plant name, as exemplified in (5.9).

- (5.9) *Wip eagna ece genim þa readan hofan* OEng.999.326  
 for eyes ache take the red hove  
 'For ache of eyes, take the red hove'<sup>16</sup>  
 (Cockayne 1865: 35)

The other weak prenominal adjectives, however, denote a property of the noun. Moreover, like the prototypical weak adjectives in the *West-Saxon Gospels*, they all denote inherent properties, albeit in a different context. In the *Leechbook*, *gód* 'good' is used about a treatment

<sup>16</sup> *Glechoma hederacea* (Cockayne 1865: 35).

(an eyesalve) for an infliction of the eye, while *yfel* 'evil' is used about the cause of various chronic ailments (head, ears and teeth), as shown in (5.10) and (5.11).

(5.10) *Wyr̥c eagesealfe wiþ wænne<sup>17</sup> ... se betsta læcedom* OEng.026.089  
work eyesalf for wen the best leechdom  
'Work an eyesalve for a wen ... the best leechdom'  
(Cockayne 1865: 35)

(5.11) *þonne atihð<sup>18</sup> þæt<sup>19</sup> þa yfelan wætan ut* OEng.782.930  
then draweth that the evil humours out  
*oþþe þurh muþ oððe þurh nosu*  
either through mouth or through nose  
'then that draweth out the evil humours either through mouth or through nose'  
(Cockayne 1865: 25)

The adjective *sár* 'sore' refers to the ache of one half of the head, and so denotes a characteristic of this kind of ailment. *Untrum* 'infirm' is like the adjectives *wís* 'wise', *dysig* 'foolish, unwise', in the section on the *West-Saxon Gospel*, in that it also changes the category of the noun, to denote not just any man, but a man who is infirm. In a remedy for thick eyelids, it is important to use a copper vessel for the ingredients, as shown in (5.12)

(5.12) *aseoh eft on þæt cyperene fæt* OEng.338.005  
strain again into the copper vessel  
'strain again into the copper vessel'  
(Cockayne 1865: 39)

*Cyperene* 'copper' refers to the material the vessel is made of, and so clearly denotes an inherent feature. Recall from section 2.2.2, how Fischer and Spamer see weak adjectives as adjunctive, i.e. as the first part of a compound noun. In the case of *cyperene fæt*, their theory seems to apply. The combination of weak adjective and noun in (5.12) resembles a compound.

As mentioned in the analysis of weak adjectives in the *West-Saxon Gospels*, participles often denote temporary features. But in the sample from the *Leechbook*, the

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<sup>17</sup> Cockayne (1865: 35) writes that "wisps or sties are called wuns in Devon". See also Bosworth and Toller s.v. *wenn*, *þeór-wenn*.

<sup>18</sup> Cockayne (1865: 25) translates *atihð* as draweth.

<sup>19</sup> Cockayne (1865: 25) translates *þæt* as that.

participle *cúpesta* 'approved' denote a permanent feature. It is used about a treatment for an infliction of the head, as demonstrated in (5.13).

- (5.13) *Se cúpesta læcedom biþ þam þe heafod wylm & sar þrowiað* OEng.764.142  
the most-approved leechdom is him whose head burning and pain suffers  
'the most approved leechdom is this for him whose head has burning  
and painful throes'<sup>20</sup>  
(Cockayne 1865: 27)

#### 5.2.4 Weak pronominal modifiers in the Peterborough Chronicle

Of the three texts, the *Peterborough Chronicle* has the highest number of weak pronominal adjectives. Since this text is a chronicle, the recording of people and events may call for the use of specific references. And so, this is reflected in a higher number of definite noun phrases. The instances of weak pronominal adjectives in the *Peterborough Chronicle* are displayed in table 5.6.

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<sup>20</sup> Words have sometimes been added to the translation for ease of understanding.

Table 5.6. Weak pronominal adjectives in the *Peterborough Chronicle*

Categories PBC	Word	Count
<b>Adjectives functional</b>		
Defective	<i>neah</i> 'next'	1
Determiner-like	<i>ilca</i> 'same', <i>ágen</i> 'own'	13
Ordinal numerals	<i>an</i> & <i>twentigan</i> 'twenty-first'	1
<b>Adjectives lexical</b>		
Past participle	<i>underþeód</i> ( <i>underþeóddan</i> ) 'subject'	1
Present participle	<i>landsittende</i> ( <i>landsittende</i> ) 'occupying land'	1
Prototypical	<i>Frensisc</i> 'French', <i>wrec</i> 'wretched', <i>eallmihtig</i> 'almighty', <i>scearp</i> 'sharp', <i>yfel</i> 'bad', <i>hálig</i> 'holy', <i>gód</i> 'good', <i>mére</i> 'great', <i>rice</i> 'great, rich', <i>earm</i> 'poor', <i>háðen</i> 'heathen', <i>cristen</i> 'Christian'	20
<b>Modifier</b>	<i>micel</i> 'great'	6
<b>Total</b>		43

In the category of prototypical adjectives, there are a few which can only refer to a permanent property, like *galileisc* 'Galilean' from the *West-Saxon Gospels*. *Frensisc* 'French', *háðen* 'heathen' and *cristen* 'Christian' all denote a permanent property of the noun, as illustrated by an example from the entry for 1087.

- (5.14) *ferdon & ofslogon & aweg adrifan eall þet hæðena folc* OEng.348.196  
went and slew and away driven all the heathen folk<sup>21</sup>  
'and they went and slew or drove away all the heathen folk'  
(Ingram 1912: 167)

<sup>21</sup> The verb *adrifan* is likely an infinitive. Garmonsway (1955) renders it as the passive verb form 'were driven away' and the other verbs in the sentence consistently have an *-on* ending. Ingram's translation is used as it is the more literal.

The evaluative adjective (cf. section 4.2.7) *wrec* ‘wretched’ occurs in the entry for 1083 and relates an attack on monks inside a church in Glastonbury, as exemplified in (5.15).

- (5.15) *þa wreccan munecas lagon onbuton þam weofode* OEng.830.242  
the wretched monks lay about the altar  
‘the wretched monks lay about the altar’  
(Ingram 1912: 161)

Twice, in the recording of this event, the monks are referred to as wretched. Since the adjective is used to describe the monks during a terrible event, *wrec* denotes a transient feature in this case, as it is not a usual characteristic of the monks. As seen in section 3.3, Grabski’s (2017) study also shows some instances of preposed weak adjectives with a stage-level reading. But most of the prenominal adjectives, in his sample, are individual-level. Instances like (5.15) are contrary to Haumann’s scheme (cf. section 3.2) in which prenominal adjectives are individual-level, expressing inherent or enduring features. But, apart from *wrec* ‘wretched’, all the other prototypical adjectives denote inherent features, which indicates that prenominal adjectives are often individual-level.

The two participles in this sample, *underþeóddan* ‘subject, subordinate’ and *landsittende* ‘occupying land’, refer to the king’s subjects and to the important landowners, who socialise with the king, as shown in (5.16) and (5.17).

- (5.16) *& benam of his underþeoddan man manig marc goldes* OEng.874.339  
and took from his subjects many marcs of gold  
‘and took from his subjects many marcs in gold’  
(Garmonsway 1954: 220)

- (5.17) *& þær him comon to his witan. and ealle þa landsittende men* OEng.949.178  
and where him came to his councillors and all the landholding men  
‘and where his councillors came to him and all the landholding men’<sup>22</sup>

In both examples, the adjectival participles denote an enduring feature. Since participles are more verb-like in nature, they may be expected to denote temporary features, as posited by Fischer. It seems, however, that participles in preposition also refer to permanent features, although preposed participles are mostly stage-level, as shown in Grabski’s (2017) study (cf. section 3.3).

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<sup>22</sup> Translation my own.

The investigation of the weak prenominal modifiers in the texts shows that most of them denote enduring or individual-level properties. Only the *Peterborough Chronicle* has a prototypical adjective *wrec* 'wretched' which denotes a transient or stage-level property. The finding thus lend support to Haumann's proposal that prenominal adjectives are individual-level. Her scheme, however, cannot account for the occurrences of stage-level adjectives, like the prenominal *wrec*. All the participial adjectives also refer to an enduring or inherent feature, such as *cúþ* 'approved' in the *Leechbook*. Despite their verb-like nature, they also refer to permanent features, as is also attested in Grabski's (2017) study.

### 5.2.5 Strong prenominal modifiers in the West-Saxon Gospels

As seen in table 5.3, there are more strong than weak prenominal modifiers in the sample from each text. This may indicate that not all the strong modifiers display verb-like features and thus denote temporary features, pace Fischer (2000, 2001). Recall that she posits that both strong pre- and postnominal adjectives display the same properties, because strong adjectives are salient in preposition, i.e. they are stressed. Thus, strong prenominal adjectives are rhematic and convey new information like their postnominal counterparts (Fischer 2001: 257). However, since verb-like or predicative adjectives naturally occur in postposition, according to Fischer (2000, 2001), it is likely that not all the strong preposed adjectives in the sample are salient and thus verb-like too. As such, postposition would be the more natural placement.

Table 5.7 provides an overview of the strong prenominal adjectives in the *West-Saxon Gospels*. The determiner-like adjective *ágen* 'own' is mostly declined strong even in definite noun phrases (Mitchell 1985: 199–200). Thus, it is included here, because of its strong declension in all the definite expressions in the sample.



**Table 5.7 Strong pronominal adjectives in the West-Saxon Gospels**

Categories	Word	Count
<b>Numeral or Weak quantifier</b>		
Numerals	<i>an</i> 'a, one'	7
<b>Adjectives functional</b>		
Determiner-like	<i>ágen</i> 'own'	4
<b>Adjectives lexical</b>		
Present participle	<i>reafian</i> ( <i>reáfigende</i> ) 'ravening'	1
Derived	<i>unádwæscendlic</i> 'unquenchable', <i>missenlic</i> 'diverse'	2
Prototypical	<i>medume</i> 'meet, fit', <i>gód</i> 'good', <i>hálig</i> 'holy', <i>eald</i> 'old', <i>mére</i> 'great', <i>leás</i> 'false', <i>gehwáede</i> 'little', <i>yfel</i> 'bad',	18
Modifier	<i>micel</i> 'great, many', <i>lytel</i> 'little'	9
<b>Total</b>		41

The context shows that all the prototypical adjectives in the sample reveal inherent or permanent features. Like its weak pronominal counterparts, *gód* 'good' and *yfel* 'bad' denote inherent properties of the nouns they modify. In the case of *halgum gaste* 'Holy Ghost', *halgum* is now part of a phrase denoting a proper name, but it still refers to an inherent property. In connection with John's baptism of people, he tells the Pharisees to provide the right sort of offering, as illustrated in (5.18).

- (5.18) *Eornostlice doþ medemne weastm þære dædbote* OEng.607.610  
 therefore bring-forth meet fruit of repentance  
 'bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance'  
 (King James Bible 1611: 2015)

The context in which John uses the phrase, i.e. to admonish the Pharisees, reveals that the 'fruits' in question must be inherently suitable. John is not asking for anything of a fleeting or transient character.

The strong preposed adjectives so far seem to be more nominal than verbal. Moreover, they make up nearly half of the strong preposed modifiers in the text. This seems to go against Fischer's view that strong prenominal adjectives are like their postnominal counterparts. The findings are more in line with Haumann's proposal, where prenominal strong and weak adjectives pattern the same, i.e. they are individual-level. But as Grabski's study shows (cf. section 3.4), strong prenominal adjectives, in particular participles, also display transient properties.

Inherent features are also displayed by the adjectives in the other categories. The participial adjective *reáfigende* 'ravening' is used to liken false prophets to ravening wolves, as shown in (5.19). The prophets may seem to be like sheep, but they are not.

- (5.19) *Warniað eow fram leasum witegum ac hig beoð* OEng.294.691  
 beware you of false prophets but they are  
*innane reáfigende wulfas*  
 inside ravening wolfs  
 'Beware of false prophets but inwardly they are ravening wolves'  
 (King James Bible 1611: 2027)

*Reáfigende* is not an inherent property of wolves, but since it is used about the false prophets, it denotes a permanent feature in this case. The same pertains to the derived adjective *unádwæscendlícum* 'unquenchable'. Fires can be extinguished, but here, the fire is employed to burn the chaff, which has been separated from the wheat. The fire is thus supposed to be unquenchable, as shown in (5.20).

- (5.20) *þa ceafu he forbærnð on unadwæscendlícum fyre* OEng.383.110  
 the chaff he burn-up with unquenchable fire  
 'he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire'  
 (King James Bible 1611: 2016)

The modifiers *micel* 'great, many' and *lytel* 'little' refer to either quantity or size with respect to the noun. Quantity does not really denote a feature as such, in terms of individual-level or stage-level, but the instances which refer to size all denote a permanent feature, as illustrated in (5.21) and (5.22).

- (5.21) *& him fyligdon mycele menigu* OEng.814.674  
 and him followed great multitude  
 'And there followed him great multitudes of people'  
 (King James Bible 1611: 2018)

(5.22) *to hwi synt ge forhte, ge lytles geleafan*  
of what are you fearful you of-little faith  
'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?'  
(King James Bible 1611: 2030)

OEng.894.130

The remaining adjectives, such as the determiner-like *ágen* 'own', do not express either a permanent or temporary property.

### **5.2.6 Strong prenominal modifiers in the Leechbook**

Of the texts, the *Leechbook* has the highest numbers of strong prenominal modifiers (cf. table 5.3). The number of strong preposed modifiers is also considerably higher compared to the weak prenominal modifiers. This may be due to the frequent listing of ingredients in a treatment, where the ingredients are rendered as indefinite noun phrases. The lack of a determiner in these phrases means that the modifiers are declined strong (cf. section 2.2). Indefinite noun phrases are also frequent following imperatives, which are often used in the text. An overview of the strong prenominal modifiers in the *Leechbook* is displayed in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Strong prenominal adjectives in the *Leechbook*

Categories	Word	Count
<b>Positional predicates</b>	<i>neoþanweard</i> 'low in position/nether part' <sup>23</sup>	1
<b>Numeral or Weak quantifier</b>		
Numerals	<i>an</i> 'one'	4
Weak quantifiers	<i>healf</i> 'half', <i>manig</i> 'many, many a'	6
<b>Adjectives functional</b>		
Determiner-like	<i>oðer</i> 'other'	1
<b>Adjectives lexical</b>		
Past participle	<i>gewleccan</i> ( <i>gewlæccedne</i> ) 'make lukewarm', <i>tobreacan</i> ( <i>tobrocenum</i> ) 'break', <i>aseon</i> ( <i>aseownes</i> ) 'filtered', <i>gebærnan</i> ( <i>gebærned</i> ) 'burn', <i>geswetan</i> ( <i>geswetan</i> ) 'sweeten'	8
Derived	<i>Englisch</i> 'English', <i>Grécisc</i> 'Greek'	2
Prototypical	<i>ceald</i> 'cold', <i>heáh</i> 'high', <i>gréne</i> 'green', <i>yfel</i> 'evil', <i>hát</i> 'hot', <i>afor</i> 'austere', <i>reád</i> 'red', <i>háwen</i> 'coloured', <i>lang</i> 'long, chronic', <i>hwít</i> 'white', <i>línen</i> 'linen', <i>wlacu</i> 'lukewarm', <i>áren</i> 'brazen, made of brass', <i>wearm</i> 'warm', <i>gód</i> 'good', <i>wilde</i> 'wild', <i>æþele</i> 'noble', <i>cwic</i> 'alive', <i>leóht</i> 'light', <i>anspilde</i> 'unique', <i>eald</i> 'old', <i>cléne</i> 'clean', <i>onwære</i> 'unripe', <i>beren</i> '(made of) barley', <i>súr</i> 'sour', <i>súþerne</i> 'Southern', <i>cyperen</i> 'coppery', <i>þicce</i> 'thick', <i>gerósod</i> 'flavoured with rose leaves'	57
<b>Modifier</b>	<i>micel</i> 'mickle, much'	5
<b>Total</b>		84

In the sample from the *Leechbook*, the positional predicate *nioþeard* 'low in position' occurs in both pre- and postposition (cf. section 6). Recall from section 3.1. that Fischer (2000, 2001)

<sup>23</sup> Cockayne (1865: 37) translates *nioþeard* as 'the nether part'.

posits that adjectives in *-weard* denote a quality in preposition, but in postposition they are like adverbs denoting a direction or a location. *Niþweard* 'low in position' occurs in a treatment for an infliction of the eyes, as shown in (5.23).

- (5.23) *Wið æsmælum niþweard æschþrotu gecowen on muþe* OEng.148.860  
 for immunities<sup>24</sup> nether-part-of asthroat chewed in mouth  
 'For immunities, the nether part of the herb asthroat chewed in the mouth'  
 (Cockayne 1865: 37)

According to the instructions, it is the nether or lower part of the herb, which is used in the treatment, and thus *niþweard* refers to a location in this instance. In this respect, it displays the same adverb-like features as their postnominal counterparts. But a single instance does not refute the proposal that adjectives in *-weard* denote a quality in preposition. It rather shows that they may be adverb-like in preposition too, as also attested in Grabski's (2017) study, where a total of 77 strong and weak *weard* adjectives are adverb-like.

Of the prototypical adjectives, *gód* 'good' and *yfel* 'evil' refer to inherent properties of the noun, as illustrated in (5.24) and (5.25). In this respect, they are like their weak prenominal counterparts, as seen in section 5.2.3.

- (5.24) *Þis bið god læcedom wiþ eagna dimnesse* OEng.376.846  
 this is good leechdom for eyes dimness  
 'This is a good leechdom for dimness of eyes'  
 (Cockayne 1865: 26)

- (5.25) *Sio adl cymð of yfelre wætan ufan flowendre* OEng.133.412  
 the disease cometh<sup>25</sup> of evil humour above flowing  
 'The disease cometh of evil humour flowing '  
 (Cockayne 1865: 21)

In (5.24), the cure for dimness of the eyes is inherently good or effective. And in (5.25), *yfel* 'evil' denotes an inherent feature of the humour causing the disease.

As can be seen from table 5.8, many of the prototypical adjectives denote an inherent feature in themselves, such as the adjectives referring to a material (*línen*, 'linen', *ðeren* 'made of brass') and the colour adjectives (*hwít* 'white', *gréne* 'green'). In the case of *gréne*, Fischer (2001) observes that in postposition the adjective refers to a temporary feature, while in

<sup>24</sup> Immunities are contraction of the pupil (Cockayne 1865: 37).

<sup>25</sup> Cockayne (1865: 37) translates *cumð* as 'cometh'.

preposition it denotes a plant (cf. section 3.1). All the instances of *gréne* in the sample refer to various plants or herbs, as illustrated in (5.26). Here, *grene cellendre* ‘green coriander’ is an ingredient in the treatment for an infliction of the eyes.

- (5.26) *Eft grene cellendre gegniden alege ofer þa eagan* OEng.303.116  
 again green coriander rubbed lay upon the eyes  
 ‘Again, lay upon the eyes green coriander rubbed  
 (Cockayne 1865: 29)

A couple of the other prototypical adjectives in the *Leechbook* also refer to plants, as shown in (5.27). As regards the adjective *heah* ‘high’, it has no separate translation in the text, it only denotes the plant’s name.

- (5.27) *heah heolopan* OEng.333.762  
 ‘elecampane’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 19)

Adjectives which modify non-concrete nouns are hard to categorize as either individual-level or stage-level, as Bech (2019: 26–27) observes. Moreover, it is not clear whether the properties are applicable in such cases, as this is not discussed in Haumann’s scheme (cf. section 3.5). In the *Leechbook*, the prototypical adjective *afor* ‘austere’ modifies such a non-concrete noun. It occurs in a cure for unilateral headache. The treatment is a mixture of hot and cold remedies, as this may cause the body to heal, as illustrated in (5.28).

- (5.28) *gehwæperes<sup>26</sup>sceal mon nyttian<sup>27</sup>&miscian* OEng.403.575  
 of-either shall one make-use-of and mix  
*þæt þone lichom hæle and æfer mægen hæbbe*  
 that the body heal and austere efficacy have  
 ‘of either shall advantage be taken, and they shall be mixed, into a mixture  
 that may heal the body and have an austere efficacy in it’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 23)

In the case of *afor* ‘austere’, it is hard to tell whether it refers to a transient or permanent property. The noun *mægen* ‘efficacy’ itself may denote something which is temporary or permanent, and this makes it more difficult to determine whether the adjective has a stage-

<sup>26</sup> Genitive case because of the verb *nyttian* ‘make use of’.

<sup>27</sup> Cockayne (1865: 23) translates *nyttian* as ‘take advantage of’.

level or individual-level interpretation. However, because the treatment, may potentially cure the disease, it can be argued that the adjective refers to an enduring property of the noun.

The remaining prototypical adjectives denote a property of the noun. Adjectives referring to physical dimensions all denote an enduring property, except in two cases. In a cure for an eye condition referred to as white spot, an essential ingredient is unripe sloe, as shown in (5.29). If it is employed, it takes three days for the eye to heal, but then the sloe must be green (Cockayne 1865: 33).

- (5.29) *Wip flie genim onwære slah* OEng.883.832  
Against white-spot take unripe sloe  
'Against white spot, take an unripe sloe'  
(Cockayne 1865: 33)

In (5.30), *piccum* 'thick' refers to the state of the eyelids affected by an infliction of the eyes.

- (5.30) *Wip piccum bræwum genim preo hand fulla mucwyrte* OEng.247.258  
for thick eyelids take three handfuls-of mugwort  
'For thick eyelids take three handfuls of mugwort'  
(Cockayne 1865: 39)

The other adjectives denoting physical properties, such as *hát* 'hot' and *clæne* 'clean' refer to permanent properties of the noun, as illustrated in (5.31) and (5.32). In (5.31), ache of half the head can be treated by using hot cures if the ache is due to cold causes. The context shows that the cures in question are inherently hot (Cockayne 1865: 23).

- (5.31) *gif hio of cealdum intingan cymð<sup>28</sup> þonne sceal mon* OEng.723.743  
if it of cold causes cometh then shall one  
*mid hatum læcedomum lacnian*  
with hot leecdoms cure  
'if it cometh of cold causes, then shall one cure it with hot leechdoms'  
(Cockayne 1865: 23)

In (5.32) *clæne* 'clean' refers to the curds that is an ingredient in another treatment for thick eyelids (Cockayne 1865: 39)

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<sup>28</sup> Cockayne (1865: 23) translates *cumð* as 'cometh'.

(5.32) *Hafa þe clæne fletan, do<sup>29</sup> on þæt fæt*

OEng.313.919

Have you clean curds, introduce into the vessel

‘Have with thee clean curds and introduce into the vessel’

(Cockayne 1865: 39)

Since nearly all the strong preposed adjectives (prototypical) in the *Leechbook* denote inherent or enduring properties, they may be supportive of Haumann’s (2010) proposition that prenominal modifiers are individual-level (cf. section 3.2). Recall, however, from section 3.2. that prenominal modifiers, in her view, always have an individual-level interpretation. As there are instances of stage-level modifiers in preposition, her account does not explain such occurrences, something which is also observed by Grabski (2017) and Bech (2019) (cf. section 3).

Although the features individual- and stage-level properties are not part of Fischer’s scheme on a par with Haumann’s, Fischer’s proposal that both strong pre- and postnominal adjectives are verb-like, would entail that the adjectives display non-inherent features. But, in this sample, the strong prenominal adjectives (prototypical) mostly display inherent or enduring features.

Concerning the adjectival participles in the text, two of them, *gewleccan* ‘make lukewarm’ and *tobreccan* (tobrocenum) ‘break’ denote a transient feature. *Gewleccan* occurs in a cure for headache (of half the head), as *gewlacedne ele* ‘lukewarm oil’ is seen as beneficial to the person affected, as shown in (5.33).

(5.33) *Him deah þæt him mon on eare drype gewlacedne ele*

(OEng.248.913)

him be-of-use that him one in ear drip made-lukewarm oil

‘it is well for him that one should drip for him in his ear oil made lukewarm’

(Cockayne 1865: 23)

*Tobreccan* (tobrocenum) ‘break’ also does not denote a permanent state of the noun. A broken body part, such as a fractured skull, may be healed by employing the remedy illustrated in (5.34).

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<sup>29</sup> Cockayne (1865: 39) translates *do* as ‘introduce’.



(5.34) *Genim wiþ tobrocenum heafde betonican getrifula & lege*

OEng.190.025

take for broken head bethony bruise and lay

*on þæt heafod ufan. Þonne samnaþ hio þa wunde & hælð<sup>30</sup>.*

on the head above then unites it the wound and healeth

‘For broken head, take betony, bruise it and lay it on the head above, then it unites the wound and healeth it’.

(Cockayne 1865: 23)

The other modifiers in the sample do not refer to either a temporary or inherent property.

This also pertains to the instances of *micel* ‘mickle, much’, which refer to quantity rather than a property of the noun it modifies.

### 5.2.7 Strong prenominal modifiers in the Peterborough Chronicle

Unlike the other texts, the *Peterborough Chronicle* contains many modifiers which are determiner-like or refer to quantity, and as such cannot be interpreted as either individual-level or stage-level. It also has the lowest number of prototypical strong adjectives compared to the other categories, as displayed in table 5.9.

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<sup>30</sup> Cockayne (1865: 23) translates *hælð* as ‘healeth’.

Table 5.9. Strong prenominal adjectives in the *Peterborough Chronicle*

Categories	Word	Count
<b>Numeral/weak quantifier</b>		
Numerals	<i>an</i> 'a, one'	8
Weak quantifier	<i>manig</i> 'many', <i>fela</i> 'many'	9
<b>Adjectives functional</b>		
Determiner-like	<i>óðer</i> 'other', <i>swilc</i> 'such'	9
<b>Adjectives lexical</b>		
Past participle	<i>gehadod</i> (gehadode) 'in holy orders', <i>gedon</i> (gedon) 'kind of',	2
Derivative	<i>hreowlic</i> 'exiting pity, lamentable', <i>Frensisc</i> 'Fench'	3
Prototypical	<i>læwede</i> 'lay, not learned', <i>hálig</i> 'holy', <i>sorhfull</i> 'anxious, sorrowful', <i>earm</i> 'poor, wretched', <i>riht</i> 'right', <i>unriht</i> 'unjust', <i>ríce</i> 'rich, mighty', <i>máere</i> 'great'	11
Modifier	<i>micel</i> 'great, much, many', <i>lytel</i> 'little'	17
<b>Total</b>		<b>59</b>

Among the prototypical adjectives, there are instances of both stage-level and individual-level adjectives. Both *sorhfull* 'anxious, sorrowful', *unriht* 'unjust' and *earm* 'poor, wretched' refer to temporary properties of the noun. *Sorhfull* is used to describe a particular year, 1086, where men experienced much hardship, as shown in (5.37).

- (5.37) *þæs ilcan geares wæs swiðe swincfull & sorhfull gear* OEng.344.273  
 this same year was very vexatious and anxious year  
 ‘this same year was a very vexatious and anxious year’  
 (Garmonsway 1954: 217)

*Unriht* 'unjust' refers to the tolls, which the reeves or stewards imposed on the people during King William's reign. Tolls may be seen as unjust, but still they are not inherently so. The context in which *unriht* occurs is shown in (5.38).

- (5.38) *Hy arerdon unrihte tollas. & manige oðre unriht hi dydan* OEng.198.635  
 they erected unjust tolls and many other unjust-things they did  
 ‘They erected unjust tolls and many other unjust things they did’  
 (Ingram 1912: 164)

*Earm* 'poor, wretched', refers to both transient and enduring properties of the noun, in this text. In relation to the unjust tolls in the previous example, the people or men subjected to them are referred to as *earm*, i.e. wretched, as shown in (5.39).

- (5.39) *& ne rohte na hu swiðe synlice þa gerefan* OEng.511.912  
 and recked not how very sinfully the stewards  
*hit begeatan of earme mannon*  
 it got of wretched men  
 ‘And recked not how very sinfully the stewards got it of wretched men’  
 (Ingram 1912: 164)

In the two other instances, the context suggests that *earm* is used in the sense of poor, and that the adjective denotes an inherent feature of the people in question. The building of castles for king William causes the poor to suffer as seen in (5.40), while in (5.41) the poor receive money after the king's death, as a way of atonement.

- (5.40) *Castelas he let wyrcean & earme men swiðe swencean* OEng.514.269  
 castles he let build and poor men exceedingly to-cause-to-labour  
 ‘he let castles build and caused poor men to labour exceedingly’<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Translation my own.

- (5.41) *& into ælcere scire man seonde hundred punda feos* OEng.086.716  
 and into every shire sent hundred of-pounds of-money  
*to dælanne earne mannan for his saule*  
 to distribute poor people for his soul  
 ‘and into every shire was sent a hundred pounds in money to be distributed to poor  
 people for his soul’  
 (Garmonsway 1954: 223)

The other strong prototypical adjectives also denote permanent properties, as do the participial adjective *gehadod* ‘in holy orders’ and the derivative adjective *hreowlic* ‘exiting pity, lamentable’. The former refers to the clergy, and thus to men who have been ordained. The two instances of the latter are used about an event and a deed, which are described as pitiful and cruel, respectively. An example is given in (5.42), where the adjective describes the king’s actions in France, where he killed many men and burned down churches.

- (5.42) *Reowlic þing he dyde* OEng.189.335  
 rueful thing he did  
 ‘Rueful was the thing he did’  
 (Ingram 1912: 165)

As in the other texts, the many instances of the modifier *micel* ‘mickle, much’ mostly refer to a quantity, as do the instances of *lytel* ‘little’. The instances which refer to size denote an inherent feature of the noun, as in (5.43).

- (5.43) *he ferde into Englande mid swa mycclan here* OEng.486.022  
 he went into England with so large army  
*swa næfre ær þis land ne gesohte*  
 as never before this land not sought  
 ‘he went into England with so large an army as never before sought this land’  
 (Ingram 1912: 162)

To sum up this section. The majority of the weak prenominal modifiers in the texts are individual-level. Of the prototypical adjectives, there is only one instance of a stage-level adjective *wrec* ‘wretched’. None of the participles are stage-level either, despite their verb-like character, but the finding is in line with Grabski’s study (cf. section 3.3), which shows some occurrences of weak prenominal participles which are individual-level. Overall, the findings seem to support Haumann’s view that all weak prenominal modifiers are individual-level. The occurrence of the stage-level adjective *wrec*, however, cannot be accounted for in

her scheme. Compared to the weak prenominal modifiers, there are more instances of stage-level strong modifiers in preposition. In the *Leechbook* there are two instances of adjectives and two of participles, which are stage-level, and the *Peterborough Chronicle* has three stage-level adjectives. Since the data shows that both stage-level and individual-level modifiers occur in preposition, all prenominal adjectives cannot be individual-level, pace Haumann. The data also shows that not all strong prenominal adjectives denote temporary features like their postnominal counterparts, as posited by Fischer (cf. section 3.1). Adjectives ending in *weard* denote a quality of the noun in preposition, according to Fischer (2001), but in postposition they are adverb-like. The instance of a positional predicate *neopanweard* 'low in position' shows that a preposed adjective in *-weard* can also be adverb-like, pace Fischer since it denotes a location like its postnominal counterparts (cf. section 6). The findings in this section corroborate what Grabski's (2017) and Bech's (2019) study show, that Fisher's and Haumann's scheme cannot account for adjective position in every instance.

## 6 Postnominal adjectival modifiers

Of the 1200 annotated noun phrases there are 28 or 2.3% which contain a postnominal modifier, a significantly lower number than those with one prenominal modifier. Table 6.1 shows how many phrases there are with a postnominal modifier in each text.

**Table 6.1. Noun phrases with a postnominal modifier in each text**

	<b>Postnominal modifiers</b>
<i>West-Saxon Gospels</i>	1/400 (0.3%)
<i>The Leechbook</i>	25/400 (6.3%)
<i>The Peterborough Chronicle</i>	2/400 (0.5%)

### 6.1 Types of postnominal modifiers

There are different types of postmodifiers in the 28 phrases, but they mostly occur in the same construction of Noun + Adj. Some of the phrases have a postposed adjective preceded by an intensifier like *swa* ‘so’ or a quantifier like *begea* ‘both’. These phrases will also be analysed as belonging to the Noun + Adj construction. In the following section, the type of adjectives which occur in this construction is examined.

### 6.2 Postnominal modifiers in the West-Saxon Gospels

The only postmodifier in the sample from the *West-Saxon Gospels* is a numeral, *an* ‘one, alone, only’ as shown in (6.1):

- (6.1) *Hit ys awriten ne leofað se man* OEng.852.948  
it is written not lives the man  
*be hlafe anum*  
of bread alone  
‘It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone’  
(King James, Matthew 4:4)

From the context it can be seen that *an* ‘one, alone, only’ does not refer to a numeral in this instance. The verses from the Bible tells of how the devil is tempting Jesus to make bread from stones. Jesus’ reply is that man does not live only by bread, but also by the word of God. So, no amount of bread is implied. Rather, it is the other senses of *an*, ‘only’ or ‘alone’ that apply here. In section 3.1, postnominal adjectives ending in *-ward* were posited to display adverb-like features, and the same appears to be the case for postnominal *an* as well.

### 6.3 Postnominal modifiers in the Peterborough Chronicle

The two occurrences of postnominal modifiers in the *Peterborough Chronicle* are shown in (6.2) and (6.3).

(6.2) *Gebete hit **God elmihtiga** þonne his willa sy* OEng.448.299  
remedy it God almighty when his will be  
'May God almighty remedy it when it shall be His will'  
(Garmonsway 1955: 217)

(6.3) *Se þridda het Heanric þam* OEng.932.206  
the third was-called Henry whom  
*se fæder becwæð **gersuman unateallendlice***  
the father bequeathed treasures innumerable  
'The third was called Henry, to whom his father bequeathed treasures innumerable<sup>32</sup>'  
(Garmonsway 1955: 219)

Since *Elmihtiga* 'almighty' occurs in postposition, the strong form of the adjective is expected (cf. section 2.2). In this case, the adjective has kept the same weak ending as in *se ælmihtiga God* 'the almighty God' in the same entry (1085). Fischer (2001: 265–268) proposes that adjectives are weak in postposition because they do not convey new information but refer to a known or inherent quality of the noun. Phrases like *God elmihtiga*, she posits, are used as a name, as a way of addressing someone. This would explain the weak inflection of the adjective in (6.2), as God is generally seen as inherently almighty.

The other modifier in the text is the prototypical adjective *unateallendlic* 'innumerable'. As shown in section 3, postnominal adjectives are strong and predicative, and they denote new or extra information about the noun rather than permanent features (Fischer 2000, 2001, Haumann 2010). Since *gersuman* 'treasures' are not inherently innumerable, the postnominal *unateallendlic* 'innumerable' provides additional information in this case.

As is also seen in section 3, Fischer (2000: 170) posits that the verb-like properties of postnominal adjectives means that they can be modified by the same elements as verbs. This entails that they can be negated, and according to her, negated adjectives are more often postposed than those which are not. What is more, derived adjectives (i.e. from verbs) in *un*

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<sup>32</sup> The translation in both examples is that of Garmonsway ().

are often postnominal (Fischer 2001:263–264). A small-scale study by Grabski (2015), however, where his point of departure is Fischer’s (2001) view on negated adjectives, shows some opposing results. His study is based on data from Aelfric’s *Catholic Homilies* (the first forty of them). He finds that negated adjectives do not occur more frequently in postposition, neither in relation to non-negated ones nor to other postnominal adjectives. To him, the negation itself does not necessarily account for adjectival postposition. An additional weak adjective in the noun phrase, or a prepositional complement may explain the postposition of a strong negated adjective (Grabski 2015: 394–395, 401).

#### 6.4 Postnominal modifiers in the Leechbook

The *Leechbook* has a total of 25 postmodified adjectives either with or without premodification. Table 6.2 displays the type of modifiers found in this position.

**Table 6.2. Postmodifiers in the Noun + Adjective construction in the Leechbook**

Categories	Word	Count
<b>Positional predicates</b>	<i>neopanweard</i> 'low in position' <i>foreweard</i> 'fore, early'	7
<b>Numeral/Weak quantifier</b>		
Weak quantifiers	<i>efenfela</i> 'so many, as many'	1
<b>Adjectives lexical</b>		
Participles	<i>cnucian</i> (gecnuadne) 'to pound'	1
Prototypical	<i>full</i> 'full', <i>hat</i> 'hot', <i>clæne</i> 'clean', <i>ansteled</i> one-stalked', 'drige 'dry', 'unsoden 'unsodden'	14
<b>Modifier</b>	<i>anlipig</i> 'alone', <i>self</i> 'self'	2
<b>Total</b>		25

As seen in table 6.2, there are as many as seven instances of a positional predicate ending in *-weard*. Of these, five refer to the lower or nether part of a plant (often a herbal) as it is essential to use the proper part in a remedy. All the occurrences of a postnominal *-weard* are demonstrated in the following examples. The ones in (6.4) and (6.5) show the phrases consisting of a noun + a postmodifier.



(6.4) *Wið heafodwærce genim hamwyr̃t niþeweard*<sup>33</sup> OEng.185.076  
 for head-wark take homewort lower-part  
 ‘For head wark, take the lower part of homewort’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 19)

(6.5) *Eft to miclum eagece croleac niþoweard* OEng.795.906  
 again for much eye ache cropleek nether-part  
 ‘Again for much eye ache the nether part of cropleek’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 33)

Then there are three phrases with a genitive preceding the head noun as demonstrated in (6.6) to (6.8):

(6.6) *& witmæres wyr̃t niþoweard cnua on wine* OEng.797.919  
 and Wihtmarswort nether-part pound in wine  
 ‘and the nether part of Wihtmars wort pound in wine’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 33)

(6.7) *Wiþflie oxan slyppan niþeweard* OEng.021.089  
 against white spot<sup>34</sup> ox-lip<sup>35</sup>nether-part  
*& alor rinde wylle on buteran*  
 and alder rind boil in butter  
 ‘Against white spot, boil in butter the nether part of ox-slip and alder rind’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 33)

(6.8) *genim streawberian wisan niþoweard* OEng.975.209  
 take strawberry.GEN plant nether-part  
*& pipor gecnuwa wel*  
 and pepper pound well  
 ‘take the nether part of strawberry plants and pepper, pound them well’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 35)

The two remaining instances, (6.9) and (6.10), both have a demonstrative preceding the noun and in (6.9) the noun is followed by the comparative form of *foreward* ‘fore, early’.

<sup>33</sup> Bosworth-Toller translates *neopan-weard* as ‘low in position’. The translation of the word in the examples follows those of Cockayne (1865).

<sup>34</sup> *Flie* is translated as ‘white speck’ in Bosworth-Toller.

<sup>35</sup> *Oxan slyppan* is translated as ‘ox-lip’ in Bosworth-Toller.

(6.9) *þonne sceal mon ærest on ða adle foreweardre blod lætan of ædre* OEng.806.931  
 then shall one first in the disease early.COMP blood let from vein  
 ‘Then shall one in the early disease let blood from a vein’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 23)

(6.10) *Wið tobrocenum heafde smire þæt heafod foreweard mid þy* OEng.349.012  
 for broken head smear the head fore with it  
 ‘For a broken head smear the forehead with it’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 27)

Scholars have remarked on the position of adjectives ending in *-weard*. Quirk and Wrenn (1955: 88) write that such adjectives often appear in postposition to the noun as seen in all the examples (6.1) to (6.10). Fischer (2000: 179; 2001: 269) observes that this type of adjective occurs prenominal as well as in postnominal position, but with a difference in meaning. In postnominal position, the adjectives in *-weard* appear to be adverbial-like since in this position they refer to a direction or a location. Most of the occurrences in (6.4) to (6.10) resemble adverbials since they refer to a location or place in some way. The part of the plant or herb to be used is the lower one.

The examples in (6.6) to (6.8) all have a genitive preceding the head noun. Mitchell (1985: §1269) writes that ‘[t]he Genitive Case ... is akin to the Adjective, with which it is often parallel’. Thus, the genitive can be seen as ‘an adjectival or ‘qualifying’ genitive’. The genitives in (6.6) to (6.8) seem to modify the nouns, in that the herbs or plants now refer to specific specimens. This finds support in Cockayne (1865: 33) who postulates that *Witmaeres wyrt* ‘Wihmars wort’ in (6.6) may refer to the Latin *Cochlearia Anglica* and *oxan slyppan* ‘ox-slip’ in (6.7) to *Primula veris elatior*. Bosworth-Toller proposes that *Wihmdæres wyrt* is equal to *spoonwort* although the entry is followed by a question mark. For *oxan slyppan* they have a lemma *oxanslyppe*, which (like Cockayne) is taken to be the same as *Primula veris elatior*.

According to Sampson (2010), the presence of an additional premodifier may account for the postposition of another adjective. However, all the instances of *-weard* in (6.4) to (6.10) display an adverb-like feature, and so this seems to be the reason for their postnominal placement.

Sampson (2010: 101, 103) writes that comparatives mostly appear in preposition, but refers to the noun phrase in (6.9) as an exception. In this case, *foreweard* ‘fore, early’ denotes time rather than place. From the context it seems like bloodletting should be done as soon as

signs of the disease, i.e. ache of half the head, occur (Cockayne 1865: 21, 23). So, the modifier's reference to time makes it adverb-like and may therefore account for its postnominal position. In (6.10), the part of the head to undergo the treatment is the forehead, and so the adjective denotes location here as well.

In a remedy for an ailment of the eye, *wen*<sup>36</sup>, there is a phrase with a postposed weak quantifier *efenfela* 'so many, as many'<sup>37</sup> which is modified by another quantifier *begen* 'both', as shown in (6.11).

(6.11) *Wyr̅c eagsealfe wiþ wænne,* OEng.907.014  
 work eyesalve for wen  
 genim cropleac and **garleac begea emfela**  
 take cropleek and garlic of-both equal-quantities  
 'work an eyesalve for a wen take cropleek and garlic of both equal quantities'  
 (Cockayne 1865: 35)

Bosworth and Toller provide an example of this adjective phrase in preposition to a coordinated noun. It is therefore not clear why the phrase is postposed in this case.

There is a single occurrence of a past participle *gecnuadne* 'pounded' as seen in (6.12). The remedy in which it occurs is for mistiness of the eyes and the ointment made is meant to help alleviate the ailment.

(6.12) *Eft finoles wyr̅ttruman gecnuadne* gemeng OEng.145.634  
 again fennel root pounded mingle  
 wið huniges seaw  
 with honey.GEN juice  
 'Again, mingle root of fennel with the purest honey'  
 (Cockayne 1865: 31)

The postposition of participles is often explained as due to the verbal nature of participles, and that they refer to incidental or non-inherent features of the noun (Fischer 2001: 261, Grabski 2017: 53–54). Regarding the fennel in the remedy for misty eyes, it must be pounded. Therefore, pounded fennel does not denote a characteristic of the plant, but rather the state or form it must possess to be useful in the remedy.

One of the most frequent postnominal adjectives in the phrases from the *Leechbook* is *full* 'full'. It is usually found in the context where a type of container is mentioned. Of the nine instances of *full*, one occurs on its own without any complements. Five of them are

<sup>36</sup> According to Cockayne (1865: 35) there is a word *wuns* meaning wisps or sties in Devon.

<sup>37</sup> Cockayne (1865: 35) has the translation equal quantities.

followed by a genitive phrase, and the remaining three occur in noun phrases with an additional premodifier. The single instance of a noun + *full* is shown in (6.13).

- (6.13) *do æges þæt white to cucler fulne* OEng.864.852  
 put egg.GEN the white to spoon full  
 ‘add the white of an egg, a spoon full’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 21)

The postnominal *fulne* ‘full’ is declined strong, and strong postnominal adjectives convey new or non-inherent information (cf. section 3.1). *Fulne* in (6.13) does not denote a permanent property of the noun, but rather a temporary one. The meaning of *cucler* ‘spoon’ is not that it contains something, although it can do so. Thus, the postnominal placement of *fulne* can be explained by its reference to a temporary feature of the noun, or in Haumann’s term (2010: 62), by its stage-level interpretation. Additionally, according to Fischer (2001: 269), the verb-like nature of the strong adjectives is also seen in their resemblance to adverbs i.e. in their ability to display adverbial features such as time, place and in the case of full, degree.

The other instances of the adjective *full* ‘full’ in the *Leechbook* also have the strong inflection, but in the case of five of them, they all have a genitive complement. Two of them consist of a bare noun + *full* + a genitive phrase, as in (6.14) and (6.15).

- (6.14) *steap fulne wines* OEng.618.769  
 stoup full wine.GEN  
 ‘a stoup full of wine’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 19)

- (6.15) *ceac fulne wines* OEng.360.352  
 jug full wine.GEN  
 ‘a jug full of wine’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 31)

In two of the other instances, the genitive phrases are more complex, as seen in (6.16) and (6.17).

- (6.16) *fæt ful grenre rudan leafa* OEng.153.150  
 vessel full of-green rye of-leaves  
 ‘a vessel full of leaves of green rye’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 21)

(6.17) *bollan fulne hates wines*  
bowl full hot wine GEN  
'a bowl full of hot wine'  
(Cockayne 1865: 33)

OEng.399.120

In (6.16), the adjective *full* 'full' is followed by a genitive phrase which has its own head noun *leafa* 'of leaves'. This noun phrase is further modified by another genitive *grenre rudan* 'of green rye'. Thus, the vessel is not just full of leaves, but it is full of a specific kind of leaves. In (6.17), there is also further modification of the genitive phrase *wines* 'of wine' by an adjective, *hates* 'hot'.

Since all the adjectives in (6.14) to (6.17) are strong and postposed, they denote non-inherent features like *fulne* 'full' in (6.13). The meaning of the nouns, such as *steap* 'stoup, cup' and *fæt* 'vessel', does not entail that they are filled with a liquid. Their meaning is rather that they are a type of container. But it is not just inflection and temporary features which may account for postposition in these phrases. Adjectives that are followed by a complement also appear to be postponed. In Grabski's (2017: 52, 107) study 27%, i.e. 85 out of 315 instances, of the postnominal modifiers in the selected texts are what he terms adjectives governing complements, i.e. adjectives which are followed by a prepositional phrase, a dative or a genitival phrase. Even though, this is not the most frequent type of postnominal modifier in his study, he finds that there is a correlation between postposed adjectives with complements and position. The reason why they are postposed may be due to the principle of end-weight whereby heavier phrases appear towards the end of a sentence. Additionally, it is worth noting that Fischer (2001: 260) posits that the sequence *full* + a genitive invariably occurs after the noun.

The last phrase containing a postnominal *full* + a genitive complement is displayed in (6.18).

(6.18) *twa bleða fulle wæteres*  
two bowls full water.GEN  
'two saucers full of water'  
(Cockayne 1865: 39)

(OEng.022.489)

Since the noun phrase also consists of a premodier *twa* 'two', it also resembles the phrases in (6.19) to (6.21).

- (6.19) *cærenes godne bollan fullne* (OEng.791.075)  
 wine.GEN good bowl full  
 ‘a good bowl full of wine’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 2)
- (6.20) *To þon ilcan on wintra senepes dustes* OEng.641.720  
 for the same in winter mustard. GEN dust.GEN  
*cucler fulne gedo on calic*  
 spoon full put in chalice  
 ‘For the same in winter, put in a chalice a spoon full of the dust of mustard’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 21)
- (6.21) *senepes sædes cucler fulne* OEng.123.024  
 mustard.GEN seed. GEN spoon full  
 ‘a spoon full of mustard seed’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 21)

Common to all these phrases is the presence of a premodifier in addition to the postnominal *full* ‘full’. In (6.19), the head noun is premodified by a prototypical adjective *godne* ‘good’, which in this phrase denotes a quantity or measure rather than a feature of the noun. The nouns in (6.20) and (6.21) are both preceded by a genitive phrase, *senepes dustes* ‘dust of mustard’ and *senepes sædes* ‘of mustard seed’ respectively. As regards the phrase in (6.18), the postposition of the adjective/*full* may be due to its genitive complement, as posited for the adjectives in (6.14) to (6.17). The presence of a premodifying numeral *twa* ‘two’, however, may also account for its postposition (cf. Sampson 2010).

As can be seen from table 6.1, there are another five postnominal prototypical adjectives apart from *full* ‘full’ in the *Leechbook*, namely *unsoddene* ‘unsodden’, *anstelede* ‘one-stalked’ *hatum* ‘hot’, *clæne* ‘clean’ and *drige* ‘dry’. The first of these adjectives *unsoddene* ‘unsodden’ occurs in a remedy for an affliction of the eye, *fig*, as demonstrated in (6.22).

- (6.22) *Eft wið gefigon*<sup>38</sup> (OEng.509.164)  
 again for disease-fig  
 sceapes **hohscancan unsoddene** tobrec  
 sheep.GEN hock shank unsodden break-to-pieces.IMP  
 ‘Again for the disease fig, break to pieces a hock shank unsodden of a sheep’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 39)

<sup>38</sup> Bosworth-Toller has ‘a disease with fig-shaped swellings’.

In this treatment, the sole ingredient is made from a hock shank unsodden of a sheep. The hock shank must be raw, and it is the marrow that is to be applied to the eyes, after the shank has been broken to pieces (Cockayne 1865: 39). Like the phrases in (6.19) to (6.21), there is a prenominal genitive phrase *sceapes* ‘of sheep’ modifying the head noun. It is not just any hock shank; it is the hock shank of a sheep that is the proper ingredient. Thus, the presence of the premodifying genitive phrase may contribute to the postposition of the adjective. In addition, the postposed adjective also appears to refer to a transitory feature, as *unsoddene* ‘unsodden’ is not an inherent feature of the noun. As was the case for the instances of *full* ‘full’, the postposition of the adjective in (6.22) may also be due to its stage-level properties.

The adjective *anstelede* ‘one-stalked’ occurs in a noun phrase which is flanked by two adjectives, i.e. the noun is both pre-and postmodified, as shown in (5.23).

- (6.23) *Wiþ healfes heafdes ece genim þa readan netlan anstelede* OEng.047.449  
 for half.GEN head.GEN ache take the red nettle one-stalked  
 ‘for ache of half the head, take the red nettle of one stalk’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 21)

*Anstelede* ‘one-stalked’ clearly refers to an inherent or permanent feature of the noun. In section 3.2, it was shown that to Haumann (2010: 69–70) such adjectives (individual-level) are expected to occur in prenominal position like the preposed *readan* ‘red’. To account for the postposition of individual-level modifiers, Grabski’s (2017:111) proposes that it may be due to the noun being premodified too, as posited in Sampson (2010). Most of the postnominal adjectives interpreted as individual-level in his study appear in phrases with an additional premodifier.

There are two phrases in the sample where a postnominal prototypical adjective is preceded by an intensifying adverb *swa* ‘so’ and *swipe* ‘very’ respectively. These occurrences are shown in (6.24) and (6.25):

- (6.24) *ymb þa eagan gnid mid þæm wirtum swa hatum* OEng.501.673  
 about the eyes rub with the worts so hot  
 ‘and rub about the eyes with the worts, so hot’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 19)

(6.25) *awringe þa wyrta swiþe clæne*  
wring the worts very clean  
'wring the worts very clean'  
(Cockayne 1865: 37)

OEng.260.161

One reason for the postposition of these adjectives is the fact that they are modified by another element. The preceding intensifier makes the phrases heavy, and so the heaviness contributes to their postponement, as was also the case for the adjectives in (6.16) and (6.17). Both adjectives also denote transient properties. In a cure for headache, the emphasis is on the ingredients being hot. They must be boiled and let to steam on the eyes, and the hot herbs must be rubbed around the eyes, i.e. they must be utilized while they are still hot. As regards the making of an eyesalve, the essential component is clean herbs. The concoction of herbs and wine is left for seven days or more, and then the herbs must be wrung exceedingly clean (Cockayne 1865: 19, 37). Thus, neither *hatum* 'hot' nor *clæne* 'clean' refer to any inherent features of herbs, and as adjectives denoting non-inherent features, they are postposed. The prototypical adjective *drige* 'dry', in (6.26), also refers to a temporary feature of the noun.

(6.26) *Wyrce eagsealfe drige*  
work eyesalve dry  
'Work a dry eye salve'  
(Cockayne 1865: 37)

(OEng.499.513)

A dry eye salve is prescribed to alleviate ailments of the eyes. Generally, dryness is not seen as an inherent feature of a salve as implied by the wider context. The description for making it provides the following instructions: 'put it [the dry salve] on a fawn's skin, let him keep it about himself, lest it get moist' (Cockayne 1865: 37). *Drige* 'dry' may therefore be postposed because it refers to a transient property of the salve.

The last two adjectives listed in table 6.1 are *anlipiges* 'solitary, alone' and *self* 'self'. They are both categorized as modifiers <Mod>, cf. section 4.2.5, but unlike the other adjectives they receive no further specification. This means that they are not classified as any particular type of modifier such as 'prototypical', 'participle' and the likes (*NPEGL Manual* 2019: 62).



- (6.27) *Sume þæs seawes anlipiges*<sup>39</sup>*nyttiað* OEng.189.387  
 Some the juice singly avail  
 & þa eagan mid þy smiriað  
 and the eyes with that anoint  
 ‘Some avail themselves of the juice singly and anoint the eyes with that’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 31)
- (6.28) *betonican niwan geworhte* OEng.883.118  
 betony new wrought  
 þa leaf self gecnuwa  
 the leaves themselves pound.IMP  
 ‘pound new wrought betony, the leaves themselves’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 41)

*Anlipiges* in this context is adverbial-like as its meaning is nearly the same as the adverb *only*. For mistiness of the eyes some people use only the juice (of celandine). It could also be said that *anlipiges* appears to be used almost as an object complement, which may account for its postnominal placement. With respect to *self* ‘self’, it cannot appear in any other position but the postnominal, because it refers (anaphoric reference) to the noun, *þa leaf* ‘the leaves’. The meaning of *self* ‘self’ is dependent on the noun, and thus cannot precede it (Carnie 2013: 148).

To sum up this section, the postposed adjectives are mostly verbal in nature. They refer to a temporary or non-inherent feature of the noun, as in the case of *eagsealfe drige* ‘dry eyesalve’. The verbal character of the postnominal modifiers is also seen in the many adjectives ending in *-weard*, which refer to place (location) or to time, and thus they corroborate Fischer’s proposal that in postposition such adjectives are adverbial (but see section 5.2.6). Several of the postposed adjectives occur in heavy phrases with a premodifier or with additional modification of the adjective itself, as in *twa bleða fulle wæteres* ‘two bowls full of water’. Grabski’s (2017) study, finds a correlation between postposition and adjectives with complements, although it is not the main reason for postposition. The only postposed modifiers in the text which do not display verb-like features or features indicative of postposition are the weakly inflected *elmihtiga* ‘almighty’ and *anstelede* ‘one-stalked’. Both denote an inherent feature, and thus they are expected to occur in preposition according

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<sup>39</sup> Cockayne uses *singly* in his translation. *þæs seawes anlipiges* is in the genitive case because the verb *nyttian* requires a direct object in the genitive, cf. Bosworth and Toller s.v. *nyttian*.

to Haumann’s scheme (cf. section 3.2). *Anstelede* occur in a phrase with a preposed adjective as well. As such it accords with the findings in Grabski’s (2017) study, which finds that individual-level adjectives in postposition mostly occur in phrases with premodification of the head noun.

## 6.5 Recursive adjectives in the three texts

All the texts have phrases with more than one prenominal adjective with no linking conjunction. There is one occurrence of a noun phrase with two prenominal adjectives in the *West-Saxon Gospels* and three in the *Leechbook*. In the *Peterborough Chronicle*, there are a total of six where one of the noun phrases have three prenominal adjectives.

The single occurrence in the *West-Saxon Gospels* is displayed in (6.29).

(6.29) *he geseh twegen oðru gebroþru* OEng.515.575  
 he saw two other brethren  
 ‘he saw other two brethren’<sup>40</sup>  
 (King James 1611: 2018)

As (6.29) shows, the adjectives consist of a numeral, *twegen* ‘two’ and a determiner-like adjective *oðru* ‘other’ (cf. section 4.2.5). The order in which they appear follows the scheme Carlton (1970) developed, which is used by Mitchell (1985: §143, §146). As can be seen, none of them are adjective-like in the sense that they provide a description of or provide any information about the brothers themselves. However, they still modify the noun as the adjectives make clear that there are two other brothers who are in focus. The type of adjectives in this phrase resemble those in the phrases with two quantifiers in (2.6) which Fischer (2000) finds to be very frequent in her study. Moreover, they show that strong adjectives can be stacked, pace Spamer (1979). Fischer (2000: 169, 2001: 258) seems to view quantifiers as an exception, and thus they appear to be recursive in her view.

The phrases in the *Leechbook* with recursive adjectives are shown in (6.30) to (6.32). As can be seen, there is more variation in the types of modifiers in these phrases.

(6.30) *mid oprum godum wirtum* OEng.945.284  
 with other good worts  
 ‘with other good worts’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 23)

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<sup>40</sup> In the annotation of the *West-Saxon Gospels*, the translation used is that of the King James (1611) bible.

(6.31) *þa yfelan ofsetenan wætan* OEng.334.886  
 the evil misplaced humours  
 ‘the evil misplaced humours’<sup>41</sup>,  
 (Cockayne 1865: 25)

(6.32) *oþre geswette drincan* OEng.872.140  
 other sweetened drinks  
 ‘other sweetened drinks’  
 (Cockayne 1865: 27)

Unlike the noun phrase in the *West-Saxon Gospels*, the phrases in the *Leechbook* contain modifiers which are more adjective-like. In (6.30), there is a determiner-like adjective *oþrum* ‘other’ and a prototypical and evaluative adjective *godum* ‘good’ (cf. section 4.2.7). The adjectives in this phrase are like the ones in Bech’s (2017: 12) study, where one adjective is determiner-like and the other is descriptive (cf. (2.12) and (2.13)).

In (6.31), there is a lexical and evaluative adjective *yfelan* ‘evil’ as well as a participial adjective, *ofsetenan* ‘misplaced, repressed’. Participles used as adjectives may be more or less adjectival in nature. Some retain more of their verbal character than others. In this phrase, the adjectives provide an evaluation of the noun. They express a view or opinion of the *humours*. As both adjectives are weak, they would be adjunctive to both Spamer (1979) and Fischer (2000) and as such they are recursive.

The noun phrase in (6.32) has a determine-like adjective and a participial adjective. In this case, the participle *geswette* ‘sweetened’ is more adjectival in nature as it describes a physical property of the noun. Fischer (2000: 172–173) proposes that there may be a difference between adjectives and participles, and that it may account for the occurrence of two strong preposed adjectives when one of them is a participial adjective.

As regards phrases with more than one prenominal adjective, the sample from the *Peterborough Chronicle* has the highest number. In total, there are six phrases with two or three adjectives in a row. In four of the phrases, the first adjective is a weak quantifier *manig* ‘manig’. Mitchell (1975: §145) cites Carlton (1970), who sees *manig* ‘manig’ as one of the adjectives which precedes the other modifiers in a phrase, and which itself is not preceded by any (although exceptions exist). The occurrences of phrases where the first adjective is *manig* ‘many’ are shown in (6.33) to (6.34).

<sup>41</sup> Cockayne translates *ofsetenan* as ‘misplaced’.

- (6.33) *manige oðre unriht* OEng.054.513  
 many other unlawful-acts  
 ‘many other unlawful acts’  
 (Garmonsway 1954: 218)
- (6.34) *mænige oðre mynstres* OEng.542.855  
 many other churches  
 ‘many other churches’  
 (Garmonsway 1954: 218)
- (6.35) *maniga rice men* OEng.295.014  
 many great men  
 ‘many great men’  
 (Garmonsway 1954: 222)
- (6.36) *manige oðre deorwurde þingon* OEng.231.597  
 many other precious things  
 ‘many other precious things’  
 (Garmonsway 1954: 222)

The phrases in (6.33) and (6.34) both consist of a weak quantifier and a determiner-like adjective declined strong. In that respect, they resemble the type of phrase with two quantifiers which are so frequent in Fischer’s (2000) study, and which she seems to view as recursive (cf. section 2.2.2).

In addition to the weak quantifier *manig* ‘many’, the noun phrase in (6.35) has a second adjective *rice* ‘great, powerful’, which is seen as prototypical and evaluative. When there are two adjectives and one is a quantifier, the adjectives tend to appear in preposition (Quirk and Wrenn 1955: 88). As in (6.33) and (6.34), both adjectives have strong inflections. The a-ending on *manig* may be due to the *Peterborough Chronicle* being a late text. Unstressed vowels fall together and there are changes to the case system. The other occurrences have the expected plural e-ending. In her study, Fischer (2000: 165) finds that both modifiers in phrases with a strong quantifier, like *ælc* ‘each’ or *sum* ‘some’ + an adjective, are mostly declined strong. She writes that this is contrary to Spamer’s theory where the adjective would have the weak declension. But her findings, she remarks, are supported in Mitchell (1985: §125) who writes that after quantifiers such as *manig* ‘many’, the adjective generally has the strong inflection.

In (6.36), there are three prenominal adjectives which all modify the noun. The order of the adjectives follows that of Carlton (1970, in Mitchell 1985: §143) as in the other phrases. In addition to the weak quantifier *manige* ‘many’, there is a determiner-like adjective *oðre* ‘other’ followed by a prototypical evaluative adjective *deorwurðe* ‘precious’. All the adjectives are declined strong in this phrase too and they are not conjoined by a conjunction as posited in Spamer (1979) and Fischer (2000, 20001) when more than two strong adjectives appear in a row. According to Pysz (2009: 219), the number of adjectives is limited due to processing, and phrases of more than three prenominal adjectives with no linking element are not found in any of the extant texts.

The phrase in (6.37), consists of two strong adjectives, a numeral *twegen* ‘two’ and a prototypical evaluative adjective *halig* ‘holy’. Adjectives following a numeral are declined strong, according to Mitchell (1985: §125).

(6.37) *twegen halige men* OEng.194.752  
 two holy men  
 ‘two holy men’  
 (Garmonsway 1954: 218)

The adjective in (6.37) resemble those in (6.29) apart from the prototypical adjective in the former phrase. *Halig* ‘holy’ conveys a view or a characteristic of the men in question. In Bech’s (2017) study (cf. section 2.2.2), adjectives like *halig* ‘holy’ are seen as classifiers, and they are frequently found in the Adj + Adj + Noun construction.

In (6.38), there are two seemingly strong prototypical adjectives, the evaluative adjective *riceste* ‘powerful’ and the nationality or ethnic adjective *Frencisce* ‘French’.

(6.38) *þa riceste Frencisce men* OEng.986.123  
 the most powerful Frenchmen  
 ‘the most powerful Frenchmen’  
 (Garmonsway 1954: 222)

Since the first adjective is preceded by a demonstrative, they are expected to have the weak inflection. Moreover, superlatives like *riceste* are usually declined weak (cf. section 2.2). What appears to be strong endings on the adjectives are proposed to be due to phonetic weakening, whereby the nominative and accusative plural weak forms have fallen together with the strong ones (Clark 1958: lvi).

Like the noun phrase in (6.37), there is also a classifying adjective *Frencisce* ‘French’ in (6.38). In present-day English, they occur in prenominal position and they are the most noun-like of the adjectives (Quirk et al. 1985, in Bech 2017: 12). Fischer (2000: 172–173) also comments on their noun-like feature. Her data reveals instances of both strong and weak adjectives referring to a nation in the Adj + Adj + Noun construction. She does not say anything explicit about the weak occurrences, but in the case of the strong ones she posits that it is the noun-like character of the adjective which may explain the occurrence of two prenominal strong adjectives.

Like Pysz (2009) and Bech (2017) find in their studies, the phrases in (6.29) to (6.38) demonstrate that both weak and strong prenominal adjectives are recursive in Old English. This pertains to phrases with less adjective-like modifiers as *twegen* ‘two’ and *oðru* ‘other’ in (6.29) as well as to phrases with more prototypical adjectives as *yfelan* ‘evil’ and *ofsetenan* ‘misplaced’ in (6.31). Fischer (2000) seems to agree that quantifiers can be stacked, as her study shows several instances of strong prenominal quantifiers. She also acknowledges the occurrences in her study of recursive weak and strong prototypical adjectives and provides a possible explanation for these. In a later article, however, adjectives are no longer seen as recursive in her view (cf. section 2.2.2).

## 7 Conclusion and further research

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the internal word order of Old English noun phrases, by annotating 400 phrases from each of the three texts, the *West-Saxon Gospels*, the *Leechbook* and the *Peterborough Chronicle*. The detailed study of the modifiers in these phrases was done to identify the factors which account for their placement. To this end, the following research questions were formulated:

- 1) What is the distribution of noun phrase word order in the three texts?
- 2) If there are differences in word order, what causes them?

As regards the first research question, there is variation in the number of modifiers, which is ascribed to a difference in text type. The *Leechbook* contains the highest number of modifiers, 141 in total, which is ascribed to the need for detailed descriptions in a medical text. The lower numbers in the other two texts, the *West-Saxon-Gospels* has 73 modifiers and the *Peterborough Chronicle* 119, indicate that such descriptions are less relevant in these works.

Prenominal modifiers are significantly more frequent than postnominal modifiers in this study, as is also attested in previous research, such as those of Sampson (2010) and Grabski (2017). As regards postnominal modifiers, there is one occurrence in the *West-Saxon-Gospels* and two in the *Peterborough Chronicle*. The *Leechbook* on the other hand, has a total of 25 phrases with a single postposed modifier. This raises the question of whether the higher number of postposed phrases is due to Latin influence. The exact sources for the *Leechbook* are difficult to identify and this is why Grabski (2017) did not include the text in his study. The current study does not investigate the original sources, thus Latin influence cannot be excluded. However, since the *Leechbook* appears to be written as a guide in the treatment of various ailments, it is likely that the syntax would be native to OE, to make the work as easy to understand as possible. Concerning the distribution of stacked modifiers, they occur in all the texts.

With reference to the second research question, the modifiers were examined in relation to the previous studies of Fischer (2000, 2001, 2006, 2010), Haumann (2003, 2010) Grabski (2017) and Bech (2017, 2019). In particular, the modifiers were investigated in relation to the properties individual-level/stage-level or inherent/non-inherent. The properties have often been the focus of previous research; Haumann relates them to position, and Fischer to declension.

As regards the prenominal weak adjectives, the present study finds that they are mostly individual-level and thus in line with Haumann's scheme. This is also the case for participial adjectives, which, despite their verbal character, display inherent properties too. There is only one instance of a stage-level adjective *wrec* 'wretched', which occurs in the *Peterborough Chronicle*. It nevertheless shows that Haumann's scheme cannot account for such instances, which are also attested in Grabski's large-scale corpus study.

The examination of the prenominal strong adjectives reveals that there are several instances of prototypical adjectives, as well as a few participles, which denote temporary or non-inherent features. These findings go against Haumann's scheme, as adjectives denoting non-inherent features are supposed to be confined to postposition. They are, however, in line with Fischer's proposal that strong adjectives display temporary features in both pre- and postposition. There is also one instance of a preposed strong adjective ending in *-weard*, *nipeweard* 'low in position/nether part of'. As regards such adjectives, Fischer posits that they denote a quality in preposition, but in postposition they denote a place or a direction, and thus they are adverb-like. The instance of the strong preposed *nipeweard* shows that it

refers to a location, rather than a quality of the noun, which then goes against Fischer's scheme.

Of the postnominal strong modifiers, only two display individual-level properties. In the phrases *God elmihtiga* 'almighty God' and *þa readan netlan anstelede*, 'the red nettle one-stalked' the adjectives *elmihtiga* 'almighty' and *anstelede* 'one-stalked' refer to an inherent property of the noun. As regards *elmihtiga*, Fischer (2000) proposes that the adjective is weak in postposition because it does not convey new information. *Anstelede* occurs in a phrase with another adjective. In accordance with the principle of end weight, it is thus postposed to avoid heavy prenominal elements. Grabski's study (2017) shows that postposed individual-level adjectives often occur in phrases with a premodifier.

The other postnominal strong modifiers all display stage-level properties. For the adjectives ending in *-weard* in this study, they all refer to location or time, which makes them adverb-like, and thus explains their postnominal position. The adjective *full* 'full' mostly occurs in phrases with additional modification of the head noun, and/or with further modification of the postposed adjective. Moreover, the instances of *full* all denote a transient feature (stage-level). Although, Grabski (2017: 107) proposes that stage-level properties are the main cause of postposition when there are several factors present, it seems equally likely that heavy elements occur in postposition, and that a heavy prenominal element may cause a second adjective to be postposed. If phrase weight is seen as a reason for postposition irrespective of stage-level/individual-level properties, then this would apply to all adjectives whether they denote inherent features such as *anstelede* 'one-stalked', or transient features such as *full* 'full'.

The study also shows that adjectives, both weak and strong, are recursive, pace Spamer (1979) and Fischer (2000, 2001), but in line with what Bech (2017) found. In many of the cases, the stacked adjectives consist of quantifiers and determiner-like adjectives, but there are also phrases with prototypical adjectives, such as *þa riceste Frencisce men* 'the most powerful Frenchmen'.

As this study shows, the findings correspond in part to those posited in Fischer's and Haumann's scheme. Prenominal adjectives are predominantly individual-level and strong postnominal adjectives are mostly stage-level. But even though both schemes have provided both insight and a valuable point of departure for research on adjective position, they cannot fully explain all occurrences of adjective positions. Thus, the application of other frameworks or the development of new ones may be useful in shedding further light on which factors



govern adjective placement. Since most OE adjectives are prenominal, the comparison with noun phrases in other Old Germanic languages may shed light on the variation in adjective position, like the ongoing project *Constraints on syntactic variation: noun phrases in early Germanic languages*.

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# Vedlegg