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DOI

[10.1017/S1360674306001924](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1360674306001924)

Publication date

2006

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

English Language and Linguistics

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Fischer, O. C. M. (2006). On the position of adjectives in Middle English. *English Language and Linguistics*, 10(2), 253-288. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1360674306001924>

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On the position of adjectives in Middle English

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(Received 2 September 2005; revised 20 December 2005)

The position of adjectives, and especially that of postnominal adjectives, in Middle English is compared to the adjective situation for Old English. Recently, Fischer (2000, 2001), followed to some extent by Haumann (2003), has proposed that in Old English there is a difference in meaning between certain types of preposed and postposed adjectives, which is related to a number of parameters such as definiteness vs indefiniteness of the NP, weak vs strong forms of the adjective, and given vs new information. This article will investigate to what extent the same or similar parameters still hold in Middle English, a period in which postposed adjective position began to decline due to, among other things, the loss of the strong vs weak distinction in adjectives, the rise of a new determiner system and the gradual fixation of word order on both a phrasal and a clausal level. Special attention will be paid to the postnominal *and* + adjective construction, which is here argued, *pace* Haumann for Old English, to be similar to postnominal adjectives without *and*.

1 Introduction

In earlier research (Fischer 2000, 2001), I looked at variation in adjective position in Old English. On the basis of my findings, using the York–Toronto–Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE), I proposed that there is a difference in meaning between preposed and postposed adjectives, and that this meaning difference is related to a number of parameters, which are interlinked. These concern: (1) the (in)definiteness of the NP of which the Adjective Phrase [AP] is part; (2) the inflectional type of adjective used (weak vs strong); and (3) the role the AP plays in terms of information structure (theme vs rheme or given vs new information in the discourse). In addition, the number of adjectives was found to play a role in the sense that it was unusual for adjectives to be stacked either pre- or postnominally; that is, a second adjective could normally only occur when coordinated by *and* (cf. Fischer, 2000: tables 2 and 3).

The aim of the present investigation is to consider what happened to adjective position in Middle English, and especially what happened to the postnominal variant, since that is the position which as good as got lost in Modern English.¹ It is instructive to look at what is written on postmodifying adjectives in two of the most recent standard

¹ An earlier, preliminary report appeared in a journal of the Japan Society for Medieval English Studies, as Fischer (2004). In that paper only postposed adjectives were analysed; it did not yet consider the behaviour of preposed adjectives nor did it include the group of postnominal *and*-adjective constructions. The present version takes both of these into account. This explains the different figures found in the (2004) article. I would like to thank audiences in Kyoto, Vienna (ICEHL 13), and Naples (ICOME 5) for their valuable comments when I presented my findings there in 2003–5. I am grateful to my colleague Willem Koopman for his very careful reading of an earlier version, to Ans de Kok and Agnieszka Pysz for discussing the situation in Old French with me, and to two anonymous referees for their comments, which I found most useful.

grammars of Present-day English (the *Longman* and the *Cambridge Grammar*). In both, only one page is devoted to the phenomenon. In Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 559–60), we are given three contexts in which postposed adjectives may or must occur: (i) adjectives in *a-* (*alive* etc.), (ii) adjectives accompanied by a PP complement, and (iii) a handful of restricted adjectives, mostly French and idiomatic phrases. In Biber et al. (1999: 519), the contexts given differ slightly: (i) adjectives with indefinite pronoun heads such as *anyone*, *something*, (ii) ‘certain’ adjectives that tend to follow, such as *available*, (iii) a number of fixed expressions, and (iv) heavy APs. It is evident that it is a mixed bag of remnants, with very little left in the way of general rules. It will become clear from this investigation that postposed adjectives were still more rule-governed in (Old and) Middle English, and that the modern remnants consist of bits and pieces of those rules that were left over when decay set in.

The next section contains some necessary preliminaries. In section 2.1, I summarize the Old English situation with regard to adjective position. Section 2.2 will briefly consider a number of studies that have been published about adjectives in Old and Middle English. Section 2.3 places the change involving the adjectives in the larger framework of the Old and Middle English grammatical systems and the kind of changes the system was undergoing at the time of the change discussed here. Section 2.4 provides a description of the corpus used and the way the data have been extracted and analysed. The main part of the investigation is found in section 3. It first describes the *types* of APs that occur postnominally (section 3.1). On the basis of these data, I investigate in section 3.2 whether and how Middle English adjective position changed, considering again the kind of factors that played a role in the choice of position in Old English. In section 3.3, I will further investigate a specific type of postnominal construction, the so-called *and*-construction.

In general, the data analysis shows that there are, as in Old English, three main or overarching factors determining position:

- (i) the nature of the adjective itself and its possible satellites
- (ii) the functional role the AP plays in terms of information structure within the NP and within the context of the discourse as a whole
- (iii) the number of adjectives involved

The discussion in section 3 will be followed by a brief conclusion in section 4.

2 Preliminaries

2.1 *The Old English situation*

In my research on the position of the adjective in Old English, I came to the conclusion that the variation was not free (which is what one reads in most grammars of Old English). Instead, I proposed that the variation is meaningful, at least in some contexts, and that it is conditioned by a number of syntactic, semantic, and discourse/pragmatic factors. I also showed that these factors are not arbitrary, i.e. specific to Old English,

but motivated, and that a similar use of postposition can be found in some Romance languages (i.e. Spanish and Italian) and in Modern Greek (see Fischer, 2000 for details). On the basis of this, I put forward the hypothesis (based ultimately on Bolinger, 1972 [1952]) that Old English adjective position may have been iconically motivated.²

In brief, the iconic principle behind this entails that the interpretation of an NP containing an AP is influenced by the linear order in which the elements in the NP are processed. In other words, when the AP precedes the head noun, the adjective (phrase) modifies our perception of the head noun: adjective plus head form a whole, a kind of compound, and together they constitute one information unit. When the AP follows the head noun, the head noun gets processed first, and forms a chunk of information by itself, while the AP that follows gives *additional* information about the entity referred to by the noun, i.e. it forms a separate information unit. This iconic principle of linear or sequential order is one of the subtypes of 'iconicity of motivation' (cf. Haiman, 1980), which is a form of diagrammatic iconicity. Iconicity of motivation 'exploit[s] the resulting linearity of the linguistic sign' so that 'the order of elements in language parallels that in physical experience or the order of knowledge' (Haiman, 1980: 528). In this case the linear order clearly affects our perception, and hence our knowledge or interpretation of the structure.

The semantic difference between the two orders can to some extent be compared to the Present-day English difference between *a bláckbird* or *a ládybird* (i.e. an insect), on the one hand, and *a bláck bird* or *a lády bird* (i.e. a female bird), on the other.³ In Old English, adjective-noun compounds like *blackbird* were less frequent, as were noun-noun compounds of the type *ladybird*, *sunlight* or *stone wall* (cf. Rosenbach 2004, who refers to Jespersen 1949: ii, section 13). The reason for this rarity is presumably because these phrases still had transparent morphology,⁴ which would put a brake on their lexicalization into a compound. Instead of adjective-noun compounds, therefore, Old English generally used a *preposed*, weak [wk] adjective + noun in order to convey that 'blackness' is inherent to the bird, i.e. that blackness is seen as a defining property

² The same factors still play a role in the few cases where an adjective can still be used both pre- and postnominally in Present-day English, as in the contrast expressed between *the present/responsible people* and *the people present/responsible*. Haumann (2003: 59) also refers to the link between linearity and what she calls the semantic distinction between 'individual-level adjectives, which express inherent qualities, and stage-level adjectives, which express accidental properties', the former being attributive in nature, the latter predicative.

³ The modern compounds are not precisely comparable to the Old English preposed weak adjective + noun combination in the sense that *blackbird* and *ladybird* have lexicalized after they became compounds so that their meaning has indeed changed and narrowed. However, that is precisely what one might expect to happen when the adjective and head noun together have become one information unit, and when, in addition, the unit happens to be frequent and/or fills a lexical gap. When the unit becomes a compound, the meaning becomes semantically fixed, unlike in cases of occasional phrases such as *the black bird*, where the unity of the adjective and noun construction is only temporary: here, adjective and noun convey one information unit only in a particular context.

⁴ Instead of noun-noun compounds, Old English used mainly genitive noun-noun combinations (e.g. *sunnan* [GEN] *leoma* 'sunlight', or *modor* [GEN] *tunga* 'mother tongue', or an adjective derived from a noun, e.g. *stæn+en weal* 'stone wall'. With the loss of inflexions in Middle English, many of these adjectives and genitive nouns lost their inflexions and began to behave like an adjunct to the noun. We still see remnants of this in Present-day English, cf. *silk dress* vs older *silken dress*, or *gold watch* vs *golden watch*.

of the bird in question, in a particular context. Another possibility was to nominalize the adjective: e.g. the phrase *se blinda*[wk] *man* could also be expressed by *se blinda*, a construction that became impossible after the Middle English period.⁵ In order to convey the Present-day English phrase *a bláck bird* – in which *black* functions as a new information unit (and hence has equal stress with the noun) – Old English could use either the same order as Present-day English but with *black* declined as a *strong* adjective, or it could use the postnominal order, *a bird black*, which iconically indicates in its word order that the topic of conversation is *a bird* and that that bird *in addition* happens to be black.

In other words, in the Old English system *new* information (which usually entails indefiniteness) was conveyed either by the use of a strong adjective prenominaly or by the use of a strong adjective in postnominal position. When the adjective contained *given* information, it would precede the noun and be weak. I should make clear that in this article I will use the terms ‘given/new’ in a fairly general sense, and, similarly, other related terms such as ‘topic/comment’, ‘topic/focus’, ‘theme/rheme’, etc. All these terms are used differently (cf. Keizer, to appear: ch. 3, for a convenient overview), but what they have in common is that ‘topic/theme/given’ adds least to the advancing process of communication (it is nonsalient), while ‘comment/focus/rheme/new’ adds extra information (it is salient). In addition, the theme usually occurs early in the clause and rheme late. Theme/rheme is therefore a useful distinction when investigating the place of the adjective within NP structure. I will argue that postposed adjectives are generally rhematic, while thematic adjectives are placed early in the NP. Other terms that are useful in connection with the NP structure, and which can be seen to be linked to the above, are ‘restrictive’ vs ‘nonrestrictive’, and ‘attributive’ vs ‘predicative’. It will be shown that rhematic adjectives are generally nonrestrictive and predicative.

With the grammaticalization of a determiner system, the situation described for Old English was disturbed.⁶ Normally in Old English an adjective in a definite NP conveyed given information and in an indefinite NP new information, but this was not fully grammaticalized (i.e. there were no obligatory (in)definite determiners). Thus, the discourse-semantic parameter of (in)definiteness functioned not purely lexically (i.e. by means of determiners) but in combination with two other morphosyntactic parameters, involving *position* and *type of adjective inflexion*. All three collaborated in the information structure of the discourse. The situation in Old English would have been more or less as follows:

⁵ It is well-known that nominalized adjectives in Present-day English, such as *the blind*, can now only refer to blind people in general and no longer to individuals, as is still possible in other Germanic languages like Dutch and German.

⁶ This is an oversimplified picture. It is more than likely that a number of factors worked together to produce the modern situation with respect to the adjective. These factors are: (1) the weakening of the demonstrative pronoun *se, seo, þæt* into a definite article and the weakening of the numeral *an* into an indefinite article; (2) the loss of inflections leading to the loss of the distinction between strong and weak forms; and (3) the gradual fixation of word order and the greater overall frequency of preposed adjectives with the result that that position became the preferred one (on the relation between frequency and grammaticalization, see especially Bybee & Hopper, 2001; Krug, 2003).

Table 1. *Parameters in the expression of rheme/theme in NPs containing APs in Old English*

Adjectives/Adj. Phrases	New information <i>Rheme</i>	Given information <i>Theme</i>
(i) (a) preposed	(no)	(yes)
(b) postposed	yes*	no
(ii) (a) weak inflexion	no	yes
(b) strong inflexion	yes	no
(iii) (a) with a definite determiner	no*	yes
(b) with an indefinite (zero) determiner	yes*	no

Usually, the three parameters (i–iii), in table 1, are all set in the same way (to ‘yes’ or ‘no’) in any given NP. Thus, a postposed adjective is normally strong and appears in a phrase without a demonstrative or possessive pronoun (i.e. it is set to ‘yes’, for i, ii, and iii) (the information it contains is ‘new’), while a preposed adjective is normally weak and appears with a definite determiner (i.e. it is set to ‘no’), providing ‘given’ information.

There were four exceptions to this situation, i.e. cases where these parameters diverged. The first exception ((i, a) in table 1), as already mentioned above, concerns the fact that it was possible and indeed common to *prepose* a *strong* adjective in an indefinite NP (presumably because here there was a different iconic principle at work; see below). I have indicated this frequent exception by putting ‘yes’/‘no’ in brackets here. The other exceptions are less common; they are indicated in table 1 with an asterisk. The first concerns the combination of a weak adjective with postposition in a definite NP (i,b), as in (1):

- (1) (a) god ælmihtig heo cwæð ic eom þin[DEF] þeowa clæna[wk]
 God almighty, she said, I am your servant pure (Marg. 338)
 (b) þis sint tacn þæs[DEF] hatan[wk] magan omihtan[wk]
 this are signs of-the hot stomach inflammatory (Lch2.16.1.1)

In both cases the weak adjective does not provide new information. We already knew in (1a) that the woman was a saint, hence *clæna*, while *omihtan* in (1b) expresses the same as *hatan*.

A third exception can be found in instances like *an blinda mann*, where the adjective is weak and conveys given or presupposed information within the NP in spite of the indefiniteness conveyed by the numeral *an*.

- (2) (a) þes an[INDEF] blinda[wk] mann getacnaðeal mancynn þe weað ablend þurh adames
 gylt
 ‘in-this a blind-man symbolizes all mankind, that was blinded through Adam’s
 guilt’ (ÆCHom I, 10 154.10)
 (b) ðone lichoman gesohte sum[INDEF] deaff[STR] man and feðeleas[STR]
 ‘a-certain deaf man and crippled sought-out this body [of the saint]’ (Mart
 5[Kotzor]1924)

In (2a) 'blind-man' functions as a kind of compound because the NP as a whole is the symbol of the 'blind-man' that here stands for all mankind; in other words, a weak adjective is used – in spite of the fact that it occurs in an indefinite NP – in order to convey that the adjective is used 'restrictively' with respect to the noun, and that the category referred to is that of 'the blind' in general. In (2b), the topic of the sentence is a particular 'man', who in addition happens to be both 'deaf' and 'crippled'. This information is not presupposed, as is the case in (2a), but is nonrestrictive and functions as a separate information unit.

The last exception involves a *definite* NP, but followed by a *strong* adjective, which conveys *new* information, as in (3):

- (3) *Pone*[DEF] *ilcan* *ceaddan* *iungne*[STR]
 the same Chad [when] young (Chad.1.184)

Even though the NP in (3) begins with a demonstrative pronoun, making the phrase definite, the postnominal adjective is strong; it is predicative and functions as a separate unit (see Fischer, 2000; Haumann, 2003).

These four cases thus show that in Old English the type of determiner (definite or indefinite) does not fully govern the inflexion and position of the adjective, since the definite type does not have to co-occur with weak declension and pre-position of the adjective, and in the same way adjectives in indefinite NPs do not have to be strong and postposed. With the loss of the adjectival (weak/strong) inflexions, the exceptions just noted could no longer be distinguished: it was indeed parameter (ii) in table 1 which was most stable in Old English (i.e. it allowed of no exceptions) in terms of indicating information structure. Its loss no doubt led to a strengthening of the determiner system and a subsequent loss of parameter (i), which was already in some disarray because of the frequency of proposed strong adjectives.

Thus, the scenario for Old English must have been that with the weakening of parameters (ii) and (i) in table 1, due to phonetic attrition and increasingly fixed word order, parameter (iii) became the crucial one to distinguish between given and new information (hence the rapid grammaticalization of the determiner system). Note that with this change, the semantic difference between *a bláckbird* and *a bláck bîrd* (noted above) can no longer be shown formally in terms of weak/strong declension or pre- or postposition. This in itself may have speeded up the loss of postposition elsewhere because, if the indefinite determiner *a(n)* helps to convey new information, it is no longer necessary to show the same characteristic by means of postposition or a strong ending. Note furthermore that the 'given-' or 'newness' of an adjective in an indefinite NP is conveyed in Present-day English by the presence or absence of phonetic salience, i.e. heavy stress on *bláck* conveys phonetic salience, which, like the linear order, is also iconic (cf. Fischer, 2001: 256).⁷ We have seen that this *pre*-position of a strong adjective

⁷ Note that the iconic aspect mentioned here is different from the linear or sequential iconicity referred to above. Here 'stress-level (salience in regard to amplitude) bears a natural [i.e. iconic] relationship to degree of interest (discourse salience)' (Langacker, 1997: 22). The effect of both types of iconicity, however, is more or less

was also a possibility in Old English. It is possible that this adjective was indeed already stressed, and hence iconic too – but this is difficult to prove for a language for which we have no spoken record. If it was a salient adjective in that position, it would have provided a strong way in for the later grammaticalization of all adjectives to prenominal position, as argued above.

2.2 *The situation in Middle English: a brief discussion of the literature*

There are two opposing views here as to the direction that the change concerning adjective position takes. There is first of all the view of more theoretically inclined linguists such as Hawkins (1983) and Lightfoot (1976, 1979), who both claim that the direction of change was from prenominal in Old English to increasingly postnominal in Middle English. More descriptively minded historical linguists such as Raumolin-Brunberg (1994) and Nagucka (1997) maintain that there was probably little change at first (they lack the data to compare Old and Middle English precisely), but that, overall, the direction was towards more and more prenominal. In other words, they believe that there was no reversal.

Hawkins and Lightfoot base their hypothesis that the basic position of the adjective changed in Middle English from pre- to postnominal mainly on typological universals and/or the presence of certain generative rules in the grammar. Hawkins, for instance, uses data concerning the position of the genitive given in Fries (1940) (which shows that the postposed *of*-genitive rapidly replaced the inflexional preposed genitive) in order to argue that, if the genitive follows the noun phrase, then by an ‘implicational universal’ the adjective will follow suit and become postnominal too (more on the genitive and the role it plays in section 2.3 below). Lightfoot (1979: 205) also refers to this point, which, like Hawkins, he sees as a further consequence of the SOV > SVO change that English was undergoing in this period. Lightfoot (1979: 208) next gives further support to his hypothesis that the basic (underlying) position of the adjective shifted to postnominal position by showing that the so-called ‘Intraposition Rule’, independently needed elsewhere, would also account for the fact that postnominally generated APs could still end up in prenominal position on the surface. In a sense, both linguists presuppose a basic postnominal position in Middle English for mainly theory-internal reasons, without providing much in the way of data. In addition, their explanation does not account for the curious zigzag movement which they admit their choice of basic adjective position involves: from basic prenominal in Old English to basic postnominal in Middle English, back to prenominal again in Modern English.

What is interesting about their hypothesis, however, is that it does not rely on the influence of French to explain the Middle English postposed adjectives. This influence has often been put forward as an explanation for the change. However, there are quite a few problems with such an explanation (cf. Lightfoot, 1979: 206).

the same: it makes the adjective ‘rhematic’. Another way of conveying ‘givenness’ was by means of the new compounds mentioned in notes 3 and 4 above, and in section 2.2 below.

Postposition of adjectives is more or less grammaticalized in Modern French (with only a few adjectives behaving exceptionally), but the *diachronic* situation is far from clear. Studies of historical French syntax note that in the development of French from Latin both positions were always available, but the percentages of the two types fluctuate between maximally 65 to 70 and 35 to 30. Thus, in Old French the adjective–noun order was the most frequent, in the period 1650–1900 it was the other way around, while in Modern French the adjective–noun order may again be increasing (cf. Buridant, 2000: 209–14; Ménard, 1973: 118–19, and for the general development Rickard, 1974: 61, 78, 115, 141). I will show below that, although postposition often occurs with French adjectives (especially after French nouns), the influence of French cannot be said to govern adjective position in all circumstances. In other words, a different or additional explanation for this position is called for.

Raumolin-Brunberg and Nagucka show by means of a detailed data investigation that the number of postnominal adjectives in Middle English was never very high. Raumolin-Brunberg's analysis of the later Middle English periods in the Helsinki corpus shows that of all adjective *tokens* 92.3 per cent are premodifiers and 7.7 per cent postmodifiers (when one considers only adjective *types*, the percentage of postmodifiers is considerably higher, i.e. 26.9 per cent). She also notes that postmodification is more frequent when more than one adjective is involved, i.e. with just *one* adjective the proportion of pre- to postmodifiers is 96.1 to 0.9 per cent. She relates this latter difference to the phenomenon of end weight (Raumolin-Brunberg, 1994: 166).

Raumolin-Brunberg does not consider the possibility that adjective position may be linked to information structure, i.e. the idea presented here that postposed adjectives behave more like predicative adjectives (are 'rhematic'), while preposed adjectives may be either attributive or predicative (cf. note 2 above). I will show below that in Middle English, as in Old English, postposed adjectives are much freer in the way they may combine with other linguistic elements, such as adverbial and prepositional phrases. This, as I argued in Fischer (2001), seems to indicate their more verbal or predicative nature. Haumann (2003), however, argues that at least one type of postposed adjective in Old English, i.e. the postnominal *and*-construction (as in *soðfæstne man & unscyldigne* '[a] righteous man and innocent', LawAfEl B14.4.3, 45), is attributive in nature. She proposes that this construction 'should not be analyzed as an instance of ambilateral adjective placement, but as an instance of DP coordination with an empty nominal element, *pro*, in the second conjunct' (Haumann, 2003: 57). This entails that the postposed '*and* adjective' is in fact attributive, and not truly postposed, since it now precedes a nominal element (i.e. *pro*). I will show in section 3.3 below that the Middle English data show that Haumann's analysis is unlikely. If her analysis is correct, it predicts that the postposed *and*-adjective should have the same characteristics as other preposed attributive adjectives. We will see that this is not the case in Middle English, and therefore unlikely to have been so in Old English. The Old English analysis of this construction can, however, only be firmly settled on the basis of an in-depth corpus investigation, which lies outside the confines of the present investigation.

2.3 Other changes in the grammar of Old and Middle English

Apart from the grammaticalization of the determiner system in the Middle English period and the loss of adjectival inflexions, there may have been a number of other factors co-determining the direction of adjective position from Middle English onwards. There is first of all the increasing fixation of word order, already briefly touched upon above. Since the AP was already most frequent in preposed position (especially when it contained only one adjective), a development towards fixed word order would have favoured that position. Fixed word order and a fixed adjective position may also have led to the stacking of adjectives in front of the NP. This in turn may have caused the formation of a hierarchical ordering of the preposed adjectives, with the first adjective acquiring scope over the second (or over both the second adjective and the noun combined) due to Bolinger's principle of linearity (see also below).⁸ The data in my corpus show that this started with degree adjectives such as *swiþe*, *ful*, *riht*, and later *verray* (all developing the meaning of 'very'), which could easily be interpreted adverbially.⁹ This interpretation was helped by the fact that the Old English adverbial ending *-e* was lost around this time and not yet replaced by the later *-ly* ending (see below and section 3.2).

Secondly, the loss of the inflexional genitive may have played a role, since some genitives also function as a type of modifier. In Old English, the genitive phrase could be pre- as well as postnominal. In Middle English we see the postnominal genitive becoming increasingly rare, and for the most part replaced by the new periphrastic *of*-construction. Rosenbach et al. (2000: 185) show this development in their figure 2, and, interestingly, they also show that the premodifying genitive *increases* again in the early Modern English period, but only with animate head nouns. Their most interesting observation, however, from the point of view of the present investigation, is that the premodifying genitive is especially frequent when the NP of which it forms part is a 'given' entity. I think two conclusions may be drawn from this. The loss of postnominal inflexional genitives may have led to a more generally fixed prenominal position for all modifiers (adjectives as well as inflexional genitives), on the one hand. At the same

⁸ See for this development in English (which begins in the late Middle English period), Adamson (2000). The result was that the first adjective in a phrase like 'lovely long legs' could now refer to the NP *long legs* as a whole, rather than that both *lovely* and *long* refer to the noun *legs* separately; i.e. it is the 'length' of the legs, not the legs themselves, that makes them 'lovely' (with a pause, or a comma in writing, the two adjectives can still of course both be descriptive). Stacking was only exceptionally found in Old English (for the exceptions see Fischer, 2000): two adjectives used with a noun (phrase) normally had equal (descriptive) status, and could only be used together in combination with a conjunction (*and*, *or*), or when straddled across the NP. For details of the virtual nonrecursiveness of adjectives in Old English, see Spamer (1979) and my comments on Spamer (Fischer, 2000: 163ff.).

⁹ The Old English degree adjectives, such as *swiþe*, *riht*, *mycel/mara/mast*, etc., begin to be used adverbially in combination with preposed *attributive* adjectives in *definite* NPs only in Middle English. I have shown in Fischer (2000) that two attributive adjectives in a row were extremely rare in Old English, and that even degree adverbs derived from adjectives such as *swiþe* did not yet occur there. In Middle English, as the number of occurrences in table 8 of appendix B shows, they become frequent, and this may have paved the way for other adjectives to appear in that position.

time, the development also shows that prenominal position is still very much associated (for linear iconic reasons, I presume) with 'givenness'. It may explain, as I hope to show in section 3, the fact that the adjectives that most explicitly convey salient or new information remain longest in postnominal position.

Another factor that has already been briefly touched upon in section 2.1 is the development of many new compound-like phrases of the N-N type (the type *a stone wall*) in Middle English. In these 'compounds' the first element functions as a premodifier: it is restrictive and nonreferential, i.e. it is used generically to indicate a *type* of wall. These compound-like phrases, like regular compounds (as I indicated in note 3), also arise out of earlier *s-less* variants of genitive constructions, such as *Lady Day*, *mother tongue* and *sunburn*. These two new NP types may have influenced the form of Old English adjective-noun phrases, where the first adjective was weak and served as a generic modifier. What I mean is, the new compound or compound-like NPs, which were *semantically* similar to the Old English weak-adjective + noun phrases (both expressing a *type* of noun and containing only one information unit), may have served as a model for the rise of adjective-noun compounds and noun-noun phrases such as *blackbird* or *silk dress*, stepping, as it were, into the gap that the Old English preposed *weak* adjective + noun had left once the inflexions were lost. In Fischer (2000: 109), I already pointed to the adjunct character of the Old English weak adjective by showing that it cannot be modified by an adverb, just as modern *stone wall* cannot be so modified (**a very stone wall*). Thus, phrases like *se/þes swiþe ealda man* 'the/this very old man' have not been attested in Old English (cf. Fischer, 2000: 168, and note 9 above); only strong adjectives could be modified in this way.¹⁰ Phrases or compounds such as *blackbird*, *blacksmith*, *blackamoor*, *blackguard* become more prominent after the Old English period. In other words, in order to assert the 'given' or 'restrictive' connection of the adjective with the noun, it is possible that the original weak adjective became more closely linked to the noun syntactically (in the form of a compound) to make up for the loss of its weak ending. Again the result of this development was that the 'givenness' of the premodifier was highlighted.

A final important development is the spread of the new adverbial form in *-ly* < OE *-lice*. In Old English, *-lic* (later > *-ly*) was still an adjectival ending but it also began to be used as an adverbial suffix by itself.¹¹ Both endings were etymologically related to the noun *lic* 'body'; hence the adjective in *-lic* referred to something that was *like* something 'in body', i.e. 'in appearance' (e.g. OE *cynelic*, *deofollic*, *wonderlic*, i.e. 'like a king, devil, wonder': 'kingly, royal', 'diabolical', 'wonderful'). In this sense such adjectives were hardly ever generic, but instead pointed to some particular characteristic of the noun which they described. It is therefore perhaps not surprising to see that the adjectives in *-ly/-lic* in my Middle English corpus are far more often placed postnominally than other adjectives, thus indicating their 'new information'-bearing status. Another interesting development in connection with the later, new adverbs in *-ly*

¹⁰ They first begin to occur in my Middle English corpus: see appendix B, table 8.

¹¹ Of course *-lice* (with an adverbial *-e* ending) signalled the adverbial form of the adjective in Old English.

Table 2. *Number of adjectives and APs found in the Middle English corpus*

Corpus A: total number of (non-complex) adjectives in PPCME2	35,558
Corpus B: total number of APs in Corpus A	3,417
Corpus B1: total number of APs with at least one postposed adjective	1,744 (1,620)
Total number of postposed adjectives in B1	1,940
Total number of postposed adjectives in a noncomplex AP in B1	631
Total number of postposed adjectives in a complex AP in B1	1,309
Corpus B2: total number of complex APs with preposed adjectives only	1,669 (900)

is the fact that they began to replace (at a later stage) some of the postnominally placed adjectives that in Old English functioned as predicative subject or object complements (a general term for these in the generative literature is 'small clauses'). This is discussed in section 3.2.

2.4 *Description of the Middle English corpus and the data used*

I have used the second edition of the *Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English* (PPCME2), which consists of 1.3 million words of syntactically annotated Middle English prose. The texts themselves are based on the prose sections of the Middle English part of the Helsinki corpus, to which extra text has been added. I have selected my material by using three queries on the corpus. The details of this are given in table 2.

The first query was a request for all the APs that are immediately dominated by an NP. The number of hits was 3,417 for the whole corpus (see table 2 and, for details, the appendices); the result of this query has been termed Corpus B in table 2. Out of these I extracted by a second query all adjectives which are immediately preceded by an NP because I wanted to concentrate on postnominal and 'ambilateral' (i.e. a combination of pre- and postmodifiers – a useful phrase introduced by Mustanoja, 1973) adjectives; the result of this query constitutes subcorpus B1 in table 2. The number of these APs was 1,744, 1,620 of which turned out to contain true postnominal cases (see below). In this group of 1,620 APs, 2,592 actual adjectives were involved, out of which 1,940 were postposed. Of these 1,940 postposed adjectives, 1,309 occurred in complex APs (for more details see Fischer, 2004).¹² The remainder of Corpus B, containing complex APs *without* postposed adjectives, constitutes subcorpus B2 (for details see appendix B). The total number of single adjectives (so not APs, which may contain a complex of adjectives) in the whole corpus (Corpus A in table 2) is 35,558. This means that out of all APs, both single and complex, only a very small percentage of adjectives is

¹² The tagging of adjectives and APs in the corpus is somewhat confusing. Normally an extra node, i.e. AP, is only inserted in the tree structures if the AP is complex (that is, if the adjective is accompanied by another adjective, an adverbial, a PP, etc.). If the AP consists of a single adjective, the AP node has been left out in order to keep the structure as flat or simple as possible. However, this tagging procedure was *not* followed in the case of single *postposed* adjectives. These were parsed with an extra AP node.

postposed. However, when only complex APs are considered, as many as 989 (1,620 minus the 631 cases which constitute single postposed adjectives; see note 12) out of 3,417 (i.e. close to 30 per cent of all complex APs) contain at least one postposed adjective. This shows that in Middle English too the number of adjectives involved in a phrase plays a very large role. As in Old English, the stacking of adjectives must still have been considered awkward because the structure of APs was still essentially 'flat'. It is noticeable too that in those types where two or more adjectives either precede or follow the head noun, the rule is still to connect the adjectives with the conjunction *and* (see the discussion below and appendix B).

As already indicated, the number of complex AP tokens involving postnominal or ambilateral adjectives was 1,744, a considerable amount.¹³ Quite a few of the data in B1, however, were discarded for a number of reasons, given below. This left me with 1,620 'true' tokens. Among these true tokens I have also counted ambiguous cases such as those given in (4) to (8):

- (4) because of the dethe of that lady thou shalt stryke *a stroke* [blow] *moste dolorous* that ever man stroke, excepte the stroke of oure Lorde Jesu Cryste (CMMALORY, 54.1800)
- (5) From aboue schal come *þe jugge fers* [fierce] *and wroþ* (CMAEL3, 57.967)
- (6) huanne he yziþ [sees] *þet uolk mest nyeduol* [in dire need]. þanne wyle he zelle [sell] *þe derrer* [the more dearly] *tuyes oþer þries* [twice or three times] *zuo moche þane þet þing by* [be] *worþ* (CMAYENBI, 36.613)
- (7) & þen take *a bal al hote* (CMHORSES, 111.264)
- (8) & bigon wið *swotnesse* [sweetness] *soffie* to seggen (CMJULIA, 103.124)

(4) is ambiguous because it is not entirely clear whether the antecedent of the *that*-clause is 'a stroke most dolorous', or only the phrase 'most dolorous' (with a definite determiner left out) functioning as a nominalized adjective. Examples (5) to (7) are cases where the APs could be said to function as subject and object complements (or 'small clauses') respectively, which link the adjectives to the verb phrase as much as to the head NP. These cases are interesting because we will see (in section 3.2) that in Middle English, as in Old English, a much less clear division was made between adjectives, small clauses, and adverbs. Note that (5) could now easily be translated with the help of adverbs ('fiercely and angrily'), whereas (6) in a modern version would probably be translated with the help of an extra predicate such as *to be* ('when he saw those people to be in dire need') or with a relative clause. In (7) too, it is clear that the main message is that the ball must be *taken* while still *hot*, hence close again to an adverbial modifying the verb.¹⁴ Note that in Present-day English a bare adjectival object small clause is getting more and more restricted to those cases where the object complement expresses result, as in *He painted the door green*. In other cases bare

¹³ The list of texts searched, the number of hits in each text, the reference labels, genre, and date of each text are given in appendix A.

¹⁴ Strictly speaking *hote* could be an adverb, since it has an *-e* ending, but by this time adjectival and adverbial *-e* endings were probably no longer pronounced, and indeed many *-e* endings were unetymological. The *-e* in *soffie* in (8) is part of the stem.

adjectives tend to be avoided.¹⁵ This was not yet the case in Middle English. In (8), it is not clear whether *soffte* is an adjective modifying *swotnesse*, or an adverb modifying *seggen*. The glossary of the text edition interprets it as an adverb; the analysts of the corpus consider it an adjective.

The following instances are examples of tokens that I have not counted as postposed or ambilateral:

- (9) *NPs that have a numeral as their head but another noun following*
And þis Eleazar sent him lxx wel lerned men (CMCAPCHR,43.354)
- (10) *Cases where like functions as a preposition and is no longer an adjective (cf. Maling 1983), contrast (a) with (b): in (b) like is still adjectival because it has its own preposition (these are counted)*
 - (a) And there was yn hys schyrte [shirt] a thyng *lyke* grene taffata (CMGREGOR, 165.892)
 - (b) ... there was sene in the chircheyard ... a grete stone four square, *lyke* unto a marbel stone (CMMALORY,7.191)
- (11) *Cases where the small-clause status of the postposed adjective is completely clear*
 - (a) hij [they] shul be 3ete multiplied in *elde* *plentifous* [plentiful] (CMEARLPS,114.4987)
[here *plentifous* does not go with *elde* as the corpus analysts imply, but is a subject complement of *hij* (this is the usual interpretation in Bible translations I have consulted of this verse in Psalm 92)]
 - (b) & þah hwen he þus is. *alre þinge feherest*. he underueð bliðeliche. & bicluppeð swoteliche þe alre ladlukeste. (CMHALI,158.434)
'and yet, though he [Christ] is thus of all things the fairest, he accepts joyfully and embraces sweetly the most loathsome of all'
[*feherest* is not an adjective dependent on *þinge* (rather, *þinge* is a genitive plural depending on *feherest*) but a subject complement of *he*]
- (12) *Cases where the adjective is nominalized*
But men seen anoþer sterre *the contrarie* to him (CMMANDEV,119.2926)
- (13) *Cases where the adjective is preceded by so/as/such (or where so/such by itself is counted as an adjective) followed by a clause introduced by as/so/that (frequent!)*
 - (a) þer is no gyft so holy as is þe gyft of lofe (CMKEMPE,49.1100)
 - (b) Ther nys no myght *so greet* of any emperour *that longe may endure* (CMCTMELI,224.C1.279)
 - (c) ... he makeþ his miracles *zuiche* [such] *ase behoueþ to þe dyeule* (CMAYENBI,56.1017)
- (14) *Cases of misreading of the adjective by the corpus analysts*
 - (a) and for þe kyng was I-lette [stopped] by his *deþ yvel* [happened] þat he miȝte nouȝt it ful-fille (CMPOLYCH,VI,5.24)
[here, *yvel* is not 'evil' but *ifel*, i.e. 'it happened']

¹⁵ Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 261 ff) make a distinction between 'depictive' and 'resultative' object complements (they call all small clauses 'predicative complements'). The depictive ones, such as *We proved it genuine* are now very often expressed with an accusative-with-infinitive (a.c.i.) construction, as in *We proved it to be genuine*, a construction that became more frequent also in this same (late Middle English) period (cf. Fischer et al. 2000: ch. 7). This leaves the resultative complements, such as *You drive me mad*, as rather isolated cases, since they can neither be replaced by an a.c.i. complement nor by an adverb in *-ly* (cf. the example discussed below in (36)).

- (b) *per byeþ Monekes þet uor claustrēs/ and uor strayte cellen, wel moche/and clyerer þanne þe zonne: habbeþ wonynges. Vor blake and uor harde kertles/ huyter þane þe snaw. . . cloþinge habbeþ an* (CMAYENBI,267.2634)
 'There are monks who instead-of cloisters and narrow cells have houses larger and clearer than the sun. Instead-of black and rough habits, [they] have clothes on whiter than the snow'
 [note that the postnominal adjectives do not depend on the nouns which immediately precede them, *cellen* and *kertles* (it is thus analysed in the corpus), but on *wonynges* and *cloþinge*]
- (15) *Cases where the adjective is used metatextually*
pou sselst ywyte [shall know] þet þis word holy [this word 'holy'] is ase moche worp (CMAYENBI,106.2066)
- (16) *Cases where the adjectives present a clear 'list' or enumeration*
 But it is to wite that holy scripture hath iiij. vnderstandingis, literal, allegoric, moral, and anagogic. (CMPURVEY,I,43.1891)

As far as adjectival participles are concerned, they have only been included when they showed up in my query because the analysts of the corpus had marked them as adjectives (usually they show adjectival behaviour). Since participles which are clearly verbal still often follow the noun in Present-day English, this does not present a problem because I am most interested in the differences between Middle English and the present-day language. Postnominal adjectival constructions that have not changed, therefore, are of less interest. This also explains the exclusion of categories such as (9)–(10), (12)–(13), and (15)–(16) above, because these constructions are still in use.

In my analysis of the complex APs in the B2 corpus (see appendix B), I have also left out the cases described in (9)–(16), and in addition cases of complex APs which were used as adverbials, as in clauses like *for he was so long* 'for he was away so long' (CMKEMPE, 118.2711); & *durst no lengar abydyn in Leycetyr* (CMKEMPE 114.2628). Also left out are instances with complex numerals such as 'five and twenty'; cases where the adjective was seen as complex because of its compound nature (as in *Alle holie beden ben godfruchte* [god-fearing] *men biheue*, CMTRINIT,201.2810); and instances like *þat is a lytul town in þe foot of Olyuete, a myle fro Ierusalem* (CMWYC-SER,327.1793), where the addition of *a myle fro Ierusalem* is not in any way related to the AP *lytul*. This reduced the number of occurrences considerably, from 1,669 to 900.

3 Adjective position in Middle English

3.1 A description of the data

I have categorized all the different constructions in which postnominal and ambilateral adjectives occur in corpus B1 according to the position and the number of adjectives involved, distinguishing the construction where the first postposed adjective immediately follows the head noun from that where this adjective is preceded by a conjunction (usually *and*), because Haumann (2003) argues that they are structurally different (more on this in section 3.3). The structural possibilities shown in table 3 were attested.

Table 3. *Structural AP types containing one or more postposed adjectives in Corpus B1^a*

Types of NPs with APs		without [and]	the [and]-construction
I	Noun + Adj	848	—
II	Noun + Adj (<i>and</i>) Adj	134	—
III	Adj + Noun + [<i>and</i>] Adj	211	267
IV	Adj + Noun + [<i>and</i>] Adj (<i>and</i>) Adj	73	19
V	Noun + [<i>and</i>] Adj (<i>and</i>) Adj (<i>and</i>) Adj ((<i>and</i>) Adj)	19	1
VI	Adj + Noun + [<i>and</i>] Adj (<i>and</i>) Adj (<i>and</i>) Adj ((<i>and</i>) Adj)	14	3
VII	Adj (<i>and</i>) Adj + Noun [<i>and</i>] + Adj	21	2
VIII	Adj (<i>and</i>) Adj + Noun + [<i>and</i>] Adj (<i>and</i>) Adj (<i>and</i>) (Adj)	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>
Total		1,326	+ 294 = 1,620 APs

^aIn the (2004) article, I have further subdivided these types and provided separate tables for each subdivision according to the nature of the adjective, the head noun and any further satellites (i.e. according to the characteristics listed in (17)). In the present article I have collated the characteristics of (17) in table 4 in order to get a less cluttered overview of the crucial factors involved in postposition and their difference in behaviour compared to preposed adjectives. In the table [*and*] in square brackets refers to the special construction discussed in section 3.4; (*and*) placed in round brackets refers to a different, optional use, which is explained below.

Playing a role across these categories, there are a number of factors of both a syntactic and a semantic nature which were found to be relevant for adjective position in Old English (cf. Fischer, 2001: 259). These again turn out to be important here; see (17). Factor (17a) replaces the strong/weak distinction in Old English; factors (i) and (k) are new to Middle English.

(17) *Factors found to play a role in the postposition of adjectives in Middle English*

- (a) the type of NP: postposition occurs mainly in indefinite NPs
- (b) adjectives are often postposed when preceded by a preposed quantifier
- (c) the adjective is a present or past participle
- (d) the adjective contains the morpheme *-ful*, or is itself *full* followed by a PP
- (e) the adjective contains a negative morpheme (e.g. *un-*, *in-*, or *-less*) or is accompanied by a negative adverb (e.g. *not*)
- (f) the adjective is a degree adjective, i.e. it has a comparative or superlative inflexion and/or is combined with the periphrastic adverbs *more*, *most*
- (g) the adjective is accompanied by an adverbial or prepositional phrase
- (h) the adjective itself is adverbial in nature (e.g. *long* meaning 'in length', *ynough*)
- (i) the adjective is of French (Latin) origin
- (j) the head noun is semantically empty (e.g. *thing*, *man*)
- (k) the adjective is part of a fixed phrase (e.g. *god almighty*)
- (l) two adjectives accompanied by (*n*)*either* – (*n*)*or*, *both* – *and*

It is clear that (17a) is important, since indefiniteness, as we have seen (cf. table 1), played a role in Old English too, being influential on the parameters of weak/strong

Table 4. *The number of times each factor of (17) occurs in APs containing postposed adjectives in B1^a*

Factors (a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)	(l)	Total (b)– (l)	Remaining cases (no features involved)
Indefinite	141	112	123	65	68	395	157	250	93	123	51	1,578	295
Definite	28	8	28	13	19	61	24	98	5	2	10	296	69

^aNote that the total number of features found in table 4 is higher than the total number of APs found: this is because one AP may show a combination of features (for details, see the tables in Fischer, 2004).

inflexions and position. This feature is of course very much tied up with information structure (given/new or theme/rheme), as a discussion of the data below will make clear. The division of postposed adjectives over definite and indefinite NPs is given in table 5 below, while table 4 makes clear how the indefiniteness factor is related to the other factors of (17).

As far as (17b) is concerned, I have shown in Fischer (2000) that quantifiers already behaved differently from adjectives in Old English, so it is important to keep them apart.¹⁶ The data make it clear, as was the case in Old English, that whenever more than one adjective precedes the head noun, the first adjective is almost always a quantifier, or the two adjectives are separated by *and* (see below, and for preposed adjectives, appendix B). In other words, it is still the case that the number of adjectives plays a role in position, and stacked adjectives are avoided.

3.2 *A discussion of the data*

In Fischer (2000, 2001) I suggested that in Old English the weak adjectives are used attributively and come closer to the nominal category (it could be said that adjective and noun together formed a kind of compound), while the strong adjectives are used predicatively, and hence closer to the verbal category. It follows in both cases that these noun- and verb-like adjectives cannot be stacked, just as one cannot stack nouns or full verbs. When there is more than one adjective in Old English, there are two possibilities. The adjectives are both pre- or both postnominal and connected by *and*, or the adjectives are ambilateral. In my Old English database I found only four postnominal examples where the adjectives occurred in a row without a connector (see Fischer, 2000: 166, table 3). There are slightly more examples of prenominal unconnected adjectives (see Fischer, 2000: 164, table 2), i.e. eleven with strong adjectives, and eleven with weak ones. The possible reasons for these 'exceptions' were discussed (Fischer, 2000:

¹⁶ In Fischer & van der Leek (1981), we showed too that Lightfoot's (1979) hypothesis that quantifiers are adjectives in Old English and become a separate category only in Middle English does not hold true.

172ff.).¹⁷ It was interesting to see, for instance, that most of the strong prenominal serial adjectives consisted of a second denominalized adjective referring to a material or a nation, i.e. adjectives that are the least adjective-like, while others sported degree adjectives in first position, which might be said to function like adverbs (which would be no problem with strong, i.e. verb-like, adjectives).¹⁸ Of the weak serial adjectives, again half concern a second denominal adjective, while for the other half the second-position adjective could be said to form an idiomatic unit with the noun (turning it into a kind of compound). In addition, I also found a number of weak Adj + Adj prenominal phrases without a connector, where the first adjective could either be interpreted as linked to the preceding demonstrative/possessive pronoun (*agen* 'own' and *ylca/self* 'same'), or where the first adjective (e.g. *mycel* 'great > greatly > much') begins to modify the second (acquiring some sort of adverbial role, which of course was already a possibility with strong adjectives) but still maintaining its adjectival weak ending (similar factors are found to play a role in the Middle English unconnected preposed adjectives; see appendix B).

In other words, already in Old English, cracks begin to be visible in the system sketched above in section 2.1, and serial adjectives begin to occur. This continues in Middle English. No doubt, due to the loss of distinction between strong and weak adjectives, it becomes easier for *weak* adjectives to be modified by an adverb. However, the data collected for this investigation show that the use of the connector *and* is still the rule wherever there were examples of two or more pre- or postnominal adjectives. When there is no connector, the first adjective in the preposed AP is usually a quantifier (see Fischer, 2004, tables 14 and 15, and note 14 there) – this type already existed in Old English – or the examples are special or occur late in the corpus (table 9, appendix B).

The features enumerated in (17) and shown at work in tables 4 and 5 already make clear what factors are involved in the variation in position, more particularly in the choice of postposition. The features almost all relate to the predicative nature of the adjectives, and are similar to the ones found for Old English (see Fischer, 2001: 259ff). The postnominal adjectives are typically verb-like (participles are frequently in this position), or show verb-like behaviour: they govern an adverbial/prepositional phrase, either explicitly or implicitly (i.e. adjectives such as *needful*, *endeles*, or *unsehelich* translate into adjectives accompanied by a PP or adverbial, 'full of need', 'without end', 'not visible'), or are themselves adverbial (e.g. *near* 'in the vicinity', *long* 'in length', etc.). Some of these adjectives are still postnominal in Present-day English, but what is striking in the Middle English data is that these factors are much more

¹⁷ And see also Adamson's footnote (2000: 63–4), which provides a further explanation for the serial, strong, prenominal adjectives.

¹⁸ As indicated in table 8, appendix B, this type with nonconnected 'adjective' undergoes a clear increase once degree adjectives are reinterpreted as adverbial. This may have paved the way for other adjectives to follow in their footsteps. Such occurrences, as table 9 indicates, are indeed all late Middle English. It also paved the way for the use of degree adjectives in definite NPs. These are much more frequent in Middle English, as table 8 shows, than in Old English, no doubt also helped by the spread of the periphrastic comparison with *more/most*.

Table 5. *Postnominal APs in relation to (in)definiteness per category of table 3*

Cat. I	Cat. II	Cat. III	Cat. IV	Cat. V	Cat. VI	Cat. VII	Cat. VIII	Total
<i>indef/def</i>	<i>indef/def</i>	<i>indef/def</i>	<i>indef/def</i>	<i>indef/def</i>	<i>indef/def</i>	<i>indef/def</i>	<i>indef/def</i>	<i>indef/def</i>
672/176	104/30	417/61	78/14	19/1	15/2	22/1	7/1	1,334/286

influential. It is clear that a new grammatical rule or basic position for adjectives (i.e. that all adjectives are preposed) is emerging but not yet grammaticalized. Although some of the postnominal adjectives may still be postnominal in Present-day English constructions, most of them are now as a rule prenominal (except when particularly heavy, e.g. followed by a PP).

Concerning the preposed adjectives (see appendix B), it is evident that the factors of (17) play a much less prominent role there, as one would expect since these factors occur typically with predicative adjectives and not with attributive ones. In addition, the number of adjectives in definite NPs is slightly larger (174 out of 900, i.e. almost 20 per cent, compared to 286 out of 1,620, i.e. 17.5 per cent in table 5) in spite of the fact that preposed adjectives may be both predicative and attributive (depending on their discourse function).

When we look at the position of adjectives in terms of information structure (given vs new information and the relation to definiteness vs indefiniteness), there are very clear differences between the two positions. In all the construction types given in table 3 the number of definite NPs with postposed adjectives is very much smaller than the number of indefinite ones. Table 5 gives an overview.

It is evident that we must have a more detailed look at *postnominal* adjectives in *definite* NPs, because they 'break the rule' as it were: since a definite NP tends to be thematic, it is to be expected that the AP which forms part of it is thematic too, and thus preposed. The question then is, can we show that the adjectives in these 'exceptions' are in fact rhematic (predicative) rather than thematic, i.e. can we show that they constitute a 'new' or salient information unit? If they are, it would be proof that the Old English 'rule' still exists, and may still serve as a basis for generating a particular position for the adjective.

A few tendencies are clear:

- (18) (a) The postposed adjectives in the definite NPs are more often accompanied by any of the features enumerated in (17) (i.e. the features that show that the adjective is more predicative) than the postposed adjectives in indefinite NPs (i.e. table 4 shows that there are fewer 'remaining' or 'feature'-less examples with postposed APs in definite NPs). In other words, it looks as if postposed adjectives in definite NPs use clear, extra markers showing their predicative nature.
- (b) Adjectives in definite NPs tend to be postposed when they are used contrastively. This will be discussed in more detail below.
- (c) Many of the adjectives in definite NPs involve French phrases. Since this is also true for the indefinite counterparts, it shows that the influence of French is a parameter separate from the others, which are all connected with information

Table 6. *Instances of postposed adjectives in category I, not marked by any of the parameters given in (17)*

adjectives used contrastively (12 have the morpheme <i>-ly</i>)	17(+12) ^a
adjectives in <i>-ly</i> (12 of which are also contrastive)	15(+12)
functioning as small clauses	7
stylistic factors (?)	4
idiomatic phrases	2
remaining cases	4
Total	49–12=37

^aThe number added in brackets means that these adjectives share another feature given in table 6.

structure. It is also striking that French influence comes much more to the fore in NPs with only one adjective (see for details Fischer, 2004). This is probably due to the fact that most of these phrases are fixed ones, used by English authors, as it were, as a unit. French fixed phrases with two or more adjectives are far less current because with a *combination* of adjectives one enters into the realm of syntax.

The tendency described in (18b) is interesting because it can be linked to the predicative/rhematic nature of postposed adjectives – which, of course, is also true for tendency (18a). I had a closer look at all the 37 postposed adjectives in definite NPs that were found in category I (in table 3 above), which were not influenced by ‘extra’ features as described in (17) (for the details, see Fischer, 2004: table 2). The reasons for their postponement can be divided up as shown in table 6.

The most important factors are ‘contrast’ and the adjective ending in *-ly*. I will discuss these in more detail first because it turns out that these two factors play an important role also in the other categories of table 3.

First ‘contrast’. It can be seen from other categories in table 3 too that whenever there is more than one postnominal adjective, that contrast is an important factor for postponement; in fact it is the most important feature in terms of number of occurrences. Thus of all the occurrences of the *and*-less construction in categories II, IV, V, VI, and VIII (i.e. the second column in table 3), 52 out of a total of 246 show contrast. For type III, it is only the *and*-construction that may express contrast (30 out of 267), since contrast expressed in an Adj + Noun + Adj construction (e.g. *my sweet thoughts foul*) would convey an unlikely, because contradictory, sense. The contrast is often made explicit by the use of such connectors as *both ... and*, *neither ... ne*, and *or*. Contrast may also be expressed by adjectives/adverbs of comparison, which is factor (f) in (17) and indeed occurs in 87 APs in the B1 corpus.¹⁹ It should be clear that when an adjective

¹⁹ This should be compared to the number of times that preposed adjectives are used contrastively. As table 9 in appendix B (i.e. type III) makes clear, only 25 constructions of the Adj *and* Adj + Noun type are used contrastively out of a total of 297. Concerning the use of adjectives of comparison, only 6 examples are found in this type, and these all express an absolute degree (so that no comparison is invited, as in *whych ys the moste*

is contrastive, it cannot be an inherent part of the head noun; thus, postposition here is natural in terms of the rules or tendencies we have set out for Old English.²⁰ These rules are still valid in Middle English in that postposition (including ambilaterals with *and*) is still the more regular construction here. Some examples:

- (19) (a) as a man haþ manye wittes, *boþe fleschly and spiritual*, and so on monye manerys he assentiþ to a þing. (CMWYCSE, 320.1696)
 (b) þe feorðe dale [fourth part] is of [about] *flesliche fondunge* [temptation] *ant gastlice* [spiritual] *baðe* [both] (CMANCRIW, 1.50.122)
 (c) By þise two wymmen ere vnderstanden . . . *two lyfes* in Haly Kyrke, *actyfe lyfe and contemplatyfe* (CMROLLTR, 31.6450)

Looking at the corpus examples, it is clear that in Present-day English, the tendency towards prenominal position has been strengthened in that in many of these cases we would now prefer preposed adjectives, but the old order also still occurs. There are also examples in the corpus where the head noun is repeated:

- (20) þorw þeose seuene ȝiftes [gifts] techep vre lord what mon haþ mester [need] of to *þe lyf bodilyche and to þe lyf gostliche*. (CMEDVERN, 247.316)

These are now rare to nonexistent. Of more interest are examples where the contrast is not formally explicit, but implicit, i.e. where only *and* is used:

- (21) Than sche mad hir prayers to owr Lord God almythy for to helpyn hir & socowryn [succour] hir ageyn [against] *alle hir enmyis, gostly & bodily*, a long while, . . . (CMKEMPE, 124.2885)

In most of these formally *implicit* cases, however, the contrast is clear from the lexical content, since these phrases are usually a combination of opposites, as in *bodilyche/gostliche* in both (20) and (21), or in combinations such as (*friendes*) *qwykke and dede* (CMEDTHOR, 20.111), *ȝimstan . . . seheliche and unseheliche* 'visible and invisible' (CMMARGA, 73.291), etc. Again, in most of these cases, the Present-day English translation would prefer preposed position.

When the contrast is part of an *indefinite* NP, we find that both pre- and postposition is usual, as one would expect because, as in Old English, preposed adjectives could be both strong (rhematic) and weak (thematic). Thus in (22) the adjectives are postposed in the first *definite* NP but preposed in the *indefinite* NP:

orgulus and lewdiste message that evir man had isente unto a kynge, CMMALORY, 43.1443); all 6 indeed occur in definite NPs.

²⁰ Table 9 in appendix B shows that contrastive constructions with *preposed* adjectives in *definite* NPs are, as we would expect, very rare. Only 4 have been found in Corpus B2. Three of them are easily explainable. The phrase *the fyrste & syxte chapytours* (CMFITZJA, A6R.84) expresses a list rather than a contrast, and so does the standard phrase (in bold) in *The Sautir comprehendith al the elde and newe testament* (CMPURVEY, I, 37.1756). The third, *þerfore I wolde not þat þei herde it, neiþer þei ne none of þees lettrid ne lewid men* (CMCLOUD, 130.795), again presents a list of different kinds of people, where the deictic pronoun *þees* is best translated by 'such' expressing a *kind* of group rather than a *determinate* group. The last example cannot be explained in this way: *ye & with dylygence also to the people to the true & false obedience of god* (CMFITZJA, A6V.94), but here it is clear from the context that both the 'true' and the 'false obedience' have already been discussed so that the contrastive adjectives here present already 'given' information.

- (22) Neuer-pe-les, if it be so þat all *thi gude* [good] *dedis bodly and gastely* ere [are] a schewynge [showing] of thi desire to Godd, 3it es þer a dyuersite [difference] by-twix *gastely & bodily dedis*; (CMROLLTR,37.781)

Similarly, in (23) we find both preposed and postposed adjectives in indefinite phrases, but it cannot be an accident that the adjectives that are clearly semantically contrastive (the phrase in bold) are *also* postposed:

- (23) And as to spoken of *affeccioun, **gostly and bodily***, þu most nursche [nourish] hit wit *holy and hoolsom meditacioun*. (CMAELR3,39.389)

In the phrase *holy and hoolsom meditacioun*, we do not have two different referents, two different types of *affeccioun*, as is the case with *gostly affeccioun* and *bodily affeccioun*, but one referent, *meditacioun*, which is both *holy* and *hoolsom*.

Returning to the category I adjectives in table 6, where only one adjective in the definite NP is postposed, it should now be clear why the factor of contrast is of interest: it may point to the nonattributive quality of an adjective used contrastively, i.e. it may show that the adjective is rhematic. Again, many examples are like (20), where one noun–adjective phrase is contrasted with another noun–adjective phrase that is opposed to it, mentioned somewhere in the discourse. Another such example, where the contrasted NP (*þe lyue eurelestinde*) is much further removed, i.e. in a different clause, is:

- (24) Þise þri þinges we ne byddeþ [pray] naȝt uor þet we hise [them] habbeþ ine *þise lyue dyadlich* [deadly/mortal] parfitliche [perfectly]. (CMAYENBI,110.2117)

A similar contrast is present in the religious use of the ‘right way’ and the ‘wrong way’. In the corpus, the adjective is postposed in this contrastive use, as in:

- (25) (a) To tæchenn hemm [them] *þat weȝze rihht*/ Þatt ledde hemm towarrd Criste (CMORM,I,119.1035)
 (b) Þatt ledeþþ hemm *þe weȝze rihht*/ Til Drihtin [Lord] upp in heoffne [heaven] (ibid. I,226.1885)

The information contained in the adjective is presented as salient or new information, which is made clear by the fact that a clause or PP follows to explain what is meant by ‘right’. It is therefore interesting to compare the examples in (25) to the ones in (26) from the same text. Here the information is no longer presented as ‘new’, as is clear from the word *efft* ‘again’, from the lack of an explanatory PP or clause, and possibly also from the possessive pronoun *þeȝze* ‘their’, i.e. they turn to the *same* ‘right road’ again, the one that was already *theirs* and therefore ‘known’.²¹

- (26) & tatt ta kingess turrnden *efft*/ Till *þeȝze rihhte weȝze* (CMORM,I,229,1893) All all swa sum þa kingess *efft*/ I *þeȝze rihhte weȝze*/ fundenn forþriht tatt steorneleom (ibid.)

²¹ It seems unlikely that the order of words is here influenced by the necessities of the metre. Note that in (25) the order *þat rihhte weȝz* would have been equally possible (*weȝze* has an unetymological *-e* here).

Table 7. *All forms ending in stem + -lich(e), -lych(e), -ly, -li*

Function/syntactic structure	Stem = Adjective / Stem = Noun		
Adverb	156	/	16
AP preposed		75 (stem = noun predominantly)	
AP postposed		128 (stem = noun predominantly)	
small clause		18 (stem = noun predominantly)	

The corpus data also show very clearly that an AP containing *new* information – evident from the fact that it is, as in (25), followed by an explanatory clause or phrase giving further information – is very frequently found in ambilateral or postposition (although pre-position is also possible in an indefinite NP):

- (27) (a) to comen unto the court of so greet a lord *and so worthy as ye been*.
(CMCTMELI,328.C1.818)
'to arrive in the court of such a great lord and [one] as worthy as you are'
(b) sche herd a sownd of melodye *so swet & delectable* [delightful], *hir powt* [to-her seemed], *as sche had ben in Paradyse*. (CMKEMPE,11.202)

This is indeed still a possible structure in Present-day English and for that reason has not been included in my data (cf. (12)–(13) above).

We will now turn to the other finding given in table 6, viz. that so many of the adjectives ending in *-ly* turn out to be postposed. I had noted above (section 2.3) that this must be due to the fact that these adjectives, just like ones ending in *-less* and *-ful*, are themselves still close to a PP; such 'adverbial' adjectives would indeed normally follow the head noun. Thus, *fleschly* and *gostly* can be translated as 'in the flesh' and 'in the mind' respectively. That there is truth in this observation is clear from the fact that the postposed adjectives in *-ly* are almost exclusively of the noun *+ly* type. When one compares that to the adjectives used as adverbs (which also begin to take *-ly* in this period), then the majority are of the adjective *+ly* type (e. g. *blithely*, *specialliche*, *kueadlich*, etc.). Table 7 gives the forms and functions of all the *-ly* words found in the B corpus (I have only counted the different stems in the adverb function; with *-ly* used as an adjective, the stem is predominantly a noun).

The *-ly* group was in many ways a confusing group in Middle English because the morpheme could be used in both adjectives and adverbs, but adverbs could also still appear without a clear adverbial ending (cf. Nevalainen, 1997 for an account of this confusing situation in late Middle and early Modern English). I have enumerated the links between their various functions and forms in (28):

- (28) (i) both nouns and adjectives could take the morpheme *-ly*
(ii) nouns *+ly* functioned mostly as adjectives (*timlich*, *bodilich*, *worldli*)
(iii) adjectives *+ly* functioned mostly as adverbs (*openlich*, *strongly*, *blipelich*)
(iv) adverbs could still have a zero- or *-e* inflexion just like adjectives
(v) adjectives functioning as small clauses could have a zero or *-e* inflexion or they could consist of noun *+ly* (see ii)

- (vi) small-clause adjectives are easily confused with postposed adjectives: both are rhematic units and both function like predicative adjectives
- (vii) small clauses are easily confused with adverbs: both have a modifying role with respect to the matrix verb
- (viii) postposed adjectives, small clauses, and adverbs often appear in similar positions
- (ix) adjectives may be applied as markers of degree, making them look more like adverbs (cf. Paradis, 2000)

It is easiest to show the extent of the confusion by means of some examples. The adjective *fleschly* is used both in pre- and postposition:

- (29) 3yfe [if] þou say þat þou lufes þam [you love them] for-thi þat þay hafe *fleschely* figure in lyknes of man, and for-thy þat þay haue saule [soul] ryghte als þou has, þan es þi broþer *fleschely* na nerre [no nearer] þan anoþer (CMEDTHOR,19.71)

In (29) the two instances of *fleschely* indeed function like adjectives. What about the postposed instances in (30)–(31)? Are they also adjectives dominated by the NP, or are they in fact adverbs, or even object complements (small clauses)? The corpus analysts mark *fleschly* in (30) as an adjective, but in (31) as an adverb. Note that the position of *fleschly* does not help in any way, since in all three functions (i.e. as a regular AP, adverbial, or small clause) the element would be in the same position:

- (30) for certes alle we have o [one] fader *fleschly*, and o mooder – That is to seyn – adam and eve and eek o fader espritueel (CMCTPARS,304.C2.654)
- (31) not in als mekill [as much] als þou and he hase [have] bathe a fadire and a modire *fleschely*, The begynnynge of þi flesche, þat es, a lyttill filth, stynkande and full [foul] to see (CMEDTHOR,19.72)

In another example:

- (32) Sche, answeyng, seyd, ‘Ser, þes wordys ben not vndirstondyn only of *begetyng* of *chyldren* *bodily*, but also be purchasyng of vertu, which is frute gostly, as be heryng [hearing] of þe wordys of God, be good exampyl zeuyng [giving], be mekenes & paciens, charite & chastite, & swech [such] oþer ...’ (CMKEMPE,121.2787)

bodily is interpreted in the corpus analysis as a postposed adjective to *children* on the basis of its position, i.e. the noun it is closest to, and quite possibly also on the basis of the parallelism with *frute gostly*. However, this is not the only interpretation possible. It could also be a postposed adjective to *begetyng* (that this is a possible interpretation in this position can be seen from (33), which also has a PP intervening between head noun and postposed adjective), or we could interpret *bodily* as an adverbial with the verb *beget* from which the gerund is derived.

- (33) alle þe woundis of þi conscience *moore and lesse* [bigger and smaller] (CMHILTON,6.41)

Another development (point (28ix) above) concerns the reinterpretation of a preposed adjective as a degree adjective, which, according to Paradis (2000: 235), took place in the early modern period. Although Paradis describes the development in terms of

semantic/pragmatic grammaticalization (or subjectivization), it is quite possible too that this development is steered by the growing tendency to place all adjectives before the noun rather than ambilaterally, without an explicit connector. Adamson (2000) shows that the first adjective in an AP may begin to modify the second adjective because of its initial position. When an adjective becomes fixed in that position, it tends to develop into a subjective or epistemic adjective. The same seems to happen with the adjectives discussed by Paradis. Adjectives such as *utter*, *entire*, *extreme*, *horrible* start off with 'propositional readings' and develop in the course of the fifteenth century into 'markers of degree', showing 'reinforcing readings' (Paradis, 2000: 234). An interesting mistake (34) in *The Book of Margery Kempe* shows the confusion at work. The author (or scribe) uses the adjective *entire* as a premodifier of another adjective; sensing its adverbial nature, (s)he sticks a *-ly* ending on it, but, finding that adjectival too, also uses an adjectival superlative ending *-est* into the bargain:

- (34) desyryng to be refreschyd wyth sum crumme [crumb] of gostly vndirstondyng vn-to
hir most trustyd & *entyrlyest belouyd souereyn*, Crist Ihesu (CMKEMPE, 98.2232)

Another interesting example is (35):

- (35) Anoper es, *wrangwisely* to halde þat at [sic] es getyn (CMGAYTRY, 13.177)

Here we have the original noun *wrong*, borrowed from Old Norse in the Old English period, which later developed into an adjective (*wronglich* and also *wrong*; cf. the use of both *wonder* and *wonderly* in appendix B, table 8), both of which then also came to be used as adverbs, in the same forms. Here in this example, it functions as an adverb, but the author is confused as to its ending, and uses two adverbial endings (*-wise* and *-ly*) for good measure. Is this due to the fact that the adverbial endings had still not been settled, and *-ly* by itself may not have been felt as enough?

It seems evident that in this confusing situation as regards the form and function of adjectives and adverbs, tendencies leading to a clearer distinction between the two became positively reinforced. The loss of postnominal adjectives, which were already less frequent, would be a 'positive move' in this since it would result in a position for adjectives that was firmly delimited. Any adjective following the noun could now begin to be seen as adverbial, and increasingly speakers begin to mark this with the newly developed adverbial ending *-ly*.²² It is noteworthy, as remarked already in Brunner (1962: 59), that verbal modifiers acquire the *-ly* ending earlier than adjectival modifiers (i.e. modifiers that appear in a typical prenominal adjective position and therefore have less need of *-ly*). This process, indeed, can still be seen at work today: many adjectival modifiers do not take *-ly* especially when the adjective they modify is a participle.²³ It is also noteworthy that at first there was a tendency to overuse the *-ly* ending in small clauses, as has been noted by many investigators (cf. Nevalainen,

²² Nevalainen (1997: 162) shows in her figure 1 how the zero adverbs slowly lost ground in the late Middle English to Early Modern period, decreasing from 21 to 13 per cent.

²³ Cf. for instance 'new born baby', 'low lying house' with 'a new(ly) made dress', 'a full(y) grown tree'. In the on-line OED I found examples such as: 1824-9 Landor, *Imag. Conv. Wks.* 1846 I. 206/2 *There are hours and*

1997: 150; Gisborne, 2000). Thus, we find for instance in Chaucer: *he nas nat right fat, I undertake, /But looked holwe, and therto sobrelly* (GP 289) rather than 'he looked sober'. Again, the reason for this is now clear: this postposed position came to be associated with adverbs.²⁴ The use of the adjective in a small clause also became more restricted. In subject complements they came to be used more and more only after copula verbs (cf. (11a) above, where the subject complement *plentifous* would now be translated as 'plenteously'), while in object complements, the adjective remained mainly in complements that expressed result or resultative state; when it had another interpretation, the adjective was again replaced by a now clear adverb in *-ly*, or other ways were used to express it (cf. note 15 and examples (5)–(6) above). Thus, (36) does not change in form in Modern English, because it expresses result:

(36) Loue is soche a mizt [power] þat it makeþ *alle þing comoun* (CMCLOUD,21.127)

while *corrupt* in (37) would in Present-day English be translated by an adverb or a preposed adjective:

(37) and ȝit this day the comoun puple in Italie spekith *Latyn corrupt* (CMPURVEY,I,59.2336)

Two last factors mentioned in table 6 remain to be discussed. First, it should not come as a surprise that when adjective position is variable, and the rules for variation are not fully grammaticalized (as they clearly were not, or no longer, in either Old or Middle English), there is room to use the variation for stylistic purposes. There are a number of examples in the corpus, all in early Saints' Lives, where a desire for balance and striking contrast seems to have resulted in postposition. Two examples should suffice:

- (38) (a) Ant nat ich neauer hwi me seið. þt heo hit al weldið. þt wullen ha nullen ha. biwinneð & biwiteð hit to se monie oþre. *nawt ane to hare freond; ah to hare fan fulle* (CMHALI,150.320)
'And I don't at all understand why it is said that those possess it completely, who, whether they want to or not-want to, acquire and keep it for so many others, not only for their friends but for their foes foul'
(b) þe driueles unduhtie swa duden sone. þt *te hude snawhwit swartede* as hit snercte. & bearst on to bleinin as hit aras ouer-al (CMMARGA,84.473)
'the knaves, unworthy, did so at once so that the skin, snow-white, blackened as it sputtered and burst into blisters, as it rose all over'

In (38a) there is a balancing in the contrastive phrases *wullen* and *nullen*, and *biwinneð* and *biwiteð*, which may have led to the balance of *hare freond* and *hare fan*, causing

occasions when she needs not be *full-dressed*, and in an OED definition, I found: *The full-open passage area in a cock or valve.*

²⁴ This, not surprisingly, happens most frequently with copula verbs which also have full referential meaning, such as *look* (also *smell*, *taste*, etc.), where speakers might waver between an adverb (which is the norm with full verbs) and a predicative complement (which is the norm with copulas).

the writer to postpone the adjective *full* 'foul', which would have upset this balance.²⁵ Similarly, the painful contrast between *te hude snawhwit* 'the snow-white skin' that gets 'blackened' in (38b) is better brought out by juxtaposing those two words (further highlighting the alliteration), making the adjective postnominal. There is one example of postposition which is not a truly stylistic use, but it shows what distinctions can be made when position varies:

- (39) Ich swerie bi þe mahtes of *ure godes muchele*. bute 3ef þu þe timluker do þe I þe
 3ein turn & ure godes grete þt tu gremest nuþe; Ic schal schawin hu mi sweort bite
 I þi swire . . . (CMKATHE,46.437)
 'I swear by the powers of *our gods great* unless you, the sooner the better, make a
 complete turn-about and worship our gods that you now offend, I shall show how
 my sword may-bite in your neck'

It seems to me that the postposition of the adjective *muchele* may not be an accident here. Note that it is postposed in a definite NP where postposition, as we have seen, is much rarer. Quite possibly a contrast is also intended here, between pagan gods and the true God. Since pagan gods cannot be 'great' in the eyes of the writer of this Saint's Life, he puts the adjective in postposition so that it is clear to the reader that greatness is not an inherent part of these gods, not a given fact, but a greatness that only exists in the mind of the pagan speaker of these lines, who therefore needs to emphasize it against this saintly maiden.

The last factor concerns idiomatic phrases. They occur a lot (see column (k) in table 4), especially in vocatives, and seem to have become set expressions. The phrase 'God almighty' occurs most often in the corpus, and this order of noun–adjective is indeed still fully acceptable in our speech nowadays – its frequency in postposed position may be explained by the fact that originally this was a complex adjective, with *all* modifying *mighty*, which as we have seen favours postposition; in time it must have become a set phrase. The same is true for expressions like *his deorling deore* (CMHALI,142.211) and *youre doghter deere* (CMCTMELI,226. C1.352), where the original vocatives have become referential phrases.

3.3 The postnominal and-construction

In Fischer (2000: 176) I argue that the postnominal *and*-construction in Old English, as in (40), can be interpreted in two different ways: either the second *and*-adjective may be used substantively, or it may be a postposed predicative adjective.

- (40) (a) *ne scyle nan mon siocne monnan and gesargodne swencan*
 not must no man (a) sick man and (a) wounded oppress
 'No one should oppress a man who is sick and wounded' or

²⁵ Note how careful this balancing is; next to the external balance there is also an internal balance within the phrases, both phonetically (assonance and alliteration) and morphosyntactically (repetition of prefixes, suffixes, and word order).

'No one should oppress a man who is sick and one who is wounded' (Boeth.4
1.38.123.32)

- (b) *þæs swetan wætres and þæs ferscan*
of-the sweet water and the fresh (Alex. 1.338)

In cases such as (40b), the adjective is probably used substantively, as the repetition of the demonstrative pronoun *þæs* indicates. In this case, the adjective is always weak, and hence clearly attributive, with the head noun after the adjective elided or, as Haumann (2003) has suggested, present underlyingly as *pro*. In (40a), the adjective is strong, and it is ambiguous whether this adjective may also be an instance of substantive use as in (40b), and hence preposed in Haumann's terms, or whether it is postposed, because, as far as I know, there are no examples in Old English with a repeated *indefinite* determiner (Mitchell, 1985: §170 only notes the repetition of a demonstrative pronoun). In both interpretations, however, I would argue that the adjective is used predicatively, since it is strong (I have tried to indicate the different possible interpretations in my translation). If the adjective is used substantively, then the *and*-adjective may but need not relate to a different referent (see below). Only context can make this clear.

Haumann (2003: 65) opts, presumably for reasons of elegance or economy, for a 'uniform analysis of the postnominal "*and* adjective" construction', and suggests that *both* types in (40) are attributive adjectives followed by *pro*. This may be a uniform solution as far as the *and*-adjective type is concerned, but it is hardly uniform when one looks at other strong and postposed adjectives that occur in the more common Noun-Adj and Adj-Noun-Adj constructions. Haumann (2003: 63) agrees with my findings that the latter do contain postposed predicative adjectives.

I have not considered the *and*-construction in any depth in Old English (this will have to be left to another occasion), but it is interesting to observe the type in Middle English. First of all it is striking that examples with an indefinite determiner begin to occur in Middle English, as (41) shows.

- (41) (a) I knowe a lord of yours in this land that is *a passing true man and a faithful*
(CMALORY, 5,139)

- (b) the cytee of Thauriso ... þat is *a full fair cytee & a gret* (CMMANDEV,99,2402)

This makes clear that a nominalized interpretation of (40a) may also have been a possibility in Old English. It is rather remarkable, however, that instances of the type with an indefinite determiner in Middle English only occur in two *late* texts in the corpus, Malory's *Morte d'Artur* and *Mandeville's Travels*. It is also noteworthy that the construction remains rare: only 16 are found among the 294 instances of the *and*-type (last column in table 3 above).²⁶ This is probably related to the fact that the nominalized adjective was losing ground in Middle English, due to the loss of inflexions.

²⁶ This is even more true for the construction with the definite determiner, i.e. the OE (40b) type; not a single instance was found in the whole of the corpus.

In addition, the data for the Middle English usage of (41) also indicate that in all attested instances the referent is identical. In other words, in this respect the type closely resembles both the postposed Adj–Noun–Adj type without the determiner *a(n)* repeated, and the Old English postposed type with *and*. Mitchell (1985: §170) indeed notes that the *and*-construction in Old English may be used both ‘when the two adjectives supplement one another [i.e. they refer to a single referent] and when they exclude one another’, i.e. when there are two referents. The above facts (the late appearance of instances with a repeated indefinite determiner, the gradual loss of nominalized adjectives, and the similarity in usage between the *and*- and the *and*-less type) make it somewhat unlikely that the Malory and Mandeville examples truly show a nominalized adjective. They may simply be a stylistic variant of the *and*-construction without *a*, which these authors in fact use more frequently themselves (in 32 instances against 16).

The fact that the Adj–Noun–Adj construction *cannot* be used when the adjectives refer to two different entities while, on the other hand, contrast is quite often present in the postnominal *and*-construction (cf. also section 3.2), may also be of interest for another reason. The data in the Middle English corpus clearly show that when a contrast between two different referents is intended (e.g. bodily vs ghostly deeds, deadly vs venial sins, etc.), then only constructions are attested which have at least one postposed adjective, unless the NP is indefinite²⁷ (see table 9 in appendix B, and the discussion in section 3.2). This strongly suggests that *all* these postposed adjectives are predicative in nature, since a contrast implies that the adjectives used here are salient or rhematic.

If the *and*-construction contains an empty *pro*, as Haumann argues, it is rather remarkable, to say the least, that more constructions of this type *with* a definite or indefinite determiner in Middle English do not appear when the determiner system grammaticalizes. Haumann (2003: 66) refers to other languages such as Modern Dutch, German, and Spanish, that like Old English make use of the *pro*-construction. There is, however, a conspicuous difference between the examples she gives from Dutch, German, and Spanish and the Old English ones. In the three modern languages only the contrastive type is found, cf. (42):

- (42) (a) Jan kocht de rode auto en de groene
 John bought the red car and the green [one]
 (b) Er hat den roten Wagen und den grünen gekauft²⁸
 He has bought the red car and the green [one]
 (c) Compré los libros verdes y los rojos
 I-bought the green books and the red [ones] (all taken from Haumann, 2003: 66)

²⁷ In which case, as I have argued, the preposed adjectives may be predicative in nature.

²⁸ A native speaker of German informed me that this sentence is in fact somewhat odd; the more usual order would be ‘Er hat den roten Wagen gekauft und den Grünen’ (the same would be true for this example in Dutch: ‘Hij heeft de rode auto gekocht en de groene’). This more usual order in fact emphasizes the fact that it concerns different cars.

In addition, the construction is also *only* possible with a repeated determiner. Thus, in Dutch (42a) can only be used if Jan has bought two *different* cars, while (43) is not grammatical:

- (43) *Jan kocht een/de rode auto en Ø groene
John bought a/the red car and green

In Old and Middle English, on the other hand, we do find this construction in noncontrastive usage (cf. Mitchell, 1985: §170, and examples (40b), (41) above), while the type *without* a determiner is in fact the more common one.

This suggests that the *pro*-analysis (with an attributive adjective) may not be the right one for the Old and Middle English postnominal *and*-constructions. Two further observations may confirm this. First, the factors enumerated under (17), which have been qualified as features typical of verbs rather than nouns – that is, of predicative rather than attributive adjectives – are also typically found with the *and*-construction. Out of the 294 *and*-constructions, only 25 appear in a definite type, while a further 183 postposed adjectives exhibit one or more of the other factors considered in (17) and in the further discussion in section 3.2 (i.e. the factor of contrast and of adjectives in *-ly*). Secondly, a large number of the *and*-constructions (i.e. 114 out of 294) appear in clauses like the following (and see also the examples in (41):

- (44) (a) fox is ec anfrech beast & fretewil wið alle
‘[a] fox is also a-greedy beast and voracious withal’ (CMANCRIW,II,103,1265)
(b) þet is wel grat zenne and wel dreduol
‘that is [a] very great sin and very dreadful’ (CMAYENBI,22,328)
(c) and stronge man was, & mizty (CMBRUT3,15,430)
(d) wheþer þei ben bodily creatures or goostly (CMCCLOUD,24,171)
(e) þei arn slawnderows wordys & erroneows (CMKEMPE,132,3092)

In these clauses the NP containing the *and*-construction functions as a subject complement of the verb *be*, which makes it possible to interpret the second adjective as a predicative complement rather than an adjective headed by the NP. The fact that it is so often used this way suggests that the *and*-adjective itself must be interpretable as predicative. It is possible that the gradual loss of the postnominal *and*-adjective led to its being used only in those positions in Middle English where it was still most predicative, and that for this reason the number of constructions such as illustrated in (44) increased in comparison to other *and*-types and slowly ousted the earlier constructions illustrated in (40). In this light it is not surprising that vestiges of (44) can still be attested in Present-day English (but now only with semantically empty heads), as the examples from the web in (45) show, whereas the (40) type has completely disappeared.

- (45) (a) Cookies can be a good thing and helpful.
(http://www.webgopro.com/source/article_tech_02.html)
(b) Being a nice person and happy.
(<http://www.superangel69.diaryland.com/Me.html>)

4 A brief conclusion

The picture that we get from the Middle English data is a situation where the rules of Old English are still more or less present but beginning to be greatly affected by the increasingly fixed word order, the loss of inflexions, the burgeoning determiner system and the arrival of new compound noun types. The old ways of expressing theme/rheme in the AP are still visible but becoming less and less efficient. So we see that postposition is still used to express new, salient information (including contrast), but this position has become awkward due to the increasing frequency of prenominal adjectives and due to the fact that no formal distinction was possible anymore between weak and strong adjectives when preposed. When the preposed distinction between weak and strong adjectives was lost, and when the preposed adjectives could therefore also be used to convey new information, it became uneconomical, especially in a time of increasing word-order fixation, to preserve the old postposed adjective, which did the same. In addition, we have noted that an adjective following the NP in surface order could become confused with the adverb modifying the verb, an adverb which, moreover, now looked formally similar to the postposed adjective. In summary, there was no good reason to stick to the old system. A new, less complicated system was ready to take over, one in which (practically) all adjectives would appear prenominally. At the same time, the adverbial modifier and the small clause strengthened their position by acquiring either a clear formal marker, i.e. the ending *-ly* on the adverb, or by getting restricted to a very clear predicative function, i.e. to that of subject complement after copulas and to 'resultatives' in the case of object complements. It has also been argued that the postposition of many French adjectives may have been an 'accidental' fact in Middle English (of a lexical rather than a syntactic nature), which did not really influence the then still current postpositional 'rule'. This French usage, as we have seen, did not share any of the properties shown by native postposed and ambilateral adjectives.

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Appendix A: *Description of sources in the PPCME2 Corpus^a*

Label	Text	Period	Text-type/ trl from	n° APs with postposed adjs/ total n° APs (total n° adjs)*
CMAELR	Rievaulx's De Institutione Inclusarum	M2/3	Rule/Latin	28/99 (1120)
CMANCRIW	Ancrene Riwe (Cotton Cleopatra C vi)	M1	Rel.Tr/	65/163 (2233)
CMASTRO	Chaucer, A Treatise on the Astrolabe	M3	Hb Ast.	62/69 (321)
CMAYENBI	Dan Michael, Ayenbite of Inwyt	M2	Rel.Tr/French	143/222 (1774)
CMBENRUL	The Northern Prose Rule of St Benet	M3	Rule	11/22 (357)
CMBOETH	Chaucer, Boethius	M3	Philos./Lat/Fr	20/45 (313)
CMBRUT3	The Brut or The Chronicles of England	M3	Hist.	48/101 (1211)
CMCAPCHR	Capgrave's Chronicle	M4	Hist.	34/98 (1476)
CMCAPSER	Capgrave's Sermon	M4	Sermon	2/4 (65)
CMCLOUD	The Cloud of Unknowing	M3	Rel.Tr	15/61 (547)
CMCTMELI	Chaucer, The Tale of Melibee	M3	Philos/French	33/83 (540)
CMCTPARS	Chaucer, Parson's Tale	M3	Sermon/French	54/108 (1048)
CMEARLPS	The Earliest English Prose Psalter	M2	Bible/Lat/Fr	42/50 (687)
CMEDMUND	The Life of St Edmund	M4	Biogr.	0/16 (137)
CMEDTHOR	The Mirror of St Edmund (Thornton Ms.)	M3	Rel.Tr/Latin	30/46 (448)
CMEDVERN	The Mirror of St Edmund (Vernon Ms.)	M3	Rel.Tr/Latin	23/39 (400)
CMEQUATO	The Equatorie of the Planets	M3	Hb Astr/.	18/26 (310)
CMFITZJA	Richard Fitzjames' Sermo die Lune	M4	Sermon/	7/25 (327)
CMGAYTRY	Dan Jon Gaytryge's Sermon	M3/4	Sermon/	28/34 (274)
CMGREGOR	Gregory's Chronicle	M4	Hist/	40/104 (1173)
CMHALI	Hali Meidhad	M1	Rel.Tr/	23/49 (319)
CMHILTON	Hilton's Eight Chapters on Perfection	M3/4	Rel.Tr/	11/22 (167)
CMHORSES	A Late Middle English Treatise on Horses	M3	Hb Med/	23/29 (197)
CMINNOCE	In Die Innocencium	M4	Sermon/	7/15 (157)
CMJULIA	St Juliana	M1	Biogr/	19/31 (266)
CMJULNOR	Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love	M3/4	Rel.Tr/	15/23 (130)
CMKATHE	St Katherine	M1	Biogr./	24/62 (352)
CMKEMPE	The Book of Margery Kempe	M4	Rel.Tr/	52/222 (1981)
CMKENTHO	Kentish Homilies	M1	Homilies/	0/3 (145)
CMKENTSE	Kentish Sermons	M2	Sermon/French	7/9 (117)
CMLAMB	The Lambeth Homilies	MX/1	Homilies	35/54 (919)
CMMALORY	Malory's Morte Darthur	M4	Romance	46/160 (1587)

Appendix A: *Continued.*

Label	Text	Period	Text-type/trl from	n° APs with postposed adjs/ total n° APs (total n° adjs)*
CMMANDEV	Mandeville's Travels	M3	Travel./French	142/255 (1457)
CMMARGA	St Margaret	M1	Biogr./	26/51 (348)
CMMIRK	Mirk's Festial	M3/4	Sermon/	36/115 (1457)
CMNTEST	The New Testament (Wycliffite)	M3	Bible/Latin	5/12 (95)
CMORM	The Ormulum	M1	Homilies/	87/173 (1701)
CMOTEST	The Old Testament (Wycliffite)	M3	Bible/Latin	9/22 (131)
CMPETERB	The Peterborough Chronicle	M1	History	6/14 (158)
CMPOLYCH	John of Trevisa's Polychronicon	M3	History/Latin	43/91 (1341)
CMPURVEY	Purvey's General Prologue to the Bible	M3	Rel.Tr./	59/102 (1271)
CMREYNAR	Caxton's History of Reynard the Fox	M4	Fiction/Dutch	5/39 (254)
CMREYNES	The Commonplace Book of Robert Reynes	M4	Hndbook/	21/27 (362)
CMROLLEP	Richard Rolle, Epistles	M2/4	Rel.Tr./	15/27 (482)
CMROLLTR	Rolle, Prose Treatises (Thornton Ms.)	M2/4	Rel.Tr./Latin	28/47 (655)
CMROYAL	Middle English Sermons	M3/4	Sermon/	18/44 (237)
CMSAWLES	Sawles Warde	M1	Homilies/	5/17 (142)
CMSIEGE	The Siege of Jerusalem	M4	Romance/	12/20 (172)
CMTHORN	Liber de Diversis Medicinis	M4	Hb Med/	18/18 (174)
CMTRINIT	Trinity Homilies	MX/1	Homilies/	25/66 (1396)
CMVICES1	Vices and Virtues	M1	Rel.Tr./	17/52 (920)
CMVICES4	The Book of Vices and Virtues	M3/4	Rel.Tr./French	17/31 (203)
CMWYCSER	English Wycliffite Sermons	M3	Sermon/	61/100 (1504)
Total				1,620/3,417 (35,558)

^aThe first column of numbers refers to all occurrences of APs containing *postposed* adjectives, those found in complex APs as well as single adjectives (cf. note 12 above); the second number refers to all the complex APs found in the texts (for a definition of what constitutes complex APs in the corpus, see also note 12). The last column refers to the total number of *single* adjectives (whether as part of a complex AP or not) occurring in each text, i.e. all items labelled in the corpus as Adj.

Appendix B: *Complex AP types containing one or more preposed adjectives in Corpus B2*

Table 8. *Type I: Adverb + Adj + Noun*

Type of adverb ^a	Total number of APs	Number occurring in <i>definite</i> NPs	Additional remarks
<i>So</i>	155	0	47 instances of <i>so</i> + Adj + <i>a</i> + Noun
<i>Full</i>	149	2	
<i>More/most</i>	103	53	10 adjs have extra <i>-er/-est</i> ending
<i>Right</i>	57	4	
<i>Well</i>	32	4	
<i>Passing</i>	31	0	
<i>Too</i>	30	0	
<i>Swipe</i>	16	0	
<i>Very</i>	10	4	
<i>Wonder(ly)</i>	11	0	<i>Wonderly</i> occurs 1x
Other types	44	14	
with 2 adverbs	5	0	4 of these adverbs may be adjectives
Total	643	81	

^aThe adverbs are all derived from original adjectives, except *wonder* and *too*, and most of these are also still used as adjectives in Middle English

Table 9. *All other types*^a

Types	Number in		Additional remarks
	Total	definite NPs	
Type II: Adj <i>and</i> Adj + Noun	189	77	18 include an extra adverb
Type III: <i>Adjs in contrastive constructions</i>			
IIIa: <i>both</i> Adj <i>and</i> Adj + Noun	1	1	
IIIb: Adj <i>ne/nor</i> Adj + Noun	3	1	2 of these have one extra adj, 1 has extra adverbs in front of the Adjs
IIIc: Adj <i>or</i> Adj + Noun	12	3	6 (incl def. NP) show no contrast; contrast is semantically inherent
IIId: Adj <i>and</i> Adj (contrastive)	10		
Type IV: Adj + Adj + Noun	23	3	3 have an extra adverb; 7 adjs are past.part; all exx. bar 1 are late ME ^b
Type V: Adj + Adj <i>and</i> Adj + Noun	7	4	all examples are late ME
Type VI: Adj <i>and</i> Adj <i>and</i> Adj + Noun	9	2	both early and late exx
Type VII: Adj + Adj + Adj + Noun	1		late ME
Type VIII: Adj <i>and</i> Adj <i>and</i> Adj <i>and</i> Adj	1		early ME, 3 adjs predicative?
Type IX: Adj <i>and</i> Adj + Adj <i>and</i> Adj	1	refers to God	late ME
Total number	257	91	
Total number of tables 8 and 9	900	172	

^aNote: the only complex APs allowable in preposed position are cases where the adjective has been reinterpreted as an adverb (table 8); in table 9 we see mainly noncomplex adjectives coordinated by a conjunction: i.e. very few examples of adjectives accompanied by an adverb or prepositional phrase, or of non-coordinated adjectives (the ones that occur are all late). The number of APs occurring in definite NPs is greater than the number of postposed/ambilateral adjectives, no doubt due to the fact that preposed adjectives were the rule in definite NPs in Old English.

^bThe examples of nonconnected adjectives in category IV are all late with one exception: *Ah Iob wes anfuld rihtwis .Mon. and swa god mon pet ure drihten him solf hine herede ...* (CMLAMB1,151.415), which is from early ME. What is noteworthy about this example is that the head noun is an empty noun (*mon*) and that the adjectives are preceded by the copula verb *be*, which makes it possible for *anfuld* to be interpreted predicatively, i.e.: 'Job was modest, (a) righteous man and such a good man that our Lord himself praised him.' The other late examples are of interest too since most are rather special: three contain the adjective *own/same* which can be seen as part of the determiner; in two the second adjective is a numeral; in at least seven the second adjective and noun could be seen as a compound ('a fair *young woman*', 'great *deadly sins*', 'honest *ancient woman*', 'foul *sinful men*', etc.), while in one the adjectives themselves can be said to form a compound ('an evil *willed soul*')