CATEGORIAL HETEROGENITY: OLD ENGLISH DETERMINERS[*]

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the syntactic properties of two structures illustrated in (1) and (2):

1) his þone readan gim
    his the   red   gem
    'his red gem'

                                                        (coblick,HomU_18_[BlHom_1]:9.125.121),

2) þæs his cwides
    that his saying
    'that saying'

                                                        (coblick,LS_17.1_[MartinMor[BlHom_17]]:215.79.2742).

Example (1) features a *possessive – determiner* sequence, which is characterized by the obligatory occurrence of both an adjective and simple determiners of the paradigm *se/seo/þæt* (Mitchell 1985: §103-112). The reversed order (*determiner – possessive*) does not display such restrictions. In particular, the adjective is optional and compound determiners (*þes/þeos/þis*) are also licit in these sequences, as shown in example (2). The analysis proposed in this paper accounts for these facts by assuming that Old English determiners are not a homogeneous group because they combine both adjectival (specifier) and pronominal (head) properties.

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1. Introduction

Determiners have been a subject of many interesting studies in the syntactic literature. They have been approached from a broad, cross-linguistic perspective, where the focus lies on the comparison of their syntactic properties and development in various languages (Philippi 1997; Abraham 1997 for Germanic languages; Roberts and Roussou 2003 for Romance languages and English; Vincent 1997 for Romance languages). Alternatively, there have been case studies on the development of determiners in particular languages (Batllori and Roca 2001 for Spanish). In general, these approaches concentrate chiefly on the syntactic status of determiners, on whether they are heads or specifiers, how they develop historically and what are the consequences of this evolution.

From a strictly historical perspective, the work on English determiners focuses mainly on the rise of the definite article, though the syntactic literature on this subject does not boggle the mind. The first important account devoted exclusively to Old English is Spamer's (1979) paper, who considers the rise of the definite article as a result of the loss of contrast between strong and weak adjective endings. Since the inflections cannot play an important grammatical role in the Early Middle English period, a new form has to be introduced. Purdy (1973), by contrast, exploits the affinity between pronouns and determiners. He claims that the semantic similarity between these two systems ends when it comes to the third person, that is the *se-he*/*heo*/*hit* relationship. This split, in turn, creates a lacuna in the system that must be filled by the definite article. More recent accounts of determiners in the history of English Jones (1988) and Millar (2000) are data-oriented and, especially the latter, give extremely detailed lists of non-agreeing forms and their functions in various contexts, which enables us to see the evolution of the determiner system from a bipartite to tripartite system with a separate definite article form. Additionally, Millar tries to give reasons for the reshufflings in the determiner system in Early Middle English.

This paper does not focus on the transitional period when important changes take place. Instead, we will look at determiners in Old English. In particular, we will investigate their syntactic behaviour in two specific structures illustrated below:

1)   He sealde *his þone readan gim*, þæt wæs *his þæt halige blod*, mid þon he us gedyde
        He gave his the red gem, that was his that holy blood, with that he us made dælnimende þæs heofonlican rices;
        participators of the holy kingdom
        'He gave his red gem, which was his holy blood, and thereby made us participators of the heavenly kingdom'

                                    (coblick,HomU_18_[BlHom_1]:9.125.121).

2)   Wæs on þære dæde swiþe cuð þæt ure Drihten is swiþe gemyndig *þæs his*
     cwides þe   he
     was on this deed   very obvious that our lord   is very   mindful   of that
     his saying which he
     sylfa ær gecwæð:
     himself before said
     'By this deed it was very evident that our Lord is mindful of that saying
     of His which He himself formerly uttered'
                          (coblick,LS_17.1_[MartinMor[BlHom_17]]:215.79.2742).

In other words, we shall look at determiners that occur with possessives and we
will try to determine their syntactic properties. Specifically, we shall see that the
two structures, which differ in some respects, can tell us something about the
positional status of determiners just before the period that sees considerable
changes in the grammatical system. The findings of the data search[1] will be
interpreted in generative terms making use of relatively recent discoveries in the
frameworks of Principles and Parameters and Minimalism (Chomsky 1981,
1995; Pollock 1989) extended to the DP area (Abney 1987; Ritter 1993; Bern-
stein 2001 and references cited therein). This is not a very usual practice when
dealing with English determiners from a diachronic point of view. However,
before we go on to the proper analysis of the data, we shall consider some basic
facts concerning the categorial status of determiners in Old English.

2. Determiners in Old English: Some basic facts

In this section, we would like to consider the view that determiners in Old Eng-
lish combine both adjectival and pronominal properties. In other words, they are
elements that can be conventionally treated both as adjectives and as pronouns.
Note that this proposal is not new and similar attempts have been made in rela-
tion to other words/categories (cf. Quirk et al. 1985 and, recently, Denison
2001), who show that language exhibits gradient categorial boundaries.
    One indication that determiners may be considered adjectival elements con-
cerns rich inflection in the nominal phrase. Old English, being an inflected lan-
guage, has a fairly elaborate case system so that there is a nearly one-to-one
correspondence between a given form and its function encoded in a case-ending
in both simple and compound demonstrative paradigms, at least in the singular
(cf. Millar 1994, 1995, 2000):

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[1]   Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this paper are taken from The York-
Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English (*YCOE*).

Table 1. Simple paradigm: *se*, *seo*, *þæt* 'the, that'

	Singular			Plural
	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	All genders
Nom.	se	þæt	sēo, sīo	þā
Gen.	þæs	þæs	þǽre	þāra, þǽra
Dat.	þǽm, þām	þǽm, þām	þǽre	þǽm, þām
Acc.	þone	þæt	þā	þā
Instr.	þý, þon	þý, þon		

Table 2. Compound paradigm *þes*, *þis*, *þēos* 'this, that'

	Singular			Plural
	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	All genders
Nom.	þes	þis	þēos	þās
Gen.	þisses	þisses	þisse, þisre	þissa, þisra
Dat.	þissum	þissum	þisse	þissum
Acc.	þisne	þis	þās	þās
Instr.	þýs	þýs		

Interestingly, we find the same endings on determiners and other nominal pre-modifiers such as adjectives, quantifiers and possessives, which may testify to their categorial similarity:

3)   þo*ne* halgan Iohannem   on sum*ne* blind*ne* seað
     'the holy John'   'into a blind hole'
     'On þyss*um* feówertig*um* nihta' trymeþ godcund*um* gif*um*
     'during these 40 nights'   'strengthens with divine gifts'
     þa*ra* manna heortan   fela god*ra* monna
     'the men's heart(s)'   'many good men'
     On ðæ*re* hálgan Rómánisce cyricean mid unriht*re* gewilnunge
     'in the holy Roman church'   'with evil desire'

Note also that these "adjectival" endings occurring on Old English demonstratives concern both the simple and the compound paradigm. In other words, there appear endings on non-determiner constituents that surface in both paradigms such as *-(u)m* in *oðrum* (*-um* of *þissum* in the compound paradigm and *-m* of *þæm* in

the simple paradigm), *-re*, as in *unrihtre* (*-re* of *þisre* in the compound paradigm and *-re* of *þǽre* in the simple paradigm) and *-ne*, as in *sumne* (*-ne* of *þisne* in the compound paradigm and *-ne* of *þone* in the simple paradigm).

Another example where the adjectival-determiner affinity is clearly noticeable is the following pair:

4)   ac se sunu ana soðlice underfeng menniscnysse of us þe he us mid alysde, eall ðæs geares ymbegang herað *God ælmihtigne* and we mid urum ðeowdome geðwærlæcað þam tidum.
        'The son alone truly accepted the human nature from us, which he redeemed us with; the whole course of the year praises the Almighty God and we with our service are in agreement with the seasons'

                                                           (coaelhom,ÆHom_11:83-90.1535-37).

5)   ne hi syngian ne magon buton ðam anum ðe þanon afeollon for heora modignysse ongean *ðone ælmihtigan God*
        'nor can they [angels] sin except for those alone who fell down from there for their pride [directed] against the Almighty God'

                                                           (coaelhom,ÆHom_12:26.1801_ID).

The movement illustrated by the above examples may be interpreted as N-to-D movement (similar to Longobardi's 1994, 2001 account of movement noticed in the Italian DP). In particular, the noun in the first example has moved overtly to the D position to activate the DP area while the adjective occupies the specifier slot so that it checks its accusative case against an appropriate head. On the other hand, the latter example shows that accusative case can be checked in [Spec, DP]. In that case, the adjective is weakly inflected. Therefore, the fact that determiners and adjectives share certain inflections supports the assumption that they exhibit syntactic similarity.

The next reason for regarding determiners as adjectival elements is word order. The usual *demonstrative – adjective – noun* order is sometimes disrupted, as illustrated below:

6)   And Þa heafda ealle wurdon gesette on *ufeweardan Þam geate*
        'and all the heads were set on the upper part of the gate'

                                                           (coapollo,ApT:3.16.36_ID).

7)   se leoma gehran Þæm treowum ufonweardum
        'the light touched the tops of the trees'

                                                           (coalex,Alex: 36.17.464_ID).

Similarly, beside the usual *demonstrative – adjective – noun* we may even find:

8)   eþel þisne
      'this country'

<div align="right">(Quirk and Wrenn 1955: 89).</div>

Such distributional similarity strengthens the hypothesis that determiners are adjectival and, consequently, phrasal elements. It must be added, however, that the order in which the adjective precedes the determiner is rather marked. Nevertheless, the limited occurrence of this structure should not be taken as an argument against the adjectival character of these two constituents. On the contrary, it supports the view that determiners are not adjectives; they only exhibit some properties of adjectives.

Despite strong evidence for the adjectival nature of determiners they evince pronominal potential as well. First, this is indicated by the possibility of Old English demonstratives being used substantivally, possibly with some emphasis (cf. Mitchell 1985), as in:

9)   Be *þam* us halig gewrit myngað þus cweþende
      'The Holy Scripture exhorts us about that, saying'

<div align="right">(cobenrul,BenR:7.28.15.412_ID).</div>

Further, these demonstratives, just like pronouns, refer back to the name of a thing, or a person or even to a clause:

10)   *Se weg* is rum and forðheald þe to deaðe and to hellewite læt *se* is neara
      and sticol þe to life and to heofona rice læt
      'the way is wide and stooping that leads to death and torments in hell and
      that [the way] is narrow and steep that leads to life and heavenly king-
      dom'

<div align="right">(cobenrul,BenR:5.20.67_ID).</div>

11)   Ða wæs Þær eft gesomnad micel fyrd   Indiscra   monna Þæra elreordi-
      gra Þe ða lond
      then was there again gathered great army of Indian people of the barba-
      rous who the land
      budon & we Þa wið *Þæm* gefuhton
      inhabited and we then against them fought
      'then again a great army of barbarous Indian people who inhabited the
      land was gathered there and then we fought against them'

<div align="right">(coalex,Alex:23.2.266_ID).</div>

12) ðaða he wæs gebroht to geleafan mid ðære grapunge, ða wearð seo
     twynung þurh *þæt* us ætbroden
     'when he was converted to faith with the touch, then the uncertainty was
     removed from us through that'

                                                          (Mitchell 1985: §316).

As a third point of parallelism with pronouns, they can also refer cataphori-
cally to a clause here:

13) þæt is rihtwisnys þæt gehwylcum sy his agen cyre geðafod.
     'It is justice that to everybody be allowed his own choice'

                                                          (Mitchell 1985: §316).

Next, there is practically no difference between demonstratives and personal
pronouns in some cases. Compare the following examples:

14) and *se* þe mid me ne gaderaþ *he* towyrpð soðlice
     'and he who does not gather with me he truly destroys'

                                                  (coaelhom, ÆHom_4:39.539_ID).

15) and *se* þe ripð þæt gerip *se* underfehþ mede
     'and he who reaps the harvest he receives the reward'

                                                  (coaelhom, ÆHom_5:79.735_ID).

In the first example of the pair the determiner *se* is coreferenced with the pro-
noun *he*. In example (15) the determiner is repeated. Apparently, this is done
arbitrarily. Finally, syntactic ambiguity arises in the context of relative clauses:

16) Abel, Adames sunu, rihtwis and Gode andfenge, *þone* ofsloh Cain his
     broðor
     'Abel Adam's son, just and approved by God, him/who(m) killed Cain,
     his brother'

                                                          (Mitchell 1985: §322).

These arguments indicate that determiners in Old English can be regarded as
pronominal elements as well despite their adjectival affinity presented in the
first part of this section.

    To sum up, there exists fairly strong evidence for adjectival as well as pro-
nominal character of determiners in Old English. In what follows we will move
on to the analysis of determiners as they interact with possessives. We shall see
that their duality depicted in this section is further manifested in the different

syntactic properties displayed in the *determiner – possessive* and *possessive – determiner* sequences. Another issue we want to tackle in the following sections is whether this duality can be reflected in structural terms. For, if pronouns are generally heads (Postal 1969; Abney 1987; Cardinaletti and Starke 1994; Panagiotidis 1998) and adjectives specifiers (Cinque 1994; Scott 2002; Laenzlinger 2000),[2] it follows that determiners, at least in theory, should be able to occupy both slots.

3. The possessive pronoun – determiner sequences

In this section, we shall deal with determiners that follow possessives (the *poss-det* constructions) and we will examine their syntactic properties. Let us first look at two examples:

17)   and heom syððan   forgeaf *his þa ecan   sibbe* on his rice mid him.
       And them afterwards gave   his the everlasting peace on his reign with him
       'and afterwards he gave them his everlasting peace with him in his king-
       dom'

                                                    (coaelhom, ÆHom_10:125.1468).

18)   and cwæð: ðu goda cyningc and *min se leofesta fæder*, hwæt is þes iunga
       man þe ongean ðe
       and said: you good king, and my the dearest father, what is this young
       man, who opposite you
       on swa wurðlicum setle   sit   mid sarlicum   andwlitan?
       On so distinguished a seat sits, with sorrowful countenance?
       Distinguished a seat sits, with sorrowful countenance?
       'And said: good king and my dearest father, what is this young man, who
       sits opposite you on so distinguished a seat, with sorrowful counte-
       nance?'

                                                       (coapollo,ApT:15.3.286).

We have found 326 examples of this sort in the corpus. As far as we can see, there are no major differences between third person pronouns and first and second pronouns, such as those observed for instance by van Gelderen (2000a, 2000b). Interestingly, 293 of these sequences contain the adjective or its equivalent. Apart from adjectives proper, exemplified in sentences (17) and (18) above, we find present and past participles or quantifiers:

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[2]   The syntactic position of adjectives is a very contentious issue and some scholars disagree that they are specifiers. Abney (1987) and Bernstein (1993), for instance, claim that adjectives are heads.

19) Micel is Godes mildheortnyss ofer manncynne þæt he sylf wyle secan swa swa us segð þis
Great is God's   mercy   over mankind that He Himself wishes to seek as us tells this
gewrit *his ða tostenctan scep.* &   him sylf geneosian.
Scripture his the scattered sheep and Himself finds out
his the scattered sheep and Himself finds out
'great is God's mercy on mankind since He Himself wishes to seek and find out his scattered sheep as this scripture tells us'

                              (cocathom1, ÆCHom_I,_17_[App]:541.191.3320).

20) Nu we sceolan, men þa leofestan, ða wundor gecyrran on soþfæstnesse geleafan ures Drihtnes
Now, we must, men the dearest, those marvels turn   to the truth   of faith in our Lord
Hælendes Cristes, þa   he þurh   *his þa mycclan miht* worhte beforan manna eagum.
Jesus   Christ, which he through his the great power worked before men's eyes
'now, we must, my dearest men, turn those wonders which he through his great power worked before men's eyes into the truth of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ'

                              (coblick,HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:17.41.216).

The partial adjectival character of quantifiers is argued in Carlson (1979) and, recently, in Bartnik (2005). As for participles, they can be inflected just like adjectives, as in example (21). Additionally, the prefix *-un* in *ungecorene* strengthens its adjectival character:

21) ah forþon Crist þa mycclan burh & þa halgan Gerusalem swa forhogdlice nemde forþon þe þa
but therefore Christ the great city and the holy Jerusalem so despicable mentioned because
burhware him wæron for heora ungeleafan & mandædum *swiþe forhogde & ungecorene*
citizens him were   for their   unbelief and   sin   very despicable and reprobate
'but, nevertheless, Christ the great city and the holy Jerusalem so contemptuously mentioned because the citizens were to him, because of their unbelief and wickedness, very despicable and reprobate'

                                   (coblick,HomS_21_[BlHom_6]:77.207.976_ID).

The overwhelming preponderance of the *poss-det* sentences with adjectives confirms the obligatory character of the adjective (Mitchell 1985). Ideally, however, we should be able to explain away the remaining 33 cases, which seem to defy this hypothesis. Interestingly, out of these 33 cases, 20 sentences contain the word *nehstan*, which means 'neighbour', as illustrated below:

22)   & Johannes se godspellere cwæð, þiss bebod we habbeð fram Gode, þæt
       se þe God lufige, he eac lufige *his þone nextan*
       'John, the Evangelist said: This commandment we have from God that he
       who will love God will also love his neighbour'

                                          (coalcuin,Alc_[Warn_35]:47.38).

The next 10 cases contain the word *halgan*, which means 'saint', e.g.:

23)   hie sylfe þær Gode ælmihtigum & *his ðam halgan* him sylfum bebeodaþ
       mid halgum gebedum,
       'there they entrust themselves to God Almighty and His saints with holy
       prayer'

                                          (coverhom,LS_19_[PurifMaryVerc_17]:53.2176).

Despite these counterexamples, we should not too hastily reject the hypothesis about the mandatory character of adjectives in these structures. Note first of all that *nehstan* and *halgan* can surface as adjectives in some contexts:

24)   & swa swa hit þeaw is, þæt to æþelum werum & wifum manige mæn   hi
       gesomniað,
       and similarly, it custom is that to noble men and women many people
       them (selves?) assemble
       to þon þæt hi   frefrian *heora þa nehstan frynd*, swa eac swylce on þa
       ylcan tid hire
       so that they (could) console their closest friends, also, likewise,   on the
       same time her
       forðfore þider comon manige weras & wif
       departure thither come many men and women.
       'and just as it is customary that many people gather around noble men
       and women in order that they might comfort their closest friends, in the
       same way many men and women came there at the (very) time of her de-
       parture (= 'death')'

                                          (cogregdC,GDPref_and_4_[C]:17.286.17.4233).

25)   Forlet he ure Drihten *his þa halgan fet* þær on þa eorþan besincan man-
       num to ecre

       let   he our Lord   his the holy feet there into the earth sink   to
       men as eternal

       gemynde,   þa   he æfter *his þære halgan þrowunga* his þa menniscan
       gecynd

       remembrance when he after his the holy   passion   his the human
       nature

       on heofenas lædon wolde, þonon he næfre onweg gewiten næs þurh his
       þa ecan

       into heaven lift   would whence he never away go was not through His
       the eternal

       godcundnesse.
       Godhead

       'Our Lord let his holy feet sink the earth there for perpetual remembrance
       to men, when he after his holy passion would take his human nature into
       heaven, from whence, by reason of his eternal divinity he had never de-
       parted'

                                        (coblick,HomS_46_[BlHom_11]:127.207.1578).

Moreover, the noun can be ellipted in Old English because of rich inflection,
which further complicates the issue, since it is not always easy to decide
whether we are dealing with the noun or the adjective with the noun ellipted
(cf. Denison 2001, who discusses gradience between nouns and adjectives
from a diachronic point of view). For example, *YCOE* reports that *nehstan* in
the following example is the adjective, though it may well be translated as a
noun:

26)   Men ða leofestan us ys mycel þearf þæt we God lufien of eallre heortan
       & of eallre sawle & of eallum mægene & syððan *ure þa nehstan*, þæt
       syndon ealle cristene menn, utan hie lufian

       eallswa us sylfe.

       'my dear men, it is very necessary for us that we should love God with all
       our heart, with all our soul with all our might, and then our neighbours,
       who are all Christian people, let us love them as we love ourselves'

                                        (coverhom,HomM_13_[ScraggVerc_21]:1.2661).

The same concerns participles, which might contain an ellipted noun or might
even be coordinated in these ellipted structures. Witness the examples below:

27)   he þa onsende his þone wuldorfæstan gast to helle grunde þær þone eal-
      dor ealra þeostra & þæs ecean deaþes geband & gehynde ealne his gefer-
      scipe swyþe gedrefde & helle geatu & hire þa ærenan scyttelas he ealle
      tobræc & ealle *his þa gecorenan* he þonon alædde,
      'he then sent His glorious spirit to the abyss of hell and there bound and
      humbled the prince of all darkness and eternal death and greatly troubled
      his company, and completely broke in pieces the gates of hell and their
      bronze bolts and brought out from there all his chosen ones'
                                         (coblick,HomS_26_[BlHom_7]:85.30.1060).

28)   ðonne besyhð se soðfæsta dema on þa swiðran healfe *to his ðam gecore-
      num & to his ðam halgum*, & he ðus cweð
      'then the just judge will look to the right side at his chosen ones and at his
      saints and will speak as follows'
                                      (coverhom,HomU_6_[ScraggVerc_15]:173.1989).

In some cases, a larger bit can be ellipted with the possessive and determiner
left:

29)   þu gename on þam ælmihtigan Gode his offrunge and nu brohtest þine to
      me ac ic nelle *þa þine* underfon, forþon þe þu on Gode his gereafodest.
      'you took away his sacrifice from the Almighty God and now you
      brought yours to me but I do not want to accept yours because you stole
      from God his [sacrifice]'
                                      (cogregdC,GDPref_and_3_[C]:26.230.24.3214).

Consequently, despite the fact that in the 30 cases *nehstan* and *halgan* are
tagged nouns in the corpus, it is clear that it is better to regard them as adjec-
tives followed by an overt or a covert noun, which renders these cases quite
unexceptional. This is further supported by the historical as well as synchronic
evidence of affixes: *nehsta* is the superlative form and *-ig* in *halig* is the adjecti-
val ending.
   The *halgan* and *nehstan* sentences make up 30 cases. The three remaining
exceptions are given below:

30)   & befealden to Hælendes cneowum, he cwæþ, Min saul bletsaþ Drihten
      & ealle *mine þa inneran* his þone halgan naman.
      'and having embraced the Saviour's knees, he said, my soul shall bless
      the Lord and all that is within me shall bless his holy name'
                                         (coblick,HomS_26_[BlHom_7]:87.99.1125).

31) ðætte Angelðeod wæs gelaðod fram Bryttum on Breotone; & heo sona
    ærest *heora þa wiðerweardan* feor adrifan; ac nales æfter micelre tide þæt
    hi geweredon wið him, & heora wæpen hwyrfdon wið Bryttas heora gefa-
    ran.
    'that the Angles were invited into Britain by the Britons: who first soon
    drove out their adversaries, but not long afterwards made a treaty with
    them and turned their arms against the Britons their allies'

    (cobede,BedeHead:1.8.9.17).

32) He gesceop men on eorþan gegaderode þa saula & þone lichoman mid *his*
    þam anwealde
    'He created men on earth, joined together the soul and the body by his
    ruling power'

    (coboeth,Bo:30.69.22.1291).

Two out of three cases given above can be explained along the lines we sug-
gested for *nehstan* and *halgan*. In particular, although *inneran* 'interior', 'inner'
(cf. Bosworth and Toller 1898) and *wiðerweardan* 'enemy' are nouns in the
corpus, they are clearly marked by adjectival or adjectival/adverbial suffixes: -
er and -*weard*, respectively. Moreover, Bosworth and Toller (1898) reports that
the two words can function as adjectives. In effect, *anwealde* 'power' remains
the only genuine exception, which does not undermine the hypothesis about the
adjectival obligatoriness in the *poss-det* structures in the face of so many exam-
ples that contain adjectives. Consequently, we conclude that this hypothesis can
be fully retained.

   One more issue needs to be raised in this place. These structures reveal that
there exists a restriction on the choice of determiners used in these strings. Spe-
cifically, only simple determiners (see Millar 1994, 1995, 2000 for the division
into simple and compound determiners), that is the *se/seo/þæt* paradigm, are
licit here. We have found no examples whatsoever where compound determin-
ers (*þes/þis/þēos*) can be preceded by possessives. This fact might additionally
corroborate the split within determiners suggested above.

   This section has tackled structures in which determiners and possessives sur-
face simultaneously and the former follow the latter. We have established that
when the possessive precedes the determiner the adjective must obligatorily
follow the two despite apparent counterexamples. Moreover, not every deter-
miner can crop up in such sequences. The next section, as might be expected,
shall deal with the reverse order of determiners and possessives. We will look at
the syntactic properties of the structure and compare it with the one presented
above.

4. The determiner – possessive pronoun sequences

This part is devoted to the combination of determiners followed by possessives. This is exemplified below:

33)   *Be þam his gehate* sette he fæstnunge mid gewrite to þæs abbodes naman
         and þæra halgena,
         by the his promise set he exhortation with writing to the Abbess' name
         and the saints'
         þe hyra reliquie, þæt is hyra ban, on þære stowe restað.
         who their relics that is their bones, on the place rest

         'according to this promise he should make confirmation in writing to the
         abbot's name and (the names) of the saints whose relics, that is their
         bones, rest in that place'

                                                        (cobenrul,BenR:58.101.1.1051).

34)   *ða mine þeowas* sindon wisdomas & cræftas & soðe welan
         'my servants are wisdom and virtues and true riches'

                                                                    (coboeth,Bo:7.18.5.287).

35)   and *ðas ðine gesætlan* synd mine gebroðra, Auitus and Særgius,
         'and these that sit with you are my brothers, Auitus and Særgius'
                                                        (coaelive, ÆLS_[Eugenia]:233.330).

In our corpus, there are 207 sentences displaying the *determiner – possessive* order. With the reverse order, we immediately notice that these structures differ from the ones presented in the previous section in that they admit the adjective only optionally. That is, we can find plenty of cases without the adjective, as in examples (33), (34), (35). On the other hand, there are cases where the adjective is present:

36)   ac he teah forð *þa his ealdan wrenceas*
         'but he brought forth his old tricks'
                                                        (cochronE,ChronE_[Plummer]:1003.6.1640).

Importantly, both kinds of determiners are allowed in this structure. As illustrated by the above examples, we can find both simple (*þam*, *þa*) and compound (*ðas*) determiners.

    This part of the article shows that the properties of the *det-poss* string are different than the properties in the *poss-det* order. In particular, the adjective is

an optional element, and there is a wider choice of determiners. In the following section we shall try to interpret our observations in generative terms.

5. The analysis

This section offers a tentative analysis of the constructions presented above focusing on the dual nature of determiners.[3] However, before we move on to the proper analysis a few remarks on agreement inside NP/DP are in order since the elements we deal with (determiners, possessives and adjectives) show agreement for case, number and gender with the head noun.

In Old English, there is an alternation between two types of inflectional endings: strong and weak endings. If strong inflectional endings are realized on the determiner or on the possessive, the adjective assumes weak endings. If, however, determiners and/or possessives do not occur, adjectives are inflected strong. Spamer (1979) interprets these facts in the following way. He suggests that there are two kinds of adjectives, which reflect the morphological strong/weak distinction. Weak adjectives, which he calls "adjuncts", form a compound with the head noun. Moreover, they are recursive elements. By contrast, strong adjectives are non-recursive as they are treated on a par with determiners: "The demonstrative and the adjective function in the same way in the noun phrase: they take essentially the same endings (in contrast to the adjuncts), they occupy the same initial position, and the use of one precludes the use of the other" (Spamer 1979: 246). Thus we can find two prenominal adjectives following one another and a weak adjective preceded by a strong one prenominally. However, according to Spamer (1979), you will not find a sequence of two strong adjectives used prenominally unless they are conjoined by *and* or when at least one of them is placed postnominally. Fischer (2000) agrees that weak adjectives are adjuncts forming a kind of nominal compound. She disagrees, however, with the idea that strong adjectives are determiners. She considers them to be predicative elements.

With these ideas in mind let us inspect the Old English data presented above. Recall that crosslinguistically, possessives are situated below the determiner phrase (cf. Haegeman and Guéron 1999; Brugé 2002). This stems from the fact that in some languages possessives may follow determiners, as in Italian. The differences in the relative word order of determiners and possessives have usually been explained by the raising of the possessive from [Spec, PossP] to [Spec, NumP] in Romance languages (Valois 1991; Picallo 1994) as a result of the need of a posses-

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[3] The analysis of possessives lies beyond the scope of this article. However, it would be natural to say that they, just like quantifiers and determiners evince dual nature. If this analysis is on the right track, possessives at least in theory, should also enter the Middle English period as a heterogeneous category.

sive form to get genitive case. On the other hand, in Germanic languages, as Olsen (1989) argues, possessives are genitive marked pronouns sitting in [Spec, DP]. Taken these proposals into account, we suggest that we obtain the *poss-det* order in Old English by the movement of the possessive into the [Spec, DP] slot to get case. Further, we have to account for the fact that the adjective is a mandatory element of the *poss-det* structure. In order to do that, we want to use Spamer's and Fischer's ideas that some adjectives form compounds with the head noun. Thus, by analogy, we propose that determiners, (pro)nominal elements (cf. section 2), form compounds with the following adjectives. Such an account also explains why the determiner goes together with the adjective when the genitive occurs, as in:

37)   se forecwedena Godes þeow
       'the aforementioned God's servant'

(GD (H) 44. 11) (Mitchell 1985: §110).

Mitchell (1985: §110) considers such examples as the third pattern in which determiners and possessives (in this case, genitives) co-occur. Our analysis nicely captures the fact that in such a configuration the determiner and the adjective can go together, as shown by example (37). Another issue worth considering here is how agreement works in such constructions. An anonymous reviewer pointed out that agreement is triggered by the head-specifier relation, where specifiers are maximal projections. However, most GB accounts and some minimalist works (van Gelderen 1997) allow another possibility of checking the agreement relation. More specifically, agreement features may be licensed in the head-head configuration. If this analysis is on the right track, the simple demonstrative being a head agrees with the adjective in such a configuration. Notice at this point that the idea that heads agree for Θ features does not have to be in conflict with the traditional assumption that only maximal projections (specifiers) can enter the agreement relation because, as Olsen (1989) suggests, strong Θ features are head features that must be given expression in D if this position is overtly filled. Consequently, the movement of the possessive pronoun is not blocked as the complex determiner-adjective sits in D.[4] The above suggestions are illustrated in Figure 1:

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[4]   An anonymous reviewer remarks that prenominal adjectives cannot be heads as they can take PP complements in some contexts. S/he gives a Polish example:

[NP dumny z syna ojciec]

Indeed, Old English adjectives can take PP complements in prenominal positions. However, it never happens in the *poss-det* structures. As our subsequent discussion shows, adjectives can also occupy a different slot in the syntactic tree, in which case PP complements are allowed. Therefore, their ability to take complements in some contexts does not preclude the existence of head adjectives provided that adjectives can be hosted in non-head positions as well.

DP

min PossP

D

se t

ADJ

Poss NP
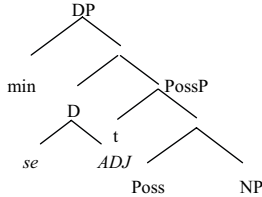
Figure 1. Derivation of *poss-det* sequences

The reverse *det-poss* order with the compound determiner (*ðas ðine*) is easily derived when we assume that the determiner and the possessive are hosted only in the specifier positions [Spec, DP] and [Spec, PossP], respectively, as illustrated by Fig. 2 below. In this way, we can account for the complete absence of the *poss*-(*compound*) *det* sequences as the movement of the possessive to [Spec, DP] is blocked because this slot is already occupied. This is illustrated in Figure 2:

DP

ðas PossP

ðine AdjP

ADJ NP
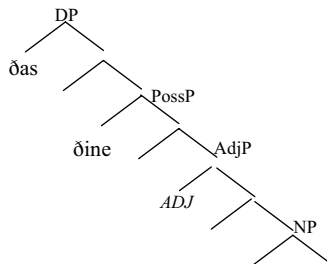
Figure 2. Derivation of *det* (*compound*)-*poss* sequences

Notice also that we put the adjective in the specifier slot as a result of its optional character in the *det-poss* sentences. Agreement obtains in the usual fashion, in the spec-head relation, since the adjective is a maximal projection in this configuration.[5] In effect, we are left with the last combination to account for,

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[5] The structural location of adnominal adjectives is a very broad topic and cannot be dealt with in detail here for space limitations. We opt for a specifier analysis of prenominal adjectives (cf. Cinque 1995; Laenzlinger 2000) in the *det-poss* sequences as

namely *the* (*simple*) *det-poss* (*se* min) string. We have already suggested that simple determiners may occupy the head position, in which case the possessive automatically raises into [Spec, DP]. If we wanted to apply this line of reasoning to the sequence in question, we would have to find reason why the possessive is not promoted, as in the previous case. In such a situation we may easily resort to the often accepted explanation based on feature strength. However, such an analysis cannot be applied here as we are not dealing with two (or more) languages with considerably different inflectional systems, which is usually an indication of this featural strength. Therefore, we propose that simple determiners may occupy the [Spec, DP] slot, just like their compound counterparts.[6] This double placement results from their dual nature demonstrated in the previous sections. That is, simple determiners can be heads as they exhibit syntactic affinity with pronouns. On the other hand, they are adjectival elements placed in the specifier position, thus showing the parallelism with adjectives. Consequently, the following structures enable us to derive all the licit combinations of determiners and possessives in Old English:
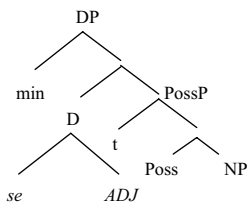

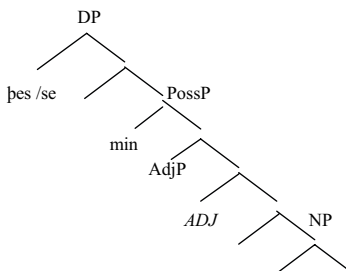Figure 3. Derivation of *poss-det* sequences

Figure 4. Derivation of *det-poss* sequences

[6]   Alternatively, we might imagine a scenario in which it is the possessive that is placed in the head of PossP provided that we can find some evidence for the placement of the possessive in the head slot. In this way, its movement to the head of DP would be blocked by the determiner already sitting there. One way or another, we obtain the desired order. If it turns out that this solution is correct, we have evidence that possessives, just like determiners, quantifiers and adjectives, as shown in this article, exhibit dual syntactic nature.

6. Summary

In this article, we have tried to show that Old English determiners are not a homogeneous group, as is traditionally claimed. We hope to have shown that they evince both adjectival and pronominal properties. The syntactic differences are also visible when these determiners are simultaneously combined with possessives. Finally, we have demonstrated that these divisions should be reflected in the syntactic analysis of these elements. The most natural way of interpreting the data is to say that determiners, just like other elements, can be both heads reflecting their pronominal nature and specifiers displaying adjectival character (see also Cornilescu 1992), who contends that the demonstrative may correspond to a specifier or a head.

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