

6: Old English Adverbs and Numerals

Adverb Formation in Modern English

adjective + *-ly*: *easy* > *easily*
scarce > *scarcely*
recent > *recently*

noun + *-wise*: *length* > *lengthwise*
clock > *clockwise*

unmarked: *fast*
hard
yesterday
there
also

Adverb Formation in Old English

- adjective + *e*:
lang (long) > *lange* (for a long time)
gearu (ready) > *gearwe* (readily)
nīwe (new) > *nīwe* (newly, recently)
īeþe (easy) > *ēaþe* (easily)
- word + *-lice*:
heard (hard) > *heardlice* (severely)
ār (honour) > *ārlīce* (honourably)
ēar (early) > *ēarlīce* (early)
- word + *-inga/unga*:
ealle (all) > *eallunga* (entirely)
ierre (anger) > *ierringa* (angrily)
- simple stems:
oft (often)
wel (well)
ēac (also, *auch*)

Adverb Formation in Old English

- word in acc.: *efen* (equal) > *efen* (equally)
āwiht (anything) > *āwiht* (at all)
- adjective in gen.: *ealle* (all) > *ealles* (entirely)
- word in dat. sg.: *nīed* (necessity) > *nīede* (necessarily)
- word in dat. pl.: *hwīl* (a while) > *hwīlum* (sometimes)
- with prep.: *tōmiddes* (prep. + gen., amidst)
tōgædere (prep. + adv., together)
wiþūtan (prep. + adv., outside)
ymbūtan (prep. + adv., around)
begeondan (prep. + adv., beyond)

Adverb or Adjective?

- ▶ Adverb *missenlice* ‘variously’
- ▶ Adjective *missenlic* ‘various’:
 - ▶ Strong ismn *missenlice*
 - ▶ Strong napmf *missenlice*
 - ▶ Strong asf *missenlice*
 - ▶ Weak nasn *missenlice*
 - ▶ Weak nsf *missenlice*

→ Rely on context!

- ▶ Weak adjectives are preceded by a pronoun or modifier
- ▶ All adjectives modify a noun, whether or not implied

Adverb or Adjective?

An adjective typically occurs close to a noun:

- ▶ Immediately preceding a noun:

Se tila cyning

- ▶ Closely following a noun:

Crist nāmode Ābel rihtwisne

Waldend þone gōdan

Adverb or Adjective?

Adverbs will often appear adjacent to the verb or adjective they modify, but especially when modifying verbs they can move more freely, e.g.:

- ▶ Adjacent to the verb that is modified:

hē hearde fēoll

- ▶ Adjacent to subject/object, modifying a clause-final verb:

hīe brædlīce for mægenlēaste swulton

Numeral Declension

Cardinals

Only *ān*, *twēgen*, *þrīe* are typically declined. They decline as strong or weak adjectives, depending on context. When *ān* is weak, it is an adverb meaning “alone” rather than “one”.

Hīe sind *ān* god, on *ānre* godcundnesse and on *ānum* gecynde.

Hē hæfde *twēgene* sunu, Ermenrēd and Ercenberht.

Her cōm Port on Brytene and his *twēgan* sunan.

Nis nā gedafenlic þæt þes man *āna* bēo.

Ordinals

Always decline as weak adjectives, except *ōðer*, which is always strong.

On þām *fiftēoþan* geare cōm Godes word ofer Iōhannem.

Ordinal Formation

An ordinal is formed by adding *-ta* or *-ða* to the cardinal stem. Beyond twelve, that stem usually ends in *-o*, either because the *-n* of the ‘teen’-morpheme is dropped or because an *o* is added to the ‘ty’-element. *Ān*, *twēgen*, *þrīe* have slightly different ordinals.

#	Cardinal	Ordinal
1	ān	forma, fyrsta
2	twēgen	ætterra, oþer
3	þrīe	þrida
4	fēower	fēorþa
11	endleofan	endlyfta
12	twelf	twelfta
13	þrēotīne	þrēotēoþa
30	þrītīg	þrītigoþa

Example Sentences

Be þissum ðinge gē habbað oft gehȳred.

Unriht weaxeð ealles tō wīde.

Neron cwæþ, “Gang mē nēar hider, and sege mē hwæt þū þence.”

Iōhannes fulluht ðwōh þone mannan wiðūtan, and nān ðing wiðinnan.

Hwīlum Brettas, hwīlum eft Seaxan sige geslōgon.

On þam twelftan dæge cristes acennednysse comon þa þry tungelwitegan.

Stephanus wæs se fyrmesta; oðer Philippus; þridda Procorus.

He ða fæste feowertig daga 7 feowertig nihta.

Verse Form

Rhythm

- ▶ Two verses per long line (separated by a caesura)
- ▶ Two lifts (= beats) per verse
- ▶ Variable number of drops (= unstressed syllables)
- ▶ (Sometimes hypermetric lines)

“ Oft Scýld Scéfing sceapena þreatum *sc-alliteration*
5 monegum mægþum méodosetla ofteah,
égsode éorlas, syððan árest wéarð *vowel alliteration*
féascaft fúnden. He þæs frófre gebád,
wéox under wólcnum, wéorðmyndum þáh,
oðþæt him ághwýlc ýmbsittendra
10 ofer hrónráde hýran sólde,
gómban gýldan. Þæt wæs gód cýning!

Alliteration

- ▶ One or both lifts in the a-verse
- ▶ First lift in the b-verse
- ▶ Vowels alliterate among themselves
- ▶ *sc, sp, st* keep to themselves