

Ferdinand von Mengden

*The Syntax of Old English Numerals*

Previous descriptions of the syntax of Old English cardinal numerals have claimed a nominal and an adjectival use of numerals. If used nominally, the numeral either stands alone or the quantified element is in the partitive genitive. If used adjectivally the numeral is a dependent attribute to the quantified NP.

For a more detailed analysis of the syntactic properties of numerals (and of the semantic implications involved) I suggest to distinguish between general syntactic functions of numerals and the syntactic relation between numeral and quantified element. My analysis results in a scale of five general syntactic uses, from a completely nominalized numeral (*þa twelf* 'the apostles') to a numeral exclusively and immediately quantifying an NP. On a different level, there are several types of quantificational constructions according to the syntactic relation between numeral and quantified NP. The main distinction here is that between attributive and partitive quantification, but again a more detailed categorisation proves to be necessary.

The analysis also reveals the inaccuracy of the traditional terminology. The reference to the word categories of classical grammar ('nominal' and 'adjectival') has so far obstructed the view on the possibility to describe the types of quantification in Old English more adequately with reference to universal types of quantification, i.e. to parallels in non-cognate languages.