

A Study of the Inflections in the *Life of Saint Katherine*

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The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the inflections and make clear the language of the *Life of Saint Katherine* which was written in one of Southern dialects. The date of Catherine Group is circa 1230-50. If we investigate the inflections at a glance, we will find the obliteration of them had already gone. The English language's system of inflection was significantly simplified during this period.

Citation is by line, e.g. (135) denoting '1.135.'

I. The declension of nouns.

(A) The Singular of nouns.

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|--|---------------|
| (1) as þe king hehte | (nom.m.432). |
| (2) Þis meiden wes bæge / federles & moderles | (nom.n. 77). |
| (3) for al þe cwarterne, of his cume / leitede o leie | (nom.n.671). |
| (4) Ne niht nis ter neauer / ne neauer na nowcin | (nom.f.1682). |
| (5) &, hure, meale wið muð | (acc.m.1722). |
| (6) Þe ðet nes nawt þes kinges þurst, / wið al þis blod, ikelet | (acc.n.2259). |
| (7) Þ he bihet to medin ham / mid swiðe heh mede | (acc.f.415). |
| (8) bitahte al hire feht / in hire healendes hond | (gen.m.612). |
| (9) t draft þerto dunriht / as an þunres dune | (gen.m.1998). |
| (10) & nom blod & ban / of a meidenes bodi | (gen.n.909). |
| (11) ne nan worldes wurðsdchipe | (gen.f.1502). |
| (12) & al þes lefdis licome / leofliche smirede | (gen.f.2192). |
| (13) Þe barren of þe burhe. | (gen.f.2317). |
| (14) Þes is þe, i þis strif | (dat.m.940). |
| (15) Þ weren in estlonde / & heued of þe heste | (dat.n.535). |
| (16) bette & eode on bote | (dat.f.1204). |
| (17) for he halt in his hond | (dat.f.1779). |
| (18) Þis meiden wes bæge / federles & moderles / of hire childhade | (dat.f.79). |

The nominative singular became identical with the accusative singular

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in the strong feminine nouns ending in a consonant, which in Old English had different forms for the two cases.

(B) The Plural of nouns.

The accusative plural is almost the same in form with the nominative.

- (1) Ðurh hwam ƿ under hwam / alle *kinges* rixleƿ (nom.224).
- (2) all his *cnihtes* / hwer he hefde, wiƿ Ðe cwen / iwunet ƿ iwiket (nom.1738).
- (3) ƿ seiƿ hit beoƿ *deoulen* / ƿ in ham dearieƿ (nom.553).
- (4) æe schulen beon mine *readesmen* (nom.574).
- (5) fedde hire al Ðe tweolf *dahes* (acc.1824).
- (6) Ah Ðu biÐenche me anan / *teonen* ƿ *tintreohen* (acc.1888).
- (7) *Homer*es motes, *Aristotles* turnes; *Esculapies* creftes,
Galienes grapes; *Philistiones* flites, *Platunes* bokes (gen.850-855).
- (8) Hwen he com to arudden / of *deafes* rake oƿre (gen.1138).
- (9) Ðurhwunest in alre *worlde* world / a on ecnesse (gen.663).
- (10) ƿ cleopede to hire Porphire, / *cnihtene* prince (gen.1559).
- (11) twenti *dahene* ƿong (gen.2469).
- (12) Ðu *kinge* forcuƿest! (gen.2211).
- (13) o least wiƿ stronge *tintreohen* / ƿ licomliche *pinen* (dat.41-42).
- (14) as hit deh drihtines *cnihtes* (dat.1436).
- (15) fode to wilde deor, / ƿ to *luftfuheles* (dat.2245).

For the nominative case in the plural I have two inflectional endings *-es* and *-en*. The accusative plural is almost the same in form with the nominative. For the genitive plural, the inflectional endings are *-e*, *-es*, *-ene*, *-en*. I find the inflectional ending of the weak declension *-ene* (O.E. *-ena*), (see 10,11).

(C) Minor Declensions

(C.1) Umlaut declension

- (1) anan wiƿuten Ðe burh, / bihefden ham, each *ƿot* (sg.2241).
- (2) honden buten felunge, / *ƿet* buten ƿonge (pl.499).
- (3) Ðe *ƿet* ƿ te honden / ƿ ha wrungen aæein (pl.1358).
- (4) ƿ hit na wis *mon* (sg.323).
- (5) ƿ each *mon* ah to hersumin / ƿ herien in eorƿe (sg.352).

- (6) Ne nis na þing hwer þurh / *monnes* muchele madschipe (gen.sg.235).
 (7) to neomen *monnes* cunde (gen.sg.1001).
 (8) ludinge of þe *men* (pl.144).
 (9) Þen þ he makeþ *men* (pl.260).
 (10) ƿ drupest alre *monne* (gen.pl.2022).
 (11) leouest an *wummon!* (sg.2420).
 (12) i þe tale of þine *wummen* (pl.2385).
 (13) Me þef fifti *wimmen* (pl.1274).
 (14) ƿ Platunes *bokes* (pl.855).

The change of vowel appears in a certain number of nouns in the nominative and accusative plural. *fot* Sg.> *fet* Pl., *mon* Sg.> *men* Pl., *wummon* Sg.> *wummen* Pl. A small group of nouns have a genitive singular of the regular type *-es*, and we find a genitive plural *monne* without umlaut.

(C.2) -R declension

- (1) of his *feader* soþ godd, / ƿ of his *moder* soþ mon (sg.929-930).
 (2) þurh þe heouenliche *feder* (sg.264).
 (3) Þi *federes* wisdom! (gen.sg.619).

II. The declension of adjectives.

(A) The strong and weak declensions.

- (1) hwil ha aa mahte, / *blisful* ƿ *bliþe* (sg.st.1857).
 (2) ƿ te *eadie* Katerine / bigon for to seggen (sg.wk.748).
 (3) feier ƿ *freolich* (sg.st.68).
 (4) ƿ beaten hire *bare* flesch / ƿ hire *freoliche* bodi (sg.wk.1538-1539).
 (5) þ *poure* ba ƿ *riche* / comen þer beforen him (pl. 50).
 (6) ƿ te irnene preones / se *scharpe* ƿ se *starke* (pl. 1925).

The strong form in the singular which had no inflectional ending was usually used, but plural ending *-e* was very common in this work. If the adjective was preceded by the definite article, by a demonstrative, by a possessive pronoun, or by a noun in the genitive case, the weak form which mostly ended in *-e* in this work.

(B) Comparison of adjectives.

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|---|---------|
| (1) ƿ alle ƿe burhmfen / seouen siȝes <i>brihtre</i> / ƿen beo ƿe sunne | (1665). |
| (2) a ƿusentfalt te <i>fehene</i> | (2291). |
| (3) Ah ȝet me ƿuncheȝ <i>betere</i> / ƿ ha beo ear ouercumen | (559). |
| (4) ƿ ferde into ƿe <i>firreste</i> / ende of Alixandre | (1554). |
| (5) ƿ <i>drupest</i> alre monne | (2022). |

The comparative was generally formed by means of *-re*. The examples of the irregular comparison which we could find was *betere* in this work.

III. The personal pronouns.

(A) Nominative, Sg., Pl.

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|---|---------|------------|
| (1) Nis buten an godd, / as <i>ich</i> ear seide | (=I) | (368). |
| (2) ƿu undernome ƿis strif | (=thou) | (681). |
| (3) on ƿ <i>tu</i> hauest bigunnen | (=thou) | (678). |
| (4) <i>Ha</i> onswerede ƿ seide | (=she) | (460). |
| (5) <i>Heo</i> wiȝ Cristes cros / cruchede hire oueral | (=she) | (726). |
| (6) ƿeos meiden lette lutel / of al ƿ <i>he</i> seide | (he) | (355). |
| (7) <i>We</i> schulen bringen to ende / ƿ <i>we</i> bigunnen habbe* | (=we) | (394-395). |
| (8) for ƿi ƿ ȝe ne sehen ham | (=you) | (278). |
| (9) ƿ <i>heo</i> buheȝ to him | (=they) | (365). |
| (10) ƿ <i>ha</i> schulen leasten a | (=they) | (277). |

In this work I can confirm the nominative *ich, ƿu, tu, ha, heo, he*, of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd persons singular. The plural is complete: *ȝe, heo* and *ha* can be found.

(B) Accusative & Dative, Sg., Pl.

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|--|---------|------------|
| (1) ȝef <i>me</i> is ileuet | (=me) | (770). |
| (2) ƿe wel wule witen ƿe | (=thee) | (684). |
| (3) He bihat <i>te</i> ƿ he wule | (=thee) | (685). |
| (4) Constantin walde efter / ƿ warpen <i>him</i> ƿeonne | (=him) | (17). |
| (5) Ah ƿe engel elnede <i>hire</i> | (=her) | (673). |
| (6) Ah ȝet ne ƿuncheȝ <i>ow</i> nawt inoh / to forleosen <i>ow</i> ƿus | (=you) | (346-347). |
| (7) iset <i>us</i> for to frouirin | (=us) | (284). |
| (8) ah he...makeȝ <i>ham</i> ƿ ha beoȝ | (=them) | (297). |

(C) Genitive, Sg., Pl.

(1) i <i>mi</i> muȝ to marhen	(=my)	(647).
(2) ƿ strengȝe i <i>mine</i> wordes	(=my)	(649).
(3) Aweld, ƿurh ƿi wisdom	(=thy)	(654).
(4) ƿ ti muȝ murie	(=thy)	(314).
(5) walde wel bicumen ƿe / for ƿin hehnesse	(=thy)	(209).
(6) ƿ tine mix maumez	(=thy)	(2069).
(7) Alle ich iseo ƿine sahen / sotliche isette	(=thy)	(358).
(8) ƿ al <i>his</i> kineriche	(=his)	(179).
(9) ƿe keiser wundrede him / swiȝe of <i>hire</i> wordes (=her)		(378).
(10) bi <i>ure</i> undeadliche godes	(=our)	(350).
(11) ƿ alle <i>ower</i> leasunges / beoȝ unlefliche	(=your)	(344).
(12) as schafte to <i>his</i> schuppent?	(=their)	(366).

The form *myne* is, needless to say, a genitive one before the vowel.

IV. Verbal inflectional endings.

(A) The Present.

(A.1) The Singular.

(1) from him ƿ ich <i>heie</i>	(1st)(1496).
(2) al ƿ ich <i>segge</i>	(1st)(1090).
(3) ƿ murie ƿu <i>makest</i> hit	(2nd)(1487).
(4) Ah her, ƿu <i>wenest</i> ȝet	(2nd)(1153).
(5) he <i>smecheȝ</i> me ƿ smealleȝ	(3rd)(1526).
(6) ƿe feont ƿe <i>findeȝ</i> euch uel	(3rd)(255).

For the present indicative, the form of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd pers. singular are *-e*, *-est*, *-eȝ*.

(A.2) The Plural.

(1) ƿ we <i>leauēȝ</i> ƿi lahe / ƿ al ƿine bileaue	(1st)(1340).
(2) ah ȝet we <i>forȝeoteȝ</i> us	(1st)(1368).
(3) Ah al ƿ ȝe <i>seggeȝ</i> / is se sutel sotschipe	(2nd)(321).
(4) wiȝ godd, ƿ ȝe <i>gremieȝ</i>	(2nd)(301).
(5) Hwen ȝe <i>sondeȝ</i> biforen / kinges ƿ eorles	(2nd)(635).
(6) ƿ heo <i>buheȝ</i> to him	(3rd)(365).
(7) ƿ se feole cuȝe men... <i>copniȝ</i> ƿ <i>kepeȝ</i>	(3rd)(801).

I can see the termination *-eȝ* for the plural.

(B) The Preterite

(B.1) The Single.

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|---|--------------|
| (1) as ich ear <i>seide</i> | (1st)(368). |
| (2) Ah ich <i>drede</i> þ tis dream / me dreie toward deaþe | (1st)(1488). |
| (3) þ tu <i>schuldest</i> heien | (2nd)(1019). |
| (4) ƿ tu <i>hauest</i> ileuet me / ƿ waldest þ ich were | (2nd)(2384). |
| (5) þe king <i>hercnede</i> his read | (3rd)(1945). |
| (6) hwen he <i>lokede</i> þron | (3rd)(1970). |
| (7) He <i>þettede</i> hire ƿ þef / bliþeliche leaue | (3rd)(2370). |
| (8) þ he wel <i>truste</i> on | (3rd)(2191). |
| (9) þe keiser <i>kaste</i> his heued | (3rd)(1351). |

The preterite endings of weak verbs are formed by adding *-de*, *-dest*, *-est*, *-de*. The endings of strong verbs are *-t*, *-d*.

(B.2) The Plural.

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| (1) þ we <i>driuen</i> longe | (1st)(1372). |
| (2) þ we <i>forleten</i> þis lif | (1st)(1376). |
| (3) þ ha <i>awundreden</i> ham / swiþe of þ sihþe | (3rd)(1606). |
| (4) þ tet flesch ƿ te fel / <i>wurþen</i> swa feire | (3rd)(1605). |
| (5) As þes deoules driueles / <i>drohen</i> to fordon hire | (3rd)(2124). |
| (6) ah þ ha <i>slepten</i> / swoteliche a sweouete | (3rd)(1426). |

The ending *-en* occurs in the preterite plural of strong and weak verbs in the ME period. In this work I can confirm the regular form *-en*.

(C) The Participle.

(C.1) The Present Participle.

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|--|------------|
| (1) Ifont ter seiþe feole / þeinde ƿ þurinde, / ƿ þeotinde | (160-161). |
| (2) alle <i>singinde</i> somet | (1673). |
| (3) þ ter ne com a steuene / <i>sihinde</i> from heouene | (2417). |

Of the present participles I can confirm the ending *-inde*.

(C.2) The Past Participle.

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|------------------------------------|---------|
| (1) <i>þurhdriuen</i> upon þe rode | (1198). |
|------------------------------------|---------|

- | | |
|--|---------|
| (2) Ða ha weren <i>iseten</i> up | (1597). |
| (3) Þ euch <i>waried</i> weoued | (201). |
| (4) Ða he Þus hefde <i>iseid</i> | (404). |
| (5) ‡ of heouene <i>isend</i> | (711). |
| (6) Haue, cwen, ane crune / <i>isent</i> te of heouene | (1574). |

The endings of the past participle are commonly *-ed*, *-id*, *-d*, *-t*. The endings of the strong verbs are different from them of the weak verbs. They have chiefly *-en*.

By the end of the ME. period the inflectional system of the English language had been greatly simplified. We can easily recognize this trend towards simplification which was primarily brought about by the tendency towards ambiguity of unstressed vowels. The levelling of inflectional endings was due to phonetic changes, partly to the operation of analogy.

In this work the *Life of Saint Katherine*, I could find the tendency towards levelling and ambiguity of the inflectional endings, but on the whole I can find the confirmed traces of the inflectional endings in OE.

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