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**English Prepositions: A Historical
Survey**

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*I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently,
using only the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.*

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Author's signature

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1. INTRODUCTION

When it comes to the diachronic study of English prepositions, it must be conceded that, until recently, historical linguists have neglected their study. With an exception of a chapter in Mitchell's two volume *Old English Syntax* (Mitchell, 1985) and another chapter in Mustanoja's *Middle English Syntax* (Mustanoja, 1960), there is no comprehensive survey of prepositions in Old nor in Middle English. As a syntactic work, Mitchell's book has a strong formal bias, dealing predominantly with the preposition-case relation. Mustanoja, on the other hand, focuses predominantly on semantics. The majority of other handbooks and grammars of Old and Middle English restrict themselves to enumerating only a selected number of prepositions, adding their basic meanings or the case they governed, if they actually do at least this. More recently, two diachronically oriented studies devoting themselves somehow more thoroughly to the study of prepositions occurred, namely, Lundskaer-Nielsen's *Prepositions in Old and Middle English* (Lundskaer-Nielsen, 1993), which, however, restricts itself to the semantics of the prepositions *in*, *on* and *at*, and Iglesias-Rabade's *Semantic Erosion of Middle English Prepositions* (Iglesias-Rábade, 2010), which studies twelve selected Middle English prepositions in terms of their frequency of occurrence and the French influence on their semantic erosion. The situation has slightly improved, especially with a small number of papers published after 2000 (cf. Krygier, 2011; Malak, 2010; Mołencki, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2011; Rissanen 2005, 2007). Having said this, one may undoubtedly come to the conclusion that there is a considerable gap in the diachronic description of English prepositions and they have long been neglected in linguistic inquiry. The aim of the present work is, therefore, to contribute modestly to this field of study in providing a brief survey of their history. For the purposes of the reader, the thesis may be divided into three general subparts. In the first, I will treat some general linguistic aspects of English prepositions, trying to define their place in English linguistic system. In particular, prepositions will be studied in relation with morphological, syntactic, lexical and semantic plane. Then, a discussion will follow of some of the most remarkable English reference grammars with an analysis of their definitions and treatments of English prepositions. Finally, the results of my empirical research are provided. These trace the quantitative development of English prepositions in two of its main historical

stages - Old English and Middle English. Finally, a chapter with some brief remarks on the development between Middle English and Modern English is added. It must be clear from the title of the present thesis, however, that our survey is historical and, therefore, it would be out of its scope to focus on Modern English prepositions as well. As for the division into Old English, Middle English and Modern English, one must stress here, that any division into historical stages is necessarily to a high degree arbitrary. Since the empirical study is based on the diachronic part of the Helsinki Corpus, the borderline between Old and Middle English periods is drawn in correspondence with the division made by the corpus compilers. In general terms, data spanning the time from the eighth to the fifteenth century will be explored. The main focus will be laid on the orthographic variants and quantitative development. Because of the low frequency of occurrence of most of the prepositions, the rate will be indicated by per mil (‰) and not per cent (%). As for the semantics, I focused only on the prototypical meaning of each preposition. This primary meaning is then explicated on a Present-day English equivalent as well as on its Latin counterpart. For various extended shades of prepositional meanings, the reader should consult dictionaries. Among these, especially noteworthy are Bosworth and Toller's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Bosworth and Toller, 1972) and Kurath and Kuhn's thirteen volume *Middle English Dictionary* (Kurath and Kuhn, 1956 - 2001).

2. DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed for the empirical investigation is essentially quantitative and is based on the diachronic part of the Helsinki Corpus. Helsinki corpus is the result of a project compiled under the supervision of Profs. Matti Rissanen and Ossi Ihalainen at the University of Helsinki. The diachronic part of the corpus includes texts from Old English, Middle English and Early Modern English, covering period of more than thousand years. In the corpus, the periods are divided as follows: Old English (700 - 1150), Middle English (1150 - 1500) and Early Modern English (1500 - 1710). Our survey restricts to the Old and Middle English periods, since these are most important when it comes to the historical development of English simple prepositions. The corpus allows us for the following subdivision:

Old English I (700-950)	94 240 words
Old English II (950-1050)	251 630 words
Old English III (1050-1150)	67 380 words
Old English (total number)	413 250 words
Middle English I (1150-1250)	113 010 words
Middle English II (1250-1350)	97 480 words
Middle English III (1350-1420)	184 230 words
Middle English IV (1420-1500)	213 850 words
Middle English (total number)	608 570 words
Total number	1 021 820 words

The range of the texts varies from poetry, to prose, legal texts, chronicles, medical and philosophical texts, religious treatises and homilies, Bible translations, biographies etc.

The corpus also incorporates information about the geographical dialect of the texts, however, for the sake of putting limits to my study, I analyzed prepositions in general, with no reference to possible dialectal variation. Although the thesis is based on empirical

research, very important theoretical notes have to be said at the beginning. When analyzing prepositions, one must inevitably raise the question of their definition. What is the scope of the notion of preposition? A deeper theoretical insights are out of the scope of the present thesis, however, it must be stressed here, that in my survey, a considerably broader notion of preposition is employed than in traditional grammars. Consider the following three sentences containing different versions of Modern English ‘since’:

- (1) Underfoð eche lif and blisse mid englen of heuene þat is giarked siðen þe biginninge of þes woreld.
- (2) They were browght upp theyr and syns sworne unto the jurdyccyon of the towne.
- (3) Ne mette he ær nan gebun land sipþan he from his agnum ham for.

Within the framework of traditional grammar (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985), it will be only *siðen* in (1) that would be classified as a preposition. *Syns* in (2) would be classified as temporal adverb and *sipþan* in (3), as any word formally similar to a preposition but taking a declarative clause complement, would be classified as subordinating conjunction. Nevertheless, keeping with much work in modern linguistics, in the present study, I will extend the membership of the preposition category to both, adverbial particles and subordinating conjunctions. This is a direct consequence of a new conception that takes prepositions to be heads of phrases - similarly as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are heads of their respective phrases. When prepositions are on par with these elements, there is no reason to impose the condition of obligatory complement on them. Accordingly, *syns* in (2) will be classified as a preposition without complement and not as an adverbial particle. In addition, consider the following two sentences:

- (4) I must with many thankes remember his courtesie to me.
- (5) I remember I did see him every day.

In (4), the verb is complemented by a noun phrase, while in (5) by a declarative clause. Despite the difference in complementation, we will classify the word *remember* in both the sentences as an instance of a verb. Correspondingly, then, there is no principled basis for

assigning *siðen* in (1) and *siþþan* in (3) to different parts of speech merely on the grounds of their different complementation. This new approach is adopted from Huddleston and Pullum's *Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002) and is also employed in Bas Aart's *Oxford Modern English Grammar* (Aarts, 2011). Last but not least, one further remark has to be added. In modern linguistics, it is commonplace to distinguish between the terms preposition and postposition and to group both of them under the heading adposition. In the present work, the broader and more traditional term preposition is used, which does not distinguish between a preposition as an item that stands before a unit it governs and postposition as an item standing after the governed element.

3. LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS

3.1 Prepositions and morphology

From a morphological viewpoint, prepositions can be defined as invariable word forms which, throughout the history of English, almost never took any inflections. The exceptions were the genitive suffix *+es* (e.g. *tomidd+es*, *togean+es*, *toward+es*) and the suffix *+mang* in *ge+mang* and *on+ge+mang*. The most productive, however, is the suffix *+ward* which occurs since the Old English period in connection with some prepositions and in this way forms compound forms. The Old English attestations include *æfterweard*, *inwardre*, *fromweardan*, *toward*, *upweard*, *utweard*. In certain extreme cases, two suffixes were added, e.g. *ongean+weard+es*. The prepositions with suffix *+ward* increased in number during the Middle English period and certain new forms like *onward* or *untoward* appeared in this period. In the course of the Early Modern English period, most of these forms were decreasing and the only remnants of this process that can be found in Present-day English are the prepositions *toward* and *towards*. Even though most prepositions formed according to the pattern preposition + ward disappeared, new prepositions were formed by compounding adverbs and the suffix *+ward*. Nevalainen (Nevalainen, 1999: 406) names the following: *leftward*, *north-eastward*, *south-westward*, *landward(s)*, *seaward(s)*, *skyward(s)*, *sunward(s)*, *windward(s)*. Most of these, along with an array of others like *backward*, *downward*, *eastward*, *homeward(s)*, *northward*, *rightwards*, or

southwards survive until nowadays. Some of the prepositions also functioned as prefixes in word-formative processes. These include Old English and Middle English prefixes *æfter-*, *æt-*, *between-*, *bi-*, *for-*, *foran-*, *forþ-*, *fram-*, *gegn-*, *in-*, *mid-*, *neah-*, *niþer-*, *of-*, *ofer-*, *on-*, *op-*, *purh-*, *under-*, *wið-*, *wiðer-* and *ymb-*. As for their morphological structure, Old English and Middle English prepositions can be classified into simple and compound. Simple prepositions are realized by a single morpheme (e.g. *æfter*, *æt*, *fram*, *geond*, *of*, *ofer*, *on*, *op*, *samod* etc.). Compound prepositions can be classified according to their morphological structure. In Old English, most of the compound prepositions are bimorphemic, the first morpheme being a preposition and the second is most commonly also a preposition (e.g. *æt+foran*, *be+geondan*, *be+innan*, *be+neopan*, *in+to*, *on+butan*, *on+innan*, *to+foran*, *wið+innan* etc.). Less commonly, the second morpheme is an adverb (e.g. *be + æftan*, *be + ufan*, *on + ufan*), a conjunction (e.g. *to + eacan*), an adjective (e.g. *and + lang*) or a numeral (e.g. *be + tweone*). In Middle English, the number of simple prepositions has risen sharply. This was a result of a merger of several Old English compound prepositions with easily discernible morphological structure which, in Middle English, can be revealed only under a closer diachronic scrutiny (e.g. *adown*, *above*, *amid*, *beneathen*, *tofore* etc.). Secondly, majority of new loan prepositions are monomorphemic (e.g. *fro*, *maugre*, *pur*, *sans*, *countre* etc.). Some of the Middle English prepositions, however, retained their clearly identifiable compound morphological structure (e.g. *in+to*, *to+ward*, *with+in*, *for+by*, *for+with*, *for+to*, *on+under*, *ou+taken*, *up+ward* etc.). Complex prepositions, which consist of two- or three-word combinations acting as a single unit, appeared only since the Late Middle English period (e.g. *by means of*, *by virtue of*, *by way of* (cf. Hoffmann, 2005:62)). Most of them have the pattern - simple preposition + noun + simple preposition. It was during the Modern English period that we saw the greatest expansion of this category which remains productive until nowadays.

3.2 Prepositions and syntax

The syntax of English preposition can be studied on two levels - phrase level and clause level. The basic unit of phrase level is prepositional phrase. Prepositional phrase consists of a preposition which functions as a head governing the phrase, plus prepositional complement. In Old English, the prepositional complement was most commonly case-

marked. Throughout the history of their development, English prepositions typically came before a noun. The noun does not necessarily come immediately after the preposition, since determiners (pronoun in Old English, and pronoun or article in Middle English) and adjectives could intervene. Other possible complements were pronoun, adverb (usually followed by a preposition), adverbial (including prepositional phrases) or rarely a clause. To sum up, Old English prepositions governed the following complements:

- a. noun phrase (with head realized by noun or pronoun)
- b. adverb phrase (with head realized by adverb)
- c. prepositional phrase

In some treatments (cf. Lundskaer-Nielsen, 1993:37), Old English infinitive marker *to* is also analyzed as a preposition. *This view is supported in the morphology by the fact that after to the infinitive usually occurs with the dative gerund ending -anne / -enne* (Lundskaer-Nielsen, 1993:37). If we accept this view, prepositional complement can also be realized by infinitive in Old English. This situation then lasted until the late Middle English when gerund replaced the infinitive (cf. Schibsbye, 1974:73). Middle English prepositions also governed noun phrases (with head realized by a noun or pronoun), adverb phrases (with head realized by an adverb) or another prepositional phrase. As far as Middle English prepositional phrases embedded in other phrasal constructions are concerned, Iglesias-Rábade (2003:380-381) distinguishes the following functions of Middle English prepositional phrase:

- a. postmodifier in a noun phrase
- b. postmodifier in an adjective phrase
- c. postmodifier of another prepositional phrase
- d. adjunct
- e. complement of a verb

Moreover, in Middle English verse, prepositions may follow the noun or pronoun:

The byschop come to þe burynes, him barones besyde,
þe maire with mony mazti men and macers before hym.

(St Erkenwald)

3.3 Prepositions and Lexicon

Prepositions are high frequency items belonging to one of the nine word classes into which English lexicon can be divided. They can be defined as a relatively closed class that is not prone to quick changes. Most of the formal changes in their system are a result of internal word-formative processes and grammaticalization and not borrowings from external sources. To put it more directly, I have counted only fourteen loan prepositions that appeared in the course of the history of English until the end of the Early Modern English period and out of these, three were dropped meanwhile. In this respect, majority of the most frequently used prepositions are of Anglo-Saxon origin. As any word class, prepositions can be broadly defined as a set of vocabulary items sharing certain common properties. These generally include varying number of morphological, syntactic and semantic phenomena. According to the degree of common properties, we speak about the centre and the periphery of a given word class. There are actually two kinds of central items and two kinds of peripheral items in every language, namely, those of the whole lexicon and those of particular parts of speech. A lexical item is central to the lexicon because of a relatively high rate of its occurrence in discourse, while a lexical item is central to the word class due to a relatively high degree of common properties with other central items. The difference between these two kinds of centre and periphery can be defined as a difference between quantity and quality. Although the boundary between central and peripheral items of a lexicon is not clearcut, one can definitely claim that prepositions, throughout the history of their development, have always been central to the English lexicon. According to the corpus data¹, the following prepositions occur among the fifty most frequently used English words:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Old English	on	to	mid	in	for	of	at	be	after	ofer
Middle English	of	to	in	for	be	on	by	with	at	
Early Modern English	of	to	in	for	with	by	at	from	on	
Modern English	of	in	to	for	with	on	by	at	from	

¹ The data for Old English, Middle English and Early Modern English are drawn from the diachronic part of the Helsinki Corpus. Modern English data are adopted from a survey of British National Corpus by Leech et al. (2001:120)

3.4 Prepositions and Semantics

Prepositions and their relation to semantics have always been problematic. They are often considered to have too little semantic content or, vice versa, to be too polysemous to warrant a proper semantic description. Most linguists consent that nouns, adjectives and main verbs are items with a full lexical meaning. When it comes to prepositions, question might arise, whether they should also be regarded as lexical elements with their own lexical meaning or rather as semantically empty grammatical elements. The answer then varies according to the linguistic framework within which prepositions are studied. In the early version of Functional Grammar (Dik, 1997a, b), or Case Grammar (Fillmore, 1968), prepositions function as grammatical elements. In Jackendoff 's approach (Jackendoff 1973; 1977; 1983), Cognitive Grammar (e.g. Zelinsky-Wibbelt, 1993) or Functional Discourse Grammar (Keizer, 2008), on the other hand, prepositions are described as an autonomous lexical category. Several other theoretical proposals like Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (Pollard and Sag, 1984), Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar (Gazdar et al, 1985), Lexical Functional Grammar (Bresnan, 2001), or Generative Grammar (Corver and Van Riemsdijk 2001), regard certain prepositions to be grammatical and other lexical. It is not my purpose to go into a lengthy theoretical dispute over the lexical or grammatical nature of prepositions. Various attempts have been made to come up with a satisfactory semantic treatment of prepositions. What is important for our survey, is the fact that the basic meaning of each preposition, irrespective of whether it is grammatical or lexical in nature, is spatial, with extensions to temporal meaning and further abstract and idiomatic meanings (cf. Mackenzie, 2001: 133). This is proved also by a diachronic development, since in Old English period, prepositions and their complements constituted a conceptual unit with an informative content associated with basic spatial or temporal sense (Iglesias-Rábade, 2003: 104). In Middle English, many prepositions developed from the basic spatio-temporal meaning to more abstract meanings and consequently underwent semantic generalization (cf. Iglesias-Rábade, 2011:27). When dealing with semantics in the present thesis, I tried to grasp the primary, or prototypical meaning of each preposition, which in most cases corresponds to the basic spatio-temporal meaning. Further semantic networks of each preposition may be consulted in dictionaries.

4. ENGLISH PREPOSTIONS IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR WRITING

After having described English prepositions linguistically, in the present chapter, we will aim to examine the development of different linguistic definitions and treatments of prepositions in selected reference grammars of English. Although one of the first grammarians to introduce the term ‘preposition’ was Dionysius Thrax, who lived in Alexandria some time around the second and first century B.C.E., in the present chapter, we shall limit ourselves strictly to the English grammatical tradition, whose roots date back to the second half of the sixteenth century. A demarcation of the object of our research in these terms, however, is not sufficient enough. The reason is that in the very beginnings of English grammatical tradition, the term ‘English grammar’ might have referred to a grammar of Latin written in English, a grammar of English written in Latin, as well as a grammar of English written in English. It must be stressed, therefore, that in the present survey, we will only deal with reference grammars of English written in English. And yet, this still includes vast amount of works by various authors. Accordingly, the scope of the present chapter is highly selective in what it covers and the majority of grammars were simply not included. Nevertheless, the author of these lines focused on, in his opinion, the most representative ones and believes that these will provide the reader with a sufficient insight into the research topic.

4. 1 The situation before 1586

Although the year 1586 marks the beginning of English grammar writing, the definition of prepositions can already be found in Old English literature:

“Præpositio is foresetnyss, se byð geðeod naman and worde and stent æfra on foreweardan: *ab illo homine* ‘fram ðam man’: her is se *ab* præpositio”.

(Aelfric’s Preface to his translation of *Ars Grammatica* by Donatus Aelius)

This definition is far from being linguistically correct, since already in the Old English period, there sometimes occurred postposed prepositions. Aelfric’s definition, as well as the term *foresetnyss* itself, imitates the Latin original by Donatus Aelius. The Anglo-Saxon

term for a preposition is derived from the Latin term *praepositio*, the morpheme *for* meaning “before”, the root *settan* meaning “to place” and the derivational morpheme *+nyss* indicates the class of nouns. The Anglo-Saxon calque, nevertheless, did not gain much popularity and the Latin original penetrated into the English lexical system in the late 14th century (cf. Oxford English Dictionary). By the end of the sixteenth century, grammars had been written for nearly all of the European vernacular languages. Also, it is a well-known fact that there was a strong influence of Latin grammatical tradition upon these grammars and the English were not an exception. In fact, in the case of English grammars, this trend continued up to the 18th century, when certain grammarians finally realized that differences between Latin and English are too great and Latin grammars cannot form the basis for the description of English. In a word, one can undoubtedly claim that “the history of English grammar writing was one of gradual and hard-won liberation from the shackles of Latin grammar” (Linn, 2006: 74).

4. 2 Bullokar and after

Grammarians influenced by Latin tradition were, for instance, likely to consider English prepositional phrases as pure equivalents of Latin case systems. Prepositions with a different function were usually deemed to be adverbs or, in some cases, a separate word class. As far as the influence of Latin grammars in the first 150 years of English grammar writing is concerned, Vorlat discerned the following tendencies:

- (a) Poole, Newton, the 1706 grammar, Turner and Entick - copy Latin grammars, without insight into a specific functioning of the English prepositions
- (b) some valuable remarks are made right at the beginning of English grammar writing by Bullokar, however much he may generally depend on his Latin source
- (c) authors as Miege, Duncan, Maittaire and Brightland (with Loughton) appear to have an original contribution to make (Vorlat, 1975: 403)

The oldest study of English prepositions is represented right at the beginning of English grammar writing by William Bullokar’s *Bref Grammar for English* (Bullokar, 1586), the first English grammar written in English. Bullokar defines prepositions as “a part

of speech properly used prepositively, that is governing an accusative case set next after it (except sometime in verse it is set after his casual word) as, I go too the church: and is sometime postpositively used, that is, when it governeth the relative, that, or which, coming before a verb, whose governing preposition is set after such verb: as, this is the man whom we spoke of, or whome we spoke; and is some time used in composition after a verb, but being severed from the verb by the adverb, not, or by an accusative case, may be said to be set in apposition adverbially” (Bullokar, 1586: 47). First of all, it is interesting to observe that Bullokar takes notice of the fact that prepositions can occur postpositively, an important syntactic property commonly disregarded by later grammarians. Except for syntactic definition, Bullokar focuses on morphological aspect of prepositions as well. He considers as prepositions those items which govern accusative case, otherwise, he regards them as adverbs. A unique feature of his work is that in his analysis, the prepositions *up*, *down*, *in*, *before*, *beneath*, *behynd*, *beyond*, *under*, *nær* and *nih* can form their respective comparative and superlative degrees, and in this way form adjectives or adverbials:

up → uper, upermost/upmost
down → downer, downermost/downmost
in → iner, inermost/inmost
before → former, foremost
beneath → næther, næthermost
behynd → hynder, hyndermost/hyndmost
beyond → yonderer, yondermost/yondmost
under → undermost
nær → nærer, next
nih → niher, next

(Bullokar, 1586: 48-49)

Bullokar’s grammar did not miss word-formative aspect of English prepositions as well. He notes that some prepositions can take the suffix +ward, e.g. *inward*, *outward*, thus creating adjectives which can be further modified by adding +ly into adverbs, e.g. *inwardly*. To a present-day speaker of English, affixation to prepositions might seem odd. Nevertheless,

especially during the Middle English period, the suffix *+ward* really occurred in combinations with some prepositions (cf. Mustanoja 1960, 423). As far as semantics is concerned, Bullokar notices that prepositions compounded before a verb commonly change the meaning of a respective verb while prepositions compounded after a verb retain its proper signification. To sum up, as is clear from the above mentioned data, the first English grammar provides a relatively thorough treatment of prepositions, studying them on morphological, syntactic and semantic level. The following decades, and the grammars they produced, devoted considerably less space to the study of prepositions and most of them, as we have already mentioned, were strongly influenced by the definitions from Latin grammars.

In 'The English Accidence', prepositions are defined simply as *a part of speech undeclined, most commonly set before the words which they govern* (Poole, 1646: 19). Subsequently, Poole provides the reader with a classification of prepositions into three basic groups. Those, which govern accusative, those which govern ablative and those which govern both accusative and ablative. A similar definition can be found in Wharton's grammar: "A Preposition is a part of speech set before other parts; either in Apposition, or Composition" (Wharton, 1654: 58). Another definition strongly influenced by Latin grammatical tradition is that of Newton's: "A Preposition is a word commonly set before other Parts of Speech, either in Apposition [...] or in Composition" (Newton, 1669: 51). A very vague definition can be found in a grammar by Miège: "A Preposition is a Word that expresses some Circumstance or other of the Noun" (Miège, 1688: 7). In his description, Miège observes that "Although the Prepositions took that Name from their being commonly placed before Nouns, yet in English they are often placed at the end of a Sentence" (Miège, 1688: 80). Miège is therefore the second author after Bullokar to explicitly notice the possibility of postposition. As he puts it, the postposition takes place especially after the pronouns *who* and *what*. As far as the relation of the verb and preposition is concerned, Miège claims that when preceded by a preposition, the verb makes one compound word with it, while when used after the verb, it is distinct from it. Finally, Miège deals with the ellipsis of prepositions which, according to his observations, take place when two substantives are transposed (e.g. *Glory of God* → *God's Glory*), after some verbs (e.g. *send it me, bring it me*), before the word *home* (e.g. *to go home*) and in

some fixed expressions (e.g. *a house forty foot high* instead of *a House to the height of forty foot*). Cases when prepositions are not followed by a noun are considered as an adverbial use. In Aickin's grammar, no chapter is dedicated specifically to prepositions, and their definition is also quite simple: "A Preposition is a part of Speech, which is commonly set before other parts of Speech, either in Apposition, as of me, to God: or else in Composition as, toward, upward, forward" (Aickin, 1693: 5-6). Another simple definitions of prepositions can be found in an anonymous grammar of 1706, where we read that "A Preposition is a Part of Speech set before other Words" (Anonym, 1706: 17) and in Turner's grammar: "A Preposition is a Word set before other Words, either to govern them [...] or else in Composition with them" (Turner, 1710: 35).

In Brightland and Gildon's grammar, we can discern the first hints of prepositions considered as functions expressing relations among things. "Prepositions, or Foreplaced Words, were invented [...] to show the Relations, that Things have to one another" (Brightland and Gildon, 1711: 117). The first truly systematic treatment of English prepositions can be found in Greenwood's 'Practical English Grammar'. "A Preposition is a Part of Speech, which being added to any other Parts of Speech, serves to mark or signify their State or Reference to each other" (Greenwood, 1711: 71). Greenwood subsequently clarifies that by using the word 'added', he wants to stress that prepositions are used before as well as after a word. He names nouns, pronouns, verbs, participles, article and adverbs as those parts of speech which can be preceded by a preposition. On the following page, he paraphrases his previous definition, stating that "A Preposition is a Word added to other Words, to show the Respect, or Relation one Thing has to another" (Greenwood, 1711: 72), concluding that all relations expressed in Greek or Latin partly by a diversity of cases and partly by prepositions, are expressed exclusively by prepositions in English. Finally, Greenwood provides the reader with a first detailed empirical account of syntactic and semantic properties of selected English prepositions.

A new approach to the study of prepositions can easily be noticed in the definition by Maittaire. "(The term preposition) signifies a word placed before, and therefore governing and requiring another to follow[...] A Preposition is a Particle, which qualifies and explains the signification of some part of speech, by going before a word, which it governs or brings into the clause or sentence[...] The Preposition has (no signification)

without the word which it precedes, and to which it is in the nature of a sign” (Maittaire, 1712: 92-93). Maittaire’s originality rests in the fact that he considers prepositions to be synsemantic particles that only contribute to the meanings of the word they govern. In this way, he introduces to his definition semantic aspect. Among other grammars from this period, let us mention the following definitions of prepositions:

“It is a Word set before another, either separate from it, or, joined to it” (Entick, 1728: 25).

“Preposition is an Indeclinable that governs the Nouns that follow it. It serves to modify or circumstantiate the Noun” (Duncan, 1731: 43).

“A Preposition is a Part of Speech set before other Words, and shews the Relation that the Word following it has to some Word before it” (Barker, 1733?: 22-23).

A careful reader can detect the failures of these definitions like merging the concept of preposition with that of a prefix, neglecting the possible postposition or narrowing one’s attention to the relation between prepositions and nouns only. These were most commonly mistakes of grammarians influenced by Latin tradition. From time to time, a more elaborated definition occurred:

“Prepositions, or Foreplaced Words, are either little Words joyned with other Words in Composition; or such as being put betwixt other Words, (chiefly Names) shew their relation to each other, in affinity, distance, or some other casual circumstance. Some Prepositions are joined in Composition [...] Or being put between Words they shew the relation they stand in to each other, usually called Case” (Collyer, 1735: 40)

An anonymous 1736 grammar focuses on a contrastive definition: “A Preposition is a Part of Speech set before other Word before it [...] In the Latin Grammar, they are usually ranked under these two Heads, viz. Prepositions in Apposition, and Prepositions in Composition [...] the English Tongue [...] not only applies them to the same uses and ends that the Latin Tongue doth; but also to supply that which the Latin Tongue does another

way, viz. in making up the several Cases of Nouns, which the Latins do by different Terminations or Endings thereof ” (Anonym, 1736: 67-69). Other authoritative grammars of this period include grammars of Saxon and Priestley:

“A Preposition [...] is a Word set before others; either to govern them... or else in Composition with them[...] Prepositions govern Nouns, &c. and being placed before them, shew the Production, Motion or Situation of Things” (Saxon, 1737: 75).

“A Preposition is a word that expresseth the relation that one word hath to another” (Priestley, 1761: 28).

A year after the publication of Priestley’s work, one of the most influential grammars of English which started the age of prescriptive grammars was written by Lowth. Lowth’s grammar became one of the most popular English grammars and went through over 20 editions in decades following publication. Lowth’s definition summarizes the best of the preceding ones plus introduces etymological note on their semantic origin according to which, the original function of prepositions is to express place relations, which were later widened to other relations. To put it in his own words, “Prepositions, so called because they are commonly put before the words to which they are applied, serve to connect words with one another, and to show the relation between them. One great use of Prepositions in English, is to express those relations which in some languages are chiefly marked by Cases, or the different endings of the Noun. Most Prepositions originally denote the relation of Place, and have been thence transferred to denote by similitude other relations” (Lowth, 1762: 91-92).

4.3 The 19th century

By the end of the eighteenth century, more than 270 grammatical works on English have been published (Gneuss, 1996: 28). This number multiplied enormously during the nineteenth century up to 1,930 titles listed by Gorlach (Gorlach, 1998). At the end of the eighteenth century and in the first half of the nineteenth century, some important grammars were published in America, represented mainly by the work of Webster, Murrey, Cobbett and Brown. One of the first grammars in America was Webster’s two volume ‘Grammatical Institute’. In the second volume, Webster defines prepositions as “words set

before nouns and pronouns to show their relation to other words” (Webster, 1784: 64). He distinguishes two sorts of prepositions - separable, which can stand alone, and, inseparable, which are used only in connection with other words and “commonly give a new meaning to the word” (Webster, 1784: 65). According to Murray, “a preposition is a word set chiefly before nouns or pronouns, to connect them with other words, and to show their relation to those words” (Murray, 1795: 77). Similarly as Webster, he divides prepositions into separable and inseparable. “The separable prepositions are those which may be used separate from other words [...] Some of these are sometimes conjoined with other words [...] The inseparable prepositions are used only in the composition of words” (Murray, 1795: 77). Cobbett states that prepositions “are called Prepositions from two Latin words, meaning before and place; and this name is given them because they are in most cases placed before Nouns and Pronouns” (Cobbett, 1819: 41). Although the morphological part of Cobbett’s grammar deals mainly with etymological aspects of particular parts of speech, when it comes to prepositions and their history, Cobbett claims that “it is useless to attempt to go into curious inquiries as to the origin of prepositions. They never change their endings; they are always written in the same manner. Their use is the main thing to be considered” (Cobbett, 1819: 74). In Gould Brown’s grammar, we can find the following definition: “A preposition is a word used to express some relation of different things or thoughts to each other, and is generally placed before a noun or a pronoun” (Brown, 1823: 90).

As for the British grammars of the 19th century, Ian Michael notes that “most grammars of English published in Britain during the nineteenth century are dull [...] They are dull, especially during the second half of the century, because they impose on the language a stifling form of analysis” (Michael, 1991: 11). Nevertheless, Murray’s grammar of 1795 became particularly popular even in the following century with many editions and abridgements published in the USA as well as in Britain. It can therefore be considered as one of the most influential grammars of the nineteenth century. Another influential grammar by Nesfield defines preposition as “a word placed before a noun or noun-equivalent to show in what relation the person or thing denoted thereby stands to something else” (Nesfield, 1898/1949: 93). Nesfield introduces the term Object for what will later be called prepositional complement and names nouns, pronouns, adverbs, infinitives, phrases

and clauses as possible objects to a preposition. A special category distinguished in his grammar are *disguised prepositions* which can be illustrated on an example of the preposition *of* that can be changed into disguised preposition *o*, as in *four o'clock*, *Jack o'latern* etc., or the preposition *on* being changed into *a* in *Four sells at tenpence a pound*, which, as Nesfield states, can sometimes be falsely identified as an indefinite article. In the “idiom and construction” section, Nesfield provides the reader with examples of nouns, adjectives, participles, verbs and adverbs which are followed by prepositions on a purely idiomatic grounds. In addition to simpler prepositions, he also distinguishes participial prepositions that are of participial or adjectival origin.

4. 4 The 20th century

As phonology became a full-fledged field, scholars started to write a phonologically focused grammars. In his ‘A Grammar of Spoken English’, Palmer includes a description of intonation patterns of English with all the example words and sentences given in phonemic transcription. As for prepositions, he firstly focuses attention on the fact that certain prepositions have both their strong and weak forms:

strong form	weak form
æt	ət
baɪ	bə
fɔə	fə
fɹɒm	fɹəm
ɒv	əv, v, ə, əf, f
tu:	tə, tu
intu:	intə, intu

(Palmer, 1924: 11)

He then adds that strong forms are used when the preposition is isolated, when it is stressed, when it occurs at the end of a sentence or breath group, when not followed immediately by an object or generally when followed by an unstressed pronoun. He also delineates a category of group-prepositions which comprise of Adverb+Preposition, Adverb + Noun + Preposition or Preposition + Noun + Preposition constructions. The

following sequence is dedicated to the function of English Prepositions which is to form (together with a following noun, noun-group or pronoun) Adverbial and Adjectival Phrases of various kinds. As for syntax, Palmer states that the normal position of the preposition “is in front of the object that it governs. When the object governed by a preposition is an interrogative, or connective words, and is consequently shifted to the beginning of the sentence, the preposition does not generally accompany it, but retains the place it would occupy if the object were not so shifted” (Palmer, 1924: 199).

Curme, in the second volume of his three-volume grammar of English writes that “a preposition is a word that indicates a relation between the noun or pronoun it governs and another word, which may be a verb, an adjective, or another noun or pronoun” (Curme, 1935: 87). Curme introduces the term prepositional unit which can be understood as complex consisting of a preposition + prepositional object. Prepositional unit can be of two kinds. Where the object of the preposition is a single word, the prepositional unit is a prepositional phrase. Where the object of the preposition is a clause, the prepositional unit is a prepositional clause. Syntactically, Curme states that the prepositional unit can be employed as an adverbial, as an object, or as an adjective element in the predicative and the attributive relation. Curme also mentions a special class of prepositions which he calls inflectional prepositions. As he puts it, inflectional prepositions “have often lost a good deal of their original concrete meaning and are no longer felt as prepositions, for they have developed into inflectional particles which indicate definite grammatical relations, often taking the place of old inflectional endings” (Curme, 1935: 91). This means that since the nouns and adjectives lost their old inflectional endings, we often employ the preposition *to* to indicate the dative relation and the preposition *of* to indicate the genitive relation. In case of verbs, inflectional preposition standing behind a given verb serves to convert intransitive verbs into transitive.

There are several grammars of the most recent decades which did not devote a single chapter to the study of prepositions, and do not provide us with their definitions neither. These include Zandvoort’s ‘Handbook of English Grammar’ or Jespersen’s seven volume ‘Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles’, Kruisinga and Erades’s two volume ‘English Grammar’ as well as Poutsma’s ‘Grammar of Late Modern English’. Moreover, Jespersen in his ‘Philosophy of Grammar’ refuses to acknowledge prepositions

as a separate word class suggesting to treat them alongside with adverbs and conjunctions as a single word class of particles instead (Jespersen, 1925: 87). On the other hand, Schibsbye's "Modern English Grammar with an Appendix on Semantically Related Prepositions", originally published in Danish in 1957, devotes ninety pages to the study of prepositions, with a special focus on their semantics.

The renewed attention to prepositions stems from an endeavour to write a comprehensive synchronic description of English grammar, which resulted in the publication of 'The Comprehensive Grammar of English Language' by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik. One of the most authoritative 20th century grammars, it was preceded and followed by certain less comprehensive volumes, however, for the sake of putting limits to the present chapter, we will restrict our attention only to the main volume.²

Prepositions are here generally defined as items expressing "a relation between two entities, one being that represented by the prepositional complement, the other by another part of the sentence" (Quirk et al., 1985: 657). The authors differentiate between central prepositions and marginal prepositions. Central prepositions are defined negatively as items that cannot have as a complement a that-clause, an infinitive clause, or a subjective-case form of a personal pronoun. Marginal are those which behave in many ways like prepositions, although they have affinities with other word classes such as verbs or adjectives, e.g. *bar*, *barring*, *excepting*, *excluding*, *save*, *concerning* etc.

Morphologically, they make a differentiation between simple and complex prepositions. Simple prepositions consist of one word only and are most frequent. They are further subdivided according to phonological criteria into monosyllabic and polysyllabic. Complex prepositions are subdivided into two- and three-word sequences. Syntactically, the structure of prepositional phrase is defined as a sequence of preposition + prepositional complement. The prepositional complement is most often realized by a noun phrase, a nominal *wh*-clause, or a nominal *-ing* clause. Among the syntactic functions of prepositional phrases, the following are mentioned:

- a. postmodifier in a noun phrase
- b. adverbial
- c. complementation of a verb

² This is also the case of Huddleston and Pullum's grammars.

d. complementation of an adjective

As far as the meaning of prepositions is concerned, the authors make a note that “so varied are prepositional meanings that no more than a presentation of the most notable semantic similarities and contrasts can be attempted” (Quirk et al., 1985: 573). In a very general sense, their semantic framework can be sketched as follows:

- a. prepositions expressing time relations
(position: point, period; duration: starting point, period, terminal point)
- b. prepositions expressing space relations
(position: point, line, surface, area; movement: direction, destination)
- c. prepositions expressing the cause/purpose spectrum
(cause, reason, motive, purpose, destination, target)
- d. prepositions expressing the means/agentive spectrum
(manner, means, instrument, agentive, stimulus)
- e. prepositions expressing accompaniment
- f. prepositions expressing support and opposition
- g. other prepositional meanings
(concession, respect, exception, addition, negative condition)

Biber et al. (1999) define prepositions as “links which introduce prepositional phrases” (Biber et al., 1999: 74). Consequently, they draw a distinction between free v. bound prepositions. “Free prepositions have an independent meaning; the choice of preposition is not dependent upon any specific words in the context. In contrast, bound prepositions often have little independent meaning, and the choice of the preposition depends upon some other word (often the preceding verb)” (Biber et al., 1999: 74). Formally, they differentiate between simple prepositions and complex prepositions which can be further subdivided into two-word prepositions, three-word prepositions and four-word prepositions. Other sequences are considered free variations.

Another great milestone of English grammar writing was undoubtedly the publication of ‘The Cambridge Grammar of the English language’ by Huddleston and Pullum. In their view, prepositions can be generally defined as “a relatively closed grammatically distinct class of words whose most central members characteristically express spatial relations or serve to mark various syntactic functions and semantic roles” (Huddleston and Pullum,

2002: 603). Syntactically, prepositions are “heads of phrases - phrases comparable to those headed by verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, and containing dependents of many different sorts” (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 598). In Huddleston and Pullum’s view, similarly as AdjPs, NPs and VPs, the prepositional phrase can also be premodified:

She died [two years after their divorce].

(Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 599)

By contrast, traditional grammars like Quirk et al. (1985) would consider this case as a separate adverbial realized by a NP. Furthermore, according to Huddleston and Pullum, prepositional phrase can stand on its own even without a prepositional complement:

I haven’t seen [her since the war].

I haven’t seen her [since].

(Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 600)

Again, in Quirk et al. (1985), *since* from the second sentence would be considered as an adverb. Huddleston and Pullum name nouns, pronouns, embedded PPs, NPs, AdvPs, AdjPs, interrogative and declarative clauses as items which can possibly follow a preposition. In mentioning declarative clauses, they once again diverge from the traditional grammar. Their view is slightly different in that the preposition category includes all of the subordinating conjunctions of traditional grammar, with the exception of *whether*, *if* (when equivalent to *whether*) and *that* when it introduces a subordinate clause. An absolutely new distinction made by Huddleston and Pullum is that of grammaticised v. non-grammaticised uses of prepositions. In grammaticised use, “the preposition has no identifiable meaning independent of the grammatical construction in which it occur” (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 601).

He was interviewed by the police.

They were mourning the death of their king.

You look very pleased with yourself.

(Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 601)

On the other hand, in non-grammaticised use, prepositions have an identifiable meaning on their own:

I left the parcel by the back-door.

This is of little importance.

He's with Angela.

(Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 601)

The last grammar to be mentioned here is 'Oxford Modern English Grammar' written by contemporary leading grammarian Bas Aarts and published in 2011. According to Aarts, "prepositions function as the Heads of prepositional phrases (PPs). They are uninflected, usually short words which often express spatial meanings which can be literal (in the box, near the school, on the desk) or figurative (in love, beyond belief, beneath contempt). Other meanings are non-spatial and abstract, as in the phrases for your benefit, the first of July" (Aarts, 2011:74). Morphologically, Aarts accepts the traditional division into simple, compound and complex prepositions. However, he offers a relatively new syntactic division of prepositions into transitive and intransitive ones. Transitive prepositions take a Complement. They can be further subdivided into regular prepositions which take NP, AdjP, AdvP, or PP as Complement, and conjunctive prepositions which take a clause as Complement. For a greater scrutiny, Aarts proposes to call those transitive prepositions which follow their Complement *postpositions* and transitive prepositions which take the same form as -ing participles or -ed participles *deverbal prepositions*.

4. 5 Conclusion

To sum up, all the definitions and approaches to English prepositions that appeared throughout more than 400 years of English grammatical tradition were relatively uniform. However, we can differentiate the following tendencies. Especially in the first decades of English grammar writing, there was a minority of grammarians like Hume, Jonson, or Fisher, who did not acknowledge in their works that prepositions constitute a word class in its own right. Other grammarians acknowledged the traditional status of a preposition as a separate word class, although not everyone considered them important enough to deal with them in their grammars. Generally, the history of English grammar writing with regard

to prepositions can be seen as one of relative stagnation, exceptionally interrupted by authors like Bullokar, Mieke, Maittaire, Brightland, Greenwood or Lowth. The relative negligence of prepositions culminated in the first half of the twentieth century, when most of the grammarians completely omitted sections on prepositions in their works. It was only in the second half of the twentieth century, that the situation radically changed and since then, grammarians like Schibsbye, Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, Svartvik, Huddleston, Pullum or Aarts introduced scientifically precise definitions and developed detailed and elaborate frameworks for their description, which in most cases reflect contemporary developments in theoretical linguistics.

5. OLD ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS

5.1 INDO-EUROPEAN STRATUM

In chapter 3 of this thesis, we have already dealt with prepositions from a broader linguistic perspective. In the succeeding pages, individual prepositions will be studied under closer scrutiny, with special reference to their etymological background and corpus findings.

With respect to the genetic classification of languages, English belongs to the family of Indo-European languages. The common ancestor of languages belonging to this group is Proto-Indo-European. We have no written record of this common ancestor, however, by a comparison of its descendant languages, linguists can reconstruct its hypothetical form. The dating and location of Proto-Indo-European is in many respects controversial, but the most widely held opinion dates the protolanguage between 3500 and 2500 BCE with the centre in the area north of the Black and Caspian seas from which it began to spread and diversify (Baugh and Cable, 2002: 37). As far as prepositions are concerned, Proto-Indo-European stratum forms the oldest layer of prepositions that can be identified in the Old English system. These most commonly include monosyllabic prepositions which, according to most historical linguists, developed in Proto-Indo-European from adverbs. The following lines present those Indo-European prepositions, which survived in Old English. The survey of cognates is based on a paper by Blažek (Blažek, 2001).

æfter

The preposition comes from the Indo-European root *apoter-o/i. The cognates include Old Indian *apataram*, Old Persian *apataram*, Armenian *vayr*, Greek *ἄποτέρω*, Cornish *ater*, Gothic *aftaro*, Old Runic *after*, Old High German *after*, Old Saxon *aftar*, Old Frisian *efter*, Old Icelandic *eptir* or Old Norse *eptir*. The primary meaning of this preposition overlaps with the primary meaning of Present-day English *after* and Latin *post*. The preposition governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Donne þy ylcan dæge þe hi hine to þæm ade beran wyllað þonne todælað hi his feoh þæt þær to lafe bið æfter þæm gedrynce and þæm plezan on fif oððe syx hwylum on ma swa swa þæs feos andefn bið.

(Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum, Book IV, Chapter XXIV)

Accusative:

Æfter ðas uutedlice dagas acende [{vel}] gebær wif his and gedegelde hia moneðum fifo cuoed.

(Aldred - New Testament - Lindisfarne Gospels)

The most frequent orthographic variant was *æfter*, other marginal variants include *efter*, *aftera*, *afterran* and *afterre*. According to the corpus data, the use of this preposition has risen 2.25 ‰ after 1050.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	272	633	321
Rate	2.88 ‰	2.51 ‰	4.76 ‰

æt

The preposition comes from the Proto-Indo-European root *ad. The cognates include Phrygian *αδ-δακετ*, Macedonian *αδ-δαι ρυμοί*, Latin *ad*, Oscan *az*, Gaulish *ad-*, Umbrian - *ař*, Welsh *ag*, Old Irish *ad-*, Gothic *at*, Old Icelandic *at*, Old Saxon *at*, Old High German *az*, Old Norse *at* and Old Frisian *et*. The preposition governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Nis nan winter swa stearc þæt ic dyrre æt ham lutian for ege hlafordes mines.

(Aelfric's Colloquy)

Accusative:

And ix scipu gefengun, and þa oþre gefliemdon; and hæþne men ærest ofer winter sæton; and þy ilcan geare cuom feorðe healfhund scipa on Temesemuþan, and bræcon Contwaraburg, and Lundenburg, and gefliemdon Beorhtwulf Miercna cyning mid his fierde, and foron þa suþ ofer Temese on Suþrige, and him gefeaht wiþ æþelwulf cyning and æþelbald his sunu æt Aclea mid West Seaxna fierde, and þær þæt mæste wæl geslogon on hæþnum herige þe we secgan hierdon oþ þisne ondweardan dæg, and þær sige namon.

(Chronicle MS A Early)

The orthography of this preposition was relatively stable and so was its rate of occurrence during the Old English period. The prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *at* and Latin *apud*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	242	617	193
Rate	2.56 ‰	2.45 ‰	2.86 ‰

be

The preposition comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **ob^hi/*b^hi*. The cognates include Old Indian *abhi*, Avestan *aibīlaiβilavilaoi*, Old Persian *abiy*, Sogdian *βy^o*, Khotanese *by^o*, ?Latin *ob*, Gothic *bi*, Old High German *bi/bī*, Old Church Slavonic *obь/obь*. The preposition governed dative:

And be suþan him and be eastan sindon Bægwære se dæl mon Regensburg hætt; and ryhte be eastan him sindon Bæme and eastnorþ sindon þyringas; and be norþan him sindon Ealdseaxan and be norþanwestan him sindon Frisan.

(Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII, The Geography of Central Europe)

The rate of occurrence of this preposition during the Old English period was relatively stable. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *by* and Latin *ab*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	225	538	267
Rate	2.38 ‰	2.13 ‰	3.96 ‰

fora

The preposition comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **pr̥rā*. The cognates include Old Indian *purā*, Avestan *parā/para*, Old Persian *parā/paranam*, Persian *paran*, Hittite *parranda*, ?Armenian *ar*, Greek *παρά/πάρα*, Latin *pro/prae*, Aeolic *πάρο*, Albanian *para*, Gothic *faúra*, Old High German *fora*, Old Saxon *fora*, Old Frisian *fara*. The form *for* is assumed to represent an apocopated form of *fora*. Its cognates in Germanic languages are OFris *for*, OS *for*, OHG *for*, and Goth *faur*. The preposition governed dative, accusative and instrumental:

Dative:

Nelle ic nateshwon awyrgean þa eorþan heononforþ for mannum.

(Genesis, The Flood)

Accusative:

Ðonne gehyreð hwylc, hwæt hyra hyge seceð? And ðu hi, drihten, dest deope to bysmre; nafast þu for awiht ealle þeoda.

(The Metrical Psalms of the Paris Psalter)

Instrumental:

Ac mycel geþolode þurh his mildheortnesse Crist for ure þearfe þa he let hine sylfne bindan and swingan and on rode ahon and him ægðer þurhdripan mid isenum næglum ge fet ge handa and swa to deaðe acwellan.

(Wulfstan's Homilies)

The rate of occurrence was relatively stable and the prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *for* and Latin *pro*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	554	1,045	343
Rate	5.87 ‰	4.15 ‰	5.09 ‰

in

The preposition comes from the Proto-Indo-European root *en/*eni/*ni-. The cognates include Old Indian *ánika-*, Avestan *ainika-*, Zoroastrian-Pahlavi *ānīk*, Persian *peš-ānī*, Khotanese *īñal/īñaka*, Hittite *in-/ne-/ni-*, Lydian *ēn-*, Armenian *i/y*, Macedonian *iv*, Greek *ev/w/evi*, Ionian, Attic and Lesbian *εις*, Cretan *εβς*, Albanian *n-*, Messapian *in*, Old Latin *en* and Latin *in*, Oscan *en*, Umbrian *en-/en*, Umbrian *-e(m)*, Gaulish *en-/in-*, Old Welsh and Old Breton *en/in*, Cornish and Breton *en*, Welsh *yn*, Old Irish *in-*, Celtic *en(i)*, Gothic *in*, Old Icelandic *í*, Old Saxon *in*, Old High German *in*, Old Prussian *en*, Lithuanian *in(t)/ĩ*, Latvian *ie-*, Old Church Slavonic *въ/vъn-*, Tocharian AB *y(n)-*, Tocharian B *in-*. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-Day English *in* or *on* as well as Latin *in*. The preposition governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Forþon ic leofra gehwone læran wille þæt he ne agæle gæstes þearfe, ne on gylp geote, þenden god wille þæt he her in worulde wunian mote, somed siþian sawel in lice, in þam gæsthofe.

(Cynewulf - Christ)

Accusative:

He gefor þa he wæs on LXXVII geara, ond he wæs æryst bebyrged in Bethania ac his ban wæron eft alæded þanon on Constantines dagum þæs caseres in þa ceastre Constantinopili.

(Old English Martyrology)

The orthographic variants found in the corpus include *in* and *inn*. The rate of occurrence decreased steadily during the Old English period from 10.27 ‰ to 2.41 ‰. This can be explained by the fact that *on* started to replace *in* in positions, where they were formerly

interchangeable. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *in* or *on* as well as Latin *in*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	968	2, 134	164
Rate	10.27 ‰	8.48 ‰	2.41 ‰

mid

The preposition comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **medʰi*. The cognates include Old Indian *mádhya*, Avestan *maidīia-Imaidīia-Imaidīiāna*, Shugni *mīd*, Ossetic *mīd-lmed-*, Persian *miyān*, Parthian *mdy'n*, Sogdian *myδ'n*, Khotanese *mayāna-*, Armenian *mēj*, Greek μέσος, Attic μέσος, Latin *medius*, Oscan *mefiālmessimas*, Gaulish *medio-*, Old Irish *mid-*, Middle Irish *mide*, Middle Welsh *mywn/mei-iau*, Welsh *mewn*, Gothic *midjis*, Old Icelandic *miðr*, Old High German *mitti*, Old Prussian *median*, Latvian *mežs*, Lithuanian *mėdžias*, Old Church Slavonic *meždu*, Tocharian A *mācrim*, Tocharian B *omotrūññaise*. The preposition governed dative, accusative and instrumental:

Dative:

He cwæð: Surget gens contra gentem, et reliqua. ðæt is on Englisc, upp ræsað þeoda, he cwæð, & wiðerræde weorþað & hetelice winnað & sacað heom betweonan for ðam unrihte þe to wide wyrð mid mannum on eorðan.

(Wulfstan's Homilies)

Accusative:

Nu ge sweotule geseoð soðne dryhten on swegl faran; sigores agend wile up heonan eard gestigan, æþelinga ord, mid þas engla gedryht, ealra folca fruma, fæder eþelstoll.

(Cynewulf - Christ)

Instrumental:

Eac we cweðað, þæt mon mote mid his hlaforde feohtan orwige, gif mon on ðone hlaford fiohte; swa mot se hlaford mid þy men feohtan.

(Alfred's Introduction to Laws)

The rate of its occurrence was relatively stable. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with Present-day English *with* and Latin *cum*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	1,037	2,076	671
Rate	11.00 ‰	8.25 ‰	9.95 ‰

of

The preposition comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **apo*. Cognates in other languages include Old Indian *ápa*, Old Persian *apa*, Khotanese *pa^opaiya*, Pashto *ba^o*, Hittite *appalappan*, Luwian *appa(n)*, Hieroglyphic Luwian *apa(n)*, Lycian *epñlepñte*, Armenian *v-*, Phrygian *ap-*, Greek *ἀπο/από*, Arcadian, Cypriote and Lesbian *από*, Macedonian *απ-/αβ-*, Albanian *prapë*, Messapian *apa*, Latin *ab/abs*, Old Indian *ávri^or/apa*, Umbrian *ap-ehrte*, Gothic *af*, Old Runic *af-*, Old Icelandic *af*, Old Saxon *af*, Old High German *abalab-*, Old Frisian *of/aflofe*, Old Norse *af*. The preposition governed dative:

Dative:

And he arærde an weofod Gode and genam of eallum þam clænum nytenum and clænum fuzelum and geoffrode Gode lac on þam weofode.

(Genesis, The Flood)

Its rate of occurrence has risen 3.79 ‰ during the Old English period. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *of* and Latin *de*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	216	1,143	410
Rate	2.29 ‰	4.54 ‰	6.08 ‰

ofer

The preposition comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **uper(i)/*upér(i)*. The cognates include Old Indian *upári*, Avestan *upairi*, Old Persian *upariy*, Khotanese *vīra*, Zoroastrian-

Pahlavi *apar*, Persian *bar*, Armenian *i verli veray*, Greek *ὑπερ*, Gaulish *uer-*, Welsh *gwar-/gor*, Cornish *gor-*, Breton *gour-*, Old Irish *forlfor-*, Gothic *ufar*, Old Icelandic *yfir*, Old High German *ubir*, Old Frisian *over*, Old Norse *yfir*. It governed dative and accusative:

Dative

Wite nu forði gif hit wære rihtlice emniht on Marian mæssedæg, þæt se dæg ne gelumpe næfre ofer ðam easterdæge, swa swa he foroft deð.

(Aelfric's De Temporibus Anni)

Accusative:

& ðæt wæter wæs fyftyne fæðma deop ofer ða heahstan duna.

(Aelfric's Treatise on the Old and New Testament)

The only orthographic variant found in the corpus is *ofer*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable and the prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-Day English *over* and Latin *super*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	199	659	128
Rate	2.11 ‰	2.61 ‰	1.89 ‰

on

The preposition comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **an(ō)*. The cognates include Old Indian *ánu*, Old Persian *anuv*, Avestan *ana*, Old Persian *anā*, Armenian *amin*, Old Phrygian *an-*, Ionian-Attic *áva/avá*, Doric, Boeotian, Arcadian, Cypriote *av*, Lesbian and Thessalian *ov*, Latin *an-hēlō*, Umbrian *an-tentulan-seriatolanglar*, Old Irish *an-dess/an-iar*, Gothic *ana*, Old Runic *ana*, Old Icelandic *ā*, Old Saxon *an(a)*, Old High German *an(a)*, Old Frisian *an/on*, Lithuanian *anót(e)*, Latvian *nūo*, Old Prussian *no/na*, Old Church Slavonic *na*, Tocharian A *eṣäk*, Tocharian B *oṃṣmem*. It governed dative, accusative and instrumental:

Dative:

Þonne hie swa beon begrinode þonne ic ofslea hie on þæm maxum.

(Aelfric's Colloquy, The Hunter)

Accusative:

Ægðer he dyde, ge he egesode ða ðe on unryht hæmdon, ge he liefde ðæm ðe hit forberan ne meahton, forðæm ðætte ða ðe gestondan ne meahton, gif hi afeallan scolden, ðæt hi afeollen on ðæt hnesce bedd ðæs gesinscipes, næs on ða heardan eorðan ðæs unrythæmdes.

(Alfred's Cura Pastoralis)

Instrumental:

On þy ilcan dæge sancte Peter gehalgode ærest cierecean on Rome.

(Martyrology)

The only orthographic variant found in the corpus is *on*. The rate of occurrence was, contrary to that of *in*, on the increase since some of the interchangeable functions of Old English *on* and *in* were gradually adopted mainly by *on*. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with Present-day English *on* and Latin *in*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	1, 845	5, 668	1, 701
Rate	19.57 ‰	22.52 ‰	25.24 ‰

to

The preposition comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **dē/*dō*. The cognates are ?Greek *δη*, Messapian *de*, Latin *dē/dō*-, Faliscan *de*, Oscan *dat*, Old Irish *dí/doldu*, Old Welsh *di*, Cornish *thelðe*, Breton *di*, Gaulish *di*-, ?Old High German *zādall/zu*, Old Saxon *tō*, ?Gothic *du*, Lithuanian *do*, Latvian *da*, Old Church Slavonic *dolda*. The preposition governed genitive and dative:

Genitive:

Ða Apollonius þæt gehyrde, he þam gehyrsumode and eode forð mid þam men oð þæt he becom to ðæs cynges healle.

(Appolonius of Tyre)

Dative:

Ðonne ærnað hy ealle toward þæm feo; ðonne cymeð se man se þæt swiftoste hors hafað to þæm ærestan dæle and to þæm mæstan, and swa ælc æfter oðrum, oþ hit bið eall genumen; and se nimð ðonne læstan dæl se nyhst ðæm tune þæt feoh gearneð.

(Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII, The Voyage of Wulfstan)

Its rate of occurrence has slightly increased after 1050 what is a direct consequence of a drift towards an analytic stage of English linguistic system. As a result, *to* started to be used as an equivalent for dative case. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-Day English *to* and Latin *ad*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	1, 359	3, 496	1, 164
Rate	14.42 ‰	13.89 ‰	17.27 ‰

þurh

The preposition stems from the Proto-Indo-European root **ter-/*tr-*. The cognates include Old Indian *tirás*, Avestan *tarə-/tarō*, Old Persian *ta[ra]*, Zoroastrian-Pahlavi *tar*, Ormuri *tar*, Khotanese *tīmu*, Pashto *tar*, Armenian *vtar*, Old Irish *tar*, Old Welsh *trui*, Middle Welsh *trwy/drwy*, Old Breton *tre*, Breton and Cornish *dre*, Old High German *durh*, Gothic *þairh*, Old Frisian *thruoh*, Latin *trāns*, Umbrian *traff/trahaf*, Welsh *tros/tra-*. It governed genitive, dative and accusative:

Genitive:

Gif he furðon þurh þa gebedu gehæled ne bið, notige þonne se abbod cyrfes, and mid isene þa uncoðe aceorfe and fram þære hæle ascyrige, þurh ðæs apostoles mungunge, þe ðus cwæþ: Afyrrað þone yfelan fram eow; and eft he cwyð: Gif se getreowleasa gewite, he gewite, þylæs þe an adlig sceap ealle heorde besmite.

(Aethelwold - The Benedictine Rule)

Dative:

Seo is weaxende þurh acennedum cildum, & wanigende þurh forðfarendum.

(Aelfric's De Temporibus Anni)

Accusative:

Seo ylce rod siððan þe Oswold þær arærde on wurðmynte þær stod, and wurdon fela gehælde untrumra manna and eac swilce nytena þurh ða ylcan rode, swa swa us rehte Beda.

(Aelfric's Lives of Saints)

The orthographic variants of this prepositions found in the corpus include *þurh*, *ðurh*, *þurg*. Its rate of occurrence has slightly increased after 950 and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *through* and Latin *per*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	131	656	175
Rate	1.39 ‰	2.60 ‰	2.59

under

The preposition stems from the Proto-Indo-European root **nd^heri*. The cognates include Avestan *adairi*, Khotanese *dīra-*, Gothic *undar*, Old Icelandic *under*, Old Saxon *undar*, Old High German *untar(i)*, Old Frisian *under/londer*. It governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Þa hrymde ðæt deoful in ðære fæmnan ond cwææð to him, þu me nedest to utgonge, ond ic ne mæg, buton me se geonga læte se me under ðam þerswolde geband.

(Old English Martyrology)

Accusative:

Ic ehte minra feonda, and ic hie gefeng, and ic ne geswac, ær hie forwurdon; ic hie gebigde þæt hie ne mihton gestandan ongean me, ac feollon under mine fet.

(The Paris Psalter)

The only orthographic variant of this preposition found in the corpus is *under*. The preposition was on the rise until 1050 when it started to decrease. This can be partially explained by the fact that the preposition *beneaþan* came to be used instead. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *under* and Latin *sub*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	43	306	13
Rate	0.45 ‰	1.21 ‰	0.19 ‰

ymb

The preposition comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **ambʰi / *mbʰi*. The cognates include Old Indian *abhita-*, Armenian *ambolj*, Greek *ἀμφί*, Albanian *mbi/mbë*, Latin *ambi-/am-/an-*, Old Latin *am*, Umbrian *amb-/a-/an-*, Oscan *ampt*, Gaulish *ambi-*, Welsh, Cornish and Breton *am-/em-*, Old Irish *imb-/imm-*, Old Icelandic *umb*, Old Saxon *umbi*, Old High German *umbi*, Old Norse *umb/um*, Tocharian A *āmpi*, Tocharian B *antapi*. It governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Forðon we sittað ymb þam wege wædligende mid Timeus sunu, uton biddan þæs æðelan Dauides sunu þæt he geopenige ure gesyhðe, þæt we butan gedwyldre þæt weorc magon began, þe we ongunnen habbað.

(Byrhtferth's Manual)

Accusative:

Is seo eagebyrd stearc ond hiwe stane gelicast, gladum gimme, þonne in goldfate smiþa orþoncum biseted weorþeð. Is ymb þone sweoran, swylce sunnan hring, beaga beorhtast brogden feðrum.

(Phoenix, The Exeter Book)

The orthographic variants found in the corpus include *emb*, *embe*, *umbe*, *ummbe*, *ymb*, *ymban* and *ymbe*. The preposition was on the decrease throughout the Old English period and finally dies out no later than 1250. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *about* and *around* and Latin *circiter* and *circa*.

	Old English I	Old English II	Old English III	Middle English I
Number of words	138	195	51	36
Rate	1.46 ‰	0.77 ‰	0.75 ‰	0.31 ‰

5.2 GERMANIC STRATUM

The subgroup within Indo-European languages to which English belongs is Germanic. The common ancestor of this branch is known as Proto-Germanic. Similarly as Proto-Indo-European, it is a hypothetical language, reconstructed on the basis of the similarities in its descendant languages. These fall into three groups: East Germanic, North Germanic and West Germanic. Old English, along with Old Saxon, Old Low Franconian and Old Frisian belonged to the West Germanic branch. The following alphabetical list of Old English prepositions includes those, which does not stem directly from the Proto-Indo-European roots. Instead, they developed mainly by word-formative processes in the period from the Proto-Germanic up to the pre-historic era of Old English.

æ

The cognates include Old Saxon *ēr*, Old Frisian *ēr*, Old High German *ēr*, Gothic *air*, and Old Norse *ār*. The preposition governed dative:

Dative:

Heo hire andwyrde and cwæð: ær ðæm dæge minra bridgifta ic eom mid manfulre scilde besmiten.

(Appolonius of Tyre)

Its rate of occurrence was constantly decreasing and the preposition *beforan* came to replace it. According to Molencki, this was mainly for phonological reasons, since the preposition *beforan* was perceived as more emphatic than short, monosyllabic *ær*. The homophony with the weak forms of other two grammatical words (the conjunction *or* and the copula

are) might have also contributed to the replacement (Molencki, 2007: 49). Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *before* and Latin *ante*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	321	578	160
Rate	3.40 ‰	2.29 ‰	2.37 ‰

andlang

The cognates include Old Frisian *andlinga* and Old Saxon *antlang*. Morphologically, it is a compound of *and* ‘against’ + *lang* ‘long’. It governed genitive:

And se cyng hæfde gegadrod sum hund scipa. And wæs ða on Cent, & ða scipu foran be suðan east andlang sæ togenes him.

(Chronicle MS A Early)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *andlang* and *ondlongne*. Its rate of occurrence was very low and relatively stable. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *along* and Latin *per*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	6	4	5
Rate	0.06 ‰	0.01 ‰	0.07 ‰

beforan

The cognates include Old Saxon *biforan*, Old High German *bifora*, Old Frisian *befara*. Morphologically, it is a compound of *be* ‘by’ + *foran* ‘from the front’. It governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Ðær Albanus abæd æt Gode þæt þær færinga com upp wætres welle beforan his fotum; ond þæm menn þe hinn beheafdade, þæm sona afeollon þa eagan bu of þæm heafde.

(The Old English Martyrology, St. Alban)

Accusative:

Ge sylfe me synd to gewitnesse þæt ic sæde, ne eom ic Crist ac ic eom asend beforan hine.

(The West Saxon Gospels, New Testament)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *befor*, *beforan*, *beforon*, *biforan*, *before*, *befora* and *beforen*. Its rate of occurrence during the Old English period was relatively stable. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *before* and Latin *ante*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	79	99	27
Rate	0.83 ‰	0.39 ‰	0.40 ‰

begeondan

Morphologically, it is a compound of *be* ‘by’ + *geondan* ‘yonder’. It governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Ponne be eastan Carendran londe, begeondan þæm westenne, is Pulgra land; ond be eastan þæm is Creca land.

(Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII, The Geography of Central Europe)

Accusative:

Pas þing wæron gewordene on Bethania begeondan Iordanen þær Iohannes fullode.

(New Testament, West-Saxon Gospels)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *begeondan*, *begiondan*, *begeonda* and *begeondon*. Its rate of occurrence during the Old English period was relatively stable and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *beyond* and Latin *ultra*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	2	8	2
Rate	0.02 ‰	0.03 ‰	0.02 ‰

behionan

The preposition was very marginal and disappeared in the course of the Old English period.

It governed dative:

Swæ clæne hio wæs offeallenu on Angelcynne, þæt swiþe feawa wæron behionan Humbre, þe hiora þeninga cupen understondan on englisc ofþe furþum an ærendgewrit of lædene on englisc areccean; ond ic wene, þætte noht monige begiondan Humbre næren.

(Alfred's Preface to Pope Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis*)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *behinon*, *behionan* and *beheonan*. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with Present-day English 'on this side of' and Latin *cis*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	2	0	1
Rate	0.02 ‰	0‰	0.01 ‰

behindan

The cognate is Old Saxon *bihindan*. Morphologically, it is a compound of *be* 'by' + *hindan* 'from behind'. It governed dative:

Eac sint to manienne ða ðe ungefandod habbað ðissa flæsclícena scylda, ðæt hie ne wenen for hira clænnesse ðæt hie sien beforan ðæm hirrum hadum, forðæmðe hi nyton ðeah hi sin behindan ðæm ðe læssan hades bioð, and hie wenað ðæt hie beforan bion scylen; forðæmðe on ðæm dome ðæs ryhtwisan Deman onwent sio gearnung ðone had and ða geðyncðo.

(Alfred's translation of *Cura Pastoralis*)

The only orthographic variant found in the corpus is *behindan*. The preposition was decreasing throughout the Old English period and I found no item after 1050. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that it occurred also in Old English III period, since it continues to occur in Middle English as well. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *behind* and Latin *post*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	3	4	0
Rate	0.03 ‰	0.01 ‰	0 ‰

binnan

The cognates include Old Frisian *binna* and Middle Low German *binnen*. It is a compound of *be* ‘by’ + *innan* ‘within’. It governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Ylþ is ormæte nyten mare þonne sum hus eall mid banum befangen binnan þam felle butan æt þam nafelan and he næfre ne liþ. (Aelfric’s Lives of Saints, XXV. 564, The Elephant)

Accusative:

Ða gyt ne com se Hælend binnan þa ceastre ac wæs ða gyt on ðære stowe þar Martha hin ongean com.

(New Testament, West-Saxon Gospels)

The orthographic variants found in the corpus include *binnan* and *binnon*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *within* and Latin *intra*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	25	47	26
Rate	0.26 ‰	0.18 ‰	0.38 ‰

beneoþan

The cognate is Old Frisian *binetha*. Morphologically, it is a compound of *be* ‘by’ + *neoþan* ‘below’. It governed dative:

Ða mid þæs modes tweonunge þa æteowde heo him swa swutole swa he his agene geseon mihte; and wæron fægere fingras smale and lange, and þæra nægla toscead and se greata lira beneoðan þæm þuman eall wæs gesyne and fram þam littlan fingre toward þas earmes, and sumne dæl of þære slyfe.

(Vision of Leofric)

The orthographic variants found in the corpus include *beneoþan* and *beneoðan*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *beneath* and Latin *sub*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	4	3	4
Rate	0.04 ‰	0.01 ‰	0.05 ‰

betweonum

Morphologically, it is a compound of *be* ‘by’ + *tweonum* ‘two each’. The preposition governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Þa geseah he betwux þam warum cype-cnihtas gesette, þa wæron hwites lichaman and fægeres andwlitan menn, and æpellice gefexode.

(Aelfric’s Homilies, Gregorius and the English Slaves)

Accusative:

Beoð soðfæste, ic bidde, and betweox eow getriwe.

(Aelfric’s second letter to Wulfstan)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *betuh*, *betux*, *betweoh*, *betweohn*, *betweonan*, *betweonum*, *betweox*, *betwih*, *betwihn*, *betwinum*, *betwioh*, *betwix*, *betwuh*, *betwux*, *betwuxn*, *betwyx*, *bitwih*, *betweon*, *betweonon*, *betwion*, *betwyh*, *betwynan*, *bituin*, *bitweonum*, *bitwien*, *betwenan*, *betweon*, *betweonan*, *betweonen* and *betwinan*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable during the Old English period and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *between* and Latin *inter*. In contrast with Modern English, there was no semantic difference between Old English *betweonum* and Old English *ongemang*, the predecessor of Present-day English *among*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	63	116	44
Rate	0.66 ‰	0.46 ‰	0.65 ‰

bufan

Morphologically, it is a compound of *be* ‘by’ + *ufan* ‘above, over’. The second element is a cognate with Old Frisian *uwa*, Old Saxon *oban*, Old High German *obana* and Old Norse *ofen*. The preposition governed dative:

And þa kyningas and þa odre heahdungene men swa micle lencg swa hi maran speda habbað hwilum healf gear þæt hi beoð unforbærned and licgað bufan eordan on hyra husum.

(Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII, The Voyage of Wulfstan)

The orthographic variants found in the corpus include *bufa*, *bufan* and *bufon*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *above* and Latin *super*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	6	17	3
Rate	0.06 ‰	0.06 ‰	0.04 ‰

butan

Cognate with Old Saxon *biutan*. Morphologically, it is a compound of *be* ‘by’ + *utan* ‘out’.

It governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Ic can butan nettum huntian.

(Aelfric’s Colloquy, Hunter)

Accusative:

Hwa mæg synna for-gyfan buton God ana?

(Gospel of Mark, Christ Heals a Man Sick of Palsy)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *buton*, *butun* and *utan*. There is an increasing frequency of its occurrence during Old English period. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English preposition *but* and Latin *tamen*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	94	252	139
Rate	0.99 ‰	1.00 ‰	2.06 ‰

foran

The preposition governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Eadsige arcebiscop hine halgode. & foran eallum folce hine well lærde.

(Chronicle MS Early)

Accusative:

& foran þæt hie gedydon æt Bedanforda, & þa foran þa men ut ongean þe þær binnan wæron, & him wiþ gefuhton, & hie gefliemdon, & hira godne dæl ofslogon.

(Chronicle MS Early)

The only orthographic variant of this preposition found in the corpus is *foran*. Although this preposition was marginal and it ceased to exist by the end of the Old English period, it gave rise to other derivatives like *ætforan*, *beforan*, *onforan*, *toforan* or *wiðforan*. All of them were synonymous in their primary meaning, which overlaps with Present-day English *before* and Latin *ante*. As far as the other prepositions from the *foran*-group are concerned, it was only the preposition *before* that survived the Middle English period. Its predominance over other compound prepositions of the *foran*-group cannot be explained by phonological reasons, since all of them were disyllabic. In order to understand the unrivalled position of *before*, we need to look at other Old and Middle English prepositions that evolved from *be*-derivation, *æt*-derivation, *on*-derivation and *to*-derivation. Of these, prepositions formed by *be*-derivation were by far the most frequent since high frequency prepositions like *betweonum*, *beutan* or *beinnan* were formed by it. In analogy with this majority, speakers of Old English preferred the frequent *be*-derivation also in the case of the *foran*-group. In this way, the form *before* was fostered while the other forms were constantly decreasing. Of these, *onforan* disappeared by 1250, *ætforan* by 1350 and *toforan* a century later.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	21	0	7
Rate	0.22 ‰	0 ‰	0.1 ‰

fram

Cognate with Old Norse *fra*, Old Saxon *fram*, Old High German *fram*, Gothic *fram*.

In Old English and especially in Middle English, there was also the preposition *fra* which is, however, a borrowing from Old Norse *fra*. The preposition governed dative:

Andgyt and gepoht menniscra heortan syndon forþhealde to yfele fram iuzoþe.

(Genesis, The Flood)

The orthographic variants found in the corpus include *fram* and *from*. The rate of occurrence has slightly decreased after 950 and then started to increase again. The prototypical

meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *from* and Latin *ab* and *ex*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	256	362	111
Rate	2.71 ‰	1.43 ‰	1.64 ‰

geond

Cognate with Gothic *jaind*. It governed accusative:

& com þa Eustatius fram geondan sæ sona æfter þam biscop.

(Chronicle MS Early)

According to Hall's dictionary (Hall, 1966:152), it was also rarely used with dative. Other dictionaries do not claim this and I have not found evidence for this claim in the corpus neither. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *geond*, *giond*, *geondan*, *geond* and *zeond*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable and the prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *through* and Latin *per*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)
Number of words	19	159	23	26
Rate	0.20 ‰	0.63 ‰	0.63 ‰	0.23 ‰

innan

Cognate with Old Saxon *innan*, Old High German *innan*, Old Norse *innan*, Old Frisian *inna* and Gothic *innana*. It governed genitive, dative and accusative:

Genitive:

Hi me on digle deorce stowe settan sarlice samed anlice, swa þu worulddeade wrige mid foldan; is me ænge gast innan hreþres, and me is heorte on hearde gedrefed.

(The Metrical Psalms of the Paris Psalter)

Dative:

Se biscop Odo mid þam mannum þe innan þam castele wæron ofer sæ ferdon.

(Chronicle E Late)

Accusative:

Nim þonne nygon clufa garleaces gehalgodes, cnuca on wine, wring þurh clað, scaf on myrran þa wyrt & fanthalig wex & brynestor & hwitne rycels, geot þonne innan þa sealfe, swa micel þæt sy III ægscylla gewyrðe, nim þonne ealde sapan & ealdes oxsan mearh & earnes mearh, do þonne þa tyrwan, ond mæng þonne mid cwicbeamenum sticcan oð heo brun sy.

(Lacnunga, Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine)

The orthographic variants of this preposition include *innan* and *inne*. Both of these were emphatic forms of the preposition *in*. Accordingly, the prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *in* and Latin *in*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	20	104	39
Rate	0.21 ‰	0.41 ‰	0.57 ‰

neah

Cogante with Old Frisian *nēi*, Old Saxon *nāh*, Old High German *nāh*, Old Norse *nā* and Gothic *nēhw*. It governed dative:

Witodlice he com on Samarian cestre þe is genemned Sichar neah þam tune þe Iacob sealde Iosepe his suna þær wæs Iacobes wyl.

(New Testament, West-Saxon Gospels)

The orthographic variant of this preposition found in the corpus is *neah*. Its rate of occurrence during the Old English period was relatively stable and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *near* and Latin *prope*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	9	59	4
Rate	0.09 ‰	0.23 ‰	0.05 ‰

onbutan

Cognate with Old Frisian *abūta*. It is a compound of *on* ‘on’ + *be* ‘by’ + *utan* ‘outside’. It governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Seo heofon beligð on hyre bosme ealne middaneard, & heo æfre tyrnð onbutan us.

Accusative:

An ea of ðam hatte Fison; seo gæð onbutan ðæt land ðe is gehaten Euilað, ðær ðær gold wyxð.

(Aelfric’s Treatise on the Old and New Testament)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *onbutan*, *onbuton* and *abutan*. Its rate of occurrence increased especially after 1050 and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *about* and Latin *de*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	2	12	16
Rate	0.02 ‰	0.04 ‰	0.23 ‰

onforan

It is a compound of *on* ‘on’ + *foran* ‘before’. It governed accusative:

Dis wæs swiðe geswincfull gear & byrstfull on eorðwæstmán. Ðurh þa ormæte reinas þe coman sona onforan August.

(Chronicle MS Early)

The only orthographic variant found in the corpus is *onforan*. Its rate of occurrence was very low during the Old English period and it completely disappeared by 1250. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *before* and Latin *ante*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)
Number of words	3	0	2	1
Rate	0.03 ‰	-	0.02 ‰	0.008 ‰

ongemang

Cognate with Old Saxon *angimang*. It is a compound of *on* ‘in’ + *gemang* ‘crowd’. According to Mitchell (Mitchell, 1985: 498), it governed both dative and accusative. Nevertheless, there is corpus evidence for accusative and therefore only example sentence with dative is provided:

Ac ne forleos mine sawle ongemang þam arleasum, ne min lif betwuh þam manslagum, þæra handa and þæra weorc syndon fulle unrihtwisnesse.

(The Paris Psalter)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *ongemang*, *ongemong*, *gemang*, *gemonge*, *onmang* and *amang*. In contrast with Modern English, there was no semantic difference between Old English *ongemang* and Old English *betweonum*. The prototypical meaning of *ongemang* in Old English overlaps with that of Present-day English *among* as well as *between* and Latin *inter*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	3	12	10
Rate	0.03 ‰	0.04 ‰	0.14 ‰

onuppan

It is a compound of on 'on' + uppan 'up'. It governed dative:

Loth for ut of Sodomān to Segor, & ðeah ne com he nauht hraðe onuppan ðæm muntum.

(Alfred's Cura Pastoralis)

The orthographic variants of this preposition include *onufan* and *onuppan*. The preposition was marginal during the Old English period and constantly decreasing. It disappeared by 1250. The prototypical meaning of this prepositions overlaps with that of Present-day English *upon* and Latin *super*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	2	5	0
Rate	0.02 ‰	0.01 ‰	0 ‰

oþ

The cognates include Old Frisian *und*, Old Saxon *und*, Old High German *unzi* and Gothic *und*. It governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

& ge beoþ in fiunge allum monnum for noma minum seþe þonne þurhwunap oþ his ende se bið hal.

(Rushworth Gospels)

Accusative:

& mon geseah swelce hit wære an gylden hring on heofonum brædre þonne sunne; & wæs from þæm heofone bradiende niþer oþ þa eorþan, & wæs eft farende wið þæs heofones.

(Alfred's Orosius)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *oþ* and *oð*. Its rate of occurrence has decrease at the end of the Old English period and it died out completely after 1350. Beside phonological weakening, homophony with two other forms may have contributed to the rapid loss of *oth* in Middle English. One of these forms was the coordinating link *oþþe* 'or', which was fairly common in twelfth and thirteenth century

texts and which became homophonous with *oth* ‘until’ after having lost its unstressed final [ə] in Early Middle English pronunciation. The other form was the weak *ope* ‘on the’ which must have been common in allegro speech and appears even in writing (Rissanen, 2007: 71). One further contributing factor to the substitution of *til* for *op* may have been that *til* /CVC/ was phonetically weightier than *op* /VC/, particularly as the phonetic weakening of *op* *hæt* resulted in homophony with *oppe* ‘or’ and *ope* ‘on the’. The complete loss of *op* and its replacement by *til* takes place remarkably early in Middle English. This is, of course, connected with the fact that *til* existed as a dialectal prepositional variant as early as the Old English period (Rissanen, 2007: 74). The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *until* and Latin *usque ad*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)
Number of words	59	41	63	15	4
Rate	0.62 ‰	0.16 ‰	0.93 ‰	0.13 ‰	0.04 ‰

samod

Cognate with Old Saxon *samad*, Old High German *samit* and Gothic *samaþ*. It governed dative:

Samod ærdæge eode eorla sum, æþele cempa self mid gesiðum þær se snotera bad, hwæþer him alwalda æfre wille æfter weaspelle wyrpe gefremman.

(Beowulf)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *samod*, *samed*, *somud*, *somod* and *samad*. As far as the rate of occurrence is concerned, it reached its peak between 950 and 1050 when it started to decrease and died out at the end of Old English period. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *at* and Latin *apud*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	10	45	4
Rate	0.1 ‰	0.17 ‰	0.05 ‰

toeacan

It is a compound of *to* ‘to’ + *eacan* ‘large’. The preposition governed dative:

& of ðam timan, ðe man ærest ereð, oð Martinus mæssan he sceal ælcra wucan erian I æcer
& ræcan sylf þæt sæd on hlafordes berne; toeacan ðam III æceras to bene & II to gærsyrðe;
gyf he maran gærses beðyrfe, ðonne earnige ðæs, swa him man ðafige.

(Laws by William I)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *toeacan*, *teken*, *tekenn*, *toecan* and *toekan*. The preposition disappeared from English prepositional system by 1250. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *beside* and Latin *apud*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)
Number of words	3	4	3	4
Rate	0.03 ‰	0.01 ‰	0.04 ‰	0.003 ‰

toforan

Cognate with Old Saxon *teforan* and Old Frisian *tofora*. It is a compound of *to* ‘to’ + *foran* ‘before’. The preposition governed dative:

On þære gesetnysse mæg sceawian se þe wyle, hu holdlice god spræc þurh þone halgan
witegan be his clænum þegenum and his clænum þinenum, hu he hi gearwurðað toforan
oðrum mannum on þam ecan wurðmynte and on wuldre mid him.

(Aelfric’s letter to Sigefyrth)

The orthographic variants of this prepositions found in the corpus include *tofor*, *toforan* and *toforen*. Its rate of occurrence was slightly increasing during the Old English period and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *before* and Latin *ante*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	1	9	20
Rate	0.01 ‰	0.03 ‰	0.29 ‰

togean

Cognate with Old Saxon *tegegnēs*. It is a compound of *to* ‘to’ + *gean* ‘straight’. The preposition governed dative:

& forþi þe he togeanes rihte & togeanes þam arcestole on Cantwarabyrig.

(Chronicle MS Early)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *togenes*, *togeanes*, *togægnēs* and *togænes*. The rate of occurrence of this preposition was steadily rising during the Old English period, but suddenly dropped at the beginning of Middle English period from 0.23 ‰ after 1050 to 0.07 ‰ after 1150 and after 1250 finally completely disappeared. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *against* and Latin *contra*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)
Number of words	2	34	16	8
Rate	0.02 ‰	0.13 ‰	0.23 ‰	0.07 ‰

toward

Cognate with Old Saxon *toward*. It is a compound of *to* ‘to’ + *weard* ‘in the direction of’.

The preposition governed genitive and dative:

Genitive

Ða mid þæs modes tweonunge þa æteowde heo him swa swutole swa he his agene geseon mihte; & wæron fægere fingras smale & lange, & þæra nægla toscæd & se greata lira beneoðan þam þuman eall wæs gesyne & fram þam littlan fingre toward þæs earmes, & sumne dæl of þære slyfe.

(Vision of Leofric)

Dative:

Ac reowlic þing þær gelamp on dæg. Ðæt þa Francisce men bræcen þone chor & torfedon towærd þam weofode þær ða munecas wæron. & sume of ðam cnihtan ferdon uppon þone uppflore. & scotedon adunweard mid arewan toward þam haligdome.

(Chronicle MS E Early)

The orthographic variants of this preposition include *toward*, *towarda*, *towardan*, *towardena*, *towardne*, *towardra*, *towærd*, *toward*, *towardre*, *towerd*, *towerdre* and *towerdum*. Its rate of occurrence slightly increased after 1050. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *toward* and Latin *erga*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	12	29	33
Rate	0.12 ‰	0.11 ‰	0.48 ‰

uppan

Cognate with Old Saxon *uppan*, Old Frisian *uppa*, Old High German *ūfen*, Old Norse *uppā*.

It is a compound of *up* 'up' + *on* 'on'. The preposition governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Iosue ða dyde swa swa Drihten him bebead, & Israhela bearn ealle ymbsnað uppan ðam beorge ðe is gehaten Preputiorum.

(The Old English Version of the Heptateuch)

Accusative:

& hi comon into capitulan on uppon þa munecas full gewepnede.

(Chronicle E Late)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *uppe*, *yppe*, *uppan* and *uppon*. Its rate of occurrence slightly increased during the Old English period and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *upon* and Latin *super*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	6	8	19
Rate	0.06 ‰	0.03 ‰	0.28 ‰

wið

Cognate with Old Norse *við*, Old Saxon *wið*, Old Frisian *with* and Gothic *wiþ*. The preposition governed genitive, dative and accusative:

Genitive:

Ðæt biþ strang sealf & god wið swelcre ablawunge & brunepan & wiþ þara ceacna geswelle oððe asmorunge. (Laeceboc)

Dative:

Ðæt is wyrse get, þæt he winnan nyle wið ðæm anwalde ænige stunde; þær he wolde a winnan onginnan, and þonne on ðæm gewinne þurhwunian forð, þonne næfde he nane scylde, ðeah he oferwunnen weorðan sceolde.

(Alfred's The Meters of Boethius)

Accusative:

Hwæt, þu meht gesion hu þæt treow bið utan gescerped & bewæfed mid þære rinde wið ðone winter & wið ða stearcas stormas & eac wið þære sunnan hæto on sumera.

(Alfred's translation of Boethius)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *wið*, *wiþ* and *wyð*. Its rate of occurrence increased 2.68 ‰ during the Old English period. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *against* and Latin *contra*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	437	613	132
Rate	4.63 ‰	2.43 ‰	1.95 ‰

5.3 OLD ENGLISH WORD-FORMATION

There is a small number of Old English prepositions, which does not form the Indo-European nor the Germanic stratum of Old English prepositional system. Instead, they developed by means of word-formative processes during the Old English period. These include:

ætforan

It is a compound of *æt* ‘at’ + *foran* ‘before’. The preposition governed dative:

Ʒa Sodomitiscan men wæron forcuðostan and swyðe synfulle ætforan Gode.

(Aelfric’s translation of Old Testament)

The only orthographic variant found in the corpus is *ætforan*. The rate of occurrence of this preposition was constantly decreasing and it finally died out in the course of the Middle English period. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *before* and Latin *ante*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	0	37	7
Rate	0 ‰	0.14 ‰	0.1 ‰

gehende

It is a compound of *ge* ‘with’ + *hende* ‘hand’. The preposition governed dative:

Hit stent on oðrum bocum, þæt Balaam swa ðeah þæhte þæm cyningce hu he cuman mihte þæt he hi beswice ; & he eac swa dyde; he beswac hi swa, þæt he sette wifmen æt his hæðengylde gehende ðam folce, þær hi on locodon; & hi eodon ða to manega of ðam folce to ðam myltystrum & wið hi hæmdon; & to ðam hæðengylde bugon.

(Aelfric’s Old Testament)

The orthographic variants of this prepositions include *gehende* and *gehendum*. The rate of its occurrence was slightly increasing, however, it was a marginal preposition with low occurrence. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with the of Present-day English *near* and Latin *prope*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	0	11	6
Rate	0 ‰	0.04 ‰	0.08 ‰

into

It is a compound of *in* 'in' + *to* 'to'. The preposition governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Soþlice þa ða tungel-witegan þone steorran gesawon fægenodon swyðe myclum gefean and gangende into þam huse hi gemetton þæt cild mid Marian hys meder and hi aðenedon hi and hi to him gebædon.

(Gospel of Matthew, The Adoration of Magi)

Accusative:

Wæs þara manna eallra þe þær ofslegene wæron & hungre swultan, mid wifmannum & wæpnedmannum, endleofan siþum hund teontig þusenda; & þa hi gyt genaman þæs folces þe þær to lafe wæs, & him selost licodan, hund teontig þusenda, and mid him læddon on hæftned; & ehtatyne syþum hund teontig þusenda hi tosendon, & wið feo sealdon wide into leodscipas.

(The Blickling Homilies)

The only orthographic variant of this preposition found in the corpus is *into*. There was a constant increase in the rate of its occurrence during the Old English period. Generally, we can claim that the reason for appearance of this preposition was the beginning of the loss of distinction between accusative and dative forms. The overt indication of motion or non-motion in connection with some prepositions could no longer be expressed morphologically. This was the main stimulus for the emergence of *into* at precisely this time, as it helped to disambiguate otherwise potentially identical constructions (Lundskær-Nielsen, 1993:22). The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *into* and Latin *in*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	10	104	123
Rate	0.1 ‰	0.41 ‰	1.82 ‰

ongegn

It is a compound of *on* ‘on’ + *gegn* ‘again’. The preposition governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Ʒa het ic sona Ʒa hors gerwan & eoredmen hleapan up, & het geniman swina micelne wræd & drifan on horsum ongean Ʒæm elpendum, forƷon ic wiste Ʒæt swin wæron ðæm deorum laðe, & hiora rying hie meahte afyrhton.

(Alexander’s Letter)

Accusative:

Feower sinoðes wæron for Ʒam soðan geleafan ongean Ʒa gedwolmen, Ʒe dyslice spræcon be Ʒære halgan Ʒrynnysse and Ʒæs hælendes menniscnysse.

(Aelfric’s letter to Wulfsgie)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *ongean*, *ongæn*, *ongan*, *ongann* and *ongen*. Its rate of occurrence rose 0.79 ‰ during the Old English period. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *against* and Latin *contra*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	0	90	77
Rate	0 ‰	0.35 ‰	1.14 ‰

ymbutan

It is a compound of *ymb* ‘about’ + *utan* ‘outside, without’. The preposition governed dative and accusative:

Dative:

Gif nu hæleða hwone hlisan lyste, unnytne gelp agan wille, þonne ic hine wolde wordum biddan þæt he hine æghwonon utan ymbepohte, sweotole ymbsawe, suð, east and west, hu widgil sint wolcnum ymbutan heofones hwealfe.

(Alfred's Meters of Boethius)

Accusative:

Seo burg wæs getimbred an fildum lande & on swiþe emnum, & heo wæs swiþe fæger an to locianne; & heo is swiþe ryhte feowerscyte; & þæs wealles micelness & fæstness is ungeliefedlic to secgenne: þæt is, þæt he is L elna brad, & II hund elna heah, & his ymbgong is hundseofontig mila & seofeða dæl anre mile, & he is geworht of tigelan & of eorðtyrewan, & ymbutan þone weall is se mæsta dic, on þæm is iernende se ungefoglecesta stream; & wiðutan þæm dice is geworht twegea elna heah weall, & bufan ðæm maran wealle ofer ealne þone ymbgong he is mid stænenum wighusum beworht.

(Alfred's Orosius)

The only orthographic variant of this preposition found in the corpus is *ymbutan*. The preposition disappeared during the Old English period. According to the corpus data, it was before 1050. It was also very marginal preposition with very low rate of occurrence. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *about* or *around* and Latin *circum*.

	Old English I (700 - 950)	Old English II (950 - 1050)	Old English III (1050 - 1150)
Number of words	8	9	0
Rate	0.08 ‰	0.03 ‰	0 ‰

6. MIDDLE ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS

As can be seen from the charts under the respective prepositions, their number increased considerably during the Middle English period. Some Old English forms disappeared altogether, e.g. *mid*, *ymb*, *op*. This was mainly a result of the fact that other

synonymous competing prepositions functioned in language, i.e. *wið*, *about*, *till*. Other prepositions were lost in the course of the Middle English period. These include *ætforen*, *baeftan*, *binnan*, *butan*, *ymbutan*, *tomiddes*, *toforen* etc. Added in Middle English were *around*, *beside(s)*, *notwithstanding*, *until*, *upon*, *within*, *without* etc. Compounding in Middle English resulted in *amid*, *amidst*, *biuten*, *inwith*, *unto*, *utwith* etc. It is commonly assumed that Middle English morphology gets poorer, i.e. a great number of flexions tend to be blurred, or dropped, leaving the words bare. There are two main reasons for this process. Firstly, it is the result of changes on phonological level which go back to the changes of stress pattern in Proto-Germanic. Consequently, in the course of Old English period, final syllables were becoming gradually unstressed a result of which was that the vowels they contained were falling together and all were ultimately reduced to /ə/. This led to neutralization of different inflectional endings. The process, however, did not stop here and during the Middle English period, schwa was gradually lost as well, leading to a drastic reduction of the remnants of inflectional endings. But phonological factors did not have to be the sole stimulus for the levelling of these sounds. After 787, when the Scandinavian tribes started to settle in much of eastern and northern England, they, as well as the native Anglo-Saxon population, had to adjust their speech in order to communicate effectively. Old English and Old Norse were similar languages with many identical words and grammatical patterns. Importantly, the inflectional endings were often a bit different. Therefore, for a smoother communication, in their interactions, the Anglo-Saxon speakers might have started to pronounce endings of their language a bit less clearly and in this way contributed to the merging of the final vowels into /ə/. What is clear, however, is that because of this morphological impoverishment, grammar had to readjust. The standard theory then claims, that the prepositions filled the functional gap left by the disappearance of case inflections. However, there is also a competing theory which holds that it was quite the opposite. The old case-forms began to disappear because more widespread use of prepositions gradually made them redundant. In a word, it was not a drag-chain but a push-chain mechanism. This view is also supported by Mitchell (Mitchell, 1985:495) who claims that certain prepositions governing more than one case even in the same sentence presumably played a part in the breakdown of the inflectional system. The word order of Middle English, therefore, became increasingly fixed.

6.1 OLD ENGLISH STRATUM

Most of the Middle English prepositions form the Old English stratum, i.e. they are direct descendants of their Old English counterparts, usually with minor orthographic changes. These include:

abuten

And ðat oþer dei þa he lai an slep in scip þa þestrede þe dæi over al landes and ward þe sunne swilc als it ware thre niht ald mone and sterres abuten him at middæi.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *onbutan* and is the predecessor of Modern English *about*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *onbutan*, *abutan*, *onbuton*, *abutæn*, *abutan*, *abute*, *abuten*, *abutenn*, *abuton*, *onbuten*, *aboute*, *abouten*, *about*, *abowte*, *abovte*, *abovt* and *about*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable throughout the Middle English period. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *about* and Latin *de*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	46	56	103	74
Rate	0.4 ‰	0.57 ‰	0.55 ‰	0.34 ‰

aboven

But I am beknowe and confesse, and that ryght dignely, that God is ryght worthy aboven alle thinges.

(Geoffrey Chaucer - Boethius)

The preposition comes from the Old English *bufan* and is a direct predecessor of Modern English *above*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *abufen*, *aboue*, *abouen*, *above*, *aboven*, *obouen*, *abouuen*, *abovyn*, *abowe*, *abowen* and *abown*. The preposition was slightly increasing during the Middle English period and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Modern English *above* and Latin *super*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	1	21	45	136
Rate	0.008 ‰	0.21 ‰	0.24 ‰	0.63 ‰

ætforen

And þis wes idon ætforen vre isworene redesmen, Boneface Archebischop on Kanterburi, Walter of Cantelow, Bischop on Wirechestre, Simon of Muntfort, Eorl on Leirchestre, Richard of Clare, Eorl on Glowchestre and on Hurtford, Roger Bigod, Eorl on Northfolke and Marescal on Engleneloande, Perres of Sauueye, Willelm of Fort, Eorl on Aubemarle, Iohan of Plesseiz, Eorl on Warewik, Iohan Geffrees sune, Perres of Muntfort, Richard of Grey, Roger of Mortemer, Iames of Aldithele, and ætforen oþre inoʒe.

(The Proclamation of Henry III)

The preposition comes from Old English *ætforan* and has no successor in Modern English. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *ætforen* and *atforen*. The rate of its occurrence was very low in the first half of the Middle English period, and it died out before 1350. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *before* and Latin *ante*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	3	4	0	0
Rate	0.02 ‰	0.04 ‰	-	-

aforen

At þe fyrste alle þe bretheren and systemen thus han behoten, þat þey every yer, on þe Sunday next aftyr þe fest of Seynt Peter and Powel, in worschipe of þe Trinite and of oure Levedy and Seynt William and alle halwen, schullen offeren to floured candelys aforn Seynt Willyams toumbe in þe mynstre of þe Trinite, and everi of hem offeren an halpeny at þe messe and heren al þe messe.

(Gild of St. William of Norwich)

The preposition comes from Old English *onforan* and has no Modern English successor. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *affore*, *afor*, *afore* and *aforn*. What is interesting is the fact that I have not found any evidence of this preposition in the period between 1250 and 1420. Nevertheless, it occurs in the corpus after 1420 what supports the view that it did not die out. Instead, it functioned in certain marginal cases through the Middle English period. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *before* and Latin *ante*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	0	0	35
Rate	-	-	-	0.16 ‰

after

þa com Henri abbot and wreide þe muneces of Burch to þe king forþi ðat he wolde underþeden ðat mynstre to Clunie, swa ðat te king was wel neh bepaht and sende efter þe muneces.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *æfter* and is a predecessor of Modern English *after*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *æfter*, *after*, *efter*, *hafte*, *ofter*, *aftur*, *aftar*, *aftir*, *aftre*, *aftyr*, *aftere*, *aftm*, *eftere*, *eftir*, *eftire*, *eftyr* and *eftyre*. The preposition was increasing until 1420 when it slightly decreased. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *after* and Latin *post*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	45	121	442	235
Rate	0.39 ‰	1.24 ‰	2.39 ‰	1.09 ‰

again

On þis kinges time wes al unfrið and yfel and ræflac, for agenes him risen sona þa rice men þe wæron swikes, alrefyst Baldwin de Redvers, and held Execestre agenes him.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *ongegn* and is a direct predecessor of Modern English *against*. The modern English *+st* in *against* comes from the genitive ending *+es* followed by a definite article. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *agænes*, *agen*, *agene*, *agenes*, *ogen*, *onʒean*, *ongann*, *ongean*, *ongeanes*, *aʒenes*, *agaist*, *agains*, *agayns*, *ogaines*, *ogains* and *ogayne*. Its rate of occurrence was very low and the prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *against* and Latin *contra*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	28	6	20	2
Rate	0.24 ‰	0.06 ‰	0.1 ‰	0.009 ‰

andlong

EGYPT is a long contree but it is streyt þat is to seye narrow for þei may not enlargen it toward the desert for defaute of water and the contree is sett along vpon the ryuere of Nyle be als moche as þat ryuere may serue be flodes or oþerwise þat whanne it floweth it may spreden abroad þorgh the contree, so is the contree large of lengthe.

(Mandeville's Travels)

The preposition comes from Old English *andlang* and its direct successor is Modern English *along*. The orthographical variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *along*, *alonge* and *endlonges*. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *along* and Latin *per*. As noted by Mustanoja (Mustanoja, 1960:360), the meaning of this preposition was influenced by the parallel Old French *au long de*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	2	4	3
Rate	-	0.02 ‰	0.02 ‰	0.01 ‰

amang

Ne deme e nogt wurdi ðat tu dure loken
Up to ðe hevene ward; oc walke wið ðe erðe,
Mildlike among men.

(The Bestiary)

The preposition comes from Old English *ongemang* and is a predecessor of Modern English *among*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *amang*, *among*, *enmang*, *amanges*, *amonge*, *amonges*, *amongs*, *amongus*, *omang*, *omanges*, *amange* and *amongis*. The rate of its occurrence was relatively stable and low and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *among* and *before* and Latin *inter*. It has to be stressed that even in the Middle English period, there was not semantic distinction between *betwixt* and *among* as these were more or less interchangeable. Their meanings differentiated only in Modern English.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	16	37	104	53
Rate	0.14 ‰	0.37 ‰	0.56 ‰	0.24 ‰

at

þa þe King Stephne to Englaland com, þa makod he his gadering æt Oxeneford and þar he nam þe biscop Roger of Sereberi, and Alexander Biscop of Lincol and te Canceler Roger, hise neves, and dide ælle in prisun til hi iafen up here castles.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *æt* and is a predecessor of Modern English *at*.

The orthographic variants of this preposition include *æt*, *at*, *att* and *atte*. Its rate of occurrence increased considerably during the Middle English period from 0.88 ‰ up to 3.82 ‰. This was a result of the fact that *at* started to be used in many phrases. According to Sykes, the development of meaning of *at* and the extension of its phrasal power are the direct result of French influence upon English (Sykes, 1899:54). However, as noted by Corisco, other languages such as Latin *ad* or Old Norse *at* also served as a basis for different calques with *at* (Corisco, 1997: 37). The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *at* and Latin *apud*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	100	244	481	819
Rate	0.88 ‰	2.5 ‰	2.61 ‰	3.82 ‰

beforen

Da he to Engleland com, þa was he underfangen mid micel wurtscipe, & to king bletcæd in undene on e Sunnendæi beforen Midwintre Dæi, & held þære micel curt.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *beforan* and is a predecessor of Modern English *before*. The orthographic variants of this prepositions found in the corpus include *beforan*, *before*, *beofren*, *biforæn*, *bifore*, *biforen*, *biforenn*, *biforren*, *biuore*, *biuoren*, *beuore*, *bifor*, *biforen*, *biforn*, *befor*, *beforn*, *bifoore*, *biforne*, *byfor*, *byfore*, *byforn* and *beffore*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *before* and Latin *ante*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	83	41	160	148
Rate	0.73 ‰	0.42 ‰	0.86 ‰	0.69 ‰

bi

þa namen hi þa men þe hi wenden ðat ani god hefden, bath be nihtes and be dæies, carlmen and wimmen, and diden heom in prisun efter gold and sylver, and pined heom untellendlice pining.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *be* and is a predecessor of Modern English *by*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *bi*, *be* and *by*. The rate of its occurrence has increased sharply after 1250 and then started to fall down after 1350. Its new higher frequency may be due to the influence exerted by the French preposition *par* (Corisco, 1997: 36). This view is also held by Mustanoja (Mustanoja, 1960:371). Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *by* and Latin *ab*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	174	771	1009	995
Rate	1.53 ‰	7.9 ‰	5.47 ‰	4.65 ‰

binethe

He let adun þe cloþes caste

Bineþen here breste;

Bi here breste he knew anon

þat on was maide and þat oper mon.

(Floris and Blancheflur)

The preposition comes from Old English *beneoþan* and is a predecessor of Modern English *beneath*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *bineoðen*, *bineþe*, *beneþe*, *benethe*, *binethe*, *byneþe* and *bynethe*. Its rate of occurrence during the Middle English period was very low and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *beneath* and Latin *sub*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	1	5	15	0
Rate	0.008 ‰	0.05 ‰	0.08 ‰	-

betwix

And thanne shal al this gold departed be,
my deere freend, bitwixen me and thee.

(Chaucer's Canterbury Tales)

The preposition comes from Old English *betweonan* and is a direct predecessor of Modern English *between*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *betuix*, *betwen*, *betweonæn*, *betweonan*, *betweonon*, *betweox*, *betweoxan*, *betwex*, *betwoex*, *betwonen*, *betwyx*, *bituhe*, *bituhen*, *bituhhe*, *bituhhen*, *bitund*, *bitunde*, *bitunon*, *bitwenen*, *bitwenenn*, *bitweonæn*, *bitweone*, *bitweonen*, *bitweonon*, *betuene*, *bituene*, *bitweies*, *bitwen*, *bitwene*, *bitwex*, *bitwexe*, *bitwixen*, *betuen*, *betwe*, *betwene*, *betwix*, *bituene*, *bituix*, *bituixand*, *bitwix*, *bitwixe*, *bitwyxe*, *bytwene*, *betuix*, *betwene*, *betwixe*, *betwixt*, *betwyne*, *betwyx*, *betwyxen*, *betwyxte*, *bitwene* and *bytwene*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable during the Middle English period and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *between* and *among* and Latin *inter*. It has to be stressed that even in Middle English period, there was not semantic distinction between *betwixt* and *among* as these were more or less interchangeable. Their meanings differentiated only in Modern English.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	60	37	87	56
Rate	0.53 ‰	0.37 ‰	0.47 ‰	0.26 ‰

bizeonde

Modred bad Childriche, þene stronge and þene riche,
 Wide senden sonde a feouwer half Sexlonde,
 And beoden þa cnihtes alle þat heo bizeten mihte,
 Þat heo comen sone to þissen kinedome,
 And he wolde Childriche zeoven of his riche
 Al bizeonde þere Humbre, for he him scolde helpe
 To fihten wið his æme, Arðure þan kinge.

(Layamon's Brut)

The preposition comes from Old English *begeondan* and is a direct predecessor of Modern English *beyond*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *bizeonde*, *bizende*, *bizonde*, *bizondis* and *beyond*. It was a marginal preposition with very low frequency of occurrence. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *beyond* and Latin *ultra*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	2	0	6	2
Rate	0.01 ‰	-	0.03 ‰	0.009 ‰

bihinde

He is ord abuten orde, and ende abuten ende;
 He ane is ævre en elche stede, wende þer þu wende;
 He is buven us and bineoðen, biforen and bihinde;
 Þe ðe Godes wille deð, eiðer he mei him finde.

(The Poema Morale)

The preposition comes from Old English *behindan* and is a predecessor of Modern English *behind*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *behinden*, *bihinde*, *bihinden*, *bihinndenn*, *byhynde*, *byhynden*, *behynd* and *behynde*. Its rate of occurrence very low and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *behind* and Latin *post*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	9	5	7	9
Rate	0.07 ‰	0.05 ‰	0.03 ‰	0.04 ‰

binnan

Eac is to wytene, þt se king Ælfred manega bec þurh Godes gast gedyhte; & binnen twam & twentig gearen his cynerices þiss eorðlice lif forlet, & to þan ecen gewende, swa him God geuðe for his rihtwisnyse.

(Vespasian Homilies)

The preposition comes from Old English *binnan* and has no successor in Modern English. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *binnen*, *binnon* and *binne*. It was a marginal preposition with very low rate of occurrence which died out before 1350. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *within* and Latin *intra*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	15	1	0	0
Rate	0.13 ‰	0.01 ‰	-	-

for

Wurþen men swiðe ofwundred and ofdred, and sæden ðat micel þing sculde cumen herefter, swa dide; for þat ilc gær warth þe king ded, ðat oþer dæi efter Sanct Andreas massedæi on Normandi.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *fora* and is a predecessor of Modern English *for*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *for*, *fora*, *forr*, *fur*, *uor*, and *uore*. Its rate of occurrence increase especially after 1250. This might have to possible reasons. Firstly, it becomes more frequent in Middle English due to the influence of French *pour* (Mustanoja, 1960: 380). Secondly, it becomes more frequent since it

started to function as an equivalent of the dative case. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *for* and Latin *pro*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	998	1122	2130	2359
Rate	8.83 ‰	11.51 ‰	11.56 ‰	11.03 ‰

fram

And he for to Rome and þær wæs wæl underfangen fram þe Pape Eugenie, and begæt thare privilegies, an of alle þe landes of þe abbotrice and anoþer of þe landes þe lien to þe circewican; and, gif he leng moste liven, also he mint to don of þe horderwycan.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *fram* and is a predecessor of Modern English *from*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *fram* and *from*. There was also compound form *fromward* (from Old English *fromweard*) in the sense ‘away from’. Its rate of occurrence slightly decreased after 1350 and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *from* and Latin *ab* and *ex*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	190	172	78	133
Rate	1.68 ‰	1.76 ‰	0.42 ‰	0.62 ‰

in

In worlde vnwisely wrought haue wee,
 This erthe it trembelys for this tree
 And dyns ilke dele!
 Alle þis worlde is wrothe with mee,
 þis wote I wele. (York Plays - The Expulsion)

The preposition comes from Old English *in* and is a predecessor of Modern English *in*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *in*, *ine*, *inn*, *hin*, *jn*, *yn*,

and *yne*. There also rarely occurs the form *inward* with the meaning ‘within’. Its rate of occurrence increased 16.98 ‰ during the Middle English period what makes it the second greatest increase in preposition use right after the preposition *of*. According to Corisco, it is very likely that the French *en* and Latin *in* have exerted an influence on the English *in*, helping to strengthen its position and gain some of the ground formerly occupied by *on* (Corisco, 1997: 38). This is also confirmed by Mustanoja (Mustanoja, 1960: 386-387). In general, *in* and *on* were no more interchangeable in the Middle English period and the numbers show that it was *in* which was predominantly used even in positions formerly occupied by *on*. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *in* and Latin *in*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	583	1736	3700	4733
Rate	5.15 ‰	17.8 ‰	20.08 ‰	22.13 ‰

inne

But wo is me þou art so naked:
 Of mi seyl Y wolde þe were maked
 A cloth þou mithest inne gongen,
 Sone, no cold þat þu ne fonge.

(Havelok)

The preposition comes from Old English *innan* and has no direct successor in Modern English. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *innan*, *inna*, *inne*, *jnne* and *ynne*. It functioned as an emphatic form of *in* and has very low rate of occurrence which was constantly decreasing during the Middle English period. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *within* and Latin *in*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	76	29	19	34
Rate	0.67 ‰	0.29 ‰	0.1 ‰	0.15 ‰

into

On al þis yvele time heold Martin abbot his abbotrice twenti wintre and half gær and ehte dæis mid micel swine, and fand þe munekes and te gastes al þat heom behoved; and heold mycel carited in the hus, and þopwethere wrohte on þe circe and sette þarto landes and rentes, and goded it swythe and læt it refen, and brohte heom into þe newæ mynstre on Sanct Petres mæssedæi mid micel wurctipe.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *into* and is a predecessor of Modern English *into*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *into*, *inte*, *intoo* and *ynto*. Its rate of occurrence dropped sharply at the end of Old English period from 1.82 ‰ before 1150 to 0.37 ‰ after 1150 and then started to increase again. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *into* and Latin *in*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	42	53	160	171
Rate	0.37 ‰	0.54 ‰	0.86 ‰	0.79 ‰

mid

Wanne he is ikindled stille lið ðe leun, ne stired he nout of slepe,
Til ðe sunne haveð sinen ðries him abuten;
Ðanne reiseð his fader him mit te rem ððet he makeð.

(The Bestiary)

The preposition comes from Old English *mid* and has no direct successor in Modern English. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *mid*, *mit*, *myd* and *mið*. The preposition sharply decreased after 1250 and finally died out in the second half of the Middle English period. The prototypical meaning of the preposition *wið* was that of Present-Day English *against*. This, however, changed during the Middle English period, when *wið* gradually broadened its meaning which started to overlap with the of Old English *mid*. In the course of Middle English *mid* was gradually displaced by *with* which became near synonym with *mid* in the Middle English period. The prepositions

were therefore competing and the question might arise, why *mid* and not *wiþ* disappeared during the Middle English period. According to Dekeyser (Dekeyser, 1990:44), there are two main reasons for this. Firstly, *wiþ* retained since it was the dynamic member, in other words, it was the semantic structure of this preposition that was on the move. It would be unlikely for such an element to suffer lexical loss. Consequently, *mid* was eventually ousted. Secondly, in Middle English, under the influence of *wiþ*, *mid* was sometimes spelled with thorn - *miþ*. This phonological similarity must have promoted the semantic osmosis of *wiþ* and *mid*, to the extent that, in spite of its frequency, the latter was eventually lost.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	659	145	0	0
Rate	5.83 %	1.48 %	-	-

nigh

And aftur þat we hadde wonne our sayd toun of Louiers, we cam afore pount-de-larche, and bisieged it on þat oon syde of þe riuer of seyne, and vpon munday þe iiij day of þe moneþ of Juill we gate vpon our enemys þe passage ouer the sayd riuer, and god of his mercy shewed so for vs and for our right that it was withouten þe deþ of any mannes persone of oures, albehit that our enemys, with grete power, assembled nigh the same riuer, for to haue let and defended vs the same passage.

(Henry V - Letter to Mayor)

The preposition comes from Old English *neah* and is a predecessor of Modern English *near*. The superlative form *next/nexste* has occurred as a preposition with the meaning 'nearest' since Old English. The comparative form *near* has been used as a preposition since later Middle English period (cf. Mustanoja, 1960:394). The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *neh*, *nigh*. The preposition had very low rate of occurrence and I have not found any token after 1420. Nevertheless, we must assume that this preposition occurred in Middle English IV period, since it is in Modern English

prepositional system as well. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *near* and Latin *prope*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	20	1	4	0
Rate	0.17 ‰	0.01 ‰	0.02 ‰	-

of

þa com Henri abbot and wreide þe muneces of Burch to þe king forþi ðat he wolde underþeden ðat mynstre to Clunie, swa ðat te king was wel neh bepaht and sende efter þe muneces.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *of* and is a direct predecessor of Modern English *of*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *of*, *off* and *offe*. The form *off* was used as an orthographic variant for *of* until 1600 (cf. Mustanoja, 1960:395) when its meanings became differentiated. The form *offe* was an emphatic form analogous to *in* vs. *inne*. According to Williams (1975), from 1250 onwards, the number of *of*-phrases increased from 6% in 1200 up to 32% of all genitive constructions and by 1300 nearly 85% was achieved. As we can see also from our corpus data, there is a very sharp increase in its use during the Middle English period due to its semantic erosion when *of* took over many of the roles previously held by other prepositions, in particular by *on*. It also became equivalent of genitive. During the Middle English period, moreover, *of* is interchangeable with *on* and *at* in many constructions (cf. Mustanoja, 1960:350-352). According to Mustanoja, the interchangeability of *of* and *on*, in particular, may have been furthered by the rather common reduction of both prepositions to *o* and *a*. From the late Old English period to 1600, when *by* becomes more common, *of* is by far the most frequently used preposition to indicate the agent of a passive action (Corisco, 1997: 41). Among the reasons for the rapid development of periphrastic genitive the growing importance of prepositional phrases could be counted. But also the French genitive construction *de* could have been a model to imitate (Corisco, 1997: 42). However, when it comes to French, some

linguists are reluctant to acknowledge its early influence, especially in the early Middle English period, only a hundred years after the Norman Conquest when *of* was already on the increase (cf. Mitchell, 1985: 508). For instance, Curme (Curme, 1931, 74-75) does not mention this possibility and argues for the graphemic force of the preposition as well as for the lack of clear genitive forms in the later period of the decay of the old declensions. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *of* and Latin *de*.

	Middle English I (1150 – 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	1845	2609	7428	7874
Rate	16.32 ‰	26.76 ‰	40.31 ‰	36.82 ‰

on

And on thy wombe þan shall þou glyde,
 And be ay full of enmyte
 To al mankynde on ilke a side,
 And erthe it shalle thy sustynauce be
 To ete and drynke.

(The York Plays - The Fall of Man)

The preposition comes from Old English *on* and is a direct predecessor of Modern English *on*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *on*, *onn* and *onne*. The form *onne* is an emphatic variant formed by the analogy with *inne*. The rate of its occurrence decreased during the Middle English period especially due to the fact that *in* started to replace *on* in many positions where they were no longer interchangeable. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *on* and Latin *in*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	1309	515	585	634
Rate	11.58 ‰	5.28 ‰	3.17 ‰	2.96 ‰

over

On þis gære for se King Henri over sæ te Lammasse.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *ofer* and is a direct predecessor of Modern English *over*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *ofer*, *offr*, *ouer*, *ower*, *ouere*, *over*, *ower* and *ovir*. Its rate of occurrence has decreased after 1250 but then became relatively stable. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *over* and Latin *super*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	163	50	82	123
Rate	1.44 ‰	0.51 ‰	0.44 ‰	0.57 ‰

sithen

Also the forsaide Sir Richard toke Robert atte Mere, Petre atte Mere, and enprisoned hem and stokkid hem withinne the forsaid lordship, forto haue had hem his bonde men, there þat thei and alle tenant₃ of the same lordship aren fre, and euere haue be, and all hire auncestrie sithen tyme oute of mynde. (A Petition of the King's Tennants at Banstead, Surrey)

The preposition comes from Old English *siþþan* and is a predecessor of Modern English *since*. The orthographic variants of this prepositions found in the corpus include *siððan*, *siððen*, *siþþan*, *siþþenn*, *sithen*, *sithon*, *syððe*, *syððen*, *siþþe*, *sipes*, *syþe*, *siþ*, *siþen*, *sith*, *sithe*, *sithis*, *siththe*, *syth*, *sythe*, *sythen*, *sythes*, *sithene*, *sithenes*, *sithenese*, *sithenys*, *sithyn*, *sythyn*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *since* and Latin *alab*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	40	18	109	41
Rate	0.35 ‰	0.18 ‰	0.59 ‰	0.19 ‰

to

For bittirly þan may I banne
The way I in þe temple wente,
Itt was to me a bad barganne,
For reuthe I may it ay repente.

(The York Plays - Joseph's Trouble about Mary)

The preposition comes from Old English *to* and is a predecessor of Modern English *to*. The orthographic variants found in the corpus include *to*, *te*, *t*, *two*, *tu* and *tho*. The rate of its occurrence increased in the Middle English period what can be partially explained by the fact that *to* became an equivalent of the dative case. It also established itself as an infinitive marker in Middle English period. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *to* and Latin *in*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	2199	2120	4373	5392
Rate	19.45 ‰	21.74 ‰	23.73 ‰	25.21 ‰

tofore

þet ilke ver dredeþ þo þet by hare myzte ham lokeþ vram dyadlich zenne, and lokeþ
holyliche hare herten and hare bodyes and hare mouþes and þe irf wyttes vram alle zenne,
and zuo libbeþ ase hi ssolden eche daye to dome come tofore God.

(The Ayenbite of Inwit)

The preposition comes from Old English *toforan* and has no successor in Modern English. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *toforen*, *tofor*, *tofore*, *tofore* and *tofor*. It was a marginal preposition with very low rate of occurrence. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *before* and Latin *ante*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	1	12	14	8
Rate	0.008 ‰	0.0001 ‰	0.07 ‰	0.03 ‰

toward

He com and mette wiþ ous tway
As we zeten in þe way,
And went toward Paradys;
þus he bot him in þe viis.

(Adam and Eve)

The preposition comes from Old English *toward* and is a predecessor of Modern English *toward* and *towards*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *touward*, *toward*, *towardan*, *towarrd*, *towart*, *toward*, *towearden*, *towarde*, *towardes* and *towardis*. The -s of *towardes* comes from the genitive singular ending -es. As noted by Mustanoja (Mustanoja, 1960:413), since Old English period, the elements of the preposition have not infrequently been separated by a noun: *to + noun + ward*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively low and was constantly decreasing during the Middle English period. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *toward* and Latin *erga*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	77	37	41	35
Rate	0.68 ‰	0.37 ‰	0.22 ‰	0.16 ‰

through

And þurh Godes milce and þurh þe Biscop of Seresberi and te Biscop of Lincol and te oþre rice men þe þer wæron, þa wiste þe king ðat he feorde mid swicdom.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *þurh* and is a predecessor of Modern English *through*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *þurh*, *þur*, *þurg*, *þurh*, *þorou3*, *þoru*, *þoru3*, *þoru3h*, *þur3*, *þure3*, *þorou*, *þorow*, *þurgh*, *þurghe*, *thorough*, *thorou*, *through*, *thurgh*, *þurgh*, *thorough*, *thoroughe* and *thorow*. Its rate of occurrence started to decrease after 1250. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *through* and Latin *per*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	323	89	81	109
Rate	2.85 ‰	0.91 ‰	0.43 ‰	0.5 ‰

under

Witt shulenn tredenn underr fot annd all þwertut forrwerppenn þe dom off all þatt laþe flocc þatt niþ forrblendedd, þatt tæleþþ þatt to lofenn iss þurh niþfull modiznesse.

(The Dedication to the Ormulum)

The preposition comes from Old English *undyr* and is a predecessor of Modern English *under*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *under*, *underr*, *onder*, *onderne*, *ounder*, *undir*, *undre* and *undyr*. The rate of its occurrence was low and it slightly decreased after 1250. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *under* and Latin *sub*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	62	14	32	29
Rate	0.54 ‰	0.14 ‰	0.17 ‰	0.13 ‰

up

þou sprengest me, Lord, wyþ þy mercy, and I shal be made clene;
þou shalt purifie me, and I shal be made whyte up snowe.

(The West Midland Prose Psalter, Psalm LI)

The preposition comes from Old English *uppe* and is a predecessor of Modern English *up*.

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *up*, *upe*, *upp*, *uppa*, *uppe* and *vppe*. Its rate of occurrence was slightly decreasing throughout the Middle English period. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *up* and Latin *supra*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	139	62	53	37
Rate	1.23 ‰	0.63 ‰	0.28 ‰	0.17 ‰

upon

Annd te bitæche icc off þiss boc, heh wikenn alls itt semeþþ,

All to þurrhsekenn ille an ferrs, annd to þurrhlokenn offte,

Þatt upponn all þiss boc ne be nan word 3n Cristess lare,

Nan word tatt swiþe wel ne be to trowwenn annd to foll3henn.

(The Dedication to the Ormulum)

The preposition comes from Old English *uppan* and is a predecessor of Modern English *upon*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *oppnan*, *upen*, *upon*, *uppan*, *uppen*, *uppeon*, *uponn*, *oppon*, *oupon*, *upo*, *vpon*, *opon*, *uppon* and *vppon*. Its rate of occurrence was increasing but then, after 1420, suddenly slightly decreased. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *upon* and Latin *in*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	50	51	202	187
Rate	0.44 ‰	0.52 ‰	1.09 ‰	0.87 ‰

wið

þerefter þe biscop of Wincestre, Henri þe kinges brother Stephnes, spac wið Robert Eorl and wið þe emperice, and swor heam athas ðat he nevre ma mid te king his brother wolde halden, and cursede alle þe men þe mid him heolden, and sæde heom ðæt he wolde uven heom up Wincestre, and did heom cumen þider.

(The Peterborough Chronicle)

The preposition comes from Old English *wiþ* and is a predecessor of Modern English *with*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *wiþ*, *wið*, *wyþ*, *wyð*, *with* and *wyth*. Its rate of occurrence firstly slightly increased, what can be explained by that fact that it became an equivalent for instrumental case. Nevertheless, after 1350, it has sharply decreased as a result of semantic changes that it suffered. The prototypical meaning of the preposition *wið* was that of Present-Day English *against*. This, however, changed during the Middle English period, when *wið* gradually broadened its meaning which started to overlap with the of Old English *mid*. This started about the beginning of the 13th century (cf. Mustanoja, 1960:418). According to Dekeyser (Dekeyser, 1990), this change was triggered by the fuzziness of its core meanings as contrasted with *ongean* and *mid* and the fact that another preposition, i.e. *ongean*, was available to take over. Secondly, as noted by Dekeyser, one could argue that it was due to the pressure of unambiguous *ongean* that *wiþ* lost its oppositional salience. Last but not least, an influence of Old Norse *viþ*, whose prototypical meaning was identical with Modern-English *with*, might have been influential. Some linguists argue also for the influence of Latin *cum* (cf. Mustanoja, 1960:419). However, as stressed by Dekeyser (Dekeyser, 1990:45), Old Norse *viþ* could not have triggered this semantic shift, since, there are numerous instances of *wiþ* in Beowulf or King Alfred, from which we can infer that this meaning can be traced back to the earliest Old English records. .

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	560	539	315	1509
Rate	4.95 ‰	5.52 ‰	1.7 ‰	7 ‰

withinnen

For he is as þe wiðin þe spruteð ut þe betere þt me hine croupeð ofte.

(Ancrene Wisse)

According to most sources, the preposition comes from Old English *wiðinnan* and is a predecessor of Modern English *within*. According to our corpus data, the preposition did not occur before 1150 and is therefore a newcomer in Middle English. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *wiðin*, *wiðinnen*, *witten*, *wiþinne*, *wyþinne*, *wyten*, *wiþin*, *within*, *withine*, *withinne*, *withjonne*, *withyn*, *withynne*, *wyten*, *withinen*, *wythin*, *wythinne* and *wythyn*. It served as an emphatic equivalent of *in*. Its rate of occurrence was low and relatively stable. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *within* and Latin *in*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	5	31	49	94
Rate	0.04 ‰	0.31 ‰	0.26 ‰	0.43 ‰

wiþuten

‘Awaym Claris,’ quap Blancheflur,
‘Ho þat luveþ paramur,
And haþ þerof joye mai luve flures;
Ac ich libbe in soreze in þis tures,
For ich wene, wiþute gabbe,
Þatþe Admiral me wile habbe.’

(Floris and Blancheflur)

According to most sources, the preposition comes from Old English *wiþutan* and is a predecessor of Modern English *without*. According to our corpus data, the preposition did not occur before 1150 and is therefore a newcomer in Middle English. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *wiðute*, *wiðuten*, *wiþoute*, *wiþouten*, *wiþute*, *wiþuten*, *withoute*, *withuten*, *wyþoute*, *wyþouten*, *without*, *withouten*, *withoutyn*, *withowten*, *withoutten*, *withowtten*, *withowtyn*, *wythout*, *wythoute*, *wythouten*, *wythovt*, *wythovte* and *wyttout*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *without* and Latin *sine*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	12	65	87	149
Rate	0.1 ‰	0.66 ‰	0.47 ‰	0.69 ‰

6.2 MIDDLE ENGLISH WORD-FORMATION

There is a small number of preposition which have no predecessor in Old English since they arose by means of word-formative processes during the Middle English period. These include:

adown

De wolf bey adoun his brest, and gon to siken harde and stronge.

(The Fox and Wolf in the Well)

According to Mustanoja, it comes from Old English *of dune* (Mustanoja, 1960:356).

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *adun*, *adune*, *adoun*, *adoune*, *adovne* and *adowne*. It was a marginal preposition with low rate of occurrence which started to decrease after 1350. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *adown* and Latin *infra*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	27	34	5	2
Rate	0.23 ‰	0.34 ‰	0.02 ‰	0.009 ‰

amid

Hwa se is ifallen amid te bearninde fur.

(Ancrene Wisse)

The preposition is a compound of Old English *on middan*, where *middan* is originally an inflected adjective. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *amid*, *amidde*, *amiddes*, *amyd*, *amydde* and *amyddes*. Its rate of occurrence was very

low and there is no corpus evidence after 1420. Nevertheless, I assume that the preposition occurred also in Middle English IV period, since it occurs in Modern English as well. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *amidst* and Latin *in medium*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	2	11	8	0
Rate	0.01 ‰	0.11 ‰	0.04 ‰	-

biside

Dat cete was sett biside þe felde þat Jacob sumtyme had in welde.

(The Northern Homily Cycle)

The preposition is a compound of Old English *bi sidan*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *bisiden*, *bisides*, *biside*, *bysyde*, *bisid* and *bisidis*. Its rate of occurrence was relatively stable and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *beside* and Latin *apud*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	3	15	18	6
Rate	0.02 ‰	0.15 ‰	0.09 ‰	0.02 ‰

forby

Haue no merueile whi I sette þees wordes forby alle oþer.

(The Cloud of Unknowing)

The preposition is a compound of Old English *for bi*. According to Mustanoja (Mustanoja, 1960:384), its occurrence in Middle English may owe something to foreign, probably Old Norse influence. The only orthographic variant of this preposition found in the corpus is *forby*. The preposition was marginal and did not occur before 1250. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *past* and Latin *praeter*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	1	2	1
Rate	-	0.01 ‰	0.01 ‰	0.004 ‰

forthwith

In þis mater þe kyng mad þe duke to take dayes and be bound, and forthwith þe duke ded homage to þe emperour.

(John Capgrave's Chronicle)

The preposition is a compound of *forth* + *with*. The only orthographic variant of this preposition found in the corpus is *forthwith*. Its tokens can be found in the corpus since 1350. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *with* and Latin *cum*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	0	1	3
Rate	-	-	0.005 ‰	0.01 ‰

forwith

He kneu him quen he him beheild, bi takens was him forwit teld.

(Cursor Mundi)

The preposition is a compound of *for* + *with*. The only orthographic variant of this preposition found in the corpus is *forwit*. I have found only three tokens of this type in the corpus all of which belong to Middle English III period. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *before* and Latin *ante*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	0	3	0
Rate	-	-	0.01 ‰	-

forto

...afterward þe Saxons come and made þat contray longe to Brenicia, þe norþ party of Norþumberlon, forto þat Kynadius, Alpinus hys sone, kyng of Scotlond, put out þe Pictes and made þat contray þat ys bytwene Twede and þe Scottysch se longe to hys kyngdom.

(Trevisa's Translation of Higden's Polychronicon)

The preposition is a compound of Old English *for to*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *forþe*, *forte*, *forto*, *vort*, *vorto* and *forthe*. It firstly appears in the corpus after 1250. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *until* and Latin *usque*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	61	46	59
Rate	-	0.62 ‰	0.24 ‰	0.27 ‰

inwith

For which this Januarie, of whom I tolde,
Considered hath, inwith his dayes olde,
The lusty lyf, the vertuous quyete,
That is in mariage hony-sweete,
And for his freendes on a day he sente,
To tellen hem th'effect of his entente.

(Geoffrey Chaucer - The Merchant's Tale)

The preposition is a compound of *in + with*. The only orthographic variant found in the corpus is *inwith*. According to Mustanoja (Mustanoja, 1960:392), this preposition occurs from the 13th century down to the 16th century. In our corpus, I have found only one occurrence in Middle English III period. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *within* and Latin *intra*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	0	1	0
Rate	-	-	0.005 ‰	-

noughtwithstondyng

Of which oon was, where the eleccion of mairaltee is to be to the fremen of the citee bi gode and paisible avys of the wysest and trewest, at o day in the yere frelich, - there, noughtwithstondyng the same fredam or fraunchise, Nicholus Brembre wyth his upberers proposed hym, the yere next after John Northampton mair of the same citee with stronge honde as it is ful knowen, and thorough debate and strengre partye ayeins the pees before purveyde was chosen mair, in destruccion of many ryght.

(The First Petition to Parliament in English)

The preposition is a compound of Old English *nawiht* + *wiðstanding*. Its form is motivated by parallel Old French *non obstant*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *notwithstanding*, *notwithstandinge*, *notwithstandyng*, *notwithstondyng*, *notwythstanding* and *notwyttstondyng*. It did not occur before 1420 when it ousted the synonymous French loan *maugre*. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *notwithstanding* and Latin *non obstante*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	0	0	12
Rate	-	-	-	0.05 ‰

throughout

That ye make serche thurghout alle my region - withoute ony tarieng, my wille may be seen and sle alle tho children, without excepcion, of to yeeres of age þat within Israelle bene!

(Digby Plays)

The preposition is a compound from Old English *þurh* + *ut*. It was an emphatic form of *through*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *thurghout*, *thurgheout* and *thurghoute*. According to the corpus data, the preposition was marginal and did not occur before 1350. However, in most of the dictionaries, *þurhut* is also mentioned as an Old English preposition. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *throughout* and Latin *per*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	0	2	3
Rate	-	-	0.01 ‰	0.01 ‰

unto

Cateryn and Hue Fenne recomaund them unto you, and they praye fore you as they can.

(Letter of Elizabeth Stonor to her husband)

According to Mustanoja, the preposition is formed after the analogy of *until* (Mustanoja, 1960:415). This claim is not supported by our corpus data, since instances of *unto* are already found before 1350, while *until* only after 1350. What is however undeniable is the fact that the first element *un* is a Scandinavian loan from Old Norse *und* ‘until’. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *unto* and *onto*. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *unto* and Latin *ad*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	13	57	180
Rate	-	0.13 ‰	0.3 ‰	0.84 ‰

6.3 FOREIGN INFLUENCES

As we have already mentioned in chapter 3, prepositions are a relatively closed class that is not prone to quick changes. This is of course not just the case of prepositions, but also other words with mainly grammatical function. Lass suggested the following borrowability hierarchy: Noun → Adjective → Verb → Adverb → Preposition (Lass, 1997:190). During the Old English period, only one preposition of foreign origin occurred,

i.e. *til*. This, however, was very marginal at that time and occurred mainly in Northern regions of the Dane Law. In order to explain the relative influx of loan prepositions into Middle English, one must take a closer look at the history of the English nation. In 1066, William of Normandy won the Battle of Hastings and was in the same year crowned king of England. As a result, there was a close connection between England and Normandy. Moreover, there was a dramatic change in the linguistic situation, since Norman French became the language of the upper classes and the Royal Court whereas English retained the role of the language of lower classes. The process of borrowing French prepositions, a word class on the lowest level of Lass's borrowability hierarchy, must therefore be viewed as indicative of very intimate language contacts between the English and the French population. Except for the majority of French loanwords, the prepositions penetrated into English also from another language, namely, Old Norse. The speakers of this language occupied part of England already during the late Old English period, nevertheless, people outside the Dane Law might have been reluctant to use the words that they associated with their Scandinavian aggressor. As a result, Scandinavian language had had very low prestige in areas outside the Dane Law. Still, after the Vikings relinquished power, these negative connotations might have gradually disappeared. This made it possible for words of Scandinavian derivation to spread to all dialects of English. Consequently, there is an increase in the use of the preposition *til* and formation of another compound preposition *until* which are both of Scandinavian origin. The list of loan prepositions which entered the Middle English prepositional system includes³:

considering

The whiche by reasons holde torne theyr face from the worlde, consideryng the ende of theyr lyfe

(In Die Innocencium)

³ Except for the above mentioned prepositions, there is an array of other loanwords from this period like *around*, *atour*, *concerning*, *countre*, *excepting*, *sans*, *save* or *saving*, however, there is no corpus evidence for their existence in the Helsinki Corpus.

The preposition comes from French. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *consederyng*, *considering*, *consideryng*, *considerynge* and *considryng*. Its rate of occurrence was very low and it did not occur before 1350. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *considering*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	0	6	10
Rate	-	-	0.03 ‰	0.04 ‰

during

And yf eny nede be to repaire, to stande opyn duryng the tyme of repeiryng as yn the said composition more openly and pleynly aperith.

(Letters and Papers of John Shillingford)

The preposition is a calque on Old French *durant* (Mustanoja, 1960:376). The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *durre*, *durren*, *duryng*, *durynge* and *during*. Its rate of occurrence was low but stable and its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *during* and Latin *per*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	3	0	4	23
Rate	0.02 ‰	-	0.02 ‰	0.1 ‰

except

The whiche þinges forsoþe iseyne, he may caste away all excepte þe stomak (if þe anothomye schal be made of þe ouer membres) and þe reynes, to see þe anothomye of þe lower membres.

(The Cyrurgie of Guy de Chauliac)

The preposition comes from Old French *excepte*. According to Mustanoja (1960, 377). The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *except* and *excepte*.

The only attestations are found in the corpus after 1420. The prototypical meaning of this preposition found in the corpus include Present-day English *except* and Latin *praeter*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	0	0	15
Rate	-	-	-	0.07 ‰

fra

Forþi blisce I þat paramour
 Quen I have ne dme dos socure;
 Þat saves me first in erth fra syn
 And hevenblys me helps to wyn.

(The Cursor Mundi)

The preposition comes from Old Norse *fra* and is a cognate with Old English *fram*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *fro* and *fra*. Its rate of occurrence reached its peak after 1350 and it started to decrease after 1420. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *from* and Latin *ab* and *ex*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words		57	433	288
Rate		0.58 ‰	2.35 ‰	1.34 ‰

maugre

Maugre his þai gun him spill,
 How proves þou þan it was his will?

(The Death of Saint Andrew)

The preposition comes from Old French *mugre*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *maugree*, *maugree*, *magre* and *mavgre*. Its rate of

occurrence was very low and it completely died out after 1500 when it was replaced by the preposition *notwithstanding*. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *notwithstanding* and Latin *non obstante*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	4	1	2
Rate	-	0.04 ‰	0.005 ‰	0.009 ‰

pur

þo he sagh Pers come þer wyþal,
 þe pore þoght, now aske I shal:
 ‘I aske þe sum gode pur charyte,
 Pers, 3yf þy wylle be.’

(Robert Manning’s *Handlyng Synne*, The Tale of Pers the Usurer)

The preposition comes from Old French *pur*. The orthographic forms of this preposition found in the corpus include *par*, *per* and *pur*. It did not occur before 1250 and its rate of occurrence was very low. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *by* and Latin *ab*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	8	5	4
Rate	-	0.07 ‰	0.02 ‰	0.01 ‰

til

Pers lestned, and herd hem spekyng,
 And þat þey had of hym knowyng;
 And pryvyly away hen am
Tyl he to þe porter cam.

(Robert Manning’s *Handlyng Synne*, The Tale of Pers the Usurer)

The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *til*, *till*, *tille*, *tyl*, *tile* and *tylle*. The origin of the preposition *til* is especially challenging. It already appeared in non-West Saxon dialects of Old English (especially Old Northumbrian and Old Mercian), however, since the evidence is very low, I have decided to classify it as a Middle English preposition. According to Oxford English Dictionary and Mustanoja (Mustanoja, 1960:408), it resulted from a merger of the homophonous Old English *til* and Old Norse *til*. Rissanen (2007: 69) is silent on this issue, claiming that the Old Norse etymology cannot be disputed, but at the same time stresses the fact that the earliest occurrence is found in an early eighth-century manuscript what would be quite early for a borrowed grammatical item. Yet, according to recent findings by Krygier (Krygier, 2011), it is rather a direct borrowing from Old Norse. Krygier analysed the use of Old English *til* as attested in the DOE corpus (Cameron et al. (ed.), 1981). He comes to the conclusion that out of 14 instances of the preposition in the corpus, only four instances (one from a Northumbrian version of Cædmon's Hymn, one from the Ruthwell Cross inscription and two from the *Lindisfarne Gospels*) are crucial for the Anglo-Saxon interpretation of the preposition as the others may be easily explained as Scandinavian borrowings due to the time of their attestation. However, Krygier points out that the early two instances of *til* from the 8th century should be seen as the only survivals of an otherwise unattested poetic Old English *til*, since it is not possible to show any functional continuity between the early and the late examples of *til*. The early examples are used as an expression of purpose in Cædmon's Hymn and in local sense in Ruthwell Cross while in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, *til* introduces an inflected infinitive in the first instance or follows a verb of speaking in a quasi-phrasal construction in the second instance. Moreover, at the time of writing the respective passages of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, the Danes had been living in Northumbria for approximately a century. The prototypical meaning of this preposition overlaps with that of Present-day English *until* and Latin *usque ad*

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	60	70	292	347
Rate	0.5 ‰	0.71 ‰	1.58 ‰	1.62 ‰

touching (touchant)

Lyte Lowys my sone, I aperceyve wel by certeyne evydences thyn abilite to lerne sciences touching nombres and proporciouns; and as wel considre I thy besy praier in special to lerne the tretys of the Astrelabie.

(Geoffrey Chaucer – A Treatise on the Astrolabe)

The preposition comes from French *touchant*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *touchende*, *toucheng*, *touching*, *touchyng*, *touchynge* and *touchyngge*. The seventeen instances found in the corpus all come from the Middle English III period.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	0	17	0
Rate	-	-	0.09 ‰	-

until

Left in Braband ful mekill dele;

And all þat land untill þis day

Fars þe better, for þat jorney.

(The Songs of Lawrence Minot)

The preposition is a compound from *un* + *til*. According to Lunds-kær-Nielsen (1993:114) *until* comes from Old Norse *und+til*. Old Norse *und* was a cognate with Old English *oð* whose meaning was synonymous with ‘til’. We can then conclude that the semantics of *until* contains the same meaning in the first as well as in the second element and therefore functioned as an emphatic form of *til*. The orthographic variants of this preposition found in the corpus include *until* and *untyll*. The preposition was marginal and did not occur before

1350. Its prototypical meaning overlaps with that of Present-day English *until* and Latin *usque*.

	Middle English I (1150 - 1250)	Middle English II (1250 - 1350)	Middle English III (1350 - 1420)	Middle English IV (1420 - 1500)
Number of words	0	0	9	1
Rate	-	-	0.04 ‰	0.004 ‰

7. FROM MIDDLE ENGLISH TO MODERN ENGLISH

The most considerable changes after 1500 that affected prepositions are orthographic changes. These are closely related to the process of standardization which took place during this period. Standard languages are often the by-products of bureaucracy and arise from practical administrative needs. English was not an exception. It became standardized firstly due to the need of the central government for regular procedures by which to conduct its business, to keep its records, and to communicate with the citizens of the land. Among other influences that strongly fostered the standardization process was the invention of the printing press. A few decades after the invention, in 1474, William Caxton printed the first English book in Belgium. Two years later, Caxton brought the printing press into England where he published about eighty other titles. In doing so, Caxton contributed to the stabilization of the new standard based on London dialect, since he concentrated on making the language understandable to the broad masses of population that read his books. In the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, there were other spelling reformers like John Cheke, Thomas Smith, John Hart, William Bullokar, Alexander Gil or Charles Butler, but the proposals of none of them met success. Finally, it was not until the eighteenth century that English had reached the stage with a fully standardized spelling. As far as the standardization of prepositions is concerned, usually the short forms became standardized (e.g. *behinden* - *behind*, *betweenen* - *between*, *withinen* - *within*, *withouten* - *without*). Nevertheless, in certain cases, the longer form was generalized (e.g. *again(st)* - *against*, *fro(m)* - *from*, *toward(s)* - *towards*). In a few cases both forms have survived as

independent prepositions, sometimes with a clear difference in meaning (e.g. *beside* vs. *besides*), sometimes as little more than stylistic alternatives (e.g. *among* vs. *amongst*). Except for the simple and compound prepositions that survived from the Old and Middle English times, new prepositions arose during the Modern English period. These fall into the new morphological category of complex prepositions. Relying on the data presented by Hoffmann (Hoffmann, 2005: 61-62) who draw from the Oxford English Dictionary and the Gutenberg Corpus, the following three groups of complex prepositions can be identified. The first group comprises early complex prepositions which have already acquired complex prepositional status by the end of the Middle English period. These include the prepositions *by means of*, *by virtue of*, *by way of*, *in place of*, *in spite of* and *in respect of*. The second group consists of constructions with grammaticalization into fixed units which can be placed within the time-span from roughly 1500 to 1700. These include *in common with*, *in conjunction with*, *in favour of*, *in need of*, *in relation to*, *in search of*, *on behalf of*, *on top of*, *with regard to* and *with respect to*. The third group contains those items, which were added within the last three centuries: *by reference to*, *in accordance with*, *in addition to*, *in charge of*, *in connection with*, *in contrast to*, *in excess of*, *in front of*, *in line with*, *in response to*, *in return for*, *in support of*, *in terms of* and *in view of*. These became the largest group of prepositions during the Modern English period and contributed significantly to the expansion of the word class.

8. CONCLUSION

The present thesis aimed to shed some light on English prepositions from a historical perspective. It tried to do so on both theoretical and empirical level. On theoretical level, I examined four hundred years of the history of English grammar writing with special reference to English prepositions. Some of the most influential definitions and treatments of prepositions were examined. We have seen that especially in the first decades of English grammar writing, there was a minority of grammarians like Hume, Jonson, or Fisher, who did not acknowledge in their works that prepositions constitute a word class in its own right. Other grammarians acknowledged the traditional status of a preposition as a separate word class, although not everyone considered them important enough to deal with them in their grammars. Generally, the history of English grammar writing with regard to prepositions can be seen as one of relative stagnation, exceptionally interrupted by authors like Bullokar, Miege, Maittaire, Brightland, Greenwood or Lowth. The relative negligence of prepositions culminated in the first half of the twentieth century, when most of the grammarians completely omitted sections on prepositions in their works. It was only in the second half of the twentieth century, that the situation radically changed and since then, grammarians like Schibsbye, Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, Svartvik, Huddleston, Pullum or Aarts introduced scientifically precise definitions and developed detailed and elaborate frameworks for their description, which, in most cases, reflect contemporary developments in theoretical linguistics.

When it comes to the results of my empirical research, these are scattered throughout the thesis. A chart with figures expressing rate of occurrence of each preposition is provided, as well as the list of all orthographic variants found in the corpus. The primary meaning of each preposition is always illustrated on Present-day English as well as Latin. Besides these findings, the corpus allows us for the following, more general, conclusions. Prepositions have always been high frequency words in English. Out of fifty most frequent words, at least nine have always been prepositions. In the Old English period, prepositional system was entirely Indo-European or Germanic in its origin. Morphologically, it consisted of simple and compound prepositions. No complex prepositions occurred during the Old English period. The corpus has shown that the number of prepositions was constantly

increasing. It was increasing already during the Old English period due to word-formative processes. This trend continued in the Middle English period. The prepositions increased as both tokens and types. The increase in preposition tokens was part of the movement of the language from a more synthetic to a more analytic state: as the old case-systems decayed, their function was often taken over by prepositions. The increase of prepositions as types is a direct consequence of further word-formative processes and new loans. Most of the new prepositions came from French. In fact, the majority of foreign prepositions that penetrated into English linguistic system throughout its 1500 years history are of French origin. Besides, two prepositions are of Old Norse origin. The history of loan prepositions therefore mirrors the long lasting intimate relation between Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians and Anglo-Saxons and Normans. The relation of the English people with other nations during the Modern English period was never close and long enough to affect the prepositional system of English. In other words, English simple prepositions never saw greater influx of foreign items than in the Middle English period. Middle English period can be therefore classified as a period of borrowings, whereas Modern English period can be classified as a period of the grammaticalization of complex prepositions. Their number has increased considerably during Modern English period and the whole class was therefore again substantially extended. Generally, then, we can claim that the number of prepositions is constantly rising. Prepositions can be therefore defined as a relatively open and expanding class although, when studied from a short-term perspective, it appears to be a closed class which is not prone to quick changes. Another conclusion may be made on semantic level.

When comparing the quantitative development of those Old and Middle English prepositions, whose primary, prototypical meanings overlapped, there was a general tendency of one preposition to oust the other(s) from the linguistic system. In other words, there was a shift during the Old and Middle English periods, which resulted in the reduction of synonymous simple prepositions, e.g. *toeacan* vs. *beside*, *beææftan* vs. *behind*, *maugre* vs. *notwithstanding*, *mid* vs. *with*, or even larger synonymous sets, e.g. *ær* vs. *ætforan* vs. *beforan* vs. *foran* vs. *onforan* vs. *toforan*, or *forto* vs. *op* vs. *til* vs. *until*. Of these groups, usually only one (underlined) item survived in Modern English. This is especially striking due to the fact that English is known as a language full of numerous

synonyms, which were formed throughout the historical development of English. Interestingly, then, when it comes to the synonymy of simple prepositions, there was a reduction during the Middle Ages and not an extension, as was the case of nouns and verbs in the same period.

There are further issues which have not been questioned in the present thesis, e.g. the role of grammaticalization in the development of particular prepositions, especially complex prepositions, or the dialectal variations of particular prepositions, especially as far as the particular orthographic variants are concerned. These, however, should remain for a topic of separate research. Nevertheless, I believe that the present work provided the reader with a brief overview of the history of English prepositions and can modestly fill the gap in the diachronic studies of English prepositions.

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and useful Method. Part IV. Treats of Sentences or Syntax, with proper Examples to each Rule in Concord and Government, explaining fully the Use of both, and Remarks upon each Rule for the Help of the Learner. And for a further Assitance to Teachers, &c fit Interrogatories are annex'd under each Head to examine Children by. With an Appendix of the Lord's Prayer by way of Question and Answer for Exercise. By Samuel Saxon. Sloth sits and censures what the Industrious teach: Foxes despise the Grapes they cannot reach. The Second Edition. Reading...

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Summary

The present thesis studies English prepositions from a historical perspective. It intends to do so on both, theoretical and empirical level. After a general introduction, chapter two deals with basic methodological problems. It briefly describes the Helsinki Corpus which is the source of the analysed data and explains that the author adopts a new, broader notion of preposition than the one which can be found in traditional grammars. Subsequently, chapter three analyses the relation of prepositions to morphological, syntactic, lexical and semantic plane of English linguistic system. Chapter four intends to trace the four hundred year history of English grammar writing with special reference to English prepositions. It provides the reader with some of the most influential definitions of prepositions and scrutinizes the approaches to their study adopted in these grammars. Chapter five is the first chapter of the empirical part of the thesis. The empirical part is essentially quantitative and is based on the diachronic part of the Helsinki Corpus. It firstly introduces those Old English prepositions, which come directly from the Proto-Indo-European language. Subsequently, prepositions of germanic origin are listed and finally, new Old English prepositions which arose in the course of the Old English period. Chapter six continues in the Middle English period. Again, prepositions are listed historically. Firstly, the prepositions which come directly from Old English are analysed, subsequently those which arose during the Middle English period by word-formative processes and finally new loan prepositions are examined. Every preposition is described in terms of its orthographic variants found in the corpus and its quantitative development throughout the respective period. The final chapter deals with the main changes that influenced English prepositions in Modern English period.

RESUMÉ

Diplomová práce se zabývá studiem anglických předložek z historického hlediska. Předložky jsou analyzovány na rovině teoretické i empirické. Po obecném úvodu následuje kapitola 2, která pojednává o základních metodologických problémech. Je v ní stručně charakterizován Helsinský korpus, jenž je zdrojem pro autorovu analýzu, jakožto také zcela nové, poněkud širší pojetí pojmu předložky než to, které můžeme najít ve tradičních mluvnících. Kapitola 3 píše o vztahu předložek k ostatním rovinám jazykového systému, zejména k rovině morfologické, syntaktické, lexikální a sémantické. Čtvrtá kapitola se snaží sledovat anglické předložky vzhledem k čtyři sta let trvající historii psání anglických mluvnic. Čtenáři nabízí nejvýznamnější definice předložek, přičemž také pečlivě analyzuje různé přístupy těchto mluvnic k jejich studiu. Pátá kapitola je první v rámci empirické části diplomové práce. Ta je zaměřena převážně kvantitativně a soustřeďuje se na korpusovou analýzu jednotlivých předložek. Nejdříve uvádí ty staroanglické předložky, které pochází přímo z protoindoevropského jazyka. Následně jsou jmenovány předložky germánského původu, a konečně nové, staroanglické předložky, které vznikly v průběhu doby staroanglické. Šestá kapitola pokračuje v době středoanglické. Předložky jsou opět řazeny historicky. Nejdříve jsou uvedeny ty, které pokračují přímo ze staré angličtiny. Následují předložky vzniklé v průběhu doby středoanglické během slovotvorních procesů a na závěr jsou uvedeny předložky cizího původu. Každá předložka je analyzována vzhledem k jejím ortografickým variantám, jež je možné nalézt v korpusu a taky vzhledem k jejímu kvantitativnímu vývoji v rámci příslušných období staroanglických a středoanglických. Závěrečná kapitola se soustřeďuje na hlavní změny, ke kterým došlo od doby střední angličtiny po moderní angličtinu.