JOHN LYDGATE'S USE OF PREPOSITIONS AND ADVERBS MEANING 'BETWEEN'

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study is to thoroughly analyse the prepositions and adverbs meaning 'between' in the works of a Late Middle English poet John Lydgate. As regards their quality, aspects such as the etymology, syntax, dialect, temporal and textual distribution of the analysed lexemes will be presented. In terms of the quantity, the actual number of tokens of the prepositions and adverbs meaning 'between' employed in John Lydgate's works will be provided and compared to the parallel statistics concerning Middle English texts collected by the *Middle English Dictionary online* and the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*.

The most spectacular finding is that John Lydgate regularly uses *atwēn, twēn(e)* and *atwix(t)(en)*, which are recorded in hardly any other Middle English texts. Moreover, the former two lexemes, and sporadically also *atwix(t)(en)*, produce the highest number of tokens of all lexemes meaning 'between' in each analysed Lydgate's text, which is unique in the whole history of the English language.

Keywords: John Lydgate, preposition, adverb, 'between', Middle English, East Midland dialect

1. Introduction

The present paper focuses on the language of John Lydgate's works. Lydgate was a Late Middle English poet writing in the East Midland dialect and greatly inspired by Geoffrey Chaucer. The specific linguistic issue analysed here is the unique use of the prepositions and adverbs meaning 'between'. The aim of the study is to establish the repertoire of those lexemes employed by Lydgate as

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well as to provide their etymology, syntax, dialect distribution, as well as temporal and textual distribution. In terms of quantity, the number of the recorded tokens of each investigated preposition and adverb in particular texts will be evaluated. Moreover, the proportion of the application of particular lexemes will be examined in the context of other Middle English preserved texts.

As regards the applied method, historical English dictionaries such as the *Middle English Dictionary online* (henceforth the *MED*) and the *Oxford English Dictionary online* (henceforth the *OED*) are employed to critically evaluate the origin of the analysed prepositions and adverbs and to construct their tentative dialect and textual distribution. Moreover, corpus linguistics methodology is used to investigate the quantitative aspects of the lexemes under discussion. The selected corpus is the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* (henceforth *CMEPV*), which is a part of the *Middle English Compendium online* supported by the University of Michigan. The corpus consists of 146 texts and text collections of all attested Middle English genres and text types, sometimes presented in two or more preserved manuscripts each (http://quod.lib.umich.edu /c/cme/browse.html; 28 December 2015). The linguistic material collected in the corpus includes ten texts by John Lydgate, which will be the subject of the investigation. Additionally, the analysis is supplemented with seven complete Middle English texts by John Lydgate not included in the corpus and one extra manuscript of a text found in *CMEPV*. All the examined texts will be searched for all the attested Middle English spelling variants of the discussed prepositions and adverbs. Those spelling variants are retrieved not only from the *MED* headwords but also from the *MED* quotations as well as from the *OED*. Numerous wildcard searches will also be performed in order to include possible spelling options not mentioned by either of the two dictionaries.

2. Recent studies on Medieval English prepositions and adverbs

Medieval English prepositions and adverbs have been recently of interest to scholars. Molencki (2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2011a, 2011b) devotes his papers to the study of prepositions/adverbs such as *after, before, because, forward* developing into conjunctions (in the framework of Hopper & Traugott's grammaticalization (2003) and Traugott's subjectification (1989, 1995)) as well as to the analysis of a group of prepositions/conjunctions borrowed from French. For his studies Molencki applies various dictionaries and corpora. Krygier (2011) investigates the preposition *till* in Old English and pays a special attention to the investigation of its actual etymology in the context of structural borrowing. Iglesias-Rábade (2011) selects for his study a group of twelve Middle English prepositions including *aboue, after, at, bi,*

bifore, *bihinde*, *biside*, *in*, *on*, *ouer*, *þurgh*, and *under* and studies their attestations in the Middle English part of the *Helsinki Corpus*. Alcorn (2013) concentrates on the placement of nominal and pronominal objects in phrases including variants of the Old English prepositions *by*, *for*, and *between* found in the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose*. Esteban-Segura (2014) investigates the possible historical variation between the prepositions *among* and *amongst* motivating their selection in Present-Day English. The Medieval English section of her study is based on the Old and Middle English sections of the *Helsinki Corpus*. Hotta (2014) discusses the spelling variants of the ME *betwixt* and *between*, focusing on their etymology and further competition of different spelling variants. Ciszek-Kiliszewska (2014a) focuses on the Middle English loss of the OE preposition *gēond* 'through, throughout, over, across' as evidenced in the two surviving ME manuscripts of Laȝamon's *Brut*. Ciszek-Kiliszewska (2014b, 2014c, 2014d, 2015) discusses various qualitative and quantitative aspects of the use of the Middle English prepositions and adverbs such as *twēn(e), emell(e), twix*, and *atwēn* on the basis of the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* comprising 146 Middle English texts and text collections.

3. Linguistic material

The linguistic material subject to the present analysis consists of 17 Late Middle English texts authored by John Lydgate. Ten[1] of them are collected in the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*, whereas the other seven[2] are recorded by the *Middle English Dictionary* as including at least one preposition or adverb meaning 'between'.

The *CMEPV* contain two longer works (the first two) and eight shorter poems:

> *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* (MS Cotton Vitellius c.13 (1475), MS Cotton Tiberius A.7 (1475), and MS Stowe 952 (1500));
> *Reason and Sensuality* (MS Fairfax 16 (1450));
> *S. Edmund und Fremund*[3] (MS Harley 2278 (1450) and MS Ashmole 46 (1500));

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[1]   There is one more text by Lydgate, i.e., *Against Millers and Bakers* (1460) included in the *CMEPV* but it does not yield any prepositions or adverbs meaning 'between'.

[2]   Actually, the *MED* lists one more short poem by Lydgate containing the preposition *twēn(e)*, i.e., *Saints Alban and Amphibal* (1500) but the author of the paper had no access to the text.

[3]   The *MED* labels the text as *Banner of Saint Edmund*. The dictionary does not list the text as including any preposition meaning 'between', though.

S. Giles (MS Harley 2255 (1460));
Life of Saint Margaret (MS Durham-U Cosin V.2.14 (1475));
Stans Puer ad Mensam (MS. Harley 2251 (1475));
Lyke the Audience, so Uttir thy Language[4] (MS Harley 2255 (1460),
     MS Univ. Lib. Camb. Hh. 4. 12 (c.1475) and MS Additional
     34,360 (1500));
Debate of the Horse, Goose and Sheep (MS Harley 2251 (1475) and
     MS Lansdowne 699 (1500));
Horns Away (MS Laud Misc. 683 (1475));
John Lydgate*, Song against Flemings* (MS Lambeth 84 (1479)).

The other seven complete texts selected on the basis of the *MED* information
are the following five sizeable works (the first five on the list) and the two
smaller poems:

Fall of Princes (MS Bodl. 263 (1439));
Troy Book (MS Cotton Augustus A.4 (1425));
Siege of Thebes (MS Arundel 119 (1450));
Secreta Secretorum (MS Sloane 2464 (1450));
Temple of Glass (MS Tanner 346 (1450));
Praise of Peace (MS Harley 2255 (1460));
Aesop's Fables (MS Trin. Coll. R. 3.19 (599) (1500)).

Moreover, I have added to the scope of the analysis yet another manuscript of
the text included in the *CMEPV*, i.e., *Stans Puer ad Mensam*, in which the *MED*
records the use of the adverb *bitwēne* (MS Lambeth 853 (1450)).

4. Repertoire of Lydgate's words meaning 'between', textual distribution, and
the number of tokens

The examined Lydgate's works yield as many as six different types of
prepositions and two types of adverbs meaning 'between'. Those include the
prepositions *bitwēn(e), twēn(e), atwēn, bitwix, atwix*, and *twix* as well as the
adverbs *bitwēn(e)* and *atwēn*, attested in texts in various spelling variants.
     Regarding the etymology of those Middle English lexemes, *bitwēn(e)* and
bitwix(t)(en) are well-established already in Old English. The other analysed
words, i.e., *atwēn, atwix, twēn(e)*, and *twix* are native Middle English creations,
structurally and semantically connected to *bitwēn(e)* and *bitwix(t)(en)*
respectively. While *twēn(e)* and *twix* are aphetic forms of correspondingly

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[4]   The *MED* labels the text as *Consulo quisque eris.*

bitwēn(e) and *bitwix(t)(en)*, *atwēn* and *atwix* are formed from the preposition *a* and *twēn(e)* or *twix* (cf. *OED* and *MED*; for more details concerning the etymology of *atwēn, twēn(e)*, and *twix* see Ciszek-Kiliszewska 2014b, 2014d, 2015).

In terms of the number of tokens representing particular types and their textual distribution in John Lydgate's works, Table 1 below presents the search results obtained for each lexeme type:

Table 1. Number of tokens of Lydgate's words meaning 'between'

John Lydgate's text	*twēn(e)*	*bitwēn(e)*	*atwēn*	*atwix*	*bitwix*	*twix*
Fall of Princes (1439)						
(MS Bodl. 263)	65	–	93	**8**	**8**	–
Secreta Secretorum (1450)						
(MS Sloane 2464)	15	–	8	**3**	–	–
Praise of Peace (1460)						
(MS Harley 2255)	2	–	6	–	–	–
Horns Away (1475)						
(MS Laud Misc. 683)	1	–	–	–	–	–
Aesop's Fables (1500)						
(MS Trin. Coll. R. 3.19 (599))	3	–	6	–	–	–
Debate of the Horse, Goose and Sheep						
(MS Harley 2251) (1475)	1	**4**	2	–	–	–
(MS Lansdowne 699) (1500)	2	**3**	2	–	–	–
The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man						
(MS Cotton Vitellius C.13) (1475)	**1**	**2**	**16+3adv.**	**14**	**5**	–
(MS Cotton Tiberius A.7) (1475)	**1**	**2**	**16+3adv.**	**14**	**5**	–
(MS Stowe 952) (1500)	**1**	**2**	**16+3adv.**	**14**	**5**	–
S. Giles (1460)						
(MS Harley 2255)	**3**	–	**3**	–	–	–
Lyke the Audience, so Uttir thy Language						
(MS Harley 2255) (1460)	**3**	–	**1**	–	–	–
(MS Univ. Lib. Camb.	**3**	–	**1**	–	–	–

Hh. 4. 12) (c.1475) (MS Additional 34,360) (1500)	**2**	–	**2**	–	–	–
S. Edmund und Fremund (MS Harley 2278) (1450)	**7**	–	**4**	**3**	–	–
(MS Ashmole 46) (1500)	**7**	–	**4**	**3**	–	–
Stans Puer ad Mensam (MS Harley 2251) (1475)	–	–	**1**	–	–	–
(MS Lambeth 853) (1450)	–	**1 adv.**	–	–	–	–
Life of Saint Margaret (1475) (MS Durham–U Cosin V.2.14)	–	–	**1**	–	–	–
Reason and Sensuality (1450) (MS Fairfax 16)	–	**1**	**6**	2	–	–
Troy Book (MS Cotton Augustus A.4; 1425)	–	**4+1adv.**	**9+2adv**	12	**3**	–
Siege of Thebes (MS Arundel 119; 1450)	–	–	**14**	4	**2**	–
Temple of Glass (1450) (MS Tanner 346)	–	1	–	**1**	**3**	–
John Lydgate, *Song* *against Flemings* (1479) (MS Lambeth 84)	–	–	–	–	–	**1**
Total	**117**	**20**	**222**	**72**	**31**	**1**

In order to better understand the results presented in Table 1, a general Middle English situation concerning the use of prepositions and adverbs meaning 'between' needs to be briefly presented. The two best-established Middle English words were *bitwēn(e)* and *bitwix(t)(en)*. They both go back to Old English, when they produced a significant number of occurrences. The *Dictionary of Old English* records c. 500 instances of *betwēonan*, the ancestor of *bitwēn(e)*, and c. 900 of *betwux*, the ancestor of *bitwix(t)(en)*. Similarly, in Middle English *bitwēn(e)* dominated in terms of frequency. *Bitwix(t)(en)* came

second, while the other prepositions and adverbs meaning 'between' were of rather minor use.

Bearing in mind the general predominant Middle English use of *bitwēn(e)* followed by that of *bitwix(t)(en)*, the quantitative results presented in Table 1 are quite unexpected. *Bitwēn(e)* and *bitwix(t)(en)* are completely absent from nine out of the 17 Lydgate's works and in the remaining eight texts they produce only a comparatively low number of tokens, i.e., 20 and 31 respectively. The lexemes dominating in terms of frequency are *atwēn*, recorded 222 times, *twēn(e)*, attested 117 times, and *atwix*, found 70 times. Among those tokens prepositions constitute the majority. Apart from them there are altogether only 13 cases of the adverbs *atwēn* and *bitwēn(e)*, nine of which (*atwēn*) are equally distributed in three different manuscripts of one text, i.e., *The pilgrimage of the life of man*. The number of the tokens of the adverbs seems too low to draw any firm conlusions concerning the Lydgate's preference for either *atwēn* or *bitwēn(e)*, though.

Yet another interesting observation is that the use of some types of prepositions and adverbs meaning 'between' in many Lydgate's works stays unnoticed by the *Middle English Dictionary online*. Those word types are marked by the bold type in Table 1.

5. Syntax

Regarding the function of the investigated lexemes, all of them except for *twēn(e)* could generally be used as both prepositions and adverbs in Middle English. *Twēn(e)* is recorded exclusively as a preposition. However, it has to be noticed that the main function of all the examined words is that of a preposition. It can be concluded not only by comparing the number of texts listed by the *MED* as including the prepositions and the adverbs but also the huge disproportion in favour of the prepositions that can be seen in the Lydgate's works. In the texts included in Table 1 there are only three adverbs *atwēn* against 16 prepositions *atwēn* in each manuscript of *The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* and two adverbs *atwēn* against seven prepositions in *Troy Book* as well as one adverb *bitwēn(e)* against five prepositions *bitwēn(e)* in *Troy Book* and one adverb *bitwēn(e)* in *Stans Puer ad Mensam* (MS Lambeth 853 (1450)). In the examined Lydgate's works *twēn(e), atwix, bitwix*, and *twix* are attested exclusively as prepositions. The overall number of the tokens of prepositions compared to that of adverbs in the analysed works (see Section 4 above) is even more illustrative of the dominant function of prepositions performed by the analysed lexemes. Examples 1 and 2 instantiate the use of *atwēn* as an adverb (see also (12) below). For the use of *bitwēn(e)* as an adverb see also (6) below.

(1)   But the heg wych stood **atwen**,
         Departyd yt (men myghtë sen),
         And the passage ek devyde:
         The ton was set on the ryht syde;
         (*Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* (all MSS), ll. 11,239–11,242)

(2)   And ȝit o þing I dar afferme and seyne,
         Þat þe menyng of þis ilke tweyne
         Ne was nat on, but wonder fer **atwene**;
         For al þat sche trew[e]ly gan mene,
         Of honeste þinkyng noon outerage,
         Liche a maide Innocent of age.
         (*Troy Book*, *Book I*, ll. 2,943–2948)

As for the position of the discussed prepositions in the prepositional phrases, they are all attested in the preposition. No cases of the postposition are recorded.

When the attention is shifted to the types of the complements that these prepositions take, it can be argued that in Lydgate's works it is not so much that the prepositions allow for some range of complements but that certain complements are very carefully matched with specific preposition(s). Such a pattern is most visible in the context involving the numeral *tweyne/two/too* 'two', where Lydgate very systematically uses the preposition *atwēn*, as for example in:

(3)   Sent his message to the cedre tre,
         That his sone myhte weddid be
         To his douhter; al-thouh in substaunce
         Atwen hem *too* was a gret discordaunce.
         (*Fall of Princes,* p. 273)[5]

(4)   Al this he ganne / to reuolue aboute,
         Ay in his herte / hauyng a maner doute,
         A-twenë *two* / hangyng / in balaunce
         where he shuldë / maken an aliaunce
         A-twene his doghtren / and the knyghtës *tweyn*.
         For on thyng / ay / his hertë gan constreyn,
         (*Siege of Thebes*, p. 64)

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5   Page numbers refer to the editions used by the *CMEPV*. All quoted instances of *atwēn* are
     put in bold type [my emphasis].

(5)   Queen of vertues / as lady souereyne,
        That suych a meene / be set **atwen** hem *tweyne*.
        (*Secreta Secretorum*, ll. 818–819)

The other preposition meaning 'between' which is very frequently used in the Lydgate's works, i.e., *twēn(e)*, is hardly ever recorded with the numeral 'two'. The careful and regular application of *atwēn* in the context of numeral 'two' is especially visible in the following passage from *Stans Puer ad Mensam* retrieved from two different manuscripts, i.e., MS Lambeth 853 from 1450 and MS. Harley 2251 from 1475. In the earlier manuscript (6) there is no numeral *tweyne/two/too* 'two' and *bitwēn(e)* functions as an adverb. However, since in the later manuscript the fragment (7) is paraphrased so that it includes the numeral *tweyne* 'two', *bitwēn(e)* is accordingly changed into *atwēn*.

(6)   As tyme requiriþ schewe out þi visage,
        To glad, ne to sory, but kepe þee euene **bitwene**
        For los or lucre or ony case sodene.
        (*Stans Puer ad Mensam*, ll. 75–77 (MS Lambeth 853))

(7)   As tyme requyrithe, shewe out thy visage,
        To gladde ne to sory, but kepe **atwene** *tweyne*,
        For losse or lucre or any case sodayne.
        (*Stans Puer ad Mensam*, ll. 75–77 (MS. Harley 2251))

A similar pattern can be observed in *Secreta Secretorum* (MS Sloane 2464; 1450), where one can find the two passages below, which contain very similar phrases. However, the fragment in (8) includes a 'Noun + *and* + Noun' phrase, which attracts *twēn*, while (9) includes a numeral *tweyne*, which prefers *atwēn*.

(8)   Set a good mene / **twen** *yong and Old of age*.
        Excellent prynce / this processe to Compyle
        Takith at gre / the Rudnesse of my style.
        (*Secreta Secretorum*, ll. 19–21)

(9)   Queen of vertues / as lady souereyne,
        That suych a meene / be set **atwen** hem *tweyne*.
        (*Secreta Secretorum*, ll. 815–819)

Yet another instance of the careful use of the preposition *atwēn* with the numeral *tweyne* 'two' is attested in the three manuscripts of *Lyke the Audience, so Uttir thy Language*. Even though the prepositions *atwēn* and *twēne* are used

in that particular poem exchangeably while preceding 'Noun + *and* + Noun' phrases, *atwēn* is preserved in the context of the numeral 'two':

(10)   **Attwen** thes *tweyne* / a greet comparysoun:
        Kyng Alisaundir / he conquéryd al;
        (*Lyke the Audience,* ll. 81–82, MS Harley 2255; 1460)

(11)   **A-twene** theis *tweyn* a gret comparison:
        kyng alysaunder, he conquerryd all;
        (*Lyke the Audience,* ll. 81–82, MSS Camb. Hh. 4. 12; c.1475 and Add. 34,360; 1500)

Moreover, I have also found a few instances of the preposition *atwix* used with the numeral 'two' in the analysed Lydgate's texts, e.g.,

(12)   Strongly armyd in the purpoynt
        Off paciencë, to sustene
        The strok, when they wer leyd **atwene**
        The hamer and the Styth also,
        And **a-twyxë** bothë *two*,
        The grene laurer off victorie,
        And the crowne ek off her glorye,
        (*The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, (all MSS) ll. 7490–7496)

(13)   Whan the play I-ended was
        Atwex hem *two*, thus stood the cas:
        (*Reason and Sensuality,* ll. 5901–5902)

(14)   And þus sche henge euen **atwixe** *two*,
        þat sche ne wist what was best to do;
        (*Troy Book*, ll. 2249–2250)

Regarding the pronominal complements such as *hem* 'them'*, us* or *you*, for example, are most frequently recorded with the preposition *atwēn:*

(15)   And whan thys parlement was do,
        As ye han herd, **atwen** *hem*,
        And Moyses ek dyned hadde
        With hys seruantys good & badde,
        (*The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, (all MSS) ll. 3,977–3,980)

(16)   I wille hir haue sothely to my wyfe,
        Loue and cherysshe for her grete beaute,
        As it is skyle, duryng al my lyfe,
        That **atwene** *vs* ther shal be no strife
        (*S. Margarete,* ll. 135–138)

There are also a few instances of *atwix* used in the context of personal pronouns without the numeral two or with the numeral.

    'Noun + *and* + Noun' phrases, on the contrary, are almost always found as complements of *twēne* in Lydgate's works*, e.g.:*

(17)   I meene, in sooth, **twen** *Ing[e]land & Fraunce*,
        His purpos was taue had a pes fynall,
        (*Fall of Princes*, MS Bodl. 263; p. 168)

(18)   Set a good mene / **twen** *yong and Old of age*.
        Excellent prynce / this processe to Compyle
        Takith at gre / the Rudnesse of my style.
        (*Secreta Secretorum*, ll. 19–21)

(19)   In this mater mak a comparisoun
        Twen *Alisaundre and Diogenes*:
        (*Fall of Princes*, MS Bodl. 263; p. 177)

Sporadically, *atwēn* and *atwix* are also used with 'Noun + *and/nor* + Noun' phrases, sometimes with exactly the same phrases as *twēne* (cf. (21)–(23)).

(20)   As off gruchchyng, but **atwen** *ioie and smert*
        Thanke God off all, and euer be glad off hert.
        (*Fall of Princes,* p. 95)

(21)   Souereyn lord, plese to your goodlyheed
        And to your gracious Royal magnyficence
        To take this tretys, which **a-twen** *hope and dreed*
        Presentyd ys to your hyh excellence!
        (*S. Edmund und Fremund, Regio,* MS Harley 2278; 1450)

(22)   O myn a-vowe which callyd art seyn Gile,
        Tween *hoope and dreed* moost meekly I requere:
        Thynk on thy man, that labourid to compile
        This litil ditee of hool herte and enteere!
        (*S. Giles*, ll. 361–364)

(23)   Assemblyd wern, fully purposyng
        To seeke the body of ther holy kyng.
        And compleyned **atwixen** *hope and dreed*
        Whan they hadde his blissid body founde,
        (*S. Edmund und Fremund, Book II,* ll. 874–877; MS Ashmole 46; 1500)

(24)   Nor, kan nat dyscerne A-ryght
        ffor ygnorance & lak off syht
        At-wexen *helthe & malladye;*
        Nor, **a-twen** *the meselrye*
        Grettest, smallest, and the mene;
        He kan no dyfference **atwene**
        Newë syknesse nor the olde.
        (*The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, (all MSS) ll. 2437–2443)

Occasional 'Noun + *and* + Personal Pronoun' complements are almost exclusively matched with the preposition *atwix*, e.g.,

(25)   And told the cause (yiff ye be wys,)
        Off my komyng A-mong thys pres,
        A-twyxë *yow & Moyses*,
        And sette me ek (yt ys no fable,)
        (*The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, (all MSS) ll. 4564–4567)

The only use of the preposition *twix* attested in Lydgate's works is to be found in context with the numeral *two* in *Song against Flemings*:

(26)   The pees purposyd at Araas in soothnesse,
        Whan our embassatourys, of hool affeccioun,
        Cam goodly thedyr, dyd ther bysinesse,
        To haue concluded a parfyt vnyoun
        Twyxt *to* reavmus, for ful conclusioun,
        (*Song against Flemings*, stanza 4; MS Lambeth 84)

The case of the complements of any of the prepositions cannot be specified as dative or/and accusative due to the Late Middle English dating of the manuscripts.

6. Temporal and dialectal distribution

Neither the temporal nor the dialectal distribution of the Lydgate's most frequent prepositions/adverbs meaning 'between', i.e., *twēn(e), atwēn*, and *atwix* is very extensive. Regarding the time of occurrence, none of the discussed lexemes is recorded in Old English (see section 4 above). Furthermore, the *MED* and my *CMEPV* search results show that there are only three Early Middle English texts which contain *twēn(e)* and/or *atwix*, i.e., *Holy Rood* (1175), which includes the earliest attested instance of *twēn(e)*, *Genesis and Exodus* (1325) and *Guy of Warwick* (MS Auchinleck, 1330) containing the first recorded example of *atwix*. The other texts employing the analysed words are preserved in the Late Middle English manuscripts. Among them there is the MS St. John's College H.1 (204) of John Trevisa's translation of *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden maonachi Cestrensis* from 1387 including the earliest case of *atwēn*. Interestingly, the *Middle English Dictionary* provides the later text of John Lydgate's *Troy Book* from 1425 as the original source of *atwēn*. The latest attested Middle English appearance of each examined word comes from 1500.

Regarding the dialectal provenance, the collected data demonstrate that *atwēn* is recorded exclusively in East Midland texts, while *twēn(e)* prevailingly occurs there as well. *Atwēn* is recorded in seven East Midland texts included in the *MED* and in the *CMEPV*, while *twēn(e)* in five. Apart from that, *twēn(e)* can be found only in one extra text from the South West and one from the North (for more details see Ciszek-Kiliszewska 2014b and 2015). Moreover, *atwix* is attested in 11 East Midland texts, including only two written by Chaucer. The results of the analysis focusing on the number of tokens of the investigated lexemes in those texts shed some more light on the proportion of use of the *twēn(e), atwēn*, and *atwix* by Lydgate and by some other authors. More specifically, the number of those three Lydgate's most frequent words meaning 'between' calculated in all other texts listed by the *MED* and included in the *CMEPV* are inversely proportional to the number of tokens calculated in the analysed Lydgate's texts. Altogether, there are 21 tokens of *twēn(e)*, 23 of *atwēn* as well as 116 of *atwix*. Hence, Lydgate's abundant use of those three lexemes and especially of *twēn(e)* and *atwēn* are unique when compared to the general tendency observed in the Middle English texts.

Lydgate's extensive use of *twēn(e)* could in theory be accounted for on the basis of a metrical analysis of his poems. Bearing in mind the fact that *twēn(e)* was an aphetic form of *bitwēn(e)*, one would expect *twēn(e)* to be a stressed monosyllabic word meaning 'between'. However, the examination of Lydgate's cases of the preposition reveals an opposite phenomenon. As illustrated in (8), (17), (18), (19), and (22) above, *twēn(e)* occurred in a verse unstressed position.

Hence, the poet could easily preserve the semantic load of the preposition *bitwēn(e)* and use its monosyllabic equivalent *twēn(e)* whenever he needed an unstressed position of his iambic pentameter to be filled in.

7. Conclusions

The aim of the present study was to investigate the use of the prepositions and adverbs meaning 'between' in John Lydgate's works. Aspects such as the types of lexemes, their etymology, syntax, temporal, dialectal and textual distribution as well as the number of tokens were examined. 17 texts by the author, with some of them preserved in more than one manuscript, were selected for a closer analysis. The *MED online*, the *CMEPV*, and the *OED online* were used as the databases.

Regarding the types of the analysed lexemes, I have found six types, i.e., *bitwēn(e), twēn(e), atwēn, bitwix, atwix,* and *twix*. As for their etymology, *bitwēn(e)* and *bitwix* were well established already in Old English, while the other four lexemes were derived from the former respectively in Middle English. The latest Middle English occurrences of all all those lexemes are recorded by the *MED* in 1500. All six types were employed in Lydgate's works with the function of prepositions, whereas two of them, i.e., *bitwēn(e)* and *atwēn* additionally functioned as adverbs. The analysis demonstrated that Lydgate deliberately avoided the use of the best established prepositions, i.e., *bitwēn(e)* and *bitwix*, and employed *atwēn*, *twēn(e)*, and *atwix* in gross numbers instead. He preferred to carefully use the preposition *atwēn* prevailingly with the numeral 'two' and also with personal pronouns, while the preposition *twēn(e)* was dominant with 'Noun + *and* + Noun' phrases. *Atwix* was employed in all those contexts as a secondary type. In Lydgate's works under analysis I have found 222 tokens of *atwēn*, 117 of *twēn(e)*, and 72 of *atwix*, which results, when compared to those obtained for the whole set of Middle English texts included in the *MED* and the *CMEPV*, i.e., 23, 21, and 116 respectively, makes Lydgate's use of the lexemes meaning 'between' unique in the whole history of the English language. Lydgate's frequent use of *twēn(e)* seems to have been motivated by his treatment of *twēn(e)* as a verse unstressed, rahther than stressed, equivalent of *bitwēn(e)*.

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