

Abstract

This work is concerned with the question of loss of inflections in the noun phrases of the Ælfrician homily *De nativitate Sanctae Mariae* (*Nativitas Sanctae Mariae Virginis; Pseudo-Matthaei Evangelium*). On the basis of collation of the manuscripts MS Hatton 114 and Bodley 343 a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the noun phrase is performed. The analysis aims to describe the main tendencies in the phonetic and morphological changes found in the text. The main tendencies of the morphological changes point toward the approach chosen by the scribe of the Updated manuscript Bodley 343 in dealing with the weakening case system. This includes unifying nouns which vary in gender affiliation in a single paradigm or the gradual implementation of new word endings with more narrowly defined meanings than ever before. The observed changes are placed in the context of the development from Old to Middle English.