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MIDDLE ENGLISH PREPOSITION
AND ADVERB *EMELL(E)*

The present paper focuses on the Middle English preposition and adverb *emell(e)*. The aspects of *emell(e)* investigated here include the etymology, semantics, dialect distribution, textual distribution, token frequency, spelling and syntax. The use of *emell(e)* is also illustrated in context. The analysis is conducted on the basis of acknowledged historical dictionaries such as the *Middle English Dictionary online* and the *Oxford English Dictionary online* as well as on an extensive electronic database, i.e., the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*.

INTRODUCTION

Some Middle English prepositions were recently subject to more detailed studies. Lundskær-Nielsen (1993) investigates the prepositions *in, on,* and *at* in Old and Middle English. Molencki (2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2011b) focuses on prepositions such as *after, before, because* and *forward*. Iglesias-Rábade (2011) studies in detail twelve Middle English prepositions such as *aboue*, *after*, *at*, *bi*, *bifore*, *bihinde*, *biside*, *in*, *on*, *ouer*, *þurgh* and *under*. Ciszek-Kiliszewska (2013, in press) performs an exhaustive study of the Middle English prepositions *twix* and *twēne* respectively. Still, numerous Middle English prepositions lack proper description or even a mention in Middle English grammars or hand-books.

The present paper focuses on the Middle English preposition and adverb *emell(e)*. The aim of the study is to present the origin of this borrowed lexeme and to investigate its semantic profile, dialect distribution, textual distribution, frequency of use, spelling and syntax in the preserved Middle English linguistic material. The analysis relies on extensive electronic databases such as the *Middle English Dictionary online* (henceforth the *MED*), the *Oxford English Dictionary online* as well as the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* and a few complete Middle English texts, all used to provide a complex profile of *emell(e)*.

DATABASES

The databases employed to investigate the whole collection of preserved Middle English texts are two electronic databases such as the *Middle English Dictionary online* and the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* included in the *Middle English Compendium*. Moreover, the token frequency of the preposition and adverb *emell(e)* is investigated in a few complete Middle English texts which have been listed by the *MED online* as including *emell(e)*, but which are not included in the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*.[1] The study is also supplemented with the third edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary online* (henceforth the *OED*).

The *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* belongs to the *Middle English Compendium online* supported by the University of Michigan. The corpus consists of 146 searchable poetic and prose texts of various genres and text types such as, e.g., religious texts, chronicles, documents and plays.

ETYMOLOGY OF *EMELL(E)*

The *Middle English Dictionary online* provides "ON *ī* or *ā millum*" as a source of the Middle English adverb *emell(e)*. The dictionary also makes a reference to related "OI *īmilli*, *āmilli* and *īmeðal*, *āmeðal*". The etymology section of the entry for the preposition *emell(e)* sends the reader to the adverb. Both the preposition and the adverb are first recorded in 1400.

The *Oxford English Dictionary online* recognizes two related prepositions and adverbs, namely *amell(e)* and *i'melle* and points to their Scandinavian origin. Their etymology is also more extensively described here than in the *MED online*. *Amell(e)* is labelled as coming from "Norse *á milli*, *á millum*, 'amid,' for *á miðli*, *miðlum* dative singular and plural of *miðil* or *meðal* 'mid, middle'; or perhaps of a later form **á meðli < meðal*, corresponding to Old Swedish *i mælli*, Danish *imellum*, the direct cognate of which is the kindred *imelle* prep. and adv.". *Imelle* is described as "[o]f Norse origin: compare Old Swedish *i mælli*, Swedish *emellan*, Danish *imellem* = Old Norse *í milli*, *í millum*, < Old Norse *meðal middle* adj. and n.; compare *amell* prep. and adv." The dictionary dates back both prepositions to 1400. The adverb *amell(e)* is recorded for the first time in *Legends of the Holy Rood* from 1400 (should be 1425 cf. *MED online emell(e)* (adv.)). The adverb *imelle* is dated back to 1475.

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[1] For the justification for the need of basing historical derivation studies on the whole attested historical linguistic material see Ciszek (2002, 2008).

SEMANTICS

The *Middle English Dictionary online* lists the following meanings of the preposition *emell(e)*:

1. Between (two persons or things)
2. Amid, among (persons or things); **theim emelle**, one another
3. In the midst of
4. Within (a period of time)

The analysis of these meanings and of the quotations accompanying them allows one for an assumption that the preposition could have locative, temporal and abstract senses. All the senses of the preposition *emell(e)*, however, are originally attested in the first half of the 15th century and thus their development cannot be safely considered within the framework of subjectification. Moreover, the fact that both the preposition and the adverb *emell(e)* appear at the same time or even in the same text, i.e., *Cursor Mundi* (MS Cotton Vespasian A.3.) prevents us from making any definite statements concerning the grammaticalisation of *emell(e)*. It can be added, however, that the meanings of the adverb *emell(e)* were slightly different from those of the adjective, i.e.,

1. Along with, besides; together
2. Altogether, utterly
3. Concerning this, about this

The *Oxford English Dictionary online* treats the investigated preposition and adverb under two separate entries, not representing different parts of speech but different spellings, i.e., *amell(e)* and *imelle*. The preposition *amell(e)* is defined as meaning 'amid, among, betwixt' and found in two Middle English texts, i.e., *Cursor Mundi* (MS Cotton Vespasian A.3.) and *Towneley Plays*. The other three cited fragments including *amell(e)* come from much later texts, with two of them being glosses. The preposition *imelle* is labelled as having a similar meaning, i.e., 'amid, among', which is recorded in four Middle English texts.

The adverb *amell(e)* is labelled as meaning 'in the middle; between; in the interval' and quoted from one text only, i.e., *Legends of the Holy Rood*, which in the *MED online* is listed as *Northern Homily Cycle: Legendary* (see Section 3 above). The adverb *imelle* is defined as assuming the meaning 'together' and as such is recorded in one text, i.e., *Liber Cocorum*.

Both *amell(e)* and *imelle* are recorded in complementary texts and they mostly have complementary meanings. The meanings of the adverb *emell(e)* in the *Middle English Dictionary online* should be supplemented with the meaning 'in the middle; between; in the interval' from the *Oxford English Dictionary online*. Still, the meanings provided by the *Middle English Dictionary online* are more extensive and they are confirmed by the analysis of the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* and some other complete texts.

Also, the list of texts including the analysed preposition and adverb is more exhaustive in the *Middle English Dictionary online* than in the *Oxford English Dictionary online* and hence the former will be referred to in Sections 5 and 6 below.

DIALECT DISTRIBUTION

The *Middle English Dictionary online* does not make any statement regarding the dialect distribution of the preposition or adverb *emell(e)*. My analysis of the citations illustrating the use of *emell(e)* listed by the *MED* shows that they come from manuscripts which, with the help of *A linguistic atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, could be localized in the North, North-East Midlands and North-West Midlands. More specifically, the manuscripts were written in Durham, Yorkshire (North Riding and West Riding), Cheshire and other more vaguely labelled Northern counties. Moreover, two manuscripts of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, i.e., MS EL 26.C.9 (Ellesmere) from 1405 and MS Hengwrt (Peniarth 392D) also from 1405 are localized in the area of London.

The *Oxford English Dictionary online* makes no claims about the dialect distribution of the investigated lexeme(s).

The investigation of the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* and all the *Middle English Dictionary online* quotations reveals the use of the preposition and adverb *emell(e)* in a few more texts. One of them can be localized in West Riding Yorkshire, two in Scotland and one was presumably written in the area of London. Many extra manuscripts of the texts listed by the *MED online* add no new localization to the study.

TEXTUAL DISTRIBUTION OF *EMELL(E)*

The *Middle English Dictionary online* evidences the use of the preposition *emell(e)* in 11 texts. These include:

  – *Cursor Mundi* (MS Cotton Vespasian A.3; 1400)
  – *Pearl* (MS Cotton Nero A.10; 1400)
  – *Northern Homily Cycle: The Northern Passion* (MS Rawl. poet. 175; 1425)
  – *Northern Homily Cycle: Legendary,* parts 1 and 2 (MS Harley 4196, 1425)
  – *Ywain and Gawain* (MS Cotton Galba E.9; 1425)
  – *Thornton Medical Book* (MS Thornton; 1440)
  – *Duke Roland and Sir Otuel of Spain* (MS Additional 31042; 1450)
  – *York Plays* (MS Additional 35290, 1450)
  – Richard Rolle, *Form of Living* (MS Rawl. C.285, 1475)
  – *Towneley Plays* (MS Huntington HM 1; 1500)

– Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales: Reeve's Prologue and Tale* (Manly and Rickert's critical edition; c. 1390)[2]

Interestingly, except for two texts, i.e., *Cursor Mundi* (MS Cotton Vespasian A.3; 1400) and *Ywain and Gawain* (MS Cotton Galba E.9; 1425), the adverb *emell(e)* is found in texts different from the ones in which the preposition *emell(e)* appears. The other texts containing the analysed adverb listed by the *Middle English Dictionary online* are:

– *Dialogue between Saint Bernard and the Virgin* (MS Cotton Tiberius E.7; 1400)
– *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (MS Cotton Nero A.10; 1400)
– *Wars of Alexander* (MS Ashmole 44; 1450)
– *Benedictine Rule* (MS Vespasian A.25; 1450)
– *Quatrefoil of Love* (MS Additional 31042; 1450)
– *Liber Cure Cocorum* (MS Sloane 1986, 1475).

Hence, altogether the preposition and adverb *emell(e)* are recorded by the *Middle English Dictionary online* in 17 texts.

Furthermore, I examined all the *Middle English Dictionary online* quotations for all possible spellings of *emell(e)*. The search revealed the use of the preposition and adverb *emell(e)* in one more text which has not been included under the *emell(e)* entry. The text is

– *Metrical Version of the Old Testament* (MS Selden Supra 52; 1450).

The analysis of the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* demonstrated that the preposition and adverb *emell(e)* can be found in three further text, i.e.,

– William Caxton, *Lyf of the Noble and Crysten Prynce, Charles the Grete* (MS C. 10, B. 9; 1485)
– Scottish alliterative poems in riming stanzas: *Awntyrs of Arthur* (MS Douce 324; 1500 and MS Thornton; 1440)

The knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane (1508)[3]

Moreover, the analysis of the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* provides insight into the actual manuscripts of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales: Reeve's Prologue and Tale*. These are:

– MS EL 26.C.9 (Ellesmere) (1405)
– MS Hengwrt (Peniarth 392D) (1405)
– MS Egerton 2726 (*olim* Haistwell) (1440)
– MS Camb. Dd.4.24 (1410)

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[2] The *MED online* labels the text as coming from Manly-Rickert's critical edition. The dates of the manuscripts are not specified. Instead, the date of the original, i.e., 1390 is provided. My search of the Manly-Rickert's edition and of the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* reveals at least a few manuscripts including *emell(e)*. They will be listed in this section below.

[3] These two poems can be found also in the *MED online* but they are labelled us being added to the dictionary and one can find neither the stencil of the texts nor any quotations including *emell(e)*.

Finally, one can discover that *emell(e)* occurs in three more manuscripts of *Cursor Mundi*, i.e.,

– MS Trinity C R.3.8 (1400)
– MS Physicians-Edinb. (1400)
– MS Göttingen Theological 107 (1400)

one more manuscript of Richard Rolle's *Form of Living*, i.e.,

– MS Camb. Dd.5.64 (1450)

and one more of *Awntyrs of Arthur*, i.e.,

– MS Thornton (1440).

TOKEN FREQUENCY AND SPELLING OF *EMELL(E)*

A thorough analysis of all complete texts which have been found to contain the preposition and adverb *emell(e)* grants us insight into the token frequency.

As regards the texts recorded by the *Middle English Dictionary online* as including *emell(e)*, *Cursor Mundi* from 1400 contains the greatest number of occurrences, i.e., 37. The manuscripts of *Cursor Mundi* which are most abundant in the tokens of *emell(e)* are MS Cotton Vespasian A.3 (18 tokens) and MS Göttingen Theological 107 (17 tokens). The other two manuscripts contain only one token each. More than a half of all these instances constitute phrases consisting of a personal pronoun *þa(i)m* and a preposition *emell(e)*. Here are some examples illustrating the use of *emell(e)* in MS Cotton Vespasian A.3 and MS Göttingen Theological 107:

(1) þir leuedis mensked þam **emell**,
     þair will þai gan til oþer tell,
     (MS Cott. Vesp. A.3 ll. 11,051-11,052)

(2) All þai said þam þaim **emell**,
     "Qua herd euer man sua spell,
     (MS Cott. Vesp. A.3 ll. 13,882-13,883)

(3) He bad þat we þe temple suld
     al to þe grund dun fell,
     He suld it rais þe thrid dai,
     na langer terme **emell**
     (MS Cott. Vesp. A.3 ll. 16,087-16,070)

(4) þai lete him pass fra þam **emell**
     And tuix þam spak þaa Iues fell,
     (MS Cott. Vesp. A.3 ll. 13,826-13,827)

(5) þa pharaseus þat ai war felle,
     Quen þai had striued þaim **emell**
     (MS Gött Theol 107, ll. 13,588-13,589)

(6) Hald stedfast loue and cherite,
     And wid þaim luuesumli to duelle,
     þe iuen lawe þaim lere **emelle**.
     (MS Gött Theol 107, ll. 12,100-12,102)

The *Northern Homily Cycle: Legendary* (MS Harley 4196) from 1425 is yet another text including numerous instances of *emell(e)*. Among the 19 occurrences, we can find the following ones:

(7) Byfor saynt Peter fete þai fell,
     Ful mekil mirth was þam **omell**
     (MS Harley 4196, ll. 67-68)

(8) A hors of his þat scho suld sell
     And gyf almus pure men **omell**.
     (MS Harley 4196, ll. 473-474)

(9) Ioy and confort of maydens fre!
     I thank þe, lord, mildly **omell**
     (MS Harley 4196, ll. 718-719)

Yet another text with a high frequency of the preposition *emell(e)*, i.e., 16 occurrences is the text of *York Plays* preserved in MS Additional 35290 from 1450. The preposition is most frequently used with personal pronouns such as *tham, us* and *you* (see examples (10) – (12)). Example (13) illustrates the case in which *emell(e)* is not used in postposition. There are six such instances.

(10) Bot of this werke grete witnes was
     With forme-faders, all folke may tell.
     Whan Jacob blyst his sone Judas
     He tolde the tale thaim two **emell**:
     Non auferetur septrum de Juda,
     donec ueniat qui mittendus est.
     (MS Add. 35290, Play 12: ll. 7-12)

(11) So bolde loke no man be
     For to aske helpe ne helde
     But of Mahounde and me,
     THat hase this worlde in welde,
     To mayntayne vs **emell**.
     (MS Add. 35290, Play 19: ll. 17-21)

(12) To telle tham comforte of ther care,
     And of there daunger that thei in dwell.
     God mayntayne you and me euermare,
     And mekill myrthe be you **emell**.
     (MS Add. 35290, Play 11: ll. 185-188)

> (13) This touches no tresoune I telle you.
>   Yhe prelatis that proued are for price,
>   Yhe schulde be bothe witty and wise
>   And legge oure lawe wher it lyse,
>   Oure materes ye meve thus **emel** you.
>   (MS Add. 35290, Play 30: ll. 454-458)

All other texts listed by the *Middle English Dictionary online* as employing *emell(e)* include only a few tokens or one token each.

Moreover, the three extra texts which I have found in the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* as including *emell(e)*, i.e., William Caxton's *Lyf of the noble and Crysten prynce, Charles the Grete* (*Lyf of Charles the Grete*) and the Scottish poems *Awntyrs of Arthur* and *The knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane* (*Golagros*) altogether include six tokens. The examples below illustrate their use.

> (14) He sittes his duspers Imange.
>   With white berde large and lange
>   Faire of flesche & felle.
>   With a floreschede thonwange,
>   Oure noble kynge þat es so strange,
>   His doghety men **imelle**.
>   (*Lyf of Charles the Grete*, Capitulo viij)

> (15) Fore him þat rightwisly rose, and rest one þe rode,
>   Þenke one þe danger þat I yne dwelle;
>   Fede folke, fore my sake, þat failene þe fode,
>   And menge me with matens and masse **in melle**.
>   (*Awntyrs of Arthur*, MS Douce 324, ll. 317-320)

> (16) Schir Cador of Cornwel, cumly and cleir,
>   Schir Owales, schir Iwell,
>   Schir Myreot, mighty **emell**;
>   Thir four, treuly to tell,oundis in feir.
>   (*Golagros*, ll. 747-751)

The results which I obtained for the *Metrical Version of the Old Testament* (MS Selden Supra 52) from 1450 are the most spectacular. I have found the presence of *emell(e)* in the text only by searching all the *Middle English Dictionary online* quotations (see also Section 6 above). Upon examining the whole text, not included in the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*, it has turned out that the text contains the highest frequency of all texts including *emell(e)*. All of the 49 tokens are used in a postposition and they appear verse finally. Examples (17) – (19) illustrate the use of *emell(e)* with personal pronouns and with nouns. Moreover, *emell(e)* functions not only as a preposition but in a few cases it can be found functioning as an adverb (see example (20)).

(17) To his fette þen Dauid fell,
and thanked him of all thyng,
luf þat was þem **o mell**
made payn at þer pertyng.
(MS Selden Supra 52, ll. 6,429-6,432)

(18) þen was full grett myrth þem **o mell**;
þei styrd and wold no langer stand,
(MS Selden Supra 52, ll. 7,081-7,082)

(19) And how þat fals archytofell,
his counsellar, was [with] hym broyȝt.
he ordand sone his men **o mell**
to remeue in all þat þei moght.
(MS Selden Supra 52, ll. 8,571-8,574)

(20) In awowtry fowle he fell
with vry wyf, pat [was] his knyȝt.
Swylke medyturs was mad **o mell**
þat with hym was scho all nyȝt.
(MS Selden Supra 52, ll. 8,079-8,082)

Table 1 below presents the frequency of *emell(e)* which I have evaluated in all works listed in Section 6 above. The texts are ordered chronologically.

The spelling variants written with capital letters in Table 1 represent types of spelling which may stand for a few actual spellings each. Table 2 below includes all spelling variants attested in Middle English texts.

As can be concluded from Table 1, the spellings *OMELL* and *EMELL* were most frequent. The spelling *OMELL* can be found in seven texts producing altogether 78 tokens whereas the spelling *EMELL* was recorded in six texts involving 63 occurrences. The spelling *I(N)MELL* is to be found in seven texts (nine manuscripts) but only once in each manuscript. *YMELL* is employed only in four manuscripts of the *Reeve's Prologue and Tale* in the *Canterbury Tales (CT)* and once in the *Thornton Medical Book*. The spelling *AMELL* appears twice in the *Metrical Version of the Old Testament* and only once in *Towneley Plays*. The quotations below illustrate the use of rare spellings. See also examples (14) and (15) above.

(21) My lord, we haue hard oure faders tell,
and clerkis that well couth rede,
Ther shuld a man walk vs **amell**
that shuld fordo vs and oure dede.
(*Towneley Plays: Pharaoh*, ll. 67-70)

(22) When þe leues are dryede ynowghe
& baken **ymelle** þe stones.
(*Thornton Medical Book*, 19/6)

Table 1. Token frequency of *emell(e)*.

texts	frequency				
	EMELL	I(N)MELL	OMELL	YMELL	AMELL
Cursor Mundi (MS Cotton Vesp. A.3; 1400) (MS Trin-C R.3.8; 1400) (MS Phys-E; 1400) (MS Göt Theol 107; 1400)	18 1 1 17				
Pearl		1			
Northern Homily Cycle: *The Northern Passion*			4		
Northern Homily Cycle: *Legendary*			19		
Ywain and Gawain			5		
Thornton Medical Book				1	
Duke Roland and Sir Otuel of Spain		1			
York Plays	16		1		
Richard Rolle, *Form of Living* (MS Camb. Dd.5.64; 1450) (MS Rawl. C.285, 1475)		1 1			
Towneley Plays	4				1
Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales:* *Reeve's Prologue and Tale* (MS EL 26.C.9; 1405) (MS Hengwrt; 1405) MS Egerton 2726; 1440) MS Cmb. Dd.4.24; 1410)				1 1 1 1	
Dialogue between Saint Bernard and *the Virgin*			1		
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight		1			
Wars of Alexander	2				
Benedictine Rule			1		
Quatrefoil of Love	1				
Metrical Version of the Old Testament			47		2
Liber Cure Cocorum		1			
William Caxton, *Lyf of the noble* *and Crysten prynce, Charles the Grete*		1			
Awntyrs of Arthur (MS Thornton; 1440) (MS Douce 324; 1500)	1 1	1 1			
The knightly Tale of Golagros *and Gawane*	1				

Table 2. Spelling variants of *emell(e)*.

EMELL	*emel*	*emell*	*emelle*	*e-mel*
I(N)MELL	*imelle*	*i-melle*	*in melle*	*inn melle*
OMELL	*omell*	*o-mell*	*o mell*	
YMELL	*ymel*	*ymelle*		
AMELL	*amell*	*a mell*		

SYNTAX OF *EMELL(E)*

As regards the syntactic distribution of *emell(e)*, the preposition appeared in phrases mostly with personal pronouns and sometimes with nouns. The personal pronoun most frequently collocating with the preposition under discussion was the third person plural pronoun *þa(i)m* or *hem* (see e.g., (1), (2), (4), (7), (10), (17) and (18) above). The other common personal pronouns were *us* and *you*, e.g., (11), (12) and (13) above. Nouns which formed phrases with the preposition *emell(e)* included nouns denoting people (see e.g., (8), (14) and (19)) and things (22) and abstract nouns (3).

As for the position of the preposition *emell(e),* in a great majority of instances attested in the preserved texts, it occurred in a postposition.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present study was to discuss the Middle English preposition and adverb *emell(e)* and to provide its etymology, semantics, dialect distribution, textual distribution, token frequency, spelling and syntax. The analysis was based on acknowledged historical English dictionaries such as the *Middle English Dictionary online* and the third edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary online* as well as on an extensive electronic database, i.e., the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*. The study was supplemented with a few complete preserved Middle English texts.

As regards the etymology of *emell(e)*, it was a loanword derived from Old Norse *ī* or *ā millum* or *milli*.

In terms of semantics, *emell(e)* as a preposition had the meaning 'between (two persons or things), amid, among (persons or things); in the midst of, within (a period of time)'. Together with a personal pronoun *þaim, emell(e)* could mean 'one another'. The preposition could assume locative, temporal and abstract senses. The adverb had the meaning 'along with, besides; together; altogether, utterly; concerning this, about this; in the middle; between; in the interval'.

As regards the dialect distribution, the dictionary, the corpus and the text analysis point to *emell(e)* appearing in the Northern, North-Eastern and North-Western dialects, in Scotland and in the area of London. The extensive preserved Middle English linguistic material shows no signs of the use of *emell(e)* in the South-West Midlands, in the South or in Kent.

When it comes to the textual distribution, the *MED online* lists 17 texts including *emell(e)*. However, the analysis of all *MED online* quotations, of the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* and of some other complete Middle English texts brings to the light four more texts and nine more manuscripts than those listed by the *Middle English Dictionary online*.

The investigation of the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* and of some other complete Middle English texts provides the source of knowledge about the actual token frequency of *emell(e)*. Apart from that, the analysis demonstrates that numerous instances of *emell(e)* are to be found in texts and manuscripts which are not listed under the *Middle English Dictionary online* or the *Oxford English Dictionary online* entries of the investigated lexeme(s). Here belongs the text with the highest frequency of *emell(e)*, i.e., the *Metrical Version of the Old Testament* including 49 tokens.

The spelling variants of *emell(e)* include those beginning with <e>, <i(n)>, <o>, <y> and <a>. Of these, the spelling <o> is to be found in the greatest number of texts and it is represented by the highest number of tokens. Hence, in my opinion the spelling <omell> should replace the spelling <emell(e)> in the *Middle English Dictionary online* headword position.

Regarding the syntax, the preposition *emell(e)* prevailingly collocated with personal pronouns, especially *þa(i)m*, but also with nouns. *Emell(e)* most frequently occurred in a postposition.

In more general terms, a detailed study of the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* and some other complete Middle English texts reveals that the *Middle English Dictionary online* needs to be treated more cautiously with respect to the text and, what it entails, dialect distribution of particular lexemes.

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