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THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUXILIARY OUGHT

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I

The auxiliary ought developed from the subjunctive use of āhte, the past form of OE (Old English) āgan. Āgan was a preterite-present verb and originally meant ‘to have, to possess’. This meaning gradually developed into that of ‘to have to pay’ and, accompanied by an infinitive, that of ‘to have as a duty (to do)’. In present-day standard English owe, developed from āgan, is not used in the sense of ‘to possess’ and that of ‘to have as a duty (to do)’, and its use is restricted to the meaning represented by ‘to have to pay’. From the seventeenth century owe in the sense of ‘to possess’ has been superseded by owe. Already before 1200 the past form āhte, which developed into ought, began to be used in the present sense expressing duty or obligation, and it has become an uninflected modal auxiliary, while owe came to be a weak verb with the past form owed, which has been in use from the fifteenth century. Thus ought, which was formerly an inflected form of the preterite-present verb āgan, is now practically a distinct verb from the newly developed weak verb owe. Such functional specialization of the past form is paralleled by must (<mōste, past form of OE mōtan), and to some extent by such modal auxiliaries as should, would, might and could. For a satisfactory study of any one of the modal auxiliaries, ought among the number, it is essential to make clear its place in the system, as it were, not only of the modal auxiliaries but of various words implying modality. But at the same time it may be admitted that, as a preliminary to such a large-scale study, a tentative sketch of the development of each word is needed. In the following I shall describe the early development of the auxiliary ought in its outline. The evolution of the whole use of āgan (owe) is to be dealt with. But my chief concern will be to make clear the process of the functional specialization of the past form āhte (ought) as an auxiliary verb expressing present duty or obligation, and the establishment of the syntactical group āhte (ought) + to-infinitive.

II

Apart from monographs dealing with the language of a particular author or work, the most detailed diachronic account of the auxiliary ought is found in OED (The Oxford

1 'Pres. indic. 1st, 3rd sg. āh, āg, pl. āgon, subj. āge, past āhte, inf. āgan...2nd sg. pres. indic. is ākst 1W–S, ākt Li, and does not elsewhere occur. Pres. part. āgende is frequent in compounds, the pass. part. āgen, āgen own occurs in adjectival use.' A. Campbell, Old English Grammar. §767.

2 Ought in the past sense is now found usually in dependent clauses.

English Dictionary). Therefore it will be convenient for any further study of the word to refer to the chronological survey in OED. The earliest and the latest quotations (abbreviated as EQ and LQ respectively) in OED of the chief senses of owe and ought are as follows.¹

### Owe

I. To have; to possess; to own.

†1. **trans.** To have; to have belonging to one, to possess; to be the owner of, to own. Obs. (since c 1680) exc. dial.

EQ. c 888 K. ÆLFRED Boeth. xiv. § 2 Pa micles bęþurfor þe micel aȝan willap.

LQ. a 1825 FORBY Voc. E. Anglia s.v., Mr. Brown owes that farm.

II. To have to pay.

This branch and the next were expressed in OE., as in the other Teutonic langs., by the vb. sceal, pa. t. sceolde, inf. sculan (Goth. skal, skuida, skulan), mod. Eng. SHALL, SHOULD. The first traces of the mod. use appear in the Lindisf. Gloss, which renders L. debère (where the Rushw., like the later Ags. Gosp., uses sculan) by the phrase ðað to zeldanne ‘to have to pay’. Examples are wanting during the following two centuries to show the stages by which this was shortened to the simple ðaðan, which is found by 1175 in full use, both in the sense ‘to owe (money)’, and ‘to have it as a duty’, ‘to be under obligation (to do something)’, in both taking the place of OE. sculan. (See also OUGHT v. 2, 5.) The result was that shall gradually ceased to have the sense ‘owe’, retained that of obligation with a weaker force, and became mainly an auxiliary of the future tense; while ðaðan, aȝen, oȝen, owen, owe, in taking débère as its main sense, has in Standard Eng. lost that of habère, or handed it over to the cognate Own, which shares it with have and such Romanic synonyms as possess.

2. To be under obligation to pay or repay (money or the like); to be indebted in, or to the amount of; to be under obligation to render (obedience, honour, allegiance, etc.). Const. with simple dat. or to. (The chief current sense.)


LQ. 1871 FREEMAN Norm. Conq. IV. xviii. 140 On behalf of the land to which they owed a temporary allegiance.

### III.

To have it as a duty or obligation.

†5. To have as a duty; to be under obligation (to do something). (Followed by inf. with or without to.) Obs.

(a) with to and infin.

EQ. c 1175 Lamb. Hom. 21 Swilcne lauerd we aȝen to dreden.

LQ. 1537 Let. in Cranmer’s Misc. Writ. (Parker Soc.) II. 352 As obedient ... as a true Christian oweth to be.

(b) with simple infin.

¹ The part of OED containing Ought was published in 1903, that containing Owe, in 1904.
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EQ. c 1200 Trin. Coll. Hom. 53 Nu aȝe we allè... nime forbisne.
LQ. 1524 HEN. VIII Let. to Pace in Strype Eccl. Mem. (1724) I. 11. App. xiii. 28 They shuld & owe, not onely forbere to geve ayde.

†6. quasi-impers. (usually with inf. clause as subject): (It) behoves, is the duty of, befits, is due (to); e.g. him owe (or oweth)=it behoves him, he ought; as him oweth =as befits him, as is due to him. Obs.

EQ. c 1220 Bestiary 350 Anòer kinde, Þat us oȝ alle to ben minde.
LQ. c 1450 Mirour Saluaciowa 4486 Hym awe serue and luf godde with his hert alle & some.

Ought⁴

I. Pa. t. of OWE v. in sense ‘to have or possess’.

†1. Possessed, owned. Obs.

α. EQ. a 1000 Beowulf 31 Leof land-fruma longe ahte.
   LQ. a 1670 SPALDING Troub. Chas. I. (1850) I. 205. The poor men that aught thame follout in.

β. EQ. a 1225 Ancr. R. 390 He... bead for to makien hire cwene of al Þet he ouhte.
   LQ. 1632 LITHGOW Trav. v. 204 The Turke who ought my Mule.

γ. (only one example) 13... Cursor M. 6719 (Cott.) Þe lord pat pat beist aght Sal þar-for ansuer at his maght [G. iht... miht, Tr. ight... myȝt].

II. Pa. t. of OWE v. in its existing sense.

†2. Had to pay, was under obligation to pay or render; owed. Obs. or dial.

The full phrase ahte to zeldanne ‘had to pay’ =debebât, owed, appears in the Lindisfarne Gospels; but, for the following two centuries and a half, examples are wanting to show the passing of this into the simple ahte: see OWE v. 2.

   Ibid. 28 Ênne of efnæþynum his seðe ahte to zeldanne [other vv. as in 24] hundræþ scillinga. 
   Ibid. Luke vii. 41 An ahte to zeldanne [Vulg. debebât, Ags. Gosp. sceolde] penningas ðif hund.] a 1300 Cursor M. 21422 Pour he was... And til a juu he mikel agh.
   LQ. a 1825 FORBY Voc. E. Anglia s.v. Aught, He aught me ten pounds.

β. EQ. a 1225 Ancr. R. 124 A mon Þet leie ine prisune, & ouhte muche rausun.
   LQ. c 1685 Life A. Martindale 231 (E.D.D.) Burton... said he ought him nothing.

III. As auxiliary of predication.

5. The general verb to express duty or obligation of any kind; strictly used of moral obligation, but also with various weaker shades of meaning, expressing what is befitting, proper, correct, advisable, or naturally expected. Only in pa. t. (indic. or subj.), which may be either past or present in meaning. (The only current use in standard Eng.)

a. In past sense: =Owed it to duty; was (were) bound or under obligation (to do something). Usually, now only, in dependent clause, corresponding to a pre-

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⁴ Quotations are classified according to the forms of ought: α=ahte, aȝte aȝte, aȝ[t(e, aught(e, aught, etc.; β=ȝht(e, ȝhte, ouȝte, ogȝte, ought(e, ouȝt, etc.; γ=ȝȝte, ȝȝt(e, iht, eȝt.
ceding past tense in principal clause: *he said you ought* = he said it was your duty.

\(a\)  EQ.  c 1200 Ormin 19108 Annd tohh swa þehh ne cnew himm nohht þe werelld alls itt ahhhte.

LQ.  c 1425 Wyntoun Cron. viii. ii. 52 Robert þe Brwys, Erle of Karryk Aucht to succeed to þe Kynryke.

\(b\)  EQ.  c 1305 St. Lucy 4 in E. E. P. (1862) 101 Of such a child wel glad heo was: as heo wel ouȝte.

LQ.  1892 Law Times XCIII. 414/2 He [the judge] did not think that the defendant ought to be kept in prison any longer.

b. In present sense: = Am (is, are) bound or under obligation; *you ought to do it* = it is your duty to do it; *it ought to be done* = it is right that it should be done, it is a duty (or some one's duty) to do it. (The most frequent use throughout. Formerly expressed by the pres. t., Owe v. 5.)

(a) with to and infin.

\(a\)  EQ.  ' c 1175 Lamb. Hom. 5 þes we ahtef.n to beon þe edmoddre.

LQ.  1658 Hattoet Corr. (Camden) 15 Therefore I aught to begg your pardon.

\(b\)  EQ.  c 1374 Chaucer Troylus v. 545 O paleys empty and disconsolat...Wel oughtestow to falle, and I to dye.

LQ.  1886 Ld. Escher in Law Rep. 32 Chanc. Div. 26 There is nothing here to shew that the parties ought not to be bound by their contract.

†(b) with simple infin. Obs. or arch.

\(a\)  EQ.  a 1200 Moral Ode 2 Mi wit ahte bon mare.

LQ.  1578-1600 Sc. Poems 16th C. (1801) II. 271 Than acht he be of all puissance denude.

\(b\)  EQ.  a 1225 Ancr. R. 326 Nie þinges beoþ þet ouhten hien touward schrifte.

LQ.  1868 Browning Agamemnon 796 How ought I address thee, how ought I revere thee?

With past sense indicated by the use of a following perf. infin. with have: *you ought to have known* = it was your duty to know, you should have known. (The usual modern idiom.)

EQ.  1551 Bible 2 Kings v. 13 Yf yþe prophet had byd the done some great thinge oughtest thou not then to have done it?

LQ.  1895 Law Times XCIX. 465/1 Lord Londesborough knew, or ought to have known, that his bill of exchange was intended to circulate.

†6. quasi-impers., with dative object.

†a. In past sense: Behoved, befitted, was due (to). Obs.

\(a\)  EQ.  1297 R. Glouc. (Rolls) 7348 Wattloker it aȝte her.

LQ.  c 1420 Sir Amadace (Camden) Iviii. That ladi gente . . . did wele that hur aghite to do.

\(b\)  (two examples) c 1366 Chaucer A. B. C 119 But oonly þer we diden not as us ouhte Doo.  1470–85 Malory Arthur vi. xii, I haue no thynge done but that me ought for to doo.

†b. In present sense: Behoves, befits, is due (to). Obs.
### The Early Development of the Auxiliary *ought*

#### α. EQ. c 1340 *Cursor M.* 12988 (Fairf.) Pe ne haȝt haue na doute.

LQ. c 1450 *Mirour Saluacioun* 1185 Than aght vs ofre to crist golde of diletionne.

#### β. EQ. a 1225 *Ancr. R.* 2 Pis nis nowt ibet ȝet al se wel hit oughte.

LQ. c 1500 *Lancelot* 2995 For well it ought o prince or o king Til honore and til cherish in al thing O worthi man.

#### γ. (Two examples) 13... *Min. P. Vernon MS.* xxxvii. 126 I ouȝte loue Jesu, ful of miȝte, And worschipe him... as me well iȝte. c 1450 *Mirour Saluacioun* 3755 The forsайдe stedes eght vs to visit.

The diagram below with the dates of the earliest and the latest quotations in OED will give an idea of how various uses came and went.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>I. 1 ‘to possess’</th>
<th>II. 2 ‘to have to pay’</th>
<th>III. 5 ‘to have as a duty (to do)’</th>
<th>III. 6 Impersonal</th>
</tr>
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<td>Form</td>
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<td>900</td>
<td>c 888</td>
<td>c 950</td>
<td>c 950</td>
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<td>a 1825</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>a 1825</td>
<td>1871 a 1825</td>
<td>1892 1868 1868</td>
<td>1895</td>
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</table>

Present status (OED)  

- Obs. exc. dial.  
- Obs. or dial.  
- Obs. or arch.  
- Cur.  

* Dates for EQ and LQ of *ought* are given irrespective of forms.  
** Abbreviations:  
  - *c* = *circa* (about);  
  - *a* = *ante* (before);  
  - obs. = obsolete;  
  - dial. = dialectal;  
  - arch. = archaic;  
  - cur. = current;  
  - exc. = except.

### III

The above diagram tells us the fates of each use through centuries. Moreover it gives a rough idea of the various uses of *owe* and *ought* in a given period. We know, for instance, that only the meaning ‘to possess’ existed in Early OE, and that almost all the meanings and uses obtained in the fourteenth century. But OED gives no information
as to the relative frequency of each use in a certain period, nor does it tell us in what relations a certain use stands to other uses. No linguistic phenomenon stands alone. It has a status peculiar to itself in the linguistic system of a given dialect in a given period. Therefore any diachronic study must be based upon a synchronic description. Mere chronological description of a phenomenon cannot be regarded as a linguistic history in its adequate sense, unless due consideration is given to its status in successive linguistic systems. Bearing this in mind, I have examined a few texts, ranging from Beowulf to Malory's works. The results thus obtained, though far from satisfactory, will carry the study of the auxiliary ought at least a step further.

The table below is intended to show the relative frequency of the uses in the texts examined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>I 'to possess'</th>
<th>II 'to have to pay'</th>
<th>III. 5 'to have as a duty (to do)'</th>
<th>III. 6 Absolute</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Pearl</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Malory</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


* The editions of the texts used are as follows:

* In the table the classification of meanings and uses is in accordance with that of OED. For to-infinitive is classified separately from to-infinitive. As for the impersonal use those instances only are considered in which the oblique case form of personal pronoun is clearly recognized.
In *Beowulf* we find 8 instances of *ægan*, all of which can be taken as meaning 'to have, to possess'.

- **Present (3):**
  - 1088 *æt* hie healfre geweald wið Eotena bearn *ægan* moston (that they might have power over half of it with the sons of the Jutes)/1727 *æt* ealra geweald (he has control of all)/2252 *nah*, hwa sword wege (I have no one to bear sword)

- **Past (5):**
  - 31 leof landfruma lange *æhte* (dear prince of the land long reigned)/487 *æhte* ic holdra *þy* læs, deorre duguċe, þæg *æt* deaċ fornam (I had the fewer trustworthy followers, dear warriors, because death had taken them away)/522 *æþær* he folc *æhte*, berh ond beagas (where he had subjects, a stronghold and treasures)/533 Soċ ic talgic, *æt* ic merestrengo maran *æhte*, earfeþo on *þyrum*, Ȝonne ænig Ȝer man. (I claim it to be true that I had more strength in the sea, hardships in the waves, than any other man.)

According to OED 'to have, to possess' was almost the only meaning of *ægan* throughout the OE period, except a few examples of the meanings 'to have to pay' and 'to have as a duty (to do)' in the *Lindisfarne Gospels* (c 950), which are quoted in II under *Owe 2* and *Ought 2*. Examples are wanting during about two centuries (from c 950 to a 1175). But we know from other sources that the use of *ægan* with the infinitive was by no means very rare. Callaway gives 32 examples with *to-*infinitive (Chron. [A]: 1; [E]: 2; Laws: 14; Wælserth.: 1; A. S. Hom. and L. S. II: 1; Wulfstan: 13), and one example with simple infinitive from *Wulfstan*. Six examples with *to-*infinitive are quoted in *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, Supplement, s.v. *ægan* (Charters: 3; Laws: 1; Lindisf. Gosp.: 2). Wülfling quotes only one example with the infinitive: *Leges Alfredi Regis* 58, 12 *nage* he hie ut on elpeodig folc to bebyegganhe (he ought not to sell her to foreign people). Three instances with the infinitive are found in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, one in A (the Paker MS.) two in E (the Laud MS.): A 1070 *þa* forsoc he. *þæs* *þe* he hit nahete to donne (then he refused and said that he was under no obligation to give it)/E 1085 hwilce gerihtæ he *æhte* to habbanne to xii monþum of ðære scire (what dues he ought to have in twelve months from each shire)/E 1140 *þæse* eorl heold Lincol agenes pe king. *þæs* benam him al ðe he *æhte* to hauen. (The earl held Lincol against the king, and deprived him of all that he ought to have.) Besides these examples with the infinitive there are 26 examples of *ægan* in the sense 'to have, to possess' in *Chronicle* [E].

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8 M. Callaway, Jr., *The Infinitive in Anglo-Saxon*, p. 80 f.
nam of hire eall p heo ahle/1046 ṣ behet man him ṣ he moste wurde [beon] ælc þera þinga þe he ǣr ahle./1048 eall ṣ heo ahle./1048 mann sette Ælfgar Leofrices sunu eorles ðæne eorldom on handa þe Harold ǣr ahle./1052 eall þet he ǣr ahle./1052 se cyng geaf þære hælfdian eall þe heo ǣr ahle./1053 þ eng Harold eorl his sunu to ðam eorldome. þa eallum þam þe his fæder ahle./1053 þ feng Ælfgar eorl to ðam eorldom þe Harold ǣr ahle./1055 se cyng geaf þone eorldom Tostige Godwine's sunu eorles. þe Siward eorl ǣr ahle./1066 se Norræna cyng ahle siges geweald./1085 forbige he ahle ægðer ge Engeland ge Normandige./1102 þone eorldom her on lande on Scrobbes byring þe his fæder Roger ær ahle.10

It was towards the end of the eleventh century that the meanings 'to have to pay' and 'to have as a duty (to do)' became prevalent. In the earlier period these meanings were usually expressed by sceldan.11 The earliest and the latest quotations in OED of sculan with these meanings are as follows:

†1. trans.

†a. To owe (money). Obs.
Lq. c 1425 HOCCLEYE Min. Poems xxiii. 695 The leeste ferthyng pat y men shal.

†b. To owe (allegiance). Obs.
Eq. c 1325 Poem temp. Edw. II (Percy Soc.) xxxxiv, Be the fayth ic schal to God.
Lq. c 1530 Crt. of Love 131 By the feith I shall to god.]

†2. In general statements of what is right or becoming: 'ought'. Obs. (Superseded by the pa. subjunctive should: see sense 18.)
Eq. Beowulf 20 (Gr.) Swa sceal zeong guma gode zewyrcean...pæt [etc.].
Lq. 1562 LEGH Armory 149 Whether are Roundells of all suche coloures, as ye haue spoken of here before? or shall they be named Roundelles of those coloures?

18. In statements of duty, obligation, or propriety (originally, as applicable to hypothetical conditions not regarded as real).
This conditional form of expression was from an early period substituted for the unconditional shall in sense 2, and in mod. Eng. the pres. tense in this use is obs., and should=ought to.
Eq. Beowulf 2708 (Gr.) Swyld sceolde secg wesan, þe þæt æt ðeartef. p 897 ÆLFRED Gregory's Past. C. iv. 36 ðonne mon forlet ðone eze...þe he mid ryhte on him innan habban sceolde.
Lq. 1896 Law Times Rep. LXXIII. 616/2 He should have looked up and down the line before he ventured to cross it.

10 Compare the following examples with habban: 890 ða Sweeney hafdon sige./1025 þa Sweon hafdon weallstowe geweald./1057 þ feng Ælfgar his sunu to þam eorldome þe se fæder ǣr hæsfde.

11 It is worth noting that sculan is used in Anglo-Saxon, Rushworth and Hatton Gospels to translate ðēbēre, while in Lindisfarne Gospels ðegan is used. Lindisf. glosses are written in Northumbrian dialect. Therefore the use of ðegan may possibly be characteristic of the dialect.
The diagram in II suggests that almost all of the chief uses of ágan (ME South. ózen, owen, etc.; North. ažen, awen, etc.) existed in the beginning of the thirteenth century. The data drawn from the Trinity Homilies (c1200) and the Ancrene Riewe (a1225) to a considerable extent corroborate this. The meaning ‘to possess’ was on the wane, while owen became a usual verb to express ‘to have to pay’. The use of the past form in the present sense began to appear, of which the earliest quotations in OED are dated c1175 (with to-infin.) and a1200 (with simple infin.). But the prevalent form to express present obligation was the present form, compared with which the past form in the present sense did not count much. Thus we see a marked contrast to the usage in the earlier period.

Examples from the Trinity Homilies (25)

I. ‘to have, to possess’ (1)

105. 25 nahte ich no betere wate.

III. 5. ‘to have as a duty (to do)’ (25)

a. present (23)

with to-infin. (17): 17. 6 Ac for pat elch man beð on fulcninge of alle synnen. and ogh to cumen his bileue ar he fulcninge underfo. 21. 6 we habbeð bigunnen to sege ou on englis hwat bitocneð pe crede. pat elch Cristeneman oh to cunnen. 27. 24 pe pridd is for mete pat ilch man agh mid him to leden. ðan he sal of pesse liue faren. 40. 4 ðus ahen alle gode herdes to wakegen gostliche. 41. 28 Swo we ahen to don ure liuemes wilte to forlenen. 47. 21 and we ogen ec to folgen hire faire forbisne. 47. 23 also we ogen to heren ure hluouer ihesu crist on ure heorte. 47. 31 and forði ech cristene oh to habben on honden to-dai in chruche lege bernende. 40. 4 alse we ogen to don. 57. 6 and forði we ahen to cumen to ure prestte er ðanne we biginnen to festen. 59. 4 and perfore we ahen alle to ben shrefene of ure synnes her we biginnen to fasten. 65. 15 and is ðat we ahen to gabben us seluen for ðat we synegeden. 65. 19 ðer is ðat we ahen ure synnes menende to shewen hem ðe prestte. 71. 12 and awich ðer stede age we hem to shewen. vre drihten us seið on ðe godspelle. ðe sein lucas makede. 153. 4 Swo we ahen alle to don. 189. 2 pat ilke we ogh al mankin to holde ðe þencheð to cumene to gode. [Moral Ode 2] Ich wealde more ðan idude mi wit oh to be more.

with simple infin. (6): 17. 25 Ne noman agh werne. 53. 11 Nu age we alle and al cristene folc nime forbisne after ðat isrealisshe folc. 65. 19 and we ahen to dai understanden þese pîne. 189. 4 hereði nu to wiche fihte we ozen þis strengeðe notien. 189. 17 An[d] to-genes hwuch fo man agh furtruen seið þe holi apostle. 217. 6 þanne heð dai cumeð man hoh herien god mid rihte leue. and mid somhe luue.

b. past in present sense (2)

12 Cf. ‘ažen’ as a full verb is largely supplanted by ‘hadde’ in B...or it may take on the inflection of an ordinary verb N. Bøgholm, The Layamon Texts. p. 75 f.

13 Cf. Lambeth MS. Ich welde mare þene ich dede mi wit ahte bon mare. / Jesus MS. Ich welde more þan ich dude. my wyt ahte beo more.
with to-infinit. (2): 157. 33, 35 On þe fœorde wise man silleð his almes penne he 
þifeð swiche men þe he æghte, mid rihte to helpe: to feden, and to shruden.
alse þe man doð. þe þifeð his almes fader. oðer moder. suster oðer broðer.
oðer oðre swo sibbe: þat he æghte mid rihte to helpen to feden. and to shruden.
Examples from the Ancrene Riwle (75)
I. ‘to have, to possess’ (2)
177. 25 he...bead for to makien hire cwene. of al þet he ouhte./182.8 nolde amon
ur on of þeos. þiuen al þet he ouhte:
II. ‘to have to pay’ (8)
a. present (6): 55. 8 al riht o þisse wise we beoð alle ine prisune her & owen god
gearte dettes of sun-nen./55. 21 ichulle nimen hit onward þe dette þet tu owest
me./107. 34 pench ec hwat tu owes god: uor his goddenden./141. 18 (twice) he
nimeð lesse þen we owen him. & is þauw wæl ipaied. we owen him blod: for
blode./185. 11 Sire ich luuede ham uor þine luue: þeo luue he ouh þe.
b. past (2): 54. 38 amon þat leie ine prisune & ougte muche raun-sun./185. 9 pu
3ulde þet tu ouhlest.
III. 5. ‘to have as a duty (to do)’ (65)
a. present (56)
with to-infinit. (19): 2. 13 alle owen hire in on: euer to holden./10. 22 ze owen to
beon nomeliche i beoden & i bonen./22. 28 & te wise ouh to uole-wen wisdom:
/25. 21 þe bestliche mon þe ne þencheð nout of god. ne ne noteð nout his wit
ase mon ouh te donne./28. 12...þe ouh to siggen./29. 30 uor þi owen þe gode
tuer to hab-ben witnesse./30. 17 ancre & huselsleði: ouh muche to beon bit-
weonen./36. 8, 9 zif heo owen to beon ueor uorum alle world-liche men: hwat.
uu ancren owen to hatien ham. & schunien./44. 2 zif þu ertz me treowe. ase
spuse ouh to beonene./56. 1 ancre ouh þus to siggen./62. 20 auh ancre ase ich
habbe iseid ouh to beon al gostlich/62. 32 heo unter stonden þet heo owen to
beon of so holli luue:/72. 20 hwui ze owen onlich lif swuwe to lunien./153. 6
Schrift ouh to beon willes./176. 35 nimed gode þeme mine leoue sustren. uor
hwì me ouh him to lunien./183. 14 þencheð zif ze ne owen eade to lunien þene
king of blisse./190. 25 ancre ne ouh nout to habben no þing þet dawre utward
hire heorte./195. 18 uor swuch ouh wummone lore to beon.
with for to-infinit. (22): 47. 12 er heo ouh ouh forte dei on in mr heiseise./63.
17 binihte ouh ancre worte beon waker & bisi abuten gostliche biȝete./69. 14
hwo se wule bi weopen hire owene & ofre monnes sunnen ase ancre ouh forte
don./72. 22 i hereð nu reisuns hwui me ouh for to fleon þene world./115. 5 heo
...noah non worte nimen godes flesch & his blod:/121. 21 þe ȝetward: ȝet is
wittes ski-le. ȝet ouh forte winden hwete./137. 6 ahu me ouh forte siggen./140.
29 peonne owes tus uorte beon anundred siçhe siourie./148. 24 hwì schrift ouh
forte beon i makeð euer on hiþe./149. 21 Schrift ouh forte beon scheomeful./
152. 16 Schrift ouh forte beon soð./154. 4 Schrift ouh forte beon owune./154. 26
Schrift ouh forte beon bipouht biuoren longe./157. 26 þis word nomeliche: lim-
peð to an-cren. hwas blisse ouh forte beon allunge ine godes rode./158. 18 ahu
[heo] habbeð hore heorte. euer towward heouene. & owen wel worte haben./
172. 37 ahu ze owen worte unnen þet.../181. 17 þus alle þe reisuns. hwui me
oit huorth given luue: pu mute i vinden in me. 181. 23 Me sulde wel luue uor luue. and so me oith fort sulen luue. 187. 20 me ham oith fort luuen. 189. 19 Marie ne oith uorte entremeten hire peof: 189. 22 An oether half non ancre ne oith fort nimen bute gned-lie che pet hire to neode. 192. 12 auh ancre oith fort 3emen bute god one.

with simple infin. (11): 2. 13 alle mu-wen & oyen holden one riwle: 2. 24 & alle ohen hire in on: ever to holden. auh alle ne muwe nout holden one riwle. nene puruen. nene oyen holden on one wise: ce vtture riwle. 6. 4 hime oith & hwi me schal crist luuen. 14/20. 29 pauhu ze ouen penchen of god euerichone: 120. 8 speken buten uor neode ne owue ze buten et ceos two purles. 33. 21 Ure deorewurce lefdi seinte marie pet oih to alle wummen beon uorbiyne. 68. 3 vor so oih ancre hire one in onliche stude ase heo ho. chirmen & cheateren euer hire bonen. 101. 32 Nu an ooper elne oih muchel wrouren ou: 120. 51 pu nouhst nout storien ne truulen ziene heorte. 172. 35 ze owen nout unnen. pet... 195. 9 ze ancreen owen pis lulte laste stucchen reden to our wummen eueriche wike enes uort zet heo hit kunnne.

absolute (4): 30. 11 Silence euere et te mete. vor zif opher religiuse doth hit. ase 3e wel wutez: ze owen biuore alle. 93. 8 zif me zemeu wurse ei ping ileasned ooper bitteih to witene. pen he wene pet hit oih. 166. 35 vre god is zif we doh pet zet we ohen. 195. 4 pe meidenes wih uten zif heo sewerde zet ancre also ase heo ohen:

b. past in past sense (2)
with for to-infin. (2): 143. 24 Ich am on ancre. a nunne. awif iwedde. ameiden. awummo zet me ileuez so wel. and zet habbe er ibeon iberned mid swuche pingce. & oihle zet betere uorte beon iwar-ned. 143. 36 Sire ich was of swuche elde: zet ich oihle wel uorte habben i wust me wisluker. 15

c. past in present sense (7)
with to-infin. (1): 155. 26 ibroken nep oether disch: ooper biseon zemeleasliche eni ping: zet me mide uarez. ooper oihle to 3emen.

with for to-infin. (1): 194. 34 non ancre servant ne oihle mid rihte uorto asken i sette huire:
with simple infin. (4): 56. 6 Iudit bi-tund inne bitocene ancre bitund. zet oihle leden hird lif ase dude zelde iudit: efter hire efne. 114. 18 and sent mon ooper wummen zet tellez to zel & bihe. oether sum suwinde sawe. zet te suster ne oihle route siggen bihe suster. 140. 9 penc euerich of his owu-ne stat zet he is. oether was inne. and he mei i seon. hwareuere he oihle siken sore. 147. 19 nie pinges beoo zet oihlen hien toutward schritte.

absolute (1): 1. 15 pis nis nout ibet zet also wel alse hit oihle.

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14 In 2. 13, 2. 24 and 6. 4 ouen is juxtaposed with another auxiliary and is construed with the same infinitive.

15 This is the earliest example of ought with the perfect infinitive in my collection. The earliest quotation in OED dates from 1551 (s.v. Ought III. 5. c).
VI

In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* there is only one instance of the meaning 'to possess':

C 361 the good-man, that the bestes oweth

I have found 9 examples of the meaning 'to have to pay':

D 425 I ne owe hem nat a word that it nis quit/D 1615 As I wol bere awey thy newe panne For dette, thou owest me of old/D 2106 By god, we owen fourty pound for stones/I 252 (twice) Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lif to god as longe as he hath lived, and eek as longe as he shal live, that no goodnesse ne hath to paye with his dette to god, to whom he oweth al his lyf./I 369 For sooth is, that if a man yeve his love, the which that he oweth al to god with al his herte, un-to a creature/I 746 For it bireveth him the love that men to him owen/I 772 (twice) And therfore, certes, the lord oweth to his man that the man oweth to his lord.

As these examples show the present form of owen is conjugated as a weak verb. On the other hand, Chaucer never used the past form owed. Throughout his whole work I have found only two instances of the past form oghte in the sense other than 'to have as a duty (to do)'. As for the present form, out of 20 examples in Chaucer's whole work 15 can be taken as meaning 'to have to pay' and only 5 express duty or obligation. Thus it may be said that in Chaucer the present form of owen was usually used as a main verb meaning either 'to have to pay' or, rather sparingly, 'to possess', and the past form was, almost without exception, used as a modal auxiliary expressing either present duty or obligation or, rather sparingly, past duty or obligation. In a general way the functional specialization of the past form oght may be said to a considerable extent to have been established by the end of the fourteenth century.

Examples of owen in the sense of 'to have as a duty (to do)' in the *Canterbury Tales* (Examples of impersonal use will be given in VII.)

a. present (1): B 2691 Also ye owen to enclylee and bowe your herte to take the pacience of our lord Jesu Crist.

b. past in past sense (2)
   with for to-infin. (1): B 2488 And seyden also, that in this caas ye oghten for to werken ful avysely with greet deliberacioun.
   with simple infin. (1): G 926 It was nat tempred as it oghte be.

c. past in present sense (58)
   with to-infin. (10): A 3089 For gentil mercy oghte to passen right!/B 2173 And al were it so that she right now were deed, ye ne oghte nat as for his deeth your-self to destroye./B 2279 and eek how wel that I can hyde and hele thinges that men oghte secreely to hyde./B 2283 certes, your wyf oghte rather to be

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17 Italicized numbers show that quotations are made from prose parts.
18 The earliest instances of weak forms in OED are: pres. 3rd. sg. ah5 (cl160), 03ep (cl205); pl. aue5 (c1200), o3e5 (a1175); past owed (a1425). The only example of owed in Chaucer is in the past participle: Bo 4. p. 5. 18 sin that, namely, prisoun, lawe, and thise othre tormentes of laweful peynes ben rather owed to felonous citezeins,...
19 LGW 589 - So fil hit, as Fortune him oghte a shame... / LGW 1609 And, as fortune her oghte a foul meschaunce,
preised than y-blamed./B 2362 now wol I teche yow which conseil ye oghte to escheue./B 3033 And every man oghte to doon his diligence and his businesse to geten him a good name./G 6 Wel oghten we to doon al our entente/I 1762 O gode god, muchel oghte a man to drede swich a Iugement/I 300 More-over, man oghte to sorwe for his wikkede wordes as wel as for his wikkede dedes/I 674 Of Pacience comth Obedience, thorugh which a man is obedient to Crist and to alle hem to whiche he oghte to been obedient in Crist.

with for to-infin. (2): A 505 Wel oghte a preest enexample for to yive, By his clennesse, how that his sheep shold live./A 4333 Wel oghte a man avysed for to be Whom that he broughte in-to his privettee.

with simple infin. (46): A 660 Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede—For curs wol slee, right as assoilie saveth/A 1249 Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and distresse/A 3051 And gladder oghte his freend ben of his deeth/B 1038 I oghten deme, of skilful Iugement, That in the salte see my wyf is deed./B 1290 ‘Nece,’ quod he, ‘it oghte y-nough suffysse Fyve houres for to slepe up-on a night/B 1833 This abbot, that which was as holy man As monkes been, or elles oghtele be/B 2128 I wol telle a litel thing in prose, That oghte lyken yow, as I suppose/B 2465 but ye oghte the rather guerdon hem and shewe hem your largesse./B 2686 we oghte paciently taken the tribulacions that comen to us/B 2696 Also the grete pacience, which the seintes that been in paradyss han had in triublaciouns that they han y-suffred, with-outen hir desert of gild, oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience./B 2714 And therfore, me thinke that men oghten nat repreve me, though I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me./B 2806 and knoweth wel, or oghte k, toze'e, that whan he is deed, he shal nothing bere with him out of this world? /B 2927 but we oghte requeren it with greet contricioun and humilitee/B 3029 which is a vicious thing, and oghte been eschewed of every good man./B 3172 Lo! this declaring oughte y-nough suffysse./B 3567 Wel oughten men thyt pithous deeth complayne!/B 3648 Of this Tragedie it oghte y-nough suffysse./C 434 Of this materie it oghte y-nogh suffysse./E 132 so that it oghte same Honour to god and yow/E 635 Wel oughte I of swich murmur taken hede/E 1351 every man that halt him worth a leek, Up-on his bare knees oughte al his lyf Thanken his god that him hath sent a wyf/E 1524, 1526, 1528 Senek among his othere wordes wyse Seith, that a man oghte him right wel avyse. To whom he yeveth his lond or his castel. And sin I oghte avyse me right wel To whom I yev my good away fro me, Wel muchel more I oghte avyse be To whom I yev my body/E 1540 But nathelesse, it oghte y-nough suffysse With any wyf, if so were that she hadde Mo gode thewes than hir wyces sadde/F 1397 Wel oghte a wyf rather hir-selven slee Than be defouled, as it thinke me./G 1182 This is nat couched as it oghte be/I 133 The causes that oghte moeve a man to Contricion been six./I 142 The seconde cause that oghte make a man to have desdayn of sinne is this/I 143 And certes, wel oghte a man have desdayn of sinne/I 149 O gode god, wel oghte man have desdayn of sinne/I 152 Allas! wel oghten they thanne have desdayn to been servauntz and thralles to sinne/I 158 The thridde cause that oghte moeve a man to Contricion, is drede of the day of dome, and of
the horrible peynes of helle./I 231 The fourthe point, that 
oughte maken a man 
to have contricion, is the sorweful remembrance of the good that he hath left 
to doon here in erthe/I 255 The fiftthe thing that 
oughte moeue a man to con-
tricion, is remembrance of the passion that oure lord Jesu Crist suffred for 
oure sinnes./I 279 Thanne was his visage, that 
oughte be desired to be seyn of al 
man-kinde, in which visage anguels desyren to looke, vileynsly bispet./I 282 
muchel oghte sinful man wepen and biwayle/I 283 The sixtthe thing that 
oughte 
moeue a man to contricion, is the hope of three thynges/I 317 Now shul ye 
understonde what is Confession, and whether it 
oughte neded be doon or noon/ 
I 621 And over alle thing men 
oughten escheue to cursen hir children/I 672 ye 
oughten first correcete youre-self/I 679 in-as-muche as it binimeth the service that 
men 
oughte doon to Crist/I 813 But for-as-muche as some folk been unmesur-
able, men 
oughten eschue fool-largesse, that men clepen wast./I 910 The fiftthe 
specie is thilke abhominable sinne, of which that no man unnethe 
oughte speke 
ne wryte/I 927 The experience of day by day 
oughte suffyse./I 7000 Certes, 
a man 
oughte hastily shewen hise sinnes for manye causes

VII

Chaucer's usage shows a marked contrast to ModE usage in two respects: (1) the form 
of the infinitive, and (2) the impersonal construction.

(1) The form of the infinitive.

In the Canterbury Tales I have found 15 cases of owsen (oughte) with to-infinitive, 3 
with for to-infinitive, and 59 with simple infinitive. As regards Chaucer's whole work 
Kenyon says, 'Though I have not made an exact count to find the proportion of simple 
and prepositional infinitives with owsen, a partial count shows about 135 cases of simple 
infinitive, 40 with to, and 5 with for to.' I have counted 139 cases of simple infinitive, 
46 with to, and 6 with for to. These figures show the predominance of simple infinitive 
over prepositional infinitives. This is contrary to the general tendency of the usage both 
in earlier and in later periods.

Concerning the origin of the usage Mätzner says, 'ought...triff man hier und da im 
Neuenglischen vom reinen Infinitiv begleitet, obwohl ihm der Infinitiv mit to ursprünglich 
zukommt.' He quotes only two OE examples, both with to-infinitive: Micel is and mære 
þat sacred ðah to dônne (Legg. Cnut. I. A. 4)/And sêde pât he hit náhte ðô to dônne (Sax. Chr. 
1070.). As to the reason why the infinitive with to was predominant in OE, the following 
remark of Callaway is suggestive: 'How shall we account for the instances in which we have 
an inflected [i.e. prepositional] infinitive as the complement of an auxiliary verb? With 
all the strict auxiliaries except agan, the predicative infinitive is normally uninflected 
[i.e. simple], and the strangling examples of the inflected infinitive are clearly the excep-
tions that prove the rule. With agan, however, the predicative infinitive is frequently

21 Callaway, op. cit., p. 82f. Cf. 'That the predicative use of the uninflected infinitive active with auxi-
liary verbs is native to the Germanic languages, as to Anglo-Saxon, is indisputable; this use of the 
inflected; why? Because of the strong datival sense of the verb,—its signification of propriety or fitness, I think. Thus Callaway thinks that there is a functional basis that distinguishes *āgan* from other auxiliaries. It may be that *āgan*, because of its 'datival' sense, governed the inflected infinitive (originally the dative case of a neuter verbal noun), while other auxiliaries governed the uninflected infinitive (originally the accusative case of a neuter verbal noun). At the same time it must be considered that OE *āgan* was predominantly used as a main verb and its combination with the infinitive had not been established till early ME, while in the case of other auxiliaries such combination had already been established in early OE. Though from a historical point of view the 'datival' sense of *āgan* may have been the cause of the use of the inflected infinitive, from a descriptive point of view we can do nothing but accept the fact that the inflected infinitive was predominantly used with *āgan*.

In early ME for-to infinitive began to be used, and it 'originally expressed purpose, but was used extensively in ME as a simple equivalent of *to* with the infinitive.' It was used as frequently as to-infinitive in the *Ancrene Riwle*, in which I have found 25 cases of *owe* with for-to infinitive, 20 with to-infinitive, and 15 with simple infinitive. For-to infinitive became 'ein scharfer Konkurrent' of to-infinitive in early ME, but it went out of fashion in early ModE. Already in Chaucer we find only 6 cases of it with *owe* as against 46 cases with to-infinitive. In early ME texts Sanders found 107 cases of *owe* with prepositional infinitive, 36 with simple infinitive. In Layamon's *Brut* the two constructions are found in much the same proportion as this. According to Wandschneider *owe* with simple infinitive was rare in *Piers the Plowman*. Thus Chaucer's usage was contrary to general tendency. Kenyon says, 'The large number of simple infinitives is no doubt due to analogy of other auxiliary verbs.' This may perhaps have been the cause, but I have not enough data to decide whether or not this phenomenon was peculiar to Chaucer. I have examined the difference of usage between verse and prose. The table below shows the frequency of the three forms of the infinitive in verse and prose of the whole work of Chaucer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Prose</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to-infin.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for to-infin.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple infin.</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We know form the table that to-infinitive shows a slightly higher percentage in prose than

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21 The first instance of *for-to infinitive* appears in *Chron. [E] 1127* (Cf. Bøgholm, *English Speech from an Historical Point of View*, p. 252) The earliest quotation in OED dates from a1175. (s. v. For 11)
24 Sanders, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
27 Kenyon, *op. cit.*, p. 98, n. 2.
in verse. But in prose as well as in verse Chaucer's usage was far from general tendency. About a century later Malory, in the first seven books, never used simple infinitive with *owe*. I have found 13 cases with *to*-infinitive and one with *for to*-infinitive. (Examples from Malory will be given in VIII.)

(2) Impersonal construction.

The earliest quotations in OED of impersonal construction such as *him owe* (or *oweth*), *him ought*, are dated c1220 (pres.), 1297 (past in past sense), *a 1225* (past in pres. sense). This use had not a long life, the latest quotations in OED being dated 1450 (pres.), 1470–85 (past in past sense), c1500 (past in pres. sense). It is not always possible to decide whether an example is impersonal or personal, unless the oblique (dative) case form is discernible. I have found 24 discernible cases in the *Canterbury Tales*.

a. past in past sense (7)

with simple infin. (2): B 2921 and seyd to hem in a goodly manere, how that *hem oughte have* greet repentance of the injurie and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee hir lord, and to hir, and to hir doghter./G1340 mighte no man sey nay, But that they weren as *hem oughte be*.

absolute (5): B 1097 Alla goth to his in, and, as *him oughte*, Arrayed for this feste in every wyse As ferforth as his conning may suffyse./B 2438 the whiche three thinges ye han nat anientissed or destroyed hem, neither in your-self ne in your conseilours, as *you oughte*.B 2458 I sey yow, that the surgiens and phisiciens han seyd yow in your conseil discreetly, as *hem oughte*B 2603 thou ne hast nat doon to him swich honour and reverence as *thee oughte*.E 1120 And ther she was honoured as *hir oughte*.

b. past in pres. sense (17)

with *to*-infin. (4): I 84 Seint Ambrose seith, that 'Penitence is the pleyninge of man for the gilt that he hath doon, and na-more to do any thing for which *him oughte to* pleyne./I 395 Despitous, is he that hath desdeyn of his nighborne, that is to seyn, of his evenecristene, or hath despyt to doon that *him oughte to do*.I 403 Irreverence, is whan men do nat honour thereas *him oughte to doon*, and waiten to be reverenced./I 676 Obedience generally, is to perfourne the doctrine of god and of his sovereyns, to which *him oughte to ben* obeisaunt in alle rightwysnesse.

with simple infin, (10): B 2188 Wherefor *us oughte*, as wel in the deeth of our children as in the losse of our goodes temporels, *have* pacience./B 2531, 2532 Now sir, as to the thriddle point; wher-as your olde and wise conseilours seyden, that *you ne oughte* nat sodeynly ne hastily *proceden* in this nede, but that *you oughte purveyen* and *apparaillen* yow in this caas with greet diligence and greet deliberacioun/C 512 O glotonye, on thee wel oughte us pleyne!/E 1150 For, sith a womman was so pacient Un-to a mortal man, wel more *us oughte Receyuen* al in gree that god us sent/G 14 Wel *oughte us werche*, and ydelnes withstonde./I 89 For as seith seint Isidre: 'he is a Iaper and a gabber, and no verray repentant, that eftsoone dooth thing, for which *him oughte repente*.' I 403 Presumpcion, is whan a man undertaketh an empryse that *him oughte nat do*, or elles that he may nat do/I 712 he that dredeth god, he spareth nat to doon that *him oughte doon*.I 1061 he that hath nat been ashamed to doon
foule thinges, certes him oghte nat been ashamed to do faire thinges, and that is confessiouns.

absolute (3): B 2403 For certes, resoun wol nat that any man sholde biginne a thing, but-if he mighte parfourne it as him oghte./I 358 And venial synne is it, if man love Jesu Crist lasse than him oghte./I 376 Eke if he flater or blandishe more than him oghte for any necessitee.

The imperonsal construction occurred only when oghte implied duty or obligation. This use was perhaps due to the analogy of other impersonal verbs expressing duty or obligation. Van der Gaaf says, 'A3en was often used to express a duty, and it is only when it had this signification, that it adopted the A construction [i.e. impersonal construction with the verb governing a dative or an accusative]. Duty, obligation was also denoted by me bird, me behovep, me semp, me nedep, all of them type A constructions, and it was on the analogy of these that me a3e, me a3t, me ou3t was formed.'29 In this construction Chaucer used the past form (in past or present sense) except in one case30: LGW 360 He moste thinke hit is his lige man, And that him o~'eth, of verray duette, Shewele his people pleyn benignitee, And wel to here hir excusaciouns.

Van der Gaaf says, 'At one time me a3e must have been very usual. Instances occur in almost every text dating from ab. 1300 to ab. 1490 I have examined, and my collection of examples is consequently pretty large, numbering about 100 in all.'31 This use seems to have become obsolescent towards the end of the fifteenth century. I have found only two clear instances in Malory's first seven books.

VI. 198 'Sir,' he seyde, 'I have nothining done but that me ought for io do.

/VII. 242 for I consyder your grete laboure and your hardynesse, your bount6 and your goodnesse as me ought to do.

VIII

As was touched upon in VII Malory's usage shows a marked contrast to Chaucer's in two respects: (1) we find no instance of simple infinitive, and (2) impersonal construction occurred rather rarely. Thus apart from the high frequency of the meaning 'to possess' and the use of ought as the past form in contrast to owed, Malory's usage is near to Modern usage.

Examples from Malory (Bks. I–VII) (Examples of impersonal construction are quoted in VII)

I. ‘to possess’ (7)

a. present (3): IV. 114 Ther is a knyght in this contrey that owyth this whyght

29 W. van der Gaaf, The Transition from the Impersonal to the Personal Construction in Middle English. §175. Cf. Kenyon, op. cit., p. 98, n. 2. We find impersonal constructions with such auxiliaries as must and thar in Chaucer: G 946 Us moste putte our good in aventure / A 5320 Him thar nat were wel that yvel dooth / D 329 Have thou y-nogh, what thar thee resche or care—? (also D 336, D 1365, H 352) van der Gaaf says, 'Remembren and must cannot be said ever to have been current as type A verbs; there are, however, four verbs, which, although 'personal' in O. E. and in early M. E., became so very usual in the type A construction that they have even erroneously been called 'impersonal'. These four verbs are M. E. a3en (awe, owe, a3t, ou3t etc.), dey'ee,e, repente'e and par (parf.)' Op. cit., §174.

30 Out of some 30 examples quoted by van der Gaaf there are only 3 cases of the present form.

sheld/V. 146 Therefore thou shalt have thy mede throw Mychael that owyth this mounte./VII. 228 ‘Lo,’ seyde the damesel, ‘yondir is a lorde that owyth yondir cité.’

b. past (4): I. 11 wherfor kynge Arthur maade the londes to be yeven ageyne unto them that oughte hem./V. 163 yf youre tytil be the trewer than ever oughd any of your elders./VI. 185 Than within an owre there com that knyght that oughd the pavylyon./VI. 196 ‘Fayre sir,’ they seyde, ‘the name of this castell is called Tyntagyll, and a deuke oughd hit somtyme that had wedded fayre Igrayne.

II. ‘to have to pay’ (10)
a. present (9): I. 38 I owghe the Emperour no trewage/I. 43 But telle thou thy kynge thus, that I owghe hym [none homage] ne none of myne elders/II. 53 And this damesell slew hirself for his love, which repentith me. And for hir sake I shall owghe all women the bettrir wylle and servyse all the dayes of my lyff./IV. 117 And all good ladies and jantyllwomen, I owghe them my servyse as a knyght ought to do./V. 163 Now sey ye to the Potestate and all the lordys aftir that I sende hem trybet that I owve to Rome/VII. 233 ‘We woll nat discover you,’ seyde they bothe, ‘tyll ye commande us, by the fayth we owve to Jesu./VII. 244 Therefore we avvyse you, ryde nat aftir sir Grynagamour but yf ye owve hym good wylle./VII. 245 by the fayth that I owghe to God and to the hygh Ordir of Knyghthode../VII. 245 And therefore, brother, I owve hym my servyse afore all knyghtes lyvyng.

b. past (1): I. 5 he asked hir by the feith she ought to hym whos was the child within her body.

III. ‘to have as a duty (to do)’
a. past in past sense (2)
with to-infin. (2): I. 5 and soo I went unto bed with hym as I ought to do with my lord/I. 11 Also themne he made alle lordes that helde of the croune to come in and to do servyce as they oughte to doo.

b. past in present sense (10)
with to-infin. (10): I. 27 ‘A, sir Arthure,’ seyde kynge Ban and kynge Bors, ‘blame hem nat, for they do as good men ought to do...’/II. 53 and I woll ryde with you and put my body in adventure with you, as a brothir oughd to do./III. 74 ‘Yee, hardly, sir, he ought to be a good man for he ys com of good kynrede as ony on lyve, and of kynges bloode.’/III. 90 ‘Truly, ye ought sore to repent hit,’ seyde Merlion, ‘for that lady was youre owne doughtir,...’/IV. 117 And all good ladies and jantyllwomen, I owghe them my servyse as a knyght oughd to do./IV. 126 ‘Loo,’ seyde the Damsell of the Lake, ‘ye ought to be ashamed for to murther suche a knyght,’/V. 137 Sir, thou ouths to be aboven all othir Crysten kynges/VI. 192 ‘Sir my name is sir Launcelot du Lake that oughd to helpe you of ryght for kynge Arthurs sake,...’/VII. 237 Mesemyth thou outhyste of reson to beware by yondir knyghtes that thou sawyste hange on yondir treis./VII. 267 ‘Alas! my fayre brother,’ seyde Sir Gawayne, ‘I ought of ryght to worship you, and ye were nat my brother, for ye have worshipte kynge Arthure and all his courte,...’
IX

From the foregoing survey it may be remarked that the auxiliary ought was nearly established towards the end of the fifteenth century. As for the subsequent history of the word such exhaustive studies as those of Visser and Franz give an idea.

On the present form owe—infinitive expressing moral obligation Visser says, 'Owe in this meaning and use died out soon after More; it may already have been obsolescent in his time (latest quotation in OED is dated 1537), since instances with owe are rare and examples with ought in exactly the same meaning (and function) abound in his language.'32 'The type him oweth (to flee) is not represented in More; it seems to have been already obsolete; the latest quotations in OED are dated c 1450 and 1470—1500.'33 There is one instance of the past form owed = ought in More: Conf. Tynd. 463 H 14, And then ye he hadde aunswered that himself being such as he was, and for suche testified by wryting, and by the word of his father, and by his owne wonderous workes ought [1532 owed] to be beliued of them in euery thynge...they might haue sayd...44 On the form of the infinitive with ought, Visser says, 'In the majority of cases the verbal complement is preceded by to. Plain infinitives, however, are by no means rare.'35 'The time-sphere of the units in which ought occurs is usually the present or in the case of general statements no special time at all. Only rarely is the reference to past time-sphere.'36 More does not seem to use ought—for to-infinitive. 'It may have become obsolete about his time.'37 'Neither are there instances in More of the type me ought, us ought.'38

According to Franz, 'Owe in der Bedeutung 'have, possess ist Sh. noch sehr gelaufig.'39 A few examples are:

Tp. I. ii. 454 Thou do'st vsurpe The name thou ow'est not| John IV. ii. 99 That blood which ow'd the breth of all this Ile|Mac. I. iii. 76 Say from whence You owe this strange Intelligence/Oth. I. i. 66 What a full Fortune do's the Thick-lips owe If he can' carry't thus?

Franz says, 'Ought kommt neben der jetzigen Bedeutung '(ich) sollte' einmal im Sinne von owed vor':40 TH4 III. iii. 151 (Mrs. Quickly) You ought him a thousand pound. There is one instance of ought with simple infinitive: Caes. I. i. 3 What, know you not (Being Mechanicall) you ought not walke Vpon a labouring day, without the figure Of your Profession?41 It is only in these respects that Shakespeare's usage differs from that of present-day standard English.

51 F. Th. Visser, A Syntax of the English Language of St Thomas More. §535 (p. 635).
52 Ibid. (p. 635).
53 Ibid. §536 (p. 635f.). ought is used in the 1557 edition. 'The only instance of owed—infinitive in OED is: a 1425 Cursor M., 14045 (Trin.) Whethe owed to love him better po. To this can be added: a 1415 Lanterne of Litz (EETS) 109, 10, po þingis of þe whiche þe pore owid to be norished.'
54 Ibid. §537 (p. 636).
55 Ibid. (p. 636).
56 Ibid. (p. 637f.).
57 Ibid. (p. 638).
58 W. Franz, Die Sprache Shakespeares. §180.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.; on this example Franz makes this comment: 'der reine Inf. wegen des Metrums, sonst to nach ought bei Sh.' §700.
It may at first sight seem strange that the meaning 'to possess', which showed signs of decline already in ME, had a very long life. But, as Dieth says, the two meanings 'to possess' and 'to have to pay' 'follow constructions of their own; e.g. *Who owes this house?* *I don't owe him a penny.*' In other words, *owe* in the sense 'to possess' is construed with one (direct) object, while *owe* in the sense 'to have to pay' is construed either with two objects (indirect and direct) or with one (direct) object and a *to*-phrase: e.g. *I owe no thanks to her.* Such syntactical contrast may have been one of the reasons for the coexistence of the two meanings. But the meaning 'to possess' was to become obsolete except in dialects. *Owe* in this sense was superseded by *own,* which expresses this sense more unambiguously than *owe,* whose main sense has been 'to have to pay'.

**APPENDIX**

No examples have been quoted from *Havelok the Dane, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Pearl,* because the number of *awe, owe, etc.* did not seem to be enough to consider the frequency. Examples from these texts are given below for reference.

*Havelok the Dane* (11)

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[43] *Own* derives from OE *āgan.* 'Used in OE. and early ME. in senses 1 ['To make (a thing) one's own, appropriate, take possession of; to seize, win, gain; to adopt as one's own'] and 2 ['To have or hold as one's own, have belonging to one, be the proprietor of, possess']; but after this scarcely found till the 17th c. It seems as if the verb itself went out of use before 1300, but was restored from the derivative *owner,* when *owe* in its original sense of 'possess' was becoming obsolescent.' (OED s. v. *Own*) The earliest quotation of *own* thus 'restored' is from Shakespeare: *Cor.* I. viii. 3 Not Affricke *ownes* a Serpent I abhorre More then thy Fame and Enuy.
I. 'to possess' (6)
   a. present (4): 1188 þe deuel him _awel/_1292 I gan Denemark for to _awe/_1298
      And þanne y wolde mine armes drawe Til me, and [þouhte hem] for to [awe] /
      1932 'Deus!' quoth Ûbbe, "hwat may pis be? Betere is i nime miself and se
      [Hwat] pis barete [oweth on] wold, Þanne i sende yunge or old.
   b. past (2): 207 And al the lond he euere _awhte/_743 And for þat Grim þat place
      _awhte_, Þe stede of Grim þe name lauhte.

II. 'to have to pay' (1): 1666 Bi þe fey ye _owe_ to þe.

III. 'to have as a duty (to do)' (4)
   a. past in past sense (1): 2787 Þorú hem witen wolde he Yif þat she _auhte_ quen to be.
   b. past in present sense (3)
      with to-infin. (1) 2173 Man-red, louer bede y þe, Þi man _auht_ i ful wel to be.
      with for to-infin. (1) 2800 For Englund _auhte forto hem_ Youres
      with simple infin. (1) 801 Þe man þat may wel eten and drinken [Par] _nout_ ne haue but on swink long.

_Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (5)_
I. 'to possess' (4): 767 A castel þe comlokest þat euer knyȝt _aȝte/_843 & þuȝt
   hit a bolde burne þat þe þurȝ _aȝte/_1775 ȝif he schulde make synne & be
   traytor to þat tolke þat þat telde _aȝte/_1941 As is pertly payed þe [pray] þat
   I _aȝte_.

III. 'to have as a duty (to do)' (1): 1526 & þe, þat ar so cortays & coyn of your
   hetes, Oghe to a gonne _þynk_ þern to _schewe_ & _teche_ sum tokenes of trweluf
   craftes.

_Pearl (4)_
II. 'to have to pay' (1): 543 Gyf hem þe hyre þat I hem _owe._

III. 5. 'to have as a duty (to do)' (1): 1139 Ani breste for bale _aȝt_ _haf_ forbrent Er
   he þerto hade had deylt.

III. 6. impersonal (2)
   a. present (1): 552 Vus _þynk_ _vus_ _oȝe_ _to take_ more.
   b. past in present sense (1): 341 Þe _oȝte_ better þyseluen _blesse._