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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 òhte, the past form of OE (Old English) ògan.\(^1\) Ògan 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 ògan, 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 From the seventeenth century owe in the sense of ‘to possess’ has been superseded by own. Already before 1200 the past form òhte, which developed into ought, began to be used in the present sense expressing duty or obligation, and it has become an uninflected modal auxiliary,\(^2\) 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 ògan, is now practically a distinct verb from the newly developed weak verb owe. Such functional specialization of the past form is paralleled by must (<mòste, past form of OE mòtan),\(^3\) 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 ògan (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 òhte (ought) as an auxiliary verb expressing present duty or obligation, and the establishment of the syntactical group òhte (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. òh, òg, pl. ògon, subj. òge, past òhte, inf. ògan...2nd sg. pres. indic. is òkst 1W-S, òhta L1, and does not elsewhere occur. Pres. part. ògente is frequent in compounds, the pass. part. ògen, ògente own occurs in adjectival use.’ A. Campbell, Old English Grammar. § 767.

\(^2\) Ought in the past sense is now found usually in dependent clauses.

\(^3\) For the early development of must see my article ‘Some Notes on the Auxiliary mòtan’. Anglica, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1958). pp. 64-80.
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.

**Owe**

1. 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 beþurton þe micel ȝan 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. debere (where the Rushw., like the later Ags. Gosp., uses sculan) by the phrase ázan to ȝeldanne ‘to have to pay’. Examples are wanting during the following two centuries to show the stages by which this was shortened to the simple ázan, 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 ázan, ȝzen, ȝoen, owen, owe, in taking dēbere as its main sense, has in Standard Eng. lost that of habere, 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. Cong. 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 Swilcn lauerd we ȝazen 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.

*The part of OED containing Ought was published in 1903, that containing Owe in 1904.*
otechnical, quasi-imperf. (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 owe* = as befits him, as is due to him. Obs.

EQ. c 1220 Bestiary 350 Ano~er kinde, *(it) beist* aght us 03 alle to ben minde.

LQ. c 1450 Mirour Saluaciowa 4486 Hym awe serue and luf godde with his hert alle & some.

Ought*

I. Pa. t. of *owe* v. in sense 'to have or possess'.

†1. Possessed, owned. Obs.

a. EQ. a 1000 Beowulf 31 Leof land-fruma longe ahte.

LQ. a 1670 SpALDlNG Troub. Chas. I. (1850) I. 205. The poor men that aucht thame follouit in.

b. EQ. a 1225 Ancr. R. 390 He . . . . bead for to makien hire cwene of al *pet* he ouhte.

LQ. 1632 LITHGOW Trav. v. 204 The Turke who ought my Mule.

g. (only one example) 13 . . Cursor M. 6719 (Cott.) Pe lord *pat* pat beist aignet Saif par-for anser at his maght [G. iht . . . miht, Tr. ight . . . my3t].

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' = *debebat*, 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 Enne of efne~e3num his se6e ahte to 3eldenna [other vv. as in 24] hundra~ scillinga. Ibid. Luke vii. 41 An ahte to zeldanne [Vulg. debebat, Ags. Gosp. sceolde] penningas fif hund.]

a 1300 Cursor M. 21422 Pour he was . . . And til a juu he mikel aignet.

I.Q. a 1825 Forby Voc. E. Anglia s.v. Aught, He aught me ten pounds.

b. EQ. a 1225 Ancr. R. 124 A mon *pet* leie ine prisune, & ouhte muche rausmun.

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*: *a* = *ahte*, *a5t(e) aus3t(e), aught(e), aucht(e), etc.; *b* = *ouhte*, *o3t(e), ouhte*, *oğhte*, *ought(e), OUCHt, etc.*; *γ* = *i3t(e), iht, eght.*
ceding past tense in principal clause: he said you ought = he said it was your duty.

α. EQ. c 1200 Ormin 19108 Annd tohh swa þehh ne cnew himm nohht þe werelld alls itt ahhte.
LQ. c 1425 Wyntoun Cron. viii. ii. 52 Robert þe Brwys, Erle of Karryk Aucht to succeed to þe Kynryke.

β. 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.
α. 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.

β. EQ. a 1225 Ancr. R. 326 Nie þinges beoȝ þet ouhten hien touward schrifte.
LQ. 1868 Browning Agamemnon 796 How ought I address thee, how ought I revere thee?

(c) 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 ye 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.

†(b) quasi-impers., with dative object.
†a. In past sense: Behoved, befitted, was due (to). Obs.
α. EQ. 1297 R. Glouc. (Rolls) 7348 Watloker it aȝte her.
LQ. c 1420 Sir Amadace (Camden) Iviii. That ladi gente . . . did wele that hur aghte to do.

β. (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 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

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<td>III. 5</td>
<td>III. 6</td>
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<td>'to have to pay'</td>
<td>'to have as a duty (to do)'</td>
<td>Impersonal</td>
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* 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 Impers.</th>
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6 The editions of the texts used are as follows:

7 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 *āgan*, all of which can be taken as meaning 'to have, to possess'.

**present (3):** 1088 þæt hie healfre geweald wið Eotena bearn *āgan* moston (that they might have power over half of it with the sons of the Jutes)/1727 *ahte* 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 *ahte* (dear prince of the land long reigned)/487 *ahte* ic holdra þy læs, deorre duguðe, þe þa deorð fornam (I had the fewer trusty followers, dear warriors, because death had taken them away)/522 þær he folc *ahte*, burh ond beagas (where he had subjects, a stronghold and treasures)/533 *Soð* ic talge, þæt ic merestrengo maran *ahte*, earþepo on þynn, ðonne ænig ðer 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 *āgan* 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 *āgan* with the infinitive was by no means very rare. Callaway gives 32 examples with *to*-infinitive (*Chron.* [A]: 1; [E]: 2; *Laws*: 14; *Waelferth*: 1; *A. S. Hom.* and *L. S. II*: 1; *Wulfstan*: 13), and one example with *simple* infinitive from *Wulfstan.8* Six examples with *to*-infinitive are quoted in *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, Supplement, s.v. *āgan* (*Charters*: 3; *Laws*: 1; *Lindisf. Gosp.*: 2). Wülfing quotes only one example with the infinitive: *Leges Alfredi Regis* 58, 12 *nage* he hie ut on elpeodig folc to bebyegganne (he ought not to sell her to foreign people).9 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. Þæt sǣde ðer hit *nahet to donne* (then he refused and said that he was under no obligation to give it)/E 1085 hwilce *ahte* to habbanne to xii monþum of ðære scire (what dues he ought to have in twelve months from each shire)/E 1140 þe eorl heold Lincol ahdenn ðe king. Þæt benam him al ðe *ahte* to havun. (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 *āgan* in the sense 'to have, to possess' in *Chronicle* [E].

675 *þas* landes ic gife *Sēc* Peter eal swa freolice swa ic self hit *ahete./*833 *þa* Deniscan *ahoton* wælstowe geweald./837 *þa* Deniscan *ahoton* wælstowe geweald./840 *þa* Deniscan *ahoton* wælstowe geweald./860... *þa* wælstowe geweald *ahoton./*871 *þa* Deniscan *ahoton* wælstowe geweald./871 *þa* Deniscan *ahoton* wælstowe geweald./871 *þa* Deniscan *ahoton* wælstowe geweald./888 *þa* Deniscan *ahoton* sige./998 æfre hi æt ende sige *ahoton./*999 *þa* *ahoton* *þa* Deniscan wælstowe geweald./1010 (twice) *þa* Deniscan *ahoton* wælstowe geweald. *þær* wurdon gehorsode. *þy* syðdon *ahoton* East Engle gëweald./1042 (twice) *þæt* raðe *þæs* se cing let geridan ealle *þa* land *þe* his modor *ahete* him to handa.

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8 M. Callaway, Jr., *The Infinitive in Anglo-Saxon*. p. 80 f.
nam of hire eall p heo ahte/1046 Ɨ behet man him ğ he moste wurđe [beon] ælc þera þinga þe he ër ahte./1048 eall ğ heo ahte./1048 mann settæ Ællfgar Leofrices sunu eorles þane eordom on handa þe Harold ær ahte./1052 eall þet he ër ahte./1052 se cyng geaf þærdian eall ğ heo ær ahte./1053 Ɨ feng Harold eorl his sunu to þam eordome. Ɨ to eallum þam þe his fæder ahte./1053 Ɨ feng Ællfgar eorl to þam eordom þe Harold ær ahte./1055 se cyng geaf þone eordom Tostige Godwines sunu eorles. þe Siward eorl ær ahte./1066 se Norræna cyng æhte siges geweald./1085 forðig he æhtæ æþær ge Englaland ge Normandige./1102 þone eordom her on lande on Scrobbies byring þe his fæder Roger ær æhte.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 sculan.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 þewyrcean…pat [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.) Swylec sceolde secg wesæn, þegn æt ðearfe./c 897 ÆLFRED Gregory’s Past. C. iv. 36 Þonne mon forlet ðone eæ…þe he mid rþhtæ 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.

Compare the following examples with habban: 890 娣 Bryttas him wiþ gefuhton. 娣 haþdon siges./1025 þa Sweon headon wealstowe geweald./1057 Ɨ feng Ællfgar his sunu to þam eordome þe se fæder ær haþde.

It is worth noting that sculan is used in Anglo-Saxon, Rushworth and Hattole Gospels to translate ðibþer, while in Lindisfarne Gospels ðagan is used. Lindisf. glosses are written in Northumbrian dialect. Therefore the use of ðagan may possibly be characteristic of the dialect.
The diagram in II suggests that almost all of the chief uses of āgan (ME South. ozen, owen, etc.; North. azen, awen, etc.) existed in the beginning of the thirteenth century. The data drawn from the Trinity Homilies (c1200) and the Ancrene Riwle (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 eich man beð on fulcinge of alle synnen.
and ogh to cunnen his bileue ar he fulcinge underfo./21. 6 we habbeð bigunnen
to sege ou on englis hwat bitocneð pe crede. pat eich cristemenan oh to cunn-
nen./27. 24 pe pridde is for mete pat ilch man agh mid him to leden. ðan he sal
of pesse liue faren./40. 4 ðus aken alle gode herdes to wakegen gostliche./41.
28 Swo we ageð to don ure lichames wille to forleten./47. 21 and we ogen ec to
folgen hire faire forbisne./47. 23 also we ogen to heren ure hlouerd ihesu crist on
ure heorte./47. 31 and forþi eich cristene oh to habben on honden to-dai in
chirche: lege bernende./57. 4 also we ogen to don./57. 6 and forþi we aken to
cumen to ure preste er ðanne we biginnen to festen./59. 4 and perfore we aken
alle to ben shrifene of ure synnes her we biginnen to fasten./65. 15 and is þat
we aken to gaben us seluen for þat we synegeden./65. 19 oðer is þat we aken
ure synnes menende to shewen hem pe prestе./71. 12 and awich oðer stede age
we hem to shewen. vre drihten us seid on pe godspelle. pe sein lucas makede./
153. 4 Swo we aken alle to don./189. 2 pat ilke wi ogh al malkin to holde pe
pencheð to cumene to goðe./Moral Ode 2 Ich wealde more þan idude mi wit
oh to be more.

with simple infin. (6): 17. 25 Ne noman agh werne./53. 11 Nu ake we alle and
al cristene folc nime forbisne after þat isrealisshe folc./65. 19 and we aken to
daí understanden þese pines./189. 14 hereð nu to wiche fhtie we azen þis
strengðe notien./189. 17 An[d] to-genes hwuch fo man agh furbien seid pe holi
apostle./217. 6 ðanne heh dai cumeð man hoh herien god mid rihte leue. and
mid soðe luue.

b. past in present sense (2)

12 Cf. ‘azen’ 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 dehe mi wit akhe bon mare. / Jesus MS. Ich welde more
þan ich dude. my wyt auhte beo more.
with to-infin. (2) | 157. 33, 35 On pe foroðe wise man silleð his almes penne he ȝifeð swiche men pe he ȝ.Distance mid rihte to helpene' to feden. and to shruden. alse pe man doð. pe ȝifeð his almes fader. oðer moder. suster oðer broðer. oðer oðre swo sibbe! Þat he ȝ.Distance mid rihte to helpene to feden. and to shruden.

Examples from the Ancrene Riwle (75)

I. 'to have, to possess' (2)

177. 25 he...bead for to maken hire cwene. of al ðet he ouht./182.8 nolde amon uor on of peos. ðiuen al ðet he ouhte:

II. 'to have to pay' (8)

a. present (6) | 55. 8 al riht o ðisse wise we beoð alle ine prisune her & owen god greate dettes of sun-nen./55. 21 ichulle nimen hit onward ðet tu owest me./107. 34 pench ec hwat tu owest god: uor his goddeen./141. 18 (twice) he nimeð lesse ðen we owen him. & ði pau wel ipaieted. we owen him blod: for blode./185. 11 Sire ich luuede ham uor þine luue: þe luue he ouh þe.

b. past (2) | 54. 38 amon ðat leie ine prisune & ougte muche raun-sun./185. 9 þu ðulde ðet tu ouhlest.

III. 5. 'to have as a duty (to do)' (65)

a. present (56) with to-infin. (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 owuh to uole-wen wisdom:/25. 21 pe bestliche mon þ ne pencheð nout of god. ne ne noteð nout his wit ase mon owuh te donner./28. 12...þ he ouh to siqgen./29. 30 uor þi owen pe gode euer to hab-ben witnesse./30. 17 ancre & huselsled: ouh muche to beon bit-weenen./36. 8, 9 zif heo owen to beon ueor urom alle world-liche men: hwat. hu ancren owen to hatien ham. & schunien./44. 2 zif þu ertz me treowe. ase spuse owuh to beonne./56. 1 ancre owuh ðus to siqgen./62. 20 auh ancre ase ich habbe iseid owuh to beon al gostlich/62. 32 heo under stonden ðet heo owen to beon of so holi liue:/72. 20 hwui ze owen onlitch lif suwice to lunien./153. 6 Schrift owen to beon willes./176. 35 nimed gode þeme mine leoue sustren. uor hwi me owuh him to lunien./183. 14 þencheð zif ze ne owen ende to lunien pene king of blisse./190. 25 ancre ne owuh nout to habben no þing þet dawre utward hire heorte./195. 18 uor wurch ouh wummonne lore to beon.

with for to-infin. (22) | 47. 12 er heo ouh forto deisen martir in hir meseise./63. 17 binihte ouh ancre worte beon waker & bisi abuten gostliche biȝeþe./69. 14 hwo se wule bi weopen hire owene & oðre monnes sunnen ase ancre ouh forto don./72. 22 i hereð nu reisuns hwui me ouh for to fleon þene world./115. 5 heo ...nauh non worte nimen godes flesch & his blod:/121. 21 pe ȝetward: ðet is wittes ski-le. ðet ouh forto wipend hweate./137. 6 auh me ouh forto siqgen./140. 29 peonne owuustu worte beon anhundred siðe soriuere./148. 24 hwi schrift ouh forto beon i makeð euer on hihðe./149. 21 Schrift ouh forto beon scheomeful./152. 16 Schrift ouh forto beon soñ./154. 4 Schrift ouh forto beon owune./154. 26 Schrift ouh forto beon bipouht biuoren longe./157. 26 þis word nomeliche: limpeð to an-cren. hwas blisse ouh forto beon allunge ine godes rode./158. 18 auh [heo] habbeð hore heorte. euer toward heouene. & owen wel worte habben./172. 37 auh ze owen worte unnen þet.../181. 17 þus alþe ðe reisuns. hwui me
Ought for to given luue: pu meih i vinden in me./181. 23 Me sulde wel luue uor luue. and so me ought forto suluen luue./187. 20 me ham ought forto luuein./189. 19 Marie ne ought vorte entremeten hire therof:/189. 22 An oter half non ancre ne ought forto nimen bute gnediche pet hire to nede/d./192. 12 ahh ancre ought forto 3emen bute god one.

with simple infin. (11): 2. 13 alle mu-wen & owen holden one riwle:/2. 24 & alle owen hire in on. ever to holden. ahh alle ne muwe nout holden one riwle. nene puruen. nene owen holden on one wise: dve vtture riwle./6. 4 hwi me ought & hwi me schal crist luuein.14/20. 29 paue zeal owen penchen of god euerichone: /30. 8 speken buten uor neode ne owue ze buten et peos two purles./33. 21 Ure deorewurde lefdi seinte marie pet ought to alle wummen beon uorbusne./68. 3 vor so ought ancre hire one in onliche stude ashe heo is. chirmen & cheateren uer hire hire bonen./101. 32 Nu an oper elne ought muchel urowen ou:/120. 51 pu nouhst nout sturien ne trulden dene heorte./172. 35 zu owen nout unnen. pet.../195. 9 ze ancre owen pis luthe laste stucchen reden to our wummen eueriche wike enes wort det heo hit kunnen.

absolute (4): 30. 11 Silence euere et te mete. vor zif otre religiuse doch hit. ase ze wel wute/d. ze owen biuoren alle./93. 8 zif me zeme/d wurse ei ping ileasned oper bitih to witene. pen he wene pet hit ought./166. 35 vre god is zif we do/d pet det we owen./195. 4 ze meidenes wiis uten zif heo seruede det ancre also ase heo owen:

b. past in past sense (2)
with for to-infi. (2): 143. 24 Ich am on ancre. a nunne. awif iwedde. aменно. awummo det me ileuend so wel. and det habbe er ibeone iberned mid swuche pingg. & oughte det betere vorte beon iwar-ned./143. 36 Sire ich was of swuche elde: det ich oughte wel vorte habben i wust me wistluer.15

c. past in present sense (7)
with to-infi. (1): 155. 26 ibroken nep oser disch: oper biseon zemeleasliche eni ping: pet me mide uaire/d. oper oughte to zemen.
with for to-infi. (1): 194. 34 non ancre servant ne oughte mid rihte vorto asken in sette huire:

with simple infin. (4): 56. 6 Iudit bi-tund inne bitocned ancre bitund. pet oughte ledten herd lir ase dude et lefdi iudit: etter hire efne./114. 18 and sent mon oter wummen det telleo to det & bihe. oser sum suwinde sawe. pet te suster ne oughte routi siggen bihe suster./140. 9 zenc euerich of his owu-ne stat det he is. oser was inne. and he mei i seon. hwareuore he oughte siken sore./147. 19 nie pinges beos det oughten hien toward schritte.

absolute (1): 1. 15 pis nis nout ibet det also wel ase hit oughte.

14 In 2. 13, 2. 24 and 6.4 owen 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 away thynewe panne For dette, thou owest me of olde/D 2106 By god, we owen fourty pound for stones/I 25216 (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 Andseyden 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 secrecyly to hyde./B 2283 certes, your wyf oghte rather to be

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16 Italicized numbers show that quotations are made from prose parts.

17 The earliest instances of weak forms in OED are: pres. 3rd. sg. ah5 (c1160), o3ep (c1205); pl. auel (c1200), o3el (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 thiste othre tormentes of laweful peynes ben rather owed to felonous citezeins,...

18 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 hise wikkede worde as wel as for hise wikkede dedes/I 674 Of Pacience comth Obedience, thurgh 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 ensample for to yive, By his clennessse, that his sheep shold live. A 4333 Wel oghte a man avysed for to be Whom that he broghte in-to his privettee.

with *simple infin.* (46): A 660 Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede—For curs wol slee, right as assoiling 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 oghte deme, of skilful Iugement, That in the salte see my wyf is deed./B 1290 ‘Nece,’ quod he, ‘it oghte y-nough suffye Fyve houres for to slepe up-on a night/B 1833 This abbot, which that was as holy man As monkes been, or elles oghte to 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 been that in paradyss han had in triublacionys that they han y-suffred, with-outen hir desert of gilte, oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience./B 2714 And therfore, me thinketh men oghten nat repreve me, though I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me./B 2806 and knoweth wel, or oghte to ze, 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 oghte y-nough suffye./B 3567 Wel oughte men thy pitous deeth complayne!/*B 3648 Of this Tragedie it oghte y-nough suffye./C 434 Of this materie it oghte y-nogh suffye./ E 132 so that it oghte seme 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 oghte 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 avysed be To whom I yev my body/E 1540 But nathelees, it oghte y-nough suffse With any wyf, if so were that she hadde Mo gode thewes than hir vyces badde/F 1397 Wel oghte a wyf rather hir-selven see Than be defouled, as it thinketh me./G 1182 This is nat couched as it oghte be/I 133 The causes that oghte move a man to Contricion been six./ I 142 The seconde cause that oghte make a man to have desdeyn 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 Alas! wel oughten they thanne have desdayn to been servauntz and thralles to sinne/I 158 The thridde cause that oghte move a man to Contricion, is drede of the day of dome, and of
the horrible peynes of helle./I 231 The fourthe point, that oghte maken a man to have contricion, is the sorwefull remembrance of the good that he hath left to doon here in erthe/I 255 The fiftthe thing that oghte move a man to contricion, is remembrance of the passion that oure lord Jesu Crist suffred for oure sinnes./I 279 Thanne was his visage, that oghte 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 biwayne/I 283 The sixtthe thing that oghte move a man to contricion, is the hope of three thynges/I 317 Now shul ye understonde what is Confession, and whether it oghte neded be doon or noon/I 621 And over alle thing men oghten escheue to cursen hir children/I 672 ye oghten first correcte youre-self/I 679 in-as-muche as it binimeth the service that men oghte doon to Crist/I 813 But for-as-muche as some folk been unmesurable, men oghten escheue fool-largesse, that men clepen wast./I 910 The fiftthe spece is thilke abominable sinne, of which that no man unnethe oghte speke ne wyte/I 927 The experience of day by day oghte suffyse./I 1000 Certes, a man oghte 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 owen (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 owe, 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...trifft 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 þât sacred ðh tō dōnne (Legg. Cnut. I. A. 4.)/And sãde þât he hit nāhte tō dōnne (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 exceptions that prove the rule. With agan, however, the predicative infinitive is frequently

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21 Callaway, op. cit., p. 82f. Cf. 'That the predicative use of the uninflected infinitive active with auxiliary verbs is native to the Germanic languages, as to Anglo-Saxon, is indisputable; this use of the inflected infinitive is sporadic except with agen (agan)...' Op. cit., p. 237f.
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 a gun from other auxiliaries. It may be that a gun, 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 a gun 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 a gun 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 a gun.

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 oven 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 oven as against 46 cases with to-infinitive.

In early ME texts Sanders found 107 cases of oven 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 oven 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>
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<th>Prose</th>
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<td>to-infin.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>for to-infin.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>simple infin.</td>
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<td>78</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>139</td>
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<td>78</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>191</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

11 The first instance of for to-infinitive appears in Chron. [E] 127 (Cf. Bøgholm, English Speech from an Historical Point of View, p. 252) The earliest quotation in OED dates from a1175. (s. v. For II)
14 Sanders, op. cit., p. 52.
15 P. Lichtsinn, Der syntaktische Gebrauch des Infinitivs im La5amone’s Brut. p. 30.
17 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 ove. 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 ove (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 seyde to hem in a goodly manere, how that hem oughte have greet repentance of the iniurie and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee hir lord, and to hir, and to hir doghter./G 1340 mighte no man sey nay. But that they weren as hem oghte be.

absolute (5): B 1097 Alla goth to his in, and, as him oghte, 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 yow oghte./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 these oughte./E 1120 And ther she was honoured as hir oghte.

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 neighe-bore, 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 hem oughte doo,e, 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 be,e obeisaunt in alle rightwysnesse.

with simple infin, (10): B 2188 Wherefor us oghte, 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 thridde point; wher-as your olde and wise conseilours seyden, that yow ne oghte nat sodeynly ne hastily proceden in this ned, but that yow oghte pursuen and apparaillen yow in this caas with greet diligence and greet deliberacioun/C 512 O glotonye, on thee wel oughte us pleyen/E 1150 For, sith a womman was so pac ient Un-to a mortal man, wel more us oughte Receyen al in gree that god us sent/G 14 Wel oughte us werche, and ydelines 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 oughte 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 oughte./I 358 And venial synne is it, if man love Jesu Crist lasse than him oughte./I 376 Eke if he flatere or blandishe more than him oughte for any necessitee.

The imperonsal construction occurred only when oughte 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 bide, 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 oweth, of verray duette, Shewen 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 nothying done but that me ought for to 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 wen wele 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.), drymen, repenten and far (karf)' 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 outh this mounte./VII. 228 ‘Lo,’ seyde the damesell, ‘yondir is a lorde that outh 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 outh ony of your elders./VI. 185 Than within an owre there com that knyght that outh the pavylyon./VI. 196 ‘Fayre sir,’ they seyde, ‘the name of this castell is called Tyntagyll, and a deuke outh 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 bettir wyle and servyse all the dayes of my lyff./IV. 117 And all good ladyes 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 owe to Rome/VII. 233 ‘We woll nat discover you,’ seyde they bothe, ‘tyll ye come unde us, by the fayth we owe to Jesu./VII. 244 Therefore we avyse you, ryde nat aftir sir Grynamamour but yf ye owe hym good wyle./VII. 245 by the fayth that I owghe to God and to the hygh Ordir of Knyghtode.../VII. 245 And therefore, brother, I owe hym my servyse afore all knyghtes lvynge.

b. past (1): I. 5 he asked hir by the feith she outh 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 outh to do with my lord/I. 11 Also thenne he made alle lordes that helde of the croune to come in and to do servyce as they outhe 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 outh to do...’/II. 53 and I woll ryde with you and put my body in adventure with you, as a brothir outh to do./III. 74 ‘Yee, hardly, sir, he outh to be a good man for he ys com of good kynrede as ony on lyve, and of kynges bloode.’/III. 90 ‘Truly, ye outh sore to repente hit,’ seyde Merlion, ‘for that lady was youre owne doughtir...’/IV. 117 And all good ladyes and jantyllwomen, I owghe them my servyse as a knyght outh to do./IV. 126 ‘Loo,’ seyde the Damsell of the Lake, ‘ye outh to be ashamed for to murther suche a knyght,’/V. 137 Sir, thou outhe to be aboven all othir Crysten kynges/VI. 192 ‘Sir my name is sir Launcelot du Lake that outh 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 outh of ryght to worship you, and ye were nat my brother, for ye have worshippte kynge Arthure and all his courte...’
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 if he had answered that himself being such as he was, and for suche testified by writting, and by the word of his father, and by his owne wonderous workes *ought* [1532 *owed*] to be belieued of them in euery thyng...they might have sayd...34 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*+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'st* 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.

**F. Th. Visser, A Syntax of the English Language of St Thomas More. §535 (p. 635).**
**Ibid. (p. 635).**
**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.) *Weheper owed to love* him better po. To this can be added: a 1415 Lanterne of Lixt (EETS) 109, 10, *po pingis of po whiche po pore owid to be norischd.'**
**Ibid. §537 (p. 636).**
**Ibid. (p. 636).**
**Ibid. (p. 637f.).**
**Ibid. (p. 638).**
**W. Franz, Die Sprache Shakespeares. §180.**
**Ibid.**
**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'.

X

In the foregoing sections I have tried to trace the development of OE Ægan on the basis of the relative frequency of various uses in several texts ranging from Beowulf to Malory's works. My chief concern has been to make clear the process of the functional specialization of the original past form ought (OE ąhte) as an auxiliary verb expressing duty or obligation, and the establishment of the syntactical group ought+to-infinitive. We have seen from the survey that the auxiliary ought, in form as well as in function, was nearly established in the day of Malory.

The elucidation of the problem has involved not only a comprehensive study of the development of Ægan, but occasional glimpses at various related words. Various questions have arisen in the course of investigation, many of which remain to be considered further. It must be admitted that, as a basis of an extensive study, the material I have collected so far is far from sufficient. The insufficiency of data has forced me to leave several problems untouched, among which are counted questions of dialects, characters of texts examined, the relations of Ægan to related words. In spite of such defects I hope my original purpose has to some extent been effected, which was to describe the early development of the auxiliary ought in its outline.

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)

43 Own derives from OE āgnian. ‘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 ownses a Serpent I abhorre More then thy Fame and Enuy.
I. 'to possess' (6)
   a. present (4): 1188 pe deuel him *awel*/1292 I gan Denemark for to *awe*/1298
      And panne y wolde mine armes drawe Til me, and [pouhte hem] for to *[awe]*/
      1932 'Deus!' quoth Ubbe, "hwat may pis be? Betere is i nime miself and se
      [Hwat] pis baret [oweth on] wold, Panne i sende yunge or old.
   b. past (2): 207 And al the lond he euere *awhte*/743 And for pat Grim pat place
      *awhte*, Pe stede of Grim pe name lauhte.

II. 'to have to pay' (1): 1666 Bi pe fey ye *owe* to pe.

III. 'to have as a duty (to do)' (4)
   a. past in past sense (1): 2787 Poru hem witen wolde he Yif pat she *auht* quen
      to be.
   b. past in present sense (3)
      with to-infin. (1) 2173 Man-red, louver bede y pe, Pi man *auht* i ful wel to be.
      with for to-infin. (1): 2800 For Englund *auhte forto ben* Youres
      with simple infin. (1): 801 Pe man pat may wel eten and drinken [Par] nout
      ne have but on swink long.

*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (5)*

I. 'to possess' (4): 767 A castel pe comlokest pat euer knyzt *auht*/843 & þuȝt
   hit a bolde burne pat pe burȝ *auht*/1775 ȝif he schulde make synne & be
   traytor to þat tolke þat pat telde *auht*/1941 As is pertly payed þe [pray] þat
   I *auht*.

III. 'to have as a duty (to do)' (1): 1526 & þe, þat ar so cortays & coyn of your
   hetes, Oghe to a ȝonke þynk ȝern to schewe & teche sum tokeneȝ of trweluf
   craftes.

*Pearl (4)*

II. 'to have to pay' (1): 543 Gyf hem pe 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 pertu had delyt.

III. 6. impersonal (2)
   a. present (1): 552 Vus þynk vus oȝe to take more.
   b. past in present sense (1): 341 Þe oȝe better þyseluen blesse.