THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUXILIARY OUGHT

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I

The auxiliary ought developed from the subjunctive use of ahte, the past form of OE (Old English) aghan. Aghan 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 aghan, 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 From the seventeenth century owe in the sense of ‘to possess’ has been superseded by owe.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 ahte, 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 aghan, is now practically a distinct verb from the newly developed weak verb owe. Such functional specialization of the past form is paralleled by must (<mœste, past form of OE mœtan), 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 aghan (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 ahte (ought) as an auxiliary verb expressing present duty or obligation, and the establishment of the syntactical group ahte (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. ah, äg, pl. agon, subj. age, past ahte, inf. ägan....2nd sg. pres. indic. is ähst Iw-S, aht Li, and does not elsewhere occur. Pres. part. -agende is frequent in compounds, the pass. part. agen, aßen 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 bępuron þe micel a¿an 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. débere (where the Rushw., like the later Ags. Gosp., uses sculan) by the phrase á¿an tō 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 á¿an, 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 á¿an, a¿en, o¿en, owen, owe, in taking débere 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. 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 a¿en to dremen.

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.
THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUXILIARY OUGHT

EQ. c 1200 Trin. Coll. Hom. 53 Nu aȝe we allè... nime forbisne.
LQ. 1524 Hen. VIII Let. to Peace in Strype Eccl. Mem. (1724) I. ii. 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 Ano~er kinde, {)at us 03 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.
'a.
EQ. a 1000 Beowulf 31 Loef land-fruma longe ahte.
LQ. a 1670 Spalding Troub. Chas. I. (1850) I. 205. The poor men that aucjt thame followit in.
β. EQ. a 1225 Ancr. R. 390 He... bead for to makien hire cwene of al ßet he ouht.
LQ. 1632 Lithgow Trav. v. 204 The Turke who ought my Mule.
γ. (only one example) 13. Cursor M. 6719 (Cott.) Pe lord pat Pat beist aght Sal ßar-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' =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.

α.
LQ. a 1825 Forby Voc. E. Anglia s.v. Aught, He aught me ten pounds.
β. EQ. a 1225 Ancr. R. 124 A mon ßet leie ine prisune, & ouht outhe muehe raunsun.
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-

4 Quotations are classified according to the forms of ought: α=ahte, aȝt(e aȝt(e, aught(e, aucht, etc.; β=ouht(e, ouht(e, ouht(e, ought(e, oucht, etc.; γ=ȝt(ȝt(e, iht(e, ȝht(e, etc.)
ceeding past tense in principal clause: he said you ought=he said it was your duty.

a. EQ. c 1200 ORMIN 19108 And tohh swa þe hh ne cnew himm nohht þe wereld alls itt ahhte.
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:=Ain (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 þæs we ahtef.n to beon þe edmondtre.
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. Esher 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 beoð þet ouhten hien toward 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 haue 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 Watloker it aȝte her.
LQ. c 1420 Sir Amadace (Camden) Iviii. That ladi gente ... did wele that hur aghte 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.
α. EQ. c 1340 Cursor M. 12988 (Fairf.) Pe ne hast haue na doute.
LQ. c 1450 Mirour Saluacioun 1185 Than aght vs ofre to crist golde of
dilectionne.

β. EQ. a 1225 Anocr. R. 2 Pis nis nowt ibet ȝet al se wel hit oughte.
LQ. c 1500 Lancelot 2995 For well it oucht 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 Isu,
ful of miȝte, And worschipe him... as me well ȝȝte. c 1450 Mirour Sal-
uacioun 3755 The forsaide 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>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>owe</td>
<td>ought</td>
<td>to simple</td>
<td>ought with perf. inf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>c 888</td>
<td>to pt.</td>
<td>c 1220</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>a 1000</td>
<td>b 1150</td>
<td>1299</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1100</td>
<td></td>
<td>c 1175 a 1200</td>
<td>1450</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1200</td>
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<td>1470–85</td>
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<td>1300</td>
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<td>c 1500</td>
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<td>1600</td>
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<td>1700</td>
<td>a 1630</td>
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<td>1800</td>
<td>a 1825</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>a 1871</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>exc.</td>
<td>dial.</td>
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</table>

* 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>Form</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>I ‘to possess’</th>
<th>II ‘to have to pay’</th>
<th>III ‘to have as a duty (to do)’</th>
<th>III 6 Impers.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>owe ought</td>
<td>owe ought</td>
<td>to owe for simple</td>
<td>ought pt.</td>
<td>ought prs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a1000</td>
<td>Beowulf</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chron. [E]</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>c1200</td>
<td>Trin. Hom.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>a1225</td>
<td>Ancre. R.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c1300</td>
<td>Havelok</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c1386</td>
<td>Cant. T.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c1390</td>
<td>Gawain</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c1390</td>
<td>Pearl</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1470-85</td>
<td>Malory</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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6 The editions of the texts used are as follows:
IV

In Beowulf we find 8 instances of āgan, all of which can be taken as meaning 'to have, to possess'.

- Present (3):
  - 1088 ṣæt hie healfre geweald wið Eotena bærn āgan moston (that they might have power over half of it with the sons of the Jutes)
  - 1727 he āhe ealra geweald (he has control of all)
  - 2252 Nah, hwa sweord wege (I have no one to bear sword)

- Past (5):
  - 31 leof landfruma lange āhte (dear prince of the land long reigned)
  - 487 ahte ic holdra þy læs, deorre duguðe, þe þæt þæt fornæd (I had the fewer trusty followers, dear warriors, because death had taken them away)
  - 522 þæt he folc ahte, burh ond beagas (where he had subjects, a stronghold and treasures)

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; Wælferth: 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. āgan (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 fole to bebyegganne (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 þæt forsoc he. J sæde þæt he hit nahte to donne (then he refused and said that he was under no obligation to give it)/E 1085 hwilce gerihtæ he ahte to habbanæ to xii monþum of þære scire (what dues he ought to have in twelve months from each shire)/E 1140 pe eorl heold Lincol æges þæt he ahte to haðan. (The earl held Lincoln 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 þæs landes ic gife Sce þæt Peter æal swa freolice swa ic self hit ahte./833 þæta Deniscan ahton wælstowe geweald./837 þæta Deniscan ahton wælstowe geweald./840 þæta Deniscan ahton wælstowe geweald./860.. J wælstowe geweald ahton./861 þæta Deniscan ahton wælstowe geweald./871 þæta Deniscan ahton wælstowe geweald/871 þæta Deniscan ahton wælstowe geweald./885 þæta Deniscan ahton sige./998 æfre hi æt ende sige ahton./999 þæta ahton þæta Deniscan wælstowe geweald./1010 (twice) J þæta Deniscan ahton wælstowe geweald. J þæt wurdon gehorsöde. J syððan ahton East Engle géweald./1042 (twice) J raðe þæs se cing let geridan ealle þæta land þæt he his modor ahte him to handa.

8 M. Callaway, Jr., The Infinitive in Anglo-Saxon. p. 80 f.
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 sculdan. 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 Hoccleve Min. Poems xxiii. 695 The leeste ferthynge 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 zewyrcane...pe [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.) Swylc sceolde secg wesan, pe...eart...e 897 ÆLFRED Gregory's Past. C. iv. 36 Donetsk mon forlet done eze...pe he mid ryhte on him innan habban secolde.
   LQ. 1896 Law Times Rep. LXXIII. 616/2 He should have looked up and down the line before he ventured to cross it.

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10 Compare the following examples with habban: 890 Bryttas him wið gefuhton. 905 ha Swoen heafdon weallstowe geweald./1025 ña Sweon heafdon sige./1025 ña Sweon heafdon sige.

11 It is worth noting that sculan is used in Anglo-Saxon, Rushworth and Hatton Gospels to translate dìbbere, while in Lindisfarne Gospels ñagan is used. Lindisf. glosses are written in Northumbrian dialect. Therefore the use of ñagan 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. *a3en*, *awen*, etc.) existed in the beginning of the thirteenth century. The data drawn from the *Trinity Homilies* (c1200) and the *Acrene Risle* (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 beō on fulcin ge of alle synnen.
      and *ogh to cumen* his bileue ar he fulcin ge underfo. 21. 6 we habbeō bigunnen
to sege ou on englis hwat bitocneō pe crede.  pat eich cristemana *oh to cunn-
en*. 27. 24 pe pridde is for mete pat ilch man *agh* mid him to leden.  pe he sal
of pesse liue faren. 40. 4 *Dus agen* alle gode herdes to *wakegen* gostliche. 41.
28 Swo we *agedō to don* ure lichames wille to forlenen. 47. 21 and we *ogen ec to
folgen* hire faire forbisne. 23 also we *ogen to heren* ure hlouerd ihesu crist on
ure heorte. 47. 31 and forpi ech cristene *oh to habben* on honden to-dai in
chirche: lege bernende. 57. 4 also we *ogen to don*. 57. 6 and forpi we *agen to
cumen* to ure preste er panne we biginnen to festen. 59. 4 and perfore we *agen*
alle to *ben* shrifene of ure synnes her we biginnen to fasten. 65. 15 and is pe
*agen to gabben* us seluen for pat we synegeden. 65. 19 *ōder* is *pat we *agen*
ure synnes menende to *shewen* hem pe prest. 71. 12 and awich *ōder stede age*
we hem to *shewen*. vre drihten us *seid* on *pe godspelle*. pe sein lucas makede. 153.
2 Swo we *agen alle to don*. 189. 2 pat ilke we *ogh* al mankin to *holden* pe
*pencheō* to cumene to gode. 153. 4 Swo we *agen alle to dole*. 153. 6 and forpi we *agen to
cumen* to givu us seluen for pat we synegeden. 189. 14 hereē nu to wiche fihte we 05eta pis
strengē leotien. 217. 6 Panne heh dai cumeō man *hoh herien* god mid rihte leue. and
mid softe luue.

b. past in present sense (2)

12 Cf. “*a3en*” as a full verb is largely supplanted by ‘hadde’ in B...or it may take on the inflection of
13 Cf. Lambeth MS. Ich welde mare jene ich dide mi wit *ahte bon* mare. / Jesus MS. Ich welde more
pan ich dude. my wyt *auhte beo* more.
with to-infin. (2):  157. 33, 35 On þe feorðe wise man silleð his almes penne he zifeð swiche men þe he æghete, mid rihte to helpe: to feden. and to shruden. alse þe man doð. þe zifeð 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 ðet he ouhte./182.8 nolde amon uor on of þeos. ðiuen al ðet he ouhte:

II. ‘to have to pay’ (8)

a. present (6):  55. 8 al riht o þisse wise we beó alle ine prisune her & owen god greate dettes of sun-nen./55. 21 ichulle nimen hit onward ðe dette ðet tu owest me./107. 34 pench ec hwat tu owest god: uor his goddened./141. 18 (twice) he nimeð lesse þen we owen him. & ðis pauh wel ipaied. we owen him blod: for blode./185. 11 Sire ich luuede ham uor ðine luue: ðeo luue he ouh þe.

b. past (2):  54. 38 amon þat leie ine prisune & ougte muche raun-sun./185. 9 þu þilde þet 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 helden./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 ouwen þe gode euer to hab-ben witnesse./30. 17 ancre & huselslefdi: ouh muche to beon bit-weenen./36. 8, 9 zif heo owen to beon ueor urom all world-liche men: hwat. hu ancrren owen to hatien ham. & schunien./44. 2 zif þu ert me treowe. ase spuse ouh to beonne./56. 1 ancre ouh ðus to siggen./62. 20 auh ancre ase ike habbe iseid ouh to beon al gostlich/62. 32 heo under stonden ðet heo owen to beon of so holi liue:/72. 20 hwui ze owen onlich lif swuðe to luuien./153. 6 Schrift ouh to beon willes./176. 35 nimed gode þeme mine leoue sustren. uor hwi me ouh him to luuien./183. 14 þencheð zif þe ne owen eade to luuien þene king of blisse./190. 25 ancre ne ouh nout to habben no þing þet drewe utward hire heorte./195. 18 uor swuch ouh wummone lore to beon.

with for to-infin. (22):  47. 12 er heo ouh forte deien martir in his meseise./63. 17 binihte ouh ancre vorte beon waker & bisi abuten gostliche biȝete./69. 14 hwo se wule bi weopen hire owene & oðre monnes sunnen ase ancre ouh forte don./72. 22 i hereð nu reisuns hwui me ouh for to fleon þene world./115. 5 heo ...nouh non vorte nimen godes fleesch & his blod:/121. 21 þe ðetward: ðet is wittes ski-le. ðet ouh forte winden hweate./137. 6 auh me ouh forte sigen./140. 29 peonne owustu vorte beon anhundred siðe siourie./148. 24 hwi schrift ouh forte beon i makeð euer on hiððe./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: limpeð to an-cren. hwas blisse ouh forte beon allunge ine godes rode./158. 18 auh [heo] habbeð hore heorte. euer towardo heouene. & owen wel vorte habben./172. 37 auh ze owen vorte unnen þet.../181. 17 þus alle ðe reisuns. hwui me
ouh forto givun lueu; pu meiht i vinden in me./181. 23 Me sulde wel lueu ur lueu. and so me ouh forto sulen lueu./187. 20 me ham ouh forto luenien./189. 19 Marie ne ouh uorte entremeten hire pereof:/ 189. 22 An oðer half non ancre ne ouh forto nimen bute gnede-liche þet hire to neodeð./192. 12 auh ancre ouh forto zemen 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. auh alle ne muwe nout holden one riwle. nene puruen. nene owen holden on one wise: ðe vtture riwle./6. 4 hwi me ouh & hwi me schal crist luenien.14/20. 29 pauh ze owen þenchen of god euerichone:/30. 8 speken buten ur neode ne ouwe ze buten et þeos two þurles./33. 21 Ure deorewurðe lefdi seinte marie þet ouh to alle wummen beon uorbisne./68. 3 vor so ouh ancre hire one in onliche stude asse heo is. chirmen & cheateren euler hire bonen./101. 32 Nu an ðeber elne ouh muchel wronen ou:/120. 51 þu nouhst nout sturien ne trulien ðeine heorte./172. 35 ze noven nout unnen. þet.../195. 9 ze ancren owen þis lulte lasste stucchen reden to our wummen eueriche wike enes wort ðet heo hit kunn.

absolute (4): 30. 11 Silence euere et te mete. vor zif oþre religiue doþ hit. ase ze wel wuteð? ze owen biuoren alle./93. 8 zif me þeneð wurse ei þing ileasned oþer biete ih to witene. þen he wene þet hit ouh./166. 35 vre god is zif we doþ þet we owen./195. 4 þe meidenes wið uten zif heo serueð de ancre also ase heo owen:

b. past in past sense (2)
with for to-infini. (2): 143. 24 Ich am on ancre. a nunne. awif iwedde. amenen.
awummo ðet me ileueð so wel. and ðet habbe er ibeon iberneth mid swuche þince. & ouhte ðe betere worte beon iwærned./143. 36 Sire ich was of swuche elde: ðet ich ouhte wel worte haber bi wiust me wisiuker.15

c. past in present sense (7)

with for to-infin. (1): 194. 34 non ancre servant ne ouhte mid rihte worto asken i sette huire:
with simple infin. (4): 56. 6 Iudit bi-tund inne bitoceneð ancre bitund. þet ouhte ledun herd lif ase dude ðe lefdi iudit: after hire efne./114. 18 and sent mon oþer wummen ðet telleð to ðe & biðe. oðer sum suwine deawe. þet te suster ne ouhte noute siggen biðe suster./140. 9 þenc euerich of his owu-ne stat ðet he is. oðer was inne. and he mei i seon. hwareuore he ouhte siken sore./147. 19 nie þinges beoð ðet ouhten hien touward schrifte.

absolute (1): 1. 15 pis nis nout ibet ðet also wel alse hit ouhte.

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 thy newe panne For dette, thou owesst me of old/D 2106 By god, we owen fourty pound for stones/I 252\(^{16}\) (twice) Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lyf to god as longe as he hath lived, and eek as longe as he shall 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 therefor, certes, the lord oweth to his man that the man oweth to his lord.

As these examples show the present form of *owe* is conjugated as a weak verb. On the other hand, Chaucer never used the past form *owed*.\(^{17}\) Throughout his whole work I have found only two instances of the past form *ought* in the sense other than 'to have as a duty (to do)'.\(^{18}\) 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 *owe* 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 *ought* may be said to a considerable extent to have been established by the end of the fourteenth century.

Examples of *owe* 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 Iesu Crist.

b. past in past sense (2)

with for to-infin. (1): B 2488 And seyden also, that in this caas ye oughten 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

\(^{16}\) 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. awed (c1200), o3ed (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 lawefull peynes ben rather owed to felonous cizteins,...

\(^{18}\) 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 escheuwe./B 3033 And every man oghte to doon his diligence and his bisiness 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 Jugement/I 300 More-over, man oghte to sorwe for hise wikkede wordes 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 cloenessse, how that his sheep shold live./A 4333 Wel oghte a man avysed for to be Whom that he broughte in-to his privetee.

with simple infin. (46): A 660 Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede—For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth/A 1249 Wel oghte I sverve in wanohope and distresses/A 3051 And gladder oghte his freend ben of his deeth/B 1038 I oghten deme, of skilful Jugement, That in the salte see my wyf is deed./B 1290 ‘Nece,’ quod he, ‘it oghte y-nough suffyse Fyve houres for to slepe up-on a night/B 1833 This abbot, which that was as holy man As monks been, or elles oghten be/B 2128 I wol telle a litel thing in prose, That oghte lyhen 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 gill, oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience./B 2714 And therfore, me thinketh men oghten nat represse me, though I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me./B 2806 and knoweth wel, or oghte to zeke, 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 suffyse./B 3567 Wel oghten men thy pitous deeth complaylee!/B 3648 Of this Tragedie it oghte y-nough suffyse./C 434 Of this matere it oghte y-nogh suffyse./E 132 so that it oghte seme Honour to god and yow/E 635 Wel oghte I of swich murmure taken hede/E 1351 every man that halt him worth a leek, Up-on his bare knees oghte al his lyi Thauke,c his god that him hath sent/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 yevhe my good away fro me, Wel muchel more I oghte avysed be To whom I yevhe my body/E 1540 But natheles, it oghte y-nough suffse With any wyf, if so were that she hadde Mo gode thewes than hir yvces badde/F 1397 Wel oghte a wyf rather his-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 moeve 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 Allas! wel oghten they thanne have desdayn to been servauntz and thralles to sinne/I 158 The triddle 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 oghte 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 oghte move a man to contricion, is remembrance of the passion that oure lord Iesu 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 angucls desyren to looke, vileynsly bispet./I 282 muchel oghte sinful man wepen and biwayle/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 escheve 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 fivthe spece is thilke abominable sinne, of which that no man unnethe oghte speke ne wryte/I 927 The experience of day by day oghte suffyse./I 1000 Certes, a man oghte hastily shewen his 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 oewn (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 oewn, a partial count shows about 135 cases of simple infinitive, 40 with to, and 5 with for to.' I9 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...trift man hier und da im Neuenglischen vom reinen Infinitiv begleitet, obwohl ihm der Infinitiv mit to ursprünglich zukommt.'20 He quotes only two OE examples, both with to-infinitive: Micel is and mare þat sacred âh tò döne (Legg. Cnut. I. A. 4)/And sêde þat he hit nähê tò döne (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 straggling examples of the inflected infinitive are clearly the exceptions 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 auxiliary verbs is native to the Germanic languages, as to Anglo-Saxon, is indisputable; this use of the inflected infinitive is sporadic except with agan (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 *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 *Ancren Riwle*, in which I have found 25 cases of *ōwen* 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 *ōwen* as against 46 cases with to-infinitive.

In early ME texts Sanders found 107 cases of *ōwen* 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 *ōwen* 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>Form</th>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Prose</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<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><em>for</em> 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>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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11 The first instance of *for* to-infinitive appears in *Chron. [E]* 1127 (Cf. Bögholm, *English Speech from an Historical Point of View*, p. 252) The earliest quotation in OED dates from 1175. (s. v. *for*)
12 H. Sanders, *Der syntaktische Gebrauch des Infinitivs im Frühmittelenglischen*, p. 28.
13 Sanders, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
16 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./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 suffysye./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
phisiens 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 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 neighe-
bore, that is to seyn, of his evenecristene, or hath despyt to doon that him
oghte to do./I 403 Irreverence, is whan men do nat honour thereas hem oughte
do, 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 dwel 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 conseillours
seyden, that youw ne oughte nat sodeynly ne hastily proceden in this nede, but
that youw oughte purveyen and apparaillen yow in this caas with greet diligence
and greet deliberacion/C 512 O glotonye, on thee wel oughte us pleyne! E 1150
For, sith a womman was so pac ient 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 verry 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 blandishie more than him oughte for any necessitie.

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 significatition, 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 ought, of verray duette, Shewen his people pleyen 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 bounté 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

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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 thor in Chaucer: G 946 Us moste putte our good in aventure / A 5320 Him thor nat wene wel that yvel dooth / D 329 Have thou y-nogh, what thor thee rescche 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 (owe, owe, a3t, ou3t etc.), derymen, repeniten 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/VI. 146 Therefore thou shalt have thy mede throw Mychael that outh thy 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 outhte hem./V. 163 yf youre tytill be the trewer than ever outht ony of your elders./VI. 185 Than within an owre there com that knyght that outht the pavylyon./VI. 196 'Fayre sir,' they seyde, 'the name of this castell is called Tyntagyll, and a deuke outht hit somtyme that had wedded fayre Igrayne.

II. 'to have to pay' (10)
a. present (9): I. 38 I oughe the Emperour no trewage/I. 43 But telle thou thy kynge thus, that I oughe 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 oughe all women the bettir wylle and servyse all the dayes of my lyff./IV. 117 And all good ladyes and jantyllwomen, I oughe 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 commaunde us, by the fayth we owe to Jesu./VII. 244 Therefore we avyse you, ryde nat aftir sir Grynagamour but yf ye owe hym good wylle./VII. 245 by the fayth that I oughe to God and to the hygh Ordir of Knyghthode../VII. 245 And therefor, brother, I owe hym my servyse afore all knyghtes lyvynge.

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 outhte 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 outht sore to repent 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 outht to do./IV. 126 'Loo,' seyde the Damsell of the Lake, 'ye outht to be ashamed for to murther suche a knyght,.'/V. 137 Sir, thou outhte to be aboven all othir Crysten kynges/VI. 192 'Sir my name is sir Launcelot du Lake that outht to helpe you of ryght for kynge Arthurs sake,...' /VII. 237 Mesemyth thou outhtyste of reson to beware by yondir knyghtes that thou sawyste hange on yondir treis./VII. 267 'Alas! my fayre brother,' seyde Sir Gawayne, 'I outht 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*+infinite 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 wriyting, 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 haue 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*+infinite. '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 geläufig.'39 A few examples are:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Text</th>
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<td><em>Tp. I. ii. 454 Thou do'st vsurpe The name thou ow'est not</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>John IV. ii. 99 That blood which ow'd the breth of all this Ile</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Mac. I. iii. 76 Say from whence You owe this strange Intelligence</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Oth. I. i. 66 What a full Fortune do's the Thick-lips owe</em></td>
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Franz says, 'Ought kommt neben der jetzigen Bedeutung *(ich) sollte* einmal im Sinne von *owned 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.

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33 Ibid. (p. 635).
34 Ibid. §536 (p. 635f.). *ought* is used in the 1557 edition. 'The only instance of *owed*+infinite in OED is: a 1425 Cursor M., 14045 (Trin.) Whejper *owed to lown* him betther po. To this can be added: a 1415 Lanterne of Lizt (EETS) 109, 10, þe þingis of þe whiche þe pore owid to be norischd.'
35 Ibid. §537 (p. 636).
36 Ibid. (p. 636).
37 Ibid. (p. 637f.).
38 Ibid. (p. 638).
40 Ibid.
41 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.’\(^{42}\) 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,\(^ {43}\) 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 āgen 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 ăhte) 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 āgan, 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 āgan 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 \textit{in its outline}.

\textbf{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.

\textit{Havelok the Dane} \((11)\)

\(^{42}\) E. Dieth, ‘Whose Lad Are You?’ \textit{English Studies}, Vol. XXXVIII. No. 6 (1957). p. 250.\(^{43}\) \textit{Own} derives from OE āgniā. ‘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.’ \textit{(OED s. v. Own)} The earliest quotation of own thus ‘restored’ is from Shakespeare: \textit{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 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
   [Hwalt] pis bare [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 Foru hem witen wolde he Yif pat she awhte quen
   to be.
   b. past in present sense (3)
      with to-infin. (1) 2173 Man-red, louver bede y pe, Pi man awht i ful wel to be.
      with for to-infin. (1) 2800 For Englond awhte forto ben Youres
      with simple infin. (1): 801 Pe man pat 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 pe comlokest pat euer knyzt a3te/843 & þuȝt
   hit a bolde burne pat pe burȝ a3te/1775 ȝif he schulde make synne & be
   traytor to pat tolke pat pat telde a3t/1941 As is pertly payed pe [pray] pat
   I aȝte.
III. 'to have as a duty (to do)' (1): 1526 & þe, þat ar so cortays & coynt 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 a3t haf forbrent Er
   he perto 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 Pe oȝte better þyseluen blesse.