Studies in Linguistic Variation and Change

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From Old to Middle English

Edited by

Fabienne Toupin and Brian Lowrey

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume consists of a selection of papers from the *Third International Biennial Conference on the Diachrony of English* (CBDA-3) held in Amiens, France, in June 2013.

CBDA is a relative newcomer to the world of internationally recognized conferences addressing the history of the English language. The main objective of the conference, created in 2008, is to provide colleagues working in France and abroad with an opportunity to explore linguistic phenomena from a diachronic perspective and to discuss their theoretical implications. A second goal was to awaken interest in France in the study of English from a variationist perspective, across a number of fields including dialectology, historical and socio-historical linguistics. Since 2008, CBDA has been held every two years alternately at the universities of Amiens and Tours; but thanks to an enlarged network of scholars involved, the 2015 edition is to be organized by the University of Reims-Champagne-Ardenne in the beautiful medieval city of Troyes.

Ever since its creation CBDA has enjoyed the financial backing of two research groups: LLL (*Laboratoire Ligérien de Linguistique*, UMR 7270) and *Corpus* (EA 4295). Their unfailing support is gratefully acknowledged here. More specifically, concerning the organization of CBDA-3, the organizers wish to express their gratitude to the *Corpus* team, to the University of Picardie, and to Professor Pierre Sicard for all their help and support.

In all, some 40 papers were presented at CBDA-3. The abstracts are available on the conference website (www.cbdaconference.org/). Only 12 papers appear in the present volume, though others might have been published elsewhere.

The editors extend their warmest thanks to Dominique Boulonnais, Xavier Dekeyser, Catherine Delesse, Sylvain Gatelais, Richard Ingham, Élise Louviot, Olivier Simonin, Olga Timofeeva and Jerzy Wełna for all their tireless work in the process of reviewing the papers. Their suggestions and corrections have not only facilitated the editors' tasks but were also greatly appreciated by the contributors to this volume. Our warmest thanks are extended, too, to Professor Stephen Morrison and his team in Poitiers, who have supported CBDA since the beginning. We are also indebted to all the contributors for their kind and patient cooperation.

Last but not least, we should like to thank Samuel Baker at Cambridge Scholars Publishing for the assistance he gave us during the preparation of the manuscript for publishing.

Amiens, January 2015
The Editors

INTRODUCTION

The history of the English language since the time of the earliest recorded writings has long been a source of fascination for diachronic linguists. The collection of papers published here focuses on attested variation and change in what is perhaps the most intriguing period in the history of English: that of the transition from Old- to Middle-English, which sees a number of what Baugh & Cable (1978: 158) call "momentous changes" take place in a relatively short space of time. These changes affect virtually every aspect of the language, from syntax to semantics and phonology, and this diversity of change is reflected in this book.

The considerable diversity of change is also mirrored by the diversity of approaches to language variation and change in evidence in this volume. Some of the papers seek to give as accurate a description as possible of the function, distribution, and form of specific linguistic items, at different stages in the evolution of Old English or Middle English. Others focus more directly on certain specific changes which affect the English of the medieval period, identifying the mechanisms concerned and highlighting the factors which allowed new forms to become established. Still others are concerned with the mechanisms of language change, in a broader sense, and show how these mechanisms can be related to attested changes which take place in English over time.

The first section of the book will be of particular interest to those working in the field of lexical semantics. In "Verbs of Granting in Old English Documents", Anna Wojtyś focuses on a range of native verbs that could be used to express the idea of legally granting something in medieval England, among which the central item seems to have been *unnan*, "grant". This verb, which belonged to the class of preterite-presents, was lost in early Middle English. But the texts under investigation contain other verbs with a similar sense, such as *becweþan* "bequeath", *gifan* or *sellan,* both with the sense of "giving". Occasionally, granting is also expressed by other items, including *gan* "go" or *fon* "seize, inherit", in structures such as "the estate should go to ..." or "someone shall inherit ...".

The study aims at identifying the most common verbs of granting used in Old English legal texts and determining their relative frequency and the

contexts in which each was employed. The analysis is thus expected to reveal whether any items endangered the position of the main item, i.e. *unnan*, so that it went out of use. The data come from the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, which contains a complete set of the surviving Old English texts, thereby allowing a thorough investigation of legal documents to be carried out.

Lexical semantics also constitutes the starting point for Agnieszka Magnuszewska who, in her study entitled "The Linguistic Image of 'sea' in Old English on the Basis of *Orosius*", investigates the concept of "sea" in a ninth-century text, *Orosius*, using a specific methodological framework originally developed in Poland, that of the "linguistic image of the world". It is to be noted that this is the first attempt at applying the cognitive methodology of the "linguistic image of the world" to the analysis of Old English lexis.

This consists essentially of a set of linguistic judgements about a certain concept. These judgements are based on a set of predetermined facets. Accordingly, the author analyses the linguistic image of "sea" in *Orosius* in terms of the following facets: [name], [hyperonym], [hyponym], [collection], [localization], [opposition], [visual feature], [non-visual feature], [parts], [number], [agent of action], [object of action], [metaphor] and finally [symbol]. The analysis of the distribution of these facets brings to light the fact that the linguistic image of "sea" is not homogeneous throughout the text: there are differences of distribution not only between the geographical section and the historical section, but also between the part translated from Latin and the Anglo-Saxon interpolations. This leads the author to describe the concept of "sea" in *Orosius* as a "fuzzy" set.

Whilst still dealing with lexical mattters, Ewa Ciszek-Kiliszewska's paper "The Middle English Preposition and Adverb *atwen*" examines a closed-class, arguably semi-grammaticalised item. She considers the origins of *atwen*, advancing the hypothesis that the preposition is formed as a kind of compound, made up of "pre-prepositional" *a-* and the shortened form of *between*, by analogy with other "twin" forms such as *afore/before* and *among/bimong*. The author then goes on to paint a remarkably detailed picture of its frequency and its dialectical and textual distribution, observing that it was used not only as a preposition but also, occasionally, as an adverb. She also analyses the semantics of *atwen*, and identifies the types of context in which it was most likely to appear, finding that it was particularly compatible with abstract meanings. This property proves to be shared both by the preposition and the adverb. As for the regional distribution of *atwen*, the author shows that it is essentially an

East-Midland form, first appearing in texts that can be dated to the 15th century.

It is with suffixation and derivational productivity that Elena Sasu and Nicolas Traputeau are concerned in " Inkhorn Terms: Some that Got Away. The Case of Middle English Words Ending in *-ess(e)*". More specifically, they examine the spread of the feminine *-ess*(*e*) nominal suffix in Middle English, and its subsequent decline. Many of the words with the *-ess(e)* ending found in Middle English share a number of properties with the learned borrowings from Latin and French that will later come to be referred to as "inkhorn" terms. They stress the importance of language contact, with French and Latin, in the adoption of the form, and of analogy in the subsequent creation of new *-ess(e)* words, and link their appearance to the loss of other feminine suffixes during the Middle English period. The authors go on to discuss the fate of *-ess(e)* nouns in early Modern English, and the subsequent decline in the productivity of the suffix. The paper also highlights the role played by sociolinguistic factors in the evolution of *-ess(e)* words, raising the question of medieval translation practices, and the manner in which changes affecting society tend to be reflected in the lexicon.

The second part of the book is given over to changes in sound patterns. Jerzy Wełna explores one of the curious modifications in English verbal morphology, namely the simplification of the preterite/past participle *macod(e)* (OE *macian* "make") to *made* instead of the expected form **maked*. The most popular hypothesis assumes the application of a sequence of rules involving *k*-voicing, *g*-affrication, vocalisation of the voiced velar fricative [ɣ] > [w] > [u] and its loss, i.e. *makode* > *makede* > *makde* > *magde* > *maɣde* > *mawde* > *maude* > *made/māde* (see Berndt 1960: 175). An alternative development, *makde* > *makte* > *maxte* (Flasdieck 1923; cf. also Wright & Wright 1928: 113 and Jespersen 1949: 25-26) seems less likely as it would result in a form like **maught* rather than *made*. Yet another form found in Middle English texts is the reduced preterite *ma* of *made*.

With reference to texts from the *Innsbruck Corpus of Middle English Prose* and a few other selected sources, the article discusses the dialectal evidence from more than one hundred texts for "the missing link", intermediate forms between *makede* and *made*.

Language reconstruction is particularly fascinating whenever it allows us to glimpse the transitory phonological qualities of a stage in the history of a language that has long since disappeared. Marta Kołos' paper addresses the problems arising from the usage of versification patterns in the study of phonological and word-formation issues. Firstly, it attempts to

establish how well grounded the prosodic systems of Old and Middle English poetry were in the suprasegmental phonology of the language, given the expectation that versification patterns should, at least to some extent, reflect linguistic rules (Kuryłowicz 1976: 66). Secondly, the question is addressed of whether metrical anomalies in poetry should be treated as evidence for phonological phenomena, or rather as proof of a "loose" application of poetic techniques. These issues are discussed on the basis of Chaucer's iambic pentameter, primarily instances of anomalous non-root stress on native vocabulary, and examined in the light of relevant data from Old and Middle English poetry.

The final section of this volume is devoted primarily to questions of syntax. Olga Fischer, in her paper on "The Influence of the Grammatical System and Analogy in Processes of Language Change: the Case of the Auxiliation of *HAVE-to* Once Again" returns to the question of the development of the modal *have to* construction, often viewed as a relatively straightforward case of grammaticalisation. Grammaticalisation is often claimed to be a "unidirectional" process (cf. Heine & Kuteva 2002: 4). However, the author takes issue with traditional accounts of the auxiliation of *have to*, arguing that insufficient attention has been paid to developments taking place elsewhere in the grammar, notably to word order factors, and that the role of analogy in the process has been hitherto underestimated. In fact, the case of *have to* suggests that grammaticalisation is not really a unidirectional process in any strict sense, but rather that it is is shaped at all stages of the process by the synchronic system of grammar, and particularly by analogical forces. Stressing the role of analogy as a force in language change has far-reaching consequences, in that it implies that we need not just to look at how individual constructions develop in isolation (as is often the case with grammaticalisation-centred studies), but also at how other, similar constructions may influence the development.

Grammaticalisation, or more specifically auxiliation, once again, is also one of the chief concerns of Magdalena Tomaszewska in her paper "On the Status of *cunnen* in Middle English". By means of a set of clearly defined semantic, syntactic and morphological properties shared by *cunnen* either with auxiliaries or with full verbs, she attempts to determine to what extent the verb could still be considered a lexical item after the crucial transition stage from Old English to Middle English, and to what extent it could be said to have fully grammaticalized as a modal auxiliary. Comparisons are also made with other pretero-present verbs that survive into Middle English. The author demonstrates that *cunnen* in fact appears to lose certain properties of lexical verbs, such as the possibility of appearing in impersonal constructions, while at the same time acquiring

new participle forms, typical of lexical verbs. This leads her to speculate as to whether some form of "split" (Heine & Reh 1984: 57-9) may be taking place at this point in the verb's development.

In "OE *weorþan* and Related Process Copulas: Demise and Rise", Xavier Dekeyser addresses the question of "process copulas" from a historical point of view. Process copulas are linking verbs that express a (mostly progressive) development from one point or stage to another. Their history is characterized by lexical loss as well as innovation. *Weorþan* is used with this function throughout the Old English period, and well into Middle English, but disappears after c.1500. The author argues that its loss is probably due to semantic competition (with *become* and *grow*) and morphological dysfunctionality. Both *become* and *grow* are late Middle English innovations. The available evidence demonstrates that they derive from phrases with the preposition *to*, which are syntactically different structures but semantically express the same notion as that of the process copulas. This development is marked by grammaticalisation and metaphorisation. In Modern English *become* has reached the stage where it can be considered the prototypical process copula.

Finally, the author examines the development of *get*, which, somewhat surprisingly, proves to be relatively recent. The copula sporadically emerges in the course of the 17th century and has for a long time been confined to the register of colloquial English. However, with Present-Day English becoming increasingly less formal, it is now universally used by the side of *become*, mainly when adjectival complements are involved.

Yana Chankova introduces a comparative dimension in her paper "On Two Types of Double Object Constructions in Old English and Old Icelandic". She discusses the core properties of scrambling and seeks to determine the ways these properties interact with semantic, discourse/informational and prosodic factors, based on Old English and Old Icelandic constructions with verbs characterized by the <Agent, Benefactive/Recipient, Theme> Theta grid. The paper starts off with an analysis of V-DO(Acc)-IO(Dat) orders which are described as consequent upon optional movement of direct objects to targets phrasally-adjoined to the left of VP "lower". V_{fin}-DO(Acc)-IO(Dat)-$V_{non\text{-}fin}$ constructions are then analyzed as being derived through optional movement of both direct and indirect objects to XP-adjoined targets in the left periphery of the "higher" VP.

Such an account stands as an alternative to case-feature driven analyses, wherein movement is triggered by the need for the internal arguments to have their case-features checked. Essentially, this paper claims that scrambling is a semantically and pragmatically effective

movement device, but it does not draw on the weak version of semantic/discourse/informational analyses, claiming that topic and focus are purely semantic features, accessible at the interface, nor does it side with their strong version which argues that topic and focus are active in the computation by attracting movement of constituents to dedicated functional projections.

Brian Lowrey, in "Subjectless Infinitival Perception Reports in Old English", approaches the issue of the complementation of perception verbs from what might be termed a "constructional" point of view. Old (and Middle-) English possessed two types of infinitive complement, used to express the direct sensory perception of an event, one in which the embedded infinitive had an "overt" subject (the so-called "AcI" construction, still common with modern English *see* or *hear*), and another, Denison's (1993) V+I, in which the subject of the infinitive remained implicit. This paper defines the distribution and the semantic properties of the subjectless construction, which has been lost in Modern English, and compares them with those of AcI perception verb complements. It shows that the subjectless construction cannot, in all probability, be analysed as a kind of "elliptical" AcI. The semantics of the subjectless complement are rather different, describing events perceived from a telic viewpoint, much like the past participle complement structure common with direct perception verbs in Present Day English (as in: *She heard the sonata played for the first time last week*). A further comparison with participial complements in Old English shows that the latter were used not to describe the perception of events, but rather of states, and that there has been a shift in the function and distribution of the participle structure, presumably to fill the gap left by the loss of V+I.

In "Some Historical Notes on English Negation: *unethes*, *almost* and *hardly*", Susagna Tubau & Richard Ingham analyse a change that can be dated to the latter part of the medieval period, and which distinguishes Modern English from earlier forms of the language. Seeking to explain changing patterns in the distribution of the adverb *unethes* from late Middle English to early Modern English, they show how it undergoes a form of grammaticalisation, from a lexical-content adverb to a negative modifier. However, they also point out that this process alone does not explain the manner in which the distribution of *unethes* changes during the late Middle English period. Unlike its modern equivalent, *hardly*, which can only appear with *any*-series items, *unethes* could appear both with *any*- and with *n*-series elements (*no man*, *nothing*, *none*, etc.) in late Middle English. The authors demonstrate that the facts can be explained by a parameter change–a shift in English negation patterns away from

negative concord, which begins in the later part of the Middle English period and is more or less complete by the end of the 16th century. This shift had far-reaching consequences, affecting certain items which were not themselves inherently negative, such as *unnethes*, whose modified distribution confirms the changing semantics of *n*-words at this time of transition.

The range of topics discussed here will serve to confirm the extent of the changes that took place in the transition from Old- to Middle-English, as well as the range of linguistic variation which characterises those periods. Variation is an omnipresent factor in all the aspects of the history of English discussed here, whether it be form and function variation, semantic variation in the meaning of individual lexical items, or variation in usage or grammatical status. The relationship between variation and change has for a long time been at the centre of investigations in diachronic linguistics, and it is hoped that the papers presented in this book will contribute to our understanding of how languages in general change, and how English has changed in particular.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Acc	Accusative (case)
Dat	Dative (case)
DO	Direct Object
DPR	Direct Perception Report
F	French
Gen	Genitive (case)
Ger.	German
Ice	Icelandic
inf.	infinitive
IO	Indirect Object
L	Latin
ME	Middle English
Nom	Nominative (case)
OE	Old English
PDE	Present-Day English
Pol.	Polish
pres.	present
pret.	preterite
part.	participle
Ppt	Past Participle
V+I	Verb + Infinitive
VOSI	Verb + Object or Subject + Infinitive

PART I

FUNCTIONAL AND REGIONAL VARIATION IN DISCOURSE AND THE LEXICON

VERBS OF GRANTING IN OLD ENGLISH DOCUMENTS

ANNA WOJTYŚ

1. Aims and sources

The main reason for the creation of Old English charters was to grant material possessions and privileges to individuals as well as institutions, most often the Church. Before the loan verb *to grant* entered the English language in the mid-13th century (cf. *Middle English Dictionary* and *Oxford English Dictionary*), legal granting had been expressed with a range of native verbs. The main word employed in Old English documents seems to have been the preterite-present verb *unnan* "to grant" (Wojtyś 2014), which was lost at a later date. However, corpus analysis reveals several other verbs with a similar, or even identical, meaning.

The aim of this study is to identify the verbs of granting in Old English legal texts and to determine their distribution. The research is expected to reveal whether *unnan* was indeed the central item in that category and to identify its potential rivals. The analysis involves a comparison of the frequencies of the attested verbs of granting as well as the contexts in which they were employed. A more general goal of the study is to establish whether any of the native verbs was strong enough to endanger the position of *unnan* and, consequently, contribute to its elimination from the language.

The data for the analysis come from the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (DOEC), containing a complete set of the surviving Old English texts. Among those are various legal documents, most of which were collected by Peter Sawyer in his annotated catalogue *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968). They are thus referred to by the numbers from this catalogue in DOEC and, consequently, also in the present study (e.g. Ch 1487). The corpus for the study consists of 412 texts, which are classified in the following subgroups: writs (112 texts), grants and leases (59 each), charters (52), wills (44), agreements (17), bequests and confirmations (11 each), as well as minor categories (fewer than 10 texts) such as records,

exchanges, letters, disputes and others, containing 88, 817 Anglo-Saxon words altogether.

2. Making up a corpus

The notion of "granting" covers a whole range of actions, including those of "agreeing", "admitting", "permitting/allowing", and "bestowing/conferring" (OED). Yet, since the data for the study come from charters, which "by definition, deal with transfer and grant of property and privilege" (Schwyter 1996: 23), "granting" is understood here as the action of "transfer[ring] (property) from oneself to another person, especially by deed" (OED, s.v. *grant*).

The first step of the analysis involved the identification of all the verbs which conveyed the above-mentioned sense of granting. To establish the list of relevant items, two historical thesauri were consulted, i.e. the *Historical Thesaurus of English* (HTE) and *A Thesaurus of Old English* (TOE). Interestingly, both contain several categories of words whose meanings resemble that of "granting". Out of nine different categories in which the verb *grant* occurs in HTE, two are most relevant for the present study, i.e. "confer by a formal act" (1a) and "grant by charter of deed" (1b), both of which make reference to the use of a formal document, cf.:

(1) a. the mind > having or possession > giving > give [verb (transitive)] > confer > by a formal act ►grant (c1305)
b. society > authority > law > transfer of property > types of transfer > [verb (transitive)] > grant by charter or deed ►grant (1766)

The former, i.e. "confer by a formal act", quite surprisingly includes no synonyms, which suggests that no other items in English have carried that sense. The latter category, i.e. "grant by charter or deed", includes only items attested later than Old English, such as *book* (c1225), *convey* (1495), *assure* (1572), *reassure* (1592), and *deed* (1816), thus making no contribution to the study of Old English. Therefore, the only applicable category proves to be that of "granting or allowing to have":

(2) the mind > having or possession > giving > give [verb (transitive)] > grant or allow to have ►grant (1297)

More general than the two previously-mentioned ones, this category includes 21 items, merely three of which were already present in Old English. These are *i-unne* (OE *(ge)unnan*), *tithe* (OE *ti(g)þian*), and two

verbs formed from the same root, i.e. *lend* and *alene* from OE *lænan* and *alænan*, respectively. The other thesaurus consulted, TOE, contains different categories. That of "grant, bestow, give" lists nine items, only one of which, i.e. *ti(g)þian*, is also found in HTE:

(3) TOE: *agifian, forgiefan, (ge)gearwian, (ge)giefan, (ge)girwan, ondlenian, onleon, (ge)sellan, (ge)tiþian*

Surprisingly, the list does not contain the verb *unnan,* which certainly had that sense in Old English. Yet, *unnan* is placed in TOE in another category, i.e. that of "grant, allow to have, give". Although it is similar to the previous one, i.e. "grant, bestow, give", the verbs included are different, cf.:

(4) TOE: *alætan, aliefan, forlætan, (ge)lætan, (ge)liefan*

Unnan is also one of the verbs categorized under the label "transfer of property–by charter/deed", together with

(5) TOE: *(ge)becan, (ge)bocian, (ge)writan*

Additionally, since the Old English documents under scrutiny also contain wills, the verbs from a much narrower category of "bequeath by will" were examined. These yielded only two items based on the same root, i.e. *becweþan* and *gecweþan.*

Grouping the verbs from all the categories, one can compile a list of 21 items based on 15 roots, i.e. *becan, bocian, cweþan, gearwian, giefan, gifan, lænan, lætan, lenian, leon, liefan, ti(g)þian, sellan, unnan,* and *writan.* Two of them, *becan* and *giefan*, are eliminated from further study, since they are absent from the data examined. Additionally, the study ignores verbs which are used in Old English documents in a sense significantly different from "granting", that is *gearwian,* employed only in the sense of "getting ready, preparing", *lenian*, which denotes "pay back", and *writan*, used exclusively in the sense of "writing, assigning". As regards the remaining items, the preliminary analysis of Old English documents made it possible to group the verbs into subcategories. The first one includes verbs related to granting only for a limited period, i.e. "leasing", where *lætan* and *lænan* belong. The second one contains verbs which refer only to granting permission, i.e. "agreeing" to something, with *liefan* and *ti(g)þian.* These are excluded from the present study since they do not carry the sense of granting a material thing, which is the main

purpose of writing wills and charters. Thus, the analysis focuses on six verbs, i.e. *bocian, cweþan, gifan, leon, sellan,* and *unnan*. Two of these verbs (*leon* and *unnan*) are obsolete at present, while the other four, i.e., *bocian, cweþan* (preceded by the prefix *be-*), *gifan* and *sellan,* survive into Modern English. Since the process of collecting the data was not strictly limited to those items, the analysis also yielded other verbs and phrases used for granting, which are mentioned in section (3).

To determine the sense of the items under scrutiny, two Old English dictionaries were consulted, i.e. Bosworth & Toller (1898), henceforth referred to as B-T, and, whenever possible, *The Dictionary of Old English* (DOE). Interestingly, "granting" is provided as the first sense for only one of the six above-mentioned verbs, i.e. *unnan,* which is defined as "to grant, to give, allow" (B-T). In the case of the remaining verbs, "granting" is listed as a peripheral meaning, with the central one being that of "saying" (*becweþan*) or "giving" (*gifan, sellan*):

(6) becweþan – I. *to say, assert* ... III. *to* BEQUEATH, *to give by will;* legare (B-T)
1. *to speak, say, declare* … 4. *to bequeath* (something *acc.*) (DOE)
bocian – *to give by charter, to charter;* (B-T, DOE)
gifan – *to give;* … IV. *to assign the future ownership of* property, *bequeath* (B-T)
leon – *to lend, grant for a time* (B-T)
sellan – *to give*…I. of voluntary giving, *to put into the possession* of a person, *transfer ownership* from one to (B-T)

In contrast to other verbs, whose meaning was quite general, the verb *bocian,* denoting "giving something by a charter", was more specialized and, as such, had a narrower application. Thus, it is not expected to have appeared in any documents other than charters, like, for instance, wills.

3. Expressing granting

The comparison of different types of Old English documents shows that the verbs of granting appear most frequently in wills. The number of attestations of such verbs in this type of document almost equals that of all other types, with the ratio of 487 to 524 instances, although wills constitute merely about 1/3 of the volume of other texts:

	Verbs of granting	Total number of words	Frequency per 1,000 words
Wills	487 occurrences	21, 087	23.09
Other documents	524 occurrences	67, 730	7.74

Table 1: occurrences of verbs of granting in Old English documents

The most frequent verb of granting in the examined Old English documents proves to be *unnan,* which is attested 555 times in the data, giving an average of 6.25 tokens per one thousand words. The verb is especially common in wills (343 uses), with attestations in that type of document accounting for 62% of all its occurrences in the Old English material. In fact, out of 44 wills, only six lack that verb, whereas in 16 it is the only verb of granting employed.

Unnan is mainly found in its present tense forms, prefixless *an(n)* and *geann*, marked with the prefix *ge-*. The forms were typical of the 1st and 3rd persons singular, the variation in the pronouns being due to the fact that wills were written by scribes, who wrote down either the exact words they heard, hence the use of the 1st person form, or the name of the grantor followed by a 3rd person pronoun and the relevant form of the verb (Hazeltine 1930: xxxi).

In wills, *unnan* is often repeated in consecutive sentences containing lists of grants for various people:

(7) *& ic* ***gean*** *minum wiue & minre dehter healues þæs landes æt Cunningtune to gedale buton þam feower hydon þe ic Æþelrice & Alfwolde* ***gean*** *& þa healuan hyde þe ic* ***gean*** *Osmære minum cnihte. & ic* ***gean*** *Ælfmære & his breðer Ælfstane þara twegra landa to gedale æt Hættanlea & æt Pottune buton þam þe ic Osgare* ***gean.*** *& ic* ***gean*** *Godere þæs þe ic æt Wimunde gebohte*.

"And I **grant** to my wife and my daughter half the estate at Conington, to divide between them, except the four hides which I **grant** to Æthelric and Ælfwold, and the half hide which I **grant** to my servant Osmær. And I **grant** to Ælfmær and his brother Ælfstan, to divide between them the two estates, Hatley and Potton, except what I **grant** to Osgar. And I **grant** to Godhere what I bought from Wimund." (trans. Whitlock 1930: 3)

(Will of Ælfhelm, Ch 1487, 20-25)

It is also noteworthy that the frequency of *unnan* would be even higher if one took into consideration the instances of its omission. In numerous wills, the verb is elided due to its presence in the preceding sentence. Compare, for instance, the passage from the Will of Ælfgifu below. The last two clauses listing grants to the Ætheling and the Queen have no predicators, since, presumably, the intended verb here was *unnan,* present in the previous sentence, listing gifts for the royal lord:

(8) *And ic* ***ann*** *minæn cinæhlafordæ þæs landæs æt Weowungum … and twegea bæagas, æigþær ys on hundtwælftigum mancussum, and anræ sopcuppan and syx horsa and swa fala scylda and spæra. And þam æþelingæ þæs landæs æt Niwanham and anæs beages on þritægum mancussum. And þæra hlæfdigan anæs swyrbeages on hundtweltifgum mancussum and anæs beages on þritegum mancussum and anre sopcuppan.*
"And I **grant** to my royal lord the estates at Wing … and two armlets, each a hundred and twenty mancuses, and a drinking cup and six horses and as many shields and spears. And to the Ætheling the estate at Newnham and an armlet of thirty mancuses. And to the queen a necklace of a hundred and twenty mancuses and an armlet of thirty mancuses, and a drinking cup." (trans. Whitlock 1930: 21)
(Will of Ælfgifu, Ch1484, 15-21)

In other types of documents, *unnan* appears with a radically lower frequency. While the average for wills is 16 words per one thousand, in other texts the ratio is that of three words per one thousand. This suggests that the verb was typically employed in the sense of granting something after one's death, or actually promising such granting after one's death since most wills were "promises that on the death of the donors the donees shall have conveyances" (Hazeltine 1930: xx) rather than factual grants. In contrast, other types of documents transferring property or granting privileges with immediate effect did not employ *unnan* that often, cf.:

unnan	
Type of text	**No. of occurrences**
wills	343 (62%)
writs	86 (15%)
charters	37 (7%)
other	89 (16%)

Table 2: three types of documents containing the highest ratio of *unnan*

In wills, the verb typically (56% of attestations) collocates with the noun *land* (9a), names of particular properties, as well as nouns denoting types and portions of land, such as, for instance, *wudæland* "woodland" (9b), *hida* "hide" or *acre* "acre". In other texts, e.g. writs, it is also followed by words denoting various rights, e.g. the general noun *(ge)riht* "right", as well as phrases listing privileges such as *saca & socna, toll & team, infangeneþeof*, etc., granting the rights to impose payments, to judge offenders, and others (9c). The remaining things that are granted with the use of *unnan* are material possessions such as clothes, tapestries (9d), cups, as well as animals, weaponry and money (9e). Occasionally, an office such as bishopric was given; additionally, there are single cases of granting permission (2 instances), forgiveness, and admittance to the monastery (1 instance each).

(9) a. *And ic* ***an*** *þat* ***lond*** *at Herlawe into sancte Eadmunde …*
"And I grant the land at Herlaw to St. Edmund …"
(Will of Thurstan, Ch 1531)

b. *& þæt* ***wudæland*** *æt Totham þæ min fæder* ***geuþæ*** *into Myresiæ ...*
"… and the woodland at Totham, which my father granted to Mersea …" (Whitlock 1930: 39)
(Will of Ælfflæd, Ch 1486)

c. *ic* ***ann*** *heom ðer* ***ofer sakæ & socne, toll & team, infangeneðeof blodwite & <weardwite> hamsocne*** *&* ***forsteall*** *& ealle ða oðre* ***gerihte*** *ðe to me belimpað.*
"I grant them jurisdiction, toll and vouching, the right to judge in the cases of theft, neglect, assault and the right to fines, and all other rights due to them."
(Ch 1137)

d. *And ic* ***geann*** *Wulfmære minum suna* ***anes heallwahriftes*** *&* ***anes beddreafes****.*
"I grant to Wulfmar, my son, a tapestry and a set of bedclothes."
(Will of Wulfwaru, Ch 1538)

e. *þ is þ ic* ***geann*** *minon hlaforde twa hund* ***mancessa goldes*** *& twa seolforhilted* ***sweord****, & feower* ***hors****, … & þa* ***wæpna*** *þe þærto gebyriað.*
"That I grant to my lord two hundred mancuses of gold, two silver-hilted swords and four horses … and the weapons that he has carried so far."
(Will of Wulfric, Ch 1536)

It is also worth mentioning that the verb is not only employed in sentences with the subject denoting a person, since there are rare cases in which the donor is God (8 tokens). Then, *unnan* may govern an object relating to things different from those mentioned earlier, such as life or reward, as illustrated by the phrase *gif me God bearnes unnan wille* "if God grants me a child", from the Will of Abba (Ch 1482).

In terms of frequency, the next two verbs are *sellan* (195 instances) and *gifan* (140 instances). Both items had the sense of "giving", thus their application was wider than that of *unnan*, and yet they appear in the documents more rarely. As the data show, the two verbs differ in their distribution. *Sellan*, like *unnan*, is most commonly found in wills (38% of its attestations), a type of texts very rarely containing *gifan* (12% of its attestations). *Gifan*, in turn, is rather found in writs (34%) and grants (21%), see Table 3:

sellan		***gifan***	
Type of text	**No. of occurrences**	**Type of text**	**No. of occurrences**
wills	74 (38%)	writs	47 (34%)
grants	29 (15%)	grants	29 (21%)
leases	13 (7%)	wills	17 (12%)
other	79 (41%)	other	47 (34%)

Table 3: the three most frequent types of documents containing *sellan* and *gifan*

Like *unnan*, both verbs are mainly found in the context of giving land. Still, there is a semantic difference between the three verbs; while *unnan* is typically employed to grant something after an owner's death, *sellan* and *gifan* are often found with a wider sense of giving (10a), or possibly, in the case of the former, selling something (10b):

(10) a. *& **ic geann** minon fæder æþelræde cynge … þæs horses þe þurbrand me **geaf** & þæs hwitan horses þe Leofwine me **geaf**.*
"And I grant to my father, king Ethelred, … the horse which Thurbrand gave to me and the white horse which Leofwine gave to me." (transl. Whitlock 1930: 59)
(Will of Ætheling Athelstan, Ch 1503, 30)
b. *& **ic gean** þæt fen þe ælfric me **sealde** into Holme*.
"And I grant to Holme the fen that Ælfric gave to/sold me."
(Will of Bishop Ælfric, Ch 1489, 29)

Yet, both verbs can also convey the same meaning as that of *unnan*. Thus, the choice of one of them seems to be the result of the author's or scribe's personal preference. *Sellan*, for instance, is the prevailing verb in the Will of Alfred Ealdorman, where it is employed 12 times, as compared to merely three occurrences of *unnan* (11a). Occasionally, one of those two verbs is found not only in the same sense and context as *unnan*, but also in close proximity to it (11b):

(11) a. *Ic Elfred dux **sello** Werburge & Alhdryðe uncum gemenum bearne, æfter minum dege, þas lond mid cwice erfe ….*
"I, Earl Alfred, give Werburge and Althryth to our child, after my time, that land with life stock and produce …" (transl. Harmer 1914: 47)
(Will of Alfred, Ealdorman, Ch 1508, 8)
b. *þat is þat ic **an** þat lond at Eskeresthorp into seint Eadmund buten ten acres ic **giue** þer into þere kirke*.
"I grant the land at Eskeresthorp to St. Edmund, except ten acres which I give to the church there."
(Will of Eadwine, Sawyer 1516, 2)

Additionally, *gifan* appears in phrases identical to those which employ *unnan*, such as *I inform you that I have granted/given …*, typically opening the charters, compare (a) and (b):

(12) a. *And ic kyðe eow þæt ic habbe **geunnen** Wulfwolde abbot þæt land æt Ceorlecumbæ …*
"And I inform you that I have granted to abbot Wulfwold the land at Ceorlecumb …"
(King William I and Earl William of Hereford to Bishop Giso, Ch IWm (Hunt 1), 3)

b. *And ich cyþe eow þat ic habbe* ***gegefen*** *Gyso biscop þat land at Merkerun …*
"And I inform you that I have given bishop Giso the land at Merkerun …"
(Writ of Queen Edith, Wells, Ch 1241, 2)

Also, *sellan* and *gifan* often occur as doublets in phrases such as *I give and grant* (13a), or those stating that the person who inherits the land can give it to whomever they please (13b):

(13) a. *ich* ***forgiue*** *and* ***selle*** *for me selfne minre saule to alesnesse minne … alderman Elfstane Alchene idal landes in þare istowe þe is inemned be Chiselburne …*
"I give and grant on my behalf … every part of the estate in the place called Cheselborn to Earl Athelstan …"
(King Æthelred to Ælfstan, Ch 342, 2)
b. *& sealde hyre þæt land æt Eanulfintune to* ***gyfene*** *& to* ***syllenne*** *ðam ðe hire leofest …*
"and gave her the land at Alton to grant and bestow upon whomsoever she pleases …"
(Marriage Agreement of Wulfric, Ch 1459, 4)

Furthermore, the verb *sellan* is employed in the sense of giving something annually as a payment (14a), or giving something in return for something else (14b), thus conveying the idea of exchanging or selling:

(14) a. *… þe mon* ***ælce gere gesylle*** *fiftene scillingas clænes feos to Tettanbyrg …*
"… each year the man should give fifteen shillings of good money to Tetbury …"
(Settlement of a Dispute, Bishop Wærferth and Eadnoth, Ch1446, 38)
b. *Ðonne* ***gesealde*** *Aðelwold biscop his cynehlaforde twa und mancussa goldes & anne sylfrene lefel on fif pundum* ***wiþe niwunge þyses freolses …..***
"Then Bishop Athelwold gave to his royal lord 200 mancuses of gold and a silver cup worth five pounds in return for the renewal of this freedom ..." (transl. Robertson 1956: 95)
(King Edgar to Winchester Cathedral, Ch 806, 13)

Both *gifan* and *sellan* are occasionally employed with God as the subject and then typically refer to granting abstract "concepts" such as understanding, benefits, or life.

The fourth verb to be discussed, *cweþan,* is attested 84 times, which is about one sixth of the frequency of *unnan*. In the majority of cases, the verb appears with the prefix *be-*, as *becweþan,* although there are 4 instances marked with *ge-* (*gecweþan*); still, the two prefixes seem to be semantically irrelevant. The verb *cweþan* is mainly present in wills (53 instances, 63% of all its attestations), although 31 instances are found in other texts, especially writs (12 instances, 14%) and agreements (8 instances, 10%). The basic sense of the verb was that of "saying" (hence the archaic form *quoth* "said" in Modern English), and yet in the Old English material, *cweþan* is found exclusively in the sense of "giving something as inheritance". The possessions bequeathed include land, money, various objects, such as pieces of jewellery, as well as animals and people. Thus, in contrast to other verbs discussed so far, *cweþan* never appears in the sense of giving something non-material. Interestingly, *unnan* and *cweþan* quite often appear in the same documents, for instance the Will of Ælfric Modercope (15a), the Will of Wulfric (15b), cf.:

(15) a. *And ic* ***an*** *into Rameseye six marc silures and þat schal Godric mine brother lesten. ... And ic* ***biquethe*** *to min heregete ane marc goldes and þat schal Godric mine brother lesten*.
"And I grant Ramsey six marks of silver, and that my brother Godric is to pay. ... And for my heriot I bequeath one mark of gold and Godric, my brother, is to pay it." (transl. Whitelock 1930: 73)
(Will of Ælfric Modercope, Ch 1490, 6-10)

b. *& ic* ***geann*** *ælfhelme minan mæge, þæs landes æt Paltertune, þæs ðe Scegð me* ***becwæð***.
"And I grant to Alfhelm, my cousin, the land at Paterton, which Sceg bequeathed me."
(Will of Wulfric, Ch 1536, 34)

or the Will of Æthelric (Ch 1501), which contains *geunnan* throughout in lists of grants (8 instances), whereas in the final sentence it reads: *þæt ælc þara þinga stande þe ic* ***gecweden*** *hæbbe* "that each of the things I have bequeathed".

Similarly to *cweþan,* the verb *bocian* also has limited application. As it denotes "granting by a charter", it is absent from wills, whereas in other documents it appears merely 30 times, most commonly in leases (13 instances, 43% of all its attestations). Note, however, that due to its

specialized meaning, *bocian* is the main verb connected with granting in bounds, the type of text disregarded in the present study since it is typically limited to the description of land. Yet, bounds very often contain the formula saying that this is the title-deed that the king granted to a certain person in perpetuity (*þis is … hida boc/landboc/ … þe … cing gebocode ... on ece yrfe*), which employs *bocian* or its prefixed variant *gebocian.* If such texts were taken into consideration, the frequency of *bocian* would increase considerably and the verb would be placed after *unnan* as the second most common item.

In the texts examined, the verb always stands in collocations with nouns denoting land or its portions (16a), with the sole exception quoted in (16b), where it collocates with the noun *boc* "title-deed":

(16) a. *Ðonne is þæs* ***landes III hida*** *þe Oswald arcebisceop* ***bocað*** *Wynsige his munuce …*
"Archbishop Oswald grants by the charter to his monk Wynsig three hides of land …"
(Archbishop Oswald to Wynsige, Ch 1336, 1)
b. *&* ***þa boc*** *þærto agæf þe Ælfred cining his yldran* ***gebocode****.*
"and has granted them in addition the charter which King Alfred drew up for his ancestors." (transl. Robertson 1956: 111)
(Bishop Æthelwold to Ælfwine, Ch 1376, 12)

In two instances, the verb is found together with *sellan*, which results in redundancy since the action of giving/granting is thus expressed twice. Presumably, the addition of *bocian* is to emphasise that granting has legal force, confirmed by a document:

(17) a. *Se cyning* ***sealde*** *&* ***gebocade*** *Wullafe fif sulung landes …*
"The king gave Wullafe five ploughlands and confirmed it by charter …"
(King Æthelberht to Wulflaf, Ch 328, 3.3)
b. *Ða* ***gesealde*** *se cyng &* ***gebecte*** *þæt land æðelstane ealdormenn ...*
"Then the king gave the estate and confirmed it by charter to Earl Æthelstan …" (transl. Robertson 1956: 91)
(Record of a Dispute over Lands Purchased by Archbishop Dunstan, Ch 1447, 24)

As regards the last verb from the list, *leon,* only one instance of its use has been identified, found in the Will of Abba:

(18) *Ærest ymb min* ***lond*** *þe ic hæbbe, & me God* ***lah*** *…*
"In the first place, with regard to the land which I have, and which God gave me …" (transl. Harmer 1914: 40)
(Will of Abba, Ch 1482, 3)

Incidentally, *lah* might be understood here as "granting for a time" or "leasing", since in such contexts verbs of temporary granting are often employed, e.g. *(a)lænan*. Yet, since no adverbial of time is added, the example has been included in the statistics. Obviously, one occurrence does not allow for any conclusions.

Thus, it follows from the study that five of the six verbs discussed have overlapping distributions, so in certain contexts the authors/scribes had a range of words at their disposal. The comparison of various documents sometimes reveals a preference for one of those verbs over the others. For instance, although the most frequent verb in wills is *unnan,* the Will of Archbishop Ælfric (Ch 1488) rather employs the verb *becweþan* (10 instances), whereas the already mentioned Will of Alfred Ealdorman (Ch 1508) is the only one that contains *sellan* in the list of grants. Similar tendencies can be noticed in the charters. Suffice it to say that, for example, one third of all the occurrences of *bocian* are attested in Bishop Oswald's documents.

Out of those six most frequently attested verbs of granting, four have survived until modern times. The item whose meaning has remained most stable is *gifan,* still functioning as the central verb in the sense of "giving". In contrast, its closest synonym, *sellan,* has narrowed its application to denote the action of selling. The next two items, *becweþan* and *bocian,* lost their prototypical sense of "saying" and "granting by charter", respectively, and are now found only to denote passing something to another person after one's death (OED, s.v. *bequeath*), and recording or reserving something (OED, s.v. *book*). Interestingly, even though *becweþan* and *unnan* were used in the same sense in Old English, but with a much higher frequency for *unnan*, the former managed to survive the latter, and *unnan* became obsolete. The remaining item, *leon,* did not survive beyond Old English.

Finally, it needs to be pointed out that in the Old English documents, granting is also expressed with the use of verbs and phrases not mentioned in the thesauri. One such marginal verb identified is *betæcan* (21 occurrences), whose main sense was "to hand over, deliver, give" (DOE), i.e. similar to that of *sellan* and *gifan*: