

## Verbs in Medieval English



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# Verbs in Medieval English

Differences in Verb Choice in Verse and Prose

Michiko Ogura

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*For Yuriko*



## Preface

This is intended to be an introductory study of one aspect of the verbal syntax of Old and Middle English. Though students of philology have long suffered from a lack of good books on syntax, they now have Mustanoja's *Middle English Syntax* (1960), Visser's *Historical Syntax* (1963–73), and last but not least, Mitchell's *Old English Syntax* (1985). It is not my intention to compete with these works but to write a book that is somewhat different in aim and emphasis. Since almost all the major syntactic changes occurred during the medieval period and most of them are in some way or another connected with verbs, it seems important to study those syntactic changes in verbs arising from either competitive or analogical environments among synonyms.

Syntax and semantics are the warp and weft of sentences. When a verb was petrified syntactically, it often came to be archaic and consequently disappeared (e.g. *cweðan*). When a verb was used in various shades of meaning, it sometimes tended in the next stage to be restricted to one or two senses with limited syntactic structures and finally to be replaced by other verbs in the rest of the senses (e.g. *tellan*). From Old English to Middle English, verbs showed growth and decline, conflict of synonyms and replacement in each syntactic pattern and semantic field. This study aims to give an outline of OE and ME uses of verbs, showing the different choice of verbs in verse and prose, and describing the major resulting syntactic changes as clearly as possible.

My thanks are due to Dr. Bruce Mitchell, Fellow Emeritus of St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, for the series of discussions on the content of this work and for detailed information about various books and articles on OE verbs, and to Professor Fred C. Robinson, Yale University, for his helpful advice on several topics. The British Academy and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science have supported me with their grants in completing the research.





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## Table of abbreviations

OE	Old English	IE	Indo-European language
LOE	Late Old English	Gmc	Germanic
EME	Early Middle English	MnG	Modern German
ME	Middle English		
LME	Late Middle English	V	Verb
MnE	Modern English	Aux	Auxiliary
WS	West Saxon	Inf	Infinitive
Goth	Gothic	Adj	Adjective
L	Latin	N	Noun
ON	Old Norse	Pron	Pronoun
OF	Old French	Ptc	Participle
AF	Anglo-French		

<i>BT</i>	Bosworth-Toller's <i>An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary</i>
<i>BTS</i>	Toller's <i>Supplement to BT</i>
<i>BTC</i>	<i>Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda to BT</i>
<i>CHM</i>	Clark-Hall and Meritt's <i>A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>OED 2</i>	The Second Edition of <i>OED</i>
<i>MED</i>	<i>Middle English Dictionary</i> (A–S <sup>12</sup> )
<i>OES</i>	Bruce Mitchell's <i>Old English Syntax</i>
<i>MC1</i>	<i>A Microfiche Concordance to Old English</i>
<i>MC2</i>	<i>A Microfiche Concordance to Old English: The High Frequency Words</i>
<i>DOE</i>	<i>Dictionary of Old English</i> (D, C, B, and Æ)

For Old English works I use the abbreviated titles proposed by Bruce Mitchell, Christopher Ball, and Angus Cameron in 'Short titles of Old English texts' (*ASE* 4 [1975], 207–221 and *ASE* 8 [1979], 331–333), such as *And* for *Andreas*, *Beo* for *Beowulf*, *Guth* for *Guthlac*, *Jul* for

*Juliana*, *PPs* for *The Paris Psalter*, etc.). For Middle English works I follow *MED*, with the exception of Wyc *EV* and *LV* (the Wycliffite Bible, the Earlier Version and the Later Version), *AW* and *AR* (*Ancrene Wisse*, i.e. *Ancr.* [Corp-C], and *Ancrene Riwe* in other MSS), and a few other works specified under 'Texts examined'.



## Texts examined

### Old English poetry

- ASPR*      *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, I–VI. eds. G.P. Krapp and E.V.K. Dobbie. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1931–53.
- Instr*      ‘Instructions for Christians’, ed. J.L. Rosier. *Anglia* 82 (1964), 4–22, and 84 (1966), 74.

### Old English glosses

- Li* and *RuI* (*Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn*)  
*Lindisfarne and Rushworth I* versions of the Gospels in *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke and Saint John*, ed. W.W. Skeat. 1887, 1871, 1874, 1878; rpt. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970.
- PsGlA*      *The Vespasian Psalter*, ed. S.M. Kuhn. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1965.
- PsGlB*      *Der altenglische Junius-Psalter*, ed. E. Brenner. Anglistische Forschungen 23. Heidelberg, 1908.
- PsGlC*      *Der Cambridger Psalter*, ed. K. Wildhagen. *Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa* 7. 1910; rpt Darmstadt: WB, 1964.
- PsGlD*      *Der altenglische Regius-Psalter*, ed. F. Roeder. 1904; rpt. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1973.
- PsGlE*      *Eadwine's Canterbury Psalter*, ed. F. Harsley. EETS, OS 92. London, 1889.
- PsGlF*      *The Stowe Psalter*, ed. A.C. Kimmens. Toronto Old English Series 3. Toronto, 1979.

- PsGIG* *The Vitellius Psalter*, ed. J.L. Rosier. Cornell Studies in English 42. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1962.
- PsGIH* *The Tiberius Psalter*, ed. A.P. Campbell. Ottawa: Univ. of Ottawa Press, 1974.
- PsGII* *Der Lambeth-Psalter, I. Text und Glossar*, ed. U. Lindelöf. Acta Societatis Scientiarum Fennicae, Tom. 35, No. 1. Helsinki, 1909.
- PsGIJ* *Der altenglische Arundel-Psalter*, ed. G. Oess. AF 30. Heidelberg, 1910.
- PsGIK* *The Salisbury Psalter*, eds. C. Sisam and K. Sisam. EETS, OS 242. London, 1959.
- PsGIL* 'Der altenglischen Glossen im Bosworth-Psalter', ed. U. Lindelöf. *Mémoires de la Société Néophilologique de Helsingfors* 5 (1909), 139–231.
- PsGLM* *The Blickling Glosses in The Blickling Homilies*, ed. R. Morris. EETS, OS 58, 63, 73. rpt. London 1967, pp. 253–263.

## Old English prose

- CP(H)* *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. Henry Sweet. 2 Parts. EETS, OS 45, 50. London, 1871–72.
- Or* *The Old English Orosius*, ed. J. Bately. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980.
- Bo* *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius*, ed. W.J. Sedgefield, 1899; rpt. Darmstadt: WB, 1968.
- GD* *Bischof Waerferths von Worcester Uebersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen*, ed. Hans Hecht. Bib. ags. Prosa 5. Leipzig: Georg H. Wigand, 1900.
- BenR* *Die angelsächsischen Prosabearbeitungen der Benediktinerregel*, ed. Arnold Schröer. Bib. ags. Prosa 2. 1885–88; rpt. Darmstadt: WB, 1964.

- Bede*      *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. T. Miller. EETS, OS 95, 96, 110, 111. rpt. London, 1959–63.
- Solil*      *König Alfreds des Grossen Bearbeitung der Soliloquien des Augustinus*, ed. W. Endter. Bib. ags. Prosa 11. Hamburg, rpt. Darmstadt, 1964.
- BlHom*      *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century*, ed. R. Morris. EETS, OS 58, 63, 73. 1874–80; rpt. London 1967.
- WSCp*      *West Saxon Gospels in The Gospel*, ed. W.W. Skeat (See *Li* and *RuI*).
- ÆCHom*      *The Sermones Catholici, or Homilies of Ælfric*, ed. B. Thorpe. 2 vols. 1843–46; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint, 1971.
- ÆHom*      *Homilies of Ælfric*, ed. J.C. Pope. 2 vols. EETS, OS 259, 260. London, 1967.
- Hex*      *The Old English Version of Hexateuch*, ed. S.J. Crawford. EETS, OS 160. rpt. London, 1969.
- ÆLS*      *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. W.W. Skeat. EETS, OS 76, 82, 94, 114. London, 1881–1900.
- WHom*      *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. Dorothy Bethuram. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957.
- Chron*      *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ed. Charles Plummer. 2 vols. 1892; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952.

## Middle English poetry

- Orm*      *The Ormulum*, ed. R. Holt, with the Notes and Glossary of Dr. R.M. White. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1878.
- Laz*      *Lazamons Brut, or Chronicle of Britain*, ed. Sir F. Madden. 3 vols. 1847; rpt. AMS, 1970.

- StKath*     *Seinte Katerine*, ed. S.R.T.O. d'Ardenne. EETS, SS 7. London, 1981.
- Cursor*     *Cursor Mundi*, ed. R. Morris. EETS, OS 57, 59, 62, 66, 68, 99, 101. 1874; rpt. London, 1961.
- Gawain*     *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. I. Gollancz. EETS, OS 210. London 1940, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, eds. J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon, 2nd. ed. Norman Davis. 1925; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.
- Pearl, Cleanness, Patience*  
               *Early English Alliterative Poems*, ed. R. Morris. EETS, OS 1. 1869; rpt. London, 1934, and *Pearl*, ed. E.V. Gordon. 1963; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.
- LeMorte*     *Le Morte Arthur*, ed. J.D. Bruce. EETS, ES 88. 1903; rpt. London, 1959.
- MorteArth*   *Morte Arthure*, ed. Edmund Brock. EETS, OS 8. 1871; rpt. London, 1961.

## Middle English prose

- Vesp.D.Hom*   *Early English Homilies from the Twelfth Century MS. Vesp. D. xiv.*, ed. Rubie D-N. Warner. EETS, OS 152. 1917; rpt. New York, 1971.
- BodHom*     *Twelfth-Century Homilies in MS. Bodley 343*, ed. A.O. Belfour. EETS, OS 137. 1909; rpt. London, 1962.
- Vesp.A.Hom*   *Vespasian A. 22 Homilies in Old English Homilies*, ed. R. Morris. EETS, OS 34, pp. 217–244.
- LambHom*   *Lambeth Homilies in Old English Homilies. First Series*, ed. R. Morris. EETS, OS 29, 34. 1886; rpt. New York: Greenwood Press, 1962, pp. 2–159.
- Wohunge*     *Pe Wohunge of ure Lauerd* in *Old English Homilies*, ed. R. Morris. EETS, OS 34, pp. 269–287.
- TrinHom*     *Trinity Homilies in Old English Homilies. Second Series*, ed. R. Morris. EETS, OS 53. London, 1873, pp. 2–219.

- HRood* *History of the Holy Rood-Tree*, ed. A.S. Naier. EETS, OS 103. London, 1894.
- HMeið* *Hali Meidenhad*, ed. F.J. Furnivall. EETS, OS 18. London, 1922.
- StMarh* *Seinte Marharete*, ed. F.M. Mack. EETS, OS 193. London, 1934.
- StJul* *Pe Liflade ant te Passiun of Seinte Iulienne*, ed. S.R.T.O. d'Ardenne. EETS, OS 248. London, 1961.
- SWard* *Sawles Warde in Old English Homilies*. EETS, OS 34, pp. 245–267.
- AW* *Ancrene Wisse edited from MS. Corpus Christi College Cambridge 402*, ed. J.R.R. Tolkien. EETS, OS 249. London, 1962.
- AR (Nero)* *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle edited from Cotton Nero A. xiv*, ed. Mabel Day. EETS, OS 225. 1952; rpt. London, 1975.
- AR (Titus)* *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle edited from Cotton MS. Titus D. xviii*, ed. F.M. Mack. EETS, OS 252. London, 1963.
- AR (Cleo)* *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle edited from B.M. Cotton MS. Cleopatra C. vi*, ed. E.J. Dobson. EETS, OS 267. London, 1972.
- AR (Pepys)* *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle edited from Magdalene College Cambridge MS. Pepys 2498*, ed. A. Zettersten. EETS, OS 274. London 1976.
- Wyc (EV, LV)* *The Holy Bible .. by John Wycliffe and his Followers*, eds. J. Forshall and F. Madden. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1850.
- Malory* *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, ed. E. Vinaver. 3 vols. 2nd. ed. 1947; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.



# Chapter 1

## Introduction to verbal syntax

This is an introductory chapter on verb forms and verbal rections. First I discuss the morphological rules and then exceptions and ambiguous forms, which may represent analogy or levelled inflections from the very early stage of Old English.

### 1. Inflections

#### 1.1. Strong verbs

The combination of the Indo-European five grades, i.e. normal grade (*e*), degré de fléchi (*o*), third or zero grade ( $\emptyset$ ), extended grade ( $\tilde{e}/\tilde{o}$ ), and reduced grade ( $\partial$ ), plus a vowel or a constant produces a series of vowel changes, i.e. gradation or ablaut. The seven classes of Old English strong verbs are characterised by seven different series of vowel changes, in which the last class, class VII, is an exception, the evidence being restricted to Gothic and early Old English. The following diagram shows the series of vowel changes with representatives of each class.

	<i>Class</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Pret.Sg.</i>	<i>Pret.Pl.</i>	<i>P.P.</i>
I	IE	e + i	o + i	– + i	– + i
	Gmc	$\bar{i}$	ai	i	i
	Goth	ei	ái	i	i
	OE	$\bar{i}$	ā	i	i
	e.g.	drīfan	drāf	drifon	drifen
II	IE	e + u	o + u	– + u	– + u
	Gmc	eu	au	u	o
	Goth	iu	áu	u	u
	OE	ēo	ēa	u	o
	e.g.	crēopan	crēap	crupon	corpen

	<i>Class</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Pret.Sg.</i>	<i>Pret.Pl.</i>	<i>P.P.</i>
III					
(1)	IE	e+n+Cons	o+n +Cons	—+n+Cons	—+n+Cons
	OE	i+n+Cons	a+n+Cons	u+n+Cons	u+n+Cons
	e.g.	singan	sang	sungon	sungen
(2)	IE	e+l+Cons	o+l+Cons	—+l+Cons	—+l+Cons
	OE	e+l+Cons	ea+l+Cons	u+l+Cons	o+l+Cons
	e.g.	helpan	healp	hulpon	holpen
(3)	IE	e+r/h+Cons	o+r/h+Cons	—+r/h+Cons	—+r/h+Cons
	OE	eo+r/h+Cons	ea+r/h+Cons	u+r/h+Cons	o+r/h+Cons
	e.g.	weorpan	wearp	wurpon	worpen
		feohtan	feaht	fuhton	fohten
IV	IE	e+r , l, m	o+r, l, m	ē+r, l, m	ə+r, l, m
	Gmc	e	a	ǣ	o
	Goth	i	a	ē	u
	OE	e+r, l, m	æ+r, l, m	ǣ+r, l, m	o+r, l, m
	e.g.	beran	bær	bæron	boren
		stelan	stæl	stælon	stolen
	cf.	niman	nam	nōmon	numen
			nōm	nāmon	
V	IE	e+Cons	o+Cons	ē+Cons	e+Cons
	Gmc	e	a	ǣ	e
	Goth	i	a	ē	i
	OE	e	æ	ǣ	e
	e.g.	sprecan	spræc	sprǣcon	sprecen
VI	IE	o+Cons	ō+Cons	ō+Cons	o+Cons
	Gmc	a	ō	ō	a
	Goth	a	ō	ō	a
	OE	a	ō	ō	a
	e.g.	scacan	scōc	scōcon	scacen
VII	Goth	ē	aí	aí	ē
		ai	aí	aí	ai
	OE	x	ēo	ēo	x
			ē	ē	
	e.g.	cnāwan	cnēow	cnēowon	cnāwen
		lāetan	lēt	lēton	lāeten



Class I includes many ordinary verbs, such as *bīdan*, *rīdan*, *rīsan*, *scīnan*. There are synonyms for 'to go': *gewītan*, (*a*)*sfigan*, *līðan*, *scrīðan* (famous for Grendel's walk); and we may include *rīdan* in a wider sense of the word, while *gān* is an anomalous verb and *gangan* belongs to class VII.

Class II includes *cēowan*, *scēotan*, and with a single vowel *ū* instead of *ēo*, *būgan* and *scūfan*, and with the consonant change in Pret.Pl. and P.P., *cēosan* (*cēas*, *curon*, *coren*), *lēosan* (*lēas*, *luron*, *loren*), to name a few.

Class III has three subclasses, (1) *n* + Cons., (2) *l* + Cons., and (3) *r* or *h* + Cons. Under (1) are found *bindan*, *drincan*, *swimman*, *irnan* (which shows the result of metathesis of Gmc *\*rinnan* but undergoes another metathesis later), *onginnan* (later supplanted by *beginnan*), *gelimpan* (which gives way to *happen* in the course of Middle English), and *winnan* (which means 'to strive' or 'to fight' in Old English, rather than 'to win'). Under (2) we have *gielðan*, *giellan*, *meltan*, and *swelgan*, and under (3), *weorðan* with the consonant change in the Pret.Pl. and the P.P. (*wearð*, *wurdon*, *worden*). *Berstan* (which was made by a metathesis of Gmc *\*brestan*), *frignan* (a Northumbrian counterpart of *ācsian*), and *murnan* also belong to this class.

Class IV includes some verbs with modified vowel sequence, such as *niman* and *cuman*; the nasal caused Gmc *e* to change to *i* in the former, and *\*cweman* was supplanted by *\*cwuman* in the latter. In *Bede*, such spellings as *cwom* and *cuoom* are attested.

Class V includes verbs whose stems end in a single consonant which is not a liquid or a nasal; thus *brecan*, a class-IV verb, should originally be in this class. Other verbs familiar to us are *metan* (in the sense 'to measure'), *giefan*, *gietan*, and *tredan*, and with the consonant change, *cweðan* (*cwæð*, *cwædon*, *cweden*). Other important verbs with irregular forms are *etan* (*æt*, *æton*, *eten*), *sēon*, (*seah*, *sāwon*, *sewen*),<sup>1</sup> and *sittan* (*sæt*, *sæton*, *seten*).

Class VI includes *dragan*, *scafan*, *standan*, *wascan*, *weaxan*, and *faran* (cf. a weak verb *fēran*). Verbs with contracted forms or umlauted vowels in the Pres. are *slēan* (meaning 'to strike'), (*ā*)*hebban*, *steppan*, *swerian* (cf. a weak verb *andswarian*), and *scieppan*.

Class VII originally consisted of “reduplicating verbs”; they were so called because in Gothic the preterit forms of these verbs were made by repeating the initial consonant, adding *ai*, and prefixing them to the preterit stem, e.g. *slēpan*: *saíslēp*, *hātan*: *haihēt* (hence an Old English variant form of *heht*).<sup>2</sup>

In the course of Middle English, the four principal forms are simplified into three, i.e. either the Pret.Sg. and the Pret.Pl. or the Pret.Pl. and the P.P. have fallen together, as is perceived in the following diagram. (I select some forms as representatives to save space; for other attested forms, see *MED*.)

I	drīfen driven	drōf(fe) drove drāf(e) drēve drīvede	driven drēven drōven drīveden	drifen driven
II	shēten shōten	shēt shette shotte shāte (EM)	shōten shotten	shōten shotten
III				
(1)	singen	sang song sunge	sungen songen	sungen songen
(2)	helpen	halp he(a)lp holpe hulpe (helped)	hulpen holpen helpen (helpeden)	holpen hulpen help (helped)
(3)	fighten	feht fa(u)ght	fuhten fo(u)ghten fa(u)ghten	fughten fo(u)ghten fouten
IV	bēren beiren	bār bēr beir bōr	bēren bāren bōren	bōren

	stēlen	stāl stōle	stālen stōlen	stōlen
	comen	cām cōm	cōmen cāmen	comen cume
V	speken specken	spēk spōke spǣk(e)	spēken spōken spāken	spēken spōken
VI	shāken	shōk scōk (N)	shōken shāken (N)	shāken shāked
	knouen kneuen (M) knaue (N)	kneue kneoue (WM&S) kneouede (M)	kneuen cneowen	knouen kneue (M&K) knaun (N) knoued (M&S)
	lēten lāten	let lette	lēten lāten	lēten letten lāten

## 1.2. Weak verbs

Weak verbs are divided into three classes, according to their prehistoric suffixes (i) *-j-* / *-i-*, (ii) *-ōj-* / *-ō-*, and (iii) *-ai-*. In the first class we find *dēman*, *cēpan*, *fyllan*, *settan* (cf. a strong verb *sittan*, class V), *lādan*, *mētan*, *wendan*, *nemnan*, *hyngran*, *lecgan*, etc. A group of verbs should also be included, which show the effect of umlaut only in the Pres. but not in the Pret. or P.P., e.g. *tellan* (denoting more frequently 'to count' or 'to account' than 'to tell'), *sellan* (meaning 'to give'), *cwellan*, *bycgan*, *rācan*, *tācan*, *sēcan*, *wyrcan*, *þencan*, *þyncan*, and *bringan* (var. *bregan*).

The second class includes *ācsian* (var. *āscian*), *ætēowian*, *baðian*, *bodian*, *clipian*, *gaderian*, *hopian*, *leornian*, *līcian*, *lōcian*, *lufian*, *scēawian*, *talian* ('to esteem'; cf. *tellan* in the first class), etc.

Under the strong influence of the first and the second classes, most of the third-class weak verbs ceased to have their distinct paradigms, with the exception of *habban*, *libban*, *secgan*, *hycgan*, *frēogan* ('to free'), and *prēagan* ('to rebuke').

We must note that a considerable number of verbs got weak conjugations in Middle English (some as early as in Old English), e.g. class-II verbs like *crēopan*, *būgan*, *lēosan*; class-III verbs like *gieldan*, *giellan*, *gielpa*n, *helpa*n, *melta*n; class-V verbs like *wreca*n; class-VI verbs like *hliehhan*, *hebban*; class-VII verbs like *slāpan*, but many more verbs went out of use before long.

### 1.3. Preterit-present verbs

A group of verbs, which originally had belonged to one of the classes of strong verbs, began to use the preterit forms for the present forms with the sense of the present tense, and consequently adopted new weak preterit forms. Of the following twelve Old English verbs, *āgan*, *cunnan*, *magan*, *mōtan*, and *sculan* survive in the Modern English modal auxiliaries *ought*, *can*, *may*, *must*, and *shall*, with morphological, semantic, and slight syntactic changes.

<i>Orig. Class</i>	<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Pres.3 Sg.</i>	<i>Pres.Pl.</i>	<i>Pret.3 Sg.</i>
I	āgan	āh	āgon	āhte
I	witan	wāt	witon	wisse, wiste
II	dugan	dēag	dugon	dohte
III	cunnan	cann, conn	connon	cūpe
III	durran	dearr	durron	dorste
III	þurfan	þearf	þurfon	þorfte
III	unnan	ann, onn	unnon	ūpe
IV	munan	man, mon	munon	munde
IV	sculan	sceal	sculon	sceolde
V	magan	mæg	magon	meahte, mihte
V	(ge)nugan	neah	nugon	nohte
VI	mōtan	mōt	mōton	mōste

These verbs change their forms in Middle English as follows.<sup>3</sup>

<i>Infinitive</i>	<i>Pres.3 Sg.</i>	<i>Pres. Pl.</i>	<i>Pret.3 Sg.</i>
owen/ōzen	owe	owe(n)	ahte/o(u)zte
witen	wōt	wite(n)	wiste
dugen	dowe	dowe(n)	douhte
cunnen	can/con	cunne(e)/cunneþ	cūpe/coude
durren	dar	dar	durste
þurfen	þarf	þurfe(n)	þurfte
	mon		mo(u)nde
	shal	shule(n)	sholde
	mai	mowen	mīzte/muhte
	mōt	mōte(n)	moste

#### 1.4. Anomalous verbs

*Bēon/wesan*, *dōn*, *gān*, and *willan* show conjugations peculiar to the respective verbs and are classified as anomalous verbs. They are so independent that the simplest way of explaining their inflections is to show paradigms for each of the four verbs. The paradigm of *bēon/wesan* consists of three Indo-European roots, i.e. *\*bheu*, *\*es/os*, *\*wes/wos*. The preterit forms of *gān* are later supplanted by those of *wendan*, a first-class weak verb. Unlike all the other Modern English modal auxiliaries, *willan*, MnE *will*, was not a preterit-present verb in origin.

##### *Bēon/wesan*

<i>Indicative</i>			<i>Subjunctive</i>	
	<i>Pres.</i>	<i>Pret.</i>	<i>Pres.</i>	<i>Pret.</i>
<i>Sg. 1</i>	eom/bēo	wæs	<i>Sg. 1,2,3</i>	sīe/bēo
2	eart/bist	wære		wære
3	is/biþ	wæs		
<i>Pl.</i>	sindon/sind/sint/ bēoþ/wesaþ	wæron	<i>Pl.</i>	sīen/bēon wæren
<i>Imperative 2 Sg.</i> bēo/wes; <i>2 Pl.</i> bēoþ/wesaþ				
<i>Infinitive</i> bēon/wesan; tō bēonne, tō wesanne (N) <sup>4</sup>				
<i>Pres.Part.</i> bēonde/wesende				