ANNA WOJTYŚ
(UNIWERSYTET WARSZAWSKI, WARSZAWA)

THE VALUE OF THE SOURCES SURVIVING IN MORE THAN ONE VERSION FOR STUDIES ON OBSOLETE WORDS: THE CASE OF NON-SURVIVING PRETERITE-PRESENTS IN ENGLISH

ABSTRACT

The main goal of the paper is to show the value of texts preserved in more than one version for studies aimed at identifying reasons for the demise of words. The data selected is a set of six non-surviving English preterite-present verbs. The analysis of the material shows that mediaeval manuscripts often exhibit orthographic and morphological variation as well as differ in lexemes. Such differences prove to be useful for the search of factors leading to the elimination of the verbs in question.

KEYWORDS: demise, obsolescence, manuscripts, mediaeval, preterite-present

STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest ukazanie wartości tekstów, które przetrwały w więcej niż jednej wersji, w badaniach nad przyczynami zaniku słów. Wybrany materiał obejmuje sześć nieużywanych obecnie angielskich czasowników z grupy preterite-present. Przeanalizowane średniowieczne manuskrypty często wykazują różnice ortograficzne i morfologiczne, a także różnią się użytymi leksemami. Różnice te są cennym materiałem dla badań nad czynnikami, które spowodowały zanik tych czasowników.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: archaizmy, manuskrypty, preterite-present, wychodzenie z użycia, przyczyny

PRETERITE-PRESENT VERBS IN ENGLISH

The group of preterite-presents was a small class already in the Old English period, when it contained merely 12 verbs. The items were distinct morphologically from other verbs, the most significant difference being the attachment of past endings to signal present tense. But it was also a group of considerable importance for the development of English grammatical system, since half of those verbs (*āgan*, *cunnan*, **durran*, *magan*, **mōtan*, **sculan*) evolved into modals or semi-modals (*ought*, *can/could*, *dare*, *may/might*, *must*, and *shall/should*). The remaining ones,

i.e. *dugan 'to avail', munan 'to remember', *-nugan 'to suffice', *þurfan 'to need', unnan 'to grant', and witan 'to know', were eliminated from the language mostly in the mediaeval period, the last item still occurring in Modern English.

Characteristically, the verbs that survived have received much more attention in linguistic literature, mostly analysing their evolution towards modality, than those that were lost, which are typically only briefly mentioned in historical grammars. The singular sources that discuss the elimination of preterite-presents adopt various perspectives. Lightfoot (1979: 109–110) assumes that "the loss of all the preterite-presents except the pre-modals" was one of the series of unconnected changes in English leading to the recognition of the group of modal verbs and assumes that "it was an accident that in this inflectional class only the pre-modals survived". Thus, he treats the reduction of the class of preterite-presents as an accident, but the one that served a specific purpose. Nagle and Sanders (1998) claim that the process of the elimination of preterite-presents was gradual since each of those verbs was lost independently. Their study also includes plausible reasons for the loss of three preterite-presents: *dugan and munan, whose modal senses were identical to those of other preterite-presents, and *þurfan, which seems to have fallen victim to the rivalry with the verb neden (PDE need). On consulting other sources mentioning non-surviving preterite-presents (Denison 1993; Molencki 2002, 2005; Porto 2005; Eitelmann 2013), one can compile a list of causes for their demise, which includes four different factors:

- the convergence of modal meaning of some non-surviving verbs with other preterite-presents, which was the case of *dugan, whose modal meaning was the same as that of magan (PDE may), and munan, which became a synonym to *sculan (PDE shall) and *mōtan (PDE must);
- the rivalry with other items, important especially in the case of *þurfan, which competed with the verb neden;
- the merger of forms of two distinct verbs, noted in the case of *þurfan and *durran (PDE dare), which led to the confusion of the two items;
- and the limited distribution, presumably a crucial factor for *þurfan, which occurred mostly in non-assertive contexts accompanied by the infinitive.

SOURCES SURVIVING IN MORE THAN ONE VERSION

All the above-mentioned factors, which presumably contributed to the loss of some preterite-presents, were examined during the preparation of the detailed study on the demise of *dugan, munan, *-nugan, *þurfan, and unnan (Wojtyś 2017). A thorough analysis of mediaeval data revealed numerous differences between manuscripts of some texts. To start with, manuscripts can differ in the choice of verbs, so the preterite-present found in one is sometimes replaced by another verb

in a different version. But even when the same preterite-present verb is found, the forms used are rarely identical. The variants usually differ in spelling and often also in morphological shape. Occasionally, the context in which the item is placed varies.

Some variants of preterite-presents are listed in historical grammars (cf. e.g. Sievers 1903; Brunner 1963; Hogg/ Fulk 2011), but only if they represent dialectal variation. All other types of manuscript differences are disregarded not only in grammars, but also in the consulted studies devoted to preterite-presents (e.g. Lightfoot 1974, 1979; Nagle/ Sanders 1998; Molencki 2002, 2005; Porto 2005; Wawrzyniak 2011; Eitelmann 2013). This is not surprising since manuscript variations, especially if numerous, often impede the discussion because their detailed presentation is space-consuming and demands the introduction of many, otherwise ignored, details. Moreover, variants are extremely difficult to handle in statistics so any statistical analysis must cover only the selected forms and disregard others, the solution also adopted in my study on obsolete preterite-presents. However, it seems that what is typically recognized as an obstacle can be interpreted as an advantage and the data from the sources surviving in more than one version can help reveal factors that provoke the demise of words from the language, as is the case with preterite-presents.

DATA

The data for the study come from four electronic corpora of Old and Middle English texts: the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (3,033,142 words), containing all surviving texts from the period, as well as *The Innsbruck Corpus of Middle English Prose* (5,949,435 words), *A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* (650,000 words), and the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse* (approx. 15 million words). The corpora contain numerous texts preserved in more than one version, the most noteworthy case being that of Old English glosses to Psalms, whose 12 manuscripts (Vsp A.1, Jun 27, Cmb Ff.1.23, Roy 2 B.V, Trin-C R.17.1, Stw 2, Vit. E.18, Tbr C.6, Lam 427, Arun 60, Sal 150, and Add. 37517) are found in the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*. All such sources have been searched for six obsolete preterite-presents (**dugan*, *munan*, **-nugan*, **þurfan*, *unnan*, and *witan*) and whenever one of them was attested, all other versions of the text were checked to identify the item used. Apart from above-mentioned Psalms, the present research is based on *Poema Morale* (7 manuscripts), *Sir Beves of Hampton* (6 manuscript), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (5 manuscripts), *Ancrene Riwle* (5 manuscripts), *Cursor Mundi* (5 manuscripts), Mannyng's *Chronicle of England* (edition based on 2 manuscripts), *The Owl and the Nightingale* (2 manuscripts), *Piers the Plowman* (edition based on 7 manuscripts) and *South English Legendary* (2 manuscripts). From those, only the occurrences repeated in more than one

manuscript were taken into consideration, which gives 10 instances of *dugan*, 63 of *munan*, 61 of *þurfan*, 14 of *unnan*, and 51 of *witan*, with, regrettably, no examples of the verb *-nugan*.

EVIDENCE: SHAPE AND FORMS

Manuscript differences include those that are of importance for various types of diachronic studies. Purely orthographic differences, such as, e.g. the spelling of the dental fricative /θ/ (*þar* vs. *thar*) or the vowel /u/ (*unnen* vs. *vnnen*), are significant only for research on graphemics. Spelling may also reflect phonological developments, e.g. signal the loss of final vowels (*mone* vs. *mon*) or the elimination of the OE prefix *ge-* (*ivnnen* vs. *unnen*), some of which result in dialectal variation, e.g. lack of raising of OE /ɑː/ in Northern areas (hence N *wat* vs. S *wot*). Such data are important for diachronic phonology and dialectology. As regards the studies on the demise of words, noteworthy are variants that show morphological differences, since such variation often reveals factors that might have had an impact on the later loss of words.

In the case of obsolete preterite-presents, differences in shape prove that most items appeared, albeit rarely, in regularized forms. Such forms are attested in the data for *þurfan*, *witan*, *munan* and *unnan*.

(1) (a) …god min ðu earð forðon goda minra ðu ne **biðearft**. (Psalms, Vsp A.1, 15.1)
…god min eart þu forþon goda minra þu ne **beþearfst**. (Psalms, Cmb Ff.1.23, 15.2)
[…you are my God, so you do not need my goods.]

(b) Þe Holi rode þat was ifounde; as ȝe **wite** in may… (*South English Legendary*, Hrl 2277, l.363)
Þe Holi rode was ifounde; as ȝe **witeþ** in may… (*South English Legendary*, Ashm 43, l.363)
[The Holy Cross that was found, as you know, in May…]

(c) Ætclifað min tunge minum gomum gif ic ne **gemon** ðin… (Psalms, Jun 27, 136.6)
Geclyfie tunge min gomum minum gif ic ne **gemune** ðin… (Psalms, Roy 2B.V, 136.6)
[Cleave my tongue to my jaws if I do not remember you…]

(d) "Ich **an** wel," cwað þe niȝtegale, (*The Owl and the Nightingale*, Clg A.9, l.1739)
"Ich **vnne** wel," queþ þe Nihtegale, (*The Owl and the Nightingale*, Jes-O 29, l.1739)
['I give my consent,' says the nightingale,]

Each of the four verbs is used in the form typical of preterite-presents in the first quotation, whereas in the second it is conjugated like all other verbs in English. Thus, *þurfan*, marked here with the prefix *be-*, attaches the ending *-st* for the 2sg (*beþearfst*), while *witan* takes *-þ* in 3sg (*witeþ*), the endings normally absent from the paradigm of preterite-presents. The other two verbs, *munan* and *unnan*, are attested without a typical ablaut and with the 1sg ending *-e* (*gemune* and *vnne*). Obviously, such uses of preterite-present verbs in the regularized forms have been long noticed by historical linguists (cf. e.g. Brunner 1963: 82–83 or Mincoff 1972: 166–167,

292), but the fact that such forms, even if only sporadically, are encountered in texts whose other manuscripts contain forms typical of preterite-presents is the best proof that the two types of forms could be used in identical contexts.

The regularized variants are found in glosses, where together with typical preterite-present forms they serve as English equivalents for one Latin item:

> (2) (a) **Memento** congregationis tuæ quam creasti ab initio,
> **Gemun** gesomnunge þinre þa þu gescope of frymðe… (Psalms, Roy 2 B.V, 73.2)
> **Gemyne** gesamnungæ þinre þæ ðu gesceope from frumæn… (Psalms, Trin-C R.17.1, 73.2)
> [Remember your congregation that you created from the beginning…]
>
> (b) **Memorare** domine que mea substantia…
> **Gemun** hwylc min sped… (Psalms, Roy 2 B.V, 78.8)
> **Gemyne** drihtyn hwæt min sped… (Psalms, Cmb Ff.1.23, 88.48)
> [Remember, Lord, what my substance is…]

In the quoted examples, the same Latin verbs, i.e. *memini* 'to remember, recollect' (2a) and *memoro* 'to bring remembrance, remind, mention' (2b), are in one manuscript translated into English with the usage of a typical subjunctive form of *munan* (*gemun*) and in another with the regularized one (*gemyne*). Such examples demonstrate that the two types of forms carried identical sense and could be used interchangeably. Interestingly, all instances of the above-mentioned forms *memento* and *memorare*, as well as those of *memineris* and *reminiscere*, whenever used in more than one version of Psalms (10 instances altogether), are always realized with regularized and non-regularized variants. This suggests that the preterite-presents were not always recognized as a group with special characteristics. More importantly, regularized forms such as *gemyne* merged with those of another verb present in the language, i.e. *gemynan*, which also had the sense 'to remember, remind' (Bosworth and Toller 1898). And since English contained also other verbs of alike shape and sense, i.e. *gemanian*/ *gemonian* 'to admonish, remind, remember' and *gemonan* 'to remember' (Bosworth and Toller 1898), in the case of some forms found in the mediaeval sources (e.g. *gemonþ*), it is impossible to decide whether they should be treated as regularized variants of the preterite-present *munan* or the typical conjugated forms of one of those other verbs. This shows that there must have been some confusion concerning the verbs of remembering and recalling, which might have led to the willingness to adopt some other item to render the sense. Hence, the verb *remember*, which entered the language in the mid-14th century (OED), fell on the fertile ground.

The data examined also display another merger of forms, in this case those of two preterite-presents. With time, the verb **þurfan* dropped the final fricative *-f* in the present singular forms *þarf* and *þerf*, thus creating *þar* and *þer*:

> (3) (a) ne **þearf** þu noht dreden þe attri neddre of helle. (*Ancrene Riwle*, Corp-C 402, p.71–72)
> ne **ðer** tu nout dreden ðe attrie neddre of helle. (*Ancrene Riwle*, Nero A.14, p.60)
> [You do not need to dread the poisonous serpent of hell.]

(b)   He haþ no kynde þat vs **þarf** drede,… (Mannyng's *Chronicle*, Lamb 131, l.7237)
He haþ no kynde þat vs **þar** drede,… (Mannyng's *Chronicle*, Petyt 511, l.7237)
[He does not have a nature we need to dread,…]

With the emergence of such *f*-less variants, forms of *þurfan began to resemble those of *durran, which led to the confusion between the two preterite-presents. One piece of evidence for such confusion is the appearance of a form combining features of both verbs, i.e. *darf*, with initial <d> like in *durran and final <f> like in *þurfan. Its earliest attestation in the language is found in two manuscripts of *Poema Morale* (Dig 4 and McC 123). Note that other versions (e.g. Eg 613 or Jes-O 29) contain the regular from *þarf*:

(4)   Þer ne **darf** man ben ofdred… (*Poema Morale*, Dig 4, f98v)
Vor þar ne **darf** he ben afered… (*Poema Morale*, McC 123, f115v)
For þer ne **þarf** he ben of-drad… (*Poema Morale*, Eg 613, f7v)
vor þer ne **þarf** he beon adred… (*Poema Morale*, Eg 613, f169v)
[Because he does not need to be afraid...]

The second proof for the *þurfan – *durran confusion is the fact that the forms of the two verbs are equivalents in different manuscripts of the same texts. The forms encountered are those of present singular (5a), past plural (5b), and 2sg contracted with the personal pronoun *þu* 'you-sg' (5c):

(5)   (a)   In oþer stede **þar** hym nought drede,… (Mannyng's *Chronicle*, Petyt 511, l.9340)
In oþer stede **dar** hym nought drede,… (Mannyng's *Chronicle*, Lamb 131, l.9340)
[In another place he does not need/ dare to dread,…]
(b)   Whan cristenemen miȝte þuder stele; hi ne **þerste** vor doute… (*South English Legendary*, Ashm 43, l.199)
Wenne cristenemen miȝte þuder stele; hi ne **dorste** vor doute… (*South English Legendary*, Hrl 2277, l.199)
[When Christian men could go there secretly, they did not need/dare to doubt…]
(c)   **Tharst** þow neuere care for corne… (*Piers the Plowman*, Rawl.38, 14.57)
Darstow neuere care for corne… (*Piers the Plowman*, Laud Misc. 581, 14.57)
[You need/dare never care for crop…]

From 319 identified uses of *þurfan in the mediaeval corpora, 37 forms point at the confusion between the two verbs. The number may seem small but one needs to remember that in the corpora numerous texts are found in one manuscript only and cannot contribute to the discussion about the mergers of the two verbs. Therefore, it is believed that the confusion between *þurfan and *durran had at least some influence on the later fates of the two preterite-presents. Note that such a merger is observed also in other West Germanic languages, cf. G *dürfen* and Du *durven*, whose forms come from one verb while the senses reflect the other. And interestingly enough, from the pair rendering OE *þurfan and *durran, Frisian, Dutch, Low German, and German all preserve only one verb, typically the latter, so it is no surprise that also in English only one of them survived.

EVIDENCE: SYNONYMS

Apart from unlike forms of the same verb, manuscripts of one text often exhibit different lexemes. Such data should not be disregarded since they may reveal synonyms of the verbs in question. And the presence of synonyms in the language is of utmost importance in the studies on the demise of words, since it leads to the competition between the words, which, in turn, influences their frequency (cf., e.g. Bator 2010: 21–22). Thus, the existence of a word of a very close, or even identical, sense, may considerably decrease the usage of a given item and, consequently, lead to its elimination from the language.

From the six obsolete preterite-present verbs, four are substituted by other items in different versions of the same mediaeval text. The verb *dugan is replaced by three items, two of which, *magan* (6a) and *āgan* (6b), are also preterite-presents:

(6) (a)   þai said þat it noght **doght**,… (*Cursor Mundi*, Vsp A.3, l.16538)
           þei seide hit not **mouʒt**… (*Cursor Mundi*, Trin-C R.3.8, l.16538)
           [they said [that] it does not avail…]
     (b)   …& fedde wið hire lutle milc as meiden **deh** to habben. (*Ancrene Riwle*, Corp-C 402, p.133)
           …& fedde wid hire litle milc as meiden **ah** to habben. (*Ancrene Riwle*, Tit D.18, p.89)
           […and fed with her little milk as a maid should have.]

The verb *magan* replaces **dugan* in *Cursor Mundi*, where it is employed in the sense of 'be strong, avail, be efficient' (MED, *mouen* v.3), which was central for **dugan* but rather peripheral for *magan*. The second rival, *āgan*, is attested twice in the data as an equivalent of **dugan* to denote the propriety of behaviour. **Dugan* developed that sense only in the early Middle English period, as the only texts to use it are those from the AB-language (13th century). Thus, it seems that the verb attempted to enter the new semantic field but, as the data from the corpora and dictionaries show, did not succeed in that. The reason that suggests itself is the presence of other frequent verbs expressing propriety in the language, such as the above-mentioned *āgan* and, obviously, it synonym **sculan*.

The third item that is found instead of **dugan* in some manuscripts is, quite surprisingly, the verb *don* 'to do':

(7)   Schome ;; bi þe reade. Ah wel mai **dohen**. (*Ancrene Riwle*, Tit D.18, p.128)
         Scheome ;; is understonden bi þe reade. auh wel mei **don**. (*Ancrene Riwle*, Nero A.14 p.126)
         [Disgrace is [meant] by red. And this may well be so.]

From the whole mediaeval data, *don* is used as an equivalent of **dugan* exclusively in *Ancrene Riwle* in the phrase *wel mei duhen*/*don*. According to MED, **dugan* appears here in the sense of 'to be fitting or proper' (MED, *douen* n.1),

while *don* is "[u]sed as a substitute for a specific verb or verb phrase" (MED, *don* v.1). This would mean that they perform different functions, the former being a lexical verb and the latter appearing as an auxiliary. However, Macaulay (1914: 328 fn. 3) supposes that the phrase is of the type *that will do very well* with *dugan appearing as the result of the confusion of the forms *dow* (from *dugan) and *do* (from *don*), so the phrase could be here translated as 'but that does not matter'. If that was the case, this would suggest that the present form of *dugan could be confused with one of the most frequent verbs in the language, which would be problematic.

The verb *þurfan, already in the Old English period had a rival in *wædlian* 'be poor, needy', as shown by the presence of both items in glosses where they are used as equivalents of the same Latin verb:

(8)   Diuites **eguerunt** et esurierunt inquirentes autem dominum non deficient omni bono.
        Welige **beþorfton** & hy hyngredon ða secendan dryhten ne geteoriað eallum gode. (Psalms, Roy 2 B.V, 33.11)
        Welige **wædlodon** & hingrydon secynde soðlice drihtyn ne aspringað ænigum gode. (Psalms, Cmb Ff.1.23, 33.11)
        Welige **beþorfton ł wædlodon** & hy hingredon þa secend/ soðlice drihten ne beoð gewanede eallum gode. (Psalms, Vit. E.18, 33.11)
        [The wealthy needed and suffered hunger; those [truly] seeking Lord do not lack/want any good.]

The passage quoted displays three different translations of L *eguerunt*, the form of the verb *egeo* 'to be needy, to need, want', i.e. with the use of *þurfan, marked with the prefix *be-*, *wædlian*, and also both verbs combined with ł, the symbol denoting 'and/ or'. Thus, *wædlian* must have been treated as a synonym to the preterite-present, since it could replace or complement it. Yet, it does not seem to have much endangered the position of *þurfan in the language, since *wædlian* was the first to disappear as shown by the last quotation from MED dated to the 12th century.

Middle English data exhibits three other items which are used as equivalents of *þurfan: the lexical verb *neden* 'to need' and two verbs that developed into PDE modals, *mōtan*, and *willan*:

(9)   (a)   Fra nu **thar** him namar be ledd,… (*Cursor Mundi*, Vsp A.3, l.13554)
                him **nedis** namare now be led… (*Cursor Mundi*, Frf 14, l.13554)
                [[Now] it is not necessary any longer for him to be led…]
        (b)   **Thurfte** he never after to aske leche,… (*Sir Beves of Hampton*, Chet 8009, l.4219)
                He **neded** neuer aske leche,… (*Sir Beves of Hampton*, Bodl. Lib. Ox, print)
                [He never needed to ask a doctor,…]
        (c)   ʒa forsoth, **thort** na man mare;… (*Cursor Mundi*, Göt Theol 107, l.23443)
                þat for-soþ **muʒt** na man mare... (*Cursor Mundi*, Frf 14, l.23443)
                [That, truly, no man needed more…]
        (d)   On what wise **þar** me not tel… (*Cursor Mundi*, Trin-C R.3.8, l.8393)
                (On quatkin wise **wil** i noght tell,… (*Cursor Mundi*, Vsp A.3, l.8393)
                [In what ways I will not tell,…]

    (e)   þar-of **thurt** him haf na ferli… (*Cursor Mundi*, Vsp A.3, l.11210)
          There-of he **wold** haue no ferly… (*Cursor Mundi*, Frf 14, l.11210)
          [He would have no wonder…]

The first verb, *neden*, almost non-existent in Old English, gained a high frequency in the Middle English period and became the closest synonym to *þurfan (cf. MED), as its use in *Cursor Mundi* (9a) and *Bevis of Hampton* (9b) show. Eventually, it replaced *þurfan as the central item in the field of needing. Quotation (9c) suggests that already in Middle English, the items denoting necessity and compulsion overlapped in use (much like in PDE, cf. e.g. Quirk et al. 1972: 101–102), but, obviously, *þurfan did not stand much chance of moving into the field of obligation as *mōtan* was very strong there. It seems that *þurfan also attempted to develop the uses close to that of *willan* (9de), e.g. appear in hypothetical clauses. But here again it encountered a serious rival in an extremely common item in English.

The verb *munan*, which originally denoted 'to remember', began to acquire the characteristic of a modal verb in the Middle English period. As an auxiliary it could refer to future and appear in subjunctive and conditional constructions, it could also denote compulsion as well as ability (cf. MED). Such a range of uses, made *munan* synonymous to several other items, as, yet again, best shown by different manuscripts of *Cursor Mundi*:

(10) (a)   i wat þai **mon** him sla,… (*Cursor Mundi*, Vsp A.3, l.15980)
           I. wate þai **wil** him sla. (*Cursor Mundi*, Frf 14, l.15980)
           [I know they will slay him.]
      (b)   It **mond** noght leons on þis wise/ Bede til him þus þair seruise. (*Cursor Mundi*, Vsp A.3, l.12359–12360)
           ȝit **wold** noght leones on þis wise/ Bede þus till him þair seruise. (*Cursor Mundi*, Göt Theol 107, l.12359–12360)
           [The lions would not serve him in this manner.]
      (c)   Wit herd dintes **mone** þai kyeth,… (*Cursor Mundi*, Vsp A.3, l.22681)
           So harde dyntus **shul** þei kiþe... (*Cursor Mundi*, Trin-C R.3.8, l.22681)
           wiþ harde dintis þaire **miȝt** to kiþ. (*Cursor Mundi*, Frf 14, l.22681)
           [They shall know hard blows...]
      (d)   Ded bi þe stret þan **mon** þai lij. (*Cursor Mundi*, Vsp A.3, l.13479)
           Dede bi strete **mot** þei ly... (*Cursor Mundi*, Trin-C R.3.8, l.13479)
           [Dead, on the street they must lie…]
      (e)   **Mon** i pass, godd be-teche i yow;… (*Cursor Mundi*, Vsp A.3, l.5450)
           Most i pass, godd bitheche i ȝou. (*Cursor Mundi*, Göt Theol 107, l.5450)
           [I must pass, God grant you…]

In the data, the verb is used as an auxiliary of future (10a) or conditional reference (10b) equivalent to *willan*, as an auxiliary expressing inevitability or possibility, equivalent to *sculan and *magan* (10c), and as an auxiliary denoting compulsion equivalent to *mōtan* (10de). This clearly shows that *munan* did not develop a distinct modal sense but was an item of a considerably vague application. Hence, it is likely that its usage could lead to misunderstandings and the verb was abandoned in favour of less ambiguous items.

Yet another obsolete preterite-present, *witan*, competes with other verbs already in Old English. As the data show, in various manuscripts of Psalms, it is replaced by *cnāwan* 'to know' and *cunnan* 'to have ability, to know' to gloss the same Latin verbs:

(11) (a)   **Nouit** dominus uias inmaculatorum…
      Wat dryht weagas unwemra… (Psalms, Vsp A.1, 36.17)
      Gecnæwð drihtyn wegas unwemra… (Psalms, Cmb Ff.1.23, 36.18)
      Can drihten wegas onwemmendra… (Psalms, Trin-C R.17.1, 36.18)
      Can ł wat drihten dagas ungewæmmedre… (Psalms, Lam 427, 36.18)
      [Know, Lord, the perfect ways…]

    (b)   Tu **scis** inproperium meum et confusionem meam…
      Þu **wast** on hosp mine & scame. (Psalms, Vit. E.18, 68.20)
      Þu **canst** mine hosp ł min onhrop & gescændnysse ł sceamunga mine... (Psalms, Lam 427, 68.20)
      [You know my reproach and my shame…]

    (c)   Veniat illis laqueus quem **ignorant**...
      Cyme him gryn þe hi **nyton**… (Psalms, Cmb Ff.1.23, 34.8)
      Cume him grin þæt hi ne **gecnawon**... (Psalms, Stw 2, 34.8)
      [Throw a snare for those that do not know…]

Quotations in (11a) contain four different translations of the Latin verb *nosco* 'to get the knowledge of, to know, recognize'. In three manuscripts it is glossed with *witan*, *cnāwan* or *cunnan*, the fourth version employing two verbs, *cunnan* and *witan*, as equivalents. This shows that both *cnāwan* and *cunnan* denoted 'knowing' and appeared in the same contexts as the preterite-present. The other quotations reveal that *cunnan* and *witan* were also regarded as equivalents of L *scio* 'to know' (11b), while *cnāwan* and *witan* glossed the negative *ignoro* 'not to know' (11c). Thus, according to the data, the preterite-present had at least two rivals in the period.

In the Middle English data, the verb *cunnan* is no longer used as an equivalent of *witan*. Although it still could render the sense of knowing, *cunnan* specialized as the verb of ability. But *cnāwan* still competes with *witan*, as shown by the quotations from *Ancrene Riwle* and *Cursor Mundi*:

(12) (a)   & hwet se he_bit & hat hire in obedience þe **cnaweð** hire manere & **wat** hire strengðe. (*Ancrene Riwle*, Corp-C 402, p.8)
      & hwat se he bit & hat hire don in obedience ðe **cnoweð** hire manere & hire strencðe. (*Ancrene Riwle*, Nero A.14, p.3)
      [And what he that knows her nature and [knows] her strength orders, she should do in obedience.]

    (b)   …he / þat mast **wist** of his priuete,… (*Cursor Mundi*, Göt Theol 107, 1.3221–3222)
      …he / þat moost **knew** of his priuete… (*Cursor Mundi*, Trin-C R.3.8, 1.3221–3222)
      […he that must know of his secret…]

In the first quotation, the two verbs are used in coordination in MS Corpus Christi, whereas in MS Nero the scribe did not feel the need to repeat the verb, proving that the senses of the two items were identical. Quotations in (12b) show

the appearance of *witan* and *cnāwan* in two different versions of *Cursor Mundi*, where the past forms *wist* and *knew* are employed. Eventually, the verb replaced *witan*, which is now considered obsolete.

CONCLUSIONS

As demonstrated, mediaeval texts surviving in more than one version provide phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical evidence, which is quite valuable for the studies aimed at discovering reasons for the demise of words. The discussed example of non-surviving preterite-present verbs shows that such data can be used to verify most of the causes of the elimination of those verbs listed in linguistic literature. True, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the verb *-nugan*, as it is attested exclusively in sources found in one manuscript. As regards other items, however, the data allow for some concluding remarks.

First of all, most of the examined preterite-presents had a certain tendency towards regularization, showing that the group was not always recognized as having unique conjugation and there were attempts to treat the verbs in an ordinary fashion. This might have influenced the recognition of the preterite-presents. Second, the phonological and morphological changes the verbs underwent with time, in the case of two items, *munan* and **þurfan*, led to mergers with other verbs, which must have led to some confusion and, consequently, the preference to use other unambiguous items. Third, three preterite-presents (**dugan*, **þurfan* and *munan*) display some inclination towards modality but the senses they conveyed overlapped with those of other "modal" verbs. Hence, they had little chance to win that rivalry. Finally, from early times **þurfan* and *witan* had very serious rivals in lexical verbs *neden* and *cnāwan*, the presence of which must have reduced their frequency in the language.

REFERENCES

DATABASES

A linguistic atlas of Early Middle English, *1150–1325*. Compiled by Margaret Laing. http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/laeme1/laeme1.html. Edinburgh: ©2008–The University of Edinburgh.
BOSWORTH, J./ TOLLER, T.N. (1898): *An Anglo-Saxon dictionary*. Digital edition available at www.bosworthtoller.com.
DIPAOLO HEALEY, A./ HOLLAND, J./ MCDOUGALL, I./ MIELKE, P. (2000): *Dictionary of Old English corpus in electronic form*, Toronto.
LEWIS, CH.T./ SHORT, CH. (eds.) (1879): *Harpers' Latin dictionary. A new Latin dictionary founded on the translation of Freund's Latin-German lexicon edited by E. A. Andrews*, New York.
MARKUS, M. (2006a): *Innsbruck computer archive of machine-readable English texts* (ICAMET), CD-ROM version 2.2, University of Innsbruck.

McSparran, F. (ed.): *The Middle English compendium: Middle English dictionary*, *HyperBibliography*, *and corpus of Middle English prose and verse*. http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/m/mec/, Ann Arbor: Humanities Text Initiative – University of Michigan.

Oxford English dictionary. Oxford University Press: http://oed.com.

Quirk, R./ Greenbaum, S./ Leech, G./ Svartvik, J. (1972): *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, London.

SPECIAL STUDIES

Bator, M. (2010): *Obsolete Scandinavian loanwords in English* (Studies in English Medieval language and literature 26), Frankfurt am Main.

Brunner, K. (1963): *An outline of Middle English grammar*, translated by Grahame Johnston, Oxford.

Denison, D. (1993): *English historical syntax: verbal constructions*, London, New York.

Eitelmann, M. (2013): "Remembering (ge)munan: The rise and decline of a potential modal", in: Diewald, G./ Kahlas-Tarkka, L./ Wischer, I. (eds.): Comparative studies in early Germanic languages. With a focus on verbal categories (Studies in language companion series 138), Amsterdam/ Philadephia, 127–150.

Hogg, R.M./ Fulk, R.D. (2011): *A grammar of Old English*. Volume 2: Morphology, Chichester.

Lightfoot, D.W. (1974): "The diachronic analysis of English modals", in: Anderson, J.M./ Jones, Ch. (eds.): *Historical linguistics: Proceedings of the first International Conference on Historical Linguistics*, Edinburgh, 2nd–7th September 1973. Syntax, morphology, internal and comparative reconstruction. Vol. 1, Amsterdam, 219–249.

Lightfoot, D.W. (1979): *Principles of diachronic syntax*. Cambridge.

Macaulay, G.C. (1914): "The "Ancren Riwle". The English text (continued)", *The Modern Language Review*, 9/3, 324–331.

Molencki, R. (2002): "The status of *dear* and *þearf* in Old English", *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, 38, 363–380.

Molencki, R. (2005): "The confusion between *thurven* and *durren* in Middle English", in: Ritt, N./ Schendl, H. (eds.): *Rethinking Middle English: linguistic and literary approaches*, Frankfurt am Main, 147–160.

Nagle, S.J./ Sanders, S.L. (1998): "Downsizing the preterite-presents in Middle English", in: Fisiak, J./ Krygier, M. (eds.): *Advances in English historical linguistics* (1996) (Trends in linguistics. Studies and monographs 112), Berlin, New York, 253–261.

Porto, L.L. (2005): *The semantic predecessors of* need*: from Old to Early Modern English*. PhD Dissertation, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela.

Sievers, E. (1903): *An Old English grammar*, 3rd edition, Translated and edited by Albert S. Cook, Boston.

Wawrzyniak, A. (2011): "The semantic analysis of OE *munan*", Eger Journal of English Studies XI (2011), 37–56.

Wojtyś, A. (2017): *The non-surviving preterite-present verbs in English*. *The demise of* *dugan, munan, *-nugan, *þurfan, *and* unnan (Studies in English medieval language and literature 51), Frankfurt am Main.