Univerzita Karlova

Filozofická fakulta

Ústav anglického jazyka a didaktiky

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE
Saikal Idinova

Regional Variation in the Plural Form of Weak Verbs in Middle English

Regionální variace plurálního tvaru slabých sloves ve střední angličtině

Praha 2024   Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Ondřej Tichý, Ph.D.

Poděkování

Převelice bych chtěla poděkovat svému vedoucímu práce Mgr. Ondřeji Tichému, Ph.D., za pomoc, inspiraci, a hlavně trpělivost při vedení mé bakalářské práce. Také bych na tomto místě chtěla poděkovat své rodině a svým kamarádům za podporu.

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně, že jsem řádně ocitovala všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla vuyžita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

Souhlasím se zapůjčením bakalářské práce ke studijním účelům.

I have no objections to the BA thesis being borrowed and used for study purposes.

V Praze dne 5. srpna 2024

Abstract:

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to explore the regional linguistic landscape during the early Middle English period by focusing on variations in the plural form of weak verbs. The evolution of the distinctive plural endings in Old English are compared to the inflectional endings in the early Middle English period. As the term 'middle' indicates, the Middle English period and language is a kind of transition period between the previously heavily synthetic Old English and the primarily analytic Modern English. Middle English is characterised by a rise in the number of texts written in regional dialects of English, as well as a widespread shift towards inflectional loss, which affects the language in many ways.

The theoretical part discusses the sociopolitical events which led to the development of Middle English and the linguistic backgrounds of both Old English and Middle English. It also briefly summarises the dialectal circumstances of both periods. The practical part consists of the compilation of the inflectional endings of 20 weak verbs and the further analysis of the plural forms of the present tense and the preterite in the north, the west midlands, the east midlands, the south-west, and the south-east. In the discussion, the results are then more closely compared based on the dialectal areas.

Key words: Middle English, regional variation, weak verbs, plural form, inflectional suffix, morphology, dialectology

Abstrakt:

Cílem této bakalářské práce je výzkum regionální lingvistické krajiny v období rané střední angličtiny se zaměřením na variace množného čísla slabých sloves. Vývoj charakteristických koncovek pro množné číslo ve staré angličtině jsou porovnávány s flektivními koncovkami v rané střední angličtině. Výraz "střední" perfektně charakterizuje toto období, jelikož funguje jako přechodné období mezi primárně syntetickou starou angličtinou a primárně analytickou moderní angličtinou. Nárůst počtu textů psaných v regionálních dialektech angličtiny a rozsáhlý posun ke ztrátě skloňovaných koncovek jsou charakteristické pro období střední angličtiny, zvláště v raní střední angličtině.

Teoretická část práce pojednává o společenskopolitických okolnostech, které vedly k rozvoji střední angličtiny, a také o jazykovém zázemí staré a střední angličtiny. Stručně také shrnuje nářeční okolnosti obou období. Praktická část se pak skládá ze sestavení flektivních koncovek 20 slabých sloves a analýzy jejich tvarů množného čísla přítomného a preteritního času na severu, západu midlands, východu midlands, jihozápadu a jihovýchodu. V diskuzní části jsou pak výsledky blíže srovnávány na základě nářečních oblastí.

Klíčová slova: střední angličtina, regionální variace, slabá slovesa, plurální tvar, koncovka, morfologie, dialektologie

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List of Abbreviations

OE	Old English
ME	Middle English
EME	Early Modern English
ModE	Modern English
PDE	Present-Day English
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
MED	Middle English Dictionary
LAEME	Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English
LALME	Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English
CTT	Corpus of Tagged Texts (LAEME)
NC	Norman Conquest
WS	West Saxon
N	North
WM	West Midlands
EM	East Midlands
S	South
SW	South-West
SE	South-East
sg.	singular number
pl.	plural number
pres.	present tense
pret.	preterite tense

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1. Introduction

The study of language evolution provides valuable insights into the historical and cultural changes that shape how we speak and write. This bachelor thesis explores the regional language landscape during the early Middle English period by examining variations in the plural forms of weak verbs. By comparing the plural endings in Old English with those in early Middle English, this paper aims to highlight the transitional nature of Middle English, which serves as a bridge between the synthetic nature of Old English and the analytic nature of Modern English.

The Middle English period, as its name suggests, represent a significant transitional time in the history of the English language. Characterised by an increase in texts written in regional dialects and a widespread reduction in inflectional endings, Middle English reflects important changes in the structure and use of English, influenced by various historical and socio-political events.

The theoretical part of this thesis discusses the historical and social events that contributed to the development of Middle English as well as provides background information on both Old English and Middle English. Additionally, it also outlines the dialectal differences during these periods.

In the practical section, the thesis examines the inflectional endings of 20 weak verbs, focusing on their plural forms in the present tense and the past tense across different dialectal regions: the north, the west midlands, the east midlands, the south-west, and the south-east. This analysis aims to identify and compare the variations in these forms, revealing regional differences and overall language trends of the time. The subsequent discussion section delves deeper into these findings, comparing the results across the five dialectal areas.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Historical Background

2.1.1. Anglo-Saxons

Before the establishment of Anglo-Saxon Britain, the native Celtic inhabitants of the island had been invaded and conquered by the Roman empire (Willams, 1975: 51). Roman rule on the islands was limited to the southeast and midlands, but their rule did not last long as it spanned from the beginning of the 1st century until the beginning of the 5th, after which it was the Germanic tribes invading the island from now northern Germany and Denmark area. According to Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of England* it is in the year 449 CE that the Angles,

Saxons, and Jutes invaded the land of the Britons (731: 62–63). Invasions from the Scandinavian Vikings were not infrequent during this period either. Eventually these tribes conquered the southeast, east, and midlands area of England and the period of their colonisation and settlement came to be known as Anglo-Saxon England (Williams, 1975: 52).

In the following centuries, political and social developments led to the creation of the so-called 'Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy,' which consisted of seven kingdoms: Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Essex, Sussex, Wessex, and Kent (Williams, 1975: 55). Many kingdoms had their eras of supremacy within the 6th to 8th century, from Kent, to Northumbria, to Mercia. However, power finally came to Wessex, where in the words of Williams (1975) it "flourished a culture that surpassed anything on the European continent since the brightest days of Rome" (56). In the following centuries, monastic scholarship, poetry, and writing in the Old English vernacular prospered. Many of the literary texts from the Old English period survive particularly in the West Saxon dialect (Williams, 1975: 56; Brinton & Arnovick, 2011: 9).

As was mentioned above, Viking raids continued throughout the history of Anglo-Saxon England. During the cultural bloom of Wessex, Danish invaders began raiding the towns and monasteries, especially in the north and east, with the Danes seizing power over the land spanning from Chester to London, which came to be named 'Danelaw' (Williams, 1975: 59). On the other side, King Alfred managed to unite at least half of the English land into the kingdom of Wessex, which continued to flourish, but eventually the Danish king Cnut defeated Wessex in 1015 and ruled over most of what we would consider England today (Williams, 1975:62).

2.1.2. Norman Conquest

Soon after the victory of King Cnut in 1015, however, the land experienced another turnover of events. One of the most significant events to alter the course of the history of the English language was the Norman invasion of England in 1066 (Baugh & Cable, 1992: 107). There had been many influences on Old English, yet the Norman Conquest and its consequences led to what Williams (1975) describes as "a language that is qualitatively different from what it was before 1066" (65).

After the death of Edward the Confessor, who had left the land without a direct heir, disputes arose over who should assume the throne. Eventually, it was William of Normandy and his army who succeeded in conquering the English lands in the early 11th century. As with any conquest the colonising power brought about major changes; for example, William

continued replacing the Anglo-Saxon nobility with Norman nobility (Williams, 1975: 66), or the practice of castle-building gaining popularity throughout mediaeval England (Strang, 1991: 283), etc.

The introduction of Norman French and Latin in legal and political spheres also carried much significance as it pushed OE out of the administrative role. Nonetheless, the English vernacular continued to be the most spoken among the people in England and for the first two centuries following the NC most of the literature was written in French and Latin (Brinton & Arnovick, 2011: 9–10).

2.2.   Linguistic Background

2.2.1.   Old English Verbs

The language of the settled Anglo-Saxons was Old English. It roughly spans from 800 CE to 1100 CE and differs greatly from Modern English. One of the chief differences is its grammar; although ModE is a heavily analytic language, OE is a primarily synthetic language with many features expressed morphologically rather than syntactically. The syntax of OE is also more flexible compared to the fixed word order of PDE and is more similar to that of modern German (Kroch & Taylor, 1994: 49), since the morphology of the word carried information which is now carried by word order or context. In addition, OE, being of West Germanic descent, has a significantly different lexicon, with most of the words of Germanic origin, whilst PDE has a higher number of words originating from French or Latin.

The OE verb distinguishes two tenses – the present and the preterite, three moods – indicative, imperative, and subjunctive, and each of these could be realised in two numbers – singular and plural, and three persons – first, second, and third (Baugh & Cable, 1991: 59). In the case of OE, a verb's tense, mood, number, and person are easily identifiable by the verb's form alone. For example, while in PDE the singular and plural are identical (except the third person sg.), in OE there were distinct forms used to distinguish the sg. from the pl., which will be discussed shortly.

In addition to the categories mentioned above, verbs in OE also have a distinct infinitive, present participle, and past participle form. An important division of the OE verbs is whether they belong to the strong or weak verb class. Strong verbs indicate a change of tense by modifying their root vowel, whilst weak verbs conjugate by the addition of distinctive suffixes with no change to the verb's stem (Fulk, 2012: 71; Baugh & Cable, 1991: 59). Both strong and weak verbs distinguish number through inflections, i.e., the plural present verb ending is *-aþ*,

and the preterite pl. inflection is *-on*. However, whilst strong verbs employ a stem change to indicate the preterite, weak verbs use the addition of the dental affix *-d-* without a change in the root with the pret. pl. inflection for weak verbs is *-don*.

2.2.2. Middle English

The grammatical system of ME is generally similar to OE, but with considerable developments which ultimately distinguish it as a separate linguistic period. As was mentioned above, there were many factors, both linguistic and sociopolitical when it comes to the emergence of ME. In general, ME spans from shortly after the NC in the 11th century to the beginning of the Early Modern English period around the year 1500 but can be, and often is, further divided into Early Middle English (1100 – 1350) and Late Middle English (1350 – 1500). After the NC, English not only experiences a massive influx of French vocabulary, but many processes which were already occuring in OE further develop and quicken. Developments such as extensive loss of inflections in verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, etc. become more prominent in ME and continue throughout EModE.

The decline of the English vernacular in legal and literary writing shortly after the NC plays a key role in the development of ME. With the fall of the WS dialect as a literary standard, texts produced in ME are less limited by literary convention and often more representative of the dialect of their scribe. Without a standard for writing, however, this period is also substantially characterised by spelling variations. Together with inflectional loss, it becomes difficult to distinguish between individual verbal forms than their morphological distinctions become less clear-cut than in OE.

In ME, the previously unique inflections marking plurality and tense, undergo vowel loss or complete loss, e.g., the pret. pl. inflection *–(d)on* alters into *–(d)en* and ends up indistinguishable from the past participle or the infinitive where the OE *–(i)an* also modifies into *–en*.

2.3. Weak Verbs

As was mentioned above OE verbs are divided into strong and weak verbs. During the ME period, however, countless strong verbs reclassify as weak, and vice versa (though in much smaller numbers). As Baugh & Cable point out, weak verbs were the more numerous verb class in OE and, unlike strong verbs, were a productive class, thus, the strong verbs which "survived were exposed to the influence of the majority, and many have changed over in the course of

time to the weak inflection" (1991:162). This process is enhanced as foreign loan verbs, chiefly of French origin, flooded into the ME lexicon and conjugated as weak from the get-go. Nonetheless, although many strong verbs fully reclassified already at the end of OE, some verbs, even verbs which were originally weak, still alternate between their strong and weak forms (Fulk, 2012: 76).

In OE, weak verbs were divided into three distinct groups – most weak verbs belonged to the first two classes with the third class consisting of only four verbs: habban, libban, secgan, and hycgan (Fulk, 2012: 81). The second class is distinguished from the first with the distinctive infix -i- in the infinitive, first-person sg. and the plural, i.e. *–ian*, *–ie*, *–iaþ*. Thus, the pres. inflections of weak verbs in OE were *–(i)e*, *–est*, *–þ* in the sg. and *–(i)aþ* in the pl. In the preterite, weak verbs add the distinctive dental affix *–d–*, or in some cases *–t–*, to the unchanged verb stem (Baugh & Cable, 1991: 59). In the case of the second class, the thematic *–i–* is retained in the form of *–o–* in the preterite (Fulk, 2012: 82). Thus, the pret. inflections of weak verbs in OE were *–(o)de*, *–(o)dest*, *–(o)de* in the sg. and *–(o)don* in the pl.

2.4.   Regional Variation

Regional variation in any language is inevitable, with circumstances never being equal throughout space. Many factors influence the development of dialects, e.g., differing foreign language contact influences, need for different specific vocabulary based on environmental differences, and much more. The study of regional dialects offers many insights into the history and evolution of language, yet it is impossible to definitively delineate the beginning of one dialectal region and the end of another, much in the same way that it is impossible to exactly pinpoint the beginning of one linguistic period and the end of another (Lass, 1992: 24). Nonetheless, points of reference are crucial and necessary for the examination and comparison of regional differences as well as ease of understanding, but the notion that the concept of regional boundaries is precisely that, a concept, should be kept in mind.

2.4.1. Old English Dialects

English as a language can be dated back all the way to the 8th century, when OE texts present a language separate from the other Germanic languages on the continent. Nonetheless, due to the nature of its age and its literature being transmitted for the most part orally, it can be rather difficult to study the dialects of the time from all the aspects as would be possible today when we can access the speech of native speakers.

Although linguistic features considered characteristic for one dialect often overlap with neighbouring dialects, (Baugh & Cable, 1991: 189), scholars distinguish four major dialects of OE – Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon, and Kentish (Baugh & Cable, 1991: 52; Williams, 1975: 55–56). Geographically, Northumbrian and Mercian were spoken north of the river Thames, whilst West Saxon and Kentish were spoken in the south. Northumbrian and Mercian are sometimes generally referred to as Anglian as they were spoken in the lands which were settled by the Angles, but both present distinctive features and are therefore often referred to separately (Baugh & Cable, 1991: 52). Documents written in Northumbrian are rare but survive in some texts such as runic inscriptions, charters, and fragments of Bible translations and literary verse (Baugh & Cable, 1991: 52; Williams, 197: 56).

The Kentish dialect in the southeast is also not the best preserved in terms of writing, contrasted by the neighbouring West Saxon dialect in the southwest which has the largest number of extant literary texts. As the best-preserved dialect of the Anglo-Saxon period, WS is thus, unsurprisingly, also the most studied dialect of the OE period (Baugh & Cable, 1991: 52–53). Towards the end of the OE period, WS had come to be the closest thing to a literary standard for English writing (Baugh & Cable, 1991: 52; Fulk, 2010: 19). The author Joseph Williams (1975) even writes that "were it not for the West Saxon rise to power and its accompanying literary flowering, we would have relatively few texts from before the Norman invasion" (56).

2.4.2. Middle English Dialects

ME is typically split into five principal dialects – northern, east midland, west midland, southwestern, and southeastern (Lass, 1992: 33–35). Nonetheless, the dialects of OE and their terminology remain relevant, where in ME terminology a feature might be considered broadly as southeastern, it may also be referred to more specifically as a Kentish feature and "marking it off as a distinct variety of Southern English" (Baugh & Cable, 1991: 189). In this thesis, I will work with the distinction of five principal dialects. The areas of the ME dialects are roughly the same to OE, but Mercian is subdivided into west and east midlands as they continue to show differing features.

The NC can be considered a catalyst for the larger number of recorded dialects. By enforcing the French language in places where English used to hold power, the previously dominant West Saxon literary standard diminished and made way for more free writing in one's own dialect. Throughout the ME period the seat of power then slowly shifts from Wessex to

the southeast and the London dialect gains importance (Lass, 1922: 23), and towards the end of the 15th century becomes the new literary standard. Nonetheless, before the London dialect's rise to influence, ME is defined by extensive spelling variation (Lass, 1992: 23) and thus, in the EME period "we move ... from a phase of westerly-based standardisation to one without standardisation" (Strang, 1991: 284).

As was mentioned above, the tendency for unstressed vowels to reduce to an –e– greatly impacts the grammatical system of English, as morphological information moves from inflections to syntax. The pret. pl. form –don begins to reduce to –den or even –de where the final pl. marker –n is lost completely. In the case of the pres. pl. form –aþ is reduced to –eþ and eventually even –e. In the north, –eþ is replaced by –es and in addition, the distinction between the pres. and the pret. forms continue to decline as the pret. pl. inflection –en begins popping up throughout England to indicate the pl. in the pres. as well. (Fulk, 2012: 72). In the EME period, however, these developments are not yet finalised and vary greatly based on region, e.g., the final –es in pl. forms in the north.

The linguist James Milroy writes that "virtually every piece of research into Middle English language … is, at least potentially, a contribution to Middle English dialectology. The difference in this respect between Middle English and other periods cannot be overstated: as virtually every commonly occurring lexical item is attested in a variety of *written* forms" (1992: 160).

3. Methodology

3.1. Material

The primary source for this thesis was *A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* (LAEME), a corpus with a focus on dialectal variation. LAEME covers the Early Middle English period with texts spanning from 1150 to 1325 (Laing, 2013). It is the daughter atlas to *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (LALME), which was originally published in the year 1986, but is also available in online form as an electronic version (eLALME) since 2013 (Benskin, Laing, Karaiskos, Williamson, 2013). LAEME first began as a project to cover the earlier period of ME to expand upon LALME, which covers the late ME period, nonetheless, it then turned into a different project as it developed into a corpus-based system compared to the questionnaire type of LALME. LAEME thus fucntions as a searchable coprus with approx. 650 000 fully tagged words (Laing, 2013). The LAEME Corpus of Tagged Texts was accessed through the function Corpus Files which allows the user to search by tag or form, or by county.

LAEME's corpus employs a unique system of lexels (lexical elements), i.e. identifying semantic information, and grammels (grammatical elements), i.e. part-of-speech information and functional information (Laing, 2013). For example, a form such as 'LOUETH' could be tagged as $love/vps13, where the lexel is 'love' and is followed by the grammel 'vps13'. Grammels for verbs in the indicative mood are divided into three main groups: 'vps' – verb in present tense, 'vpt' – weak verbs in the preterite, and 'vSpt' – strong verb in the preterite. The number following the tense indicates number: 1 = sg and 2 = pl., and person: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person (Laing, 2013).

In the LAEME corpus, word forms are written in upper-case, so 'LOUETH' stands for <loueth> in the manuscript. Lower-case letters are reserved for special letters, e.g., lower-case 'g' = insular g, 'ae' = ash <æ>, 'y' = thorn <þ>, 'd' = edh <ð>, 'w' = wynn <ƿ>, lower-case 'n' or 'm' = line above preceding vowel indicating an abbreviation <ē> for –en (Laing, 2013). Special symbols such as '[]' are also indicators of further information, e.g., '[]' = damage to the text where the word or letter is not visible, '<<' = deletion, '>>' = insertion, '^' = indicates that the following letter is written in superscript (Laing, 2013).

Each text tagged in LAEME also contains information about text localisation, where the localisation of text origin and text language is incredibly specific, usually specified down to cities and counties.

The Middle English Dictionary (MED) and the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) were both also frequently consulted since not all lexels were as straightforward to identify as 'love' (OE lufian). For example, for the ME verbs *wenden*, *wonen*, or *tholen* the lexels turned out to be the OE verb forms 'wendan,' 'wunian' and 'Yolian.' So, the MED and the OED both provided essential information in terms of etymology and general information about the verbs.

Microsoft Excel was used as storage for all the information accessed from LAEME, for organisation, and then further investigation of the plural forms of the chosen verbs.

3.2. Methods

3.2.1. Weak Verbs Selection

The selection process of the weak verbs for analysis proved to be a slightly time-consuming one. After an initial probe, I compiled two lists of verbs from sources: *An Introduction to Middle English* (Fulk, 2012: 81–85) and the item list of eLALME (Benskin, Laing, Karaiskos, & Williamson, 2013).

First, I compiled a list of over 100 verbs selected from chapters 78, 79, 80, and 81 in *An Introduction to Middle English* (Fulk, 2012: 81–85). The ME verbs were searched in LAEME to assess whether they were classified as weak or strong as well as to find which verbs needed further search to find out their lexel. *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online* was also frequently consulted as it provides information on whether a verb is strong or weak in OE and made it easier to discern the verb class of the verbs in ME. The verbs where the lexel was the PDE verb form were easy to search, whilst verbs such as *wenen* 'to hope' or *heren* 'to praise' proved to be more difficult since they did not survive into PDE. For these verbs, the lexel turned out to be the OE spelling instead of the ME spelling and thus, the MED and the OED proved helpful for the determination of the OE spelling, e.g. 'wenan' for ME *wenen* and 'herian' for ME *heren*. Thus, from the initial list, the verbs which conjugated as strong were removed, and 92 weak verbs remained.

The item list of eLALME was also used in the same way as Fulk (2012), where all the verbs were compiled into a list of 101 verbs, then through the same process as the verbs from Fulk (2012) the strong verbs were eliminated and 73 remained. Out of the 73 remaining weak verbs from the eLALME list, 23 were the same as the Fulk list, so they were also removed and thus 151 weak verbs remained for analysis. Nonetheless, while searching for the pl. forms of these verbs, many did not return any tokens for the pl. form, so the list was further cut down and finally verbs which had 5 cases or more in the pres. and in the pret. were chosen. Thus, the final 20 weak verbs were selected.

The final 20 weak verbs (in their lexel form) whose pl. inflections were then analysed and compared are, in order of most cases and tokens: *have*, *make*, *love*, *hear*, *live*, *follow*, *turn*, *ask, sin*, *wendan* 'walk, go', *wenan* 'hope', *lead*, *wunian* 'live, reside', *believe*, *cleopian* 'speak, call', *Yolian* 'endure', *send*, *read*, *lae:fan* 'leave', and *set*.

3.2.2. Data Collection

Inflectional differences were searched under LAEME's Corpus Files, which allows the search of the corpus' tagged texts. The pl. form of the present and the pret. were searched under the grammels: 'vps2%' and 'vpt2%'. As was mentioned above, the first number following the verb tense indicates number, thus 'vps2%' and 'vpt2%' searches for all verbs in the pl. in the first, second, and third person, in the present and the preterite. Each verb was thus searched two times and together with the information about the localisation of the verb forms and their texts was then copied onto a Microsoft Excel sheet.

3.2.3. Inflection Identification and Organisation

Once all the information was exported, the individual counties: Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cumberland, Dorset, Durham, Devon, Isle of Ely, Essex, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Herefordshire, Huntingdonshire, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, London, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Soke of Peterborough, Shropshire, Somerset, Sussex, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Wiltshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, City of York, Yorks (East Riding), Yorks (North Riding), Yorks (West Riding) (Laing, 2013) were divided into eight categories: NorthWest, NorthEast, the Yorkshire area, West Midlands, East Midlands, East Anglia, SouthWest, and SouthEast. Nonetheless, these subcategories did not show much variation and were then ultimately grouped into the main five general categories: North, West Midlands, East Midlands, SouthWest and SouthEast. Additionally, texts with insufficient information or that were unable to be localised classified into the category Unlocalised.

The counties were thus grouped: NORTH – Cheshire, Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, City of York, Yorks (East Riding), Yorks (North Riding), Yorks (West Riding); WEST MIDLANDS – Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire; EAST MIDLANDS – Cambridgeshire, Essex, Huntingdonshire, Isle of Ely, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Soke of Peterborough, Suffolk; SOUTH-WEST – Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire; SOUTH-EAST – Berkshire, Hampshire, Kent, London, Oxfordshire, Sussex.

Once the specific verb forms were divided into dialectal areas, the inflection of each case was described. The base of each verb was checked through the tagged texts of LAEME and then the individual inflection was added manually.

4. Results

The final 20 weak verbs and their inflectional differences thus formed the basis for analysis.

4.1. North

4.1.1. Present N

As was specified above, in OE the plurality of weak verbs in the present tense was indicated with the inflection -aþ. However, as can be seen in Table 1, the intedental fricative has been lost completely in the north during the ME period:

inflection	cases	tokens
no inflection	46	69
+E	24	32
+EN	19	28
+IS	18	30
+ES	13	17
+S	9	11
+En	7	13
+IN	2	2
+IEN	2	2
++	1	1
+AN	1	1
+IES	1	1
total	143	207

Table 1: Present-Tense Inflections in the North and Their Frequency

The most frequent inflection for the pres. tense in the N is no inflection at all. The second most frequent inflection –*e* could indicate the loss of the fricative -*þ* or rather the loss of the nasal –*n*, however, given that the third most frequent inflection is the inflection –*e*, this seems to be a loss of a final –*n*, carried from the pl. pret. inflection –*on*, indicating a kind of melding of the pres. and pret. pl. forms. The fourth, fifth, and sixth most frequent inflections are all endings containing the alveolar –*s*, a unique feature originating in the north not only for the pl., but sg. forms of verbs as well (Burrow & Turville-Petre, 1992: 43).

The rest are inflections containing a final –*n*, or a final –*s*, with forms containing a final –*n* forming 31 of the 143 cases and forms with a final –*s* forming 41 of the 143 cases, as can be seen in Tables 2 and 3, respectively:

inflection	cases	tokens
+EN	19	28

+En	7	13
+IN	2	2
+IEN	2	2
+AN	1	1
total	31	46

Table 2: Present-Tense Inflections Containing Final –*n* in the North

inflection	cases	tokens
+IS	18	30
+ES	13	17
+S	9	11
+IES	1	1
total	13	59

Table 3: Present-Tense Inflections Containing Final –*s* in the North

4.1.2. *Preterite N*

In the preterite tense, the OE –*don* is also changed, with the 20 weak verbs' inflections presented in table 4:

inflection	cases	tokens
+D	23	34
+DE	13	15
+ID	10	31
no inflection	10	13
+ED	6	7
+DEN	6	9
+E	3	7
+TE	2	4
+T	2	3
+EDEN	2	2
+[1]	1	1
+EN	1	1
+En	1	1
+DEn	1	1
+DIN	1	1
total	82	130

Table 4: Preterite Inflections in the North

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[1] '+' here indicates that the verb form was part of a compound in the manuscript, where it is usually a free word.

Interestingly, only 12 of the 82 cases contain a final –*n*, which had previously been a distinctive feature for the pret. pl. of weak verbs and as can be seen in Table 5, only 10 cases contain both a dental suffix and the final –*n*:

inflection	cases	tokens
+DEN	6	9
+EDEN	2	2
+DEn	1	1
+DIN	1	1
total	10	13

Table 5: Preterite Inflections Containing -*d*- *or* -*t*- and Final –*n* in the North

The most frequent inflectional ending in the N is the suffix –*d* which is directly connected to verb stem with a total of 23 cases and 34 tokens. As can be seen in Table 6, the distinctive weak verb dental affix (together with its voiceless pair –*t*) are present in 66 of the 82 inflections.[2]

inflection	cases	tokens
+D	23	34
+DE	13	15
+ID	10	31
+ED	6	7
+TE	2	4
+T	2	3
total	56	94

Table 6: Preterite Inflections with final -*d*- *or* -*t*- in the North

4.2.   West Midlands

The West Midlands were the most represented in this entire search and analysis. As was mentioned in section 2.1. that is because of its substantial surviving collection of texts, with many of the best-known surviving works from this period being attributed to this region (Serjeantson, 1927: 54). The cases and tokens amoun to almost double of the previously discussed N, with a total of 366 cases and 614 tokens for the present plural, and 221 cases and 306 tokens for the preterite plural.

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[2] From the analysed verbs, -*t*- occured only in the preterite forms of the verb *leave* (OE lǣfan, lexel – lae:fan) as it follows the voiceless fricative /f/, e.g. 'LEFTE' and in the SE *ask* (OE āscian, ācsian, lexel – ask) where the velar plosive is lost and thus follows the voiceless /s/, e.g. 'ESSTE'.

4.2.1. Present WM

As can be seen in Table 7, compared to the N, there are only 6 cases with the final –*n* and not a single instance of no inflectional ending. At first glance, one can see that the OE –*aþ* is better preserved in the WM, with the three most frequent pres. pl. inflections being forms ending with the interdental fricatives –*ð* and –*þ*:

inflection (vps2%)	cases	tokens
+Ed	135	237
+IEd	57	81
+Ey	53	127
+ET	32	47
+ED	18	20
+IEy	10	25
+E	8	8
+Id	7	8
+IT	7	10
+IAd	7	9
+Ad	5	5
+IAy	4	10
+IED	3	3
+EN	3	3
+YEy	2	4
+E[d|	2	2
+IET	2	2
+I	2	2
+En	2	2
+D	1	2
+IN	1	1
+E[]	1	1
+Ay	1	2
+E+	1	1
+ETH	1	1
+E>d>	1	1
total	366	614

Table 7: Present-Tense Inflections in the WM

Nonetheless, although the inflections with the strong vowel -*a*- are still present in the forms –*(i)aþ* and –*(i)að*, they have been replaced by the more frequently used –*(i)eþ* and –*(i)eð*:

inflection	cases	tokens
+Ed	135	237

+Ey	53	127
+IEd	57	81
+IEy	10	25
+Id	7	8
+IAd	7	9
+Ad	5	5
+IAy	4	10
+YEy	2	4
+E[d]	2	2
+Ay	1	2
+ETH	1	1
+E>d>	1	1
total	282 + 3	509 + 3

Table 8: Present-Tense Inflections containing –ð, –þ, –th in the WM

After the dental fricatives, the final dental plosives –d and –t are also prominent in the present pl. inflections:

inflections	cases	tokens
+ET	32	47
+ED	18	20
+IT	7	10
+IED	3	3
+IET	2	2
+D	1	1
total	63	83

Table 9: Present-Tense Inflections containing -d- or -t- in the WM

This shift from the fricative to the plosive makes it difficult to distinguish from pret. sg., even from the pret. pl. as was shown in the inflections of the N. In this case the only way to distinguish the tense and plurality of the verb is through the syntax or context.

4.2.2. Preterite WM

In the WM, the final –n of pret. pl. forms is better preserved than in the N, with a total of 182 cases out of 221. In addition, as can be seen in Table 10, once again ther is no case of complete inflectional loss:

inflection (vpt2%)	cases	tokens
+DEN	68	107
+EDEN	62	90

+EN	25	33
+EDE	15	17
+DE	13	14
+EDEn	7	8
+DEn	7	7
+DDEN	4	5
+DDE	4	5
+En	3	6
+E	3	3
+ED	2	2
+ID	1	1
+EDON	1	2
+E-DEN	1	1
+D	1	1
+>E>DEN	1	1
+>E>DAN	1	1
+E*N	1	1
+DON	1	1
total	221	306

Table 10: Preterite Inflections in the WM

As can be seen further in Tables 11, 12, and 13 the majority of the inflections contain both the dental suffix of the preterite and the final –*n* of the pl.:

inflection	cases	tokens
+DEN	68	107
+EDEN	62	90
+EDEn	7	8
+DEn	7	7
+DDEN	4	5
+EDON	1	2
+E-DEN	1	1
+>E>DEN	1	1
+>E>DAN	1	1
+DON	1	1
total	153	223

Table 11: Preterite Inflections Containing -d- or -t- and Final -n in the WM

In most cases the inflectional vowel is reduced to an -*e*-, but there is one case where the vowel of OE pl. ending -*don* is preserved.

Similarly to the N, there are many cases where the final –*n* of the pl. is lost, as can be seen in Table 12:

inflection	cases	tokens
+EDE	15	17
+DE	13	14
+DDE	4	5
+ED	2	2
+ID	1	1
+D	1	1
total	36	40

Table 12: Preterite Inflections containing -d- or -t- without final -n in WM

Nonetheless, there are more cases where the final –*n* is retained as opposed to the N:

inflection	cases	tokens
+EN	25	33
+En	3	6
+E*N	1	1
total	29 (-3 small n)	40 (- 6 small n)

Table 13: Preterite Inflections containg final -n without -d- or -t- in WM

4.3. East Midlands

4.3.1. *Present EM*

The inflectional endings in the EM show much more competition between the OE final -aþ and the emerging final -n for the present-tense pl. of weak verbs. As can be seen in Table 14, the most frequent form is -en, but it is closely followed by -eð:

inflection (vps2%)	cases	tokens
+EN	54	84
+Ed	53	71
+IEd	25	36
+E	14	15
+IEN	7	10
+EN^N	6	10
+ED	5	6
+En	5	8
+ENN	5	5
+IgEd	4	8
+Id	3	7
+In	3	4
+IgEn	2	2

+Ey	1	1
+ETH	1	1
no inflectional ending	1	1
+IN	1	1
+N	1	1
+Ig[I]d	1	1
+ID	1	1
+ET	1	1
total	194	274

Table 14: Present-Tense Inflections in the EM

Nonetheless, when grouped together, cases containing final *-ð*, *-Þ*, *-th* are the most frequent making up 88 cases out of the 194 as can be seen in Table 15.

inflection	cases	tokens
+Ed	53	71
+IEd	25	36
+IgEd	4	8
+Id	3	7
+Ey	1	1
+ETH	1	1
+Ig[I]d	1	1
total	88	125

Table 15: Present-Tense Inflections with final -ð, -Þ, or -th

inflection	cases	tokens
+EN	54	84
+IEN	7	10
+EN^N	6	10
+En	5	8
+ENN	5	5
+In	3	4
+IgEn	2	2
+IN	1	1
+N	1	1
total	84	125

Table 16: Present-Tense Inflections with final -n in the EM

Inflections with either final –*n* or final –*ð*, –*þ*, or –*th* make up the majority of the pl. inflectional endings. The rest of the inflectional forms consist of 7 cases of –*d* or –*t*, and 14 cases of final –*e*. There is also only one instance of no inflectional ending in the analysed verbs.

4.3.2. Preterite EM

As can be seen in Table 17, the most frequent preterite inflectional ending for weak verb plurals is –*den*, followed by –*eden*:

inflection (vpt2%)	cases	tokens
+DEN	31	46
+EDEN	27	47
+EN	15	21
+DDEN	8	24
+DE	8	12
+EDE	7	10
+DEN^N	7	16
+EDEn	5	18
+DEn	4	8
+IDE	2	2
+DDEn	2	3
+E	2	2
+DE>N>	1	1
+En	2	2
+DENN	1	3
no inflection	1	1
+ENDEN	1	1
+DDIN	1	1
+TE	1	1
+D	1	1
+DIN	1	1
+DDE	1	1
+ED^EN	1	1
total	130	223

Table 17: Preterite Inflections in the EM

There is a total of 107 cases containing a final -n and 110 cases with the dental suffix. Specifically, however, inflections containing both the dental affix and the final –*n* are much more frequent than inflections containing only one of the two, as can be seen in Table 18, 19, and 20:

inflection	cases	tokens
+DEN	31	46
+EDEN	27	47
+DDEN	8	24
+DEN^N	7	16
+EDEn	5	18
+DEn	4	8
+DDEn	2	3
+DE>N>	1	1
+DENN	1	3
+ENDEN	1	1
+DDIN	1	1
+DIN	1	1
+ED^EN	1	1
total	90	170

Table 18: Preterite Inflections containing -d- or -t- and final -n in the EM

inflection	cases	tokens
+DE	8	12
+EDE	7	10
+IDE	2	2
+TE	1	1
+D	1	1
+DDE	1	1
total	20	27

Table 19: Pretertie Inflections containing -d- or -t- and no final -n in the EM

inflection	cases	tokens
+EN	15	21
+En	2	2
total	17	23

Table 20: Preterite Inflection conataining final -n and no -d- or -t- in the EM

These make up the bulk of the preterite pl. inflections in the WM, together with 2 cases of final –*e* without any consonant and 1 instance of no inflectional ending.

4.4. South-West

The South-West had the second smallest number of cases and tokens for the weak verb pl. forms with a total of 75 cases and 106 tokens for the present-tense and 64 cases and 96 tokens for the preterite.

4.4.1. *Present SW*

The present-tense inflectional endings in the SW are similarly to the WM dominated by the interdental fricatives –*þ* and –*ð*, however, in the SW the voiceless –*þ* is more frequent, with the inflection –*eþ* making up 47 of the 75 cases:

inflection (vps2%)	cases	tokens
+Ey	47	76
+IEy	10	11
+EN	6	7
+E	5	5
+Ed	2	2
+IEN	1	1
+YN	1	1
+IN	1	1
+Ad	1	1
+ET	1	1
total	75	106

Table 21: Present-Tense Inflections in the SW

The final -n is also present in the SW and similarly to the WM the ratio between the final –*þ*, –*ð* and the final -n is much larger, with –*þ*, –*ð* making up roughly 47% of the inflections and final –*n* making up roughly 7%:

inflection	cases	tokens
+Ey	47	76
+IEy	10	11
+Ed	2	2
+Ad	1	1
total	60	90

Table 22: Present-Tense Inflections with final -Þ or -ð in the SW

inflection	cases	tokens
+EN	6	7
+IEN	1	1
+YN	1	1

+IN	1	1
total	9	10

Table 23: Present-Tense Inflections with final -n in the SW

The rest of the inflections are then forms –*e* with 5 cases and –*et* with 1 case.

4.4.2. *Preterite SW*

Although Table 24 for the preterite inflections in the SW may look similar to the midlands, Tables 25 and 26 show there are more cases where the inflectional ending for plurals contains the dental affix without the final –*n* than with it. Excluding this difference, the results are similar. Forms with the dental affix are more frequent than without, as there are only 7 cases of –*e* and 8 cases of –*en*:

inflection	cases	tokens
+EDE	16	26
+DEN	8	15
+DE	8	12
+E	7	11
+EN	7	11
+EDEN	7	8
+DDEN	3	4
+DDE	3	3
+DEn	2	2
+En	1	2
+DDEn	1	1
+DEDE	1	1
total	64	96

Table 24: Preterite Inflections in the SW

inflection	cases	tokens
+DEN	8	15
+EDEN	7	8
+DDEN	3	4
+DEn	2	2
+DDEn	1	1
total	21	30

Table 25: Preterite Inflections containing -d- or -t- and final -n in the SW

inflection	cases	tokens

+EDE	16	26
+DE	8	12
+DDE	3	3
+DEDE	1	1
total	28	42

Table 26: Preterite Inflections containing -d- or -t- and no final -n in the SW

inflection	cases	tokens
+EN	7	11
+En	1	2
total	8	13

Table 27: Preterite Inflections containing final -n and no -d- or -t- in the SW

4.5. South-East

4.5.1. Present SE

As can be seen in Table 28, the most frequent inflection for the SE is –*eþ*, followed by –*eth*:

INFLECTION (vps2%)	COUNT OF FREQ	SUM OF FREQ
+Ey	50	184
+ETH	10	13
+EZ	7	17
+Ed	7	13
+IETH	5	5
+IEy	5	10
+ET	4	6
+E	4	6
+Od	2	2
+E>y>	2	2
+Ad	2	2
+UTH	2	3
+YEy	2	7
+IAd	2	3
no inflection	1	1
+y	1	1
+IEDH	1	1
+EN	1	1
+IET	1	1
+IEd	1	2
+ETy	1	1
+TH	1	1
total	112	281

Table 28: Present-Tense Inflections in the SE

Interestingly, the SE is also the only dialect with the spelling -ez for /eÞ/ and -edh for /ð/. There is also only one instance each of final -n and no inflectional ending at all, with the majority being made up of the dental fricatives -Þ, -ð, and -th, the dental plosives -d and -t, and four cases of final -e.

inflection	cases	tokens
+Ey	50	184
+ETH	10	13
+IETH	5	5
+IEy	5	10
+E>y>	2	2
+UTH	2	3
+YEy	2	7
+y	1	1
+ETy	1	1
+TH	1	1
total	79	227

Table 29: Present-Tense Inflections with final -þ, -th in the SE

inflection	cases	tokens
+Ed	7	13
+Od	2	2
+Ad	2	2
+IAd	2	3
+IEDH	1	1
+IEd	1	2
total	15	23

Table 30: Present-Tense Inflections with final -ð, -dh in the SE

4.5.2. Preterite SE

As can be seen in Table 31, out of the 89 cases for the preterite plurals of weak verbs in the SE 70 contain the preterite dental affix and 40 contain the final –n:

INFLECTION (vpt2%)	COUNT OF FREQ	SUM OF FREQ
+DE	15	34
+DEN	15	35
+E	13	70
+EDE	10	12
+DDE	9	37

+EDEN	9	14
+DDEN	7	43
+EN	6	30
+DDEn	2	2
+TE	1	1
+DAN	1	1
+T	1	1
total	89	280

Table 31: Preterite Inflections in the SE

Nonetheless, out of the 70 that contain the dental affix, only 34 contain both the dental affix and the final –*n*, as shown in Table 32:

inflection	cases	tokens
+DEN	15	35
+EDEN	9	14
+DDEN	7	43
+DDEn	2	2
+DAN	1	1
total	34	95

Table 32: Preterite Inflections containing -d- or -t- and final -n in the SE

As was the case with the SW inflections containing both the -*d*- or -*t*- and –*n* and inflections containing only -*d*- or -*t*- are much closer in number than in the midlands.

inflection	cases	tokens
+DE	15	34
+EDE	10	12
+DDE	9	37
+TE	1	1
+T	1	1
total	36	85

Table 33: Preterite Inflections containing -d- or -t- and no final -n in the SE

5. Discussion

As was presented in the previous section there are many variations when it comes to inflectional endings of weak verbs in Early Middle English. In this section I will discuss the findings and compare the results based on dialectal region more closely. This section will also discuss the drawbacks and problems which arose during the analysis method, and future areas for research.

5.1.   Present-Tense Inflectional Variation

As was seen in the Results section, ME dialectal areas show differing preferences for inflections indicating plurality in weak verbs and show more variation than in OE (this is partly due to the higher number of surviving texts produced in the ME period, as well as the replacement of English in the legal and political sphere by French and Latin leading to 'more freedom' od English scribes to express their language).

5.1.1. Final -s, Final -z, and No Inflectional Ending

In the case of present-tense plurality in weak verbs the northern texts showed the most differing results compared to the rest of the dialects. It was the only dialectal area with forms containing a final –s to express plurality:

inflection ∨	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+IS	18	0	0	0	0	18
+ES	13	0	0	0	0	13
+S	9	0	0	0	0	9
+EZ	0	0	0	0	7	7
+IES	1	0	0	0	0	1
total	41	0	0	0	7	48

Table 34: Present-Tense Inflections with final –s, –z, or no inflectional ending

The N was also the region with the most cases of no inflectional ending, with the EM and the SE both having only 1 case each of no inflectional ending (in EM: wANT - wendan/vps23 in SW Essex; in SE: WENT – wendan/vps23 in Canterbury, Kent). The WM and the SW did not show any cases of no inflectional ending:

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
no inflection	46	0	1	1	0	48
total	46	0	1	1	0	48

Table 35: No inflectional endings in present tense

5.1.2. Final -n

The inflection which was present in all dialectal areas were inflections ending in -n. The specific -en was the most frequent form, making it difficult to distinguish from the subjunctive, nonetheless, already in the early ME period the subjunctive as a formal category begins to subside (Laing, 2013: 4.4.4.6).

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+EN	19	3	54	6	1	83
+En	7	2	5	0	0	14
+IEN	2	0	7	1	0	10
+EN^N	0	0	6	0	0	6
+IN	2	1	1	1	0	5
+ENN	0	0	5	0	0	5
+In	0	0	3	0	0	3
+IgEn	0	0	2	0	0	2
+N	0	0	1	0	0	1
+YN	0	0	0	1	0	1
+AN	1	0	0	0	0	1
total	31	6	84	9	1	131

Table 36: Inflection with final –n in present tense

Nonetheless, as can be seen in Table 36 above, although each dialectal region shows at least 1 instance, inflections ending with -n are most frequent in the EM and are common in the N (but not as common as the no inflectional ending). The WM and the SW show less than 10 cases of the final -n, and the SE only 1 case.

5.1.3. Final -ð, -þ, -dh, -th

The inflections showing the closest resemblance to the OE interdental fricative ending –aþ are present in all the areas except the N. These are most common in the WM and the S, where they make up the majority of the pl. inflections. Nevertheless, there are spelling variations among them as well, with inflections ending with –ð used more in the WM and the EM, where they appear in similar numbers as the final –n, and inflections ending with –þ used more in the S:

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+Ed	0	135	53	2	7	197
+IEd	0	57	25	0	1	83
+Id	0	7	3	0	0	10
+IAd	0	7	0	0	2	9
+Ad	0	5	0	1	2	8
+IgEd	0	0	4	0	0	4
+Od	0	0	0	0	2	2
+Ig[I]d	0	0	1	0	0	1
+E>d>	0	1	0	0	0	1
total	0	212	86	3	14	315

Table 37: Inflections ending with –ð in the present tense

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+Ey	0	53	1	47	50	151
+IEy	0	10	0	10	5	25
+YEy	0	2	0	0	2	4
+IAy	0	4	0	0	0	4
+E>y>	0	0	0	0	2	2
+y	0	0	0	0	1	1
+Ay	0	1	0	0	0	1
+ETy	0	0	0	0	1	1
total	0	70	1	57	61	189

Table 38: Inflections ending with –þ in the present tense

Two other features which were interesting to compare regionally are the spellings of the interdental fricatives and the retention of the thematic -*i*- in the inflections. As was seen in Tables 37 and 38 above, the runic letters þ, ð still remain in larger use in the EME period, but as can be seen in Table 39 the spellings –*th*, and in smaller use –*dh*, show 19 cases in the SE:

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+ETH	0	1	1	0	10	12
+IETH	0	0	0	0	5	5
+UTH	0	0	0	0	2	2
+IEDH	0	0	0	0	1	1
+TH	0	0	0	0	1	1
total	0	1	1	0	19	21

Table 39: Inflections endings with –th in the present tense

As can be seen in Table 43, the Midlands show the most cases with the weak verb class II's thematic -*i*- still preserved, although this could possibly be attributed to the higher number of tagged texts from the WM in LAEME. Each dialectal area shows signs of its retention, though only in very few cases in the N and moderately in the S, with the most cases in the Midlands. Interestingly, the EM are the only region which show the inflectional forms containing the insular <g> which was often used to indicate the thematic -*i*- in verb endings.

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+IEd	0	57	25	0	1	83
+IEy	0	10	0	10	5	25
+IEN	2	0	7	1	0	10
+IAd	0	7	0	0	2	9
+IETH	0	0	0	0	5	5
+IAy	0	4	0	0	0	4
+IgEd	0	0	4	0	0	4

+IET	0	2	0	0	1	3
+IgEn	0	0	2	0	0	2
+Ig[I]d	0	0	1	0	0	1
+IEDH	0	0	0	0	1	1
+IES	1	0	0	0	0	1
total	3	80	39	11	15	148

Table 40: Inflections with thematic -i- in the present tense

5.1.4. *Final -e and -i*

The last prominent inflectional endings used in present-tense pl. weak verbs are the inflection –*e* and –*i*, where the final consonant has been lost completely in writing. As can be seen in Table 41, these are less common in the Midlands and much less common in the S, but appear in relatively significant numbers in the N:

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+E	24	8	14	5	4	55
+I	0	2	0	0	0	2
total	24	10	14	5	4	57

Table 41: Inflections with final –e or –i

As is the case with PDE, the loss of the final consonant, and thus the formal distinction of the plural number becomes the standard where even the endings –*e*, and –*i*, eventually disappear. But in EME in the N, this tendency appears earlier to the rest of the Island.

5.2. Preterite Inflectional Variation

Compared to the Present-Tense inflectional endings, the differences between in the pl. form of weak verbs in the preterite are less easily visible. Nonetheless, we can distinguish the preterite into distinctive subgroups as well.

5.2.1. *Preterite Plural -den*

The majority of inflections for the preterite pl. of weak verbs are inflections containing both the preterite dental suffix -*d*- and the plural suffix –*n* with a total of 308 cases out of 585 inflections, -den and its variations are present in all dialectal areas, with the most cases in the WM, followed by the EM. Table 42, 43, and 44 present ortographic variations in the spelling of –*den* and their regional frequencies:

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+DDEN	0	4	8	3	7	22
+DDEn	0	0	2	1	2	5
+DDIN	0	0	1	0	0	1

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+DEN^N	0	0	7	0	0	7
+DENN	0	0	1	0	0	1
totsl						

Table 42: Inflections with double consonants in the preterite[3]

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+DEN	6	68	31	8	15	128
+DIN	1	0	1	0	0	2
+DAN	0	0	0	0	1	1
+DON	0	1	0	0	0	1
+DDIN	0	0	1	0	0	1
+>E>DAN	0	1	0	0	0	1
total						

Table 43: Inflections with variations in the vowel

5.2.1.1. *Possible Retention of thematic -o-*

Another interesting feature to compare regionally is the retention of the OE thematic -o- distinctive of the weak verb class II. As can be seen in Table 44, the inflection *–eden* is the most frequent in the West and East Midlands areas:

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+EDEN	2	62	27	7	9	107
+EDEn	0	7	5	0	0	12
+E-DEN	0	1	0	0	0	1
+>E>DEN	0	1	0	0	0	1
+EDON	0	1	0	0	0	1
+ENDEN	0	0	1	0	0	1
+>E>DAN	0	1	0	0	0	1
+ED^EN	0	0	1	0	0	1
total	2	73	34	7	9	125

Table 44: Inflections showcasing the retention of the thematic -o- in the preterite

Nonetheless, compared to the plural present tense -i-, the -e- in the preterite is less indicative of the class II weak verb class as it appears both in OE weak verbs class II verbs as well as weak verbs which did not originally belong to class II and the connecting -*e*- may function for different purposes. It is, however, more common in the verbs which originally did belong to the class.

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[3] Most frequent in the EM, especially the double final -n from text #301.

5.2.2. Inflections without Final -n

The second most frequent group of inflections are forms containing the preterite -*d*- or -*t*- without the final -n with a total of 176 cases. The third most frequent group are inflections containing the final –*n* without the dental affix with a total of 62 cases.

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+DE	13	13	8	8	15	57
+EDE	0	15	7	16	10	48
+D	23	1	1	0	0	25
+DDE	0	4	1	3	9	17
+ID	10	1	0	0	0	11
+ED	6	2	0	0	0	8
+TE	2	0	1	0	1	4
+T	2	0	0	0	1	3
+IDE	0	0	2	0	0	2
+DEDE	0	0	0	1	0	1
total	56	36	20	28	36	176

Table 45: Inflections without final –n in the preterite

5.2.3. Inflections without Dental Affix

As can be seen in Table 45, there are two instances of inflections where neither plurality nor the preterite tense are indicated, these are –*e* and no inflectional ending at all. The N showed the most cases of no inflectional ending, with the EM being the only other region with 1 case.[4] The inflection –*e* is present in all dialectal areas, with the most cases being in the SE. The most frequent inflection which does not contain any dental affix is –*en*, which is also present in all dialectal areas with the highest frequency being the WM (once again, the WM having the most cases could be because of the higher number of tagged words from this area).

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
+EN	1	25	15	7	6	54
+En	1	3	2	1	0	7
+E*N	0	1	0	0	0	1
+E	3	3	2	7	13	28
no inflection	10	0	1	0	0	11
total	15	32	20	15	19	101

Table 46: Inflections without the dental suffix in the preterite

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[4] OE wendan, lexel: wendan, form: WEN/vpt23, in Text #137, E Cambs. The rest of the cases for this verb in the EM had either -en, or -e – wENDEN, WENTE, wANTEn, wENDEN, ...

With the loss of the preterite -*d*-, -en does not indicate any difference between the present and the past tense, it does, however, still retain the distinction between the singular and plural number.

inflection	NORTH	WM	EM	SW	SE	total
-d- or -t- and -n	10	153	90	21	34	308
d- or -t- and no -n	56	36	20	28	36	176
-n and no -d- or -t-	2	29	17	8	6	62
no inflection	10	0	1	0	0	11
final -e	3	3	2	7	13	28
TOTAL	82	221	130	64	89	586

Table 47: Comparison of the inflectional varieties in the preterite

6. Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the regional linguistic situation during the early Middle English period, specifically by examining the variations in the present and preterite plural form of weak verbs. The research compared the evolution of inflectional endings from Old English to early Middle English in 5 of the major regional dialects: norther, west midland, east midland, south-west, and south-east. The Middle English period is characterised by extensive inflectional ending loss as well increase of recorded texts written in various dialects, which provided the perfect basis for the research into regional variation through taking a closer look at inflectional endings.

The theoretical section outlined the historical influences integral for the development of Middle English, along with overviews on the linguistic landscapes of Old and Middle English. The dialectal situations of both the linguistic periods are outlined and information concerning weak verbs in specific provided a theoretical background for the practical part of this thesis. The findings of the practical part were compiled and the inflectional endings of 20 selected weak verbs were examined across different regions: the north, west midlands, east midlands, south-west, and south-east.

The findings reveal significant regional variations of the plural form, especially in the present-tense inflectional endings. Notably, the northern dialect exhibited unique features, such as the use of final –s and the frequent absence of inflectional endings completely. The east midlands displayed a high frequency of –en endings, while the west midlands and south-west showed much fewer instances of the plural –n endings. The west midlands and the southern dialects retained forms resembling Old English interdental fricative endings, with notable spelling variations.

In the preterite tense, inflectional variation was slightly less pronounced but still notable. The most common inflections combined the dental suffix -d- with a plural –n, predominantly found in the midlands. Variations without the distinctive plural final –n and forms lacking the dental affix were also observed, though in smaller numbers, with the northern dialects again showing the most cases of no inflectional ending.

Ultimately, the Middle English period, especially in its early stages, showcases complexity and diversity of English dialects, influenced by historical, social, and linguistic factors. Future research could further explore the sociolinguistic implications of these findings, examining how regional identities and interactions influenced linguistic developments. Additionally, a comparison to late Middle English would provide more comprehensive insights into the

evolution of Middle English inflectional patterns. In conclusion, the regional differences in the inflectional endings of the plural form of weak verbs underscore the dynamic nature of the language during this period of transition.

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7. Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá zkoumáním fletktivních koncovek v rámci pěti dialektálních území rané střední angličtiny. Flektivní koncovky, které byly analyzovány byly variace množného čísla slabých sloves. Výzkum si kladl za cíl porovnat vývoj koncovek od staré angličtiny k rané střední angličtině, přičemž zdůraznil přechodnou povahu střední angličtiny, charakterizovanou posunem od syntetické staré angličtiny k analytické moderní angličtině.

Práce byla rozdělena na teoretickou část a praktickou část. V teoretické části se nastínily historické, společenské a politické vlivy na vývoj střední angličtiny jakou jsou příchod germánských kmenů na území Anglie v pátém století a Normanská invaze v raném jedenáctém století. V této se části se také nastínily lingvistické vývoje od staré angličtiny do střední angličtiny jako jsou např. redukce flektivních koncovek a nárůst přílivu cizích slov, hlavně francouzských. Poskytla také přehled nářečních regionů obou období a pohledy akademické sféry na gramatické vývoje těchto období a jejich regionální variace.

V praktické části se sestavilo 20 slabých sloves a postupně se prozkoumaly jejich flektivní koncovky množného čísla v pěti různých nářečních oblastech střední angličtiny: sever, západní midlands, východní midlands, jihozápad a jihovýchod. Výsledky odhalují významné regionální variace ve skloňování plurálu slabých sloves hlavně v přítomném čase. Na severu se prokázaly jedinečné rysy, jako např. použití koncovky –*s*, která se nevyskytla nikde jinde (na jihovýchodě se projevila pouze jedna forma s koncovkou –*z*). Severní dialekt se také vyznačil častou absencí jakýchkoliv koncovek. Východní midlands se vykazovalo vysokou frekvencí zakončení –*en*, které se zajímavě nejspíše přejalo z preteritního tvaru plurálu, čímž nahradilo předešlou koncovku –*aþ*. Západní midlands a jihozápad vykazovalo méně případů zakončení –*n*. V jižních a zápdních midlands dialektech se mnohem lépe zachovaly formy připomínající koncovky staré angličtiny, s pozoruhodnými ortografickými variacemi jako jsou např. –*eð*, –*eth*.

V préteritu byla variace skloňování méně pozoruhodná, ale stále výrazná. Nejčastější koncovky kombinovaly dentální příponu -*d*- s koncovkou množného čísla –*n*, které se vyskytovaly převážně v midlands. Pozorovány byly pak také variace bez koncového –*n* a tvary bez dentálních afixů, přičemž severní dialekt opět vykazoval nejvíce případů bez žádné flektivní koncovky.

Tato práce zdůrazňuje komplexitu a rozmanitost flektivních koncovek slabých sloves v rané střední angličtině a prokazuje variaci ve vývoji dialektů z Anglosaského období do

středověké Anglie. Období střední angličtiny je silně ovlivněno historickými, sociálními a lingvistickými faktory a regionální rozdíly ve skloňování plurálních koncovek zdůrazňují její dynamickou povahu v ohledu gramatického vývoje angličtiny od silně flektivního jazyka na primárně analytickou moderní angličtinu.

Budoucí výzkum by mohl dále prozkoumat sociolingvistické důsledky těchto zjištění a jelikož je oblast střední angličtiny tak rozsáhlá a variace ve slovesech velice rozmanitám jsou budoucí studie na toto téma stále zajímavá. Následné srovnání s pozdní střední angličtinou by také navíc poskytlo komplexnější pohled na vývoj středoanglických flektivních vzorců.

8. Appendix

8.1. Apendix 1: List of weak verbs from *An Introduction of Middle English* (Fulk, 2012)

<u>FROM 78. The OE background:</u>

1. **HABBAN** 'have' (OE: ge)habban; ME: haven): to have (sb or sth in a state or condition), have (sb or sth somewhere; with obj or infinitive: to possess; have (a part or an organ of a certain kind, have (a soul, body, …); to have (sb) under one, exercise authority over (sb); to possess a quality or attribute; to have (an emotion, idea, etc.); … – **have**

2. **LIFIAN** 'live' (West Saxon and late Kentish *libban*) (OE: cp. A lifgan (lifian); ME: liven): to be alive, continue to live, survive, also be alive spiritually; of things or abstractions: to last, endure, be exist; to dwell (in a place), live (in water) – **live**

3. **SECGAN** 'say' (OE: secgan, sæcgan; ME: seien): with direct quotation: to say, utter; to answer; to say (sth, sth to sb), state, declare; to express, repeat, etc. – **say**

4. **HYCGAN** 'think' – **hycgan**

5. **HERAN** 'hear' (OE: cp. A ge)hēra(n): to hear (a sound, speech, words, messages, etc); to be able to hear, have the function of hearing; to understand (sth), comprehend; to listen to (sb or sth) – **hear**

6. **DEMAN** 'judge' (OE: dēman): to pass judgment on (sb or sth); judge; criticize, censure, condemn; to rule (a people) under the law of the land – **deem**

7. **SETTEN** 'set' (OE: settan) – to make (sb) sit – **set**

8. **TEMIAN** 'tame' (OE: temian): to tame (an animal, sb or sth that is wild); *fig* to civiize (men), Christianize; to subjugate (sb, the world), defeat, also force by subduing – **tame**

9. **LUFIAN**, ME louen 'love' (OE: lufian): to feel affection or friendship for (sb, an animal), love, also show love to (sb), behave lovingly toward; to love (God, Christ), worship and obey; to feel the emotion of love, behave in a loving manner – **love** from lalme

10. **FYLLAN** 'fill' (OE: fyllan): to make full, to load (a ship) to capacity; of smokes, fumes, smell: pervade, fill (space); to furnich or equip adequately; to satiate – **fill**

11. **TELLEN** (OE: tellan): to speak, talk, say, speak (of sb or sth), speak (to sb, against sb), make mention (of sth), talk (to sb); of an author: to tell in writing, state in text; to tell a story aloud, relate an event, recount a miracle; to inform; anounce sth – **tell**

12. **NEMNEN** (OE: nemnan, nemnian & genemnan): to mention, specify, or speak of (sb or sth) by name; tell or say the anem of (sb or sth); give a name to (sb or sth); toc all (sb or sth) by some title, term, decriptive adjective or phrase; to choose or appoint – **name**

13. **KISSEN** 'kiss' (OE: cyssan) – **kiss**

14. **LAUGHEN** 'laugh' (OE; cp. A hlæh(h)an, WS hlieh(h)an): to laugh (ina musement, triumph, derision, etc.), smile, jeer, of the eye: show pleasure or amusement; to laugh at (sth) – **laugh** – found only strong paradigms in the past tense (the p.ppl. And the weak past of laughen are exceedingly rare before the 2nd half of the 14th century)

15. **WISHEN** (OE: wyscan, wīscan): to feel intense longing of a spiritual or an emotional nature, suffer unfulfilled desire, also give voice to one's longing; to experience a desire

for possession or acquisition of some good; to be eager for, wish, eagerly desire – **wish** – only one case of present tense

16. **THANKEN** (OE: þancian, þoncian, þongian): to give thanks, also in passive quotation; give thanks (to sb, God); to rejoice with sb, wish joy (to sb) – **thank**

17. **DELEN** 'deal' (OE: dǣlan): to separate (things, persona, languages); to cut off (sth); to divide, cut up; chod (food); to give (sth) to (sb); give (sth) away; to reign, rule, arrange, govern – **deal**

FROM 79: Sample paradigms:

18. **WON(I)EN** (OE: wunian, wunigan): to live (somewhere), reside, dwell; remain (somewhere for a period of time), sojourn; take up habitation; continue to be (in a certain state or condition); to be present (inside sb); be accustomed or used to – **wunian**

19. **DEFIEN** 'defy' (OF: desfier): to renounce (Sth), reject, repudiate; disavow, disclaim; give up; to despise, treat with contempt, scorn; to challenge (sb) to fight, defy; declare war on – **defi:en**

20. **ANOIEN**(OF: anoier, en(n)uier, ennuer): to disturb, annoy, offend, displease, irritate, provoke; to trouble or vex (sb), to harass or oppress (a country); to harm, hurt, or injure; be perplexed or worried; to tire out, make weary – **annoy**

21. **TRYMMEN** 'strengthen' (OE: trymman, trymian): to exhort (sb to sth), encourage; to strengthen (sb's faith), to give birth, bind together – lexel in laeme: **trymian**

22. **WRETHEN** (OE: wræþan): to be or become angry, rage?, of God: be or become reighteously wrathfulto provoke (sb, God, etc) to anger, also, displease; to harass, vex – **wrae:Yan**

23. **DEREN** 'injure' (OE: derian): to hurt (sb), injure, damage (sth), to wound (sb), to grieve (sb), frighten; to be injurious, be painful, do harm – **derian**

24. **SENDEN** 'send' (OE: sĕndan, sǣndan): to dispatch (sb) as messenger or on a mission or an errand, dispatch; to cause (sb) to be conducted or conveyed, allow to go, return (a captive to sb); release; to cause to be delived or conveyed – **send**

FROM 80: Variant stem types of regular verbs:

25. **GRETEN** 'greet' Greet (OE: grētan, grōtan - forms show influence of OE grēatian.): to greet (sb), pay one's respects to, send greeting; to give honor to, cry to (God, Our Lady, etc.); to address (sb with contumely), insult, challenge; to attack – **greet**
    a. Greet (OE grētan (?also WS *grǣtan)): to weep, cry, lament; to cry out, howl

26. **RESTEN** 'rest' (OE: restan): to take repose, esp. In bed, relax by sleeping, lying down; to cease temporarily from a journey, take a break, refrain from activity; to lay down; to remain undisturbed, be still; to remain in a place – **rest**

27. **DREMEN** 'dream' (OE: dreman): of a musical instrument: to resound – **dream**

28. **MENEN** 'mean' (OE: mǣnan): to intend to convey (sth), mean; intend (sth, to do sth, …); to say, assert – **mean, mae:nan**

29. **GIRDEN** (OE: gyrdan): to encircle the waist of (sb with a belt or girdle), put a belt or girdle about (sb, sb's waist); gird the loins, fasten (a garment); to clothe (sb with a garment), cover (a horse); to buckle one (a sword) – **gyrdan**

30. **BILDEN** 'build' (OE: byldan, bylde, byld (rare). The word is chiefly southwestern until 1350, it overlaps belden both in form and meaning): to make one's home (in a place), settle, dwell, live; to construct, build (a house, church, altar); to engage in construction or building, build, build up; to found (a city), establish; to provide (living quarters) – **build**

31. **WENDAN** 'go' (OE: wendan, wændan, (Nhb.) woendan to turn; occas. difficult to distinguish from ME wīnden): to go on foot, walk; to make one's way, travel, rpoceed, move; traverse; leave, depart; sail; descend; go to hell after death; behave in a certain way; die; to dwell – **wendan**

32. **LEUEN** 'leave' (OE: lǣfan): to stop, cease; to abandon, desert; allow to survive, spare; take one's departure – **lae:fan**

33. **BIREUEN** (OE: berēafian): to deprive or rob (sb, sth); to take (sth) away, esp by violence, snatch away, steal; deprive, rob – **bere:afian**

34. **KIÞEN** 'make known' (OE: cȳþan): to make (sth) known by speech or writing, say (sth), tell, proclaim, foretell; to command, presxribe; to make (sth) known without words, reveal (a fact, an idea, etc); to exhibit (a virtue, vice, quality, exercise (power, strength), show (joy, love, one's habits, etc) – **cy:Yan**

35. **CLETHEN** (clothe) – cladde pret. (clothed)
    a. Nhb. clæðdon (operuistis), which is prob. from OE clǣþ. ME clēthen occurs chiefly in N texts or in texts containing N forms – **clae:Yan**
    b. Clothen (OE: The late and rare Nhb. **geclāded (vestitum)** may also be derived from OE **clāþ**; no other forms of OE *clāþian have been found – **clothe**

36. **FEDEN** 'feed' (OE: fēdan): to supply with sth to eat or drink; to frunish with a meal; to feed; to supply with milk from the breast; to nourish – **feed**

37. **METEN** 'meet' (OE: mētan): to come across (sb), chance upon, fall in with; to come together, meet; to go see (sb) visit; to engage in combat; to touch, come in contatc with; to have intercourse – **meet**

38. **KEPEN** (OE: cepan) – **keep**

39. **FELEN** (OE: ge)felan): to experience a tactile or muscular sensation – **feel**

40. **HELEN** 'heal' (OE: hǣlan): to cure, heal; apply treatment; oh a wound, disease, etc: to become healed, get better; to reform (an evil, sins) – **heal**

41. **LEREN** 'teach'
    a. 'teach' (OE: lǣran): to teach, give instruction to (sb); ppl. Lered: educated, cultivated, wise; to bid (sb), command; to recount a legend, historical event; receive instruction, learn – **learn**
    b. **CF. LERNEN** (OE: leornian): ro receive instruction, be educated, to learn, to read; to get knowlege of (sth); to teach (sb), instruct – **learn**

42. **LEDEN** (OE: lǣdan): to conduct (sb), accompany, bring, take; to bring (sb) in one's retinue or train; go before preced; to guide (sb) on his way, direct, lead; command; control (sb or sth), have power over (sth) – **lead**

43. **SLEPEN** – many strong preterite tokens (OE: (WS) slǣpan, slāpan, (A) slēpan): to sleep, be asleep; to fall asleep, get to sleep; to have intercourse; be inactive, be inoperative) – **sleep**

44. **QUENCHEN** (OE: ācwencan): to extinguish (sth, fire, sth burning); to drench (sth) with water; to bring (sth, vital force) to nought, end, eliminate, destroy; to assuage (sorrow, enmity, indignation – **quench**

45. **BLENCHEN** 'flinch' (OE: blencan - deceive (rare) & ON. MnE has both blench & blink): to move suddenly or sharply; jerk, twist, flinch, wince, dodge; to change one's course, turn; to avoid, evade, abstain – **blencan**

46. **DRENCHEN** 'drown' (OE: drencan, drencte & gedrencan): to drown (sb), kill by drowning; to drown, be drowned; to sink (a ship, its cargo); give (sb) drink, to poison with a drink; to descend, fall; flood; soak (sth) – **drencan**

47. **MENGEN** 'mix' (OE: mengan, mængan): to mix (sth with sth else), mingle; add (sth to sth else); to prepare (a mixed drink); to join (with sb), unite; to marry, join; to disturb (sb in mind), confuse, trouble, anger – **mengan**

48. **SPRENGEN** 'sprinkle' (OE: sprengan, sprencgan, sprængan): to sprinkle (salt, ashes, holy water, etc), scatter, disperse; to sprinkle, spatter, moisten – **sprengan**

49. **LIEN**
    a. Lie (OE:licgan, læg, lægon, gelegen): to adopt a recumbent posture, lie down; to have intercourse with; be in a reclining posture, recline, lie at ease; to be down or cast down; lie wounded or unable to move; be in some misfortune; of land: be situated; be placed or lacated; remain hidden, lie in concealment – **licgan**
    b. Lie (OE: WS lēogan & A lēgan): to tell a lie, soeak falsely, deceive; of the Bible, book: to contain misinformation, deceive; also, cheat; speak untruthfully; to be false to (sb), betray; be mistaken, misjudge – **le:ogan**

50. **MAKEN**
    a. Make (OE: macian): of God, Christ: to create (the earth, man, etc); to constuct or produce (Sth), make (cloth, mortar, charcoal, a statue, garment, etc.; coin (money); to found (a city, church, etc.); … – **make**
    b. Make (from make): to mate with (sb), marry –

51. **TAKEN** (LOE: tacan & ON): to grip, take hold; pick up and put or place; to penetrate, pierce, seize someone by force; prevail; take possession of sth, esp. selfishly , wrongfully, or forcibly; strike a blow, make an attack; obtain victory; receive – **take** – mostly strong (vpt: 1case and 1token; vSpt: 80cases and 164tokens)

52. **MEUEN** 'move' (OF: movoir, meuvre, muevre, moevre & AF moveir, muve(i)r): to move (sb or sth), shift, remove, dislodge, move, shake, disturb, stir; to go, journey, travel; to exist, have being, move, live – **move** – no indicative plural paradigms of weak category

53. **PREUEN** (OF: prover, prouver, preuver, pruever, pruver): to test (sb), put to the test, try, tempt; to prove in practice; to approve of sth, sanction, agree with; to find out, discover, ascertain, realize – **prove**

54. **COUEREN**, keueren (OF: covr-ir, couvr-ir): to cover (sth) by laying or spreading material over or about it, cover up or envelop; to caparison (a horse); to cover (sth) – **cover{r}**

FROM: 81. Examples of the stem type:

55. **CLENSEN** (OE: clǣnsian): to separate (the grain) from the chaff and other refuse, sift, winnow; to free (liquid, etc.) from sediment and impurities, clarify, strain; to cleanse (sth) of filth or dirt, wash, wipe, or sweep clean, remove (filth), wipe away – **cleanse**

56. **CLEPEN** 'call' (OE: A cliopian, cleopian, WS clipian, clypian): to speak, call, shout; to apply (a name, epthet, title, expression, or designation to sb or sth), name (sb so-and-so), call (sb king, foolish, etc); to address, salute; to call upon or appeal – **cleopian**

57. **FOLWEN** 'follow' (OE: folgian, ge-folgian & fylg(e)an): to come after (sth) in space, to come or occur after in time, to succeed, to be next after, to follow; to advance along (a path, etc), to accompany (sb); to obey or be subservient (to sb) – **follow**

58. **HEREN** 'praise' (OE: herian, hergan): to praise (sb or sth); to worship (God, a god); to honor (sb or sth) – **herian**

59. **HOPEN** 'hope' (OE: hopian): to hope, take hope, maintain hope, hope for (sth); to think (sth, that sth is the case), to expect, fear – **hope**

60. **LOKEN** (OE: lōcian): to use the yes for seeing, engage the sense of vision, direct or fix the sight; take alook, look about, look; glance, peer, gaze, stare – **look**

61. **LOUEN** (from loue -adj): to make (Sth) low, cut down, lower; to decline in price; to reduce (sb) in power or status; to make (sb, one's soul) humble – **low**

62. **SPELLEN** 'narrate' (OE: spellian, spillian): to talk, speak; to tell a story orally or in writing; to preach – **spellian**

63. **BITAKNEN** 'betoken' (from tōknen & OE tācnian): to be symbol or emblem of (sth), represent symbolically; to be a sign or omen of (sth), to foretell, prophesize; indicate, show – **betoken**

64. **TILEN** 'cultivate' (OE: tilian, til(i)gan, teolian, tylian): to prepare land for agricultural use; also engage in husbandry; to produce crops, raise, grow, produce; to trwat (sb) medically, cure; to make an effort, strive, toil – **till**

65. **ÞOLEN** 'endure' (OE: þolian, þolige(a)n): to be made to undergo (a penalty for misdeed; to suffer, endure (hunger, pain); experience, feel (shame); be patient, forbear, put up with – **Yolian**

66. **WONDREN** or wonder (be amazed) (OE: wundrian, wundrigan): to be struck with awe or amazement, feel wonder; to be taken by surprise; to be puzzled, curious; to gaze with fascination – **wonder**

67. **BENDEN** – no plural in LAEME
    a. Bend (OE: bendan): to draw back the string of (a bow); to curve or turn (Sth), bend, twist; to have a tendency (to do sth), be inclined (to sth); to stoop, bow – **bend**

68. **BLEDEN** (OE: blēdan, blēdde): to emit or lose blood, bleed; bleed to death, die of wounds, die; to stain or cover (sth) with blood – **bleed**

69. **BLENDEN** (OE: blendan - rare & blandan - corresp. to OI blanda): to mix or blend; to intersperse; to penetrate (sth); to spill or shed blood; of a person: to migle or have dealings (with others), have intercourse – **blend**

70. **FELLEN** 'fell' (OE: WS ge-)fyllan, A ge-fællan): to make (sth) fall or drop from a supported or hanging position; to knock (fruit, flowers, leaves) from a tree; to cut (a

person) down from a cross or gibbet, to shed (tears); to slay, kill; to overthrow (an institution), abolish (laws) – **fell**

71. **GILTEN** 'sin' (OE: gegyltan): to commit a misdeed or transgression, do wrong, sin, be guilty of sin or wrong-doing – **guilt**

72. **HENTEN** 'catch' (OE: ge)hentan): to take hold of, seize, grasp; of briars: tocatch (sth); to take (sth), pick up, select, choose – **hentan**

73. **HYDEN** (OE: hȳdan): to conceal (sb or sth), hide, put in a secret place; conceal oneself, disappear, to protect (sb or sth), shelter; to cover up, wrap; keep secret, conceal – **hide**

74. **LASTEN** (OE: lǣstan): of a state or sondition, a situation, sin, life, etc: to go on existing, continue; of a quality, thought, emotion: to continue, remain unchanged; to continue, proced, to go on living – **last**

75. **PLIƷEN** 'promise' (OE: plihtan): to promise or pledge (sth to sb), to swear allegiance – **plihtan**

76. **SEMEN** 'seem' (ON: cp. OI sœma - to honor, conform): to appear to be (sick, honest, of grewat age, etc.); look like; to appear to someone's perception, convey an impression – **seem**

77. **SPEDEN** 'succeed' (OE: spēdan & *spœdan): to achieve one's goal, accomplish one's purpose, fulfill one's expectation; to fare, get along, do; to give assisstance, assist, help to attain success – **spe:dan**

78. **SPILLEN** 'devastate' (OE: spillan): to kill (sb, oneself, an animal), esp in abrutal or violent fashion, slay; exterminate; to laye waste (a city, territory, etc.), devastate; to cause the damnation of (a preson, soul, fallen angel); to die – **spill**

79. **WENEN** – 'hope' (OE: wēnan, wǣnan, (Nhb.) woenan): to believe, opine, suppose – often with counterfactual force; to expect, anticipate, hope; merely to suppose – **we:nan**

80. **SPREDEN** – 'spread'
    a. (OE *sprǣdan): to lay (cloth, hide, etc.) out flat, spread – **spread**

81. **DREDEN** (WS drǣdan): to be afraid; to fear (sb or sth) – **dread**

82. **GREDEN** 'exclaim'(WS grǣdan (A grēdan)): to cry out, shout; weep, alment; implore (sb), importune – **grae:dan**

83. **REDEN** – read (OE: rǣdan): read, engage in reading – **read**

84. **Scheden** – 'fall' **sce:adan**

85. **TOSNEDEN** 'cut up' (OE: snǣdan, snēdan): to cut (sb) to pieces, slaughter – **snae:dan**

86. **LENEN** 'lean' (OE: Merc. hleonian, WS hlinian, Nhb, hli(o)nian): to lean, support oneself – **hleonian**

87. **RENDEN** – (OE: rendan): to tear a hole in (sth), rip; tear, cleave; to lacerate (sb); remove violently, tear off – **rend**

88. **CLEUEN** (weak and strong preterites) 'cling' (OE: cleofian, clifian) - to stick or adhere (to sth); hold or hang (on to sth)

89. **CREPEN** (creopan) – LAEME lexel: **creep** (but only found strong preterite)

90. **LETTEN** 'hinder' (OE: lettan) – **lettan**

91. **BILEUEN** 'believe'
    a. Believe (OE: WS gelīefan, gelȳfan & A gelēfan) – **believe**
92. **RIPEN** 'rob' (OE: ripan, rypan) – to rob pillage – **ri:pan**

8.2. Appendix 2: List of weak verbs from *eLALME* (Benskin, Laing, Karaiskos, & Williamson, 2013)

From eLALME Item List:
1. STRENGTHEN – strength; only weak
2. LENGTHEN – length; only weak
3. THINK – think; weak but IRREGULAR
4. WORK – work; weak but IRREGULAR

HERY (praise)
WONYE (DWELL)
5. ANSWER – answer; weak
6. ASK – ask; weak
Begin – beginnan (+ onginnan); predominantly strong
7. BLESS – bletsian; weak
8. BURN – burn; mostly weak
9. BURY – bury; weak
10. BUY – buy; IRREGULAR
11. CALL – call; weak

COME sg – come; strong
CAN inf – can; strong
12. CAST – cast; mostly weak

CHOOSE – strong
13. DIE – die; weak
14. DO – do; IRREGULAR
15. DREAD – dread; weak

SPREAD
16. DWELL – dwell; weak
17. FETCH – fetch; weak

FIGHT – fight; strong
FILL
FOLLOW
OE 'feng' TOOK sg — fongen (also fon): take, seize, grasp – fo:n; strong
18. GAR – geren: ON: to prepare of equip – weak
19. GATHER – gather; weak

GET – strong
GIVE – give; strong
GO – strong
GROW – grow; strong
HANGED – mostly strong
HAVE
HEAR
20. HIGH – high; only weak

HOLD – hold; strong
KNOW – know; strong
LAUGH

LEAD

LET pt

LIE (DOWN)

LIVE

    21. LONG – long; weak (Langian, gelangian)

LOVE

LOW

MAKE

    22. MAY – may; weak but IRREGULAR

    23. NIGH – nigh; only weak

    24. PRAY – pray; weak

    25. PRIDE – pride; only weak

HIDE

READ

RUN – run; predominantly strong

SAY

SEE – see; strong

    26. SEEK – seek; weak

    27. SELL – sell; weak but IRREGULAR

    28. SIN – sin; weak

SLAIN – slay; strong

    29. SORROW – sorrow; weak

BRAKE – break; strong

STAND – stand; strong

    30. STIR – styrian; weak

    31. SUFFER – suffer; weak

TAKE inf

    32. TOUCH – touch; weak (from OF)

    33. TRUST – trust; weak

    34. TURN – turn; weak

    35. WIT– witan; weak

    36. WORSHIP – worship; only weak

YIELD – gieldan; predominantly strong

    37. DARE – dare; weak

    38. PREVENT – weak

SPRING* 'sprung' – spring; strong

WAX* 'wyxe' – wax; strong

    39. CHANGE – change; weak (from OF)

    40. GRANT – grant; weak (from OF)

    41. PLANT – plant; weak

BLOW – blow; strong

BEQUEATH – bequeath; strong

BEAR – bear; strong

SPEAK – speak; strong

HELP – help; strong

    42. END – end; weak

QUENCH

SEND

SPEND

WIN – winnan; strong

43. BRING – bring; weak but IRREGULAR
44. LIKE – like; weak
SHINE – shine; more strong
FIND – find; more strong
45. COMFORT – comfort; more weak (from OF)
46. HARM – harm; more weak
47. OPEN – open; more weak
DRINK – drink; strong
48. WORD – word; no tokens