THE GRAMMAR OF OE HATAN

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In the present paper I shall propose a syntactic and semantic analysis of OE hatan in order to account for the properties and peculiarities this verb displays in Old English. For the illustrative material I have taken examples from The Old English version of Bede's Ecclesiastical history of the English people; the modern English translation (not always literal) is quoted after the editor of the text.

During the last decade lexicological problems and, more specifically, lexical structures have been of considerable interest to transformational grammarians (cf. Gruber 1967, 1976, Fillmore 1970, 1971, Perlmutter 1970, Postal 1971). A historical linguist would like to be in a position to avail himself of their methodological experience and of the results they obtain, but he must be aware of the fact that a number of devices used in the analysis of contemporary languages are inaccessible to him. He cannot expect reasonable answers to such questions as: what an OE speaker knew about the specificity of some individual word, what his linguistic intuition was that enabled him to use the word correctly, what he felt about the conditions which determined the appropriateness of the usage of some lexical structure, what paraphrase or synonymous expression he might suggest for a given word, and so on. In spite of these shortcomings and limitations lexicological problems of historical material can be examined and at least some speculative reflections on them proposed. A linguist engaged in historical research of this type is to a great extent bound to rely upon the immediate and sometimes less immediate textual context in which a given word occurs; he may take into account certain conceptually sound assumptions, as well as his own linguistic intuition, and finally, he may look for support of his argumentation in the behaviour of contemporary words which have a similar lexical meaning.

Evidence for the occurrence of two meanings and uses of hatan which seem at first sight to have little in common can be drawn from such sentences as:

(1) so was hatan Amfleot 90/27 (in an inlet of the sea) called Ambietuse
(2) Ond he ða heht his geferan towærpan calbe pone herig 7 pa getimbro 7 forbereman 138/10 (Then he bade his companions pull down all that sanctuary and its buildings, and burn them up with fire)

Working on an assumption that there are two distinct meanings: (1) call, name and (2) order, bid, command which might be referred to as hatan; and hatan, respectively, let us see how each of these verbs behaves with respect to syntax.

The verb hatan, which is illustrated in (1) is a transitive verb. It requires an object and an object complement which is a noun phrase, which is shown indirectly by sentences (3) through (5):

(3) þe mon hatæþ Gallia Bellica 28/2 (the province) called Gallia Belgica
(4) þe mon hatæþ Ealdseaxsan 52/6 (the people) called Old Saxones
(5) þe Romane heton Ueroliuman 49/22 (which the Romans called Veroliuman)

Note that in the above three examples hatan appears in relative clauses. The unrelativized form of (3), for instance, would be something like:

(3a) þe mon hæþe pa meagþe Gallia Bellica

(cf. the whole sentence which runs: Hit hæþe frum suðdale pa meagþe ongean, þe mon hæþe Gallia Bellica - It has on the south opposite to it the province called Gallia Belgica). The noun phrases which function as grammatical subjects of hatan are typically human (þe mon used here as an indefinite pronoun, Romane).

Being a transitive verb, hatan, can undergo passivization; the deletion of by someone is here a regular process dependent on the syntactic construction in which the verb in question appears. Consider some additional passives:

(6) hit waes in geara Albion haten 24/29 (formerly called Albion)
(7) past cynn nu geond to þeg Dalreadings waron hatene 28/28 (Up to this day the race is called Dalreadings)
(8) Wyrtgœmæ was haten 50/12 (Vortigern by name)
(9) þee fæder was Witta haten, þee fæder was Witta haten 52/12 (whose father was called Witta, whose father was Witta)

The passives may undergo a transformation of reduction, i.e. the auxiliary wesan can be deleted, resulting in the phrases of modification such as:

(10) Claudius haten 6/8 (called Claudius)
(11) Æthelfrith haten 92/4 (named Æthelfrith)

To see that (10) and (11) have the function of modifying an NP consider the contexts in which they appear in apposition to some NP’s:

(10a) Dat se aftera Romwara caere, Claudius haten, þæt ylice ealdon gesohte (That the second emperor of the Romans, called Claudius, visited the same island)
(11a) Dyssum tidum forewas Northumbria rice se strongestas cyning 7 se gylggesonnesta, Æthelfrith haten (At this time there ruled over the kingdom of Northumbria a king named Æthelfrith, who was very brave and very ambitious)

The syntactic properties of hatan, pointed out so far, such as a transitive character of the verb and its liability to enter the process of passivization with its regular accompanying transformations of deletion, seem to be observationally proved. Still this observation raises several questions of an explanatory nature. The most important one concerns the passive and the reduced form of it. On the one hand, in the haten sentences (1) and (6) through (9) there are necessary elements to ascribe them to the passive, on the other hand haten may be interpreted as a participial adjective on the basis of the inflectional endings it may take. Note that in hatene (7) the ending -e indicates plurality, masculine gender agreeing in this respect with Dalreadings. Or take another example:

(12) Dat se ylice cyning bidlicde of Socotta peode bispoc onfeng Aidanum on naman gehatene 14/4 (That the same king on his request received a bishop from the Scots named Aidan)

where gehatene is marked for masculine, accusative singular. When discussing concord in Old English, Quirk and Wrenn (1968:76) say that “past participles display some variety of usage. With copula verbs...they often agree with the subject...but more usually they are invariable”. This is exactly what has been noticed in the above examples. Visser (1968: 1223 ff.) is more specific about this point; for him “although the past participle in its adjectival and predicative uses resembles an adjective, it distinguishes itself from an ordinary adjective by having a clearly manifest verbal force...”. The tests commonly applied to establish the categorial status of a given word are useless here, one can only say that a structure of the type: *uwe gehatene (*very called) or *(as) gehatene cyning (*a named king) have not been found in the text (for that matter neither in Modern English would any of the constructions be imaginable). At the moment we may conclude that (pe)hatene is participial in form and function - but we shall come back to this problem when semantic notions involved in the syntax of hatan, are considered.

It is generally agreed that hatan is a single verb in Old English which has a passive verbal inflection. One could treat it as an intransitive verb for the
simple reason that it does not take an object. *Hatte*, used both for present and preterite, is found in the following sentences:

(12) of paere byrig de Leptis haette 32/13 (from the town called Leptis)
(14) sa weron cumene of Hibernia Scotia ealonde mid heora heretogan,
Reada haette 28/25 (they came from Ireland, the island of the Scots,
with their leader called Reada)
(15) Hwet haette seo mag9 96/25 (What is the people called)

The structural, surface differences between a periphrastic passive construction, i.e. *vesan + haten*, and the inflectional one, i.e. *haette*, is too obvious to comment upon. The lexical and notional environmental specifications do not seem to be responsible for the use of one form or the other; but to say that they are in free variation or paraphrase each other may be, perhaps, a premature conclusion.

In all the illustrative examples it is the verb *haten*, by which the syntactic shape of the sentence is conditioned. The meaning of *haten*, as has been already said — *name, call*. This is evidenced by semantically parallel sentences in which *neman* occurs, for example:

(16) pe mon gyf nenned Agustine sacc 98/15 (at a place still called the
oak of Augustine)
(17) se was genenne Haepfeld 30/9 (in the plain) called Bishop's Hatfield)
(18) pet heo Dere nemele weron 96/27 (that they were named Deiri)

It appears that *haten, and neman* are used interchangeably; the following is the clearest example:

(9a) pess fader was Witla haten, pess fader was Witla haten 7 pess
Witla fader was Woden nenned 52/12 (whose father was called
Witla, whose father was Witla, and the father of Witla was called
Woden)

or take (5), whose context runs as follows:

(5a) neah beore ceaster, de Romene heton Uercolanum, seo nu fram
Anglebeode Worlamecester opp Waelingceaster is nenned 40/22

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(close to the town which the Romans called Vercolanium, and is now named by the English Worlamecester or Waelingceaster)

(Note that in the above *from Anglodec* has not been deleted.) Besides *haten*, and *neman, (ge)pat* is occasionally used in the same sense, e.g.:

(19) Alabanus ic em gecig from minum yldrum 36/19 (I am called
Alban by my parents)

The preceding examples all contain verbs which are performative in some hypothetical speech acts of the form *I name you so and so*. However, for obvious reasons it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to postulate the circumstances for the speaker performing such a verbal act that would satisfy one of the conditions usually set for these occasions. This might be the case for (19), whose surface syntactic structure indirectly reflects that it was the parents (*from minum yldrum*) that at some time performed a verbal act of naming their son Alban. We may assume that at that time they had "qualifications" of this sort or just some authority according to common law or procedures accepted by the society. To a certain extent one may say the same about the Romans (5) or the English (5a), but not easily about mon (3), (4), (16). Unless additional examples are brought to light, it may be supposed that *haten* is used in acts of stipulating (using one of Fraser's (1975: 192) classificatory terms of performative verbs) which are characterized by "the speaker's desire for the acceptance of the naming convention expressed by the proposition". Still, it must be remembered that what a historical linguist has at his disposal is not a direct speech act; moreover, the putative speaker is in most cases unspecified, and it is unlikely that he ever would be identified. Thus, although *haten*, can be classified as a performative verb, the sentences in which it occurs do not describe the verbal act itself; they seem to convey the literal meaning of a speech act (indirectly), the result and the effect of such an act. In this way *haten*, being a performative verb in some hypothetical direct speech act situations, identified as an agentive verb requiring a human subject, has features of a causative agentive verb. In surface syntactic structures it appears mainly as passive in form and stative in meaning. *Hatte*, being formally exceptional, could be described as passive, noncausative and stative.

Whether the structure is *pe mon hatto X* (called notional passive by Quirk and Wrenn), the most commonly met *X was haten* (segmental passive), or finally *X hatte* (inflectional passive), the semantic content in all refers to some

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* See also sentences in which *noma* (nomin) is used with *haten*, or *neman*, e.g.: see ciro noman was Tate haten 124/10 (who was also called Tate) (cf. (12))

* For detailed discussion on various aspects of speech acts see a collection of papers ed. by Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan (1975).

* If this observation is correct, Austin's well known example *I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth* could be paraphrased into *I cause this ship to have the name of Queen Elizabeth*.
permanent attribute. The state of having some name is not an inherent property of an object, human or nonhuman, but “can only have been reached after something has been done” (Traugott 1972:33). Traugott when describing the passive in Old English sees the stative meaning in the adjectival inflection of the participle. She claims that since there are cases which regularly are not inflectionally marked in surface realizations, they are ambiguous with regard to stative and nonstative meaning. This semantic aspect of the passive has been ignored both by Quirk and Wrenn and by Visser.

Now that we have at least demonstrated the possibility of using three different structures of hatan, let us attempt to show the meaning relationships between them. If the assumption involved here is that hatan is a performative verb, which is its primary function, then none of the examples would be a direct manifestation of some verbal act of naming. The active character of the verb in question is indirectly expressed by a formally active but notionally passive construction. In the structures be Romana hatan Ucelaintisum (8) or be mon hatat X (3) - (4), the subjects are obligatorily human (Romana, mon); in spite of the fact that the structural features, i.e. the inflectional, typically active endings of hatan, and the presence of the human subject would qualify the above as active sentences, the semantic interpretation of them against a broader context would reveal their passive meaning. We noted earlier that the examples (3) through (5) are relative clauses, and as such their function is to modify some NP. That is, (3) modifies be mytge, (4) refers to dam lande, and (6) identifies bare eacte. The province, the people and the town respectively are identified by their names, which is expressed by means of relative constructions whose structurally active shape has to be interpreted in terms of their passive significance. It seems that the relative clauses we are dealing with might be paraphrased into something like be wass X haten, or haten X, the constructions which have been recorded in the text. Note that for the editor all three ways of identifying some object by a proper name are semantically identical, hence the ModE translations he suggests are the same:

(3) be mon hatat Galia Bellica — called Galia Belgica
(6) beet wass in geas Albion haten — formerly called Albion
(10) Claudius haten — called Claudius

For these formally active sentences there are corresponding passive transforms which by their nature tend to express the result of the action rather than the action itself. All the more so when by + someone (the former agent) is deleted. Further evidence of a stative character rather than strictly passive of such OE sentences is supplied by the possibility of adjectival inflection of the partikiple (cf. Traugott 1972:33). This is as expressed in the case of hatan: the agent is regularly absent, hatan may be inflected. Although in the meaning of wesan + haten sentences there is very little, if at all, of any action the verb might have had originally, the structural characteristics permit these sentences to be traced back to their corresponding active forms. Still fewer traces are found in the X haten phrases, which in their semantic functions are close to X haten. This unique passive inflection, as it is generally accepted, has nothing in common with the passive construction and perhaps in its interpretation would be similar to a ModE usage such as The book sold quickly vs. the passive proper The book was sold quickly (cf. Visser 1973:2090).

To sum up, we can discern in the development of the semantic concept of haten, the following stages:

- performative, active, causative — not recorded
- active in form, notionally passive or stative
- passive in form (either segmental or inflectional), semantically stative.

Let us now see what is the syntactic behaviour and the semantic interpretation of hatan, which has so far been left, and whether it is compatible with haten, as regards the same aspects. The verb hatan is illustrated by the following sentences:

(20) Da het he hrade his pegnas hine secen 7 ascut 34/25 (Then he quickly ordered his attendants to go and demand him)
(21) po het he hi bidan on jem salonde. 58/8 (He ordered them to remain on the island)
(22) 7 het Agustinum mid his gesferum pider to his sprace cuman 58/19 (and directed Augustine and his companions to come there to confer with him)
(23) pe het se seyning his sitten 58/27 (Then the king made them sit down)

The syntax of the above is of a typical pattern: NP haten, NP V (infinite). The NP subject is obligatorily human (he, se eyning) and so is here the NP object (his pegnas, his, Agustinum, his) required by haten. The next element which must be used with this verb is the infinitive; the presence of all other structures is optional (on jem salonde, mid his gesferum, etc.), or dependent upon the syntactic characteristics of the infinitival complement (e.g. secen being a transitive verb requires an object, i.e. hine). The accusative and infinitive construction may be derived from a deep sentence by virtue of the operation of a “complementizer-changing rule” if we accept R. Lakoff’s interpretation assumed for similar structures in Latin (1968:77 ff.). According to this process, the original nominative subject is converted to its accusative form and an infinitive ending is attached to the verb. (Note that R. Lakoff juxtaposes this Latin complementizer with an English one and finds in the derivational histories of both considerable similarities.) Thus, the intermediate stage of (20)

would be:

(20a) Da het he hrade put his pegnas hine see (then he quickly ordered that his attendants should go to him)

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expresses "the speaker's desire for the hearer to bring about the state of affairs expressed in the proposition" (Fraser 1975:192), in other words, hatan is used in acts of requesting, following Fraser's taxonomy. The authority having the power to order, command, bid, etc. is unquestionable: as bishop (2) — the bishop, ealdorman (20) — the governor, se cyning (21) through (26) — the king, Saxan (27) — the Saxons who won the victory, etc. The authoritative character of the subject of hatan, being obligatorily human, is clearly evident from the context whether immediate or nonimmediate. Once we agree that the speaker in question has the power to give orders owing to his social, legal or some other high rank which he holds, the addressee of the command is his inferior. Thus in (2) it is the bishop who gives orders to his companions, in (20) the governor orders his chance to do something, in (21) the king commands Augustine and his companions to remain on the island, etc. In some cases the object of hatan is not specified, e.g. in (24) through (28), especially in the situations when it is irrelevant who will actually perform the task such as building a church or making a seat for the king. The performer of some activity is a person, or a group of people whose identification is of no importance at the moment of giving orders. Besides, it often happens that the object is presupposed and hence unexpressed. It seems that the sentences with hatan without its object are permissible in Old English only in cases when the circumstances are not ambiguous or obscure. Contrary to expectation such structures would be considered ungrammatical in Modern English. The verb order cannot stand alone without an NP complement, e.g. "The king ordered to build a church," and instead its passive form would rather be used: The king ordered a church to be built. (See also ModE translations from the Old English given by the editor of the text.)

With the observations that the surface hatan does not behave regularly with regard to the presence or absence of its NP complement let us consider the verb from the point of view of its underlying meaning. Any performative verb of command, order, request must be followed in its direct application, i.e. in a speech act, by an NP referring to the hearer who is the recipient of the order, which order he is expected to carry out. One cannot give orders without

5 Among the verbs listed by Fraser there are ask, beg, request as well as command, order, prohibit. That there are considerable semantic differences between requests and orders has been demonstrated on various occasions (see for instance the articles by Stamps, or Green in Cole and Morgan 1975).

6 One may come across sentences which show that it need not be a human (or animate, at least) object, e.g.: and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night... (The Bible, Exodus: 14:21)

7 Cf. Polish equivalent construction, which is both structurally and semantically correct:
Książę rozkazał odbić kościół.
argue that this is not always true and that the *hate* sentence does not say anything about the obligation fulfilment. The textual context is of much help in this respect, but if even this is not necessary if Fraser’s suggestive proposals are correct: according to him, “given nothing to suggest the contrary, whenever someone has an obligation to perform some action one can infer that he will perform that action” (1975: 194). Since the concept of causativity underlies *hate*, the verb in question is characterized by some specific features: its subject is identified as agent and only as agent (cf. Gruber 1976: 188), it is a transitive verb whose object is affected by someone’s orders. The obligation or command imposed upon the addressee may be understood as the cause of some action. If we take a sentence such as (29) *pa dydon heo ealo swe he helt—Then they all did as he bade*, the cause-effect relation is clear: they did something (effect) because he ordered them to do so (cause).

It has been shown that both *hate* and *hate* are periphrastic, transitive and causative verbs. There is, however, a strikingly evident difference between them which refers to their notional, not formal character. As mentioned earlier, *hate* often has passive meaning (though active in form), which does not seem to be the case with *hate*. The active meaning of *hate* is strengthened by the infinitive which is uninflected and cannot be interpreted as a verbal noun (gerund). The latter is not unknown in Old English but has not been found with *hate*. Note the difference between these two sentences:

(29) *pa dydon heo ealo swe he helt—Then they all did as he bade*.

(30) *he helt desofeglid toweorpian 7 fest scealt forleatan 172/7 (he) ordered the idols to be overthrown and finally abandoned*.

(31) *Sweelse ecu cyningas 7 rice men sendon heo heo dohter pider to lamarne 7 to gepeodenne pame heofonlice brydgman 172/16 (Kings also and rich men sent their daughters there, to be educated and to be espoused to the heavenly bridegroom)*.

It is my intention now to explain the semantic relationship, if such exists, between *hate* and *hate*. From the surface manifestations it follows that, in general, each is used in some structurally determined constructions which show distinctions in their ultimate syntactic forms. These are only apparent distinctions, since both appear identical in their prelexical base:

\[ NP_1 \text{ V } NP_2 \text{ NP_3 } \]

and it is the NP₂ which may undergo different transformations, and these transformations play a crucial role in differentiating surface *hate* from *hate*. The process of transforming a prelexical structure into either a *hate* sentence or a *hate* sentence seems to be instigated by one of the lexical features of the verb *hate*. It has been demonstrated that it is a periphrastic verb and that it takes a human subject (NP₁); it is causative and hence it takes an object, human or nonhuman; and finally, it requires an object com-
plement assigning to it either stative or active implications. By saying (1)
se wise hatan Amfisb we imply that:
someone (NP₁) cause (V) something (NP₂) stative (NP₃)
while by saying (20) Da het he brahe his gynas hine secon we imply that:
someone (NP₁) cause (V) someone (NP₂) active (NP₃)
The argumentation presented, if semantically sound, shows that the causative
verb *hatan* which demands an object complement imposes upon it either
stative or active meaning. Certain restrictions have to be observed, i.e. if
active meaning is meant the direct object must be animate, while in the case of
stative this restriction is loosened and the direct object may be animate
or nonanimate. Thus the verb *hatan* has the sense of ordering, commanding,
etc. if active is chosen, but it has the sense of naming if stative is selected.

The causative character of *hatan* which has been mentioned on various
occasions still needs some clarification. What is it that can cause someone
to do something, someone to have something, someone (something) to be
(to become) something, or something to happen? There are two viewpoints:
(1) causative verbs take human subjects in the deep structure, the approach
most often met in linguistic literature, and (2) causatives take clauses as
semantic subjects, the claim made by Jonnie E. Geis (1973). She argues that
"only acts or states of affairs, and not persons, cause things" (213). This may be,
perhaps, a correct observation for the examples she discusses in which inchoa-
tive or causative-inchoative verbs are used; however, it is also postulated for
true causative verbs like cause or make. If we accept this solution for our
purposes, the subjects of *hatan* would have to be expanded into subject com-
plements referring to some event that is the cause of "some change of state
or the commencement of an activity". A direct speech act might be the very
event Geis talks about, but however plausible such an analysis may be, one
still must have human subjects in these subject complements. A similar diffi-
culty one encounters when analysing such ModE sentences as: *They elected
Brown (to be) chairman, or We appointed him treasurer*. For Geis elect and
appoint would most probably be "complex verbs which are inserted for caus-
active predicates" formed by some process and the underlying structures would
be something like: *Their votes elected Brown chairman, Our decree (decision)
appointed him treasurer*. It appears that this analysis shows the immediate
cause of something, still in most cases the ultimate instigator of the cause
is human. Thus her statement that "this subject-embedding analysis of
causative verbs is meant to provide a structural representation of the fact
that only an act or a state of affairs, and not a person or instrument per se
can cause something to happen or someone to do something" (1973: 211–12)
seems to be too categorical.a

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a For a detailed discussion of different aspects of causative verbs see Anderson
(1971) and the literature referred to there.

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A final remark I should like to make concerns ModE translations of OE
*hatan*. It seems that partially, of course, the meanings of *hatan* are rendered
by some uses of ModE call: (1) to give a name to; name, (2) to give the order
for; to bring into action. It might be interesting to see whether a similar analy-
sis of call would prove or disprove the interpretation of OE *hatan* suggested
in this paper.

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* Notice that in modern German heissen of the same root as OE *hatan* is also used
in two meanings.