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# DIALECT AND WORD CHOICE IN OLD ENGLISH: TWO CASE STUDIES WITH OLD ENGLISH PERCEPTION VERBS

*Abstract:* This article examines the textual distribution of two sets of Old English verbs, *hrepian* versus *hrīnan* ('to touch'), and *frēdan* versus *fēlan* ('to feel'). In both pairs, their etymologies reveal cognates that are widely distributed in Germanic languages, and their range of meanings in Old English show a close synonymy, suggesting that they fulfilled similar semantic needs within larger semantic fields. However, while their distribution in Late West Saxon texts and elsewhere seem to conform to a Winchester (or Ælfrician) vs. non-Winchester pattern, the presence of *frēdan* in Early West Saxon is a marked variation from the norm. The article thus suggests that the distribution of these verb pairs reflects genuine dialectal variation (rather than deliberately selected linguistic forms), thereby giving evidence of speech divisions that vary from traditionally recognized dialectal areas. The behavior of these verbs may also illustrate the need for a more nuanced description of the nature of the 'Winchester vocabulary'.

## 1. Introduction

We have been studying Old English dialects and word distributions in the Old English corpus long enough that we ought to have a good idea of what we know and what we can expect to find. We know, for instance, that the language was brought to Britain by a heterogeneous group of Germanic speakers; that for most people travel was difficult and one's affiliations were necessarily local; and we know that this situation persisted for centuries. These are conditions under which dialectal variation thrives, so that we can agree with Thomas Toon (1992, 421) that "we should assume a mixture of linguistic influence and expect variation" in the records available to us.

We have also come to recognize that traditional designations of Old English dialects are problematic at best, and sometimes quite misleading. The traditional view tends to promote the impression of autonomy, continuity, and coherence; essentially, it suggests that each dialect had a self-contained identity. It is now recognized that the original taxonomy of four main Old English dialects – West Saxon, Kentish, Mercian, and Northumbrian, with the latter two comprising the larger category of Anglian – developed in the context of the nineteenth-century desire to see nationhood developing among the Anglo-Saxons. As Richard Hogg (1998, 111–12) explains, although the most significant factor in shaping a text's linguistic features was probably the particular "ecclesiastical regime" in which it

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was written, the dialects were named after political divisions. Furthermore, nineteenth-century linguists were preoccupied with the *Stammbaum* theory of language change and development, with its "branching nodes" or "evolution through division". As an outcome of this prevailing way of thinking, "dialectal distributions which run contrary to *Stammbaum* theory … have usually been considered only atomistically". As Hogg points out (1998, 107–08), Alistair Campbell was one of the first to argue against this trend, and, given what appeared to be the "lack of territorial significance" among dialectal texts, Campbell reduced the meaning of dialects to a series of mathematical equivalencies, to "pure structure". This has been helpful in freeing dialectal texts from the assumptions that had been heaped upon them, but as Hogg observes, it also wholly divorced these texts from any geographical context.

It has thus often been difficult for scholars to capture a sense of how general or local the dialect features of particular texts might have been. As Joseph P. Crowley (1986, 99) says: "Whether the written language of … a center [of literary production] was used throughout the kingdom in which the center was located is not known, nor is the exact relationship between that written language of a center and the spoken dialect of that locality". This gap in our knowledge is at the heart of many of our challenges in describing linguistic variation in Old English.

Acknowledging these difficulties, in this article, I will explore two sets of words whose distribution is arguably dialectal in nature. Before beginning, it will be helpful to review what dialectology tells us about the geographical boundaries between distinctly regional forms, and how these might be manifested, given ideal evidence.[1] First, regional dialects can be generally defined through the bundling of linguistic features, which among other things can be phonological, morphological, syntactic, or lexical (variation can also reflect gender, age, or class, but surviving Old English gives little evidence of these elements). We know that for each set of distinctive linguistic features there is usually a unique geographic or spatial division, an isogloss, between those features. Finally, we know that isoglosses can crisscross larger dialectal divisions, particularly in long-settled areas. Thus we might find an area that is generally characterized by the forms of one perceived dialect, but retains a feature of another. We should not therefore be surprised if we encounter what seem to be divisions, say in vocabulary, cutting across what we think of as Late West Saxon.

Michael Benskin (1994, 172) reminds us that if we are surprised, it is because we have again fallen into the trap of thinking of dialects as entities onto themselves: "Once a dialect is abstracted from the continuum to

[1] For a general traditional discussion of linguistic boundaries in dialects, see Chambers & Trudgill (1998, 89–103), ch. 7: "Boundaries". See also Hogg (2006) and Laing & Lass (2006, esp. 417–21). Crowley (1986), Fisiak (1988), Sauer (1991), Toon (1992), and Kornexl (2008) likewise provide helpful background to Old English dialectology and the problems associated with it.

which it belongs, once it is regarded as a thing in its own right, then it is natural to define it, and rigorous definition becomes too easily an exercise in essentialism." While I cannot hope to correct this problem, I hope to demonstrate stark lexical variation within the traditional dialectal areas. This is therefore chiefly a narrowly focused dialectal study, which will work towards further eroding monolithic conceptions of Old English dialects.[2] However, it also has possible effects on our understanding of 'Winchester words', as I will explain below.

## 2. The 'Winchester Vocabulary' and Words from Winchester

As I have indicated, the distribution of the words under consideration may be related to with what is known as the 'Winchester vocabulary', the distinctive group of words which are seen to characterize the works of Ælfric and other products of Æthelwold's school at Winchester, and it will be worthwhile to review what we know of the nature and origins of this vocabulary before proceeding. In 1972, Helmut Gneuss demonstrated that the works of Ælfric and a number of other texts with apparent connections to Winchester show a remarkable uniformity in choosing between certain synonyms.[3] Walter Hofstetter subsequently fleshed out Gneuss's observations, first with a book-length study in German (1987) and then with a condensed article in English (1988). Hofstetter examined thirteen semantic areas in which it was possible to distinguish between Winchester and non-Winchester vocabulary; he was then able to expand the list of "Winchester works" characterized by this vocabulary.

Central to the arguments of both Gneuss and Hofstetter was the idea that the Winchester vocabulary was the result of a deliberate, conscious effort to shape and direct the language. Gneuss (1972, 78) referred to the Winchester usage as "a specific and planned vocabulary", and Hofstetter (1988, 161) stated that "it was the result of a deliberate attempt … to regularize vocabulary", although he admitted that "certain elements were [likely] derived from the dialect spoken in Winchester and the surrounding area".[4] Scholars have been generally receptive to the theory of the Win-

[2] For a recent study along these lines, see Fulk (2008).

[3] Gneuss was interested in uncovering the origins of the standardized spelling and morphology of Late West Saxon texts known as Standard Old English, and he suggested that Winchester, with its interest in regulating usage, might have been the originator of this standard. Scholars, including Gneuss, no longer believe this (see Gneuss 1972/1996, "Addenda"); as Gretsch (2001, 44) remarks, "[the] Winchester vocabulary and Standard Old English are quite distinct in character and intention" (see also Gretsch 2003).

[4] Kitson (1993, 24) suggests that Ælfric's particular use of prepositions is not characteristic of the Winchester area, but of areas further north and west; thus the texts' connection to the physical site of Winchester may not be securely established.

chester usage thus formulated. For instance, in the subsequent discussion of another distinctive (but smaller) group of words characterizing a number of glossed texts from Canterbury, Hans Sauer (1992, 321) comments that "at Canterbury no one attempted to develop and spread a similar kind of standardized vocabulary as Æthelwold and his pupils did at Winchester".[5] Hugh Magennis' (2011, 64) recent introduction to Ælfric's milieu sums up the prevailing view: "In the translation of the *Rule* and in other writings associated with Æthelwold we begin to see the development of a special standard vocabulary … This vocabulary became increasingly fixed and is distinctly found in the works of Winchester writers and those influenced by them, Ælfric being strictest and most consistent in his use of it."

For certain portions of the Winchester vocabulary, these assertions make sense, for they match what we know about the linguistic habits resulting from the scholastic practices of glossing Latin vocabulary. For instance, we can imagine, as Hofstetter (1988, 160) suggests, that "*miht* … may have been taught as a standard Old English equivalent for the Latin *virtus*"; this may have encouraged the use of *miht* ('might') in non-Latin dependent contexts over such non-Winchester equivalents as *cræft* and *strengð*. The argument is most compelling for words that seem to have clear theological associations and were regularly used to render Latin lemmata, such as *(ge)laðung* ('assembly, church') for *ecclesia*, *wuldorbeag* ('crown of glory') for *corona*, or *cyðere* ('witness, martyr') for *martyr*. Indeed, Mechthild Gretsch asserts that "Winchester words are, as a rule, employed to render key concepts of the Christian religion; they are thus an intellectual and stylistic phenomenon".[6]

However, the pattern of word "preference" that characterizes the Winchester works also includes a number of words that do not always have clear religious associations; as Gneuss (1972, 76–7) himself said, the Winchester usage "prefers *sunu* to *bearn* and replaces *cniht* in the sense of 'boy' by *cnapa* … For 'path' the preferred word seems *pæð*, as opposed to *stig* and *siðfæt*; instead of *fremde* ['foreign'], *ælðeodig* or *elfremed* is used; *werod* ['sweet'] is preferred to *swete* and *myrig*". Likewise, in Hofstetter's study (1988, 145–8) one finds *(ge)dyrstlæcan* for *aðristian* ('to dare'), *oga* for *anda* ('terror'), and *(ge)gearcian* for *(ge)gearwian* ('to prepare'). Both Gneuss and Hofstetter admitted that it was difficult to find a clear organizing principle behind the entire vocabulary characteristic of Winchester.[7] Their best guess was that it was motivated by stylistic con-

[5] See Seebold (1989) and Pulsiano (1994, esp. 258) on the different character of the Canterbury vocabulary.

[6] Gretsch (2009, 125). In the same article (118–22), she makes a compelling case for Ælfric's precision and inventiveness in translating Latin grammatical terms into Old English.

[7] See Gneuss (1972, 76): "There is very little that can be said about the reasons which prompted the choice of one word rather than another in the various in-

cerns, although they could not identify any one prevailing stylistic end that would be thus served. Gneuss (1972, 78) did on several occasions refer to the Winchester vocabulary as "modern", suggesting that the school at Winchester was either inventing or making use of fresh new words. While this is conceivable for some compounds, especially loan formations/calques, or for novel derivations of existing morphemes (for instance, *(ge)rihtlæcan* instead of *(ge)reccan* ['to make straight'] on the model of *rectum facere*, *modignes* instead of *ofermod* ['pride'], or even *behreowsian* instead of *(ge)hreowsian* ['to do penance, feel sorrow']),[8] it is highly unlikely for unique, underived forms, as Hofstetter (1988, 159 n. 98) himself acknowledged: "After all, the Winchester usage cannot have been created *ex nihilo*; its initiators certainly chose its vocabulary from language already in existence."

It is clear then that some portion of the words characteristic of Ælfric and other Winchester texts must reflect dialectal differences. Elmar Seebold (1992, 414) was one of the first scholars to address the need to distinguish between Winchester words "connected with the ideology of the reformers" and those with potentially dialectal origins.[9] Ursula Lenker (2000, 237–8) suggested multiple origins for the heterogeneous vocabulary: "Obviously, only some of the theological and religious words are genuine neologisms … Other words, such as *oga* 'fear' or *gearcian* 'prepare', seem to be southern regionalisms; yet others, for example *ælfremed* 'foreign', may be archaisms." Gretsch (2001, 48) in turn responded by narrowing what makes something a Winchester word: "We may attach the label 'Winchester words' to any such newly-found lexical items which were demonstrably given some thought in Æthelwold's circle … as long as it is understood that this label designates words revealing the philological preoccupations of Æthelwold's school." Subsequently, she reasserted (2009, 125) that "Winchester words … cannot be adequately assessed in terms of dialect vocabulary".

While Gretsch is helpful in making our sense of the Winchester vocabulary more precise, we are left with the problem of what to do with those words that do not obviously demonstrate Christian, intellectual, or stylistic considerations, and yet are characteristic of Ælfric and other works associated with Winchester. We might possibly introduce a distinction between "Winchester [intellectual] *vocabulary*" and "Winchester [dialect]

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stances"; likewise, Hofstetter (1988, 160): "It is difficult to ascertain how the Winchester usage came into existence."

[8] Seebold (1992, 417–19) treats *gearcian*, *gerihtlæcan*, *gedyrstlæcan*, *oga*, and *ælfremed* among others all as dialectal words reflecting a "Jutish" substrate.

[9] Seebold (1992, 417) writes: "There are a few common words and types of word formation in the Winchester vocabulary which can have no other source than a regional dialect. These words have 'normal' English meanings which are not dependent on the meaning of Latin words; they are not formed according to a productive Old English type of word formation (but are, as a rule, old words)."

*words*", although it is certain that these terms cannot be kept absolutely distinct. Ultimately, while the case for the Winchester school's interest in shaping linguistic usage has been made convincingly, what has been missing is a clearer sense of the backdrop of other more purely dialectal features – by this I mean words that are employed as the average regional speaker employs them: as a "natural" part of the language one has grown up with. Interestingly, while Lenker (2000, 238) seems to suggest that what might have been a somewhat self-conscious use of "originally archaic, dialectal or idiosyncratic features" could become a "vernacular norm" through the influence of social networks, Hogg (2006, 412–13) instead says that the Winchester texts both present language "in a special theological register", and at the same time reflect the "wide dialectal variation in this large area of the South".[10] The difference is subtle, but it amounts to the degree of self-consciousness involved in the use of dialectal forms. At least for the features described below, the curious distribution of the evidence suggests a more natural, un-self-conscious use of the forms involved.

## 3. Case Study Outline

In the first case study, *hrepian* versus *hrīnan* ('to touch'), the verbs' distribution in Late West Saxon and elsewhere conforms to what Hofstetter (1988, 156–7) established as the essential Winchester vs. non-Winchester pattern: "the Winchester usage is a South English phenomenon", "a late Old English phenomenon", and "make[s] up a prosaic vocabulary", with Ælfric being "the core figure of prototypical Winchester usage". However, in the second case study, *frēdan* versus *fēlan* ('to feel'), while *frēdan* occurs in Late Old English almost exclusively in Ælfric and other Winchester (and Canterbury) texts, it also appears in the Early West Saxon of Alfred's circle. This is a surprising variation from the normal pattern, as it represents a continuity in usage from Alfred to Ælfric.[11] Thus, while both sets of verbs demonstrate an arguably isoglossic pattern, the attestations of *frēdan* and *fēlan* are a particularly dramatic illustration of the idiosyncratic ways that regional forms can be distributed.[12]

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[10] On this variation, see esp. Kitson (1993, 1995) as well as Kitson (1996, 2002, 2003, 2004).

[11] Cf. Hogg (2006, 400): "The differences between Alfredian and Ælfrician West Saxon cannot be reduced to mere chronology. There is also dialectal variation."

[12] I will be collapsing several forms in this discussion for ease of presentation. The prefix *ge-* could appear with these verbs and with the verbs discussed below but it does not appear to convey any readily observable significance. The forms *hrepian*, *hreppan*, *gehrepian*, and *gehreppan* seem to be used interchangeably, especially in Ælfric. The same goes for *hrīnan*, *gehrīnan*, and *æthrīnan*, although there seems to be a preference for *hrīnan* in poetry. With *æthrīnan*, there are only a few instances where the prefix *æt-* has obvious force, the best example being in

These verbs are interesting in a number of respects: they are broadly synonymous, but rarely co-occur in the same work, author, or manuscript.[13] Since each of the verbs has widespread Germanic (and, in the case of *frēdan* and *fēlan*, Indo-European) cognates, their distinctive presence in Anglo-Saxon England might be the result of importation by different groups. Certainly, as will be seen, no stylistic or intellectual end is discernible in selecting one over the other. In the study of semantics, it is generally accepted that truly synonymous words are rare. David Burnley (1992, 491), for instance, remarks that "the economy of language … is illustrated by the fact that it contains very few total and complete synonyms". It is certainly possible that these verb pairs might have been distinguished from one another through some connotative level that we are not sensitive to. But if we theorize that they were words expressing the same thing *in different dialects*, we can offer at least one explanation of why they appear to share so many of the same meanings.

Each case study will have the following three parts. A look at the verbs' cognates will show that each was generally available to Old English through various strains of Germanic. A review of their meanings will demonstrate that each verb filled a particular semantic niche for the speakers who used it. Finally, a survey of the verbs' attestations will suggest underlying patterns which match the expected behavior of isoglosses.

## 4. First Case Study: *hrepian* vs. *hrīnan*

### *4.1 Cognates*

The attested cognates of both *hrepian* and *hrīnan* show that the basic forms behind these verbs were widespread at least in Germanic. I treat *hrīnan* first, as it seems to have been recorded first in Old English. Relatives of *hrīnan* include Old High German *(h)rīnan* ('to touch, feel [with one's fingers], to hit, attack'), Old Saxon *hrīnan* ('to touch'), and Old Norse *hrīna* ('to cleave to, to stick; to take effect, hurt').[14] *Hrepian* (or *hreppan*) is related to Old Frisian *hreppa*, Middle Dutch and Middle Low German *reppen* ('to move, stir'), to Old Norse *hreppa* ('to catch, obtain'), and to Middle High German *raffen* and Norwegian *rap(p)a* ('to snatch, pick up').[15] If there is a pattern here, it is that *hrīnan* seems more charac-

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the *Lindisfarne Gospels* gloss, where it seems to render the *ad-* of Latin *adhaero*. Likewise, both *frēdan* and *gefrēdan,* and *fēlan* and *gefēlan* seem to be used interchangeably.

[13] This is particularly striking for an era in which writers favored tautological and alliterative word pairs (cf. Koskenniemi 1968).

[14] Cf. Köbler (1993), Holthausen (1967), and Cleasby & Vigfussen (1957).

[15] Cf. *OED* (s.v. † *repe* v.[1]), Holthausen (1925), Cleasby & Vigfussen (1957), and Holthausen (1934).

teristic of the High German branch of West Germanic, while *hrepian* characterizes the Anglo-Frisian branch, although the two verbs coexist in Old Norse and Old English. In any case, the various cognates perform a heterogeneous range of semantic functions, but their basic senses have to do with actions of touching, seizing, or affecting.

### *4.2 Meanings*

C.S. Lewis (1967, 5–6) once observed how words in different languages, beginning with the same basic sense, will often go through very similar semantic extensions and metaphorical developments: "There is something, either in the structure of the mind or in the things it thinks about, which can produce the same results under very different conditions." Eve Sweetser (1990, 45) demonstrated how cognitive semantics can explain this phenomenon: in the case of verbs of physical perception, "the internal self is pervasively understood in terms of the bodily external self, and is hence described by means of vocabulary drawn … from the physical domain".[16] This similarity in semantic development certainly seems to be in evidence when we compare the meanings of Present-Day English *touch* with Old English *hrīnan* and *hrepian* (as well as Latin *tango*, which they often gloss).

If one were to generate a list of basic meanings for Present-Day English *touch*, one might come up with something like this:[17]

(1) 'to place the hand, finger, etc. in contact with'
(2) 'to bring (something) into contact with (something else)'
(3) 'to be or come into contact with'
(4) 'to border on, adjoin, extend to' (of unmoving things)
(5) 'to reach, come to; to attain' (of moving things)
(6) 'to have to do with (in the least degree)'
(7) 'to partake of (food and drink)'
(8) 'to lay hands on, treat roughly (in the least degree)'
(9) 'to affect by contact, act upon, make an impression upon'
(10) 'to affect (in some negative or injurious way)'
(11) 'to affect the emotions of, move'
(12) 'to treat or discuss in passing, deal with'.

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[16] See Sweetser (1990, 23–48), ch. 2: "Semantic structure and semantic change: English perception-verbs in an Indo-European context", and Allan (2008, esp. 62–3).

[17] The definitions and ordering are my own, though similar schemes can be found elsewhere. I rely on the work I did in my dissertation (Klein 1998), in which I outlined the semantic fields of the Old English verbs of 'tasting', 'smelling', 'touching', and 'perceiving'. For examples and word counts, I used the *Dictionary of Old English (DOE) Corpus* (diPaolo Healey *et al.* 2007); in the quotations below, I cite the individual editions, along with the *DOE Corpus* titles.

What seems to unify all of these meanings is the notion of making '*light* contact', even if the contact is metaphorical, or the effects of the contact are severe; sometimes this notion is transmuted into the nuance 'in the least degree' or '[not *even*] in the least degree' if negated. However, the action described by *touch* can be either deliberate or involuntary, and the consequences of the action can be said primarily to reside either within the verb's subject ('to partake of') or its object ('to affect by contact').

Remarkably, the various forms of *hrīnan* and *hrepian*, which are the primary 'touch' verbs in Old English,[18] show very similar ranges of meaning. We will not run through all twelve meanings listed above, though examples exist, but we will look at enough illustrations to show how extensive their synonymy is.[19] Their most basic, non-figurative sense seems to be that of making light contact, either with the hand or some physical object. We see this for *hrīnan* in the Old English version of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History:* "He eorre þone cyning liggende **gehran** mid þære gyrde"[20] (even though the action is carried out in anger, the larger context makes it clear that the sense of *gehran* is 'touched', not 'struck'). A passage from Ælfric's *Homilies* uses *hrepian* in a similar way: "He dyde þa his fingras innto his earan, & mid his halwendan spatle hys tungan **hrepode**."[21] Then this notion of 'light contact' seems to have had the same force in the development of the more figurative meanings, often suggesting the idea of 'having anything to do with' or, with food, 'partaking of (in the very least)'. So we find *hrīnan* in the Corpus version of Gregory's *Dialogues:* "Ac hi … noldon ne na **gehrinan** þam [*sic*] unalyfdan & godwræ[c]lican mete."[22] Ælfric uses *hrepian* for a similar avoidance: "Ne **hrepa** þu þæs treowes wæstm, for ðon þe ðu byst deadlic gif þu ðæs treowes wæstm geetst."[23]

Next, the idea of 'having anything to do with' comes up when either verb describes violent or powerful individuals who are using their physical force upon others; in this case, the verbs are usually used negatively to mean 'to (*not*) lay hands on, treat roughly (in the least degree)'. A passage

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[18] In terms of deliberate rather than purely experiential action, 'touching' is opposed to 'feeling' (which is described in Old English by *frēdan* and *fēlan*). Other verbs related in sense are *handlian* ('to handle'), *(ge)cunnian mid hand* ('to search out by the hand'), and *(ge)grāþian* ('to explore by touch'). See Klein (1998, 120–36).

[19] See Klein (1998, 136–56).

[20] Miller (1890–98, v. 3, 288 [Bede 3]): 'He angrily touched the king as he lay with the rod.' – Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

[21] Pope (1967–68, 568 [ÆHom 17]): 'He put his fingers into his ears and touched his tongue with his healing spit.'

[22] Hecht (1900–07, v. 3, 232 [GDPref and 3 {C}]): 'But they … would not touch the forbidden and wicked food.' The use of the dative is curious.

[23] Clemoes (1997, 181 [ÆCHom I, 1]): 'Do not touch this tree's fruit, for you will be subject to death if you eat of this tree's fruit.'

from *Juliana* uses *hrīnan* in this way: "Ne wæs ænig þara þæt me þus þriste, swa þu nu þa, halig, mid hondum **hrinan** dorste."[24] Ælfric uses *hrepian* instead: "Hine [biton lys] bealdlice and flean, þone þe ær ne dorste se draca furþon **hreppan**."[25] Finally, there are many instances in which both verbs are used in a more general sense of 'to affect by contact, act upon'. Usually, this refers to the power of an agent to act upon an object, as above often expressed negatively: thus *hrīnan* in *Beowulf*, "Æghwylc gecwæð þæt him heardra nan **hrinan** wolde iren ærgod",[26] and *hrepian* in Ælfric's *Lives of the Saints*, "He … sloh eft swiðe; þa ætstod þæt swurd and þone swuran ne **hrepode**".[27]

This survey of the meanings of *hrīnan* and *hrepian* raises the obvious question: why would Old English need two such apparently synonymous verbs? Apparently, most languages need 'touch' verbs; as we will see by their attestations, it seems that two Old English dialectal varieties met that need with different lexemes.

### *4.3 Attestations*

The distribution of *hrepian* and *hrīnan* in the *DOE Corpus* largely follows the pattern established by Hofstetter. *Hrepian* is arguably characteristic of Winchester works, particularly those of Ælfric, while *hrīnan*, the non-Winchester word, is the only one of the pair to appear in earlier, Northern, and poetic texts, and it is the only one that appears in the Early West Saxon texts associated with Alfred's circle (871–899). Regarding this latter fact, *hrīnan* appears in the texts traditionally assigned to Alfred himself:[28] five times in the translation of the *Pastoral Care* and once in the *Meters of Boethius*, while the derived substantives *hrīne* and *hrīnung* appear once each in the translation of Augustine's *Soliloquies*. *Hrīnan* is also found in several early texts which scholars have often described as having a Mer-

[24] Muir (2000a, ll. 510–12 [Jul]): 'There was none of them that dared touch me with their hands as boldly as you do now, a holy [woman].'

[25] Pope (1967–68, 679 [ÆHom 22]): 'Lice and fleas bit him boldly, whom before not even the devil dared to touch.'

[26] Fulk, Bjork & Niles (2008, l. 987 [Beo]): 'Everyone said that not even the good old iron swords of stern men would have touched him.'

[27] Skeat (1881–1900, v. 1, 276 [ÆLS {Ash Wed}]): 'He … struck again hard; then the sword stood still and did not touch the neck.'

[28] The question of Alfred's actual authorship has been both reasserted and much debated lately. Thus Donoghue (2004, 106) can write: "A similarity of ideas, phrasings, and idiosyncrasies allows us to identify a body of writing we can with some confidence attribute to Alfred himself"; and Godden (2007, 18) can respond: "My personal view is that Alfred did not 'write' anything". For an in-depth discussion of the problem, see Godden & Irvine (2009, 135–51); see also Waite (2000), Bately (2003), and Discenza (2005).

cian[29] background: it occurs 31 times in Wærferth's translation of Gregory's *Dialogues* which, although preserved in a West Saxon manuscript from the second half of the eleventh century, may retain some of its Mercian characteristics,[30] and 35 times in the translation of Bede, also thought to have a Mercian origin.[31] *Hrīnan* also occurs in the Old English *Martyrology,* another early, apparently Mercian text.[32] In addition, *hrīnan* appears three times in the ninth-century *Vespasian Psalter* gloss, a key Mercian text, and once each in the *Life of St. Chad*, the *Life of St. Christopher*, and the *Letter of Alexander*, which have been thought to have 'Mercian' origins.[33]

The tenth-century evidence supports the impression that forms of *hrīnan* were characteristic of Anglian in general. *Hrīnan* appears 49 times and *æthrīnan* three times in the Northumbrian glosses of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*; *hrīnan* also occurs five times in the *Durham Ritual* gloss, added by the same scribe, Aldred, who wrote both glosses around 950. In the *Rushworth Gospels,* the glossators Farman (Mercian) and Owun (Northumbrian) employ *hrīnan* and *æthrīnan* 32 times; at least three of these occurrences are independent of the Lindisfarne model, thus attesting to the simultaneous use of *hrīnan* forms in both tenth-century Mercia and Northumbria.

*Hrīnan* (especially the simplex) is the only 'touch' verb to be found in poetry, where it occurs 25 times: once in *Andreas,* five times in *Beowulf,* once in *Christ & Satan,* twice each in *Genesis A* and *B*, three times in *Guthlac A* and once in *Guthlac B*, once in *Juliana*, once in the *Meters of*

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[29] I use terms such as 'Mercian' or 'Anglian' advisedly, recognizing that these sometimes refer to geographical origination and at other times to dialectal characteristics that, as Campbell (1959, §256) observed, may be "practically without territorial significance". Mary Clayton (1998, 133) observes: "In practice, … the term 'Mercian' means early rather than having a specifically regional application". See also Hogg (2006, 402–05).

[30] Bately (1988, 97) remarks: "The only Mercian text that can be securely assigned to the late ninth century is the translation of Gregory's *Dialogi.*"

[31] Early on, Miller (1890, liii) discussed the dialect origins of the text, concluding: "All issues raised lead to similar results, placing the origin of the version in Mercia." Bately (1988, 98) says: "The consensus today is against a West Saxon author … and in favour of a Mercian one", and that consensus appears to be holding. On dialect words in the Old English Bede, see J.J. Campbell (1951).

[32] Unfortunately, it occurs in the fragment of the *Martyrology* found in the 11th-century MS Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41, which contains a portion of the text (from December 25th to 31st) that is missing from all the other manuscripts, making it impossible to say how *hrīnan* might have appeared in the earlier versions. Celia Sisam (1953) discussed the various manuscripts and the date and Mercian provenance of the *Martyrology*, which still seems widely accepted.

[33] Vleeskruyer (1953, 56, 70–1). However, cf. above and Bately (1988, 109): "I am not convinced that all the so-called Mercian words must originally have been particular to the territory called Mercia, or even to territory controlled by Mercians."

*Boethius*, twice in the verse *Paris Psalter*, and once each in the *Riddles* 6, 15, 23, 39, 66, and 84. The dating and provenance of Old English poetry is vexed, of course, but some scholars have suggested that many of the distinctive words characterizing the Old English poetic vocabulary were originally Anglian.[34]

This brings us to the larger body of Late West Saxon texts, where *hrepian* suddenly appears and begins to mix with *hrīnan* and *æthrīnan*. We may wonder where it had been during the previous centuries. Clearly, given its widespread Germanic cognates, it was not spontaneously invented. We must assume that it simply had failed to be recorded until Ælfric, who apparently came from the heartland of its use in Anglo-Saxon England, for *hrepian* occurs 80 times throughout his works while *hrīnan* is entirely absent.[35] This uniformity in usage is dramatically demonstrated in the translation of the Heptateuch. Of the seven times that *hrepian* occurs there, six fall within the parts translated by Ælfric (see Clemoes 1974), while with only one exception, the anonymous translator prefers either *æthrīnan* (five occurrences) or *onhrīnan* (once).

Elsewhere in Late West Saxon, the appearance of *hrepian* and *hrīnan* correlates respectively to Winchester/non-Winchester texts, though not as distinctly. For one thing, neither form (particularly *hrepian*) gets used that often; for another, the forms co-occur in at least eight works indicating that, at least for some writers, the words had become synonyms. Outside of Ælfric's works, *hrepian* appears in three texts that Hofstetter classified as Winchester works, and in one of these, the *Benedictine Rule* gloss, it occurs without co-occurring *hrīnan* forms; however, in the other two, forms of *hrīnan* also occur. In the Hatton version of Gregory's *Dialogues,* one of the central texts for Winchester usage, the tenth-century reviser does use *hrepian* twice, but does so in elaborating a translation, rather than in replacing a form of *hrīnan*. In four cases, he keeps the original *hrīnan*, and twice he replaces it with *æthrīnan*, so it seems that both *hrepian* and *æthrīnan* were part of his active vocabulary. The *Durham Hymnal* gloss is another important Winchester work, and here again we find *hrepian*, which occurs twice (plus one occurrence of *hrepung*), being used

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[34] See, for example, Hofstetter (1988, 157): "The greatest part of Old English poetry was composed at an earlier period and in the Anglian dialect." However, questions regarding the Anglian origins of Old English poetry have been raised as early as by Kenneth Sisam (1953, 119–39, esp. 131). Kornexl (2008, 178) sums up the state of the question: "Though the existence of a distinctly poetic idiom and style is undisputed, the concept of a general poetic dialect [or of its Anglian origins] remains open to question. The complex distribution of dialectal features in individual pieces of Old English verse and prose and between them offers a continued challenge."

[35] At least one variant reading occurs: for "heo **hrepode** his reafes fnædu" (Godden 1979, 228 [ÆCHom II, 28]; 'she touched the fringe of his garment'), MS Bodley 343 has *aran* (for *āhrān*). Since Bodley 343 is a late manuscript (dated "s. xii$^{2}$" by Ker [1957, 368, no. 310]), the substitution is likely to be scribal.

beside *æthrīnan*, which occurs once. A form of *hrepian* also occurs in the *Sedulius Glosses* (MS Paris, BN Lat. 8092), where *adtacta* is glossed by *mid hre[punge]*; I mention this because Michael Lapidge noted some lexical affinities of this gloss with the vocabulary of the Winchester group.[36] Alternately, forms of *hrīnan* occur without *hrepian* in several other Winchester texts: three times in the *Expositio hymnorum* gloss, once each in the Stowe, Vitellius, Lambeth, and Arundel Psalters (F, G, I, and J),[37] while *hrīnung* is used once in the *Rule of Chrodegang*. These results, summarized in Table 1, suggest that *hrepian* tends to be characteristic of certain Winchester texts, although it is not the exclusive 'touch' verb outside of Ælfric.

When we finally come to late Old English non-Winchester texts, we find a number of curious patterns, all of which suggest the dialectal mixing and semantic development one would expect over time. In the abovementioned Canterbury group, another body of texts (mainly glosses) noted for its distinctive vocabulary,[38] forms of both *hrīnan* and *hrepian* appear. Here again their attestations are not very distinctive; apparently, for at least two of the glossators the verbs were synonyms, possibly reflecting the mixing of dialects that must have gone on in Canterbury. Other than these, forms of *hrepian* appear in four non-Winchester works, and in all four forms of *hrīnan* appear as well. In his *Enchiridion*, Byrhtferth shows a definite preference for *hrepian*,[39] although mainly in the sense 'to mention in passing'; since he appears to use *æthrīnan* mainly to mean 'to come into contact', the words may have had distinct meanings for him. In the *West Saxon Gospels*, the verbs appear to be synonyms, and the translator clearly favors *æthrīnan* over *hrepian* (see Table 1). In the *Herbarium, hrepian* occurs twice against one occurrence of *æthrīnan* (and two occurrences of the noun *æthrīne*); if it can be called a preference, it is possible that this reflects the *Herbarium*'s general tendency towards Winchester words.[40] Finally, *hrepian* occurs twice (and *æthrīnan* once) in the Salisbury Psalter (K); this is noteworthy because it appears to be the one instance

[36] See Lapidge (1982, 6 [SedGl 6]); Lapidge supplies the ending to the unfinished word.

[37] It is not surprising that *hrīnan* forms are found in F, G, and J, since they follow D (Royal). Hofstetter (1988) identified them as Winchester texts even though their rate of substitution of Winchester for non-Winchester vocabulary was as low as 10 per cent. However, Psalter I shows "striking independence" (Morrell 1965, 124) in modifying and multiplying glosses, suggesting that *æthrīnan* was part of the glossator's active vocabulary.

[38] See note 5 above; Canterbury texts include the *Prudentius Glosses* [Boulogne-sur-Mer], the *Arundel Prayers* gloss, the *Liber Scintillarum* gloss, the *Regularis Concordia* gloss, and the *Cleopatra Glossaries 1* and *3*.

[39] See Table 1. The grounds on which Hofstetter excluded the *Enchiridion* from the Winchester group are fairly tenuous: with one occurrence of a Winchester word against three occurrences of non-Winchester words, there simply was not enough evidence to put it definitively in either group.

[40] Cf. Hofstetter's data (1987, 416–17).

Table 1: Distribution of *hrīnan* and *hrepian*

| | *hrīnan* | *hrepian* |
|---|---|---|
| **Early West Saxon and Mercian Texts** | | |
| *Pastoral Care* | 5 | — |
| *Meters of Boethius* | 1 | — |
| Augustine's *Soliloquies* | (*hrīne* 1, *hrīnung* 1) | — |
| Bede's *History* | 35 | — |
| *Rushworth Gospels* | 32 | — |
| Gregory's *Dialogues* [Corpus] | 31 | — |
| *Vespasian Psalter* | 3 | — |
| *Martyrology* | 1 | — |
| *Life of St. Chad* | 1 | — |
| *Life of St. Christopher* | 1 | — |
| *Letter of Alexander* | 1 | — |
| **Northumbrian texts** | | |
| *Lindisfarne Gospels* | 52 | — |
| *Durham Ritual* gloss | 5 | — |
| **Poetry** | | |
| *Andreas*, *Beowulf*, *Christ & Satan*, *Genesis A & B*, *Guthlac A & B*, *Juliana*, *Paris Psalter*, *Riddles* 6, 15, 23, 39, 66, 89 | 24 | — |
| **Winchester texts** | | |
| Ælfric's works (including Heptateuch) | — | 80 |
| *Benedictine Rule* gloss | — | 1 |
| *Sedulius Glosses* [Paris, BN Lat. 8092] | — | (? *hre[pung]* 1) |
| Gregory's *Dialogues* [Hatton] | 5 | 2 |
| *Durham Hymnal* gloss | 1 | 2 (*hrepung* 1) |
| *Expositio hymnorum* gloss | 3 | — |
| *Rule of Chrodegang* | (*hrīnung* 1) | — |
| Psalters F G I J | 1 each | — |
| **Canterbury texts** | | |
| *Prudentius Glosses* | — | 1 |
| *Arundel Prayers* gloss | 4 | 1 |
| *Cleopatra Glossary* | (*gehrīne* 1) | 1 |
| *Liber Scintillarum* gloss | 3 | — |
| *Regularis Concordia* gloss | 1 | — |
| **Other non-Winchester texts** | | |
| Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion* | 4 | 13 |
| *Old English Herbarium* | 1 (*æthrīne* 2) | 2 |
| Psalter K | 1 | 2 |
| *West Saxon Gospels* | 35 | 1 |
| *Bald's Leechbook* | 2 | — |
| *Old English Medicina* | 5 | — |
| 40 other texts | 50 | — |

where a scribe replaced a form of *hrīnan* with *hrepian*.[41] As for the non-Winchester texts in which only *hrīnan* forms appear, they include various homilies, saints' lives, confessionals, liturgical directions, the *Lapidary*, the *Marvels of the East,* notes, and glosses.

Table 1 thus makes clear that *hrepian* and *hrīnan* do fall into a Winchester/non-Winchester pattern, meeting all the criteria set forth by Hofstetter (1988, 156–7): *hrepian*, the Winchester word, is "prosaic", "South English" and late, and it is overwhelmingly associated with Ælfric. Because the Winchester vocabulary comes on the scene so late, our tendency has been to think of the non-Winchester word as being dialectally or stylistically "unmarked". In a sense, we have come to perceive it as the "standard" word, with the Winchester word as the "modern" (Gneuss 1972, 78) word. Nonetheless, we know that the cognates of *hrepian* had a broader existence and, unless we wish to explore the unlikely possibility of a late import into southwest England (outside the Danelaw and with little evidence of contact with other Germanic speakers), it seems plausible that *hreprian* must have been present in England for as long as *hrīnan*, but simply had not been written down until Ælfric.

## 5. Second Case Study: *frēdan* vs. *fēlan*

Arguably, scholarly discussion has tended to deemphasize the dialectal aspect of Winchester usage (the Winchester *words* as opposed to the Winchester *vocabulary*, to use the distinction I introduced earlier), and to concentrate on its deliberate, technical elements. As we turn to our second case study, we can speculate that the reason for this is because of the usage's essential association with Ælfric. In many regards, the works of Ælfric represent ground zero of this particular linguistic variety. The instance of *frēdan* ('to feel') versus *fēlan* ('to feel') is therefore especially remarkable, because it shows the continuity of a 'Winchester' form over time and it can also be associated with another intellectual circle – that of Alfred. The verb pair is noteworthy as well because of the stark division between texts that use *frēdan* and those that use *fēlan*. *Frēdan* and *fēlan* thus offer a particularly fine illustration of the way that language varieties develop linguistic forms along similar semantic lines to meet the same expressive need.

### *5.1 Cognates*

To begin, we should note that both *frēdan* and *fēlan* have widely attested Indo-European backgrounds, and *frēdan* and its cognates are especially

[41] For Ps 143.5, K has *hrepa muntas*, whereas D, the general source for K, has *a-hrīn*, as do Psalters E, F, G, and J.

illustrative of the fundamental phonological developments that characterize the Germanic branch. As we see below, counter to the usual trend of abstract or figurative senses developing from concrete senses,[42] the cognates of *frēdan* seem to have had more abstract associations, while those of *fēlan* seem more concrete; they apparently arrive at the same set of meanings in Old English by approaching from opposite directions.

*Frēdan* seems to be cognate with another Old English word, the adjective *frōd* ('wise, old').[43] The root from which these descend seems to be Proto-Indo-European **prāt-* or **prōt-*, which appears in widely-separated Indo-European languages.[44] For example, it is found in Lithuanian *pràsti* ('to perceive') and *prõtas* ('wit, intellect'), Latvian *pràst* ('to understand') and *pràts* ('understanding, sense'), and in Old Prussian *iss-pres-tun* ('to understand') and *prâtin* ('counsel, advice').[45] It also appears in Tocharian as *pratim* ('decision'), while in Celtic, where Indo-European initial /p/ is often dropped, we find it in Old Irish *ráthaigid* ('to perceive, get knowledge of').[46]

In the Germanic branch of Indo-European, the root naturally underwent the sound changes affecting that branch, so under Grimm's Law, where Indo-European voiceless stops became voiceless fricatives, /p/ became /f/ and /t/ became /θ/. Thus we find in Gothic, the earliest attested Germanic language, *fraþjan* ('to think, recognize'), *fraþi* ('mind, understanding'), and *frōþ* ('intelligent, wise') (Lehmann 1986). Likewise, Old Norse cognates include *fróðr* ('intelligent, wise'), *fræði* ('knowledge, lore') and *fræða* ('to instruct').[47] Furthermore, through Verner's Law, where a voiceless fricative /θ/, surrounded by voiced phonemes and preceded by an unaccented vowel, also became voiced, we have Gothic *frōdei* ('wisdom') and *frōdaba* ('intelligently') (Lehmann 1986); elsewhere we find Old Saxon *frōd* ('old, wise, experienced') and *frōdon* ('to grow old, to be wise', Old Frisian *frōd* ('wise') and *frōdhed* ('wisdom') and Old High German *frad* ('able') and *fradi* ('efficiency, zeal').[48] Finally arriving at Old English, we find that the back vowels of other cognates have shifted forward through front mutation, and we have *frēdan*.

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[42] See Allan (2012, esp. 22–3) and Győri & Hegedűs (2012). Allan (2012, 23) writes: "A word history that appears to show a development from earlier metaphorical meaning to a later literal meaning [should] be treated with caution." This is not quite the case with the cognates of *frēdan*, which seem to begin and remain more or less abstract in meaning – though some might consider 'old' a concrete sense.

[43] Cf. *OED* (s.v. *frede*), *MED* (s.v. *freden*), and Wood (1914), although other scholars have disagreed.

[44] See Walde & Pokorny (1927–32) and Pokorny (1959–69): "'**prā/ăt-* 'verstehen'" and "'**pret-*, **prō/ŏt-* 'verstehen'."

[45] Cf. Fraenkel (1962–65), Īriste & Eniņa (2000), and Nesselmann (1873).

[46] See Adams (1999) and Vendryes, Bachellery & Lambert (1959–87).

[47] Cf. Cleasby & Vigfusson (1957) and Vries (1977).

[48] Cf. Holthausen (1967), Köbler (1983), and Köbler (1993).

Reviewing all the cognates of *frēdan* derived from Indo-European **prōt-*, it seems clear that what characterizes the group as a whole are the essentially abstract senses of 'to understand, know, perceive' where the cognates are verbs, 'intelligence' where they are nouns, and 'intelligent' where they are adjectives, with the Germanic branch making an association between 'intelligence/wisdom' and 'age'. *Frēdan*'s sense 'to feel' may have developed by extension of the sense 'to perceive, experience at first hand'.[49]

Just as Old English *frēdan* seems to have a common origin with *frōd* ('wise, old'), so Old English *fēlan* might be cognate with the poetic word *folm* ('palm, hand').[50] However, in contrast to *frēdan*, *fēlan* and its cognates seem to have arisen from concrete origins. The most obvious cognates of *fēlan* are West Germanic: Old Saxon *gifōlian* ('to feel, perceive, observe'), Old Frisian *fēla* ('to feel') and *fēle* ('feeling, sense'), Old High German *fuolen* ('to feel, sense; caress') and Middle and Modern Dutch *voelen* ('to touch, feel, perceive').[51] They all share the passive perceptual meaning of 'to feel, perceive', while the German and Dutch cognates also express the proactive action of 'to touch, feel deliberately'.

There are several schools of thought about the origin of these cognates. Pokorny's first guess (1959–69, 798) was the most speculative: he suggested that the cognates are associated with Latin *pollex* ('thumb, big toe'), and that they all descend from a root **polo-* or **pōlo-* meaning 'swollen, fat'. The connection is "vielleicht … 'mit dem Daumen betasten'" ('perhaps "to touch with the thumb"'). A more likely solution connects these cognates to a larger body of words for 'touching', 'striking', or 'setting into motion', deriving from IE **pel-*, or **plē-*. These include Latin *palpo* ('to stroke'), Greek *ψάλλειν* ('to pluck'), and Sanskrit *asphalayati*

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[49] Lewis (1967, 134) argued that this was the originating sense of Latin *sentio*; I made a similar argument for *frēdan* and *fēlan* (Klein 1998, 194–5; also cf. 13–17). The *OED*'s arrangement differs somewhat in placing the absolute sense first ('to have sensation, sensory perception; to sense or perceive' [s.v. *felan*]), and concludes with complex objects; the arrangement emphasizes both sensation and syntax. Mine instead argues for a development coming out of experiencing at first hand and being sensible of close effects, which then includes having sensation and perceiving through touch, then perceiving through other faculties or general physical impressions, and finally understanding and knowing intuitively. Sweetser (1990, 37) suggests that in Indo-European languages "the sense of touch is not only linked with general sense perception, but is also closely tied to emotional 'feeling'", and this fits with the schema I outline.

[50] The *OED* and Onions *et al.* (1966) associate *fēlan* with *folm*, while Pokorny (1959–69) places them under different roots, *fēlan* under **polo-/*pōlo-* 'geschwollen, dick, groß' ('swollen, fat, big'), and *folm* under **pelə-*, *plā-* 'breit und flach, ausbreiten' ('broad and flat; to spread'). On the poetic word *folm*, and its occasional appearance in prose, see Frank (1994, 97–8).

[51] Cf. Holthausen (1967), Richthofen (1840), Köbler (1993), and Franck & Van Wijk (1929).

('[he] strikes').[52] A form such as **plama* is posited (cf. Partridge 1966, s.v. *feel*) to explain such words for the hand or palm as Old English and Old Saxon *folm*, Old High German *folma*, Old Irish *lám*, Latin *palma*, and Greek *παλάμη*. This would suggest an association between touching, perceiving, and the hand in the semantic development of these words. In any case, this review of the etymological background of Old English *frēdan* and *fēlan* presents us with two words that in theory ought to have rather different ranges in meaning. As it turns out, they are remarkably similar in their uses, and both embrace a broad range of similar actions.

## *5.2 Meanings*

Elsewhere I argue that *frēdan* and *fēlan* can be best understood as Old English general verbs of perception, along with *ongytan*, with *ongytan* tending to describe a more intellectual 'apprehending' or 'grasping', and *fēlan* and *frēdan* a more immediate 'experiencing' (Klein 1998, ch. 5). Furthermore, although Old English *fēlan* is the form behind Modern English *feel* and shares some of its senses, both it and *frēdan* differ from *feel* in several important ways. For one, neither verb is ever used in the active 'seeking an impression' sense of *feel* as 'to touch (with the hand)'.[53] If there is a single governing sense underlying the uses of *fēlan* and *frēdan*, it probably most resembles Latin *sentio*, which C.S. Lewis described as meaning 'to experience, learn by experience, undergo, know at first hand'.[54] We may thus begin our survey of their meanings with instances in which they seem to mean 'to experience, undergo'. *Bald's Leechbook* uses *fēlan* in this fundamental way: "Sume lator **felað** þara læcedoma, sume raþor."[55] The idea is one of passing through some event, and 'passing through' or 'undergoing' seems to be what is expressed by *frēdan* in this passage from the Alfredian translation of the *Pastoral Care:* "Sio burg ðæs modes … sceal suiðe oft **gefredan** hiere feonda speru."[56] It is probably in this way that these two verbs come to describe perceiving through the senses; that is, it is a small move from 'going through' or 'experienc-

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[52] Cf. Pokorny (1959–69), *OED* (s.v. *feel*), Onions *et al.* (1966), Partridge (1966), Klein (1967), and Chantraine *et al.* (2009).

[53] Those senses were expressed mainly by *grāpian* ('to grope, explore by touch') and by the above-considered *hrīnan* and *hrepian*.

[54] Lewis (1967, 134); indeed, *fēlan* and *frēdan* often translate or gloss *sentio*. For the meaning 'to undergo' (or even 'go through') for *sentio*, see Horace: "Tecum Philippos et celerem fugam sensi" – 'I went through [the battle at] Philippi and the swift retreat with you' (Ancona 2005: *Ode* 2.7, 9–10).

[55] Cockayne (1864–66, v. 2, 84 [Lch II {1}]): 'Some experience healing slower, some faster.'

[56] Sweet (1871, 277 [CP]): 'The fortress of the mind … must often experience the spears of its enemies.'

ing' something, to 'sensing' or 'feeling' it. Tellingly, these verbs often are used to describe the perceiving of physical sensations that are sensed directly and immediately, without much apparent cognitive processing. For instance, we read in *The Seafarer*, "Ne mæg him þonne se flæschoma … sar **gefelan.**"[57] *Sar* here seems to refer to an internal condition of the body, as opposed to the 'torments' mentioned above which emanate from outside it. Similarly, Ælfric uses *frēdan* to describe Christ's experience of hunger: "And se þe ealle þing afedeð, se **gefredde** hungor."[58] From here, the meanings of the two verbs seem to broaden to include mental acts and degrees of cognition in the senses 'to sense, perceive, recognize through general impressions'. For instance, it does not seem that any single faculty informs the pregnant woman that the child within her is alive, in this passage from a metrical charm ("For Delayed Birth"): "And þonne seo modor **gefele** þæt þæt bearn si cwic, ga þonne to cyrican."[59] Nor is it by a specific sense that Herod perceives the approach of death in Ælfric's homily: "Æt nextan þa ða he **gefredde** his deaðes nealæcunge …".[60] *Fēlan* and *frēdan* can then be applied to a broad range of physical sensations, including 'to feel, perceive by touch' and even 'to taste', and the verbs finally extend into acts of intuitive knowing or understanding, as we see in this line from the *Legend of the Seven Sleepers:* "He sylf ðas þingc swa gescifte … þæt heora nan **gefelan** ne mihte hu hi gewurdon on slæpe."[61] Sometimes apparently even plants have feelings: "Ælc wyrt and ælc wudu wile weaxan on þæm lande … þær þær hit **gefret** þæt hit hraðost weaxan mæg."[62] While further examples could be adduced, this brief overview demonstrates that the range of meanings of the two verbs is highly similar, while their points of divergence are few. Since the two verbs seem to have developed in markedly similar ways, we may again wonder why both of these verbs would be necessary.

### *5.3 Attestations*

In our first case study, we considered the possibility that the verbs of touch *hrīnan* and *hrepian* were dialectal variants, given their distribution in the Old English corpus. While it was difficult to draw conclusions re-

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[57] Muir (2000b, ll. 93–4 [Sea]): 'Then his body cannot … feel pain.'

[58] Norman (1849, 42 [ÆAdmon 1]): 'And he that nourishes all things felt hunger'.

[59] Dobbie (1942, 124, l. 12 [MCharm 6]): 'And when the mother feels that the child [within her] is alive, let her then go to church.'

[60] Clemoes (1997, 222 [ÆCHom I, 5]): 'When he finally felt his death's approach …".

[61] Magennis (1994, 234 [LS 34 {SevenSleepers}]): 'He himself fashioned these things … so that none of them could understand how they had fallen asleep.'

[62] Godden & Irvine (2009, 318 [Bo]): 'Every plant and every tree wishes to grow in the land … where it knows it can grow most readily.'

garding the precise distribution of these forms, it did appear that the *hrīnan* forms were characteristic of the North, while *hrepian* was a southern feature that made its way into writing, most notably in the works of Ælfric, in the mid- to late-tenth century.

The case for *fēlan* and *frēdan* being dialectal variants is even more compelling. As the semantic survey above reveals, their range of meanings was, if anything, closer. However, they *never* seem to have both been used by a single Old English author or manuscript (discounting a few late manuscript variants).

We may first observe that *fēlan* is characteristic of the Northumbrian texts: it occurs twelve times in the *Durham Ritual* gloss, once in the gloss of the *Lindisfarne Gospels* and again in the identical gloss of the *Rushworth Gospels*. Furthermore, *fēlan* is the only one of the two verbs to be found in poetry, where it occurs nine times: twice in *Christ C*, and once each in *Christ & Satan*, *Seafarer*, *Whale*, *Riddles* 6, 25, 84, and *Metrical Charm* 6. If we still accept the premise that much of the distinctive Old English poetic vocabulary has an Anglian origin, then the presence of *fēlan* in both poetry and the Northumbrian glosses certainly suggests that the verb was characteristic of Anglian. These results are summarized in Table 2.

Turning next to the Early West Saxon works, we discover something surprising. Although in Late West Saxon, *frēdan* and *fēlan* fall generally into the Winchester vs. non-Winchester pattern outlined by Gneuss and Hofstetter, in Early West Saxon they depart from it. As already noted, according to Hofstetter (1988, 156), one of the characteristics of the Winchester usage is that it is "a late Old English phenomenon". However, we find that both *frēdan* and *fēlan* appear in Early West Saxon, and they do so in a rather striking pattern, as Table 2 illustrates. *Frēdan* appears fifteen times in the *Pastoral Care*, four times in Boethius' *Consolation*, and four times in Augustine's *Soliloquies*. *Fēlan*, on the other hand, occurs eleven times in Gregory's *Dialogues* (Corpus version), five times in Bede's *History*, once in Orosius' *History*, and once in the *Martyrology*. The pattern of course is that *frēdan* is characteristic of the translations associated with Alfred or his circle, while *fēlan* is characteristic of non-Alfredian works.[63] We know that Wærferth translated Gregory's *Dialogues*; the Bede and the *Orosius*, once ascribed to Alfred, have been shown on linguistic grounds to be the work of other authors, while the *Martyrology* was never connected with Alfred.[64] In addition, the four texts in which

[63] See note 28 above for the recent debates on Alfredian authorship.

[64] Although the translation of Bede was ascribed to Alfred by Ælfric and William of Malmesbury, that authorship was brought into doubt by the text's many Mercian elements, first pointed out by Miller (1890–98) and elaborated by J.J. Campbell (1951). William of Malmesbury also ascribed the *Orosius* to Alfred, but Liggins (1970) and Bately (1970) persuasively disproved that authorship.

Table 2: Distribution of *fēlan* and *frēdan*

| | *fēlan* | *frēdan* |
|---|---|---|
| **Early West Saxon and Mercian Texts** | | |
| *Pastoral Care* | — | 15 |
| Boethius' *Consolation* | — | 4 |
| Augustine's *Soliloquies* | — | 4 |
| Gregory's *Dialogues* [Corpus] | 11 | — |
| Bede's *History* | 5 | — |
| Orosius' *History* | 1 | — |
| *Martyrology* | 1 | — |
| *Rushworth Gospels* | 1 | — |
| **Northumbrian texts** | | |
| *Durham Ritual* gloss | 12 | — |
| *Lindisfarne Gospels* | 1 | — |
| **Poetry** | | |
| *Christ & Satan*, *Christ C*, *Metrical Charm 6*, *Riddles* 6, 25, 84, *Seafarer*, *Whale* | 9 | — |
| **Winchester texts** | | |
| Ælfric's works | — | 36 |
| Gregory's *Dialogues* [Hatton] | — | 1 |
| *Durham Hymnal* gloss | — | 1 |
| *Expositio hymnorum* gloss | — | 1 |
| *Aldhelm Glosses* [Brussels 1650, Digby 146] | — | (*ge*fred*mælum* 1) |
| *Rule of Chrodegang* | 1 | — |
| *Legend of the Seven Sleepers* | 1 | — |
| **Canterbury texts** | | |
| *Liber Scintillarum* gloss | — | 2 |
| *Regularis Concordia* gloss | — | 1 |
| **Other non-Winchester texts** | | |
| *Bald's Leechbook* | 10 | — |
| *Old English Medicina* | 1 | — |
| Wulfstan's *Homilies* | 1 | — |
| *Vercelli Homilies* | 1 | — |
| 6 other homilies, saints' lives, glosses | 10 | — |
| *Peri Didaxeon* | — | 2 |
| *West Saxon Gospels* | — | 1 |
| *Benedictine Rule*, Winteney | — | 1 |
| *Life of Mary of Egypt* | — | 1 |

*fēlan* does appear have all been described as showing some Mercian influence.[65] While not definitive, the occurrence of *fēlan* in these texts again supports the impression that it was generally characteristic of Anglian.

Turning next to the Late West Saxon texts, we find that *frēdan* alone is characteristic of Ælfric's works, where it occurs 35 times.[66] There are also single occurrences of it in the tenth-century Hatton revision of Gregory's *Dialogues*,[67] in the *Durham Hymnal* gloss, and in the *Expositio hymnorum* gloss, all reckoned by Hofstetter to be part of the body of texts characterized by the Winchester usage. The list may be further expanded if we include the two occurrences of *gefredmælum*, a loan-formation from Latin *sensim* ('gradually, tentatively'), found in the Aldhelm *Glosses* in the manuscripts Brussels 1650 and Digby 146. *Fēlan*, on the other hand, occurs only twice in the Winchester group, once in the *Rule of Chrodegang* and once in the *Legend of the Seven Sleepers*. Thus, in terms of its appearances in Late West Saxon, *frēdan* behaves very much like a typical Winchester word.

*Frēdan* does occur outside the Winchester group in Late West Saxon. Most notably, it appears twice in the *Liber Scintillarum* gloss and once in the *Regularis Concordia* gloss which, as noted above, are thought to form part of the Canterbury group. It is found as well in such texts as the *West Saxon Gospels* and the *Winteney Version* of the *Benedictine Rule*. However, *fēlan* predominates in non-Winchester texts: it appears in *Bald's Leechbook*, the *Old English Herbarium*, Wulfstan's *Homilies*, the *Blickling* and *Vercelli Homilies*, and at least six other homilies and saints' lives.

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[65] See notes 30, 31, and 33 above for the Mercian background (with caveats) of Gregory's *Dialogues*, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and the *Martyrology*. For the *Orosius*, Bately (1980, xxxix) remarks upon a small number of Mercian "or even Northumbrian" elements.

[66] The exceptions are variant readings with *fēlan* that appear in the late manuscripts Bodley 343 (Ker [1957, 368, no. 310]: "s. xii$^{2}$") and Cotton Vespasian D. xiv (Ker [1957, 271, no. 209]: "s. xii$^{med}$"). Since in every instance these variants are set against earlier and more authoritative manuscript witnesses, we may safely assume that these are scribal. In Middle English, *freden* gradually dies out, though it appears in several known East Midland and South Western texts. According to Ker, Bodley 343 seems to be a *West* Midland manuscript, and Cotton Vespasian D. xiv to be South *Eastern*, "probably from Rochester or Canterbury" (277). If all the above holds, it would make sense that the later scribes would change *frēdan* to *fēlan*.

[67] Although there are eleven occurrences of *frēdan* in the Corpus version, they are all in the latter portion of the text which the reviser did not rewrite. The one instance of *frēdan* in the revised version was changed from *ongytan* in the original translation (Gregory's *Dialogues* [C] 2, 2, 102, 2; [H] 2, 2, 102, 4); so unfortunately we do not get to see what the Winchester reviser would do when confronted by *frēdan*.

## 6. Conclusion

In both case studies, we have observed how two Old English verbs can possess widely-attested Germanic (and, in the second case, Indo-European) cognates, present very similar arrays of meanings, and yet be distributed in the corpus of Old English in such a way to suggest that, for most of the writers of whom we have a record and who had occasion to use them, the words were not co-existing synonyms. This seems to have been particularly true of *frēdan* and *fēlan:* it is difficult to say what sort of regional distribution would have kept these words so distinctly apart, but it is possible that the partial alliterative and assonant resemblance between this latter pair suggested a false etymological connection to any speakers who did encounter the opposing term, so that they perceived them as variants of the same form, rather than as different words. In any case, while the attestations of *hrepian* and *hrīnan* give ample evidence of regional variation, the example of *frēdan* and *fēlan* is a particularly dramatic illustration of the idiosyncratic way dialectal forms can be distributed, synchronically as well as diachronically.

Furthermore, we have discovered that while one of the verbs, *frēdan*, behaves like a Winchester (dialectal) word in Late West Saxon, it behaves very much *unlike* one in appearing in attested Early West Saxon. As Scott Kleinman (1997, 372) remarks, "West Saxon is the language of both Alfred and Ælfric, but the later West Saxon of Ælfric does not appear to have developed directly from the earlier West Saxon of Alfred". *Frēdan* thus represents an unusual point of connection between these two early and late linguistic varieties. Going forward, we may wish to look for other such connections, as they will continue to enrich and complicate our picture of both West Saxon and the Winchester usage, comprised, as it is, of both a "modern" theological vocabulary and distinctly dialectal words with their own attested histories.

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