On sārnesse þū ācenst ċild: being born *in the history of English, with special reference to the Old and Middle English periods* [1]

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I propose a diachronic reconstruction of a part of the Old English vocabulary of *birth*. Starting from a careful and systematic analysis of the semantic entries in the *Thesaurus of Old English* and of the syntactic complementation patterns in the *Helsinki Corpus* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*, I have attempted to derive the internal hierarchical grading of the verbs included in the OE lexical subdimension of *birth*: in this way, the most significant parameters of categorization can be determined, each of which highlights a given aspect of how this vital process was categorized by Anglo-Saxon speakers, and how its collective mental representation has been changed in the later history of the English language.

1. AIMS AND SCOPE

This paper is intended to contribute to the domain of historical lexical semantics; more particularly, it addresses some aspects of lexico-semantic change in the lexical subdimension of BIRTH in OE [2] and ME. My analysis of the structure of this field is based on the Functional-Lexematic Model (FL-M), elaborated by Martín Mingorance [3] and further developed by Faber and Mairal (1994, 1998abc). In the FL-M, the paradigmatic and syntagmatic information that characterizes a lexical entry are closely interrelated to the extent that a verb's combinatory possibilities and potential syntactic patterns are semantically motivated.

Moreover, the relationship between the paradigmatic axis (where lexical items are arranged onomasiologically in semantic fields) and the syntagmatic

axis (which specifies the complementary patterns of a given predicate), which gives rise to the derivation of cognitive conceptual schemata within the lexicon, is seen as dynamic in two different senses. On the one hand, this relationship is conceived as dynamic on the micronet level, in the sense that a change in the syntagmatic axis implies a similar movement in the paradigmatic axis, and vice versa (Faber and Mairal 1994: 210-211). On the other, a change within a cognitive schema is complemented by further changes in the neighbouring schemata, which produces a more general dynamism within the whole macronet (Díaz Vera 1999, 2000a, 2000b).

The lack of native-speaker informants, which is particularly painful when dealing with the reconstruction of a given semantic area, will be substituted here by such valuable materials as concordances, computer-readable corpora and thesauri: the *Microfiche Concordance to Old English* (Healey and Venezky 1980; hence *MCOE*), the *Thesaurus of Old English* (hence *TOE*), edited by Roberts and Kay (1995), the CD-ROM edition of *Oxford English Dictionary* (hence *OED*, 1994), Bosworth and Toller's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (hence *BT*; 1988), Kurath and Kuhn's *Middle English Dictionary* (hence *MED*, 1952-), and the OE and ME sections of the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts* (hence HC; see Kytö, 1996); moreover, etymological data correspond to Pokorny's *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (hence *Pokorny*, 1959-1969).

Starting from a careful and systematic analysis of the semantic entries in *TOE* and of the syntactic complementation patterns in *HC*, *MCOE* and *OED*, I have attempted to derive the internal hierarchical grading of the lexical subdimension of *birth*: in this way, the most significant parameters of categorization can be determined, each of which highlights a given aspect of how this vital process was categorized by Anglo-Saxon speakers, and how its collective mental representation has been changed in the later history of the English language.

2. SETTING THE SCENE: THE LEXICAL FIELD OF EXISTENCE IN THE FL-M

EXISTENCE is one of the most basic domains in the lexicon (Faber and Mairal 1997: 119). On examining the lexical structure of this field, two different types of existence can be distinguished: (1) general existence in the objective world and (2) specific existence in someone's perception. Moreover, we must make a distinction between existence of animate and inanimate entities, so that:

[w]hile and inanimate entity exists for us when it enters our field of vision, a person/animal/plant exists for us (as something <u>animate</u>), when we perceive that it is alive. Our perception of this quality of *aliveness* is the essence of our understanding of life (Faber and Mairal 1997: 120).

As living creatures, we function in TIME and SPACE. This means that our interpretation of the conceptual notion of existence will be categorized according to these two parameters, so that existence is seen as a temporal phenomenon consisting of three consecutive phases: <u>to begin to exist</u> (*to be born*), <u>to continue to exist</u> (*to live*) and <u>to stop existing</u> (*to die*). The semantic space corresponding to the subfield <u>to begin to exist</u> can be further divided into the following dimensions (Faber and Mairal 1997: 125):

2. To begin to exist
    2a. To cause to begin to exist
        2a.1. To cause to be born
  2.1. To begin to exist in the perception of others
  2.2. To begin to exist in time (becoming real)
      2.2a. To cause something to begin to exist in time (*happen*)

In this paper, I will concentrate on dimensions 2a and 2a.1, where the core vocabulary of *birth* is included.

3.   *BEGINNING TO EXIST* IN OE: DIMENSION-LEVEL SCHEMATA

Within the conceptual arrangement of the OE vocabulary followed by the compilers of the *TOE*, words for *birth* have been included in Section I, corresponding to the *physical world*[4], which has been divided into the following five general categories:

01. The Physical World
02. Life and Death
03. Matter and Measurement
04. Material Needs
05. Existence

Heading 02. *Life and Death* can be further divided into eight subcategories. Within the general superordinate subcategory 2.1 *Existence, life*, the OE vocabulary for *birth* has been divided between 02.01.03.03.02 *To bring forth* and 02.01.03.03.03 *Birth* (with its subordinate 02.01.03.03.03.01 *Child-bearing, childbirth*). Most of the lexemes analyzed in this study present the following distribution:

02.01 Existence, life
    [...]
    02.01.03.03.02 To bring forth: *(ge)beran, (on)cemman, tī eman*
    .To bring forth young: *ċealfian* [5]*, ēanian, hwelpian*
    02.01.03.03.03 Birth / to be born: *āspringan of, (ā/on)wacan,*
    (ā/on)wæcnan, cuman ūp, for þcuman
    02.01.03.03.03.01 Child-bearing, childbirth: *(ge)byrd, cennes, tēam*
02.02 Death
02.03 Humankind
02.04 Body
02.05 Sensation, perception, feeling
02.06 Animal
02.07 Plant
02.08 Mental / spiritual health

As this distribution shows, OE speakers made a lexical difference between '(general) reproduction' (02.01.03.03.02-03) and its subordinate 'human reproduction' (02.01.03. 03. 03.01). In order to reconstruct the origins of this lexical differentiation, I will refer to what I describe as an IE agricultural metaphor in the next section.

4. HUMAN REPRODUCTION AS VEGETABLE PRODUCTION: THE LEXICALIZATION OF AN IE AGRICULTURAL METAPHOR

An initial distinction will be made here between the general vocabulary for *birth* and more specific verbs, which were exclusively used in reference to human beings. In general terms, words referring to different aspects of human reproduction can be described as compounds formed by the noun *bearn-* 'child' plus the corresponding root from the general subdimension, as can be seen from the following OE nouns:

TABLE 1

OE words for *conception, pregnancy* and *begetting*: lexical variation

	CONCEPTION	PREGNANCY	BEGETTING
[±human]	*ēacnung*	*ēacen*	*tēam*
[+human]	*bearnēacnung*	*bearnēacen*	*bearntēam*

There existed however a second pattern of lexical differentiation regarding OE words for *birth*, which was based not on the relatively recent compounding

strategies of Gmc, but directly on morphological devices, such as IE ablaut or the newer i-umlaut and breaking.

This is the case of OE *beran* 'to produce' (<Gmc **beran*>IE **bher-* 'to carry'; *Pokorny* 1.*bher*-128; Roberts and Pastor 1996: 25-26), a nuclear lexeme used to make reference to human reproduction (as different to animal reproduction). The interaction of processes of IE, Gmc and pre-OE date on the original IE root has implied the development of what Kastovsky (1992: 294) calls a 'large morphologically related word-family' for the expression of the most relevant meanings within the general category of 'vegetal production / human reproduction'.

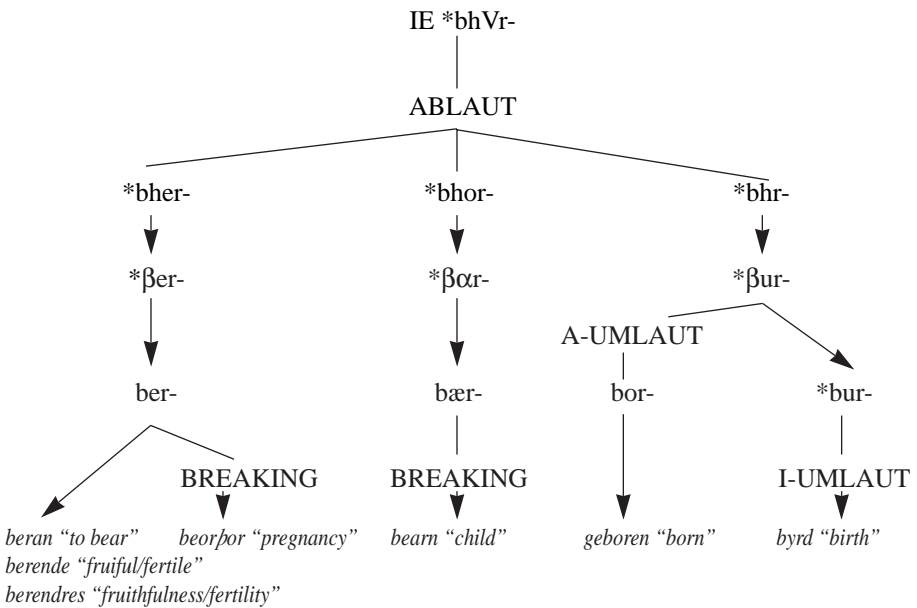Here is an illustrative sample of the most frequently found OE reflexes of the IE root **bher-* 'to bring forth' [6]:

Fig. 1. IE *bher- "to bring forth" in OE

OE *beran* 'to bring forth offspring' can be described as the result of an ancient process of metaphorical extension from the field of vegetal production; the relationship between these two types of production appears clearly from the synchronic analysis of the three core meanings that can be distinguished for OE *beran* 'to bring forth':

*beran*1: TO BRING FORTH FRUITS
SVO
[a]   S = prototyp. plant (Ag)
[b]   S = prototyp. leaves, flowers, fruits, etc. (Go)
(1)   *Æghwilc treow þara þe ne bereþ godne woestin bi∂ acorfen & in fyre sended.*
        "Every tree of those that bear no good fruit is cut down and thrown into the
        fire." (Rushw. 37) [c975]

*beran*2: TO BRING FORTH VEGETABLE PRODUCTIONS
SVO
[a]   S = prototyp. the Earth (Ag)
[b]   S = prototyp. vegetable productions (Go)
(2)   *Þe erthe ne bar nan corn, for þe land was al fordon mid suilce dædes.*
        "The earth bore no corn, for the land was completely ruined because of such
        deeds." (Peterb. 56) [1070-1154]

*beran*3: TO BRING FORTH OFFSPRING
SVO
[a]   S = prototyp. woman (Ag)
[b]   S = prototyp. child (Go)
(3)   *Heo þone eaþmodon cyning bær.*
        "She bore the humble king". (Blick.Hom. 13) [971]

As stated in the *OED* (see also Scardigli and Gervasi 1978: 100), the senses
to bring forth fruit and *to bring forth offspring* are both found in this word and
in its derivates in the IE languages geneerally; however, whereas the
lexicalization of IE **bher-* in the sense of 'reproduction' is reduced in non-
Gmc languages to a few nouns and adjectives (such as L *fertilis* 'fertile'), it is
precisely in Gmc that this IE root has served as the basis for the derivation of
the largest part of the vocabulary for *human reproduction*. For this reason, the
Gmc vocabulary does not show a clear-cut lexical division between mankind
and the rest of the animate creation as occurs in the case of Romance languages
such as French (Hallig and von Wartburg 1952) or Spanish (Moliner 1990), but
rather between physical and mental existence (Kay and Chase 1990: 306).

The close link between food production and human reproduction may well
be universal, rather than merely Gmc or IE. Chevalier and Gheerbrant (1969:
465-467) give a wide list of examples to illustrate the almost universal
representation of the Earth as a symbol of maternity, as Mother Earth (Walker
1986: 887). Moreover, agricultural labours and human reproduction are deeply
linked in the IE cultural tradition, where furrowing is frequently identified with
sexual penetration, sowing with copulation, and harvesting with birth[7].

The Gmc cosmogony is especially rich in illustrations of this conceptual
metaphor, which acquires here interesting religious connotations. According to
western Scandinavian sources, the world of the human beings (i.e. *jör∂*

'Earth') is one of the three roots of the ash tree known as Yggdrasill, the *axis mundi* supporting the heavenly vaults (Boyer 1981: 195). In the poetical *Edda* (*Voluspá*, 18-20), the first couple of human beings (i.e. Ask 'ash tree' and Embla 'elm') is described as created by Óðinn from two fallen tree-trunks. The importance given to the Earth in her function of creator and food supplier by the old Germanic peoples is further reflected by her prominent role as one of the fundamental divinities of the Germanic mythology (where she is known as *Nerthus*, from Gmc *erþa 'earth'; Boyer 1981: 43-46), as described by Tacitus (*Germania* XL, 2): "Nec quicquam notabile in singulis, nisi quod in commune Nerthum, id est Terram matrem, colunt eamque intervenire rebus hominum, invehi populis arbitrantur" [8].

Human reproduction and vegetal production (in any of its two variants) are thus seen in parallel ways, a link that has rarely extended to the expression of animal reproduction. The selection restrictions of the arguments, which can be seen as a consequence of the primitive pressure to differentiate humans from other animal species already from their very origins [9], implies that the verb *beran* is hardly ever used with reference to female mammalia other than women: obviously, a non-human argument is marginally acceptable, depending on the type of animal involved, and the extent to which human tracts can be attributed to it.

On the syntagmatic axis, OE *beran*3 is always used in transitive structures of the type *beran bearn, sunu, ċild,* etc. There are no semantic reasons to justify the activation of this true argument [10], which did not become optional until the late ME period; the following examples illustrate some of the first occurrences of this predicate as intransitive:

(4)   *Preise, thou bareyne that berst not.*
        "Praise, you bearing, that you do not bear." (Wyclif. *Isa.* 1) [1382]
(5)   *Women are made to beare, and so are you.*
        (Shakes. *Tam. Shr.* 2.1.201) [1596]

The pervasiveness of the transitive pattern implies that the paradigmatic relationship between OE *beran*1 and *beran*3 has a clear reflection on the predicate syntax, so that the second argument of *beran*3 (i.e. *bearn*) continues to be syntactically prominent in the actual linguistic expression, in spite of the fact that it is automatically incorporated by the subject (i.e. *mōdor* or *wīfman*).

5. ANIMAL REPRODUCTION

OE verbs expressing animal reproduction are generally derived from the nominal root for the corresponding young animal plus the Gmc formative */-oːj-/, which characterized Class 2 weak verbs. From a semantic point of

view, this type of denominal verbs can be described as sharing the sense 'to provide with a young' (see Kastovsky 1992: 389; 1993), so that effectivity and inchoativity could be assumed in OE *ċealfian* (Ritt 1993), a predicate best interpreted as 'to provide someone with a calf', where the meaning expressed by the verb is focused on the addition of one member of the group [11].

Derivation of Class 2 continued to be fully productive throughout the whole OE and most of the ME period; as a consequence of this, the number of verbs of animal reproduction formed on this pattern underwent a continuous increase until well into the 15th century. The *OED* gives the following first occurrences of these predicates:

OE *ċealfian*: TO PROVIDE WITH A CALF
SV
[a]   S = prototyp. cow (Proc)
(6)   *Ða wolde heo [seo cu] cealfian on ʒesihðe þæs folces.*
       "Then would she [the cow] calve within view of the people". (Ælfric *Hom.* II. 300) [c1000]

OE *ēanian*: TO PROVIDE WITH A LAMB (OE *eowu* 'female sheep'; cf. L *ovis*)
SVO
[a]   S = prototyp. eow (Ag)
[b]   O = prototyp. lamb (Go)
(7)   *He ʒenam hine of eowedum sceapa, fram eaniʒendum he ʒenam hine*
       "He took it from the herds of sheep, among those that were earning he took it."
       (Lamb. Ps. 77.70) [c1000]

OE *hwelpian*: TO PROVIDE WITH A HWELP OR HWELPS (OE *hwelp* "puppy") [12]
SV
[a]   S = prototyp. bitch, lioness, etc. (Proc)
(8)   *Þatt deor þatt wass i leoness like, þatt riseþþ o þe þridde daʒʒ Affterr þatt itt iss wheollpedd.*
       "That beast that was like a lioness, that rises on the third day after that it has whelped." (Ormin. 6029) [c1200]

ME *childen*: TO PROVIDE WITH A CHILD
SVO
[a]   S = prototyp. woman (Ag)
[b]   O = prototyp. child (Go)
(9)   *Þe shall Elysabæþ þin wif an sune childenn.*
       "Elisabeth your wife shall child you a son". (Ormin. 156) [c1200]

ME *folen*: TO PROVIDE WITH A FOAL
SV
[a]　　S = prototyp- mare (Proc)
(10)　　*The fend... yow fech body and bones, As ferforthly as ever wer ye folid!*
　　　　"The fiend... fetch you, body and bones, as sure as you were foaled!"
　　　　(Chaucer *Friar's T.* 247([c1386]

ME *kydden*: TO PROVIDE WITH A KID
SV
[a]　　S = prototyp. she-goat (Proc)
(11)　　*Þan þe femell [the doe]... goþe to kydde fer þens.*
　　　　"Then the female [the doe]... goes to kid her kids far from there". (Master 4)
　　　　[c1400] [13]

In general terms, the earliest occurrences of all these predicates illustrate predominantly intransitive complementation patterns. It is clear that the lexical structure of these verbal items determined automatically the semantic scope of the second argument (i.e. we can suppose that a lexeme like *ċealf-ian*) would imply a straightforward semantic interpretation as 'to provide with a calf [and not with a lamb, a kid, or a young animal of any other species]' by speakers of OE). These shadow arguments are thus semantically incorporated in the lexical item, which implies that the syntactic activation of a direct object in the actual linguistic expression unnecessary, creating an awkward or redundant effect (especially when the object is not modified by an adjective or a relative clause).

Transitive uses of most of these verbs are not met with until the ME period (ME *whelpen* 1225; *foalen* 1386; *calven* 1388), often coinciding with the gradual loss of prototypicity of the OE nouns referring to the corresponding young animals: this is the case of the OE nouns *hwelp* and *fola*, which entered in competition with the newer *puppy* (1486; Moessner 1994: 210) [14] and *hore/filly* (1400). In the case of OE *ċealfian*, the change from OE *ċealf* to ME *kalf* and the subsequent formation of a new predicate ME *kalven* 'to bring forth a calf' may well account for the development of a true argument (i.e. the object in SVO) from the previous shadow argument found in the intransitive pattern.

Transitive structures in OE and early ME are practically limited to the predicates *eowian* and **ċildian* (ME *childe*). In the case of *eowian*, it should be recalled here that this is the only OE verb of animal reproduction derived not from the name of the young animal (i.e. OE *lamb*), but from that of its mother (OE *eow*). This implies the lack of a shadow argument (as the ones described for OE *ċealf-ian* or *hwelp-ian*), and the necessity to make the second argument explicit in the linguistic expression. In the case of OE

*ċildian, its synonymy with the transitive predicate OE *beran*3 described above might be the cause of the generalized use of a true argument (i.e. *bearn, sunu, ċild*, etc.) with this verb. In fact, the development of intransitive **ċildian* coincides in time with that of intransitive *beran*3, the first recorded occurrences of both intransitive predicates dating back to the 14th century (see also examples (6) and (7)):

> (12)   *Time is come the lady schal childe: Scheo bad that God beo to hire mylde.*
> "The time has come that the lady shall child: she bid that God be mild to her." (K.Alis. 604) [c1300]

> (13)   *Þe wyfman lyþ a chi[l]dbedde oþer nyez to childi.*
> "The woman lies in travail or close to child." (Ayenb. 224) [1340]

6.   PROCREATION IN THE SOCIAL WORLD: OE *TĪEMAN* AND *CENNAN*

A third group of OE verbs of *birth* consists of lexemes derived from Gmc nouns referring to aspects and results of procreation and to familial and tribal groups, such as:

> [a] OE *tīeman* (<Gmc **tɑumjɑn*) is related to IE **deuk* ("to lead" *Pokorny deuk-* 220; cf. L *ducere*); appears in OE with the core meanings of family, race and brood (NE *team*).

> [b] OE *cennan* (<Gmc **kɑnnjɑn*) is derived from IE **gen-* ("to procreate" *Pokorny* 1.*gen-*373; cf. L. *genus*, Greek γὲνοϛ); three main senses appear: (1) race or stock, (2) class or kind, (3) gender or sex (found in OE and early ME, but not later).

In both cases, these verbs present the typical phonological and morphological traits that characterize OE Class 1 weak verbs, such as stem-formative **/-j-/* and umlauted root vowel (Lass 1994: 166-167). This implies that these predicates were developed as causatives, with the general sense 'cause (X: family, tribe, etc.) to increase':

OE *tīeman*: TO CAUSE A GROUP [FAMILY, TRIBE, RACE TO INCREASE SV
[a]   S =prototyp. familial/tribal group
(14)   *Entas wæron eac swylce ofer eorðan on ðam dagum, æfter ðan ðe Godes bearn tymdon wið manna dohtra.*
"There were also giants on earth in the days when God's sons procreated with the daughters of men." (Ælfric *OldT.* 6.1.) [c1000]

SVO
[a]   S = prototyp. familial/tribal group
        O = prototyp. offspring
(15)   *Þæt folc tymde micelne tean on ðam westene*
        "That nation had a large progeny in the west." (Ælfric *Hom.* II. 212) [c1000]

OE *cennan*: TO CAUSE A FAMILY TO INCREASE
SV
[a]   S = prototyp. adult human being (mother)
(16)   *Swa eal manna bearn sorgum sawað, swa eft ripað, cennað to cwealme.*
        "All the sons of men sow grieve and then they reap, they bear to suffer."
        (Christ 5)

SVO
[a]   prototyp. adult human being: father ("to conceive") or mother ("to give birth to").
[b]   prototyp. child
(17)   *Wintra hæfde twa and hundteontig þa seo tid gewearð þaet se eorl ongan
        æðele cennan, sunu and dohtor.*
        "After one hundred and two years when the hour had arrived, that the noble
        earl began to have progeny, a son and a daughter." (Gen. 39) [c1000]

Broadly speaking, these terms are deeply related to the most relevant social aspects of human procreation, especially to succession laws (see Herlihy 1985: Chapter 2). Thus, OE *tīeman* can also be found in the subheading 11.03.01.01.01 *Proof, demonstration*, as it is used in legal texts with the senses 'to refer or trace (property), for evidence of ownership, *to* a third person representing the party from whom it was acquired; to vouch to warranty' (*OED*):

(18)   *Gif man forstolenne ceap befehð, ne mot hine mon tieman to ðeowum men.*
        "If a stolen slave is found, no one can prove that he belongs to the thieve."
        (Ine Laws 110) [c700]

As for OE *cennan* as a verb of social interaction, it can also be found in the general sense 'to make known' (*TOE* entry 09.06.02.01 *To tell, make known, declare, relate, announce*), or with the more specific sense of 'to make known, recognize someone as legal heir or successor to an estate' (especially in ME, derived from the subfield *TOE* 14.03.03.08 *Justification*):

(19)   *Cen þec mid cræfte ond þyssum cnyhtum wes lara liðe.*
        "Make yourself known with strength and to these knights be generous in
        advices." (Beow. 38) [c900]
(20)   *Gif he þonne cenð þæt he hit mid ʒewitnysse bohte.*
        "If he then shows with testimonies that he bought" (Edgar Laws 10) [c975]
(21)   *Askande him to be kende to the saide lande as air til his fadir.*
        "Asking him to be recognized heir of the land mentioned, as before to his
        father." (BRA I.28) [1468]

7.   BIRTH, DEATH AND THE 'SLEEP' METAPHOR

The last group of verbs analyzed here is formed by predicates referring to the action of becoming awake, such as (*ā/on)wacan* and (*ā/on)wæcnan*. OE *wæcnan* probably had the sense 'to become awake', though this is shown only in the compounds *āwæcnan* and *onwæcnan*, the simple verb being found only in the sense 'to come into being', which may be either a figurative use of the sense 'to awake', or represent a different application of the original wider sense of the root. As for OE *wacan* and its derivates, this verb has the inchoative sense 'to cease to sleep; to become awake':

OE (*ā/on)wæcnan:* TO COME INTO BEING
SV
[a]   S = prototyp. child, what is born
(22)   *Þonon Eomer woc hæleðum to helpe, Hemminges mæg, nefa Garmundes, niða cræftig.*
"Thence Eomer was born to help the heroes, Hemming's strength, Garmund's nephew, powerful in the battles." (Beow. 60) [c900]

OE (*ā/on)wacan*: TO BECOME AWAKE
SV
[a]   S = prototyp. child, what is born
(23)   *Ne weorþeð sio mægburg gemicledu eaforan minum þe ic æfter woc, nymþe ic hlafordleas hweorfan mote from þam healdende þe me hringas geaf*
"The family is not increased by the descendants by my descendants after I was born, unless I can leave, lordless, from the guardian that gave me the ring." (Riddl. 190) [c950]

The metaphor of sleep has further reflexions within the field DEATH (Ower 1996; *TOE* 30-37), where OE *slæpan* and its hyponyms are frequently used to express 'to stop existing':

(24)   *And byr ʒenna... untyned weron &... lichoma halʒa wæra ða ðe slepdon arison.*
"And the tombs... were unfenced and... the sleeping bodies of the holy men woke up." (Lindisf. Gosp. Matt. 27.52) [c950]
(25)   *Hwi sind ða deadan slapende ʒecwedene?... Ealle hi moton slapan on ðam ʒemænelicum deaðe.*
"Why are the dead said to be sleeping?... They all must sleep in the common death." (Ælfric *Hom.* II. 566) [c1000]

The identification of 'coming to existence' with 'becoming awake' can thus be considered as a part of a general conceptual metaphor of life as consciousness, where the following concepts are deeply intertwined:

TABLE 2

The "Sleep" Metaphor in OE

OE verbal lexemes	*(ā/on) wæcnan* *(ā/on) wacan*	slœpan
Field of 'sleep'	to become awake	to become asleep
Field of 'existence'	to come to existence	to stop existing
Mental state	consciousness	loss of consciousness
Temporal connection	day	night

8. FINAL REMARKS

In this paper, four groupings of OE terms for BIRTH have been proposed, corresponding to the three major areas of human activity: physical, social and mental.

1. Physical world:
    a) vegetal: *beran*
    b) animal: **cildian*
2. Social world:
    c) legal: *tīeman, cennan*
3. Mental world:
    d) sleep: *(ā/on)wæcnan, (ā/on)wacan*

The lexemes included in each of these four groups have been linked not only on semantic grounds, but also on phonomorphological, syntactic, etymological and pragmatic reasons. My results can be diagrammed as follows:

LEXICAL DIMENSION BIRTH

GROUP	PHONO-MORPHOLOGY	SYNTAX	ETYMOLOGY	FOCUS ON
vegetal	strong verb	+accusative	IE **bher-*	process of production
animal	weak verb (C2)	-accusative	Gmc N+*/-oj-/ (denominal)	who bears forth
social	weak verb (C1)	±accusative	Gmc N+*/-j-/ (denominal)	growth of social group, producer
mental	strong verb	-accusative	IE **weg-*	what is produced

These OE lexemes indicate thus four different ways of perceiving the process of *birth*: BIRTH as *creation,* BIRTH as *reproduction*, BIRTH as *social growth* and BIRTH as *individual consciousness*. These four categorizations probably represent four successive developmental stages in our understanding of the whole process of <u>coming to existence</u> as human beings: from the general action of being created (represented by the strong verb *beran*) to the individual process of becoming conscious or aware of our quality of aliveness (developed as a metaphorical extension from the verbs of SLEEP *wæcnan* and *wacan*). It is precisely through this focus on the individual as the primary goal of the action expressed by verbs of BIRTH that the passive construction *to be born* (which, similarly to OE *wæcnan* and *wacan*, allows the topicalization of the entity that is coming to existence) will become the most common predicate within this subdimension in NE.

Moreover, the later evolution of these predicates (i.e. development of transitive patterns for previously unaccusative verbs, changes of meaning) demonstrates once again that the relationship syntax vis-à-vis semantics is diagrammatically and iconically motivated, the nodes in the macronet being a clear example of the inseparability of both aspects. On a macrostructural level, BIRTH extends to different domains, and the connections of a given conceptual schema with those of other domains, which constitute the basis of the so-called lexical architecture of the lexicon (Faber 1994), are subject to diachronic modification, and so are our representations of what we know about the world and ourselves.

NOTES

[1] Part of the research reported on here has been supported by two grants from the DGICYT (*Desarrollo de una lógica léxica para la traducción asistida por ordenador a partir de una base de datos léxica inglés-francés-alemán-español multifuncional y reutilizable;* n° 94/0437) and the University of Castilla-La Mancha (*Gramaticalización y derivación léxica en inglés antiguo y antiguo nórdico*). Both grants are hereby gratefully acknowledged. I also should like to thank the anonymous referees and the Editors of *Estudios Ingleses de la Universidad Complutense* for their helpful suggestions and comments on an earlier version of this paper. Last but not least, very many thanks to Francesca, whose birth in July 1999 prompted what follows.

[2] The following abbreviations will be used here: IE = Indo-European; L = Latin; Gmc = Germanic; OE = Old English; ME = Middle English; NE = New English.

[3] For a complete compilation of Martín Mingorance's papers on the FL-M, I refer the reader to Marín Rubiales (1998).

[4] As opposed to the *mental world* (Section II) and the *social world* (Section III); see Kay 1994: 113.

[5] This verb belongs to the *TOE* subcategory 02.06.01.07 *Breeding, hatching*. However, in the *OED* OE *ċealfian* is defined as 'to give birth to a calf' (as in example [6] below).

[6] A more complete reconstruction of the OE reflexes of IE **bher-* 'to carry a burden / to bring forth' is found in Lass (1994: 191-192).

⁷ This is probably a cross-cultural (or even universal) metaphor; for example, in some African and Asian societies, sterile women are thought to turn the soil unproductive, which is a frequent cause of abandonment by their husbands; moreover, the *Koran* (11, 223) describes women as arable lands, whereas in the *Odyssey* (V, 125) Jason joins Demeter, the Greek goddess of maternity, vegetation and Earth, within a sown furrow (Frazer 1911-1915).

⁸ "Nor in one of these nations [i.e. the Germanic tribes] does aught remarkable occur, only that they universally join in the worship of Herthum; that is to say, the Mother Earth. Her they believe to interpose in the affairs of man, and to visit countries" (Church and Brodribb 1877: 65).

⁹ The same need can be seen as the cause of the OE compounds with *bearn* referred to in *Table 1*, as well as of the frequent use of euphemistic words and expressions to refer to human *pregnancy* and *birth* in most modern languages (NE *to bear / to give birth to*, Spanish *dar a luz / parir*).

¹⁰ I use the term *true argument* (Faber and Mairal 1998b: 58) to refer to parameters that are strictly necessary for the syntax of a verb; other types of argument are *default arguments*, which participate in the meaning but are not necessarily expressed syntactically, and *shadow arguments*, which are semantically incorporated in the lexical item (Pustejovsky 1995: 63-64).

¹¹ Since all these verbs refer to cattle and domestic animals, the recipient of the action can be identified with the owner of the female animal, so that "a cow provides (its cowherd) with a calf".

¹² For a full study of the position and the evolution of this lexeme within the lexical field DOG from OE to NE, see Moessner (1994: 207-218).

¹³ Further examples of this type of derivation are *to kitten* (1495), *to pig* (1532), *to lamb* (1611).

¹⁴ Used as a verb 'to bring forth puppies' from 1589.

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APPENDIX

Abbreviations

OLD ENGLISH TEXTS:

Ælfric *OldT.*	Ælfric, *Treatise on The Old Testament* [c1000]
Ælfric *Hom.*	Ælfric, *Homilies* [c1000]
Beow.	Beowulf [c900]
Blick.Hom.	*Blicking Homilies* [971]
Christ	*Christ* (Exeter Book) [c950]
Edgar Laws	Anglo-Saxon Laws (Edgar) [c975]
Gen.	*Genesis* [c1000]
Ine Laws	Anglo-Saxon Laws (Ine) [c700]
Lamb.Ps.	*Lambeth Psalter* [c1000]
Lindisf.Gosp.	*Lindisfarne Gospels* [c950]
Riddl.	*Riddles* (Exeter Book) [c950]
Rushw.	*Rushworth Gospels* [c975]

MIDDLE AND EARLY MODERN ENGLISH TEXTS:

Ayenb.	Michael of Northgate, *Ayenbyte of Inwyt* [1340]
BRA	Burgh Rec. Aberdeen 20 Mar. (Spalding Cl.) [1468]
Chaucer *Friar's T.*	Chaucer, *The Friar's Tale* [c1386]
K.Alis.	*Kyng Alisaunder* [c1300]
Master	*Master of Game* [c1400]
Ormin.	*The Ormulum* [c1200]
Peterb.	*The Peterborough Chronicle* [1070-1154]
Shakes. *Tam.Shr.*	William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew* [1596]
Wyclif. *Isa.*	John Wyclif, *The Old Testament (Isaac)* [1382]