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THE AXIOLOGICAL PROFILE OF THE GNOMIC DOMAIN OF EVALUATION IN OLD ENGLISH

The aim of the article is to reconstruct the axiological profile of the domain of gnomic utterances in Old English and identify its distinctive criterion of evaluation. In defining the domain as a field of experience rather than a genre, it makes use of a material comprising 257 contexts of positive and 19 contexts of negative evaluation that are labelled ‘gnomic’ in a corpus of 2,953 contexts of 76 Old English evaluative adjectives in 285 texts of all periods. Evaluative values are attributed to each value concept realisation on three levels: dictionary, etymology and collocational frame, and are then classified under Schwartz’s ten basic values. The resulting distribution of these values is tested for significance by means of χ^2 and Haberman’s standardised residuals. The outcome confirms the existence of a gnomic actualized axiological profile built on two focal values – Achievement (32.2% of the domain’s realisations, 108 focal cases; z = +19.85) and Self-Direction (12.0%, focal in all 98 cases; z = +26.56) – lexicalised above all by the wisdom adjective wīs ‘wise’ and by the comparatives betera / betst and sēl / sēlra ‘better, best’. The domain evaluates by an experiential, comparative-analytic standard, ranking the quality and efficacy of action on a ‘better – worse’ scale rather than by conformity to a sacred norm. This thesis is confirmed by a deficit of Tradition (0.5%, z=−9.48) and by the generalised non-metaphoricity of maxims. It shows that gnomic poems are indeed Christian in conception but owe their vocabulary of evaluation to a native, pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon intellectual tradition. Here, theological reference is clearly distinct from the experiential semantics of the evaluative adjectives ‘better’, ‘good’ and ‘best’. A comparison with the religious domain shows that the two domains share a background of value concept Universalism but embody the opposite forms of legitimation: the axiology of obedience in religion and the axiology of prudence in gnomic utterances. This work represents a step in a wider typology of axiological domains in Old English.

Keywords: *Old English, evaluation, axiological profile, gnomic domain, maxim, S. Schwartz’s model.*

Introduction. The gnomic poetry, including maxims, sententious statements (Exeter Maxims (Maxims I), Cotton Maxims (Maxims II), The Fortunes of Men, The Rune Poem, Precepts, Solomon and Saturn II, Vainglory, The Order of the World, The Wanderer, The Seafarer, Beowulf), is one of the more distinctive layers that can be identified within the range of Old English writing. However, a number of questions regarding the organisation of its value structure remain unresolved, often shifting the discussion into more general matters to do with genre and origin. Because of this phenomenon, such that a single evaluative lexeme activates a completely different value bundle in a gnomic environment than in a religious or heroic environment, it is useful to treat gnomic discourse as forming a field in which evaluation is realised. The research problem then posed by the gnomic domain is what evaluative core it is based upon, how it is lexicalised, what dominant criterion of evaluation operates within it, and just how it differs from other domains.

Theoretical Background. Gnomic poetry, gnomes, and maxims have been studied mainly as a genre rather than as an area of axiology. Citing Aristotle (through C. Larrington), an explanation of the gnome as general rather than particular has been given, and the near interchangeability in usage between gnome and maxim has been noted [8, p. 3]. Earlier approaches to gnomes and maxims are summarized briefly, including their formal definition as sententious sentences [16]; typological division of gnomes into ethical and observational [3]; and analysis of gnomic catalogue-lists separately from the rest [6]. P. Cavill offers a definition of the maxim as a «sen-

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tentious generalisation» with three constraints – the present tense of the verb, a non-specific subject (God, fate, nature, or a class of people), and the absence of deixis [2, p. 66–67]. T. Shippey treats the maxim functionally, emphasising its comparative basis: «the Beowulfian maxim contains the comparative selran, 'better'; and 'better' implies 'worse'» [12, p. 28–46].

Formal features thought to help pinpoint the gnomic, such as *sceal* / *biþ*, *gerisan*, *selre* / *selast*, and *oft*, are given, with contrasting analyses of *sceal* and *biþ*, the specialised use of sceal, biþ, mæg orders experience into "what is" and "what ought to be", while the comparative selre and the superlative selast indicate "what is better or best" [5, p. 56]. Larrington reduces the debate over the *sceal* / *biþ* distinction to an «ought – is» scale, after M. Nelson [8, p. 6–7], whereas P. Cavill disputes its categoricalness, showing that almost any verb can occur in a maxim, and it is the tense that is significant [2, p. 60]. The maxim's distinctiveness as literally logico-propositional and non-metaphorical (via Barley) is outlined as presented by Norrick [9, p. 61].

Our approach is centering on C. Larrington's remark that the evaluative-intellectual vocabulary of the gnome is native: «the existence of such a wealth of terms indicates an interest in the mind and psychological attributes which predates the importation of classical theory with the coming of Christianity» [8, p. 9]; in the Exeter Maxims she counts sixteen words of the semantic field of wisdom, against two in the Cotton Maxims [8, p. 9]. At the same time, both C. Larrington and P. Cavill maintain that the poems are Christian in conception [8; 2, p. 233], and T. Shippey notes that the commonest type of maxim asserts «the power of God» [12, p. 28–46].

The axiological framework is established through Schwartz's theory of values [11] and the semantic-development model used "to see" – "to know" – "to be wise" by M. Sweetser [13, p. 33]. Finally, the lack of integral corpus-based description of the value profile of the gnomic domain of Old English is indicated, thus setting the scene for the novelty of the present study.

Aim and tasks. The aim is to reconstruct the axiological profile of the gnomic domain of evaluation in Old English and to establish the criterion of evaluation proper to it. The tasks are: 1) to determine the value core of the domain; 2) to describe its lexicalisation (wisdom words and comparative forms); 3) to substantiate the experiential-analytic criterion of evaluation and to resolve the question of the relationship between theological reference and evaluative semantics; 4) through the comparison with the religious domain due to close themes, to bring out the distinctiveness of the gnomic profile.

The materials and methods leading up to the following analysis are as follows. The overall dataset consists of 257 positive and 19 negative gnomic contexts, thematically tagged as gnomic or wisdom by the author, selected from a corpus of 2,953 contexts drawn from 285 texts (76 evaluative adjectives). The unit that is taken into consideration in our analysis is the value realization by axiodeterminant (evaluative adjective) in the contexts. The determination of realization of value concepts in the corpus is carried out on the basis of three independent criteria: a) on the basis of a dictionary profile which typically creates a hierarchy of meanings; b) on the basis of etymology and c) the collocational frame, as this clearly has an important influence on the evaluated notion. A distinction was also drawn between the overall frequency of realisation of a value and its focality (the cases in which the concept is the semantic centre of the utterance). To test the dependence of the distribution of values on the domain, the χ^2 test (Eq. 1) was applied together with Haberman's standardised residuals (z) (Eq. 2):

$$\chi^2 = \Sigma ((O - E)^2 / E), \quad (1)$$

and

$$z_{ij} = (O_{ij} - E_{ij}) / \sqrt{(E_{ij} \cdot (1 - r_i/N) \cdot (1 - c_j/N))} \quad (2)$$

where O is the observed number of realisations of a value in the domain, E = (row total · column total) / N is the number expected under independence, r and c are the marginal proportions of the row and the column respectively, and N is the total number of realisations. A value of $|z| > 1.96$ corresponds to a significance level of $\boldsymbol{p} < 0.05$, and $|z| > 2.58$ to $\boldsymbol{p} < 0.01$; a positive residual indicates a statistically significant over-representation of a value in the domain, a negative one its under-representation.

Discussion. The value profile of the gnomic domain shows the significance of two focal values (see Table 1).

Achievement (ACH) is the most frequent value among all contexts – 32.2% and 108 cases of being a focal value, which can be explained by the fact that the aim of gnome is to evaluate mainly the effectiveness, productivity, and utility of an action. Self-Direction (12,0%) which is always focal when is used in a gnomic domain (98 out of 98 cases) represents the peculiarity of the domain which actually concentrates the vocabulary of practical wisdom. Haberman's standardised residuals for both values prove our

Table 1

The value profile of the gnomic domain

Value Concept	%	Focal Usage
Achievement (ACH)	+32.2%	108
Power (POW)	+16.2%	13
Universalism (UNIV)	+12.8%	0
Self-Direction (S-D)	+12.0%	98
Benevolence (BEN)	+8.8%	16
Hedonism (HED)	+8.2%	14
Security (SEC)	+4.0%	1
Conformity (CONF)	+1.2%	6
Stimulation (STIM)	+0.8%	0
Tradition (TRAD)	+0.5%	1
Tradition⁻ (TRAD⁻)	−1.1%	–
Conformity⁻ (CONF⁻)	−0.8%	–
Benevolence⁻ (BEN⁻)	−0.5%	–

thesis – z for ACH is +26.56 and z for S-D is +19.85 (see Table 2).

Represented secondarily, but still statistically significantly, is Power (POW) with 16.2%; z = +2.78 working with glory as a variety of achievement. Universalism (UNIV) has a noticeable share (12.8%), yet its residual is close to zero, that is, the value is represented at the expected level. UNIV is used to describe generalised statements about the world order in Old English gnomic texts. Tradition (TRAD), Conformity (CONF), Security (SEC), and Stimulation (STIM) are significantly under-represented in the corpus. The adjusted Haberman residuals (Table 2) confirm this outcome: Tradition (z = −9.48), Stimulation (z = −7.99), Benevolence (z = −4.75), Conformity (z = −4.36), and Security (z = −3.65) are significantly under-represented; Universalism and Hedonism are statistically neutral (HED being borderline, z = −1.98).

The core of the domain is lexicalised by three groups of adjectives (see Table 3). First, the wisdom

Table 2

Haberman's standardised residuals for the value concepts of the gnomic domain

Value Concept	O	E	z
Self-Direction (S-D)	98	11.8	+26.56
Achievement (ACH)	240	80.1	+19.85
Power (POW)	116	92.2	+2.78
Universalism (UNIV)	103	119.5	−1.73
Hedonism (HED)	62	77.8	−1.98
Security (SEC)	36	62.3	−3.65
Conformity (CONF)	14	39.3	−4.36
Benelovence (BEN)	70	114.5	−4.75
Stimulation (STIM)	5	62.7	−7.99
Tradition (TRAD)	13	95.3	−9.48

axiodeterminant *wīs* 'wise' (81 uses) is the most frequent one of the domain, realising Self-Direction. Other axiodeteminants denote more specific aspects of this evaluative dimension, in particular *snotor* 'prudent' and *glēaw* 'sagacious'; wisdom that grows with age is connected with the gerontological dimension of the culture [10]. This fact is accounted for on the basis of the etymology of *wīs* from PIE ****weyd-*** 'to see', which likewise has the typical qualities of a metaphor [13, p. 33]: TO SEE → TO KNOW → TO BE WISE, with the evaluative meaning arising from the descriptive one through subjectification [14]. Second, the comparative and superlative forms *betera / betst* and *sēl / sēlra* 'better, best' (119 uses together) realise Achievement by ranking quality on a scale, which accords with the axiological parameter built into conceptualisation [7]. C. Larrington shows that the comparatives *betri / verra* (Old Norse) are used, so that «a hierarchy of values is established … bound by the comparatives 'betri' (better) … 'verra' (worse)» [8]. Third, we find the adjectives of general approval *til* 'good, fit' and *gōd*. In total, the concentration of these axiodeterminants describing the cognitive dimension Self-Direction in the excerpt concurs with C. Larrington's observation that «sixteen words referring to 'wisdom' occur in the eight brief maxims» in the Exeter Book verse [8].

The principle of evaluation in the gnomic domain differs fundamentally from those of other domains. The gnome ranks the quality and efficacy of action on a "better – worse" scale: the dominant comparatives make evaluation a comparative rather than an absolute act. Examples from the corpus such as *Ongiet georne hwæt sy god oþþe yfel* «discern keenly what is good and what is evil» (Precepts) thematizes evaluation as a rule of judgment and directly names it as the cognitive operation of making an evaluative discrimination. This binary antithesis of the moral universe (*wel / wa, leof / lað, god oþþe yfel*) is, according to E. Hansen, foundational to the gnomic worldview [5], while the very distinction of GOOD and BAD belongs to the semantic primes [15]. Its formal correlate is the − metaphoricity of the maxim in Norrick's matrix: «Once a unit such as Live and let live has been defined by Barley's features, +manipulates logical relations, +full statement, +fixed form, − metaphorical, along with such additional features as +traditional, +conversational, +didactic … the decision to label it a maxim or a proverb does not matter» [9, p. 61]. Thus, the maxim is a literal, logico-propositional judgement rather than a figurative utterance, that is, an instrument of analytic rather than symbolic thought. Evaluation in the domain appears

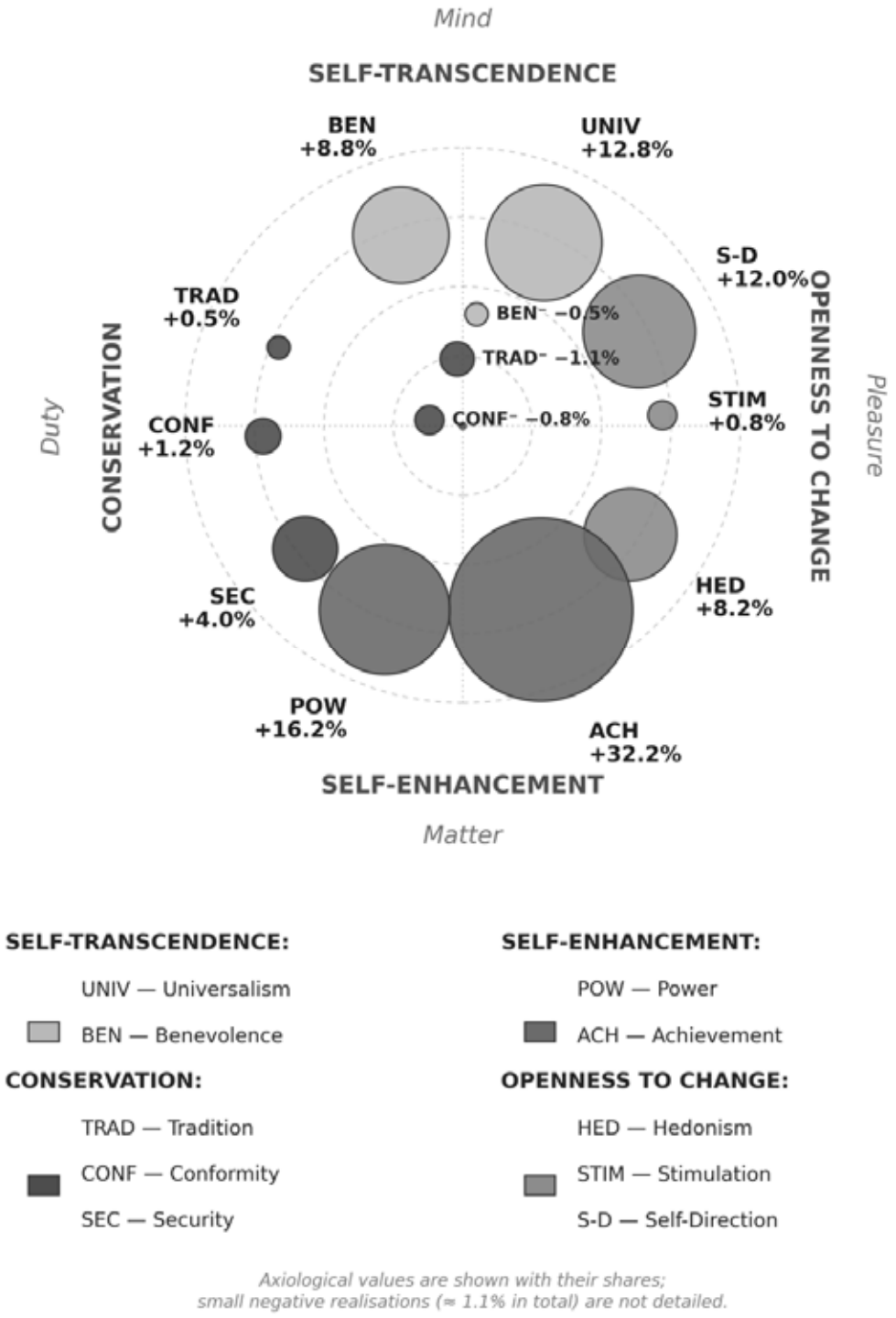


Fig. 1. Axiological profile of the gnomic domain in old English (generated by the author using claude (opus))

Table 3

Main axiodeterminant of the gnomic domain

Axiodeterminant	Number of Contexts	Axiodeterminant	Number of Contexts
wīs ‘wise’	81	*snotor* ‘prudent’	9
betera / betst ‘better, best’	68	*glēaw* ‘sagacious’	8
sēl / sēlra ‘better’	51	*fæger* ‘wonderful’	5
til ‘good, fit’	10	*līþe* ‘mild’	5
gōd ‘good’	9	*gesǣlig* ‘happy’	3

as practical reason of weighing certain quality (practical wisdom as a universal human virtue [4], which explains the exceptional focality of Self-Direction.

One objection to the hypothesis raises a contradiction: the semantic deficit of Tradition (0.5%; z = −9.48) in gnomic domain along with the explicit theology of most Old English maxims. T. Shippey points out that a common type of Old English maxim asserts the power of God [12, p. 28–46], and P. Cavill concedes that the surviving gnomic poetry is Christianised [2, p. 233]. Yet the hypothesis does not extend beyond the bounds of the deficit inherent specifically to semantics of adjectives of evaluation in their gnomic use. Even when a maxim is reinforced with theological content, wisdom is presumably evaluated as wisdom, not as holiness. Moreover, C. Larrington points out that the intellectual vocabulary of the gnome, for example *wīs*, *snotor*, *glēaw*, and *frōd*, is native and predates Christianization [8, p. 9]. Hence, the deficit of Tradition with respect to the gnomic domain as a whole concerns specifically the evaluative semantics of adjectives in their gnomic use.

To proceed with the explanation of the peculiarities of the gnomic domain we should compare it to the religious domain (see Table 4).

Table 4

The comparison of religious and gnomic domain axiological profiles

Value Concept	Religious Domain	Gnomic Domain
Tradition (TRAD)	18.0%	0.5%
Self-Direction (S-D)	0.9%	12.0%
Achievement (ACH)	5.3%	32.2%
Benevolence (BEN)	15.7%	8.8%
Universalism (UNIV)	13.9%	12.8%

The two domains that share common topics and trajectors are like mirror images of one another. What dominates one appears as marginal in the other. The religious domain is concentrated (absolute frequency and relative frequency) in the value category of Tradition (18.0%), and has a Self-Direction component (positive pole) of almost zero (0.9%). In contrast, the gnomic domain is concentrated in Achievement (32.2%) and Self-Direction (12.0%), and has a Tradition component that approaches zero (0.5%). These high and low frequencies point to opposite types of evaluativity realisation. The axiology of obedience is to be found in the religious domain: evaluation is grounded in the conformity of conduct to a specifically sacred norm. The axiology of prudence is to be found in the gnomic: evaluation takes place on the basis of the individual's experience and success. This contrast brings clearly into focus the essential profile of the gnomic value orientation, distinguishing it sharply from the religious by its experiential-analytic criterion of evaluation from the latter's sacral-normative one. An important result of this contrast is that the value concept of Universalism, describing the general principles of the world order, turns out to be represented in both domains (13.9% and 12.8% respectively). This indicates a significant point of contact between the two domains, namely the concern with the general order of the world. The gnomic domain has a relatively small negative pole represented in only 19 contexts. The values composing it are very non-systematic; its leading items *wamm* and *lāþ* would appear to express a normative distinction of the proper and the improper rather than what may be generally understood as the 'evil'.

Conclusions. The value core of the gnomic domain is constituted by two focal pillars: Achievement (32.2%, 108 focal; z = +19.85) and Self-Direction (12.0%, 98 focal; z = +26.56). The Tradition in the gnomic domain is observed in deficit (0.5%; z = −9.48).

The value core's lexicalisation is realized by means of the wisdom adjective *wīs*, which is the lexical realisation of Self-Direction; the comparative *betera* and superlative *betst* / *best*, which simulate the comparative evaluation phenomenon central to the gnomic domain by realising the achievement category. The adjectives *sēl* / *sēlra* have the similar function. The experiential-analytic criterion for evaluating values realised in the gnomic domain diverges fundamentally from that prescribed by religious axiology. It determines the quality of an action not by its conformity to a sacred norm, but by weighing it on a better-worse scale.

The apparent deficit of Tradition is the third conclusion of the analysis. By distinguishing reference from semantics, this study resolves the deficit of the theological or religious subject-matter within the domain of the gnomic maxim. At the same time the intellectual vocabulary of the gnome is native and pre-Christian.

The religious domain's sacral-normative pole (Tradition, as obedience) differs fundamentally and irreconcilably from the experiential-analytic evaluation pole (Achievement and Self-Direction) of the gnomic domain, both of which share the background of Universalism. This opposition constitutes the first step of the Old English axiological domains typology, as further understanding necessitates a symmetrical description of the heroic and aesthetic-cosmological domains.

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Соловйова О. В. АКСІОЛОГІЧНИЙ ПРОФІЛЬ ГНОМІЧНОГО ДОМЕНУ ОЦІННОСТІ В ДАВНЬОАНГЛІЙСЬКІЙ МОВІ

Мета статті – реконструювати аксіологічний профіль гномічного домену у давньоанглійській мові та встановити властивий йому критерій оцінювання. Розглядаючи домен як поле досвіду, а не жанр, дослідження спирається на матеріал із 257 контекстів позитивної та 19 контекстів негативної оцінки, позначених як «гномічні», у корпусі з 2953 контекстів уживання 76 давньоанглійських оцінних прикметників у 285 текстах усіх періодів. Ціннісні концепти приписано кожній ціннісній реалізації за трьома принципами: 1) словниковим профілем, 2) етимологією та 3) колокаційним фреймом. Надалі ціннісні реалізації класифіковано за десятьма базовими цінностями Ш. Шварца. Здобутий розподіл цінностей перевірено на значущість за допомогою критерію χ^2 та стандартизованих залишків Хабермана. Результат підтверджує наявність актуалізованого гномічного аксіологічного профілю якому зафіксовано дві фокусні цінності –Досягнення (32,2 % реалізацій домену, 108 фокусних випадків; z = +19,85) і Самостійность (12,0 %, фокусна в усіх 98 випадках; z = +26,56), –лексикалізованого передусім прикметником мудрості wīs «мудрий» та компаративами betera / betst і sēl / sēlra «кращий, найкращий». Домен оцінює за критерієм наявного досвіду та порівняльно-аналітичним принципом, ранжуючи якість та ефективність дії за шкалою «краще–гірше», а не за відповідністю сакральній нормі. Цю тезу підтверджують дефіцит Традиції (0,5 %; z = −9,48) та загальна неметафоричність максим. Показано, що гномічні поеми справді є християнськими за задумом, проте завдячують своїм оцінним вокабуляром питомій дохристиянській англосаксонській інтелектуальній традиції. Теологічна референція чітко відмежована від досвідної семантики оцінних прикметників «кращий», «добрий» і «найкращий». Зіставлення з релігійним доменом показує, що обидва домени поділяють спільне тло – ціннісний концепт Універсалізм, але втілюють протилежні форми: аксіологію послуху в релігії та аксіологію розсудливості в гномічних висловленнях. Ця стаття є частиною ширшої типології аксіологічних доменів давньоанглійської мови.

Ключові слова: *давньоанглійська мова, оцінність, аксіологічний профіль, гномічний домен, максима, модель Ш. Шварца.*

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