The aim of the present study is to analyse the development of the semantic profile of the Old English word þēod(e) from Old to Middle English and to focus on the changes of its usage between the two periods. Moreover, since the OE þēod(e) did not survive beyond the Middle English period, the study is intended to reveal some plausible reasons and circumstances for its loss. All these aspects will be analysed on various sources, i.e., three acknowledged historical English dictionaries and the evidence found in the entire two manuscripts of Layamon’s Brut. The latter source is significantly illustrative of the analysed decline of þēod(e) since of the 64 occurrences of the lexeme in the earlier MS Caligula about two-thirds have been reduced in the later MS Otho. In the remaining cases, a detailed semantic analysis of the parallel passages of the two manuscripts and the words which are attested to replace þēod(e) is believed to give us some insight into the factors contributing to the loss of this Old English lexeme in Middle English, at least in the West-Midlands, where the text could be localised.

Key words: semantic change, semantic profile, lexical replacement, Old English, Middle English, þēod(e), Layamon’s Brut

1. INTRODUCTION

The present paper stems from my observation that the Old English word þēod(e) did not survive beyond the Middle English period. The aim of the study is to analyse the development of the semantic profile of the lexeme from Old to Middle English as well as to focus on the changes of the usage of þēod(e) between the two periods. Moreover, the study is intended to reveal some plausible reasons and circumstances for the loss of the OE word þēod(e). All these aspects will be analysed on various sources, i.e., three acknowledged historical English dictionaries and the evidence found in the entire two manuscripts of Layamon’s Brut. This particular text has been selected for the detailed investigation since out of a few Middle English texts including the lexeme þēod(e), Layamon’s Brut is the only text which is preserved in two parallel manuscripts revealing the features of Old English (MS Caligula) and Early Middle English (MS Otho). Moreover, the two manuscripts of Layamon’s Brut are significantly illustrative of the analysed decline of þēod(e) since of the 64 occurrences of the lexeme in the earlier MS Caligula about two-thirds have been reduced in the later MS Otho. In the remaining
cases, the words which are attested to replace þēod(e) will be subject to a detailed semantic analysis. It is believed that a careful observation of the parallel passages of Layamon’s Brut including the instances of þēod(e) and these where the lexeme is either reduced or replaced with some other word will give us some insight into the factors contributing to the loss of this Old English lexeme in Middle English, at least in the West-Midlands, where the text could be localised.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis relies on the semantic field theory, as presented by Lehrer (1974, 1985). The author also refers to the concept of metonymy, as recently discussed by Langacker (2004, 2009).

3. PREVIOUS STUDIES

The topic of the loss of numerous lexical items of Germanic origin has been briefly discussed in some handbooks on Middle English. The semantic field ‘people’ has not been their focus, however.

As regards the text of Layamon’s Brut, some aspects of the vocabulary of the two manuscripts have been mentioned by, e.g., Wyld (1930), Strout (1952), Keith (1960), Amodio (1988) and Iwasaki (1993). Of these, Wyld (1930) is the only one who discusses the semantic field ‘people’. He does not concentrate on the word þēod(e), though.

4. METHODOLOGY

The starting point of the analysis are the definitions of the word þēod(e) found in such acknowledged historical English dictionaries as An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary by Bosworth and Toller (1898-1921) for Old English and the Middle English Dictionary online (henceforth the MED, based on the printed MED by Kurath et al. (1952-2001)) for Middle English. The description of the lexeme þēod(e) as appearing in Medieval English will be also observed in the most recently revised third edition of the Oxford English Dictionary online (henceforth the OED). The definitions of þēod(e) from these three dictionaries will be analysed and on the basis of the recorded meanings the senses which the lexeme could convey will be identified. The next step is the detailed scrutiny of the entire two manuscripts of Layamon’s Brut.
5. THE TEXT

_Layamon’s Brut_ is an alliterative poem written in the West-Midland dialect, preserved in two manuscripts, i.e., MS Cotton Caligula A.IX (henceforth MS Caligula) and MS Cotton Otho C.XIII (henceforth MS Otho). MS Caligula, possibly written c. 1200, is assumed to be deliberately archaised and thus shows many characteristics of a Late Old English text. MS Otho is a copy from c. 1300, though some scholars assess only a fifty-year difference between the two manuscripts. Nevertheless, MS Otho is a distinctively Early Middle English text. The two manuscripts are of extensive length since MS Caligula consists of more than 16,000 lines and MS Otho is about one-sixth shorter due to some damage of the manuscript. The present study relies on the entire two manuscripts of _Layamon’s Brut_ as published in two volumes edited by Brook and Leslie (1963-1978) as well as on the electronic versions of these editions included in the _Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse_ provided by the _Middle English Dictionary_ online. The comparison of the two manuscripts will allow for some conclusions concerning the development and treatment/usage of the OE word *þēod(e)* in Early Middle English, or at least in the EME dialect of the West-Midlands.

6. THE SEMANTICS OF _PĒOD(E)_ IN MEDIEVAL ENGLISH

6.1. _PĒOD(E)_ IN OLD ENGLISH

Bosworth and Toller (1898-1921) treat *(ge)þēod(e)* under a few entries in their _Anglo-Saxon Dictionary_ and provide the following definitions:

*þēod, e. f.*

I. a nation, people
   I a. where the general term is used, but only a part of the people is actually concerned; ‘a body of warriors, old and young, attached by personal service to the king’
   I b. in pl. the gentiles
   I c. a race
   I d. in a general sense, particularly in pl., people, men
II. in a local sense, the district occupied by a people, a country
III. a language.

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1 E.g., Wyld (1930: 1). For an overview of the discussion over various dating of MS Caligula see Roberts (1994). For similar data concerning MS Otho see Cannon (1993).
2 Krygier (1996), who situates the Otho MS in the latter part of the 13th c., demonstrates, however, that its plural markers of the OE nouns of relationship show some peculiar features found in some later texts. Fisiak and Krygier (2002) draw similar conclusions in a broader study of the two manuscripts.
3 Line numbering in the examples below comes from the latter source.
4 Quotations have been omitted here.
peóð- As the first part of several compounds (see below) peóð has the force of general, great; a similar use is found in O. Sax. and Icel. The form is also found in proper names, e.g. Deóð-bald, Deóð-ríc, Peóð-Scyldingas. Cf. regn-.

ge-peóð, e; f. A people

gle-peóð, e; f. Fellowship, association

gle-peóde, es; n. Language, speech, idiom, translation; lingua; tongue as distinguishing nationality

If we combine all these definitions and distinguish more general senses that the noun (ge)þēod(e) expressed, we will obtain the following three: (1) ‘people, a group of people’, (2) ‘a territory, a place’ and (3) ‘a language’. The first sense is manifested by meanings such as ‘a nation, people, a people, a race, a body of warriors, men, fellowship, association’. Sense (2) is conveyed by meanings such as ‘the district occupied by a people, a country’. The last sense can be found in context where geþēode refers to ‘language, speech, idiom, translation; lingua; tongue as distinguishing nationality’. Judging from the number of instances of (ge)þēod(e) found in preserved Old English texts by Bosworth and Toller (1898-1921), the noun (ge)þēod(e) was most frequently attested to convey the sense of (1) ‘people, a group of people’ and (2) ‘a territory, a place’.

6.2. ÞĒOD(E) IN MIDDLE ENGLISH

The Middle English Dictionary online, unlike Bosworth and Toller (1898-1921), treats the word þēod(e) with all the Old English meanings as belonging to the same noun and thus places þēod(e) under one entry5:

thēd(e) (n.(2)) Also theod(e), 3ede, (infl.) theden & (early) þiod(e, þode, (infl.) þeodæ, -en, -an & (in names) thet-, the-, thid(e)-, thud-, tet-, tet(t(e)-)e, teth-, ted-, te-, tied-, ted- & (errors) weode, wode; pl. thedes, etc. & (early) þeoden, -an, (infl.) þeode, -a, -æ, -um.

[OE þēod, þōd.]

1. 

(a) People, a body of persons forming some kind of group; also, a group or an order of angels [quot. ?c1200, 1st]; ~ lond; ~ speche; aungel ~; hethen ~;
(b) a group of people sharing a national, religious, an ethnic, or a tribal identity; judeish (phariseish, etc.) ~, ir-lond (israel) ~;
(c) in ~, among people; in a company.

5 There is one more entry for thēde (þēode) ‘a brewer’s strainer’ of unknown origin.
2.

(a) A land, country, region; a realm, kingdom [some quotas. may belong to senses 1(a) or (b)]; ~ folk, the people of a country;

(b) a piece of land or property.

3.

Language, speech; -- also pl.

4.

In surnames and place names.

Similarly to the situation in Old English, the word pēod(e) could be used in Middle English to convey three major senses, i.e., (1) ‘people, a group of people’, (2) ‘a territory, a place’ and (3) ‘a language’. Sense (1) is here rendered by meanings such as ‘people, a body of persons forming some kind of group; also, a group or an order of angels; a group of people sharing a national, religious, an ethnic, or a tribal identity’ and sense (2) by ‘a land, country, region; a realm, kingdom; a piece of land or property’. Sense (3) found under the label 3. in the definition above is recorded only in some rather Old English texts included in the MED, such as Vespasian Homilies (1150), Herbarium Apuleii (1150), Peri Didaxeon (1150) and Bodley Homilies (1175). Thus, the sense/meaning ‘a language’ of pēod(e) will be disregarded in the present study as attested in Middle English. Definition 4 is not valid for the present investigation.

6.3. PĒOD(E) IN MEDIEVAL ENGLISH

The third edition of the Oxford English Dictionary online provides the following meanings of the word pēod(e) in Medieval English.6

1. a. A people, race, nation.

   b. pl. (biblical.) The nations, the Gentiles.

2. The district occupied by a people; a country.

Surprisingly, the Oxford English Dictionary does not recognise the meaning ‘a language, speech’ as belonging to pēod(e).

As regards the major senses of the noun, they are the same as those distinguished on the basis of Anglo-Saxon Dictionary and the Middle English Dictionary online, i.e., (1) ‘people, a group of people’, (2) ‘a territory, a place’.

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6 The last attestation of pēod(e) is dated to 1508.
7. THE WORD ḞĒOD(E) IN LAYAMON’S BRUT

The analysis of the whole two manuscripts of Layamon’s Brut has given the record of 64 preserved instances in MS Caligula and 39 of these used in MS Otho. The context examination has confirmed the presence of the two main senses of the word Ḟēod(e) defined above.

In terms of particular meaning labels used by the Middle English Dictionary, some quotations from Layamon’s Brut are listed respectively under

(a) People, a body of persons forming some kind of group;
(b) a group of people sharing a national, religious, an ethnic, or a tribal identity;

2. (a) A land, country, region; a realm, kingdom; ~ folk, the people of a country;

Quite unexpectedly, the Oxford English Dictionary does not include any citations of Ḟēod(e) from Layamon’s Brut.

8. ANALYSIS

My analysis demonstrates that the number of occurrences of the word Ḟēod(e) in MS Caligula is about three times higher than that in MS Otho. There are 64 attested instances in the earlier manuscript and only 22 preserved in the later one.

This significant decrease in the use of Ḟēod(e) might be to some extent caused by numerous paraphrases of MS Caligula, which is a more universal phenomenon. MS Caligula of Layamon’s Brut is by and large declared a more elaborate manuscript engaging richer vocabulary (Wyld 1933: 48), while the MS Otho scribe appears “a matter-of-fact person who stood in critical attitude to his exemplar and took no pleasure in simile, epic repetition, or description” (Hall 1920: 450). Hence, the paraphrases of passages longer than single lexemes account for the fact that the later manuscript is about one sixth (17%) shorter than the original one. Moreover, a substantial damage of the final 10% of the MS Otho has to be taken into consideration.

The absence of the original MS Caligula Ḟēod(e) from MS Otho due to paraphrases of passages longer than a single lexeme and due to some damage of the manuscript can be claimed for 25 instances. This makes 39% of the MS Caligula occurrences of Ḟēod(e), which is higher than the average rate of omission caused

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7 It has to be added here that there are two instances of Ḟēod(e) in MS Otho which were not attested in the earlier MS Caligula. In both cases the original uses lēod(e), which makes these changes somewhat peculiar, because MS Otho displays a general tendency to replace lēod(e) with some other lexemes (see Ciszek 2012). However, the requirements of alliteration seem to account for the choice of the MS Otho scribe.
by the factors mentioned above (c. 27%). This calculation seems to be the first sign that there is something specific about the word *þēod(e)*, which triggers the MS Otho scribe to avoid it.

Some omissions due to paraphrases and MS Otho damage can be illustrated by the following examples:

(1) and al he leas his wurðscipe. for þôn win-scenche; ne dude nauer Ôder god. ne greiðe on his *þēod(e)*;
(MS Caligula, ll. 3,456-3,457)

þat al he leos his worsipe; þorh his mochele dringe.
= (MS Otho, ll. 3,346-3,347)

(2) al heo hit biwunnen. mid heore ahte wæpnen;
Ah makieð in eowre londe. castles swiðe stronge;
and werieð eowre *þēod(e)*. wið vnécüede leode;
& wunieð her hal and hæil. & habbeð alle godne dæie;
(MS Caligula, ll. 6,250-6,254)

al þat hii i-seh of lond; hii wonne to hire o3e hond.
al þis hi bi-wonne; mid hire main stronge.
= Wonieþ here niht an dai; and nou ich wolle fare min way.
(MS Otho, ll. 5,894-5,897)

(3) and he wulle þi mon bi-cume; and to Þisle seollen þe his sune.
and of þe his kine-lond halden; and for lauerd þe ikenne;
& on ælchere *þēod(e)*; beon 3aru to þine neode.
he wule beon þi mon icoren; a3ein ælcne mon iboren.
(MS Caligula, ll. 15,501-15,504)

and he wolde bi-come his man; his mans+++e he3i.
da3es and nihtes; he and a+ (h)is cnihte(s).
++ cniht +++ forþ wen++ ++ ++++lþ++ þan ++++
+++++++ ++++ +mette; +++ ++++ +grette.
(MS Otho, ll. 14,156-14,159)

(4) Pa com þer an gume riden; to Gurmunde kingen.
he wes ihaten Isemberd; inne France wes his æerd.
he wes Louweises sune; þas kinges of þere *þēod(e)*.
his fader hine hafuede ut idriuen. of al his kinercichen.
(MS Caligula, ll. 14,559-14,562)

(the corresponding MS Otho page is damaged)
The second important observation is that out of the 39 occurrences of the MS Caligula ðēod(e) which have some corresponding lexical realisation in the parallel MS Otho 22 seem to have been copied because of the requirements of alliteration. ðēod(en) was preserved in a close vicinity, within the same verse, of yet another word including the diphthong <ēo> such as nēode, Rōmlēode, lēode or ēoden (marked by bold type in the examples below). Thus, we can assume that were it not for the poetic constraints of alliterative poems, some extra 34% of the original MS Caligula ðēod(e) occurrences would have been eliminated from MS Otho. The instances below exemplify the discussed cases:

(5) Co[m] of Galwæie; Æssel þe gode.
    com of Muriene; moni spere kene.
of alle þissen peoden; come to þære neode.
to Cassibellaune; kinge of þissen londe.
(MS Caligula, ll. 3,715-3,718)

Com of Galeweye; Essil þe gode.
and of Moraine mani speres kene.
of alle þisse peode; come to þilke neode.
to Cassibilane; king of þisse londe.
(MS Otho, ll. 3,592-3,595)

(6) ich spæc wið þene abbed; þat is hali mon [&] god.
    & seiden him þa neode; þe icumen is to þissere peode.
(MS Caligula, ll. 6,597-6,598)

ich spac wip þan abbod; þat his holi man and god.
and tolde him þe neode; þat icome was to peode.
(MS Otho, ll. 6,227-6,228)

(7) ihouen and ihalden; þurh þene he3e Godd.
    and he wolden bi his liuën; Cadwalain luuien.
and beon 3aru to his neode; an ælchere peode.
(MS Caligula, ll. 15,077-15,079)

= 
and he wolde bi his liue; Cadwalpan louie.
and beo 3are to his neode; in euereche peode
(MS Otho, ll. 13,829-13,831)

(8) Heo ferde 3eond þas peoden. & sloh þa Romleoden;
(MS Caligula, l. 5,676)

He verde ouer al þeos peode; and sloh þe Romleode.
(MS Otho, l. 5,371)
(9) Nis he in nare kuððe; þe hit þe ma3e icu[ð]ðe. for alle ðan uolke; þe uulieð ðan kinge. wið-uten þan Rom-leoden; of his a3ere þeode. and wið-ute ðan uolke; þe ðiðneð þas kinges are. (MS Caligula, ll. 13,082-13,085)

Ne ma(y n)o man mid mouþe; sopliche segge. of haluendeal ðan folke; þat folweþ ðan caysere. wið(þ)-houte Romleode; of his o(wene) þeode. and wiþ-vt (þan) folke; þat ðiðneþ his (ore). (MS Otho, ll. 12,180-12,183)

(10) & 3if þu wult wel don. ich wulle þe makien riche mon; and driuen of mire þeode. vncuðe leoden; (MS Caligula, ll. 6,069-6,070)

and 3ef þou wolt wel don; ich wolle maki þe riche man. and drif of mine þeode; oncouþe leode. (MS Otho, ll. 5,730-5,731)

(11) Fortiger hæhte his sweines. sadeli his blonken; & nemnede twælf scalkes. to laden mid him-seoluen; to horse hii eoden. swulc heo wolden of þeode; (MS Caligula, ll. 6,744-6,746)

Vortiger hehte his sweines; sadeli his stedes. and nam twealf cnihtes; forþ mid him-seolue. to horse hii eoden; alse hii wolde of þeode. (MS Otho, ll. 6,364-6,366)

Finally, the remaining 17 instances of the original MS Caligula þēod(e) were modified in the way that they were replaced with some other lexeme each. The parallel MS Otho word(tokens) fall into 9 word-types: lōnd(e) (8 occurrences), folk(e) (2 occurrences) as well as kine-lōnde, cunde, kinedōm, riche, eorþe, cnihtes and ferde 1 occurrence each. Semantically, they can be divided into words either clearly denoting ‘a territory, a place’ or clearly denoting ‘people, a group of people’.

As regards the words referring to ‘a territory, a place’, lōnd(e) is the most frequently used substitute of þēod(e). It is attested in 8 cases, e.g.,

(12) Þes Cassibellaunus; wes þisses londes king. þe leodes hine luueden; for his la3en weoren gode. he sette feire þeauwes; in þissen þeoden. and he wes swiðe god king; & god cniht burh alle þing. (MS Caligula, ll. 3,569-3,572)
Þeos Cassibilane was god king; and wel bi-loued þorh alle þing.

= 
(He se)tte fai(re) þeues; ine þis (londe)
(MS Otho, ll. 3,451-3,453)

(13) For idelnesse is luðer; on ælchere þeode.
for idelnesse makeð mon; his mon-scipe leose.
(MS Caligula, ll. 12,433-12,434)

For ydilnisse doþ harm; in euereche londe.
ydilnisse makeþ man; his mansipe lease.
(MS Otho, ll. 11,536-11,537)

(14) Penda ich hit þe sugge ouer-al; Oswy haueð for-wal;
oðer he lið ibedde; ibunden mid ufele.
oðer uncuðe leoden; icumen beoð to his þeoden.
(MS Caligula, ll. 15,770-15,772)

Penda ich þe segge; and wel ich wene;
þat Oswi his swiðe on-hol; and in bedde ligge.
oþer oncouþe leode; icome beoþ to his londe.
(MS Otho, ll. 14,342-14,343)

(15) Na man him ne faht wið; no he ne makede nan un-frið.
ne mihte nauere nan man; bi-þenchen of blissen.
þat weoren in æi þeode. mare þan i þisse.
(MS Caligula, ll. 11,341-11,343)

No man him ne fast wiþ; ne he non oþer wiþ.
ne mihte no ma[n] bi-þenche of blisse þat were more.
in eni cunnes londe þane was in þisse.
(MS Otho, ll. 10,478-10,480)

In some of the attested instances the replacement of þēod(e), the prototypical meaning of which is ‘a nation, people’, with nouns with the sense ‘a territory, a place’ can be treated as a result of metonymy. Examples (12), (13) and (14) as well as (16), (18), (19) and (20) below are clear instances of metonymy.

Lexemes denoting ‘a territory, a place’, other than lōnd(e), can be found only ones in MS Otho as replacing the original þēod(e). Here belong kine-lōnde ‘a/the kingdom’, cunde (here: ‘hereditary possessions’), kinedōm, riche and eorþe, i.e.,

(16) Þa weoren ærchebiscopes þreo; inne þissere þeode.
inne Lunden and in Eouuerwic; and inne Karliun Sein[t] Dubric.
(MS Caligula, ll. 12,161-12,162)
Po weren archebissopes þreo; in þisse kinelonde.
ine Londene and in Euerwich; and ine Cayrlion Seint Dubr[i]ch.
(MS Otho, ll. 11,281-11,282)

(17) of swiðe muchele plihte. Nu þe bi-houeð mihte;
nu þe bi-houeð wepnen. to werie þine þeoden;
(MS Caligula, ll. 6,644-6,645)
of swiþe mochele plihte; Nou þe bi-oueþ mihte.
nou þe bi-houeþ wepne; to witie þine cunde.
(MS Otho, ll. 6,274-6,275)

(18) Seoððen com Redion; & rædden þissen þeoden
half 3er & seouen niht; þa wes he dæd forh-riht.
(MS Caligula, ll. 3,509-3,510)
After him com Redion; and heold þisne kinedom.
(MS Otho, ll. 3,395)

(19) swa þat heo al speken. þer heo heore mete æten;
þat Uortiger weoren wurðe. to walden þas þeode;
þurh-ut alle þinges. bæt þene swulche þreo kinges.
(MS Caligula, ll. 6,710-6,712)
and hii stille speken; þar þat hii seten.
þat Vortiger were worþe to welde þeos riche;
þorh-vt alle þinges; bet þane soche þreo kinges.
(MS Otho, ll. 6,333-6,335)

(20) Seoððen her com vnçu[d] folc; faren in þessere þeode.
& nemneden þa burh Lundin; [an] heore leode-wisen.
(MS Caligula, ll. 3,544-3,545)
Suþþe þar com oncuþ folk; faren to þisse erþe.
and nemede (þe)os borh Londen; in hire (le)od-wise.
(MS Otho, ll. 3,426-3,427)

The substitutes of þeoden(e) clearly denoting some ‘people, a group of people’
include folk(e), found in two cases, as well as cnihtes and ferde ‘an army, a band,
a company of people, people, nation’, attested in one case each, i.e.,

(21) Þa he alles spac; mid þræte he spilede.
To wroþer heore hele; habbed heo such werc i-don.
Mine þralles i mire þeode; me suluen þretiað.
Wide he sende 3eond þat lond; for he wes leoden king.
(MS Caligula, ll. 246-249)
The aim of the present paper was to concentrate on the semantic development and usage of the word *þēod(e)* from Old to Middle English as well as to reveal some plausible reasons and circumstances for the loss of the OE word *þēod(e)*
beyond the Middle English period. The linguistic material selected for the investigation were the entire two manuscripts of *Layamon’s Brut*. The later MS Otho of the text shows a significantly reduced use of the lexeme *þēod(e)* attested in the earlier MS Caligula. Similarly to the case of *lēod(e)* (see Ciszek 2012), the results of the analysis show a pattern of replacement in the direction of semantic transparency. The OE word *þēod* could have the sense of either ‘people, a group of people’ or ‘a territory, a place’. The MS Caligula scribe employs *þēod(e)* 64 times. 25 of these instances have no lexical representation in the later copy due to paraphrases or a damage of the MS Otho. In about a half of the occurrences which have some lexical counterpart in the MS Otho the original lexeme *þēod(e)* was preserved. In these cases *þēod(e)* seems to be employed because of the requirements of alliteration. The other half of instances were replaced in the MS Otho with some semantically transparent, unambiguous words referring exclusively either to ‘a territory, a place’, e.g., *lōnd(e)*, *kine-lōnde*, *kinedōm*, *eorþe* and *riche* or to ‘people, a group of people’, e.g., *folk(e)*, *cnihtes* and *ferde*. Moreover, it can be observed that some of the attested instances of the replacement of *þēod(e)*, the prototypical meaning of which seems to be ‘a nation, people’, hence the sense ‘people, a group of people’, with nouns with the sense ‘a territory, a place’, e.g., *lōnd(e)*, *kine-lōnde*, *kinedōm* or *eorþe*, can be treated as the result of metonymy.

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