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Weorðan Lost!

The development and disappearance of the Old English
copula *weorðan*.

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Dedicated to my parents Karl and Johanna,

my brother Konrad

and my husband Paul.

In love and gratitude.

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Table of Content

Abstract	8
1 Introduction	9
2 Grammatical concept – Construction Grammar.....	11
2.1 General approaches	11
2.2 Working approach	16
3 Diachronic development of <i>weorðan</i> and the constructions it occurs in	18
3.1 Weorðan – general development and meaning	18
3.2 Copula Constructions	20
3.3 Passive Constructions	25
3.3.1 Forms of the passive.....	25
3.3.2 Historical development of the passive	27
3.3.3 The passive in Old English.....	31
3.4 Future Constructions	38
3.4.1 General development of Germanic Future Constructions	38
3.4.2 The development of constructions with <i>weorðan</i> expressing futurity	44
3.4.3 The development of the German <i>werden</i> - future	49
4 Corpora	51
4.1 YCOE	51
4.2 LAEME	52
5 Corpus analysis 1: <i>Weorðan</i> in Old English	54
5.1 <i>Weorðan</i> in Non – Copula Constructions	55

5.2 <i>Weorðan</i> in Copula Constructions	56
5.2.1 <i>Weorðan</i> in constructions with passive meaning	60
5.2.2 <i>Weorðan</i> in constructions with future meaning	63
5.3 Conclusion.....	65
6 <i>Weorðan</i> lost – the disappearance	67
6.1 Language contact and competition.....	67
6.2 Construction Grammar approach	69
6.3 New approach – system of boundedness.....	74
7 Corpus analysis 2: <i>Weorðan</i> in Early Middle English	78
7.1 <i>Weorðan</i> in Non – Copula Constructions	80
7.2 <i>Weorðan</i> in Copula Constructions	82
7.2.1 <i>Weorðan</i> in constructions with passive meaning	85
7.2.2 <i>Weorðan</i> in constructions with future meaning	87
7.3 Conclusion.....	90
8 Summary and conclusion	92
9 Bibliography	94
9.1 Corpora.....	101
9.2 Online sources	101
10 Appendix	102
10.1 German abstract.....	102
10.2 Curriculum Vitae	105

Abstract

This paper is going to show the development of the Old English copula *weorðan*. It was a highly frequent word and used in a variety of different constructions. Research on *weorðan* has mainly dealt with certain parts of *weorðan*'s development, as for example in Toyota's study on the diachronic development of Passive Constructions or in Petré and Cuycken's detailed study on *weorðan* in Copular Constructions. Some older publications, for example by Frary, Zieglschmid and Klingebiel deal particularly with the disappearance of this Old English word, while Petré and Cuyckens speak of the disappearance of the construction. These different studies will be discussed and compared in greater detail.

The main focus of this paper, besides providing a detailed picture of *weorðan*'s development, is to show if *weorðan* was used to express passive and future meaning in the constructions it occurred in. Furthermore, the corpus analysis will also illustrate similarities and changes between the Old and the Early Middle English period, as well as show which of the theories of disappearance might be more plausible than others.

As *weorðan* developed out of the same Germanic root as German *werden*, it is surprising that it did not undergo a similar process and is now used to form futurity. As a full study on *weorðan* as a future marker has not been done by now, this will be an important part of this paper. The corpus analysis shows the different constructions in which *weorðan* was used in the Old and Early Middle English period and if it was really used to express future meaning and also passive meaning, like *werden* in German. There is a study dealing with the differences between the German and the English development under preparation by Diewald and Wischer, containing a full corpus analysis of Old and Middle English as well as Old and Middle High German Corpora. This paper will provide a detailed English Corpus analysis but not a German Corpus analysis.

The basis of this paper will be the theoretical framework of construction grammar (Traugott, Goldberg, Croft, etc.) which will help to display the different ways of *weorðan*'s development in a variety of different constructions (Non-Copula Constructions, Copula Constructions).

1 Introduction

Old English *weorðan*: At first it looks like nothing more but a nice little word, cognate to German *werden* – which, after a time of prosperity from 900 – 1200 A.D. rather suddenly died out. Immediately arises the question, “Is there much more to say, about this nice little word?” “Yes, there is. There is a lot more to say about it.”

Weorðan was one of the five most frequent verbs used in Old English, with the same ancestor and a similar meaning as German *werden*, but surprisingly its development continued in a very different way. This paper is going to have a closer look on this development and on the most interesting problem – its disappearance. Much research has already been done on *weorðan*, and the problem still is that researchers have always only dealt with certain parts of *weorðan*’s development. While on the one hand, a lot of research can be found on its usage as a passive auxiliary (Frary 1929. Klingebiel 1937. Kilpiö 1989. Denison 1989. Andersen 1991. Shields 1992. Hewson 1997. Denison 2004. Abbot-Smith, Behrens 2006. Harbert 2007. Toyota 2008.), on the other hand, there is next to nothing on its use for the expression of futurity, nor is there a comparison to the development of German *werden*. Many researchers mention that *weorðan* is used to express futurity, but none of them provides a more detailed discussion of this topic. Right now a study is conducted by Diewald and Wischer, which promises to offer a very detailed analysis and comparison of *werdan/weorðan* in Old High German and Old English corpora¹, with a special focus on their usage for the expression of futurity and the differences in their development.²

After Petré and Cuyckens (2008, 2009) approached *weorðan* and its disappearance with the help of construction grammar, research on the topic got a new input, both with regard to analysis and with regard to attempts to explain *weorðan*’s loss. The Copula Construction, as a “forerunner” of the Passive Construction and construction from which *weorðan* was lost,

¹ Arbeitstitel: „A parallel annotated diachronic corpus of Old High German and Old English texts for studies in grammaticalization and construction grammar“ - verbindet anglistische und germanistische Linguistik mit allgemeiner Sprachwandelforschung und Korpuslinguistik (<http://www.uni-potsdam.de/anglistik/fachgebiete/eves/wischer.html#c/2>).

² At the ICEHL in Pecs 2010, Wischer and Diewald talked about this topic: Wischer, Ilse & Gabriele Diewald: Markers of futurity in Old High German and Old English: A comparative corpus-based study [workshop paper].

opens new ways of explanation. As does Petré's newest research (2010) on the relationship between boundedness and *weorðan*'s loss.

This paper intends to provide an overview of *weorðan*'s different usages and the research already done on the different topics involving it. Therefore it is important to offer concrete and comparable data in the corpus analysis. It is hard to find comparable sources as they differ in dialect and genre. A more detailed exposure of the chosen corpora and example texts will be given in chapter 5.

Apart from collecting and classifying Old English instances of *weorðan*, it is necessary to (a) clarify where *weorðan* comes from, (b) if there had already been Future or Passive Constructions in Indo European and (c) if the ancestors of *weorðan* had already occurred in these constructions.

As can be seen, out of the first working title *Old English Weorðan*, a variety of different questions and subtopics developed. It is not just a "nice little word". It opens a whole research field ranging from Indo European via Old English and Old High German to Early Middle English, from Copula Constructions via Copula Constructions with a passive meaning to Copula Constructions with a future meaning and from lexical theories to Construction Grammar.

Concluding, the most important research questions for this paper should be summarised. Besides providing a detailed picture of *weorðan*'s development, the main question is, if *weorðan* was used to express future and passive meaning and if there is a difference between Old English and Early Middle English data. Furthermore, the second question is, if examples, which undermine certain theories explaining *weorðan*'s disappearance, can be found in the corpus analysis.

2 Grammatical concept – Construction Grammar

2.1 General approaches

As the theoretical framework of Constructions Grammar is the basis for this paper and especially for the corpus analysis, this chapter first gives an overview of the general approach of Construction Grammar. Most recent research suggests that *weorðan* was used in certain constructions and also disappeared because of the change in these constructions, and therefore Constructions Grammar is a very helpful tool to show the different possibilities of *weorðan*'s usage and different hypotheses concerning its disappearance. Secondly, a closer look on the chosen approach of Construction Grammar, used in this paper, will be taken.

There are different models that fall into the category of Construction Grammar (CxG) approaches. The most important ones will be mentioned here together with their similarities and differences. The first approach was developed in the 1980s by Fillmore and Kay in Berkley and was strongly influenced by Fillmore's frame semantics. It represents a generative model and is slowly moving towards the *Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar* (Pollard; Sag: 1994) – possibly uniting into one approach.

The second model is based on cognitive linguistics and mainly represented by Goldberg and Lakoff. At the same time it gets inputs from Fillmore's frame semantics, and additionally, using ideas taken from generative grammar (Lakoff 1987) and cognitive grammar (Langacker 1987; 1991), it is not too far away from Jackendoff's conceptual semantics (Jackendoff 1983, 1990; Goldberg 1996b; Goldberg/Jackendoff 2004)

The third approach is called "Radical Construction Grammar" and was mainly developed by Croft (2001). This model is on the one hand similar to certain versions of generative grammar approaches, like Minimalism (Chomsky 1995), Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (Pollard; Sag: 1993), Construction Grammar (Fillmore; Kay: 1993, 1999), etc. but as the name implies, it is radically different, as it, for example, argues against the existence of syntactic relations between the syntactic elements in a construction. (Croft 2001: 5. Fischer & Stefanowitsch 2007: 4f).

There are four basic assumptions, which all versions of CxG share:

“(1) Constructions are defined as pairings of form and meaning, ranging from the morphemic to the utterance level of linguistic structure;

(2) Constructions are organized in complex hierarchical networks with inheritance, polysemy and synonymy relations;

(3) The scope of the notion of constructions ranges from ‘lexicalized’ or ‘idiomatic’ items to abstract productive patterns;

(4) Constructions are highly sensitive to frequency as well as to their respective co- and contexts.” (Bergs & Diewald 2008, 1f; see also Fischer & Stefanowitsch 2007, 4f).

A further point shared by all of the above mentioned approaches is that every construction can be combined with other constructions and each utterance, bigger than a word, is a combination of more constructions (Fischer & Stefanowitsch 2007, 6f).

Fischer and Stefanowitsch (2007: 5) also mention that CxG is non-modular, meaning that sound, form, etc. are not separate and also non-derivational, that there is no derivation from one level to another (e.g. deep and surface structure). Furthermore, CxG rests on the assumption that there is no inherent knowledge about language, as constructions are not there *a priori* but have to be learned.

These ideas are shared mostly by the three mentioned approaches, but there is one idea, that “diese Zeichen stehen zueinander in systematisch beschreibbaren Verhältnissen” (Fischer & Stefanowitsch: 4f) [these signs correlate with each other in systemic describable relations] that is not shared by all of them in the same way. Croft’s basic paradigm that “Radical Construction Grammar does not posit any syntactic relations in constructions.” (Croft 2001: 5) excludes a certain kind of relation. He claims that the relations between parts of a sentence are neither important nor necessary for analysis. The hearer of a sentence and also the analysis just need symbolic relations (the relation between the semantic and syntactic structure) (2001: 207). But Fischer and Stefanowitsch (2007) talk about “systemic describable relations” – which is very open, and this is important as the different approaches focus on different relations in language and construction structure. In opposition to Croft, Goldberg (1995, 2006) and Langacker (1987) assume that constructions are connected via inheritance and generalization. So generally they all agree that there are relations between the constructions, although labelled and explained differently.

Furthermore, these approaches share another crucial point, namely the answer to the question “What is a construction?”. Although there is no complete agreement on what constructions really are, there is an agreement on the general point that grammar is entirely made up by signs/constructions. Constructions are, so to say, the “basic units of language” (Goldberg 1995: 4). Fischer and Stefanowitsch (2007: 5) give Lakoff’s definition as a representative, “Each construction will be a form-meaning pair (F, M) where F is a set of conditions on syntactic and phonological form and M is a set of conditions on meaning and use” (1987, 467). Some approaches add to this definition the condition that its “meaning or form is not compositionally derived from other constructions in the language” (Goldberg 1995: 4). Goldberg expresses this claim also in a more detailed way, “C is a CONSTRUCTION iff_{def} C is a form-meaning pair <F_i, S_i> such that some aspect of F_i, or some aspect of S_i is not strictly predictable from C’s component parts or from other previously established constructions.” (1995: 4). To illustrate that, take the example of morphemes; they are clear instances of constructions, as they are not predictable from anything else. Also Fillmore and Kay share this opinion about compositionality in contrast to Langacker (1987) and Croft (2001) who reject this condition (Fischer & Stefanowitsch 2007 : 5).

Another point of discord relates to the question about the range of CxG. It is generally agreed on that there is no division between the lexicon and syntax, and that beside semantics also pragmatics plays an important role in constructions. There are analyses, which use illocutionary functions (Lakoff 1987), metalinguistic commentaries (Kay 2003), scalar models (Kay 2003; Fillmore, Kay & O’Connor 1988), information structure (Lambrecht 1994; Goldberg 1995; Michaelis & Lambrecht 1996), which offer different ways of working with constructions (Fischer & Stefanowitsch 2007: 9).

Furthermore, another disagreement relates to polysemy. All approaches allow constructional polysemy. For Lakoff and Goldberg it is a very basic principle (Lakoff 1987. Goldberg 1995) and so it is for Croft (2001). Goldberg (1995: 4) describes polysemy in constructions in the following way: “Several constructions can be shown to be associated with a family of distinct but related senses, much like the polysemy recognized in lexical items. Moreover, these constructions are shown to be interrelated.” Goldberg also calls this “*constructional polysemy*: the same form is paired with different but related senses.” (Goldberg 1995: 33) For example “Mary taught Bill French.” vs. “Mary taught French to Bill.” For her, the meaning is similar but not the same. In the first example it is implied that Bill actually learned French successfully, which is not sure in the second example. But I think that it is difficult to claim

that “Mary taught Bill French.” and “Mary taught French to Bill.” are one form with two different meanings, as those two examples are two different forms and no real polysemy. What makes more sense to be called “constructional polysemy” is the Copular Construction, which will be discussed in more detail. If we take [NP_{NOM} *weorðan* PP_{LE}] we have one (abstract) form which can have different meanings, such as

(1) He wearð ofslagen.

He was killed.

(2) He wearð geedwerped.

He was recovered.

Also sceptical about this topic is the Berkley school, Kay, for example, prefers monoseme explanations, because he thinks polysemy to be redundant (Kay 2000 cited in Fischer & Stefanowitsch 2007, 10).

The last point of disagreement, which should be discussed here is abstractness. It is agreed that there are both specific and abstract constructions. An example of a specific construction would be [NP_{NOM} *fress*- NP_{DAT} *die Haare von Kopf*] while an abstract construction would look like the following [NP_{NOM} V NP_{DAT} NP_{ACC} PP]. A specific construction already includes certain specific lexical items and therefore the open slots can only be filled with specific lexical items, while an abstract construction allows a bigger variety of items to be used in it. In Old English, a specific construction with *weorðan* would look like this [NP_{NOM} *weorðan ofslagen*]. A more abstract variety would be [NP_{NOM} *weorðan* PP_{LE}] and the most abstract form would be [NP_{NOM} BE PP_{LE}]. It can be said that abstract constructions are generalizations over the specific constructions. What is different among the several approaches is the level of abstractness they allow. While Croft and Langacker argue that also abstract generalizations need rather specific meanings, the Berkley school is open to much more abstract meanings.

After listing the similarities and differences of the three main approaches mentioned above the following part is going to deal with certain ‘specialities’ brought into account by different researchers (Fischer & Stefanowitsch 2007: 10).

A very common procedure is the distinction between *construction*, which stands for the abstract representation, the so-called “blueprint”, and *construct*, which is the concrete realization of the abstraction. Bergs and Diewald (2008: 5) also mention Cappelle (2006) who distinguishes between *constructions*, which are abstract, and *allostructions*, which is similar to *construct*, a more concrete realisation. Traugott (2008: 31f) suggests the slightly different distinction of “macro-, meso- and micro-constructions”. Macro-constructions are the most abstract constructions, meso-constructions are groupings of similar constructions, for example like the Copular Constructions (chapter 3), and micro-constructions are single, basic constructions (Bergs & Diewald 2008: 6). But with these classifications also some difficulties occur, because what are similar constructions? When should one speak of a single construction with two variants and when of two different, separate constructions? These are questions discussed in all different approaches, along with the question “If something is not a construction, what is it?” Most researchers seem to agree on the claim that “similar function in a similar context results in different constructions in competition with each other” (Bergs & Diewald 2008: 6). But when looking at the example “bring the criminal in” and “bring in the criminal”, the question if those are “allostructions” of the verb-particle construction cannot be answered easily. Gries’ s (2003 cited in Bergs & Diewald 2008: 6) opinion is that there are more differences than similarities in it, and he rejects the idea that they belong to the same category, while Cappelle (2006 cited in Bergs & Diewald 2008: 6) calls this a basic construction with two variants, as he thinks there are enough similarities between them (Bergs & Diewald 2008). Goldberg (1995: 3) has a different opinion, because she thinks that sentences might differ in meaning although they share the same lexical items and similar constructions. Thereby she agrees with Bolinger, whom she cites, “A difference in syntactic form always spells a difference in meaning” (1968: 127). She terms this the “Principle of No Synonymy of Grammatical Forms” referring to different researchers, like Givón (1985) or Langacker (1985) who have already stated this hypothesis before.

Another important point for this paper should be discussed at the end of this chapter. Goldberg shares of course the assumption that constructions are form-meaning correspondences, but she also points out that constructions are meaningful in themselves, even independently of the words they contain. From that perspective a lexical approach (a bottom-up approach) is not suitable to catch the complex meaning of utterances. Therefore “constructions are crucial to the description of language” (Goldberg 1995: 2). This shows that linguistic change cannot only affect single words/items (e.g. in the case of *weorðan*) but whole constructions. And as we are going to see in a later chapter, it is not only the case that

changes of lexical items can have an impact on constructions, but it also works the other way round: changes in complex constructions can have a huge impact on single words.

2.2 Working approach

From the general overview of CxG now to the specific approach by Croft, the Radical Construction Grammar, which is the basis of this paper, following the framework used in the study on *weorðan* by Petré and Cuyckens (2009).

Croft's Radical Construction Grammar approach (RCxG) has a very different view on the categorisation of parts of languages than Construction Grammar in general. For him there are no cross-linguistic categories (like Subject, Noun, etc.) as they differ from language to language and as each language fulfils a variety of different criteria for particular "categories", as for example verbs need to have inflections for agreement and tense, mood and aspect. For some languages this may be true, but for others it may be wrong or not important (Croft 2001: 31). RCxG has the contrastive assumption that syntactic categories can only be derived from the constructions they occur in, but as the constructions are then named after these categories (like Copular Constructions) the categories become the "primitive elements of syntactic representation" – it is a circular approach (Croft 2001: 45). He adds that "Constructions, not categories and relations, are the basic, primitive units of syntactic representation" (46). Furthermore, he argues that theories of categories are "theories of nothing", because they do not work cross-linguistically and very often already fail within one language. RCxG claims that the speaker has knowledge of constructions, knowledge of words and the knowledge how to combine constructions and words – words fit into many different constructions and constructions can be built out of many different words, and on this basis there can be a definition of categories, but only in relation to constructions.

For this paper this means that *weorðan*, mainly referred to as a copula in Old and Middle English grammars, is not just a copula or even a "semantically empty" copula (Pustet 2001: 5). The category of *weorðan* is not the prior concern here. The categories will arise from the different constructions. It will be a copula when it occurs in a Copula Constructions.

The notation of constructions will look as in the following example of a schematic Copula Construction and is also based on Croft (2001: 53) and Petré & Cuyckens (2009: 313).

[NP_{NOMINATIVE} Subj IntrV.Cop XP_{NOMINATIVE} SubjComp] (Petré, Cuyckens 2009: 313).

Of course these labels, like Subj, V, etc. reflect language specific constructional criteria, which cannot be used in the same way universally (314). It would be more accurate to call it Subject of or in an (English) Copula Construction.

Petré and Cuyckens (2009: 314) combine the RCxG with a diachronic component and expand it to a diachronic construction grammar. Most important in diachronic Construction Grammar is that it includes not only lexically specific constructions but also partially substantive constructions, meaning that these constructions include “whole syntactic categories admitting a wide range of possible words and phrases to instantiate those categories” (Croft 2001: 15). Out of these substantive constructions emerged schematic constructions, which are abstract constructions where a slot is no longer associated with a certain lexeme. In the study by Petré and Cuyckens (2009), this emergence from a substantive construction to a schematic construction is also discussed and it will be dealt with in this paper in chapter 3.2.

3 Diachronic development of *weorðan* and the constructions it occurs in

3.1 Weorðan – general development and meaning

Weorðan was among the five most frequent words in Old English, and it was even the most common ‘copula of becoming’ during that period (Kilpiö 1989. Visser 1961). Its basic meaning was ‘come’, ‘become’ or ‘come to be’. Especially the meaning ‘become’ shows a semantic closeness to *beon*. *Weorðan* may have derived from the Indo European root **uer-t-* meaning ‘turn’. In Old High German *werdan* still had both meanings, ‘to turn’ (‘sich/etwas drehen/etwas wenden’) and ‘to become’ (‘werden’), while Latin *verto* or Sanskrit *vártate* only had the meaning ‘to turn’ and Gothic *wairþan*, deriving from the same root, only meant ‘to become’ (Stowasser 1994: 546. Biese 1932: 218).

The Indo European root of *beon*, **bheu-/bh(e)wi* also **uer-t* developed a future meaning, reflected in various Indo European languages. An example would be Gothic *wairþan* which was already very early used to express futurity, as in the following example (Coleman 1996, 9):

(3) *jainar wairþiþ grets* (Gothic)

‘there will be weeping there’

‘thar wirdit wuoft’ (Old High German)

Or in an example with a present participle, which was very common to express futurity in Gothic (10):

(4) *saihands wairþa* (Gothic)

‘I become seeing’ -> ‘I shall see’

‘wirde sehende’ (Middle High German) – this participle was then replaced through the infinitive in Modern High German - *ich werde sehen*

The question if *weorðan* in Old English was also used to express futurity is going to be discussed in chapter 3.4 and in the corpus analysis (in chapter 5.3).

The past tense of *weorðan* is *wearð*, its plural is *wurdon*, and the past participle is *worden* (Bosworth-Toller: 1200). *Weorðan* is a strong verb, which distinguishes tenses through different stem-vowels. It is a member of the third ablaut class, 3b to be precise, in which the verbs either have an *i* + nasal + consonant and a past participle *-u-* or, as *weorðan*, an *e* or *eo* + liquid + consonant with a past participle *-o-*, as *worden* (Quirk, Wrenn 1965: 49f). Through further sound changes in West Germanic [ð] was modified to [d]. This is the reason for *weorðan* – *wyrð* - *wearð* - *wurdon* – *worden* (Quirk, Wrenn 1965: 127).

Lass (1994: 74) explains that there occurred two fricative voicings at different dates: A late voicing from [θ] to [ð] happened in the 1st and 3rd person singular present tense (*weorþe*). The preterite plural *wurdon* was affected by an early voicing from [θ] to [ð] (Verner's Law) and a hardening from [ð] to [d]. In the first case it is not Verner's Law, either the opposite, because the voicing took place after an accented syllable. In final position, as in 1st and 3rd person preterite singular *wearþ*[θ] the voiceless fricative remained unchanged.

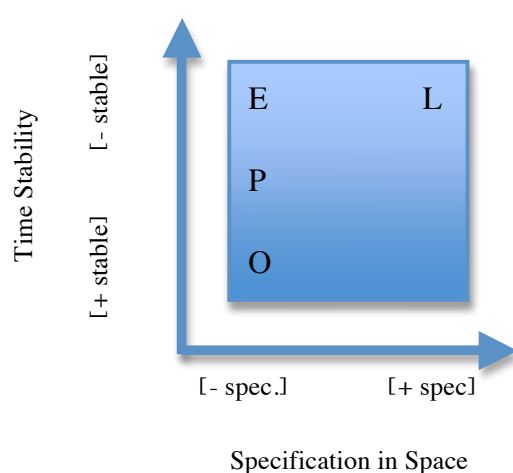
Bosworth-Toller lists many different possible paraphrases for *weorðan*. The most important ones are:

- *to come to, to be made, to arise, come, be, to be done, to happen, to take place, befall*
- with a predicative substantive: *to become, be made, be*
- with a predicative adjective: *to get, grow*
- with prepositions: *to come from, be caused by, be produced from or by*
- *to get into a state of being, feeling, to become*
- *to get into a state of action, to come to be doing something, to fall into an action, to take to*
- to change in material condition: *to come to be something, to turn into, to turn to, to become*
- implying movement, changing position: *to come, get*
- as an auxiliary with participles in the present tense and in the past tense forming the passive

3.2 Copula Constructions

As already mentioned before, *weorðan* was the most common ‘copula of becoming’ during the Old English period. For Croft’s Radical Construction Grammar the construction the verb occurs in and not the category in which it was put is important. Therefore a closer look on the constructions *weorðan* occurred in has to be taken. In many examples *weorðan* was used in Copula Constructions, which makes it a copula, but there are also evidences in which it did not occur in Copula Constructions, and in this cases it is not a copula, but a simple verb.

Petré and Cuyckens (2009) identified most of the constructions *weorðan* occurred in as Copula Constructions and therefore this construction type is important for this paper. The general form of the schematic Copula Construction is [NP IntrV XP] and is also called intransitive or one-participant predication. Petré and Cuyckens (2009) work with four different categories of Copula Constructions, therefore they use the model of intransitive predication by Stassen (1997), who distinguishes between event predicates (E), property-concept predicates (P), object predicates (O) and locational predicates (L) (Stassen 1997: 578). In Construction Grammar this is furthermore embedded in the concept of conceptual space (Croft 2001: 92 ff) where conceptual spaces or domains show different functions. In the case of the English Copula Construction these domains deal with the specification of the predicates and the time stability. The following model illustrates the assumptions concerning conceptual space:



ID

Figure 1 Conceptual Space of Intransitive Predication (Stassen 1997 cited in Petré and Cuyckens 2009: 319).

As can be seen in this diagram event and locational predicates are least time stable, while property predicates are at an intermediate level, and object predicates are most time stable.

The following examples should illustrate the different categories:

The Location Construction makes use of copulas on the one hand, but also of locative verbs (like *stand*) on the other hand, they often share the same or a very similar meaning, as in the following example. The time stability in this case is very low, as mostly animated subjects are the ones who can change their location quickly.

(5) He *is* in the garden.

(6) He *stands* in the garden.

The Event Construction is not very common in Present Day English (PDE), as it is mainly expressed through morphological verbs, as in “He *falls*.” But in OE and ME events were expressed in Copula Constructions, as in “He *is tortured*.”, which is a Passive Construction in PDE. Similar to Location Constructions, events are not very time stable.

OE and ME Copula Constructions look very similar to PDE Passive Constructions and this similarity and also the differences will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter and in the corpus analysis.

The Property Construction uses the same construction as the object construction and diverges in time stability from very unstable as in “He *is* angry.” to very time stable, as in “It *is* wooden”.

The Object Construction is generally built with *is* and its cognates and is, as the example shows, very time stable:

(7) John *is* a man.

In PDE *is* is not only used in the Object Construction, but also in the Property Construction and for certain Location and Event Constructions. In OE and ME a variety of different copulas, like *weorðan* and *wesan* were also used in these constructions and each of them had its “favourite” construction in which it occurred most, although they were used interchangeably.

Weorðan also occurred in each of the four different categories, as the following examples taken from my corpus analysis will illustrate.

Copula Location Construction

- (8) ... *and to ciðum* *and to wyrtrumum* *weorðe* *on þære*

... and to seeds DAT and to roots DAT be PRES SUBJ on the

eorðan.

earth DAT

“... and to shoots and to roots turns on the earth”

(coboeth.o2.psd)

Copula Event Construction

- (9) ... *and he* *oferstæled* *weorðe.*

... and he convicted PPLE be PRES SUBJ

“... and (if) he is convicted.”

(colaw2cn.o3.psd)

Copula Property Construction

- (10) *seo mæste unsælp* *on þys andweardan life*

The biggest misfortune NOM on this present life

þat mon *ærest* *weorðe* *gesælig* *and.*

that man NOM first be PRES SUBJ happy ADJ and

æfter þam ungesælig

after that unhappy ADJ

“The biggest misfortune in this life is that men first will be happy and after that unhappy.”

(coboeth.o2.psd)

Copula Object Construction

- (11) ... *and ic sylf nu bidde þæt þu me.*
... and I NOM self now ask PRES that you me
geþingie hu ic wurdę his biggenga
ask PRES SUBJ how I be PRES SUBJ his worshipper NOM.

“... and I myself now ask that you ask me how I will become his worshipper.”

(coaelive.o3.psd)

In terms of CxG this interchange ability of the copulas lead to the emergence of a schematic construction. At first there were a variety of substantial clauses, with *is*, *wesan* and *weorðan* as a copula.

[NP.Subj *beon* AdjP (PP). SubjComp<property>]

[NP.Subj *beon* NP(PP). SubjComp<object>]

[NP.Subj *beon* PPLE. SubjComp<result>]

[NP.Subj *beon* PP. SubjComp<location>]

[NP.Subj *wesan* AdjP (PP). SubjComp <property>]

...

[NP.Subj *weorðan* AdjP (PP) SubjComp <property>]

...

These four different substantial constructions gave rise to a more schematic construction: [NP.Subj *beon* XP.SubjComp]/[NP.Subj *wesan* XP.SubjComp]/[NP.Subj *weorðan* XP.SubjComp] and also, as the verbs were used interchangeably, the above mentioned varieties became more abstract as in:

[NP.Subj Cop AdjP (PP).SubjComp<property>]

or

[NP.Subj Cop PPLE. SubjComp<result>]. (Petré and Cuyckens 2009: 340)

Finally out of these more abstract versions of the single Copula Construction developed THE schematic Copula Construction: [NP.Subj Cop XP.SubjComp].

Petré and Cuyckens found out that *weorðan* preferably occurred in Property and Event Constructions with (property) predicates showing the least time stability. These are mainly predicates about “human propensity” (*milde* ‘merciful’, *forþ* ‘afraid’, *bliðe* ‘joyful’, *wrað* ‘angry’ etc.), or about “physical and knowledge related” topics (*earm* ‘poor’, *wearm* ‘warm’, *dead* ‘dead’, *cuð* ‘known’ etc.), while *beon* preferably occurred together with the most time stable predicates, which are predicates about “form” (*seunwealt* ‘round’), “value” (*god* ‘good’, *yfel* ‘evil’, *anote* ‘useless’ etc.) or “material” (*treowen* ‘wooden’). *Weorðan* does not very frequently occur in Location Constructions in OE, but Petré and Cuyckens argue that its usage in Property and Event Constructions developed out of Location Constructions, as a change of functions is not uncommon (Stassen 1997: 94f). One evidence for this theory is that *weorðan* developed out of a stem **uert*, meaning ‘to turn/to move’ (to or away from a location). Further evidence is the usage of prepositional phrases with Property Constructions, which were mostly used in Locational Constructions (Petré & Cuyckens 2009: 336).

Generally all of these constructions, substantial or schematic, are possible to change. As we will see during the following chapters, these changes may either be a starting point for a new construction or may be a death sentence for certain constructions or words or phrases occurring in these special constructions.

3.3 Passive Constructions

3.3.1 Forms of the passive

In PDE the construction known as “the passive” is generally *be* + past participle, a so called “periphrastic construction”. Of course there is a corresponding active, but they do not share the same subject. Toyota (2008: 9) gives a “schematic representation of [the] active-passive alternation”:

Active					Passive			
NP ₁	-	VP (Active)	-	NP ₂	=	NP ₂	-	VP (Passive) - (NP ₁)
SUBJ				OBJ		SUBJ		OBL

Figure 2 Schematic representation of active-passive alternation (Toyota 2008: 9).

The subject in the Passive Construction is the “undergoer” and the object, which is not always necessary, is the “actor” (Foley and Van Valin 1984, 1985. Van Valin and La Polla 1997, cited in Toyota 2008: 9). Toyota (2008: 9f) mentions that this system, which is hierarchical, is clearer than the “agent-patient” distinction, as there are many more different roles the actor and the undergoer can take, as the following figure shows:

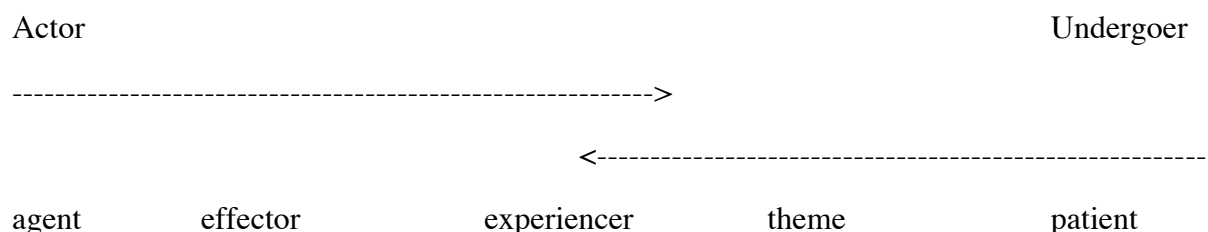


Figure 3 Hierarchical thematic role assignment of actor-undergoer (from Van Valin and La Polla 1997: 146; cited in Toyota 2008: 10).

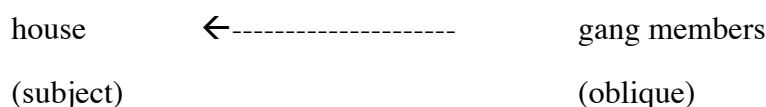
In a Passive Construction there is not always a patient, it can also be a theme, as in

(12) *That vehicle* (theme) *was seen by many people* (experiencer). (Toyota 2008: 10)

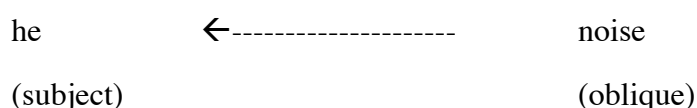
After this short aside concerning the subject and the object of the Passive Construction, the focus will now be on the verb and its different forms. Scholars distinguish between a “verbal passive” and a “resultative passive” (Toyota 2008: 12). The difference is also referred to as “stative” and “resultative” (Andersen 1991: 87) or, as Mitchell (1985) and Mustanoja (1960) name it, as “actional” and “statal” (cited in Denison 2004: 418, 457) or “dynamic” and “stative” (Mitchell 1985. Quirk and Wrenn 1957, cited in Toyota 2008: 18).

Toyota (2008: 13) also mentions a third passive, the “adjectival passive”, which lies between the verbal and the resultative passive. The following figure will show the differences:

a. Verbal passive (dynamic), e.g. *The house was ransacked by gang members.*



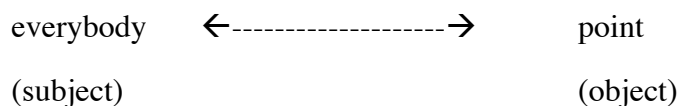
b. Adjectival passive e.g. *He was surprised at the noise.*



c. Resultative passive (stative), e.g. *The house is surrounded by the forest.*



d. Active voice (stative), e.g. *Everybody understands the point.*



e. Active voice (dynamic), e.g. *Gang members ransacked the house.*

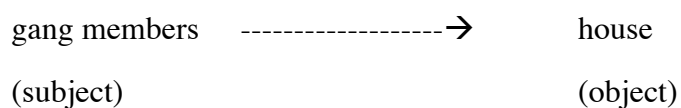


Figure 4 Orientation of the periphrastic passive and related constructions in English (Toyota 2008: 12).

While in the verbal passive the subject (the undergoer) of the clause undergoes a change during the event, in the resultative passive the clause shows a certain state of the subject. To connect the terms mentioned before: the verbal passive is dynamic, while the resultative passive is stative. Very important for Toyota (2008: 13) is the causer-causee relationship, which means that the causee, the subject of the passive, is either affected by the causer, the object of the passive, or not. He explains that in the verbal passive there is a “causer-causee relationship”, as something active is done to the causee by the causer, while in the resultative passive there is none, as it is not active. As the adjectival passive lies between those two, it has something of both; on the one hand it is stative, while on the other hand there is a “causer-causee relationship”, as the causer, which in example b. is inanimate, affects the causee in a passive way, meaning that “the subject is affected by the event” (Toyota 2008: 13).

After having shown the forms of the passive, the following chapter will explain how these PDE forms came to be.

3.3.2 Historical development of the passive

Indo European did not have an inflectional or a periphrastic passive, but it had a so-called “middle voice” which was inflectional and could express a kind of a passive meaning (Harbert 2007: 317). It could be called the Indo-European ancestor of the passive. The middle voice forms “signal [a] reflexive or self-directed action in which the subject of a transitive verb is understood to present both the actor and the patient of the action” (Harbert 2007: 322). The following examples will show what is meant with this definition (ibid.):

(13a) *elouísato* (Greek)

“she bathed (herself)”

“he bathed (himself)”

(13b) *These books sell well.*

In example 13b the seller of the books is implied, but not mentioned, so it can be seen, that also in PDE a middle voice construction is possible.

In some Germanic languages the middle voice developed a passive meaning, like in Gothic. In other languages, as in Greek for example, the middle voice coexists with the passive voice. In Gothic there is only evidence for an inflected passive in the present tense, in the preterit Gothic developed a periphrastic form, which was also common in other Germanic languages, with *wairþan* ‘become’ or *wisan* ‘be’ + past participle. This is also similar to Latin, which also has an inflected passive in the present and in the past tense, but a periphrastic construction with a past participle and an auxiliary in the perfect (Harbert 2007: 317).

Other Germanic languages only use the periphrastic construction, as they have not developed an inflected passive. They all use the common construction past participle + passive auxiliary (*be* or *become*). It is not totally clear why some languages use forms of *be*, some use forms of *become* and others use both. Harbert (2007: 318) and also other scholars, like Frary (1929) or Vezzosi (1999), explain the case that some languages use both verbs through the difference of stative and dynamic meaning. They argue the forms of *be* are used for a stative meaning and forms of *become*, like *weorðan*, are used for a dynamic reading.

Another group of scholars is against this claim. Mitchell (1985) and Quirk and Wrenn (1957) claim that there was no distinction of this kind, and both verbs could be used to express a stative, as well as a dynamic reading, as these copulas are interchangeable (Toyota 2008: 18). But Mitchell (1985) as well as Visser (1963-73) mention that the passive with *weorðan* was often used to express a future meaning (Toyota 2008: 18), which goes together with the dynamic reading, as a future meaning obviously implies a dynamic meaning.

Some languages, like German and Dutch, have kept the two different passive auxiliaries, while others, as English, have dropped the form of *become*, like *weorðan* in the case of English, in favour of *be* (Harbert 2007: 319).

This section has shown the importance of the passive auxiliary in the Passive Construction, and before continuing on the development of the whole construction, a short aside on the auxiliary follows to define what is an auxiliary. In the literature there are a variety of different definitions for auxiliaries. Toyota (2008: 51) says, that

[g]enerally speaking, auxiliary verbs possess morphosyntactic characteristics of verbs, i.e. the position in a clause, inflectional information (agreement, tense-aspect

mood, etc.), but differ in their lack of ability to create a major conceptual relation of the clause (i.e. state or activity expressed in a clause). In addition they are often considered semantically empty, except for a subcategory of auxiliary commonly known as modal auxiliary, which can express modality.

Furthermore, there is also the discussion if a category of auxiliaries even exists in grammar. Scholars, like Jackendoff (1972), Plank (1981), Steele (1981) and Palmer (2001) agree with the assumption that there is a certain category, while others, as McCawley (1975), Huddleston (1976), Pullum (1981), Schlachter (1983) and Huddleston and Pullum (2002) deny this claim and argue that these words should be treated like types of lexical verbs (all cited in Toyota 2008: 52).

Toyota (2008: 54) also mentions another approach, which lies between these two assumptions, the “gradience approach”. This approach, already described by Bybee (1985), Dahl (1989), Hopper and Traugott (1993) and other scholars, shows that there is no clear boundary between auxiliaries and lexical verbs, which results out of historical changes (Toyota 2008: 54). Every auxiliary originates from a full verb and very often the development goes on after being an auxiliary. The following figure (ibid.) will illustrate this. The arrow shows the direction of historical change:

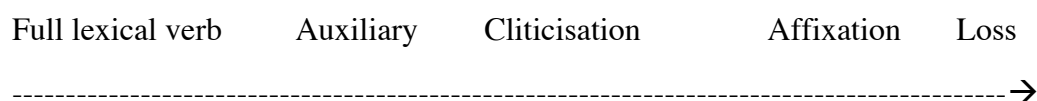


Figure 5 Schematic representation of auxiliary scale.

In the periphrastic passive Keenan (1985: 257-61, cited in Toyota 2008: 55) distinguishes between four types of passive auxiliaries: “(i) the verb of being or becoming, (ii) the verb of reception, (iii) the verb of motion and (iv) the verb of experience.” As we have already seen, the verb of being and becoming is most commonly used in the Germanic languages.

Toyota (2008: 91) illustrates the most common auxiliaries, those of being and becoming, in the following table:

	Language	Auxiliaries	
EAST:	Gothic	<i>wisan</i> ‘be’	<i>wairþan</i> ‘become’
NORTH:	Danish	<i>være</i> ‘be’	<i>blive</i> ‘become’
	Faroese	<i>vera</i> ‘be’	<i>verða</i> ‘become’ , <i>bliva</i> ‘become’
	Icelandic	<i>vera</i> ‘be’	<i>verða</i> ‘become’
	Norwegian	<i>være</i> ‘be’	<i>bli</i> ‘become’
	Swedish	<i>vara</i> ‘be’	<i>bli</i> ‘become’
WEST:	Dutch	<i>zijn</i> ‘be’	<i>worden</i> ‘become’
	English	<i>be</i>	
	Frisian	<i>wêze</i> ‘be’	<i>wurde</i> ‘become’
	German	<i>sein</i> ‘be’	<i>werden</i> ‘become’

Figure 6 Choice of passive auxiliaries in the Germanic languages.

As can be seen, the auxiliary of becoming is missing in English, as *to become* is not an auxiliary, but a lexical verb.

After illustrating the general development of the Passive Construction and the definition of the passive auxiliary, the following chapter is going to show what happened to the Passive Construction during the Old English period and to *weorðan* used in them before it got out of use.

3.3.3 The passive in Old English

Toyota (2008: 32. See also Davis 1986. Traugott 1992) claims that the PDE Passive Construction developed out of an earlier perfective-adjectival construction. As both constructions looked similar in the Old English period it is rather plausible that the development of the perfective construction had an influence on the development of the Passive Construction. At first there will be a short aside on the perfective construction and its possible influences on the Passive Construction, before focussing on the Passive Construction itself.

The perfective aspect, stating a result, was at first (in PIE) expressed with “undergoer-orientation and verbal adjective”. Towards the end of PIE and during the development into the daughter languages, the verbal adjective turned into a verbal participle. This participle was then often used with copula verbs, but the clause was still “undergoer-oriented” (Toyota 2008: 33). However there was an exception: When the verbal participle occurred with a mutual verb (i.e. intransitive verbs, involving a change of place and state (Fischer 1992: 260)) the construction became “actor-oriented”. Non-mutual verbs could only achieve actor-orientation in a perfective construction when described by a lexical verb showing possession, which is the reason why *have* developed (Toyota 2008: 33). Bally (1926 cited in Toyota 2008: 34) points out that *have* is more human-oriented, while *be* is more focussed on the inanimate. Here we find a similar distinction as between *be* and *weorðan*. *Be* is seen to be more passive, while *have* is active, but the difference does not occur in aspect, but in animacy of the subject. (Toyota 2008: 34). *Have* very soon became a passive auxiliary, but both constructions, with *be* and with *have*, were used side by side from the emergence of the *have*-perfect in the Old English period until the 19th century, when the *have*-perfect finally was the only perfective construction in use. There are different explanations why *have* became the perfective auxiliary. For example, some scholars suggest that *be* was so overloaded with functions that in this case *have* took over (Mustanoja 1960; Traugott 1972 both cited in Toyota 2008: 38).

It is very likely that the emergence of the *have*-perfect brought forward the development of the construction with *be* from a *be*-perfect to a *be*-passive. Visser (1963-73: § 2161) claims this happened already in Old English, while Mitchell (1985: § 753) shows examples of the implementation of the *be*-passive in Middle English. It is likely that in Early Middle English the perfective passive was used frequently (Toyota 2008: 44).

For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that during the 18th century also the progressive passive came into use, but this will not be discussed in more detail here (for more information see Toyota 2008: 42).

After this aside on the development of the *be*-passive out of the *be*-perfect we will return to the Passive Construction itself.

Vezzosi (1998: 55) distinguishes four different passive or passive-like structures in the Old English period:

1. the periphrastic construction *beon* ‘to be’ + past participle;

- (14) *seo sunne* *wæs* *swelce* *heo*
the sun NOM be PAST IND as if it
- wære* *eall* *gelythlad-u*.
were PAST IND all diminished PPLE

“The sun was as if it was fully diminished.”

2. the periphrastic construction *weorðan* ‘to come to, to become’ + past participle

- (15) *he* *gefeahrt* *wiþ Gotan* *and* *gefliemed* *wearð*
he fought PPLE with Gotan and put to flight PPLE was PAST IND

“He fought with the Goths and was put to flight.”

3. the ‘impersonal’ construction (herein mon-construction) with impersonal pronoun (*man*) or with personal pronouns [...]

- (16) *man gehalgode* *on his steal* *Ecgeberht*
one consecrate PPLE in of-him stead Ecgeberht ACC
- on iii idus Iunii*
on 15 June

“Instead of him “they” consecrated Ecgeberht on June 15th.”/“Instead of him Ecgeberht was consecrated on June 15th.”

4. the impersonal passive with 3rd sg *weorðan* + past participle

- (17) *þær wearð ofslægen Lucumon cynges*
 there was PAST IND kill PPLE L. NOM king's
gerefa
 chief GEN

“There Lucumon, the king’s chief, was killed.

Most frequently used were the periphrastic constructions with *beon* and *weorðan*. Vezzosi (1998: 55) points out that the periphrastic passive is a “subclass of nominal sentences, where the past participle had an adjective role.” She explains the ancestor of the Passive Construction (with an auxiliary *be*-verb and an uninflected past participle) similar to Traugott (1992: 189) as a construction consisting of a *be*-verb + an inflected, originally adjectival, past participle. It is difficult to see if the participle is inflected, as the strong masculine and neuter singular inflection is zero and looks the same as an uninflected example (Traugott 1992: 198).

The following two examples show the difference between the two construction types (Traugott 1992: 199). Number 18 shows an inflected passive, while number 19 shows an uninflected passive:

- (18) *On þære ilcan tide wurdon twegen æþelingas*
 On this same time be PAST IND two noblemen NOM
afliemde (PL) of Sciþþian.
 banish PPLE PL from Scythia.

“At the same time two noblemen were banished from Scythia.”

(19) & *hu* *Il æþelingas* *wurdon* *affliemed*
 and how two noblemen NOM be PAST IND banished PPLE SG
 of *Scipþium*.
 from Scythia

“... and how two noblemen were banished from Scythia.”

A point of discussion, as already mentioned before, is the question of the different usage of *beon* and *weorðan*. Similar to Harbert (2007), Frary (1929), Toyota (2008) and Vezzosi (1999) also Traugott (1992: 199) mentions the tendency of *weorðan* to occur in activities and changes of state, while *beon* (and *wesan*) is used for resultant states. She gives the following examples to illustrate this claim:

(20) *ðær wearð Alexander þurhscoten mid anre flan.*
 There be PAST IND Alexander pierced PPLE with an arrow DAT
 “Alexander was pierced with an arrow there.” (Traugott 1992: 176)

(21) *In þæm gefeohte* *wæs* *ærest anfunðen* *Scipþia*.
In the fight DAT be PAST IND first revealed PPLE Scythia
wanspeda.
insufficiencies GEN

“The Scythian’s insufficiencies were first revealed in that battle.”

(Traugott 1992: 180)

The third example shows two momentary changes (using *weorðan*) followed by a permanent state (using *beon*):

- (22) *he gefeaht wiþ Gotan, & gefliemed wearð*
 He NOM fight PPLE with Gotan DAT and put to flight PPLE be PAST
& bedrifen on anne tun & þær wearð on annum huse.
 and drive PPLE in a fortress ACC and there be PAST IND in a house DAT
forbærned þær wæs swiþ e ryht dom geendad
 burn PPLE there be PAST IND very right judgement NOM carry out
 PPLE

“... he fought against the Goths and was put to flight and driven into a fortress;
 and he was burned to death in a house. Very just judgement was carried out
 there ...”

(Traugott 1992: 199f)

Vezzosi generally shares a similar idea, but as she could also find examples in her corpus analysis which did not undermine this claim, she formulated it differently. In her opinion “*beon* tends to have specific time and space complements, whereas *weorðan* prefers either no time or space determination or just *þær*” (Vezzosi 1997: 55). She illustrates this claim with the following examples (ibid.):

- (23) *þy geare was senoð æt Heorot gegaderot ...*
 That year be PAST IND synod NOM at Heorot gathered PPLE

“That year the synod (was) gathered at Heorot ...”

- (24) *þær wearð Romana XXX M ofslagen ...*
 There be PAST IND Roman 3000 NOM killed PPLE

“There 3000 Romans were killed ...”

Furthermore, she explains in more detail that “*beon* expresses a more punctual aspect and therefore resultative state; *weorðan* instead focuses the attention on the action *in fieri*, on the change of state, and has a more imperfective meaning.” The illustration of this claim can be found in example number 25. Additionally, however, she mentions that during the Old English period both words became a kind of “covariants”, being used in the same contexts (like synonyms) and eventually one form disappeared in Middle English (Vezzosi 1997: 56).

In the four different forms of the Old English passive Vezzosi also mentioned the impersonal or “mon-construction”. This construction is not important for this paper, but there is a special form of the “mon-construction” in which *weorðan* occurs. It allows impersonal Passive Constructions with transitive verbs as the following example shows (Vezzosi 1997: 58).

(25) *þær wearð ofslægn Lucumon cynges gerefa.*

There be PAST IND killed PPLE Lucumon NOM king chief GEN

“There Lucumon, the king’s chief, was killed.”

For more information on the impersonal see Vezzosi (1997) and Denison (1989). In the following section the changes the periphrastic construction underwent throughout the Old English and Early Middle English period will be described.

Toyota (2008: 84) provides a straightforward table on the development of the Passive Construction:

Relevant category	Grammatical features
Aspect	i. Change from stative to dynamic reading: earlier occurrence was more stative, adjectival. ii. Emergence of <i>have</i>-perfect: its emergence made it possible for the <i>be</i>-perfect to be reanalysed as passive. iii. Presence of actor with high agentivity: there are some sporadic occurrences in OE, which indicate that the verbal passive was already present in OE.

Auxiliary	iv. Progressive passive: its use indicates that the verb cluster <i>be</i> + past participle was reanalysed as verbal phrase, not adjectival as before. v. Perfective passive: its use indicates that the verb cluster <i>be</i> + past participle was reanalysed as verbal phrase, not adjectival as before. vi. Emergence of features typical of auxiliary after ME: <i>be</i> used in periphrastic construction shows more typologically common properties of auxiliary verb.
Affix	vii. Decline of the prefix <i>ge</i>: <i>ge-</i> was often associated with a perfective reading, but it was less frequent in the passive in comparison with the perfective construction already in OE and it totally disappeared in ME.
Past Participle	viii. Inflection and agreement: past participle showed agreement in OE and ME (although not always), but it ceased in ME. ix. Prepositional verb phrase started to appear in the passive, forming the prepositional passive after ME.

Figure 7 Summary of various features as indications of grammaticalisation (Toyota 2008: 84).

The table in Figure 7 shows clearly the steps *be* + past participle underwent and which are steps of grammaticalisation. They lead to a reanalysis of *be* + past participle as a verbal phrase and not as a phrase consisting of a copula and an adjectival participle. Toyota (2008: 85) mentions also an auxiliarisation of *be* during the ME period, which suggests that during the OE period *be* (*beon*, *wesan*) did not yet function as an auxiliary, but was still a copula in a Copula Construction (see Petré and Cuyckens 2009, 2010). These Copula Constructions already had future and passive meanings, but the form of *be* occurring in them cannot yet be called future or passive auxiliary.

Regarding the Passive Construction, it could be seen that it has most likely developed out of a perfective construction. Therefore, it had at first, presumably before the beginning of Old English and during the OE period, more often a stative, resultative, still perfective meaning. It became more and more dynamic throughout the later OE and the ME period (Toyota 2008: 83). But this did not mean that *weorðan*, which is claimed to have expressed a more dynamic

meaning, appeared more often. Quite the opposite was true, *beon* became capable of expressing a more dynamic meaning and took over the constructions *weorðan* was used in as well.

3.4 Future Constructions

3.4.1 General development of Germanic Future Constructions

Before focusing on *weorðan* and expressions of futurity in Old English, the development of expressions of futurity and Future Constructions will be discussed.

Streitberg claims that in Indo-European there was no real concept of tense, only of aspect. Actions happening in the past, present or future were not characterised by when they happened, but by how they happened. Numerous forms of the present, a perfect and the strong aorist (s-aorist) were the main distinguishing aspects (Streitberg 1963: 276f). He differentiates five types of aspect, the durative or imperfective aspect, showing a continuous action, the inchoative aspect, showing the changing of a state to another state and the perfective aspect, showing that an action is in the phase of being completed. This perfective aspect was mainly expressed through the aorist. The aorist was derived from ancient Greek, where it was one of the two main forms to tell a story. It was then used generally for different languages to label an unmarked form, which expressed a perfective aspect (Meier-Brügger 2003: 173ff; Smyth 1956: § 1128; Teffeteller 2006: 149f). Furthermore, Streitberg describes the iterative aspect, showing repetition and the “perfektische Aktionsart”, which must not be mixed up with the perfective aspect and describes the action when it is completed (Streitberg 1963: 278).

He describes that verbs showing a present action were not marked, while actions which happened in the past were marked with the help of an adverb of time, an augment (a prefix used to form past tenses) (Smyth 1956: § 429, § 435) the idg. **é*. This augment was nearly totally lost in Germanic. Future actions were displayed mostly by an affix *-sie-* or *-sio-* (Streitberg 1963: 276f) or **-se/o* (in West Indo European) or **-sye/o* (in East Indo European) (McCone 1991:139).

Further in his work, he writes about “Die sog. Tempora” (“The so called tenses”) and mentions the present, the imperfect (an augment tense to the present), the perfect, the plusquamperfect (an augment tense to the perfect), the s-aorist and the Futurum with *-sie/-sio-* (Streitberg 1963: 280).

Therefore IE had a system of tense, although it may have been a different system compared to many European language systems today. It was based on aspects, but definitely not entirely “time- or tense-less”, although some scholars, like Hewson (2001: 76f), talk about IE as a “three aspect system”, instead of a “three tense system”.

Streitberg (1963: 267f) as well as Bammesberger (1992: 57) also points out that the usage of moods, like the subjunctive and the optative were very common to express futurity.

Speyer (2007: 85) describes the four moods in IE the following way: The indicative was used for actions which were happening or had just happened, while the subjunctive was used for events which had not yet happened, but were wished and hoped to happen. Furthermore, there were the imperative and the optative. The latter was used for actions that had not yet happened but were seen as possible to happen or wished to do so. In Germanic the subjunctive (also used to express futurity) fell together with the indicative. The indicative took over the function of the subjunctive to express futurity. The optative and the imperative were kept and the optative took over other functions of the former subjunctive and developed two different ways of interpretation, either to show that the speaker wishes the statement to be true (real optative) or to express that the speaker does not know yet if the proposition is true so that it could become true in the future, although it is not true at the moment of speaking (potentialis) (Speyer 2007: 86).

To get a better understanding of the different time and tense systems in IE and Germanic one needs to know that the concept of aspect is embedded in the concept of Ascending and Descending Time (Shields 1992: 212. Hewson 2001: 74). This concept is best described with the example of a man who is climbing a wall. If we see the whole wall and watch the whole event of the climbing, it is a unit. We can see a short time before the beginning, representing possibility, then the beginning and the middle, in which the event is incomplete (imperfective), the end, in which he is completing the event of climbing (perfective) and then we can also see him looking down, a kind of retrospective event (a totally complete action, usually referred to as perfect) (Hewson 2001: 75). Between the perfective and the

retrospective there is only a slight difference, actually only a short moment, which may explain why the perfect and the aorist fell together in many languages.

The perspective just described is the so-called Descending Time, we saw the “figure moving against the ground”.

In Ascending time the zoom of the camera would be on the man and we would see the wall moving down the screen. In linguistics the following example will show the difference:

(26) “I saw him climb the wall.” (Descending Time)

(27) “I saw him climbing the wall.” (Ascending Time)

In Ascending Time the action is watched from an internal view. Hewson labels this as “Performative aspect”. The Performative aspect can only occur in the Ascending Time and is an unmarked form. On the contrary, the action taking place in Descending Time is seen from an external point of view and can be labelled as “Perfective”, which can only occur in the Descending Time. Hewson shows that IE had a three aspect system in Descending time. He takes over Guillaume’s model of Universe Time (“real time” – future, present, past) and Event Time (when the event takes place) (Guillaume 1933/1964) and provides the following graphs (this model was also used by Korrel 1991. Shields 1992. Duffley 1992. all cited in Hewson 2001).

Indo European

Universe Time

∞ ----- $\rightarrow \infty$

event time

Imperfective I $\leftarrow$ -----x- - - - > I

event time

Perfective I $\leftarrow$ -----x I

event time

Retrospective I $\leftarrow$ ----- I x

Figure 8 Indo-European (Hewson 2001: 77).

This graph explains again the different aspects which are possible in Descending time. Universe time is time in general and in front of this eternal time span an event is taking place, like the climbing of a wall. This event takes a certain time, the so-called event time and depending on the status of the event, there are different possibilities to describe it: Either right in the middle of the event, at the end or after the event, as shown in the three examples above.

These explanations should help to understand the system of aspect in IE, as it is different to the PDE system.

For a different approach see Streitberg (1963: 277f). As already mentioned, he distinguishes five aspects in correlation with six tempora, which is different from Guillaume/Hewson's model. A slightly diverse terminology uses Speyer (2007: 79) who calls the three aspects in German Imperfektiv (Präsens), Perfektiv (Aorist) and Stativ (Perfekt).

We still find the system of Descending Time in Sankrit and Greek, but we do not find it in Germanic languages, as there is no distinction between imperfective, perfective and retrospective aspect. There is a two tense system, including a past and a non-past tense, which is capable of representing all different kinds of events, making a perfective aspect redundant. But to express a variety of aspects, English has developed a progressive form (Hewson 2007: 77. Shields 1992: 217ff).

Germanic

Universe Time



Figure 9 Germanic (Hewson 2001: 77).

When comparing these two systems it appears at first rather impossible that IE should be an ancestor of Germanic, as the differences in the aspect/tense system are very remarkable. Next to Germanic there is only Hittite in the IE family which shares the two tenses system. This even raised doubts if Germanic was really a direct descendant of IE (Hewson & Bubenik

1997: 229ff), but it is the ablaut system which proves the line of descent and also how the three aspect system could become a two tense system. Hewson (2007: 79) cites Prokosch (1935: 160) who claims that the Germanic preterit/past emerged out of the IE perfect (retrospective aspect), but there are also evidences that in the Germanic preterit plural the ending **-es* was common, the ending of the aorist (perfective aspect). So he concludes that the Germanic preterit is an “amalgam of the morphology of the PIE perfect and PIE aorist” (1935: 164). During the change from PIE to Germanic, the perfective and the retrospective aspect fell together in the new past tense, while the imperfective aspect, which was already representing the present in IE, became the new non-past tense, representing present and also future events in Germanic texts. All of these texts also used modal verbs to express futurity, but they were still used to express volition and willingness or obligation and necessity (Hewson 2007: 80f). Furthermore, Shields (1992) points out that the OE perfective forms of *to be* – *beo*, *bist*, *biþ* were used to express futurity (226) and the OE *weorþan* ‘to become’ was also “a contender as a future auxiliary” (219).

Summarising, it can be said that early Germanic consisted of three nominal forms, two subjunctives and two indicative tenses. The biggest changes happening afterwards were the development of a periphrastic future, a periphrastic perfect and a periphrastic imperfective, the progressive (Shields 1992: 224). Furthermore, a distinction in tense and aspect occurred in later stages. As it turns out, periphrastic constructions are not unique in Germanic languages, as they also developed in Romance and Celtic languages (Harbert 2007: 293).

After clarifying the development of Germanic tenses in general, the focus will now turn on the future construction in particular. Beside the periphrastic future, which arose in many different languages, the use of the present tense to express futurity is very common. And there are even certain contexts in which only the present tense can be used for future reference (Harbert 2007: 297). In English, the way of using the present tense to express futurity is more limited than in other Germanic language as the following example will illustrate:

(28) Swedish: Jag ringer till di I morgen.

(29) English: I call you tomorrow.

In English it has to be “I’ll call you tomorrow”, of course (Harbert 2007: 297). Allen et al. (1995: 269 in Harbert 2007: 298) claims that the usage of the present tense for future meaning is more often possible with telic verbs (implying a goal/an endpoint) like ‘stop’, ‘come’, etc.

than with atelic verbs (not implying a goal/an endpoint) like ‘live’, ‘read’, ‘eat’, etc. which are generally used for periphrastic future constructions.

In contrast to the usage of the present tense to express futurity, Abraham (1989. Harbert 2007: 299) distinguishes between three types of periphrastic future:

a. Inchoative verbs (‘become’ future)

b. Verbs of motion

‘go’ (‘andative’ future)

‘come’ (‘ventitive’ future)

c. Modal verbs

Bybee (1994: 244) structures the different possibilities to express futurity the following way:

1) Primary Future:

- constructions involving movement verbs
- markers of obligation, desire and ability
- temporal adverbs

2) Aspectual Future:

- forms expressing perfective/inceptive or
- imperfective aspect

Furthermore, also *haban* ‘have’ was used as a future auxiliary, for example in Gothic for durative verbs (Streitberg 1920: 201). This is the only case for *haban* in Germanic languages but in Romance languages it is very common, as the future suffix derived from Latin *habere*. Rather common in Germanic languages is the usage of inchoative verbs like *werden* ‘to become’. Every Germanic language has a future of this kind, except for Dutch, Frisian and English (Harbert 2007: 299).

Verbs of motion became future auxiliaries in some West and North Germanic languages. ‘Come’ appeared only in Scandinavian languages (Norwegian and Swedish, but not Danish) and in Alemannic High German. (Harbert 2007: 299). ‘Go’ was and still is more often used in West Germanic languages, like English.

Finally, the last possibility to express futurity, which should be mentioned here, are the modal verbs. Every Germanic language, except for German, which uses *werden* and Icelandic which has no future auxiliary at all, uses modal verbs. Either they have turned ‘will’ (with a former volitional meaning) or ‘shall’ (with a meaning of obligation) or both of them into future auxiliaries. Worth mentioning is the fact that Frisian is the only language which has only the modal type for future reference, with the auxiliary *sille* (Harbert 2007: 300). Although the language would have a suitable auxiliary it is not used for future constructions. Toyota (2008: 91) illustrates this with the table already shown in the chapter “General development of the Passive Construction (Figure 6, page 29)”, showing the different auxiliaries used in Germanic languages, especially to build the passive or as in many cases the future.

For Comrie (1985: 43ff), the distinction between past and present is a distinction of tense, while the difference of future and non-future lies more in modality – as these are two different modalities. He confirms this by indicating that actions lying in the future are never 100 percent stable, there can still be changes. Huddleston (1995 cited in Hilpert 2008: 21) states that as a result of the just mentioned exceptionality of the future, English does not have a future tense (it is also discussed if German has a future tense – this question will be dealt with in the next chapter). For a more detailed look on Future Constructions in Germanic see for example Dahl (2000).

After this overview of the development of the Indo European and the Germanic Future Constructions, we will have a closer look on the construction in Old and Middle English in the following chapter.

3.4.2 The development of constructions with *weorðan* expressing futurity

In PDE there is a variety of different possibilities to convey future meaning. There are the modal verbs *will* and *shall*, forms of *to be*, like *be to*, *be about to*, *be going to*, as well as the usage of the present tense to express futurity. Furthermore, it is also possible to use other modal verbs, like *can*, *may*, *must* or lexical verbs showing volition, like *desire* or *expect* (Hilpert 2008: 19).

In Old English, modal verbs like *willan* and *scullan* were still used as lexical verbs. Some scholars, like Wischer (2006: 125) claim that they had already developed into auxiliaries used

in periphrastic constructions and that this development became more important and more frequent towards the end of the Old English and the beginning of the Middle English period. Their frequency and especially their occurrences as future auxiliaries increased during the “transition period” from Old to Middle English (Wischer 2006: 132).

- (30) *þæt hit* *scyle eall swa geweorðan*
 That it NOM shall PAST everything so be PARTICIPLE
swa swa God æt fruman getiohhad hæfde.
 as God NOM at the beginning intend PPLE have PAST
 “That everything should happen as God had intended it in the beginning.”

(coboeth.o2.psd)

But other scholars, like Shields (1992: 219), point out that these modals still had their original sense of either volition and willingness, or obligation and necessity. He claims that they are still in their development to be an auxiliary during the OE and ME period.

Furthermore, in Old English we mainly find present tense constructions which can be read as future, often through the usage of verbs, like *weorðan* or *beon*.

- (31) *se ðe wis byð,*
 the who wise be PRES IND
ne wurð he næfre modig.
 not be PRES IND he never proud.
 “The one who is wise will never be/get proud.” (coaelive.o3.psd)

Or with the help of temporal adjectives, like *tomorrow*, *next ...*, *in ...*, *etc.* Additionally the prefix *ge-* is also said to refer to a future meaning (Wischer 2006: 2).

Visser (1966: 671ff) points out that the present tense forms of *beo*, like *beo*, *bist*, *beoþ*, *biþ* were used to express futurity in contrast to the other forms, like *eart*, *is*, *sindon*, *sint*. He does not mention *weorðan* at all. Also Wekker (1976: 26f), who cites him, does not write anything about *weorðan*, but only about the development of *shall* and *will*.

As can be seen especially in the older literature, *weorðan* was not taken into account as a marker of futurity. But before we continue, we should try to decide what future, or to say it with terms of the grammatical approach of this paper, what a Future Construction is?

Hilpert (2008: 17) describes the term Future Construction as a construction containing a “future auxiliary in connection with a schematic slot for an infinitive verbal complement” = [NP.Subj Aux VComp SubjComp].

Thinking about Present Day German or English we can agree with this definition, but it is not satisfying for Old English, as futurity was expressed differently. *Weorðan* and also other auxiliaries rarely occurred together with an infinitive (Harm 2001: 302). In Present Day German, as well as in Present Day English we use an infinitive verbal complement in the slot, but in Old English we do not find infinitives in these slots, we mainly find participles. Therefore many of *weorðan*’s examples show passive meanings (the passive is still under development), but sometimes examples can also be read with future meaning, but it is not always easy to tell. Most examples, which can be read as futurity, are either present forms of *weorðan* occurring together with a participle or with an adjective.

Important to mention is the fact that we need a distinction between Future Constructions, which express futurity because of semantic conventions and between the concept of futurity itself, which is mostly implied through pragmatic features, like context. In constructions with *weorðan*, a future meaning is often implied, but it can not be spoken of a Future Construction. The following examples show implied future meanings in Copular Constructions using *weorðan*:

- (32) *Ac ælc mon* *þe allunga* *underþeoded* *bið*
But every man NOM who together support INF bePRESIND
- unþeawu* *forlæt* *his sceppend*
evil practise DAT loose PRES IND his influence ACC
- his fruman sceaft* *and* *his æðelo* *&* *þonan* *wyrð*
and his first origin ACC and his nobility ACC and then bePRESIND
- anæþelad* *oð ðæt he* *wyrð* *unædele*
degraded PPLE to that he NOM be PRES IND ignoble

“But every man who is supporting this evil practise will lose his influence and his origin and his nobility and then will be degraded so he will be ignoble.”

(coboeth.o2.psd)

- (33) *Ac God* *him* *geunne þæt* *his goddæda*
 But God NOM him grant that his good work NOM

swyðran *weroðan* *þone* *misðada*.
 strong ADJ be PRES SUBJ than bad works.

“But God grants him that his good deeds will be more powerful than his bad deeds.”

(cochronD.psd)

In Old English we mostly find *weorðan* in the forms *wearð* (past tense), *weorð*, *wurð* and *wyrð* (present tense). In Middle English, there is a variety of ways to spell the different forms, for example *ward*, *weard* and *werd* (past tense), *wurd*, *wury*, *wurde* (past tense and present tense), *warth/en*, *wurth/en* (past tense), *worth* (present tense), etc.

The OED also mentions the future meaning of *weorðan* (in the article about *worth*) and gives some examples, mostly from the Early Middle English period:

1297 *R. Gloucester's Chonicle* (Rolls) 2232:

- (34) *Pou* *worst* *þer* *king* *anon*.

 You NOM become PRES IND there king NOM at noon

 „You will become king at noon.“

1377 *Langland Piers Plowman* B. xix. 404:

- (35) *Ysaued* *worstow* [*v.r.* *worst þou*] *neure*.

 Save PPLE you NOM be PRES IND never

 „You will never be saved.“

c1380 *Sir Ferumbras* (1879) 1. 805:

(36) *Elles þow worst beley.*

Unless you NOM be PRES IND betray PPLE

„Unless you will be betrayed.“

c1425 *Seven Sag.* (P.) 1505:

(37) *Certys, syre, thou worst schent.*

Certainly, Sir, you NOM be PRES IND injure PPLE

“Certainly, Sir, you’ll get injured.”

And there are also examples in the LAEME Corpus, which show future reference:

(38) *... & dat he herefore wurde*

... and that he NOM therefore be PRES SUBJ

fordemd into helle pine.

doom PPLE into hell GEN punishment ACC

“... and that therefore he will be doomed into hell’s punishment.” (vvat.tag)

(39) *... da ic ut of prisun wurde don.*

... that I NOM out of prison DAT be PRES IND do PPLE

“... that I will be taken out of prison.” (genexodt.tag)

In the fifth chapter, a closer look on the different constructions will be taken. To have a basis for comparing the English development to that of another Germanic language, the next chapter is going to show the development of OHG *werden*.

3.4.3 The development of the German *werden* - future

Going back to the same Germanic and Indo Germanic ancestors, the extremely different development of English and German futurity is very striking. In Old High German, similar to other Germanic languages (also English) the present was used to express futurity.

In Middle High German (MHG) periphrastic forms with modal verbs, like *soln* and *wellen* (compare *shall* and *will*) are used more often, although they still have their strong meaning of modality next to the future meaning. Also *werden* is used in MHG, but at first mainly in combination with a present participle. These constructions often mark the beginning of an action and therefore show an inchoative or ingressive aspect (Harm, 2001: 288). Later, roughly from the 13th century onwards, *werden* + infinitive was used to express a future action, but at first only rarely. During the 14th and 15th century *werden* + infinitive became more and more important, while the usage of *werden* + present participle and the modal constructions declined. After 1500 *werden* + present participle was totally extinct and modal constructions were used scarcely (Harm, 2001: 289).

Until the 16th century *werden* + infinitive could still have the inchoative meaning, additionally to the future meaning, as the following example shows.

(40) *er ward klagen*

“he started to mourn”

Over quite a long period both, the older meaning and the new meaning, were commonly used, until the future meaning became the exclusive meaning for the *werden* + infinitive construction (Harm 2001: 289).

It is not clear why the *werden* + infinitive construction did replace the *werden* + present participle construction. There are different theories, which Harm (2001: 290ff) discusses and compares. Here, the theory, which Harm claims to be the most likely one, will be presented. It is the so called “analogy hypothesis” (2001: 292, 294), first developed by Wilmanns (1897-

1909: 177; Bd. 3. cited in Harm 2001). He claims that the influence of the modal + infinitive construction and the MHG constructions with ingressives, like *beginnen/entstân* + infinitive, was responsible for the *werden* + infinitive construction to replace the *werden* + present participle construction. The analogy between the ... + infinitive constructions is crucial here.

An unusual development is that this new construction has overtaken two already very well established constructions, which, as in the case of the modal construction, did also develop in a similar way in other (Germanic) languages. It is very likely that the *werden* + present participle construction was no longer used because of the stronger modal construction, which gave rise to the *werden* + infinitive construction and the general decline in the usage of the present participle, like *ist tuend* (Harm 2001: 295). Furthermore, speakers tend to even out differences in similar constructions. It is likely that they dropped one construction in favour of the most useful construction. Researchers claim that the *werden* + infinitive construction is more useful as it involves a meaning of modality, but is a “pure” future (Abraham 1989: 365; Harm 2001: 295f). However, this explanation is not very satisfying, as many languages use modal constructions to express futurity. There are more languages using modal constructions than languages using constructions similar to the *werden* + infinitive construction. Furthermore, many languages which use modal constructions to express futurity, like English, do not have a lot of modal meaning left in the constructions and have other verbs which took over the meaning of modality, like *ought to*, *have to* or *must* (Harm 2001: 297).

To summarise, it can be said that although German *werden* was similar to English *weorðan*, as it was also used as a copula to build the predicate, like *sîn* and *belîben*. The development of the two words proceeded distinctively from the Middle English/MHG period onwards. But beside this major difference, there are also similarities, namely that *werden* as well as *weorðan* was used together with past participles to form the passive and in both languages the present indicative very often had a future meaning (Harm 2001: 298).

4 Corpora

For the corpus analysis I have chosen the

a) York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE), compiled by Ann Taylor, Anthony Warner, Susan Pintzuk and Frank Beths of the Department of Language and Linguistic Science at the University of York.

and

b) A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English 1150 – 1325 (LAEME), compiled by Margaret Laing and Roger Lass in 2007 at the University of Edinburgh.

4.1 YCOE

The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose covers the time from the beginning of Old English writing around 700 AD until roughly the time of the Norman Conquest 1150/1200.

Out of the whole output I have chosen six manuscripts containing 301.496 words.

For this paper I tried to choose a representative variety of texts covering different time spans and different text types. Starting with Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* written around 950 and the *Chronicle D* produced around 979. At the beginning of the eleventh century Ælfirc wrote his *Lives of Saints* (1000-1100), a biography, which was also chosen for this paper. Furthermore, the decision was made to use Bede's *History of the English Church* and the *Laws of Cnut II*, both written in 1050. A fact worthy of noting is that Bede used *weorðan* extremely rarely in his text, which is a translation from Latin. He uses *beon/wesan* nearly exclusively. Also, Ælfirc only used *beon/wesan* in his discussions of English-Latin equivalents for the passive. He did not mention *weorðan* at all, but he used it a lot in his *Lives of the Saints* and also in his *Homilies*. It is not clear why he did not use it in his grammar, either it was not "standard" for him or maybe there was no Latin equivalent, which may also explain why Bede had used it so rarely in his translation (Traugott 1992: 200).

The latest OE work used for this analysis is the *Chronicle E*, produced between 1125 and 1150. As can be seen, the time these documents were written spans from 950 to 1150 and there is also a variety of different text types. There are religious and philosophical writings as well as texts containing law and history.

4.2 LAEME

The Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English covers the period from about 1150 to 1325. But it is not continuous as Laing and Lass (1993: 4) point out, as for certain dialect areas there are only a few manuscripts, so it is not a complete continuous picture for the whole language development in each dialect area.

For the Middle English period I tried to choose texts which represent a variety similar to the chosen Old English texts. This was not easy, as many texts, containing different varieties of the word *weorðan*, are in fact religious texts. So the assortment is not as balanced, concerning genre, as in Old English, but at least concerning time span the texts are similarly wide spread. The earliest text is the *Peterborough Chronicle*, a historical text, written around 1154. This text is also the oldest surviving text written in Middle English (Laing & Lass 1993: 4). Other early texts are *The Ormulum*, a religious work and the *Trinity Homilies* (hand B). Both works were produced around 1170/1180. The biggest amount of the chosen works was written in the 13th century. The *Lambeth Homilies* date from the beginning of the century (around 1200) and *Vices and Virtues* (hand A) was written in the first quarter of the 13th century. Two manuscripts of the *Ancrene Wisse/Ancrene Riwle* (British Library Cotton Nero and Titus) were also written in the first half of the 13th century. The *Ancrene Wisse* manuscript of the Cambridge Corpus Christi Library dates back to the second half of the 13th century. Also written in the second half of the 13th century was Layamon's *Brut*, which contains *The Owl and the Nightingale* and is, as well as the *Peterborough Chronicle*, a secular work in addition to the strong religious component. A manuscript written towards the end of the 13th century, from the Oxford Jesus College includes religious writings as well as secular writings, like *The Owl and the Nightingale*. The manuscript of the Bodleian Library (Laud Misc 108) contains writings about the life and passion of Christ as well as writings about the lives of saints and was produced around 1300. Furthermore, I have chosen three works of the beginning of the

14th century: A manuscript of the *Cursor Mundi*, one of *The Ballad on the Scottish War* and the latest one, dating from around 1325, the *Genesis and Exodus*.

All these Middle English texts have together a total amount of 205.091 words. More statistic details, as well as the linguistic analysis, are going to follow in the next chapter.

5 Corpus analysis 1: *Weorðan* in Old English

The texts used for the analysis are the following:

Title	Filename	Number of words	Number of occur. of <i>weorðan</i>	Number of occur. in percent	Approx. Date
Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy	coboethius.o2.psd	48 443	105	0,21 %	950
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle D	cochronD.psd	26 691	63	0,23 %	979
Ælfric's Lives of Saints	coaelive.o3.psd	100 193	388	0,38 %	1000-1010
Bede's History of the English Church	cobede.o2.psd	80 767	14	0,01 %	1050
Laws, Cnut II	colaw2cn.o3.psd	4 761	11	0,23 %	1050
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle E	cochronE.o34.psd	40 641	100	0,24 %	1125-1150

Figure 10 Texts from the YCOE used for the analysis.

As can be seen from the table, *weorðan* was used, beside the very little usage in Bede's text, rather steadily throughout the Old English period. The following sections will show *weorðan*'s functions in this period.

5.1 *Weorðan* in Non – Copula Constructions

As *weorðan* was mainly used as a copula in OE, most of the constructions it occurs in are Copula Constructions, but there are instances in which *weorðan* functions just as verb, as in

- (41) ... *gewurðað* ... *of Gode*.
... came into existence PRES IND of God DAT.
“... came into existence through God.” (coaelive.o3.psd)

or in

- (42) ... *gewurðe* ... *ðin willa*.
... happen PRES SUBJ your/thy will NOM
“... thy will be happening.” (coaelive.o3.psd)

or in

- (43) *Forðæm hit* ... *gewearð* ... *ðæt* ...
Therefore it NOM happen PAST IND that
“Therefore it happened, that ...” (coboeth.o2.psd)

Out of 681 occurrences in Old English, 51 instances are non-copula examples, which are 7,4%. In Middle English out of 220 occurrences, of forms of *weorðan*, 34 are non-copula evidences, which are 15,45%.

These examples can mainly be translated with *weorðan*'s most common meanings: 'to come', 'to become', 'to happen'.

5.2 *Weorðan* in Copula Constructions

The Copula Construction is the most common construction in which *weorðan* is used. Petré and Cuyckens (2009) distinguish between four different types of Copula Constructions, as already mentioned before. In the corpus it was possible to find instances of every type, but most often Event Constructions [NP.Subj IntrV. Cop PPLE <result>] were found. *Weorðan* appeared in different tenses and moods occurring together with past participles, like present indicative + past participle, present subjunctive + past participle, past indicative + past participle and past subjunctive + past participle.

A fourth of all the occurrences of *weorðan* is in Event Constructions. The Event Construction with *weorðan* in the past tense can very often be translated into a PDE Passive Construction, while the occurrences with *weorðan* in the present tense often show a future meaning or a possibility. However, those two meanings will be dealt with in the following sections of this chapter.

The following examples will show some instances of the Event Construction:

- (44) *þa swor Philippus þæt he friðian*
 There swear PAST IND Philippus NOM that he make peace INF
wolde þa leasan wudewan ðeah þe heo
 would the lying widower ACC through whom she
gelignod wurðe
 convicted of lying PPLE be PAST SUBJ

“There Philippus swore that he would make peace with the lying widower through whom she was convicted of lying.” (coaelive.o3.psd)

- (45) ...and on þisum dege wearð to menn geboren.
 ... and on this day be PAST IND to men DAT born PPLE

“... and on this day was born to mankind.” (coaelive.o3.psd)

(46) ... *and* *wearð* *geedwerped*.

... and be PAST IND recover PPLE

“... and was recovered.” (cobede.o2.psd)

(47) ... *and he* *þær* *wearð* *ofslægen* *and LXXXIII manna*

... and he NOM there be PAST IND killed PPLE and 84 men NOM

mid him.

with him DAT

“... and there he was killed and 84 men with him.” (cochronD.psd)

(48) *þær wearð* *se eorl of Normandig* *gefangen*.

There be PAST IND the earl of Normandy NOM catch PPLE

“There the earl of Normandy was caught.” (cochronE.o34.psd)

(49) *And gyf he* *betihtlod* *weorðe ...*

And if he NOM accused PPLE be PRES SUBJ

“And if he is accused ...” (colaw2cn.o3.psd)

All of these examples, except number 49, are examples in which *weorðan* is used in the past tense, either using indicative or subjunctive mood. As most of these texts are about historical events it is not surprising, that they use the past tense.

There is one verb, which, as a past participle, was used most frequently together with *weorðan*. This is *ofslægen*, meaning “to be killed”, as in example 47. It is exclusively used in the Chronicles. In *Chronicle D*, out of 47 occurrences, 25 are together with *ofslægen* and 2 together with *ofscoten*, which has a similar meaning. In *Chronicle E* there are 14 occurrences of *weorðan* + *ofslægen* out of 71.

Example 47 uses the present tense form *weorðe* in a subjunctive mood and, as it is a text about law, shows a possibility.

Not as often, but also quite frequently *weorðan* occurs in Object Constructions [NP.Subj IntrV. Cop NP. <object>], together with a noun phrase and in Property Constructions [NP.Subj IntrV. Cop AdjP. <property>] together with an adjective phrase. Out of the 681 instances of *weorðan* around 6% are Object Constructions and around 5% are Property Constructions.

The following examples show Object Constructions:

- (50) ... *and ic* *sylf nu* *bidde* *þæt þu me.*
... and I NOM self now ask PRES that you me

geþingie *hu ic wurðe* *his biggenga*
ask PRES SUBJ how I be PRES SUBJ his worshipper NOM.

“... and I myself now ask that you ask me how I will become his worshipper.”

(coalive.o3.psd)

- (51) *Gyf weofedþen* *mannslaga* *weorðe* *oððon ...*
If priest NOM murderer NOM be PRES SUBJ or

“If a priest becomes a murderer, or ...”

(colaw2cn.o3.psd)

After looking at these examples we can again see that most of them use past tense forms of *weorðan*, except example 51 out of the law, which does not inform the reader about historical events, so it is possible to use the present tense and express possibility.

More common is the usage of present tense forms of *weorðan* together with adjective phrases, as we can see with the following examples, showing Property Constructions. They sometimes use present indicative forms as in example 52 that leads the meaning into the direction of future meaning, while for expressing possibility the present subjunctive is mostly used.

- (52) *se ðe wis byð,*
the who wise be PRES IND
ne wurð he næfre modig.
not be PRES IND he never proud.
“The one who is wise will never be/get proud.” (coaelive.o3.psd)

- (53) *... þa wearð he strengra.*
... then be PAST IND he NOM stronger ADJ
“... then he became stronger.” (coboeth.o2.psd)

- (54) *..., þæt hi weorðað þonnan earmran and eargran.*
... that they NOM be PRES IND then ADV evil ADJ and wretched ADJ
“... that they become evil and wretched.” (coboeth.02.psd)

- (55) *Ac God him geunne þæt his goddæda*
But God NOM him grant that his good work NOM
swyðran weroðan þone misðada.
strong ADJ be PRES SUBJ than bad works.
“‘But God grant him that his good deeds will be more powerful than his bad deeds.” (cochronD.psd)

- (56) *þe Swegen dead wearð.*
When Swegen NOM dead ADJ be PAST IND
“‘When Swegen died.” (cochronE.o34.psd)

- (57) *And gif he þonne ful weorðe.*
 And if he NOM then ADV ful ADJ be PRES SUBJ
 “And if he then is guilty.” (colawcn2.o3.psd)

These three different groups of Copula Constructions are the most common ones *weorðan* occurred in. There were only 4 occurrences for a Location Construction and some other examples were not clearly relatable to one group.

The following sections will have a more detailed look on passive and future meanings in the examples.

5.2.1 *Weorðan* in constructions with passive meaning

As discussed in the chapter about Passive Constructions, Petré and Cuyckens (2009: 316) argue, that the Passive Construction has developed out of the Event (Resultative) Construction. Now a closer look at certain examples taken out of the data should help to determine, if there were constructions which already expressed a passive meaning in the Old English period.

- (58) *... gif hit wyrð ameldod.*
 ... if it NOM be PRES IND known PPLE
 “... if it is made known.” (coaelive.o3.psd)

- (59) *þa wearð heo be agenum wyllan gewæmmed*
 Then be PAST IND she NOM by own will DAT destroy PPLE
þurh þas deofles lare.
 through PREP the devil GEN teaching ACC
 “Then she was destroyed by her own will through the devil’s teaching.”
 (coaelive.o3.psd)

- (60) *þa wearð he licumlicre untrumnesse gehrinen*
 Then be PAST IND he NOM bodily weakness ACC attack PPLE
& gestonden.
and strike PPLE

“Then he was attacked and stroke by a bodily weakness.” (cobede.o2.psd)

- (61) *þæt se anwald þara yfelana weorðe toworpen.*
 That the power NOM that evil GEN be PRES SUBJ destroy PPLE
 “The power of the evil will be destroyed.” (coboeth.o3.psd)

- (62) *And eac heora scypu sume þurh oferweder wurðon*
 And with their ships DAT some GEN through storm ACC be PAST IND
tobrocene.
 break PPLE

“And some of the ships got broken through the storm.” (cochronD.psd)

- (63) *Her Anna cining werð ofslagen.*
 Here Anna king NOM be PAST IND kill PPLE
 “Here king Anna was killed.” (cochronE.o34.psd)

- (64) *And Eadwine eorl wearð ofslagen arhlice*
 And Eadwine earl NOM be PAST IND kill PPLE disgracefully
fram his aenum mannum.
 by his own men DAT

“And earl Eadwine was killed disgracefully by his own men.”

(cochronE.o34.psd)

(65) *And gyf he betihtlod weorðe ...*
 And if he NOM accuse PPLE be PRES SUBJ
 “And if he is accused ...” (colaw2cn.o3.psd)

(66) *..., þa wurðe he efre wuniende*
 ... then be PRES SUBJ he NOM ever ADC live PRES PLE
mid God ælmihti on heuenrice.
 with God Almighty DAT in heaven
 “..., then he will live with God Almighty in heaven.” (cochronE.o34.psd)

The examples 58 – 65 show that Event Constructions could have a passive meaning. In these examples mostly somebody does something to somebody and there is a causer-causee relationship (Toyota 2008: 13) therefore it has a rather dynamic reading. In 59, 60, 62 and 64 there is even the typical “by”, in the case of Old English *þurh*, *fram*, ... in the sentence. Many examples of passive meanings in the Chronicles occur together with the already mentioned *ofslægen* or *ofslagen*. “To be killed” is a passive and it already was in the form of “*wearð ofslægen*” in the Old English period. The different prepositions for “by” are, as already mentioned in the chapter about the Passive Construction, used till the end of the Middle English period and only then “by” becomes the only preposition used to indicate who did something to somebody/something in the Passive Construction. What is also important to mention is that example 61 and 65 are, beside the passive meaning, able to express futurity as well through the usage of the present subjunctive. Thus, it was possible to express a future meaning and a passive meaning together.

Only the last example, number 66, can not be read as a passive although it is kind of an Event Construction, as *wuniende* is a participle, but a present participle and furthermore the expression “to live” cannot be used in the passive. Thus, there are some exceptions, but most of the Event Constructions already have a passive meaning and it is not hard to follow Petré and Cuyckens (2009) claim that our PDE Passive Construction emerged out of the Copula Event Construction, but mainly out of the Event Construction using the Copula in the past tense [NP.Subj Cop_{Past Subjunctive/Past Indicative} PPLE Subj.Comp]

5.2.2 *Weorðan* in constructions with future meaning

The most difficult constructions to identify were definitely the constructions with future meaning. It was not possible to find a Future Construction which includes a “future auxiliary in connection with a schematic slot for an infinitive verbal complement” (Hilpert 2008: 17) [NP.Subj Aux VComp SubjComp], as these were not used in the Old English period, therefore other possible expressions of futurity in connection with *weorðan* had to be found. The construction, which shows most examples of a future reading, is [NP.Subj Aux_{Present Subjunctive} PPLe Subj.Comp] or [NP.Subj Aux_{Present Subjunctive} AdjComp Subj.Comp]. It is either the Event Construction or the Property Construction, but, in contrast to most constructions with a passive reading, with the form of *weorðan* in the present tense and subjunctive mood. This is not surprising, as the subjunctive was already in PIE used to express futurity (Streitberg 1963: 267f. Bammesberg 1992: 57) and also in OE the subjunctive expressed wishful utterances. Furthermore, the subjunctive was preferred in “monastic and legal regulations; charms, medical prescriptions and similar generalised instructions” (Traugott 1992: 185).

The following examples will show the possibility of a future reading in the subjunctive:

- (67) *Ic abæd æt Criste þæt ðis cwealmbæra fyr*
 I NOM pray PAST to Christ DAT that this deadly fire NOM
me ne gewylde þæt þu wurðe gescynd.
 me not tame PAST that you NOM be PRES SUBJ frighten PPLe
 “I prayed to Christ that this deadly fire I did not tame will frighten you.”
 (coaelive.o3.psd)

- (68) *Wurðe hit þam casere cuþ*
 Be PRES SUBJ it NOM the emperor DAT known ADJ
ne canst þu þe nænne ræd
 not can PRES IND you the none advice ACC
 “If it is made known to the emperor you cannot give the advice.”
 (coaelive.o3.psd)

Both examples are taken out of Ælfric's *Live of Saints*, but there are only 7 occurrences of it. Of course the *Chronicles* do not use any present tense at all, as do Bede's *History of the English church* and Cnut's *Law*. Apart from Ælfric's text only in Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* *weorðan* is used in the present subjunctive, like in the following examples.

- (69) *seo mæste unsælp* *on þys andweardan life*
 The biggest misfortune NOM on this present life
- þat mon ærest weorðe gesælig and.*
 that man NOM first be PRES SUBJ happy ADJ and
- æfter þam ungesælig*
 after that unhappy ADJ
- “The biggest misfortune in this life is that men first will be happy and after that unhappy.” (coboeth.o2.psd)

- (70) *...and to ciðum and to wyrtrumum weorðe on bære*
 ... and to seeds DAT and to roots DAT be PRES SUBJ on the
- eorðan.*
 earth DAT
- “... and to shoots and to roots turns on the earth” (coboeth.o2.psd)

- (71) *þæt se anwald þara yfelana weorðe toworpen.*
 That the power NOM that evil GEN be PRES SUBJ destroy PPLE
- “The power of the evil will be destroyed.” (coboeth.o3.psd)

In Boethius' text there are 12 occurrences of *weorðan* in the present subjunctive and all of them have a future meaning. In this text there are also some occurrences of *weorðan* in the present indicative and some of them do also have a future meaning, like the following example.

- (72) *Gif þu þonne ænne stan toclifst,*
 If you NOM then a stan ACC break PRES IND,

ne wyrð he næfre gegadrod
 not be PRES IND it NOM never put together PPLE

swa he ær wæs ...
 as it before was

“If you break a stone, it will never be put together, as it was before.”

(coboeth.o2.psd)

Not in every example of the present indicative there is a future meaning, but there are some and the most obvious is example 72. *Weorðan* occurs in a conditional sentence, which shows that something is very likely to happen (in the future). In PDE the will future is used in this case and also in Old English a very similar meaning of futurity is expressed, with the help of *weorðan*.

5.3 Conclusion

In Old English we can find *weorðan* in a variety of Copula and Non-Copula Constructions. Most often in the Copula Event Construction, where it occurred together with a past participle and still very often in the Copula Property and the Copula Object Construction, together with adjectives and noun phrase subject complements. Furthermore, it also turned up as a simple verb meaning *come* and *happen* in Non-Copula Constructions.

In Copula Constructions it was possible to locate different meanings, like the development of a passive and a future meaning. The passive meaning could be found among Copula Event

Constructions, using *weorðan* in the past tense, while the future meaning could be found in different types of Copula Constructions with *weorðan* in the present tense.

It can be seen that *weorðan* was a very common verb in Old English, which was used to express a variety of different meanings. Towards the end of the Old English period the usage of *weorðan* declined. Before the analysis of the Middle English data the following chapter presents different theories and explanations for *weorðan*'s disappearance. Afterwards the corpus analysis of the Early Middle English data will show possible changes and implications caused by this declension.

6 *Weorðan* lost – the disappearance

6.1 Language contact and competition

Earlier research on the disappearance of *weorðan*, either in Passive Constructions (Frary 1929. Zieglschmid 1930. Kurtz 1931. Klingebiel 1937) or in Copula Constructions (Biese 1932), mostly claimed language contact and competition with *be* as the main reasons for it.

Frary (1929: 70f) denies the hypothesis by van Draat (1910) that *weorðan* had been “crowded out by *beon*”. She points out the gap of occurrences in Old English and Middle English texts and looks for something that happened between those two periods. Frary picks up Mätzner’s (1873-1875) suggestion of foreign language influence, but she does not only name the French as a foreign influence, as Mätzner does, she thinks that “the Danes” have been much more important (Frary 1929: 71). She claims that the Old Norse influence was much more influential than the French one, also because they were conquered by the French, but lived more or less peacefully next to and with the Scandinavians. She explains the loss of *weorðan* in the following way: in Old Norse the passive was built either with the reflexive in *-sk* or with a periphrastic construction using *vesa* or *vera* (cognates to *wesan*). *Verþa*, the cognate of *weorðan* was a frequently used verb, but not yet a passive auxiliary. Frary claims that therefore, for a better understanding, English people left out the construction with *weorðan* when talking to Danes. She undermines this claim with the general strong influence of Old Norse on (Old) English grammar (Frary 1929: 72).

Zieglschmid (1930: 113f) supports van Draat’s hypothesis on the disappearance of *weorðan* and adds some details himself. Furthermore, he rejects Frary’s and Mätzner’s claim on foreign influence. Zieglschmid argues that *be* became a “bridge-form” “connecting like a bridge two distinct meanings, in our particular case that of *weorþan* (its inherent meaning) with that of *wesan*” (1930: 113). Therefore *weorðan*’s original meaning was lost. In the Passive Construction *be*, as the passive auxiliary, also took over *weorðan*’s meaning. Furthermore, *be* took over the parts in which *weorðan* was used similar to an auxiliary verb and some of its copula meanings, but in this case also some full verbs, like *to come*, *to get*, *to become* became important (Zieglschmid 1930: 114f).

Kurtz (1931: 110f) shares Frary's argument that *weorðan* was lost because of foreign (Scandinavian) influence and the difference of the Old Norse Passive Construction, but he points out that *weorðan* or *wurthe*, was lost because of phonological changes. He claims that the ME infinitive *wurthe* fell together with the past participle, as the "grammatical alternation" was no longer productive. Kurtz argues that maybe the auxiliary *wurthe* was lost to avoid ambiguity. Furthermore, *wurthe* was used to express the present and the future passive and this ambiguity might as well have been beneficial for its loss. He adds that the *u* of the preterit plural indicative *wurthen* also was used in the preterit singular, which made it even more ambiguous and the infinitive *wurthen* could easily be confused with the verb *wurthen*, which meant *to honour, to pay respect to somebody* (Kurtz 1931: 111). For Kurtz these changes in the phonological structure were, additionally to the foreign influence, a very important reason for *weorðan*'s disappearance.

Klingebiel (1937: 105) lists and summarises the explanations, which were popular at this time and comments on them. He mentions Frary's and Kurtz's theories on foreign influence (at first the Scandinavian influence and later also the French one) as well as on phonological changes. Furthermore, he lists Curme (1930: 271) who talks about the "clumsiness" and the "heaviness" of *weorðan* and the "lighter handy *be*", by which it was replaced, as a reason for its loss. Klingebiel also cites Jespersen (1919: 99), who argues that *weorðan*'s disappearance can be ascribed to its irregularity (*weorðe* - *wierð* - *wearð* - *wurdon*).

After listing those different reasons, Klingebiel (1973: 107) concludes that one factor alone is not enough to explain the disappearance of such a frequent word as *weorðan*. Therefore, he thinks that many of these cited reasons must have played a role, but some of them do not sound convincing to him. For examples Curme's "clumsy" *weorðan*, or Kurtz's ambiguity between the copula *wurthen* and the verb *wurthen*, meaning *to honour, to pay respect to somebody*, as he thinks there is no chance to mistake those two verbs. For Klingebiel the fact that the present and the preterit form fell together in *wurð* (Kurtz 1931) is much more important. Furthermore, he claims that the French influence was much more important than believed by the cited scholars, as the Passive Construction is more often used in written language and in standard language spoken at home, on which French had a stronger influence than Scandinavian, which was spoken in conversations with "neighbours" or trading partners, like the Danes (Klingebiel 1937: 108).

At the end he lists French influence before Scandinavian influence, as the two most important reasons and then adds the phonological changes as additional factors.

Biese (1932: 221) is looking for a reason of *weorðan*'s disappearance inside the lexical system of the language. For him foreign influences, as well as phonological changes, are not convincing. He asks himself if it is more likely that *become* developed a meaning of 'becoming', of 'werden', because *weorðan* got lost more and more, or if it happened the other way round, that *weorðan* died out, because *become* had developed a similar meaning. He continues, claiming that, as *weorðan*, in Old English, was the only way to express 'become', there was a longing for different ways to express "become". Therefore, beside the copula usage, which *be* took over, new words developed a meaning of 'become', like *become*, *wax*, *turn*, *grow*, *fall*, *come*, *go* and *get* (Biese 1932: 223).

To summarise, it has to be said, that especially in the late 1920s and the 1930s there were first researches done on *weorðan*. All of these scholars tried to find convincing explanations for *weorðan*'s loss. They named foreign influence, as well as changes in the phonological and in the lexical system. It took nearly 90 years, since Frary's publication, until new research on this topic was done, especially on the disappearance. In 2006, 2009 and 2010 new publications, with new approaches and insights by Petré and Cuyckens, were issued. The following two sections will have a more detailed look on these new researches with new possible reasons for *weorðan*'s disappearance.

6.2 Construction Grammar approach

Petré and Cuyckens (2009) argue for a change in the system of constructions which lead to *weorðan*'s disappearance. As already mentioned, constructions, either schematic or not, are dynamic and may therefore change. When a construction changes, it is also a change for the lexemes occurring in the constructions. Petré and Cuyckens' (2009: 346) claim that a change in a schematic construction "always creates a TENSION between the schematic construction and the lexemes used in them", mainly because lexemes are dependent on their constructions, as constructions make the lexemes to what they are (passive auxiliary, copula, etc.) (see also Petré 2010: 462). When a lexeme occurs in a construction, it generally matches with its form and meaning, but if there suddenly happens to be a mismatch, because of a change in the

construction, the lexeme and the construction do not fit each other any more. If the lexeme does not change with the constructions, to fit it, it is going to start to sound archaic and will decrease in usage until it disappears. Petré and Cuyckens (2009: 347) claim that this is what had happened to *weorðan*.

But this opens up a new question. “Why did the construction, *weorðan* was occurring in, change?”

As we have already seen, *weorðan* occurred mostly in Event and Property Constructions. The predicates used with *weorðan* in these constructions were generally less time stable as *weorðan* preferred those. Petré and Cuyckens now suggest that these two constructions were actually not two separate constructions, but “formed part of a single, semantically and formally coherent construction”, which they call “Time-Unstable Property Construction” (2009: 347). They see these constructions as coherent as “the event predicates are encoded by participial constructions, which are morphologically similar to adjectival encoded property predicates” (ibid). Petré and Cuyckens (2009: 347) admit, that the adjectival and the participial construction are not totally identical, but that, in OE and Early Middle English, they still share important features, as the agreement of number and case with the subject. What also supports this argument is the case that together with *weorðan* adjectival predicates and participles occurred in one sentence, as in the following examples (Petré and Cuyckens 2009: 348):

(73) *ðo wurðen he frigti and agrisen.*

Then become PAST IND he NOM apprehensive ADJ and frighten PPLE

“Then they became apprehensive and frightened.”

(74) *On þis gear wærð þe king Stephne ded & bebyried.*

In this year be PAST IND the king Stephen NOM dead ADJ and bury PPLE.

“In this year king Stephen died and was buried.”

As the Copula Time-Unstable Property Construction was the construction containing both, the Copula Property and the Copula Event Construction, the changes in both of these constructions may have driven them apart on the schematic level and therefore led to a change in the Time-Unstable Property Construction as well.

There were two main changes, which most likely have led to *weorðan*'s disappearance: The development of the Passive Construction and “The decrease in productivity of the weak verbs of Class II and the Copula Property Construction” (Petré and Cuyckens 2009: 356).

At first a look at the Passive Construction and the changes happening in the Copula Event Construction will be taken. In the corpus analysis one could see that most Copula Event Constructions have a passive meaning, but in OE these constructions were not considered “passivizations of transitive events” (Petré and Cuyckens 2009: 349). These constructions showed “intransitive situations, in which a state, which RESULTS from some previous action, is predicated of a non-agent”, as in the following example (ibid.):

(75) *Ac heora bendas sona wurdon forswælede.*
 But their fetters NOM soon ADV be PAST IND burnt away PPLE.

“But their fetters immediately were burnt away.”

But the change to the Passive Construction in which a transitive event is expressed, started already in Old English involving an agent and a patient (Petré and Cuyckens 2009: 350). Of course the change to the Passive Construction also initiated a change in the copula verb, as it was now used as a passive auxiliary. In this process, Petré and Cuyckens (2009: 350) point out, that the auxiliaries became “desemanticized”, as the verbal content was shifted to the participles (2009: 352), and therefore they became interchangeable. This shift also influenced the resultative predicates, which became verbalized, what further on leads to an extension from participles to atelic (activity) verbs, which became more common during the ME period, as the (non-resultative) Passive Construction became more important (2009: 352).

Mitchell (1985: 311 – 24 cited in Petré and Cuyckens 2009: 350) argues that many of these developments in the Event Construction were already at a very advanced state in OE. However, it took until the end of the ME period for their completion.

These developments did not fully affect *weorðan*, what can be seen especially in the change of the resultative predicates to the activity verbs, as there are nearly no occurrences of *weorðan* + activity verb (Petré and Cuyckens 2009: 353). During the ME period the Passive

Construction developed further to a more “discourse-structuring function”, but not with *weorðan* any more.

Furthermore, Petré and Cuyckens (2009: 354) point out a possible reason for the emergence of the Passive Construction: the change of word order, as OE had the possibility of an OVS structure, as in:

- (76) *me* *beswicode* *he*
 me DAT betray PAST IND he NOM
 * “Me betrayed he” -> PDE: “I was betrayed by him.”

But in ME the SVO order rose and became fixed. Therefore, the topic and subject slots overlapped, what asked for a new construction, in form of the Passive Construction, with a more “discourse-structuring function”.

To come back to the Time-Unstable Property Construction, one can conclude that these changes in the Copula Event Construction led to a split between the Copula Event and the Copula Property Constructions. This change also forced the Time-Unstable Construction with *weorðan* to split, but it did not, as

the association between resultative event predicates and property predicates in the case of *weorðan* is so strong that *weorðan* increasingly resisted such a split and as a consequence started to sound archaic and not up to date to the present state of the set of schematic constructions available to the language users. This unsolved tension, then, furthered the disappearance of *weorðan* (Petré and Cuyckens 2009: 355).

Secondly, a closer look at what happened to the Copula Property Construction will be taken. The change in this type of construction was initiated by the “decrease of productivity of the Weak Verbs of Class II” (Petré and Cuyckens 2009: 256). Until *becuman* became more important in the second half of the 10th century, *weorðan* was the only copula to express a change of state, but it was very restricted to resultative event predicates and human propensity or physical property predicates. Beside *weorðan* only verbs of the Weak Verb Class II could express a change of state, or as Petré and Cuyckens (2009: 357) put it, “the transition into a new relation between Subj – SubjComp”. This verb class is called “verbs in –ian” and the

following example will show how those words were capable of expressing a human propensity (ibid.):

- (77) *þonne forthlaþ* *ealle gesceafta,* *ge heofonware*
 Then be afraid PRES IND all creatures NOM, the heavenly

ge eorþware.
 the earthly.

“Then all creatures are afraid, both heavenly and earthly.”

Petré and Cuyckens (2009: 357) point out two differences between “verbs in –ian” and *weorðan* – constructions: firstly *weorðan* mainly focuses on the transition into a new Subject-Predicate relation, while “verbs in –ian” tend to focus more on the “transitory character of the Subject-Predicate relation”, not just on the starting point. Secondly, “verbs in –ian” occur together with the whole variety of property predicates, from least time-stable to most time-stable, while *weorðan* sticks to the group of least time-stable predicates.

The productivity of the Weak Verb Class II started to decline in the late OE period and many verbs, like *ealdian* ‘to grow older’, disappeared. Now *weorðan* would have had the chance to take over and fill the gaps those words had left, but it did not. It was too strongly embedded in the Time-Unstable Property Construction and did not extend to more time-stable predicates. Thus, new copulas, like *becuman* and *weaxan*, occurred together with more time-stable predicates, as they had not *weorðan*’s strong bonds and were not that inflexible. It was only a question of time until they also took over the least time-stable predicates, which beforehand occurred together with *weorðan* (Petré and Cuyckens 2009: 359).

It can be summarised, that *weorðan* was too strongly embedded into the constructions and the predicates it occurred with, that it was impossible for it to survive those changes occurring towards the end of the OE period. Therefore, of course new constructions, as well as new copulas took over and expressed the meaning, which was formerly expressed by *weorðan*.

Petré (2010) has pursued this topic and has come up with even more new insights, which will be dealt with in the following chapter.

6.3 New approach – system of boundedness

Petré (2010) claims that the disappearance of *weorðan* is closely related to the disappearance of the system of boundedness in OE. He found out that *weorðan* was closely linked to narrative language use and in this structure shows striking differences to *wæs*. In contrast to *wæs*, *weorðan* preferred to occur in main clauses, which are usually used in narratives. Furthermore, it occurred together with time adverbials, which were crucial for bounded language use and died out in the ME period – similar to *weorðan*. Finally, Petré (2010: 458) mentions that *weorðan* occurred more frequently in “inverted clause constructions”, which were also typical for bounded language structures.

Before having a closer look on the system of boundedness itself, important details to the approach should be added. Petré (2010: 462) points out that *weorðan* is ONE verb and not three different ones, a passive, a copula and an intransitive verb. With the help of Construction Grammar it is easier to show that *weorðan* is one verb, which occurs in different constructions and takes over certain “roles” depending on the construction it occurs in.

Another important thing to mention is the fact, that the past tense use of *weorðan*, namely *wearð*, fell into disuse earlier than the present tense use. Petré suggests that this might also be connected to the bond between *weorðan* and the narrative structure, as the past tense was mainly used in narratives, while the present tense was used in different contexts and most likely fell into disuse because of different factors, like the upcoming analytic future with *shall*, etc. (2010: 480). Therefore, Petré’s (2010: 464) study focuses only on the past tense usage and keeps the present tense usage for later research.

Now we are coming to the system of boundedness, which was generally used in narratives. The system of boundedness is used to show progress in a narration, it gives starting and endpoints and structures the narration, as in:

(78) ... *then he walked over to the other side.* (Petré 2010: 464)

Unbounded language is constructed in a more “openended” way and often uses the progressive aspect for that:

(79) ... *he was walking about.* (ibid.)

PDE, like Arabic, is a language that does not use many bounded constructions, quite in contrast to languages like German, Dutch and also OE, which show a strong preference for bounded constructions (Petré 2010: 464). German speakers, for example, tend to structure their narratives by certain temporal markers, like *dann*, *plötzlich*, *auf einmal*, *danach*, etc., while PDE speakers do not do that. Carroll et al. (2004 cited in Petré 2010: 466) argues that PDE's syntax and the grammaticalized constructions it uses, like the progressive, encourage unbounded language use.

Concerning the system of boundedness OE was very similar to German. It has not yet had a progressive construction, only its predecessor, the *be + Vende* construction, which did not very often express progressiveness. Furthermore, the different word order rules and structures and the frequent use of time and place adverbials are very suitable for the bounded system. The most common adverbial used in OE was *þa* 'then', which is similar to German 'dann' and helps to structure the narrative (Petré 2010: 466). Time adverbials are often put in the first position in a German sentence, having the verb at the second position and the subject inverted. In OE this mostly happens with *þa*, but not that often with other time adverbials. Until PDE the possibility of the verb-second construction and also the time adverbials were lost, because the SVO order was established and the progressive had emerged. The bounded system, which was dependent on the time adverbials and the verbs-second syntax, had already been lost by the end of the 14th century (Petré 2010: 467).

That this disappearance of the bounded system also had an influence on the disappearance of *weorðan* can be seen by comparing an OE fragment and a ME fragment, taken from the Wycliff bible (Petré 2010: 467 – 468). It is Luke 15, 13-20:

(80) *þa æfter feawa dagum ...se gingra sunu ...ferde wræclice on feorlen rice, & forspilde þar his æhta lybbende on his gælsan. þa he hig hælfde ealle amyrrede þa wearð mycel hunger on þam rice & he wearð wædla ... þa beþohte he hine & cweað, Eala, hu fela yrðlinga in mines fæder huse half genohne habbað ... Ic ... fare to minum fæder, & ic secge him, Eala fæder, do me swa anne of þinum yrðlingum. & he aras þa & com to his fæder, & þa gyt þa he wæs feart his fæder he hyne geseah & wearð mid mildheortnesse astyrod.*

“Then after a few days ... the younger son ... travelled abroad to a far country, and wasted there his possessions, living a life of pleasure. **When he had wasted them all,**

then a great hunger came over the country and he became a beggar ... **Then** he thought to himself and said: “Why, how many servants in my father’s house have enough bread ... I ... will go to my father, and will tell him: hey father, ... take me as one of your servants.” And he arose **then** and came to his father, and **when** he was **still** far from him his father saw him and was stirred by mercy.”

(81) *And not aftir many daies ... the yonger sone wente forth in pilgrimage in to a fer cuntre; and there he wastide hise goodis in lyuyng lecherously. And aftir that he hadde endid alle thingis, a tronge hunger was maad in that cuntre, and he bigan to haue nede ... And he turnede ayen to hym silf, and seide, Hou many hirid men in my fadir hous han plente of looures ... Y schal ... go to my fadir, and Y schal seie to hym, Fadir ... make me as oon of thin hirid men. And he roos vp, and cam to his fadir. And whanne he was yit afer, his fadir saiy hym, and was stirrid bi mercy.*

This comparison shows very clearly that the ME text does no longer contain *þa* (*tho* in ME), that there are not any verb-second syntax examples and also *weorðan* (worth) can not be found. The progressive construction is still under development in the stage that ME text was written. Furthermore, the progressive form is more likely to turn up in present tense descriptions than in past tense writing. Of course there is much more past tense writing in ME, so present tense evidences are rather rare (Petré 2010: 468).

What is new in the ME text and became much more popular during the ME than during the OE period, is the usage of *beginnan* (Petré 2010: 469). *Beginnan* and also other verbs of the *-ginnen* - class are ingressive/inchoative verbs and show the start of a new situation. Therefore, those verbs differ from *weorðan* which expresses the process “from one state into another one, including the end result” (Petré 2010: 369). Although *weorðan* is also sometimes labelled as an inchoative or ingressive verb, this is not correct, as it should be labelled as a “change-of-state” verb (ibid.). The two bible fragments are suitable to demonstrate that those inchoative verbs have also replaced *weorðan*, as out of *wearð wælla* ‘became a beggar’ became *bigan to haue nede* ‘began to have need’ (Petré 2010: 369).

To conclude, it can be said that Petré’s study shows that *weorðan*, especially in its past tense usage, indeed was strongly interwoven into the OE system of boundedness and that this

research gives a very plausible explanation for its disappearance. It can also be seen very clearly in my corpus analysis, as there are 323 occurrences of *weorðan* (total 681) with a temporal or sometimes with a local adverbial. Thus, half of the time *weorðan* occurred together with a time/place – adverbial. Out of these 323 occurrences, 168 are with *þa*, which is the most common time-adverbial. The difference to Early Middle English is really striking, as there are only 19 examples (total 220) which contain a time or place adverbial, mainly ‘then’ and ‘there’. Obviously there is a huge difference between 50% of occurrences in the OE corpus and 8,6% of occurrences in the EME corpus.

It sounds very plausible, that *weorðan* disappeared together with certain time adverbials like *þa*, with which it was frequently used and with a syntactic structure, the verbs-second syntax, which was only possible before English turned into an SVO language. And furthermore, other inchoative verbs to express a similar meaning turned up.

Petré (2010: 480) concludes that his study goes beyond those simple claims that *weorðan* was lost because of competition, because “In lot frequency but embeddedness within a network of constructions is of primary importance in the survival of one of the competing forms.” And that “[t]he idea that a constructional subsystem of a language’s grammar has an impact on its lexicon can probably be fruitfully applied to the history of other function words and other languages as well.”

7 Corpus analysis 2: *Weorðan* in Early Middle English

After dealing with different approaches concerning *weorðan*'s disappearance, the analysis of Early Middle English corpus will help to see *weorðan*'s development more clearly.

The texts used for this analysis are the following:

Title	Filename	Number of words	Number of occur. of <i>weorðan</i>	Number of occur. in percent	Approx. Date (a1 – first quarter, b1 – third quarter)
Peterborough Chronicle	petchront.tag	2 547	9	0,35 %	C12b1 (1154)
Trinity Homilies	trhomBt.tag	24 187	32	0,13 %	C12b2
Ormulum	ormt.tag	11 504	21	0,18 %	C12b2
Lambeth Homilies	lamhomA1t.tag	18 739	11	0,05 %	C13a1 (1200)
Vices and Virtues	vvat.tag	20 284	12	0,05 %	C13a1
Acrene Riwe	titusart.tag	14 224	9	0,06 %	C13a2 (1240-50)
Collection of Texts (religious)	nerowgt.tag	5 279	4	0,07 %	C13a2
Acrene Riwe (Acrene Wisse)	corpart.tag	15 183	8	0,05 %	C13b ?
Layamon's Brut	layamonAat.tag	13 723	21	0,15 %	C13b

Collection of Texts (religious and secular – Owl and Nightingale)	jes29t.tag	18 265	16	0,08 %	C13b2
Collection of Texts (religious – Live of Christ)	laud108at.tag	32 987	21	0,06 %	C13b2- C14a1 (1300)
Genesis and Exodus	genexodt.tag	12 467	52	0,41 %	C14a (1325)
A Ballad on the Scottish War	scotwart.tag	1 606	1	0,006 %	C14a
Cursor Mundi	edincmct.tag	14 087	3	0,02 %	C14a

Figure 11 Texts of the LAEME used for the analysis.

During the Middle English period *weorðan* was still used, although much less than in the Old English period. It can also be seen that the usage declined when comparing the percentages from 0,35% in the *Peterborough Chronicle* to 0,02% in the late example of the *Cursor Mundi*. There is one irregularity in the development, which is the *Genesis and Exodus* example, with 0,41%, but Bible texts are always based on older texts they were copied and modified from, so it is not surprising that this example still includes more archaic forms than other texts of this time.

7.1 *Weorðan* in Non – Copula Constructions

As already mentioned in the chapter on Old English, 15,45% of the Middle English occurrences are non-copula usages of *weorðan*, as in the following examples.

- (82) ... *forgif me* *nu* *þæt* *I* *hit* *haue* *talð*
 ... forgive me now that I it have PRES tell PPLE
- þe* *þah* *I* *schulde* *wurðe* *wod* *ne*
 you though I NOM should PAST IND be INF mad ADJ not
- shall* *tu* *neauer* *eft* *wite*
 shall PRES IND you NOM never ADV again ADV know INF
- hu* *me*
 how ADV me ACC

“... forgive me now that I have told it to you, and even if I should go mad, you shall never again know how I am.” (titusart.tag)

- (83) ... *hit* *shal* *wurðe* *ful* *liht*
 ... it NOM shall PRES IND be INF ful ADV light ADJ
- lihtre* *þen*
 light ADJ COMP than

“... it shall be lighter than light.” (titusart.tag)

- (84) *þe lastand dede* *sal* *worþe awai*.
 The lasting death NOM shall PRES IND be INF away ADV

“The lasting death shall come away.” (edincmct.tag)

(85) *Adam wass wurþen deofless þeow.*

Adam NOM be PAST IND be PPLE devil GEN servant NOM

“Adam had become the devil’s servant.” (ormt.tag)

(86) *þe nihtegale at þisse worðe was welneþh*

The nightingale NOM at these words DAT be PAST IND almost ADV

ut of rede iworþe.

out of speech ACC be PPLE

“At these words the nightingale almost became speechless.” (jes29t.tag)

What is striking is the fact that in non-copula examples *weorðan* very often occurs together with *shall*, as the examples 82 - 84 show. Furthermore, they can sometimes be read with a future meaning, but with *weorðan* not being the future auxiliary but the verb.

In the other examples it occurs in similar contexts as in Old English meaning *get*, *become* or *come*.

7.2 *Weorðan* in Copula Constructions

Also during the Middle English period *weorðan* occurred in Copula Constructions most frequently, 184 out of 220 occurrences are Copula Constructions. 72 examples are Event Constructions, but also 72 examples are Property Constructions, therefore, out of all occurrences one third are Event Constructions and one third are Property Constructions.

The Event Construction in Middle English looks the following way:

- (87) *ðurh Eve de was giet maiden*
 Through Eve ACC who be PAST IND also ADV maid NOM
was all mankenn forloren
 be PAST IND all mankind NOM lose PPLE
ðurh Marie ðe eadig maiden hit warð eft
 Through Mary the blessed maid ACC it NOM be PAST IND again
geboregen.
 save PPLE

“Through Eve, who was also a maid, mankind was lost. Through Mary, the blessed maid, it was saved again. (vvat.tag)

- (88) *wurþen men suiðe ofuundred and ofdred.*
 be PAST IND men NOM strongly ADV fear PPLE and dread PPLE
 “Men were strongly feared and dreaded.” (petchront.tag)

- (89) *þæt enngeles brihte leoma. He warþ*
 The angels GEN bright light He NOM be PAST IND
forfeared.
 frighten PPLE
 “The angels’ s bright light. He was frightened” (ormt.tag)

- (90) *þat mine heste worþeth rigt folfullde.*
 That my order NOM PL be PRES IND right ADV fulfill PPLE
 “That my orders are fulfilled correctly.” (laud108at.tag)

- (94) *Abram wurþ wis and war.*
 Abram NOM be PAST IND wise ADJ and knowing ADJ
 “Abram became wise and knowing.” (genexodt.tag)

- (95) *God Almyhti wrþe him wroþ.*
 God Almighty NOM be PRES SUBJ him NOM angry ADJ
 “God Almighty will be angry with him.” (jes29t.tag)

Similar to the Old English constructions is that in Middle English Event Constructions were mainly built with past forms of *weorðan*, while in Property Constructions also present forms were used, as in example 95. In the sections about the constructions with a passive and a future meaning one will see if this has similar consequences as in Old English.

The following examples are Object Constructions, which are similar to their Old English ancestors.

- (96) *Al wurþ Godes wille.*
 ful ADJ be PRES IND God GEN will NOM
 “God’s will be done fully.” (jes29t.tag)

- (97) *Ne wrþ þer bred ne wyn.*
 Not be PRES IND there ADV bread NOM nor wine NOM
 “There are not bread nor wine.” (jes29t.tag)

- (98) *To wurrþenn man on erþe.*
 To be PRES IND man NOM on earth.
 “To become man on earth.” (ormt.tag)

- (99) *And hit ward sone suythe god pais.*
 And it NOM be PAST IND soon ADV strong good peace NOM
 “And soon there was a strong and good peace.” (petrchont.tag)

7.2.1 *Weorðan* in constructions with passive meaning

This section is going to investigate if the Middle English Event Construction still has this passive meaning as we could find in the Old English examples. The following examples show a passive meaning:

- (100) *ðurh Eve de was giet maiden*
 Through Eve ACC who be PAST IND also ADV maid NOM
was all mankenn forloren
 be PAST IND all mankind NOM lose PPLE
ðurh Marie ðe eadig maiden hit warð eft
 Through Mary the blessed maid ACC it NOM be PAST IND again
geboregen.
 save PPLE
 “Through Eve, who was also a maid, mankind was lost. Through Mary, the blessed maid, it was saved again. (vvat.tag)

- (101) *...and ðat he herefore wurðe fordemd*
 ... and that he NOM therefore be PRES SUBJ doom PPLE
into helle pine.
 into hell GEN punishment ACC
 “... and therefore he will be doomed into hell’s punishment.” (vvat.tag)

- (102) *Wurþen men suiðe ofuundred and ofdred.*
 Be PAST IND men NOM strongly ADV fear PPLE and dread PPLE
 “Men were strongly feared and dreaded.” (petchront.tag)

- (103) *þat ne worth adoun iþrowe.*
 That NOM not be PRES IND down ADV throw PPLE
 “That is not thrown down.” (laud108at.tag)

These examples show that in Middle English the Event Construction with *weorðan* still had a passive meaning, the combination of a form of *to be* with a participle, either in the present or in the past tense, very often implies that the subject is not doing something actively, but that something happens to the subject. The subject is passive, what creates a passive meaning as in the examples 100 – 104. However, there are fewer examples than in the Old English corpora. Constructions like *wearð + ofslægen* had already died out or were formed differently, for example with the help of a Property Construction, like in *weorðan + dede*.

One could still find constructions, with a form of the past participle, similar to the Old English form, like *weorðan + ofuundred* (example 102). Furthermore, there occurred many past participles which were built with a prefix, as in *weorðan + iþtrowe*, or *weorðan + geboregen* (examples 103 and 100). However, some past participles were already built like in PDE, as in the following example:

- (104) *þa þe tende moned cam in,*
 When ADV the tenth month NOM come PAST IND in
so wurð dragen ðe watres win.
 so be PAST IND draw PPLE the water GEN force ACC
 “When the tenth month came in, the water's force was (with)drawn..” (genexodt.tag)

The next section is going to show if similar changes happened in constructions with a future meaning.

7.2.2 *Weorðan* in constructions with future meaning

Similar to Old English also in Middle English we cannot find *weorðan* expressing future meaning similar to our PDE Future Construction. We find the same constructions as in Old English: the Event and the Property Construction. Both of them showed a future meaning if *weroðan* occurred in the present subjunctive and sometimes, but very rarely, if it occurred in the present indicative. There are only a few examples in the Early Middle English corpus showing future meaning, but already in Old English there were not many examples which used *weorðan* in the present subjunctive. The amount roughly stayed the same.

The following Copula Event and Property Constructions, with *weorðan* in the present subjunctive, show a future meaning. Of course the subjunctive mood is not the future, but the meaning is often similar.

- (105) *Wel wurðe his migt leffful ay.*
 Truly ADV be PRES SUBJ his power NOM believable ADJ forever
 “Truly his power will be believable forever.” (genexodt.tag)

- (106) *Qat wreche so ðor wurðe numen?*
 What vengeance NOM so there ADV be PRES SUBJ
 “What vengeance will be taken there?” (genexodt.tag)

- (107) *Wan al ðis werld wurðe brenþ.*
 When ADV all this world NOM be PRES SUBJ burn PPLE
 “When all this world will be burnt.” (genexodt.tag)

- (108) *Qeðerso it wurðe softe or strong.*
 Whether it NOM be PRES SUBJ soft ADJ or strong ADJ
 “Whether it will be weak or strong.” (genexodt.tag)

- (109) *þatt it him wurrþe cweme.*
 That it NOM him DAT be PRES SUBJ please ADJ
 “That it will please him.” (ormt.tag)

- (110) *God Almyhti wrþe him wroþ.*
 God Almighty NOM be PRES SUBJ him NOM angry ADJ
 “God Almighty will be angry with him.” (jes29t.tag)

Some of these examples, as example 105 and 107, show a future reading because both examples are about events which lie in the future, eternity (implied through ‘forever’) implies futurity, as well as “when all the world is burnt down” which implies doomsday. Furthermore, in those two, as well as in the other examples the subjunctive mood supports the future meaning, as both, futurity and the subjunctive convey a meaning of possibility. Therefore, the subjunctive often expresses futurity, because possibility very often lies in the future. Already in Indo European the subjunctive was used to express futurity, and also in the examples 105 – 110 it helps to argue for a future meaning.

In the following example a future meaning is, despite the subjunctive mood, not so clear. This construction occurred ten times in *trhomBt.tag*. The German counterpart construction uses the subjunctive as well, but at a closer look, also at the German version, reveals a future meaning, as it implies that people should thank God generally. This means now, but also in the future, which is often included in the prayer with words like “now and in eternity”. Maybe the future reading is not as strong as in other examples, but it is definitely in this example as well.

- (111) *þanked wurðe him.*
 Thank PPLE be PRES SUBJ him DAT.
 “Thanked be he.” → Dank **sei** Gott. (trhomBt.tag)

The last two examples will show that there are also some examples which use *weorðan* in the present indicative to create a future meaning. Here the future meaning is created through implication. The first example implies that these orders should be fulfilled correctly not just now, but generally, not only today, but also tomorrow, next week, in three months. Although it is translated with a present tense, the future is implied. Example 113 is similar to a conditional sentence; “if you believe in God you will be in joy”, it shows a possibility/an opportunity.

- (112) *þat mine heste worþeth rigt folfulde.*
 That my orders NOM be PRES IND right ADV fulfill PPLE
 “That my orders are fulfilled correctly.” (laud108at.tag)
- (113) *Bileveth on him and ge worþeth in ioye.*
 Believe PRES IMP in him DAT and you NOM be PRES IND in joy
 “Believe in him and you are/will be in joy.” (laud108at.tag)

Furthermore, the advance of the modal verb *shall* can be seen in the Middle English examples. In some of them *shall* already occurs together with *weorðan* (as the verb and not as the auxiliary any more - *weorðan* in Non-Copula Constructions), like in these examples:

- (114) ... *forgif me nu þæt I hit haue talð*
 ... forgive me now that I it have PRES tell PPLE
- þe þah I schulde wurðe wod ne*
 you though I NOM should PAST IND be INF mad ADJ not
- shall tu neauer eft wite*
 shall PRES IND you NOM never ADV again ADV know INF

hu *me*
 how ADV me ACC

“... forgive me now that I have told it to you, and even if I should go mad, you shall never again know how I am.” (titusart.tag)

(115) ...*hit* *shal* *wurðe ful* *liht*
 ... it NOM shall PRES IND be INF ful ADV light ADJ

lihtre *þen.*
 light ADJ COMP than

“... it shall be lighter than light.” (titusart.tag)

It is important to point out that there are not many examples of the Copular Constructions with future meaning in Early Middle English and, as in the Old English period, there is not “the Future Construction”. However, there are constructions with future meaning, but not a special construction only for this purpose. And, as the last two examples show, *shall* is advancing and slowly taking over the purpose of creating a future meaning, what might be an explanation why there are so few constructions, including the copula *weorðan*, with a future meaning.

7.3 Conclusion

To summarise, it can be said that *weorðan* continued to be used in the same constructions in Early Middle English as it was in Old English. The Event Construction is still most popular, but its importance declined and *weorðan* was equally often used in Property Constructions. This may have happened because certain constructions, which were Event Constructions, like *weorðan + ofslægen*, were taken over by other constructions, like the Property Construction.

As shown in the Early Middle English corpus analysis, examples in which *weorðan* was used in constructions with a future or a passive meaning still exist, but there is no change to a

special Future or Passive Construction. For Future Constructions later modal verbs were used, while the Passive Construction was totally taken over by forms of *to be*.

Furthermore, the usage of *weorðan* generally declined, as the tables indicate.

The chapter about *weorðan*'s disappearance has already given a detailed account about the different theories dealing with *weorðan*'s loss.

In the conclusion of this paper we are now coming back to the research questions, expressed in the introduction.

8 Summary and conclusion

This paper has shown how strongly *weorðan* was embedded in certain constructions during the Old English period. It was, not exclusively, but mainly used in Copular Constructions, functioning as a copula verb. *Weorðan* preferred to occur with the least time-stable property predicates and therefore was very inflexible. This continued throughout the different processes of change. As the schematic Time-Unstable Copula Property Construction changed, *weorðan* did not take over more time stable predicates. Therefore, “new” words, like *becuman* or *waxen*, took over more and less time stable predicates and *weorðan*, as it did not change with the construction, started to sound archaic.

Furthermore, this paper has illustrated how important and frequent *weorðan* was during the Old English period, as one of the five most frequent words in Old English and the only copula of becoming until in the 10th century *becuman* turned up.

The corpus analysis has shown that Old English and also Early Middle English did not have a Passive or Future Construction, but both, future and passive meaning, were expressed, amongst others, by *weorðan*, as the data shows. The development of the Future Construction then continued in a different way, as the modal verbs *will* and *shall* became important. But, as Petré and Cuyckens (2009) claim, it is very likely that the Passive Construction developed out of the Event Construction. Passivity was mainly expressed by *weorðan* + PPLe, which is similar to the Modern High German Passive Construction and was often supported through the usage of “by”, “through”, etc. to show who the causer was. Futurity was frequently implicated, either through the context and/or through the usage of the subjunctive mood, which shows possibility. As not many examples expressing futurity could be found, neither in Old English, nor in Middle English, it is obvious that it was not *weorðan*’s most important function and it is likely that people in Old and Middle English also used different ways (like forms of *to be*, modal verbs, ...) to express futurity.

Furthermore, in the corpus analysis examples of Petré and Cuyckens’ Time-Unstable Copula Property Constructions, in which *weorðan* occurred together with participles and adjectives, could be found. These examples occurred mainly in the Old English period which supports their argument that this construction was subject of a change, also affecting *weorðan*.

Additionally, there were certain Old English examples, like *wearð ofslagen*, which were extremely frequent in Old English, but had already died out or changed completely in Early Middle English.

Examples of the most recent study on *weorðan*, the connection between the copula and the system of boundedness, could be seen very clearly in the corpus analysis. 50% of the Old English data were examples of *weorðan* occurring together with bounded language. In Early Middle English only 8,6% of the examples included bounded language. This is a very striking connection, strongly supporting the claim that *weorðan* disappeared together with the bounded language system.

This paper has shown that *weorðan*'s disappearance will also raise questions in the future, as theories in historical linguistics are often difficult to prove. However, it has also shown that the data of different corpora can help to find connections or differences, which may help to prove or abolish certain theories. Probably nobody will ever know the absolute truth about *weorðan*, but I think the most recent theories are on the right track and revealing the truth step by step.

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9.1 Corpora

The York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose

[<http://www-users.york.ac.uk/~lang22/YCOE/YcoeHome.html>] compiled by Ann Taylor, Anthony Warner, Susan Pintzuk, Frank Beth. (York: © 2003 – The University of York)

A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English, 1150-1325
[<http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/laeme/laeme.html>] compiled by Margaret Laing and Roger Lass (Edinburgh: © 2007- The University of Edinburgh)

9.2 Online sources

The Oxford English Dictionary. Online edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
www.oed.com (20 November 2011).

10 Appendix

10.1 German abstract

Diese Arbeit stellt die Entwicklung des altenglischen Verbs *weorðan*, insbesondere in seiner Funktion als Kopula, dar. *Weorðan* war eines der am häufigsten vorkommenden Verben in der altenglischen Periode, welches in einer Vielzahl von Konstruktionen verwendet wurde. Wissenschaftliche Forschung hat sich meist mit einer speziellen Verwendung von *weorðan* beschäftigt, wie zum Beispiel Toyotas Studie zur Entwicklung der Passivkonstruktion oder Petré und Cuyckens Studie zu den Kopulakonstruktionen. Ältere Forschungsarbeiten haben sich besonders mit der Frage des Verschwindens von *weorðan* beschäftigt (Frary, Zieglschmid, Klingebiel, etc.). Während man in den Zwanziger- und Dreißigerjahren des 20. Jahrhunderts hauptsächlich vom Verschwinden des einzelnen Wortes ausging, sprechen heutige Forschungen, wie jene von Petré und Cuyckens, vom Verschwinden der gesamten Konstruktion. Diese Studien werden in dieser Arbeit diskutiert und verglichen.

Das Hauptaugenmerk dieser Arbeit liegt, neben der Darstellung der Entwicklung des Verbs *weorðan*, hauptsächlich auf seiner Verwendung in Konstruktionen, welche eine Passiv- oder Futurbedeutung ausdrücken. Die Korpusanalyse möchte hier Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede zwischen der alt- und der frühen mittenglischen Periode aufzeigen und in weiterer Folge Aufschluss darüber geben, welche Theorien zum Verschwinden von *weorðan* am plausibelsten sind.

Obwohl sich *weorðan* aus der selben germanischen Wortwurzel wie *werden* entwickelt hat, schlug es, in der alt- und mittenglischen Periode, einen anderen Weg ein und entwickelte sich nicht, wie das Deutsche *werden*, zu einem Verb, welches das Passiv oder das Futur ausdrückt. Die Korpusanalyse wird zeigen, ob es im Altenglischen und auch im frühen Mittenglischen noch in diesen Kontexten verwendet wurde.

Als Basis dieser Arbeit dient der theoretische Rahmen der Konstruktionsgrammatik (Traugott, Goldberg, Croft, etc.), welcher besonders gut dafür geeignet ist, die Entwicklung, sowie das Verschwinden von *weorðan* in verschiedenen Konstruktionen darzustellen.

EIDESSTATTLICHE ERKLÄRUNG

Ich versichere,

1. dass ich diese Diplomarbeit selbständig verfasst, andere als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel nicht benutzt und mich auch sonst keiner unerlaubten Hilfe bedient habe.

2. dass ich diese Diplomarbeit bisher weder im Inland noch im Ausland in irgendeiner Form als Prüfungsarbeit vorgelegt habe.

Wien, März 2012

10.2 Curriculum Vitae

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