

The origins of periphrastic perfect and pluperfect in West Germanic: Between aspect and tense

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The paper presents the results of a language change study on the grammaticalization of verbal periphrases with the auxiliary verbs 'have' and 'be' plus participle II of the main verb in Old English, Old Saxon and Old High German. In contrast to previous research, where the interaction between aspect and tense semantics of the perfect and pluperfect periphrases is fundamentally interpreted in a similar way (cf. Grønvik 1986, Kuroda 1999), the evidence from *Beowulf*, *Heliand*, *Tatian*, *Otfried* and *Notker* shows that there are essential differences between the two periphrases, so that already in the oldest period of development in West Germanic, a distinction should be made between two types of anteriority (cf. Crellin & Juegel 2020): evaluative past (perfect) vs. narrative past (pluperfect) cf.

Notker, Psalms 6, 20, 13-15:

Mîn oûga ist truôbe . fóre dînemo zórne . Dîn zorn fúrhtendo . *hábo ih keuuêinot* sô fílo . daz iz truôbe ist .

„My eyes are grieved because of your anger. For fear of your wrath I have wept so much that it is grieving.“

versus

Tatian 102, 2:

Phígboom *habeta* sum *giflanzotan* in sinemo uuingarten. inti quáam suoehen uuahsamon in themo boume inti ni fant.

„A man had planted a fig tree in his vineyard; and when he came to see whether it bore fruit, he found none.“ (Lk. 13, 6-7).

The auxiliarization of genuine full verbs and grammaticalization of the total structures as tense periphrases are carried out on the methodological basis of the diachronically oriented functional-syntactic or functional-semantic approach (cf. Schrodts 2004), whereby the concept of construction grammar is explicitly confronted with the complexity thesis. It will be determined whether the complex (syntactic) coding patterns in Old Germanic result in completely idiosyncratic forms in the process of grammaticalization, which correspond to synthetic tenses from a functional point of view, or whether their formal compositionality reflects semantic complexity. The results of the analysis suggest the second option. In the perfect there is an “evaluative split” between past (participle II of the main verb) and present reference (present of the auxiliary), while in the pluperfect a “narrative split” between the previous past (participle II) and past (past of the auxiliary) is encoded.

Keywords: West Germanic, grammatical change, perfect, pluperfect, auxiliary verb

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