

Semantically, these verbs behave like inchoative ergatives; they have a present participle, but lack a past participle.<sup>41</sup> As Ferraresi<sup>42</sup> has shown, the passive is formed by the corresponding transitive verb:

*weihnan* 'to become holy'

(37)(a) Matthew 6,9

atta unsar þu in himinam, weihnai namo þein.

father our you in heavens be hallowed name your

'Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.' (ἀγισθήτω)

*weihan* 'to sanctify'

(37)(b) 1 Corinthians 7,14

weihaida ist qens so ungalaubjandei in abin, jah gaweihaidis

sanctified is wife the unbelieving in husband and sanctified

ist aba sa ungalaubjands in qenai

is husband the unbelieving in wife

'the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, and the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife' (ἡγίσται)

In both cases the Greek text has a passive verb. According to Egge<sup>43</sup> one and the same verb can also appear as passive or as *na*-verb:

(38)(a) Luke 1,20

... waurdam meinaim, þoei usfulljanda in mela seinamma.

words my which are fulfilled in time their

... my words which shall be fulfilled in their season.' (πληρωθήσονται)

(38)(b) Matthew 8,17

ei usfullnodedi þata gamelido þairh Esaian praufetu qiþandan

that might be fulfilled that spoken by Isaiah prophet saying

'that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, who said'

(πληρωθῆ)<sup>44</sup>

Wulfila apparently makes no distinction between the meaning of the passive and the *na*-verb. That is because both the passive and the ergative verb only assign the internal theta-role. As for the external theta-role, in a passive

<sup>41</sup> Braune – Heidermanns, *Gotische Grammatik*, p. 166.

<sup>42</sup> *Word Order*, p. 113.

<sup>43</sup> *Inchoative Verbs*.

<sup>44</sup> Streitberg, *Gotisches Elementarbuch*, p. 191.

verb this role is absorbed, while it is not assigned with an ergative verb at all. Therefore, *na*-verbs never take a *fram*-phrase.<sup>45</sup>

In all, *na*-verbs were not an alternative corresponding exactly to the passive. Moreover this verbal class got lexicalised. No productive word formations could be formed any longer.

However, both formations, the passive variant of the medio-passive and the *na*-verbs, are similar in denoting a change of state, a process. As Schroeder<sup>46</sup> has convincingly demonstrated, the passive meaning of the synthetic medio-passive is an processual (or agentive) passive (Vorgangs-Passiv; *werden*-passive) and not a stative passive (Zustands-Passiv; *sein*-passive). One example is sufficient:

(39) 2 Corinthians 3,15

akei und hina dag miþþanei siggwada Moses, hulistr ligiþ ana  
 but unto this day when is read Moses veil lies upon  
 hairtin ize.  
 hearts their

'But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts.' (ἀνα-  
 γινώσκεται)

### 2.2.2. The Periphrastic present passive: stative passive

If one reckons the passive variant of the synthetic medio-passive and – because of its passive character – also the *na*-verbs among the semantic class process, there is a strong preponderance of the process meaning. For stative meaning lacks entirely. In such a situation the grammatical category aspect comes into play. Stative passives must appear naturally, if Gothic has the grammatical category aspect in another part of the language system.

However, the existence of aspect in Gothic is a moot point. Some scholars only assume lexical aspect or "Aktionsart", for aspect is not grammatically marked. But as Streitberg<sup>47</sup> has shown,<sup>48</sup> Gothic has a means of perfectivizing, the verbal prefixes, especially the prefix *ga*-. This prefix causes the least verbal modification and is therefore usable for grammatical functions; for example Gothic *sitan* – *gasitan* 'to sit', 'to sit down', *baíran* –

<sup>45</sup> Ferraresi, Word Order, p. 114.

<sup>46</sup> Gliederung.

<sup>47</sup> Perfective und imperfective Aktionsart, p. 102.

<sup>48</sup> Compare Vogel, Wortarten und Wortartenwechsel, p. 178; Smith, Parameter of Aspect; Leiss, Rolle der Kategorie des Aspekts, p. 12.

*gabairan* 'to carry', 'to give birth to', *standan* – *gastandan* 'to stand', 'to come to a stand'. Streitberg compared these verb pairs with the Slavic verbs which are either perfective or imperfective. While perfective verbs denote states and activities which were ended or which will be ended, imperfective verbs denote actions in progress, just ongoing states and activities. Since in Slavic numerous perfective verbs are formed from simple imperfectives by prefixation, Streitberg is surely right in regarding the Gothic prefix verbs as the perfective counterpart to unprefixed imperfective verbs, too. Thus, telicity is opposed to atelicity or duration.

As for the Gothic passive I now assume, that the same contrast situation as with the perfective and imperfective verbs was established. Firstly, Wulfila chose the analytic verbal forms *wisan* + past participle in the present to denote the stative passive. Pairings of *wairþan* and *wisan* + adjectives, where telicity and atelicity are denoted, could have been the model:

(40)(a) Mark 7,27

let faurþis sada wairþan barna  
let afore filled be children  
'Let the children first be filled'

(40)(b) Galatians 3,3

swa unfroþans sijup?  
so foolish you are  
'Are ye so foolish?'

Analogous to (40) Wulfila formed sentences with decidedly present character; in the Greek text the corresponding form is a present passive:

(41) 2 Corinthians 1,4

saei gaþrafstida uns ana allai aglon unsarai, ei mageima weis  
who comforted us in all tribulation our that may can we  
gaþrafstjan þans in allaim aglom þairh þo gaþlaiht þizaiei  
comfort those in all trouble by the comfort wherewith  
gaþrafstidai sijum silbans fram guda.  
comforted we are ourselves by God

'who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted by God.'  
(παρακλούμεθα)

Luther translates *damit wir trostet werden von Got*, but 'wir sind getröstet' with stative meaning is also an acceptable translation.<sup>49</sup>

A stative passive also occurs in (42). The first *wisan*-passive translates a Greek perfect and the second one a Greek present. In both cases a Gothic stative passive is the adequate equivalent:

(42) 2 Corinthians 7,4

usfulliþs im gaþlaihtais, ufarfulliþs im fahedais in allaizos  
 filled I am comfort filled I am joys in all  
 managons aglons unsaraizos.  
 many tribulations our

'I am filled with comfort; I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.' (πεπλήρωμαι, ὑπερτερισσεύομαι)

In Schroeder's<sup>50</sup> study we just mentioned but which is unfortunately not noticed in more recent papers about the Gothic passive, it is proven that the character of the Greek perfect as perfect present accommodates the Gothic *wisan*-passive. Also the rendering of the Greek aorist passive by the Gothic *wisan*-passive is correct, as the comparison with Luther's translation shows.

(43) Ephesians 4,21

jabai sweþauh ina hausideduþ jah in imma uslaisidai sijuþ,  
 if ever him you heard and in him taught are  
 swaswe ist sunja in Iesu  
 as is truth in Jesus

'If so it be that ye have heard Him and have been taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus' (ἐδιδάχθητε)

Luther: *vñ ynn yhm geleret seyt*

The German translation and not the English one is decisive here, for English has no stative passive.

There is no doubt that the large number of *wisan* + past participle for a Greek present, perfect or aorist passive means the present of the stative passive in Gothic.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Schroeder, *Gliederung*, p. 34.

<sup>50</sup> *Gliederung*, p. 38.

<sup>51</sup> Schroeder, *Gliederung*, p. 61.

## 2.2.3. The periphrastic past passive

After having reached the first step in the evolution of the periphrastic passive, namely embedding in the present system, the periphrastic passive entered the preterite. While only a present passive had existed, the inherited medio-passive and the new *wisan*-passive with ongoing and stative meaning, respectively, the opportunity to form a passive preterite was given. Since *wisan* had the preterite *was*, the present stative passive only had to be put into the preterite. And a formation for the processual passive was available, too: the preterite *warþ* of the verb *wairþan* ‘to become’ + past participle.

But as Schroeder<sup>52</sup> points out, the differentiation in the preterite was not as successful as in the present.

## 2.2.3.1. Processual passive

However, *warþ* + past participle always denotes the processual passive and is telic.<sup>53</sup> It translates the Greek passive aorist, the perfect passive and the imperfect passive:

## (44) 2 Corinthians 12,4

batei frawulwans warþ in wagg jah hausida unqepja waurda ...  
 that caught up was into paradise and heard unspeakable words  
 ‘and how he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words ...’  
 (ἡρπάγη)

Also *was* + past participle and *warþ* + past participle in the same passage of a text are used as we would expect.

## (45) Luke 15,24

unte sa sunus meins dauþs was jah gaqiunoda, jah fralusans was  
 for this son my dead was and revived and lost was  
 jah bigitans warþ  
 and found was  
 ‘for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’  
 (ἀπολωλὼς ἦν, εὐρέθη)<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Gliederung, p. 61.

<sup>53</sup> Barðdal – Molnár, Passive in Icelandic, p. 235.

<sup>54</sup> Schroeder, Gliederung, p. 65; Abraham, Emergence, p. 3f.; Ferraresi, Word Order, p. 122.

## (46) Romans 7,6

ip nu, ... andbundanai waurpum af witoda, ... in þammei  
 but now delivered we were from law in which  
 gahabaidai wesum  
 held we were

'But now we are delivered from the law, ... wherein we were held' (κατειχόμεθα)

## 2.2.3.2. Stative passive

We also find many further denotations of events which can be interpreted as past states in common with (44) and (45):

## (47) Luke 8,37

unte agisa mikilamma dishabaidai wesun.  
 for fear great taken they were  
 'for they were taken with great fear.' (συνείχοντο)<sup>55</sup>

Here, the Greek imperfect denotes duration, repetition. Translations of the Greek past perfect passive yield stative passives, too:

## (48) Luke 16,20

... Lazarus; sah atwaurpans was du daura is, banjo fulls.  
 Lazarus this thrown down was to gate his sores full  
 '... Lazarus, who was laid at his gate, full of sores' (ἐβέβλητο  
 Schroeder<sup>56</sup>: 'Lazarus war hingeworfen').

Likewise translations of the Greek aorist passive:

## (49) John 7,39

unte ni nauhþanuh was ahma sa weiha ana im, unte Iesus  
 for not yet was Ghost the Holy in them for Jesus  
 nauhþanuh ni hauhiþs was.  
 yet not glorified was  
 'for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.'  
 (ἔδοξάσθη)<sup>57</sup>

But in other passages of the text the periphrastic preterite passive *was* + past participle as translation of the Greek aorist passive causes difficulties indeed. The most striking example is:

<sup>55</sup> Schroeder, Gliederung, p. 78.

<sup>56</sup> Gliederung, p. 79.

<sup>57</sup> Schroeder, Gliederung, p. 94.

## (50) Mark 1,9

jah warþ in jainaim dagam, qam Iesus fram Nazaraip  
 and happened in those days came Jesus from Nazareth  
 Galeilaias jah daupips was fram Iohanne in Iaurdane.  
 Galilee and baptized was by John in Jordan

'And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.' (ἐβαπτίσθη)<sup>58</sup>

Here, text coherence definitely demands the processual passive in Gothic.<sup>59</sup> Why Wulfila chose another translation, is unclear. But perhaps he thought of nominalization of the past participle: literally: 'Jesus was a baptized person'.<sup>60</sup>

There may be a similar construction: Confer without finite verb, but past participle:

## (51) 2 Corinthians 7,5

jah auk qimandam unsis in Makaidonjai ni waiht habaida  
 and for coming we into Macedonia no had  
 galveilainais leik unsar, ak in allamma anapragganai  
 rest body our but erverywhere pressed persons

'For when we had come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side'. (θλιβόμενοι)<sup>61</sup>

Wulfila could have used nominalized *anapragganai* 'pressed persons'.

Though in the preterite the grammatical category stative passive is not as clear as in the present, this voice headed in the right direction.

<sup>58</sup> According to Abraham, Emergence, p. 9 the periphrastic passive should be analysed in its components, the copula and the past participle respectively, to form a compositional meaning: The participle denotes an event or action having taken place in the past, and the linking verb *wairþan*, "by force of its inherent terminativity, [refers] to a point in time at which the action represented by the participle impinges, or will impinge, upon an entity." On the other hand, *wisan*, "by force of its inherent stative meaning, [expresses] an ongoing passive ... or as a resultant passive, [refers] to a state of the subject entity as a result of prior impingement of the verbal action upon entity". But this analysis is contrary to the findings of Schroeder, Gliederung.

<sup>59</sup> Schroeder, Gliederung, p. 99; Abraham, Emergence, p. 3f.; Ferraresi, Word Order, p. 122. Behaghel, Deutsche Syntax. Wortklassen, p. 207: In the preterite there is no difference between stative and processual passive.

<sup>60</sup> Compare Schroeder's translation of 2 Corinthians 11,25:

'Dreimal war ich ein mit Ruten Geschlagener, einmal ein Gesteinigter'

'Three times I was a knocked person by birches, once I was a stoned person.'

<sup>61</sup> Streitberg, Gotisches Elementarbuch, p. 216.

## 2.2.4. The periphrastic present passive: processual passive

But the circle in the evolution of the passive is not yet completely closed. One periphrastic present passive is still lacking, the periphrastic processual passive with *wairþan*. This last step can be dealt with quickly. In analogy to the coexistence of the processual passive and the stative passive in the preterite, in the present an processual passive with *wairþan* was created as a counterpart to the stative passive with *wisan*. That this was really the last emergence of a passive category in the Gothic passivization circle is shown by its few attestations. The periphrastic passive with *wairþan* is documented only six times:<sup>62</sup>

(52) Mark 9,12

jah hwaiwa gameliþ ist bi sunu mans, ei manag winnai jah  
 and how written is of son man that much may suffer and  
 frakunþs wairþai.  
 despised may be

'and how it is written of the Son of Man that He must suffer many things and be set at nought.' (ἐξουθενωθῆ)

In relation to the great number of synthetic present passives these few examples suggest that the synthetic forms were still a vivid grammatical category for the present passive.<sup>63</sup>

### 3. Comparison between the Pre-Proto-Germanic, Gothic and West Germanic

Finally, let us compare the grammatical category medio-passive and its competitors in Pre-Proto-Germanic, Gothic and West Germanic. We differentiate between +/-productive, active, rising and relic, whereby active means: The formation is recognizable, but no new verbs are added to this formation class:

<sup>62</sup> Schroeder, *Gliederung*, p. 32f. As Ferraresi, *Word Order*, p. 124 states, "with the verb *wairþan* it is ... possible to render the inchoative intransitive verbs which in Gothic are represented by the *-na*-verbs". This is true. But the spare testimony proves this periphrastic passive as end in the evolution of passive.

<sup>63</sup> Compare Schroeder, *Gliederung*, p. 33.



(53)

A) Pre-Proto-Germanic

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Present       |   |
| medio-passive |   |
| preterite     |   |
| -             | intransitive aorist<br>intransitive perfect |

B) Gothic

You can see the spreading of the categories:

| Middle                    |                            | Passive    |                           |  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--|
| Present                   |                            | present    |                           |  |
| medio-passive<br>++active | reflexive<br>+++productive | PROCESSUAL | medio-passive<br>++active | <i>wairþan</i> -passive<br>+rising       |
|                           |                            |            |                           | <i>na</i> -verbs<br>++active             |
|                           |                            | STATIVE    |                           | <i>wisan</i> -passive<br>+++productive   |
| preterite                 |                            | preterite  |                           |  |
| -                         | reflexive<br>+++productive | PROCESSUAL | -                         | <i>wairþan</i> -passive<br>+++productive |
|                           |                            |            |                           | <i>na</i> -verbs<br>++active             |
|                           |                            | STATIVE    | -                         | <i>wisan</i> -passive<br>+++productive   |

Since we only investigated the language of the Gothic Bible, i.e. Wulfila's translation, we have the idiolect of one speaker and therefore only one language stage.<sup>64</sup>

### C) Westgermanic

| Middle                 |                            | Passive    |                        |  |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------|------------------------|--|
| Present                |                            | present    |                        |  |
| medio-passive<br>relic | reflexive<br>+++productive | PROCESSUAL | medio-passive<br>relic | <i>werthan</i> -passive<br>+++productive |
|                        |                            |            |                        | <i>na</i> -verbs<br>+++productive        |
|                        |                            | STATIVE    |                        | <i>wesan</i> -passive<br>+++productive   |
| preterite              |                            | preterite  |                        |  |
| -                      | reflexive<br>+++productive | PROCESSUAL | -                      | <i>werthan</i> -passive<br>+++productive |
|                        |                            |            |                        | <i>na</i> -verbs<br>-productive          |
|                        |                            | STATIVE    | -                      | <i>wesan</i> -passive<br>+++productive   |

We chose the oldest stage of Old High German as representative of Westgermanic.<sup>65</sup>

As for the change from Gothic to Old High German we can observe the well known tendency to replace synthetic forms with analytic ones. Tense, aspect and the connection of these grammatical categories are the driving force. A preterite both for the middle and the passive voice must be created in analogy to the active. And aspect gave rise to the differentiation between

<sup>64</sup> Against this, Ferraresi, *Word Order*, p. 106 assumes two language stages for the evolution of the Gothic passive.

<sup>65</sup> Compare Braune - Reiffenstein, *Althochdeutsche Grammatik*, p. 256; Dal, *Kurze deutsche Syntax*, p. 128f.

processual- and stative passives in present and preterite by the *werþan-* and *wesan-*passive. But which drift caused the language change from Pre-Proto-Germanic to Gothic? Here, the crucial factor is the separation of the two voices middle and passive.

Why did a formal differentiation become necessary? I suppose the cause is information structure: As Leiss<sup>66</sup> points out, the function of the passive is to put an already definite patient in a privileged position. As the definite patient in passive constructions mostly has the feature “known”, this prominent position must be the topic position; compare examples (53) and (54) with a definite passive subject – the subjects are semantic definites according to Löbner<sup>67</sup>, for noun plus genitive yield uniques here. The patient is animate:<sup>68</sup>

(54) John 12,31

nu staua ist þizai manasedai, nu sa reiks þis fairhvaus  
 now judgement is of this world now the prince of this world  
 uswairpada ut.  
 is cast out

‘Now is the judgement of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.’

(55) Mark 10,33

jah sunus mans atgibada þaim ufargudjam jah bokarjam  
 and son of man is delivered the chief priests and scribes

‘and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes’

Another case is (55): Here I[intonational] topics occupy the prefield. They refer to a given set, *twai* ‘two’:

<sup>66</sup> Verbalkategorien, p. 150.

<sup>67</sup> Intensionale Verben und Funktionalbegriffe, p. 36ff.; Definites, p. 279ff.

<sup>68</sup> Since the evolution of syntactic categories often depends on the connection of meaning and grammatical function Silverstein’s Hierarchy of features and Ergativity must be considered:

(1)(a) Local person (= 1. and 2. Person) > Pronoun 3<sup>rd</sup> > Proper Noun 3<sup>rd</sup> > Human 3<sup>rd</sup> > Animate 3<sup>rd</sup> > Inanimate 3<sup>rd</sup>

(1)(b) Agent > Patient

According to this hierarchy one could expect that the first and second person is not permitted as patient subject, for these persons have the most prominent proto-agent features. Indeed, there are languages where sentences like

(2) Ich wurde von einem Dachziegel getroffen. (Aissen, Markedness and subject choice, p. 687) are not allowed.

But saliency hierarchies seem not to be crucial for the Gothic passive.

## (56) Luke 17,34

þatei þizai naht twai wairþand ana ligra samin, ains usnimada jah  
 that this night two shall in bed the same the one is taken and  
 anþar bileiþada  
 the other is left

'in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.'

Though Gothic is a null-subject language, personal pronouns also appear in passive constructions in front of the passive verb:

## (57) 1 Corinthians 15,52

jah dauþans usstandand unriurjai, jah weis inmaidjanda.  
 and the dead revive incorruptible and we are changed  
 'and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.'<sup>69</sup>

These examples are in accordance with the Greek version.<sup>70</sup> However, Gothic has Verb second order, as deviations from the Greek text show:

## (58) Romans 7,13

þata nu þiurþeigo warþ mis dauþus? / τὸ οὖν ἀγαθὸν ἐμοὶ γέγονεν θάνατος  
 that now good became for me death  
 'Was then that which is good made death unto me?'<sup>71</sup>

Therefore, a true Gothic linguistic usage may be documented in (54) to (57).

Furthermore, in other early Germanic languages verb second in main clauses can be demonstrated. According to Hinterhölzl<sup>72</sup> German is a VO-language, whose basic information structure was:

<sup>69</sup> Mark 10,38

magutsu driggkan stikl þanei ik driggkja,  
 jah dauþeinai þizaiei ik dauþjada, ei dauþjaindau?  
 'Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?'

(compare Mark 10,39)

2 Corinthians 6,12

ni þreihanda jus in uns, iþ þreihanda in hairþram izwaraim.  
 'Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own affections.'

<sup>70</sup> John 12,32

jah ik jabai ushauhjada af airþai, alla atpinsa du mis. (κἀγω ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ...)

'But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.'

<sup>71</sup> Behaghel, *Deutsche Syntax. Wortstellung*, p. 11.

<sup>72</sup> *Language change*, p. 140.

## (59) C background V focus

Thus, the prefield is a distinguished position, and it can be supposed that the emergence of real passives in Gothic is connected with the rise of the prefield in main clauses.

### Conclusion

If this is true, then information structure was the decisive trigger for emergence of the grammatical category passive. The passive function of the old medio-passive was separated to yield appropriate definite topics. On the contrary, the middle function got a reflexive construction. It is non-basic or marked, because the patient subject acquires agent properties. Tense and aspect were also participating in the continuation of the medio-passive and brought about the preterite and processual and stative passives, respectively. Moreover reflexive constructions are static or atelic and are therefore contrasted to the *wairþan*-passive and *na*-verbs denoting processes. All in all middle and passive constructions contribute to the semantic diversity of subjects.<sup>73</sup> But while the form of the inherited medio-passive was lost, the meanings middle and passive are preserved from the origins of Germanic until today.

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<sup>73</sup> Hawkins, *Argument-predicate Structure*, p. 129ff.

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