THE DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN THE OLD DUTCH PRESENT PERFECT AND PRETERIT

Marijke de Belder

Katholieke Universiteit Brussel and Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis

1. Introduction

The Old Dutch present perfect has received very little attention in the linguistic literature so far. This lack of interest is part of a more general neglect of Old Dutch, and it is mainly due to a lack of data sources; only two Old Dutch texts have been preserved. One is a word-for-word translation of the Psalms found in the Vulgate, the other is a free translation of and a comment on the Song of Salomon. Although there are only these two texts, the present paper shows that there is nevertheless enough material to draw conclusions on the properties of Old Dutch tenses.

In this paper I discuss a set of data that show that the Old Dutch preterit and the Old Dutch present perfect are distributed according to the Elsewhere Principle. Specifically, I will show that the present perfect is an aspectually and temporally more specific tense than the preterit, which acts as the default past tense in Old Dutch. The data and the analysis offer an insight into the aspectual and temporal properties of Germanic past tenses in the early medieval period.

The paper is organized as follows. In the next section I present the basic data and the research questions that arise from these data. I show that a Latin perfect can be translated both by an Old Dutch present perfect and by an Old Dutch preterit. In other words, both Old Dutch tenses can be used to translate a single Latin tense. The question is why this is the case and more importantly, what determines the distribution of these two tenses. In the third section I present the prerequisites for the analysis. These include analyses of the temporal and aspectual properties of the Latin perfect, the Old Dutch preterit and the Old Dutch present perfect. I show that the Latin perfect is a perfective past tense, the Old Dutch preterit an aspectually unmarked past tense and the Old Dutch present perfect a perfective tense that expresses a completed event with a present result. In section four I show that the distribution of the Old Dutch preterit and present perfect depends on a result in the present and more generally can be accounted for by means of the Elsewhere Principle. The last section sums up and concludes.

2. Basic data and research questions

Translating Latin tenses into Old Dutch. In this paper, I use data from the *Egmondse Williram* (henceforth EW). This eleventh century text contains two parts. The first is a translation of the Latin version of the Song of Salomon. It is important

that this translation is such that the content of the Latin text is preserved in the Old Dutch version. Central to this article is the fact that the event structure of the Latin text is maintained in the Old Dutch text. The second part of the text is a comment on the Song of Salomon. As this paper focuses on the distribution of Old Dutch tenses as translations of the Latin perfect, I mainly use data from the first part of the EW.

In the Old Dutch translation of the Latin Song of Salomon, the Latin perfect is translated either by an Old Dutch present perfect or by an Old Dutch preterit.

(1) a. Lavi   pedes   meos
         washed.*perf*   feet   mine
      b. Ich   havo   mine   fuoze   gethuagan
         I   have   my   feet   washed.*part*
         'I have washed my feet' (EW 78,2-3)

(2) a. filii   matris   meae   pugnaverunt   contra   me
         sons   mother.*gen* mine   fought.*perf* against   me
      b. Miner   muoder   kind   vuchtan   wither   mer.
         my.*gen* mother   children   fought.*pret* against   me
         'My mother's children fought me.' (EW 11, 1-3)

In (1) the Latin perfect *lavi* 'I washed' is translated by the Old Dutch present perfect *havo gethuagan* 'I have washed'. Note that the Old Dutch present perfect is a periphrastic tense which contains an auxiliary (*have* or *be*) and a past participle. In (2) the Latin perfect *pugnaverunt* 'fought' is translated by the Old Dutch preterit *vuchtan* 'fought', which is a non-periphrastic tense form.

These data raise two questions. First, one wonders why two different Old Dutch tenses, i.e. the present perfect and the preterit, are used as translations of one single Latin tense (the perfect). Secondly, we will question the factor that determines the distribution between these two tenses.

3. Prerequisites for the analyses: tense and aspect in Old Dutch and Latin

3.1. Introduction

In order to be able to address the research questions raised above, I first present an analysis of the temporal and aspectual properties of the tenses involved, i.e. the Latin perfect, the Old Dutch present perfect and the Old Dutch preterit. For this analysis I combine a Reichenbachean tense notation (Reichenbach 1947) with the notation of aspect proposed by Smith (1991).

Reichenbach divides the concept of tense into three points: the event time, the moment of speaking and the reference time. The event time, E, refers to the moment at which the event takes place. The moment of speaking, S, refers to the moment at which the sentence is uttered. The reference point, R, refers to a more abstract point, which relates the event time to the moment of speaking. This can be illustrated by means of the following example.

(3)   At 8 o'clock, John will have eaten.

In (3), *at 8 o'clock* does not refer to the event time. The event of John eating has taken place before 8 o'clock. The function of *at 8 o'clock* is to link the perfectivity of

the event *(At 8 o'clock John has eaten)* to the posteriority of the sentence to the moment of speaking (8 o'clock is still in front of us). Reichenbach named this point between the event time and the moment of speaking the reference point. A time adverbial usually refers to this reference point. The two possible relations between these three points are precedence, indicated by an underscore, and simultaneity, indicated by a comma.

To denote outer aspect, i.e. the aspectual properties of the tense proper, I will use the notation of Smith (1991). Smith divides the aspectual properties of an event into an implied initial point, a final point and an interval between these two points. Note that it is not a possible interpretation of an initial or final point which is at stake here, but the inherent implication of these points by the proper meaning of the tense. A perfective tense will thus be represented as follows.

(4) [I......F]

The square brackets indicate the interval of the event, an interval which takes place between an initial point I and an implied final point F. When the presence or absence of the final point is underspecified, I will put parentheses around F.

(5) [I......(F)]

Note that the underspecification of the final point, which yields the interpretation of an unmarked tense, is not the same as the absence of the final point, which indicates imperfectivity. An underspecified tense can syntactically behave both as an imperfective or as a perfective tense. This can be illustrated by means of the following modern Dutch example.

(6) Marie wandelde naar school en   ze   groette de   directeur.
     Mary   walked   to   school and   she   greeted the   principal
     'Mary walked to school and she greeted the principal.'

The aspectually underspecified preterit (6) yields two possible interpretations, i.e. a perfective and an imperfective reading. The first possibility is that Mary walked to school, arrived at school and greeted the principal. This is the perfective reading in which the first event reached its final point before the second event took place. The second possibility is that Mary was walking to school and greeted the principal on her way to school. This is the imperfective reading in which the first event (the walking) did not reach its final point before the second event took place. As aspectually unmarked tenses give no grammatical information on the presence or the absence of the final point, we call these tenses underspecified for the final point. An imperfective tense or formulation on the other hand will only yield the interpretation in which the first event did not reach its final point before the second event took place, as in the following modern Dutch example.

(7) Marie was naar   school aan   het wandelen
     Mary   was to   school on   the walk.*inf*
     en   ze   groette de   directeur.
     and   she greeted the   principal
     'Mary was walking to school when she greeted the principal.'

In (7) only one interpretation is possible; Mary greeted the principal while she was walking to school. From (7) we can conclude that imperfective tenses give grammatical information on aspect. More specifically, they assert the absence of the fi-

nal point from which a specific interpretation of the event structure follows. Imperfective tenses are thus very different from aspectually underspecified. Imperfective tenses assert the absence of the final point, whereas underspecified tenses give no information on the presence or the absence of the final point.

We will also distinguish between some properties of inner aspect, these are the aspectual properties of verb types. More specifically, we need to make a distinction between an inherent, natural final point and an arbitrary final point.

Natural final points are restricted to verbs expressing achievements and accomplishments (Dowty 1979, Vendler 1967). Verb types with a natural final point, Fn, imply that the final point will occur at a given, non-arbitrary moment. Moreover, if the event is not interrupted before the final point, the event will end in a result.

(8)   I baked a pie. We can eat it now if you want to.

(9)   I was baking a pie, the telephone rang, I did not finish the pie.
      #I baked a pie.

In (8) the event of baking a pie has ended and results in the presence of a pie. The given final point is the pie; baking a pie ends when the pie is finished. (9) shows that if this event is interrupted before the final point, one cannot use a perfective tense to state that the event took place. Other examples are *to fly to Prague*, *to read a book*, *to swim 100 meters*, etc.

Arbitrary final points are typical for verbs expressing activities (Dowty 1979, Vendler 1967). Verb types with arbitrary final points can be ended at any arbitrary moment and do not imply a result.

(10) I was working, the telephone rang and I did not work anymore that evening.
      I worked. *(activity)*

In (10), one can use a perfective tense to state that the event took place, despite the fact that the activity was interrupted at an arbitrary moment. No result is inherently implied. Other examples are *to laugh*, *to sleep*, *to dance*, etc.

In the next section a Reichenbachean tense system will be combined with Smith's notions of initial points and final points of outer aspect and the notions of natural and arbitrary final points in inner aspect. I first discuss the Latin perfect.

3.2. The Latin perfect

The Latin perfect is a clear example of a perfective past tense (Comrie 1998: 12, 53). As the Latin perfect is a perfective tense, it implies that the event has ended, i.e. the event took place in an interval between an initial point I and an implied final point F. As the Latin perfect is a past tense, it implies that the event took place before the moment of speaking. This can be summarized as follows.

	Lat perf
aspectually	[I.......F]
temporally	E, R _S

1

(11) the Latin perfect

3.3. The Old Dutch preterit

I will show that the Old Dutch preterit is a past tense which is unmarked for aspect. This view on the Old Dutch preterit is supported by Comrie (1998: 83), who makes a similar claim for all Old Germanic preterits. In the following paragraphs, I present Old Dutch data to support this view. I first consider the temporal properties of the Old Dutch preterit and then its aspectual properties.

I claim that the Old Dutch preterit is a genuine past tense. This implies that both the event and the reference point are situated before the moment of speaking. This can be demonstrated on the basis of sentences in which a temporal adverbial is combined with a preterit. As we have seen in section 3.1, a temporal adverbial normally refers to R. If R is situated before S, i.e. in the past, we predict that the temporal adverbial refers to the past as well. This expectation is borne out. The Old Dutch preterit can only combine with past temporal adverbials, as can be seen in (12) and (13).

(12) Hiz ne-uerid nu   so   niet, so hiz eer   deda.
      He   not-goes now   so   not   so he   earlier did.*pret*
      'He no longer walks as he used to do.' (EW 39, 2-3)

(13) So   thar   nah,   tho   ich hiro   gescriphta thurgh   suoghta,
      so   there after then I   their   writings   through sought.*pret*
      tho   vand   ich minen wine.
      then   found.*pret*   I   my   lover
      'Thereafter, when I went through their writings, I found my lover.' (EW 48, 31)

In (12) the preterit *deda* 'did' is combined with the temporal adverbial *eer* 'earlier' that refers to the past, whereas in (13), the preterits *suoghta* 'sought' and *vand* 'found' are combined with a past temporal adverbial, namely *tho* 'then'. From the combination of past temporal adverbials with a preterit we can conclude that the preterit is a genuine past tense. This supports the traditional view on the Old Germanic preterit as in Comrie (1998: 83)

I will further show that the Old Germanic preterit is unmarked for aspect. I first demonstrate that it cannot be interpreted as a durative, imperfect tense. Then I illustrate that it cannot be a perfective either. As the preterit cannot be reduced to imperfectivity or perfectivity, I conclude that it is neither of both and thus unmarked for aspect.

The Old Dutch preterit is not inherently durative. Support for this view comes from individual-level predicates (Diesing 1992: 17). Individual-level predicates express an inherent property and typically combine with the tense that is least specified for aspect. A further and a possibly related fact is that they are incompatible with a durative interpretation (Klein 1994: 101).

(14) The brontosaur was an herbivore.

(15) *The brontosaur was being an herbivore.

(14) contains an example of an individual-level predicate, i.e. *to be a herbivore*. It expresses an unchangeable property of the subject, namely that the brontosaur is a

herbivore. As can be seen in (15), individual-level predicates are incompatible with a durative tense. Similar Old Dutch sentences always contain a preterit.

(16) her   was   Ismahelis   sun
      he   was   Ismahel.*gen*   son
      'He was Ishmael's son' (EW 9, 3-4)

In the individual-level predicate in 16 a preterit is used to express the unchangeable property of kinship. This implies that the preterit is the least marked past tense of Old Dutch, as individual-level predicates typically combine with the aspectually least marked tense. Furthermore, the occurrence of the preterit in individual-level predicates implies that the preterit is not a durative tense, as individual-level predicates are incompatible with durativity (cf. 15). The preterit is thus the least marked past tense of Old Dutch and it is non-durative.

The above reasoning, however, does not exclude the possibility that the Old Dutch preterit in fact denotes perfectivity. This is for example the case for the English simple past, as in 17. A good test to detect the presence or absence of perfectivity are the event structures between main clauses and their temporal adverbial clauses. When the events in the temporal adverbial clause and in the main clause are interpreted as taking place sequentially, the tense of the main clause is perfective (cf. Smith 1991). On the other hand, when the events in the temporal adverbial clauses and in the main clause are interpreted as overlapping, the tense of the main clause is not perfective. Smith (1991) gives the following examples to illustrate this.

(17) Mary sang when John entered the room.

(18) Mary was singing when John entered the room.

In 17 Mary starts to sing when John enters the room. The two events are sequential. This sequential interpretation indicates that the tense of the main clause, here the simple past, is a perfective past tense. In 18 Mary sang while John entered the room. The events are interpreted as overlapping, which indicates that the tense of the main clause, here the past continuous, is not a perfective past tense. From the use of a non perfective tense in the main clause, we can conclude that the events of the main clause and the temporal adverbial clause are overlapping. Similarly, we can conclude the absence of perfectivity from overlapping events.

According to the reasoning above, the use of the Latin imperfective tense *esset* 'was' in 19a, which is of course a non perfective tense, yields an overlapping interpretation of the events in the Latin sentence.

(19) a. Cum   esset   rex   in   accubitu   suo
              when   was.*impf* king   on   throne   his
              nardus mea   dedit   odorem   suum
              oil   mine   gave.*perf* odour   its
        b. Tho   ther   kuning gezas   upho   sinemo   stuole,
              when   the   king   sat.*pret* up   his   chair
              tho   begunda   min salfwerz meer   ande   meer ze stinchene
              then   began.*pret* my ointmentmore   and   more to scent
              'When the king was sitting on his throne, my balm began to smell more and more.' (EW 19, 1-3)

According to the overlapping interpretation of the Latin sentence, the balm began to smell while the king was sitting on his throne. The Latin version is translated such that the event structure is preserved, as I noted in the introduction under 2. Because of this, we can assume that the event of the main clause *begunda* 'began' and the event of the temporal adverbial *gezas* 'sat' in 19b should also be interpreted as overlapping. The fact that the events are overlapping leads to the conclusion that the Old Dutch preterit is not perfective.

We have seen that the Old Dutch preterit is neither imperfective nor perfective. Moreover, we have seen that the preterit must have been the aspectually least marked past tense of Old Dutch. From this we can conclude that the Old Dutch preterit is an aspectually unmarked past tense, in line with the traditional view. This can be summarized as follows.

(20) The Old Dutch preterit

	OD pret
aspectually	[I.......F]
temporally	E, R _S

3.3. The Old Dutch present perfect

I will show that the Old Dutch present perfect is a tense which indicates that an event that took place in the past has ended in a present result. I first consider the temporal properties of the Old Dutch present perfect and then its aspectual properties.

I claim that the Old Dutch present perfect has a reference point situated in the present. A testing ground for this hypothesis is once again provided by sentences in which a temporal adverbial is combined with a present temporal adverbial. As we have seen in 3.1, a temporal adverbial commonly refers to R. If R is simultaneous with S, i.e. in the present, we predict that a temporal adverbial will refer to the present as well. This expectation is borne out. The Old Dutch preterit can only combine with present temporal adverbials, as can be seen in (21) and (22).

(21) Ienoch   nehavon   ich   sin   niet   fundan
      until.now   not.have   I   him   not   found.*part*
      'Still, I have not found him.' (EW 48, 5)

(22) Nu   ich   hine   vundan   havon
      now   I   him   found.*part*   have
      'Now that I have found him,…' (EW 48, 34)

In 21 the present perfect *havon fundan* 'have found' is combined with the temporal adverbial *ienoch* 'until now', which refers to the moment of speaking. Similarly, in 22 the present perfect *havon fundan* 'have found' is combined with a present temporal adverbial, namely *nu* 'now'. We can thus conclude that the Old Dutch present perfect refers to the present.

Aspectually, the present perfect is a perfective tense that implies a present result. This means that it expresses the fact that a certain event took place prior to

the moment of speaking and that this event necessarily ended in a result that holds for the present. This analysis is supported by two sets of data. First of all, the use of the present perfect is restricted to verbs denoting achievements and accomplishments (Dowty 1979, Vendler 1967). The Latin perfect is translated 16 times by means of a present perfect and in all these cases the verb type has a natural final point. A present perfect of a verb with an arbitrary final point does not occur. All these are translated by means of the Old Dutch preterit. This can be seen in the following table.

(23) The present perfect is restricted to Fn-verbs

	Fn	Fa
preterit	0	18
present perfect	16	0

Table 23 shows that the present perfect is never used to translate a verb type with an arbitrary end point and is restricted to verb types with a natural final point.

As we have seen above, these verb types have an inherent end point, which necessarily ends in a result. From this, we expect that the present perfect is resultative. Indeed, the presence of a result is often made explicit by the context, as in the following examples.

(24) a. Lavi   pedes   meos   quomodo inquinabo illos?
        washed.*perf* feet   mine   how   soil   them
     b. Ich   havo   mine   fuoze   gethuagan
        I   have   my   feet   washed.*part*
        scal   ich   sie   auor   bewollan?
        shall I   them   over   soil.*inf*?
     'I have washed my feet, how shall I soil them again?' (EW 78,2-3)

(25) a. Quo   declinauit   dilectus   tuus?   et   querimus   eum   tecum
        where fled.*perf* lover   yours? and   seek   him   you.with
     b. Saga   uns,   wara   is   thin   wino   untwichan
        say   us   where is   your   lover fled
        ande   wir   suochon hin   mit   thir!
        and   we   seek   him   with   you
     'Tell us where your lover fled and we will seek him together with you!' (EW 98,1)

In 24 the past event is the washing of the feet, which ends in clean feet. The context indicates that the result of clean feet still holds for the present, as they can be soiled again. In 25 the past event is the fact that the lover fled, which ends in the absence of the lover. Here again, the context indicates that the result holds at least until the moment of speaking, given that the speaker proposes to look for the fled lover.

Summing up, the present perfect is restricted to Fn-verbs, it expresses an accomplished event and it necessarily implies a result. That present result is linked to R, which is situated in the present. We can thus conclude that the present perfect

expresses a past event with a result in the present. This can be summarized as follows.

(26) The Old Dutch present perfect

	OD pres perf
aspectually	[I.......Fn]
temporally	E _S,R

3.4. Summary

The above discussion can be summarized as follows.

(27) Overview

	Lat perf		OD pret		OD pres perf	
aspectually	[I.......F]		[I.......(F)]		[I.......Fn]	
temporally	E,R	_S	E,R	_S	E	_S,R

The Latin perfect expresses a perfective past event. It implies that the event took place in the past and that the final point was reached in the past. Also the Old Dutch preterit is a past tense. It is not completely similar to the Latin perfect however, as it is aspectually unmarked. The presence of the final point is grammatically unmarked. The Old Dutch present perfect on the other expresses the final point as the Latin perfect does. However, it differs from the Latin perfect as it has a reference point in the present and is restricted to verb types with a natural final point.

4. The analysis: the Old Dutch preterit vs. the Old Dutch present perfect

We have seen that the preterit expresses a past event and that the present perfect is restricted to verbs with an inherent end point that express a past event with a present result. From this, we can predict the distribution of the Old Dutch preterit and the Old Dutch present perfect as translations of the Latin perfect.

First of all, as the present perfect is restricted to verb types with an inherent end point, we predict that every Latin perfect of a verb type with an arbitrary end point will be translated by the Old Dutch preterit. This expectation is borne out, as can be seen in the following table.

(28) The present perfect is not used to translate Fa-verbs

	Fa
preterit	18
pres perfect	0

In 28 it is again illustrated that every Latin perfect of a verb with an arbitrary end point is translated by means of a preterit and that the present perfect is never used to

translate such Latin perfects. The following sentence exemplifies the Old Dutch trans-
lation of verb types with arbitrary final points by means of an Old Dutch preterit.

(29) a. filii   matris   meae   pugnaverunt   contra   me
        sons   mother.*gen*   mine   fought.*perf* against   me
     b. Miner   muoder   kind   vuchtan   wither   mer.
        my.*gen*   mother   children   fought.*pret* against   me
     'My mother's children fought me.' (EW 11, 1-3)

In 29, the Latin perfective *pugnaverunt* 'fought' is translated by means of the Old
Dutch preterit *vuchtan* 'fought'. The verb *to fight* has an arbitrary end point and thus
cannot end in a result. As expected by our analysis, in Old Dutch the preterit is used.

We further predict that each Latin perfect of a verb type with an inherent end
point and the possible interpretation of a result in the present will be translated by
means of the Old Dutch present perfect. This expectation is also borne out, as is
shown in the following example.

(30) a. Lavi   pedes   meos   quomodo   inquinabo   illos?
        washed.*perf* feet   mine   how   soil   them
     b. Ich   havo   mine   fuoze   gethuagan
        I   have   my   feet   washed.*part*
        scal ich   sie   auor   bewollan?
        shall I   them   over   soil.*inf*?
     'I have washed my feet, how shall I soil them again?' (EW 78,2-3)

In 30, the Latin perfect *lavi* 'I washed' is translated by means of the Old Dutch
present perfect *havo gethuagan* 'have washed'. As we have seen above, the verb *to
wash* has an inherent end point and the context of this example allows for the inter-
pretation of a present result. Not surprisingly, then, we find a present perfect in the
Old Dutch text.

Thirdly, we also predict that verb types with inherent end points used in a con-
text disallowing the interpretation of a present result, cannot be translated by an Old
Dutch present perfect. Recall that for this tense to be licit, there has to be a result in
the present. When a past event ends in a past result, then, the Old Dutch preterit is
once again used. Consider in this respect the following example.

(31) a. Ferculum   fecit   sibi   rex   salomon
        table   made.*perf*   himself   king   Solomon
        columnas   eius   fecit   argenteas.
        columns   its   made.*perf* silver
     b. Ther cuning   Salemon   machoda   himo selvemo   eynan   disk
        The king   Solomon   made.*pret* him self   one   table
        Thie   suule,   thie   waran   silverin.
        The   columns   those   were.*pret*   silver
     'King Solomon made himself a table. The columns were made of silver.'
     (EW 52, 1-4)

In 31, the Latin perfective *fecit* 'made, produced' is translated by the Old Dutch
preterit *machoda* 'made'. The event of making a table has an inherent end point, i.e.

the moment at which the table is finished. We have seen that when the end point of a verb with an inherent end point is reached, the event necessarily ends in a result. As such, the event of making a table will necessarily end in a result, namely a table. In the case of such an accomplished event, we expect the present perfect. In spite of this, the Old Dutch preterit is used. We thus need to account for this unexpected occurrence of the preterit. This explanation can be found in the further description of the table. The use of the past tense in this description implies that the table no longer exists. The table, which is the result of the event, thus cannot be situated at the present. The fact that the result is not longer present makes the use of the present perfect illicit, as the present perfect has a present reference point to express a present result. Since the context makes the use of the present perfect unsuitable, the preterit is used as a default form.

I have shown that the aspectual unmarkedness of the Old Dutch preterit and the implication of a result in the present of the Old Dutch present perfect account for the following three facts. Firstly, Latin perfects of verb types with an arbitrary end point are translated by means of an Old Dutch preterit. Secondly, Latin perfects of verb types with an inherent end point and a present result are translated by an Old Dutch present perfect. Thirdly, Latin perfects of verb types with an inherent end point but without a present result are translated by an Old Dutch preterit. Put differently, the Old Dutch present perfect is used if there is an implied result in the present, while the preterit is used in all other cases. In table 32 the number of occurrences are given.

(32) Overview

	Fn + present result	Fn without present result	Fa
preterit	0	18	18
pres perf	16	0	0

16 times we have a Latin perfect of a verb type with a natural final point in a context that does not make the interpretation of a present result illicit. All these are translated by means of the Old Dutch present perfect. 18 times occurs a Latin perfect of a verb type with a natural final point in a context that prohibits the interpretation of a present result, as in 31. In these cases, the Old Dutch preterit is used. Another 18 times, the preterit is used to translate Latin perfects of verbs with arbitrary final points.

The distribution between the present perfect and the preterit seems to be an example of Kiparsky's Elsewhere Principle (Kiparsky 1973: 94). This principle states that if both a general rule and a specific rule are applicable in a certain situation, the specific one blocks the application of the general one. This holds for the Old Dutch present perfect and the Old Dutch preterit. The present perfect and the preterit both refer to a past event. The present perfect, however, is more specific in that it also implies that there is a result in the present. The preterit on the other hand is aspectually unmarked and can be used regardless of whether there is a result in the present or not. This means that when both tenses could in principle be used (i.e. when the Latin source refers to a past event with a present result), it is the more specific

present perfect that takes precedence over the underspecified (and thus general) preterit, a classic case of the Elsewhere Principle.

5. Conclusion

Old Dutch has two tenses that express a past event. The first is the preterit, which is an aspectually underspecified past tense. The second is the present perfect. This is a perfective past tense that implies a result in the present. Both tenses can be used as translations for the Latin perfect. As the present perfect is more specific than the preterit, their distribution is determined by Kiparsky's Elsewhere Principle. The present perfect is only used if there is a result in the present. The Old Dutch preterit is used in all other cases.

References

Alfrink and Suenens (eds.), 1995, *De Bijbel uit de grondtekst vertaald. Willibrord vertaling.* 18th edition. 's Hertogenbosch and Brugge: Katholieke Bijbelstichting and Uitgeverij Tabor.

Bartelmez, Erminnie Hollis, 1967, *The «expositio in cantica cantorum» of Williram abbot of Ebersberg 1048-1085. A critical edition.* Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society.

Comrie, Bernard, 1998, *Aspect.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Diesing, Molly, 1992, *Indefinites.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Dowty, David R., 1979, *Word meaning and Montague grammar.* Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Jones, Alexander (ed.), 1966, *The Jerusalem Bible.* Garden City: Doubleday and Company.

Kiparsky, Paul, 1973, «Elsewhere», in *Phonology. A Festschrift for Morris Halle*, ed. by Stephen R. Anderson and P. Kiparsky, 93-106. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Klein, Wolfgang, 1994, *Time in language.* London and New York: Routledge.

Michaelis, Laura A., 1998, *Aspectual Grammar and Past-Time Reference.* London and New York: Routledge.

Quak, Arend and Johannes M. van der Horst, 2002, *Inleiding Oudnederlands.* Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven.

Reichenbach, Hans, 1947, *Elements of Symbolic Logic.* New York: MacMillan.

Rooryck, Johan, 1994, «On 0- and α-underspecification in syntax and phonology», *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics* 22, 197-216.

Sanders, Willy, 1971, *Expositio Willerammi Eberspergensis Abbatis in canticis canticorum: Die Leidener Handschrift.* München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.

Smith, Carlota S., 1991, *The Parameter of Aspect.* Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Traugott, Elizabeth C., 1992, *Syntax. Cambridge History of the English Language.* Volume 1, ed. by Hogg Richard M. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vanden Wyngaerd, Guido, 1994, *PRO-legomena. Distribution and reference of infinitival subjects.* Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.

—, 2001, «Measuring Events», *Language* 77, 61-90.

Vendler, Zeno, 1967, *Linguistics in Philosophy.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.