



*Toller*, adds detailed information about the word, subdividing its sense and usage; there the basic meaning is shown at the beginning as "in a state of preparation, so as to be capable of immediately performing (or becoming the object of) such action as implied or expressed by the context", and this meaning seems to hold true in the citations from *Beowulf* above. The subdivided senses (nineteen in all) are "dressed, armed", "(of food) dressed, cooked", and "(of ships) equipped for service", to mention a few.

Besides the adjective *gæaro*, Old English had a number of connected words, the adverb *gear(w)e*, *gæaro* "readily, entirely" (> Mod. E *yare*, which is now obsolete or archaic), the adverb *gearolice*, "readily, clearly" (> Mod. E *yarely* (arch.)), the verb *gearwian* "to make ready, prepare, put on, clothe" (> ME *zare(n)* > Mod. E *yare*), which derived from the adjective *gæaro* and is now obsolete, the verb *gearcian* "to prepare, make ready" (> ME *zarke(n)* > Mod. E *yark*), which was formed as the adjective *gæaro* + factitive suffix *-cian* and is now obsolete, and the noun *gearwe* (used only in pl.) "clothing, gear, arms (< things which were equipped, things made ready)", which was completely replaced by *gere*, of Norse origin, during the Middle English period. The number of related words will increase considerably, if we add compounds such as *gæaro-gongende* "going quickly", *gæaro-wyrdig* "ready in words", etc.

OE *gæaro* became *zare* (and later *yare*) in Middle English. However, ME *zare* was not used so commonly as *gæaro*, and was being gradually replaced by *redi*, *redy* (> Mod. E *ready*), which began to be used in the twelfth century; Dickins and Wilson (1951: 22), citing *Lazamon's Brut*, show "(þer com Arður him azein,) **zaru** mid his fehte." (the British Museum Cotton Caligula A IX (c. 1225)), along with the textual variation "**redi** to fihte" (the British Museum Cotton Otho C XIII (c. 1250)). In the stage of transition *yare* and *redy* seemed to be sometimes used tautologically side by side, e.g. *redy and yare*, or *yare and redy*.<sup>1)</sup> In Modern English, though *yare*

1) In his *Dialect Dictionary* (s.v. *gare*), Wright cites a Yorkshire dialect illustration, which runs as follows, "I'm gare and ready. I'll say 'gar gar' for it [i.e. ready, ready] expressive of anxiety for its obtainment]." This shows that the Scottish or Yorkshire dialect *gare*, of Norse origin and with the same etymology as the native *yare*, is not so familiar and needs to be explained tautologically. Therefore, it may be that the expression "*yare and ready*" was redundant but necessary after *yare* had not been commonly used any longer.

is occasionally found in Shakespeare's works, the translators of the Authorized Version never used it, and as a result it has been replaced almost completely by *ready* and has become dialectal or archaic now.

2.2. ME *gere* (> Mod E *gear*) is known to be a Scandinavian loanword, which meant "equipment of any kind, such as clothes, armor, harness, tools, etc.; behavior, doings" and was used very frequently throughout the Middle English period. As stated above, Old English had the word *gearwe* with similar meanings, but ME *gere* was not a direct descendant of OE *gearwe*, the initial sound of which had already gone through the phonetic change *g > j*, whereas the initial consonant of *gere* is considered to be a guttural plosive retaining a Scandinavian phonetic value; therefore it is very probable that the word was introduced into English after the process of palatalization had already ended. The fact that a great number of illustrations of this word are cited in the *MED* (s.v. *gere*) shows its considerably frequent use in Middle English. The following are examples:

Whyle oure luflych lede lys in his bedde, / Gawayn graypely at home,  
in **gere**3 (= bedclothes) ful ryche / of hewe;

(*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ll. 1469~71)<sup>1)</sup>

An hundred lordes hadde he with hym there, / Al armed, save hir heddes,  
in al hir **gere** (= fighting equipment), / Ful richely in alle maner thynges.

(*The Canterbury Tales; The Knight's Tale*, ll. 2179~81)<sup>2)</sup>

Moreover, Mod. E *gear* is used as a verb, though its older meanings "to adorn, array, dress; to equip" are obsolete or archaic (cf. *OED*, s.v. *gear* v.). This verb, related to the Old English verb *gearwian*, was also borrowed from Old Norse as *geren* in the thirteenth century. What is to be noticed is that ME *geren* "to prepare, equip; to dress; to adorn; to make, cause" had much more frequency and importance than Mod. E *gear*. The following are examples:

Wel gay wat3 þis gome **gered** (= clothed) in grene, / & þe here of his

1) The example is cited from Gollancz (1940).

2) The example is cited from Robinson (1966).

hed of his hors swete;

(*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ll. 179~80)

Ho la3t a lace ly3tly þat leke vmbē hir syde3, / Knit vpon hir kyrtel,  
vnder þe clere mantyle, / **Gered** (= adorned) hit wat3 with grene  
sylke, & with golde schaped, (ib. ll. 1830~32)

Further, ME *geren* had a variant *garen*<sup>1)</sup> (> Mod. E *gar*), which has lost almost all its senses in Modern English except for the one “to cause (someone) to do something”, though dialectal, e.g.:

Gregorie the grete clerk **gart** (= caused) write in his bokes / The ruele  
of alle religious ryghtful and obedient.

(*Piers The Plowman*, C-Text, Passus VI, ll. 147~48)<sup>2)</sup>

2.3. Since *garb* was introduced into English in the sixteenth century, its etymology is fairly clear; according to the *OED*, it was borrowed from It. *garbo* “grace, elegance” through F *garbe* (now *galbe*). The word, however, is a cognate of *gear* (*n.*) and therefore of Germanic origin, and it seems to have gone through the semantic change “something done, made, or prepared → (a) equipment, dress → fashion of dress, elegance; → (b) behavior *obs.* → manner of doing *obs.*”

3.1. As we have seen thus far, *gear* and its related words are of Norse origin; to put it in another way, they were borrowed from Old Norse in the Middle English period.<sup>3)</sup> The Norse word from which Mod. E *gear* (*v.*) and *gar* derived was ON *gørva* “to make, do”, an important word in that it differentiates North Germanic from East and West Germanic.

3.2. In Germanic languages the words meaning “to do, make”<sup>4)</sup> have a

1) In reference to the form different from the normal one *geren*, Sisam (1970, s.v. *garre*, *gar* in glossary) mentions that “the *a* forms are difficult to explain”. As *Onions* (s.v. *gar*) has it, *-ar-*, instead of *-er-*, probably began to be used in the past tense and the past participle.

2) The example is cited from Skeat (1970).

3) The Scandinavian loanwords were very scarce in Old English, most of them being borrowed in Middle English. cf. Björkman (1900).

4) cf. Buck (1949: 537) “Words for ‘do’ and ‘make’ are treated together because these most generic notions of action are so commonly expressed by the same word. . . .”

peculiar distribution, that is to say, *taujan* in Gothic, *gørva* in Old Norse, and *dōn*, *macian* in Old English, and the phenomenon is generally regarded as one of the characteristics which lexically distinguish between East, North, and West Germanic. Etymologically, it is generally accepted that OE *dōn*, with its cognates OS *dōan* and OHG *tuon*, came from Gmc *\*dōn*, and ultimately from IE *\*dhē-*, *\*dhō-* “to put, place”, that OE *macian*, OS *makōn*, and OHG *mahhōn* derived from Gmc *\*makōn*, and ultimately from IE *\*mag-*, *\*mak-* “to knead”, and that Goth. *taujan* is a Germanic word from Gmc *\*taw-* “to make, manufacture”.

At the earliest stage of Old Norse, *tawido* “made (the past tense)” is found in inscriptions, such as the famous one on the Golden Horn at Gallehus: “Ek HlewagastiR HoltijaR horna **tawiðō** (I, HlewagastiR, Holti’s son, made the horn)” and Old English had *tāwian* “to prepare, make ready, make” (> Mod. E *taw* “to dress (skins)”), but neither of them became common in these languages. Further, a number of words related to OE *dōn* (namely, deriving from IE *\*dhē-*) were used in Old Norse though *gørva* had already been used instead of *dōn* without a trace of the latter; e.g. *dáð* (cf. OE *dād*, Mod. E *deed* < that which is done), *dómr* “judgement” (cf. OE *dōm*, Mod. E *doom*; < that which is put), *dæma* “to give judgement” (cf. OE *dēman*, Mod. E *deem*), etc.

3.3. The historical background of ON *gørva* is not so simple; though it is agreed that the word derived from Gmc *\*garwian*, its form was complex, that is, there were a number of different forms recorded in Old Norse, such as *gera*, *gerva*, *gōra*, *gjøra*, *gjörva*, etc. besides *gørva*. Gmc *\*garwian* is thought to have become *\*gerwa* by *i*-mutation, from which *gera* (> *gera*) developed, and then *\*gørwa* by *w*-mutation, from which *gørva* (> *gōra*) developed, or Gmc *\*garwian* may have become *\*gørwa* by *w*-mutation (through *\*garwa* without *i*-mutation), from which *gjörva* (> *gjøra*) was formed by *r*-breaking. In passing, this wide variety of forms has brought about a number of disputes on how the stem vowel of the verb was determined in Danish and Swedish.<sup>1)</sup> Then ON *gørva* had a causative meaning

1) cf. Andersen (1945-48) and Andersen (1965).

like Mod. E *make*, and was also used periphrastically as an auxiliary in poetry, as *ef hón gøri koma* “if she did come”, though not used as a vicarious verb. In this connection, though this periphrastic use has not become prevalent in modern Norse languages, vicarious uses, similar to those of the auxiliary *do* in Modern English, have developed in Swedish, Danish and Norwegian. Further, ON *gørva* had an intransitive function, as *þat mun ekki gørva* “that won’t do”, and *Onions* (s.v. *do*) attributes the intransitive use of Mod. E *do* “to help, avail, suffice” partly to this Old Norse verb; this meaning was first recorded in Shakespeare’s works, but it is “probably much older than the date of our present evidence”.

3.4. Gmc *\*garwian* was probably formed as *\*garwa-* “ready, prepared” + factitive suffix *-ian* (hence “to make ready, equip”, then “to make, do”), and since *\*garwa-* became *gørr* by *w*-mutation and the loss of *-w-* in Old Norse, ON *gørva* can be regarded as a derivative of *gørr*, a cognate of the above-mentioned OE *gearo*, from which OE *gearwian* was similarly formed. Therefore, in order to know the etymology of *gørva*, we have to know how the etymology of *gørr*, together with that of *gearo*, has so far been explained.

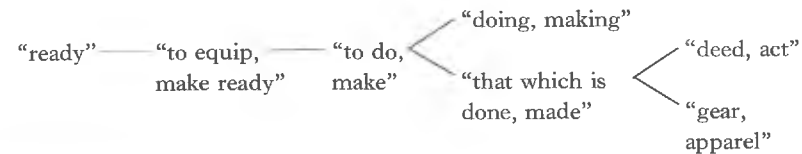
According to the *OED* (s.v. *yare*) *gearo*, *gørr* and other cognate words such as OS *garu*, OHG *garo* (Mod. G *gar*), etc. were compounded as Gmc *\*ga-* (> OE *ge-*) + *\*arw-* (> OE *earu* “quick, active, ready”, ON *qrr* “ready”). The *NWD*, the *RHD* and *Partridge* also accept this etymological derivation and A. Jóhannesson (1956: 420) refers to it, but Vries (1962; s.v. *gørr*) states that the derivation is not plausible (“Wenig einleuchtend ist die herleitung . . .”) and *Onions* (s.v. *yare*), one of the Oxford dictionaries, does not adopt the *OED*’s idea but simply says that it is from Gmc *\*garwu-*.<sup>1)</sup> Since the *OED*’s etymological description was not revised in the second edition, it may be a matter of concern and interest what the etymology of *yare* will be like when a further revision is made in the future.

1) The *SOD*<sup>3</sup> (1955) followed the example of the *OED*, but the *SOD*<sup>3</sup> (1973) discarded the policy and adopted *Onions*’ interpretation; the etymology of the *SOD*<sup>4</sup> has become more concise and does not show reconstructed forms.

Falk u. Torp (1910–11), A. Jóhannesson (1956: 418–420), Pokorný (1959: 493–94), Nielsen (1966: 143), Web 3rd (without referring to a reconstructed form; s.v. *yare*), etc. traced the etymology back to IE *\*g<sup>wo</sup>her-* “hot, warm”, from which Gmc *\*warma-*, then ON *varmr*, OE *wearm*, OS/OHG *warm*, etc. derived, comparing them with other Indo-European cognate words. According to their hypothesis, IE *\*g<sup>wo</sup>her-* became Gmc *\*garwa-* meaning “ready, prepared” (< “heated, fermented enough to eat”<sup>1)</sup>) < “hot, warm”), and in this respect Mod. G *gar* “cooked through, done” well represents the meaning in relation to cooking.<sup>2)</sup>

But many etymological and historical dictionaries, such as *Barnhart*, *Bloch et Warburg*, *Klein*, *Kluge*, *Le grand Robert*, the *ODS*, *Pfeifer*, *Skeat*, *Weekley*, etc., do not accept this speculation but regard OE *gearo*, ON *gørr*, etc. as ultimately of Germanic origin, and prudently Watkins shows only the Germanic derivation without touching upon Indo-European roots in his *American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots* (s.v. *garwian*).

3.5. As has been seen, the etymology of ON *gørr* is controversial, but in any case the word and its derivatives were widely used in Old Norse; e.g. *gørð*, *gerð*, *gjørð* “making, building; doing, act, deed” (< *gørva* < *gørr*) side by side with a similar form *gerð* “gear, harness, armor”<sup>3)</sup>, *gørvi*, *gervi* “gear, apparel”, *gørning*, *gerning* “doing, deed”, etc. The sense development of *gørr* and its related words seems to be like this:



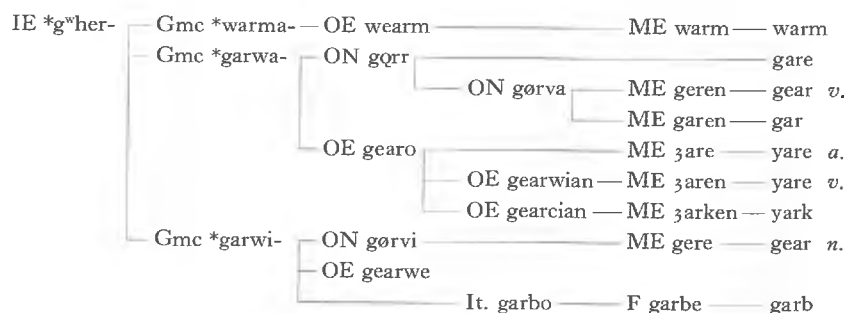
1) Friesen (1937), referring to Modern Icelandic *ger* “yeast”, suggests the possibility that ON *gjør* had something to do with ON *gjósa* “to gush, burst out” (cf. Mod. E *gush*) and meant “fermenting, boiling, simmering movement in water”, and that the original meaning of ON *gørr* may have come not so much from “heated” as from “fermenting, bubbling”.

2) As we have seen (cf. 2.1.), OE *gearo* meant “(of food) dressed, cooked” as well.

3) This word also means “yeast, ferment”. cf. footnote 1) above.

Out of the Old Norse words cited above, *gǫrr* "ready" was borrowed into English as the Scottish dialect *gare* "ready; eager", *gǫrva* as ME *geren*<sup>1)</sup> "to prepare, equip; to cause" (Mod. E *gear* (v.)) and also as ME *garen* "to do, make; cause" (Mod. E *gar*), and *gǫrvi* as ME *gere* "gear, apparel, armor" (Mod. E *gear* (n.)).

4.1. The etymology of *gear*, *garb*, *yare*, etc. is complicated in that the native words, *yare* (v.), *yare* (a.), *yark*, the Scandinavian loanwords, *gare*, *gear* (v.), *gear* (n.), *gar*, and the French loanword *garb* have coexisted, affecting one another. Provided that they have derived from IE \*g<sup>w</sup>her- "hot, warm", their derivation can be shown as below:



4.2. We have thus far seen the historical backgrounds of the word group of *gear*, *garb*, *yare*, etc., but most of them are now obsolete, archaic, or dialectal; accordingly, *gar*, *gare*, *yare* and *yark* are no longer entered in such a synchronic dictionary as the *COD*. Moreover, since *garb* only appears in a formal or literary context, the only one word of the word group that is used in an ordinary context is *gear*. This word, however, is limited in use, because the most familiar meaning of *gear* (n.) today is "a toothed wheel", which is a later development and dates from as late as the sixteenth century, though there remains a meaning "equipment, clothing"; further-

1) Concerning the loss of -w-, we have seen that -v- (<\*-h- < \*-w-) already dropped in Old Norse, as *gǫrva* > *gǫra*, but the *OED* (s.v. *gear* n.), after describing the phenomenon in Old Norse, also points out "a disposition to reduce *rw* to *r* after a stressed palatal vowel" in Middle English.

more, *gear* (v.) seems to have virtually lost its meaning in connection with a machine or tool, i.e. "to put (machinery) into gear", in ordinary speech and is commonly used figuratively with a sense "to adapt (something) to suit a particular need".<sup>1)</sup>

## ABBREVIATIONS

- Barnhart*: *The Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology*. New York: H. W. Wilson, 1988.
- Bloch et Wartburg*: Bloch, O. et W. v. Wartburg. (ed.). *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968<sup>3</sup>
- Bosworth and Toller*: Bosworth, J. and T. N. Toller (ed.). *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*. Oxford: University Press, 1898.
- COD*: *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995<sup>9</sup>.
- CULD*: *Chambers Universal Learners' Dictionary*. Edinburgh: Chambers, 1980.
- Klein*: Klein, Ernest (ed.). *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. Amsterdam, London, New York: Elsevier.
- Kluge*: Kluge, F. (ed.). *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*<sup>22</sup>. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989.
- LDCE*: *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. Harlow: Longman, 1987<sup>2</sup>.
- Le grand Robert*: *Le grand Robert de la langue française*. Paris: Le Robert, 1985<sup>2</sup>.
- MED*: *The Middle English Dictionary*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1952-.
- NWD*: *Webster's New World Dictionary*. New York: Webster's New World, 1988<sup>3</sup>.
- ODS*: *Ordbog over det Danske Sprog*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, Nordisk, 1919-56.
- OED*: *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989<sup>2</sup>.
- Onions*: Onions, C. T. (ed.). *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- Partridge*: Partridge, E. (ed.). *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966<sup>4</sup>.
- Pfeifer*: Pfeifer, W. (ed.). *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993.
- RHD*: *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*. New York: Random House, 1987<sup>2</sup>.
- Skeat*: Skeat, W. W. (ed.). *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. New Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

1) Learners' dictionaries, such as the *LDCE* (s.v. *gear*<sup>2</sup>) and the *CULD* (s.v. *gear*) give nothing but this figurative meaning.

- SOD*: *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. The 3rd ed., 1955; the 3rd ed. (with revised etymologies), 1973; the 4th ed., 1993.
- Toller*: Toller, T. N. (ed.). *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Supplement*. Oxford: University Press, 1921.
- Web 3rd*: *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*. Springfield: Merriam, 1961.
- Weekley*: Weekley, E. (ed.). *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*. New York: Dover, 1967.

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