

# THE *GERMANIC* LANGUAGES

EDITED BY

**EKKEHARD KÖNIG**

AND **JOHAN VAN DER AUWERA**

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Ekkehard König  
and  
Johan van der Auwera



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# *List of Contributors*

- Erik Andersson, Department of Swedish, Åbo Akademi, Åbo, Finland.
- John Ole Askedal, Department of Germanic Studies, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway.
- Michael P. Barnes, Department of Scandinavian Studies, University College London, London, UK.
- Georges De Schutter, Linguistics (GER), University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium.
- Bruce Donaldson, Department of Germanic Studies and Russian, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.
- Peter Eisenberg, Department of German, University of Potsdam, Potsdam, FRG.
- Jan Terje Faarlund, Department of Scandinavian Studies, University of Trondheim, Dragvoll, Norway.
- Hartmut Haberland, Department of Languages and Culture, Roskilde University, Roskilde, Denmark.
- Carol Henriksen, Department of Languages and Culture, Roskilde University, Roskilde, Denmark.
- Jarich Hoekstra, Frisian Academy, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands.
- Neil G. Jacobs, Department of Judaic and Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA.
- Ans van Kemenade, Department of English, Free University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- Ekkehard König, Institute of English Philology, Free University of Berlin, Berlin, FRG.
- Winfred P. Lehmann, Linguistics Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, USA.
- Silke Van Ness, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, State University of New York at Albany, New York, USA.
- Ellen F. Prince, Department of Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.
- Aad Quak, Department of Old Germanic Philology, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Suzanne Romaine, Merton College, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK.

Höskuldur Thráinsson, Department of Linguistics, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA; University of Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland.

Peter M. Tiersma, Loyola Law School, University of California, Los Angeles, USA.

Johan van der Auwera, Belgian National Science Fund, Linguistics (GER), University of Antwerp, Antwerp, Belgium.

Marijke J. van der Wal, Department of Dutch Language and Literature, Leyden University, Leyden, The Netherlands.

Eivind Weyhe, Fróðskaparsetur Føroya, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands.

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# Preface

In its basic structure and organization, this work follows the model of B. Comrie (ed.) *The World's Major Languages* (London: Routledge, 1987) and, more specifically, that of M. Harris and N. Vincent (eds) *The Romance Languages* (London: Routledge, 1988). As in the book on Romance languages, the goal is to present a comprehensive but compact overview of the structure of all members of a language family in a discursive style of narrative and within a framework that stresses common ground and convergent features in traditional and current linguistic theorizing rather than controversies and mutually incompatible views. The book includes four chapters on earlier stages of Germanic languages: a chapter on Gothic, our major source of information for the reconstruction of Proto-Germanic, a chapter on Old Norse, the source of all Scandinavian languages and a chapter on Old and Middle English, as well as a chapter on the early stages of Continental West Germanic, i.e. the historical source of German, Dutch, Frisian, Yiddish and Afrikaans.

The modern Germanic languages as they are spoken today are treated in twelve different chapters. The distinctions and differentiations underlying these twelve chapters are, of course, to a certain extent arbitrary and controversial. There are, after all, no purely linguistic criteria for deciding in a given case whether we should speak of two varieties of a single language or of two different languages. There is a separate chapter on Pennsylvania German, but not on Swiss German. Faroese and Frisian are treated as separate Germanic languages, but Neo-Norwegian and Dano-Norwegian are regarded as two varieties of one language. In all of these twelve chapters some attention is given to diachronic developments, but since there are four separate historical chapters dealing with the earlier stages of Germanic languages, the main focus is on the synchrony.

Finally, there is a chapter on Germanic creoles and both the term 'Germanic creoles', which is not an established one, and the inclusion of that chapter require some justification. This chapter mainly treats English-based creoles, but it also includes some discussion of German- and Dutch-based creoles. Although not Germanic languages in their grammatical structure, such

pidgins and creoles derive a major part of their vocabulary from Germanic. Moreover, it has been suggested, though not generally accepted, that Middle English is a creole, since extensive borrowing from French and Latin could be regarded as undermining its historical continuity and identity as a Germanic language. A further reason for including this chapter is the fact that pidgins and creoles provide interesting insights into the nature of linguistic change in general.

Each chapter is written by one or several experts on the language in question and in many cases these experts are also native speakers of the relevant language. As in the two other books mentioned above, there are no footnotes, few or no references and there is only a very limited bibliography, a select list of essential reference works and further reading, comprising maximally 15 to 20 items. Hence authors have not been able to refer properly to the sources they have used and to indicate precisely which of the ideas presented are their own and which were borrowed from others. We hope that such information will be obvious to the specialist and that it will be of no interest to the general reader. The inclusion of a fair portrayal of previous and ongoing scholarship would have easily doubled the size of the book.

Each chapter is tightly structured on the basis of a common scheme. There is thus a certain uniformity not only in the major sections for each chapter (introduction, phonology, morphology, syntax, lexis), but also in the range of topics covered in each section. On the other hand, the authors were given sufficient leeway to discuss the core topics, as well as all the other topics they wanted to include, in as much detail as they considered appropriate. This means that the individual chapters differ in the amount of attention given to certain core and non-core topics, depending on the expertise of the author in a certain domain, on the amount of information available for a specific language and on the assessment of the importance of a topic made by the author. Such divergence is natural and even useful, given the fact that our knowledge about the languages covered in this book varies enormously from case to case. English and German are among the best described languages of the world, whereas many essentially descriptive problems have yet to be solved for Faroese or Neo-Norwegian. It is also for this reason that some, but not all, authors were able to go beyond a mere descriptive sketch and to give a general typological characterization of 'their' language on the basis of a constant comparison with the other languages covered in this book.

What are the possible uses of this book? First of all, it will provide a comprehensive and compact source of information for all Germanic languages. There are, of course, many excellent grammars available for English, German or Dutch, but such grammars as exist for Faroese, Norwegian or Swedish are either fairly old, limited in their scope or not easily accessible to those who do not speak a Scandinavian language.

Second, the book can be used as a basis for all kinds of comparative work within the Germanic family, for typological and contrastive work as well as

work on language contact. In contrast to the situation in Romance linguistics, there are hardly any works which give a comprehensive overview of all Germanic languages and provide the basis for any kind of comparative insight. Those interested in pursuing a specific phenomenon across the various chapters will find information (a) on features that are typical of Germanic languages; (b) on parameters of variation and major differences between members of this family; and (c) on pervasive tendencies of phonological, morphological and syntactic change.

The distinction between weak and strong verbs, the phonological opposition between related tense and lax vowels, the use of word order to distinguish interrogative sentences from declarative ones, the verb-second phenomenon and the inflectional contrast between only two tenses are typically Germanic features. Not all Germanic languages exhibit these features anymore and in that sense Icelandic, Swedish and Dutch are typical representatives of this family, whereas English and Afrikaans are not.

Major differences between the Germanic languages can be found *inter alia* in the inflectional morphology, in the coding of grammatical relations, in the form and use of reflexive markers and in the conditions for passivization. While Icelandic and to a lesser extent German have preserved many of the inflectional categories of Proto-Germanic, English and Afrikaans have lost most of these distinctions and have moved away from the inflectional type to the isolating morphological type. As far as the identification of grammatical relations (subject, object) is concerned, an interesting contrast can be found within the Germanic family. In German the only relevant factor is case: the subject is the constituent coded in the nominative case regardless of its position. In English, and interestingly enough also in Icelandic, that is in a language preserving the traditional Germanic case system, it is the position before the finite verb (in unmarked declarative sentences) that identifies subjects. In other words, Icelandic has a wide variety of dative, accusative and even genitive subjects, so that case marking is to a certain extent ornamental.

The form of reflexive markers and the constraints on the use of these expressions also differ widely across Germanic languages. Some languages (Old English, Frisian, Old Dutch, Afrikaans) have no reflexive markers at all. The Scandinavian languages have verbal affixes in addition to pronouns, whereas German and Yiddish only have reflexive pronouns. In contrast to all of these languages, English employs complex expressions (pronoun + *self*) to indicate co-reference between two noun phrases in the same clause. Moreover, the Germanic languages differ widely as regards the differentiations made within the system of reflexive markers and the domain in which the markers are used.

Another fascinating area for further comparative work is the system of voice. In German, for example, both intransitive and transitive verbs may passivize, but in the latter case a morphological condition is relevant: only accusative objects of a corresponding active sentence may show up as

subjects of a passive counterpart with *werden*. Dative objects may correspond to subjects in a passive sentence with the auxiliary *bekommen*. In English the relevant conditions for passivization are configurational ones: there must be a noun phrase following, but not necessarily adjacent to, the verb in the corresponding active sentence that can be selected as subject of the passive sentence.

It goes without saying that the Germanic languages also provide a valuable field for the study of all kinds of diachronic processes: the development of reflexive markers, the development of tense systems and the attrition of inflectional systems are particularly interesting areas for such historical investigations. Again an example will illustrate the type of information available to those who pursue certain phenomena across the various chapters. In addition to the two-term contrast between the past and the non-past tense, which was their original endowment, all Germanic languages have developed a perfect from underlying resultative constructions. In some Germanic languages this new category has undergone or is undergoing a further development into a narrative tense. In German this development is still under way. In Afrikaans and Yiddish the perfect has completely replaced and thus ousted the past tense. In English and in nearly all Scandinavian languages there is still a clear semantic opposition between the perfect and the past tense.

As regards the intended level of readership, we have tried to ensure that the book is both sufficiently clear and expository for it to be used for general reference or as a text book for undergraduate or graduate courses in linguistics or any of the relevant philologies. On the other hand, we also hope that it will offer information and occasional insights to scholars in linguistics and allied disciplines.

All abbreviations used in this book more than once are given in the list following this preface. An asterisk in front of a construction indicates that the construction is ungrammatical. In the diachronic chapters, however, the asterisk is used to indicate that the relevant form of a word is reconstructed rather than actually attested, and to avoid confusion with this latter usage a double asterisk is used for ungrammatical forms in the section on Yiddish phonology. Occasionally, an asterisk will also be found following a construction or symbol, but such usage will be explained in the text. In the chapters with several authors the division of labor was the following: 'The Germanic languages': North and East Germanic (Carol Henriksen), Introduction, West Germanic (Johan van der Auwera); 'Old and Middle Continental West Germanic': Introduction, Old and Middle Dutch (Marijke van der Wal), Old and Middle High German, Old Saxon and Middle Low German (Aad Quak); 'Yiddish': Phonology (Neil Jacobs), Syntax (Ellen Prince), Introduction, Morphology, Lexis (Johan van der Auwera).

In conclusion, we would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the individual contributors in preparing the final versions of their chapters (more

or less) on time and for respecting guidelines and deadlines. For comments on earlier versions of the relevant chapters, we are grateful to Ernst Ebbinghaus (Gothic), Jan Ragnar Hagland and Trygve Skomedal (Old and Middle Scandinavian), Andrew R. W. Baxter (Old and Middle English), Kjartan G. Ottósson (Icelandic), Svein Lie, Oddrun Grønvik and Rolf Theil Endresen (Norwegian), Kirsten Gregerson (Danish), Lars Heltoft (Danish), John Hawkins and Edgar Schneider (English). Finally, we would like to thank our editor, Jonathan Price, for his enthusiasm and patience, and our copy editor, Marguerite Nesling, for her expertise.

Ekkehard König  
*Free University of Berlin*

Johan van der Auwera  
*Belgian National Science Fund and  
University of Antwerp*

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# *List of Abbreviations*

A	answer	Gmc	Germanic
abl.	ablative	Go.	Gothic
acc.	accusative	HA	Hebrew/Aramaic
adj.	adjective	imp.	imperative
adv.	adverb	ind.	indicative
AdvP.	adverb phrase	indef.	indefinite
Afr.	Afrikaans	indir.	indirect
aux.	auxiliary	inf.	infinitive
BM	<i>Bokmål</i> Norwegian	instr.	instrumental
Br.	British	intr.	intransitive
C	consonant	IPA	International Phonetic Association
com.	common	Ir.	Irish
CYid.	Central Yiddish	Lat.	Latin
Dan.	Danish	lit.	literally
dat.	dative	Lith.	Lithuanian
def.	definite	m.	masculine
det.	determiner	MEng. etc.	Middle English etc.
dim.	diminutive	MHG	Middle High German
dir.	direct	MLG	Middle Low German
Du.	Dutch	n.	neuter
EN	East Norwegian	N	noun
Eng.	English	NEYid.	Northeastern Yiddish
exc.	exclusive	NN	New Norwegian
EYid.	Eastern Yiddish	nom.	nominative
f.	feminine	non-imp.	non-imperative
fam.	familiar	NP	noun phrase
fin.	finite	O/obj.	object
Fris.	Frisian	obl.	oblique
gen.	genitive	OEng. etc	Old English etc.
Ger.	German	OHG	Old High German
Gk	Greek		

ON	Old Norse	Sem.	Semitic
part.	participle	SEN	Southeast Norwegian
PG	Pennsylvania German	SEYid.	Southeastern Yiddish
PGmc	Proto-Germanic	sg.	singular
PIE	Proto-Indo-European	Slav.	Slavic
pl.	plural	SPE	<i>The Sound Pattern of English</i> (N. Chomsky and M. Halle, 1968, New York: Harper & Row)
pol.	polite		
Pol.	Polish		
poss.	possessive		
PP	prepositional phrase		
pp.	past participle	StGer. etc	Standard German etc.
pr.	primary (object)	su.	subject
pres.	present	subj.	subjunctive
pret.	preterite	sup.	supine
PYid.	Proto-Yiddish	SVO etc	subject – verb – object etc.
Q	question		
refl.	reflexive	tr.	transitive
RM	<i>Riksmål</i> Norwegian	V	vowel or verb
RP	Received Pronunciation	VLat.	Vulgar Latin
		voc.	vocative
S	sentence/clause or subject	VP	verb phrase
		V2	verb-second
SAdv.	sentence adverb	WFris.	West Frisian
Sax.	Saxon	WYid.	Western Yiddish
sec.	secondary (object)	Yid.	Yiddish

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# *1 The Germanic Languages*

*Carol Henriksen and Johan van der Auwera*

Of the 4,000 to 6,000 languages presently spoken in the world, the Germanic languages form a very small subset. For the purposes of this book, there are only twelve modern Germanic languages, and even with the inclusion of varieties like Luxembourgish and Swiss German, and perhaps some 40 to 50 creoles, the membership remains modest. In terms of numbers of speakers, the Germanic group scores much better, for there are at least 450 million native speakers, which is approximately one twelfth of the world's population. Still, even within Indo-European, the Romance languages with an estimated 580 million native speakers rank higher. What the Germanic languages are unrivalled in, however, is their geographical distribution. While originally these languages were confined to a small part of Europe, colonizers and immigrants successfully implanted them, particularly English, in the Americas, Africa (e.g. South Africa), Asia (e.g. India), as well as in the Pacific (e.g. Australia). Moreover, English has become the world's most important international language, serving commerce, culture, diplomacy, and science, including linguistics.

The modest beginnings of this evolution seem to be found in the southern Baltic region (northern Germany, the Danish Isles, southern Scandinavia), which according to accepted opinion had been settled by speakers of Indo-European around 1000 BC. They encountered speakers of non-Indo-European origin, gradually changed their Proto-Indo-European into Proto-Germanic, and dispersed beyond the original homeland to occupy the region from the North Sea stretching to the River Vistula in Poland by 500 BC. The language spoken during this period is attested only indirectly, in the foreign words, usually proper names, used by Greek and Latin authors, and in early loans in neighbouring and co-territorial languages, especially Finno-Ugric and Baltic. The earliest direct records are Scandinavian runic inscriptions from the beginning of the third century AD.

It is customary to divide Germanic into East Germanic, with Gothic as its prominent member, North Germanic, with Icelandic, Faroese, Norwegian, Danish and Swedish, and West Germanic (sometimes 'South Germanic'), with German, Yiddish, Pennsylvania German, Dutch, Afrikaans, Frisian and

English. If we relate this variety to the one Common Germanic language of two thousand years ago, we face the question of how we got from the one parent language to the three branches and to the dozen or so descendant languages.

One factor to bear in mind is that every language is inherently variable. A language only exists through speakers that speak an idiolect, and typically share a dialect – and sociolect – with the people with whom they communicate most often or want to be associated. Thus some degree of dialectal variation must have prevailed in Common Germanic too, an assumption plausible also on purely linguistic grounds. Standard methods of linguistic reconstruction sometimes lead to two reconstructed forms rather than only one, suggesting that Common Germanic allowed both. Thus the inherent linguistic variation within Common Germanic itself may safely be taken as a partial explanation of later diffusion, in particular, of the distinction between North and West Germanic.

A second factor responsible for the variety in Germanic is migration. When speakers move away from their homeland and cut or strongly diminish communication with those who stay behind, the inherent tendency for dialect variation increases. The migrants, moreover, may come into contact with speakers of another language, which may alienate either language, in varying degrees, from the language of the previous generations. It may also lead to the disappearance of one or even both of the languages. A distinction may be made in terms of the language variety with which the migrants left. Did they leave with Common Germanic, with a branch of Germanic like relatively undifferentiated North Germanic, or with a fully differentiated separate Germanic language like English? Germanic illustrates each of these types and scenarios.

Towards the end of the pre-Christian era, Germanic tribes, including the Vandals, Burgundians and Goths, left the Common Germanic homeland. The Goths, the only ones that left any significant linguistic records, moved to the Baltic shores east of the Oder, some of them moving on to the Balkans around AD 200, and from there westward to Italy, France and Spain. Because of the initially eastern orientation of the migration, the language of the Goths is called 'East Germanic', and because it is generally taken to have separated from Common Germanic, it is considered a branch, on the same level as West and North Germanic.

Migrations that lead to increased linguistic diversity took place with respect to both North Germanic and West Germanic. During the Viking Age (c.800–c.1050) speakers of North Germanic settled in Iceland, Greenland, the Faroes, the Shetlands, the Hebrides and the Orkney Islands, parts of Ireland, Scotland, England, the Isle of Man and Normandy, along the shores of Finland and Estonia, and even in Novgorod, Kiev and Constantinople. Only in the case of Iceland and the Faroes did these migrations eventually lead to separate modern languages. In Finland, North Germanic was to be retained as

a variant of Swedish, and in all other areas North Germanic was gradually given up. As for West Germanic, tribal groups of Angles, Saxons and Jutes invaded England during the fifth and sixth centuries, and the Langobard(ic) (Lombard) tribe moved into Italy. Whereas the southward expansion proved unsuccessful (by the end of the first millennium Langobardic was basically extinct), the westward expansion led to modern English.

The third type of migration resulted primarily from the exploration and colonization of the world by Europeans from the fifteenth century onwards. Its strongest effect was to spread English around the globe. In terms of the fragmentation of Germanic, it led to the creation of colonial variants of Dutch, German and English, and to several creoles, especially of English. A special case is the development of Yiddish. The main form, Eastern Yiddish, is the result of the eastward migration of German-speaking Jews to Slavic territories from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, and from there back to the west (Europe, Palestine-Israel, and the general migration poles of the Americas, South Africa and Australia) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A third factor needed to explain how one ancestral language relates to a dozen descendant languages is standardization. Without this concept one would still not know why Swedish, Danish and Norwegian are considered different languages, even though mutual intelligibility is very high, whereas some northern and southern dialects of German, which are hardly mutually intelligible, are not considered separate languages. Standardization is the process whereby a community, typically a literate one, imposes a uniformity on its language in response to a growing desire of political, religious or cultural authorities for improved communication across dialects. The standard which then emerges is typically based on dialects that are (a) spoken in the economically and culturally strongest region; (b) deemed 'authentic' in a way that satisfies a sense of national identity in search of a national language; and/or (c) more highly cross-dialectally intelligible than others. Early catalysts were the printing press; the attention for the native vernacular as opposed to Latin during the Renaissance, giving rise to the first grammars, dictionaries and academies; the Bible translations of the Reformation; and the appearance of strong centralized governments. One or more of these factors were at work in the making of standard Danish, Swedish, German, Dutch and English, and to a small extent Icelandic. The nationalism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the major impulse for the development of Afrikaans, Faroese, Norwegian, and again Icelandic. Norwegian even has two standards, one based on the Danish-influenced language spoken by the élite, and the other reconstructed from conservative, 'pure' dialects. In the case of the languages without a nation state – Pennsylvania German, Yiddish and Frisian – standardization is a part of language promotion and maintenance efforts, initiated primarily by small numbers of nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary figures, journalists and linguists.

## East Germanic

The first of the Germanic tribes to migrate from the Danish Isles and southern Sweden were the Goths, who presumably departed from the Common Germanic area around 100 BC. After crossing the Baltic they were joined by the Rugians, the Vandals and the Burgundians. Together these tribes constitute the eastern branch of Germanic known to us primarily from biblical translations from around AD 350. These translations, the majority of which have been attributed to Wulfila, the Bishop of the Western Goths, were undertaken after the Goths had settled on the Black Sea and become Christians.

The manuscript fragments which have come down to us containing a translation of the Bible into Gothic are not contemporary with Wulfila but were transcribed in Italy around AD 500. The most important are the *Codex Argenteus* in the University Library in Uppsala (330 leaves, of which 187 are still preserved, of the four Gospels), the *Codex Carolinus* in the library in Wolfenbüttel (four leaves containing about 42 verses from the Epistle to the Romans), the *Codices Ambrosiani*, 5 fragments in the Ambrosian Library in Milan (185 leaves containing portions of Epistles, a small fragment of a Gothic Calendar, St Matthew, Nehemiah and a commentary on St John), the *Codex Turinensis* in Turin (4 damaged leaves containing fragments of Epistles), and the *Codex Gissensis*, discovered in Egypt near the ancient town of Antinoë (a double sheet of parchment containing fragments from St Luke in Latin and Gothic).

Due to the early migration of the Gothic tribes, the language of the Goths developed differently from that of the West and North Germanic peoples, and as a consequence of subsequent migration into Italy, France and Spain, the Goths gradually became absorbed by other tribes and nations, thus leaving us with little more than Wulfila's Bible translation as evidence of an East Germanic variety of the Germanic languages.

## North Germanic

'Common Scandinavian' is a term often used for the Germanic language spoken in Scandinavia in the period after the 'Great Migrations' in which the organization of power was still local and tribal (c.550–c.1050). According to the historians Jordanes (c.550) and Procopius (c.554), there were many small tribal kings in the area which is now Scandinavia, all rivalling to extend their domain at the expense of the others. Of these, the dynasties of the Skjoldungs in Denmark and the Ynglings in Sweden and Norway were the most prominent. Like Common Germanic, Common Scandinavian is attested in runic inscriptions.

The language of the Viking Age (800–1050) was still relatively uniform, referred to as *dǫnsk tunga* 'Danish tongue' well into the Middle Ages. Since there are no native manuscripts from this period, our knowledge of the language derives from foreign texts, loanwords in other languages, place-

names datable to this period, runic inscriptions, and later manuscripts, which either go back to an earlier oral tradition or are copies of earlier documents now lost.

Regarding the runic inscriptions, it is interesting to note that there are no or very few Danish inscriptions from around 600 to 800 and only a few, though very important ones, from Norway and Sweden. Around 800 we encounter a revival of runic writing in Denmark, but now in a new alphabet, the younger *futhark*. During this period there are 412 Danish inscriptions, 240 of them on stones erected by wealthy families to commemorate their dead. The younger *futhark* reached Norway around 800, but only a few inscriptions are preserved from this area. Runic writing is also found in the British Isles, Greenland and the Faroes, but in Iceland it is surprisingly sparse and late. Sweden became the great home of runic epigraphy in the younger *futhark* with more than 2,500 preserved inscriptions, testifying to the wealth and power of the leading families and at the same time providing valuable information concerning the fates of those who fell abroad on Viking expeditions. The fragments of poetry found in the runic inscriptions belong to the rich poetic tradition represented in the later Old Icelandic manuscripts.

Since the peoples of the north were linked together primarily by sea routes, it is easy to see how three separate centres of power began to emerge, a southern one (Denmark), a Baltic one (Sweden) and an Atlantic one (Norway). The Danish kings controlled the approaches to the Baltic, the Swedes occupied the region around Lake Mälär, and the Norwegians controlled the fjords, primarily those on the west coast where navigation was best and access to foreign wealth close at hand. The establishment of a Danish archbishopric of the Roman Catholic Church in Lund in 1104, a Norwegian archbishopric in Trondheim (Nidaros) in 1152, and a corresponding Swedish archbishopric in Uppsala in 1164 reflects this political division of Scandinavia into Danish, Norwegian and Swedish kingdoms.

Towards the end of the Viking Age we find a gradual splitting up of Common Scandinavian, initially into two branches: East Scandinavian, comprising the kingdom of Denmark and the southern two-thirds of Sweden and adjacent parts of Norway; and West Scandinavian, comprising most of Norway and the Norwegian settlements in the North Atlantic, in particular Iceland.

### **East Scandinavian**

The East Scandinavian branch is not so much a distinct language as the sum of the innovations that encompassed Denmark, most of Sweden, and adjacent parts of Norway at the end of the Viking Age, splitting during the Middle Ages (1050–1340) into Old Danish, Old Swedish and Old Gutnish, the written language of the island of Gotland. Of these, only Danish and Swedish survived the later processes of political centralization and linguistic standardization.

**Danish**

Danish (*dansk*) is the official language of the kingdom of Denmark (comprising Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland), where it is native to the majority of a population of over 5 million. Danish is also the first language or 'cultural language' of some 50,000 inhabitants in German Schleswig-Holstein, south of the Danish border.

Modern Standard Danish developed on the basis of the written language of the Reformation, further influenced during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the spoken language of the influential citizens of Copenhagen, the economic and cultural centre of the emerging nation state.

The history of the Danish language falls into three major periods: Old Danish (c.800–c.1100), corresponding roughly to the Viking Age; Middle Danish (c.1100–c.1525), corresponding to the Middle Ages; and Modern Danish (after c.1525), the period after the Reformation and up to modern times.

Danish is the Scandinavian language that has moved farthest away from its Common Scandinavian roots, primarily due to Denmark's geographic location, which forms a bridge between the Nordic countries and the European mainland.

**Swedish**

Swedish (*svenska*) is spoken as the official language of Sweden by a population of some 8.5 million inhabitants. It is also the first language of some 300,000 speakers in Finland (on the semi-independent Åland Islands and on the west and south coast) and the second language of various linguistic minorities, altogether up to a million, mostly recent immigrants but also indigenous Finns and Saamis (Lapps).

Prior to the Viking Age it is difficult to distinguish Swedish from Danish, but after c.800 the East Scandinavian languages begin to separate, with a major cleavage taking place after extensive Danish innovations around 1300.

Modern Standard Swedish developed in the Mälär-Uppland region, the location of the chief centres of government and learning since the Middle Ages (Stockholm and Uppsala), but the standard language was also influenced by the dialect of the Götaland region immediately to the south. While the cultivated pronunciation of Stockholm enjoys considerable prestige, there are also strongly resistant regional norms, particularly those of southern Sweden (*skånska*) and Finland (*finlandssvenska*).

The history of the Swedish language falls into two major periods: an Old Swedish period covering the Viking Age and the Middle Ages, further subdivided into the runic period (c.800–c.1225), the classical period (c.1225–c.1375) and the younger period (c.1375–c.1526); and a Modern Swedish period with Older Modern Swedish from c.1526 to c.1732 and Younger Modern Swedish from c.1732 to the present.

### West Scandinavian

We can assume that there was regional variation even in the Common Scandinavian period, but by the Viking Age a split is observable between the more conservative west facing the Atlantic and the more innovative east that looked to the Baltic. The West Scandinavian branch of Common Scandinavian consists of Old Norwegian and Old Icelandic, the latter deriving from a form of West Norwegian brought across the ocean and developed in relative isolation after the period of settlement (870–930). Otherwise West Scandinavian covered what is present-day Norway, the provinces of Jämtland, Herjedalen, and Bohuslän, now belonging to Sweden, the western isles of Shetland, the Faroes, the Orkneys, the Hebrides, the Isle of Man, coastal areas of Scotland and Ireland, and Greenland.

### Icelandic

Icelandic (*íslenska*) is the West Scandinavian language that has been spoken on Iceland ever since the country was settled over a thousand years ago. Today Modern Icelandic is spoken by a population of close to 260,000.

Since the Icelandic settlers came from different localities along the extensive coastal stretch from northern Norway all the way down to the south, as well as from the British Isles, it is hardly possible that the early language was free of variation. In spite of this, Icelandic has never shown any real tendency to split into dialects. Today regional variation in pronunciation and vocabulary is so insignificant that it would be misleading to speak of Icelandic dialects.

The modern standard is a direct continuation of the language of the original settlers, most strongly influenced by the language of southwestern Norway. During the first 200 years there was no marked difference between Norwegian and Icelandic. Cultural ties between the two countries were strong, even into the fourteenth century. However, in the wake of the Kalmar Union, the political union of Denmark, Norway and Sweden between 1397 and 1523, Icelandic and Norwegian went their separate ways. While Danish became the official language of the State and Church in Norway, the Icelanders translated the Bible and other religious literature into their own native Icelandic.

Icelandic is the most conservative of the Scandinavian languages and represents a unique case of linguistic continuity in that it has retained its original inflectional system and core vocabulary relatively unaltered up to this very day. Various developments in pronunciation make it possible, however, to speak of Old Icelandic (up to c.1550) and Modern Icelandic periods (from c.1550), less clearly also of Middle Icelandic (c.1350–c.1550).

### Norwegian

Norwegian (*norsk*) in two varieties, Neo-Norwegian (*nynorsk*) and Dano-Norwegian (*bokmål*), is the language of over 4 million inhabitants of Norway, including somewhat more than 20,000 Saamis (most of them bilingual). Both

Neo-Norwegian and Dano-Norwegian are official languages in Norway. Both are used by national and local officials, and citizens writing to a public institution have the right to receive an answer in the language of their own letter. School districts choose one of the official languages as the language of instruction and teach the parallel language in separate classes.

During the period in which Danish was the written language of Norway (1380–1814), most Norwegians spoke their local dialects and pronounced Danish using their own Norwegian sounds. The lack of a strong native norm explains in part why the Norwegian dialects were able to thrive on a much larger scale than in Denmark or Sweden. They are still very much alive and socially acceptable even outside the geographic area in which they are spoken.

Since for historical reasons there was no standard Norwegian alternative, such a standard had to be created, either on the basis of the popular dialects or through gradual changes in the Danish norm in the direction of the spoken Norwegian of the urban educated classes. As a result two modern standards developed. The written standard of Neo-Norwegian was established on the basis of the local dialects by the linguist and poet Ivar Aasen in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was officially recognized in 1885 and spread rapidly through the western and midland regions, being taught today as a first language to somewhat less than one fifth of the Norwegian schoolchildren and as a second language to the rest. Dano-Norwegian, or 'book language', is the first language of the majority of the population. Linguistically it is the result of the gradual Norwegianization of the Danish standard which was inherited from the period prior to Norway's independence.

Although it was originally hoped that the two standards could be amalgamated into one 'United Norwegian' (*sammorsk*), this seems farther away today than some years ago, the current solution being peaceful co-existence. The presence and daily use of two standard languages and numerous local dialects does not seriously affect communication in Norway, a country which is exemplary today when it comes to the question of linguistic tolerance.

### **Faroese**

Faroese (*føroyskt*) is the first language of the approximately 47,000 inhabitants of a small group of islands in the North Atlantic, midway between Scotland and Iceland (18 in all, of which one is uninhabited), and along with Danish it is one of the official languages of the Faroe Islands. The Faroes, previously under the Norwegian crown, officially became part of Denmark in 1816, receiving semi-independent political status in 1948. Unlike Denmark proper, for example, they have not chosen membership in the European Community.

As a West Scandinavian language, Faroese is related to Icelandic and several of the West Norwegian dialects. It has developed into its present form

from the language spoken by the Norwegians who colonized the islands in the early 800s. Although there is significant variation in pronunciation from island to island, there are no true dialects.

In contrast to Icelandic, the Faroese written tradition is recent and sparse. Aside from a few Faroese characteristics in some of the Old Norwegian texts from the Middle Ages, the earliest texts in Faroese are three ballads recorded around 1773 by J. C. Svabo, the first to record Faroese folk ballads and to collect material for a Faroese dictionary. In 1846 a literary orthography was devised by V. U. Hammershaimb, based on the Icelandic tradition, and in the 1870s a group of Faroese students in Copenhagen began writing creatively in the language. From these beginnings, Faroese was transformed in the course of a century from a mere spoken language into a language used in schools, newspapers, churches, radio and public administration.

The development of a native literary tradition has been slow, but today there exists a sizeable body of Faroese poetry, fiction, educational material and journalism.

### **West Germanic**

Whereas the origin of the modern North Germanic languages can be traced back to one relatively homogeneous North Germanic parent language, the case for a similar parentage of the West Germanic languages is less clear. It has been suggested instead that ancient West Germanic only existed as a conglomerate of three dialect groups, sometimes referred to after Tacitus as 'Ingwaeonic', 'Istwaeonic' and 'Herminonic' or, in modern terms, 'North Sea Germanic', 'Rhine-Weser Germanic, and 'Elbe Germanic'. This tripartite division bears no direct relation to the division of the modern descendant languages, however. Thus standard (High) German is related to two of these hypothetical dialect groups, namely Istwaeonic and Herminonic. English, Frisian, and to a lesser extent Low German and Dutch, can arguably all be traced back to Ingwaeonic, but because of the geographical discontinuity and because of the Viking and Norman French invasions in the ninth to eleventh centuries and resulting language interference, English developed in an idiosyncratic way such that modern English is strongly estranged from both its Anglo-Saxon ancestor and its modern continental Ingwaeonic counterparts. Interestingly, in the case of English insularity lacked the conservative effect it had for North Germanic, Romance (cf. Sardinian as the most conservative Romance language), Celtic (cf. the fact that Celtic, once spoken over vast areas of continental Europe, now only survives on islands – Britain, Ireland – and a peninsula – Brittany) and, within Germanic, for the conservative insular variety of North Frisian.

## German

German (*Deutsch*) is spoken as an official language of the Federal Republic of Germany, as of 1990 united with the former German Democratic Republic (close to 80 million native speakers), Austria (7.5 million), Liechtenstein (15,000), the larger part of Switzerland (4.2 million out of a total of 6.4 million), South Tyrol and a few isolated villages further south in Italy (270,000), the part of Belgium along the border with Germany (65,000), and Luxembourg, which recognizes both the non-indigenous Standard German and the native *Lëtzebuergesch* (360,000), traditionally a Central Franconian dialect. The Swiss, Tyrolean, Belgian and Luxembourg speakers are all in varying degrees diglossic in the local variety and Standard German, as well as bilingual in a Romance language. German is also spoken by autochthonous minorities in Belgium, primarily on the southern side of its border with Luxembourg (estimates vary between 1,000 and 30,000), the French Lorraine (some 300,000) and Alsace (perhaps 1 million), the Danish southern Jutland (20,000), ancient immigrant groups in Eastern Europe, especially the former Soviet Union (1.2 million), Romania (400,000) and Hungary (250,000), in former German colonies (Namibia, Togo, Cameroon), and by a millionfold of relatively recent immigrants especially to the Americas and Australia, most of these again both diglossic and bilingual. German furthermore functions as the second language for the indigenous minorities, Frisian (12,000), Danish (up to 50,000) and Sorbian (anywhere between 20,000 and 100,000) in Germany; Slovene (17,000), Croatian (18,000) and Hungarian (4,000) in Austria; some of the French, Italian, and Romantsch-speaking Swiss (more than a million, 600,000, and 40,000, respectively), and for several millions of foreign nationals residing within the German speech area.

The German dialects go back to the dialects of the West Germanic tribes, Franks, Saxons, Hermunduri (Thuringians), Alemanni, Suebi (Swabians) and Bavarians, who settled in the area roughly corresponding to Germany west of the Elbe and Saale, present-day Austria and German-speaking Switzerland. From the time of Charlemagne up to the eighteenth century, a colonizing and merchandizing movement took these dialects eastward, primarily into Bohemia, Slovakia, Upper Saxony, Silesia, Mecklenburg, Brandenburg, Pomerania, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and even created linguistic enclaves as far east as the Volga or southeast as the Romanian Banat. With the resettlements in the aftermath of the Second World War, some of the eastward expansion was undone, so that except for some isolated speakers and enclaves and some border regions, the German/Slavic–Hungarian border has joined the modern state borders of Germany and Austria.

The dialects of German subdivide into Low German (*Niederdeutsch*, *Plattdeutsch*) and High German (*Hochdeutsch*). The former are spoken in the north of Germany, the latter in the centre and the south. In linguistic terms, the criterion is the degree to which the dialects have been affected by the so-called 'High German Consonant Shift': Low German has not been affected

by it, 'Central' German partially, and Southern or 'Upper' German (almost) completely. Modern Standard German developed primarily on the basis of the late medieval chancery language of the court of Saxony and the East Central dialect area around Dresden. In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this written language gained gradual acceptance throughout the entire German-speaking area, in part because of the economic power of Saxony and the position of the dialect, intermediate between Low and Upper German and thus more widely comprehensible than either, and in part because Luther made it the language of the Reformation. In this process of geographical expansion, the emerging Modern German standard ousted – but was also influenced by – competing regional standards, the Low German standard of the Hanseatic League in the north, and the Upper German 'Common German' (*gemeines Deutsch*) in the south. The spoken standard spread much later and is based on the North German pronunciation of the written standard, bearing witness to the fact that by the end of the eighteenth century Saxony had lost political power and cultural prestige to Prussia. The expansion of the spoken standard was never completed, however: both in Switzerland and in Luxembourg the local dialects, when spoken, have the social prestige normally associated with a standard language.

High German is documented first in runic inscriptions and glosses, and later in clerical texts, a phase called Old High German (until c.1100), followed by Middle High German (until 1400 or 1500), the period of courtly and epic poetry, then Early New High German (until c.1650), which laid the foundations of the modern New High German (from c.1650). For Low German, one distinguishes between Old Low German or Old Saxon (until c.1100), Middle Low German (until 1400 or 1500), contemporaneous with the heyday of the Hanseatic League, and thereafter New Low German.

### Yiddish

Yiddish (ייִדיש *yidish* 'Jewish') is one of many Jewish languages and in quantitative terms it used to be the most important one. The origin of Yiddish is traced back to medieval Germany, where Jewish settlers adopted the local German as well as adapted it, mixing it partly with elements of Hebrew and Aramaic, which were kept for religious purposes. These Jews are called 'Ashkenazic', after the Hebrew word *Ashkenaz*, roughly meaning 'Germany', different from 'Sephardic', the other large European group, named after *Sepharad* 'Spain'. From the twelfth to the sixteenth century Ashkenazic groups spread towards Slavic territories (especially present-day Poland, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Russia, but also Lithuania), and their language absorbed elements from Slavic. From the seventeenth century onwards, their language differed sufficiently from that of the Jews that had stayed in German-speaking areas to justify the modern terms 'Eastern Yiddish' and 'Western Yiddish'. The latter variant began to decline towards the end of the eighteenth century and disappeared nearly completely during the nineteenth

century. In the east, however, the nineteenth century saw the language strengthened: instead of, or in addition to, using Hebrew, German or a Slavic language, artists, religious propagandists, socialists, and Zionists turned to the language actually spoken by the Jewish masses, which was Yiddish. In 1908, at a Conference for the Yiddish Language in Czernowitz (today in the Ukraine), Yiddish was accepted as 'a national language of the Jewish people'. Yiddish continued to flourish in literature, the theatre and the press, and it became a language of education, especially in interwar Poland, with Vilnius (now in Lithuania) and Warsaw as its intellectual centres, and a standard language developing on the basis of both Lithuanian and Polish Yiddish dialects. Westward migrations, which started as early as the second half of the seventeenth century and gathered momentum from the end of the nineteenth century, had also taken the language overseas, primarily to North America. On the verge of the Second World War, North America probably had at least three million speakers of Yiddish, while more than seven million had stayed in Eastern Europe, another million being spread over western Europe, Palestine, Central and South America, Africa, Asia and Australia. This meant that more than half of the total Jewish population of the world spoke Yiddish. But then came the Holocaust of six million Jews, subsequent dispersion of the survivors over both the typical immigration countries and western Europe, and linguistic assimilation, partially forced but largely spontaneous, especially to Russian in the former Soviet Union, to English in North America, and to Hebrew in the state of Israel, which was founded in 1948 with Hebrew as its official language. Today Yiddish is estimated to have between one and three million speakers, half of them in the United States, but in every country that has a Jewish population, Yiddish speakers form a minority, usually secular and not passing on the language to the following generation. It is chiefly in orthodox communities that Yiddish is maintained, but then primarily as a spoken in-group language, with Hebrew for religion and the local co-territorial language for contact with outsiders.

Throughout its entire history, speakers of Yiddish have attained high levels of bilingualism. Yiddish has always used a version of the Aramaic alphabet, employing its own orthographical rules. The periodization of Yiddish distinguishes between Early Yiddish (up to c.1250), evidenced by glosses only; Old Yiddish (c.1250 to c.1500); Middle Yiddish (c.1500 to c.1700), the period when the centre of gravity moved east; and New or Modern Yiddish (from c.1700). Sometimes Middle Yiddish is not distinguished and the period of Old Yiddish extended.

### **Pennsylvania German**

Pennsylvania German (*Pensilfaanish*, *Deitsch*), also popularly known as 'Pennsylvania Dutch' or just 'Dutch', has an estimated 300,000 native speakers chiefly in the United States of America. These speakers descend from German colonists who hailed from all regions of German-speaking Europe, but

primarily from the Palatinate (the *Pfalz*), and settled mostly in the eastern part of Pennsylvania during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first groups consisted primarily of religious sects, but later waves were increasingly comprised of economic migrants. From their primary settlements in Pennsylvania, sectarian groups moved to Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina, but also to the Midwest, Canada and even Central and South America. These groups have kept the language up to the present day.

On the continuum between dialect and language Pennsylvania German gravitates more towards the dialect pole than any other Germanic 'language' treated in this book. The reason for not just calling it a dialect is that it underwent both spontaneous uniformization (dialect levelling) and some standardization efforts, and that it marginally also functions for written communication. All speakers are bilingual in English, and earlier generations diglossic in High German, which was – and still is – used for liturgy. Among secular speakers, the language is in a state of attrition, but in some Old Order Amish and Mennonite communities, for which language is synonymous with religion and which have a high birth-rate, there is no immediate threat to continuity.

### **Dutch**

Dutch (*Nederlands* 'Netherlandic', earlier *Dietsch* or *Duytsch* '(language) of the people' – as distinguished from Latin – and *Nederduytsch* 'low Dutch' – as distinguished from German) is the official language of the Netherlands, where it is native to the majority of a population of some fourteen million, with the exception of two or three hundred thousand Frisians and diverse ethnic minorities of seven hundred thousand. It is also an official language of Belgium, where it is the native language in the Flemish community counting up to six million native speakers, thus forming the majority of the population, also comprising c.3.7 million French-speaking Belgians, 900,000 foreign nationals, and up to 90,000 German-speaking Belgians. Dutch is a school language for many Dutch and Belgians that do not have Dutch as their native language, but the level of competence in Dutch differs enormously, with native Frisians reaching the highest levels of bilingualism. The Brussels conurbation is north of the French–Dutch language border and was thus originally Dutch-speaking, but it is now officially bilingual and the dominant language of its inhabitants has become French. This is one language change among others in the vicinity of the language border which together with a general revival of Dutch plagued twentieth-century Belgium with ethnic and political conflict. A Dutch dialect is still spoken by a dwindling minority in the northwestern corner of France (French Flanders) and it is the language of administration and education in the Dutch Antilles and in Surinam (formerly Dutch Guyana). Afrikaans is sometimes considered to be a creole of Dutch (see p. 15) and *Negerhollands* is the name of a virtually extinct Dutch creole on the Virgin Islands.

Dutch derives from Old (West) Low Franconian (c.400 to c.1100), the language associated with the tribal settlements from the fourth to the ninth century in what is now The Netherlands and Dutch-speaking Belgium, except for Frisian and Saxon settlements in the north and east of the Netherlands respectively. In view of its later development Old Low Franconian is also called 'Old Dutch'. There are few direct records of this language. Its Middle Dutch successor (c.1100 to c.1500) is well documented from the end of the twelfth century, especially in the western (Flemish) and centre (Brabantic) dialects of the economically more prosperous southern area, now Belgium. Standard Dutch is the variety of Modern Dutch (from c.1600 onwards, after the sixteenth century as a transition period with Middle Dutch) based primarily on the dialect of the Amsterdam region after it had become the capital of an independent nation. After the separation of the north, the south saw its upper layers of society and their transactions in the field of culture, education, administration and religion become increasingly romanized, a process which started in the Middle Ages, and when Belgium acquired its independence in 1830 it only had French as a national language. When Dutch slowly reassumed its social prestige and came to be used again for more forms of communication during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the northern standard was accepted.

### **Afrikaans**

Afrikaans is one of the two official languages of the Republic of South Africa, where it has some 5 million native speakers, i.e. 14 per cent of the total population of 36.5 million, including the inhabitants of the homelands. A little less than half of them are whites, called *Afrikaners*, formerly *Boers* 'farmers', while the other half are Cape Coloureds (*Kaapse kleurlingen*), who are descended from the original Dutch settlers, indigenous Hottentots, and Indian, Malay and Black slaves. Some further tens of thousands of native speakers live in Namibia, the former German colony of South West Africa, under the control of South Africa from 1914 to 1990, also consisting of both whites and people of mixed race. In both South Africa and Namibia, especially in the rural areas, Afrikaans further serves as a lingua franca for hundreds of thousands of people of all races. As an official language, Afrikaans is in competition with English, the mother tongue of a little less than 3 million, mostly white but some Coloureds and many of the 1 million Indians living in the country. Afrikaans is also the second language of the majority of Afrikaners and Coloureds and many Blacks. Afrikaans and English coexist with several indigenous languages, especially Sotho (9 million), Zulu (7 million) and Xhosa (7 million), all of them Bantu.

South Africa is the result of Dutch and British expansion into the interior of southern Africa from Cape Town, founded in 1652 by the Dutch East India Company. Cape Town is now the legislative capital of the republic as well as of the Cape Province, the largest of the country's four provinces. As Dutch

settlement proceeded along the southern coast in an easterly direction throughout the eighteenth century, so their language spread across southern Africa. In 1806 the British took over the Cape – after an earlier brief occupation from 1795–1803 – and started to encourage British emigration to the territory. As a result the Cape Province became bilingual, though Afrikaans remained dominant in the rural areas, mainly because it had become the mother tongue of the Cape Coloured.

The provinces of the Orange Free State, Transvaal and Natal are the result of the *Great Trek*, which took place in the latter half of the 1830s. The *Trek* was the attempt of the Boers to find farmland beyond the reach of the British authority and the English language. Natal was annexed by the British as early as 1843, but the Orange Free State and Transvaal enjoyed the status of independent republics until their defeat by the British in the Boer War of 1899–1901. When founded in the middle of the century, their white population was overwhelmingly Afrikaans-speaking, although the discovery of diamonds and gold in the 1870s and 1880s in these areas attracted many non-Afrikaans-speaking immigrants. These historical events explain why the white population of Natal is predominantly English-speaking, whereas that of Transvaal and the Orange Free State speaks predominantly Afrikaans, especially in the rural areas but also in some cities, as Boers later became city dwellers. In the administrative capital of Pretoria the dominant language is also Afrikaans, since the government and its bureaucracy has been manned chiefly by Afrikaners since the victory of the National Party in the election of 1948. The language of commerce, however, is English.

It is now generally agreed that the Dutch spoken at the Cape had become a separate idiom by the early nineteenth century ('Cape Dutch'), but the first written records did not appear until half a century later and only in 1925 did the parliament officially adopt Afrikaans as the country's other official language. There is still some disagreement as to whether Afrikaans is an essentially spontaneous development of seventeenth-century Dutch dialects, influenced by neighbouring and co-territorial indigenous and colonial languages, or more of a creole developed by the non-Dutch inhabitants of the Cape. Independently of whether Afrikaans is to be regarded as a creole of Dutch or not, however, certain sectors of the non-white population speak a variety of Afrikaans called *Oorlams*, dialects which betray a greater number of creole features than standard Afrikaans. Because most native speakers of Afrikaans are bilingual in English and because the two languages are not geographically separated, the latter is in the process of exerting a tremendous influence on the former.

### **Frisian**

Modern Frisian exists as three mutually unintelligible varieties: (a) West Frisian (*Frysk*), spoken in the northern Dutch province of *Fryslân* (*Friesland*) by four hundred thousand people, half of whom have it as their mother

tongue; (b) East Frisian or Saterlandic (*Friisk*), spoken in the three villages of Saterland, an islet in a moorland area between Bremen and the Dutch border, probably only by a thousand speakers; and (c) North Frisian (*Friisk*, *Frasch*, *Fresk*), spoken on the islands and the northwestern coast of Schleswig-Holstein by up to ten thousand people. Most of the speakers of Frisian are bilingual in Dutch (West Frisian), Low and High German (East and North Frisian), and even in the Jutish dialect of Danish (northern North Frisian). Each of the varieties is in decline, East Frisian more than North Frisian and both more than West Frisian. Especially during the last two decades, language-preservation attempts have been undertaken, which have resulted in little more than a dictionary and an occasional publication for East Frisian; a regular publication scheme and tuition for North Frisian; and, for West Frisian, regular publications, access to the media of radio and television, mandatory tuition and local governments' assessments of Frisian as an asset.

The present geographical location is essentially the result of the gradual reduction of a Frisian territory once stretching continuously along the North Sea coast from North Holland to the Weser and discontinuously extending into the North Frisian area. The oldest direct records are from the late thirteenth century in the variant now called 'Old Frisian'. For post-1550 records one uses the term 'Modern (New) Frisian' or 'Middle Frisian', and in the latter case 'Modern Frisian' takes over from 1800 onwards.

## **English**

From the middle of the fifth century, Germanic federates of Jutes, Angles and Saxons left the Danish and German North Sea coast and settled in England, the Angles in the north and the Saxons in the south, except for Kent, which was seized by the Jutes. The native Celts retained control of most of Cornwall, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, but in England they gradually assimilated to the newcomers. The West Germanic dialects spoken then are now referred to collectively as Anglo-Saxon or Old English (up to c.1150), first documented in runic inscriptions, with literary, documentary and religious texts from the eighth century onwards, mostly from the southern, so-called 'West Saxon' area. From the end of the eighth century until the beginning of the eleventh century, the Anglo-Saxon population was itself the victim of an invasion, namely by Vikings, who established themselves in the east of England in the area called the 'Danelaw', merged with the earlier inhabitants and influenced the language, especially the lexicon. A third invasion which shaped the English language, again primarily its lexicon but also the orthography, started in 1066 when the Norman French duke, William the Conqueror, forcefully seized the throne of England and started to colonize the land and introduce a French-speaking administration, nobility and clergy. French was to remain the prestige language until the fourteenth century. The lexical and orthographical changes together with a levelling of the Anglo-Saxon inflectional system characterize the 'Middle English' period, conventionally taken to

extend from c.1150 to c.1500, the beginning of 'Modern English'. The latter is the period of the enormous geographical dispersion. In nearby Cornwall, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, English nearly ousted Celtic, and on the Shetlands and Orkneys English replaced the descendant of Old Norwegian called *Norn*. With Britannia's and later the United States' rule of the waves, English was exported around the globe, with the creation of numerous English-based creoles as a side-effect. Today more than 300 million people have English as their native language, and a similar number may have it as a daily second language, and many more as the lingua franca for science, international trade and politics.

The most important predominantly English-speaking areas are the United States (240 million), the United Kingdom (56 million), Canada (24 million), Australia (17 million), Ireland (3.5 million) and New Zealand (3.2 million), though none of them is linguistically homogeneous. Furthermore, English is an official language in a number of countries that lie, or used to lie, in the British colonial or United States' spheres of influence, where it either has substantial numbers of native speakers (e.g. South Africa with nearly 3 million) but more often of second-language speakers (e.g. the Philippines with 11 million), and where it is co-territorial with indigenous languages, other western languages (e.g. Cameroon with French, and South Africa with Afrikaans) or with creoles (e.g. Jamaica).

There are many national variants of English, differing primarily in pronunciation and less so in grammar and spelling. British English has a standard that originated in the London dialect area, but has now become a sociolect, associated with the educated upper classes and often heard on radio and television.

### **Into the Twenty-first Century**

Most of the Germanic languages are not 'endangered species'. On the contrary, most of them lead the protected life of a national language of one or more states. English will most likely increase its role as an international language, and within Europe the liberalization in Eastern Europe will probably revitalize German as a lingua franca. The three Germanic languages that are not associated with a modern state will have a harder time surviving through the next century, however. The fate of Pennsylvania German and Yiddish probably depends on whether or not the sectarian lifestyle of Amish, Mennonite and Jewish communities will continue to attract followers. Most threatened perhaps is Frisian, since it has neither a state nor a religion to support it.

### A Note on the Numbers

Estimating the numbers of first- and second-language speakers is very difficult. Our numbers are estimates based on the sources listed in the references or on the expert opinions of some of the contributors to this volume.

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# 2 Gothic and the Reconstruction of Proto-Germanic

*Winfred P. Lehmann*

## 2.1 Introduction

Gothic is the language of two Germanic peoples, the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths, known from the early centuries of our era. Except for a few runic inscriptions, Gothic provides us with our earliest Germanic texts. The texts are chiefly translations of the New Testament and fragments of the Old Testament, ascribed to Wulfila (c. 300–82/3), and a few other materials from the sixth century. Because it precedes other extensive Germanic texts by three or four centuries, by even more those in North Germanic, Gothic is important for reconstruction of Proto-Germanic as well as for the information it gives us on its society and their language.

Like all early texts, those in Gothic present many problems. These have given rise to an enormous bibliography that has by no means provided solutions. Our information on Wulfila is slight. The origin of the Gothic alphabet is undocumented and spelling conventions are disputed. The text of the Greek Bible used for the translation is unknown. Only parts of the translation have come down to us, so that the stock of words and forms is not great. And the manuscripts that have preserved the translation were written in northern Italy, the Balkans or southern France, apparently in the early sixth century, possibly even by Ostrogothic scribes in contrast with the Visigoth Wulfila who produced the translation in the fourth century.

Moreover, the early history of the Goths is obscure. As a result, their relationships to the other Germanic peoples is unclear. Traditionally, as reported to us by a sixth-century historian, Procopius, they moved from Götland in eastern Sweden to the coastal area near the mouth of the Vistula in the first century before our era; Tacitus in the *Germania* of AD 98 reports Gotones in this area at his time (chapter 44). Around AD 200 they migrated to southern Russia, some going on to the Black Sea, in the region around the Sea of Azov. There two distinct groups can be recognized, the Visi ('good') and

the Ostrogoths ('Eastern Goths'). Subsequently the designation Visigoths was introduced and came to be interpreted as 'Western Goths', as indeed they were geographically in the Eastern Empire and later in their location in Spain from the fifth century. With other Germanic groups, whose languages we know only from names – the Burgundians, the Vandals, the Rugians – the Goths and their language are referred to as East Germanic, in contrast with the North Germanic peoples and languages of Scandinavia, and the West Germanic of central Europe. But differences in time of the texts brought about by shifts and realignments of the identifiable Germanic groups leave this classification open to many questions.

In the fourth century the Goths were in close touch with the Eastern Empire. Captives in battle were Christianized, and the new religion was introduced in other ways as well. Wulfila's grandparents were taken captive in a raid on the Cappadocian village, Sadagolthina, in AD 264. Brought up in the faith, Wulfila came with a delegation to the imperial court c. AD 336/7; there he was influenced by Bishop Eusebius to embrace the Homoean doctrine, a view of the relation of Christ to God the Father similar to that of Arianism. Probably in part because of his missionary efforts, the Goths as a group were Arians; as the Visigoths settled in the west towards the end of the fourth century, and the Ostrogoths a century later, they were at odds with the dominant Athanasian doctrines of the western Church. The doctrinal differences led to conflict. The Goths were destroyed as important political groups, the Ostrogoths by an army of the Eastern Empire under Belisarius in 555, the Visigoths by the Moslems in AD 711.

### **The Language in Relation to Proto-Germanic and the Other Germanic Dialects**

According to tradition the Goths maintained an aristocratic culture that reflected many characteristics of Indo-European society. They supported poets who preserved accounts of their valiant men, such as the king, Ermaneric, who came to be central figures in the medieval literature of the West and North Germanic peoples. The poets created a major role for Attila, ruler of the Huns, glorified as Etzel in the High German *Nibelungenlied*, and for Theodoric, the founder of the Ostrogothic empire in northern Italy, celebrated as Dietrich von Bern. The language maintains many military, legal and political terms, such as *draūhti*- 'army' in derivatives, \**mabl* 'assembly', and the possibility of creating poetic terms known in other Indo-European literary traditions, as in the compound *mana-sēþs* 'world' < 'seed of men'. Such retentions of the earlier culture as well as archaic characteristics in the language support the view that Gothic can be taken as the chief source for reconstructing Proto-Germanic.

The other Germanic languages have undergone phonological and morphological changes not found in Gothic. The voiced sibilant /z/ has become a resonant, as in Old High German *mēro*, Old Icelandic *meiri*, as opposed to

Gothic *maiza* ‘more’. Long /ē/ has been lowered, as in Old Icelandic *mākir*, Old English *māce* as opposed to Gothic *mēki* ‘short sword’. The West Germanic languages have been especially innovative, as in lengthening consonants before resonants, e.g. Old English *settan*, Old High German *setzen* as opposed to Gothic *-satjan* and Old Icelandic *setja* ‘set’. And as in this example, Gothic does not exhibit umlaut. Morphologically it maintains reduplication in many verbs and, like North Germanic, the reflex of the Indo-European second-person singular perfect form, as in *namt* ‘thou didst take’ as opposed to Old English *nōme*, Old High German *nāmi*. The Indo-European middle-passive is still preserved. Unfortunately for the determining of syntactic patterns, the Bible translation is very literal, so that it provides little information on syntax.

As might be expected, Gothic of the fourth to sixth century has also undergone changes from Proto-Germanic of the period before our era. Among innovations, Proto-Germanic /i, u/ have been lowered before /r/ and /h/, where the lowered vowels are written <ái, aú>. Moreover, strong verbs exhibit no variation between voiceless and voiced fricatives, as in *slaha*, *slōh*, *slōhun*, \**slahans* ‘strike’. Some specialists attribute the lack of contrast to absence of application of Verner’s law in Gothic, by which voiceless fricatives became voiced if the Indo-European accent did not precede them, as in Old High German *slahan*, *sluoh*, *sluogum*, *gislagan*. But regularization is more likely, in view of the contrast in common words that are likely to maintain irregularities, like *áih* vs *áigun* ‘have’, or in derivatives, such as \**frawardjan* ‘destroy’ versus *wairþan* ‘become’.

## 2.2 Phonology

The Gothic alphabet, like the Greek and other early alphabets, also served to indicate numerals. There was no symbol for zero, and accordingly 27 symbols were adequate, those representing 1–9, 10–90, 100–900. In early Greek systems, each of these had a phonetic value. When there was no sound in Gothic corresponding to that in Greek, the symbol was none the less maintained for its use as numeral; for example, the symbol for koppa, representing 90, was kept even though Gothic had no back velar voiceless stop.

Wulfila or other designers of the Gothic alphabet made ingenious use of some superfluous symbols. For the [k<sup>w</sup>] sound they used the symbol representing 6, which in Greek stood for [w] or [v]; in our texts it is transliterated as <q>. For [h<sup>w</sup>] they used the symbol representing 700, which is transliterated as the ligature <h>. On the other hand, the symbol representing 5 was selected for long Gothic [e:], leaving no likely symbol for the short [e], for which the <ai> digraph was selected. Since short [e], [o] were represented by <ai, au> the symbols <e, o> represent long vowels /e:, o:/. Because these vowels are always long, some handbooks do not indicate the length with a

macron. The digraph <ei> is used to represent long /i:/.

The readings of <ai> and <au> are disputed. From borrowed names we know that they represented [ɛ] and [ɔ], the pronunciation of the digraphs in Greek of the time, e.g. *Aileisabaiþ* Gk *Elisábet*, *apaústaúlus* Gk *apóstolos*. But many words with [ay, aw] diphthongs in the other Germanic dialects are also written with the digraphs, e.g. *áins*, Ger. *eins* 'one', *áugō*, Ger. *Auge* 'eye'. Still others have different cognate elements, e.g. *saian*, Ger. *säen* 'sow', *sauil*, Ger. *Sonne* 'sun'. The digraphs then may have had three different pronunciations: [ɛ, ay, ɛ:, ɔ, aw, ɔ:]. Yet specialists who insist on one pronunciation argue that framers of an alphabet would be unlikely to use symbols with more than one value. A solution is likely only if we discover new inscriptions or manuscripts. As here, specialists may use acute accent marks to distinguish the readings.

While the order of the alphabetic symbols and their values correspond to those in Greek, the shapes have several origins. Those for <h> and <r> were based on Latin. The alphabet then, like other elements of Gothic society, reflects the combination of influences of the Greeks and the Latins on Germanic culture that led to the Gothic culture we know.

### The Consonant System

We assume nineteen consonantal phonemes for Gothic, four of which are differently interpreted by some specialists (Table 2.1). The series /b, d, g/ has stop articulation initially, finally and when doubled, fricative articulation between vowels. The other consonants have one principal allophone, except for /n/, which has a velar variant before velars.

The status of /j/ and /w/ is disputed, some interpreters taking them as variants of /i, u/. In most contexts they stand in complementary distribution, for example, only [w] before vowels, only [u] under accent between consonants. Direct contrasts for /i/ vs /j/ are found with proper names, e.g. *Maria* vs *kunja* 'kin'; for /u/ vs /w/ the contrasts are clear, as in *gáidw* 'lack', *faíhu* 'property'. Yet the positions in which contrasts are found are so limited that we may assume single phonemes for the resonants in Proto-Germanic.

The status of <q> /k<sup>w</sup>/ and <h> /h<sup>w</sup>/ is also disputed, some taking them as clusters of two phonemes. Clusters of consonant plus *w* occur only with

**Table 2.1** The consonant system

p	t		k	<i>k<sup>w</sup></i> <q>
b	d	z	g	
f	þ	s	h	<i>h<sup>w</sup></i> <h>
m	n			
l	r	j	w	

Note: The four italicized phonemes are those which are differently interpreted by some specialists. <h> is the Gothic letter which represents the complex consonant [hw].

dentals, as in *twái* ‘two’; the unique form *bidagwa* ‘beggar’ is taken as an error. Moreover, they pattern with single consonants, as in the past tense *sagq* [saŋkʷ] ‘sank’, where interpretation as a cluster would require a three-consonant sequence. Similarly, in the initial cluster of *qrammipa* ‘dampness’, which would be unique if taken as /kwr/, though the cluster may be an error for /kr-/. We assume the same consonant system for late Proto-Germanic, except that /i, u/ included the consonantal variants [y, w], Gothic *j* and *w*. Moreover, before the fixing of the accent, [z] was a variant of /s/.

### The Vowel System

The vowel system of sixth century Gothic consisted of five short and five long vowels: /i, e, a, o, u, i:, e:, a:, o:, u:/, plus at least one diphthong /iw/ and probably /ay, aw/ as well. But there are problems.

As noted above, [i, e] [o, u] were virtually in complementary distribution, the open counterparts standing before /h, hʷ, r/, the close elsewhere, e.g. with PGmc /e/ *qiman*, cf. OHG *queman* ‘come’ but with PGmc /i/ in *gatahun*, cf. OHG *zigun* ‘showed’. An early form of Gothic may have had a short vowel system consisting of three members: /a/, plus /i, u/ with allophonic variants. But the variants came to stand before other consonants as well, as did [e] in *aíþhau* ‘or’ < \**eh-p-*, and [i] before *r, h* as in *hiri* ‘here’, *nih* ‘and not’. Accordingly, by the time our manuscripts were written, the language included five short vowels. Borrowings reflect this system, as in *aípiskaúpus*, Gk *epískopos* ‘bishop’, with /e/ and /o/ before /p/.

Proto-Germanic on the other hand had a vowel system consisting of four short and four long vowels; the two low back vowels had fallen together. The system is generally represented with short /a/ and long /o:/ as a result of the later introduction of short /o/ and long /a:/. After the Proto-Germanic period, short /o/ resulted from lowering of some /u/; long /a:/ arose from compensatory lengthening upon loss of nasal before voiceless fricatives, as in \**pāho* ‘clay’, OHG *dāhā*, cf. Lith. *tānkus* ‘thick’.

A new long close /e:/ arose in Proto-Germanic through compensatory lengthening, upon loss of nasal as in \**mēs*, OHG *mias* ‘table’ < VLat. *mēsa*, Lat. *mensa*, and of laryngeal as in *fēra*, OHG *fiara* ‘side’ < PIE (*s*)*peHyr-*. Proto-Germanic /ē/ was then lowered, generally written /ǣ/, so that the language had a long vowel system of six members. The two long *e* vowels fell together in Gothic; Old English *lǣtan* ‘let’ corresponds to Gothic -*lētan*, while Old English *mēse* reflects the close long /ē/, often called *ē<sup>2</sup>*, as in Gothic *mēsa* ‘table’, yielding the system of five long vowels indicated above.

Early Gothic had the diphthongs /ay, aw, ey/, as in *áins* ‘one’, cf. OLat. *oinos*, *áukan* ‘increase’, cf. Lat. *augere*, and \**kiusa* ‘test’, cf. Gk *geúomai* ‘taste’.

### Accentuation and Syllable Weight

Unfortunately we have no means for determining the intonational pattern of sentences. We can however determine the accentuation of individual words. Since voiceless fricatives are manifested even in forms that have voiced fricatives in the other Germanic dialects, we conclude that Gothic had fixed accent on stem syllables, usually initial, as in: *wisan*, *was*, *wēsum* ‘be’ in contrast with Old English *wesan*, *wæs*, *wæron*. The variation between singular and plural of the past is maintained to this day in *was*, *were*.

Other evidence supports the assumption of initial accent on words. The particle *anda* ‘along’ has maintained its second vowel in nouns, which had principal stress on the first syllable, but has lost it in verbs, which have principal stress on the stem; the difference is indicated in 1 Timothy 6:12 *andhaíhást þamma gōdin andaháita* ‘you have confessed the good confession’. Similarly, because of the initial strong stress on nouns, vowels were lost or weakened in final syllables, as in the accusative singular *haúrn* ‘horn’ in contrast with *horma* of the Gallehus runic inscription dated about AD 325.

Moreover, enclitics, especially the connective particle *u(h)* ‘and’ can be placed between prefixes and verb stems, as in *at-uh-gaf* ‘and he gave to’, suggesting that those prefixes carried a secondary stress. On the basis of this evidence we assume three degrees of stress: strong, mid, and weak.

Syllables are light if they contain only a long vowel, or a short vowel, also when ending in a consonant; otherwise they are heavy. Heavy syllables were followed in Proto-Germanic by a vowel + consonant variant of resonants. The effect is attested in *-ja*-stems of nouns and verbs, as illustrated in Table 2.3.

## 2.3 Morphology

### Phonological Variation in Morphological Sets

Gothic, like Proto-Germanic, makes heavy use of the vocalic variation inherited from Proto-Indo-European that is known as ablaut. The varying vowels are the result of sound changes. In treatment of ablaut they are referred to as grades, with *e*-grade as basic (often called ‘normal’), plus the variants: *o*-grade, lengthened grade, and zero grade. Ablaut is especially prominent in strong verbs, as in: *wairþan*, *warþ*, *waúrþun*, *waúrþans* ‘become’. A paradigm has been constructed with four principal parts. Classes I–V have *e*-grade in the present and the infinitive, *o*-grade (PGmc, Go. *a*) in the past singular indicative, and zero grade in the past plural and subjunctive as well as the past participle. Classes IV and V have lengthened grade in the third principal part. Classes VI and VII observe different patterns.

While verbs of the first five classes have one basic pattern, they are classified into five groups in accordance with the structure of their stem (Table 2.2). Such alternation is also found in derivation, as in *\*(fra)wardjan* ‘destroy’, which illustrates Indo-European use of the *o*-grade in deriving

**Table 2.2 The basic pattern of strong verbs classes I–V**

		Present	Past singular	Past plural	Past participle
Proto-Indo-European		e	o	∅	∅
Proto-Germanic		e	a	∅	∅
Gothic	I	ei	ái	i	i
	II	iu	áu	u	u
	III	i/aí+l/m/n/r	a+	u/aú+	u/aú+
	IV	i/aíR	aR	ēR	u/aúR
	V	iC	aC	ēC	iC

Note: R = resonants, C = all other consonants.

causatives and factitives. Reflexes of ablaut variation in endings are also maintained, as in the nominative *brōþar* as opposed to the genitive *brōþrs* ‘brother’. Although such patterns of vowel variation are attested in some derived verbs, in nouns and endings, derivational morphology relies more heavily on affixation than on ablaut in both Proto-Germanic and Gothic.

### Morphological Classes

Like the other Indo-European languages, Gothic distinguishes nominals and verbals inflectionally as opposed to uninflected words. The nominals in turn may be subclassified into nouns, pronouns and adjectives, which include some forms of numerals. Nouns, adjectives and non-personal pronouns are inflected for gender, number and case. There are three genders: masculine, feminine, neuter. There are three numbers: singular, plural and dual, though the dual is preserved only in the personal pronouns, and in first- and second-person verbs of active voice. There are five cases: nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, and vocative, which has the same form as the nominative or accusative. Scholars who assume a Proto-Indo-European based on Indo-Iranian and Greek posit further cases for Proto-Germanic, of which only residues remain in Gothic; the residues may be derived from derivational as well as from inflectional forms.

### The Nominal Group

Proto-Indo-European distinguished athematic nouns (nouns made up of a base without a suffix before inflectional endings) and thematic nouns (nouns with base followed by *e/o* and inflectional endings). In Germanic the thematic nouns have become more prominent; consonant stems like *hatis* ‘hate’ have become thematic. The *-n-* stems have, however, maintained their prominence; a second adjective inflection has been built on them.

Nouns have six major classes of inflection, plus two subgroups of the *a*-stems. The *n*-stems have also developed separate inflections for *-ōn* and *-īn*

**Table 2.3** The principal noun classes

	<i>PGmc stem</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>a-stems</i>		<i>ō</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>n</i>	consonant
Base		dag	ja	-ja	gib	gast	sunu	gum	baúrg
Singular									
Nom.	az	dags	harjis	haírdeis	giba	gasts	sunus	guma	baúrgs
Acc.	an	dag	hari	haírdi	giba	gast	sunu	guman	baúrg
Gen.	e/as	dagis	harjis	haírdeis	gibōs	gastis	sunaus	gumins	baúrgs
Dat.	ái	daga	harja	haírdja	gibai	gasta	sunau	gumin	baúrg
Voc.	e		–	haírdi		–	sunu		
Plural									
Nom.	ōzez	dagōs	harjōs	haírdjōs	gibōs	gastei	sunjus	gumans	baúrgs
Acc.	anz	dagans	harjans	haírdjans	gibōs	gastins	sununs	gumans	baúrgs
Gen.	ō/ēn	dagē	harjē	haírdjē	gibō	gastē	suniwē	gumanē	baúrgē
Dat.	amaz	dagam	harjam	haírdjam	gibōm	gastim	sunum	gumam	baúrgim

subgroups; these and other details must be left to the handbooks. In Germanic grammars the classes are designated, as in Table 2.3, with labels representing their Proto-Germanic stem vowels or consonants. The Proto-Germanic endings are listed in the first column. The *a*-stems are masculine and neuter. The neuter nominative singular has the ending of the accusative; the nominative plural has an *-a* ending. The *ō*-stems are feminine. The other classes may have any one of the genders. A full set of forms is given for each declension.

### *Pronouns*

Like the other Indo-European languages, Gothic has various sets of pronouns. The personal pronouns are derived from comparable forms in Proto-Indo-European, though some have been enlarged with suffixes, such as the accusative singular *-k* < *-ge*. For example, the accusative *mik* ‘me’ corresponds to Greek (*e*)*mé* + *-ge*, with loss of final *-e*. Like the pronouns in the parent language, they maintain the shift in stem between nominative and oblique cases. Many of the forms have been analogically modified; *unsis* is found beside the accusative/dative *uns* (see Table 2.4).

Possessive adjectives are based on the genitive stems, e.g. *meins*, *þeins*, *unsar*, *izwar*; they are inflected like strong adjectives.

An anaphoric pronoun for the third person is based on a root *i* (possibly merged with *e*); it is inflected for case, number and gender, though not all forms are attested (Table 2.5). The interrogative pronoun, found only in the singular, is based on Proto-Indo-European *kʷo-*. In contrast with the other Germanic dialects, a distinct feminine has been developed (Table 2.6).

The neuter also includes a form *hʷē*, which is interpreted as an instrumental, as in *hʷē wasjaþ* ‘with what you clothe yourself’. A comparable form

**Table 2.4** The personal pronouns

	I	we	we two	thou	you	you two	self
Nom.	ik	weis	wit	þu	jus		
Acc.	mik	uns	ugkis	þik	izwis	igkis	sik
Gen.	meina	unsara		þeina	izwara	igkara	seina
Dat.	mis	uns	ugkis	þis	izwis	igkis	sis

**Table 2.5** The anaphoric pronoun 'he, she, it'

	<i>Singular</i>			<i>Plural</i>		
	m.	f.	n.	m.	f.	n.
Nom.	is	si	ita	eis		ija
Acc.	ina	ija	ita	ins	ijōs	
Gen.	is	izōs	is	izē	izō	
Dat.	imma	izái	imma	im	im	im

**Table 2.6** The interrogative pronoun

	m.	f.	n.
Nom.	h <sup>w</sup> as	h <sup>w</sup> ō	h <sup>w</sup> a
Acc.	h <sup>w</sup> ana	h <sup>w</sup> ō	h <sup>w</sup> a
Gen.	h <sup>w</sup> is		h <sup>w</sup> is
Dat.	h <sup>w</sup> amma	h <sup>w</sup> izái	h <sup>w</sup> amma

is found in the neuter demonstrative, but, apart from compounds, only in the phrase *ni þē haldis* 'by no means' (< 'not rather than that'). It is a residual comparative construction of the OV pattern, paralleled in *neo dana halt* of the Old High German *Hildebrandslied*, both giving testimony to the early verb-final structure of Proto-Germanic.

The usual relative pronoun is made with *-ei* suffixed to the simple demonstrative, i.e. *saei*, *sōei*, *þatei*. The suffix may also be added to other pronouns, as in *ikei* 'I, who', and *ei* may be used alone as a clause connective meaning 'that, so that'. The creation of this relative pronoun in contrast with the adaptation of the interrogative in English and of the demonstrative in German provides evidence that postposed relative clauses were developed only in the individual Germanic dialects rather than inherited from Proto-Indo-European or Proto-Germanic.

**Table 2.7 The two adjective declensions in the masculine**

	<i>Strong</i> Singular	Plural	<i>Weak</i> Singular	Plural
Nom.	blinds	blindái	blinda	blindans
Acc.	blindana	blindans	blindan	blindans
Gen.	*blindis	*blindáizē	blindins	*blindanē
Dat.	blindamma	blindáim	blindin	*blindam

### *Adjectives*

Like the other Germanic languages, Gothic has two adjective inflections. One is based on the inflection of the noun, with possible *ja*-stems, *i*-stems and *u*-stems, though *o/ā*-stems are most prominent. This inflection is labelled strong. It includes some endings that are taken over from pronouns.

The other inflection is a Germanic innovation based on the inflection of *n*-stems. It indicates definiteness. Its meaning developed from the function of *n*-stems in some Indo-European languages to indicate specific individuals; such forms could then become personal names, e.g., Gk *Plátōn* 'Plato' (< 'the broad-shouldered individual'). Germanic shares the development of a definite adjective inflection with Slavic and Baltic, though in those branches the affixed element is a demonstrative. When definite articles were introduced into Germanic, possibly by influence from Latin which in turn had been influenced by Greek, and this earlier by Egyptian, weak (definite declension) endings accompanied the definite article; in time the adjective endings lost their distinctiveness. When maintained, as in Modern Standard German, the weak endings are reduced to *-e* and *-en*. To illustrate the two declensions, the masculine forms for each are given in Table 2.7.

Comparison is made with the suffixes *-iz-* and *-ōz-*, as in *managizō* 'more' and *garahtōza* 'juster', and in the superlative with *-ist-* and *-ōst-*, as in *managistans* 'most' and *armōstái* 'poorest'. Since comparatives refer to specific individuals, the comparative is inflected in the weak declension; the superlative is inflected either weak or strong.

### *Determiners*

Gothic had no articles. The Greek article is represented in some contexts by the simple demonstrative; in such passages the translator apparently intended to express emphasis. The early runic inscriptions also contain no article; accordingly we assume that there was none in Proto-Germanic.

### *Demonstratives*

The simple demonstrative is formed with reflexes of Proto-Indo-European \**so*, *sā*, *tad*. Similar paradigms are found in the other Germanic dialects;

**Table 2.8 The demonstrative pronoun**

	Singular			Plural		
	m.	f.	n.	m.	f.	n.
Nom.	sa	sō	þata	þái	þōs	þō
Acc.	þana	þō	þata	þans	þōs	þō
Gen.	þis	þizōs	þis	þizē	þizō	þizē
Dat.	þamma	þizái	þamma	þáim	þáim	þáim

accordingly we can assume the forms also for Proto-Germanic (Table 2.8).

An extended form of the demonstrative is made with the affix *-(u)h* ‘and, then’, i.e., *sah, sōh, þatuh*. The affix is assumed to be a cognate of Latin *-que* ‘and’. This demonstrative is occasionally used as a relative pronoun.

### Quantifiers

Quantifiers are treated in Gothic grammar as indefinites; for example, *sums, suma, sum* ‘someone’ is inflected like a strong, rather than a weak, adjective. Its negative is represented by phrases consisting of *ni* ‘not’ and *áins*, ‘one, *h<sup>w</sup>as* ‘who’, or *manna* ‘man’ followed by the enclitic particle *hun* ‘any’, e.g. *ni . . . áinshun, áinōhun, áinhun* ‘no one’; they are treated as pronouns, though *áinshun* is also accompanied by nouns in the genitive. Two items represent ‘each’: *h<sup>w</sup>azuh, h<sup>w</sup>ōh, h<sup>w</sup>ah* and less commonly *h<sup>w</sup>arjizuh*, which is made up of *h<sup>w</sup>arjis* ‘who’ and *-uh*.

### Numerals

Cardinal numerals have the bases found in other Indo-European languages, e.g., *áins, twái, \*þreis, fidwōr, fimf, saíhs, sibun, ahtau, niun, taihun*. The first three are inflected in all genders and cases, though as illustrated with ‘3’ not all forms are attested.

The numerals for 11 and 12 are made as in Lithuanian with a suffix meaning ‘additional’ based on Proto-Indo-European *leyk<sup>w</sup>*- ‘leave over’: *\*áinlif, twalif*; the other teen numerals attested have the additive pattern of VO languages, *fidwortaihun* ‘14’, *\*fimftaihun* ‘15’.

The numerals from 20–60 are made with simple cardinals plus *\*tigjus* ‘-ty’, e.g. *twáim tigum* ‘(with) twenty’; those from 70–100 with *-tēhund*, e.g. *sibuntēhund* ‘70’, *taihuntēhund* ‘100’. The hundreds are made with cardinals plus the neuter plural *hunda*, e.g. *fimfhunda* ‘500’.

The ordinals are based on the cardinals, except for *fruma* ‘first’ and *anþar* ‘second’, e.g. *þridja* ‘third’, *saíhsta* ‘sixth’.

## The Verb

Gothic verbs are inflected for three persons, for three numbers – with the dual only in first and second persons, for present and preterite tenses; for indicative, subjunctive and imperative moods; and for active and passive voice, though passive forms are found only in the present tense. The subjunctive is based on the Indo-European optative; some handbooks maintain the designation, though to indicate parallelism with other Germanic dialects the term ‘subjunctive’ is generally used. Passives are also made with forms of *wisan* and *wairþan* plus the preterite participle.

### *Aspectual Expression*

While Gothic has a tense system, derivational patterns, such as the *-nan* verbs, also indicate manner of action (*Aktionsart*). Yet expression of such verbal meaning is one of the most debated features of the language, as is treatment of aspectual expression in linguistic handbooks.

Some linguists use the term ‘aspect’ generally, while others insist on restricting it to languages like Russian, in which parallel forms are found for the so-called perfective and imperfective aspects. It is useful to distinguish between aspect with such a meaning and *Aktionsart* ‘manner of action’, which is expressed through means such as derivation. Those who make the distinction posit only *Aktionsart* for Gothic.

### *Strong and Weak Verbs*

Gothic verbs fall into two groups: those called strong indicate tense through internal marking based on ablaut; those called weak are largely derived and indicate tense through a *d*-affix. The strong verbs consist of seven classes, for which we here use Roman numerals; the weak verbs consist of four, for which we use Arabic numerals. This twofold distinction sets Germanic off from other Indo-European languages; Latin, for example, has four conjugations, the third of which includes verbs such as those making up the strong group in Germanic. The two other western groups, Greek and Celtic, have even less distinct classes.

### *The Strong Verbs*

The strong verbs consist of two sets as determined by their ablaut patterning. Of the seven Germanic classes, the first five are parallel in their ablaut patterning, as illustrated in Table 2.2; the forms have adapted the ablaut vowels *e* vs *o*, and zero, though the fourth and fifth classes employ lengthened grade in the preterite forms other than the singular indicative.

The two remaining classes are difficult to analyse; their pattern may have been determined by laryngeal bases. By such an analysis the normal grade was applied in the past, while the present and the past participle have zero grade, e.g. Proto-Germanic *a* vs *ō* vs *ō* vs *a* of class VI, and *ay* vs *ēy* vs *ēy* vs *ay* among others of class VII, e.g., *swaran*, *swōr* ‘swear’, *hāitan*, *hahait*

'be named'. This hypothesis is difficult to verify because few verbs in the two classes have bases that are similarly modified in other Indo-European languages. Verbs of class VII show reduplication in the past tense. Its presence has been taken by some as persistence of the widespread pattern in Indo-Iranian and Greek. It may also be the result of internal spread, for parallel verbs in the other Germanic dialects provide only a few forms that have been interpreted as reflexes of reduplicated forms. For the most part the other dialects form the stem vowel in the past tense of class VII verbs with reflexes of Proto-Germanic  $\bar{e}^2$ .

*The Weak Verbs*

Gothic has four classes of weak verbs, distinguished by their suffixes: class 1 *ilj*; class 2 *ō*; class 3 *ái*; class 4 *na/ō*. The last two may also be characterized semantically; class 3 verbs are stative; class 4 verbs are inchoative or medio-passive. Class 1 verbs result from various sources, notably causatives or factitives, e.g. *lagjan* 'lay', and denominatives based on nouns or adjectives, e.g. *háiļjan* 'heal'. Class 2 verbs are also chiefly denominatives.

*The Verbal Paradigm*

Many forms of the class IV strong verb *niman* 'take' are attested; it is therefore useful for illustrating the paradigm (Table 2.9). The active voice has two tenses and three moods, but only present forms are found for the passive.

The forms of weak verbs are comparable, though the affix must be taken into consideration. And in the first class the second- and third-person singular and the second plural must be noted for variation of the resonant marking the root. The present singular forms are given in Table 2.10.

The forms of the weak past are characteristic only in the singular indicative. For *lagjan* the first and third singular are *lagida*, the second singular *lagidēs*.

**Table 2.9** The verbal paradigm as illustrated by the class IV strong verb *niman*

	Active			Past		Passive	
	Present Indicative	Subjunctive	Imperative	Indicative	Subjunctive	Present Indicative	Subjunctive
1 Singular	<i>nima</i>	<i>nimáu</i>		<i>nam</i>	<i>*nēmǰáu</i>	<i>nimada</i>	<i>nimáidau</i>
2	<i>nimis</i>	<i>*nimáis</i>	<i>nim</i>	<i>namt</i>	<i>nēmeis</i>	<i>nimaza</i>	<i>nimáizau</i>
3	<i>nimiþ</i>	<i>nimái</i>	<i>nimadau</i>	<i>nam</i>	<i>nēmi</i>	<i>nimada</i>	<i>nimáidau</i>
1 Dual	<i>nimōs</i>	<i>*nimáiwa</i>		<i>nēmu</i>			
2	<i>nimats</i>	<i>*nimáits</i>	<i>*nimats</i>	<i>*nēmuts</i>			
1 Plural	<i>nimam</i>	<i>*nimáima</i>	<i>*nimam</i>	<i>nēmum</i>	<i>*nēmeima</i>	<i>nimanda</i>	<i>nimáindau</i>
2	<i>nimiþ</i>	<i>nimáiþ</i>	<i>nimiþ</i>	<i>nēmumþ</i>	<i>*nēmeiþ</i>		
3	<i>nimand</i>	<i>nimáina</i>		<i>nēmumun</i>	<i>nēmeina</i>		

**Table 2.10** The present singular of weak verbs

	Class 1			Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
1 sg.	lagja	stōja	sōkja	salbō	haba	fullna
2 sg.	lagjis	stōjis	sōkeis	salbōs	habáis	fullnis
3 sg.	lagjiþ	stōjiþ	sōkeiþ	salbōþ	habáiþ	fullniþ

There are three non-finite forms, the infinitive, e.g. *niman*, the present participle, *nimands*, the past participle, *\*numans*. The present participle is inflected like a weak adjective, though the feminine ends in *-ei*, e.g. *nimandei*.

#### *Preterite-presents*

The Germanic languages have a small group of verbs that are inflected as past-tense forms but have present meaning. They arose when in the shift from an Indo-European aspect system to the Germanic tense system the lexical meaning rather than the aspectual meaning underwent change. For example, *wát* 'I know' is based on the perfect (preterite) form of the Proto-Indo-European root *\*weyd-* 'see'; the aspectual meaning 'I have completed seeing' was not shifted to the preterite meaning 'I have seen' but rather to 'I know' – for, one who has seen knows. Among other members of the group are *kann* 'I know, I can' from 'I have recognized', *ōg* 'I fear' from 'I have suffered in spirit'.

Somewhat similarly, the verb forms *wiljau*, *wileis*, *wili* 'want' are historically optative, but are used as indicatives.

The present-tense forms of the verb *be* are made from the Proto-Indo-European root *\*ǵes-* 'be', e.g. *im* 'I am', *is* 'thou art', *ist* 'is'. The infinitive and past tense are made from the root Proto-Indo-European *\*wes-* 'exist', e.g. *was*, *wast*, *was*, inf. *wisan*, pres. part. *wisands*.

#### **Uninflected Words**

There are four classes of uninflected words: adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. Among these the class of adverbs has the most members, some of which are noted here.

Adverbs derived from adjectives are made with the suffix *-ō* that is a reflex of Proto-Indo-European *-ōd*, and identified by some scholars as an ablative, e.g. *galeikō* 'similarly'; as a more likely explanation it is a form from which the ablative in some nouns arose, notably in Sanskrit and Latin. The suffix *-ba* is used to derive adverbs of manner from adjectives, e.g. *ubilaba* 'evilly'. Adverbs of place form a set of related items using several suffixes, e.g. *inn* 'into', *inna* 'within', *innaprō* 'from within', *h<sup>w</sup>ap* 'where to', *h<sup>w</sup>aprō* 'from where'.

Prepositions are found that govern any of the oblique cases, or also several cases, such as *ana* 'on, at' governing the dative and the accusative, *in* governing all three cases, with the meaning 'because of' when followed by the genitive. They are also used as prefixes in compounding, e.g. *faura-gaggja* 'steward' < 'one going ahead'. When such prefixes are found with verbs, a particle may be placed between the two segments, e.g. *us-nu-gibiþ* 'now give (out)'. The position of the separating particle indicates that such verbal compounds are not fixed yet. This conclusion is supported by the position of the accent in such compounds in Modern German, where the prefix has been weakened in verbs, e.g. *erlauben* 'permit', but not in nouns, e.g. *Urlaub* 'furlough'.

Many conjunctions are in use to indicate the relationships between clauses. They do not govern modal forms, which in Gothic have the function of expressing modality rather than subordination.

Simple conjunction is indicated by *jah* 'and, also', *uh* 'and', and *nih* 'and not'. Disjunction is expressed by *pau(h)* and *aifþpau* < \**aif-þau*, cf. Eng. *if*, 'or', as well as by the correlatives *andizuh ... aifþpau* 'either ... or'. Adversative relationship is expressed by *iþ*, *þan*, *aþþan*, *akei* 'but' and *ak* 'but, on the contrary'.

For indicating conditional relationships *jabái* 'if' and *nibá(i)* 'if not' are used, and for indicating concessive relations, *þáuhjabái* 'even if', *swēþáuh* 'to be sure'.

To indicate purpose, many conjunctions in *-ei* are found, including *ei*, *þatei*, *þēei*, *þei* 'that', *swaei* and *swaswē* 'so that'. The conjunction *swē* is used for comparison with the meaning 'as' and temporally 'as, when'. Other temporal conjunctions are *þan*, *þandē* 'whenever, as long as', *biþē*, *mipþanei* 'while', *sunsei* (*suns-ei*) 'as soon as', *untē* 'until'.

Causal relationship is expressed by *allis*, *áuk*, *untē*, *rahtis* 'for, because'; result by *eipán*, *nu*, *nuh*, *nunu*, *þanuh*, *þannu*, *þaruh* 'therefore, accordingly'.

This large array of conjunctions, most newly created for these uses in Gothic or Proto-Germanic, provides further evidence that means for expressing clausal interrelationships in Proto-Germanic had to be created, as we have noted with relative markers. When the basic order of sentences shifted from the Proto-Indo-European Object–Verb (OV) to Verb–Object (VO) in Proto-Germanic and its dialects, subordinate clauses came to be postposed; markers were then essential to indicate their relationship with the principal clause. The need was even greater because clausal interrelationships were not expressed through verbal forms, for example, subjunctives in contrast with indicatives.

Only a few interjections are included in the texts: *o* 'oh', *sai* 'behold', *wai* 'alas', as well as the three forms modified for number, *hiri*, *hirjats*, *hirjiþ* 'come here'.

## 2.4 Syntax

The many syntactic studies have been chiefly concerned with determining the function of morphological elements and categories, such as the uses of the various case forms, especially where they differ from the Greek. The space allotted does not permit summaries of the results; on the whole the functions of grammatical classes and categories in Gothic are in accordance with those of the other Indo-European languages, and equivalent to those in the other Germanic languages.

Because of the literal translation, the word order of our texts is for the most part that of the Greek original. Citing the order of sentence constituents or the structure of nominal and verbal groups merely provides a description of these structures in Biblical Greek. Only deviations from the Greek can be used to determine the native order, especially when they accord with the patterning of other early Germanic texts, such as the runic inscriptions. We therefore examine such deviations to determine the native syntax, also for its information on the syntax of Proto-Germanic.

These deviations indicate that Gothic retained many patterns of Object-Verb (OV) syntax. In OV languages, e.g. Japanese, Turkish, governing elements occupy the same position with regard to the element governed as does the principal governing element, the verb. Accordingly adpositions follow nouns as postpositions, rather than precede them as prepositions. And in the comparison of inequality construction, the adjective follows the standard rather than precedes it, as in English. Because they are equivalent to objects, complements (object clauses), and also adverbial clauses, precede the principal clause. Moreover, nominal modifiers, such as relative clauses, genitives and adjectives, precede nouns. Residues of OV patterns in a VO language inform us of the previous structure of the language.

### OV Order in Government Constructions

While the order of most clauses maintains that of Greek, in positive sentences with predicate adjectives the auxiliary follows the adjective, as in *siuks ist* 'is sick' (John 11:3). Since many predicate adjective constructions correspond to intransitive verbs in Greek, we may assume that the Gothic pattern is native. The order of such sentences is that of verb-final languages.

Comparative constructions support the assumption of earlier OV order, e.g., *managáim sparwam batizans sijub jus* (lit.) 'than many sparrows better are you' = 'you are better than many sparrows' (Matthew 10:31). Here the Greek does not have a comparative, but rather a verb: *pollôn strouthiôn diaphérete humeís* 'of (from) many sparrows differ you'. While the Gothic pattern differs from the Greek, examples like this illustrate the difficulty of determining the native order. The preposed standard in the comparative construction is indeed as in OV syntax; but the noun phrase also precedes the verb in Greek and may have provided the pattern for the Gothic order. Other

comparatives with standards in the dative, such as *máiza imma* ‘more than he’ (Matthew 11:11) also have the order of the Greek.

### OV Order in Participial Constructions

Attempts have been made to determine the native syntactic pattern through analysis of texts other than the Bible translation. But these, except for the Commentary on the Gospel of John, are short; the Commentary also is conceded to be heavily influenced by Greek, whether or not it is a translation. Yet it includes much subordination through the use of participial constructions, as in *jah þa leikinōn us wambái munans gabaúrþ in tweiþl gadráus* (lit.) ‘and the corporeal from womb thinking birth into doubt fell’ = ‘because he thought of the corporeal birth from the womb, he doubted’. Such use of participial clauses preposed to the principal verb is characteristic of OV languages. This frequent pattern in the Commentary then provides further support for assumption of OV as the native word order. We must conclude, however, on the basis of the numerous conjunctions in the biblical texts and other constructions discussed below that the language had been shifting from OV to VO patterning.

### The Infinitive as Verbal Noun

A construction that has attracted considerable attention is the use of the infinitive to translate passive infinitives of Greek, as in *háit nu witan þamma hláíwa* ‘command now guarding [(to) guard] for that tomb’ for Greek *kéleuson oûn asphalísthênai tòn táphon* ‘command that the tomb be guarded’. Such use of infinitives as object, and also as subject, indicates that the so-called infinitive actually was a verbal noun; this analysis is supported by its origin in an accusative suffix, Proto-Germanic *\*-onom*. The present participle used as noun maintains similar evidence, for, when nominal, it is used with the genitive, as in *þans fijands galgins Xristaus* ‘those hating of the cross of Christ’ in contrast with its use of *fijands* when adjectival with a following dative. Such verbal noun constructions are characteristic of OV structure.

### Negation and Interrogation

Negation is marked by the particle *ni* or the suffixed form *nih*. These typically stand before the verb.

Interrogation is marked by the enclitic *-u* generally placed on verbs, as in *wileiz-u* ‘do you wish’ (Luke 6:54). In negative sentences, however, it may be enclitic to *ni*, as in *ni-u gamēliþ ist?* ‘Is it not written?’ (Mark 11:17). This marker assumes a positive reply. The markers for a negative reply are *ja-u* and *ibái*, as in *ibái mag blinds blindana tiuhan* ‘can a blind person lead a blind person?’ The position of the particles is often that of the Greek. Yet the placing of interrogative *-u* after verbs may be taken as a residue of OV order; such verbal modifiers are postposed to the verb in OV languages.

### Subordination

Subordination is indicated by conjunctions that do not govern the modal form of the verb, as noted above. Accordingly the construction of complex sentences is still highly paratactic as in OV languages.

Relative constructions, as we have indicated, are typically introduced by pronouns or particles suffixed by *-ei*. These often reproduce parallel relatives in Greek. The marker may however be used by itself, as in *from þamma daga ei háusidēdum* ‘from the day that we heard it’ (Colossians 1:9). It then functions as if indicating the focus of the sentence. This force is found when it is used with *ik* and *þu*, as in *þu h<sup>w</sup>as is þuei stōjis* ‘thou who art – thou-who judgest > who are you that you judge?’

Relative constructions then have something of the pattern found in Hittite, Vedic Sanskrit, early Greek and early Latin, where the relativizer is essentially a focusing particle. In Hittite and Latin the particle is based on PIE *k<sup>w</sup>-*, in Sanskrit and Greek on *yo-*. The focusing particle was placed in the clause that complemented the principal clause, as in the examples here, and eventually developed as the relative pronoun. The differing relative markers in the Germanic dialects, e.g. Ger. *der, die, das*, Eng. *who, which, that*, indicate that Proto-Germanic had no single marker, and that each of its dialects developed its own.

### Passivization

Greek passive constructions may be translated with the Gothic medio-passive in the present, with forms of *-nan* verbs, and with periphrastic constructions made with the preterite participle and forms of *wisan* and *wairþan*. The periphrastic forms still maintain some of their literal value, and accordingly are not actually elements of the verbal system. The perfect passive is translated with forms of *wisan* ‘be’ in most occurrences; the aorist on the other hand was more commonly translated with *wairþan* ‘become’. Presumably the difference in selection was made because *wisan* like the perfect indicates a state rather than a process. Development of such periphrastic forms gives further indication that the language was moving to VO patterning.

## 2.5 Lexis

In spite of its limited corpus, Gothic maintains words that are not attested in the other Germanic dialects, e.g. *amsas* ‘shoulders’, *aljis\** ‘other’, *háih\** ‘one-eyed’, *milip* ‘honey’, and also the word for ‘ruler’ borrowed from Celtic *reiks*. Gaps in attestation, as of *\*mōþar* ‘mother’, for which *aipai* is used, may be a result of our small corpus. The word *atta* is used for ‘father’; its cognate *fadar* is attested only once.

The vocabulary includes terms that were borrowed into Proto-Germanic from Celtic, some of which belong in the military sphere, e.g. *brunjō*

'breastplate', *eisarn*\* 'iron', *kēlikn* 'tower'; others have to do with legal and social arrangements, e.g. *áiþs*\* 'oath', *ambahts* 'servant', *arbi* 'inheritance', *dulgs*\* 'debtor', *freis* 'free'. (Placement of \* after a word indicates that the form, usually the base of a noun or verb, is not attested, but that another form of that word is attested, such as the dative plural, so that the base form can be provided with reasonable assurance.) These suggest that the Germanic peoples were in contact with Celts in the period before our era, and were culturally influenced by them.

Words borrowed into Proto-Germanic from Latin reflect trading, presumably in the centuries surrounding the beginning of our era: *akeit*\* 'vinegar', *asilus*\* 'ass', *assarjus*\* '(name of a) coin', *áurkeis*\* 'a pot', *katils*\* 'kettle', *káupōn* 'trade'. Latin words were also taken from the general vocabulary, such as *káisar*\* 'emperor'.

Subsequently Gothic borrowed many ecclesiastical terms. Some of these are found in two forms, the first, for example, *diabulus* 'devil' assumed to be borrowed before the time of Wulfila, who presumably used the form *diabauilus*. Among such terms borrowed from Greek are: *aggilus* 'angel', *aikklēsjo* 'congregation', *paska* 'Easter'. Yet the *-us* ending indicates the influence of Latin, from which terms were introduced by early missionaries. The basic vocabulary, however, remains Germanic.

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# 3 *Old and Middle Scandinavian*

*Jan Terje Faarlund*

## 3.1 Introduction

The Scandinavian languages are the North Germanic languages spoken in Scandinavia. Sometimes, and especially in the Scandinavian countries, the term ‘Scandinavian’ is used in a narrow sense to refer to the mutually comprehensible dialects and standard languages of Denmark, Norway and Sweden (including parts of Finland). The term ‘Nordic’ is then used in a wider sense to include Icelandic and Faroese. In this chapter ‘Scandinavian’ will be used in the wide sense.

The first detectable dialect split between East and West Scandinavian is due to sound changes that may have taken place by the seventh century. The common Scandinavian language of the period prior to that is called Ancient Scandinavian. The East Scandinavian dialects were spoken in Denmark and Sweden. West Scandinavian included the dialects spoken in Norway and in the Norse settlements in the West (Iceland, the Faroe Islands, the Shetland and Orkney Islands, the Isle of Man, parts of Scotland, and Greenland). The present-day descendants of West Scandinavian are Icelandic, Faroese and Norwegian. Of these, Norwegian has changed most radically, partly under the influence from neighbouring Swedish and Danish, but mainly as part of a common mainland Scandinavian linguistic development.

We can distinguish three periods in the history of Scandinavian: Ancient Scandinavian, until the seventh century, with no known or significant dialect differences; Old Scandinavian, seventh to fifteenth century, with two main dialect areas, West Scandinavian (Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian) and East Scandinavian (Old Danish and Old Swedish); and the modern Scandinavian languages, from the fifteenth century to the present. Old West Scandinavian is commonly referred to as ‘Old Norse’.

Old Norse is by far the best attested variety of Old Scandinavian. ‘Classical’ Old Norse is the language found in the Icelandic sagas from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There is also a standardized spelling adopted for Old Icelandic, used in edited texts from the classical period. This chapter will be structured primarily as a synchronic description of classical Old Norse: where relevant, I will make diachronic digressions in either direction,

and where there are significant East Scandinavian deviations, those will be dealt with.

Quite frequently, the term ‘Middle’ Norwegian etc. is used of the last couple of centuries before the Reformation (mid-sixteenth century). This is a chronological term rather than a linguistic one. Linguistically, it was in many ways a period of transition, and it is impossible to define a sufficiently uniform ‘middle’ stage of Scandinavian. It was a period where many of the changes that led to the modern system took place, but at different times in the different areas of Scandinavia. The changes that took place usually started in Danish, followed by Swedish and East Norwegian, then West Norwegian, and finally Icelandic, which is the most conservative of the Scandinavian languages.

The Scandinavian languages and dialects of today differ mainly in terms of how far they have moved away from Old Scandinavian in various parts of the system. Therefore it is not possible to state the dates where a given change took place. For example, monophthongization of /ai/ to /e:/ had taken place in Jutland by the year 1000, while the diphthong still exists in many Norwegian dialects. Similarly, there are still dialects in mainland Scandinavia that have a separate dative case or number agreement in verbs, although such features started to disappear from the written languages towards the end of the ‘middle’ period and are now absent from all the standard languages of mainland Scandinavia.

### 3.2 Phonology

#### Orthography

Old Scandinavian is recorded in two different scripts, the runic script (the *Futhark*) and the Roman alphabet, which came into use with the introduction of Christianity shortly after the turn of the millennium. With certain additions the latter was made quite suitable as a means of representing the sounds and phonemes of Old Norse. The <þ> and later the <ð> for the voiced counterpart were borrowed from Old English. The <y> for the front, high labial vowel was also borrowed from Anglo-Saxon. Digraphs were used to represent the

**Table 3.1** Vowel phonemes of Old Norse

	i	í	y	ý	u	ú	e	é	ø	œ	o	ó	æ	a	á	ǫ
High	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+
Back	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	+	+
Labial	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+
Long	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-

rich vowel system of Old Scandinavian. In addition various diacritics were occasionally adopted both for vowel quality and quantity. In the standardized spelling used in edited texts and adopted here, the acute accent ' is used to denote long vowels. The letters used and their phonetic value can be seen from Tables 3.1 and 3.3.

## Vowels

### *Old Norse Vowel System*

The vowel phonemes of Old Norse can be represented as in Table 3.1, where the vowels are given in the standard orthography. The main redundancy in the system is that non-low back vowels are always labial. There are seven pairs distinguished by length only. Early in the period the short /æ/ merged with /e/. The long variant of /ɔ/ merged with /ǫ/ early in the thirteenth century, and is represented by that letter in most of the classical texts. In a later development, in Norwegian and Swedish, the labial /ǫ/ also tended to become higher, and thus it would come closer to /ó/. This vowel would in turn move up and threaten to merge with /ú/, which then would move forward and become a high central vowel.

The /i/ and the /u/ can also occur in a non-syllabic position and function as semivowels, /j/ and /w/ (the latter written <v>). In Ancient Scandinavian, /j/ was lost word initially, *ár* 'year' (< \**jara*), and /w/ was lost in front of stressed labial vowels, *ulfr* 'wolf' (< \**wulfaz*).

This vowel system has evolved from the Ancient Scandinavian system through the process of *umlaut*. Ancient Scandinavian had the five canonical vowels /i, u, e, o, a/, which could be long or short. In stressed syllables preceding unstressed syllables with the vowel /i/ (syllabic or semivowel) the back vowels would have a fronted allophone: /u/ > [y], /o/ > [ø], /a/ > [æ], /au/ > [ey]. Similarly, an /u/ in a following syllable would cause labialization, particularly /a/ > [ɔ], but occasionally also /i/ > [y] and /e/ > [ø] caused by a following semivowel. There was also an *a*-umlaut, which was a lowering of high vowels preceding an unstressed /a/. During the period from c. AD 500 to 700, called the 'syncopation period', Scandinavian underwent some important phonological changes, such as the loss of vowels in unstressed syllables. This loss led to the phonologization of certain allophonic variants. For example, the plural of *land* was phonologically \**landu*, pronounced with a labialized ('rounded') root vowel, \*[lɔndu]. When the final vowel was lost, the labialized root vowel became the mark of the plural for this class of nouns, and the [ɔ] became a phoneme, written <ɔ>.

In general, there are more umlaut effects in the West than in the East. In the eastern dialects of East Scandinavian there is no *a*-umlaut, and only a few traces of *u*-umlaut. The *i*-umlaut, however, seems to have extended throughout Scandinavia. All of these umlaut rules were productive at a period prior to that covered by our written records; therefore it is not possible to describe

the rules accurately. The *i*-umlaut has great consequences for the inflectional morphology of the Scandinavian languages, and is the basis of important morphophonemic alterations, which will be treated in the section on morphology (pp. 45–53). It was – at least during a certain period – sensitive to syllable structure, therefore it did not apply in words with a short root syllable where the /i/ was lost: *staðr* ‘place’ (< \**staðiz*). The *a*-umlaut has mainly affected the lexicon, and plays a less important role in the grammar of the languages.

One umlaut rule is still a synchronic rule of Old Norse, however, namely the so-called younger *u*-umlaut, which changes /a/ to /ɥ/ in front of an unstressed /u/ in an inflectional ending, as in *dɔgum*, the dative plural of *dagr* ‘day’. This rule is most consistently applied in Icelandic and in western Norwegian, less so in eastern Norwegian, and in East Scandinavian only in specific environments, such as across a nasal consonant.

*Breaking* is another effect of unstressed vowels on stressed root vowels. *A*-breaking would change a short /e/ in a root syllable to /ia/ under the influence of a following /a/, as in *hjarta* ‘heart’. *U*-breaking is the *u*-umlauted variant of this, caused by an original /u/ in the following syllable: *jorð* ‘earth’ (< \**erþu*). By this process, initial /j/ was reintroduced into the language, after the loss of word-initial /j/ in Ancient Scandinavian.

### *Diphthongs*

There are three diphthongs in Old Norse: /æi/, /ɥu/, /æy/. The first one has developed from Ancient Scandinavian /ai/ through a raising of the first element under the influence from the second (some kind of *i*-umlaut): /ɥu/ comes from /au/ through labialization of the first element under influence from the /u/ (some kind of *u*-umlaut); /æy/ is the *i*-umlaut of /au/. /æ/ in /æy/ was furthermore labialized, and the diphthong developed into /øy/. In East Scandinavian the diphthongs were monophthongized early on: /ai/ > /æi/ > /e:/, /au/ > /ɥu/ > /ø:/, /ey/ > /øy/ > /ø:/. The trend started in Jutland and spread gradually east through Denmark and then north through southern and central Sweden and to parts of eastern Norway. By 1100 the diphthongs were monophthongized in all of Denmark and most of Sweden.

### *Vowels in Unstressed Syllables*

The inventory of vowels in unstressed syllables is much smaller than that in stressed syllables. Instead of the sixteen phonemes of Table 3.1, there is only a contrast of three vowel phonemes in Old Norse, see Table 3.2. There is no length opposition, /a/ is distinguished from the other two by the feature [+ low]. The relevant feature is [± low] rather than [± high], which is shown by the fact that in many manuscripts, especially early Icelandic ones, the unstressed vowels are spelt <e> and <o> instead of <i> and <u>. /u/ is distinguished from the other two by the feature [+ labial]. This is shown by the fact that an unstressed /a/ becomes /u/ under *u*-umlaut, as in *kolluðu*

**Table 3.2 Vowels in unstressed syllables**

	i	u	a
Low	-	-	+
Labial	-	+	-

'called (3 pl.)', from *kalla* + *ðu*. (If the distinctive feature were [ $\pm$  back], there would be nothing for the *u*-umlaut to change.)

In Old Swedish and in eastern and northwestern dialects of Old Norwegian the use of *-i/-u* vs. *-e/-o* in unstressed syllables is determined by a principle of vowel harmony. Root syllables with a [+ high] vowel are followed by *i* and *u* in an unstressed syllable, as in *flutti* 'moved' and *bitu* 'bit (3 pl.)'; and root syllables with a [-high, -low] vowel are followed by *e* and *o*: *dæmde* 'judged, sentenced' and *tóko* 'took (3 pl.)'. (After low root vowels the picture is less consistent.)

### Consonants

The consonant phonemes of Old Norse are represented as in Table 3.3, where the consonants are given in the standard orthography. The non-strident non-sonorants form three groups of three consonants each: the labials, the velars, and the dentals [-labial, -velar]. Each of these has a voiceless stop (/p, t, k/), a voiced stop (/b, d, g/), and a fricative (/f, þ, h/). In the labials and dentals the feature [ $\pm$  continuant] takes precedence over [ $\pm$  voice]; there is a voice opposition in the stops, and no voice opposition in the fricatives. That means that [f] and [v], and [θ] and [ð] are in complementary distribution. The voiceless fricatives are used word initially, and the voiced ones word medially and finally. The letter <f> is used for both the voiced and the voiceless variant, as in *fara* [fara] 'go' and *hafa* [hava] 'have', whereas there are separate letters for the two dental allophones, as in *þaðan* 'thence'. In the velar series [+ voice] takes precedence over [ $\pm$  continuant]; there is a continuant opposition

**Table 3.3 Consonant phonemes of Old Norse**

	p	b	f	t	d	þ	k	g	h	s	m	n	r	l
Sonorant	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+
Continuant	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	0	+	+	-	-	+	+
Velar	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
Labial	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
Strident	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
Voiced	-	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+

between the two voiceless consonants, /k/ and /h/, while the voiced /g/ may be a stop or a fricative depending on the environment.

By the Old Scandinavian period, the /h/ had been lost in all positions except word initially. Thus an /h/ which was the result of final devoicing of a fricative /g/ would also be lost: \**mag* > \**mah* > *má* 'may, can'. In Norwegian and East Scandinavian the /h/ was lost everywhere except word initially before vowels and semivowels. This created a difference between Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian, as in *hlutr* 'part', *hringr* 'ring', *hníga* 'sink', etc. vs *lutr*, *ringr*, *níga*, etc.

A nasal preceding a final stop (which was devoiced) was generally assimilated to that stop in the West, but not in the East. Thus the past tense of *binda* 'bind' was *bant* (< *band* through final devoicing) in the East, but *batt* in the West.

A synchronic rule of Old Scandinavian is the assimilation of /r/ to a preceding /s/, /n/, or /l/. This takes place whenever a suffix starting with /r/ is added to a stem which ends in one of those consonants. In the case of /l/ and /n/ the rule does not apply after short stressed vowels: cf. *stóll* (< *stól+r*) 'table', *ketill* (< *ketil+r*) 'kettle', vs *telr* 'tells'. In most cases /nn/ changes to /ð/ before /r/, as in *maðr* (< *mann+r*) 'man'.

In Danish post-vocalic voiceless stops began to be voiced in the twelfth century, and later the voiced stops would develop into fricatives. Together with the vowel reduction mentioned above, this would lead to the characteristic Danish development: *mata* > *made* > *maðe* 'feed'. (The present-day orthography represents the middle stage.)

Towards the end of the thirteenth century certain consonant clusters began to be unacceptable, in particular final clusters ending in /r/. Since the /r/ in most cases was an inflectional ending, it was not easily dropped. Instead, an epenthetic vowel was inserted, *bændr* > *bænder* 'farmers'. The vowel would often be written <æ>. In western Norwegian and Icelandic an <u> was used.

## Prosody

### Stress

There is a distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables in Old Scandinavian. As we have already seen, the two kinds of syllables have a different inventory of distinctive vowel qualities. The stress is normally on the root syllable of a word; in most cases that is the first syllable. In compound words, the first element (or sometimes the second) has the primary stress, while the other element has a secondary stress. Certain prefixes may also have primary stress, in which case the root has secondary stress.

### Quantity

Syllable quantity plays no significant part in the synchronic phonology of Old Scandinavian, but it did play a certain role in the derivational morphology of

Ancient Scandinavian (see below, pp. 48 and 51), and it has far-reaching consequences for the subsequent development of the sound systems of the Scandinavian dialects. As we have seen, vowels may be short or long, and consonants may occur in clusters or be geminated. In stressed syllables, a short or a long vowel may be followed by none, one, or two (or more) consonants. Stressed syllables may thus be short, long, or 'overlong'.

In eastern Norwegian and western Swedish bisyllabic words have undergone certain phonological processes that are sensitive to the quantity of the root syllable, often referred to as *vowel balance*. On the one hand these processes have created new morphological patterns and distinctions in those dialects, and on the other hand they have set them off from the other Old Scandinavian dialects.

One such process is *vowel reduction*, which in these dialects affects only words with a long root syllable. After a long stressed syllable an unstressed vowel is reduced, while it is maintained after a short syllable. In eastern Norwegian this has led to the so-called 'cleft infinitive', with the ending *-a* after originally short root syllables (*vera* 'be') and *-e* after long root syllables (*kaste* 'throw'). In some of the Norwegian dialects the reduced vowel was completely dropped. In some words with a short root syllable the root vowel assimilated to the final vowel: *gatu* > *gutu* 'road'. The basis for these processes is the fact that a final syllable following a short root syllable receives some of the word stress, and is therefore better preserved. In some dialects such words probably had a 'balanced' stress.

In the further development of Scandinavian an important restructuring of the syllable structures took place. In West Scandinavian and Swedish an interdependency between stress and quantity arose; a stressed syllable had to be long. This means that the short stressed syllables were lengthened, either through lengthening of the vowel or through gemination of the consonant, depending on the actual consonants involved, and on the dialect. This change can be described as follows: The syllable boundary shifted towards the left, so that the last one of post-vocalic consonants can no longer count as part of the preceding syllable, and a long syllable is defined as a bi-moraic syllable. Thus a word like *fé* 'cattle' has still two morae, but now it counts as a long syllable and can still constitute a stressed syllable. */hol/* 'hole' is reanalysed as */ho-l/* and becomes mono-moraic, therefore it changes into */ho:l/* or */holl/*, and */koma/* 'come' might become */ko:ma/* or */komma/*. At the same time overlong syllables were also abolished, mostly through shortening of the vowel: *nátt* > *natt* 'night'.

In Danish a different development took place; short vowels in stressed, open syllables were lengthened, */fara/* > */fa:re/* 'go, travel'. This did away with one type of short stressed syllables. On the other hand, all geminate consonants were shortened, *pakk* > *tak* 'thanks', which gave rise to a new type of short stressed syllables in monosyllabic words. In monosyllabic words with a short vowel plus a short consonant, the vowel would either remain short or be lengthened, as in */skip/* > */ski:b/* 'ship'.

*Tone*

In most Norwegian and Swedish dialects there is today a distinction of two word tones in words of more than one syllable. These tones have never been recorded in writing, therefore we have only indirect evidence of their origin. The tonal difference was originally a difference between the pitch contour of monosyllabic and bisyllabic words. The two tones are therefore called 'single' (') and 'double' (") tone, respectively. In the modern languages there are also bisyllabic words with the single tone. These are mainly of three origins: they are loan words; they are monosyllabic roots with the definite article attached to them, /'ba:de/ (*bad* + *et*) 'the bath'; or they are words that have become bisyllabic through the insertion of an epenthetic vowel, /'biter/ (< *bítr*) 'bites (pres.)'. Words which were also bisyllabic in early Old Scandinavian have the double tone: /"bade/ 'bathe (inf.)', /"biter/ (< *bítar*) 'bites, bits (m. pl.)'. These facts indicate that the tonal distinction must have arisen before the definite article changed from being a clitic to becoming a suffix, and before the epenthetic vowel was introduced in final consonant clusters ending in an *r*, which means no later than early thirteenth century.

**3.3 Morphology**

Historically, most nouns and verbs consist of three elements: the root (or a derived stem), a stem suffix and an inflectional ending. The concatenation of the root and the stem suffix is not a productive process in Old Scandinavian; in the verbs it reflects older (mostly Common Germanic) derivational processes. For many classes of words the stem suffix is not even directly discernible on Old Scandinavian; it may have disappeared through phonological development, or it may have merged with the root or the inflectional ending, and hence it plays a role only in determining the inflectional class of the word. In some cases a stem suffix may have left its traces in the form of an unlauded root vowel.

In some of the inflectional categories there are minor differences in the actual forms in the various dialects of Old Scandinavian. The examples and patterns given in this section are from Old Norse. For a complete survey of eastern Scandinavian deviations, the reader is referred to standard historical grammars of those languages.

**The Nominal Group***Nouns*

Old Scandinavian nouns are divided into stem classes depending on the original Proto-Germanic stem suffix. One possibility was for the stem suffix to end in one of the vowels *a*, *ō*, *i*, *u*. These nouns form the strong declensions. Then the stem suffix might have ended in an *n* preceded by *a*, *ō*, *i*. Those are the weak declensions. In addition there are a few nouns that have stems

**Table 3.4** Development of masculine *a*-stem nouns

	Singular		Plural	
Nom.	*armaz	> armr	*armōr	> armar
Acc.	*arma	> arm	*armanz	> arma
Gen.	*armas	> arms	*armō	> arma
Dat.	*armē	> armi	*armumz	> qrmum

Note: The Ancient Scandinavian forms of this particular noun are reconstructed.

ending in *nd* or *r*, as well as roots without stem endings.

There are three genders in Old Scandinavian. The gender of the noun partly depends on its stem class: *a*-stems are masculine or neuter, *ō*-stems are feminine, *i*-stems are masculine or feminine, *u*-stems are masculine (originally also neuter and feminine). The gender of *n*-stems depends on the preceding vowel as in the vowel stems. *nd*-stems are masculine, and *r*-stems and athematic stems are masculine or feminine.

Nouns have two numbers – the original dual having been replaced by the plural – and four cases: nominative, accusative, dative and genitive. The two categories, number and case, are expressed syncretically by one inflectional ending. There are thus at most eight different endings for a given noun. In the plural the ending *a* is generalized in the genitive and *um* in the dative for all classes. The forms of the noun *armr* ‘arm’ as derived from Ancient Scandinavian are shown in Table 3.4. The stem vowel is *a*, and the noun is masculine. The Ancient Scandinavian forms of this particular noun are reconstructed, but most of the forms are attested with other nouns of the same stem class. As can be seen, the stem vowel *a* had merged with the inflectional ending in some of the forms as early as Ancient Scandinavian. The major changes from Ancient Scandinavian to Old Scandinavian are the loss of an unstressed short vowel except when followed by a double consonant; the shortening of long unstressed vowels; and the change /z/ > /r/. In the dative plural there is *u*-umlaut (see section 3.2). Neuter nouns have no ending in the nominative/accusative. In the plural the stem vowel appeared as *u* in Ancient Scandinavian, which caused *u*-umlaut of an /a/ in the root, and was then lost: *land* ‘land’, plural *lōnd*.

The *ō*-stems are all feminine. In Ancient Scandinavian the stem vowel appears as *u* in the nominative singular, which would cause *u*-umlaut of an *a* in the root. There is no ending in the nominative singular; the genitive singular ends in *ar*, and the dative singular in *u* or *∅*. In the plural, these nouns have the same ending for the nominative and the accusative.

Masculine *i*-stems have basically the same original inflectional endings as the *a*-stems, the main difference being that whenever the stem vowel is visible, it shows up as *i*. The stem vowel causes *i*-umlaut where possible in

**Table 3.5 Declension of masculine *an*-stem**

	Singular	Plural
Nom.	granni	grannar
Acc.	granna	granna
Gen.	granna	granna
Dat.	granna	grønnum

most nouns with a long root syllable: *gestr* ‘guest’, pl. *gestir*. Some nouns have a genitive in *ar*: *staðar* ‘place’s’ (no umlaut in a short syllable). Feminine *i*-stems always have the genitive in *ar*.

During and before the transition from Ancient Scandinavian to Old Scandinavian there was a fluctuation between  $\bar{o}$ -stems and feminine *i*-stems. On the one hand, the  $\bar{o}$ -stem pattern without the *r* in the nominative and with the same ending for nominative and accusative in the plural was considered a feminine pattern. On the other hand, several original  $\bar{o}$ -stems adopted the plural ending *ir*, while the feminine *i*-stems developed a specifically feminine declension type. This development continues into modern Norwegian and is still going on, since the plural ending *er* (< *ir*) is being generalized to all feminine nouns, while *ar* is being generalized to all masculines. In the modern dialects, then, the stem vowel, which is now to be analysed as part of the plural ending, is determined by the gender of the noun, while originally the gender of a noun was determined by its stem class.

The *u*-stems make up a minor class in Old Scandinavian, and they are all masculines. The stem vowel shows up only in the accusative plural, but has left its trace in the form of *u*-umlaut in other forms. The genitive singular has the ending *ar* and has no *u*-umlaut. The nominative singular ends in *ir* and the dative singular in *i*, both with *i*-umlaut.

In the *n*-stems the *n* of the stem suffix has disappeared in most Old Scandinavian forms. In the singular, those nouns end in a vowel, and all the oblique cases have the same form. In the plural the nominative is based on the strong declensions, and the dative has the ending *um*. The forms of the masculine *an*-stem noun *granni* ‘neighbour’ are shown in Table 3.5.

Feminine  $\bar{o}n$ -stems have the ending *a* in the nominative singular (*saga* ‘story’), and *u* for the other singular forms (*sögu*). Nominative and accusative plural are identical in the feminine gender (*sögur*). In the genitive plural the stem consonant *n* shows up (*sagna*). Neuter *an*-stems have the ending *a* throughout the singular (*auga* ‘eye’), and *u* in the nominative/accusative plural (*augu*). *in*-stems end in *i* in all cases in the singular (*glæði* ‘happiness, joy’), and probably also in the plural except the dative, where there would be an *um*-ending. Most of these nouns are abstracts, however, derived (diachronically) from adjectives (*glad* + *in*), and are therefore rarely used in the plural.

**Table 3.6 Personal pronouns proper**

	Singular			Dual		Plural	
Nom.	ek	þú		vit	it	vér	ér
Acc.	mik	þik	sik	okkr	ykkur	oss	yðr
Gen.	mín	þín	sín	okkar	ykkar	vár	yðar
Dat.	mér	þér	sér	okkr	ykkur	oss	yðr

Some nouns have originally an *ij* or a *w* preceding the stem suffix *a(n)* or *ō(n)*. In these nouns, any stem vowel that can undergo umlaut does so, also in those forms where the *ij* or *w* is lost. There is therefore no morphophonemic change of stem vowel in these nouns. Thus an original *a* has become *o* in words with *w* (*sōngr* < \**sangwaz* ‘song’), and *e* in words with *ij* (*stef* < \**stafija* ‘refrain’ ‘verse’). In words with a short root syllable, *ij* was reduced to the semivowel *j*. In these words, the semivowels appear in Old Norse only when they are followed by a vowel with different feature values. Thus *j* appears only in front of *a* and *u* (*stef*, gen. pl. *stefja*, dat. pl. *stefjum*). And *w* appears only in front of *a* and *i* (*sōngr*, dat. sg. *sōngvi*, nom. pl. *sōngvar*). After a long root syllable the semivowel *j* was lost and only *i* remained. This in turn was deleted before another vowel, but was maintained before a consonant and word finally. Thus the neuter *a*-stem *kvæði* ‘poem’ keeps the *i* in all forms except in the genitive and dative plural, where it is followed by *a* and *u*, respectively.

### Pronouns

The set of personal pronouns in Old Scandinavian is made up of three separate morphological systems. First, there is the system of personal pronouns proper, where there is a distinction of three numbers (the dual still exists in this system) and four cases, but no gender distinction (Table 3.6). These are the pronouns used for the first and second person, and for the third-person reflexive. As in other Indo-European languages, there is a high degree of suppletion. The reflexive forms (*sik* etc.) are used also for the dual and the plural. Since pronouns are often unstressed, especially when postposed to the verb, various clitic forms appear. Thus in poetry, the first-person singular may appear simply as a suffix *-k* on the verb. (The cliticization of the reflexive pronoun is treated in the section on verbal morphology.)

In some dialects, especially in western Norway, the nominative of the first and second persons dual and plural following a finite verb were reanalysed, whereby the verbal ending was analysed as an initial consonant of the pronoun: *hafið ér* > *hafi þér* ‘have you’, similarly *hofum vér* > *hofu mér* ‘have we’. Subsequently, this was restored as *hafið þér*, and the new pronoun form was used also in other positions: *þér hafið*. The first-person plurals in *m* still