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### Overview of old Germanic languages and their followers

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## 3 OVERVIEW OF OLD GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND THEIR FOLLOWERS

### 3.1 East Germanic Languages (“Vistula–Oder Languages”)

The East Germanic branch includes several tribal dialects which were spoken during the first four centuries CE in the area of present-day Poland, Ukraine and the eastern Balkans. They later spread to the central Danube area, northern Italy, southern France, to the Iberian Peninsula and in case of the Vandals also to northern Africa. None of the East Germanic languages/dialects, with the exception of Crimean Gothic, survived after the year 1000. Nor have any texts written in any of the East Germanic tribal languages/dialects been preserved, with the major exception of Gothic (a translation of a large part of the New Testament and several early runic inscriptions). Their inclusion into the East Germanic language group is based on characteristic phonetic features in the small amount of glosses noted in Latin texts (and also in proper names and loanwords into languages which were finally superimposed on their territory), as well as on the evidence found in ancient and early medieval texts describing the kinship between individual tribes (compare with the above-cited account by Pliny of the “Vandils” and their kinship with the Burgundians, Gutons, etc.).

#### 3.1.1 Vandalic

There are three known variants of the Vandalic tribal name: *Vandali* (3rd century: Cassius Dio 55.1.3; 5th c: Orosius 7.15.8; 6th c: Jordanes *Getica* 60.11, 80.16, and others), *Vandili* (1st century: Pliny 4.99) and *Vandilii* (1st century: Tacitus 2), and *Vanduli* (3rd century: *Tabula Peutingeriana*). The initial form \**Wandālōz* probably meant “[people of the] beautiful valley” (Trubačev 1974, 56). The path of Vandal settlements leads to the Jutland Peninsula. The northern part of the peninsula is still called *Vendsyssel* (*Vændlesysæl* in Old Danish) and its northernmost promontory *Vandilsskagi* (Saxo Grammaticus, 9th century; Adam of Bremen, 11th century). The Prose Edda mentions “sea kings” called *Vinill* and *Vandill*. However, the ancient records, which are several centuries older, place the oldest settlements of the Vandals between the rivers Vistula and Oder. Jordanes (6th century) notes that the Goths conquered the *Hulmerugii* as well as their neighbours, the Vandals [§26]. It seems that at the time of the arrival of the Goths, the Vandals settled on the western bank of the Vistula, probably in a more southern location than the *Hulmerugii*. Based on the information extracted from Cassius Dio, a Roman historian writing in Greek, the Vandals had spread as far as the Giant Mountains (Krkonoše) by the beginning of the 3rd century: “The Albis rises in the Vandalic Mountains, and empties, a mighty river, into the northern ocean. Drusus undertook to cross this river, but failing in the attempt, set up trophies and withdrew.” [55.1.3].<sup>12</sup>

12) μέχρι τοῦ Ἀλβίου, πάντα πορθῶν. ἐκείνον γάρ ῥεῖ δὲ ἐκ τῶν Οὐανδαλικῶν ὄρων, καὶ ἐς τὸν ὠκεανὸν τὸν προσάρκτιον πολλῶ μεγέθει ἐκδίδωσιν ἔπεχείρησε μὲν περαιωθῆναι, οὐκ ἠδυνήθη δέ, ἀλλὰ τρόπαια στήσας ἀνεχώρησε.

Translated by Earnest Cary with Herbert B. Foster (1914–1927).

One of the Vandalic tribes, the **Silingi** (positively identified as Vandals by Hydatius, a Spanish bishop and author of chronicles [...*Vandali cognomine Silingi*] around 420), lived in the area of present-day Silesia in the 2nd century [Ptolemy 2.11.10]. This ethnonym is undoubtedly connected to the name of the area itself, which is *Silesia* in its Latinized form (1017 in *pago Silensi*), *Śląsk* in Polish, regardless of the origin of this name (derived from the “holy” mountain *Ślęza*, renamed *Sobótka* in the 14th century and called *Zobten* in German, which had been worshipped long before the arrival of Christianity; or from the river *Ślęza*, 1155 *Selenza*, detailed account in Udolph 1995, 335–354).

In the 3rd century, Cassius Dio noted the existence of two Vandalic kings from the **Hasdingi** family (= Old Icelandic *Haddingjar*, Old English *Heardingas*, Old High German *Hartunge*; the respective Gothic form would be *\*Hazdiggōs* and all are derived from Germanic *\*xazd-* “long hair as a sign of aristocratic origin?”, cf. Old Icelandic *haddr* “long female hair”), whose names he noted down as *Raptos* and *Raos* (cf. Gothic *raus* “reed” and Old Icelandic *rapttr* “log?”): “Under the leadership of their chieftains Raos and Raptos, the Hasdingi came to Dacia with all their possessions, hoping to secure the property and the country as a service to their allies. When this plan failed, however, they left their women and children in the protection of Clemens, until they conquered the land of the Costoboci with their weapons; after subjugating that nation, they continued in plundering Dacia no less than before” [72.12]. Two Vandalic kings are also mentioned in the text *Origo gentium Langobardum* from the 7th century (see Appendix) and Paul the Deacon’s “History of the Langobards” from the 8th century. Both of these sources call them *Assi* and *Ambri* and tell us that they were the leaders of the Vandals at the time when the Vandals still lived in the country of *Scoringa*, probably located in the Jutland Peninsula. At that time, they were supposedly attacked by the *Winnili* tribe (that is, the Langobards), who were also led by two chieftains, *Ibor* and *Aion* [*Origo* § 1 – see Appendix].

According to Jordanes, around 336 the Vandals lived between the rivers *Marisia* (present-day *Marusza*), *Grisia* (present-day *Körös* in Hungarian, *Griul* in Romanian), *Miliare* (present-day White *Körös*) and *Gilpil* (present-day Black *Körös*); that is, in the territory of what is now eastern Hungary and north-western Romania. Their neighbours were the Marcomanni to the west, the Hermunduri to the north and the Goths to the east. It was here, on the banks of the river *Marisia*, that the Vandals led by King Wisimar from the Hasdingi family fought the Goths led by King Geberic. After this fateful battle, the remaining Vandals moved to the west. The emperor Constantine gave them permission to settle in Pannonia [*Getica* §§ 113–15].

Around 400, they were forced to leave it under pressure from the Huns and their allies among other Germanic tribes. They made alliances with other tribes, primarily with the Silingi, but also with the Suebi and with the Iranian Alans. Under the leadership of King Godigisel, the Vandals plundered the upper Danube area in Rhaetia in 401. By 405 they had already got as far as the river Neckar and in the winter of 406–407 they crossed the frozen Rhine with their allies, despite the resistance of the Frankish allies of Rome. Over the following three years, they plundered Gaul while moving into Hispania. Here, the Suebi and the Hasdingi settled in Gallaecia in the north-west of the peninsula and the Silingi and the Alani occupied Baetica in the south. However, in 419 or 420 they were attacked by Wallia king of the Visigoths, who were Roman allies at that time.

The resulting critical situation was resolved by the Hasdingi: they allied with the Silingi and created a common power structure. During the second decade of the 5th century, they added a new element to the usual conquering and subsequent plundering of towns throughout the land: invasions of port cities from ships that they had learned to use in a very short time. Owing to this skill, 80,000 Vandals and their allies from the Alan tribe managed to cross from Hispania, which was becoming far too small for them, to northern Africa. In a short time, they overcame coastal towns and manors. They seized Carthage in 439. The Vandals became infamous for their pirate raids on places ranging from the Balearic Islands to Greece. In 455, they penetrated Hispania and the crowning achievement of their gangster politics was to sack Rome in the same year. The Vandalic military elite was kept strictly separated from the indigenous inhabitants. However, the comforts of life in their stolen luxury led to a loss of military instinct in the Vandals and this proved disastrous. In 533, the Vandals were defeated by a Byzantine army lead by Belisarius. It is symptomatic of them that they

left almost nothing behind in northern Africa or in Hispania and southern France (with the possible exceptions of the territorial name *Andalusia* and the place name *Gandalon*, known in the 10th century as *Castrum Vandalorum*).

The Vandalic linguistic material comprises a few dozen proper nouns. There are only two known common nouns from a phrase noted in the Latin text *Collatio Beati Augustini cum Pascentio ariano* in the form *sihora armen*. The interpretation of these words is problematic. A slightly fictive reconstruction of the phrase, *\*frōja armēs*, is supposed to mean “God, have pity”. The East Germanic character of the language is obvious from the development of Proto-Indo-European *\*ē*: it changed to *\*ā* in Northwest Germanic, while remaining unchanged or contracting to *\*i* in the Eastern branch of this language family. The name of the Vandalic chieftain Geilamir (6th century), for example, would correspond to the Biblical Gothic *\*Gailamers*; also compare Old High German *Sigimar*, Old Icelandic *Sigimarr*, Old Runic (Sweden: 550–600) *SigimArAz*. Even though the Vandalic language material is limited and based mostly on proper nouns written down in Latin or Greek texts (cf. Hartmann 2020), it shows that Vandalic had substantially reduced its nominal flexion. For example, the final *-s* is lost (except for masculine nominal stems ending in a velar of the *-riks* type).

### 3.1.2 Burgundian

The Burgundians are first mentioned by Pliny around the middle of the 1st century CE [4.99]: “There are five German races; the Vandili, parts of whom are the Burgundiones, the Varini, the Carini, and the Gutones” in translation of John Bostock & H.T. Riley – see above – §1.1.). Approximately a century later, Ptolemy wrote:

[2.10.15] “.. and the *Suevi Semnones*, whose boundaries beyond the Albis extend from the area we mentioned towards the east up to the Suevus river, and the *Burguntae*, who inhabit from there to the Vistula.”<sup>13</sup>

[2.10.16] “Between ... *Ruticleos* and *Burguntas* {live} *Aelvaeones*.”<sup>14</sup>

[2.10.18] “Back below the *Semnones* the *Silingae* have their seat, and below the *Burguntae* the *Lugi Omani*, below whom the *Lugi Diduni* up to Mt. Asciburgius.”<sup>15</sup>

[3.5.20]. “Lesser races inhabit Sarmatia near the Vistula river. Below the Venedae are the Gythones, then the Finni, then the Sulones; below whom are the Phrungundiones; then the Avarini near the source of the Vistula river; below these are the Ombrones, then the Anartophracti, then the Burgiones, then the Arsietae, then the Saboci, then the Piengitae and the Biessi near the Carpathian mountains.”<sup>16</sup>

Ptolemy’s “Frugundioni” living on the right bank of the middle Vistula probably represent the same ethnonym which reached the geographer of Alexandria by a different source [3.5.20]. It is possible that an even older trace of Burgundian settlements is represented in the name of Bornholm, the easternmost Danish island. The name of the Burgunds was retained in the name of a part of the southern Baltic coast until the end of the 9th century, when it appeared in the description of the Baltic and Scandinavian coast by the sailor Ohthere. This description was included in the Old English translation of Orosius by Alfred the Great (888–893/7):

“Then to the north of the Danube’s source and to the east of the Rhine are the East Franks, and to the south of them are the Swaefas on the other side of the river Danube, and to the south and east of them are the Begware – the part called Regensburg – and directly east of them are the Baeme and northeast are the Thyringas. To the north of them are the Old Saxons and northwest of them the Frisians. West of the Old Saxons is the mouth of the river Elbe

13) [2.10.15] καὶ τὸ τῶν Σηήβων τῶν Σεμνόων, οἵτινες διήκουσι μετὰ τὸν Ἄλβιν ἀπὸ τοῦ εἰρημένου μέρους πρὸς ἀνατολὰς μέχρι τοῦ Σηήβου ποταμοῦ, καὶ τὸ τῶν Βουργουντῶν τὰ ἐφεξῆς καὶ μέχρι τοῦ Οὐϊστούλα κατεχόντων.

14) [2.10.16] μεταξύ ... Ρουτικλείων δὲ καὶ Βουργουντῶν Αἰλουαίωνες.

15) [2.10.18] Πάλιν ὑπὸ μὲν τοὺς Σέμνονας οἰκοῦσι Σιλίγγαι, ὑπὸ δὲ τοὺς Βουργούντας Λούγοι οἱ Ὀμανοί, ὑφ’ οὓς Λούγοι οἱ Διδούνοι μέχρι τοῦ Ἀσκιβουργίου ὄρους.

16) [3.5.20]. Ἐλάττονα δὲ ἔθνη νέμεται τὴν Σαρματίαν παρὰ μὲν τὸν Οὐϊστούλαν ποταμὸν ὑπὸ τοὺς Οὐενέδας Γύθωνες, εἶτα Φίννοι, εἶτα Σούλωνες· ὑφ’ οὓς Φρουγουδιωνες, εἶτα Ἀδαρινοὶ παρὰ τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ Οὐϊστούλα ποταμοῦ· ὑφ’ οὓς Ὀμβρωνες, εἶτα Ἀναρτοφράκτοι, εἶτα Βουργίωνες, εἶτα Ἀρσιῆται, εἶτα Σαβῶκοι, εἶτα Πιενγίται καὶ Βιέσσοι παρὰ τὸν Καρπάτην τὸ ὄρος.

Translated by Edward Luther Stevenson (1932).

and Frisland, and northwest from there is the land which is called Angeln and Sillende and some Danish territories. North of them are the Afdrede and northeast the Wilte known as the Haefeldan; east of them is the land of those Wends who are called Sysyle, and southeast the Maroara who extend over a wide territory; the Maroara have to the west of them the Thyringas and some Behemas and half the Begware, and south of them on the other side of the Danube river is the land Carendre extending south as far as the mountains called the Alps. To that same mountain range lie the boundaries of the Begware and Swaefas. Then to the east of the land Carendre beyond the uninhabited district is the land of the Pulgare and east of that is the land of the Greeks. To the east of the land of the Maroara is the land of the Vistula, and east of that are those Datia who were formerly Goths. To the north east of the Maroara are the Dalamentsan and to the east of the Dalamentsan are the Horigti. North of the Dalamentsan are the Surpe and west of them the Sysyle. To the north of the Horigti is Maegtha land and to the north of Maegtha land the Sermende as far as the Riffen mountains. West of the South-Danes is the arm of the ocean surrounding Britain, and north of them is the arm of the sea called Ostsae. To the east and north of them are the North-Danes both on the main lands and on the islands. To the east of them are the Afdrede, and south of them is the mouth of the river Elbe and part of the Old Saxon lands. The North-Danes have to their north the same arm of the sea which is called the Ostsae, east of them are the tribe the Osti, and to the south the Afdrede. The Osti have to the north of them the same arm of the sea and the Wends and the Burgendan; south of them are the Haefeldan. The Burgendan have the arm of that sea to their west and Swedes to the north. East of them are the Sermende and to their south the Surfe. The Swedes have south of them the arm of the Ostsae and to their east the Sermende and to their north beyond the uninhabited land is Cwenland. Northwest of them are the Scridefinne and west are the Norwegians.”<sup>17</sup>

Also included in Alfred’s translation of Orosius was the testimony of another sailor, Wulfstan of Hedeby, who undertook a voyage from Jutland to the eastern Baltic. His *Burgenda land*, that is “the land of the Burgundians”, is probably the island of Bornholm:

“Wulfstan said that he travelled from Hedeby, arriving in Truso after seven days and nights, the boat running under sail the whole way. To starboard he had Wendland, to port Langeland, Lolland, Falster and Skane. All these lands belong to Denmark. ‘Then we had Bornholm to port, where the people have their own king. Then after Bornholm we had on our port side the lands which are called Blekinge, More, Öland and Gotland, and these lands belong to the Swedes. Wendland was to starboard the whole of the way to the mouth of the Vistula.’ This Vistula is a very large river which separates Witland and Wendland. Witland belongs to the Este. The Vistula flows out of Wendland into Estmere which is at least fifteen miles wide. The Elbing flows into Estmere from the lake on the shore of which Truso stands, and they flow together into Estmere, the Elbing west from Estland and the Vistula north from Wendland. Then the Vistula deprives the Elbing of its name for the estuary is known as the Vistula estuary and flows from Estmere northwest into the sea.”<sup>18</sup>

17) *þonne wið norþan Donua cewielme be eastan Rine sindon Eastfrancan; be suþan him sindon swæfas, on oþre healfe þære ie Donua. be suþan him be eastan sindon Bæggware, se dæl þe mon Regnesburg hætt. ryhte be eastan him sindon Bæme, eastnorþ sindon Þyringa(s). be norþan him sindon Ealdseaxan, be norþanwestan him sindon Frisan. be westan Ealdseaxum is Ælfe muþa þære ie, Frisland. þonan westnorð is þæt lond þe mon Ongle hætt, Sillende sumne dæl Dene. be norþan him is Alfrede eastnorþ Wilte, þe mon Hæfeldan hætt. be eastan him is Wineda lond, þe mon hætt Sysyle, eastsuþ, ofer sum dæl, Maroara. hie Maroara habbað bewestan him Þyringas, Behemas, Begware healfe; be suþan him on oþre healfe Donua þære ie is þæt land Carendre suþ oþ þa beorgas þe mon Alpis hætt. To þæm ilcan beorgan licgað Begwara landgemæro Swæfa. þonne be eastan Carendran londe, begeondan þæm westenne, is Pulgara land. be eastan þæm is Creca land. be eastan Maroara londe is Wisle lond. be eastan þæm sint Datia, þa þe iu wæ ron Gotan. Be norþaneastan Maroara sindon Dalamentsan sindon Horigti. be norþan Dalamentsan sindon Surpe; be westan him Sysyle. Be norþan Horoti is Mægþa land; be norþan londe Sermende oþ þa beorgas Riffen. Be westan Suþdenum is þæs garsecges earm þe liþ ymbutan þæt Ostsæ; be eastan him be norþan sindon Norðdene, ægþer ge on þæm maran landum ge on þæm iglandum; be eastan him sindon Afdrede; be suþan him is Ælfe muþa þære ie Ealdseaxna sum dæl. Norðdene habbað be norþan him þone ilcan sæs earm þe mon hætt Ostsæ, be eastan him sindon Osti þa leode; Afrede be suþan. Osti habbað be norþan him þone ilcan sæs earm, Winedas, Burgendan; be suþan him sindon Hæfeldan. Burgendan habbað þone (ilcan) sæs earm be westan him; Sweon be norþan; be eastan him sint Sermende, be suþan him Surfe. Sweon habbað be suþan him þone sæs earm Osti; be eastan him Sermende; be norþan him ofer þa westenne is Cwenland; be westannorþan him sindon Scridefinnas; be westan Norþmenn. Edited by Bright (1913); translated by Christine E. Fell (1984).*

18) *Wulfstan sæde þæt hē gefōre of Hæðum, þæt hē wære on Trūsō on syfan dagum and nihtum, þæt þæt scip wæs ealne weg yrnende under segle. Weonoðland him wæs on stēorbord, and on bæcbord him wæs Langeland, and Læland,*

However, the island certainly was not the permanent home of this powerful tribe, but rather a temporary stop on the way from somewhere else (from Scandinavia?). This scenario is also supported by one etymology for this ethnonym; it is possible to derive it from the Germanic *\*burgundijōz* “mountain people”. The only mountains which may possibly have been the cradle of the Burgundians are located in what is now Norway. According to an eminent Germanist Ernst Schwarz, the ancestors of the Burgundians were the neighbours of the Rugii. A more probable etymology has the ethnonym derived from Germanic *\*burg-* “fortified place”, documented in Gothic *baurgs* “town, tower”, Old Icelandic *borg* “wall, castle, town”, Old High German *burg* “fortified place, castle, town”, etc. In that case, the tribal name would mean “people living in fortified settlements” and there would be no foundation for locating the Burgundian Urheimat to the mountains.

Information about the further migrations of the Burgundians is scarce. Jordanes writes that during the reign of the emperor Decius, i.e. around the middle of the 3rd century, the Burgundians fought with the Gepids, who were led by the warlike King Fastida [*Getica* §97]. Whether the battle took place in the Vistula basin or somewhere in the central Danube area is unclear. At the end of the 3rd century, the Burgundians [*Burgunziones*] are listed in the document called *Laterculus Veronensis* or *Verona List*, dated to 297 CE (see Mommsen 1863, 492) between the Chatti and the Alemanni; that is, in the upper and central Main area: *Gentes barbarae quae pullulauerunt sub imperatoribus: Scoti, Picti, Calidoni, Rugi, Heruli, Saxones, Camari, crinsiani, Amsiuari, Angri, Angriuari, Fleui, Bructeri, Cati, Burgunziones, Alamanni, Sueui, franci, Gallouari, Iotungi, Armilausini, Marcomanni, Quadi, Taifruhi, Hermundubi, Uandali, Sarmatae, Sciri, Carpi, Scitae, Gothi, Indii, Armeni, Horro I Palmoerni, Mosoritae, Marmeritae, Theui, Isaur / Friges, Persae.*

Ammianus Marcellinus, a Roman historian writing at the end of the 4th century, noted that “... first, because the Burgundians know that they are descendants of the Romans from ancient times; and then, since they frequently quarrelled with the Alamanni about salt-pits and boundaries.”<sup>19</sup>

In 406–407, the Burgundians crossed the Rhine under the leadership of Gunther and occupied the area around Strasbourg, Speyer and Worms; the last mentioned became their centre. Afterwards, they united with the army of the Gallic usurper Jovinus and in 412–413 they attacked southern Gaul together. In 436, the Burgundian army of 20,000 men – again under the leadership of Gunther – was surrounded by the Huns and totally defeated. The Nibelungenlied epic is based on this event. According to Orosius, they accepted the Christian faith as early as the beginning of the 5th century, but even before their fatal encounter with the Huns, the Burgundians had allegedly converted to Arianism. In 443, they obtained the status of Roman allies and, in addition, they also gained the area of modern *Savoy* in today’s southern Switzerland and in the adjacent part of France. In 445, they joined the Romans, Goths and other Germanic tribes in battle against the Huns and their other Germanic allies such as the Gepids. Several years later, they went on a military campaign over the Pyrenees against the Suebi. During the 5th century, the Burgundian territory was stabilized within the borders set by the rivers Sane in the North, Rhone in the West and Lake Neuchâtel in the East. They fought over the southern border with Provence. Among the most important towns in the Burgundian territory were old Gaulish centres, such as Lyon [*Lugdunum*], Genoa [*Genua*], Yverdon [*Eburodunum*] and Lausanne [*Lousonna*]. In the second half of the 5th century, the Burgundians repelled the invasion of the Alemanni into the Sane valley (454 and 472), as well as the attempts of the Visigoths to occupy the eastern side of the Rhone (469–475).

and Falster, and Scōnēg; and þās land eall hýrað tō Denemearcan. And þonne Burgenda land wæs ūs on bæcbord, and þā habbað him sylfe cyning. Þonne æfter Burgenda lande wæron ūs þās land, þā synd hātene ærest Blēcinga-ēg, and Mēore, and Eowland, and Gotland on bæcbord; and þās land hýrað tō Swēom. And Weonodland wæs ūs ealne weg on stēorbord oð Wislemūdan. Sēo Wisle is swýðe mycel ēa, and hio tōlið Witland and Weonodland; and þæt Witland belimpeþ tō Estum; and sēo Wisle lið ūt of Weonodlande, and lið in Estmere; and sē Estmere is hūru fiftēne mila brād. Þonne cymeð Ilfing eāstan in Estmere of ðæm mere, ðe Trūsō standeð in stæðe; and cumað ūt samod in Estmere, Ilfing eāstan of Estlande, and Wisle wūðan of Winodlande. And þonne benimð Wisle Ilfing hire naman, and ligeð of þæm mere west and norð on sǣ; for ðy hit man hæt Wislemūða.

Edited by Bright (1913); translated by Christine E. Fell (1984).

19) *prima quod iam inde a temporibus priscis subolem se esse Romanam Burgundii sciunt, dein quod salinarum finiumque causa Alamannis saepe iurgabant.* Translated by John C. Rolfe (1935–1940).

However, in 532 they were defeated at Autun by the Franks and thus the period of Burgundian independence came to an end.

Our current understanding of the Burgundian language is very incomplete. The one-word runic inscription (𐀓𐀚𐀓𐀚𐀓𐀚 *ranja* “hurtling”) on a spear point, dating from the middle of the 3rd century and found in Dahmsdorf near Brandenburg in Germany, may be the oldest written Burgundian word (Toporova 2000, 17). The historian Ammianus Marcellinus recorded two other words in the 5th century – Burgundian *hendinos* “king” vs. Gothic *hindumists* “the most sovereign” (or *kindins* “ruler”) and Burgundian *sinistus* “the highest priest” vs. Gothic *sinista* “eldest” [28.5.14]. Several glosses are known from Latin texts, especially those of the Burgundian legal code (*Lex Burgondionum*), compiled at the order of King Gundobad (480–516): *leudis* “freeman”, corresponding to the Wisigothic gloss *leodes* “people” (*Leges Visigothorum*), Old Saxon *liud*, Old High German *liut* “people”; *borgs* : Gothic *baurgs* “town”, *herts* “heart” : Gothic *hairto* id., *hauh-hairts* “proud”, etc.

A runic inscription on a clasp was found in Charnay and dated to the middle of the 6th century. The inscription is comprised of all of the signs in the fixed order of the old runic script, beginning with the six signs 𐀓𐀚𐀓𐀚𐀓𐀚, which gave the runic script the name *futhork*. These are followed by 17 signs divided probably into four words, but the interpretation of the words is ambiguous. (These are in turn followed by approximately five signs which are difficult to read):

𐀓𐀚 𐀓𐀚𐀓𐀚 𐀓𐀚𐀓𐀚𐀓𐀚𐀓𐀚𐀓𐀚  
**uþ fnþai iddan liano**

The interpretation varies from one author to another. Versions (a) & (b) add the vowel *i* to the second word between 𐀓𐀚 and 𐀓𐀚; according to (c), 𐀓𐀚 *a* should stand in the place of 𐀓𐀚:

- (a) MacLeod & Mees 2006, 42: “Can Liano find Iddo?”
- (b) Toporova 2000, 17: “May [the god] Od find protection for Iddo.”
- (c) Antonsen 1975, 77: “To her husband Iddo, Liano.”

The Burgundian language finally disappeared because its speakers were romanised before the year 1000. However, the Burgundian adstrate probably caused the difference between the so-called Franco-Provençal dialects and both the standard French in the north and the Provençal dialects in the south of France.

### 3.1.3 Rugian

The tribal name *Rugii* was first recorded by Tacitus in his *Germania*. He writes [§44]:

“Beyond the Lugii are the Gothones, who are ruled by kings, a little more strictly than the other German tribes, but not as yet inconsistently with freedom. Immediately adjoining them, further from the coast, are the Rugii and Lemovii, the badge of all these tribes being the round shield, the short sword, and servile submission to their kings.”<sup>20</sup>

Only several decades later, Ptolemy, the geographer and astronomer of Alexandria, described the Gothic settlements as situated on the right bank of the Vistula [3.5.20]. It can therefore be assumed that the Rugii were settled on the left bank in the lower Vistula area and further to the west and south as far as the Vandal settlements, as the Gothic historian Jordanes recorded in his *Getica* in the middle of the 6th century [§ 26]: “Soon they moved from here to the abodes of the *Ulmerugi*<sup>21</sup>, who then dwelt on the shores of Ocean, where they pitched camp, joined battle with them and drove them from their homes. Then they subdued their neighbors, the Vandals, and thus added to their victories.”<sup>22</sup>

20) *Trans Lugios Gotones regnantur, paulo iam adductius quam ceterae Germanorum gentes, nondum tamen supra libertatem. protinus deinde ab Oceano Rugii et Lemovii; omniumque harum gentium insigne rotunda scuta, breves gladii et erga reges obsequium.*  
 Translated by Alfred J. Church & William J. Brodribb (1942).

21) Jordanes wrote *Ulmerugi*, the initial *H-* follows from the most likely etymology connecting the first part of the compound with Germanic *\*xulma-* > Old Icelandic *holmr* “little island”, Old English *holm* “sea, island”, Old Saxon *holm* “height”, cf. also the Old Icelandic form *Holm-rygir*, probably “insular Rugii” or “Rugii from the hillocks”.

22) *Vnde mox promoventes ad sedes Vlmerugorum, qui tunc Oceani ripas insidebant, castra metati sunt eosque commisso proelio propriis sedibus pepulerunt, eorumque vicinos Vandalos iam tunc subiugantes suis aplicavere victoriis.*

Translated by Charles C. Mierow (1915).

The origin of the *Rugii* can be traced, on the basis of toponyms and ethnonyms, further to the north-west as far as *Rogaland*, a Norwegian region whose inhabitants were called *Rogi* pl. *Rygir* by the speakers of Old Norse. Considering the likely route which the ancestors of the *Rugii* took – from south-western Norway across the Danish islands to the southern shores of the Baltic Sea – it seems legitimate to look for connections between their ethnonym and the name of the island of Rügen. In the middle of the 5th century, at the very latest, the *Rugii* were already settled in the central Danube area, where they joined other East Germanic tribes in the fight for independence against the Huns [Jordanes, *Getica* §261]. The area between modern Klosterneuburg and Krems is still called *Rugiland* today.

The ethnonym *Rugii* has traditionally been derived from the Germanic word for “rye”, e.g. Old Icelandic *rugr*, Old English *ryge*. However, there is no evidence that rye was grown in Norway in this early period. Yet another alternative is represented by Scandinavian dialectal *ryg* “stone”. The categorization of the language of the *Rugii* into the East Germanic language group is based on the location of their historical settlements between the mouths of the Vistula and Oder, as well as on Procopius of Caesarea, who recorded in his *Gothic War* [7.2.] the following information: “There was a certain Eraric in the Gothic army, one of the *Rogi* by birth, a man possessed of great power among these barbarians. Now these *Rogi* are indeed a Gothic nation, but in ancient times they used to live as an independent people. But Theoderic had early persuaded them, along with certain other nations, to form an alliance with him, and they were absorbed into the Gothic nation and acted in common with them in all things against their enemies. But since they had absolutely no intercourse with women other than their own, each successive generation of children was of unmixed blood, and thus they had preserved the name of their nation among themselves.”<sup>23</sup>

### 3.1.4 Herulian

The name *Heruli* is first mentioned in the sources around 300 in the form *Eruli* (*Scriptores Historiae Augustiae*). In his 4th-century work, the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus uses the form *Aeruli*. This form is also attested by Eusebius [Ερουλοί], a religious author of the same century writing in Greek, and by Procopius of Caesarea in the 6th century in whose *Persian War*, *Vandal War* and *Gothic War* the Heruli are most frequently mentioned. Other authors spell the tribal name with an initial *H-*: *Heruli* (Ennodius and Jordanes, 6th century) = Ερουλοί (Zosimus, 5th century). An obviously erroneous spelling *Eluri* (Jordanes), corresponding to Ελουροι (Dexippos) is also known.

The recorded forms allow for two possible etymologies. The first one, based on the records without the initial *H-*, connects the ethnonym with Old Icelandic *jarl* “chieftain”, Old English *eorl* “warrior, hero, chieftain”, Old Saxon *erlos* “men”, reflecting Germanic *\*erlaz* (Kluge). The connection with Old Runic *erilaz* is problematic, however. This word differs in the derivational suffix *-il-* and its meaning – in the old runic inscriptions, this word denoted the authors of the inscriptions themselves, who were thought to have magical power. Grimm took the initial *H-* into account when he compared the ethnonym with Gothic *hairus* “sword”, Old Saxon *heru-*, Old English *heoru* and Old Icelandic *hjorr*. Some advocates of the first etymology speculate that it may have been the Heruli who spread the early runic script, thanks to their unprecedented mobility through Scandinavia, Central Europe, the Black Sea, Northern Italy and Gaul. At the time of their half-legendary departure from Scandinavia (around 250 CE), however, the Germanic peoples had already been using the runic script for at least two centuries. Considering the known deeds of the Heruli, it is difficult to believe that they were intellectually superior to their contemporaries in other Germanic tribes. If they excelled in anything compared to the then-barbaric standard, it was fighting skills and possibly also cruelty. In the light of the ancient historians’ records, therefore, the second etymology seems to be preferable.

23) Ἐράριχος δὲ ἦν τις ἐν τῷ Γότθων στρατῷ Ῥογός μὲν γένος, δύναμιν δὲ περιβεβλημένος ἐν τούτοις δὴ τοῖς βαρβάροις μεγάλην. οἱ δὲ Ῥογοὶ οὗτοι ἔθνος μὲν εἰσι Γοτθικόν, αὐτόνομοί τε τὸ παλαιὸν ἔβιον. Θεουδερῖχου δὲ αὐτοὺς τὸ κατ’ ἀρχὰς ἑταιρισμένον σὺν ἄλλοις τισὶν ἔθνεσιν, ἕξ τε τὸ Γότθων ἀπεκέρκντο γένος καὶ ἔνν αὐτοῖς ἐς τοὺς πολεμίους ἅπαντα ἔπρασσον. γυναιξὶ μὲντοι ὡς ἤκιστα ἐπιμυγνόμενοι ἄλλοτρίαις, ἀκραιφνέσι παιδῶν διαδοχαῖς τὸ τοῦ ἔθνους ὄνομα ἐν σφίσιν αὐτοῖς διεσώσαντο.

Translated by Henry B. Dewing (1914–1928).



After the Battle of Nedao, the Heruli from the central Danube area were settled at the borders of present-day southern Moravia, south-eastern Slovakia, north-western Hungary and northern Austria. Some rich burial grounds, e.g. those located in southern Moravia (Žuráň by Slavkov = Austerlitz; Cezava by Blučiny) are usually ascribed to them. In Italy, the Heruli served Odoacer (from 476) as well as his successor Theoderic the Great (from 493).

Around 500, the Central European Heruli found themselves in the centre of the Langobardian and Gepidian power interests. After alternate victories and defeats, the Langobards dealt a crushing blow to the Heruli in 512; the Heruli king Rodulf was also killed. The Heruli turned to the Byzantine emperor Anastasius and part of them settled within Roman territory, in the so-called Pannonia Secunda (south of Sirmium, present-day Sremska Mitrovica). During the reign of the emperors Justin I and Justinian I, they lived in the province of Dacia Ripensis and later in the vicinity of the town of Singidunum (modern Belgrade). Another part of the Heruli headed for Italy, where the Heruli had an important position in the times of Odoacer and Theoderic. Surprisingly, one part of the Heruli set out northwards, as recorded by Procopius of Caesarea: “When the Eruli, being defeated by the Langobards in the above-mentioned battle, migrated from their ancestral homes, some of them, as has been told by me above, made their home in the country of Illyricum, but the rest were averse to crossing the Ister River, but settled at the very extremity of the world; at any rate, these men, led by many of the royal blood, traversed all the nations of the Sclaveni one after the other, and after next crossing a large tract of barren country, they came to the Varni, as they are called. After these they passed by the nations of the Dani, without suffering violence at the hands of the barbarians there. Coming thence to the ocean, they took to the sea, and putting in at Thule, remained there on the island. Now Thule is exceedingly large; for it is more than ten times greater than Britain. And it lies far distant from it toward the north. On this island the land is for the most part barren, but in the inhabited country thirteen very numerous nations are settled; and there are kings over each nation. In that place a very wonderful thing takes place each year. For the sun at the time of the summer solstice never sets for forty days, but appears constantly during this whole time above the earth. But not less than six months later, at about the time of the winter solstice, the sun is never seen on this island for forty days, but never-ending night envelops it.”<sup>24</sup>

The supposed affiliation of the *Heruli* to the East Germanic group is based on the more or less universal scenario for the East Germanic tribes: originally from Scandinavia, they moved through Central to Eastern Europe. In this respect, they are closest to the Goths; they were sometimes even mistaken for them.

### 3.1.5 Gepidean

In Roman records, the name Gepid first appeared around 300 CE as *Gipidae*, *Gipedes* [*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*]. In the works of historians writing in the 6th century, the order of the vowels in the first and second syllables changed: *Gepidae* [Ennodius, Cassiodorus], *Gepidas* [Jordanes], *Gēpaides* = Γήπαιδες [Procopius]. The ethnonym should have represented a somewhat unflattering nickname, as Jordanes’s explanation suggests: *gepanta pigrum aliquid tardumque significat* “*gepanta* means something lazy and hesitant” [*Getica* §17]. This would confirm even the external comparison with Latin *hebes*, genitive *hebetis* “feeble, dull” etc. In

24) Bellis 6.15: Ἦνικα Ἐρουλοὶ Λαγγοβαρδῶν ἡσηθέντες τῇ μάχῃ ἐξ ἡθῶν τῶν πατρίων ἀνέστησαν, οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν, ὡς περ μοι ἐμπροσθεν δεδιήγηται, ψήκησαντο ἐς τὰ ἐν Ἰλλυριοῖς χωρία, οἱ δὲ δὴ ἄλλοι Ἰστρον ποταμὸν διαβαίνειν οὐδαμῇ ἐγνωσαν, ἀλλ’ ἐς αὐτάς που τὰς ἐσχατίας τῆς οἰκουμένης ἰδρύσαντο: οὗτοι γοῦν πολλῶν ἐκ τοῦ βασιλείου αἵματος ἡγουμένων σφίσιον ἤμειψαν μὲν τὰ Σκλαβηνῶν ἔθνη ἐφεξῆς ἅπαντα, ἔρημον δὲ χώραν διαβάντες ἐνθένδε πολλὴν ἐς τοὺς Οὐάρνους καλουμένους ἐχώρησαν. μεθ’ οὗς δὴ καὶ Δανῶν τὰ ἔθνη παρέδραμον οὐ βιαζομένων σφᾶς τῶν τῆδε βαρβάρων. ἐνθένδε τε ἐς ὠκεανὸν ἀφικόμενοι ἐναυτίλλοντο, Θούλην τε προσχόντες τῆνῆσφ’ αὐτοῦ ἔμειναν. Ἔστι δὲ ἡ Θούλη μεγίστη ἐς ἄγαν: Βρεττανίας γὰρ αὐτὴν πλεονὴ δεκαπλασίαν ζυμβαίνειεῖναι. κεῖται δὲ αὐτῆς πολλῶν ἀποθεντρὸς βορρᾶν ἄνεμον. ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ νήσῳ γῆμὲν ἔρημος ἐκ τοῦ ἐπὶ πλείστον τυγχάνει οὐσα, ἐν χώρᾳ δὲ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἔθνη τριακαίδεκα πολυανθρωπότατα ἰδρυταί: βασιλεῖς τέ εισικατὰ ἔθνος ἕκαστον. ἐν ταῦθα γίνεται τι ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος θαυμάσιον οἶον. ὁ γὰρ ἥλιος ἀμφιθερινὰς μὲν τροπὰς μάλιστα ἐς ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα οὐδαμῇ δύει, ἀλλὰ διηλεκῶς πάντα τοῦτοντὸν χρόνον ὑπὲρ γῆς φαίνεται. μῆσι δὲ οὐχ ἕσσον ἢ ἑξ ὕστερον ἀμφὶ τὰς χειμερινὰς πομπὰς ἥλιος μὲν ἐς ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα τῆς νήσου ταύτης οὐδαμῇ φαίνεται, νύξ δὲ αὐτῆς ἀπέραντος κατακέχεται.

Translated by Henry B. Dewing (1914–1928).

the Old English epic *Beowulf*, there appears a tribe called the *Gifðas* or *Gefðas* who should have lived on the Baltic Sea. The meaning of this ethnonym might be completely different, however, namely “the people endowed with happiness”, if there is an etymological connection with Old English *geofu*, *giefu* “a gift, a favour, goodwill” *giefiġ* “rich”. Finally, the German scholar Müllenhoff tried to prove that the word *gepanta* designates a wide, somewhat clumsy ship. His interpretation follows the legendary story of three boats handed down to us by Jordanes: the Goths should have used these ships for moving from Scandinavia to the Vistula estuary. The Gepids would have arrived in the last and slowest boat. Jordanes’s interpretation also indicates a close relationship between the Gepids and the Goths.

Jordanes’s chronology suggests that in the mid 3rd century, the Gepids led by King Fastida clashed with the Burgundians. However, it is not clear whether their encounter occurred around the river Vistula or already in the Danube area. In any event, already in 269, they together with Goths invaded Dacia, which was still a Roman province at that time. Although the Romans would leave Dacia in the following decade, the Gepids did not occupy this area but settled instead on the left bank of the river Tisza. At the beginning of the 5th century, they came under the rule of the Ostrogoths, but in the following century both of these tribes became vassals of the Huns. The Gepid king Ardaric was supposedly held in much greater affection than any other Germanic ally. For their loyalty, the Gepids received a somewhat unenviable task: defending the right wing of Attila’s army in the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains. However, after the death of Attila, it was Ardaric who successfully led the rebellion against Attila’s sons which culminated at the Battle of Nedao in 454. Not even this military success and their subsequent status as Roman allies helped the Gepids retain their position in the Danube area for long. Half a century later, the Gepids were driven from the area by the Ostrogoths under the leadership of Theoderic the Great.

Around 537, the Gepids returned to the environs of Sirmia, but even there their situation remained unstable. In the mid 6th century, the Byzantine Empire relied on cooperation with the Langobards who, on Byzantines’ order, defeated the Gepids in the Battle of Asfeld in 552 under the leadership of Audoin. It is remarkable that the senate at Constantinople promised help to the Gepids as well. However, as soon as the growing power of the Lombards in Pannonia became undesirable for the Byzantine Empire, they started to support the Gepids. These with Byzantine help succeeded in defeating the Langobards in 566, but a year later they surrendered to the Avars. Another powerful player in this area caused the Langobards as well as some Gepids to leave Pannonia and head for Italy, which was then under the control of the Byzantines. The remaining Gepids were integrated into the multinational Avar army, with which they attacked Constantinople in 626.

The richest Gepidean burial grounds are located near the Hungarian town of Szentes. It is therefore assumed that in this very area one should be looking for the Gepid’s centre of power. The area controlled by the Gepids is called – with some exaggeration – the Gepidean Empire, but their territory was substantially more extensive including the area around the central and lower Tisza and Transylvania. Like the other East Germanic languages with the exception of Gothic, there are only a few attestations which may be considered Gepidean. Besides some proper names – especially personal names, and to a lesser extent toponyms, we can find also Gepidean loanwords in the languages of other peoples in antiquity and presently spoken.

### 3.1.6 Gothic

The Greek seafarer Pytheas of Massalia might have provided the ancient world with the first testimony of the Goths already in 325 BC, if we trust Pliny’s reporting on this fact in his *Naturalis Historia* as authentic (1st century CE) [37.35-36/11]: “... Pytheas says that the *Gutones*, a people of Germany, inhabit the shores of an æstuary of the Ocean called Metuonis, their territory extending a distance of six thousand stadia; that, at one day’s sail from this territory, is the Isle of Abalus, upon the shores of which, amber is thrown up by the waves in spring, it being an excretion of the sea in a concrete form; as, also, that the inhabitants use this amber by way of fuel, and sell it to their neighbours, the

*Teutones*.”<sup>25</sup> The ablative plural form *Gutonibus* from the manuscript F allows for an unambiguous interpretation “about Gutons” which means “about Goths”. However, in the best-preserved manuscript, the *Codex B*, we find the form *Guionib* and therefore some uncertainty arises. An alternative solution is to suppose that the scribe confused *i* and *t*. In that case, we can posit that the initial *G* was switched with *S*, which allows for identification with the tribe of the Suions [*Suiones*], who Tacitus writing in the 1st century AD placed across the Baltic Sea, possibly in southern Scandinavia. Some scholars considered the original form to be *\*Inguiones = Inguaeones*. The equation *Guiones = Teutones* is even less acceptable. If the less problematic identification with the Goths is considered, Pytheas’s testimony suggests that the Gutons (i.e. Goths) were settled in the lowlands along the Metuonis Ocean. An etymology of this toponym on the basis of Germanic *\*mēdwō* > Old Frisian *mēde*, Middle German and Middle Dutch *mēde*, *māde* “a marshy meadow”, Old English *mēd*, genitive *mēdwe* “a meadow” is possible, but it is ambiguous whether it is the coast of the North Sea or whether the island of Abalus is Heligoland as the German scholar Detlefsen concluded at the beginning of the 20th century (cf. Horák 1954, 38). The islands of Læsø and Anholt in the Kattegat Strait between the northeastern coast of Denmark and the southwestern coast of Sweden may also be considered to be Abalus, or even the island of Bornholm, which is closer to the southern coast of Sweden. A somewhat mysterious information on the sea of the area of about 6000 stadia (around 1100 km) allows us to assume that it is surrounded by land which supports the thesis that this is the Baltic Sea.

The early history of the Goths was described in detail in “Origin and Deeds of the Goths” [*De origine actibusque Getarum*, abbreviated *Getica*], written by the Gothic historian Jordanes in the first half of the 6th century. For completeness, it should be mentioned that the author used the ethnonyms Gets [*Getae*] and Goths [*Gothi*] probably as synonyms because a part of the Goths were settled for a time in the area where the Paleo-Balkan *Getae* lived in the first half of the 1st millennium BC. Jordanes mentioned the Goths for the first time together with numerous tribes of the island *Scandza* (i.e. Scandinavia) in the form of *Gauthigoth* [§22] and *Ostrogothae* [§23]. The Goths’ appearance in history Jordanes situated on the Baltic Sea – Black Sea trajectory [§25-28]: §25. “Now from this island of Scandza, as from a hive of races or a womb of nations, the Goths are said to have come forth long ago under their king, Berig by name. As soon as they disembarked from their ships and set foot on the land, they straightway gave their name to the place. And even to-day it is said to be called Gothiscandza.”<sup>26</sup> We find out that the Goths drove off the *Hulmerugii* out of this area and that they subjugated their neighbours Vandals (see the extracts above dealing with the Rugian and Vandal languages). In the part devoted to the Gepids, Jordanes explains: [§94] “You surely remember that in the beginning I said the Goths went forth from the bosom of the island of Scandza with Berich (sic), their king, sailing in only three ships toward the hither shore of Ocean, namely to Gothiscandza. [§95] One of these three ships proved to be slower than the others, as is usually the case, and thus is said to have given the tribe their name, for in their language *gepanta* means ‘slow’.”<sup>27</sup> Elsewhere Jordanes adds: [§42] “In their third dwelling place, which was above the Sea of Pontus, they had now become more civilized and, as I have said before, were more learned. Then the people were divided under ruling families. The Visigoths served the family of the *Balthi* and the Ostrogoths served the renowned *Amali*.”<sup>28</sup> From all this, one can conclude that according to their own tradition, which was still a vivid memory in the 6th century, the Goths came from Scandinavia. They moved across the sea to the area near the

25) ... Pytheas *Gutonibus*, *Germaniae genti*, *accoli aestuarium oceani Metuonidis nomine spatio stadiorum sex milium*; *ab hoc diei navigatione abesse insulam Abalum*; *illo per ver fluctibus advehi et esse concreti maris purgamentum*; *incolas pro ligno ad ignem uti eo proximisque Teutonibus vendere*. Translated by John Bostock & H.T. Riley (1855).

26) *Ex hac igitur Scandza insula quasi officina gentium aut certe velut vagina nationum cum rege suo nomine Berig Gothi quondam memorantur egressi: qui ut primum e navibus exientes terras attigerunt, ilico nomen loci dederunt. Nam odieque illic, ut fertur, Gothiscandza vocatur.*

27) *Meminisse debes me in initio de Scandzae insulae gremio Gothos dixisse egressos cum Berich rege suo, tribus tantum navibus vectos ad ripam Oceani citerioris, id est Gothiscandza. Quarum trium una navis, ut adsolet, tardior nancta nomen genti fertur dedisse; nam lingua eorum pigra gepanta dicitur.*

28) *Tertia vero sede super mare Ponticum iam humaniores et, ut superius diximus, prudentiores effecti, divisi per familias populi, Vesegothae familiae Balthorum, Ostrogothae praeclaris Amalis serviebant.*

Vistula estuary which they called *Gothiscandza*, probably \**Gutisk-andja* “Gothic shore”. They forced out another Germanic tribe called *Hulmerugii*, i.e. “island Rugii” from there. The old tradition recorded by Jordanes is partially confirmed by archaeological data (burial mounds with cairns which are common to both Scandinavia and the area around the river Vistula). These data show that around 30 CE a noticeably different population in terms of culture appeared at the Vistula estuary, which might be no one else but a military aristocracy. Soon, the newly-coming people took over the people of Oksywie (Oxhöft) culture and on its basis, they created a new culture called Wielbark (Makiewicz 2002, 104–105). The Wielbark culture spread over the following two centuries south-east along the rivers Bug and San to Volhynia and then further to southern Ukraine. The Černjaxov (Chernyakhov) culture, which was formed during the second half of the 3rd century and the 4th century, dominates the area between the lower Danube and lower Don river. The Goths may have played an important role in both of these cultures (see Heather 2002, 30–31, 46–48).

Jordanes described the migration of the Goths from the lower Vistula to the southeast as follows: [§26] “But when the number of the people increased greatly and Filimer, son of Gadaric, reigned as king – about the fifth since Berig – he decided that the army of the Goths with their families should move from that region. [§27] In search of suitable homes and pleasant places they came to the land of Scythia, called *Oium* in that tongue. Here they were delighted with the great richness of the country, and it is said that when half the army had been brought over, the bridge whereby they had crossed the river fell in utter ruin, nor could anyone thereafter pass to or fro. For the place is said to be surrounded by quaking bogs and an encircling abyss, so that by this double obstacle nature has made it inaccessible. And even to-day one may hear in that neighborhood the lowing of cattle and may find traces of men, if we are to believe the stories of travellers, although we must grant that they hear these things from afar. [§27] This part of the Goths, which is said to have crossed the river [= Dnieper?] and entered with Filimer into the country of *Oium*, came into possession of the desired land, and there they soon came upon the race of the *Spali*, joined battle with them and won the victory. Thence the victors hastened to the farthest part of Scythia, which is near the sea of Pontus; for so the story is generally told in their early songs, in almost historic fashion.”<sup>29</sup> Although modern archaeology tries to avoid the idea of mass migrations in the sense of the Biblical exodus, there are also actual archaeological testimonies supporting Jordanes’ description of a large-scale movement in which even women took part. In the graves of the Černjaxov (Chernyakhov) culture, women’s (funeral) dresses in the Wielbark style were found. One cannot assume the continuity of women’s clothing connecting the Wielbark and Černjaxov cultures, if the women themselves were missing (Heather 2002, 57).

During the 3rd century, the Goths were already active in the area near the Black Sea as is documented for example, by a Greek historian, Dexippus, in his *Scythica*, which describes clashes with Germanic peoples in 238–274 CE. In 238, the Goths plundered the town Histria in the Danube delta. In 250, the Gothic tribal chief Kniwa penetrated to the area of what is now Bulgaria where he conquered the city of Philippopolis. A year later at Abrittus, he destroyed a Roman army which was sent there to punish the expansionist Kniwa. Its commander-in-chief, the Roman emperor Decius himself, was killed in the battle. In 255–257, the Goths attacked ports on the Black Sea, viz. Pityus, Trapezus, Nikomedeia, Nikaia, etc. This time, they used the water-ways. Other pirate raids were organized by the Goths together with the Heruli and possibly other tribes as well in 268–270. The towns of Tomis, Markianopolis, Kyzikos and Byzantium were able to defend themselves. The raiders forced a passage through the straits and penetrated to the Aegean Sea and further to the south. One part of their forces

29) *Vbi vero magna populi numerositate crescente et iam pene quinto rege regnante post Berig Filimer, filio Gadarigis, consilio sedit, ut exinde cum familiis Gothorum promoveret exercitus. Qui aptissimas sedes loca quae dum quereretur congrua, pervenit ad Scythiae terras, quae lingua eorum Oium vocabantur: ubi delectatus magna ubertate regionum et exercitus mediaetate transposita pons dicitur, unde amnem traiecerat, inreparabiliter corruisse, nec ulterius iam cuidam licuit ire aut redire. Nam is locus, ut fertur, tremulis paludibus voragine circumiecta concluditur, quem utraque confusione natura reddidit impervium. Verumtamen hodieque illic et voces armentorum audiri et indicia hominum depraehendi commeantium attestationem, quamvis a longe audientium, credere licet. Haec ergo pars Gothorum, quae apud Filemer dicitur in terras Oium emenso amne transposita, optatum potiti solum. Nec mora ilico ad gentem Spalorum adveniunt consertoque proelio victoriam adipiscunt, exindeque iam velut victores ad extremam Scythiae partem, que Ponto mari vicina est, properant. Quemadmodum et in priscis eorum carminibus pene storicu ritu in commune recolitur.*

in which the Heruli predominated attacked Thessaloniki. The second part consisting of both Goths and Heruli assailed Attica. The third group comprising mainly Goths posed a threat to the towns in Asia Minor, Troy and Ephesus where they destroyed the Temple of Artemis among other sites. Not even islands such as Rhodes and Cyprus were spared. However, subsequent defeats in battle against the emperor Gallienus (268), and against Claudius II in the Battle at Naissus (270) forced the Goths and Heruli to return to their settlements on the north Pontic coast. In 271, a punitive expedition crossed the Danube and the emperor Aurelian defeated the Gothic king Cannabaudes. Around 300 CE, six initial states began to form in the area of the culture called Černjxovskaja with the Goths playing a dominant role.

During the 4th century, a new state whose greatest expansion was achieved during the reign of King Ermanaric of the Amali dynasty appeared north of the Black Sea. Jordanes enumerated thirteen tribes which were subject to this king. *Golthescytha*, *Thiudos*, *Inaunxis* (= *in Aunxis*, i.e. between the Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega), *Vasinabronca* (= *Vas in Abronca*), *Merens*, *Mordens*, *Imniscaris* (*Mordens in Niscaris?*), *Rogas*, *Tadzans*, *Athaul*, *Navego*, *Bubegenas*, *Coldas*. In the names *Thiudos*, *Vas*, *Merens* and *Mordens*, the following Finno-Ugric tribes can be identified: *Čjud'* (= Estonians), *Veš* (= Vepsians on the White Sea), *Merja & Merjane* (at Nero (Rostov) and Kleščino Lakes) and *Морьдва* (= present-day Mordvians on the middle Volga). They were listed almost in the same order in the 12th century by the chronicler Nestor in the *Primary Chronicle* (*Пověсть времєньныхъ лѣтъ*) [§2, 7, 12, 13] together with the tribes that paid tribute to Kievan Russia. Jordanes further tells us: [§119] "After the slaughter of the Heruli, Hermanaric also took arms against the Venethi. This people, though despised in war, was strong in numbers and tried to resist him. But a multitude of cowards is of no avail, particularly when God permits an armed multitude to attack them. These people, as we started to say at the beginning of our account or catalogue of nations, though off-shoots from one stock, have now three names, that is, Venethi, Antes and Sclaveni. Though they now rage in war far and wide, in punishment for our sins, yet at that time they were all obedient to Hermanaric's commands. [§120] This ruler also subdued by his wisdom and might the race of the Aesti {= today Baltic nations}, who dwell on the farthest shore of the German Ocean, and ruled all the nations of Scythia and Germany by his own prowess alone."<sup>30</sup>

If we consider Jordanes's account to be reliable, Ermanaric would have controlled a huge territory demarcated to the north by the Baltic Sea, Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega, to the east by middle Volga and Don and to the south by the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. His vassals included not only Baltic and Finno-Ugric tribes, but also Slavs in the west of this territory. This development, which could have potentially led to a mighty multinational empire rivaling Rome, was drastically interrupted by the invasion of the Huns in 375. This was the most radical invasion in the history of Europe and it was the main cause of the Age of Migration. Already during the 3rd century, a part of the Goths settled down on the lower Danube and undertook raids into the Roman territory. Their captives included Christian priests as well. Although these captives had no rights, they nonetheless managed something unheard of, namely carrying out successful missionary activity.

The first Christian communities emerged, and their representatives clashed with the followers of the traditional religion in 347–348. This conflict led to the departure of the weaker party, the Gothic Christians. They moved to the territory of the Roman Empire where they were accepted by Emperor Constantine. They settled at the foot of the *Emimons* Mountains (today the Balkan Mountains in Bulgaria), there they were known as the "Little Goths" in the contemporary sources. The man named Wulfila (?310–?383), who was ordained a bishop in Constantinople in 341, was at their head. Jordanes recorded [§267] that in the mid 6th century, they were a mighty tribe living around the city Nicopolis and at the foot of the Emimons

30) *Post Herulorum cede item Hermanaricus in Venethos arma commovit, qui, quamvis armis despecti, sed numerositate pollentes, primum resistere conabantur. Sed nihil valet multitudo inbellium, praesertim ubi et deus permittit et multitudo armata advenerit. Nam hi, ut in initio expositionis vel catalogo gentium dicere coepimus, ab una stirpe exorti, tria nunc nomina ediderunt, id est Venethi, Antes, Sclaveni; qui quamvis nunc, ita facientibus peccatis nostris, ubique deseviunt, tamen tunc omnes Hermanarici imperiis servierunt. Aestorum quoque similiter nationem, qui longissimam ripam Oceani Germanici insident, idem ipse prudentia et virtute subegit omnibusque Scythiae et Germaniae nationibus ac si propriis laboribus imperavit.*  
Translated by Charles C. Mierow (1915).

mountains in Moesia, in what is now Bulgaria. Afterwards, they were probably assimilated by the Slavs.

Meanwhile, around 370, the Huns crossed the Don. First, they subjugated a part of the Alans' tribal union, one part of which managed to flee to the Caucasus and survive there under the name of the Ossetians to this day. Then it was the Goths' turn. In 375, King Ermanaric died, supposedly at the incredible age of 110 years. Today we are not able to determine how large a portion of the Gothic population refused to submit, but these could have maintained their freedom only by making a quick departure to the West. Athanaric, who was elected a judge of the *Greuthungi* some decades before, tried to slow the unstoppable advancement of the Huns in 375. With his people he fortified the Roman Limes in Oltenia, i.e. in today's Romania, but they were not able to stop the Huns. A growing number of Goths strove for Roman protection.

When the *Tervingi* and *Greuthungi* asked for asylum in 376, the emperor Valens allowed only the *Tervingi* to cross the river Danube. The pressure imposed by the Huns together with the plots of Roman commanders led the *Greuthungi* to cross the Danube the same year without the emperor's consent and they would do so again ten years later. The *Tervingi* and *Greuthungi* in the Balkans were united by Alaric I by 395 at the latest when he led the great uprising of the Goths. Alaric I marched on Italy twice: first in 401–402 when he and his troops after two indecisive battles returned to the Balkans, and for the second time in 408–410, when they managed to sack Rome after a long blockade. Alaric I died soon afterwards and was replaced by Ataulf, who led the Goths to southern Gaul. They were joined by other Goths from the former divisions of Radagaisus who had also tried to take control of Italy. After the murder of Ataulf and the immediately following assassination of the plot's leader Sigeric, Wallia became king and was replaced by Theoderic I in 417–418. Theoderic I would complete the integration of Goths from different tribes and clans into a new union political rather than ethnic the Visigoths. He fell in the famous Battle of the Catalaunian Plains in 451 as an ally of Rome in their war with the Huns led by Attila.

The Visigoths began to invade the Iberian Peninsula from their settlements between the Pyrenees Mountains and the Garonne River where they chose Toletum (now Toledo) as their centre of power. They lost their dominant position on the peninsula definitely in 711 when the largest part of it was taken over by North African Muslims led by the Berber commander Tariq ibn Ziyad. Nevertheless, their Gothic identity as well as language had already been lost at that time (Heather 2002, 301).

The Ostrogoths as a nation were formed only later, in Attila's declining years and after the Huns had lost power between 450–484. Two groups of Goths played an important role in this process: the so-called Pannonian Goths led by Valamir at the time of Attila's death and so-called Thracian Goths with their privileged position within the army of the Byzantine Empire and led by Theoderic Strabo. The Pannonian Goths under the leadership of Valamir's brother Theodemir headed south in 473 and settled in Macedonia with the aim of gaining the same privileges as their tribesmen from Thrace. However, they were unwelcome competitors for the Thracian Goths. After the death of Theodemir in 476, Theoderic of the Amali dynasty became the leader of the Pannonian Goths. When the Thracian Goths supported the ousting of the Byzantine emperor Zeno from the throne, Zeno then looked for support among the Pannonian Goths and promised the position of Theoderic Strabo to Theoderic the Great. Zeno's attempt to intensify the conflict between the Pannonian and Thracian Goths and cause them to fight against each other undoubtedly noticeably weakening both parties failed and resulted in the exact opposite: the two groups of Goths became allies and began to act in coordination. This is the approximate scenario of the formation of the Ostrogoths. After the death of Theoderic Strabo and the murder of his son Recitach, Theoderic the Great of the Amali dynasty became the only representative of the Goths in the southern part of the Balkans. He knew as well as Zeno did that they could not trust each other and sooner or later some hostilities would break out. They solved this situation in an original fashion by planning an invasion of Italy which should have been carried out by the Goths under the leadership of Theoderic the Great while Zeno would have supported them both logistically and politically. In the winter of 488/489, the Goths marched to Italy where they succeeded in a couple of battles against Odoacer's army.

Odoacer, the military leader of Italy, may have also been of an East Germanic origin because he probably came from the tribe of the *Scirii*. Odoacer retreated to Ravenna where, surrounded by marshlands, he managed to maintain his position until 493. At that time, Theoderic offered him an agreement on the division of power which Odoacer gladly accepted. However, shortly afterwards during a celebratory feast, Odoacer was murdered by Theoderic himself. Odoacer's family and supporters suffered the same fate. Theoderic the Great together with his Ostrogoths became the master of Italy, though formally they still formally paid tribute to Constantinople. In the following years, Theoderic managed to carry out a policy of expansion by which he partly restored the Western Roman Empire. He reintroduced Gothic influence to the Balkans and after 511 controlled the Visigoths' part of Hispania. His supremacy was also recognised by the Vandals in northern Africa and the Burgundians west of the Alps. His empire collapsed after his death in 526. His grandchild Athalaric should have succeeded him, but as he was only a child, his mother Amalasuintha (Theoderic's daughter) reigned instead. When Athalaric died and his mother was murdered, Theodahad became the chief of the Ostrogoths.

The murder of Amalasuintha served as a pretext for the emperor Justinian I to send his best military leader Belisarius (also of Gothic origin) to Italy. After Belisarius landed in Ravenna, Theodahad was murdered and Belisarius captured his successor Vitiges soon afterwards in 540. The complete destruction of the Ostrogothic empire was averted by the skilled military and political leader Totila the chief of Ostrogoths in 541–552. He was fatally wounded in the Battle of Busta Gallorum with Byzantines and the fate of Ostrogoths was sealed, though their resistance under the leadership of Vidinus lasted until 561. Langobard troops also fought on the side of the Byzantines in 522, and it was them who returned to Northern Italy in 568 and established control over it for two centuries.

The Goths had an impact on European history from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean and from the Don to Iberian Peninsula for more than six centuries. After their loss of power in the Balkans, in Italy and Gaul over the 6th century and in Hispania at the beginning of the 8th century, they disappeared quickly from the historical scene. In Western Europe, they were romanised and in the area north of the Black Sea they were assimilated by the Slavs and into a lesser extent by other ethnic groups. Despite all this, they showed an extraordinary vitality. They are the only one of the East Germanic tribes who managed to create their own literary language. Another important source of information on the Gothic lexicon are loanwords from Gothic which entered the languages of peoples who lived alongside the Goths, whether briefly or for a longer period of time. These influences are mapped in the studies summarised in the subsection **Early Germanic influence on other languages** in the end of Bibliography.

It is unique that the descendants of the Goths managed to maintain an isolated enclave – and their own language – for almost a thousand years longer than other East Germanic people. These were the Crimean Goths, who were described by the Flemish diplomat Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq in 1562. He met representatives of this people in Constantinople and recorded around eighty expressions from their language. Despite a clear influence from his own native language and the orthographic conventions of the time, his record provides enough unambiguous evidence that he was dealing with a real continuation of Gothic, though not of Biblical Gothic. To give one example: Crimean Gothic *ada* "egg" would correspond in Biblical Gothic to the nominative plural *\*addja*, but this word is not attested in the Biblical Gothic texts that have come down to us. Germanic *\*-jj-* changed to *-ddj-* only in Gothic, cf. Old Norse *egg*, and its borrowing into early English as *æg*, alongside the original Middle English *ei*, Old Saxon and Old High German *ei*. Proto-Germanic *\*ajja-* "egg" developed in three different ways: East Germanic *\*addja-*, North Germanic *eggja-*, and West Germanic *\*ejja-*. The form *ada* represents unambiguously the East Germanic development (Lehmann 1986, 2). The entirety of Busbecq's documentation, as it was published in 1589, is provided in the appendix with both the Latin original and the English translation.

By the beginning of the 5th century, the Goths had disintegrated into a number of groups led by various leaders. The British historian Heather (2002, 62–63) has attempted to classify them:

Visigoths (5th century): 1. a (larger) part of the Tervingi; 2. Ermanaric's Greuthungi; 3 Radagaisus's Goths. Around 410, the Balti dynasty began to gain influence, but the murder of Amalaric in 531 brought about its end.

Ostrogoths (5th century): 4. the Goths led by the Amali dynasty (after 450); 5. the Goths led by Theoderic Strabo.

Others: 6. The rest of the Tervingi? = Arimer's Goths; 7. Farnobius's Greuthungi; Odotheus's Greuthungi; Bigelisu's Goths; 8. Gothic supporters of Attila's son Dengizich; 9. Crimean Goths; 10. Goths living on the Sea of Azov.

Studying the etymology of the ethnonym "Goth" and of the names of dynasties brings the following results:

*Gutones / Gotones / Goti / Gothi* etc. – Old Norse *goti* "Goth; man, hero, stud", *gotnar* "men, warriors", Old Runic (Eggjum, around 700) genitive plural *gotnA* (Vries 1962, 183), Norwegian *gut*, Swedish *gutt* "boy, youth" (Otrębski 1950, 94). The same semantic motivation may be expected for the ethnonym *Buri* (Tacitus, *Germania* §43) formed from Germanic *\*buri-*, which was reconstructed on the basis of Gothic *baur* "born", Old Norse *burr*, Old English *byre* "son" (Schönfeld 1911, 58; Schwarz 1956, 72) and Slavic *\*Čexъ*: Slovenian *čèh* "boy", Kashubian *čex* "youth, child" (Blažek 2010, 18–19). The ethnonym therefore supposedly means "young man" in the case of a series of other Indo-European ethnonyms.

*Austrogoti / Ostrogothi* and others are traditionally interpreted as the "Eastern Goths" as they were already by Jordanes [*Getica*, §82<sup>31</sup>]. Schönfeld (1911, 39) prefers Streitberg's etymology which connects the first part with Sanskrit *usrá-* "bright, shiny, reddish, morning" without having found any other Germanic counterpart. The ethnonym might be explained more convincingly if we consider the High German *ustrī* 'industria', i.e. "diligence, industry", Swedish *yster* "lively" (cf. Blažek 2012, 20–21; Kroonen 2013, 562).

*Wisigothae / Vesegothae* – these are not the "western Goths" as many scholars and also Jordanes supposed [*Getica*, §82 – see *Austrogoti*]. The component *Wisi-* appears in many early Germanic personal names, e.g. Ostrogothic *Wisibadus*, Vandalic *Visimar*, and the isolated ethnonym *Visi* (300 AD), *Vesi* (5th century), from Old High German area *Wisi-/Wisu-*. An element productive in formation of personal names in many Indo-European languages corresponds to this component, e.g. Sanskrit *vásu-*, Gaulish *vesu-/visu-* which means "good, excellent" (Schönfeld 1911, 267–268; Streitberg 1920, 7). This explanation lacks the semantic connection with the name Ostrogoths (the probability of two counterparts one meaning "Light-Goths" and the other "Good-Goths" is not very likely). However, the Old High German word *wisa* "pasture" is worth noting. Then, both ethnonyms would make a meaningful pair which expresses the difference in their way of life: *Austrogoti* = "the Goths working [in the fields]" versus *Wisigothae* = "the herder Goths". This resembles the distinction made by Herodotus [IV, 11, 17, 18] between the nomadic tribe of the Scythians [Σκύθαι οἱ νομάδες], the ploughmen Scythians [Σκύθαι ἀροτῆρες] and the farmer Scythians [Σκύθαι γεργοί] (cf. Blažek 2012, 21–22).

The forms *Greutungi / Grutung / Grauthungi / Gruthungi* and others, which are related to Old Norse *grjót*, Old English *gréot*, Old Saxon *griot*, Old High German *grioz* "stones, sand, gravel" (Schönfeld 1911, 113), apparently mean "people from a stony or sandy country" (de Vries 1962, 190).

The forms *Tervingi / Thervingi / Terungi* can be traced back to the Germanic deity "All Tree" where they appear as *Ala-terviae* in Latin transcription (nominative plural), Proto-Slavic *\*dervo* "tree", corresponding to another ablaut variant in Germanic *\*trewan*, which developed into Gothic *triu*, Old Norse *tré*, Old English *tréo(w)*, Old Saxon *treo*, *trio* "tree". Thus, the name of this tribe can be explained as "the people from the woods", which may refer to the time when that part of the Goths lived in densely wooded Dacia (Schönfeld 1911, 222).

*Amali* may then be related to Icelandic *amla* "to work very hard, to toil" and Norwegian *amla* "to get tired". The etymology of *Austrogoti* is semantically very close to *Amali*, if it is

31) *utrum ab ipsius nomine, an a loco, id est orientales, dicti sunt Ostrogothae, residui vero Vesegothae, id est a parte occidentia "...or according to their location, those living in the east are called Ostrogoths, and others Visigoths, i.e. those from the western part."*  
Translated by Charles C. Mierow (1915).



associated with the Old High German *ustrī* “diligence, perseverance” (cf. Schönfeld 1911, 15 with reference to J. Grimm).

Schönfeld (1911, 43) attempted to provide an etymology for the word *Balthi*, comparing it with Gothic *balþaba* “bravely”, Old Icelandic *ballr*, Old English *beald*, Old Saxon, Old High German *bald* “courageous, brave”. This opinion is also supported by Jordanes’s remark ...*Baltha, id est audax* “...Baltha – that is brave” [*Getica*, §146].

The Goths as well as the majority of the other Germanic tribes in the first seven centuries of the Common Era knew the runic script. Historically, the first attestation of the Gothic language (in the form of a mixture of runic and Latin characters) is the word TILFRIDĪ *tilarids* “target rider” found on the spearhead which was unearthed in the Ukrainian locality Kovel, dated to the first half of the 3rd century. An inscription on a golden ring from the Romanian site of Pietroassa, on which the Goths are directly mentioned, dates from the end of the 4th century (or possibly from the time after the death of Attila – cf. Schlette 1977, 225). The unsegmented text XNŦŦ+ĪŦPĪHŦHŦFX *gutaniowihailag* is interpreted in various ways: *gutaniowi[h] hailag* “Sacrosanctum of Gothic women” (Antonsen 1975, 74), *gutani o[bal] wi[h] hailag* “sacred inheritance of the Goths” (Schlette 1977, 225), *gutan[i] i[ŋwi] o wi[h] hailag* “for Ingwi, sacrosanctus for the Goths” (Seebold 1994, 75). The inscription MFRIŦ *marijs* “a horseman” (the underlined characters are written with a ligature in the original text) may be of Gothic (Gepidean, Herulian) origin; this was found on a shield from Szabadbattyán in central Hungary in the first half of the 5th century. The inscription XŦĪĪ *ganis* “moving forwards” on the spearhead from the Gotland region of Moos also provides evidence that the ancestors of the Goths may have lived on the island of Gotland. In the writing system of Biblical Gothic, \**gaggeis* would correspond to this word (Seebold 1994, 73; older transcriptions assumed an incomprehensible reading of this word as *gaois*). Its dating to the first half of the 3rd century (Krause 1971, 155) would indicate that the Gothic (or East Germanic) population remained on Gotland for two centuries more after some of them had moved to the southern shore of the Baltic Sea.

Unlike other East Germanic tribes, Gothic became a literary language in the true sense of the word. According to the tradition recorded by Greek church historians in 5th century, Gothic gained a literary form thanks to the bishop Wulfila (?310–383). Wulfila created his own Gothic alphabet based on the Greek writing system along with some Latin and Runic characters (see the appendix) and he used this for his translation of the New Testament, significant parts of which have been preserved until today.

The most extensive and therefore the most significant part of the known Gothic corpus is represented by the **Codex Argenteus**. The manuscript originally comprised texts of the four Gospels on 336 purple pages written in silver script and sometimes in gold script. Only 188 pages have survived. The last one was discovered in 1970 in the Speyer cathedral. The codex was created for Theoderic the Great shortly before his death in 526 either directly in Ravenna where he resided or in Brixia (today’s Brescia), which the existence of a strikingly similar work called the Codex Brixianus suggests because it was also written on purple material. The Codex did not appear publicly until 16th century in the Benedictine abbey of Werden at Essen where it had been bought from northern Italy by St. Ludger. Before 1554, two scholars from Cologne named Cassander and Wouters knew of this manuscript and copied parts of it. In 1569, Goropius Becanus published the Gothic version of the Lord’s Prayer in his book *Origines Antwerpianae*. Other fragments of unknown origin appear in the book *De literis et lingua Getarum sive Gothorum*, which was published in 1597 by Bonaventura Vulcanius. At the end of the 16th century, the Codex became a part of the Prague collection of the emperor Rudolf II as recorded by his councillor Streits, who died in 1600. It remained there until Prague Castle was occupied by the Swedes when it was sent by the Count of Königsmark to Christina, Queen of Sweden. After her conversion to Catholicism and abdication, the Codex appeared in the Netherlands, where it became a property of the Isaak Vossia. His uncle published the complete text in 1665 for the first time. Immediately after its publication, the earliest printing was bought by Count Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie, who had it bound in silver and put it at the queen’s disposal. She handed it over to the University library in Uppsala where it has been kept to this day in the *Carolina Rediviva* building. Only a double leaf of

parchment has been preserved of the so-called **Codex Gissensis**, named after the University of Giessen in Hessen (Germany), which acquired the manuscript in 1907/1908. This document was found outside Europe, in Egypt at the site of Šeiḥ ṣabade near the ancient town of Antinopolis on the left bank of the Nile. It is a unique Gothic-Latin bilingual text of which unfortunately only small fragments of Luke's Gospel have survived.

The remaining manuscripts recording Gothic texts are palimpsests, i.e. earlier manuscripts reused for new texts. The **Codex Carolinus**, which probably dates from the 6th century, comprises four pages of the Gothic and Latin version of the Epistle to the Romans in fragmentary form. The manuscript changed its hands many times; having been housed in monasteries in Bobbio, Weissenburg, Mainz, Prague and finally in Wolfenbüttel, where it was discovered in 1756. It was published for the first time six years later in Brunswick.

The **Codex Ambrosianus** was named after the Milan library known as the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*. This manuscript consists of 102 leaves: 190 pages are legible, 2 illegible and 12 pages were left blank. Most of the text consists of epistles of Paul to which a Gothic calendar is attached. The manuscript B consists of 77 leaves: 154 pages covered with writing and 2 blank pages. These contain epistles as well. The manuscript C comprises only two leaves with a fragment of the Gospel according to Matthew. The manuscript D is unfortunately limited to only 3 sheets and reflects only one fragment of the Old Testament, namely the Book of Nehemiah. The manuscript E contains 5 sheets with a unique text called the *Skeireins*, Gothic for "explanation". This Gothic commentary to the Gospel according to John is a very unique text because it is not a translation but was composed by a native Goth (though not by Ulfilas).

The **Codex Vaticanus Latinus** preserved in the Vatican library in Rome represents fragments of the same *Skeireins* on three sheets. The **Codex Taurinensis**, named after the library in Turin where it was kept, consists of 4 sheets. Here we find fragments of the Epistle to the Galatians and the Epistle to the Colossians, which are recorded in Codex Ambrosianu A as well.

Another post-Biblical relic of the Gothic language is the Naples Deed, which comprises four established, formally close formulations accompanied by signatures of clergymen. The document from Arezzo is of a similar nature, but it contains only one sentence. The aforementioned fragment from Speyer records the final part of the Gospel according to Mark and is therefore related to the "Silver book" (Codex Argenteus). The form of the Gothic language as it was four centuries later preserved in the names of the Gothic runes, as the learned monk Alcuin (730/40–804) recorded them. Alcuin was invited by Charlemagne and at the end of the 8th century he tutored the emperor as well as his court. Alcuin's discussion of the Gothic names for the runes (see Appendix) as well as the Anglo-Saxon futhork is recorded in Codex Vindobonensis 795 from the 9th century, which is kept in the Vienna University Library.

The Lord's Prayer (Mt 6, 9–13) with its English version will serve as an illustration of Wulfila's translation.

9. <i>Atta unsar þu in himinam, weihnai namo þein.</i>	"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
10. <i>Qimai þiudinassus þeins. Wairþei wilja þeins, swe in himina jah ana airþai.</i>	Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
11. <i>Hlaif unsarana þana sinteinan gif uns himma daga.</i>	Give us this day our daily bread,
12. <i>Jah aþlet uns þatei skulans sijaima, swaswe jah weis aþletam þaim skulam unsaraim.</i>	and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
13. <i>Jah ni briggais uns in fraistubnjai, ak lausei uns af þamma ubilin; unte þeina ist þiudangardi jah mahts jah wulþus in aiwins.</i>	and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory now and forever"

## 3.2 Northwest Germanic

### 3.2.1 Old Runic = Northwest Germanic = “Urnordisch”

The oldest inherently Germanic writing system, the runes, was used in the first half of the 1st millennium CE for a language which was more or less uniform and is considered by some linguists to be representative of the still undifferentiated Northwest Germanic (it must be mentioned, however, that the same writing system was also used for recording some short inscriptions of East Germanic provenance, presumably Gothic). The archaic nature of the early runic texts which preserve a virtually unchanged state of the language long after the actual division of the North and West Germanic dialectal areas can be best explained by assuming that it is a type of literary *koiné* (Makaev).

The origin of the runic alphabet consisting of 24 letters is usually sought in the old North Italic alphabets derived from Etruscan script. An analysis by Markey (2001, 82–126) shows that the runic script shares the greatest number of common features with the so-called Camunian script used in the Alpine region of Northern Italy. The Camuns [*Camunni*] apparently represented one of the Rhaetian tribes which left behind a few inscriptions and also some place names, such as *Val Camonica*. Linguistically as well as culturally, they are probably closely related to the Etruscans. The transfer of the Camunni script to the Germanic people occurred most likely through the medium of Celtic tribes, which predominated in the Alpine region around the year 0.

Probably the oldest known runic inscription is on a fibula found in Meldorf in the district of Dithmarschen, north of the estuary of the river Elbe (Germany). Archaeologically, this discovery is dated to the first half of the 1st cent. CE (Düwel 2008, 23–24).



**Picture 1:** Runic inscription on the fibula from Meldorf

It consists of only four characters whose interpretation is by far not unambiguous. One German scholar, Düwel, reads it **hiwi** and sees in the inscription the dative singular form “for the spouse”, cf. Old Saxon, Old High German *hīwa* “spouse”; Old Saxon, Old High German *hīwiski* “family”; Old Saxon *hīwian*, Old High German *hīwan* “to marry”; Gothic *heiwa-frauja* “master of the house”. His colleague Moltke reads the characters in the opposite direction **ihih**, while the Danish specialist Stoklund does not exclude the possibility that these characters are mere ornaments (see Nielsen 2000, 280).

Another one-word inscription originates from the second half of the 2nd century CE. This is written on a spearhead which was found in Øvre Stabu in Oppland, Norway. We read here the word **ᚱᚱᚢᚦᚢᚱᚢ** **raunijaz**, which is usually interpreted as “tester”, cf. Old Icelandic *reynir* id., *reyna* “to test”. Probably at the end of the 2nd century, a name **ᚱᚱᚱᚱ** **harja** was written on a comb found in Vimose on the Danish island of Funen. This may be a hypocoristic shortening of a personal name derived on the basis *\*xarja-* “army”, cf. Gothic *harjis*, Old Saxon, Old High German *heri*, Old Icelandic *herr* id, as well as the epithet of Odin *Heirann*.

The longest known inscription from the period before 200 CE was written on both sides of a metal chape found in Thorsberg in Schleswig-Holstein:

ᚲᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ

**owlᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ** (with a wrong sequence of the first two characters) **ni waje mariz**

“Wolᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ, not ill-famous”.

Approximately at the same time, the text  $\text{BIMFFRIRI\textcircled{F}Y \uparrow\text{F}XIMFI}$  **bidawarijaz talgidai** “Bidawarijaz carved [it]” was written on a fibula from Nøvling in Northern Jutland. From the mid 3rd century, we have the text  $\text{MF\textcircled{I}\textcircled{F} MFRIMFI F\text{F}F}$  **makija maridai ala** “Ala decorated this sword”, cf. Gothic *meki*, Old Saxon *māki* “sword” and Old Icelandic *mæra* to “decorate”, the sword was also found in Vimose on the island of Funen. A relatively long and not very intelligible inscription has been preserved on a spear shaft from Kragehul, also from the island of Funen (300):

$\text{M\textcircled{A} MRIRF\textcircled{A} F\textcircled{E}N\textcircled{X}I\textcircled{E}F\textcircled{F}F\textcircled{E} M\textcircled{M} N\textcircled{I}F\textcircled{I}F\textcircled{I}T\textcircled{M} X\textcircled{F} X\textcircled{F} X\textcircled{I}\textcircled{+}\textcircled{N} X\textcircled{F} \textcircled{I}M\textcircled{...}\textcircled{I}\textcircled{H}\textcircled{E}\textcircled{...}\textcircled{I}\textcircled{F}\textcircled{X}\textcircled{F}\textcircled{F} F\textcircled{I}\textcircled{H}\textcircled{N}\textcircled{B}\textcircled{I}\textcircled{X}$   
**ek erilaz asugisalas em uha haite ag ag ginu ag he...lija.. hagala wijubig**

“I am erilaz Ansugis<sup>a</sup>la. Ūha is my name.

I provide protection (three times the abbreviation **ag** = auja gebū), I provide mighty protection ... hailstorm...”

A similar formulation can be found in the text from Lindholm in Skåne in Southern Sweden (from 300 AD):

$\text{M\textcircled{<} M\textcircled{P}I\textcircled{F}\textcircled{F}Y \textcircled{E}F\textcircled{P}I\textcircled{F}\textcircled{X}\textcircled{F}\textcircled{X}\textcircled{F}Y H\textcircled{F}\textcircled{T}\textcircled{M}\textcircled{<}F\textcircled{...}$   
**ek erilaz sawilagaz ha [i] teka** “I erilaz Sawilagaz am called ...”

The word *erilaz* refers here to “the master of the Runic script”, as is documented for example by the epitaph from Järsberg in the Swedish region of Värmland written between 450 and 550. The author of this text did not make its reading easy for future readers – the direction of writing was changed a couple of times, and while writing the author jumped from one line to another. (A slash / indicates the division between lines and an arrow ← means that the direction of writing was from the right to the left.)

←  
 $\text{\textcircled{T}I\textcircled{A}H\textcircled{ }M\textcircled{Y}\textcircled{ }M\textcircled{R}I\textcircled{N}\textcircled{F}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{ }--\textcircled{N}\textcircled{B}\textcircled{F}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{ }H\textcircled{I}\textcircled{T}\textcircled{M}\textcircled{ }:\textcircled{ }H\textcircled{F}\textcircled{R}\textcircled{F}\textcircled{B}\textcircled{F}\textcircled{+}\textcircled{F}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{ }/\textcircled{ }R\textcircled{N}\textcircled{+}\textcircled{X}\textcircled{Y}\textcircled{ }P\textcircled{/}\textcircled{T}I\textcircled{R}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{/}\textcircled{I}$   
**tiah ek erilaz /-ubaz hite harabanaz / runoz w/tira/u**

The reconstructed text: ek erilaz [le]ubaz h[a]ite harabanaz hait ... runoz waritu

“I am called erilaz Leubaz. ,Hrabanaz was the name [of the person burried here]...?’, I write runes to”

Other tomb inscriptions also merit attention especially, due to their simplicity, e.g. the one from Opedal in the Norwegian region of Hordaland. This is dated to 350 and should be read from right to left:

$\text{\textcircled{I}\textcircled{H}\textcircled{I}M\textcircled{ }R\textcircled{A}\textcircled{T}\textcircled{I}\textcircled{P}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{Z} \textcircled{X}\textcircled{R}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{Z}\textcircled{ }/\textcircled{ }/\textcircled{X}\textcircled{O}\textcircled{X}\textcircled{R}\textcircled{I}\textcircled{Z}\textcircled{ }:\textcircled{ }P\textcircled{X}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{I}\textcircled{ }:\textcircled{ }Y\textcircled{P}\textcircled{M}\textcircled{ }/\textcircled{I}\textcircled{Z}\textcircled{/}\textcircled{P}\textcircled{I}\textcircled{I}$   
**leubu mez : wage : birgnggu boro swestar minu**  
 “Dear to me Wagaz [and] Birgingū; Borō, my sister”

An alternative reading is offered by Seebold (1994, 78):

**birg nguboro swestar minu liubu mez wage**  
 “Stay hidden, Inguboro, my sister, dear to me Wang”

Another one comes from Kjølevik in the Norwegian region of Rogaland (from 450; it is read from right to left)

$\text{\textcircled{X}\textcircled{+}\textcircled{+}\textcircled{M}\textcircled{ }/\textcircled{X}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{M}\textcircled{ }X\textcircled{M}\textcircled{I}\textcircled{Q}\textcircled{I}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{ }I\textcircled{H}\textcircled{ }Y\textcircled{A}\textcircled{M}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{T}\textcircled{X}\textcircled{/}\textcircled{X}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{H}\textcircled{ }>\textcircled{M}\textcircled{ }Y\textcircled{A}\textcircled{>}\textcircled{A}\textcircled{ }I\textcircled{I}\textcircled{ }M\textcircled{A}\textcircled{H}$   
**hadulaikaz ek hagustadaz hlaaiwido magu minino**  
 “[Here lies] Hadulaikaz. I, Hagustadaz buried my son.”

The best-known inscription in the Older Runic language was found in 1639 on the Golden Horn of Gallehus. Another horn was discovered nearby in 1734, but unfortunately both of



Υ.Ϡ|Ϣ Υ|Ϣ ϣϣϣϣ ϣ  
ek aljamarkiz bajj[a]z

The first two words obviously mean “I, the foreigner” (literally “from another region”, cf. Old Icelandic *mork* “area, border”). The interpretation of the third word remains open. Antonsen (1975, 52) supposed that the meaning was “warrior”, but the only support for this interpretation was found in Old Icelandic *beimar* “warriors”. Seebold (1994, 79) suggested the meaning “both” but the text refers to only one person. Following the word “foreigner”, one might expect a word explaining the person’s origin (i.e. an ethnonym or homeland). This model corresponds well with the hypothesis of the French Celtologist Delamarre (2001, 70; Krause 1937, 495 quotes Olsen with the same interpretation), who proposed the explanation “I, the foreigner Boius”, i.e. “the foreigner from the land of the Boii”. The Celtic Boii no longer existed in the 5th century CE as they had merged with other nations. However, their name survives in the designation of countries (*Boiohaimon*, *Bohemia* as well as *Bavaria* etc.) to this day.

It would appear then that the foreigner who left the inscription on the rock near Kårstad might have come from Bohemia. He may have been a member of the Heruli tribe, part of which returned to Scandinavia through Bohemia after 512. Although the inscription was probably created before 500 judging from the description of their return to Scandinavia (Procopius, *De Bello Gothico* II, 15), the Heruli never lost touch with their old homeland. Some 700 years later, the Danish Vikings called Bohemia *Bœm*, which appears in sagas about the Danish kings:

*hann fekk dóttur konungsins af Bœm, Margrétu, er sumir kalla Dagmey*

“He [i.e. Valdemar II, 1202–1241] who married the daughter of the Bohemian king, Margarethe, who is called Dagmey” (Džakson 2000, 248, 250).

One Runic inscription has maybe been found in Bohemia, on a decorative copper axe discovered near the village of Lipová in the Šluknov Hook, which was formerly known as Hainspach (Czech Hanšpach). This inscription, consisting of a ligature and two other characters ᚢᚢᚱ, is difficult to interpret. Krause’s (1937, 468) reading with filled-in vowels is following: **l[a] ḡ[a] s[a]r**. The first word in the form *laḡu* is known from at least seven early Runic inscriptions (cf. Gothic *laḡons* “appeal, invitation”, *laḡa-leiko* “willingly, gladly”, Old Icelandic *laḡð*, Old English *laḡu*), including the shortened form *lḡu* on the bracteate from Skonager in Jutland. The second word may correspond to Old Saxon and Old High German *sār* “immediately” (Krause 1937, 453). It is necessary to stress that the authenticity of this inscription remains doubtful (Düwel, Nedoma & Oehrl 2020, CCII date it to 585–610, but say that ‘Echtheit ist nicht gesichert’). On the other hand, in 2017 there was unearthed the end of the runic abecedarium, namely ᚠᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ **tbemdo**, in one grave by Břeclav in South Moravia dated to c. 600, whose authenticity is sure (Macháček, Nedoma et alii, 2021).

### 3.2.1.1 North Germanic

The first mention of the people from Scandinavia after Pytheas is found in Tacitus’ *Germania* from the late 1st century CE [§§44–45]: “And now begin the states of the Suiones, situated on the Ocean itself, and these, besides men and arms, are powerful in ships. The form of their vessels is peculiar in this respect, that a prow at either extremity acts as a forepart, always ready for running into shore. They are not worked by sails, nor have they a row of oars attached to their sides; but, as on some rivers, the apparatus of rowing is unfixed, and shifted from side to side as circumstances require. And they likewise honour wealth, and so a single ruler holds sway with no restrictions, and with no uncertain claim to obedience. Arms are not with them, as with the other Germans, at the general disposal, but are in the charge of a keeper, who is actually a slave; for the ocean forbids the sudden inroad of enemies, and, besides, an idle multitude of armed men is easily demoralized. And indeed it is by no means the policy of a monarch to place either a nobleman, a freeborn citizen, or even a freedman, at the head of an armed force.... Beyond the Suiones is another sea, sluggish and almost motionless, which, we may certainly infer, girdles and surrounds the world, from the fact

that the last radiance of the setting sun lingers on till sunrise, with a brightness sufficient to dim the light of the stars. Even the very sound of his rising, as popular belief adds, may be heard, and the forms of gods and the glory round his head may be seen. Only thus far (and here rumour seems truth) does the world extend. At this point the Suevic sea, on its eastern shore, washes the tribes of the Æstii, whose rites and fashions and style of dress are those of the Suevi, while their language is more, like the British. They worship the mother of the gods, and wear as a religious symbol the device of a wild boar. This serves as armour, and as a universal defence, rendering the votary of the goddess safe even amidst enemies. They often use clubs, iron weapons but seldom. They are more patient in cultivating corn and other produce than might be expected from the general indolence of the Germans. But they also search the deep, and are the only people who gather amber (which they call “glesum”), in the shallows, and also on the shore itself. ... Closely bordering on the Suiones are the tribes of the Sitones, which, resembling them in all else, differ only in being ruled by a woman. So low have they fallen, not merely from freedom, but even from slavery itself. Here Suevia ends.”<sup>32</sup> Ptolemy in the second half of the 2nd century knew of 7 tribes altogether which inhabit Scandinavia [2.10.33-35]:

[§33] “... East of the Cimbrian peninsula there are four islands called the Scandian islands, three of them smaller, of which the one in the middle has the following position: 41°30’ & 58°”<sup>33</sup>

[§34] “but one of them very large and the most eastwards at the mouth of the river Vistula; its ends are located to the West 43° a 58°, to the East 46° & 58°, to the North 44°30’ & 58°30’, to the South 45° & 57°40’.”<sup>34</sup>

[§35] “It is properly called Scandia itself; and its western region is inhabited by the *Chaedini*, its eastern region by the *Favonae* and the *Firaesi*, its northern region by the *Finni*, its southern region by the *Gutae* (*Gautae*) and the *Dauciones*, and its central region by the *Levoni*.”<sup>35</sup>

Jordanes registered 30 tribes living in Scandinavia [§§19-24]:

[§19] “Now in the island of Scandza, whereof I speak, there dwell many and divers nations, though Ptolemaeus mentions the names of but seven of them. There the honey-making swarms of bees are nowhere to be found on account of the exceeding great cold. In the northern part of the island the race of the Adogit live, who are said to have continual light in midsummer for forty days and nights, and who likewise have no clear light in the winter season for the same number of days and nights.”

[§20] “By reason of this alternation of sorrow and joy they are like no other race in their sufferings and blessings. And why? Because during the longer days they see the sun returning to the east along the rim of the horizon, but on the shorter days it is not thus seen. The sun shows itself differently because it is passing through the southern signs, and whereas to

32) *Suionum hinc civitates, ipso in Oceano, praeter virosarmaque classibus valent. forma navium eo differt quodutrimque prora paratam semper adpulsui frontem agit. nec velis ministrant nec remos in ordinem lateribus adiungunt: solutum, ut in quibusdam fluminum, et mutabile, ut res poscit, hinc vel illinc remigium. est apud illos et opibus honos, eoque unus imperitat, nullis iam exceptionibus, non precario iure parendi. nec arma, ut apud ceteros Germanos, in promisco, sed clausa sub custode, et quidem servo, quiasubitos hostium incursus prohibet Oceanus, otiosae porroarmatorum manus facile lascivunt: enimvero neque nobilem neque ingenuum, ne libertinum quidem armis praepone regia utilitas est. ... Trans Suionas aliud mare, pigrum ac prope immotum, quo cingi claudique terrarum orbem hinc fides, quod extremus cadentis iam solis fulgor in ortus edurat adeo clarusut sidera hebetet; sonum insuper emergentis audiri formasque equorum et radios capitis aspici persuasio adicit. illuc usque et fama vera tantum natura. ergo iam dextro Suebici maris litore Aestiorum gentes adluuntur, quibusritus habitusque Sueborum, lingua Britannicae propior. matrem deum venerantur. insigne superstitionis formas aprorum gestant: id pro armis hominumque tutela securum deae cultorem etiam inter hostes praestat. rarus ferri, frequens fustium usus. frumenta ceterosque fructus patientius quam pro solita Germanorum inertia laborant. sed et mare scrutantur, ac soli omnium sucinum, quod ipsi glesum vocant, inter vada atque in ipso litore legunt. ... Suionibus Sitonum gentes continuantur. cetera similesuno differunt, quod femina dominatur: in tantum non modoa libertate sed etiam a servitute degenerant.*

Translated by Alfred John Church & William Jackson Brodribb (1942).

33) [§33] Ἀπ’ ἀνατολῶν δὲ τῆς Κιμβρικής Χερσονήσου τέσσαρες νῆσοι αἰ καλοῦμεναι Σκανδία, τρεῖς μὲν μικραὶ, ἣν ἡ μέση ἐπέχει μοῖρας μα’ ἦ νη’.

34) [§34] μία δὲ μεγίστη καὶ ἀνατολικώτατη κατὰ τὰς ἐκβολὰς τοῦ Οὐδιστοῦλα ποταμοῦ, ἥς; τὸ μὲν δυτικώτατον πέρας ἐπέχει μοῖρας μγ’ νη’, τὸ δ’ ἀνατολικώτατον μθ’ νη’, τὸ δ’ ἀρκτικώτατον μδ’ ἦ νη’ ἦ, τὸ δὲ μεσημβρινόν με’ νζ’ ψΟ’.

35) [§35] Καλεῖται δὲ ἰδίως καὶ αὐτῆ Σκανδία, καὶ κατέχουσιν αὐτῆς τὰ μὲν δυτικὰ Χαιδεῖοι, τὰ δ’ ἀνατολικά Φαυόνοι καὶ Φιραῖοι, τὰ δὲ ἀρκτικά Φίννοι, τὰ δὲ μεσημβρινὰ Γοῦται καὶ Δαυκίωνες, τὰ δὲ μέσα Λευῶνοι.

Translation by Edward Luther Stevenson (1932).

us the sun seem to rise from below, it seems to go around them along the edge of the earth. There also are other peoples.”

[§21] “There are the *Screrefennae* { = *Scrithi-Fennae* ‘marching Fenns’?},, who do not seek grain for food but live on the flesh of wild beasts and birds’ eggs; for there are such multitudes of young game in the swamps as to provide for the natural increase of their kind and to afford satisfaction to the needs of the people. But still another race dwells there, the *Suehans*, who, like the Thuringians, have splendid horses. Here also are those who send through innumerable other tribes the sapperine skins to trade for Roman use. They are a people famed for the dark beauty of their furs and, though living in poverty, are most richly clothed.”

[§22] “Then comes a throng of various nations, *Theustes*, *Vagoth*, *Bergio*, *Hallin*, *Liothida*. All their habitations are in one level and fertile region. Wherefore they are disturbed there by the attacks of other tribes. Behind these are the *Ahelmil*, *Finnaithae*, *Fervir* and *Gauthigoth*, a race of men bold and quick to fight. Then come the *Mixi*, *Evagre*, and *Otingis*. All these live like wild animals in rocks hewn out like castles.”

[§23] “And there are beyond these the *Ostrogoths*, *Raumarici*, *Aeragnaricii*, and the most gentle *Finns*, milder than all the inhabitants of *Scandza*. Like them are the *Vinovilith* also. The *Suetidi* are of this stock and excel the rest in stature. However, the *Dani*, who trace their origin to the same stock, drove from their homes the *Heruli*, who lay claim to preëminence among all the nations of *Scandza* for their tallness.”

[§24] “Furthermore there are in the same neighborhood the *Grannii*, *Augandzi*, *Eunixi*, *Taetel*, *Rugi*, *Arochi* and *Ranii*, over whom *Roduulf* was king not many years ago. But he despised his own kingdom and fled to the embrace of *Theodoric*, king of the *Goths*, finding there what he desired. All these nations surpassed the *Germans* in size and spirit, and fought with the cruelty of wild beasts.”<sup>36</sup>

The North Germanic languages separated from the Northwest Germanic dialect continuum during the 2nd century CE (See Appendix VII). The language of the oldest runic inscriptions is considered either the direct predecessor of only the North Germanic languages (*Urnordisk*) or as a predecessor of both the North and West Germanic languages (*Antonsen* and his school). Here we accept *Makaev’s* theory that this variety is a literary koiné of a still undifferentiated Northwest Germanic language which maintained its archaic features long after many changes had spread to the spoken language.

The following features are considered to be the diagnostic isoglosses differing Gothic from the Northwest Germanic continuum (*Wessén* 1968, 7–8; *Haugen* 1984, 140–41):

36) §19. *In Scandza vero insula, unde nobis sermo est, licet multae et diversae maneant nationes, septem tamen eorum nomina meminit Ptolemaeus. Apium ibi turba mellifica ob nimium frigore nusquam reperitur. In cuius parte arctoa gens Adogit consistit, quae fertur in aestate media quadraginta diebus et noctibus lucas habere continuas, itemque brumali tempore eodem dierum noctiumque numero luce clara nescire.*

§20. *Ita alternato merore cum gaudio beneficio aliis damnoque impar est. Et hoc quare? Quia prolixioribus diebus solem ad orientem per axis marginem vident redeuntem, brevioribus vero non sic conspicitur apud illos, sed aliter, quia austrinis signis percurrit, et quod nobis videtur sol ab imo surgere, illos per terrae marginem dicitur circuire.*

§21. *Aliae vero ibi sunt gentes: Screre-Fennae { = Scrithi-Fennae}, quae frumentorum non queritant victum, sed caribus ferarum atque ovis avium vivunt; ubi tanta paludibus fetura ponitur, ut et augmentum praestent generi et satietatem ad copiam genti. Alia vero gens ibi moratur Suehans, quae velud Thyringi equis utuntur eximiis. Hi quoque sunt, qui in usibus Romanorum sapperinas pelles commercio interveniente per alias innumeras gentes transmittunt, famosi pellium decora nigridine. Hi cum inopes vivunt, ditissime vestiuntur.*

§22. *Sequitur deinde diversarum turba nationum, Theustes, Vagoth, Bergio, Hallin, Liothida, quorum omnium sedes sub uno plani ac fertilis, et propterea inibi aliarum gentium incursionibus infestantur. Post hos Ahelmil, Finnaithae, Fervir, Gauthigoth, acre hominum genus et at bella prumtissimum. Dehinc Mixi, Evagre, Otingis. Hi omnes excisis rupibus quasi castellis inhabitant ritu beluino.*

§23. *Sunt et his exteriores Ostrogothae, Raumarici, Aeragnaricii, Finni mitissimi, Scandzae cultoribus omnibus mitiores (minores?); nec non et pares eorum Vinoviloth; Suetidi, cogniti in hac gente reliquis corpore eminentiores: quamvis et Dani, ex ipsorum stirpe progressi, Herulos propriis sedibus expulerunt, qui inter omnes Scandiae nationes nomen sibi ob nimia proceritate affectant praecipuum.*

§24. *Sunt quamquam et horum positura Grannii, Augandzi, Eunixi, Taetel, Rugi, Arochi, Ranii, quibus non ante multos annos Roduulf rex fuit, qui contempto proprio regno ad Theodorici Gothorum regis gremio convolvavit et, ut desiderabat, invenit. Hae itaque gentes, Germanis corpore et animo grandiores, pugnant beluina saevitia.*

Translated by Charles C. Mierow (1915).



- Proto-Germanic \**ē* > Northwest Germanic \**ā* / Gothic *e* = [ē]: Old Icelandic, Old Swedish *ār*, German *Jahr* “year” / Gothic *jer* id.; Old Icelandic, Old Swedish *láta*, German *lassen* “to let” / Gothic *letan*;
- Proto-Germanic \**ō* > Northwest Germanic \**u* / Gothic *a*: Proto-North Germanic \**geþu*, Old English *giefu* / Gothic *giba* “gift, present”; Proto-North Germanic \**worðu*, Old English *wordu* / Gothic *waurda* “word”; Proto-North Germanic \**beru*, Old Saxon *beru* : Gothic *baira* “to bear, to carry”
- Proto-Germanic genitive singular *a*-stems: Northwest Germanic \**-as* / Gothic *-is*: Proto-Norse \**dagas*, Old Saxon *dagas* / Gothic *dagis* “of day”;
- Proto-Germanic genitive plural *a*-stems: Northwest Germanic \**-a* / Gothic *-e*: Proto-Norse \**daga*, Old English *daga* / Gothic *dage* “of days”;
- Proto-Germanic genitive singular *u*-stems \**-auz* > Northwest Germanic \**-ōz* / Gothic. *-aus*: North-West Germanic \**sunōz*, Old High German *witō*, *witu* / Gothic *sunaus* “son”;
- Proto-Germanic dative singular *a*-stems \**-ai* > Northwest Germanic \**-ē* / Gothic *-a*: Proto-North Germanic \**dagē*, Old High German *tage* / Gothic *daga* “day”;
- Proto-Germanic dative plural *a*-stems \**-om* > Northwest Germanic \**-um* / Gothic *-am*: Proto-Norse *dōgum*, Old High German *tagum* / Gothic *dagam* “days”;
- Proto-Germanic dative singular *i*-stems \**-ēi* > Northwest Germanic \**-ē* / Gothic *-ai*: Proto-Norse \**brūði*, Old Saxon *ansti* / Gothic *anstai* “love”;
- Proto-Germanic dative singular *u*-stems \**-ēu* > Northwest Germanic \**-iu* / Gothic *-au*: Proto-Norse \**magiu*, Old High German *suniu* / Gothic *sunau* “to the son”;
- demonstratives: Old Icelandic *þessi*, nominative *þetta*, plural *þessir*, Swedish *denne*, *detta*, *dessa*, Old High German *dese*, German *dieser*, English *this* / Gothic *sa* “this”.

There are specific isoglosses between Gothic and the North Germanic languages as well:

- Proto-Germanic \**-jj-* > Gothic *-ddj-* and Scandinavian \**-ggj-*: Proto-Germanic \**twajjō* (genitive of \**twai* „2“) > Gothic *twaddje*, Icelandic *tveggja*, Old Swedish *twäggia*, but Old High German *zweio*;
- Proto-Germanic \**-ww-* > Gothic and Scandinavian \**-ggw-*: \**trewwa-* “loyal, faithful” > Gothic *triggws*, Icelandic *tryggr*, Old Swedish *trygger*, but German *treu*;
- 2nd person singular has the ending *-t*: Gothic *gaft* “you gave”, *namt* “you took”, Icelandic *gaft*, *namt*;

So-called inchoative verbs are formed by means of *-nan* in Gothic, *-na* in Icelandic : Gothic *fullnan* “to become full”, Icelandic *roðna* “to become red”;

- formation of verbal abstract nouns of feminine gender by means of suffixes \**-ōni-*, \**-īni-*, \**-ēni-* : Gothic *laþons* “invitation”: *laþon* “to invite”, *skeireins* “explanation” : *ga-skeirjan* “to explain”; Icelandic *skipan* “order” : *skipa* “to organize”, *sōgn* “story, legend” : *segja* “to say” etc.

Some isoglosses are specifically Gothic-East Scandinavian:

- Gothic and Old Swedish have *ō* in an open syllable while Icelandic and West Germanic languages show *ū*: Gothic *bauan* [bōan], the digraph *au* serves for denoting of [ō], Old Swedish *bóa*, but Icelandic *búa*, Old High German *būan*;
- the so-called *a*-umlaut is missing in Gothic and it is rare in East Scandinavian languages in comparison to West Germanic languages: Gothic *budans*, Old Swedish *bupin*, but Icelandic *boðinn*, German *geboten*;
- accusative plural of neuter *n*-stems ends in *-ona*, in Gothic, e.g. *augona* “eyes” which corresponds to Old Swedish *óghon*, but in Icelandic we find *augu*;
- 3rd person plural in conjunctive ends in *-ina* in Gothic, in Old Swedish it is *-in*, but in Icelandic *-i*: Gothic *weseina*, Old Swedish *varin* “they would be”, but Old Icelandic *væri*.

If we accept the hypothesis that the Gaudi (Jordanes *Gauti*; Procopius Γαυτοί, Old English *Géatas*, Old Icelandic *Gautar*, Old Swedish *Götar*) vying for power in Sweden in the 6th century were linguistically related to the Goths, who derived their own origin from Scandinavia (Jordanes), then the following explanation of the specific parallels between Gothic and (East) Scandinavian may be offered. The Gaudi-Goths, who spoke East Germanic languages, inhabited Scandinavia or at least Sweden before the peoples who later spoke North Germanic languages. How else could one explain the East Germanic elements which sometimes appear in the Old Runic inscriptions from Scandinavia (cf. Euler 1985; contra: Peterson 1998). The

future North Germanic people began to move to that area from Jutland and the Danish islands at the latest around the beginning of the Common Era. Sometime during this period, probably due to the pressure imposed by the newcomers, the ancestors of the Goths moved to the Vistula estuary, an event recorded by Jordanes who claimed that they travelled directly across the Baltic Sea on the legendary three boats. The possibility that they migrated via the island of Gotland to the Estonian coast, as the Guta Saga says, should also be considered. These migrants may have been integrated into the Balto-Finnic tribes, whose lexis bears traces of influence of a Germanic language similar to Gothic. In the 6th century, the Gauri were finally subjugated in Sweden and afterwards also linguistically assimilated. The Gotho-Gautic culture was probably preserved on the remote island of Gotland for the longest period of time. Such a connection is revealed not only by the name of the island itself, but also by the traits specific to the Old Gutnish dialect, which retained some common isoglosses with Gothic as late as the 13th century.

### 3.2.1.1.1 Common Scandinavian

This is the name given to the language of the North Germanic population between 550–1050 in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and in the areas the language spread to during that period. In inscriptions, the language is documented especially by texts written in the runic script called the Younger Futhark. A large amount of onomastic material and of loans into languages in contact with Common Scandinavian is also available. This is enough to attest that the language was more or less unified, hence the name **Common Scandinavian**.

In the 6th century, Scandinavia came out of the era of mute archaeological artefacts, laconic inscriptions with no names of personalities whose identity could be established and undated legendary traditions. The first historic date connected with a specific name from Scandinavian history was provided by a happy correlation between the events of the Old English epic poem *Beowulf* and historical events as presented by the Frankish chronicler Gregory of Tours. The author of *Beowulf*, an Anglo-Saxon church dignitary of high rank, had accurate knowledge of the circumstances in Scandinavian royal courts during the 6th century, when he described in detail the conflicts between the Swedes, the Geats and the Danish. Among other figures, he mentioned *Hygelac*, a king of the Geats, who attacked and devastated the Frisian coast:

<p><sup>1202</sup><i>þone hring hæfde Higelac Geata,</i>  <sup>1203</sup><i>nefa Swertinges, nyhstan siðe,</i>  <sup>1204</sup><i>siðþan he under segne sinc ealgode,</i>  <sup>1205</sup><i>wælcraef werede; hýne wyrd fornam,</i>  <sup>1206</sup><i>syþðan he for wlenco wean ahsode,</i>  <sup>1207</sup><i>fæhðe to Frysum. He þa frætwe wæg,</i>  <sup>1208</sup><i>eorclanstanas ofer yða ful,</i>  <sup>1209</sup><i>rice þeoden; he under rande gecranc.</i>  <sup>1210</sup><i>Gehwearf þa in Francna fæþm feorh cyninges,</i>  <sup>1211</sup><i>breostgewædu, ond se beah somod;</i>  <sup>1212</sup><i>wyrsan wigfreca wæl reafedon</i>  <sup>1213</sup><i>æfter guðsceare, Geata leode,</i>  <sup>1214</sup><i>hreawic heoldon.</i></p>	<p>“That ring had Hygelac of the Geats,  grandson of Swerting, on his last adventure,  when under the banner he defended riches,  warded slaughter-spoils; him Fate took away,  after he from pride sought misery,  feud with the Frisians; he then wore the ornament,  the mysterious stone over the waves’ cup,  the mighty prince; he fell under the rimmed-shield.  Passed then into the Franks’ grasp the body of the king,  mail-coat and the ring together;  lesser warrior rifled the corpses  after the slaughter of battle; the people of the Geats  filled the field of corpses.”</p>
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*Beowulf*, edited and translated by Benjamin Slade<sup>37</sup>, 2022

The same event was depicted by Gregory of Tours in his *Historia Francorum* [III, 3, translation by Lewis Thorpe]. The raider in his account was called *Chlochilaichus* and led the Danish invaders in approximately 521: “The next thing which happened was that the Danes sent a fleet under their King Chlochilaich and invaded Gaul from the sea. They came ashore, laid

<sup>37</sup> Slade’s translation is more accurate in comparison with another recent translation (in verse) by Heaney 2001.

waste one of the regions ruled by Theuderic and captured some of the inhabitants. They loaded their ships with what they had stolen and the men they had seized, and then they set sail for home. Their king remained onshore, waiting until the boats had gained the open sea, when he planned to go on board. When Theuderic heard that his land had been invaded by foreigners, he sent his son Theudebert to those parts with a powerful army and all the necessary equipment. The Danish king was killed, the enemy fleet was beaten in a naval battle and all the booty was brought back on shore once more.”<sup>38</sup> See also Walther (2004, 166–67).

The Old English name *Hygelac* corresponds to *Hugleikr* in Old Norse; in the early runic language, the name would have been *\*Hugilaikaz*. This shows that Gregory of Tours recorded a relatively exact form of this proto-Viking pirate, including the old diphthong *ai*. At the same time, it is obvious from his testimony that the final *\*-z* (adapted as the Latin *-s*) had not yet been changed to *-r*, as is documented by both later runic texts from the Viking era and Old Norse recorded in Latin script.

The half-legendary *Skjoldung* (Old English *Scyldingas*) dynasty in Denmark and *Yngling* dynasty in Sweden and Norway started on the long road to the unification of the fragmented territories and the creation of centralised states. The Danes dominated the Jutland peninsula, Danish islands and the south of Sweden. On their southern border, they clashed with Charlemagne, who set out for this area after defeating the Saxons. For this reason, the Danish king Gudfred decided to build a protective wall across the Jutland peninsula in 810. The ancestors of the Swedes were already firmly settled around Lake Mälaren.

As we know from *Beowulf* and the Norwegian genealogical poem *Ynglingatal* from the end of the 9th century, the Swedes succeeded in conquering the Geats (*Götar* in Old Norse). Soon afterwards, they spread their power to the island of Gotland and other parts of Sweden, with the exception of the southern tip, which remained under Danish control. According to the *Ynglingatal*, part of the Swedish royal family emigrated to eastern Norway, where they set up a new stronghold by what is today Oslofjord. This version of events dates the creation of the centralised Norwegian state to 872, when the king of Oslofjord defeated the rulers of western Norway. The gradual concentration of power in their homeland drove many families across the borders of the traditional territory.

The Viking era begins at the end of the 8th century. In spite of the initial *V-* written in uppercase, the term *Viking* should not be seen as an ethnic name. The most generally accepted etymology explains the word as meaning “those from the bays”, cf. Old Norse *vík* “bay” (de Vries 1962, 662). The personal experience of the thousands of victims of Viking assaults in northern and western Europe shifted the meaning of the word to “sea raiders”. Looking beyond the destructive consequences of their actions, the reach of the Normans, as they first started to be called in the mid 9th century in the Frankish kingdom, is really impressive. In 793, the English town of Lindisfarne was attacked. From that time on, Danish Vikings began to settle on the east coast of England. Their influence reached far inland. The area under their administration was called *Danelag*, the Danelaw. The western part of Britain lying approximately between Wales and Scotland, i.e. the Lake District, was controlled by the Norwegian Vikings. Moreover, they also conquered northern Scotland, the Isle of Man and the eastern and southern part of Ireland, where they lived between the 9th and 13th centuries. On the Hebrides, they stayed from 9th until 15th century, and two more centuries on the Orkney Islands, as well as on the Shetland Islands, where the Nordic language **Norn** was spoken till the 18th century.

The settlement of the Faroe Islands begun around 800 and the settlement of Iceland some time later. Around 980, the Icelanders began to settle the island of Greenland (this colonisation ceased in the 14th–15th century) and from Greenland further to the North American mainland, where the first Norman settlement was established around 1000 in *Vínland*, what is probably Newfoundland today.

38) *His ita gestis, Dani cum rege suo nomen Chlochilaichum evectu navale per mare Gallias appetunt. Egressique ad terras, pagum unum de regno Theudorici devastant atque captivant, oneratisque navibus tam de captivis quam de reliquis spoliis, reverti ad patriam cupiunt; sed rex eorum in litus resedebat, donec navis alto mare conpraehenderent, ipse deinceps secutus. Quod cum Theudorico nuntiatum fuisset, quod scilicet regio eius fuerit ab extraneis devastata, Theudobertum, filium suum, in illis partibus cum valido exercitu ac magno armorum apparatu direxit. Qui, interfectu rege, hostibus navali proelio superatis oppraemit omnemque rapinam terrae restituit.*  
Translated by Lewis Thorpe (1974).

In the meantime, the Danish Vikings gained Normandy in fealty (911) in exchange for discouraging their kin from attacks on France. They kept their Nordic language no longer than two generations, but they maintained their skills as warriors. 155 years later, their frenchified descendant William the Conqueror defeated the English army at the Battle of Hastings and thus the long-term and intense pressure of the French language on English began. The Swedish Vikings operated predominantly in the Baltic Sea. They settled along the Finnish coast, where their descendants still speak Swedish today; also in Estonia and in small enclaves also in Latvia and historical Prussia. Their reach was not limited to the coast. Travelling upstream on the big European rivers, they penetrated inland, overcame flat watersheds and arrived in the Dnieper and Volga basins. In Eastern Europe, their military retinues functioned mostly as escorts to rich merchants, but also as personal bodyguards of local rulers. One or more such retinues of Swedish Vikings contributed to the creation of the first Russian state, as is explicitly stated in the Primary Chronicle and indirectly demonstrated by the Norman names of the first princes (*Rurik* < Runic Swedish *HröríkR*, *Igor* < Runic Swedish *Ingvarr*; *Oleg* < Runic Swedish *Hälgi*, *Olga* < Runic Swedish *Hälga*, *Uleb* < Runic Swedish *OlafR*, *Rogvolod* < Runic Swedish *Ragnvold*, *Askold* – cf. Old Icelandic *Hǫskundr*; see Wessén 1968, 98) as well as by the probable etymology of the name of Russia itself, which has been explained with help of Old Swedish *rōpsmān* “oarsmen, rowers”, Finnish *Ruotsi* ‘Sweden’ via the *Varangians*, which had to bring the term among the East Slavs (cf. de Vries 1962, 450).

Around 1000, the rulers of the Viking homelands converted to Christianity and started to spread it in their dependencies as well: Harald Gormsson in Denmark in 965, Olaf Tryggvason in Norway before 995 and from here on Iceland in 1000, Olof Skotkonung in Sweden around 1008.

The written records on the Normans and the development of their language during the 1,500 years of the Christian era can be found in several distinct types of sources, namely foreign historical and mythological texts, Nordic loans into other languages, place names in areas which were once under Norman control and finally their own inscriptions. From the Old English epic poems *Widsið* and *Beowulf*, we learn of the rivalry of the Swedes (Old English *Swéon*, Old Danish *-swéaR*), Danes (Old English *Denum*, Old Danish *Danum*), Geats (Old English *Géatun*, Old Norse *Gautum*), Jutes (Old English *Eotena*) and others during the 6th century (the ending *-um* is a dat. pl. marker in both Old English and Old Norse).

Further information about the inhabitants of Scandinavia in the same century was recorded by the Gothic historian Jordanes and his Byzantine colleague Procopius of Caesarea and also by Gregory of Tours (538–594), Isidore of Seville (†636) and Paul the Deacon (c. 725–795). At the end of the 9th century, Alfred the Great translated the ‘History of Orosius’ into Old English and included two descriptions of journeys from Scandinavia, one by Wulfstan and the other by Ohther (= Old Norse Ottar < \**óhta-hariz*). Here, the name of Norway appears for the first time in the form *Norðweg* (Old Norse *Nóregr*) and *Norðmanna land* (Old Norse *norðmanna land*) and the name of Denmark as *Denemearc* (cf. gen. sg. *tanmarkaz* in the runic inscription from Jelling I from circa 935).

The first detailed description of Scandinavia can be found in the *Gesta Hamburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* from around 1060. Among other things, it contains the first written record of the discovery of the land of *Winlandia*, i.e. the *Vínland* of the Icelandic sagas, which were written down later.

The long-term cohabitation of Norse and English in the British Isles and nearby archipelagos brought a marked enrichment of the English vocabulary by Scandinavian words, often connected with administration (*law*, *bylaw*, *outlaw*, *ransack*, *riding*). In most cases, however, the words replaced everyday terms (*bloom*, *booth*, *call*, *cast*, *die*, *egg*, *fellow*, *frost*, *get*, *give*, *hit*, *husband*, *ill*, *kid*, *knife*, *loose*, *odd*, *scant*, *scrape*, *scrub*, *sky*, *take*, *want*, *window*, *wrong*) and even pronouns and grammatical words (*same*, *their*, *them*, *they*, *though*, *till*). Such strong influence can only be attributed to a close co-existence of the languages, supported by mixed marriages. A strong representation of Norman fathers is corroborated today by family names, originally patronymics, with the ending *-son*. The place names are no less informative; there are still hundreds of them in the conquered areas, for example *Derby* (Old Norse *by* “farmstead”), *Nortoft* (Old Norse *tofte* “settlement”), *Coningsthorpe* (Old Norse *þorp* “farmstead established on cleared soil”), etc.

To a smaller, but still visible degree, the language of the Normans also enriched the Goidelic languages and Welsh in the British Isles, as well as French (e.g. *équiper* “arrange” < Old Norse *skipa*), especially in Normandy. The most authentic evidence about specific times and places is provided by texts set down by the authors themselves.

The tradition of runic documents survived after 600, even if it was much poorer compared with the previous centuries. For example, there is no known inscription from Denmark dating from the period 600–800. Swedish finds come from the localities of Gummarp, Istaby, Stentofte and Björketrop from the 7th century and Rävsaal, Roes, Sölvesborg and Ellestad from the 8th century. Let us examine the inscription of Björketrop (from about 675) in transliteration, in a standardised transcription corresponding to the Old Norse usage and in English translation (the symbol / represents the end of a line while the symbol // divides two different parts of the same inscription). All of the following examples of transcriptions, as well as their interpretations, are based on Haugen (1976, 169–178) or Elliott (1959, 31):

**uþArAbAsbA // hAidRrunoronu / fAlAhAkhAiderAg /**

**inArunARArAgeu / hAerAmAlAusR / utiARwelAdAude / sARþAtbArutR**

*Ūþarþa-spā! HeiðR-rūnōro nū falhk heðra,*

*ginna-rūnaR. Ergan hearma-lausR, ūti æR wēla-dauðe, sār þat brýtR*

“Prophecy of danger! Runes of honor I now conceal here, runes of power. Pursued by perversity, exposed to a miserable death, will he be who destroys this [monument]”

From among the Norwegian inscriptions, one can mention the inscription on the Setre Comb. There is also the famous inscription on a gravestone slab from the locality of Eggjum (circa 700), the first line of which is shown below:

**nissolusotuknisAksestAinskorin ... = ni'sölu sött ok ni saksi steinn skorinn ...**

“Not struck by the sun and not cut by sword is the stone ... a curse on the evil-doer!”

Between 550 and 750, the modern language diverged so far from that for which the runic script had been designed that it was necessary to remove the discrepancy. Today we would say that the differences between the literary tradition and the spoken language required a spelling reform. It may be presumed that already around 550, a sound similar to Czech *ř* was pronounced instead of the final *-z*. Norse scholars traditionally transcribe the sound as *-R* (by around 1100 it had merged fully with common *r*, as one may judge from the interchangeability of the respective signs *Y* and *R*). This conclusion is based on the testimony of the Gothic historian Jordanes dated 550, stating that the tribe of the *Feriar* lived in what is today Sweden; the name *Feriar* is interpreted as *\*FerhviaR*, with the plural marked by *-R* and not *-z*.

Around 600 (for the first time in the inscription from Istaba), the rune with the value *j* began to be used for the vowel *a*. In order to differentiate, scholars use **A** to indicate its new value. The reason for this rather unusual change is the acrophonic principle, which assigns a word to each letter for ease of memorization, with the initial letter of the word representing the phonetic value of the sign. In case of the rune *j*, the mnemonic word was the Common Scandinavian *\*jāra* “year”, which however changed to *ār* at the turn of the 6th and 7th centuries. On the other hand, the rune **a**, which had been assigned to the word *\*ansuz* “god” in the old literary tradition, gained the new value of the nasal [ã], transcribed by Norse scholars as **a**, because the word *\*ansuz* was already pronounced as *qss*.

This new vocalic opposition can already be seen in the inscriptions from the turn of the 6th and 7th centuries: the inscription from Setre includes the word **mAR** “girl”, corresponding to Old Norse *mær* id., while the inscription from Eggja includes the word **māR** “man”, corresponding to *maðr*, both from the older *\*mannR*. The rune **w** maintained its original value longer than the rune *j*, but it also started to be used for another sound, namely **u**: **suema** “de” “swimming” (Eggja). The vowel **o** began to be substituted by **u**, cf. **uk** “and” (Eggja) and Old Norse *ok*. The vowel *ē* was written as **i** (Strand **hli** “protection” : Old Norse *hlé*). Voiced **b** was used also for the rare voiceless *p* (Björketörp **sbA** “prophecy” : Old Norse *spá*; Eggja **warb** “threw” : Old Norse *varp*), while the rune **t** substituted also for the

voiced *d* (Eggja **la<sup>nt</sup>** “land” : Old Norse **land**), and **k** was used to mark *g* (Eggja **fokl** “bird” : Old Norse *fugl*). The rune **ŋ** for the velar nasal was used only rarely, sometimes substituted by **ng**. Even in the oldest version of the runic script, nasals were not recorded before stops (Eggja **suema<sup>nde</sup>**, **la<sup>nt</sup>**).

As a result of these sound changes, 8 runes of the original 24 were eliminated, two were redefined and the value of the rune **z** was changed to **R**. The reform, probably implemented at the end of the 8th century in Denmark, reduced the original 24 runes to 16. Because of the established order of the signs (**fup̄arkhniastbmlR**), the runic alphabet is called the futhark, and to distinguish it from the old runic alphabet of 24 runes, it is called the Younger Futhark. Compared to the Elder Futhark, the new runic system is definitely the more ambiguous one. The following signs have several sound values: **i** = *i, j, e*; **u** = *u, w, o, y, ø*; **b** = *b, p, mb, mp*; **t** = *t, d, nd, nt*; **k** = *k, g, ng, nk*. Diphthongs are recorded as a combination of vowels and their sound value is also ambiguous: **ai** = *ai, æ*; **au** = *au, øy, ø, ø*; **ia** = *ia, e, æ*. The length or doubling of vowels is not recorded.

Surprisingly, this obviously imperfect system of writing became quickly established and spread not only in Scandinavia, but also far beyond its borders with the Viking voyages. The runic script spread to Norway around 800, but from the next 150 years there are only 12 known inscriptions. The oldest inscriptions in stone in the Younger Futhark date from between 930 and 1000 on the Isle of Man; in about 30 cases, they were inscribed on Christian crosses. Overall, there are about 100 known Norman inscriptions in younger runes from the British Isles: 5 from the Shetland Islands, 32 from the Orkney Islands, 9 from the Hebrides, 6 from Scotland, 5 from Ireland, 32 from the Isle of Man and 13 from England. So far, only 3 inscriptions have been found on the Faroe Islands, 53 on Iceland (but mostly dating after 1200) and 38 on Greenland. The northernmost one, the Kingittorsuaq stone, was located almost as far north as the 73rd parallel. At the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries, the younger runes became established also in Norway, especially in the southeast (Astad, Dynna, Vang). However, they were most popular in Sweden, where more than 2500 inscriptions have been found, of which 2060 date from before 1100.

Let us turn to several inscriptions which were created before the end of the 11th century. The most common are grave inscriptions, stating who erected the gravestone in the memory of the deceased father, mother, husband or wife, son or daughter, etc. Sometimes the positive characteristics of the deceased are listed, and there is always a phrase to deter anyone who might damage the grave. In the first sample (Gørlev), the list of the Younger Futhark runes is used for the magic protection of the grave:

Gørlev, side A; Denmark, early 9th century (the colon : is used to divide the words):

**Djauþui : risþi : stinþansi : aftuþinkaur : fup̄arkhniastbmlR : niutualkums :**

**þmkiiissstttiiilll (: ) iaksataru(na) ri(t) kuniarmutRkru(b)**

*Þjóðvi reišþi stein þanni eft Óðinkar. Fup̄arkhniastbmlR. Njút wēl kum[l]s.*

*þistill mistill kistill. Jak satta rúna rétt. Gunni, ArmundR*

“Þjóðvi raised this stone for Odinkar. Fup̄arkhniastbmlR. Enjoy your memorial well.

*þistill mistill kistill* [magic formula]. I set the runes rightly. Gunni, ArmundR ...”

Glavendrup; Denmark, around 900 (the symbol – is used to divide the words while the symbol / separates the lines of the original):

**rakhnilter – sa/ti – stainþansi – auft / ala – sauluakuþa / uial(i)þs haiþuiar þanþia / kn //**

**ala – suniR – karþu / kubl – þausi – aft – faþur / sin – auk – hañs – kuna – auft / uar – sin –**

**in – suti – raist – run/aR – þasi – aft – trutin – sin / þur – uiki – þasi – runaR //**

**at – rita – sa – uarþi – isstainþansi / ailti – iþa aft – añañ – traki**

*Ragnhildr satti stein þanni eft Alla sölwa, goða wéa, liðs heiðrwerðan þegn.*

*Alla syniR gerðu ku<sup>mb</sup>l þausi eft faður sinn ok hans kona eft wēr sinn,*

*en Sóti reist rúnaR þessi eft dróttinn sinn. þórr wígi þessi rúnaR!*

*At rétti sa wērði, es stęin þannsi elti eða eft annan dragi*

“Ragnhild erected this stone for Alli the Dark, priest of the shrines, honoured chief of the host. Alli’s sons made this memorial for their father, and his wife for her husband, while Soti carved these runes for his master. May þor consecrate these runes! May he become a dastard who overturns this stone or drags it away for someone else!”

Rök: the first two lines; Östergötland, Sweden, beginning of the 9th century (the symbol / represents the division of the lines):

**aftuamupstąntarunaRþaR / inuarinfaþifabiRaftfaikiąnsunu ...**

*Aft Węmođ standa rúnaR þaR. En Warinn fáði fađir eft feįgjan sunu ...*

“After Węmođ stand these runes. But Warinn drew (them), the father after (his) dead son”

Ågersta; Uppland, Sweden, between 1050–1075 (the symbol · is used to divide the words; the inscription is written on the bodies of two intertwined snakes engraved on the gravestone):

**uiþugsi · lit · raisa · stain · þiasn · iftiR · seref · faþur · sen · koþan · han · byki · agurstam · hiermn · stanta · stan · miþli · bua · raþi · tekr · þaR · rynsi · runum · þimsum · bali · risti**

*Viðhugsi lét reisa stęin þęnnsa eftiR Sęreįb, fađur sinn góđan. Hann byggi Agurstađum.*

*Hér mun standa stęinn miđli býja. Ráđi dręngR þaR rýnn sé runum þęim sum Balli risti*

“Viðhugsi had this stone erected for Sęreįba, his good father. He lived in Ågersta.

Here the stone shall stand between the villages.

Let any man who skilled runes read the runes that Balli carved.”

Dynna; Norway, around 1040 (this time, the symbol x is used to divide the words):

**x kunuur x kirþi x bru x þririkstutir x iftirąsriþi x tutur x sina x suuasmarhanarst x aþaþalanti**

*Gunnvęr gerđi brú, þryđriks dóttir, eftir Ás[ę]riđi, dóttur sína. Sú was męr hannarst á Hađalandi*

“Gunnvör, daughter of þryđrik, made a bridge in memory of Astrid her daughter. She was the most skilful maiden in Hadeland.”

Royal inscriptions constitute a special category of gravestones. Most are concentrated in the burial ground of the Danish kings in Jelling. The first example is an inscription by King Gorm in memory of his late wife Þyra dating from 935:

**: kurmr : kunkR : karþi : kubl : þusi : aft : Þurui : kunu : sina : tanmarkaR : but :**

“King Gorm set up this monument to his wife Þyre – Denmark’s restorer”

The next is an inscription of their son Harald from 983–985 (the symbol : divides the words, / divides the lines and // divides parts of the inscription):

**: haraltr : kunukR : baþ : kaurua / kubl : þausi : aft : kurmfapursin / aukaft :/ Þaurui : muþur : sina :**

**sa / haraltar [:] ias : saR – uan – tanmaurk // ala – auk – nuruiak // – auk – tani [-] (karþi) [-] kristna**

*HaraldR konu<sup>n</sup>gR bađ gorwa ku<sup>m</sup>bl þausi eft Gorm fađur sinn ok eft Þęrwi móđur sína,*

*sá Haraldr es sęR wann Danmęrk alla ok Norweg, ok dani gerđi kristna*

“King Harald bade this monument be built for Gorm his father and for Þyra, his mother – that Harald, who won all Denmark and Norway for himself and made the Danes Christians.”

The main differences distinguishing Common Scandinavian (6th–11th centuries) from the language of the oldest runes (1st–6th centuries) may be summed up in the following (Haugen 1984, 191–194):

- *ai, au, iu* > *é, ó, í*: *kurnai* > *korné* dat.sg. “corn”, *sunauz* > *sunóR* gen.sg. “son”, *magiu* > *magí* dat.sg. “son”;
- elimination of short unstressed vowels, with the exception of those followed by a final *-m, -n* or *-r*: *horna* > *horn* “horn”; *dagaz* > *dagR* nom.sg. “day”, *dagan* > *dagā* acc.pl. “days”; *katilaz* > *katilR* “cauldron”, nom.pl. *katilōz* > *katlóR*;
- shortening of long vowels: *kornē* > *korne* dat.sg. “corn”;
- A-umlaut *i, u* > *e, o* under the influence of a following *a*: *wiraz* “man” > Old Norse *verr*; *hurna* “horn” > *horn*; this explains the complex vocalism of the paradigm of the word “son”: *\*sunuz* > Old Norse *sunr*, gen.sg. *\*sunōz* > Old Norse *sonar*, nom.pl. *\*suniuz* > Old Norse *synir*, gen. pl. *sunō* > Old Norse *sona*;
- I-umlaut *a, o, u, ā, ō, ū, au* > *ę, ø, y, é, ý, ey*: *katilaz* > *kętilR* “cauldron”; *komiz* > *kømr* “coming” > Old Norse *kemr*; *langizā* > *lęngRe* “longer” > Old Norse *lęngri*; *māliu* > *męli* “I speak”; *dōmiðō* > *dømdā* “I judged”; *lūkiz* > *lýkR* “ends”; *hauzian* > *heyRa* “hear”;
- U-umlaut *a, e, i, á, é, í, ēi* > *q, ø, y, ó, ý, ey*: *barnu* > *børn* “children”; *teguz* > *tøgr* “ten”; *trigguz* > *tryggR* “faithful”; *sāru* > *sør* “wounds”; *bliu* > *bly* “lead (metal)”; *ęiu* > *ey* “always”.

### 3.2.1.1.2 Old Norse

Old Norse is an overall term for the language of various literary attestations from the end of the 11th century to the mid-14th century, such as runic inscriptions, texts of laws written usually in Latin script, Eddic songs and prosaic works written also in Latin script, usually long after they were composed. At this period, there was already a distinct division into two dialect zones, Western, usually conservative, and Eastern, usually innovating (but not as regards the umlaut).

Common Scandinavian	Western	Examples	Eastern	Examples
<i>ú ~ ó</i>	<i>ú</i>	<i>brú</i> “bridge” <i>búa</i> “live (somewhere)” <i>kú</i> “cow” <i>trú</i> “faith”	<i>ó</i>	<i>bró</i> <i>bóa</i> <i>kó</i> <i>tró</i>
<i>o ~ u</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>boþ</i> “command” <i>brot</i> “fraction” <i>holt</i> “forest”	<i>u</i>	<i>buþ</i> <i>brut</i> <i>hult</i>
<i>ęi</i> <i>qu</i> <i>ø</i>	<i>ei</i> <i>au</i> <i>øy</i>	<i>reip</i> “drove” <i>lauss</i> “free” <i>løysa</i> “release”	<i>é</i> <i>ø</i> <i>ó</i>	<i>ręp</i> <i>lős</i> <i>lōsa</i>
umlaut of the stressed vowel of strong verbs	umlaut:	<i>skýtR</i> “shoots” <i>skyti</i> “I would shoot”	none umlaut	<i>skjútr</i> <i>skuti</i>
no umlaut before <i>R</i>	umlaut	<i>ígęR</i> “yesterday”	without umlaut	<i>í gáR</i>
no umlaut before <i>-Gi</i>	umlaut	<i>degi</i> “day” dat. sg. <i>tekinn</i> “taken”	without umlaut	<i>takenn</i>
no “breaking”	without breaking	<i>ek(a)</i> “I” <i>stela</i> “steal”	breaking	<i>jak</i> <i>stjala</i>
umlaut before <i>u</i>	umlaut	<i>høndum</i> “hands” dat. pl. <i>søk</i> “guilt”	without umlaut	<i>handum</i> <i>sak</i>
<i>e</i> after <i>g</i> and before <i>-gi</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>gefa</i> “give” <i>segja</i> “say”	<i>i</i>	<i>giva</i> <i>sighia</i>



Common Scandinavian	Western	Examples	Eastern	Examples
y before -ng, -rC	y	<i>syngwa</i> “sing” <i>skyrtá</i> “shirt”	iu/io	<i>siunga</i> <i>skiorta</i>
a, o, u after j	a o u	<i>hjarta</i> “heart” <i>mjolk</i> “milk” <i>fljuga</i> “fly”	æ ø y	<i>hjærtá</i> <i>mjølkk</i> <i>flyga</i>
N + p, t, k	pp tt kk	<i>soppr</i> “mushroom” <i>brattr</i> “steep” <i>ekkjá</i> “widow”	mp nt nk	<i>svampr</i> <i>brantr</i> <i>ænkia</i>
-uminum dat.pl. of the definite article	-unum	<i>hestunum</i> “to those horses”	-umin	<i>hestumin</i>
-iþ imp. 2 pl.	-iþ / -ir	Old Icelandic <i>farþ</i> “goes” Old Norwegian <i>farir</i> id.	-in	<i>farin</i>

**Table 1:** Differences between Western and Eastern varieties of Old Norse

### 3.2.1.1.3 Icelandic

Permanent settlement of Iceland began in the period 870–930, which was called *landnám*, “taking of the land”. Then, just as today, the island was “an icy land” (Old Norse *íss* “ice”). The so-called *Landnámabók* (“Book of the Settlers”) goes back as far as this period, though the version known today was edited at the beginning of the 13th century. Most settlers came from western Norway and brought their culture, language, etc. with them from that area.

By the decision of the popular (or rather all-male) parliament called the *Alþing*, the island adopted Christianity in 1000. The motives for this step were obviously opportunistic, as the old faith in pagan gods persisted, but for Iceland it meant several more centuries of peaceful life. In 1056 Icelanders gained their first bishop. His name was Ísleifr Gizursson and he studied at the monastery school at Herford in Westphalia. Shortly after 1070 an Icelander called *Sæmundr fróði* (“the wise”) began his studies in Paris. He is known to have been the first Norseman at the Sorbonne.

The Norwegian colonists brought with them to Iceland the knowledge of the runic script, but they wrote on wood, a material which has not survived to this day. This is why the oldest runic inscriptions here come from the beginning of the 13th century (from the church door in Valþjóstaðir). With the arrival of Christianity, the Latin script and a new material – parchment – came to the island. The Latin script reached both Iceland and Norway from Britain, in two variants: the Anglo-Saxon minuscule created by the Irish monks for the native languages and the Carolingian minuscule which was adopted for the Latin texts from the continent. The oldest manuscript in Latin script dates from the end of the 12th century; it is therefore older than the oldest surviving runic inscriptions. However, Latin script was used even before that. Ari Fróði recorded that the *Alþing* in 1117 decided to write down the laws, which took effect in the following winter. The records of church tithe collections may be even older, as they were possibly maintained as early as 1096.

After 1122, Icelandic history also began to be recorded in writing. A unique text by an anonymous Icelander from the mid-12th century represents the first grammatical description of the Icelandic language (*bæði lög ok áttvísi eða þýðingar helgar, eða svá þau in spakligu frœði* “On reading and writing to make it easier, also on laws and on the history of families and inheritance records”). This has been preserved in a later copy from 1360. The oldest actually preserved text is a fragment from a collection of homilies and two fragments from the legal code called the *Grágás*, all from the end of the 12th century. Icelandic literature experienced a boom during the 13th century. Family sagas describing the settlement of the island in 900–1030 were composed and also Snorri Sturluson wrote both his masterpieces in this

period: the *Heimskringla* on the history of the Norwegian kings and the *Prose Edda*, a textbook of skaldic poetry for beginners. At this time, the older *Poetic Edda*, capturing in a unique way the ancient Nordic mythology, was also written. The most important texts were preserved in manuscripts in the following approximate order:

- the legal code *Grágás*: circa 1260–1270;
- poetic *Edda*: circa 1260–1270;
- *Morkinskinna* (“mouldered leather book”) contains the description of the history of Norwegian kings: circa 1260;
- *Kringla* – the main text of Snorri’s history of the Norwegian kings; the manuscript was written down no later than 20 years after Snorri’s death (1241). It begins with *Ynglingasága*, introduced by the words *Kringla heimsins, sú er mannfólkitt byggvir* “The circle of land in which people live.” This manuscript disappeared during the great fire of Copenhagen in 1728. Fortunately, Árni Magnússon had it copied in time and this copy is the main source for the study of Snorri Sturluson’s work.
- Snorri’s *Prose Edda* in an edition called the *Uppsala Edda*: around 1300;
- *Annales regii* – a collection of official documents, prized for its careful spelling; beginning of the 14th century;
- the so-called Book of Hauk (*Hauksbók*) – a large manuscript of mixed content, the author of a significant part of which is *lögmaðr* “judge” Haukr Erlendsson (†1334);
- the main manuscript of Snorri’s *Edda*, written around 1325;
- *Codex Frisianus* – again includes historical records of Norwegian kings; it also contains *Heimskringla* (besides the “Saga of St. Olaf” *Óláfs saga helga*) and “Saga of Hákon Hákonarson” written by Sturla Þórðarson, Snorri’s nephew; written around 1330;
- *Möðruvallabók* – includes Icelandic family sagas, among others *Njálssaga*, *Egilssaga*, *Laxdæsa*: circa 1340;
- *Codex Wormianus*, which includes Snorri’s *Edda* and also the Eddic poem *Rígsþula* and four grammatical treatises by an anonymous Icelander on his native language (see above); created around 1360;
- *Flateyjarbók* – a large collection of historical content; written between 1387–1394.

Old Icelandic differed very little from Old Norwegian. More noticeable differences can be found between the Old Norwegian western and eastern dialects than between Old Icelandic and Old Western Norwegian. One of the more marked differences distinguishing medieval Icelandic from modern Norwegian is the elimination of initial *h-* before a consonant in Norwegian: Old Norwegian *loupa* : Old Icelandic *hlaupa* “run”, Old Norwegian *ringr* : Old Icelandic *hringr* “circle”. In the late Middle Ages, classical Icelandic also began to undergo certain changes. First, some phenomena only known from the oldest manuscripts were eliminated from the literary language:

- enclitic pronoun usage: *emk* = *em ek* “am I”, *stendk* = *stend ek* “stand I”;
- negative particle *-ka(t)*: *verðra* = *verðr eigi* “will not happen”; *skalattu* = *þú skalt eigi* “you do not have to”; *veitka* = *ek veit eigi* “I do not know”;
- perfective particle *of*: *of síá* “behold”; *of skilia* “distinguish”;

Later on, more changes appear:

- delabialization *æ* [œ] > *æ* [æ]: *dæma* : Swedish *döma* “to judge”;
- probably already at the beginning of the 13th century, *q* changes into open *ø* and so merges with inherited *ø*, which originated through *u*-umlaut from *e* or *ä*: *søkkva* “fall”; after 500, *ø* is replaced by *ö*: *lönd* pl. “land”, *köllum* “we call” (inf. *kalla*);
- *é* > *ie*: *fé* “livestock” = [fie];
- insertion of vowel between final *-r* and preceding consonant: *ríkur* “rich”, *armur* “arm”;
- *á* > *o* after *v*: *váði* “danger” > *voði*;
- *ll* and *rl* > *ddl*: *falla* & *ffjall* “mountain” = [faddla] & [ffjaddl], *karl* “man” = [kaddl]; *rn* > *ddn*: *barn* “child” = [baddn], *horn* “horn” = [hoddn], *björn* “bear” = [bjöddn];
- mediopassive forms of verbs are marked by the ending *-z*, later *-zt* and finally *-st*, instead of *-sk* as in classical Icelandic.

The following examples of the literary form of Western Norse are chosen from the *Poetic Edda*, a collection of Old Icelandic mythological and heroic poems from the *Codex Regius* manuscript. The following extract describes the creation of the world.

<b>Vǫlospá</b>	“The Song of the Wise-woman”, stanzas 1–4	translation by Henry Adams Bellows (1936) < <a href="http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/poe/index.htm">http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/poe/index.htm</a> >
1. <i>Hlióðs bið ek allar helgar kindir, meiri ok minni, møgo Heimdallar! Vildo, at ek, Valföðr, vel fyrtelia forn spioll fira, þau er fremst um man.</i>	“Hearing I ask from the holy races, From Heimdall’s sons, both high and low; Thou wilt, Valfather, that well I relate Old tales I remember of men long ago.	3. <i>Ár var alda þat er Ymir byggði, vara sandr né sær né svalar unnir, iorð fannz æva né upphiminn, gap var ginnunga, en gras hvergi.</i>
2. <i>Ek man iotna, ár um borna, þá er forðom mik fœdda höfðo; nío man ek heima, nío íviði, miqtvið mæran fyr mold neðan.</i>	I remember yet the giants of yore, Who gave me bread in the days gone by; Nine worlds I knew, the nine in the tree With mighty roots beneath the mold.	4. <i>Áðr Burs synir biððom um ypþo, þeir er miðgarð, mæran, skópo: sól skein sunnan á salar steina, þá var grund gróin grænom lauki.</i>
		Of old was the age when Ymir lived; Sea nor cool waves nor sand there were; Earth had not been, nor heaven above, But a yawning gap, and grass nowhere. Then Bur’s sons lifted the level land, Mithgarth the mighty there they made; The sun from the south warmed the stones of earth, And green was the ground   with grow- ing leeks.”

<b>Grímnismál</b>	“Sayings of Grímnir” §§40–41	translation by Henry Adams Bellows (1936) < <a href="http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/poe/index.htm">http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/poe/index.htm</a> >
40. <i>Ór Ymis holdi var iorð um sköpoð, en ór sveita sær,  biorg ór beinom, baðmr ór hári, en ór hausi himinn;</i>	“Out of Ymir’s flesh was fashioned the earth, And the ocean out of his blood; Of his bones the hills, of his hair the trees, Of his skull the heavens high.	41. <i>en ór hans brám gørðo blíð regin miðgarð manna sonom; en ór hans heila vóro þau in harðmóðgo ský ǫll of sköpoð.</i>
		Mithgarth the gods from his eyebrows made, And set for the sons of men; And out of his brain the baleful clouds They made to move on high.”

See <<http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/germ/anord/edda/edda.htm>>

Modern Icelandic arose as early as the mid-16th century. However, the old and modern forms of the language are so close that an average literate Icelander can (and indeed does) read sagas from the 13th century in the original and understand them. Icelandic is undoubtedly the most conservative of the modern Germanic languages. Nonetheless, the language has seen some small changes: continuing delabialization of the vowels, diphthongization of long vowels and lengthening of old short vowels in open syllables. In unstressed syllables, *t* > *ð*: *husið* “that house”, *hvað* “what” (as early as in the Poetic Edda, as recorded by the *Codex Regius*); *k* > *g*: *ok* “and” → *og*, *ek* “I” → *ég*, *mik* acc. “me” → *mig*.

The morphology underwent only a very small number of changes. The paradigms of modern Icelandic can therefore be compared with the developmental stage of Swedish or Norwegian in the period of the Viking runic inscriptions. It is notable that the old form of the dual of the 1st person personal pronoun *vit*, modern Icelandic *við*, replaced the old plural *vér*. Similarly, the old relative pronoun *er* was substituted by the form *sem*.

Modern Icelandic inherited the immense lexical resources of the old literary language. It is known for its purism regarding foreign influences and for creating neologisms from its own resources rather than borrowing whole words, though the model for these can hardly be found in the Eddas. The reasons are certainly not to be seen as purely nationalistic. Every borrowed word must conform to the Icelandic grammatical system, which may be far from easy, as the word *dama* “dame”, which has entered most European languages, serves to illustrate. The accusative singular of this word is *dömu* and nom. pl. *dömur*. The name of (the Mediterranean fruit) dates, was adopted in the form *daðla*, with the acc. sg. *döðlu*. Of course, one may also find several dozen borrowed words in the dictionary of modern Icelandic,

especially from Danish (*tau* “cloth” < Danish *tøi*; *spaug* “joke” < Danish *spøg*; *flibbi* “collar” < Danish *flip* etc.).

It seems that today even the Icelandic purist taboos have been eroded by the global influence of American English, which may be seen not only on the lexical, but also on the grammatical level. This might be a sign of the imminent end of the unique language museum that the Icelandic language has been so far. Nonetheless, it is still worth noticing how the Icelandic language has dealt with modern terms using its own resources: *sími* “telephone”, *hjól* “bicycle”, *vél* “machine”, *mynd* “photograph”, *deild* “faculty”, *þvol* “soda”, *lyf* “medicine”. Most words however are usually created for new concepts by compounding: *lyfsali* “pharmacist”, *lyfjabúð* “pharmacy”, *lyfseðill* “receipt”, *bókasavn* “library”, *bókavörður* “librarian”, *bókmenntir* “literature”, *kvikmynd* “motion picture”, *bjartsýni* “optimism”, *bölsýni* “pessimism”, *lýðveldi* “democracy”, *heimspekingur* “philosopher”, *verkfræði* “technology”, *eðlisfræði* “physics”, etc.

The translation of the New Testament by Oddur Gottskálksson, which appeared in 1540 in the Danish town of Roskilde, was the first book printed in Icelandic. Guðbrandur Þorláksson translated the Old Testament and also had it printed in the Icelandic town of Holar in 1584. Thanks to a complete translation of the Bible, Danish did not become the official church language on Iceland, as it became on the Faroe Islands or in Norway. Nevertheless, its influence grew and during the 17th and 18th centuries it became dominant in official and business spheres. Purist tendencies, which began in the second half of the 18th century and can be connected with the poet and biologist Eggert Ólafsson (1726–1768), are also a reaction to the pressure of Danish.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Danish linguist Rasmus Rask visited Iceland. In 1811, he published a book titled *Vejledning til det islandske eller gamle nordiske Sprog*, thus establishing a basis for the study of Old Icelandic in the context of the Germanic languages. In 1813–1815 he returned to learn the modern language. During his second journey, Rask also became familiar with many old manuscripts. While staying in Sweden (1816–1818), he published a new edition of his books, but most importantly, he published the original version of both the Poetic and Prose Eddas, accompanied by a translation into Swedish made in collaboration with his friend Arvid A. Afzelius (1818).

The European intellectuals of the time had been enchanted by the literary wealth of India that was available to them through Sanskrit, but now another cultural treasury became available and as a result, interest in Iceland grew markedly in the Romantic era. The 19th century, also thanks to Rask, was the era of the Icelandic national revival. Poetry flourished especially in this era, also thanks to poets such as Bjarni V. Thorarensen (1786–1841) and Jónas Hallgrímsson (1807–1845) and later Þorsteinn Erlingsson (1858–1914), Mattias Jochumsson (1835–1920) and others. Jón Thoroddsen (1818–1868) was the author of the first modern novels. A collection of folk legends and fairy tales by Jón Árnason (*Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri*, 1862–1864) also saw great success. Among the most famous authors of prose were Gestur Pálsson (1852–1891), Guðmundur Magnússon (1873–1918), Einar Kvaran (1859–1938), Gunnar Gunnarsson (1889–1975) and the Nobel Prize laureate Halldór Kiljan Laxness (1902–1998).

#### 3.2.1.1.4 Faroese

Faroese literature had very modest beginnings. Only a couple of runic inscriptions have been found, but there are no extensive texts. Therefore, even the provisions by Haakon V Magnusson from Oslo issued in 1298 are of great significance for the history of this language. These provisions were included in a single binding with the legal code of Norway then in force. Magnusson’s text is based on the proceedings of a judicial authority called *løgting* and consists of individual Faroese words. The lack of literary works is compensated by ballads accompanied by dances (so-called *kvæði*), the first of which originated in the 14th century. These ballads drew inspiration from the Norse sagas as well as from European chivalric stories. Danish scholars of the Enlightenment began to write them down in the 17th century (e.g. Ole Worm, 1588–1654). At the end of the 18th century, Jens Christian Svabo (1746–1824) collected

these ballads and had the first printed version published under the title *Færøiske Qvæder om Sigurd Fafnersbane og hans Æt* by H.C. Lyngbye in 1822. A systematic collection of old Faroese ballads was carried out by provost Hammersheimb, and later on by Sven Grundtvig and his co-worker Jørgen Bloch who gathered folk tales and ballads in an extensive collection called the *Corpus carminum Færoensium*. A partial translation of the Bible into Faroese was carried out in the early 20th century by Jacob Dahl, followed by the translation of the New Testament in 1937 and finally the entire Bible in Faroese appeared in 1961. The most famous among Faroese writers are the brothers Djurhuus, Heðin Brú and William Heinesen.

Faroese phonetics resembles in many features the West Norwegian dialects. While the long-lasting influence of Danish left traces on the Faroese lexicon, its morphology is closest to Icelandic. The language is divided into six dialectal areas. Until the 19th century, there was no Faroese literary tradition. A Faroese standard written language was introduced as late as 1846 by Venceslaus Ulricus Hammershaimb (1819–1909), who used the etymological principle. The Danish scholar Petersen and the Norwegian Munch inspired Hammershaimb to adapt the Faroese writing system to the Icelandic paradigm. The basis for the literary language came to be the dialect spoken in the town of Tórshavn. Since 1906, Faroese has been taught as a subject at Faroese schools, and in 1939 it even became the language of instruction. In 1948 it was established as the main language of the Faroe Islands by law. Later, in 1952, radio broadcasting began in Faroese.

This language, similarly to Icelandic, has preserved a rich declension and conjugation. Nouns are declined according to the following grammatical categories: 3 genders, 4 cases (nominative, genitive, dative and accusative) and 2 numbers. The definite article is placed either following the noun defined or it stands in front of it as an independent word. The article also changes according to gender, number and case. The verb is conjugated in both synthetic and analytic forms for tense, voice and mood, and verbs change according to person and number.

In 2022, the Faroese Islands had 54,000 inhabitants, with around 90% native speakers of Faroese, plus another c. 20,000 speakers in mainland Denmark and elsewhere.

### 3.2.1.1.5 Norwegian

According to the testimony provided by Hrabanus Maurus (†859), the archbishop of Mainz, the people from the [northern] border were called Norsemen (*Marcomanni quos nos Nordmannos vocamus*). The name was commonly used to designate all Scandinavian people and in a narrower sense the word was used for the Norwegians.

Initially a new modification of the runic script (the younger fuþark) was used for writing in the area inhabited by the then Norwegians. Starting in the 11th century, the Roman alphabet was used in parallel with the runic script, but the oldest preserved manuscripts date from the second half of the 12th century like those of Iceland. Though the Norwegian literary tradition appears to be poorer in comparison with the contemporary Icelandic one, it includes law manuscripts, religious and historic writings and translations of chivalric romances. *Konungs skuggsjá*, known in Latin as *Speculum regale* and meaning “the King’s mirror”, was written by an unknown author in the mid-13th century and is considered to be the most important work. Many Icelandic sagas are set in Norway (a number of the best-known skalds from the 10th century were natives of Norway) and they also have Norwegian versions, e.g. ‘The Saga of Olaf Tryggvason’ by the monk called Oddo, *Fagrskinna* and the legendary ‘Saga of Saint Olaf’.

Already in the oldest manuscripts, one finds differences between the West Norwegian dialects and the East Norwegian ones located in the area around Trondheim. In the East Norwegian area, the *u*-umlaut was not carried out similarly to other East Norse languages. However, another change occurred there, namely the progressive *i*-umlaut, i.e. the change *ia* > *iæ*. The vocalism of endings follows the rules of vowel harmony, e.g. *tíðir* “times”, *synir* “sons”, but *skáler* “shells”, *bæner* “prayers”, or *tungur* “languages”, *húsum* “houses”, but *konor* “women”, *sonom* “sons” (dative plural). The same feature appears in the Swedish manuscripts of the same era. In East Norwegian texts, it can be observed that the final vowel is reduced after long vowels. The difference in the vocalism of demonstratives – West Norwegian *þann*,

*þat, þar* versus East Norwegian *þænn, þæt, þær*, similar to Old Swedish – may be of the same origin. Early East Norwegian dialects correspond to Swedish and Danish in other features as well, e.g. diphthong contraction *haust* > *høst* “autumn”, *höyra* > *höre* “to hear”, *dröyma* > *dröme* “to dream”.

During the 12th century, power shifted back and forth between western Norway with its centre in Bergen and Trondheim, a region whose centre was the city of Nidaros. Since 1152 the archbishop resided in Nidaros while state officials were headquartered in Bergen. Therefore, language features characteristic of West Norwegian and Trondheim prevailed in the 13th-century Norwegian literary language. This situation changed around 1300 when state offices moved to Oslo, the centre of the East Norwegian dialects. Naturally, interference occurred between the dialects of the northern coast and the Norwegian east.

In the mid-14th century, Norwegian experienced similar changes as Swedish and Danish. The old inflection system was simplified, many endings were reduced or disappeared completely, and therefore the word order became less free. In the East Norwegian dialects as well as in contemporary Danish, the shift *p, t, k* > *b, d, g* occurs between vowels, after a vowel, and in final position. In 1319, Norway and Sweden entered into a political union to which Denmark was attached in 1380 (or 1389). Both of these events pushed the original Norwegian language inland. First, Swedish dominated and words and collocations from that language were used, e.g. *högh* “high” *iak* “I”, *i villin* “you want” (cf. Old Norse *þér vili*). Swedish also gained prestige due to the order of the Bridgettines who had a convent in Bergen.

Danish began to influence Norwegian only in the mid-15th century, but its impact lasted longer and was stronger as well. After 1500, the bishops from Nidaros and Oslo wrote their letters only in Danish. It became the only official language of Norway and after the Reformation also the language of church and literature. A contributing factor was that the Norwegian literary language had shifted away from the spoken one and therefore did not have the necessary prestige.

Let us look at some samples from the Old Norwegian period (Haugen 1976, 228):

An inscription in the younger runic script inscribed on a marble desk from the church in Tingvoll from the early 13th century.

**ek biþ firi guþrs sakar yþr lærþa menn er / uarþuæita staþ þænna ok alla þa er raþa kunnu /  
bøn mina minnizk salo minnar ihælgum bønóm en / ek et gunnar ok gærþi ek hus þætta +  
ualete**

“I ask for God’s sake you learned men who preside over this place, and all who can read my prayer: remember my soul in holy prayers. And I was called Gunnar and I built this house. Valet!”

An inscription in the younger runic script on the Bergen stick from 1250–1300.

**ristek : bot : runar : rist ekbiabh : runar : eæin faluip : aluom : tuialtuip : trolom : þreualt :  
uip : þ..**

*Ríst ek bótrúnar, ríst ek bjargrúnar, einfalt við alfum, tvífalt við trollum, þrífalt við þ[ursum]*

“I carve healing runes; I carve protecting runes; once against the elves, twice against the trolls, thrice against the ogres.”

The manuscript *Konungs skuggsjá*, “the King’s mirror”, was probably written in 1275, but it was transcribed from an original written sometime between 1240–1263. It is an educational text for the king and his subjects written in form of a fictional dialogue between a father and his son. It is worth noting that the son uses the plural when addressing his father while the father speaks to his son in the singular.

[Faðer:] *Nu skolum ver firi þvi gofga æinn guð þann er allarr skepnur þiona oc biðia til hans mæð æinfolldu atkvæðe ar æi þyðez flærðsamer guðarr til varra akalla firi þat at ver margfalldem atkvæðe at fleiri væri guð en æinn íakalli guðlegs nafns. Þæsser luter ganga oc til at skamsynir mænn mætte þat hyggia at fleiri væ[r]i ahans nafn kallat oc er þat retliga tilskipað oc vitrlega at æinfolld se tru oc heilogh hafi ækki rum eða villu stig at ganga af rettre þioðgatu. Nu æf þer skilz æigi til fullz þæsse ræða þa mægum vit ænn flæira til finna. En æf þæssi ræða ma þec leiða til fullrar skilningar þa mægum vit væl vikia occarri ræðu til anndsvara um þa luti aðra er þu spurðer.*

[Sunr:] *Þæsser luter skiliaz mer væl oc þycki mer væra bæde sannliger oc þo nauðsynlegir at firi þvi skal hælldr ænfalldaz en margfalldaz oll at kvæðe til guðs at hvarki mægi rett tru spillaz*

*firi margfallt at kvæðe. Oc æigi mægi slægir uvinir unnder þyðazt þat akall er æinfolld tru oc rett visar þeim ifra. En ec vil nu at þer skyrit þat firi mer er ec spurða um væralldar rikis mænn hvi oll at kvæðe þætti bætr til þæirra margfalldat en æinfalldat.*

[Father:] “Now we shall worship the one God whom all creatures serve and pray to Him with singular address, in order that it shall not be interpreted as if false gods are the objects of our prayers, since we would make our address plural if there were more than one God in our prayers. These are further reasons, that foolish men might think that there is more than one God if His name were spoken with plural address, and this is rightly and wisely ordered that simple and holy faith shall not have room or path on which to stray from the right road. Now if you do not fully understand this speech, we shall find more things to say about it. But if this speech can lead you to full understanding, then we could well turn our speech to answering those other questions you raised.”

[Son:] “These things I well understand, and it seems to me they are both true and needful, that all address to God should be singular rather than plural so that nowhere will the true faith be lost through plural address, and deceitful enemies will not misinterpret the prayer in a way that simple faith and truth rejects. But I would now ask that you explain to me what I asked about the rulers of the world: why is it thought better to address them in the plural than in the singular?”

Translated by Haugen (1976, 238–39).

The dominance of Danish in Norway lasted until the 19th century. Norwegian poets and writers actually used Danish, though coloured to a greater or lesser degree by Norwegian features. In tracing the beginnings of Modern Norwegian literature, Peder Claussøn (1545–1614) must be mentioned. He wrote the “The Description of Norway” (*Norges beskrivelse*; printed in 1632) and translated “the Kings History” of Snorri Sturluson (printed in Copenhagen in 1633). The life of Northern Norwegian peasants and fishermen was humorously described by Peder Dass (c. 1647–1707). Starting in the end of the 17th century, the Norwegians went for higher education almost exclusively to Copenhagen and therefore only pure Danish was used for writing. For example, Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754), a Norwegian born in Bergen, wrote in his youth in a language with some Norwegian elements. Later, he was well known for his dramas written for the Danish theatre. Nevertheless, a shift took place over time. The Norwegian accent and pronunciation began to appear in the language of the better-educated townsfolk in Norway, so that it was possible, at the beginning of the 19th century, to differentiate between the “town language” (*bymål*), which was no longer Danish, and the “country language” (*landsmål*), which maintained the old traditions reaching back to Old Norwegian. After Norway gained independence in 1814, Danish remained the official language and the language of instruction in schools, and Danish textbooks were still used.

The actual beginning of the revival of the Norwegian language can be traced to the 1830s. Henrik Wergeland used a large number of words of Norwegian origin with Norwegian inflection in his poems. The folklorists Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Engebretsen Moe preserved the typical Norwegian style in their “Norwegian fairy tales” (*Norske Folkeeventyr*), even though other language features remained basically Danish. In the 1840s, Knud Knudsen (1832–1895) opposed the artificial creation of a standard language and decided to start from the everyday language (*dagligtale*) of schools and public offices. In 1881, Knudsen published the dictionary *Unorsk og norsk* (non-Norwegian and Norwegian), in which he suggested a number of original Norwegian words to substitute for Danish and German ones. Knudsen influenced the language of Henrik Ibsen and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, among others. It was also Knudsen’s ideas which led to the language and orthographic reforms of the 20th century.

The standard language of the second half of the 19th century, the *Riksmål*, can still be described as a branch of Danish. It was used by the best-known Norwegian writers of that time: Ibsen, Bjørnson, Kielland and Lie. The Romanticism developing at the same time stimulated an interest in Old Norwegian texts, which were written down and published thanks to Peter Andreas Munch among others, and folk songs and fairy tales to whose publishing Sophus Bugge, Magnus B. Landstad, Jørgen Moe, Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and others contributed. Ivar Aasen (1813–1896) worked on an extensive grammar of Norwegian dialects which was published in 1848 and then on a dictionary (1850). His ambition was to create

a literary language on the basis of the dialects, which constituted a continuity with Old Norse.

In a relatively short time, the *Landsmål* movement made such progress that in 1872, the parliament (*Storting*) decided that children may choose schooling in the language they normally use. In 1885, the government issued a regulation, in which the “Norwegian vernacular” was considered equal to the “Norwegian standard language”. An addition was made to it in 1892 stating that school boards should decide where textbooks in *Riksmål* (also called *Bokmål*) would be used and where textbooks in *Landsmål* – or alternatively in both these varieties – would be appropriate. It was intended that pupils learn both languages, and so both languages would be used in the school-leaving exams. Therefore, Norwegian has had two official forms since 1929: *Bokmål*, which enjoys greater popularity in the eastern part of the country, particularly in Oslo, and *Nynorsk* which replaced *Landsmål* in the western part of the country. Naturally, the contemporary *Bokmål* is based on the East Norwegian dialects, while *Nynorsk* is grounded on the West Norwegian dialects. Let us compare a couple of words (*Bokmål/Nynorsk*, from Wessén 1968, 70): *gammel/gamal* “old”, *sommer/sumar* “summer”, *dømme/døma* “to judge”, *drømme/drøyma* “to dream”, *gutt/gut* “boy”, *lott/lut* “part”, *nett/net* “net”, *kjøtt/kjøt* “meat”, *venn/ven* “friend”, *sønn/son* “son”, *grønn/grøn* “green”.

### 3.2.1.1.6 Danish

The name of the contemporary inhabitants of Denmark appeared in the history for the first time in the *Getica*, written around 550–551 by the Gothic historian Jordanes. There the name was mentioned in the form of a Latin plural *Dani*. Almost at the same time (554), the Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea, who wrote in Greek, used the form  $\Delta\alpha\nu\omicron\iota$ , which differs only in the Greek plural ending. The Latin form *Dani*, gen. pl. *Danorum* is also known from other Latin sources, such as Gregory of Tours (†594), Venantius Fortunatus († before 610), *Liber Historiae Francorum* (727), Alcuin (†804) and other sources. In the Old English epic *Beowulf*, which deals with events from the 6th century, the Danish people are called *Dene*, while in Old Icelandic and Old Danish they are called *danir*. It is generally believed that the basis for the word is the Germanic lexeme attested in Middle High German *dēne* “basin, furrow, forest valley”, Old English *dēnu* fem. “valley” etc. (Holthausen 1963, 72; Trubačev 1974, 56).

The name of the country (Old Icelandic *Danmǫrk*) actually means “the borders of the Danes”. It probably began to be used under the reign of Charlemagne when, after the defeat of the Saxons, the eastern border of the Danes became the northernmost border of the Carolingian Empire. This is confirmed by the testimony provided by Hrabanus Maurus (†859), the archbishop of Mainz. He mentions a peculiar script (obviously the runes) used by those dwelling along the borders whom Maurus’s people called the Northerners (*Marcomanni quos nos Nordmannos vocamus*). From the Danish kings’ inscriptions from Jellinge (see above), it is obvious that by the 10th century the Danes had accepted this originally foreign name.

Also the Danish literary tradition originated in runic writing. The runic inscriptions on tombstones in Jellinge in Jutland tell us about the first two historical Danish kings, Gorm the Old and his son Harald Bluetooth (see above). In this early era, we can observe similar tendencies in the development of the Jutlandic dialects, West Norwegian, Faroese and Icelandic while the language used in Scania already then appeared to be closer to Swedish. The use of the Roman alphabet is documented only in the 12th century. The oldest known Latin text is the so-called *Necrologium Lundense* written on a parchment, with some of its parts dating to 1120. The oldest known Danish text is the *Skånelagen*, the “Scanian Law”, an area in Southern Sweden which was under Danish control for some centuries. Its origin dates back to the time between 1202 and 1216, but the oldest preserved manuscripts date from around 1250. Between 1220 and 1240, a new legal code for the island of Sjælland was written (*Valdemars sjællandske lov*, *Eriks sjællandske lov*), and around 1241, Waldemar II published the Code of Jutland (*Codex Holmiensis* or *Jydske lov*). A unique text is the *Codex runicus* from the end of the 13th century. This is a runic transcription of the ‘Scanian Law’, the ‘Scanian Code of Canon Law’ and other smaller texts including one ballad; the texts were transcribed from an original written in the Roman alphabet.



The Danish language of the 13th century texts still preserves *p*, *t*, *k* after vowels and distinguishes *th*- and *t*-, but diphthongs are already contracted. There is neither *u*-umlaut nor *i*-umlaut of the present sg. and preterite sg. in the strong verbs. The final vowels *-a*, *-i*, *-u* were still written in the Scanian dialect, but their written form *-æ* on Sjælland and in Jutland suggests that they were reduced to [-ə] in this position. Old Danish abandoned noun inflection more quickly than any other Scandinavian language. The original nom. sg. appears only in the *Skånskelagen* (*þiufær* “thief”), otherwise it is substituted by the accusative. Later, in the sg. only two cases are distinguished the form of nom.-dat.-acc.: *þiuf* “thief” : gen. *þiufs*, while in the pl. there is only one form for all cases: *þiuvæ*.

In the late Medieval era, the language underwent further changes which only partially mirror those in Swedish. We can mention here the shift of unvoiced *p*, *t*, *k* after a vowel to voiced *b*, *d*, *g* while Swedish preserved the unvoiced consonant (*griþa* : *griþa* “to catch”, *biða* : *biða* “to bite”, *aga* : *åka* “to go”). On Sjælland and in Jutland the development went on to produce the fricatives [v], [ð], [g]. The originally fricative *gh* changed after a back vowel into *w*, e.g. *lywe* : Old Swedish *liugha* “to lie, tell a lie”, *flywe* : Old Swedish *fliugha* “to fly”, *lawe* : Old Swedish *lage* “to make/do”, *low* : Old Swedish *lag* “law”, *skow* : Old Swedish *skog* “forest”, and others. The fricative *gh* changes to [j] after the front vowel: *vei* : Old Swedish *vægh* “way”, *høi* : Old Swedish *høgh* “high”, and others. The fricative *th*- at the beginning of a word started to be written as a normal *t*-. The consonant groups *ld* and *ln* were assimilated to *ll* and *nn* respectively, but they were still written in their original form. In fact, in some texts the old geminates *ll*, *nn* were written hypercorrectly as *ld*, *ln*: *falde* “to fall”, *kvinde* “a woman”. Due to the Hanseatic League, the Danish lexicon was massively enriched with mainly Low German loanwords just as the Norwegian and Swedish languages of the time.

In the literature of the 14th and 15th centuries only a few original themes are found. Legends on the saints’ lives, postillas and other religious texts prevailed. Quite a few manuscripts were created as translations of Swedish works. They contain numerous Swedish forms and words. The role of mediator was played by the Scanian dialect, which represents a kind of a bridge (even geographically) between the actual Swedish dialects and the dialect of Sjælland or Jutland. In 1495, the first Danish book was printed. This was a rhymed chronicle by the priest Michael written in a mixture of some of the dialects then existent, among which the Sjællandic dialect prevailed. The author used both the new and old language and even numerous loanwords are found. The official language of the state chancellery tilted toward the Sjællandic dialect and therefore precisely this dialect provided the basis for the future standard language. As a first example of Old Danish, one prayer with both pagan and Christian elements is presented and then passages from two codes of law will be compared (see Haugen 1976, 225–30).

Ribe, Jutland, younger runes on a five-edged stick, around 1250:

A: **iorþ : biþak : uarþæ : ok : uphimæn : sol : ok : santamaria : ok :  
salfæn : gudrotæn : þæthan : læmik : læknæs : hand : oklif : tuggæ : atliuæ**

B: **uiuindne : þær : botæ : þarf : or : bak : okorbryst :  
orlæke : okorlim : orøuæn : okorøræn : or : allæþe : þær : ilt : kaniat**

A: *Iorþ biþ-ak uarþæ ok uphimæn, sol ok santæ maria ok salfæn  
gud-drottæn, þæt han læ mik læknæs-hand ok lif-tungæ at lækæ*

B: *\*bin-undæ þær botæ þarf: or bak ok or bryst,  
or liuæ ok or lim, or øuæn ok or øræn, or allæ þe þær ilt kan at[kumæ].*

A: “Earth I bid aid me and the Heaven above, the sun and Saint Mary  
and himself, the Lord God, that he lend me healing hands and life-giving tongue,

B: to cure the wounds that want relief: From back and from breast,  
from life and from limb, from eyes and from ears, from all that evil can overcome.”

*Codex runicus*: The Scanian Law, end of the 13th century:

*Far man kunu ok dør han før en hun far barn ok sigir hun ok hennæ frændær at hun er mæþ barne þa skal hun sittæ i egenþ bægiæ þerræ uskiþø tiukhu ugu ok til se mæþ sinum uæriændæ ær hun æi*

“If a man marries a woman, and he dies before she gets a child, and she and her kinsmen say that she is with child, then she shall remain on the property common to them undivided for twenty weeks and look after the property with her guardian.”

The introduction to Jutlandic Law (*Jyske lov*), the first manuscript from Flensburg, around 1300: the original may have been written in 1241:

*(M)æth logh skal land bygiæ æn wildæ hwær man oruæs at sit eghæt. Oc lataæ mæn nytæ iaf næth tha thurftæ man ækki logh with. Æn ængi logh ær æmgoth at fylghæ sum sannænd. Hwaræ sum man æuer um sannænd. Thær skal logh letæ hwilkt ræt ær.*

“With law shall a land be built. But if each were content with his own and would let others enjoy the same right, there would be no need of a law. No law is as good to obey as the truth, but wherever one is in doubt about the truth, there the law shall show what is true.”

After the Treaty of Roskilde (1658), the Danish provinces of Scania, Halland and Blekinge passed to Sweden. It should be mentioned that all of them are now located in southern Sweden. Swedish suddenly became both the official and ecclesiastical language and within one generation it spread to the new areas as a spoken variety as well. The fact that the contemporary dialects were more similar to Swedish than Danish definitely contributed to the rapid spread of Swedish. In the south, too, the area where Danish had once been in use was reduced: count Gert brought German to Schleswig already in the 14th century. The Reformation furthered the influence of Low German in the Protestant church and subsequently at schools. The Hanseatic League had a great influence on commercial towns. In the first half of the 19th century, the area of Angeln between the cities Flensburg and Schleswig where Danish originally dominated became wholly German.

Book printing was introduced in Denmark at the end of the 15th century, but only thanks to the Reformation did printing become more widespread. The first well-preserved printed book in Danish is the translation of the New Testament issued in Leipzig in 1524. The Latin translation was created at the order of King Christian II. H. Mickelsen (the mayor of Malmö) worked on it together with the royal secretary Ch. Winters and the writer Henrik Smith. The result clearly shows that this translation was done in a rush. Therefore, already in 1529 a new translation appeared, this time produced by the excellent writer Christian Pedersen. The translation of the whole Bible was rounded off in 1550, and this effort for which the best writers in Denmark at the time came together (namely again Christian Pedersen and also Petrus Palladius and others) was financed by King Christian III. This translation, widely acknowledged as a classic literary work of the Danish Reformation, later played an important role during the formation of the modern literary language.

From the secular literature, the translation of Saxo Grammaticus by Sørensen Vedel (1575) must be mentioned. In the following century, the most interesting work from the linguistic point of view is the legal code produced by King Christian V (1683). The rise of Humanism brought prestige to Latin as a literary language. It therefore comes as no surprise that the first textbook of Danish from 1668 is written in Latin. The first Danish textbook written in Danish was published in 1685 by Peder Syv, who was well-known for his collection of folk songs and sayings. It is more than characteristic of the time that he recommended that readers translate the example sentences into Latin for better understanding. One must realize that the contemporary royal court, the aristocracy and wealthy townspeople as well as the majority of merchants and the army used German, and only the educated knew Latin. Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754), a prose writer and dramatist, tried to fight this trend by using Old Danish for the purpose of purifying the modern language of its many loanwords and calques. Holberg’s comedies were put on to great success in the first Danish theatre, *Den Danske Skueplads* (1722–27). Later, after he became a professor, he wrote an extensive work *The History of the Danish Empire* (1732–1735).

Despite Holberg's efforts and the influence of the Bible financed by King Christian V, Danish remained a mixture of old and new elements, loanwords and borrowed phrases. The spelling was not unified, which led to the development of a large number of doublets. Around 1750, a new direction was taken by the circle around the philosophers Frederik Ch. Eilschow, and Jens S. Sneedorf, the aim of which was to reform the language for the sake of simpler spelling and grammar rules. Their contemporary Johannes Ewald (1743–1781) attributed a great significance to the poetic language. In Ewald's efforts to revive poetry, he sought inspiration in other Nordic languages and their traditions. He replaced loanwords, especially those from German, with substitutes originating not only in the Danish countryside but also in the Swedish and Norwegian dialects.

A law of 1814 declared schooling compulsory for children from the ages of seven to fourteen. In reality, this goal was accomplished only around 1850. The main aim of education was to gain the ability to read and write.

A reliable scientific description of Danish in the context of the other Nordic languages was provided in 1826 by Rasmus Christian Rask (1787–1832) in his work *Forsøg til en videnskabelig dansk retskrivningslære*. In 1845, the University of Copenhagen established a section for Nordic philology whose first chair was Niels Matthias Petersen (1791–1862). He wrote an excellent history of the Nordic languages (*Det danske, norske og svenske sprogs historie*, 1829–1830). At the same time, Christian Molbech published his books *Dansk ordbog* ("The Danish Dictionary", 1828–1833) and *Dansk dialectlexikon* ("Danish Dictionary of Dialects", 1841). In 1911, the Society for Danish Language and Literature (*Det danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab*) was established with the aim of republishing Danish works from older periods in a way which would suit modern requirements. One of the classical figures of this institution, Lis Jacobsen (1882–1961), became the publisher of the largest Danish dictionary, *Ordbog over det danske sprog*.

### 3.2.1.1.7 Swedish

Out of all the contemporary Scandinavian nations, the ethnonym Swede appeared first in history. Tacitus recorded in his work *Germania* written around 98 CE a list of the peoples dwelling around the Baltic Sea: ... *Suionum hinc civitates, ipso in Oceano, praeter viros armaque classibus valent forma navium eo differt...*<sup>39</sup> "And now begin the states of the Suiones, situated on the Ocean itself, and these, besides men and arms, are powerful in ships..."<sup>40</sup>. In the middle of the 6th century, the Gothic historian Jordanes noted down the form *Suehans*, while in the Old English epic poems *Beowulf* and *Widsith*, which describe events from the 6th century, the form *Sweon* was used. Adam of Bremen wrote around 1070 of the *Sueones*, and Old Icelandic sources mention the nation *Svíar*. The Old Swedes in their own works called themselves *Svear*. This ethnonym is usually considered to mean "their own [people]", i.e. the people of their own ethnic identity. The most widely-used name of Sweden which we know from the Latin form *Svetia*, *Svecia*, German *Schweden*, English *Sweden*, French *Suède*, originates in the composite preserved in Old Icelandic *Svíþjóð*, Old Swedish *Svethiudh* "the people of Svía", i.e. the Swedes. Already in Jordanes we find *Svetidi*, *cogniti in hac gente reliquis corpore eminentiores* "The Swedes are famous among these tribes for their large stature exceeding everyone else". A similar composite appears in Gothic *Gutþiuda* "the Goth people". The Swedes alone call their land *Sverige*, in Old Sweden *Sverighe*, *Sverike*, *Svearike*, Old Icelandic *Svíaríki*, i.e. "the Swedish empire" (Wessén 1968, 26).

The history of the Old Swedish language can be divided into two phases according to the writing system that prevailed during the respective period. From the beginning of the 11th century until the last quarter of the 13th century, Old Swedish was primarily recorded in the younger futhork. The runic script had naturally been used in the area of today's Sweden

39) Cornelius Tacitus: *de Origine et Situ Germanorum Liber*. In: Opera Minora by Cornelius Tacitus, ed. by Henry Furneaux. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900.

40) Cornelius Tacitus: *Germany and its Tribes*. In: Complete Works of Tacitus, translated by Alfred John Church & William Jackson Brodribb. New York: Random House, 1942.

much earlier, at least since 200 CE, but only after 1000 did the basis for the future Swedish, Danish and Norwegian languages begin to form. Icelandic and Faroese took – due to their insular location – a somewhat different path of development. Starting in approximately 1225, the Latin script began to be used and gradually forced out the runic script. Both writing systems, however, coexisted in Sweden for some time, and this mixture survived longest probably in Gotland. The majority of runic inscriptions from the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries come from Uppland (ca. 1200). Södermanland follows with approximately 375 inscriptions, Östergötland (250), Västergötland (200), Småland (about 100), and others. The most northern areas where runic inscriptions have been found are Medelpad and the island of Frösö in Lake Storsjön in Jämtland.

A clash broke out between the old pagan cults and Christianity. The new Christian faith spread to Sweden from two directions, namely from England on one side, and from Hamburg and Bremen on the other. Judging from the runic inscriptions from Uppland (the centre of the Swedish empire), this relatively densely populated area was largely christianized already in the 11th century. The phase of missions was followed by a period of establishing the church organization. Starting with the bishops, through ordinary priests and ending with deacons, all clergymen were meant to be proficient in reading and writing. The only books at their disposal were Latin books of liturgical content, as there was not yet a need for texts in this country's own language. During this period, an immense heritage from the past, namely the old myths and songs, was lost. Only some of them were uniquely preserved in Iceland.

The first preserved Swedish work written in the Latin script is *Västgötalagen*, 'Law of Western Götaland'. Its creation is due to the judge Eskil Magnusson, brother of the mighty Birger Jarl. Two sheets were preserved from the manuscript, which dates to the period between 1225 and 1250. A nearly complete version of this work dates from around 1280 and is considered the oldest Swedish book. In the mid-13th century, a legal code of Uppland (*lagsaga*), first passed down orally, was in force in the area of *Swethiudh*. Although recorded later than the *Västgötalagen*, no copy has been preserved. Useful information about *lagsaga* was found in the *Svenska krönikan* ("Swedish Chronicle") by Olaus Petri, where a chapter dealing with duels is cited (*Hednalagen*). The lost law book was probably at least partly included in the Law of the Dalarna region (*Dalalagen*) that dates from the first half of the 14th century. In other areas of Old Sweden, local laws were also gradually collected and recorded (*Östgötalagen*, *Upplandslagen*, 1296) and others. The law in force during the reign of King Magnus Eriksson was recorded around 1350.

Besides legal documents from the 13th and 14th centuries, only a few manuscripts have been preserved. The *Codex Bureanus* comprising a collection of legends and some leaves describing the revelation of St. Bridget of Sweden must be mentioned. Another work, the *Erikskrönikan* ("Eric's Chronicle"), is rather secular, capturing in its 4500 verses Swedish history from the mid-13th century until the beginning of the 14th.

Despite the gradual development of literature, whether legal, ecclesiastical (lives of the saints) and secular (chivalric romances), literacy spread slowly in late medieval Sweden. Even in the second half of the 15th century, it was clear that not all members of the Imperial Council could read and write. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that already by this time some women were educated. The legends of St. Bridget recount how it was her who taught her husband Ulf Gudmarsson (a judge!) to read. Two manuscripts from the second half of the 15th century were written by noble women. These are "The Book of Lady Märeta" (1457) and "The Book of Lady Elin" (1476). At the beginning of the Old Swedish literary period, based on the Latin alphabet, the influence of the Latin writing tradition was apparent. The text of the *Västgötalagen* shows the influence of the Norwegian writing of the time. Also the influence of Medieval Latin, Low German and later also the Danish writing system continues to grow. Two manuscripts of the Uppland legal code were probably recorded by Danish scribes.

The Old Swedish language had preserved the letter *þ* for the voiceless dental fricative from the time of the runic inscriptions. However, since 1375 it began to be reflected by the digraphs *th*, *dh*: *þing* "thing" → *thing*, *riþa* "to ride" → *ridha*. In the same way, the voiced fricative was set down as *gh*: *ögha* "eye", *lagh* "law". The length of the vowel is usually expressed by its doubling: *naal* "needle", but geminated consonants don't appear at the end of the word

but only between vowels: *fal* “a fall”, *falla* “to fall”. The Old Norse vowel *e* is substituted by *ä*: *vägher* “a way” : Old Icelandic *vegr*. An epenthetic consonant appears in consonant clusters: *aldra* genitive pl. from *allir* “all”, *andrir* pl. from *annar* “different, another”, *himblar* pl. from *himil* “heaven”, *nampn* “a name”. Final *-r* gradually disappears, especially in Götland: *hästa(r)* pl. “horses”, *göþi(r)* pl. “the good ones” : Old Icelandic *góðir*, *vi* “we” : Old Icelandic *vér* and others. Unlike in Old Icelandic, *a*-umlaut (*kul* “coal”) and *i*-umlaut (dative pl. *landum* “to the lands” : Old Icelandic *lǫndum*) are missing in Old Swedish. Nouns still distinguished three genders (cf. the respective personal pronouns: *han* “he”, *hon* “she”, *þät* “it”) and four cases with reduced endings:

	sg.			pl.		
nom.	<i>staver</i> m. “a stick”	<i>bok</i> f. “a book”	<i>barn</i> ntr. “a child”	<i>stava(r)</i>	<i>böker</i>	<i>barn</i>
gen.	<i>stafs</i>	<i>boka(r)</i>	<i>barns</i>	<i>stava</i>	<i>boka</i>	<i>barna</i>
dat.	<i>stavi</i>	<i>bok</i>	<i>barni</i>	<i>stavum</i>	<i>bokum</i>	<i>barnum</i>
acc.	<i>staf</i>	<i>bok</i>	<i>barn</i>	<i>stava</i>	<i>böker</i>	<i>barn</i>

**Table 2:** Old Swedish declension

The articles were suffixed to the noun and both the noun and the article were inflected: *stafin* “the stick”, gen. *stafsins*, *bokin* “the book”, gen. *bokinna(r)*, *barnit* “the child”, gen. *barnsins*.

With the exception of the preterite of the strong verbs, the verbal form does not change in the singular; rather, the respective person is expressed by a personal pronoun. The plural preserved the old endings, e.g. *skiuta* “to shoot”, sg. *iak/þu/han skiuter* : pl. *vi skiutum*, *I skiu-tin*, *þe skiuta*.

In the course of the 15th century, inflection was simplified even further: the genitive form with a universal ending *-s* replaced the dative and genitive even for the feminine and plural, besides the accusative forms were preserved. The vocabulary was enriched by specialized and church terminology originating in Greek and Latin, while other words for everyday life were adopted from the other Germanic languages of the time, namely English, Frisian and especially from Low German (*bädd* “a bed”, *dräkt* “clothes”, *stövel* “high boot”, *språk* “language”, *bliva* “to stay”, *arbata* “to work”, and others).

Examples of Old Swedish texts start with the runic inscriptions (Haugen 1976, 226–27):

Nybbe, Söderland, tombstone probably from the 12th century:

stain : hiuk : esber [n] : stintn : at : uitum : bat  
 miþ : runum : raisti : kyla : at : gaiRbern :  
 boanta : sin : auk · kofriþ : at : faþur : sin : hanu/  
 aR : boanti : bestri : kili : raþi : saR : kuni :

*Stæin hiogg Æsbærn, stæindan at vitum, bant með runum; ræisti Gylla at GæRbern,  
 boanda sinn, ok Guðfrið at faður sinn. Hann vaR boandi bæztr i Kili. Raði saR kunni.*

“Æsbærn hewed this stone, stained in memory, bound  
 with runes; Gylla raised it after GæiRbern,  
 her husband, and Guðfrið, after her father. He  
 w/as the best of the dwellers in Kil. Let him read who can.”

Burseryd, Småland, a runic inscription on a baptismal font from the 14th century:

arinbiorn : gørthe : mik : uitkunder : prester : skref : mik : ok : hær : skal : um : stund : stanta :  
 “Arinbjörn made me, Víðkunnr priest wrote me. And here (I) shall stand for a while.”

Advice by the Virgin Mary to St. Bridget on spiritual understanding, a manuscript originating around 1367 (Haugen 1976, 233–34):

- (1) *fyrst vil iac þik sighthia huru þik æru andelik vnderstandilse gifin sea oc hora*
- (2) *sumi hafþo þæn hælghanda saghe til konunge þæn dagin koma*
- (3) *sænde-boþan oc mange visto huat þem skulle suaras fyr æn þe talabo sumi visto oc vtan*
- (4) *mana kynilse suma þem þær varo lifand<sup>e</sup> ælla døþe oc visto þe fyr æn st[r] ipin byriadis*
- (5) *huru hon ændapis*

- (1) “First I will tell you how spiritual understanding is given you to see and hear.
- (2) Some [saints] had the Holy Spirit such that they the hour, as (when) the prophet told the king: ‘On that day comes
- (3) the messenger.’ And many knew what should be answered those (who asked) even before they spoke. Some also knew without
- (4) men’s telling them who were living or dead, and they knew before the battle began
- (5) how it would end.” ... and so on.

During the development which led towards the modern Swedish language, two major events played a role: the invention of the printing press and the Reformation. The first printed book in Sweden was a collection of fables published in Stockholm. A year later, the Uppsala Missal followed. Both books were naturally published in Latin. The first printed book in Swedish dates to 1495, the second to 1514. Printed books became widely available only during the Reformation thanks to its emphasis on using the particular country’s own native language.

A Swedish translation of the New Testament was published by the king’s printer. Its translator remains unknown to this day, with the only thing certain being that the translation as well as the printing was directed by the king’s chancellor Laurentius Andreae. The Latin translation by Erasmus with its Greek predecessor and Luther’s German translation served as a template. The translation of the whole Bible was completed between 1540 and 1541 and is referred to as the Gustav Vasa Bible. It was written in the common language of the Mälars province with archaic traits which found support in the old legal texts. The Vasa Bible spread widely during its time and therefore played an important role in the development of the standard Swedish language. The so-called Charles XII Bible differs only slightly from the Vasa Bible and this translation was used almost unchanged until 1917.

Secular literature played second to religious writing during the 16th century. At least two chronicles should be mentioned here: one written by Olof Persson (Olaus Petri) and the second by Peder Swart. Printed versions of these were not available until much later. In 1630 king Gustav II Adolf addressed in his message called the *Memorandum to Antiquarians* what collection they should found and what must be included in the future Swedish dictionary. He enumerated countless objects and tools of everyday life, and also requested that they should record the names of all parishes, villages, woods, rivers, lakes, mountains, large and small islands and peninsulas while also examining the origin of these names. Gustav Adolf intended to establish a department for the Swedish language at the university in Uppsala, but he did not succeed. His daughter Christina, Queen of Sweden in the years 1632–1654, continued with his plans, especially with those yet unrealized. Her ambition was to set up an Academy of the Swedish Language according to the French model, but not even this could be completed.

As Sweden’s power grew, the self-confidence of Swedish intellectuals increased, which led to Swedish replacing Latin as the language of science. In 1677, the professor of medicine Olof Rudbeck (†1702) introduced the Swedish language into the curriculum at Uppsala University. His scientific publication *Atlantica* was also written in his mother tongue. Only slowly was Rudbeck’s example taken up by others, and only in the 18th century did a significant number of authors decide to use Swedish for their dissertations. Here it is necessary to note that Latin was taught already at the lower levels of schooling. One of the most important people who helped the victory of the mother tongue at all levels of education was John Amos Comenius, who was living in Sweden at that time. Lexical collections which were gathered

by Erik Schroderus, author of the Swedish adaptation of Comenius's work *Janua Linguarum*, and they preserve their value to this day.

The first Swedish grammar was published by Erik Aurivillius in 1684, though it was written in Latin. A grammar of Swedish written in Swedish itself appeared in 1696 thanks to Nilse Tiallmann. The first Swedish dictionary, *Glossarium Sveo-Gothicum* by Haquin Spegel, was printed in 1712. The essay *Schibboleth* by Jesper Svedberg, in which original Swedish words were opposed to foreign ones, followed in 1716. In the same year, the *Orthographia Suecana* by Urban Hjärne was published. In 1769, a professor at Uppsala University, Johan Ihre (1780) published a work with a similar title as Spegel, namely the *Glossarium Sviogothicum*. This time it was an etymological dictionary written critically in the broader context of the other Germanic languages. Sven Hof, a teacher at the grammar school in Skara, published in 1772 a significant essay entitled *Dialectus Vestrogothica* about the dialects of western Götaland compared to the Middle Swedish dialects. The *Svensk grammatik* (1769) and *Svensk ordbog* (1773) by Abraham Sahlstedt (1716–1773) served as a normative example for many future generations. The king Gustav III (1771–1792) presided over the introduction of Swedish into the theatre. The same sovereign founded the Swedish Academy in 1786. One of its main objectives was language maintenance. In the 1830s a plan for collecting all Swedish vocabulary since 1526 in one dictionary came into existence at the Academy. The editorial board of this dictionary (*Ordbok öfver svenska språket*) moved to Lund and in 1893 the first volume appeared. By the late 1960s, two-thirds of the dictionary had been written.

Around 1680, some terms from the spoken language penetrated into the standard language, e.g. *du, dig, din* “you (subject), you (object), your” instead of *tu, tigh, tin; wi sku* “we must” instead of *wi skola; han börja* “he began” instead of *han började* etc. A mysterious pronoun *Ni* “you (plural/polite form)” appeared, which originated due to an incorrect desegmentation of such idioms as *sågen-I* “you saw – you”. Already during this time, the palatalization of *g, k, sk* in front of front vowels began. The Swedish vocabulary also developed further. The influence of Low German mediated by the Hansa was replaced by High German. This happened due to the Reformation, as well as to the Thirty Years' War and the subsequent migration of German craftsmen, miners and also scholars to Sweden, one of the victorious powers that needed a qualified workforce. To this period one can trace loanwords such as *tapper < tapfer, riktig < richtig, sats < Satz, ordentlig < ordentlich, träffa < treffen, värva < werben, alltså < also*, etc. Swedish borrowed words from the jargon of German miners, namely *gruva < Grube, hytta < Hütte, schakt < Schacht, skiffer < Schiefer*, etc. The French and Wallonian Huguenots brought French to Sweden in the middle of the 17th century. They contributed to Swedish with such words as *affär, respekt* and *trafik*. The French influence intensified during the 18th century when French became not only in fashion at the European royal courts, but also indispensable in diplomacy and prestigious in science. An opposing tendency to this was the adoption of words from other Scandinavian languages, Old Swedish and Old Icelandic (*alster* “a product”, *ätt* “lineage, family”, *gåta* “a riddle”, *tärna* “a girl”, *fager* “nice”, *tima* “to happen”, etc.). Later, in the 19th century, words were borrowed also from Danish and Norwegian (*betingelse, bestyrelse, besvikelse, upplevelse, eftermäle, skötesynd, hähsyn, samfärdsel, räckvidd, uppsving, levebröd, utbyte, utslag, kräsen, säregen* etc.). In the 18th century, English loanwords started to enter Swedish. Among the oldest ones are *potatis, klubb, pudding, biff(stek), punsch, mollskinn < moleskin, sjal < shawl*. In the second half of the 19th century the quantity of English loanwords increased: *strejk, lockout, bojkott, budget, trust, sport, tennis, rekord, jobb, skout, hobby, snobb, humbug, flirt, blus, smoking, shoddy, tweed, slips, pullover, jumper, sweater, hall, tunnel, koks, intervju, film, lunch, kex, grapefrukt, service, raid, camping, smart, truism, tejp*, and many others. An even stronger influx of (American) English loanwords was noted at the end of the 20th century and this tendency has not seemed to weaken in the 21st either.

### 3.2.1.1.8 Old Gutnish

During the Viking era as well as during the High Middle Ages, the inhabitants of the island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea spoke a language sufficiently different from its contemporaries – Old Swedish and Old Danish – to be considered a separate East Scandinavian language.

From a taxonomical point of view, it is today one of the dialects of Swedish. However, written documents dating between the 10th and 15th centuries – whether runic inscriptions or texts written in the Latin script – testify that it was distinctly different from the Old Swedish of the time. In general, it is marked by archaisms. Innovations, particularly phonetic ones, which were characteristic for Swedish and often Danish as well, usually left no mark on the language of the inhabitants of Gotland. The following phenomena were characteristic of Old Gutnish phonetics:

Retention of the Germanic *\*ai*: Old Gutnish *gait* “goat”, Gothic *gaitis* : Old Icelandic *geit*, Swedish *get*; Old Gutnish *stain* “stone”, Gothic *stains*, Old Runic acc.sg. *staina* : Old Icelandic *steinn*.

Retention of the Germanic *\*au*: Old Gutnish *auga* “eye”, Gothic *augo*, Old Icelandic *auga* : Swedish *öga*; Old Gutnish *draumr* “dream”, Old Icelandic *draumr* : Swedish *dröm*.

Fronting of the Germanic *\*au* under the influence of *i*-umlaut: Old Gutnish *oyra* “ear” : Old Icelandic *eyra*, Swedish *öra*, but Gothic *auso*.

Change of the Germanic *\*eu* > Proto-Norse *\*iu* > Old Gutnish *iau*: Old Gutnish *diaup* “deep” : Gothic *diups*, Old Icelandic *djúpr*, Swedish *djup*; Old Gutnish *skiauta* “shoot” : Old Icelandic *skjóta*, Swedish *skjuta*; *liaus* “light” : Old Icelandic *ljós*, Old Swedish *ljūs* id.

Retention of Germanic *\*u*: Old Gutnish *sun* “son”, Gothic *sunus*, Old Icelandic *sunr*, *sonr* : Swedish *son*; Old Gutnish *fulc* “folk” : Old Icelandic, Swedish *folk*.

Many vowels kept their closed pronunciation: *mela* : Old Icelandic, Old Swedish *mæla* “say”, *dyma* : Old Icelandic, Old Swedish *dæma* “judge”, *lit* : Old Icelandic *lét*, Old Swedish *let* “let”.

The phenomenon of “breaking” did not occur, cf. *singe* : Old Swedish *siunga* “sing”, *sinke* : Old Swedish *siunka* “sink”.

With regard to *i*-umlaut, however, Gutnish corresponds with West Scandinavian languages, but not with Swedish: *slegr* “hit”, acc. *steþ* “place”, *legþi* : Swedish *lade* “lay”, *segþi* : Swedish *sade* “said”, etc.

There are two main sources available for the study of Old Gutnish: runic inscriptions written between the beginning of the 10th century and the beginning of the 16th century (also found on other Baltic islands) and medieval manuscripts. It is remarkable that the density of medieval runic inscriptions here is by far the highest in all Scandinavia. They are usually grave inscriptions or profane texts on church objects, such as the 12th century baptismal font in Åkirkeby on the island of Bornholm. Among the most important locations of findings are Pilgård, Tjängvide, Ardre, Hauggrän, Sjonhem and Stainkumbla. The most important manuscripts include the *Guta Lag* legal code and the *Gutasaga* attached to it from the mid-14th century, a runic calendar from 1328 and the rules of a guild.

An extract from Chapter 39 “Concerning Insults” from the Gutnish *Guta Lag* legal code [Haugen 1976, 235]:

*Af oqueþins orþum. Oqueþins orþ iru manni fiugur þiaufr. oc morþingi. rauferi. oc casna vargr En vm cunu iru fem þiaufr. oc morþingi. hordombr. oc fordeþ sciepr. oc casna wargr þa en mandr verþr firir sclicum oqueþins orþum þa scal fara haim til garz hinum sum þaim hafr melt. oc stefna hanum til kirchiur miþ schielum. oc biþia orþ sin atr taka. þaun sum osinum iru melt. i. striþi eþa vpp dryckiu. þa en hann dyl. þa sueri miþ þrim mannum firi socna mannum er hann aldri þaun orþ melti*

“Concerning Words of Abuse. For a man there are four words of abuse: thief, murderer, robber and firebug. But for a woman there are five: thief, murderer, whoredom, witchcraft and firebug. Now if a man comes in for such words of abuse, then he shall go home to the farm of the one who has spoken them and lawfully summon him to church, and ask him to take back his words, those which unintentionally are spoken in strife or drunkenness. Now if he denies, then he shall swear with three men before the officials that he never spoke those words.”

An extract from the so-called *Gutasaga* (Chapter 1) attached to the Old Gutnish legal code (*Gutalag*). The manuscript is from 1350, but the text itself was written before 1285, probably as early as around 1220 [Ranke & Hofmann 1988, 149–50; Zatočil 1941, 17–59]:



Gutland hitti fyrsti maþr þan sum Þielvar hit. Þá war Gutland só elvist, at þet daghum sanc oc náatum war uppi. En þann maþr quam fyrsti eldi á land, oc síþan sanc þet aldri. Þissi Þielvar hafþi ann sun, sum hit Hafþi. En Hafþa cuna hit Huitastierna; þau tú bygðu fyrsti á Gutlandi. Fyrstu nát, sum þaun saman suáfu, þá droymdi henni draumbr, só sum þrír ormar wárin slungnir saman í barmi hennar, oc þýtti henni, sum þair scriþin ýr barmi hennar. Þinna draum segþi hán firi Hafþa bónda sínum; hann riap draum þinna só: ‘Alt ir baugum bundit, bóland al þitta warþa, oc fáum þría syni aiga.’ Þaim gaf hann namn allum ófýdum: ‘Guti al Gutland aigha, Graipr al annar haita oc Gunfiaun þriþi.’ Þair scriptu síþan Gutlandi í þría þriþiunga, só at Graipr, þann elzti, laut norþasta þriþiung oc Guti miþalþriþiung, en Gunfiaun, þann yngsti, laut sunnarsta. Síþan af þissum rim auca is fulc í Gutlandi só mikit um langan tíma, at land elpti þaim ai alla fýþa. Þá lutapú þair bort af landi huert þriþia þiaup, só at alt sculdu þair aiga oc miþ sír bort hafa, sum þair ufan iorþar áttu. Síþan wildu þair nauþugir bort fara, men foru innan Þorsborg oc bygþus þar firir. Síþan wildi ai land þaim þula, vtan racu þaim bort þeþan. Síþan foru þair borþ i Faroyna oc bygþus þar firir. Þar gatu þair ai sic vppi haldit, vtan foru i aina oy wiþr Aistland, sum haitir Dagaiþi, oc bygþus þar firir oc gierþu burg aina, sum enn synis. Þar gatu þair oc ai sic haldit, vtan foru vpp at watni þi, sum haitir Dyna, oc vpp ginum Ryzaland. ...

“Gotland was first discovered by a man named Þieluar. At that time the island was so bewitched that it sank by day and rose up at night. That man, however, was the first that brought fire to the island, and afterwards it never sank again. This same Þieluar had a son named Hafþi, and Hafþi’s wife was called Huitastierna. These two were the first to settle in Gotland. The first night that they slept together, she dreamed a dream. It was just as if three snakes were coiled together within her womb, and it seemed to her as though they crawled out of her lap. She related this dream to Hafþi, her husband, and he interpreted it as follows: ‘Everything in rings is bound. Inhabited this land shall be; we shall beget sons three.’ He gave them each a name, while they were still unborn: ‘Guti shall Gotland claim, Graipr the second by name and Gunfiaun the third.’ They later divided Gotland into thirds, in such a way that Graipr the eldest inherited the northern third, Guti the middle third and Gunfiaun the youngest inherited the southernmost. Subsequently, from these three men, the population of Gotland increased so much over a long period of time that the land was not able to support them all. Then they cast lots to send every third person away from the island, on the understanding that they should have a right to keep, and take away with them, everything that they owned in the way of moveables. But then they were unwilling to move away, and went instead into Torsburgen, and lived there. Later the people of the island were not prepared to tolerate them, but drove them away from there. They then went away to Fårö and settled there. They could not support themselves there, but travelled to an island off Estonia called Dagö, where they settled, and built a fortification, which is still to be seen. They could not support themselves there either, but travelled up by the watercourse called the Dvina, and onward through Russia. ...”

### 3.2.1.2 West Germanic

#### 3.2.1.2.1 Ingvaemonic

##### 3.2.1.2.1.1 English

Early Medieval sources already agree that the indigenous Celtic population of Britain – the Brittons – were gradually pushed to the western coast of the island by newcomers from the southern and eastern coast of the North Sea. These new arrivals were primarily the Angles and the Saxons and, to a smaller degree, also the Jutes and the Frisians. The **Angles** and their neighbours were first mentioned by Tacitus at the end of the 1st century CE in his work *Germania* [§40]: “Next come the Reudigni, the Aviones, the Anglii, the Varini, the Eudoses, the Suardones, and Nuithones who are fenced in by rivers or forests. None of these tribes have any noteworthy feature, except their common worship of (N)ertha, or mother-Earth, and their belief that she interposes in human affairs, and visits the nations in her car.”<sup>41</sup> Further

41) *Reudigni deinde et Aviones et Anglii et Varini et Eudoses et Suarines et Nui tones fluminibus aut silvis muniuntur. nec quicquam notabile in singulis, nisi quod in commune Nerthum, id est Terram matrem, colunt eamque intervenire rebus hominum, inuehi populis arbitrantur.*

Translated by Alfred J. Church & William J. Brodribb (1942).

on, they are mentioned by Ptolemy [2.11.15]: “Of the people of the interior and those who live inland the most important are the *Suevi Angili*, who are to the east of the Langobardi extending towards the north and up to the central part of the Albis river...”<sup>42</sup>

In the first half of the 6th century, Saint Gildas, a Welsh monk, recorded in his *De excidio et conquestu Britanniae* (“On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain”, §23) a single ethnonym of the Germanic conquerors of Britain, *Saxones*: “Then all the councillors, together with that proud tyrant Gurthrigern [Vortigern], the British king, were so blinded, that, as a protection to their country, they sealed its doom by inviting in among them like wolves into the sheep-fold, the fierce and impious Saxons, a race hateful both to God and men, to repel the invasions of the northern nations. Nothing was ever so pernicious to our country, nothing was ever so unlucky. ... They first landed on the eastern side of the island, by the invitation of the unlucky king, and there fixed their sharp talons, apparently to fight in favour of the island, but alas! more truly against it. Their motherland, finding her first brood thus successful, sends forth a larger company of her wolfish offspring, which sailing over, join themselves to their bastard-born comrades.”<sup>43</sup>

Procopius of Caesarea, a Byzantine historian, who wrote his work *De Bello Gothico* not long afterwards (around 550), described the inhabitants of Britain in the following way [8.20]: “The island of Brittonia is inhabited by three very numerous nations, each having one king over it. And the names of these nations are Angili, Frisones, and Brittones, the last being named from the island itself.”<sup>44</sup> The most detailed description of the origin of the Germanic inhabitants of Britain can be found in the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (“Ecclesiastical History of the English People”) by Bede Venerabilis (673–735), which includes the history of the island from Caesar’s invasion of Britain until 731. It is obvious that he partially used the legend concerning the settlement of Britain from a source close to Procopius (see the Appendix).

Around 406, the Roman legions left Britain. The power vacuum that followed was an opportunity for the Germanic peoples to wage separate attacks from the continent. According to the annals of Bede, the decisive attack came around 449. In Bede’s description, three tribes participated in the Germanic invasion. The **Jutes** [*Iutae*<sup>45</sup>], who originally came from what is today Danish-German border area, are described by Bede as settling in Kent, on the Isle of Wight and on the south English coast opposite it. There is some uncertainty as to whether their tribal dialect belonged to the West Germanic or the North Germanic branch. The original settlements of the **Saxons** were probably located at the mouth of the Elbe and to the north of it. They spread from this area to the south of the continent and along the Elbe to the southeast, but also along the coast of the North Sea to the Channel coast and from there to southern England (excluding Cornwall) approximately up to an imaginary line between Worcestershire and Norfolk. The **Angles** originally settled between the Jutes and the Saxons. They began their British campaign in Lincolnshire. From there they penetrated to the north as far as Edinburgh, to the west until the Welsh borders and also to the south, to the detriment of the Saxons. A belt of mixed Anglo-Saxon dialects was thus created, stretching from Norfolk county to Bristol.

The Germanic conquest of Britain was certainly not the result of a single attack, but rather a long-term series of invasions. The resulting effect was devastating for the indigenous Celtic

42) Τῶν δὲ ἐντὸς καὶ μεσογείων ἔθνῶν μέγιστα μὲν ἐστὶ τό τε τῶν Σηθίων τῶν Ἀγγειῶν, οἱ εἰσὶν ἀνατολικώτεροι τῶν Λαγγοβάρδων ἀνατείνοντες πρὸς τὰς ἄρκτους μέχρι τῶν μέσων τοῦ Ἄλβιος ποταμοῦ, ...

Translated by Edward Luther Stevenson (1932).

43) *tum omnes consilarii una cum superbo tyranno caecantur, adinuenientes tale praesidium, immo excidium patriae ut ferocissimi illi nefandi nominis Saxones deo hominibusque inuisi, quasi in caulas lupi, in insulam ad retundendas aquilones gentes intromitterentur. quo utique nihil ei usquam perniciosius nihilque amarius factum est. ... primum in orientali parte insulae iubente infausto tyranno terribiles infixit ungues, quasi pro patria pugnaturus sed eam certius impugnaturus. cui supradicta genetrix, comperiens primo agmini fuisse prosperatum, item mitit satellitum canumque prolixiorum catastam, quae ratibus aduecta adunatur cum manipularibus spuris.*

Translated by John Allen Giles (1841).

44) Βριττίαν δὲ τὴν νῆσον ἔθνη τριαπολυανθρωπώτατα ἔχουσι, βασιλεύς τε εἰς αὐτῶν ἑκάστω ἐφέστηκε. καὶ ὀνόματα κεῖται τοῖς ἔθνεσι τούτοις Ἀγγίλοι τε καὶ Φρίσσονες καὶ οἰτὴ νῆσω ὀμόνυμοι Βρίττωνες.

Translated by Henry B. Dewing (1914–1928).

45) First by Caesar [BG I, 51] in the accusative plural sequence *Nemetes Seudosos*, the correct form of which was probably \**Eudusos*; then Tacitus: *Eudoses* [*Germania* §40], Orosius *Euduses* [VI, 7.7]. From an etymological point of view, this is probably a combination of Germanic \**eupa-* > Old Norse *jóð* “newborn; offspring” (Neumann 2008, 347) and the suffix of perfect active participles that is found in Gothic *ber-usjos* “parents” (Schönfeld 1911, 81–82).

inhabitants. They were partially pushed to the inhospitable north and to the west coast, while a portion of their population was eventually assimilated. Killings of British Celts, especially men, played a significant role in the acquisition of space, as is shown by contemporary genetics. The very limited contact between the Anglo-Saxons and the indigenous Celtic (Brittonic) inhabitants is documented by the tiny number of loans (e.g. the Modern English *bin*, *hog*) in comparison to what happened in Gaul. On the other hand, the new inhabitants borrowed scores of old place names, especially hydronyms (*Thames*, *Severn*, etc.), which confirms some degree of contact. Specific evidence that they were familiar with their Celtic neighbours is provided by place-names created from Brittonic ethnonyms such as *Walcot* and *Walton*, where the first part is *Wealh*, i.e. Old English “Britton; slave”, or *Cumberland*, *Comberbath*, where the first part is a Brittonic word meaning “from the same country”, which was also used for the native name of Wales, *Cymru*, and the name of its inhabitants, *Cymro*.

The Germanic conquerors brought the runic script to Britain, but its use was limited. It was usually used to identify property (mostly weapons, just as on the continent). Only a handful of records on bones and wood were preserved in Britain that show that the runic script was also used in everyday communication. Most of the inscriptions are very short with stereotypical content. One of the oldest inscriptions was found close to Undley in Suffolk. It is dated to the late 5th century (Nielsen 2000, 91)

X F X F X F M F X F M M M N

g æ g o g æ m æ g æ m e d u

“a member of the tribe is to be given a reward”

The longest text was found on a cross in Ruthwell (Dumfriesshire); it consists of 290 characters. Another hundred or so were lost when the cross was broken in the 17th century.

The Ruthwell cross inscription (modern Scotland, in what was, at the time of its 8th-century creation, the Kingdom of Northumbria):<sup>46</sup>



Picture 2: Ruthwell cross inscription

Transcription of the top and right section:

ⱱⱿⱱⱿⱿ ⱿⱿⱿ ⱿⱿ ⱿⱿⱿⱿ ⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿ / ⱿⱿⱿⱿ ⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿ ⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿ / ⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿ ⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿⱿ

Krist wæs on rodi. Hweþræ’ / þer fusæ fearran kwomu / æþþilæ til anum.

“Christ was on the cross. Yet / the brave came there from afar / to their lord.”

46) Cf. Elliott 1959, 90–96.

Transcription of the left section:

MIP ƿTRMINDM XIPD+WFM FIMXWDT HIF HITF NIMƿORIXTF XIƿTFƿD+ HIM

**Miþ strelum giwundad alegdun hiæ hinæ limwoerignæ gistoddun him**

“With missiles wounded, they laid him down limb-weary, they stood

(FT HIF NAFH HTƿWDT)

**(æt his licæs heafdum)**

at his body’s head.”

Even though the runic script was pushed out by the Latin script, several signs penetrated into Old English texts, usually to represent sounds that were not represented in the Latin alphabet: *þ* (called *thorn*) and *ƿ* (called *wynn*), which however alternated with the digraphs *th* and *uu*. The literary era of Germanic Britain began only with the arrival of Christianity. The first Christians arrived in Britain with the Roman legions, but the decisive process of Christianisation took place during the 6th and 7th centuries and it came from two directions. From the north came the Irish-Scottish mission founded by St. Patrick – ironically, a British Celt – who had spread the Christian faith in Ireland around 430. In 563, Irish monks led by St. Columbanus came to Scotland and founded the Iona monastery on the north-western coast. They gradually christianised Scotland, Cumbria, Wales and Cornwall, mainly areas with Celtic inhabitants. In 635, Aidan from the Lindisfarne monastery succeeded also in Saxon Northumbria. The Roman tradition was brought to Britain in 597 from the south by the Benedictine monk Augustine. He christianised the southeast of the island, while his successors, such as Paulinus around 625, spread Christianity further north. The process of Christianisation was mainly completed over the 7th century. Representatives of both religious traditions set out on missions to continental Europe. Anglo-Saxon missions went to the Frisians (Willibrord, 690), to southern and central Germany (St. Boniface, 740–754); the well-educated monk Alcuin taught at the court of Charlemagne (782). The Irish began to found new monasteries in Burgundy and in northern Italy, from which their missions continued to central Europe (probably also to Moravia, where they presumably arrived several decades earlier than the Byzantine mission).

Though Britain had seen use of the Germanic runic script and the ogham script brought by settlers from Ireland, it is Christianisation that really marks the start of the British literary period. Until the 12th century, Anglo-Saxon texts were usually written in the small Latin script brought and adapted by Irish missionaries, called the insular script. The first non-Latin literary texts come from the 7th century. They are legal codes written in the **Kentish** dialect, which is usually connected with the presence of the Jutes. However, the main Old English dialect was the **West Saxon** dialect of Wessex, especially due to the political influence of Alfred the Great in the second half of the 9th century. The Saxons of Essex and Sussex also had their own language variants. Although the dialects of the Angles were spread over the largest area (East Anglia, Mercia, Northumbria), the West Saxon dialect was preferred as the main tool of government administration to the degree that in the 10th century, texts originating in East Anglia and Mercia were translated into it.

The Old English literature is represented, among other works, by the epic poem *Beowulf* from around 700, which describes both mythical and real figures and events at the courts of the Danes and the Swedes as well as the slightly mysterious Geats, also inhabitants of Sweden. Other types of poems were also written in the Old English period, such as elegiac poems (*Judith* or “The Wife’s Lament”) or religious poems (*The Dream of the Rood*); among prose works, there were homilies (e.g. the Blickling Homilies) and lives of the saints (*Ælfric*), historical works like the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and scientific treaties, such as *Enchiridion* by Byrhtferth.

Although the Anglo-Saxons’ native language had an important role, Latin remained the most prestigious language, as is demonstrated, among other things, by a number of loans. The oldest layer of loans was brought by the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons from the continent. These are adaptations of words such as Latin *cāseus* “cheese” > Old English *cīese* > English *cheese*, cf. German *Käse*; Latin *campus* “military camp” > English *camp*, cf. German

*Kamp & Kampf*; Latin *cattus* “cat” > Old English *catt(e)* > English *cat*, cf. German *Katze*; Latin *monēta* “coin” > Old English *mynet* > English *mint*, cf. German *Münze*; Latin *strāta* > Old English *stræt* > English *street* “street”, cf. German *Straße*; Latin *tegula* “brick” > Old English *tigele* > English *tile*, cf. German *Ziegel*, etc. Another layer of Latin loans in Old English was mediated by the Brittonic languages that borrowed them during the time when Britain was controlled by the Romans (43–406 CE). Among the words that entered English in this way is the word *ass* “donkey”. Terminology connected with Christianity presented another source of vocabulary of Latin origin, e.g. *abbod* > *abbot*; *mæse* > *mass*; *ælmese* > *alms*, etc. The word *cross* came through Celtic mediation.

At the end of the 8th century, a new factor affected the development of the British Islands and their languages: Scandinavian raiders, mainly from Norway and later from Denmark. Norwegian Vikings attacked the Lindisfarne monastery as early as in 793, but they mainly attacked Scotland, the western coast of Britain (plundering the monastery at the Iona Island in 795) and Ireland, while southeast England was mostly the target of Danish forays. The first isolated attacks were followed in the middle of the 9th century by a coordinated invasion that the Anglo-Saxons were unable to resist for a long time. Effective defence only came with Alfred the Great, ruler of Wessex from 871. However, only the smaller part of Britain remained under his control, west of an imaginary line connecting London and Chester. The area to the East and to the North of this line was called the Danelaw, as it was under Danish law.

As opposed to the mutual isolation of the Celtic Britons and Anglo-Saxons, whose languages had a very limited impact on each other, the Scandinavians left their mark on the language of the Anglo-Saxons. In the preserved texts written mostly in the language of Wessex, the impact of the Scandinavians is least distinct in the Old English period, as Wessex was long independent. In 954, England freed itself from Viking rule, but the attacks of the Norsemen were renewed after 980. Between 1013 and 1042, England was controlled by Danish rulers. As a result, the influence of Old Norse grew significantly stronger in the era just before the Middle English period. The interference was so intense that it affected not only terms for items, but also function words, such as pronouns (*they*, *them*, *their*) and prepositions (*till*, *fro* in the phrase *to and fro*).

However, a dramatic change in this development was caused by a new wave of raiders, who were also originally from Scandinavia, but who attacked Britain in 1066 from the French peninsula known as Normandy. Vikings, especially those from Denmark, began settling around the mouth of the Seine and on the peninsula west of it around 910, when their leader Rollo (christened Robert, died around 932) received this area as a fief from the French king Charles III the Simple (879–929). In 1066, the childless English king Edward the Confessor died. He was succeeded by Harold II, who was himself of Nordic origin. However, the leader of the French Normans, William I (approx. 1027–1087), also claimed the throne. On 14 October 1066 he defeated the English at the battle of Hastings, earning the epithet Conqueror, and Norman rule over England began. Within 150 years, these Normans were completely assimilated in their new homeland and brought to Britain the then-current Northern French dialect, slightly inaccurately called Anglo-Norman. The language of the Anglo-Saxons, which – despite Scandinavian influence – had held the position of the country’s second language after Latin both in literature and in administration, was side-lined and pushed out of government administration and from towns to the country-side.

A turnaround in this development came only in the mid-14th century, when English was reinstated as the language of administration, after a court decision made it the language of legal proceedings and of the opening of parliament (1362). However, it was then already a very different language. Intense interference from two other languages, Old Norse and Old French, resulted in a dramatic reduction of its inflection, especially in case of declension, and in extensive changes in its vocabulary, which are only comparable in Europe to the Arabic contribution to Spanish. Several individual French words penetrated into English even before the Norman Conquest, such as *bacon*, *castle*, *proud* and *tower*. After the victory of William the Conqueror, no one who sought education or any government or church office could do without French. Even though this dominance was forced by the military supremacy of the conquerors, the most prestigious form of French was not the language of the Normans but the language of the capital, i.e. Paris. This particular sociolinguistic situation resulted in the

creation of a number of lexical doublets, both French-English, such as *royal* : *kingly*, *mutton* : *sheep* and French-Anglo-Norman, such as *chattel* : *cattle*, *chase* : *catch*, *guardian* : *warden*, etc.

Because the language of the Anglo-Saxons lost its position in government administration during the Middle English period, there were no standardisation efforts. Thus a separate literary tradition in the local dialect emerged in every Middle English dialect zone. The language was separated, from south to north, into the Kentish, Southern, Western Central, Eastern Central, Northern and Scottish zones. For a certain period of time, none of these was more prestigious than the others. This changed, however, due to several circumstances. One was the growing influence of the capital city of London: the Eastern Central dialect played the main role in the city, which was nevertheless also populated by inhabitants from all parts of the island. In this way, certain supradialectal characteristics spontaneously emerged in London English. Another circumstance was the foundation of the Westminster chancery, which marked the beginning of efforts to standardise the administrative language. And the introduction of typography in 1476 also played its role. The first printer, Caxton, is known to have sought uniform word forms.

Despite its less prestigious position than in the Old English period, the Middle English period also produced a number of exceptional and original works. Among them is the so-called Peterborough Chronicle (the writing of which began on the initiative of Alfred the Great and was finished in 1154), the guide for anchoresses *Ancrene Riwe*, epic works in verse such as *Ormulum* (named after its author Orm) and *Cursor Mundi* (“Runner of the World”) translated from the southern dialect to the northern one, *Handlyng Synne* “Handle of sinner”, the poem *Gawain* by an unknown author, the “Canterbury Tales” by Geoffrey Chaucer (approximately 1330–1400) and the sociocritical epic poem *Piers Plowman* by William Langland (approximately 1330–1400), to name at least a few. Notable works were also written by the mystics Richard Rolle (approximately 1300–1349), Julian of Norwich (approximately 1342–1413) and Margery Kempe (approximately 1373–1438) and also by reformers such as William of Ockham (approximately 1285–1349) and John Wycliffe (c. 1328–1384).

During the 15th century, the standard English used and disseminated since 1430 by the Westminster chancery began to become the established form, and it was therefore called the Chancery Standard. Two main sources may be found for it, namely Chaucer’s and Gower’s works created in London at the end of the 14th century and the language of central England, the so-called Midlands, used by Wycliffe and his followers. The turn of the 16th and 17th centuries brought further developments in the language standardisation process. John Hart published the first spelling handbook (1569), William Bullock the first grammar book (1585) and John Cawdrey the first monolingual dictionary of English (1604). At this time, George Puttenham in his work *The Arte of English Poesie* (1586) aptly summarised what forms of speech are to be avoided by anyone who wants to speak well: (1) inhabitants of border areas and port towns due to a more intense penetration of language by other languages; (2) universities, because of their excessive use of Latin and Greek words; (3) inhabitants of the country; (4) the lower classes; (5) old poets; (6) inhabitants living north of the Trent, i.e. north of Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. This area, originally quite small, included London along with Oxford and Cambridge, but not other, more distant major cities. However, the standard language continued to spread, not only pushing dialects out to a greater distance, but also forcing them into a still less prestigious position. The standard language became the domain of the middle class, that is, the part of the population that strove to move up the social ladder. It was not adopted by the least wealthy classes, neither by a significant part of the aristocracy, as Daniel Defoe wryly noted three centuries ago.

The following periods are distinguished in the development of literary English (see *Atlas Englische Sprache* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag 2002), cited according to the Czech version *Encyklopedický atlas anglického jazyka* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 2005, 70–71):

Period	Subdivision	Time period	Examples of literature and notes
Old English (700–1200)	Early Old English	700–900	Alfred the Great
	Late Old English	900–1100	Ælfric of Eynsham
	Transition from Old English	1100–1200	Verse chronicle “Layamon’s Brut”
Middle English (1200–1500)	Early Middle English	1200–1300	<i>Ancere Riwle</i> (Guide for Anchor-esses)
	Late Middle English	1300–1400	Geoffrey Chaucer
	Transition from Middle English	1400–1500	William Caxton
Modern English (1500–today)	Early Modern English	1500–1650	William Shakespeare
	Late Modern English	1650–today	codification of standard English around 1800 thanks to the publication of normative dictionaries and grammar handbooks

**Table 3:** Periods in the development of literary English

The difference between the graphic representation of English and the current spoken standard arises from the fact that the spelling (stabilised around 1800) reflects the state of English phonology from around 1400. In other words, no significant change was made to the spelling to adjust it to the spoken language in the last six centuries.

It was not only the sound system of the language that underwent dramatic changes. Similarly turbulent changes also happened to English morphology and usually led to the reduction of inflection and then to the creation of new syntactic structures. In this respect, it can be summarised that during the last thousand years, English was the most progressively developing European language (at least of those which have been documented throughout the entire millennium; there must have been even more significant changes in Albanian, for example, but the Albanian language has only been documented in writing in the past 600 years).

As early as the 11th–12th centuries, all unstressed vowels in final syllables were merged into /ə/, e.g. Old English *riðan* > Middle English *ride(n)* “ride a horse” or Old English dat. pl. *stānum* > Middle English *stone + s* “to the stones”. As a result of the reduction and disappearance of inflectional endings, grammatical gender also gradually disappeared. The nominative and accusative singular of nouns were some of the cases that were left without an ending. The genitive singular and nominative plural were universalised, however. For example, Middle English *apes*, *bookes* “books”, *shuldres* “shoulders” replaced Old English *apan*, *bēc*, *sculdru* id.

The function of the cases was gradually taken over by the prepositions and the fixed word order subject – predicate – object. The so-called strong inflection of adjectives disappeared and the only opposition that remained was between the singular and the plural, e.g. *god* : *gode* “good”, while the weak forms became identical – *gode*. With the disappearance of gender, the definite article was also reduced to a single form *þe* (with the graphic variants *ðe*, *the*) to represent all three original genders, both numbers and all cases. The remainder of the dual, represented in Old English by the pronoun *wit* “both of us”, was also eliminated. With the reduction of the dative and accusative case endings, these two cases became identical in the pronoun inflection. The second-person plural pronoun *you*, originally a dative/accusative form, began to function in the Modern English period as a singular as well. As a result, new plurals appeared, such as Irish-English *youse* and American *you all*. The verbal system underwent truly radical changes. In the Middle English period, the basic division of Old English

verbs into strong verbs with ablaut and weak verbs with a dental preterite already began to shift towards the more regular weak verbs. Following this, it is estimated that about half of the Old English strong verbs disappeared altogether and a portion of those remaining was transformed into weak verbs, especially during the 12th–14th centuries. However, even the remaining strong verbs were simplified. For example, the difference between the singular and the plural was neutralised in the preterite. The only exception still used in the modern language is the singular/plural opposition *was* : *were*. In modern English verbal inflection, only one grammatical person is expressed with a specific ending, namely *-s* in the 3rd person singular of the present indicative. This ending does not appear in modal verbs, as the modern present tense was originally the preterite. Its origin has not yet been definitively resolved. The fact that it spread over centuries from the north to the south of Britain suggests that it might have been imported from Old Norse, which interfered heavily with English.

One of the results of the changes in sentence structure during the transitional period between Old and the Middle English was the creation of the periphrastic perfect and pluperfect with the auxiliary verb *habban* “to have” + perfect participle. The verb *be* was used in intransitive verbs indicating a change of state, but the verb *have* has been dominant since the beginning of the 20th century.

There were also other innovations in English syntax. One of them is the construction called *expanded form*, such as *he is writing*, known since the Old English period, when it was probably inspired by a similar Latin construction. The popularity of this construction has grown since the 14th century and during the 15th century it spread into all dialects. It is actually a fusion of two forms, the present participle ending with *-ende* (such as *bindende* “binding”) and the construction consisting of the preposition *on* and a deverbative substantive created by the *-ung* ending (such as Old English *on leorning* “during learning”). This resulted in the creation of the *-ing* ending, which was at first accompanied by the prefix *a-*, originating from the preposition *on* and in use until the beginning of the 20th century and in dialects even longer. In the Old English period, a question was formed by a simple inversion of the word order, i.e. predicate – subject. After 1400, a periphrastic construction with the auxiliary verb *do* began to appear. Negation underwent an analogical process, though on a smaller scale.

The English vocabulary is a unique record of the languages which have influenced it. If we disregard the weak Britonic (Celtic) substrate, there are two other source languages of extraordinary intensity, Old Norse and French. The French influence persisted until World War I, when the prestige of French as the language of diplomacy, science and trade began to wane. However, even the Scandinavian influence did not end with the replacement of the Scandinavian northmen by their French counterparts. Loans, especially from the fields of trade, seafaring and military, poured into English also from German – first Low German (from the 12th century) and later High German (from the 16th century) – Dutch (from the 12th century), Spanish (from the 16th century), Portuguese, Arabic and to a smaller extent also from the languages of the colonies, particularly India and North America. The so-called “learned” languages, namely Latin and Greek, also cannot be disregarded, as English has long drawn specialised terminology from them. It is interesting to observe how the proportion of words of different origin changes if corpora of various sizes are compared. Unfortunately, the following table (see *Atlas Englische Sprache*, München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag 2002, cited according to the Czech version *Encyklopedický atlas anglického jazyka*, Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 2005, 74) does not distinguish between the inherited Germanic vocabulary and the borrowed vocabulary (from Old Norse and later periods of the Scandinavian languages, Dutch, Low and High German) or between various Romance languages, but it is still highly instructive:



corpus origin / volume	80 096 <sup>1</sup> words	27 241 <sup>2</sup> words	3 984 <sup>3</sup> words
Germanic	26.28%	31.83%	50.89%
Romance	30.23%	37.49%	38.20%
Latin	28.29%	22.05%	9.59%
Greek	5.32%	1.59%	0.25%
Celtic	0.34%	0.25%	–

1) Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1964).

2) Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1963).

3) M. West: A General Service List of English Words (1953).

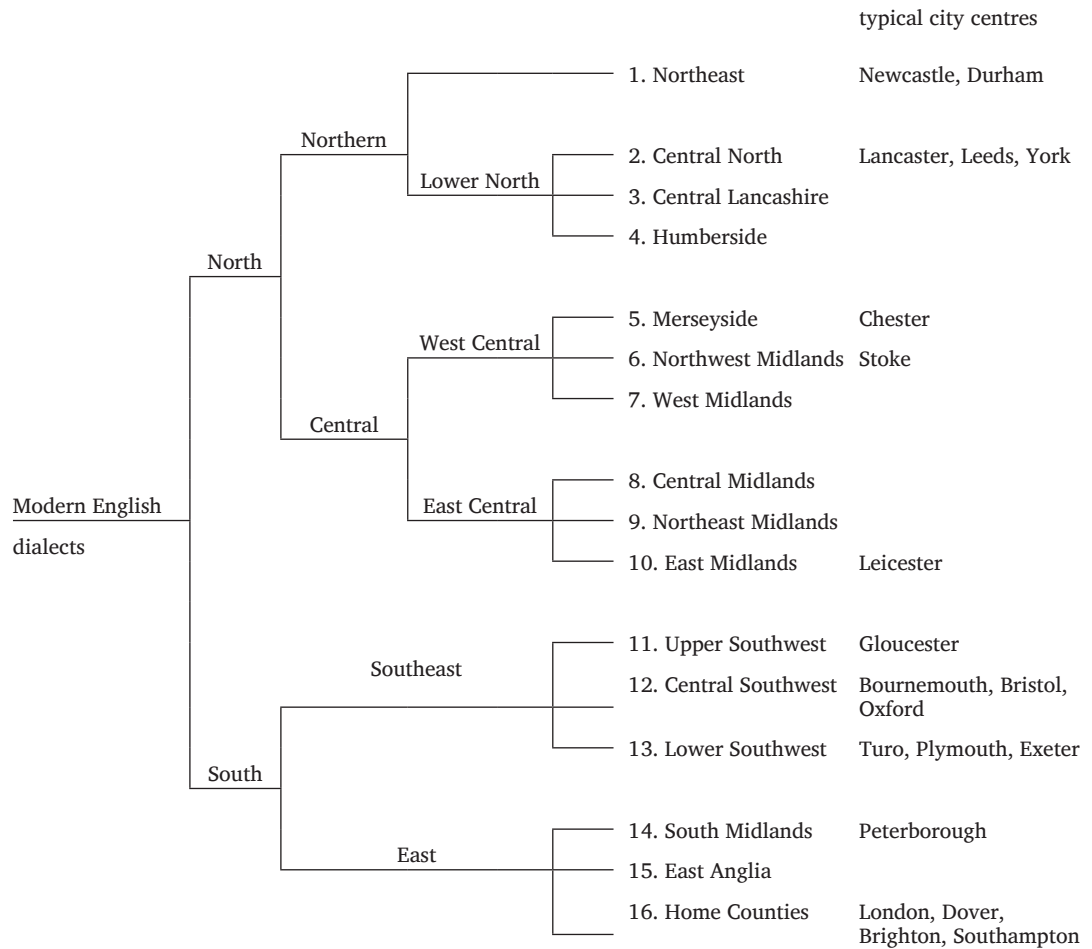
**Table 4:** English lexicon according to its origin

In the most ample corpus of these examined, the Romance vocabulary takes the first place, closely followed by the Latin one. The Germanic component comes only in the third place. In the mid-sized corpus, the Germanic component comes before Latin and the proportion of words of Greek origin decreases to less than a quarter of the previous proportion. A wholly different situation is found in the smallest corpus, which represents the most frequently used vocabulary. Even though the proportion of words of Romance origin is again higher, the Germanic component is in first place with more than half of the words. The proportion of words of Latin origin falls below 10%, i.e. to less than half compared with the mid-sized corpus and approximately a third compared to the largest corpus. The proportion of Greek words falls to less than a sixth compared with the mid-sized corpus, on par with the proportion of words of Celtic origin in that corpus.

Besides the external influence of other languages, English also underwent internal developments that were no less dramatic, as can be illustrated by the examples of compound shortening, such as Old English *hlāfweard* “lord”, literally “bread protector” > English *lord* and Old English *hlāfdige* “lady”, literally “the one who kneads the bread” > *lady*, or by meaning shifts, e.g. Old English *hund* “dog” > English *hound*, Middle English *bird* “fledgeling” > English *bird*, Middle English *silly* “happy” > English *silly*, Middle English *nice* “stupid” (from Latin *nescius* “not knowing”) > 18th-century English “pleasant” > Modern English *nice* “pretty”.

Despite an often dismissive attitude to dialects, interest in them grew as well. In 1674, the natural scientist John Ray published the first glossary of regionalisms. Dialectal features can also be found in the general dictionary of Elisha Coles (1676) and in the comprehensive *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* by Nathaniel Bailey (1721).

Modern English dialects are classified mostly on the basis of phonetic criteria in the following way (see *Atlas Englische Sprache*, München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag 2002, cited according to the Czech version *Encyklopedický atlas anglického jazyka*, Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny 2005, 100):



**Scheme 1:** Classification of the Modern English dialects

The difference between all 16 variants can be illustrated by a diagnostic sentence:

	<b>Very</b>	<b>few</b>	<b>cars</b>	<b>made</b>	<b>it</b>	<b>up</b>	<b>the</b>	<b>long</b>	<b>hill</b>
1.	<i>Veree</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mehd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>oop</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>hill</i>
2.	<i>Veri</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mehd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>oop</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>ill</i>
3.	<i>Veri</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>carrs</i>	<i>mehd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>oop</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>longg</i>	<i>ill</i>
4.	<i>Veree</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mehd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>oop</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>ill</i>
5.	<i>Veree</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mayd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>oop</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>longg</i>	<i>ill</i>
6.	<i>Veri</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mayd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>oop</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>longg</i>	<i>ill</i>
7.	<i>Veree</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mayd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>oop</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>longg</i>	<i>ill</i>
8.	<i>Veri</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mayd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>oop</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>ill</i>
9.	<i>Veree</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mayd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>oop</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>ill</i>
10.	<i>Veri</i>	<i>foo</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mayd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>oop</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>ill</i>
11.	<i>Veree</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>carrs</i>	<i>mayd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>up</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>ill</i>
12.	<i>Veree</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>carrs</i>	<i>mayd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>up</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>iooll</i>
13.	<i>Veree</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>carrs</i>	<i>mehd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>up</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>ill</i>
14.	<i>Veree</i>	<i>foo</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mayd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>up</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>iool</i>
15.	<i>Veree</i>	<i>foo</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mayd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>up</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>(h)ill</i>
16.	<i>Veree</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>cahs</i>	<i>mayd</i>	<i>it</i>	<i>up</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>iooll</i>

**Table 5:** Differences between English varieties of England

There are also other specific characteristics in individual regions:

**Northeast:** The pair of phonemes written as *al* is pronounced [ah]: *all* = [ahl], *walk* = [wahk].

**Central North** (Bradford, Leeds, York): Voiced consonants at the end of a word before voiceless consonants at the beginning of the next word are also pronounced as voiceless, i.e. *red pen* = [ret pen].

**Central Lancashire:** The words *book* and *cook* are pronounced with the same vowel as *cool*, as opposed to standard pronunciation, which corresponds to the vowel in the word *pull*.

**Merseyside:** The word *there*, is pronounced with [d-], while in *hair* and *her* no initial consonant is pronounced.

**West Midlands:** The final *-er* in *her* or *-ur* in *fur* is pronounced as a rounded vowel, similar to French *œuf* “egg”.

**Central Southwest** (Bristol): Final *-l* is added to words ending with *-a*: *America* → *Americal* or *India* → *India*. Thus the substantive *idea* is identical with the word *ideal*.

**Home Counties:** Loss of the opposition between *th* [ð/θ] and *v/f*, e.g. *mother* = [muvver] and *thing* = [fing].

The dialects of any language can also be classified from a different point of view, namely based on the opposition between conservative and innovative phenomena. Based on this criterion, the English dialectologist Peter Trudgill (1990) compared the phonetic forms of certain diagnostic words. Conservative pronunciation is in bold. Basically, it can be concluded that innovations spread from south to north; that is, the northern (specifically Northumberland) dialects preserve archaic features in their phonetics the most.

region/word	arm	bat	blind	hill	land	long	night	seven
Northumberland	<b>arrm</b>	<b>bat</b>	<b>blinnd</b>	<b>hill</b>	<b>land</b>	<b>lang</b>	<b>neet</b>	<b>seven</b>
Lower North	<i>ahm</i>	<b>bat</b>	<b>blinnd</b>	<i>ill</i>	<b>land</b>	<b>lang</b>	<b>neet</b>	<b>seven</b>
Lancashire	<b>arrm</b>	<b>bat</b>	<i>blined</i>	<i>ill</i>	<b>land</b>	<i>long</i>	<b>neet</b>	<b>seven</b>
Lincolnshire (NE)	<i>ahm</i>	<b>bat</b>	<b>blinnd</b>	<i>ill</i>	<b>land</b>	<i>long</i>	<i>nite</i>	<b>seven</b>
Central & Eastern SW	<b>arrm</b>	<b>bat</b>	<i>blined</i>	<i>ill</i>	<b>land</b>	<i>long</i>	<i>nite</i>	<i>zeven</i>
Eastern	<b>arrm</b>	<i>bæt</i>	<i>blined</i>	<b>hill</b>	<i>lænd</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>nite</i>	<b>seven</b>
Southeast	<b>arrm</b>	<i>bæt</i>	<i>blined</i>	<i>ill</i>	<i>lænd</i>	<i>long</i>	<i>nite</i>	<b>seven</b>

**Table 6:** English dialects of England: conservative vs. innovative

Even though English was fighting for survival in the first third of the second millennium – first with Old Norse, then with French – it started to expand outside England itself. Probably in the 11th century, the existence of the Brittonic language in Cumberland (the region on the west coast of Britain, bordering Scotland in the north and the Lake District in the south) finally ended. Approximately at the same time the language of the Picts was also assimilated; it is even possible that there were in fact two languages, one of them Brittonic, the other one perhaps not even Indo-European. In these particular cases, altogether three languages participated in the assimilation: English in the south, Goidelic Gaelic in the west and Old Norse in the northwest.

A Scandinavian creole called **Norn** was established on the Orkney and Shetland Islands and in the northwest of the Scottish region of Sutherland. Both groups of islands stayed under Norman control until 1471, when the islands were annexed by Scotland. However, Norn was spoken there as late as the mid-16th century and on some more distant Shetland islands until as late as the 18th century. Even today, Shetlandish is spoken there – a specific variety of Scottish English based on the so-called Lowland Scots dialect but with Scandinavian influence in both vocabulary and syntax.

The situation was even more complicated in Scotland. Until the middle of the first millennium, this was the territory of the Pictish tribes, at least some of which used a Brittonic language. Around 500, Goidelic-speaking Gaels began to arrive in Scotland. In 843, the Gaels and the Picts created a common state called Alban, the first ruler of which was named Kenneth. Over the following two centuries, Gaelic became the dominant language in Scotland, but then English began to replace it. English spread most quickly among the members of the royal court, certainly also because the court had been moved to Edinburgh. Malcolm III, who ruled between 1058 and 1093, was the last Scottish king whose mother tongue was Gaelic. His youngest son David I (1124–1153) applied an Anglo-Norman feudal model in Scotland, which also contributed to the spread of English and the pushing out of Gaelic to the mountains and islands. However, as late as the end of the 19th century a Gaelic-speaking population prevailed in the Highlands area, i.e. to the north of the arc defined by the Firth of Clyde in the southwest and Moray Firth in the northwest (the so-called Highland Line or Celtic Border) and in the Hebrides. A century later, in 1991, Gaelic was spoken by a majority of the population only on the Outer Hebrides. On the Island of Skye and in the Highlands, the proportion of Gaelic speakers fell below 10%. As of that year, only 1.4% of the population of Scotland spoke Gaelic.

A unique Old English literary treasure is represented by the epic poem *Beowulf* concerning the mythical history of the Danes, the Swedes and the Geats from around 500 CE. The poem was written soon after 700 in England and the text is preserved in a manuscript from around the year 1000 [*Beowulf*, ed. M. Lehnert 1967, verses 205–224]:

*Hæfde sé góða Géata léoda  
cempaŋ gēcorone āþára þe hé cénoste  
findan mihte; fiftyŋa sum  
sundwudu sóhte, secgŋwísade,  
laġucraeftig mon, landġemyrcu.  
Fyrst forð ġewát; flota wæs on ýðum,  
bát under beorġe. Beornas ġearwe  
on stefn stiġon, – stréamas wundon,  
sund wið sande; secġas báeron  
on bearm nacan beorhte frætwe,  
ġúðsearo ġeatolic; ġuman út scufon,  
weras on wilsid wudu bundenne.  
ġewát þá ofer wēġholm winde ġefýsed  
flota fámtheals fugle ġelícost,  
oð þæt ymb ántíd ópres dóġores  
wundenstefna ġewaden hæfde,  
þæt þá líðende land ġesáwon,  
brimclifu blícan, beorġas stéape,  
síde scēnæssas; þá wæs sund liden,  
eoletes æt ende.*

“And now the bold one from bands of Geats  
comrades chose, the keenest of warriors  
e’er he could find; with fourteen men  
the sea-wood (= ship) he sought, and, sailor proved,  
led them on to the land’s confines.  
Time had now flown; afloat was the ship,  
boat under bluff. On board they climbed,  
warriors ready; waves were churning  
sea with sand; the sailors bore  
on the breast of the bark their bright array,  
their mail and weapons: the men pushed off,  
on its willing way, the well-braced craft.  
Then moved o’er the waters by might of the wind  
that bark like a bird with breast of foam,  
till in season due, on the second day,  
the curved prow such course had run  
that sailors now could see the land,  
sea-cliffs shining, steep high hills,  
headlands broad. Their haven was found,  
their journey ended.”

We can see the difference between West Saxon and the Northumbrian dialect using the Lord’s Prayer as an example (see Hladký 1996, 32–33):

West Saxon: end of the 10th century  
*Fæder úre þú þe eart on heofonum,  
Sī þīn nama ġehálgod. Tóbecume  
þīn ríce. ġewurþe ðīn willa on  
eorðan swá swá on heofnum. Úrne  
ġedæġwámlican hláf syle ús tó dæġ.  
And forġyt ús úre ġyltas, swá swá  
wé forġyfað úrum ġyltendum. And  
ne ġeléd þú ús on costnunge, ac dlýsin  
costnunge, ah ġefriġ usich from  
of yfele.*

Northumbrian:  
*Lindisfarne Gospels*  
*Fader urer ðu arð in heofnum, sie  
ġehalgud noma ðin. Tocymeð ric  
ðin. Sie willo ðin suæ is in heofne  
ond in eorðo. Hlaf userne ofer  
wistlic sel us todæg. Ond forġef  
us scylda usra suæ uoe forġefon  
scyldgum usum. Ond ne inlæd usih  
yfele.*

1662 Anglican Book of Common Prayer translation  
*Our Father, which art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom  
come; thy will be done, in earth  
as it is in heaven. Give us this day  
our daily bread. And forgive us our  
trespasses, as we forgive them that  
trespass against us. And lead us not  
into temptation; but deliver us from  
evil.*

Vowel quantity is marked by accent (ó = ō = [o:]).

Similarly, a comparison can be made between the Middle English, Early Modern English and Modern American versions of the Lord's Prayer (see Hladký 1996, 34–35):

<p>Middle English: 1389 (Wycliffe)  <i>Óúre fádír that art in heuenes, halewid bé thí náme; Thí kyngdom come tó; bé thí wille dón in érthe as in heuene; Gíve to vs this dai óúre breed óúeer óthír substance; And forgyue tó vs óúre dettis, as wé forgyuen tó óúre dettóúris; And leede vs nat in tó temtacióún, bút delyuere vs fró yuel.</i></p>	<p>Early Modern English: 1611  <i>Our Father in heaven, thy name be hallowed; thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us the wrong we have done, as we have forgiven those who have wronged us. And do not bring us to the test, but save us from the evil one.</i></p>	<p>Modern American: 1966  <i>Our father in heaven: May your name be kept holy, May your kingdom come, May your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today the food we need; Forgive us the wrongs that we have done, As we forgive the wrongs that others have done us; do not bring us to hard testing, but keep us safe from the Evil One.</i></p>
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### 3.2.1.2.1.2 Frisian

The Frisians (*Frisii*, *Frisiavones*) were first mentioned by Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis Historia* [IV, 101/29] in the description of Belgium: “In the Rhine itself, nearly 100 miles in length, is the most famous island of the Batavi and the Canninefates, as also other islands of the Frisii, the Chauçi, the Frisiabones, the Sturii, and the Marsacii, which lie between Helinium and Flevum. These are the names of the mouths into which the Rhine divides itself, discharging its waters on the north into the lakes there, and on the west into the river Mosa. At the middle mouth which lies between these two, the river, having but a very small channel, preserves its own name.”<sup>47</sup>

It also said that the Frisians were one of the groups of tribes settled in the area around the mouth of the Rhine, which was defeated by Nero Claudius Drusus in 12 BCE. The same location was confirmed at the end of the 1st century CE by Tacitus in his *Germania* [§34] and in the *Annals* [II, 8]. Tacitus added that in his time, the Frisians were already subjugated to the Romans. This is his testimony [*Germania* §§34–35; translation Thomas Gordon]:

[§34] “The Angrivarii and Chamavi are bounded in the rear by the Dulgubini and Chasuarii, and other tribes not equally famous. Towards the river are the Frisii, distinguished as the Greater and Lesser Frisii, according to their strength. Both these tribes, as far as the ocean, are skirted by the Rhine, and their territory also embraces vast lakes which Roman fleets have navigated. We have even ventured on the ocean itself in these parts. Pillars of Hercules, so rumour commonly says, still exist; whether Hercules really visited the country, or whether we have agreed to ascribe every work of grandeur, wherever met with, to his renown. Drusus Germanicus indeed did not lack daring; but the ocean barred the explorer's access to itself and to Hercules. Subsequently no one has made the attempt, and it has been thought more pious and reverential to believe in the actions of the gods than to inquire.”<sup>48</sup> The difference between the *Frisii Minores* and the *Frisii Maiores*, that is, the “lesser” and the “greater” Frisii, might have been based on whether they lived to the east or the west lake *Flevo* (later Zuider See and now IJsselmeer).

[§35] “Thus far we have taken note of Western Germany. Northwards the country takes a vast sweep. First comes the tribe of the Chauçi, which, beginning at the Frisian settlements, and occupying a part of the coast, stretches along the frontier of all the tribes which I have enumerated, till it reaches with a bend as far as the Chatti. This vast extent of country is not merely possessed, but densely peopled, by the Chauçi, the noblest of the German races,

47) *In Rheno autem ipso, prope Ć in longitudinem, nobilissima Batavorum insula et Cannenefatium et aliae Frisiorum, Chaucorum, Frisiavonum, Sturiorum, Marsaciorum, quae sternuntur inter Helinium ac Flevum. ita appellantur ostia, in quae effusus Rhenus a septentrione in lacus, ab occidente in amnem Mosam se spargit, medio inter haec ore modicum nominis suo custodiens alveum.*  
 Translated by John Bostock & H.T. Riley (1855).

48) [§34] *Angrivarios et Chamavos a tergo Dulgubnii et Chasuarii cludunt aliaeque gentes haud perinde memoratae, a fronte Frisii excipiunt. maioribus minoribusque Frisiis vocabulum est ex modo virium. utraeque nationes usque ad Oceanum Rheno praetextuntur ambiuntque immensos insuper lacus et Romanis classibus navigatos. ipsum quin etiam Oceanum illa temptavimus: et superesse adhuc Herculis columnas fama vulgavit, sive adiit Hercules, seu quicquid ubique magnificum est, in claritatem eius referre consensimus. nec defuit audentia Druso Germanico, sed obstitit Oceanus in se simul atque in Herculem inquiri. mox nemo temptavit, sanctiusque ac reverentius visum de actis deorum credere quam scire.*

a nation who would maintain their greatness by righteous dealing. Without ambition, without lawless violence, they live peaceful and secluded, never provoking a war or injuring others by rapine and robbery. Indeed, the crowning proof of their valour and their strength is, that they keep up their superiority without harm to others. Yet all have their weapons in readiness, and an army if necessary, with a multitude of men and horses; and even while at peace they have the same renown of valour.”<sup>49</sup>

In the following century, Ptolemy defined also the east boundary of the Frisians, whom he called Φρίσιοι [2.11.11]: “The shore by the Ocean is inhabited by Frisians above the *Bructeri* up to the Amisia river; beyond them *Cauchi minores* up to the Visurgis river; further *Cauchi maiores* up to the Albis river. From there to the isthmus of the Cimbrian Peninsula Saxons; the peninsula proper above the Saxons from the west is occupied by *Sigulones*.”<sup>50</sup>

Some of the Frisian names recorded by ancient authors are still used today. For example, Strabo mentioned Βούρκανις and the same name can be found in Pliny [NH 4.27/101] in the form *Burcana*, which is the modern island of *Borkum*. Tacitus [*Germania*, §2] called the Germanic tribes living closest to the North Sea *Ingaevones (proximi Oceano Ingaevones)*. Besides the Frisians, there were also the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Cherusci and probably also the Chauci (*sic*), northeastern neighbours of the Frisians, as categorised by Pliny. In the 3rd century, the Chauci set off to Rome on a military campaign and afterwards disappeared from the historical record. The gap they left was taken by the Saxons, who thus became neighbours of the Frisians. It is assumed that the name of the tribal confederation *Ingevoones* originated in their common worshipping of the god *Ingvi*, who is better known from Scandinavia (*Yngvifreyr* < \**Ingwiafraujaz* “Ingvi-lord”).

The name of the Frisians was explained by many authors. Already Zeuss (1837, 136; see the survey by Neumann 2008, 359) connected it with Gothic *fraisan* “to tempt”, Old High German *freisa*, Old Frisian *frēs* “danger”, perhaps as a people facing dangerous floods?

After 250 CE, there are no specific records about the Frisians for several centuries, only the event described by the Frankish chronicler St. Gregory of Tours is an exception. He describes a Scandinavian raider named *Chochilaicus*, who supposedly attacked the Frisian coast in 521. A similar story is mentioned in the English epic poem *Beowulf*, which could have been written around 700 but describes events that happened around the Baltic and North Seas at the beginning of the 6th century. Gregory’s Chochilaic corresponds with the Geat king *Hygelac* from *Beowulf*.

Historical records about Frisians appear again during the reign of the Merovingian and Carolingian times, but it is uncertain whether this was indeed the same ethnic group as the one described by Pliny, Tacitus and Ptolemy. This question cannot be answered due to a lack of information. Let us therefore accept the hypothesis that the same ethnonym and the same tribal territory still denoted the same ethnic group. In 689, a Frisian named Redbad came on scene, only to be defeated by the Frankish king Pippin at Dorestad. However, Redbad waited until Pippin’s death in 714 and regained the territory he had lost. He was nevertheless defeated again, this time by Karl Martell in 719, who gradually occupied most of the Frisian territory south of the Netherlands. From 695, the Frisians had their own bishop with a seat in Utrecht. Their first bishop was Willebrord. This signals that at least a part of the Frisians had already converted to Christianity by that time. However, Christianity had likely not put down deep roots, as in 754 the Anglo-Saxon missionary St. Boniface lost his life at Dokkum while trying to convert the locals.

49) [§35] *Hactenus in occidentem Germaniam novimus; in septentrionem ingenti flexu redit. ac primo statim Chaucorum gens, quamquam incipiat a Frisis ac partem litoris occupet, omnium quas exposui gentium lateribus obtenditur, donec in Chattos usque sinuetur. tam immensum terrarum spatium non tenent tantum Chauci sed et implent, populus inter Germanos nobilissimus quique magnitudinem suam malit iustitia tueri. sine cupiditate, sine impotentia, quieti secretique nulla provocant bella, nullis raptibus aut latrociniiis populantur. id praecipuum virtutis ac virium argumentum est, quod, ut superiores agant, non per iniurias assequuntur; prompta tamen omnibus arma ac, si res poscat, exercitus, plurimum virorum equorumque; et quiescentibus eadem fama.* Translated by Alfred John Church & William Jackson Brodribb (1942).

50) Την δὲ παρῳκεανίτην κατέχουσιν ὑπὲρ μὲν τοὺς Βουκτέρους οἱ Φρίσιοι μέχρι τοῦ Ἀμισίου ποταμοῦ, μετὰ δὲ τοὺτους Καῦχοι οἱ μικροὶ τοῦ Οὐισούργιου ποταμοῦ, εἶτα Καῦχοι οἱ μείζους μέχρι τοῦ Ἄλβιου ποταμοῦ, ἐφεξῆς δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν αὐχένα τῆς Κιμβρικής χερσονήσου Σάξονες. αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν χερσόνησον ὑπὲρ μὲν τοὺς Σάξονας Σιγούλωνες ἀπὸ δυσμῶν.

Translated by Edward Luther Stevenson (1932).

The Franks were supposed to guarantee protection to the subjugated Frisians. However, they were unable to withstand the invasions of the Norman raiders from the sea, i.e. the Vikings. One such strong attack against the Frisians took place in 810. The Frankish-Frisian town of Dorestad was taken by the Danes 14 years later and they converted it into a powerful trading centre with connections across northern Europe. The Danish leader Rorik settled in Friesland, which he used as a base for organising attacks on Canterbury and London around 850. In 934, the Frisian coast was again attacked by the Vikings led by Gnupa, the Swedish king of Hedeby. Norman raids only ceased at the end of the 11th century. During the whole period of these particular Scandinavian-Frisian relationships, they carried on trade with one another, which also stimulated a certain degree of language interference. For example, it is assumed that Old Icelandic *bákn* was taken from Old Frisian *bāken*, which reflects Germanic *\*baukna-*. On the other hand, the Frisian nominative plural ending *-ar/-er* (< Old Norse *\*-ar*) is of Scandinavian origin.

During the Carolingian era, the Frisians became well-known, capable sea traders, which was a very advantageous position. The *Lex Frisionum*, the first Frisian legal code and allegedly created at the initiative of Charles the Great, was probably written in 802. After the division of the Frankish Empire in the 9th century, the Frisian territory became part of one of the successor empires, East Francia. Friesland was divided into western, central and eastern parts. East Friesland comprised the territory between the river Ems and the Jade Bight area. It consisted of the modern provinces of Emsingerland, Brokmerland, Noderland, Harlingerland, Reiderland, Mormerland, Ostringen, Wangerland and Rüstringen. Central Friesland comprised the current Dutch province of Friesland and the northern part of the Groningen province. Western Friesland covered the same territory as the northern part of the modern Dutch province of Northern Holland. As early as 1289, West Friesland became part of the County of Holland and the whole area quickly became “netherlandised”. Central Friesland stayed politically neutral during the next century.

The hottest debate centres around the time when the Frisians settled on the East and North Frisian Islands and the adjacent mainland. It is usually estimated that the islands were inhabited earlier (between 500 and 1000 according to Jørgensen, in the 7th or 8th century according to Jankuhn) than the adjacent mainland (10th–11th century?). Glottochronological analysis shows that around 1000, the Frisian dialect continuum was already divided into three units, which gave rise to the modern West, East and North idioms.

Besides Latin epitaphs or votive inscriptions dating from the Roman era, the first known texts from the Frisian territories are runic inscriptions. As is the case also with other Germanic traditions, these precede the introduction of the Latin script by several centuries. Among the oldest is a one-word inscription on a golden solidus found near Schweindorf in Eastern Friesland (Germany), dated between 575–625, which obviously represents the personal name *Weland*, cf. also Old English *Weland*:

𐌿𐌚𐌰𐌹𐌳𐌰 – read from right to left **weladu** (dative singular?)

A later (8th century) but distinctly longer inscription is a votive runic inscription on a comb from Oostum in Groningen in the Netherlands:

ᚱᚲᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱ ᚱᚱᚱᚱ  
**aib ka<sup>(m)</sup>bu deda habuku**  
 “Aib comb made for Habuku”<sup>51</sup>

The literary era of Frisian begins only in the 13th century. There had probably been an older tradition, but only oral, as is inferred from Altfred’s Life of St. Ludger from the 9th century, which mentions a blind singer named Bernlef. Three periods can be distinguished within the development of the Frisian literary language. The Old Frisian period lasted from the 13th century until approximately 1500. This period coincided with the era of Middle English

51) Looijenga 1997, 178–79.

and Middle Low and High German, while Middle Frisian only appeared at a time when those languages were already entering their modern period, i.e. from the 16th century. Around 1800, it was succeeded by Modern Frisian. Texts dated to the Old Frisian era were preserved in handwritten codices written in the Latin script. These are primarily legal documents, but there is also a fragment of a psalm translation, other texts with Biblical themes and even literary genres such as sagas and riddles. The language of the Old Frisian texts is characterised by certain specific features such as rhythm, alliteration and metaphor. The introduction to the Ten Commandments can serve as a sample of an Old Frisian text of eastern provenance.

*Thit riuht skrêf God selua, ûse hêra, thâ thet was thet  
Moyses lâtte thet Israhêliske folk thruch thene râda sê,  
and of there wilda wôstene, andse kômon tō tha berge,  
ther is ehêten Synay. Thâ festade Moyses twîa fîuwertich  
dega and nahta; thêr efter jef God him twâ stênena tefla,  
thêr hi on eskriuin hede tha tian bodo, tha skolde hi lêra  
tha Israhêliska folke.*

“This law was written by the God, our Lord; when Moses led the Israeli people through the Red Sea and across a hostile desert, they arrived at a mountain which is called Sinai. Then Moses fasted twice for forty days and nights. Afterwards the God gave him two stone tables on which He wrote the Ten Commandments, which [Moses] should teach to the Israeli people.”

Robinson 1992, 183, 272.

The territory of the modern province of Friesland came under the Habsburg Monarchy in 1524. As a result, West Frisian was completely pushed out of public use. The last official document written in West Frisian dates from 1573. Even though using Frisian was a sign of a lower social status, the Frisians in the Netherlands created their cultural and political centre in Leeuwarden (*Ljouwert* in West Frisian), the administrative centre of Friesland. The university in Franeker (*Frjentsjer*) served as a Frisian educational centre from the end of the 16th century until the beginning of the 19th century. The arrival of the Renaissance in the North Sea area was a new stimulus for the development of West Frisian literature. The poet Gyspert Jaspix (1603–1666) is considered the key personality of this era. Inspired by successful role models from Dutch literature, he published the work *Fryske Rymlerije* (Frisian Poetry) in 1668. Not only did it become the masterpiece of Frisian literature, it also created a certain supradialectal literary standard followed by Jaspix’s successors until the 20th century.

In the 18th century, a number of talented Frisian authors, such as Willem and Onno Zwir van Haren, preferred to write in Dutch. Further decline of West Frisian literature was aided by the change of the originally federative Dutch Republic into a unitary state in 1795. This step ended the Frisians’ relative sovereignty and significantly increased the dominance of Dutch as a national language in all domains of activity. Romanticism, which affected both the Netherlands and Germany in the post-Napoleon era, contributed to a renewed interest in Frisian. In 1844, the *Selskip foar Fryske Tael en Skriftekennisse*, or Society for the Frisian Language and Culture, was founded, which promoted the use of Frisian in all cultural spheres as well as in education. Old texts were published and a grammar and dictionary of Modern West Frisian were compiled thanks to this society, which also initiated the search for an optimum spelling system. Literary production in Frisian began to thrive again and there was an increased interest in folk culture.

The Frisian revival brought about a new generation of successful authors, represented by among others the Halbertsma brothers with their collection of short stories and poems in *Rimen en Teltsjes* (Rhymes and Tales, 1871), Walling Dykstra, Piter Jelles Troelstra. The last of these also experienced a no less successful political career as the leader of the parliamentary faction of the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party between 1897 and 1925. In 1915, the so-called Young Frisian Movement led by Douwe Kalma was established in Friesland. The movement successfully established a Centre for Teaching of Frisian as early as 1928, while in the mid-1930s, a Frisian translation of the New Testament was published. In 1937, Frisian was included in the curriculum as an optional subject and a year later, the *Fryske Akademy*, or Frisian Academy, was founded in Leeuwarden. The Frisian movement survived the Nazi era and after World War II it continued in its efforts for gradual emancipation of the Frisian language. Another breakthrough of Frisian into the education system came in 1955; a year later, Frisian was established as equal to Dutch in courts, although it had to wait until the 1970s to be accorded equal status in the churches as well. It became a second official language in



1970, but was only emancipated in administration and the government in 1986 and in 1992 it finally became an official minority language of the European Union.

During the 20th century, there was another revival of Frisian literature. The novel *De frou yn'e flesse* (Woman in a Bottle, 1988) by the talented author Anne Wadman (1919–1997), about the relationship between a Dutch boy and his Frisian teacher became very popular. The most important works of world literature are translated into Frisian on a larger scale than ever before. Frisian production has also branched out into hitherto unexplored forms. In 1995, the first Frisian opera, *Rixt*, premiered in Leuwarden. In 1985 (*De Dream*) and 1994 the Frisian director Pieter Verhoeff created two successful films, *The Dream* and *The Lighthouse* (*De Vuurtoren*). This encouraging rise in Frisian national consciousness contrasts with a demographic situation that reflects globalisation tendencies across Europe. So far the slightly isolated Friesland on one hand increasingly attracts tourists, 1.5 million and rising every year, but the young generation leaves for further education and work outside the Frisian territories. Frisian is becoming increasingly limited to oral communication. At the end of the 20th century, only 10% of Frisian speakers used their language also in its written form. From this perspective, it can be considered a success that the overall number of West Frisian speakers has not been significantly decreasing and is stable at around 300,000 (“core”) to 400,000 speakers. Besides the mainland Friesland (*Fryslân*) province itself, West Frisian is also still spoken on two West Frisian islands, Terschelling (*Skylge*) and Schiermonnikoog (*Skiermûntseach*).

The East and North Frisian dialects found themselves in a different linguistic and political environment. Until the 19th century, they were exposed to the influence of Low German; with the onset of the Industrial Revolution, High German started to take on the role of the more dominant language. In 1815, the territory of Lower Saxony was together with its East Frisian inhabitants connected to Prussia and after the three Schleswig wars, Northern Frisians also became part of Prussia. At the beginning of the 20th century, Frisian disappeared from the East Frisian islands; in the 20th century, it has only been surviving in three villages – Ramsloh, Strücklingen and Scharrel – in Saterland west of Oldenburg. For this reason, East Frisian is also alternatively called Saterland Frisian. In 2015 the number of East Frisian speakers was estimated at 2,000 (by *Ethnologue* 2018).

North Frisian is called *Frasch*. At the end of the 20th century it was still spoken by about 9,000 people on the somewhat isolated North Sea island of Heligoland (*Deät Lun*), on four North Frisian islands – from south to north Hooge, Amrum (*Omram*), Föhr (*Feer*) and Sylt (*Söl*) – and on the coast of Schleswig-Holstein opposite around the town of Niebüll. North Frisian has no written standard, as each island as well as the coast has its own specific dialect and, with the exception of poetry, there is no literature written in the language (probably the most famous work of literature from the North Frisian area, the somewhat suspenseful novel “The Rider on the White Horse” from 1888 by Theodor Storm, was written in German under the title *Der Schimmelreiter*; the film version of the novel also deserves attention). Nonetheless, North Frisian was incorporated into the curricula of about 30 primary schools (Salverda 2002, 129). This at least delayed the extinction of the language. In Bredstedt (Bräist), there is the so-called North Frisian Institute, which has been organising language courses and publishing grammatical and lexical descriptions of the individual North Frisian variants since the 1960s.

### 3.2.1.2.1.3 Saxon / Low German

The Saxons were localized for the first time by Ptolemy [2.11.11]: “The shore by the Ocean is inhabited by Frisians above the *Bructeri* up to the Amisia river; beyond them *Cauchi minores* up to the Visurgis river; further *Cauchi maiores* up to the Albis river. From there to the isthmus of the Cimbrian Peninsula Saxons; the peninsula proper above the Saxons from the west is occupied by *Sigulones*.”<sup>52</sup> Ptolemy apparently relied on Roman sources from the beginning of the 1st century CE. At his time, the Saxons probably inhabited a larger area which kept

52) Τὴν δὲ παρωκεανῆτιν κατέχουσιν ὑπὲρ μὲν τοὺς Βουκτέρους οἱ Φρίσσιοι μέχρι τοῦ Ἀμισίου ποταμοῦ, μετὰ δὲ τούτους

expanding further due to occasionally friendly, but more often violent integration of smaller tribal units. In 531, the Saxons together with the Franks destroyed the Thuringian kingdom and assumed its northern part. From the middle of the 5th century, the Saxon settlers started settling down in the north of Gaul where they were soon assimilated by the Franks. At that time, they were more vigorous in Britain, where they, accompanied by the Angles, and to a smaller extent apparently by the Frisians and the Jutes as well, pushed the Celtic Britons towards the western coast of the island and took their space. The alliance with the Franks soon came to an end and the following centuries were characterised by permanent Saxon-Franconian conflicts. Some Saxons from Thuringia tried to escape the Franconian pressure by withdrawing to Italy (568 CE). However, they were confronted by the Langobards there. When they refused to submit themselves, they had no other choice but to return. But in the meantime, their original settlements were taken by the Alamanni that were brought here by the Franconian king Sigebert. After several failed attempts to reach a military victory, these Saxons finally united with the Alamanni. More northern areas where the Saxons still dominated were subject to several Anglo-Saxon missions during the 7th and 8th centuries. However, the Saxons were rejecting the new faith for a long time, since they were afraid of possible power supremacy of the Franks. This was achieved by Charles the Great by an extremely bloody military campaign against the Saxons in the 780s as well as by the draconian legal code *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* from 782–785 which, among other things, ordered the Saxons to undergo christening under the penalty of death. Although the new legal code adopted in 802–803 took into consideration the Saxon customary law, Saxon uprisings continued until 841. One century later when the centre of power shifted from the Franks to the Saxons, these previously unrelenting pagans were already guarantors of the Christian character of state as well as the expansion of Christianity further to the north and east.

The name of the Saxons is usually linked to the name of their typical weapon, cf. Old Saxon, Old High German *sahs* “knife”, Germ. arch. *Sachs* “sword”, Old English *seax* “knife, short sword”, Old Frisian, Old Icelandic *sax* “knife, sword”. This connection was perceived already by ancient chroniclers as it is apparent from the description of a treacherous ruse directed at the king of the Britons Vortigern and his retinue by the Saxon king Hengist in the text *Historia Brittonum* from the 9th century which is ascribed to a Welsh monk, Nennius [§46]: “Under the pretence of concluding an agreement, Hengist invited the king as well as about three hundred members of nobility and army officers. Treacherously hiding his godless intention, he ordered three hundred Saxons to hide knives under their feet and mingle among the Britons. ‘And once they are drunk enough’, he said, ‘I will scream *eu Saxones nimith eure saxes* “Saxons, draw your swords”, and then everyone draws his knife and kills his man. But save the king. Because of his marriage to my daughter it will be better for him to be redeemed than murdered.’ The king and his retinue arrived to the celebration where they blended among the Saxons who, while peacefully talking in their language, were carrying a betrayal in their hearts and each of them took positions near one of the guests. After they have eaten and drunk and many were intoxicated, Hengist suddenly called and his supporters immediately drew their knives and swooped on the Britons and slit the throats of those closest to them. In this way, 300 members of Vortigern’s nobility were murdered. The king, being captured, offered as a ransom the provinces of Essex and Sussex and other areas of interest to his treacherous defeaters.”<sup>53</sup>

The first literary document from the area inhabited by the Saxons on the Continent were the so called ‘Vesera Runes’, short runic inscriptions on bones. Three fragments with the

Καῦχοι οἱ μικροὶ τοῦ Οὐισούργιος ποταμοῦ, εἶτα Καῦχοι οἱ μείζους μέχρι τοῦ Ἄλβιος ποταμοῦ, ἐφεξῆς δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν αὐχένα τῆς Κιμβρικής χερσονήσου Σάξονες. αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν χερσονήσον ὑπὲρ μὲν τοῦς Σάξονας Σιγούλωνες ἀπὰ δυσμῶν...

Translated by Edward Luther Stevenson (1932).

53) Loosely retold according to the English interpretation of Giles (1841). The Latin original in the edition of J. Stevenson (1838): *Et Hengistus omni familiae suae iussit, ut unus-quisque artavum suum sub pede in medio ficonis sui poneret. et quando clamavero ad vos et dixerero: eu Saxones nimith eure saxes, cultellos vestros ex ficonibus vestris educite et in illos irruite et fortiter contra illos resistite. et regem illorum nolite occidere, sed eum, pro causa filiae meae, quam dedi illi in coniugium, tenente, quia melius est nobis, ut ex manibus nostris redimatur. et conventum adduxerunt et in unum convenerunt, et Saxones amicaliter locuti in mente interim vulpicino more agebant et vir iuxta virum socialiter sederunt. Hengistus sicut dixerat, vociferatus est et omnes seniores trecenti Guorthigirni regis iugulati sunt et ipse solus captus et catenatus est et regi-ones plurimas pro redemptione enimae suae illis tribuit, id est Estsaxum, Sutsaxum, ut ab illicita conjunctione se separaret.*

evidence numbers 4990, 4988, 4991 (respectively; the colon divides each of the three parts) apparently constitute a single text: a report of significant military importance:

𐌺𐌹𐌵𐌹𐌻𐌺 𐌺𐌹𐌵𐌹𐌻𐌺 [picture of a ship] 𐌺𐌹𐌵𐌹𐌻𐌺 𐌺𐌹𐌵𐌹𐌻𐌺 𐌺𐌹𐌵𐌹𐌻𐌺 : 𐌺𐌹𐌵𐌹𐌻𐌺 𐌺𐌹𐌵𐌹𐌻𐌺

**lōkōm hēr**

**lātam hari-kunni wē-hagal ūlu-hari dede**

“I see here [a Roman vessel]. Let us, fighting kin, unleash woe-hail<sup>54</sup>. Uluhari did (this).”

Antonsen (1993, 2, 14), author of the presented interpretation, assumes that it is written in a West Germanic dialect, which later developed into the literary Old Saxon.

The most significant Old Saxon literary document is the text called *Heliand* in Old Saxon, that is “Savior”, which was probably created around 830 CE. It is an epic poem in alliterative verses of about 6000 lines. It tells the life story of Jesus Christ in a way that could be understood by the contemporary Saxons. Jesus is pictured as a typical contemporary ruler of a Germanic tribe: he rewards his vassals, that is “disciples”, by arm bands, celebrations are described as benders.

Old Saxon “Lord’s Prayer”

*Heliand*, verse 1600n

*Fadar ūsa firihō barno,  
thu bist an them hōhon himila rīkea,  
geuūihid sī thīn namo uuordo gehuulico.  
Cuma thīn craftag rīki.  
Uuerða thīn uuilleo obar thesa uuerold alla,  
sō sama an erðo, sō thar uppa ist  
an them hōhon himilo rīkea.  
Gef ūs dago gehuulikes rād, drohtin the gōdo,  
thīna hēlaga helpa, endi alāt ūs, hebenes uuard,  
managoro mēnsculdio, al sō uue ôðrum mannum  
dōan.  
Ne lāt ūs farlēdean lēða uuihti  
sō forð an iro uuilleon, sō uui uuirðige sind,  
ac help ūs uuiðar allun ubilon dādūn.*

an (almost) word-for-word translation

Father of us, the sons of men,  
You are in the high heavenly kingdom,  
Blessed be Your name in every word.  
May Your mighty kingdom come.  
May Your will be done over all this world--  
just the same on earth as it is up there  
in the high heavenly kingdom.  
Give us support each day, good Chieftain,  
Your holy help, and pardon us, Protector of Heaven,  
our many crimes, just as we do to other human  
beings.  
Do not let evil little creatures lead us off  
to do their will, as we deserve,  
but help us against all evil deeds.“

(Naumann & Betz 1962, 107)

Compared with this, the common translation of the Lord’s Prayer from the New Testament is much shorter:

“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

Another important Old Saxon text is a fragment of the Old Testament’s *Genesis*. Its existence had been assumed even before it was actually discovered. As early as 1875, German scholar Eduard Sievers articulated a hypothesis that the Old English version of *Genesis* is based on an Old Saxon original. When the Old Saxon version of *Genesis* was indeed discovered in 1894, Sievers’ hypothesis was validated, even if the two texts only overlap in 25 lines (Robinson 1992, 110). The following nine lines can be contrasted and compared:

54) Literally “Let us let [our] warlike tribe [to unleash] a hail of woe!”

verse	the Old Saxon version		verse	the Old English version	
			790	<i>Ādam gemælde</i>	<i>and tō Êuan spræc:</i>
Alas Eve, says Adam					
556	<i>“Uuela, that thu nu, Êua, habas,” quað</i>	<i>“uþilo gimarakot</i>	791	<i>Hwæt, þû Êue, hæfst</i>	<i>yfele gemearcod</i>
that you have now evilly marked					
557	<i>unkaro selþaro sið.</i>	<i>Nu maht thu [sehan] thia suarton hell</i>	792	<i>uncer sylfra sið.</i>	<i>Gesyhst þû nû þâ sweartan helle</i>
the destiny of us both. Now you can see black hell					
558	<i>ginon grâdaga;</i>	<i>nu thu sia grimman maht</i>	793	<i>grêdige and gîfre.</i>	<i>Nû þû hie grimman meht</i>
yawning greedily. Now you can hear its					
559	<i>hinana gihôrean,</i>	<i>nis hebanrîki</i>	794	<i>heonane gehýran.</i>	<i>Nis heofonrîce</i>
roaring directly. It is not like the Kingdom of Heaven					
560	<i>[gelíc] sulþcaro lôg-nun:</i>	<i>thit uuas alloro lando scôniust,</i>	795	<i>gelíc þâm lîge,</i>	<i>ac þis is landa betst,</i>
this flame. But this is the best country					
561	<i>that uuit hier thuruh unkas hêrran thank</i>	<i>hebbian muostun,</i>	796	<i>þæt wit þurh uncres hearran þanc</i>	<i>habban môston,</i>
which we two could have had thanks to the grace of our Lord					
562	<i>thar thu them ni hôrdis,</i>	<i>thie unk thesan haram giried,</i>	797	<i>þær þû þâm ne hiérde</i>	<i>þe unc þisne hearm gerêd,</i>
if you had not listened to the one who advised us this evil,					
563	<i>that uuit uualdandas</i>	<i>uuord farbrâkun,</i>	798	<i>þæt wit waldendes</i>	<i>word forbrêcon,</i>
so that we both did not followed the command					
564	<i>hebankuningas.</i>		799	<i>heofoncyninges.</i>	
of the king of heaven.					

**Table 7:** Corresponding passages of the Old Saxon and Old English translations of *Genesis*

The descendant of Old Saxon is Middle Low German. It was spoken approximately between 1100 and 1500. Between the 13th and 15th centuries, it experienced an unprecedented prime as it became the generally accepted means of communication within the Hansa, a league of merchant cities by the coast of the Baltic and North Seas and on large rivers that empty into them. It included for example Bremen, Hamburg, Lübeck, Kiel, Rostock, Stralsund; inland e.g. Hannover, Essen, Duisburg, Düsseldorf, Cologne; in the Netherlands Groningen and Arnhem, in Sweden Malmö (till the 15th century Danish), Stockholm and Visby (the first mention of Hansa comes from the island of Gotland, dating back to 1161); in Poland Szczecin, Toruń, Elbląg, in the Baltics Kaunas, Riga, Tallinn, Tartu, in Belarus Polotsk, in Russia for example Pskov. The eastmost area of the Hansa influence was Novgorod; the western border was London. Among various variants of the Middle Low German, a certain *koine* dialect of Lübeck played a significant role even if it was never codified. (The city initiated the establishment of a commercial confederation with Hamburg in 1241; in 1282, Cologne joins and at this point it is possible to talk about the establishment of the German Hanseatic League.) Because of the position of the Hansa as an often monopolistic mediator of trade, Middle Low German spread during the two centuries of its prime far beyond its original borders. It significantly enriched the vocabularies of Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Latvian and Estonian and left traces in English and Russian, too.

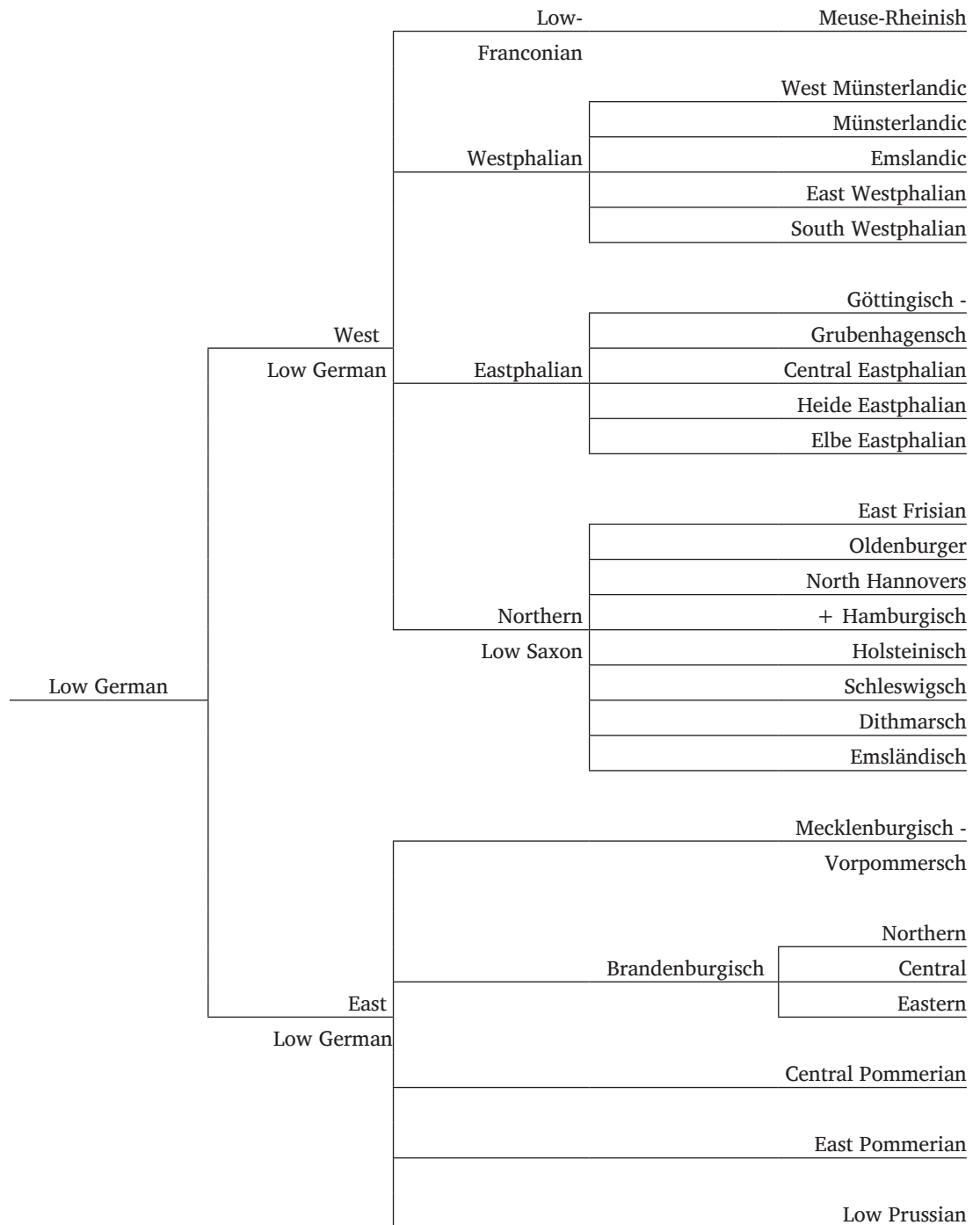
For basic differentiation of Low German from the rest of the dialect continuum, it suffices to say that the language did not experience the 2nd, or the High German, consonant shift (see

Appendix). This resulted, among other things, in the diminutive suffix *-ken*, corresponding with the standard High German version *-chen*. Unlike in High German, the Low German dialects did not experience diphthongisation of the original long vowels, e. g. *huus* “house” corresponds with the standard High German *Haus* or *tiit* “time” with the standard *Zeit*. Several other phenomena are spread over the whole Low German area, or at least over most of it:

- vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, and the diphthong *au* are often affected by umlaut even where their High German equivalents are not – *seggn* : *sagen* “say”, *söss* : *sechs* “six”, *gläbn* : *glauben* “believe” (does not apply to the area around Hamburg);
- *n* in front of an affricate disappears – *fief* : *fünf* “five”;
- *p* and *k* at the end of a word becomes *f* and *ch* respectively – *wief* : *Weib*, *wech* : *Weg*;
- High German *-chs-* is corresponded by *-ss-* *Ochse*, *wassen* : *waschen*;
- *d* after nasals and liquids is assimilated – *wäller* : *Wälder*, *hann* : *Hände*;
- postvocalic *-r-* disappears in pronunciation, consequently the vocal is usually lengthened – [vo:am] “worm”, [le:an] “to teach”;
- *s* in groups *sk*, *sp*, *st* does not change to *sh* like in the High German dialects, but it is pronounced as [s]; similarly, the High German *Schnee* etc. corresponds to *snee*, where the *ch* does not even appear in writing;
- when declining substantives and adjectives, dative and accusative blend: *in en groot holt* can be translated into High German as *in ein großes Holz*, as well as *in einem großen Holz*;
- plural of substantives is usually formed by the suffix *-s* (*nobers* “Nachbarn”) or *-n* (*nach'n* “Nächte” from the sing. *nach* “Nacht”), rarely by umlaut (*scheep* “Schiffe”, plural from *schipp* “Schiff”).

The zone of Low German dialects has (or had until recently) its southern boarder south from Berlin and north of Wittenberg, south from Magdeburg and north from Cologne, and is divided into a western part and an eastern part. The border between them is approximately formed by the cities of Rostock and Magdeburg. The western variant used in Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, Eastphalia, Westphalia and in the Lower Rhine area is typical with generalisation of the suffix of the 2nd person plural present *-(e)t* for the whole plural paradigm, for example: *wi maakt*, *gi maakt*, *se maakt* corresponds to the standard High German *wir machen*, *ihr macht*, *sie machen*. On the other hand, in the eastern variant, the eastern border of which is constituted by the river Oder, the universally used suffix for the 1st and 3rd person plural is *-(e)n*: *wi maaken*, *gi maaken*, *se maaken* = *wir machen*, *ihr macht*, *sie machen*.

A survey of the Low German dialects depicted as a tree-diagram (see Malášková 2008):



**Scheme 2:** Classification of the Low German dialects

### 3.2.1.2.2 Istvaeonic

#### 3.2.1.2.2.1 Frankish

This is an overall designation of the tribal dialects of the Franks, a tribal union with an exceptional potential for power. The ethnonym *Franci* first appears in antiquity from the end of the 3rd century CE, on so-called Peutinger's Map (*Tabula Peutingeriana*). It says *Quietpranci*, after emendation *qui et Franci*. The Greek transcription Φράγγοι of the text *Diamerismòs tēs gēs* ascribed to the Roman bishop Hippolytus (†235?) comes from the 3rd century as well. The ethnonym is usually interpreted in one of the following ways: (a) “free”; (b) “armed by spear

called *franca*”; (c) “bold, fierce”. Explanation (a) comes from the Romance adjective *\*frank-* “free”, which can be found in French, Catalanian *franc*, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese *franco* and through French also in Middle Dutch *vranc*, Dutch *vrank*, (Middle) English *frank* etc. However, this is most probably rather an adaptation of this ethnonym, since during the era of the Frankish kingdom, the Franks constituted the ruling elite and as such the freest section of the population. It was probably similar with the (b) option as well: the Old English *franca* “spear, javelin”, Old Icelandic *frakki* “javelin” meaning simply “the Frank [weapon]”, similarly as in later Latin *francisca* “throwing axe”, analogically, Old Icelandic *flæmingr* “sword” : *flæmingi* “Flemish”. Hence the only primary etymology is offered by the (c) option based on Old Norse *frakkr* “bold, fearless”, Norwegian *frakk* “bold, fast”, if the original form was Proto-Germanic *\*frankaz*, and not *\*frakkaz* (EWAhd III, 520–524).

Information about the language, or rather the dialects of the Franks from the 1st millennium is conveyed in several varied sources. In 1996, the first known fragment of a Frankish text written in the form of older runic inscriptions was found at the town of Bergakker near the city of Tiel in Central Netherlands. In 1999 a summary of opinions of leading specialists on its interpretation was published by Bammesberger (1999):



**Picture 3:** Frankish runic text from Bergakker

Bammesberger: *Haþ(u)þ(u)ras ann k(u)s(j)am lōg(u)n[r]...* “I grant to Haþuþurar and his chosen [bride] the wedding-rune”.

Looijenga: *Hā(le)þ(e)was ann k(e)sjam log(e)ns* [property] of Hāleþewaz: “He grants the swords to the swordfighters”

Odenstedt: *hā(le) þ(e)was ann k(eis)am lo(ka)ns* “hale servants [warriors] I [the sword] like. I place cuts”.

Seebold: *h(ø)þ(u)was ann k(u)sjam log(u)ns* “I grant combat to the choosers of the sword”.

Vennemann: *Haþ(ur)s ann k(u)sjam lōg(u)ns* “[property] of Haþur. I grant lodging to the swordblades.”

The richest source of information on the Frankish vocabulary are loans in French and other Romance languages. Their amount is somewhere between 700 and 1000. The following 10 examples show that loans are found in various spheres of life, not only within military affairs.

*\*alisna* “awl” > French *alêne*, Provençal *alesna*, Spanish (*a*)*lesna*; cf. Middle Dutch *elsene*, Dutch *else*.

*\*blao* “blue” > Old French *blou*, French *bleu*, Provençal, Catalanian *blau*; cf. Middle Dutch *blā*, *blau*, *blaeuw*, Dutch *blauw*.

*\*busk* “forest” > Provençal *bosc*, Old French *bos*, *bois* “forest”, French *bois* “forest, wood”; cf. Middle Dutch *bosch*, *busch*, Dutch *bos* “bush”.

*\*fliukka* “arrow” > French *flèche* > Provençal *fleca*, Spanish *flecha*, Portuguese *frecha*, Italian *freccia*; cf. Middle Dutch *vliecke*, Old Saxon *fliukka*.

*\*hruslo* / *\*hurslo* “hornet” > French *frelon*, Southern Provençal *fursalun*, plus the gloss *for-sleone*; cf. Middle Dutch *horsel*, Dutch *horzel*.

*\*kiosan* “choose” > Old French, French *choisir*; cf. Middle Dutch *kiesen*, Dutch *kiezen*. Another possible source is the Gothic *kiosan* “try”.

*\*rōbon* “steal” > Old French *rober*, French *dérober*, Italian *rubare*, Provençal *raubar*, Catalanian, Spanish *robar*, Portuguese *roubar*; cf. Middle Dutch *rōven*, Dutch *roven* “rob”.

*\*sporo* “spike, spur” > Italian *sperone*, Provençal, Catalanian *esporó*, French *éperon*; Middle Dutch *spōre*, Dutch *spoor*.

*\*wardōn* “guard” > French *garder*, Provençal, Catalanian, Spanish, Portuguese *guardar*, Italian *guardare*; cf. Middle Dutch *waerden* “defend”, Old Saxon *wardōn*.

*\*werra* “war” > French *guerre*, Italian *guerra*; cf. Dutch *war*, Old High Germ. *werra* “chaos”.

The attempts to establish a literary form of the Franconian language were successful at least in short term and fragmentarily in the **Old Low Franconian dialect**. The current knowledge of Old Low Franconian stems from the so-called Wachtendonk Codex, unfortunately preserved only in several fragments. In its original form, it was a book of Latin psalms accompanied by hymns and credos. Between the lines, a word-for-word translation into a specific Germanic language was written. This language was named Old Low Franconian.

This information about the Codex was recorded by a Flemish scholar Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) in a letter to his friend Hendrik Schottius of Antwerp. He informed Schottius that he had received the psalter from Arnold Wachtendonk, an official of the Minorites from Liège. He also wrote that he had produced a list of words that according to him are different in contemporary Dutch. He also completed an alphabetic overview of these 670 words with their Latin equivalents. Unfortunately, the original letter is not preserved. It is only known from the printed collection of 1602. Unfortunately, the print includes many mistakes apparently caused by extremely illegible handwriting of Lipsius. In 1870, a librarian from Leiden University discovered a manuscript among the scripts of Lipsius which consisted of 822 words and included obviously less mistakes. It was not written by Lipsius personally, but apparently under his supervision, and above that, it also includes notes written by Lipsius himself. The list includes references to specific psalms, hymns and credos describing where specific words come from. In 1612, Abraham van der Myle published Psalm 18 which relied on the copy produced by Lipsius from the same psalter. Since the original was later lost, it is unfortunate that van der Myle modified the text to reflect contemporary spelling.

Another source is a manuscript written by two different scribes and probably also at different times. It includes Psalms 53.7-73.9. The first copist was not Lipsius, but probably one of his contemporaries. The comparison of this manuscript, also known as the Diez Manuscript, with the glosses confirms that it comes from the same text. The last manuscript related to the Wachtendonk Codex includes copies of psalms 1.1-3.5. However, it should not be considered a monument of the Old Low Franconian language, more specifically its **Eastern** variety, but rather of the **Middle Franconian** language, which (due to the so called 2nd Germanic consonant shift) falls within the Old High German dialect continuum.

As for localising the Old Low Franconian language in time and space, most scholars agree on the area around the Dutch town Limburg reaching to the German city of Aachen, the former metropolis of Charles the Great, and the beginning of the 10th century. This language cannot be considered a predecessor of current Dutch, but only one of its many components. A direct continuity can be acknowledged only in case of the Limburgish dialect which differs significantly from other dialects. The focal point where the actual Dutch crystallized was located further West, in Flanders, Brabant and Holland. The birth and crystallization of the Dutch language is closely related to the development of the Roman Empire and its successor states.

At the beginning of the common era, Celtic tribes (*Belgae* and *Batavi*) continued to live south of the lower Rhine, while the Germanic Frisians lived further north. The Celtic area under Roman control was gradually romanized; however, the Germanic tribes invaded beyond the river Rhine since the times of Caesar. Later, Romans rendered them control over the northern border. In the 3rd and 4th centuries, the Franks settled south of the Rhine. During the 5th century, they were united under the rule of Clovis I, the founder of the Merovingian dynasty, and gained dominion over the lower Rhineland as well as the whole of northern Gaul up to the Loire. The following Carolingian dynasty expanded to the north and east, subjugated (among others) the Frisians and Saxons, the northern neighbours of the Franks that settled in the area of today's Dutch provinces of Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe and Overijssel. The then border between the Frisians and the Saxon was the river Ijssel, one of the right branches of the Rhine which now constitutes the border between the Frank and Saxon dialects of the Dutch language. The Roman-Germanic border moved several times in history. Since Caesar conquered Gaul in the 1st century BC, the originally Celtic area was gradually romanized up to the estuary of the Rhine. With the emergence of the Franks, mainly from the 5th century on, the Germanic border moved further south; the furthest it ever reached was up to the Loire. During the 7th and 8th centuries, the Franks settled in the Romance environment were subjected to Romanization and the Roman-Germanic border moved back to the north where it stabilised in a line east of Étamples. Further changes are minor: in the west, the Romance



area expanded to the north beyond Dunkerque, while today, the West Flemish minority reaches into France in the department Pas-de-Calais; the area is called *Frans-Vlaaderen*, that is French Flanders, or *Westhoek*.

The Old Low Franconian literary language can be illustrated by the Psalm 61 [Robinson 1992, 205–06]:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. <i>Gehôri, got, gebet mîn, thenke te gebede mînin.</i>   | 1. Hear, O God, my supplication: be attentive to my prayer,   |
| 2. <i>Fan einde erthen te thi riep, so sorgoda herte mîn. An stêine irhôdus-tu mi;</i>                        | 2. To thee have I cried from the ends of the earth: when my heart was in anguish, thou hast exalted me on a rock. Thou hast conducted me; |
| 3. <i>Thû lêidos mi, uuanda gedân bist tohopa mîn, turn sterke fan antscêine fiundis.</i>                     | 3. For thou hast been my hope; a tower of strength against the face of the enemy.   |
| 4. <i>Uuonon sal ic an selethon thînro an uueroldi, bescirmot an getheke fetharaco thînro.</i>                | 4. In thy tabernacle I shall dwell for ever: I shall be protected under the covert of thy wings.  |
| 5. <i>Uanda thu, got mîn, gehôrdos gebet mîn, gâui thu erui forhtindon namo thînin.</i>                       | 5. For thou, my God, hast heard my prayer: thou hast given an inheritance to them that fear thy name.                                     |
| 6. <i>Dag ouir dag cuningis saltu gefuogan, jâr sîna untes an dag cunnis in cunnis.</i>                       | 6. Thou wilt add days to the days of the king: his years even to generation and generation.   |
| 7. <i>Foluuonot an êuuon an geginuuir di godis; ginâthi in uuârhêide sîna uue sal thia suocan?</i>            | 7. He abideth for ever in the sight of God: his mercy and truth who shall search?   |
| 8. <i>Sô sal ic lof quethan namin thînin an uuerolt uueroldis, that ik geue gehêita mîna fan dage an dag.</i> | 8. So will I sing a psalm to thy name for ever and ever: that I may pay my vows from day to day.  |

### 3.2.1.2.2.2 Dutch

The formation of the **Dutch** language in the 10th and 11th centuries was influenced mainly by Low Franconian dialects, while a certain role was also played by Frisian, their substrate and northern neighbour, and the Saxon dialects in the East. The Western Low Franconian dialect provided the base for the Dutch dialects of Flanders and Holland; the Eastern Low Franconian for the dialects of Limburg and the Rhineland. The **Western Low Franconian dialect** can be illustrated by the following fragment composed around 1100 which is considered to be a love poem (see Robinson 1992, 203–05):

<i>Hebban olla vogala nestas hagunnan hinase hic enda thu uuat unbidat uue nu</i>	“Have all birds begun nests except me and you what are we waiting for?”
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The Eastern Low Franconian counterpart is “The Song of Songs” by Williram, the Abbot of Edersburg, written approximately at the same time.

The era of Middle Dutch starts in the 12th century. It was launched by the troubadour Heinrich von Veldeke (1150–1190/1200) originally from the area around Maastricht in the Limburg province. Middle Dutch can be divided in three dialects: (i) Coastal (Holland, Zeeland, Flanders); (ii) South-Eastern (Brabant, Limburg) and (iii) North-Eastern; they originally represented the related Low German dialects that succumbed to Dutch influence already during the Middle Ages. In the 13th century, the dialects of Flanders and Brabant dominate due to rich cities like Bruges, Ghent, Ypres (= in Flemish Ieper). From the mid-13th century, the domestic language started depriving Latin of its monopolistic role as a literary language. Literary figures like Jacob van Maerlant (1230/1240–1288/1300) from Flanders or the poetess Hadewych (Hadewijch) of Brabant (c. 1200 – c. 1260) create literary text in their own language. During this time, an anonymous Flemish fable *Van den Vos Reinaerde* “Reynard, the fox” was written which was received extraordinarily well in France, where the name of the fox even pushed out the domestic word for “fox” (today *renard*). Besides being used in literary texts, the domestic language was more and more often used in non-literary texts as well. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the domestic language asserted itself in the literature of Flanders, Brabant and the Limburg region, but also in Holland.

During the era of Middle Dutch, the vocabulary was enriched mainly by loans from French (*spijt* “regret” < *despit*; *tapijt* “carpet” < *tapis*; *taart* “tartlet” < *tarte* “cake”; *fazant* “pheasant” < *faisan*). This fashion trend affected morphology as well: the original Dutch word stems were expanded by French derivative suffixes, e. g. *vrij-* + *-age* = *vrijage* “love affair”. Middle Dutch was among other things known for contracted forms where subject and predicate were joined as in *segghic* = *segghe ic* “say I”. After the domestic language pervaded texts of civil character, a need for its standardization arose. This process was further aided by other circumstances as well: the spread of the printing press and political unification, even if under the control of Burgundy. It united Holland, Zeeland, Flanders, Artois, Hainaut, Brabant, Limburg, Luxembourg and the Duchy of Guelders (today Gelderland) and had a crucial influence in the Bishopric of Utrecht and the Bishopric of Liège. Although the Burgundy nobility used French, their attitude towards the domestic language was very tolerant. In 1477, the Burgundy court moved to Brussels and thus became even closer to the domestic environment.

A whole new era of the Dutch and Belgian history began with Mary of Burgundy who united in marriage with the Habsburg family. Her grandson Charles V (1500–1558) united under his rule Spain, the Holy Roman Empire and the Netherlands in the wider sense, that is today’s Benelux. In 1548, he expanded the Netherlands by adding the Burgundy dependencies in northern France and named this whole entity Burgundy. He reformed the state administration here and expanded the trade possibilities. The centre of trade and hence also culture moved to Antwerp. In Charles V’s Burgundy, humanism and reformation took up strong positions which benefited not only the inhabitants, but also their language.

The rule that strong and successful sovereigns are followed by incompetent successors was perfectly fulfilled by Charles’ son Philip II. He introduced high taxation and substituted religious tolerance of his father by bigot Catholicism which showed itself in anti-reformation and anti-Jewish campaigns. Popular uprisings started to break out at many places and he managed to suppress by means of military force only those in the southern provinces, that is in Flanders and Brabant. The northern provinces, despite many losses, managed to defend themselves and created an independent state body called United Provinces or the Dutch Republic. The southern part of the Netherlands remained under Spanish rule, which meant a complete Recatholisation. Consequently, many merchants and intellectuals escaped to the north. The Spanish southern Netherlands lost their elites in this way, while the northern United Provinces gained. The Dutch Republic shortly became the most developed part of Europe.

This fatal division which has lasted since 1585 to this day meant also two separate fates on the level of language. The southern dialects of Dutch that had been developing in a promising way during the previous few centuries were survived only in the countryside and preserved only for private occasions. The language of state administration and of the Catholic church was French. It should be pointed out that this role was never assumed by Spanish. On the other hand, the north is dominated by Dutch. A key role is played by a dialect of the Holland province which (beside other reasons because of the influx of rich and educated exiles from the South) became the most influential within the United Provinces. Consequently, the north is dominated by the Holland dialect which however incorporated many elements of southern dialects.

During the 17th century, the Dutch Republic became even stronger, although Europe was being plagued by the Thirty-Year War. Amsterdam became one of the richest cities in Europe. An important role in this was played by Amsterdam bankers (among others), who financed a substantial part of the war operations. The main merit, however, lay with trade and the decisive role was played by two trade and transport institutions: the Dutch East India Company (1602), specializing in South Africa and South-Eastern Asia; and Dutch West India Company, focussing on America (New Amsterdam, the Caribbean) which were all locations where the Dutch established thriving colonies. The Dutch were the only Europeans at the time who had access to Japanese ports.

Hand in hand with the economic successes, art experienced a boom as well. The expression “Dutch Masters” in visual arts also refers to this era. The literature of the 17th century is represented by such great names as Gerbrand A. Bredero (1585–1618), Pieter C. Hooft (1581–1647), Christiaan Huygens (1629–1695), Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679) and others. In 1637, the Bible translation called *Statenbijbel* was completed, after a team of transla-

tors representing various Dutch regions had worked on it for 18 years. The translation hence reflects regional variants which then due to a high level of education and the popularity of *Statenbijbel* took root among Protestant families and started to be used in the standard language as well (e.g. the originally Saxon reflexive of the 3rd person *zich* as opposed to the domestic *hem, haar*).

The self-confidence of Dutch speakers can be seen among other things in the fact that for many specialized expressions, domestic neologisms are created to replace Greek or Latin terms used in various sciences, e. g. *wiskunde* “mathematics”, *driehoek* “triangle”, *werkwoord* “verb” (literally “working word”), *ondenwerp* “subject”, etc. The significant role of the Netherlands in the shipping industry stood behind the spread of such terms as *buoy, dock, freight* or *yacht*, etc. Nevertheless, French continued to be the most prestigious language of Europe, and the Dutch repeatedly used it as well to enrich its own vocabulary, even if it had its own suitable expression (e. g. *visite* for “visit” replaces the native *bezoek*). Another source of new expressions in the mainly colloquial Dutch was *Yiddish*, the language of the Aškenazi Jews. Although a large number of substantially richer Sephardi Jews found refuge in the Netherlands, their language *ladino*, also known as *Judeo-Spanish*, never played such role. Last but not least, the Dutch language was enriched by the languages of the colonies, mainly the Malay language and the Indonesian language (the same was true vice versa).

The two decades when the Netherlands were under French rule (1795–1815) played an important role in the history of the Dutch language. In 1804, Siegenbeek suggested the first version of a standard orthography which was accepted in the south and a year later, an official Dutch grammar was published. Another orthographical reform was prepared in 1863 by De Vries and Te Winkel, again for both the Netherlands and Belgium. Later, there have not been that many changes of Dutch orthography any more. The last orthographical reform was introduced in 1996. In 1982, the Dutch Language Union was established, the linguistic sovereignty of which was later recognized by the Netherlands as well as Belgium. The Union should coordinate decisions about Dutch orthography and grammar and support the language abroad. Thanks to the Union, the most prestigious grammar standard was created by W. Haeseryn et. col.: *Algemene Nederlandse Spraakkunst* (1997). The monumental dictionary *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* is currently being finished – it started to be published in 1882 already by De Vries and Te Winkel.

Standardization of the orthography took roots not only in the Protestant northern Netherlands, but also in the Catholic south – due to a short-term unification after the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815. This only lasted till the uprising in 1830 and the declaration of the Kingdom of Belgium in 1831; however, French then remained the language of the local elite. The capital Brussels which was mainly Flemish before the declaration of independence, became Frenchified during the 19th century, too. While Dutch was proclaimed the “national language” after the Belgian declaration of independence, it only gained an official status in 1898 and effective equality at courts, in state administration and in education in the 1930s. In 1932, Flemish Dutch finally entered the university milieu. It became the language of conduct for the first time at Ghent University. The privileged position of French in Belgium started to weaken after the Flemish north started to gain economic supremacy over the Walloon south. Besides, it should be noted that in today’s Belgium, the 6 million Flemish exceed in numbers the approximately 4 million Walloon. Moreover, Brussels is now bilingual.

While differences between the spoken southern Flemish and the northern Dutch are apparent, both variants share more or less the same orthography and a major part of history and culture. With 16 million of Dutch users among the Dutch and another million among the immigrants, the Dutch language in the widest sense represents the third most widely spoken Germanic language. Some creole languages could be also counted, in the first place *Afrikaans* – the language of the descendants of the Dutch immigrants into southern Africa which started to be shaped after the Dutch East Indian Company had established a colony in the Cape Province in 1652 and needed settlers for it. The language of the Boers, as they called themselves, became emancipated after the Boer war at the beginning of the 20th century when the British imposed by military force their own ideas about running the colony. Today, *Afrikaans* is used by approximately 7 million inhabitants (2016) of the South African Republic, Namibia and Botswana, only about half of them have European ancestors. Another creole variety of Dutch

was constituted in Suriname, former Dutch Guiana in the north of South America. Currently it returns to the Netherlands with immigrants, often of African origin. Even more complicated are the origins of the creole language *Papiamentu* used on the islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, also former Dutch dominions, since it originated from the Portuguese language. Other creoles based on Dutch have already disappeared, among others *Mohawk Dutch* from the New Amsterdam area which vanished in the 18th century, *Negerhollands* which was used on the Virgin Islands till the beginning of the 19th century, *Petjok* from Indonesia which lost its function after the declaration of independence, etc.

Dialects are retained even in contemporary Dutch and there are differences from the standard language as well as among the dialects. These are especially apparent in Belgium, but also in the Netherlands there are apparent differences between the west with more Ingvaeonic features, and the east that inclines more towards Low German, which is the continuant of the Old Saxon.

### 3.2.1.2.3 Erminonic

The Erminonic language group comprises the dialects of the Suebi, Langobards<sup>55</sup>, Alemanni and Bavarians. Some more tribal dialects may be added to this list, but they actually are already included as subvarieties of the above-mentioned dialects. Their ethnonyms namely relate to the most significant tribal unions which arose due to a multiple integration of smaller tribal units. This resulted in a considerably inhomogeneous language material during the beginning of the Old High German writing that only began to unify while literary Old German was being formed. We should mention at least the basic information that writers using Latin or Greek in the first millennium after Christ recorded about the large Erminonic tribal unions.

**Suebi** are first mentioned by Caesar in the *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* (see §1.1. above). Tacitus in his work *Germania* wrote:

[§2] “In their ancient songs, their only way of remembering or recording the past, they celebrate an earth-born god Tuisto, and his son Mannus, as the origin of their race, as their founders. To Mannus they assign three sons, from whose names, they say, the coast tribes are called Ingaevones; those of the interior, Herminones; all the rest, Istaevones. Some, with the freedom of conjecture permitted by antiquity, assert that the god had several descendants, and the nation several appellations, as Marsi, Gambrivii, Suevi, Vandilii, and that these are nine old names. The name Germany, on the other hand, they say is modern and newly introduced, from the fact that the tribes which first crossed the Rhine and drove out the Gauls, and are now called Tungrians, were then called Germans. Thus what was the name of a tribe, and not of a race, gradually prevailed, till all called themselves by this self-invented name of Germans, which the conquerors had first employed to inspire terror.”<sup>56</sup>

[§38] “I must now proceed to speak of the Suevians, who are not, like the Cattans and Tencterians, comprehended in a single people; but divided into several nations all bearing distinct names, though in general they are entitled Suevians, and occupy the larger share of Germany. These people are remarkable for a peculiar custom, that of twisting their hair and binding it up in a knot. It is thus the Suevians are distinguished from the other Germans, thus the free Suevians from their slaves. In other nations, whether from alliance of blood with the Suevians, or, as is usual, from imitation, this practice is also found, yet rarely, and never exceeds the years of youth. The Suevians, even when their hair is white through age, continue to raise it backwards in a manner stern and staring; and often tie it upon the top of

55) Ptolemy [2.11.9] counted Langobards explicitly among the *Suebi*: Σουῆβοι Λαγγοβάρδοι.

56) [§2] *celebrant carminibus antiquis, quod unum apud illos memoriae et annalium genus est, Tuistonem deum terra editum. ei filium Mannum originem gentis conditoremque Manno tres filios assignant, e quorum nominibus proximi Oceano Ingaevones, medii Herminones, ceteri Istaevones vocentur. quidam, ut in licentia vetustatis, plures deo ortos pluresque gentis appellationes, Marsos Gambrivos Suebos Vandilios affirmant, eaque vera et antiqua nomina. ceterum Germaniae vocabulum recens et nuper additum, quoniam qui primi Rhenum transgressi Gallos expulerint ac nunc Tungri, tunc Germani vocati sint: ita nationis nomen, non gentis, evaluisse paulatim, ut omnes primum a victore ob metum, mox et a se ipsis invento nomine Germani vocarentur.*

their head only. That of their Princes, is more accurately disposed, and so far they study to appear agreeable and comely; but without any culpable intention. For by it, they mean not to make love or to incite it: they thus dress when proceeding to war, and deck their heads so as to add to their height and terror in the eyes of the enemy.”<sup>57</sup>

[§39] “Of all the Suevians, the Semnones recount themselves to be the most ancient and most noble. The belief of their antiquity is confirmed by religious mysteries. At a stated time of the year, all the several people descended from the same stock, assemble by their deputies in a wood; consecrated by the idolatries of their forefathers, and by superstitious awe in times of old. There by publicly sacrificing a man, they begin the horrible solemnity of their barbarous worship. To this grove another sort of reverence is also paid. No one enters it otherwise than bound with ligatures, thence professing his subordination and meanness, and the power of the Deity there. If he fall down, he is not permitted to rise or be raised, but grovels along upon the ground. And of all their superstition, this is the drift and tendency; that from this place the nation drew their original, that here God, the supreme Governor of the world, resides, and that all things else whatsoever are subject to him and bound to obey him. He potent condition of the Semnones has increased their influence and authority, as they inhabit hundred towns; and from the largeness of their community it comes, that they hold themselves for the head of the Suevians.”<sup>58</sup>

The ethnonym *Suebi* or *Suevi* is based on the Indo-European reflexive *\*sue-* “own”, which expresses their ethnic identity (cf. Neumann 2008, 294f). The name of the predecessors of Swedes *Suioni/Suehans/Suetidi* is of a similar origin (Schönfeld 1911, 212–15). The Suebi appeared and formed their union at the middle Elbe. New tribes gradually singled out from the *Suebi* tribal union, these frequently moved far away from their original homeland (e.g. *Marcommani* and *Quadi* to the area of the Czech and Slovak Republic), others stayed close (*Hermunduri*, the probable predecessors of the *Thuringi* – see Schwarz 1956, 156–182). The part of the tribal union which retained the name Suebi moved the farthest. They, together with Vandals, crossed the frozen Rhine and gradually penetrated the Iberian Peninsula where they settled in the area Gallaecia, today’s Galicia on the Northwestern part of the peninsula.

According to their own history, the Langobards left their original homeland in southern Sweden under the name *Winnili* around 100 BC. They moved to the southern coast of the Baltic Sea where they joined parts of other tribes. That may be the reason why Tacitus ranked them to the Suebi people as follows from his text where the passage devoted to the Suebi continues with the description of the Langobards [§40]: “What on the contrary ennobles the Langobards is the smallness of their number, for that they, who are surrounded with very many and very powerful nations, derive their security from no obsequiousness or plying; but from the dint of battle and adventurous deeds.”<sup>59</sup>; also Ptolemy in his *Geography* [2.11.9] provides similar information.

Since the 1st century BC Langobards inhabited the area in Bardengau at the lower Elbe which is known thanks to the archaeological evidence. Later, when they were forced by Tiberius to the east bank of the Elbe in 5 CE, they shortly got into the power sphere of Marbod’s *Marcomanni*. Already in 17 CE they went over to the *Cherusci* [Tacitus, *Annali* 2.45, 11.17]. Together with the *Ubii*, they despatched a troop of 6,000 men to Upper Pannonia in 166–167 [Cassius Dio 71.3.1a]. However, a larger part of this tribe moved to the Danubian

57) [§38] *nunc de Suebis dicendum est, quorum non una ut Chattorum Tencterorumve gens; maiorem enim Germaniae partem obtinent, propriis adhuc nationibus nominibusque discreti, quamquam in commune Suebi vocentur. insigne gentis obliquare crinem nodoque substringere: sic Suebi a ceteris Germanis, sic Sueborum ingenui a servis separantur. in aliis gentibus seu cognatione aliqua Sueborum seu, quod saepius accidit, imitatione, rarum et intra iuventae spatium, apud Suebos usque ad canitiem horrentem capillum retro sequuntur, ac saepe in ipso vertice religant; principes et ornatorem habent. ea cura formae, sed innoxia; neque enim ut ament amenturve, in altitudinem quandam et terrorem adituri bella compti hostium oculis ornantur.*

58) [§39] *vetustissimos se nobilissimosque Sueborum Semnones memorant; fides antiquitatis religione firmatur. stato tempore in silvam auguriis patrum et prisca formidine sacram omnes eiusdem sanguinis populi legationibus coeunt caesoque publice homine celebrant barbari ritus horrenda primordia. est et alia luco reverentia: nemo nisi vinculo ligatus ingreditur, ut minor et potestatem numinis prae se ferens. si forte prolapsus est, attolli et insurgere haud licitum: per humum evolvuntur. eoque omnis superstitio respicit, tamquam inde initia gentis, ibi regnator omnium deus, cetera subiecta atque parentia. adicit auctoritatem fortuna Semnonum: centum pagi iis habitantur, magnoque corpore efficitur ut se Sueborum caput credant.*

59) [§40] *contra Langobardos paucitas nobilitat: plurimis ac valentissimis nationibus cincti non per obsequium, sed proeliis et periclitando tuti sunt.*

Translated by Alfred J. Church & William J. Brodrrib (1942).

region only during the 4th century or even after the year 400 [*Origo gentium Langobardum* 2: see the attachment; *Historia Langobardorum* 1.13]. Soon after 488, king Tato led the Langobards to the area north of Noricum which until now bears the name Rugiland after the east Germanic tribe *Rugii*. Here they became subjected to the *Heruli*, whom they defeated in 508–509. Around 500, the Langobards converted to Christianity probably thanks to Arian missionaries of East German origin. The king of the Pannonian Langobards, Wacho, who ruled approximately in the years 510–540, developed friendly relations with the Byzantine Empire. Strategic marriages of his daughters with the members of the Merovingian dynasty secured him safety from the Franks.

His successor Adoin concluded a contract with the Byzantine Empire based on which the Langobards participated in the Battle of Busta Gallorum against the Ostrogoths. Nevertheless, when the Avars attacked Pannonia in the 560s, the Langobards realistically assessed their possibilities as well as the ‘solidarity’ of their mightier allies and decided to move to Italy, because their military nobility knew a part of Italy thanks to their campaign against the Ostrogoths on the side of the Byzantine Empire in 552. Fragments of other tribes joined the Langobards on their way: there were German tribes (the Gepids, Taifals, Saxons, Bavarians, Thuringii) as well as non-Germanic ones (for example the Noric people of Celtic origin, the Iranian Sarmatians and Turkic Bulgarians and others).

In 568 Aquileia was captured and within a year Langobards with their allies seized all of Northern Italy and made Milan their capital. Milan constitutes until today a natural centre of Lombardy which bears the name of the Langobard (> Lombard) tribe. On their march, Langobards stopped in 575 in front of the city walls of Rome and five years later they reached Campania east of Rome. Nevertheless, they never seized completely Italy because inner resistance lasted continually during their stay at the Italian Peninsula also in its northern part. Although their attempts of expansion beyond Italy (e.g. Gaul) were repelled, the Langobards dominated Italy much longer than the Ostrogoths (489–552). It was not until 773 that the king of the Franks, Charlemagne, ended the Langobards’ domination over Italy, which heralded his coronation as an Emperor in Rome. For completeness we should add that the father of Charles the Great, Pippin III, defeated the king of Langobards Aistulf already in 755.

The name of Langobards *\*Langa-bardōz* is most often interpreted as “those with long beards/hair” or “those with long axes”. The sources though agree that a typical weapon of the Langobards was a throwing spear (Schwarz 1956, 192), which makes the first interpretation more probable (cf. Nedoma 1995c). And it is further supported by the habits of Langobards themselves (*Origo gentium Langobardum* 2: *longibarbae* – see the Appendix). Individual glosses were preserved from the language of Langobards in chronicles, law books and other official documents, e.g. *adelingi* “the noble ones”: Old High German *adal* “a noble family”;

*aldius* “a half-free man”: Old Saxon *eldi*, Old English *elde*, *ylde* “people”;

*feraha* “oak”: Old High German *ferah-eih*;

*lagi* “thigh”: Old Norse *leggr* “limb” < *\*lagjaz*.

The High German Consonant Shift is typical of some examples:

*ih* “I”: Old High German *ih*, Old Saxon and Gothic *ik* id.;

*pair* “a wild boar”: Old Saxon *bēr*(*swīn*), Old English *bār* < West Germanic *\*bairaz*

(all Langobardic glosses are quoted from Bruckner 1895).

The ethnonym **Alamanni** [Ἀλαμαννοί] was first recorded in 3rd century CE by a Roman historian Cassius Dio who wrote in Greek.

[78.13.4] “Antoninus made a campaign against the Alamanni and whenever he saw a spot suitable for habitation, he would order, ‘There let a fort be erected. There let a city be built.’ And he gave these places names relating to himself, though the local designations were not changed; for some of the people were unaware of the new names and others supposed he was jesting.”<sup>60</sup>

60) [78.13.4] ὅτι ὁ Ἀντωνῖνος ἐς τοὺς Ἀλαμαννοὺς στρατεύσας διέταττεν, εἴ ποῦ τι χωρίον ἐπιτήδειον πρὸς ἐνοικήσιν εἶδεν, ἐνταῦθα φρούριον τευχισθήτω, ἐνταῦθα πόλις οἰκοδομηθήτω. καὶ ἐπωνυμίας γέ τινας τοῖς τόποις ἀφ’ ἑαυτοῦ ἐπωνόμαζε, τῶν ἐπιχωρίων μὴ ἀλλοιομένων: οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἠγνόουν, οἱ δὲ παίζεον αὐτὸν ἐδόκουν.

[78.13.6] “Antoninus sent a letter to the senate commending Pandion, a man who had formerly been an assistant of charioteers, but in the war against the Alamanni drove the emperor’s chariot and thereby became both his comrade and fellow-soldier. In this letter he asserted that he had been saved by this man from an exceptional peril; and he was not ashamed at feeling more gratitude toward him than toward the soldiers, whom in their turn he always regarded as superior to us senators.”<sup>61</sup>

[78.15.2] “Antoninus devastated the whole land and the whole sea and left nothing anywhere unharmed. The enchantments of the enemy had made Antoninus frenzied beside himself; at any rate, some of the Alamanni, on hearing of his condition, asserted that they had employed charms to put him out of his mind.”<sup>62</sup>

The area where the Alamanni, literally “all men”, began to form had been inhabited by the Suebi before. Therefore it is likely that the new tribal union included also members of this people besides fragments of other tribes. Since the 3rd century, the Alamanni were attacking the Roman Empire, especially the area between the upper Rhine and the upper Danube, but they never settled in Roman territory. The Romans themselves attributed to the Alamanni considerable military abilities; after all Alamannic troops served in the Roman army: for example the king Fraomar left his people and with his troops served to the Romans on the British Isles. The individualism of tribal chiefs and their people probably was the reason why the Alamanni never achieved the degree of integration as the Goths, the Langobards and the Franks did. It was the Franks, their western neighbours, who deprived them of independence after a decisive battle that occurred probably in 506. This battle most probably initiated the christening of the king of the Franks, Clovis I (Bednaříková 2009, 83–98). Despite losing their political independence, the Alamanni never disappeared. Their tribal language served as a basis for the modern south western High German dialects which are in use in the German federation state Baden-Württemberg, south western Bavaria, and also in Alsace-Lorraine, eastern France, Switzerland, furthermore in the Austrian federation state Vorarlberg, and western Tirol as well as in the north Italian province Ticino. The tribal name *Alamanni* survived until today as the designation for Germany in many Romance languages, e.g. French *Allemagne*, Spanish *Alemania*, or even Turkish *Almanya*.

From the area inhabited by Alamanni in the 1st millennium after Christ, namely Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hessen, Rhineland-Palatinate, Switzerland, Alsace-Lorraine, c. 70 runic inscriptions from around 520–690 are known, they are mostly recorded on buckles. The Pforzen buckle (the end of the 6th century):

ᚱᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲ ᚱᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲ ᚱᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲ ᚱᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲ

**aigil andi aïlrūn / Itahu gasokun**

“Aigil and Ailrun fought at the Ilz river” is one of the possible interpretations

The Nordendorf fibulae (the end of the 6th century or around 600):

ᚱᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲ ᚱᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲ ᚱᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲ ᚱᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲᚲ

**logaþore wodan wigīþonar awa leubwinī**

“the magicians/sorcerers [are] Wodan [and] Wigi-Ponar; to Awa Leubwin”

61) [78.13.6] ὅτι ὁ Ἀντωνίνος Πανδίωνα, ἄνδρα πρότερον μὲν ἠνιόχων ὑπηρέτην γενόμενον, ἐν δὲ τῷ πολέμῳ τῷ πρὸς Ἀλαμαννοὺς ἰ ἀρματηλατοῦντα αὐτῷ καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἑταῖρον ὄντα καὶ συστρατιώτην, ἐπήνεσεν ἐν τῇ γερουσίᾳ διὰ γραμμάτων ὡς καὶ ἐκ κινδύνου τινὸς ἐξαισίῳ ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ σωθεὶς, οὐδ’ ἠσχύνθη πλείονα ἐκείνῳ χάριν ἢ τοῖς στρατιώταις, οὓς καὶ ἡμῶν ἀεὶ κρείττους ἦγεν, ἔχων.

62) [78.15.2] ὅτι πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν πᾶσαν δὲ τὴν θάλασσαν ἐπόρθησεν ὁ Ἀντωνίνος, καὶ οὐδὲν ὅ τι τῶν ἀπάντων ἀκάκωτον κατέλιπεν. ὅτι τὸν Ἀντωνίνον ἔκφρονα καὶ παραπλήγη αἱ τῶν πολεμίων ἐπωδαὶ ἐπεποιήκεσαν: ἰ ἀκούοντες γάρ τινες τῶν Ἀλαμαννῶν ἔφασαν ὅτι μαγγανείαις τισὶν ἐπ’ ἐκπλήξει τῶν φρενῶν αὐτοῦ.

Translated by Earnest Cary & Herbert Baldwin Foster (1914–1927).

Kleines Schulerloch near Essing:

𐀀𐀃𐀆 • 𐀃𐀓𐀆 • 𐀆𐀓𐀆𐀃𐀆𐀓𐀆

**birg : leub : selbrade**

“Birg [is] kind [to] Selbrad”

The buckle form Bad Ems (dated around 660–690):

𐀆𐀆-: 𐀃𐀓𐀆 𐀓-𐀓 𐀓-𐀆𐀓𐀆

**go [d] fura d [i] h d [e] ofile**

“God for you, Theophil”

A noteworthy fact is that while the runic inscriptions from the 6th century do not show the Second High German Shift, the latest inscription already exhibits these features. This can be crucial for dating of this Shift.

**The Bavarians** appeared first in the form *Baibarīi* in Jordanes’s *Getica* in the first half of the 6th century:

[§280] “After a certain time, when the wintry cold was at hand, the river Danube was frozen over as usual. For a river like this freezes so hard that it will support like a solid rock an army of foot-soldiers and wagons and sledges and whatsoever vehicles there may be – nor is there need of skiffs and boats. So when Thiudimer, king of the Goths, saw that it was frozen, he led his army across the Danube and appeared unexpectedly to the Suavi from the rear. Now this country of the Suavi has on the east the **Baiovari**, on the west the Franks, on the south the Burgundians and on the north the Thuringians.”

[§281] “With the Suavi there were present the Alamanni, then their confederates, who also ruled the Alpine heights, whence several streams flow into the Danube, pouring in with a great rushing sound. Into a place thus fortified King Thiudimer led his army in the winter-time and conquered, plundered and almost subdued the race of the Suavi as well as the Alamanni, who were mutually banded together. Thence he returned as victor to his own home in Pannonia and joyfully received his son Theodoric, once given as hostage to Constantinople and now sent back by the Emperor Leo with great gifts.”<sup>63</sup>

The form *Baioarii*, comes also from the 6th century, younger forms are *Bawarii*, *Baoweri* and others. All of them reflect a probable original word *\*Baj(a)-warjōz* “the inhabitants of the [land] Boio”. Traditionally the land Boio is considered to be identical with the first recorded name for Bohemia, *\*Boio-haimon* “mountain ridge of the Boii” (see Blažek 2010, 24–25), which was germanised as *\*Baja-haima-* “the homeland of the Boii” (Schönfeld 1911, 41–43). Schwarz (1956, 182–89) placed the land Boii to Pannonia where it was also localized by the anonymous Geographer of Ravenna. Obviously, the name is a heritage of the ancient presence of the Boii at the middle Danube where they fought with the Dacians over the control of Pannonia and where they around 40 CE suffered a crushing defeat. A devastated and desolate area around the lake Pelso (today’s Lake Balaton) was called *Deserta Boiorum* “Boii’s wasteland”<sup>64</sup>. The predecessors of the Bavarians are supposed to be formed from the frag-

63) [§280] *Post certum vero tempus instanti hiemali frigore amnemque Danubii solite congelato – nam istiusmodi fluvius ille congelascit, ut in silicis modum pedestrem vehat exercitum plaustraque et traculas vel quidquid vehiculi fuerit, nec cumbarum indigeat lintres – sic ergo eum gelatum Thiudimer Gothorum rex cernens pedestrem ducit exercitum emensoque Danubio Suavis inprovisus a tergo apparuit. Nam regio illa Suavorum ab oriente Baibaros habet, ab occidente Francos, a meridie Burgundzones, a septentrione Thuringos.*

[§281] *Quibus Suavis tunc iuncti aderant etiam Alamanni ipsique Alpes erectos omnino regentes, unde nonnulla fluenta Danubium influunt nimio cum sonu vergentia. Hic ergo taliterque munito loco rex Thiudimer hiemis tempore Gothorum ductavit exercitum, et tam Suavorum gente quam etiam Alamannorum, utrasque ad invicem foederatas, devicit, vastavit et pene subegit. Inde quoque victor ad proprias sedes, id est Pannonias revertens Theodoricum filium suum, quem Constantiopolim obsidem dederat, a Leone imperatore remissum cum magnis muneribus gratanter excepit.*

Translated by Charles Christopher Mierow (1915).

64) Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* III, 146: *A tergo Carnorum et Iapudum, qua se fert magnus Hister, Raetis iunguntur Norici oppida eorum Virunum, Celeia, Teurnia, Aguntum, Iuvaum, omnia Claudia, Flavium Solvense. Noricis iunguntur lacus Pelso, deserta Boiorum; iam tamen colonia Divi Claudii Savaria et oppido Scarabantia Iulia habitantur.* “In the rear of



ments of a couple of Central European West Germanic tribes that came to the upper Danube up the stream from Pannonia around the verge of the 5th and 6th century.

### 3.2.1.2.3.1 High German

The designation German comprises at least two different West Germanic languages, High German and Low German and the transition varieties between those two.

German *deutsch* “German” presents the continuation of Old High German *diutisc* “German (language)”, cf. Old Saxon *thiudisca liudi Germania*, besides Old English *þeōdisc* “belonging to the people”, Gothic *þiudisko* “like the heathen”, everything the adjective derivatives from Proto-Germanic *\*þeudō* “the people, nation, tribe”. The designation for the Dutch is of the same origin.

High German singled out from the West Germanic dialect continuum when the High German consonant shift, also called the second Germanic consonant shift (*Lautverschiebung*), took place. The first Germanic shift affected the whole Germanic area, the second Germanic consonant shift defined only the High German dialect area. The whole process is displayed by the following table:

Indo-European	*t	*d	*dʰ	*k	*g	*gʰ	*p	*b	*bʰ	Change
Proto-Germanic	*þ	*t	*d	*χ	*k	*g	*φ	*p	*b	The First Germanic Consonant Shift
Gothic	þ	t	d	h	k	g	f	p	b	
Old Saxon	þ	t	d	h	k	g	f	p	þ	
Old High German	d	z	t	h	ch	k	f	pf	p	The Second Germanic Consonant Shift

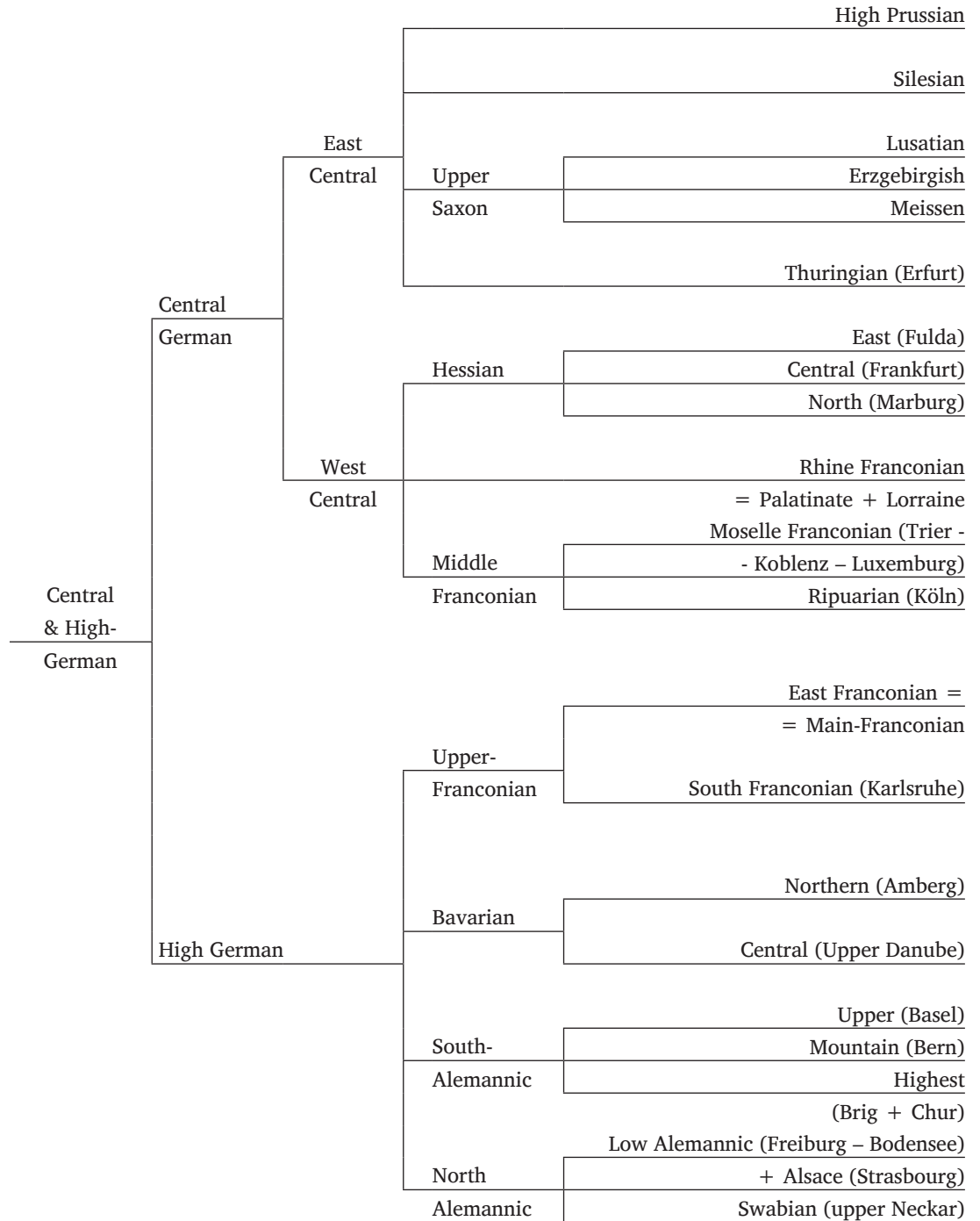
**Table 8:** The first and second Germanic consonant shift

The oldest texts in which the High German Consonant Shift can be observed are written in runic script or rather in its archaic variant. They date back to the 7th century CE. This may also be the answer to the question when German first appeared on the scene. In reality, this is a very simplified answer limited to a narrow chronologic view. No other Germanic language underwent such a complex development during which integration played a bigger role than the expected divergence.

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the Carni and the Iapydes, along the course of the great river Ister, the Rhaeti touch upon the Norici. Their towns are Virunum, Celeia, Teurnia, Aguntum, Vianiomina, Claudia, and Flavium Solvense. Adjoining to the Norici is Lake Pelso, and the deserts of the Boii; they are however now inhabited by the people of Sabaria, a colony of the now deified emperor Claudius, and the town of Scarabantia Julia.” Translated by John Bostock & H.T. Riley (1855).

The overview of the High German Dialects at the end of the 19th century, when they were the most widespread (see Malášková 2008):



**Scheme 3:** Classification of the High German dialects

The extent of the High German Shift in the area of the transitional dialects is well illustrated by the two diagnostic sentences, which demonstrate the gradual transition from the zero occurrence of the High German Shift to its full extent (Noble 1983, 114):

Low German		Ik	make es.	Im Dorp haben wir	dat	Pund	Äppel.
West-central	Ripuarian (Krefeld)	Ich	make es.	Im Dorp haben wir	dat	Pund	Äppel.
	Ripuarian (Cologne)	Ich	mache es.	Im Dorp haben wir	dat	Pund	Äppel.
	Moselle-Franconian	Ich	mache es.	Im Dorp haben wir	dat	Pund	Äppel.
	Pfaelzisch & Hessian	Ich	mache es.	Im Dorp haben wir	das	Pund	Äppel.
East-central		Ich	mache es.	Im Dorp haben wir	das	Fund	Äppel.
High German		Ich	mache es.	Im Dorp haben wir	das	Pfund	Äpfel.

**Table 9:** Transitional dialects between Low and High German

The transition area between the Low and High German dialects is divided into a western and eastern part. The western variant is used in Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Hesse and in the French Lorraine. While the western variant disposes of the counterpart *p-* for High German *pf-*, the eastern one spoken in Thuringia and Upper Saxony shows *f-*. The standard High German *Pfennig* is therefore pronounced [penɪŋ] in western Central German vs. [fɛni] in the eastern one.

Although some runic inscriptions from the turn of the 6th and 7th century may be written in a language from which Old High German developed, only the second half of the 8th century (when the Latin alphabet started to be used) is considered the beginning of Old High German. The end of the old period falls into mid-11th century.

In the beginning of Old High German, it was Latin which dominated in written communication, it was the language used in literature. A number of German authors wrote in Latin, for example Ekkehard I. of the Abbey of Saint Gall (†973) and Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim (?935 – after 973). It is therefore not surprising, that translations into German prevailed over original literary output. As an example of an early work of purely German origin can serve the heroic epic poem, the *Hildebrandslied*. The main centres of the literary production in Old High German were convent schools, e.g. Notker III. of the Abbey of Saint Gall. These schools specialized in translating Latin texts into Old High German.

The transition between the Old and Middle High German presents a kind of hiatus after which a swift increase of literary production follows especially in the convents located in today's Austria. Both the religious motifs and secular genres developed. Religious literature is represented for example by *Leben Jesu* by Frau Ava (around 1120; she was the first female poet in the German history known by name!) secular texts were most often inspired by French model, e.g. *The Song of Roland*, which was translated into Middle High German by the monk Conrad (Der Phaffe Chunrat), and the first prose *Lanzelet* from 1220. The tradition of minnesingers (German *Minnesänger*) in the German speaking countries was inspired by the tradition of Provençal *troubadours* and French *trouvères*. The most famous of them were Der von Kürenberg (his works are from 1170–1175), Walther von der Vogelweide (he lived approximately from 1170 to 1230). We also know many other Minnesingers whose works are recorded in the manuscript *Manessische Liederhandschrift*, which is now kept in the University Library in Heidelberg. Another group of poets, namely Hartmann von Aue (1160/1170 – after 1210), Wolfram von Eschenbach (c. 1170 – c. 1220) and Gottfried von Strassburg (1180–1210/1215), were inspired by the British court literature, mostly by the legend of the King Arthur. Domestic epic is represented by *Nibelungenlied* “The song of the Nibelungs”, the story of which takes place at the Burgundian court in Worms. One of the characters in this

work is Dietrich von Bern, whose model was Theoderic the Great, the ruler of Goths from the 5th and 6th centuries.

In the 13th and 14th century even philosophical texts appear in Middle High German. Soon after 1270, *Summa Theologica* by Thomas Aquinas was translated. The German philosophers as Meister Eckhart (1260–1327/8), Johannes Tauler (1300?–1361), Heinrich Seuse (1293–1366) preferred the German language. These authors introduced into German among others the suffixes *-ung*, *-heit*, *-schaft* used for forming abstract nouns. Thanks to their efforts and also other authors such as Claus Cranc, a translation of the Book of Prophets was completed around 1350. That was the first time a Biblical prosaic text was translated into German. Thanks to this development German started to equal Latin, which until then had preserved a unique dominant position.

From the mid-14th century until the mid-18 century we can already speak about Early Modern German. However, not even during Renaissance and Humanism did German literary works secede from the influence of the classical literature. For example Jakob Wimpfeling (1450–1528) continued in mediating the works of classical Latin and Greek authors to German readers by translating them. The work *Cosmographia* “Description of the World” by Sebastian Münster (1488–1522) published in Basel in 1544 became the most popular textbook although it was a compilation from mostly translated and considerably obsolete sources. The persisting strong position of Latin is testified by the fact that some authors continue to write in Latin and only subsequently translate their works into German. Johannes Aventinus (Turmair) (1477–1534) and his *Annales ducum Boiariae* “Annals of the Earls of Bavaria” can serve as an example. Despite this also original works in German were produced. An exceptional and long-term response encountered the satire *Narrenschiff* “Ship of Fools” from 1494 by Sebastian Brant. Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1528), the most significant scholar of his time, also wrote in German.

The development of German in the 16th century was undoubtedly influenced the most by Martin Luther (1483–1546), specifically by his Bible translation. Luther himself managed to edit even its last publication which appeared during his lifetime in 1545. The Bible translation together with Luther’s catechism and other theological scripts constituted the most important part of production of printed books in the first half of the 16th century. The process of emancipation of German in relation to Latin appeared to be irreversible during the 16th century.

One of the consequences of the intensive anti-reformation in the 17th century was that German, so successfully promoted by Luther, had to yield to other languages again. Education and science returned back to Latin while French became the language of noble society. Even the most versatile German scientist and philosopher of that time, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1714), wrote primarily in Latin or French (we need to add that Latin was the language of Leibniz’s biggest rival in the field of developing modern mathematics, the Englishman Isaac Newton). Despite this fact, Leibniz inspired his contemporaries and future generation to use German. He wanted that the German literary language comply to the following conditions: it should be self-sufficient in vocabulary (*Reichtum*), comprehensible and unambiguous (*Reinigkeit*) and should have its own style (*Glanz*). Leibniz’s wish came true thanks to writers of the 18th century, such as Friedrich Gottlob Klopstock (1724–1803), Gotthold E. Lessing (1729–1781), Christoph M. Wieland (1733–1815), J. Ch. Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805) and primarily Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). These authors used mostly the so called East Middle German, which then became the base for most German grammar books in the 18th century, namely *Deutsche Sprachkunst nach den Mustern der besten Schriftsteller des vorigen und itzigen Jahrhunderts* “German Grammar according to the Model of the Best Writers of the last and this Centuries” (Leipzig 1748) by Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1766) and *Umständliches Lehrgebäude der Deutschen Sprache* “A Thorough Grammar of the German Language” (1782) by Johann Christoph Adelung (1732–1806). His handbook called *Vollständige Anweisung zur deutschen Orthographie* “Complete instruction on the German Orthography” from 1788 was used for the whole 19th century.

For writers of the 19th century it is typical that they based their works on the language of Goethe, such an influence did he leave. Some imitated or developed his language, others defined themselves against him. This applies to a couple of dozens writers who represented

various directions and worked from the end of the 18th century until the first half of the 20th century. It was not a matter of course: the political unification of Germany (Prussia) occurred only in 1871 and the dialectal differences persisted even after that. The Standard German which was developed by the strong generation of writers of the 18th century was used among others by the Romantic writers Ernst Th. A. Hoffmann (1776–1833), Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811), Friedrich von Hardenberg called Novalis (1772–1801), August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767–1845), Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829), Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853); conservative representatives of Biedermeier such as Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872), Nikolaus Lenau (1802–1850), Anette von Droste-Hülshoff (1797–1848); their opponents from the group *Junges Deutschland*, e.g. Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), Friedrich Hebbel (1813–1863); representatives of Realism such as Gottfried Keller (1819–1890), Theodor Fontane (1819–1898), Wilhelm Raabe (1851–1910), etc.; representatives of Naturalism and their opponents, among others Stefan George (1868–1933), Gerhart Hauptmann (1862–1946), Christian Morgenstern (1871–1914), Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926), Hermann Hesse (1877–1962), Stefan Zweig (1881–1942) and many others. From the authors who wrote in German in the 20th century the following names need to be mentioned: Heinrich Mann (1871–1950), Thomas Mann (1875–1955), Robert Musil (1880–1942), Franz Kafka (1895–1924), Heinrich Böll (1917–1985), Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–1990), Günter Grass (1927–2015).

If we do not consider the runic script in the pre-history, High German was written down in the Latin script since its beginnings. However, it was not the Latin script which is used today. The oldest manuscripts are written in the Anglo-Saxon alphabet or the so called Carolingian minuscule. Both alphabets were later replaced by the Gothic script, also called Fraktur. Although this script started to be replaced by Latin one already in the 15th century, *Kurrentschrift* or shortly *Kurrent*, which developed from the Gothic script, remained in use until 1941.

### Lord's Prayer translated in the Franconian and Old High German literary dialects

South Rhine Franconian	East Franconian	Standard English	
Weissenburg Catechism	Tatian		
<i>Fater unsēr, thū in himilom bist, giwihit si namo thīn. Quaeme rīchi thīn. Werdhe willeo thīn, sama sō in himile endi in erthu. Broot unseraz emezzigaz gib uns hiutu. Endi farlāz uns sculdhi unsero sama sō wir farlāzzēm scolōm unserēm. Endi ni gileidi unsih in costunga. Auh arlōsi unsih fona ubile.</i>	<i>Fater unser, thū thār bist in himile, si giheilagōt thīn namo, queme thīn rīhhi, sī thīn willo, sō her in himile ist, sō sī her in erdu, unsar brōt tagalīhaz gib uns hiutu, inti furlāz uns unsara sculdī, sō wir furlāzemēs unsarēn sculdīgōn, inti ni gileitēst unsih in costunga, ūzouh arlōsi unsih fon ubile.</i>	“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”	
Alemannic: 789 St. Gallen	Alemannic: 1000 Notker's Catechism	Bavarian: second half of the 9th c. Freising	Standard English
<i>Fater unseer, thū pist in himile, wihi namun dīnan, qhume rīhhi dīn, werde willo diin, sō in himile sōsa in erdu. Prooth unseer emezzihic kip uns hiutu, oblāz uns sculdi unserero, sō wir oblāzēm uns sculdikēm, enti ni unsih firleiti in khorunka, ūzzer lōsi unsih fona ubile.</i>	<i>Fater unsēr dū in himele bist, dīn willo gescēhe in erdo, also in himele. Unser tágelicha brōt kib uns hiuto unde únsero sculde belāz uns, ālsā ōuh wir belāzen unseren sculdigen. Unde in chorunga ne léitēst dū únseh. Nube lōse unsih fōne ubele.</i>	<i>Fater unsēr, dū pist in himilum, kawihit si namo dīn, piqhueme rīchi dīn, wesa dīn willo, sama sō in himile est, sama in erdu. Pilipi unsraz emizzigaz kip uns eogawanna enti flāz uns unsro sculdi sama sō wir flāzzamēs unsrēm scolōm enti ni princ unsih in chorunka, ūzzan kaneri unsih fona allēm suntōn.</i>	“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

(Naumann & Betz 1962, 106–107)

Merseburg Incantations, first published in 1841, are known from a manuscript originating in around 900. Names of pagan gods appearing in the Second Merseburg Charm testify of its pre-Christian origin [Jan de Vries: *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, II. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1957, 169].

<i>Phol ende Uodan vuoron zi holza; dû uuart demo balderes volon sîn vuoꝝ birenkit. thû biguolen Sinhtgunt, Sunna era suister; thû biguolen Fria, Sunna era suister; thû biguolen Uodan,</i>	“Phol and Wodan were riding to the woods, and the foot of Balder’s foal was sprained. So Sinhtgunt, Sunna’s sister, conjured it. and Frija, Volla’s sister, conjured it. and Wodan conjured it,	<i>sô hê uuola conda: sôse bēnrenkī sôse bluotrenkī sôse lidirenkī; bēn zi bēna, bluot zi bluoda, lid zi geliden, sôse gelīmida sîn</i>	as well he could: Like bone-sprain, so blood-sprain, so joint-sprain: Bone to bone, blood to blood, joints to joints, so may they be glued.”
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(See Fortson 2004, 325)

### Hildebrandslied “Song of Hildebrand”

It is an epic poem manuscript of which was written by two anonymous monks in the monastery of Fulda. The Bavarian variant of Old High German prevails in this work (cf. *prut* “bride, wife”, *pist* “(you sg.) are”, *chind* “child”), although Old Saxon influence also appears (e.g. *to* “to”, *uuêt* “white”, *luttilla* “little”, *ûsere* “our”, *ôdre* “others”, next to the hypercorrect *huitte* “white”, which represents a mechanical transformation of Old High German *hwizze*) and some orthographic elements typical of the Anglo-Saxon writing are also found there (ligature *æ*, letter *ƿ* for *uu*-). The poem describes a conflict between Theoderic and Odoacer, which is indicative of the originally Gothic theme and depicts events from the end of the 5th century in Northern Italy. The story was mediated by the Langobards, which is proven by the suffix *-brand* typical of the Langobard but not Gothic names. Probably because of the collapse of Langobards’ power in the years 770–780, the text was moved to Bavaria where it was converted into the literary Old High German. The last transformation of this work that added the Old Saxon and Anglo-Saxon influence occurred in Fulda (Kartschoke 1987, 127; de Boor

1979, 67; Braune, Helm, Ebbinghaus 1979; Lühr 1982).

*Ik gihorta ðat seggen,  
ðat sih urhettun anon muotin,  
hiltibraht enti hadubrant, untar heriun tuem  
sunufatarungo. iro saro rihtun,  
<sup>5</sup> garutun se iro gudhamun, gurtun sih iro suert ana,  
helidos, ubar [h]ringa. do sie to dero hiltiu ritun.  
hiltibraht gimahalta, heribrantes sunu – her uuas  
heroro man,  
ferahes frotoro -; her fragen gistuont  
fohem uuortum, [h]wer sin fater wari  
<sup>10</sup> fireo in folche, ‘eddo [h]welihhes cnuosles du sis.  
ibu du mi enan sages, ik mi de odre uuert,  
chind, in chunincriche: chud ist mi <r> al irmind-  
eot.’  
hadubraht gimahalta, hiltibrantes sunu:  
‘dat sagetun mi usare liuti,  
<sup>15</sup> alte anti frote, dea erhina warun,  
dat hiltibrant hatti min fater: ih heittu hadubrant.  
  
forn her ostar gi{h} <w> eit – floh her otachres  
nid -  
hina miti theotrihhe enti sinero degano filu.  
her furlaet in lante luttilla sitten  
<sup>20</sup> prut <i> in bure, barn unwahsan,  
arbo laosa. he raet ostar hina.  
de <s> sid detrihhe darba gistuontu <n>,  
fater{er}es mines: dat uuas so friuntlaos man.  
her was otachre ummett <i> irri,*

“I have so heard it said:  
That once came together in single combat  
Hildebrand and Hadubrand between two hosts  
Father and son. Their fittings they fastened,  
Securing their byrnies: bound their swords on  
Over the ring-mail ere they rode to the fighting.  
Hildebrand spoke, Heribrant’s son – he was the  
older man –  
In few words asking  
who his father was  
Among the fighting-folk... ‘...or from what kindred  
you come.  
For if you tell me one the other I’ll know.  
You see, lad: I know all the land’s noble houses.’  
Hadubrand spoke then, Hildebrand’s son:  
‘Know this on the faith of those of our folk  
Who, older and learned, were living long since –  
Hildbrand is my father named; I am called Hadu-  
brand.  
Long time ago he is gone away east, driven by  
Otake’s envy,  
With Thiedrek faring and his thanes all together.  
Behind him in grief he abandoned ungrown  
His little bairn, and his bride in the bower,  
Lacking all means. He had to go east.  
Thiedrek thenceforth much was in need  
Of my father’s service: he was so friendless a man.  
To Otaker he was a foe ever angry;

- <sup>25</sup> *degano dechisto, unti deotrichhe darba gistontun.* But for Thiedrek the foremost of thanes.  
*her was eo folches at ente; imo <w> as eo* At the front of the battle he went, and best loved  
*feh <t> a ti leop:* the fighting.  
*chud was her chonnem mannum. ni,* He was well-known to the keenest warriors.  
*waniu ih, iu lib habbe.“* I suppose that he is no longer alive.’  
*‘wettu irmingot’, quad hiltibraht, „obana ab heuane,* ‘God be my witness,’ quoth Hildebrand, ‘from  
*dat du neo dana halt mit sus sippan man dinc ni* heaven on high:  
*gileitos.’* You’d best have no dealings in deeds of battle with  
 so close a kinsman.’  
<sup>30</sup> *want her do ar arme wuntane bouga,* He took from his arm the twisted torc  
*cheisuringu gitan, so imo se der chuning gap,* Wrought with gold chasing given him once  
*huneo truhtin: ‘dat ih dir it nu bi huldi gibu.’* By the king of the Huns. ‘Have this for friendship,’  
 he said.  
*hadubraht gimalta, hiltibrantes sunu:* Hadubrand spoke then, Hildebrand’s son:  
*‘mit geru scal man geba infahan, ort widar orte.* ‘A man *seizes* his prize by plying his spear – Point  
<sup>35</sup> *du bist dir, alter hun, ummet spaher,* counter point.  
*spenis mih mit dinem <w> ortun, wili mih dinu* You’re a wily warrior indeed, you old Hun. With  
*speru werpan.* words you will cozen me, but then cast your  
 weapon.  
*pist also gialtet man, so du ewin inwit fortos.* You’ve become old by base double-dealing.  
*dat sagetun mi seolidante* Sailors on the ocean western,  
*westar ubar wentilsēo, dat <in> an wic furnam:* on Wendel-sea already have warned me: war took  
 him away.  
<sup>40</sup> *tot ist hiltibrant, heribrantes suno.’* Dead now is Hildebrand Heribrand’s son.’  
*hiltibraht gimahalta, heri <brant> es suno:* Hildebrand spoke now, Heribrand’s son:  
*‘wela gisihu ih in dinem hrustim,* ‘Well I can gather, from your good battle-gear  
*dat du habes heme herron goten,* That you have at home a handsome master,  
*dat du noh bi desemo riche reccheo ni wurti.* You’ve not ever suffered exile by the same.  
<sup>45</sup> *welaga nu, waltant, got’, quad hiltibrant,* Alas now, Almighty God,’ quoth Hildebrand,  
*‘wewurt skihit.* ‘a woeful fate follows.  
*ih wallota sumaro enti wintro sehstic ur lante,* I have fared sixty summers and winters far from my  
*dar man mih eo scerita in folc sceotantero,* land,  
*so man mir at burc enigeru banun ni gifasta.* Always ranged forward in the first battle-rank.  
*nu scal mih suasat chind suertu hauwan,* Nor yet has fate found me before any fortress;  
<sup>50</sup> *breton mit sinu billiu, eddo ih imo ti banin* But now must my own son hew me with sword,  
*werdan.* Lay me low with his spear, or I take his life.  
*doh maht du nu aodlihho, ibu dir din ellen taoc,* You well may, however – if your might is so hard,  
*in sus heremo man hrusti giwinnan,* Win from so old a man his armor with ease,  
*rauba bi{h}rahanen, ibu du dar enic reht habes.* Bear it for booty if you win it in battle.’  
*der si doh nu argosto’, quad hiltibrant, ‘ostarliuto,* Quoth Hildebrand, ‘Not even the craven cowards of  
 the east  
 Could deny you the duel since you so desire  
 To fight to the finish. So then let us find out,  
 Which of us two will give up his gear,  
 And who bear away both of the byrnies.’  
 Then first they let fly their ash spears,  
 In sharp-falling showers that stood in their shields.  
 Then they closed battle, and battered their boards  
 Hacking hard at the hay-white shields,  
 Till the wood dwindled beneath deadly blows,  
 Weakened with weapons ... ”
- <sup>55</sup> *der dir nu wiges warne, nu dih es so wel lustit,*  
*gudea gimeinun: niuse, de motti,*  
*[h]werdar sih hiutu dero hregilo hrumen muotti*  
*erdo desero brunnono bedero uualtan.’*  
*do lettun se arist asckim scritan,*  
<sup>60</sup> *scarpēn scur <un>, dat in dem sciltim stont.*  
*do stoptun to samane, staimbort chlu <b> un,*  
*heuwun harmlicco huitte scilti,*  
*unti im iro lintun luttulo wurtun,*  
*giwigan miti wabnum ...*

Edited by R. Lühr (1982, 210–13).

Translated by Bruce McMenemy (1997).