



CURSO 2016 - 2017

CONCEPTS AND METHODS OF HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS



Sir William Jones, Jacob Grimm and Karl Verner from Lisa Minnick 2011. "Let them eat metaphors, Part 1: Order from Chaos and the Indo-European Hypothesis" *Functional Shift*
<https://functionalshift.wordpress.com/2011/10/09/metaphors1/>
[retrieved February 17, 2017]

HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

AIMS OF STUDY

- 1) Language change and stability
- 2) Reconstruction of earlier stages of languages
- 3) Discovery and implementation of research methodologies

Theodora Bynon (1981)

- 1) Grammars that result from the study of different time spans in the evolution of a language
- 2) Contrast them with the description of other related languages
- 3) Linguistic variation cannot be separated from sociological and geographical factors

ORIGINS

- Renaissance: Contrastive studies of Greek and Latin
- Nineteenth Century: Sanskrit
 - 1) Acknowledgement of linguistic change
 - 2) Development of the Comparative Method
- Robert Beekes (1995)
 - 1) The Greeks
 - 2) Languages Change
- R. Lawrence Trask (1996)
 - 1) 6000-8000 years
 - 2) Historical linguist as a kind of archaeologist

THE COMPARATIVE METHOD

- Sir William Jones (1786): Greek, Sanskrit and Latin
- Reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European
- Regular principle of phonological change
 - 1) The Neogrammarians
 - 2) Grimm's Law (1822) and Verner's Law (1875)
 - 3) Laryngeal Theory : Ferdinand de Saussure (1879)
- Two steps:
 - 1) Isolation of a set of cognates:

Latin: decem ;	Greek: deca ;	Sanskrit: daśa ;	Gothic: taihun
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 - 2) Phonological correspondences extracted:

1. Latin d ;	Greek d ;	Sanskrit d ;	Gothic t
2. Latin e ;	Greek e ;	Sanskrit a ;	Gothic ai
3. Latin c ;	Greek c ;	Sanskrit ś ;	Gothic h
4. Latin em ;	Greek a ;	Sanskrit a ;	Gothic un

CONCEPTS AND METHODS OF HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

- The sound laws would help to reconstruct a series of phonemes:
 - 1) It was concluded that the Proto-Indo-European word for *ten* was ***dek^m**
 - 2) Using regular phonological principles, we can figure out how this word developed into the different variants:
 1. Latin: ***m>em**
 2. Greek: ***m>a**
 3. Sanskrit: ***k>ś** and ***m>a**
 4. Gothic: ***d>t** ; ***k>h** and ***m>un**
- Despite the empirical character of this method, it has been subjected to some criticism:
 - Linguistic reality of Indo-European
- Some basic assumptions of the Comparative Method have also been reconsidered:
 - 1) Parent language
 - 2) Divergence and convergence of languages

THE WAVE THEORY

- Johannes Schmidt (1872)
 - 1) Correlation between geographic distance of an specific change
- T. Bynon (1981)
 - 1) Some innovations occur and isoglosses will star to rise
 - 2) Not all linguistic changes lead to divergence between languages
 - 3) After two languages have become independent they can start sharing certain features
- Claude Vandeloise (1984)
 - 1) Logical time
 - 2) Historical time
 - The Family–tree representation of linguistic evolution and the Wave Theory complement one another to the study of linguistic change

THE NOTION OF PROTO-LANGUAGE

- Hypothetical reconstruction of the earlier form of a language
 - 1) No written records exist of it
 - 2) Its reconstruction draws upon the comparison of related words and expressions of the different languages that derived from it
 - Ancestral parent language of all the derived languages

LINGUISTIC GENEALOGIES

- Typological classification
 - Based on similarities in the linguistic structure:
 - 1) According to grammar (Matthew S. Dryer 1996; 1997; 1998)
 - 2) According to the lexicon
- Genetic classification
 - Lead to the establishment of language families/phylum
- ✓ These two methods can be combined

CONCEPTS AND METHODS OF HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

- Example of typological classification (Elizabeth Closs Traugott 1994)
 - Types of languages:
 - 1) Isolating (analytic)
 - 2) Agglutinative
 - 3) Inflectional (synthetic)

THE NEOGRAMMARIANS

- R. L. Trask (1996)
 - OE: **hūs, mūs, lūs, dūn, tūn** > PDE: **house, mouse, louse, down, town**: /au:/
 - ✓ Great Vowel Shift
 - But OE: **rūm** > PDE: **room**: /u:/
- Karl Verner (1875)
 - He explained the apparent exceptions to phonological changes
 - Grimm's Law: First Germanic Consonant Shift
 - They were conditioned by phonological environment
- The Neogrammarian Hypothesis

INTERNAL RECONSTRUCTION

- Internal Reconstruction supplements Comparative Linguistics
 - 1) Analysis of irregular linguistic patterns
 - 2) Structuralist approach to language
 - It is not necessary to examine other languages to reconstruct the earlier stages of one
- R. L. Trask (1996): English past participles
 - 1) Love/loved, paint/painted
 - 2) Write/written, take/taken
 - 3) Access/accessed, commute/commuted, escalate/escalated
 - 4) He has shaved but He is clean-shaven
 - 5) I have mowed the lawn but This is new-mown hay
 - 6) The lead has melted but his is molten lead
 - ✓ The original forms of the participles showed the *-en* pattern, since they were strong verbs
 - ✓ By analogy with weak verbs the regular forms in *-ed* displaced the original strong pattern
 - ✓ The adjectival form was not affected by this analogical development, which still end in *-en*



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THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES



Germanic governing assembly, drawn after the depiction in a relief of the Column of Marcus Aurelius from Emanuel Mäller-Baden, 1904: *Bibliothek des allgemeinen und praktischen Wissens, Bd. 2. - Berlin, Leipzig, Wien, Stuttgart: Deutsches Verlaghaus Bong & Co.* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germanic_peoples#/media/File:Germanische-ratsversammlung_1-1250x715.jpg [retrieved February 17, 2017]

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INDO-EUROPEAN LINGUISTICS

- The Indo-European language is the proto-language that has received the most attention from historical linguists
- All the theoretical frameworks and procedures aimed at reconstructing this common ancestor inaugurated the field of study known as Indo-European Linguistics

- 1) Sir William Jones (1786): scientific treatment
- 2) Jacob Grimm (1822): *Deutsche Grammatik*
 1. **Ablaut**
English vowel changes in verb stems: sing, sang, sung
 2. **First Germanic Consonant Shift or Grimm's Law**
Voiceless plosives became fricatives:
*p>f; *t>þ; *k>x
Voiced plosives became voiceless:
*b>p; *d>t; *g>k
Voiced aspirated plosives dropped the aspiration:
*b^h>b; *d^h>d; *g^h>g

✓ High German: **Second or High German Sound Shift**

English: *open*; *eat*

German: *offen*; *essen*

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3) Karl Verner (1875): **Verner's Law**

Latin: centum

English: hund**red**

- When the Indo-European accent was not on the vowel immediately preceding, such voiceless fricatives became voiced in Germanic:

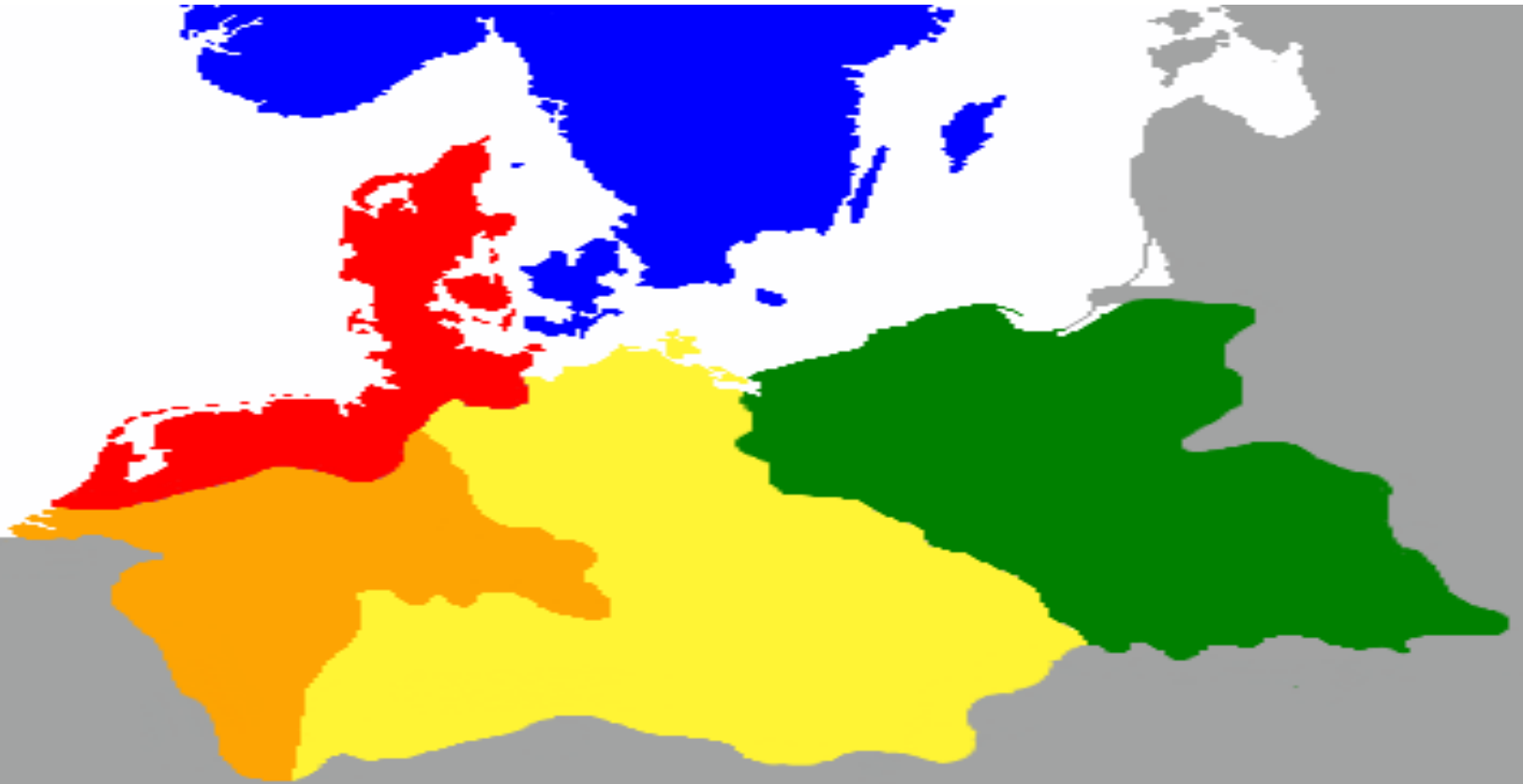
OE: cwe**p**an (to say)

ic cwa**p**; we cwæ**d**on; cwed**e**n

- The languages thus brought into relationship by descent or progressive differentiation from a parent speech are called a family of languages: **Indo-European**
- The surviving languages show various degrees of similarity to one another and fall into eleven principal groups:
 1. Indian
 2. Iranian
 3. Armenian
 4. Hellenic
 5. Albanian
 6. Italic
 7. Balto-Slavic
 8. **Germanic**
 9. Celtic
 10. Hittite
 11. Tocharian

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

THE GERMANIC BRANCHES

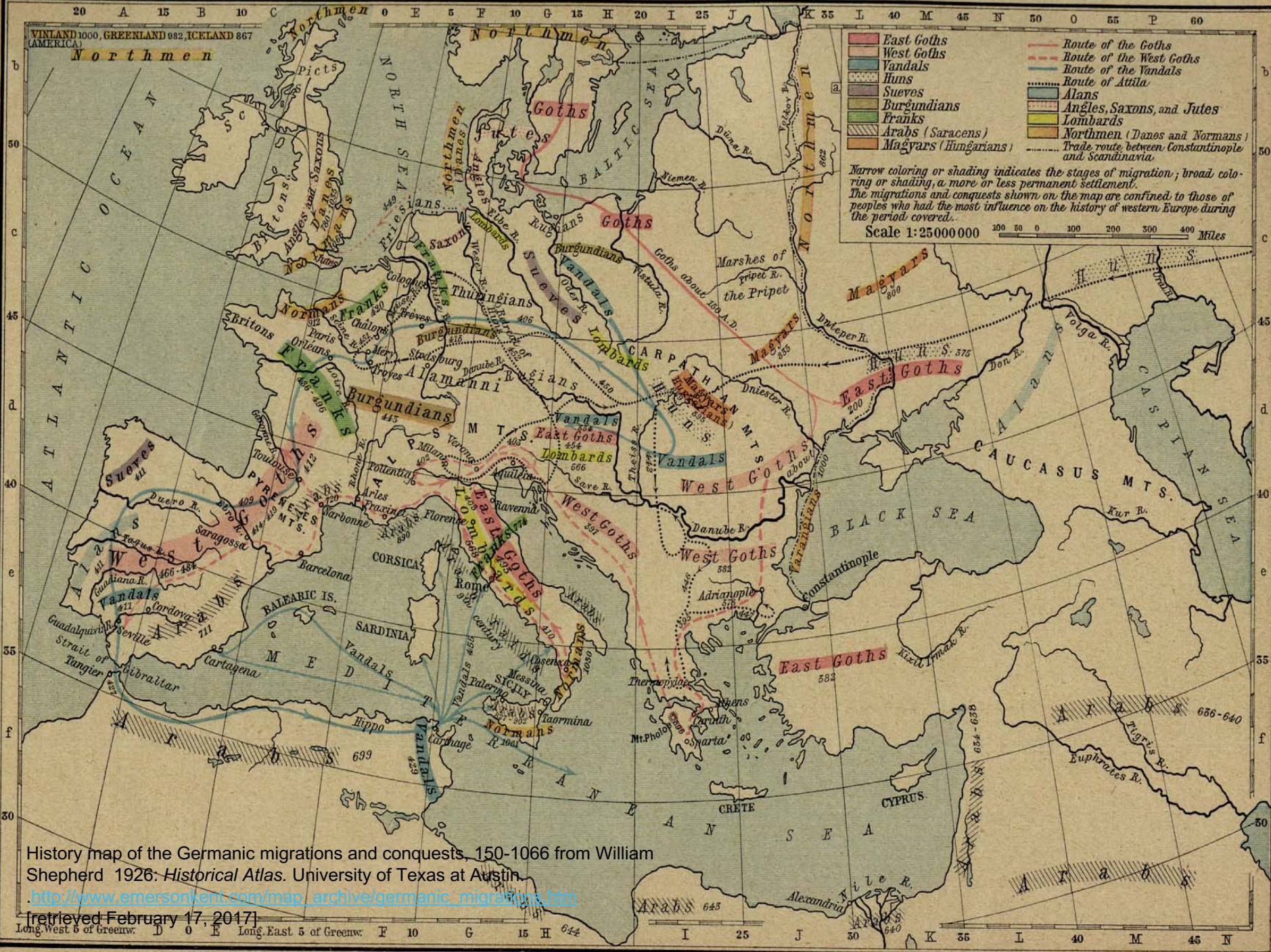


1. North Germanic
2. North Sea Germanic
3. Weser-Rhine Germanic
4. Elbe Germanic
5. East Germanic

The Germanic groups from Werner König 2001: *dtv-Atlas Deutsche Sprache*. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. 46-52.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germanic_peoples

[retrieved February 17, 2017]

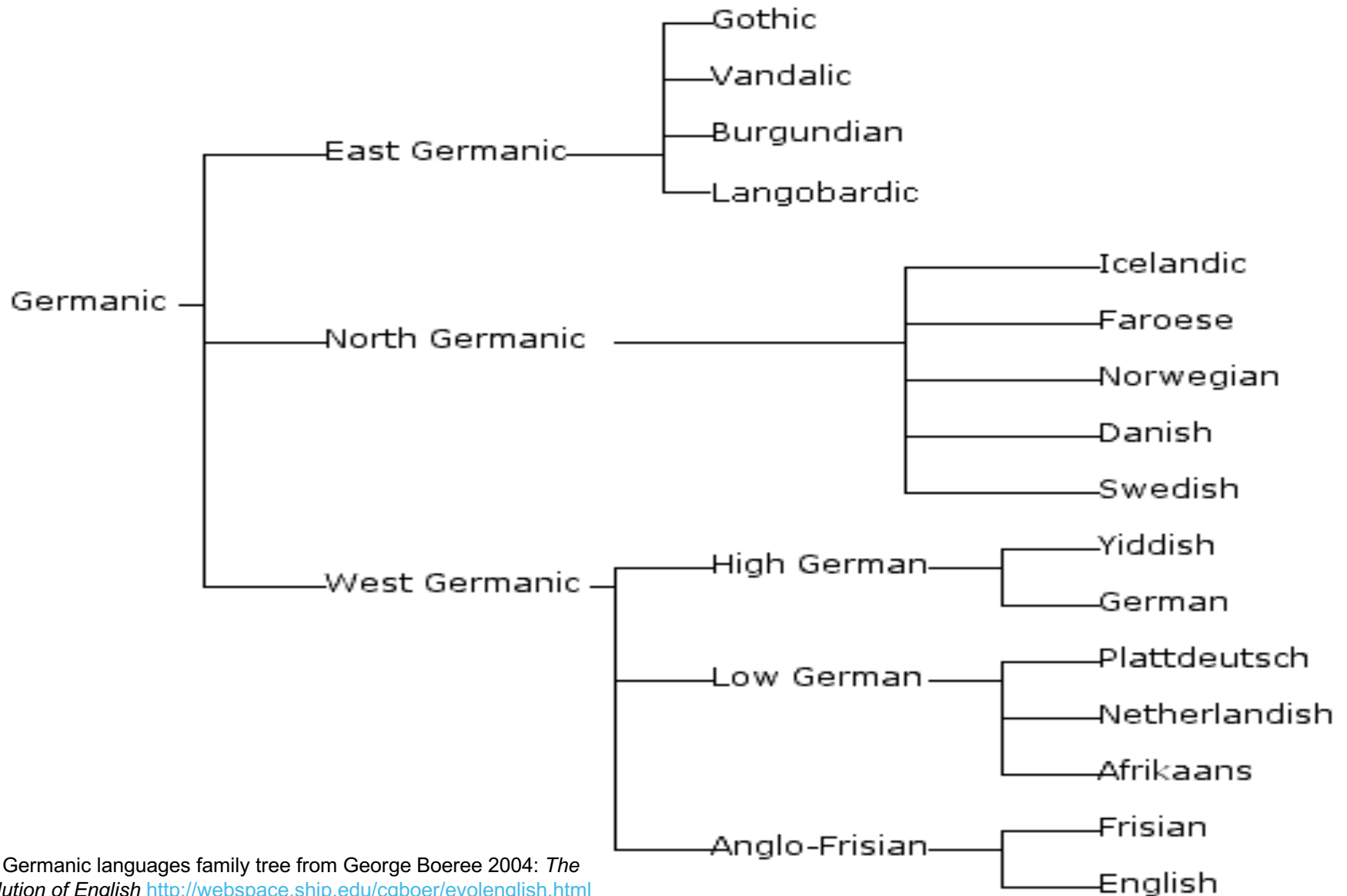


History map of the Germanic migrations and conquests, 150-1066 from William Shepherd 1926: *Historical Atlas*. University of Texas at Austin.

http://www.emersonkent.com/map_archive/germanic_migrations.htm

retrieved February 17, 2017

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES



The Germanic languages family tree from George Boeree 2004: *The Evolution of English* <http://webspaceship.edu/cgboer/evolenglish.html>
[retrieved February 17, 2017]

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

- R. L. Trask (1996)
 - ✓ **Shared innovations:** developments in a group of languages of a family
 - same parent language
 - ✓ **Shared archaisms:** specific relevant feature shown by the common ancestor
 - inherited by some daughters but not all

THE WEST GERMANIC BRANCH

- Has descended from the North-Sea, Rhine-Weser and Elbe groups
- Six modern standard languages have emerged from the dialectal varieties of this branch:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. English | 3. Afrikaans |
| 2. Frisian | 5. German |
| 3. Netherlandic | 6. Yiddish |

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

1. ENGLISH

- Has descended from the North Sea Germanic group
 - ✓ The most relevant development is the disappearance of Proto-Germanic nasal sounds before voiceless fricatives (f, þ, s)

English :	soft	German:	san ft
	other		an d er
	us		un s
	goose		ga n s

- ✓ Palatalization of /k/ before front vowels and /j/, and of Proto-Germanic /g/ before front vowels

English:	chin	German:	kin n
	birch		bir k e
	yield		ge l ten
	yard		ga r ten

2. FRISIAN

- Has also descended from the North Sea Germanic group
 - 1) West Frisian: Friesland
 - 2) East Frisian: Saterland
 - 3) North Frisian: Western coast of Schleswig
- ✓ It shows all the features that distinguish English from the other Germanic languages

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

3. NETHERLANDIC

1. National language of the Netherlands
 2. One of the official languages of Belgium
 3. Primary standard language in the Netherlands Antilles
 4. Primary standard language in the Republic of Suriname
 5. Afrikaans is derived from Netherlandic
- It split off from the Rhine-Weser group
 - Presents some characteristics of the languages that belonged to the North Sea Germanic group:
 - ✓ Disappearance of nasals before certain voiceless fricatives such as /f/
 - ✓ But kept before /p/ or /s/

4. AFRIKAANS

1. Seventeenth century: Dutch East Indian Company
 2. Germans and French Huguenots
 3. End of the eighteenth century: British
- Modern Afrikaans descended from the Netherlandic dialect spoken in Zuid-Holland
 - Spoken by non-natives
 - Contact between the white population and the Bantu speakers

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

5. GERMAN

1. Standard language of Germany
 2. Standard language of Austria
 3. One of the national languages of Switzerland
 4. Boasts a large number of dialectal varieties
 - ✓ Low-German: North
 - ✓ High-German: South
- When the first Germanic tribes arrived in Southern Germany, the voiceless stops /p/, /t/, and /k/ showed the same alternations as PDE
 - After the **High German Consonant Shift**: sixth century
 - These plosives evolved into affricates at the beginning of words and when geminated
 - And into long fricatives after a vowel and in final position
 - ✓ This consonant shift produced the major dialectal subdivision of the German language
 - ✓ The consonants of Low-German resemble the distribution observed in PDE
 - ✓ Relevant changes have occurred in High-German

Low-German (no mutation)	High-German (mutated)		
	After Germanic fricative (*s/, */f/, */h/)	In initial position; after consonant except Germanic fricative; in geminates	Between vowels; in final position
/t/	/t/	/ts/	/s/
/p/	/p/	/pf/	/f/
/k/	/k/	[k], [kx], [x] according to dialect	/x/

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

5. YIDDISH

1. United States
 2. Latin America
 3. Israel
 4. Countries that composed the Soviet Union
- The most atypical Germanic language
 - Features from Romance
 - Hebrew-Aramaic
 - Slavic languages
 - Two main dialects: Western and Eastern Yiddish
 - Four main periods:
 1. Early Yiddish
 2. Old Yiddish
 3. Middle Yiddish
 4. Modern Yiddish
 - ✓ The literary tradition in the three first periods: **Western**
 - ✓ In the Modern period: **Eastern**

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

THE EAST GERMANIC BRANCH

- The languages that belong to this branch are extinct
 - The only one from which we have information is **Gothic**: Western area of the Black Sea
 - ✓ The oldest surviving Germanic language apart from a few disperse runes
 - ✓ Translation of the Bible by Ulfilas
 - In the eighth century the language had almost disappeared
 - Its role had been relegated to that of a ritual language
-
- ✓ The Gothic consonant system is the same to that reconstructed for Proto-Germanic
 - ✓ This language shows archaizing features lost by the other Germanic languages
 1. Passive voice
 2. Past tense formed by reduplication
 3. Dual forms for the first and second persons: Verbs and pronouns
 - ✓ Underwent developments independently from the other Germanic languages
 1. Shortening of long vowels in final unstressed syllables
Proto-Germanic: *erþō> Gothic: airþa (earth)
 1. Lost of most short vowels
Proto-Germanic: *stainaz> Gothic stains (stone)
 - ✓ Voiced fricatives at the end of words became unvoiced
Proto-Germanic nominative: *hlaiaz> Gothic: hlaifs (bread)
Proto-Germanic accusative: *hlaian> Gothic: hlaif

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

THE NORTH-GERMANIC BRANCH

- This branch is also known as the **Scandinavian family**
- Extant runic inscriptions (futhark) which are the oldest evidence of Germanic language
 - ✓ The surviving runic inscriptions do not constitute texts: marks indicating ownership or manufacturing
 - ✓ The runes can be designated Northwest Germanic
 - ✓ From the seventh century we can speak of North-Germanic as a distinguishable dialect: **Common Scandinavian**
- The migrations of the **Nordic people** in the Viking Age (750-1050) caused the spread of Scandinavian:

1. Iceland	7. Isle of Man
2. Greenland	8. Parts of Ireland
3. The Faeroes	9. Parts of England
4. Shetlands	10. Parts of France (Normandy)
5. Orkneys	11. Parts of Russia
6. Hebrides	
- The different migratory directions lead to the distinction of two main dialects:
 - ✓ West Scandinavian: conservative
 - ✓ East Scandinavian: innovative
- The next period in this language is known as **Old Scandinavian**
 - ✓ Consolidation of the Christian Church
 - ✓ European Medieval culture
- Six Germanic languages derived from the Scandinavian family:

1. Danish	4. Faeroese
2. Swedish	5. New Norwegian
3. Icelandic	6. Dano-Norwegian

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

1. DANISH

- ✓ More differentiating linguistic features from Common Scandinavian
- ✓ In the eighteenth century a purist reform replaced a considerable number of loans by the Danish original terms
- ✓ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries acquired a literary dimension
 - In 1958 a spelling reform was effected to assimilate Danish spelling to Swedish and Norwegian:
 1. Replacement of aa by å
 2. Capitalization of nouns was eliminated

2. SWEDISH

- ✓ Danish had strongly influenced the Swedish language until 1525: Revolution headed by Gustav Vasa
 - The written language developed following the model of the manuscripts from **Central Sweden**
 - Existence of silent –t and –d in final position:
 1. husted (house)
 2. kastad (thrown)

3. ICELANDIC

- ✓ It was not completely displaced by Danish during the Danish rule
- ✓ Some of the contributing factors:
 1. Existence of a solid literary tradition in Icelandic
 2. The remote geographical position of the country
 3. The enormous linguistic differences between both languages
 4. The distribution of the population scattered across the country in small communities
- When all the Scandinavian languages had lost their inflectional system, Icelandic maintained Common Scandinavian grammar unaltered
- ✓ When independence was achieved in the nineteenth century preoccupation for the role of the Icelandic language emerged
- ✓ All this circumstances have made it considerable different from the other Scandinavian languages

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

4. FAEROESE

- ✓ This language is spoken in the Faeroe islands
 - In the nineteenth century it developed an independent orthography along etymological lines quite unphonetic
- ✓ Only in the twentieth century we can speak of a real literary activity in Faeroese

5. NEW NORWEGIAN

- ✓ In the fifteenth century when Denmark and Norway became united, Old Norwegian was suppressed and written traditions gradually faded away
- ✓ In 1814 Norway became independent: Ivar Aasen proposed a Norwegian norm intended to substitute Danish
 - After continuous efforts he presented a grammar, a dictionary and a large amount of literary texts
 - The New Norwegian was appointed the second official language in 1885
 - Ivar Aasen's norm has considerably changed
 1. Speech of East Norway as a guide for the spoken language
 2. Dano-Norwegian for the written

6. DANO-NORWEGIAN

- ✓ Primary language of Norway's population
 - The Danish language used was given Norwegian pronunciation
 - Considerable amount of un-Danish terms and structures
- ✓ In 1840 a new policy was devised at achieving consistency between the spoken and the written forms
 - The resultant language was officially known as **Bokmål**

THE CULTURE AND ORIGIN OF THE GERMANIC PEOPLE

RELIGION

- ✓ Due to their early conversion to Christianity we do not know much about the autochthonous religious practices of the Germanic people
- ✓ Only Scandinavians maintained the original religious beliefs until late Middle Ages
 - There exist evidence in English and German vernacular texts of the existence of **charms**:
 - Short invocations aimed at solving problems of daily life
 - People's and cattle's illnesses and interpersonal relations
 - **Merseburg Charms** (c.900): alliterating verse
 - The heroic poem Beowulf is of Scandinavian origin: Germanic symbols and images
 - Manuscript known as **Elder Edda** composed of a number of lays:
 - Heroic poems
 - Mythological poems:
 - ✓ Stories of German Gods, a cosmogony, the beginning and apocalyptic ending of ancient Scandinavian world (**Ragnarök**), and recommendations to lead a wise life
 - ✓ **Hávamál**: Collection of aphorisms about daily life, wisdom, counseling and magic charms attributed to Odin

THE GERMANIC FAMILY OF LANGUAGES

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

- ✓ Germanic migrations lasted until the early Middle Ages and were responsible for the fall of the Western Roman Empire: agriculture-based lifestyle
- ✓ Loose political structure favored the migration of some groups
- ✓ Noble class whose members were eligible for being the Kings of the community
- The way the tribal life was organized was reflected in the *Germanic laws*
 - **Leges Barbarorum** (fifth-ninth centuries): Latin
 - Law was not devised by a central authority
 - They arose as the result of following fixed customs of the tribe: unwritten
 - ✓ Ethical and moral attitude to life
 - ✓ Connected to the migrations and conquests
 - Discussed by popular assemblies: declared as such by the King
- The Germanic social system:
 1. Free: Nobles and ordinary free men
 2. Un-free
 3. Half-free: could take part in certain transactions and get married
- The government was organized with a **King**, his **council** and a **tribal assembly**
 - The King: The highest military and religious authority and most powerful figure in the assembly
 - Assembly: Major decisions affecting the welfare of the tribe
- The tribe was subdivided into **clans**: all the tribal members related by blood and a had a **chief**
- Marriage involved the purchase of the bride by the groom
- Divorce existed as a practice: husband

6. **O**ðr þær lepli gúma húr var sin þíð bana. Ólm
 þær þær muno ey lya ef: þ vís uig varar. en elli
 geir. horn enga þ þót hō geirar gefi. Ropir aglapi
 er t kyns hō þyllt þ vñ ep þvñ. alt ef ley ef. þ
 sylg um getr vpi er þa gep guma. Sa en vev e vñda 5
 ratar z hej: þiolþ vñ þarip. hūio gedi styf gūna hūn
 la er vitandi ef vitz. Haldit þ aheri drecki þo at ho
 ja mñad. meli þærje ep þegi. okyht þ vñ þic engz
 þ at þv gang snēna at forā. Grapvgr hals nēa geds
 vñ etr ser alde trega opt þer hlegif er m; hōlco hōe 10
 mōyi hēlco magi. Híardir þ vño nēr þer hēi lcolō
 þ gāga þa aj: grali. en olup þ kan evagi sint v mall
 maga. Yefall þ z illa scapi hlgr at hūivēna. hñchi þ
 vev ef þ vñ þyrpti at þ er vāma vñr. Ólup þ
 vakir v allar nēr z hñt at hūivēna. þa ef mōþ ef 15
 at mōm hōe alt ef vñ lē var. Ólnotr þ hñt ser
 alla þa vñ hlōende vñ. hñchi þ þat þót þr vñ þ
 þat leli ef: þ m; snottō lñt. Ólnotr þ. h. l. a. v. v.
 vñ. þa þ þñt ef at þñi hōe at þ aþmēlendr þa.
O lnotr þ þñt alt vñ ef: þ a s i va vev. hñchi þ vñ 20
 hñ þ vñ vñ þa ef: hñ þñsta þñt. Ólnotr ef m; al
 dir hōe þ er hñt at þ þegi. þgi þ vñ at þ eñi hñ
 nēa þ meli t mñt. uerra þ hñ ef vñchi vñ þót
 þ meli t mñt. Þrōde la þñt e þregna kan z leg
 ia at lāma. epvñt lēyna mego yca seyn þ er gēna 25
 v guma. Orna meli la ef eva þeg hñd lōlo hñt
 hñd meli tūga nēa haldendr eigi opt s oget vñ
 gele. at aþa braggi scala þ anan hñt þót t kyn
 is hñt. mñgr þa þñt þñt ef: þ þregif ef at o
 nai þ þvñ þñt þvñ. Þrōde þñt la e þlōt 30
 tēf geir at geir hñt vñt aþa la ef v vñt

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