

Ulrich Geupel¹, Germanic Workshop Pavia 2015

1st lesson: Introduction and preliminaries

2nd lesson: Important sound changes

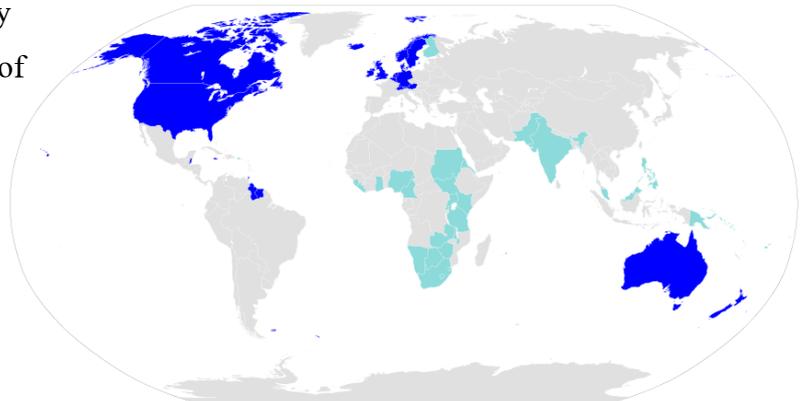
3rd lesson: Important basics of morphology

4th lesson: Important basics of syntax and semantics / text readings

Lesson 1

The Germanic languages as a branch of the Indo-European (*IE*) language family

Today Germanic languages, mostly English, are spoken in many areas of the world as the main official language (highlighted in dark blue) or at least as one of the official languages (highlighted in light blue).



Going back in time exhibits a clearly different picture:

The expansion of the Germanic tribes 750 BC – AD 1 (after the *Penguin Atlas of World History* 1988; which is of course tentative):

Settlements before 750 BC

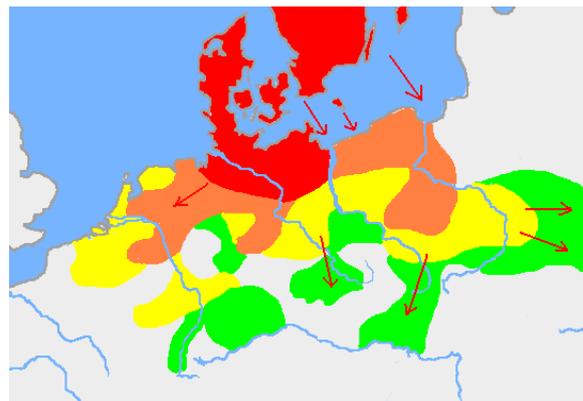
New settlements by 500 BC

New settlements by 250 BC

New settlements by AD 1

Later settlements are: The invasion of Anglo-Saxons to **England** starting in the 5th century after the retreat of the Romans from the

Britannic island; the Norse settlement in **Iceland** may go back to the 7th or 8th cent. as indicated by archeological findings. The *landnámabók* (book of invasions), written in the Old Icelandic language, describes increasing population from the 9th cent. onwards. In early times ancestors of the Gothic speaking people moved to the east and south as far as to the **Crimean peninsula**, some words and phrases of their language are preserved in some word lists from the 16th cent.



¹ Partly based on didactic material by Sabine Ziegler.

So, in the Middle Ages Germanic languages were spoken from Iceland to the Crimea, from Scandinavia to the alps.

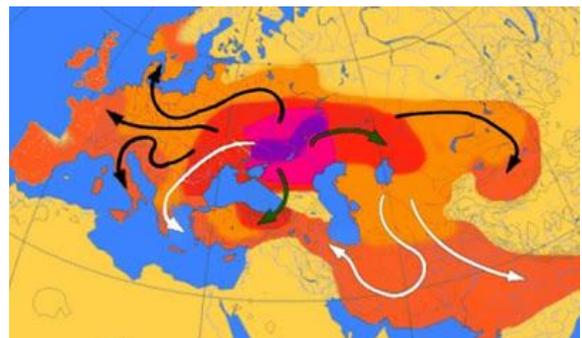
Modern Germanic languages in Europe:

- █ Nether Franconia (West Germanic)
- █ Nether Saxon + East Nether Saxon (West Germanic)
- █ Middle German/Teutonic (OED: *Teutonic*, to avoid misunderstandings between *Germanic* and *German*; it is a mixture between Nether and High German, West Germanic)
- █ High German /Teutonic (West Germanic)
- █ Anglian (Anglo-Frisian, West Germanic)
- █ Frisian (Anglo-Frisian, West Germanic)
- █ East Scandinavian (North Germanic)
- █ West Scandinavian (North Germanic)
- █ Borderline between West- and North Germanic
- █ East Germanic languages (Gothic realms in Spain, Italy; Crimean Gothic)



All Germanic languages go back to a predecessor called *Proto Germanic (PGmc)*, which is not attested but can be reconstructed by means of the methods of Historical Linguistics. I will come to that later.

The Germanic languages form an autonomous group within the Indo-European languages, like, e.g., Anatolian, Indian, Iranian, Slav(on)ic, Baltic, Celtic Languages, Latin and other Italic languages, Greek, Armenian, Tocharian, Albanian. Their origin can with due caution be dated to the 4th or rather 5th millenium BC.



From the time of their earliest attestation, the Germanic varieties are divided into three groups. Languages are grouped by what one could call *linguistic type fossils (linguistische Leitformen)* [term introduced by Sabine Ziegler]. The term *type fossil (Leitform)* is an expression coined by archaeologists denoting forms of e.g. brooches, pottery, or jewellery typical for certain regions. It is important that it is not only one feature but a class of characteristics which constitutes the

„Germanicity“ of a given language. Concerning the Germanic languages the most important distinctive features are:

- the first, i.e. Germanic consonant shift including Verner's Law; e.g. PIE **ph₂tér* „father“ > PGmc. **faðer* (attested in goth. vocative *fadar* „o father!“)
- a group of sonantic shifts (mainly PIE **o* > Gmc. **a*; PIE **ā* (bzw. **eh₂*) > Gmc. *ō*); e.g. PIE **g^hosti-* „stranger“ (Latin *hostis*, Old Church Slavonic *gostь*) > PGmc **gasti-*: run. *-gastiz*, goth. *gasts*, ONorse *gestr*, OHG, OS, MDutch *gast*, OEngl *giest*, ModEngl *guest*
- the shift of stress to the first or root syllable and as a result
- the reduction of final syllables; e.g. goth. *-s*, NGmc. *-r* from PIE Nom.sg. ending *-os*, other Gmc. languages show a complete loss of that ending, e.g. goth. *dags* „day“, ONorse *dagr*, ModHG *Tag*, OEngl. *dæg*, ModEngl. *day*, Dutch *dag*
- the loss of the PIE Aorist and Imperfect tense and as a result
- the composition of periphrastic future and perfect tense constructions, e.g. Engl. *he will be*, *she has been*, ModHG *er wird sein*, *sie ist gewesen*, and
- the composition of weak verbs with the dental or *t*-preterite; e.g. *bring* : *brought*, *blame* : *blamed* (as compared with the strong verbs *find* : *found*, *give* : *gave*)
- the loss of the PIE subjunctive whose functions were taken over by the optative (Engl. *shall* : *should*; ModHG *kann* : *könne*);
- the reduction of the PIE voice system and as a result
- the composition of periphrastic passive constructions; e.g. *he has been cured*, *she has been found*, ModHG *er ist geheilt worden*, *sie ist gefunden worden*, a.s.o.
- the reduction of the PIE case system to the core cases Nom., Gen., Dat., and Akk.;
- the development of the strong and weak adjective inflection, e.g. ModHG *blinder*^[st.] *Mann* „blind man“: *der blinde*^[wk.] *Mann* „the blind man“, Goth. *magus blinds* „blind boy“ : *sa magus blinda* „the blind boy“.

Furthermore, the Germanic languages are separated from each other by common innovations. These mechanisms of subdivision are repeated again and again until today. There is no common opinion on the first division of the Germanic languages because the first isoglosses separating these branches are few and the historical attestation is too scarce. Still it is widely assumed that East Germanic branched off first, while the remaining North West Germanic unity split up later.

Common models of the Germanic subdivisions:

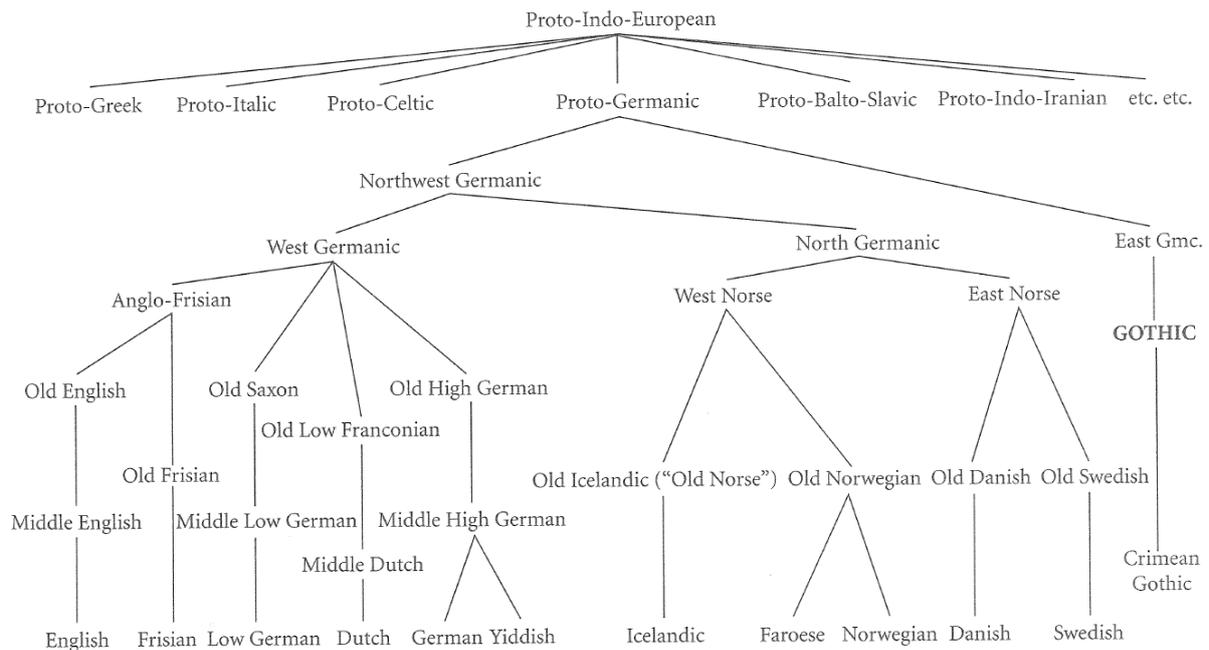
East + North :: West

East :: North + West

East + North + West :: South (Th. Vennemann's *bifurcation* theory)

'Leitformen' of the Germanic subbranches:

PGerm.	*dagaz 'day'	*harjaz 'army, host'	*bidjana 'bid, ask'
East: Goth.	<i>dags</i>	<i>harjis</i>	<i>bidjan</i>
North: (Run. >) ON	(-az > -R >) <i>dagr</i>	<i>herr</i>	<i>biðia</i>
West: OS/OE/OHG	<i>dag/dæg/tag</i>	<i>heri/here/heri</i>	<i>biddian/biddan/bitten</i>



[Jasanoff in Woodard 2010: p. 338]

Literature:

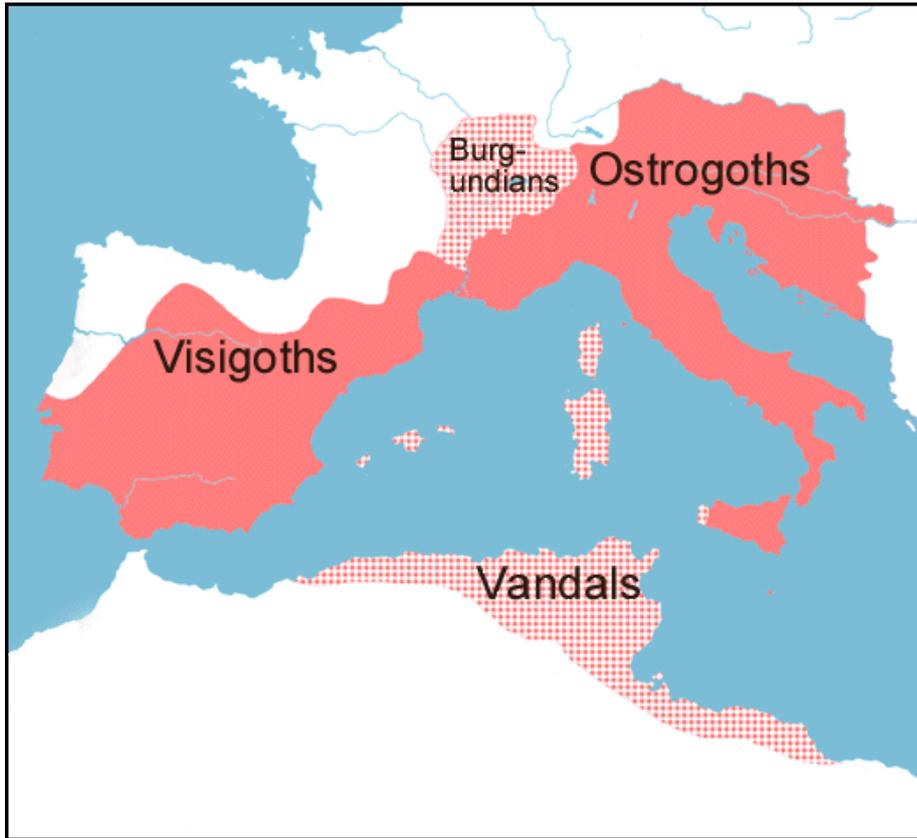
- Fortson, Benjamin W.: *Indo-European language and culture: An introduction*. 2. ed., Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell 2010. [Chapter 15 "Germanic", pp. 338-381]
- Jasanoff, Jay: Gothic. In: Woodard, Roger D. (ed.): *The ancient languages of Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press 2008, pp. 189-214.

East Germanic

East Germanic is mainly attested in a translation of the Bible into Gothic.

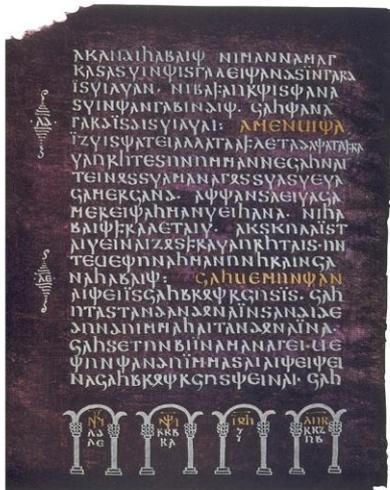
Other East Germanic languages (Vandalic, Burgundian, Gepidic) are attested only very fragmentary, mainly as names in Latin and Greek historiographical texts.

A basic historical division differentiates *Austrogotae*, „Eastern Goths: *Ostrogoths*“ and *Visigotae*, „Western Goths: *Visigoths*“, but this without much linguistic value.



Territories under the rule of Theoderich, AD 523.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goths#/media/File:Empire_of_Theodoric_the_Great_523.gif]



Besides some minor fragments Gothic is attested in the translation of parts of the Bible by bishop Ulfilas (Wulfila, ca. 311- 383), of which the 6th-century manuscript Codex Argenteus preserves 188 folios (out of originally 336).

Crimean Gothic (250[?]-1700/1800[?])

- Only source: report by Flemish diplomat, writer and traveller Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq from 1562 (first published in 1589) conatining 101 words with disputed authenticity:

nostratia aut parum differentia. haec erant

Broe. <i>Panis.</i>	Tag. <i>Dies.</i>
Plut. <i>Sanguis.</i>	Oeghene. <i>Oculi.</i>
Stul. <i>Sedes.</i>	Bars. <i>Barba.</i>
Hus. <i>Domus.</i>	Handa. <i>Manus.</i>
VVingart. <i>Vitis.</i>	Boga. <i>Arcus.</i>
Reghen. <i>Pluuia.</i>	Miera. <i>Formica.</i>
Bruder. <i>Frater.</i>	Rinck. <i>sine.</i>
Schuuester. <i>Soror.</i>	Ringo. <i>Annulus.</i>
Alt. <i>Senex.</i>	Brunna. <i>Fons.</i>
VVintch. <i>Ventus.</i>	VVaghen. <i>Currus.</i>
Siluir. <i>Argentum.</i>	Apel. <i>Pomum.</i>
Goltz. <i>Aurum.</i>	Schietē. <i>Mittere sagittā.</i>
Kor. <i>Triticum.</i>	Schlipen. <i>Dormire.</i>
Salt. <i>Sal.</i>	Kommen. <i>Venire.</i>
Fisct. <i>Piscis.</i>	Singhen. <i>Canere.</i>
Hoef. <i>Caput.</i>	Lachen. <i>Ridere.</i>
Thurn. <i>Porta.</i>	Eriten. <i>Flere.</i>
Stein. <i>Stella.</i>	Geen. <i>Ire.</i>
Sune. <i>Sol.</i>	Breen. <i>Assare.</i>
Mine. <i>Luna.</i>	Schuualth. <i>Mors.</i>

Knauen tag erat illi Bonus dies: knauen bonum dicebat, et pleraque alia cum nostra lingua non satis congruentia usurpabat, ut

Iel. <i>Vita sine sanitas.</i>	Baar. <i>Puer.</i>
Ieltsch. <i>Viuus sine sanus.</i>	Ael. <i>Lapis.</i>
Iel vburt. <i>Sit sanum.</i>	Menus. <i>Caro.</i>
Marzus. <i>Nuptiae.</i>	Rintsch. <i>Mons.</i>
Schuos. <i>Sponsa.</i>	Fers. <i>Vir.</i>
Statz. <i>Terra.</i>	Lista. <i>Parum.</i>
Ada. <i>Ouum.</i>	Schediit. <i>Lux.</i>
Ano. <i>Gallina.</i>	Borrotsch. <i>Voluntas.</i>
Telich. <i>Stultus.</i>	Cadariou. <i>Miles.</i>
Stap. <i>Capra.</i>	Kilemschkop. <i>ebibe calicē.</i>
Gadeltha. <i>Pulchrum.</i>	Tzo Vvarthata. <i>tu fecisti.</i>
Atochta. <i>Malum.</i>	Ies Varthata. <i>Ille fecit.</i>
VVichtgata. <i>Album.</i>	Ich malthata. <i>Ego dico.</i>
Mycha. <i>Ensis.</i>	

[reprint of Busbecq's list, Stearns in Beck 1989]

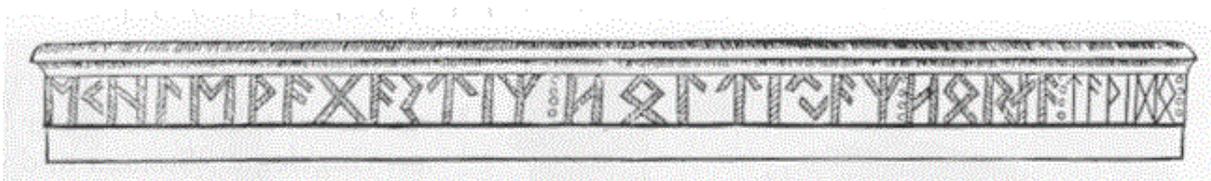
Literature:

- Stearns, Macdonalds Jr.: Das Krimgotische. In: Beck, Heinrich: *Germanische Rest- und Trümmersprachen*. Berlin : de Gruyter 1989.

North Germanic

- Runic inscriptions from AD 150-, but very fragmentary attestation

- Proto Norse is besides Gothic the most archaic stage of Germanic with only few phonological innovations:
 - *a*-mutation: **i, *u > e, o / _a, ḁ, ē* [shared with WGerm.]
 - Secondary **ē* of different (and partly unclear) origin [shared with WGerm.]
 - unaccented **ai, *au > *ē, ḁ* [shared with WGerm.]
 - **pl > *hl* [shared with WGerm.]
 - **b, *d, *g > plosives / _#, /N_* and when geminated, otherwise *β, ḁ, γ*
 - **ai > ā / _h, r: faihide > fahide*
 - final devoicing: **gaþe ‘gave’ > gaf; *gang > *gank > ON gakk ‘go!’*
 - assimilations **nþ > nn, *lþ > ll: *anþara- ‘other’ > ON annarr*
- classical Old Norse = Old Icelandic, 9th – 13th century
- evolved into the modern Scandinavian languages from the 14th onwards:
Icelandic, Faroese, Swedish, Elfdalian, Danish, Norwegian, †Norn



inscription on the horn II of Gallehus

West Germanic

- West Germanic share a couple of linguistic features, but some could rather be treated in terms of a *sprachbund*:
 - lowering of PGerm **ē (ā) > ā*
 - various apocopes and syncopes of final short vowels; epenthesis in *-CR#*
 - phonologization of *i* mutation
 - rhotacism **z > r*
 - gemination of plosives before *i, r, l: *sitjan > sittjan;*
 - development of a free article from a demonstrative pronoun *this*
- possible subdivisions:

North Sea Germanic (Ingvaenic): Old Frisian (attested 1150-1550), Old English (7th c. – c. 1066), Old Saxon (8th – 10th c.)

Weser-Rhine Germanic (Istvaeonic): Old Frankish (?5th c.? - 900)

Elbe Germanic (Irminonic): Old High German (750 - 1050)

HFAV DVPR: FJ: VZGAA:

Bergakker sword scabbard inscription, 5th c. (Old Frankish?)

Oldest Germanic text: inscription on Helmet B, Negau (Ženjak, Slovenia) (before 100BC), written in an Old Italic (Raetic or Venetic) alphabet



[Bammesberger 1994: 4]

1//A 1|3 1|4 AY|WAE

[Bammesberger 1994: 3]

⟨HARIXASTITEIVA//...⟩ = /Harigasti, Tejuā[?]/

- PGerm. personal name *Harigastis* m. *i*-stem (**χarja-* ‘host, troop, army’; **gasti-* ‘guest’: Goth. *gasts*, ON *gestr*, OE *giest*, OHG *gast*)
- PGerm. god **tejuā-*: ON *Tyr* (pl. *tívar*), OE *Tiw*, *Tig*, OHG *Ziu*

- unclear: grammar (-i: vocative?, -ā: instrumental? Or WGmc. nominatives?), content (personal name? name of a deity? mixed phrase?), function (owner's inscription? maker's inscription? sacrifice?)

Literature:

- Bammesberger, Alfred: The development of the runic script and its relationship to Germanic phonological history. In: Swan, Toril / Endre Mørck: *Language Change and Language Structure: Older Germanic Languages in a Comparative Perspective*. Walter de Gruyter 1994.
- Nedoma, Robert: *Die Inschrift auf dem Helm B von Negau. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Deutung norditalischer epigraphischer Sprachdenkmäler* (=Philologica Germanica 17, Wien 1995).