

# History of English

S. Gramley, SS 2009

Language Change;

Old English

## The Second (or High German) Sound Shift explains many of the differences between German and English:

<u>English</u>		<u>German</u>		<u>English</u>		<u>German</u>
p	>	pf (initial)		f	>	f
		f (medial, final)				
t	>	ts (initial)		ð	>	d
		s (medial, final)				
k/tʃ	>	k(x) (initial)		h	>	h
		x (medial, final)				

Supply examples (English and German words) for the correspondences in the Second Sound Shift.

<b>English</b>		<b>German</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>German</b>
p >		pf (initial) f (medial, final)	f >	f
pipe		Pfeife	father	Vater
t >		ts (initial) s (medial, final)	ð >	d
to water		zu Wasser	that	das
k/tʃ >		k(x) (initial) x (medial, final)	h >	h
kitchen		Küche	horn	Horn

**Note that the distribution between initial and medial is not fully predictable.**

## Latin

**b** >

**lubricus** >

(OBul)

**slabu** >

**p** >

**pater** >

**piscis** >

**d** >

**quod** >

**t** >

**tres** >

**g** >

**jugum** >

**k** >

**cordis** >

## English

**p** >

**slippery** >

**sleep** >

**f** >

**father** >

**fish** >

**t** >

**what** >

**θ** >

**three** >

**k** >

**yoke** >

**x (h)** >

**heart** >

## German

**pf (initial)**

**schlüpfrig**

**schlafen**

**f**

**Vater**

**Fisch**

**s**

**was**

**d**

**drei**

**x**

**Joch**

**h**

**Herz**

**Find and order the personal pronouns in each of the three periods in the following charts**

	Old English		EModE		ModE	
	sing	plural	sg	plur	sg	plur
<b>1st p</b>						
nom		wē		we		we
gen		ūre, ūrne, ūrum		our		our
dat		ūs		us		us
acc		ūs		us		us
<b>2nd p</b>						
nom	þū					
gen	þīn, ðīn		thy		your	
dat						
acc						
<b>3rd p</b>						
nom			it		it	
gen						
dat						
acc						

ĥ.      dccclxxi.    Hcricōmfehene tōrea  
dingum onpescfcaxe. 7 þær ymbe. iiii. niht iudon  
trecgen eorlas ip. þa ge mætt æþel pulf ealdor  
man hic on ængla felda. 7 him þær iud gefcaht.  
7 iudcnam 7 heora pearð oþær þær ofslægen  
þær nama pær Sidrac. Ða ymb. iiii. niht æbered  
cýning. 7 ælfred his broþer þær mýcle fýrd  
coricadungum zelæddon. 7 iud þone here ge  
fihwon. 7 þær pær mýcel pæl geflægen on zehpære  
hãrd. 7 eadelpulf ealdor man pearð ofslægen.  
7 þa dæmrcan ahton pælscope gefeald. 7 þær  
ymb. iiii. niht gefcaht æbered cýning 7 ælfred  
his broþer iud ealne þone here on æscer dune.  
7 hi pæron on tæm gefýlcum on oðrum pær  
ba zecg. 7 healf dene þa hædenan cýningas. 7 on  
oþrum pæron þa eorlas. 7 þa feahc se cýning  
æbered iud þara cýninga zetruiman. 7 þær  
pearð se cýning ba zecg ofslægen. 7 ælfred  
his broþer iud þara eorla zetruiman. 7 þær

## Text 2.1

### Page from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Abingdon II)

This is from the entry for 871, a year of battles between the forces of Wessex and the Vikings.

In the following you will find a partial transcription of this text. Your task is to complete it.

## **What context it was written in, by whom, and when?**

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* exists in a number of different MSS (nine), and each varies somewhat from the others, at times significantly (in including or leaving out material, in giving place names). The *Chronicle* was begun in the late 9th century, but starts (in one version at least) in the year 60 BCE.

It was initiated by Alfred the Great, the king of Wessex. It is also due to his initiative that a culture of writing developed and spread, leading eventually to something of an Old English standard (based largely on the Wessex dialect).

The *Chronicles* are the most important source of information about Anglo-Saxon history up to and following the Norman Conquest. A further important source of information is Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (*Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*), which goes from Julius Caesar to 731.

## How was it transmitted to us?

The Peterborough *Chronicle* is the version which was updated for the longest period. It was copied from an original up to 1121; then the same scribe continued the chronicle, but with some spellings influenced by contemporary spoken language. A different scribe added the data for 1132 – 1154 with new forms based on contemporary east midlands, not archaic Wessex forms (cf. Knowles: 48)

The page we are looking at comes, however, from the Abingdon II MS, which virtually ends in 1066.



# Locations of MSS of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon\\_Chronicle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_Chronicle)

## How does the language look?

**Alphabet.** The alphabet was a modified Latin one. It adopted the letters <a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, t, u, x, y>, but not <q, z>. It did not differentiate between <i> and <j> nor between <u> and <v>. Furthermore, it added thorn, eth, the ligature ash, and wynn (see below).

The use of capital letters is rare (but in the text below we find <S> and <Ð>).

**Caligraphy.** The use of Insular Script (in Ireland and Britain) was widespread. It is a very round script, suitable for use on parchment (or vellum). It replaced the earlier more angular script used on papyrus and the runes used on wood.

## How does the language look?

conservative or advanced

(near) standard / non-standard (regional, social, etc.)

**Orthography.** The spelling reflects more the continental phonetic values than does modern English spelling. Note the following:


**<c>** is used for /k/ or /tʃ/



**<þ>** and **<ð>** are used without differentiation for /θ/ or /ð/

**<æ>** is used for /æ/

**<sc>** is used for /ʃ/

**<cg>** is used for /dʒ/

ƿ  (wynn) = modern <w>

ð(eth)  and þ (thorn)  = modern <th>

ȝ = modern <&>

 = modern <g>

 = modern <r>

 = modern <s>

æ(ash) = modern <a> with the phonetic value of /æ/

DCCCLXXI Her com se here to \_\_\_\_\_ on  
ƿestseaxe . 7 þæs ymbe III niht ridon \_\_\_\_\_ eorlas up .  
þa \_\_\_\_\_ ealodor man hie on ængla felda .  
\_\_\_\_\_ ƿið gefeaht . 7 rigenam 7 heora ƿearð oþær  
þær ofslægen þæs nama ƿæs Sidrac .  
Ðaymb III \_\_\_\_\_ æþered cyning . 7 ælfred his broþer þær  
mycle fyrd to readingum gelæddon .  
7 ƿið þone here gefuhton . \_\_\_\_\_ ƿæs mycel  
ƿælgelægen on gehƿære hand .  
7 eaðelƿulf ealdorman ƿearð \_\_\_\_\_ .

7 þa dæniscan \_\_\_\_\_ ƿealstoƿe geƿeald .

7 þæs \_\_\_\_\_ gefeaht æƿered cyning 7  
ælfred his broþor ƿið ealne þone here on æsces dune .

7 hi ƿæron on tƿam gefulcum on oðrum ƿæs bagsecg . 7  
healfdene \_\_\_\_\_ .

7 on oþrum ƿæron þa \_\_\_\_\_ .

7 þa feaht \_\_\_\_\_ æƿered ƿið þara cyninga getruman .

7 þær ƿearð se cyning begsecg ofslægen . 7 ælfred his  
broþor ƿið þara eorla getruman . 7 þær ...

**DCCCLXXXI** Her com se here to **readingum on ƿestseaxe .**  
871 CE This year the army went to Reading in Wessex.

**ƿ** **þæs ymbe III niht ridon tƿegen eorlas up .**

And afterwards two earls rode up about three nights.

**þa gemette æþelƿulf ealdor man hie on ængla felda .**

Afterwards Ethelwolf the Alderman met them on Englefield

**ƿ him þær ƿið gefeaht . ƿ rigenam**

– and fought there with them. And seized them

**ƿ heora ƿearð oþær þær ofslægen þæs nama ƿæs Sidrac .**

and another one was slain there whose name was Sidrac.

**Ðaymb IIII niht æþered cyning .**

About four nights Ethered, the king,

**ƿ ælfred his broþer þær mycle fyrd to readingum gelæddon .**

and Alfred his brother led their great army to Reading.

ᚷ ƿið þone here gefuhton .

And they fought with that army .

ᚷ þær ƿæs mycel ƿælgelægen on gehƿære hand .

And there was much slaughter on both sides.

ᚷ eaðelƿulf ealdorman ƿearð ofslægen .

And Ethelwolf the Alderman was killed.

ᚷ þa dæniscan ahton ƿeal stowe geƿeald .

And then the Danes well took possession of the place.

ᚷ þæs umb III nyht gefeaht æþered cyning ᚷ ælfred his broþor ƿið

And fours nights afterwards King Ethered and his brother Alfred

ealne þone here on æsces dune .

fought with all the army on Ashdown.



ᚷ hi ƿæron on tƿam gefulcum on oðrum ƿæs bagsecg .

And they were in two groups. In the other was Bagsac

ᚷ healfdene ƿa hæðenan cyningas .

and Healfden the heathen kings.

ᚷ on oþrum ƿæron ƿa earlas . ᚷ ƿa feaht se cyning æþered

And in the other were the earls. And then the king, Ethered,  
ƿið ƿara cyninga getruman .

fought with the king's troops.

ᚷ ƿær ƿearð se cyning begsecg ofslægen . ᚷ ælfred his broþor

And then the king Bagsac was killed. And Alfred his brother  
ƿið ƿara eorla getruman . ᚷ ƿær ...

with their earls' troops. And that ...

## What are its register features?

**medium:** written

**field:** history, with concentration on dynastic figures and military campaigns

**purpose:** supports Christianity against paganism and Anglo-Saxon dominion over Danish hegemony

**style:** narrative and unembellished

**genre:** a chronicle, viz. yearly summaries of what are seen as important happening

**traditions:** draws on Bede, but coexisted with other chronicles or annals, such as the Irish *Annals of Ulster* (*Annála Uladh*) in Irish with some Latin, *of Innisfallen* (in Latin and Irish) or the Welsh *Annales Cambriae*, and those of the Carolingian Renaissance (*Annales Fuldenses*, *Annals of Lorsch*), the latter all in Latin.

# Syntax

**Articles:** Find and systematize all the articles that occur in this text according to case, number, and gender.

**Relative clause usage:** & heora ƿearð opær þær ofslægen þæs nama ƿæs Sidrac

**Passive:** heora ƿearð opær þær ofslægen  
& þær ƿearð se cyning begsecg ofslægen  
& eaðelƿulf ealdorman ƿearð ofslægen  
& þær ƿearð se cyning begsecg ofslægen

**Word order:** What is the relative order of subject and verb and what principle lies behind it?

## For gender, compare the following:

**And Hæstenes wíf and his sunu twegen man brohte tó þam cyninge (ASChron: 894).**

**And Hasten's wife and her two sons they brought to the king**

**Ða sette Adam eft hire oðerne naman, ÆEva, þæt is líf: forðan ðe heo is ealra lybbendra modor ("On the beginning of Creation" from Ælfric's Homilies, ca. 1000 CE).**

**Then Adam set again her other name, Eve, which is life: because she is the mother of all the living.**

## **Morphology:**

**derivation: ofslagen, gefulcum, getruman**

**compounding: ȝestseaxe, æþelȝulf, ealdor man / ealdorman,  
ascas dune**

**phrasal verbs: rídon ... up**

## **Vocabulary**

**Germanic word stock: 100%**

**Borrowings: none**

**Pragmatics: Use of this text to muster support for the cause  
of the Christian Anglo-Saxons**

## **Text no. 2.2:** An extract from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for 1087.

Se<sup>1</sup> cyng and þa<sup>1</sup> heafod men lufedon<sup>2</sup> swiðe and ofer swiðe  
gitsunge on golde and on seolfre, and ne róhtan<sup>2</sup> hú synlice hit  
wære<sup>3</sup> begytan<sup>2</sup>, búton hit<sup>4</sup> come<sup>2</sup> to heom<sup>4</sup>.

The king and the head men loved much, and overmuch,  
covetousness in gold and in silver; and recked not (= were not  
concerned with) how sinfully it was got, provided it came to them.

<sup>1</sup> Demonstratives (used as  
definite articles)

	m	f	n	plur
N	se	seó	þæt	þá
G	þæs	þære	þæs	þára
D	þam	þære	þam	þám
A	þone	þá	þæt	þá
I	þý		þý	þam

<sup>2</sup> Verbs (past tense)

**lufian:** past, 3rd plur – **lufeden**

**récan:** past, 3rd plur – **róhtan**

**begytan (begitan):** infinitive

**cuman:** past, 3rd plus – **come**

<sup>3</sup> The verb *be*:

	sg 1st	2nd	3rd	plural
Pres.:	<b>eom</b>	<b>eart</b>	<b>is</b>	<b>sind(on)</b>
or:	<b>beom</b>	<b>bist</b>	<b>bið</b>	<b>boeð</b>
Past;	<b>wæs</b>	<b>wære</b>	<b>wæs</b>	<b>wæron</b>

#### 4 Personal pronouns:

1st	sg	dual	plural	2nd	sg	dual	plural
N	ic	wit	we	N	þú	git	ge
G	mín	uncer	úser, úre	G	þín	incer	eówer
D	me	unc	ús	D	þé	inc	eów
A	mec, me	unc	úsic, us	A	þec, þe	inc	eówic, eów

3rd	m	f	n	plural
N	he	héo	hit	hie (hig, hi, heo)
G	his	hire (heore)	his	heora (hyra, hira, hiora)
D	him (heom)	hire (heore)	him (heom)	him (heom)
A	hine	hí, héo, hie	hit	hie (hig, hi, heo)
I	hý (héo)		hý (héo)	

## **Text no. 2.2 (continuation – 2)**

**Se cyng sealde his land swá deóre to male swá heo deórest mihte; þonne com sum oðer and beade máre þonne þe oðer ær sealde, and se cyng hit let þam men þe him máre beád;**

**The king let his land at as high a rate as he possibly could; then came some other person, and bade more than the former one gave, and the king let it to the men that bade him more.**



## **Text no. 2.2 (continuation – 3)**

**þonne com se þridde, and beád gét máre, and se cyng hit let þám men to handa þe him ealra mæst beád, and ne róhte ná hú swiðe synlíce þa gerefan hit begeatan óf earme mannum, ne hú manige unlaga hi dydon. Ac swá man swýðor spæc embe rihte lage, swá man dyde máre unlaga.**

**Then came the third, and bade yet more; and the king let it to hand to the men that bade him most of all: and he recked not how very sinfully the stewards got it of wretched men, nor how many unlawful deeds they did; but the more men spake about right law, the more unlawfully they acted.**

## **Text no. 2.2 (continuation – 4)**

**Hi arerdon unrihte tóllas, and manige oðre unriht hi dydan þe sindon éarfoþe to areccenne.**

**They erected unjust tolls, and many other unjust things they did, that are difficult to reckon.**

**Se cyng Willelm, þe we embe sprécað wæs swiðe wís man, and swiðe ríce, and wurðfulre and strengere þonne ænig his foregenga wære.**

**This King William then that we speak about was a very wise man, and very rich; more splendid and powerful than any of his predecessors were.**

## **Text no. 2.2 (continuation – 5)**

**He wæs milde þám gódum mannum þe God lufedon,  
and ofer eall gemett stearc þám mannum þe  
wiðcwædon his willan.**

**He was mild to the good men that loved God, and  
beyond all measure severe to the men that gainsayed  
his will.**

**On þám ilcan stede þe God him geuðe þæt he móste  
Engleland gegán, he arerde mære mynster, and  
munecas þær gesætte, þæt hit wel gegódade.**

**On that same spot where God granted him that he  
should gain England, he reared a mighty minster,  
and set monks therein, and well endowed it.**

# Add further personal pronouns to each of the OE chart.

	Old English			
	sing		plural	
1st p				
nom			wē	
gen			ūre, ūrne, ūrum	
dat			ūs	
acc			ūs	
2nd p				
nom	þū			
gen	þīn, ðīn			
dat				
acc				
3rd p	masc.	fem.	neuter	plural
nom				
gen				
dat				
acc				

## Homework

1. Find and systematize all the articles that occur in Text 2.1 (the MS page) according to case, number, and gender.
2. Add further personal pronouns from 2.1 to the OE chart.
3. What is the relative order of subject and verb and what principle lies behind it? Use both Texts 2.1 and 2.2.
4. Read and translate ll. 16 – 26 from Text 2.2.

## References

Knowles, Gerald O. 1997. *A Cultural History of the English Language*. London: Edward Arnold.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon\\_Chronicle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_Chronicle)