

From Proto-Germanic to the Mediaeval West Germanic
Languages: An Absolute and Relative Chronology

□

January 22, 2026

Contents

Contents	i
1 The state of Proto-West Germanic	1
2 The West Germanic runic inscriptions	3
2.1 Introduction	3
2.2 The runic inscriptions of the <i>Engilcuinn</i>	3
2.3 The runic inscriptions of the <i>Frisan</i> and <i>Sabsan</i>	7
2.4 The South Germanic runic inscriptions	10
2.5 The Proto-West Germanic runic inscriptions	10
2.6 The Proto-Northwest Germanic runic inscriptions	10
3 The West Germanic texts	11
3.1 The earliest Anglian textual attestations	11
3.2 The earliest Frankish textual attestations	18
3.3 The earliest German textual attestations	18
4 The West Germanic sound changes	19
4.1 From Proto-Germanic to Proto-West Germanic	19
4.2 Chronology of Anglian sound changes	19
4.3 Chronology of Frisian sound changes	19
4.4 Chronology of Saxon sound changes	19
4.5 Chronology of High German sound changes	19
5 A grammatical sketch of Proto-West Germanic	21
5.1 Phonology	21
5.2 Morphology	21
Bibliography	25

Chapter 1

The state of Proto-West Germanic

Chapter 2

The West Germanic runic inscriptions

2.1 Introduction

2.2 The runic inscriptions of the *Engilcuinn*

2.2.1 425-450: Caistor-by-Norwich astralagus

The Caistor-by-Norwich astralagus is a roe deer astralagus found in an urn at Caistor St Edmund, Norfolk, England in 1937. It is currently housed at the Norwich Castle Museum.

The runic inscription in Elder Futhark is as follows:

ra₁æh₁a₁n
raihan [rɔixan] ‘roe’s’ gen. sg. < PWGmc. **raihan*

æ, deprecated in its original use in denoting CGerm. **ē* > CNWGerm. **ā* (cite Anton- sen), is employed as in the innovated West Germanic tradition for *i*.

No linguistic or runic innovations beyond Common West Germanic are displayed.

2.2.2 450-500: Undley bracteate

The Undley bracteate is a bracteate found in Undley Common, near Lakenheath, Suffolk, England in 1981. It is currently housed at the British Museum.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

g₁[^]a₁g₁[^]a₂g₁[^]a₁ ma₁g₁a₁ me₂du
gagangā [jæyŋgæ] ‘fate’ acc. sg. < PWGmc. **gagangā*
maga [mæjæ] ‘mighty’ acc. sg. masc. < PWGmc. **maga*
mēdu [me:dō] ‘I meed’ < PWGmc. **mizdu*
‘I meed mighty fate.’

Some scholars have interpreted this inscription as parallel to a line in *Bēowulf*, *maga gemēdu* ‘consent of the kinsmen’ (Looijenga 2003, 220). However, the cognates of *gemēde* reflected in OS. *gimōdi* and OHG. *gimuati* < CWGerm. **gamōdija* reveal the original vocalism to be **ō*, whose umlaut, much less unrounding, is unlikely to have occurred at this early date.

The parallelism between the Undley bracteate and the Kragehul spear shaft has been noticed since the discovery of the former. However, while some have invoked the supernatural in interpreting the sequence g₁[^]a₁g₁[^]a₂g₁[^]a₁ in the former, g₁[^]a₁g₁[^]a₁g₁[^]a₁ in

the latter, others have identified them as cognates from a derivative of Common Northwest Germanic **gaganga-*. However, some of these formations are not easily reconcilable with the runic inscriptions.

Yet neither OE *gegenga* ‘companion’ or *gegang*, *gegong* ‘chance, hap, fate, accident’ can properly be associated with *gagāga* / *gagōga*. The i-umlaut of the root vowel of OE *gegenga* ‘companion’ indicates that an earlier agentive construction in **ga-gang-* should be expected to be formed with **jan* (< **jēn*); i.e. OE *gegenga* (m.) ‘companion’ < **ga-gang-jēn* vs. *gegenge* (n.) ‘company, troop’ < **ga-gang-jan*. And a similar issue speaks against a connection of both forms with OE *gegang*, *gegong* ‘chance, hap, fate, accident’ (< ‘a going, a happening’; cf. OE *wyrda gangum* ‘the course of fate’) as OE *gegang*, *gegong* (unlike the Gothic neuter *gagg* ‘street, way’) is clearly a masculine (< **gagangaz*). Indeed the Scandinavian cognates of OE *gegangen*, *gegongen* and its nominal derivatives usually present somewhat different meanings; cf. ON *ganga* ‘walk, course, procession’ and *gangr* ‘walking, movement, route, course, process, aggression, urine, latrine, gang’ and Middle Danish *gang* ‘course, action, attack, fight, passage, time’. Such morphological and orthographical considerations make a connection between the Undley form and the development of **ga-gang-* problematic. (Mees 2019, 9–10)

The vocalic ending of the attestation, however, may simply reflect the accusative, the object of the following verb in the Kragehul I inscription, while his proposed **gagangq*, a neuter denominative, is virtually unattested in the Germanic languages. Considering the semantics of the relevant verb **wiju** ‘I consecrate’, I prefer to take the grander meaning of ‘fate’ for **gagangaz*, which may have already developed by the time of Common Northwest Germanic.

It has been suggested that a more careful look should be taken at the parallels between the Undley and Kragehul I inscriptions. (Mees 2023, 191). Accordingly, I have taken **ma₁g₁a₁** to semantically parallel the formation in **g₁inug₁a₁** ‘great, holy, powerful’, and **me₂du** as a verb ‘I meed’, as in **wiju** ‘I consecrate’, rather than the noun ‘meed’ (nom. sg.) as traditionally assumed.

Finally, the retention of final *-a* provides a *terminus post quem* for *a*-apocope, the employment of the **a₂** rune provides a *terminus ante quem* for nasal rounding and the reflex *ēd* < CWGerm. **izd* provides a *terminal ante quem* for Crist’s law (Crist 2002).

2.2.3 400-600: Loveden Hill urn

The Loveden Hill urn is a cremation urn found in Loveden Hill, Lincolnshire, England in 1955.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

s₂æp_aba₁^id
Sīþebaid [si:θæbaid] P.N. nom. sg. < PWGmc. **sinþa* ‘journey’ + **baidu* ‘oath’
 ‘Sithebad’

The personal name with the first element *Sīþæ-* is almost uncontroversially read, providing a *terminus post quem* for *a*-syncope. The second element is variously read as *-bald*, *-bæd* or *-bad* (cf. Nedoma 2016, 4ff for the history of interpretations). Nedoma’s arguments for the runic vocalism being a ligature of **a₁** and **i** which eventually formed **a₃** are convincing (Nedoma 2016, 8f), but I believe that it does not necessitate the monophthongisation of *ai*.

We may then read *-baid*, transferred to the *a*-stem from earlier CWGerm **baidu*, parallel to other *u*-stem dithematic names such as **Sigifriþu* > *Sigefriþ* in order to match the rhythm of names such as *Sigewolf* (Nedoma 2016, 18). The lack of inflectional ending provides a *terminus ante quem* for *a*-apocope.

I do not have the confidence to analyse the rest of the inscription – see Nedoma 2016 and Waxenberger 2025 for conflicting interpretations, the latter employing the assistance of Dr Ernst Taayke, an expert on earthenware.

2.2.4 475-525: Chessell Down scabbard mount

The Chessell Down scabbard mount is a scabbard mount found in Chessell Down, Isle of Wight, England in 1855. It is currently housed at the British Museum.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

a₁ka₂ xori
Akkō [ækkō:] P.N. nom. sg. < PWGmc. **Akkō* < ? PWGmc. **akan* + **-ō*
 ?
 ‘Acke ...’

a₂ is used for the reflex of PWGmc. **-ō*, meaning that at this point, it has merged qualitatively (without the nasalisation) with the reflex of northern PWGmc. **ǣ*, providing a *terminus post quem* for the opening of **-ō* but not complete unrounding. I have postulated [ɒ] for the quality of the vowel.

Notice that the personal name reflected in the inscription is ancestral to the name *Acca Eacca* in later Old English.

The final component has an anomalous rune which has received numerous interpretations. I have not found an adequate solution, but an overview of interpretations may be found in Higgs 2025.

2.2.5 500-575: Watchfield mount

The Watchfield mount is a mount found in Watchfield, Oxford, England in 1985.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

h₁a₁ribok₁i wus₂a₁
hæribōki [xɛrtbø:ci] ‘army-book’s’ gen. sg. < PWGmc. **harja* ‘army’ + **bōki* ‘book’s’
Wusā [wɔsɑ:] P.N. nom. sg. < ? (cf. Lom *Vuso*)
 ‘Wose of the army-book’

a₁ is used for the reflex of CWGerm **-ō*, providing a *terminus ante quem* for the complete unrounding of unstressed **ō*

2.2.6 500-575: Chessell Down pail

The Chessell Down pail is a brass pail found in Chessell Down, Isle of Wight, England in 1855.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

bws₂e₂e₂k₂k₂a₁a₁
Beccā [bekka:] P.N. nom. sg. (*calque*) ← Fr. **Bekkō* < PWGmc. **berhta* + **-ō*
Weccā [wecca:] P.N. nom. sg. (*calque*) ← Lom. **Wakxjō* < PWGmc. **Wakkjō* <
**wakkjan* + **-ō*

Seccā [sekka:] P.N. nom. sg. (*calque*) ← Fr. **Sekkō* < PWGmc. **Sigikō* < **sigi* + **-kō*
 “Beck, Wech, Seck”

The layout and the sequence of the runes recalls the medieval Scandinavian runic *þistil, mistil, kistil* formula (as for instance on the GØRLEV stone, Sjøland, Denmark, showing the sequence: **þmkiisssstttiilll**, generally interpreted as *þistil, mistil, kistil* ‘thistle, mistle(toe), kistle (small chest)’). When operating in the same way, we would get here: **becca, wecca, secca**, three masculine personal names, all nsm. *n*-stem. Two of the names are known from the Old English travelogue Widsith 115: *Seccan sohte ic ond Beccan*. Both names are here in the acc. sg. *Becca* was, for instance, the name of one of Eormanric’s followers, ruler of the Banings. In Widsith, his full name was Deodberht (Widsith 1962:196). In legend, he was the evil counsellor who advised Eormanric to murder Sunilda. The *Secca* of Widsith is the hypocoristic form of Sigiwald (cf. Widsith 1962:131f. and 196f.). *Wecca* is reminiscent of the name of Wehha, the father of Wuffa, king of East Anglia, who began his reign in 570 AD. *Secca* had to flee and live in exile in Italy (Florentius n.d., 13, 16, 23f.). (Looijenga 2003, 280–281)

I am not convinced by the identification of **we₂k₂k₂a₁** with the East Anglian regent. There is no reason to insert him into the friendship of Frankish king and exile, the protagonists of the later *Wolfdietrich* epic. Instead, the Lombardic king *Waccho*, who shared amicable relations with Austrasia and wedded two of his daughters to consecutive rulers of the Merovingian dynasty, indeed to *Becca* himself, seems a far likelier candidate. The vocalism *e* instead of *æ* then reflects phonemic *i*-mutation, providing a *terminus ante quem* for the phenomenon, while the use of **a₁** for *ā* instead of **a₃** provides a *terminus post quem* for the monophthongisation of *ai*.

2.2.7 610-650: Caistor-by-Norwich brooch

The Caistor-by-Norwich brooch is a brooch found in Caistor St Edmund, Norfolk, England in 1991. It is currently housed at the Norwich Castle Museum.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

luda₃ gibota₁ sigila₁

Lūdā [lu:da:] P.N. nom. sg. < PWGmc. **lūdi* + **-ō*

gibættē [jibø:tæ:] ‘may compensate’ 3sg. pres. subj. < PWGmc. **gabōttijē*

sigilē [sɪjɫæ:] ‘by the brooch’ dat. sg. < PWGmc. ***sigilē*

“May Loude compensate by the brooch.”

The interpretations of the verb hinges on whether **t** stands for a single or geminate consonant. However, despite claims to the contrary (Bammesberger 2003, 134), both are acceptable as geminates are frequently indicated by a single rune. Nevertheless, I prefer Bammesberger’s interpretation as a present subjunctive *gibættē* instead of preterite indicative *gibættē*, not only due to parallels with legal terminology employing *gebēte* with a dative to indicate compensations for misdeeds, but also for the fact that it is unlikely for *sigilē* to represent the direct object of the verb, being overwhelmingly attested as a neuter *a*-stem in manuscripts (Bammesberger 2003, 134f). Either way, the inscription provides a *terminus ante quem* for high vowel loss.

The Wremen stool is a stool found in Wremen, Cuxhaven, Nethersaxony, Germany in 1994. It is currently housed at the Bederkesa Castle Museum.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

ksa₁mella₁ lguska₁þi
skamella [skʰamella] ‘footstool’ ← Lat. *scamellum*
Laguskapin [layoʃskʰaθun] P.N. dat. sg. of **Laguskapō* < **lagu* ‘sea’ + **skapō* ‘warrior’
 “Footstool for Layshathe”

2.3.3 575-610: skanomodu solidus

The *skanomodu* solidus is a solidus with an unknown provenance.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

s₂k₂a₃nomodu
Scānəmədā [ʃɕɑ:nəmo:də] P.N. nom. sg. < CWGerm. **skauni* ‘shining’ + **mōda* ‘mind’
 “Sheenmod.”

The legend **sk_a₂nomodu** (**a₂** = □) on a solidus of unknown provenance (ca. 600) renders the dithematic anthroponym *Skānəmədā* (or **Skānəmədā*), presumably the name of the moneyer. It seems that medial **o** stands for [ɔ] or [θ], an allophonic variant of the linking element /a/ before a labial consonant; parallels can be found in Old Germanic naming. Two linguistic features, viz. *ā* < WGmc. **au* and the nominative ending -*ə* < WGmc. -*a* < PGmc. *-*az*, indicate that the language of the inscription is Pre-Old Frisian. (Nedoma 2021)

The *i*-stem prototheme seems to have been transferred to the *a*-stem, with linking vowel represented by **o**; this, however, cannot be due to “name-rhythm”. A tendency for compositional vowels in root composites to undergo vowel harmony was noticed by Dr Arend Quak, which better explains the form to harmonise with the following *ō* (Versloot 2016, 30).

Notice that the use of the **a₃** “oak” rune for *ā* is imported from England, providing a *terminus ante quem* for the English monophthongisation of *ai* (this argument has certainly been made by others, but I am unable to find citations at the moment). Obviously, it also provides a *terminus post quem* for the monophthongisation of *au*.

Lastly, the inscription provides a *terminus post quem* for the reduction of -*a*.]

2.3.4 575-625: Harlingen solidus

The Harlingen solidus is a solidus found in Harlingen, Friesland, the Netherlands in 1846. It is currently housed at the Fries Museum.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

ha₃da₃
Haddā [xadda:] P.N. nom. sg. cf. OE *Headda* ~ *Hadda* < PWGmc. **hapu* + *-*ō*
 “Hadde”

The use of **a₃** for *a* in a velar environment provides a *terminus post quem* for the phonemic split of *a*.

2.3.5 575-625: *Schweindorf solidus*

The Schweindorf solidus is a solidus found in Schweindorf, Witmund, Lower Saxony, Germany in 1848. It is currently held at the East Frisian State Museum.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

wela₂d

Weland [we:lɒnd] ‘Weland the Smith’ nom. sg. cf. OE *Weland* < PWGmc. **Welhandu* < PGmc. **Welhanduz* > OWN *Vqlundr*

2.3.6 600-650: *Folkestone tremissis*

The Folkestone tremissis is a tremissis found in Folkestone, Kent, England in 1732. It has since been lost.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

a₁niwulufu

Ēniwulfō [æ:niwɒlɔfɔ] P.N. nom. sg. cf. OE *Ēanwulf*, WFrank. *Aunulf*, OHG *Ōnulf* (Nedoma 2014, 352) < PWGmc. **auna* ~ *auni* ‘?’ + **wolfa* ‘wolf’
“Eanwolf”

A variant of a widely attested name with linking *-i-*. **a₁** for *au* in an *i*-mutated environment provides a *terminus post quem* for *i*-mutation.

2.3.7 750-850: *Oostum comb*

The Oostum comb is a comb found in Oostum, Groningen, the Netherlands in 1908. It is currently housed at the Groninger Museum.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

a₃ib ka₃bu deda₃ ha₃buku

Aib [aiβ] P.N. nom. sg. < PWGmc. **Aibi* > SGmc. *Aebi*

kambə [kɒmbə] ‘comb’ acc. sg. < PWGmc. **kamba*

dedæ [dedæ:] ‘made’ 3sg. pres. indic. < PWGmc. **dedā*

Habuku [xɑβɔkɔ] P.N. dat. sg. of *Habuku* < PWGmc. **habuka* ‘hawk’ + *-u

“Eaf made the comb for Hawke.”

There are two interpretations of the inscription depending on which of the two proper names is the subject and which the object. Although **ha₃buku** fits phonologically as the nominative singular of *a*-stem *Habukə*, the modern Frisian male name *Hauke* is rather an *an*-stem while the female name *Hauk* is an *ō*-stem. Thus, the name must reflect the indirect object of the inscription, which fits well with the dative singular (inherited from an earlier instrumental) of feminine *Habuku*. Consequently, **aib** must reflect the subject, and it may be connected with **aebi** as attested on the Schwangau fibula (Versloot 2019, 82f). No matter the stem, its lack of inflectional ending provides a *terminus ante quem* for high vowel loss (the ending in *Habuku* may be due to grammatical restoration).

2.4 The South Germanic runic inscriptions

2.5 The Proto-West Germanic runic inscriptions

2.5.1 250-320: Fienstedt comb

The Fienstedt comb is a comb found in Fienstedt, Erfurt, Thuringia, Germany in 2000. It is currently housed at the Thuringian Office for Historical Preservation and Archaeology.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

ka₁ba₁
kamba [kamba] ‘comb’ nom. sg. < PGmc. **kambaz*
 “Comb.”

An inscription closer Proto-West Germanic proper, with the common non-representation of *m*, and *-a* representing the sound reflected by early South Germanic *-a* and Frisian *-u*.

2.6 The Proto-Northwest Germanic runic inscriptions

2.6.1 210-240: Nørling brooch

bidawarijaz talgidai
a

2.6.2 160-240: Thorsberg chape

o wlpupewaz ni waje mariz
Wulpupewaz [wulθuθewaz] P.N. nom. sg. < PGmc. **Wulpuz* ‘Wolth’ + **pewaz* ‘servant’
ni [ni] ‘not’ < PGmc. **ni*
wajē [waje:] ‘in woe’ dat. sg. < PGmc. **wajai*
māriz [mariz] ‘famous’ < PWGmc. **mēriz*

2.6.3 190-210: Illerup shield handle

The Illerup shield handle is a shield handle found in Illerup, Skanderup Parish, Kolding Municipality, Region of Southern Denmark, Denmark. It is currently housed at the Moesgaard Museum.

The runic inscription and its interpretation are as follows:

la₁gub²ew²a₁
Lagupewē [laγuθewæ:] P.N. nom. sg. < **laguz* ‘lake’ + **pewaz* ‘servant’ + **-a*
 “Laythew.”

Chapter 3

The West Germanic texts

3.1 The earliest Anglian textual attestations

3.1.1 *Introduction*

3.1.2 The Épinal-Erfurt-Corpus-Leiden glossaries

Composition Date: 675

Manuscript: 'Épinal glossary' 700

'Erfurt glossary' 820

'Corpus glossary' 825 × 850

- aend* [ænd] 'and' < PWGmc. *andi
aenid [ænid] 'drake' < PWGmc. *anudi
īsaern [i:zærn] 'kingfisher', *aern-* [ærn] < PWGmc. *arnu 'eagle', *arnu-
aex [æxs] 'axe' < PWGmc. *ahsu
alaer [aɫæ̃r] 'alder', *alaer-* [aɫæ̃r] < PWGmc. *alza, *alza-
aldot [aɫdɔt] < PWGmc. *alduttji
an [an] 'on', *an-* [an] < PWGmc. *an, *ana-
angā [aŋgɑ:] 'sting' < PWGmc. *angō
auuel [awæɫ] 'awl' < PWGmc. *awala
bā- [ba:] < PWGmc. *bōjēn 'both', bai-
fōsturbarn [fo:stōrbarn] 'foster child' < PWGmc. *barnu 'child'
hindberīae [çundberjæ:] 'raspberry' < PWGmc. *bazjā 'berry'
bi- bi < PWGmc. *bi, *bi-
bīo- [bio] < PWGmc. *bijā, *bija-
bōecāe [bø:cæ:] 'beech' < PWGmc. *bōkijā
boog [bo:ɣ] 'shoulder' < PWGmc. *bōgu
strēlborā [stre:lborɑ:] 'archer' < PWGmc. *borō 'bearer'
uuegbrādāe [we:jbrɑ:dæ:] 'waybread' < PWGmc. *braidā 'breadth'
brand- [brɔnd] < PWGmc. *branda 'fire', *branda-
breer [brɛ:r] 'briar' < PWGmc. *brāza
briosā [briozɑ:] 'gadfly' < PWGmc. *briusō
misbyrd misbyrd 'misbirth' < PWGmc. *missaburdi
cladaer- < Pre-Welsh *kledr 'stave'
clāuuo [kla:wɔ] 'claw' < PWGmc. *clāwu
crop [krop] '(plant) head' < PWGmc. *kroppa
dil [dɪl] 'dill' < PWGmc. *dillji
gidyrstig [jɪdʏrstɪj] 'daring' < PWGmc. *gadurstīga
ēar- [æar] < PWGmc. *auza, auza-
fōstur- [fo:stōr] < PWGmc. *fōstra 'fostering', *fōstra-
giēodun [jɪeodɔn] < PWGmc. *gān, PST.PL.IND.3PL *eudun
faag [fa:ɣ] < PWGmc. *faiga
faer- [fær] < PWGmc. *far 'for', far-

- faestinnum* [fæstunnōm] ‘for strongholds’ < PWGmc. *fastunnji ‘stronghold’,
DAT.PL *fastunnjum
- flīo* [fli:w] ‘leucoma’ < PWGmc. *fliwa
- huitfoot* [xwi:tfot] ‘white-foot’ < PWGmc. *fōt ‘foot’
- fram* [fram] ‘vigorous’ < PWGmc. *frama
- fričtrung* [frɪçtrōŋg] ‘divination’ < PWGmc. *frihtrungu
- fūlae-* [fu:læ] < PWGmc. *fūla ‘black’, *fūla-
- fȳr-* [fy:r] < PWGmc. *fuir ‘fire’, *fuir-
- gaar-* [ȝa:r] < PWGmc. *gaiza ‘spear’, *gaiza-
- gaebuli* [jæβōlu] ‘with tribute’ INST.SG of *gaebul* < PWGmc. *gabula ‘tribute’
- gāeaeas* [jæ: kæs] ‘cuckoo’s’ < PWGmc. *gauka ‘cuckoo’, *gaukas
- seglgaerd* [sɛjljærd]
- aerngeōt* [æmȝeot] ‘bird of prey’ < PWGmc. *geuta
- gi-* [ji] < PWGmc. *ga-
- goos* [ȝo:s] ‘goose’ < PWGmc. *gans
- haegu-* [çæȝo] < PWGmc. *hagu ‘enclosure’, *hagu-
- haesl* [xæzl] ‘hazel’ < PWGmc. *hasla
- bāhalbē* [ba:xaɪβæ:] ‘(on) both sides’ < PWGmc. *halbu, DAT.SG *halbē
- holthanā* [xoɪtxana:] ‘woodcock’ < PWGmc. *hanō
- herd* [xɛrθ] ‘hearth’ < PWGmc. *herpa
- hind-* [çɪnd] < PWGmc. *hindi ‘hind’, *hindi-
- hnutu* [xnøtu] ‘nut’ < PWGmc. *hnutu
- holegn* [xoɪɛjn] ‘holly’ < ?
- alaerholt* [aɪærxoɪt] ‘alder grove’, *bolt-* [xoɪt] < PWGmc. *holta ‘grove’, *holta-*
- brāgrā* [xra:ȝra:] ‘heron’ < PWGmc. *hraigrō
- bramsā* [xromsa:] ‘ramson’, *bramsan* [xromzan] ‘ramson’s’ < PWGmc. *hramsō,
GEN.SG *hramsan
- huit-* xwi:t < PWGmc. *hwīta ‘white’, *hwīta-
- īs-* [i:s] < PWGmc. *īsa, *īsa-
- lāec* [læ:k] ‘leek’, *gaarleec* [ȝa:rlæ:k] ‘garlic’, *ynnīlāec* [ynnulæ:k] ‘onion’ <
PWGmc. *lauka
- uulanclīcāe* [wlonkli:cæ:] ‘arrogantly’ < PWGmc. *likā (adverbial suffix)
- lidrināe* [liðrinæ:] ‘(things) of leather’ < PWGmc. *liþrīna, MASC.NOM.PL
liþrīnē
- loccas* [lokkas] ‘locks’ < PWGmc. *lokka, NOM.SG *lokkōs
- mapuldur* [mapoɪdōr] ‘maple tree’ < PWGmc. *mapuldra
- meeli* [mɛ:lu] ‘cup’ < PWGmc. *mālī
- mēg-* [mɛ:ɟ] < PWGmc. *māga, *māga-

- merici* [merɪci] ‘with smallage’ SG.INT of *meric* < PWGmc. *marika
uuermōd [wermo:d] ‘wormwood’ < PWGmc. *mōda ‘mind’
naectaegalāe [næçtæɣɑlæ:] ‘nightingale’ < PWGmc. *nahtagalā
ōcustā [o:kōsta:] < PWGmc. *anhstō
fȳrpannāe [fy:rɒnnæ:] ‘brazier’ < PWGmc. *pannā ‘pan’
brandrād [brɒndrɑ:d] ‘grate’ < PWGmc. *raidu ‘ride’
rysil [ryzɪl] ‘grease’ < PWGmc. *rusila
saeppāe [sæppæ:] ‘fir’ < ? Gaulish *sappos, Latin sappinus
scald- [sçɑld] < PWGmc. *skalda ‘shallow’, *skalda-
scēabas [sçæɑβas] ‘sheaves’ < PWGmc. *skauba, NOM.PL *skaubōs
bisceridāe [bɪsçerɪdæ:] ‘(he) rejected’ < PWGmc. *skaran ‘to shear’, PST.SG.IND.I, 3SG
 *skaridē
faerscribaen [færsçrɪβæn] ‘proscribed’ < PWGmc. *skribana
segl- [sɛjl] < PWGmc. *segla ‘sail’, *segla-
sercāe [sercæ:] ‘shirt’ < PWGmc. *sarkijā
sētungāe [se:tɒŋgæ:] ‘by dwelling’ < PWGmc. *sātungu ‘dwelling’, *sātungē
mēgsibbi [mɛ:jsɪbbɪ] ‘with kinship’ INST.SG of *mēgsibb* < PWGmc. *sibbi
 ‘kinship’
snel [snɛl] ‘quick’ < PWGmc. *snella
spaldur [spɑldɔr] ‘aspalathus’ < PWGmc. *spaldra
staefnaendrā [stæβnændrɑ:] ‘of those alternating’ < PWGmc. *stamnandi ‘al-
 ternator’, GEN.PL *stamnandizō
steelī [ste:li:] ‘steel’ < PWGmc. *stahlī
cladaersticcā [kladærstɪkka:] < PWGmc. *stikkō
stigu [stɪju] ‘halls’ < PWGmc. *stija, NOM.PL *stiju
strēl- [strɛ:l] < PWGmc. *strālu ‘bow’, *strālu-
sūd- [su:θ] < PWGmc. *sunþa ‘south’, *sunþa-
ansuēop [answeop] ‘blew’ < PWGmc. *swaipan, PST.SG.IND.I, 3SG *swēp
suilcāe [swɪlcæ:] ‘likewise’ < PWGmc. *swalikā
sūrāe [su:ræ:] ‘sorrel’ < PWGmc. *sūrā
thegn [θɛjn] ‘thane’ < PWGmc. *þegna
thōbāe [θo:hæ:] ‘clay’ < PWGmc. *þanhā
haeguthorn [çæɣoθoɾn] ‘hawthorn’ < PWGmc. *þorna ‘thorn’
thrauuō [θrawo] ‘threat’ < PWGmc. *þrau, GEN.SG *þrawā
thungas [θoŋgas] ‘anoites’ < PWGmc. *þunga, NOM.PL *þungōs
scaldthýblas [sçɑldθy:βlas] ‘shallow thickets’ < PWGmc. *þūbila ‘thicket’,
 NOM.PL þūbilōs
gitiungi [jɪtɒŋɣu] ‘by preparation’ INST.SG of *gitiung* < PWGmc. *tihungu
 ‘preparation’

- fūlaetrēo* [fu:lætreo] ‘blackalder’ < PWGmc. *treu ‘tree’
trimsas [trɪmzəs] ‘tremisses’ < PWGmc. *trimsa, NOM.PL *trimsōs
uest- [wɛst] < PWGmc. *westa ‘west’, *westa-
uueg- [wɛj] < PWGmc. *wega ‘way’, *wega-
uuer- [wer] < PWGmc. *wari ‘defender’, *wari-
uulanc- [wɒŋk] < PWGmc. *wlanka ‘proud’, *wlanka-
ēaruuiggā [æarwɪggɑ:] ‘earwig’ < PWGmc. *wiggijō
uestsūduuind [wɛstsu:θwɪnd] ‘southwestern wind’ > PWGmc. *winda ‘wind’
bīouuyrt [biowɪrt] ‘beewort’ < PWGmc. *wurti ‘wort’
paar [wɑ:r] ‘seaweed’ < PWGmc. *waira
ynni- [ɪnnɪ] < PWGmc. *unnji ‘onion’, *unnja-

3.1.3 *Cadman's hymn*

Composition Date:

Manuscript: 'Moore Bede' 734 × 737

'Leningrad Bede' 731 × 746

Cadman's hymn

nū scylun bērgan · bēfaen-ričaes uárd,
nu: s̥cylōn xerjan xēþænri:cæs wārd
 now must-we praise heaven-kingdom's guardian
 nu skulun hazjan hebana-rīkijas warda

Now must we honour the Kingdom of Heaven's Guardian,

mētudaes mēctī, · end his mōd-gidānc,
metōdæs meçti: ænd xis mo:djuθōnk
 measurer's mights and his mind-thought
 metōdas mahtī andi his mōda-gaþanka

the mights of the Measurer, and the thought of His mind,

uērc uūldur-fadur · suē hē uūndrā gihwāes
werk wōldōrfadōr swe: xē: wōndra: juxwæs
 work glory-father's as he wonders' of-each
 werka wuldra-fadur swā hiz wundrō gahwas

the work of the glorious Father as He of each of the wonders,

ēcī drýctin, · ōr āstēlidāe.
e:ci: dryçtun o:r a:steliðæ:
 eternal lord beginning established
 aukī druhtina ōra azstaldē

the eternal Lord, established beginning.

hē āerest scōp · āeldā bārnum
xē: æ:ryst s̥co:p ælða: bārnum
 he first shaped mens' sons.PL.DAT
 hiz airist skōp aldiþō barnum

He first created for the sons of men

bēben til hrōfē, · bāleg scēppend.
xēþæn til xro:þæ: xū:læj s̥ceppænd
 heaven.SG.ACC for roof.SG.DAT holy creator
 hebana til hrōbē hailaga skapjandi

a roof for the heaven, the holy Creator.

thā middun-geàrd · món-cýnnaes uàrd,
 θα: middonjard mōnkynnæs wārd
 then Middle-Earth.SG.ACC man-kind's guardian
 þō midjuna-garda manakunjas warda

Then mankind's Guardian did this Earth

ēci dryctin · æfter tīadāe,
 e:ci: dryctun æftær tī:adæ:
 eternal Lord afterwards furnished
 aukī druhtina after tihōdē

furnish afterwards as eternal Lord,

fīr.um fōldum · frēa allmectig.
 fīrhōm fōldōm fræ:a almeçtīj
 men.PL.DAT lands.PL.DAT lord almighty
 fīrhum foldum frawa alamahtīga

the lands for men, Lord almighty.

3.1.4 *Bede's death song***Bede's death song**

Forē thāem néid-faerāe · nāenig uuīurthit
 foræ: θæ:m ne:dfæræ: næ:mij wiŋrðit
 before the.MASC.SG.DAT need-fare none will-be
 forē þaimi naudi-farē nainīga wirþip

Before the required journey, no one will be

thonc-snotturā · than him tharf sie
 θonksnottora: θon xim θarf stæ:
 thought-wiser than him.SG.DAT needs be
 þanka-snotrō þan him þarb sijē

wiser of thought than him, judgment be

tō ymbhýccgannāe · āer his híniongāe
 to: ymbxyjgannæ: æ:r xis xinjongæ:
 to think-about before his hence-going
 tō umbihuggjannjē airi his hingangē

to think about before his passing

hwaet his gāstāe · gōdaes aeththa ýflaes
 xwæt xis ȝa:stæ: ȝo:dæs æðða: ȝflæs
 what his spirit.SG.DAT of-good or of-evil,
 hwat his gaistē gōdas aþþō ubilas

what to his spirit, for good or for evil

aefter dēoth-dægē · dōemid wéorthae
 æftær dæ:oθdægæ: dø:mud weörðæ:
 after death-day judged will-be
 after dauþu-dagē dōmid werþē

after his deathday, will be judged.

3.1.5 *Leiden riddle***3.2 The earliest Frankish textual attestations**3.2.1 *The Malberg glosses***3.3 The earliest German textual attestations**3.3.1 *The Abrogans glossary*

Chapter 4

The West Germanic sound changes

4.1 From Proto-Germanic to Proto-West Germanic

4.2 Chronology of Anglian sound changes

h-loss: A sound change that never was: h-loss and vowel lengthening in Old English, Nelson Goering

4.3 Chronology of Frisian sound changes

4.4 Chronology of Saxon sound changes

4.5 Chronology of High German sound changes

Chapter 5

A grammatical sketch of Proto-West Germanic

5.1 Phonology

5.2 Morphology

5.2.1 Nominal declension

Proto-Germanic

The paradigms of ‘day’ (masculine *a*-stem), ‘word’ (neuter *a*-stem), ‘gift’ (feminine *ā*-stem) and ‘fetter’ (feminine *ī*-stem) are given below.

	‘day’	‘word’	‘gift’	‘fetter’
sg. nom.	dagaz	wurdan	gebā	bandī
voc.	dage	wurdan	gebā	bandī
gen.	dagasa	wurdasa	gebāz	bandijāz
dat.	dagōi	wurdōi	gebāi	bandijāi
acc.	dagan	harjan	gebān	bandijan
inst.	dagō	harjō	gebō	bandijō
pl. nom.	dagōzez, -ōsez	wurdā	gebāz	bandijāz
gen.	dagōn	wurdōn	gebōn	bandijōn
dat.	dagamaz	wurdamaz	gebāmaz	bandijāmaz
acc.	daganz	wurdā	gebānz	bandijānz
inst.	dagamiz	wurdamiz	gebāmiz	bandijāmiz

The paradigms of ‘man’ (masculine *n*-stem), ‘eye’ (neuter *n*-stem), ‘tongue’ (feminine *n*-stem), ‘guest’ (masculine *i*-stem) and ‘sea’ (neuter *i*-stem) are given below.

	‘man’	‘eye’	‘tongue’	‘guest’	‘sea’
sg. nom.	gumōn, -ān	augōn	tungān	gastiz	mari
gen.	gumen-ez	augen-ez	tungān-ez	gasteiz	mareiz
dat.	gumen-i	augen-i	tungān-i	gastejei	marejei
acc.	guman-un	augōn	tungān-un	gastin	marin
inst.	gumen-ā	augen-ā	tungān-ā	gastī	marī
pl. nom.	guman-ez	augōn-ā	tungān-ez	gastejez	marī
gen.	guman-ōn	augan-ōn	tungān-ōn	gastejōn	marejōn
dat.	guman-maz	augan-maz	tungān-maz	gastimaz	marimaz
acc.	guman-nz	augōn-ā	tungān-nz	gastinz	marinz
inst.	guman-miz	augan-miz	tungān-miz	gastimiz	marimiz

The paradigms of ‘deed’ (feminine *i*-stem), ‘son’ (masculine *u*-stem), ‘cattle’ (neuter *u*-stem) and ‘chin’ (feminine *u*-stem) are given below.

	‘deed’	‘son’	‘cattle’	‘chin’
sg. nom.	dādz	sunuz	fehu	kennuz
gen.	dādeiz	sunauz	fehauz	kennauz
dat.	dādejei	sunewei	fehewei	kennewei
acc.	dādin	sunun	fehu	kennun
inst.	dādī	sunū	fehū	kennū
loc.	dādāi	sunāu	fehāu	kennāu
pl. nom.	dādejez	sunewez	fehū	kennewez
gen.	dādejōn	sunewōn	fehewōn	kennewōn
dat.	dādimaz	sunumaz	fehumaz	kennumaz
acc.	dādinz	sununz	fehinz	kennunz
inst.	dādimiz	sunumiz	fehumiz	kennumiz

Early Proto-Core Germanic

The paradigms of ‘day’ (masculine *a*-stem), ‘word’ (neuter *a*-stem), ‘gift’ (feminine *ā*-stem) and ‘fetter’ (feminine *ī*-stem) are given below.

	‘day’	‘word’	‘gift’	‘fetter’
sg. nom.	dagaz	wurda	gebō	bandī
voc.	dage	wurda	gebō	bandī
gen.	dagasa	wurdasa	gebāz	bandijāz
dat.	dagōi	wurdōi	gebōi	bandijōi
acc.	daga	harja	gebā	bandijan
inst.	dagō	harjō	gebō	bandijō
pl. nom.	dagōzez, -ōsez	wurdō	gebāz	bandijāz
gen.	dagō	wurdō	gebō	bandijō
dat.	dagamaz	wurdamaz	gebōmaz	bandijōmaz
acc.	daganz	wurdō	gebōnz	bandijōnz
inst.	dagamiz	wurdamiz	gebōmiz	bandijōmiz

The paradigms of ‘man’ (masculine *n*-stem), ‘eye’ (neuter *n*-stem), ‘tongue’ (feminine *n*-stem), ‘guest’ (masculine *i*-stem) and ‘sea’ (neuter *i*-stem) are given below.

	‘man’	‘eye’	‘tongue’	‘guest’	‘sea’
sg. nom.	gumō, -ǣ	augō	tungā	gastiz	mari
gen.	gumenez	augenez	tungōnez	gasteiz	mareiz
dat.	gumeni	augeni	tungōni	gastejei	marejei
acc.	gumanu	augō	tungōnu	gasti	mari
inst.	gumenǣ	augenǣ	tungōnǣ	gastī	marī
pl. nom.	gumanez	augōnō	tungōnez	gastejez	marī
gen.	gumanō	auganō	tungōnō	gastejō	marjō
dat.	gumammaz	augammaz	tungāmmaz	gastimaz	marimaz
acc.	gumanz	augōnō	tungōnz	gastinz	marinz
inst.	gumamiz	augamiz	tungōmiz	gastimiz	marimiz

The paradigms of ‘deed’ (feminine *i*-stem), ‘son’ (masculine *u*-stem), ‘cattle’ (neuter *u*-stem) and ‘chin’ (feminine *u*-stem) are given below.

	‘deed’	‘son’	‘cattle’	‘chin’
sg. nom.	dǣdiz	sunuz	fehu	kennuz
gen.	dǣdeiz	sunauz	fehauz	kennauz
dat.	dǣdejei	sunewei	fehewei	kennewei
acc.	dǣdi	sunu	fehu	kennu
inst.	dǣdī	sunū	fehū	kennū
loc.	dǣdǣi	sunǣu	fehǣu	kennǣu
pl. nom.	dǣdejez	sunewez	fehū	kennewez
gen.	dǣdejō	sunewō	fehewō	kennewō
dat.	dǣdimaz	sunumaz	fehumaz	kennumaz
acc.	dǣdinz	sununz	fehunz	kennunz
inst.	dǣdimiz	sunumiz	fehumiz	kennumiz

Proto-West Germanic

5.2.2 *Pronominal declension*

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>neut.</i>	<i>fem.</i>
sg. nom.	*ez ~ *iz	*it	*sī ~ *siju
acc.	*inā	*it	*sijā
gen.	*es ~ *is	*es ~ *is	*izā
dat.	*emu ~ *imu	*emu ~ *imu	*izē
inst.	*ī	*ī	*izu
pl. nom.-acc.	*sijē	*siju	*sijō
gen.		*izō	
dat.		*ima	

Cite The Comparative Method, Internal Reconstruction, Areal Norms and the West Germanic Third Person Pronoun, Patrick V. Stiles.

5.2.3 *Adjectival declension*

Bibliography

- [1] Elżbieta Adamczyk. *Reshaping of the Nominal Inflection in Early Northern West Germanic*. Ed. by Stephen Laker. Co-editor John Ole Askedal and Hans Frede Nielsen. Vol. 31. NOWELE Supplement Series. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, Apr. 2018. ISBN: 978-9-027264-411. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/nss.31>.
- [2] Alfred Bammesberger. “The Harford Farm Brooch Runic Inscription”. In: *Neophilologus* 87 (1 Jan. 2003). Ed. by Paul J. Smith, pp. 133–135. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021277926944>.
- [3] Sean Crist. “An Analysis of *z loss in West Germanic”. unpublished. 2002.
- [4] Georgius Florentius. *Historia Francorum iii*. Historia Francorum.
- [5] Jasmin Higgs. “Determining the functions of the pre-Old English runic inscriptions”. PhD thesis. University of Nottingham, 2025.
- [6] Jay Jasanoff. “The Germanic Weak Preterite: Facing up to *talgidai*”. In: *Historische Sprachforschung* 131 (2019). Ed. by Martin Joachim Kümmel, Olav Hackstein, and Sabine Ziegler, pp. 146–167. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13109/hisp.2019.132.1.146>.
- [7] Tineke Looijenga. *Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions*. Ed. by Barbara Crawford et al. Vol. 4. The Northern World: North Europe and the Baltic c. 400-1700 AD. Peoples, Economies and Cultures. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003.
- [8] Bernard Mees. *The English Language before England: An Epigraphic Account*. Ed. by Claire Bowern. Routledge Studies in Historical Linguistics. New York: Routledge, 2023.
- [9] Bernard Mees. “The Intertextuality of the Kragehul Spear-shaft Inscription”. In: *European Journal of Scandinavian Studies* 49 (1 May 2019). Ed. by Klaus Bödl, Massimo Ciaravolo, and Karin Hoff. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/ejss-2019-0001>.
- [10] Robert Nedoma. “Die frühe voraltsächsische und voraltfriesische Runenüberlieferung: Stationen der Sprachgeschichte”. In: *NOWELE: North-Western European Language Evolution* 74 (1 Apr. 2021). Ed. by Stephen Laker, pp. 27–65. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/nowele.00048.ned>.
- [11] Robert Nedoma. “The personal names on the Loveden Hill urn and the Watchfield case fitting”. In: *NOWELE: North-Western European Language Evolution* 69 (1 Jan. 2016). Ed. by Stephen Laker, pp. 3–37. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/nowele.69.1.01ned>.

- [12] Robert Nedoma. “Voraltfriesische -u im Nominativ und Akkusativ Singular der maskulinen a-Stämme”. In: *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik. Directions for Old Frisian Philology* 73 (Jan. 2014). Ed. by Rolf H. Bremmer Jr., Stephen Laker, and Oebele Vries, pp. 343–368.
- [13] Donald A. Ringe and Ann Taylor. *The Development of Old English*. 1st ed. Vol. 2. A Linguistic History of English. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-19-920784-8.
- [14] Arjen P. Versloot. “Reduction of unstressed vowels in Proto-Frisian and the Germanic ‘Auslautgesetze’”. In: *NOWELE: North-Western European Language Evolution* 72 (1 Apr. 2019). Ed. by Stephen Laker, pp. 78–98. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1075/nowele.00021.ver>.
- [15] Arjen P. Versloot. “Unstressed vowels in Runic Frisian. The history of Frisian in light of the Germanic Auslautgesetze”. In: *Us Wurk* 65 (1-2 2016). Ed. by Joanna Da Silveira Duarte et al., pp. 1–39.
- [16] Gaby Waxenberger. “The Loveden Hill Urn: Its second runic sequence and an afterthought”. In: *Germanic Interrelations: Studies in memory of Hans Frede Nielsen*. Ed. by Stephen Laker. Co-editor John Ole Askedal. Vol. 34. NOWELE Supplement Series. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2025, pp. 356–375.
- [17] Widsith. *Widsith*. Ed. by Kemp Malone. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1962.