

# *History and Change of English*

Dr. Martin Schweinberger



# Overview

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Course  
Session

*History and Change of English*  
Diachronic linguistics and origins of English

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Martin Schweinberger  
Office  
Office hours

[m.schweinberger@uib.no](mailto:m.schweinberger@uib.no)  
Bergen  
by appointment  
(register via e-mail)

The course consists of 14 lectures/seminars.

The full schedule and resources will be made available at the beginning of the semester.

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# Course description

English, more than any other language, is now the language of global communication – it is arguably the first truly global language. The role and status of English today is unique, even when considering other „world“ languages such as French, Spanish, and Chinese and Arabic. In the context of English studies especially, it becomes crucial to understand the history of English, the changes that English has undergone, and the events that led to the unique status of English, and for related languages. Among other topics, in this class we will consider:

- ▶ **the history, development, and spread of English;**
- ▶ the main **varieties of English**; their geographical distribution, the linguistic characteristics that distinguish them from each other, and the **sociological status of dialects of English**
- ▶ the role of English as a foreign language, and as a **global language**; the **future of English**, and whether the dominance of English is a good thing.

# Session Structure

Each session will follow this (approximate) template:

- ▶ 10 min intro: house-keeping and activating recapitulation
- ▶ 30 min interactive lecture
- ▶ 40 min activities and discussions (partly student led)
- ▶ 10 min outro: summary, questions, tips for resources, and outlook

# Coursebook and pensum

The main coursebook we will be using in class is the below:

- ▶ Galloway, Nicola and Rose, Heath. 2015. Introducing global Englishes. Routledge.

You should purchase this book: it has been ordered at Akademika bookshop. The other readings below, as well as possible additional material, will be made available electronically on Blackboard throughout the course (either for download or as links to e-readings from the library):

- ▶ Altbach, Philip G. (2007). The Imperial Tongue: English as the Dominating Academic Language. *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 8, 2007
- ▶ Dunstan, Stephany B. and Jaeger, Audrey J. (2015). Dialect and influences on the academic experiences of college students. *The Journal of Higher Education* 86(5):776-803.
- ▶ Fonyuy, K. E. (2010). The rush for English education in urban Cameroon: Sociolinguistic implications and prospects. *English Today*, 26(1), 34-42.
- ▶ Kerswill, Paul (2014). The objectification of 'Jafaican': The discoursal embedding of Multicultural London English in the British media. In Androutsopoulos, Jannis (ed.), *The media and sociolinguistic change*, 428-55. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- ▶ Momma, Haruko and Matto, Michael. (eds.) 2008. *A companion to the history of the English language*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Chapter 50: Ziegler, Mary B. Migration and motivation in the development of African American Vernacular English. 509-520.

Chapter 54: Mufwene, Salikoko S. Creoles and pidgins. 553-566.

- ▶ Rickford, John R. and McWhorter, John. 1998. Language contact and language generation: Pidgins and creoles. In Coulmas, F. (ed) *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell. 238-256.
- ▶ Svartvik, Jan and Leech, Geoffrey. 2016. *English: one tongue, many voices*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Chapters 2 and 3 and pp. 101-118.

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**Week      Topic**

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Week 1  | Introduction   |
| Week 2  | Where does variation come from?  |
| Week 3  | <b>Diachronic linguistics the origins of English</b>                                 |
| Week 4  | Britain during Old English time  |
| Week 5  | Middle English and French: the second Viking invasion?                               |
| Week 6  | Politics and culture in Middle English times: the anarchy, the plague, and the court |
| Week 7  | Early and Late Modern English: impacts of religion and technology                    |
| Week 8  | The rise of the Empire and cultural change   |
| Week 9  | English beyond Britain: of trade, colonies, and bastards                             |
| Week 10 | Types of change (phonological, lexical, and grammatical)                             |
| Week 11 | Standardization and language ideology  |
| Week 12 | New Englishes and English as global, second, and foreign language                    |
| Week 13 | The future of English / Exam review  |
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# Recommendations

## Media

- ▶ The History of English Podcast (highly recommended):  
<http://historyofenglishpodcast.com/>
- ▶ Documentaries and documentary series  
(available on [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)):

*The History of the English Language,*  
*A History of Britain,*  
*The Adventure of English,*  
*The Story of English*

START OF TRIAL LECTURE!

(PARTLY) BASED ON

SVARTVIK, JAN AND LEECH, GEOFFREY. 2016.  
ENGLISH: ONE TONGUE, MANY VOICES. BASINGSTOKE:  
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN. CHAPTERS 2 AND 3.

## **Issues we will deal with today today**

- ▶ Diachronic linguistics and the reconstruction of language
- ▶ What was going on in Britain before English?
- ▶ Old English basics

## **Today's main question**

What do we know about the languages and culture in Britain  
before the first Viking invasion?



CAN YOU GUESS WHAT IS SHOWN IN THE PICTURES?



# DIACHRONIC LINGUISTICS

# Family tree

*„The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure, more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident.“*

(Sir William Jones, 1796)

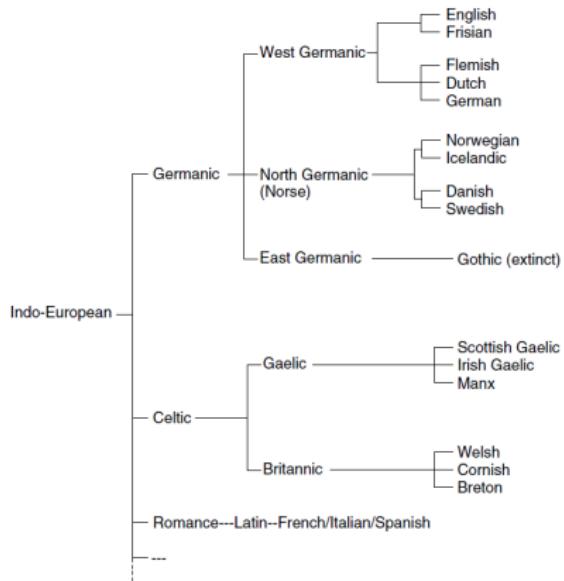
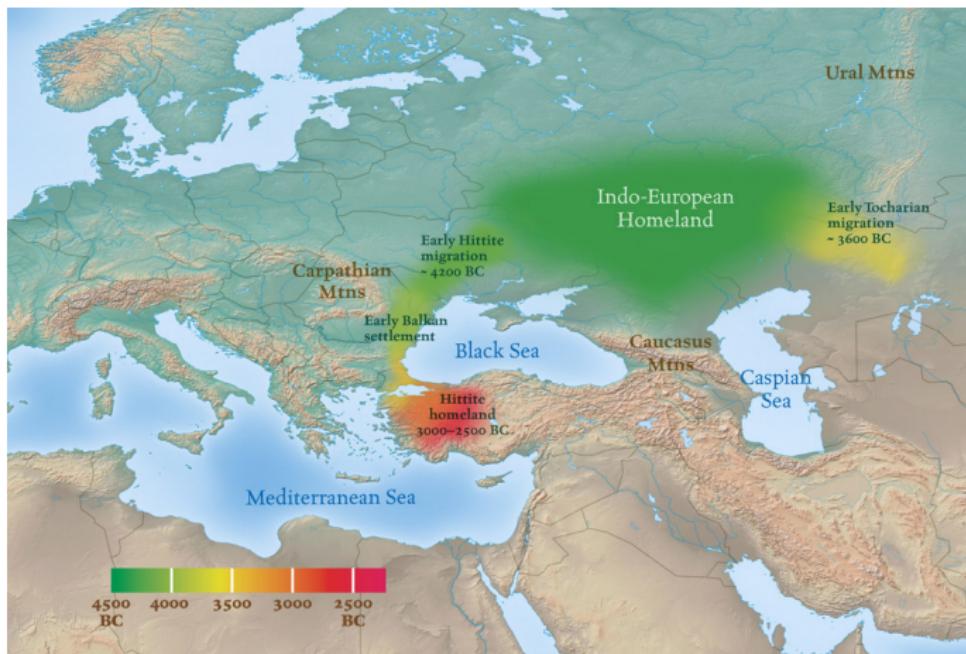


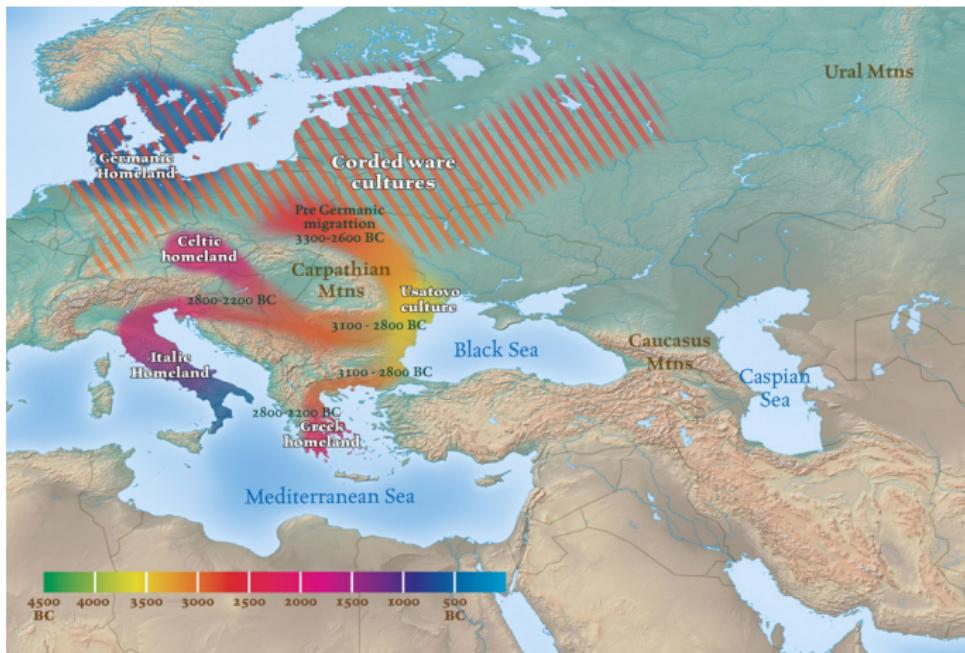
Figure 2.1 Diagram of Germanic and Celtic languages within the Indo-European family

During 19th century linguists inferred that most European languages share a common ancestor (Proto-Indo-European) which was spoken in the Caucasus mountains in 4000 BC.

# Indo-European homeland and early migrations



# Centum/Satem split and centum migrations



# Diachronic Linguistics

## Family connections

- ▶ Italian and Hindi related? Have a look at Latin and Sanskrit:

Sanskrit	Latin	Ancient Greek	Translation
pitar	pater	pater	father
bhratar	frater	phrather	brother

- ▶ Cognates are words that share a common ancestor and often exhibit similarities in form and meaning.

	<mother>		<Mutter>
English	<father>	are cognates with/of	<Vater>
	<friend>		German <Freund>

- ▶ Extensive set of cognates between md. English and md. German suggests that they probably evolved from a common ancestor.

# Diachronic Linguistics

## Comparative reconstruction

- ▶ Using cognates to reconstruct proto-forms
  - ▶ Majority principle
    - ▶ If, in a cognate set, three words begin with a „p“ and one with a „b“, probably the majority has retained the original sound whereas the minority has changed.
  - ▶ Most natural development principle
    - ▶ Some sound changes are very common (others unlikely)
      1. Final vowel often disappears: vino → vin
      2. Voiceless sounds become voiced (typically between vowels): muta → muda
      3. stops become fricatives: ripa → riva
      4. Consonants become voiceless at the end of words: rizu → ris

# Diachronic Linguistics

## Sound reconstruction

Languages			
I	S	F	Translation
cantare	cantar	chanter	(„sing“)
catena	cadena	chaine	(„chain“)
caro	caro	cher	(„dear“)
cavallo	caballo	cheval	(„horse“)

- I and S begin with a [k] while F is the only one beginning with [ʃ]: [k] in I and S is probably older than [ʃ] in F.
- Latin: cantare, catena, carus, caballus → [k]

# Diachronic Linguistics

## Word reconstruction

<b>Languages</b>				
<b>A</b>	<b>B)</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>Protoform</b>	<b>Translation</b>
mube	mupe	mup	?	(„stream“)
abadi	apati	apat	?	(„rock“)
agana	akana	akan	?	(„knife“)
enugu	enuku	enuk	?	(„diamond“)

What are the protoforms/which language is the most archaic?

# Diachronic linguistics

## Language change over time

- ▶ Internal factors for language change
  - ▶ one vowel shifts because another vowel has moved/changed/disappeared (Great English Vowel Shift: high vowels become diphthongized because mid vowels rise)
- ▶ External factors for language change
  - ▶ Influx of new lexemes due to language contact (Viking settlements, Norman Conquest)

# Diachronic Linguistics

## Grimm's law

- ▶ Jacob Grimm investigated systematic differences in the pronunciation of words of Indo-European languages (particularly differences between Latin and Greek versus Germanic languages).
- ▶ 1<sup>st</sup> Germanic sound change
  - ▶  $b^h \rightarrow b \rightarrow p \rightarrow \emptyset/f$
  - ▶  $d^h \rightarrow d \rightarrow t \rightarrow \theta$
  - ▶  $g^h \rightarrow g \rightarrow k \rightarrow x/h$
  - ▶  $g^{wh} \rightarrow g^w \rightarrow k^w \rightarrow x^w$



# Diachronic Linguistics

## Grimm's law (Grimm's 1<sup>st</sup> law)

- p → f:  
ped(em) (Lat.) → foot, Fuß  
pisces (Lat.) → fish, Fisch
- d → t:  
dens (Lat.) → tooth
- t → θ:  
tres (Lat.) → three  
tonare (Lat.) → thunder
- k → h:  
cornu (Lat.) → horn  
capere (Lat.) → have  
centum (Lat.) → hundred



# PRE-ENGLISH

# Pre-English

## Stone Age (6000-2000 BCE)

- ▶ Skara Brae (Orkney islands): stone-built Neolithic settlement occupied 3180-2500 BCE
- ▶ Hunters & gatherers (farming after 3500)



## Bronze Age (2000-700 BCE)

- ▶ First Celtic arrival (2000-1200 BCE)
- ▶ Goidelic-speaking (→ md. Scottish and Irish Gaelic)
- ▶ Mining for ore and metal production (international trade)

The Seven Ages of Britain, Episode 1,

29:00-33:00

## Iron Age (700 BCE - 43 CE)

- ▶ Second arrival of Celts (500-400 BC)
- ▶ Brythonic-speaking (→ md. Welsh and Cornish)
- ▶ First linguistic evidence (runic inscriptions)

# Pre-English

- ▶ By the time the Romans arrived (43CE), Celtic was spoken across Britain with traces preserved mainly in place names (tor (Torpenhow) = peak, caer (Carlisle) = fortified place, Thames = dark river, lin(do) = lake, avon = river, Cymru (Welsh name for Wales): Cumberland, Cumbria)
- ▶ 43-410 Romans arrived and Latin became the official language but Latin (of that period) had a very weak influence on the development of the English language



# OLD ENGLISH

# Old English (450-1150)

- ▶ Germanic tribes arrive in huge numbers in England between 446 and 454
- ▶ According to Bede, a monk from Jarrow, writing in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century, they belonged to three tribes, Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. (It is highly likely that Frisians were also part of that group)
- ▶ The Germanic tribes forced the Celts to move to the West and destroyed the civilization as it had been attained under Roman influence.



# Old English (450-1150)

- ▶ Germanic roots preserved in place names:  
ing (Reading) = people of,  
ham (Nottingham) = Farm, etc.
- ▶ Germanic word stock: is: is, have: habban, man: mann, woman: wif, child: cild, house: hus, food: mete, eat: etan, drink: drincan, etc.
- ▶ The first written records used futhorc
- ▶ The most important piece of Old English poetry is the epic of the Geatish warrior *Beowulf* who slays the monster Grindel and dies fighting a dragon.



Manuscript Letters

Modern Letters

þær! fe lopbeno	in georlögum,	in georlögum,
bodcynningo,	þyam geornebo,	þyam geornebo,
ha ða arþelingas	ellen geornebo,	ellen geornebo,
Ófer Scyld Scerung	georlögum þearam,	Ófer Scyld Scerung
monegem manghum,	meorðweora orphus,	meorðweora orphus,
egfode exiles.	þyððan ærest pæsþ,	egfode exiles.
preforger panðen,	he þas grange gehold,	Syððan ærest wærd
peos under polcenum,	þeƿðynymðum þah,	þeƿðafest fæderen,
oþer him aȝþylc.	þopa ȝymberferfesþa	he þas frode gehold,
oþer heortade,	þyðam geðebe,	wex under wælcram,
gomban gylðan.	gomban gylðan.	weorðanhydnum þa
ofer horevare,	hyðan scode,	oþer him aȝþylc.
gomban gylðan.	hyðan scode,	þyðan scode,

# Old English (450-1150)



Hwæt. We Gardena in geardagum,  
þeodcyniga, þrym gefrunon,  
hu ða æbelingas ellen fremedon.  
Oft Scyld Scefing sceafena þreatum,  
monegum mægbum, meodosetla ofteah,  
egsode eorlas. Syððan ærest wearð  
feasceaft funden, he þas frofre gebad,  
weox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þah,  
oðþæt him æghwylc þara ymsittendra  
ofer hronrade hyran scolde,  
gomban gyldan. þæt wæs god cyning.

The Story of English (Episode 2)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuyEXotPRxM>, 1:35-2:21

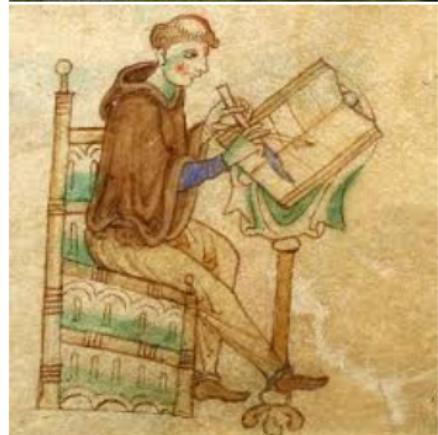
# Old English (450-1150)

- ▶ Entire word stock in Old English  
app. 25,000 words (almost entirely Germanic almost no Latin)
- ▶ Determiners, adjectives and nouns were fully inflected:  
The king : se cyning  
of the king : thaes cyninges  
to the king : thaem cyninge
- ▶ Word order did not matter (as much):  
Se cyning meteth thone biscop = Thone biscop meteth se cyning  
The king meets the bishop ≠ The bishop meets the king



# Old English (450-1150)

- ▶ Germanic tribes were pagans as we can still detect in English weekdays (Woden: Wednesday, Thor: Thursday, Fria: Friday).
- ▶ From the sixth to the eighth century the Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity.
- ▶ Latin (language of religion) came to influence English
  - (1) angel, bishop, candle, church, martyr, priest, school, ...



# Old English: Exercise

Can you gloss or even translate? Give it a try!

- (2) Sēo cwēn lufode þone gōdan cnapan.
- (3) Se fisc swam under þæt scip and ofer þone sciellfisc.
- (4) þæt se æþela cyning nolde (would.not) Crīste wiþsacan (forgive)
- (5) þā tugon (took) þā hæþnan þone hālgan (holyman) tō slege
- (6) and mid ānum swenge slōgon him of þæt hēafod (head)

# Old English: Exercise

Form groups! Find differences to md. English with respect to one of the following topics: articles, case and gender marking, negation, word order.

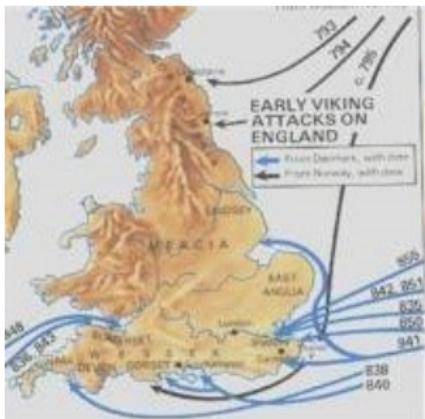
- (7) Sēo cwēn lufode þone gōdan cnapan.  
The queen loved the good servant.  
'The queen loved the good servant'
- (8) Se fisc swam under þæt scip and ofer þone sciellfisc.  
The fish swam under the ship and over the shellfish.  
'The fish swam under the ship and over the shellfish.'
- (9) þæt se æþela cyning nolde Crīste wiþsacan  
That the noble king would.not Christ forgive  
'that the noble king would not forsake Christ'
- (10) þā tugon þā hæþnan þone hālgan tō slege  
There took the heathens the holy.one to slay  
'Then the heathens took the holy one for slaying'
- (11) and mid ānum swenge slōgon him of þæt hēafod  
And with one swing slew him off the head  
'and with a single blow struck the head from him'

END OF TRIAL LECTURE!  
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING!

## OLD ENGLISH AND OLD NORSE

# Old English and Old Norse

- ▶ From the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Vikings invaded England to plunder and settle.
- ▶ Beginning their invasion in 793 in Lindisfarne, they conquered almost all of Britain and destroyed monasteries and killed or enslaved the native population.
- ▶ But in 878 Alfred the Great won in a last attempt to withstand the invasion in Edington (dad Alfred not won, Britain would be Scandinavian today).
- ▶ Peace treaty between Vikings and Alfred: division of England into the Danelaw (Viking rule) and Wessex (only remaining Anglo-Saxon kingdom).
- ▶ Alfred united the remaining Anglo-Saxons and revitalized English (education, poetry, and official documents in Old English)





Vikings (Season 1 Episode 2)  
33:30-42:30

## Old English and Old Norse

- ▶ During the Danelaw, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings traded and inter-married (very strong influence of Old Norse n Old English, e.g. places in -by and family names -son)
  - ▶ Core vocabulary with origin in Old Norse:  
*give, law* (Anglo-Saxon: *doom; king-dom*),  
*leg, skin* (Anglo-Saxon: *haut*), *sky, take,*  
*neck* (Anglo-Saxon: *hals*), *die* (Anglo-Saxon:  
*stearvan* which would become *starve*), and  
*they* (may be because of phonetic similarity between  
*heo* (3<sup>rd</sup> pers. sg. feminine) and *hie* 3<sup>rd</sup> pers. pl.).



# Britain under English rule

- ▶ In France, Charles the Simple offered Rollo Normandy if he guarded Paris from further Viking attacks.
- ▶ In the Danelaw, unity evaporated and rule became decentralized, while Alfred the Great unified the Anglo-Saxons who went on the offensive in 913.
- ▶ After years of conquest, Æthelstan defeated an alliance of the Scots, Danes, and Vikings to become King of all England during the battle of Brunanburh in 937 - thereby uniting England under Anglo-Saxon rule and ending the Danelaw.
- ▶ New viking attacks start in 980 and Æthelred the Unready paid Danegeld to keep the raiders from attacking.



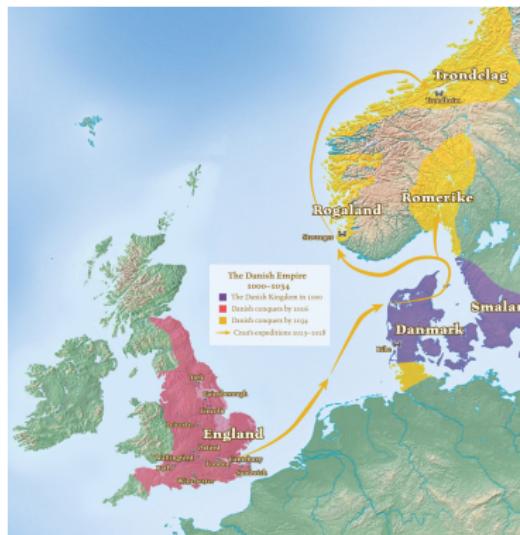
# Britain under Viking rule

- ▶ Danegeld increased raids and impoverished England causing famine and weakened England's defense
- ▶ Massacres of Dane's due to hatred towards Viking invaders
- ▶ One prominent death: Gunhilde (origin of *gun*, sister of Sweyn Forkbeard and daughter of Harald Bluetooth who united several Norse peoples)
- ▶ As revenge, Sweyn and his son Canute aimed to conquer England in 1014 and became king of England.



# England's first empire

- ▶ After subduing England, Denmark, and Norway, Canute became ruler of the united Viking empire
- ▶ When Canute died in 1035, Edward the Confessor (raised in Normandy) became king of England
- ▶ When Edward died in 1066, he was succeeded by Harold Godwinson who was killed during the Battle of Hastings by the Norman William the Conqueror (believed Edward had promised him the English throne)



# MIDDLE ENGLISH

# Norman Conquest in 1066

- ▶ William the Conqueror defeated the British army in 1066 in Hastings.
- ▶ The southern English earls died in battle and were replaced by French nobility
- ▶ William intended to leave the structures in place and collect the Danegeld (land-tax)
- ▶ The northern English nobility rebelled were consequently disowned, replaced with loyal French barons and their lands devastated



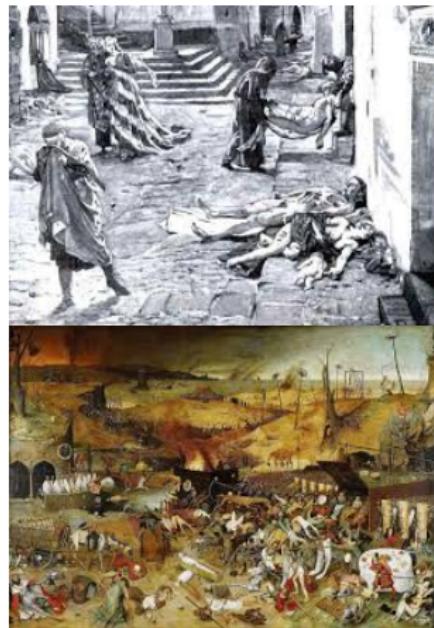
# England under French rule

- ▶ English went underground (official documents in Latin or French)
- ▶ Emergence of castles and „chivalry“
- ▶ Terms relating to governance, courts, military, and cuisine mainly French (e.g. *parliament*, *government*, *minster*, *battalion*, *soldier*, *navy*, *judge*, *attorney*, *court*, etc.)
- ▶ Products often French (*beaf*, *mutton*, *poultry*, etc.) while the original animal (handled by English peasants) retained the Germanic term (*cow*, *lamb*, *chicken*, etc.)



# The Black Death (late 1340s)

- ▶ Close-knit communities (e.g. monks) suffered especially badly
- ▶ Of a total population of 6 million, app. 3-4 million people died.
- ▶ Clergy fled or died → shortage of Latin speakers → people who replaced the Latin-speaking clergy were English speakers → English re-emerged and was re-introduced into the parliament (1362), court, church, and schools
- ▶ Henry, Duke of Lancaster, became Henry IV - the first English-speaking king since the Norman Conquest



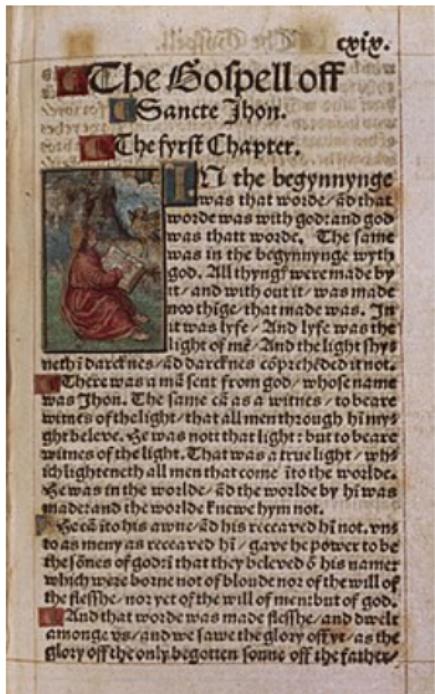
# Religion and English

- ▶ John Wyclif (1330-1384)
- ▶ Similar to Luther, Wyclif propagated that the only religious authority is scripture itself
- ▶ Clergy was lazy and the majority could neither recite the ten commandments nor the Lord's Prayer
- ▶ A small pious group distributed a Bible translated into English aiming to overthrow the corrupt church-elite



# Religion and English

- ▶ The translation was almost a word-to-word gloss thus retaining Latin word order and many Latin terms
- ▶ Wyclif trained a secret undercover clergy - the Lollards - that were send out into the country to teach the faith in English and spread an anti-clergy sentiment



# Linguistic change in Middle English

- ▶ Grammatical changes were not only primarily consequences of the Norman Conquest but continuations of processes that were ongoing (loss of inflection) and the Norman Conquest supported these processes in that it removed conservative forces
- ▶ Changes were not uniform and written language changed substantially slower, e.g. inflectional endings can still be found in some manuscripts dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century.
- ▶ English was widely replaced by French in written and spoken language of the higher social classes as it was considered as culturally inferior
- ▶ The influence of French on the English language is not comparable with anything else in its history.

# French Vocabulary

- ▶ After the Norman Conquest French was introduced as the language of the higher social classes and public affairs, and remained as such for more than 200 years.
- (12) crown, state empire, authority, court, alliance, subject, rebel, traitor, liberty, office, chancellor, chamberlain, marshal, minister, mayor, noble, peer, prince(-ss), duke, count, sir, madam, mistress, manor, bailiff, peasant, servant.
- ▶ The higher clergy were mostly Norman, in monasteries and religious houses French was the common language, the church as a pathfinder to a career in politics.
- (13) religion, theology, sermon, sacrament, baptism, confession, prayer, clergy, prelate, cardinal, parson, pastor, crucifix, incense, lectern, image, chapter, chancel, abbey, convent, creator, savior, virgin, saint, faith, devotion, temptation, absolution, salvation, piety, sanctity, charity, pity obedience.

# French Vocabulary

- ▶ French also became the language of the court, where the OE equivalent survived it has lost the technical sense.
- (14) justice, plea, plaintiff, defendant, judge, attorney, complaint, jury, panel, evidence, verdict, sentence, prison, felony, assault, fraud, perjury, adultery, property, estate, tenant, heritage, heir, entail, just, innocent
- ▶ After the conquest the English army and navy were under control of the French speaking authority
- (15) army, navy, peace, enemy, arms, battle, soldier, garrison, guard, captain, lieutenant, sergeant; verbs: arm, array, harness, vanquish, defend

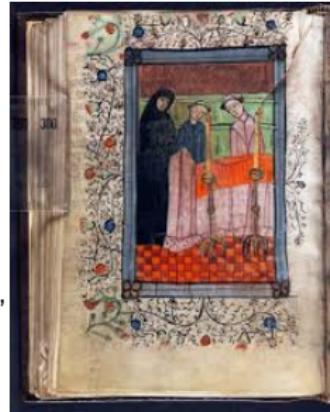


AN. Celle Courtois pro leys assent. f. 67v Lambeth



# French Vocabulary

- ▶ Upper classes set up the standards of fashion, dining, and social life and used their terms to describe them
- (16) fashion, dress, robe, cloak, veil, lace, button, garter, satin, fur, blue, brown, scarlet, ruby, emerald, pearl, diamond, dinner, supper, feast, appetite, venison, beef, mutton, pork, bacon, sausage, salmon, sardine, oyster, poultry, pullet, pigeon, raisin, fig, grape, orange, vinegar, spice, herb, boil, roast, stew, mince, arras, curtain, couch, chair, blanket, wardrobe, closet, dance, solace, music, chess, leisure, rowel, trot, stable, harness, terrier, leash, kennel, scent
- ▶ Upper classes set up the standards of arts, learning, and medicine and used their terms to describe them
- (17) painting, sculpture, music, beauty, image, figure, cathedral, palace, mansion, chamber, chimney, study, logic, geometry, grammar, noun; literature: rime, prose, romance, tragedy, prologue, chapter, paper, pen, poet, chirurgy, physician, surgeon, pain, plague, pestilence, anatomy, stomach, balm



# The Birth of Standard English

- ▶ Standard English emerged in the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and became generally acknowledged in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in spoken and written language.
- ▶ East Midland dialect (particularly London dialect), became the basis of Standard English
- ▶ London was the seat of the court and the highest judicial tribunals, political and commercial center, and the focus of the social and intellectual activity.
- ▶ William Caxton introduced printing in 1476 and London was the center of book publishing
- ▶ Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the Midlands were important intellectual centers



## SUMMARY

# What have we learned today?

- ▶ Indo-European family tree: languages are related
- ▶ Comparative reconstruction using cognates
- ▶ Celtic only recoverable from place names
- ▶ Germanic invasion (450): birth of English
- ▶ Christianisation (600-800): Latin introduced church related terms
- ▶ Viking invasion (800): new vocabulary (sk-terms)
- ▶ Norman invasion (1100): massive vocab. influx (terms related to military, politics, and cultured life)
- ▶ Great Plague (1350): caused English to reemerge
- ▶ Printing (1470): spread of literacy and standardization



CAN YOU GUESS WHAT IS SHOWN IN THE PICTURES?



## TIP OF THE DAY

EXPLORE REGIONAL VARIETIES OF ENGLISH  
WORLD-WIDE USING THE eWAVE!

# Exploring Varieties of English World Wide

*The electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English (eWAVE) is a large database of structural properties of 50 varieties of English and 26 English-based Pidgins and Creoles in eight Anglophone world regions (<https://ewave-atlas.org/>).*

