oldest Eastern Scandinavian runic inscriptions, dating from a period before the beginning of the literature, as well as in many modern Eastern Scandinavian dialects. For, having regard to the Scandinavian dialects generally, we must adopt quite a different classification from that indicated by the dialects which are represented in the literature. We now pass on to review the latter and their history.

I. Icelandic.—In ancient times Icelandic was by far the most important of the Scandinavian languages, in form as well as in literature. To avoid ambiguity, the language before the Reformation (about 1530-40) is often called old Icelandic.

1. *Old Icelandic* was spoken not only in Iceland, but also in Greenland, where Icelandic colonists lived for a lengthened period (983- about 1400). Our knowledge of its character is almost exclusively derived from the remarkably voluminous literature, @@1 dating from the middle of the 12th century, and written in the Latin alphabet, adapted to the special requirements of this language. Nothing is preserved of older runic literature.@@2 Indeed, Old Icelandic pos­sesses only very few runic monuments (about forty), all of them almost worthless from a philological point of view. The oldest, the inscription on the church door of Valpjofstaðr, dates from the beginning of the 13th century,@@3 and is consequently later than the oldest preserved manuscripts @@4 in the Latin alphabet, some of which are as old as the end of the 12th century. A small frag­ment (Cod. AM. 237, fob) of a *Book of Homilies* (of which a short specimen is given below) is considered the oldest of all. About contemporary with this is the oldest part of an inventory entitled *Reykjaholts máldage.* From about 1200 we possess a fragment (Cod. Reg. old sign. 1812) of the only existing Old Icelandic *glossary,* and from the first years of the 13th century the *Stockholm Book of Homilies* (Cod. Holm. 15, 4to), which from a philological point of view is of the greatest importance, chiefly on account of its very accurate orthography, which is especially noticeable in the indica­tion of quantity; from the early part of the same century comes the fragment (Cod. AM. 325, 2, 4to) entitled *Agrip* (“abridgment” of the history of Norway), probably a copy of a Norwegian original, also orthographically important. Among later manuscripts we may mention, as philologically interesting, the *Annales Regii* (Cod. Reg. 2087) from the beginning of the 14th century, orthographically of great value; the rich manuscript of miscellanies, *Hauksbók* (Codd. AM. 371, 544, 675, 4to), a great part of which is written with Haukr Erlendsson’s (+1334) own hand; and, above all, three short essays, in which some Icelanders have tried to write a grammatical and orthographical treatise on their own mother-tongue, all three appearing as an appendix to the manuscripts of the *Prose Edda.* The oldest and most important of these essays (preserved in the Cod. Worm, from about 1330) is by an unknown author of about 1150, and is probably intended to be a continuation of a lost work of the first grammarian of Iceland, Póroddr Rúnameistari (who flourished at the beginning of the 12th century); the second (the oldest known manuscript of which is preserved in the Cod. Ups., c. 1290) is perhaps the work of the famous Snorri Sturloson (+1241); the third (the oldest manuscript in Cod. AM. 748, 4to, of the begin­ning of the 14th century) is by Snorri’s nephew Ólafr Hvítaskáld (+1259), and is no doubt based partly upon pórodd’s work above mentioned, partly and chiefly upon Priscian and Donatus.@@5

The oldest form of the Icelandic language is, however, not pre­served in the above-mentioned earliest manuscripts of the end of the 12th century, which are written in the language of their own age, but in far later ones of the 13th century, which contain poems by the oldest Icelandic poets, such as the renowned Egill Skallagrimson (about 930) and the unknown authors of the so-called Edda-songs. In spite of the late date of the manuscripts, the metrical form has been the means of preserving a good deal of the ancient language. But, as already remarked, during the 10th and 11th centuries this dialect differs but little from Norwegian, though in the 12th this is no longer the case.

We may here contrast a specimen of the above-mentioned oldest Icelandic manuscript (from the end of the 12th century) with an almost contemporary Norwegian one (Cod. AM. 619; see below):—

*Icel. —*En pat es vitanda, at allt ma andlega merkiasc oc fyllasc i oss, pat es til kirkio bunings epa pionosto parf at haua, cf ver liuom sva hreinlega at ver sem verper at callasc gops mustere.

*Norw.—*En pat er vitanda, at allt ma andlega merkiasc oc fyllasc i os, pat er til kirkiu bunings eða til pionasto parf at hafa, ef ver lifum sva rseinlega, at ver sein voröir at kallasc guös mysteri.

*Engl. —*And that is to be known that all that is needed for the decoration of the church or the service may, spiritually, be found and imitated within us, if we live so cleanly that we are worthy to be called God’s temple.

Apart from the fact that the language is, generally speaking, archaic, we find in the Icelandic text two of the oldest and most essential characteristics of Icelandic as opposed to Norwegian, viz., the more complete vowel assimilation (pionosto, *tyonasto ; cf.* also, *e.g.,* Icel. *kollokom,* Norw. *kallaðum,* we called) and the retention of initial *h* before *r (hreinlcga, rasinlega), I,* and *n.* other differ­ences, some of which occur at this period, others a little later, are— in Icel. lengthening of *a, o, u* before *If, Ig, Ik, Im,* and *Ip* (as Icel. *halfr,* Norw. and oldest Icel. *halfr,* half); later still, also of *a, i,* ii, and *y* before *ng* and *nk*; Icel. *di* and *ey* for older and (ϕy (as in Icel. *daema, heyra,* Norw. and oldest Icel. *dϕma,* to deem, *hϕyra,* to hear); Icel. termination of 2nd plur. of verbs in -8 (p) or *-t,* but Norw. often in *-r* (as Icel. *taktið, -t,* Norw. *takir,* you take). These points may be sufficient to characterize the language of the earlier ‘classical” period of Icelandic (about 1190-1350). At the middle of the 13th century the written language undergoes material changes, owing in a great measure, no doubt, to the powerful influence of Snorri Sturloson. Thus in unaccented syllables *i* now appears for older *e,* and *u* (at first only when followed by one or more con­sonants belonging to the same syllable) for *o* ; the passive ends in *-z* for *-sk.* The other differences from Norwegian, mentioned above as occurring later, are now completely established. With the begin­ning of the 14th century there appear several new linguistic pheno­mena : a *u* is inserted between final *r* and a preceding consonant (as in *ríkur,* mighty); *o* (pronounced as an open *o)* passes into *ö* (the character *ö* was not introduced till the 16th century), or before *ng, nk* into *au* (as *long, fioll,* pronounced *laung, fiöll)*; c before *ng, nk* passes into *ei*; a little later *e* passes into *ie,* and the passive changes its termination from -z, oldest *-sk,* into *-zt* (or *-zst)* (as in *kallazt,* to be called). The post-classical period of old Icelandic (1350-1530), which is, from a literary point of view, of but little importance, already shows marked differences that are character­istic of Modern Icelandic ; as early as the 15th century we find *ddl* for *ll* and *rl* (as *falla,* pronounced *faddla,* to fall), *ddn* for *nn* and *rn* (as *horn,* pron. *hoddn,* horn); about the year 1500 *ve* after *h* passes into *vo,* in other positions to *vo* (as *hvelpr,* pron. *xvolpur,* whelp; *kvern,* pron. *kvöm,* mill), etc.

Although dialectical differences are not altogether wanting, they do not occur to any great extent in the Old Icelandic literary language. Thus, in some manuscripts we find *ft* replaced by *fst (oft, ofst,* often); in manuscripts from the western part of the island there appears in the 13th and 14th centuries a tendency to change *If, rf* into *lb, rb (tolf, tolb,* twelve ; *porf, porb,* want), &c. To what extent the language of Greenland differed from that of Iceland we cannot judge from the few runic monuments which have come down to us from that colony.

Apart from the comparatively inconsiderable attempts at a grammatical treatment of old Icelandic in the Middle Ages which we have mentioned above, grammar as a science can only be said to have commenced in the 17 th century. The first grammar, written by the Icelander Runolphus Jonas (+1654), dates from 1651. His contemporary and compatriot Gudmund Andreae (+1654) compiled the first dictionary, which was not, however, edited till 1683 (by the Dane Petrus Resenius, +1688). The first scholars who studied old Icelandic systematically were H. K. Rask (1787-1832), whose works @@6 laid the foundation to our knowledge of the language, and his great contemporary Jac. Grimm, in whose *Deutsche Grammatik* (1819 *sq.)* particular attention is paid to Icelandic. Those who since the time of Rask and Grimm have principally deserved well of Icelandic grammar are—the ingenious and learned Norwegian P. A. Munch, 1863, @@7 to whom we really owe the normalized orthography that has hitherto been most in use in editing Old Icelandic texts; the learned Icelander K. Gíslason, whose works are chiefly devoted to phonetic researches ; @@8 the Danish scholars

K. J. Lyngby (+1871), the author of an essay @@9 which is of funda­mental importance in Icelandic orthography and phonetics, and

1. F. A. Wimmer, who has rendered great services to the study of the etymology. @@10 The latest Icelandic grammar is by the Swede Ad. Noreen. @@11 As lexicographers the first rank is held by the

@@@1 A complete catalogue of the literature edited hitherto is given by Th. Möbius, *Catalogus Librorum Islandicorum et Noreegicorum AEtatis* Mediae, 1856, and *Ver­zeichnis» der . . . altisländischen und alt norwegischen . . . von 1855 bis 1879 erschienenen Schriften,* 1880. Compare Iceland.

@@@2 See B. Magndsson Ölsen, *Runeme i den Oldislandske literatur,* 1883.

@@@3 See Kr. Kalund, “Islands fortidslevninger" (in *the Aarbϕger for Nordist Oldkyndighed,* 1882).

@@@4 An account of all the oldest Icelandic manuscripts (to about 1230) is given by J. Hoffory in the *Gott. Gel. Am.,* 1884, p. 478 *sq.*

@@@5 A short review of the most important old Icelandic manuscripts (and their editions), classed according to subjects, is given by O. Brenner, *Altnordisches Handbuch,* pp. 13 *sq.* The principal collections of manuscripts are—1, the Arnamagnaean (AM.) in Copenhagen, founded by Ami Magnusson (+ 1730); 2, tile collection of the Royal Library (Reg.) in Copenhagen, founded by Th. Torfaeus (f 1719) and Brynjdlfr Sveinsson (+ 1674); 3, the Delagardian collection (Delag. or Ups.) at Upsala, founded in 1651 by Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie; 4, the Stockholm collection (Holm.), founded by Jón Rugman (in 1662) and Jón Eggertson (in 1682).

*@@@*6 *E.g., Veiledning til det Islandske sprog,* 1811 ; in a new, much Improved Swedish edition, *Anvisning til Isländskan,* 1818.

@@@7 *Fomswenskans och Fornnorskans sprakbyggnad,* 1849, and (along with C. R. Unger) *Norrönasprogets grammatik,* 1847.

@@@8 Especially *Urn frumparta Islemkrar tüngu ifornöld,* 1846.

*@@@*9 *Den Oldnordiske udtale,* 1861.

@@@10 *Fomnordisk formtära,* 1874.

*@@@*11 *Altisländische und altnorwegische Grammatik unter Berücksichtigung des Umordischen,* 1884.