

2: Old English Sound Laws and Verbs

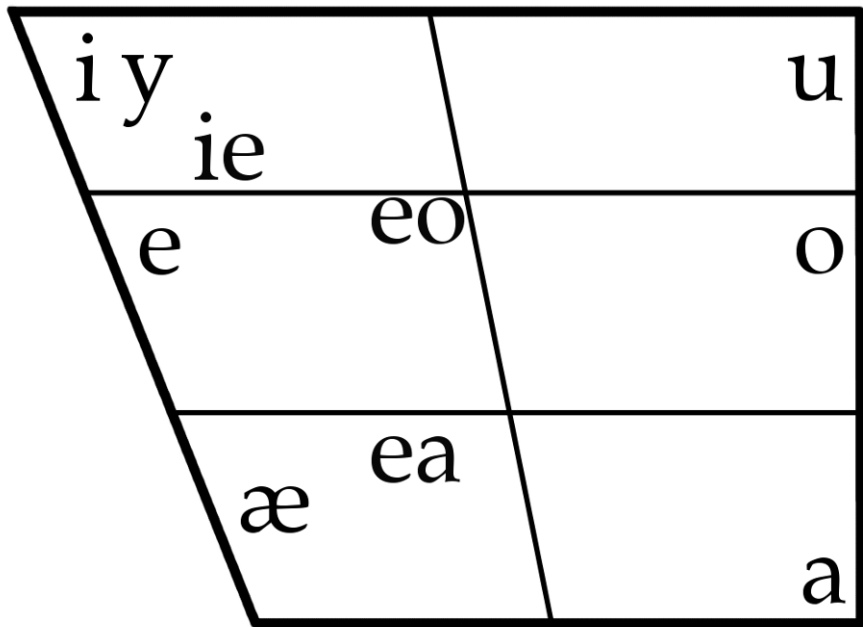
Front Mutation: *i*-Mutation

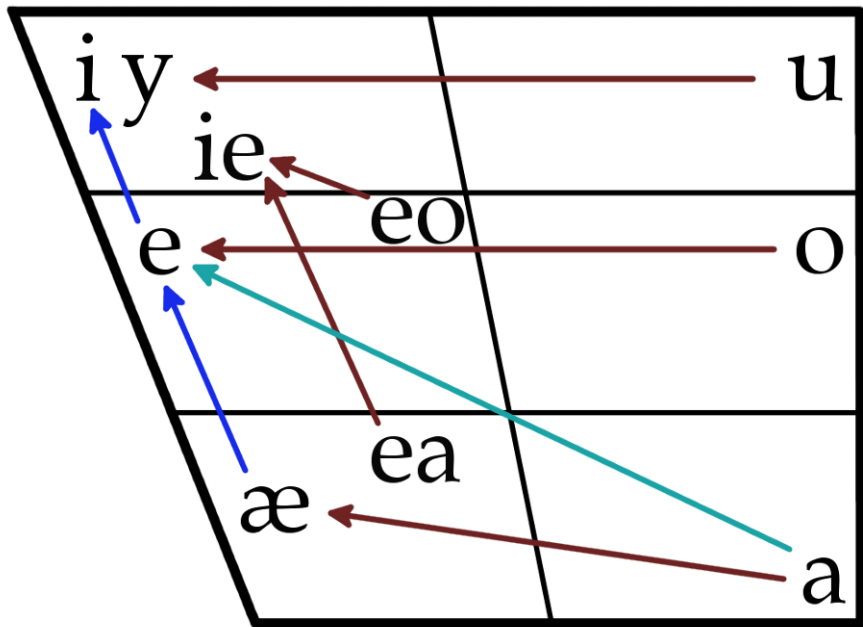
m	singular	plural
Nom.	fōt	fēt
Acc.	fōt	fēt
Gen.	fōtes	fōta
Dat.	fēt	fōtum

Front Mutation: *i*-Mutation

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Proto-Germanic *fōts, dative *fōti, plural *fōtiz





Front Mutation: *i*-Mutation

m	singular	plural
Nom.	mann	menn
Acc.	mann	menn
Gen.	mannes	manna
Dat.	menn	mannum

Proto-Germanic *mann, dative *manni, plural *manniz

What about *dæg*?

m	singular	plural
Nom.	dæg	dagas
Acc.	dæg	dagas
Gen.	dæges	daga
Dat.	dæge	dagum

What about *dæg*?

m	singular	plural
Nom.	dæg	dagas
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- ▶ PG *a* fronted to OE *æ* unless followed by a nasal consonant (Campbell §131)
- ▶ *æ* was then restored to *a* before a back vowel (Campbell §157)

Alistair Campbell, *Old English Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959)

Syncope

m	singular	plural
Nom.	engel	englas
Acc.	engel	englas
Gen.	engles	engla
Dat.	engle	englum

- ▶ A “long-stemmed dissyllable” loses its second vowel when a third syllable is added. In other words:
 1. The word itself has two syllables
 2. The first syllable has a long vowel, or a short vowel followed by two consonants
 3. The second syllable has a short vowel followed by no more than one consonant
 4. When an ending is added, the second vowel disappears: *engles*
- ▶ Final *h* is dropped before an ending: *scōh* → **scōhes* → *scōs*
This causes compensatory lengthening: *feoh* → **feohes* → *fēos*

Breaking

- ▶ Short *e* followed by *h*, or by *r* + consonant → *eo*
- ▶ Short *æ* followed by *h*; *r* + consonant; or *l* + consonant → *ea*

Thus

- ▶ bregdan, brægd, brugdon, brogden; but
- ▶ weorpan, wearp, wurpon, worpen

Grimm's Law and Verner's Law

aspirated voiced stops	→	voiced stops	→	voiceless stops	→	voiceless fricatives
b ^h	→	b	→	p	→	b
d ^h	→	d	→	t	→	d
g ^h	→	g	→	k	→	g
				s	→	r
if immediately preceded by IE word stress:				p	→	f
				t	→	θ
				k	→	x
				s	→	s
				<u>fr</u> ater	→	brō p or
				pa <u>ter</u>	→	fæ d er

Alternation Due to Grimm's Law and Verner's Law

- ▶ frēosan: ic frēas, wē fruron (cf. English *freeze*, German *frieren*)
- ▶ cēosan: ic cēas, wē curon (cf. English *choose*, German *küren*)
- ▶ snīðan: ic snāð, wē snidon

Verb Classes

Strong

Form their preterites and past participles using vowel gradation:

singan, sang, sungon, sungen

Weak

Form their preterites and past participles by adding a dental suffix *d/t*:

lāran, lārde, lārdon, lāred

Anomalous/Mixed

Do not answer to these categories, or combine them.

All verb classes commonly prefix the past ptc. with *ge-*:

gesungen, gelāred

Conjugation

- ▶ **Person: first, second, third**
- ▶ Number: singular, plural
- ▶ Tense: present, preterite
- ▶ Mood: indicative, subjunctive, imperative

ic fremme	wē fremmaǰ
þū fremest	gē fremmaǰ
hē fremeǰ	hīe fremmaǰ

- ▶ Cf. early Modern English ‘I do, thou dost, he doth’
- ▶ Remember that *þ* is everywhere interchangeable with *ð*

Conjugation

- ▶ Person: first, second, third
- ▶ Number: **singular, plural**
- ▶ Tense: present, preterite
- ▶ Mood: indicative, subjunctive, imperative

ic fremme	wē fremmaǎ
þū fremest	gē fremmaǎ
hē fremeǎ	hīe fremmaǎ

! *Einheitsplural*: contrast *wir/sie machen/tun, ihr macht/tut*

Tense

- ▶ OE present : MnE present, future (simple/continuous);
- ▶ OE preterite : MnE past, present perfect, past perfect (simple/continuous);
- ▶ **resolved** tenses: *habban/bēon*/modal + participle/infinitive.
(= **periphrastic** tenses)

ic fremme

ic fremede

ic hæbbe gefremed

ic hæfde gefremed

þæt wæs gefremed

hē sceal fremman

is fela tō fremmenne

Conjugation

- ▶ Person: first, second, third
- ▶ Number: singular, plural
- ▶ Tense: present, preterite
- ▶ Mood: indicative, subjunctive, imperative

Weak		Strong	
ic fremme	wē fremmað	ic scīne	wē scīnað
þū fremest	gē fremmað	þū scīnest	gē scīnað
hē fremed	hīe fremmað	hē scīneð	hīe scīnað
ic fremede	wē fremedon	ic scān	wē scinon
þū fremedest	gē fremedon	þū scine	gē scinon
hē fremede	hīe fremedon	hē scān	hīe scinon

What's With *fremman*, *fremest*?

- ▶ **Gemination** (consonant doubling)
- ▶ Here compensatory lengthening after loss of *j* (PG **framjan*)
- ▶ Forms with single *m* saw *j* absorbed into the *i* of the original ending before gemination could occur

Strong Verb Gradation Patterns

<i>class</i>	<i>first</i>	<i>fronted</i>	<i>second</i>	<i>third</i>	<i>fourth</i>	<i>cf.</i>
1	scīnan		scān	scinon	scinen	write/scheinen
2	crēopan	crīepþ	crēap	crupon	cropen	freeze/frieren
3	bregdan	britt	brægd	brugdon	brogden	bind/bergen
4	beran	birþ	bær	bæron	boren	bear/gebären
5	tredan	tritt	træd	trædon	treden	tread/treten
6	faran	færst	fōr	fōron	faren	shake/fahren
7	healdan	healdeþ	hēold	hēoldon	healden	fall/halten
7	grow/hātan	hæt	hēt	hēton	hāten	heißen

Strong Verb Gradation Patterns

<i>class</i>	<i>first</i>	<i>fronted</i>	<i>second</i>	<i>third</i>	<i>fourth</i>
1	ī		ā	i	i
2	ēo	īe	ēa	u	o
3	eCC	iCC	æCC	uCC	oCC
4	e	i	æ	ǣ	o
5	e	i	æ	ǣ	e
6	a	æ	ō	ō	a
7	X	X-fronted	Y	Y	X

Conjugation

- ▶ Person: first, second, third
- ▶ Number: singular, plural
- ▶ Tense: present, preterite
- ▶ **Mood: indicative, subjunctive, imperative**

Hēo fremep þæt

Ic wille, þæt hēo fremme þæt (cf. ‘that she do that’)

Ic wille, þæt wē fremmen þæt

Ic wolde, þæt hēo fremede þæt

Ic wolde, þæt wē fremeden þæt

Freme þæt!

Fremmaþ þæt!

→ See subjunctive handout

Voice

No *inflectional* passive. Passivity is expressed:

- ▶ Through *bēon* or *weorðan* + past participle:

Hē wearð ācenned

Se cāsere wæs ofslagen

- ▶ Through impersonal *man* with an active verb:

Man brohte his hēafod on ānum disce

Man gehalgode twēgen biscopas

Only the verb *hātan* can be used as a true passive verb:

Saga hwæt ic hātte

(Cf. *Sum consul Boetius wæs hāten*, formed with *bēon*.)

Anomalous Verbs

<i>bēon, wesan “to be”</i>							
<i>present indicative</i>				<i>present subjunctive</i>			
<i>1sg</i>	ic eom/bēo	<i>1pl</i>	wē sindon/bēoþ	<i>1sg</i>	ic sīe/bēo	<i>1pl</i>	wē sīen/bēon
<i>2sg</i>	þū eart/bist	<i>2pl</i>	gē sindon/bēoþ	<i>2sg</i>	þū sīe/bēo	<i>2pl</i>	gē sīen/bēon
<i>3sg</i>	hē is/biþ	<i>3pl</i>	hīe sindon/bēoþ	<i>3sg</i>	hē sīe/bēo	<i>3pl</i>	hīe sīen/bēon
<i>preterite indicative</i>				<i>preterite subjunctive</i>			
<i>1sg</i>	ic wæs	<i>1pl</i>	wē wāron	<i>1sg</i>	ic wāre	<i>1pl</i>	wē wāren
<i>2sg</i>	þū wāre	<i>2pl</i>	gē wāron	<i>2sg</i>	þū wāre	<i>2pl</i>	gē wāren
<i>3sg</i>	hē wæs	<i>3pl</i>	hīe wāron	<i>3sg</i>	hē wāre	<i>3pl</i>	hīe wāren
<i>past participle</i>	(gebēon)	<i>imperative sg</i>	wes/bēo	<i>pl</i>	wesaþ/bēoþ		