

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SEVENTH EDITION

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The Backgrounds of English

CHAPTER 4



English, as we know it, developed in Britain and more recently in America and elsewhere around the world. It did not begin in Britain but was an immigrant language, coming there with the invading Anglo-Saxons in the fifth century. Before that, English was spoken on the Continent, bordering on the North Sea. And even longer before, it had developed from a speechway we call Indo-European, which was the source of most other European and many south-Asian languages. We have no historical records of that prehistoric tongue, but we know something about it and the people who spoke it from the comparisons linguists have made between the various languages that eventually developed from it.

Indo-European is a matter of culture, not of genes. The contrast between our genetic inheritance and the language we speak is highlighted by some recent discoveries in genetics. Scholars used to think of early Europe as inhabited by a Paleolithic (old Stone Age) people who were hunter-gatherers but whose culture was replaced by Neolithic (new Stone Age) agriculturalists. The latter were supposedly replaced by a Bronze Age culture (beginning between 4000 and 3000 B.C.), spread by a sweeping invasion of technologically more advanced people from the east.

Recent genetic studies, however, have established that most modern Europeans (and of course the Americans descended from them) owe only about 20 percent of their biological inheritance to the later peoples and 80 percent to their early Paleolithic ancestors (Barbujani and Bertorelle 22–25; <https://genographic.nationalgeographic.com/genographic/resources.html>; and Wells *The Journey of Man* 92ff.). It looks now as though the genetic characteristics of Europeans have been remarkably stable, despite the striking changes that have overtaken European culture between earliest times and the beginning of recorded history.

Linguists have also long thought that the Indo-European languages, of which English is one, were spread across the Continent by the invading Bronze Age hordes, who came in chariots and wiped out the native populations and cultures. More recently, however, it has been posited that Indo-European languages were spread throughout Europe very much earlier, and that the Indo-European expansion did not follow a simple east-to-west path, but was far more complex and

included a south-to-north migration of early Celtic and Germanic peoples from Spain and southern France. At the present time all that can be said confidently about the early history of the Indo-European languages is that we know less than we formerly thought we did. Yet we do know some things.

INDO-EUROPEAN ORIGINS

INDO-EUROPEAN CULTURE

On the basis of cognate words, we can infer a good deal about Indo-European culture before it spread over many parts of Europe and Asia. That spread started no later than the third or fourth millennium B.C. and perhaps very much earlier. Indo-European culture was considerably advanced. Those who spoke the parent language, which we call Proto-Indo-European (PIE), had a complex system of family relationships. They could count. They used gold and perhaps silver also, but copper and iron only later. They drank a honey-based alcoholic beverage whose name has come down to us as *mead* (from PIE root **médhu*- 'honey, fermented honey drink'). Words corresponding to *wheel*, *axle*, and *yoke* make it clear that they used wheeled vehicles. They were small farmers, not nomads, who worked their fields with plows, and they had domesticated animals and fowl.

Their religion was polytheistic, including a Sky Father (whose name is preserved in the ancient Vedic hymns of India as Dyaus pitar, in Greek myth as Zeus patēr, among the Romans as Jupiter, and among the Germanic peoples as Tiw, for whom Tuesday is named). The cow and the horse were important to their society, wealth being measured by a count of cattle: the Latin word *pecus* meant 'cattle' but was the source of the word *pecūnia* 'wealth,' from which we get *pecuniary*; and our word *fee* comes from a related Old English word *fēoh*, which also meant both 'cattle' and 'wealth.' So we know things about the ancient Indo-European speakers on the basis of forms that were not actually recorded until long after Indo-European had ceased to be a single language.

THE INDO-EUROPEAN HOMELAND

We can only guess where Indo-European was originally spoken—but there are clues, such as plant and animal names. Cognate terms for trees that grow in temperate climates (*alder*, *apple*, *ash*, *aspen*, *beech*, *birch*, *elm*, *hazel*, *linden*, *oak*, *willow*, *yew*), coupled with the absence of such terms for Mediterranean or Asiatic trees (*olive*, *cypress*, *palm*); cognate terms for *wolf*, *bear*, *lox* (Old English *leax* 'salmon'), but none for creatures indigenous to Asia—all this points to an area between northern Europe and southern Russia as the home of Indo-European before its dispersion. And the absence of a common word for *ocean* suggests, though it does not in itself prove, that this homeland was inland.

The early Indo-Europeans have been identified with the Kurgan culture of mound builders who lived northwest of the Caucasus and north of the Caspian

Sea as early as the fifth millennium B.C. (Gimbutas, *Kurgan Culture*). They domesticated cattle and horses, which they kept for milk and meat as well as for transportation. They combined farming with herding and were a mobile people, using four-wheeled wagons to cart their belongings on their treks. They built fortified palaces on hilltops (we have the Indo-European word for such forts in the *polis* of place names like *Indianapolis* and in our word *police*), as well as small villages nearby. Their society was a stratified one, with a warrior nobility and a common laboring class. In addition to the sky god associated with thunder, the sun, the horse, the boar, and the snake were important in their religion. They had a highly developed belief in life after death, which led them to the construction of elaborate burial sites, by which their culture can be traced over much of Europe. Early in their history, they expanded into the Balkans and northern Europe, and thereafter into Iran, Anatolia, and southern Europe.

Other locations have also been proposed for the Indo-European homeland, such as north-central Europe between the Vistula and the Elbe and eastern Anatolia (modern Turkey and the site of the ancient Hittite empire). The dispersal of Indo-European was so early that we may never be sure of where it began or of the paths it followed.

HOW INDO-EUROPEAN WAS DISCOVERED

Even a casual comparison of English with some other languages reveals similarities among them. Thus English *father* clearly resembles Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish *fader*, Icelandic *faðir*, Dutch *vader*, and German *Vater* (especially when one is aware that the letter *v* in German represents the same sound as *f*). Although there is still a fair resemblance, the English word is not quite so similar to Latin *pater*, Spanish *padre*, Portuguese *pai*, Catalan *pare*, and French *père*. Greek *patēr*, Sanskrit *pitár-*, and Persian *pedar* are all strikingly like the Latin form, and (allowing for the loss of the first consonant) Gaelic *athair* resembles the others as well. It takes no great insight to recognize that those words for 'father' are somehow the "same." Because such similarity of words is reinforced by other parallels among the languages, we are forced to look for some explanation of the resemblances.

The explanation—that all those languages are historical developments of a no longer existing source language—was first proposed several centuries ago by Sir William Jones, a British judge and Sanskrit scholar in India. The Indo-European hypothesis, as it is called, is now well supported with evidence from many languages: a language once existed that developed in different ways in the various parts of the world to which its speakers traveled. We call it Proto-Indo-European (or simply Indo-European) because at the beginning of historical times languages derived from it were spoken from Europe in the west to India in the east. Its "descendants," which make up the Indo-European family, include all of the languages mentioned in the preceding paragraph, as well as Russian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, Albanian, Armenian, Romany, and many others.

Nineteenth-century philologists sometimes called the Indo-European family of languages *Aryan*, a Sanskrit term meaning 'noble,' which is what some of the

languages' speakers immodestly called themselves. *Aryan* has also been used to name the branch of Indo-European spoken in Iran and India, now usually referred to as Indo-Iranian. The term *Aryan* was, however, generally given up by linguists after the Nazis appropriated it for their supposedly master race of Nordic features, but it is still found in its original senses in some older works on language. The term *Indo-European* has no racial connotations; it refers only to the culture of a group of people who lived in a relatively small area in early times and who spoke a more or less unified language out of which many languages have developed over thousands of years. These languages are spoken today by approximately half of the world's population.

LANGUAGE TYPOLOGY AND LANGUAGE FAMILIES

In talking about a language family, we use metaphors like "mother" and "daughter" languages and speak of degrees of "relationship," just as though languages had offspring that could be plotted on a genealogical chart or family-tree. The terms are convenient ones; but, in the discussion of linguistic "families" that follows, we must bear in mind that a language is not born, nor does it put out branches like a tree—nor, for that matter, does it die, except when every single one of its speakers dies, as has happened to Etruscan, Gothic, Cornish, and a good many other languages, most recently the aboriginal tongue Amurdag in the Northern Territory of Australia; see the *National Geographic* map "Language Hotspots" that shows languages nearing extinction (www.languagehotspots.org). We speak of Latin as a dead language, but in fact it still lives in Italian, French, Spanish, the other Romance languages, as well as in the form of a revival as a foreign language studied in schools. In the same way as Latin survives in the Romance languages, Proto-Indo-European continues in the various present-day Indo-European languages, including English.

Hence the terms *family*, *ancestor*, *parent*, and other genealogical expressions applied to languages are metaphors, not literal descriptions. Languages are developments of older languages rather than descendants in the sense in which people are descendants of their ancestors. Thus Italian and Spanish are different developments of an earlier, more unified Latin. Latin, in turn, is one of a number of developments of a still earlier language called Italic. Italic, in its turn, is a development of Indo-European.

Earlier scholars classified languages as isolating, agglutinative, incorporative, and inflective, exemplified respectively by Chinese, Turkish, Eskimo, and Latin. The isolating languages were once thought to be the most primitive type: they were languages in which each idea was expressed by a separate word and in which the words tended to be monosyllabic. But although Chinese is an isolating and monosyllabic language in its modern form, its earliest records (from the middle of the second millennium B.C.) represent not a primitive language but actually one in a late stage of development. Our prehistoric ancestors did not prattle in one-syllable words.

Earlier scholars also observed, quite correctly, that in certain languages, such as Turkish and Hungarian, words were made up of parts "stuck together," as it were; hence the term *agglutinative* (etymologically 'glued to'). In such languages the elements that are put together are usually whole syllables

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having clear meanings. The inflectional suffixes of the Indo-European languages were supposed once to have been independent words; thus some early scholars believed that the inflective languages had grown out of the agglutinative. Little was known of what were called incorporative languages, in which major sentence elements are combined into a single word.

The trouble with such a classification is that it was based on the now discarded theory that early peoples spoke in monosyllables. Furthermore, the difference between agglutinative and inflective languages was not well defined, and there was considerable overlapping. Nevertheless, the terms are widely used in the description of languages. Objective and well-informed typological classification has been especially useful in showing language similarities and differences (Greenberg, *Language Typology*).

From the historical point of view, however, much more satisfactory is the genetic classification of languages, made on the basis of such correspondences of sound and structure as indicate relationship through common origin. Perhaps the greatest contribution of nineteenth-century linguistic scholars was the painstaking investigation of those correspondences, many of which had been casually noted long before.

NON-INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

Before proceeding to a more detailed discussion of the Indo-European group, we look briefly at those languages and groups of languages that are *not* Indo-European. Two important groups have names that reflect the biblical attempt to derive all human races from the three sons of Noah: the Semitic (from the Latin form of the name of his eldest son, more correctly called Shem in English) and the Hamitic (from the name of his second son, Ham). The term *Japhetic* (from Noah's third son, Japheth), once used for Indo-European, has long been obsolete. On the basis of many phonological and morphological features that they share, Semitic and Hamitic are thought by many scholars to be related through a hypothetical common ancestor, Hamito-Semitic, or *Afroasiatic*, now called *Afrasian*.

The Semitic group includes the following languages in three geographical subgroups: (Eastern) Akkadian, whose varieties include Assyrian and Babylonian; (Western) Hebrew, Aramaic (the native speech of Jesus Christ), Phoenician, and Moabitic; and (Southern) Arabic and Ethiopic. Of these, only Arabic is spoken by large numbers of people over a widespread area. Hebrew has been revived comparatively recently in Israel, to some extent for nationalistic reasons. It is interesting to note that two of the world's most important religious documents are written in Semitic languages—the Jewish scriptures or Old Testament in Hebrew (with large portions of the books of Ezra and Daniel in Aramaic) and the Koran in Arabic.

To the Hamitic group belong Egyptian (called Coptic after the close of the third century of the Christian era), the Berber dialects of North Africa, various Cushitic dialects spoken along the upper Nile (named for Cush, a son of Ham), and Chadic in Chad and Nigeria. Arabic became dominant in Egypt during the sixteenth century, when it replaced Coptic as the national language.

Hamitic is unrelated to the other languages spoken in central and southern Africa, the vast region south of the Sahara Desert. Those sub-Saharan languages are usually classified into three main groups: Nilo-Saharan, extending

to the equator, a large and highly diversified group of languages whose relationships with one another are uncertain; Niger-Kordofanian, extending from the equator to the extreme south, a large group of languages of which the most important belong to the Bantu group, including Swahili; and the Khoisan languages, such as Hottentot and Bushman, spoken by small groups of people in the extreme southwestern part of Africa. Various of the Khoisan languages use clicks—the kind of sound used by English speakers as exclamations and conventionally represented by spellings such as *tsk-tsk* and *cluck-cluck*, but used as regular speech sounds in Khoisan and transcribed by slashes or exclamation points, as in the !O!kung language, spoken in Angola.

In south Asia, languages belonging to the Dravidian group were once spoken throughout India, where the earlier linguistic situation was radically affected by the Indo-European invasion of approximately 1500 B.C. They are the aboriginal languages of India but are now spoken mainly in southern India, such as Tamil and Telegu.

The Sino-Tibetan group includes the various languages of China, such as Cantonese and Mandarin, as well as Tibetan, Burmese, and others. Japanese is unrelated to Chinese, although it has borrowed the Chinese written characters and many Chinese words. Japanese and Korean are sometimes thought to be members of the Altaic family, mentioned below, but the relationship is not certain. Ainu, the language of the aborigines of Japan, is not clearly related to any other language.

A striking characteristic of the Austronesian (or Malayo-Polynesian) languages is their wide geographical distribution in the islands of the Indian and the Pacific oceans, stretching from Madagascar to Easter Island. They include Malay, Maori in New Zealand, Hawaiian, and other Polynesian languages. The native languages of Australia, spoken by only a few aborigines there nowadays, have no connection with Austronesian, nor have the more than a hundred languages spoken in New Guinea and neighboring islands.

American Indian languages are a geographic rather than a linguistic grouping, comprising many different language groups and even isolated languages having little or no relationship with one another. A very important and widespread group of American Indian languages is known as the Uto-Aztecan, which includes Nahuatl, the language spoken by the Aztecs, and various closely related dialects. Aleut and Eskimo, which are very similar to each other, are spoken in the Aleutians and all along the extreme northern coast of America and north to Greenland. In the Andes Mountains of South America, Kechumaran is a language stock that includes Aymara and Quechua, the speech of the Incan Empire. The isolation of the various groups, small in number to begin with and spread over so large a territory, may account to some extent for the great diversity of American Indian tongues.

Basque, spoken in many dialects by no more than half a million people in the region of the Pyrenees, has always been something of a popular linguistic mystery. It now seems fairly certain, on the basis of coins and scanty inscriptions of the ancient Iberians, that Basque is related to the almost completely lost language of those people who once inhabited the Iberian peninsula and in Neolithic times were spread over an even larger part of Europe.

As Allan R. Bomhard points out, until the mid-twentieth century, linguists accepted a nineteenth-century theory postulating a group of non-Indo-European

languages spoken in Europe and in parts of Asia, the Ural-Altaic language family, with the two sub-groups, the Uralic and the Altaic: the Uralic's two branches were argued to be Samoyed, spoken from northern European Russia into Siberia, and Finno-Ugric, including Finnish, Estonian, Lappish, and Hungarian; and the Altaic's varieties were said to include Turkish, such as Ottoman Turkish (Osmanli) and the languages of Turkestan and Azerbaijan, plus Mongolian and Manchu.

The foregoing is by no means a complete survey of non-Indo-European languages. It includes only some of the most important groups and individual languages. In the late 1980s, Merritt Ruhlen listed 17 phyla (large groups of distantly related languages), including nearly 300 major groups and subgroups and about 5000 languages, of which 140 were Indo-European; twenty-five years on, Paul M. Lewis in *Ethnologue* tallies 6909 languages today (<http://www.ethnologue.com/>). Although Indo-European languages are fewer than 7 percent of the number of languages in the world, nearly half the world's population speaks them.

Languages may be related to each other more distantly in macrofamilies, or superfamilies. The twentieth-century linguist Joseph Greenberg posited a linguistic stock called Eurasiatic, which includes Indo-European, Uralic-Yukaghir, Altaic (Mongolian, Chuvash-Turkic, and Manchu-Tungus), Japanese-Korean (Korean, Ainu, and Japanese-Ryukyuan), Gilyak, Chukchi-Kamchatkan, and Eskimo-Aleut. Other linguists have posited even larger macrofamilies, such as Nostratic, which includes many languages of Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America. Allan Bomhard and John C. Kerns argue that the Nostratic macrofamily includes Afrasian (formerly known as Hamito-Semitic, Semito-Hamitic, Afroasiatic, Erythraic, and Lisramic), Elamo-Dravidian, Kartvelian, and Eurasiatic, with Eurasiatic including Etruscan, Indo-European, Uralic-Yukaghir, Altaic, Chukchi-Kamchatkan, Gilyak, and Eskimo-Aleut (19–33). Others ask whether all human languages can be traced to a single original speech, Proto-World or Proto-Human. But no one knows; we are quite in the dark about how it all began.

MAIN DIVISIONS OF THE INDO-EUROPEAN GROUP

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Some Indo-European languages—for example, Thracian, Phrygian, Macedonian, and Illyrian—survive only in scanty remains. It is likely that others have disappeared without leaving any trace. Members of the following subgroups survive as living tongues: Indo-Iranian, Balto-Slavic, Hellenic, Italic, Celtic, and Germanic. Albanian and Armenian are also Indo-European but do not fit into any of these subgroups. Anatolian and Tocharian are no longer spoken in any form.

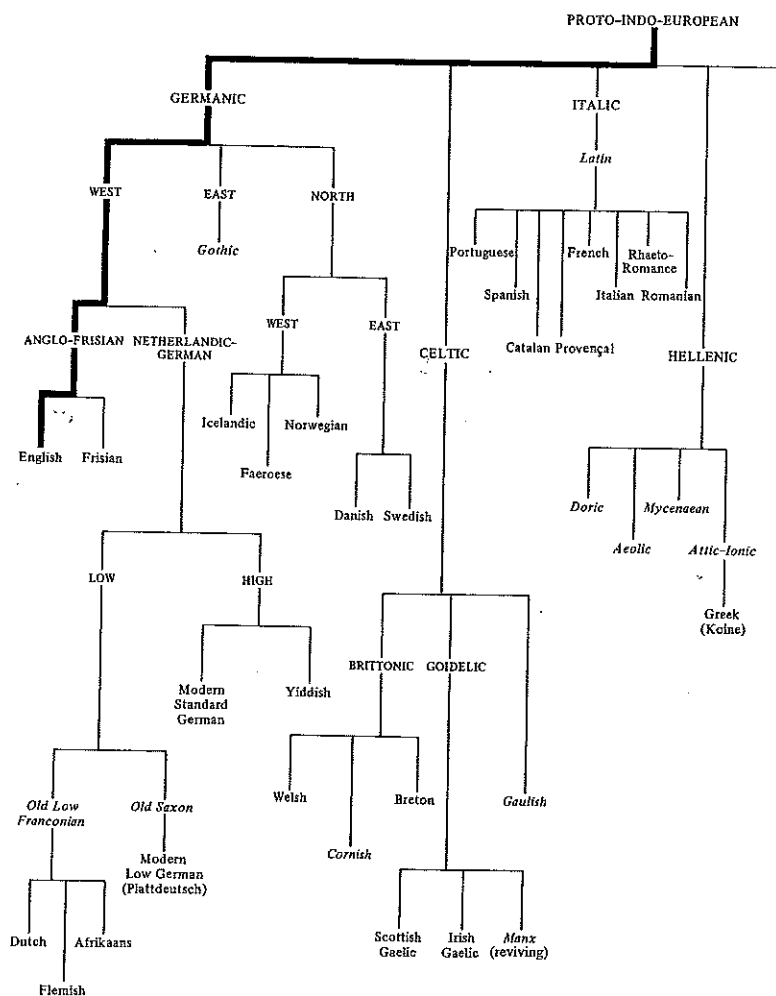
The Indo-European languages are either *satem* languages or *centum* languages. *Satem* and *centum* are respectively the Avestan (an ancient Iranian language) and Latin words for 'one hundred.' The two groups are differentiated by their development of Indo-European palatal *k*.

In Indo-European, palatal *k* (as in **kmtom* 'hundred') was a distinct phoneme from velar *k* (as in the root **kréuh*₂- 'raw flesh, gore,' which we have in the Sanskrit *kravís*, the Latin *cruor*). (An asterisk before a form indicates that it is a reconstruction based on comparative study.) In the *satem* languages—Indo-Iranian, Balto-Slavic, Armenian, and Albanian—the two *k* sounds remained

separate phonemes, and the palatal *k* became a sibilant—for example, Sanskrit (Indic) *śatam*, Lithuanian (Baltic) *šimtas*, and Old Church Slavic *sūto*. In the other Indo-European languages, the two *k* sounds became a single phoneme, either remaining a *k*, as in Greek (Hellenic) (*he*)*katon* and Welsh (Celtic) *cant*, or shifting to *h* in the Germanic group, as in Old English *hund* (our *hundred* being a compound in which *-red* is a development of an originally independent word meaning 'number'). In general, the *centum* languages tend to be spoken in the West and the *satem* languages in the East, although Tocharian, the easternmost of all Indo-European tongues, belongs to the *centum* group.

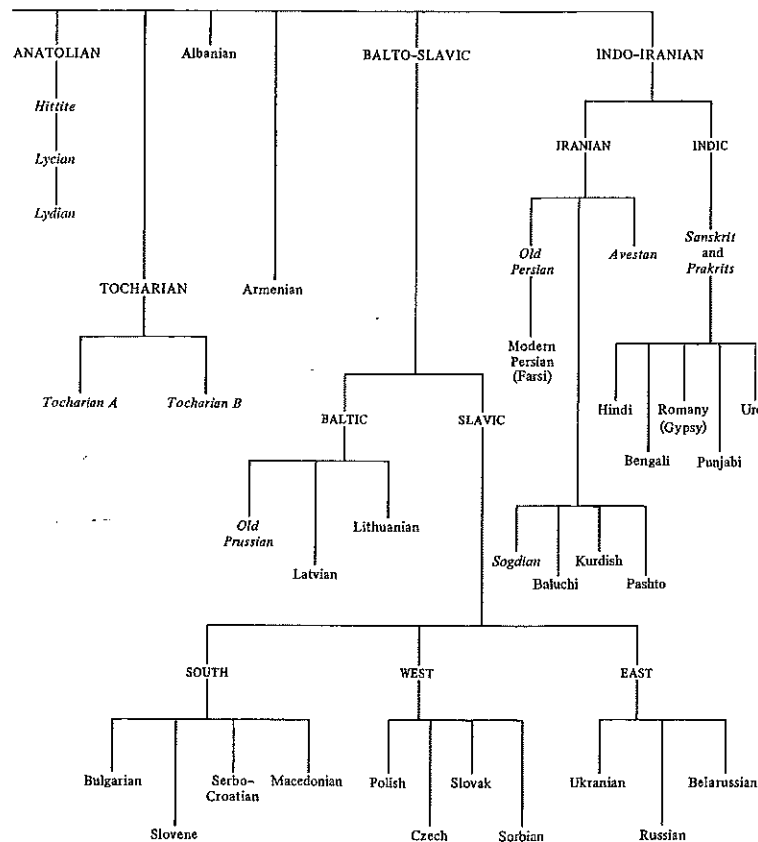
INDO-IRANIAN

The Indo-Iranian group (*Iranian* is from the same root as the word *Aryan*) is one of the oldest for which we have historical records. The Vedic hymns, written in an early form of Sanskrit, date from at least 1000 B.C. but reflect a poetic



tradition stretching back to the second millennium B.C. Classical Sanskrit appears about 500 B.C. It is much more systematized than Vedic Sanskrit, for it had been seized upon by early grammarians who formulated rules for its proper use; the very name *Sanskrit* means 'well-made' or 'perfected.'

The most remarkable of the Indian grammarians was Panini. About the same time (fourth century B.C.) that the Greeks were indulging in fanciful speculations about language and in fantastic etymologizing, he wrote a grammar of Sanskrit called *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, ('eight chapters') that to this day holds the admiration of linguistic scholars. Other ancient Indian scholars also wrote works preserving the language of the old sacred literature that put much of the grammatical writing of the Greeks and Romans to shame. Sanskrit is still written by Indian scholars according to the old grammarians' rules. It is in no sense dead as a written language but has a status much like that of Latin in medieval and Renaissance Europe.



THE INDO-EUROPEAN TREE
MAIN BRANCHES
SUB-BRANCHES
Dead languages
Living languages

Indic dialects had developed long before Sanskrit became a refined and learned language. They are called Prakrits (a name that means 'natural,' contrasting with the "well-made-ness" of Sanskrit), and some of them—notably Pali, the religious language of Buddhism—achieved high literary status. From these Prakrits are indirectly derived the various non-Dravidian languages of India, the most widely known of which are Bengali, Hindi, and Urdu.

Romany (Gypsy) is also an Indic dialect, with many loanwords from other languages acquired in the course of the Romanies' wanderings. When they first appeared in Europe in the late Middle Ages, many people supposed them to be Egyptians—whence the name *Gypsy*. A long time passed before the study of their language revealed that they had come originally from northwestern India. The name *Romany* has nothing to do with *Rome*, but is derived from the word *rom* 'human being.' Likewise the *rye* of *Romany rye* (that is, 'Romany gentleman') has nothing to do with the cereal crop, but is a word akin to Sanskrit *rajan* 'king,' as well as to Latin *rex*, German *Reich*, and English *regal* and *royal* (from Latin and French).

Those Indo-Europeans who settled in the Iranian Plateau developed several languages. Old Persian is the ancestor of modern Iranian. It was the language of the district known to the Greeks as Persis, whose inhabitants under the leadership of Cyrus the Great in the sixth century B.C. became the predominant tribe. Many Persians migrated to India, especially after the Muslim conquest of Iran in the eighth century. They were Zoroastrians in religion who became the ancestors of the modern Parsis (that is, Persians) of Bombay. Avestan, another Iranian tongue, is a sacred language, preserved in the Avesta, a religious book after which the language is named. There are no modern descendants of Avestan, which was the language of the sage Zarathustra—Zoroaster to the Greeks.

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ARMENIAN AND ALBANIAN

Armenian and Albanian are independent subgroups. The first has in its word stock so many Persian loanwords that it was once supposed to belong to the Indo-Iranian group; it also has many borrowings from Greek and from Arabic and Syrian.

Albanian also has a mixed vocabulary, with words from Italian, Slavic, Turkish, and Greek. It is possibly related to the ancient language of Illyria in an Illyrian branch of Indo-European. Evidence of the ancient language is so meager, however, and modern Albanian has been so much influenced by neighboring languages that it is difficult to tell much about its affinities.

TOCHARIAN

Tocharian denotes two closely related languages of the Indo-European family, called Tocharian A (East Tocharian or Turfanian) and Tocharian B (West Tocharian or Kuchean). Once thought to be two dialects of one common

language, Tocharian A and B are now considered two distinct languages. The language is misnamed. When it was discovered at the end of the nineteenth century in sixth-to-eighth-centuries-A.D. central Asian Buddhist scriptures, monastic letters, business accounts, caravan passes, and graffiti, it was at first thought to be a form of Iranian and so was named in 1907 by F. W. K. Müller after an extinct Iranian people known to the ancient Greek geographer Strabo as Tocharoi, as Todd B. Krause and Jonathan Slocum point out. Later it was discovered that Tocharian is linguistically quite different from Iranian. Nevertheless, the name has stuck. The language itself has long been extinct, though one can learn it at the website *Tocharian Online*: <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/eieol/tokol-0.html>.

ANATOLIAN

Shortly after the discovery of Tocharian, another group of Indo-European languages was identified in Asia Minor. In the early twentieth century, excavations uncovered the royal archives at Hattusha, the capital city of the Hittites, a people mentioned in the Old Testament and in Egyptian records from the second millennium B.C. Those archives included works in a number of ancient languages, including one otherwise unknown. As the writings in the unknown tongue were deciphered, it became clear that the Hittite language was Indo-European, although it had been profoundly influenced by non-Indo-European languages spoken around it. Later scholars identified several different but related languages (Luwian, Palaic, and Lydian), and the new branch was named *Anatolian*, after the area where it was spoken. One of the interesting features of Hittite is that it preserves an Indo-European "laryngeal" sound (transliterated *h*) that was lost in all of the other Indo-European languages (for example, in Hittite *pahhur* 'fire' compared with Greek *pûr*, Umbrian *pîr*, Czech *pýř*, Tocharian *por*, and Old English *fȳr*).

BALTO-SLAVIC

Although the oldest records of the Baltic and the Slavic languages show them as quite different, most scholars have assumed a common ancestor closer than Indo-European, called Balto-Slavic. The chief Baltic language is Lithuanian, and the closely related Latvian is spoken to its north. Lithuanian is quite conservative phonologically, so that one can find a number of words in it that are very similar in form to cognate words in older Indo-European languages—for example, Lithuanian *Diēvas* and Sanskrit *devas* 'god' or Lithuanian *platūs* and Greek *platús* 'broad.'

Still another Baltic language, Old Prussian, was spoken as late as the seventeenth century in what is now called East Prussia. Prussians, like Lithuanians and Latvians, were heathens until the end of the Middle Ages, when they were converted to Christianity at the point of the sword by the Knights of the Teutonic Order—a military order that was an outcome of the Crusades. The aristocracy of the region (their descendants are the Prussian *Junkers*) came to

be made up of members of this order, who, having saved the souls of the heathen Balts, proceeded to take over their lands.

Slavic falls into three main subdivisions. East Slavic includes Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarussian, spoken in Belarus, north of the Ukraine. West Slavic includes Polish, Czech, the similar Slovak, and Sorbian (or Wendish), a language spoken by a small group of people in eastern Germany. The South Slavic languages include Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, and Slovene. The oldest Slavic writing we know is in Old Church Slavic (or Slavonic), which remained a liturgical language long after it ceased to be generally spoken.

HELLENIC

In ancient times there were many Hellenic dialects, among them Mycenaean, Aeolic, Doric, and Attic-Ionic. Athens came to assume tremendous prestige, so its dialect, Attic, became the basis of a standard for the entire Greek world, a koine or 'common [dialect],' which was ultimately to dominate the other Hellenic dialects. Most of the local dialects spoken in Greece today, as well as the standard language, are derived from Attic. Despite all their glorious ancient literature, the Greeks have not had a modern literary language until comparatively recently. The new literary standard makes considerable use of words revived from ancient Greek, as well as a number of ancient inflectional forms; it has become the ordinary language of the upper classes. Another development of the Attic koine, spoken by the masses, is called *demotike* 'popular.'

ITALIC

In ancient Italy, the main Indo-European language was Latin, the speech of Latium, whose chief city was Rome. Oscan and Umbrian have long been thought to be sister languages of Latin within the Italic subfamily, but they may be members of an independent branch of Indo-European whose resemblance to Latin is due to the long period of contact between their speakers. It is well known that languages, even unrelated ones, that are spoken in the same area and share bilingual speakers (in an association called a *Sprachbund*) will influence one another and thus become more alike.

Latin became the most important language of the peninsula. As Rome came to dominate the Mediterranean world, it spread its influence into Gaul, Spain, and the Illyrian and Danubian countries (and even into Britain, where Latin failed to displace Celtic). Thus, its language became a koine, as the dialect of Athens had been earlier. Spoken Latin survives in the Romance languages. It was quite different from the more or less artificial literary language of Cicero. All the Romance languages—such as Italian, Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Portuguese, French, Provençal, and Romanian—are developments of Vulgar Latin (so called because it was the speech of the *vulgus* 'common people') spoken in various parts of the late Roman Empire.

French dialects have included Norman, the source of the Anglo-Norman dialect spoken in England after the Norman Conquest; Picard; and the dialect

of Paris and the surrounding regions (the Île-de-France), which for obvious reasons became standard French. In southern Belgium a dialect of French, called Walloon, is spoken. The varieties of French spoken in Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Louisiana are all developments of the dialects of northern France and are no more "corruptions" of standard (Modern) French than American English is of present standard British. The Cajuns (that is, Acadians) of Louisiana are descendants of exiles from Nova Scotia, which was earlier a French colony called Acadia.

The speech of the old kingdom of Castile, the largest and central part of Spain, became standard Spanish. The fact that Spanish America was settled largely by people from southern Andalusia rather than from Castile accounts for the most important differences in pronunciation between Latin American Spanish and the standard language of Spain.

Because of the cultural preeminence of Tuscany during the Italian Renaissance, the speech of that region—and specifically of the city of Florence—became standard Italian. Both Dante and Petrarch wrote in this form of Italian. Rhaeto-Romanic comprises a number of dialects spoken in the most easterly Swiss canton and in the Tyrol.

CELTIC

Celtic shows such striking correspondences with Italic in its verbal system and inflectional endings that the relationship between them must have been close, though not so close as that between Indic and Iranian or Baltic and Slavic. Some scholars therefore group them together as developments of a branch they call Italo-Celtic.

The Celts were spread over a huge territory in Europe long before the emergence in history of the Germanic peoples. Before the beginning of the Christian era, Celtic languages were spoken over the greater part of central and western Europe. By the latter part of the third century B.C., Celts had spread even to Asia Minor, in the region called for them Galatia (part of modern Turkey), to whose inhabitants Saint Paul wrote one of his epistles. The Celtic language spoken in Gaul (Gaulish) gave way completely to the Latin spoken by the Roman conquerors, which was to develop into French.

Roman rule did not prevent the British Celts from using their own language, although they borrowed a good many words from Latin. But after the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes arrived, British (Brittonic) Celtic was more severely threatened. It survived, however, and produced a distinguished literature in the later Middle Ages, including the *Mabinogion* and many Arthurian stories. In recent years, Welsh (Cymric) has been actively promoted for nationalistic reasons. Breton is the language of the descendants of those Britons who, at or before the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasion of their island, crossed the Channel to the Continent, settled in the Gaulish province of Armorica, and named their new home for their old one—Brittany. Breton is thus more closely related to Welsh than to long-extinct Gaulish. There have been no native speakers of Cornish, another Brittonic language, since the early nineteenth century.

Efforts have been made to revive it: church services are sometimes conducted in Cornish, and the language is used in antiquarian recreations of the Celtic Midsummer Eve rituals—but such efforts seem more sentimental than practical.

It is not known whether Pictish, preserved in a few glosses and place-name elements, was a Celtic language. It was spoken by the Picts in the northwestern part of Britain, where many Gaelic Celts also settled. The latter were settlers from Ireland called Scots (*Scotti*), hence the name of their new home, Scotia or Scotland. The Celtic language that spread from Ireland, called Gaelic or Goidelic, was of a type somewhat different from that of the Britons. It survives in Scottish Gaelic, sometimes called Erse, a word that is simply a variant of *Irish*. Gaelic is spoken in the remoter parts of the Scottish highlands and the Outer Hebrides and in Nova Scotia.

In a somewhat different development called Manx, Gaelic survived on the Isle of Man until the mid-1970s, when Manx was declared extinct; however, this language is now experiencing a revival. Jeffrey Dastin notes that when the Isle of Man experienced economic prosperity in the 1980s as a tax haven for British companies, locals stopped searching for work off the island and had the means to stay home and learn Manx as a hobby; accordingly, the island's parliament created the Manx Heritage Foundation to promote Manx culture through language classes, music festivals, shop and road signage, and an online site (<http://www.learnmanx.com/>). In 2001, a primary school conducted entirely in Manx was founded, called Bunscoill Ghaelgagh, and literary works have been published in Manx, such as Brian Stowell's translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, or *Contoyrtyssyn Ealish ayns Çheer ny Yindyssyn*, in which the dialog between Ealish (Alice) and the Kayt (Cat) reads in Manx:

"Kevys diu dy vel mish keoi?" dooyrt Ealish.

"Shegin dhyt ve keoi," dooyrt y Kayt, "er nonney cha beagh oo er jeet dys shoh."

("How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice.

"You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here.")

In Ireland, which was little affected by either the Roman or the later Anglo-Saxon invasions, Irish Gaelic was gradually replaced by English. It has survived in some of the western counties, though most of its speakers are now bilingual. With the 2003 *Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla* (Official Languages Act or OLA), efforts have been made to revive the language for nationalistic reasons in Éire, and it is taught in schools throughout the land, is required by some employers, and is designated for place-names and signage; but this resuscitation, so far less successful than that of Hebrew in modern Israel, cannot be regarded as in any sense a natural development. Perhaps in future decades, we will see the strength of the Irish language grow as it moves out of the rural west and into the cities and beyond (it became an official language of the European Union in 2007); Hebrew has, in fact, had a longer history than Irish in its efforts for revival, becoming an official language of Israel in 1948 and being supported by the *Haskalah* movement as a literary language as far back as the late seventeenth century.

In striking contrast to the wide distribution of the Celtic languages in earlier times, today they are restricted to a few relatively small areas abutting the Atlantic Ocean on the northwest coast of Europe.

GERMANIC

The Germanic group is particularly important for us because it includes English. Over many centuries, certain radical developments occurred in the language spoken by those Indo-European speakers living in Denmark and the regions thereabout. Proto-Germanic (or simply Germanic), our term for that language, was relatively unified and distinctive in many of its sounds, inflections, accentual system, and word stock.

Unfortunately for us, those who spoke this particular development of Indo-European did not write. Proto-Germanic is to German, Dutch, the Scandinavian languages, and English as Latin is to Italian, French, and Spanish. But Proto-Germanic, which was probably being spoken shortly before the beginning of the Christian era, must be reconstructed just like Indo-European, whereas Latin is amply recorded.

Because Germanic was spread over a large area, it eventually developed marked dialectal differences leading to a division into North Germanic, West Germanic, and East Germanic. The North Germanic languages are Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic, and Faeroese (very similar to Icelandic and spoken in the Faeroe Islands of the North Atlantic between Iceland and Great Britain).

The West Germanic languages are High German, Low German (*Plattdeutsch*), Dutch (and the practically identical Flemish), Frisian, and English. Yiddish developed from medieval High German dialects, with many words from Hebrew and Slavic. Before World War II, it was a sort of international language of the Jews, with a literature of high quality. Since that time, it has declined greatly in use, with most Jews adopting the language of the country in which they live; and its decline has been accelerated by the revival of Hebrew in Israel. Afrikaans is a development of seventeenth-century Dutch spoken in South Africa. Pennsylvania Dutch (that is, *Deutsch*) is actually a High German dialect spoken by descendants of early American settlers from southern Germany and Switzerland.


The only East Germanic language of which we have any detailed knowledge is Gothic. It is the earliest attested of all Germanic languages, aside from a few proper names recorded by classical authors, a few loanwords in Finnish, and some runic inscriptions found in Scandinavia. Almost all our knowledge of Gothic comes from a translation mainly of parts of the New Testament made in the fourth century by Wulfila, bishop of the Visigoths, those Goths who lived north of the Danube River. Late as they are in comparison with the literary records of Sanskrit, Iranian, Greek, and Latin, these remains of Gothic provide us with a clear picture of a Germanic language in an early stage of development and hence are of tremendous importance to the history of Germanic languages.


Gothic as a spoken tongue disappeared a long time ago without leaving a trace. No modern Germanic languages are derived from it, nor do any of the other

Germanic languages have any Gothic loanwords. Vandalic and Burgundian were apparently also East Germanic in structure, but we know little more of them than a few proper names.

During the eighteenth-century “Age of Reason,” the term *Gothic* was applied to the “dark ages” of the medieval period as a term of contempt, and hence to the architecture of that period to distinguish it from classical building styles. The general eighteenth-century sense of the word was ‘barbarous, savage, in bad taste.’ Later the term was used for the type fonts formerly used to print German (also called *black letter*). Then it denoted a genre of novel set in a desolate or remote landscape, with mysterious or macabre characters and often a violent plot. More recently it was applied to an outré style of dress, cosmetics, and coiffure, largely featuring the color black and accompanied by heavy metal adornments and body piercing in unlikely parts of the anatomy. *Goth* also refers to a style of rock music derived from punk and to its fans or performers; *Merriam-Webster* defines *goth* as ‘rock music marked by dark and morbid lyrics’ and a Goth as one ‘who wears mostly black clothing, uses dark dramatic makeup, and often has dyed black hair,’ or, as ironized by the uneven but often sociologically illuminating slang *Urban Dictionary*: ‘Pretentious people who listen to Nu metal who think they are Goths but [are] really teenagers who know nothing of music’ (www.urbandictionary.com). As we can see from this catalog of definitions, the name of a people and of a language long ago lost to history survives in uses that have nothing to do with the Goths and would doubtless have both puzzled and amazed them.

COGNATE WORDS IN THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

-  Words that come from the same source are said to be cognate (Latin *co-* and *gnatus* ‘born together’). Thus the verb roots meaning ‘bear, carry’ in Sanskrit (*bhar-*), Greek (*pher-*), Latin (*fer-*), Gothic (*bair-*), and Old English (*ber-*) are cognate, all being developments of Indo-European **bher-*. Cognate words do not necessarily look similar because their relationship may be disguised by sound changes that have affected their forms differently. Thus, English *work* and Greek *ergon* are superficially unlike, but they are both developments of Indo-European **wergom* and therefore are cognates. Sometimes, however, there is similarity—for example, between Latin *ignis* and Sanskrit *agnis* from Indo-European **egnis* ‘fire,’ a root that is unrelated to the other words for ‘fire’ cited earlier, but that English has in the Latin borrowing *ignite*.

 Some cognate words have been preserved in many or even all Indo-European languages. These common related words include the numerals from one to ten, the word meaning the sum of ten tens (*cent-*, *sat-*, *hund-*), words for certain bodily parts (related, for example, to *heart*, *lung*, *head*, *foot*), words for certain natural phenomena (related, for example, to *air*, *night*, *star*, *snow*, *sun*, *moon*, *wind*), certain plant and animal names (related, for example, to *beech*, *corn*, *wolf*, *bear*), and certain cultural terms (related, for example, to *yoke*, *mead*, *weave*, *sew*). Cognates of practically all our taboo words—those monosyllables that pertain to sex and excretion and that seem to cause great

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pain to many people—are to be found throughout the Indo-European languages. Historically, if not socially, those ancient words are just as legitimate as any others.

It takes no special training to perceive the correspondences between the following words:

Latin	Greek	Welsh	English	Icelandic	Dutch
ūnus	oinē ¹	un	one	einn	een
duo	duo	dau	two	tveir	twee
trēs	treis	tri	three	þrír	drie

¹'one-spot on a die'

Comparison of the forms for the number 'two' indicates that non-Germanic [d] (as in the Latin, Greek, and Welsh forms) corresponds to Germanic [t] (English, Icelandic, and Dutch). A similar comparison of the forms for the number 'three' indicates that non-Germanic [t] corresponds to Germanic [θ], the initial sound of *three* and *þrír* in English and Icelandic. Allowing for later changes—as in the case of [θ], which became [d] in Dutch, as also in German (*drei* 'three'), and [t] in Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish (*tre*)—these same correspondences are perfectly regular in other cognates in which those consonants appear. We may safely assume that the non-Germanic consonants are older than the Germanic ones. Hence we may accept with confidence (assuming a similar comparison of the vowels) the reconstructions **oinos*, **dwō*, and **treyes* as representing the Indo-European forms from which the existing forms developed. Comparative linguists have used all the Indo-European languages as a basis for their conclusions regarding correspondences, not just the few cited here.

INFLECTION IN THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

All Indo-European languages are inflective—that is, all have a grammatical system based on modifications in the form of words, by means of inflections (endings and vowel changes), to indicate such grammatical functions as case, number, tense, person, mood, aspect, and the like. Examples of such inflections in Modern English are *cat-cats*, *mouse-mice*, *who-whom-whose*, *walk-walks-walked-walking*, and *sing-sings-sang-sung-singing*. The original Indo-European inflectional system is very imperfectly represented in most modern languages. English, French, and Spanish, for instance, have lost much of the inflectional complexity that once characterized them. German retains considerably more, with its various forms of noun, article, and adjective declension. Sanskrit is notable for the remarkably clear picture it gives us of the older Indo-European inflectional system. It retains much that has been lost or changed in the other Indo-European languages, so that its forms show us, even better than Greek or Latin can, what the system of Indo-European must have been.

SOME VERB INFLECTIONS

When allowance is made for regularly occurring sound changes, the relationship of the personal endings of a verb in the various Indo-European languages becomes clear. For example, the present indicative of the Sanskrit verb cognate with English *to bear* is as follows:

Sanskrit	
bharā-mi	'I bear'
bhara-si	'thou bearest'
bhara-ti	'he/she beareth'
bharā-mas	'we bear'
bhara-tha	'you (pl.) bear'
bhara-nti	'they bear'

The only irregularity here is the occurrence of *-mi* in the first person singular, as against *-o* in the Greek and Latin forms cited immediately below. It was a peculiarity of Sanskrit to extend *-mi*, the regular first person ending of verbs that had no vowel affixed to their roots, to those that did have such a vowel. This vowel (for example, the *-a* suffixed to the root *bhar-* of the Sanskrit word cited) is called the thematic vowel. The root of a word plus such a suffix is called the stem. To these stems are added endings. The comparatively few verbs lacking such a vowel in Indo-European are called athematic. The *m* in English *am* is a remnant of the Indo-European ending of such athematic verbs.

Leaving out of consideration for the moment differences in vowels and in initial consonants, compare the personal endings of the present indicative forms as they developed from Indo-European into the cognate Greek and Latin verbs:

Greek	Latin
pherō ¹	ferō ¹
pherei-s	fer-s ³
pherei ²	fer-t
phero-mes (Doric)	feri-mus
phere-te	fer-tis
phero-nti (Doric)	feru-nt

¹In Indo-European thematic verbs, the first person singular present indicative had no ending at all, but only a lengthening of the thematic vowel.

²The expected form would be *phere-ti*. The ending *-ti*, however, does occur elsewhere in the third person singular—for instance, in Doric *didōti* 'he gives.'

³In this verb, the lack of the thematic vowel is exceptional. The expected forms would be *feri-s*, *feri-t*, *feri-tis* for the second and third persons singular and the second person plural, respectively.

Comparison of the personal endings of the verbs in these and other languages leads to the conclusion that the Indo-European endings were as follows (the Indo-European reconstruction of the entire word is given in parentheses):

Indo-European	
-ō, -mi	(*bherō)
-si	(*bheresi)
-ti	(*bhereti)
-mes, -mos	(*bheromes)
-te	(*bherete)
-nti	(*bheronti)

Gothic and early Old English show what these personal endings became in Germanic:

Gothic	Early Old English
bair-a	ber-u, -o
bairi-s	biri-s
bairi-þ	biri-þ
baira-m	bera-þ ¹
bairi-þ	bera-þ
baira-nd	bera-þ

¹From the earliest period of Old English, the form of the third person plural was used throughout the plural. This form, *beraþ*, from earlier **beranþ*, shows Anglo Frisian loss of *n* before *þ*.

Germanic *þ* (that is, [θ]) corresponds as a rule to Proto-Indo-European *t*. Leaving out of consideration such details as the *-nd* (instead of expected *-nþ*) in the Gothic third person plural form, for which there is a soundly based explanation, the Germanic personal endings correspond to those of the non-Germanic Indo-European languages.

SOME NOUN INFLECTIONS

Indo-European nouns were inflected for eight cases: nominative, vocative, accusative, genitive, dative, ablative, locative, and instrumental. These cases are modifications in the form of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives that show the relationship of such words to other words in a sentence. Typical uses of the eight Indo-European cases (with Modern English examples) were as follows:

- nominative: subject of a sentence (*They* saw me.)
- vocative: person addressed (*Officer*, I need help.)
- accusative: direct object (*They* saw *me*.)
- genitive: possessor or source (*Shakespeare's* play.)
- dative: indirect object, recipient (Give *her* a hand.)

TABLE 4.1 | INDO-EUROPEAN NOUN DECLENSION¹

	Indo-European	Sanskrit	Greek	Latin	Old Irish	Old English
<i>Singular</i>						
Nom.	*ekwos	aśvas	hippos	equus	ech	eoh
Voc.	*ekwe	aśva	hippe	eque	eich	
Acc.	*ekwom	aśvam	hippon	equum	ech n- ²	eoh
Gen.	*ekwosyo	aśvasya	hippou	equī	eich	ēos
Dat.	*ekwōy	aśvāya	hippōi	equō	eoch	ēo
Abl.	*ekwōd	aśvād		equō		
Loc.	*ekwoy	aśve				
Ins.	*ekwō	aśvena				
<i>Plural</i>						
N./V.	*ekwōs	aśvās	hippoi	equī	eich	ēos
Acc.	*ekwons	aśvān(s)	hippous	equōs	eochu	ēos
Gen.	*ekwōm	aśvānām	hippōn	equōrum	ech n- ²	ēona
D./Ab.	*ekwobh(y)os	aśvebhyas	hippois	equīs	echaib	ēom
Loc.	*ekwoysu	aśvesu				
Ins.	*ekwōys	aśvais				

¹There are a good many complexities in these forms, some of which are noted here. In Greek, for the genitive singular, the Homeric form *hippoio* is closer to Indo-European in its ending. The Greek, Latin, and Old Irish nominative plurals show developments of the pronominal ending *-oi, rather than of the nominal ending *-ōs. Celtic was alone among the Indo-European branches in having different forms for the nominative and vocative plural; the Old Irish vocative plural was *eochu* (like the accusative plural), a development of the original nominative plural *ekwōs. The Greek and Latin dative-ablative plurals were originally instrumental forms that took over the functions of the other cases; similarly, the Old Irish dative plural was probably a variant instrumental form. The Latin genitive singular -i is not from the corresponding Indo-European ending, but is a special ending found in Italic and Celtic (Old Irish *eich* being from the variant *ekwi).

²The Old Irish *n-* in the accusative singular and genitive plural is the initial consonant of the following word.

ablative: what is separated (He abstained *from it*.)

locative: place where (We stayed *home*.)

instrumental: means, instrument (She ate *with chopsticks*.)

The full array of cases is preserved in Sanskrit but not generally in the other descendant languages, which simplified the noun declension in various ways. The paradigms in Table 4.1 show the singular and plural of the word for 'horse' in Proto-Indo-European and five other Indo-European languages. Indo-European also had a dual number for designating two of anything, which is not illustrated.



WORD ORDER IN THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

Early studies of the Indo-European languages focused on cognate words and on inflections. More recently attention has been directed to other matters of the grammar, especially word order in the parent language. Joseph Greenberg ("Some Universals of Grammar") proposes that the orders in which various

grammatical elements occur in a sentence are not random, but are interrelated. For example, languages like Modern English that place objects after verbs tend to place modifiers after nouns, to put conjunctions before the second of two words they connect, and to use prepositions:

verb + object: (The workman) *made a horn*.

noun + modifier: (They marveled at the) *size of the building*.

conjunction + noun: (Congress is divided into the Senate) *and the House*.

preposition + object: (Harold fought) *with him*.

On the other hand, languages like Japanese that place objects before verbs tend to reverse the order of those other elements—placing modifiers before nouns, putting conjunctions after the second of two words they connect, and using **postpositions** (which are function words like prepositions but come after, instead of before, a noun). Most languages can be identified as basically either VO (Verb Object) languages (like English) or OV (Object Verb) languages (like Japanese), although it is usual for a language to have some characteristics of both types. English, for example, regularly puts adjectives before the nouns they modify rather than after them, as VO order would imply.

Winfred P. Lehmann (*Proto-Indo-European Syntax*) has marshaled evidence suggesting that Proto-Indo-European was an OV language, even though the existing Indo-European languages are generally VO in type. Earlier stages of those languages often show OV characteristics that have been lost from the modern tongues or that are less common than formerly. For example, one of the oldest records of a Germanic language is a runic inscription identifying the workman who made a horn about A.D. 400:

ek hlewagastir holtijar horna tawido

I, Hlewagastir Holtson, [this] horn made.

The SOV (subject, object, verb) order of words in sentences like this one suggests that Proto-Germanic had more OV characteristics than do the languages that evolved from it.

In standard Modern German a possessive modifier, as in *der Garten des Mannes* 'the garden of the man,' normally follows the word it modifies; the other order—*des Mannes Garten* 'the man's garden'—is possible, but it is poetic and old-fashioned. In older periods of the language, however, it was normal. Similarly, in Modern English a possessive modifier can come either before a noun (an OV characteristic), as in *the building's size*, or after it (a VO characteristic), as in *the size of the building*, but there has long been a tendency to favor the second order, which has increased in frequency throughout much of the history of English. In the tenth century, practically all possessives came before nouns, but by the fourteenth century, the overwhelming percentage of them, over eighty percent, came after nouns (Rosenbach 179). This change was perhaps under the influence of French, which may have provided the model for the phrasal genitive with *of* (translating French *de*).

When we want to join two words in English, we put the conjunction before the second one (a VO characteristic), as in *the Senate and people*. But Latin,

preserving an archaic feature of Indo-European, had the option of putting a conjunction after the second noun (an OV characteristic), as in *senatus populusque*, in which *-que* is a conjunction meaning 'and.' Modern English uses prepositions almost exclusively, but Old English often put such words after their objects, so that they functioned as postpositions, thus:

Harold him wið gefeaht.

Harold him with fought.

Evidence of this kind, which can be found in all the older forms of Indo-European and which becomes more frequent the farther back in history one searches, suggests that Indo-European once ordered its verbs after their objects. If that is so, by late Indo-European times a change had begun that was to result in a shift of word-order type in many of the descendant languages from OV to VO.

MAJOR CHANGES FROM INDO-EUROPEAN TO GERMANIC

One group of Indo-European speakers, the Germanic peoples, settled in northern Europe near Denmark. Germanic differentiated from earlier Indo-European in the following ways:

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1. Germanic has a large number of words that have no known cognates in other Indo-European languages. These could have existed, of course, in Indo-European but been lost from all other languages of the family. It is more likely, however, that they were developed during the Proto-Germanic period or taken from non-Indo-European languages originally spoken in the area occupied by the Germanic peoples. A few words that are apparently distinctively Germanic are, in their Modern English forms, *broad*, *drink*, *drive*, *fowl*, *hold*, *meat*, *rain*, and *wife*. The Germanic languages also share a common influence from Latin, treated in Chapter 12 (277–78).
2. Germanic languages have only two tenses: the present and the preterit (or past). This simplification of a much more complex Indo-European verbal system is reflected in English *bind–bound*, as well as in German *binden–band* and Old Norse *binda–band*. No Germanic language has anything comparable to such forms as those of the Latin future, perfect, pluperfect, and future perfect forms (for instance, *laudābō*, *laudāvī*, *laudāveram*, *laudāverō*), which are expressed in the Germanic languages by verb phrases (for instance, English *I shall praise*, *I have praised*, *I had praised*, *I shall have praised*).
3. Germanic developed a preterit tense form with a dental suffix, that is, one containing *d* or *t* (as in *spell–spelled* [speld, spelt]) alongside an older pattern of changing the vowels inside a verb (as in *rise–rose*). All Germanic languages have these two types of verbs. Verbs using a dental suffix were called weak by the early German grammarian Jacob Grimm because they needed the help of a suffix to show past time. Verbs that did not need such assistance, he called strong. Grimm's metaphorical terminology is not very satisfactory, but it is still used. An overwhelming majority of our verbs add the

dental suffix in the preterit, so it has become the regular and only living way of inflecting verbs in English and the other Germanic languages. All new verbs form their preterit that way: *televise-televised*, *rev-revved*, *dis-dissed*, and so forth. And many older strong verbs have become weak. Historically speaking, however, the vowel change in the strong verbs, called ablaut or gradation (as in *drive-drove* and *know-knew*), was quite regular. On the other hand, some weak verbs, which use the dental suffix, are irregular. *Bring-brought* and *buy-bought*, for instance, are weak verbs because of the suffix *-t*, and their vowel changes do not make them strong. No attempt at explaining the origin of this dental suffix has been wholly satisfactory. Many have thought that it was originally an independent word related to *do*.

4. All the older forms of Germanic had two ways of declining their adjectives. The weak declension was used chiefly when the adjective modified a definite noun and was preceded by the kind of word that developed into the definite article. The strong declension was used otherwise. Thus Old English had *pā geongan ceorlas* 'the young fellows (churls),' with the weak form of *geong*, but *geonge ceorlas* 'young fellows,' with the strong form. The distinction is preserved in present-day German: *die jungen Kerle*, but *junge Kerle*. This particular Germanic feature cannot be illustrated in Modern English, because English has happily lost all such declension of adjectives. The use of the terms *strong* and *weak* for both verbs and adjectives, in quite different ways for the two parts of speech, is unfortunate but traditional.
5. The "free" accentual system of Indo-European, in which the accent shifted from one syllable to another in various forms of a word, gave way to the Germanic type of accentuation in which the first syllable was regularly stressed, except in verbs like modern *believe* and *forget* with a prefix, whose stress was on the first syllable of the root. None of the Germanic languages has anything comparable to the shifting accentuation of Latin *vīrī* 'men,' *virōrum* 'of the men' or of *hābeō* 'I have,' *habēmus* 'we have.' Compare the paradigms of the Greek and Old English developments of Indo-European **patēr* 'father':

	Greek	Old English
Singular nominative	patēr	fæder
Singular genitive	patrós	fæder(es)
Singular dative	patri	fæder
Singular accusative	patéra	fæder
Singular vocative	páter	fæder
Plural nominative	patéres	fæderas
Plural genitive	patérōn	fædera
Plural dative	patrási	fæderum
Plural accusative	patéras	fæderas

In the Greek forms, the accent may occur on the suffix, the ending, or the root, unlike the Old English forms, which have their accent fixed on the first syllable of the root. Germanic accent is also predominantly a matter of stress (loudness) rather than pitch (tone); Indo-European seems to have had both types of accent at different stages of its development.

6. Some Indo-European vowels were modified in Germanic. Indo-European *o* was retained in Latin but became *a* in Germanic (compare Latin *octo* 'eight,' Gothic *ahtau*). Conversely, Indo-European *ā* became Germanic *ō* (Latin *māter* 'mother,' OE *mōdor*).
7. The Indo-European stops *bh*, *dh*, *gh*; *p*, *t*, *k*; *b*, *d*, *g* were all changed in what is called the First Sound Shift or Grimm's Law (sometimes referred to as Rask's-Grimm's rule). These changes were gradual, extending over long periods of time, but the sounds eventually appear in Germanic languages as, respectively, *b*, *d*, *g*; *f*, *θ*, *h*; *p*, *t*, *k*.

FIRST SOUND SHIFT

GRIMM'S LAW

Because the First Sound Shift, described by Grimm's Law, is such an important difference between Germanic and other Indo-European languages, we illustrate it below by (1) reconstructed Indo-European roots or words (for convenience omitting the asterisk that marks reconstructed forms), (2) corresponding words from a non-Germanic language (usually Latin), and (3) corresponding native English words. (Only a single Indo-European root is given for each set, although the following words may be derived from slightly different forms of that root. Therefore, the correspondence between the two derived words and the Indo-European root may not be exact in all details other than the initial consonants.)

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1. Indo-European *bh*, *dh*, *gh* (voiced stops with a puff of air or aspiration, represented phonetically by a superscript [^h]) became respectively the Germanic voiced fricatives *β*, *ð*, *γ*, and later, in initial position at least, *b*, *d*, *g*. Stated in phonetic terms, aspirated voiced stops became voiced fricatives and then unaspirated voiced stops. These Indo-European aspirated sounds also underwent changes in most non-Germanic languages. Their developments in Latin, Greek, and Germanic are shown in the following table:

Indo-European	<i>bh</i>	<i>dh</i>	<i>gh</i>	(that is, [<i>b</i> ^h], [<i>d</i> ^h], and [<i>g</i> ^h])
Latin	<i>f</i> -	<i>f</i> -	<i>h</i> -	(initially; medially: - <i>b</i> -, - <i>d</i> - or - <i>b</i> -, - <i>g</i> -)
Greek	<i>φ</i>	<i>θ</i>	<i>χ</i>	(that is, [<i>p</i> ^h], [<i>t</i> ^h], [<i>k</i> ^h], transliterated <i>ph</i> , <i>th</i> , <i>ch</i>)
Germanic	<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>g</i>	

Keep these non-Germanic changes in mind, or the following examples will not make sense:

Indo-European <i>bh</i>	Latin <i>f</i> , Greek <i>ph</i>	Germanic <i>b</i>
bhrāter	frāter	brother
bhibhru-	fiber	beaver
bhlē	flāre	blow
bhreg-	fra(n)go	break
bhudh-	fundus (<i>for</i> *fudnus)	bottom
bhāgo-	fāgus	beech
bhag-	(Gk.) phōgein 'to roast'	bake

Indo-European <i>dh</i>	Latin <i>f</i> , Greek <i>th</i>	Germanic <i>d</i>
dheigh-	fi(n)gere 'to mold'	dough
dhwer-	foris	door
dhē-	(Gk.) thē- 'to place'	do
dhug(h)atēr	(Gk.) thugatēr	daughter

Indo-European <i>gh</i>	Latin <i>b</i> -, Greek <i>ch</i>	Germanic <i>g</i>
ghordho-	hortus	(OE) geard 'yard'
ghosti-	hostis	guest
ghomon-	homo	gome (<i>obsolete, but in</i> brideg(r)oom)
ghol-	(Gk.) cholē (> cholera)	gall
ghed-	(pre)he(n)dere 'to take'	get
ghaido-	haedus 'kid'	goat

2. Except when preceded by *s*, the Indo-European voiceless stops *p*, *t*, *k* became respectively the voiceless fricatives *f*, *θ*, *x* (later *h* in initial position):

Indo-European <i>p</i>	Latin, Greek <i>p</i>	Germanic <i>f</i>
pātēr	pater	father
pisk-	piscis	fish
pel-	pellis	fell 'animal hide'
pūr-	(Gk.) pūr	fire
prtū-	portus	ford
pulo-	pullus	foal
ped-	ped(em)	foot
peku-	pecu 'cattle'	fee (<i>cf. Ger. Vieh</i> 'cattle')

Indo-European <i>t</i>	Latin <i>t</i>	Germanic <i>θ</i>
treyes	trēs	three
ters-	torrēre 'to dry'	thirst
tū	tū	(OE) þū 'thou'
ten-	tenuis	thin
tum-	tumēre 'to swell'	thumb (<i>that is</i> , 'fat finger')
tonə-	tonāre	thunder

Indo-European <i>k</i>	Latin <i>k</i> (spelled <i>c</i> , <i>q</i>)	Germanic <i>h</i>
kɾn-	cornū	horn
kerd-	cord-	heart
kwod	quod	what (OE hwæt)
ker-	cervus	hart
kmtom	cent-	hund(red)
kel-	cēlare 'to hide'	hall, hell
kap-	capere 'to take'	heave, have

3. The Indo-European voiced stops *b*, *d*, *g* became respectively the voiceless stops *p*, *t*, *k*.

Indo-European <i>b</i>	Latin, Greek, Lithuanian, Russian <i>b</i>	Germanic <i>p</i>
treb-	trabs 'beam, timber' (> [archi]trave)	(archaic) thorp 'village'
dheub-	(Lith.) dubùs	deep
abel-	(Russ.) jabloko	apple

The sound *b* was infrequent in Indo-European and extremely so at the beginning of words. Examples other than those above are hard to come by.

Indo-European <i>d</i>	Latin, Greek <i>d</i>	Germanic <i>t</i>
dwō	duo	two
dent-	dentis	tooth
demə-	domāre	tame
drew-	(Gk.) drūs 'oak'	tree
dekm	decem	ten (Gothic taihun)
ed-	edere	eat

Indo-European <i>g</i>	Latin, Greek <i>g</i>	Germanic <i>k</i>
genu-	genu	knee (<i>loss of [k-] is modern</i>)
agro-	ager 'field'	acre
genə-	genus	kin
gwen-	(Gk.) gunē 'woman'	queen
grəno-	grānum	corn
gnō-	(g)nōscere	know, can

VERNER'S LAW

Some words in the Germanic languages appear to have an irregular development of Indo-European *p*, *t*, and *k*. Instead of the expected *f*, *θ*, and *x* (or *h*), we find *β*, *ð*, and *γ* (or their later developments). For example, Indo-European *pātēr* (represented by Latin *pater* and Greek *pater*) would have been expected to appear in Germanic with a medial *θ*. Instead we find Gothic *faðar* (with *d* representing [ð]), Icelandic *faðir*, and Old English *fæder* (in which the *d* is a West Germanic development of earlier [ð]). It appears that Indo-European *t* has become *ð* instead of *θ*.

This seeming anomaly was explained by a Danish scholar named Karl Verner in 1875. Verner noticed that the Proto-Germanic voiceless fricatives (*f*, *θ*, *x*, and *s*) became voiced fricatives (*β*, *ð*, *γ*, and *z*) unless they were prevented by any of three conditions: (1) being the first sound in a word, (2) being next to another voiceless sound, or (3) having the Indo-European stress on the immediately preceding syllable. Thus the *t* of Indo-European *pātēr* became *θ*, as Grimm's Law predicts it should; but then, because the word is stressed on its second syllable and the *θ* is neither initial nor next to a voiceless sound, that fricative voiced to *ð*.

Verner's Law, which is a supplement to Grimm's Law, is that Proto-Germanic voiceless fricatives became voiced when they were in a voiced environment and the Indo-European stress was not on the immediately preceding syllable. The law was obscured by the fact that, after it had operated, the stress on Germanic words shifted to the first syllable of the root, thus effectively disguising one of its important conditions. (The effect of the position of stress on voicing can be observed in some Modern English words of foreign origin, such as *exert* [ɪg'zɜrt] and *exist* [ɪg'zɪst], compared with *exercise* ['eksərsaɪz] and *exigent* ['eksɪjənt].) The later history of the voiced fricatives resulting from Verner's Law is the same as that of the voiced fricatives that developed from Indo-European *bh*, *dh*, and *gh*.

The *z* that developed from earlier *s* appears as *r* in all recorded Germanic languages except Gothic. The shift of *z* to *r*, known as rhotacism (that is, *r*-ing, from Greek *rho*, the name of the letter), is by no means peculiar to Germanic. Latin *flōs* 'flower' has *r* in all forms other than the nominative singular—for instance, the genitive singular *flōris*, from earlier **flōzis*, the original *s* being voiced to *z* because of its position between vowels.

We have some remnants of the changes described by Verner's Law in present-day English. The past tense of the verb *be* has two forms: *was* and *were*. The alternation of *s* and *r* in those forms is a result of a difference in the way they were stressed in prehistoric times. The Old English verb *frēosan* 'to freeze' had a past participle from which came a now obsolete adjective *frore* 'frosty, frozen.' The Old English verb *forlēosan* 'to lose utterly' had a past participle from which came our adjective *forlorn*. Both these forms also show the *s/r* alternation. Similarly, the verb *seethe* had a past participle from which we get *sodden*, showing the [θ/d] alternation. In early Germanic, past participles had stress on their endings, whereas the present tense forms of the verbs did not, and that difference in stress permitted voicing of the last consonant of the participle stems and hence triggered the operation of Verner's Law.

THE SEQUENCE OF THE FIRST SOUND SHIFT

The consonant changes described by Grimm and Verner probably stretched over centuries. Each set of shifts was completed before the next began and may have occurred in the following order:

1. Indo-European (IE) bh, dh, gh → (respectively) Germanic (Gmc) β, ð, γ
2. IE p, t, k → (respectively) Gmc f, θ, x (→ h initially)
3. Gmc f, θ, x, s → (respectively) Gmc β, ð, γ, z (under the conditions of Verner's Law)
4. IE b, d, g → (respectively) Gmc p, t, k
5. Gmc β, ð, γ, z → (respectively) Gmc b, d, g, r (except no rhotacism in Gothic)

WEST GERMANIC LANGUAGES

The changes mentioned in the preceding section affected all of the Germanic languages, but other changes also occurred that created three subgroups within the Germanic branch—North, East, and West Germanic. The three subgroups are distinguished from one another by a large number of linguistic features, of which we can mention six as typical:

1. The nominative singular of some nouns ended in *-az* in Proto-Germanic—for example, **wulfaz*. This ending disappeared completely in West Germanic (Old English *wulf*) but changed to *-r* in North Germanic (Old Icelandic *ulfr*) and to *-s* in East Germanic (Gothic *wolfs*).
2. The endings for the second and third persons singular in the present tense of verbs continued to be distinct in West and East Germanic, but in North Germanic the second person ending also came to be used for the third person singular in the present tense:

Old English	Gothic	Old Icelandic	
bindest	bindis	bindr	'you bind'
bindeþ	bindiþ	bindr	'he/she binds'

3. North Germanic developed a definite article that was suffixed to nouns—for example, Old Icelandic *ulfr* 'wolf' and *ulfrinn* 'the wolf.' No such feature appears in East or West Germanic.
4. In West and North Germanic the *z* that resulted from Verner's Law appears as *r*, but in East Germanic sometimes it appears as *s*: Old English *ĕare* 'ear' and Old Icelandic *eyra*, but Gothic *auso*.
5. West and North Germanic had a kind of vowel alternation called mutation (treated in the next chapter); for example, in Old English and Old Icelandic, the word for 'man' in the accusative singular was *mann*, while the corresponding plural was *menn*. No such alternation exists in Gothic, for which the parallel forms are singular *mannan* and plural *mannans*.

6. In West Germanic, the δ that resulted from Verner's Law appears as d , but it remains a fricative in North and East Germanic: Old English *fæder*, Old Icelandic *faðir*, Gothic *faðar* (though spelled *fadar*).

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West Germanic itself was divided into smaller subgroups. For example, High German and Low German are distinguished by another change in the stop sounds—the Second or High German Sound Shift—which occurred comparatively recently as linguistic history goes. It was nearing its completion by the end of the eighth century of our era. This shift began in the southern, mountainous part of Germany and spread northward, stopping short of the low-lying northernmost section of the country. The *high* in High German (*Hochdeutsch*) and the *low* in Low German (*Plattdeutsch*) refer only to relative distances above sea level. High German became in time standard German.

We may illustrate the High German shift in part by contrasting English and High German forms, as follows. In High German:

Proto-Germanic p appears as pf or, after vowels, as ff (*pepper*–*Pfeffer*).

Proto-Germanic t appears as ts (spelled z) or, after vowels, as ss (*tongue*–*Zunge*; *water*–*Wasser*).

Proto-Germanic k appears after vowels as ch (*break*–*brechen*).

Proto-Germanic d appears as t (*dance*–*tanzen*).

The Continental home of the English was north of the area in which the High German shift occurred. But even if this had not been so, the English language would have been unaffected by changes that had not begun to occur at the time of the Anglo-Saxon migrations to Britain, beginning in the fifth century. Consequently English has the earlier consonantal characteristics of Germanic, which it shares with Low German, Dutch, Flemish, and Frisian.

Because English and Frisian (the latter spoken in the northern Dutch province of Friesland and in some of the islands off the coast) share certain features not found elsewhere in the Germanic group, they are sometimes treated as an Anglo-Frisian subgroup of West Germanic. They and Old Saxon share other features, such as the loss of nasal consonants before the fricatives f , s , and h , with lengthening of the preceding vowel: compare High German *gans* with Old English *gōs* 'goose,' Old High German *fimf* (Modern German *fünf*) with Old English *fif* 'five,' and High German *mund* with Old English *mūð* 'mouth.'

English, then, began its separate existence as a form of Germanic brought by pagan warrior-adventurers from the Continent to the relatively obscure island that the Romans called Britannia and, until shortly before, had ruled as part of their mighty empire. There, in the next five centuries or so, it developed into an independent language quite distinct from any Germanic language spoken on the Continent.

PODEL
4.16

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