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Supplement 1: Odic Force as Explanatory of Clairvoyance



Submitted by Carl von Reichenbach on Sat, 02/22/2014 - 09:50

SUPPLEMENT I

Odic Force as Explanatory of Clairvoyance

THE present volume is issued as a book of "fundamentals," the contention being that these fundamentals still hold good in the main, notwithstanding the advances made since Reichenbach's death in 1869 in all branches of science, among which the advances made in psychic science itself must not be forgotten. It is not intended to set up any foolish contention that rectifications of Reichenbach's work will not be found necessary in instances : but it is for professional scientists to point these instances out. For this reason no attempt is here made to commentate either the text of the *Letters on Odic Magnetism* or that of the passages set on record in this Supplement and Supplement II.

But, as Gustav Theodor Fechner, late professor of physics in the University of Leipsic, remarks in his *Memories of the Last Days of the Odic Theory [ad fin.]*, Reichenbach's work on psychic phenomena has been so exhaustive, so scientifically conducted, and recorded with such patient precision, that all future investigators will be bound to follow its elaborator along the path on which he is a pioneer, until it is definitely shown what sections of his track, if any, must be abandoned by science.

The two main questions on which students of psychic science have to concentrate their attention in this connection are in my opinion :

1. Is the existence of odic force an objective biological fact?
2. Does odic force, if shown to be objectively existent, explain the phenomena, or lead us toward an explanation of the phenomena, of what is commonly known as "spirit intercourse?"

The following passages are printed as illuminative texts bearing intimately on the solutions to be given to these two questions :

Prof. Wm. Gregory: *Animal Magnetism*, 4th ed. 1896, pp. 34-36 :

Clairvoyance defined.—Dr. Gregory defines clairvoyance as:

“ *The direct and immediate perception of absent or distant objects without the use of the eyes.* ”
Perception in the shape of vision without the use of the external organs of vision. ”

Q. By what means is the image of the object conveyed to the internal organ of vision and to the sensorium ?

*A. Common vision by ordinary light it cannot be, for the eyes are closed... We must therefore admit the existence of (a) **some Other force** or influence, exerted by bodies, and capable of reaching the brain without passing through the eye. When the sleeper [The reference is to the hypnotic patient or "mesmeric sleeper" exercising clairvoyance] finds his vision not clear, or misty, as he calls it, he will very often, in order to see an object which is shown to him, apply it to his forehead, to the coronal region, or in some rare cases to the occiput, and forthwith perceive it more distinctly.*

*"We feel that he who can see an object behind him while his eyes are closed, and who sees it best when applied to his head, has **some means** of perceiving objects which is either not possessed in the ordinary waking state or, if possessed, is not attended to, but (b) its impressions are overpowered by the stronger impressions of the ordinary senses."*

*"We easily conceive that... (c) our new force or influence may, like light, traverse the universe without difficulty, while, like heat, it may be able to penetrate through all objects, even through walls of brick or stone. And such precisely is the character of Baron von Reichenbach's **odyle** [Gr.: h-od-os, way, movement; h-y-le, matter], save that it moved with less velocity than light and passed through solid bodies much more easily than heat."*

"I may point to the very frequent, in some cases universal, occurrence of luminous emanations from all objects thus seen by the sleeper, nay, often seen by him while awake (as in the case of the light from the tips of the fingers of the operator or of other parties present),

“first, as indicating that an emanation of some kind... really does proceed from bodies in general, and”
 “secondly, as confirming the results of the researches of Baron von Reichenbach, who has proved... the existence of a peculiar influence (force, fluid, or imponderable agent) in all forms of matter and pervading the universe, the action of which is perceived in various forms by a large proportion of mankind, and always very distinctly by spontaneous somnambulists. **It is in this direction that we shall most probably find the explanation so eagerly sought after.**”

”

”

Gregory wrote the foregoing for the first edition of his book in 1851. But in the *British Spiritual Telegraph* of 23rd August, 1857, a penny weekly spiritualistic newspaper published in Keighley, Yorkshire, a letter appears from him, written just seven months before his death, in which he states his opinion " that there is a great analogy between certain spiritual communications, or other facts, and the phenomena of clairvoyance... My sole object," he continues, "is to ascertain the truth. My (feelings are entirely in favour of Spiritualism, but I cannot feel thoroughly and logically satisfied until the facts and arguments are produced *which render every other theory untenable...* . The hypothesis of disembodied spirits as the cause of the phenomena [*i.e. the phenomena of spiritual communications, not the phenomena of clairvoyance*] is by far the simplest and the best."

A sensitive, we must note, is not always a clairvoyant. Some undoubted sensitives go through a whole lifetime without exercising a single clairvoyant or clairaudient act. Many, again, only exercise such acts fitfully, and often find themselves bereft of the desired power when they most of all wish to exercise it. What the conditions are which determine their power to use their constitutional clairvoyant or clairaudient faculty they themselves do not know. Nor apparently, so far at any rate, does anyone else. To acquire reliable information on the point is the task now before us. Gregory writes (*Anim. Mag.*, p. 5): "The sleeper in the mesmeric state has a consciousness quite separate and distinct from his ordinary consciousness. He is in fact, if not a different individual, yet the same individual in a different and distinct phase of his being, and that phase a higher one... His whole manner seems to undergo a refinement... It would seem as if the brute or animal propensities were laid to rest, while the intellect and higher sentiments shone forth." And it seems reasonable to draw the same distinction between the sensitive in power and the sensitive in act even when he is awake—always of course bearing "relativity" in mind. Sleeping and waking are but relative terms. Some people, we say, seem never properly awake their whole lives through. Otherwise, why should King Gautama of Nepal have called himself the Buddha, i.e. the Awakened ?

Sir Oliver J. Lodge: *Raymond Revised*, 1922 (p. 220), writes : " I am as convinced of existence on the other side of death as I am of existence here. It may be said, you cannot be as sure as you are of sensory experience. I say I can. A physicist is never limited to direct sensory impressions: he has to deal with a multitude of conceptions and things for which he has no physical organ. The dynamical theory of heat, for instance, and of gases, the theories of electricity, of magnetism, of chemical affinity, of cohesion, aye, and his apprehension of the Ether itself, lead him into regions where sight and hearing and touch are impotent as direct witnesses, where they are no longer efficient guides."

For Mr. (later Sir) William Crookes's experiments—unaccountable movements of balanced board recorded by weighing machine, and playing of scientifically isolated concertina—with Mr. Daniel Dunglas Home as medium or high-sensitive in the year 1870, in the presence of (i) Dr. Huggins, Vice-President of the Royal Society, (2) Serjeant Cox, (3) Mr. William Crookes's brother, and (4) Mr. William Crookes's chemical assistant, brought forward as proving

“ Reichenbach's "odic molecular movement" utilized by an unseen, unknown, intelligent operator, ”

see *Quarterly Journal of Science*, vol. vii., p. 316, July see also pamphlet of 15 pages entitled *Psychic Power—Spirit Power: Experimental Investigations of W. Crookes, Dr. Huggins, Serjeant Cox, and Lord Lindsay*, 2nd thousand, reprinted from *The Spiritualist* newspaper, published by E. W. Allen, Ave Maria Lane, E.C.. 1871. This pamphlet includes a letter from Lord Lindsay (later Earl of Crawford, compiler and editor of the learned *Bibliotheca Lindesiana*), dated 14th July, 1871, and detailing

“ D. D. Home's visualization of light from a magnet, as per Reichenbach, and a levitation of Home's own body in and out of windows. ”

A passage tending to show the necessity of guidance from Reichenbach's investigations occurs from Crookes's pen in the above pamphlet, p. 3, where,» speaking of D. D. Home, he says:

"These experiments appear conclusively to establish the existence of a new force, in some unknown manner connected with the human organization, which for convenience may be called the Psychic Force... It is mainly owing to the many opportunities I have had of carrying on my investigation in his presence that I am enabled to confirm so conclusively the existence of this force. The experiments I have tried have been very numerous, but owing to our

“ (1) imperfect knowledge of the conditions which favour or oppose manifestations of this force, to the
(2) apparently capricious manner in which it is exerted, and to the fact that Mr. Home himself is subject to
(3) unaccountable ebbs and flows of force,
”

it has but seldom happened that a result obtained on one occasion should be subsequently confirmed and tested with apparatus specially contrived for the purpose."

The necessity of continued methodic investigation—and that on the solid foundations of nature laid bare by Reichenbach—is in fact obvious. If a natural force exists, it is constant *per se* and *in se*: it is only our scientific enthusiasm which is inconstant.

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Odic Force

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Odic force

The **Odic force** (also called **Od** [ōd], **Odyle**, **Önd**, **Odes**, **Odylic**, **Odylicic**, or **Odems**) is the name given in the mid-19th century to a hypothetical vital energy or life force by Baron Carl von Reichenbach. Von Reichenbach coined the name from that of the Norse god Odin in 1845.^[1]

History

As von Reichenbach was investigating the manner in which the human nervous system could be affected by various substances, he conceived the existence of a new force allied to electricity, magnetism, and heat, a force which he thought was radiated by most substances, and to the influence of which different persons are variously sensitive.^[2] He named this vitalist concept *Odic force*. Proponents say that Odic force permeates all plants, animals, and humans.^[3]

Believers in Odic force said that it is visible in total darkness as colored auras surrounding living things, crystals, and magnets, but that viewing it requires hours first spent in total darkness, and only very sensitive people have the ability to see it.^[4] They also said that it resembles the eastern concepts prana and qi. However, they regarded the *Odic force* as not associated with breath (like India's prana and the qi of Eastern martial arts) but rather mainly with biological electromagnetic fields.^[5]

Von Reichenbach did not tie Odic force into other vitalist theories. Baron von Reichenbach expounded the concept of Odic force in detail in a book-length article, *Researches on Magnetism, Electricity, Heat and Light in their Relations to Vital Forces*, which appeared in a special issue of a respected scientific journal, *Annalen der Chemie und Physik*. He said that (1) the Odic force had a positive and negative flux, and a light and dark side; (2) individuals could forcefully "emanate" it, particularly from the hands, mouth, and forehead; and (3) the Odic force had many possible applications.

The Odic force was conjectured to explain the phenomenon of hypnotism. In Britain, impetus was given to this view of the subject following the translation of Reichenbach's *Researches* by a professor of chemistry at the University of Edinburgh. These later researches tried to show many of the Odic phenomena to be of the same nature as those described previously by Franz Mesmer and even long before Mesmer by Swedenborg.^[6]

The French scientists Hippolyte Baraduc and Albert de Rochas were influenced by the concept of the Odic force.^[7]

Scientific basis

Von Reichenbach hoped to develop scientific proof for a universal life force; however, his experiments relied on perceptions reported by individuals who claimed to be "sensitive", as he himself could not observe any of the reported phenomena. The "sensitives" had to work in total or near-total darkness to be able to observe the phenomena.

Reichenbach stated that, through experimentation, possibly 1/3 of the population could view the phenomenon, but far less otherwise. Author Sydney Billing claimed to have witnessed it, as well as colleagues who were medical doctors in England who viewed it through experimentation.^[8] Discussion on the subject continues into the present day, with some claiming to be able to see it naturally even on sunny days with clear skies.^[9] Although the phenomenon description seems to correlate with Prisoner's cinema or the Blue Field Entoptic phenomenon.^[10]

Scientists have abandoned concepts such as the Odic force. In western popular culture the name is used in a similar way to qi or prana to refer to spiritual energies or the vital force associated with living things. In Europe, the Odic force has been mentioned in books on dowsing, for example.

Popular culture

- **1920:** The detective in the Sax Rohmer book "The Dream Detective" sleeps at the scene of crimes and gets a picture of the deed through the odic force.
- **1932:** Od is presented as an all pervasive force in *Communication with the Spirit World of God* by Johannes Greber.
- The power of Od is the focal point of an episode of CBS Radio Mystery Theater about von Reichenbach^[citation needed].
- Published **1988** onwards: The magic used by Schierke in the manga *Berserk* is called Od^[citation needed].
- **1998+:** Cerebus, in Fred Saberhagen's Book of the Gods was made using odylic forces.
- **2004:** Od is used in *Fate/stay night* as magical energy humans can produce.
- **2008:** Od is a form of energy or force the teacher Reiji Takano of the video game Lux-Pain is investigating in the same way Carl von Reichenbach did. He set up a machine and investigated statues which were later on revealed to be devices created by one of the game's antagonists.
- The Odyll force appears in the fiction of Brian Keaney^[citation needed].
- **2010:** The villainous fictional version of Thomas Edison who appears in *Atomic Robo* comic books is obsessed with harnessing the Odic force (via direct current) to unlock the secret of immortality.


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- [3] Mary Coddington *Seekers of the Healing Energy: Reich, Cayce, the Kahunas, and Other Masters of the Vital Force* 1991, p. 67
- [4] Peter Johannes Thiel *The Diagnosis Of Disease By Observation Of The Eye To Enable Physicians, Healers, Teachers, Parents to Read the Eyes* Kessinger Reprint Edition, 2004, p. 52
- [5] Mark Woodhouse *Paradigm Wars: Worldviews for a New Age* 1996, pp. 191-192
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External links

- Odin Force Definition (http://www.randi.org/encyclopedia/odic_force.html) in An Encyclopedia of Claims, Frauds, and Hoaxes of the Occult and Supernatural
- Researches on Magnetism, Electricity, Heat and Light in their relations to Vital Forces (<http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/moa/sgml/moa-idx?notisid=ABL5306-0015-126>) or here (http://books.google.com/books/download/Researches_on_magnetism__electricity__he.pdf?id=KukRAAAAYAAJ&hl=fr&output=pdf&sig=ACfU3U3nqkyamSfUKay6Iol3jgdh9mnmqw&source=gbs_v2_summary_r&cad=0)
- Luminous World (<http://www.luminet.net/~wenonah/history/odenergy.htm>)
- Odic Energy (<http://www.odicenergy.com/>) ("Site suspended" (2014-02-21), but archived as of 2013-12-30 on Wayback Machine (<http://web.archive.org/web/20131230041333/http://odicenergy.com/>))
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Carl Reichenbach

Carl Reichenbach	
 Carl Ludwig von Reichenbach	
Born	Karl Ludwig Freiherr von Reichenbach February 12, 1788 Stuttgart, Germany
Died	January 19, 1869 (aged 80) Leipzig, Germany
Nationality	German
Alma mater	University of Tübingen
Occupation	Chemist, Geologist, Metallurgist, Naturalist, Industrialist and Philosopher
Known for	Odic force

Baron Dr. **Carl (Karl) Ludwig von Reichenbach** (full name: Karl Ludwig Freiherr von Reichenbach) (February 12, 1788 – January 1869) was a notable chemist, geologist, metallurgist, naturalist, industrialist and philosopher, and a member of the prestigious Prussian Academy of Sciences. He is best known for his discoveries of several chemical products of economic importance, extracted from tar, such as eupione, waxy paraffin, pittacal (the first synthetic dye) and phenol (an antiseptic). He also dedicated himself in his last years to research an unproved field of energy combining electricity, magnetism and heat, emanating from all living things, which he called the Odic force.^[1]

Life

Reichenbach was educated at the University of Tübingen, where he obtained the degree of doctor of philosophy. At the age of 16 he conceived the idea of establishing a new German state in one of the South Sea Islands, and for five years he devoted himself to this project.

Afterwards, directing his attention to the application of science to the industrial arts, he visited manufacturing and metallurgical works in France and Germany, and established the first modern metallurgical company, with forges of his own in Villingen and Hausach in the Black Forest region of Southern Germany and later in Baden.

Scientific contributions

Reichenbach conducted original scientific investigations in many areas. The first geological monograph which appeared in Austria was his *Geologische Mitteilungen aus Mähren* (Vienna, 1834).^[citation needed]

His position as the head of the large chemical works, iron furnaces and machine shops upon the great estate of Count Hugo secured to him excellent opportunities for conducting large-scale experimental research. From 1830 to 1834 he investigated complex products of the distillation of organic substances such as coal and wood tar, discovering a number of valuable hydrocarbon compounds including creosote, paraffin, eupione and phenol (antiseptics), pittacal and cidreret (synthetic dyestuffs), picamar (a perfume base), assamar, capnomor, and others. Under the name of eupione, Reichenbach included the mixture of hydrocarbon oils now known as waxy paraffin or coal oils. In his paper describing the substance, first published in the *Neues Jahrbuch der Chemie und Physik*, B, ii, he dwelt upon the economical importance of this and of its associate paraffins, whenever the methods of separating them cheaply from natural bituminous compounds would be established.^[citation needed]

Earth's magnetism

Reichenbach expanded on the work of previous scientists, such as Galileo Galilei, who believed the Earth's axis was magnetically connected to a universal central force in space, in concluding that Earth's magnetism comes from magnetic iron, which can be found in meteorites. His reasoning was that meteorites and planets are the same, and no matter the size of the meteorite, polar existence can be found in the object. This was deemed conclusive by the scientific community in the 19th century.^[2]

The Odic force

In 1839 Von Reichenbach retired from industry and entered upon an investigation of the pathology of the human nervous system. He studied neurasthenia, somnambulism, hysteria and phobia, crediting reports that these conditions were affected by the moon. After interviewing many patients he ruled out many causes and cures, but concluded that such maladies tended to affect people whose sensory faculties were unusually vivid. These he termed "sensitives".^[citation needed]

Influenced by the works of Franz Anton Mesmer he hypothesised that the condition could be affected by environmental electromagnetism, but finally his investigations led him to propose a new imponderable force allied to magnetism, which he thought was an emanation from most substances, a kind of "life principle" which permeates and connects all living things. To this vitalist manifestation he gave the name *Odic force*.^[3]

Works

- *Das Kreosot: ein neuentdeckter Bestandtheil des gemeinen Rauches, des Holzessigs und aller Arten von Theer* 1833
- *Geologische Mitteilungen aus Mähren (Geological news from Moravia)* Wien, 1834
- *Physikalisch-physiologische Untersuchungen über die Dynamide des Magnetismus, der Elektrizität, der Wärme, des Lichtes, der Krystallisation, des Chemismus in ihren Beziehungen zur Lebenskraft* (Band 1 + Band 2 ^[4]) Braunschweig, 1850
- *Odisch-magnetische Briefe* ^[5] Stuttgart 1852, 1856; Ulm 1955
- *Der sensitive Mensch und sein Verhalten zum Ode (The sensitive human and his behaviour towards Od)* Stuttgart und Tübingen (Band 1 ^[6] 1854 + Band 2 ^[7] 1855)
- *Köhlerglaube und Afterweisheit: Dem Herrn C. Vogt in Genf zur Antwort* ^[8] Wien, 1855
- *Wer ist sensitiv, wer nicht* ^[9] (Who is sensitive, who is not?) Wien, 1856
- *Odische Erwiederungen an die Herren Professoren Fortlage, Schleiden, Fechner und Hofrath Carus* ^[10] Wien, 1856

- *Die Pflanzenwelt in ihren Beziehungen zur Sensitivität und zum Ode* ^[11] Wien, 1858
- *Odische Begebenheiten zu Berlin in den Jahren 1861 und 1862* ^[12] Berlin, 1862
- *Aphorismen über Sensitivität und Od* ^[13] (*Aphorisms on Sensitivity and Od*) Wien, 1866
- *Die odische Lohe und einige Bewegungserscheinungen als neuentdeckte Formen des odischen Princips in der Natur* ^[14] Wien, 1867

English translations:

- *Physico-physiological researches on the dynamics of magnetism, electricity, heat, light, crystallization, and chemism, in their relation to Vital Force* ^[15] New York, 1851
- *Somnambulism and cramp* ^[16] New York, 1860 (excerpt translated chapter out of *Der sensitive Mensch und sein Verhalten zum Ode*)
- *Letters on Od and Magnetism* 1926

Reichenbach's ideas in popular culture

Characters in the fantasy novel, *The Hollow People* by Brian Keaney (Orchard Books 2006) manipulate Odyllic force, an energy which is accessed through waking dreams.

Reichenbach and his Odic force are referred to in the game "Amnesia: A Machine for Pigs".

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- [1] Much of this information is quoted from: <http://books.google.com/books?vid=0mfUqc4DBV7x8P&id=5iMIMLNd4jsC&pg=PA20&lpg=PA20&dq=reichenbach+pittacal> Reichenbach, Karl. *The New American Cyclopaedia*, 1863 (in the public domain). Facsimile copy available on the Internet at Google Books.
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Notes

Regarding personal names: *Freiherr* is a title, translated as *Baron*, not a first or middle name. The female forms are *Freifrau* and *Freiin*.

External links

- Karl von Reichenbach und Od (http://www.paranormal.de/para/ballabene/okkultes_weltbild/aether/reichenbach/reichenbach1.htm). Paranormal Site (In German)
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- Luminous World (<http://customers.hbci.com/~wenonah/history/odenergy.htm>). Article by Gerry Vassilatou

Odin

Odin (/ˈoʊdɪn/; from Old Norse *Óðinn*) is a major god in most if not all branches of Germanic mythology especially in the Norse mythology branch of Germanic mythology, the **Allfather** of the gods, and the ruler of Asgard.^[1] Homologous with the Old English "Wōden", the Old Saxon "Wōdan" and the Old High German "Wōtan", the name is descended from Proto-Germanic **Wōdanaz* or **Wōdanaz*. "Odin" is generally accepted as the modern English form of the name, although, in some cases, older forms may be used or preferred. His name is related to *ōðr*, meaning "fury, excitation", besides "mind" or "poetry". His role, like that of many of the Norse gods, is complex. Odin is a principal member of the Æsir (the major group of the Norse pantheon) and is associated with war, battle, victory and death, but also wisdom, Shamanism, magic, poetry, prophecy, and the hunt. Odin has many sons, the most famous of whom is the thunder god Thor.

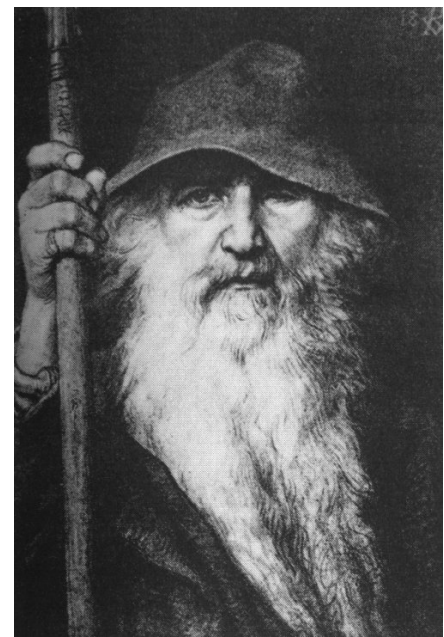
Etymology

Odin's name is formed from two words: first "*óðr*" which means "*ecstasy, fury, inspiration and poetry*". The second word is the suffix "*-inn*" which is a masculine article that when added to another word gives the meaning of "*master of*" or "*perfect example of*".

Origin

Worship of Odin may date to Proto-Germanic paganism. The Roman historian Tacitus may refer to Odin when he mentions Mercury as the chief god of the Germanic tribes.^[*citation needed*] The reason is that, like Mercury, Odin was regarded as a Psychopomp, "guide of souls" and considered the god who brought poetry to mankind.

Originally, Odin was possibly considered mainly a shamanistic god and the leader of the war band. His consort was presumably Friigg. The ascetic ritual of hanging from the world tree, Odin's practice of seidr, his familiar animals (Sleipnir, Hugin and Munin) and his connection to ecstatic inspiration all suggest his role as the prototypical shaman. As the society changed, Odin's shamanistic role became less prominent, although it remained one of his attributes, and he was mostly considered the wise king of the gods and bringer of victory. Friigg presumably split into Frigg and Freyja, with Freyja being the one to receive most of the shaman's aspects.^{[2][3][4]}



Odin the Wanderer (1896) by Georg von Rosen



A depiction of Odin entering Valhalla riding on Sleipnir from the Tjängvide image stone

Parallels between Odin and the Celtic Lugus have often been pointed out. Both are intellectual gods, commanding magic and poetry. Both have ravens and a spear as their attributes. Julius Caesar (*de bello Gallico*, 6.17.1) mentions Mercury as the chief god of Celtic religion. A likely context of the diffusion of elements of Celtic ritual into Germanic culture is that of the Chatti, who lived at the Celtic-Germanic boundary in Hesse during the final centuries before the Common Era.^[citation needed]



The 7th century Tängelgarda stone shows Odin leading a troop of warriors all bearing rings; Valknut symbols are drawn beneath his horse, which is depicted with four legs

Adam of Bremen

Written around 1080, one of the oldest written sources on pre-Christian Scandinavian religious practices is Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*. Adam claimed to have access to first-hand accounts on pagan practices in Sweden. His description of the Temple at Uppsala gives some details on the god.



A detail from runestone G 181 in the Swedish Museum of National Antiquities in Stockholm. The three men are interpreted as Odin, Thor and Freyr

In hoc templo, quod totum ex auro paratum est, statuas trium deorum veneratur populus, ita ut potentissimus eorum Thor in medio solium habeat triclinio; hinc et inde locum possident Wodan et Fricco. Quorum significationes eiusmodi sunt : 'Thor', inquit, 'praesidet in aere, qui tonitrus et fulmina, ventos ymbresque, serena et fruges gubernat. Alter Wodan, id est furor, bella gerit, hominique ministrat virtutem contra inimicos. Tertius est Fricco, pacem voluptatemque largiens mortalibus'. Cuius etiam simulacrum fingunt cum ingenti priapo.

– *Gesta Hammaburgensis* 26, Waitz' edition ^[5]

In this temple, entirely decked out in gold, the people worship the statues of three gods in such ways that the mightiest of them, Thor, occupies a throne in the middle of the chamber; Wotan and Frikko have places on either side. The significance of these gods is as follows: Thor, they say, presides over the air, which governs the thunder and lightning, the winds and rains, fair weather and crops. The other, Wotan – that is, the Furious – carries on war and imparts to man strength against his enemies. The third is Frikko, who bestows peace and pleasure on mortals. His likeness, too, they fashion with an immense phallus.

– *Gesta Hammaburgensis* 26, Tschan's translation

Poetic Edda

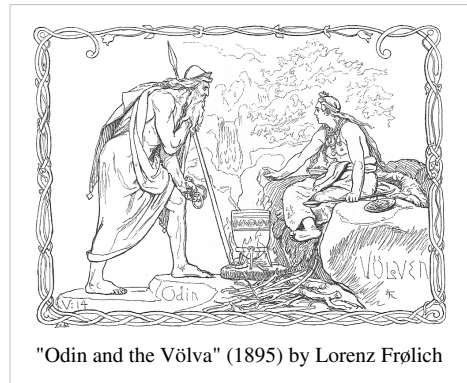
Völuspá

In the poem *Völuspá*, a völva tells Odin of numerous events reaching far into the past and future, including his own doom. The Völva describes creation, recounts the birth of Odin by his father Borr and his mother Bestla and how Odin and his brothers formed Midgard from the sea. She further describes the creation of the first human beings – Ask and Embla – by Hænir, Lóðurr and Odin.

Amongst various other events, the Völva mentions Odin's involvement in the Æsir-Vanir War, the self-sacrifice of Odin's eye at Mímir's Well, the death of his son Baldr. She describes how Odin is slain by the wolf Fenrir at Ragnarök, the subsequent avenging of Odin and death of Fenrir by his son Víðarr, how the world disappears into flames and, yet, how the earth again rises from the sea. She then relates how the surviving Æsir remember the deeds of Odin.

Lokasenna

In the poem *Lokasenna*, the conversation of Odin and Loki starts with Odin trying to defend Gefjun and ends with his wife, Frigga, defending him. In *Lokasenna*, Loki derides Odin for practicing seid (witchcraft), implying it is women's work. Another example of this may be found in the *Ynglinga saga* where Snorri opines that men who used seid were *ergi* or *unmanly*.



"Odin and the Völva" (1895) by Lorenz Frølich



"Odin Rides to Hel" (1908) by W. G. Collingwood

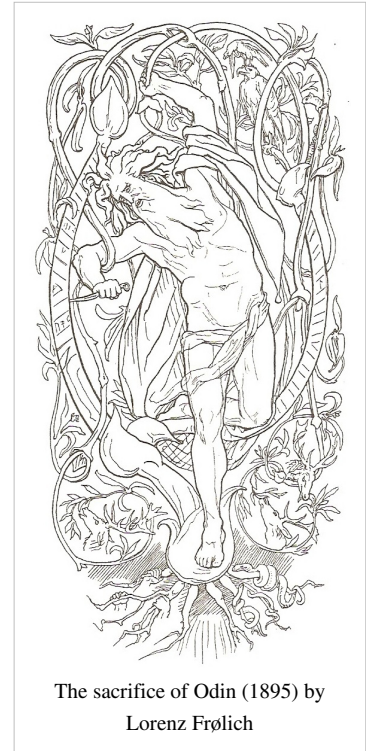
Hávamál

In *Rúnatal*, a section of the *Hávamál*, Odin is attributed with discovering the runes. In a sacrifice to himself, the highest of the gods, he was hanged from the world tree Yggdrasil for nine days and nights, pierced by his own spear, in order to learn the wisdom that would give him power in the nine worlds. Nine is a significant number in Norse magical practice (there were, for example, nine realms of existence), thereby learning nine (later eighteen) magical songs and eighteen magical runes.

One of Odin's names is *Ygg*, and the Norse name for the World Ash—Yggdrasil—therefore could mean "Ygg's (Odin's) horse". Another of Odin's names is *Hangatýr*, the god of the hanged.

Hárbarðsljóð

In *Hárbarðsljóð*, Odin, disguised as the ferryman Hárbarðr, engages his son Thor, unaware of the disguise, in a long argument. Thor is attempting to get around a large lake and Hárbarðr refuses to ferry him.



The sacrifice of Odin (1895) by
Lorenz Frølich

Prose Edda

Odin had three residences in Asgard. First was Gladsheim, a vast hall where he presided over the twelve Diar or Judges, whom he had appointed to regulate the affairs of Asgard. Second, Valaskjálf, built of solid silver, in which there was an elevated place, Hlidskjalf; from his throne on Hlidskjalf he could perceive all that passed throughout the whole earth. Third was Valhalla (the hall of the fallen), where Odin received the souls of the warriors killed in battle, called the Einherjar. Valhalla has five hundred and forty gates, and a vast hall of gold, hung around with golden shields, and spears and coats of mail.

A number of magical artifacts are associated with Odin: the spear Gungnir, which never misses its target; a magical gold ring (Draupnir), from which every ninth night eight new rings appear; and two ravens Huginn and Muninn ("Thought" and "Memory"), who fly around Earth daily and report the happenings of the world to Odin in Valhalla at night. He also owned Sleipnir, an eight-legged horse, who was given to Odin by Loki, and the severed head of Mímir, which foretold the future. He also commands a pair of wolves named Geri and Freki, to whom he gives his food in Valhalla since he consumes nothing but mead or wine. The Valknut (slain warrior's knot) is a symbol associated with Odin, consisting of three interlaced triangles.



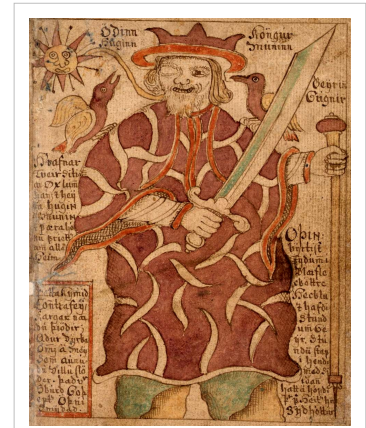
A depiction of Odin riding Sleipnir
from an 18th-century Icelandic
manuscript.

Odin is an ambivalent deity. Connotations of Odin during the old Norse age lie with "poetry, inspiration" as well as with "fury, madness and the wanderer". Odin

sacrificed one of his eyes at Mímir's spring in order to gain the Wisdom of Ages. Odin gives to worthy poets the mead of inspiration, made by the dwarfs, from the vessel *Óð-rærir*.^[6]

Odin is associated with the concept of the Wild Hunt, a noisy, bellowing movement across the sky, leading a host of slain warriors.

Consistent with this, Snorri Sturluson's Prose Edda depicts Odin as welcoming the great warriors who have died in battle into his hall, Valhalla, which, when literally interpreted, signifies the hall of the slain. The fallen, the *einherjar*, are assembled and entertained by Odin so that they in return might support and fight for the gods in the final battle of the end of Earth, Ragnarök. Snorri also wrote that Freyja receives half of the fallen in her hall Folkvang. The souls of women warriors, and those strong and beautiful women whom Odin favored, became valkyries.



Odin with his ravens and weapons
(MS SÁM 66, 18th century)

He is also a god of war, appearing throughout Norse myth as the bringer of victory.^[citation needed] In the Norse sagas, Odin sometimes acts as the instigator of wars, and is said to have been able to start wars by simply throwing down his spear Gungnir, and/or sending his valkyries, to influence the battle toward the end that he desires. The Valkyries are Odin's beautiful battle maidens that went out to the fields of war to select and collect the worthy men who died in battle to come and sit at *Odin's table* in Valhalla, feasting and battling until they had to fight in Ragnarök. Odin would also appear on the battlefield, sitting upon his eight-legged horse Sleipnir, with his two ravens Hugin and Munin, one on each shoulder, and two wolves Geri and Freki on either side of him.

Odin is also associated with trickery, cunning, and deception. Most sagas have tales of Odin using his cunning to overcome adversaries and achieve his goals, such as swindling the blood of Kvasir from the dwarves.

On September 2, 2009, an amateur archaeologist found a small silver figurine at Lejre in Denmark. It has been dated to around 900. The figurine is only two centimeters tall and shows a person sitting on a throne adorned with two beast heads and flanked by two birds on the arm-rests. The excavator interpreted the piece as a representation of Odin, Hugin and Munin.^[7] Scholars specialising in Viking-Period dress and gender representations, however, pointed out that the person is dressed entirely in female attire, making it more probably a goddess such as Freya or Frigga.

Prologue

Snorri Sturluson feels compelled to give a rational account of the *Æsir* in the prologue of his Prose Edda. In this scenario, Snorri speculates that Odin and his peers were originally refugees from the Anatolian city of Troy, folk etymologizing *Æsir* as derived from the word Asia. In any case, Snorri's writing (particularly in *Heimskringla*) tries to maintain an essentially scholastic neutrality. That Snorri was correct was one of the last of Thor Heyerdahl's archeoanthropological theories, forming the basis for his *Jakten på Odin*.

Gylfaginning

According to the Prose Edda, Odin, the first and most powerful of the Æsir, was a son of Bestla and Borr and brother of Vili and Vé. With these brothers, he cast down the frost giant Ymir and made Earth from Ymir's body. The three brothers are often mentioned together. "Vili" is the German word for "will" (English), "Vé" is the German word (Gothic *wai*) for woe but is more likely related to the archaic German "Wei" meaning "sacred".

Odin has fathered numerous children. With his wife, Frigg, he fathered his doomed son Baldr and the blind god Höðr. By the personification of earth, Fjörgyn or Jörð, Odin was the father of his most famous son, Thor. By the giantess Gríðr, Odin was the father of Vídar, and by Rinda he was father of Váli. Also, many royal families claimed descent from Odin through other sons. (For traditions about Odin's offspring, see *Sons of Odin*.)

Odin and his brothers, Vili and Ve, are attributed with slaying Ymir, the Ancient Giant, to form Midgard. From Ymir's flesh, the brothers made the earth, and from his shattered bones and teeth they made the rocks and stones. From Ymir's blood, they made the rivers and lakes. Ymir's skull was made into the sky, secured at four points by four dwarfs named East, West, North, and South. From Ymir's brains, the three gods shaped the clouds, whereas Ymir's eyebrows became a barrier between Jotunheim (giant's home) and Midgard, the place where men now dwell. Odin and his brothers are also attributed with making humans.

After having made earth from Ymir's flesh, the three brothers came across two logs (or an ash and an elm tree). Odin gave them breath and life; Vili gave them brains and feelings; and Ve gave them hearing and sight. The first man was Ask and the first woman was Embla.

Odin was said to have learned the mysteries of seid from the Vanic goddess and völva Freyja, despite the un-warriorlike connotations of using magic.^[citation needed]

Skáldskaparmál

In section 2 of *Skáldskaparmál*, Odin's quest for wisdom can also be seen in his work as a farmhand for a summer, for Baugi, and his seduction of Gunnlod in order to obtain the Mead of Poetry.

In section 5 of *Skáldskaparmál*, the origins of some of Odin's possessions are described.

Sagas of Icelanders

Ynglinga saga

According to the *Ynglinga saga*:

Odin had two brothers, the one called Ve, the other Vili, and they governed the kingdom when he was absent. It happened once when Odin had gone to a great distance, and had been so long away that the people of Asa doubted if he would ever return home, that his two brothers took it upon themselves to divide his estate; but both of them took his wife Frigg to themselves. Odin soon after returned home, and took his wife back.

In *Ynglinga saga*, Odin is considered the 2nd Mythological king of Sweden, succeeding Gylfi and was succeeded by Njörðr.



"Odin's last words to Baldr" (1908) by W.G. Collingwood



"Odin with Gunnlöð" (1901) by Johannes Gehrts

Further, in *Ynglinga saga*, Odin is described as venturing to Mímir's Well, near Jötunheimr, the land of the giants. He traveled not as Odin, but as Vegtam the Wanderer, clothed in a dark blue cloak and carrying a traveler's staff. To drink from the Well of Wisdom, Odin had to sacrifice his eye (which eye he sacrificed is unclear), symbolizing his willingness to gain the knowledge of the past, present and future. As he drank, he saw all the sorrows and troubles that would fall upon men and the gods. He also saw why the sorrows had to come to men.

Mímir accepted Odin's eye and it sits today at the bottom of the Well of Wisdom as a sign that the father of the gods had paid the price for wisdom.

Other sagas

According to *Njáls saga*: Hjalti Skeggiason, an Icelander newly converted to Christianity, wished to express his contempt for the native gods, so he sang:

*Ever will I Gods blaspheme
Freyja methinks a dog does seem,
Freyja a dog? Aye! Let them be
Both dogs together Odin and she!*^[8]

Hjalti was found guilty of blasphemy for his infamous verse and he ran to Norway with his father-in-law, Gizur the White. Later, with Olaf Tryggvason's support, Gizur and Hjalti came back to Iceland to invite those assembled at the Althing to convert to Christianity (which happened in 999).^[9]

The *Saga of King Olaf Tryggvason*, composed around 1300, describes that following King Olaf Tryggvason's orders, to prove their piety, people must insult and ridicule major heathen deities when they are newly converted into Christianity. Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld, who was reluctantly converted from paganism to Christianity by Olaf, also had to make a poem to forsake pagan deities. Below is an example:

The whole race of men to win
Odin's grace has wrought poems
(I recall the exquisite
works of my forebears);
but with sorrow, for well did
Viðrir's [Odin's] power please the poet,
do I conceive hate for the first husband of
Frigg [Odin], now I serve Christ.
– *Lausavísur* 10, Whaley's translation

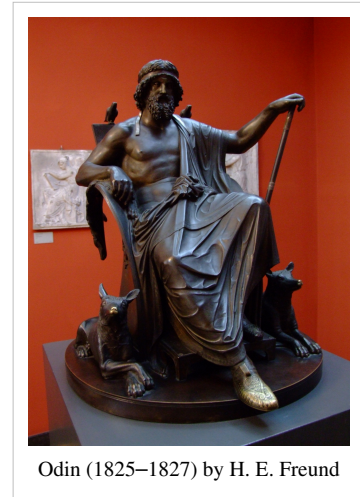


"Odhin" (1901) by Johannes Gehrts.

Flateyjarbók

Sörla þáttur is a short narrative from a later and extended version of the *Saga of Olaf Tryggvason*^[10] found in the *Flateyjarbók* manuscript, which was written and compiled by two Christian priests, Jon Thordson and Magnus Thorhalson, from the late 14th^[11] to the 15th century.^[12]

"Freyja was a human in Asia and was the favorite concubine of Odin, King of Asialand. When this woman wanted to buy a golden necklace (no name given) forged by four dwarves (named Dvalinn, Alfrik, Berling, and Grer), she offered them gold and silver but they replied that they would only sell it to her if she would lie a night by each of them. She came home afterward with the necklace and kept silent as if nothing happened. But a man called Loki somehow knew it, and came to tell Odin. King Odin commanded Loki to steal the necklace, so Loki turned into a fly to sneak into Freyja's bower and stole it. When Freyja found her necklace missing, she came to ask king Odin. In exchange for it, Odin ordered her to make two kings, each served by twenty kings, fight forever unless some christened men so brave would dare to enter the battle and slay them. She said yes, and got that necklace back. Under the spell, king Högni and king Heðinn battled for one hundred and forty-three years, as soon as they fell down they had to stand up again and fight on. But in the end, the great Christian lord Olaf Tryggvason arrived with his brave christened men, and whoever slain by a Christian would stay dead. Thus the pagan curse was finally dissolved by the arrival of Christianity. After that, the noble man, king Olaf, went back to his realm."^[13]



Odin (1825–1827) by H. E. Freund

Gesta Danorum

In the 13th century, Saxo Grammaticus, in the service of Archbishop Absalon in Denmark, presented in his Latin language work *Gesta Danorum* euhemerized accounts of Thor and Odin as cunning sorcerers that, Saxo states, had fooled the people of Norway, Sweden and Denmark into their recognition as gods:

"There were of old certain men versed in sorcery, Thor, namely, and Odin, and many others, who were cunning in contriving marvellous sleights; and they, winning the minds of the simple, began to claim the rank of gods. For, in particular, they ensnared Norway, Sweden and Denmark in the vainest credulity, and by prompting these lands to worship them, infected them with their imposture. The effects of their deceit spread so far, that all other men adored a sort of divine power in them, and, thinking them either gods or in league with gods, offered up solemn prayers to these inventors of sorceries, and gave to blasphemous error the honour due to religion. Some say that the gods, whom our countrymen worshipped, shared only the title with those honoured by Greece or Latium, but that, being in a manner nearly equal to them in dignity, they borrowed from them the worship as well as the name. This must be sufficient discourse upon the deities of Danish antiquity. I have expounded this briefly for the general profit, that my readers may know clearly to what worship in its heathen superstition our country has bowed the knee." (Gesta Danorum, Book I)

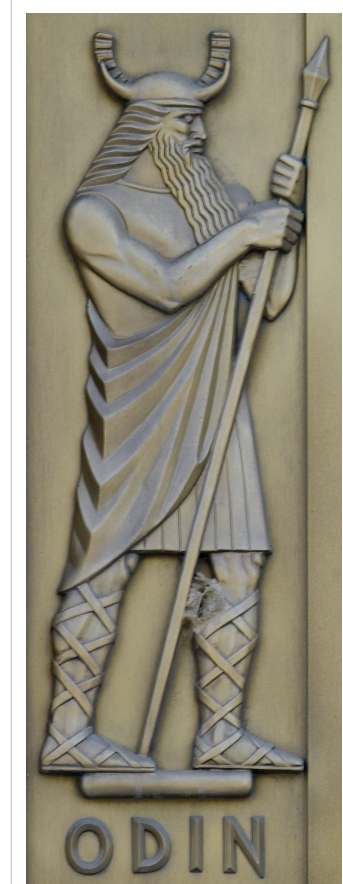
Saxo also wrote a story about how Odin's wife, Frigg, slept with a servant to obtain a device to steal Odin's gold.

"At this time there was one Odin, who was credited over all Europe with the honour, which was false, of godhead, but used more continually to sojourn at Upsala; and in this spot, either from the sloth of the inhabitants or from its own pleasantness, he vouchsafed to dwell with somewhat especial constancy.

The kings of the North, desiring more zealously to worship his deity, embounded his likeness in a golden image; and this statue, which betokened their homage, they transmitted with much show of worship to Byzantium, fettering even the effigied arms with a serried mass of bracelets. Odin was overjoyed at such notoriety, and greeted warmly the devotion of the senders. But his queen Frigg, desiring to go forth more beautified, called smiths, and had the gold stripped from the statue.

Odin hanged them, and mounted the statue upon a pedestal, which by the marvellous skill of his art he made to speak when a mortal touched it. But still Frigg preferred the splendour of her own apparel to the divine honours of her husband, and submitted herself to the embraces of one of her servants; and it was by this man's device she broke down the image, and turned to the service of her private wantonness that gold which had been devoted to public idolatry. Little thought she of practicing unchastity, that she might the easier satisfy her greed, this woman so unworthy to be the consort of a god; but what should I here add, save that such a godhead was worthy of such a wife? So great was the error that of old befooled the minds of men.

Thus Odin, wounded by the double trespass of his wife, resented the outrage to his image as keenly as that to his bed; and, ruffled by these two stinging dishonours, took to an exile overflowing with noble shame, imagining so to wipe off the slur of his ignominy. At home, Frigg went with a certain Mith-Othin



Lee Lawrie, *Odin* (1939). Library of Congress John Adams Building, Washington, D.C.

and took over Odin's properties, until Odin came back and drove them away. Frigg's death later cleared Odin's name and he regained his reputation." (Gesta Danorum, Book I)

There is also an account about how Odin was exiled by the Latin gods at Byzantium:

But the gods, whose chief seat was then at Byzantium, (Asgard), seeing that Odin had tarnished the fair name of godhead by divers injuries to its majesty, thought that he ought to be removed from their society. And they had him not only ousted from the headship, but outlawed and stripped of all worship and honour at home...

Sacrifices to Odin

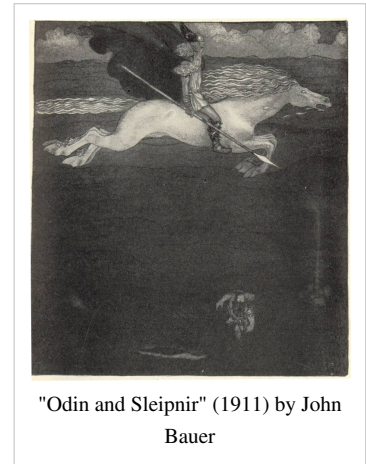
It is attested in primary sources that sacrifices were made to Odin during blóts – Norse pagan sacrifices to the Norse gods and spirits. Adam of Bremen relates that every ninth year, people assembled from all over Sweden to sacrifice at the Temple at Uppsala. Male slaves and males of each species were sacrificed and hung from the branches of the trees.

As the Swedes had the right not only to elect their king but also to depose him, the sagas relate that both King Domalde and King Olof Trätälja were sacrificed to Odin after years of famine. It has been argued that the killing of a combatant in battle was to give a sacrificial offering to Odin. The fickleness of Odin in war was well documented; in *Lokasenna*, Loki taunts Odin for his inconsistency.

Sometimes sacrifices were made to Odin to bring about changes in circumstance.

A notable example is the sacrifice of King Víkar that is detailed in Gautrek's Saga and in Saxo Grammaticus' account of the same event. Sailors in a fleet being blown off course drew lots to sacrifice to Odin that he might abate the winds. The king himself drew the lot and was hanged.

Sacrifices were probably also made to Odin at the beginning of summer (mid-April, actually – summer being reckoned essentially the same as did the Celt, at Beltene, Calan Mai [Welsh], which is Mayday – hence as summer's "herald"), since the Ynglinga saga states one of the great festivals of the calendar is *at sumri, þat var sigrblót*, "in summer, for victory". Odin is consistently referred to throughout the Norse mythos as the bringer of victory. The Ynglinga saga also details the sacrifices made by the Swedish king Aun, to whom it was revealed that he would lengthen his life by sacrificing one of his sons every ten years; nine of his ten sons died this way. When he was about to sacrifice his last son Egil, the Swedes stopped him.



"Odin and Sleipnir" (1911) by John Bauer

Persisting beliefs and folklore

The Christianization of Scandinavia was slow, and it worked its way downwards from the nobility. Among commoners, beliefs in Odin lingered and legends would be told until modern times.

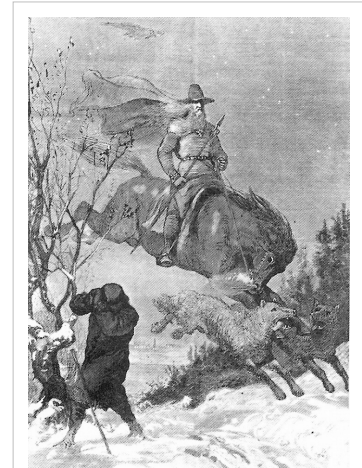
The last battle where Scandinavians attributed a victory to Odin was the Battle of Lena in 1208.^[14] The former Swedish king Sverker had arrived with a large Danish army, and the Swedes led by their new king Eric were outnumbered. It is said that Odin then appeared riding on Sleipnir and he positioned himself in front of the Swedish battle formation. He led the Swedish charge and gave them victory.

The *Bagler sagas*, written in the 13th century concerning events in the first two decades of the 13th century, tells a story of a one-eyed rider with a broad-brimmed hat and a blue coat who asks a smith to shoe his horse. The suspicious smith asks where the stranger stayed during the previous night. The stranger mentions places so distant that the smith does not believe him. The stranger says that he has stayed for a long time in the north and taken part in many battles, but now he is going to Sweden. When the horse is shod, the rider mounts his horse and says "I am Odin" to the stunned smith, and rides away. The next day, the battle of Lena took place. The context of this tale in the saga is that a peace-treaty has been signed in Norway, and Odin, a god of war, no longer has a place there.

Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar, written in the 1260s, describes how, at some point in the 1230s, Skule Baardsson has the skald Snorri Sturluson compose a poem comparing one of Skule's enemies to Odin, describing them both as bringers of strife and disagreement. These episodes do not necessarily imply a continued belief in Odin as a god, but show clearly that his name was still widely known at this time.

Scandinavian folklore also maintained a belief in Odin as the leader of the Wild Hunt. His main objective seems to have been to track down and kill a lady who could be the forest dweller *huldran* or *skogsrået*. In these accounts, Odin was typically a lone hunter, save for his two dogs.^{[15][16]}

In late 19th century Danish folklore, an account of Odin as having hid in a cliff of Møen (modern Møn, Denmark) where his residence there is "still pointed out". At this time, he was referred to as the "*Jætte* (giant) from Uppsala" but "is now called Jön Upsal" and from this latter name comes the expression "*Men jøtten dog!*" as opposed to the expression "*Men Jös dog!*" ("By Jesus!"). Outside his doorway a green spot is described on the otherwise white cliff; this is where he "goes out on behalf of nature". A man who "now lives in Copenhagen" is described as having once sailed along the cliff, having seen Jön toss out his "dirt" – a big cloud of dust was to be seen outside of his door. Several "still living people" have lost their way in Klinteskoven ("The Cliff Forest") and ended up in Jön Upsal's garden, that is said to be so big and wonderful that it is beyond any description. The garden is also in full bloom in midwinter. If one sets out to find this garden, it is impossible to find.^[17]



Odin continued to hunt in Swedish folklore. Illustration by August Malmström.

Names

Odin was referred to by more than 200 names which hint at his various roles. Among others, he was known as Yggr (terror), Sigfodr (father of Victory) and Alfodr (All Father)^[18] in the skaldic and Eddic traditions of heiti and kennings, a poetic method of indirect reference, as in a riddle.

Some epithets establish Odin as a father god: Alföðr, "all-father", "father of all"; Aldaföðr, "father of men (or of the age)"; Herjaföðr, "father of hosts"; Sigföðr, "father of victory"; and Valföðr, "father of the slain".

Eponymy

Many toponyms in Northern Europe where Germanic tribes existed contain the name of *Wodanaz (Norse Odin, West Germanic Woden).

Wednesday is named after Woden, the English form of Odin (Old English *Wēdnes dæg*, "Woden's day"). It is an early Germanic translation of the Latin *dies Mercurii* ("Mercury's day") based on the Roman practice of understanding foreign gods by comparing them to Roman deities.

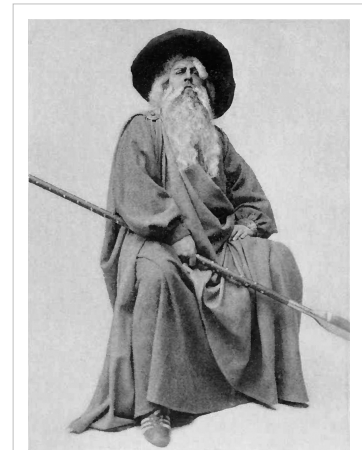
Odin came to be used as a Norwegian male given name from the 19th century, originally in the context of the Romanticist Viking revival.^[citation needed]

Contemporary worship of Odin

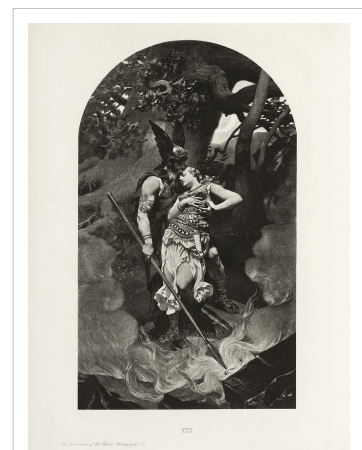
Odin, along with the other Germanic gods and goddesses, is recognized by Germanic neopagans. His Norse form is particularly acknowledged in Ásatrú, the "faith in the Æsir", an officially recognized religion in Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Spain.^[19]

In popular culture

- In a letter of 1946 J.R.R. Tolkien stated that he thought of Gandalf as an "Odinic wanderer".^[20] Other commentators have also compared Gandalf to Odin in his "Wanderer" guise – an old man with one eye, a long white beard, a wide brimmed hat, and a staff.
- Odin is the main God character in the 2001 novel *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman; the character of Odin is primarily called Mr. Wednesday and the All-Father in the novel.
- Odin appears in *The Dresden Files* by Jim Butcher living under the name Vadderung and is a "retired god" turned security specialist.
- The 2011 TV series *The Almighty Johnsons* features Norse gods in modern New Zealand, the main character being Axl Johnson (Emmett Skilton) who discovers on his 21st birthday he is the incarnation of Odin. Siobhan Marshall plays Odin when Axl becomes female.
- Odin is a character in the Marvel Comics universe, in which he is the god-king of the Asgardians and father to the popular superhero Thor and the adoptive father of Thor's nemesis Loki. He was adapted from Norse mythology by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. He was introduced in *Journey into Mystery* #86 in 1962 and appeared in the 2011 Marvel Studios film *Thor*, as well as the 2013 movie *Thor: The Dark World*.



"Odin disguised as a Traveller" from 1914.




"Wotan takes leave of Brunhild" (1892) by Konrad Dietz.

- In Douglas Adams' *The Long Dark Tea-time of the Soul*, Odin is an aged patient in an asylum, who sells his soul to mankind for stiff, clean sheets.

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Preceded by Gylfi	Mythological king of Sweden	Succeeded by Njörör
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Old Norse

Old Norse	
dǫnsk tunga, dansk tunga ("Danish tongue"), norrœnt mál ("Norse language")	
Region	Nordic countries, Scotland, Ireland, England, Wales, Isle of Man, Normandy, Vinland, the Volga and places in-between
Era	developed into the various North Germanic languages by the 14th century
Language family	Indo-European <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Germanic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Germanic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old Norse
Writing system	Runic, later Latin (Old Norse alphabet)
Language codes	
ISO 639-2	non
ISO 639-3	non

Part of a series on
Old Norse

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English words of Old Norse origin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v t e^[1]

Old Norse is a North Germanic language that was spoken by inhabitants of Scandinavia and inhabitants of their overseas settlements during the Viking Age, until about 1300.

The Proto-Norse language developed into Old Norse by the 8th century, and Old Norse began to develop into the modern North Germanic languages in the mid- to late 14th century, ending the language phase known as Old Norse. These dates, however, are not absolute, since written Old Norse is found well into the 15th century.^[2]

Old Norse was divided into three dialects: Old East Norse, Old West Norse, and Old Gutnish. Old West and East Norse formed a dialect continuum, with no clear geographical boundary between them. For example, Old East Norse traits were found in eastern Norway, although Old Norwegian is classified as Old West Norse, and Old West Norse traits were found in western Sweden. Most speakers spoke Old East Norse in what is present day Denmark and

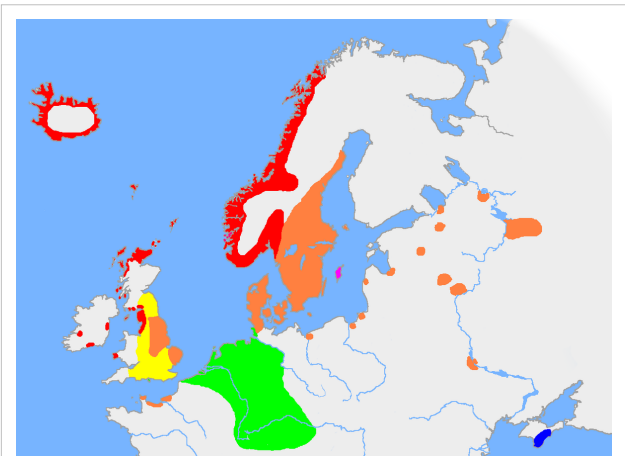
Sweden. Old Gutnish, the more obscure dialectal branch, is sometimes included in the Old East Norse dialect due to geographical associations. It developed its own unique features and shared in changes to both other branches.

The 12th-century Icelandic *Gray Goose Laws* state that Swedes, Norwegians, Icelanders and Danes spoke the same language, *dǫnsk tunga* ("Danish tongue"; speakers of Old East Norse would have said *dansk tunga*). Another term used, used especially commonly with reference to West Norse, was *norrænt mál* ("Nordic speech"). Today Old Norse has developed into the modern North Germanic languages (Icelandic, Faroese, Norwegian, Danish and Swedish), and although distinct languages there is still considerable mutual intelligibility.

In some instances the term *Old Norse* refers specifically to Old West Norse.^[3]

Geographical distribution

Old Icelandic was essentially identical to Old Norwegian, and together they formed the Old West Norse dialect of Old Norse, which was also spoken in settlements in Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man and north-west England, and Norwegian settlements in Normandy.^[4] The Old East Norse dialect was spoken in Denmark, Sweden, settlements in Russia,^[5] eastern England, and Danish settlements in Normandy. The Old Gutnish dialect was spoken in Gotland and in various settlements in the East. In the 11th century, Old Norse was the most widely spoken European language, ranging from Vinland in the West to the Volga in the East. In Russia, it survived the longest in Novgorod, probably lasting into the 13th century there. The age of the Swedish language's presence in Finland is strongly contested (see Swedish-speaking Finns), but at latest by the time of the Second Swedish Crusade in the 13th century, Swedish settlement spread the language into the region.



The approximate extent of Old Norse and related languages in the early 10th century: Old West Norse dialect Old East Norse dialect Old Gutnish Old English Crimean Gothic Other Germanic languages with which Old Norse still retained some mutual intelligibility

Modern descendants

The modern descendants of the Old West Norse dialect are the West Scandinavian languages of Icelandic, Faroese, Norwegian and the extinct Norn language of the Orkney and the Shetland Islands; the descendants of the Old East Norse dialect are the East Scandinavian languages of Danish and Swedish. Norwegian is descended from Old West Norse, but over the centuries it has been heavily influenced by East Norse, particularly during the Denmark–Norway union.

Among these, Icelandic and the closely related Faroese have changed the least from Old Norse in the last thousand years, although with Danish rule of the Faroe Islands, Faroese has also been influenced by Danish. Old Norse also had an influence on English dialects and Lowland Scots, which contain many Old Norse loanwords. It also influenced the development of the Norman language.

Various other languages, which are not closely related, have been heavily influenced by Norse, particularly the Norman dialects, Scottish Gaelic and Waterford Irish.^[citation needed] Russian, Belarusian, Lithuanian, Finnish and Estonian also have a number of Norse loanwords; the words *Rus* and *Russia*, according to one theory, may be named after the Rus' people, a Norse tribe; *see Rus' (name)*, probably from present-day east-central Sweden. The current Finnish and Estonian words for Sweden are *Ruotsi* and *Rootsi*, respectively.

Of the modern languages, Icelandic is the closest to Old Norse. Written modern Icelandic derives from the Old Norse phonemic writing system. Contemporary Icelandic-speakers can read Old Norse, which varies slightly in spelling as well as semantics and word order. However, pronunciation, particularly of the vowel phonemes, has changed at least as much as in the other North Germanic languages.

Faroese retains many similarities but is influenced by Danish, Norwegian, and Gaelic (Scottish and/or Irish).^[6] Although Swedish, Danish and the Norwegian languages have diverged the most, they still retain asymmetric mutual intelligibility.^[7] Speakers of modern Swedish, Norwegian and Danish can mostly understand each other without studying their neighboring languages, particularly if speaking slowly. The languages are also sufficiently similar in writing that they can mostly be understood across borders. This could be because these languages have been mutually affected by each other, as well as having a similar development influenced by Middle Low German.^[8]

Phonology

Vowels

The vowel phonemes mostly come in pairs of long and short. The standardized orthography marks the long vowels with an acute accent. In medieval manuscripts, it is often unmarked but sometimes marked with an accent or through gemination. All phonemes have, more or less, the expected phonetic realization.

Old Norse had nasalized versions of all nine vowel places.^[9] These occurred as allophones of the vowels before nasal consonants and in places where a nasal had followed it in an older form of the word, before it was absorbed into a neighboring sound. If the nasal was absorbed by a stressed vowel, it would also lengthen the vowel. These nasalizations also occurred in the other Germanic languages, but were not retained long. They were noted in the First Grammatical Treatise, and otherwise might have remained unknown. The First Grammarian marked these with a dot above the letter. This notation did not catch on, and would soon be obsolete. Nasal and oral vowels probably merged around the 11th century in most of Old East Norse.^{[10]:3} However, the distinction still holds in Dalecarlian.^{:4} The dots in the following vowel table separate the oral from nasal phonemes.

Generic Vowel System c. 9th-12th centuries

	Front vowels				Back vowels			
	Unrounded		Rounded		Unrounded		Rounded	
High	i • ī	i: • ī:	y • ŷ	y: • ŷ:			u • ū	u: • ū:
Mid	e • ē	e: • ē:	ø • ø̄	ø: • ø̄:			o • ō	o: • ō:
Low/Low-Mid	ɛ • ē̄	ɛ: • ē̄:	æ • ǣ		a • ā	a: • ā:	ɔ • ɔ̄	ɔ: • ɔ̄:

Note: The low/low-mid vowels may be indicated differently:

- /æ/ = /ɛ/
- /ɔ/ = /ɔ̄/
- /ɑ/ = /a/

Sometime around the 13th century, Q (/ɔ̄/) merged with Ø or O in all dialects except Old Danish. In Icelandic, all Q merged with Ø. This can be determined by their distinction within the 12th-century First Grammatical Treatise but not within the early 13th-century Younger Edda. The nasals, also noted in the First Grammatical Treatise, are assumed to have been lost by this time. See Old Icelandic for the Ǽ > Æ and Ǫ > E mergers.

Generic Vowel System c. 13th–14th centuries

	Front vowels				Back vowels			
	Unrounded		Rounded		Unrounded		Rounded	
High	i	i:	y	y:			u	u:
Mid	e	e:	ø	ø:			o	o:
Low/Low-Mid	ɛ	ɛ:			a	a:		

History of Old Norse and Old Icelandic vowels

Proto-Germanic	Northwest Germanic	Primitive Old West Norse	Old Icelandic (1st Grammarian)	Later Old Icelandic	Example (Old Norse)
a	a	a ⟨a⟩	a	a	<i>land</i> "land" < * <i>landa</i>
a	a (+i-mut)	ɛ ⟨e⟩	e ⟨e⟩	e	<i>menn</i> "men" < * <i>manniz</i>
a	a (+u/w-mut)	ɔ ⟨o⟩	ɔ	ø ⟨ö⟩	<i>lond</i> "lands" < * <i>landu</i> < * <i>landō</i> ; <i>söngr</i> "song" < <i>songr</i> < * <i>sangwaz</i>
a	a (+i-mut +w-mut)	œ ⟨ø₂⟩	ø	ø ⟨ö⟩	<i>gøra</i> "to make" < * <i>garwijaną</i>
æ:	a:	a: ⟨á⟩	a:	a:	<i>láta</i> "to let" < * <i>lētana</i>
æ:	a: (+i-mut)	ɛ: ⟨æ⟩	ɛ:	ɛ:	<i>mæla</i> "to speak" < * <i>mālījan</i> < * <i>mēlijana</i>
æ:	a: (+u-mut)	ɔ: ⟨ō⟩	ɔ:	a: ⟨á⟩	<i>mól</i> "meals" < * <i>mālu</i> < * <i>mēlō</i>
e	e	e ⟨e⟩	e	e	<i>sex</i> "six" < * <i>seks</i> ; <i>bresta</i> "to burst" < * <i>brestana</i>
e	e (+u/w-mut)	ø ⟨ø₁⟩	ø	ø ⟨ö⟩	<i>tøgr</i> "ten" < * <i>teguz</i>
e	e (broken)	ea ⟨ea⟩	ja ⟨ja⟩	ja	<i>gjalda</i> "to repay" < * <i>geldana</i>
e	e (broken +u/w-mut)	eo/īo ⟨eo⟩/⟨īo⟩	jo > jō ⟨jō⟩	jø ⟨jö⟩	<i>skjöldr</i> "shield" < * <i>skelduz</i>
e:	e:	e: ⟨é⟩	e:	e:	<i>lét</i> "let (past tense)" < * <i>lēt</i>
i	i	i ⟨i⟩	i	i	<i>mikill</i> "great" < * <i>mikilaz</i>
i	i (+w-mut)	y ⟨y⟩	y	y(:)	<i>slyngva</i> "to sling" < * <i>slingwana</i>
i:	i:	i: ⟨í⟩	i:	i:	<i>líta</i> "to look" < * <i>lītana</i>
o:	o:	o: ⟨ó⟩	o:	o:	<i>fór</i> "went" < * <i>fōr</i> ; <i>mót</i> "meeting" < * <i>mōta</i>
o:	o: (+i-mut)	ø: ⟨œ⟩	ø:	ɛ: ⟨æ⟩	<i>mæðr</i> "mothers" < * <i>mōdriz</i>
u	u	u ⟨u⟩	u	u	<i>una</i> "to be content" < * <i>unana</i>
u	u (+i-mut)	y ⟨y⟩	y	y	<i>kyn</i> "race" < * <i>kunja</i>
u	u (+a-mut)	o ⟨o⟩	o	o	<i>fögl</i> "bird" < * <i>fuglaz</i> ; <i>morginn</i> "morning" < * <i>murganaz</i>
u:	u:	u: ⟨ú⟩	u:	u:	<i>drúpa</i> "to droop" < * <i>drūpaną</i>
u:	u: (+i-mut)	y: ⟨ý⟩	y:	y:	<i>mýss</i> "mice" < * <i>mūsiz</i>
ai	ai	ai, ɛi ⟨ei⟩	ɛi	ɛi	<i>bein</i> , Gut. <i>bain</i> "bone" < * <i>baina</i>
ai	ai (+w-mut)	øy ⟨ey⟩, ⟨øý⟩	øy ⟨ey⟩	ɛy	<i>kveykva</i> "to kindle" < * <i>kwaikwana</i>
au	au	au ⟨au⟩	au	au	<i>lauss</i> "loose" < * <i>lausaz</i>
au	au (+i-mut)	øy ⟨ey⟩, ⟨øý⟩	øy ⟨ey⟩	ɛy	<i>leysa</i> "to loosen" < * <i>lausijana</i>

eu	eu	eu ⟨eu⟩	jú ⟨jú⟩	jú	<i>djúpr</i> "deep" < * <i>deupaz</i>
eu	eu (+dental)	eo ⟨eo⟩	jó ⟨jó⟩	jó	<i>bjóða</i> "to offer" < * <i>beudana</i>
Ƿ	Ƿ	Ƿ	Ƿ	lost	<i>komá</i> < * <i>kwemana</i> "to come, arrive"; OWN <i>vétr/vétrr</i> < <i>vintr</i> < * <i>wintruz</i> "winter"
Ƿ:	Ƿ:	Ƿ:	Ƿ:	lost	<i>hár</i> "shark" < * <i>hanhaz</i> ; <i>órar</i> "our" (pl.) < * <i>unseraz</i> ; <i>órá</i> "younger" (acc. neut. wk.) < * <i>junhiza</i>

Consonants

Old Norse has six plosive phonemes. Of these /p/ is rare word-initially and /d/ and /b/ do not occur between vowels, except in compound words (e.g. *veðrabati*), because of the fricative allophones of the Proto-Germanic language (e.g. *b > [β] > [v] between vowels). The /g/ phoneme is realized as [g] after an *n* or another *g* and as [k] before /s/ and /t/. It is realized as a voiced velar fricative [ɣ], by some accounts inside words, and by others between vowels (and otherwise as [g]).^{[11][12]} Wikipedia:Please clarify The Old East Norse /R/ was an apical consonant whose position isn't precisely known, being reconstructed as a palatal sibilant.² It descended from Proto-Germanic /z/ and eventually developed into /r/, as it already had done in Old West Norse.

	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Palatal	Velar	Labiovelar	Glottal
Plosive	p b	t d				k g		
Nasal	m	n				(ŋ)		
Fricative	f (v)	θ (ð)	s			(ɣ)		h
Trill			r					
Approximant				ʀ	j		w	
Lateral approximant			l					

The consonant digraphs *hl*, *hr*, *hn* occurred word-initially. It is unclear whether they were sequences of two consonants (with the first element realised as /h/ or perhaps /x/), or as single voiceless sonorants /h̥/, /r̥/ and /n̥/ respectively. In Old Norwegian, Old Danish and later Old Swedish the groups *hl*, *hr*, *hn* were reduced to plain *l*, *r*, *n*, suggesting that they were most likely realised as voiceless sonorants by Old Norse times.

The pronunciation of *hv* is unclear, and may have been /x^w/ (the Proto-Germanic pronunciation), /h^w/ or /w/. Unlike the other three groups above, it was retained much longer in all dialects, and never developed into a voiceless sonorant in Icelandic, but instead "hardened" to a plosive /kv/. This suggests that it was not a voiceless sonorant, but retained stronger frication.

Orthography

Unlike Proto-Norse, which was written with the Elder Futhark, runic Old Norse was originally written with the Younger Futhark, which only had 16 letters. Because of the limited number of runes, the rune for the vowel *u* was also used for the vowels *o*, *ø* and *y*, and the rune for *i* was used for *e*. Medieval runes came into use some time later.

As for the Latin alphabet, there was no standardized orthography in use in the Middle Ages. A modified version of the letter wynn called vend was used briefly for the sounds /u/, /v/, and /w/. Long vowels were sometimes marked with acutes, but also sometimes left unmarked or geminated. The standardized Old Norse spelling was created in the 19th century, and is for the most part phonemic. The most notable deviation is that the non-phonemic difference between the voiced and the voiceless dental fricative is marked — the oldest texts as well as runic inscriptions use *þ* exclusively. Long vowels are denoted with acutes. Most other letters are written with the same glyph as the IPA phoneme, except as shown in the table below.

Accent

Primary stress in Old Norse falls on the word stem, so that *hyrjar* would be pronounced /'hyr.jar/. In compound words, secondary stress falls on the second stem (e.g. *lærisveinn*, /'lɛ:r.i.swɛin:/).^{[13]:1}

Modern Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian have two registers reflected in differing pronunciation of the stressed syllable of words. In Swedish and Norwegian, the registers are reflected in different tones (i.e. through tonal word accent), while in Danish the difference is the presence or absence of *stød*, a glottal gesture considered a kind of creaky voice that seems to have been documented by Swedish sources as early as the 16th century.^[14] What is here called *class 1* is reflected as tone 1 in Norwegian, acute accent in Swedish, and presence of *stød* in Danish, whereas *class 2* words have tone 2 in Norwegian, grave accent in Swedish, and no *stød* in Danish. No sign of any tonal system is found in Icelandic or Faroese.

Not all cognates occur in the same register classes in all three languages, partly due to language-specific restrictions on the contexts in which the two classes can occur. For example, *stød* can only occur in stressed words that have long vowels and end in a voiced consonant, whereas in Swedish and Norwegian, monosyllables can only take tone 1/acute accent. In general, however, class 1 words are those that are monosyllabic in Old Norse, while class 2 words are those that are polysyllabic. Exceptions, including minimal pairs, have arisen for various reasons:

1. Suffixing a definite article onto class 1 words does not change their class, suggesting that the register distinctions developed before the definite article fused with the noun. Hence Old Norse *and-inn* "the duck" > Swedish class 1 *anden*, but *andi-nn* "the spirit" > class 2 *anden*.
2. The Old Norse non-syllabic morpheme *-r* after a consonant later became syllabic through the epenthesis of a vowel, without changing the class. Hence Old Norse *bændr* "farmers" > Norwegian class 1 *bønder*, but *baunir* "beans" and *bæinir* "prayers" both > Norwegian class 2 *bønner* (homophonous with *bønder* except for the pitch difference).
3. Many later polysyllabic loanwords in the various languages have acquired class 1.

Phonological processes

Ablaut

Ablaut patterns are groups of vowels which are swapped, or **ablauted**, in the nucleus of a word. Strong verbs ablaut the lemma's nucleus to derive the past forms of the verb. This parallels English conjugation, where, e.g., the nucleus of *sing* becomes *sang* in the past tense and *sung* in the past participle. Some verbs are derived by ablaut, as the present-in-past verbs do by consequence of being derived from the past tense forms of strong verbs.

Umlaut

Umlaut or **mutation** is an assimilatory process acting on vowels preceding a vowel or semivowel of a different vowel backness. In the case of **i-umlaut** and **R-umlaut**, this entails a fronting of back vowels, with retention of lip rounding. In the case of **u-umlaut**, this entails labialization of unrounded vowels. Umlaut is phonemic and in many situations grammatically significant as a side effect of losing the Proto-Germanic morphological suffixes whose vowels created the umlaut allophones.

Some /y/, /y:/, /ø/, /ø:/, /ɛ/, /ɛ:/, /øy/, and /ɛi/ were obtained by i-umlaut from /u/, /u:/, /o/, /o:/, /a/, /a:/, /au/, and /ai/ respectively. Others were formed via R-umlaut from /u/, /u:/, /a/, /a:/, and /au/.

Some /y/, /y:/, /ø/, /ø:/, and all /ɔ/, /ɔ:/ were obtained by u-umlaut from /i/, /i:/, /e/, /e:/, and /a/, /a:/ respectively. See Old Icelandic for information on /ɔ:/.

/œ/ was obtained through a simultaneous u- and i-umlaut of /a/. It appears in words like *gøra* (gǫra, geyra), from Proto-Germanic *garwijaŋa, and commonly in verbs with a velar consonant before the suffix like *søkkva* < *sankwijaŋa.^[15]

OEN often preserves the original value of the vowel directly preceding runic *R* while OWN receives *R*-umlaut. Compare runic OEN *glar*, *harī*, *hraur* with OWN *gler*, *heri* (later *héri*), *hrøyrr/hreyrr* ("glass", "hare", "pile of rocks").

U-umlaut

U-umlaut is more common in Old West Norse in both phonemic and allophonic positions, while it only occurs sparsely in post-runic Old East Norse and even in runic Old East Norse. Compare West Old Norse *fǫður* (accusative of *faðir*, father), *vǫrðr* (guardian/caretaker), *ǫrn* (eagle), *jǫrð* (in Modern Icelandic: *jörð*, earth), *mjólk* (in Modern Icelandic: *mjólk*) with Old Swedish *faþur*, *varþer*, *örn*, *jorþ* and Modern Swedish *örn*, *jord*, *mjöl* with the latter two demonstrating the u-umlaut found in Swedish.^[16]

This is still a major difference between Swedish and Faroese and Icelandic today. Plurals of neuters do not have u-umlaut at all in Swedish (in Danish they do in *barn*, cf. Swedish *barn*), but in Faroese and Icelandic they do, for example the Faroese and Icelandic plurals of the word *land*: *lond* and *lönd* in contrast to the Swedish plural *land* and other numerous examples. That also applies to almost all feminine nouns, for example the largest feminine noun group, the o-stem nouns (except the Swedish noun *jord* mentioned above), and even i-stem nouns and rootnomina, such as Old West Norse *mǫrk* (*mörk*^[17] in Icelandic) in comparison with Modern and Old Swedish *mark*.

Breaking

Vowel breaking, or **fracture**, caused a front vowel to be split into a semivowel-vowel sequence before a back vowel in the following syllable. While West Norse only broke *e*, East Norse also broke *i*. The change was blocked by a *v*, *l*, or *r* preceding the potentially-broken vowel.^{:1}

Some /ja/ or /jɔ/ and /ja:/ or /jɔ:/ result from breaking of /e/ and /e:/ respectively.^[18]

Assimilation or elision of inflectional r

When a noun, pronoun, adjective, or verb has a long vowel or diphthong in the accented syllable and its stem ends in a single -l, -n, or -s, the -r (or the elder r- or z-variant *ṛ*) in an ending is assimilated.^[19] When the accented vowel is short, the ending is dropped.

The nominative of the strong masculine declension and some i-stem feminine nouns uses one such -r (*ṛ*). *Óðin-r* (*Óðin-ṛ*) becomes *Óðinn* instead of **Óðinr* (**Óðinṛ*), but *karl-r* (*karl-ṛ*) remains *karl*.

Blása, to blow, has *blæss* for "you blow" instead of **blæsṛ* (**blæsṛ*).^[20]

The rule is not hard and fast, with counter-examples such as *vinr*, which has the synonym *vin*, yet retains the unabsorbed version, and *jǫtunn*, where assimilation takes place even though the root vowel, *ǫ*, is short.

Words with a final r in the word stem, such as *vetr*, do not add another -r, as the sounds are already the same. The effect of the dropping usually results in the lack of distinction between some forms of the noun. In the case of *vetr* the dropping renders the nominative and accusative singular and plural identical; the nominative singular and nominative and accusative plural would otherwise have been **vetrr* (**vintrṛ*), while the accusative singular would still have been *vetr*. This is because the 3rd strong masculine declension, to which it belongs, marks the nominative singular and nominative and accusative plural, but not the accusative singular, with inflectional Rs.

Phonotactics

Blocking of *ii*, *uu*

Ij adjacent to *i*, *e*, their u-umlauts, and *æ* was not possible, nor *u/v* adjacent to *u*, *o*, their i-umlauts, and *ø*. At the beginning of words, this manifested as a dropping of the initial *ij* or *uv*. Compare ON *orð*, *úlfr* with English *word*, *wolf*. In inflections, this manifested as the dropping of the inflectional vowels. Thus, *klæði* + *-i* remains *klæði*, and *sjáum* in Icelandic progressed to *sjóum* > *sjóm* > *sjám*.^[21] The *jj* and *vv* of Proto-Germanic became *ggj* and *ggw* respectively in Old Norse, a change known as Holtzmann's law.

Epenthesis

An epenthetic vowel became popular by 1200 in Old Danish, 1250 in Old Swedish and Norwegian, and 1300 in Old Icelandic.[¶] An unstressed vowel was used which varied by dialect. Old Norwegian exhibited all three: /u/ was used in West Norwegian south of Bergen, as in *aftur*, *aftor* (older *aptr*); North of Bergen, /i/ appeared in *aftir*, *after*; and East Norwegian used /a/, *after*, *aftær*.[¶]

Syntax

Old Norse had a freer word order than English. Old Norse used different listing structures than the English, "a, b and c," and "a, b or c." In those two cases, Old Norse would have, "a and b and c," or, "a and b or c."

Grammar

Old Norse was a moderately inflected language with high levels of nominal and verbal inflection. Most of the fused morphemes are retained in modern Icelandic, especially in regard to noun case declensions, whereas modern Norwegian in comparison has moved towards more analytical word structures.

Gender

Old Norse had three grammatical genders – masculine, feminine or neuter. Adjectives or pronouns referring to a noun must mirror the gender of that noun, so that one says, "heill maðr!" but, "heilt barn!" Like in other languages, the grammatical gender of an impersonal noun is generally unrelated to an expected natural gender of that noun. While indeed *karl*, "man" is masculine, *kona*, "woman", is feminine, and *hús*, house, is neuter, so also are *hrafn* and *kráka*, for "raven" and "crow", masculine and feminine respectively, even in reference to a female raven or a male crow.

All neuter words have identical nominative and accusative forms,^[22] and all feminine words have identical nominative and accusative plurals.^[23]

The gender of some words' plurals does not agree with that of their singulars, such as *lim* and *mund*.^[24] Some words, such as *hungr*, have multiple genders, evidenced by their determiners being declined in different genders within a given sentence.^{[25][26]}

Hierarchy

Old Norse inherited the Proto-Germanic feature of having neuter as the default gender.^[27] This means that when the gender of a noun is unknown, adjectives and pronouns referencing it use the neuter gender forms, rather than the masculine or feminine. Thus, if speaking or writing to a general audience, one would say *velkomit*, "well is it come," rather than *velkominn* or *velkomin*, "well is [he or she] come," as one does not know whether the person hearing it is going to be male or female.

One generally sees adjectives in their neuter form when used pronominally for this reason. For words more commonly used in this way (rather than to describe a noun) one sees their neuter forms more often than their

masculine or feminine. Normally the masculine form would be the most beneficial form of an adjective to learn first, given that the majority of nouns are masculine.^[28] In these cases, however, the most practical form to learn first would be the neuter.

Morphology

Nouns, adjectives and pronouns were declined in four grammatical cases — nominative, accusative, genitive and dative, in singular and plural numbers. Adjectives and pronouns were additionally declined in three grammatical genders. Some pronouns (first and second person) could have dual number in addition to singular and plural. The genitive is used partitively, and quite often in compounds and kennings (e.g.: *Urðarbrunnr*, the well of Urðr; *Lokasenna*, the gibling of Loki).

There were several classes of nouns within each gender, the following is an example of the "strong" inflectional paradigms:

The strong masculine noun <i>armr</i> (English arm)		
Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	armr	armar
Accusative	arm	arma
Genitive	arms	arma
Dative	armi	ormum/armum

The feminine noun <i>høll</i> (OWN), <i>hall</i> (OEN) (English hall)		
Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	høll/hall	hallir/hallar (OEN)
Accusative	høll/hall	hallir/hallar (OEN)
Genitive	hallar	halla
Dative	høllu/hallu	høllum/hallum

The neuter noun <i>troll</i> (English troll):		
Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	troll	troll
Accusative	troll	troll
Genitive	trolls	trolla
Dative	trolli	trollum

In addition to these examples there were the numerous "weak" noun paradigms, which had a much higher degree of syncretism between the different cases in its paradigms, i.e. they didn't have as many different forms as the "strong" nouns.

A definite article was realised as a suffix, that retained an independent declension e.g. **troll** (*a troll*) – **trollit** (*the troll*), **høll** (*a hall*) – **høllin** (*the hall*), **armr** (*an arm*) – **armrinn** (*the arm*). This definite article, however, was a separate word, and did not become attached to the noun before later stages of the Old Norse period.

Texts

The earliest inscriptions in Old Norse are runic, from the 8th century. Runes continued to be commonly used until the 15th century and have been recorded to be in use in some form as late as the 19th century in some parts of Sweden. With the conversion to Christianity in the 11th century came the Latin alphabet. The oldest preserved texts in Old Norse in the Latin alphabet date from the middle of the 12th century. Subsequently, Old Norse became the vehicle of a large and varied body of vernacular literature, unique in medieval Europe. Most of the surviving literature was written in Iceland. Best known are the Norse sagas, the Icelanders' sagas and the mythological literature, but there also survives a large body of religious literature, translations into Old Norse of courtly romances, classical mythology, and the Old Testament, as well as instructional material, grammatical treatises and a large body of letters and official documents.^[29]

Relationship to English

Old English and Old Norse were closely related languages, and it is therefore not surprising that many words in Old Norse look familiar to English speakers, e.g. *armr* (arm), *fótr* (foot), *land* (land), *fullr* (full), *hanga* (to hang), *standa* (to stand), etc. This is because both English and Old Norse stem from a Proto-Germanic mother language. In addition, a large number of common, everyday Old Norse words mainly of East Norse origin were adopted into the Old English language during the Viking age. A few examples of Old Norse loanwords in modern English are (English/Viking age Old East Norse):^[citation needed]

- **Nouns** – *anger* (anгр), *bag* (baggi), *bait* (bæit, bæita, bæiti), *band* (band), *bark* (bǫrkR, stem bark-), *birth* (byrðr), *dirt* (drit), *dregs* (dræggiaR), *egg* (ægg, related to OE. cognate "æg" which became Middle English "eye"/"eai"), *fellow* (félagi), *gap* (gap), *husband* (húsbóndi), *cake* (kaka), *keel* (kiǫlR, stem also kial-, kil-), *kid* (kið), *knife* (knífR), *law* (lǫg, stem lag-), *leg* (læggR), *link* (hlænkr), *loan* (lán, related to OE. cognate "læn", cf. lend), *race* (rǫs, stem rás-), *root* (rót, related to OE. cognate "wyr̥t", cf. wort), *sale* (sala), *scrap* (skrap), *seat* (sæti), *sister* (systir, related to OE. cognate "sweostor"), *skill* (skial/skil), *skin* (skinn), *skirt* (skyrta vs. the native English *shirt* of the same root), *sky* (ský), *slaughter* (slátr), *snare* (snara), *steak* (stæik), *thrift* (þrift), *tidings* (tíðindi), *trust* (traust), *window* (vindauga), *wing* (væ(i)ngR)
- **Verbs** – *are* (er, displacing OE "sind") *blend* (blanda), *call* (kalla), *cast* (kasta), *clip* (klippa), *crawl* (krafla), *cut* (possibly from ON kuta), *die* (dǫyia), *gasp* (gæispa), *get* (geta), *give* (gifa/gefa, related to OE. cognate "giefan"), *glitter* (glitra), *hit* (hitta), *lift* (lyfta), *raise* (ræisa), *ransack* (rannsaka), *rid* (ryðia), *run* (rinna, stem rinn-/rann-/runn-, related to OE. cognate "rinnan"), *scare* (skirra), *scrape* (skrapa), *seem* (søma), *sprint* (sprinta), *take* (taka), *thrive* (þrifa(s)), *thrust* (þrysta), *want* (vanta)
- **Adjectives** – *flat* (flatr), *happy* (happ), *ill* (illr), *likely* (líklígr), *loose* (lauss), *low* (lágR), *meek* (miúkR), *odd* (odda), *rotten* (rotinn/rutinn), *scant* (skamt), *sly* (slǫgr), *weak* (væikR), *wrong* (vrangR)
- **Adverbs** – *thwart/athwart* (þvert)
- **Prepositions** – *till* (til), *fro* (frá)
- **Conjunction** – *though/tho* (þó)
- **Interjection** – *hail* (hæill), *wassail* (ves hæill)
- **Personal pronoun** – *they* (þæiR), *their* (þæiRa), *them* (þæim) (for which the Anglo-Saxons said *híe*,^[30] *hiera*, *him*)
- **Prenominal adjectives** – *same* (sami)

In a simple sentence like "They are both weak" the extent of the Old Norse loanwords becomes quite clear (Old East Norse with archaic pronunciation: "ÞæiR eRu báðir wæikiR" while Old English "híe syndon bégen (þá) wáce"). The words "they" and "weak" are both borrowed from Old Norse, and the word "both" might also be a borrowing, though this is disputed. Wikipedia:Avoid weasel words While the number of loanwords adopted from the Norse was not as numerous as that of Norman French or Latin, their depth and every day nature make them a substantial and very important part of every day English speech as they are part of the very core of the modern English vocabulary.^{[citation}

needed]

Words like "bull" and "Thursday" are more difficult when it comes to their origins. "Bull" may be from either Old English "bula" or Old Norse "buli" while "Thursday" may be a borrowing, or it could simply be from the Old English "Þunresdæg" which could have been influenced by the Old Norse cognate. The word "are" is from Old English "earun"/"aron", which stems back to Proto-Germanic as well as the Old Norse cognates.^[citation needed]

Dialects

Most of the innovations that appeared in Old Norse spread evenly through the Old Norse area. As a result, the dialects were very similar and considered to be the same language, a language that they sometimes called the Danish tongue (*Dǫnsk tunga*), sometimes Norse language (*Norrænt mál*), as evidenced in the following two quotes from *Heimskringla* by Snorri Sturluson:

Móðir Dyggva var Drótt, dóttir Danps konungs, sonar Rígs er fyrstr var konungr kallaðr á danska tungu.^[31]
Dyggvi's mother was Drott, the daughter of king Danp, Ríg's son, who was the first to be called king in the Danish tongue.

...stirt var honum norrænt mál, ok kylfdi mǫk til orðanna, ok hefðu margir menn þat mǫk at spotti.^[32] ...the Norse language was hard for him, and he often fumbled for words, which amused people greatly.

However, some changes were geographically limited and so created a dialectal difference between Old West Norse and Old East Norse.

As Proto-Norse evolved into Old Norse, in the 8th century, the effects of the umlauts seem to have been very much the same over the whole Old Norse area. But in later dialects of the language a split occurred mainly between west and east as the use of umlauts began to vary. The typical umlauts (for example *fylla* from **fullian*) were better preserved in the West due to later generalizations in the east where many instances of umlaut were removed (many archaic Eastern texts as well as eastern runic inscriptions however portray the same extent of umlauts as in later Western Old Norse).

All the while, the changes resulting in breaking (for example *hiarta* from **hertō*) were more influential in the East probably once again due to generalizations within the inflectional system. This difference was one of the greatest reasons behind the dialectalization that took place in the 9th and 10th centuries, shaping an Old West Norse dialect in Norway and the Atlantic settlements and an Old East Norse dialect in Denmark and Sweden.

Old West Norse and Old Gutnish did not take part in the monophthongization which changed *æi* (*ei*) into *ē*, *øy* (*ey*) and *au* into *ō*, nor did certain peripheral dialects of Swedish, as seen in modern Ostrobothnian.^[33] Another difference was that Old West Norse lost certain combinations of consonants. The combinations *-mp-*, *-nt-*, and *-nk-* were assimilated into *-pp-*, *-tt-* and *-kk-* in Old West Norse, but this phenomenon was limited in Old East Norse.

Here is a comparison between the two dialects as well as Old Gutnish. It is a transcription from one of the Funbo Runestones (U 990) meaning : *Veðr and Thane and Gunnar raised this stone after Haurasi, their father. God help his spirit:*

Veðr ok Þegn ok Gunnarr reistu stein þenna at Haursa, fǫður sinn. Guð hjalpi ǫnd hans. (OWN)

Veðr ok Þegn ok Gunnarr ræistu stæin þenna at Haursa, faður sinn. Guð hialpi and hans (OEN)

Veðr ok Þegn ok Gunnarr raistu stain þenna at Haursa, faður sinn. Guð hialpi and hans (OG)

The OEN original text above is transliterated according to traditional scholarly methods, wherein u-umlaut is not regarded in runic Old East Norse. Modern studies^[citation needed] have shown that the positions where it applies are the same as for runic Old West Norse. An alternative and probably more accurate transliteration would therefore render the text in OEN as such:

Veðr ok Þegn ok Gunnarr ræistu stæin þenna at Haursa, fǫður sinn. Guð hialpi ǫnd hans (OEN)

Some past participles and other words underwent i-umlaut in Old West Norse but not in Old East Norse dialects. Examples of that are Icelandic *slegið/sleginn* and *tekið/tekinn*, which in Swedish are *slagit/slagen* and *tagit/tagen*. This can also be seen in the Icelandic and Norwegian words *sterkur* and *sterk* ("strong"), which in Swedish is *stark* as in Old Swedish.^[34] These differences can also be seen in comparison between Norwegian and Swedish.

Old West Norse

The combinations -mp-, -nt-, and -nk- mostly merged to -pp-, -tt- and -kk- in Old West Norse at around the 7th century, marking the first distinction between the Eastern and Western dialects.^{:3} The following table illustrates this:

English	Old West Norse	Old East Norse	Proto-Norse
mushroom	s(v)ǫppr	svamper	*swampu
steep	brattr	branter	*brantaz
widow	ekkja	ænkia	*ain(a)kjōn
to shrink	kreppa	krimpa	*krimpan
to sprint	spretta	sprinta	*sprintan
to sink	sökkva	sænkva	*sankwian

An early difference between Old West Norse and the other dialects was that Old West Norse had the forms *bú* (dwelling), *kú* (accusative for cow) and *trú* (faith) whereas Old East Norse had *bō*, *kō* and *trō*. Old West Norse was also characterized by the preservation of *u*-umlaut, which meant that for example Proto-Norse **tanþu* (tooth) was pronounced *tǫnn* and not *tann* as in post-runic Old East Norse; OWN *gǫs* and runic OEN *gōs*, while post-runic OEN *gās* (goose).

The earliest body of text appears in runic inscriptions and in poems composed ca 900 by Þjóðólfr of Hvinir. The earliest manuscripts are from the period 1150–1200 and concern both legal, religious and historical matters. During the 12th and 13th centuries, Trøndelag and Western Norway were the most important areas of the Norwegian kingdom and they shaped Old West Norse as an archaic language with a rich set of declensions. In the body of text that has come down to us from until ca 1300, Old West Norse had little dialect variation, and Old Icelandic does not diverge much more than the Old Norwegian dialects do from each other.

Old Norwegian differentiated early from Old Icelandic by the loss of the consonant *h* in initial position before *l*, *n* and *r*, thus whereas Old Icelandic manuscripts might use the form *hnefi* "fist", Old Norwegian manuscripts might use *nefi*.

From the late 13th century, Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian started to diverge more. After c. 1350, the Black Death and following social upheavals seem to have accelerated language changes in Norway. From the late 14th century, the language used in Norway is generally referred to as Middle Norwegian.

Old West Norse underwent a lengthening of initial vowels at some point, especially in Norwegian, so that OWN *eta* became *éta*, ONW *akr* > *ákr*, OIC *ek* > *ék*.^[35]

Old Icelandic

In Iceland, initial /w/ before /r/ was lost.^[36] Compare Icelandic *rangur* with Norwegian *vrangr*, OEN *vrangR*. This change is shared with Old Gutnish.

A specifically Icelandic sound, the long, u-umlauted A, spelled *Ǫ* and pronounced /ɔ:/, developed circa the early 11th century. It was short-lived, being marked in the Grammatical Treatises and remaining until the end of the 12th century.

/w/ merged with /v/ during the 12th century. This caused /v/ to become an independent phoneme from /f/, and the written distinction of ⟨v⟩ for /v/ from medial and final ⟨f⟩ to become merely etymological.

Around the 13th century, *Ǫ/Ǧ* (/ø:/) merged to *Ǽ* (/ɛ:/).^[37] Thus, pre-13th-century *grænn* "green" became modern Icelandic *grænn*. The 12th-century Grágás manuscripts distinguish the vowels, and so the Codex Regius copy does as well. However, the 13th-century Codex Regius copy of the Poetic Edda probably relied on newer and/or poorer quality sources — Demonstrating either difficulty with or total lack of natural distinction, the manuscripts show separation of the two phonemes in some places, but frequently mix up the letters chosen to distinguish them in others.^[38]

Towards the end of the 13th century, *Ʒ* (/ɛ/) merged to *E* (/e/).^[39]

Old Norwegian

Around the 11th century,^[citation needed] Old Norwegian ⟨hl⟩, ⟨hn⟩, and ⟨hr⟩ became ⟨l⟩, ⟨n⟩, and ⟨r⟩. It is debatable whether the ⟨hC⟩ sequences represented a consonant cluster, /hC/, or a devoicing, /C̥/.

Orthographic evidence suggests that, in a confined dialect of Old Norwegian, /ɔ/ may have been unrounded before /u/, so that u-umlaut was reversed where the *u* had not been eliminated. e.g. *ǫll, ǫllum > ǫll, allum*.^[40]

Greenlandic Norse

This dialect of Old West Norse was spoken by Icelandic colonies in Greenland. When the colonies died out around the 15th century, the dialect went with it. /θ/, and some /ð/ merged to /t/, so that Old Icelandic **Þórðr** becomes **Tortr**.

Text example

The following text is from *Alexanders saga*, an Alexander romance. The manuscript, AM 519 a 4to, is dated c. 1280. The facsimile demonstrates the sigla used by scribes to write Old Norse. Many of these were borrowed from Latin. Without familiarity with these abbreviations, the facsimile will be unreadable to many. In addition, reading the manuscript itself requires familiarity with the letterforms of the native script. The abbreviations are expanded in a version with normalized spelling like the standard normalization system's. Comparing this to the spelling of the same text in Modern Icelandic shows that, while pronunciation has changed greatly, spelling has changed little.

Digital facsimile of the manuscript text ^[41]	The same text with normalized spelling	The same text in Modern Icelandic
[...] fem oþn̄ n̄ brizgloðo h̄o ep̄ þ̄ þ̄ s̄iðar mon faḡ verða. Þeffi fvein̄ á.* Þar ífcola feþr̄ fem siðenia ē þ̄l rikra mañā vþan-lanþz aþ laða ġa við boþn̄ s̄iñ Meifþari þar h̄o þengin̄ fa ē arifloþilef heþ. þ̄ þar harðla goð̄ clercr 7 eñ mefþi spekingr aþ þ̄li. 7 er þ̄ .xif. veþþ̄ gamall aþ alþri nalga alrofcin̄ aþ þ̄li. en fþoþhvgað̄ þ̄ þ̄m alla fina iaþnahl̄þa.	[...] sem óvinir hans brigzluðu honum eftir því, sem siðarr man sagt verða. þessi sveinn Alexander var í skóla settr, sem siðvenja er til ríkra manna útanlands at láta gera við börn sín. meistari var honum fenginn sá, er Aristoteles hét. hann var harðla góðr klerkr ok inn mesti spekingr at viti. ok er hann var 12 vetra gamall at aldri, nálíga alroskinn at viti, en stórhugaðr umfram alla sína jafnaldra, [...]	[...] sem óvinir hans brigsluðu honum eftir því, sem siðar mun sagt verða. Þessi sveinn Alexander var í skóla settur, sem siðvenja er til ríkra manna utanlands að láta gera við börn sín. Meistari var honum fenginn sá, er Aristóteles hét. Hann var harðla góður klerkur og hinn mesti spekingur að viti og er hann var 12 vetra gamall að aldri, nálega alroskinn að viti en stórhugaður umfram alla sína jafnaldra [...]

* **a** printed in uncial. Uncials not encoded separately in Unicode as of this section's writing.

Old East Norse

Old East Norse, between 800 and 1100, is in Sweden called *Runic Swedish* and in Denmark *Runic Danish*. The use of *Swedish* and *Danish* is not for linguistic reasons as the differences between them are minute at best during the more ancient stages of this dialect group. Changes had a tendency to occur earlier in the Danish region and until this day many Old Danish changes have still not taken place in modern Swedish rendering Swedish as the more archaic out of the two concerning both the ancient as well as modern languages, sometimes by a profound margin but in all differences are still minute. They are called *runic* because the body of text appears in runes.

Runic Old East Norse is characteristically archaic in form, especially Swedish (which is still true for modern Swedish compared to Danish). In essence it matches or surpasses the archaicism of post-runic Old West Norse which in its turn is generally more archaic than post-runic Old East Norse. While typically "Eastern" in structure, many later post-runic changes and trademarks of EON had yet to happen.

The phoneme *ʀ*, which evolved during the Proto-Norse period from *z*, was still clearly separated from *r* in most positions, even when being geminated, while in OWN it had already merged with *r*.

Monophthongization of *æi* > *ē* and *øy*, *au* > *ō* started in mid-10th-century Denmark. Compare runic OEN: *fæigrʀ*, *gæirrʀ*, *haugʀ*, *møydōmrʀ*, *diūrʀ*; with Post-runic OEN: *fēgher*, *gēr*, *hōgher*, *mōdōmber*, *diūr*; OWN: *feigr*, *geirr*, *haugr*, *meydómr*, *dýr*; from PN **faigiaz*, **gaizaz*, **haugaz*, **mawi- + dōmaz* (maidendom; virginity), **diuza* ((wild) animal).

Feminine o-stems often preserve the plural ending *-aR* while in OWN they more often merge with the feminine i-stems: (runic OEN) **sōlaR*, **hafnaR*/**hamnaR*, **vāgaR* while OWN *sólir*, *hafnir* and *vágir* (modern Swedish *solar*, *hamnar*, *vågar*; suns, havens, scales; Danish has mainly lost the distinction between the two stems with both endings now being rendered as *-er* or *-e* alternatively for the o-stems).

Vice versa, masculine i-stems with the root ending in either *g* or *k* tended to shift the plural ending to that of the ja-stems while OWN kept the original: *drængiaR*, **ælgiaR* and **bænkiar* while OWN *drengir*, *elgir* (elks) and *bekkir* (modern Swedish *drängar*, *älgar*, *bänkar*).

The plural ending of ja-stems were mostly preserved while those of OWN often acquired that of the i-stems: **bæðiaR*, **bækkiaR*, **væfiaR* while OWN *beðir* (beds), *bekkir*, *vefir* (modern Swedish *bäddar*, *bäckar*, *vävar*).



The Rök Runestone in Östergötland, Sweden, is the longest surviving source of early Old East Norse. It is inscribed on both sides.

Old Danish

Until the early 12th century, Old East Norse was very much a uniform dialect. It was in Denmark that the first innovations appeared that would differentiate Old Danish from Old Swedish³ as these innovations spread north unevenly (unlike the earlier changes that spread more evenly over the East Norse area) creating a series of isoglosses going from Zealand to Svealand.

In Old Danish, /hr/ merged with /r/ during the 9th century.^[42] From the 11th to 14th centuries, the unstressed vowels *-a*, *-o* and *-e* (standard normalization *-a*, *-u* and *-i*) started to merge into *-ø*, represented with the letter *e*. This vowel came to be epenthetic, particularly before *-R* endings. At the same time, the voiceless stop consonants *p*, *t* and *k* became voiced plosives and even fricative consonants. Resulting from these innovations, Danish has *kage* (cake), *tunger* (tongues) and *gæster* (guests) whereas (Standard) Swedish has retained older forms, *kaka*, *tungor* and *gäster* (OEN *kaka*, *tungur*, *gæstir*).

Moreover, the Danish pitch accent shared with Norwegian and Swedish changed into *stød* around this time.

Old Swedish

At the end of the 10th and early 11th century initial *h-* before *l*, *n* and *r* was still preserved in the middle and northern parts of Sweden, and is sporadically still preserved in some northern dialects as *g-*, e.g. *gly* (lukewarm), from *hlyr*.

The Dalecarlian dialects developed as Old Swedish dialects and as such can be considered separate languages from Swedish. One such language is Elfdalian, spoken in the Älvdalen municipality of Sweden, by about 1,000–5,000 speakers (various sources). This language is only with big difficulties comprehensible to a limited extent to speakers of the other Scandinavian languages.

Text example

This is an extract from *Västgötalagen*, the Westrogothic law. It is the oldest text written as a manuscript found in Sweden and from the 13th century. It is contemporaneous with most of the Icelandic literature. The text marks the beginning of Old Swedish as a distinct dialect.

Dræpær maþar svænskan man eller smalenskæn, innan konongsrikis man, eigh væstgøskan, bøte firi atta ørtogher ok þrettan markær ok ænga ætar bot. [...] Dræpar maþær danskan man allæ noræn man, bøte niv markum. Dræpær maþær vtlænskan man, eigh ma frid flyia or landi sinu oc j æth hans. Dræpær maþær vtlænskæn prest, bøte sva mykit firi sum hærlænskan man. Præstær skal i bondalaghum væræ. Varþær suþærman dræpin ællær ænskær maþær, ta skal bøta firi marchum fiurum þem sakinæ sökir, ok tvar marchar konongi.

If someone slays a Swede or a Smålander, a man from the kingdom, but not a West Geat, he will pay eight örtugar (20-pence coins) and thirteen marks, but no weregild. [...] If someone slays a Dane or a Norwegian, he will pay nine marks. If someone slays a foreigner, he shall not be banished and have to flee to his clan. If someone slays a foreign priest, he will pay as much as for a fellow countryman. A priest counts as a freeman. If a Southerner is slain or an Englishman, he shall pay four marks to the plaintiff and two marks to the king.

Old Gutnish

Due to Gotland's early isolation from the mainland, many features of Old Norse did not spread from or to the island, and Old Gutnish developed as an entirely separate branch from Old East and West Norse. For example, the diphthong *ai* in *aigu*, *þair* and *waita* was not retroactively umlauted to *ei* as in e.g. Old Icelandic *eigu*, *þeir* and *veita*. Breaking was especially active in Old Gutnish, leading to forms such as *bjera* and *bjauþa*, mainland *bera* and *bjúþa*. Dropping of /w/ in initial /wɪ/ is shared only with Old Icelandic.

Text example

The Gutasaga is the longest text surviving from Old Gutnish. It was written in the 13th century and dealt with the early history of the Gotlanders. This part relates to the agreement that the Gotlanders had with the Swedish king sometime before the 9th century:

So gingu gutar sielfs wiliandi vndir suia kunung þy at þair mattin frir Oc frelsir sykia suiariki j huerium staþ. vtan tull oc allar utgiftir. So aigu oc suiar sykia gutland firir vtan cornband ellar annur forbuþ. hegnan oc hielp sculdi kunungur gutum at waita. En þair wiþr þorftin. oc kallaþin. sendimen al oc kunungr oc ierl samulaiþ a gutnal þing senda. Oc latta þar taka scatt sinn. þair sendibuþar aighu friþ lysa gutum alla steþi til sykia yfir haf sum upsala kunungi til hoyrir. Oc so þair sum þan wegin aigu hinget sykia.^[43]

So, by their own will, the Gotlanders became the subjects of the Swedish king, so that they could travel freely and without risk to any location in the Swedish kingdom without toll and other fees. Likewise, the Swedes had the right to go to Gotland without corn restrictions or other prohibitions. The king was to provide protection and help, when they needed it and asked for it. The king and the jarl shall send emissaries to the Gutnish thing to receive the taxes. These emissaries shall declare free passage for the Gotlanders to all locations in the sea of the king at Uppsala (that is the Baltic Sea was under Swedish control) and likewise for everyone who wanted to travel to Gotland.

Relationship to modern Scandinavian languages

Development of Old Norse vowels to the modern Scandinavian languages

Old Norse	Modern Icelandic	Modern Faroese	Modern Swedish ^[44]	Modern Danish	Examples ^[45]
a [a]	a(:) ^[46]	a/ɛa:	a/ɑ: ⟨a⟩; ɔ/o: ⟨ā⟩ (+ld,rd,ng)	⟨a⟩; ɔ/o: ⟨ā⟩ (+rd)	ON <i>land</i> "land": Ic/Fa/Sw/Da/No <i>land</i> ; ON <i>dagr</i> "day": Ic/Fa <i>dagur</i> , Sw/Da/No <i>dag</i> ; ON <i>harðr</i> "hard": Ic/Fa <i>harður</i> , Sw/Da <i>hård</i> , No <i>hard</i> ; ON <i>langr</i> "long": Ic/Fa <i>langur</i> , Sw <i>lång</i> , Da/No <i>lang</i>
ja [ja]	ja(:)	ja/jɛa:	(j)ɛ(:) ⟨(j)ä⟩	⟨jæ⟩; ⟨je⟩ (+r)	ON <i>hjalpa</i> "to help": Ic/Fa <i>hjálpa</i> , Sw <i>hjälpa</i> , Da <i>hjælpe</i> , No <i>hjelp</i> ; ON <i>hjarta</i> "heart": Ic/Fa <i>hjarta</i> , Sw <i>hjärta</i> , Da <i>hjärte</i> , NB <i>hjerter</i> , NN <i>hjärtal/hjarte</i>
a: [á]	au(:)	ɔ/ɔa:	ɔ/o: ⟨ā⟩	⟨ā⟩	ON <i>láta</i> "to let": Ic/Fa <i>láta</i> , Sw <i>låta</i> , Da <i>lade</i> , No <i>la</i>
ɛ: [æ]	ai(:)	a/ɛa:	ɛ(:) ⟨ä⟩		ON <i>mæla</i> "to speak": Ic/Fa <i>mæla</i> ; ON <i>sæll</i> "happy": Ic <i>sæll</i> , Fa <i>sælur</i> , Sw <i>säll</i> , Da <i>sæl</i>
e [e]	ɛ(:)	ɛ/e:			ON <i>menn</i> "men": Ic/Fa <i>menn</i> , Sw <i>män</i> , Da <i>mænd</i> , No <i>menn</i> ; ON <i>bera</i> "to bear": Ic/Fa <i>bera</i> , Sw <i>bära</i> , Da/No <i>bære</i> , NN <i>bera</i> ; ON <i>vegr</i> "way": Ic/Fa <i>vegur</i> , Sw <i>väg</i> , Da <i>vej</i> , No <i>vegvei</i>
e: [é]	jɛ(:)	a/ɛa: ⟨æ⟩			ON <i>lét</i> "let" (past): Ic <i>lét</i> , Fa <i>læt</i> , Sw <i>lät</i>
i [i]	ɪ(:)	ɪ/i:	ɪ/i: ⟨i⟩	e ⟨i⟩/ e: ⟨e⟩	ON <i>kinn</i> "cheek": Ic/Fa <i>kinn</i> , Sw/Da <i>kind</i> , No <i>kinn</i>
i: [í]	i(:)	ɯɪ(:)		⟨i⟩	ON <i>tíð</i> "time": Ic/Fa <i>tíð</i> , Sw/Da/No <i>tid</i>
ɔ [o]	ø > œ(:) ⟨ö⟩	œ/ø: ⟨ø⟩, ɔ/o: ⟨o⟩	⟨a⟩; ⟨o⟩ ^[47] ; ⟨ø⟩ (+r); ⟨ā⟩ (+ld,rd,ng)		ON <i>hond</i> "hand": Ic <i>hönd</i> , Fa <i>hond</i> , Sw/NN <i>hand</i> , Da/NB <i>hånd</i> ; ON <i>nøs</i> "nose": Ic <i>nös</i> , Fa <i>nøs</i> , Sw/No <i>nos</i> , Da <i>næse</i> ; ON <i>qrn</i> "eagle": Ic/Sw <i>örn</i> , Fa/Da/No <i>ørn</i> ; ON <i>söngur</i> "song": Ic <i>söngur</i> , Fa <i>songur</i> , Sw <i>sång</i> , Da/NB <i>sang</i> , NN <i>song</i>
jɔ [jo]	jø > jœ(:) ⟨jö⟩	jœ/jø: ⟨jø⟩	(j)œ/(j)ø: ⟨(j)ø⟩		ON <i>skjöldr</i> "shield": Ic <i>skjöldur</i> , Fa <i>skjöldur</i> , Sw <i>sköld</i> , Da/No <i>skjold</i> ; ON <i>björn</i> "bear": Ic/Sw <i>björn</i> , Fa/Da/NN <i>björn</i>

o: [ǫ]	a: > au(:) <á>	o/oa: <á>	o/o: <â>	<â>	ON <i>tá</i> (*tǫ) "toe": Ic/Fa <i>tá</i> , Sw/Da/No <i>tå</i>
o [o]	o(:)	o/o:	o/o: <o>		ON <i>morginn/morgunn</i> "morning": Ic <i>morgunn</i> , Fa <i>morgun</i> , Sw/NN <i>morgon</i> , Da/NB <i>morgen</i>
o: [ó]	ou(:)	œ/ou:	u/u: <o>	<o>	ON <i>bók</i> "book": Ic/Fa <i>bók</i> , Sw/No <i>bok</i> , Da <i>bog</i>
u [u]	ʏ(:)	ʊ/u:	ø/ʉ: <u>		ON <i>fullr</i> "full": Ic/Fa <i>fullur</i> , Sw/Da/No <i>full</i>
u: [ú]	u(:)	ʏ/ʉu:		<u>	ON <i>hús</i> "house": Ic/Fa <i>hús</i> , Sw/Da/No <i>hus</i>
jó [jǫ]	jou(:)	jœ/jou:	jø/jʉ: <ju>	<y>	ON <i>bjóða</i> "to offer, command": Ic/Fa <i>bjóða</i> , Sw <i>bjuda</i> , Da/No <i>byde</i>
jú [jú]	ju(:)	jʏ/jʉu:			ON <i>djúpr</i> "deep": Ic/Fa <i>djúpur</i> , Sw <i>djup</i> , Da <i>dyb</i> , NB <i>dyp</i> , NN <i>djup</i>
ø [ø]	ø > œ(:) <ö>	œ/ø: <ø>	œ/ø: <ö>		ON <i>gøra</i> "to prepare": Sw <i>göra</i>
ø: [œ]	ε: > ai(:) <æ>			<ø>	ON <i>grænn</i> "green": Ic <i>grænn</i> , Fa <i>grønur</i> , Sw <i>grön</i> , Da <i>grøn</i> , No <i>grønn</i>
y [y]	i(:)	íi:	<ö>; <y>[48]		ON <i>dyrr</i> "door": Ic/Fa <i>dyr</i> , Sw <i>dörr</i> , Da/No <i>dør</i> ON <i>fylla</i> "to fill": Ic <i>fylla</i> , Fa/Sw <i>fylla</i> , Da <i>fylde</i> , No <i>fylle</i>
y: [ý]	i(:)	ʏi(:)	ʏ/y: <y>	<y>	ON <i>dýrr</i> "dear": Ic <i>dýr</i> , Fa <i>dýrur</i> , Sw/Da/No <i>dyr</i>
ei [ei]	ei(:)	ai(:)	e(:) <e>	<e>	ON <i>steinn</i> "stone": Ic <i>steinn</i> , Fa <i>steinur</i> , Sw/Da/NB <i>sten</i> , NN <i>stein</i>
øy [ey]	ei(:)	oi(:) <oy> oi̯: <oyggj>[49]	œ/ø: <ö>	<ø>	ON <i>ey</i> "island": Ic <i>ey</i> , Fa <i>oyggj</i> , Sw <i>ö</i> , Da <i>ø</i> , No <i>øy</i>
au [au]	øy(:)	ε/εi: <ey>			ON <i>draumr</i> "dream": Ic <i>draumur</i> , Fa <i>dreymur</i> , Sw <i>dröm</i> , Da/No <i>drøm</i> , NN <i>draum</i>

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Template:Old_Norse_sidebar&action=edit

[2] Torp, Arne, Lars S. Vikør (1993)

[3] Peter Tunstall. *Review of The syntax of Old Norse: With a survey of the inflectional morphology and a complete bibliography* (<http://elanguage.net/blogs/booknotices/?m=200802>). Primary source.

[4] A. J. Johnson Company, *Johnson's universal cyclopedia: a new edition*, pp. 336 (<http://books.google.com/books?id=H8IXAQAIAAJ&pg=PA336>), 337 (<http://books.google.com/books?id=H8IXAQAIAAJ&pg=PA337>), 338 (<http://books.google.com/books?id=H8IXAQAIAAJ&pg=PA338>); 1895 D. Appleton and company & A. J. Johnson company

[5] Article *Nordiska språk*, section *Historia*, subsection *Omkring 800–1100*, in *Nationalencyklopedin* (1994).

[6] J. van der Auwera & E. König (1994). *The Germanic Languages*, p. 217.

[7] J. Moberg, C. Gooskens, J. Nerbonne, N. Vaillette (2007). *Conditional Entropy Measures Intelligibility among Related Languages*, Proceedings of the 17th Meeting of Computational Linguistics in the Netherlands, pp. 51-66.

[8] *See, e.g.*, Harbert 7–10.

[9] Introduction to Letter A (http://lexicon.ff.cuni.cz/html/oi_cleasbyvigfusson/b0001.html)

[10] *The Nordic Languages; 202. The typological development of the Nordic languages I: Phonology*. 1. Proto-Nordic: 1853 (<http://books.google.com/books?id=6b7WwBC5tRAC&pg=PA1853>). 2. Common Nordic: 1855 (<http://books.google.com/books?id=6b7WwBC5tRAC&pg=PA1855>). 3. Old East Nordic: 1856 (<http://books.google.com/books?id=6b7WwBC5tRAC&pg=PA1856>), 1859 (<http://books.google.com/books?id=6b7WwBC5tRAC&pg=PA1859>). 4. Old West Nordic:

[11] Orrin W. Robinson, *Old English and Its Closest Relatives*, pg. 83 (<http://books.google.com/books?id=xAeJoF55hhsC&pg=PA83>)

[12] Henry Sweet, *An Icelandic Primer* (1895) pg. 5

[13] Vigfússon, Powell; *An Icelandic Prose Reader: with Notes, Grammar, and Glossary* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=YN4NAAAAQAAJ>); #: Chapter

[14] Nina Grønnum, "Nyt om det danske stød" (http://www.cphling.dk/ng/presentations/stoed_hum_fest_04.pdf) (Microsoft PowerPoint presentation)

[15] Introduction to Letter Ö (Ø): 1 (http://lexicon.ff.cuni.cz/html/oi_cleasbyvigfusson/b0761.html), 2 (http://lexicon.ff.cuni.cz/html/oi_cleasbyvigfusson/b0762.html)

[16] Ragnvald Iversen, *Norrøn Grammatikk*, 1961, p 24 and onwards.

[17] <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/IcelOnline/IcelOnline.TEId-idx?type=entry&eid=MO3RK-1&q1=mörk>

[18] Formation of Words - Vowel Changes; Page 1 (<http://www.northvegr.org/vigfusson/xxix.php>): Umlaut, Breaking (Resolution); Page 2 (<http://www.northvegr.org/vigfusson/xxx.php>): Breaking, Absorption and Contraction, Ablaut

[19] Noun Tables (<http://www.northvegr.org/vigfusson/xvi.php>), Remarks on the 1st Strong Masculine Declension (Assim.: Note 3.α)

- [20] Old Norse for Beginners Lesson 5 (<http://www3.hi.is/~haukurth/norse/olessons/lesson5.php>)
- [21] A. G. Noreen *Abriss Der Altnordischen (Altisindischen) Grammatik* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=xf-gwaFP7pgC>) pg. 12
- [22] Old Norse for Beginners: Grammar Reference - Neuter nouns (<http://www3.hi.is/~haukurth/norse/grammar/neutern.php>)
- [23] Old Norse for Beginners: Grammar Reference - Feminine nouns (<http://www3.hi.is/~haukurth/norse/grammar/femininen.php>)
- [24] References to words labelled heterogeneous in gender: Lilja-Linditre (http://lexicon.ff.cuni.cz/html/oi_cleasbyvigfusson/b0389.html); Muna-Mundr (<http://www.northvegr.org/vigfusson/437.php>)
- [25] MeNoTa Handbook v.2.0 - Ch. 8.3#id391306341240 (http://www.menota.org/guidelines-2/ch8/lemma_2-0.page).2.1 Gender
- [26] *Zoëga's* - Letter H (<http://norse.ulver.com/dct/zoega/h.html>) - Entry hungur
- [27] *Early England and the Great Gender Shift: Old English and Old Norse Straddling the Horns of the Default Dilemma* Rice, Steinmetz (referenced in this abstract (http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V6H-4G4N0M8-1&_user=10&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&_docanchor=&view=c&_searchStrId=1085402217&_rerunOrigin=google&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=7b971b553b941b6f05f41c1f03bbe118S))
- [28] Trond Tosterud, "Gender assignment in Old Norse (http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V6H-4FN5KR7-1&_user=10&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&_docanchor=&view=c&_searchStrId=1085480144&_rerunOrigin=google&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=e1df50e2de899a09db4fd2082a9fcd78)," *Lingua* 116:9 (Sep. 2006), pp. 1441–1463
- [29] See, e.g., O'Donoghue 22–102.
- [30] O'Donoghue 190–201; Lass 187–188.
- [31] Ynglingasaga (http://www.heimskringla.no/wiki/Ynglinga_saga)
- [32] <http://www.heimskringla.no/original/heimskringla/sagasigurdarjorsalafara.php>
- [33] The Old Norse dialect areas (<http://aveneca.com/westeast.html>)
- [34] The word stark in *Svensk etymologisk ordbok*, "Swedish etymological dictionary" (<http://runeberg.org/svetyon/0950.html>)
- [35] *Further Old Norse Secondary Formations*; Albert Murray Sturtevant; p. 457 (<http://www.jstor.org/pss/409955>)
- [36] Introduction to Letter R (<http://www.northvegr.org/vigfusson/481.php>)
- [37] Introduction to Letter Æ (Æ) (<http://www.northvegr.org/vigfusson/757.php>)
- [38] Codex Regius - Völuspá (<http://gandalf.uib.no:8008/corpus/document.xml?corpus=menota&document=GKS23654to-Vsp-0-9-2&position=0:0+0+0&mode=facs&homepage=/corpus/menota.xml>)
- [39] Introduction to Letter E: 1 (http://lexicon.ff.cuni.cz/html/oi_cleasbyvigfusson/b0113.html), 2 (http://lexicon.ff.cuni.cz/html/oi_cleasbyvigfusson/b0114.html)
- [40] Hock, Hans Henrich. *Principles of Historical Linguistics*. 1986 p. 149
- [41] Andrea de Leeuw van Weenen, University of Leiden, University of Greifswald, ed. 2009. AM 519 a 4to: Alexanders saga, fol. 1v, l. 10-14. Menota ms. 14, v. 1.0. Bergen: Medieval Nordic Text Archive (<http://www.menota.org/>). Facsimile (<http://gandalf.uib.no:8008/corpus/document.xml?corpus=menota&document=AM519a&position=0:0+0+0&mode=facs&homepage=/corpus/menota.xml>); Normalization (<http://gandalf.uib.no:8008/corpus/document.xml?corpus=menota&document=AM519a&position=0:0+0+0&mode=norm&homepage=/corpus/menota.xml>)
- [42] Tarrin Wills, *The Anonymous Verse in the Third Grammatical Treatise* (<http://web.archive.org/web/20110623131139/http://www.dur.ac.uk/medieval.www/sagaconf/wills.htm>) Retrieved from Internet Archive January 13 2014.
- [43] *Gutasaga* §§4–5.
- [44] Helfenstein, James (1870). *A Comparative Grammar of the Teutonic Languages: Being at the Same Time a Historical Grammar of the English Language*. London: MacMillan and Co.
- [45] NB = Bokmål Norwegian, a mixture of Danish and pure Norwegian; NN = Nynorsk Norwegian, based on West Norwegian dialects and without Danish influence; No = same in both forms of Norwegian.
- [46] Vowel length in the modern Scandinavian languages does not stem from Old Norse vowel length. In all of the modern languages, Old Norse vowel length was lost, and vowel length became allophonically determined by syllable structure, with long vowels occurring when followed by zero or one consonants (and some clusters, e.g. in Icelandic, most clusters of obstruent to obstruent + [r], [j] or [v], such as [pr], [tj], [kv] etc.); short vowels occurred when followed by most consonant clusters, including double consonants. Often, pairs of short and long vowels became differentiated in quality before the loss of vowel length and thus did not end up merging; e.g. Old Norse /a a: i i:/ became Icelandic /a au i i/, all of which can occur allophonically short or long. In the mainland Scandinavian languages, double consonants were reduced to single consonants, making the new vowel length phonemic.
- [47] or (before /r/) in some isolated words, but the tendency was to restore .
- [48] When un-umlauted */u/ is still present elsewhere in the paradigm.
- [49] When not followed by a consonant.

Pronunciation of vowels in various Scandinavian languages

Spelling	Old Norse	Modern Icelandic	Modern Faroese	Modern Swedish
ⱱa	a	a(:)	a/ɛa:	a/ɑ:
ⱱá	a:	au(:)	ɔ/ɔa:	--
ⱱǎ	--	--	--	ɛ/ɛ:
ⱱǎ́	--	--	--	ɔ/o:
ⱱæ	ɛ:	ai(:)	a/ɛa:	--
ⱱe	e	ɛ(:)	ɛ/e:	e/e:
ⱱé	e:	jɛ(:)	--	--
ⱱi	i	ɪ(:)	ɪ/i:	ɪ/i:
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External links

- Heimskringla.no (http://www.heimskringla.no/wiki/Main_Page), an online collection of Old Norse source material
- Indo-European Language Resources (http://www.ling.upenn.edu/~kurisuto/germanic/language_resources.html) The resources in question are mostly Germanic, including two dictionaries of Old Icelandic (**English**), two grammars of Old Icelandic (one in English, one in German) and a grammar of Old Swedish (**German**).
- An English Dictionary of Runic Inscriptions of the Younger Futhark, at the university of Nottingham (<http://runicdictionary.nottingham.ac.uk/index.php>)
- Old Norse for Beginners (<http://www.hi.is/~haukurth/norse/>)
- Viking Language - Learn Old Norse, Runes, and Icelandic Sagas (<http://www.vikingnorse.com/>)
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- Old Norse Online (<http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/eieol/norol-0-X.html>), by Todd B. Krause and Jonathan Slocum from the Linguistics Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.
- Old Norse conjugator (<http://www.verbix.com/languages/oldnorse.shtml>) at Verbix.com
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- Old Norse basic lexicon at the Global Lexicostatistical Database (<http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/response.cgi?root=new100&morpho=0&basename=new100\ier\grm&limit=-1>)

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