

Lecture 5

# OE VOCABULARY

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# 1. NATIVE WORDS

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**1) Indo-European** – these mainly were words meaning **natural phenomena, plants and animals, agricultural names, parts of the body, kinship, basic activities**

E.g.:

- Substantives: fæder, mōdor, nama, tunze, fōt, niht, heorte;
- Adjectives: neowe, zeon3, riht, lon3;
- Verbs: sittan, liczan, beran, teran;
- Numerals: 1-100;
- Pronouns: ic, ðu, sē.

## 2) Common Germanic

E.g.:

- Substantives: hand, finger, cealf, eorþe, land, sæ, sand, earm;
- Adjectives: earm, 3rēne;
- Verbs: findan, sinzan.

**3) West Germanic:** bi, be, macian, to.

**4) Specifically OE:** wimman, scir3erēfa (sheriff), hlāford (lord), clipian (call)

# 2. LOAN WORDS

## Latin Borrowings

### 1<sup>st</sup> Layer – Continental:

- From Latin through CG
- Names of objects of material culture and products Anglo-Saxons bought: *stræt*, *weall*, *myln*, *pipor*, *wīn*;
- Substantive '**castra**' made part of a number of names of cities: Chester, Manchester, Winchester, Worcester, Leicester; '**strata**' – Stratford; '**fossa**' – Fossway, Fosbroke
- 175 words

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Layer – insular:

- From Latin through Celtic
- belong to the sphere of religion, church and education: *biscop*, *cleric*, *apostol*, *deofol*, *mæsse*, *munuc*, *māzister*;
- Under Latin influence some native words acquired new meanings: *ēāstron* (originally a heathen spring holiday) acquired the meaning Easter
- 500 words

- 12 words from **Celtic**
- words for geographical features such as **torr** (peak), **cumb** (deep valley), **crag** (rock);
- animals such as **brocc** (badger);
- miscellaneous words such as **bannuc** ‘a bit’ and **bratt** (cloak)
- many current place names and names of topographical features such as *rivers* and *hills* remain as evidence of England’s Celtic settlement: **Kent**, where the Jutes initially settled, is derived from Celtic, as is **Devon**, which preserves the name of the tribal *Dumnoni*. **London** is also Celtic, and **Cumberland** means ‘land of the Cymry’ (which is what the Welsh, or Cymraig, call Wales). **Thames, Avon, Esk, Wye, Usk** are all Celtic river names
- **uisge** (water) – Usk, Esk; **dun** (dune) – Dumfries; **llan** (church) – Londonderry; **coil** (forest) – Kilbrook; **inis** (island); **inbher** (mount); **bail** (house)

# From OLD NORSE

- the **Vikings** (9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century)
- given high degree of mutual intelligibility of OE and ON
- some ON words came to be used synonymously with OE cognates
- eventually either one or the other may have dropped out of use (as in the case of OE **ey** and ON **egg**, which co-existed until well into the fifteenth century);
- semantic differentiation may have taken place (as in the case of cognate OE **shirt** and ON **skirt**, both of which originally meant 'garment').

- OE borrowed Norse **third person plural *th-* forms**
- prepositions such as ***till*** and ***fro***
- 'everyday' lexical items such as ***sister, fellow, hit, law, sky, take, skin, want,*** and ***scot*** 'tax' (as in *scot-free*)
- Some Scandinavian suffixes are found in the geographical names:
  - by** (byr-town) – **Derby**;
  - dale** (dalr-valley) – **Avondale**;
  - toft** (toft-grassy spot) – **Langtoft**;
  - ness** (nes-cape) – **Inverness**;
  - beck** (bakkr-rivulet) – **Trontbeck**;
  - wick/wich** (vik-bay) – **Greenwich**

# 3) OE WORD FORMATION

## 1. COMPOUNDING

- nouns and adjectives with their final element typically acting as the head  
e.g.: **heāh-clif** ‘high-cliff’, **bōccraftig** ‘book-crafty’ > ‘learned’,  
**god-spellere** ‘good-newser’ > ‘evangelist’, **heahburg** ‘high city’ > ‘capital’.
- Modern English has inherited a few amalgamated compounds from OE; that is, words which were once transparent compounds but which, through pronunciation and spelling changes, have fallen together into a seemingly indivisible whole  
e.g.: **daisy** (**dages** + **eāge** ‘day’s eye’), **garlic** (**gār** + **lēac** ‘spear leek’) and **nostril** (**nosu** + **pyrel** ‘nose hole’)
- Many place names are also the result of such amalgamations  
e.g.: **Boston** (**Botulph’s stone**), **Sussex** (**suþ** + **Seaxe** ‘south Saxons’),  
**Norwich** (**norþ** + **wic** ‘north village’).
- extremely useful device in poetic composition. The alliterative patterns used in the genre necessitated the availability of a variety of synonyms for the same concept, hence the creation of oft-quoted compounds such as **swanrād** ‘swan-road’, **hwalrād** ‘whale-road’ and **ganetes baþ** ‘gannet’s bath’ for the **sea**. These compounds are known as **kennings**.

# 2. AFFIXATION

## 1) Suffixation

### ▫ Substantive suffixes:

- ere** (m)- fiscere, wrītere;
  - estre** (f)- spinnestre;
  - end** (m) - frēōnd;
  - in3** - cynin3 ; adj+in3=noun lýtlin3, earmin3;
  - lin3** (with emotional colouring) - dēōrlin3;
  - en** (m. stems > f nouns) – 3yden (3od, fyxen (fox)
  - nis/nes** (abstr. nouns)3ōdnis, ħrenēs;
  - un3** (f verbal nouns) - leornun3, rædin3;
  - dōm** - wisdōm, frēōdōm;
  - hād** – cīldhād;
  - lāc** – wedlāc;
  - scipe** - frēōndscipe
- Dōm** - doom; **hād** - title; **lāc** - gift. These suffixes were originally nouns

### ▫ Adjective suffixes:

- i3** (from nouns) - hāli3, misti3, īsi3, bysi3;
- en** (from nouns) - 3ylden;
- isc** (nationality) - En3lisc, Welisc
- sum** (from nouns, adjectives, verbs) - lan3sum;
- full** (from abstract nouns) synnfull, carful;
- lēās** (from verbs and nouns) slæplēās;
- lic** – frēōndlic

### ▫ Adverbs:

- e** – harde;
- lice** – frēōndlice

## 2) Prefixation

- ā-** (out of) – ārisan;
- for-** (destruction) – fordōn;
- 3e-** (collectivity, perfection) - 3emynd, 3efēra;
- mis-** (bad quality) – misdæd;
- on-** (change, separation) – onbindan;
- un-** (negative) – uncuħ (unknown)

## 4. Semantic shift

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- evolution of word meaning,  
e.g.: **Easter** was the name of a pagan Goddess of spring, however, due to the Roman influence and Christianization the meaning changed.



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LUNEDI	<i>Mōnandæg</i>	Monday	Montag
MARTEDI	<i>Tīwesdæg</i>	Tuesday	Dienstag
MERCOLEDI	<i>Wōdnesdæg</i>	Wednesday	Mittwoch
GIOVEDI	<i>þūnresdæg</i>	Thursday	Donnerstag
VENERDI	<i>Frīgedæg</i>	Friday	Freitag
SABATO	<i>Sæturnesdæg</i>	Saturday	Sonnabend (Samstag)
DOMENICA	<i>Sunnandæg</i>	Sunday	Sonntag

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