

# Gothic

JAY H. JASANOFF

## 1. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Gothic, mainly known from a Bible translation of the fourth century AD, is the only Germanic language that has come down to us from antiquity in a reasonably complete state of preservation. Lacking direct descendants itself, it is closely related to the early medieval dialects ancestral to Modern English, German, Dutch, and the Scandinavian languages (Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic, Faroese). The family tree of the Germanic languages can be drawn as follows:

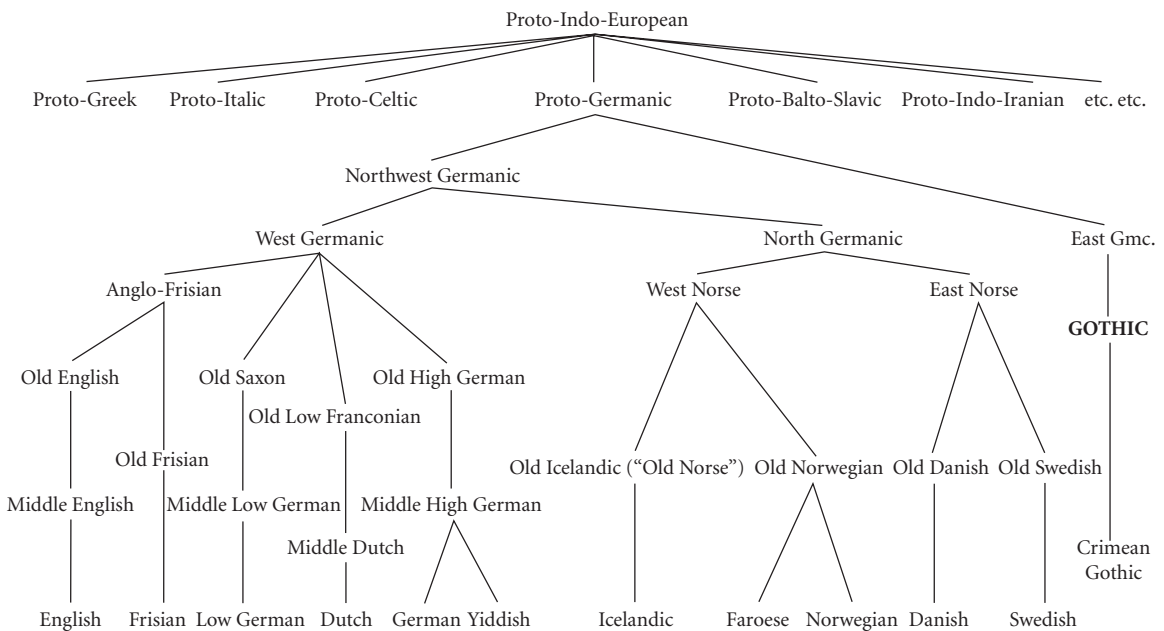


Figure 9.1 The Germanic languages

As can be seen from this figure, Gothic is the sole representative of the East Germanic branch of the family. The more numerous North and West Germanic languages are much later: Old English and Old High German are first substantially attested in the eighth century, while Old Saxon and Old Low Franconian date from the ninth and tenth centuries,

respectively. The remaining “Old” Germanic languages – Old Frisian and the early Scandinavian dialects – are essentially languages of the High Middle Ages, contemporary with Middle English and Middle High German. It is thus not surprising that Gothic presents a significantly more conservative appearance than its Germanic sister dialects. The only comparably archaic remains of an early Germanic language are the Early Northwest Germanic inscriptions of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, mostly from Denmark and written in the indigenous runic alphabet (see Ch. 10). These, however, are only tantalizing fragments, often deliberately obscure and topheavy with personal names.

Like other East Germanic tribes such as the Vandals, Burgundians, Gepids, and Heruls, the Goths originally lived in the area of present-day Poland and eastern Germany; their own traditions placed their earliest home in southern Sweden. Moving toward the mouth of the Danube and the Black Sea shortly before 200 AD, they first began to make serious raids into Roman territory in the middle of the third century. A hundred years later they had expanded significantly eastwards and split into two sub-peoples: the *Ostrogoths* (“East Goths”), located beyond the Dniester, who controlled most of the modern eastern Ukraine; and the *Visigoths* (meaning unclear; *not* “West Goths”), who remained centered in the southwest of the Ukraine and adjacent parts of Moldova and Rumania. It was in the latter area, toward the middle of the fourth century, that the Arian Christian Wulfila (Ulphilas, Ulphilas) began his ultimately successful effort to convert the Goths to Christianity. Wulfila (Gothic for “Little Wolf”) was himself a native speaker of Gothic, and like many missionaries then and now, recognized the value of translating the Christian scriptures into the language of his intended converts. For this purpose he devised a Greek-based alphabet which remained in use for as long as Gothic continued to be written (see §2). The surviving remains of Wulfila’s translation, amounting to somewhat less than half of the New Testament, constitute the great bulk of the Gothic corpus that has come down to us. Although the Christian Gothic community over which Wulfila presided as bishop was still small at the time of his death (c. 382), he laid the groundwork for future missionary work so effectively that Arian Christianity soon became something like a national religion among the Germanic tribes of eastern and central Europe. Yet, interestingly, the Bible seems never to have been translated into Vandal, or Burgundian, or Herulian; evidently these East Germanic languages were close enough to Gothic to make such endeavors unnecessary.

The career of the Goths in the upheavals that accompanied the end of the Western Roman Empire was short but spectacular. The Visigoths, after sacking Rome in 410, established themselves in southern Gaul and subsequently in Spain; here their kingdom lasted until the Moorish conquest of 711, although all our documents from Visigothic Spain are in Latin. The Ostrogoths, in the meantime, established a short-lived kingdom in Italy under their great ruler Theodoric (492–526). Unlike their Spanish cousins, the “Italian” Goths appear to have cultivated their fledgling literary tradition during their half-century of independence. It is to sixth-century Italy, and not to Spain, that we owe our surviving manuscripts of the Gothic Bible, including the famous 188-page Codex Argenteus now housed in Uppsala, Sweden. Also of Italian origin are the few surviving non-Biblical Gothic monuments, which include a fragmentary commentary on the Gospel of John (the so-called *Skeireins* or “explanation”), a calendar, and two very short legal documents. Following the Byzantine reconquest of Italy in 552, the Ostrogoths – and with them the Gothic language – disappear from history.

Or nearly disappear. By chance, a ninth- or tenth-century parchment (the Salzburg–Vienna Alcuin Ms.) has come down to us containing two incomplete versions of the Gothic alphabet and a few verses from the Gothic Bible, the latter accompanied by a mixed transcription/ translation into Old High German. A curious feature of this document is that the Gothic letters bear names, which closely resemble the names of the corresponding runes in Old English and Old Norse. We can only guess at the specific circumstances under which

this information came to be recorded, but one thing seems certain: the descendants of the Ostrogoths who withdrew over the Alps in the middle of the sixth century somehow managed to retain a shadow of their linguistic and religious identity, albeit tenuously, for a period of three or four hundred years.

Another Gothic “survival” turns up much later in a very different corner of Europe. In the middle of the sixteenth century AD, Ogier van Busbecq, the ambassador of the emperor Charles V to the court of the Turkish sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, recorded eighty-six words of a language spoken in the sultan’s Crimean dominions that reminded him of his native Flemish. Most of the lexical items written down by Busbecq are, in fact, obviously Germanic, and one, *ada* “egg,” appears to show the distinctively East Germanic sound change of *\*-jj-* to *-ddj-* (see §3.6.4). It is usually held, therefore, that the Crimean Goths were the last remnants of the Gothic population that once occupied the northern shore of the Black Sea, and that their language was a direct descendant of the Gothic of the fourth century. Unfortunately, by the time anyone thought to extend Busbecq’s vocabulary, Crimean Gothic had disappeared.

## 2. WRITING SYSTEMS

Apart from Busbecq’s word list and two or three problematic runic inscriptions, the entire surviving Gothic corpus is written in Wulfila’s alphabet. Table 9.1 shows the letters as they appear in our most important Gothic manuscript, the Codex Argenteus:

**Table 9.1 Wulfila’s alphabet**

	Transcription	Numerical value	Name
ⱱ	a	1	aza
Ɱ	b	2	bercna
Ɀ	g	3	geuua
Ȿ	d	4	daaz
Ɀ	e	5	eyz
Ɱ	q	6	quertra
Ɱ	z	7	ezec
Ɀ	h	8	haal
Ɀ	p	9	thyth
Ɀ	i, ī	10	iiz
Ɱ	k	20	chozma
ⱱ	l	30	laaz
Ɱ	m	40	manna
Ɱ	n	50	noicz
Ɱ	j	60	gaar
Ɱ	u	70	uraz
Ɱ	p	80	pertra
Ɱ	—	90	—
Ɱ	r	100	reda
Ɱ	s	200	sugil
Ɱ	t	300	tyz
Ɱ	w	400	uuinne
Ɱ	f	500	fe
Ɱ	x	600	enguz
Ɱ	hʷ	700	uuaer
Ɱ	o	800	utal
Ɱ	—	900	—

The essentially Greek inspiration of this alphabet is shown by a number of features, including:

1. The form of the letters, about two-thirds of which closely resemble their uncial Greek counterparts;
2. The order of the letters and their associated numerical values;
3. Greek orthographic practices, such as the (late) use of *ai* to stand for the monophthong [ɛ], and the use of *g* to stand for the the velar nasal [ŋ] before velar consonants.

Wulfila did not, however, adhere slavishly to his Greek model. In several instances he assigned altogether new values to Greek letters which would otherwise have been useless in Gothic. This was the case with Greek **F** ([w]), which became Gothic *q* ([k<sup>w</sup>]), and with **Ψ** (psi), which was probably the source of the Gothic character *hv* ([h<sup>w</sup>]). Curiously, Wulfila chose not to use the letters **Φ** (phi) and **Θ** (theta) to write the Gothic voiceless fricatives [f] and [θ], respectively, despite the fact that **Φ** and **Θ** had precisely these values in fourth-century Greek. Instead, he employed **Φ** to write Gothic [θ] and borrowed the Latin letter **F** to write Gothic [f]. The new phonetic value of **Φ** led to its being moved to the alphabetic position formerly occupied by **Θ**, while the new Latin-derived *f* took over the place vacated by **Φ**. Other Latin letters that found their way into the Gothic alphabet were *r* and *h*, as well as the variant of the *s*-character used in the Codex Argenteus (other Gothic manuscripts show an *s* that is decidedly more Greek-looking). In addition, several Gothic letters have been claimed to come from the runic alphabet – *u*, for example, which Wulfila used in place of the Greek digraph **OY**. But the extent to which runic writing played a role in the creation of the Gothic alphabet is highly controversial, not least because many of the characters in the runic alphabet are very similar to their Latin counterparts.

### 3. PHONOLOGY

#### 3.1 Consonants

The most highly structured part of the Gothic consonant system consists of a symmetrically organized subsystem of twelve stops and fricatives (the term *coronal* is used here to denote the dental, alveolar, and palatal regions):

(1)	<i>Labial</i>	<i>Coronal</i>	<i>Velar</i>	<i>Labiovelar</i>
<i>Voiceless stops</i>	/p/	/t/	/k/	/k <sup>w</sup> / <q>
<i>Voiceless fricatives</i>	/f/	/þ/	/h/	/h <sup>w</sup> / <hv>
<i>Voiced stops/Fricatives</i>	/b/	/d/	/g/	/g <sup>w</sup> / <gw>

Of the voiceless stops, the labial /p/ is infrequent outside obvious Greek and Latin loanwords (e.g., *praufetus* “prophet,” *pund* “pound”). The labiovelar /k<sup>w</sup>/, which Wulfila’s native-speaker intuition led him to write with a single character (*q*), patterns phonotactically as a single consonant (cf. *qrammīpa* “moistness,” with initial *qr-*) and is best analyzed as a unitary phoneme. The voiceless fricatives include /h/ and /h<sup>w</sup>/ (likewise a unitary phoneme), which, phonetically, were probably indistinguishable from the English sounds spelled *h* and *wh* – in other words, simple glottal fricatives with no significant velar occlusion. (This was doubtless also the case in syllable-final position, as, e.g., in *sahv* “saw” [1st, 3rd sg.], *nahts* “night” and *sahvt* “saw” [2nd sg.]; the development of [h] to velar [x] in this position in German [cf. *Nacht*, etc.] had no parallel in Gothic). Historically, however, they arose from older \*x and

\*x<sup>w</sup>, and structurally their place is still clearly with the oral fricatives /f/ and /þ/, with which they share important distributional properties.

The sounds denoted by the letters *b*, *d*, *g(w)* were voiced stops in some environments and voiced fricatives in others. The stop reading is certain after consonants (e.g., *windan* [windan] “wind,” *siggwan* [sing<sup>w</sup>an] “sing,” *þaurban* “need” [þǫrban]), and probable, at least for *b* and *d*, in word-initial position (*barn* [b-] “child,” *dags* [d-] “day”). After vowels, single *b*, *d*, and *g* are fricatives (e.g., *sibun* [sibun] “seven,” *bidjan* [biðjan] “ask,” *ligan* [ligan] “lie.” The stop /g<sup>w</sup>/ is found only after nasals (in words like *siggwan*) and in the geminate combination -ggw- (e.g., *bliggwan* [-gg<sup>w</sup>-] “strike”); there is thus no fricative allophone [g<sup>w</sup>].

The remaining Gothic consonants include two sibilants and a standard complement of nasals, liquids, and glides:

(2)		Labial	Coronal	Velar
	<i>Nasals</i>	/m/	/n/	([ŋ] <g>)
	<i>Voiceless sibilant</i>		/s/	
	<i>Voiced sibilant</i>		/z/	
	<i>Liquids</i>		/r/, /l/	
	<i>Glides</i>	/w/	/y/	

The voiced sibilant /z/ is not found in word-initial position. The velar nasal [ŋ], spelled <g> in imitation of Greek practice, is the automatic realization of /n/ before velar and labiovelar stops. The graphic sequence -ggw- is thus ambiguous, representing both [-gg<sup>w</sup>-] and [-ŋg<sup>w</sup>-].

## 3.2 Vowels

Gothic has five short and seven long vowels, along with a single diphthong:

(3)		Short		Long
		<i>Front</i>	<i>Back</i>	<i>Front</i>
	<i>High</i>	/i/ <i>	/u/ <u>	/i:/ <ei>
	<i>High-mid</i>			/e:/ <e>
	<i>Low-mid</i>	/ɛ/ <ai>	/ɔ/ <au>	/ɛ:/ <ai>
	<i>Low</i>			/a:/ <a>
	<i>Diphthong</i>			/iu/

### 3.2.1 Short vowels

Among the short vowels, /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ are only marginally phonemic, being in most cases mere positional variants of underlying /i/ and /u/ before -r, -h, and -hv (*breaking*; see §3.4.2). But both have a general distribution in foreign (i.e., Greek and Biblical Semitic) words (e.g., *aikklesjo* [ɛkkle:sjo:] “church,” Greek ἐκκλησία; *apaustaulus* [apɔstɔlus] “apostle,” Greek ἀπόστολος), and /ɛ/ serves as the normal reduplication vowel in native Gothic preterites of the type *letan* – *lailot* [lɛlo:t] “let,” *aukan* – *ai auk* [ɛɔ:k] “increase.” The use of the graphic diphthong <ai> to stand for a front monophthong is based directly on late Greek practice; the parallel use of <au> for [ɔ] is an innovation of Wulfila’s system.

### 3.2.2 Long vowels

The long vowels include the high-mid vowels /e:/ and /o:/, which lack short counterparts and are unambiguously indicated by the letters *e* and *o*. The Gothic alphabet, however, does not mark length as such. The long versions of [a], [ɛ], [ɔ], and [u] are not written differently from their short equivalents; orthography alone gives no indication that *pahta* “(s)he thought,” *air* “early,” *hauhs* “high,” and *bruþs* “young woman” represent [pa:hta], [ɛ:r], [hɔ:hs], and [bru:þs], respectively, with distinctive length (note that the modern editorial practice of writing *þâhta*, *áir*, *haúhs*, and *brúþs* to indicate length, and writing *ái* and *áu* for short /ɛ/ and /ɔ/, has no basis in ancient usage). The case of /i/ and /i:/, which are orthographically distinguished as <i> and <ei> (cf. *bitan* “bitten” [nom. sg. neut.] vs. *beitan* “to bite” [inf.]), is exceptional. Wulfila’s practice probably reflects a qualitative difference between the two *i*-vowels, perhaps comparable to that between the relatively low [-i-] and the relatively high [-i:] of German *bitten* “ask” versus *bieten* “offer.”

The seven long vowels show considerable differences of patterning and distribution. Low central /a:/ is rare, being confined in the native Gothic lexicon to etymological sequences of \*-*anh-*, which yielded [-ãh-] in Proto-Germanic and subsequently lost its nasalization in Gothic (cf. 3.4.4). The lower-mid vowels /e:/ and /ɔ:/, on the other hand, are relatively common; they represent the Proto-Germanic diphthongs \**ai* and \**au* and pattern as the *o*-grade counterparts of /i/ and /u/. There is little basis for the view, rooted in a coincidence of Germanic etymology and Greek orthography, that “long” *ai* and *au* actually represent synchronic diphthongs in Wulfila’s Gothic. The only true Gothic diphthong is /iu/.

### 3.3 Accent

The position of the word accent is not overtly indicated. To judge from the other Germanic languages, ordinary words were stressed on their first syllable. But in verbal compounds consisting of a prefix and a lexical verb, the prefix was proclitic, so that the accent probably remained on the initial syllable of the verbal root (cf. *af-niman* [af-níman] “take away” and *and-niman* [and-níman] “receive,” with the accentuation of the simplex *niman* [níman] “take”). The accent pattern of the corresponding nominal compounds (e.g., *anda-numts* “reception,” *anda-numja* “receiver”) is uncertain.

### 3.4 Synchronic phonological processes

A number of automatic phonological rules, reflecting historical sound changes, affect the surface form of Gothic words.

#### 3.4.1 Word-final devoicing

This rule applies exclusively to fricatives, converting [b], [d], [g], and [z] to [f], [p], [x], and [s] in absolute-final position: for example, *gaf* < \**gab*, third singular preterite of *giban* “give”; *baþ* < \**bad*, third singular preterite of *bidjan* “ask”; *maujos* < \**maujoz*, genitive singular of *mawi* “girl.” The devoicing of [g] to [x] is not noted orthographically (cf. *mag* [max] “is able”), presumably because the [g] : [x] contrast was not phonemic and there was no letter in ordinary use to denote the voiceless velar fricative (Wulfila’s use of the letter *x* is virtually confined to the divine name *Xristus* “Christ”). No devoicing is found in forms of the type *band* “bound” and *ward* “word,” showing that the final consonant was a stop in these environments.

### 3.4.2 Breaking

This is the traditional name (German *Brechung*) for the regular lowering of synchronically underlying *\*i* and *\*u* to *ai* [ɛ] and *au* [ɔ] before *-r*, *-h*, and *-hv*., for example, *wairþan* “become,” first singular preterite *warþ*, first plural preterite *waurþum*, participle *waurþans*, paralleling the regular pattern seen in *hilpan* “help” *halp*, *hulpum*, *hulpans*.

### 3.4.3 Hiatus lowering

This is the regular but comparatively rare process by which long high and high-mid vowels were replaced by their low-mid counterparts when immediately followed by another vowel: as in *saian* [se:an] < *\*sean* [se:an] “sow”; *stauida* [stɔ:ida] < *\*stoida* [sto:iða], third singular preterite of *stojan* “judge.”

### 3.4.4 Loss of *-n-* before *-h-* with compensatory lengthening

This process is found not only after *-a-* (cf. *þahta* < *\*þanhhta*; see §3.2.2), but also after *-u-* (cf. *þuhta* < *\*þunhta*, third singular preterite of *þugkjan* “seem”) and *-i-* (cf. *þeihan* < *\*þinhan* “prosper”). The nasalized vowels that originally resulted from *\*-Vnh-* sequences fell together with non-nasal /a:/, /u:/, and /i:/ in Wulfila’s language.

## 3.5 Morphophonemic processes

Phonological processes that have been *morphologized*, i.e., restricted to specific morphemes and/or morphological categories, include the following:

### 3.5.1 Grammatical change

Grammatical change (German *grammatischer Wechsel*) is the traditional name for the alternation of word-internal voiceless and voiced fricatives (or stops derived from fricatives) under conditions originally governed by Verner’s Law (see §3.6.2): for example, *hafjan* “lift” versus *uf-haban* “lift up”; *fra-wairþan* “perish” versus *fra-wardjan* “destroy”; third singular *aih* [ɛ:h] “has” versus third plural *aigun* [ɛ:gun]. Voiced : voiceless pairs of this type are much rarer in Gothic than in the other early Germanic languages. But Gothic has a number of derivational suffixes which vary according to *Thurneysen’s Law*: a voiced fricative appears when the preceding syllable begins with a voiceless consonant, and vice versa: for example *aupida* “desert” versus *diupiþa* “depth”; *wulþags* “glorious” versus *stainahs* “stony”; *fraistubni* “temptation” versus *waldufni* “power”.

### 3.5.2 Ablaut

Ablaut, or apophony, is the system of morphologically governed vowel alternations inherited by Gothic and the other Germanic languages from Proto-Indo-European (PIE). The clearest examples are seen in the formation of the principal parts of strong verbs, as in *wairþan* (< PIE *\*wert-*; “e-grade”), *warþ* (< PIE *\*wort-*; “o-grade”), *waurþum* (< PIE *\*wrt-*; “zero-grade”), *waurþans* (likewise < PIE *\*wrt-*). But ablaut changes are also associated with other derivational and inflectional processes, ranging from the inflection of *n*-stem nouns (e.g., acc. sg. *auhsan* “ox” < pre-Germanic *\*ukson-*; dat. sg. *auhsin* < *\*uksen-*; gen. pl. *auhsne* < *\*uksn-*) to the formation of causatives from underlying strong verbs (e.g., *frawairþan* → *frawardjan*, *sitan* “sit” → *satjan* “set”).

### 3.5.3 Sievers' Law

Sievers' Law describes the regulated distribution – observable in both *ja*-stem nouns and adjectives, and in verbs with infinitives in *-jan* – of *-ji-* after “light” sequences (i.e., sequences of the form  $*-\check{V}C-$ ) and *-ei-* [i:] after “heavy” sequences (i.e., sequences of the form  $*-\bar{V}C-$  and  $*-VCC-$ ): e.g., *harjis* “army” versus *hairdeis* “shepherd”; third singular *satjīþ* “sets” versus *frawardeiþ* “destroys.” In its Proto-Indo-European form, Sievers' Law mandated the realization of underlying  $*-y-$  as  $*-iy-$  after heavy sequences; the *-ei-* of *hairdeis* and *frawardeiþ* is the contraction product of pre-Germanic  $*-iji-$ .

### 3.5.4 Dental substitution

Suffix-initial *-d-* is replaced by *-s-* after an immediately preceding root-final *-t-* or *-d-*, or by *-t-* after any other root-final obstruent. In the former case the root-final *-t-* or *-d-* itself becomes *-s-*; in the latter case the root-final obstruent is represented by the corresponding voiceless fricative: for example, *witan* “know,” preterite *wissa*; *þaurban* “need,” preterite *þaurfta*; *magan* “be able,” preterite *mahta*. Contrast the “normal” pattern seen in *munan* “think,” preterite *munda*; *satjan*, preterite *satida*; etc. These alternations reflect the special treatment of dental + dental clusters in Proto-Indo-European, and the failure of voiceless stops to undergo the Germanic Consonant Shift (see §3.6.1) when preceded by an obstruent.

### 3.5.5 Clitic-related effects

Word-final *-s* usually becomes *-z-* before vowel-initial enclitics, especially *-(u)h* “and” and the relativizing particle *-ei*: e.g., *hvazuh* “each” < nominative singular masculine *hvas* “who” + *-uh* (cf. Lat. *quisque*), where the final *-s* is a devoiced etymological  $*-z$ ; and *þizei* “whose” < genitive singular masculine *þis* “his” + *-ei*, where the *-z* is analogical. Similar effects are seen in the behavior of prefixes; compare the variant forms in *us-hafjan* “lift up,” *uz-anan* “breathe out,” and *ur-reisan* “arise.” The final *-h* of *-(u)h* sometimes assimilates to a following *-þ-*, as in *wesunuhþan* (= *wesun-uh-þan*) “but there were,” *sumaiþþan* (= *sumai-h-þan*) “but some,” etc.

## 3.6 Diachronic developments

### 3.6.1 Grimm's Law

As a Germanic language, Gothic shared in the characteristic phonological developments that set Germanic apart from the rest of the Indo-European family. The most conspicuous sound change in the prehistory of Germanic was *Grimm's Law* or the *Germanic Consonant Shift*, which took place in three steps:

- (4) A. PIE voiceless stops  $*p$ ,  $*t$ ,  $*k̂$  (+  $*k$ ),<sup>1</sup>  $*k^w$  became the voiceless fricatives  $*f$ ,  $*þ$ ,  $*x$  (>  $h$ ),  $*x^w$  (>  $*h^w$ ) when not preceded by an obstruent
- B. PIE voiced stops  $*b$  (rare),  $*d$ ,  $*ǵ$  (+  $*g$ ),  $*g^w$  became the voiceless stops  $*p$ ,  $*t$ ,  $*k$ ,  $*k^w$
- C. PIE voiced aspirated stops  $*b^h$ ,  $*d^h$ ,  $*ǵ^h$  (+  $*g^h$ ),  $*g^wh$  became the voiced fricatives  $*ḅ$ ,  $*ḁ$ ,  $*ǵ$ ,  $*ǵ^w$ , which further developed to voiced stops in some environments



Examples are legion: compare (A) Go. *ƒotus* (Eng. *foot*), *prija* (Eng. *three*), *haur̥n* (Eng. *horn*), *hwata* (Eng. *what*) beside Lat. *pēs*, *trēs*, *cornu*, *quod*; (B) Go. *tunþus* (Eng. *tooth*), *kaurn* (Eng. *corn*), *qius* (Eng. *quick*) beside Lat. *dēns*, *grānum*, *uīuus* (< \**g<sup>w</sup>* īwos); (C) Go. *beitan* (Eng. *bite*), (*ga*)-*daursan* (Eng. *dare*), *gaitis* (Eng. *goat*), *warmjan* (Eng. *warm*, with *w*- < \**g<sup>w</sup>*-) beside Skt. *bhid-* “split,” *dhṛṣ-* “be bold,” Lat. *haedus* (< \**x*- < \**k<sup>h</sup>*- < \**ǵ<sup>h</sup>*-), Skt. *gharmá-* (< \**g<sup>w</sup>h*-) “hot drink.”

The voiceless stops, however, remained unchanged after \**s* (cf. Go. *steigan* “climb” beside Gk. στεῖχω (*steik<sup>h</sup>ō*) “id.”) or when preceded by another stop (cf. Go. *-haftis* “having, having taken” beside Lat. *captus* “taken”).

### 3.6.2 Verner’s Law

The Germanic Consonant Shift applied both word-initially and word-internally (Proto-Indo-European word-final stops were lost). In word-internal position, however, the voiceless fricatives produced by the shift, together with the inherited sibilant fricative \**s*, were potentially subject to *Verner’s Law*. The effect of this rule was to convert \**f*, \**p*, \**x*, \**x<sup>w</sup>*, and \**s* to the corresponding voiced fricatives \**b*, \**d*, \**ǵ*, \**ǵ<sup>w</sup>*, and \**z* when the preceding vowel *did not* bear the pre-Germanic (equivalent to the Proto-Indo-European) movable accent. Thus, the Proto-Indo-European word for “father,” which was accented on the second syllable (cf. Skt. *pitár-*, Gk. πατήρ (*patér*)), gave \**ƒapér* by Grimm’s Law and \**faðér* (> Go. *fadar*) by Verner’s Law, while the word for “brother,” which had initial accent (cf. Skt. *bhrátar-*, Gk. φρότηρ (*phrátēr*)), became \**brōþēr* by Grimm’s Law and retained its voiceless \**p-* in Gothic (*broþar*). Following the operation of Verner’s Law, the pre-Germanic system of “free” accent was replaced by the attested Germanic system of fixed initial stress (see §3.3), so that the original condition for the voicing of word-internal fricatives can no longer be detected synchronically in Gothic or in any other Germanic language.

### 3.6.3 Further obstruent developments

The obstruent system that emerged from the operation of Grimm’s and Verner’s Laws was subject to further changes within the Germanic period, notably the following:

1. The weakening of \**x* and \**x<sup>w</sup>* to \**h* and \**h<sup>w</sup>*.
2. The “strengthening” of \**b*, \**d*, \**ǵ*, and \**ǵ<sup>w</sup>* to stops after nasals and, at least in the case of \**b* and \**d*, word-initially.
3. The development of the fricative \**ǵ<sup>w</sup>* to \**w* in most remaining environments (though \**ǵ<sup>w</sup>* was dissimilated to \**ǵ* before a following \**u*; note the Gothic pair *magus* “boy” < \**mag<sup>w</sup>uz* vs. *mawi* “girl” < \**mag<sup>w</sup>ī*).
4. The change of \**s* to \**z*, regardless of the original position of the accent, in absolute final position.

The resulting Proto-Germanic system was hardly modified in Gothic at all, save by the introduction of final devoicing and by the substitution of [b], [d], [g] for [b̥], [d̥], [g̥] after non-nasal consonants (*waurd*, etc.; see §3.4.1).

### 3.6.4 Sonorant developments

The Proto-Indo-European consonant system also included the liquids \**r* and \**l*, the nasals \**m* and \**n* (the latter with a velar allophone [ŋ]), the glides \**y* and \**w*, and the three so-called laryngeals \**h<sub>1</sub>*, \**h<sub>2</sub>*, and \**h<sub>3</sub>*, of uncertain phonetic value. The liquids were preserved unchanged in Germanic and Gothic. This was also true of the nasals except before \**h*

and in absolute final position, where *\*-m* and *\*-n* fell together and eventually disappeared. But the fate of the glides *\*y* and *\*w* was more complicated. Word-initially and postconsonantally, *\*y* and *\*w* were preserved as Germanic *\*j* and *\*w*, respectively (cf. Go. *juk* [Eng. *yoke*], *winds* [Eng. *wind*] beside Lat. *iugum*, *uentus*). After vowels, however, there were two basic treatments:

1. Germanic *\*-Ø-* and *\*-w-*, respectively (cf. Go. *bau-an* “dwell” < *\*bhū-ye/o-*; *aiws* “age, time” beside Lat. *aeuom*). A specifically Gothic change subsequently deleted *\*-w-* after the rounded vowel *o* (cf. *stojan* “judge” < *\*stōwjan*, pret. *stauida* < *\*stōida* < *\*stōwida*).
2. Germanic *\*-jj-* and *\*-ww-*, respectively, whence Gothic *-ddj-* and *-ggw-*, respectively: e.g., Gmc. *\*twajjōn* “of two” (gen.), Go. *twaddje* (cf. Skt. *dvayoh* “id.”); Gmc. *\*trewwaz* “true,” Go. *triggws* (cf. Old Prussian *druwīt* “believe”). The seemingly irregular doubling or *Verschärfung* of *\*-y-* and *\*-w-* to *\*-jj-* and *\*-ww-* is now thought to reflect the original presence of a Proto-Indo-European laryngeal after the glide.

Apart from their role in *Verschärfung*, laryngeals had much the same treatment in Germanic as in the other Indo-European languages; their typical fate was to disappear with compensatory lengthening of an immediately preceding vocalic element in the same syllable. The vocalic element in question might be a vowel proper (*\*e*, *\*a*, etc.) or a syllabic liquid (*\*r̥*, *\*l̥*) or nasal (*\*ŋ̥*, *\*ŋ̥*) – the syllabic liquids or nasals being non-contrastive sounds which served in Proto-Indo-European as allophones of consonantal *\*r*, *\*l*, *\*m*, *\*n*.

### 3.6.5 Vocalic developments

#### 3.6.5.1 Proto-Indo-European

Following the loss of laryngeals, the Proto-Indo-European dialect ancestral to Germanic had five short and five long vowels:

(5)		Short		Long	
		<i>Front</i>	<i>Back</i>	<i>Front</i>	<i>Back</i>
	<i>High</i>	i	u	ī	ū
	<i>Mid</i>	e	o	ē	ō
	<i>Low</i>	a		ā	

(It is no longer customary to include a central mid vowel *\*ə* in the inventory of Proto-Indo-European short vowels. The sound denoted by this symbol in older handbooks was a subphonemic support vowel; cf., e.g., *\*ph<sub>2</sub>tér* [p<sub>h</sub>₂tér], which was eventually phonologized as /a/ in most Indo-European languages.) In addition, there were four short and four long syllabic liquids and nasals:

$$(6) \quad \text{r̥, l̥, m̥, ŋ̥} \quad \bar{\text{r}}, \bar{\text{l}}, \bar{\text{m}}, \bar{\text{ŋ}}$$

and six short and six long *i-* and *u-*diphthongs:

$$(7) \quad \begin{array}{cccccc} \text{ei} & \text{ai} & \text{oi} & \bar{\text{e}}\text{i} & \bar{\text{a}}\text{i} & \bar{\text{o}}\text{i} \\ \text{eu} & \text{au} & \text{ou} & \bar{\text{e}}\text{u} & \bar{\text{a}}\text{u} & \bar{\text{o}}\text{u} \end{array}$$

This is the inventory of syllabic nuclei that must be taken as the point of departure for the history of the Proto-Indo-European vowel system in Germanic.

#### 3.6.5.2 Proto-Germanic

The number of vowels and vowel-like elements was greatly reduced over the course of the three millennia or so that passed between dialectal Proto-Indo-European and

Proto-Germanic. An early development was the shortening of the long diphthongs and the long syllabic liquids and nasals, which merged with their short counterparts; syllabic liquids and nasals were subsequently eliminated altogether by the change of \*ʒ, \*ʒ̥, \*ŋ, \*ŋ̥ to the vowel + consonant sequences \*ur, \*ul, \*um, \*un: e.g., Gothic *fulls* “full” < \*fulnaz < \*p̥l̥nós < \*p̥lh₁-nó-s; *hund* “100” < \*hundan < \*k̥r̥ntóm; *haur̥n* “horn” < \*hurnan < \*k̥r̥nóm. Among the vowels proper, the \*a : \*o distinction was lost in both the long and short subsystems, the longs merging as \*ō (cf. Go. *broþar*, *bloma* “flower” beside Lat. *frāter*, *flōs*) and the shorts as \*a (cf. Go. *akrs* “field,” *ahtau* “eight” beside Lat. *ager*, *octō*). (It is interesting to note that a similar confusion of *a*- and *o*-vowels occurred in the neighboring Indo-European languages, Celtic and Balto-Slavic.) There was also a change of short \*e to \*i in certain environments: for example, before nasal clusters (\*-nt-, \*-mb-, etc.), and before an \*i in the next syllable (cf. Old High German *bintan*, Gothic *bindan* “bind” < \*b<sup>h</sup>énd<sup>h</sup>onom; OHG *ist*, Go. *ist* “is” < \*éstī; but OHG *geban*, Go. *giban* “give” < \*g<sup>h</sup>éb<sup>h</sup>onom; forms are cited from Old High German to show the still recoverable difference between Germanic \*e and \*i, which was effaced entirely in Gothic). These developments were paralleled in the treatment of the diphthongs: \*ai and \*oi merged as \*ai; \*au and \*ou merged as \*au; \*ei gave \*ī (i.e., /ii/, spelled <ei>; cf. Go. *steigan* [OHG *stigan*] beside Gk. στείχω (*steik<sup>h</sup>ō*)); and \*eu gave the new diphthong \*iu before an \*i in the following syllable (cf. OHG 3rd sg. *biutit* “offers” < Gmc. \*biudīþ, but inf. *beotan*, *biotan* < Gmc. \*beudan). Within the long vowel subsystem, \*ē was phonetically lowered to approximately the sound heard in English *sad* (i.e., [æ]), while the phonetic place of the old \*ē was taken over by a new vowel \*ē₂, of obscure origin.

The result of the foregoing, in the end, was the vowel system reconstructible for Proto-Germanic:

(8) Proto-Germanic monophthongs

	Short		Long	
	Front	Back	Front	Back
High	i	u	ī	ū
Mid	e	[o]	ē₂	ō
Low		a		ǣ

Some authorities set up a secondary short \*o for Proto-Germanic, but there is no evidence for such a vowel in the prehistory of Gothic, and it can equally well be explained as a common innovation of the North and West Germanic dialects. The low vowel \*ǣ is commonly also written \*ē or \*ē₁.

(9) Proto-Germanic diphthongs

- ai
- au
- eu
- iu

In addition, there were also nasalized \*ā<sup>N</sup>, \*ī<sup>N</sup>, \*ū<sup>N</sup>, and probably – at least in final syllables – other nasalized vowels as well. All were purely allophonic.

3.6.5.3 Gothic

The main Gothic innovations in the treatment of the Germanic short vowels were the complete merger of \*e and \*i as *i* (cf. Go. *giban* beside OHG *geban*, etc.) and the subsequent

creation of new low-mid vowels by “breaking” before *-r*, *-h*, and *-hv* (see §3.4.2). The long vowels were somewhat more extensively restructured, with *\*ē* and *\*ē<sub>2</sub>* falling together as the high-mid vowel written *e* (cf. Go. *her* “here” [OHG *her*, *hiar*] < *\*he<sub>2</sub>r*, identical in vocalism with first plural preterite *gebum* “we gave” [OHG *gābum*] < *\*gābum*), and a new *ā* joining the system through the denasalization of *\*ā<sup>N</sup>*. Here as in the shorts, the system was expanded by the addition of new low-mid vowels – this time through the monophthongization of *\*ai* and *\*au* (cf. §3.4.2). As a byproduct of the general shift of short *\*e* to *\*i*, the two remaining diphthongs, *\*eu* and *\*iu*, fell together as *\*iu* in Gothic (cf. *-biudan*, *-biudīþ* beside OHG *biotan*, *biutit*).

Gothic shows major changes vis-à-vis Proto-Germanic in its treatment of final syllables. Proto-Germanic generally preserved the vowels of late Proto-Indo-European final syllables intact; thus, for example, the *o*-stem nominative singular in *\*-os* was still *\*-az* in Proto-Germanic (cf. Runic Norse *-aR*; and see Ch. 10, §2.1), and the first singular present in *\*-ō* (< *\*-oh<sub>2</sub>*) remained as *\*-ō*. In addition to normal long and short endings, however, Proto-Germanic also had final syllables with hyperlong or “trimoric” long vowels; these mainly arose from prehistoric sequences of two vowels in hiatus (e.g., PGmc. *\*galikō* “similarly,” with trimoric or “circumflex” *\*-ō* from PIE *\*-o-h<sub>2</sub>ad*). Gothic is often said to have undergone a “law of three moras” or *Dreimorengesetz*, under which short vowels were lost (cf. nom. sg. *dags* “day” < *\*dagaz* in final syllables, normal (bimoric) long vowels were shortened (cf. 1st sg. *nima* “I take”), and trimoric long vowels became bimoric longs (cf. *galeiko*). But this generalization is not completely valid: *\*-u(-)* was never lost at all (cf. *sunus* (< *\*-uz*) “son,” *faihu* (< *\*-u*) “cattle”), and even bimoric long vowels retained their length before *\*-z* (acc. pl. *gibos* “gifts” < *\*-ōz* < late PIE *\*-ās* < *\*-ah<sub>2</sub>(m)s*). As in every other Germanic language, the *Auslautsgesetze* of Gothic still present many problems.

## 4. MORPHOLOGY

### 4.1 Nominal morphology

From a morphological point of view, Gothic is an averagely conservative older Indo-European language, similar in overall complexity to, e.g., Old Church Slavonic. Nouns come in three genders (masculine, feminine, neuter) and distinguish five cases (nominative, vocative, genitive, dative, accusative). There are singular and plural forms, but no dual (though the dual survives in personal pronouns; see §4.1.4). A number of features familiar from other Indo-European languages, such as the identity of the nominative and accusative cases in the neuter, and the identity of the nominative and vocative in the plural, appear in Gothic as well.

#### 4.1.1 Nominal case development

Proto-Indo-European had eight cases: nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative, genitive, locative, and vocative. Of these, the ablative was lost in Germanic (it survives in adverbs like Gothic *galeiko* “similarly”; see §4.3), and the dative and the locative merged to form the synchronic dative. The instrumental, which was still a separate case in Proto-Germanic, was absorbed by the dative in the post-Germanic history of Gothic; thus, a form which patterns as a dative in Gothic may in principle go back to a Proto-Indo-European dative, locative, or instrumental.

### 4.1.2 Nominal stem-classes

Gothic declensions are conveniently classified according to the original stem-final element, which is usually best preserved in the dative plural and/or accusative plural. The most important types, as in the other Germanic languages, are (i) *a*- and *ja*-stems; (ii) *ō*- and *jō*-stems; (iii) *i*-stems; (iv) *u*-stems (collectively termed *strong*); and (v) *n*-stems (traditionally termed *weak*). The basic paradigms are given in Table 9.2.

In the *ja*-stems, the difference between *hairdeis* and *harjis* is due to Sievers' Law (see §3.5.3). The endings of *i*-, *u*-, and *n*-stems show traces of stem-final ablaut: *anstim* : *anstais* : *ansteis* (< \**-ey-es*); *sunum* : *sunaus* : *sunīwe* (< \**-ew-ōm*); *guma* (< \**-ō(n)*) : *gumins* : *gumans*; and *namō* (< \**-ō(n)*) : *namins* : *namna*. Minor declensional types include relics of other consonant-stem classes, especially *r*- and *nt*-stems (e.g., *broþar*, gen. *broþrs*, nom. pl. *broþrjus*; *nasjands* “savior,” gen. *nasjandis*, nom. pl. *nasjands*).

#### 4.1.2.1 Ablaut and accent patterns

Proto-Indo-European nouns, with the exception of *o*-stems (> Gmc. (*j*)*a*-stems) and *ā*-stems (> Gmc. *ō*-stems), were characterized by complex alternations of ablaut and accent which affected the root, the derivational suffix that optionally followed the root, and the grammatical ending proper or *desinence*. Four or five such ablaut/accnt patterns can be reconstructed for stems containing a suffix (e.g., \**-t(e/o)r-*, \**-(e/o)n-*, \**-w(e/o)nt-*, \**-t(e/o)i-*, etc.). Thus, for example, the oldest recoverable declension of the Proto-Indo-European word for “father” (Go. *fadar*) was of the *hysterokinetic* type, with nominative singular \**ph<sub>2</sub>-tēr* (zero-grade root, accented *ē*-grade suffix, zero desinence), accusative singular \**ph<sub>2</sub>-tēr-ṃ* (accented *e*-grade suffix, invariant desinence), and genitive singular \**ph<sub>2</sub>-tr-és* (zero-grade suffix, accented *e*-grade desinence). Quite different from this was the declension of the word for “sowing, seed” (Go. *seþs*; *i*-stem), which was *proterokinetic*, with nominative singular \**séh<sub>1</sub>-ti-s*, accusative singular \**séh<sub>1</sub>-ti-m* (accented *e*-grade root, zero-grade suffix, invariant desinence), and genitive singular \**sh<sub>1</sub>-tēi-s* (zero-grade root, accented *e*-grade suffix, zero-grade desinence). Root nouns – nouns lacking a derivational suffix – displayed comparable inner-paradigmatic allomorphy, as in the Proto-Indo-European word for “foot” (Go. *foþus*): nominative singular \**pōd-s* (*ō*-grade root, invariant desinence), accusative singular \**pōd-ṃ* (*o*-grade root, invariant desinence), genitive singular \**pēd-s* (*e*-grade root, zero-grade desinence).

Little remains of this complexity in Germanic and Gothic. Root ablaut was almost completely abandoned within paradigms (*seþs* and *foþus* generalized the vocalism of the nominative singular), and suffixes and desinences fused to form what can be described synchronically as “*i*-stem endings,” “*u*-stem endings,” “*n*-stem endings,” etc. Only the *n*-stems, which underwent a period of great expansion in Germanic, retain something of the variety of Indo-European ablaut patterns, as can be seen by comparing the morphological differences between *guma*, *hairto*, and *namo* (see Table 9.2; the feminine *n*-stem types – *qino* and *managei* – are entirely a Germanic innovation).

#### 4.1.2.2 Gothic *ō*- and *jō*-stems

The Proto-Indo-European *o*- and *ā*-stems (i.e., thematic and *eh<sub>2</sub>*-stems respectively) lacked the ablaut alternations of the other stem-types – a fact no doubt partly responsible for their frequency and productivity around the family. In Gothic the *ō*-stems (< *ā*-stems) in particular retain a fairly transparent declension, with the historical desinences added to the still-preserved stem-vowel (e.g., dat. sg. *gibai* < \**-āi* < \**-eh<sub>2</sub>-ei*; nom. pl. *gibos* < \**-ās*

**Table 9.2 Gothic nominal stems**

*a-* and *ja-*stems (*hlaifs* [masc.] “bread,” *waurd* [neut.] “word,” *hairdeis* [masc.] “shepherd,” *harjis* [masc.] “army,” *kuni* [neut.] “race”):

Sg. <i>nom.</i>	hlaifs	waurd	hairdeis	harjis	kuni
<i>voc.</i>	hlaif	waurd	hairdi	hari	kuni
<i>gen.</i>	hlaibis	waurdis	hairdeis	harjis	kunjis
<i>dat.</i>	hlaiba	waurda	hairdja	harja	kunja
<i>acc.</i>	hlaif	waurd	hairdi	hari	kuni
Pl. <i>nom.</i>	hlaibos	waurda	hairdjos	harjos	kunja
<i>gen.</i>	hlaibe	waurde	hairdje	harje	kunje
<i>dat.</i>	hlaibam	waurdam	hairdjam	harjam	kunjam
<i>acc.</i>	hlaibans	waurda	hairdjans	harjans	kunja

*ō-* and *jō-*stems (*giba* [fem.] “gift,” *bandi* [fem.] “bond,” *mawi* [fem.] “girl”):

Sg. <i>nom.</i>	giba	bandi	mawi
<i>voc.</i>	giba	bandi	mawi
<i>gen.</i>	gibos	bandjos	maujos
<i>dat.</i>	gibai	bandjai	maujai
<i>acc.</i>	giba	bandja	mauja
Pl. <i>nom.</i>	gibos	bandjos	maujos
<i>gen.</i>	gibo	bandjo	maujo
<i>dat.</i>	gibom	bandjom	maujom
<i>acc.</i>	gibos	bandjos	maujos

*i-* and *u-*stems (*gasts* [masc.] “guest,” *ansts* [fem.] “favor,” *sunus* [masc.] “son”):

Sg. <i>nom.</i>	gasts	ansts	sunus
<i>voc.</i>	gast	ansts	sunau, -u
<i>gen.</i>	gastis	anstais	sunaus
<i>dat.</i>	gasta	anstai	sunau
<i>acc.</i>	gast	anst	sunu
Pl. <i>nom.</i>	gasteis	ansteis	sunjus
<i>gen.</i>	gaste	anste	sunuwe
<i>dat.</i>	gastim	anstim	sunum
<i>acc.</i>	gastins	anstins	sununs

*n-*stems (*guma* [masc.] “man,” *hairto* [neut.] “heart,” *namo* [neut.] “name,” *qino* [fem.] “woman,” *managei* [fem.] “multitude”):

Sg. <i>nom.</i>	guma	hairto	namo	qino	managei
<i>voc.</i>	guma	hairto	namo	qino	managei
<i>gen.</i>	gumins	hairtins	namins	qinons	manageins
<i>dat.</i>	gumin	hairtin	namin	qinon	managein
<i>acc.</i>	guman	hairto	namo	qinon	managein
Pl. <i>nom.</i>	gumans	hairtona	namna	qinons	manageins
<i>gen.</i>	gumane	hairtane	namne	qinono	manageino
<i>dat.</i>	gumam	hairtam	namnam	qinom	manageim
<i>acc.</i>	gumans	hairtona	namna	qinons	manageins

< \*-eh<sub>2</sub>-es; etc.). The *jō*-stems mostly follow the same pattern, but include the significant subtype represented by *mawi*, which historically contains an ablauting proterokinetic suffix \*-ī-/yā- < \*-ih<sub>2</sub>-/yeh<sub>2</sub>- (nom. sg. -i < \*-ih<sub>2</sub>, gen. sg. -jos < \*-yeh<sub>2</sub>-s; cf. Sanskrit nom. *devī* “goddess,” gen. *devyāś*; Greek nom. *τράπεζα*, gen. *τραπεζης*, see Ch. 2, §4.1.1.1).

#### 4.1.2.3 Gothic a- and ja-stems

The *a*- and *ja*-stems (continuing the Proto-Indo-European thematic stems) show greater phonetic erosion than the *ō*- and *jō*-stems, especially in the singular; thus, for example, the accusative singular in Germanic, \*-an (< PIE \*-om), was reduced to zero (Go. *dag*), while the corresponding sequence \*(i)jan (< \*(i)yom) was reduced to -i (*hari*, *hairdi*). In the genitive singular, Gothic -is (-jis, -eis) is a late borrowing from the pronominal declension (cf. gen. sg. *þis*, *hvis* < PIE \*tes(y)o, \*k<sup>w</sup>es(y)o); the other Germanic languages have forms pointing to \*-os(y)o.

### 4.1.3 Nominal endings

The historical endings proper show considerable phonetic reduction in Gothic: PIE \*-es gave -s in the nom. pl. *sunjus* (< \*-ew-es); PIE \*-i (locative) gave zero in the dative singular *gumin* (< \*-en-i); PIE \*-m gave zero in the masculine and feminine accusative singular of all stem-classes.

The endings of the dative plural and genitive plural call for special comment. The Gothic dative plural in -m continues the Proto-Germanic instrumental plural in \*-mi(z), which has close counterparts in Baltic (Lithuanian -mi) and Slavic (Old Church Slavic -mi), but contrasts with forms in \*-b<sup>h</sup>i(s) in the other Indo-European languages. The origin of the masculine and neuter genitive plural in -e is a mystery. Most feminines form their genitive plural in -o < \*-ōn < \*-ōm, and \*-ōm is the ending for all three genders in the other Germanic languages (cf. Old High German -o, Old Saxon -o, Old English -a, Old Icelandic -a) and elsewhere in Indo-European (cf. Latin -um, Greek -ων, etc.). The *e*-colored Gothic ending, presumably from \*-ēn, is an unexplained innovation.

### 4.1.4 Pronouns

Demonstrative and interrogative pronouns show points of contact with *a*- and *ō*-stem nouns, but with a great many idiosyncrasies (see §4.1.4.1). Below are given the paradigms of *sa* (masc.), *so* (fem.), *þata* (neut.) “this; the” (definite article) and *hwas*, *hvo*, *hva* “who, what.” Note the existence of a special instrumental form in the interrogative.

(10)		Masc.	Fem.	Neut.	Masc.	Fem.	Neut.
	Sg. nom.	sa	so	þata	hwas	hvo	hva
	gen.	þis	þizos	þis	hvis	*hvizos	hvis
	dat.	þamma	þizai	þamma	hamma	hvizai	hamma
	acc.	þana	þo	þata	hvana	hvo	hva
	instr.				(= dat.)	(= dat.)	hve
	Pl. nom.	þai	þos	þo			
	gen.	þize	þizo	þize			
	dat.	þaim	þaim	þaim			
	acc.	þans	þos	þo			

Based on these are the more emphatic demonstrative *sah*, *soh*, *þatuh* “this . . . here” and the indefinite *hvazuh*, *hvoh*, *hvah* “each,” which consist of the forms of *sa* and *hwas* followed by



-(u)h “and” (see §3.5.5). In lieu of a separate relative pronoun, Gothic uses *sa* with the conjunction *ei* “that” (nom. *saei*, *soei*, *þatei*, gen. *þizei*, *þizozei*, etc.). Other demonstratives, interrogatives, and indefinites, including *jains* “that . . . there,” *hvarjis* “which,” and *hvarjizuh* “each,” are declined as strong adjectives (see §4.1.5).

The personal pronoun of the third person is a weakened demonstrative with separate masculine, feminine, and neuter forms; the declension is similar to that of *sa* and *hvas*. The first- and second-person pronouns, on the other hand, are morphologically unique. Here and here alone in Gothic declension, there are separate dual forms.

(11)		“he”	“she”	“it”	“I”	“you”
	Sg. nom.	is	si	ita	ik	þu
	gen.	is	izos	is	meina	þeina
	dat.	imma	izai	imma	mis	þus
	acc.	ina	ija	ita	mik	þuk
	Du. nom.				wit	jut (?)
	gen.				ugkara	igqara
	dat.				ugkis	igqis
	acc.				ugkis	igqis
	Pl. nom.	eis	ijos	ija	weis	jus
	gen.	ize	izo	ize	unsara	izwara
	dat.	im	im	im	uns, unsis	izwis
	acc.	ins	ijos	ija	uns, unsis	izwis

There is also a third-person reflexive pronoun, indifferent to gender and number, with gen. *seina*, dat. *sis*, and acc. *sik*.

#### 4.1.4.1 Pronominal idiosyncrasies

Although many of the Proto-Indo-European demonstrative and interrogative pronouns also had stems in \*-o- (masculine and neuter) and \*-ā- (feminine), their declension was marked by a number of idiosyncratic features. Thus, the Gothic pronominal dative plural in *-aim* (*þaim*, etc.) shows the normal dative plural marker *-m* (see §4.1.3) added to an augmented stem form *þai-*, which otherwise surfaces without a case ending as the nominative plural masculine form. Other stem-extending elements in the Gothic pronominal system are *-mm-* < \*-zm- (dat. sg. masc./neut. *þamma*; cf. Sanskrit *tasmai*) and *-z-* (gen. sg. fem. *þizos*, dat. sg. fem. *þizai*, gen. pl. masc./neut. *þize*; cf. Sanskrit *tasyās*, *tasyai*, *teṣām*). The accusative singular masculine in *-ana* (*þana*, etc.) shows the addition of a particle *-a* < \*-ō to the old accusative in \*-n. The peculiar nominative singular forms *sa* (masc.) and *so* (fem.) go back to a defective stem \*so-, fused into a single paradigm with \*to- since Indo-European times. The use of a suppletive stem in the nominative singular of the unmarked Proto-Indo-European demonstrative recalls the contrast between *ik* versus *mik*, *mis*, *meina*, or *weis* versus *uns(is)*, *unsara* in the personal pronouns.

#### 4.1.5 Adjectives

Gothic shares with the other Germanic languages the peculiarity of declining adjectives in two ways. The *weak* declension is used with the demonstrative/article *sa*; the forms are the same as those of the masculine, feminine, and neuter *n*-stem nouns *guma*, *qino*, and *hairto* (see Table 9.2): for example, *sa blinda magus* “the blind boy,” genitive *þis blindins magaus*, etc.; *so blindo mawi* “the blind girl,” genitive *þizos blindons maujos*, etc. The *strong*



declension appears in all other environments. The endings are basically those of ordinary (*j*)*a*- and (*j*)*ō*-stems, but with a heavy admixture of pronominal forms:

(12)		<i>Masc.</i>	<i>Fem.</i>	<i>Neut.</i>
	<i>Sg. nom.</i>	blinds	blinda	blind, blindata
	<i>gen.</i>	blindis	blindaizos	blindis
	<i>dat.</i>	blindamma	blindai	blindamma
	<i>acc.</i>	blindana	blinda	blind, blindata
	<i>Pl. nom.</i>	blindai	blindos	blinda
	<i>gen.</i>	blindaize	blindaizo	blindaize
	<i>dat.</i>	blindaim	blindaim	blindaim
	<i>acc.</i>	blindans	blindos	blinda

The strong:weak distinction between adjectives is one of the most characteristic features of Germanic. The strong adjectives continue the basic type, inherited from Proto-Indo-European. Their declension, originally no different from that of (*j*)*a*-, (*j*)*ō*-, *i*- or *u*-stem nouns, was heavily influenced by the demonstrative pronouns before the breakup of Proto-Germanic. The weak adjectives, on the other hand, are a completely new category. The suffix *\*(e/o)n-* originally served to form “individualized” derived nouns of the type Latin *Cato*, gen. *-ōnis*, literally “Smarty,” or Greek Στράβων (*Strábōn*), gen. *-ωνος* (*-ōnos*), literally “Squint-eyes,” from *o*-stem adjectives (cf. *catus* “smart,” στράβος (*strabós*) “squint-eyed”). The pre-Germanic ancestor of a phrase like Gothic *sa blinda magus* thus probably once meant something like “the blind person, a boy.” But by late Proto-Germanic and Gothic, the distribution of the two types had become completely grammaticalized, the weak form being *de rigueur* after the definite article and the strong form being almost mandatory elsewhere.

In principle, most adjectives also form a comparative and a superlative. The comparative is always declined according to the weak paradigm; it is marked by a suffix *-iza* (nom. sg. masc.; fem. *-izei*, neut. *-izo*) or, less frequently, *-oza* (*-ozei*, *-ozo*). The superlative ends in *-ists* or *-osts* and is declined both strong and weak: for example, *manags* “much”: comparative *managiza*: superlative *managists*; *arms* “miserable”: *\*armoza*: *armosts*. A few common adjectives have suppletive comparative and superlative forms, e.g., *goþs* “good”: *batiza* “better”: *batists* “best”; *mikils* “large”: *maiza* “larger”: *maists* “largest.”

## 4.2 Verbal morphology

The Gothic verbal system is similar to that of the other Germanic languages, but with a number of conspicuously archaic features. In addition to the singular and plural, there are special dual forms in the first and second persons. The only tenses are the present and preterite; to express future time Gothic uses the simple present rather than a periphrastic construction like English *I will go* or German *ich werde gehen*. No purely morphological distinction is made between forms meaning “I went” and “I was going/used to go,” or between “I went” and “I have gone.” The active:passive distinction, marked periphrastically in the other early Germanic languages, is expressed in Gothic, at least in the present tense, with the aid of a special inflected passive. There are three moods – indicative, optative, and imperative; the imperative is remarkable for having third- as well as second-person forms. The nonfinite forms of the verb, consisting of an infinitive, a present active participle, and a past passive participle, conform to the Germanic standard.

### 4.2.1 Strong versus weak

As in the declensional system (see §§4.1.2, 4.1.5), most verbs can be classified as *strong* or *weak*. The terms are traditional, going back to Jakob Grimm in the early nineteenth century. (As used by Grimm, “strong” referred to vowel-stem nouns and vowel-changing verbs, while “weak” referred to consonant-stem [typically *n*-stem] nouns and consonant-suffixing verbs). Formally, verbs are distinguished as strong or weak depending on how they form their preterite and past participle. Strong verbs, which are almost always primary, are characterized by a participle in *-an(a)-* (nom. sg. masc. *-ans*) and by ablaut or reduplication (occasionally both) in the preterite. Weak verbs, typically denominative or derived from another verb, are marked everywhere outside the present by a dental suffix, normally *-d-*.

To generate the complete paradigm of a normal strong or weak verb, it is necessary to know four potentially different stem-forms, corresponding to the four *principal parts* of traditional grammars:

1. The *infinitive* (e.g., *niman* “take,” *satjan* “set”), reflecting the stem of the present indicative and optative (active and passive), and of the imperative and present participle;
2. The *first singular preterite* (e.g., *nam*, *satida*), underlying the rest of the preterite singular;
3. The *first plural preterite* (e.g., *nemum*, *satidedum*), underlying the rest of the preterite plural and dual, along with the preterite optative;
4. The *past participle* (e.g., *numans*, *satips* [stem *satida-*]).

### 4.2.2 Strong verbs

The principal parts of strong verbs fall into seven well-defined patterns or classes. The first six are characterized by ablaut:

(13) Class	Infinitive		1st sg. pret.	1st pl. pret.	Past part.
<i>I</i>	<i>beitan</i>	“bite”	<i>bait</i>	<i>bitum</i>	<i>bitans</i>
<i>II</i>	<i>-biudan</i>	“offer”	<i>-baup</i>	<i>-budum</i>	<i>-budans</i>
<i>III</i>	<i>bindan</i>	“bind”	<i>band</i>	<i>bundum</i>	<i>bundans</i>
	<i>wairþan</i>	“become”	<i>warþ</i>	<i>waurþum</i>	<i>waurþans</i>
<i>IV</i>	<i>niman</i>	“take”	<i>nam</i>	<i>nemum</i>	<i>numans</i>
	<i>bairan</i>	“bear”	<i>bar</i>	<i>berum</i>	<i>bourans</i>
<i>V</i>	<i>giban</i>	“give”	<i>gaf</i>	<i>gebum</i>	<i>gibans</i>
<i>VI</i>	<i>faran</i>	“go”	<i>for</i>	<i>forum</i>	<i>farans</i>

(*wairþan*, *waurþans*, etc.; *bairan*, *bourans*, etc. show the breaking of *i* to *ai* and *u* to *au*; see §3.4.2).

Class VII is reduplicated, usually without ablaut; the reduplication vowel is *-ai-* (= short /*ε*/; see §3.2.1):

(14) <i>VII</i>	<i>skaidan</i>	“separate”	<i>skaiskaip</i>	<i>skaiskaidum</i>	<i>skaidans</i>
	<i>aukan</i>	“increase”	<i>ai auk</i>	<i>ai aukum</i>	<i>aukans</i>
	<i>letan</i>	“let”	<i>lailot</i>	<i>lailotum</i>	<i>letans</i>
	<i>hwopan</i>	“boast”	<i>hwaihvop</i>	<i>hwaihvopum</i>	<i>hwopans</i>

A very few strong verbs have infinitives in *-jan* or *-nan*, which affects their conjugation in the present but not in the preterite or past participle: for example, *bidjan* – *baþ* – *bedum* – *bidans*

“request”; *hafjan* – *hof* – *hofum* – *hafans* “lift”; *frahnan* – *frah* – *frehum* – *frahans* “ask” (note also *standan* – *stop* – *stopum*, with infixed *-n-* in the present stem).

The class membership of a given strong verb is generally predictable from the vocalism and root structure of the infinitive. Note that classes III–V are in complementary distribution: in class III the root ends in a nasal + obstruent or liquid + obstruent cluster; in class IV it ends in a single liquid or nasal; in class V it ends in a stop or fricative. Class VII includes all strong verbs with *ai*, *au*, *e* (cf. also *saian* “sow” < \**sean* [see §3.4.3], pret. *saiso*) or *o* in the infinitive.

### 4.2.3 Weak verbs

The weak verbs are likewise traditionally grouped into classes:

(15) Class	Infinitive		1st sg. pret.	1st pl. pret.	Past part.
<i>I</i>	<i>satjan</i>	“set”	<i>satida</i>	<i>satidedum</i>	<i>satiþs</i>
<i>II</i>	<i>salbon</i>	“anoint”	<i>salboda</i>	<i>salbodedum</i>	<i>salboþs</i>
<i>III</i>	<i>haban</i>	“have”	<i>habaida</i>	<i>habaidedum</i>	<i>habaiþs</i>
<i>IV</i>	<i>fullnan</i>	“become full”	<i>fullnoda</i>	<i>fullnodedum</i>	—

A small number of weak verbs with infinitives in *-jan*, such as *waurkjan*, pret. *waurhta* “make” and *þagkjan*, pret. *þahta* (< \**-anh-*) “think,” lack the union vowel *-i-* in the preterite and past participle. Class I weak verbs with a heavy first syllable (e.g., *hausjan* “hear”) or more than one syllable before the infinitive ending (e.g., *mikiljan* “magnify”) substitute *-ei-* for *-ji-* in the present, exactly as in *ja*-stem nouns (3rd sg. *hauseiþ*, *mikileiþ*). Class IV weak verbs in *-nan*, which are intransitive, lack past participles; their inflection is like that of *niman* in the present but like that of *salbon* in the preterite (see Table 9.3). The mood sign of the optative is /i:/, which appears as *-ei-* in the preterite and contracts with the preceding stem vowel to give *-ai-* (*nimai-*, *satjai-*, etc.) or *-o-* (*salbo-*) in the present.

### 4.2.4 Preterito-presents

By far the largest class of irregular verbs are the so-called *preterito-presents* – verbs whose presents resemble strong preterites and whose synchronic preterites are weak. Given below are representative forms of *witan* “know,” *munan* “think,” *magan* “be able,” and *þaurban* “need”:

(16) <i>Pres. indic. sg.</i>	1	<i>wait</i>	<i>man</i>	<i>mag</i>	<i>þarf</i>
	2	<i>waist</i>	<i>mant</i>	<i>magt</i>	<i>þarft</i>
	3	<i>wait</i>	<i>man</i>	<i>mag</i>	<i>þarf</i>
	<i>pl. 1</i>	<i>witum</i>	<i>munum</i>	<i>magum</i>	<i>þaurbum</i>
	2	<i>wituþ</i>	<i>munuþ</i>	<i>maguþ</i>	<i>þaurbuþ</i>
	3	<i>witun</i>	<i>munun</i>	<i>magun</i>	<i>þaurbun</i>
	<i>opt. sg. 2</i>	<i>witeis</i>	<i>muneis</i>	<i>mageis</i>	<i>þaurbeis</i>
	3	<i>witi</i>	<i>muni</i>	<i>magi</i>	<i>þaurbi</i>
	<i>part.</i>	<i>witands,</i>	<i>munands,</i>	<i>magands,</i>	<i>þaurbands,</i>
		<i>fem. -ei</i>	<i>fem. -ei</i>	<i>fem. -ei</i>	<i>fem. -ei</i>
	<i>Pret. indic. sg. 1</i>	<i>wissa</i>	<i>munda</i>	<i>mahta</i>	<i>þaurfta</i>
	<i>pl. 1</i>	<i>wissedum</i>	<i>mundedum</i>	<i>mahtedum</i>	<i>þaurftedum</i>

Also irregular are *wisan* – *was* – *wesum* “be,” with a suppletive and anomalous present (sg. *im*, *is*, *ist*, pl. *sijum*, *sijuþ*, *sind*; opt. *sijai-*), and *wiljan* – *wilda* – *wildedum* “want,” which

**Table 9.3 Gothic strong and weak verb paradigms**

			Active					
<i>Pres. indic.</i>	sg.	1	nima	satja	salbo	haba		
		2	nimis	satjis	salbos	habais		
		3	nimiþ	satjiþ	salboþ	habaiþ		
	du.	1	nimos	satjos	salbos	habos		
		2	nimats	satjats	salbots	habats		
		3	nimand	satjand	salbond	haband		
	<i>Pres. opt.</i>	sg.	1	nimau	satjau	salbo	habau	
			2	nimais	satjais	salbos	habais	
			3	nimai	satjai	salbo	habai	
du.		1	nimaiwa	satjaiwa	salbowa (?)	habaiwa		
		2	nimats	satjats	salbots	habats		
		3	nimaina	satjaina	salbona	habaina		
<i>Pres. impv.</i>		sg.	2	nim	satei	salbo	habai	
			3	nimadau	satjadau	salbodau	habadau	
			3	nimandau	satjandau	salbondau	habandau	
	du.	2	nimats	satjats	salbots	habats		
		1	nimam	satjam	salbom	habam		
		2	nimiþ	satjiþ	salboþ	habaiþ		
	pl.	1	nimama	satjama	salboma	habama		
		2	nimiþ	satjiþ	salboþ	habaiþ		
		3	nimandau	satjandau	salbondau	habandau		
<i>Pres. part.</i>		nimands, f. -ei	satjands, f. -ei	salbonds, f. -ei	habands, f. -ei			
<i>Pres. inf.</i>		niman	satjan	salbon	haban			
<i>Pret. indic.</i>	sg.	1	nam	satida	salboda	habaida		
		2	namt	satides	salbodes	habaides		
		3	nam	satida	salboda	habaida		
	du.	1	nemu	satidedu	salbodedu	habaidedu		
		2	nemuts	satideduts	salbodeduts	habaideduts		
		3	nemum	satidedum	salbodedum	habaidedum		
	pl.	1	nemum	satidedum	salbodedum	habaidedum		
		2	nemuþ	satideduþ	salbodeduþ	habaideduþ		
		3	nemun	satidedun	salbodedun	habaidedun		
<i>Pret. opt.</i>	sg.	1	nemjau	satidedjau	salbodedjau	habaidedjau		
		2	nemeis	satidedeis	salbodedeis	habaidedeis		
		3	nemi	satidedi	salbodedi	habaidedi		
	du.	1	nemeiwa	satidedeiwa	salbodedeiwa	habaidedeiwa		
		2	nemeits	satidedeits	salbodedeits	habaidedeits		
		3	nemeima	satidedeima	salbodedeima	habaidedeima		
	pl.	1	nemeiþ	satidedeiþ	salbodedeiþ	habaidedeiþ		
		2	nemeina	satidedeina	salbodedeina	habaidedeina		
		3	nemeina	satidedeina	salbodedeina	habaidedeina		
			Passive					
<i>Pres. indic.</i>	sg.	1	nimada	satjada	salboda	habada		
		2	nimaza	satjaza	salboza	habaza		
		3	nimada	satjada	salboda	habada		
	pl.	1–3	nimanda	satjanda	salbonda	habanda		
		<i>Pres. opt.</i>	sg.	1	nimaidau	satjaidau	salbodau	habaidau
				2	nimaizau	satjaizau	salbozau	habaizau
3	nimaidau			satjaidau	salbodau	habaidau		
pl.	1–3	nimaindau	satjaindau	salbondau	habandau			
	<i>Pres. part.</i>		numans, fem. -a	satipþ, fem. -da	salboþþ, fem. -da	habaiþþ, fem. -da		

inflects in the present like a preterite optative (*wiljau*, *wileis*, etc.). Note, too, the irregular preterite *iddja*, pl. *iddjedum*, suppletting *gaggan* “go.”

#### 4.2.5 Verb endings

The inflection of the individual moods and tenses in Gothic conforms closely to what would be expected in an archaic Germanic language. In the present system, both strong and (class I) weak verbs preserve the inherited distribution of the thematic vowel (-*i*- in *nimis*, *nimiþ*; -*a*- in *nimam*, *nimand*, part. *nimands*; -*a* < \**-ō* (< \**-o-h*<sub>2</sub>) in 1st sg. *nima*). The only athematic present to survive in Gothic was the verb meaning “to be,” which preserves a trace of the athematic ending \**-mi* in the first singular form *im* (on Indo-European thematic and athematic morphology see Appendix 1, §3.4). The optative of an athematic present underlies the paradigm of *wiljan* (see §4.2.4).

The verb endings themselves are well anchored in Indo-European comparative grammar, including those of the present optative, which differ in part from the terminations of the indicative (e.g., 1st sg. *nimau* < \**-oih*<sub>1</sub>-*ŋ*, 3rd sg. *nimai* < \**-oih*<sub>1</sub>-*t*, with the Proto-Indo-European *secondary* endings). In the other Gothic modal category, the imperative (no trace of the Indo-European subjunctive survives in Gothic), the second singular and second plural go back to well-established preforms in \**-e* and \**-ete*, while the third-person forms in *-adau* and *-andau* have close, though not exact, counterparts in Sanskrit and Hittite. The special passive forms *nimada* (3rd sg., extended to the 1st sg.), *nimaza* (2nd sg.), and *nimanda* (3rd pl., extended to the 1st, 2nd pl.) continue earlier middles in \**-toi*, \**-soi*, and \**-ntoi*, with exact equivalents in Greek and Sanskrit. A significant innovation of the passive in Gothic and Germanic was the generalization of the *a*-colored variant of the thematic vowel throughout the paradigm.

All preterites are inflected alike outside the indicative singular. The plural (and dual) endings contain the vowel *-u-*, which arose by regular sound change in the third plural (*-un* < \**-nt*) and was morphologically extended as a union vowel. In the singular, strong preterites and preterito-presents have the reduced endings of the Proto-Indo-European perfect (1st sg. \**-a* (< \**-h*<sub>2</sub>*a*), 2nd sg. \**-t(h)a* (< \**-th*<sub>2</sub>*a*), 3rd sg. \**-e*). The singular of the weak preterite has special endings, of which only the first-person form in \**-(d)ōn* is wholly uncontroversial.

#### 4.2.6 Diachrony of the Gothic verb

The Gothic verbal system retains a number of significant archaisms vis-à-vis the other Germanic languages, such as the inflected passive, the third-person imperative, and the special dual forms of the first and second person. Yet in comparison with the Indo-European parent language, Gothic shares the characteristic Germanic features of *reduction* and *regularization*: reduction in the number of grammatical categories, and regularization in the number of ways that these categories can be expressed.

##### 4.2.6.1 Tense-aspect

The Proto-Indo-European tense-aspect system included three preterite-like formations: (i) the *imperfect*, built to the present stem and sharing its imperfective (iterative, durative, etc.) nuance; (ii) the *aorist*, formed from a distinct stem and denoting a punctual action or process; and (iii) the *perfect*, likewise formed from its own stem and properly denoting the state resulting from a process. Proto-Germanic reduced this system more drastically than most of the other early Indo-European languages, completely eliminating the imperfect and aorist and converting the perfect into a simple preterite.

## 4.2.6.2 Strong verbs

The past tense which arose from the Indo-European perfect was the Germanic and Gothic *strong preterite*, which betrays many traces of its origin. The perfect in Proto-Indo-European was characterized by reduplication with \*-e-, special endings, and *o* : zero ablaut; the accent was on the *o*-grade root in the indicative singular and on the endings elsewhere. In general, Germanic gave up reduplication in verbs where ablaut was preserved, but retained reduplication in the minority of cases where ablaut distinctions were impossible. The strong preterites of classes I–III illustrate the typical treatment:

(17) Class	PIE (sg./pl.)	Germanic	Gothic
I	*b <sup>h</sup> eb <sup>h</sup> óid-/*b <sup>h</sup> eb <sup>h</sup> id-'	*bait-/*bit-	bait/bitum
II	*b <sup>h</sup> eb <sup>h</sup> óud <sup>h</sup> -/*b <sup>h</sup> eb <sup>h</sup> ud <sup>h</sup> -'	*baud-/*bud-	baup/budum
III	*b <sup>h</sup> eb <sup>h</sup> ónd <sup>h</sup> -/*b <sup>h</sup> eb <sup>h</sup> nd <sup>h</sup> -'	*band-/*bund-	band/bundum
	*wewórt-/*wewǵt-'	*warþ-/*wurd-	warþ/waurþum

There is a complication in classes IV (*niman*, *bairan*) and V (*giban*), where the singular has the regular *o*-grade (*nam*, *bar*, *gaf* < \*(*ne*)*nóm*-, \*(*b<sup>h</sup>e*)*b<sup>h</sup>ór*-, \*(*g<sup>h</sup>e*)*g<sup>h</sup>ób<sup>h</sup>*-), but the plural, which would have been inconvenient or unpronounceable with the expected zero-grade (\**nmum*, \**brum*, \**gbum*), inserts an \*-ǣ- of uncertain origin (*nemum*, *berum*, *gebum*). Class VI is deviant; the nucleus consists of verbs which had Proto-Indo-European \*-a- in the present and made their perfects by lengthening \*-a- to \*-ā- (cf. Go. *skaban* “scrape,” pret. *skof*, *skobum*, matching Lat. *scabō* “scratch,” perf. *scābī*). Class VII, with retained reduplication, is largely composed of verbs which were incapable of ablaut, or whose vocalism in the perfect fell together with their vocalism in the present (*skaidan* – *skaiskaiþ*, *aukan* – *aiauk*, etc.). Ablaut and reduplication aside, a peculiarity of the strong preterite in Gothic is the elimination of inherited *grammatischer Wechsel* (see §3.5.1) between singular and plural. Note the contrast between, on the one hand, Gothic *warþ* – *waurþum*, with *-þ-* in both singular and plural, and, on the other, Old English *wearþ* – *wurdon*, with etymological \*-ǣ- in the plural.

The regularization and regimentation characteristic of the preterite are equally typical of the present (and of the derived present infinitive, which continues a Proto-Indo-European verbal noun in \*-ono-; Go. *bairan* = Skt. *bhāraṇam* “(act of) carrying”). Of the numerous ways that roots could form presents in Proto-Indo-European, one was greatly extended at the expense of the others in Germanic – the *primary thematic* type, marked by accented *e*-grade of the root and the suffix-like thematic vowel \*-e/o- (\*-e- before obstruents, \*-o- elsewhere). Thus, the standardly cited examples *beitan* (< \**b<sup>h</sup>éide/o-*), *biudan* (< \**b<sup>h</sup>éud<sup>h</sup>e/o-*), *bindan* (< \**b<sup>h</sup>énd<sup>h</sup>e/o-*), *niman* (< \**néme/o-*), and *giban* (< \**g<sup>h</sup>ébe/o-*) all go back to *e*-grade thematic preforms; the comparative evidence, however, indicates that at least \**b<sup>h</sup>éid-* “split” and \**b<sup>h</sup>éud<sup>h</sup>-* “awake” formed their presents differently in Proto-Indo-European (cf. Lat. *fi-n-dō*, Skt. *budh-ya-te*). In classes I–V the monotony of the usual pattern is broken only by a handful of old *ye/o-* and *ne/o-* presents like *bidjan* and *fraiḥnan* (see §4.2.2). Even the more seriously aberrant classes VI and VII, consisting of inherited *o*-grade presents (e.g., *faran*) and verbs with inherent *a*-vocalism (*skaban*, etc.), have been considerably normalized.

The past participle of strong verbs goes back to a zero-grade verbal adjective in \*-ana- < \*-onó-, which was generalized at the expense of the competing participial suffix \*-tó-. Classes I–III thus show the same vocalism in the participle as in the preterite plural (*bitans*, *-budans*, *bundans*, *waurþans*). In classes IV and V, where the vocalism of the preterite plural is an innovation (Go. *nemum*, *gebum*, etc.), the vowel of the participle is secondary as well (*numans*, *gibans*). The pattern of the non-ablauting verbs of class VII, which have the same

vowel in the participle as in the present (*skaiþans*, *haitans*, etc.), was copied in class VI (*farans*).

#### 4.2.6.3 Weak verbs

The two most important classes of weak verbs, represented by *satjan* (class I) and *salbon* (class II), go back to Proto-Indo-European presents in *\*-eye/o-* and *\*-āye/o-* (earlier *\*-eh<sub>2</sub>ye/o-*), respectively. The suffix *\*-eye/o-* made causatives and denominatives in the parent language; typical Gothic reflexes are *satjan* itself (< *\*sod-éye/o-*) and *fulljan* “fill (tr.)”. Proto-Indo-European *\*-āye/o-* made both denominatives like *salbon* itself (< *salba* “unguent”) and iteratives of the type *hvarbon* “walk back and forth” (< *hvaiban* “walk”).

Since derived verbs had no perfects in Proto-Indo-European, they lacked ablauting or reduplicated preterites in Germanic. New preterites were therefore needed, and these were of a characteristic innovated type, marked by an added dental element. The origin of this formation, the *weak preterite*, is the most widely discussed morphological problem in Germanic. Although there is no solution that is generally agreed upon, many arguments favor the old view that the weak preterite goes back to a periphrastic formation involving the verb “to do” (Gmc. *\*dōn*, pret. *\*ded-/dāēd-*). Particularly striking is the resemblance of the Gothic plural forms in *-dedum*, *-deduþ*, *-dedun* to the Old High German free-standing preterite plural *tātum*, *tātut*, *tātun* “we, you, they did.” The “long” endings *-dedum*, *-deduþ*, and so forth are a Gothic specialty; the other Germanic languages simplified *\*-dāēd-* to *\*-d-* under the influence of the singular.

The *\*-da-* of the weak past participle goes back to PIE *\*-tó-*, which was favored over *\*-ana-* < *\*-ono-* because of its resemblance – probably originally accidental – to the preterite marker *\*-d(āēd)-*. The vowel that preceded the participial suffix was extracted from the stem of the (pre-Germanic) present: class I presents in *\*-eye/o-* were given participles in *\*-e-tó-* (Go. *satīþs* < *\*satidaz* < *\*sod-e-tó-*) and class II presents in *\*-āye/o-* were given participles in *\*-ā-tó-* (Go. *salboþs* < *\*salbōdaz* < *\*solp-ā-tó-*). The pattern of employing *\*-e-* (> Gmc. *\*-i-*) and *\*-ā-* (> Gmc. *\*-ō-*) as “linking vowels” before the dental of the participle eventually became characteristic of the preterite proper as well (cf. Go. *satida*, *satidedum* and *salboda*, *salbodedum*).

The stage was thus set for two further developments:

1. The weak verbs of class III, which were marked by an etymologically obscure diphthong *\*-ai-* in some of their present forms (cf. Go. *habaiþ* “has”), extended this element to the preterite and past participle (cf. Go. *habaiþ* – *habaida* – *habaiþs*).
2. The preterito-presents (see §4.2.4) – old stative perfects that escaped the normal Germanic development of the perfect to a preterite – were provided with weak preterites based on their inherited participles in *\*-tó-* (cf. Go. *witan*, part. *\*wissa-* (< *\*wid-tó-*), pret. *wissa*; *þaurban*, part. *þaurfts*, pret. *þaurfta*).

### 4.3 Adverbs

Gothic adverbs are productively made from adjectives by means of the suffixes *-ba*, of obscure origin (e.g., *bairhtaba* “brightly” from *bairhts* “bright”) and *-o*, historically the ending of the *a*-stem ablative singular (e.g., *galeiko* “similarly” from *galeiks* “similar”). Adverbs of location are commonly associated in semantically related groups, as, for example, *þar* – *þadei* – *þapro* “there” – “thither” – “thence”; *inna* – *inn* – *innapro*, *innana* “within” – “to within” – “from within.” Like adjectives, adverbs can have comparatives and superlatives;



the comparative form ends in *-is* (e.g., *airis* “earlier,” *hauhis* “higher”), showing a more archaic variant of the suffix (from PIE *\*-yes-/-yos-/-is-*) than the *n*-extended form found in adjectives (see §4.1.5).

#### 4.4 Numerals

The *numerals* in Gothic present a characteristic mixture of inflected and invariable forms. The numbers from 1 (*ains*) to 3 (*\*þreis*) are adjectives with masculine, feminine, and neuter forms; 2 (*twai*) has the notable genitive form *twaddje* (< *\*twajj-*), apparently the replacement of an old genitive dual. From 4 (*fidwor*) onwards there are no gender distinctions and only optional inflection for case. Noteworthy among the higher numerals are the decades from 20 to 60, which incorporate the *u*-stem noun *tigus* (cf. *taihun* “10”) “a tenfold” (e.g., *twai tigjus* “20,” etc.). Both 100 (*hund*) and 1,000 (*þusundi*) are nouns.

## 5. SYNTAX

### 5.1 Syntax and the Greek text

Because almost the whole Gothic corpus is a literal translation from the Greek, it is extremely difficult to tell how much of Wulfila’s syntax is authentically Gothic and how much is Greek in Gothic disguise. Thus, for example, the supposed dative absolute construction seen in the recurrent phrase (*at*) *andanahtja waurþanamma* “when evening had come on” has often been dismissed as artificial because the dative absolute in Gothic invariably translates a similar construction – the genitive absolute – in Greek (οφίας γενομένης).

Relatively safe conclusions can be drawn, on the other hand, about the placement of enclitic particles and pronouns, which frequently pattern quite differently in the two languages. In Mark 8.23, for example, where the Greek reads

- (18) ἐπηρώτα      αὐτόν    εἰ    τι            βλέπει  
 he was asking    him    if    anything    he sees  
 “He asked him whether he saw anything”

the Gothic has

- (19) *frah ina ga-u-hva-sehvi*

with both the question particle *-u* (here = “whether”) and the indefinite/interrogative pronoun *hva* (here = “anything”) infixing into the compound verb *ga-sailvan* “see” (perfective). Such *tnesis*, or “cutting,” of a compound is an Indo-European feature that was lost from New Testament Greek, but remains fairly common in Gothic, especially when the inserted element is *-uh* “and” (cf. *uz-uh-hof* “and he raised” < *us-hafjan* “raise”).

### 5.2 Word order

Larger-scale questions about word order are harder to answer. The best evidence comes from cases where a word-for-word translation was simply impossible. Thus, in II Timothy 3.12, the Greek mediopassive verb διωχθήσονται “they will suffer persecution” could only be rendered by a two-word sequence in Gothic, with separate words for “will suffer” (*winnand*) and “persecution” (*wrakos*). Here and in similar cases, Wulfila put the object before the verb



(*wrakos winnand*); when the object was a pronoun, on the other hand, he put the verb first (cf. Matthew 27.5 ἀπήγξατο “he hanged himself,” rendered *ushaihah sik* in Gothic). Occasional details like these, gleaned from a minute comparison of the Greek and Gothic texts, provide our safest points of reference for the study of Gothic syntax.

### 5.3 Prepositions

Gothic has a full complement of *prepositions*, some of which govern the dative (e.g., *mīþ* “with,” *us* “out of,” *fram* “from”), some the accusative (e.g., *faur* “for,” *and* “along,” *þairh* “through”), and some more than one case, including the genitive (e.g., *ana* “at” [+ dat.], “to” [+ acc.]; *in* “in” [+ dat.], “into” [+ acc.], “on account of” [+ gen.]).

As in most early Indo-European languages, the inventory of prepositions overlaps considerably with the set of *preverbs* – preposition-like elements optionally prefixed to verbs to form compounds (e.g., *ana-biudan* “command,” *faur-biudan* “forbid”; *af-niman* “take away,” *and-niman* “receive”). Although prepositions and preverbs can be traced historically to a single category, the two are synchronically quite distinct in Gothic; thus, for example, the common preverbs *fra-* (sometimes meaning “away, forth”) and *ga-* (sometimes meaning “together” and sometimes merely perfectivizing) lack prepositional counterparts. As in the oldest Greek and Sanskrit, verbal compounds in Gothic sometimes display *tmesis* – the interposition of a restricted range of words and particles between the verb and prefix: for example, *ga-u-hva-selvi* “whether he might have seen anything” (*ga-sailvan* “see” [perfective], *-u* = question particle, *hva* = indefinite/interrogative pronoun); *uz-uh-hof* “and he raised” (*us-haffan* “raise,” *-uh* “and”). Phrase-internal facts like these are among our safest points of reference for the study of Gothic syntax.

### 5.4 Conjunctions

Gothic retains the inherited enclitic *-(u)h* (PIE *\*-k<sup>w</sup>e*) “and”; the normal free-standing word for “and” is *jah* (< *\*yo-k<sup>w</sup>e*), with cognates elsewhere in Germanic. The ubiquitous subordinating conjunction is *ei*, which in isolation introduces purpose clauses and which combines with other words to form complex conjunctions of the type *þatei* “that,” *akei* “but,” *faurþizei* “before,” *mīþþanei* “while,” and so forth. Other common conjunctions include *aīþþau* “or,” *auk* “for,” *iþ* “but,” and *unte* “until,” *swe* “as,” and *þau* “than,” all inherited or composed of inherited materials.

#### Note

1. Germanic belongs to the *centum* division of IE languages, in which the PIE “palatals” *\*k̑, \*g̑, \*gh̑* and the less common “velars” *\*k, \*g, \*gh* fell together into a single velar series.

#### Bibliography

- Bammesberger, A. 1986–1990. *Untersuchungen zur vergleichenden Grammatik der germanischen Sprachen*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.
- Bennett, W. 1980. *An Introduction to the Gothic Language*. New York: Modern Language Association of America.
- Braune, W. and E. Ebbinghaus. 1981. *Gotische Grammatik* (19th edition). Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Jasanoff, J. 1994. “Germanic.” In F. Bader (ed.), *Langues indo-européennes*. Paris: CNRS Editions.
- Krahe, H. and E. Seebold. 1967. *Historische Laut- und Formenlehre des Gotischen* (2nd edition). Heidelberg: Carl Winter.

- Krahe, H. and W. Meid. 1967–1969. *Germanische Sprachwissenschaft* (7th edition). Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Krause, W. 1968. *Handbuch des Gotischen* (3rd edition). Munich: Beck.
- Lehmann, W. 1986. *A Gothic Etymological Dictionary* (based on third edition of S. Feist, *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der gotischen Sprache*). Leiden: Brill.
- Mossé, F. 1956. *Manuel de la langue gotique: grammaire, textes, notes, glossaire* (2nd edition). Paris: Aubier.
- Robinson, O. 1992. *Old English and its Closest Relatives*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Seebold, E. 1970. *Vergleichendes und etymologisches Wörterbuch der germanischen starken Verben*. The Hague/Paris: Mouton.
- Streitberg, W. 1965. *Die gotische Bibel. I. Teil: Text* (5th edition). Heidelberg: Carl Winter.