

XIX.—*The Origin and Formation of the Gothic Tongues, but particularly the Anglo-Saxon.* By the Rev J. BOSWORTH, M. A. F. A. S., Member of the Royal Society of Literature, Honorary Member of the Copenhagen Society for Ancient Northern Literature, &c.; and Vicar of Little Horwood, Bucks.

I SHALL not stop to prove that the European Languages of the Scythian, Teutonic, or Gothic stock, are related to those of India and Persia, but take it for granted you will allow, that the stream of population, which, about the seventh century before the Christian æra, came out of Asia into Europe, over the Kimmerian Bosphorus, brought with it the primitive tongue, from which the more recent northern languages have been derived.\* Though I have given a table of these languages in “the Elements of the Anglo-Saxon,” I shall here lay before you the table of my friend, Professor Rask, of Copenhagen, as in some points, it is more systematic than mine.

## GOTHIC.

SCANDINAVIAN BRANCH.	GERMANIC, OR TEUTONIC BRANCH,		
Ancient Scandinavian, or Islandic, which was spoken in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, Greenland, Ferro Isles, Shetland, and Orkney Isles, and, for a time, at the Court of Russia.	Very extensive in two subdivisions, being all six distinct languages of ancient Germany.		
	1. Upper Dialect.		2. Lower Dialect.
Modern Islandic, scarcely distinguishable from the Ancient Swedish and Danish.	Mæso-Gothic, Alemanic, Frisic, Old Saxon, Anglo-Saxon, and Francic.		
Modern Swedish.	High Dutch, or German, & some other dialects.		Low German. Dutch.
Modern Danish.			English. Low Scotch.

The Anglo-Saxon, though not a primitive language, must be interesting to every intelligent Englishman, as it is the parent of his own tongue.

\* See Undergellse om det gamle Nordishe eller Islandshe Sprogs Oprindelse af R. R. Rask. Copenhagen, 1818, 8vo.; Herod. Melp. sec. 5, 6, 7, 11.; Turner's Hist. of Anglo-Saxons, 3rd edit. 8vo. vol. i. p. 95.

It boasts of no meretricious ornaments, but for strength and the philosophical manner of its structure, it is inferior to few, and, therefore, deserves the careful attention of every philologist. Some knowledge of the general formation of languages, as well as of those which flow from the Gothic, may be acquired from an intimate acquaintance with the structure of the Anglo-Saxon.

In investigating the origin of language, we must observe, that a knowledge of things is conveyed to the mind, through the medium of the five senses, but chiefly by the sight. An idea, or image of a visible object is formed in the mind, by means of the eye, and the word which, when written or spoken, conveys this image of the thing to the mind, is called a *Noun*. The general outline, or form of an object would be first impressed on the mind; nouns, therefore, appear to be the primitive words in language.\* Nouns which are pronounced by a single impulse of the voice, and, therefore, called monosyllables, were probably first formed; as,

Æc, ac, *an oak*; Ʒer, wer, *a man*; Mod, mod, *the mind*.

Compound nouns, in Saxon, often consist of two, or more, independent and significant words; as,

Æc, ac, *an oak*; corn, a corn; accorn, accorn, *a corn of the oak, an acorn*.

Ʒer, wer, *a man*; heorð, heord, *an herd*; Ʒerheorð, werheord, *an herd's man*.

Ʒin, win, *wine*; treow, treow, *tree*; Ʒintreow, wintreow, *a vine*.

Ea, ea, *water*; lanð, land, *land*; Ealand, ealand, *an island*.

From these few examples, it will be evident that those words, which are generally considered primitive, in the present English, are in reality

† Many eminent philologists have been of a different opinion. See Bishop of Salisbury's *Essay on the Study of Antiquities*, 2nd edit. p. 89.; Anselm Bayley's *Introduction to Languages*, p. 73, &c. They say 𐌳𐌹, dæg, is *a fish*, from 𐌳𐌹, dæg, *to multiply, or increase*; but would not the image, or general figure of the fish be formed on the retina, and from thence be conveyed to the mind, and a monosyllabic sound representing that image, be uttered before the property of its great increase could be observed? I should then rather say, that 𐌳𐌹, dæg, *to act, as a fish, to increase, or multiply*, was formed from 𐌳𐌹, dæg, *a fish*; for the fish must often have been seen, and pointed out by a name, before its property of great increase had been noticed.

expressive Saxon compounds ; as, *Accorn*, accorn, *a corn of the oak* ; and *Ealand*, ealand, *a water-land, or an island*. But the use of Saxon in ascertaining the true meaning of English words, will be best seen in explaining a few of those terminations which appear to many to be inexplicable. The Saxon will unfold the mystery, and prove that many English terminations are either the whole or part of a significant Saxon word ; *dom*, *dom*, signifies *judgment, right* ; words ending in *dom* have this signification ; as, *cýnedom*, *cynedom*, *a king's right, or kingdom* ; composed of *cýne*, *cyne*, *a king*, and *dom*, *dom*. *Ric*, *ric*, *dominion*, and *biŕceop*, *bisceop*, *a bishop*, make *biŕceoppic*, *bisceopric*, *a bishop's dominion, or bishopric*. *Þaðe*, *hade*, *office, state*, and *cild*, (pronounced *child*,) *a child*, make *cildhaðe*, *cildhade*, *a child's state, or childhood*. *Scýne*, *scyre*, *shire, share*, and *preost*, *a priest*, make *preostŕcýne*, *preostscyre*, *a priest's share or parish*. *Er*, *er*, *per*, *wer*, *a man*, and *feorm*, *a farm*, make *feormer*, *feormer*, *a man who farms, a farmer*.

Verbs appear to be derived from Nouns. Every Noun, or name of a thing, which has an existence, must have either *an action, or a state of being*, and the word which expresses *that action, or state of being*, is denominated a *Verb*. After the general outline of an object was formed in the mind, the attention would be fixed upon its *action, or state of being* ; and, therefore, Verbs were formed subsequently to Nouns. Verbs are often Nouns applied in a verbal sense ; as, in Hebrew,

*דב*, *dëb*, *a bear* ; *דב*, *dëb*, *he acts as a bear, he murmurs, or grumbles*.

*כבש*, *këbës*, *a lamb* ; *כבש*, *këbës*, *it acts as a lamb, it is subject, or humble*.

*מלך*, *mëlëk*, *a king* ; *מלך*, *mëlëk*, *he acts as a king, he reigns, or rules*.

*נר*, *nër*, *a river* ; *נר*, *nër*, *it acts as a river, it flows*.

Examples occur in Anglo-Saxon ; as,

*Mæg*, *mæg*, *power* ; *Mæg*, *mæg*, *to act with power, to be able, may*.

*Mot*, *mot*, *an assembly* ; *mot*, *mot*, *to act as people in an assembly, to assemble, to meet*.

*Teon*, *teon*, *an accusation* ; *teon*, *teon*, *to act with accusation, to accuse*.

Examples also occur in English ; *aš*, *a fear to fear* ; *a sleep, to sleep* ; *a dream, to dream*.

That Verbs are derived from Nouns admits of ample illustration from

most languages, but the more ancient and simple the language is, the more satisfactory and convincing will the examples prove. In the Oriental languages many examples are found: it will be sufficient to quote a few from the Hebrew.

אֵר, *ār*, a river; אָרַר, *ārēr*, it acts as a river, it flows, flows away, or destroys.

אָח, *āck*, a brother; אָחַךְ, *āckē*, he acts as a brother, he joins, consociates.

אֵפ, *āp*, heat, anger; אָפַךְ, *āpē*, it acts as heat, it bakes.

אֵשׁ, *ās*, fire, wrath; אָשַׁשׁ, *āsēs*, it acts as fire, it consumes, he is wrath.

בֵּן, *bēn*, a son; בָּנָה, *bēnē*, he acts as a son, he builds up, supports his father's house.

דָּל, *dēl*, poor; דָּלָה, *dēlē*, he is in the state of the poor, he is exhausted, lean.

כֶּר, *kēr*, circuit; כִּרְכַּר, *kērķēr*, he goes quickly in circles, he dances round.

Instances of Verbs formed from Nouns, are also numerous in Greek; they are formed by  $\omega$ , the last letter in  $\epsilon\gamma\omega$ , *ēgō*, I; as,

Δουλος, *doulos*, a slave; δουλευω, *douleuō*, slave I, or I enslave.

Βιος, *bios*, life, βιοω, *bioō*, life I, I live.

Ἀβροτη, *abrotē*, night; ἀβροτεω, *abroteō*, night I, I benight, I err.

Σαλος, *salos*, the sea; σαλευω, *saleuō*, sea I, I agitate.

Ψυχη, *psuchē*, a soul; ψυχωω, *psuchoō*, soul I, I soul, or enliven.

Ὀιμη, *oimē*, a way; οιμαω, *oimaō*, way I, I make way, or advance.

Examples of Verbs formed from Nouns are numerous in the Gothic tongues, but particularly in Anglo-Saxon, as the greatest part of Saxon Verbs are formed from Nouns by the addition of the syllables *an*, *ian*, or *gan*, probably formed from—

Ānan, *anan*, or *an*, *an*, to give, to add; *anend*, *anend*, giving; *anod*, *anod*, given, &c.

Īrangan, *gangan*, or *gan*, *gan*, to go; *ganzenð*, *gangend*, going; *ganzeð*, *ganged*, gone.

Āgan, *agan*, to possess, to have; *agend*, *agend*, having; *agæð*, *agæð*, had.

The terminations derived from these Verbs are added to Nouns, and give a verbal signification ; as,

Dæl, dæl, *a part* ; ðælan, dælan, *to give a part, to divide.*

Feorþm, feorþm, *food* ; feorþmān, feorþman *to have food, to feed, or farm.*

Fefereþ, fefereþ, *a fever* ; fefereþgan, fefereþgan, *to have a fever.*

Þit, wit, *wisdom* ; þitan, witan, *to give knowledge, to know.*

Mæso-Gothic Verbs are formed in the same manner ; as,

**MATS**, mats, *meat* ; **MATGAN**, matgan, *to give meat, to eat.*

**NAMQ**, name, *a name* ; **NAMGAN**, namgan, *to give a name, to name.*

**SJAT**, salt, *salt* ; **SJATGAN**, saltgan, *to give salt, to season.*

**hAUKN**, hauru, *a horn* ; **hAUKNGAN**, haurngan, *to give the horn, to celebrate with horn trumpet, to praise.*

Adjectives are formed from the two preceding classes of words ; that is, from Nouns or Verbs. Some Nouns are used as adjectives without any alteration ; as,

Deop, deop, *the deep, the sea* ; ðeop, deop, *deep.*

Lað, lath, *evil* ; lað, lath, *pernicious.*

Genuine Adjectives are formed by adding to Nouns and Verbs the terminating syllables an, an ; en, en ; eþ, ed ; end, end ; ig, ig ; ic, isc, &c. These are probably derived from an, an ; ican, ican ; *to give, to add, to join* ; as,

Ærc, æsc, *an ask* ; en, en, *add, give, join* ; ærcen, æscen, *ask, add, or join, something* ; as, ærcen treop, æscen treow, *an ash tree.*

Golþ, gold, *gold* ; en, en, *add, give, join* ; golþen, golden, *golden.*

Lyn, lyn, *flax* ; en, en, *add, &c.* ; linen, linen, *flaxen.*

Blod, blod, *blood* ; ig, ig, *join, &c.* ; blodig, blodig, *bloody.*

Þit, wit, *wisdom* ; ig, ig, *join, &c.* ; þitig, wutig, *wise, witty.*

Þrincan, drincan, *to drink* ; end, end, *join, &c.* ; þrincend, drincend, *drinking.*

Here we see the true meaning of the English Adjectives ending in *en* and *y* ; as, *blood, blood-y* ; *gold, gold-en* ; that is, *add, or join something, to bloody, golden, such as hand* ; making *bloody hand, &c.*

Adjectives are formed from Nouns and Verbs by the addition of other syllables ; as,

Þer, wer, *a man*, lic, lic, *like* ; þerlic, werlic, *manlike, manly*.

Lufe, lufe, *love* ; lice, lice, *like* ; luflice, luflice, *lovelike, amiable*.

Þynne, wynne, *pleasure* ; rum, sum, *some part* ; þynrum winsum, *some pleasure, joyful*.

Þync, wyrk, *work* ; rum, sum, *some* ; þyncrum, wyrsum, *laborious*.

Tunȝ, tung, *tongue* ; full, full, *plenty* ; tunȝful, tungful, *loquacious*.

Þærtn, wæstm, *fruit* ; bærn, bærn, *producing* ; þærtnbærn, wæstm-bærn, *fruitful*.

Lufe, lufe, *love* ; tyme, tyme, *teem* ; luf-tyme, luftyme, *pleasant*.

ġoð, God, *God* ; cunð, cunð, *born* ; ġoðcunð, godcunð, *divine*.

Æe, æ, *law* ; fært, fært, *fast, fixed* ; æfært, æfært, *fixed in the law, pious*.

Fæðer, fæðer, *father*, leaſ, leas, *lost, less* ; fæðerleaſ, fæðerleas, *fatherless*.

We cannot fail to observe, that what are now used as adjective terminations, are, in reality, significant words, or fragments of such words in Saxon.

The comparative terminations on, or ; an, ar ; en, er ; and, by transposition, þe, re, are from an, ar, or æn, ær, *before*, in regard to time, and then to quality and the superlative ar-t, ast or ært, æst, *first* ; as,

Ā, a, *time*, an, ar, æn, ær, *before time, before* ; ar-t, ast, ært, æst, *first time, foremost*.

Þiſ, wiſ, *wise* ; Þiſær, wiſær, *before in wisdom, wiser* ; Þiſært, wiſært, *first in wisdom, wisest*.

Those Adjectives which are now considered irregular, were once formed by the preceding rule ; as,

Bet, bet, *good* ; betern, beter, *better* ; bet-rt, bet-st, *bet-st, best*.

Þoe, woe, *bad* ; þoe, wore, þoſſ, wors, *worse* ; þoſſrt, worst, *worst*.

Ma, ma, *much* ; mæne, mære, *more* ; mært, mært, *most*.

Pronouns are thought to be formed from the fragments of Verbs and Nouns. The Pronouns he, he ; hit, hit ; þe, the ; and þe, se, may, perhaps, have their origin from a Verb ; as,

PRESENT.—Þatan, hatan, *to call, to say*. PERFECT.—Þe, he, heo, heo, *called, said, he*; hæτ, hæτ, hit, hit, *it, said*.

PRESENT.—Ðean, thean, *to say*. PERFECT.—Ða, tha, þeo, theo, *said, the*; þæt, that, *said, that*.

Adverbs are formed by constantly using Nouns in certain cases, or from Verbs; as,

Þpilum, hwilum, *awhile, now*; the dative case of hpile, hwile, *time, moment*.

Ðanceŕ, thances, *freely, gratis*; the genitive case of þanc, thanc, *thank, favour*.

Ġet, get, *get*; the imperative mood of ġetan, getan, *to get*.

Lang, lang, *long*; the imperative mood of langan, *to prolong*.

Prepositions and Conjunctions are generally formed from Verbs; as

Ġemanġ, gemang, *among*; from ġemenġan, gemengan, *to mix*.

Þiþutan, withutan, *without*; from þiþutan, wirthutan, *to be out*.

Eac, eac, *also, and*; from eacan, eachan, *to add*.

Ġiŕ, gif, *if*; from ġiŕan, gifan, *to give*.

I have thus briefly traced the formation of the Anglo-Saxon language, that its philosophical structure and great utility, in an etymological point of view, might be more apparent. The amazing extent and facility of forming many very expressive compound words, from a few simple terms, must attract the notice of every Saxon student. Thus we have a Verb combined with Prepositions.

Standen, standen, *to stand*.

Āġen-ŕtandan, agen-standan, *to stand against, oppose*.

Ānd-ŕtandan, and-standan, *to stand back, resist*.

Of-ŕtandan, of-standan, *to stand off, tarry behind*.

Under-ŕtandan, under-standan, *to stand under, bear, to know, or understand*.

Þiþ-ŕtandan, with-standan, *to stand against, withstand, oppose*.

The Anglo-Saxons, like other Gothic nations, were remarkable for combining several short significant words to express any complex idea. Instead of adopting technical terms from other languages, it was their usual practice to translate them by a simple combination of the radical

words, taken from their own nervous language. Hence, for the word Grammar, the Saxons used the expressive term böc-cpæp̃t, boc-craft, *book-craft*; composed of böc, boc, *a book*. and cpæp̃t, cræft, *craft, art, knowledge*; tungol-cpæp̃tīz, tungol-craftig, *star-crafty*, or an astronomer, which word we have adopted from the Greek ἀστρον, *a star*, and νόμος, *a law, or rule*. Þinberia, winberia, *a wine berry, or grape*. Nih̃tbut-terpleze, nihtbutterfleye, *a night butterfly, blatta, or moth*. Indigenous Saxon words were formed in the same manner; thus, Staþol-fæp̃ton, stathol-fæston, *to confirm or fix firmly*, is composed of Staþol, stathol, *a foundation*, fæp̃t, fæst, *firm, fast*, and an, an, *to give*.