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Gothic

Introduction – Part 1: Linguistic Affiliations and External History
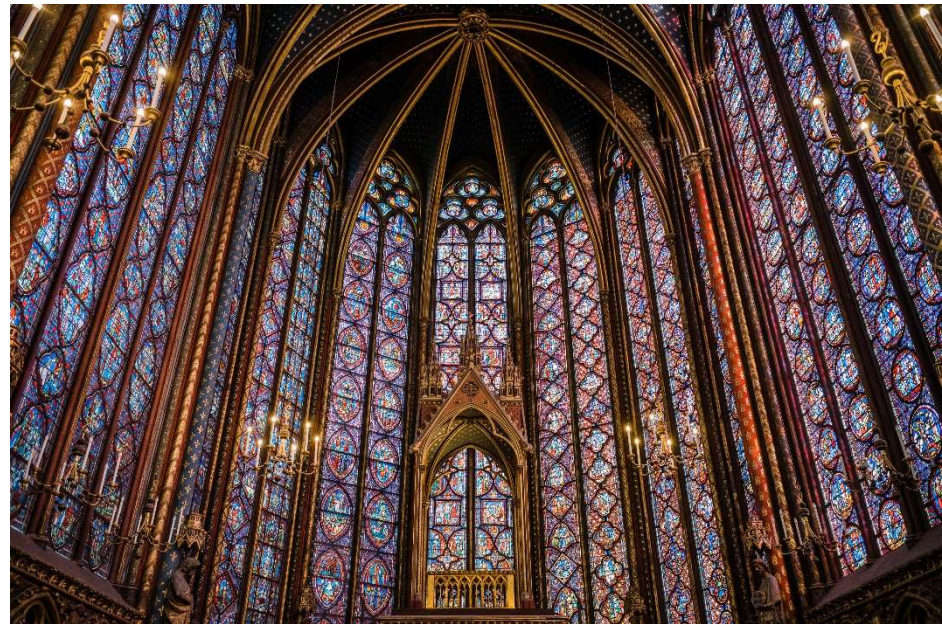
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Roadmap

- What is Gothic?

- Linguistic History of Gothic

- Linguistic Relationships: Genetic and External

- External History of the Goths

What is Gothic?

- **Gothic** is the oldest attested language (mostly 4th c. CE) of the **Germanic** branch of the Indo-European family.

- It is the only substantially attested **East Germanic** language.

- Corpus consists largely of a translation (Greek-to-Gothic) of the biblical New Testament, attributed to the bishop **Wulfila**.

- Primary manuscript, the *Codex Argenteus*, accessible in published form since 1655.

- **Grammatical Typology**: broadly similar to other old Germanic languages (Old High German, Old English, Old Norse).

- **External History**: extensive contact with the Roman Empire from the 3rd c. CE (Romania, Ukraine); leading role in 4th / 5th c. wars; Gothic kingdoms in Italy, Iberia in 6th-8th c.
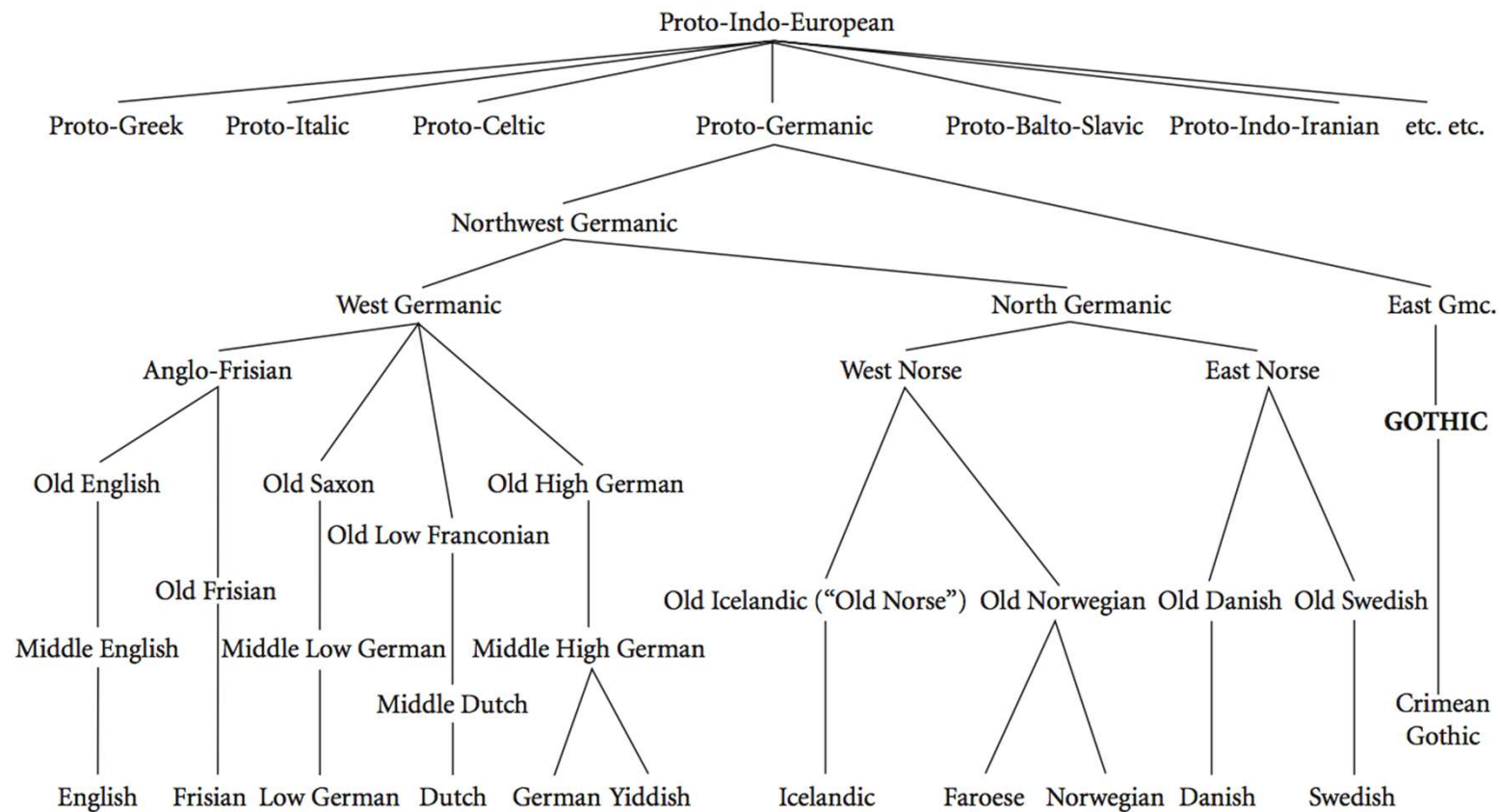
What Gothic is not...

Linguistic History of Gothic

- Earliest substantively attested Germanic language.
    - Only well-attested East Germanic language.
- The language is a "snapshot" from the middle of the 4th c. CE.
    - Biblical translation was produced in the 4th c. CE.
    - Some shorter and fragmentary texts date to the 5th and 6th c. CE.
- Gothic was extinct in Western and Central Europe by the 8th c. CE, at latest.
- In the Ukraine, communities of Gothic speakers may have existed into the 17th or 18th century.
    - *Vita* of St. Cyril (9th c.) mentions Gothic as a liturgical language in the Crimea.
    - Wordlist of "Crimean Gothic" collected in the 16th c. – probably not a direct descendent of earlier Gothic.
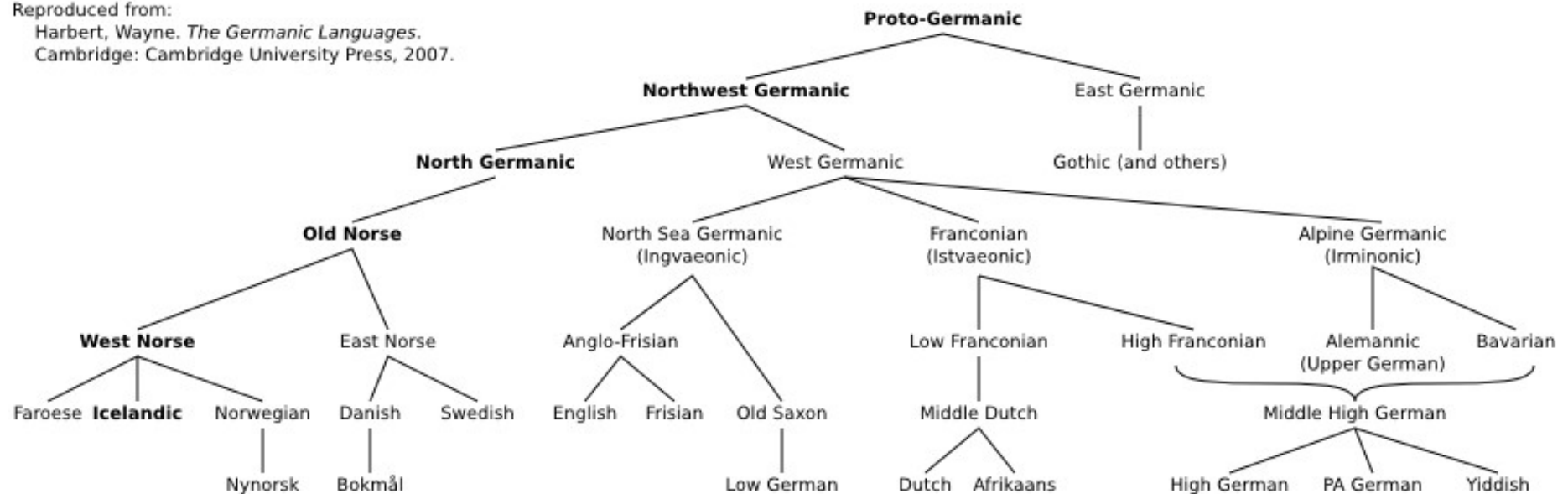
Gothic in the Germanic Family

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- Also East Germanic: Burgundian and Vandalic.
- Vandalic evidence points to a language similar to but distinct from Gothic (Onesti Fthc.).

Reproduced from:
Harbert, Wayne. *The Germanic Languages.*
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Northeast or Northwest Germanic? SD3

- Default Assumption: three independent Germanic branches (East, West, North).

- Evidence for a common Northeast Germanic:

  - "Holtzmann's Law": PGmc. *[jː] and *[wː] > Goth. *ddj* and *ggw*, Old Norse *ggj* and *ggv* (Gothic *triggwa*, Old Norse *tryggva* 'loyalty')
  - 2SG.PST ending /-t/ (Gothic *gaft*, Old Norse *gaft* 'gave').

- Connection to West Germanic: higher degree of lexical similarity (Mańczak 1984).

- In favor of Northwest Germanic:

  - Rhotacism: PGmc. */z/ > /r/
  - PGmc. */ē$_1$/ > /ā/
  - Preterite of Class VII Strong Verbs lacks reduplication.

- Northwest Germanic credible; East plus another branch not very.

SD3   I'm not a big fan of titles up there
Saverio Dalpedri; 28.07.2019

External Linguistic Contacts

- Extensive evidence for contact with Latin and Greek.
  - Lexical fields: Christian religion, products of the Mediterranean world.
  - Religion: *aiwaggeljo* 'gospel', *diabulus* 'devil'
  - Products: *alew* '(olive) oil'
  - Often originally Greek words have a Latin form (see above).
  - But some originally Latin words have a Greek form (*laigaion* < Gk. *legeṓn* < Lat. *legiō* 'legion)
- Credible: contact with West Germanic, but difficult to substantiate.
  - Especially high degree of lexical similarity between Gothic and Old High German might be evidence for contact.
- Geographically possible: contact with Proto-Slavic and Iranian languages.
  - Conversely: possible Gothic loanwords in Slavic and Baltic.
  - PSlv. **bjōda* 'bowl' < Goth. *biuda;* PSlv. *bōkū* 'letter' < Goth. *boko*.

Whence the Goths?

- Generally undisputed: Gothic speakers present in areas along the northwestern Black Sea from the 3rd c. CE.
- Entirely unclear: where Gothic speakers were present in earlier centuries.
- Jordanes (6th c. CE, active in Byzantium): Goths originated in Scandinavia (''Scandza'') and migrated to "Gothiscandza".
  - Jordanes, *De origines actibusque Getarum*, Chapter 4, 25:
    Ex hac igitur Scandza insula quasi officina gentium aut certe velut vagina nationum cum rege suo nomina Berig Gothi quondam memorantur egressi: qui ut primum e navibus exientes terras attigerunt, ilico nomen loci dederunt. Nam odieque illic, ut fertur, Gothiscandza vocatur.
  - Onomastic evidence from Scandinavian place names: island of *Gotland*, region of *Götaland* in southern Sweden.
- Gothiscandza: possibly associated with the Wielbark culture (1-4th c. CE) along the Vistula.
- Good archeological evidence for population movements in area northeast of the Danube in the 2nd and early 3rd c. CE.

Whence the Goths?

Key:
Green: Götaland

Pink: Gotland

Red: Wielbark Culture

Orange: Chernyakov Culture

Blue: Roman Empire

Goths in the 3rd Century

- From the middle of the 3rd c. CE, incursions of Goths southward into Dacia and the Balkans.
- In 249-251, a Gothic and Scythian army led by Cniva invaded Dacia and Moesia.
  - Danube was crossed, cities of Marcianopolis and Philippopolis besieged.
  - Roman army massively defeated at the Battle of Abritus (Summer 251); Emperor Decius killed.
- 267-269: Naval invasion of the Black Sea and Aegean coasts.

  - Gothic army soundly defeated at Naissos (Niš) by Claudius II in 269.
  - Incursions largely abate until the mid-4th c. CE.

GOTHIC INVASIONS OF 267-269 AD
Roman territory
o   provincial capital
Tomis   attacked site

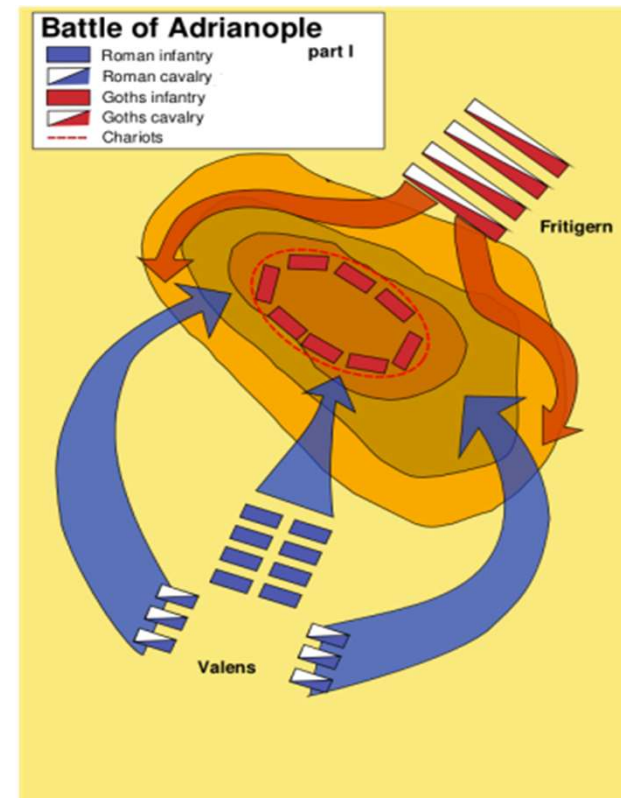# Goths in the 4th Century: Tribal Divisions

- Terms to refer to distinct Gothic groups attested from the end of the 3rd c. CE.

  - A speech praising the emperor Maximian from about 291 mentions the *Tervingi* as a group of the Goths.
  - Another division, the *Greuthungi* are first mentioned by the 4th c. historian, Ammianus Marcellinus.

- These two terms can be equated with the labels *Austrogothi* (Ostrogoths) and *Vesi* (Visigoths) also employed by historians of late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

  - *Greuthungi = Austrogothi* 'eastern Goths' (cf. Germ. *Ostern* 'Easter')
  - *Tervingi = Vesi* 'good guys' (IE *μes- 'good')
  - *Austrogothi* and *Vesi* were endonyms; *Greuthungi* and *Tervingi* exonyms.

- Roman contact during the late 3rd and early 4th centuries was more extensive with the Vesi.

  - Campaign from 328-332 in Dacia led to submission of Vesi and export of soldiers.

Goths in the 4th Century: Adrianople

■ Ostrogoths: expanding territory under Ermanaric.

- Mentioned in Ammianus and Jordanes as a warrior-king.
- Name preserved in Anglo-Saxon (*Eomanrīc*) and Old Norse (*Jǫrmunrekr)* legend.

■ War between Ostrogoths and Huns in the 370s.

- Death of Ermanaric in 376.
- Ostrogothic refugees move southwest; remaining fall under Hunnic dominance.

■ Vesi and Ostrogothic refugees ask for resettlement beyond the Danube (376).

- Large numbers of Goths, led by Alavivus and Fritgern, enter Moesia and Thrace.
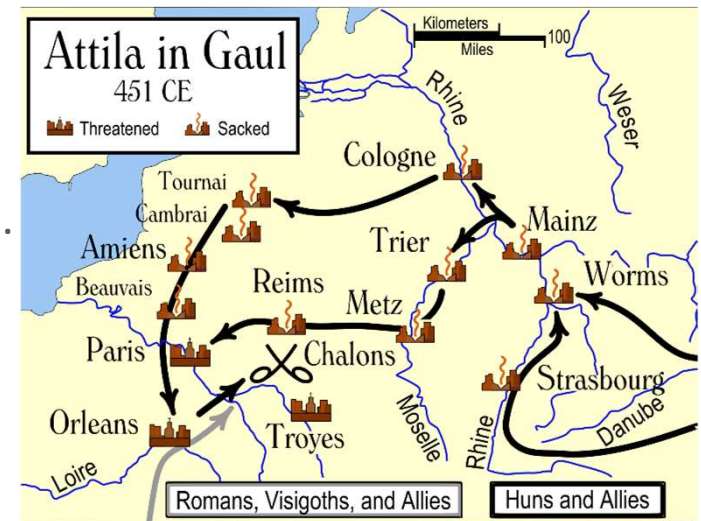- Mistreatment by provincial officials results in rebellion, small battles over two years.

Goths in the 4th Century: Adrianople

- In 378, the eastern emperor Valens organized a large force of seven legions (Battle of Adrianople).

  - August 9: leaves Adrianople to engage nearby Gothic army.
  - Fritgern delays through negotiation; Romans make uncoordinated attacks; Gothic cavalry ambush.
  - Rout of Valens' forces, death of Valens ⇒ permanent Gothic presence inside Roman borders.

Battle of Adrianople part I
- Roman infantry
- Roman cavalry
- Goths infantry
- Goths cavalry
- Chariots

Fritigern

Valens

Goths and the Hunnic Wars

- Vesi post-Adrianople: lead by Alaric.

  - 395: raiding in Greece.
  - 410: sack of Rome.
  - 416: Visithoic-Roman *foedus*, resettlement in Aquitaine.
- Ostrogoths: subject population in the Hunnic Empire.

- Hunnic Invasion of Gaul in 451

  - Visigoths part of Roman coalition led by Aetius.

  - Ostrogoths present with Huns

  - Battle of the Catalaunian Fields: Visigothic king Theodoric (son of Alaric) killed; Roman and Visigothic victory (Jordanes).

- Outcome: greater Visigothic political independence from Rome.

Ostrogothic Italy: Emergence

- Germanic vassals defeat Huns at the Battle of Nedao (453 CE)

  - Role of Ostrogoths disputed – Hunnic allies or enemies?
  - Outcome: Hunnic Empire wanes, Ostrogoths under Theodomir (Amal dynasty) become Eastern Roman *foederati* settled in Pannonia.

- Cessation of tribute payments in 460 led to invasion of Illyria.

  - Peace settlement (461) sent Theodomir's son Theodoric Amal as a hostage to Constantinople.
  - 477-483: wars in the Balkans between Emperor Zeno (Byzantines), Theodoric Amal, and Theodoric Strabo (Ostrogoths).

- 484: Theodoric Amal becomes *magister militum* and consul.

- 488: Theodoric sent by Zeno to conquer Italy from Sciriian Odoacer.

- 493: Ostrogothic conquest of Italy completed with murder of Odoacer by Theodoric at the peace banquet.

Ostrogothic Italy: Governance and Culture

- Theodoric (the Great) was effectively independent, though officially a subject of Byzantium. Seat at Ravenna.

  - Persistent political and religious disagreement with Byzantium.
  - Catholic administrators often undermined Arian Christian Goths.
  - Longest period of peace in Italy since the early 4th century.

- New architecture and public works commissioned in Ravenna Rome, including a mausoleum for Theodoric.

- *Codex Argenteus* produced. Virtually all surviving Gothic manuscripts produced in Italy during this period.

- Death of Theodoric in 526.

- Byzantine (under Justinian I) reconquest of Italy in wars 535–554.

Ostrogothic Kingdom (493-553)

Visigothic Kingdom in Iberia

- Expansion from Aquitaine between 466 and 500 CE.

- Led by Euric, son of Theodoric.

  - Wars in Iberia against Suebi, local Romans.
  - Occupation of Arles, Marseille.

- Conflict with Franks in early 6th c., loss of territory in Gaul.

- Kingdom in Iberia centered at Toledo.

  - Conversion of Visigothic nobility from Arianism to Catholicism in 589.
  - Military conflict with Byzantium during the late 6th c.

- New cities founded in Iberia during 6th and 7th centuries.

- Conquest of much of Iberia by Umayyads 711-725.

- Core of later Spanish kingdoms formed by Visigothic nobility in Asturias.

Greatest extent of the
Visigothic Kingdom (c. 500)

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Thank you for your attention!