The Development of Proto-Germanic
Don Ringe

in A History of English: From Proto-Indo-European to Proto-Germanic
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Item type: chapter

This chapter discusses the reconstructable linguistic changes that occurred in the development from Proto-Indo-European to Proto-Germanic. The first half of the chapter discusses regular sound changes, especially prominent changes including the elimination of laryngeals, Grimm’s Law, Verner’s Law, the remodelling of Sievers’ Law, the loss of intervocalic *j, and several changes of vowels. The second half discusses morphological changes. A long initial section deals with the wholesale morphological restructuring of the verb system, concentrating on preterite-present verbs, strong and weak past tense stems, and participles. Subsequent sections discuss less sweeping changes in the inflection of verbs and nominals.

Phonological Approaches and Processes
Jeremy J. Smith

in Sound Change and the History of English
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This chapter offers a categorization of sound-changes: splits, mergers, and shifts; combinations of these three categories; and realization and phonotactic developments with the potential for phonological ‘activation’. All of these developments are exemplified and discussed, and it is concluded that sound-change is an ‘emergent’, processual phenomenon. The chapter then discusses different approaches to phonology (taxonomic-phonemic, generative/lexical, and natural and evolutionary phonology), and shows how all these approaches can be
harnessed for the purposes of this book. The chapter concludes with an extended illustrative example: Grimm's Law.

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English Is an Indo-European Language
Timothy J. Pulju

in Approaches to Teaching the History of the English Language: Pedagogy in Practice

This chapter suggests ways that Indo-European can be made relevant throughout an entire course on the history of English. Grimm’s Law and Verner’s Law, for example, are not just useful for demonstrating that English is member of the Germanic branch of the Indo-European family. Rather, in combination with other, later sound changes, they have repercussions in present-day English. For example, they tell us that day and diurnal are not cognate, but that raw and crude are, as are seethe and sodden. An understanding of Proto-Indo-European linguistic phenomena, such as sound changes, ablaut, and the PIE active-stative verb system can be used to explain the structure of Old, Middle, and Modern English as well as aspects of English as it is spoken today.