English

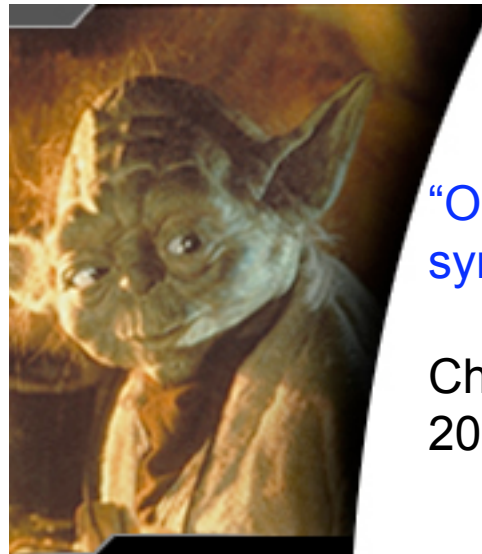## *It could have been worse*

"Out of this world Yoda's syntax always has been."

Chicago Tribune, May 17, 2005 By Nathan Bierma

Eric Gilleland

Research Applications Laboratory

National Center for Atmospheric Research

http://www.ral.ucar.edu/~ericg

Coarse-scale history

OE → ME → → MnE

5th century	First (large-scale) germanic groups in Britain
Late 8th century	Viking Raids
Mid-to-late 9th century	Danish invasions
Late 11th century	Norman Conquest (1066)
Mod-to-late 15th century	"Chancery Standard," printing press give rise to MnE
15th, 16th, 17th century	The Great Vowel Shift

English--It could have been worse

In the beginning…

3rd century	Saxons impact in SE England
Late 4th century	Angles in E Anglia
Mid 5th century	Major germanic influx
2nd half of 5th century	Germanic push inland
≈ ce 500	Battle at "Mount Badon"
Late 6th century	Most of Britain lost

In the beginning…

- *"This she-wolf is a reward to my kinsman"*

Anglo-Frisian, C.E. 450-500 From Undley Common near Lakenheath, Suffolk, England

Image from The British Museum

gæ go gæ – mægæ medu

May 14, 2008   English--It could have been worse

In the beginning…

- First written account of the early history
  - *"The Ecclesiastical History of the English People," by The Venerable Bede*
  - Written in Latin ≈731; nearly 300 years after the events described therein
- "It Oere Linda Boek"?
  - Alternate world history (pre BCE 2193)
  - Hoax?
  - (e.g., Scrutton, 1979)

OE

In the beginning…

- ## According to Bede
  - Forefathers of Anglo-Saxons came from three Germanic groups: (i) the Saxons, (ii), the Angles and (iii) the Jutes.

- ## New linguistic and archaeological evidence suggests two large revisions (Robinson, 1992)
  - If Jutes came at all, they did not come directly.
  - Frisians either came in large numbers or, being on the way, greatly influenced the language.

In the beginning…

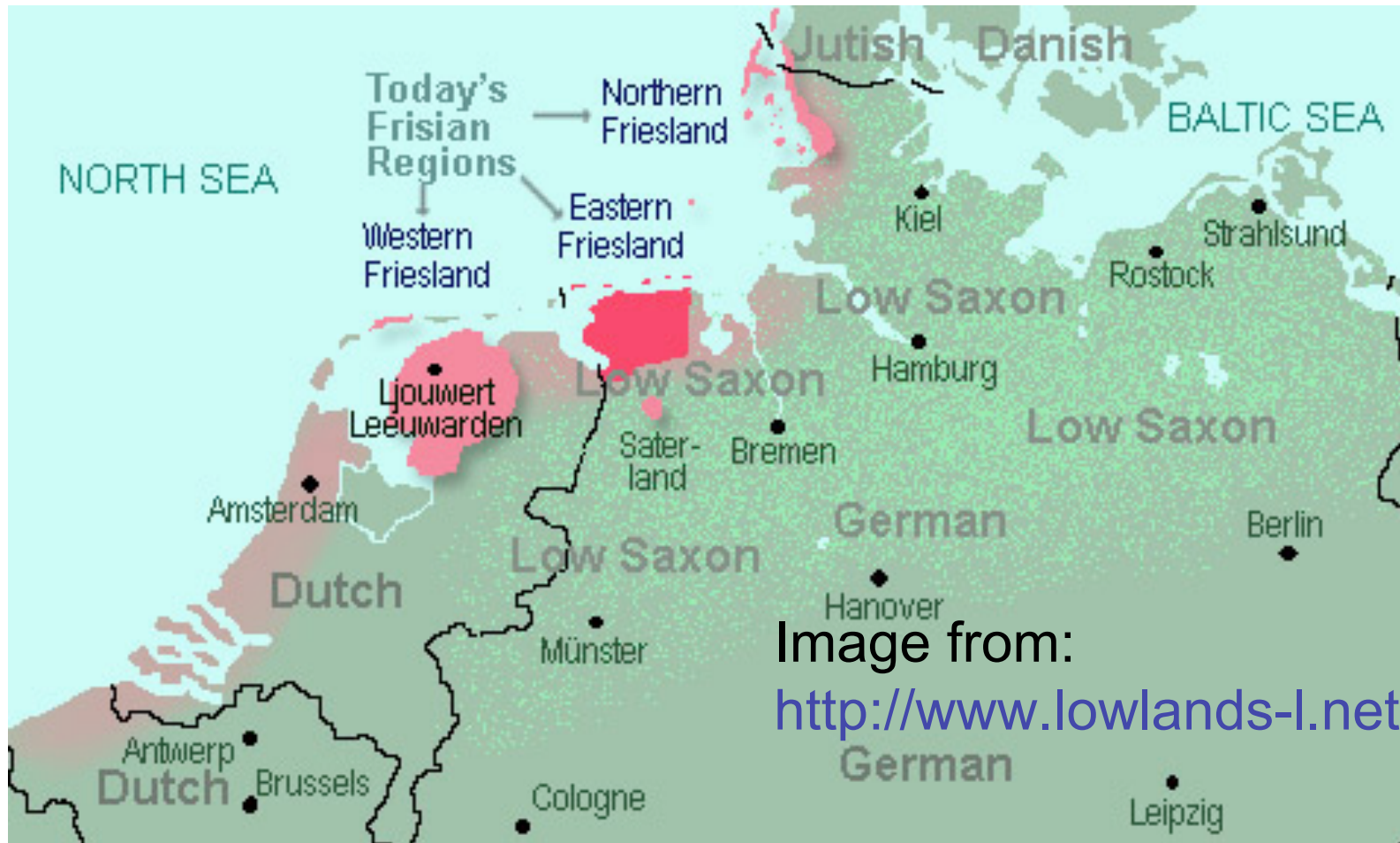Archaeological evidence connects Isle of Wight (Jutes) with Ripuarian Franks of the middle Rhine
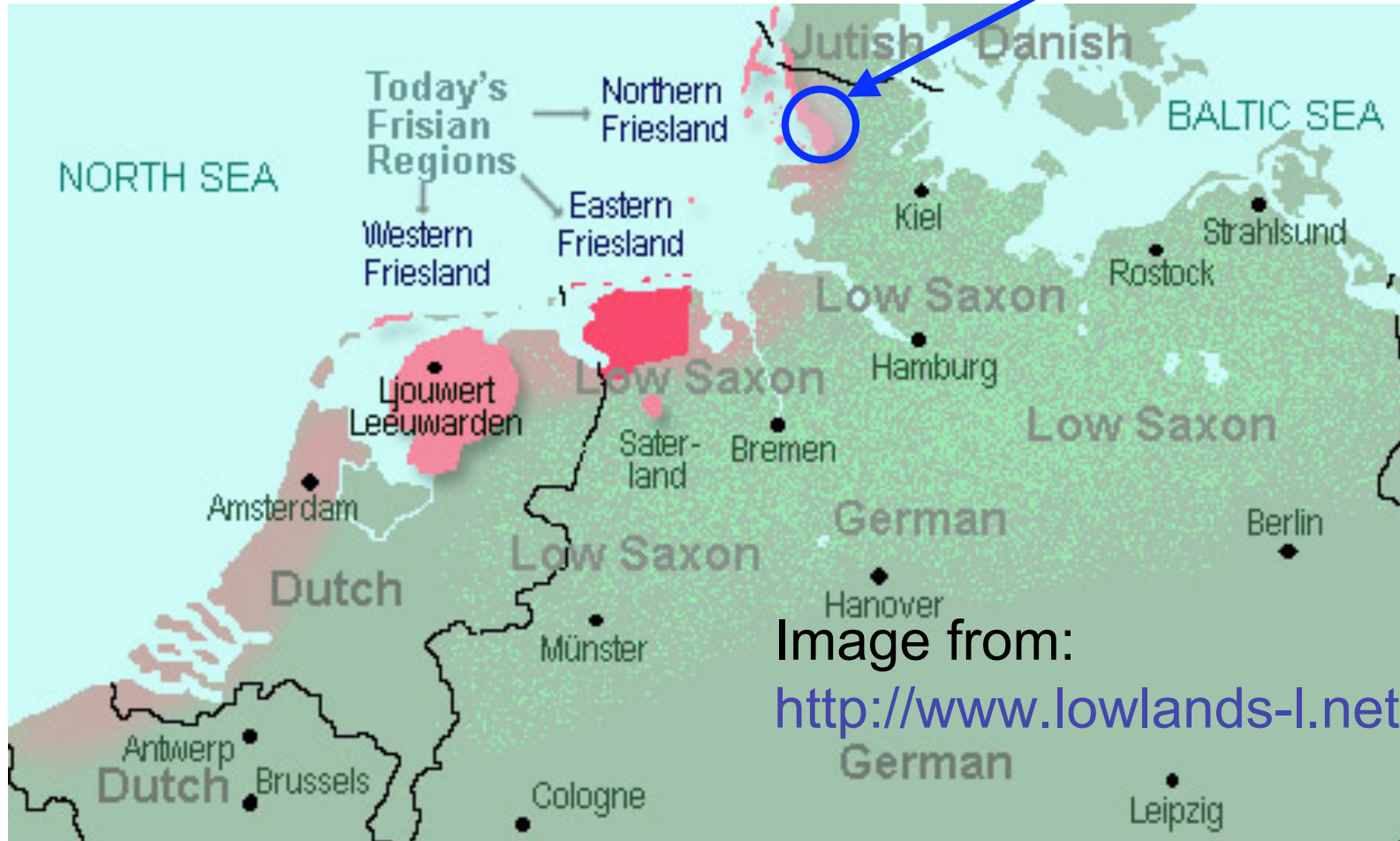
English--It could have been worse

In the beginning…

Image from:
http://www.lowlands-l.net

English--It could have been worse

In the beginning…

Angles

Image from:
http://www.lowlands-l.net

English--It could have been worse

OE

In the beginning...

Angles

Seelter (E. Frisian)

Image from:
http://www.lowlands-l.net

May 14, 2008   English--It could have been worse

In the beginning...

OE

Angles

Seelter (E. Frisian)

Image from:
http://www.lowlands-l.net

May 14, 2008   English--It could have been worse

In the beginning…

Anglo-Saxon?

Or…

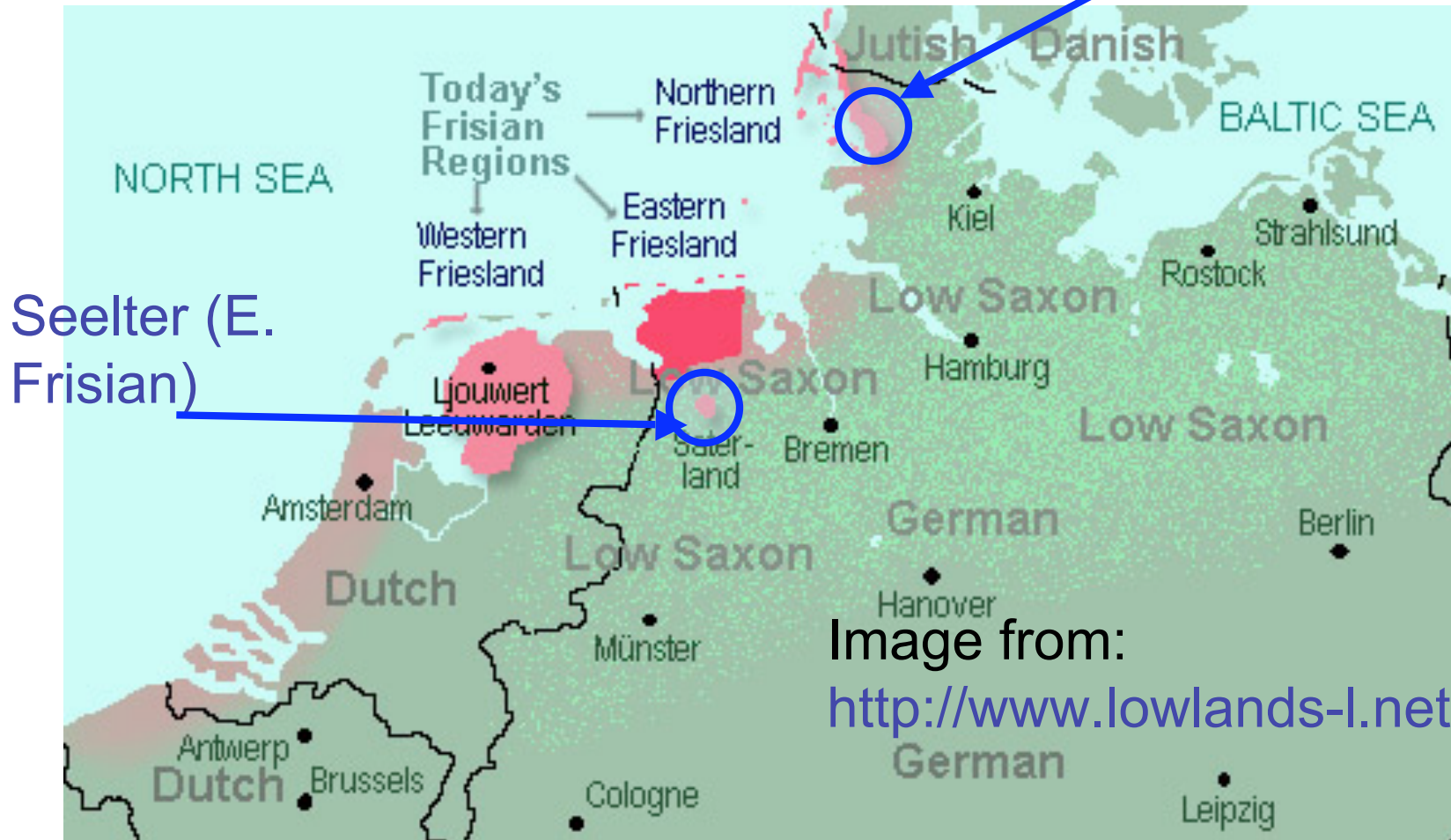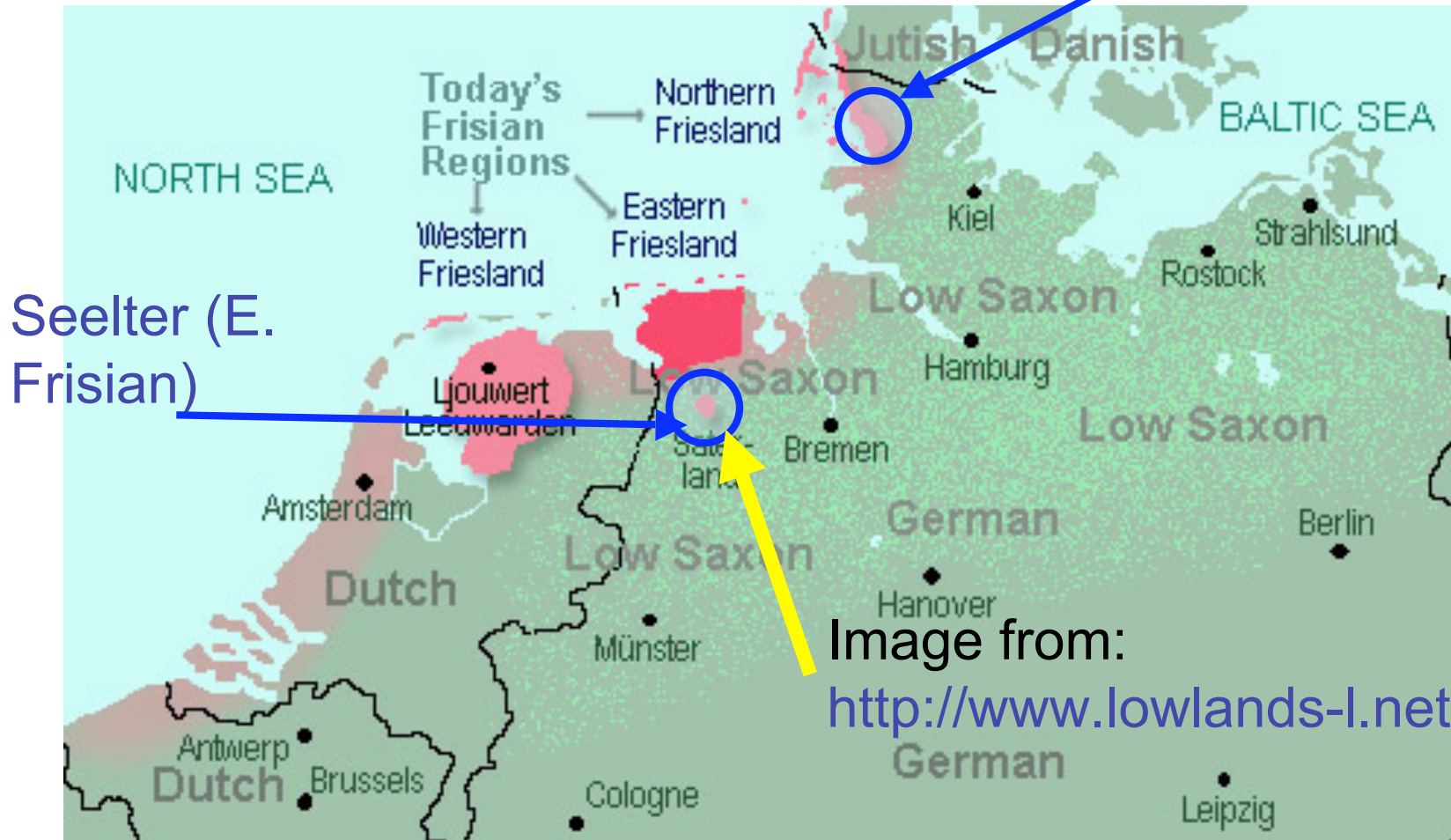May 14, 2008   English--It could have been worse

In the beginning…

Franco-
Fries

English--It could have been worse

Which one is Englisc?

Thit riuht skrêf God selua, ûse hêra,

thâ thet was thet Moyses lâtte thet

Israhêliske folk thruch thene râda sê,

and of there wilda wôstene…

Fadar usa firiho barno,

Thu bist an them hôhon himilia rîkea,

Geuuîhid sî thin namo uuordo gehuuilico

Fæþer ure, þu þe eart on heofonum,

Si þin nama gehalgod.

To becume þin rice.

Gewurde þin willa.

OE

Which one is Englisc?

Old Frisian*

Thit riuht skrêf God selua, ûse hêra,

thâ thet was thet Moyses lâtte thet

Israhêliske folk thruch thene râda sê,

and of there wilda wôstene…

Old Saxon

Fadar usa firiho barno,

Thu bist an them hôhon himilia rîkea,

Geuuîhid sî thin namo uuordo gehuuilico…

Fæðer ure, þu þe eart on heofonum,

Si þin nama gehalgod.

To becume þin rice.

Gewurde þin willa

*Old Frisian is contemporary with ME

May 14, 2008   English--It could have been worse

- Voiced and unvoiced consonants
  - *s*, *f*, þ (and ð)
  - OE ofer = MnE over
  - », MnE bath/bathe, path/paths loaf/loaves
- All consonants pronounced
  - *gecnawan (understand »* MnE *know)*
  - *biddan (ask, bid)* [bid-D]
- *h*
  - *hatan* (command, to be named)
  - cniht (boy, servant, » MnE knight)

Nouns in OE

- Three genders:
  - Masculine, Feminine and Neuter
  - Not natural genders
    - *se wifmann* (masc., the woman)
    - þ*æt wif* (neut., the woman)
    - *se stan* (masc., the stone)
    - *seo giefu* (fem., the gift)
- Two groups:
  - Weak and strong

Pronouns in OE

The, That

	Singular			Plural
	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	All genders
Nom.	se	þæt	seo, sio	þa
Acc.	þone	þæt	þa	þa
Gen.	þæs	þæs	þære	Þara, þæra
Dat.	Þæm, þam	Þæm, þam	þære	Þæm, þam
Inst.	þy, þon	þy, þon		

May 14, 2008   English--It could have been worse

3rd Person Pronouns in OE

	Singular			*Plural*
	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	All genders
Nom.	he	hit	heo, hio	hie, hi
Acc.	hine	hit	hie, hi	hie, hi
Gen.	his	his	hire	hira, hiera, heora, hiora
Dat.	him	him	hire	him, heom

May 14, 2008   English--It could have been worse

cf. Fris. se/hja (she, they)

	Singular			Plural
	Masc.	Neut.	Fem.	All genders
Nom.	he	hit	heo, hio	hie, hi
Acc.	hine	hit	hie, hi	hie, hi
Gen.	his	his	hire	hira, hiera, heora, hiora
Dat.	him	him	hire	him, heom

English--It could have been worse

"Hwæt hwæm ge gesæde?"

English--It could have been worse

"Hwæt hwæm ge gesæde?"
"You said what *to* whom?"

English--It could have been worse

To be (OE *beon, wesan*)

Indicative	Present	Present	Preterite
Sg. 1	eom	*beo*	*wæs*
2	eart	*bist*	*wære*
3	is	*biþ*	*wæs*
Pl.	*sind(on), sint*	*beoþ*	*wæron*
Subjunctive			
Sg.	sie	*beo*	*wære*
Pl.	sien	*beon*	*wæren*
Imperative			
Sg.	wes	*beo*	
Pl.	*wesaþ*	*beoþ*	

English--It could have been worse

To be (OE *beon, wesan*)

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Subjunctive			
Sg.	sie	beo	wære
Pl.	sien	beon	wæren
Imperative			
Sg.	wes	beo	
Pl.	wesaþ	beoþ	

Future, eternal truth

May 14, 2008   English--It could have been worse

Danish influence

- ## New words
  - ### freckle, leg, skull, meek, rotten, trust, take, husband, sky, crawl, dazzle, clasp

- ## Cognates with new slightly altered meanings
  - ### scatter/shatter, skirt/shirt, whole/hale, bathe/bask, stick/stitch, hack/hatch, wake/watch, break/breach

- ## Pronouns "they," "them" and "their"

Example: *A Colloquy on the Occupations*

The Shepherd

"'Hwæt segst þu, sceaphierde? Hæfst þu ænig gedeorf?'

'Giese leof, ic hæbbe micel gedeorf! On ærnemergen ic drife min sceap to læswe. Siþþan stande ic ofer hie mid hundum, þy læs þe wulfas hie forswelgen. Þonne læde ic hie on æfen ongean to hira locum. Ic hie melce tuwa on dæge. Ic macie buteran and ciese. And ic eom minum hlaforde getriewe.'"

pasture (ds), them (ap), lest, their

ME
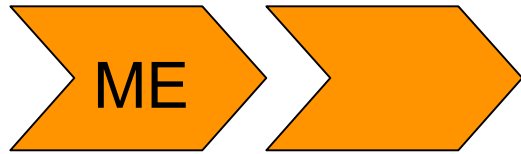
Norman (Old French) influence

- Results in ME
- French and Latin spoken by noble *men* for official purposes only
- Women and commoners spoke only English

English--It could have been worse

ME
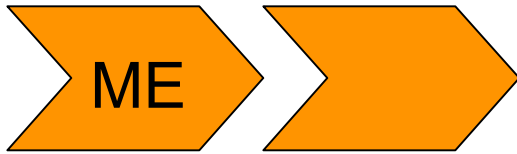
Old French/Latin influence on English

- ## qu- pronounced as kw- instead of k-
  - ### cf., quit/quitter, question/question, quarter/quart
- ## ca- vs. cha-
  - ### carry/charrier, cauldron/chauldron, cattle/chattle
- ## -arie and -orie vs. -aire and -oire
  - ### victory/victoire, salary/saloire
- ## Norman kept "s" where Parisian did not
 - ### August/août, forest/forêt

ME
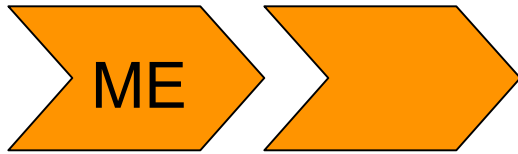
French/Latin influence on English

- About 7500 words adopted from Norman French are still in use today.
- Henry IV (1399) first ruler since Norman Conquest to use English only.
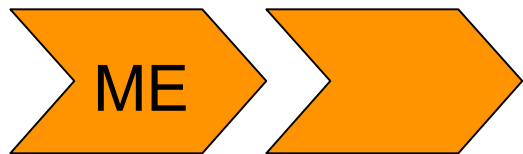
ME Yogh ȝ ȝ

- In addition to þ and ð, we have yogh (ȝ).
- Generally used for OE "g" and "h"
  - "g" also used, but only for stop consonants as in "good."
- ȝ used for "y" in ȝong (young)
- MnE "gh" as in niȝt (night)
  - "-gh" sounds still heard in Scots, (*licht* and *loch*).
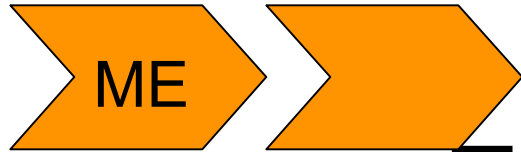- Sometimes "w" as in oȝen (own).
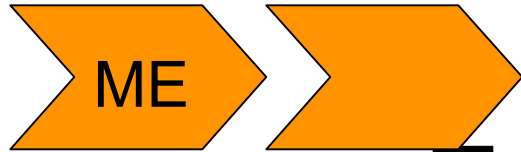
Example: Early ME

The Peterborough Chronicle

1137 Đis gære for the king Stephne ofer sæ to Normandie, and ther wes underfangen forþi ðat hi wenden ðat he sculde ben alswic alse the eom wes and for he hadde get his tresor--ac he toldeld it and scatered sotlice…

went (faren, to go), received, because, they
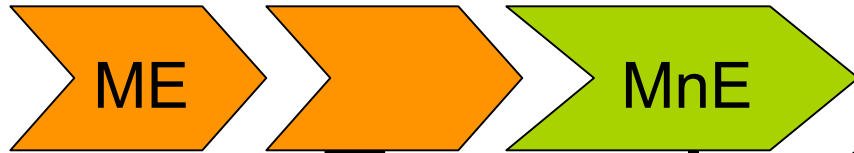
Example: Late ME

The Canterbury Tales (Chaucer)

"… Thanne were ther yonge poure scolers two,

That dwelten in the halle of which I seye,

Testyf they were and lusty for to pleye…"
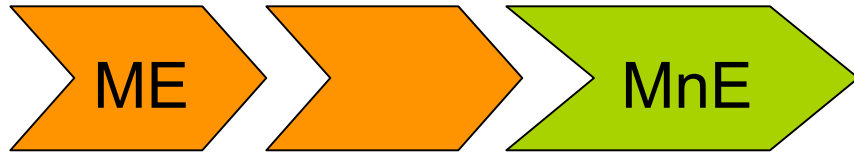
headstrong, eager to have fun

Example: Shakespeare

Love's Labour's Lost (Act I, scene I)

…

COSTARD: The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaquenetta. The manner of it is, I was taken with the manner.

BEROWNE: In what manner?

COSTARD: In manner and form following, sir, all those three. I was seen with her in the manor house, …

ME ▶ ▶ MnE

Example: Shakespeare (Henry IV, I-ii)

FAL. Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?

PRINCE. Thou art so fat-witted with drinking of old sack, and   unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping upon benches after   noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou   wouldest truly know.

OE ► ME ► ► MnE

Wine-whine merger

wine/whine, wet/whet, weather/whether, wail/whale, Wales/whales, wear/where, witch/which

"Whole" spelled with "wh" came late in English, but the word is one of a few English words remaining very close to its IE origin.

Photo from wikipedia.org

May 14, 2008   English--It could have been worse

Will and Shall
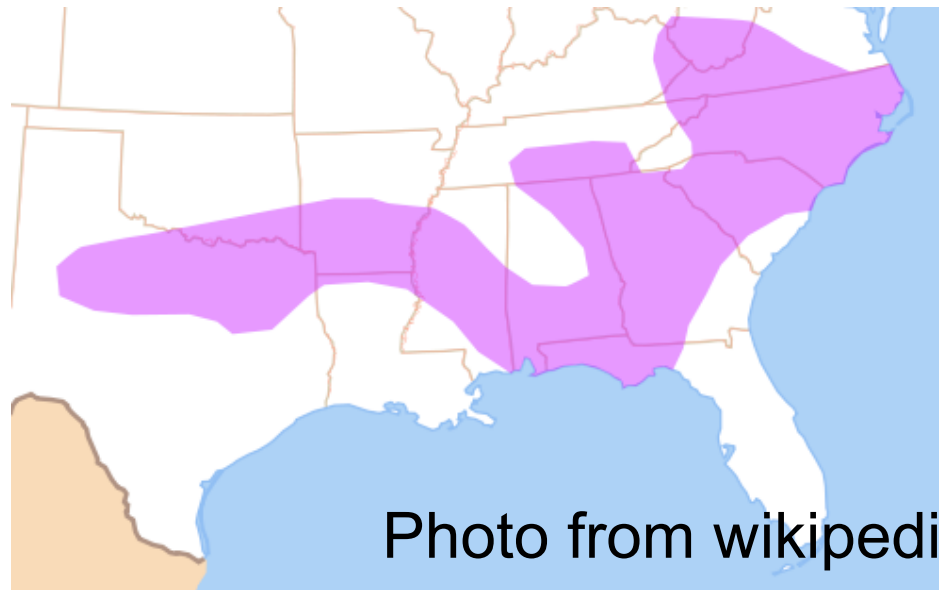
- OE *sculan ⟶ *obligation, must*
  - *"Se byrdesta sceall gyldan" (the wealthiest must pay)*
  - *"Hwæt sceal ic singan?" (what must I sing, cf. Latin version "Quid debeo cantare")*
- *OE willan* ⟶ *wish* or *intention*
  - "ic wille sellan" (I want to give)
  - "Þa Darius geseah, þæt he oferwunnen beon wolde" (when D. saw that he would be conquered)

Will and Shall

- ME *schulen* ⟹ future sense (independent of what anyone wants)
  - *"It schal be so*!" (*Sir Orfeo, 226*)
- ME willen ⟹ wish, want, desire
  - "What wouldst?" (W. Shakespeare, *LL* I-i). "What do you want?"
  - *wante* = MnE "to lack" (from ON *vanta*)
- "Þu clumbe…swulc Þu woldest to hævene; nu Þu scalt to hælle" (Laȝamon's *Brut*, 165–6). "You climbed as if you wished to heaven; now you shall to hell."

English--It could have been worse

Frisian "*wolle*" and "*sille*"

- *sille*, future modifier
  - "Ik sil nei Ljouwert ta" (I will go to Leeuwarden)
  - "Soest reedride" (you were going (to go) skating)
- *wolle* = wish, desire
  - "Hy woe tige graach reedriden leare" (he wanted very much to learn how to skate)
  - Older folks use "wolle" in an *obvious* future sense
    - "it wol reine" = "(you can clearly see that) it's going to rain)
- *sille* + *wol* ('t) = probability
  - "Jo sille wol thús bliuwe moatte" (you will probably have to stay at home)

Modals

OE	ME	MnE	Fris
magan	*mahen*	*"to be able to", "have the ability", may*	*mei*
cunnan	*cunnen*	*can, "to be able to"*	*kinne*
*motan	*moten*	*must*	*moatte*
willan	*willen*	*want, (will)*	*wolle*
*sculan	*schulen*	*shall*	*sille*

Was required to

OE cunnan, *motan, *sculan, mahan, witan (to know) are preterite-present verbs.

Preterite of ME moten gives MnE present "must"

cf. Fris. m*oatte*: "hja moast har fyts ride" = "she had to ride her bike"

Fris

Was able to

Fris. "meie"

"se mocht har fyts ride" = "she was allowed/able to ride her bike."

English--It could have been worse

More on *ge-* words

Most germanic languages have lots of words beginning with *ge-*, why not MnE?

- OE riddled with *ge-* words.

- In some OE nouns, *ge-* signifies "together."
  - *geferscipe* (s.m. fellowship, community)
  - gefera (w.m. companion)
  - *gebrothru* (m.pl. brothers).

- In verbs, often has a perfective sense:
  - *geascian* (find out)
  - *gewinnan* (get by fighting, win), cf. Fris. *gewin* (gain)
  - often used with past ptcs.

More on *ge-* words

- Stress is placed on the first syllable, but *ge-* is never stressed in OE.
- ME *ge-* ⟹ i- (y-) as in
  - "*Now for the ground which; which,I mean, I walked upon: it is y-cleped thy park.*"
    - W. Shakespeare, LL I-i.
  - MnE S. Appalachian dialect ⟹ *a-*
    - "You were a-scared of that place?"

They had enough, though.

| OE	ME	MnE	Fris
ruh	roȝ	rough	rûch
riht	riȝt	right	rjocht
Þeah	Þoȝ, Þou, thow (Scandinavian origin)	though	(al)hoewol't
bog	Boȝe, bowe	bough	?

English--It could have been worse

Fris

MnE *th, ch, gh* and *sh*

- Þ became the dominate letter over ð early in ME
- Þ often confused in ME with "Y"
  - Whence, "Ye Olde Tea Shoppe."
- ⟹ "th" replaced þ in late ME,
- ⟹ "gh" replaced ȝ
- ⟹ "ch" and "sh"

OE → ME → MnE

Loss of case and gender

	stan (masc.)	scip (neut)	giefu (fem.)
Nom.	stan, stanas	scip, scipu	giefu, giefa,-e
Acc.	stan, stanas	scip, scipu	giefe, giefa,-e
Gen.	stanes, stana	scipes, scipa	giefe, giefa,-ena
Dat.	stane, stanum	scipe, scipum	giefe, giefum
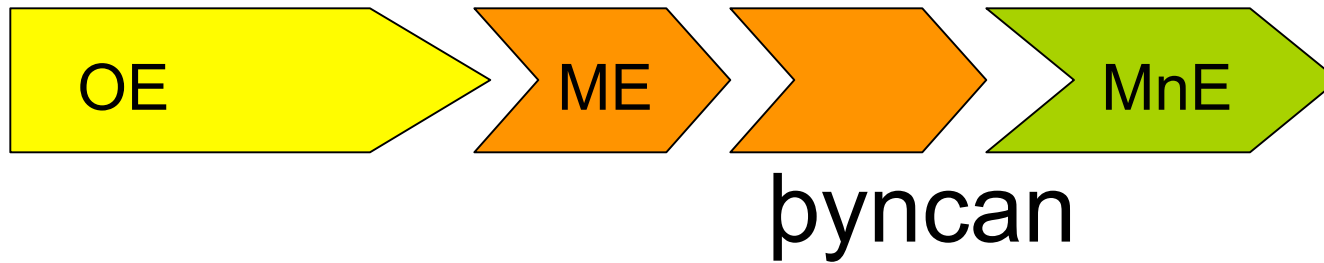
OE → ME → → MnE

þyncan

From the heart proceed evil thanks,
Matthew 15:19, 12th century translation

OE → ME → → MnE

þyncan

From the heart proceed evil thanks,
Matthew 15:19, 12th century translation

Þyncan=to seem

Methinks (ME)

Þencean
=think

Causing
images/reflections to
appear to one's brain;

thoughtfulness

thanks=thoughts

thanks

OE ➤ ME ➤ ➤ MnE
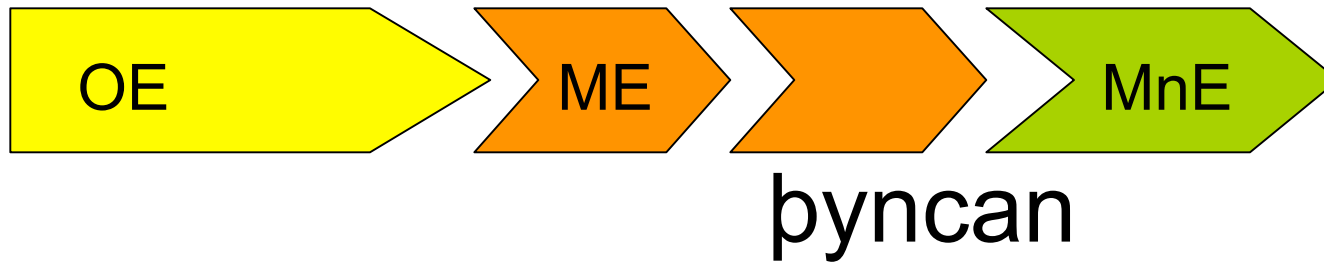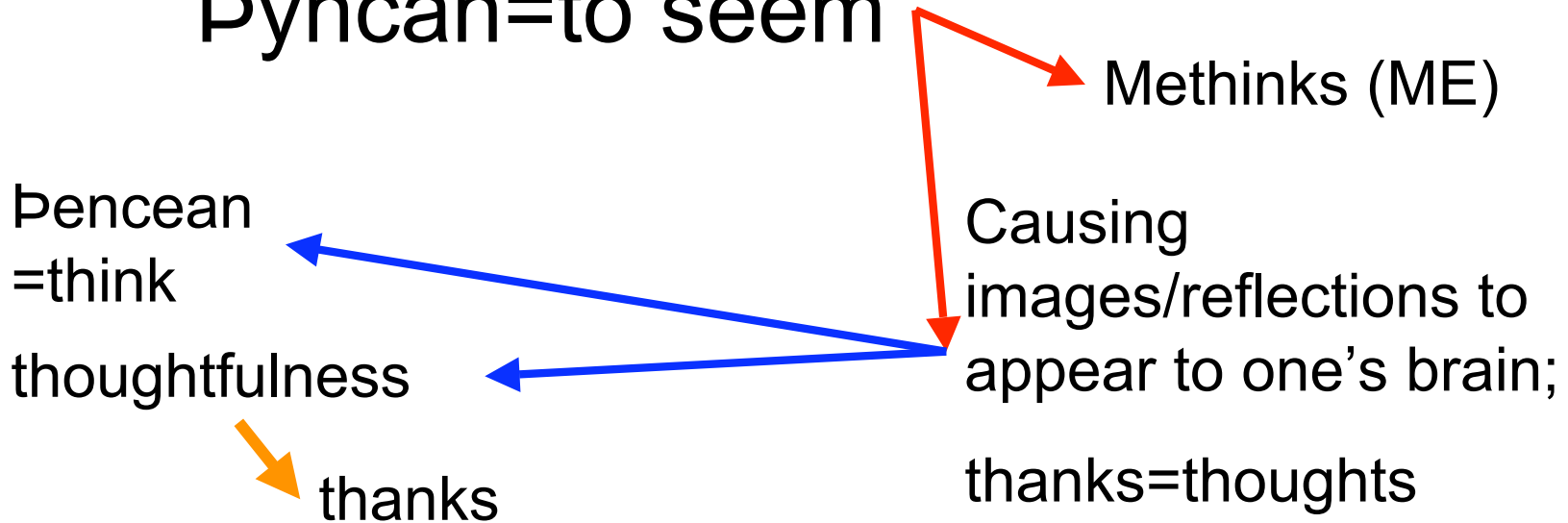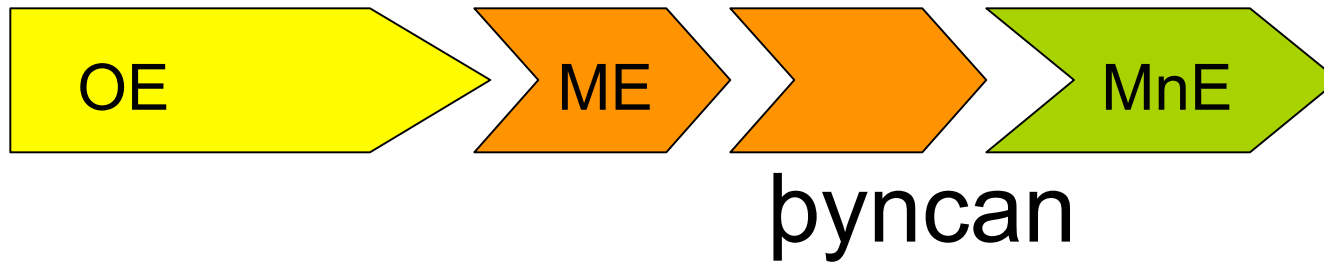
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Þyncan=to seem

Methinks (ME)

Þencean
=think

Causing
images/reflections to
appear to one's brain;

thoughtfulness

thanks

thanks=thoughts

MnE changes

- "bugs" in the computer
- Seinfeld
  - http://www.angelfire.com/nj/carlb/seinfeld/seinfelddictionary.html
  - Anti-dentite, close-talker, low-talker, high-talker, etc.
- From http://www.urbandictionary.com
  - fo shizzel
    - 1) of course, 2) for real?
  - Word
    - 1) From "my word is my bond" in U.S. prisons: "speak the truth," 2) affirmative, 3) agreement, 4) greeting (like French ça va?)

English--It could have been worse

Some references

- Old English
  - Mitchell and Robinson (2001)
  - Robinson (1992)
- Middle English
  - Burrow and Turville-Petre (2000)
- Entertaining
  - Bryson (2001)
- English Word Origins
  - Ayto (1990)

Thanks for coming!

Thanks to Alma and Greg for lots of help with this presentation.

Kwestshons?

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1st Per. Pronouns

	Singular	*Dual*	*Plural*
Nom.	ic	wit	we
Acc.	me, mec	unc	us
Gen.	min	uncer	ure
Dat.	me	unc	us

2nd Per. Pronouns

	Singular	*Dual*	*Plural*
Nom.	þu	git	ge
Acc.	þe, þec	inc	eow
Gen.	þin	incer	eower
Dat.	þe	inc	eow

Who/What

	Masc./Fem.	*Neut.*
Nom.	hwa	hwæt
Acc.	hwone	hwæt
Gen.	hwæs	hwæs
Dat.	hwæm, hwam	hwæm, hwam
Inst.	hwy	hwy, hwon

English--It could have been worse

Wh- words

OE	ME	MnE	Fris
hwa	who, wo, qwo	who	(*h*)wa(t)
hwæm, hwam	whom	who, whom	(*h*)wa(t)
hwanne, hwænne	when, hwen, quen, wan, won	when	wannear
hwær	where, quere, war, wær	where	wêr
hu	hu	who	hoe