

A GUIDE TO OLD ENGLISH
REVISED WITH TEXTS AND GLOSSARY

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REVISED WITH
TEXTS AND GLOSSARY

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS

TORONTO AND BUFFALO

A Guide to Old English © Bruce Mitchell 1964, 1968
A Guide to Old English revised with Texts and Glossary
© Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson 1982

First edition 1964

Second edition 1968

Reprinted 1971, 1975, 1978, 1981, 2017

Revised edition with texts and glossary 1982

This edition first published in Canada and the United
States by University of Toronto Press
Toronto and Buffalo
1982

ISBN 978-0-8020-2489-3 (cloth)

ISBN 978-0-8020-6513-1 (paper)

In Memoriam

DONOVAN F. MITCHELL

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FOREWORD TO THE REVISED EDITION

The Guide aims at making easier the initial steps in the learning of Old English. It is intended for beginners and will, it is hoped, prove especially useful to those wishing to acquire a reading knowledge of the language. But potential specialists in philology should find it a help in their preliminary studies of the essential grammar. The Guide can be used by students working with or without a teacher; for the latter, a section on 'How to Use this Guide' has been provided.

In general, the Guide devotes more space than is usual to the simple explanation of difficult points and to ways of reducing rote learning and of solving problems which arise for the reader of Old English texts. Part One is divided into seven chapters—Preliminary Remarks on the Language, a simple treatment of Orthography and Pronunciation, Inflexions, Word Formation, Syntax (where stress is laid on the important differences between Old and Modern English), a brief Introduction to Anglo-Saxon Studies in which language and literature, history, and archaeology, are discussed, and a highly selective Bibliography for the beginner. Part Two consists of Texts (with notes), and Glossary. Phonology is not treated in a separate section, but is integrated with the grammar, important sound-changes being treated briefly when they provide the accepted explanation of apparent irregularities in inflection. Those seeking more information on sound-changes and their relation to accident are recommended in the first place to the work by R. F. S. Hamer cited in §9 Note. But the *Guide* aims at being self-contained, as far as it goes.

The Texts are arranged in order of increasing difficulty. The first three selections are normalized throughout, and palatal *ċ* and *ġ* are distinguished from velar *c* and *g*. The fourth selection is not normalized, but a few peculiarities have been removed to ease transition to the unnormalized texts in the remainder of the readings. The Glossary is extremely detailed, with heavy parsing of words recorded. Similarly, the notes are full, and cross-references to the grammatical explanations in the *Guide* are frequent. So full an apparatus may seem at times to encumber the student with more help than he needs, but our intention is to make it possible for the student to begin reading Old English from the outset, without obliging the teacher to take up particular topics in the grammar in a particular sequence before assigning texts for translation. Although

individual teachers and readers are thus freed to cover the fundamentals of the language in whatever sequence suits their taste, we do think that the order of topics laid out on pages 3 to 5 is recommended both by logic and by our own experience. The prose texts selected are on the whole those which have traditionally been offered to beginning students to read. We have resisted the temptation to substitute novel selections for the familiar ones: such passages as King Alfred's Preface, the story of Cædmon, the conversion of Edwin, and Cynewulf and Cyneheard, have been chosen by generations of teachers and scholars as the appropriate introductory texts precisely because these are the essential ones for the proper orientation of beginners towards both the literature and culture of Anglo-Saxon England. Replacement of any or all of these with different selections might give the veteran teacher a refreshing change from the canon, but it would also deprive beginning students of important reference points in their initial study of Old English literature.

Michaelmas 1981

BRUCE MITCHELL
FRED C. ROBINSON

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS

Gmc.	Germanic	nWS	non-West-Saxon
IE	Indo-European	OE	Old English
Lat.	Latin	OHG	Old High German
ME	Middle English	WS	West-Saxon
MnE	Modern English		

Before the name of a language or dialect

e = Early l = Late Pr = Primitive

GRAMMATICAL TERMS

acc.	accusative	nom.	nominative
adj.	adjective	pass.	passive
adv.	adverb	p.d.	see § 100
conj.	conjunction	pers.	person
cons.	consonant	pl.	plural
dat.	dative	poss.	possessive
dem.	demonstrative	prep.	preposition
fem.	feminine	pres.	present
gen.	genitive	pret.	preterite
imp.	imperative	pret.-pres.	preterite-present
ind.	indicative	pron.	pronoun
inf.	infinitive	ptc.	participle
infl.	inflected	sg.	singular
inst.	instrumental	st.	strong
masc.	masculine	subj.	subjunctive
neut.	neuter	wk.	weak

's' may be added where appropriate to form a plural.

SYMBOLS

> became

< came from

* This precedes a form which is not recorded. Usually it is a form which probably once existed and which scholars reconstruct to explain the stages in sound-changes; see § 103.3.

Sometimes it is a form which certainly never existed but which is invented to show that one sound-change preceded another. An example is *cierfan* in § 100, note.

— over a letter denotes a long vowel or diphthong.

over a letter denotes a short vowel or diphthong.

as for example in § 100 means 'short and long e'.

in § 41 denote a long and short syllable respectively.

' x denote respectively a syllable carrying full, secondary, or no, stress.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This section is particularly addressed to those of you who are working without a teacher. I hope that when you have finished with this book you will not disagree too strongly—as far as elementary Old English grammar is concerned, at any rate—with the pithy observations made by Dr. Johnson to Boswell in 1766:

People have now-a-days, said he, got a strange opinion that everything should be taught by lectures. Now, I cannot see that lectures can do so much good as reading the books from which the lectures are taken. I know nothing that can be best taught by lectures, except where experiments are to be shown. You may teach chemistry by lectures.—You might teach making of shoes by lectures!

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING AND PARSING

The ability to recognize forms in the texts you are reading and an awareness of the basic structure of Old English are far more important than a parrot knowledge of the paradigms. Hence, from the beginning, you must get into the habit of analysing and thoroughly understanding each form you meet in your texts. Here you will find 'parsing' a great help. Since this word is taboo in many places, it had better be explained if it is to be used here.

All it means, of course, is recognizing what part of speech the word is—noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, and so on—and what particular form the word has in your sentence. The information needed is

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Noun: | Meaning, gender, number, case, and the reason for the case, e.g. accusative because it is object, genitive denoting possession, or dative of the indirect object. |
| Pronoun: | Same as for noun. Here you need to know the noun to which the pronoun refers. (If it is a relative pronoun, see § 162). |
| Adjective: | Same as for noun. Sometimes, of course, an adjective is used with a noun, sometimes it is used alone, either as a complement or where a noun is more usual, e.g. 'The good often die before their time'. |
| Verb: | If you have the infinitive, you merely need the meaning. Otherwise you need to work out the person, number, |

tense, and mood, and then deduce the infinitive. Unless you are familiar with the verb, you will have to do all this before you can find its meaning. For hints on how to do it, see §134.

Adverbs and interjections (a name given to words like 'Oh!' 'Alas!' and 'Lo!') will give little trouble. It is important to notice the case of a word governed by a preposition, for a difference in case sometimes indicates a difference in meaning; see §§213-214. Conjunctions are a greater source of difficulty. Lists of them are given in §§168, 171, and 184, and references to discussions on them are set out in 'Understanding the Syntax' below.

Note

The importance of gender varies. Sometimes it is obvious, sometimes it is of no real importance. But at times it provides a vital clue. Thus in *Hē gehierþ þās word and þā wyrceð*, *þās* and *þā* could be acc. sg. fem. or acc. pl. Only the fact that *word* is neuter will tell us that we must translate 'He hears these words and does them'.

LENGTH MARKS

Long vowels have been marked (ˉ) throughout, with the exception noted below. A knowledge of the length of vowels (or 'quantity', as it is called) is essential for the understanding of OE metre and for the serious study of phonology. Hence, when you learn the inflexions, you will need to remember both the form of the word and the length of its vowels. Long vowels are marked in the Texts and you should take advantage of this by noting carefully those which occur in both familiar and unfamiliar words.

But since the length-marks are not shown in the Old English MSS, many editions of prose and verse texts do not show them. Examples are the standard editions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and of the Homilies of Ælfric and Wulfstan, the texts published by Methuen (in their Old English Library) and by the Early English Text Society, and *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (published by Columbia University Press) which contain all the extant poetry. You will have to use one or more of these works fairly early in your career. In the hope that you will find the transition to such texts easier if you have already seen short passages in the form in which they appear in these works, I have not regularized the spelling (see §3) or marked vowel-length in the illustrative quotations in chapters V and VI. Most of the passages quoted are taken from texts which appear in nearly all readers. You can use these passages by writing them out, marking in the length-marks yourself, and then comparing

them with the correct version in your reader. You can check individual words in the glossary. But you will find it more interesting if you track down the context of the longer prose passages and those in verse with the help of the references in your glossary. By so doing, you will improve your knowledge of vowel quantity and widen your acquaintance with OE literature.

LEARNING THE INFLEXIONS

Those who want to test their knowledge of the paradigms and to try their hand at translating into Old English (a very useful way of learning the language, especially important since no-one speaks it today) will find A. S. Cook *Exercises in Old English* (Ginn, 1895) a useful book. There are second-hand copies about. *An English—Anglo-Saxon Vocabulary*, compiled by W. W. Skeat and printed for private distribution only by the Cambridge University Press in 1879, was reprinted in 1976 by J. D. Pickles of Cambridge, England.

I suggest that those coming to this book without any knowledge of Old English learn the inflexions in the order set out below. But remember that texts must be read and an understanding of the syntax acquired at the same time. Hints on how to do this are given later in this section.

1. Read §§1-4.
2. Now work through §§5-9. Make sure that you can recognize the new letters æ , þ and ð , and practise reading aloud the Practice Sentences (Text 1), following generally the natural stress of MnE.
3. Now read §§10-12.
4. The next step is to learn the paradigms in A below, in the order in which they are set out there.
5. (a) When you have learnt the pronouns, nouns, and adjectives, in A, you can see whether §§77-81 help or hinder you. Experience on this point differs.
(b) When you have learnt the verbs in A, you should read §§131-134.
6. You can now turn to the paradigms referred to in B below. B contains what may be called the 'derived paradigms', i.e. those which can be derived from the paradigms set out in A when certain sound-changes are understood. The sound-changes are presented in the hope that they will make your work easier, not as an end in themselves. Thus, if you meet a word *hwatum* in your reading, you will not be able to find out its meaning

unless you know that it comes from an adjective *hwæt* 'active, bold'. You will know this only if you have read §70.

7. The paradigms in C are important ones of fairly frequent occurrence which need not be learnt all at once. When you come across one of them in your reading, you can consult the relevant section. In this way, you will absorb them as need arises.

A Key Paradigms

These paradigms must be known thoroughly. At this stage, concentrate on them alone; disregard anything else in these sections.

1. The pronouns set out in §§15-21. Note particularly §19. (The dual forms in §21 may be passed over at first.)
2. *Nama* (§22) and, after reading §§63-64, *tila* (§65).
3. Now read §§26-32.
4. *Stān* (§33), *scip/word* (§34), and *giefu/lār* (§§47-48).
5. The strong declension of the adjectives (§§66-67).
6. Now read §§14, 87-89, and 115.
7. *Fremman* (§§116-117) and *lufian* (§§124-125).
8. *Habban* (§126), *bēon* (§127), and *weorþan* (Appendix A.3 (b)).
9. The principal parts of the strong verbs (§§90-95).
10. The conjugation of strong verbs (§§110-113).

B Derived Paradigms

The paradigms in this group may be derived from those in A as follows:

1. From *nama*, those in §§23-25.
2. From *stān*, *scip*, or *giefu*, those in §§35-44, 48-51, and 52-60. See now §13.
3. From *tila* and *til*, those in §§68-73.
4. From *fremman*, those in §§116-123.
5. From *lufian*, those in §§124-125.
6. From §§90-95, those in §§96-109.
7. From §§110-113, those in §114.

Note

Some nouns which often go like *stān*, *scip*, or *giefu*, once belonged to other declensions. As a result, they sometimes have unusual forms which may cause you difficulty in your reading. It might be just as well if you learnt to recognize these fairly early in your career. They include: *cild* (§34), *hælep* and *mōnaþ* (§44), some nouns in *-e* (§§45-46), the feminine nouns discussed in §§49 and 51, the relationship nouns (§60), and the *u*-nouns (§§61-62).

C Other Paradigms

1. Other Strong Nouns (§§45-46 and 61-62).
2. Comparison of Adjectives (§§74-76).
3. Numerals (§§82-86).
4. Verbs
 - (a) Class 3 weak verbs (§126).
 - (b) *Dōn* and *gān* (§128).
 - (c) *Willan* (§§129 and 211).
 - (d) Preterite-present verbs (§§130 and 206-210).
5. Adverbs (§135).

LEARNING THE VOCABULARY

Many OE words are easily recognizable from their MnE counterparts, though sometimes the meaning may be different; see §4 and look up the word 'lewd' in the Oxford English Dictionary.

Other words differ in spelling and pronunciation as a result of changes in ME and MnE. The short vowels *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, have remained relatively constant (see §7). But the long vowels and the diphthongs have sometimes changed considerably. Words with a long vowel in OE sometimes appear in MnE with the vowel doubled, e.g. *fēt* (masc. pl.) 'feet' and *dōm* (masc.) 'doom'. Sometimes, they have -*e* at the end, e.g. *lif* (neut.) 'life' and (with, in addition, one of the differences discussed below) *hām* (masc.) 'home' and *hūs* (neut.) 'house'.

Correspondences like the last two are more difficult to spot. Yet a knowledge of them is easily acquired and will save you much hard work. Thus, if you know that OE *ā* often appears in MnE as *oa*, you will not need to use your glossary to discover that *bār* (masc.) means 'boar', *bāt* (fem. or masc.) 'boat', *brād* 'broad', and *hār* 'hoar(y)'. Words like *āc* (fem.) 'oak', *hlāf* (masc.) 'loaf', and *hlāfas* (masc. pl.) 'loaves', will not present much more difficulty.

The table which follows will help you to recognize more of these correspondences. But it is not complete and the correspondences do not always apply. Thus OE *hāt* is MnE 'hot' and you may find it interesting to look up in a glossary or dictionary the four OE words spelt *ār* and see what has happened to them.

<i>OE spelling</i>	<i>MnE spelling</i>	<i>Vowels</i>	<i>Consonants</i>
fæt (neut.)	vat	æ = a	f = v
rædan	read	æ = ea	
dæd (fem.)	deed	æ = ee	
hālig	holy	ā = o	
hām (masc.)	home	ā = o.e	
āc (fem.)	oak	ā = oa	c = k

<i>OE spelling</i>	<i>MnE spelling</i>	<i>Vowels</i>	<i>Consonants</i>
hlāf (masc.)	loaf		hl = l
ecg (fem.)	edge		cg = dge
dēman	deem	ē = ee	
frēosan	freeze		s = z
ċild (neut.)	child		ċ = ch
miht (fem.)	might		h = gh
scip (neut.)	ship		sc = sh
lif (neut.)	life	ī = i.e	
ġiellan	yell	ie = e	ġ = y
ġiefan	give	ie = i	ġ = g
dōm (masc.)	doom	ō = oo	
hūs (neut.)	house	ū = ou.e	
nū	now	ū = ow	
synn (fem.)	sin	y = i	

See §253 for a book which may help you to learn the vocabulary.

The principles on which words were formed in OE are set out in §§136-138. Once you understand these, you will be able to deduce the meaning of some new words by their similarity to words you already know; see §136. For correspondences in endings, see §138.

UNDERSTANDING THE SYNTAX

The fundamental differences between the syntax of Old English and that of Modern English are set out in §§139-153. These, and §§182-183, should be studied as soon as you can read simple sentences with some degree of fluency and before you pass on to the connected passages of Old English recommended below. Other sections which should be read fairly soon are §§154-155, 157-158, and 160 (noun clauses and their conjunctions), §162 (relative pronouns), §§166-167 and §§169-170 (conjunctions introducing adverb clauses), §189 note, and §§195-199 (the uses of the tenses and the syntax of the resolved verb forms).

The remaining parts of the syntax should be used for reference when the need arises; note especially the topics mentioned in §§141-142 and the lists of conjunctions in §§168, 171, and 184. When you begin to feel some confidence, you can try the exercise in §172.

If at first you find these sections too long and complicated, you are advised to use one of the books cited in §256.

TEXTS TO READ

This book contains a selection of texts for beginners, the texts being carefully coordinated with the explanations in the grammar sections. After you have worked your way through these, you will

be ready for a book like John C. Pope's *Seven Old English Poems* (W. W. Norton, new edition 1981). This combination of texts should provide a foundation from which you can advance to the prose and verse texts available in Methuen's Old English Library and the Manchester Series, and ultimately to *Beowulf*.

READING THE TEXTS

Before beginning to read the texts you should do two things: first, study carefully the introduction to the Glossary, and second, familiarize yourself with the function words and word-patterns listed in §§168 and 171. While reading the texts, you should make careful use not only of the Glossary, but also of the Index of Words.

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Part One

I PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE LANGUAGE

§1 Professor Campbell defines Old English as 'the vernacular Germanic language of Great Britain as it is recorded in manuscripts and inscriptions dating from before about 1100'. It is one of the Germanic group of the Indo-European family of languages. Those who are unfamiliar with this concept should read about it in one of the histories of the English language cited in the Bibliography.

§2 There are four dialects distinguishable in the extant monuments—Northumbrian, Mercian, Kentish, West-Saxon. The differences are apparent in the spelling; otherwise, of course, we should not know about them. After 900 West-Saxon was increasingly used as a standard written language. It is for this reason that, initially at any rate, you learn West-Saxon. But even here the spelling conventions were never as rigidly observed as they are in Great Britain or America today, where compositors, typists, and writers, in different parts of the country use the same spelling, no matter how different their pronunciations may be.

§3 Most OE primers therefore attempt to make things easier for the beginner by 'normalizing', i.e. regularizing, the spelling by eliminating all forms not belonging to the West-Saxon dialect. But difficulty arises because two stages can be distinguished—early West-Saxon (eWS), which is the language of the time of King Alfred (c. 900), and late West-Saxon (lWS), which is seen in the works of Ælfric (c. 1000). Professor Davis, in revising Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Primer*, followed Sweet and used eWS as his basis. Quirk and Wrenn's *Old English Grammar*, however, normalizes on the basis of Ælfric's lWS. For the beginner, the most important difference is that eWS *ie* and *īe* appear in lWS texts as *y* and *ȳ*; this accounts for such differences as Sweet *ieldra*, *hieran*, but Q. & W. *yldra*, *hȳran*. Another is that *ea* and *ēa* may be spelt *e* and *ē* in lWS (and sometimes in eWS) texts, e.g. *seah* and *scēap*, but *seh* and *scēp*. Since the other differences will scarcely trouble you and since there are some disadvantages in the use of lWS, the paradigms are given here in their eWS forms and the sound laws are discussed with eWS as the basis. Any important variations likely to cause difficulty—apart from those mentioned here—will be noted. Full lists of all dialectal variants will be found in the appropriate section of Campbell's *Old English Grammar*.

In the sections on syntax, the spelling of a standard edition has

generally been followed, though occasionally an unusual form has been silently regularized. This should ease the transition to non-normalized texts. Similarly, in the prose texts provided for reading, we have moved from totally normalized to non-normalized texts.

§4 As has been explained in the Foreword, this book, after a brief discussion of orthography and pronunciation, deals with accidence, word formation, and syntax (including word-order), and attempts simple explanations of those sound-changes which will help you to learn the inflexions. Other sound-changes, the metre of poetry, and semantics, are not discussed. It is important, however, to remember that many common words have changed their meaning. *Sellan* means 'to give', not just 'to give in exchange for money, to sell'. *Eorl* cannot always be translated 'earl' and *dēor* and *fugol* mean, not 'deer' and 'fowl', but 'any (wild) animal' and 'any bird' respectively. The Bibliography contains references to useful introductory discussions on all the topics not discussed in this book.

II ORTHOGRAPHY AND PRONUNCIATION

i ORTHOGRAPHY

§5 As a glance at the facsimile of any OE manuscript will show, the letters used by Anglo-Saxon scribes were sometimes very like and sometimes very unlike those used today, both in shape and function. Printers of Anglo-Saxon texts generally use the equivalent modern letter form. Hence the sounds [f] and [v] are both represented by *f*, and the sounds [s] and [z] by *s* because this is the usage of the scribes; on these and other differences in representing the consonants, see §9. On the value of *y*, which represents a vowel now lost, see §7.

The following symbols are not in use today: *æ* (ash), which represents the vowel in MnE 'hat', *þ* (thorn) and *ð* (eth or, as the Anglo-Saxons appear to have called it, *ðæt*), both of which represent MnE *th* as in 'cloth' and in 'clothe'. Capital *ð* is written *D*. To make the learning of paradigms as simple as possible, *þ* has been used throughout chapter III.

The early texts of the Methuen Old English Library used the runic 'wynn' *ƿ* instead of *w* and the OE letter *ȝ* for *g*. In the latest volumes, these have been discarded.

As is customary, the punctuation in quotations from OE is modern.

ii STRESS

§6 The stress usually falls on the first syllable, as in MnE, e.g. *mórgen* 'morning'. The prefix *ǵe-* is always unaccented; hence *ǵebídan* 'await'. Two main difficulties occur:

1. Prepositional prefixes, e.g. *for-*, *ofer-*, can be either accented (usually in nouns or adjectives, e.g. *fórwyrð* 'ruin') or unaccented (usually in verbs, e.g. *forwiernan* 'refuse').

2. Compound words in which both elements retain their full meaning, e.g. *sæ-weall* 'sca-wall', have a secondary stress on the root syllable of the second element. There is some dispute about three-syllabled words with a long first syllable (see §26). Some say that *bindende* 'binding' and *timbrode* 'built' have a pattern like MnE 'árchàngels', not like 'hástily'. But not everyone agrees.

iii VOWELS

§7 Short vowels must be distinguished from long vowels, which are marked (ː) in this book (except as noted above). Approximate

pronunciations of OE vowels for those working without a teacher are given as far as possible in terms of Received Standard English.

<i>a</i>	as the first vowel in 'aha'
<i>ā</i>	as the second vowel in 'aha'
<i>æ</i>	as in 'mat'
<i>ǣ</i>	as in 'has' ¹
<i>e</i>	as in 'bet'
<i>ē</i>	approx. as in 'hate' [German <i>See</i>]
<i>i</i>	as in 'tin'
<i>ī</i>	as in 'seen'
<i>o</i>	as in 'cough'
<i>ō</i>	approx. as in 'goad' [German <i>so</i>]
<i>u</i>	as in 'pull' [NOT 'hut']
<i>ū</i>	as in 'cool'
<i>y</i>	as <i>i</i> , with lips in a whistling position [French <i>tu</i>]
<i>ȳ</i>	as <i>ī</i> , with lips in a whistling position [French <i>ruse</i>]

Vowels in unstressed syllables should be pronounced clearly. Failure to distinguish gen. sg. *eorles* from nom. acc. pl. *eorlas* is characteristic of ME, not of OE.

iv DIPHTHONGS

§8 If you are not sure of the distinction between vowels and diphthongs, you should consult a simple manual of phonetics. It is important to realize that OE words such as *heall*, *hēold*, *hielt*, which contain diphthongs, are just as much monosyllables as MnE 'meat' and 'field' (in which two letters represent one vowel) or MnE 'fine' and 'base', which contain diphthongs. The diphthongs, with approximate pronunciations, are:

<i>ea</i>	= <i>æ</i> + <i>a</i>
<i>ēa</i>	= <i>ǣ</i> + <i>a</i>
<i>eo</i>	= <i>e</i> + <i>o</i>
<i>ēo</i>	= <i>ē</i> + <i>o</i>
<i>ie</i>	= <i>i</i> + <i>e</i> ²
<i>īe</i>	= <i>ī</i> + <i>e</i>

A short diphthong is equal in length to a short vowel, a long diphthong to a long vowel. But remember that, like the MnE word 'I',

¹ If you experiment, you will notice that the vowel in 'has' is longer than that in 'mat', though MnE [æ] is frequently described as a 'short vowel'.

² The original pronunciation of *ie* and *īe* is not known with any certainty. It is simplest and most convenient for our purposes to assume that they represented diphthongs as explained above. But by King Alfred's time *ie* was pronounced as a simple vowel (monophthong), probably a vowel somewhere between *i* and *e*; *ie* is often replaced by *i* or *y*, and unstressed *i* is often replaced by *ie*, as in *hiene* for *hine*. Probably *īe* had a similar sound.

they are diphthongs, not two distinct vowels such as we get in the *ea* of 'Leander'.

V CONSONANTS

§9 All consonants must be pronounced, e.g. *c* in *cnapa*, *g* in *gnæt*, *h* in *hlāf*, *r* in *pær*, and *w* in *writan* and *trēow*.

Double consonants must be pronounced. Thus *biden* and *biddan* differ as MnE 'bidden' and 'bad debt'.

Most of the consonants are pronounced in the same way as in MnE. The main exceptions are set out below.

The letters *s*, *f*, *þ* and *ð*, are pronounced voiced, i.e. like MnE *z*, *v*, and *th* in 'clothe', between vowels or other voiced sounds, e.g. *risan*, *hlāfas*, *paþas*, and *hēafdes*. In other positions, including the beginning and end of words, they are voiceless, i.e. like MnE *s*, *f*, and *th* in 'cloth', e.g. *sittan*, *hlāf*, *pæþ*, and *oft*. This accounts for the different sounds in MnE 'path' but 'paths', 'loaf' but 'loaves', and the like. Initial *ge-* does not cause voicing; *findan* and its past ptc. *ge-funden* both have the sound *f*.

At the beginning of a word ('initially') before a vowel, *h* is pronounced as in MnE 'hound'. Otherwise, it is like German *ch*.

Before *a*, *o*, *u*, and *y*, *c* is pronounced *k* and *g* is pronounced as in MnE 'good'. Before *e* and *i*, *c* is usually pronounced like *ch* in MnE 'child' and *g* like *y* in MnE 'yet'. In this book, the latter are printed *ċ* and *ȝ* respectively, except in the examples quoted in chapters V and VI.

Between back vowels, *g* is pronounced like the *g* in German *sagen*. Those without a teacher can pronounce it as *w* in words like *dragan* and *boga*.

The combinations *sc* and *cg* are usually pronounced like MnE *sh* and *dge* respectively. Thus *scip* 'ship' and *ecg* 'edge' are pronounced the same in both OE and MnE.

Note

A more detailed account of the pronunciation of Old English will now be found in §§9-19 of *Old English Sound Changes for Beginners* by R. F. S. Hamer (Basil Blackwell, 1967).

III INFLEXIONS

INTRODUCTION

§10 Following (as most primers do) the conventional terminology, we distinguish in Old English the following parts of speech: nouns, adjectives, pronouns (including articles), verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections.

§11 Like most inflected languages, OE distinguishes number, case, and gender, in nouns, pronouns, and adjectives. The numbers are singular and plural; a dual is found in the 1st and 2nd pers. pron. where, e.g. *wit* means 'we two', *git* 'you (ye) two'. The main cases are nominative, accusative, genitive, and dative, but in certain parts of the adjective and pronoun declensions an instrumental occurs; where it does not, the dative does its work.

§12 There are three genders—masculine, feminine, and neuter. Gender sometimes agrees with sex, e.g. *se mann* (masc.) 'the man', *sēo sweostor* (fem.) 'the sister', or with lack of it, e.g. *þæt scip* (neut.) 'the ship'. This is often called 'natural gender'. But grammatical gender is often opposed to sex, e.g. (with persons) *se wifmann* (masc.) 'the woman', *þæt wif* (neut.) 'the woman', and (with inanimate objects) *se stān* (masc.) 'the stone', *sēo giefu* (fem.) 'the gift'. These opposing tendencies, which contribute to the later disappearance of grammatical gender in English, sometimes produce 'lack of concord'; see §187.2. Compounds follow the gender of the second element; hence *þæt wif* (neut.) + *se mann* (masc.) = *se wifmann* (masc.).

§13 Generally, the gender of nouns must be learnt. The form of the demonstrative is the main clue (see §§16-17). The following nom. sg. endings, however, are significant:

Weak Masc.	-a.
Strong Masc.	-dōm, -els, agent nouns in -end and -ere, -hād, concrete nouns in -ing and -ling, -scipe.
Strong Fem.	-nes(s), abstract nouns in -ing/ung, -ræden, -þo/þu.
Strong Neut.	-lāc.

Notoriously ambiguous is the ending -e; see §77. On these endings, see further §§136-138.

§14 Verbs. The differences between strong and weak verbs and the system of conjugating the OE verb are described in §§87-89. New developments, many of them important for MnE, are outlined in §§199-203.

i PRONOUNS

§15 You are now ready to learn your first paradigms. The demonstrative *se* serves as a definite article. Both *se* 'that' and *þes* 'this' can be used with nouns, e.g. *se mann* 'the man', or as pronouns, e.g. *hē sorgaþ ymb þā* 'he is concerned about those (them)'.

§16 *se* 'the, that'

	<i>Singular</i>			<i>Plural</i>
	<i>Masc.</i>	<i>Neut.</i>	<i>Fem.</i>	<i>All genders</i>
<i>Nom.</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>þæt</i>	<i>sēo, sīo</i>	<i>þā</i>
<i>Acc.</i>	<i>þone</i>	<i>þæt</i>	<i>þā</i>	<i>þā</i>
<i>Gen.</i>	<i>þæs</i>	<i>þæs</i>	<i>þære</i>	<i>þāra, þære</i>
<i>Dat.</i>	<i>þæm, þām</i>	<i>þæm, þām</i>	<i>þære</i>	<i>þæm, þām</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>þȳ, þon</i>	<i>þȳ, þon</i>		

§17 *þes* 'this'

	<i>Singular</i>			<i>Plural</i>
	<i>Masc.</i>	<i>Neut.</i>	<i>Fem.</i>	<i>All genders</i>
<i>Nom.</i>	<i>þes</i>	<i>þis</i>	<i>þeos</i>	<i>þās</i>
<i>Acc.</i>	<i>þisne</i>	<i>þis</i>	<i>þās</i>	<i>þās</i>
<i>Gen.</i>	<i>þisses</i>	<i>þisses</i>	<i>þisse</i>	<i>þissa</i>
<i>Dat.</i>	<i>þissum</i>	<i>þissum</i>	<i>þisse</i>	<i>þissum</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>þȳs</i>	<i>þȳs</i>		

§18 3rd Pers. Pron.

	<i>Singular</i>			<i>Plural</i>
	<i>Masc.</i>	<i>Neut.</i>	<i>Fem.</i>	<i>All genders</i>
<i>Nom.</i>	<i>hē 'he'</i>	<i>hit 'it'</i>	<i>hēo, hīo 'she'</i>	<i>hīe, hī 'they'</i>
<i>Acc.</i>	<i>hine</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>hīe, hī</i>	<i>hīe, hī</i>
<i>Gen.</i>	<i>his</i>	<i>his</i>	<i>hire</i>	<i>hira, hiera, hiora</i>
<i>Dat.</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>hire</i>	<i>him</i>

§19 The following similarities in these declensions may be noted:

1. neut. gen. dat. inst. are the same as the corresponding masc. forms;
2. nom. and acc. neut. sg. are the same;
3. gen. and dat. fem. sg. are the same;
4. pl. is the same for all genders;
5. acc. fem. sg. is the same as nom. and acc. pl.

Note too the way in which the masc. and neut. sg., while agreeing with one another except in the nom. and acc., differ markedly in inflexion from the fem.

§20 *Hwā* is interrogative 'who?' or indefinite 'anyone, someone'. It is not a relative pronoun in OE; see §164.