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

May 14, 2008  English--It could have been worse
## Coarse-scale history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5th century</td>
<td>First (large-scale) germanic groups in Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 8th century</td>
<td>Viking Raids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-to-late 9th century</td>
<td>Danish invasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 11th century</td>
<td>Norman Conquest (1066)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod-to-late 15th century</td>
<td>“Chancery Standard,” printing press give rise to MnE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th, 16th, 17th century</td>
<td>The Great Vowel Shift</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## In the beginning…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd century</td>
<td>Saxons impact in SE England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 4th century</td>
<td>Angles in E Anglia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid 5th century</td>
<td>Major Germanic influx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd half of 5th century</td>
<td>Germanic push inland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≈ ce 500</td>
<td>Battle at “Mount Badon”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 6th century</td>
<td>Most of Britain lost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

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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)
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
In the beginning...
In the beginning...

Image from: http://www.lowlands-l.net
In the beginning…

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

May 14, 2008 English--It could have been worse
In the beginning...

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

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English--It could have been worse
In the beginning…

Anglo-Saxon?

Or…
In the beginning…

Franco-Fries

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English--It could have been worse
Which one is Englisc?

Thit riuht skrêf God selua, ûse hèra,
thâ thet was thet Moyses lâtte thet
Israhêliske folk thruch thene râda sê,
and of there wilda wôstene…

Fader usa firiho barno,
Thu bist an them hôhon
himilia rîkea,
Geuûîhid sî thin namo
uuordo gehuuilico

Fæþer ure, þu þe eart on heofonum,
Si þin nama gehalgod.
To become þin rice.
Gewurde þin willa.
Which one is Englisc?

Old Frisian*
Thit riuht skrêf God selua, ūse hêra, thà thet was thet Moyses lâtte thet Israhêliske folk thruch thene råda 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 bêcume þin rice. Gewurde þin willa

*Old Frisian is contemporary with ME

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• 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)
    • þæt wif (neut., the woman)
    • se stan (masc., the stone)
    • seo giefu (fem., the gift)

• Two groups:
  – Weak and strong
## Pronouns in OE

### The, That

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masc.</td>
<td>Neut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>se</td>
<td>þæt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>þone</td>
<td>þæt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>þæs</td>
<td>þæs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>þæm, þam</td>
<td>þæm, þam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inst.</td>
<td>þy, þon</td>
<td>þy, þon</td>
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</table>

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English--It could have been worse
### 3rd Person Pronouns in Old English (OE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Plural All genders</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
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<td>hit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>hine</td>
<td>hit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>his</td>
<td>his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>him</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
cf. Fris. *se/hja* (she, they)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Plural</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Nom.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>hine</td>
<td>hit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>his</td>
<td>his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>him</td>
<td>him</td>
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</table>
“Hwæt hwæm ge gesæde?”

May 14, 2008

English--It could have been worse
“Hwæt hwæm ge gesæde?”
“You said what to whom?”
To be (OE *beon*, *wesan*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indicative</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Subjunctive</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sg. 1</strong></td>
<td>eom</td>
<td>beo</td>
<td>sie</td>
<td>wes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>eart</td>
<td>bist</td>
<td>beon</td>
<td>wesan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>is</td>
<td>bīp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pl.</strong></td>
<td>sind(on), sint</td>
<td>beop</td>
<td></td>
<td>wærren</td>
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</table>

May 14, 2008  English--It could have been worse
To be (OE *beon*, *wesan*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Present</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Preterite</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sg. 1</td>
<td>eom</td>
<td>beo</td>
<td>wæs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>eart</td>
<td>bist</td>
<td>wære</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>biþ</td>
<td>wæs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td>sind(on), sint</td>
<td>beop</td>
<td>wær(on)</td>
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Subjunctive

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<th>Preterite</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sie</td>
<td>beo</td>
<td>wære</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td>sien</td>
<td>beon</td>
<td>wær(on)</td>
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Imperative

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>wes</td>
<td>beo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pl.</td>
<td>wesap</td>
<td>beop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Future, eternal truth
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. Sippan 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.’”

*OE*

pasture (ds), them (ap), lest, their
Norman (Old French) influence

- Results in ME
- French and Latin spoken by noble men for official purposes only
- Women and commoners spoke only English
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
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.
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 ȝoȝen (own).
Example: Early ME

The Peterborough Chronicle

1137 Æis 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, ...
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.
“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.
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
  - *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.”
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** thûs bliuwe moatte” (you will probably have to stay at home)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OE</th>
<th>ME</th>
<th>MnE</th>
<th>Fris</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>magan</td>
<td>mahen</td>
<td>“to be able to”, “have the ability”, may</td>
<td>mei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cunnan</td>
<td>cunnen</td>
<td>can, “to be able to”</td>
<td>kinne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*motan</td>
<td>moten</td>
<td>must</td>
<td>moatte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>willan</td>
<td>willen</td>
<td>want, (will)</td>
<td>wolle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*sculan</td>
<td>schulen</td>
<td>shall</td>
<td>sille</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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English--It could have been worse
OE cunnan, *motan, *sculan, mahan, witan (to know) are preterite-present verbs.

Preterite of ME moten gives MnE present “must”

cf. Fris. moatte: “hja moast har fyts ride” = “she had to ride her bike”
Was able to

Fris. “meie”

“se mocht har fyts ride” = “she was allowed/able to ride her bike.”
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-* \(\rightarrow\) *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 \(\rightarrow\) *a-*
    • “You were a-scared of that place?”
They had enough, though.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OE</th>
<th>ME</th>
<th>MnE</th>
<th>Fris</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ruh</td>
<td>roȝ 3</td>
<td>rough</td>
<td>rûch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>riht</td>
<td>riȝt</td>
<td>right</td>
<td>rjocht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þeah</td>
<td>Þoȝ, Þou, thow</td>
<td>though</td>
<td>(al)hoewol’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Scandinavian origin)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bog</td>
<td>Boȝe, bowe</td>
<td>bough</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OE → ME → MnE

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 þ
- “ch” and “sh”
Loss of case and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>stan (masc.)</th>
<th>scip (neut)</th>
<th>giefu (fem.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom.</td>
<td>stan, stanas</td>
<td>scip, scipu</td>
<td>giefu, giefa,-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>stan, stanas</td>
<td>scip, scipu</td>
<td>giefe, giefa,-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>stanes, stana</td>
<td>scipes, scipa</td>
<td>giefe, giefa,-ena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat.</td>
<td>stane, stanum</td>
<td>scipe, scipum</td>
<td>giefe, giefum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the heart proceed evil thanks,
*Matthew 15:19*, 12th century translation
It could have been worse

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

þyncan = to seem

þencean = think
thoughtfulness
thanks

Methinks (ME)
Causing images/Reflections to appear to one’s brain;
thanks = thoughts

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English--It could have been worse
From the heart proceed evil thanks, 
*Matthew 15:19, 12th century translation*

Þyncan = to seem

Þencean = think
thoughtfulness

causing images/reflections to appear to one’s brain;

thanks = thoughts

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English--It could have been worse
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?)
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?
References used for this presentation


May 14, 2008 English--It could have been worse
# 1st Per. Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Plural</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>wit</td>
<td>we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc.</td>
<td>me, mec</td>
<td>unc</td>
<td>us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>min</td>
<td>uncer</td>
<td>ure</td>
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<tr>
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<td>unc</td>
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## 2nd Per. Pronouns

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<td>þe, þec</td>
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<td>Gen.</td>
<td>þin</td>
<td>incer</td>
<td>eower</td>
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<td>þe</td>
<td>inc</td>
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## Who/What

<table>
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<td>hwæt</td>
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<td>hwæs</td>
<td>hwæs</td>
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<td>Dat.</td>
<td>hwæm, hwam</td>
<td>hwæm, hwam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inst.</td>
<td>hwy</td>
<td>hwy, hwon</td>
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May 14, 2008

English--It could have been worse
### Wh- words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OE</th>
<th>ME</th>
<th>MnE</th>
<th>Fris</th>
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<tr>
<td>hwa</td>
<td>who, wo, qwo</td>
<td>who</td>
<td>(h)wa(t)</td>
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<td>hwæm, hwam</td>
<td>whom</td>
<td>who, whom</td>
<td>(h)wa(t)</td>
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<td>hwanne, hwænne</td>
<td>when, hwen, quen, wan, won</td>
<td>when</td>
<td>wannear</td>
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<td>hwær</td>
<td>where, quere, war, wær</td>
<td>where</td>
<td>wêr</td>
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<tr>
<td>hu</td>
<td>hu</td>
<td>who</td>
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