

- Pre-OE Germanic had three contrastive places of articulation for obstruents: labial, dental/alveolar, and velar. There was nothing (phonemically) in the palato-alveolar or palatal area (except /j/). In a transition to OE a new series was created: 'palatal' /tʃ, dʒ, ʃ/

*catt, cuman, gōd* - velars (before back vowels)  
*cradol, glæs,* - velars (before a consonant)

*cinn, cēosan, geard* - palatals (before i(:) eo(:) ea(:))

- Phonetically this suggests fronting of velars in front contexts (and this is what happened), but in OE we can have a velar before a front /y/ being the result of i-mutation, or before /e/. In other words, front vowels in non-palatalising contexts are secondary and not original. This suggests that palatalisation is older than i-mutation.
- A few problems: 1) what is the phonetic nature of this process? /k/ → /tʃ/ is rather unlikely, so probably first there was an intermediate stage with /k/ becoming [c] a voiceless palatal stop (like in MnE keel) and the second problem: 2) had /ɣ/ become /g/ before palatalisation or did this happen later? (this obviously is not an independent issue being part of Grimm's law - IE /bh, dh, gh/ and Verner's law acting on /f, θ, x/. IE /gh/ didn't become a stop in early Germanic (except after nasals); indeed it still hasn't in Netherlandic.

WGmc input	ki	ɣi	ɣ
Backness Accomodation	ci	ji	-
Palatal softening	tʃi	-	-
Hardening	-	-	g
OE form	cinn	gielðan	gōd

- Some Examples

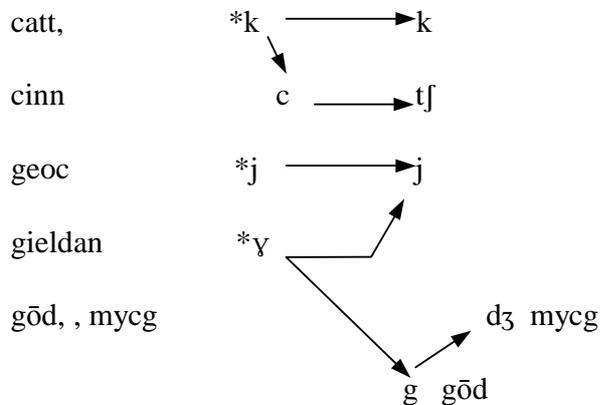
/ɣ/ was palatalised after front vowels *dæg* /dæɣ/ → *day*

/k/ after front vowels except /æ(:)/ *pic* 'pitch', but *bæc* 'back'

Medial /ɣ/ between back vowels remained unchanged in OE, and weakened to /w/ in ME. Hence MnE alternation *day* - *dawn* from OE *dæg* [dæj]- *dagung*. [dɑwung]

- Additionally, from a historical \*/ɣ/ which became a stop [g] after a nasal and in gemination we get /dʒ/ as a result of palatalisation: *sengean* 'singe' < \*/sanɣjan/, *mycg* 'midge' < \*/muɣɣj/

- To sum up,



- A different sort of palatalisation /sk/ → /ʃ/  
 The mechanics are not clear. Probably /sk/ → /sx/ → /ʃ/. The reason for this palatalisation is obscure. It appears in both front and back environments, and before consonants so it is not assimilatory, e.g.  
*scīnan* 'shine'  
*scofl* 'shovel'  
*scanca* 'shank'  
 Occasional failure in back environments, spelling <x> due to metathesis, palatalised and non-p. variants of one lexeme appear in one text.
- A palatalised variant in WS OE is not always a key to its modern pronunciation. P. was restricted in Northumbrian, and still is in Scots kirk vs. church. Alternatively its lack may be due to 'Scandinavian influence' or the two things may be quite the same. It is certain in any case that many words in MnE could not possibly derive from southern OE. WS *giefan* -give, skirt (OE *scyrte* gives the doublet shirt), guest OE *giest*, gift OE *gift*, etc.