

The Parable of the Sower in four Germanic languages

Old English

3 and *he spræc* to him fela on bigspellum
cweþende: Sopllice uteode se sædere hys sæd
to sawenne
4 and þa þa he seow, sume hig feollon wip
weg, and *fuglas comun* and *æton* þa;
5 Sopllice sume feollon *on stænihte* þær hyt
næfde mycle eorþan, and hrædlice up
sprungon forþam þe hig næfdon þære eorþan
dypan;
6 Sopllice up sprungenne *sunnan* hig
adruwudon and forscruncon, forþam þe hig
næfdon *wyrtrum*;
7 Sopllice sume feollon on *þornas*, and þa
þornas weoxon and forþrysmudon þa;
8 sume sopllice feollon *on gode eorþan* and
sealdon weastm . . .”

Old Norse

3 Hinn er sa vill sæði sinu, þa ferr han ut.
4 Ok meðan hann er a veginum, þa fellr sumt
niðr i hja veginum, ok *koma fuglar* at ok *eta*
þat.
5 En sumt fellr *i þurra jorð ok grjotuga*, en
með því at þar var grunnlendi ok engi vøkvi,
6 þa rann skjott upp, ok þornaði þa þegar af
solar ofhita.
7 Sumt rann upp in millum *klungra ok*
hagþyrna, ok af þeirra hvassleika þa fellr þat
bratt niðr til jarðar ok fyrirfersk.
8 En sumt kom *i goða jorð* ok varð at avoxti
. . .

Douay-Rheims translation Matthew 13:3–8

3 And *he spoke* to them many things in
parables, saying: Behold the sower sent
forth to sow.
4 And whilst he soweth some fell by the
way side, and *the birds* of the air came
and *ate* them up.
5 And other some fell *upon stony*
ground, where they had not much earth:
and they sprung up immediately,
because they had no deepness of earth.
6 And when *the sun* was up they were
scorched: and because they had not *root*,
they withered away.
7 And others fell among *thorns*: and the
thorns grew up and choked them.
8 And others fell *upon good ground* and
they brought forth fruit . . .

*Instructions: Examine each of the four early
Germanic translations of this well-known
passage. It's easiest if you go from the
Modern English to Old English to the
others. Track each of the bold-face words
across the five texts. How many other words
in the older texts can you identify?*

*Note: you aren't expected to make
specialized, technical observations. Simply
observe what correspondences you can as a
curious amateur!*

Gothic (Mark 4:2–8)

2 Jah laisida ins in gajukom manag, jah *qap*
im in laiseinai seinai:
3 “Hauseiþ! Sai, urrann sa saians du saian
fraiwa seinamma.
4 Jah warþ, miþþanei saiso, sum raihtis
gadraus faur wig, jah *qemun fuglos* jah
fretun þata.
5 Anþaruþ-þan gadraus *ana stainahamma*,
þarei ni habaida airþa managa, jah suns
urrann, in þizei ni habaida diupaizos airþos;
6 at *sunnin* þan urrinnandin ufbrann, jah
unte ni habaida *waurtins*, gaþaursnoda.
7 Jah sum gadraus *in þaurununs*; jah
ufarstigun þai þaurnjus jah afþvapidedun þata,
jah akran ni gaf.
8 jah sum gadraus *in airþa goda* jah gaf
akran urrinnando jah wahsjando . . .”

Old High German

3 . . . inti *sprah* in managu in ratissun sus
quedenti: Senu gieng tho uz thie thar sauuit
zi sauuenne.
4 Mit thiu her tho sata, sumu fielun nah
themo uuege inti vvurdun furtretanu, inti
quamun fugala inti *frazun* thiu.
5 Andaru fielun *in steinahti lant*, thar ni
habeta mihhala erda, inti sliumo giengun uf,
uuanta sie ni habetun erda tiufi;
6 ufganganteru *sunnan* furbrantu vvurdun:
bithiu sie ni habetun *vvurzalun*, furthorretun.
7 Sumiu fielun in *thorna*; tho uuohsun thie
thorna inti furthamftum.
8 Andaru fielun *in guota erda* inti gabun
uuahsmon . . .