

## **Danish sloppiness: How did it come so far?**

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At around 500 AD the phonological structure of the word in the Germanic dialect that eventually was to become modern Danish still had an archaic Indo-European look. During the 4000 years that had passed since the breakup of the Indo-European proto-language at around 3500 BC, important changes had taken place at the morphosyntactic and lexical levels in this dialect; but at the phonological level the changes were rather insignificant, at least compared to those that would characterise the following period, from 500 AD until now.

In order to understand the nature of synchronic reduction processes more deeply, it may be useful to be aware of the broader historical perspective of which the synchronic processes form part. In this paper I shall give an overview of the most important phonological developments that have taken place in Danish during the last 1500 years, drastically reshaping the phonological structure of the word.