

Old English Language

It is believed that more than 5000 years ago Proto-European language was spoken in Baltic area. Circa 1000 B.C, branches of that language became distinct. The Indo-European family of languages include the following major branches

- 1.The Germanic languages.
- 2.The Celtic language.
- 3.Latin and Romance languages.
- 4.Ancient Greek language.
- 5.Balto-Slavic languages.
- 6.Indo-Iranian languages.

The most widespread major branch was the Celtic language . It was the language of the Celts who lived in what is now England, Germany, Spain and France.

The Celts and the Roman Invasion;

Britain was invaded by the Roman under Julius Caesar in 55 and 54 B.C., and the Celts forced him to withdraw. In 43 B.C, the Roman Emperor Claudius occupied Britain. The Romans established the colony Britannia and their rule lasted for about centuries. The Celtic people spoke Latin or mixture of Latin and Celtic so as to communicate with the Romans. In 436 A.D, the Roman Empire collapsed and the Romans withdrew from Britain.

The Germanic Occupation of Britain;

It is about 200 B.C, when the Germanic people moved down from Scandinavia and swept through Central Europe in successive waves . The Germanic tribes , who were primitive and aggressive , spread over what now is England, Spain, France and Italy. The Celts in England were more developed than the Germanic invaders, and their Celtic languages

still survive as Gaelic, Welsh, Manx and Breton.

Germanic tribes invaded the British Isles in the fifth century A.D. They were Angles from Denmark, Saxon from northern Germany. Jutes from Jutland and some Frisian. The Celtic inhabitants of Britain were pushed into Wales , Cornwall and Scotland. One group of them migrated to the Brittany Coast of France. With the passage of times seven kingdoms were established by various combined tribes. The kingdoms were North Umbria , Marcia, East Anglia, Kent, Sussex and Wessex, The Angles were named from the name of their original land ' Engle or Engla- land' . Their language was called Englise from which the word English is derived.

It should be known that the invasion of Britain is considered the beginning of the history of Old English because it led to the development of English as a separate language from a West Germanic dialects. The oldest sample of English was an Anglo-Saxon inscription dated between 450 and 480 A.D.

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