THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH PODCAST TRANSCRIPTS

EPISODE 20:
THE EARLY GERMANIC TRIBES

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Welcome to the History of English Podcast – A Podcast About the History of English Language. This is Episode 20: The Early Germanic Tribes.

In this episode, I'm going to look at the emergence of the first Germanic tribes in northern Europe. So we'll be looking at the peoples and the languages which gave birth to English. That means that from this point forward in the podcast, we'll be establishing a continuum from the original Germanic language spoken by those northern European tribes, to the Germanic dialects spoken by the Anglo-Saxons, to Middle English, and then ultimately Modern English. So this is really the prelude to Old English. And that means that it's the last chapter in our look at the development of pre-English.

Of course, we'll continue to look at outside influences like Latin and French and Old Norse, but from this point on, we'll be looking at those languages as outside influences on this continuum from the original Germanic language to Modern English.

But before I begin, let me remind you that the website for this podcast is historyofenglishpodcast.com. And my email address is kevin@historyofenglishpodcast .com. And also, I wanted to remind you that I do have a twitter account which is @englishhistpod. And also, I am still working on that alphabet series. I have everything recorded. I just need to edit it now and figure out how I'm going to make it available. So I'll keep you updated on that, and hopefully that will be available very shortly.

Now, in this episode, I want to examine where the Germanic tribes came from and how they came to occupy central Europe east of the Rhine.

Back in Episode 11, I looked at the emergence of the Usatovo culture near the Black Sea which many linguists believe to be the link between the original Indo-Europeans and the Germanic tribes. So let me begin by reviewing the key points from that episode.

Sometime around 3500 BC, the Usatovo culture emerged in the Northwestern corner of the Black Sea around the mouth of the Dniester River. This appears to have been a hybrid culture which combined the cultures of the Indo-European steppe herders to the immediate north with the people of the fixed agricultural settlements around the Balkans to the south. It is generally believed that the people who inhabited this region spoke an Indo-European dialect. And a few centuries later, after this culture emerged, some of the people who inhabited this region began to migrate northwestward along the Dniester River. That took them along the northern side of the Carpathian Mountains into northern Europe. And these Usatovo people encountered other peoples in northern Europe which are known as the Corded Ware people based upon a type of pottery they produced which had cord-like designs around the outside. And I also noted back in that episode that the early Germanic languages were on the ground and being spoken in and around Scandinavia by around 500 BC. But that obvious leaves a pretty big gap in both time and knowledge between the first migration of Usatovo people around 3300 BC and the emergence of Germanic-speaking tribes around 500 BC.

So what about that gap? What do we know about the links between the original Indo-Europeans and the first Germanic tribes? Well, the answer is we don't know very much with any certainty. But there are few reasonable conclusions that we can draw from this period.

First, since the original Germanic language was an Indo-European language, we know that the original Germanic tribes in Scandinavia were connected to the Indo-Europeans of the Black Sea region – at least linguistically. This is the same assumption we can make about the first Greeks, the first Latin-speaking tribes, and the first Celts. They all spoke Indo-European languages, so there has to be some type of connection to the Indo-Europeans. And the connection appears to be those corded ware people of northern Europe, at least in the case of the Germanic tribes.

Now there is archaeological evidence from northern Europe during this period between the Usatovo Culture and the emergence of the Germanic tribes, but there are no inscriptions, so we don't know much about the languages in this region during this period. So instead of linguistic evidence like inscriptions, scholars have to look for cultural links between these peoples.

So let's take a closer look at the Corder Ware people.

The first thing I should note about the Corded Ware people is that they occupied a very large portion of northern and central Europe during the later period of the original Indo-Europeans. To put some actual dates on this culture, they appear to have spread across northern Europe from around 3200 BC to around 2300 BC. And as you may recall from earlier episodes, the period of the original Indo-Europeans is estimated to be between 4500 BC and 2500 BC. So during the later half of the Indo-European era, the Corded Ware culture was in place in Northern Europe.

And just to emphasize the point, that means the Corded Ware people were in place before the emergence of the original Germanic language, and before the original Celtic, Baltic and Slavic languages. So these people lived in northern Europe around the same time the original Indo-Europeans were starting to expand outward from the Black Sea region. And to get a better idea of the region where these people lived, check out the map which Louis Henwood was kind enough to prepare for Episode 11. Just go to historyofenglishpodcast.com and click the link for Episode 11.

So these people lived in northern Europe at a time when the Indo-Europeans were starting to expand into that region. But we don't really know anything about the language of the Corded Ware people. But we do know that the culture began to take on many characteristics associated with the Indo-Europeans to the south. And that is a major signal that Indo-Europeans were expanding into this region and affecting the culture of the region.

Archaeologists have determined that the Corded Ware people were mobile, and they were pastoral since relatively few fixed settlements have been found in the Corded Ware region. Their mobile nature is also suggested by the wide territory which they covered. There is also evidence that they had domesticated horses and were using ox-drawn wagons at this very early stage. And since horses were domesticated in the steppe region to the southeast during the Indo-European

period, that is a strong sign that the Indo-Europeans were expanding into northern Europe and were bringing domesticated horses with them.

And since wheeled vehicles were also in common use on the steppes by this point, the presence of ox-drawn wagons in northern Europe is another sign of Indo-European expansion into this region to the north. Also, bronze objects began to appear in the Corded Ware region during this period. And bronze technology and bronze objects can be traced from the Balkans and Carpathian basin around the Black Sea, through the steppe region and into this area of northern Europe. So this is further evidence of the spread of Indo-European peoples and culture into this region.

So all of this suggests that this Corded Ware culture was comprised of either Indo-European people who had migrated into northern Europe, or it was a blended culture consisting of Indo-European people who had become assimilated with native people in this region. This second option is probably the most likely because there are some clear differences between this culture and the Indo-European culture. For example, the Indo-Europeans tended to use a particular type of burial called Kurgan burials, and those types of burials are not generally found in the Corded Ware region. So that suggests more of a blend of cultures.

As I said, there is no clear evidence of the language of the Corded Ware people, but we do know that Indo-European languages eventually emerged throughout this region a few centuries later. To the west, the Germanic languages emerged. To the south, the Celtic languages appeared. And to the east, the Baltic and Slavic languages came about. So again, this is a sign that the early Indo-European language spread into this Corded Ware region during this transitional period.

And it may very well be the case that the later Indo-European languages which emerged in this region were not the product of a single Indo-European tribe or dialect. It could be the case that there were waves of Indo-Europeans entering this region with each new wave bringing its own Indo-European dialect.

Historical linguists note that when two different languages meet in the same region, there is usually a period of bi-lingualism in which the two languages exist side by side. But sometimes, over a period of several generations, one of the languages loses its status and prominence. And new generations only learn to speak the more dominant language. And that is very likely what happened here. The Indo-European dialects may have emerged as the dominant languages because the chiefs who spoke those dialects had larger herds of cattle and sheep, and they may have had more horses than could have been raised by the native people of Northern Europe. And it is also possible that there was more linguistic variation during this time. In other words, local languages and dialects may have been common, but there might not have been a common language spoken throughout the entire region. And in that environment, a single dominant language like the Indo-European language could have emerged as a common lingua franca spoken throughout the entire region. So future generations would have tended to speak that language to the exclusion of the local dialects and languages. Again, these are some of the theories to explain how Indo-European dialects replaced the native languages in these regions. While the specific process is still up for debate, there is no doubt what the ultimate result was.

During the first millennium BC, the original or 'proto' versions of the modern languages of northern Europe began to emerge. And this included the Germanic languages, the Celtic languages and the Balto-Slavic languages.

But this fact also produces a dilemma for historical linguists. Remember that the Germanic and Celtic languages are considered Centum languages, whereas the Balto-Slavic languages of eastern Europe are considered Satem languages. So did all of these languages evolve together as part of a common dialect which later fractured into separate dialects? Or did all of these languages evolve separately from each other in different places at different times? Again, the answer depends on who you ask.

In the mid-1800s, some early linguists attempted to put together the first family tree of Indo-European languages. One of those linguists was August Schleicher. And Schleicher noticed similarities between the Germanic languages and the Baltic and Slavic languages. For example, all of those languages had similar case endings in certain situations. In his early Indo-European family tree, Schleicher created a basic 'Slavo-Germanic' branch in which the Germanic languages of northern Europe and the Baltic and Slavic languages eastern Europe were all part of the same language family. He then indicated a later separation of the Germanic languages from the Baltic and Slavic languages.   So in essence, he thought the Germanic languages and the Balto-Slavic languages had emerged from a common dialect spoken in Northern Europe.

But there was an obvious problem with Schleicher's model. By the point, linguists had already started to make that distinction be the Centum and Satem languages. Supposedly, this distinction represented a very early split in the Indo-European languages between a western Centum group and an eastern Satem group. And the Germanic languages were part of the western Centum group and the Balto-Slavic languages were part of the eastern Satem group. So this suggested that the Balto-Slavic languages developed separately from the Germanic languages. And it also suggests that the similarities between the two language groups were the result of long-term borrowing. And all of these languages were spoken in close proximity, so that would explain some of the similarities.

We should also keep in mind the wave theory I mentioned earlier. And that might also account for some of the fundamental similarities and differences between those languages. There might have been an initial Indo-European dialect brought by early settlers. And in certain places, there may have been later settlers who brought a related, but different, Indo-European dialect. So these theories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

This is still a subject of ongoing debate among some modern linguists. But at the end of the day, the proper classification of the Germanic languages isn't really all that important to our story of the history of English. While the linguistic evidence is unclear and somewhat contradictory, we can say that an early 'proto' Germanic dialect had emerged in Scandinavia and northern Germany early in the first millennium BC.

So let's turn our attention to those early Germanic speakers.

During this very early period, the Germanic tribes were confined to a relatively small portion of northern Europe from Scandinavia down into modern-day Denmark. Now even though there are no inscriptions or writings from this period to confirm that the people who lived there were early Germanic tribes, there are other clues which lead to this conclusion. For example, this is the only area in the region where there are no pre-Germanic place names. And that suggests that Germanic-speaking people were in this region very early on. But again, it's difficult to put any actual dates on the arrival of these tribes into this region.

Regardless of the date of their arrival, it does appear that early Germanic dialects were being spoken in this region by about 1000 BC, and perhaps earlier than that.

South of this region were the Celtic tribes. And remember that early on the Celts dominated much of central Europe. But some time later around 1000 BC, some of the Germanic tribes began to move southwestward into Celtic territory. And within a few centuries, the dividing line between Celts and the Germans had moved all the way westward to the Rhine. And these Germanic tribes continued their migration and displacement of the Celts further south down into modern Germany. And these migrating tribes soon became distinct from the tribes which remained up in Scandinavia. And we now have an early split between the North Germanic tribes and the West Germanic tribes. The northern tribes would eventually produce a dialect called Old Norse which was the language of the Vikings, and it ultimately produced the modern Scandinavian languages like Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Icelandic. And those western Germanic tribes ultimately produced the western Germanic dialects – including English, German and Dutch.

Meanwhile, around this same time, a separate eastward expansion of Germanic tribes out of Scandinavia occurred, and that occurred between around 600 BC and 300 BC. This movement was from Scandinavia to the opposite Baltic coasts down into the area of modern-day Poland. And this movement then continued southward and eastward from there. By around 300 BC, they were located in and around the Carpathian Mountains. The customs and dialects of these tribes were distinct from those of the western Germanic tribes. And these tribes are known as the East Germanic tribes. They eventually reached the Black Sea and the Danube. In fact, most of the tribes which overtook western Europe upon the collapse of the Roman Empire were these East Germanic tribes – not interestingly enough the neighboring West Germanic tribes.

These East Germanic invaders included the Goths, the Vandals, the Gepids, the Burgundians and the Lombards. Now these tribes and their dialects have long since disappeared. They were assimilated into other tribes and peoples over time, but their story is a very important part of the overall story of the Germanic tribes. So we will look at them in more detail in an upcoming episode.

So that gives you a very general overview of the emergence and division of the early Germanic tribes. But it also brings us to the point in our story where we actually start to have independent evidence of these tribes and their languages. Up to this point, we have to rely upon archaeological evidence of the peoples who lived in this region. But now, around 300 BC, we get the first written accounts from people who encountered these Germanic tribes. And soon

thereafter, we get the first archaeological evidence of the language of these tribes. And this evidence comes in the form of some early inscriptions. So our knowledge of the Germanic tribes starts to grow significantly after about 300 BC. So let's look at some of that evidence.

The first documented encounter with these tribes can be attributed to the Greek traveler Pytheas. The last time I mentioned Pytheas was the episode on the Celts. And you might recall that he also gave us our first glimpse of the Celts in Britain. He coined the term the 'Pretanic Islands' which eventually became *Pretania* and then *Britannia*. And of course later *Britain*.

Well, after he left the British Isles on his way back to Greece, around 325 BC, he traveled across the North Sea into the region of modern-day Denmark and northern Germany. And he mentioned two tribes in this region by name. He mentioned the Teutones in modern-day Denmark and the Gutones in northern Germany.

Now, I mentioned the Teutones back in that episode about the Celts. You might recall that the Teutones and the Cimbri were the two tribes that moved out of northern Europe down to the region around Hungary and then moved westward and threatened the Roman Empire. And the Romans eventually defeated them, but it was part of the overall threat to the Romans which led Caesar to invade Gaul in the first century BC. And you might remember that there is some uncertainty as to whether the Cimbri were a Germanic tribe or a Celtic tribe. And there is even some argument about the Teutones as well since their name comes from a Celtic word meaning 'people.' But most modern historians consider them to be a Germanic tribe. So thanks to Pytheas, we know that they were located around Denmark about 325 BC. And you may also remember that the name of the Teutone tribe gives us the modern word *Teutonic* to refer to things associated with Germany.

So that's the Teutones, but what about that other tribe which Pytheas mentioned – the Gutones? Well, some scholars believe that the Gutones may have been the same tribe which we would later know as the Goths. And if that is true, that means the Goths were still located in northern Europe around 325 BC, before beginning their movement into southeastern Europe. And the time frame actually works, but there is no way to know for sure if Pytheas was referring to the early Goths. In fact, the reports of Pytheas are so sparse and limited, that they only give us a brief glimpse of these Germanic tribes and the region where they lived around 325 BC.

Now as I mentioned, the Romans encountered the Teutones and the Cimbri around 109 BC. That was a couple of centuries after Pytheas and his reports from the region. And that set in place a series of events which ultimately led to the Roman invasion of Gaul all the way to Rhine, and even beyond that on several occasions. So after that point, around the first century BC, we get more and more first-hand accounts of the Germanic tribes from the perspective of the Romans. But during the 300 year period between Pytheas and Caesar, our knowledge is limited to the archaeological evidence. Remember, the Celtic tribes and the Germanic tribes were both illiterate. So they didn't keep their own recorded histories.

So based on the evidence we do have, it appears that the Germanic tribes in Scandinavia and northern Germany continued their migrations southwest and southeast during this period. We

know the Teutones migrated from Denmark down into Hungary and then westward into Gaul. And if the Gutones were in fact the early Goths, we know that they moved from this region southeastward to the area around the Black Sea. And we know from the accounts of the Romans during this period that they were getting more and more concerned about these tribal movements to the north. There were more and more Celtic tribes knocking at the door of the Romans during this period, presumably because the Celtic tribes being pushed southward by the expanding Germans further north. So let's take a closer look at the migrations during this period.

As I noted, by this point, the Germanic people had started to move southwestward towards Gaul where they had begun to settle down, and they had also began to merge with native Celtic people. So in some of these regions Celtic tribes and Germanic tribes were already starting to become intermingled within the same general area by this point. And this is part of the problem we have in trying to classify early tribes like the Teutones and the Cimbri. They have Celtic names, but they originated in areas that were later associated with the Germanic tribes. So historians still debate whether some of these tribes spoke Celtic languages or Germanic languages.

As the Germanic tribes encountered the Celts to the south, we can also see the split between the western and eastern tribes. The west Germans eventually tended to settle down once they were in place. But the east Germans continued to be migratory. As I noted earlier, the earliest Germanic tribes were nomadic herders and shepherds in keeping with their Indo-European roots. And they continued to have very limited grain agriculture during this period between Pytheas and Caesar. And Europe was heavily wooded which tended to limit agricultural development. So expanding Germanic tribes tended to settle in areas that were open and unforested. In those areas, the Germans could live off of their flocks and herds. But as the population began to grow, the herds were not capable of sustaining the population. So given this dilemma, they had three options:

(1) First, they could clear more land for larger herds,
(2) Second, they could switch over to an agricultural economy and grow crops, or
(3) Third, they could migrate elsewhere to an area that was not as congested.

Well, the nature of the Germanic tribes was to migrate, so they typically took the last option and moved on elsewhere. The first two options were contrary to their culture and lifestyle. So as they continued their migrations and expansion southward, the Germanic tribes continued to travel into Celtic regions. And the major point here is that this appears to be more of a migration than an invasion. Central and northern Europe was still very sparsely populated compared to today. There were no nation-states or standing armies. So generally speaking, these were merely nomadic pastoral people looking for new pastures. And this was the situation as we find it around the first century BC with Germanic tribes moving down into central Europe into Celtic territory. In fact, by this point, the Germanic tribes had reached all the way down into southern Germany. And that meant that some of the Celtic tribes were displaced in the process and were being forced southward as well.

So now we can start to see how all of these pieces fit together.

In the south along the Mediterranean we have the Romans. In the north were the Germanic tribes. And in most of central Europe were the Celts. And I mentioned in earlier episodes that the Celts were caught between a rock and a hard place. And the ultimate trigger here was the expansion of Germanic tribes southward. That had caused a domino effect which pushed the Celtic tribes further southward. And that caused pressures along the Roman border. And in response to those pressures and the general Roman fear of the Celtic tribes to the north, Julius Caesar invaded the Celts in Gaul in the first century BC. And when all was said and done, the Celts in Europe were consumed by these two expanding forces which left the Romans and the Germanic tribes as the two primary players in western Europe, with the Rhine and the Danube as the de facto border between the two regions.

When Caesar invaded and conquered Gaul in the first century BC, the territory of Gaul extended all the way to the Rhine in the east. And in case you're not familiar with European topography, the Rhine flows from central Europe northward to the North Sea and the Danube flows from the same general region of central Europe eastward to the Black Sea. So the region west and south of these two rivers essentially became Roman territory. And as the Germanic tribes expanded southward, eventually consuming the Celts, the region north and east of these two rivers became the Germanic territory.

So this is a good point to stop and take a snapshot of the situation as we find it in Europe. We basically have a southeast and northwest divide between the Romans and the Germanic tribes, but Celtic tribes had not completely disappeared yet. To the west of the Rhine in Gaul, they were still there, they were just under the control of the Romans now. And over time, Romanization ensured that the Celtic nature of these tribes began to disappear and were replaced by Roman elements. But in the east, Germanic and Celtic cultures continued to co-exist for a while.

There was a Celtic tribe in this region called the Germani. And the Romans began to call all of the people in this region east of Gaul – in other words east of the Rhine – the Germani. But over time, as the Germanic languages and culture began to replace the Celtic culture in that region, the term *Germani* became specially associated with these Germanic peoples. So this is the origin of the words *Germanic* and *German*. Again, as I noted in an earlier episode, *Germanic* – like *Teutonic* – has Celtic origins. But we associate those terms with the Germans today because German culture eventually supplanted Celtic culture in these regions which became known as *Germania*.

It's also at this point that we start to see the transition of the western Germanic tribes from migratory herders to grain farmers. The Celts east of the Rhine had already begun to shift to grain agriculture, and they had begun to establish fixed settlements and villages. But with the Roman conquest of Gaul, the Germanic tribes couldn't penetrate the Roman territory which was defended by the Roman legions. So that effectively prevented any further expansion by the Germans in a westward direction. And migration of these tribes to the east was limited because the east was already densely occupied by other Germanic tribes which were migrating southeastward. So since they couldn't really continue to migrate to new regions as required by a nomadic herding lifestyle, they had no choice but to adopt grain agriculture and start farming the land. And that's what happened around this time in the west.

The West Germans began to adopt a lifestyle which was closely related to the Celtic tribes which they encountered and, in some cases, which they conquered. In some of these areas, the remaining Celtic expertise in agriculture would have been valuable. And some historians think there was a level of cooperation between the Celts and the Germans in many of these areas. In fact, it's possible that there was a mixing of Germanic and Celtic tribes in some of these regions. And this may account for the inability of the Romans to distinguish some of these groups as Germanic or Celtic.

But keep in mind that the eastern Germanic tribes didn't face this dilemma. There was no hard barrier like the Roman army in eastern Europe north of the Danube. So the eastern tribes continued to migrate eastward and eventually southward. And so we see cultural and lifestyle differences emerging between the eastern and western Germanic tribes very early on.

But let's look back to the Rhine region to the west. With the Romans firmly entrenched in Gaul, and with more Germanic tribes coming in from the north, the region east of the Rhine became more and more densely populated with Germanic tribes. So it became more and more Germanic. And that meant less and less Celtic. But since the Germanic tribes weren't able to cross into Roman territory west of the Rhine, Gaul didn't become diluted by German tribes. Over time the area west of the Rhine evolved into a Romano-Celtic culture and the area east of the Rhine became more and more Germanic. So the linguistic and cultural divide on each side of the river became sharper over time.

Now initially the Romans conquered Gaul, but that doesn't mean they were content to remain in Gaul. Remember this is the Roman Empire we're talking about. So it was inevitable that Rome was going to set its sights on the Germanic region east of the Rhine. Rome initially crossed the Rhine on several occasions, but it wasn't with the intent of permanent occupation or conquest. The Germanic area was a greater challenge than Gaul. Remember that the Celts had become settled farmers in and around villages and small towns. So once these towns were conquered, the Celts could be subdued. But in the Germanic region, the tribes were only beginning to adopt agriculture. Many of them were still nomadic herders when the Romans arrived. So if the Germanic tribes were defeated in battle, they would just shrink into the forests and engage in guerrilla warfare.

But by the first century AD, the Romans thought they were finally in a position to conquer and dominate the Germanic regions to the east just as they had done in Gaul. The Romans had actually engaged some of the Germanic tribes in battle and they had scored some several significant victories against them east of the Rhine between the years 12 BC and 7 BC. So the Romans decided to make a claim to the entire territory east of the Rhine which they now called the province of 'Germania.' And in the year 4 AD, the Romans entered Germania with the intention of making it the next Roman province.

They initially had success again the Germanic tribes they encountered there. And it looked like Germania was destined to follow the same course as Gaul.

But a couple of years after that initial invasion, a highly-respected and feared Roman General named Varus was sent to consolidate Roman power in Germania. His trusted advisor was Arminius – a German who had been handed over to the Romans as a child by his Germanic chieftain father during that earlier Roman invasion of the territory. This was a customary practice at the time. Defeated chieftains would sometimes hand over their child as tribute to the Romans and to confirm Roman victory over the tribe. So the young child Arminius had been raised as essentially a hostage in Rome, and he had been given a military education. He subsequently rose in the ranks of the Roman army. But Arminius had secretly forged an alliance among competing Germanic tribes to oppose the Romans. And while the Roman General Varus was on his way from his summer camp to his winter camp near the Rhine, he received reports of a rebellion in the province. He took a detour through unfamiliar territory in the Teutoburg Forest region of Germany probably at the direction of Arminius. What he didn't know was that the Germanic troops were waiting for him in the trees and the brush. And when Varus and the Roman troops came through, the Germanic troops ambushed the Romans.

The Germanic soldiers surrounded the three Roman legions commanded by Vargus, and they hemmed them in. And they then proceeded to slaughter the Romans with estimates of 15,000 to 20,000 Roman casualties including Varus himself who committed suicide. This is known as the Battle of Teutoburg Forest. And it was a complete and shocking defeat for the Romans.

The contemporary Roman sources at the time acknowledged the complete defeat of the Romans. And even though the Romans did make a few more limited excursions into the region in subsequent years, the Teutoburg defeat effectively ended Roman expansion into Europe east of the Rhine.   And that effectively set the Rhine River as the de facto boundary between Rome and Germania going forward.

Though the Romans could not conquer Germania, they could certainly trade with them. The Empire was in constant need of raw materials from Germania like amber and furs, and manpower (usually in the form of slaves). And the Germans desired Roman luxury goods especially gold and silver items like jugs, buckets, ladles, cups, brooches, rings and other jewelry. They especially desired Roman coins, particularly those of small denominations which they began using in their own burgeoning free market economy. Trade was primarily conducted between the Romans and Germanic tribes living within a hundred miles or so of the Rhine and Danube border. And these Germanic border tribes tended to act as intermediaries to facilitate the trade of those same items deeper into Germanic territory. So this was the state of the Romano-German relationship through the middle of the second century AD.

And so it should not be surprising that we start to see Latin words associated with the Romans flowing into the early Germanic language at this point.

Some linguists estimate that about 175 words were borrowed directly from Latin by these early Germanic tribes in continental Europe. In other words, these words made their way into the Germanic languages while the Anglo-Saxons were still on the continent before they migrated to the British Isles. So the presence of these words in Modern English can be traced back to the Germanic tribes while they were still trading with the Romans in Europe.

So let's look at some of those words. We see the Latin influence in words associated with trade between the Romans and the Germanic tribes, especially portable articles. So the following words passed from Latin into the original Germanic dialects – words like *chest*, *dish*, *cup*, *kettle*, *pillow*, *sack*, *sickle*, *chalk*, *pear*, *pepper*, *butter*, and *cheese*. Now the Germans already had words for some of these items in their languages like butter and cheese, but the modern words which we use today were originally borrowed from the Romans.

The word *wine* was also borrowed by the Germanic tribes during this period. The Germans had *beer* and *ale* and *mead*. Remember that *mead* goes all the way back to the original Indo-Europeans. Beer and ale were drinks developed in and around Germany. *Ale* is a Germanic word, and *beer* has a disputed etymology. It is unclear if the word *beer* came from the Germanic languages or from Latin. There are actually possible roots within both languages. But fermented fruit juices did not come from Germany. That was a speciality of the Mediterranean. So the word *wine* definitely comes from the Latin word for 'wine' which was *vinum*.

A trader or a huckster was called a *caupo* in Latin. And it may have also been used to mean 'wine seller' early on. This word was borrowed into the Germanic languages and ended up as *ceap* in Old English meaning marketplace, wares or price. But you may remember that the original Anglo-Saxon 'k' sound assibilated or shifted to a 'ch' sound. So /ceap/ became /cheap/ in Old English. But it was originally a noun. When the Norman French invaded England in 1066, they brought a French phrase for a bargain which was 'bon marche.' This was translated into Middle English as a 'good cheap.' And it appears that this phrase was shortened during early Modern English into the adjective *cheap* meaning inexpensive or low quality. So the word *cheap* can be traced back to this Germanic borrowing from the Romans.

The word *anchor* also came into the Germanic languages from Latin during this period. The Romans were far more adept at ship building that the central European Germans. So the Germans were apparently impressed by this Roman technology and *anchor* passed into the Germanic languages at that time.

In addition to words associated with trade, we start to see the introduction of words suggesting certain civilizing influences of the Romans.

The Romans introduced paved roads to the Germans. And the Latin word for 'paved road' was *strata*. And that word passed into the Germanic languages during this period and then eventually passed into English as *street*.

And speaking of *street*, the word *toll* can also be traced back to a borrowing by the original Germanic tribes from the Romans.

And in order to build roads and, for that matter, to build many of the large structures associated with the Romans, you needed to have very precise measurements of distance and weight. So this is where many of the Roman weight measurements entered the Germanic languages.

The Latin word for 'thousand' – *mille* – produced the measurement we know today as a *mile*. I discussed this measurement back in the episode on the early Romans. Well, the word now passed into the Germanic languages and then eventually into English as *mile*.

Now the Romans had a *mille* which was a precise measurement of a 1,000. But apparently the original Indo-European language didn't have a word for 'one thousand.' Nor did the original Germanic languages. But the early Germanic languages had developed a word that was pronounced something like 'thusundi' which meant several hundred or a great many of something. And the Germanic tribes used this Germanic word to translate the Latin word *mille*. So that is how the word passed into English as *thousand*, and it now came to mean a specific measurement of 1,000. So even though the word *thousand* is a native Germanic word, its specific meaning today comes from its association with Latin.

And in the last episode I mentioned that the British 'pound sterling' came from the Old English word *pund* which meant a pound of weight as used by the Romans. Well, that Old English word *pund* meaning 'pound' goes back to the Germanic tribes who borrowed the word from the Romans. But you may say, 'Hey wait a minute, I thought the Latin word for pound was *libra*, which is why we still use 'lb' to abbreviate a pound.' Well, that's true. But the Roman word *pondus* meant weight – as in how much something weighs. And they often used the phrase 'libra pondo' to mean a 'pound by weight.' And it is in the is sense that the Germanic tribes borrowed the *pondo* as the name for a pound of weight. And from there we get *pound*.

And with Roman construction, we get the words like *tile* and *table* via this same process. *Tile* meant a roof covering and was a technology introduced by the Romans. *Table* came from the Latin word *tabula* meaning a board or plank. I mentioned in an earlier episode that Romans sometimes covered small boards with a thin layer of wax used for writing. And from this word *tabula* we get the modern English word *tablet*. Well, this same word passed into the early Germanic languages meaning a board or plank. And since boards or planks were used to create certain pieces of furniture, the word *tabula* eventually gave us the word *table*.

The Romans had also developed advanced technology to grind grain into flour. And from this technology the Latin word *molina* passed into the Germanic languages and eventually gave us the English word *mill*.

And the civilizing influence of the Romans can also be seen in a word like *kitchen* which also comes from the Romans via the Germans. The original word was a Vulgar Latin word *cocina* (/ko-kee-na/) which meant 'kitchen.' This word passed into the Germanic languages. And again, we can see that Old English sound shift from the 'k' sound to the 'ch' sound in the middle of that word from /ko-kee-na/ to 'kitchen.'

The Latin word *vallum* meant a rampart or a row of stakes. Once again, the word was borrowed by the Germanic tribes from the Romans and eventually became the word *wall* in Modern English.

There is another word that followed this route into Modern English. It is in fact one word in Modern English, but it means two different things. It is the word *mint*. And in Modern English it can refer to an herb or it can refer to a place where money is coined. Well in Old English, the herb was *minte*. And that word came from the Germanic tribes, who borrowed it from the Romans. The Latin word for the herb was *menta* or *mentha*, and that's also where we get the word *menthol* in Modern English.

As far as the place were coins were made, that word also comes from Old English. And the Old English word for 'coins' was *mynet*. That word came directly from the Latin word *moneta* which meant 'money.' I discussed that word in the last episode. As you may recall, the Latin word for 'money' or 'coins' was *moneta* from the name of the Roman Goddess 'Juno Moneta.' Well the word *money* comes from that original Latin word via the French. But the word *mint* comes from that word via the Germanic tribes. It passed into Old English as *mynet* – still meaning 'coins.' But its meaning eventually evolved to mean 'the place where coins were made.'

So again, even though the words *minte* meaning 'herb' and *mynet* meaning 'coins' were once distinct in Old English, they have become identical in Modern English as the word *mint*. And both uses of the word come to us from the Romans thanks to the Germanic tribes.

So words which we still use everyday reflect a time in history when the early Germanic tribes were trading with the Roman Empire, and were adopting elements of Roman civilization. And it also helps to illustrate the many ways in which Latin has influenced Modern English. As we can see, Latin didn't just come into English through French. At least a few Latin words came with the original Germanic Anglo-Saxons.

So in this episode, we have explored the origins of the Germanic tribes as best we can determine. And we've looked at their expansion throughout central Europe at the expense of the Celtic tribes. And we looked at the Roman influences on the early Germanic language.

Well next time, I'm going to focus on the Germanic language itself. Specifically, the development of that language and the structure and grammar of that language. And that will be very important as it relates to English. Since English is a Germanic language, we will see many features that are very familiar to us. So next time, we'll look at the Germanic language.

Until then, thanks for listening to the History of English Podcast.