

January 24 & 31, 2005

CLASSES 1-2: HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

'Fæder ure' (Old English)

Matthew 6: 9-13, c.1000 AD

Fæder ure, þu þe eart in heofonum;
si þin nama gehalgod,
To becume þin rice,
gewurþe ðin willa on eorðan,
swa swa on heofonum.
Urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us to dæg,
and forgyf us ure gyltas,
swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltendum,
and ne gelæd þu us on costnunge,
ac alys us of yfele, soþlice.

'Our Father' (Modern English)

from the 1928 Book of Common Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven,
hallowed be Thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy Will be done on Earth,
as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Excerpt from the 'Prologue' of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (Late Middle English)

Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
When April, with its sweet showers
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
Has pierced the drought of March to the root,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
And bathed every plant's vein in such liquid
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Of which virtue the flower is engendered;
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
When Zephirus, too, with his sweet breath,
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
Has inspired in every forest and field,

The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
The tender shoots, and the young sun
Hath in the Ram his halfe course yronne,
Has run half his course in Aries,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
And small birds make melodies
That slepen al the nyght with open eye,
That sleep all night with open eyes,
So priketh hem nature in hir corages —
So does nature incite them in their hearts
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
Then it is that people long to go on pilgrimages

from Shakespeare: *Macbeth*, Act II, Scene 1, 'Dagger soliloquy' (Early Modern English)

*Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings, and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,*

*With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Fear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it.*

WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

Language is the **most complex communication system** known. It is also **unique to the human species**. Crudely put we can capture the way **language works** as follows:

linguistic forms

(words/sentences) *activate thoughts/ideas*

(meanings)

in the mind of the listener/reader

It thus becomes clear that language consists of **component systems**:

Meanings: *the semantic system*

- concepts; what we know about the world
- ideas triggered by incoming language

Sounds: *the phonological system*

- makes words different from one another

Words: *the morphological system and the lexicon*

- provides labels for meanings

Phrases and sentences: *the syntactic system*

- blends meanings of words by stringing them together

Discourse: *the text system*

- organizes sentences into different kinds of texts

HISTORY OF A LANGUAGE

Emergence:

We must first find out **when/where/how** the language emerged (or at least try to!).

Change:

We then look at the (change within the) language over the **period of its existence**.

- *all systems, from semantics to discourse, change over time*; consider for English:
 - lexical change / change in meaning of words (specific words, borrowing, etc.)
 - major sound change through the Great Vowel Shift (c.1400-1600 AD)
 - change in morphological paradigms (case system, verb morphology)
 - change in word order / syntax (from OV to VO, loss of verb second)
 - change in acceptability / use of language (from peasants to science)

Causes:

And finally we investigate what (could / would have) **caused language change**.

- *internal* or organic causes (e.g., 'least effort' pronunciation changes)
- *external* or socially-motivated causes (imitation of prestige language)

LANGUAGE FAMILIES

Sir William Jones (1746-1794)

- English judge and (self-taught and -practising) scholar of language
- stationed in India as part of the British colonial administration
- studied classical languages (Classical Greek, Latin, Sanskrit)
- noticed similarities among the three, too numerous to be coincidence

If these similarities are well-founded, they would involve the **geographical distances** separating (what we know today as) Greece, Italy, and India.

Jones' theory:

Greek, Latin, Sanskrit are similar because they arose from a **common predecessor or ancestor language**. (Next classes we will learn more about such **proto-languages**.)

Consider the numbers **1-10 in various languages:**

	<u>Sanskrit</u>	<u>Cl. Greek</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Basque</u>	<u>Turkish</u>
1	<i>éka</i>	<i>hei:s</i>	<i>u:nus</i>	<i>bat</i>	<i>bir</i>
2	<i>dvá</i>	<i>dúo:</i>	<i>duo</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>iki</i>
3	<i>trí</i>	<i>trei:s</i>	<i>tre:s</i>	<i>hiru</i>	<i>üç</i>
4	<i>catúr</i>	<i>téttares</i>	<i>quattuor</i>	<i>lau</i>	<i>dört</i>
5	<i>pánca</i>	<i>pénte</i>	<i>quinque</i>	<i>bost</i>	<i>beş</i>
6	<i>şaş</i>	<i>héx</i>	<i>sex</i>	<i>sei</i>	<i>alti</i>
7	<i>saptá</i>	<i>heptá</i>	<i>septem</i>	<i>zazpi</i>	<i>yedi</i>
8	<i>astá</i>	<i>októ</i>	<i>octo:</i>	<i>zortzi</i>	<i>sekiz</i>
9	<i>náva</i>	<i>ennéa</i>	<i>novem</i>	<i>bederatzi</i>	<i>dokuz</i>
10	<i>dáça</i>	<i>déka</i>	<i>decem</i>	<i>hamar</i>	<i>on</i>

Jones' observation led to **productive scholarship on relationships** among languages.

First in **Europe and Near East** (19th century):

- *Indo-European* (Latin, German, English, Greek, Hindi)
- *Semitic* (Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic)
- *Finno-Ugric* (Finnish, Hungarian, Estonian)

Then **rest of the world** (20th, 21st centuries):

- China, East Asia
- Africa
- Native American languages
- Pacific languages

Most of the world's languages can be classified as belonging to one or another language family. (The exact **classification** is still being debated and not our concern.) Good candidates can be found on the map depicting the **world's language families**.

The **Indo-European (IE)** language family is the one interesting for us — at least because it includes English. Table 1 presents some information on its sub-groupings:

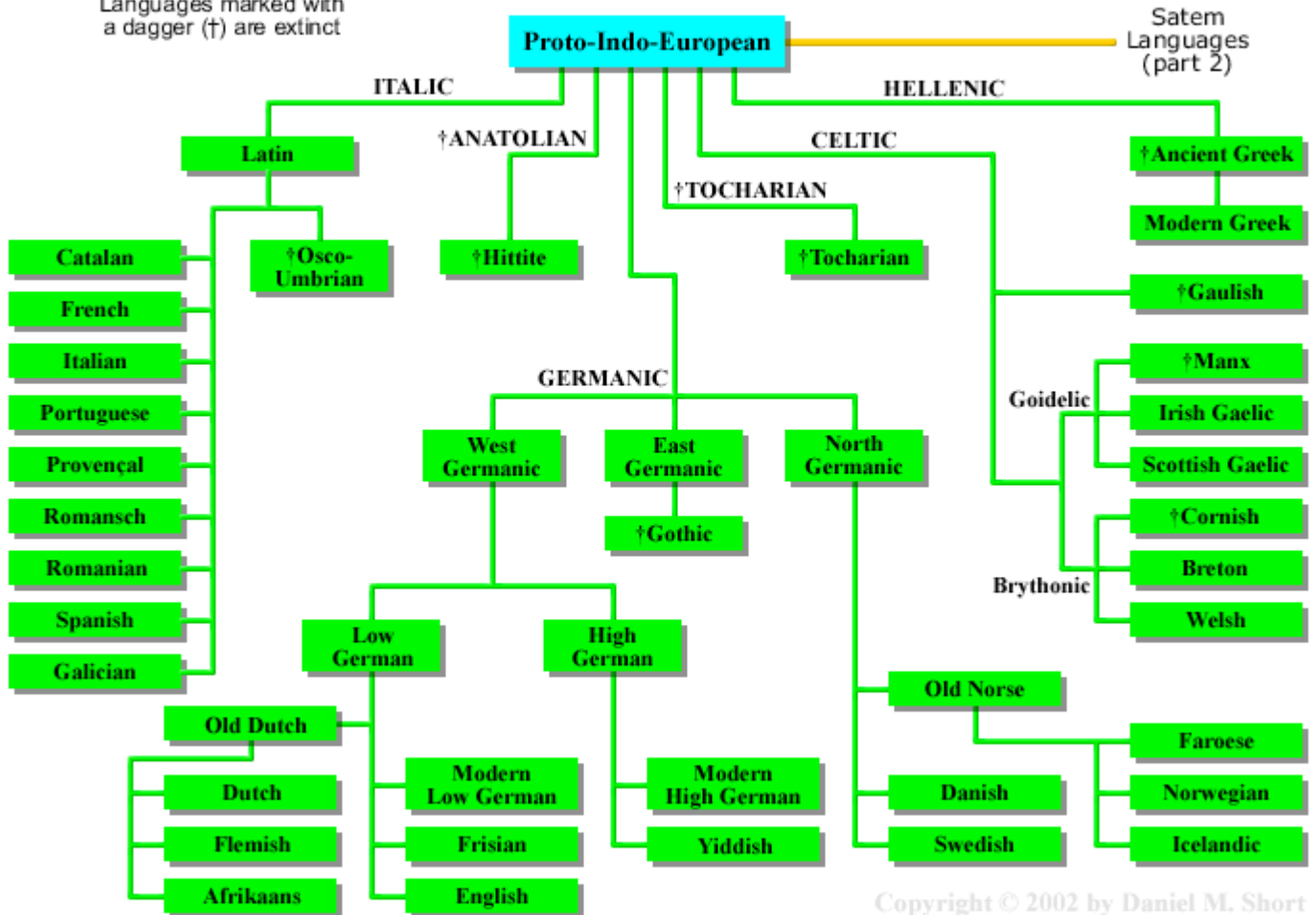
Subgroup	Members	When spoken	Where spoken
Anatolian	Hittite Palaic Lydian Lycian	2000 BC - 0 AD	Turkey
Indo-Iranian	Sanskrit Avestan Hindi Urdu Punjabi Farsi Pashto Kurdish...	since 1000 BC	N. India; Persia (Iran)
Greek	Classical Greek Modern Greek	since 1300 BC	Greece; Eastern Mediterranean
Italic	Latin (+ modern descendants) Oscan Umbrian	since 500 BC	Italy; Western Mediterranean
Celtic	Welsh Cornish Breton Irish Scots Gaelic Gaulish	since 400 AD	British Isles; parts of France
Germanic	English German Dutch Gothic Scandinavian languages (and many dialects)	since 400 AD	Northern Europe
Armenian	Armenian (2 dialects)	since 400 AD	Armenia
Tocharian	Tocharian A Tocharian B	700 - 900 AD	Chinese Turkestan
Balto-Slavic	Russian Polish Czech Serbo-Croatian Bulgarian...	since 800 AD	Eastern Europe
Albanian	Albanian (2 dialects)	since 1500 AD	Albania; Italy

Table 1: Sub-groups of Indo-European [see also next page]

Indo-European Language Tree

Part 1: Centum Languages

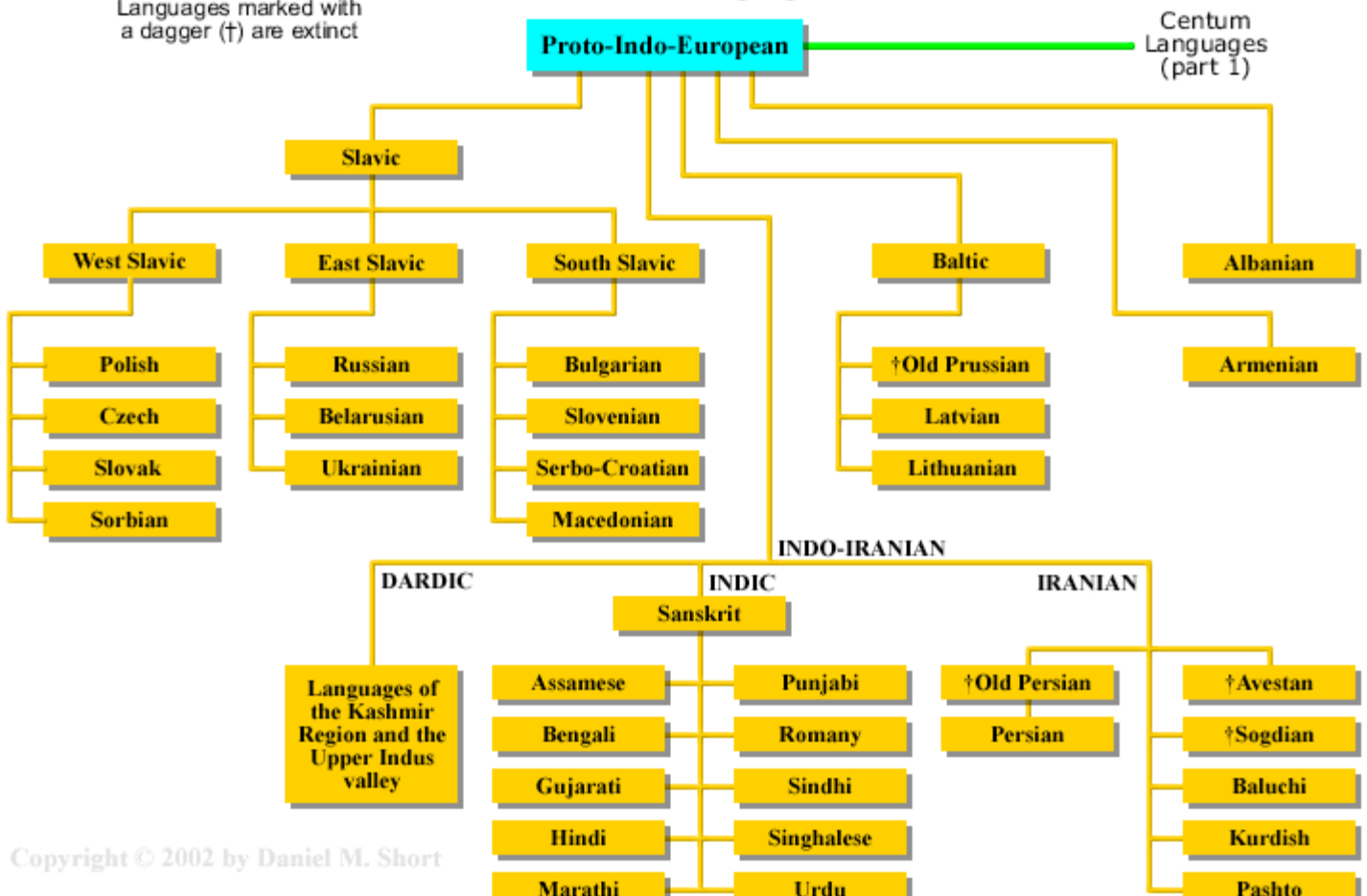
Languages marked with a dagger (†) are extinct



Indo-European Language Tree

Part 2: Satem Languages

Languages marked with a dagger (†) are extinct



Q: How do we define the notion **language family**?

A: A **group of languages** which are all descended from a **common parent language** and which all bear **systematic similarities** to each other.

Two basic questions that language families raise:

1. *Why are languages alike?*
 - arise from a single root or parent language
 - language contact
 - random chance / coincidence
2. *Why are languages different from each other?*
 - arise from different parent languages
 - language contact innovates new forms
 - different natural changes within each daughter language

Language contact:

The kind and degree of contact determine language outcomes.

A. In what ways do different peoples come into **contact** with one another?

- trade, conquest, exploration, slavery, migrant labor, migration/immigration, spread of technical innovation, learning/education, international aid

B. *Some linguistically relevant questions:*

What **level of intensity** is likely to accompany these different contacts, with what sort of **linguistic outcomes**?

What kind / kinds of contact is / are likely to lead to **superstratum** / **substratum** relationships — and / or also / in addition to **adstratum** relationships?

What are likely **language outcomes** of ad- vs. super- / substratum relationships?

STUDY OF INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

- historical or comparative linguistics, about 200 years old
- shows the ancestry of English and many other languages
- methodology can be applied to other language families

Significant Milestones

European scholars in the late 18th to late 19th centuries:

- the British judge William Jones' (1746-1794) speech to the Asiatick Society, 1786
- Franz Bopp's (1791-1867) book *On the Conjugational System of the Sanskrit Language, in Comparison with that of the Greek, Persian, and Germanic Languages*, 1816
- fellow German philologist Karl Brugmann's (1849-1919) impressive publication of *A Comparative Grammar of the Indo-Germanic Languages*, 1900

Eight main branches:

Indo-Iranian, Armenian, Greek, Albanian, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, Balto-Slavic

PLUS

Anatolian (Hittite), Tocharian, Phrygian, Thracian, Illyrian (see also Table 1)

Methodology

Assemble data ⇒ *form hypotheses* ⇒ *establish relationships* (“one fact, one hypothesis”)

- metaphor of **genetic relations**
- elements included **lexicon, phonology, morphology, syntax**
- need to distinguish **true cognates** from **borrowings** or **chance** similarities

INDO-EUROPEAN CULTURE

A side-benefit of linguistic project: glimpse into IE culture thanks to shared vocabulary.

5000 BC

<i>Environment</i>	bee, bear, starling, beaver, eagle, etc. forest: oak, birch, beech, elder, elm, ash, apple snow no common word for ‘ocean, sea’
<i>Culture</i>	plow, draft animals in yoke rye, barley; milling, domesticated animals spinning and weaving wool copper, bronze, gold, silver -- no iron wheel, ship, ax decimal counting system
<i>Religion</i>	patriarchal system, probably sun-worshipping: * <i>deiw-os</i> ‘to shine’ burial of the dead shows a belief in afterlife
<i>Location</i>	inland, temperate, central to early migrations perhaps Kurgan, north of Caspian Sea — no one knows for sure

Oetzi the Ice Man

5300-year-old body found in 1991, Austrian/Italian Alps

Britain before English

Physical traits of the island of Britain

- Stone Age inhabitants
- The Celts
- Roman occupation: 43 AD - 410 AD



Map 1: Tribes in Britain during the Roman occupation of the British Isles

Stone Age inhabitants

- What was their culture like?
- Was their language Indo-European?

The Celts

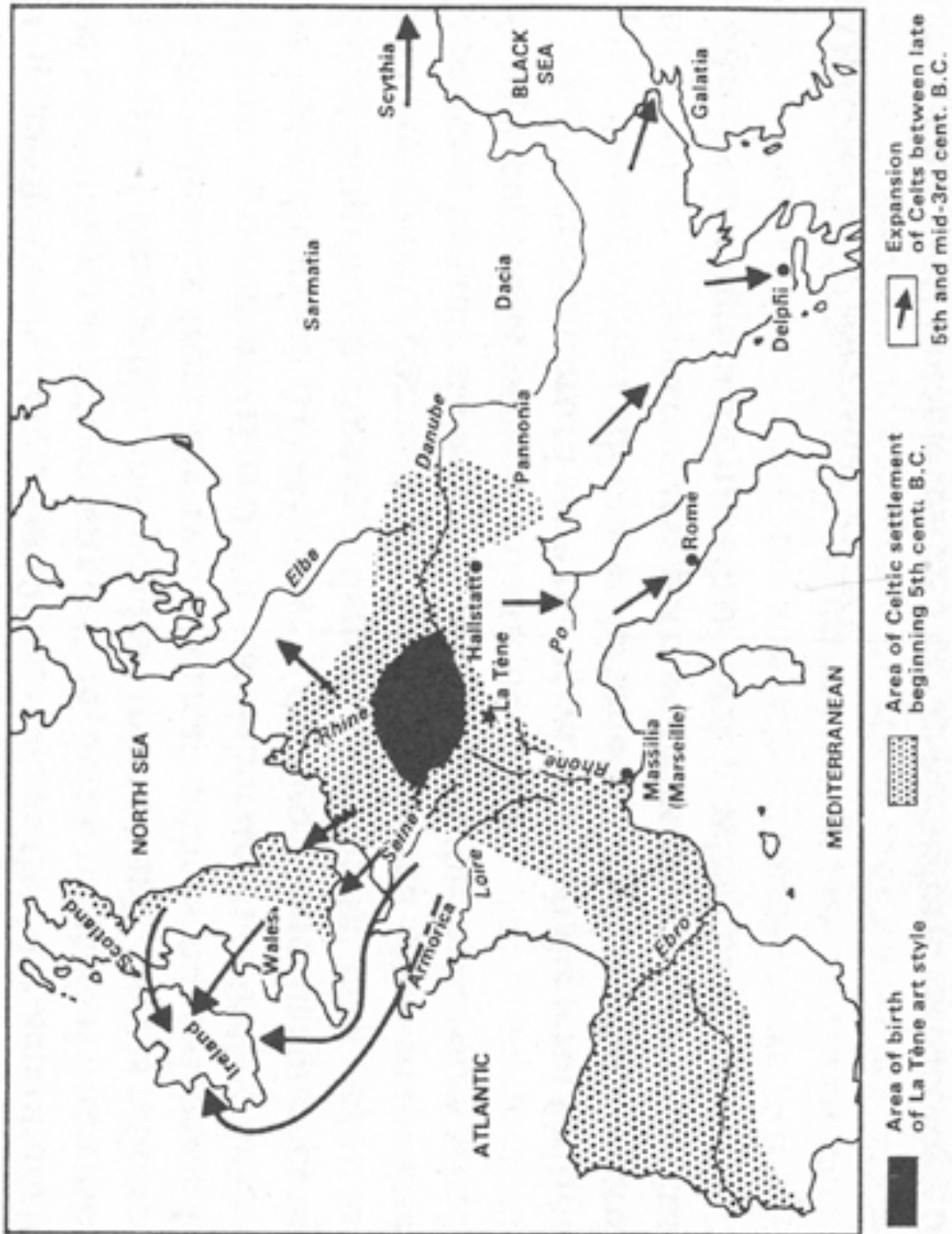
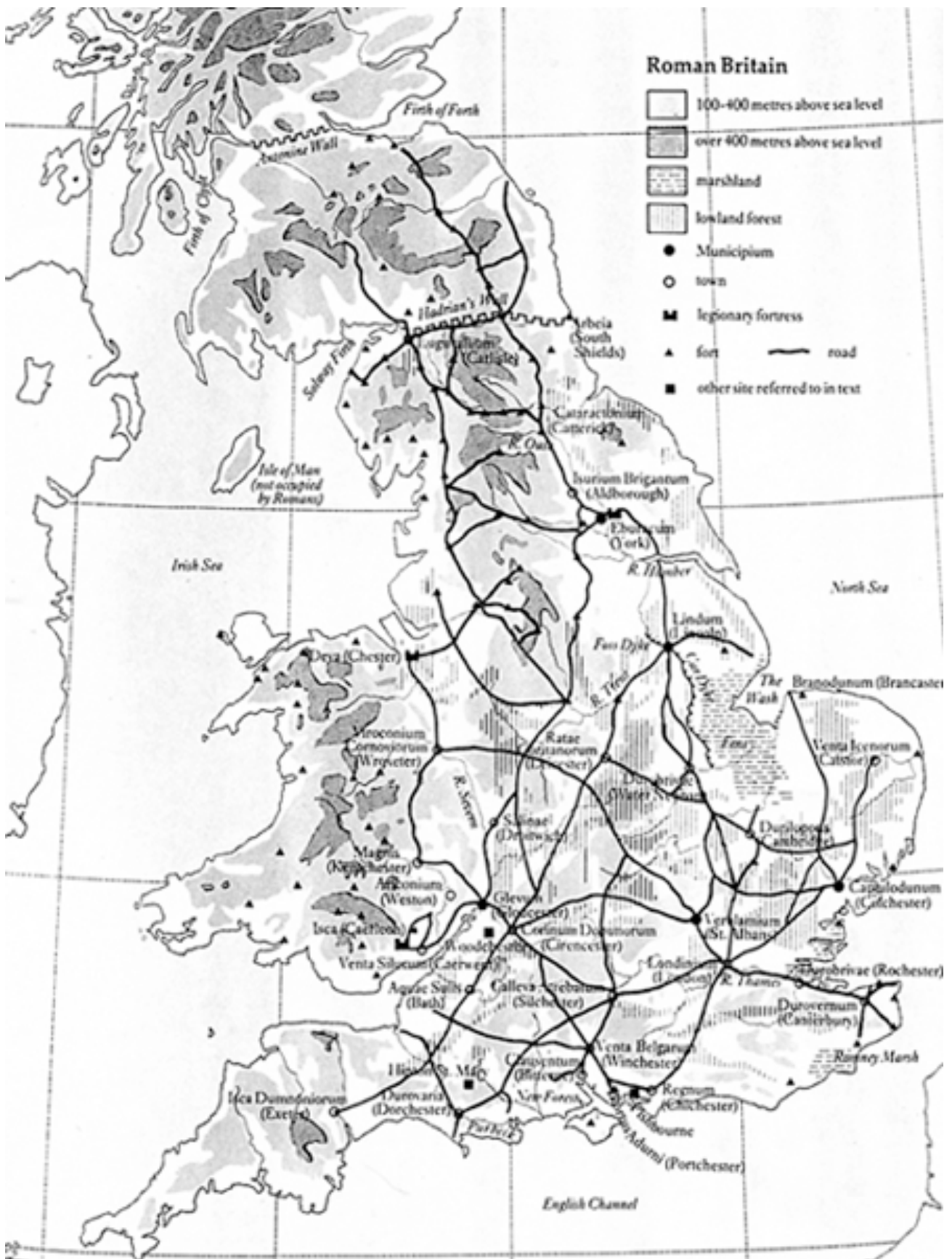


FIG. 9.1 Map by Duval indicating notional Celtic lands.

Map 2: Celtic lands in Europe

Roman occupation: 43 AD - 410 AD



Map 3: Britain under Roman occupation



The Roman Empire in the early fifth century

Map 4: The Roman Empire in Europe

Onset of the "Dark Ages":

- Germanic and West Asian invaders overrun Europe
- the last years of the **Roman Empire**
- **departure** of the Roman colonists from Britain:
consequences for the Celtic inhabitants

A BRIEF EXTERNAL HISTORY OF BRITAIN AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

before 55 BC	Celts live in British Isles: various Celtic dialects [descendant: Welsh]
55 BC	Romans occupy England: little influence on native dialects [some Latin place names]
c.449 AD	Angles, Saxons, and Jutes invade the British Isles (from today's N Germany & S Denmark): Old Saxon and Old Frisian dialects [Anglo-Saxon dialect develops]
c.600 – 800	conversion of England to Roman Catholic Church [many Latin words]
c.700 – 1150	Old English develops as most influential language in British Isles [Old English (OE)]
c.700	<i>Beowulf</i> : most famous work in Old English [heroic narrative in 3,182 lines]
c.800 – 1050	Vikings invade England: many Old Norse words [little change in grammar]
849 – 899	King Alfred actively promotes OE in literature & official documents [OE in all domains of society]
1066	Norman Conquest of England under William the Conqueror brings Norman French to England, spoken by upper classes: begins losing influence in early 13th century [permanent mark on English vocab, grammar, literary style]
c.1150 – 1500	Middle English develops as standard language: dominated by the dialects of London (capital), Oxford and Cambridge (universities) [Middle English (ME)]
1350 – 1500	transition from Middle to Modern English: major vowel shifts [Late Middle English (LME) / Early Modern English (ENE)]
1386 – 1400	<i>The Canterbury Tales</i> : most famous work in Middle English [Geoffrey Chaucer]
1474	first book printed in English by W. Caxton: printing press helps preserve ME spellings despite further developments in pronunciation [orthography]
1500 onwards	Modern English period [ENE/NE]
1607	first permanent English settlement in N America at Jamestown, Virginia: English becomes primary language of the New World [American English (AmE)]
1755	S. Johnson's <i>Dictionary of the English Language</i> published: setting standards of correctness of English and for future dictionaries [standardized spelling]
1783 onwards	after loss of 13 colonies in American Revolution: England concentrates on colonization efforts in Canada, West Indies, Far East, Africa [World English]
1828	first American dictionary <i>An American Dictionary of the English Language</i> published by N. Webster: establishing American variety [AmE]