BASICS OF THE THEORY OF ENGLISH

THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

LECTURE 2

RUTHWELL CROSS NEAR DUMFRIES

Runes were capable of poetry, as can be seen on the eighth-century Ruthwell Cross near Dumfries in Scotland, which shows events from the life of Christ. This best equipped them for short practical messages. They are represented in the solutions to some of the Exeter Riddles.

THE RUTHWELL CROSS

Dates from Anglo-Saxon times: destroyed during the conflicts which followed the Reformation: lay in the earthen floor of this Church from 1642 – 1790: erected in the manse garden in 1823: sheltered here and declared a Monument under The Ancient Monuments Act in 1887.
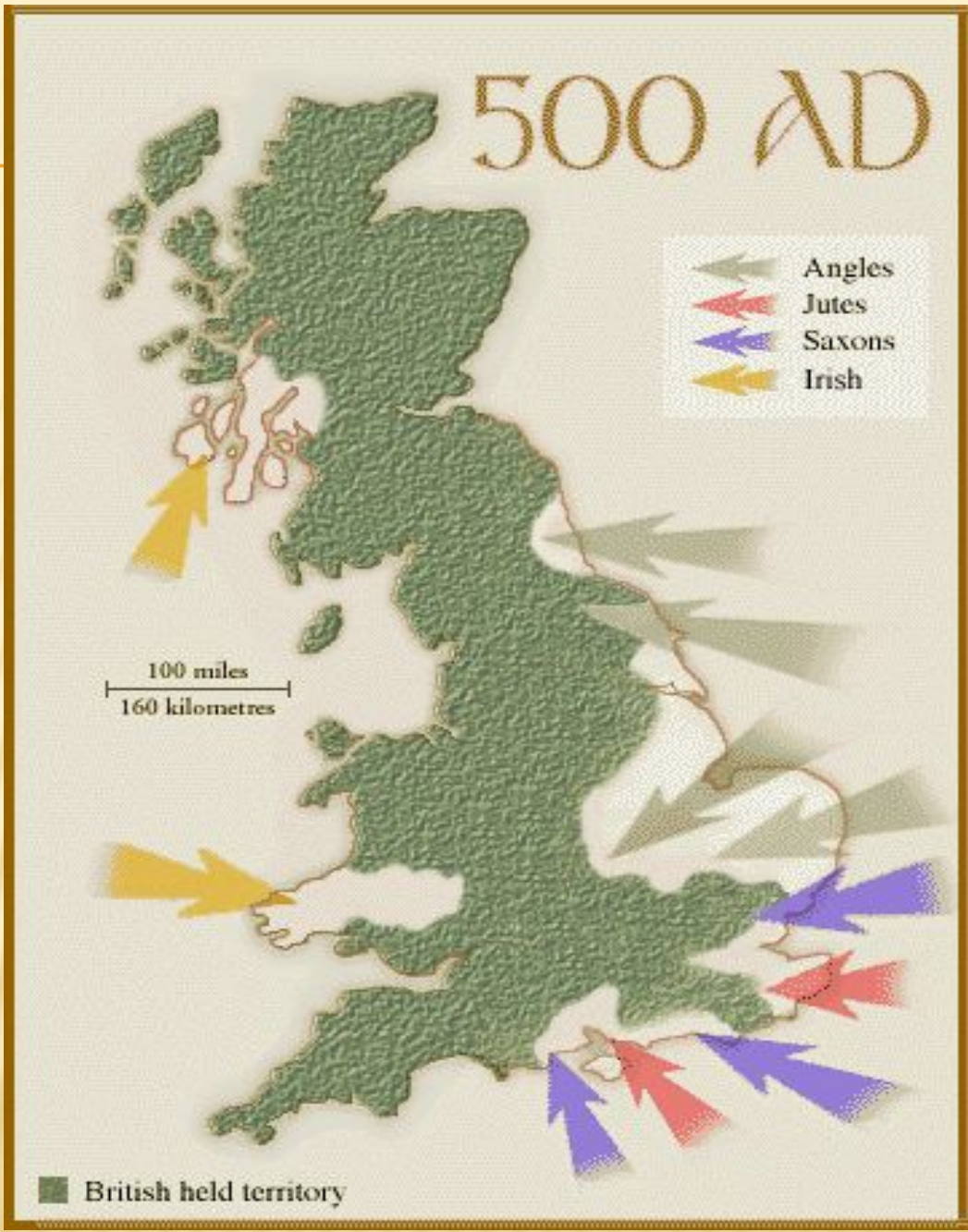
the Exeter Book Riddles

The Exeter Book with its riddles gives us insights into the word games so beloved of English-language crossword solvers and Scrabble addicts ever since. The seeds are already there in what were so long mis-called "The Dark Ages." This is from the sole remaining manuscript, in the library of Exeter Ca thedral, which contains ninety-four riddles

I live alone, wounded by iron,
Struck by a sword, tired of battle work,
Weary of blades, Often I see war,
Fight a fearsome foe, I crave no comfort,
That safety might come to me out of the war-strife
Before I among men perish completely,
But the forged brands strike me,
Hard-edged and fiercely sharp, the handwork of
smiths,
They bite me in the stronghold, I must wait for
A more murderous meeting, Never a physician
In the battlefield could I find
One of those who with herbs healed wounds,
But my sword slashes grow greater
Through death blows day and night."

500 AD

Angles
Jutes
Saxons
Irish

100 miles
160 kilometres

British held territory

700 AD

Northumbria

Lindsey

East Anglia
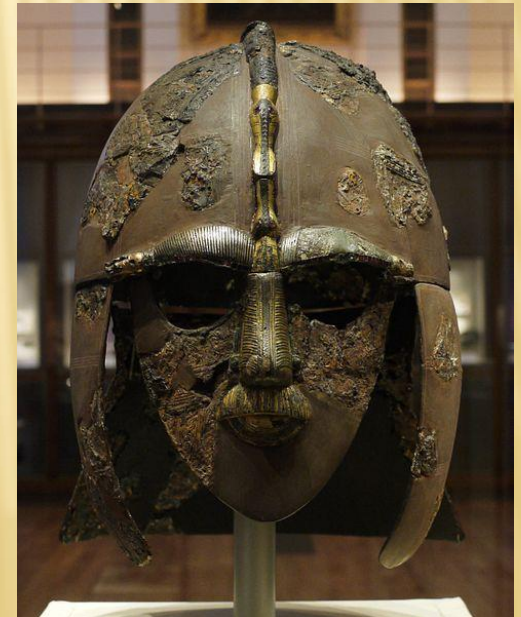
Mercia

Essex

Kent

Wessex   Sussex

100 miles
160 kilometres

British held territory

ANGLO-SAXON HEPTARCHY (UNION OF 7KINGDOMS)

- East Anglia
- Mercia
- Northumbria, including sub-kingdoms Bernicia and Deira
- Wessex
- Essex
- Kent
- Sussex   Sutton-Hoo
         amunition

- **West Germanic** is the ancestor of Modern German, Dutch, Flemish, Frisian, and English

- **It is divided into 2 branches**, High and Low German, by the operation of a Second (or High German) Sound-Shift analogous to **Grimm's Law**. This change, by which West Germanic **p, t, k, d**, etc. were changed into other sounds, occurred about A.D. 600 in the southern or mountainous part of the Germanic area, but did not take place in the lowlands to the north.

- We distinguish as Low German tongues Old Saxon, Old Low Franconian, Old Frisian , and **Old English**. The last two are closely related and constitute a special or Anglo-Frisian subgroup

COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS

- Most of the European languages, such as English, German and French, were historically related not only to each other, but also to the languages of antiquity, such as Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit.

English	Latin	Greek	Sanskrit
ten	decem	deka	daśa
two	duo	duo	dva
heart	cordia	kardía	hŕd

English	Latin	Greek	Sanskrit
t	d	d	d

- The languages of the Indo-European family also share similar morphological and syntactic properties that support a distant historical relationship.

- Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit have preserved an original **d** articulation, whereas at some point in the history of English, certain speakers changed the pronunciation of their **d**'s into **t**'s.

- The Germanic languages, then, share several innovations, such as the change of **d** to **t**, that differentiate this group from the other Indo-European languages.

The initial sound of the following word lists from German and English, and notice that the German **z** (written as uppercase **Z** in the case of nouns), which is pronounced *ts*, is consistently a **t** sound in English:

German	English
zu	to
zwanzig	twenty
zwölf	twelve
zwitschern	twitter
Zinn	tin

BASIC FEATURES OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES
PHONETICS, GRAMMAR, VOCABULARY

- Strong dynamic stress falling on the first root syllable. Fixed stress emphasized the syllable bearing the most important semantic element.

- Ablaut, or gradation, which is spontaneous, positionally independent alteration of vowels inhabited by the Germanic languages from the Common Indo-European period.

Word Stress/Accent Indo-European (Non-Germanic)

Proto-Germanic

1. free stress	1. fixed stress
2. pitch stress (musical)	2. dynamic stress (force, breath stress)

E.g.: русский	E.g.: German	English
б`елый	*`Liebe*	*`white*
белизн`а	*`lieben*	*`whiteness*
белов`атый	*`lieberhaft*	*`whitish*
бел`ить	*ge`liebt*	*`whitewash*

Main tendencies in Vowel Changes in the Germanic Languages:

1. Short vowels → become neutralized.

2. Long vowels → become short and more open.

   → become diphthongized and more closed.

Proto-Germanic Vowel System

Short Vowels	i	e	a	o	u
Long Vowels	iː	eː	aː	oː	uː

There are two types of Ablaut: quantitative and qualitative.
The qualitative Ablaut is the alteration of different vowels, mainly the vowels [e] / [a] or [e] / [o].

Old Icelandic	b**e**ra (to give birth) – b**a**rn (baby)
Old High German	st**e**lan (to steal) – st**a**l (stole)
Cf.: Russian Latin	бр**е**ду (I stroll, I wade) – бр**о**д (ford, wade) t**e**go (to cover, to cloth) – t**o**ga (clothes)

- Quantitative Ablaut means the change in length of qualitatively one and the same vowel: normal, lengthened and reduced

[e:]	[e]	[–]
patēr (nominative case, lengthened stage)	patĕr (vocative case, normal stage)	patros (genitive case, reduced stage)

- Ablaut in Germanic languages is a further development of Indo-European alterations
- Internal flexion functioned in Old Germanic languages both in form- and word-building, but it was the most extensive and systematic in the conjugation of strong verbs

UMLAUT, OR MUTATION

- phonetic assimilation of the root vowel to the vowel of the ending

- palatal mutation, or i-Umlaut, when under the influence of the sounds [i] or [j] in the suffix or ending the root vowels became more front and more closed

Gothic harjis	OE here (army)
Gothic dōmjan	OE dēman (deem)
Gothic kuni	OE cynn (kin)

GERMANIC CONSONANTS.
FIRST CONSONANT SHIFT, OR GRIMM'S LAW.

- Grimm's Law holds that unvoiced IE [Indo-European] stops became Germanic unvoiced continuants, that voiced IE stops became Germanic unvoiced stops, and that unvoiced IE continuants became Germanic voiced stops.

Indo-European	Germanic
1 voiceless stops p t k	**voiceless fricatives f þ h**
Latin pater Latin trēs Greek kardia	OE fæder (father) Gothic preis (three) OHG herza (heart)
2 voiced stops b d g	**voiceless stops p t k**
Russian болото Latin duo Greek egon	OE pōl (pool) Gothic twai (two) OIcl ek (I)
3 voiced aspirated stops **bh dh gh**	**voiced non-aspirated stops** **b d g**
Sanskrit bhratar Latin frāter, Russian брат Sanskrit madhu Russian мёд Sanskrit songha Greek omphe (voice)	OE brō or OE medu (mead) OIcl syngva (sing)

- **<u>Verner's law</u>** explains the changes in the Germanic voiceless fricatives **<u>f þ h</u>** resulting from the first consonant shift and the voiceless fricatives depending upon the position of the stress in the original Indo-European word, namely:

Indo-European	Germanic
p t k s	b /d g z/r
Greek hepta	Gothic sibun (seven)
Greek pater	Old Sc fa ir, OE fæder
Greek dekas	Gothic tigus (ten, a dozen)
Sanskrit ayas	Gothic aiz, OHG ēr (bronze)

VERNER'S LAW

- According to Verner's law, the above change occurred if the consonant in question was found after an unstressed vowel. It is especially evident in the forms of Germanic strong verbs, except the Gothic ones, which allows to conclude that at some time the stress in the first two verbal stems fell on the root, and in the last two – on the suffix:

GRAMMAR

- The common Indo-European notional word consisted of 3 elements: **the root**, expressing the lexical meaning, **the inflexion** or ending, showing the grammatical form, and the so-called **stem-firming suffix**, a normal indicator of the stem type

- Germanic languages belonged to the **syntactic type** of form-building, which means that they expressed the **grammatical meanings** by changing the forms of the word itself, **NOT** resorting to any auxiliary words