

The Six Celtic Languages

There was a unifying language spoken by the Celts, called not surprisingly, old Celtic. Philologists have shown the descendance of Celtic from the original *Ur-language* and from the Indo-European language tradition. In fact, the form of old Celtic was the closest cousin to *Italic*, the precursor of Latin.

The original wave of Celtic immigrants to the British Isles are called the *q-Celts* and spoke *Goidelic*. It is not known exactly when this immigration occurred but it may be placed sometime in the window of 2000 to 1200 BC. The label *q-Celtic* stems from the differences between this early Celtic tongue and *Italic*. Some of the differences between *Italic* and *Celtic* included that lack of a **p** in *Celtic* and an **a** in place of the *Italic* **o**.

At a later date, a second wave of immigrants took to the British Isles, a wave of Celts referred to as the *p-Celts* speaking *Brythonic*. *Goidelic* led to the formation of the three Gaelic languages spoken in Ireland, Man and later Scotland. *Brythonic* gave rise to two British Isles languages, Welsh and Cornish, as well as surviving on the Continent in the form of Breton, spoken in Brittany.

The label *q-Celtic* stems from the differences between this early Celtic tongue and the latter formed *p-Celtic*. The differences between the two Celtic branches are simple in theoretical form. Take for example the word *ekvos* in *Indo-European*, meaning *horse*. In *q-Celtic* this was rendered as *equos* while in *p-Celtic* it became *epos*, the **q** sound being replaced with a **p** sound. Another example is the Latin *qui* **who**. In *q-Celtic* this rendered as *cia* while in *p-Celtic* it rendered as *pw*. It should also be noted that there are still words common to the two Celtic subgroups.

As an aside, take note that when the Irish expansion into Pictish Britain occurred (see below), several colonies were established in present day Wales. The local inhabitants called the Irish arrivals **gwyddel**: *savages* from which comes **geídil** and **goidel** and thus the Goidelic tongue.

