

The etymology and classification of the Germanic tribes.

Greek writer Strabo thought that the Romans called the Germans "germani" (in Latin, "true"), to distinguish them from similar to them in the form of Celtic life. In the modern version, the word "Germans" in Latin, is borrowed and is derived from the Celtic word, which the inhabitants of Gaul is designated different from their neighbors (in particular, living beyond the Rhine) tribes. The assumption is based on the Welsh of ger, Irish gearr - terms, meaning the proximity. In the Late Iron Age in north-eastern Iberia lived a tribe of Herman, but most historians regard them as Celts. Linguist Kuzmenko said that their name is associated with the region, from where they migrated to Spain, and which was later transferred to the Germans.

For the first time the term "Germans" used by well-known figures, Posidonius in the 1st half of I in. BC. e. for the name of the people, who had the custom to wash down fried meat with a mixture of milk with undiluted wine. Modern historians believe that the use of the word in earlier times was the result of later insertions. Greek authors, with little regard for ethnic and linguistic differences of the «barbarians», were not shared by the Germans and Celts. So, Diodorus of Sicily, who wrote his work in the middle of I in. BC. e., refers to the Celtic tribes that already in his time, the Romans (Julius Caesar, Sallust) called German.

The real word 'Germans' went into circulation in the 2nd half of I in. BC. e. after the Gallic Wars of Julius Caesar, for the peoples living to the east of the Rhine and north of the upper and lower Danube, that is, it was for the Romans not only ethnic, but also a geographical concept. However, in the German language too is consonant with the name (not to be confused with the Roman) (German Hermann -. Altered Harimann / Herimann, dibasic name of the ancient German origin, formed by adding the components heri / hari - «army" and mann - «people»).

Classification of the Germanic tribes

1. Vindili (Modern East Germany)
2. Ingveones (Modern West Germany, North Sea, Holland)
3. Istaevones (Modern West Germany, the Rhine)
4. Herminones (Modern South Germany)
5. Pevkins and Bastarns (Modern Rumanica)
6. Hilleviones (Modern Germany, Scandinavia)

According to the archeological evidence the first Germanic tribes were relatively uniform and in the 8th century BC they occupied large territories in the Southern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula along the coasts of the North and Baltic seas from what is now the Netherlands to the Vistula river. In the 3rd century BC they spread south and the 1st century BC separate

dialects began to appear. These three groups of Germanic tribes spread over the territory of Europe and in the 4th century AD the Great Tribal Migration began.

East Germanic Tribes

- Vandals – inhabited the territory between two rivers: the Oder and the Vistula. They migrated to North Africa via Iberia (Spain).
- Burgundians – they reached the main land from the island of Bornholm in the Baltic and migrated westwards and settled in Burgundy, in Western Switzerland and Northwestern Italy.
- The Goths – they were the most powerful tribes. They migrated from Scandinavia, settled in the lower basin of the Vistula, in the second and third centuries AD moved to the steppes on the Black Sea and the lower basin of the Danube. They invaded the Roman territory, moved to Southern Gaul and Iberia and founded Toulouse kingdom.
- The Western group – Visigoths (visigotae) – Ostrogoths settled in the basin of the Dnieper then crossed the Balkan Peninsula and founded another kingdom in Northern Italy with the capital Ravenna. They flourished in 5th and 6th centuries AD and then the kingdom fell. They had first written records of the 4th to 6th centuries AD, they were the 1st who became Christians and in the 4th century Ulfilas, a bishop, made a translation of the Gospel from Greek into Gothic using a modified Greek alphabet – the Silver Codex.
- The Eastern Group – Ostrogoths (ostrogotae)

North Germanic Tribes

- The Teutons (the southern coast of the Scandinavian peninsula and Northern Denmark)
- Common parent language – Old Norse or Old Scandinavian
- Gave birth to Sweden, Denmark and Norway

West Germanic Tribes

- Franconians or Franks (Istaeuones) – They lived along the Rhine River
- Angles, Frisians, Jutes and Saxons – they occupied hostile territories, occupied the coastal area of the modern Netherlands and the South of Denmark.
- High Germans – southern part of Modern Germany
- Low Germans – occupied lowlands of the North Germany
- Alemanni, Bavarians - In the 3rd and 5th centuries occupied the territory in the south of Modern Germany and moved farther south to the Alps.

In the end of the 5th century the first (Franks) moved to the west Gal and their empire embraced France and half of Italy. In the 4th and 5th centuries Saxons moved from the north sea coast towards the Rheine in the 5th and 6th centuries Persians, Jews and Anglo-Saxons moved to the British isles. Their first writings were in runes. Later in the 7th century they adopted Christianity, together with Latin alphabet

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