

From the arrival of Celts to the Norman Conquest

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INTRODUCTION

- A history of invasions, contacts and intermingling going over the course of 2 millennia
- we can synthesis English history from about 900 BC until the Norman Conquest in 1066.

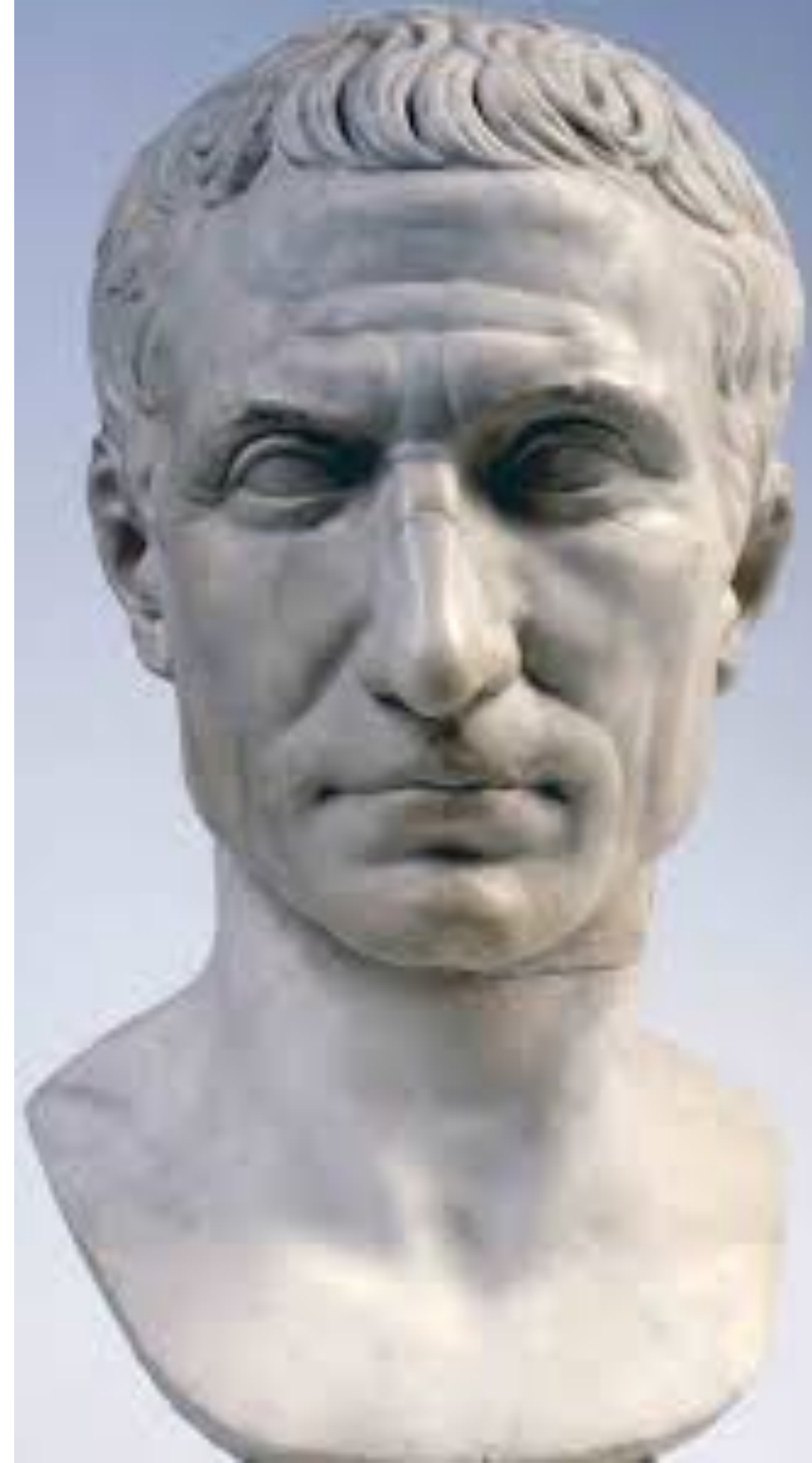
THE CELTS

- they came from the regions surrounding the Rhine;
- they were divided into Britons and Gaels;
- Their society was based on hunting and farming;
- Druids played an essential role in the preservation of culture and tradition.



THE ROMANS

- the first attempt to conquer England dates back to 55 BC under Julius Cesar;
- some scholars think that Caesar meant to discourage the British Celts to intervene in support of the Gauls;
- others think that he was driven by the many accounts of the legendary treasures of the island;
- the Romans failed their attempt.



THE ROMAN CONQUEST

- in 43 AD Roman conquest of Britain actually began;
- Romans gaining control of the central and Southeastern regions, the only significant opposition was the uprising led by Boudicca;
- they built the Hadrian's wall, the area south of it becomes the Roman province of Britannia;
- They built a vast network of roads, they imported their farming techniques, habits and lifestyle
- Latin did not spread among the native population and that did not replace the Celtic language;
- Christianity never totally replaced pagan rites and beliefs.

END OF ROMAN RULE

- Roman rule ended in 410, when the last Roman troops were called back to Italy, leaving the British territory undefended.



THE ANGLO-SAXON INVASION

- the term refers to three Germanic tribes who came in Britain around 450;
- the Anglo-Saxon raided Britain for over a century.



ANGLO-SAXON SOCIETY AND CULTURE

- the society was strongly hierarchical;
- at top there was a tribal chief or the head of family unit or a king;
- warriors grouped together under a single king or ruler formed a comitatus;
- the culture was based on a rich tradition, symbolized by the mead-hall;
- the arrival of Christian missionaries was essential for the preservation of Anglo-Saxon culture.

THE VIKING INVASION

- between 750 and 1050;
- they carried out frequent raids, looting villages and monasteries;
- they found a little resistance (King Alfred of Wessex who is remembered for his military achievement and for his contribution to the diffusion and preservation of Anglo-Saxon culture).



THE NORMAN INVASION

- in the 1066 William Duke of Normandy defected the English king at the Battle of Hastings; William became William the Conqueror:
- Old french became the language of the court, government, church and aristocracy;
- Old English was confined to the lower orders of society.

