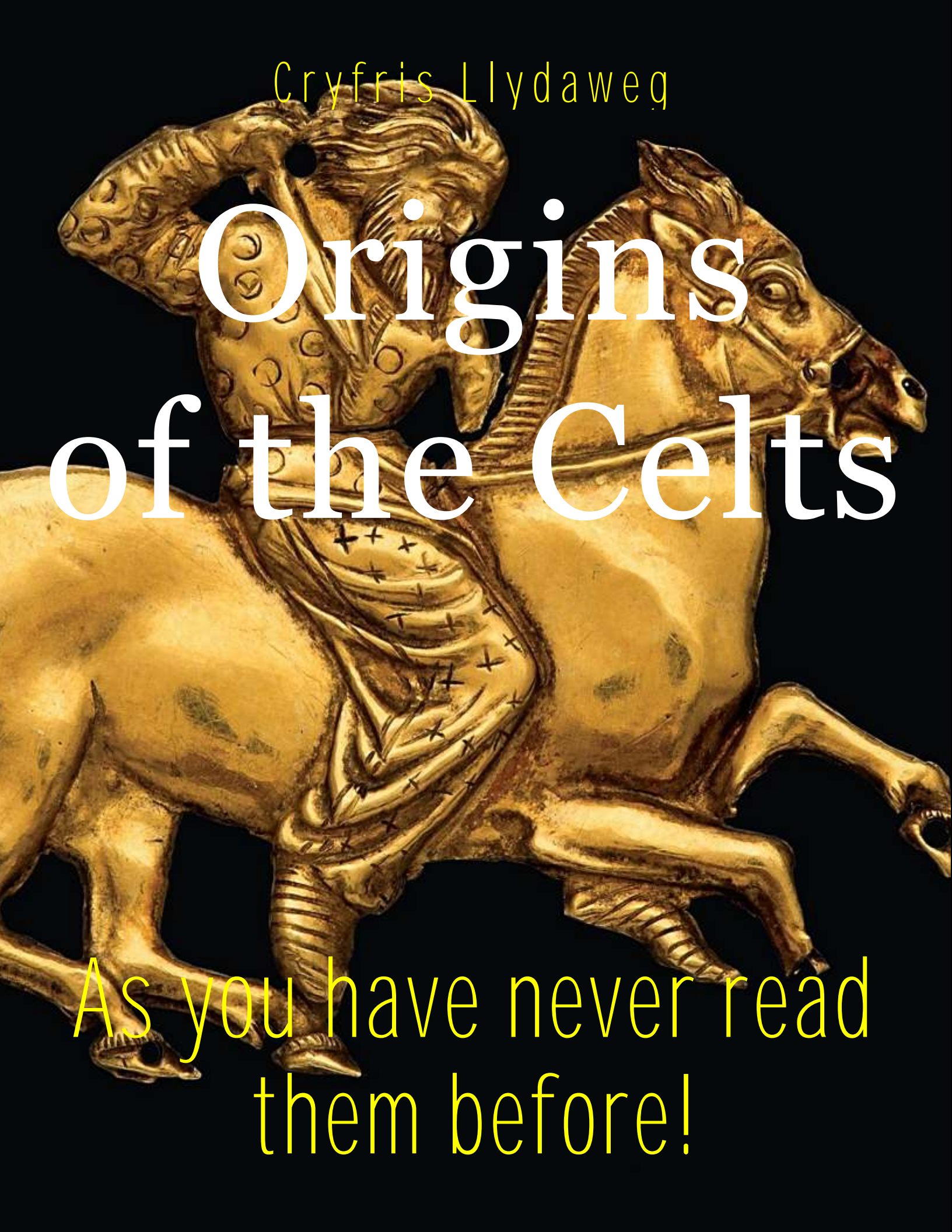


Cryfris Llydaweg

Origins of the Celts

As you have never read
them before!



Title: Origins of the Celts

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Author: Hervé Cariou aka 'Cryfris Llydaweg'. He 'rationalises' myths to rehabilitate ancient chronicles that contain important historic events and reveal surprising origins for certain populations.

Essays:

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Eurasian origin

Introduction

Around 600 BC, the inhabitants of Massilia (Marseille, France), a Greek colony, referred to the people of Provence using the terminology 'Keltoi'. Later, the Romans would 'latinise' the name: 'Celtae' (Celts). They also used this name for all populations north of Provence (including the Alps).

Herodotus refers to them in his book *Histories*.

'This latter river has its source in the country of the Celts near the city Pyrene, and runs through the middle of Europe, dividing it into two portions. The Celts (Ed. Greek Keltoi) live beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and border on the Cynesians, who dwell at the extreme west of Europe. Thus the Ister flows through the whole of Europe before it finally empties itself into the Euxine at Istria, one of the colonies of the Milesians.'

The Ister is an ancient name for the Danube. The Cynesians were a population of the Iberian Peninsula. Herodotus does not equate them with the Celts. Pyrene is a city unknown to archaeology. Herodotus specifies that the Danube 'begins' near this city. Either he is referring to its source in the Black Forest (Germany), or to a seaside city on the Black Sea where the river flows (on the present territory of Bulgaria).

The Romans did not equate Belgians and German with Celts. When confronted with the Belgian populations of Britain, they would not equate the other peoples of the island with Celts either. This confusion may date from the Germanic invasions of Britain. Faced with a multitude of local populations, the Germans probably adopted a generic term for them.

Origins of the Celts

No inscriptions from before the Roman colonisation of Gaul and the island of Britain mention Celts. During the 'Gallic' war, the Romans distinguished three Gauls: Belgium, Celtic and Aquitaine. Who were these Keltoi of Provence? What is the origin of the Gauls of Roman Celtic? What is the link between the Keltoi and the Gauls?

Linguistics is of little help as the root 'kelt' is unknown to Indo-European languages and the Celtic peoples had an oral, not written, tradition.



Ruins of Gonur Depe, Turkmenistan

Author: David Stanley. Source: Wikipedia. [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Indo-European

Originally, Indo-European referred only to speakers of specific languages. These languages had a certain syllabic proximity and were distinguished from Semitic, African and Asian languages. As linguists did not agree on the geographical origin of these languages (North Indian, Eurasian or European), the terminology 'Indo-European' was the result of a compromise.

Then the Indo-European became a member of a human family that shared a certain physical resemblance, a similar (ancient) way of life and, of course, linguistic proximity.

There are two basic theses on the origin of Indo-Europeans. According to the first, all populations have a common background. According to the second, Indo-Europeans are descended from local populations whose neighbourhood spread a way of life and the linguistic elements that go with it. Many historians favour the first thesis, and since then they have been looking for the 'common ground'.

Origins of the Celts

What is the likely hypothesis? Knowing that Indo-European archaeological sites stretch from Ireland to Korea (...), the thesis of the propagation of a way of life through the neighbourhood is difficult to defend. That said, we could consider a 'hybrid' path: a common fund would have influenced local populations.

This hypothesis is because a population can make significant advances in agrarian, metallurgical, architectural, economic, linguistics, etc., and use this breakthrough to increase its influence over other populations.

There are many competing theories on the common ground. They can be grouped using the four cardinal points: north, east, south, and west. Linguists and historians lean towards the East. In this respect, an ancient fortified city of 30 hectares founded 4400 years ago is very fashionable. This is the city of Gonur Depe (Turkmenistan), whose artistic wealth of artefacts uncovered is not trivial.

Some artefacts represent winged women (fertility goddesses), 'dragons' (half snake, half lion) and large birds of prey that do not seem to be 'sympathetic' with dragons. Finally, the extinction of this city, a thousand years later, would be due to lasting changes in the region's climate.

The site of Khara-Khoto in the Gobi Desert (which was not always a desert) seems more promising. We base this on a discovery made by Pyotr Kuzmich Kozlov, a Russian explorer, during an expedition at the beginning of the last century (1907–1909). He wrote a report translated into English under the title *Mongolia and Amdo and the Dead City of Khara-Khoto* (1923). In summary, he states that this splendid city (still active in medieval times) had multiple foundations. However, the sand is such an obstacle that it discourages archaeologists.



Aeta was one of the earliest inhabitants in the Philippines

Author: Seanaleta. Source: Wikipedia. [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Population Genetics

To identify the origin of Indo-Europeans, linguistics, archaeology and history have unfortunately failed. We will therefore call on a more recent discipline: population genetics.

This branch of genetics is the study of the reproduction of populations. Previously, evolution was studied from the point of view of individuals only. Nowadays, it is also done from the point of view of populations.

Individuals are a distribution of genotypes and it is the population that generates these genotypes. These contain the information carried by the genome of an organism, contained in the DNA of each cell. Our human genome contains between 28,000 and 34,000 genes spread over 46 chromosomes grouped into 23 pairs. One of these pairs consists of the chromosomes that determine a person's sex. A man carries a Y chromosome and an X chromosome. And a woman carries two X chromosomes.

Origins of the Celts

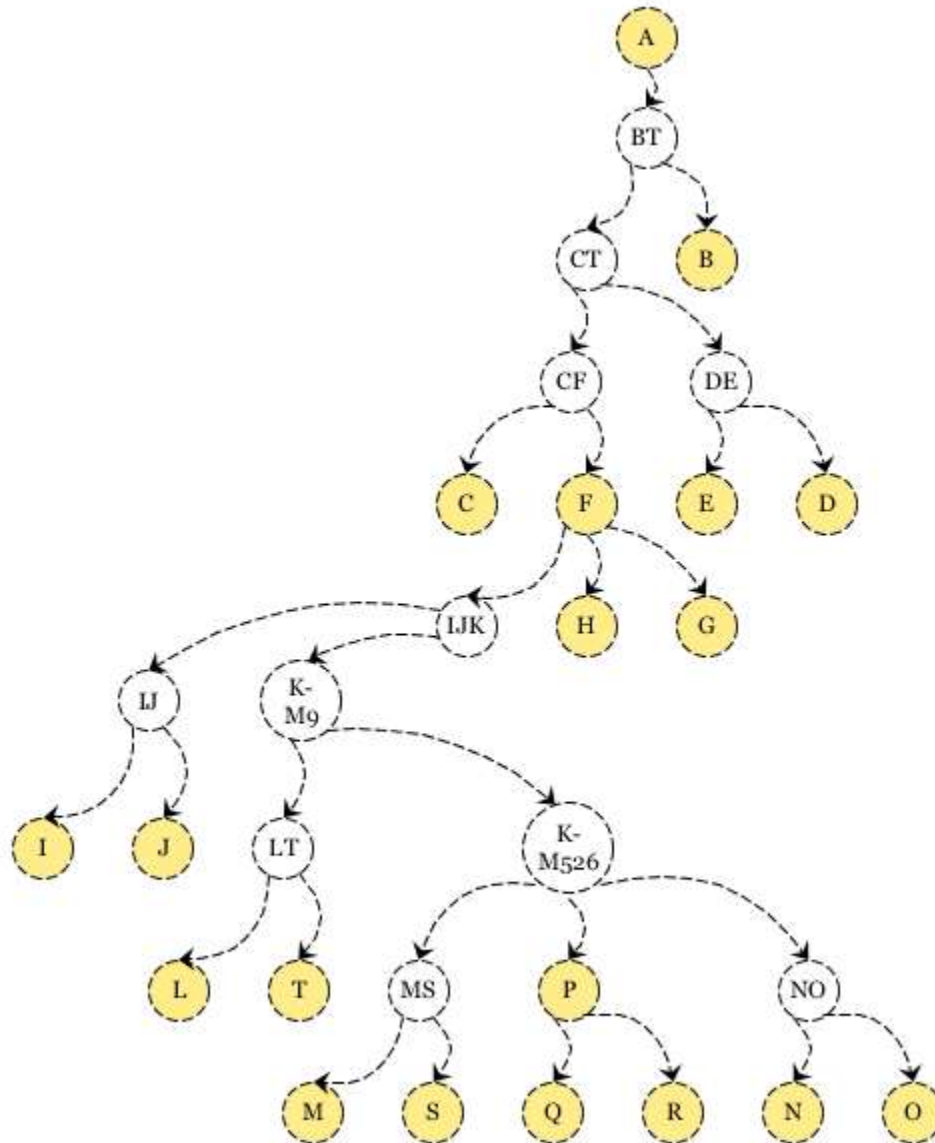
Population genetics uses the Y chromosome as a 'marker'. Finally, a 'satellite' genome called mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) is distinct from our DNA. And only the mother passes it on. This genome refers to mitochondria present in so-called eukaryotic cells. All this to say that population genetics also uses it as a 'marker'.

Y Chromosome

In population genetics, the different Y chromosomes are grouped into 'haplogroups'. A haplogroup is a group of similar haplotypes (group of alleles) that share a common ancestor with a single-nucleotide polymorphism mutation.

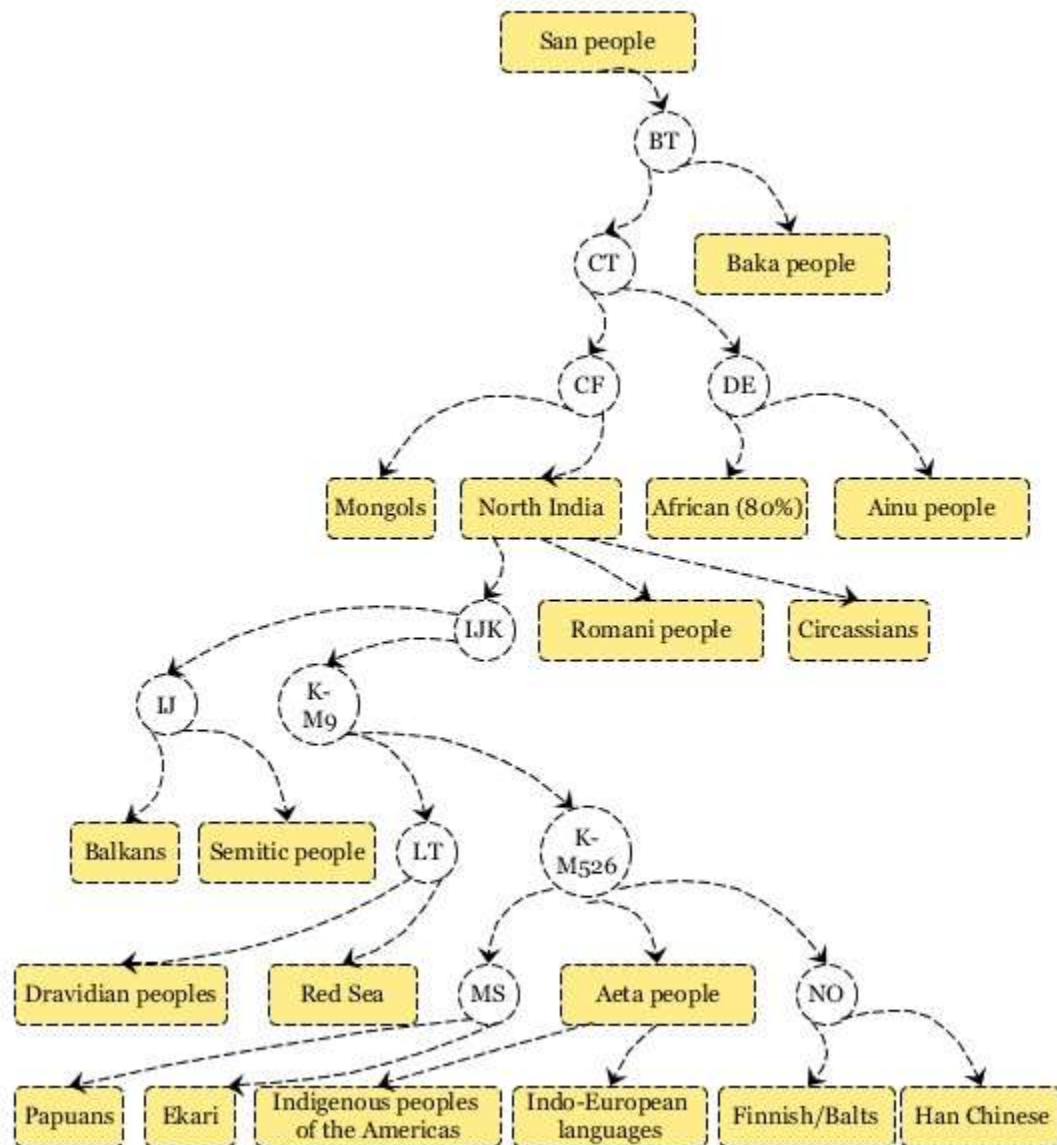
The Y Chromosome Consortium (YCC, 1991–2012) defined the first nomenclature in 2002. According to this nomenclature, our human genus has 20 haplogroups (noted from A to T). A haplogroup descends directly from another or from a mutation. Here is our (simplified) 'genetic tree' in diagram form. The haplogroups are highlighted in yellow (or grey for black and white publication) and the mutations are highlighted in white.

Origins of the Celts



What is most striking is the ‘convoluted’ transition between haplogroup F and the following ones. Now, let’s try to translate this tree on the population level, knowing that the numerous human migrations do not make the exercise easy. To do this, we will look for the population (or even the region) where we find the best representation for each of them. Here is the same genetic tree (simplified) from the population point of view.

Origins of the Celts



Indigenous Americans and Indo-Europeans are descended from the haplogroup of the Aeta people. And the latter currently resides in the Philippines. Native Americans and Indo-Europeans evolved on two and unrelated continents before the official discovery of America in 1492. From the point of view of human palaeontology, the only place where they could have crossed paths is in the Far East, 15 to 20,000 years ago. This was before the future Indians migrated to America through the Bering Strait (which connects Siberia and Alaska) and before the future Indo-Europeans migrated to Central Asia and Europe.

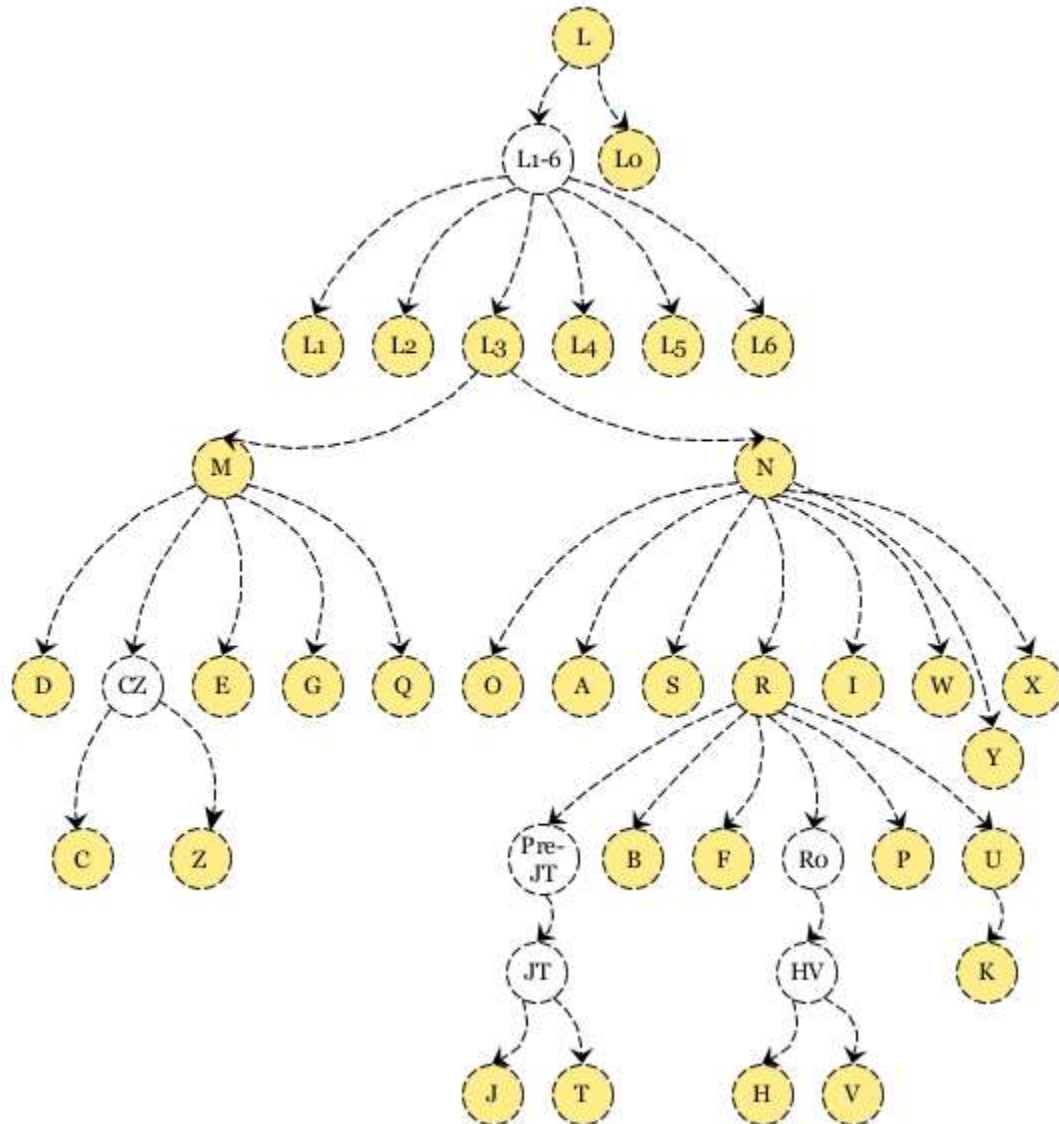
Mitochondrial Eve

Mitochondrial Eve is the name given to a hypothetical woman who is believed to be the newest common maternal ancestor of humanity. And cases of paternal transmission of mitochondrial DNA are very rare.

Considering the rate of mutation (the molecular clock concept) in this DNA, calculations suggest that the mitochondrial Eve lived about 150,000 years ago. Phylogeny also suggests that she lived in East Africa. Phylogeny is the study of the relationships between individuals, populations or species.

Mitochondrial DNA has 33 haplogroups (A to Z, plus 7 variations of L). Here is our second (simplified) 'gene tree' in diagram form. The haplogroups are on a yellow background (or grey for a black and white publication) and the mutations are on a white background. And the L is the mitochondrial Eve.

Origins of the Celts



Unlike the Y chromosome, the translation of this tree into populations is impossible. But since haplogroups are concentrated in certain regions, we will nevertheless draw attention to some unusual elements.

For example, we go directly from the L3 of East Africa to the M and N pair in the Far East and Oceania, without passing through the East and Central Asia. Our ancestor 'L3' seemed to have good navigational skills.

Origins of the Celts

The Far Eastern M has produced half of the world's population. And the Oceanian N has produced the other half. Haplogroup R, mainly present in Oceania, is the ancestor of the majority of Caucasus populations, the Middle East and Western Europe. To put it mildly, human migration has made two complete changes of direction: first, 'all the way to the east' and second, 'all the way to the west'.

Review

If Indo-European originated in South-east Asia, it probably left the 'family nest' early. He then colonised regions in Asia, concentrating on temperate zones between the 30th and 50th (geographical) parallels. This choice could be explained by an early aptitude for agriculture and a taste for a fairly rural lifestyle.

It remains to be explained why the ancestors of the Amerindians headed east (America) and why their Indo-European 'cousins' went the other way. We know today that the Amerindians liked the great outdoors for hunting. As the seasons changed, they did not hesitate to move around either. However, this characteristic can be found in the Indo-European populations of the Central Asian steppes.

One thing is certain: Indo-Europeans and Amerindians were never afraid of wide open spaces and long journeys. 'What is the origin of the Gauls of Roman Celtic?' For the moment, the only certain answer can be summarised: 'far away'.

Origins of the Celts

Tocharian vocabulary (sample)								
English	Tocharian A	Tocharian B	Ancient Greek	Sanskrit	Latin	Proto-Germanic	Gothic	Old Irish
<i>father</i>	pācar	pācer	patēr	pitṛ	pater	*fadēr	fadar	athair
<i>mother</i>	mācar	mācer	mētēr	mātr	māter	*mōdēr	mōdar	máthair
<i>brother</i>	pracar	procer	phrātēr ^[a]	bhrātr	frāter	*brōpēr	brōpar	bráthair
<i>sister</i>	ṣar	ṣer	éor ^[a]	svāsṛ	soror	*swestēr	swistar	siur
<i>horse</i>	yuk	yakwe	híppos	áśva-	equus	*ehwaz	aihvs	ech
<i>cow</i>	ko	keu	boûs	gauṣ	bōs ^[b]	*kūz	(OE <i>cū</i>)	bó
<i>voice</i> ^[b]	vak	vek	épos ^[a]	vāk	vōx	*wōhmaz ^[a]	(Du <i>gewag</i>) ^[a]	foccul ^[a]
<i>name</i>	ñom	ñem	ónoma	nāman-	nōmen	*namō	namō	ainmm
<i>to milk</i>	mālkā	mālkant	amélgein	–	mulgēre	*melkanaṣ	miluks	bligid (Mlr)

Tocharian vocabulary (sample). Comparison to other Indo-European languages

Source: Wikipedia

Linguistics

There are several main branches in the Indo-European language family. Usually, it is an eleven-branched tree. Europe has seven branches: Celtic, Italic, Germanic, Slavic, Baltic, Hellenic and Illyrian. Asia has the other four: Anatolian, Armenian, Indo-Iranian and Tocharian.

None of these branches can claim precedence over one or more others. In other words, the tree has no ‘trunk’. In contrast, for example, the Semitic language family is a true family tree. This singularity is probably linked to the fact that Indo-Europeans had an oral tradition and that the genealogy is lost.

In Europe, three non-Indo-European languages are present: Etruscan (contemporary with Latin), Basque and Finnish (related to Estonian and Hungarian). The origins of Etruscan and Basque are an enigma, whereas the origin of Finns (Finnish) is more easily explained (although the origin of the Finns also remains an enigma).

Origins of the Celts

Population genetics has pointed to a Far Eastern origin of Indo-Europeans. The so-called Tokharian (easternmost) branch could therefore claim authorship. However, the opposite thesis, according to which the Indo-Europeans moved from the west to the east, has not yet had its last word. The fortified site of Brodgar in Scotland is a millennium older (but ten times smaller) than Gonur Depe in Turkmenistan.

Nevertheless, despite the earlier Brodgar Ness, the population density in Western Europe seemed so low (at the time) compared to Turkmenistan that the position is difficult to defend. Finally, Asia is so vast that it is far from having revealed all its archaeological treasures.



Reconstructed Srubnaya hut

Author: Водник. Source: Wikipedia. [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Cimmerians

The Cimmerians go up the Danube, settle in territories of present-day Romania, then in the Pannonian Plain (or even in the German-Polish plain). Finally, populations will move even further west and settle between the Paris Basin and the Southern Alps. In conclusion, we would go so far as to suggest that this massive Cimmerian immigration merged with the Hallstatt culture. And that it is not foreign to the La Tène culture that developed in Europe from the year 450 BC onwards.

The Cimmerians appear in history during an incursion into ancient Phrygia (Anatolia, modern Turkey). They came from the Black Sea. Apparently, they left and returned home after the death of the Phrygian ruler, the legendary Midas. They thus inaugurated a tradition that the Gauls would adopt and that can be summarised as follows: *veni, vidi, vici* ('I came, I saw, I conquered') and '*venit*' (I returned).

Origins of the Celts

One can, for example, recall the sack of Rome by the Senon Gauls led by Brennus in 387 or 390 BC. This behaviour is atypical. In ancient times, armies fought over territory. The Cimmerians and the Senon Gauls fought for glory.

Where did these Black Sea Cimmerians come from? Of all the ancient populations of Eurasia, the Cimmerian population is the oldest mentioned by Greek and Latin authors. This leads historians to consider their settlement on the shores of the Black Sea as early as 1200 BC. Let us now quote the introduction to the Wikipedia article on 'Kurgan'.

'A Kurgan is a type of tumulus constructed over a grave, often characterised by containing a single human body along with grave vessels, weapons and horses. Originally in use on the Pontic-Caspian steppe kurgans spread into much of Central Asia and Eastern, Western and Northern Europe during the 3rd millennium BC. —...—The earliest kurgans date to the 4th millennium BC in the Caucasus, and researchers associate these with the Indo-Europeans.' Source: Wikipedia

Then there is an article on the 'Srubnaya culture'.

'The Srubnaya culture, also known as Timber-grave culture, was a Late Bronze Age – 18th – 12th centuries BC – culture in the eastern part of Pontic-Caspian steppe. The name comes from Russian сруб – srub – , “timber framework”, from the way graves were constructed. Animal parts were buried with the body. The Srubnaya culture is a successor of the Yamna culture, Catacomb culture and Poltavka culture. It is co-ordinate and probably closely related to the Andronovo culture, its eastern neighbour. Whether the Srubnaya culture originated in the east, west, or was a local development, is disputed among archaeologists.' Source: Wikipedia

Origins of the Celts

‘Animal parts were buried with the body.’ Animal parts are called meat quarters. This culture therefore considered that the deceased would need food. Before the Gauls practised cremation (probably due to a growing population), they buried their dead in rectangular graves. These were sometimes surrounded by a burial enclosure. The latter is reminiscent of the wooden logs that supported the framework of the Srubnaya tombs. Stranger still, some Gallic tombs contained provisions, including meat quarters.

The Cimmerians and the Gauls thus had at least one belief in common: in the passage to the afterlife, one is not only nourished by love and fresh water.

‘The Srubnaya culture is a successor of the Yamna culture.’

On the Eupedia site (European population genetics), the page Yamna Culture (c. 3500-2500 BCE) states the following.

‘The Yamna DNA samples recovered from elite serious Kurgan southern Russia belonged overwhelmingly to haplogroup R1b-Z2103, the essentially eastern branch of Indo-European R1b. In the absence of other hand R1b subclades probably simple percentage owed to the dominance of has golden royal single aristocratic lineage among the Yamnayan elite buried in Kurgans.’

Haplogroup R1b (Y-DNA) page on the Eupedia website shows the current distribution of this haplogroup. The highest concentrations are in the British Isles, the former Gaul and Spain. It also shows that all regions that were least affected by Roman colonisation have rates of 80% or more as some total population.

Conclusion

A continuity between the Kurgan civilisation, the Yamna culture, the Srubnaya culture, the Cimmerians (who could be considered as southern Yamnaians) and the Gauls can no longer be excluded.

There is one last question: 'What is the link between the Keltoi and the Gauls?' In response, a foray into the Bretons and Scythians of antiquity might bring its share of surprises.

Breton origin

Introduction

Before getting into the subject, an overview of European history is far from being a luxury. We start with the 5th millennium BC, between 5000 and 4000 BC.



We are two thousand years before the emergence of the Egyptian civilisation. Europe is mainly populated by hunter-gatherers. The names correspond to cultures known from archaeology. The symbol corresponds to regions of dispersed farmers without any special social culture. The one north of the Alps and the one at Vinča are extensive and cover (at least) the banks of the Rhine and the Danube.

Stone architecture is not well developed and is concentrated in Brittany and Poitou. However, in Anatolia (present-day Turkey and northern Syria), this type of site has existed since at least the previous millennium. Finally, the ancestors of the future Basques were already present in the Pyrenees.

Origins of the Celts

Barnenez is home to the oldest (and largest) cairn in Europe. It is 70 m long and 20–25 m wide and contains 11 burial chambers. Locmariaquer was an inhabited site of several hectares and its population density was high (for its time). Finally, in Carnac, the construction of the alignments began.

Is the proximity of the three sites a coincidence? One could even suggest that Carnac was the construction site, Locmariaquer was the place where the workforce lived and Barnenez honoured personalities of the time. In this case, what Neolithic culture (social organisation) could deploy such resources? And for what purpose?

Between 4000 and 3000 BC



The site of Carnac is still active. In the middle of the millennium, the construction of Stonehenge began. Finally, the first European fortified city appears in Orkney, an archipelago in the north of Scotland: it is the Ness of Brodgar. The site is three hectares in size and contains, among other things, a 400 m long wall.

Origins of the Celts

The geographical eccentricity of this Ness challenges specialists. How can one explain the presence of the oldest European city on an island of 500 km² at the same latitude as Oslo and where 17,000 people live today? Did advanced cultures of the time practise maritime navigation and opt for lands away from the European continent? Finally, are they related to the one in Locmariaquer? Did they come from local farming communities?

Between 3000 and 2000 BC



The sites of Carnac, Stonehenge and Brodgar are still active. New cultures appear: the Minoan culture in Crete, the Hurrian culture in Anatolia, the Argar culture in Murcia (Spain) and the Corded Ceramic culture in northern Europe. Minoan (the so-called Linear A) is the first known European language and is still not deciphered. Historians do not know whether the Minoans were Indo-Europeans (the Hurrians were not).

The Argar culture site covers an area of 4.5 hectares and contains, among other things, 300 m long ramparts. It is the first known fortified site on the continent. It is less remote than Brodgar, but its geographical location is of interest to specialists.

Origins of the Celts

By the end of the millennium, the world population would have reached 100 million. If we apply the current ratio (5%) between the European and world populations, Europeans are 5 million at that time.

Between 2000 and 1000 BC



The sites of Carnac and Brodgar become extinct. A new advanced culture appears in Anatolia: the Hatti. Indo-Europeans make their official appearance in Europe (Illyrians, Thracians, Macedonians, Philistines, Achaeans, etc.) and in Anatolia (Hittites, Luwians). Finally, the cultures of the urn fields and Villanova appear. We can also add that the Phoenicians from the Near East have been criss-crossing the Mediterranean since (at least) the beginning of the millennium.

The Scythians were already residing on the shores of the Caspian Sea at the end of the millennium. They are Indo-Europeans, possibly from the Andronovo culture (Siberia).

Origins of the Celts

Between 1000 and 750 BC



Thracians found Phrygia and Lydia. Luwians founded (possibly) Lycia. Hatti (already colonised by the Hittites) died out under the blows of the 'Sea Peoples' (and the Philistines especially). The Hurrians founded the state of Urartu. Finally, the Iberians appear in Spain and this is the period of the creation of Athens.

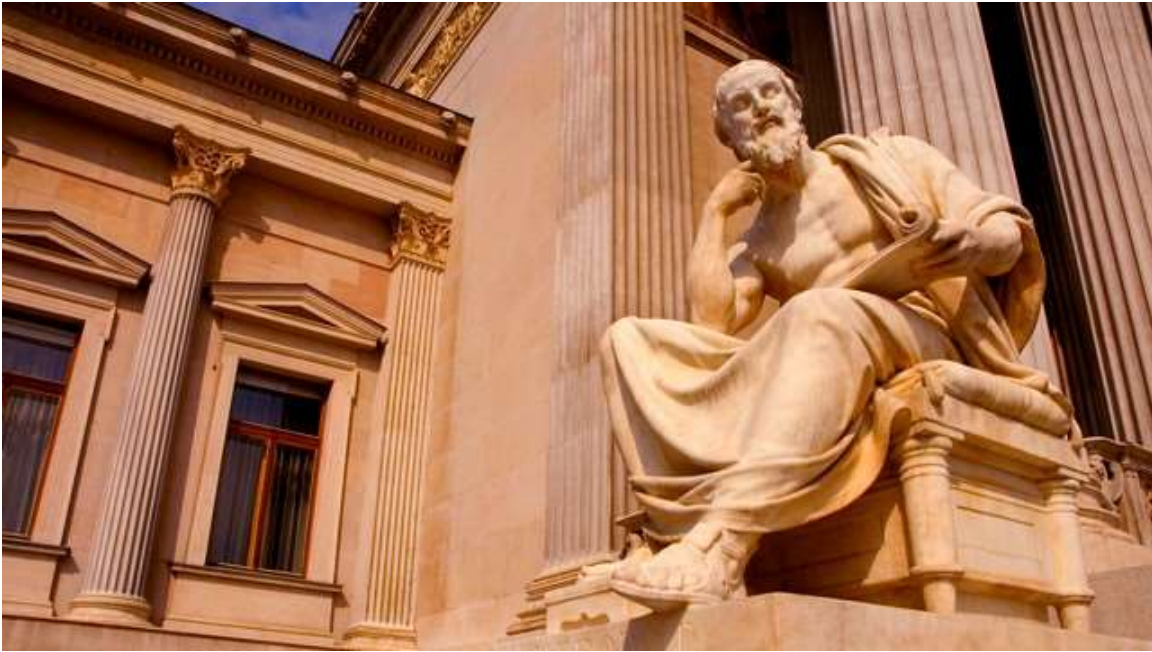
Between 750 and 500 BC

Origins of the Celts



Phrygia is the victim of a Cimmerian incursion. Urartu had to admit defeat to the Scythians and Armenians. Lydia cannot resist the Persians and the table is set for the future Greco-Persian Wars. The Hallstatt culture succeeded that of the Urnfield culture.

Finally, the last chapter of this essay will introduce the Fomoraig, Fir Bolg, Tuatha De and Gaels.



Statue of the ancient Greek historian Herodotus in the parliament of Vienna

Author: morhamedufmg. Source: Wikipedia. [CC 0 1.0](#)

Herodotus

Herodotus (480-c. 420 BC) was a historian and geographer. He was the son of a certain Lyxes, probably from ancient Caria. In 469 BC, his family went into exile in Samos because they conflicted with the Carian tyrant Lygdamus. He spent time in Egypt, Syria, the city of Tyre (modern Lebanon), Babylon (modern Iraq), Colchis (modern Georgia), the city of Olbia (modern Ukraine) and Macedonia.

Back in Halicarnassus, in Caria, around 454 BC, he took part in the insurrection that overthrew the tyranny. Then he had to go into exile again and settled in Athens where he sympathised with Sophocles. He then followed the colonists who, at the instigation of Pericles, left to reach the city of Thurii, in south-eastern Italy. This is called a refoundation, as this city once existed under the name of Sybaris.

We will review Herodotus's information on the Cimmerians.

Origins of the Celts

'There is also another different story, now to be related, in which I am more inclined to put faith than in any other. It is that the wandering Scythians once dwelt in Asia, and there warred with the Massagetae, but with ill success; they therefore quitted their homes, crossed the Araxes, and entered the land of Cimmeria. For the land which is now inhabited by the Scyths was formerly the country of the Cimmerians. (...) Scythia still retains traces of the Cimmerians; there are Cimmerian castles, and a Cimmerian ferry, also a tract called Cimmeria, and a Cimmerian Bosphorus. It appears likewise that the Cimmerians, when they fled into Asia to escape the Scyths, made a settlement in the peninsula where the Greek city of Sinope was afterwards built.'

The Greek city of Sinope was south of the Black Sea. The Cimmerians would therefore have lived in the present-day Scythian country and retreated to (western) Asia on the shores of the Black Sea. They were also in the Bosphorus (modern Turkey). This is a strait that connects the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara.

'The whole district whereof we have here discoursed has winters of exceeding rigour. For eight months the frost is so intense that water poured upon the ground does not form mud, but if a fire be lighted on it mud is produced. The sea freezes, and the Cimmerian Bosphorus is frozen over.'

It is an understatement to say that at the time, the climate in this region seemed much harsher than today.

'Cyaxares, the grandson of Deioces, drove the Cimmerians out of Asia.'

Origins of the Celts

Cyaxares was a Scythian ruler. It was during his reign that the Cimmerians left Asia for good. Herodotus describes the debate among these Cimmerians before the Scythians fell upon them.

'At this meeting opinion was divided, and both parties stiffly maintained their own view; but the council of the Royal tribe was the braver. For the others urged that the best thing to be done was to leave the country, and avoid a contest with so vast a host; the Royal tribe advised remaining and fighting for the soil to the last. As neither party chose to give way, the one determined to retire without a blow and yield their lands to the invaders; but the other, remembering the good things which they had enjoyed in their homes, and picturing to themselves the evils which they had to expect if they gave them up, resolved not to flee, but rather to die and at least be buried in their fatherland. Having thus decided, they drew apart in two bodies, the one as numerous as the other, and fought together. All of the Royal tribe were slain, and the people buried them near the river Tyras, where their grave is still to be seen. Then the rest of the Cimmerians departed, and the Scythians, on their coming, took possession of a deserted land.'

These events took place after 630 BC, as Herodotus states that the fleeing Cimmerians plundered the Greek city of Sinope (founded around 630 BC). To their credit, they had a (fleeing) population to feed. So we are more than a century before the foundation of democracy in Greece and the Cimmerians already had 'parties', including the 'people's party'.

What happened next is not known. According to the official thesis, they were colonised and assimilated by the Scythians. But Herodotus's testimony does not support this hypothesis. The idea that part of the Cimmerians went up the Danube is not new. To support the idea, we can point out that the Greek geographer Strabo specified that the Cimmerians had Thracian allies.

Origins of the Celts

We could recall the following scenario. The Cimmerians go up the Danube, settle in territories of present-day Romania, then in the Pannonian Plain (or even in the German-Polish plain). Finally, populations will move even further west and settle between the Paris Basin and the Southern Alps. If this is the case, we are talking about the Gauls.

Officially, the latter came from the Hallstatt culture before a hypothetical immigration of the Cimmerians into Central Europe. These Cimmerians appeared spontaneously and disappeared just as spontaneously in history. However, their society had a political maturity that the ancient Greeks did not have until much later.

In conclusion, we would go so far as to suggest that this massive Cimmerian immigration merged with the Hallstatt culture and that it is not alien to the La Tène culture that developed in Europe from 450 BC onwards. Having said that, let us finally address the subject: the Bretons.



Portrait of the photographer Laureen Keravec dedicated to Ar Bard (for the Lyre) and Alan Stivell (for the Celtic Harp). Author: Kergonan22. Source: Wikipedia. [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Kymry

On the ‘literary’ side, the Bretons make their historic first appearance in the oldest European narrative: the Irish *Lebor Gabála Érenn*. We will use the translation by Henri Lizeray (French author, 1844–1905) published in 1884 under the title *Leabar gabala, Livre des invasions de l’Irlande*. The action would be slightly later than the reign of Pharaoh Nectanebo II around 350 BC.

(FR-Lizeray) ‘Criomtan du Clair-Bouclier leur raconta ses malheurs, et un remède lui fut indiqué par le druide des Cruitnéacs, pour le temps où il serait en guerre avec les peuples de Fidga, dans les forêts ; c’était un peuple de Bretons qui étaient continuellement en engagement de bataille avec Criomtan.’

(EN-Free translation) ‘Criomtan of the Light Shield told them of his misfortunes, and a remedy was indicated to him by the druid of the Cruitneacs, for the time when he would be at war with the

peoples of Fidga, in the forests; they were a people of Bretons who were continually engaged in battle with Criomtan.'

Criomtan is a chief of ancient Ireland and the Cruitneacs were a population originating from the continent and allied to the Irish ruler Erimon. The earliest known Bretons were therefore 'Fidga' and did not reside in the lands of Ireland. These Fidga seemed to behave like an expeditionary force.

Historians believe that the Bretons appeared at about the same time in present-day Wales as the Kymry (be pronounced kumri), Cymri or Cymraeg. The earliest known texts of the Kymry date from the 6th century AD and were inspired or even written by Welsh bards. The best-known text is *Y Gododdin* or *Book of Aneirin* (a bard). The poems of the bard Taliesin are also collected in the *Book of Taliesin*. Finally, we can also mention the poems of Myrddin, who inspired the Merlin's character.

The second wave of texts is later. The major writing is the *Mabinogion* (also called the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*). It contains four texts developed from two 14th century manuscripts: the *White Book of Rhydderch* and the *Red Book of Hergest*. These texts are *Pwyll, Prince of Dyved*, *The Mabinogi of Branwen*, *Manawydan son of Llyr* and *Math son of Mathonwy*.

Of course, Welsh literature of the time is known for the Arthurian legend, but this cannot help us in the quest for the origins of the Bretons. In short, we have only four books: those of Aneirin, Taliesin, Rhydderch (the 'White' book) and Hergest (the 'Red'). Unfortunately, these texts do not do much better: they are short on information about the origin of the Bretons.

Origins of the Celts



Snowdonia (Welsh: Eryri) is a mountain range in Gwynedd and Conwy, Wales

Author: Joanna Rycerz. Source: Pixabay

Owen Jones

Owen Jones was born in Denbighshire, Wales. In the mid-1760s, he moved to London. He studied Welsh literature from childhood and collected old manuscripts. Assisted by the bard Edward Williams of Glamorgan (Iolo Morganwg) and the antiquarian William Owen Pughe, he published the *Myvyrian Archaeology of Wales* in 3 volumes (1801–1807), a compilation of manuscripts dating from the 5th to the 14th century.

These manuscripts were deposited in the British Library in London. He cofounded the Gwyneddigion Society in London in 1770 to encourage the study of Welsh literature. He died in 1814 at his home in Upper Thames Street, London. The antiquarian William Owen Pughe (famous in his day) was later found to be a forger, but his contribution to the compilation of Owen Jones's manuscripts came from his personal collection, which was genuine.

We will focus on a character described in these manuscripts: Hu Gadarn. He is the first chief of the Cymri who set foot in 'Prydein' (modern Britain). These Cymri

came from the 'Land of Summer' and more precisely from 'Deffrobani'. They crossed the Tawch Sea. Once on the island, they would have reached 'Llydaw'. Two other chiefs accompanied them: Prydein ab Aedd Mawr and Dyvnwal Moelmud.

We will come back to the Summerland and Deffrobani, but the Tawch Sea could (conditionally) be the eastern part of the North Sea that connects present-day Germany and Britain. As for the island of Britain, these Cymri had named it Prydein (any tribute to Prydein ab Aedd Mawr?). The Llydaw still exists and is a natural lake in Wales. Finally, the manuscript distinguished three tribes (one for each chief?).

These tribes were peaceful and did not want to take over land through war. This is probably the reason why they settled in an area away from other populations of the time. The manuscripts show that they did not practise agriculture. It was Hu Gadarn himself who had taught them in this field and he had started to do so in the 'Summerland'. However, a certain Coll, son of Colvrewi, had brought soft wheat and barley and a certain Elldud Varchawc developed ploughing. The first 'horned' oxen were those of Hu Gadarn.

These Cymri had no system of laws and customs (Dyvnwal Moelmud developed this). Worse, they had no 'tradition'. They even decided to initiate a tradition through songs and music. The manuscripts mention the first three 'composers': Hu Gadarn himself, Tydain and Gwyddon Ganhebon.

It is probably between 450 and 350 BC. Agriculture and law systems were widespread at this time. Why is this population non-agricultural and devoid of laws and customs? Secondly, pacifism was rare at this time. Why is it so essential to this population?

Horned oxen may be a reference to buffaloes. The latter were (originally) domesticated in India (or even in South-east Asia). However, at that time they already existed in Africa and Eurasia.

The term 'soft wheat' is used in contrast to 'hard wheat' from the Mediterranean. The Greek philosopher Theophrastus stated in his History of Plants that the wheat

Origins of the Celts

of the Black Sea regions had the reputation of being softer, better able to withstand transport and to keep longer. Barley, on the other hand, had been grown in Africa, Europe and Asia for thousands of years.

The question arises: how can a population without agriculture be so good at maritime navigation (or even at building ships)? In short, 'Something doesn't add up'.

The 'soft wheat' puts us on the track of the Black Sea. But Herodotus, at the time, said that the weather there was winter (eight months a year). So, the Black Sea is no longer a candidate for the Summerland. Moreover, the Black Sea peoples not only had agriculture and systems of laws, but some of them already practised democracy before its official appearance in Athens.

One clue remains: 'Deffrobani'. For some, this term referred to the peninsula of present-day Istanbul, but no manuscript supports such a hypothesis. For others, it is a derivative of the Greek 'Taprobana' which referred to an island in the Indian Ocean at the time when Alexander reached India. Depending on the author, it is either Ceylon or Sumatra (or even Borneo). That's a long way to go. Finally, the Cymri are Indo-Europeans and these remote islands have never claimed any Indo-European populations.

Is it a dead end?

There is still the linguistic track. The Cornish and the Breton are two 'sister' languages. Both languages share with Gaelic about half of the syllables (excluding sound and syntax).

There are also some similarities between Cymric and the language of the Luwians who occupied the southern and western part of Turkey 3,500 years ago. Some authors even suggest that the city of Troy was not Hittite but Luwian. They were Indo-Europeans who would have been assimilated by other populations several centuries before the Cymri migration. That said, they practised agriculture and had a system of laws. In summary, a Luwian origin of the Cymri cannot be supported. Nevertheless, it remains a lead for the Summerland.

Origins of the Celts

From our point of view, two hypotheses remain.

The first one ignores the geographical index ('Deffrobani') and the climatic clue (Summerland). In this case, the Cymri would have originated from the Black Sea or the Sea of Marmara (further south). This would explain their aptitude for maritime navigation. It remains to be explained why they were not suited to agriculture.

It is known that the Scythians overwhelmed the Cimmerians in the Black Sea in the 7th century BC. However, it cannot be excluded that Cimmerians also lived on the shores of the Marmara Sea. As a result, this population would have been caught between the Scythians, Greeks and Persians. It is even possible that the Greeks or Persians enslaved this population, as slavery was an institution in both societies. This could explain the inability to farm because when you work in villas for generations, you forget everything.

The Greeks took advantage of the departure of the Cimmerians from the Black Sea to deploy colonies in former Cimmerian territories although this brought them into direct contact with the Scythians. To deploy such 'mushroom' colonies, it takes manpower and personnel. And the Greeks at the time were not used to paying for it. Finally, we would go so far as to suggest that the Scythians had possibly taken over some Greek colonies and since they did not practise slavery, an entire Cimmerian population was starting over.

Moreover, one can bet that some Greeks' 'staff' were sailors. The easiest (and safest) way to transit between Greece and its Black Sea colonies was via the Aegean and the Sea of Marmara.

A second hypothesis remains: the Cymri were originally from an island, in the Indian Ocean. On this island, agriculture was not necessary to feed everyone. The people were peaceful and did not see the need for a system of laws. Finally, the weather was exceptional and it was the Land of Eternal Summer.

In Welsh tradition, the Summerland is also a synonym for the afterlife (the Land of the Dead). That said, it cannot be ruled out that the Cymri had an earlier and sunnier geographical origin. The term 'Deffrobani' is a real mystery, but we can at least rule out a Cymri etymology. Speaking of etymology, the Greeks referred to the Cimmerians as 'Kimmeroi'. The syntactic gap between Kimmeroi and Cymri is not so great...

We will end with an anecdote. According to a Welsh tradition whose manuscript(s), we have not been able to find, Hu Gadarn was the chosen one of the 'god' Diana. The latter is unknown to historians. Knowing that at that time, a hero could become a 'god' at the speed of light, let us look for a hero named Diana. This is another dead end. In that case, let's look for a heroine. We found one: a Scythian princess. All this to say that a romance between the 'goddess' and the chosen one (of her heart) is not excluded.

Concerning the Scythians and the Cimmerians generally, historians have long thought that they were Slavs (a family of Indo-Europeans). However, population genetics has shown that the Indo-European populations of Britain and Western Europe were not Slavs. Consequently, the Scythians and Cimmerians were not either.

Origins of the Celts



Picture of Hengistbury Head. Taken June '06
Author: Hut 8.5. Source: Wikipedia. [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

Britain

Albion for the Greeks, Prydein for the Cymri, Brittia for the Romans, the island of Britain has not lacked diminutives. Between the first Bretons in history, who appear in the Irish *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*, and the British peoples discovered by the Romans (a few centuries later), there is an archaeological void.

We summarise the little that historians know. Commercial relations existed between Mediterranean civilisations (Carthage especially) and the populations of the south of the island. They mainly concerned the trade in metals (gold, tin), hunting dogs and slaves. The site of Hengistbury Head (county of Dorset) was a hub as early as the 3rd century BC. Finally, the alleged Gauls known as 'Veneti' seemed to play a role as intermediaries. In short, nothing is known about the populations of the island before the arrival of the Romans.

Here are the main populations of the island in the first century AD. The source is the Greek geographer Ptolemy.

Origins of the Celts



To decipher this patchwork, the Irish *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* will prove very useful. It may be added that the populations of the time used to name themselves after a common ancestor or place of origin. We will look at the populations in a north-south and east-west direction.

Origins of the Celts

People	Proposition	Status
Limnu	Possible link with the Scythian names Elim, Fedlim and Nua	Gaelic
Skitis	Possible reference to Scota, an ancient sovereign of Gaels	Gaelic
Carini	Possible link with 'Carn' of Gaels signification of which is a stony mass	Gaelic
Lugi	A reference to Lug, Scythian hero	Gaelic
Decantae	'Dech' is a Cymraeg prefix and Welsh 'Cant' derives from 'Cannoedd' (one hundred)	Cymraeg
Cerones	Synonym of Carnonacae and an additional reference to 'Carn' of Gaels	Gaelic
Vacomagi	Their main site was called Bannatia and it is possible to make a link with the region Banna of ancient Ireland	Gaelic
Taexali	Old Dutch consonance?	
Venicones	Ben (Ven) Edar is a Scythian name and 'Cones' can refer to one of five kingdoms of Ireland, Connacht	Gaelic
Caledonii	Possible links with Welsh (hard) 'Caled' and 'caledi' (hardness)	Cymraeg
Damnonii	Clear reference to the Scythian population of Fir Domnann	Domnann
Epidii	Their territory will give birth to the kingdom of Dál Riata from which the name returns to the plain Riatta of ancient Ireland	Gaelic
Votadinii	Their fortified town was Dunedin. 'Dun' indicates the fortress in Gaelic but 'Edin' is not without reminding of Welsh 'Cyffredin' (common, general, etc.)	Gaelic
Novantae	(Future Atecott Picts) link with Trinovantum (possible old name of London)?	
Selgovae	Their main site was Carbantorigum and roots 'carba' and 'Tor' remind of the Scythian names Ucarba and Tethor	Gaelic
Parisi	A well-known population in Gaul	
Brigantes	Clear reference to Brigantia, the capital of Gaels of Spain who had won Ireland	Gaelic

Origins of the Celts

People	Proposition	Status
Coritani	Link with Corineans (possible old people of the island)?	
Deceangli	(or Deceangi) 'Dech' and 'Angiad' are Cymraeg roots and the fortified town of this population had a name with strong consonance: Caerhun	Cymraeg
Cornovii	Several populations had this name which still reminds of 'Carn' of Gaels.	Gaelic
Iceni	It is a name with Cymraeg consonance (for example, 'Picen' is the plural of Welsh 'pic', cake). Boudicca (Buddug) was the Iceni's lead	Cymraeg
Ordovices		Brittonic
Demetae		Brittonic
Silurids		Brittonic
Catuvellani	Belgian population	Bolg
Dobunni	Possible link with the Scythian names Dob and Dobal but 'dob' is also a Cymraeg root	Cymraeg
Trinovantes	Brittonic people and one of the most powerful of the island	Brittonic
Atrebates	Population related to the Belgians (according to the Romans)	Bolg
Durotriges	'Dur' (the steel in Welsh) is a Cymraeg root but 'Trig' is shared (Scythian, Cymraeg)	Cymraeg
Dumnonii	Clear reference to the Scythian population of Fir Domnann	Domnann
Belgae	(Belgians in Latin)	Bolg
Regninses	(Regni or Regini) this population would be affiliated to Atrebates	Bolg
Vectis	Population of Isle of Wight and it was Belgian (according to the Romans)	Bolg
Cantiaci	(Synonym of Cantii) Welsh 'Cant' derives from 'Cannoedd' (one hundred)	Cymraeg

We summarise: Gaelic (12), Cymraeg (7), Bolg (5), Brittonic (4), Domnann (2) and not set (4). The last chapter (*Scythian origin*) gives details of the Bolg and Domnann. Historians sometimes equate the Brittons with the Bretons. The Brittons were piratical between the mainland and the island of Britain. The Romans probably had contact with them before they set foot on the island. It would therefore not be surprising if the Latin name of the island, Brittia, derived from Brittons. The origin of these continental 'pirates' remains untraceable. That said, the last chapter (*Scythian origin*) gives a clue.



A Young Breton Woman (1903)

Artist: Roderic O'Connor (1860–1940). Source: Wikipedia

Brittany

We will skip over the centuries of Roman occupation in Britain. Like all colonial periods, this is of little interest (sic). After the Romans withdrew, the islanders faced a new challenge: the incursions of the Germans. The war lasted for two centuries.

The Cymri will split into two groups. The first will consolidate its historic territory (present-day Wales) and continue the Cymric tradition. The second would cross the Channel and start afresh. In short, the Cymraeg were those who stayed and the Brezhoneg (Bretons) were those who left. That was over fifteen centuries ago. Despite this, today a Breton speaker can easily communicate with a Welsh speaker.

During the two centuries of conflict, Christianity made a remarkable breakthrough on the island. The prestige of the monks had even surpassed that of the Merlin-like 'enchanters'. Note that the inability of the druids to find a solution against the Romans had tainted their reputation. It was therefore monks who guided the Brezhoneg in their new environment: Gallo-Roman Armorica. Several waves of

Origins of the Celts

immigration followed, the first of which took place when the Romans left Armorica in 410 AD.

The first settlers founded Domnonea, in the north-east of the future Britannia Minor (Brittany). 'Domnonea' is a clear reference to the Domnans. In 491, they faced a Frankish army in Blois and the final result (a 'draw') put an end to the ambitions of both protagonists.

The Brezhoneg formed a second wave of immigration in 496. They avoided the territory of the Domnans and settled in southern Armorica. They founded two states: that of Cornouaille (southern Finistère) and that of Broërec (Bro Gwened, Morbihan).

Four years later, on the island of Britain, the islanders won the famous battle of Mount Badon against the Germans. This battle seems to be the event that inspired the island's bards and led to the legend of King Arthur and the Arthurian cycle.

At least a third wave settled in the lands of the present Poher (north-west of the future Brittany). In 540, the name of the Poher ruler was Conomor. The Breton etymology of this name is not convincing. This name refers to Irish names: Conn, Connact, Conairé. In 554, the Poher and the Domnonea conflicted. Finally, the Domnan ruler, Judual, calmed the ardour of Conomor.

A few decades later, the ruler of Broërec, Waroc II, conquered the present-day regions of Nantes (587) and Rennes (594). From this period onwards, Armorica was renamed 'Britannia'.

In 635, the Frankish ruler, Dagobert, established a 'march of Britannia' which delimited the border between Bretons and Franks. He included Nantes and Rennes in the Frankish borders. At that time, Brittany would have been home to only the three original states: Domnonea, Cornouaille and Broërec.

In 753, the Frankish ruler Pepin the Short invaded Britannia. His son, Charlemagne, invaded Britannia three times (786, 799 and 811). The Bretons did

not submit. The third invasion was unbelievably cruel. The Bretons sheltered their families in monasteries and practised guerrilla warfare. Tired of chasing the elusive Bretons, Charlemagne and his two sons looted the monasteries and exterminated monks, women and children.

In 818, Louis the Debonair invaded and occupied Britannia. From 822 to 825, the Bretons rose. In 831, to ease tensions, the Frankish sovereign delegated power to an 'emperor's envoy', the Breton Nominoë (originally from Poher?). Nominoë took up residence in Vannes. In 843, a Frankish incursion was organised in the Vannes region, which seemed to target Nominoë's residence.








In 844, Vikings travelled up the Loire and made an incursion into Nantes. In the same year, Nominoë broke with the Frankish power, brought Nantes back into the Breton fold and secured the city. The following year, it was the battle of Ballon and the Breton victory over the Franks. Three years later, in 848, the Pope of the time, Leo IV, recognised Nominoë's sovereignty over Brittany (which excluded Rennes). In 850, Nominoë conquered the city of Rennes and the following year repelled two Frankish attempts to retake it.

Thirty-fifth heads of State succeeded Nominoë and we present them briefly.










Origins of the Celts

Nominoë	Erispoë Nominoë's son	Salaün (Salomon) Nominoë's nephew	Alan Iañ Salaün's grandson
	He led a successful military campaign against the Franks. He abolished serfdom to repopulate the country		
Karedig CC BY-SA 3.0		Moreau. henri CC BY-SA 3.0	Public domain
Wrmaelon Reigning Prince	Alan II Varvek Alan I's grandson	Drogo Alan II's son	Hoël I Alan II's son
			
	Public domain		
Guerech Alan II's son	Alan Guerech's son	Konan I Count of Rennes	Jafrez I Konan I's son
He went to the Court of the King of West Francia, Lothair to pay homage (he establishes a precedent)		Pact with Richard I of Normandy; [this pact] established firm Breton-Norman links for the first time	
Wikipedia		Wikipedia	Public domain

Origins of the Celts

<p>Alan III Jafrez I's son</p>  <p>Coat-of-arms</p>	<p>Konan II Alan III's son</p>  <p>Coat-of-arms</p>	<p>Hoël II. Alan III's son-in-law</p>  <p>Coat-of-arms</p>	<p>Alan IV Fergant Hoël II's son</p>  <p>Banner, 1st crusade</p>
Chapron-Radenac	Public domain	Joseph Eddie Seay	GwenofGwened CC BY-SA 4.0
<p>Konan III Alan IV's son</p> <p>He abolishes several seigniorial laws disadvantageous to the population</p>	<p>Berthe. Konan III's daughter</p> <p>She was the last member of the Cornouaille House to reign over Brittany</p>	<p>Conan IV Earl of Richmond</p>  <p>Banner</p>	<p>Konstanza Conan IV's daughter</p> <p>Henry II of England invaded Brittany and forced Conan IV into abdicating in Constance's favour</p>
	Wikipedia	GwenofGwened CC BY-SA 3.0	Wikipedia
<p>Jafrez II Konstanza's spouse</p> 	<p>Arthur I Jafrez II's son</p> <p>His father, Geoffrey, was the son of Henry II, England King. In 1190, Arthur was designated heir to the throne of England</p>	<p>Guy of Thouars Konstanza's spouse</p> 	<p>Alis of Thouars Guy's daughter</p>
Public domain	Wikipedia		PtrQs CC BY-SA 4.0

Origins of the Celts

Yann I the Red Alis son	Yann II Yann I's son	Arthur II Yann II's son	Yann III the Good Arthur II's son
	In 1271, he accompanied his brother-in-law, the future Edward I, to the Ninth Crusade, meeting there with Louis IX of France		 Coat-of-arms
PtrQs CC BY-SA 4.0	Wikipedia	Public domain	Public domain
Yann IV Count of Montfort	Yann V ar Fur Yann IV's son	Frañsez I Yann V's son	Pêr II Yann V's son
Son of John of Montfort and Joanna of Flanders. His father claimed the title Duke of Brittany (War of the Breton Succession)			 Coat-of-arms
Wikipedia	Public domain	Public domain	Public domain
Arthur III Yann IV's son	Frañsez II Yann IV's grandson	Anna Breizh Frañsez II's daughter	Claude of France Anna's daughter
Arthur de Richemont. He fought alongside Joan of Arc, and was appointed Constable of France			
Wikipedia	Public domain	Jean Bourdichon (1457–1521)	Public domain

Frañsez II (François II) struggles for keeping the independence of Brittany and will never recover from wounds received during battles. Not fewer than twelve nationalities took part in battles (included Frenchmen in the Breton ranks). His

12-year-old daughter, Anna inherits the throne and she marries two (successive) French sovereigns to avoid any new conflict.

Conclusion

Our foray into the Bretons leads to the conclusion that their involvement in Celtic culture is almost non-existent in antiquity. On the other hand, the Scythians, whom we describe in the next chapter, could lay claim to this culture and to the Druidic religion that frames it.

Scythian origin

Introduction

In 1314, the Battle of Bannockburn gave Scotland its independence. On 6 April 1320, the Scottish ruler, Robert Bruce, and fifty signatories sent a declaration of independence to Pope John XXII. This is the Declaration of Arbroath, written in Latin. And it contains a surprising passage:

‘(...) and ex antiquorum gestis and libris Colligimus quod inter Ceteras naciones egregias nostra scilicet Scottorum NATO multis preconijs fuerit insignita, that from Maiori Schithia per Pool tirenum and Columpnas Herculis (...)’.

In plain English, the signatories speak of ancient achievements and writings that demonstrate that the nation of Scots originated in Scythia Major and came via the Tyrrhenian Sea (part of the Mediterranean) and the Columns of Hercules (Gibraltar).

But why would a northern European nation claim the legacy of an ancient population from the Central Asian steppes?



Buner reliefs Scythian bacchanalian cropped
Author: Dan Diffendale. Source: Wikipedia. [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Scythians

The origin of the Scythians is unknown. They appear in history around 700 BC through documents from ancient Assyria. But it is at least known that they are Indo-Europeans and that they are probably descended from Kurgan or Turanians. And we also know that they had settlements in Egypt and Korea, even if their preferred land was the plains north of the Caucasus and the shores of the Caspian Sea. What is certain is that distances did not frighten them. We even know that one of their branches, the Sogdians, traded with China.

The Scottish elite relied on the oldest story in Europe: the *Lebor Gabála Éirenn*.

‘Lebor Gabála Éirenn (literally “The Book of the Taking of Ireland”), known in English as The Book of Invasions, is a collection of poems and prose narratives in the Irish language intended to be a history of Ireland and the Irish from the creation

Origins of the Celts

of the world to the Middle Ages. There are a number of versions'
Source: Wikipedia.

We have chosen two translators.

Lebor Gabála Éirenn (LGE)	Version	Author	Oldest Manuscript	Translator
Before 8e century	n/a (oral transmission)			
12e	R1	Collective work (30k words)	Book of Leinster (1150)	R. A. Stewart Macalister (1870–1950)
12e?	Min (Míniugud)	Collective (Leinster?)	Three separate texts (R2 subset)	
14e	R2	Collective	Seven separate texts	
14e	R3	Collective	Book of Ballymote (1391)	
17e	K	Micheál Ó Cléirigh (80k words)		Henry Lizeray (1844–1905)

'Macalister was born in Dublin, Ireland, the son of Alexander Macalister, then professor of Zoology, University of Dublin. His father was appointed professor of anatomy at Cambridge in 1883, and he was educated at The Perse School, and then studied at Cambridge University. Although his earliest interest was in the archaeology of Ireland' Source: Wikipedia.

Origins of the Celts

Henry Lizeray continues to be an unknown but he founded the Druidic and National Church in Paris (1885). His direct translation (1884) was the first in the French language.

The difficulty in reading this book is to distinguish the Irish tradition (the original text) and the biblical tradition (the text added by medieval copyists). Because of this addition, it is surprising that historians consider the *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* to be a legend when it describes with great accuracy characters and events from the distant past. Some of these characters have been used in Irish mythology, but the 'Book' (we will use this diminutive term) shows that all the deities involved were, without exception, mere mortals. And when the biblical tradition is subtracted from the text, we are dealing with a book of history.

In the format of the 1884 French translation, the Book is 180 pages long and we will concentrate on pages 8 to 95. These pages describe the 6 major invasions of Ireland. **Medieval copyists changed the original dates to coincide with the biblical calendar.** It is therefore lost. But by cross-referencing events of the Book with historical events, we can deduce that the second invasion took place around 1200 BC. And the most surprising thing is that the populations involved in invasions 2 to 6 have the same common ancestors, namely two Indo-Europeans from the shores of the Caspian Sea: Aitech and his brother Baath. They are therefore the patriarchs of Ireland.

We have tried to restore the original calendar and so far this is what we can offer (at that time, rulers could live long and beget late):

Columns

❖ The Book: event	Event reported in the Book
❖ BC From	Current dating of Egyptology
❖ BC To	Idem
❖ The Book: year	Canonical year in the Book
❖ The Book: generation	Generation deduced from the Book
❖ *	Average nb of years per generation
❖ BC?	Our proposal

Origins of the Celts

The Book: event	BC From	BC To	The Book: year	The Book: generation	*	BC ?
Nel and Scota				Baath, 3th		
Sru (grandson of Nel), contemporary of pharaoh Twosret				Baath, 5th		
Pharaoh Twosret (reign)	1 191	1 189	n/s			
Partholon (landing in Ireland)			2 520	Aitech, 6th		1 260
Nemed (landing in Ireland)			2 850	Aitech, 9th	82.5	930
Fir Bolg (landing in Ireland)			3 226	Aitech, 18th	54.3	554
Tuatha De (landing in Ireland)			3 303	Aitech, 22nd	46.1	477
Galam (father of Erimon), contemporary of pharaoh Nectanebo				Baath, 24th		
Pharaoh Nectanebo I (reign)	379	361	n/s			
Pharaoh Nectanebo II (reign)	358	340	n/s			
Gaedil (Erimon, landing in Ireland)			3 500	Baath, 25th	49.0	280

As the Book will show, the descendants of these patriarchs will influence events in Greece and Spain. And on their way, they will meet Egyptians, Athenians, Philistines, Cruitneacs in the north of Europe, Bracas (?) in Spain, Fomoraig on the island of Britain (now Great Britain), etc. We will ignore the first invasion, whose population was decimated in less than a year due to a disease (or even an epidemic). But before tackling the second invasion, we will describe the background of the ancestors of these 'invaders'.

Origins of the Celts



Caucasus Mountains

Author: Richard Mcall. Source: Pixabay

Nel and Scota

It all starts in the Caucasus where Aitech and Baath are said to have lived. The latter has a grandson, Nel, a Fenni prince (an Indo-European population of the region whose leader is his father, Feinius Farsaid). Nel married one of the daughters of the pharaoh at the time. This girl was called Scota and her name is said to be the etymology of the word Scythian and of the word Scot. But Nel and Scota only travelled between the Caspian and Red Seas and never set foot in Western Europe. It is worth noting that 3,000 years ago, the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea were connected by an arm of the sea that was hazardous to navigation. And this seemed to be linked to the shallow water and the presence of quicksand.

As for Scota, she is said to have met the famous Moses in her homeland. The encounters between Scota and Moses are so realistic that this addition by medieval copyists can be considered a masterpiece. Nel and Scota had a first son, Gaedel Glas, who was nicknamed the Green. His name is said to be the etymology of the term Gael, the people who carried out the last invasion of Ireland. But Gaedel the Green will never see Western Europe, let alone the green of Ireland.

Origins of the Celts

Let's leave Baath's descendants aside for the moment and return to his brother Aitech. If we consider Aitech's generation as the first generation, it is one of his descendants in the 6th generation who will lead the second invasion of Ireland.



Sicily (sea shore)

Author: Marpiclic. Source: Pixabay

Partholon

Partholon is thus of the 6th generation. He lives in Sicily, in a colony of a Scythian population based in Greece. Everything is going well until he and his brother decide to murder their parents to take over. Then he heads to Greece (apparently to be accountable) and stays there for a year. At the end of his stay, he, his wife and his retinue head for Ireland via Aladacia (linked to ancient Dacia), the columns of Hercules (Gibraltar) and Spain.

The journey took two months and twelve days. The year was around 1200 BC. Historians know that at that time, the Phoenicians travelled the Mediterranean and even the Atlantic coast of Europe, and that they had trading posts on the Mediterranean coast of Spain. But the most surprising thing is the maritime mastery of these populations originating from the Central Asian steppes.

The question remains: how did Partholon know about Ireland? In this respect, one may wonder whether Phoenician merchants were not already transporting tin from the ancient Isles of Scilly (British Isles) to the Mediterranean. It is worth

Origins of the Celts

remembering that tin was used in the most important alloy of the time: bronze, an alloy of copper and tin. And tin was less scarce on the shores of the Atlantic than in the Mediterranean basin.

When Partholon set foot in Ireland, the island was deserted and it was necessary to clear the land to develop agriculture. He and his retinue, including three druids (around 1200 BC), roll up their sleeves and after ten years, the result is very successful. And this attracts the attention of a nation based on the neighbouring island of Britain. The members of this nation are called the Fomoraig (Fomoirii). They were not Bretons because the latter landed in Britain eight centuries after.

Apparently, the Fomoraig are not very advanced. They are unable to develop agriculture to the extent that their food is limited to 'fish and birds'. On the other hand, they have skills in building cities and ships and in making weapons. The confrontation between the Partholon retinue (whose number is not specified) and eight hundred Fomoraig is very violent. And no native is spared. It should be remembered that the Scythians were known in antiquity for their fighting skills.

Two hundred years later, the Scythian colony in Ireland will reach nine thousand members. But in a single week, the population would be eradicated by the 'plague'. This 'diagnosis', probably made by medieval copyists, is dubious, for the plague does not eradicate a population in a week. And one cannot rule out the hypothesis of a Fomoraig late revenge by a large-scale poisoning (of drinking water?). And there is no mention of the fact that a colony of nine thousand Scythians is starting to look scary.



Caspian Sea, near Baku

Author: Roya Mehralizade. Source: Pixabay

Nemed

Only 30 years later, a certain Nemed, his spouse Relbeo, daughter of the 'king' of Greece (according to Ó Cléirigh's), and his people set foot on the island of Ireland. Compared to his ancestor Aitech, he is of the 9th generation. But where did Nemed come from? And why Ireland?

Nemed came from Scythia, in which he exercised an authority that is not specified in the Book. His point of departure was the Caspian Sea. At that time it was possible to sail between the Caspian Sea and the Cimmerian (Black) Sea. Nemed's fleet consisted of thirty ships (between one thousand eight hundred and three thousand people). It is said to have strayed into the 'Cod Sea' (the North Atlantic?) to such an extent that it took one and a half years to reach Ireland.

For the rest, the reasons for this departure from Scythia are not specified. As Partholon was Nemed's great-great-uncle, one or more of his ships may have sailed regularly between Ireland and Scythia. In this case, Scythia had not heard from Partholon for 30 years.

Origins of the Celts

Nemed landed in Ireland. The Fomoraig did not occupy the island (probably because of their unsuitability for agriculture). But they occupied a fortified place on a promontory and were led by a certain Conaing, son of a Fomoraig ruler from Britain. So, before clearing plains, Nemed began to build 'raths', circular fortified ditches in the middle of which the Scythians built their habitats.

The confrontation with the Fomoraig is inevitable. Two Fomoraig kings come to Conaing's aid. Despite numerous setbacks, Nemed is almost winning when a 'plague' (strangely reminiscent of the one that exterminated the Partholon population) takes the lives of him and three thousand of his subjects. And the surviving Scythians submit.

Tired of a long servitude (about 160 years), the descendants of the Scythians, whom we will call the **Nemedians** (for ease of reading), send an embassy to the descendants of Nemed's Greek in-laws. And the Greeks are happy to come to the rescue. We can state that we are around 700 BC, several centuries after the Trojan War. And at that time, the Greek warriors may have needed action. So they charter a fleet of three hundred ships and there are thirty thousand of them (...) when they land in Ireland.

Afterwards, there is little suspense, although the Fomoraig put up a good fight. The Greeks sack the Fomoraig's fortified place and the Nemedians return the honours and release them from their obligations. The Greeks set sail again with most (if not all) of the booty. And the Nemedians deal with their dead, who still litter the floor of the ancient fortress of Fomoraig.

But a fleet is pointing out to sea and it is not the Greek fleet but that of the Fomoraig's ruler, More (that is his name). The Nemedians, who have lost many men, find themselves greatly outnumbered and defend the port at all costs to prevent Fomoraig from deploying. But the events do not end there. A violent storm arises and sweeps away the entire Fomoraig fleet (except for More's ship). And it also sweeps away all the men who were fighting on the shore, except for thirty Nemedians. The Book explains that the ruler More was so thirsty for revenge that he did not put his fleet under cover and this forced all the protagonists on the shore to continue the fight.

Origins of the Celts

For the thirty survivors, this is too much. They have paid too heavy a price on this land of Ireland, and they decide to leave it. As the three remaining leaders could not agree on the destination, they split into three groups. The first group will sail to Greece, the second will land on islands in northern Greece and the third will sail to the island of Britain, the land of the Fomoraig. The third group's destination seems reckless (even unconscious) but the destruction of the Fomoraig ruler's fleet could reinforce this bold choice. We can also specify that this group is led by Britan (Britain, Ó Cléirigh's **Breotan**) and Fergus Red-Side, his father, two accomplished warriors.



Young Irish sisters

Author: Pretty Sleepy Art. Source: Pixabay

Fir Bolg

Two hundred years after the departure of the Nemedians, new Scythians set foot on Irish soil. They were the 18th generation of their ancestor, Aitech. They call themselves the Fir Bolg. In their language, Fir means Men and a bolg means a leather bag for carrying soil. According to some historians, the term bolg is the etymology of the Belgian. In this respect, we can recall that the Roman army that occupied the island of Britain much later compiled a list of the island's populations. This list included several Belgian populations (grouped in the south and south-east of the island).

The Fir Bolg are ruled by five brothers, the eldest of whom, Slaine, was Ireland 'first king'. They are descendants of the Nemedians group who left Ireland for Greece. At first they were warmly welcomed by the Greeks, since the exploits of the Greek warriors on the island of Ireland were still fresh in their minds. However, the soaring population of the Nemedians eventually worried the Greek authorities and they decided to enslave the Scythians.

Origins of the Celts

Tired of their servitude, the descendants of these Nemedians escaped from the 'stony' mountains where they were confined to forced labour. They used a stratagem by hiding in leather bags used to evacuate the soil (stones?). Then they eventually reached a place of embarkation. The Book does not give details of the chartering of ships and the sea journey.

Once on the island of Ireland, they divided it into five territories. The Book says little about the Fir Bolg, but it does state that their sovereignty over Ireland was never contested until the arrival of the Tuatha De.

In conclusion, the Fir Bolg were divided into three tribes: the Fir Bolg themselves, the Gailioin and the Fir Domnann. Concerning the Fir Domnann, we can recall that in Roman times, there were Damnonii and Dumnonii tribes on the neighbouring island of Britain.



Imbros gorge

Author: FotoIT. Source: Pixabay

Tuatha De

Eighty years after the arrival of the Fir Bolg, the new conquerors call themselves the Tuatha De. In their language, Tuatha means ‘people’ and De ‘goddesses’. From the ancestor Aitech, they are 22nd generation descendants and are also descendants of the group of Nemedians who left the island of Ireland for the islands of northern Greece.

The Book tells us that these islands were four in number. We may recall that in the northern Aegean Sea there are four islands: Samothrace, Thasos, Imbros and Lemnos. About Samothrace, ancient Greek historians are aware of the religious importance of this island for the Greeks. The Book states that druidism and ‘sciences’ were taught on these islands.

(Ó Cléirigh only) When their ‘studies’ were complete, the Nemedians left the islands with a memento from each island. And these souvenirs became objects of veneration among the ancient Irish. We start with the spear of Lug (Lugad), a god of Irish mythology (a Tuatha De born much later). Then we continue the sword of

Nuadu, another god (another Tuatha De born much later). We continue with the cauldron of Dagda. Dagda was a nickname (or title) borne by Eochaid, a Tuatha De. The latter's nickname was the Great Patriarch (born much later). Contrary to what some historians claim, Dagda was never the name of a character in the Book and even less that of a god. And we end with the famous Stone of Destiny. It has been present at every coronation of the British monarchy for centuries. The Book states that this stone made, in ancient times, a 'noise'. Finally, Destiny refers to the Island of Destiny, an Ireland ancient nickname.

(Ó Cléirigh only) After these Nemedians left these northern Greek islands with their memories, they settled for about 200 years in a territory between the Athéansta (Athenians) and the Félistinéada (Philistines). These two neighbours regularly quarrelled, and the descendants of the Nemedians remained cautious on the sidelines. Until one day, after a terrible battle, the descendants of the Nemedians (the future Tuatha De) healed many of the Athéansta to the point of restoring many of them to health.

The expression 'to health' is a mild euphemism, as this anecdote in the story is surreal. It is best to quote the French translation.

(Ó Cléirigh only, free translation from Lizeray's text) *'They fought with all their strength and the victory was won over the Athéansta, so that all their troops were slaughtered, except for a few. Then the Tuatha De began to heal the Athéansta and by their sorcery (by their druidism) they put demons into the bodies of the slain heroes among the Athéansta, who were still ready for battle and made new provocations. Great was the surprise of the Félistinéada when they saw the men they had killed fighting them again the next day. They informed their Druids of this; the Dean of the Druids gave them his advice and said to them: bring (he said), wooden spears and tree bark to the battle tomorrow, and if you win, place the wooden spears on the necks of the men you will kill tomorrow: if they are demons, a crowd of worms will come upon them. They did so. The Félistinéada triumphed again; they placed wooden spears on the necks of the heroes they killed, and worms came on the heads.'*

No comment. Except one: the medieval copyists added 'by their sorcery' whereas in Greek and Scythian antiquity, sorcerers did not exist. One can speak of a lack of fair play towards druidism.

Obviously, this triggered the anger of the Philistines against the Scythians. And to avoid the massacre, the future Tuatha De fled and wandered and finally reached the north of Albania where they stayed for seven years. Then they decided to head for Ireland and seemed aware that they would have to contend with the Fir Bolg. The Book says nothing about their sea voyage but states that the wife of Nuadu, ruler of the Tuatha De, was called Tailtiu and that she was the daughter of the 'king' of Spain, Mag Mor. This suggests that the Tuatha De had stopped in Spain before heading to Ireland.

Of course, the confrontation with the Fir Bolg raged on and the Tuatha De came out on top with heavy losses. Nuadu even had his hand cut off, so that he could not exercise sovereignty for seven years. The care of Nuadu is so strange that it is best to quote the Book:

'Bress s. Elada took the kingship of Ireland post, to the end of seven years, till the arm of Nuadu was healed: a silver arm with activity in every finger and every joint which Dian Cecht put upon him, Credne helping him. But Miach son of Dian Cecht fixed joint to joint and vein to vein of his own hand, and it was healed in thrice nine days; and on that account his silver hand was given as his guerdon.'

'Vein to vein'? In modern medicine, this is called a prosthesis.

The Fir Bolg were decimated and the survivors took refuge on 'remote' headlands and islands. It is likely that these Fir Bolg refugees or their descendants, faced with the limited resources of the headlands and islands, eventually landed on the island of Britain.

Then the Tuatha De, who were not very combative during their former stay in Greece, fought over the sovereignty of Ireland. The Book describes these disputes in detail, but we will limit ourselves to mentioning characters who have passed into posterity. We begin with Brigit, a goddess of Irish mythology who was a niece of Nuadu. She was a poet, which in her time was a sign of social success. We then move on to a little nephew of Nuadu, Mac Cuill. We continue with Lug, known as the Long Hand. He is a god of Irish mythology. He was the lucky holder of the spear from the islands north of Greece. He was a nephew of Nuadu and ruled Ireland for 40 years. Then he was killed by Mac Cuill who must have been impatient with Lug's longevity.

There remains a point to be clarified: why did Tuatha De reappoint in Tuatha De Danan? Hypotheses do not miss, including the most picturesque. For example, according to one of them, the Tuatha De Danan (or Danann) would be one of the twelve tribes of Israel, that of Dan. However, it was enough to read the Book. Nuadu had a small niece, Danan, and this last had three girls. The religious prestige of his three daughters was such as they were high (in their lifetime) at the rank of goddesses and as they were called Danan. And Tuatha De, people of the goddesses, became the Tuatha De Danan, the people of the goddesses of Danan.

There is still one point to be clarified: why did the Tuatha De rename themselves as Tuatha De Danan? There is no shortage of hypotheses, including the most picturesque. For example, according to one of them, the Tuatha De Danan (or Danann) would be one of the twelve tribes of Israel, that of Dan. However, it was enough to read the Book. Nuadu had a great-niece, Danan, and she had three daughters. The religious prestige of her three daughters was such that they were elevated (during their lifetime) to the rank of goddesses and were called the Danan. And the Tuatha De, people of the goddesses, became the people of the goddesses of Danan.

We shall conclude with a strange passage from the Book. In the nineteenth century, the Irish Academy deleted this passage but Trinity College retained it.

(Ó Cléirigh only, free translation from Lizeray's text) *'Tethor the distinguished who discovered mead, brave was the man. The*

Origins of the Celts

hazel tree was the god of the grandson of the Dagda who was not black, Banba was his wife.'

Let us first identify the characters. Tethor was a brother of Mac Cuill and had the nickname 'Son of the Hazel Tree', because he worshipped this tree (...) Eochu, nicknamed the Dagda, was Tethor's grandfather. And now we come to the most surprising term: the Dagda was not 'black'. Black of skin? It wouldn't be so surprising, because according to the Book, the Scythians had settlements south of the Red Sea and these settlements had good relations (even marriage ties) with the Egyptian elite and its pharaohs. And historians know that some pharaohs and dignitaries were black.

Origins of the Celts



Ireland (countryside)

Author: Bayawe. Source: Pixabay

Gaedil

We end up with the Gaedil, better known as Gaels. This was also a Scythian population, but unlike the others, they were not descended from the ancestor Aitech but from his brother Baath. We are talking about the 25th generation from that of Baath. They are descendants of a long dynasty of Scythian rulers, going back to the ruler Nenual, brother of Nel, whose history we have already mentioned.

They are less gifted in 'science' than the Tuatha De but they are fearsome warriors. We begin with the 300 years before their arrival in the land of Ireland. The story starts with the 12th generation and more specifically, with two sons of a Scythian ruler: Allot and Lamfhind. When the story begins, they are on the Caspian Sea, then sail to the Libyan Sea and land on a 'pleasant' island called Cercina (Kerkennah Islands, Tunisia). They stayed there for a little over a year.

When they were on the Caspian Sea, they were confronted with 'mermaids'. The Book considers these creatures as 'beasts' but their description is worth a look:

(Ó Cléirigh only, free translation from Lizeray's text) *'They had above the navel a prodigiously beautiful woman's body, a gorgeous woman's face, and, on their heads, blond hair that fell lower than their shoulders ...; fish they were from the navel to the tip.'*

But there is a less attractive element: they were carnivores.

After this journey, their druid, Caicher, makes a prophecy: the Gaels will reach the island of Ireland in ... 300 years. After their relatively short stay on the island of Cercina, they settled in the country of the Macotic Marshes (?), whose sovereignty they consolidated until the 21st generation. Then the Gaels set sail again. Their leader at the time was called Brat. They settled in Spain and fought against the Toisions (Greeks?), the Bachra (?) and the Lombards. The presence of the Lombards, originally from Scandinavia, in Spain at this time is surprising. On the other hand, the presence of Greeks would be less surprising: they had supplanted the Phoenicians in Spain. Then the Book states that the next generation of Gaels subdued 'all the clans of Spain' (which is probably an exaggeration).

This generation (the 22nd), conquerors of Spain, with the ruler Bregon at its head, built their capital and named it Brigantia. It is easy to identify where this Brigantia is, because when the Romans invaded Spain, they renovated an old city and gave it the name of Brigantium (present-day A Coruña). The 23rd and 24th generations were uninterested in Ireland (and even seemed to have forgotten its existence). One of the leaders of the 24th generation, Galam, decided to make a voyage to Scythia, the land of his ancestors, which he had never visited. His fleet consisted of forty ships (between two thousand four hundred and four thousand people). He sailed beyond the maritime limits of Galian (the name of the country of the Gaels in Spain?), via the columns of Hercules (Gibraltar) and Sicily.

In Scythia, Galam was so well received that he became the son-in-law of the Scythian ruler of the time, Refloir. But Galam became so popular that Refloir took offence and challenged him to a duel. A duel that proved fatal for the ruler. As a

result, the Scythian dignitaries banished Galam. He had to abandon his wife but was allowed to take his two sons with him. And the Gaels set sail again with their ships.

Direction... Egypt. The pharaoh of the time, Nectanebo (Lizeray's Nectonibus), received him warmly. It must be said that Galam was a descendant of the Scythian Nel who had married Scota, the daughter of an ancient pharaoh. Galam received land and even the hand of one of the daughters of Nectanebo. In memory of the ancient Scota, the Gaels gave Galam's wife the same name: Scota. After a stay of unspecified length, Galam decided to return to Spain and took Scota with him.

Before reaching Spain, he stayed with the Macotic Marshes. It is known that the Gaels had secured sovereignty over these Marshes, but the Book does not give details of the native population.

Finally, having followed (or taken back up) the Rhine, followed Gaul (Gaul), etc. Galam is back in the Marshes and decides to go back to Spain. He discovers Brigantia, a city which is not any more at the hands of Gaels. He dispels the population of the city and takes back the control of the region. Of course, Bracas and Lombards try again. And they have new allies: Chartered them out (Friesians?) Galam wins all battles and restores the sovereignty of Gaels. And the population, as a sign of recognition, will call him Galam Miledh. According to Lizeray, Miledh would have a signification identical to Latin 'militis' (serviceman). Historians use the nickname Miledh (or derivatives as Mil or Milesius) for the name Galam.

Finally, after having travelled along (or up) the Rhine, along Gaul, etc., Galam returns to the Marshes and decides to return to Spain. There he discovers a city of Brigantia which is no longer in the Gaels hands. He drives the population out of the city and regains control of the region. Of course, the Bracas and the Lombards come back. And they have new allies: the 'Frétions' (Friesians?). Galam wins all the battles and re-establishes the sovereignty of the Gaels. His people, as a sign of gratitude, will call him Galam Miledh. According to Lizeray, Miledh would have an identical meaning to the Latin 'militis' (military person). Historians use the nickname Miledh (or derivatives such as Mil or Milesius) for the name Galam.

Origins of the Celts

The last two sons of Galam were born in Spain and were called Erimon (Ó Cléirigh's **Ereamon**) and Erannan. Then Galam died of the 'plague' and so never set foot on Irish soil. The Book states that the Gaels had so lost sight of Ireland that it will take a sign of fate for the three-century-old prophecy of the druid Caicher to be fulfilled. During a 'clear winter', a great-uncle of Erimon, Brega, thought he saw 'a country and a beautiful island'. It is certain that the site of La Coruña is at the same latitude as the island of Ireland, but it is still a little far. On the strength of this vision, Brega prepares a fleet, even if relatives try to dissuade him.

Finally, Brega will set foot on Irish soil but the Tuatha De chiefs will not spare him. And it is to avenge his great-uncle that Erimon/Ereamon will land in Ireland. He never set foot in Spain again and became King of Ireland. It is said that the name of present-day Ireland, Eire, derives from the prefix of his first name: 'Ere'. But the suffix 'amon' also attracts attention. Amon was the god of the city of Thebes in Egypt and Erimon's mother was called Scota, the Egyptian.

To conclude, given that the ancient language of the Irish and Scots is Gaelic, what would be the fundamental difference between the Irish and the Scots? There are several clues in the Book that suggest that some present-day Scottish clans originated from ancient Tuatha De clans.

Conclusion

Through these five invasions of Ireland, some questions arise about certain nations of ancient Europe. For example, during his journey through Europe, why did Galam Miledh not come across any German or Celts? Historians do not rule out the fact that German may be descendants of Scythians. But did they come from the East (the continent) or the West (the British Isles)?

It is remembered that after the last battle between the Nemedians and the Fomorai, there were thirty survivors. Then, they divided themselves into three groups, specifying that one of the three took the direction of the island of Britain (Great Britain). The Book mentions (twice) the names of the thirty but without specifying their distribution in the three groups. But after mentioning the leader of the first group, Eriol, three names follow. Then after mentioning the leader of the second group, Britan, fifteen names follow. Finally, after naming the leader of the third group, Simeon, there are nine names left. The Book states that each group consisted of ten people but this is not consistent with the way the sequence of leaders and names is presented.

The group we are interested in is the Britan group which will be heading for the island of Britain. In this group, we find a member called German. As the populations of the time used to name themselves after a common ancestor, we can wonder if German is the ancestor of the German. In the same vein, the name of the Britons, an ancient population of the northern coast of the European continent, could be a reference to Britan. These Britons should not be confused with the Bretons.

Historians know that the Celts are descendants of Cimmerians from the Black Sea. They are also Indo-Europeans, but they did not have relations with the Scythians. The Greek historian Herodotus mentions them in his book at a time in their history when the Scythians were about to overwhelm them (we are around 600 BC). And they make the decision to migrate westwards up the Danube. Herodotus describes the debate among the Cimmerians between those who wanted to stay and those who wanted to leave. Today, historians know that they settled first on the territory of present-day Romania and then on the Danube Plain.

Origins of the Celts

Finally, a third wave of Cimmerians emigrated even further west to the territory between the Paris Basin and the Alps. And these third wave Cimmerians called themselves the Kelti (Celts). It should be remembered that for the Romans, the Celts were one of the three populations of Gaul. The other two were the Belgians and the Aquitanians (Basques).

That said, everything indicates that Galam did not go to the Danube Plain and the German-Polish plain. And that he only went along Gaul. At that time, the population density of the Celts must not have been high. And the Germanen were not necessarily deployed in the German-Polish plain. For example, geologists know that this plain was still below sea level 10,000 years ago. And we can assume that it was still swampy 2,500 years ago. Moreover, during Galam's journey, the Book mentions the great northern ocean, and if it is the North Sea, we could deduce that this sea was larger than today.



Author: Julien Tromeur. Source: Pixabay

Epilogue

Let us say that we are Scythian Gaels around 600 BC. We come from Gaelic colonies in the Mediterranean region. We go up the Rhone (through Provence) and then settle. Later, according to Herodotus, merchants from the Greek colony of Massilia visit us on our territory. They did not understand our language but we wanted to mark our territory: 'this is the home of the Gaels'. In 600 BC, how can we say that in Gaelic?

Origins of the Celts

English word	Language	Word	Pronunciation
Gael	Old Gaelic (Old Irish)	Goídel	Like <i>gwidel</i>
	Scottish Gaelic	Gàidheil	Like <i>kail</i> with a long <i>ai</i>
	Irish Gaelic	Gaeil	Like <i>goail</i>
House	Old Gaelic (Old Irish)	teg	
	Scottish Gaelic	taigh	Like <i>taye</i>
	Irish Gaelic	teach	Like <i>tiare</i>

So there are three possibilities: Goídel teg, Gàidheil taigh (pronounced 'kail taye') or Gaeil teach. When we hear a new language, the tones are never familiar. In ancient Greek, the pronunciation of Keltoi is 'kail tial', which is very close to the pronunciation of Gàidheil taigh. In other words, the etymology of Celt could be based on a ... misunderstanding.

Table of Contents

Eurasian origin	1
Introduction	1
Indo-European	3
Population Genetics	5
Y Chromosome.....	6
Mitochondrial Eve.....	9
Review	11
Linguistics	12
Cimmerians	14
Conclusion	17
Breton origin.....	18
Introduction	18
Between 4000 and 3000 BC.....	19
Between 3000 and 2000 BC.....	20
Between 2000 and 1000 BC	21
Between 1000 and 750 BC.....	22
Between 750 and 500 BC.....	22
Herodotus.....	24
Kymry	28
Owen Jones	30
Britain.....	35
Brittany.....	39
Conclusion	45
Scythian origin.....	46
Introduction	46
Scythians.....	47
Nel and Scota.....	51
Partholon.....	53
Nemed	55
Fir Bolg	58

Origins of the Celts

Tuatha De	60
Gaedil.....	65
Conclusion	69
Epilogue	71