

The Classical Celts : What the Greeks and Romans Wrote About the Celts

By Bruce R. Linnell, PhD

2005

Authors included in this work

<i>Homer</i>	<u>Caesar</u>	<u>Aulus Gellius</u>
<i>Aristeas</i>	Timagenes	Maximus of Tyre
Hecataeus	Dionysius	Galen
<i>(Massiliote Periplus)</i>	<u>Diodorus</u>	Clement of Alexandria
<i>Pindar</i>	Catullus	Tertullian
<i>Himilco</i>	Virgil	<u>Dio Cassius</u>
Herodotus	<u>Strabo</u>	Oppian
Thucydides	Nicolas of Damascus	Ulpian
<i>Hellanicus</i>	Livy	Aelian
Xenophon	Propertius	Philostratus
Plato	Ovid	Hippolytus
Pseudo-Scylax	Trogon	Origen of Alexandria
Ephorus	Velleius	Solinus
Aristotle (and Pseudo-'s 1&2)	Valerius Maximus	Athenaeus
Theopompus	Pliny the Elder	Diogenes
Pytheas	Silius Italicus	Iamblichus
Cleitarchus	Frontinus	Ausonius
Ptolemy I	Mela	Himerius
<i>Hecataeus of Abdera</i>	Lucan	Ammianus
Timaeus	Demetrius	Julian the Apostate
Sopater	Josephus	Julius Obsequens
Apollonius	Martial	Eutropius
Eratosthenes	Dion Chrysostom	(<i>Historia Augusta</i>)
Phylarchus	Suetonius	Avienus
(Greek Anthology)	Plutarch	Severus
Cato	Tacitus	Jerome
Sotion	Juvenal	Claudian
Polybius	Florus	Orosius
Pseudo-Aristotle #3	Arrian	Cyril
Nicander	Ptolemy	Sidonius
Pseudo-Scymnus	Appian	Constantius
Posidonius	Polyaenus	Zosimus
Polyhistor	Pausanias	
Cicero	Lucian of Samosata	

Key : *nothing Celtic*; [needs work](#); a little material; some material; **more material**; **lots of material**

(Apologies for the lack of links – when searching, preface the name with “: ”, such as “: Strabo”)

The Classical Celts © 2015 Bruce R. Linnell. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0). You are free to download this work and share it with others as long as I retain credit for the work. You can change or build on this work as long as you use the same license, but you cannot use it commercially (that is, for your profit).

Introduction

My goal was to find everything the ancient Greeks and Romans wrote about the Celts (the people, their attitudes and culture) and Gaul, Britain, etc. (their lands). I was not interested in anything dealing with Roman activity (especially wars) in Gaul, Britain, etc. Nor was I particularly searching for information about Celtiberians (in Spain) or the Celts in Asia Minor, but if I ran across something interesting about them, I included it.

My original intention was to provide the actual text, so that the reader could see exactly what was said (within the limitations of the translation). But copyright issues forced me to just provide the exact references (book, chapter, section, line, etc.) and summaries of what was said. **Please note, I am only interested in what the ancient authors actually said, not about the accuracy of what they said.**

I would call this a “semi-scholarly” work – I did not use the internet, I spent many, many dozens of hours at libraries, and have a file drawer full of photocopies of translations of the ancient authors’ works! I also have computer files with all the relevant material (the exact quotes) that all the summaries came from.

I did my best to avoid interpreting the author’s statements, except to equate ancient names of towns, rivers, mountain, etc. to their modern counterparts. If a historian refers to events before his time, no dates are given unless the ancient author himself provides that information; factual errors made by the author are not corrected, etc. Nor did I provide any cross-referencing between similar statements made by different authors.

But, I’m not that concerned with the authors’ biographies – just enough information is given to put their comments in context, and all the places lived and the “When” dates are very approximate.

Nor am I concerned about how much one author may have quoted another. If an ancient author does not clearly state where he got his material from, the quote stays with the author who wrote it. There is also the question of when one author is quoting another as to where the quote ends – I have used my own discretion in that matter.

Please note that all claims of “so-and-so was the first author to say such-and-such” are with respect to only the authors and references included in this work!

Every author gets a “header” of common information, filled in to the best of my knowledge :

Author : multiple spellings are given; the first name given is always used in this document

When : entries are in chronological order, as best as possible

Culture : how he grew up provides information about his bias and “hand” (below)

Lived : provides information about his bias and “hand”; the first place is where he was born

Occupation : poets tended to make stuff up, historians probably *tried* to be factual, etc.

Hand : First = traveled to or interacted with Celts personally

Second = had access to someone who traveled to or interacted with Celts personally

Third = collected information from books

Bias : if the author is known to be biased in any way, it is listed – fiction, Christian, pro-Rome, etc.

The “Comments” section often refers to words or terms from the original source, often but not always shown in the Summary. It is provided for clarification for anyone who reads the original sources.

“Galatia” can refer to the Celtic lands in central Asia Minor around modern Ankara, but unfortunately some ancient authors use “Galatian” to refer to the Gauls in western Europe. I will call the former “Asia Minor Gauls”. Also, the name of the British Celtic woman who started a revolt against the Romans in 60 AD will be spelled “Boudicca” altho other spellings include Boudica, Boadicea, Boudicea, Buduica, Boudouika, etc.

Blue text indicates claims about what the ancient author says that I could not confirm, or when I could not find any of the author’s sources, etc. Basically it indicates things that need to be “filled in”.

Green text indicates modern claims about what the ancient author says that I believe are erroneous.

Unfortunately I did not have enough time to finish this project. In addition to the authors that I could not find (and Caesar and Orosius which I did not have time to process), I would in retrospect have formatted the entire document differently. I think it would have been better to give each reference (“20.4.2”) in the Summary along with what it specifically said, so that anyone interested in tracking down the original source would know immediately where to look. I *might* also include the original translations in this document if they were out-of-copyright, but that would make the document much longer, and often the original statements are overly verbose.

If anyone would like to take up the mantle and finish this document, please do so! Just perhaps use a different font for added material, and please include my name as well in the final version.

Cimmerians, Hyperboreans, the Cimbri, and the Germans

The earliest Greek and Roman authors often refer to Hyperboreans and Cimmerians. Some modern authors consider these to be possible references to Celts.

“Hyperboreans” were originally a mythical, sacred race who were often associated with the god Apollo. They dwelt at the ends of the earth (the word “Hyperborean” means “beyond the north wind”), and lived long lives in peace with themselves and their neighbors. Their legends are later intermingled with British, northern Celtic, and Germanic cultures by ancient authors.

The name “Cimmerian” has many meanings. To the earliest ancient Greeks, they were a mysterious race who lived in mist and darkness at the ends of the earth, but later Greek authors clearly describe the movements of a group of people they called Cimmerian. Archaeologically, these Cimmerians can (barely) be traced back as far as 1200 BC, where they lived in the southern steppes of Russia. By 700 BC, they had migrated to the Black Sea, where they interacted (in other words, fought) with many of the peoples there, but they apparently disappeared from the historical record by about 500 BC. There are many impossible-to-prove modern-day claims about the Cimmerians, such as they were originally the lost tribes of Israel, or they became the ruling class that formed the Celtic Hallstatt culture.

The tribe of the Cimbri first appear around 113 BC, when they began wandering all over Gaul, Spain, and Italy, looking for a place to settle. They joined with the Teutones, Helvetii, and Tiguri tribes to become a powerful fighting force, but were ultimately wiped out by the Romans in 101 BC. While both the Cimbri and Teutones were Germanic (the Cimbri possibly originated from Denmark), their tribal names have Celtic root words, many of their chiefs had Celtic names, and the few words of their language that we know have Celtic roots as well. So it is likely that the Cimbri and Teutones were very “Celtish”.

The Cimmerians and Cimbri were often confused by ancient writers. While some authors tried to distinguish between them, and sometimes justify a connection between the two groups (due to the similarity of their names), others simply used the terms interchangeably, or said that “Cimmeri” was merely an archaic Greek word used to describe the Cimbri.

To Rome, “Germany” included parts of modern-day Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, the Netherlands, and northern France and Belgium. Roman writers often confused Celtic and German tribes in the regions near the Celtic/German border. As mentioned already with the Cimbri and Teutones, many of the tribes labeled as German by Roman writers had Celtic names and ways of life that were very similar to that of the Celts. As with the Cimmerians and Cimbri, some authors tried to distinguish between them, while others were not so careful.

References to the Hyperboreans, Cimmerians, Cimbri and Germans are included here because of their possible connection with the Celts. The earliest quotes about the Hyperboreans and Cimmerians (which are most likely not about the Celts) are included only to show how the associations developed.

Abaris

Abaris is a mythical figure mentioned by many ancient authors, including Herodotus, Plato, Hecataeus, Diodorus, and possibly Pindar, Posidonius and/or Strabo ([unconfirmed claims](#)), all of whom say he was a Hyperborean. Lucian mentions him in passing (but not by name), Iamblichus calls him a “Scythian priest of Hyperborean Apollo”, and Diogenes and Himerius might also talk about him ([could not confirm](#)).

He is tracked because [there are modern authors that claim some of the ancient authors say he is a Druid, but I have not been able to find any ancient sources that say this.](#)

Thule

First mentioned by Pytheas around 325 BC as an island north of Britain, the name “Thule” came to represent the northwest boundary of the known world. Alternate spellings include “Thoule”, “Thyle”, and “Tyle”.

Thule has been variously identified by both ancient and modern authors as the Orkney Islands, the Shetland Islands, Norway, or Iceland.

Although there are no obvious direct connections between Thule and the Celts, it is often mentioned while discussing Celtic lands, especially Britain and Ireland.

Author : Homer

When : 8th-7th centuries BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : A Greek colony in Asia Minor (Turkey)

Occupation : Poet

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Fiction

“Homer” is the name given to the poet who probably wrote the Illiad and the Odyssey, and is considered one of the greatest classical poets. While it is possible that many different storytellers created these works, or that he was merely the first to write down existing stories, most modern scholars believe that there was a single person who contributed a great deal of original material to these works, although there is still some debate as to whether the Illiad and Odyssy were written by different people.

References : “The Odyssey”, 11.14

Source : Translated by Samuel Butler, 1900.

Comments : Oceanus was “the stream that encircles the earth”, which means they were at the end of the known world. Interestingly, it was a North wind that blew them there, so they were sailing south.

Summary : Homer describes the Cimmerians as being at the edge of the known world, where they “live enshrouded in mist and darkness which the rays of the sun never pierce”, living in “one long melancholy night”.

Author : Aristeas

When : 7th century BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Proconnesus (Greek island)

Occupation : Poet

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Not much is known about Aristeas, whose life was given mythical qualities by many ancient authors after him. He wrote an epic travel poem, “Arimaspeia” or “Arimaspea”, which has been lost.

References : Herodotus (at least 240 years later), “Histories”, 4.13, 4.16

Sources : See Herodotus below. “Aristeas of Proconnesus”, by J.D.P. Bolton, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1962.

Comments : The “Southern Sea” is probably the Indian Ocean, but might be the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf.

The Scythians populated the lands north and east of the Black Sea, which is where the Cimmerians were driven from (according to Aristeas). The Issedonians were possibly located in the region around Lake Balkhash in modern-day eastern Kazakhstan, and may be early Huns, while the Arimaspians might be early Mongols.

Aristeas is the first Greek to mention Hyperboreans, and he apparently places them in the far east (according to Bolton).

Summary : The races mentioned by Aristeas are arranged geographically (from nearest to farthest from Greece) as : Southern Sea-Cimmerians-Scythians-Issedonians-Arimaspians-Hyperboreans-Sea

He says the Hyperboreans were living in peace with their neighbors, and the Cimmerians were driven from their home on the Southern Sea by the Scythians.

Author : Hecataeus, Hecataeus of Miletus, Hecateus

When : Born 560-540 BC, died 490-475 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Asia Minor (Turkey); Egypt; Persia; Scythia; southern Spain?

Occupation : Geographer, travel writer, historian

Hand : Second?

Bias : Unknown

Called the “father of geography”, Hecataeus was the first geographer who tried to locate places by using compass headings and constellations, and one of the first writers who wanted to distinguish between myth and historical fact, although he accepts what Homer and other ancient poets said as truth. Unfortunately, he is often confused with Hecataeus of Abdera (below) by both ancient and modern authors.

One of his works was “Periodos Ges”, which is variously translated as “Trip Around the World”, “Tour of the World”, “Travels Around the Earth”, or “Journey Round the World”. In its two volumes (one on Europe and one on Asia), he not only described the geography, but the origins and histories of the places he visited, as well as local customs and anecdotes. While he is said to have travelled extensively to collect his material, we can only confirm that he visited Egypt in the late 6th century BC.

Periodos Ges has only survived as some 350 fragments, and the majority of these are merely brief descriptions or simply names. The work included a map as well, which has been lost, but modern reconstructions have been made.

References : Stephan of Byzantium (about 1000 years later), "Ethnica", [unknown chapter and lines](#)

Because they are so hard to find, the original Greek fragments are given here :

"Narbon emporion kai polis Keltica" (Jacoby FrGrH 1F.54, Muller FHG Hecat. 19)

"Massalia polis tas Ligustikas kata tan Keltican" (Jacoby FrGrH 1F.55, Muller FHG Hecat. 22)

"Nurax polis Keltika" (Jacoby FrGrH 1F.56, Muller FHG Hecat. 21)

Sources : "Stephanos Byzantini Ethnikon", edited by A. Meineke, an unchanged reprint of the edition : Berlin, 1849; Ares Publishers, Chicago Illinois, 1942 (p. 435, 18-19; p. 469, 10-14; p. 479, 5). L. Pearson, "Herodotus on the Source of the Danube", Classical Philology, 19, 328-337, 1934.

Comments : Ethnica clearly references Hecataeus' "Europe" when it discusses Massalia and Nyrax, but not for Narbo. According to Pearson, the Ethnica says it is quoting Strabo, and then adds that Hecataeus called its inhabitants "Narbaioi" or "Narbaious".

Hecataeus is the first author to mention the Celts by that name (assuming that ALL the subsequent authors and transcribers quoted him correctly).

Massalia is modern Marseille, and Narbo is probably Narbonne, a south-west French seaport. The location of Nyrax is unknown, but might have been in Austria.

Summary : according to Hecataeus, Narbo is a trading center ("emporion") and town ("polis") of the Celts ("Keltica"), Massalia is a town in the land of the Ligurians, near ("kata") the land of the Celts ("Keltican"), and Nyrax is a town of the Celts ("Keltika").

Thus the Celts seem to be well established in southern Gaul (and possibly as far north-east as Austria) by around 500 BC.

Author : Unknown

When : Around 525-500 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Massalia (Marseille, France)

Occupation : Unknown

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

The "Massiliote Periplus" was a sailing manual, now lost, written in the Greek port of Massalia, and described the coastline from northern Spain to Massalia, and probably included information about Brittany, Britain, and possibly Ireland.

It was used by Avienus (below) as a basic framework for his "Ora Maratima", upon which he embellished. Because it is difficult to extract what might have been the original Periplus from his work, the relevant quotes are given in Himilco and Avienus. This entry is used to show its actual chronological place.

Author : Pindar

When : Born 522-518 BC, died 446-438 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Boecia (Greece); Athens; Sicily; Thebes (Egypt)

Occupation : Poet

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Fiction

Considered by many to be the greatest lyric Greek poet, 45 of Pindar's odes survive complete, and there are fragments of many others.

References : "Pythian Odes", 10.25-10.45; "Olympian Odes", 3.15-3.20

Source : "The Odes of Pindar", translated by Sir John Sandys, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1915.

Comments : The Ister river is the Danube.

Pindar is the first author to explicitly place the Hyperboreans in a specific region of the known world. His placement of them at the source of the Danube is the first association of the Hyperboreans with the lands of the Celts.

There are claims that Pindar mentions Abaris, but no such reference could be found.

Summary : Hyperboreans are described by Pindar as an ancient, sacred people, who worship Apollo and live without illness, old age, or strife. In his "Pythian Odes", Pindar says they live in a place which cannot be reached "by ships nor by land", but in "Olympian Odes", he seems to indicate they are associated with the source of the Danube.

Author : Himilco

When : 6th-5th century BC

Culture : Phoenician

Lived : Carthage; Iberia; Gaul; Britain?

Occupation : Navigator

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

In search of tin, Himilco sailed thru the Straits of Gibraltar, and then turned north and probably explored the western coasts of Spain, Portugal, and France. It is possible he may have even visited Britain. His works are unfortunately lost, and none of the remaining fragments directly discuss the Celts, but he is mentioned here because he very likely interacted with them first-hand.

References : Pliny the Elder (about 600 years later), "Natural History", 2.47.169; from Avienus (about 1000 years later), "Ora Maritima", lines 114-129, 380-389, 406-416

Sources : see Pliny the Elder and Avienus below.

Comments :

Summary : Himilco reports that the Atlantic is difficult to sail thru, and is full of monsters.

Author : Herodotus

When : Born 490-480 BC, died 429-424 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Western Turkey; Greece; Italy; Egypt; Africa

Occupation : Historian

Hand : First and second

Bias : Unknown

Called the "Father of History", his work is considered one of the most accurate and trustworthy (relatively speaking) of the earliest ancient historians, often saying whether he got his information first- or second-hand,

and how reliable he thought it was. He travelled in Egypt, Africa, Asia Minor, and eastern Europe collecting his information.

References : “Histories”, 1.6, 1.15, 1.16, 1.103, 2.33, 3.115, 4.1, 4.11, 4.12, 4.32-4.36, 4.49

Source : “Herodotus’ Histories”, translated by G.C. Macaulay, MacMillan and Company, London, 1890.

Comments : Herodotus is the first author (whose *original* works we still have) to use the word “Celt” (Keltoi), and to mention the western “tin islands”. He is also the first to mention Abaris.

The Ister river is the Danube, the Euxine is the Black Sea, Istria is in northeast Italy, the “northern sea” is the Baltic Sea, and the Pillars of Hercules are the Straits of Gibraltar.

The Eridanus river has been linked to the Po river in Italy (but it does not empty into a northern sea), the Danube (note the common root “danu” with the Celtic name Danubius), but it also does not empty into a northern sea, the Nile, or as the world-encompassing Oceanus of the early Greeks.

The location of Pyrene and the identity of the Cynesians are unknown.

Summary : Herodotus speaks of a Celtic town Pyrene at the source of the Danube river, which is in modern-day Germany. He mentions Celts as living beyond the Straits of Gibraltar, but east of the westernmost Cynesians, which is presumably referring to some part of Spain, or Celtiberia. He also mentions, but says he cannot confirm the existence of, the western islands from which tin is imported.

The Cimmerians “had rule over Asia”, but were driven from their homes by the Scythians, and travelled to Sardis (Turkey) and Media (northwest Iran). He says that there are many things in the land of Scythia (north coast of the Black Sea) named Cimmerian.

The people of Delos (an Aegean island) claim that the Hyperboreans make sacred offerings to them, which travel thru many lands to reach them. Herodotus also describes Abaris as a Hyperborean, travelling all over the world, carrying an arrow and needing no food.

Author : Thucydides

When : Born 471-450 BC, died 400-399 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Greece (Athens,Thrace,Peloponnesia); Sicily?

Occupation : Historian

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

Witnessing the Peloponnesian war first-hand, Thucydides eventually became a general in the Greek army, but was banished for 20 years for failing to save an important colony during the war. In his “Peloponnesian Wars”, he says he tried to confirm his claims and avoid “the fabulous”.

References : “The Peloponnesian Wars”, 6.18, 6.20

Source : “History of the Peloponnesian War”, translated by Richard Crawley, 1874.

Comments : whether the Iberians Thucydides refers to were Celtic or not is unknown, but considering Herodotus’ comments above, it is possible.

Summary : Thucydides claims that Sicily was originally settled by Iberians driven from their homes by Ligurians.

The Greeks were hiring Iberian mercenaries in the 5th century BC, who are described as the most warlike barbarians known.

Author : Hellenicus, Hellenicus of Lesbos, Hellanikos

When : Around 450-400 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Lesbos (island between Turkey and Greece)

Occupation : Historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Seeking to reconstruct a complete and more accurate chronicle of Greek history, Hellenicus broke from the methods used by historians before him, and tried to date events in the past in a more scientific manner. Ironically, because of this, he is considered untrustworthy by later ancient historians.

References : from Clement of Alexandria (about 625 years later), "Miscellanies" 1.15

Sources : see Clement of Alexandria below.

Comments : the Rhiphaean mountains are the mythical northern boundary of the known world.

In his "Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race" (1911), Thomas Rolleston apparently decided that this clear reference to Hyperboreans was a reference to the Celts and described it as such, which has since been often quoted on the web as actually being a description of the Celts.

Summary : Hellenicus describes the Hyperboreans as being vegetarians, and a just people, even though they seem to practice a form of genocide against the elderly.

Author : Xenophon

When : Born 444-425 BC, died 355-359 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Athens; Persia; Sparta

Occupation : Historian, soldier

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

A student of Socrates and a general in the Greek army, Xenophon wrote many works on topics ranging from history, philosophy, hunting, and warfare.

References : "Hellenica" Book 7, Chapter 1

Source : "The Works of Xenophon", translated by H. G. Dakyns, in "The Greek Historians", edited by F.R.B. Godolphin, 1942.

Comments : it is unknown whether the Iberians were Celtic or not, but considering Herodotus' comments above, it is possible. It is also unclear whether the cavalry was Celtic, but it is also possible that they were.

Summary : according to Xenophon, Celtic and Iberian mercenaries were being used by the Greeks around 400 BC. He also describes in some detail the tactics of some cavalry which *might* be Celtic.

Author : Plato

When : Born 429-427 BC, died 347 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Athens

Occupation : Philosopher, mathematician

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

A student of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle, Plato is considered to be one of the greatest western philosophers of all time.

References : "Laws" 1.637 d-e; "Temperance" 158 b-c

Source : "Plato's Laws", translated by Benjamin Jowett, 1871.

Comments :

Summary : Plato describes the Celts and Iberians as drunken and warlike.

He also describes Abaris as an Hyperborean who makes magical charms.

Author : Pseudo-Scylax, Scylax, Skylax, Skulax

When : Around 400-350 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived :

Occupation : Sailor

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Scylax of Caryanda was a Greek mariner in the early 6th century BC who travelled down the Indus river, then westward along the Arabian coast, and finally north up the Red Sea. A description of his voyage ("periplus") was written, but has been lost.

Pseudo-Scylax is the name given to the author of an existing periplus in Greek which describes the Mediterranean coastline from the Straits of Gibraltar, across Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Arabia, Egypt, and then back across northern Africa. It was probably written in the latter half of the 4th century BC, and whether it contains any information from the original Scylax's voyage is debatable.

References : "Periplus" 18

Source : "The Periplus of Pseudo-Skylax : An Interim Translation", by Graham Shipley, 2002.

Comments : from the entries before and after the one of interest, it can be determined that Pseudo-Scylax is describing northeastern Italy, around the Po river.

Summary : Pseudo-Scylax says there are Celts ("Keltoi") living in northern Italy.

Author : Ephorus, Ephoros

When : Born 408-400 BC, died 350-330 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Asia Minor (Turkey)

Occupation : Historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Not much is known about Ephorus' life, and only fragments of his 30 book "Universal History" survive, quoted by many later writers. He apparently tried to differentiate between history and myth, although not always successfully.

References : from Strabo (about 350 years later), "Geography", 1.2.28, 5.4.5, 4.4.6, 6.2.4, 7.2.1, 7.3.15; from Josephus (about 440 years later), "Against Apion", 1.12

Sources : see Strabo and Josephus, below.

Comments : Gades is modern-day Cadiz in southern Spain, near the Straights of Gibraltar. Avernus is west of Naples, Italy.

Strabo says that after about 350 years, many of the things Ephorus said about the Celts is no longer true.

The lines that immediately follow the explicit Ephorus reference in Strabo 4.4.6 are often included as belonging to Ephorus (discussing how the Celts try not to grow fat), but they seem to better belong with Strabo.

There is some question as to whether Scymnus used Ephorus, or whether they both used a common source. See Scymnus below for a quote about relationships between the Celts and the Greeks which is often attributed to Ephorus. **In particular, Thomas Rolleston in "Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race" (1911) apparently attributed the reference about the Celts following the customs of the Greeks, who they are friendly with, to Ephorus, even tho it is attributed to Scymnus by other modern authors. This reference has been quoted by many people on the web since.**

There are also references to a comment by Ephorus that the Celts ("Keltoi") always walked about armed. This may possibly be from Nicolas of Damascus (below, Fragment 105?), but I could not confirm this.

Summary : Ephorus describes the Celts as one of the four great "uncivilized" peoples of the known world, and says they occupy western Europe. He also says they occupy Spain as far west as the Straits of Gibraltar (but apparently lived all in one city there), and that they are fond of the Greeks.

He claims that the Iberians first settled Sicily, and that some coastal Celts allow the tides to destroy their homes as "training in the virtue of fearlessness".

He also describes the Cimmerians as living near a volcanic lake west of Naples Italy, in underground houses connected by tunnels, and who have an oracle that many people come to visit.

=====
Author : Aristotle

When : Born 384 BC, died 322 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Greece

Occupation : Philosopher

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

A student of Plato, Aristotle is one of the great western philosophers, commenting on matters of government, nature, mathematics, ethics, and science.

References : “Meteorology”, 1.13; “Nicomachean Ethics”, 3.7; “On the Generation of Animals”, 2.8; “Politics”, 2.9, 7.2, 7.7, 7.17; “Eudemian Ethics”, 3.1.26; “On the Universe”, 393b; “On Marvellous Things Heard”, 50, 85, 86; from Athenaeus (about 550 years later), “Deipnosophistae”, 13.576 a-b; from Plutarch (about 440 years later), “Parallel Lives, Camillus”, 22.3

Sources : “On Marvellous Things Heard”, translated by W.S. Hett, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1936. The remaining quotes are from “The Works of Aristotle”, W.D. Ross editor, Clarendon Press, Oxford : “Meteorology” : translated by E. W. Webster, 1923; “Nicomachean Ethics” : translated by W.D. Ross, 1925; “On the Generation of Animals” : translated by Arthur Platt, 1910; “Politics” : translated by Benjamin Jowett, 1921; “Eudemian Ethics” : translated by J. Solomon, 1915; “On the Universe” : translated by E.S. Forster, 1914.

Also see Athenaeus and Plutarch below.

Comments : “On the Universe” is generally considered to have been written by someone other than Aristotle (“Pseudo-Aristotle #1”), and so its true date is unknown. But it may have been translated to Latin by Apuleius in the second century AD, so it was likely written between 300 BC and 100 AD.

“On Marvellous Things Heard” is also attributed to someone other than Aristotle (“Pseudo-Aristotle #2”).

There are apparently lost works where Aristotle discusses the constitutions of several city-states, and there is no reason to assume that the one mentioned by Athenaeus was not actually written by Aristotle, but it can’t be proved one way or the other.

The Massilian king Nannus is described by Trogus (below) as the king of the Segobrigii, a Celtic and/or Ligurian tribe.

The Pyrenees mountains stretch between France and Spain, and Massilia is modern-day Marseille. The Istrus river is the Danube, the Tartessus river is probably in southern Spain, the Euxine is the Black Sea, and Phocaea was located in the western end of Turkey, near modern-day Izmir. The Gallic Gulf is today’s Gulf of Lyons.

Summary : Aristotle identifies the Pyrenees as being in the land of the Celts, and mentions Celts living in cold lands “beyond Iberia”.

He describes the Celts as being “mad or insensible” because they fear neither earthquakes nor the waves. He claims they are not brave merely because they “endure formidable things” since their passion makes them ignore the “greatness of the danger” they face, such as when they “take arms and march against the waves”.

He says the Celts “openly approve of male love”, hold military power in esteem, and expose their children to cold weather while wearing only light clothing in order to accustom them to the cold. He describes the Iberians as “warlike”, and says their graves are marked with the number of men they have slain.

He describes tribes living in the cold parts of Europe (presumably including the Celts) as “full of spirit, but wanting in intelligence,” and having “no political organization.”

He says that Marseille was founded when Euxenus the Phocaeen married the daughter of the king of the local Celtic and/or Ligurian tribe.

Pseudo-Aristotle #1 names Albion and Irene as the British Isles, lying outside the Straits of Gibraltar, “beyond the land of the Celts”.

Pseudo-Aristotle #2 mentions Celtic tin, a road thru Celtic lands which is made safe for passage by the locals, and a swift-acting Celtic herbal poison.

Author : Theopompus, Theopompus of Chios

When : Born 388-378 BC, died 323-305 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Chios/Chius (Greek island); Athens

Occupation : Historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Theopompus was a friend of both Alexander the Great and his father, which caused him some problems with his fellow Greeks. He was the most prolific historian of the 4th century BC, but only fragments remain of his works.

References : From Pliny the Elder (about 300 years later), “Natural History”, 3.5.57; from Athenaeus (about 550 years later), “Deipnosophistae”, 10.443b-10.443c

Sources : see Pliny the Elder and Athenaeus below.

Comments : [Theopompus also apparently says that Drilonius is a major city of the Celts \(FHG F202?\), but I could not confirm this.](#)

Summary : Theopompus was apparently one of the first authors to mention the taking of Rome by the Celts, and also related a story where the Celts use an opponent’s fondness for food against them with an herbal poison.

Author : Pytheas

When : Late 4th century BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Massalia (Marseille, France)

Occupation : Navigator (mathematician and astronomer)

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

Around 330-300 BC, Pytheas followed the European coast from Spain northward to Gaul, and then westward to Britain. There he circumnavigated the island and travelled across it, spending some time learning about the Celts’ way of life, and studied the mining and processing of tin. He then apparently sailed so far north that he witnessed the arctic midnight sun, pack-ice, and icebergs.

His text, “On the Ocean” has been lost, but was quoted at length by Strabo, Polybius, Pliny the Elder, Timaeus, and Diodorus, along with another dozen ancient authors. Unfortunately, his accounts are treated with scorn by many of them, due to the “unbelievable” tales he told of a congealed sea, blocks of ice bigger than his ship, and a sun that never sets.

References : from Strabo (about 300 years later), “Geography” 1.4.2-1.4.5, 2.1.18, 2.4.1-2.4.2, 2.5.8, 3.2.11, 4.2.1, 4.4.1, 4.5.5, 7.3.1; from Pliny the Elder (about 360 years later), “Natural History” 2.75.186-2.75.187, 2.94.217, 4.14.102, 4.16.104, 37.11.35-37.11.36; from Stephen of Byzantium (about 825 years later), “Ethnika” [sections unknown](#)

Sources : The Ethnika quote comes from “Stephanos Byzantini Ethnikon”, edited by A. Meineke, an unchanged reprint of the edition : Berlin, 1849, Ares Publishers, Chicago Illinois, 1942 (p. 712, 21). “Pytheas of Massalia, ‘On the Ocean’”, by C.R. Roseman, Ares Publishers, Chicago IL, 1994. Also see Strabo and Pliny the Elder, below.

Comments : Pytheas is the first author to give any detailed information about Britain, the first to mention Thule, and the first to distinguish the Germans from the Celts.

Massilia is modern-day Marseille, France; Gades is modern Cadiz, Spain (near the Straights of Gibraltar); the Tanais river is the Don river in Russia (runs between Moscow and the Caspian Sea); and the Liger river is the Loire. The identity of the Metunois estuary and the island of Abalus, like that of Thule, is open to speculation. The “land of the Ostimioi” is probably Brittany, but other interpretations do exist. No other references to the Ostiones, Ostidaioi, Ostiaioi, or Kossinoi exist.

Although Pytheas is not explicitly mentioned in Pliny 4.16.104, all of the information in that passage has been ascribed to him elsewhere, and was included by Roseman as a reference to Pytheas.

Summary : Pytheas claims to have “travelled over the whole of Britain that was accessible”, “visited the whole coast-line of Europe” from Gadiz, Spain as far as the Don river in Russia, and says he had “explored in person the whole northern region of Europe as far as the ends of the world”.

He gives the length of Britain as more than 2300 miles and its circumference 4550 miles (Strabo 2.4.1) or 4480 miles (Pliny 4.14.102). These estimates are off by less than 10 percent!

He says that an island called Thule (where the days and nights are six months long) lies six days’ sail north of Britain, and that the Congealed Sea (which he attempts to describe as a mixture of earth and sea and vapor) lies a day’s sail from Thule.

He describes in some detail the diet of those who live “close to the frozen zone” (Strabo 4.5.5), but it is unclear whether he is describing Britain or Thule (or both, or possibly even somewhere else).

He claims that it is easier to get to “Celtica” by going thru the northerly parts of Iberia than by ocean, and names the Ostimii as one of their tribes.

He apparently described Brittany, Germany, and Scythia (the region north of the Black Sea), and gave several latitude measurements of the places he had been.

=====
Author : Cleitarchus, Cleitarchus of Alexandria
When : Flourished 310-300 BC
Culture : Greek
Lived : Alexandria, Babylon
Occupation : Historian
Hand : Unknown
Bias : Unknown

Cleitarchus wrote a “History of Alexander”, which was very popular in its day, but is now lost.

References : from Strabo (about 280 years later), “Geography”, 7.2.1

Source : see Strabo below.

Comments : Cleitarchus is apparently the first author to mention the Cimbri by that name.

Summary : Cleitarchus appears to offer a somewhat bizarre explanation as to why the Cimbri started to migrate across Europe – their homeland was inundated by the sea.

=====

Author : Ptolemy I, Ptolemy Soter I, Ptolemy

When : Born 367 BC, died 284-283 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Alexandria

Occupation : General, king

Hand : Possibly first

Bias : Unknown

A general in Alexander the Great's army, he became the first Grecian king of Egypt, founding the Ptolemaic Dynasty which was to rule Egypt for 250 years. He also started the famous Library of Alexandria, but nothing remains of his own writings today.

References : from Strabo (about 300 years later), "Geography", 7.3.8; from Arrian (about 460 years later), "Anabasis of Alexander", 1.4.6-1.4.8

Source : see Strabo and Arrian below.

Comments : while Arrian doesn't name his source, it is widely believed that he drew heavily on Ptolemy I's lost text.

The Ister river is the Danube.

Summary : when the Celts come to acknowledge Alexander, they tell him while they value his friendship, the ONLY thing they fear is that the heavens may fall.

=====

Author : Hecataeus of Abdera, Hecataeus, Hecateus

When : Flourished 350-300 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Egypt, Syria

Occupation : Historian, philosopher, grammarian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Fiction (with respect to Hyperboreans)

Not much is known about his origins, but Hecataeus apparently accompanied Ptolemy I to Syria and Egypt, and wrote two volumes on the history of Egypt and the Jews. He also wrote a *fictional* account of the Hyperboreans, with enough geographical and astronomical detail to sound authentic. While his works are lost, he is quoted by many later authors.

Unfortunately, not only is his account of Hyperborea taken as fact even today by some, he is often confused by both ancient and modern writers with Hecataeus of Miletus, above.

References : From Diodorus (about 250 years later), "Historical Library", 2.47.1-2.47.6; from Aelian (about 575 years later), "On Animals", 11.1

Sources : See Diodorus and Aelian below.

Comments : Hecataeus is the first author to place the Hyperboreans in the ocean "beyond the land of the Celts", thus beginning their association with Britain.

The cithara is a kind of harp.

There are possibly many other things that Hecataeus says about Hyperboreans, but I could not confirm any such references.

Summary : Hecataeus identified the home of the Hyperboreans as an island in the north Atlantic, and Abaris as a Hyperborean. The land is so fertile that that they can harvest crops twice a year, and the Hyperboreans continuously worship Apollo in song, along with some amazing swans.

Author : Timaeus, Timaeus of Tauromenion, Timaios

When : Born 356-345 BC, died 270-250 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Sicily; Athens

Occupation : Historian

Hand : Third

Bias : Unknown

Son of the ruler of his home town, Timaeus was banished to Athens by a subsequent ruler for 50 years, where he wrote a 38-book history of his native land, which is lost. By his own admission, Timaeus merely studied earlier authors rather than travelling to the lands he described, although he was most likely living in Athens when the Celts raided Delphi, less than 100 miles away. While Timaeus apparently consulted all available earlier authorities, he was definitely not impartial. Not to be confused with Timaeus of Locri (or Locris), a 5th century BC astronomer.

References : from Polybius (about 150 years later), "Histories", Book 12, 28a.3; from Diodorus (about 250 years later), "Historical Library", 4.56.3-4.56.4; from Strabo (about 290 years later), "Geographies" 4.1.8; from Pliny the Elder (about 360 years later), "Natural History", 4.16.104

Sources : see Polybius, Diodorus, Strabo, and Pliny the Elder below.

Comments : the mention in Polybius of a "tradition handed down from ancient times" has been *inferred* by many as a reference to Druids, but Timaeus makes no clear reference to Druids by name, nor even to a group of people who kept the tradition, as far as I could find.

An osier is a branch of a willow tree.

Pontus is on the southeastern shore of the Black Sea.

There are references to Timaeus saying that the Celts are descended from a giant named Keltos, or from the union of a Cyclops named Polyphemus and a nymph named Galatea, but I could not find this.

Clement is claimed as quoting Timaeus about the Celts, but I could not find anything definitive.

Summary : Timaeus says that the Celts have a tradition "handed down from ancient times" that some of their gods appeared from the ocean. He says that the mouth of the Rhone river (in Celtic territory) has five mouths, and describes an island named Mictis from which the Britons get their tin.

Author : Sopater, Sopater of Paphos

When : Around 340-260 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Cyprus

Occupation : Playwright

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Fiction

According to Athenaeus, Sopater was a writer of parodies who lived during the time of Alexander (356-323 BC) and the second Ptolemaic king of Egypt (282-246 BC).

References : from Athenaeus (about 500 years later), “Deipnosophistae”, 4.160e

Source : see Athenaeus below.

Comments :

Summary : according to Sopater, the Celts have a reputation for sacrificing captives taken in battle to their gods if they are victorious.

Author : Apollonius, Apollonius of Rhodes, Apollonius Rhodius, Apollonios

When : Born 300-260 BC, died 247-190 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Alexandria, Rhodes

Occupation : Poet

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Fiction

Apollonius became the head of the Alexandrian Library, and royal tutor to one of the Ptolemy's. His only surviving work, “Argonautica”, is an epic poem about the Argonauts in the style of Homer.

References : “Argonautica”, Book 1:lines 669-685; Book 4:lines 592-658

Source : “Apollonius Rhodius : Argonautica”, R.C. Seaton, Harvard University Press, 1912.

Comments : the Eridanus river has been linked to the Po river in Italy, the Danube (note the common root “danu” with the Celtic word Danubius), or as the world-encompassing Oceanus of the early Greeks.

Summary : Apollonius says that the Celts believe that amber comes from the tears of Apollo. He also says that Apollo (the sun) travelled from Lycia (which was in the far east, in modern Turkey), to Hyperborea, so he seems to locate Hyperborea in the far west.

Author : Eratosthenes

When : Born 276-275 BC, died 196-194 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Cyrene, Libya (North Africa); Alexandria

Occupation : Geographer, historian

Hand : Third

Bias : Unknown

Appointed the third head librarian of the Library at Alexandria, Eratosthenes was recognized as a leading scholar of his day in areas of mathematics, geography, astronomy, and geometry. He made the first estimate of the size of the earth by measuring the lengths of shadows of sticks at noon in two different cities. His works are lost, and are only quoted by later authors.

References : from Strabo (about 215 years later), “Geography”, 1.4.4, 2.1.41, 2.42, 2.4.4, 3.2.11

Source : see Strabo below.

Comments : Gades is modern-day Cadiz in southern Spain, near the Straights of Gibraltar. The Sacred Cape is Cape Ortegal at the northern-most tip of Spain. The Borysthenes river is modern-day Dniro in the Ukraine. Pontus is on the southeastern shore of the Black Sea.

If Thule is Iceland, then Eratosthenes' north/south distance from the mouth of the Dniro to Thule is off by less than 10 percent!

There are references to Eratosthenes saying that the Celts were widespread across western and trans-alpine Europe, and that the Celts in Iberia have become more prolific and/or powerful than they were a couple hundred years before his time, but I could not confirm these.

Summary : Eratosthenes claims that the Gauls occupy all of Spain east of the Straights of Gibraltar, and that it is easier to cross the Pyrenees to get to Celtica than to cross the ocean. He also says that Thule is approximately 1270 miles north of the mouth of the Dniro river.

Author : Phylarchus

When : Around 250-210 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Greece

Occupation : Historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Not much is known about Phylarchus, except that he wrote a 28-book history covering the years 272 to 220 BC which has been lost, but was quoted by many later authors.

References : From Athenaeus (about 430 years later), "Deipnosophistae", 4.150d-4.150f

Source : see Athenaeus below.

Comments : an osier is a branch of a willow tree.

Summary : Phylarchus briefly describes the Celts' manner of eating, with loaves of bread and pieces of meat cooked in a cauldron, and that everyone waits for the king to eat first. He also describes in detail how a rich Celt named Ariamnes hosted a huge feast in his entire domain for a whole year.

Author : Unknown

When : Varies

Culture : Greek

Lived : Unknown

Occupation : Unknown

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

The "Greek Anthology" is a collection of more than 6000 short poems of various authors from the 7th century BC to the 10th century AD. It is arbitrarily placed here due to the 9/125 reference's dating.

References : Book 7, Epigram 492 (by Anyte of Mitylene, possibly around 280 BC); Book 9, Epigram 125 (anonymous, possibly around 200 BC); Book 9, Epigram 368 (by the emperor Julian, around 360 AD); Book 11, Epigram 424 (by Piso, around 50 AD)

Source : "The Greek Anthology", W.R. Paton, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1983.

Comments : Paton comments that 11/424 must be referring to the nature of the Gallic people, since there were no Greek myths which say the Furies came from Gaul.

Summary : one poet describes a Celtic ritual whereby the father of a newborn washes his child in the Rhine river to determine if he is its father, and another calls Gaul the home of the Furies, “destroyers of men”. Yet a third tells how three maidens died rather than submit to the ravages of the Gauls, and Julian comments that the Celts did not cultivate grapes.

=====
Author : **Cato**, Cato the Elder, Marcus Porcius Cato, Cato the Censor

When : Born 234 BC, died 149-144 BC

Culture : Roman

Lived : Italy

Occupation : Writer, orator, lawyer, politician

Hand : probably first

Bias : Unknown

An influential man in early Rome, Cato wrote 150 speeches, in which he discussed medicine, agriculture, law, rhetoric and military science. Except for a discourse on agriculture, most of his works are lost, but he was quoted by many later ancient authors. He very likely fought Gauls in several campaigns all across Europe, including Spain. Apparently all his works have been lost, and are only referenced by other authors.

References : from Pliny the Elder (about 240 years later), “Natural History” 3.15.116, 3.17.124, 3.19.130; from Plutarch (about 275 years later), “Parallel Lives” ([unknown section numbers](#)), “Life of Marcus Cato” ([unknown section numbers](#)); from Aulus Gellius (about 340 years later), “Attic Nights” 2.22.27-2.22.29; from Ammianus (about 550 years later), “Roman History” 15.12

Sources : see Pliny the Elder, Plutarch, Aulus Gellius, and Ammianus below.

Comments : [I found many modern references to statements by Cato about the Celts that could not be confirmed.](#)

The following are fragments I could not find reliable translations for, nor work and section references by reliable academics; the numbers index the *Historicorum Romanorum Fragmenta* (as far as I know).

#33 : The Libui tribe cut ice with axes.

#34 : The greater part of Gaul pursues two things with great industriousness, the art of war and speaking with eloquence.

#35 : *Some unidentifiable reference to or about Gaul.*

#36 : *Possibly refers to or briefly tells the story of their invasion into Italy and the sack of Rome.*

#39 : The Insubres import 3000 or 4000 hams a year into Italy. [The translation is debatable.]

#85 : The Alps are the wall of Italy, and the Gauls had breeched it.

Summary : Cato claims that the Celts’ continual drunkenness produces a “voluntary kind of madness”. He says the Boii were made up of 112 tribes, and that Navara was a village belonging to the Ligurians. He also says that the Veneti are descended from the Trojans, and the Cenomani lived near Marseille, and names the Libui and Insubres tribes. Cato himself hired Celtiberian mercenaries to quell other Spanish barbarians by force. He also confirms a story that a Roman named Lucius executed a Gallic prisoner, evidently a deserter, at a feast. He says that there are great iron and silver mines in Spain, and a great mountain of salt.

Regarding the temperament of the Celts themselves, he says that the greater part of Gaul pursues two things with great industriousness : the art of war and speaking with eloquence.

=====

Author : Sotion, Sotion of Alexandria, Soton

When : Flourished 200-170 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Alexandria

Occupation : Philosopher

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Very little is known about Sotion, except from references by those who quote him.

A description of Druids by Sotion is referenced by Diogenes Laertius about 415 years later, but because the details of his comments are impossible to determine from the reference, it is given in Diogenes, below. Sotion is given an entry here to show his place in chronological order.

Sotion and/or Pseudo-Aristotle #3 (below) are apparently the first authors to clearly mention Druids, although it is unknown if they actually called them by that name.

Author : Polybius

When : Born 204-200 BC, died 122-118 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Greece, Rome, Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain

Occupation : Politician

Hand : First and second

Bias : Pro-Roman

An influential Greek politician, Polybius was deported by Rome to Rome due to his desire to keep Greece independent of Rome. Of his 40 book universal history, only the first five are completely intact, but there are many fragments of the rest, known from quotes by other authors. According to Polybius himself, he sailed in the Atlantic, and visited Africa, Spain, Gaul and Britain. While he is now generally considered cautious and impartial, he was definitely biased towards Rome.

References : “Universal History” – it is hard to give specific references for Polybius, because he devotes the majority of at least four books to Romans dealing with Celts : book 2 goes into great detail about early Rome’s wars with its immediate neighbors, usually the Celts (mostly 2.18-2.35); book 3 describes Hannibal’s march on Rome going thru Celtic territories and recruiting them (mostly 3.34-3.79); book 21 describes wars against the Asia Minor Gauls; and book 35 describes the Celtiberian wars. What is important may vary from reader to reader, but the specific references that follow point out the items given in the Summary : 1.6.1, 1.17.3, 1.77.1, 1.80.1, 2.5.-2.7, 2.15.8-2.15.9, 2.17.3-2.18.4, 2.18.9-2.19.4, 2.19.9-2.19.11, 2.21.5, 2.22, 2.23.2-2.23.3, 2.28.7-2.28.8, 2.29.5-2.29.8, 2.30.3-2.30.4, 2.30.8, 2.31.5, 2.32.7-2.32.8, 2.33.2-2.33.3, 2.34.10, 3.3.5, 3.17.2, 3.34, 3.37, 3.40.10, 3.62, 3.69, 3.71, 3.79, 4.45-4.46, 5.53.3, 5.77.2, 5.78.1, 8.22.1, 9.34.9, 9.30.3, 18.37.9, 18.41.7, 21.38.1-21.38.7, 22.21, 34.6

Source : Polybius, “Universal History”, translated by W.R. Paton, Loeb Classical Library, 1922-1927. Note : 21.38.1-21.38.7 is said to come from Plutarch, The Virtuous Deeds of Women 22 and Livy 38.24.2; 22.21 from Suidonius; and 34.6 from Athenaeus 8.332a.

Comments : Polybius apparently uses “Celt” and “Gaul” interchangeably. The Trebia river in Italy is now spelled Trebbia. Asia Minor is modern-day Turkey.

Summary : in his introduction, Diodorus mentions the Gauls occupying Rome, being defeated at Delphi, and entering Asia Minor; he refers to early Rome’s struggles with “Italian Celts” and to the Carthaginians hiring Celtic and Iberian mercenaries. He names Autaritus as a leader of the Gauls, and in 1.80.1 has him give a

moving speech as to why they should *not* continue a war since they already have enough spoils. Later on, Polybius names Atis and Galatus as local tribal kings, Concolitanus and Aneroëstus as kings of the Gaesatae, and Cavarus as a king of the Thracian Gauls.

He gives several examples, and then just comments on, how the Celts have a reputation for betraying those who hire them. He specifically names the region just north of the Alps as “Transalpine Gaul”.

He names the Celtic tribes near Rome, from east to west, as the Laevi, Lebecii, Insubres (the largest of all), Cenomani and Veneti (who were Roman allies in one war), Anares, Boii (also very large), Lingones, and the Senones. He says the Veneti differ slightly from the other Gauls in clothing, customs and language. Other tribes he names in various books include the Taurini, Taurisci, and Agones tribes (but does not clearly name them as Celtic). He does however identify the Rhigosages and the Aegosagae as Gallic tribes, and says that Mediolanum is the chief town in the territory of the Insubres.

He says that they all live in unwallled villages, without much furniture, sleeping on beds of leaves. They eat lots of meat, but are very occupied with only war and agriculture, having no knowledge of arts or sciences. Their main possessions were only cattle and gold, so they could remain easily mobile. But they treated friendship with the greatest importance, and those who were the most powerful had the largest number of “attendants and associates”.

At one point, the northern Italian Celts made a peace treaty with the Romans, but when other Celtic tribes further north threatened to invade their own lands, they incited the other tribes to attack Rome, and even joined in. But afterwards, they had a falling out over the division of the spoils, destroying each other and the spoils. Diodorus says this happens quite often with the Gauls, due to their drunkenness and excesses.

Another time, when Rome sent emissaries to the Senones for the return of prisoners, the emissaries were “treacherously slain”, so Rome attacked and drove them completely out of their homeland.

He says that the Gauls living in the Alps and near the Rhone are called “Gaesatae” because they are mercenaries, which is what the name means.

During one battle, the Insubres and Boii wore their trousers and light cloaks, but the Gaesatae stood naked and without weapons in front of the Roman army, wearing only golden torcs and armlets. Diodorus speculates that they did this because they thought that the brambles on the battlefield would catch on their clothes and weapons. The Romans were terrified of this sight, as all the men were finely built, and in the prime of their life. The Celts also made a dreadful din with their horns and trumpets, and everyone was shouting war-cries and gesturing at the Romans.

Diodorus notes that the Gaulish shield does not cover the whole body, and their swords can only cut and not stab. He also says that when the Celts feel distressed and ineffectual in combat, they are likely to either rush the enemy uselessly sacrificing their lives, or retreat thus throwing more of their comrades into disorder. He adds that as a whole they are very formidable and spirited in their first attack, but since their swords bend easily, they are less effectual unless given time to straighten them.

Twice he refers to the “lawless violence” of the Gauls, and says Celts inhabit the Alps and the area south of them as well as the lands near the Narbo river and beyond it as far as the Pyrenees mountains, and between the Trebia and the Po rivers. He also makes a clear distinction between Iberia and Celtiberia.

Once, when three Romans requested a parley with the Boii, the Celts agreed to the meeting but then took the Romans prisoners in order to get back their own men from the Romans.

At one point, he says that Hannibal had some Gaulish “suits of armor” that a king might wear when about to engage in single combat.

Polybius says that the Celts were fond of ambushing enemies while hiding in thick woods, and that they were “soft” and tried to avoid physical labor as much as possible.

He mentions a group of Gauls in Asia Minor led by Comontorius, and refers to the attack on Delphi led by Brennus. He calls the Asia Minor Gauls the most formidable and warlike nation of its time.

He says that a group of Gallic warriors considered an eclipse of the moon a bad omen.

He tells a story of the Asiatic Gauls in which Chiomara, the wife of Ortiagon was captured and raped by her Roman captor. Upon payment of her ransom, she signaled to one of the Gauls to kill her captor, after which she cut his head off and took it with her back to her husband. When he saw what she had done he said “Ah! My wife, it is good to keep faith”, to which she replied “Yes, but it is better still that only one man who has lain with me should remain alive”. Polybius says he met her, and admired her spiritedness and intelligence. He describes her husband as generous and magnanimous, charming and intelligent in conversation, and brave and skilled in the art of war, which Polybius says is the most important thing among the Gauls.

He says that the plain from the Pyrenees mountains to the Narbo river have Celtic towns called Illeberis and Rhoscynus after rivers which run near them.

Author : Pseudo-Aristotle #3

When : 2nd century BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Unknown

Occupation : Unknown

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Aristotle is the name given to the author who wrote “Magicus”, which was probably written in the 2nd century BC, so he cannot be the 4th century BC philosopher. Other than that, little is known about him.

A description of Druids by this “Aristotle” is referenced by Diogenes Laertius about 380 years later, but because the details of “Aristotle”’s comments are impossible to determine from the reference, it is given in Diogenes, below. Pseudo-Aristotle #3 is given an entry here to show his place in chronological order.

Pseudo-Aristotle #3 and/or Sotion (above) are apparently the first authors to clearly mention Druids, although it is unknown if they actually called them by that name.

Author : Nicander, Nicander of Colophon

When : Probably 2nd century BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Colophon, Asia Minor (Turkey)

Occupation : Botanist, physician, poet

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Not much is known about Nicander, and most of his writings have been lost. While it is debated whether he wrote original works or simply copied earlier authors, he seemed to value writing good verse over accurately quoting his sources.

References : from Tertullian (about 350 years later), “A Treatise on the Soul” 57.10

Source : see Tertullian below.

Comments :

Summary : Nicander says that the Celts (“Celtas”) would spend the night near the graves of their “brave chieftains” in order to have prophetic dreams.

Author : Pseudo-Scymnus

When : Probably around 100 BC

Culture : Unknown

Lived : Unknown

Occupation : Unknown

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Pseudo-Scymnus is the name given to the author of an incomplete periplus which describes the coasts of the northern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. It is dedicated to “King Nicomedes”, who is probably Nicomedes III of Bithynia (ruled 127-94 BC), and so possibly dates to the early 1st century BC.

References : “Periplus”, lines 164-168, 183-187, 188-195, 399-400

Sources : the paraphrased quotes come from E.H. Bunbury, “A History of Ancient Geography Among the Greeks and Romans from the Earliest Ages till the Fall of the Roman Empire”, London, 1883. Lines 183-187 come from “The Celtic Heroic Age”, edited by J.T. Koch with J. Carey, Celtic Studies Publications, Malden Massachusetts, 1995.

Comments : Gades is modern-day Cadiz, Spain, and Tartessus probably refers to the south-eastern portion of Spain.

Lines 183-187 are often attributed to Ephorus (above). There is some question as to whether Scymnus used Ephorus, or whether they both used a common source. However, since Scymnus doesn’t name his sources, the statements are left here.

Summary : Pseudo-Scymnus says the Celts inhabit western Europe from south-eastern Spain to southern Germany, and as far east as Austria. He also says they are very friendly with the Greeks, and have adapted many of their customs. He says the Celts use music at public assemblies for its “soothing effects”, and that Spain produces gold, tin, and brass.

Author : Posidonius, Poseidonius, Poseidonios

When : Born 135 BC, died 51-50 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Syria; Athens, Greece; Rhodes, Greece; Turkey; Rome; southern Spain, southern Gaul, Africa

Occupation : Historian, philosopher, scientist, politician

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

Posidonius travelled widely in the western Mediterranean, and was head of the Stoic school of philosophy in Rhodes, where he also became a prominent political figure. He wrote many works on astronomy, mathematics, weather, ethics, military tactics, geography, and geology, and is said to have travelled in Gaul and Iberia. While all of his works have been lost, he was quoted extensively by many later authors.

References : from Strabo (about 75 years later), “Geography”, 2.3.6, 3.2.9, 3.4.13, 3.4.15, 4.1.13, 4.1.14, 4.4.4, 4.4.6, 7.2.2, 13.1.67; from Athenaeus (about 300 years later), “Deipnosophistae”, 4.151e-4.152f, 4.153e, 4.154b-4.154c, 6.233d-e, 6.234a-c, 6.246c-6.246d; from Priscianus Lydus (about 640 years later), “Solutiones ad Chosroem”, 6; from “Scholia in Apollonium Rhodium” (about 1300 years later), 2.675

Sources : see Athenaeus and Strabo below. The quotes from “Scholia in Apollonium Rhodium” and “Solutiones ad Chosroem” are taken from “Posidonius Book III : The Translation of the Fragments”, by I.G. Kidd, 1999.

Comments : Massilia is modern Marseille, France, Tolosa is Toulouse, France, and the Liger River is the Loire.

It is unclear in some passages exactly how much information came from Posidonius.

[There is a claim that Posidonius says that the Celts commonly walk about armed, which may be an inference from Athenaeus 4.154b-4.154c, which says that the Celts assemble for dinner armed.](#)

Summary : Posidonius points out the similarity of the eastern Cimmeri’s and the western Cimbri’s names, and speculates about a connection. While he agrees with the notion that the Cimbri started to migrate because of a fast-flooding sea, he refutes the story that a Roman general returned from Toulouse with some of the original booty the Celts stole from Delphi. He claims the Helvetii joined forces with the Cimbri when the Helvetii saw how much loot could be had from raiding.

He says that the lands of the Celts are rich in gold and silver, which they deposit as treasures in lakes and elsewhere because they were “god-fearing and not extravagant in their ways”. He saw first-hand how the Celts hang the heads of their enemies from their horses, and nail them to the entrances of their homes.

He describes at length how the Celts eat together : they eat sitting on the ground at low wooden tables, with bread and lots of meat, boiled or broiled. They are neat, but have ferocious appetites, and cut their meat with special dinner knives. They dine in a circle, but the highest ranking of them sits in the middle. He describes their shields as oblong.

He says that in earlier times the warriors often fought to the death or performed a ritual suicide. He also says their social rank is determined by their “skill in war, or family connections, or wealth”. He describes a huge feast given by Lovernius, and calls bards “poets who recite praises in song”.

He tells of priestesses on an island some small distance out from the mouth of the Loire who perform a ritual killing of one of their own each year, but he does not call them Celtic.

He also claims that the Hyperboreans used to live in the Italian Alps, which would make them Celtic.

=====
Author : Polyhistor, Alexander Polyhistor, Lucius Cornelius Alexander Polyhistor

When : Born 105-100 BC, died 40-35 BC

Culture : Greek

Lived : Asia Minor; Rome

Occupation : Historian, philosopher, geographer

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Alexander Polyhistor was a Greek scholar taken as a Roman slave-of-war, who then became a Roman citizen when he was released. Only fragments remain of his extensive writings on history, geography, the Jews, and philosophy.

References : from Clement of Alexandria (about 250 years later), “Miscellanies”, 1.15

Sources : see Clement of Alexandria below.

Comments : Polyhistor is the first author to link Pythagoras with the Celts, although he does not name Druids explicitly.

[It is claimed that Polyhistor is cited by Pliny as an authority on mistletoe and oaks, but I could not find any references in Pliny’s works to that effect.](#)

Summary : Polyhistor claims that Pythagoras got his ideas on reincarnation from the Gauls and Brahmins (priests of India).

Author : Cicero, Marcus Tullius Cicero

When : Born 106 BC, died 43 BC

Culture : Roman

Lived : Arpinum (Italy); Athens; Rhodes; Rome; Sicily; Greece

Occupation : Lawyer, politician, philosopher

Hand : First, second

Bias : Unknown

A major political player in Rome (at one point he was consul, the highest Roman office), Cicero was exiled by Caesar’s triumvirate when he refused to join them, but was allowed to return to Rome once Caesar became emperor. He was then killed by the new regime after Caesar was assassinated.

References : “Ad Herennium” 4.31.43, 4.33.45; “De Inventione” 2.37.111; “On the Manilian Law” 11.30; “In Defense of A. Caecina” 30.88; “In Catilinam” 3.4, 3.22; “Pro Flacco” 63; “De Haruspicum Responsis” 9.19; “Against Piso” 23.53; “On Behalf of Fonteius” 4.8, 4.9, 9.19-10.21, 12.26-12.27, 13.28-13.30, 14.30-14.31, 15.33, 16.36, 20.46-21.47; “Philippic” 3.8.20, 6.3.5, 8.9.27, 12.4.9; “The Republic” 2.6.11, 3.9.15, 33.9.16; “Tusculan Disputations” 2.27.65; “De Divinatione” 1.37.81, 1.41.90; “De Officiis” 1.12.38, 3.31.112; “Letters to Atticus” 1.19, 4.17.3; “Letters to his Brother Quintus” 1.1.27; “Letters to His Friends” 7.1, 12.5.2; from Ammianus (about 430 years later), “Roman History” 15.12.4

Sources : “Cicero in Twenty Eight Volumes”, translated by H. Caplan, H.M. Hubbell, H.G. Hodge, C. MacDonald, N.H. Watts, W.C.A. Ker, C.W. Keyes, J.E. King, H. Rackham, W.A. Falconer, W. Miller, E.O. Winstedt, W.G. Williams, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1965-1989. See Ammianus below.

Comments : Cicero is the first author whose original works we still have who describes Druids using that name.

[I found a modern reference that Cicero says that the Cimmerii live in perpetual darkness, but are “allowed” to use fire to have light \(Academica 2.19?\), but could not confirm this.](#) If true, whether he is referring to the Celtic Cimbri or to the myths associated with the Cimmerians (or is mixing them together) is unknown.

[It is claimed that Cicero describes Gallic speech is harsh, but it depends on the translator : Caplan et.al. translate 15.33 as “with vague threats and uncouth barbarian menaces upon their lips”, while another translator gives “trying to frighten us with the noise of their barbaric language” \(translator unknown\).](#)

Summary : Cicero refers to “Cisalpine Gaul and Further Gaul”, and says that the Rubicon river (in northern Italy) borders Gaul. He describes the people of Gaul as “fierce”, “uncouth”, “proud and unflinching”, and refers to them many times as “barbarous”, but also says that the main quality of Gaul is its “vigor”.

He describes them as wearing cloaks and breeches (“braccae”), and speaking in “vague threats and uncouth barbarian menaces”. He makes reference to their reputation for drinking to excess.

He more than once mentions the attack on Delphi, and the underground passage that the Gauls used to reach the Roman Capitol. At one point he claims that Gaul isn’t completely pacified and is still willing to make war on Rome, but in another section he indicates that parts of Gaul are loyal to Rome without any incentives. He says that Rome takes from Gaul its corn, infantry, cavalry, arms, and money.

He says that some Gallic bands were making Cisalpine Gaul unsafe by their raiding, but had no leader. He refers to blood feuds among the Gauls, and twice mentions human sacrifice, calling it “monstrous and barbarous”, and says they still practice it in his day. He claims that they often raid the fields of others, taking their grain, and indicates that Gauls drank to excess. He says that the Cimbri and Celtiberians “revel in battle and wail in sickness”. He claims that in dealing with the Celtiberians and the Cimbri, Rome fought for survival.

Cicero claims to personally know a Druid named Divitiacus from the Aeduan tribe, who claimed to study nature or philosophy (“physiologia” in Greek), and who made predictions by using either augury or conjecture.

To discredit Gallic testimony against his client, he belittles them as dis-honorable, unable to tell the truth under oath.

He says that either the people of Gaul, or their gods, are very different from those of other nations in “habit and character”.

He mentions Caesar’s invasion of Britain, and says that Britain has no gold or silver.

He mentions several Gallic tribes : Aedui, Allobroges, Cimbri, Helvetii, Patavium, Vocontii, Volcae.

He names Indutiomarus as the leader of the Allobroges and all of Gaul, and describes him in particular as excessively bold, arrogant, and insolent.

He also names some Gallic towns : Bononia, Cobiomachus, Crodunum, Elesioduli, Narbo, Parma, Regium Lepidi, Tolosa (Toulouse, France), Vulchalo.

Author : Caesar, Julius Caesar
When : Born 100 BC, died 44 BC
Culture : Rome
Lived : Rome
Occupation : General, Emperor
Hand : First
Bias : Strong

Caesar had a great deal of first-hand experience with the Celts, as he conquered Gaul and attempted to conquer Britain. However, his eye-witness reports were meant to win over Roman public opinion (because his expeditions into Britain were an unauthorized personal enterprise), and to convince the Senate that the Gauls were a good prize if conquered and a threat if not. Thus he had many reasons to fabricate, distort, or exclude information about British and Gallic culture. Many of the statements he made about the Celts are directly contradicted by other sources – for example, at the same time that British Celtic woven woolen cloaks were all the rage in Rome, Caesar stated that the British Celts did not even know how to weave! He may have also exaggerated the Druid’s power, in order to make the Gallic tribes appear more of a threat.

References : unknown

Source :

Comments :

Summary : I have not had the time needed to read any of his works to find all the Celtic references, which is a shame, because I'm sure there are very many.

ROME CONQUERS WESTERN GAUL (FRANCE)

Author : Timagenes, Timagenes of Alexandria
When : First century BC
Culture : Greek
Lived : Alexandria, Rome
Occupation : Rhetorician (public speaker), historian
Hand : Third
Bias : Unknown

Not much is known about Timagenes, except for references to his works (which included a history of Alexander and a history of the Gauls) by later authors.

References : from Strabo (about 30 years later), "Geography", 4.1.13; from Ammianus (about 410 years later), "Roman History", 15.9.2-15.9.7

Source : see Strabo and Ammianus below.

Comments : the Tectosages are a Celtic tribe.

The following conclusions should be taken with the understanding that due to the nature of the quotes, it is difficult to tell in detail just what Timagenes originally said.

Timagenes seems to indicate that Druids are the keepers of their history. This is the first clear indication of that responsibility, as far as I know.

Ammianus 15.9.8 continues to discuss Bards, Vates, Druids and Pythagoras, and is often also attributed to Timagenes. However, Ammianus' comment at the end of 15.9.7 about ceasing to discuss "varying opinions" is assumed here to be the end of the material collected by Timagenes, and is put with Ammianus.

Some modern authors claim that Ammianus and Diodorus both *call* Timagenes an authority on Druids, but no such statements could be found, altho in fact Ammianus' quote about Timagenes does mention Druids once, before 15.9.8. And no relevant explicit reference to Timagenes could be found in Diodorus at all.

Summary : Timagenes told the story of the Celts' "expedition" to Delphi, some 230 years earlier. He also discussed a number of different theories about the origin of the Celts and their names, and indicates that Druids ("Drysidæ") were aware of their peoples' history.

Author : Dionysius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus
When : Born 60-55 BC, died around 10 AD
Culture : Greek
Lived : Asia Minor (Turkey); Rome
Occupation : Historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Dionysius was a prolific author who was very popular in his own lifetime. About half of his 20-book “Antiquities of Rome” or “Roman Antiquities” still exist, along with several other shorter works.

References : “Roman Antiquities”, 1.10.3, 13.6.1, 13.6.5, 13.7.1-13.12.2, 14.1.1-14.1.5

Source : “The Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus”, translated by Earnest Cary (based on the version of Edward Spelman), Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1968.

Comments : Cary often chose to render Dionysius’ use of “Celts” and “Celtica” as “Gauls” and “Gaul” respectively.

The Ister river is the Danube, the Pontic Sea is the Black Sea, and the Hercynian forest spanned from the Danube River to Czechoslovakia, which includes the modern day Black Forest.

According to Cary, the name “Celsica” (14.1.5) is derived from the verb “to put to shore” (unverified).

Summary : Dionysius recounts in some detail the taking of Rome by the Celts, including the initial attack by Roman ambassadors (a severe breach of ancient “international” protocols), and ending with the infamous “Woe to the vanquished!”. He claims that Celts originally sought out Rome for its wine and olive oil.

He mentions that the Ligurians occupy some parts of Celtica, and describes Celtica as lying north of the Pyrenees, east of the Atlantic, and west of the Alps. He names Germany as that part of Celtica north of the Rhine, and Gaul as that part to the south.

Author : Diodorus, Diodorus Siculus

When : Born 90-70 BC, died 27-20 BC

Culture : Roman

Lived : Sicily, Greece, Egypt, Spain, Gaul, Rome

Occupation : Historian

Hand : Possibly first, definitely third

Bias : Pro-Roman, pro-Caesar

Before settling in Rome, Diodorus claims to have travelled all over Asia and Europe collecting information for his 40 book “Library of History” or “Historical Library”. Of these, 15 survive completely intact, and there are many fragments of the rest. While he is a valuable source of lost works from earlier authors, he seems to merely list unrelated facts, is often repetitive and contradictory, and is currently regarded as fairly unreliable.

References : From “Historical Library” 1.4.7, 2.27.4, 3.38.2, 4.19.1-4.19.4, 5.21.1-5.22.4, 5.24.1-5.34.2, 5.38.4-5.38.5, 14.113.1-14.116.7, 14.117.5, 14.117.7, 15.70.1, 17.113.1-17.113.2, 20.11.1, 20.64.1-20.64.2, 22.4.1, 22.9.1-22.9.4, 22.11.1-22.12.1, 34/35.36.1, 36.1.1, 36.3.1, 37.1.5, 38/39.4.2

Source : “Diodorus of Sicily”, translated by C.H. Oldfather, C.L. Sherman, C.B. Welles, R.M. Geer, and F.R. Walton, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1979-1984.

Comments : the “describing” dates given in books 14 thru 20 are from Oldfather. According to Oldfather, the figures for the size of Britain in 5.21 are from Pytheas. Oldfather also estimates that book 14 discusses events around 387 BC, book 15 those of 368 BC, book 17 around 324 BC, book 20 those of about 310 BC, and book 22 around 275 BC.

The isle of Ictus mentioned in 5.22 was probably St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall.

"Galatia" as used by Diodorus is the general Greek name for Gaul, not the Celtic territory in Asia Minor.

Diodorus refers to the modern-day Danube as the Danube in western Europe and the Ister in eastern Europe. Massalia is modern-day Marseille.

There is a quote from Diodorus that appears often on the web, about how the Celts use discordant horns, shout in their deep and harsh voices, and beat their swords against their shields. Diodorus does comment on their horns, and *much* later says their voices are deep and harsh, but I could find no mention of beating their swords against their shields. I don't know who originated that quote, but it appears to be pieced together, and then spread without confirmation.

Summary : Diodorus makes a clear distinction between Celts and Gauls in 5.32, saying that Celts are those tribes above Massalia, in the slopes of the Alps, and north of the Pyrenees, but Gauls include all tribes north of the Celts, from the Atlantic to the Black Sea. He adds that the Romans make no distinction, calling them all Gauls.

He explains the mythological origin of the Gauls and their name in 5.24, saying that the son of Hercules and a Gallic woman united the tribes under his name, Galates. In 4.19, he says that Hercules brought law and order to the Celts.

He tells the story of the sack of Rome by Gauls (and the reasons for it) in 14.113-117, saying that the initial fault was that of the Romans ambassadors for joining the battle (a severe breach of the "international protocols" of the day).

He describes the geography and climate of Gaul in 5.25-26, and says that Gaul has many tribes, ranging from 50,000 to 200,000 men. He places some Gallic tribes north of the Rhine.

From 5.28 to 5.31, Diodorus describes Gauls as tall, with white skin and blond hair. He says their appearance is "terrifying", and their voices are deep and harsh. The nobles let their moustache grow until it covers their mouth, and many men wash their hair in mineral lime water, making it heavy and coarse. Their clothing consists of dyed and embroidered shirts, trousers (which they call "bracae"), and striped or checked cloaks. He says they like to talk in riddles and hints and pompous language, and calls them "boasters" and "threateners". But he adds that they have "sharp wits" and are "not without cleverness at learning".

In 5.27, he calls the Celts an "exceedingly covetous people", and describes their love of gold, saying that both men and women wear huge golden rings, bracelets around their arms and wrists, and necklaces of solid gold. But he also says that they have left huge amounts of gold in their temples, and no one steals it because of their religious beliefs.

He says they are "exceedingly addicted" to wine, drink it unmixed (Roman wine was meant to be watered down), and will trade a slave for a single large jar of it (5.26). In 5.32, he says the Gallic women are a match for the men both in their courage and their "great stature". He describes the Celts as very flagrant about their homosexuality (5.32).

In 5.28, he describes the Celts' eating habits - they sit on skins on the ground, and the youngest children serve. The bravest warriors are given the choicest portions of the meat. During the meal, the warriors are quick to challenge each other to single combat over any trivial matter, "without regard for their lives". He also mentions Celtic hospitality, saying that strangers invited to their feasts are not asked until it is over what their business is.

In 5.29 and 5.30, he tells of their style of fighting. They use bronze shields as tall as a man, some of which have figures of animals embossed on them. Their bronze helmets may also have horns or figures of animals attached to them. Some Celts wear chainmail breastplates, while others fight naked. For weapons, they use long broadswords, spears and javelins. He also describes their use of chariots in battle, their penchant for single combat between champions, and how they sing their own praises while belittling their opponents. He also tells of how they cut off the heads of their enemies and hang them on their horses and houses, or embalm them in cedar oil.

In 5.28, Diodorus says that the Gauls follow the beliefs of Pythagoras, that the soul is immortal and lives multiple lives on earth. This gave rise to the practice of throwing letters to the deceased on their funeral pyres. He discusses Bards and Druids in 5.31, saying that Bards are “lyric poets” who sing songs of praise or abuse. He calls Druids philosophers, “learned in religious affairs”, and says their diviners may use the flight or cries of birds, or the sacrifice of an animal to foretell the future. In matters of great concern, they kill a human in a certain way and make their predictions based on his death throes. He says Bards, Druids, and diviners are all held in high esteem, and can even stop an eminent battle.

He names Contoniatus as the chieftain of a Gaulish city Iontora. In 22.9, he describes how Brennus attacked Macedonia and Delphi, and laughed at the Greeks for making statues of their gods.

Diodorus discusses Britain in 5.21 and 5.22, saying that the tribes are simple and modest, living in dwellings built of reeds or logs. The island is densely populated, and has many “kings and potentates” who generally live at peace with each other. He describes how the natives near Cornwall produce tin, and take it to an island called Ictis for sale to mainland Europe.

He refers to Ireland as “Iris” in 5.32, and says those Britons who live there are cannibals.

In 5.32, he claims the Cimbri are the descendants of the Cimmerians, and are the same tribe which captured Rome and plundered Delphi. He says they keep criminals for 5 years, then sacrifice them to the gods. In 37.1, he describes them as giantlike and “unexcelled in feats of strength”.

He discusses the Celtiberians in 5.33-38. He says they wear black woolen cloaks, drink honey mixed with wine, and are “honourable and humane” towards strangers. He says they are clean “in their ways of living”, but use urine to bathe in and brush their teeth with. In battle, they use light shields similar to the Gauls’, or circular wicker shields, and bronze helmets. For weapons, they carry two-edged swords and daggers.

He says Hyperboreans have their own language, and they are very friendly with the Greeks. He mentions Abaris as a Hyperborean who visited Greece long ago.

Author : Catullus, Gaius Valerius Catullus

When : Born 84 BC, died 54 BC

Culture : Roman/Celtic

Lived : Italy, Bithynia (Turkey)

Occupation : Poet

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Anti-Roman; anti-Caesar; fiction

Very little is known about Catullus, except that he came from Cisalpine Gaul (conquered about 100 years earlier), and his family was wealthy and well connected.

References : “Carmina”, poems 29, 37, 39

Source : “The Poems of Catullus”, translated by Charles Martin, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1990.

Comments : Mamurra served under Caesar in Spain and Gaul. Pontus is on the southeastern shore of the Black Sea.

Summary : Catullus obviously disapproves of Caesar’s plundering of Gaul and Britain. He also mentions that the Iberians brush their teeth with their own urine.

Author : Virgil, Vergil, Publius Vergilius Maro

When : Born 70 BC, died 19 BC

Culture : Roman/Celtic

Lived : All over Italy

Occupation : Poet

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Fiction

Considered one of the great Classical poets, Virgil was born in Cisalpine Gaul (conquered by Rome 120 years earlier), and became a Roman citizen at age 21. He is best known for his unfinished epic, the Aeneid.

References : “The Aeneid”, Book 6:lines 1178-1187; Book 8:lines 871-878

Source : John Dryden, Harvard Classics, PF Collier & Son, NY, 1909

Comments :

Summary : Virgil describes Gauls as having blonde hair and white skin, and wearing golden torcs. The warriors used long spears, carried shields, and had golden “vests”. He also mentions the Celtic tradition of single combat between champions.

Author : Strabo

When : Born 63-60 BC, died around 24 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Pontus (Turkey), Alexandria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Rome

Occupation : Geographer, historian

Hand : Third

Bias : Pro-Rome

Strabo’s home town came under Roman rule around the time of his birth, and after travelling to Egypt and Ethiopia, he wrote a 17 book “Geography”, most of which survives. It was an attempt to gather all the available geographical knowledge and present it in the context of politics and history as well as simple geography, but he did not travel west of Italy. Strabo is considered fairly unreliable - for example, he accepted Homer as factual but completely ignored Herodotus, and had his own bizarre notions about the geography of western Europe and the British Isles. In addition, he was definitely a proponent of Roman imperialism.

References : “Geography”, 1.1.17, 1.3.21, 2.1.13, 2.1.16, 2.1.18, 2.5.8, 2.5.8, 2.5.27-2.5.28 , 3.1.3, 3.4.13, 3.4.16, 3.5.11, 4.1.1-4.1.14, 4.2.1-4.2.3, 4.3.1-4.3.5, 4.4.1-4.4.6, 4.5.1-4.5.4, 4.6.3-4.6.5 , 6.4.2 , 7.1.1 , 7.1.2 , 7.2.1-7.2.3 , 7.3.2 , 7.4.3 , 11.2.5 , 11.3.6 , 12.5.1-12.5.2

Source : “The Geography of Strabo”, translated by H.L. Jones, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1988.

Comments : Portions of some quotes are duplicated in Posidonius, Timagenes, Pytheas, and Ephorus, but have been left in here for continuity.

The Rhodanus river is the Rhone, the Garumna river is the Garonne, Massalia is Marseille, and the Cemmenus mountains are the Cevennes.

Some modern authors claim that Strabo describes Abaris at length, but those descriptions attributed to Strabo instead match that of Himerius, below.

Summary : Strabo describes Transalpine Celtica (which he also calls Celtica or Ulterior Gallia), as bounded by the Pyrenees, the Atlantic Ocean, the Rhine, the Alps, and the Mediterranean. Because Strabo's notions of western Europe are so bizarre (for example, he says the Pyrenees form the western border of Celtica, and the British channel forms the northern border), no further boundaries will be described.

He divides Transalpine Celtica into four regions : Provincia Narbonensis, Aquitani, Gallia Lugdunensis, and Gallia Belgica. He names two "Galatic Gulfs", which are now called the Gulf of Lyon and the Gulf of Gascogne.

When referring to these western European Celts as a whole, he variously calls them "Celti", "Gallic" or "Galatic".

He discusses Provincia Narbonensis in 4.1.3 to 4.1.14, saying that its people were called "Celtae" in the past, and speculates that the Greeks called all the western European tribes "Celti" due to the renown of this group. The women are prolific at bearing children, and the men used to be fighters rather than farmers, but now they till the soil under Roman rule.

He claims that Massalia used to be a "training-school for the barbarians", and that under Greek influence, those tribes near Massalia began to write their contracts in Greek. By Strabo's time, they had adopted Roman speech, lifestyles, and government. He mentions that entire Celtic towns would hire physicians and sophists (teachers).

Strabo names many tribes in Narbonensis : Sequani, Aedui, Allobroges, Lingones, Segusiavi, Vocontii, Tricorii, Iconii, Medulli, Lexobii, Caleti, Arecomisci and Tectosages (both part of the Volcae), Cavari (possibly Celtic/Ligurian), and Sallyes (Celtic and/or Ligurian).

He also names some towns : Lugdunum is a city of the Segusiavi; Narbo is the "greatest of the emporiums in this country"; Arelate is another significant emporium; Vienna is the metropolis of the Allobroges; Nemausus is the metropolis of the Arecomisci, and controls 24 surrounding villages. He also names Undalum, Avenio, Arausio, Aeria, and Tolosa as Celtic towns.

Strabo describes the Aquitani in 4.2.1 to 4.2.3, who are composed of over 20 small and relatively insignificant tribes. He names many of them, including the Elui, Arverni, Vellavii (who once belonged to the Arverni), Lemovices, Gabales (who have silver mines), Petrocorii (who have iron works), Nitiobriges, Cadurci (who have linen factories), Santoni, Pictones, Ruteni (who have silver mines), Namnitae, Auscii, Tarbelli (who have gold mines), Covenae (which means "assembled rabble"), Onesii, and Mandubii. He says several tribes of the Bituriges (the Cubi, who work iron, and the Vivisci) also reside in lands of the Aquitani, but do not pay tribute to them.

He also names some towns : Lugdunum is in the land of the Covenae; Nemosus which is the metropolis of the Arverni; Mediolanium is the city of the Santoni; Cenabum is an emporium of the Carnutes; Gergovia is a city of the Arverni; Alesia is a city of the Mandubii; and Burdigala is an emporium of the Vivisci. He names one other emporium, Corbilo.

He names one person, Vercingetorix, a Celtic leader who fought against Caesar, as being born in Gergovia. He names another leader, Luerius, and says he once rode a chariot scattering gold and silver coins for his followers to pick up.

Strabo discusses Gallia Lugdunensis from 4.3.1 to 4.3.5. He names as tribes the Treveri, Nervii, Senones, Remi, Atrebatii, Eburones, Menapii, Morini, Bellovaci, Ambiani, Suessiones, Caleti, Elvetii (usually called Helvetii), Rhaeti, Vindelici, Sequani, Mediomatrici, Aedui, Lingones, Leuci, Arverni, Carnutes, Tribocchi, Parisii, Meldi, Lexovii, Remi, and Segusiavi.

He says the Aedui were the first Celtic tribe in Lugdunensis to ally themselves with the Romans, and the Sequani often joined forces with the German tribes. Although already wealthy, the Elvetii joined with the Cimbri when they saw how many riches could be had from raiding. The Mediomatrici allowed a Germanic tribe to settle in their land.

He names a few towns : Lucoticia is a city of the Parisii; Duricortora is the metropolis of the Remi; Lugdunum is the city of the Segusiavi; and Cabyllinum is a city of the Aedui.

He briefly mentions Gallia Belgica in 4.4.1, saying that its people are the bravest of all the Celts, and are divided into 15 tribes. He names a few, saying that the Bellovaci are bravest, and after them the Suessiones. Others include the Veneti and the Osismii.

Strabo discusses the Celts' lifestyle in general from 4.4.2 to 4.4.6. He describes the Celts as "war mad", "high spirited", "quick for battle", and "fond of strife", but adds that it is those tribes who live more to the north and along the Atlantic coast which are more warlike. He says they are the best cavalry the Romans have.

He refers to them several times as simplistic, and says they are witless and boastful, but adds they are also straightforward and "not ill-mannered". He says they have a fondness for wearing golden chains around their necks and bracelets on their arms and wrists. Their dignitaries wear clothing that has been dyed with colors and "sprinkled with gold". The people wear their hair long, wear breeches (trousers) and short tunics, and coarse-woven cloaks.

He says that the tasks of men and women are opposite those of the Greeks and Romans. He alludes to their homosexuality, saying the young men are "prodigal of their youthful charms". The young men are also fined if they get too fat.

Their houses are large and dome-shaped, made of wooden planks and wicker, and covered with thatch. They sleep on the ground, and eat meals while sitting on beds of straw. They have a wide variety of foods, including fresh and salted pork.

Many tribes will band together when one of them has been wronged, but they also migrate easily whenever a stronger tribe invades their territory.

Before the Romans took over, their governments were aristocratic, with one leader being chosen annually, and during war, one man would be selected as general by the common people. At their assemblies, hecklers are warned three times to be quiet, but then their cloaks are cut in two.

Their weapons and armor include sabres, spears, light throwing javelins, bows, slings, and oblong shields. There is supposed to be a tree which looks like a fig tree that bears a fruit whose sap is poisonous, and which they put on their arrows.

Strabo discusses Druids, headhunting, and sacrifices in 4.4.4 to 4.4.5, saying that the Bards are "singers and poets", the Vates are "diviners and natural philosophers", and the Druids study "natural philosophy and moral

philosophy". The Druids arbitrate public and private disputes, murder cases, and can stop wars even when the opponents are lined up and ready for battle. He says that Druids "and others" believe that souls and the universe are indestructible, but "both fire and water will at some time or other prevail over them".

Druids had to be present at sacrificial divinations, which had many forms. A person could be stabbed in the back with a sabre in order to watch their death throes, or stabbed in the temples, or shot with arrows. Strabo tells a story where animals and humans are stuffed into a huge "colossus of straw and wood", and then burnt to death.

He discusses Celtiberians in 1.3.21, 3.1.3, 3.4.13, 3.4.16, 6.4.2, and 11.3.6, saying they are rich in gold but their land is poor.

He says they "live for satisfying their physical needs and bestial instincts", calling them irrational because they bathe and brush their teeth in their own urine. They offer sacrifices on nights of the full moon, in front of the doors of their houses.

He says they have four castes : the nobility, the priests, the soldiers and farmers, and the common people. The kings are selected from the nobility, being the eldest next-of-kin to the previous king, and the next in line "administers justice" and is general of the army. The priests settle disputes between tribes. The possessions of the common people, whom he describes as "slaves of the king", belong to their families, which are run by the eldest.

He names four large groups of Celtiberian peoples : the Arvacans, Lusonians, Vaccaeans and Celtiberians. He names the Nomanini and Cantabri tribes as those defeated by the Romans in earlier times.

He also names a few cities : Numantia, Segeda and Pallantia of the Arvacans, Segobriga and Bilbilis of the Celtiberians, and Segesama and Intercatia.

He names a couple of leaders, Viriathus and Sertorius.

Strabo describes the Asia Minor Gauls in 12.5.1 and 12.5.2, also calling them Gallo-Graecians. He says there are three main groups, the Trocmi, the Tolistobogii, and the Tectosages, which all spoke the same language and "differed from each other in no respect". The first two were named after their leaders, while the third takes its name from the tribe in Provincia Narbonensis.

In times past, each tribe was divided into four "tetrarchies", led by a tetrarch, a judge, and a general. The Council of the twelve tetrarchs consisted of 300 men. By Strabo's time, however, the power had passed to three rulers, then two, and then finally to a single man.

He names some towns, which he describes as "walled garrisons" and "fortresses" : Ancyra of the Tectosages, Blucium and Peium of the Tolistobogii, and Tavium, Mithridatium, and Danala.

He names a couple of Asia Minor Gallic leaders, Deiotarus and Amyntas. He says that Leonnorius was the chief leader of the Celt's original expedition to Asia Minor.

Of Britain (4.5.1-4.5.3), he says the men are "taller than the Celti, and not so yellow-haired, although their bodies are of looser build". He says their way of life is similar to the Celts, but simpler and more barbaric. They do not farm, nor know how to make cheese, but they do raise hunting dogs, and use war chariots just like the Celts. They live in large circular camps in the woods, walled with a ring of tree trunks, but do not stay in any one place for long.

About Ireland (2.1.13, 2.5.8, 4.5.4), Strabo has little good to say – it is a cold, “wretched” place, whose people are cannibalistic, incestuous savages; however, he does admit he has no “trustworthy witnesses” for this information.

Strabo discusses the Germans a little in 4.3.4 and 7.1.2, naming several German tribes : the Cimbri, Teutones, Ubii, Nervii, Sugambri, Tribocchi, and Suevi.

He describes the Cimbri in 7.2.1 to 7.2.3, and says they had grey-haired “priestesses who were seers” who would sacrifice prisoners of war by slitting their throats over a huge cauldron, and then disembowel them to receive their prophecies. He refutes the idea that they left their homeland because of a “great flood-tide”.

Strabo mentions Cimmerians briefly (1.3.21, 7.4.3, 11.2.5), saying they had in the past overrun the region south and east of the Black Sea, but had later been driven out by the Scythians. He names one tribe, the Tretran.

In 3.5.11, he says the Cassiterides are islands off the coast of Spain, whose nomadic people wear black cloaks and walk with canes, and trade their tin and lead for pottery, salt, and copper utensils.

Strabo mentions many similarities between the peoples of western Europe :

Of the four regions in Transalpine Gaul, he claims the Aquitani are most different in their language and looks, being more like the Iberians. Of the remaining three, he says there are some slight variations in their languages, methods of government, and lifestyle.

Both the Iberians and Celts bathe in and wash their teeth with their own urine, and sleep on the ground.

He says the lifestyle of the Britons is similar to that of the Celts, and they use chariots in warfare just as some of the Celts do.

Regarding the claim of cannibalism in Ireland, he adds that the Celts practice it as well if forced to during sieges.

He says that not only are the Germans are similar to the Celts in lifestyle, government, and build, but they are also kinsmen.

He claims that while the Ligurians are a different race than the Celts, their lifestyles are similar.

Author : Nicolas of Damascus, Nicholas, Nicholaus

When : Born about 64 BC, died about 7 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Syria, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome

Occupation : Philosopher, historian, playwright, rhetorician?

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

The son of prominent citizens of Damascus, Nicholas was advisor to Herod the Great, friend to Augustus, and tutor to Cleopatra’s children. He wrote a universal history, a biography of Augustus, an autobiography, a work describing the customs of various countries, as well as tragedies, comedies, and philosophical works. While the universal history and the customs of various countries undoubtedly included references to the Celts, all of his works have been lost except for fragments referenced by other ancient authors.

Source : see Athenaeus, below.

Comments : there are references to Nicolas having commented on the honesty of the Celts, whose doors were never locked and who never stole from each other, but I could not confirm this.

Summary : Nicolas describes a Celtic king named Adiatomus, of the Sotiani tribe, as having 600 bodyguards called “siloduri” (Greek for “bound by a vow”), that swear to protect the king with their lives in return for great power, but who also die *whenever* the king dies, even if by chance or disease. Nicolas says that none of the Celtic bodyguards ever went back on their vow.

=====
Author : Livy, Titus Livius

When : Born 64-59 BC, died 11-17 AD

Culture : Roman/Celtic

Lived : Patavium, Italy; Rome

Occupation : Historian

Hand : Third

Bias : Pro-Rome

Unlike most other Roman historians, Livy did not get involved with politics. While that deprived him of an “inside” view of history, it also allowed him to describe history in more personal and moral terms. He was also the first historian to write in Latin rather than Greek. He wrote 142 books, only 30 of which survive today. His “History of Rome” influenced the style of historical writing for centuries, although today he is considered only a mediocre historian. Even though he was born in Cisalpine Gaul (conquered about 130 years earlier), and may have even spoken Celtic, most of his references to the Celts are regarding past events.

References : “History of Rome” 5.17, 5.24, 5.32-5.39, 5.41-5.49, 6.1, 6.7, 6.11, 6.17, 6.42, 7.1, 7.9-7.15, 7.18, 7.20, 7.23-7.26, 8.14, 8.17, 8.20, 9.4, 9.11, 9.19, 9.29, 10.2, 10.10, 10.13, 10.16, 10.18, 10.21, 10.26-10.29, 21.16, 21.20, 21.23-21.28, 21.30-21.32, 21.38, 21.39, 21.42, 21.45, 21.46, 21.48, 21.52, 21.53, 21.55, 21.57, 22.1, 22.2, 22.6, 22.10, 22.14, 22.21-22.33, 22.46, 22.59, 22.61, 23.14, 23.24, 23.25, 23.28, 23.49, 24.8, 24.41, 24.42, 24.49, 25.9, 25.32, 25.33, 26.50, 27.36, 27.38, 27.39, 27.48, 27.49, 28.1, 28.2, 28.10, 28.11, 28.24, 28.36, 28.38, 28.46, 29.5, 30.7, 30.8, 30.16, 30.18, 30.33, 31.2, 31.10, 31.21, 31.49, 32.7, 32.26, 32.28-32.30, 33.12, 33.18, 33.21-33.23, 33.36, 33.43, 34.5, 34.8, 34.10, 34.17, 34.19, 34.22, 34.32, 34.46, 34.47, 34.53, 35.1, 35.4-35.7, 36.39, 36.40, 37.8, 37.18, 37.46, 37.47, 37.51, 37.60, 38.12, 38.16-38.27, 38.37, 38.40, 38.45-38.48, 39.2, 39.3, 39.6, 39.7, 39.21, 39.22, 39.42, 39.44, 39.45, 39.54-39.56, 40.1, 40.16, 40.17, 40.30-40.36, 40.39, 40.40, 40.47, 40.49, 40.50, 40.53, 40.58, 41.5, 41.7, 41.19, 41.23, 41.26, 41.28, 42.2-42.4, 42.10, 42.52, 42.57, 42.58, 43.5, 44.12-44.14, 44.21, 44.26-44.29, 45.19, 45.20, 45.30, 45.34, 45.38, 45.44; “Periochae”, 20.8-20.11, 48.19-48.21, 103.10-103.11, 104.2, 104.8, 105.5

Sources : “Titus Livius, The History of Rome”, translated by Rev. Canon Roberts, Ernest Rhys editor, Everyman’s Library, J.M. Dent and Sons, London, E.P. Dutton and Co., New York, 1912. “Periochae” translated by Jona Lendering, with suggestions by Andrew Smith, found at <http://www.livius.org/li-ln/livy/periochae/periochae00.html>.

Comments : The “Periochae” is a 4th century summary by an unknown author of the contents of Livy’s work.

Summary : Livy variously describes the Gauls as treacherous, indolent, “savage and barbarous”, and fierce. He says they have the highest military reputation, and are the most warlike and dreaded, of all nations. But he adds that “as a nation they cannot control their passions”.

He describes their appearance as tall and large, with white skin and red hair, wearing golden armlets and chains. Of their demeanor, he says they have no resolution or endurance, nor tolerance for heat, exertion, dust, or thirst. However, he adds that “as a nation they are by no means inattentive to the claims of religion” (5.24). While he does not name them as Druids, Livy does mention the “priests and ministers” of their “temples” (23.24).

He says that in battle, they enjoy single combat between heroes, and taunting their enemies. He also describes them as singing or whooping while brandishing their shields and weapons at the enemy before a battle. He says their shields and swords are exceptionally large, and Gallic and Spanish shields have nearly the same shape. Gallic swords have no point, but Spanish swords are “pointed like a dagger”. He mentions that they fight naked or semi-naked, and rush into battle with “wild excitement” and “blind fury”. He describes Gallic mercenaries as the “most formidable” mercenaries of various nations.

He says that they may fight naked in order to better show off their wounds, and will cut themselves if a wound is too small in order to increase their glory (38.21). They also “fling themselves on the ground in shame and fury” if a fatal wound only looks superficial. Thus they prefer hand-to-hand combat, where they can inflict wounds as well as receive them, but are highly frustrated when attacked from a distance by missile weapons.

When battle is over, they strip the bodies of their valuables, pile the weapons up in heaps, and cut off the heads of their enemies. The heads are put on their horses or the ends of their spears (10.26), or taken to their “temples” where the skull is cleaned and covered with gold to be used as a ritual drinking cup (23.24).

He describes at length the sack of Rome and the reasons for it in 5.33-5.49, the war with Carthage (using Celtic mercenaries) in 21.16-28.2, the Gallograecia wars in 38.12-38.40, and a Celtiberian war in 40.30-40.50.

He says that many Celtic migrations were due to overpopulation, but that they often made armed forays into other lands. He adds that the Gauls attended their council sessions fully armed.

He names many Celtic tribes, including the Aedui, Allobroges (“second to none in Gaul in power and reputation”), Ambarri, Auleri, Arverni, Bituriges (who formed “a third of Gaul”), Boii, Carnutes, Cenomani, Insubres, Libui, Salassi (possibly Ligurian), Saluvii, Senones, Sequani, Taurini, Tectosagi, Tolostobogii, Tricastini, Tricorii, Troceni, Vaccaci, Veneti, Vettones, Vocontii, and Volcae.

He also mentions many Celtic chieftains by name, including Brennus, Cassignatus, Claudicus, Eposognatus, Lonorius, Moeniacepto, and Vismaro. He says that Ambigatus is the ruler of the Bituriges, Boiorix is the chief of the Boii, Brancus is leader of the Allobroges, Balanos is a chieftain in Transalpine Gaul, Comboiomarus is chief of the Troceni, Elitovius is the leader of the Cenomani, Vertomarus is the leader of the Insubres, Gaulotus is the chief of the Tectosagi, Ortiagon is chief of the Tolostobogii, and Thurrus is the chief of several tribes in Spain, and is the “most powerful man in Spain”. He adds that Aluccius is a Celtiberian noble, Cincibilus is the brother of the king of the Gauls, and that Bellovesus and Segovesus are nephews of Ambigatus. He names Ariovistus as a German commander.

He says that Gaul was once called Ariminum, and names Munda, Certima, Ergavica, and Alce as cities in Celtiberia. He says that Cuballum, Gordium, and Olympus are towns in Gallograecia, and that Brixia is a Gallic capital (of either the Boii or Insubres or Cenomani).

Author : Propertius, Sextus Propertius

When : Born 50-45 BC, died 15-1 BC

Culture : Roman

Lived : Assisi (Italy), Rome

Occupation : Poet

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Fiction

Little is known about Propertius, but he influenced many later Roman poets.

References : “Elegies”, 2.2.71-2.2.78, 2.18d, 2.31.8-2.31.14, 4.3.5-4.3.10, 4.10.39-4.10.44

Source : “Propertius, Elegies”, translated by G.P. Goold, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1990.

Comments :

Summary : Propertius speaks of painted British chariots with figured harnesses, and women in Britain and Gaul who paint their faces a rich blue color. He describes a “giant” Gallic chieftain, Virdomarus, with his striped trousers and torc who threw spears from his chariot. He also refers to Gauls being cast down from mount Parnassus in Greece.

Author : Ovid, Publius Ovidius Naso

When : Born 43 BC, died 17 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Italy, Greece, Turkey, Sicily

Occupation : Poet

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Fiction

A prolific and very successful poet in his own lifetime, Ovid was suddenly exiled to the Black Sea at age 50. His works influenced later generations of poets for centuries.

References : “Amores”, Book 2, Elegy 13,16; “Art of Love”, Book 2, Part 6; “Metamorphoses”, Book 1, 7, 11, 15; “Ex Ponto”, Book 4, Chapter 7, 10

Sources : “Ovid’s Metamorphoses” by A. S. Kline, 2000. [I have unfortunately lost track of the other books that the rest of the references came from.](#)

Comments : Pontus is on the southeastern shore of the Black Sea.

A more complete description of Ovid’s reference to “that day when the hand of punishment fell on the Gauls, they deluded by maids in mistress’ clothes” (“Art of Love”, Book 2, Part 6) is given in Plutarch (“Moralia”, 313a) below.

Summary : Ovid mentions “painted Britons”, and describes the people of Britain as “sea-going”. He mentions “Gallic laurels”, “Celtic kings”, and “hounds of Gaul”.

He describes a cave in a mountain near Cimmeria, which he places near the Black Sea, as dark and foggy.

He describes men in Hyperborea who have “soft plumage”.

Author : Trogus, Trogus Pompeius, (Cnaeus) Pompeius Trogus

When : Born 27 BC, died 14 AD

Culture : Roman/Celtic

Lived : Unknown

Occupation : Historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Trogus was a Roman historian whose ancestors were from the Voconti tribe in Transalpine Gaul, conquered about 90 years earlier. His 44 book history of the world (“Philippic History”, called by many a “Universal History”) has been lost, but was summarized about 225 years later by Justin in his “Epitome of Pompeius Trogus”. Unlike other Roman historians, Trogus placed more emphasis on non-Roman history.

References : “Universal History”, 6.6, 12.13, 20, 24.4-24.8, 25.1-25.2, 26.2, 27.2, 27.3, 28.2, 32.1, 32.3, 38.3-38.4, 43.3-43.5, 44.1

Source : “Justin, Cornelius Nepos, and Eutropius”, translated by J.S. Watson, George Bell and Sons, London, 1886.

Comments : the tribe of the Segobrigii are mentioned nowhere else, and are probably Ligurian and/or Celtic. Massalia is Marseille, France. It is unclear whether Catumandus is Celtic or Ligurian.

Summary : Trogus mentions the Gallic sack of Rome several times, and also says they sent ambassadors to Alexander the Great.

He describes Gauls as savage, greedy, bold, fierce, and warlike, and says they are “skilled in augury beyond other nations”. He says at one point they sacrificed victims and used their entrails to divine the outcome of a battle. He says the tribe of the Tectosages threw 110,000 pounds of silver and 1,500,000 pounds gold into a lake on the advice of their soothsayers in order to change their luck.

He says the Gauls migrated over Europe because of “civil discords”, perpetual feuding, and overpopulation. They settled in Italy, Illyricum (between Italy and Greece), Pannonia (modern Hungary), Greece, Macedonia, and Bithynia. Of these eastern Gauls, he says they had the same “extraction, courage, and mode of fighting” as their western kin. He also describes the wanderings of the Scordisci and Tectosagi tribes.

He says that the reputation of the Gauls struck such terror that kings would pay them off with large sums of money rather than fight them, and would have to include Gallic mercenaries in their armies if they wished to win wars.

Trogus tells many stories about the Gauls, including their alliance with tyrant Dionysius I of Sicily, and their initial victory but subsequent defeat against king Ptolemy of Macedonia. He describes in some detail Brennus’ actions in Macedonia and Delphi, and how his remaining troops attack Antigonus’ camp but are routed. He says that Antiochus used Gallic mercenaries to defeat his brother Seleucus, but then the mercenaries start to turn against Antiochus until he buys them off. He describes one instance where the Gauls slaughtered their own wives and children in an attempt to appease their gods. He also tells a story of how Catumandus called off his attack against Marseille when he had a vision of a goddess who turned out to be Minerva.

He describes the beauty and bounty of Spain, and says that Gaul is “disturbed by incessant winds.”

He says that Marseille was founded when the Phocaeen Protis married the daughter of the king of the local Celtic/Ligurian tribe.

Trogus names Belgius and Brennus as leaders of the Gauls, and Emanus and Thessalorus as captains. Nannus is named the king of the Segobrigii, and Catumandus is called a petty prince.

He names the Scordisci and Tectosagi as Celtic tribes.

=====
Author : Velleius, Velleius Paterculus, Marcus Velleius Paterculus

When : Born around 20 BC, died around 30 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Greece, Turkey, Hungary, Germany

Occupation : Soldier

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Very little is known about Velleius, except that he compiled a book of ten centuries of Roman history from the best of previous Greek and Latin authors.

References : “Compendium of Roman History”, 1.15.5, 2.8.3, 2.12.2, 2.39.1, 2.46.1, 2.39.1, 2.67.4, 2.106.1-2.106-3; “The Acts of Augustus”, 5.26, 5.32

Source : “Velleius Paterculus, Compendium of Roman History”, translated by F.W. Shipley, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1979.

Comments : [some modern authors claim that he mentions single combat between Roman and Gallic champions, but I could find no such reference.](#)

Summary : Velleius describes various Roman encounters with Celtic and German tribes, including the Scordisci in Pannonia and the Charydes, Cimbri, Semnones, and Teutons in Germany. He names one British tribe, the Dumnobellaunus.

He says that the Gallic provinces are exceptionally wealthy, paying to Rome almost as much tribute as the rest of the world. He also describes an invasion of Germany by way of the Elbe river.

Author : Valerius Maximus

When : Born around 20 BC, flourished around 30 AD, died around 50 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Greece, Asia

Occupation : Possibly rhetorician

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Little is known about Valerius Maximus' life. His nine volume “Memorable Deeds and Sayings” is a collection of anecdotes from earlier authors on a wide variety of topics, and was very popular in its time.

References : “Memorable Deeds and Sayings”, 1.1.11, ([possibly 1.1.18](#)), 1.2.ext.9 (Paris), 1.2.ext.9 (Nepotianus), 2.6.9-2.6.11, 3.2.5-3.2.6, 3.2.7, 3.2.21-3.2.23, 6.1.ext.1-2, 6.3.1a-1b, 7.4.3-7.4.5, 8.15.5-8.15.6

Source : “Valerius Maximus : Memorable Doings and Sayings”, translated by D.R.S. Bailey, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 2000.

Comments :

Summary : Valerius describes Gauls as both “greedy and usurious” and having a strong “reverence for the divine”. He praised both Gauls and Celtiberians for their strong conviction that their homelands should be defended at all costs, and for their “unwavering loyalty” to their friends. He says they looked forward to battle so as to die in glory, while to die of illness was almost dishonorable. Celtiberians were shamed if they survived a battle while someone whose safety they had guaranteed died.

He says that the Gauls would make loans to be repaid after death, because they believed that their souls were immortal, and compares their belief to that of Pythagoras.

He mentions single combat between champions several times, and refers to the taking of Delphi by Brennus and the taking of Rome by the Gauls.

He names a Gallic “petty king” Ortiago, the tribes of the Senones and Cimbri, and a Celtiberian noble Pyresus and capital city Contrebia.

CHRISTIANITY BEGINS TO SPREAD

ROME CONQUERS BRITAIN

Author : Pliny the Elder, Gaius Plinius Secundus

When : Born 23-24 AD, died 79 AD

Culture : Roman/Celtic

Lived : Italy; Gaul; Iberia (Spain); Germania

Occupation : Naturalist

Hand : First, second

Bias : Unknown

Born in Cisalpine Gaul (conquered by Rome about 215 years earlier) to Roman parents, Pliny was an advisor to emperors, a military officer, wrote 75 books, and left 160 volumes of notes. His only surviving work is his “Natural History”, in which he tried to describe the known world. However, he appears to have merely recorded rumors, not facts, and tells of (for example) races of dog-headed people and people with no heads at all.

References : “Natural History”, 2.58.148, 2.75.186-2.75.187, 2.82.195, 3.14.112, 3.17.123-3.17.125, 4.13.97, 4.14.99-4.14.100, 4.16.102-4.19.109, 7.56.197, 8.51.143, 8.61.148, 8.79.196, 16.95.259, 24.62.103-24.63.104, 25.6.20-25.6.21, 25.58.106-25.58.107, 26.8.19, 27.76.101, 28.51.191, 29.12.52-29.12.54, 30.4.13, 34.47.156, 37.11.35-37.11.36

Source : “Pliny’s Natural History”, translated by H. Rackham, W.H.S. Jones, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1969-1979.

Comments : Anglesea is the Isle of Man, and an osier is a branch of a willow tree. The tin trader Midacritus (7.56.197) is dated to around 600 BC.

Pliny’s statement “Hailing the moon in a native word that means ‘healing all things’ ...” (16.95.259) is also sometimes translated as “Hailing mistletoe in a native word that means ‘healing all things’ ...”.

There seems to be no doubt that Pliny discusses Gallic corn reaping machines at length, and their superiority to the Roman ones, but I could not find the reference.

Summary : Pliny discusses Britain (saying its name used to be Albion) and Ireland in 4.16.102. He calls Gaul “long-haired”, and says it has three “races” : Belgic, Celtic (or Lyonese), and Aquitanian (used to be Armorica). He also mentions Thule, the Germans (including the Cimbri, whose houses were on wagons), and amber.

He claims that tin was first brought from the Cassiterides by Midacritus, and both soap and checked patterns in clothing came from Gaul. He also says that the “sixth day of the moon” is the beginning of Gallic months and years. He claims that the name Ivrea comes from the Gallic word for “a man good at breaking horses”, and that the Boians founded Lodi, while the Insubrians founded Milan.

He says that the Gauls used to practice “magic”, while the Britains still do, and with “grand ritual” (30.4.13). He mentions several Druidic herbs (24.62.103, 25.58.106, 27.76.101), and gives detailed information about mistletoe, how it is collected, and its believed healing properties in 16.95.259. He describes a fantastic Gallic “egg”, which is believed to help one in litigation (29.12.52).

He names many tribes in various parts of Gaul :

Belgic Gaul - Texuandri, Menapi, Morini, Oromarsaci, Bretons, Ambiani, Bellovaci, Bassi, Catoslugi, Atrebates, Nervi, Veromandui, Suaeuconi, Sussionsiones, Ulmanectes, Tungri, Sunici, Frisiavones, Baetasi, Leuei, Treveri, Lingones, Remi, Mediomatriei, Sequani, Raurici, Helveti.

Celtic Gaul - Lexovii, Vellocasses, Galeti, Veneti, Abrincatui, Ossismi, Namnetes, Aedui, Carnuteni, Boii, Senones, Aulerci (both those named Ebuovices and those named Cenomani), Neldi, Parisii, Tricasses, Andicavi, Viducasses, Bodiocasses, Venelli, Coriosvelites, Diablinti, Rhedones, Turones, Atesui, Secusiani.

Aquitanian Gaul - Ambilatri, Anagnutes, Pictones, Santoni, Bituriges (also named Vivisci), Aquitani, Sediboviates, Convenae, Begerri, Tarbelli Quattuorsignani, Cocosates Sexsignani, Venami, Onobrisates, Belendi, Monesi, Mountain Oscidates, Sybillates, Camponi, Bercorcates, Pinpedunni, Lassunni, Vellates, Toruates, Consoranni, Ausci, Elusates, Sottiates, Oscidates of the Plain, Suceasses, Latusates, Basaboiates, Vassei, Sennates, Cambolectri Agessinates, Dituriges called Cubi, Lemovices, Arverni, Gabales, Ruteni, Cadurci, Nitiobroges, Petrocori.

In Transpadana Gaul, he names the tribes of the Salassi (probably Celto-Ligurian), Libicii, Sallui, and Vertamacori. He also names the towns of Seluzzo, Susa, Turin, Aosta Praetoria (Salassi), Vercelli (Libicii), and Novara (Vertamacori).

Author : Silius Italicus, Titus Catus Silius Italicus

When : Born 25-26 AD, died 101 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Padua, Italy; Rome; Asia minor; Campania, Italy

Occupation : Politician, poet, consul

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Fiction

Silius served as consul and an administrator to Asia before he retired from politics. His historical epic poem "Punica", about the second Punic war, is written in the style of Vergil's Aeneid, and is the longest surviving Latin poem (and some say the worst).

References : "Punica", 1.620-1.630, 2.397-2.403, 3.340-3.355, 4.145-4.160, 4.175-4.223, 4.248-4.305, 4.310-4.313, 4.700-4.710, 5.130-5.145, 5.640-5.660, 8.15-8.20, 12.130-12.135

Source : "Silius Italicus, Punica", translated by J.D. Duff, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1983.

Comments :

Summary : Silius refers several times to the sack of Rome, and says Celtiberians prefer to let their fallen warriors be eaten by vultures. He claims that the men of Gaul "have knowledge concerning the entrails of beasts, the flight of birds, and the lightnings of heaven" and that the women of Gaul perform every task but that of war. He describes Crixus as having snow-white skin and wearing lots of gold, including a golden torc. He variously describes Gauls as rich, furious in battle, fickle, guileless, savage, boastful, unstable, and "bold at the start but infirm of purpose".

He names the Senones, Boii, and Suevi as Gallic tribes. He names Crixus, Teotalus, Sarmens, Ligaunus, Vosegus, and Ducarius as warriors, and Gargenus as king of the Boii.

He appears to place the subterranean city of the Cimmerians somewhere near Naples.

Author : Frontinus, Sextus Julius Frontinus

When : Born 30-40 AD, died 103-104 AD

Culture : Roman/Celtic

Lived : Gaul, Alexandria?, Britain, Rome

Occupation : Consul, governor

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

Born in Gallia Narbonensis (conquered about 155 years earlier), Frontinus was the Roman governor of Britain from 74-78 AD, and the commissioner of water at Rome later in life. His two surviving works are “Strategems” and “On Aqueducts”.

References : “Strategems”, Book 1 : 2.6, 2.7, 6.4, 8.3, 11.14, 11.15; Book 2 : 1.8, 1.16, 3.17, 3.18, 4.5, 4.7, 5.3, 5.7, 5.20, 5.34, 6.1, 13.1, 13.11; Book 3 : 7.2, 13.1, 15.1, 16.2, 16.3, 17.6, 17.7; Book 4 : 3.14, 5.4

Source : “Frontinus : The Strategems, The Aqueducts of Rome”, translated by C.E. Bennett, edited by M.B. McElwain, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1925.

Comments :

Summary : Frontinus describes many different tactics and tricks both used by and against the Gauls and Celtiberians in battle. He mentions the “scythe-bearing chariots” of the Gauls, and describes a road passing thru Roman territories known as “the Gallic Way”.

He names Castus and Cannicus as “the leaders of the Gauls” and Viriathus as “leader of the Celtiberians”. He names the Boii, Atrebates, Lingones, and Cadurci as Gallic tribes, and Commius, Viridomarius, and Ambiorix as military leaders.

=====
Author : Mela, Pomponius Mela

When : Flourished 40-50 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Southern Iberia (Spain); Rome?

Occupation : Historian

Hand : First/second

Bias : Unknown

Not much is known about Mela, except that he is the first Roman geographer, and that he was born into an Italian family in Iberia, conquered by the Romans about 225 years earlier. His only known work is “De Situ Orbis”, or “Description of the World”. While he generally follows the beliefs of those before him, his knowledge of the east is inferior, and he sometimes adds his own bizarre notions. However, he was more acquainted with western Europe than earlier authors.

References : “Description of the World”, Book 1:18, 19; Book 2:55, 74-93, 124-126; Book 3:3-32, 36, 37, 45, 47-54, 57

Source : “Pomponius Mela’s Description of the World”, translated by F.E. Romer, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1998.

Comments : Mela’s comment about Thule being near (“apposita”) the Belcae (3.57) may involve some transcription errors : “apposita” may have originally been “opposita” (opposite), and the Belcae are a Scythian tribe (who lived around the Black Sea), but Thule is supposed to be in the northeast Atlantic. There is much speculation about what “Belcae” might have originally been or meant.

Summary : Mela describes in great detail the boundaries, rivers, towns, tribes of Gaul, Spain, and Germany, and mentions Britain, Ireland, the Cassiterides, the Orkneys, and Thule. He describes Hyperborea as a land of peace and plenty, where the people commit suicide when their lives have been fulfilled.

He says that Gallia Narbonensis was once called Gallia Bracata, and names Gallia Comata as being inhabited by the Aquitani, the Celts, and the Belgae.

Of the people of Gaul, he says they are “crude” and “superstitious”, and used to sacrifice humans to their gods, but that practice was banned. He says their Druids “claim to know the size and shape of the earth and of the universe, the movements of the sky and of the stars, and what the gods intend”, and teach their noble men in secret. He mentions their belief in an eternal soul and in an afterlife. He says that in the past, debts could be deferred until the afterlife, and some Gauls would throw themselves on their loved one’s funeral pyre to be with them in the afterlife.

He describes an island off the coast of Brittany where nine Gallic virgin priestesses tend the oracle of an unnamed Gallic god, and says that the people believe these priestesses can control the wind and the waves, cure the sick, shape-change, and predict the future.

He says that the Germans are hardy, courageous, fierce, and wage war for the pleasure of it. He names the Cimbri as German.

He says that the people of Britain are uncivilized, and they dye their bodies blue. They war among themselves constantly from a desire to expand their kingdoms, using weapons and methods very similar to the Gauls.

Of Ireland, he only says that it good for raising sheep, but the people are “undisciplined”, and ignorant of virtue and piety.

Author : Lucan, Lucian, Marcus Annaeus Lucannus
When : Born 39 AD, died 65 AD
Culture : Roman/Celtic
Lived : Iberia (Spain); Rome
Occupation : Poet
Hand : Unknown
Bias : Pro-Roman; pro-Caesar; Celts are barbarians; fiction

Born in Celtiberia (conquered by Rome about 240 years earlier) to a wealthy and well-connected Roman family, Lucan is considered one of the greatest classical poets, and is the last of the Roman epic poets. He wrote a 10-volume epic poem “Pharsalia” (now generally called “The Civil War”) which was not quite completed when he committed suicide after being implicated in a plot against emperor Nero. Not to be confused with Lucian of Samosata (below).

References : “Pharsalia”, Book 1, lines 245-248, 282±, 351±, 476-523; Book 2, lines 641±; Book 3, lines 88±, 449-487; Book 4, lines 8-11, 145-152

Source : Berkeley/SunSite, 1996.

Comments : Pharsalia was written about 100 years after the events it describes, and often ignores historical fact.

Lucan says the grove described in Book 3 was near Massilia (Marseille, France).

The god Hesus is also sometimes given as Esus.

Lucan provides the only literary reference to the Celtic god Taranis.

It is said that the Berne Scholia commentary on Lucan (written centuries later by Christian monks) notes that to worship (H)Esus men were hung from trees and stabbed or flayed and/or left to decompose; to worship Teutates they were drowned (possibly in cauldrons or barrels); and to worship Taranis they were sealed in hollow trees or wooden barrels and/or burnt to death. I could not find any original sources or academic works to confirm the exact wording of the comments.

Summary : Lucan speaks of blood sacrifices to “savage” Teutates, to the “horrid” shrines of (H)Esus, and to the “cruel” altars of Taranis.

He tells of Bards who sing of “valorous deeds in battle done”, and Druids who perform “strange mysteries” and “hateful rites”, know the “gods and stars”, and dwell in “secluded groves” and “forests far remote”.

He says that the Celts believe that life does not end at death, but continues on “in another age” with death in between, and therefore they do not fear to kill or be killed in battle.

In other passages, Lucan describes the Gauls as restless, savage, noble, and rebellious “for years on years”. He also refers to “Britain’s fair-haired chiefs”.

He describes a dark grove with cold, stagnant air and water dripping from “coal-black fountains”, where “barbarous worship” and “savage rites” were performed, the blood of human sacrifice covered every tree, and the leaves themselves trembled. Within there were “horrible” altars placed on upturned stones, and “rude, scarcely fashioned” statues of gods made from tree trunks that were “pallid with decay”. Men did not dare to worship near the grove, and even the priests approached the grove “in anxious dread” at noon or midnight, lest they “find its lord” within. Caesar’s men were so awed by its “dark majesty” that they feared the grove itself would strike them down should they try to destroy it.

=====

Author : Demetrius, Demetrius of Tarsus

When : Flourished late 1st century AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Tarsus (southern Turkey), Britain

Occupation : Grammarian

Hand : First (Britain)

Bias : Unknown

Very little is known about Demetrius except what Plutarch says about him in “Moralia”. According to Plutarch he lived in Tarsus, and was a “grammarian”. He very likely spent some time in Britain in the last half of the first century AD.

References : from Plutarch (about 135 years later), “Moralia/Obsolescence of Oracles” 419E

Source : see Plutarch below.

Comments : Demetrius probably visited Britain around 80 AD.

Two bronze votive plates have been found in York with Greek inscriptions, one dedicated to the gods of the governor’s headquarters by “Scribonius Demetrius”, the other to two of the Titans by “Demetrius”.

The Isle of Man is said to be named after the Celtic sea god Mannan mac Lir, and the Isle of Skye for the warrior queen Scathach (pronounced “Sca’-ya” or “Sky’-ya”).

Summary : Demetrius says that many of the small islands near Britain are mostly uninhabited, and some of them are named after gods or heroes. He says he travelled to one of them, populated by “holy men who were all held inviolate by the Britons” (but he does not call them Druids), and describes how they interpret a sudden storm as an indication that a powerful person somewhere has died.

Author : Josephus, Flavius Josephus

When : Born 37-38 AD, died 100-101 AD

Culture : Jewish; Roman

Lived : Jerusalem; Middle East; Rome; Greece

Occupation : Priest, soldier, scholar, historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Pro-Rome

Born into a noble family, Josephus received both a religious and classical education, and was apparently gifted in diplomacy. He eventually became a commander of Jewish forces rebelling against Rome; when he was captured he managed to survive by presenting himself as a prophet to his captor, Vespasian. When Vespasian became Emperor, Josephus was freed and became an advisor to the Roman army. He later settled in Rome and wrote many works.

References : “Antiquities of the Jews”, 17.13.2, 18.7.2, 19.1.15; “The Wars of the Jews”, 2.7.3, 2.16.4, 3.1.2, 4.9.9, 6.6.2, 7.4.2; “Against Apion”, 1.20

Source : “The Works of Flavius Josephus”, William Whiston, Nelson and Brown, Edinburgh, 1828.

Comments :

Summary : Josephus describes barbarians (German and presumably Celtic) as “naturally passionate”, impulsive, physically robust, and performing “great exploits”. He says the Gauls have 305 “nations”, and their country is bordered on the “east side by the Alps, on the north by the river Rhine, on the south by the Pyrenean mountains, and on the west by the ocean”. He also implies that they are wealthier than most other Roman provinces. He mentions Vienna and Lyons as cities in Gaul.

He has Agrippa (31-12 BC) claiming that the Gauls are quite happy and prosperous under Roman rule, and hold the power and fortune of the Romans in “great regard”. He says that Vespasian (69-79 AD) “pacified the west”, including Britain. He has Titus (79-81 AD) saying that the Britons “adore the arms of the Romans”. In 69-70 AD, the Gauls allied themselves with the Germans in a rebellion against Rome, which Domitian quickly broke up. He names Classicus and Vitellius as two commanders of the rebellion.

Author : Martial, Marcus Valerius Martial

When : Born 38-43 AD, died 102-104 AD

Culture : Roman/Celtic

Lived : Iberia (Spain); Rome; Cisalpine Gaul

Occupation : Poet

Hand : First

Bias : Fiction

A Roman Celtiberian (conquered by Rome about 240 years earlier), Martial moved to Rome and eventually gained recognition as a master poet who perfected the poetic “epigram”. Over 1500 of his epigrams still survive.

References : “Epigrams”, Book 1:49, 53, 92; Book 3:1, 47; Book 4:55; Book 5:1,13; Book 6:11; Book 7:52; Book 8:75, Book 10:44, 78; Book 11:3, 21, 53; Book 12:18; Book 14:99, 128, 129, 200

Source : Martial’s Epigrams, translated by D.R. Shackleton Bailey, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1993.

Comments : all the epigrams from book 14 are tags on Saturnalia gifts.

The Lingones were a Celtic tribe located in modern-day France. Caledonia was the part of Britain north of Antonine’s Wall.

The “vertragus” was probably the ancestor of the greyhound. The name probably means “swift” or “fast runner” in Celtic.

A “cucullus” was a thick, heavy, full-length hooded cloak that came from Gaul, which kept much of the wool’s natural oils to make it more waterproof.

There are several claims by modern authors about what Martial said about the Celts, including that they thought the world was round (implied by Mela above), they had female warriors that participated in gladiatorial games against wild animals, and that they had invented a dye called “Mainz soap”, but I could not find any of these in any of Martial’s works I had access to.

Summary : Martial mentions Gallic jackets, cloaks, and hounds, and refers to Gallic credulity, “greasy Gaul”, and Parma, a town in Cisalpine Gaul, which was well known for its high quality wool. He says that Gauls prefer red cloaks.

He also refers to “Caledonian Britons”, British breeches, and painted blue Britons.

He mentions many Celtiberian names, calling them “harsh” and “uncouth”.

Author : Dion Chrysostom, Dio Chrysostom

When : Born 40 AD, died 112-120 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Asia Minor (Turkey); Rome; Ukraine; Balkans; Euboea (Greek island); Alexandria, Egypt

Occupation : Orator, philosopher

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Friend to several emperors, Dion Chrysostom (“Dion of the Golden Mouth”) was a well respected philosopher of his day. Exiled at one point, he travelled across eastern Europe before he was eventually allowed to return to Rome. About 80 of his orations survive today, covering topics ranging from politics to literature to philosophy.

References : “Orations”, 37.27, 49.7, 79.4, 79.5

Source : H. Lamar Crosby, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1986.

Comments : discourses 37 and 64 are now attributed to Dion’s Gallic student, Favorinus.

Summary : Dion says that the Celts have appointed the Druids, who are “devoted to the prophetic art and to wisdom in general”, to “advise” their kings, but that it was in fact the Druids who ruled, because the kings “were not permitted to do or plan anything” without their council.

He says that amber abounds in the land of the Celts, and berates his countrymen for paying a tribute of silver to the Celts without cause.

=====

Author : Suetonius, Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus

When : Born 69-75 AD, died 122-160 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Italy

Occupation : Biographer

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Rome is decadent

Suetonius wrote about the lives of the first Roman emperors and their families. His most famous work is “The Lives of the Caesars” or “The Twelve Caesars”.

References : “Julius” XXII, XXIV, XXV, XLVII, LI, LIV, LVIII, LXXVI, LXXX; “Augustus” XL, LXXIX; “Tiberius” III, IX, XLI, XLIX; “Caligula” XLIV; “Claudius” I, XVII, XXI, XXV; “Nero” XVIII, XXXIX, XL, XLI; “Galba” III, IX, XII; “Vespasian” IV; “Domitian” X

Source : Suetonius, De Vita Caesarum, translated by J. C. Rolfe, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1920.

Comments : Nero Claudius Drusus (Drusus I) was the father of Claudius and Germanicus. Germanicus was the father of Caligula, who was the father of Nero.

Summary : Caesar [30-27 BC] : Suetonius mentions Cisalpine Gaul and Gallia Comata. Transalpine Gauls were used in Caesar’s army, and were later granted citizenship. Gaul was paying 40 million sesterces (about 10,000 pounds of silver) in taxes each year. Caesar was the first to invade Germany and Britain, and may have entered Britain in search of pearls. He pillaged the towns, shrines and temples of Gaul and Iberia merely for their riches. Gauls are described by Suetonius as “half-civilized”. “Alauda” is mentioned as the Gallic name of a legion, and “Lusitania” as a region in Iberia. The clothes of the Gauls are referred to as “braccans”.

Augustus [27 BC-14 AD] : refused to grant a Gaul citizenship because to do so would tarnish the honor of Rome.

Tiberius [14-37 AD] : Suetonius claims that Drusus (father of Claudius, great-grandfather to Nero) rather than Camillus brought back from Gaul the gold which had been paid to the Senones when they invaded Rome over 360 years earlier. During the reign of Tiberius, the chiefs of Gaul were quarreling, and the Germans were moving into Gaul. Tiberius plundered the provinces of Iberia and Gaul to confiscate their wealth. He mentions the Gallic tribe of the Senones.

Caligula [37-41 AD] : names two Britons Adminius and Cynobellinus, and the latter is called the “king of the Britons”.

Claudius [41-54 AD] : the cities of Gaul are told what ceremonies, prayers and sacrifices to make. Claudius conquered Britain “without any battle or bloodshed”, and portrayed the surrender of the British kings in arenas. He abolished the “cruel and inhuman religion” of Druidism in Gaul.

Nero [54-68 AD] : Boudicca’s rebellion is mentioned, but not by name. A Gaul named Vindex led a Gallic revolt against Nero. Suetonius describes a sculpture of a Roman horseman dragging a Gallic soldier by the hair.

Galba [68-69 AD] : the word “galba” in Gallic apparently means fat man. Galba also dealt with a Gallic rebellion by Vindex. He treated Iberian and Gallic provinces who did not immediately side with him very harshly.

Author : Plutarch, Mestrius Plutarchus

When : Born 45-46 AD, died 124-125 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Greece, Egypt, Italy, Rome, Athens

Occupation : Biographer, philosopher

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Despite his popularity with Roman intellectuals, Plutarch stayed in his home town in Greece, and was active in its affairs, even serving as mayor. He also served for many years as a priest of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Most of his works still exist. He claimed he tried to separate conjecture from “authentic history”. [It is claimed by some that there is proof that he lived among the Celts in his writings, but I could not find a clear reference.](#)

References : “Parallel Lives” –

“Romulus” 21, 22, 33, 45; “Numa Pompilius” 1, 25; “Solon” 6; “Camillus” 16-22, 24-26, 28-31, 43, 44; “Fabius” 3, 26; “Paulus” 8, 11; “Marcellus” 2, 4, 7-9; “Pyrrhus” 29, 35; “Marius” 2, 14-16, 22, 30, 39, 40, 43, 45, 64; “Crassus” 17, 23; “Pompey” 11, 54; “Caesar” 6, 14, 17-26, 28, 31; “Cato the Younger” 20; “Comparison of Tiberius and Caius Gracchus with Agis and Cleomenes” 5; “Cicero” 25; “Comparison of Dion with Brutus” 6; “Galba” 13; “Otho” 11

“Moralia” –

“A Letter to Apollonius” 113A; “Superstition” 165D-E, 171B-C; “Bravery of Women” 246B-246D, 257E-258F; “The Roman Questions” 269E, 287B-C; “Parallel Stories” 309B-C, 313A-B; “The Fortune of the Romans” 324D-325D, 325F-326A; “Concerning Talkativeness” 510F; “On Love of Wealth” 523F-524A; “Table-Talk” 676B-C, 734B; “The Dialogue on Love” 768B-D, 770D-771C; “Other Fragments”, 189; “On the Face in the Moon”, 941A

Sources : “Plutarch’s Lives”, John Dryden, 1683. “Plutarch’s Moralia”, translated by F.C. Babbitt, P.H. DeLacy, B. Einarson, P.A. Clement, H.B. Hoffleit, E.L. Minar, F.H. Sandbach, W.C. Helmbold, H.L. Fowler, H. Cherniss, E.N. O’Neil, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1968-1986.

Comments : Plutarch often refers to “Galatia”, but this is probably a Greek word meaning “land of the Gauls”, not the land of the Celts in Asia Minor, which he calls “Celto-Scythians”. In addition, he at least one time refers to the “Galatians of Asia”, so “Galatia” by itself probably refers to the Celts of western Europe.

Lake Maeotis is the modern-day Sea of Azov, Scythia was the large region to the west of Maeotis, and Pontus was the small region on the southern border of the Black Sea.

[It is claimed by modern authors that Plutarch says that Celtic women were allowed to speak at tribal assemblies, and while “Bravery of Women” 245B-D says they often settled disputes, nothing was found about general assemblies.](#)

Summary : Plutarch says that the country of the Celts reaches from the Atlantic ocean and “the arctic regions” as far east as the Black Sea. But there they have mingled with other nations, and so are called Celto-Scythians (what I call Asia Minor Gauls). In his invasion of their lands, Caesar conquered 800 Celtic towns, 300 “states”, and 3 million men. Plutarch says the river Rubicon divides Gaul from the rest of Italy, that the Ligurian tribe was a barrier between Gaul and Italy, and that the Gauls who live near the Danube are also called Basternae and are warlike and famous horsemen. He also says that Gaul has many earthquakes.

Interestingly, Plutarch says that “the Gauls are of the Celtic race”, indicating they are distinguishable. He says that in ancient times the Gauls had to leave their homeland because the land could not support them due to their large numbers, and entire tribes of warriors, women, and children then wandered and settled all over Europe. But some tribes, discovering Italian wine, went in search of it, and that’s why so many Celtic tribes lived in Italy early on.

He *speculates* that the Cimmerians, as they were anciently called by the Greeks, were a part of the Celto-Scythians that were driven away from their homeland to the remotest northern regions of the “outer ocean” where they lived in days and nights that were a year long each. But eventually they migrated to Italy, to be then known as the Cimbri.

Plutarch describes the Celtic people as very tall, constantly feasting and drunk, insatiably greedy, and exceptionally skilled in horsemanship, but not used to heat or drought. According to him, they believed that their gods delighted in human sacrifice. They dressed in “trews” (close-fitting trousers, possibly with a colorful pattern) and sleeves (as opposed to tunics). He says that the women would eat bowls of porridge while they and their children bathed, and used an ointment that colored their hair gold or red.

He tells a story where Celtic women stopped a civil war between opposing armies that were poised to battle, and after that the women continued to arbitrate disputes. In Hannibal’s army, Celtic women were used to settle disputes between the Carthaginians and Celts.

He says Celts are the “most noble” of all the barbarians, and filled with “manly spirit”, but their weapons were made of soft metal and would bend easily in combat. He says that bands of mercenary soldiers were called Gaesatae. In one battle at least, he says the women and children fought alongside the men, until they too were slain.

The Gauls were also very wealthy – he describes the armor of a king of the Gauls as adorned with gold and silver, shining like lightning. Many of the warriors’ bucklers (small shields) were also adorned with gold and silver.

Twice he explains why the Gauls attack Rome, each time a little differently : when the Gauls attacked the Clusinians, a Roman ambassador Fabius (or, 3 ambassadors of the Fabius family) was sent to the Gauls to negotiate a peace treaty, which Brennus the king of the Gauls refused. In one version the ambassadors go to the Clusinians to inflame them against the Gauls. Regardless, at that point Fabius challenged the Gauls to single combat on behalf of the Clusinians, and won. The Gauls now went to Rome to petition against Fabius, saying that he had breached “international” law by attacking a Gaul while acting as an ambassador. While the Roman diplomats agreed with the Gauls, either Fabius fled and Rome made no effort to find him, or the general populace voted in favor of Fabius. Either way, enraged by this breach of diplomacy, that’s why the Gauls decided to attack Rome.

Plutarch describes the taking of Rome in great detail in “Parallel Lives”, “Camillus” 20-31. And at the end he describes the famous scene where Rome capitulates to paying the Gauls a “thousand weight” of gold to leave, but the Gauls rigged the scales, and when challenged by the Romans as showing bad faith, Brennus tosses his sword and belt onto their side of the scales and replies in scorn “What should it mean, but woe to the conquered?”. Plutarch also offers a reason as to why the Gauls decided to leave Rome – that they had heard their own homelands were being invaded.

Several times Plutarch mentions how greatly the Romans feared the Celts because they had once gotten to the heart of their empire.

Plutarch mentions in passing that Galatian mules are very expensive. He also says that the Romans very much like a pitch-flavored wine made in Gaul near Vienna.

He tells the story of when Brennus, the leader of the Gauls who attacked Delphi, was told by a woman of Ephesus in Asia Minor that she would let him sleep with her, and she would deliver Ephesus to him, in exchange for his gold. So he told his soldiers to throw all their gold at her, and she died under the weight of it.

He also tells of when Atepomarus, another king of the Gauls, publicly announced that he would not cease fighting the Romans until they prostituted their wives to he and his soldiers. But the Romans instead sent their maid-servants, who so tired out the Gauls with sex that the Romans were able to attack them while they slept and defeat them.

Twice Plutarch tells the story of Camma and Sinorix : there were two Galatian kinsmen, Sinatus and Sinorix. Sinatus married Camma, who was lovely and kind, and loved by all. She was also a priestess of Diana (that Plutarch says the Galatians worshipped the most of all gods). But Sinorix also loved her, and when he could not have her by “persuasion or violence”, killed Sinatus. She eventually pretended to accept his advances, and finally sent for him to discuss their marriage. When he arrived, she poured mead for both of them, and drank first. But after he had drunk his, she revealed that the drink was poisoned, and said that she would gladly give up her life to avenge her husband’s murder. She died some time after he did, comfortably and in cheerful spirits.

He also tells of the Galatian woman Stratonica, the wife of Deiotarus, who when she and her husband could not have children, persuaded him to have children by another woman, whom she raised and educated as if they were her own.

And the story of Chiomara, a woman of the “Galatians of Asia”, who was taken captive during battle and raped by her captor. While she was being ransomed back, she gave a sign to one of the Gauls and he cut off her captor’s head. She took his head back to her husband, who said “Oh, wife! Your fidelity is noble”. To which she replied “It is a nobler thing that there is now but one man alive that has ever lain with me”.

Plutarch says that the tribe of the Aruveni possess a small sword they keep in a temple, claiming that they won it from Caesar during battle. He says that Caesar himself saw it, and let them keep it because he considered it consecrated.

He names Viridomarus and Atepomarus as kings of the Gauls, Britomartus as a king of the Gaesatae, Boeorix as a king of the Cimbri, and Deiotarus as a king in Galatia.

Celtic tribes include the Sequani, Edui, Ligones, Allobroges, Insubrians and then the Helvetians and Tigurini who had 12 towns and 400 villages, the Belgae who were “the most powerful of all the Gauls” and inhabited one third of the Gallic territory, and the Nervii who were the “fiercest and most warlike” of the tribes.

He names the Celtic towns of Clastidium, Alesia, Ariminum, Narbo, Vienna, Ravenna, Milan (the greatest and most populated, and their capital), and Massilia (Marseille), to which they were “much attached”.

Of Britain, he says that they were so poor they had nothing worth plundering. Some of their tribes included the Arverni and Carnutini, and some leaders were Abriorix and Vergentorix, the supreme general. He says an island called Ogygia lies five days’ sail west of Britain.

Plutarch describes Germany in some detail, saying their warriors wore helmets shaped like the heads of wild animals, adding plumes of feathers on top to make themselves look taller. They had breastplates of iron, “white glittering shields”, “darts” (presumably a short-ranged thrown weapon) and large heavy swords.

He names the German tribes of Teutones, Cimbri, Ambrones, Usipes, Tenteritae, Sugambri, and Suevi, the most warlike people of all. He says one of the German kings was named Ariovistus.

Author : Tacitus, Publius Cornelius Tacitus, Gaius Cornelius Tacitus

When : Born 54-56 AD, died 117-120 AD

Culture : Roman(/Celtic?)

Lived : Gaul?, Rome, Turkey

Occupation : Historian, politician

Hand : Second

Bias : Rome is decadent, barbarians are noble savages

There are some indications from his writings that Tacitus may have been born in Gaul or Transalpine Gaul (conquered about 100 and 170 years earlier, respectively). Born to an aristocratic family, his father-in-law Agricola was the governor of Britain from 78-84 AD, so much of Tacitus' information about Britain is considered reliable. In general, he is considered accurate and fair. His major works are given the abbreviated titles "Agricola", "Germany", "Dialogs", "History", and "Annals". Less than half of both "Annals" and "History" survive today.

References : "Agricola" 5, 10-38; "Germany" 25-33, 99-570, 604-611, 744-778, 825-828, 874-880, 932-951; "Histories" 1.2, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9, 1.51, 1.59, 1.61-1.65, 1.67, 1.76, 1.87, 1.89, 2.32, 2.57, 2.61, 2.68, 2.93, 2.94, 2.97, 3.34, 3.41, 3.44, 3.45, 3.53, 3.72, 4.12, 4.17, 4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.31, 4.36, 4.54-4.57, 4.59-4.65, 4.67-4.69, 4.71, 4.73-4.79; "Annals" Book 1:765-839, Book 2:445-456, 1311-1318, Book 3:821-934, Book 6:149-152, Book 11:54-60, 355-362, 468-539, Book 12:389-394, 514-646, 675-679, Book 13:652-658, Book 14:615-862, 1157-1170, Book 15:836-842, Book 16:269-276

Sources : "Agricola", translated by A.J. Church and W.J. Brodribb, MacMillan, London, 1877. "Germany", translated by Thomas Gordon, Collier & Son Company, New York, 1910. History, Annals : "The Complete Works of Tacitus", translated by A.J. Church and W.J. Brodribb, Modern Library, New York, 1942.

Comments : The "Mother Earth" goddess "Herthum" (Germany, line 825) is also known as "Nerthus".

Mona is the island of Anglesey.

Tacitus' descriptions of the Germans have many points of similarity with the Celts : in battle, he says they "urge furiously" and "shrink timorously". He notes that their ballads are the only form of history and record-keeping; many foot soldiers fight naked, and any warrior becomes outcast if they flee in battle. Priests enforce the laws, there are many consecrated and holy woods and groves, and they are all "addicted" to divination and augury. He also says they reckon time by counting nights, make payment for minor wrongs with livestock, use grain storage pits, drink to excess, are very kind to strangers, and bathe often. In assemblies, he says a speaker's rank is set by their age, nobility, "warlike renown", or eloquence, and that their influence "proceeds rather from [their] ability to persuade than from any authority to command".

There is a claim that Tacitus reported that the Druids say that their supreme god must be adored in silence, with veneration and sacrifices, but this *apparently* comes from a 1797 document whose accuracy (if I could even find it) would be highly suspect.

Summary : Tacitus says that there are 64 states in Gaul, and describes the coast of Gaul as inhabited by an "unwarlike population". He claims that the tribe of the Aedui were first to have the right to be Roman senators.

He describes the Germans and Gauls as "always liable to disease", says the Gallic tribe of the Helvetii was "famous once for its warlike population", and mentions the sack of Rome by Gauls. He calls Gaul and Spain

“the most powerful region of the world”, and says that Gauls command Roman legions and rule Roman provinces. He also comments on the “mutual jealousy” of the Gallic provinces.

He tells of Druids making “prophetic utterances of an idle superstition”, and describes a scene where Druids and “priestesses” on Mona faced off with Roman soldiers (Annals, book 14, lines 615-862). He also tells the stories of Cartismandua (Annals/12.514) and Boudicca (Agricola/16, Annals/14.655-14.788).

He claims that Gauls were expelled from Germany, the language of the Aestians (a Germanic tribe) is similar to that of Britain, and the language of another Germanic tribe, the Gothinians, is Gallic; and he says that the Cimbri live in Germany, near the ocean. He also tells of prophetic German women who were considered divine, lived in isolation, and communicated their answers by means of a relative.

He notes many similarities between Gaul and Britain : “Their [Gallic] religious belief may be traced in the strongly-marked British superstition. The language differs but little; there is the same boldness in challenging danger, and, when it is near, the same timidity in shrinking from it. The Britons, however, exhibit more spirit...”. He also admits of the British Celts, “they admit no distinction of sex in their royal successions”. He describes the British Celts as armed with “small bucklers and unwieldy weapons. The swords of the Britons are not pointed, and do not allow them to close with the foe, or to fight in the open field.”

He says of Ireland, which he calls Hibernia : “In soil and climate, in the disposition, temper, and habits of its population, it differs but little from Britain”.

Of the Germans, he calls their recital of verse “barding”, which they chant in loud, harsh tones while advancing to battle. In Histories/4.65, he says that a Celtic town is related to a German town by blood. See the Comments above for many other aspects of German culture which are very similar to Celtic culture.

He describes a vow “often made by barbarians” : they grow their hair long and dyed red until their goal has been reached. It is unclear whether he is referring to Germans or Celts (or both).

He says that Thule can be seen from the Orkneys.

He names many Celtic tribes, including the Helvetii, Brigantes, Boii, Aedui, Arverni, Ubii, Lingones, Nervii, Sequani, Remi, Andecavi, Turoni, Mediomatrici, Silures, Odrovices, and Treveri. He names Santones as a “state” of Gaul.

He also mentions several German tribes : Suevi, Batavi, Tungri, Frisii, Tencteri, Cimbri, Teutones, Angrivarii, Hermundusi, and Quadi. He does not identify them, but the Betasii are probably Germanic and the Boresti are probably Scottish.

He names many Celtic individuals : Boudicca, Cartismandua (female chieftain of the Brigantes), Flavius (chieftain), Rufinus (chieftain), Vannius (king of the Quadi), Caractacus (British king), Civilis, Vitellius, Vindex, Julius Tutor, Julius Sabinus (who claimed to be great-grandson of Julius Caesar), Classicus, Sacrovir, Tullius Valentinus (a Treveri), Julius Auspex (a Remi), Venutius, Julius Florus (a Treveri), Julius Sacrovir (an Aedui), Cogidumnus, and Galgacus.

He mentions a few Celtic towns : Lugdunum (Lyon, France), Divodurum (Metz, France), Londinium (London, England), and Verulamium (near St. Albans, England).

Author : Juvenal, Decimus Junius Juvenalis

When : Born around 55-60 AD, died around 136-140 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Italy, Britain?, Rome, Spain?, Egypt

Occupation : Poet
Hand : Possibly first
Bias : Rome is decadent; fiction

Not much definite is known about Juvenal, except that he knew Martial, and is considered Rome's last great satirical poet. He may have been born to well-off Spanish parents living near Rome, seen military duty in Britain, and been exiled to Egypt at one point. Sixteen of his satires survive.

References : Satire 2, lines 159-161; Satire 4, lines 124-131; Satire 6, lines 118-121; Satire 7, lines 13-16, 150-152; Satire 8, lines 144-147, 231-236; Satire 9, lines 27-31; Satire 10, lines 12-15; Satire 11, lines 111-115; Satire 15, lines 108-113

Source : "Juvenal, the Sixteen Satires", translated by Peter Green, Penguin Books, 1967.

Comments :

According to Green, the mention of "galled ankles" and "low slippers" at the beginning of Satire seven is a reference to a gallica, a Gallic shoe or slipper which did not cover the ankles, and so did not hide the scars from slave's shackles.

The hooded cloaks ("cucullo") referred to in Satires six and eight are probably of Celtic origin and manufacture.

Summary : in Gaul, Juvenal says that lawyers are "flourishing", and "smart Gaulish professors are training the lawyers of Britain". He refers to "trousered Gauls", "loose-woven" Gallic cloth, and the sack of Rome by the Gauls.

About Britain, he says it has "short clear nights", refers to "British whales", and names Arviragus as a king of the Britons.

=====
Author : Florus

When : Flourished 130-160 AD
Culture : Roman
Lived : Africa, Rome, Spain
Occupation : Historian
Hand : Unknown
Bias : Third

A contemporary of Trajan (53-116) and Hadrian (76-138), Florus is sometimes called "Julius Florus", "Lucius Anneus Florus", or "Anneus Florus", and may actually be Publius Annius Florus. He compiled a history of Rome, which is often wrong in chronological and geographical details.

References : "Epitome of Roman History" 1.7, 1.8, 1.13, 1.20, 1.27, 1.33, 1.38, 1.45

Source : "Lucius Annaeus Florus, Epitome of Roman History", translated by E.S. Forster, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1984.

Comments :

Summary : Florus re-tells the story of the taking of Rome by the Celts, as well as several other common encounters between Rome and the Celts. He describes them as physically large and "wild", "uncivilized" and constantly refers to them as barbarians with the "spirit of wild beasts", saying that they can "act with cunning", and have "no trace of fear".

He says that the spoils of war from Gaul in early times consisted mostly of wagons, and that the Veneti tribe had a navy. He describes Celtic women as fighting in a battle to protect their wagons and carts, and killing their children and themselves when the battle was lost.

He names many Celtic tribes : Aquitani, Aedui (near Rhine), Arverni, Belgae, Bituriges, Carnutes, Cimbri, Eburones, Helvetii, Insubres (near the Alps), Morini (Gallic coast), Senones, Sequani, Tencteri, Teutones, Tigurini, Treveri, Veneti.

He also names many tribal leaders : Ambiorix (Eburones), Ariovistus, Boiorix (Cimbri), Brittomarus, Casuellanus (Britian), Indutiomarus (Treveri), Teutobodus (Teutones), Vercingetorix, Viridomarus.

He names a few towns : Alesia, Avaricum, Gergovia (Arverni).

Author : Arrian, Lucius Flavius Arrianus, Aulus Flavius Arrianus

When : Born 85-96 AD, died 165-180 AD

Culture : Greek/Roman

Lived : Bithynia (Turkey); Greece; Spain; Black Sea coast

Occupation : General, politician, historian, philosopher

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

Arrian was a powerful man in the Roman Empire. He was a friend of emperor Hadrian (who built Hadrian's Wall in Britain), a general in the Roman army, and he was the first Greek to be a Roman consul. Among his many existing works, his "Anabasis" is the clearest existing biography of Alexander the Great from that time. From the things he says in his books on hunting and tactics, he seems to have lived in Roman Gaul for some time.

References : "Anabasis of Alexander" 1.3.1, 7.15.4; "Indica" 16.10; "On Hunting", 2.1-2.3, 3.1-3.7, 19.1-21.3, 34.1-35.1; "Tactics", 19.2-19.3, 33.1, 37.4, 42.4, 43.2, 44.1-44.2

Sources : "Anabasis" and "Indica" quotes are from "Arrian", translated by P.A. Brunt, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1976. "On Hunting" quotes are from "Xenophon and Arrian On Hunting", translated with commentary by A.A. Phillips and M.M. Willcock, Aris & Phillips Ltd., Warminster England, 1999. "Tactics" quotes are from "Flavius Arrianus : 'Tactical Handbook' and 'The Expedition Against the Alans'", translated by J.G. DeVoto, Ares Publishers Inc., Chicago Illinois, 1993.

Comments : the Quadi and Marcomanni were German tribes, while the Iazyges, Getae, and Sauromatae were located in Hungary and Romania.

Many people consider the Vertragi to be the ancestors of modern greyhounds.

A purse net is a net whose edges can be drawn together with a string.

Sections 34 to 43 in "Tactics" describe Roman cavalry exercises, some of which *may* have been borrowed from the Celts. However, since it is impossible to tell what portions may have originally been Celtic, they are not included here.

Summary : Arrian claims that the Greeks first learned of the Celts when tribes from all over Europe, Africa, and the Middle East sent envoys to Alexander the Great. He describes Celts as the "most warlike tribes", but the tribes he specifically names are German and Scythian. He says the source of the Danube is in Celtic territory, and that the Celts use bits in their horses' mouths.

He says that the Celts of his day hunt for both sport and food. He dislikes the Celtic “Segusian” breed of dog (which he speculates is named after a Celtic tribe) as much as he loves their “Vertragi” breed (which he says is the Celtic word for “speed”). He describes a Celtic nobleman’s sporting hunt in 19.1-21.3, and a Celtic sacrificial ritual to the goddess of the hunt in 34.1-35.1 – each time they are successful on a hunt, they put various amounts of money in a collection box dedicated to “Artemis” depending on what they caught, then once a year take all the money and buy as expensive an animal (sheep, goat, calf) as they can, and ritually sacrifice and eat it (leaving some of the meat for Artemis), and decorate their hunting dogs with garlands.

He claims that the “European barbarians” [western European Celts?] did not use chariots, only British tribes did, which were drawn by “small and scruffy” horses.

He says the Romans used Iberian and Celtic words for cavalry matters, since the Romans held the Celtic skill at cavalry in high esteem, and gives several examples : “petrinos”, “xynema”, and “tolougeton”.

Author : Ptolemy, Claudius Ptolemaeus
When : Born 85-100 AD, died 141-178 AD
Culture : Greek/Roman
Lived : Alexandria
Occupation : Geographer, astronomer, mathematician
Hand : Probably second and third
Bias : Unknown

Probably born into a Greek family in Alexandria, but a citizen of Rome, Ptolemy was one of the most influential classical scientists. He made astronomical observations in Alexandria from 127-141 AD, published several books on astronomy, and discovered the precession of the equinoxes. His 8 volume “Guide to Geography” remained the principal authority until the 15th century. Book Two lists names of towns, rivers, and tribes (by latitude and longitude), for the whole of western Europe. Unfortunately his works were not faithfully reproduced by later transcribers and authors, and many variations on his original text exist.

References : chapters 1, 2, 6-9.

Source : “Geography of Claudius Ptolemy” by E.L. Stevenson, The New York Public Library, 1932. I realize this text is not considered to be at all reliable, but it was all I had access to. However, all I wanted were tribe and town names.

Comments : Hibernia is Ireland; Albion is Britain. Anyone interested in the relative locations of the tribes and towns listed can refer to the text. “Colonies” may refer to Roman towns added after they conquered the area, and so may not represent any original Celtic towns.

Summary : In Ireland, Ptolemy lists some “towns” : Magnata, Manapia, Eblana, Regia, Rhaeba, Laberus, Macolicum, another Regia, Dunum, and Hibernis.

The tribes he names are the Vennicni, Rhobogdi, Erdini, Magnatae, Autini, Gangani, Vellabori, Darini, Volunti, Eblani, Cauci, Manapi, Coriondi, and Brigantes.

In Britain, he names the following towns as belonging to these tribes :

Novantae : Locopibia, Rerigonium
Selgovae : Carbantorigum, Uxellum, Corda, Trimontium
Damnoni : Colanica, Vindogara, Coria, Alauna, Lindum, Victoria
Otalini : Coria, Alauna, Bremenium
Vacomagi : Bannatia, Tamia, Pinnata, Tuesis
Venicones : Orrea

Taezali : Devana

Brigantes (extending to both coasts) : Epiacum, Vinovium, Caturactonium, Calatum, Isurium, Rigodunum, Olicana, Eboracum (Legio VI Victrix), Camulodunum

Parisi : Petuaria

Ordovices : Mediolanum, Brannogenium

Cornavi : Deva (Legio XX Victrix), Viroconium

Coritani : Lindum, Ratae

Catuvellauni : Salinae, Urolanium

Iceni : Venta

Trinovantes : Camulodunum

Demetae : Luentinum, Maridunum

Silures : Bullaeum

Dobuni : Corinium

Atrebati : Caleva

Canti among whom are the towns : Londinium, Daruernum, Rutupie

Regni : Noeomagus

Belgae : Iscalis, Aquae Calidae, Venta

Durotriges : Dunium

Dumnoni : Voliba, Uxella, Tamara, Isca

And refers to these tribes by name only : Epidi, Cerones, Carnonacae, Caereni, Cornavi; Caledoni, Decantae, Lugi, Smertae

Ptolemy says that Gallia is divided into four provinces : Aquitania, Lugdunensis, Belgica, and Narbonensis.

In Aquitania, he names the following tribes and their towns –

Pictones : Ratiatum, Limonum

Santones : Mediolanium

Bituriges Vibixci : Noviomagus, Burdigala

Tarbeli : Aquae Augustae

Limovici : Augustoritum

Cadurci : Dueona

Petrocori : Vesuna

Bituriges Cubi : Avaricum

Nitiobriges : Aginnum

Vassari : Cossium

Gabali : Anderedum

Dati : Tasta

Ausci : Augusta

Averni : Augustonemetum

Velauni : Ruessium

Rutani : Segodunum

Convenae : Lugdunum (colony)

In Lugeunensis Gallia, he names the following tribes and their towns –

Biducasi : Argenua

Venelli : Crociatonnum

Lexubi : Noeomagus

Caletae : Iuliobana

Osismi : Vorganium

Veneti : Darioritum

Aulircii Diablitae : Noeodunum

Arvi : Vagoritum

Veneliocasi : Ratomagus
Andicavae : Iuliomagus
Aulirei Cenomani : Vindinum
Namnetae : Condivincum
Abrincatui : Ingena
Aulirci Eburaci : Mediolanium
Rhedones : Condate
Senones : Agedicum
Carnutae : Autricum, Cenabum
Parisi : Lucotecia
Tricasi : Augustobona
Turonii : Caesarodunum
Segusiavi : Rhodumna, Forum Segusianorum
Meldae : Latinum
Vadicasii : Noeomagus
Aedui : Augustodunum, Cabylinum, Lugdunum Metropolis
Tribe name only : Lexubi, Venelli, Biducasi, Samnites.

In Belgica Gallia he names the following tribes and their towns –

Atribati : Metacum
Bellovici : Caesaromagus
Ambiani : Samarobriva
Morini : Tarvanna, Gesoriacum (a “naval station”)
Tungri : Atuatum
Menapii : Castellum
Nervi : Bagacum
Subanecti : Ratomagus
Viromandui : Augusta Viromanduum
Vesones : Augusta Vesunum
Remi : Durocortorum
Treveri : Augusta Treverorum
Mediomatrici : Divodurum
Leuci : Tullium, Nasium

In Narbonensis Gallia he names the following tribes and their towns –

Avatici : Maritime city (colony)
Comani : Massilia, Tauroentium, Olbia, Forum Julii (colony)
Deciati : Antipolis
Volcae Tectosages : Illiberis, Ruscinon, Tolosa (colony), Cessero, Carcaso, Baetirae, Narbon (colony)
Volcae Arecomici : Vindomagus, Nemausus (colony)
Allobroges : Vienna
Segallauni : Valentia (colony)
Tricastini : Noeomagus
Cavari : Acusion (colony), Avennion (colony), Arausion, Cabellion (colony)
Salvies : Taruscon, Glanum, Arelatum (colony), Aqua Sextia (colony), Ernaginum
Vocontii : Vasion
Memini : Forum Neronis
Elycoi : Albaugusta
Senti : Dinia
Tribe name only : Medulli

Author : Appian

When : Born 95-100 AD, died around 165

Culture : Greek/Roman

Lived : Alexandria

Occupation : Historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Pro-Rome

Not much is known about Appian, except that he eventually became a Roman citizen. His "Roman History" describes specific events rather than a continuous history, and is ordered by culture rather than by time. Eleven of the 24 books are complete, and many excerpts from the rest are quoted by later authors.

References : "Roman History" preface.4, preface.5; "Concerning Italy" 2.8.2, 2.9.1; "The Gallic History" 4.1-4.21; "The Wars in Spain" 6.1.1-6.1.2, 6.12.72; "The Hannibalic War" 7.1.4, 7.2.5-7.2.6, 7.2.8; "The Punic Wars" 8.1.5; "The Illyrian Wars" 10.1.2, 10.1.4-10.1.5, 10.2.7-10.2.8; "The Syrian Wars" 11.11.65; "The Civil Wars" 1.4.29, 1.4.50, 1.10.86, 1.10.92, 1.13.108-1.13.109, 2.2.13, 2.2.17, 2.4.41, 2.21.150, 3.14.97-3.14.98, 4.1.2

Source : "Appian's Roman History", translated by H. White, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1982.

Comments :

Summary : Appian describes Gauls as "intemperate by nature", "large and delicate and full of flabby flesh", and unable to maintain any effort. He says Gallic spears are more like javelins : "four-sided, half of wood and half of iron, which was soft except for the pointed end".

He tells the story of why and how the Gauls sacked Rome, and of the sack of Delphi and how they were punished. He also describes single combat between champions.

He describes the Bracari, a Celtiberian tribe in the north of Portugal, as very warlike, and says the women fought alongside the men, and would kill themselves (and sometimes their children as well) rather than submit to captivity.

He describes a Celtic bard who "sang in barbarous fashion the praises of King Bituitus, and then of the Allobroges, and then of the ambassador himself, celebrating his birth, his bravery, and his wealth".

He refers to the country north of the Pyrenees as "the country of the Celts, which is now called Gaul", and calls the region just north of the Pyrenees "Old Gaul". He says the eastern part of Spain is inhabited by Celts, who are called Galatians or Gauls, while the western people are called Iberians and Celtiberians.

Appian names many Celtic tribes, including the Aedui, Allobroges, Belgae, Boii, Bracari (Celtiberian), Britores, Helvetii, Nervii, Salyes (possibly Ligurian), Senones, and Tigurini.

He says Bituitus was king of the Allobroges, Brennus was king of the Gauls, Britomaris was the leader of the Senones, and names Camilus as a chief. He says Taurasia was a Gallic town in Italy.

He also names many German tribes, including the Cimbri, Sigambri, Suevi, Tencteri, Teutones, and Usipetes, and names Ariovistus as the king of the Germans.

Author : Polyaeus

When : Born around 100 AD; died after 163 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Turkey; Athens; Macedonia (northern Greece); Rome

Occupation : Rhetorician (public speaker)

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Late in his life, Polyaeus wrote an eight-book work, "Strategems", on the various ways in which different cultures wage war. It seems very hastily written, and he confuses many simple facts.

References : "Strategems" 4.6.17, 4.8.1, 6.intro, 7.35.1-7.35.2, 7.42, 7.50, 8.7.2, 8.16.2, 8.23.2-8.23.11, 8.25.1, 8.39, 8.61

Source : "Polyaeus : Strategems of War", translated by P. Krentz and E.L. Wheeler, Ares Publishers Inc., Chicago Illinois, 1994.

Comments : Polyaeus' references to Galatia and Galatians are probably the Asia Minor Gauls.

Summary : Polyaeus gives many examples about how Gauls behave in battle, including a couple about Brennus, and ten in which Caesar outwits the Gauls. He says that Celtic women were able to stop an imminent battle between two Celtic armies, and that Celtic women were named as the arbiters between Carthage and the Celts. He also claims that Gauls sell their prisoners-of-war as slaves to other cultures.

He speaks of the "slashing swords of the Celts, with which in a downward stroke they would chop off heads", but says that their iron is so soft and the swords so badly shaped that they quickly "double over and are useless for battle". He also says that the Celts are "by nature immoderately fond of wine", Artemis is especially revered by Galatians, and mentions Gallic cloaks made of goat's hair.

He names Ciderius as a commander of some Gallic mercenaries, Casivellaunus as king of the Britanni (a Gallic tribe), and Vercingetorix as "king of the Gauls". He describes Sinorix and Sinatus as two tetrarchs (kings) in Galatia, and Camma as a woman willing to sacrifice her own life in order to avenge her husband's murder. He also names two Gallic towns : Alesia and Gergovia, the "largest city in Gaul".

Author : Pausanias

When : Born 115 AD, died 180 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Lydia (Turkey); Greece; Asia Minor (Turkey); Syria; Palestine; Egypt; Macedonia; Italy; Epirus
(northern Greece)

Occupation : Geographer

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Pausanias travelled all over the *eastern* Mediterranean. His most important work is his ten-book "Description of Greece", which describes the legends, monuments, ruins, and geography of Greece.

References : "Description of Greece" 1.3.5, 1.4.1-1.4.6, 1.7.2, 1.8.1, 1.9.5, 1.13.2, 1.16.2, 1.19.5, 1.25.2, 1.30.3, 1.31.2, 1.33.4, 1.35.5

Source : "Pausanias, Description of Greece with an English Translation" by W.H.S. Jones, Litt.D. in 4 Volumes. Volume 1 : Attica and Cornith, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1918.

Comments : the Eridanus river has been linked to the Po river in Italy, the Danube (note the common root "danu" with the Celtic word Danubius), or as the world-encompassing Oceanus of the early Greeks.

Summary : Pausanias mentions the Gauls' migration into Greece : they overran Thessaly, then turned to Greece, "eager to sack Delphi and the treasures of the god". He says the Gauls live near a vast sea, in a land thru which the river Eridanus flows. He considers the name "Gaul" recent, and the name "Celt" ancient. Celtic mercenaries hired by Ptolemy Solon almost betrayed him. The Celts are described as being more numerous than any other nation. He also names the Cabares as a very northern Celtic tribe.

Author : Lucian of Samosata, Lucian

When : Born 115-125 AD, died 180-200 AD

Culture : Syrian/Greek

Lived : Syria; Ionia (western Turkey); Greece; Italy; Gaul

Occupation : Rhetorician (public speaker)

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

A popular speaker of his day, 82 existing works are attributed to Lucian, although not all of them may have been written by him. Not to be confused with Marcus Annaeus Lucanus ("Lucan", also sometimes spelled "Lucian", above), who lived from 39 AD to 65 AD.

References : "Dialogs of the Dead", Section 12; "Zeuxis and Antiochus", Section ???; "The Way to Write History", Section ???; "Alexander [of Abonutichus] the Oracle-Monger", Section ???; "The Liar", Section ???; "Heracles, an Introductory Lecture", Section ???

Source : "Works by Lucian of Samosata", translated by H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler, 1905.

Comments : brogues are a type of shoe. His references to Galatians are definitely Asia Minor Gauls.

Lucian provides the only classical reference to the Celtic deity Ogmios.

The "Hyperborean Flying Stranger" is probably Abaris, but Lucian does not name him.

[I did not have access to the 4th volume of his works as of this writing.](#)

Summary : Lucian describes Hannibal as conquering the Celtiberians and subduing western Gaul, and tells how Antiochus Soter won a battle against the Galatians with elephants. He refers to "Celtic ice" and to Severian, a Celt who invaded Armenia.

He mentions a Hyperborean "Flying Stranger" wearing brogues (shoes), who performs many magical feats by means of incantations.

He also describes at length how the Celts worship "Hercules" (the Roman's equivalent name) as providing the power of speech and wisdom, but represent him as an old man, and call him Ogmios.

Author : Aulus, Aulus Gellius

When : Born 125-130 AD, died 170-180 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Rome, Athens, Attica (?)

Occupation : Author, grammarian, lawyer

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Aulus Gellius wrote a twenty-volume book of knowledge called “Attic Nights”, most of which survives. While it discusses history, law, grammar, geometry, and many other subjects, it is poorly organized, but quotes many otherwise lost works of other authors.

References : “Attic Nights”, 3.9.7, 9.11.1-9.11.9, 9.13.1-9.13.19

Source : “The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius”, translated by J.C. Rolfe, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1946.

Comments :

Summary : Aulus names Tolosa as a town in the land of Gaul.

He tells a story of a one-on-one combat between a leader of the Gauls, an enormous man in armor gleaming with gold, against the Roman Valerius. As they began to fight, a raven flew down and harrassed the Gaul, allowing Valerius to win.

He tells another story that he got from the works of Quintus Claudius Quadrigarius, of a Roman warrior who was given the surname Torquatus because of the golden neck-chain he had taken from a Gaul in on-on-one combat. In the middle of a battle, a Gallic warrior called a stop between the two armies and challenged anyone to meet him in single combat, which no one wanted to do because of his size, strength, and savagery. At this point the Gaul began to laugh at the Romans and stuck his tongue out at them, causing Titus Manlius to come forward to meet him. The Gaul was naked except for a shield, two swords, and his neck-chain and bracelets. After defeating the Gaul, Titus cut off his head and put the bloody torc around his own neck, and was ever afterwards called Torquatus.

=====
Author : **Maximus of Tyre**, Cassius Maximus Tyrius, Maximus
When : Flourished 150-190 AD
Culture : Greek
Lived : Alexandria; Rome; Arabia?; Turkey?
Occupation : Philosopher, rhetorician (public speaker)
Hand : Unknown
Bias : Unknown

Not much is known about Maximus of Tyre’s life, except that he probably travelled extensively. 41 of his essays on philosophy, ethics, and theology still exist. Not to be confused with Valerius Maximus.

References : “Whether Images Should be Set up in Honor of the Gods”, 8

Source : “Maximus of Tyre : The Philosophical Orations”, translated by M.B. Trapp, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997.

Comments : [there is a claim that Maximus reported that the Druids say that their supreme god must be adored in silence, with veneration and sacrifices, but this *apparently* comes from a 1797 document whose accuracy \(if I could even find it\) would be highly suspect.](#)

Summary : Maximus says that the Celtic image of their version of “Zeus” is a tall oak.

=====
Author : **Galen**, Claudius Galen
When : Born 130 AD, died 200 AD
Culture : Greek
Lived : Pergamum/Pergamus (Greece); Mysia (Turkey); Smyrna (Turkey); Alexandria; Rome

Occupation : Physician

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Second only to Hippocrates in his importance to medical science, Galen's "On the Natural Facilities" was the authority on medicine well into the 16th century, despite its many mistakes.

References : unknown

Source : none found.

Comments : [Modern authors report that Galen wrote that the Celts have a cool, damp, pale, hairless skin, but I have not been able to confirm this.](#)

Summary : none found.

Author : Clement of Alexandria, Titus Flavius Clemens

When : Born 150 AD, died 211-216 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Athens; Alexandria; Jerusalem

Occupation : Christian theologian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Christian; Celts are "noble savages"

Trained in classical philosophy, and converted to Christianity as an adult, Clement was one of the first Christians to try to combine Platonic philosophy and Christian beliefs. He was considered a saint until the 9th century, when he was then declared a heretic.

References : "Miscellanies" 1.15, 6.3; "The Instructor" 2.2, 3.3, 3.4

Source : "The Ante-Nicene Fathers", Volume 2, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, American edition, revised by A.C. Coxe, Wm. B. Eerdmans publishing company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1885.

Comments : [there is an often-repeated modern claim that Clement said that Pythagorus picked up his ideas from the Druids of the Celts, but I could not find any such statement in the works I had available.](#)

Summary : Clement describes the Celts as "war-like" and "addicted to intoxications". He says they wear their hair long, but hate luxury and do not deck themselves in finery. He says that the Greeks got their philosophy from "the barbarians".

Interestingly, he mentions "the Druids of the Gauls" and "the philosophers of the Celts" separately in the same sentence.

Author : Tertullian, Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus

When : Born 150-160 AD, died 225-240 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Carthage, North Africa

Occupation : Lawyer, theologian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Christian

Tertullian grew up pagan in Carthage (second only to Rome at this time in importance), where he was trained in rhetoric and law. Converting to Christianity as an adult, he was the first to write about Christianity in Latin.

References : “To the Nations” Book 1, Chapter XVII; “On the Apparel of Women” Book 2, Chapter VI; “On the Pallium” Chapter IV; “Antidote for the Scorpion’s Sting” Chapter VII; “On the Veiling of Virgins” Chapter X; “An Answer to the Jews” Chapter VII; “Apology” 9.5, 16.5, 40.9; “To His Wife” Book 1, Chapter 4

Sources : “Apology” from “Tertullian and Minucius Felix”, translated by G.H. Rendall, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1984. “To His Wife” from “Tertullian, Treatises on Marriage and Remarriage”, translated by W. P. Le Saint, Newman press, New York, 1951. The remaining quotes come from “The Ante-Nicene Fathers : Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325”, A. Roberts and J. Donaldson editors; American reprint of the Edinburgh edition, revised by A. C. Coxe, Wm. B. Eerdmans pub., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1903. Tertullian in Vols. III and IV, translated by P. Holmes and S. Thelwall.

Comments : Tertullian provides the only known Classical reference to the Celtic goddess Epona.

Summary : Tertullian claims that many Roman women, envious of German and Gallic women’s natural hair color, would dye their hair red.

He twice mentions human sacrifices to the Gallic god “Mercury”, and once says that it is the elderly that are sacrificed.

He talks about “Galatian scarlet” (probably referring to western Gaul), the “diverse nations of the Gauls”, the Celtic horse goddess Epona, the Celtic sack of Rome, and Gallic mules. He also mentions “tattoo-marks of the Britons”.

=====

Author : Dio Cassius, Cassius Dio, Dion Cassius

When : Born 150-164 AD, died 235 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Bithynia (Turkey); Rome; Pergmum (Greece); Smyrna (Turkey); Libya (Africa)

Occupation : Politician

Hand : Third

Bias : Unknown

Dio Cassius spent much of his life in public service, holding many high offices thru the reigns of several emperors. His 80 book “Roman History”, written in Greek, provides details into the workings of Roman government that is distinctly different than that of a poet or historian. Unfortunately, only 27 or 28 complete books survive today, along with many fragments and summaries from other authors. He attempted to use works by earlier authors with a healthy dose of skepticism.

References (Z/ = from Zonaras) : “Roman History” 7.25.3, 7.29.5, 7.35.1, 12.16.1, 12.18, 12.19, 12.20, 13.1.1, 14.57(Z/8.24), 14.57.6, 15.57(Z/9.3), 22.74.1, 27.94.2, 37.33.4, 37.47.1, 38.8.5, 38.31.2, 38.31.3, 38.32.1, 38.32.2, 38.48.1, 38.49.4, 39.1.1-2, 39.3, 39.4, 39.5, 39.45.7, 39.46.1, 39.49, 39.50, 39.51.3, 40.2.3, 40.5.1, 40.31.2, 40.33.1, 40.33.2, 40.34.1, 40.39.1, 40.41.1-40.41.3, 41.19, 41.36.3, 41.61.4, 44.42.4, 46.55.4, 46.55.5, 53.12.5, 53.12.6, 53.25.2, 59.21.2, 60.19.1, 60.20.1, 60.20.2, 60.21.4, 62.2-62.7, 62.8.2, 62.12, 63.22, 63.24.4, 63.24.4, 65.3.1, 65.3.2, 65.16.1, 65.16.2, 69.3.4, 77.12.1-77.12.4, 77.16.5, 78.6.1

Source : “Dio’s Roman History”, translated by Earnest Cary, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1914.

Comments :

Summary : the summaries are listed by book number, to keep the information in chronological order.

Book 7 (around 390 BC)

The Romans were panic-stricken by the huge size of the Celts, and the strange, terrifying sound of their voices. The Celts wore “collars” made of gold.

Dio describes the one-on-one combat of Marcus Valerius and a Gaul, saying the Gaul excelled in strength and daring, but a crow appeared and attacked him, allowing Valerius to defeat him.

Book 12 (around 250 BC)

The Gallic mercenaries working for the Carthaginians changed sides to Rome for more money. Sometimes they would change sides and attack their own people.

Dio mentions the Boii and Insubres tribes, saying the Insubres live on the other side of the Po river, and have kinsmen living beyond the Alps.

The Gauls would sell off captives of war for money.

Books 13-15 (around 220-200 BC)

Gallic mercenaries deserted their army during the night.

The Pyrenees mountains separate Spain from Gaul. The tribes of Spain were very diverse, and spoke different languages.

He mentions the Narbonenses tribe in Gaul.

He describes the whole Gallic race as fickle, cowardly, and faithless. They are easily emboldened when fortune favors them, but equally frightened and panicked when things turn against them.

When the Boii defeat a Roman army, they cut off the general’s head, emptied it out, gilded the skull and used it for a bowl in their sacred rites.

Book 22-29 (around 150 BC)

He mentions the Salassi, a Gallic tribe. He says the Cimbri were used to living in the outdoors without houses, bathing in cold water, eating raw meat, and avoided wine and strong drink.

Book 37 (around 80 BC)

He mentions “Hither Gaul”, and how the Allobroges tribe was devastating Gallia Narbonensis.

Book 38 (around 60 BC)

He mentions Cisalpine Gaul and Transalpine Gaul.

The Helvetii, led by Orgetorix, was a tribe so large that their land could not support them, and decided to migrate en masse to a larger country, and burned all their villages so that none could turn back.

The Helvetii traveled thru the lands of the Allobroges, Sequani, and Aedui, but there they turned on their kinfolk and plundered their country.

The women of some German tribes forbade the men to engage in battle before the new moon as a result of their divinations.

Roman daggers are smaller than Gallic ones, and have steel points.

Book 39 : Caesar’s conquest of Gaul (around 60-55 BC)

The Belgae occupy from the Rhine to the Atlantic ocean, and are composed of many mixed tribes.

He mentions the Nervii tribe, and their neighbors the Aduatuci, but says the Aduatuci are more like the Cimbri in race and temperament.

He names the Veragri, as dwelling along Lake Lemman (probably Lake Geneva) and next to the Allobroges as far as the Alps.

The Gauls are unreasonably insatiable in all their passions. They know no moderation, swinging from headstrong boldness to hopeless cowardice.

The people of Aquitania are Gauls, their land going right up to the Pyrenees.

Interestingly, he says that the Aquitania “live next to Celtica”, indicating Gaul and Celtica are separate.

The Rhine river starts in the Celtic Alps, and winding westward borders Gaul to the south and the Germans to the right. Dio says that long ago, the Germans were also called Celts.

The Murini tribe dwells in the Belgic territory, on the coast, at the closest point to Britain.

Britain is 60 miles from Gaul, and extends along the coast of all of Gaul and Spain.

Britain's military forces were mainly chariots and cavalry.

Book 40 : Caesar in Britain and Gaul (around 55-50 BC)

Cassivellaunus is one of the highest-ranking chiefs in all Britain.

Ambiorix is the chief of the Eburones tribe in Britain.

Dio names the Trevari tribe, with Indutiomarus as their leader.

He names the Allobroges and Sequani tribes in Gaul, and says that Avaricum is a city of the Bituriges tribe, with a wall around it that was hard to approach, with swamps on one side and a swift river on the other.

The Arverni tribe under the leadership of Vercingetorix revolted. When he realized he was defeated, Vercingetorix could have escaped, but instead decided to surrender to Caesar and hope that Caesar would pardon him based on their past friendship. When he appeared before Caesar he said not a word, but fell to his knees, hands clasped in supplication. But Caesar was not moved, and after sending him to a triumph in Rome, had him put to death.

Book 41 (around 55-50 BC)

He says that the Gauls live south of the Alps and beyond the Po river.

He names the Massaliot tribe, and a Gallic city Patavium.

He names the German Ambrones and Cimbri tribes.

He names three regions : Gallia Narbonensis; Gallia Togata is that part of Gaul south of the Alps, so-called because the people already wear Roman clothing; and north of the Alps is called Gallia Comata because the people wear their hair long.

Book 53 (around 25 BC)

He says that the regions Gallia Narbonensis, Gallia Lugdunensis, Aquitania, and Belgica comprise "all the Gauls".

He describes Germany as that part of the Belgic territory along the Rhine extending northward to the sources of the Rhine and southward to the Atlantic Ocean near Britain.

He names the Salassi tribe as dwelling at the foot of the Alps.

Book 59 (around 40 AD)

He describes Gaul as having "abounding wealth".

Book 60 (invasion of Britain, around 45 AD)

He says that a Briton named Bericus who had been exiled persuaded emperor Claudius to invade.

He names Caratacus and Togodumnus as kings, and the sons of Cynobellinus.

He says the British tribes were not independent of each other, but were divided into groups to be ruled by various kings. He names the Bodunni tribe as being ruled by a tribe of the Catuellani.

He names Camulodunum as the capital of Cynobellinus.

Book 62 (Boudicca's rebellion, around 60 AD)

Dio says that some of the reasons for Boudicca's revolt was because of money that had been given to the Britons against their will, then payment with interest was suddenly demanded.

Boudicca was a Briton woman of the royal family who was "possessed of great intelligence". She was very tall, terrifying in appearance, with a fierceness in her eyes, a harsh voice, and a "great mass" of tawny hair. She

wore a tunic of many colors, covered by a thick mantle fastened with a brooch, and a large golden necklace around her neck.

Dio has her give a rousing speech to her people against the Romans in 62.3-62.6, during which she let loose a hare as a means of divination, and it ran in the direction of their fortune.

At one point he says she rode in a chariot herself at the head of an army of 230,000 men.

Dio says the Britons took two Roman cities and cruelly tortured many Roman nobles, amongst other sacrifices, feasts, and orgies held in their “sacred places”, especially the grove of Andate.

He devotes just a single paragraph (62.12) to the entire battle, and says that Boudicca died of an illness, which ended the rebellion.

Book 63 (around 67-68 AD)

During Nero’s rule, Gaul had suffered greatly due to harsh taxes imposed by Rome. A Gaul named Gaius Julius Vindex, descended from the royalty of the Aquitanian tribe, was a Roman senator because of his father’s status. Dio describes him as “powerful in body and of shrewd intelligence, skilled in warfare”, and full of ambition, daring, and love of freedom. He gives a passionate speech at a tribunal against Nero and his atrocities in 63.22, rousing his men to war. Eventually Vindex killed himself as the war turned against him, altho Dio says that the opposing soldiers slashed his body to give the impression that they had killed him.

Book 65 (around 75 AD)

Julius Sabinus, a member of the Germanic or Gallic (Dio says both in different places) Lingones tribe tried to revolt against Roman rule. After being defeated, he lived in hiding in an underground vault below a country estate which he burned down. He remained hidden there for nine years with his wife, who had two sons during that time.

Book 69 (around 125 AD)

Favorinus the Gaul is a “sophist” (a paid teacher, usually to the upper classes).

Book 77 (around 205 AD)

Dio says there are two main “races” in Britain, the Caledonians and the Maeatae, with all the others being merged into these two. The Maeatae live next to Hadrian’s Wall, while the Caledonians live north of it. These tribes have no cities, but live in tents, naked and barefoot, and survive on their flocks, wild game, and fruits, but never eat the abundant fish. They share their wives and raise their children in common. They have a sort of democratic leadership and are very fond of plundering. They fight in chariots drawn by small swift horses, and their foot-soldiers are swift and do not give ground easily. They use a shield and a short spear, with a bronze ball that clangs against the spear to terrify their opponents. Dio claims they will go into the swamps and stay there for days with only their head above water. They can also survive in the woods on bark and roots, and can prepare a certain unspecified kind of food, a bean-sized portion of which keeps them from feeling hungry or thirsty.

He tells a story of a conversation between the Roman empress and the wife of Argentocoxus, of the Caledonian tribe in Britian : when the empress chided the woman about how the Caledonian women had free sex with any man, she replied “We fulfill the demands of nature in a much better way than do you Roman women; for we consort openly with the best men, whereas you let yourselves be debauched in secret by the vilest.”

Book 78 (around 210 AD)

Dio describes the Gauls as fickle, cowardly, and reckless.

=====

Author : Oppian

When : Born around 170 AD, died 200-215 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Cilicia (Southern Turkey), Malta, Rome

Occupation : Poet
Hand : Unknown
Bias : Unknown

The son of a prominent man, Oppian was trained in music, grammar, philosophy, and geometry. He was considered the author of works on hunting (“Cynegetica”), birdcatching (“Ixeutica”), and fishing (“Halieutica”), but modern scholars now consider these three works to have been written by two or three different authors.

References : “Cynegetica” I lines 368-376, 467-479; “Halieutica” II lines 674-677, III lines 541-544, lines 620-626

Source : “Oppian, Colluthus, Tryphiodorus”, translated by A. W. Mair, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1987.

Comments :

Summary : Oppian holds Celtic and British hunting dogs in high esteem, and names the dogs of the “painted Britons” as Agassian. He describes the Iberians as proud and says they “plume themselves upon their might”. He says the Celts and Iberians are fishermen.

Author : Ulpian, Domitius Ulpianus

When : Born around 170 AD, died 223-224 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Tyre (Lebanon); Rome; Britain; Gaul

Occupation : Jurist (one who studies law)

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

Not much is known about Ulpian’s personal life, but even though he was banished from Rome at one point, he became advisor to the emperor a dozen years before his death. He travelled with the emperor through Gaul to Britain around 208-211. He left over 100 books on law interpretation as well as a variety of other works which strongly influenced Roman law.

References : unknown

Sources : not found.

Comments : apparently Ulpian’s works make many brief mentions of Gallic laws, and one of his rulings state that Gallic was an acceptable language to provide testimony in, along with Latin, Greek, or Punic. But I have not been able to obtain any first-hand sources of his statements.

It is also claimed that he speaks of “the” (singular) Gallic language, but whether that is explicit or an inference I do not know.

Summary : not available.

Author : Aelian, Claudius Aelianus

When : Born around 170 AD, died around 235 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Italy; Rome

Occupation : Rhetorician (public speaker), teacher, historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Aelian was a stoic retorician who taught in Rome. He wrote “On the Characteristics of Animals” (17 books of anecdotal stories about animals), “Historical Miscellanies” (14 books of history, biography, and natural history), as well as several other smaller works.

References : “On Animals” 10.22, 12.33, 13.16, 15.25, 17.19

Source : “Aelian : On the Characteristics of Animals”, translated by A.F. Scholfield, Harvard Univerisity Press, Massachusetts, 1971.

Comments : The Vaccaeii are Celtiberians. The Galatians mentioned in 17.19 are in Asia Minor, according to Scholfield.

Summary : Aelian describes the burial practices of a Celtiberian tribe, saying that those who die a noble death are left for the vultures (which are considered sacred), but those who die from disease or cowardice are burned.

He tells of the sack of Rome, and says that coastal Celts catch tuna, and feed their horses and cattle on fish.

He also relates a story that in “eastern Galatia”, birds are charmed by prayers and sacrifices to eat locusts.

=====
Author : Philostratus, Lucius Flavius Philostratus, Philostratus of Lemnos

When : Born 170-172 AD, died after 244-249 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Lemnos (Greek island); Athens; Rome; Gaul; Britain; Turkey; Lebanon

Occupation : Sophist (orator)

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

Philostratus became a leading orator of his day, eventually ending up at the Roman imperial court. He may have accompanied the royal family to Britain around 208, and to Gaul around 212. Among his remaining works are a biography of Apollonius of Tyana, and a collection of biographies of various orators (“Lives of the Sophists”).

References : from “Life of Apollonius”, 5.3

Source : “Philostratus : Life of Apollonius of Tyana”, F.C. Conybeare, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1969.

Comments : Gadeira is modern-day Cadiz in southern Spain, near the Straights of Gibraltar.

Modern authors claim that Philostratus says that Celtic warriors did not fear death, and celebrated births with mourning and deaths with joy (Apoll. of Tyana, v. 4?). Also that he discusses the enameling on British decorations, but I have not been able to find *any* such comments.

Summary : Philostratus discusses the slowness of the rising and setting sun in the land of the Celts.

=====
Author : Hippolytus

When : Born 170 AD, died 235-236 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Alexandria; Rome; northern Italy

Occupation : Scholar
Hand : Unknown
Bias : Christian; Celts are “noble savages”

A bishop in the early Christian church, Hippolytus wrote in Greek but probably lived in or near Rome.

References : “Refutations” 1.contents, 1.2, 1.22

Source : Translated by Reverend J.H. MacMahon, M.A., T.&T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1868.

Comments :

Summary : Hippolytus describes the Druids as philosophers, similar to the Brahmins of India, but says they also use “magical rites”.

He claims that a servant of Pythagoras’ brought his philosophy to the Celtic Druids, which enabled them to foretell certain events using calculations and numbers.

Author : Origen of Alexandria, Origenes Adamantius

When : Born 182-185 AD, died 254-255 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Alexandria

Occupation : Theologian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Christian

The son of a martyr, Origen became an eminent theologian of the early Church, and the founder of Christian mysticism. He was later condemned by the Church.

References : “Origen Against Celsus” 16

Source : [unknown \(lost\)](#).

Comments : [there are many modern claims about what Origen says about the Celts, such as that the Druids were monotheistic and used no images or sculptures to represent their deity, and the people of Britain had worshipped one god \(before Christianity\). He also claims that Buddhism had reached Britain long before Christianity, but I could find no such claims in the materials I had access to.](#)

Summary : Origen says that Celsus believes the Druids of the Gauls to be among the most learned and ancient tribes, partly due to the similarity between their traditions and those of the Jews.

Author : Solinus, Julius Solinus, Caius Julius Solinus

When : 200-400 AD, probably around 250

Culture : Roman

Lived : Unknown

Occupation : Geographer

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Virtually nothing is known of Solinus’ life. He created one work which is known as “Collection of Remarkable Facts” or “Gallery of Wonderful Things”, a compilation of all the bizarre bits of information from Pliny’s “Natural History”, Mela’s “Geography”, and other sources.

References : I could not find a complete, reliable source of “Collection of Remarkable Facts”, so I can only provide some references. Possibly relevant chapters might include 17, 19 (especially 19.2-19.6), 21, 22 (especially 22.2-22.6), 23, 25, 34, 35.

Source : [unknown \(lost\)](#).

Comments : Hibernia is modern-day Ireland. The Silures tribe probably occupied Wales and its nearby islands. The actual distance between England and Ireland is about 22 miles.

Summary : [what follows is just from those portions of Solinus’ work as I could find access to](#).

Britain is surrounded by many large islands, including Hibernia, whose people practice “inhuman, savage rituals” and are “barbarous and warlike”, but whose grasslands are so rich the cattle must be held back from over-grazing. Their warriors smear the blood of their fallen enemies on their faces, and then drink it.

A mother will put her baby son’s first solid food on the tip of her husband’s sword and feed it to her son from the sword, so that he may die in battle and among weapons.

The people of Britain adorn the hilts of their swords with the teeth of the monsters from the sea.

There are no snakes or bees on Hibernia, and its dirt will cause existing swarms to abandon their hives. The narrow sea channel between Britain and Hibernia is about 120 miles, and exceptionally stormy.

On “the island of the Silures”, the people still maintain “the old customs” and worship the gods devoutly to this day. They never use coin money but only barter for goods. Men and women boast of their knowledge of foretelling future events.

He says that Thule is five days’ sail from the Orkney (“Orcades”) islands, and there the days are very long in the summer and the nights very long in the winter.

There are many rivers and hot springs in Britain, including one which is a temple to Minerva where the fires never burn out, and the ashes turn into balls of stone. He also says that Britain is rich in veins of various metals, and describes a stone called Geate which has several almost magical properties. Britain is partly inhabited by barbarous people who “impress” shapes of different animals on their bodies.

=====

Author : Athenaeus, Atheneus, Atheneius

When : Flourished 200-230 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Egypt, Rome

Occupation : Author

Hand : Third

Bias : Unknown

Little is known about Athenaeus, except that he wrote at least two other works which no longer exist. His only surviving work, “Deipnosophistae” (Banquet of the Philosophers) is a fifteen book collection of quotations from earlier writers, many of whom have been otherwise lost.

Because he often named his sources, most of his many comments about the Celts have been put with the original authors (Aristotle, Theopompus, Phylarchus, Sopater, Polybius, and Posidonius).

References : “Deipnosophistae” 13.603a, 14.657e

Source : “Athenaeus, The Deipnosophists”, translated by C.B. Gulick, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1987.

Comments :

Summary : in the few places where he does not name his sources, Athenaeus mentions Celtic homosexuality, calls Celtic women “very beautiful”, and praises the quality of Celtic ham.

Author : Diogenes, Diogenes Laertius

When : Probably around 230 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Laerte, Ciicia (Turkey)

Occupation : Biographer

Hand : Third

Bias : Unknown

Diogenes’ ten book “Lives [and Opinions] of Eminent Philosophers” is an important source of information about the development of early Greek philosophy. While he is uncritical about his sources, and is considered a poor philosopher himself, it does contain many references to earlier writings which have otherwise been lost. It is not known if he was Christian or not.

References : “Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers” 1.Prolog.1, 1.Prolog.6

Source : Diogenes Laertius, translated by R.D. Hicks, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1979.

Comments : see above for brief descriptions of Sotion and “Pseudo-Aristotle #3”.

There are several claims about Diogenes by modern authors I could not confirm, including that a Druid named Abaris taught the Greeks about the soul’s immortality, and that Druids teach in triads.

Summary : according to Diogenes, both Sotion and “Pseudo-Aristotle #3” apparently describe the Druids as philosophers, but also call them “Holy Ones”. They say Druids teach in riddles, and advocate reverence to the gods, abstinence from wrong-doing, and the practice of courage.

Interestingly, Diogenes refers to “the Celts and Gauls” separately.

Author : Iamblichus

When : Born 250 AD, died 326-333 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Chalcis, Coele-Syria (Lebanon)

Occupation : Philosopher

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

A neo-Platonic Greek philosopher, Iamblichus established his own school which tried to combine the teachings of Plato, Pythagoras, Hermetism and magic into a single system, which was more theology and occultism than philosophy. Only fragments of his many works remain.

References : “Life of Pythagoras”, Chapters 19, 28, 30

Source : Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras, translated by T. Taylor 1818; Inner Traditions International, Ltd., Rochester, Vermont, 1986.

Comments :

Summary : Iamblichus states in one passage that Pythagoras included aspects of Celtic and Iberian mysteries into his philosophy, but in another he says that it was Pythagoras' freed slave who took Pythagoras' idea that the soul survives death to the Gauls.

He also says that Abaris was originally a Scythian, but was a priest of Hyperborean Apollo.

ROME ADOPTS CHRISTIANITY

Author : Ausonius, Decimus Magnus Ausonius

When : Born 310 AD, died 393-395 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Burdigala, Gaul (Bordeaux, France); Rome

Occupation : Poet

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

Living in Gaul about 260 years after the Roman conquest, he became professor of rhetoric in the university of Burdigala, and eventually became a tutor of the emperor's son. He converted to Christianity in his 50's, although this may have been only to qualify as the imperial tutor. He eventually served as the prefect of Gaul and then consul of Rome.

References : [Ausonius is another ancient author I could not find any complete, scholarly translations of. Possibly relevant works include "Parentalia" and "Mosella" \("Moselle"\), but his other works may also have references to Celts and/or Druids, in particular his "Poems Commemorating the Professors of Bordeaux"](#).

Sources : [none found](#).

Comments : Bayex is Bayeux France, just north of Brittany; Belenus is a Gallic god, Armorica is Brittany, and Bordeaux is in southwestern France.

Summary (all of the following is unconfirmed) : [Ausonius claimed he was descended from the Viviscan Gauls, had an aunt named Dryadia \(Gaulish for Druidess\), and says his grandfather practiced astrology and further hints at his being a Druid. Ausonius also wrote a paper on the properties of the number 3, describing it in terms of both Christian and Druidic beliefs.](#)

[He says a contemporary named Delphidius was a descendant of the Druids at the temple of Belenus in Bayex, and another named Phoebicius was descended from the Druids at a temple of Belenus in Armorica.](#)

Author : Himerius

When : Born 310-315 AD, died 380-393 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Bithynia (Turkey), Athens, Antioch (Turkey)

Occupation : Sophist (orator), rhetorician (public speaker), poet

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Himerius practiced rhetoric in Constantinople under the emperor Julian, and later started a school of rhetoric in Athens. Although he was a pagan, he showed no prejudice against Christians. Not to be confused with a Catholic archbishop in Spain who lived around the same time, nor with the Catholic saint who lived about 150 years later.

References : [Himerius is another ancient author I could not find any complete, scholarly translations of.](#) *Possible* references of interest include [“Ex Orat. ad Uricum ap. Phol. Cod. 243”](#) and [“Vall. Coll. No. 12, p. CXIII”](#)

Sources : [none found.](#)

Comments : There are wildly varying modern claims about what Himerius said, but they are all about Abaris. Some say that he was born Hyperborean, speaks Greek, dresses like a Scythian, and is very eloquent. Others say he was a friend of Pythagoras. Other authors describes him as coming from Briton, with a bow and quiver, wearing trousers and a plaid tunic (note : [this description in particular is often mistakenly attributed to Strabo!](#)). Other modern authors combine the above separate items into a mish-mash.

The only reason Himerius is included here is in case he does claim that Abaris is a Briton.

Summary : none available.

=====
Author : Ammianus, Ammianus Marcellinus

When : Born 325-330 AD, died 392-397 AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Antioch (Turkey), Syria; Nisibis (Turkey); Gaul; Amid (Turkey); Rome

Occupation : Soldier, historian

Hand : First

Bias : Celts are “noble savages”

Ammianus was the last great Roman historian. After travelling all over the Roman world (including Gaul) in the service of emperors, he wrote a 31 book history of the Roman empire (“Commentaries on the Remaining Conducted Affairs”), 18 of which survive. He is considered accurate, impartial, and comprehensive.

References : “Roman History” 15.9, 15.10.1-15.10.2, 15.10.11, 15.11, 15.12, 18.2.3, 19.6.3-19.6.5, 19.6.7-19.6.12, 20.8.15, 22.12.6, 23.6.88, 26.4.5, 26.7.4, 27.8.1, 27.8.5, 28.1.53-28.1.56, 28.2.10, 29.1.8

Source : “Ammianus Marcellinus” translated by J.C. Rolfe, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1982.

Comments : sections 15.9.2-15.9.7 are repeated in Timagenes, but are included here for continuity. However, since that information is attributed to Timagenes, it is not included in the summary below.

Summary : Ammianus describes Gauls as tall, “fair and ruddy”, with a fierce look in their eyes, and “formidable and threatening” voices. While they are extremely arrogant, and love to drink and quarrel, they also keep their clothes very clean and neat. Their soldiers are men of all ages, and none try to avoid military service. He describes their women as stronger than the men, and fierce in a fight, punching and kicking with their “huge white arms”.

Their Bards, Vates, and Druids study the “liberal arts”. The Bards sing songs of famous men, the Vates study the secret laws of nature, and the Druids investigate “obscure and profound subjects” and believe the soul to be immortal.

Geographically, the lands of the Celts were bounded on the north by the Rhine river, on the east by the Cottian Alps, on the south by the Tuscan and Gallic Seas, and on the west by the Atlantic ocean and the Pyrenees. He describes the path of the Rhone river in some detail.

In earlier times, the Celts were divided into three main groups which had different “languages, habits, and laws” : the Gauls (who were also called Celts), the Belgae, and the Aquitanians. The Gauls were separated from the Belgians by the Marne and Seine rivers, and separated from the Aquitanians by the Garonne river. The Belgae were considered the most violent, and the Aquitanians the most civilized.

Current provinces and major towns of Gaul :

- Lower or Second Germany - Cologne, Tongres
- First or Upper Germany - Mayence, Worms, Spire, Strasburg
- First Belgium - Metz, Treves
- Second Belgium - Amiens, Chalons, Rheims
- Seine - Besancon, Augst
- First Lyonnese - Lyons, Chalon-sur-Saone, Sens, Bourges, Autun
- Second Lyonnese - Rouen, Tours, Evreux, Troyes
- Graian and Pennine Alps - Avenche (abandoned)

Current provinces and major towns of Aquitania :

- Aquitania - Bordeaux, Clermont, Saintorige, Poitiers
- “Nine Nations” - Auch, Bazas
- Narbonese - Eauze, Narbonne, Toulouse
- Viennese - Vienne, Arles, Valance, Marseille

He tells a story of Gallic soldiers in the Roman army who, because of the “greatness of their Gallic hearts”, demanded a chance to fight the enemy, and who showed so much courage and daring that statues were erected honoring them.

He also claims that the Gauls would die of despair if any more of their young men were recruited as soldiers.

He names several Celtic tribes : Taurini, Tricasini, Tricorii, Vocontii.

He names Phronimius, Euphrasius, and Theodorus as well-educated Gauls in positions of power within the Roman empire. But he also names Doryphorianus as a Gaul who was made a Roman deputy so that he could legally have a Roman senator put to death. Doryphorianus is described as “reckless to the point of insanity”, “savage”, and “carrying everything to excess”, but he gets the job done.

He says that pearls are gathered in the bays of Britain, and that Britain produces enough grain to export to the continent on a regular basis.

=====
Author : Julian the Apostate, Flavius Claudius Julianus, Emperor Julian

When : Born 331-332 AD, died 363 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Constantinople; Rome; Nicomedia; Athens; Britain; Gaul

Occupation : Military, Emperor

Hand : First

Bias : Unknown

The half-nephew of emperor Constantine, Julian grew up in Gaul but was educated in Christianity and neoplatonic philosophy, and became emperor after successful campaigns in Britain and Gaul. He eventually abandoned Christianity and tried to re-instate paganism as the official Roman religion. Ironically, his death in battle ended the Roman acceptance of paganism.

References : “Misopogon” ([all the sections I used were lost](#)); “Panegyric in Honor of Constantius” 29.C-D, 36.B; “Heroic Deeds of Constantius” 56.A-B

Source : “The Works of the Emperor Julian” translated by W.C. Wright, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1913.

Comments : according to Wright, Julian refers to Gaul as Galatia.

Summary : Julian names Lutetia as the Celtic name for “the capital of the Parisians”.

He variously calls the Celts and Gauls “boorish”, “uncultured”, “fierce”, and “headstrong”. They do not know how to ingratiate or flatter, and behave simply and frankly equally to everyone.

However, he says he really enjoyed his life among the Celts, saying they loved him greatly, would do anything for him, and even gave him money when he needed it (actually, they practically forced it on him!).

He calls the Celts, Iberians and Germans “good fighters”, and that all the peoples from the Rhine to the Atlantic ocean are more energetic than any other race, and not easy to subdue, which he knows from personal experience. He specifically calls Gaul the most warlike and high-spirited of all nations.

Celts only acknowledge Aphrodite so they can marry and have children, and only acknowledge Dionysus so they can drink as much as possible. But in their theaters they tolerate no lewd or disrespectful behavior on stage. They think Roman theater performances and dances are ridiculous.

He mentions the taking of Rome by the “Galatians and Celts”, and says that a Celtic or Galatain soldier would never retreat in battle.

Author : Julius Obsequens

When : Mid 4th century AD (350)

Culture : Roman

Lived : Unknown

Occupation : Unknown

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Virtually nothing is known about Obsequens. His only surviving work, “The Prodigies”, is a collection of omens, auguries, and strange events.

References : [I have not been able to find an English translation of his work, but looking at a Latin copy there were about a dozen or so references to “Galli” or “Gallia”.](#)

Source : [none found](#).

Comments :

Summary : none available.

Author : Eutropius, Flavius Eutropius

When : Around 350-380 AD

Culture : Unknown (wrote in Latin)

Lived : Rome

Occupation : Soldier, historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Flavius Eutropius became the court historian for the emperor Valens (364-378), but little else is known about his life. He wrote a ten-book history entitled “A Concise History of Rome” or “Abridgment of Roman History”, which was very popular for many centuries.

References : “Roman History” 1.20, 2.5, 2.6, 2.10, 2.16, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 4.22, 4.23, 4.25, 4.27, 5.1, 5.2, 6.14, 6.17, 7.10, 7.13, 7.14, 7.19, 8.2, 8.19, 9.4, 9.13, 9.18, 9.20, 9.23

Source : “Justin, Cornelius Nepos, and Eutropius”, translated by J.S. Watson, George Bell and Sons, London, 1886.

Comments :

Summary : Eutropius twice mentions single-champion combat between Romans and Celts, and Celtic “golden collars” or golden neck chains. He also describes in some detail (relatively speaking) the battles with the Cimbri.

He names several Celtic tribes : the Senones, the Arverni, and the Helveti, “who are now called Sequani”.

He names Viridomarus as king of the Gauls, Bituitus as king of the Arverni, and Deiotarus as king of the Asia Minor Gauls.

He names several towns in Gaul, including Narbonne, Agrippina, Catalauni, and Lingonae.

Author : Unknown

When : Late 4th century AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Unknown

Occupation : Unknown

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

The “Historia Augusta” is the name given to a collection of biographies of Roman emperors from about 125 AD to 284 AD. It is currently believed to have been originally written by several different authors, and then combined and modified by someone around 400 AD.

References : “Hadrian” (117-138 AD) 5.1-5.2, 11.2, 12.1-12.2; “Antonius Pius” (138-161 AD) 1.1, 5.4; “Marcus Antoninus” (161-180 AD) 8.7-8.9; “Pertinax (193 AD) 8.1-8.4; “Septimius Severus” (193-211 AD) 19.1-19.2, 22.4; “Clodius Albinus” (193-197 AD) 5.3-5.4; “Alexander Severus” (222-235 AD) 59.4-59.6, 60.3-60.8; “The Two Valerians” (253-260 AD) 1.4; “The Two Gallieni” (253-268 AD), 4.3-4.5, 6.3-6.6; “The Thirty Pretenders/Postumus” (260-269 AD), 3.1-3.9; “The Deified Claudius”, 6.2 (268-270 AD), 9.6; “The Deified Aurelian” (270-275 AD) 34.2, 44.3-44.4; “Tacitus” (275-276 AD) 15.2; “Probus” (276-282 AD) 4.5, 18.5, 18.8; “Firmus,Saturninus,Proculus” (281 AD) 7.1, 14.1; “Carus,Carinus,Numerian” (282-285 AD) 2.4-2.5, 14.1-15.6

Source : “The Scriptores Historiae Augustae”, translated by D. Magie, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1979.

Comments :

Summary : the Historia Augusta describes Gauls as restless, rough, surly, and “always desirous of creating either an emperor or an empire”. They were “frequently a source of danger to emperors” because they were “always desiring a change of government”. They often seemed to revolt if the emperor was too strict, stern, or frivolous.

Gallic trousers and cloaks (“cucullus”) are mentioned, as are Celtic horses, “which fame has rendered renowned”. A Gallic woman is described as “very brave”.

Gallic Druid priestesses are mentioned three times, in Alexander Severus (60.3-60.8), Aurelian (44.3-44.4), and Carus, Carinus, Numerian (14.1-15.6). Each time they offer a prophecy which comes true. These references span the years from about 220 to 270 AD.

Several Gallic towns are mentioned : Nimes, Eboracum, Luguvallum, and Sicilia. One Gallic tribe is named, the Atrebates.

Ireland is mentioned in Tacitus 15.2.

=====

Author : Avienus, Rufus Festus Avienus

When : Late 4th century AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Lybia (Africa); Achaia (Greece)

Occupation : Poet

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Unknown

Not much is known about Avienus. His two surviving works are “Ora Maritima” (“The Sea Shore”) and “Periegesis seu Descriptio Orbis Terrae” (“Description of the World”). “Ora Maritima” is a description of the coast down western Europe and around Spain, and Avienus lists his sources as Hecataeus, Hellanicus, Herodotus, and eight other ancient authors. It is believed that the Massilote Periplus, a (probably) 6th century BC lost manuscript (see above), was the original source for much of his information.

References : “Ora Maritima” lines 93-107, lines 108-116, lines 129-137, lines 485-489, lines 558-565, lines 637-640, lines 662-667

Source : “Ora Maritima”, Rufus Festus Avienus, edited by J.P. Murphy, Ares Publishers, Chicago, 1977.

Comments : the Oestrymnides have been variously identified with Cornwall, Brittany, or the Scilly islands.

It is generally believed that the “Holy Island” with its “Hierni”, and the “island of the Albiones” are referring to Ireland and England, respectively, but there are other theories.

It is known that the Ligurians occupied the coast of south-east France, but Avienus claims that they were driven there from a much more northern location by the Celts. The meaning of “Lycaon” is unknown.

The Berybraces are a Celtic tribe, according to Murphy. The Tyrius river and the town Tyris were probably in eastern Spain. Massalia is Marseille, France.

Summary : Avienus describes the Oestrymnides islands as being rich in tin and lead, but does not explicitly name their people as Celtic. He apparently names Ireland and Britain as islands which many other peoples went to for trade. He says the Celts drove the Ligurians from their homeland, and the Berybraces, a Celtic tribe, are “rough and fierce” herdsman, whose diet is rich in milk and cheese. He mentions Pyrene as a trading post for Massalia, and places the Hyperboreans in the Atlantic ocean.

Author : Severus, Sulpitius Severus, Sulpicius Severus

When : Born 353-363 AD, died 420-429 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Gaul

Occupation : Monk

Hand : First

Bias : Christian

An aristocrat educated in the classical manner, Severus became a monk after his wife died. His “World Chronicle”, “Dialogs”, “Sacred History”, as well as a biography of Saint Martin of Tours, and many of his letters still survive.

References : “Dialogs”, 1.4, 1.5, 1.8, 1.13, 1.20, 1.27, 2.8, 2.13; “History”, 2.32, 2.39; “Letters” Letter 3 (To Bassula, his mother-in-law); “St. Martin” Chapters 4, 12

Source : “The Works of Sulpitius Severus”, Alexander Roberts, New York, 1894.

Comments : St. Martin of Tours was born around 315-330 AD in modern-day Yugoslavia, was raised in Italy, and converted to Christianity as a young man. He founded the first monastery in Gaul.

I have seen references to Severus commenting that when the Romans conquered them, the Gauls found it easy to give up worshipping their “Jupiter” because he was portrayed as stupid, but they found it harder to give up worshipping their “Mercury”, but I could not find any such statement.

Summary : Severus repeatedly depicts Gauls as being overly fond of eating, and Gallic is considered a “rude form of speech”. Interestingly, the Gallic character in Dialogs is told to “speak either in Celtic, or in Gaulish”.

Severus says that Christianity did not reach Gaul until after the fifth persecution under Aurelius (emperor from 161-180 AD).

He names three towns in Gaul : Aries, Bitterae, and Condate. He names one tribe, the Augiones (this is the only known reference to this name).

Pagan rituals in Gaul at this time consisted of carrying “the images of demons veiled with a white covering” through fields, and “sacrifices to the gods”.

Author : Jerome, Saint Jerome, Hieronymus, Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus

When : Born 347, died 420 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Eastern Europe, Rome, Asia Minor

Occupation : Priest

Hand : First

Bias : Christian

Classically raised (learning Greek and Roman and studying the classical authors and philosophers), Jerome joined the clergy but fell out of favor in Rome, eventually ending up a hermit and producing a great number of literary works.

References : “Paul the Apostle’s Epistle to the Galatians”, [section unknown](#)

Sources : [unknown](#)

Comments : the Treveri are a Celtic tribe, and were probably located in modern-day France.

Summary : Jerome says that the eastern Galatians’ language is almost the same as the Treveri’s.

Author : Claudian, Claudius Claudianus
When : Born around 370, died 400-420 AD
Culture : Greek/Roman
Lived : Alexandria; Rome
Occupation : Poet
Hand : Unknown
Bias : Fiction

Probably a Greek born in Alexandria, Claudian is considered the last of the great classical Roman poets.

References : “The First Book Against Rufinus” lines 123-133; “The Second Book Against Rufinus” lines 106-114; “Against Eutropius I” lines 390-395; “Against Eutropius II” lines 246-251; “Epithalamium” lines 180-184; “The Fourth Consulship of Honorius” lines 31-34, 330-394, 582-593; “On Stilicho’s Consulship II” lines 242-255; “On Stilicho’s Consulship III” lines 91-94, 295-302; “The Gothic War” lines 415-420; “Of Gallic Mules

Source : “Claudian”, translated by M. Platnauer, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1972.

Comments : Bithynia was located in the north-west part of Turkey. The Garonne river passes thru the south-west portion of France.

Tethys was a Titan, the goddess of underground rivers, and the wife of Oceanus, the river that circled the known world.

Summary : Claudian describes Gauls as fierce and warlike, with golden hair combed back, wearing torcs, and carrying two javelins. He mentions the “wise men of Gaul”, names Senones and Lingones as Gallic tribes, and says Gauls founded Milan and settled in Asia Minor.

He describes Britons as dressed in skins, wearing a sea-blue cloak, with tattooed cheeks.

He mentions Picts several times, and says they have “strange devices” tattooed on their faces. He also mentions the “fierce” Scots a couple of times.

He refers to Ireland twice as Hibernia, describing it as “ice-bound”.

Claudian says that the fury Megaera (“grudging”) was born in Gaul, and he has high praise for Gallic mules.

Author : Orosius, Paulus Orosius, Paul Orosius
When : Born 380-390 AD, died after 417 AD
Culture : Roman
Lived : Iberia (Portugal); Africa; Palestine; Alexandria

Occupation : Christian priest, historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Christian (anti-pagan)

Orosius' major work, "Seven Books of History Against the Pagans", is the first world history written by a Christian, although it contains many errors. Using material from earlier classical authors, he attempted to counter the growing belief that the Roman Empire had fallen because of the adoption of Christianity.

References : unknown

Source : [none found](#).

Comments : [Orosius apparently includes Gaul and Britain in his history, including the state of affairs up to his time, but his is another work I did not have time to search.](#)

Summary : none available.

Author : Cyril, Cyril of Alexandria

When : Born 375-390 AD, died 444 AD

Culture : Roman

Lived : Alexandria

Occupation : Priest

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Christian (anti-pagan)

An archbishop of the Christian church in Alexandria from 412-444 AD, Cyril was intolerant of heretics, heathens, pagans, and Jews.

References : unknown

Sources : [none found](#).

Comments : [modern authors claim that Cyril calls Druids philosophers, and learned their teachings from Pythagoras. He also says that Galatians \(presumably Asia Minor Gauls\) still have Druids, but they believed in only one god.](#)

Summary : none available.

Author : Sidonius, Sidonius Apollinaris, Caius Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius

When : Born 430-431 AD, died 480-489 AD

Culture : Roman/Celtic

Lived : Gaul; Rome

Occupation : Politician, bishop

Hand : First

Bias : Christian

A Roman aristocrat and son-in-law to the Roman emperor Ativus, Sidonius served under 3 emperors, and became a bishop and prefect of Rome. Although his family was originally from the Roman aristocracy, they had lived in Gaul for generations, and he apparently considered himself as much Celtic as Roman. He

witnessed the beginning of the fall of the Roman Empire first-hand when Gaul was invaded by the Goths, and the Roman imperial government collapsed. He left 24 poems and 9 books of letters.

References : “Letters”, Book 1, #2 : To his brother-in-law Agricola, 454(?) AD; #5 : To his friend Herenius, 467 AD; #7 : To his friend Vincentius, 468 AD; #11 : To his friend Montius, Around 461-7 AD; Book 3, #3 : To his brother-in-law Ecdicius, 474 AD; #9 : To his friend Riothamus, 472 AD; #12 : To his nephew Secundus, 467 AD; Book 4, #14 : To his friend Polemius, 477 AD; Book 5, #10 : To his friend Sapaudus (no indication of date); Book 6, #12 : To the Lord Bishop Patiens, 474 AD; Book 7, #12 : To his friend [Tonantius] Ferreolus, 479 AD; Book 8, #1 : To his friend Petronius, 480 AD; #6 : To his friend Namatius, 480 AD; Book 9, #13 : To his friend Tonantius, around 481 AD; “Poems”, Panegyric on Maiorianus, lines 42-47; Panegyric on Avitus, lines 545-550

Source : Letters : “Sidonius Apollinaris, Letters”, translated by O.M. Dalton, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1915.
Poems : “Sidonius:Poems and Letters”, translated by W.B. Anderson, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, 1956.

Comments : many believe that Riothamus (Book 3, #9) may be a source for the legends of King Arthur, and reference this letter.

Summary : Sidonius describes Gauls as having “good cheer” and being “austere”, but their language as “barbarous”, and says that their best exports are their “flocks and herds.” He mentions a tribe of Bretons north of the Loire river, and a division of Gaul “between Visigoth and Burgundian”. He names Paeonius, Polemius, Priscus Valerianus, and his father and grandfather Apollinaris as being prefects of Gaul. He claims his grandfather was the first Gaul to adopt Christianity and abandon the “old sacrilegious rites”. He says that Flavius Nicetius introduced the concept of a statute of limitations to Gallic law.

Author : Constantius, Constantius of Lyons

When : About 480 AD

Culture : Unknown

Lived : Gaul

Occupation : Historian

Hand : Unknown

Bias : Pro-Roman; Christian

Virtually nothing is known about Constantius, except that he is the author of “The Life of Germanus”, a history of St. Germanus, a Gallic bishop who made at least two trips into Britain.

References : unknown

Source : [none found](#).

Comments : [altho Constantius apparently describes the various battles going on in Britain during St. Germanus' visits, it is unknown if he actually says anything about the British people or their way of life.](#)

Summary : none available.

Author : Zosimus

When : Late 5th-early 6th century AD

Culture : Greek

Lived : Asia Minor, Constantinople

Occupation : Historian

Hand : Third
Bias : Anti-Christian

Zosimus was a senior official in the eastern Roman empire, and openly hostile towards Christianity. He wrote a history of the Roman emperors starting with Augustus through the early 5th century, of which books 1-4 and part of 6 still exist.

References : "New History", Book 2 lines 529-555, 1480-1505; Book 4 lines 372-457, 1295-1319; Book 6 lines 8-148

Source : Zosimus, "New History", translator unknown, Green and Chaplin Pubs., 1814.

Comments :

Summary : Zosimus names Carnutum as a town in Gallia Celtica, Vienna as a town in Gaul, and the Leti as a people of Gaul. Twice he refers to "the Celtic nations" Spain and Britain (separately). He says the Alps separate Gaul from Italy.

=====

FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE