

## WHO WERE THE GALATIANS? (5 shortened sources, different investigations) attach 6

(edited for brevity)

### Where is Galatia and Where did Galatians come from?

Galatia was in north central Turkey; Ankara, the capital of modern Turkey, was also a major Galatian city (Ancyra).

The name Galatia comes from the 20,000 Gauls who settled in the region in 278 B.C.E.

More than two centuries later, in 25 B.C.E., it became a Roman province then extended south. In Paul's day, the new province included the regions of Pisidia, Phrygia, and Lycaonia. Scholars refer to the new southern regions as "south Galatia" and to the geographic Galatia as "north Galatia."

Yet recent archaeological discoveries suggest that Galatia extended further south during the first century C.E.—meaning that the audience of Paul's letter might be larger than supposed.

In the Fall 2020 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Mark Wilson of the Asia Minor Research Center in Antalya, Turkey, examines the size of Galatia at the time that Paul visited and wrote his letter. As suggested by its title, "Galatia in Text, Geography, and Archaeology," his article known evidence for tracking down this province's borders to determine the original audience of Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Acts records Paul's travels through "south Galatia," in the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe Acts 13-16. Paul also visited Perga and Attalia in the region of Pamphylia on the Mediterranean coast Acts 13-14. Discoveries suggest that these cities in Pamphylia were part of Galatia when Paul visited:

The Stadiasmus Patarensis, a road monument from the city of Patara in Lycia, dates to 46 C.E. and lists Pamphylia as a bordering province. Some thought Lycia and Pamphylia were a joint province. The road monument shows that Pamphylia and Lycia were *not* a joint province when Paul visited the area.

And, 2 Latin inscriptions, found in the city of Perga in Pamphylia, name Galatia and Pamphylia as a joint province during the late 40s and early 50s C.E.

These inscriptions show that the province of Galatia stretched from central Anatolia to the Mediterranean Sea during Paul's day. The audience of Galatians would have included cities in Pisidia, Phrygia, Lycaonia, and Pamphylia. See: Mark Wilson's article "Galatia in Text, Geography, and Archaeology," published in the Fall 2020 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.

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### Why Did They come?

Galatia was the only great Celtic kingdom established outside of their original area. This due to its huge migrant influx. The strength of its armies secured its place in the violent world of the Hellenistic Period. Galatians were widely used as mercenaries in the ancient world, and Celtic tribes from Europe continued to migrate to the Mediterranean where they found work as mercenaries.

Galatians were used by the great Hellenistic armies and fought in the wars of the Seleucids and Ptolemies. Celtic mercenaries had a reputation of being capable but unreliable warriors. In spite their value as mercenaries, Galatians were often mistrusted for their foreign ways and their lack of loyalty to the kings who were hiring them.

The nation of the Gauls, multiplied like rabbits and pushed heavily into Asia. Eastern kings routinely went to war with a Gallic mercenary army. They used them, too, if they had been dethroned and hired them for protection, as well.

**They were terrors with their good equipment, excellent training and gung-ho attitudes. In time, princes thought they couldn't hold or keep power, recover lost power or have security, without the assistance of the fearless Gauls. Nice resume'.**

(Marcus Junianus Justinus, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, 25.2)

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### **Professional Raiders Settle In**

By the **5th century BCE**, their overpopulation caused them a shortage of resources. In response to that and greater competition, **Celtic warbands** turned south. A leader's social status was totally dependent on their success as warriors and acquisition of wealth through raiding. Established leaders had to continuously maintain prestige once they achieved rank. The competitive structure encouraged armed conflict and raids. No resting on your laurels - no moss on your feet.

When the Galatians arrived, Anatolia was already teeming with many different foreign transplants.

Celts began raiding in small groups moving further and further out to areas like Italy and the Danube. It snowballed into large-scale population movements into the Mediterranean during the 4th and 3rd Centuries BCE. **Ancient Roman authors surmised that migrating Celts were partly motivated by their appetite for Mediterranean luxuries** like wine and olive oil.

A coalition of tribes led by a king invaded Greece in the 3rd century BCE. Celts were defeated at Delphi, after which the allied tribes scattered. However, a splinter group of 2 chiefs detached from the coalition and invaded Thrace and then Byzantium. **Only half of their number were fighting men, the rest were women and children!** The hoard relied on raiding and pillaging to support themselves but was in dire need of a secure home in the short term. These Celts became known as the Galatians after crossing into Asia Minor.

**Throughout their military maturation, they discovered that they could double dip; as paid mercenaries and keeping bounty.** At one point, they worked for Romans. They were excellent and fearless warriors, but notoriously disloyal, turning on their own leaders as well as their employers.

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### **Polytheists**

The polytheistic religion remains obscure for lack of written records, but archeology and accounts by classical authors piece together a number of the key gods, sacred sites, and cult practices. Variations existed across regions and centuries, but common features of the Celtic religion include the reverence for sacred groves and other natural sites like rivers and springs, the dedication of votive offerings to gods such as foodstuffs, animal and (more rarely) human sacrifices, and the depositing of valuable and everyday goods with the deceased in tombs.

**The religion was led by druids who refused to commit their knowledge to writing, there are no sacred texts, hymns or prayers which survive in written records.** Roman writers often misinterpreted the role of druids by giving fortune-telling duties to a separate class of individuals, the seers who interpret such things as flights of certain birds. Another figure sometimes equated with druids is the *fili* or learned poet-historian of ancient Ireland.

When the Roman Empire expanded through Europe, the Celts adopted and adapted some forms of Roman religion. Votive inscriptions, rituals and burial practices have been discovered. Amulets protected both the living and the deceased and talismans brought luck) and both are found in graves of children and women. Druids were priests known for their great wisdom and knowledge of religion, kept history and traditions.

We have significant gaps in knowledge about views of their own origins, the universe and their place within it.

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One of the widest-venerated gods was Lugus (who became better-known as Lugh in the Middle Ages). He may be the god that Julius Caesar (c. 100-44 BCE) describes as the supreme **Celtic god Lugus who gave his name to many places such as Lugdunum, modern Lyon in France.**

The god most depicted in Celtic art is Cernunnos, often described as simply 'the horned god'. Typically shown seated and wearing stag antlers or horns. He is famously depicted on the Gundestrup Cauldron (perhaps 1st century BCE). Perhaps a particular J-6 ancestor?

**Julius Caesar (100-44 BCE) mentions in his *Gallic Wars*, a holy site in the region of the Carnutes tribe in France (near modern Orléans), and we know, too, that Mona (Anglesey, Wales) a holy island prior to the mid-1st century CE. Even individual trees, particularly large oaks.**

**They developed their own unique religious architecture.** One type of Celtic sacred area was a square or rectangular cleared area surrounded by earthworks. Many are found in southern Germany, France and Bohemia. Some had deep shafts dug for votive offerings. Pottery shards in the shafts often date to the 2nd and the 1st century BCE.

**Offerings could take different forms** and were at sacred sites near lakes, rivers, or bogs. Anglesey revealed a mass of swords, shield bosses, spear points, cauldrons, decorative metal pieces for riding gear and chariots, slave chains which include collars and a loads of animal bones.

**Animals were sacrificed. Humans, too, but rarely** and one such victim is Lindow Man, a corpse in England, who lived between the 1st and 2nd century CE. He was in good health but died in the standard manner for ritual killings: hit on the head, strangled and his throat cut. The corpse was in water for some time then buried.

**Other methods of human sacrifice**, as described by Roman writers, were sometimes particular to specific gods. Victims for Teutates were drowned; for Esus, they hung from a tree and had their limbs removed; and for Taranis, they were placed in a hollow tree or wooden vessel and burnt alive. The most elaborate of all methods (according to Strabo, c. 64 BCE - 24 CE), was to build a gigantic human figure using straw and wood, stuff it with cattle, wild animals and humans and set the whole thing ablaze.

**From 1st century BCE and the conquest of Gaul, the Roman Empire at first took a less aggressive stance against the Celtic religion, satisfying itself with robbing Celtic temples of their treasures.** Statues of Roman gods appeared in Celtic temples and shrines, but **some Celtic deities were adopted by the Romans, too, particularly members of the Roman army, and some sanctuaries were expanded.** Then, **during the 1st century CE, as the Romans sought to tighten their grip on conquered peoples, measures were taken to eradicate cultural leaders.** Druidism was forbidden and sanctuaries were attacked and destroyed. In late antiquity, **there was a revival of the Celtic religion when the Roman Empire fell into decline and Christianity had yet to tighten its own hold on European religious practices.**

Celtic religion was a victim of military and cultural conquest. Thankfully, it could never be revived in its original form, despite spurious attempts from the 19th century due to lack of written records.

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### **Back to Old Ways**

For some time the Celts were able to rampage over Asia Minor without challenge. From their initial footholds in the Near East, they staged raids against the surrounding cities. This **brief period of free reign was brought to an end by Antiochus I Soter at the “Elephant Battle” of 275 BCE. The Celts facing Antiochus had never before seen elephants, and the battle turned into a crushing defeat.**

After the Elephant Battle, the Celtic tribes made an alliance with Mithridates I of Pontus (r. 281-266

BCE). Around 232 BCE, the Celts settled around the city of Ankara, in a part of Phrygia. **The Hellenistic kings who divided Asia Minor were in agreement about the need to resolve the Celtic problem, and settling the marauding tribes in the barren hills of Central Anatolia seemed like a fitting solution.** Eventually, this region became known as Galatia, deriving from *Galatae*, a Greek name for Celts. Kind of like how Australia was settled.

**Celts brought their pastoral lifestyle. Major cities like Ankara were used as tribal headquarters, the Celts built no new cities of their own and even destroyed some of those which already existed.** Galatian tribes built hillforts to protect farmsteads and settlements. Tribal groups staked territories, and competition between Celtic Galatian chiefs resumed.

The Roman geographer Strabo (c. 64 BCE - c. 24 CE) described the history of Galatia's political organization:

The three tribes spoke the same language and differed from each other in no respect; and each was divided into four portions which were called tetrarchies, each tetrarchy having its own tetrarch, and also one judge and one military commander, both subject to the tetrarch, and two subordinate commanders. The Council of the twelve tetrarchs consisted of three hundred men, who assembled at Drynemetum, as it was called. Now the Council passed judgment upon murder cases, but the tetrarchs and the judges upon all others. Such, then, was the organisation of Galatia long ago, but in my time the power has passed to three rulers, then to two, and then to one, Deiotarus, and then to Amyntas, who succeeded him. But at the present time the Romans possess both this country and the whole of the country that became subject to Amyntas, having united them into one province.

*(Geography, 12.5.1)*

While Celts did not immigrate to Asia Minor in large enough numbers to displace locals, they did become rulers. Celtic culture permeated lower levels of society and was assimilated into local traditions.

**The Galatians didn't settle down after establishing in Galatia, they resumed raids in the rest of Asia Minor. Galatian raids against Aegean cities intensified in the 3rd century BCE, spurred on by the vast wealth and political instability of the Hellenistic cities.**

The Attalid Dynasty, based in their capital of Pergamon, was the great power in the region and the most powerful enemy of the Galatians. **Eumenes I of Pergamon (r. 263-241 BCE) paid the Galatians tribute in exchange for peace, as the other rulers of Asia did.** Eumenes I's successor Attalus I (r. 241-197 BCE) had no intention of appeasing the Galatians with treasure. Instead, Attalus I went to war with the Galatians to assert his power. A very bold move.

**Attalus I eventually defeated the Galatians** in 233 BCE, a dramatic victory that became his crowning achievement. Pausanias (c. 110-180 BCE) recounted a Greek legend that Attalus and his defeat of the Galatians had been prophesied in a poem many years before. That the Celtic army would cross from Europe to Asia to destroy the cities there was **prophesied by Phaennis in her oracles a generation before the invasion** occurred. (Paus. 10.15.2-3)

Attalus I took on the epithet 'Soter' ('the Saviour') to commemorate his defeat of barbarians who threatened the Hellenistic cities of Asia Minor. Attalus I Soter commissioned artwork depicting his defeat of the Galatians. It was around this time that the Galatian or Gallic warrior became the archetypal barbarian of the Greek imagination.

After the Galatian War, the Roman Republic forced the Galatians to cease raiding in west Asia Minor.

In the early 2nd century BCE, **Galatia was dragged into the conflicts between the Roman Republic and the Seleucid Empire. Antiochus III (223-187 BCE) employed large numbers of**

**Galatian troops in his wars** with the Kingdom of Pergamon. These Galatians were present for Antiochus III's defeat at the Battle of Magnesia in 190 BCE by a Roman-Pergamene alliance. Galatian involvement in the conflict was used by the Roman Republic as a *casus belli* for the Galatian War in 189 BCE. The year after the Battle of Magnesia, **a Roman general was tasked with conquering the kingdom of Galatia. Attalus I assisted the Romans in this war against their mutual enemies.**

In preparation for war, the Tectosages gathered their forces around the city of Ankara. The Tolistobogii and the Trocmi amassed their numbers around Mount Olympus (not THAT Mt. Olympus but modern Uludağ) in Galatia. The Roman-Pergamene alliance defeated the Galatians there, effectively conquering two of the three tribes in Galatia.

It was not easy to get at the number of those killed, for the flight and the carnage extended over all the spurs and ravines of the mountain, and a great many losing their way had fallen into the deep recesses below; many, too, were killed in the woods and thickets. Claudius, who states that there were two battles on Olympus, puts the number of killed at 40,000; Valerius Antias, who is usually more given to exaggeration, says that there were not more than 10,000. The prisoners, no doubt, amounted to 40,000, because they had carried with them a multitude of both sexes and all ages, more like emigrants than men going to war.

(Livy, *Roman History*, 38.23)

Gnaeus Manlius Vulso followed up this victory by defeating the Tectosages at Ankara later that year, effectively shutdown all Galatian foolishness. In the aftermath of the Galatian War, the Roman Republic forced the Galatians to cease all raiding in western Asia Minor. However, the Romans also prevented the Pergamon from dominating Galatia.

By 167 BCE, the Galatians had once again returned to their marauding ways, and Eumenes II of Pergamon (197 - 159 BCE) was at war with them for the next two years. Like his predecessor Attalus I, Eumenes II promoted himself as a protector of the Greeks and their champion against the Galatians.

Eumenes II commissioned four monumental works to commemorate triumphs over the Celts on the Pergamene Acropolis. These monuments paid homage the triumphs of the Attalid dynasty, including Eumenes II's defeat of the Galatians c. 166 BCE. Legendary events like the founding of Pergamon by Telephus, and the Gigantomachy from Greek mythology were the most prominently portrayed themes, but were myth and history.

The monuments have since been lost, but several large marble blocks from the 2.48 meter base of the monument have been excavated. An inscription from one of these blocks reads:

King Attalos having conquered in battle the Tolistobogii Gauls around the springs of the river Kaikos [set up this] thank-offering to Athena. (Pollitt, 85)

The famous 'Dying Gaul' (in the Capitoline Museums) and the 'Ludovisi Gaul' (in the Museo Nazionale di Roma) are some of a few Roman copies of 2nd-century BCE Hellenistic art.

**Galatia was heavily influenced by Asiatic, Greek, and Roman cultures** but the region had a strong Celtic tradition in the local language and the Celtic heritage of its ruling families. The most well-known reference to ancient Galatia is Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians in the New Testament. In the 4th century CE, **Saint Jerome (347 - 420 CE) remarked upon similarities between the language of the Galatians and the Celts in Treverorum (Trier).**

- Previously published as Celts in Asia Minor: Part 4 of Celtic History Explained on Magna

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## **ROBIN'S NOTES:**

**A.D.** Anno Domini, refers to the birth of Christ;

**C.E.** means 'Common Era'.

**B.C.** Before Christ

**B.C.E.** 'Before Common Era'

Which one is used largely depends on a writer's religious leanings and that of the audience.

Isn't it odd that to be so formidable, that Gauls weren't as interested in securing real estate as they were raiding the homeowners and then just squatting?