

The Celts In Asia, the Galatians.

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The migration into Asia Minor

Following a Celtic expansion into Italy and Greece some Celtic tribes migrated into Asia Minor. The Celts as a whole were respected in antiquity for their warring skills¹, even if some of the prestige came from a theorized propaganda, concerning Greek and Roman writers and the possibility that they may have embellished their descriptions of the Celtic tribes². Regardless, many opportunities to war as mercenaries were offered to the Celts from outside rulers in the Graeco-Roman period.

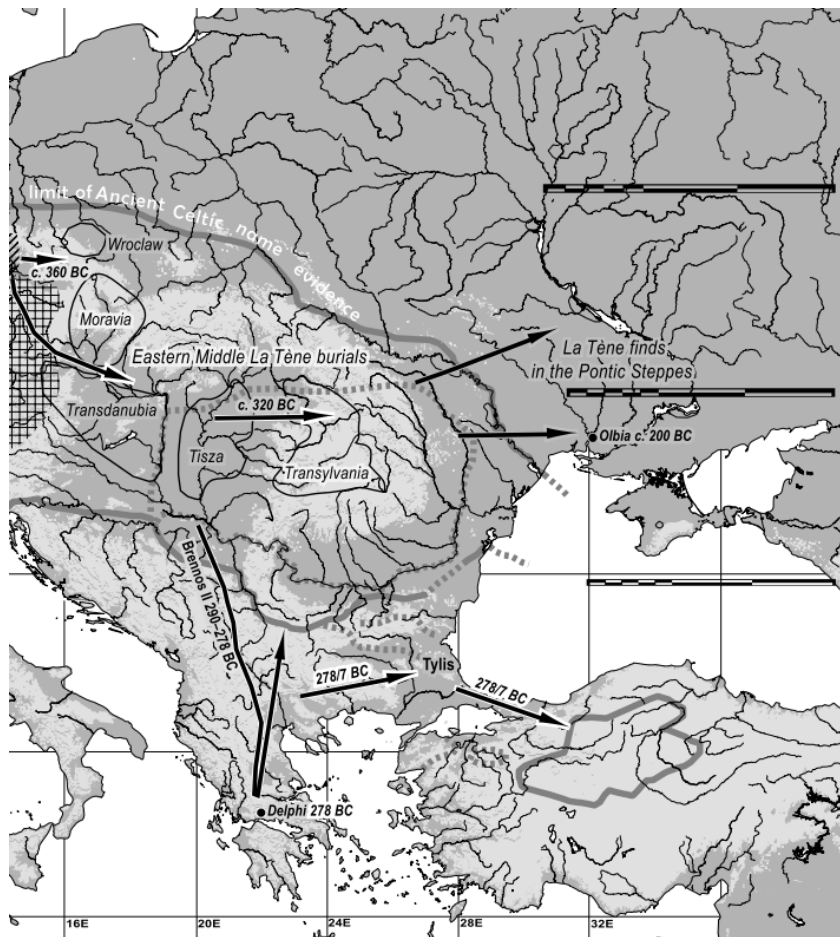


Figure 1 The Celtic Expansion into Minor Asia, The O'Donnell lectures³.

¹ Barry Cunliffe. *The Ancient Celts*, 2nd edn. (New York : Oxford University Press 2018). P. 149.

² Cunliffe. 2018. pp. 211-213.

³ university of Wales. *The O'Donnell Lectures 2008* (Cardiff: University Of Wales)
<<https://www.wales.ac.uk/Resources/Documents/Research/ODonnell.pdf>> [accessed 21 October 2023]

This particular opportunity arose because of the death of the founder of a new Kingdom, the Kingdom of Bithynia⁴, the founder's successor, and son, Nicomedes the 1st requested Celtic mercenaries join him against his younger brother Zipoetes. Zipoetes was then defeated and executed in 277 BCE⁵. Bithynia's location is in the North-western region of Asia Minor⁶. Though it is to be noted that the Celts did not settle instantly, as Maier puts it 'these mercenaries first lingered restlessly in the regions bordering Bithynia, but gradually settled down'⁷. As seen in the map of the Celtic expansion and migration into Asia Minor that is provided, the expansion of the Celts went into the areas now known as Bohemia, Greece, Asian Turkey, and the Pontic steppes⁸.

The Galatian tribes

Between 280 BCE and 25 BCE the Galatians thrived, warred and settled parts of what is now Modern day Turkey, to the frustration of the neighbouring regions, villages, and cities⁹.

In Barry Cunliffe's book, *The Ancient Celts*, Cunliffe states that the tribes were made up of three tribes, 'The Celts who crossed the narrow strip of water between Europe and Asia were a varied group comprising three separate tribes, the Tolistoboggi, the Tectosages, and the Trocmi'¹⁰, and according to Bernard Maier, the three tribes settled in the following areas;

The *Tolistoboggi*, also known as the *Tolistoagii*, settled in the west near Pessinus and Gordium, the *Tectosages* settled in the centre in Ancyra (Ankara), and the Trocmi settled in the east by the river of Halys¹¹. The tribes had territories referred to as *Tetrarchies*, there were four of these *Tetrarchies*, and each had what is called a *Tetrarch* to rule and lead it¹². Cunliffe also mentions that the tribes had their own raiding areas from each other, the *Tolistoboggi* raided Aeolis, the *Trocmi* raided on the Hellespont, and the *Tectosages*, as Cunliffe puts it, 'regarded inland Asia Minor as their sphere of activity'¹³. During this timeline the Galatians kept some of their native traditions, though they also adapted to the Roman and Hellenistic cultures in Asia Minor¹⁴. One of few Celtic traditions kept alive is the language¹⁵, specifically personal names of the elite¹⁶, for example the name *Deiotaros*, *taros* could represent the Gaulish *tarvos* for bull¹⁷. There is also the name of a formal meeting place and/or event for political practises known as *drunémeton*¹⁸, from *Nemeton*, meaning sacred grove, and *dru*, meaning oak, alike *druid* which translates to Oak knowing¹⁹.

⁴ Bernard Maier. *The Celts – A History From Earliest Times To The Present*. 2nd edn. (University of Wales 2008). P. 108.

⁵ Maier. 2008. P. 108.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Barry Cunliffe. *The Celts : A Very Short Introduction*. (New York: OUP Oxford 2008). pp. 37-46.

⁹ Cunliffe. 2018. P. 14.

¹⁰ Cunliffe. 2018. P. 148.

¹¹ Maier. 2008. P. 109.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Cunliffe. 2018. P. 149.

¹⁴ Cunliffe. 2018. P. 151.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Maier. 2008. P. 112.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Maier. 2008. P. 109

¹⁹ Oxford reference. [n.d.]. 'OVERVIEW of Drunemetón'

<<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095732249>> [accessed 24 October 2023]

The end of the Galatian 'Honeymoon' in Anatolia

The Galatians were defeated many times, with two significant defeats coinciding in the 160s BCE²⁰, after these battles they were no longer a threat in the Graeco-Roman world.

Augustus of the Romans ordered the region to be the new province of Asia, this occurred after Amyntas the *Tetrarch* of Galatia was killed in a battle against a Pisidian mountain tribe in 25 BCE²¹. Another event during the 1st century BC was the letters from Paul the Apostle to the Galatians²², where he sought to convert the Galatian people to an early version of christianity.

²⁰ Cunliffe. 2008. P. 14.

²¹ Maier. 2008. P. 111.

²² Cunliffe. 2018. P. 151.

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