

Cryfris Llydaweg

# Origins of the Celts

A golden Celtic bronze sculpture of a horse and rider, likely a chariot horse, with intricate patterns and a rider in a patterned tunic. The horse is depicted in a dynamic, rearing posture, and the rider is seated on its back, holding the reins. The sculpture is highly detailed, showing the texture of the horse's coat and the intricate patterns on the rider's tunic.

As you have never read  
them before!

Title: Origins of the Celts

License: Attribution 4.0 International ([CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/))

Editor: [cariou.info](https://cariou.info) (Brittany)

Publication: February 2022

Cover photo: [Szkíta.jpg](#) | Public Domain | Wikimedia Commons

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

Essays:

Title	Language	First release
Tè Ra : Quand l'Histoire dépasse la fiction	FR	2021-10-26
Furia : Les deux guerres mondiales décodées	FR	2021-07-19
Ibéria : L'énigme proto-ibère	FR	2021-06-18
Scythia: The Amazing Origins of Ancient Ireland	EN	2021-04-19
Brittia II : Du Kalimantan à la Bretagne	FR	2020-11-19
Europa : Les origines des Européens	FR	2020-09-01
Namaka : Les origines des peuples anciens	FR	2020-08-29
India : Les origines de l'Inde	FR	2020-05-18
Troia : L'Histoire de la Nouvelle-Troie	FR	2019-09-23
Sela : Des témoignages historiques surréels	FR	2019-02-22
Koya : Les indices de la "généohistoire"	FR	2018-11-02
Gaia : La Préhistoire revisitée	FR	2018-09-30
Luzia : L'Histoire ancienne du Nouveau Continent	FR	2018-04-20
Maya : L'Histoire de la population maya	FR	2018-04-15
Nâga : L'Histoire de la population nâga	FR	2018-04-10
Keltia : L'étrange Histoire des Celtes	FR	2018-02-25
Brittia : L'Histoire méconnue des Bretons	FR	2018-02-20
Scythia : L'étonnante Histoire de l'antique Irlande	FR	2018-02-01

Publishing Platforms (non-exhaustive): Academia (2015), Internet Archive (2018), Scribd (2018), Issuu (2018), Smashwords (2018), Atramenta (2020), SlideShare (2020), Fnac (2020), Kobo.com (2020), Open Library (2021), Project Gutenberg (2021), Wattpad (2021), YouScribe (2021), Chapters Indigo (2021), Barnes & Noble (2021)

# Eurasian origin

## Introduction

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

Herodotus refers to them in his book *Histories*.

---

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

---

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

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

## Origins of the Celts

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

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



Ruins of Gonur Depe, Turkmenistan

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

### Indo-European

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

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

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

## Origins of the Celts

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

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

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

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

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

## Origins of the Celts



Aeta was one of the earliest inhabitants in the Philippines

Author: Seanaleta. Source: Wikipedia. [CC BY-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

## Population Genetics

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

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

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

## Origins of the Celts

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

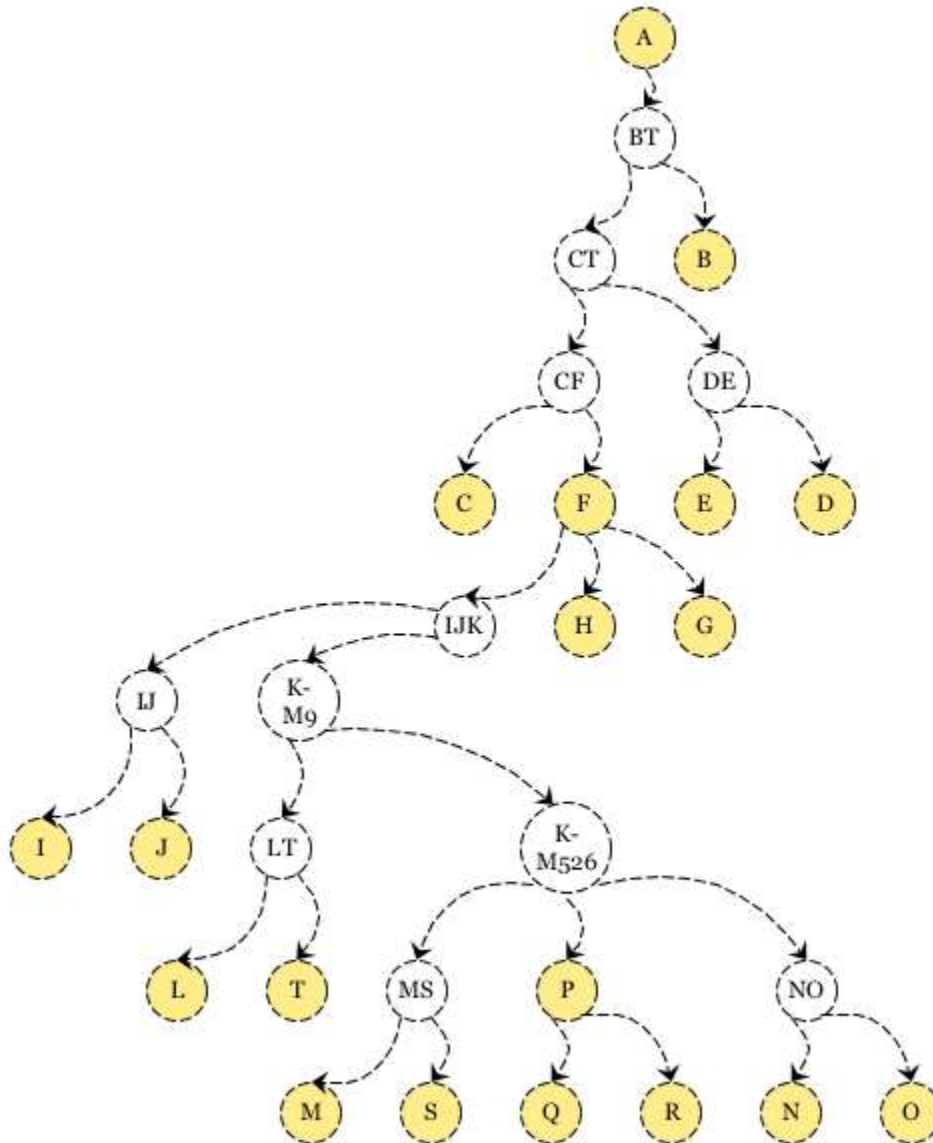
### Y Chromosome

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

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

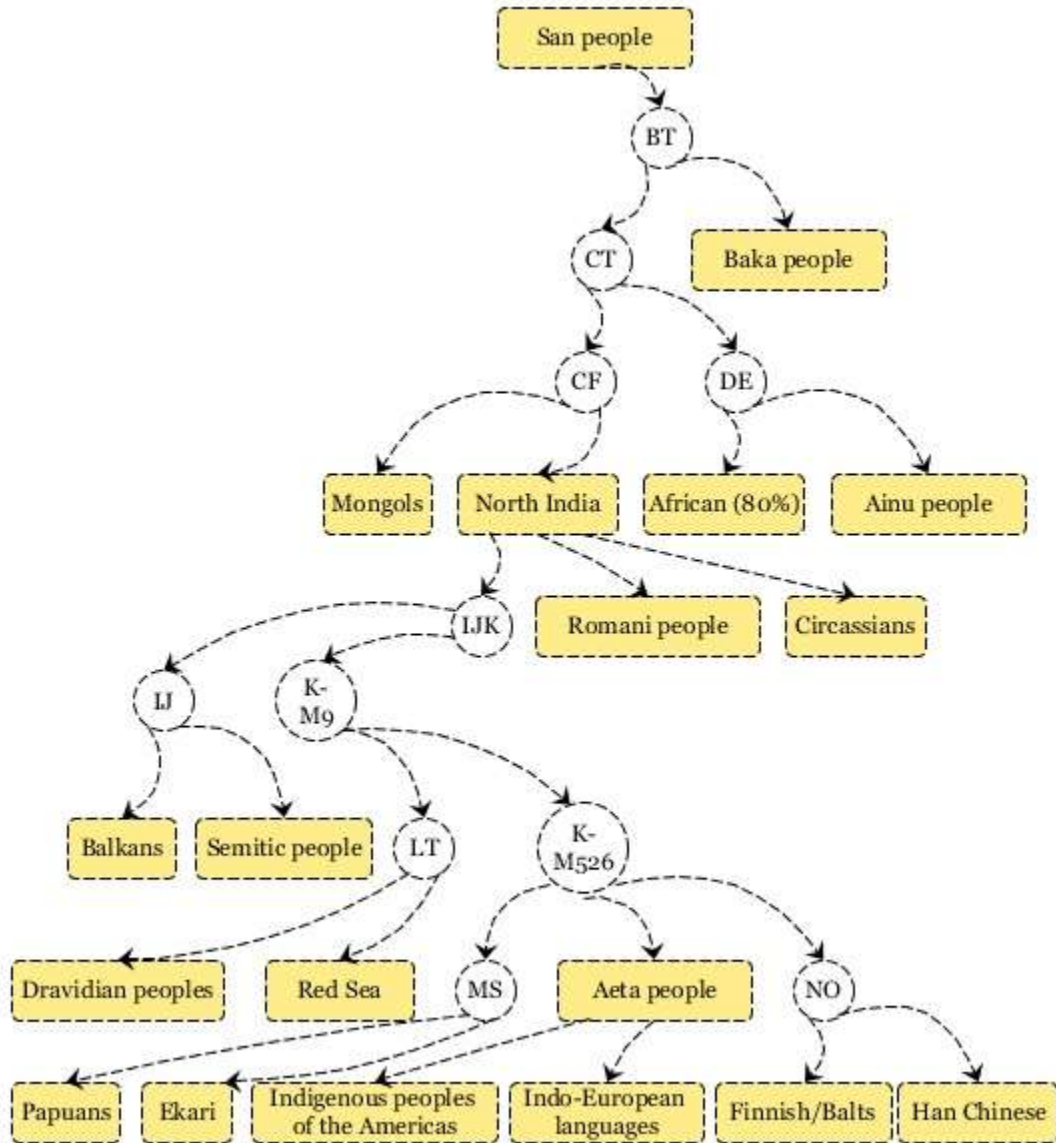


## Origins of the Celts



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

## Origins of the Celts



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

## Origins of the Celts

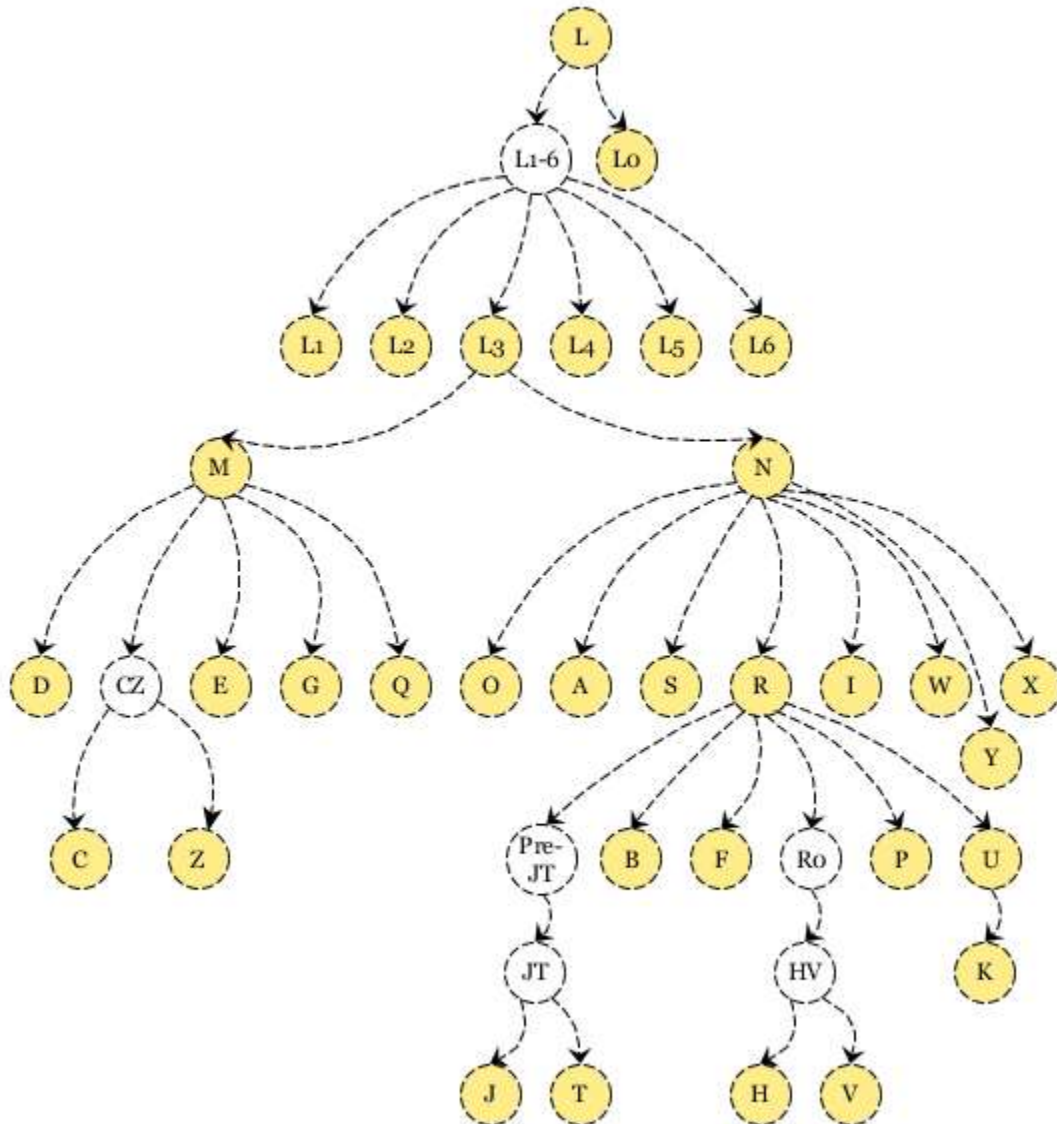
### Mitochondrial Eve

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

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

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

## Origins of the Celts



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

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

## Origins of the Celts

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

### Review

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

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

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

## Origins of the Celts

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

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

Source: Wikipedia

## Linguistics

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

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

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

## Origins of the Celts

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

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

## Origins of the Celts



Reconstructed Srubnaya hut

Author: Водник. Source: Wikipedia. [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

## Cimmerians

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

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



## Origins of the Celts

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

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

---

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

---

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

---

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

---

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

