

Frameworks for the Analysis of European Prehistory

Introduction

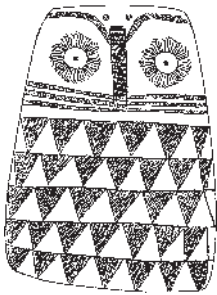
Key Frameworks for Prehistory

In the introduction we discussed the emergence of archaeology as a scientific discipline, and its subsequent theoretical development from culture-history to New or Processual archaeology and Interpretative or Contextual archaeology. These are general frameworks for understanding past behaviour which have been generated by continuous disciplinary argument and debate. In this section we will focus upon theoretical frameworks related to specific periods of prehistory.

Sometimes these frameworks appear to be so much part of common sense that they have not been questioned. This is often because they are bound up with contemporary beliefs and prejudices. For example, as *Mark Pluciennik* shows in **Chapter 1 (a)**, the belief that hunter-gatherers live in a state which is 'closer to nature' and that the act of hunting and gathering places them alongside animals is the result of the adoption of economy and technology as structuring frameworks of analysis during the emergence of Capitalism in the 17th and 18th centuries. Indeed these perceptions of hunter-gatherer populations are still in operation today as they are often used as a means of justifying the extermination of supposedly 'backward' indigenous populations by nation states. The denigration of hunter-gatherers and the promotion of agriculture over foraging are therefore bound up with the analysis and justification of capitalism, and with the territorialist and expansionist policies of nation states. These assumptions have influenced the debate concerning the transition between the Mesolithic to the Neolithic for at least a century.

For later prehistory the subject of the Celts, discussed by *John Collis* in **Chapter 1 (b)**, is equally bound up with contemporary and historically recent concerns. In this case the belief in the Celts intersects with the emergence of the nation state and the romantic belief in the origins of certain nationalities and populations. The assumption of the historical reality of 'the Celts' has influenced scholars of later prehistory – the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age – for centuries. Witness the number of books and university courses with the prefix 'Celt' or 'Celtic'. Nor is the critique of the concept of the Celts without its detractors. So powerful is the notion, and so bound up with national ideologies that there are many vested interests in the retention of a belief in the Celts.

So we observe that for Earlier and Later European Prehistory the analysis of the past is bound up with politically strong narratives, of nation building and of the emergence of capitalist economics. It is little wonder then that these narratives have remained unquestioned for so long since they are so closely tied up with contemporary economics and the formation and maintenance of the nation state. It is only with the critical awareness fostered by interpretative or contextual approaches over the last few decades that the political position of archaeologists has been acknowledged, and with this many long-cherished frameworks are now open to challenge.



I (a)

Hunter-Gatherers to Farmers?

Mark Pluciennik

We all 'know' that historical and archaeological periodizations are present-day constructions, which is not to say that they do not have a basis in empirical fact. Such periodizations, however, can often become reified and form barriers to thinking afresh. Even substantial and sustained critique about the meaning of the 'labels' can serve to reinforce rather than challenge the original framework. Nowhere has this been more apparent than for the span of prehistory traditionally covered by the Mesolithic and Neolithic, and for most archaeologists today relating not to lithic technology – the 'polished stone' of the neo-lithic – but rather to a much longer-standing division between foragers and farmers. The longevity of this distinction – one can plausibly argue that it goes back to classical times, though subsequently restated and elaborated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in western Europe in particular – itself should serve as a warning that we may like to stand back and try to consider afresh what it is that we are trying to do when we study these periods of prehistory, primarily the earlier Holocene for most of Europe.

History

The recognition of difference between human collectivities is no doubt one with its roots deep in the prehistory of evolution. Here the issue is how and why the *subsistence* categories of 'hunter-gatherer' and 'farmer' became incorporated within anthropology and archaeology in the particular ways that they did, and eventually and uniquely substituted for the *technological* category represented by the 'Stone Age' part of the Three Age system which still forms the basis of European archaeological periodizations today. In general we might describe all these schemes as social evolutionary, though one must be careful not to fall prey to the anachronistic fallacy. From a historiographic perspective, though, it is legitimate to ask: how old is a meaningful contrast between hunter-gatherers and farmers?

There are perhaps two major strands in the genealogy of these types of socio-economic categories. The first, geographical or 'ethnographic' strand, relates to the ways in which others – those not like the particular 'us' in question – were described and valorised. Given that the earliest known ideas and texts derive from settled

farming societies or ‘civilizations’, part of the descriptions of others often referred to the real or apparent lack of these attributes in the society concerned. Thus from the Greek point of view ‘barbarians’, beyond speaking a non-Greek language, might also be pejoratively characterized as being unsettled and without agriculture, as well as possessing unsavoury customs. Sometimes these views were undoubtedly based on experience or ‘knowledge’, of peoples such as the Scythians, whether hearsay or otherwise; at other times they pass seamlessly into myth with reports of cannibals, races without heads, and so forth (e.g. the Blemmyes with their eyes and mouths in their chests, said to inhabit Africa south of Egypt found in Pliny the Elder’s *Historia naturalis* [V.8.46]). The second strand also relates to myth but in the form of general or universal ‘histories’, which can be recognized from many parts of the world. These represent forms of explanation of how current customs and conditions arose. Again, they typically describe the writer’s society as the norm, whether judged as morally good, bad or indifferent, and the preceding peoples or stages as those lacking some or all of those ‘normal’ attributes. Thus one can find classical or earlier writers presenting historical schemes of either progressive development or degeneration, in which the lack of farming is seen as a vice or virtue. Hesiod’s *Works and Days* from perhaps the eighth century BCE; and later Thucydides (*History of the Peloponnesian War*) Dicaearchus, Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura*, Book V) and poetic reworkings by Virgil, Strabo, Tacitus others have all been cited as early examples of forms of social evolution and the use of the categories of hunter-gatherers and farmers (Lovejoy and Boas 1965; Nisbet 1980; Rudebeck 2000; Zvelebil 2002; but cf. Pluciennik 2002). However, one can equally argue that a (mythical) distinction between non-agricultural and agricultural times and hence people is found much earlier, in Babylonian and biblical myth, for example, and also find parallel examples in south Asian, Chinese and Arabic texts and thinkers (Pluciennik 2004). In my reading, however, the content and salience of these particular categorical descriptions was refined, and politically as well as intellectually operationalized, during the mercantile capitalist and colonialist era of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, initially in northwestern Europe and within European colonies. I have argued that it is during this period that we see the ascription of particular positive values to agriculture (and the associated ideas of technical, economic, rational and moral ‘improvement’), and consequent negative values to especially ‘hunting’ (with connotations of nomadism, lack of property, laziness and general immorality). It was in the mid-eighteenth century that we see the typical three or four stage schemes in which ‘savage’ Hunters, ‘barbarian’ Herders, and ‘civilized’ Farmers and Traders (contemporary early capitalist societies: Adam Smith’s ‘Age of Commerce’) are distinguished and ranked in ascending order. Barnard has made a related argument, in suggesting that earlier European writers and thinkers were primarily concerned with abstract or *a priori* contrasts between asocial and social beings, and hence that the notion that there could be such a thing as a characteristic hunter-gatherer form of *society* only arose in the eighteenth century (Barnard 2004). The nuances are many and complex, but it is clear that particular and modern notions of hunter-gatherers, especially, arose in the context of a radical change in ideas about what constituted properly rational and moral social and economic behaviour. From the middle of the eighteenth century the concept of such a division between hunter-gatherers and farmers became widespread and even formulaic.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to suggest that this schema simply survived and became transferred to the much later introduced archaeological labels of the

Mesolithic and Neolithic. Ethnology and archaeology had other traditions to draw upon. The most important of these was the suggestion of Lucretius, that technologically one could expect successive Ages of Stone, Bronze or Copper, and Iron. This had been reinforced by ‘ethnographic’ descriptions, especially from North America, of peoples without knowledge of the latter. The third was the early and rapid development of Scandinavian archaeology proper, which was to have a huge and lasting influence. By 1813 Vedel-Simonsen, in his *Aperçu sur les périodes le plus anciennes et les plus remarquables de l’histoire nationale*, had ‘already argued for 3 periods of Scandinavian antiquity – a Stone, a Copper or Bronze, and an Iron Age’ (Lowie 1938). More famously Thomsen, who had experimented with different ways to classify his museum collections, wrote in 1825:

I find it essential, in placing archaeological specimens accurately in context, to keep a chronological sequence in mind, and I believe that the validity of the old [Lucretian] notion of first stone, then copper, and finally iron is constantly gaining new support in Scandinavia. (Cited in Klindt-Jensen 1975:52)

Although there were exceptions in Europe, specifically Sven Nilsson, who attempted directly to correlate a four-stage theory with the archaeological record through his regional survey (1838–43), by and large these nineteenth-century ethnologists and archaeologists did not draw on their immediate predecessors. E. B. Tylor, the first professor of anthropology in Britain, was absolutely explicit why this should be the case:

Criticizing an 18th-century ethnologist is like criticizing an 18th-century geologist. The older writer may have been far abler than his modern critic, but he had not the same materials. Especially he wanted the guidance of Prehistoric Archaeology, a department of research only established on a scientific footing within the last few years. (Tylor 1871, I:48)

Part of the reason for this was the shift of emphasis in the intellectual climate from materialism to idealism, and the associated interest in matters other than subsistence. Earlier Tylor had noted the ‘most important problems’ to be addressed in writing an ‘Early History of Man’ were ‘the relation of the bodily characters of the various races, the question of their origin and descent, the development of morals, religion, law, and many others’ (Tylor 1865:2–3). As Voget (1967:133) commented, at that time the aim of comparative anthropology was rather the ‘total study of mankind’s progressive cultivation of mind, morality, refinement in tastes, and advances in technical skills. . . . Above all, the new science of man would focus on a history of the human mind’. Much of such a programme was not obviously conducive to direct empirical archaeological exploration and materialist explanation. However the importance of subsistence as a category, and its eventual mapping onto archaeological periods, arose from two routes (Pluciennik 2001, 2006).

The first can be seen as a direct response to archaeological discoveries. Even before the influential British scholar Lubbock was persisting with his purely technological definition of the Neolithic – he would maintain this stance for 50 years and through 13 editions of his *Pre-historic Times* (1865) – others had noted important distinctions within the archaeological record. In 1862 Worsaae contrasted the ‘hunting and fishing tribes’ of the middens of southern Scandinavia with ‘a higher

civilisation with domestic animals, with agriculture, and with better formed implements (Daniel 1975:88). In France, de Mortillet's 1872 definition of the 'Robenhausian' (from a Swiss village site) included farming and pottery, as well as polished stone tools. In Britain Dawkins (1894:248) contrasted nomadic Palaeolithic man with 'Neolithic Man', whose skills and attributes included herding and tilling, pottery, textiles and mining, sedentism and burial in tombs: 'There is obviously a great gulf fixed between the rude hunter civilisation of the one, and the agricultural and pastoral civilisation of the other'. Many had also noted that 'polished stone' did not necessarily correlate with these other 'Neolithic' characteristics. By the earlier twentieth century such views were commonplace across Europe (e.g. Burkitt 1921; Peake 1927; Vayson de Pradenne 1935). By the same time, the idea of a Mesolithic or middle stone age, first proposed in 1872, was finally beginning to be accepted as a useful archaeological and chronological period, if not social evolutionary stage (Zvelebil 1986a:5–6). Almost defined by default against the Neolithic, as non-farmers, social evolutionary history repeated itself and the term Mesolithic became reserved for the last hunter-gatherers of Europe. One of those reluctant to use 'Mesolithic' was Gordon Childe, who preferred the Palaeolithic to remain as a baseline against which to measure the subsequent Neolithic (considered as 'food production') Revolution.

The second route at least in part arose via a transatlantic detour. The extremely influential American ethnologist Lewis Henry Morgan, as Kehoe (1998:175) has noted, was in a circle who were intellectually much closer to the eighteenth-century conjectural historians of the Scottish Enlightenment. His famous seven 'ethnical stages' (1877:9) were closely related to changes in technology and subsistence. Indeed, the whole of the second chapter of *Ancient Society* is dedicated to the 'Arts of Subsistence' and in it he argues that since

Mankind are the only beings who may be said to have gained an absolute control over the production of food. . . . It is accordingly probable that the great epochs of human progress have been identified, more or less directly, with the enlargement of the sources of subsistence. (Morgan 1877:19)

Morgan's views were generally more clearly materialist and indeed open to empirical verification than those of many of his European contemporaries, which explains one of the attractions of his framework. In addition, the particular importance of Morgan for European prehistory is that his work was well-known and received there (by Tylor, for example, whose 1881 *Anthropology* was clearly influenced by what he had read, and later by Childe); but even more importantly, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, whose 1884 *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* was subtitled 'in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan'. This and other Marxist writings often influenced the terminologies and categories used in Eastern Europe, such as Para-neolithic or Forest Neolithic (hunter-gatherer societies with pottery) (Zvelebil 1986a:7, Table 2). There was also however a concentration on issues such as ethnogenesis (Trigger 1989:218–43), which tended to support investigations of indigenous development and process, in contrast to the prevailing tradition of a much more descriptive 'culture history' typical of much western European prehistory in which migration was the most common explanation of change. Most people are familiar with the culture group approach of this period (and see Collis, this volume). But the basic figures for the change from hunter-gatherers to farmers

were invasion, colonization and migration. Even though there was occasional reference to the fact that 'Mesolithic' populations could have interacted with farmers and even adopted farming, the primary model was one of diffusion through migration and colonization, itself marked by the spread of the material culture (primarily pottery) whose typologies formed the units of the maps and chronological charts. As an example I shall simply offer two quotes from one of Childe's last publications, *Prehistoric Migrations in Europe*, and so well after his important *The Dawn of European Civilisation* (1925). In 1950 he acknowledged that 'the spread of Neolithic cultures in our continent depended, therefore, not merely on colonisation by immigrant farmers but also on the multiplication of established populations that had adapted [*sic*] the new productive economy' (Childe 1950:36). But in his subsequent text it is difficult to find any reference to the latter process. Greece, the Balkans and the north Mediterranean coast are discussed almost exclusively in terms of migrations from the east. Elsewhere, 'early Neolithic farmers colonised the whole area from the Atlantic coasts to the Alpine foothills, the Jura, Vosges and Ardennes, crossed to the British Isles and subsequently spread from Switzerland into Upper Italy and across the Rhine to central Europe, invading territories already colonised by other peasantries' (Childe 1950:84) – the equally exogenous Danubian cultures. The only exception Childe was prepared to make was in northern France and Switzerland, where he suggested that 'groups of gatherers were gradually admitted into the food producer's societies' (*ibid*:88). Similar approaches characterized Mesolithic researchers, with ever more elaborate schemes or rather maps and charts based on sometimes minute differences in lithic typologies or assemblages, and often equated explicitly or implicitly with ethnic or quasi-ethnic 'peoples'. In this scenario, the *doyens* of Mesolithic (and Palaeolithic) studies tended to be the lithic specialists who often erected grand chronotypological schemes: This would include those such as Escalon de Fonton and de Lumley (e.g. 1955) and Laplace (1954, 1966) in France, or J. Koslowski in Poland, and Barandiaran in Spain, all of whose influence spread far beyond their native countries; later on one might point to the monumental works and incredibly detailed knowledge represented by those such as Rozoy (1978), or the contents of the edited pan-European volumes such as S. Koslowski (1973) or Gramsch (1981).

The Mesolithic Neolithic Transition

One of the outcomes of the migrationist/colonist model was that in effect there was little to be explained about the change from hunter-gatherer to farmer. For various reasons including the legacy of the stadial social evolutionary schemes discussed above, farmers were perceived as essentially and radically different from foragers. They were also closer to 'us' not only in terms of practical subsistence, but also in their lifestyle (sedentary villages), the richness of their material culture, relationships with the land (the old trope of 'property'), social organization and more generally conceptually and culturally (Pluciennik 1998). It was often felt that, for example, evidence for practices such as fertility cults and associated cult objects, ancestral tombs and the like were self-evident – understandable – in a way that Mesolithic hunter-gatherers were not (see Zvebil 1996 for an exploration of how this played out within nationalist histories). Interest in a social or societal archaeology was often reserved for the Neolithic and later, while the typically less rich material culture for

earlier periods reinforced ecological and functional approaches to the Mesolithic. Nowhere is this better shown than by the great British archaeologist Graham Clark, who did so much to raise awareness of the value of the Mesolithic as an archaeological period (e.g. 1936). His last brief book was entitled *Mesolithic Prelude*. In the introduction he felt he had to restate the case for the term:

it is now perceived to be of crucial significance for understanding the course of prehistory, and not least for explaining the rise and spread of the Neolithic societies that laid the foundations of the diverse civilisations of mankind. (Clark 1980:5)

The Mesolithic was thus ‘an essential *prelude* to fundamental advances in the development of culture’ (ibid:7) – a curiously apologetic tone for one who had done so much to advance study of the period. But for many the Mesolithic remained a chronological and geographical backwater: interesting perhaps because it represented the final European hunter-gatherers – the last or even degenerate descendants of the virile, art-making, hunters of the Upper Palaeolithic – but in social evolutionary terms irrelevant to the broader picture. History at this time was being written elsewhere, especially in southwest Asia where the first integrated agricultural societies were forming and spreading, and where hunter-gatherers were part of the origins, rather than spread, of agriculture. It was thus essential, if the change from hunter-gatherer to farmer in Europe was to be investigated and discussed as a process – as an archaeological topic – for Mesolithic communities to be considered as interesting in their own right, as well as relevant to consideration of the spread, or even indigenous origins, of farming in Europe.

There are perhaps three major factors to be considered here. First, there was inevitably more and better data, not only in a cumulative but also qualitative sense (the discovery of hunter-gatherer cemeteries, for example, in the Balkans and in southern Scandinavia; the excavation of the famous Iron Gates sites in the 1960s [e.g. Srejovic 1972]). The still-increasing trend towards geomorphologically and/or period-focused field surveys (e.g. Chapman et al. 2003; Jochim 1976, 1998; Runnels et al. 2005) has vastly increased our knowledge of Mesolithic occupation especially in those areas (central Europe, Greece) once thought to be only sparsely or even un-populated. There were also improved or more widely and systematically applied techniques such as those within palynology and archaeozoology, often once again pioneered in Scandinavia. But perhaps most important of all was the introduction and increasing availability of radiocarbon dates, the impact of which will be discussed further below. The second factor related to the more imaginative use of ethnography and anthropology generally as a source of analogies or models for interpretation; the third factor was the academic (and wider) re-evaluation of hunter-gatherers generally, in ways which inverted or at least challenged the social evolutionary hierarchy. Gradually, during the post-war period, but more particularly from the 1980s onwards, there were a series of projects and publications which made it clear that hunter-gatherers – and perhaps particularly those pertaining to the post-glacial period – were worthy of extended discussion; their demise, or transformations into other types of (farming) societies were complex and sometimes long-lasting. Grahame Clark’s own works, and in particular his excavation and publication of the famous British site of Star Carr (1954) can be seen as an early example and promulgations of this shift; following his own travels through northern Europe and especially Scandinavia he applied many of the techniques he had

observed to this site with far-reaching consequences (Lane and Schadla-Hall 2004). This Scandinavian influence and interchange on post-glacial archaeology continued in Britain: see e.g. Clarke (1976) and Mellars (1978). Southern Scandinavia (and also the Netherlands) became 'hot spots' for debate about the transition during the 1980s especially (see e.g. de Roever 1979; Fischer 1982; Jennbert 1985; Larsson 1986; Louwe Kooijmans 1993; Madsen 1986; Rowley-Conwy 1983, 1985; Zvelebil & Rowley-Conwy 1984). In other parts of Europe too ecological approaches became more common. Feeding into these debates were changes in approaches towards hunter-gatherers more generally: a key moment is often seen as the 1966 *Man the Hunter* conference in Chicago (Lee and DeVore 1968), at which Sahlins' (1968) paper suggesting that hunter-gatherers were the 'original affluent society' was a sign of a return in some ways to a vision of pre-agricultural times as a Golden Age (for wider discussion of this change in perception of hunter-gatherers see Bender & Morris 1988; Pluciennik 2001:751–3). It was at this time that some proposed that at least some aspects of agricultural subsistence could have been independently invented in Europe (e.g. Barker 1985; Dennell 1983). Another outcome of these wider trends was a new interest in the possibility of Mesolithic 'complex' hunter-gatherers (Price and Brown 1985), for example. All this served to complicate what had once been the simple issue of the colonization of central and western Europe at least by farmers from the Near East; as well as conventional culture historical wisdom that once farming arrived, there was little else to be said. A new set of ethnographically-derived 'frontier models' (Dennell 1985; Zvelebil 1986a; Zvelebil and Rowley-Conwy 1984) was suggested for the investigation of potentially highly-variable relations and interactions between forager and farmer communities. The conceptual divide between foragers and farmers was so much lessened that, by 1986, in what has been perhaps the most influential expression (in Europe and beyond) of this revised attitude towards the transition, Zvelebil asked:

If the postglacial hunters of the temperate zone can really be characterised by logistic, rather than residential mobility, storage, intensive resource-use strategies, non-egalitarian social organisation and the use of pottery, polished stone and other technological innovations traditionally associated with the Neolithic, what is left of the difference between the Mesolithic and the Neolithic? (Zvelebil 1986b:168)

Dating, Genetics, Linguistics

At the same time, however, there has been a counter-current to these social anthropologically informed approaches. In 1965 Grahame Clark made use of the existing radiocarbon dates to investigate whether one could plot the spread of 'the Neolithic' across Europe. Soon after the archaeologist Albert Ammerman and geneticist Luigi-Luca Cavalli-Sforza (1971; 1973; 1984) presented a demographic model for the spread of farming in Europe. Discussing the apparent rate of spread, they explained this through contemporary studies which suggested that small-scale farming societies in general have a higher rate of population growth than those of hunter-gatherer societies (for a recent re-examination of the large-scale radiocarbon dates, see Pinhasi et al. 2005). Over the long term, one did not therefore have to think in terms of migrations and directed colonizations; rather, population increase among farming groups and consequent fissioning around the margins would produce a 'wave of advance'. One could visualize this as the move of kin-groups over a range of around 25 kilometres perhaps once a generation, thus producing the apparent

average rate of spread of around 1 kilometre a year. In fact this also fitted in with then current ideas about the nature of, say, LBK 'slash-and-burn' agriculture and settlement in central Europe, with the timber longhouses also argued to last for a relatively short period before being abandoned. Together with survey, as radiocarbon dating became cheaper, more prolific and more accurate, better resolution has enabled one to talk in detail about process on the regional scale – 'fringe' effects around the LBK and the delayed spread into the North European Plain for example (Bogucki 2000; Gronenborn 1999; Jeunesse 2003; Verhart 2000); the Balkans (Biagi et al. 2005) and the Adriatic (Biagi and Spataro 2002); central Italy (Skeates 1999), or northern Spain (Ruiz 2005). Nonetheless it should be noted that here too it has been argued that biased sampling and the way we excavate has sometimes served to maintain the division between hunter-gatherers and farmers (Pluciennik 1997; Skeates 2003).

Even more influentially, though, Ammerman and Cavalli-Sforza noted that, assuming that early farming in Europe was initially associated with an exogenous and biologically distinct population from the Near East, there were 'possible genetic implications of the model'.

The population wave of advance accompanying the spread of early farming should be reflected, if this [demic diffusion] explanation is the correct one, in the genetic compositions of the resulting populations. (Ammerman and Cavalli-Sforza 1971:687)

Since that date there have been hundreds of articles exploring precisely what one can learn from genetic studies of contemporary populations and occasionally from ancient DNA too. This latter would appear to offer much more specific information from individuals and groups of individuals who can be culturally-situated, contextualized and dated archaeologically, but so far has made little impact, primarily because of problems of contamination (though see e.g. Chandler et al. 2005; Haak et al. 2005). It should be noted that this problem of contamination of ancient DNA is not an issue for animal and plant material, and there have been many interesting – though often still inconclusive – studies using ancient and modern material for materials including wheat (see e.g. Jones and Brown 2000) and cattle (Beja-Pereira et al. 2006; Bollongino et al. 2006).

Technically, there are now many direct studies of geographic variation in different parts of the human genome including mitochondrial DNA and the Y-chromosome, which in principle should even allow us to distinguish between female and male 'contributions' from differing population groups. The investigation of haplogroups and phylogenetics – the history of genetic lineages – allows much more regionally nuanced studies than the original work in 'classical markers' such as blood proteins. Dating remains a key problem (rates of change are often uncertain, and hence the range of possible dates from genetic information alone is usually much too wide for archaeological purposes), although mtDNA (mitochondrial DNA) studies in particular have suggested that many of the existing patterns of distribution of genetic variation should be ascribed to the Upper Palaeolithic and post Last Glacial Maximum movements of resettlement. (For an excellent recent review see Richards 2003, though 'archaeogenetics' is an especially fast-moving field). For some, who in effect ignored the problem of the inherent lack of resolution, the apparent large-scale patterns produced by this genetic data suggested a need for equally large-scale explanations. Key figures in this field have been Cavalli-Sforza (Cavalli-Sforza et al. 1994), Colin Renfrew (e.g. 1987; 1992; 1997; Renfrew and Boyle 2000)

and Peter Bellwood (Bellwood 2001; 2004; Bellwood and Renfrew 2002). Both have been active in promoting explanations, which rely primarily on the demographic growth of early agriculturalists ‘swamping’ indigenous hunter-gatherers biologically and culturally, and thus providing mutually supporting evidence from archaeology, genetics and language. Indeed, Bellwood and Sanchez-Mazas (2005:483) recently concluded that the complexity of the data meant that ‘We need to propose overarching hypotheses that can account for the comparative data from linguistics, genetics, and archaeology with as little stress as possible’. However others have remained unconvinced by such cavalier use of Ockham’s Razor, helped by the persistent conflation of genetic, linguistic and cultural ‘entities’ including those derived from archaeology, and a particular problem with work stemming from geneticists: the major work by Cavalli-Sforza et al. (1994) came in for particular criticism for this reason (see e.g. Bandelt et al. 2002; Gamble et al. 2005; MacEachern 2000; Moore 1994; Pluciennik 1996; Terrell and Stewart 1996; Zvelebil 2000). The assumption that these forms of biology, culture and identity almost inevitably go together bears an uncanny resemblance to earlier versions of culture history equating material culture and ethnicity.

The contribution of the study of the human genome to archaeology, or rather to our understanding of human (pre)history is so far unclear. The data is often ambiguous, and many would see attempts (by archaeologists such as Renfrew and Bellwood) to link genetic data to those of archaeology, and then to linguistic ‘historical evidence’ as well, as misguided or at best grossly over-simplified. One could also argue that a disproportionate amount of time and money has been spent on pursuing genetic data of dubious value: molecular biology is currently a fashionable (and exciting) discipline which attracts research funds in a way that a proposal, say, to carry out yet another archaeological field survey is not. On the other hand some of the excesses, as well as genuine new evidence deriving from ‘archaeogenetics’ have forced archaeologists to confront new questions or consider them again: what kinds of demographic (and associated cultural) processes should we be thinking about in the past? How varied were they? Are there patterns to this variation? What kinds of spatial and chronological scales should we be looking at? What might be the relationships between language and other forms of identity? What are the processes involved in such changes? How far can we distinguish between migration of various kinds, and diffusion? In this way archaeogenetics has certainly re-invigorated or influenced the parameters for debates about many periods, places and processes in the past. The immediate value of the study of non-human genetic material seems more clear. Although many of the same doubts about rates of change in the genome may remain, it is often much easier to extract and work with ancient (that is, archaeologically-derived) material with a much fuller context and generally much better dates. Demonstrating that some species appear to have undergone multiple domestications, for example, while others seem to have been domesticated uniquely and then diffused, tells us something of much interest about the history of human–animal or human–plant relations, and subsequent cultural processes, as well as those of the plant and animal species themselves.

The Shock of the New

As is suggested by the above, archaeology is very much a mixture of disciplines, methods, techniques and approaches; though even apparently convergent data

rarely offers unambiguous historical or archaeological answers. Pinhasi and Pluciennik (2004) recently examined the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition in southern Europe using relatively 'hard' data (skeletal morphometrics – in this case measurements of human skulls), which are indeed partly related to genotypes, as well as other factors such as environment and diet. However they suggested that such data are rather another point of triangulation in the complex debate about *some* aspects of the demographic and cultural processes in this period of prehistory. It is a necessarily woolly picture. In that paper they wrote:

Neither skeletal nor genetic nor archaeological [nor linguistic] data alone will provide 'solutions' to questions about the nature of the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition. Different data sets address a variety of processes at different scales and chronological and geographical resolutions. (Pinhasi & Pluciennik 2004:74)

Nevertheless, as is often the case, carrying out one or more types of analysis on the same samples helps either to confirm interpretations, or suggests anomalies, which need to be investigated. For example, a series of papers by Alex Bentley, Douglas Price and collaborators, primarily using strontium isotope analysis of skeletal material from Germany, has shown that it is possible to distinguish between those originating or spending substantial parts of their lives in the geologically older uplands – and perhaps associated with either foraging or herding – and those associated with the perhaps more agricultural lowlands (e.g. Bentley et al. 2002; 2003; Bentley & Knipper 2005). Interestingly, these differences sometimes map onto other biological or cultural differences including sex and burial goods, perhaps giving a tantalizing glimpse into marriage and residence patterns in parts of early Neolithic Europe.

Similarly, the use of carbon and nitrogen isotope ratios has been illuminating and provocative. The first European archaeological carbon isotope analysis of human skeletons was by Tauber (1981: see Richards et al. 2003a for an updated review). Tauber examined Mesolithic and Neolithic specimens from Denmark, and found a marked difference between the former (associated with marine and aquatic resource remains) and the latter (presumed to be much more dependent on agriculture). In a related way, the nitrogen isotope ratio $N^{15}:N^{14}$ is enhanced as it passes up the food chain: low values suggest a predominantly plant food diet, high values a marine/aquatic diet. Because relatively dense populations of hunter-gatherers are often associated with coastal or aquatic zones, with tendencies towards sedentism and associated cemeteries, both carbon and nitrogen isotope values have thus often been used to explore the nature of any dietary shifts associated with the transition to agriculture (e.g. Bonsall et al. 2004; Boric et al. 2004 for the Iron Gates). Although the Mesolithic individuals generally cluster towards the 'aquatic' end of the spectrum, there are some interesting anomalies – in some cases possibly 'Neolithic' incomers who had until very recently been eating mainly plant foods. These debates over interpretation continue. In a recent series of papers Schulting and Richards have analyzed skeletal remains from northern and western Europe – primarily the British Isles, Brittany and southern Scandinavia, again focusing on the Mesolithic to Neolithic transition. What they have found is a very marked and rapid shift in isotope values between the two periods – far greater than might have been expected – which suggests that 'Neolithic' populations, even those living near the coast, virtually shunned marine foods which had been so important to

Mesolithic people. (See e.g. Richards et al. 2003b). This radical shift, at least as seen through the isotope data, is so pronounced that it has led to questioning of the methodology (see Milner et al. 2004; Milner et al. 2006; Richards and Schulting 2006), although until recently isotope analysis has been seen as a relatively robust technique. Others have accepted the results implied by the analyses, but suggested that perhaps for some reason sea foods became the subject of a strict taboo in Neolithic times, with water and the sea in particular associated with the dead (Thomas 2003). But this too would seem a surprising homogeneity of belief.

Recent Models for Transition

As noted above, in the 1980s many of the most influential ideas and models came from non-Balkan and non-Mediterranean areas, principally northern and north-eastern Europe, where there were very different historical and theoretical, as well as archaeological, conditions. It is interesting that many of the 'social' models and more complex ideas came from this pan-Baltic area from the 1980s onwards. One of the key areas is Poland, where, despite problems of palimpsests and difficult-to-date sites on sandy soils, it is now very clear (Nowak 2001; 2006) that there was a huge chronological 'overlap' of several millennia, and interaction and co-existence between 'Mesolithic', 'Neolithic' and indeed 'Bronze Age' societies and communities. The emergence of the Neolithic TRB tradition is strongly or largely related to 'hunter-gatherer' communities; there are long-term and varying interactions between foragers, farmers, forager-herders, forager-farmers, pastoralist-foragers which raise fascinating issues of cultural hybridization and historical change, and not only how people became farmers. It is thus here and in Scandinavia that the categories of Mesolithic and Neolithic, and hunter-gatherer and farmer have come under the greatest tension. Another key area has been that of the Iron Gates area of the Danube, where the extraordinary material of late Mesolithic and Neolithic date has provoked many re-examinations and interpretations (e.g. Boric et al. 2004; Radovanovic 2006; Radanovic & Voytek 1997; Tringham 2000). Survey, excavation and dating in the Balkans and the Adriatic too has forced a rethink of the pace, nature and meaning of the changes from hunter-gatherer to farmer (e.g. Banffy 2004; 2006; Biagi et al. 2005; Budja 2001; Forenbaher and Miracle 2005). The link between Neolithic occupation and sedentism has been challenged, especially in northwestern Europe (Bailey et al. 2005; Whittle 1996), but contrasting work in Ireland, for example, suggests that regional trajectories and variation are one of the keys to understanding the transition and 'the Neolithic' too (Cooney 1997; Woodman 2000). This blurring of categories has been further reinforced by archaeological (as well as ethnographic) evidence that plant (e.g. water chestnut) and animal management, and domestication of some animals such as pig was certainly not confined to the Neolithic and the Near East (Larson et al. 2005).

The result is that while there is a spectrum of contemporary understandings of the change from hunter-gatherer to farmer, the majority view among archaeologists is that it is the local and regional scales which are currently driving the arguments and demonstrating the complexities of these historical and primarily socio-cultural (rather than ecological or social evolutionary) processes. Zvelebil (2004:44–5) terms this rather broad consensus the integrationist paradigm, that is, those who are willing to accept that indigenous adoption, diffusion and various forms of 'coloniza-

tion' are differentially influential, and geographically and chronologically variable. In short, 'the direction and pace of the adoption of farming reflected as much the existing Mesolithic social context . . . [as the] conditions of the Neolithic communities and the regional ecological circumstances' (Zvelebil 2004:45). That this paradigm is generally accepted across Europe can be seen in recent publications such as Price (2000); but see Ammerman and Biagi (2003). The shift in hunter-gatherer studies is also well represented in Larsson et al. (2003), though this has a marked northern European bias.

Discussion

Do you wish to understand the true history of a Neolithic Ligurian or Sicilian? Try, if you can, to become a Neolithic Ligurian or Sicilian in your mind. If you cannot do that, or do not care to, content yourself with describing and arranging in series the skulls, implements, and drawings which have been found belonging to these Neolithic peoples. (Croce 1921:134)

What might constitute 'true history'? Croce's intellectual context was the lengthy debates about the differences between varying types of knowledge (theological, philosophical, scientific, humanist), which originally blossomed in mid-nineteenth-century Germany. The original conflict has remained a particularly important one for archaeology, though, often seen as straddling the latter two boundaries. This has been even more so for the periods under discussions here, where generalized ecological explanations of hunter-gatherers have often contrasted with more localized, materially and culturally richer and intuitively closer – more understandable? – descriptions of farmers. In modern terms Croce's 'true history' might perhaps be glossed as 'social archaeology' or one informed by (past) cultural meanings. But what is it that we are trying to understand and explain? If we are wishing to examine the period encompassing – and defined by – the various shifts from hunter-gatherers to farmers in Europe, then we are talking about a timespan covering 5,000 and arguably 8,000 years. Should we then confine ourselves to only examining the change to agriculture, however that is defined, assuming that it is a single process or outcome – what Zvelebil (2004:45) called 'the overarching coherence of the historical process of agricultural transition' (cf. Zvelebil 1989)? Or at least a set of processes that will show relatively little variation – arguing that the underlying generalizations about demography, language shift or risk-avoidance work at a regional, continental or even global scale (e.g. Bellwood 2004; Renfrew 1987; 1992; 1997; Smith 1995)? Clearly, the nature of the transition to agriculture is an important, interesting and legitimate question to ask: partial or total reliance on domesticated resources has many implications beyond diet, though the ways in which that is practiced and expressed is also highly variable. When 'the Neolithic' was understood to represent such a radically different and indeed superior state of society to those of hunter-gatherers, it was necessary to explain the coherent and simultaneous shift in socio-economic attributes from one evolutionary stage to the next. Since both 'stages' were defined by subsistence, it was indeed the obvious place to start. However, focusing on this single subsistence transition could also lead to a conceptually homogenous Neolithic, in the same way that hunter-gatherers were often characterized in ecological terms. There is also the effect of hindsight. If Zvelebil

(1998:26) argues that ‘the Neolithic is the process of agricultural transition’, Rowley-Conwy (2001:129) looks to the Jomon period of Japan to suggest other ways of approaching the Mesolithic, pointing out that ‘Eight thousand years of complexity did not lead to an indigenous Jomon agriculture. Jomon studies have freed themselves from this predestination, so groups can be examined for their own sake – not for what they might become’. There are methodological and epistemological issues here too, of course. Different data sets (including contemporary distributions of genetic traits, skeletal morphometrics, material culture attributes, radiocarbon dates, settlement patterns, comparative linguistics, palaeoecological information etc.) do not refer to the same entities, or even where they do (or might) they are unlikely to possess the same spatial, chronological or social resolutions.

Studies of the earlier Holocene in Europe have changed markedly over the last few decades. The variation within hunter-gatherer societies including especially the potential for social and economic complexity is much better recognized qualitatively and quantitatively, with the middens and cemeteries of Portugal and southern Spain, evidence of sea voyages from Sicily and north Africa to Pantelleria to acquire obsidian, and from mainland Italy and France to Corsica. To the Iron Gates sites in the Balkans, and the astonishingly rich and varied record from southern Scandinavia, the Baltic and northeast Europe must be added the expansion in the number of hunter-gatherer sites provided by more sensitive and focused survey. The variability of ‘the Neolithic’ too is better described and understood across a series of axes – cosmological, ecological, subsistence practices, the economy, social structure and of course material culture, all varying across space and time. We have at the European scale a mosaic of variably connected and variably-bounded ‘cultures’ which characterize both the Mesolithic and the Neolithic: a continuously varying landscape of sociocultural and economic processes and traditions. We are reaching the point at which for many regions at least it is clear that to treat ‘the transition to agriculture’ as the only or most important lens through which to view the archaeological record runs the danger of downplaying other trajectories – other histories. Other themes, other axes of variation which cut across the traditional period boundaries – mobility in things, people and genes; long-term histories of societal interactions (as in Poland); changes in cosmology; cultural hybridization; the ebb and flow of directionality of relations within regions; new cross-period ecological or landscape histories; shifting social structures – all these and more are now possible in many parts of Europe, especially as our ability and willingness to ascribe agency and history to hunter-gatherers has improved. The conceptual shadow cast by a morally evaluative social evolution is beginning to dissipate, in large part brought about by persistent exploration of stadial difference engendered by that very same scheme. ‘Only history can free us from history’, suggests Bourdieu (1982:9), and so itself produce a framework for change. It does not mean that ‘the transition to agriculture’ will disappear as a topic; it might mean that different questions and perspectives will present themselves – and help us see Others.

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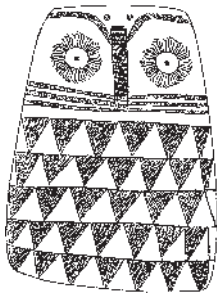
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I (b)

The Celts as 'Grand Narrative'

John Collis

Introduction

The trend in the last decade or two of the twentieth century has been away from the 'big picture' to detailed local studies, the world 'as lived' by individuals and small groups, an approach often labelled 'Post-Processual' or 'Post-Modernist'. This has led to detailed analysis of the structure and layout of settlements and the processes of deposition, especially where these can be related to belief systems or the way in which ancient peoples may have perceived themselves and their environment. Though these matters are clearly vitally important not only in themselves, but also in terms of how they fundamentally affect our understanding of the nature of the archaeological record (what is, or is not, buried in such a way that much later we archaeologists can find and interpret it), nonetheless there were wider processes going on which affected these often very different societies and linked them into wider networks – local, regional even pan-European – and it is essential to attempt to document and understand these processes as well. Why, at certain periods of time, do we get similar types of monument such as hill-forts and oppida occurring over wide areas of central and western Europe? Why at certain periods are there fashions in burial rite, in decoration of ornaments or ceramic styles which are widely distributed, or, conversely, why at other periods is there considerable regional variation (e.g. pottery styles in southern Britain during the Middle Iron Age)? Why is there similarity of languages (Celtic, Germanic, Iberian), and what dictated their boundaries?

Several explanations have been put forward over the last couple of centuries. The linguistic similarities were recognized earliest, starting in the 16th century, and from the 19th century there was the recognition of a large related group of languages found from central Asia and northern India to the western limits of Europe – the Indo-Germanic or Indo-European languages, encompassing several big families: Romance, Germanic, Sanskrit, Celtic, Slav, etc. The relationship between them was likened to a tree, the trunk being the original 'Indo-European' language from which all the others derived by a process of expansion and splitting, the so-called Stammbaum theory. It also gave a relative chronology: Latin was clearly older than the Romance languages such as French, Italian and Spanish which were derived from it.

In the 19th century languages were assumed to correlate with 'Races', and these races were in turn assumed by many scholars also to be physically distinctive, distinguishable especially from the shapes of their skulls (craniology). From the mid-19th century archaeological criteria were added in the form of art styles, burial rites, ceramic and metal types, culminating in the concept of the 'Culture Group' as defined by Gustaf Kossinna and Gordon Childe, and it is to this category of explanation that the archaeological 'Celts' belong. For the pioneers of prehistory, Culture History (i.e. the History of 'Cultures') was the primary aim of the subject; as Hans-Jürgen Eggers, the major critic of Kossinna wrote: 'Prehistory would cease to be an historical science if it were to stop its continuous attempt to solve the problems of ethnic meaning' (1959:200; translation: author). For Childe one of the major themes of prehistory was the study of the interplay between these 'Culture Groups' or 'Cultures' as he more commonly called them, their expansion and contraction, and these 'Cultures' he equated with 'peoples'. But there was also 'progress', the adoption of new technologies or economic and social forms (e.g. metalworking, urbanization) which generally emanated out from areas of higher civilization in the Near East (*ex oriente lux*), under the all-embracing term of 'diffusion'.

In the 1960s this concept of diffusion was often rejected, and new models developed to explain the exchange of ideas, such as 'peer polity' interaction or trade and exchange. This was especially invoked for the Neolithic and Bronze Age (e.g. the appearance of megalithic tombs or of copper working). For the Iron Age, though such models were useful and were adopted, the traditional models continued to be employed, in part because there was plentiful historical evidence for migration (Celts) and colonization (Greeks and Phoenicians), or of military expansion (Persians, Romans), and also, because of the tighter historically based chronologies, diffusion could be clearly demonstrated, for instance in the adoption of iron working or coinage, or the process of 'orientalizing' in art styles, all genuinely *ex oriente lux*. But what does 'diffusion' actually mean? It is in fact merely a descriptive term, and offers no explanation. A number of different mechanisms can be invoked for the spread of orientalizing: movement of craftsmen (Greece); colonization (Phoenicians and Greeks); trade (central Italy, central Europe, Iberia); local emulation of prestige goods (Situla and La Tène Art). But even this does not explain what traits may be accepted, or rejected, or whether we are looking merely at surface change or more fundamental changes within society. The composite animals such as the sphinx, the winged horse or the chimera introduced by orientalizing played important roles in Greek foundation myths. But especially for the Iron Age we also cannot assume a unidirectional flow of ideas, nor a single locus of innovation, indeed cultural manifestations may have multiple origins, very much like the Wellen (wave) theory for linguistic innovations (Mallory 1989).

The Celts

All these models are applicable to the Celts. The historical migrations of the Celts into northern Italy and Asia Minor are well documented, and this migration model has been used to explain the presence of Celtici and Celtiberians in Iberia, and Celtic languages in central Europe, Iberia, Britain and Ireland. The orientalizing of art styles in the 5th century, producing 'Celtic' or 'La Tène' art, is seen as a local imitation of classical Greek and Etruscan prototypes which arrived via trade into

eastern France and southern Germany, and this art was then 'diffused' to Ireland and Bulgaria, to northern Italy and Denmark. Many local versions of weapons, ornaments and ceramic styles were developed, some of which remained highly localized in their distribution, but others of which achieved wide distributions across Europe. For instance, the development from the Early to the Middle La Tène brooch is typified by the foot being bound on to the bow, and in the Late La Tène it was cast on. These features were recognized by Tischler as early as 1885, and ever since have formed the basic chronology for the La Tène period from Britain to Romania, simply because they were so widespread.

The picture of the Celts that has been disseminated in a large number of books in the 20th century consists of a number of elements. Ultimately the existence of the Celts is derived from a number of mentions and descriptions by ancient authors between the 6th century BC and the 5th century AD, but with a continuity along the Atlantic coast in Brittany, Wales, Ireland and western Scotland into modern times. The Celts are primarily defined by their languages, a part of the wider group of Indo-European languages which derive from eastern Europe or Asia Minor. When the language group was disseminated and when the Celtic languages became differentiated from neighbouring languages such as Germanic and Italic is still a matter of debate; Colin Renfrew (1991) links it with the spread of agriculture in the 6th–5th millennia; linguists generally date it to the Chalcolithic starting in the 3rd millennium BC with the Celts arriving in their present location during the Iron Age (Mallory 1989). Since then the Celts have gradually been 'pushed' westwards by later invaders, by Romans and peoples of Germanic stock. The post-Roman Irish, Scots Gaelic, Welsh and Bretons and their descendants are seen as preserving the culture of their continental ancestors wiped out by the Roman and Germanic expansions, in the form of the language, social structure, 'spirit', art and literature (e.g. the heroic poetry of Ireland).

Archaeologists assign a particular culture group to the Ancient Celts, the La Tène Culture, with a distinctive material culture and art. The origin of both is considered to lie in the Champagne area of northern France, the hill ranges of the Eifel and the Hunsrück on either side of the Mosel and the central Rhine, and the upper Danube, a river whose source, according to Herodotus, lay in the territory of the Celts. In these areas, and in parts of Bavaria, Bohemia and Austria there is considerable continuity from the late Hallstatt Culture of the 6th century. This core area is depicted on most maps as the origin of the Celts from which they expanded by migration, taking with them their La Tène Culture to Spain, Italy, Asia Minor, western France, Britain and Ireland (Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

This is the now generally accepted view of the Celts, but in almost every aspect it can be questioned if not demolished on theoretical, methodological and factual grounds, and I shall try to describe these new arguments in the rest of this chapter, summarizing the views I have argued in greater detail in my recent book and elsewhere (Collis 2003; 2004; forthcoming).

The Modern, or 'Secondary' Celts

One problem in studying the Ancient Celts is that they are interpreted through the lens of the Modern Celts, and modern concepts are imposed on the ancient population, for instance in the definition of the Celts as a people who speak, or whose

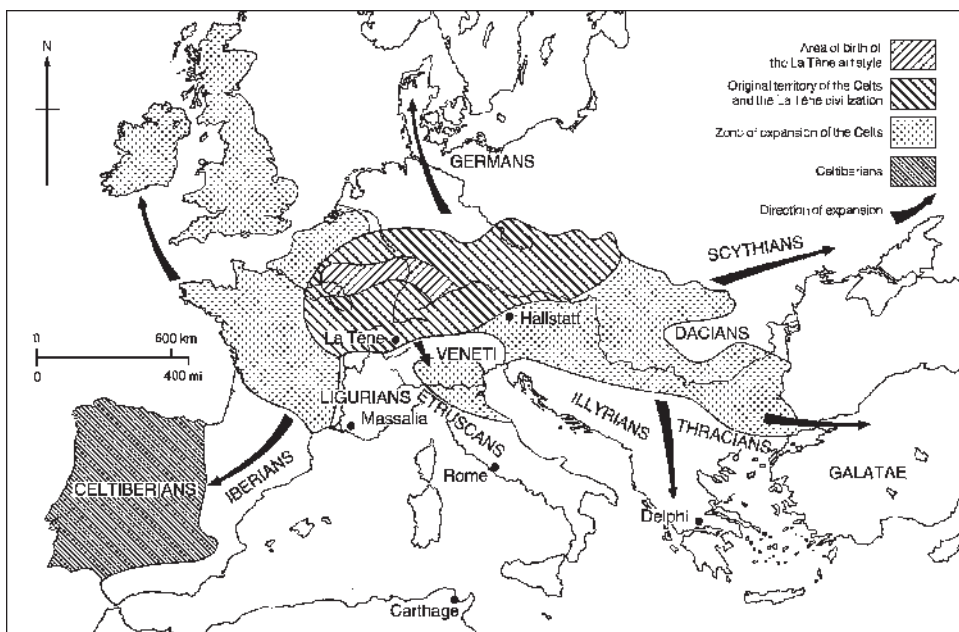


Figure 1.1 The origin and expansion of the Celts. This is the most widely produced map, and has appeared in various forms in the last half century, with variations especially in the way in which Britain and Ireland are treated. See also Figure 1.7 (Source: Megaw and Megaw 1989)

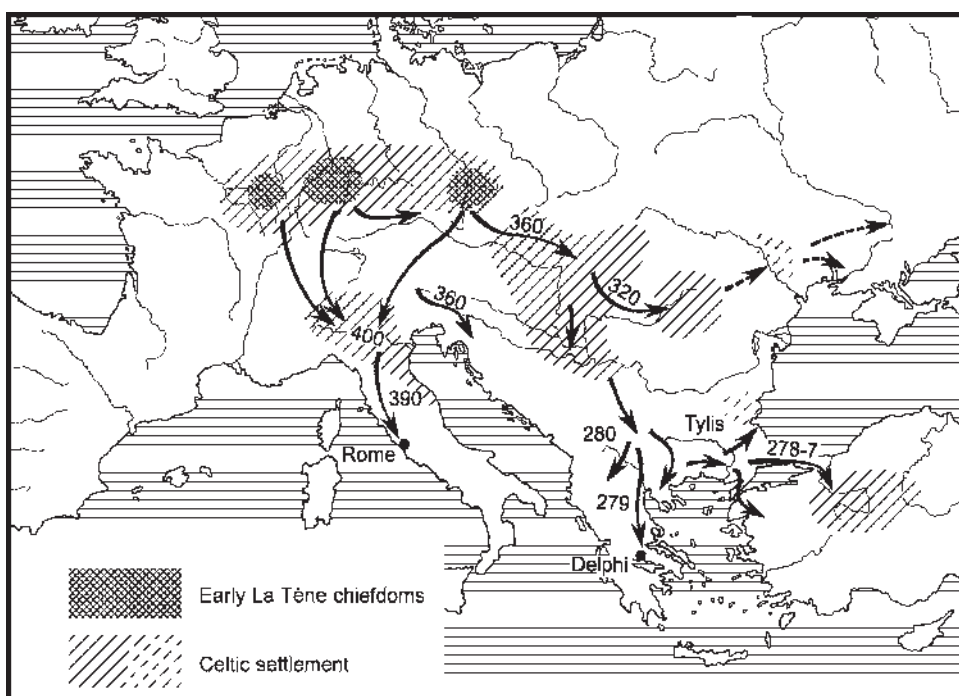


Figure 1.2 This version of the origin and expansion of the Celts first appeared in James 1993, and later in Cunliffe 1997. It is based on archaeological evidence, and largely ignores the historical sources such as Livy (Source: Cunliffe 1997)

recent ancestors spoke, a Celtic language. In fact we are dealing with two very different groups of Celts, whose links with one another are fairly tenuous. Firstly they are divided by a gulf of over 1,000 years. Between the last mention in the 5th–early 6th centuries AD in authors such as Sidonius Apollinaris and Isidore of Seville and their rediscovery in the Renaissance in the 16th century, the name 'Celt' virtually disappears, with authors either referring to specific tribal names (e.g. Bede refers to the Morini, and Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Allobroges), or using the cognate term of the Galli both for the ancient inhabitants of Gaul and their descendants who became the French nation. They are also divided geographically, with almost no overlap except in Brittany and perhaps Galicia (Figure 1.3), and there the populations are usually interpreted as descended from Late or Post-Roman immigrants from the British Isles.

The 16th century saw the dissemination of Greek and Latin texts, many recently rediscovered, and made widely available through the adoption of the printing press. But at the same time the feudal basis of medieval Europe had started crumbling, with the rise of a new class of small landowners and merchants, and the emphasis of historical interest started shifting from the genealogy of the noble families to the origins of peoples and the constitutional basis of the developing nation states. Though sociologists argue that the rise of the nation state is primarily a feature of the 18th century, many elements already existed in the 16th century, for instance

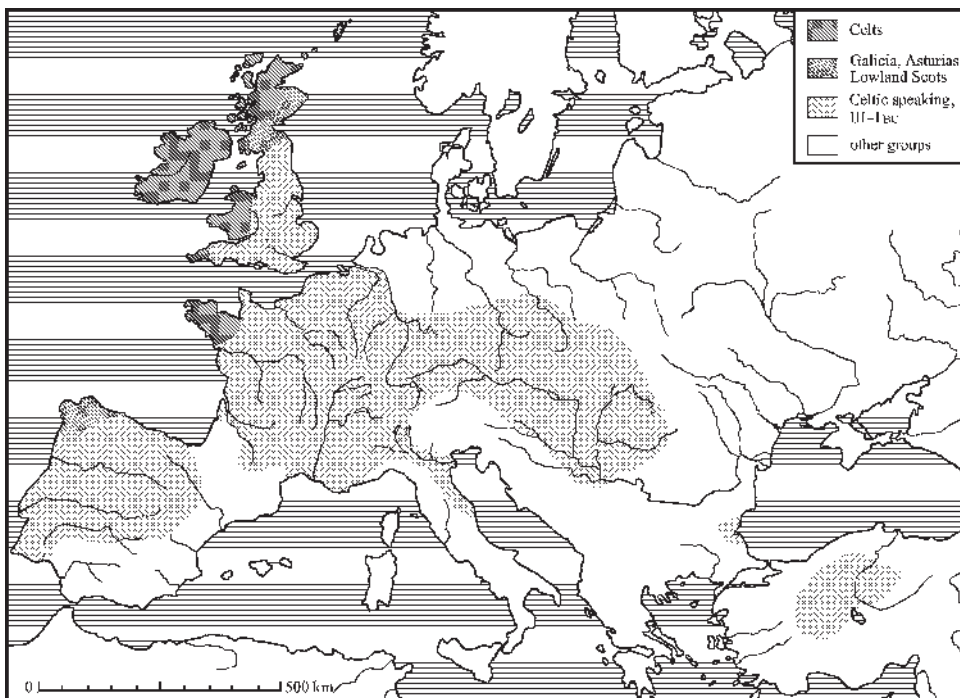


Figure 1.3 Areas occupied by the Modern or 'Secondary' Celts, compared with the earlier distribution of Celtic languages. The distribution of the Modern Celts is based on the location and post-Roman colonization of the Celtic-speaking peoples of the British Isles, though the status of the Lowland Scots and the Galicians of northern Spain is ambiguous. Note the contrast with Figure 1.8 (Source: the author)

Shakespeare's evocation of the English (and Welsh) in his play *Henry V*, and Ferguson (1998) has similarly argued for a sense of Scottishness perhaps as early as the 15th century, amalgamating different ethnic groups and kingdoms: the Picts; the Scots from Ireland; the Norse in the western and northern isles; and English and British speakers in the south.

It is precisely in Scotland that we find the first evocation of the Celts as ancestral to the modern nations, specifically the Irish and Scots. The Scottish scholar, playwright and politician George Buchanan, in his book *De Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (1582), in true Renaissance tradition rejected the medieval myths which derived the Britons from the Trojan Brutus, and the Irish from the Greek Gaythelos and the Egyptian princess Scota, and he looked for a more logical origin for the inhabitants of the British Isles and Ireland using the historical evidence of the Latin and Greek sources (Collis 1999; MacNeill 1913–14). He argued for an origin of the pre-Roman British in France, Iberia and the Baltic, mainly on the evidence of shared place names: the Roman town names ending in -dunum, -durum, -briga and -magus which he recognized as being cognate to words found in Scots Gaelic. He was also the first to claim in print that there was a group of related languages which included Irish, Welsh and Scots Gaelic which derived from the languages spoken by the Ancient Britons and the Gauls. He termed these languages 'Gallic', with Celtic, Belgic and Britannic dialects, and contrasted them with the Germanic- and Latin-based groups of languages, the first such distinction ever made. For him the Celts were only the inhabitants of Ireland who had immigrated from Spain, and their Scottish off-spring who had colonized the Western Isles. The Welsh he thought might be derived from the Belgae whom Caesar said had invaded southeastern Britain, and the Picts he derived from the Baltic (following Bede), from the Aestiones whom Tacitus had described as speaking 'Britannice'; Buchanan thought they might be a remnant of the Gauls who Livy had described as migrating eastwards to the Hercynian Forest under Segovesus (Figure 1.4). Using the evidence especially of Irish and Scottish genealogies, he calculated the original colonization of Britain to be around the 4th–3rd centuries BC, and so part of the migrations of the Gauls described by Livy and other ancient authors.

It is a matter of debate how influential Buchanan's writings were; the volume was recalled soon after Buchanan's death by James VI as it was uncomplimentary to his mother, Mary Queen of Scots; his work was also used in the debate over the 'divine right of kings' and so became politically unacceptable after the Restoration in 1660. Indeed were chosen, along with the works of Milton, for public burning in Oxford in 1683 (McFarlane 1981). It was not until 1827 that the *Historia* was republished in Britain, and this was the first English translation (Aikman 1827). However, it had remained in print in Protestant areas on the continent, and his theories were cited in what became the official and most popular version of Britain's history, William Camden's *Britannia* (1586), though his ideas were only given equal weight alongside other theories of the origin of the British: the Cimbri, Cimmerian, Gomerian connection which gave a biblical origin through Gomer, son of Japhet, son of Noah (a link first propounded in Josephus in the first century AD, to which Camden added the Cymry); and the more politically correct Brutus myth. However, the well-known reference to the Celtic origin of the Scots mentioned by the Reverend Donald Macqueen, a priest on Skye, and recorded in James Boswell's description of Samuel Johnson's visit to the Hebrides in 1782, comes in a context where Buchanan's work was being discussed, indeed venerated (Pottle and Bennett

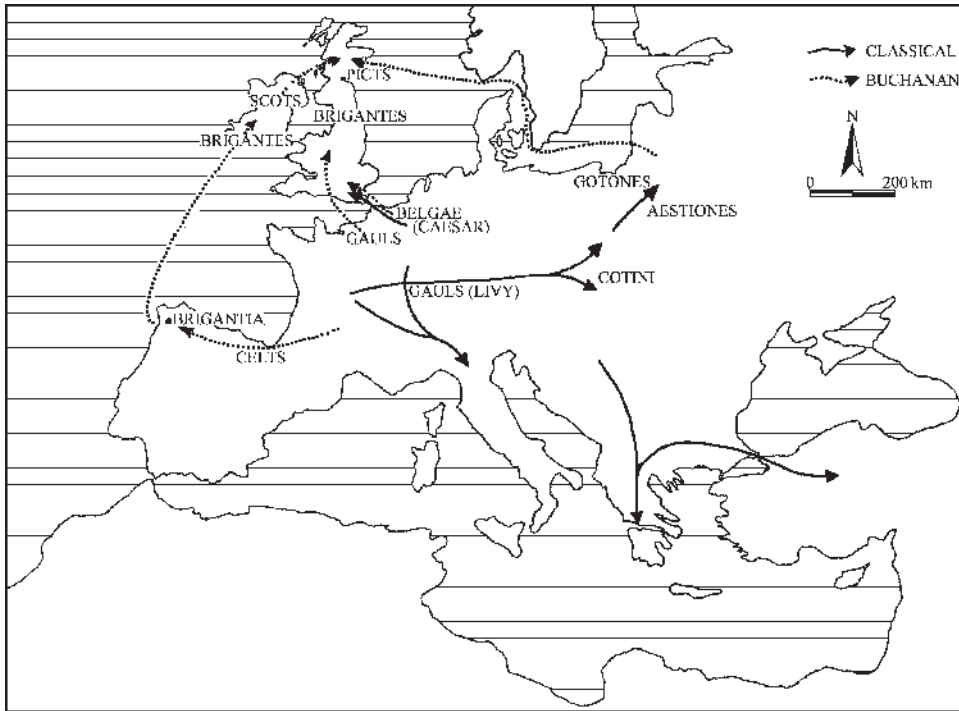


Figure 1.4 A reconstruction of the migrations recorded by Livy and of the original settlement of the British Isles, based on the writing of George Buchanan (1582) (Source: Collis 1999)

1936). But Camden himself never used the word 'Celt'; he always wrote of the 'Ancient Britons'.

In Britain the Celts did not reappear in the literature until the beginning of the 18th century. It derived from two disparate sources. The first was a discussion of the Druids and the interpretation of the prehistoric monuments such as Stonehenge and Avebury; the second was linguistic. In 1703 the Abbé Paul-Yves Pezron published a book on the origins of the Breton language (he was himself a Breton), which he considered to be the last remnant of the language of the *Celtae* described by Julius Caesar (Brittany fell into the area defined by Caesar as Celtic Gaul). He believed that the language of the Celts was one of the original languages from the Tower of Babel, and, like Camden, he associated it with the original colonization of Europe by Japhet and his descendants, and specifically correlated the Gomerians with the Celts. He noted similarities of certain words between the Celtic, Germanic, Latin and Greek languages, and suggested that these were due to periods when these other nations had been dominated by the Celts during their gradual migration towards the west. Pezron's book caused considerable interest in Britain, as he recognized that Welsh was closely linked with Breton, so he considered them as Celts as well, though he makes no mention of Irish or Scots Gaelic. His work was quickly translated into English, and so became widely available (Jones 1705). He is really the first author to consider that the Celts were people who spoke a Celtic language, though most linguists would now consider his basic premise was wrong, and that Breton, rather than being a survival of the language of the Celts, was rather a British

language introduced in the Late or Post-Roman period from Cornwall and Wales (Giot et al. 2003; Snyder 2003).

One person who was profoundly influenced by Pezron's writing was Edward Lhuyd, though they never met, and Lhuyd complains that Pezron had failed to respond to his letters (Gunther 1945). He had worked on the 1695 'Gibson' version of Camden's *Britannia*, and so one assumes he knew something of Buchanan's work as well, though he never cites it. As a result of his efforts to update Camden he decided to carry out a survey of the archaeological monuments and the early languages of Britain though, due to his early death, only the survey of the languages was published, in 1707. In it he compared the vocabulary of Irish, Scots Gaelic, Welsh, Cornish and Breton, and recognized their common source and their similarity with other languages such as Latin and Greek, a comparative study which was not to be superseded for over a century. His introduction is not entirely clear, but he cites Pezron's work, and decided to follow him and to call the language group 'Celtic' even though he recognized that this should properly only be applied to the continent. He also made the division between 'C' ('Q')-Celtic which encompassed Irish and Scots Gaelic, and which he suggested had been introduced by 'Goidels', and a 'Brythonic' 'P-Celtic' which included Welsh, Cornish and Breton. Lhuyd is thus the first person to use the term 'Celtic' to encompass all the early languages and peoples of Britain, and this was to have a profound effect on later developments.

Interest in the Druids had been rekindled during the Renaissance (Owen 1962), but it was also not until the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century that they were linked with the megalithic monuments of western Europe. In 1689 John Aubrey had written a work assigning the construction of Stonehenge to the Druids, and though this was not published, his ideas were incorporated into the 1695 version of Camden's *Britannia*. In 1723 we find the first two authors who put together the Druids, the megalithic monuments and the Celts: Henry Rowlands in his *Mona Insula Restaurata*; and William Stukeley in his unpublished work *The Antient Temples of the Druids* (Piggott 1985). Interest in the Druids had also been stimulated in the religious debate generated by the Deists, and John Toland had planned to write a book attacking the Druids from a Deist perspective (Huddleston 1814). Stukeley explicitly states that one of his aims in studying Avebury and Stonehenge was 'to attack the Deists from an unexpected quarter'. In his later works (1740; 1743) Stukeley drops references to the Celts, and usually uses the term 'Druidic' to describe the monuments. Thus, by the mid-18th century there was a general acceptance in academic circles that the early inhabitants of Britain were 'Celts' though it had not yet been popularized.

Celtomania in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries

Though the Anglo-Saxon scholar Bede had made a clear distinction between the Germanic and the native British populations in the 6th and 7th centuries in Britain, and the early language classifications by Buchanan and by Scaliger (1610) had distinguished between Gallic and Germanic languages, the actual relationship between the Celts and the Germans was confused, based largely on conjecture on the vague biblical references. Thus, in his *Histoire des Celtes* (1740) Simon Pelloutier suggested that the Germani were descended from the Celtae, and this is also found

in Mallet's *Northern Antiquities* (Blackwell 1898), translated and published in English by Bishop Thomas Percy in 1770 (Kidd 1999). It was in his Preface to the volume that Percy elaborated on what for him and Evan Evans (Lewis 1957) were the clear contrasts between the languages and the customs of the Celts and of the Goths, a distinction which was generally taken up in Britain.

The second half of the 18th century also saw the rise of Romanticism and Primitivism, and the Celts formed an important component of these fashions. In Britain it was in part triggered by Thomas Gray's poem 'The Bard' published in 1757, lamenting the loss of the Welsh bardic tradition under the English onslaught under Edward III. This proved a popular theme in art, with pictures of a lone bard playing his harp against a backdrop of stone circles or megalithic tombs, with the advancing English army in the background (Smiles 1994). More specifically 'Celtic' were the poems of the Ossian cycle ('Fingal', 'Temora') published by James Macpherson in 1760–3, which, whatever their status (collations, fabrications), achieved European-wide fame for the literature of the Irish and Gaelic world, and even to the development of a tourist industry encompassing the Hebrides, of which Felix Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture ('Fingal's Cave', 1832) is a lasting reminder. In the early 19th century this sense of Scottish Celticity was further developed in the novels of Sir Walter Scott such as *Rob Roy* (1817) in which the eponymous hero is specifically referred to as a Celt. Scott is often credited with the invention and popularization of the outward trappings of Scottish culture – the tartan, the kilt and its associated ornaments, (sporrans, penannular brooches, etc.), and the bagpipes – ideas which were finally given the seal of approval by the British royal family under George IV and Victoria (Trevor-Roper 1983). The Scottish tradition represents an interesting mixture of features taken over from the politically dominant Lowlands (the church, legal system and especially the English language), and from the 'suppressed' Highland tradition such as poetry, and dress, the romantic aura, and the name of the country (the Scoti were, according to Bede, settlers from Ireland).

A parallel development occurred in Wales, with the increasing concept of 'Welshness', epitomized for instance in the foundation of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion in London by Welsh émigrés in 1751, and the promotion of early Welsh literature by collectors of manuscripts such as Evan Evans. But as in Scotland, many of the Welsh traditions were fabrications of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, or at best a revival in a new guise of medieval traditions which had been allowed to lapse. Thus, in 1791 Edward Williams (Iolo Morgannwg) founded the druidical Gorsedd, based on the romantic concept of the bards who had provided the historical record and the poetry in aristocratic courts, but using antiquarian ideas such as stone circles; he too specifically used the term 'Celtic' to describe these developments. In 1819 the Eisteddfod was re-established, and the two traditions were soon linked, proving a strong incentive to the survival of the Welsh language (Morgan 1983).

The reasons for the popularity of a Celtic identity in the late 18th century are not clear (Collis forthcoming). It was a time when the idea of the nation state was developing, and Linda Colley (1992) has claimed that 'Britishness' was based on a combination of anti-French and anti-Catholic sentiment. However, Celticity cuts across this. Not only does it unite a predominantly Catholic Ireland and a French Brittany with strongly Protestant areas, but even among the Protestants there were divisions, between a Presbyterian Scotland and a Methodist Wales. James (1999) has argued that it was a political response by the Scots against the Act of Union in

1707; I have suggested its roots lay in the rise of Romanticism (Collis 2003), not only in Britain, but also in France (e.g. de La Tour d'Auvergne-Corret 1796). Hechter (1975) for more recent times has documented the peripheral nature of these societies and their shared reaction to the centralization of power within the British and French nation states. However, in France the Celts were also seen as a source of unity, with the origin of the state being sought in 'nos ancêtres les Gaulois' as portrayed in Amédée Thierry's influential *Histoire des Gaulois* (1828). The idea of a Celtic unity was based purely on a scholastic, academic construction, that of a language group, yet within a century this had been translated into a widely held feeling of common empathy between very disparate groups.

Celtic Art and Archaeology

All authors up to the mid-19th century were working on a biblical timescale, so the Celts, Gauls and Britons were seen as the first inhabitants of western Europe with dates for their arrival varying between about 1500 BC (Thierry) and the late first millennium (Buchanan). However, this chronology was under attack from two quarters. Firstly there were developments in Geology, with an increasing recognition of the great antiquity of the world, the occurrence of extinct animals in the deposits and the occasional association of human-made tools with them, culminating in the events of 1859 when not only was the concept of evolution published by Darwin, but the great antiquity of mankind was formally recognized by the scientific world. The second driving force for new ideas was in linguistics, with the identification of the 'Indo-Germanic' languages by Franz Bopp, Jakob Grimm and others. In Europe Basque and Finnish were recognized as non-Indo-European, raising questions about earlier populations and the date of the arrival of the Indo-European languages, of which Celtic formed a major group.

From the 18th century language had been linked with the idea of 'race', so initially it was hoped that the speakers of these different languages might be identifiable from their physical remains, especially the skull, and various attempts were made in Scandinavia and Britain to characterize 'racial groups' during the 19th century (Morse 1999; 2005), though some anthropologists were sceptical about whether this was possible; James Cowles Prichard, for instance, suggested language might be a better indicator as human populations might change their physical characteristics to adapt to changing environments (e.g. develop dark skins as protection against the sun), and he wrote the first book on the Celtic languages, their origin and relationship to other Indo-European languages (Prichard 1831). However, some relative dating was needed for the graves from which the skulls were derived, and this was provided by the Three Age System of Christian Thomsen, first published in 1836, and translated into English in 1848, though writers such as Prichard were using it before this date (discussed in Morse 2005; Prichard 1973). On the evidence of skull shape, craniologists suggested that there was a change from long-headed 'dolichocephalic' to a round-headed 'brachycephalic' population at the beginning of the Bronze Age, and that this marked the arrival of the Celts.

From the 1840s onwards, led by the staff of the British Museum (Samuel Birch, Augustus Wollaston Franks), an alternative way of recognizing racial groups was attempted, through distinctive art styles. Thus, newly discovered objects such as the 'Tara' brooch and the Battersea shield were termed 'Celtic', but it was

not until 1856, in a lecture in Dublin, that the characteristics of this art style were first defined by John Kemble. His death soon after prevented him publishing his work, but it was used by William Wilde in his description of the objects in the collections of the Royal Irish Academy (1861), and was finally published by Franks in 1863 (Kemble et al. 1863), and named by him 'Late Keltic Art'. Franks was able to parallel the British finds with objects on the continent, notably with the newly discovered finds from La Tène, and the concept was further developed by British authors, especially in the first book on Celtic art by J. Romilly Allen, published in 1904.

It is important to note that the nomenclature and definition of the art style as 'Celtic' was based on the presumption that the early inhabitants of Britain were Celts. No continental author used the term in this way, or applied it to the ancient historical Celts, until Joseph Déchelette in 1914, and he used Allen and Franks as his major sources. However he was able to draw on other developments on the continent to produce the first recognizably modern definition of the Celts incorporating historical, linguistic, art historical and archaeological sources, as well as concepts such as the archaeological 'Culture Group' ('les civilisations d'Hallstatt et La Tène'), and a firm chronology. The chronology for the Iron Age had been developed rapidly in the last quarter of the 19th century, from the first realization that the two stylistic groups identified by Hans Hildebrand in 1874, of Hallstatt and La Tène, in fact represented a chronological succession. This was followed in 1885 by Otto Tischler's division of the La Tène period into Early, Middle and Late on the basis of the typological development of brooches and scabbards, and later refined and extended by Paul Reinecke's papers in the first decade of the 20th century on both Hallstatt and La Tène chronology in southern Germany, using nomenclature still in use today (Reinecke 1963). Déchelette developed his own chronology, giving it some absolute dates on the basis of the presence of Greek and Etruscan imported vessels in some of the Early La Tène graves. On this evidence he suggested an origin for 'Celtic Art' in the 5th century BC in the zone extending from northern France through the central Rhine and Mosel to Bohemia (Figure 1.5).

For his linguistic and historical interpretation Déchelette relied heavily on the work of Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville, first director of Celtic Studies in the Sorbonne (Collis 2004). He had envisaged a series of 'Empires' in the history of human settlement of Europe (he ignored archaeological data which he claimed was outside his competence): a period of cave dwellers, epitomized by the Cyclops Polyphemus; an Iberian empire of hunters and gathers perhaps originating from Atlantis in 6000 BC; Indo-European Ligurians who introduced agriculture around 2000 BC; and the Celts or Gauls who arrived in the later 1st millennium BC. On the evidence of place names he suggested the arrival of Celtic languages in France was relatively late, and that their origin should be sought on the central Rhine–Main area (Figure 1.6); the Germans arrived in historical times. Déchelette translated this into archaeological terms mainly using the evidence of burial rites: crouched inhumation (e.g. beaker burials) for Ligurians; extended inhumation for Celts; and cremation for Germani and Belgae. For the Celts he envisaged an expansion into France in the Iron Age, with the early Celts epitomized by the distribution of Hallstatt inhumation burials from central France to Bohemia (Figure 1.5). The two areas thus defined by Déchelette for the origin of the Celts and for the origin of La Tène art reappear on most of the modern maps of the origin and of expansion the Celts (e.g. Figure

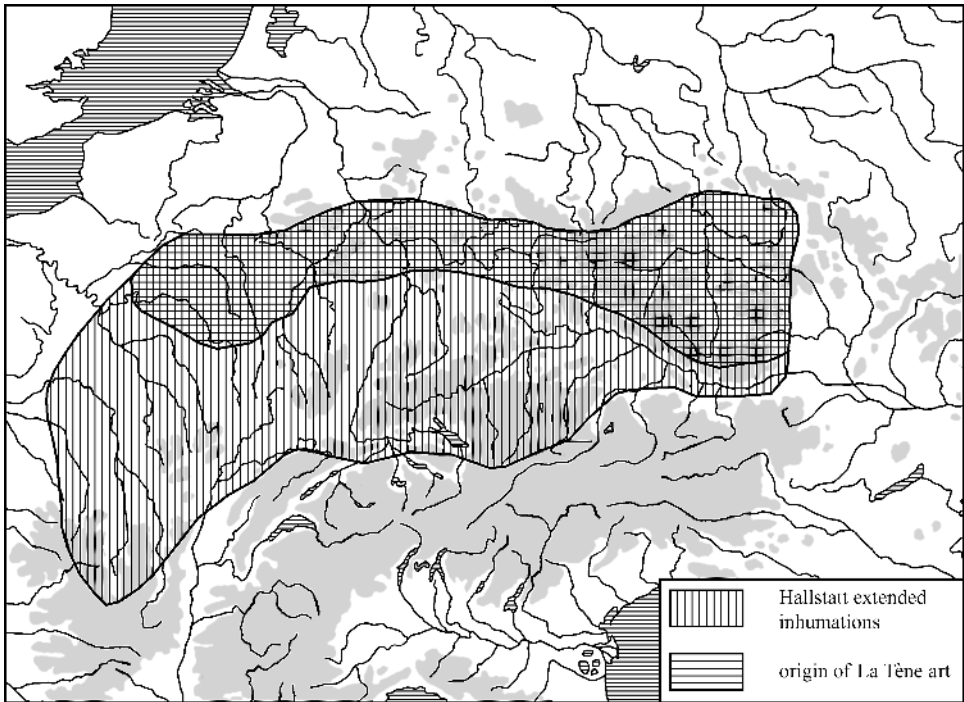


Figure 1.5 The homeland of the Celts (areas of Hallstatt inhumation burials) and the origin area of La Tène art, a reconstruction based on the writings of Joseph Déchelette (1914). Note how this reappears in Figure 1.1 (Source: the author)

1.1), a map which appeared in its earliest version in Aymard 1954 (Figure 1.7). In recent years it has been reproduced in various forms (with numerous variations on how to deal with Britain and Ireland), even though on methodological grounds we would no longer accept the simplistic interpretations of d'Arbois de Jubainville and Déchelette, indeed they can be shown to be factually incorrect – the recently discovered cemetery at Mont Beuvray, excavated by Jon Dunkley and Jean-Loup Flouest, in the heart of Celtic territory consists entirely of cremations!

The Celtic Migrations

A major aspect of the 'grand narrative' of the Celts are the historical migrations: the Celtic settlement in Spain; the invasion of northern Italy culminating in the attack on Rome around 390 BC; the attacks on Delphi and Olbia; the settlement of the Galatians in central Asia around Ankara in 287 BC; and the invasions of the Belgae into northern Gaul and southern Britain. Early authors such as Thierry who believed the Celts or Gauls were the original inhabitants of western Europe assumed the homeland of the Celts to be in Gaul, and that the tribes mentioned by Livy as taking part in the invasion of Italy were already in position (i.e. in central Gaul) in the 5th century BC, and that the more precise information from the 1st century, in Caesar, Strabo, and later Ptolemy, allows us to locate these tribes more precisely. However, this view came under attack in the late 19th century mainly from d'Arbois

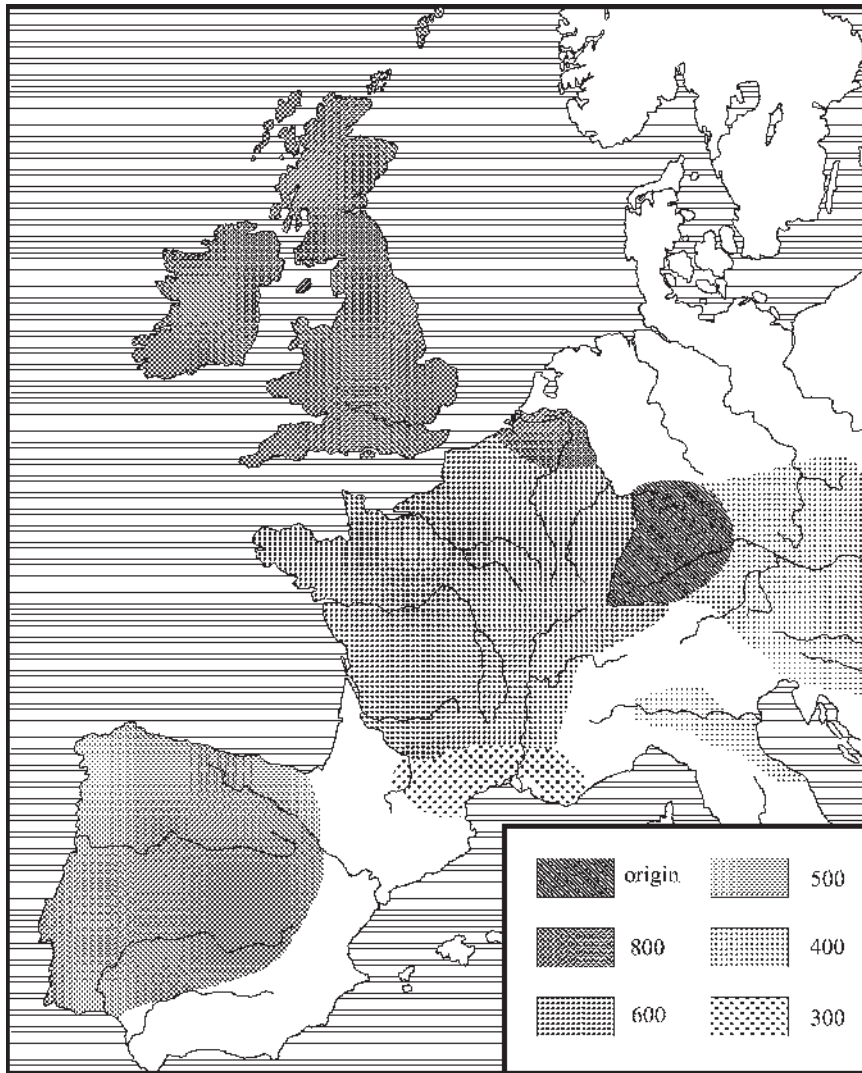


Figure 1.6 The origin and expansion of the Celts in western Europe, reconstructed from the theories of Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville (1903, 1904) (Source: Collis 2004)

de Jubainville and Alexandre Bertrand (1889, the first systematic attempt to link archaeology with the historical sources), both of whom argued for an origin of the Celts (or in the case of Bertrand, the Gauls) east of the Rhine, a view which has largely survived to the modern day.

In 1870–1 Gabriel de Mortillet and Emile Désor argued that the objects in the burials from the Etruscan town of Marzabotto were most closely paralleled in the burials from northern France and from the finds from La Tène, and so were evidence of the Gauls, and specifically the Senones, who had invaded Italy in the early 4th century BC. The date of the invasion is ambiguous; the text of Livy implies an early date, around 600 BC, while Polybius suggests a date around 400. Bertrand linked the arrival of the Celts with the Hallstatt period burials in northern Italy,

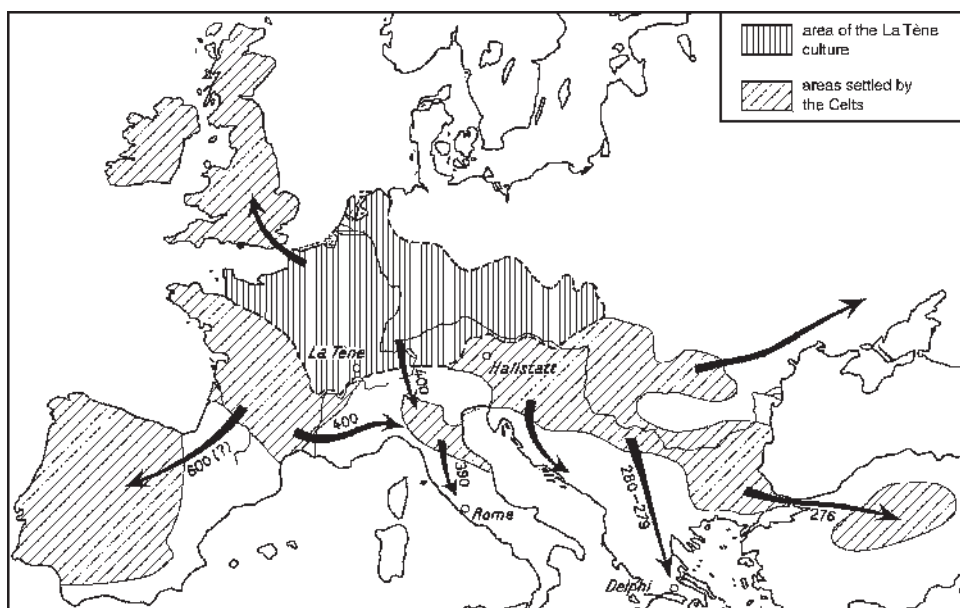


Figure 1.7 This is the earliest map to appear of the origin and expansion of the Celts, and is the source for many later maps such as that in Figure 1.1; note especially the outline area of the Celtiberians in Spain, though this has little to do with the actual area occupied by them, but it appears in all subsequent maps (Source: Aymard 1954)

but with Déchelette the emphasis was placed back on the La Tène period, and Livy's earlier date has since largely been ignored in the archaeological world. The view that Hallstatt and La Tène could be viewed not merely as chronological periods, but also as 'Culture Groups' had been developing during the late 19th century, and in 1911 the idea that such groups could be interpreted in racial terms was firmly advocated by Gustaf Kossinna in respect of the Germans (a view taken up more generally by Gordon Childe in the 1920s). Déchelette was never so dogmatic with his *Civilisation de La Tène*, and he distinguished between Celtic, Germanic and Insular versions of the La Tène culture. However, under the influence of Childe and his contemporaries, during the course of the 20th century the racial/ethnic interpretation of La Tène became much stronger, and in central Europe and elsewhere the appearance of a 'La Tène Culture' and 'flat inhumation cemeteries' was directly correlated with the 'arrival' of the Celts and the Celtic language (e.g. Filip 1960; Kruta 2000; Szabó 1992). This 'Culture-Historical' interpretation is fundamental to most of the recent surveys of the Celts (e.g. Cunliffe 1997; Haywood 2004; James 1993; Kruta et al. 1991; Powell 1958), though from the 1960s in other areas of prehistoric studies it has been generally abandoned as methodologically unsound.

The Ancient or 'Primary' Celts

When reviewing the evidence for the Ancient Celts, we must remove our preconceptions derived from more recent developments, especially a definition of the Celts

which relies on linguistic and archaeological data. As we have seen much of this is based on presumptions which have proved false; that Breton is a survival of the ancient language of the historical Celts (making the term 'Celtic' for the language group a misnomer). 'Celtic' art is also a misnomer, based on the false assumption that the ancient inhabitants of Britain were Celts, indeed we can demonstrate that it was not employed by all peoples who spoke a Celtic language or may have considered themselves to be Celtic (e.g. in the Iberian peninsula), nor was it confined to Celtic speakers – it was employed by Iberian speakers in southern France (e.g. Ensérune), and probable Germanic speakers in Denmark (Kaul 1991). There was also no continuity between the ancient and the modern Celts – there is a thousand year gap when the term disappeared, and there is virtually no geographical overlap between the two groups. The simple problem is that we do not know how the Ancient Celts were defined (linguistically, geographically, culturally), and it is also clear that different authors in the ancient world employed the term 'Celt' in different ways, either as something very general for all the people who lived in western Europe, or for very specific groups who lived within well-defined boundaries. There are also differences in the way authors used the cognate words *Galli* and *Galatai*; usually they are simply equated with Celts, but in some authors they are used to contrast two different groups.

We must also not be misled by the bias of deposition in the archaeological record. The areas defined by Caesar as the territory of the Celts in Gaul do not have rich burials at any period during the Iron Age (e.g. the territories of the Arverni, the Aedui, the Sequani in the modern Auvergne, Burgundy and Franche Comte), and the areas with rich burials especially in the 5th century and the 2nd–1st century are in the Belgic, not the Celtic areas, even though the ancient sources tell us the latter were much richer. The area of the Mosel which is often claimed as the origin of 'Celtic Art' and of the Celts is in fact nowhere stated to be Celtic in the ancient sources; Caesar is ambiguous, and Tacitus says the Treveri thought of themselves as Germani, though they spoke a Celtic language. The only reason that it may be claimed as the origin of the art style is because we have evidence from the rich burials, whereas Celtic central France is not considered simply because there are no rich burials, and so no art objects. In fact the richest settlement in terms of the Mediterranean imports in the 5th century BC outside the Mediterranean area is Bourges, though the burial evidence is not especially rich; it reminds us of the importance assigned to the Bituriges, after whom Bourges is named, in the version of the Celtic migrations given by Livy.

We only know of the Celts and their migrations because we have the written sources, and if we are to locate the Celts, we need to go back to these, but be aware of their bias and ambiguity. Some authors were better informed than others, either because they themselves were Celtic (Martial, Pompeius Trogus, Sidonius Apollinaris), came from or near Celtic areas (Pliny, Livy and perhaps Tacitus), or travelled extensively in Celtic areas (Poseidonius, Caesar). The early sources are vague or partial in their evidence; much has been made, for instance, of the periplous or coastal voyaging manuals which do, or do not, mention, Celts (Himilco, Scylax, etc.), but they do not tell us what was happening inland (the lack of mention of the Volcae in southern Gaul, for instance, was perhaps because they did not inhabit the coastal areas). Geographical knowledge could be limited – when Herodotus talks about the Danube rising in the territory of the Celts, did he mean north of the Alps, or, as seems likely because of his mention of

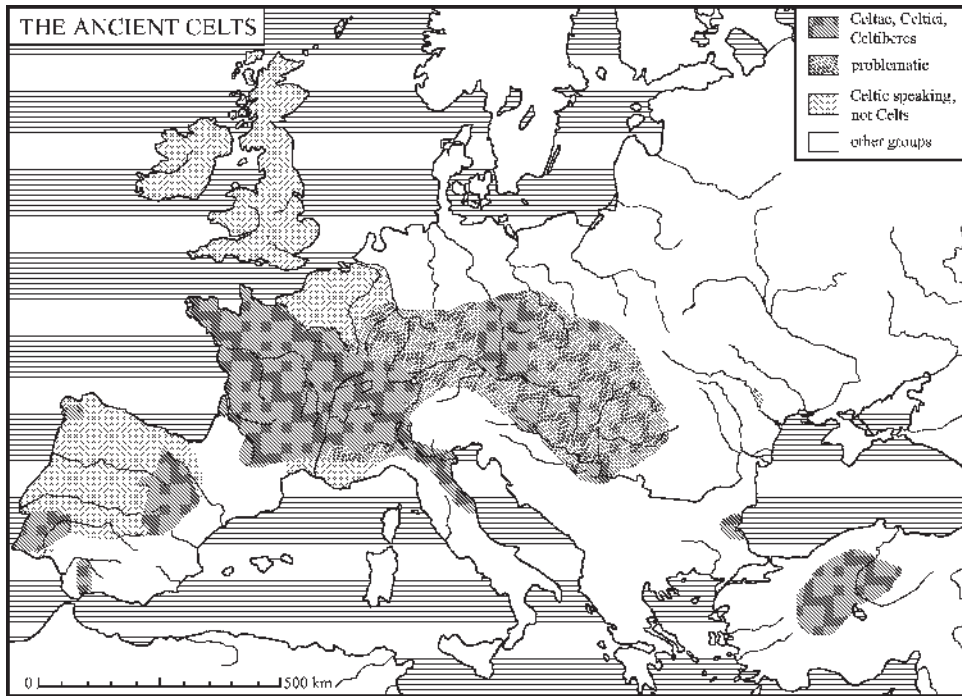


Figure 1.8 Areas occupied by the Ancient Celts, Celtici and Celtiberians, based on an interpretation of the classical written sources, and compared with areas where Celtic languages are likely to have been spoken. Note especially the category of ancient peoples who spoke Celtic languages but were not considered to be Celts (Vettones, Lusitanians, Ligurians, Belgae, Britanni) (Source: the author)

Pyrene, did he, like Aristotle, believe the source of the Danube lay in the Pyrenees? In fact, the evidence we have from these early sources is just as consistent with the Celts being where they were five centuries later, that is in central France and parts of Spain, than in southern Germany and northern France as argued by d'Arbois de Jubainville and others, and a view which appears in all the 'grand narratives' of the Celts.

I have shown the location of the Celts and related groups based on the written sources (Figure 1.8), though it inevitably contains many value judgements on what weight can be placed on specific sources, or how to deal with vague statements. However, it does change the emphasis from northern France and Germany as the territory of the Celts back to central and western France and central Spain. It also breaks the links between historical Celts and the so-called West Hallstatt and La Tène cultures (not that these are concepts which I find particularly useful). In some cases, as in Asia Minor, we can still reasonably make the link between the arrival of people from western Europe (the Galatians) with the appearance in that area of a Celtic language and La Tène artefact types (brooches, weapons, etc.) which are foreign to the local societies. In other areas such as the Hungarian Plain the evidence is more ambiguous, but perhaps new techniques such as isotope analysis may be able to tell us more about the movements of groups and individuals during the Iron Age. We should also start posing different questions, for

instance, to what extent did new ideas flow between areas which already had linguistic similarities?

In summary, the popular stories of the origins and the spread of the Celts are in fundamental need of revision; we need to shed ourselves of stereotypic preconceptions such as 'Celtic Society', 'warrior societies', etc., and study the historical, linguistic and archaeological sources in a much more critical way. However, it will also be interesting to see how this new critique of the Celts will affect those who nowadays consider themselves to be Celts, or descendants of the Ancient Celts. Is the link with the distant past really important for present ethnic sentiment? The Modern Celts were originally fashioned on academic constructs; will modern academic deconstruction have a comparable effect?

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