

Chapter 9 — Go West Young Man!

Great Migrations and the Foundations of Today's Western World

Do the ethnic or nationalistic roots of European peoples really matter at the beginning of a new millennium? It is dangerously naive to think that it doesn't matter. The end of the cold war and the triumph of free-market capitalism have not meant universal peace or stability. In today's Europe, and elsewhere, there are clever politicians breathing new life into an old agenda that dangerously flirts with a distorted sense of nationalism, ethnicity, and sometimes religion.

The first step a free people takes on the road back to slavery is for them to wallow in the muddy low spots of hedonism, injustice, and selfish materialism. Such a people becomes ignorant about who they really are and what they ought to stand for—spiritually speaking. The second step for such a people is to listen to lies about their role and identity in history. Those who refuse to learn from their history are condemned to relive it—with a mostly unimproved outcome.

Adolf Hitler and his Nazis took advantage of just such circumstances to subvert the *Deutsch* nation during the 1930s. Hitler's followers, both storm troopers, and university professors, told their people that they were innately superior to other people and that this superiority had been inherited by them from the most remote times.

They had “supplied the conquerors and the ruling classes of nearly all Europe and a great part of Asia from time immemorial.... It is very widely held that the Teutonic [their emphasis being on modern *Deutschland*] area was the original home of the Indo-European languages.... The Teutonic peoples are therefore the true Indo-Europeans—the nucleus and purest stock of the great group of peoples which have dominated Europe and western Asia for thousands of years.”¹

As Hitler saw it, the Jews and the Christian Church were standing in the way of the Deutsch-speaking “Aryan” people from accomplishing their destiny: dominating the entire world! So, according to the Nazis, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel had to be destroyed, along with those who really took seriously the Christian gospel.

Paradoxically, Hitler got the ethnogenesis of most of the modern Western European nations *wrong*, though it has become true that the Indo-European forebears of European civilization have eventually dominated on the global scene for a time since WWII!

This chapter will reveal clues to solve not only Hitler's paradox, but also the long-running mystery of what happened to the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel once they were exiled from their Promised Land. Fact is indeed stranger than fiction.

¹ H. Munro Chadwick, *The Nationalities of Europe and The Growth of National Ideologies*, Cambridge University Press, 1945, pp. 140-141.

The Origins of the Western European Peoples

Where did the people originate who created the Western and Northern European nations? Those nations seemed instinctively destined to be colonizing nations due to the restless migrations that created them in the first place. During a period of about 450 years spanning the sixteenth to twentieth centuries, great waves of emigrants set out from their old homes in Europe for uncharted often hostile shores. It took a special type of gritty people to attempt and succeed at literally changing the face of the world. It is hard to imagine the course of history without those European migrations to the New World and beyond! Who were those people with the restless feet and the glint of steel in their eyes? Where did the migratory founders of modern Northwestern European civilization come from in the first place?

The origin and first home of the Indo-Germanic [Indo-European] peoples is much disputed.²

While the ancient civilizations of Rome and Greece bequeathed a significant cultural legacy to northwestern, northern, and central Europe, the Romans and Greeks did not furnish the bulk of the genetic stock, the folk who created today's United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland (not forgetting some of the Iberians) and their colonial overseas expansions. The land to the north of the old Roman Republic and Greek city-states was settled by peoples whom the Greco-Roman world considered "barbarians." These northern peoples beyond the pale of the Mediterranean world were lampooned as "two-legged animals" incapable of living by the written codes of real — Roman — civilization. Why, it was said, that they only barely tolerated even their own kings.



Romans Battle the Barbarians

Ludovisi Battle sarcophagus, Romans vs. Goths 3rd century CE Lanmas

² Hans-Joachim Diesner, *The Great Migration*, Orbis Publishing, London, 1982, p. 86.

The northern barbarians were thought to be culturally bizarre, unpredictable in behavior, and extremely dangerous in battle. While one barbarian might embrace another as his own family through blood brotherhood rituals, they had little regard for outsiders. They made ghoulish drinking cups out of the skulls of defeated aristocratic Roman generals to serve as trophies.

But grudgingly, it was also admitted that the barbarians were tall, fair, and good-looking. However, they smelled and their personal hygiene (they dressed their hair with butter rather than olive oil) seemed atrocious. Barbarians were always greedy for gold. Their lust for alcoholic beverages and sex was proverbial. Romans held the barbarian powers of procreation in awe, as they were thought to be like the “*generandi amor* of the Jews.”³ Such sexual energy and the resultant offspring bore grave political implications to the civilized world. In his attempt to give context to the phenomenon of the successive waves of barbarian invasions threatening the Roman Empire, Synesius of Cyrene (370-413 AD) explained to Emperor Arcadius (in power 395-408 AD):

The reproductive energy of the barbarians is inexhaustible. The northern climate of their native land with its long winter nights, favors their fantastic urge to procreate. If a barbarian people is driven back or even destroyed, the next one already emerges from the marshes and forests of Germany or the greater Scythian steppe. **Indeed, there are really no new barbarian peoples—descendants of the same tribes keep appearing.... They did in fact constantly invent new names and disguise their appearance to deceive the Romans—the civilized world—but strictly speaking the Scythians had remained the same since the days of Herodotus.**⁴

Perhaps the origin of the word used to label a massive group of these “barbarian” tribes does reveal something of a genuine effort on their part to hide their true ethnic identity. Some scholars believe that ethnic label “Celt” came from the Goidelic Irish word *ceilt*, which means “concealment” or “hidden.” The modern English word for “kilt” has a similar derivation. This would fit with the Celts strongly held religious prohibition against setting down in writing their people’s knowledge, traditions, and understanding, which were to be only communicated orally. The purpose of such a prohibition was not to cover up illiteracy. Many Celts used Greek to conduct their private and public business. When Julius Caesar invaded Gaul he could only



Julius Caesar Gallic Wars

Wellcome Trust/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA

³ Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, University of California Press, 1988, p. 379.

⁴ Wolfram, pp. 7 and 11.

wonder about the reasons for this strong Celtic religious prohibition. Consequently some scholars believe the word *keltoi* or Celt is an appropriate label for a people who genuinely sought to keep much about themselves hidden or secret.⁵

Who were the “barbarian” peoples to the north, beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire? The learned opinions today on this subject are many, complex, and often conflicting. Yet, Synesius of Cyrene linked them unequivocally to the Scythians. Today’s scholars often debate whether a particular European people’s culture merely evolved from an “indigenous” population with the help of various cultural implants from neighbouring peoples, or whether change and new developments were due to the arrival of new, more powerful migrants who would often subdue and assimilate the previous population, or altogether push them out of their former homeland, or squeeze them into the less desirable areas of the newly conquered territory. From the writings of classical Roman and Greek historians and the excavated archaeological record, it is evident that all of these methods of European ethnogenesis occurred.

While I don’t want to minimize the peaceful growth, assimilation, and development of any people, the story of the creation of the modern European peoples concerns a series of great migrations. The ancestors of the peoples who now live in western, central, and northern Europe did indeed flourish somewhere else before they came into the lands where their descendants now live. So who were they previously? Was Synesius of Cyrene right? Were they the descendants of the same tribes under constantly changing names who kept reappearing over the centuries to plague the status quo?

There are answers. However, due to the nature of this abbreviated work, I must restrict our scope to the broad, general outline.

Going Back in Time to a Very Different World

Let’s begin our search by examining language—a cultural characteristic that frames our thoughts and defines our culture. When we look today at the various nations of northwestern, north, and central Europe we see clearly delineated nation-state boundaries, distinctly different languages (i.e. English, French, Danish) and dialects (like High and Low German). However, just sixteen hundred years ago such clear distinctions did NOT exist!

Down to the fifth century (AD) the German, English and Scandinavian languages differed but slightly from one another. By this time, and for some considerable time previously, the Gothic language—and probably also the other eastern languages—had already come to differ from these languages in many important respects. We may therefore constitute an eastern and a northwestern-western group at this time. In the fifth and following centuries differentiation took place very quickly within the north-western group. English developed in general on lines about midway between German and Scandinavian, but with many special features of its own. Frisian [Dutch] seems to have differed little from English for a long time.... **The differentiation of the languages was obviously governed by their geographical position.**⁶

⁵ Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Celtic Empire*, Constable, London, 1990, pp. 9-10.

⁶ Chadwick, p. 145.

Deutsch, which is but one of a much larger group of related languages broadly labeled Germanic, developed its distinctive character in the interior of now western Germany in the area ranging from the lower Elbe to the Alps. The distinction between High German (*Deutsch*) and Low German (Dutch) didn't occur until the seventh century AD.

From the point when the Germanic languages started to differentiate, if we go back another five hundred years we would discover that great swaths of north, west, and eastern Europe spoke a very similar, common Indo-European language. **It was only in the first century BC that the first consonant shift in "Germanic" started to distinguish that broad language family from Celtic!** When scholars try to pin a label on a particular European barbarian tribe as either Germanic or Celtic, they often find themselves in a genuine quandary at certain ancient stages of the tribe's development.

Pliny the Elder...mentions the Gutones as a subgroup of the Vandals-Vandili. Moreover, Strabo connects the Gutones with the Lugians, and even Tacitus names the Lugians and Vandals in one breath. The most likely explanation—though one that has been challenged—is that the Lugians and Vandals were basically the same people who lived in the interior south of the Gutones and east of the Oder [River]. **Until the birth of Christ they were considered Celts and went by the name Lugians, but a century later they were considered Germanic.**⁷



Cimbri & Teutones Migrate

Courtesy of Heritage History

The Cimbri and the Teutones are similarly difficult to classify. These two tribes left their homelands, respectively, in the Jutland (Cimbric) Peninsula and along the Baltic Sea in 113 BC. The Cimbric and Teutonic warriors, accompanied by their women and children in a great wagon train, launched a mass migration to the south. These tribes in the course of their search for living space were confronted three times by Roman armies that were sent out to destroy them. Three times the Romans were beaten. It took a fourth try after thoroughly reorganizing their army before the Romans could finally decimate the migrants. This event impressed upon the classical world the dangers that could arise from the north. Some historians call this tribal migration the first great "Germanic" wandering due to the geographical areas from which these tribes issued forth.⁸

⁷ Wolfram, p. 40.

⁸ Malcolm Todd, *Everyday Life of the Barbarians, Goths, Franks and Vandals*, B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1972, p. 3: "Teutones, a German people settled in Denmark, who, three hundred years [after the Greek explorer Pytheas from Marseilles first wrote of them in the fourth century BC] later were to burst in upon the Roman world and bring about the first great confrontation between the Roman legions and German warriors."

When many people hear the word “Teuton,” they equate it with “German,” which they believe means the modern *Deutsch*-speaking ethnic group and its ancestors. Yet the word “Teuton” was directly appropriated from the Teutones tribe who, evidently, were not so clearly Teutonic in the modern sense of that word (that is to say, of the *Deutsch* Germanic ethnic group). Even *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.*, notes that the word “Teuton” can mean “a member of an ancient probably Germanic or Celtic people.” The historian Peter Berresford Ellis noted this about the Cimbri and the Teutones:

The name [Teuton] itself is simply the Latin form of the Celtic word meaning “people” [as in the Irish *tuath*, meaning “tribe”] The contemporary evidence, however, seems clear enough. The Cimbri and the Teutones spoke Celtic, had Celtic names and used Celtic weapons. The very names of the two tribes were Celtic. They were, then, Celts. And, eventually, they formed alliances with other Celtic tribes, creating a large Celtic army which, once more, nearly brought about the downfall of Rome.... Poseidonius connected them with the *Cimmerians*, who, according to Homer’s *Odyssey*, were a people living on the edge of the world by the shore of Oceanus, a land shrouded by perpetual mist and darkness [poetic Greek license for the Black Sea or Baltic regions?]. Some nineteenth century writers have tried to link the name with the Welsh Cymry.⁹

Poseidonius, a Greek writer of the first century BC, “was the first to distinguish the Germans from the Celts and Scythians as a separate barbarian people.”¹⁰ The fact of the matter is that even the word *Germani* was “originally the name of a Celtic people, and that subsequently it came to be used in a wider sense, but with a *geographical* rather than an *ethnic* or *linguistic* significance.”¹¹

In antiquity a barbarian tribe would be labeled by the Latin writers as *Germani* if they lived east of the Rhine. As the Romans rarely bothered learning barbarian languages, preferring to use interpreters, they couldn’t tell the difference between the language spoken in Gaul and that spoken on the other side of the Rhine because the noticeable differences were so slight to their ears.

Archaeology makes it clear, as no ancient writer does, that there were close contacts between the German peoples and the Celts. These are manifest not so much in the field of trade as in broad cultural affinities between Central and Northern Europe.... **They establish very clearly that there was no abrupt dividing line between Celt and German in the centuries about the time of the birth of Christ.** Writers like [Julius] Caesar and Tacitus have greatly obscured the truth of this by insisting on the Rhine as a cultural frontier between Celts to the west and Germans to the east. **That this distinction is false is demonstrated not only by the archaeological evidence but also by the evidence of personal- and place-names.** The peoples living to the east of the Rhine and between the valleys of the Main in the south and Weser in the north were strongly influenced by Celtic culture, *though they were not themselves Celtic*... Their origins are obscure but they may perhaps have been an old grouping of tribes which had resisted the westward advance of German [or Celtic ethnic groups].¹²

⁹ Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Celtic Empire*, Constable, London, 1990, pp. 120-121.

¹⁰ Malcolm Todd, *Everyday Life of the Barbarians, Goths, Franks and Vandals*, B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1972, p. 4.

¹¹ Chadwick, p. 148.

¹² Todd, p. 10.

To modern scholars, tribes like the Bastarni of southeast Europe create problems because they lived in an area not typically considered especially Germanic or Celtic and so don't fit an easily defined slot. Nevertheless the historical and archaeological evidence has led some scholars to conclude that they were Celtic,¹³ while others insist they were Germanic.¹⁴ A few scholars finesse the question, saying Germanic-Celtic.¹⁵ Perhaps the best explanation for the difficulty in classifying them is that they occupy a transition phase of a barbarian group living in what was a traditional Scythian stomping ground having some characteristics that are recognized as Celtic and others that appear Germanic.

What are we to make of all this lingual commonality and cultural sharing among the Indo-European barbarian peoples? It makes perfectly logical sense according to Cambridge University Professor H. Munro Chadwick:

In any discussion as to the origin of the Teutonic (or Germanic) languages it must of course be borne in mind that these languages are merely a branch of the Indo-European languages...and consequently that their original home—as distinct from the area in which they acquired their special characteristics—was that of the whole Indo-European family. The same remark applies to the Celtic languages.... No one doubts that these languages, or rather the parent language from which they are derived, were once limited to a much smaller area than that of their present distribution.¹⁶

And from what common point of distribution did these languages seem to spread from? Chadwick has a clue for us:

Many philologists, a majority just a few years ago, favoured locating **“the original homeland on the steppe north of the Black Sea [Scythia], or perhaps somewhat farther east [the Caucasus? the Fertile Crescent?]... The evidence of linguistic paleontology seemed especially favourable to the steppe—the life of pastoral people, cattle-keepers and shepherds, who were familiar with the horse and the use of wheeled vehicles from the earliest times....** There is no doubt that the present wide distribution of the Indo-European languages, from the Atlantic to India—formerly also to eastern Turkestan—**implies great movements of population from very early times.**¹⁷

When it came to identifying the barbarian peoples living north of them, the very earliest of the Greek ethnographers, Hekateus (Hecataeus) in the sixth century BC and Herodotus in the fifth century BC, noted that **to the northwest of them dwelt Celts, while in the northeast were Skyths, or Scythians.** There was no mention of Germani who would only develop sufficient distinctiveness to classify them as a separate group four to five hundred years later.¹⁸ Some

¹³ T. Sulimirski, *The Sarmatians*, Thames and Hudson, 1970, p. 128.

¹⁴ Wolfram, p. 113.

¹⁵ Wolfram, p. 44.

¹⁶ Chadwick, p. 157.

¹⁷ Chadwick, p. 158.

¹⁸ Todd, p. 3.

archaeologists referred to Northern Europe during the mid-millennium BC period as being broadly divided between Celts and *Scytho-Teutons*.¹⁹

There can be no question that the Scythians, Celts and later, the Germani were related closely by language. But, ethnically, were the Celts totally distinct and unrelated to the Scythians? Or did they bear the signs of common origins, as well?

Pathways to Markets, Minglings and Migrations

To understand the interplay between Celtic and Scythian ethnic identities, it is necessary to know a bit of geography. Peninsular Europe above the Mediterranean world has what might be called a hub, a nexus where the headwaters of its major rivers, the Rhine, Danube, Seine and Rhône, come together. This hub linked communications and trade between the Atlantic, Nordic-Baltic, Eastern-Black Sea and Mediterranean zones. It was a gateway to Europe. From the Rhine other arteries of communication branched off to the east in central Europe following river valleys like those of the Lippe, Ruhr and Main, then northward along the Weser and Elbe.



Barbarian Peoples' Migration Routes

Seterra

¹⁹ "The first person...who brought to the Greeks a definite knowledge of the north was Pytheas of Marseilles, a Grecian geographer of the fourth century before Christ, who 'followed the old path of the Phoenicians,' and was an eye-witness of the tin-mining processes in Britain. He went further. We may assume, concluded Müllenhoff [a nineteenth century German archaeologist], after a most elaborate investigation, 'that Pytheas saw with his own eyes the island and shores of the North Sea, passed the mouths of the Rhine, **and the boundary between Celts and Scytho-Teutons,**' Francis B. Gummere, *Founders of England*, 1891, p. 12. Pytheas noted there were Teutones living on the island of Abalum (Esel) off the Baltic coast who were engaged in the amber trade, cf. Ellis, p. 121.

Another major communication pathway existed for the precious amber trade. Starting from the sources for amber on the Baltic Sea shore in the Jutland Peninsula and adjacent areas, this trade route led south across the central German plain, through Bohemia to where it intersected with the Danube near modern Vienna. From there one could travel by water down the Danube to the Greek trading posts on the shores of the Black Sea. The Black Sea was also a major trade hub. Deep penetrating rivers like the Dniester, the Dniepr, and the Bug led far into Eastern Europe where a short portage would connect a traveler or migrant with the Dvina, Weicsel, or Vistula rivers, providing access to Eastern Europe and the Baltic region.

The eastern branch of Scythians, residing around the Caspian Sea, also had access to the Baltic Sea via the Volga River, which was navigable past present-day Moscow to its headwaters. As Dr. Thor Heyerdahl, an ethnographer famous for his work on ancient migration routes, has pointed out, the source of the Volga is tantalizingly close to the headwaters of the Dvina, which empties into the Baltic at Riga.

In the ancient migration saga²⁰ of the Viking people, the heroic chieftain Odin and his people came from a land called Aser. This homeland was said to be east of the Black Sea and the Caucasus. Odin's group traveled in "foldable boats" northwestward through Russia, Saxland, and Denmark into Sweden. Mere legend? Archaeologists have learned that the earliest boats used in northern waters were made of skins stretched over wooden frames! The earliest wood plank boat dates from about 200 BC.²¹ As a fascinating coincidence, Dr. Heyerdahl quotes the fifth century BC Greek historian Herodotus who said that in the Scythian-populated area in what is now Armenia and Azerbaijan (adjacent to the Caspian Sea):



Traveling merchants used boats built with a framework of wood and canes covered with skin, and of such great size that they carried one or more donkeys in addition to crew and cargo. They navigated down river to Babylonia where they sold their merchandise and the framework [wood was especially valuable there], then they folded the skins and loaded them on the donkeys for their return upstream in preparation for the next voyage.²²

River Boats from Antiquity

Caferzade I., 1973: *Gobustan*:

²⁰ Snorri, *The Sagas of the Viking Kings of Norway*, English translation: J. M. Stenersens Forlag, Oslo, 1987.

²¹ Todd, pp. 170-171.

²² Dr. Thor Heyerdahl, *The Azerbaijan Connection, Challenging Euro-Centric Theories of Migration*, Azerbaijan International, an on-line magazine, Spring 1995.

Most people think of the Scythians as just mounted nomads wandering the steppes with their herds and flocks. However, the Saka Scythians living by the Caspian Sea were well known as great fishermen and prodigious eaters of fish. Some of their tribes were called Apa-saca, meaning the “Water Saca.”²³ Both Scythian and Celt were thoroughly versed in water travel. Rivers and seas were the highways of trade and travel in antiquity. The Celtic Veneti tribe were a maritime power with over 220 large oak vessels—whose cross-timbers were a foot wide secured by iron spikes as thick as a man’s thumb. The Veneti’s stronghold was in the western French peninsula of Brittany on Quiberon Bay. According to Roman sources the Veneti traded not only along the coasts of Gaul, but also with Britain and Ireland for tin.²⁴ With this knowledge of the ways and means of getting about in the mid-first millennium BCE, let’s take a look at what archaeology and history has to say about the relationship between Celt and Scythian.

The Celts of Hallstatt and the Scythians of Vekezug

Among scholars there are two main theories on the point of origin of the Celts. One group holds they may first be located on the northwest coast of Europe. A second opinion believes they first achieved prominence around the headwaters of the Danube, at Peninsula Europe’s communications hub.

Archaeologists have detected significant changes occurring in the Upper Danube region around 700 BCE, denoting a marked break from the previous Urnfield Culture, a culture typified by cremation burials in urns. But suddenly, the dead were being interred in tombs with:

The Hallstatt long sword of iron or bronze, distinctive array of chaps with which the sword sheath terminated, and the trappings for horses both as cavalry beast and yoked in pairs for pulling vehicles. The distribution of these various artifacts demonstrates a core area stretching in a broad zone from central France to Bohemia and Hungary, but with a number of more isolated finds beyond indicates the huge peripheral territory linked by systems of exchange to the core.²⁵

The people who established the Hallstatt Culture (700-450 BCE) are called either proto-Celts or just plain Celts. The material culture as represented by the grave goods of the Hallstatt



Hallstatt Swords

https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Iron_Age_sword?file=Hallstatt_culture_swords_ramsauer.jpg

²³ Malcolm A. R. Colledge, *The Parthians*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1967, p. 27.

²⁴ Ellis, p. 136.

²⁵ Barry Cunliffe, *The Ancient Celts*, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 47.

aristocracy is remarkably universal and distinct. Inhumation instead of cremation, cavalry weapons like the long slashing sword, a proliferation of iron weapons—such evidence indicates a radical break with the prior Urnfield Culture.

The Hallstatt Celts were innovative metal workers. Their ability to produce iron weapons gave them a definite edge. They brought along with them an improved breed of horses that could run faster with great stamina in comparison to the horses already in northern-central Europe. This gave the Celts greater mobility. Combined, these two factors gave the Hallstatt Celts military superiority over their neighbors. After all, who did they have to fear among the more backward tribes already residing in the Europe north of the Mediterranean? Consequently, those less advanced peoples were either displaced or subjugated as tenant farmers.



Wagon Burial

https://home.bawue.de/~wmwerner/hochdorf/wagen_f.html

Many of the richest Hallstatt burials are furnished with vehicles. These sturdy four-wheeled wagons show a significant technical competency. They had spoked wheels fitted with iron tires shrunken and nailed onto the composite wooden felloes. The wooden yokes accompanying the wagons were decorated by patterns of bronze nail heads. These artifact-rich “horsy” burials seem to have been initially concentrated in the area of the Upper Danube to Bohemia. Later in the 500s BCE the Hallstatt zone of control expanded to the west.

Who were these people who established the Hallstatt Culture? Vehicle burials were a distinctive trademark of the Scythian culture. The late eighth and seventh centuries BCE were a time of disruption and change not only at the headwaters of the Danube, but also in

the Black Sea and Caucasus regions. There were migrating tribes of “dislocated horse-riding warriors distinguished as Cimmerians and Scythians by contemporary sources.”²⁶ As ethnographer Barry Cunliffe wrote:

What is of particular interest is that there should be evidence of unrest and folk movement among the horse riders of the Pontic Steppe, building to a peak in the eighth century when some moved south-east in Asia Minor. **Given the geography of the region and the fact that the western shores of the Black Sea, including the Lower Danube region, are really an extension of the Pontic Steppe, it is not unreasonable to suggest, as many archaeologists have done, that there was a parallel movement of Cimmerians [westwards] along the Danube into central Europe.**²⁷

²⁶ Cunliffe, p. 170.

²⁷ Cunliffe, p. 42.

This theory of a Cimmerian migration has been much debated. But the presence of, what is called by scholars, the “Pontic” element seems clear. Artifacts like bronze horse bits, side pieces, and phalerae from harnesses have been discovered throughout Hungary in archaeological contexts dated to the late eighth and seventh centuries BCE.

Other items typical of the Black Sea nomads included short bronze swords or daggers and heraldic bird-headed iron staff heads, which bear comparison to similar, though later, ceremonial pieces found in the Eastern Scythian tombs at Pazyryk in Western Siberia. Short swords with anthropoid hilts, comparable to the famous Scythian *akinakes*, were widely distributed from Hungary to central and western Gaul and into Britain. Were they the symbol of a certain social class, or merely an expensive personal weapon of that day?

The Hallstatt Celts’ lifestyle had many similarities to that of the Scythians. A Hallstatt sword in Vienna’s Natur-Historisches Museum has ornamentation that shows a Celt wearing profusely decorated pants. This is directly comparable to Scythian dress as pictured on the Chertomlyk vase (Black Sea area). This Vienna sword also depicts a tail-coat bearing a striking parallel to Eastern Scythian apparel found by the Russian archaeologist Radlov at Katanda in the southern Altai.²⁸ Another Celtic sword found at Port Bern, Switzerland, was stamped during its manufacture with a decoration of two standing horned animals flanking a tree of life—a classic Near Eastern, Scythian theme.²⁹

Clearly, the archaeological evidence shows that the Celts and Scyths both shared and mingled. Russian and eastern European excavations have revealed the blending of these two groups:

[The Russian archaeologist] Spitzin³⁰ discovered at Nemirovo in Podolia in western Russia **Scythian objects lying with fragments of typical Hallstatt pottery**; Danilevski found the same when excavating various sites in the district of Kiev and along the Dneipr, and Bobrinsky unearthed La Tène [a later Celtic cultural development] as well as Hallstatt ware during several excavations conducted within the limits of the Dnieper. Conversely, Párducz, excavating at Szentes-Vekerzug³¹ in Hungary... encountered a most complex state of affairs. The *Vekerzug* burials cover a large area and are of a mixed character. **Many contained horse burials which include horse-trappings; in some there also lay mirrors, trefoil arrow-heads and other Scythian objects, whilst in others nothing [specifically identifiable as] Scythian was found.** The same situation existed at a number of allied sites such as Egreskáta, Mátraszele and Chotin. **At all of these the Scythians and Celts appear to have intermixed**, and the same seems to have happened in certain regions of Transylvania. It is still impossible to draw a clear distinction in these mixed burial grounds between the tombs of each group, but Párducz feels convinced that the burials show “quite definite signs of Scythian customs.”

Matsulevich likewise, when describing a grave of a “barbarian king” found in eastern Europe, draws attention to some harness ornaments belonging to it. The most interesting were snake-shaped but had the heads of fish-birds. They resembled on the one hand some Scythian examples from Kerch [Crimea region] and on the other some

²⁸ Tamara Talbot Rice, *The Scythians*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1958, pp. 188-189.

²⁹ Cunliffe, p. 115.

³⁰ Makarenko, N. “La Civilisation des Scythes de Hallstatt,” *ESA*, No. V, (61), pp. 22-23.

³¹ Párducz, M., *Le Cimetière Hallstattien de Szentes-Vekerzug 2. Les fouilles de 1952-53*, *Acta. Arch. Hung.*, 1954., (65), pp. 25-89.

fibulae [brooches] of the fifth century AD found on the Oise in France. **The Balkan burials thus provide a link between Scythian Kerch and Merovingian France.**³²

That Scythian, “Vekerzug Culture,” or “Thracian” horse-riding, semi-nomadic communities widely settled in Transylvania, the Great Hungarian Plain, Slovakia and much of eastern Europe is now clearly established.³³ Most scholars also agree that it is evident that these Scythians of eastern Europe maintained close relations with both the Scythians still on the steppes to the east and the Hallstatt-La Tène Celts to the west. It is interesting to note that the distinctive Scythian trilobate arrowheads have also been found scattered throughout western Celtic Europe.³⁴

Archaeological evidence also suggests the Scythians had a presence north of the Great Hungarian Plain. In the northern German town of Vetersfelde, near modern Berlin, a big decorated fish made of electrum, an alloy of gold and silver, was discovered. This fifth century BCE artifact, which was once used to decorate a shield or a cuirass, has been recognized by archaeologists as being unmistakably Scythian with clear artistic links to other Scythian finds in Hungary and the Black Sea area. Unlike Greek art objects, Scythian art was not widely exported as trade goods in antiquity. Consequently the Vetersfelde fish discovery carries significant implications.³⁵



Vetersfelde Fish
Altes Museum zu Berlin

During the second half of the first millennium BCE, Europe north of the Mediterranean world was shared by two related cultures. From the British Isles, to the headwaters of the Danube, to the eastern fringe of the Alps the Hallstatt and later La Tène Celtic cultural style prevailed. Further to the east, occupying much of eastern Europe was the strong, horse-focused, traditional Scythic cultural identity based on a lifestyle suited to grasslands instead of mountains and forests. Each group provided

ideas and inspiration for the other. And obviously according to the archaeological evidence, the two groups didn't hesitate to intermarry—“there was much mingling of populations.”³⁶

³² Rice, pp. 189-190.

³³ Cunliffe, p. 170.

³⁴ Cunliffe, p. 94.

³⁵ Boris Piotrovsky, *From the Lands of the Scythians*, The State Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, exhibition book, pp. 153-154.

³⁶ Cunliffe, p. 123 and pp. 78-79

The Bastarnae, who were labeled as a Celtic tribe by the Russian ethnographer Sulimirski but Germanic by others, became an established identity on the Dniester and the Pruth rivers, reaching the Danube delta in the middle of the third century BCE. That was a time when this area [Dobruja, that part of modern Romania between the Danube and the Black Sea] was known as Scythia Minor and hosted a strong Scythian settlement.³⁷ Sulimirski states that the evidence is clear the Bastarnae intermarried freely with the Getae and other Scythian tribes in the region. The almost imperceptible ethnic boundaries between these two groups is evidenced by the archaeological record in which a significant amount of La Tène metalwork has been found in otherwise Scythian graves.³⁸

Noteworthy is a princely burial with several Celtic La Tène objects of the period around 100 BCE found at Marička-Bougalom on the southern Bug [River], and also a “Scythian” barrow grave near Tarashcha, south of Kiev, in which a La Tène iron sword of c. 200 BC was excavated. La Tène has also been found in princely tombs in Scythian Neapolis in the Crimea.... It suggests that the Ukraine west of the Dnieper was then either under some sort of Bastarnian control, or that the rulers of the nomad Scythians in the steppe, like those of the presumably Thracian/Getan tribes in the black-earth area further north, were allied to the Bastarnae³⁹



Great Migrations and Intermingling of Celts and Scythians

³⁷ Sulimirski, p. 101.

³⁸ Cunliffe, p. 176.

³⁹ T. Sulimirski, *the Sarmatians*, Thames and Hudson, 1970, pp. 128, 130.

The Celts and Scythians were only as different from each other in the same way as North Americans varied according to their sectional differences during the nineteenth centuries. For instance, lumberjacks or small-acreage farmers in the Pacific Northwest or Minnesota had significant cultural and even some ethnic mix differences from the cowboys living on the wide open plains of the West. Nevertheless, these two groups still shared many similarities, and they spoke different dialects of the same basic language.

Differences between the Celts and the Scythians could simply be a question of the adoption of new styles, different manufacturing sources, and behavior patterns. Different tribes might also vary ethnically in small ways from each other due to admixtures from different sets of neighbours. But again in the course of time, when one group of these related Indo-European tribes had a popular idea, it tended to be adopted to some degree by all.

Speaking of the spread of the Celtic La Tène style of cultural development (c. 450 BCE to the Roman occupation of Gaul in the mid-first century BCE), historian Barry Cunliffe wrote:

The European-wide spread of various early La Tène groups dominated by the burial of warriors...demonstrates, with great clarity, **a degree of cultural uniformity brought about in this century of migration [fourth century BCE], stretching from the Marne to Transylvania. Though there are distinct regional variations, it is reasonable to regard this uniformity as a cultural continuum through which ideas and people moved freely.**⁴⁰

Just as among the early Royal Scyths there were forest, steppe, and coastal tribes, these differences in lifestyles persisted as they dispersed moving by land or water routes from their Black Sea homelands.

⁴⁰ Cunliffe, p. 80.