

# Voices The Celts

Queensland History Week  
22 - 26 May 2023

The Queensland History  
Teachers' Association  
presents



# Queensland History Week

22 – 26 MAY 2023

**QHTA**

#### Above:

Image: An overview map of the Hallstatt culture (c. 1200 - c. 450 BCE) - marked in yellow, and the La Tène culture (c. 450 - c. 50 BCE) - marked in green.

Dbachmann, . (2012, April 26). Map of Hallstatt & La Tène Cultures. World History Encyclopedia. Retrieved from <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/88/map-of-hallstatt--la-tene-cultures/>

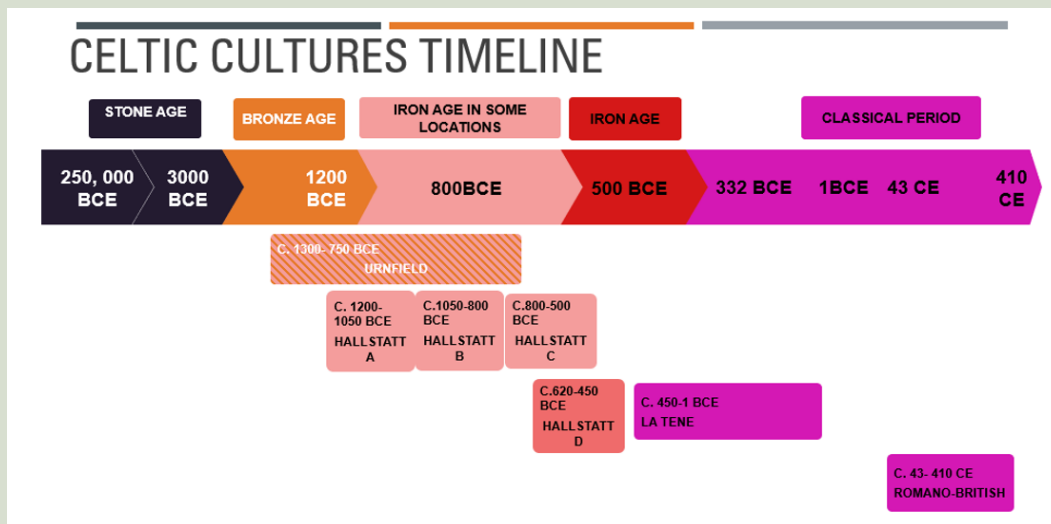
#### Right:

Image: from the tomb of Vix, at the foot of Mont Lassois (Châtillonnais Museum))Picture Credit: Claude PIARD. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license. Wikimedia Commons

#### Reference list:

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(Milns & Watts, 2003)  
Milns, B., & Watts, D. (2003). In ANCH2210: The Celts in the Classical World.  
Goodreads, Inc. (2023). Kate Mosse: Quotable Quote. Good Reads. Retrieved from <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/977127-history-is-written-by-the-victorious-the-liars-the-strongest>  
Sheldon, N. (2022) The Princess of Vix: Trade, Culture and Women in Celtic Society. History and Archaeology Online. Retrieved from <https://historyandarchaeologyonline.com/the-princess-of-vix-trade-culture-and-women-in-celtic-society/>





## Voices - The Celts

The ‘Celts’ were tribal people who occupied Western Europe from the late Bronze Age through to the Iron Age. However, ‘Celt’ is a problematic title for a number of reasons. Firstly, there was no unified civilization but rather tribal groups who shared a common language, culture and/or practices. This is contested by Julius Caesar who claims the tribes had different languages and cultures. Secondly, the term “Celt” did not surface until approx. 100CE and was devised by Greeks and Romans originating from the Greek word, “Keltoi”. Thirdly, the term was only used by the Greeks and Romans to describe those who did not live like them. Lastly, no classical author referred to the inhabitant of Britain as Celts, despite that being a common understanding now.

The people known as Celts were distinguished by cultural elements discovered in archaeological excavations. The Urnfield Culture (1300-750 BCE) was from the upper Danube region. This was a Bronze Age culture named for the common practice of burying urns containing cremated remains. Hallstatt Culture (1200-450 BCE) was named after a settlement that was discovered in the town of Hallstatt in Austria. It was a rich culture that spread through trade and migration and can be identified through the phenomenon of the ‘priestly burials’. The La Tène Culture (450-1 BCE) was named for its location in Switzerland and was renowned for its art style. The Romano-Celtic Culture, also known as Romano-British (43-410 CE) was a transitional period as the Roman Empire took control of their lands, culture and religion.

According to author Kate Mosse, ‘History is written by the victorious, the liars, the strongest, the most determined.’ (Mosse, 2005). This could not be truer for the Celts. They were a people who did not record their own story but rather had an oral tradition that was kept by their spiritual leaders, the Druids. Much of what we know of these people have come from the writings of the ancient Greek and Roman writers, who did not understand their culture, language or beliefs and often saw them as inferior barbarians. Additionally, historians rely on the material evidence discovered in various archaeological sites across Europe, such as burials and settlements.

### Thinking Activity

Choose one perspective (British Celt, Celt/Gaul, Roman, Greek) to explore, using these sentence-starters:

- I am thinking of the Celtic story from the viewpoint of a (Celt, Roman, Greek, Modern Historian)
- I think ... describe the topic from your viewpoint. Be an actor—take on the character of your viewpoint
- A question I have from this viewpoint is ... ask a question from this viewpoint

### Extra for experts

Read about the Lady of Vix Burial: <https://historyandarchaeologyonline.com/the-princess-of-vix-trade-culture-and-women-in-celtic-society/>

Watch this short documentary about the Celts: [https://youtu.be/S\\_QizTMIr-0](https://youtu.be/S_QizTMIr-0)

Think about what you have learned about the topic and complete the following sentence stems:

I used to think...

Now I think...