



Celts: The History and Legacy of One of the Oldest Cultures in Europe

Martin J. Dougherty

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“They cut off the heads of enemies slain in battle and attach them to the necks of their horses... They embalm the heads... [and]... display them with pride to strangers.” – Diodorus Siculus.

Before the Vikings, before the Anglo-Saxons, before the Roman Empire, the Celts dominated central and western Europe. Today we might think of the Celts only inhabiting parts of the far west of Europe – Ireland, Great Britain, France and Spain – but these were the extremities in which their culture lasted longest. In fact, they had originated in Central Europe and settled as far afield as present day Turkey, Poland and Italy. From their emergence as an Iron Age people around 800 BC to the early centuries AD, Celts reveals the truth behind the stories of naked warriors, ritual beheadings, druids, magic and accusations of human sacrifice. The book examines the different tribes, the Hallstatt and La Tène periods, as well as Celtic survival in western Europe, the Gallic Wars, military life, spiritual life, slavery, sexuality and Celtic art. Illustrated with more than 180 color and black-and-white photographs, maps and artworks, Celts is an expertly written account of a people who have long captured the popular imagination.

REVIEWS

"...easy to read, yet detailed and extensive...bursting with color photographs of artifacts, archaeological sites, paintings, and sculpture, showing Celtic design and artistic motifs as well as depictions of the Celts throughout history, especially by their enemies. The author is fair as he narrates the current, most widely accepted consensus about various aspects of Celtic culture, while also presenting competing hypotheses. Chapters are split into short, focused sections, and pages are beautifully arranged with plenty of white space, and illustrations, each explained through helpful side notes. This beautiful book is a wonderful and pleasurable introduction to this amazing culture.

City Book Review

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