

Part II

THE CELTIC CONNECTION REVISITED

Old World – New World Diffusion

Part 1

AMERICA BEFORE DISCOVERY - THE NORTH ATLANTIC CELTIC SEA LINK

Chapter VII

A Discussion of possible Old World – New World Contacts

*“A host will come across the clear sea,
To the land they show their rowing;
Then they row to the conspicuous stone,
From which arise a hundred strains.”*

(Immram Brain maic Febail “Voyage of Bran Son of Febal”, v. 17.)

They had ships!

One of the main objections to the possibilities of a contact of the Old World Celts with the New World Indians is that the Celts were not a seafaring people and that they did not possess the navigational skills to maintain commercial sea ports along the shores of the North Atlantic. This of course is a fallacy and is contradicted by good classical sources.

These Greek and Roman sources knew from their Celtic neighbors much about the geography of the Atlantic coast and of the existence of a continent on the other side of the ocean.

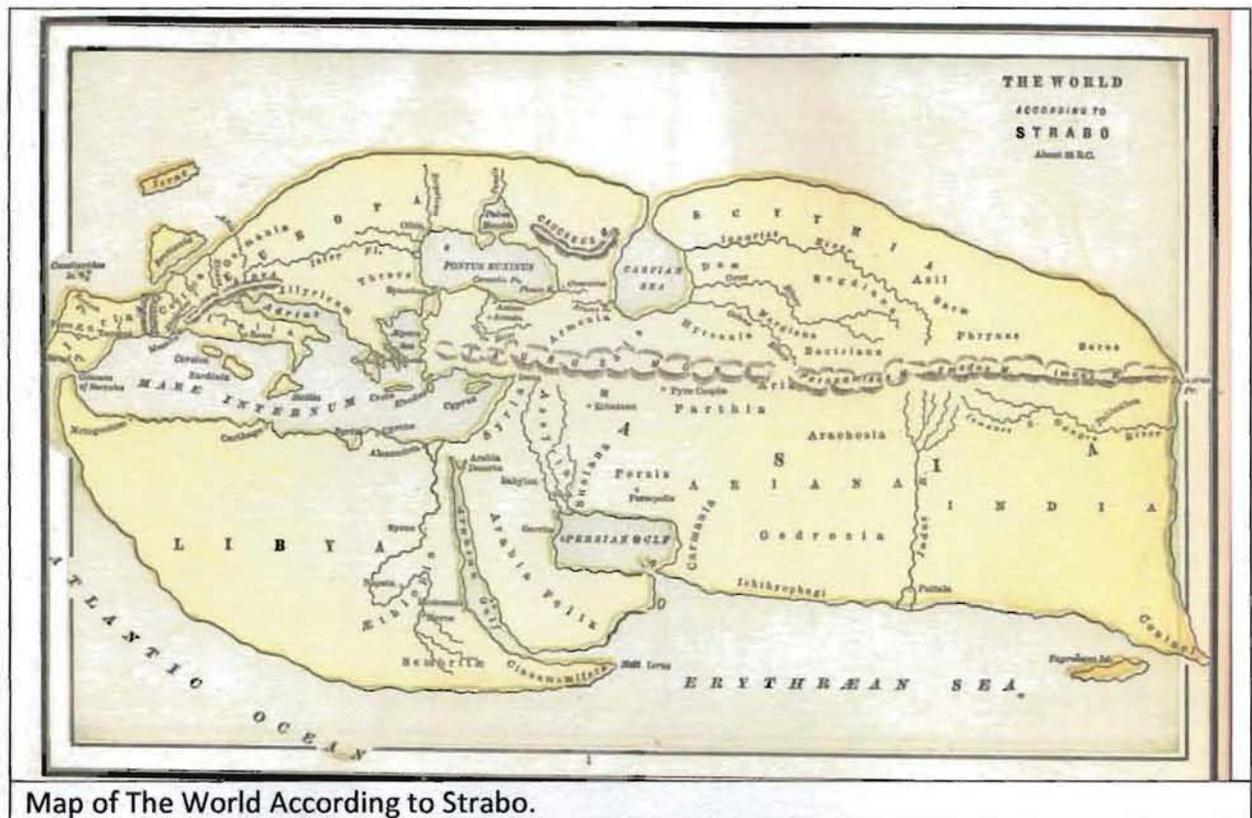
The Greek historian Appian of Alexandria (c.95-c.165), in his *History of Rome, The Spanish Wars (I to V)*, states that "The Pyrenees extend from the Tyrrhenian sea to the Northern ocean. The eastern part is inhabited by Celts, otherwise called Galatians, and more lately Gauls. From this part westward, beginning at the Tyrrhenian Sea and making a circuit by way of the Pillars of Hercules to the Northern Ocean, the Iberians and Celtiberians dwell. Thus the whole of Iberia is sea-girt, except the part embraced by the Pyrenees, the largest and perhaps the most precipitous mountains in Europe. In coasting they follow the Tyrrhenian Sea as far as the Pillars of Hercules. They do not traverse the Western and Northern Ocean, except in crossing over to Britain, and this they accomplish by availing themselves of the tide, as it is only half a day's journey. For the rest, neither the Romans nor any of the subject peoples navigate that ocean."

Herodotus, in *History book II* (written in 440 B.C.E), also clearly places the Celts in the maritime regions of Western Europe.

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



The *Cabrières d'Aygues (Aigues) Stele* representing Durance river boatmen of Gaul hauling a wine boat. Photo by Fabrice Philibert-Caillat from the Musée Calvet (Musée lapidaire) of Avignon, France.



Map of The World According to Strabo.

That the contemporaneous Celts could also have crossed the Ocean “over its vast stretch” is but a guess.

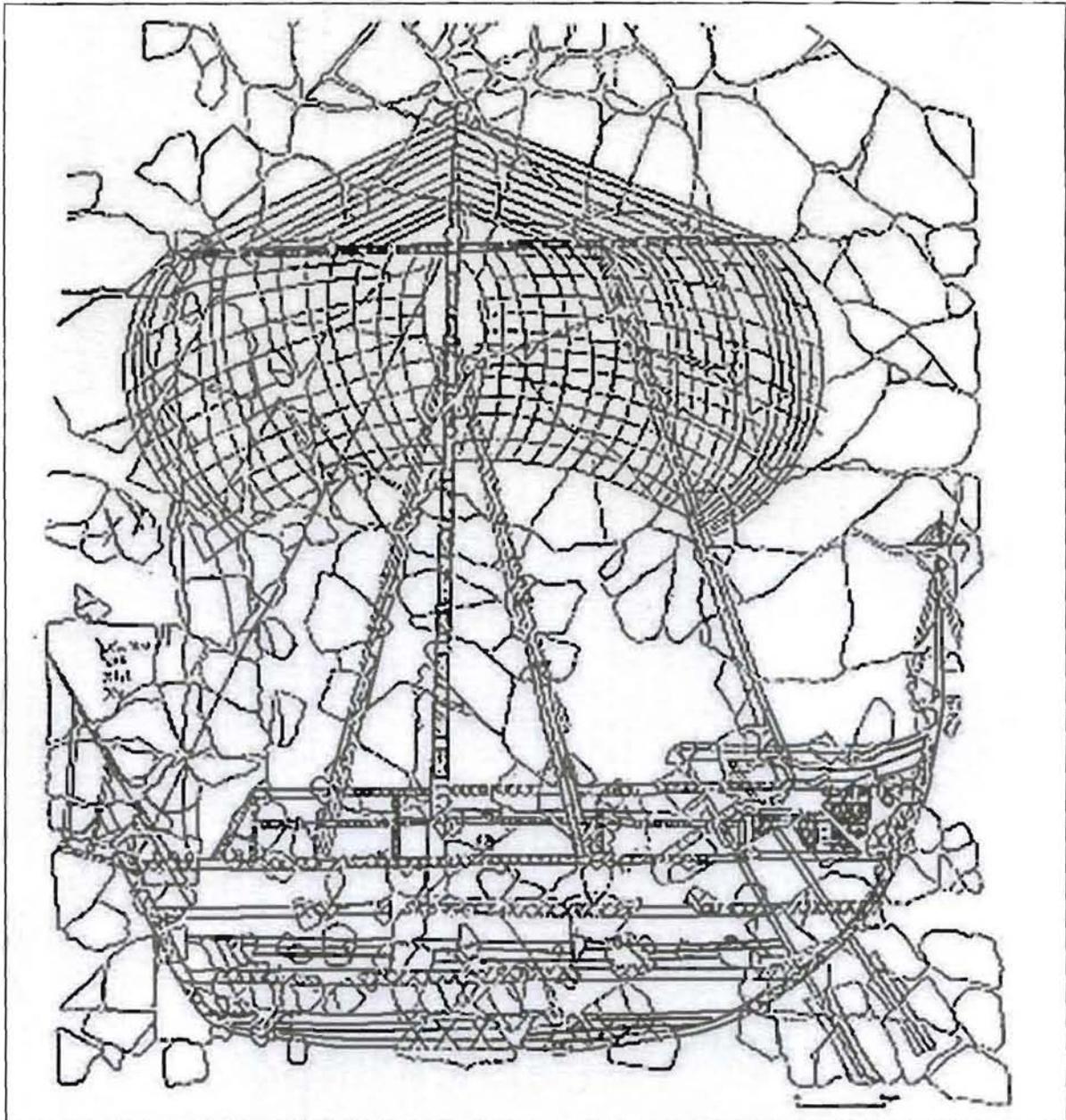
However, Julius Caesar himself maintains in his *Gallic War Commentaries, Book III*, that the Celts did have these sailing capabilities. The Armorican Venetic state controlled much of the traffic between the continent and the British islands:

“The influence of this state is by far the most considerable of any of the countries on the whole sea coast, because the Veneti both have a very great number of ships, with which they have been accustomed to sail to Britain, and [thus] excel the rest in their knowledge and experience of nautical affairs; and as only a few ports lie scattered along that stormy and open sea, of which they are in possession, they hold as tributaries almost all those who are accustomed to traffic in that sea.” (...)

“They knew that the passes by land were cut off by estuaries, that the approach by sea was most difficult, by reason of our ignorance of the

localities, [and] the small number of the harbors, and they trusted that our army would not be able to stay very long among them, on account of the insufficiency of corn; and again, even if all these things should turn out contrary to their expectation, yet they were very powerful in their navy. They well understood that the Romans neither had any number of ships, nor were acquainted with the shallows, the harbors, or the islands of those parts where they would have to carry on the war; and the navigation was very different in a narrow sea from what it was in the vast and open ocean." (...)

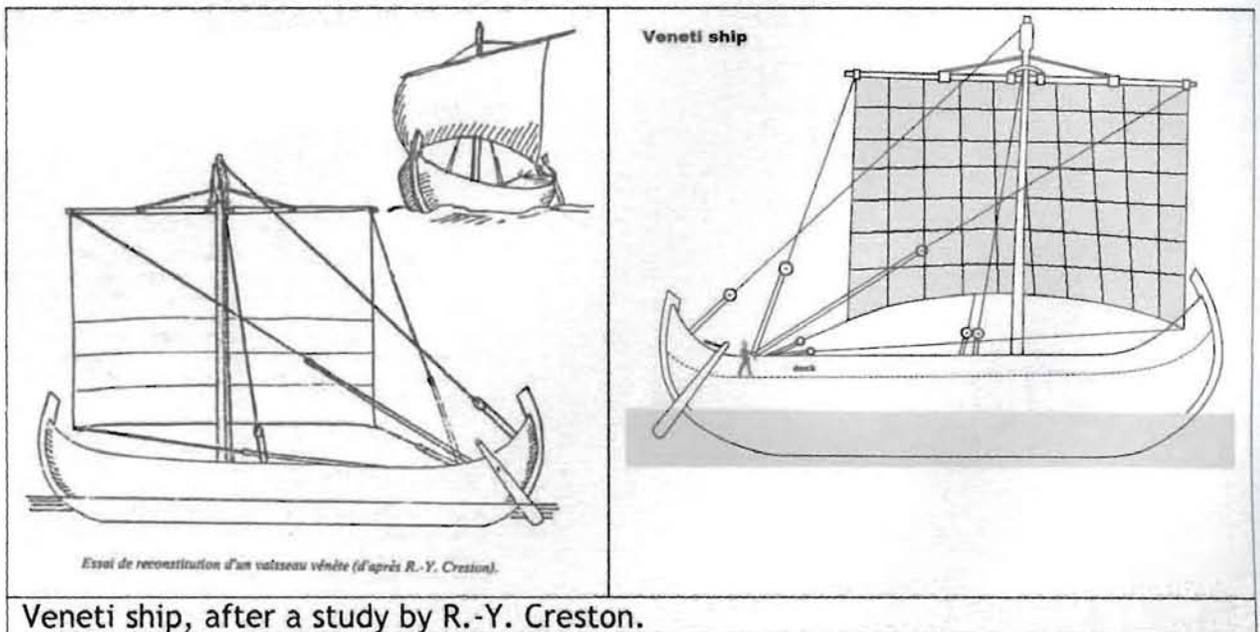
"The sites of their towns were generally such that, being placed on extreme points [of land] and on promontories, they neither had an approach by land when the tide had rushed in from the main ocean, which always happens twice in the space of twelve hours; nor by ships, because, upon the tide ebbing again, the ships were likely to be dashed upon the shoals. Thus, by either circumstance, was the storming of their towns rendered difficult; and if at any time perchance the Veneti overpowered by the greatness of our works, (the sea having been excluded by a mound and large dams, and the latter being made almost equal in height to the walls of the town) had begun to despair of their fortunes; bringing up a large number of ships, of which they had a very great quantity, they carried off all their property and betook themselves to the nearest towns; there they again defended themselves by the same advantages of situation. They did this the more easily during a great part of the summer, because our ships were kept back by storms, and the difficulty of sailing was very great in that vast and open sea, with its strong tides and its harbors far apart and exceedingly few in number."



Gallo roman Ponto type trading vessel found at the site of an antique villa of Le Viely near Cucuron, Vaucluse in Provence, France (Tallah 2004, p. 237-239). Red ochre and green framed painted panels dating from 70 AD permitted the reassembling of a Mediterranean sea ship (Gassend 1986 ; Pomey 1993).

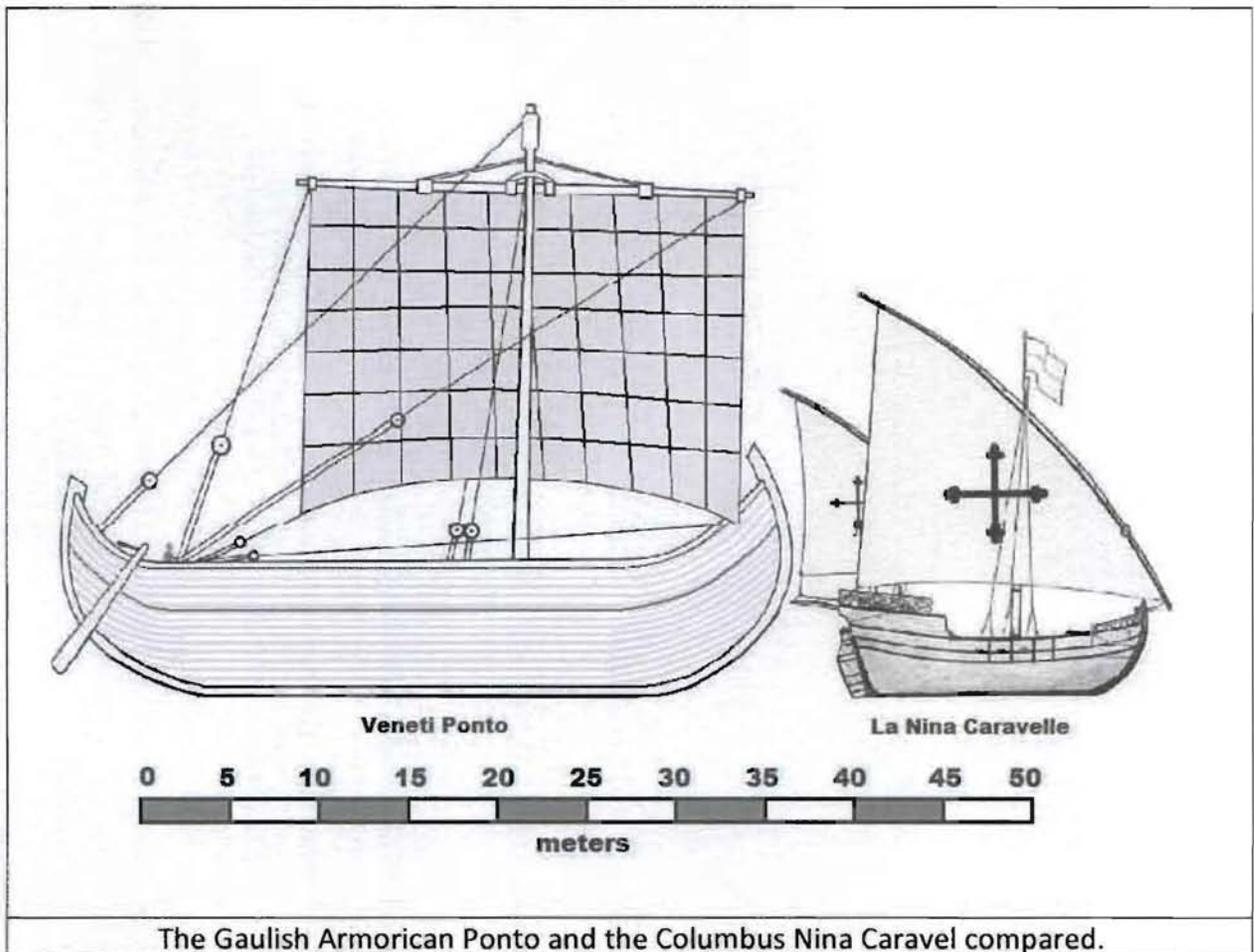
For their ships were built and equipped after this manner. The keels were somewhat flatter than those of our ships, whereby they could more easily encounter the shallows and the ebbing of the tide: the prows were raised very high, and, in like manner the sterns were adapted to the force of the

waves and storms [which they were formed to sustain]. The ships were built wholly of oak, and designed to endure any force and violence whatever; the benches which were made of planks a foot in breadth, were fastened by iron spikes of the thickness of a man's thumb; the anchors were secured fast by iron chains instead of cables, and for sails they used skins and thin dressed leather. These [were used] either through their want of canvas and their ignorance of its application, or for this reason, which is more probable, that they thought that such storms of the ocean, and such violent gales of wind could not be resisted by sails, nor ships of such great burden be conveniently enough managed by them. The encounter of our fleet with these ships' was of such a nature that our fleet excelled in speed alone, and the plying of the oars; other things, considering the nature of the place [and] the violence of the storms, were more suitable and better adapted on their side; for neither could our ships injure theirs with their beaks (so great was their strength), nor on account of their height was a weapon easily cast up to them; and for the same reason they were less readily locked in by rocks. To this was added, that whenever a storm began to rage and they ran before the wind, they both could weather the storm more easily and heave to securely in the shallows, and when left by the tide feared nothing from rocks and shelves: the risk of all which things was much to be dreaded by our ships."



The description of the Veneti ships Caesar makes is of the utmost importance. We here learn that their ships were built to withstand the harsh environment of the North Atlantic and that such vessels could easily make it across the Ocean. They were, after all, no much smaller and more seaworthy than Columbus's caravel type ships which measured about 50 to 60 feet in length and were built to sail the Mediterranean Sea but not the open ocean. The *Santa María*, Columbus's flagship, was presumably a medium sized carrack of about 60 feet (18.3 meters) in length on deck, and not very much larger than the smaller *Pinta* and *Nina*. The *Nina* and *Pinta* were medium sized Caravels of about 50 feet (15.24 m) in length on deck.

In comparison, the Armorican ships measured about 131.2 feet (40 m) in length, over 39.4 feet (12 m) in width, and 9.8 feet (3 m) in draught; its flat hulls preventing risk of prolonged immobilization after stranding during neap-tide or, willingly or not, during spring tide. The bulwarks were also impressive, more so at the extremities, as they measured 16.4 to 19.7 feet (5 to 6 m) above the waterline. The Celtic or Gaulish name for this category of ships was Ponto.



During Antiquity, the kingdoms of the Hibernian and British isles depended much on these large sea vessels for insular and continental trade exports and imports.

Another interesting remark is the mention that the sails were made of leather and not of canvas. Caesar reasons that the Armoricans were ignorant of the application of canvas but then concludes that for ocean conditions leather was better adapted. We know from archaeology that the Celts were good weavers. So, they were certainly not ignorant of the use of cloth. The main reason for leather sails was most likely because, when needed, hides were readily available in all parts of the North Sea and this, from sea mammals to coastal game animals.

Accordingly, Julius Caesar in his *Gallic War Commentaries* (Book I, I and V) gives a compelling description of the goings about of the Helvetii around 58 BCE on way to the Atlantic coast at the invitation of the Santones (the old historical province of Saintonge):

“It is again told Caesar, that the Helvetii intended to march through the country of the Sequani and the Aedui into the territories of the Santones, which are not far distant from those boundaries of the Tolosates, which [viz. Tolosa, Toulouse] is a state in the Province. If this took place, he saw that it would be attended with great danger to the Province to have warlike men, enemies of the Roman people, bordering upon an open and very fertile tract of country. For these reasons he appointed Titus Labienus, his lieutenant, to the command of the fortification which he had made. He himself proceeds to Italy by forced marches, and there levies two legions, and leads out from winter-quarters three which were wintering around Aquileia, and with these five legions marches rapidly by the nearest route across the Alps into Further Gaul.”

(...)

“After his death, the Helvetii nevertheless attempt to do that which they had resolved on, namely, to go forth from their territories. When they thought that they were at length prepared for this undertaking, they set fire to all their towns, in number about twelve--to their villages about four hundred--and to the private dwellings that remained; they burn up all the corn, except what they intend to carry with them; that after destroying the hope of a return home, they might be the more ready for undergoing all dangers. They order everyone to carry forth from home for himself provisions for three months, ready ground. They persuade the Rauraci, and the Tulingi, and the Latobrigi, their neighbors, to adopt the same plan, and after burning down their towns and villages, to set out with them: and they admit to their party and unite to themselves as confederates the Boii, who had dwelt on the other side of the Rhine, and had crossed over into the Norican territory, and assaulted Noreia.”

Therefore, at the time of Caesar in 58 BCE, the powerful Celtic Helvetii residing in the Alps had planned to move the entire nation to the Atlantic coast at the invitation of the Santones. Were Santones to move to the British Islands or was it the Helvetii? Apart from the Setantii, the Gallic continental Belgae and Brigantes had settled in Ireland and Britain, the Parisi in Britain and the Pictaves or Pictones in Caledonia, among others. As it is recorded, these founding events were maintained in the insular colonial annals up onto the Christian era.

Bede the Venerable (ca. 672, 673 – 735) in *Ecclesiastical History of England* (pp. 37-38) picks up from where Caesar left off in his *Gallic War Commentaries*:

“But at first this island had no other inhabitants but the Britons, from whom it derived its name, and who, coming over into Britain, as is reported, from Armorica, possessed themselves of the southern parts thereof. Starting from the south, they had occupied the greater part of the island, when it happened, that the nation of the Picts, putting to sea from Scythia, as is reported, in a few ships of war, and being driven by the winds beyond the bounds of Britain, came to Ireland and landed on its northern shores. There, finding the nation of the Scots, they begged to be allowed to settle among them, but could not succeed in obtaining their request. Ireland is the largest island next to Britain, and lies to the west of it; but as it is shorter than Britain to the north, so, on the other hand, it runs out far beyond it to the south, over against the northern part of Spain, though a wide sea lies between them. The Picts then, as has been said, arriving in this island by sea, desired to have a place granted them in which they might settle. The Scots answered that the island could not contain them both; but “We can give you good counsel,” said they, “whereby you may know what to do; we know there is another island, not far from ours, to the eastward, which we often see at a distance, when the days are clear. If you will go thither, you can obtain settlements; or, if any should oppose you, we will help you.” The Picts, accordingly, sailing over into Britain, began to inhabit the northern parts thereof, for the Britons had possessed themselves of the southern.”

The name Scythia was the usual medieval expression used to define the eastern lands ancestral to the Celts. The Picts, that were the Pictaves, therefore, set sail from the east of Britain. Their Britain bound vessels were blown off course on Ireland where they were met by the Scots. At the time of Pictish colonisation, the Scots were not in Caledonia but in Ireland mainly.

Sailing westerly around the tip of Britain into the Irish Sea not only permitted to avoid treacherous open sea currents but also led to the best bays, ports and landing sites.

From Claudius Ptolemy's *Geography, Book II, chapter 2*, we learn that the Setanti held a port on Britain's West coast:

| Description of the west side which borders on the Hibernian Ocean and the Vergionius Ocean. | |
|--|---|
| English translation | Old Celtic form |
| From the Novantian promontory | Nouantion "Town of the Fresh" / punning with Nouienton 'New town' |
| mouth of the Abravannus river | Abrauanos "Dark water" |
| Iena estuary | Iena "young, Fresh" |
| mouth of the Devas river | Deua "Goddess" |
| mouth of the Novius river | Nouios "New" |
| Ituna estuary | "Wandering" |
| Moricambe Aestuarium (estuary) | Moricambo "bay, bight" |
| Setantiorum harbour | Setantioron "Utmost town", Town of Merseyside |
| Belisama estuary | Belisama |
| Seteia estuary | Seteia "Place of Otters" |
| Caeanganorum promontory | Caeanganoron / caianganoron "Pleasant pool" |
| mouth of the Toesobis river | |
| mouth of the Stuccia river | |
| mouth of the Tuerobis river | |
| Octapitarum promontory | |
| mouth of the Tobius river | |
| mouth of the Ratostabius river | |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Sabrina estuary | |
| Uxella estuary | |
| Herculis promontory | |
| Antivestaeum or Bolerium promontory | |
| Damnonium or Ocrium promontory | Damnonion "Industrious (place)", Ocrion "Promontory, Edge". |

The Hibernian Ocean, of course, is the Irish Sea and Verionius is the latinization of Uergionios, the Old Celtic name for the Atlantic Ocean.

Moricambe Aestuarium is the present day Morcambe Bay and the Belisama and Seteia rivers are respectively: River Ribble in Lancashire and the River Mersey in Merseyside. Setantiorum was then the harbor of the Setantes or Setantii as they were called.



A map of the British Isles, drawn in the 15th century to illustrate the 'Geographia' of Ptolemy (90-168) Photo: The Bridgeman Art Library.

Chapter VIII

The Old Gaelic Connection

The Greek navigator Pytheas of Massalia (Marseilles) knew the British Isles which he called the Oestrymnides or Casterides, where much tin is found: the Orcades, Mona (Monapides) and many other small islands of the Gallic Sea. We also know from Herodotus of the many sea contacts the Celts had with the Carthaginians and other people of the Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea. Interesting are Herodotus's remarks concerning the curragh leather boats of the Hibernian Scots:

"And in their well-known skiffs they widely plough the turbid sea and the storm-pit of the monster-tenanted Ocean. These folk indeed do not build their keels of pine, nor do they know how to fashion them, neither do they round their barks from fir, as is the common practice, but with wondrous skill they make each skiff with skins bound together, and often in their hide-bound crafts, skim o'er the mighty deep. From here a two day's voyage the Sacred Island (Ireland) lies (for by this name the Ancients knew it), rich in green sward amid the waves it lies, peopled thickly by the folk of the Hierni. Near them lie the shores of the Albiones. The Tatesii (Iberians) were accustomed to trade even to the boundaries of the Oestrymnides (Britain). Even the Carthaginians and the people dwelling round the Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar) were accustomed to make visits to these seas."

The Irish curragh, or currach, was a skin seagoing boat ranging in sizes akin to the Eskimo or Inuit umiak which could contain up to 20 people and more. A smaller version of the curragh was used for river and lake boating. Apart from primitive curraghs, the Alban Picts of ancient Scotland were also in possession of sailing vessels. These were not very much different from those of their cousins of Armorica. Let us remember that the Picts were a colony of the continental Pictavi, close cultural neighbors of the Veneti.



Gold Boat, Ireland, 1st Century B.C. National Museum of Ireland, presumed to represent a very large skin-clad vessel. The artifact was found in Brough, Co. Derry, at the beginning of the 20th century.

Describing the curragh, Farley Mowat summed it up nicely in *The Farfarers* (pp. 335- 336):

“Currags”, as the Irish Celts called them, evolved from the used by the indigenes of northern Britain long before the Celtic invasions and were part of the circumpolar tradition of skin-clad vessels. Irish records tell us that, by the sixth century, currags were being sheathed with ox hides. Presumably this was because walrus hides were no longer available. In 1976 a thirty-six-foot curragh replica sheathed in leather carried a crew of five and nearly a ton of supplies from Ireland to Newfoundland via Iceland. Siberian and Alaskan umiaks, sheathed in walrus or bearded seal hides, are known to

have reached lengths of sixty feet and more, and to have been capable of carrying as many as forty passengers and their gear in voyages across the Bering Sea. We can assume that the skin-clad craft of aboriginal north Europeans would have been at least as effective.



Inuit group in umiak, in the spring, 1920-1929, photo print by Robert J. Flaherty, McCord museum, Montréal, Québec.

Ireland's National Museum has a tiny model of a curragh equipped with rowing and steering oars, a mast, and a spar, all hammered out of gold. Found in County Derry, the model is thought to date from the first century A.D. It represents a beamy, undecked, bluff-bowed, double-ended, soft chinned vessel primarily intended to be wind-driven, but fitted with auxiliary power in the form of eighteen oarsmen, whose presence still left

half of the vessel's capacity free for carrying passengers or cargo. Such a vessel would necessarily have had to be close to fifty feet in length."



According to Farley Mowat, *The Farfarers Before the Norse*, p. 19, the Irish currach was probably sheathed in ox hides and would have been about 36' in length.

In his article entitled *The Donegal Curachs* (Mowville Inishowen.com), Donál MacPolín mentions of the rough environment and life of subsistence of the islanders. The currach was constructed with whatever materials were available, retrieved or recycled.

"Frames were of rough - cut timber or driftwood, the hull of hazel or willow 'rods' tied with horse hair and covered with cowhide, sealskin - even old flour-bags. As one fisherman put it rather inelegantly, 'and there you are... a boat as rough as a badger's arse!' A Toraigh (Tory Island) curach built in 1923, now in the National Museum of Ireland, has couples cut from split greenwood, possibly hazel or alder, and its longitudinal pieces are composed of split hazel and just three sawn laths. Most of the tyings are horse-tail hair, but twine and bits of wire are also in evidence. This variety of materials confirms that the early curach-makers had to make do with

what few materials came to hand. Because it required few raw materials and was simply and easily constructed, there were once huge numbers of curachs in daily use here. The longitudinal pieces used in curachs built today are exclusively sawn laths."

MacPolín's, description is important in that currachs were readily built with whatever material available and that these vessels, in use since prehistoric times, have continued to be used even nowadays.



A fisherman family paddling a Tory Island curragh, County Donegal. Photo taken in 1936, Mowville Inishowen.com.

The Oceanic Mariners of Celtic Antiquity - Druids across the Atlantic

According to the teachings of the Celtic Druids, the Otherworld lay on the other side of the Ocean. The Ocean was not just a vast body of water but also a physical barrier between both worlds, the world of the living and the land of the dead. Across its waves lied the Elysian Fields, Tír na nÓg, the

land of eternal youth. These otherworldly lands across the waves which were so intensely sought after by intrepid heroes on a spiritual quest were also quietly visited by druid seers who were searching not immortal fame or renown but the fulfillment of true science and wisdom. As recorded in ancient Irish myth and legend in a manuscript kept at the British Library (*Lebor gabála Érenn*, "The book of the taking of Ireland", *Cath Maige Tuired*, "The Second Battle of Mag Tuired": Author: [unknown], London, British Library, Harleian MS 5280, p.25) :

"The Túatha Dé Danann were in the northern islands of the world, studying occult lore and sorcery, druidic arts and witchcraft and magical skill, until they surpassed the sages of the pagan arts. They studied occult lore and secret knowledge and diabolic arts in four cities: Falias, Gorias, Murias, and Findias."

What the Irish monk cleric here pejoratively describes as "*occult lore and sorcery, druidic arts and witchcraft and magical skill*" were in fact, according to ancient pre-Christian learning, esoteric and natural sciences including geography and astronomy. Following the ancient scholars, the exact phrasing of would have been thus: "They were in the northern islands studying philosophy, druidic arts and science, until they surpassed the other sages of Antiquity". The four fabled cities of Falias, Gorias, Murias and Findias, were in fact mystical places in the principal region of the Pegasus star group formed by Alpheratz, Scheat, Markab and Algenib. Along with the Pleiades and Hyades of Taurus, this constellation played an important role in ancient European agriculture as a seasonal marker and can be seen high in the sky starting near the end of summer and continuing through autumn. Its rising marked the arrival of the warmer spring weather and its associated rainstorms. Myths surrounding the constellation of Pegasus (Pegasos in Greek meaning "Springing Forth"), represented the blooming of spring while the Chimera (Greek Khimera for "Wintery"), the cold chill of winter, had its winter-rising in Capricorn. In Greek myth, this horse was seen as the thunderbolt-bearer of Zeus. The Pegasus asterism was anciently associated not only to the northern regions but also to the ocean, its secrets and its dangers. In light of this, the sea travels accomplished by the Celtic mariners and sages were less chimerical than the tales surrounding them. In Irish lore, the Immrama were a class of popular tales describing sea journeys to faraway places, islands of the sea

and lands beyond the sea prosaically called Tír na nÓg, "Land of the Young", Mag mell, "Plain of Joy", Tír fo Thuinn "Land under the Wave", Tír na mBan "Land of Women",

Tír na mBeo "Land of Life" and Ablach "Apple-orchard". In these adventures, their shores could be reached by traveling in all directions from west of Ireland's coast. And in which, following terrible gales and tempests, ships are blown off course left adrift to touch many other fantastic islands. And not unlike Ulysses, are lost at sea for many years before returning home reaching their first destination. The heroes of the Immrama include Mael Dúin and Bran Mac Febal (of the Voyage of Bran) and in later Christian accounts as St. Brandan (also spelled Brendan). Although heavily Christianized, the story of St. Brandan is deeply rooted in pagan myth. Culdee wanders and sea roving monks, such as Brandan, although followers of the new faith, were in fact pursuing the old faith of the Druids.



Detail of the Cossans, or Glamis stele, also called the "St. Orland's Stone". Royal Commission

The otherworldly and eerie realms of Tír na mBan and Emain Ablach, “the Apple-orchard”, are here prosaically described in fairytale terms (*Voyage of Bran Son of Febal*, v. 10-12):

'Without grief, without sorrow, without death,
Without any sickness, without debility,
That is the sign of Emain--
Uncommon is an equal marvel.

'A beauty of a wondrous land,
Whose aspects are lovely,
Whose view is a fair country,
Incomparable is its haze.

'Then if Aircthech is seen,
On which dragon stones and crystals drop
The sea washes the wave against the land,
Hair of crystal drops from its mane.

Again, from the *Lebhor Gabala Erenn*, *First Book of the Takings of Ireland*, *The Nemedians and the Fir Bolg*, verses 304 and 353, make it clear that the new faith did not completely mask the old ways and wisdom.

“Thereafter the progeny of Bethach son of Iarbonel the Soothsayer son of Nemed were in the northern islands of the world, learning druidry and knowledge and prophecy and magic, till they were expert in the arts of pagan cunning.” (...)

“Though some say that the Túatha Dé Danann were demons, seeing that they came unperceived [and they themselves said that it was in dark clouds that they came, after burning their ships] and for the obscurity of their knowledge and adventures, and for the uncertainty of their genealogy as carried backwards : but that is not true, for their genealogies carried backward are sound : howbeit they learnt knowledge and poetry; for every

obscurity of art and every clearness of reading, and every subtlety of crafts, for that reason, derive their origin from the Tuatha Dé Danann. And though the Faith came, those arts were not put away, for they are good, and no demon ever did good. It is clear therefore from their dignities and their deaths that the Túatha Dé Danann were not of the demons nor were they sidh-folk. It is said that Bethach son of Iardan was chieftain of that Taking and of the arts, and that seven chieftains followed him: Dagda, Dian Cecht, Creidne, Luchne, Nuadu Argatlam, Lug son of Cian.”

Irish manuscripts, such as the *Lebor gabála Érenn* “The book of the taking of Ireland” as cited above, claim that the primeval Druids resided in the “Islands of the North” and that these wise men surpassed “all the other sages of Antiquity”. This boast can also be corroborated through classical sources. Caesar in his *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*, “Gallic Wars Commentaries”, Book VI, chapter 14, describes their professional training as being very rigorous and that students “remain in the course of training for twenty years” ...

“They likewise discuss and impart to the youth many things respecting the stars and their motion, respecting the extent of the world and of our earth, respecting the nature of things, respecting the power and the majesty of the immortal gods.”

On the subject, the French Celtologist Joseph Monard in the *Celtic Connection* (p. 54) commented thus:

“First consider the notions found in the Irish manuscripts that claim that the “primeval Druids”, the Túatha Dé Danan, resided in the “Islands of the North”. If these Tuatha are truly what I think they are, that is, a reminiscence of euhemerized Proto-Celts called Denen/Danuna; this brings us closer to the “Sea Peoples” which the Greeks made into the “Atlanteans”. On my part, I suspect that these “primeval Druids” were mythified reminiscences of great thinkers, a synthesized evolved link between the shamanism of the “Proto-Druids” of the European Hyperboreans and those of the Pre-Aryans and the Proto-Indo-Europeans from the steppes of Asia. These early thinkers and their disciples philosophized much only to become the Druids. Thus the same process occurs with the analogous oriental

Brahmans. Therefore, starting with the same shamanic-pre-Aryan thinking, they passed to their own Vedic phase only to stumble on to their brand of Brahmanism, the ancestor to Hinduism.

“This analysis suggests the possibility of the need for these proto-Celtic, and later Celtic peoples, to retreat to the faraway islands for religious purposes. Henceforth, they were the precursors of the Ceillioi Deui (for “companions of God”) which yielded the Cele-De in Old Irish, the “Culdees” in the later anglicized form. These were the Christianized anchorites still very much druidicized that the Vikings found at sea from Caledonia all the way to Iceland, thus earning the name “papar”. Thus the meeting of the Scandinavians and Celts in the Faraway Islands happened not long after the Atlantic Sea voyages of Maelduin and Brendan, whose stories were later romanticized in poetic form.

“One of these famous “Islands of the North” was called Gorias in later medieval Irish transcription. Linguists of the Celtic studies have explored the possible etymologies for this name and have come up with Gortu = “heat”, which explains the geysers and volcanic activity of Iceland very well. This could very well be the original Celtic name for Iceland in the form of a possible Gortona, a name with a double meaning, the type the Celts were mad about. Gortona corresponds to Gortia = “enclosure”, “protected site”, hence “retreat”. Nothing keeps us from supposing that the Celts made the trip further “discovering America” before Leif Ericson and consorts... and this does not prevent Euskaroids or Ibers (i.e. Basques) from having been there too.”

Following Monard’s lead that Gorias could be Iceland, this leaves us with placing the three other fabled islands of Falias, Murias, and Findias.

The meanings of the Gaelic names Falias, Gorias, Murias, Findias are traditionally rendered thus:

Falias “the Mighty”, Gorias “the Hot”, Murias “the Sea”, and Findias “the White”.

Their Celtic etymologies yield:

Falias < Ualia “in Might, in Force”, “of Authority”, “of Competence”.

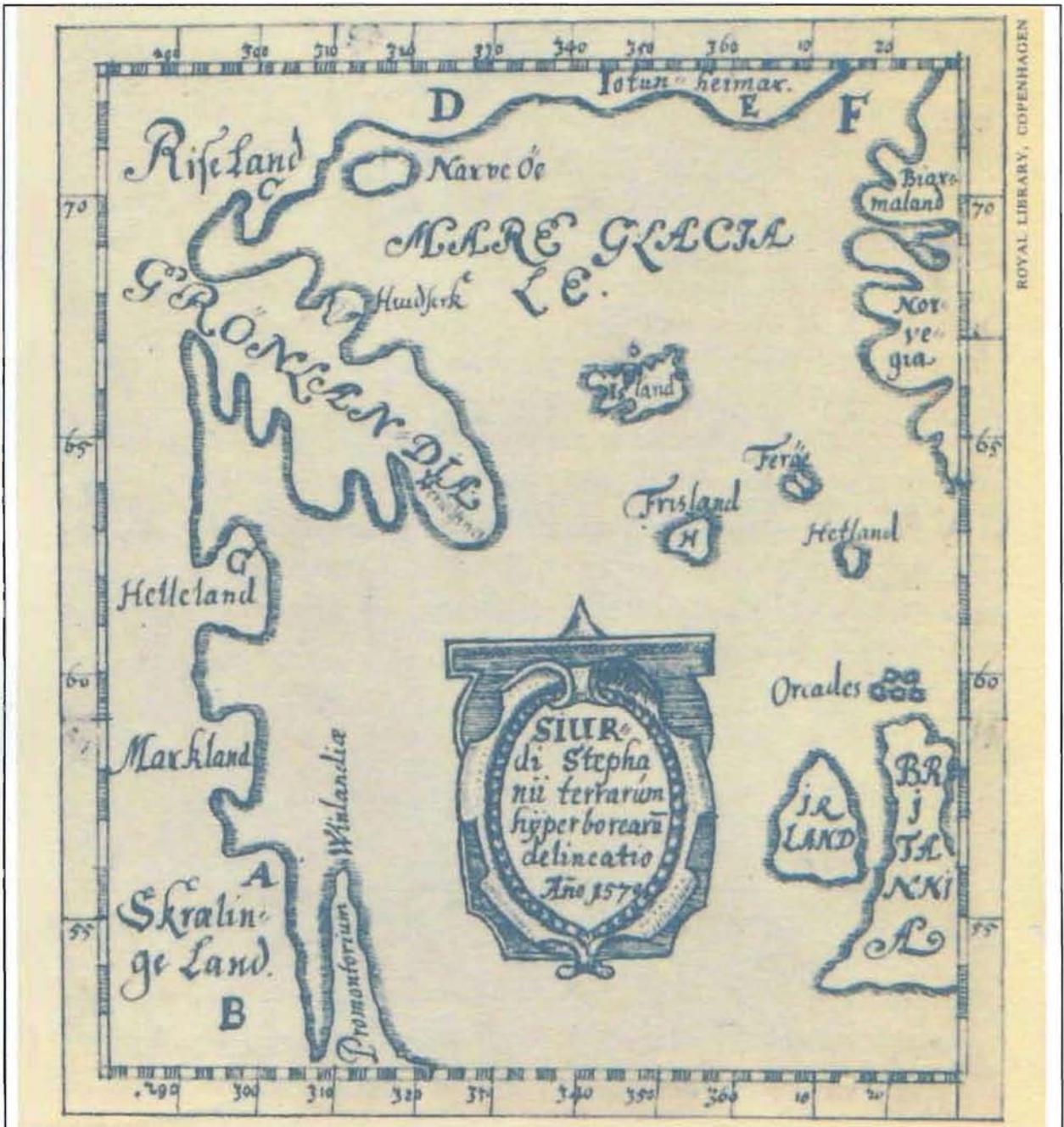
Ualia, punning with Aballia « Apple Orchard », name of one of the mystical or mythical islands of the sea such as: Ynys Afallach (Inicia Aballaci « island of the Orchard ») the welsh Avalon along with the Irish Emain Ablach (Emania Aballaci « Twin of the Orchard »), the Irish equivalent of the Greek Hesperides, the Canary islands or the Azores. In astronomical terms, Falias < Ualiassos, is Markab, the delta star of Pegasus.

Gorias < Goria “the Warm, the Hot”; punning with: Gortia “the enclosure”; Garria “green oak ». Gorias < Goriassos, is Algenib, the epsilon star of Pegasus.

Morias < Moria “the Sea”; presumably the Irish equivalent of the Greek Meropis. Murias < Moriassos, is Scheat, the beta star of Pegasus.

Findias, Finias < Uindia « the Spark », “the Sheen”, “the Beauty”, “the Splendid”, “the White”. Findias < Uindiassos, is Sirrah, the alpha star of Andromeda.

Before Norwegian archaeologists Helge Ingstad and his wife Anne Stine Ingstad finally discovered a Viking at L’Anse aux Meadows (L’Anse aux Méduses “Jellyfish Cove” in French) in the early 60s, few people believed that the mythic names related in the Icelandic Sagas referred to real places. That Newfoundland was Markland, Land of forests” was just a guess. Just recently, three new Viking settlements were discovered on Baffin Island. It is now certain that Helluland “Land of stone slabs,” was situated on Baffin Island’s East coast overlooking Greenland in what is now the Nunavut territory about 200 km southwest of the modern town of Iqaluit. It is just a matter of time before archaeologists positively identify Vinland, “Land of Vines”, further south. Sijurdur Stefansson’s map seems to position Vinland at the location of present day Nova Scotia.



The Friseo "Vinland Map" drawn by Sijurdur Stefansson in 1570 showing Britain, Ireland, Norway, the Orkneys and the Viking colonies of Iceland, Greenland and America. Lands mentioned counterclockwise include: Britannia, Irland, Orcales, Hetland, Frisland, Feröe, Norvegia, Biarmaland, Rifeland, Grönlandia, Helleland, Markland, Skralingeland, Promontorium Winlandia.

The Celtic fabled islands of the Irish myths could therefore hint at real places.

The two warring cities of the Greek sea kingdom of Meropis could have its counterpart in the Emain Ablach (Emania Abalaci "Twin cities of the Orchard") of the ancient Irish texts.

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