

## Citation style

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Karl STROBEL, *Die Galater: Geschichte und Eigenart der keltischen Staatbildung des hellenistischen Kleinasien*, vol. 1. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und historischen Geographie des hellenistischen und römischen Kleinasien 1. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996. ISBN 3 05 002543 3. Pp. 269. DM 280.

Most people, Karl Strobel says, first hear of the Galatians in St Paul's *Letter to the Galatians*. But Paul was not writing about the same Galatians as Karl Strobel. Paul addressed Greeks living in the Roman province called "Galatia". Strobel writes about the ethnic group for whom the Roman province was named.

Few people have written specifically about this Celtic people, who migrated from Central Europe to Central Anatolia during the early Hellenistic period. As Strobel notes, most prehistorians and Celtic specialists think the Galatians to be on the fringes of their interests, while Classical historians know nothing much about Iron Age Europe and content themselves with repeating the clichés of the ancient Greeks. The Greek sources, in turn, are quite fragmentary.

Strobel hopes to overcome the problems by adding the researches of recent Celtic archaeology in Central Europe and insights from the anthropology of migration and ethnogenesis to the skimpy Classical accounts.

The present volume is the first of two. Its text is divided into four major chapters, with twelve topical subdivisions, as well as a four-page bibliography. The present volume has lengthy footnotes, but no index, illustrations or maps, all of which would make the work more useful.

The first chapter ("Einführung") introduces Strobel's basic themes, that the Galatians have been poorly understood by Classical historians, and that modern Celtic studies allow a better, less biased, picture.

Chapter II, "Galatien und die Galater: Ethnos und Landschaft. Bild, Forschungsstand und Deutungsmuster", surveys previous research on the Galatians and expands on ideas mentioned briefly in the introduction. Pages 55-8 contain Strobel's survey of previous research. Few have written solely on the Galatians. F. Stähelin, *Geschichte der kleinasiatischen Galater* (Leipzig 1907), D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton 1950) and S. Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* (Oxford 1993) have the most significant accounts. Stähelin created the traditional image of the Galatians and, like most

later writers, identified with the Greeks, describing the Galatians as enemies of civilization in Asia Minor, with an economy based upon nomadic herding and robbery. The war of Attalus I of Pergamum became the archetypal conflict between Greeks and barbarians, and protecting civilized people from the Galatians, the *raison d'être* of the Pergamene kingdom. Mitchell even points to the Hallstatt period wagon burials as evidence that the Celts were constantly migrating. (In fact, wagons were status symbols in an otherwise sedentary society.) The Romans also posed as defenders of Greek city-states from the roving Celts.

The ancient Celts, Greek stereotypes to the contrary, were settled people, not nomads, although warrior aristocrats might be rather mobile. The spread of Celtic La Tene society took place because groups of warrior aristocrats were able to impose themselves upon new territories. Usually there were three stages to a migration. First, diplomatic or commercial contact with a distant region. Second, military contact with the new region, either by raids or mercenary service. Finally, a warrior band or a clan might move to the region in search of land to dominate. A random collection of warrior bands and extended families might combine their various traditions to form a new ethnic group. The Galatians followed this pattern of migration and expansion in Asia Minor.

Once installed in central Asia Minor, the Galatians were also sedentary farming people, like their subjects and neighbors. Many scholars have assumed that because the region was dominated by nomadic Turkmen in early modern times, it had always been so. Strobel presents evidence to the contrary. Byzantine sources show that Galatia was dominated by farmers until the thirteenth century A.D. It was the wars between the Byzantines and the invading Seljuk Turks which depopulated central Anatolia and turned it over to nomads.

Chapter III, "Galatername und Keltenbegriff", discusses the Galatians as Celtic people in detail. It is divided into four sections. The first discusses Paul's *Letter to the Galatians*, since this is where most people first hear of the Galatians. Strobel demonstrates that Paul was addressing, not ethnic Galatians, but Greek-speaking people in the Roman province named Galatia. Section 2, "Galater, Kelten, und Gallier", discusses the place of the Galatians in the broader field of Celtic studies and particularly traces the origins and usages of the three synonymous terms, Galatian, Gaul and Celt, as well as the three tribal names of the Anatolian Galatians, Trokmeri, Tektosagi and Testobogi. These tribal names

first appear in accounts of groups in eastern France and western Germany, show up later along the Danube, and are eventually also found among the Celts of Asia Minor. Strobel believes that not all people calling themselves, e.g., Testobogi, moved three times. Some families took the name when they moved. Section 3, "Die Galater als sprachliche Einheit in Kleinasien", presents evidence that the Galatians did indeed speak a Celtic language in Asia Minor. Section 4, "Der Sprachwissenschaftliche Keltenbegriff", discusses the place of their language in Celtic and Indo-European linguistics at greater length.

Chapter IV, the last and most substantive, describes the history proper of the migration and conquest of central Asia Minor by groups of Celtic-speaking peoples, a discussion divided into eight sections. Section 1 describes the expansion of La Tene culture, c. 400–350 B.C., from eastern France and western Germany to northern Italy, Bohemia and the middle Danube, replacing Hallstatt culture. A domino effect took place. One group of warrior aristocrats displaced another, which displaced a third, and so on. The three-stage pattern outlined earlier is shown in action. Alexander the Great made alliances with Celtic groups near the Danube. Celtic mercenaries fought in Hellenistic armies (e.g. that of Lysimachus), and returned home with information on the wealth of Greece and on Hellenistic methods of fighting. Strobel cites, as evidence of Celts travelling in the Hellenistic realms, La Tene graves with (e.g.) Phrygian helmets, and cylinder seals marked with Aramaic writing among the grave goods. During the reign of Cassander, the first military raids took place on Macedon. Section 2 details the rise of the various Hellenistic Successor states in Asia Minor while section 3 tells how various Danubian Celts took advantage of the chaotic situation to invade Greece, 280–279/8 B.C. In section 4, the author describes how the invaders were driven out of the Balkans by Antigonos Gonatas, while sections 5 and 6 detail how another group of invaders was recruited by Nicomedes I of Bithynia to help in his war against Antiochus I, the Seleucid ruler. In section 7, Strobel relates that Nicomedes granted land in central Anatolia to his Celtic mercenaries for services rendered, while in the last section, 8, the author elaborates how Antiochus I defeated the Celtic mercenaries in the "Battle of the Elephants", but allowed them to remain in Anatolia. The volume ends with a short synopsis of the contents of volume II. Strobel promises it will deal with the period from the settlement until the Roman conquest, dealing particularly with internal

development and relations with the Pergamene kingdom.

Overall, Strobel has interesting ideas and has written a good book. It is true that most ancient historians do not know much about the "barbarians" of central and northern Europe, and are content to repeat Greco-Roman clichés. Likewise, recent excavations in Central Europe give a more detailed picture of the spread of La Tene culture, which is quite relevant to the history of the Anatolian Galatians. Strobel's rehabilitation of migration as an agent of social change is interesting too. He is right to emphasize that the migrations were by small groups, not entire tribes. Not every Trokmer left Champagne and ended up in Phrygia anymore than every MacDonald left Scotland for North America. But he ought to defend more explicitly his assumption that all groups with La Tene style artifacts were in fact Celts, in the linguistic sense. One need not speak a specifically Celtic language to appreciate La Tene ornament. But the only place where Strobel seems to question this assumption is in pages 172-7, where he discusses the rise of a "German" identity among the tribesmen of the Elbe.

While acknowledging that this work fills a need, Strobel's volume also has some flaws. It suffers from a lack of supplementary materials. He needs maps to explain the movements of his Celts. Not everyone will be equally familiar with the geography of Central Europe and of Asia Minor. Likewise, if the details of grave goods are as important as Strobel thinks, he needs to have illustrations of them. Finally, he needs an index. These flaws may be made good in the second volume of this work, but at present they hinder his scholarship.

To sum up, *Die Galater* is well worth reading, both by Hellenistic historians and Celticists, filling a void in research. But it would be improved by maps, illustrations, and an index. Hopefully, volume II will fill this lack.

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