

# Galatia

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From [Galatia](#), an article in Wikipedia.

Ancient Galatia was an area in the highlands of central Anatolia in modern Turkey. Galatia was named for the immigrant Gauls from Thrace (cf. Tyllis), who settled here and became its ruling caste in the 3rd century BC, following the Gallic invasion of the Balkans in 279 BC. It has been called the "Gallia" of the East, Roman writers calling its inhabitants "Galli" ("Gauls"). <sup>1</sup>

Galatia was bounded on the north by Bithynia and Paphlagonia, on the east by Pontus and Cappadocia, on the south by Cilicia and Lycaonia, and on the west by Phrygia. Its capital was Ancyra (i.e. Ankara, today the capital of modern Turkey ).

**From W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*.**

We now come to a political division of Asia Minor, which demands a more careful attention. Its sacred interest is greater than that of all the others, and its history is more peculiar. The Christians of Galatia were they who received the Apostle 'as if he had been an angel' who, 'if it had been possible, would have plucked out their eyes and given them to him' and then were 'so soon removed' by new teachers 'from him that called them, to another Gospel' who began to 'run well,' and then were hindered, who were 'bewitched' by that zeal which compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, and who were as ready, in the fervor of their party spirit, to 'bite and devour one another,' as they were willing to change their teachers and their gospels." (Gal. 4:15; 1:6; 5:7; 3:1; 1:7; 5:15) It is no mere fancy which discovers, in these expressions of St. Paul's Epis-

tle, indications of the character of that remarkable race of mankind, which all writers, from Caesar to Thierry, have described as susceptible of quick impressions and sudden changes, with a fickleness equal to their courage and enthusiasm, and a constant liability to that disunion which is the fruit of excessive vanity, that race, which has not only produced one of the greatest nations of modern times, but which, long before the Christian era, wandering forth from their early European seats, burnt Rome and pillaged Delphi, founded an empire in northern Italy more than co extensive with Austrian Lombardy, and another in Asia Minor, equal in importance to one of the largest domains of the pashas.

For the "Galatia" of the New Testament was really the 'Gaul' of the East. The 'Epistle to the Galatians' would more literally and more correctly be called the 'Epistle to the Gauls.' When Livy, in his account of the Roman campaigns in Galatia, speaks of its inhabitants, he always calls them 'Gauls.' <sup>2</sup> When the Greek historians speak of the inhabitants of ancient France, the word they use is 'Galatians. The two terms are merely the Greek and Latin forms of the same appellation.

That emigration of the Gauls, which ended in the settlement in Asia Minor, is less famous than those which led to the disasters in Italy and Greece ; but it is, in fact, identical with the latter of these two emigrations, and its results were more permanent. The warriors who roamed over the Cevennes, or by the banks of the Garonne, reappear on the Halys and at the base of Mount Dindymus. They exchange the superstitions of Druidism for the cer-

<sup>1</sup>from Wikipedia article *Galatia*.

<sup>2</sup>The country of the Galatians was sometimes called Gallogrecia.

emonies of the worship of Cybele. The very name of the chief Galatian tribe is one with which we are familiar in the earliest history of France ; and Jerome says that, in his own day, the language spoken at Ancyra was almost identical with that of Treves.

The Galatians were a stream from that torrent of barbarians which poured into Greece in the third century before our era, and which recoiled in confusion from the cliffs of Delphi. Some tribes had previously separated from the main army, and penetrated into Thrace. There they were joined by certain of the fugitives, and together they appeared on the coasts, which are separated by a narrow arm of the sea from the rich plains and valleys of Bithynia. The wars with which that kingdom was harassed, made their presence acceptable. Nicomedes was the Vortigern of Asia Minor: and the two Gaulish chieftains, Leonor and Lutar, may be fitly compared to the two legendary heroes of the Anglo Saxon invasion. Some difficulties occurred in the passage of the Bosphorus, which curiously contrast with the easy voyages of our pirate ancestors.

But once established in Asia Minor, the Gauls lost no time in spreading over the whole peninsula with their arms and devastation. In their first crossing over we have compared them to the Saxons. In their first occupation they may be more fitly compared to the Danes. For they were a movable army rather than a nation, encamping, marching, and plundering at will. They stationed themselves on the site of ancient Troy, and drove their chariots in the plain of the Cayster. They divided nearly the whole peninsula among their three tribes. They levied tribute on cities, and even on kings. The wars of the East found them various occupation. They hired themselves out as mercenary soldiers. They were the royal guards of the kings of Syria, and the mamelukes of the Ptolemies in Egypt. <sup>3</sup>

The surrounding monarchs gradually curtailed their power, and repressed them within narrower limits. First Antiochus Soter drove the Tectosages, and then Eumenes drove the Trocmi and Tolistobii, into the central district which afterwards became Galatia. Their territory was definitely marked out and surrounded by the other states of Asia Minor, and they retained a geographical position similar to that of Hungary in the midst of its German and Slavonic neighbors. By degrees they coalesced into a number of small confederate states, and ultimately into one united kingdom. Successive cir-

cumstances brought them into contact with the Romans in various ways ; first, by a religious embassy sent from Rome to obtain peaceful possession of the sacred image of Cybele ; secondly, by the campaign of Manlius, who reduced their power and left them a nominal independence ; and then through the period of hazardous alliance with the rival combatants in the Civil Wars. The first Deiotarus was made king by Pompey, fled before Caesar at the battle of Pharsalia, and was defended before the conqueror by Cicero, in a speech which still remains to us. The second Deiotarus, like his father, was Cicero's friend, and took charge of his son and nephew during the Cilician campaign. Amyntas, who succeeded him, owed his power to Antony, but prudently went over to Augustus in the battle of Actium. At the death of Amyntas, Augustus made some modifications in the extent of Galatia, and placed it under a governor. It was now a province, reaching from the borders of Asia and Bithynia to the neighborhood of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, 'cities of Lycaonia'

Henceforward, like the Western Gaul, this territory was a part of the Roman Empire, though retaining the traces of its history in the character and language of its principal inhabitants. There was this difference, however, between the Eastern and the Western Gaul, that the latter was more rapidly and more completely assimilated to Italy. It passed from its barbarian to its Roman state, without being subjected to any intermediate civilization. The Gauls of the East, on the other hand, had long been familiar with the Greek language and the Greek culture. St. Paul's Epistle was written in Greek. The cotemporary inscriptions of the province are usually in the same language. The Galatians themselves are frequently called Gallo Grecians ; and many of the inhabitants of the province must have been of pure Grecian origin. Another section of the population, the early Phrygians, were probably numerous, but in a lower and more degraded position. The presence of great numbers of Jews <sup>4</sup> in the province, implies that it was, in some respects, favorable for traffic; and it is evident that the district must have been constantly intersected by the course of caravans from Armenia, the Hellespont, and the South. The Roman Itineraries inform us of the lines of communication between the great towns near the Halys and the other parts of Asia Minor. These circumstances are closely connected with the spread of the Gospel, and we shall

<sup>3</sup>Even in the time of Julius Caesar, we find four hundred Gauls (Galatians), who had previously been part of Cleopatra's bodyguard, given for the same purpose to Herod. Josephus, *War*,xx.3.

return to them again when we describe St. Paul's first reception in Galatia.

## Churches of Galatia

The remarks which have been made on Phrygia, must be repeated, with some modification, concerning Galatia. It is true that Galatia was a province : but we can plainly see that the term is used here in its popular sense, not as denoting the whole territory which was governed by the Galatian proprietor, but rather the primitive region of the tetrarchs and kings, without including those districts of Phrygia or Lycaonia, which were now politically united with it.

There is absolutely no city in true Galatia which is mentioned by the Sacred Writers in connection with the first spread of Christianity. From the peculiar form of expression with which the Christians of this part of Asia Minor are addressed by St. Paul in the Epistle which he wrote to them, and alluded to in another of his Epistles (1 Cor. 16:1), we infer that the churches of Galatia, were not confined to any one city, but distributed through various parts of the country.

If we were to mention two cities, which, both from their intrinsic importance, and from their connection with the leading roads, are likely to have been visited and revisited by the Apostle, we should be inclined to select Pessinua and Ancyra. The first of these cities retained some importance as the former capital of one of the Galatian tribes, and its trade was considerable under the early Emperors. Moreover, it had an ancient and widespread renown, as the seat of the primitive worship of Cybele, the Great Mother. Though her oldest and most sacred image (which, like that of Diana at Ephesus, had 'fallen down from heaven') had been removed to Rome, her worship continued to thrive in Galatia, under the superintendence of her effeminate and fanatical priests; and Pessinus was the object of one of Julian's pilgrimages, when Heathenism was on the decline. Ancyra was a place of still greater moment : for it was the capital of the province.

The time of its highest eminence was not under the Gaulish but the Roman government. Augustus built there a magnificent temple of marble, and inscribed there a history of his deeds, almost in the style of an Asiatic sovereign." This city was the meeting place of all the great roads in the north of the peninsula." And, when we add that Jews

had been established there from the time of Augustus," and probably earlier, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that the Temple and Inscription at Ancyra, which successive travelers have described and copied during the last three hundred years, were once seen by the Apostle of the Gentiles.

However this may have been, we have some information from his own pen, concerning his first journey through" the region of Galatia." We know that he was delayed there by sickness, and we know in what spirit the Galatians received him.

St. Paul affectionately reminds the Galatians (Gal. 4:13)" that it was 'bodily sickness which caused him to preach the Glad Tidings to them at the first.' The allusion is to his first visit : and the obvious inference is, that he was passing through Galatia to some other district (possibly Pontus, where we know that many Jews were established), when the state of his bodily health arrested his progress.

Thus he became, as it were, the Evangelist of Galatia against his will. But his zeal to discharge the duty that was laid on him did not allow him to be silent. He was instant" in season and out of season." "Woe" was on him if he did not preach the Gospel. The same Providence detained him among the Gauls, which would not allow him to enter Asia or Bithynia (Acts 16:6,7): and in the midst of his weakness he made the Glad Tidings known to all who would listen to him.

We cannot say what this sickness was, or even with certainty identify it with that" thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7 10) to which he feelingly alludes in his Epistles as a discipline which God had laid on him. But the remembrance of what he suffered in Galatia seems so much to color all the phrases in this part of the Epistle that a deep personal interest is connected with the circumstance. Sickness in a foreign country has a peculiarly depressing effect on a sensitive mind. And though doubtless Timothy watched over the Apostle's weakness with the most affectionate solicitude, yet those who have experienced what fever is in a land of strangers will know how to sympathize, even with St. Paul, in this human trial.

The climate and the prevailing maladies of Asia Minor may have been modified with the lapse of centuries: and we are without the guidance of St. Luke's medical language," which sometimes throws a light on diseases alluded to in Scripture: but two Christian sufferers, in widely different ages of the Church, occur to the memory as we look on the map of Galatia. We could hardly mention any

two men more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of St. Paul, than John Chrysostom and Henry Martyn, And when we read how these two saints suffered in their last hours from fatigue, pain, rudeness, and cruelty, among the mountains of Asia Minor which surround the place where they rest,<sup>4</sup> we can well enter into the meaning of St. Paul's expressions of gratitude to those who received him kindly in the hour of his weakness.

The Apostle's reception among the frank and warm-hearted Gauls was peculiarly kind and disinterested. No Church is reminded by the Apostle so tenderly of the time of their first meeting. The recollection is used by him to strengthen his reproaches of their mutability, and to enforce the pleading with which he urges them to return to the true Gospel. That Gospel had been received in the first place with the same affection which they

extended to the Apostle himself. And the subject, the manner, and the results of his preaching are not obscurely indicated in the Epistle itself. The great topic there, as at Corinth and everywhere, was "the cross of Christ, Christ crucified" set forth among them.<sup>5</sup> The Divine evidence of the Spirit followed the word, spoken by the mouth of the Apostle, and received by "the hearing of the ear." Many were converted, both Greeks and Jews, men and women, free men and slaves.

The worship of false divinities, whether connected with the old superstition at Pessinus, or the Roman idolatry at Ancyra, was forsaken for that of the true and living God. And before St. Paul left the region of Galatia on his onward progress, various Christian communities were added to those of Cilicia, Lycaonia, and Phrygia.

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<sup>4</sup>It is remarkable that Chrysostom and Martyn are buried in the same place. They both died on a journey at Tocat or Comana in Pontus.

<sup>5</sup>Compare Gal. 3:1 with 1 Cor. 1:13,17 and 2:2