

Animal disease in iron-age and early medieval Western Europe

Knowledge, understanding and management

Outline

A Well Developed and Documented Medico-Legal-Veterinary System

- Written Sources
- Post Patrician (Christian)
- Hagiography, Prophecies, Mysticism
- Philosophy, Poetry, Epic sagas
- Annals, Laws

Archaeological and Linguistic Evidence

- Archaeology of the Celtic Era
(Hallstatt and La Tene)
- “it is clear from linguistic evidence that many of the essentials of the early Irish legal system go back at least as far as the common Celtic period...” Fergus

Kelly

An Liagh-The Veterinarian?

- Modern Irish
- An Liaigh - The leech?
- An Máinlia – The Surgeon
- An Tréidlia – The Vet
- An Dochtúir – The Doctor

Veterinary in Gaelic Ireland

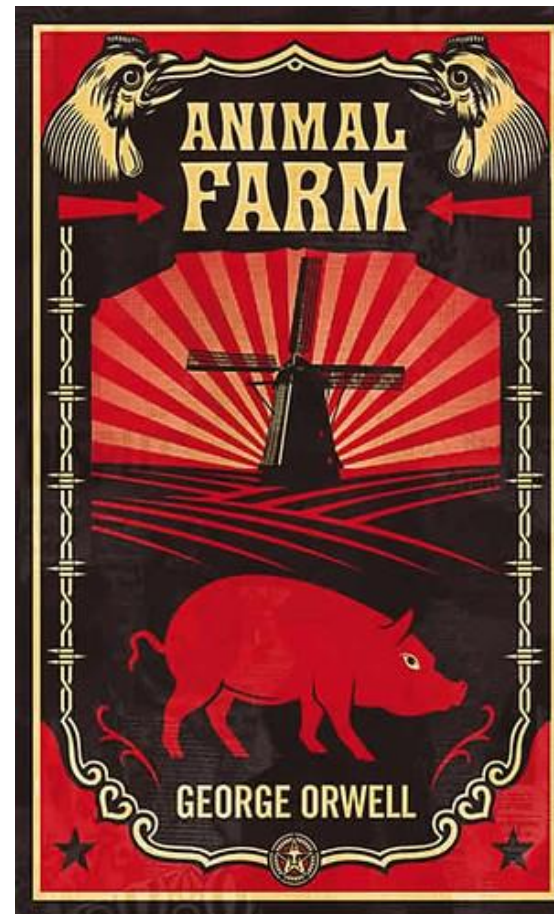
- Medicine in Gaelic Ireland was essentially on a “One-Health” basis
- The treatment of both animals and people was carried out by An Liaigh
- The fee for curing an animal was one third the value of the animal
- An Liagh had an important medico-legal-veterinary function



Allegory of Dian Cécht

Mythology of Gaelic Medicine

- Enigmatic, good and bad
- God / semi-divine healer
- Surgery vs. Medicine
- Killed his physician son
- Tears of daughter
- Healing herbs thrown to winds
- NOBODY knows more than a portion of available cures



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The Brehon Laws

- The Brehons might best be described as an order of Druids
- They were primarily involved making judgement according to the Gaelic Laws which had been handed down orally for generations
- Their authority was entirely moral, based on the justice of their judgements
- Appeal to a higher Brehon was possible
- No jails, no death penalty
- Restitution was a fine, levied according to the “honour price” of the individual who had been offended against

Define Defects in Animals

- Defects after Purchase
(all animals including slaves)
- Inherent /Fundamental defects
- Contractable/contagious Defects
- Defects of Unknown Origin
- Similar Signs/Different Diseases
- Limitation Period
- Legal Liabilities



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Further Stipulations and Definitions

- Define when an animal is cured
- List of Desirable Qualities
- Animals for Food must have been Killed for that Purpose

Driving

- Deliberately Releasing
- Driving into a Marsh
- Driving into an Infected Place
- Cáin Dár Í
- Bó-ár 7 Bedgach



Cattle Diseases

- Opann Sudden Death
- Idú Colic
- Scamach - -Respiratory
- Adbach Abortion
- Bedgach Louping Ill
- Critheach Trembling
- Ingenas buaile Anoestrus
- Radrachas Infertility
- Dallsinche Mastitis
- Comalne Dropsy
- Sinech Cowpox
- Lésán Foiche Warble sting
- Galar Rigín Aphosphorosis?
- Milliuda Bewitching
- Mille Ba Bewitching
- Urchar Millte Elf-shot

Other Species

Diseases of Horses

- Strangles
- Shiverer
- Assorted Lamenesses
- Glanders
- Tetanus
- Colic
- Worms

Diseases of Sheep, Goats, Dogs, Cats, Poultry and Bees

- Less well documented
- Small number of Conditions

Rabies Conach, Confaid

- Warning
- Kill
- Body to be Burned
- Ashes thrown in River
- The Enigma of the Conach Worm



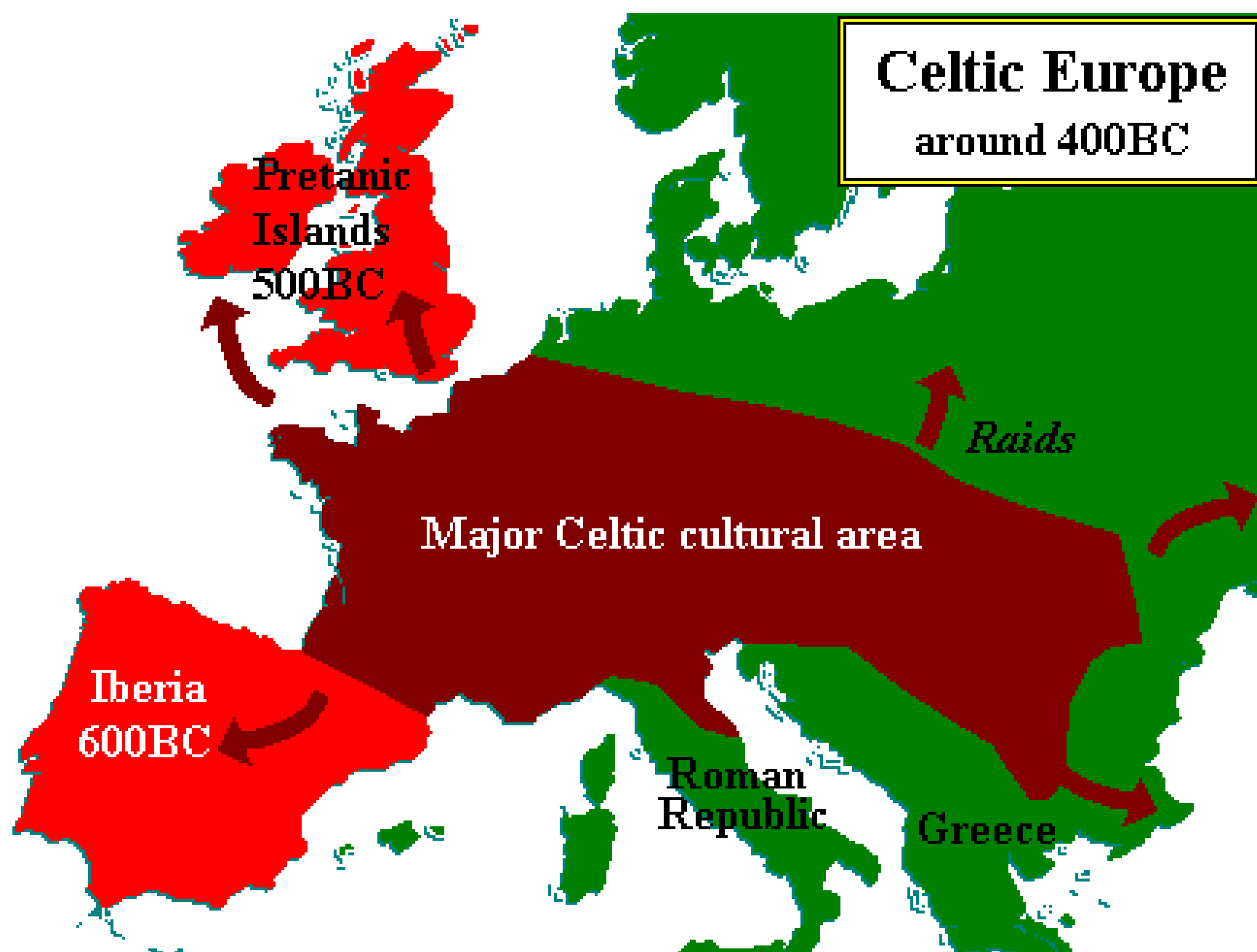
Archaeological and Linguistic Connections

Archaeological

- Celtic/Irish intrusion between c.1000-500 B.C.
- No evidence of violence or genocide
- Cultural and political assimilation of two populations

Linguistic

- Proto-Celtic Language
- Irish (Manx, Scots Gaelic)
- Celt-Iberian, (Galicia)
- Brythonic (Welsh, Cornish, Breton)
- Gallic (Gaulish?), Lepontic
- Galatian



Map produced for The Ireland Story. This map may be used elsewhere provided a link is given to www.irelandstory.com, the site is non-profit and the map is not modified.

- Toutatis /Tuatha (de Danaan)----
“I swear by the Gods my people swear by”
- Belenos/Bealtaine/Beltane
- Lugh, Lleu, Lugos, Lugues
- Lugdunum-Lyons
- Dian Cécht
- Badhbh



- Irish Gaelic is the oldest vernacular literature in Northern Europe
- Gaelic Ireland was the repository for ancient Celtic European Lore
- This lore was written down when literacy came to Ireland from the sixth century C.E. on.

- “The Senchas of the men of Éireann, what has maintained it? The joint memory of the old men, transmission from one ear to another, chanting of poets, amplification by law of the letter, for those are the strong rocks by which the judgements of the world are fixed.” (Senchas Mór)
- “Report says that in the schools of the Druids they learn by heart a great number of verses, and therefore some persons remain twenty years under training. And they do not think it proper to commit these utterances to writing, ...” Caesar, J. De bello gallico, Bk.VI,Ch.11

How Old are the Brehon Laws?

- Pre P/Q Shift
- Before divergence of Brythonic and Goidelic Celtic
- Common Celtic Era
- Dian Cécht, Lugh, Badb, Belenos, Toutatis
- Very Very Old



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