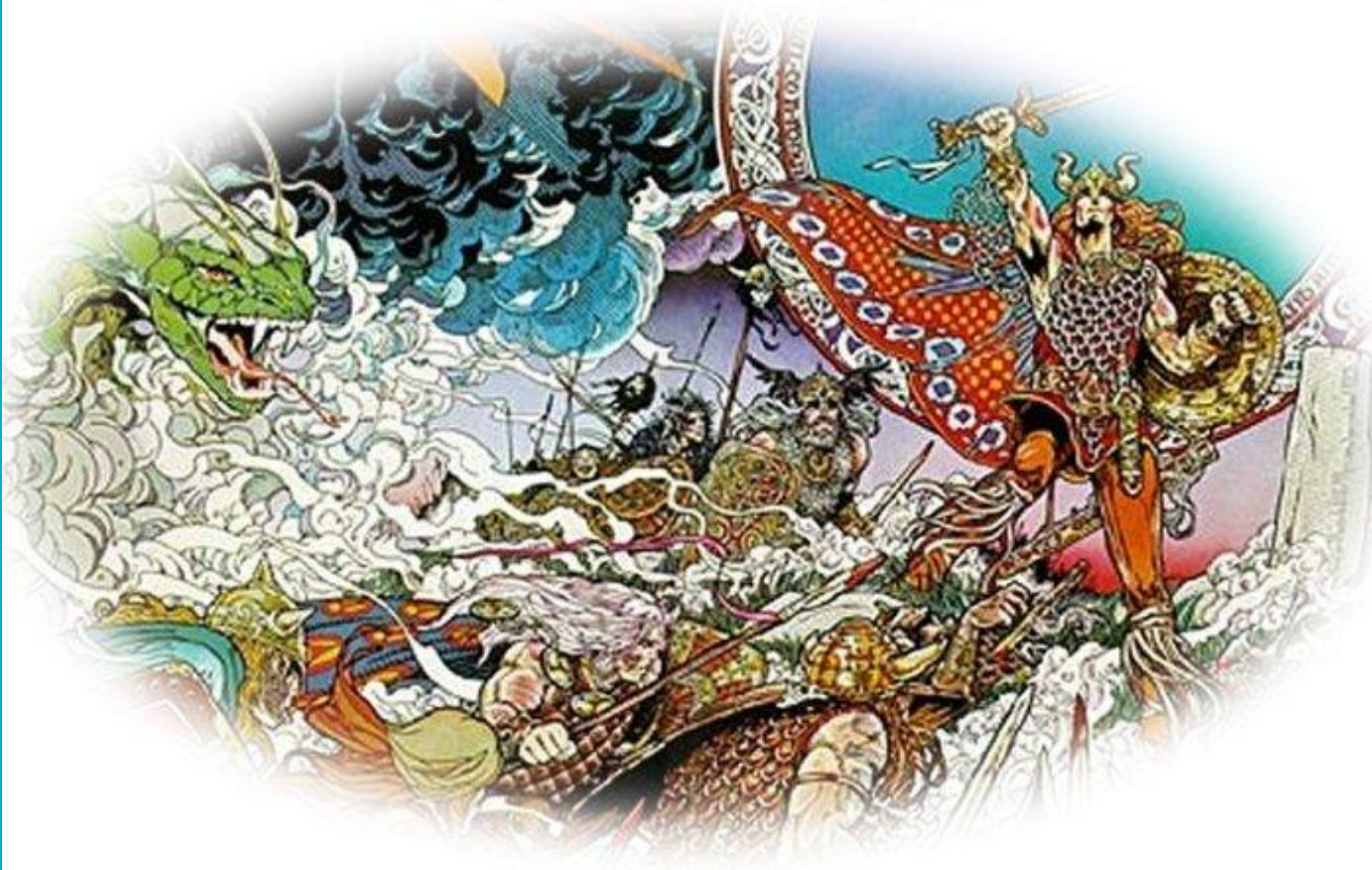
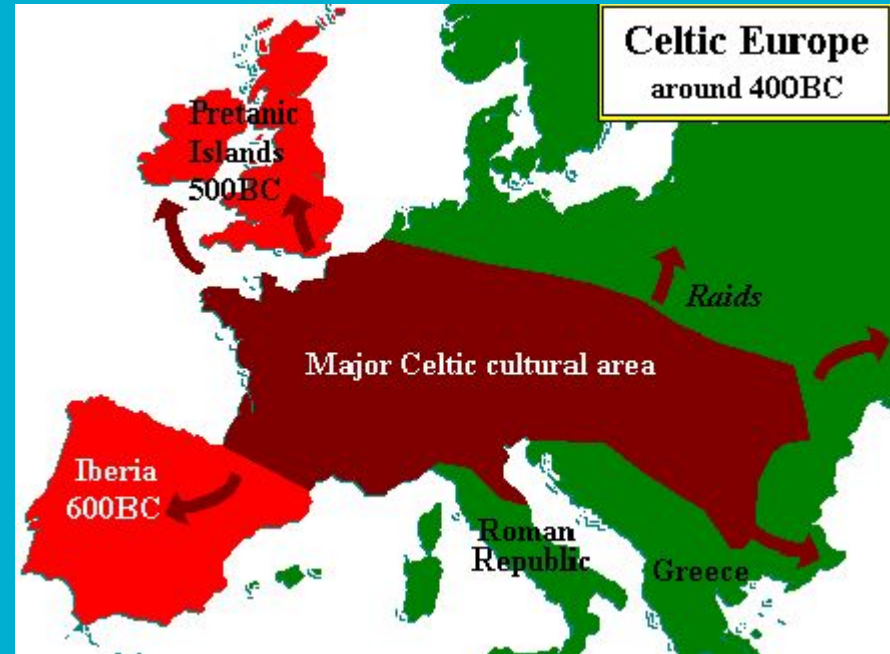


THE CELTS



Celts

THE EARLY CELTS WERE ONE OF THE GREATEST ANCIENT PEOPLES OF EUROPE. THE CELTS LIVED IN INDIVIDUAL TRIBES AND SHARED A COMMON CULTURE AND LANGUAGE. THEY WERE A PROUD AND HONOURABLE PEOPLE AND WERE WELL KNOWN FOR BEING FIERCE WARRIORS





THE EARLY CELTS ARE SOMETIMES CALLED IRON AGE CELTS. THE IRON AGE LASTED FROM AROUND 700 BC TO AD 43. THIS TIME PERIOD IS CALLED THE IRON AGE BECAUSE THAT WAS WHEN PEOPLE STARTED MAKING ITEMS FROM IRON, SUCH AS PLOUGHS FOR FARMING, HELMETS, SHIELDS AND COINS.

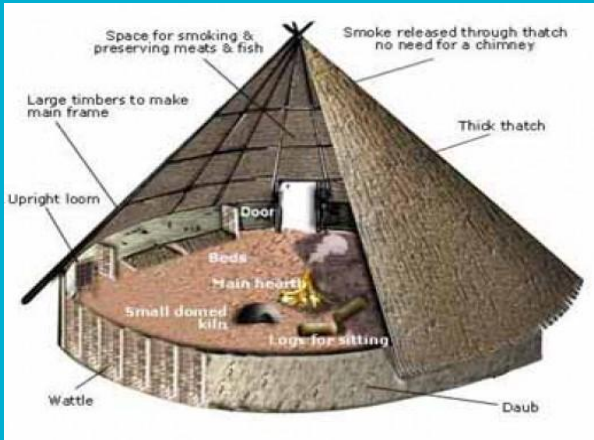


THE THREE MOST COMMON PIECES OF CLOTHING WORN BY THE CELTS WERE: KNEE-LENGTH TUNICS DYED AND EMBROIDERED IN BRIGHT COLOURS AND WORN WITH A GOLD OR SILVER-PLATED BELT TROUSERS, CALLED 'BRACAE' STRIPED WOOLLEN CLOAKS FASTENED BY A BROOCH.



BOTH SEXES WERE WITH LONG HAIR AND WORE JEWELLERY (IT SHOWED THEIR WEALTH). THE TORC WAS AN IMPORTANT ORNAMENT WORN BY THE CELTS. IT WAS A NECK RING MADE OF A ROD OF METAL (SOMETIMES TWISTED) IN BRONZE OR GOLD DEPENDING ON THE WEALTH OF THE WEARER. THE TWO ENDS OF THE TORC ALMOST MET.





THE CELTS LIVED IN ROUNDHOUSES WHICH WERE LOCATED IN THE CENTRE OF THE VILLAGE. MANY FAMILIES LIVED IN A SINGLE ROUNDHOUSE WHICH CONTAINED ONE LARGE ROOM. THE DOOR OF THE ROUNDHOUSE WAS DECORATED WITH SPECIAL CARVINGS AND PLANTS TO KEEP EVIL SPIRITS FROM ENTERING.

ROUNDHOUSES WERE BUILT AROUND A CENTRAL POLE WITH POLES RADIATING OUTWARDS FROM IT TO FORM THE ROOF, WHICH RESTED ON VERTICAL POLES. THEY USED MATERIALS FROM THE FOREST TO BUILD THEIR HOMES. THE WALLS WERE MADE OF WATTLE (WOVEN WOOD) AND DAUB (STRAW AND MUD) AND THE ROOFS WERE THATCHED.

THE IRON AGE CELTS HAD OVER 400 GODS AND GODDESSES. THEY BELIEVED THAT EVERY TREE, EVERY BUSH, EVERY FLOWER, EVERY RIVER, ALMOST EVERYTHING HAD A LITTLE GOD LIVING IN IT. SOME OF THEIR GODS AND GODDESSES WERE EXTREMELY POWERFUL. BUT MOST WERE LITTLE GODS OR GODDESSES.

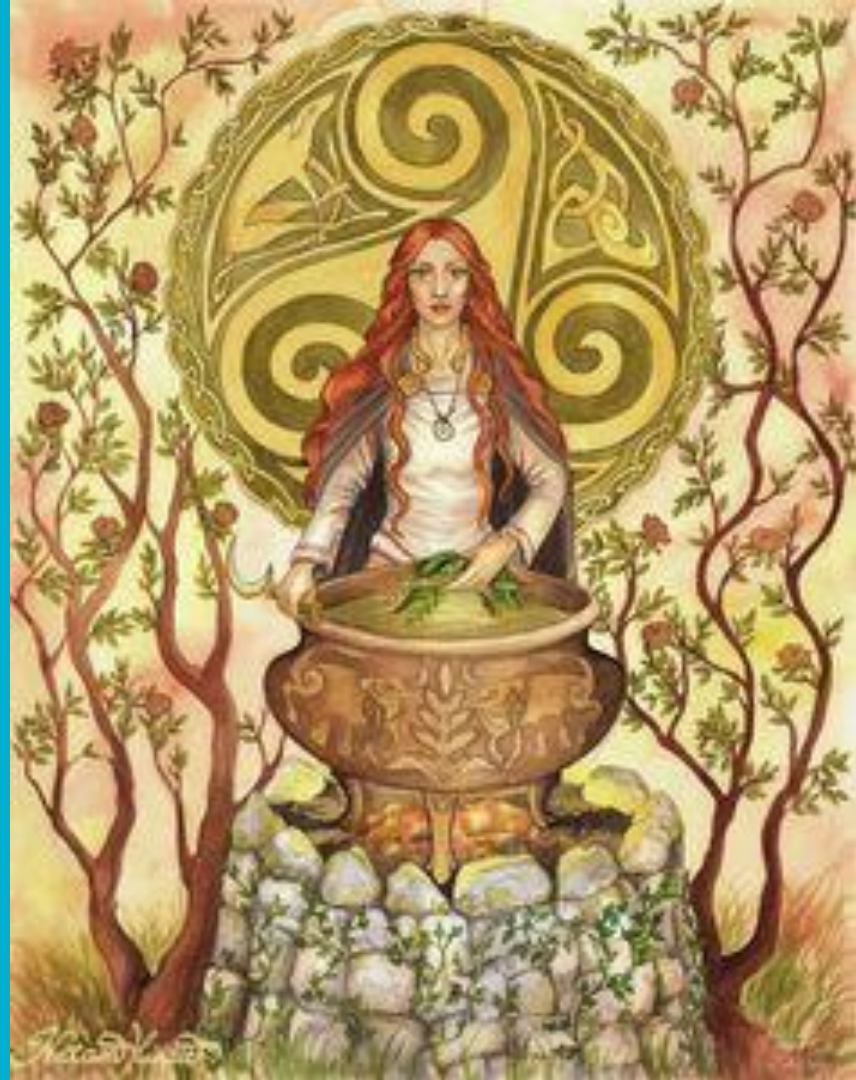
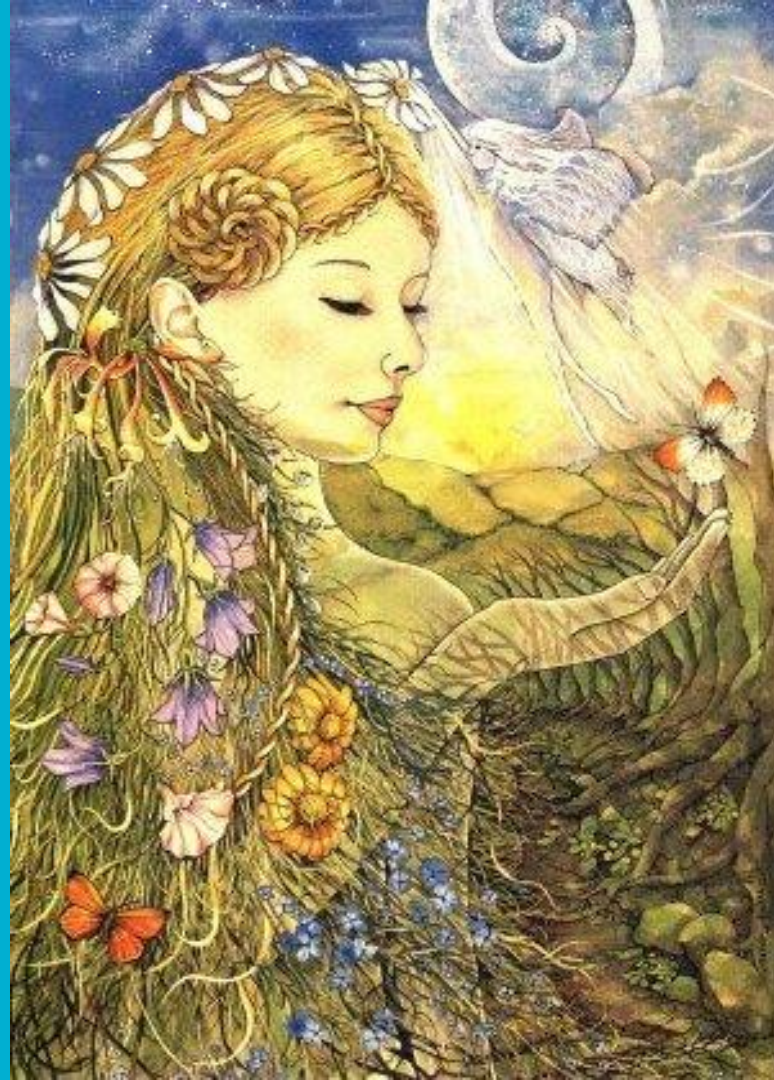
THE ANCIENT CELTS DID NOT WORSHIP THEIR GODS. THEY DID NOT GO TO CHURCH. INSTEAD, THEY LEFT LITTLE OFFERINGS ALL OVER THE PLACE.



DAGDA WAS THE FATHER GOD OF THE CELTS. THEY CALLED HIM THE 'GOOD GOD' BECAUSE HE PROTECTED THEIR CROPS. HE HAD A CAULDRON CALLED THE UNDRY WHICH SUPPLIED UNLIMITED FOOD AND A LIVING OAK HARP CALLED UAITHNE WHICH CAUSED THE SEASONS TO CHANGE IN THEIR ORDER.



THE MORRIGAN THE MORRIGAN WAS THE GODDESS OF WAR, LIFE AND DEATH. SHE THEREFORE HAD A HABIT OF APPEARING TO THE GREAT HEROES WHEN THEIR LIFE WAS IN DANGER. CÚ CHULAINN HIMSELF ENCOUNTERED THE MORRIGAN IN A VARIETY OF FORMS. HER MOST WELL-RECOGNISED FORM WAS THAT OF A BLACK CROW.









THE NOBLES, OR THE WARRIOR CLASS, INCLUDED THE WARRIORS AND LANDOWNERS. THIS WAS THE HIGHEST CLASS AND WAS HEADED BY A KING, QUEEN OR A CHIEFTAIN. THE NOBLES WERE THE LANDOWNERS AND OWNED MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF THE LAND, HERDS, AND WEALTH OF THE TRIBE OR CLAN. WHEN THE NOBLES WERE NOT AT WAR THEY SPENT THEIR TIME DOING BUSINESS, PLAYING BOARD GAMES, WATCHING YOUTHS PLAYING FIELD GAMES, TAKING PART IN CONTEST OF SKILL AND STRENGTH, HUNTING AND FEAST

IN CELTIC SOCIETY, WOMEN WERE A LOT BETTER OFF THAN IN MOST SOCIETIES OF THAT TIME. WOMEN COULD GO INTO ANY PROFESSION, CHOOSE THEIR OWN HUSBAND, AND OWN THEIR OWN PROPERTY. WOMEN TRAINED HEROES, WENT INTO BATTLE AND SOME EVEN LED ARMIES. THE WAY WOMEN WERE TREATED REFLECTED THE EARLY CELTS' RESPECT FOR THE LAND AND THE ARTS OF MAGIC AND CREATIVITY WHICH THEY ASSOCIATED WITH WOMEN.

