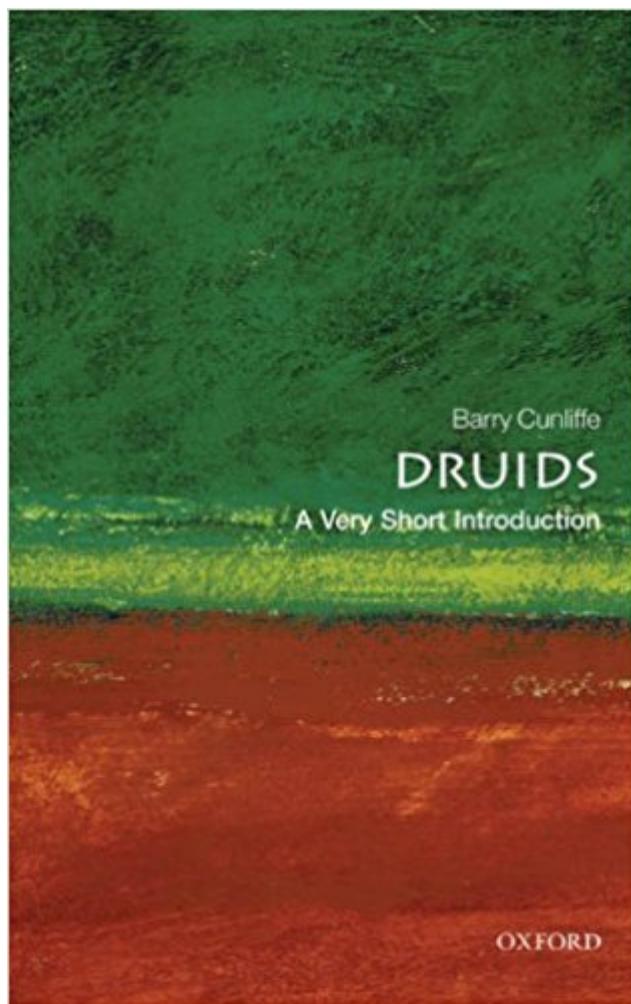


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Druids: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)



Synopsis

Who were the Druids? What do we know about them? Do they still exist today? The Druids first came into focus in Western Europe - Gaul, Britain, and Ireland - in the second century BC. They are a popular subject; they have been known and discussed for over 2,000 years and few figures flit so elusively through history. They are enigmatic and puzzling, partly because of the lack of knowledge about them has resulted in a wide spectrum of interpretations. Barry Cunliffe takes the reader through the evidence relating to the Druids, trying to decide what can be said and what can't be said about them. He examines why the nature of the druid caste changed quite dramatically over time, and how successive generations have interpreted the phenomenon in very different ways.

ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book is short out of necessity as so little is known about the Druids. The author repeatedly mentions that there are really only 3 actual accounts that may accurately describe the Druidic practices through the blinders of their own bias. The rest of the sources cited are rehashings or complete fantasy. The book is actually a description of what practicing Druids were not - anything seen or described in the media. After reading 3 of Francis Pryor's books, I wished to sample another approach to English pre-history. So little is known or authenticated that the book is a trying exercise in repetition. I suggested doing a Wiki search and saving yourself the expense.

Barry Cunliffe's *Druids* does a good job surveying the relatively sparse information on the Druids from literary and archaeological sources and how the understanding of who they were has been interpreted by different societies. Neodruuids and neopagans starting back in 1772 created societies under the influence of late 18th century "Romanticism" that relied upon overactive imaginations and was loosely connected with the past understandings of Druidism. A worthwhile read that is slow going sometimes, parsing the ambiguous archaeological evidence but satisfying to this reader because of the helpful analysis of what is actually known about Druids as "philosophers and theologians" and as present at sacrifices.

Druids are one of the most unknown groups in the world. Little is known about their traditions simply because it was a vocal tradition. It's a short, but very good introduction.

The more I read these books, the more I love them! Unbiased, totally didactic anthropologies. I'm buying as many as I can.

I had to read for class it was okay

This book was an enjoyable and illuminating look at a group that has been shrouded by the mists of time. Good information in an easy to swallow package.

all good

This book is answering the questions I've had about the Druids and is just what I was looking for. It's uncomplicated and easy reading.

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