

Galatia

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Word count: 909

Galatia was a region in central Asia Minor, occupied by Celtic-speaking peoples, which came under direct Roman rule when it was annexed by Augustus in 25 BCE. The later importance of Galatia was owed to its geographical position, which lay on all the routes across Asia Minor from the Bosphorus to Syria and to the eastern frontiers of the empire.

In origin Galatia was the territory of Celtic tribes, which had mounted an invasion of Greece in 279/8, culminating in a famous assault on Delphi, and crossed to Asia Minor in 278/7 BCE. Although they were represented by Greek sources as fearsome barbarian warriors, the Galatians moved into a political vacuum in northern Anatolia on the basis of an agreement with the Bithynian kingdom, and served as a buffer against Seleucid power. In the later third and second centuries the rise of the Attalids as a philhellene hellenistic kingdom owed much to their victories over the Galatians, which were commemorated by the monuments of defeated Gauls displayed at Pergamum. The Galatians formed a distinctive and successful state, based on Celtic tribal organization, but also furnished substantial mercenary forces to all the major hellenistic dynasties (Strobel 1996). They became important allies of Rome during the wars with Mithridates, and Galatian kings and tetrarchs took charge of regions, including Lycaonia, Phrygia, and parts of Pisidia, extending from the Taurus mountains north to the Black Sea. Strabo indicates that the original extent of the province of Galatia corresponded to the territory ruled by the last Galatian king, Amyntas (Strabo 12.5.1, 567).

The center of the Roman province was Ancyra, previously a local stronghold, which was gradually transformed into a major city. Its focal point was the temple of the Deified Augustus and Rome, which carried the bilingual text of Augustus' *Res Gestae* and still stands at the heart of modern Ankara. This famous document, written by Augustus in the last months of his life to memorialize his achievements and originally displayed on his mausoleum at Rome, survives only in three copies, all found in the province of Galatia. A list of the benefactions of imperial priests, carved on the temple under Augustus and Tiberius, demonstrates how members of the Galatian aristocracy assumed the role of provincial leaders and reinforced tribal loyalty to Rome. Under the Julio-Claudian emperors, several other important regions of northern and eastern Anatolia, many of which had been controlled by Galatian chieftains, were added to the province: Paphlagonia, Pontus Galaticus, the territory of Comana Pontica, and Pontus Polemonianus. Many provincials were recruited into the Roman legions, especially *Legio VII Macedonica* (later *Claudia*), *XXII Deiotariana*, and *III Cyrenaica*.

The most important settlements in southern Galatia were the colonies of Roman veterans, founded by Augustus in Pisidia and the adjoining regions of the western Taurus. The largest of these was Pisidian Antioch, which became one of the major cities of Asia Minor (Levick 1967). The first Roman road of the province was the *Via Sebaste*, constructed in 6 BCE, which linked Antioch and the other colonies to the south coast of Asia Minor in Pamphylia. Northern Galatia, around Ancyra, was

fully integrated geographically with the rest of Asia Minor only by roads built in the Flavian period after CE 78. At this time and until the beginning of Trajan's Parthian War, Galatia was joined in a single administrative unit with Cappadocia, under the control of senior consular governors, who commanded legionary forces stationed along the upper Euphrates. After CE 113, Galatia was separated from Cappadocia and was governed by governors of ex-praetorian status (Sherk 1951, 1980).

The Galatian aristocracy, which proclaimed its descent from earlier, independent rulers and possessed huge rural landholdings, evolved into a civic society in the second century CE. Agriculture and stockholding were the prime sources of wealth, but leading men from colonial and indigenous backgrounds became members of the Roman governing class (Mitchell 1993: I, c. 10). The prime example is C. Julius Severus, who used his wealth to provide for Trajan's forces when they passed through Ancyra in CE 113. He reaped the reward of being adlected into the Senate by Hadrian, for whom he took prominent military and government roles.

During the Roman campaigns against the Parthians of CE 161–5, Ancyra became increasingly important as a military center through which troops were deployed to the eastern frontier, and it continued this role through the Severan period. In the mid-third century provincial cities suffered from the raids of Goths in the north, and the Sassanian attacks of Shapur I in the south, and fell briefly under the control of the breakaway regime in Palmyra. Many provincial cities were fortified during this period, but also formed vital reservoirs of troops, supplies, and logistic support for Roman campaigns in the east (Nollé 1995).

In late antiquity Ancyra was the major center of Roman power between Constantinople and Syrian Antioch. This status is reflected in the prominence of its bishops, Marcellus and Basil, in the major church controversies of the fourth century (Foss 1977). Moreover, both the capital and the rural districts of the province were strongholds of heretical Christian sects, especially the Montanists. The emperor Julian, however, also found significant pagan supporters in the province and issued his famous edict banning Christian teachers while passing through Ancyra in CE 362. An extraordinary source, the *Life of Theodore of Sykeon*, illuminates conditions of life and religious belief in the northwest of the province in the sixth and seventh centuries.

SEE ALSO: Cappadocia; Paul/Pauline epistles; *Res Gestae*

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