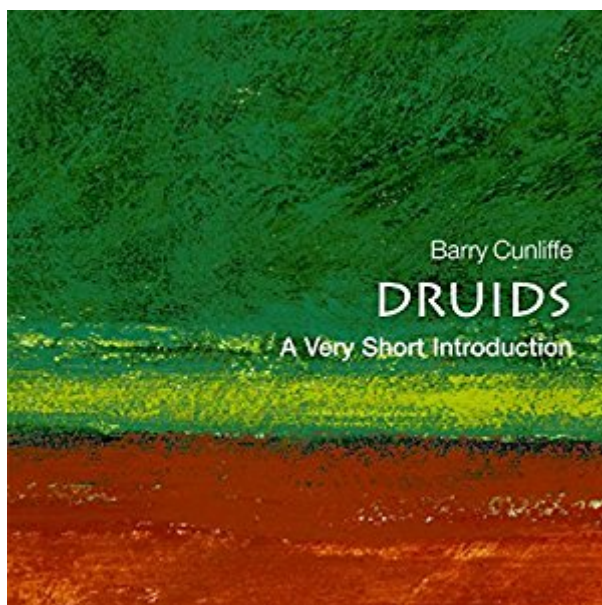


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Druids: A Very Short Introduction



Synopsis

The Druids have been known and discussed for at least 2,400 years, first by Greek writers and later by the Romans, who came in contact with them in Gaul and Britain. According to these sources, they were a learned caste who officiated in religious ceremonies, taught the ancient wisdoms, and were revered as philosophers. But few figures flit so elusively through history, and the Druids remain enigmatic and puzzling to this day. In this Very Short Introduction, one of the leading authorities on British archaeology, Barry Cunliffe, takes the listener on a fast-paced look at the ever-fascinating story of the Druids, as seen in the context of the times and places in which they practiced. Sifting through the evidence, Cunliffe offers an expert's best guess as to what can be said and what can't be said about the Druids, discussing the origins of the Druids and the evidence for their beliefs and practices, why the nature of the druid caste changed quite dramatically over time, and how successive generations have seen them in very different ways.

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. Neodruids 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 a 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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