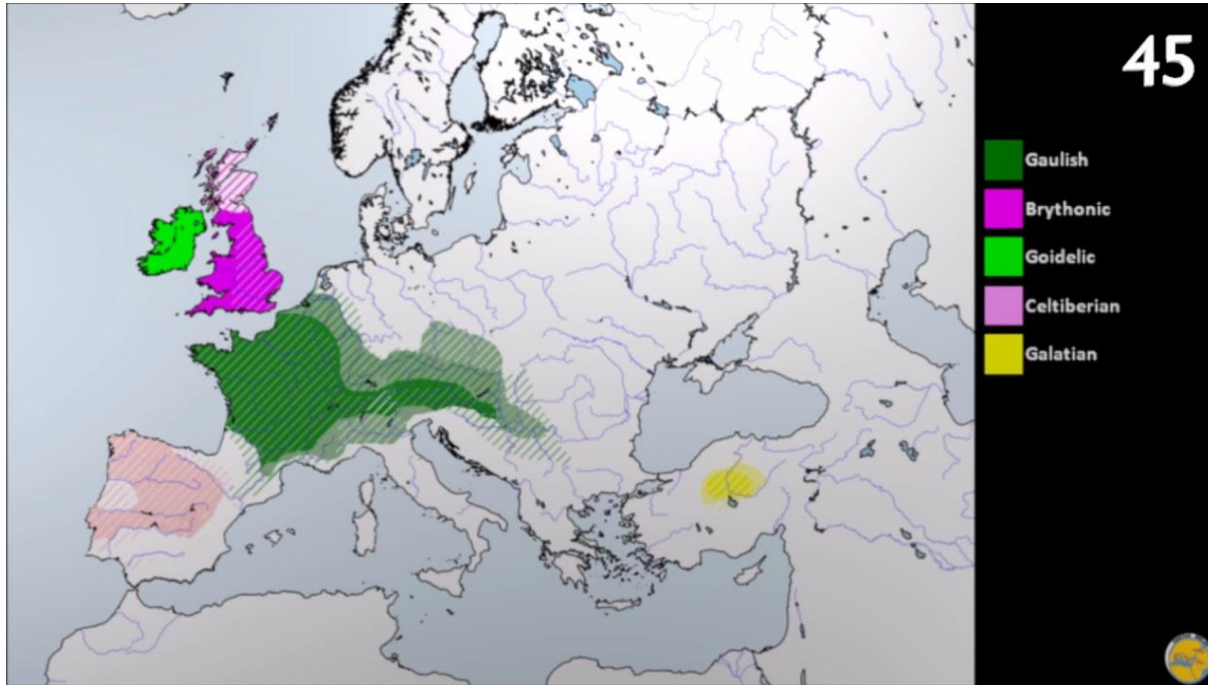# The Gaulish Language

Gaulish was a Celtic Language spoken around the continental area of Europe.

The first sign of the language date to about 100 BC and the language fade after the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th Century.
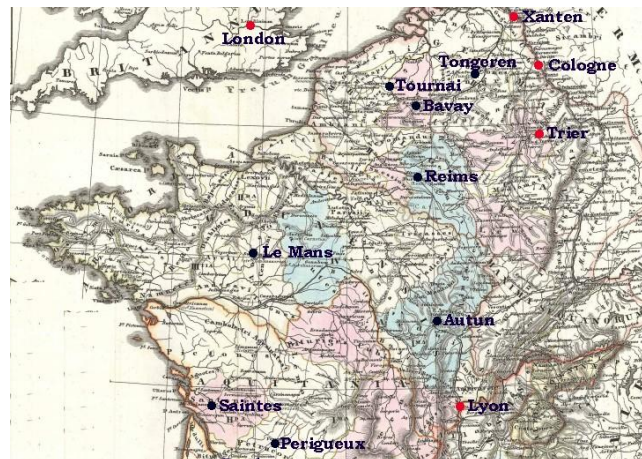
Due to the vast geographic area of the Gaulish language, several alphabets were used for orthography.

The Lepontic alphabet was used in Cisalpine Gaul, which was the area of northern Italy

The Eastern Greek alphabet was used in southern Gallia Narbonensis, which was the southern area of France

The Latin alphabet was used in the Roman Gaul, which was the central and northern areas of France.

The Lepontic Alphabet

The lepontic Alphabet consists of the following:

AEIKLMNOPRSTΘUVXZ.

The alphabet does not distinguish voicing in stops, so P represents /b/ or /p/, T represents /d/ or /t/, and K represents /g/ or /k/.

F/Ⅎ	Ɛ/Ǝ	I	K/⋊	J	M/ᛗ	И/Ɲ	O/Ꝏ	↑
A	E	I	K	L	M	N	O	P
[a]	[e]	[i]	[k/g]	[l]	[m]	[n]	[o]	[b/p]

D/◁	Ꙅ/ꙅ	⋈	X/T	⊙/⊗	V/Y	ⅎ	X/Ⅴ	Ꙅ/ǂ
R	S	Ś	T	Θ	U	V	X	Z
[r]	[s]		[t/d]	[t]	[u]	[w]	[g]	[ts]

The Eastern Greek Alphabet

The Eastern Greek alphabet Consists of the following:

αβγδεζηθικλμνξοπρστυχω

ΑΒΓΔΕΖΗΘΙΚΛΜΝΞΟΠΡСΤΥΧΩ

Used similarly to the modern greek alphabet, with a few changes.

Θ was used for /ts/, ou for /u/ and /w/, η was used for /e/ and /ē/, while ω was used for /o/ and /ō/.

In the Eastern Greek alphabet, a sigma was denoted by C, c instead of Σ, σ.

The Latin Alphabet

The Latin alphabet consists of the following:

abcdðefghiklmnopqrstvxz

ABCDÐEFGHIKLMNOPQRSTVXZ

There were a few changes in the phonology from the Latin alphabet that we all know.

G and K were used interchangeably, Ð/ð was used for /ts/ and /dz/, Q was both used as the latin /kʷ/ and -cu-.

Due to the original vast spread of the Celtic language group, there are a set of sound changes that set Gaulish apart from the rest of the Celtic group phonologically.

Sound Change Rules

The Celtic labiovelar kʷ became p. Celtic words such as *maqos "son" formed into mapos in Gaulish.

The Proto-Celtic labiovelar gʷ became w instead of b. Proto-Celtic words such as gʷediūmi became wediiumi in Gaulish.

Word deriving from the PIE ds or dz became ts(ð). *neds-samo became neððamon.

The only large vowel sound change is eu and ou to ō, as well as ei and ē to ī.

Phonology Exercise

Using the sound change laws, show how the Proto-Celtic words would result in Gaulish.

- *ekʷos
- *teutā
- *treis
- *gʷātis
- *brāteis

Due to the sound change rules, the following was the phonological inventory of Gaulish consonants:

	Bilabial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Nasals	m	n		
Stops	p b	t d		k g
Affricates		ts		
Fricatives		s		x
Glide			j	w
Liquid		r l		

Since Gaulish was spoken around the area of the development of Italic, Latin had some lonewords from Gaulish, eventually entering into the English language.

English	Old French	Latin	Gaulish
ambassador	embassadeur	ambactus	ambactos
beak	bec	beccus	beccos
bulge	boulge	bulga	bulgā
car	carre	carrus	karros
cream	cresme	cramum	krāmum
change	changier	cambiare	kemb-
dune	dune	-	dunum