



Smithsonian Associates

Roman Gaul

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Monday, December 2, 2024 - 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. ET

Further Reading

- James C. Anderson, Jr. 2013. Roman Architecture in Provence. Cambridge.
- James Bromwich. 1996. The Roman Remains of Southern France: A Guidebook. Rutledge.
- Henry Cleere. 2001. Southern France: An Oxford Archaeological Guide. Oxford.
- Christopher Gregg. 2000. "The Imperial Cult at Lugdunum: Augustan Policy and Celtic Tradition." *Archaeological News* 23, 1998/2000: 45-55.

Historical Context

- 122 BCE
 - Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus and Quintus Fabius Maximus Allobrogicus defeat the Allobroges and Arverni tribes in Gaul
 - Construction of the Via Domitia
- 121 BCE
 - Territory of southern Gaul is annexed as a Roman province (hence, "Provence")
- 118 BCE
 - Foundation of Colonia Narbo Martius (Narbonne): future capital of the province Gallia Narbonensis
- 58-50 BCE
 - Gallic Wars of Gaius Julius Caesar (assassinated March 15, 44 BCE)
- 27-10 BCE
 - Consolidation of Gaul under Augustus, First Roman Emperor (ruled 27 BCE-14 CE)

Other Roman Emperors active in Gaul:

- Tiberius, emperor 14-37 CE
- Hadrian, emperor 117-138 CE
- Septimius Severus, emperor 193-211 CE

Dates:

- BCE = BC
- CE = AD

The whole race which is now called both "Gallic" and "Galatic" is war-mad, and both high-spirited and quick for battle, although otherwise simple and not ill-mannered. And therefore, if roused, they come together all at once for the struggle, both openly and without circumspection, so that for those who wish to defeat them by stratagem they become easy to deal with (in fact, irritate them when, where, or by what chance pretext you please, and you have them ready to risk their lives, with nothing to help them in the struggle but might and daring); whereas, if coaxed, they so easily yield to considerations of utility that they lay hold, not only of training in general, but of language-studies as well.

Strabo, *Geography* 4.4.2

Terms

- **Gaul:** the territory of Western Europe roughly equivalent to modern France.
- **Gallic:** the term applied to the peoples and cultures of Gaul, used to define a specific portion of the Celtic population of Western Europe.
- **Gallo-Roman:** term applied to objects and styles demonstrating a fusion of Roman and Gallic cultural elements.
- **Votive:** an offering made to deities in return for a favor or as a thank offering for a perceived divine benefit already received.
- **Nautes:** "boat men" who plied the rivers of Gaul and contributed substantially to the economic success of the territory. In some areas, they may have formed "guilds" (collegia) to project social and economic power within their community.
- **Circus (Roman):** both the venue and the activity of chariot racing.
 - **Spina:** the central barrier of the chariot racing arena
 - **Eggs & Dolphins:** lap counters
 - **Factions:** four racing teams in the circus, designated Blue, Green, Red and White
- **Theater**
 - **Cavea:** the seating area
 - **Orchestra:** the semicircular area between the stage and cavea; used as seating for elites and special guests using portable benches or chairs
 - **Scaena frons:** the stage and backdrop

- **Regia:** the central doorway in the backdrop, often used to represent a palace or temple
- **Amphitheater:** elliptical structure designed specifically for the presentation of public spectacles, including gladiatorial games and wild beast hunts.
- **Imperial cult:** the institutional worship of deceased, divinized emperors (and sometimes their family members) alongside the Genius (protective spirit) of the living Emperor and Roma (goddess-personification of Rome).

Map:



Source: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Gaul-ancient-region-Europe>