



Invaders and Settlers: Romans



Learning Objective:

To find out who was in Britain when the Romans invaded and learn about their way of life.

Today we are going to explore what Britain was like just before the Romans invaded.

Do you know **who** lived in Britain before the Romans invaded?



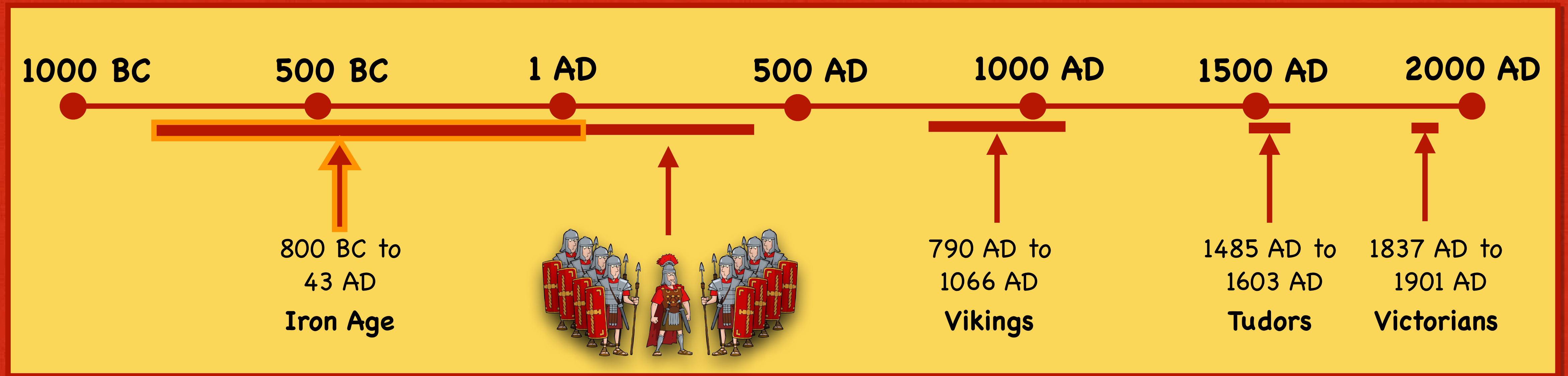
What do you think **daily life** was like in Britain before the Romans invaded?

Think, pair, then share your ideas.

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Before the Romans invaded, Britain was home to a group of people who we now call the **Celts**. However, they were not known as Celts at this time. The Romans called them **Britons**.



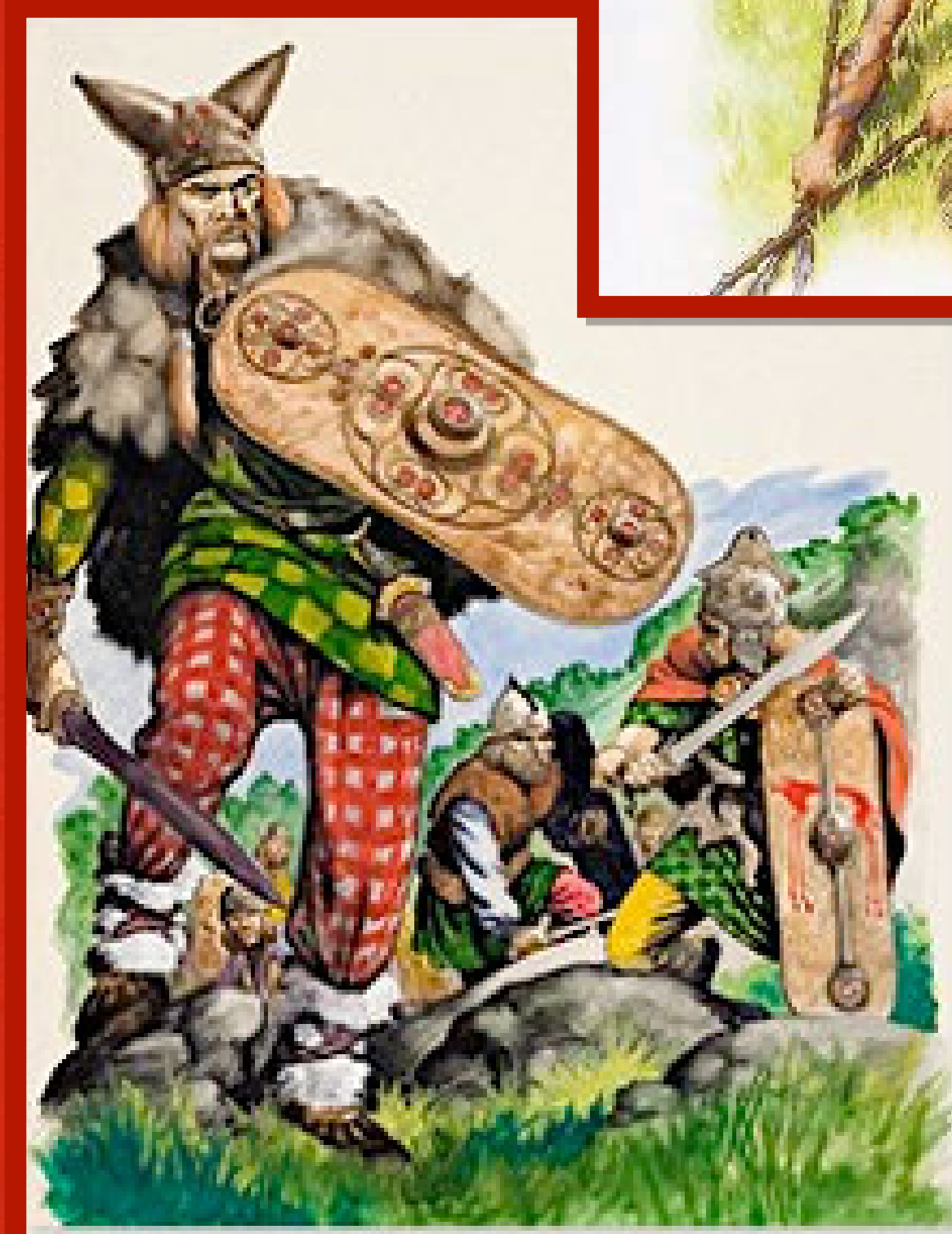
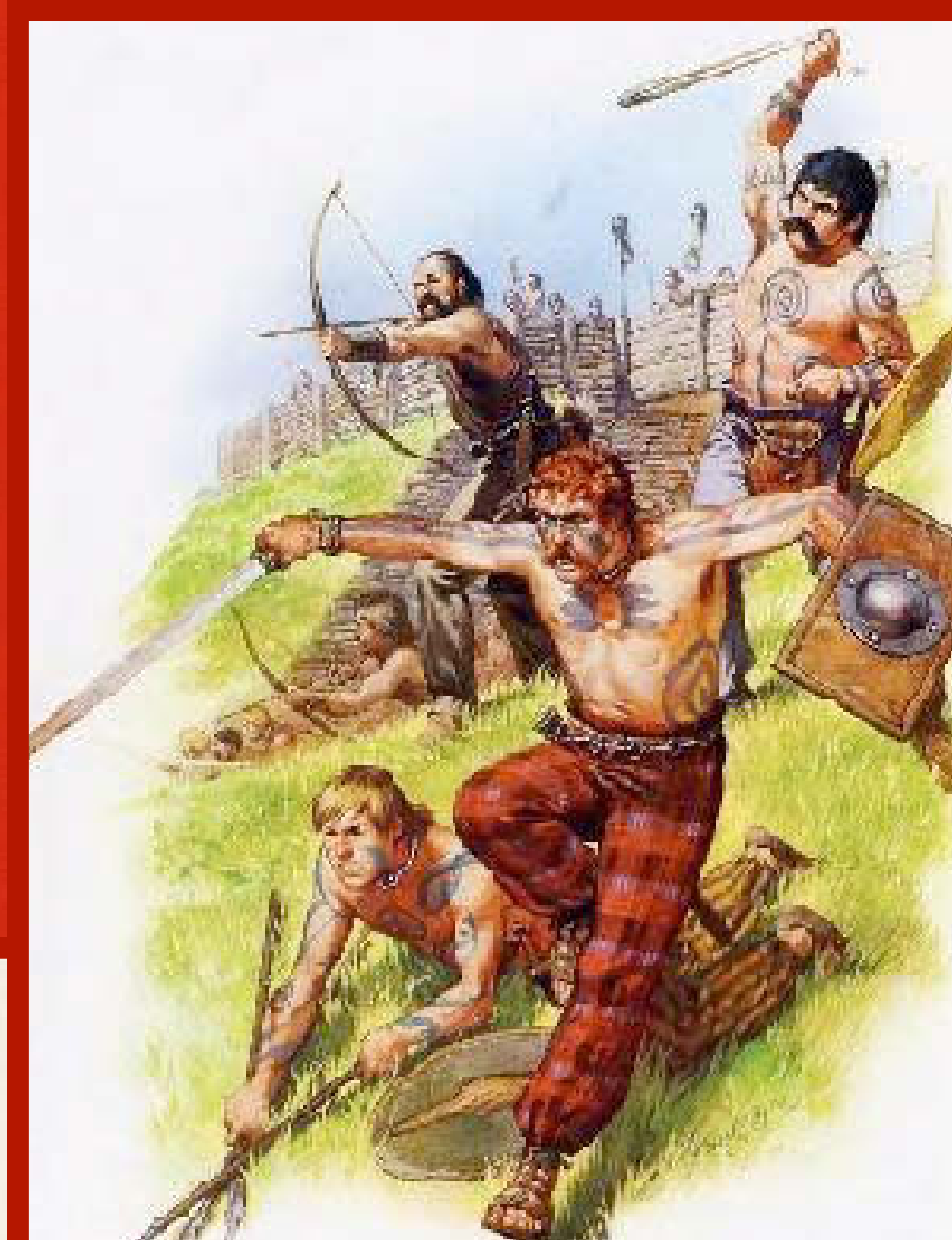
During the Iron Age, between 750 BC and 12 BC, the Celts were one of the most powerful groups of people in Europe, with some of them living in other countries like France, Switzerland and Belgium.

Here is an artist's impression of what the Celts living in Britain might have looked like at the time.



What do you think the Celts were like, based on these pictures?

What words would you use to describe them?



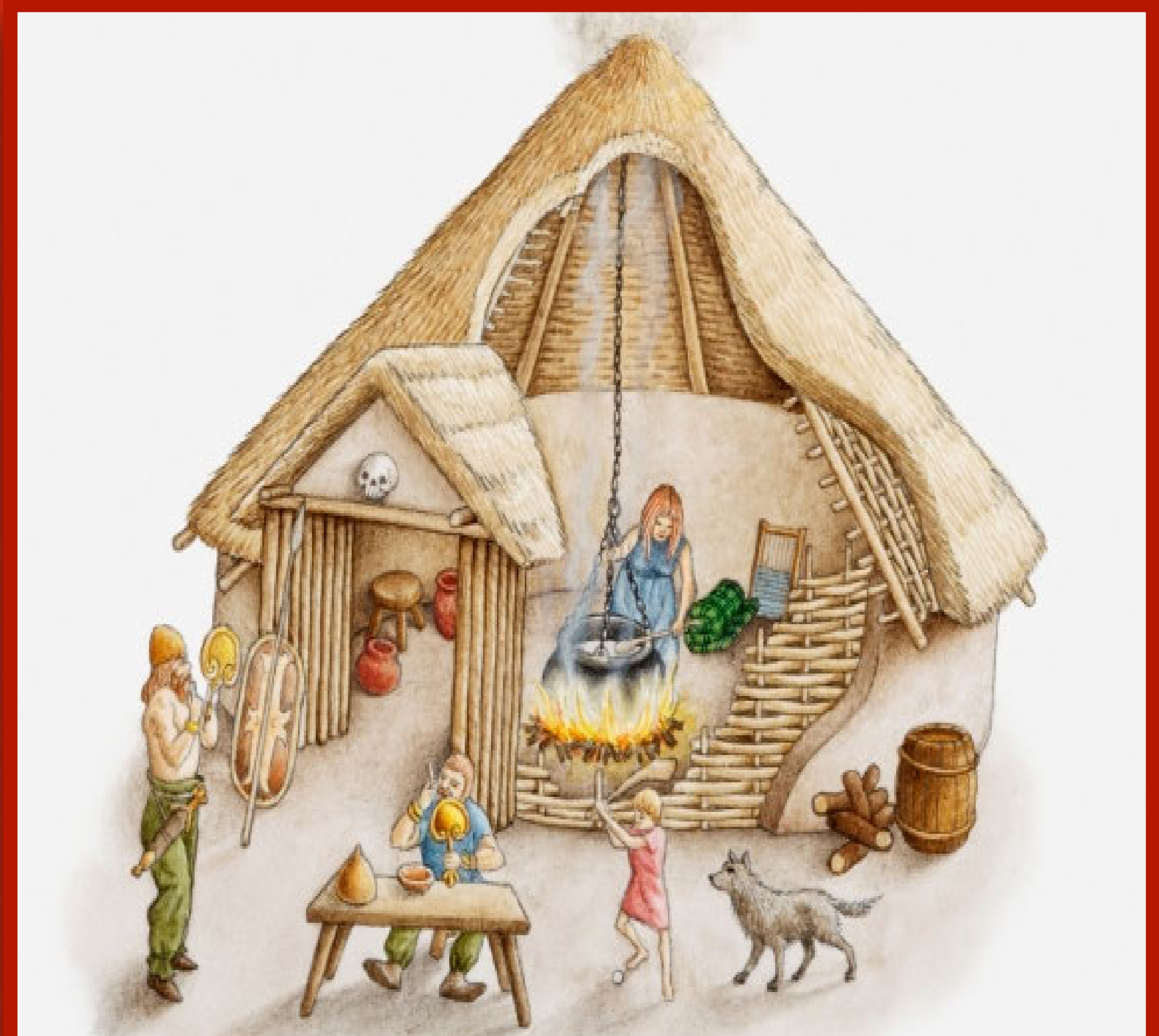
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The Celts lived in lots of different groups which they called **tribes**.

They lived in small, round houses made from **wattle and daub** (branches woven together and coated with mud, clay and straw), with a thatched roof made from straw or heather. Several of these round houses were built together as a small village, with a fence around them to keep out intruders and wild animals. The Celts did not have any large towns or cities.



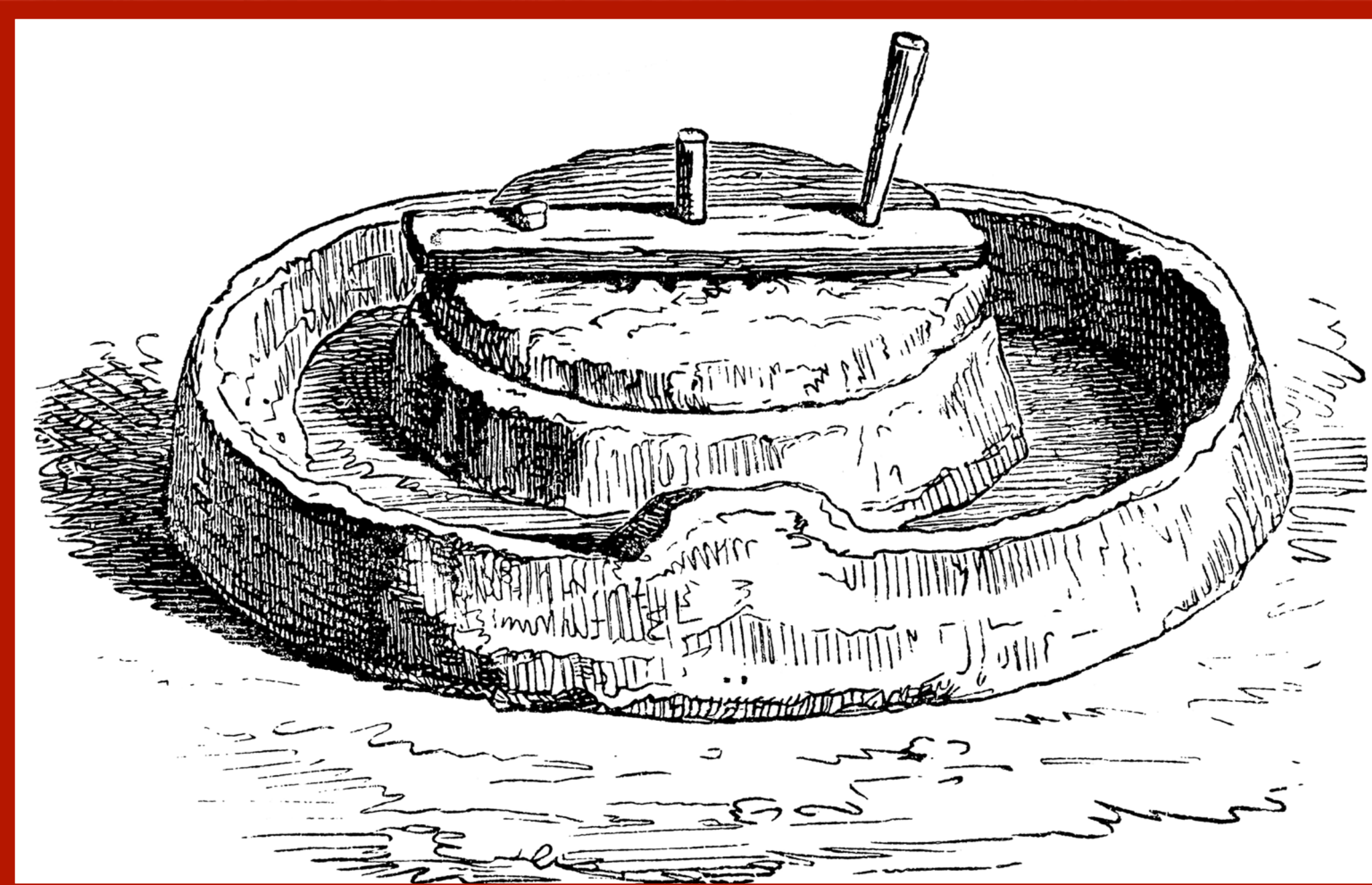
Can you see the skull above the door? Celts thought the head was very important, and the skulls of the dead were respected and even worshipped.

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Most Celts were **farmers**. They grew vegetables such as leeks, onions, turnips, parsnips and carrots, and grains to make into bread and porridge. They gathered berries and nuts, and hunted wild animals such as deer, boar, foxes and bears. They kept domesticated animals such as goats, sheep and pigs, using them for meat, milk and wool.



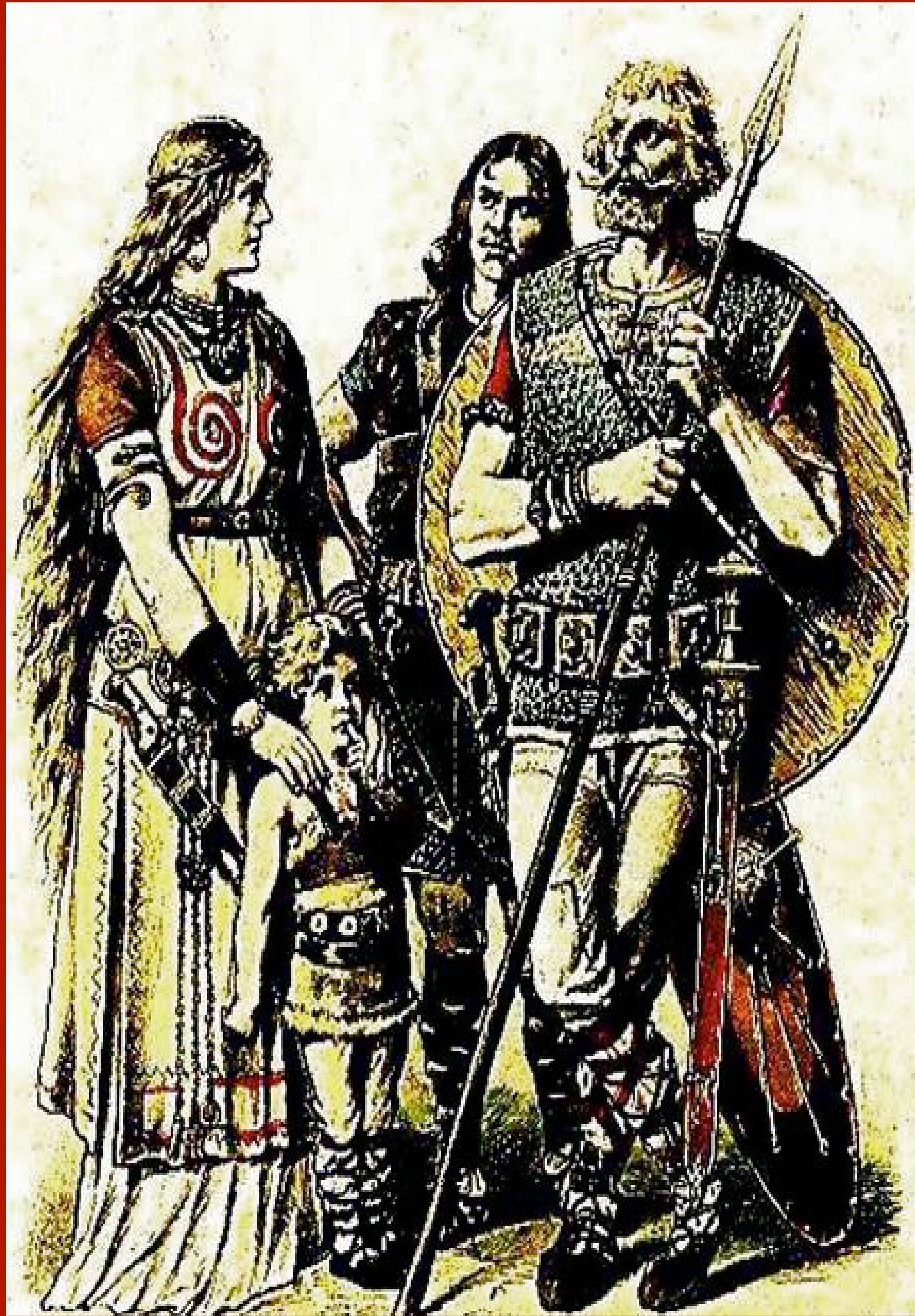
This is a quern stone used for grinding grains to make flour for bread.

What do you think of the Celtic diet?
Would you have been happy to eat their food?



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A Celt's clothes showed their status and importance within the tribe. They made their clothes on a loom using wool, colouring the cloth they made with **natural dyes** from plants and berries.

Men wore a long **tunic** over trousers, with a belt and a cloak. Women wore long skirts or dresses and shawls. Shoes were made from leather.

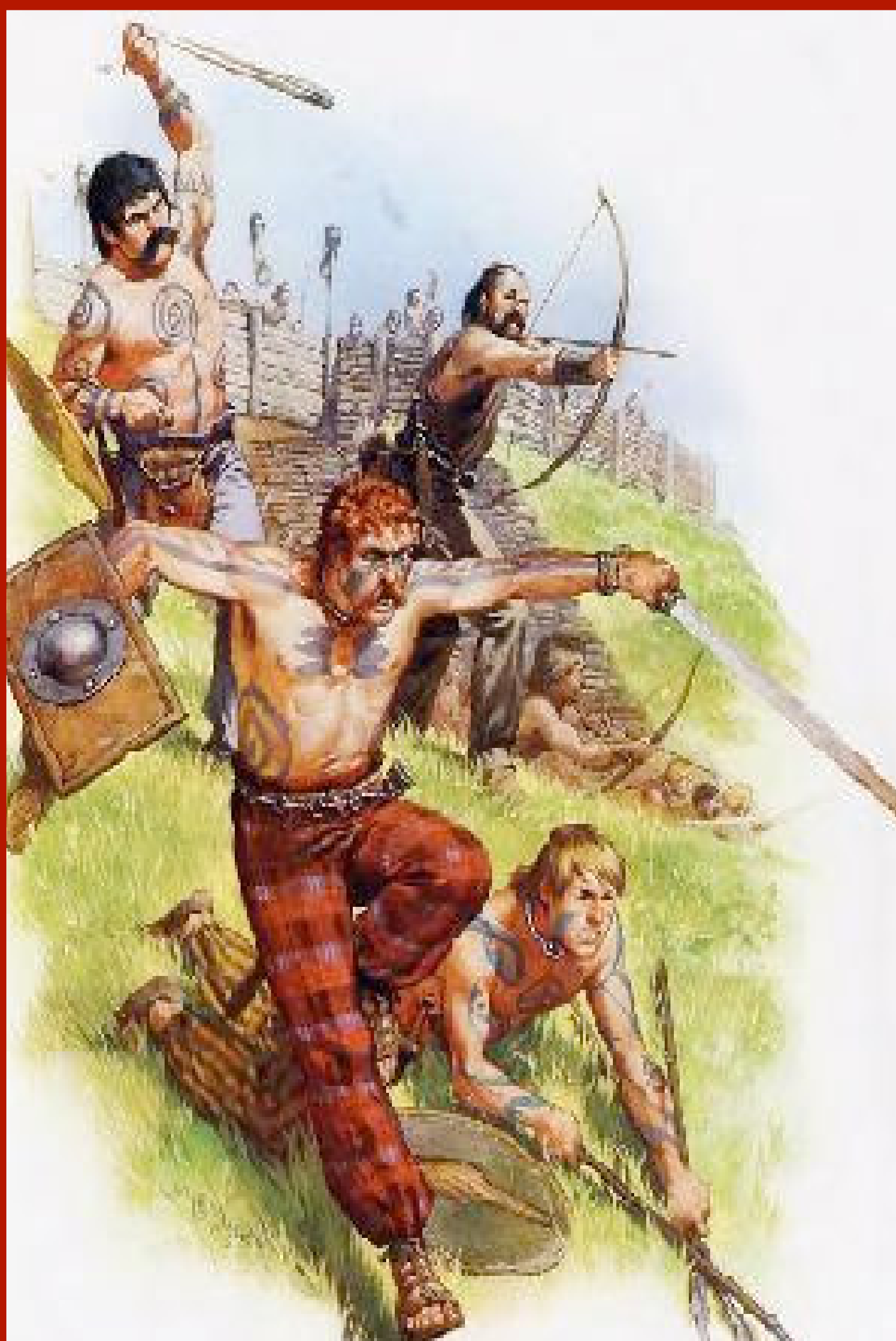
An important member of the tribe would wear a piece of jewellery called a **torc**, which was a neck ring made from twisted metal, and decorated with patterns.

This is how Diodorus Siculus, a Roman historian, described the appearance of the Celts:

"They are very tall in stature, with rippling muscles under clear white skin. Their hair is blond, but not naturally so: they bleach it, washing it in lime and combing it back from their foreheads. They look like wood-demons, their hair thick and shaggy like a horse's mane. Some of them are clean-shaven, but others - especially those of high rank - shave their cheeks but leave a moustache that covers the whole mouth."



"The way they dress is astonishing: they wear brightly coloured and embroidered shirts, with trousers called bracae and cloaks fastened at the shoulder with a brooch, heavy in winter, light in summer. These cloaks are striped or checkered in design, with the separate checks close together and in various colours."



The Celts were also fierce **warriors**, and the different tribes were often at war with one other. This was one of the reasons why the Romans were able to conquer Britain: the Celts fought so much amongst themselves that they were unable to work together against the Romans.

How might history be different if the Celtic tribes had not fought with each other so much?



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Now it's your turn to find out more about the daily life of the Celts before the Romans invaded.



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Plenary:



What do you think Britain might be like today if the Romans had **not** been successful at invading the country?

Think, pair, then share your ideas.

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