

- ¹⁴ Adiega matir Aias, ¹⁵ Potita dona Prim[i] (*duxir*)¹⁶ Abesias.
Adiega mother Aia Potita ? wife Primus daughter Abesa

TENTATIVE TRANSLATION

Herein—:

- a magical incantation of women,
 - their special infernal names,
 - the magical incantation of a seeress who fashions this prophecy.
- The goddess Adsagsona maintains Severa daughter of Tertiu in two cult offices, (as) their scribe(?) and offering maker.

Below, where they shall be impressed, the prophetic curse of these names of theirs is a magical incantation of a group of practitioners of underworld magic: Banona daughter of Flatucia, Paulla wife of Potitos, Aia daughter of Adiega, Potitos father of Paulla, Severa daughter of Valens [and] wife of Paullos(?), Adiega mother of Aia, Potita wife of Primos daughter of Abesa.

The Classical Authors on the Ancient Celts²

§§3-16. Pre-Posidonian³ Authors

TRANS. PHILIP FREEMAN

§3. Hecataeus of Miletus [late 6th century BC; s.v. Stephan of Byzantium]

¶ Fragment 54.

NARBON: trading centre and city of the Celts ... Hecataeus calls them Narbaioi.
¶ Fragment 55. Massalia: a city of Ligurians near Celica, a colony of Phocaeans. [According to] Hecataeus in his *Europa*.

¶ Fragment 56. Nyxax: a Celtic city. [According to] Hecataeus in his *Europa*.

§4. Herodotus *History* 2.33 [5th century BC].

THE NILE flows out of Libya, cutting through the middle of that country. And as I reason, calculating unknown things from known, it begins at the same distance as the Ister [Danube]. For the Ister, beginning in the land of the Celts and the city of Pyrene,⁴ flows through the middle of Europe. The Celts live beyond the Pillars of Hercules [Straits of Gibraltar] and border on the Cynetes, who are the westernmost inhabitants of Europe. The Ister then flows through all of Europe and empties into the Euxine [Black Sea] at Isthria, which colonists from Miletus inhabit.

² What is perhaps the earliest reference to Celtic-speaking peoples is the reference to the inhabitants of Britain and Ireland in the *Ora Maritima* of Avienus (§30 below).

³ Posidonius was a Greek writer, Stoic philosopher, and historian of the earlier 1st century BC, whose firsthand description of Gaul has not survived directly, but was an important source for the surviving accounts of Diodorus (§18), Athenaeus (§17), Strabo (§19), and, to a disputed extent, Caesar (§20). He proved so influential for subsequent Greek and Roman writings on the Celts that his career provides a convenient milestone according to which we may subdivide the classical accounts of the Celts that preceded him from those which follow. See further, J. J. Tierney, 'The Celtic Ethnography of Posidonius', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* lx, Section C, No. 5 (1960) 189-275.

⁴ Pyrene. The location is unknown, but the name may be connected with that of the Pyrenees Mts. of present-day Spain and France, in which case Herodotus has mislocated the source of the Danube.

§5 Plato *Laws* 1.637d-e [4th century BC].

I AM NOT discussing the drinking of wine nor drinking in general, but outright drunkenness, and whether we ought to follow the custom of the Scythians and Persians, and also the Carthaginians, Celts, Iberians, and Thracians, all very warlike peoples, or be like you Spartans, who, as you claim, abstain totally from drink.

§6. Aristotle [4th century BC]. ¶ *Politics* 2.6.6

THE INEVITABLE result is that in such a state wealth is esteemed too highly, especially if the men are dominated by women as it is with most military and warlike cultures, except the Celts and certain other groups who openly approve of sexual relations between men.

¶ *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.7.6-7 On account of honour the virtuous man stands his ground and performs brave deeds. But the one who is fearless with excessive bravery, who fears nothing at all, not even earthquakes or waves (as they say of the Celts), has no name, unless we call him mad or insensible.

¶ *Eudemian Ethics* 3.1.25 Therefore no one is brave if he endures formidable events on account of ignorance, such as a madman who taunts thunderbolts, or if someone knows the dangers involved but is carried away by reckless passion, as the Celts who take up arms against the waves. The bravery of barbarians in general is based in passion.

§7. Ephorus [4th century BC; s.v. Strabo *Geography* 4.4.6].

EPHORUS, IN HIS ACCOUNT, says that Celtica is so large that it includes most of Iberia, as far as Gades [mod. Cadiz, near Gibraltar]. He also reports that the Celts are great admirers of the Greeks and says many things about them that are not true for current times. For example, they are very careful to avoid becoming fat or potbellied, and if any young man's belly sticks over his belt he is punished.

§8. Theopompus [4th century BC; s.v. Athenæus *Deipnosophistae* 10. 443b-c].

THE CELTS, knowing this weakness when making war on them [the Illyrians], announced to all the soldiers that a wonderful banquet had been prepared for them in their tents. They put a certain medicinal herb in the food which attacked and purged their bowels. Then some were captured and slain by the Celts, while others, unable to stand the pain, threw themselves into the rivers.

§§9-10. The Celts of the Balkans and Alexander the Great

§9. Ptolemy I [4th century BC; s.v. Strabo 7.3.8]

PTOLEMY, THE SON OF LAGUS, says that during this campaign some Celts living near the Adriatic arrived seeking good will and friendship. Alexander received them warmly and while they were sharing a drink asked them what they feared the most, thinking they would say him. They answered that they feared nothing except that the sky might fall down on them, but that they honoured the friendship of a man like him more than anything. And the following are signs of the candour of the barbarians: . . . that the Celts said that they feared no one, and yet valued above all else the friendship of great men.

§10. Arrianus Flavius [2nd century AD] *Anabasis of Alexander* 1.4.6-5.2 [TRANS. J. T. KOCH]

AT THIS POINT AMBASSADORS came to Alexander from the other autonomous tribes from the region of the Ister [Danube] and from Syrmus, King of the Triballi; others from the Celts settled on the Ionian gulf [Adriatic]. The Celts were big in stature and haughty in their bearing; however, all of them expressed their wishes for Alexander's friendship. And he gave the fitting guarantees to everyone and received these likewise. He asked the Celts what living things they feared most, hoping that his own great renown had extended as far as the Celts and beyond, and that they would confess that they feared him more than anything. However, their answer was surprising to him. Since they lived in rugged country far from Alexander and judging that his invasion was aimed in another direction, they said that they feared most that the sky might fall upon them. [Alexander] proclaimed that they were his friends, agreed to a treaty, and sent them home, making the offhand remark, 'These Celts are such pretentious boasters!'

§11. Sopater [3rd century BC; s.v. Athenæus *Deipnosophistae* 15.160c].

AMONG THEM is the custom, whenever they win a victory in battle, to sacrifice their prisoners to the gods. So I, imitating the Celts, have vowed to the divine powers to burn as an offering Three of those false dialecticians.

§12. Phylarchus [3rd century BC; s.v. *Athenæus Deipnosophistae* 4.150d-f].

IN HIS THIRD BOOK PHYLARCHUS says that Ariannes, a Galatian of very great wealth, announced that he would give a year-long feast for all the Galatians, and this is how he accomplished it: He divided the country by marking out convenient distances on the roads. At these points he set up banqueting halls made out of poles, straw, and wicker-work, which each held four hundred men or more, depending on the size of nearby towns and communities. Inside he put huge cauldrons with every kind of meat. The cauldrons were made the year before the feast by artisans from other cities [tribes]. He then provided many oxen, pigs, sheep, and other kinds of animals every day, along with great jars of wine and an abundance of grain. And not only did the Galatians dwelling in nearby towns and villages enjoy the feast, but even strangers passing by were invited in by servants, who urged them to enjoy the good things provided.

§13. Anonymous poet *Greek Anthology* 9.125 [c. 200 BC].

THE BOLD CELTS test their children in the jealous Rhine
And no man regards himself as a true father
Until he sees the child washed in the holy river.

For immediately when the child has come from

The mother's womb and shed its first tears, the father picks

It up and places it on his own shield, not sympathizing,

For he does not feel for the child like a true father

Until he sees it judged in the river's bath.

And the mother, having new pains added to those

Of childbirth, even if she knows him to be the true father,

Awaits in fear what the inconstant river will judge.

§14. Polybius *History* [2nd century BC].⁵

¶ 2.28.3-10.

THE CELTS had stationed the Gaesatae ['Spearmen'] from the Alps to face Aemilius on the rear, and behind them were the Insubres. On their front they placed the Taurisci and the Cisalpine Boii to face the Romans. They placed their waggons and chariots on the edges of both wings, with the booty being on one of the hills near the road under guard. Thus the Celtic army was double-faced. Their way of arranging their forces was effective as well as designed to

⁵ The first three passages concern the Battle of Telamon, fought in Etruria (Northern Italy) in 225 BC.

inspire fear in their enemies. The Insubres and Boii were clothed in pants and light cloaks, but the Gaesatae from conceit and daring threw their clothing off, and went out to the front of the army naked, having nothing but their weapons. They believed that since the ground was covered with brambles which might catch their clothing and hinder the use of their weapons, they would be more effective this way. At first the fighting was only for possession of the hill, and the amount of cavalry from all three armies made it an impressive sight to everyone. In the middle of the battle the consul Gaius, fighting with great bravery, was killed, and his head was brought to the Celtic king.

¶ 29.5-9. But the Romans, while pleased to have trapped the enemy between two of their own armies, were greatly disturbed by the ornaments and battle noise of the Celts. For there were among them countless horns and trumpets which were being blown simultaneously from every part of the army. The sound was so loud and piercing that the clamour didn't seem to come from trumpets and human voices, but from the whole countryside all at once. Also terrifying was the appearance and rapid manoeuvring of the naked warriors in front, men at the prime of their strength and magnificence. And all the warriors in front were wearing torques and bracelets. All these sights terrified the Romans, but hope of victory encouraged them to try even harder in the battle.

¶ 31.1-2. Forty thousand of the Celts were killed, and about ten thousand were captured, including Concolitanus, one of their kings. The other king, Aneroetus, fled with a few followers and joined his people in a place of security. There he committed suicide along with his companions.

¶ 21.38.1-6. [2nd century BC]. By chance, one of the prisoners captured when the Romans defeated the Asian Galatae at Olympos was Chiomara, wife of Ortigon. The centurion in charge of her took advantage of his soldierly opportunity and raped her. He was indeed a slave to both lust and money, but eventually his love of money won out. With a large amount of gold being agreed on, he led her away to be ransomed. There was a river between the two camps, and the Galatae crossed it, paid the ransom, and received the woman. When this was accomplished, she ordered one of them with a nod to kill the Roman as he was making a polite and affectionate farewell. The man obeyed and cut off the centurion's head. She picked it up and rode off with it wrapped in the folds of her dress. When she reached her husband, she threw the head at his feet. He was astonished and said, 'Wife, faithfulness is a good thing.' 'Yes,' she said, 'but it is better that only one man alive would have lain with me.'

§15. Pseudo-Scymnus *Periplus* 183-87 [c. 100 BC].

THE CELTS follow the customs of the Greeks,
Being on very friendly terms towards Greece,

On account of the hospitality of those dwelling abroad.
With music they conduct public assemblies,
Using it for its soothing effects.

§16. Nicander of Colophon [2nd century BC; s.v. Tertullian
De Anima 57.10].

AND IT IS OFTEN ALLEGED because of nighttime dreams that the dead truly appear, for the Nasamones receive special oracles by staying at the tombs of their parents, as Heracles—or Nymphodorus or Herodotus—writes. The Celts also for the same reason spend the night near the tombs of their famous men, as Nicander affirms.

§§17–20. The Posidonius Tradition

§17. Athenæus [fl. c. AD 200] *Deipnosophistae*, TRANS. PHILIP FREEMAN

¶ 4.36

POSITONIUS, THE STOIC PHILOSOPHER [c. 135–c. 50 BC] collected the customs and manners of many peoples in his *Histories*, which he wrote according to the principles of his own philosophical convictions. He says that the Celts place dried grass on the ground when they eat their meals, using tables which are raised slightly off the ground. They eat only small amounts of bread, but large quantities of meat, either boiled, roasted, or cooked on spits. They dine on this meat in a clean but lion-like manner, holding up whole joints in both hands and biting the meat off the bone. If a piece of meat is too difficult to tear off, they cut it with a small knife which is conveniently at hand in its own sheath. Those who live near rivers, the Mediterranean, or Atlantic also eat fish baked with salt, vinegar, and cumin. They also use cumin in their wine. They do not use olive oil because of its scarcity and, due to its unfamiliarity, it has an unpleasant taste to them. When a number of them dine together, they

sit in a circle with the most powerful man in the center like a chorus leader, whether his power is due to martial skill, family nobility, or wealth. Beside him sit the remainder of the dinner guests in descending order of importance according to rank. Bodyguards with shields stand close by them while their spear-men sit across from them, feasting together with their leaders. The servers bring drinks in clay or silver vessels resembling spouted cups. The platters on which they serve the food often are of similar material, but others use bronze, wooden, or woven trays. The drink of choice among the wealthy is wine brought from Italy or the region of Massalia [the Greek colony at Marseilles]. It is normally drunk unmixed with water, although sometimes water is added. Most of the rest of the population drinks a plain, honeyed beer, which is called *corma*. They use a common cup, sipping only a little at a time, but sipping frequently. The servant carries the cup around from the right to the left. In the same direction they honour their gods, turning to the right.

¶ 4.37 Posidonius, describing the great wealth of Lovernius [‘Fox-like’], father of Bituitus who was deposed by the Romans, says that in order to gain the favour of the populace, he rode through the fields distributing gold and silver to the vast crowds of Celts which followed him. He also enclosed a square over two kilometers in length on each side, into which he put vast amounts of food and expensive drink. For many days the feast was served continuously to all who would enter. Finally when the celebration had come to an end, a Celtic poet arrived too late for the feast. He composed a song for Lovernius praising his greatness and lamenting his own tardy arrival. Lovernius was so pleased with this poem that he called for a bag of gold and tossed it to the poet as he ran beside his chariot. The bard picked up the bag and sang a new song, proclaiming that even his chariot-tracks gave gold and benefits to his people.

¶ 4.40 In the twenty-third book of his *Histories*, Posidonius says that the Celts sometimes engage in single combat during their feasts. Arming themselves, they engage in mock-fights and sparring sessions with each other. Sometimes, however, wounds are inflicted and these mock-battles lead to real killing unless the bystanders restrain the combatants. Posidonius also says that in ancient times, the best warriors received the thigh portion during feasts. If another man were to challenge his right to the choicest portion, a duel was fought to the death. Others in former days would collect silver, gold, or a number of wine jars. Having received gift-pledges and distributed gifts among friends and family, they would stretch themselves out across their shields on their backs and then someone standing near would cut their throats with a sword.

¶ 6.49 Posidonius, in the twenty-third book of his *Histories*, says that the Celts have with them, even in war, companions whom they call parasites [‘those who dine at another’s table’]. These poets recite their praises in large companies and crowds, and before each of the listeners according to rank. Their tales are recounted by those called Bards, poets who recite praises in song.

§18. Diodorus Siculus [wrote c. 60–c. 30 BC] 5.27–32, TRANS. PHILIP FREEMAN ¶ 27.

IN GENERAL, SILVER IS SCARCE throughout Gaul, but gold is abundant and freely given to the inhabitants by nature without the need for mining. This is because the rivers which flow through Gaul twist and turn, dashing against the sides of mountains in their course and breaking off large amounts of earth. Thus the rivers become full of gold-dust. This is collected by labourers who repeatedly pound and wash the material until it is pure and ready to be melted in a furnace. In this manner they accumulate a large amount of gold, men and women alike using it for decoration. On their wrists and arms they wear bracelets and on their necks thick bands of solid gold. They also wear rings on their fingers and even golden tunics. The Celts of the interior also have a peculiar custom concerning the sacred places of their gods. In temples and sanctuaries throughout the country, large amounts of gold are openly displayed as dedications to the gods. No one dares to touch these sacred depositions, even though the Celts are an especially covetous people.

¶ 28. The Gauls are very tall with white skin and blond hair, not only blond by nature but more so by the artificial means they use to lighten their hair. For they continually wash their hair in a lime solution, combing it back from the forehead to the back of the neck. This process makes them resemble Satyrs and Pans since this treatment makes the hair thick like a horse's mane. Some shave their beards while others allow a short growth, but nobles shave their cheeks and allow the moustache to grow until it covers the mouth. The result is that their moustaches become mixed with food while they eat, but serve as a sort of strainer when they drink. They do not sit in chairs when they dine, but sit on the ground using the skins of wolves or dogs. While dining they are served by adolescents, both male and female. Nearby are blazing hearths and cauldrons with spits of meat. They honour the brave warriors with the choicest portion, just as Homer says that the chieftains honoured Ajax when he returned having defeated Hector in single combat. They also invite strangers to their feasts, inquiring of their identity and business only after the meal. During feasts it is their custom to be provoked by idle comments into heated disputes, followed by challenges and single combat to the death. They do not fear death, but subscribe to the doctrine of Pythagoras that the human spirit is immortal and will enter a new body after a fixed number of years. For this reason some will cast letters to their relatives on funeral pyres, believing that the dead will be able to read them.

¶ 29. In both journeys and battles the Gauls use two-horse chariots which carry both the warrior and charioteer. When they encounter cavalry in battle they first hurl their spears then step down from the chariot to fight with swords. Some of them think so little of death that they fight wearing only a loincloth, without armour of any kind. They use free men from the poorer classes as charioteers and shield-bearers in battle. When two armies are drawn up for battle, it is their

custom to step before the front line and challenge the best of their opponents to single combat while they brandish their weapons in front of them to intimidate the enemy. When an opponent accepts their challenge, they recite the brave deeds of both their ancestors and themselves, at the same time mocking the enemy and attempting to rob him of his fighting spirit. They decapitate their slain enemies and attach the heads to their horses' necks. The blood-soaked booty they hand over to their attendants, while they sing a song of victory. The choicest spoils they nail to the walls of their houses just like hunting trophies from wild beasts. They preserve the heads of their most distinguished enemies in cedar oil and store them carefully in chests. These they proudly display to visitors, saying that for this head one of his ancestors, or his father, or he himself refused a large offer of money. It is said that some proud owners have not accepted for a head an equal weight in gold, a barbarous sort of magnanimity. For selling the proof of one's valour is ignoble, but to continue hostility against the dead is bestial.

¶ 30. The Gauls wear stunning clothing—shirts which have been dyed in various colours, and trousers which they call *bracae*. They also wear striped cloaks with a chequered pattern, thick in winter and thin in summer, fastened with a clasp. They use uniquely decorated, man-high shields in battle, some with projecting bronze animals of superb workmanship. These animal-figures serve for defensive purposes as well as decoration. Their helmets have large figures on top—horns, which form a single piece with the helmet, or the heads of birds and four-footed animals—which give an appearance of added height to the warrior. Their trumpets are also of a peculiar and barbaric kind which produce a harsh, reverberating sound suitable to the confusion of battle. Some use iron breast-plates in battle, while others fight naked, trusting only in the protection which nature gives. They do not use short swords, but prefer a longer variety which are hung on their right sides by chains of iron or bronze. Some wear gold or silver-plated belts around their tunics. Their spears, called *lanciae*, have iron heads a cubit [18 inches] or more in length and slightly less than two palms in width. Their swords are as long as the spears of other peoples, and their spears have heads longer than others' swords. Some of the spears have straight heads, but others are twisted in their entire length so that a blow not only cuts but mangles the flesh and withdrawal tears the wound open.

¶ 31. The Gauls are terrifying in appearance and speak with deep, harsh voices. They speak together in few words, using riddles which leave much of the true meaning to be understood by the listener. They frequently exaggerate their claims to raise their own status and diminish another's. They are boastful, violent, and melodramatic, but very intelligent and learn quickly. They have lyric poets called Bards, who, accompanied by instruments resembling lyres, sing both praise and satire. They have highly-honoured philosophers and theologians [those who speak about the gods] called Druids. They also make use of seers, who are greatly respected. These seers, having great authority, use auguries and sacrifices

to foresee the future. When seeking knowledge of great importance, they use a strange and unbelievable method: they choose a person for death and stab him or her in the chest above the diaphragm. By the convulsion of the victim's limbs and spurring of blood, they foretell the future, trusting in this ancient method. They do not sacrifice or ask favours from the gods without a Druid present, as they believe sacrifice should be made only by those supposedly skilled in divine communication. Not only during peacetime but also in war, the Gauls obey with great care these Druids and singing poets, both friend and enemy alike. Often when two armies have come together with swords drawn these men have stepped between the battle-lines and stopped the conflict, as if they held wild animals spell-bound. Thus even among the most brutal barbarians angry passion yields to wisdom and Ares stands in awe of the Muses.

¶ 32. It is useful now to point out a distinction unknown by most. Those tribes that live inland from Massalia, as well as those around the Alps and on the eastern side of the Pyrenees are called Celts. But those tribes in the northern area near the ocean, those near the Hercynian mountain [probably today in the Czech Republic], and those beyond as far as Scythia [present-day Ukraine and South Russia], are called Galatae. The Romans, however, group all these tribes together as Galatae.

The women of the Gauls are not only as large as their husbands but are equal to them in strength. Gaulish children are usually born with gray hair, but this takes on the parents' colour as time passes. The most savage tribes are those in the north and those which are near Scythia. Some say they eat human flesh, just like the *Pretiani* [Britons] inhabiting the land called *Iris* [probably Ireland]. The savage and war-loving nature of the Gauls is well known. Some say that in ancient times they ravaged all of Asia under the name of Cimmerians, which in time became deformed to Cimbri. From long in the past it has been their nature to ravage foreign lands and view the rest of humanity as beneath them. It was they who captured Rome and plundered the temple at Delphi, and who extracted tribute from much of Europe and no small part of Asia. It was they who occupied the lands of the people whom they had defeated, and were called Gallo-Graeci because of their connection with the Greeks, and who, last of all, destroyed many great Roman armies. It is fitting to their savage nature that they practice a particular impiety in their sacrifices: they keep criminals in custody for five years and then impale them in honour of their gods. They also construct enormous pyres and burn prisoners on them along with many first-fruits. They use war prisoners as sacrificial victims to honour their gods. Some even sacrifice the animals captured in war in addition to the human beings, or burn them in a pyre or kill them through some other means of torture.

The men of the Gauls pay little attention to their women, even though they are quite beautiful, but prefer unnatural intercourse with other men. They sleep on the ground on the skins of wild animals, rolling about with their sleeping

companions on each side. The oddest custom is that without any thought towards being discreet, they gladly offer their youthful bodies to others, not thinking this any disgrace, but being deeply offended when refused.

§19. Strabo [64/63 BC—AD 21 at least] *Geography*,
TRANS. BENJAMIN FORTSON

¶ 4.1.13

THE PEOPLE CALLED THE TECTOSAGES live near the Pyrenees, but touch also on small parts of the northern side of the Cevennes, and the land they inhabit is full of gold. Apparently at one time they not only were the dominant power but also abounded in men to such an extent that, when a seditious conflict arose, they drove many of their own people from their homeland; then others from other tribes joined forces with these exiles. Among these people, it is said, were also those who occupied the part of Phrygia [present-day central Asiatic Turkey] that borders on Cappadocia and the Paphlagonians. And indeed as proof of this we have the people who even today are called the Tectosages, who are actually composed of three tribes: one of them, living around the city of Ankara, is called the tribe of the Tectosages, while the remaining two are the Trocmi and the Tolistobogii. While the fact that these latter peoples are of the same stock as the Tectosages shows that they emigrated from Celtica [in Western Europe], we cannot tell from which districts they set out, for we have not ascertained whether any Trocmi or Tolistobogii now live across the Alps, or in them, or on this side of them. But due to the continuous migrations probably none are left, just as comes to pass with many other peoples. There are some who say, for example, that the second Brennus—the one that invaded Delphi—was a Pausan, but where on earth the Pausans used to live we cannot say, either. The Tectosages, too, are said to have taken part in the expedition against Delphi, and supposedly the treasure that was found on them in the city of Toulouse by the Roman general Scipio [*read* Caepio] was part of the riches from Delphi, and the men augmented it with items from their private possessions by way of invoking and propitiating their god. It was because of seizing them that [Caepio] ended his life in misfortunes: he was banished from his native land as a temple-robber and left his daughters behind as his successors, who ended up becoming prostitutes and dying in shame, as Timagenes has said. But the report of Posidonius is more trustworthy: he says that the booty found in Toulouse was worth about fifteen thousand talents, some of it lying in sacred enclosures, the rest in sacred lakes, and none of it fashioned, but merely unwrought gold and silver. The temple at Delphi, on the other hand, was already at that time empty of such things, having been robbed by the Phocians during the holy war; and if anything was left, it had been divided among many. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that they escaped to their homeland safely, since after their retreat from

Delphi they departed in misery and dispersed in various directions due to dissension. But, as that one and others have reported, the land, being full of gold and belonging to men who were pious and not extravagant in their living, contained treasures in many places in Celtica. What provided safety more than anything, however, was the lakes into which they had thrown heavy weights of silver and gold. At any rate, the Romans, once they were in power over the area, sold the lakes at public auction, and many of the purchasers found millstones of hammered silver in them. And in Toulouse the temple was hallowed as well, as it was held in exceeding reverence by the inhabitants; and because of this the treasures there were very plentiful, since many made dedications and no one dared touch them.

¶ 4.4.1. After the tribes already mentioned, the remaining ones are tribes of Belgi that live along the coast, of which the Veneti are the ones that fought a naval battle against Caesar; for they were ready to hinder his passage to Britain because they used a trading-station there. However, he defeated them easily in the naval battle, and did not even use rams (for their beams were thick), but rather, since they bore down upon him by wind, the Romans pulled down their sails with wooden halberts, for the sails were made of leather on account of the strength of the winds, and were hoisted with chains instead of ropes. They make their ships broad-bottomed with high sterns and prows because of the ebb-tides, and out of oak wood, of which there is an abundance. For this reason they do not bring the joins of the planks together, but leave gaps which they then caulk with sawweed, lest the wood dry out for lack of moisture when the ships are hauled up, as sawweed is by nature quite moist, while oak is dry and lacks fat. These Veneti, I believe, are the colonisers of the land on the Adriatic [as namesakes of Venice], for nearly all the other Celts emigrated out of the land across the Alps, as did even the Boii and the Senones; but due to the fact that they have the same name, people call them Paphlagonians. I do not insist on this point, however, for in such matters likeness is enough. The Osismii, whom Pytheas [c. 325 BC] calls the Ostimii, inhabit a headland that juts rather far out into the ocean [western Brittany], but not as far as he and those who believe him claim. Of the tribes between the Seine and the Loire, some border on the Sequani, others on the Arverni.

¶ 4.4.2. The whole race, which they now call both Gallic and Galatic, is warlike, both spirited and quick to go to war, but otherwise simple and not malicious. Because of this, when they are provoked, they come together in a body for the fight, openly and without forethought, so that they become easy to cope with for those who want to outwit them by stratagem. Indeed, once one irritates them (at whatever time and place and on whatever false pretext one wants), one has them ready to risk their lives, even though they have nothing to aid them besides strength and courage. But if prevailed upon, they easily give themselves over to what is useful, so that they take up education and literature. As for their strength, it is partly due to the large size of their bodies, and partly to their

numbers, and because of their simplicity and frankness they easily come together in great numbers, since they always share in the anger of those neighbours of theirs whom they perceive have been wronged. Right now they are all at peace, as they have been enslaved and live according to the rules of the Romans, who captured them; but it is from early times that we take this account of them, and from the customs that obtain among the Germani still to this day: for not only do these people resemble each other in their nature and their societal institutions, but they also are kindred to one another. The territory they inhabit has a common border (it is divided by the river Rhine) and is for the most part practically the same throughout, although Germania is situated farther to the north (comparing the southern parts with the south and the northern ones with the north). Because of this it is also easy for them to migrate, for they move in bands and with their whole army, or rather set out with all their households whenever they are expelled by others who are more powerful. Again, the Romans conquered them much more easily than they did the Iberians, with whom they started war earlier and stopped later, whereas all these they defeated in the meantime (all the ones between the Rhine and the Pyrenees mountains, that is). For since the former were used to falling on their enemies in a body, they were defeated in a body, but the latter would conserve their resources and split up their fights, with different men waging war at different times and in different divisions, like pirates. Indeed all of them are fighters by nature, but they are stronger as cavalry than as foot-soldiers, and among the Romans the best cavalry-force comes from them. But the ones that live farther to the north and along the coast are more warlike.

¶ 4.4.3. Of these they say the Belgi are the best; they are divided into fifteen tribes, and live along the ocean between the Rhine and the Loire, so that they alone withstood the incursion of the Germani—the Cimbri and Teutones. Among the Belgi themselves the best are said to be the Bello[?]aci, and after them, the Suesiones. Of their populousness, the following is an indication: they say that the number of Belgi of former times that can bear arms amounted to about three hundred thousand. I have already given the population of the Elvetii [=Helvetii] and the Arverni and their allies; from these facts the size of the population is clear, as well as (as I stated above) the excellence of the women at bearing and raising children. They wear *sagi*, let their hair grow long, and wear tight trousers, and instead of normal tunics wear slit ones that have sleeves and extend as far down as the private parts and buttocks. The wool from which they weave the thick *sagi* (which they call *lainai*) is coarse and shaggy, but the Romans, even in the northernmost regions, raise flocks of sheep, clothed in skins, with quite fine wool. The war-gear corresponds in size to the size of their bodies: a long sword, hung on the right side, and an oblong shield and spears in proportion, and a *madaris*, a kind of light javelin. Some also use bows and slings. There is also a certain wooden weapon like a *grosphos*, cast by hand and not from

a thong, and having a longer range than arrows; these they use most of all for hunting fowl. Even to the present day many of them sleep on the ground, and eat sitting on beds of straw. Most of their nourishment comes from milk and all kinds of meats, especially pork, both fresh and salted. Their pigs live in the open, excelling in height, strength, and speed; in fact, it is dangerous for an inexperienced person to go up to them, as it is for a wolf. They have houses made from beams and wicker, big and with a conical roof, over which they throw a lot of thatch. Their herds of sheep and swine are so plentiful that they supply an abundance of *sagi* and pickled meat not only to Rome, but to most parts of Italy as well. Most of their tribes were aristocratic, but in earlier times they elected one leader per year, just as one general was chosen by the populace for war. Now, however, they abide by the commands of the Romans most of the time. At assemblies they have a peculiar practice: if anyone should disturb the person speaking and interrupt him, an officer, approaching him with drawn sword, orders him to be silent with a threat; and if he does not cease, he does it a second and a third time, and at last cuts off enough of the man's 'sagus' as to make it useless for the future. As far as the men and women and the fact that they exchange work in an opposite manner from ours is concerned, that is common among many other barbarian peoples as well.

¶ 4.4.4. As a rule, among all the Gallic peoples three sets of men are honoured above all others: the Bards, the *Vātes*, and the Druids. The bards are singers and poets, the *Vātes* overseers of sacred rites and philosophers of nature, and the Druids, besides being natural philosophers, practice moral philosophy as well. They are considered to be the most just and therefore are entrusted with settling both private and public disputes, so that in earlier times they even arbitrated wars and could keep those intending to draw themselves up for battle from so doing; and it was to these men most of all that cases involving murder had been entrusted for adjudication. And whenever there is a big yield from these cases, they believe that there will come a yield from the land, too. Both these men and others aver that men's souls and the universe are imperishable, although both fire and water will at some times prevail over them.

¶ 4.4.5. Besides simplicity and spiritedness, there is also much senselessness, boastfulness, and love of ornament about them; for not only do they go about wearing gold—in the form of necklaces around their throats, and armlets and bracelets around their arms and wrists—but also those having an honourable rank wear garments that are brightly coloured and shot with gold. And because of this lightness of character, when victorious they look intolerable, but panicky when defeated. Besides their senselessness, there is also among them the barbaric and highly unusual custom (practised most of all by the northern tribes) of hanging the heads of their enemies from the necks of their horses when departing from battle, and nailing the spectacle to the doorways of their homes upon returning. Indeed Posidonius says that he saw this himself in many places,

and that while he was unaccustomed to it at first, he could later endure it calmly due to his frequent contact with it. The heads of those enemies that were held in high esteem they would embalm in cedar oil and display them to their guests, and they would not think of having them ransomed even for an equal weight of gold. The Romans put a stop both to these customs and to the ones connected with sacrifice and divination, as they were in conflict with our own ways: for example, they would strike a man who had been consecrated for sacrifice in the back with a sword, and make prophecies based on his death-spasms; and they would not sacrifice without the presence of the Druids. Other kinds of human sacrifices have been reported as well: some men they would shoot dead with arrows and impale in the temples; or they would construct a huge figure of straw and wood, and having thrown cattle and all manner of wild animals and humans into it, they would make a burnt offering of the whole thing.

¶ 4.4.6. He also says that in the ocean there is a little island, not far out to sea, situated at the mouth of the river Loire, and this island is inhabited by women of the Samnitae who are possessed by the god Dionysus and who propitiate this god with initiations and appease him with other sacred rites. No man sets foot on the island, he says, although the women themselves sail from it, have intercourse with the men, and then return back again. He further says that it is their custom once a year to take the roof off the temple and then roof it over again on the same day by sunset, with each woman bringing a load to add to the roof; if the load falls out of a woman's hands, she is torn to pieces by the others. They then carry the pieces around the temple, and do not stop crying 'Euai!' until they cease from their frenzy; and he says it always happens that someone jostles the woman who is to suffer this. Still more fabulous is the story reported by Artemidorus about the crows: there is a certain harbour on the coast called Two Crows, as the story goes, and in this harbour one can see two crows whose right wings are part white; and so people having a dispute about certain things go there, and having put a plank on a spot of high ground, each man separately throws barley-cakes on it; and the birds fly up and eat some of them, and scatter others. The one whose cakes were scattered wins the dispute. Now although what he says about these things sounds very much like legend, his story about Demeter and Core is more believable: that there is an island near Britain on which sacrifices having to do with Demeter and Core, like those in Samothrace, are performed. The following story is also one of those that are believed: that in Celtica there grows a kind of tree resembling a fig tree, which bears fruit closely resembling the capital of a Corinthian column. When this fruit is cut into, it exudes a deadly juice that they use for smearing on their arrows. And the following, too, is one of the things commonly talked about, namely that not only do all the Celts love strife, but also it is not considered shameful among them for their youth to be lavish of their charms. . .

§20. Julius Cæsar [writing c. 50 × 44 BC] *De Bello Gallico* 6.11–20
TRANS. ANNE LEA⁶

¶ 11.

SINCE I HAVE REACHED THIS POINT, it would seem to be not out of place to relate the customs of the Gauls and Germans and how these peoples differ between themselves. In Gaul, not only in every tribal region and every village and every area, but even in almost every single home, there are political parties and the leaders of the parties are men who are considered to have the highest authority and power of judgement, to whom decisions and judgements of all things and councils may be brought. And this seems an arrangement from long ago. By reason of the people, no one should be in need of help against someone more powerful: for no [leader] allows his people to be oppressed or assailed, or otherwise, if it is done, he has no authority among them. This same rule is in the whole of Gaul: for all the tribes are divided into two parties.

¶ 12. When Cæsar came into Gaul, the leaders of one party were the Aedui, the others were the Sequani. These, the Sequani, were less strong, since the highest authority from long ago was in the Aedui and their clientship was large. And they, the Sequani, joined the Germans and Orivistus who with great sacrifices and promises had persuaded them. In truth, several battles were fought successfully and all of the nobility of the Aedui were slain so that a great part of their clients were brought over from the Aedui to the Sequani, and children from their leaders were taken as hostages and they were compelled to swear publicly that they would not initiate a plan against the Sequani. And the Sequani took possession of the neighbouring land by force and held pre-eminence over all of Gaul. This necessity led Divitiacus to make for the Senate at Rome in the interest of gaining assistance but he returned with the matter unresolved. With the coming of Cæsar a change of affairs was brought about. The hostages of the Aedui were given back, old clientships were restored, and new ones were arranged by Cæsar. The Aedui, who had attached themselves to their friendship, saw better

6 The extent to which Cæsar utilised the account of Posidonius is more uncertain than the acknowledged attribution amongst the preceding three writers. Cæsar had first-hand experience in Gaul during his governorship, 60–50 BC.

Cæsar's discussion of Gaulish tribal politics and civilisation was motivated largely by his desire to justify its military and political intervention in Gaulish politics to his Roman readers.

For Cæsar, as for the other Greek and Roman writers, *Gallia* and *Germania* ('Gaul' and 'Germany') were primarily geographical terms, Germany being the land east of the Rhine and north of the Danube and Gaul being the land to the west. The Greek and Roman writers were not overly concerned with or knowledgeable about the languages of barbarian peoples. There definitely were Celtic-speaking tribes east of the Rhine in Cæsar's day. So we should not assume that the people he calls *Germani* were linguistically Germanic.

conditions and a more just rule, and their esteem and dignity increased in the rest of their affairs and the Sequani gave up the leadership. The Remi had succeeded in their place: who, it is understood, are equal to Cæsar in esteem. The Sequani, who because of old enmities were able by no means to join the Aedui, were dedicating themselves into clientship to the Remi. The Remi carefully guarded the Sequani: in this fashion they were holding their recently and suddenly acquired authority. At that time the state of affairs was that the Aedui were regarded as foremost by far and the Remi held second place in dignity.

¶ 13. In all of Gaul there are two classes of men who are of some rank and honour. But the common people are held almost in the condition of slaves who dare nothing by themselves and none are treated in assembly. Very many of them, hard pressed by debt or extensive taxes or powerful injustice, give themselves up in servitude to the nobility: in them are all the same rights which masters have over slaves. But these other two classes are, first, the Druids and, second, the warriors with horses. The Druids intervene in divine matters; they look after public and private sacrifices; they interpret religious matters: to them a great number of young men rush together for the sake of instruction, for the Druids are great in honour before them. For as a rule they settle all public and private disputes and, if some crime has been committed, or if a slaying done or if it concerns inheritance or a border dispute, the same Druids decide: they settle the compensation and punishment; if a private person or the public does not yield to their decision they are prohibited from sacrifices. This is among the most serious punishments. Of those who are prohibited in this fashion, they are held as godless and wicked and they are cut off from all. They are avoided in conversation and meeting, and from fear of moral infection they are not received, and penance does not restore their rights nor is any honour imparted. Moreover, of all the Druids one precedes who has the highest authority among them. When this one dies either the one who excels in dignity from the rest succeeds or if there are many who are suitable, by the vote of the Druids they contend for leadership, sometimes even contending with arms. At a certain time of the year they sit down in a consecrated place in the territory of the Carnutes [near Chartres, France] which region is believed to be the centre of all Gaul. To this place all come from everywhere who have disputes and the Druids bring forth their resolutions and decisions. It is believed the training for Druids was discovered in Britain and from there it was transferred into Gaul. And now those who wish to learn the matter carefully depart for Britain for the sake of learning.

¶ 14. The Druids retire from war nor are they accustomed to any taxes. They have immunity from military service and are exempt from all lawsuits. So greatly are young men excited by these rewards that many assemble willingly in training and many others are sent by parents and relatives. They are said to commit to memory a great number of verses. And they remain some 20 years in training. Nor do they judge it to be allowed to entrust these things to writing although in

nearly the rest of their affairs, and public and private transactions, Greek letters are used. It seems to me there are two reasons this has been established: neither do they wish the common people to pride themselves in the training nor those who learn to rely less on memory, since it happens to a large extent that individuals give up diligence in memory and thorough learning through the help of writing. The foremost tenet of which they wish to convince is that the soul does not die but crosses over after death from one place to another and this they believe is the greatest incentive to bravery by disregarding the fear of death. Further, they debate concerning the heavens and their movement, concerning the size of the universe and the earth, the workings of nature, the strength and power of the immortal gods, and these things they hand down to the young men.

The other class are the warriors with horses. These are concerned with the practice of war (which, before Caesar's coming, they were accustomed to these happening nearly every year so that either they brought them on or they drove them back), all of them are engaged in war and their class is such that each has troops and mercenaries so that many have *ambacti* [literally 'men sent around' i.e. 'subordinates at their command'] and clients around them. They know only this kind of esteem and power.

¶ 16. All the people of Gaul are completely devoted to religion, and for this reason those who are greatly affected by diseases and in the dangers of battle either sacrifice human victims or vow to do so using the Druids as administrators to these sacrifices, since it is judged that unless for a man's life a man's life is given back, the will of the immortal gods cannot be placated. In public affairs they have instituted the same kind of sacrifice. Others have effigies of great size interwoven with twigs, the limbs of which are filled up with living people which are set on fire from below, and the people are deprived of life surrounded by flames. It is judged that the punishment of those who participated in theft or brigandage or other crimes are more pleasing to the immortal gods; but when the supplies of this kind fail, they even go so low as to inflict punishment on the innocent.

¶ 17. Of the gods they worship Mercury most of all. Of him there are many images: they extol him as the inventor of all the arts, the ruler of journeys and travelling, and they judge him to have the greatest power over obtaining money and trade. After him Apollo, Mars, Jupiter and Minerva. Concerning these they have nearly the same opinions as the rest of people: Apollo to drive away diseases, Minerva to teach the elements of skill, Jupiter to hold the order of the heavens, Mars to control wars. To him, when they have decided to fight a battle, they consecrate a large part of the plunder; when they have conquered, they collect captured living things and the rest and burn them in one place. In many tribal territories one is allowed to see mounds of objects erected in consecrated places and it often happens that someone neglects religion and has dared to

remove and hide things taken in war, and the greatest punishment with torture is agreed upon for them.

¶ 18. The Gauls proclaim that they are all sprung from the same father, Dis, and they say this has been transmitted from the Druids. For this reason they define the space of time not by the number of days but of nights. They observe birthdays and the beginnings of months and years in this way so that day follows night. In the rest of the undertakings of life they differ from other peoples. They consider it disgraceful for a father to be seen with his sons in public until they have grown up so that they can sustain military duty.

¶ 19. . . . Men have the power of life and death over their wives, as with their children. When the head of an illustrious family dies, his relatives meet and if matters about the death are suspicious, they question the wives in the manner of slaves. And if certain information is discovered they do away with them by fire and excruciating tortures. The funerals, by the standards of the Gauls, are splendid and expensive. It is judged that all which was held dear while alive should be put into the fire, even living beings, and a little before our time, slaves and clients of choice were burned at the completion of the funeral.

¶ 20. Of those tribes which are considered to administer their governance properly, they have a sacred law that if anyone received any information concerning their civic affairs from their neighbours by rumour or talk, they refer it to the magistrate and do not communicate it to others for often inexperienced people are accidentally frightened by false rumours and are incited to action, and they have been known to take extreme action in conclusion. Magistrates hide many things from sight of the ordinary people and produce that which they judge proper. Talk is not permitted concerning the public affairs except in the deliberation of the council.

[CÆSAR'S FIRST INVASION OF BRITAIN (55 BC)] *De Bello Gallico* 4.33,

TRANS. PHILIP FREEMAN

THIS IS THE WAY THE BRITISH fight with their chariots. First, they drive about in all directions throwing spears and spreading chaos throughout the ranks of their enemies by the terror of their galloping horses and screeching wheels. When they have worked their way into the middle of the enemy cavalry they leap down from the chariots and fight on foot. Meanwhile the chariot-drivers have moved the chariots away, but close enough to come to the aid of the warriors if they are seriously threatened by the enemy. The chariot forces thus combine the advantages of cavalry mobility and infantry stability. By constant practice they have become so adept that they can gallop with their teams down steep slopes without losing control, stop and turn them in a moment, and run along the yoke between the horses then rapidly return to the chariot.

[FROM CÆSAR'S SECOND INVASION OF BRITAIN (54 BC)] *De Bello Gallico* 5.12-17, TRANS. PHILIP FREEMAN

¶ 12.

THE INTERIOR PARTS OF BRITAIN are inhabited by tribes which by their own traditions are indigenous to the island, while on the coastal sections are tribes which had crossed over from the land of the Belgæ seeking booty. Nearly all these maritime tribes are called by the names of lands from which they immigrated when they came to Britain. After their arrival, they remained there and began to till the fields. The population of the island is very large. They live in homes packed close together, like the Gauls, and have many cattle. They use bronze or gold coins, or tallies of iron of a certain weight in place of money. Tin is found in the middle of the country and iron in the coastal regions, but only in limited amounts, while they import bronze. There is every variety of timber, as in Gaul, aside from beech and pine. They believe it wrong to eat hares, fowl, and geese, but they do keep these animals as pets. The climate is more temperate than in Gaul, with warmer winters.

¶ 13. The island is shaped like a triangle and one of the sides faces Gaul. On this side one of the angles, Cantium (Kent), where almost all the ships from Gaul land, faces east, while the lower angle faces south. The length of this side is about 500 miles. The second side of the triangle faces towards Hispania and the setting sun, in which direction is Hibernia (Ireland), thought to be half the size of Britain. The separation is equal to that of Britain from Gaul. In the middle of the channel is an island called Mona [Anglesey or the Isle of Man]. Several other smaller islands supposedly lie close to land, concerning which some have written that the darkness there in midwinter lasts thirty days. We could find out no information concerning this, but using a water-clock we did discover that the nights in Britain are measurably shorter than on the continent. The natives relate that this westward-facing side is about 700 miles. The third side faces the north, but there is no land opposite it. The angle of that side in general, however, does extend towards Germania. That side is estimated at 800 miles in length. Thus the whole island is two thousand miles in circumference.

¶ 14. Of all the tribes of Britain, those inhabiting the wholly maritime land of Cantium are the most civilised, differing little from the Gauls. Most of those in the interior do not sow wheat, but live on milk and meat, clothing themselves in animal skins. But all the Britons dye their skin with woad, which gives them a blue colour and fearsome appearance in battle. They wear their hair long, but shave every part of their bodies aside from the head and upper lip. Ten or twelve men have wives together in common, particularly among brothers and between fathers and sons. The children born to these women are considered part of the house to which the bride was first led.

¶ 15. The horseman and the charioters of the enemy fought fiercely with our cavalry as we marched, but our troops were totally superior to them and drove them into the forests and hills. But some of our cavalry were too eager and were killed in their pursuit. After a short time our troops were busy digging a trench around the camp and were off their guard when the enemy suddenly dashed out of the woods and attacked some advance troops guarding in front of the camp. The fighting was very fierce and the enemy brought through the small space between our troops, even though Cæsar had sent two cohorts forward as reinforcements. The enemy withdrew from the conflict safely even when additional cohorts were sent up, as our troops were unused to this new type of fighting. On that day a tribune, Quintus Laberius Durus, was killed.

¶ 16. The fighting took place in front of the camp where all could see, and it was clear to everyone that our infantry was badly equipped for this sort of fighting, as the heavy weight of their armament prevented them from pursuing a fleeing enemy or moving far from the protective ranks of their fellow-soldiers. The cavalry was also at a great disadvantage because the enemy would deliberately retreat a little ways to separate the horsemen from the bulk of the army, then leap off their chariots and fight on foot to our disadvantage. Moreover, the tactics of their cavalymen threatened us with the same danger whether they were retreating or attacking. In addition, the Britons never fought close together but scattered widely apart in small groups. They also had reinforcements posted at intervals so that fresh warriors could easily replace their exhausted companions.

The Gauls' Invasion of Rome

[c. 390 × 387 BC]; TRANS. PHILIP FREEMAN

§21. Titus Livius (Livy) [64/59 BC-AD 12/17]; *Ab urbe condita* 5

¶ 5.35-36.

THE THREE SONS OF MARCUS FABIVS AMBUSTUS were sent by the Senate as ambassadors to the Gauls attacking their Etruscan allies at Clusium, asking them not to attack a city which had harmed them in no way and moreover was a friend and ally of the Roman people. Rome, they said, would protect Clusium by force of arms if necessary, but a peaceful solution and understanding with this new group of immigrants was preferable. The purpose of the mission was entirely peaceful, but unfortunately the ambassadors behaved more like Gauls than Romans. The council of Gaulish leaders answered them as follows: 'We have never heard of Rome before, but we believe you must be a worthy people since Clusium sent to you for help in their time of trouble. You say you prefer to aid your allies peacefully if possible and do not wish to fight with us. We are willing to accept this peace with you, but only if Clusium will yield to us a portion of their territory as we badly need more land. Truthfully, they have much more than they need. These are the only conditions for peace that we can accept. We will receive your answer in person, so that if you refuse you may see us fight and tell your allies how much the Gauls exceed all other men in courage and bravery.' When the Romans asked them how they could justly ask for land by threatening war and just what right did they have to be in Etruria anyway, the Gauls simply said that they carried justice on the point of their swords.

¶ 5.38-39. The Romans' line collapsed when the Gauls attacked, showing no trace of the old Roman courage among either officers or soldiers. They were so terrified that they fled to the once-enemy town of Veii, even though the Tiber River was in between, rather than to their own homes in Rome. The Roman reserves were temporarily in a better position than the rest of the army, but the main body of the army collapsed as soon as they heard the Gaulish war cry on their sides and behind them, not even waiting to see these strange warriors. They made no effort to resist, but fled in panic before they had lost a single man. None were killed in fighting, but many were cut down from behind as they fled through the crowds of their own countrymen. Near the left bank of the river there was a horrible slaughter, as the whole left wing of the army had flung away their weapons there in an attempt to swim across. But many didn't know how to

swim and others who could were dragged down to death by the weight of their armour. Half the army reached Veii alive, but they sent no message of their defeat to Rome, let alone any aid against the Gauls. The men on the right wing had been closer to the hills and away from the river, so they all rushed to Rome and took refuge on the Citadel without even taking time to close the city gates.

The Gauls couldn't believe their good fortune in winning a battle so easily. As they stood in a daze they began to wonder if the whole thing was some sort of trap, but soon began to collect the weapons of their dead in a pile, as is their custom. When finally no sign of the enemy was to be seen anywhere, they marched on Rome and reached the city at sunset. Cavalry were sent forward to spy out the city and found the gates open with no guards on the walls. Once again they were astonished at such good fortune. But the darkness might have held unknown dangers in this strange city, so after a brief further reconnaissance of the walls to try to discover some pattern to their enemies' actions, they made camp between Rome and the Anio River.

¶ 5.41. When the night had passed the Gauls found that their lust for battle had faded, since they had faced no serious resistance and had no need to storm the city by force. So in the morning they entered the city gates cautious but calm. The Colline Gates were wide open, so they made their way to the Forum, admiring the temples and examining the Citadel above, the only place in Rome which gave a hint of war. They posted a guard at the Citadel to prevent an ambush from behind, then dispersed in small groups in search of plunder. Some of them broke into the first house they found on the empty streets, while others went further away thinking the richer booty would be away from the city centre. But the strange silence and separation from their comrades unnerved them, making them suspicious of a trap, so they soon returned to the Forum. Here they found the common houses locked and barred but the homes of the nobility wide open. The poorer houses were quickly looted, but a sense of awe kept them for a long while from the noble's homes, especially the figures seated in the open courtyards seated in majestic robes and looking with their calm eyes like the gods themselves. The seemed to be statues in some holy temple and held these barbarian warriors in a kind of trance. But then one of the Gauls touched the long beard of a certain Marcus Papirius, and the Roman knocked him on the head with his ivory walking stick. With the spell broken, the Gauls exploded in anger, killing him and the others where they sat. From then on no mercy was given. Houses were ransacked and the empty shells were burned.

¶ 5.48. Quintus Sulpicius met with the Gaulish chieftain Brennus and agreed to pay one thousand pounds of gold, the price of a nation that would rule the world. The Romans were insulted further when the weights which the Gauls brought for weighing out the treasure turned out to be heavier than those of the Romans. When Quintus complained Brennus flung his sword on the scale and answered with words intolerable to Roman ears—*Vae victis*, 'Woe to the conquered.'

The Gauls' Invasion of Greece

[280-278 BC]; TRANS. PHILIP FREEMAN

§22. Marcus Junianus Justinus (Justin) [3rd century AD] *Epitome of the Philippic History* 24 of Pompeius Trogus [1st century AD]

¶ 6.

ONE OF THE GAULISH GROUPS who had invaded Greece was led by Brennus. Now when Brennus had heard of the victory of his countryman Belgus over the Macedonians and how such rich plunder was abandoned by him after victory, he was furious. He brought together an army composed of 150,000 infantry and 15,000 cavalry and led them in an invasion of Macedonia. While Brennus was plundering crops and farms, he was met by a Macedonian army under Sosthenes. This army, however, was small and terrified, while the Gauls were numerous and powerful, so Brennus easily won. The defeated Macedonians then hid within the walls of their cities while the Gauls plundered the whole countryside unopposed. Then, not satisfied with spoils of human labour, he began to plunder temples as well, foolishly joking that the gods were rich and should be generous to people. Setting greed before fear of the gods, he immediately began a march to Delphi, saying the immortals needed no wealth as they commonly wasted it on people anyway.

The Temple of Apollo at Delphi is on Mt. Parnassus, surrounded by steep cliffs on every side. A large number of settlers had originally come here from various lands because of admiration for the grandeur of the place. Both the community and temple are protected by nature rather than manmade fortifications, so that it is hard to say whether the natural beauty of the place or the presence of the god is more wonderful. The middle part of the cliff recedes to form a natural amphitheatre. Because of this, human voices and trumpets are greatly multiplied beyond the original volume as the cliff walls echo the sounds. People who hear this are generally unaware of the cause, with the resulting increase in sound only adding to their awe of the place. In this recess, halfway up the hill, there is a narrow plateau with a deep fissure in the ground from which oracles are delivered. A gust of cold air is driven up through this crack by the wind, sending the priests into a frenzied state and causing them to answer questions under the authority of the god. There are many rich gifts here from kings and others who were grateful for the god's generous and reliable responses.

¶ 7. When Brennus finally saw the temple, he debated whether he should attack at once or give his weary troops a night's rest. The leaders of the Aenianes and the Thessalians urged him to launch his assault at once while the enemy was unprepared and panicked over his arrival. If he allowed them until morning, they said, the Delphians would have time to rally their spirits, receive reinforcements, and blockade the now-open road. But the Gauls had endured a long, hard journey, so when they learned that the surrounding countryside was well stocked with food and wine, they were just as happy as if they had won a great victory. They spread out through the area in an unorganised mob looting everything they could find, thus giving the people of Delphi a short time to organise a defence. The story goes that at the first rumour of the coming Gauls, the oracle of the god had forbidden the nearby farmers from removing the harvested grain and wine from their farms. The sound reason for this was unknown until the spoils had succeeded in delaying the Gauls and allowing reinforcements to arrive. In this way, the Delphians added to the number of their troops and had time to fortify their town against the invaders, who could not be recalled by any means from their drunken revels. Brennus had the best 65,000 infantrymen from his whole army at Delphi, while the Greeks numbered a mere 4,000. The Gaulish leader sneered at such a paltry resistance and urged his men on by pointing out the great spoils which awaited them. The statues and chariots which they could see in the distance, he said, were made of solid gold and weighed even more than they appeared.

¶ 8. Roused by these claims, yet suffering badly from the drinking binge of the day before, the Gauls charged into battle heedless of the dangers. The Delphians relied on the god more than their own strength, and fought the despised enemy with their whole might, hurling down spears and rocks on the Gauls attempting to climb the cliffs. When the two forces were in the thick of battle, the temple priests and priestesses suddenly rushed to the front lines with their hair in disarray and wearing their holy insignia. They cried out that they had seen the god himself leaping down into his temple from the hole in the roof and that he was young and vigorous, with a beauty far beyond that of mortals. With him were two virgins in armour who had come to meet him from the nearby temples of Diana and Minerva. Not only had they seen this with their own eyes, they shouted, but had heard the twang of the bow and the clatter of the weapons. So they declared, with fierce determination, that the Delphians were not to hold back against the enemy but were to share in the victory of the gods.

The Delphians rushed fearlessly into battle with these admonitions ringing in their ears. They themselves felt the presence of the gods, as an earthquake sheared off a side of the mountain and crushed the Gauls below. The close-packed barbarians were scattered and slaughtered by the fierce Greeks, and their wounded were finished off by freezing hail from the heavens. Even Brennus died, unable to bear the pains of his wounds, killing himself with a dagger. His

second-in-command fled Greece with 10,000 wounded and weary soldiers, punishing those who had urged the invasion of Greece in the first place. But Fate was not kind even to the pitiful refugees, stalking them relentlessly with bitter nights and harrowing days and grinding them down with unceasing rain, biting snow, and hungry exhaustion. The inhabitants of the lands through which they passed constantly harassed the dwindling force, and thus the once proud and powerful army that had dared to mock the gods was destroyed, with none surviving to tell the tale of their terrible defeat.

§§23-37. The Classical Authors on the Druids⁷

TRANS. PHILIP FREEMAN AND J. T. KOCH

§23: Diogenes Laertius [first half of 3rd century AD] *Vitae*, Intro.

¶ 1.

SOME SAY THAT THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY first developed among the barbarians. For the Persians had their Magi, the Babylonians or Assyrians their Chaldeans, the Indians their Gymnosophists, while the Celts and Galatae had those called Druids and Semnotheoi, according to Aristotle in the *Magics* and Sotion in the 23rd book of his *Successions*.

¶ 5. Those who believe philosophy arose among the barbarians explain the teachings of each group. They say the Gymnosophists [of India] and Druids instruct by means of riddles, urging worship of the gods, abstinence from evil, and the practice of manly virtue.

§24. Dion Chrysostom [AD 40-c. 112], *Orations* 49.

THE PERSIANS HAVE MEN KNOWN AS MAGI . . . , the Egyptians have their holy men . . . , the Indians have their Brahmins. For their part, the Celts have men called Druids, who deal with prophecy and every division of wisdom. Even kings would not be so bold as to make a decision or take action without [the Druids'] counsel. Thus in reality it was [the Druids] who governed.

7 See further T. D. Kendrick, *The Druids*, New York, 1926; N. Chadwick, *The Druids*, Cardiff, 1966; S. Piggott, *The Druids*, London, 1968.

The kings, who sat on golden thrones and lived luxuriously in their great residences, became mere agents of the decisions of the Druids.

§25. Cicero [106-43 BC] *De Divinatione* 1.41.90.

NOR IS THE PRACTICE OF DIVINATION neglected even among the barbarian tribes, since indeed there are Druids in Gaul. Among these was Divitiacus the Aeduan, your guest and eulogist, whom I knew personally. He claimed a knowledge of the natural world which the Greeks call *physiologia*, making predictions of the future, sometimes by augury, sometimes by conjecture.

§26. Ammianus Marcellinus [c. AD 330-c. 395]

¶ 15.9.4.

THE DRUIDS RECOUNT that part of the population of Gaul was indigenous, but that some of the people immigrated there from outlying islands and the lands beyond the Rhine, driven out by frequent wars and violent floods from the sea.

¶ 15.9.8 Throughout these regions, as people gradually became more civilised, study of praiseworthy doctrines grew, introduced by the Bards, Euhages [read Vates], and Druids. The Bards sang the praiseworthy deeds of famous men to the melodious strains of the lyre. The [Vāres] endeavoured to explain the sublime mysteries of nature. Between them were the Druids, an intimate fellowship of a greater ability who followed the doctrine of Pythagoras. They rose above the rest by seeking the unseen, making little of human mortality as they believed in the immortality of the soul.

§27. Suetonius [c. AD 69-c. 140] *Claudius* 25.

CLAUDIUS destroyed the horrible and savage religion of the Druids among the Gauls, which had been forbidden to citizens under Augustus.

§28. Pomponius Mela [wrote c. AD 37-c. 50] *De Situ Orbis* 3.2.18-19.

THE VESTIGES OF SAVAGE CUSTOMS still remain in the drawing of a victim's blood while he is being led to the altar, though outright slaughter has been abolished. Still, they have their own eloquence and wise men called Druids. They claim to know the size of the earth and cosmos, the movements of the heavens and stars, and the will of the gods. They teach, in caves or hidden groves, many things to the nobles in a course of instruction lasting up to twenty years. One of their doctrines has become commonly known to the populace so that warriors might fight more bravely, that the spirit is eternal and another life awaits the spirits of the dead. Thus they burn or bury articles useful in life with

the dead. For this reason also, in past times, they would defer business and payment of debts to the next life. There were some who would even throw themselves willingly onto the funeral pyres of their relatives so that they might live with them still.

§29. Pliny [AD 23/4-79] *Natural History*

¶ 16.24.

NOT TO BE OVERLOOKED is the admiration of the Gauls for this plant [the mistletoe]. The Druids—as their magicians are called—hold nothing more sacred than this plant and the tree on which it grows, as if it grew only on oaks. They choose only groves of oak and perform no rites unless a branch of that tree is present. Thus it seems that Druids are so called from the Greek name of the oak [Greek *drus*]. Truly they believe that anything which grows on the tree is sent from heaven and is a sign that the tree was chosen by the god himself. However, mistletoe rarely grows on oaks, but is sought with reverence and cut only on the sixth day of the moon, as it is then that the moon is powerful but not yet halfway in its course (it is by the moon they measure days, years, and their cycle of thirty years). In their language the mistletoe is called 'the healer of all'. When preparations for a sacrifice and feast beneath the trees have been made, they lead forward two white bulls with horns bound for the first time. A priest in white clothing climbs the tree and cuts the mistletoe with a golden sickle, and it is caught in a white cloak. They then sacrifice the bulls while praying that the god will grant the gift of prosperity to those to whom he has given it. They believe that mistletoe, when taken in a drink, will restore fertility to barren animals, and is a remedy for all poisons. Such is the dedication to trifling affairs displayed by many peoples.

¶ 24.103-4. Similar to the Sabine plant [Savin] is *selagos*. It is gathered without iron implements by passing the right hand through the left sleeve-opening of the tunic as if one were stealing it. The harvester must be barefoot and wearing white, and have offered bread and wine before the gathering. The Gaulish Druids say it is a charm against every evil, and that its smoke is a good medicine against eye disease. They also gather a plant from marshes called *samolus*, which must be gathered with the left hand during a fast. This is good against diseases of cattle, but the gatherer must not look back nor put the plant anywhere except in the drinking-trough.

¶ 29.52. There is also a sort of egg, famous in the [Roman] provinces of Gaul, but ignored by the Greeks. Innumerable snakes coil themselves into a ball in the summertime. Thus they make it so that it is held together by a bodily secretion and by their saliva. It is called an *anguinum*. The Druids say that [the snakes] hiss

and cast it upwards,⁸ and that it is to be caught in a cloak so that it not [fall and] touch the ground. One must immediately ride off on a horse with it, for [the snakes] will continue to pursue until the course of a stream blocks their way. If one tests it, [the *anguinum*] will float against the current of a river even when covered in gold. And, as the *magi* ['wizards'] will throw a cloak of deception over their trickery, they make out as though [the eggs] are to be taken only on a particular point in the lunar cycle, as though it was up to human beings to determine the snakes' rôle in this procedure. Nonetheless, I have seen one of these eggs myself. It was round, the size of a small apple. The shell was cartilaginous, and mottled with cups like the tentacles of a squid. The Druids value it highly: it is praised as insuring success in litigation and in going to audiences with kings. However, this is nonsense; for once a man (a Roman knight and a tribesman of the Vocontii) held one of these eggs against his body during a trial, and was condemned to death by the Emperor Claudius, for that reason alone so far as I can tell.

¶ 30.13. The [Roman provinces of] Gaul also possessed [magic] down to the time of our memory. Thus it was during the reign of the Emperor Tiberius that a decree was issued by the Senate against [the Gauls'] entire class of Druids, *Vates*, and physicians. Why do I comment on this craft that has spread beyond the ocean to the far reaches of the earth? Nowadays, Britain continues to be held spellbound by magic and conducts so much ritual that it would seem that it was Britain that had given magic to the Persians. Peoples of the whole world are alike in this way, though they are wholly ignorant of one another. Thus the debt to the Romans cannot be overestimated, for abolishing this abomination, in which slaying a man was deemed a most religious act and eating his flesh was truly thought most beneficial.

§30. Lucan [AD 39-65] *Pharsalia*

¶ 1.450-58.

TO YOUR BARBAROUS RITES and sinister ceremonies,
TO Druids, you have returned since weapons now lie still.

⁸ In the modern folklore of England and Wales, the idea of serpent stones persists. The editor has heard a Welsh folk-tale in which a young girl was pursued in the woods at Castell Coch near Cardiff by a horde of writhing snakes. When they disappeared, they left behind a small jewel-like sphere made of their congealed saliva. This object, when worn on a string around the neck, was supposed to cure *y wen* ('goiter'). After its second successful application, it had completely melted away. These magical stones are called *min mair* ('snare stone') and *glain y nidir* ('the snake's jewel') in South Wales dialect. When alleged serpent stones have been examined, they have sometimes turned out to be glass beads from the pre-Roman Iron Age. See further Kendrick, *The Druids* 125-28.

To you alone it is given to know the gods
And spirits of the sky, or perhaps not to know at all.
You dwell in the distant, dark, and hidden groves.
You say that shades of the dead do not seek
The silent land of Erebus or the pallid kingdom of Dis,
But that the same spirit controls the limbs in another realm.
Death, if what you say is true, is but the mid-point of a long life.

§31. Tacitus [c. AD 55 – c. 120] *Annals* 14.30.

[ON THE ROMAN INVASION OF THE DRUID SANCTUARY OF MONĀ,
MOD. ANGLESEY, NORTH WALES]

STANDING ON THE SHORE WAS THE OPPOSING ARMY, a dense formation of men and weapons. Women in black clothing like that of the Furies ran between the ranks. Wild-haired, they brandished torches. Around them, the Druids, lifting their hands upwards towards the sky to make frightening curses, frightened [the Roman] soldiers with this extraordinary sight. And so [the Romans] stood motionless and vulnerable as if their limbs were paralysed. Then their commander exhorted them and they urged one another not to quake before an army of women and fanatics. They carried the ensigns forward, struck down all resistance, and enveloped them in [the enemy's own] fire. After that, a garrison was imposed on the vanquished and destroyed their groves, places of savage superstition. For they considered it their duty to spread their altars with the gore of captives and to communicate with their deities through human entrails.

Historiae 5.54. It is remembered that the Gauls once took Rome [c. 390 BC; see §21 above], but as Jupiter's sanctuary remained intact, the state survived. The Druids however proclaimed, with the prophecies of foolish superstition, that the fateful fire [at the Capitol] was a sign of the wrath of heaven and prefigured that humanity would come under the dominion of the tribes from beyond the Alps.

§32. Lampridius *Alexander Severus* 59.5.

WHILE HE [ALEXANDER SEVERUS] was departing, a woman of the Druids shouted to him in the Gaulish tongue: 'Hurry forward, but do not hope for victory, nor put trust in your soldiers.'

§33. Vopiscus

¶ *Numerianus* 14.

AS MY GRANDEFATHER TOLD ME, DIOCLETIAN was once staying at an inn in the region of the Tungri tribe in Gaul. He was at the time still at a lesser rank in the army. He went once to settle the day's bill for his accommoda-

tion with a Druidess. This woman said to him, 'You are excessively acquisitive and stingy with your money, Diocletian.' As a joke, he replied to that, 'I shall be more generous when I am emperor.' After those words the Druidess responded, 'Don't joke, Diocletian, for you will be emperor when you have slain The Boar.'

¶ *Aurelianus* 63.4.5. He [Asclepiodotus] used to say that Aurelian once consulted with Gaulish Druidesses to discover whether his progeny would continue to rule the empire. These women responded that no name would be more famous in the history of Rome than the future descendants of Claudius. And it is indeed so that the present Emperor Constantius is of this man's blood. I think that his descendants will achieve the glory prophesied by the Druidesses.

§34. Ausonius [† c. AD 395] *Commem. professorum*.

¶ 4.7-10

YOU ARE SPRUNG FROM THE DRUIDS OF BAYEUX,

If the report does not lie.

To you is a sacred lineage,

From the temple of Belenus.

¶ 10.22-30 Nor will I forget

The old man named Phoebicius,

Who though servant of [the Gaulish god] Belenus

Received no profit thereby

Sprung, it is said, from the Druids

Of Armorica [Brittany].

He received a chair at Bordeaux

Through the help of his son.

§35. Hippolytus *Philosophumena* 1.25.

THE CELTIC DRUIDS eagerly took up the philosophy of Pythagoras, having been introduced to the study by Zalmoxis, a Thracian slave of Pythagoras. He came to those lands after his master's death and explained to them his philosophy. The Celts hold the Druids as prophets and foretellers of future events because they can predict certain events by Pythagorean science and mathematics . . . The Druids also use magic.

§36. Clement of Alexandria [c. AD 150 – c. 210] *Stromata* 1.15.70.1.

ALEXANDER, in his book on the symbols of Pythagorean belief, says Pythagoras was a student of Zaratus the Assyrian . . . and wants us to believe that Pythagoras listened to the Galatae and Brahmins as well.

¶ 1.15.70.3. Thus the very useful study of philosophy flourished in the past among the barbarians, enlightening the peoples of the world, and only later coming to Greece. Most important were the prophets of the Egyptians, the Chaldeans of the Assyrians, the Druids of the Galatae, the Samnians of the Bactrians, the philosophers of the Celts, and the Magi of the Persians.

§37. Valerius Maximus [wrote c. AD 35] 2.6.10.

HAVING COMPLETED MY DISCUSSION OF THIS TOWN [MASSALIA], an old custom of the Gauls should be mentioned: they lend money repayable in the next world, so firm is their belief in the immortality of the spirit. I would say they are fools, except what these trouser-wearers believe is the same as the doctrine of toga-wearing Pythagoras.

The Skull Cup — L. Postumius and the Cisalpine Boii

§38. Livy [64/59 BC-AD 12/17] ¶ 23.24; TRANS. J. T. KOCH

L [UCIUS] POSTUMIUS, consul designate, was lost together with his host in [Cisalpine] Gaul [in 216 BC]. He was leading his army by way of a huge forest that the Gauls call *Litanā* [‘The Broad One’]. The Gauls had cut the trees to the right and left of the road in such a way that they stood if not disturbed but fell if lightly pushed. Postumius had two Roman legions . . . that he led into the hostile country. The Gauls surrounded the wood, and when the [Roman] force entered the wood they pushed the outermost trees that had been cut. These trees fell one against the other, each one having been unstable and barely attached, and piled up from either side crushing the armament, men, and horses, so that scarcely ten men escaped. . . . Postumius died fighting with all his strength trying to avoid capture. The spoils stripped from his corpse and the severed head of the commander were taken by the Boii to their holiest temple. Then, after they removed the flesh from the head, they adorned the skull with gold according to their custom. They used it as a sacred vessel to give libations on holy days, and their priests and the custodians of their temple used it as a goblet.⁹

⁹ Livy’s account of an important victory and associated religious ritual amongst the Celts of northern Italy has strikingly close analogues in the following (closely paraphrased) descrip-

The Foundation of Gaul

§39. Diodorus Siculus *The Historical Library* 5.24; TRANS. JOHN CAREY

A FAMOUS MAN, THEY SAY, FORMERLY RULED CELTICA, to whom was born a daughter of gigantic stature, far surpassing all others in beauty.

tions of the steppe nomads living further east, as far the north-western frontiers of China. It would seem that the ritual trophy of the skull cup was a widely shared cultural attribute of the Northern Barbarian peoples of the Eurasian Iron Age.

Analogue 1. Herodotus *History*, 4.66 [5th century BC], in the context of a detailed ethnographic description of the Iranian-speaking Scythians of present-day Ukraine and South Russia, tells of Scythian head-hunting: The skulls of the enemies whom they most hated [presumably their most formidable opponents] would be turned into drinking cups. They would first saw off the portion below the eyebrows, then clean out the inside, and cover the exterior of the cranium with leather. If the Scythian trophy taker was poor, that was the final form of the cup. But if he was rich, he would also cover the interior with gold. Either way, the skull was then used as a drinking cup. The Scythians would do the same with the skulls of their own relatives if they had feuded with them and overthrown them in the king’s presence. When strangers whom the Scythians regarded as important persons came to visit them, the skulls would be passed around, and the host would tell that the heads were of his kinsfolk who had fought against him and how he had overcome them. The Scythians viewed these customs as a way of proving bravery.

Analogue 2. In the Chinese annals of the Han Dynasty, the *Shiji* of Simaa Qian (Ch. 123) and the *Qian Han Shu* of Ban Gu (Ch. 96A), we find parallel and complementary accounts concerning the western nomads for the period c. 209–c. 160 BC. The two peoples in question were the Yueji, who were probably Indo-European (Iranian or Tocharian speakers) and appear later in Indian and Persian sources as the Kushan dynasty, and the Xiongnu, who were probably Turkic speakers and have often been equated with the Huns who appeared in Europe some centuries later. According to Simaa Qian, the Yueji were nomads and roamed here and there following their herds. They had the same way of life as the Xiongnu. Their mounted bowmen numbered ten or twenty myriads. According to Ban Gu, they originally lived between Dunhuang and the mountains known as Qilian Shan in what is now Gansu province in western China. Simaa Qian tells us that they had at first been strong and could make light of the Xiongnu. However, both sources tell that when Modun became Chanyu, or ruler, of the Xiongnu (c. 209 BC), he attacked and defeated the Yueji. Modun’s son and successor Laoshang (ruled c. 174–160 BC) killed the king of the Yueji and made a drinking vessel of his skull. According to Ban Gu, the Yueji then moved far away beyond a region called Dayuan (perhaps the Tarim Basin). In the West, they defeated the Daxia (the Bactrian Greeks, Alexander’s successors in Central Asia) and made them their subjects. Then the Yueji made their head-quarters north of the Wei River (= the Oxus in modern Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan).

But she, glorying in her strength and her wondrous beauty, refused to marry any of her suitors, considering none of them worthy of her. During his expedition against Geryon, Heracles arrived in Celtica and stayed there in the city of Alesia.¹⁰ Having seen him, and marvelled at his nobility and physical pre-eminence, she eagerly accepted his advances—her parents had given their consent.

After uniting with him, she bore to Heracles a son named Galates, who far outstripped his fellow tribesmen in nobility of spirit and strength of body. When he had grown to manhood and succeeded to his father's kingdom, he took possession of much of the adjacent territory and performed mighty deeds of war. The fame of his valour having spread far and wide, he called his subjects Galatae after himself; from them all Galatia was named.¹¹

§§40-41. The Foundation of Marseilles

[*Latin Massilia, Greek Massalia*], TRANS. JOHN CAREY

§40. Athenæus *Deipnosophistae* 13.576.

ARISTOTLE, in *The Constitution of Massilia*, gives a similar account:

The Phocaeans, merchants of Ionia, were the founders of Massilia. Euxenus of Phocaea was a guest of the king Nannus (for that was his name). As Nannus was celebrating his daughter's marriage, Euxenus chanced to arrive and was invited to the feast.

The marriage took place in this way: after the meal the girl was to come in, and to give a bowl of drink which she had mixed to the man whom she preferred among assembled suitors. He to whom she offered it was the bridegroom. When she came in, the girl gave the bowl—whether by chance, or for some other reason—to Euxenus; her own name was Petta.¹²

When this happened, her father concluded that she had acted in accordance

¹⁰ Alesia. The oppidum of Alesia was the capital of Vercingetorix as national leader of the Gaulish resistance to Cæsar in the 50s B.C.

¹¹ Galatia here is the general Greek name for Gaul and does not signify the Celtic territory in Asia Minor about Ankara.

¹² The bride's name *Petta* is Celtic meaning, most generally, 'portion, thing', cf. Welsh *petb*, Old Irish *ait*. A specialised meaning which may be relevant to this story is that of *Pett*, *Pitt* found in hundreds of place-names in the former territory of the Picts (i.e. present-day north-eastern Scotland), where the term was taken into Scottish Gaelic in the sense a 'holding of land'.

with divine will; Euxenus took her as his wife and lived with her, changing her name to Aristoxene. And even now there is a kindred descended from this woman in Massilia, called the Protidae: for Euxenus and Aristoxene had a son named Protias.

§41. Justin *Philippic Histories* 43.3.

IN THE TIME OF KING TARQUIN the young men of Phocaea, in Asia, arrived at the Tiber's mouth and concluded an alliance with the Romans; thence they voyaged to the farthest harbours of Gaul, and founded Massilia among the Ligurians and the fierce tribes of the Gauls. . .

The leaders of the fleet were Simos and Protis. They met with Nannus, king of the Segobrigii,¹³ seeking an alliance: they were eager to establish a city in his territory. It happened that on that day the king was busy with the preparations for the wedding of his daughter Gyptis: according to the custom of the people, she was to be given in marriage to a bridegroom chosen during the feast. And so, when all her suitors had been summoned, the Greek visitors were also invited to attend the banquet. The maiden was led in, and instructed by her father to offer water to the man whom she chose as her husband; ignoring all the rest, she turned to the Greeks and offered the water to Protis. He who had been a guest was now a son-in-law; and he obtained from his father-in-law the land on which to found a city.

King Catumandus and the Dream-Vision of the War-Goddess

§42. Justin *Philippic Histories* 43.5; TRANS. J. T. KOCH

[THE GREEKS OF MASSILIA] MADE GREAT WARS against [their neighbours] the Ligurians and Gauls. This increased the eminence of their city, and made their valour, through their many victories, famous amongst all the nations around them. They also thoroughly routed the Carthaginian army in a dispute which arose over the capture of some fishing boats, and they granted the vanquished peace . . . Subsequently, when Massilia was at the zenith of its renown, for the fame of its deeds as well as for the abundance of its wealth and its reputation for might, the neighbouring tribes unexpectedly conspired to lay waste to Massilia utterly, so as to wipe out its very name, as if to quench a conflagration

¹³ The tribal name *Segobrigi* is also Celtic and means 'Dwellers in the Strong Hillfort'.

that threatened to consume them all.¹⁴ Catumandus,¹⁵ one of their minor tribal kings, was chosen by unanimous consensus to lead them in war. As he was besieging the city with a vast force of chosen warriors, he was terrified in his sleep with the dream of a woman with a fierce expression. She told him that she was a goddess. He immediately sued for peace with the Massaliots. He then asked permission to enter the city in order to worship their gods. He went to the temple of Minerva, and in the portico he saw the image of the goddess that he had seen in his sleep. He suddenly blurted out that it was she who had come to him in the night and she who had demanded that he break off the siege. With congratulations to the Massaliots (for he knew that they were favoured by the immortal gods), he offered a golden torque to the goddess and thus concluded a permanent treaty of friendship with the Greeks of Massilia.¹⁶

§§43-44. The Poisoned Libation: The Love Triangle of Sinātus, Sinorīx, & the High Priestess Cammā¹⁷

§43: Plutarch *On the Bravery of Women* 257-8; TRANS. JOHN CAREY

SINĀTUS AND SINORĪX, distant kinsmen, were the most powerful of the Tetrarchs of Galatia. Sinātus had a young wife named Cammā, much admired for her youth and beauty, but still more remarkable for her virtues.¹⁸ For she was

¹⁴ The siege described in this story took place about 390 B.C.

¹⁵ The Gaulish king's name *Catumandus* probably means 'war-pony' and was a common king's name in both Gaul and Britain. The father of the powerful 7th-century Welsh king Cadwallon (see below) was Caramanus or (in later spelling) Cadfan. The Anglo-Saxon poet Caedmon's name is a borrowing from Celtic.

¹⁶ The Roman writer Justin is here summarising the lost work of the Romanised Gaul Trogus Pompeius, who was descended from the native people of the region.

¹⁷ Features of the narrative—including a queen closely connected with a goddess, a honey drink that proves poisonous, an unnatural death instead of a wedding feast, a chieftain set in a chariot as his relatives prepare his tomb, a love triangle terminating in a fateful chariot ride, kinslaying as the prelude to the downfall of king, a woman who brings great evil to those close to her through no fault of her own—resonate widely through the Celtic literary traditions and may be viewed as elements in its inherited preliterary substance.

¹⁸ *Sinorīx* means 'old king', *Cammā* probably means 'evil woman', literally 'crooked one' (fem.). Galatia here means the Celtic domain founded in Hellenistic times in central Asia Minor, about modern Ankara.

not only modest and affectionate, but also shrewd and courageous, and fervently beloved by her servants on account of her compassion and her kindness. She was further distinguished by her office as priestess of Artemis, the goddess whom the Galatae most revere, and was always to be seen at the solemn processions and sacrifices, magnificently attired.

Sinorīx fell in love with her. Unable to possess her either by persuasion or by force while her husband lived, he did a dreadful deed: he killed Sinātus treacherously. Not long thereafter he proposed to Cammā, who was now living in the temple. She was biding her time, and bore Sinorīx's crime not with pathetic weakness but with a keen and foreseeing spirit.

He was importunate in his entreaties, and proffered arguments not entirely implausible: he claimed that he was a better man than Sinātus and had killed him for no reason except his love for Cammā. Even at first, her refusals were not too harsh, and in a little while she seemed to soften. (Her relatives and friends were also pressuring and seeking to force her to accept him, hoping themselves for the favour of the mighty Sinorīx.)

At last she yielded, and sent for him so that the compact and the vows might be made in the presence of the goddess. When he arrived she received him affectionately. She led him to the altar, poured a libation from a drinking-bowl, drank some herself, and told him to drink the rest. It was a drink of milk and honey [*milikraton*], with poison in it. When she saw that he had drunk, she cried aloud and fell down before the goddess. 'I bear witness to you, most glorious spirit,' she said, 'that it is for the sake of this day that I have lived since Sinātus's murder, in all that time taking pleasure in none of the good things of life, but only in the hope of justice. Having attained this, I go down to my husband. As for you, most impious of men, your relatives can prepare your tomb, instead of your wedding and bridal chamber.'

When the Galatian heard this, and felt the poison at work in him and penetrating his body, he mounted his chariot as if the tossing and shaking might do him good; but forthwith he desisted, got into a litter, and died in the evening. Cammā survived through the night: learning of his death, she passed away cheerfully and gladly.

§44. Polyaeus *History* 8.39; TRANS. PHILIP FREEMAN

SINORĪX AND SINĀTUS were rulers of the Galatians. The wife of Sinātus was called Cammā, and she was a woman famous for both her beauty and fine character. She was a priestess of the goddess Artemis, whom the Galatians worship above all other gods. Whenever there was a religious procession or sacrifice to Artemis, Cammā was always present, attired in magnificent and grand robes. But Sinorīx also loved Cammā. However, no matter how hard he tried to persuade Cammā to leave Sinātus and marry him, and even when he began to

make threats, she refused to betray her husband while he was alive. Sinorix took care of that difficulty very quickly. Even after her husband's death, Cammā still resisted Sinorix's advances, even though her family was urging her strongly to give in and marry him. And so finally she agreed. 'Have Sinorix come to the temple of Artemis,' she said, 'and there we will be married.' So Sinorix came and all the leading men and women of the Galatians came also as wedding guests. Cammā kindly received Sinorix into the temple, and led him to the sacrificial altar, where she poured out a drink from a golden cup. When she had drunk from it, she handed it to him so that he might drink, too. He took the cup from her, sweetly smiling at his bride, and drank. But unknown to him, the drink was a poisoned mixture of milk and honey. When Cammā saw that he had drunk from the cup, she let out a cry of victory and praised the goddess: 'O greatly-honoured Artemis, I know that you are indeed kind, because today in your own temple you gave me justice over this man who thought he could unjustly become my husband!' When she had finished speaking, she immediately collapsed and died. And Sinorix, who was rather surprised at this turn of events, also immediately died at the altar of the goddess.

§§45-49. Ancient Celtic Women Leaders

TRANS. J. T. KOCH & JOHN CAREY

Onomāris

§45. *Tractatus De Mulieribus Claris in Bello* [5th/6th century BC?]

ONOMĀRIS is one of those held in honour by the Galatians. When her people were oppressed by famine, and sought to flee from their country, they offered themselves as subjects to anyone who was willing to lead them. When none of the men wished to do this, she placed all of their property in a common store, and led the settlers, of whom there were many, to . . .¹⁹ Crossing the Danube, and conquering the natives in battle, she ruled over that land as queen.

¹⁹ A few letters are missing in the manuscript here; perhaps a place name?

§§46-47. Boudicā

§46. Dio Cassius [wrote c. AD 190-235] *Roman History* 62.

BOUDICĀ,²⁰ a British woman of royal lineage and an uncommonly intelligent woman was the person who was most instrumental in inciting the natives and convincing them to fight the Romans, who was thought fit to be their commander, and who directed the campaigns of the entire war. This very woman brought together her martial forces, approximately 120,000 in number, then she climbed up onto a raised platform, which had been built of turf in the Roman manner.

She was huge of body, with a horrific expression and a harsh voice. A huge mass of bright red hair descended to the swell of her hips; she wore a large torc of twisted gold,²¹ and a tunic of many colours over which there was a thick cape fastened by a brooch. Then she grasped a spear to strike fear into all who watched her.

. . . After that, she used a type of augury, releasing a hare from the folds of her garment. Because it ran off in what [the Britons] considered to be the auspicious direction, the whole horde roared its approval. Raising her hand to the sky, Boudicā said: 'I thank you, Andrasta [the 'Unconquered' goddess], and call out to you as one woman to another . . . I implore and pray to you for victory and to maintain life and freedom against arrogant, unjust, insatiable, and profane men.'

§47. Tacitus

Annals. ¶ 14-35.

IN A CHARIOT with her daughters in front of her, Boudicā went to tribe after tribe, arguing that it was in truth proper for the Britons to fight under the command of women. 'But now,' she said, 'it is not as a woman of aristocratic descent, but as one of the folk that I take vengeance for lost freedom, my lashed body, the violated virginity of my daughters. Roman appetite has gone so far that not even our persons, not even age or virginity, are left inviolate. But heaven is on the side of just revenge; a legion that was so bold as to fight has been extinguished; the rest are hiding themselves in their camp, or are nervously considering escape. They will not bear even the clamour and cry of as many thousands [as

²⁰ Her name means 'victorious' (cf. Lóegaire *Buadach* §§65, 68). On the death of her husband Prasutagos, she assumed the leadership of her tribe the Iceni, who lived in present-day East Anglia, England. In AD 60-61, she led a revolt against the Romans, destroying the towns of Colchester, London, and Verulamium (nr. St Albans), and killing an estimated 80,000, before she was defeated and committed suicide.

²¹ Many torcs of twisted gold dating from the first century BC/AD have been found in East Anglia, the largest single find spot being Snettisham, Norfolk, though that group would predate the following events by more than a century.

anti-Roman party was infuriated at that and further stirred up as they looked ahead to submitting in dishonour to the overlordship of a woman. The best of their youths were picked out for war, and they invaded her kingdom. We had anticipated this, and some auxiliary cohorts were sent to her aid. A keen struggle followed. The outcome was in doubt as it began, but it ended successfully.

Histories ¶ 3.45. These discords and ongoing rumours of civil war put spirit into the Britons, who were under the leadership of Venutius, a man who was naturally fierce, hated the name of Rome, and was also driven on by his own personal hatred of Queen Cartimandua. Cartimandua, because she was of most noble descent, ruled the Brigantes. She had increased her power, when, due to her under-handed capture of King Caratacus [in AD 51], she came to be viewed as having secured the most important component of the Emperor Claudius' triumph [the conquest of Britain]. After this, there came the luxury and indolence of victory. Casting aside her husband Venutius, she took Vellocatus, his armour-bearer, in marriage and to share in governing the realm. This huge scandal rocked her household to its foundation. The tribe's sentiments favoured her rightful husband [Venutius]. Favoured the illegitimate husband were the queen's libido and her ferocious temper. So then, Venutius mustered some warbands and was helped at that same time by an uprising amongst this tribe, the Brigantes. He succeeded in putting Cartimandua into an extremely desperate position. She requested Roman forces. Some of our infantry and cavalry auxiliary units, after fighting for a time with mixed results, rescued the queen from this dangerous crisis. [But] Venutius' power was not finished, and we were [thus] left with a war.

§§50-64. Ireland before St Patrick

TRANS. PHILIP FREEMAN

§50. Avienus *Ora Maritima* [4th century AD, believed to be based on a lost 'Massaliote Periplus' of the 6th century BC]

FROM HERE it is a two day voyage to the Sacred Isle, for by this name the ancients called the island. It lies rich in turf among the waves,

thickly populated by the *Hierni*.²⁴

Nearby lies the island of the *Albiones*.²⁵ The Tartessians²⁶ were accustomed to trade even to the edge of the Oestrymnides.²⁷ The Carthaginian colonists and people around the Pillars of Hercules frequented these waters. Four months scarcely is enough for the voyage, as Himilco the Carthaginian proved by sailing there and back himself.

§51. Diodorus Siculus *Bibliotheca Historica* ¶ 5.32.2-3 [see §18 above.]

§52. Julius Caesar *De Bello Gallico* ¶ 5.13 [see §20 above.]

§53. Strabo *Geography*

¶ 2.1.13

THE VOYAGE FROM CELTICA to the north is currently said to be the most extreme. By this I mean the voyage beyond Britain to *Lernē*,²⁸ a wretched place to live because of the cold, beyond which the lands are considered uninhabitable. They say that *Lernē* is separated from Celtica by not more than five thousand stadia.

¶ 4.5.4 There are also other smaller islands around Britain, the largest being *Lernē* which lies to its north and is longer than it is wide. Concerning this island I have nothing certain to report, except that the people living there are more savage than the Britons, being cannibals as well as gluttons. Further, they consider it honourable to eat their dead fathers and to openly have intercourse, not only with unrelated women, but with their mothers and sisters as well. I say these things not having trustworthy witnesses, and yet the custom of cannibalism is said to be found among the Scythians, and, because of necessity during sieges, the Celts, Iberians, and others besides are said to have practised it.

²⁴ *Hierni* 'The Irish'.

²⁵ *Albiones* 'The British'.

²⁶ Living near present-day Gibraltar.

²⁷ *Oestrymnides*: possibly the same tribe later known as the *Oisimii*, living in western Armorica, present-day Brittany.

²⁸ *Lernē* 'Ireland', home of the *Hierni* 'Irish' mentioned in §50 above; cf. the Middle Irish tribal name *Érainn*.