

WEEK EIGHT:
The Barbarians – Ethnographies II

Tuesday: Gauls and More + Crossing the Channel

For this week's readings we will turn to selections from Roman authors that discuss the Gauls and Germans. Up first are the Gauls and peoples of early Britain. Livy's *ab Urbe Condita* (*AUC*), extensive selections of which we will be reading when we turn to Hannibal in the coming weeks, was a monumental effort to describe the entire history of Rome from the founding of the city (the meaning of the title, *AUC*) up to Livy's own day (the Augustan principate). The work totaled 142 books, though only 35 survive today. Livy first discusses the Gauls in Book Five, when they attack Italy and eventually sack Rome itself (which we will read later). Livy gives a brief description of the early history of the Gauls and briefly touches on some cultural issues as he does so.

Caesar's commentaries on the Gallic War (*de Bello Gallico* = *BG*) describe his campaigns in Transalpine and Northern Gaul (modern-day France and Belgium, roughly), Britain, and Germany. The Gauls had long been a difficult opponent for the Romans. Caesar's campaign continued for nearly 10 years and left most of the Celtic world under Roman rule, a feat that nearly doubled the amount of territory controlled by Rome. Read the first chapter (1.1), which opens with one of the most famous lines of Latin prose (*Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres...*) and lays out a rough approach to the general characteristics of Gaul. The second selection (6.11-20) lays out the social, political, and religious customs of the Gauls.

Next, we will examine Caesar's and Tacitus' descriptions of Britain. Although Caesar was the first Roman commander to make an expedition to Britain, each of his two campaigns were short and did little other than to set up a client king and exact some tribute from the area. Caesar pauses in his narrative to describe the unfamiliar territory and its people to Rome before the first of his two invasions of the island. The Romans ruled Britain only in name through client kingdoms for next 100 years, when the Emperor Claudius sent a force to conquer the island and establish a firm Roman presence there. While this campaign was largely successful, Britain remained a troubling hot spot for decades, until the Emperor Domitian sent Gnaeus Julius Agricola to put down unrest and solidify Roman control over the province. Agricola led the most successful Roman campaign in Britain, as he put down several major revolts and circumnavigated the island for the first time. Agricola's son-in-law, Tacitus, commemorates the general's efforts in a biography published years later (in a time when the subsequent emperors were more tolerant of the celebration of personal achievements). Our brief selection from Tacitus' biography of his father-in-law lays out the customs of the Britons.

Assignment:

- **Gauls and More: Livy *AUC* 5.33-35** (=Luce trans., pp. 317-20); **Caesar *de Bello Gallico* (=BG) 1.1** (=Hammond trans., p. 1); **6.11-20** (=Hammond trans., pp. bottom of 124-129)
- **Crossing the Channel: Caesar *BG* 5.12-14** (=Hammond trans., pp. 95-96); **Tacitus *Agricola* 10-12** (=Birley trans., pp. 8-11)
- Since this is a fairly short assignment, I strongly urge you to **get a head start on your review for the midterm exam!**

Reading Questions:

- How do these ethnographic selections compare to those we read from Herodotus and *AWP* for last week? Do the Roman authors seem concerned with practices that are similar to or different from the focus of their Greek counterparts?
- To what does Livy attribute the Gallic invasion of Italy? How does this compare with the behavior of the Gauls described by Caesar?
- What selective processes might be at work in the details that Caesar chooses to provide about each of these groups of people? Are there details that are surprising? What would you expect to be present that is not?
- How do Caesar and Tacitus describe the inhabitants of Britain in comparison to their counterparts in mainland Gaul?
- What qualities do each of the authors praise or censure and for what reasons?

Thursday: Germans across the Rhine

For Thursday, we will turn to Germany, a place even more troublesome for the Romans than Gaul. Caesar made two expeditions across the Rhine to “conquer” the Germans (much like he did in Britain). In his narrative of the second campaign in Germany, he describes the customs of the Germans—immediately after the selection on the Gauls we read for Tuesday, which you should review to understand how Caesar compares and contrasts between these two neighboring peoples. Review, too, the opening of the *BG* (1.1), where the Germans play a role in how Caesar defines and describes the three major groups of Gaul.

Next, read Tacitus’ *Germania*, which he composed shortly after the *Agricola*. This text is a fully dedicated ethnography, one of very few surviving examples from the ancient world. Tacitus describes the professed origins of the German peoples, describes their customs across several different facets of their lives, and then proceeds on a state-by-state description of the various subgroups of Germans. He organizes these geographically, beginning with those closest to the Rhine (and subsequently, Rome) and making his way farther east.

Assignment:

- **Tacitus, *Germania*** (= Birley trans. pp. 37-62)
- **Caesar, *BG* 6.21-28** (=Hammond trans. pp. bottom of 129-top of 133)

Reading Questions:

- How does Caesar compare the Germans to the Gauls? What qualities distinguish them from each other and what effects do these have on how he interacts with them?
- How does the focus or organization of Tacitus’ text (as a dedicated ethnography) compare to the excerpts we have read from other works over the last two weeks? Are the differences matters of scale or kind?
- What German customs, qualities, or behaviors receive praise or censure?
- As Tacitus defines the various subgroups of Germans in the latter half of the text, what characteristics does he use to distinguish between each people?
- Again (as we have asked about the other ethnographic passages), what do you think is “missing” from these descriptions?

People, Terms, Events and Concepts, to know from Week Eight:

(Gaius Julius) Caesar	Tacitus	Livy
Reasons for Gallic invasion of Italy	Caledonia woad	-assemblies -clothing
Arruns	luxury	-marriage
Etruscans	Germany	-personal relationships
Belgae, Aquitani, Gauls	the Rhine	Mannus
Gallic <i>factiones</i>	German: -religion	<i>baritus</i>
druids	-equine auspices	Ulysses
knights	-social customs	Chatti
Gallic religion	-agricultural practices	Cimbri
Dis	-animals (elks!)	Suebi
Britain	-physique	Fenni