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The Gallic Wars



Synopsis

Caesar portrayed his invasion of Gaul as being a defensive pre-emptive action, most historians agree that the wars were fought primarily to boost Caesar's political career and to pay off his massive debts. Even so, Gaul was extremely important to Rome, as they had been attacked many times by the Gauls. Conquering Gaul allowed Rome to secure the natural border of the river Rhine. Caesar painstakingly describes his military campaign, and this is it is still the most important historical source on the Gaul campaign. It is also a masterwork of political propaganda, as Caesar was keenly interested in manipulating his readers in Rome as he published this book just as the Roman Civil war began. W. A. Macdevitt's translations brings this land mark historic book alive.

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Customer Reviews

I would give this 4 stars were it not for the fact the format of the book is a little plain and there are numerous typos, which is inevitably my fault since I purchased a rather cheap edition, but price was not the only thing influencing my decision; Macdevitt's translation was one of the simplest ones, with no annoying overly pro-Caesar or overly pro-Gaulish prefaces, poor English translations over-shadowed by pages of beautiful Latin, or bizarre un-professional and ill-suited British characteristics in the English such as "cock-a-hoop". Anyways, I'm not reviewing this as a student of Latin or even of Rome (though I can see this work would be convenient for that) but as an amateur yet highly engrossed student of ancient Gaul and French history. Like any Roman, Caesar can't be wrong and is biased against the Celts, but he's a political and military figure writing propaganda letters back to Rome; I don't expect standing ovations or ceaseless applause for the

people standing in the way of his goals, and I'm not particularly offended. Of course, study of the Gauls would be 20 times less messy if the most detailed records of their society, politics and doings in history had not been written by disinterested foreigners who typically resented them and believed in stereotypes. Still, this book is one of the best options for an in-depth student of the Gauls, so on with the description: Caesar includes a large portion in one of his books which endeavors to tell us a little of Gaulish culture and politics, and I would say he was quite accurate in ascribing to them a certain favoritism for Mercury (Roman rendering of a Celtic deity associated with travel and commerce, perhaps Lugh), since there is much archaeological evidence to support post-Gallic Wars era worship of a Celtic deity renamed Mercury, especially in Auvergne, where (according to Pliny, I believe) a colossal statue of him carved by a Roman or Italian sculptor was erected. Caesar also provides a similar following section dedicated to the Germans, though some of what he says about their religion isn't in accordance with information provided by later authors, but after all, he was a very preoccupied person and he had less experience with them than with the Gauls. So, for anyone getting started studying the Gauls, I recommend beginning your journey in the tale of this passionate,, metallurgic and impetuous people reading Caesar's book, a firsthand account of many of their actions. Besides, the arrival to the story of Vercingetorix in chapter seven is worth it's weight in gold; I must say he's an interesting ancient historical figure, and probably my favorite to read about. Besides, the Arverni are my favorite tribe.

Got this book and have been reading it for a few days now and enjoying it. The translation here by Macdevitt sometimes gets me lost in the details and there's even grammatical errors sometimes in the book. The worst part about this book is the cover art. It could not be a worse representation of the art it's supposed to depict. It's overstretched and really could have been done differently, and better if it looked like it took more than 10 minutes in photoshop. This isn't the book you put on a shelf or out in the open. It's the type you hide from visitors before you get a different copy.

Wow!! What a treat to be able to read Caesar's words after 2,000 years!!! What a learned individual----makes him more of a 'real' historical personage.

order was as advertised, great service

The Gallic War by Caesar was written just over two thousand years ago by one of the greatest military minds the world has ever known. Unfortunately many people think it is a scholarly work,

which it is not, it is a war diary, carefully edited for political consumption. The value of this book is the view it gives of Caesar himself and how he met and overcame his adversaries. As he recounts his battle plans and their results in his detailed reports to the senate in Rome, from his own words, the reader can get the feel of how he fought on the battlefields and in the political spheres of his times. Caesar's strategies were sometimes cunning, often tricky, but generally just exceptionally logical. His character could be described as a schizoid mix of Dr. Spock and Captain Kirk combined into one person on a polite rampage. At times you can almost picture Caesar sitting bloodied in the dirt trying to put the whole thing into words that will not offend the prissy senators sitting on their marble benches back in Rome. Nothing was too daring to try in his win/lose world of politics and battlefields and his solutions ranged from unbelievably complex (building moats and bridges while engaged in battle), to just burning down the walls. Once the battles were over, whenever possible, he strove to setup a political order among the conquered that would keep them conquered and even though over two thousand years have passed we still call it imperialism. Much can be learned from reading this book about the man who fights so he can be free and the man who fights for the state and is never free. It all leaves you with the unanswerable questions: So what would our world of today be like if there had been no Caesar and what would Caesar have been like if there had been no Rome?

An excellent literal translation of Caesar's writings on the Gallic War. Especially helpful for students in AP Latin seeking a translation to supplement their studies and personal translations. Reasonably priced as well.

This is of course a classic, used as source material not just by modern scholars, but by Roman Generals for generations after Julius Caesar. But - it is hard to wrap your brain around. For example, it's hard to really understand the scope of the genocide just based on Caesar's writing. It's better to have a historian give you a view of the archaeological evidence alongside the narrative. Having read this multiple times in preparation for my podcast, I can tell you that reading a biography of Caesar first is the way to go. Try Goldsworthy first. If you want the Gallic Wars in Audio form, check out my podcast: iTunes:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-rhine/id1059237175?mt=2&sticker>:

<http://www.stitcher.com/podcast/joseph-rigodanzo/the-rhine-stories-and-legends-from-the-contested-frontier-of?refid=stpr>

Terrific work by one of my favorite ancient world heroes, Julius Caesar. Superb tactician, and a very manly guy.

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