



# KEEPING UP WITH THE JULII

Roman Impact on Social Stratification and Mobility  
in the Rhône Basin c.125-10BCE Vol.I: pp1-306

SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS, SCHOOL OF HISTORIES  
AND HUMANITIES

Ralph Moore  
August 2022

## Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis entails the acknowledgement of the contributions of so many.

I would like, firstly, to thank my beloved wife Linda for her unwavering support and endless patience through the tribulations of our life together as I laboured on this project. Gratitude is also due to my parents, John and Kathryn, for their putting up with my many eccentricities and encouragement of the education that brought me here.

To Hazel Dodge, my advisor, I extend the warmest thanks for your aid and guidance throughout the diverse iterations this project passed through before reaching its final form. To Anna Chahoud and Ash Clements, faithful readers and astute critics of my work thus far, I remain forever obliged.

To the Irish Research Council, who provided the financial support necessary to bring this project to fruition, I offer my sincerest appreciation, especially for the swift and sympathetic responses you provided to in our exchanges of correspondence through hard times.

To my colleagues and fellow travellers along the path to a doctoral degree, in both TCD Classics Department and the Trinity Long Room Hub Research Institute, I offer my heartfelt solidarity and deepest condolences. Particular honourable mention is merited by Kat Murphy, Autumn Brown, Nandini Gupta, and Lisa Doyle for their proofreading services on short notice.

And, lastly, to my housemates, Kylie, Alexandra, Avery, and Willow, I thank you for your tolerance of my work schedule and use of our

shared spaces, especially during the pressure of the ongoing pandemic.

## Table of Contents

1: Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology .....	6
1.1 General Introduction .....	8
1.2 The Geography of the Rhône Basin .....	10
1.3 'Gaul', the 'Gauls', and the Late Iron Age .....	12
1.4 Literature Review.....	21
1.4.1 Starting Point: Drinkwater's 'The Rise and Fall of the Gallic <i>Julii</i> ' (1978).....	21
1.4.2 Drinkwater's Context.....	22
1.4.3 Woolf and other Successors.....	27
1.4.4 New Discoveries and Issues .....	39
1.4.5 Contribution to Scholarship.....	44
1.5 Primary Questions .....	46
1.6 The Available Evidence .....	47
1.6.1 The Problem of Caesar .....	49
1.6.2 Other Ancient Contributors .....	54
1.6.3 Seeing Gaul through Roman (and Greek) Eyes.....	62
1.6.4 The State of Archaeology.....	66
1.6.5 Numismatics.....	66
1.6.6 Funerary Archaeology .....	68
1.6.7 Patterns of Settlement .....	69
1.6.8 Trade, Agriculture, and Consumption .....	75
1.6.9 Epigraphy.....	77
1.6.10 Iconographic Evidence .....	79
1.6.11 What is Lacking .....	81
1.7 Methods and Approaches .....	83
1.7.1 Technologies of Social Power .....	84
1.7.2 Ideology and Legitimation .....	91
1.7.3 Class and Rank .....	95
1.7.4 Agency and Adaptation in Colonial Settings.....	98
1.7.5 Stratification and Mobility .....	102
1.7.6 Summary .....	105

2 - Rome and the Rhône c.125-10BCE .....	106
2.1 Beyond the Alps – The establishment of Roman Power in the Lower Rhône Valley c.125-90BCE .....	106
2.1.1 The Saluvian-Allobrogan Wars c.125-120BCE .....	107
2.1.2 The Via Domitia.....	115
2.1.3 The Impact of the Cimbric Wars c.107-102BCE .....	116
2.1.4 The Revolt of c.90BCE.....	123
2.2 Expanding Networks, Rising Tensions – Rome and the Rhône Basin c.90-65BCE .....	124
2.2.1 Gallia Transalpina and the Roman West c.90-70BCE...	124
2.3 Crisis and Conquest – The Origins and Impact of the Caesarian Gallic Wars c.65-50BCE.....	130
2.3.1 Rome and the Allobroges c.65-60BCE – A prelude? .....	130
2.3.2 The Gallic Crisis c.65-58BCE .....	134
2.3.3 The Helvetian and Ariovistan Wars c.58BCE .....	138
2.3.2 The Revolt of Vercingetorix c.52BCE .....	146
2.3.3 The Toll of War.....	153
2.4 Pawns and Powerbrokers – The Rhône Basin in the Age of the Roman Civil Wars c.50-30BCE .....	159
2.5 Restoration and Reconstruction? – The Provincial Rhône Basin in the Early Augustan Era c.30-10BCE .....	164
2.5.1 The Augustan Revolution .....	164
3 Rule of Law? - Political Power.....	167
3.1 Defining Political Power .....	167
3.2 Ethnic/National Identity and State-building .....	170
3.2.1 <i>Nationes, Gentes, and Pagi</i> .....	171
3.2.3 Provincialisation and Development of Gallo-Roman <i>Civitates</i> .....	180
3.3 Political Organisation.....	187
3.3.1 Class and Social Organisation.....	187
3.3.2 Monarchy, Oligarchy, and Constitutionality in Late Iron Age Gaul .....	201
3.3.3 Magistracy, Senates, and Officeholding in Late Iron Age Gaul.....	219
3.3.3 Gallo-Roman Provincial Political Offices.....	236
3.4 Colonial and Imperial Interactions .....	240
3.4.1 Provincial Governors and Agents in the Rhône Region	240

3.4.2 Roman Senatorial, Triumviral, and Imperial Patrons for Gallic Clients .....	245
3.5 Conclusions .....	248
4 Those who live by the Sword - Military Power.....	250
4.1 Defining Military Power .....	250
4.2 Prowess – The Indigenous ‘Warrior Elite’ of the Rhône Basin .....	252
4.2.1 Heroes of Old?.....	253
4.2.2 A War-Mad Race? .....	260
4.3 Command – Indigenous Gallic Military Organisation and its Socio-Political Ramifications .....	268
4.3.1 Generals and Officers.....	268
4.3.2 Warlords and Warbands.....	276
4.4 Service - Gallic Warriors, Roman Commanders.....	283
4.4.1 Warriors of the Lower Rhône Valley and the Roman Province c.120-60BCE .....	284
4.4.2 Serving with Caesar? c.60-30BCE .....	290
4.4.3 A Gallic Legion? – The Case of the <i>Alaudae</i> .....	298
4.4.4 Impact of the Augustan Military Reforms c.30-10BCE ...	301
4.5 Conclusions .....	304
5 For Richer, For Poorer – Economic Power.....	307
5.1 Defining Economic Power .....	307
5.2 Land.....	309
5.3 Labour .....	322
5.4 Coinage.....	330
5.5 Trade .....	342
5.6 Conclusions .....	364
6 Playing the Part - Cultural Power .....	367
6.1 Defining Cultural Power .....	367
6.2 – Iconographies of Class and Status .....	369
6.2.1 – Examining iconography as a means of projecting power and status .....	369
6.2.2 – Statuary and Sculpture in Late Iron Age Rhône Gaul .....	372
6.3 – Speaking and Writing the Languages of Power: Gaulish, Greek, and Latin in the Rhône Basin .....	386
6.3.1 – Language Usage and Frameworks of Prestige and Power .....	386
6.3.2 – Gaulish Epigraphy in the Late Iron Age.....	388

6.3.3 – The Latin Epigraphic Habit and its limitations in the Rhône Basin .....	394
6.3.4 – Interlingual and Intercultural Engagement in Literature .....	396
6.4 – Coinage as Iconography and Epigraphy .....	407
6.5 – Looking the Part: Archaeology of Personal Appearance and Grooming as indicators of Social Status .....	411
6.4.1 – The Available Evidence .....	412
6.4.2 – ‘Comatan’ and ‘Togatan’ Gauls?.....	415
6.5 – Conclusions .....	424
7 – Conclusion(s) .....	427
7.1 Summary Overview – ‘Keeping Up with’ the Julii.....	427
7.2 Looking Ahead.....	435
Appendices: .....	438
Appendix 1: On the Gaulish Language .....	438
Gaulish Onomastics and Naming Conventions .....	438
The Tau Gallicum and other Phonemes .....	439
Appendix 2: The Peoples of the Ancient Rhône .....	440
The Saluvii: .....	441
The Cavares: .....	441
The Volcae Arecomici: .....	442
The Vocontii:.....	443
The Helvii: .....	444
The Allobroges: .....	444
The Segusiavi:.....	445
The Arverni: .....	446
The Aedui:.....	447
The Sequani: .....	448
The Helvetii:.....	448
Appendix 3: Glossary of Non-English Terms .....	449
Gaulish: .....	449
Latin: .....	450
Greek: .....	459
Appendix 4: Glossary of Locations .....	462
Gaul: .....	462
Italy:.....	466
Greece and the Aegean:.....	466

Appendix 5: Glossary/Index of Historical Individuals.....	467
Figures:.....	478
Bibliography .....	502

## Table of Figures

Fig. 1 Geographic/Hydrological Map of the Rhône Basin, Present Day, credit Wikipedia Commons.....	478
Fig. 2: Map of the Greater Rhône Basin region in the first two centuries BCE (borders modern). Credit author.....	479
Fig. 3: Divisions of 'Gaul' in Roman Late Republican/Caesarian conception (NB 'Narbonensis' more properly labelled 'Transalpina' in Pre-Augustan contexts). Credit Wikiwand.com. ....	480
Fig. 4: Caesar's division of Gaul by ethnic grouping and area. Credit Collis, 2003 Fig. 55. ....	481
Fig. 5: Theoretical spread of Celtic Languages and La Tène Material Culture in the Later First Millennium BCE, after Megaw and Megaw 1989: fig.2 'Interpretation 2'. Credit Collis, 2003: fig.44. ....	482
Fig. 6: The Aedui, Sequani, and allied/client states of each in their early first century BCE conflict. Credit Fichtl, 2004: 132.....	483
Fig. 7: Comatan Gallic and Belgic Communities of the Late Second/Early First Centuries. Credit Arbabe, 2017: Carte 4. ....	484
Fig. 8: Diagrams of Pyramidal vs Trapezoidal models of social organisation by class division, after Fernández-Götz, 2014. Credit author.....	485
Fig. 9: Attestations of Comatan Gallic monarchical regimes of the early to mid-first century BCE. Credit Arbabe, 2017: Carte 8. ....	486
Fig. 10: Attested/theorised Comatan Gallic oligarchic regimes of the late second/early first centuries BCE. Credit Arbabe, 2017: Carte 9. ....	487
Fig. 11: Attested Comatan Gallic rulers of the mid-to-late first century BCE. Credit Arbabe, 2017: Carte 11.....	488
Fig. 12: Gallo-Roman Civitates of the Early to High Imperial Periods c.10BCE-250CE. Credit Provost, Carte Archéologique de Gaule 3. ....	489
Fig. 13: Pottery fragment recovered from Clermont-Ferrand (in the territory of the Arverni), appearing to show a warrior carrying a severed head on the reins of their horse. Credit Collis, 2003 Fig. 86. ....	490
Fig. 14: Coins of Dubnoreixs, Silver Quinarius Weight Standard, BN5027-8/DLT5026 (Top), BN5038-40 (Bottom). Credit WildWinds.com and CNG.com.....	491
Fig. 15: Coins of Vercingetorixs, Gold Stater Weight Standard, BN774-5 (Top), DLT3778 (Bottom). Credit WildWinds.com.....	492
Fig. 16: Coins of Vercingetorixs. Top – Gold Sub-Stater Weight Standard (7.44g) DLT3777. Bottom – Bronze Unknown Denomination (7.46g) DLT3943/BN3936-47. Credit WildWinds.com. ....	493

Fig. 17: Coins of Epaḍnactos. Silver Quinarius Weight Standard. DLT3900 (Top) and BN3885 (Bottom). Credit WildWinds.com and CoinArchives.com.....	494
Fig. 18: Coin of Epaḍnactos. Bronze Unknown Denomination, BN3895-7. Credit CBG Numismatics Paris. ....	495
Fig. 19: Coin of Litaviccos. Silver Quinarius Weight Standard. BN5076-9/DLT5072. ....	495
Fig. 20: ‘Accroupi’ Statue replica, Glanum. Site Archéologique Glanum (Centre des Monuments Nationaux). Credit author. ....	496
Fig. 21: Guerrier de Mondragon Musée Lapidaire Calvet d’Avignon (Inv. G137). Credit author.....	497
Fig. 22: Guerrier de Vachères, Musée Lapidaire Calvet d’Avignon (Inv. G136 <sup>c</sup> ). Credit author.....	498
Fig. 23: Tarrasque de Noves, Musée Lapidaire Calvet d’Avignon (Inv. N51). Credit author. ....	499
Fig. 24: Cenotaph of the Julii’, Glanum. Credit author.....	500
Fig. 25: Primary geographic range of finds of Gallo-Greek Inscriptions (late third to early first centuries BCE). Credit Mullen, 2013: Map 3, and Lejeune, 1994: Carte 2. ....	501

## List of Abbreviations

- *AE* – L’Année Epigraphique
- *BN* – Catalogue des Monnaies Gaules de la Bibliothèque Nationale
- *CIL* – Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
- *DLT* – De La Tour, H. 1892 *Atlas de Monnaies Gauloises*
- *P.Hamb* – Papyrus Sammlung SUB Hamburg
- *P.Mich* – University of Michigan Papyrus Collection
- *P.Wisc* – University of Wisconsin, Madison, Papyrus Collection
- *RIG* – Recueil des Inscriptions Gauloises

*Primary source texts are abbreviated in citations in line with the Oxford Classical Dictionary 4<sup>th</sup> ed. See Bibliography.*



# 1: Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology

## 1.1 General Introduction

When a community is dominated by another in situations of imperialism/colonialism, how are the ideological systems by which distinctions of class and rank are maintained within that community affected? In the face of loss of sovereignty to external conquerors, can pre-existing ruling classes maintain their dominance and exclusivity or will they inevitably be challenged or even lost? This thesis attempts to apply these questions to the context of the advent of Roman imperial power over the Gallic communities of the Greater Rhône Basin area in the late second and first centuries BCE. While the experiences of local elite groups in better documented regions, notably the Hellenic world of the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean, are illustrated by readier, clearer evidence in their relationships with Roman conquerors, those of Gaul are far harder to reconstruct due to the limited and equivocal sources available to us. This situation has engendered a variety of hypotheses as to how the Roman campaigns of conquest undertaken in this part of western Europe over the late second and first centuries BCE, as well as their immediate aftermath, impacted local dynamics of class, social status, and power. Herein, we shall re-examine these

approaches, weighing them against what evidence we have, and attempting to construct a more grounded, more holistic picture of the events and processes that contributed to the changing world of the Greater Rhône Basin as it came into the orbit of Rome.

The Rhône and its tributaries formed one of the most significant waterways of ancient western Europe, and as such were a vital artery of transport, trade, and communication, especially in providing connections between the Mediterranean and the temperate lands of the interior and beyond. The area has rarely been studied as a geographic unit in its own right in the context of the Ancient World, however, due in part to the fact that it was bisected by a Roman provincial boundary, established in the wake of the Roman conquest of the south c.125-120BCE and maintained after the Caesarian wars of conquest further north c.58-50BCE. The separation of different parts of the river system by political circumstance in this timeframe has often obscured the underlying shared cultural history of neighbouring groups around it and their continued relationships with each other. Comparing the changes that occurred across differing areas of the Rhône Basin with the advent of Roman domination, rather than simply diachronically, will also allow for a more nuanced understanding of how various factors shaped the integration of Gallic societies into Gallo-Roman ones in differing ways. The chronology of the thesis ends in 10BCE in the wake of the *princeps* Augustus' last visit to Gaul and solidification of his reforms to the Imperial provincial system.

It falls to the rest of this chapter to introduce key geographic and ethnographic parameters for our research topic, survey the state of

scholarship that pertains to it, assert and elaborate the core questions of our project, consider the source of evidence available for our research (and the complications they entail), and explain the methodological approaches best suited to our situation. Chapter 2 will then provide the reader with an overview of the relevant historical events of the period c.125-10BCE that affected the peoples of the Rhône Basin. Chapters 3-6 examine various approaches to power in relation to class structure and its potential changes as a result of conquest (explained further in section 1.7 below). The conclusions we reach, and their implications for the wider historiography of Gaul, its place in the Roman World, and for Roman Imperialism generally, will be discussed in Chapter 7.

## 1.2 The Geography of the Rhône Basin

For its geographical parameters this thesis takes the area hereafter referred to as the 'Greater Rhône Basin'. The extent of the area is indicated on our main maps (Fig.1 and 2) and follows the main drainage basin, flood plains, and valleys of the rivers in question. This includes not only the Rhône itself (known as '*Rhodanus*' in Antiquity), from its source in the High Alps down to the delta on the Mediterranean coast, but also its major tributaries; the Saône (also known as '*Arar*' in Latin sources), the Isère, the Durance, and the Gard.<sup>1</sup> This riverine system functioned as a major network of travel, communication, and trade, both within itself and in providing access

---

<sup>1</sup> Latin references; Caes. *BG* 1.6, Cic. *Fam.* 10.9.2, Vitruvius. *De Arch.* 8.6, Livy 21.26.4-7, Tibullus. 1.7.10-16, Horace. *Carm.* 2.20.20, Ovid. *Fast.* 4.571, Seneca. *Apoc.* 7.11, Nepotianus. *Hann.* 4.1, Lucan. 1.433, Suetonius. *Iul.* 25, Tacitus. *Ann.* 13.53, Florus. 1.37, Silenus. *Pun.* 15.500-5. In Greek known as '*Ῥοδανός*'; Aristophanes. *Met.* 351.17-19, Apollonius. *Arg.* 4.627, Polybius. *Hist.* 3.47, Diodorus Siculus. 5.25, Strabo. *Geog.* 4.2.1, Appian. *Celt.* 15, Plutarch. *Mar.* 15.1-3, Oppian. *Hal.* 3.625, Cassiodorus. Dio 44.42.4-5,

to the sea. While this thesis does include examinations of certain areas technically outside these parameters (notably the eastern highlands of the Massif Central), these are covered for their established ties to the basin proper in terms of trade, politics, and cultural similarities.

The Rhône originates in the north-western Alps, flowing west through Lac Lemman before meeting the Saône and making a sharp almost due south. It is joined by many tributaries, most notably the Isère, Drôme, and Durance from the east and the Gard from the west, before emptying into the Mediterranean in a wide delta (which is said to have consisted of at least five branches by the first century CE). The confluence of the Rhône and Saône and the south-facing corridor it creates between the Alpine and Cevennes foothills can be considered the gateway between the Mediterranean and Temperate climatic areas of the region, necessitating varying adaptations of agricultures and architectures on the part of those living in each. The southern part of our area of study, below the Rhône-Saône Confluence and bounded by the coastline to the south, the Cevennes to the west and the Alpine foothills to the east, is termed the Lower Rhône Valley. The areas further north under our scrutiny, often generally termed here the Upper Rhône Basin, include the Upper Rhône stretches of Lac Lemman and the western Swiss Plateau, as well as the Saône Valley, and eastern parts of the Massif Central.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> This last area is hydrologically more accurately part of the drainage basin of the Loire rather than the Rhône, but is included for its strong political, military, and economic connections with areas further south and east.

In Greek and Roman textual sources, the Rhône and its tributaries attracted a fair amount of comment. In addition to its size (broad and deep enough to be navigable by ship in its lower reaches) and fertility, a frequent point of note was the contrast between the rapidity of the Rhône's flow and the gentle pace of the Saône.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the Rhône's speed has resulted in issues for archaeologists, as it is subject to correspondingly high rates of erosion and sedimentary deposition, raising the valley floor level comparatively quickly and dispersing and burying debris in difficult to reach contexts.<sup>4</sup> Pliny the Elder suggests that the name of the river originated from a defunct colony of Greeks from Rhodes settled near the delta (*NH* 3.5), though little information exists to confirm or deny this assertion. Though no extant text confirms what the Gaulish hydronym was, attempts have been made to reconstruct it as *\*Rodanus/-os'*, relating the second part of its name to the Irish adjective *'dánae'* (fierce, violent) in another reference to its infamous torrent.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.3 'Gaul', the 'Gauls', and the Late Iron Age

This thesis is not particularly concerned with the 'Celts' as a wide-ranging cultural grouping and their possible origins. It is primarily focussed on groups like the Aedui, Allobroges, Arverni, and Volcae Arecomici as socio-political units in their own right rather than attempt to speak to some variety of 'national' Gallic, let alone 'Celtic', cultural unity or shared substrate. Despite the vital and

---

<sup>3</sup> For examples see n.1.

<sup>4</sup> Mauné, 2000: 239.

<sup>5</sup> Lambert, 1994: 37. For more information on the Gaulish language and its relationship with Irish and other 'Celtic' languages see the following section, as well as Appendix 1.

fruitful debate that the potential use of the term in protohistoric/archaeological contexts is generating, the only places where ‘Celts’ are found herein is as a ready English translation of the Greek ‘Κέλτοι’, while the associated adjective ‘Celtic’ is used only as a linguistic descriptor referring to the eponymous branch of the Indo-European family. Nevertheless, due to the fraught nature of terminology relating to these contested areas of scholarship, a brief overview of relevant concerns in both historical and archaeological language used to identify and describe the populations in question will orient the reader and explain the choices of terms and assigned meanings as they are utilised in this thesis.

In the latter half of the first millennium BCE Greek and Latin writers assigned a collection of labels to the peoples living north and west of their homelands, or who were believed to have originated there.

Herodotus offers us the earliest coinage of the term ‘*Keltoi*’ (*Κέλτοι*, *Hist.* 4.49), situating those it denotes in the remote and mysterious far west of Europe but offering little concrete information.<sup>6</sup> The writings of Plato (*Leg.* 637), Aristotle (*Pol.* 7.2.13), and Xenophon (*Hell.* 7.1.20) make sporadic, anecdotal references to the same people, mostly encountered in the form of itinerant mercenaries, placing their homelands vaguely and variously in European regions

---

<sup>6</sup> Pope’s recent work has, however, argued that Herodotus’ brief asides are less woolly than they might appear (with the reported city of ‘Pyrene’ near the source of the Danube corresponding to the real settlement of the Heuneberg) and that Classical/Early Hellenistic Greek geography of western Europe was relatively consistent and informed by genuine trade routes, placing the ‘*Keltoi*’ in an area bounded by the Po, Rhine, North Sea, and Pyrenees. Pope, 2021: 31-44, c.f. Collis, 2003: 126. Sims-Williams, conversely, contests the Pyrene-Heuneberg connection, arguing that it rests on circular logic and suggesting that, like the later Apollodorus, Herodotus had a poor grasp of the region and conflated the Danube, Rhine, Rhône, and Po as parts of a single, interconnected watercourse. Sims-Williams, 2016: 15-18.

north and west of Greece.<sup>7</sup> It is only in the second century BCE, with Polybius that find the earliest surviving Classical ethnography of the ‘*Keltoi*’ in a comprehensive format, primarily based on their settlement in northern Italy and conflicts with Rome therefrom, but noting their relationships with, and presumable origins in, the lands west of the Alps (*Hist.* 2.17-19). The text firmly establishes them as an ethnic Other, distinct from both Greeks and the peoples of Italy in their alien way of life and attitudes.<sup>8</sup> Polybius and other, later Greek historians dealing with the period c.300-150BCE apply the term (along with the similar ‘*Galatai/Γαλάται*’) and framework to a broad array of populations encountered everywhere from the shores of the Atlantic, through the Alps, Northern Italy, and the Danube, all the way to the Aegean and the establishment of Galatia in central Asia Minor.<sup>9</sup>

Early Latin texts on the matter of their northern neighbours, from the first century BCE, or preserving quotations from largely lost second century BCE works, tend to eschew Greek terminology in favour of a seemingly homegrown term ‘*Galli*’. Authors such as Cicero, Varro, and Cato the Elder (surviving in fragments) make use

---

<sup>7</sup> Pseudo-Aristotle’s *On Marvellous Things Heard* places the ‘*Keltoi*’ in western Europe beyond Italy (85.857). Rankin, 1987: 45-6. Cunliffe, 1997: 4.

<sup>8</sup> Rankin, 1987: 115. Williams, 2001: 80-4.

<sup>9</sup> The potentially confusing overlaps and distinctions between the various Greek and Latin terms is covered well by Collis in his survey of the textual evidence and latter-day receptions of it. Collis, 2003: 98-103. Cunliffe further argues that, in response to the apparent mass population movements between western Europe, northern Italy, the Danube Basin, and the Balkans c.400-200BCE, the terms ‘*Keltoi*’ and ‘*Galatai*’ were applied with increasing indiscriminatio to migrating Europeans regardless of origin or ethnic affiliation. Cunliffe, 2011: 193-4. Pope’s revisiting of the debate, conversely, argues that the terms held distinct connotations in Greek usage until at least the first century CE (the ‘*Keltoi*’ matching Caesar’s ‘*Celtae*’ quite closely and the ‘*Galatai*’ roughly corresponding to the *Belgae* and/or *Germani* per a reading of Strabo *Geog.* 4.1.14) but were conflated in Latin (a point highlighted by Diodorus 5.31.1). Pope, 2021: 49-51.

of the term primarily to describe groups and individuals living either in northern Italy (especially in the Po Valley region) or in lands west of the Alps, using the toponym '*Gallia*' ('Gaul') for both. As these regions became annexed to the power of the Roman Republic in the later second/early first centuries BCE as provinces, the distinguishing terms '*Cisalpina*' ('within-the-Alps') and '*Transalpina*' ('beyond-the-Alps') were coined for clarity. The lands not under Roman dominion until the Caesarian wars of conquest (c.58-50BCE), stretching away to the north and west towards the Atlantic, Rhine, and North Sea were labelled '*Gallia Comata*' ('hairy/wild Gaul'). References to Gauls outside this framework (especially in reference to the Invasion of Greece c.279-8BCE) are found in Republican Latin texts, implying an intertextual relationship between Latin and Greek approaches to ethnography, though '*Gallia*' never appears to have been applied so broadly.

In the first century BCE Caesar opens his *Commentarii* with the now famous remarks outlining "*Gallia omnis*", a vision of a discrete territorial entity bounded by rivers, seas, and mountain ranges, internally divided between Gaul proper ('*Gallia Celtica*') in the centre and its breakaway counterparts ('*Aquitania*' and '*Belgica*') in the south-west and north-east respectively.<sup>10</sup> Hidden in this spare, authoritative prose was a radical reformulation of earlier Roman (and Greek) perceptions of Gaul, erasing the Gallic identity of '*Cisalpina*' and downplaying that of the already annexed areas of '*Transalpina*' (which Caesar consistently refers to only as the

---

<sup>10</sup> See Fig. 3 and 4.



'*provincia*' or '*provincia nostra*').<sup>11</sup> Crucially, Caesar's exploratory campaigning, annexation, and literary accounts of the processes conceptually removed Gallia Comata from the vast, unknowable wilderness of the North in the minds of his readers, establishing the Rhine (however artificially) as a firm boundary between semi-civilised Gaul and utterly barbarous Germania.<sup>12</sup> Whilst Greek perceptions of the region were slower to shift, they mostly followed in Caesar's wake.<sup>13</sup> Strabo's *Geography* of the world treated '*Keltiké*' (*Κέλτικη*) as a discrete region of the world stretching from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, bounded by the Rhine, Alps, and Pyrenees, covered (along with the islands of the northern Atlantic) in the fourth book of his work (*Geog.* 4.1-4).<sup>14</sup>

As such in the period under study (c.125-10BCE) it can be reasonably assumed that the inhabitants of the Greater Rhône Basin who were not perceived as Roman, Greek, or other Mediterranean extraction first and foremost would fit the category of '*Galli/Γαλάται*' in the eyes of Greco-Roman observers. What identity we might assign to them, being contemporary observers, far removed in time (and in space depending on the reader's location), is a question to which all answers must be provisional rather than definitive.

---

<sup>11</sup> Riggsby, 2006: 31. For analysis of the changing attitudes to the peoples of Gallia Cisalpina in Roman society, and the potentially decoupling of their identity from negative perceptions of Gallic identity, see Williams, 2001: 120-36.

<sup>12</sup> Schadee 2008: 162. Krebs 2006: 14-5. Woolf, 2011: 87-8.

<sup>13</sup> Dobesch, 2007: 117. Plutarch, despite writing over a century later, still speaks of a wild conflation of Gauls, Germani, Scythians in relation to temperate Europe in his discussions of the origins of the Cimbri and Teutones in the *Life of Marius* (11.4-9). Tierney, 1960: 19.

<sup>14</sup> The fifth section of Book 4 of the *Geography* describes Britain, Ireland, and argues against the existence of the mysterious far northern island of Thule.

One of the defining characteristics of those whom we might identify as Gauls is the use of the Gaulish language as a vernacular. 'Gaulish', as it is classified, is a now extinct language belonging to the 'Celtic' branch of the Indo-European family.<sup>15</sup> The precise relationship between Gaulish and other languages within the branch, both living and similarly dead, remains a matter of some debate, but the identity of the language as a distinctive and recognisable one in its own right is undisputed.<sup>16</sup> There exists no surviving canon of written Gaulish literature in the vein of Greek or Latin. However, Gaulish did exist as a textual language in at least certain contexts and formats. A catalogue of identifiable epigraphic attestations (ranging from coin legends and graffiti to near monumental inscriptions) survives to the present day, indicating its considerable engagement with writing as a technology. For more information on the varying forms of written Gaulish and their significance see section 1.6.9 of this chapter, Chapter 6.3, and Appendix 1.

Another important aspect of the question of who our subjects were lies in their relationship with material culture and thus archaeology. The timeframe under scrutiny in lands north of the Mediterranean is conventionally labelled the Late Iron Age, and, more specifically in

---

<sup>15</sup> Dottin, 1920: 22-3. Lambert, 1994: 8. Cunliffe, 1997: 21.

<sup>16</sup> Recent scholarship has tended to put forward a four or five sub-branch model, with Gaulish either linked with Brythonic (with which it shares a number of features and apparent cognates) or held as a separate lineage (Goidelic, Lepontic, and Celtiberian being the other main sub-branches). Lambert, 1994: 14. Cunliffe, 1997: 21-3. For ongoing debate on the origins and spread of the 'Celtic' branch within Indo-European see Isaac 2010: 165-6 versus Koch, 2010: 292-3. Sims-Williams' recent contribution has convincingly demolished many of the more speculative approaches to Celtic historical linguistics and their relationship with archaeology, opting for a less romantic but far more reasonable hypothesis. Sims-Williams, 2020: 511-24.

the case of north-western Europe, of the so-called La Tène culture.<sup>17</sup> Named after a rich burial site uncovered in Switzerland, taken as exemplary of its characteristic art and object styles, the cultural style defines much of north-western European archaeology over the period c.400-50BCE.<sup>18</sup> It is characterised by the widespread presence of high quality metalwork, distinctive abstract scrolling or spiralling art designs, a tendency towards enclosed settlements and intensification of arable agriculture (especially at later dates), and burial customs marked with the use of jewellery, long-bladed iron swords, and horse-drawn, wheeled vehicles as grave goods.<sup>19</sup> Earlier scholars, in their adherence to 'Culture-Historical' models, tended to assume a one-to-one relationship between the presence of identifiably La Tène artefacts and the presence of a 'Celtic' ethnicity, an approach now rightly discredited (and even ridiculed).<sup>20</sup> Due to its technical specificity and continued widespread use in archaeological cataloguing systems, however, this thesis utilises the terminology of La Tène material culture nonetheless. The term itself is utilised as a byword to describe Later Iron Age temperate Europe as a broader context (without reference to the often problematic realms of ethnicity), and is used in line with dating systems (most of the period under scrutiny relating the end of the La Tène C and duration of the La Tène D phases).<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> On the origins of the 'Three Age' model (giving rise to the 'Iron Age') see Cunliffe, 1997: 27-8.

<sup>18</sup> Cunliffe, 1997: 16.

<sup>19</sup> Darvill, 2002: 223.

<sup>20</sup> Collis, 2003: 96-7. For an attempt to map the relevant Iron Age material cultures and their possible relationships with language and ethnic affiliation onto the landscape of ancient Europe see Fig. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Collis, 2003: 78-80.

Whatever Caesar or other foreign authors assert, we can only guess at what the peoples of the region thought and felt about their ethnic identity. The surviving lexicon of Gaulish contains no words which translate straightforwardly as ethnonyms applicable to the culture as a coherent whole or that act as equivalents to the Latin and Greek ethnographic terms applied to them. The bare scraps of evidence we possess on the matter would appear to suggest, unsurprisingly, that their primary points of identification were with family and immediate community rather than race or nation.<sup>22</sup> The consistent terminology with which this thesis works is that of Gauls (defined as primarily Gaulish-speaking individuals originating in transalpine Western Europe not of colonial, immigrant, or imported enslaved background) and the accompanying adjective Gallic to refer to matters relating to them ('Gaulish' is used only to identify the eponymous language for clarity). In all but the strictest linguistic sense (referencing the branch of the Indo-European language family as above), the adjective 'Celtic' is avoided due to its imprecise connotations and history of problematic scholarship, and the individuals or populations under study are not labelled 'Celts'.<sup>23</sup> Though far from homogenous, the diverse and often idiosyncratic communities of the Late Iron Age greater Rhône Basin were nevertheless part of a broader Gallic cultural continuum and existed in vigorous communication, trade, diplomacy, and rivalry with

---

<sup>22</sup> Patronymics are common to the point of ubiquity in surviving Gaulish inscriptions relating to persons, alongside spousal indicators in the rarer cases of women. *RIG* G-172 (often taken as an exemplum due to its relatively complete, unabbreviated format) identifies its subject Segomarus both through an apparent patronymic (*Uillonios* – 'son-of-Uillonos') and as a citizen ('*toutios*') of the community of Namausos (modern Nîmes).

<sup>23</sup> Cunliffe, 1997: 16. Harding, 2002: 366-7.

another. The largely conceptual boundary between the province of Transalpina and Gallia Comata beyond was an entirely artificial imposition on the landscape and had little to no significance in local geopolitics beyond alignment with territorial claims of peoples considered conquered or allowed to maintain their independence.

Based on the previously detailed concerns the chosen terms and usages found in the thesis are as follows. The term 'Gaul' is herein used primarily in a geographic, spatial sense and roughly follows Caesar's (*BG* 1.1) imposed framework, referring to lands bounded by the Rhine and Alps to the east, the Mediterranean and Pyrenees to the south, the Atlantic to the west, and the English Channel and North Sea to the north.<sup>24</sup> The ethnographic term 'Gauls', and the associated adjective 'Gallic', are preferred, but are utilised in a limited sense and tend to be accompanied by the qualifying geographic addition of 'Rhône'.<sup>25</sup> Again, rather than make any assumptions or assertions that 'Gaul', as an ethnographic label, describes a specific, discrete, recognisable culture, its usage in this thesis is contextual and positional. The 'Gauls' of the Rhône Basin, and adjoining regions, are characterised here as the indigenous populations of the area contrasting with the colonising populations of Roman/Italian/Greek or other Mediterranean origins and, potentially,

---

<sup>24</sup> The region of Aquitania, as characterised by Caesar and Strabo (*Geog.* 4.2.1), stretching from the Garonne to the Atlantic and Pyrenees in what is now south-western France, can generally be considered excluded from this usage, due to the well-established cultural differences between its Late Iron Age inhabitants and their neighbours. By contrast, the Gallic identity of Belgica is far more open to debate and interpretation.

<sup>25</sup> Here used in an adjectival sense, since English does not have a ready equivalent of the French '*rhodanien/rhodanienne*'.

invaders from other parts of Europe labelled 'Germani' by Caesar *et al.*

For a description of the primary Gallic polities and people groups examined in this thesis see Appendix 2.

## 1.4 Literature Review

### 1.4.1 Starting Point: Drinkwater's 'The Rise and Fall of the Gallic *Julii*' (1978)

In the late 1970s, ancient historian J.F. Drinkwater published an article laying out observations and assertions against the previous grain of scholarship on the nature of class, status, and local power in early Roman Gaul and their relation to those aspects of earlier pre-conquest Iron Age society there. Drawing on a variety of sources in recovered coinage, Tacitean prose, and early Latin epigraphy he identified a common trend in that members of the local social elite across Gaul in the late first century BCE to mid-first century CE widely bore the *nomen* 'Julius', marking their enfranchisement as citizens under the patronage of Caesar and/or his successors in the Imperial family.<sup>26</sup> The crucial point this article made was that the fallout of the Caesarian Gallic Wars c.58-50BCE saw a vast power vacuum created amongst the ruling classes of Gallic polities, as leading aristocrats were variously slain in battle, exiled, or reduced to penury; a vacuum to be filled by ascendant parvenus backed by the patronage of Caesar.<sup>27</sup> Although this new Gallic aristocracy of

---

<sup>26</sup> Examples include Q. Julius Togirix amongst the Sequani (evinced by coinage issues DLT5632-5632(2)), the Treveri Julius Florus and Julius Indus and Aeduan Iulius Sacrovir (Tac. *Ann.* 3.41-2), as well as the Aeduan L. Julius Calenus (Tac. *Hist.* 3.35) and his grandfather C. Iulius Eporedorix thought to be a descendant of warrior who fought with Caesar (*BG* 7.39).

<sup>27</sup> Drinkwater, 1978: 824-5.

'Julii' functioned similarly to their predecessors in their sources of power, wealth, and status, Drinkwater argued, they were demographically distinct. Although comments on the fall of the Gallic Julii, based in the instabilities and changes in relationships between Roman imperial institutions and those of the provinces, remain mostly persuasive, Drinkwater's suggestions of their rise require further interrogation.

Although this particular publication of Drinkwater's has not been consistently cited in later scholarship (in contrast with his more comprehensive, foundational works from the 1980s), the idea of a serious discontinuity amongst the elite population of Gaul in relation to the advent of Roman Conquest has become an important underlying question in the discourse on the functioning and experiences of Roman Imperialism in the region.<sup>28</sup> To understand the place which this theory occupies in the wider framework of scholarship, and how it leads to this thesis, we must both look back into the milieu that shaped Drinkwater's research and thinking and follow the threads of debate down to the present day.

#### 1.4.2 Drinkwater's Context

The primary grain of thought against which Drinkwater's assertions were made harks back to the *fin de siècle* works of C. Jullian. With heavy reliance on the preserved canon of Latin and Greek literature, the author interpreted that the general dearth of information on the

---

<sup>28</sup> Drinkwater's 1983 historical overview of the provinces of Gallia Lugdunensis, Aquitania, and Belgica from the Caesarian Conquest to the mid-third century CE and, especially, his 1987 major investigation into the otherwise enigmatic history of the 'Gallic Empire' splinter state c.269-274CE should be core components of any bibliography concerning Roman Gaul.

local ruling classes of Gaul between accounts of the first century BCE conquest and the emergence of surviving Latin literature produced by provincial Gallic writers (most notably Ausonius and Sidonius Apollinaris) from the fourth century CE onwards as evidence of unbroken continuity.<sup>29</sup> In addition to the assumption that the absence of evidence of change indicates a largely unchanging status quo, there is also the emphasis that Jullian put on the idea of 'Gaul' (both Iron Age and Roman) as direct ancestor to the French nation state of the Third Republic in which he lived.<sup>30</sup> A further point of note to understand the tone set by Jullian on this topic is his attempt to impose a model of stadial evolution predicated on narratives of Athenian and Roman history onto interpretations of Gaul. He foists a progression from primitive monarchy to revolutionary oligarchy and republicanism onto the region's largely undocumented past, and seeing its inhabitants as merely at a stage of delayed development next to their Mediterranean peers. The influence of Jullian's approach can be seen in the fact that even after Drinkwater's challenge to it, Brunt (1990) offered a somewhat blithe assertion of continuity amongst the aristocracy of the region in finding rapport with Rome despite their conquest. It must be noted, however, that this perspective reflects a very broad-brush approach to the idea of provincial ruling classes, in which the annexation of Gaul is given momentary consideration amidst a sweep the encompasses both halves of the Mediterranean and at least three centuries' worth of timespan.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Jullian, 2015/1895: 129-31, 207. Drinkwater, 1978: 817.

<sup>30</sup> Jullian, 2015/1895: 26.

<sup>31</sup> Brunt, 1990: 267-77.



In the English language, an important precursor to Drinkwater's hypothesis was the work of Badian (1958) on viewing connections between members of the ruling class of the Roman Republic and ethnic outsiders (often conquered) through the institution of patron/client relations. In its broad sweep of evidence for such relationships and their potential significances from the First Punic War to rise of Pompey, this monograph laid the groundwork for further investigations into interactions between ruling classes (especially individuals and factions thereof) in the early Roman world, including those of *Gallia Transalpina*. Although limited by its focus on merely what non-Roman clients could do for those at Rome, rather than vice versa, the book nevertheless remains a core part of the genealogy of this thesis, leaving the road open for Drinkwater to theorise the ascendancy of Gallic clients to Caesar's patron as the emergent Julii.<sup>32</sup>

Closer to Drinkwater's own time of research and publication, however, the 1970s were a time of substantial development in the study of Iron Age Gallic societies and their fate.

Influenced by Marxist and Annaliste perspectives, particularly from the work of fellow French historian M. Bloch, Lewuillon (1975) produced a highly innovative view of Late Iron Age Gaul, on the cusp of conquest, as forming the deep roots of feudalism in the *longue durée*.<sup>33</sup> Whereas others had tended to draw feudalism in its more familiar, better documented medieval form as a potential

---

<sup>32</sup> For updates to Badian's model in relation to southern Gaul specifically see Christol, 2015: 153-63. For criticisms of the limitations of Badian's model, particularly its overemphasis on formal, ritualised ties of patronage over a broader variety of evidence types see Dench, 2018: 9-10.

<sup>33</sup> Lewuillon, 1975: 428-9.

analogue through which protohistory could be explored and reconstructed, he took the leap to framing the issue as a methodological one in its own right. On the one hand, Lewuillon's creative approach shook up what had tended to be rather static, derivative handling of the available evidence and, in turning a critical lens to the usage and precise meaning of preserved terminology, he generated some observations which remain pertinent and valuable. On the other, however, the methodology used in his 1975 publication suffers from two major flaws. Firstly, its heavy reliance on the limited and often problematic textual sources left to us, while giving little heed to the information provided by archaeology and other media, leaves many of its assertions lacking in supporting evidence. Secondly, in determining to examine class conflict as a primary lens of study, it rushes to imagine a complex multiplicity of classes and other social divisions active and in dynamic tension with one another in first century BCE Gaul in ways that read as more speculative than grounded.<sup>34</sup> Lewuillon's later work carries forward similar tendencies to rely on text over material evidence and to multiply rather than consolidate reconstructed social groups but continue to have substantial value in their close readings of said texts and observations derived therefrom.

By contrast, Crumley (1974) established a new precedent in constructing a comprehensive holistic methodology for the investigation of social structures (including class divisions and

---

<sup>34</sup> Most notably, Lewuillon assumes that variances in Caesar's vocabulary must refer to distinct subjects in terms of Gallic social structure (Lewuillon, 1975: 542-3) and that reported factional conflicts amongst Gallic polities must have mapped neatly onto Marxist dialectics of conflicting sources of wealth and social power (Lewuillon, 1975: 556 and 569).

dynamics of power and status) in the Iron Age communities of Western Europe, incorporating both the resources of written history and archaeology. One issue, that Crumley herself foresaw, was that the archaeological record of European Iron Age material has vastly expanded and been repeatedly, thoroughly re-appraised over the last fifty years. A somewhat greater sticking point, however, is that, in contrast with Lewuillon's fine-toothed comb approach, Crumley tended to use a broad brush in handling texts as evidence. In her methodological framework, archaeological findings tend to be used as a means of evaluating the accuracy of written accounts and their assertions on a more binary than nuanced basis.

Intriguingly, despite their disparate methodologies, both Lewuillon and Crumley reached rather similar conclusions about the nature of class as a factor of societies in Gaul leading up to the Roman conquest. The idea of a dynamic, rapidly changing political landscape in which a diversity of interest groups struggled for power (generally framed around a clash between land and trade as competing sources of wealth) is one shared amongst the two. Some vestiges of Jullian's teleological assumptions might be detectable here. It is also worth noting that Drinkwater does not seem to share these assumptions, as his 'Julii' theory rests on the idea that the new aristocracy arising in the wake of conquest merely aped its predecessor, and that mercantilism as an independent source of status was a later development.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Drinkwater, 1978: 835-46.

Another contributor from the 1970s worth including in this discussion, though related only indirectly to discussions of the Gallic Julii and their origins, is the thorough historical investigation and overview of *Gallia Transalpina's* time as a province of the Roman Republic produced by Ebel (1976). Though highly useful in its coverage of events often neglected by other scholars and wringing much out of a relative paucity of source material, the work suffers somewhat from its Romocentric perspective, potentially contributing to an ongoing tendency to treat southern, earlier annexed Gallic communities as fundamentally distinct from their neighbours only a little to the north.

#### 1.4.3 Woolf and other Successors

The historiography and archaeology of Gaul's incorporation into the burgeoning Roman Empire and its last years of independence beforehand have, unsurprisingly, moved apace since the 1970s. Examining the major developments in scholarship since then, as well as considering the impact of Drinkwater's legacy, will allow us to better understand our task in revisiting his conclusions.

Not so much a successor as a contemporary, S.L. Dyson made certain contributions to ongoing discourse on Gallic social organisation and politics in relation to Roman Imperialism in his 1985 monograph. In contrast to a tendency amongst other writers to focus on information concerning Gallic politics of the mid-first century BCE derived from Caesar's writings, Dyson extended his approach to earlier horizons. Incorporating the conflicts that culminated in the conquest of the Mediterranean coastline of Gaul by Rome c.125-120BCE (building on Ebel's groundwork) into his

overview of the long-term development of Roman military power in the region this grasp of the broader chronology of events provides groundwork for further examinations. However, Dyson's work remains centred on paradigms that otherwise serve our investigation poorly. Its perspective is consistently that of the Roman State (somewhat problematically rendered as a singular coherent entity with consistent goals) rather than that of the Gauls themselves. Its approach is also closely tied to the concept of 'frontiers' as set forth in Luttwak's 1976 'Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire', which has long since come under sustained critique for its anachronistic assumptions and baked-in colonialism and is more generally rejected by later scholars as a paradigm for understanding Roman approaches to empire, let alone the experiences of its victims.<sup>36</sup>

Dyson's work can help us in its attempts to extract and decode factual information regarding key events from often oblique sources, but many of his conclusions are in need of modification. Another successor to Ebel's work, more than Drinkwater's per se, incorporating a greater level of archaeological source material into his perspective, and extending his chronology into the period after Caesar's campaigns of conquest can be found in Rivet (1988).

Following Drinkwater's floruit in the late 1970s and 1980s, arguably the foremost scholar of Gaul in the English language since has been G. Woolf. Beginning in the later 1990s, with articles challenging paradigms of 'Roman' versus 'Native' binaries in studies of culture and identity formation of provincial societies, on the basis of their

---

<sup>36</sup> For comprehensive critiques of Luttwak, see Isaac, 1991: 3-5; Whittaker, 1994: 6-7; and Elton, 1996: 7. For Luttwak's attempts at rebuttal and defence of his approach see Luttwak, 2016: x-xii.

neglecting complex intersections of class and social status, his work has been instrumental in developing new approaches to questions relating to sub-elite groups in the Ancient World.<sup>37</sup> This paved the way for Woolf's foundational 1998 monograph *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilisation in Gaul*, a striking, perceptive, and methodologically rigorous analysis of the short to medium term impact of the Roman takeover on Gallic material and social cultures. A crucial aspect that this work highlighted regarding the changing landscapes of the region, most obviously in the processes of urbanisation, is the interplay between powers wielded by agents of the Roman imperial state and those of local figures of authority to whom they delegated and patronised. Such relationships marked the emergence of a potentially new elite, or at least of elites flexing their status and power in new ways.<sup>38</sup> The relationship between Drinkwater's 'Julii' theory and Woolf's work here is largely indirect. Individual Gallic 'Julii' loom large in some of Woolf's writings and form the basis of his own theories regarding the significance of connections to, and imitations of, the Julio-Claudian dynasty as a transformative driving force in the socio-political landscape of Gaul under Roman dominion.<sup>39</sup> The argument made in his oeuvre is not so much one of a replacement of one ruling class by another, driven by support from external, imperial backers, but of a transformation of

---

<sup>37</sup> For one of the clearest statements of this trend see Woolf, 1997: 340-1.

<sup>38</sup> Woolf, 1998: 125-6.

<sup>39</sup> C. Julius Rufus and C. Julius Victor, early first century CE aristocrats among the Santones of the Atlantic Coast identified as a commissioner of several monuments in his own community and at Lugdunum, is a favoured case study for Woolf's hypotheses. Woolf, 2000: 129-30; and Woolf, 2005: 114.

the language of power in the context of Gaul to address a new situation, with new opportunities as well as pitfalls.

In addition to his foundational text from 1998, more recent offerings (2011a, 2011b) provide vital criticism and context to the use of textual sources on the topic of Roman Imperialism and its impact on Gaul. Interrogating the imperial perspective from which Latin and Greek texts describe the inhabitants of north-western Europe, deconstructing the uses and motivations of colonial rhetoric, and identifying factors which obscure rather than illustrate the experiences and perspectives of the colonised, they give us a useful road-map for better understanding the relationships of power that existed between the ruling imperial elite of the Roman world and the local sub-elites they dominated.

The trajectory of Woolf's work on Gaul should also be contextualised in the development of new approaches to Roman Imperialism and its impact on provincial societies over a wider area during the last three decades. In the Anglophone scholarly community, at least, one of the main arms of development has been debate concerning 'Romanisation' as a concept for describing the apparent reproduction of institutions and aspects of material culture considered 'Roman' in conquered contexts, set against the wider backdrop of the rise of Postcolonial Studies as an academic discipline.<sup>40</sup> Just as Woolf was keen to note in 1997, many members of the upper classes of communities across the Roman World,

---

<sup>40</sup> For earlier uses of 'Romanisation' as a working concept in relation to Gaul see Ebel, 1988: 572-90. On the groundwork of Postcolonial Studies in the late 1980s and 1990s, see Spivak, 2000: 1442-8; Kiernan and Kay, 1995: 158; and Gandhi, 1998: 15.

regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, emphasised their identities as 'Romans' on the basis of the power and access they enjoyed within the imperial schema, others latched onto the same idea and built upon it. A new emphasis can be seen on investigating the experiences, varied and at times discrepant, of those affected by the Roman Empire in the early 2000s.<sup>41</sup> Attempts to update and reconcile the clashing concepts of 'Romanisation' and Postcolonialism in this timeframe (e.g. MacMullen 2000, Keay 2001) have tended to underline the fact that the former term has little to differentiate it from general definitions of imperialism/colonialism beyond a modicum of historical specificity.<sup>42</sup>

Hingley (2005-2015) offers an attractive alternative to 'Romanisation' in the form of 'Globalization', drawing parallels between the power dynamics of contemporary, Postcolonial, international standards of culture (predicated on North American and Western European norms without necessarily indicating ethnic identity or national character) and the emergence of similar patterns of shared, dominant touchstones across the Ancient Mediterranean and conquered hinterlands. This approach particularly stands as a criticism of the not only colonialist but deeply nationalist turns taken by the historiography of Antiquity amidst nineteenth century academics.<sup>43</sup> In a potential contrast to the consumerist models of culture prevalent today, however, Hingley, following Woolf, argues

---

<sup>41</sup> On the particular value of 'discrepant experience' as a concept see Mattingly, 1997 and 2011: 17.

<sup>42</sup> For MacMullen's rather striking and unusual perspective on the spread of Roman culture in annexed Gaul see MacMullen, 2000: 96-113. For Keay's definition of 'Romanisation' see Keay, 2001: 113.

<sup>43</sup> Hingley, 2005: 22-32.



that the accoutrements of this form of Roman globalisation (many taking the form of building projects and settlement patterns as much as personal expressions of language or dress) would only have been accessible and interactive for the upper strata of elites and sub-elites amongst the imperial populace, excluding the subaltern majority.<sup>44</sup>

The notion of a 'Cultural Revolution' taking place in the Mediterranean and its hinterlands in the first century BCE (and continuing into the first century CE), perhaps most comprehensively articulated by Wallace-Hadrill (2008), is a factor that influences Woolf's, and by extension our, approach to the significant changes in ways of life occurring in relation to the growing power of Rome at this time. As with Hingley's 'Globalisation', this perspective sees cultural developments in annexed Gaul occurring in dialogue with those occurring in the imperial heartland of Italy itself, rather than as a clear-cut unidirectional exportation of a colonising 'Roman' cultural package onto a passive indigenous canvas.<sup>45</sup> The idea of a shared revolutionary shift, rather than a linear process of acculturation, in relation to the changes that occurred also addresses some of the issues with colonialist approaches in the vein of 'Romanisation' pointed out by Versluys (2015); in contrast with indigenous peoples of the New World and their sudden, violent encounters with Europeans in the Modern Era, the peoples of the Mediterranean and its hinterlands (including Gaul) had been in contact with one another

---

<sup>44</sup> Hingley, 2005: 118.

<sup>45</sup> Woolf, 2001: 174.

for centuries before the advent of the Roman Empire and its globalising cultural *koiné*.<sup>46</sup>

While their precise identities remain a matter of debate, a strong thread emerges from the decline and fall of 'Romanisation' in scholarly discourse that it was local ruling classes, in Gaul and elsewhere, that played the leading role in the other processes proposed to have taken place. Terrenato (2000) emphasises the importance of 'horizontal mobility' between the ruling classes of communities across the Italian Peninsula in the gradual, unificatory rise of Roman power in the region; a degree of access that was by no means automatically extended to subjugated groups further afield but helped foster a relatively broad and assimilative model of elite culture in the Late Republic and Early Empire.<sup>47</sup> Ando (2000), in his reassessment of the functioning of the Roman Imperial administration itself vis à vis the provinces, emphasised the role of provincial ruling classes as participants (albeit junior ones) in the network of governance rather than as mere subjects of it.<sup>48</sup> Some voices of concern were raised about the potential neglect of non-elite populations and their agency and contributions under such methodological schemas (Alcock 2001), but the gist of conclusions reached by this movement in scholarship on the Roman Empire have tended to be accepted and built upon in the intervening years rather than rejected since.

---

<sup>46</sup> See also Revell, 2009: 45-6.

<sup>47</sup> For the complex picture of ethnic identity in Republican and Augustan Roman Italy, and how it may have filtered interactions with provincial subaltern communities see Farney, 2007: 197-241.

<sup>48</sup> See particularly Ando, 2000: 59-60.

Despite their consistently strong work, one issue that arises from both Woolf's approach and much of the surrounding scholarship is that its consistent focus on the emergence of provincial cultures under the Roman Empire, both in terms of local experiences and colonial perspectives, leaves questions of continuity with pre-conquest pasts unresolved. *Becoming Roman* and its companion pieces offer us a highly detailed, expansive, and perceptive picture of the communities that arose in Gaul following the advent of Roman provincial control, but they do not offer similarly clear conclusions about the relationships between those communities and their predecessors from decades or centuries earlier. While one of Woolf's most recent publications (2019) has focussed on the Caesarian Gallic Wars themselves, if we wish to look further back, we will have to find scholarship elsewhere.

Discussions on how to identify and understand the impact of Roman Imperialism on the colonised communities of what became provinces have continued in both enthusiastic vigour and academic rigor right up to the present moment. Johnston (2017) makes a brave attempt for the reconstruction of local, indigenous identities among the people of Gaul in the shadow of imperial administration, hinting at complex dynamics of local power and status. Dench (2018) provides an excellent overview of debate on 'Romanisation' and its more recent replacements and further refines the models of imperial culture and governance promulgated by Woolf, Terrenato, Ando et al. into an even more nuanced model of an inter-ethnic, globalising oligarchy, headed by the emperor, as the mainstay of the Roman Empire's success in the first two centuries CE. A particular

highlight of these very recent conversations for our research foci has been contributions by R. Häussler and E. Webster (2020), who, in addition to experimenting with new conceptual terminologies for social change in responses to empire and colonialism in the Ancient World, have put forward a strong case against assuming a singular role for members of the ruling class in driving said changes, a role potentially better fitted to subaltern groups and their negotiations with the ruling classes.<sup>49</sup> They similarly champion recognition of possible heterogeneity, rather than narrow, rigid class alignment, amongst the powerbrokers of provincial societies such as those of Roman Gaul.<sup>50</sup> These observations strongly influence the approaches utilised here. However, similarly to the works of Woolf and Hingley, they apply most directly to the world of the High Empire, charting developments in Gallic and other provincial societies as they evolved over the long term in a globalised world dominated by Rome, rather than examining the transition period from independence to subordination and the immediate impact of conquest.

On that note, approaches to reconstructing the societies of independent, pre-conquest Iron Age Gaul offering updates and advancements from Crumley's valiant attempts have not been lacking in the last three decades either.

A noticeable trend in French archaeology regarding the Gallic Iron Age from the 1970s to the mid-1990s was an emphasis on regionalism, aimed at challenging artificial assumptions of

---

<sup>49</sup> Häussler and Webster, 2020: 17.

<sup>50</sup> Häussler and Webster, 2020: 3-10.

homogeneity of La Tène material culture throughout its theorised extent. Ironically, however, taken in agglomeration, the results of these studies revealed underlying similarities across many of the varied lands assigned to the label 'Gaul', cutting across the boundary later imposed between the Roman province of Gallia Transalpina and the regions further north.<sup>51</sup>

Archaeologist and ancient historian S. Fichtl has been a standard bearer of recent Francophone scholarship on the subject. His 2004 monograph concerning the polities of Late Iron Age Gaul remains a comprehensive and foundational reference work on the subject, outlining critical information for understandings of both individual polities and attempts at generalising reconstructions through a combination of textual and archaeological methods. One flaw in his body of work, though, can be seen in a tendency to follow Lewuillon in stretching out limited amounts of textual evidence in pursuit of somewhat tendentious conclusions. The prime example of this problem is seen in Fichtl's 2014 chapter relating to possibilities of nouveau riche status amongst certain identified Gallic historical figures, issues with which contentions are explored in greater detail in Chapters 4 and 6 of this thesis.

Meanwhile, the standard-bearers of Iron Age Archaeology in the English-speaking world during this timeframe were Collis (1987-2007) and Cunliffe (1998-2011). Collis, especially, is a figure of significant influence in this thesis, as his perspicacious analyses of the relationships between Classical texts, the uncovering of

---

<sup>51</sup> Verdin, 1998: 27.

archaeological evidence, and the influence of modern colonialist and nationalist ideologies is a crucial building block of the methodology utilised herein.<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile, Roymans (1990) sets a strong precedent in the gathering of as wide and varied a data set as possible for building a picture of a protohistoric society in his monograph concerning the inhabitants of the northern reaches of Gaul on the eve of Roman conquest. This holistic method was marked not merely by throwing a wide net over the often disparate and inconsistent available sources, but by undergirding findings with an anthropological perspective examining how each piece of the puzzle might have functioned in relation to others. The models for reconstructing and understanding protohistoric Iron Age societies in north-western Europe that Roymans created have come under certain criticism for potentially exceeding the available evidence, a point to be elaborated upon in Chapter 4.1 of this thesis.<sup>53</sup> However, they remain a relatively firm foundation on which to build our approaches.

The precedent set by Roymans was supported in its call for anthropological approaches by Verger (2009) and followed, with even greater results, by his more recent successor M. Fernández-Götz (2012, 2013, 2014, 2017). Advancing on his predecessor's methodology, Fernández-Götz offers a particularly comprehensive overview of available approaches and concerns to be implemented, most notably a recognition of the foreignness and inaccessibility of

---

<sup>52</sup> See Collis, 2007: 524.

<sup>53</sup> An example of this criticism, taken into account with regard to the rest of this thesis, can be found in Quintela, 2012: 457-9.

the thought-worlds of Iron Age individuals and communities to our own contemporary mentalities.<sup>54</sup>

While this project heavily incorporates methods and considerations established by Roymans and Fernández-Götz, it diverges from their work on two key points. Firstly, their focus was fixed upon northern (especially north-eastern) Gaul, with little attention paid to regions and communities further south closer to the Alps and Mediterranean and a clear recognition that their conclusions would not necessarily apply to those other areas.<sup>55</sup> Secondly, in basing their aims around the reconstruction of societies in the whole, with Fernández-Götz' interests being particularly in concepts of identity and state formation, they sit somewhat adjacently to our focus on issues of class and social status as areas of study in their own right.

Anglophone scholarship on Gallic provincial historiography and archaeology following the conquest has also shown a tendency to privilege the north (and north-east especially) over other regions, as Wightmann's (1985) examination of Belgica and Carroll's (2001) of the areas later labelled the provinces of Germania Superior and Inferior (despite their position west and south of the Rhine), illustrate.

Taking stock, we can see scholarship blossoming on the subjects of provincial ruling classes (including those of Gaul) and their complex relationships with lower strata of local societies under the regime of the Roman Empire, as well as attempts to understand the social systems in which pre-conquest elites would have lived and

---

<sup>54</sup> Fernández-Götz, 2014: 2-3.

<sup>55</sup> Roymans, 1990: 27.

dominated. But many questions remain as to exactly the latter may have given rise, or given way, to the former.

#### 1.4.4 New Discoveries and Issues

In addition to the development of questions regarding the transformation of Gaul and its elite classes from the Iron Age to the High Roman Empire directly, the last thirty years have also seen major advances in related fields. Studies of particular aspects of the topic area of Gaul, its peoples, and products in the timeframe of the second and first centuries BCE, especially those on which sources of evidence are relative forthcoming, are vital. However, as we shall see, attempts (and failures) to fit the results of these more specialised approaches to research into the bigger picture can result in certain problems for the scholarly discourse.

A major recent contributor from the Francophone scholastic community on the subject of the workings of Gallic societies is Arbabe (2017), who, in discussing the internal politics of Gaul as a region, makes a rare and highly effective foray into bridging the divide between independent and provincial contexts of Gallic historiography. In many ways, his work is a successor that of Lewuillon, focussing on close critical analyses of available descriptions to extract useful information, and placing consideration on the relationships between Gallic polities themselves as constituent to their experiences as much as, if not more than, their relationships with Rome. However, while Arbabe does offer a highly perceptive, analytical reconstruction of structures of political power amongst Gallic communities during their long transition his contributions have their limits. His largely institutional perspective



and methodological focus on text and epigraphy over archaeology and iconography mean that his work does not offer much to discussions of elite culture and class as social realities.

One of the most important areas in which recent archaeological work has serious implications for the historiography of Late Iron Age and Early Roman Gallic elite culture and class structures is the question of urbanism. As noted above, the idea of an urbanisation process, in which the previously rustic landscapes of Iron Age Gaul gave way to the rise of local cities on the Mediterranean model, was a core component of Woolf and others' framework of a 'Cultural Revolution' in the region in line with developments elsewhere in the Greco-Roman World.<sup>56</sup> However, recent archaeological discoveries and reinterpretations of existing evidence have challenged the idea that pre-Roman Gaul was a land devoid of settlements which could be characterised as 'urban' and thus that the shifts in settlement patterns that occurred in the wake of conquest necessarily represented a revolutionary change.

Following publication (Moore *et al.* 2013) of new excavations at the site of Bibracte (long identified as the 'capital' settlement of the Aedui people), revealing larger areas of built environment than had previously been assumed in the vicinity of the settlements main, fortified citadel, much investigation and reconsideration of the nature and role of settlements in Late Iron Age Gaul emerged. Poux (2014) and Moore and Ponroy (2014) have made strong cases that the

---

<sup>56</sup> This side of what we may call the 'urbanisation debate', seeing Gaul as fundamentally non-urban in its pre-conquest days, can be observed in Drinkwater, 1985: 51.

absence of certain features associated with contemporaneous Mediterranean cities (most prominently city walls) in agglomerated Gallic settlements from the period has led to their long exclusion from categorisation as 'urban' despite potentially playing quite similar roles in practice.<sup>57</sup> A further consideration, favoured by Gaydarska (2017) and Moore (2017) particularly, is the notion of 'low density urbanism', which sees networks of dispersed but spatially organised sites of habitation as well as large sites of mass seasonal occupation as viable forms of 'urban' living in pre- and protohistoric contexts especially. For a more intermediary view between the two camps, see Adam and Fichtl (1996). These approaches, as they relate to control over landscapes and mass popular gatherings, should certainly inform our understanding of major settlements amongst the Aedui, Arverni, Segusiavi, and other Late Iron Age Gallic communities around the Rhône Basin. The result of these developments in scholarship is the suggestion that, contra earlier assertions of a seismic shift from Iron Age rusticism to Roman provincial urbanism potentially requiring a social revolution to drive, the changes in the material culture of settlement patterns between the early first century BCE and first century CE were more a matter of changing the form and face of communal living in the region, a transition potentially negotiated with less upheaval.

Another archaeological area in which recent developments have implications for the study of class and social status in the societies

---

<sup>57</sup> While walls are often cited, other aspects include the absence of characteristically orthogonal grid-plans for street layout and differing approaches to designated intramural public spaces (like Roman *fora* or Greek *agorai*). See Kaiser, 2011: 203.

of Late Iron Age Gaul (especially in the context of the Rhône Basin) is that of the remains of trade between local communities and the Mediterranean world, especially regarding the comparatively plentiful evidence of trade in wine. Although preliminary works of investigation, collation, and analysis on the subject of the importation of Italian wine by Iron Age Gallic communities was gamely undertaken in the 1980s in both French (Laubenheimer 1990) and English (Fitzpatrick 1985), by the turn of the millennium their results required updating based on more recent excavations and reexaminations.<sup>58</sup> French archaeologist M. Poux (2004) made a ground-breaking study of remains and deposition patterns of amphorae in the territories of the Arverni, Aedui, and neighbouring communities from the mid-second to mid-first centuries BCE, not only collating available data but constructing theories as to the implications raised by the remains of trade, distribution, and consumption of wine in those protohistoric contexts. In the Anglophone sphere, M.E. Loughton (2003, 2009, 2014) has contributed similarly strong and well-informed efforts at regrouping and interpreting the material gathered from deposition sites, shipwrecks, originating vineyards, and routes of travel in between. The two have often reached distinct conclusions from the evidence available (these contradictions examined further in Chapter 6.5) but both offer vital insights into the economies of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin and the roles that wealth could have played in the power wielded by local ruling classes.

---

<sup>58</sup> Loughton, 2003: 178.

Attempts to examine the world of Gaul and its relationships with the Mediterranean World in the late second and first centuries BCE through lens of trade and economy have, however, been some of the most fraught.

Goudineau (1990) while otherwise sound in his attempts to deconstruct the problematic frameworks left behind in French/Gallic archaeology by the legacy of Napoleon III's nineteenth century projects, reached some rather contentious conclusions regarding the economic factors that may have contributed to the rationale of Roman Conquest under Caesar.

A similar issue greets some of the most recent work of Fentress (2018-19) in its reception of Poux, Loughton, and Tchernia's latter day contributions. Taking the available data pointing to the scale and social significance of wine importation amongst the Arverni (most prominently) alongside concomitant changes in settlement patterns and suggestions of connections between wine and slaves in the trading, she reaches for rather misguided regarding the proposed relationships between them. Based on a rather narrow stratum of economic evidence, Fentress has proposed that the Arverni (as well as many of their neighbours) functioned as a dedicated slaving society, engaged in a cycle of violence wherein warlords used wine to recruit and reward warriors to raid slaves, corralled them in newly built oppida fortifications, and sold them to Roman merchants in exchange for more wine.<sup>59</sup> These suggestions weigh strongly on potential interpretations of the kinds of ruling classes existed in the

---

<sup>59</sup> Fentress, 2019: 151-4.

Rhône Basin and their powers they wielded were in the decades prior to the Caesarian Gallic Wars. However, Fentress' arguments face multiple issues with regard to their use of the available evidence and rely quite heavily on analogy with an anachronistic and non-comparable historical phenomenon (the Early Modern Atlantic Slave Trade) to buttress them. These problems and potential alternative interpretations of the same material are discussed at greater length in Chapter 6.5 of this thesis.

While these works provide much in the way of crucial information regarding our subject matter, in some of the conclusions they draw they also represent the dangers of privileging any one strand of the complex, incomplete web of evidence pertaining to the protohistoric world of Late Iron Age Gaul.

#### 1.4.5 Contribution to Scholarship

Having surveyed the genealogies of prior scholarship underlying this paper, it is time to discuss what this thesis itself can contribute to the ongoing canon of knowledge. There are four main lacunae in the current discourse regarding the topics of class, social status, and the impact of Roman Imperialism thereupon in the Rhône Basin c.125-10BCE that this thesis aims to address.

Firstly, much of the scholarship extant in both English and French that deals directly with the topics of class and social status in pre-conquest Gaul and continuities/discontinuities thereof in relation to Roman conquest is now several decades old. As substantial changes have taken place in the field, both in terms of archaeological discoveries and advances in the methodological uses of textual and iconographic sources, the conclusions reached by

earlier scholars need to be re-examined and re-tested in light of newer evidence.

Secondly, much of the scholarship recording and producing these new advances in archaeology, iconography, and literary critique of ancient texts has tended to form disparate, at times isolated, strands of work, specialising closely in their own areas and disciplines. As we have seen, taking such discoveries and advances in isolation as the basis for new theories regarding the comprehensive functions and experiences of protohistoric Gallic communities can lead to unsubstantiated conclusions. The material variously produced in the last two decades would benefit greatly from synthesis into broader, more holistic methodological approaches, wherein strands can reinforce and/or nuance each other, rather than each giving rise to their own plethora of diverse, even contradictory conclusions.

Thirdly, while holistic approaches of the required kind are by no means absent from current scholarship on the societies of Late Iron Age Gaul and the impact of Rome thereupon, they have tended to lay geographic emphasis on the northern areas of Gaul (particularly Belgica) to the exclusion of others. Despite the major historical significance of groups like the Aedui, Arverni, Helvetii, Allobroges, and Saluvii, their treatment in scholarship has tended to either hyper-localisation (at the expense of considerations of their experiences in relation to one another) or subsummation into the broader, overarching categorisations of 'Gauls' or even 'Celts' (at the expense of considerations of their uniqueness or at least distinctions from other groups beneath such vast umbrellas).

Fourthly and finally, closely related to the above, a common thread in scholarship on provincial and/or subaltern experiences of Roman Imperialism concerning Gaul is that the arbitrarily imposed line dividing 'Gallia Transalpina/Narbonensis' from 'Gallia Comata' is treated as fundamental boundary and that it is the 'Gallic Wars' pursued by Caesar c.58-50BCE which are the sole or true departure point for studies, rather than any earlier conflict.

## 1.5 Primary Questions

This brings us to the main questions which animate our discussion and motivate our investigations.

Faced with conquest at Roman hands were the means by which the ruling classes of communities in Gaul maintained and exercised their power flexible enough to adapt to a new existence as a sub-elite group under foreign overlords, or would they have to be replaced? Were the Julii, acting as delegates of the Roman Principate and playing their part in the gradual transformation of Gallic into Gallo-Roman civilisation, a group of parvenus whose language of power outcompeted that of their downfallen predecessors or merely a new iteration of the old elite exchanging one system of control for another?

Drinkwater's assessment carries with it the assumption that for a new, identifiable group to have emerged in our sources, it must have existed in distinction (and potential opposition) to earlier ones. Similar thought processes appear to have underlain Lewuillon and Crumley's proliferation of class groups in Late Iron Age Gallic contexts. The question of ruling class continuity and survival versus

replacement from below rests on an important concern: how and why were pre-conquest elites endowed with the power to rule? Attempting to answer these questions is of vital importance, as any answers we might find will greatly illuminate our other inquiries. If the bases for their rule were things that defeat and conquest by another would eliminate or at least severely damage (e.g., reputation for unbroken military success) then the suggestion of downfall and replacement increases in probability. If, conversely, the distinguishing characteristics of the Rhône Basin ruling classes were things that could potentially survive conquest and/or be refashioned in its wake (e.g., familial ancestry) then the balance of evidence may lean further toward a conclusion of continuity and adaptation. Closely related to the issue of how and why these ruling classes functioned in their communities is the issue of their stratification or mobility. How easy or difficult would it have been for those initially on a lower rung of society to acquire power and acceptance as a member of the elite?

Further discussion of the theoretical frameworks by which we can better understand the nature and function of ruling classes in history and the dynamics of social stratification and mobility are explored in greater detail later in this chapter.

## 1.6 The Available Evidence

Having reviewed the state of extant scholarship on the topic of Late Iron Age Gallic ruling classes (especially those of the Rhône Basin region) and their fates in relation to the Roman Conquests, we must turn to considering what evidence we have at our disposal.



It can be divided into three main groupings by medium.

Firstly, there is textual evidence, in forms of preserved written accounts of the history of the period c.125-10BCE and the ethnography of the inhabitants of the Rhône Basin. As previously noted, the peoples of Late Iron Age Gaul fall into the category of protohistory. They exist within the realm of history by virtue of chronological position and contact with literate, history-producing societies, but we lack surviving direct accounts of the past or historical present from their perspective.

Secondly, there is archaeological or material evidence. This consists of the largest variety of types and, arguably, the greatest potential amounts of available data. Archaeological excavations aimed at uncovering material relating to Late Iron Age Gaul have been a major concern since the mid-nineteenth century (with vast survey projects commissioned by Emperor Napoleon III of France) and have revealed much in terms of settlements and artefacts.<sup>60</sup> These remains can tell us a great deal about aspects of life in the communities of the Late Iron Age Rhône, but interpreting this data in relation to solid historiographical conclusions can be a complex, hotly debateable matter.

Thirdly, there is iconographic evidence. This relates to artistic depictions arising in the contexts of our period and area of study and what can be gleaned from them in terms of representation and symbolism. Of the three main groupings, this is the smallest in terms

---

<sup>60</sup> Napoleon III, 1866. Harmand, 1967: 101. Goudineau, 1990: 93.

of volume of relevant material but is nevertheless potentially very useful.

### 1.6.1 The Problem of Caesar

The most extensive source of textual evidence relating to Late Iron Age Gaul is the *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* written by G. Julius Caesar. These are accounts of Caesar's campaigns of conquest and repression waged against the various polities of Gaul over the period c.58-50BCE, covering events from the initial origins on the conflict up to their climax in the Revolt of Vercingetorix c.52BCE, with an accompanying follow-up volume penned by Caesar's lieutenant Aulus Hirtius recording later clean-up operations, and providing numerous incidental descriptions on pertinent aspects of Gallic military, political, social organisation. These accounts were disseminated for a Latin-speaking audience and seemed to have formed the foundation of all later surviving accounts of those events in Latin and Greek.<sup>61</sup> The exact format and date of their dissemination, as well as their specific target audience, remains a matter of some dispute amongst scholars but one that is largely tangential to our project beyond potentially informing us as to frameworks of interpretation.<sup>62</sup> For example, Mehl's argument for

---

<sup>61</sup> Accounts of the Gallic Wars of c.58-50BCE found in Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* (*Epit.* 103-108) and the biographies of Caesar penned by Plutarch (*Caes.* 15-27) and Suetonius (*Div. Jul.* 22-4) closely follow, and at times directly cite, the *Commentarii*. Based on later references and fragments, it would appear that the later first century BCE historian Asinius Pollio, a former soldier and adherent of Caesar, produced accounts that contradicted his commander's on certain points. However, not only are those texts lost to history, but it is also probable that the major points of contention between the two related to narratives of the later Roman Civil Wars rather than the Conquest of Gaul, the latter attracting far less overt controversy in the eyes of Caesar and Pollio's shared audiences. Toher, 2009: 231. Damon, 2010: 443.

<sup>62</sup> On the disputes see Riggsby, 2006: 9; Kraus, 2009: 160; and Dimitrova, 2018: 58.

book-by-book serial composition and publication supports a contention that the ethnographic information found in later sections of the text is of higher quality due to Caesar's increasing knowledge and familiarity.<sup>63</sup> While the idea that later books are more reliable than some of the earlier ones may have some merit, as argued further below, it also ignores other complicating factors.

As sources, the *Commentarii* present a host of problems. At a basic level they represent an external and largely hostile picture of the communities in question, which not only offers incidental rather than comprehensive descriptions, but also represents the highly unusual circumstances of crisis pressure as those communities faced their subjugation at foreign hands.<sup>64</sup> On further analysis, Caesar's assertions are compromised by more than his status as an external enemy of the Gauls, but the underlying agenda of the *Commentarii* themselves. Written as apologetics of his military conduct against allegations of impropriety for the benefit of a Roman audience, there are many reasons to suspect obfuscation of the facts, if not outright fabrication, on the part of the author.<sup>65</sup> Upon thorough scrutiny, there are sections of *Commentarii*, most notably Book 1 and sections of Books 4 and 6, which present particularly problems for their factual accuracy on the basis of likely deliberate misrepresentation of events and potential mischaracterisation of groups, cultures, and institutions amongst the Gauls. Book 4, fortunately, impinges little on our project as it deals with events away

---

<sup>63</sup> Mehl, 2011: 74.

<sup>64</sup> Webster, 1996: 119.

<sup>65</sup> For the political context of Caesar's writings on this point see Vasaly, 1993: 151-2; Osgood, 2009: 339-40; and Mehl, 2011: 24-5.

from the Rhône Basin region. The issues pertaining to the far more immediately relevant narrative of Book 1, its probable fabrications, and attempts to reconstruct more accurate historiography are dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 2 of this thesis. The problem section of Book 6, specifically the excursus offering general ethnographies of the Gauls and their contrasting counterparts the Germani (*BG* 6.12-27), would appear to offer information relevant to the reconstruction of Late Iron Age societies of the region. However, its assertions are undermined by the fact that many of them do not appear to be well reflected in the narrative sections of the text that bracket it.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore the excursus appears largely shaped and motivated by a rhetorical desire to establish firm lines of distinction between the Gauls and Germani in the minds of his Roman audience, with the former acceptable and the latter anathema, prompting highly biased approaches to their description.<sup>67</sup>

With all of that taken into consideration, however, Caesar's work remains indispensable. We simply do not have access to an alternative source of similar breadth, detail, and first-hand perspective. Although it is vital to read Caesar against a backdrop of archaeological evidence that can serve to correct, affirm, or nuance his testimony, the inconvenient fact remains that without his narrative, most of the events of the wars he prosecuted would be

---

<sup>66</sup> Notably, Caesar ascribes great cultural significance and far-reaching powers of legal judgement and diplomacy to the Druids as a social group in Gallic culture (*BG* 6.13-14) none of which materialises at any point in his account of the conquest of their communities. See also Rawlings, 1998: 171.

<sup>67</sup> Woolf, 2011a: 87-8.

almost impossible to detect, let alone reconstruct, with material remains alone.<sup>68</sup>

Caesar's work has cast a long shadow over much of the earlier scholarship in this field, hampered (as noted above) by varying swings across a spectrum of excessive credulity and scepticism towards the ancient author's assertions. While it is vital to note where the text diverges from, or is even seemingly contradicted by, other forms of evidence (especially the archaeological), treating it as fundamentally fictitious obfuscates its potential points of value.<sup>69</sup>

Deconstructive criticism of the *Commentarii* themselves, treating them, first and foremost, as literary texts informed by Caesar's political and stylistic concerns rather than merely reports of fact and/or fabrication are vital part of the scholastic conversation and, by extension, our methodological concerns. Such moves towards critical analysis were already underway before and during the 1970s, as Rambaud (1966), Delbrück (1975), and Murphy (1977) demonstrate, providing much of the groundwork for Crumley, Lewuillon, and Drinkwater's reassessments of the historiography of the Gallic Wars. These early approaches are somewhat limited, though, in relying on either the limited available archaeological evidence of the time to simply prove Caesar wrong (and offer their own alternative explanations) or, in Murphy's case, to point to the text adhering to thematic concerns possibly over rigid adherence to fact.<sup>70</sup> While their conclusions largely remain sound, they do not offer much in the way of diagnostic tools for examining Caesar's

---

<sup>68</sup> Krebs, 2019: 2-3.

<sup>69</sup> Arbabe, 2017: 7. Woolf, 2009: 210.

<sup>70</sup> Delbrück, 1975: 459-60 and 469-70. See Murphy, 1977: 234-41.

assertions on a case-by-case basis. For that, we are better furnished by more recent work. A strong example is Riggsby's 2006 monograph, which analyses Caesar's authorial and propagandising techniques of composition through his contextual relationships with both his Roman audience and the wider backdrop of literary traditions and conventions of his chosen genre, and which provides utile templates for performing our critical analyses of the *Commentarii*. Shorter, more specialised, but no less rigorous offerings from Krebs (2006, 2010), Schadee (2008), Vasaly (2009), Tarpin (2009), and Kraus (2009) also take pride of place in this discussion.<sup>71</sup> Taking our cues from these works and their approaches, we are comparatively well equipped to separate the wheat from the chaff in what Caesar has to say.

While it is the *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* which loom particularly large amongst the available textual sources, both his later commentary on the conflict with Pompey and accounts of later campaigns by anonymous authors later attributed to Caesar himself also play a role in the evidence necessary for investigating the Gallic Julii. Although their narratives take place outside the context of the Gallic Rhône Basin (though the campaign against Massalia and its consequences have some relevance), their main link to our project is in their descriptions of Gallic individuals and groups serving as auxiliary troops to Roman forces (primarily those of Caesar but with

---

<sup>71</sup> Krebs variously offers analyses of Caesar's construction and projection of Gallic ethnic identities (2010: 206-9) and propagandistic use of intertextuality (2006:112-29). Vasaly (2009: 248-51) and Tarpin (2013: 671-9) target Caesar's highly rhetorical approaches to characterisation, with Ariovistus as a case study. Kraus offers an overview of Caesar's rhetorical positionality and intertextuality with contemporaneous Latin literature (2009: 160-72).

occasional episodes of defection). In establishing links between Caesar, as a historic individual, and particular groups of Gauls (many based in Rhône Basin communities) through shared military experiences and institutions of patronage, these sources gave a formative element to Drinkwater's theory of the Julii as an ascendant replacement ruling class to those brought low by the preceding conquest and give ammunition to similar approaches. However, it should be noted that descriptions of Gallic auxiliaries are incidentally scattered throughout the *Commentarii de Bellum Civile* and *Commentarii de Bellum Africanum* rather than ever given a coherent, totalising treatment. On the one hand, this means that the picture is a largely inchoate, impressionistic one resting on a handful of anecdotes and generalisation made therefrom. On the other, the passing nature of such mentions, and the perspective of familiarity through which they are rendered, somewhat decreases the likelihood that their content was fabricated or egregiously misrepresented. This is not to suggest that Caesar's word should be taken for granted, by any means, but there are few fewer detectable reasons for him to lie or misinterpret Gallic subordinates and comrades-in-arms than Gallic foes and potentially fair-weather allies against whom he fought and negotiated.

### 1.6.2 Other Ancient Contributors

Although none of them rival Caesar in terms of the size of their contributions, several other authors whose writings have survived from Antiquity offer pieces of potentially valuable information concerning the Rhône Basin Gauls and their ruling classes in the second and first centuries BCE. We will survey and introduce them

here briefly to give an idea of the material with which we are working.

Strabo, perhaps, represents the second most extensive and focused literary source we possess on Late Iron Age Gaul with the descriptions laid out in Book 4 of his *Geography*. He also presents something of a foil to Caesar's perspective; deriving his information on a firmly second-hand basis (seemingly having never set foot in Gaul himself) but presenting it in a comprehensive rather than incidental format.<sup>72</sup> Although completed in the early years of Tiberius' regime as Princeps, the work explicitly relates its descriptions of Gaul and its people to their indigenous forms of organisation (insofar as Strabo is informed of them) rather than imposed formations of Roman provincial organisation (*Geog.* 4.1.1) and outlines a number of differences between the state of Gallic societies in the early first century CE and earlier, pre-conquest timeframes.<sup>73</sup> These observations make the *Geography* particularly useful amongst our limited range of sources for considering the impact of conquest and imperialism upon Gallic cultures in the short term. An attendant issue, however, is that the geographer is not always precise in chronological terminology, favouring a simple construction of past ("παλαιόν") versus present ("νυν"), leaving the span of time between those standpoints and any historic moment of transition vague and up for interpretation.

---

<sup>72</sup> Potheary, 2005: 162.

<sup>73</sup> See Thollard, 2009: 79-83. On the political positionality of Strabo's work in the context of the Principate see Ilyuscheckkina, 2017: 60-5. For a critique of the more problematic aspects of Strabo's approach on this front see Potheary, 2005: 177-8.



One important strand of Strabo's comments on the state of Gallic society in past periods, that is potentially easier to pin down, is his preservation of fragments from Posidonius of Apamea, a late second/early first century BCE Greek philosopher and traveller said to have spent some time in Gaul.<sup>74</sup> If it is true that Posidonius did sojourn amongst the Gauls, and that our later citations of his lost works are accurate, then he would represent our only first-hand witness other than Caesar and is a unique source in terms of his chronological horizons.<sup>75</sup> Traditional views of the 'Posidonian Tradition' as a coherent, influential, and potentially valuable school of thought in Classical Ethnography of Gaul, particularly informing and underlying the work of Strabo, Diodorus, and possibly even Caesar, have come under increasing scrutiny. Caesar's work, even in his dubious ethnographic tangent in Book 6 of the *Commentarii*, differs on several key points from his counterparts, while both Strabo and Diodorus likely drew on a wide variety of sources rather than a single canonical text to construct their descriptions. Furthermore, even if what is credited to him preserves traces of genuine eyewitness testimony, it still faces limitations as a source for life in early first century BCE Gaul. The main problems with assertions and descriptions attributed to Posidonius are that they likely relate to a very specific and unusual set of circumstances within the context of Gaul rather than providing grounds for generalisation. The philosopher, it would seem, spent some time amongst communities

---

<sup>74</sup> Tierney, 1960: 198-225.

<sup>75</sup> Doubts have been raised as to authenticity of accounts of Posidonius' travels in Western Europe, though these rest largely on the contention that anecdotes about the Gauls attributed to him align too closely to those thought to be derived from Roman oral traditions to have been original ethnographic description. Lampinen, 2014: 256.

in the far south-east of Gaul near Massalia c.90BCE, when the region was very much in recovery from the serious upheavals of the Roman Conquest of c.125-120BCE and the Cimbric Wars of c.117-101BCE (both explained in greater detail in Chapter 2 of this thesis).<sup>76</sup> Since these circumstances fall within the period and region which study they do have use for us, but need to be interpreted in their correct context as localisms filtered heavily through a colonial gaze rather than generalisations acceptable as fact.

Cicero, the great orator and philosopher of the Late Roman Republic, though unusually and ironically outdone in his verbosity on the subject of Gaul by the concise Caesar, nevertheless has his place as a source here. Certain of his recorded orations, most notably the *Pro Fonteio* and *Pro Quinctio*, relate to events and aspects of life within the province of Gallia Transalpina in the early first century BCE, an area on which we have very little other testimony. Meanwhile, as a contemporary of Caesar, Cicero's correspondences, orations such as *De Provinciis Consularibus*, and even later philosophical texts such as *De Divinatione* and *De Officiis*, offer points of conceptualisation and nuance to the accounts of conquest presented in the *Commentarii*.<sup>77</sup> An issue that arises from Cicero's writings, however, is that his hostility towards Gallic individuals and communities, largely expressed in invective and stereotyping, is more overt and egregious than found in other

---

<sup>76</sup> Nash, 1976: 119-23.

<sup>77</sup> On Cicero's relationship with Caesar's conquests as seen through *De Provinciis Consularibus* see Brunt, 1978: 177-81; Steel, 2001: 158-9 and 186; and Riggsby, 2006: 21.

contexts, largely as a tool for courtroom rhetoric.<sup>78</sup> As such, Cicero's writings are primarily useful for extracting minor points of historical fact and for gaging aspects of perceptions of Gaul and its peoples from a metropolitan Roman perspective, but have little to speak to the perspectives of the Gauls themselves.

On a closely related front, we find usage of the Latin historian Sallust, whose account of the Catilinarian Conspiracy of c.63BCE offers more detail on the role played by members of the Allobroges (as Gallic provincial subjects from the Lower Rhône Basin) in exposing the plotted coup than Cicero's orations do (*Cat.* 40-1). The historian's perspective is an intriguing one, as it appears to offer more sympathy and rationality to his Gallic subjects than most of his peers. However, their role in the text is very much that of a cameo in a narrative fundamentally centred around Rome, with experiences hinted at rather than explored comprehensively.<sup>79</sup> Sallust thus provides us with hints about the nature of life and power dynamics between conquerors and conquered in provincial Gallia Transalpina but cannot give us a full picture.

Diodorus Siculus' *Library of History* is also a source of some potential use but many problems. Its broad overview of Gallic ethnography (5.28-32) appears to function as a conglomeration of earlier stereotypes and anecdotes applied synchronically, with little interest in changes over time, and an apparent guiding theme of

---

<sup>78</sup> See Vasaly, 1993: 191-4 and Polo, 2019: 115-26.

<sup>79</sup> For further analysis of the roles given to the Allobroges as a device in relation to the Catilinarian Conspiracy within Latin and Greek historiography see Pagán, 2004: 31-48.

heroic primitivism.<sup>80</sup> Diodorus' approach may have relied partly on Posidonius as its source of information, but, as he provides no citation as such, this conclusion largely rests on inference based on similarities with Strabo.<sup>81</sup> His work is chronologically closer to the period of independence, being a product of the late first century BCE, and is potentially more independent of Caesar's influence than later texts. Diodorus' works is, overall, more useful as a guide to Hellenic perceptions of the Gallic world during our period than to any aspect of the Gauls' own experiences, but it may at times dimly reflect their lived realities enough to provide back-up to assertions based on other, stronger evidence.

Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*, perhaps surprisingly, is a late but vital source, as, like Strabo, he preserves fragments of Posidonius' account of his sojourn among the Gauls in the opening years of the first century BCE. His descriptions of feasting customs, while viewed through a combination of colonial and comedic lenses, provide potential insights into Gallic elite culture and aspects of life more generally that would otherwise be lacking in the more straightforwardly political and military accounts of Caesar *et al.*

A common problem faced with the textual sources at our disposal is that, aside from Caesar, accounts of pertinent historical events and episodes are only preserved in the epitomised or summarised sections of larger works whose full texts are now lost. This is true of Livy's descriptions of the conquest of Gallia Transalpina c.125-

---

<sup>80</sup> Riggsby, 2006: 53. Woolf 2011a: 21. For the problems of modern reception of Diodorus' sketch of Gallic/'Celtic' mores see Collis, 1996: 172.

<sup>81</sup> Nash, 1976: 113.

120BCE and Allobrogan Revolt of c.61BCE, which exists only in brief summaries lacking in either sufficient detail or nuance to construct more than a bare-bones picture of events.<sup>82</sup> Similar issues attend the fragmentary parts of Diodorus and Cassius Dio that cover these areas.

The later Greek historian Appian, like many of his counterparts, only provides an extremely broad-brush, heavily summarised, and detail-light overview of the wars between Rome and various peoples considered Gallic. However, surviving quotations and fragments from his *On Embassies* relate to certain areas of those conflicts and provide accounts of nuance and colour that we would otherwise lack. These vignettes of Appian's are, in line with other descriptions by Classical authors, not be taken as hard fact (and we can identify at least one serious error in them) but they provide further material through which we can trawl for nuggets of useful information.

Small amounts of otherwise obscure or lost information are also provided by the biographical writings of Plutarch and Suetonius. The former's writings on the late second/early first century BCE Roman general and politician Gaius Marius (*Mar.* 11-27) provide our only extant narrative account of the Cimbric Wars of c.117-101BCE, whose course affected the Rhône Basin of Gaul in serious ways (again laid out in greater detail in Chapter 2 of this thesis), and those on other relevant Roman figures (Caesar, Cicero, etc.) can provide certain amounts of detail and/or backup to information furnished by

---

<sup>82</sup> The sections of Livy that survive in full, discussed at greater length in Chapter 6.3.4, are also marked with a rather prejudicial view of the Gauls. Bernard, 2015: 40-1.

other accounts. The latter, Suetonius, is of more limited use for our purposes due his generally later chronological horizons, though titbits from his biography of Caesar crop up from time to time. The key weakness of both writers, for our purposes, is that their emphasis on biographical portraiture of specific Roman individuals means that any information about Gaul and its inhabitants is handled tangentially.<sup>83</sup> Whatever they say of potential interest to our research tends to be of limited detail, rests on what is likely to be less than second-hand testimony, and is filtered and framed for its usefulness to the rhetorical picture of their individual subject rather than the broader historical context.

There are several other ancient textual sources cited at points in the thesis, including the second century BCE *Histories* of Polybius, certain of the philosophical writings of Aristotle, the works of Tacitus, Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia*, and others. However, these do not provide much, if anything, that addresses the subject of class and social power amongst the peoples of the Rhône Basin c.125-10BCE directly. Instead, their roles are, primarily, to provide bracketing effects, giving information about earlier or later historical periods that can help us contextualise what we have, or, secondarily, to provide further insight into the traditions of Greek and Roman thought that shape the perspectives and terminology of our main sources.

---

<sup>83</sup> On how these issues affect the use of Plutarch as a historiographical source see Geiger, 2014: 295 and Stadter, 2014: 25.

### 1.6.3 Seeing Gaul through Roman (and Greek) Eyes

Having surveyed the texts at our disposal to mine for evidence, it is important that we consider some of the problems that this canon presents for our research and how we can effectively respond to such methodological challenges.

We must also note that our view on the peoples of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin and the historical events they faced as taken from the textual sources available to us is one from the perspective of cultural outsiders characterised at best by prejudicial ignorance and at worst by hostility.<sup>84</sup> None of it can equal or replace a perspective from within the societies being discussed; a perspective we unfortunately lack access to. We face a double-distancing effect of attempting to divine Gallic behaviours, through Roman or Greek interpretations of them, bounded by the framework of our modern preconceptions.<sup>85</sup> On closer reflection, though, this is increased to at least a triple-distancing effect as the actions of the Gauls are not only observed by Greek and Roman eyes, but described for the comprehension of Greek and Roman readers, meaning that much of the information presented is warped by approaches that filtered differences from the expected norms of its writers in either one or

---

<sup>84</sup> The exact framework through which we should understand prejudicial and/or discriminatory attitudes towards the peoples of Gaul on the part of Roman and Greek authors is a matter of substantial debate. Studies of ethnic Othering in these contexts have a long history, with a strong opening salvo from Sherwin-White (1967: 3-57), and more recent contributions from Isaac (2004: 23, 83-97, 413-38), Williams (2001: 3, 46-7, 171-7), Woolf (2011a: 23; 2011b: 273), and Krebs (2010: 206-9), arguing as to what extent such stereotyping and expressions of hostility can be interpreted as analogous, or even linked to, systemic cultural issues like White Supremacy. Gruen (2011: 146-53) presents a more reconciliatory argument somewhat against the grain.

<sup>85</sup> Rawlings, 1998: 174-5.

both of two ways.<sup>86</sup> The first aspect to consider is a smoothing of differences through analogy with the familiar, placing things in categories that their readers will have understood and exercising their colonial gaze in defining foreign things for themselves. The second aspect, similar to the first, is that differences in custom or behaviour are sometimes presented in condemnatory terms, representing what may have been respected norms of Gallic society as failures, misdemeanours, or aberrations from a Hellenic or Italian perspective.

For examples of these trends, to be revisited in greater detail later, we can look to episodes of Caesar and Athenaeus. Caesar makes multiple uses of the terms '*Senatus*' and '*Senatores*' (though notably never '*senator*' singular) to describe Gallic groups and political institutions without offering any precise explanation, leaving it for the reader to consider exactly how close his analogy with Roman society should be in each instance.<sup>87</sup> Meanwhile, Athenaeus' description of the Arvernian leader Louernios' provision of a public feast to his people presents it rather snidely as an act of crass demagoguery, aimed at cynically currying favour (*Deip.* 5.37), obscuring its likely role as an expected, even possibly honoured practice within that culture.

---

<sup>86</sup> Krebs has argued for a concept of 'Borealism', adapting Saïd's 'Orientalism', as a way of understanding Greek and Roman perceptions of temperate Europe through an imperial lens analogous to Medieval and Modern Western perceptions of the Middle and Far East. In both cases, imperial observers neglect or ignore local knowledge and self-perceptions to frame themselves as authoritative in their descriptions of the regions they visit and use the systems of privileged they create as part of larger projects of colonial domination and extractivism. Krebs, 2010: 206-9. Saïd, 1978: 2-12.

<sup>87</sup> Arbabe, 2017: 13.



The primary way to combat such problems in our project is to interrogate the Latin and Greek terminology utilised by the authors we read to unpick the various shades of meaning implied and weigh them against what other evidence may be marshalled on that topic. By ensuring that our understanding of what the writers might have meant, rather than reaching for easy assumptions, is as closely scrutinised as possible, we can then more readily proceed to weighing up their relationships with other forms of evidence, instead of simply assessing them as binarily accurate or inaccurate.

Even within their problematic confines, the range of matters covered by the texts in question is circumscribed and biased towards specific contexts, most notably that of conflict. This is predominantly in the form of military conflict as reflected by Caesar, Appian, and the summaries of Livy, but also in the form of political/legal tension in the scenarios addressed by Cicero and Sallust. What glimpses of the Iron Age Gallic world outside of such agonistic frameworks that we can snatch from the material left to us tend to be viewed in the shadow of war, with conquests and upheavals weighing heavily on both Posidonian material pertaining to the early first century BCE and views such as Strabo's in the wake of the Caesarian Gallic Wars. As noted in our earlier discussion of the critique of the 'Posidonian tradition', most of our textually sourced information regarding Gallic society outside of the realms of war and diplomacy is derived from decontextualised vignettes and anecdotes rather than comprehensive ethnographies even as undertaken by external, imperialist observers.

Despite the inevitable imperfections of our looking through these colonial filters, it is wiser to engage with this lens and its limitations, however, than to try to do away with them entirely in relation to our current state of evidence. Attempts to reconstruct Gallic societies without reference to the Roman and Greek lenses through which we are forced to view are admirable but often ill-fated. They tend to result in the imposition of anthropological *comparanda* drawn from more distant contexts, resulting in anachronistic and/or otherwise misleading perceptions. While by no means devoid of merit, references to High Medieval Feudalism (à la Lewuillon and his predecessors), Enright's Beowulf-esque constructions, or Fentress' overtures to the Early Modern Atlantic can often do more to obscure than illuminate the enigmatic world of Late Iron Age Gaul.<sup>88</sup>

Another reason to consider the Mediterranean perspectives on the world of the Rhône Basin, despite their colonialist aspect, is that we are dealing with a colonial situation and making an examination of how colonial and indigenous cultures were able to interact.

Understanding the real or potential commensurability of social institutions and values that existed between groups like the Aedui, Allobroges, or Volcae Arecomici and Rome, as observed and described by Latin and Greek-speaking commentators, is vital to understanding the functioning of imperial governance.

Something which should be demonstrated thus far is that the problems faced in attempting to use Latin and Greek textual sources

---

<sup>88</sup> For Enright, and his attempts to draw comparisons between Caesarian visions of Gallic society and Early Medieval Germanic Literature, see Enright, 1996: 144-216.

to reconstruct Late Iron Age Gallic society and its responses to Roman conquest, especially in terms of the ruling classes of the Rhône Basin, go beyond those of bias and unreliability. The texts alone are insufficient in scope to give more than broad strokes, which may in turn be misleading. The need to holistically incorporate material and iconographic evidence is not merely a matter of confirming or negating what Caesar or other sources say, but of expanding on our knowledge base and building a more detailed and comprehensive picture of the past.

#### 1.6.4 The State of Archaeology

Having reviewed the ancient textual evidence at our disposal, it is necessary to survey the more varied and dynamic range of material evidence that might illuminate our search for the ruling classes of the Rhône Basin in the late second and first centuries BCE. This cannot be an exhaustive list of archaeological developments in the field, as the work already completed is vast in scope and, in contrast to the relatively static canon of historical literature, is being expanded upon constantly. However, it is important that we cover key formats of evidence and the methodological opportunities that they present for our research concerns.

#### 1.6.5 Numismatics

Coins, as produced by Late Iron Age Gallic societies, contain a potentially vast amount of usable information for our purposes. For one thing, the extant record of coins and their inscriptions is one of the few sources that offers potential corroboration to Caesar's writings in their identification of key figures in Gallic politics. Issues marked with the names of Vercingetorix, Dubnoreix, Epađnactos,

or Litaviccus speak to the reality of those individuals as described in the *Commentarii*, while their choices of iconographic designs can perhaps nuance our understandings of the personae they wished to project and the coins' distribution patterns might evince their networks of connectivity across the landscape of Gaul.<sup>89</sup> Overall, the combination of evidence embodied in coins' textual inscriptions, pictorial representations, and material testimony to access to precious metals and metalworking facilities, makes numismatics a uniquely potent source of potential evidence about the nature of power and characterisations of ruling classes amongst Late Iron Age Gallic societies.

Coins, as archaeological objects, do, however, present multiple of issues for correct interpretation on two key points above all. Firstly, they are difficult to date, as they tend to lack encoded information regarding their time of production, and their deposition contexts can only provide estimated *termini prae quem*.<sup>90</sup> Secondly, debate continues as to the exact ways in which coins, as objects, were used in the context of pre-conquest and/or provincialized Gaul, limiting our ability to make definitive conclusions about the information they provide in any given context (for the debate on monetisation in the La Tène world see Chapter 5.4). Numismatics are thus most useful to our project as sources of information when they can be viewed in archaeological contexts relating to their creation (at times more than their later distribution) and when they can be interpreted in tandem

---

<sup>89</sup> Coins of Vercingetorix BN3774-5/*RIG* 4.302. Coins of Dubnoreix BN5027-8/*RIG* 4.143 and BN5038-40/*RIG* 4.142. Coins of Epaḍnactus BN3895-7/*RIG* 4.106 and BN3885/3903/*RIG* 4.160-1. Coins of Litaviccus BN5076-9/*RIG* 4.194. See Fig. 14-19.

<sup>90</sup> Haselgrove, 2019: 243.

with textual sources, mutually anchoring the other in frames of reference.

With several extensive back catalogues of collected Gallic coins published (Allen and Nash 1980, Deroc 1983, Allen and Mays 1995, Colbert de Beaulieu and Fischer 1998, Ralite and Gentric 2016), and a continually expanding canon, we have large amounts of potential data to be mined from the available numismatic record, provided we can find effective and accurate means of interpreting it.

### 1.6.6 Funerary Archaeology

Funerary archaeology, generally speaking, represents one of the richest and most effective sources of information about the identities and cultural values of any given society that material culture can provide. The treatment of the dead can speak volumes about their perception as individuals by their community, paradigms of honour and prestige practiced by their society, and divisions of status between social groups.<sup>91</sup> As is the case for many, if not most, ancient cultures, archaeological investigation and analysis of burials (especially those accompanied by surviving grave goods) and tomb markers provide a vital window into the world of Late Iron Age Gaul.

However, in the context of the Rhône Basin region c.125-10BCE, we run into certain problems with the use and integration of funerary remains into the wider archaeological picture of society. A major stumbling block is that of inconsistency. Burial formats varied substantially between communities throughout the region, and over

---

<sup>91</sup> Pitt, 2007: 701. For further consideration about the ways in which treatment of the dead reflects upon the power and status dynamics of the living see Baines and Yoffee, 2000: 14.

time. Although such differences can be useful indicators in some contexts, a problem that we face is that certain forms of burials in our region and period provide more ready information for our investigations into class and elite identity than others, and tend to be more easily identified, than others. This leads to the privileging of certain sites and examples over others, muddying considerations of survey data and leaving potential lacunae in our attempts to use burials for reconstructive purposes. It is difficult to interpret differences in burial practices as evidence of class division when it is possible, yet uncertain, that the only burials fully published are those of social elites.

Examples of the varying trends of funerary archaeology across the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin include the so-called warrior graves of the Lower Rhône, Isère, and Gard Valleys (dated to the second and early first centuries BCE), cremated 'token' burials, and, from the later first century, cemeteries marked by stone monuments on the fringes of southern Gallic settlements, and intramural cremated burials at Bibracte beneath the floors of houses.<sup>92</sup> We can use uncovered and examined burial instances to tell us about certain aspects of life and/or certain specific communities, but if we wish to apply these lessons to a wider framework, we are forced to generalise.

### 1.6.7 Patterns of Settlement

The archaeology of settlements, as sites, and their relationships to each other provide one of our best sources of material evidence for

---

<sup>92</sup> Pleiner, 1993: 45-59; Woolf, 1998: 9-10; Goodman, 2007: 150; and Häussler, 2010: 209.

the organisation of society in protohistoric Iron Age contexts and how we interpret it.

One of the ways in which the archaeological remains of built environment can speak to questions of power and class in protohistoric contexts like that of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin is that, by their nature, large scale projects like fortifications and monuments require organisation of labour.<sup>93</sup> Although egalitarian prehistoric societies have proven themselves capable of organisation for the construction of monumental sites, certain features of the archaeological record tend to invite more hierarchical interpretations. A strong example of how centres of hierarchical power can be identified in the landscape is in their relationship to pre-existing networks of resource gathering and transport, standing out as “disembedded” nodes whose control by a ruling elite forces local patterns to adapt to them and their influence.<sup>94</sup> While this observation is primarily predicated on examples from the Bronze and Early Iron Age Fertile Crescent, many sites in the context of Late Iron Age Gaul align well with it.

A potentially useful case study may be found in the site of Entremont, usually identified as the stronghold of the Saluvii in the later second century BCE, notable for its enclosing walls and grid-like layout of internal streets but apparent absence of identifiable public buildings, monuments, or large gathering spaces.<sup>95</sup> This allows for interpretations of spatial power and social division on the

---

<sup>93</sup> Audouze and Büchsenschutz, 1992: 87-8.

<sup>94</sup> Yoffee, 2005: 37.

<sup>95</sup> Scarre, 2013: 394.

basis of interior and exterior, but does not offer much information about distinctions between potential rulers and ruled amongst those who inhabited the site at first glance. By contrast, settlements that demonstrate more overt monumentality and hierarchical distinction of their built environments, of which those identified as 'oppida' in the record of Late Iron Age Gaul tend to do, present more signs of intra-communal stratification between classes.<sup>96</sup> 'Oppida' is a somewhat fraught categorisation for a particular type of high-profile settlement emerging in Gaul (as well as neighbouring regions of temperate Continental Europe and arguably southern Britain) in the Late Iron Age. The term derives originally from Caesar's usage of the Latin noun (most directly translatable as 'town') as a go-to for describing settlements as he encountered and interacted with them in Gaul.<sup>97</sup> The term, in modern archaeological parlance, has been applied to monumental, fortified sites characterised by elevated settings, extensive earthworks, and forms of stone and timber walls.<sup>98</sup> Its usage is, however, complicated by the fact that, in so far as they can be identified in the archaeological record, the settlements Caesar described by the term '*oppidum*' do not adhere to that category, including many unwallled and low-lying sites.<sup>99</sup>

Surveys and examinations of settlements within the Rhône Basin area are a well-established area of academic interest and incorporate a deeper chronological sweep than just our period of

---

<sup>96</sup> Cowley, Fernández-Götz, Romankiewicz, and Wendling, 2019: 11.

<sup>97</sup> However, Caesar does at times utilise the term '*urbs*' ('city') to refer to Gallic settlements, notably Avaricum and other major settlements of the Bituriges (*BG* 7.15), Gergovia (*BG* 7.36), and Alésia (*BG* 7.68). Kraus, 2009: 172.

<sup>98</sup> Adam and Fichtl, 1996: 193-4 and Büchsenschutz, 2007: 423-8.

<sup>99</sup> Examples include Genava (*BG* 1.6) and the Aeduan Noviodunum (*BG* 7.55). Moore and Ponroy, 2014: 146.



focus. Arcelin (2004) lays out important underlying trends in agglomeration and nucleation in the Lower Rhône Valley in the fourth and third centuries BCE, setting the scene for many of the developments of our period. Meanwhile, others (Audouze and Büchsenchutz 1992, Mauné 2000, Fichtl 2019) have created syntheses of similar material throughout areas of the Rhône Basin and beyond within our timeframe. A shared emphasis on evolving cycles in patterns of habitation between contraction into nucleated, fortified centres and dispersal into scattered, smaller farmsteads across the landscape over decades and centuries amongst all of these works almost certainly relates to matters of social power and class division amongst the inhabitants, but, without incorporation of further evidence it is difficult to make effective arguments thereto.

Interpreting the evidence of individual sites for evidence of stratification, either singly or in aggregate, is only part of the picture, though, as the relationships between sites, in terms of networks of cooperation, dependence, and dominance, also potentially illuminates ground on questions of social organisation and hierarchy.<sup>100</sup> On this front, Bibracte, due to its size and ready identification in Caesarian textual sources, has received a particularly high level of archaeological work. This can raise issues as to whether it functions as a good, if outsize, exemplar for settlement forms across Late Iron Age Gaul or if it should be interpreted as a unique phenomenon unto itself.<sup>101</sup> In addition to the notions of 'low density urbanism' discussed above in relation to

---

<sup>100</sup> Cowley, Fernández-Götz, Romankiewicz, and Wendling, 2019: 14.

<sup>101</sup> Moore et al., 2013: 510.

Moore (2017) and Gaydarska (2017), an earlier constituent aspect of theory applied to reading the archaeological remains of settlements is 'network systems theory' (Hohenberg and Lees 1985), which emphasises the importance of trade routes in the development of settlements as centres of power and population. In some ways, the current swing of the urbanisation debate in favour was foreshadowed by earlier arguments in that direction promulgated by Collis (1987, 2007), Jones (1987) and Buchsenschutz (2007), who viewed the '*oppida*' of Iron Age North-Western Europe as manifestations of a pre-Roman move towards urbanism.

The debate over the status of *oppida* in central and eastern Gaul as urban, proto-urban, or non-urban has pushed further investigation of the relevant sites and yielded much in the way of interpretative literature. However, its emphasis on fitting produced data into largely abstract categories has sometimes obscured its relationship with social power, which is our primary concern. Regardless of the semantics we apply to them, *oppida*, in the sense of pre-conquest Gallic settlements of a certain magnitude and monumentality, are consistently identifiable as centres of power and thus closely linked to ruling classes of the region. Examining their remains for indications as to how they were used by occupants can tell us much about the character of said ruling classes.

On a similar basis, the link between changes in settlement patterns in the Rhône Basin in the wake of Roman conquest and questions of local power and elite culture is not a tangential one. Arguments have been advanced, rebutted, and modified concerning the role played

by cities (as perceived in Roman imperial idiom) in matters of provincial administration. Theories that Roman administrative systems of the late first century BCE-first century CE relied on urban spaces as their fundamental unit of territorial organisation (Elton, 1996) have been modified in favour of a messier but more reasonable conclusion. This holds that, while in Gaul and other temperate areas of the Roman world, new cities functioned as key venues for administrative work and interactions between locals and imperial agents, the actual organisation of administrative territorial units was handled on a complex ad hoc basis of interweaving, and at times competing, variations of units (Goodman, 2007).

It is, however, worth noting that differences did emerge between the forms of urbanism found in southern Gaul in the late first century BCE and that in areas further north, with the presence of walls, perhaps ironically, being a major factor.<sup>102</sup> The presence of Roman *coloniae*, with the organised aggregation of Italian settlers and alterations to the landscape through centuriation, played a large role in this, and greatly helped in perceptions of difference between the provincial regions in the minds of Mediterranean commentators during the Imperial period.<sup>103</sup> *Coloniae* of this type were few and far between in temperate areas of Gaul in the immediate wake of the Caesarian conquests, but those that existed (with the exception of Lugdunum the only example within our area of study is Colonia Julia

---

<sup>102</sup> See Owens, 1991: 111-34; Knight, 2001: 16; Goodman, 2007: 85-6; and Anderson, 2013: 47 and 69-70. For a brief survey of major changes in Lower Rhône Gallic architecture in relation to the Roman conquest and domination of the first century BCE see Hales, 2003: 173-6.

<sup>103</sup> On colonisation and centuriation in Gallia Narbonensis see Ward-Perkins, 1970: 11-13 and Heijmans and Sintès, 1994: 141-7. On Roman practices of cadastration more generally, see Campbell, 1996: 81-93.

Equestris Noviodunum/Nyons) would likely have had similar impacts on the surrounding landscapes.<sup>104</sup> In any case, while certainly pertinent to debate concerning the 'urbanisation' of Gaul and accompanying changes in material culture and social organisation, the role of *coloniae* as settlements for incoming settlers more than indigenous communities means that they would impinge upon our questions concerning the fates of Gallic ruling classes indirectly. For example, if evidence can be found for land deductions affecting the land holdings and/or usage of local aristocrats or if the new settlements provided some means of rapid advancement for lower status *indigenes*.<sup>105</sup>

While it is an indispensable source of data, and a major area of evolving scholarship, we must remain aware that that the material we have continues to support multiple potential interpretations rather than narrowing the field towards definitive conclusions.

### 1.6.8 Trade, Agriculture, and Consumption

A key aspect of social power whose material remains can, potentially, be fruitfully looked for and analysed is the production, distribution, and exchange of material resources.

As noted in the literature review above, the archaeology of trade and consumer goods in relation to Late Iron Age Gaul has enjoyed a recent boom, whose data is a vital contribution to our investigation. A major issue for archaeologists examining these areas of life, however, is the discrepancies in survival of identifiable remains

---

<sup>104</sup> Combe, 1996: 7-9; Purcell, 2005: 97; Woolf, 2011c: 150-2; and Broadhead, 2011: 160-1.

<sup>105</sup> See also Sweetman, 2011: 1-2.

between varying products and forms of infrastructure. We have comparatively large amounts of data concerning imported Italian wine in Late Iron Age precisely because of the combined archaeological durability and relatively easily identified shape of the containers associated with it (predominantly amphorae of the Dressel 1 category).<sup>106</sup>

By contrast, our evidence for the production, storage, and dissemination of agricultural and perishable goods, while vital, is more elusive. Analyses of soil and pollen remains, as well as profitable work on the osteoarchaeology of livestock, have given us some indication of the scale and productivity of Iron Age farming in Gaul, but these in and of themselves do not give much clarification to questions of power and class division in relation to land and agriculture.<sup>107</sup> More specific indicators are required on that front. Granaries, for example, can be taken as a strong indicator of centres of power, as those who control the hoarded storage of basic foodstuffs can wield enormous control over the populace which requires them.<sup>108</sup> Confidently identifying the remains of such facilities, when no trace of their original contents is readily identifiable, can be a tall order, however, as can the remains of mills and other infrastructural features of cereal cultivation.<sup>109</sup>

While this is an area of study with great relevance to understanding the structures of economic/material power that prevailed in the Late

---

<sup>106</sup> For a comprehensive definition of the Dressel 1 amphora type, and other types often found in accompanying contexts (e.g. Greco-Italian or Lamboglia 2), see Loughton, 2003: 179-83.

<sup>107</sup> Audouze and Büchsenschutz, 1992: 158-225. Woolf, 2001: 57-9. King, 2001: 215-21. Sallares, 2007: 26. Haselgrove and Guichard, 2013: 317-18.

<sup>108</sup> Bakels, 1996: 331-2. Liverani, 2013: 173.

<sup>109</sup> Bowman and Wilson, 2013: 3 and 17-18.

Iron Age and Early Roman Rhône Basin, we must take care to distinguish between the assertions that we can make with relative confidence (backed up by falsifiable data) and those which stand as logical hypotheses rather than proven statements.

### 1.6.9 Epigraphy

Contrary to certain stereotypes, the communities of pre-conquest Gaul were not illiterate societies. A canon of inscriptions written in what has been identified as the Gaulish language exists, dated to a timeframe stretching from the late third century BCE to the first century CE (thus bridging our period of study), and the Rhône Basin very well represented in findspots. As such, what evidence these forms of epigraphy can provide in terms of the nature of the ruling classes of the communities that created them is important to take into consideration.

The canon of epigraphy studied here is designated Gallo-Greek. It uses adapted forms of the Greek writing system to record Gaulish text and is heavily tied to the context of the Lower Rhône Valley region in the second and early first centuries BCE.<sup>110</sup> Gallo-Greek inscriptions have also been recovered from sites in the Upper Rhône Basin area, most notably at Bibracte and Alésia, speaking to their connections with the south. However, they are comparatively few and, barring two main exceptions, take the form of one-word labels incised on ceramics.<sup>111</sup> By contrast, the other two main canons of Gaulish inscriptions, Gallo-Etruscan and Gallo-Latin, fall outside of

---

<sup>110</sup> Lejeune, 1985: 1-5.

<sup>111</sup> The exceptions were both recovered from the site of Alésia, being what appears to be a stone pilaster capital inscribed with the name of the builder (*RIG* G-256) and fragments of what is thought to be a statue base (*RIG* G-257).

our region on the one hand and largely outside of our period on the other.<sup>112</sup>

The main reason that this area of study is considered under the umbrella of material/archaeological evidence, rather than textual, is that the information provided to us by the extant canon of recorded inscriptions from Late Iron Age and Early Roman Gaul is not comparable in format or scope with that afforded by Latin and Greek literature. The inscriptions yet uncovered do not provide much direct information on relevant topics such as significant historical events or otherwise identifiable figures, matters of local law or political organisation, or identifying information about specific members of society (as for example Latin and Greek epitaphs often do). A few longer epigraphs exist in the form of what appear to be religious dedications, the majority of survivals to the form of *instrumenta domestica* (labels or graffiti inscribed on moveable objects) or are too heavily abbreviated to provide much of clarity.<sup>113</sup> As such, our primary usage of evidence of this kind relates not to what the inscriptions say specifically, but instead to what their existence as a form of writing and display says about the roles and social status of the Gaulish language. Considering the idea of the epigraphic habit (MacMullen 1988), in which the placing of written text in permanent,

---

<sup>112</sup> Gallo-Etruscan, being a form of epigraphy adapting the Etruscan writing system to Gaulish, is a product of Cisalpine Gallic culture in the Italian Peninsula, whilst Gallo-Latin (i.e. Gaulish written with the Latin alphabet), although a product of transalpine Gaul, appears to have emerged in the first century CE after the close of our period of study. Lejeune, 1988: 63. The primary exception to this categorisation is the canon of numismatic inscriptions whose use of the Latin alphabet in the first century BCE is discussed in Chapter 6.3.

<sup>113</sup> On the Gallo-Greek *RIG* corpus, which boasts 207 *instrumenta* out of a total 281 recorded inscriptions, mostly ceramic graffiti, see Lejeune, 1985: 3-4. On the similar difficulties and limitations faced with the use of coinage as an epigraphic source material see Colbert de Beaulieu and Fischer, 1998: 7-8.

public contexts (as opposed to temporary or private ones) is analysed as a distinctive social custom of the Ancient World, it is worth analysing what we can about how and why the peoples of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin used inscribed texts as media of public communication and social expression. A further point, particularly underlined by the fact that the writing systems utilised in epigraphy were based on adaptation of those from other cultural contexts, is that this topic relates closely to concerns of communication and potential commensurability between cultures. Questions relating to these matters are explored in greater detail in Chapter 6.3 of this thesis.

#### 1.6.10 Iconographic Evidence

Evidence drawn from artistic iconography represents, arguably, the smallest of our three umbrella categories in terms of volume of data.

A matter of geographical inconsistency similarly affects our analysis here, as certain artistic media are conspicuously absent in the record of Late Iron Age Gaul north of the Rhône-Saône Confluence. Stone sculpture is vanishingly rare to non-existent in such contexts, in contrast with the small but striking canon of pieces from the Iron Age south. Various explanations may be put forth for this lacuna, including a lack of easily worked forms of stone available for quarrying in the geology of regions outside of the Mediterranean littoral and/or a preference for working in wood or other perishable materials.<sup>114</sup> While the possibility remains that the communities of central and northern Gaul in the Iron Age simply did not invest in statuary or other forms of large scale sculpture, we do

---

<sup>114</sup> Cassibry, 2015: 471-5.



possess surviving figural artistic production from them in the form of coinage.

A point important to note that while often plentiful, readily available, and better documented, depictions of Gallic individuals in art produced in Greek or Roman contexts is of limited use for our project. Like many, if not all, of our textual sources it deals in stereotypes and potential misrepresentations but, lacking supplementary information to be mined for nuggets of fact, its distance and separation from the perspective of the indigenous communities of Gaul robs it of most of its evidentiary value.<sup>115</sup> This problem is only exacerbated by the fact that most of the artworks offering depictions of 'Gauls' either derive from unrelated contexts (that of the Galatians of Asia Minor in the case of the Ludovisi 'Gauls' and their Pergamene original forms) or postdate our chronological horizon (in the case of the Arch of Orange and Arch of Glanum being products of the early first century CE).

The main limitation we face with regard to the use of iconographic evidence is that we only possess a small number of examples, representing a correspondingly small number of archaeological/historical contexts, from which to draw data. Most of those which we do possess, however, promise to be highly informative. These strongly correlate to contexts associated with social status, power, and prestige, not only including coinage (with its links to identifiable members of elite classes) but also

---

<sup>115</sup> Cassibry, 2017: 27-31.

monumental architectural contexts and/or places of public display in the case of statuary.

Examinations of iconographic evidence, drawn from the various media discussed here, are addressed most comprehensively and directly in Chapter 6.2 of this thesis, but also inform discussions in Chapters 4 and 5.

#### 1.6.11 What is Lacking

There are three crucial areas in which the data available to us is critically lacking for an analysis of Gallic ruling classes and their fate(s) in relation to Roman conquest and imperial administration.

At no point in our analyses can we forget that we are dealing with a culture whose thoughtworlds and perspectives are lost to us, perhaps irrevocably in some aspects at least. Beyond a handful of sparsely written inscriptions, we have no accounts provided by members of Iron Age Gallic communities, which might shed some light on how they thought or felt about the historical events examined here or about the social systems within which they lived. We can only theorise about what their experiences might have been.

In stark contrast to what would be the bread and butter of an approach to social history (especially in Modern contexts) there is virtually no data available regarding the demography of the Rhône Basin in the period c.125-10BCE. No census information, no population figures, and barely even viable estimates.<sup>116</sup> We are

---

<sup>116</sup> It may be noted that at least two censuses of the population of the Gallic Provinces are recorded to have occurred within our period 27BCE (Livy *Epit.*134) and 12BCE (Livy *Epit.*139 and Cass. Dio 53.23.5) on the orders of Augustus. However, any results generated by them have long since been lost to history.

occasionally given numerical estimates of population, or at least army, sizes amongst Gallic communities by Caesar and other ancient writers, but such assertions are invariably vague, inconsistently attributed (e.g. pertaining to the Helvetii on the one hand but offering no information about the Sequani on the other) and highly dubious (being particularly prone to exaggeration in military contexts).<sup>117</sup> Attempts to generate working population statistics and/or models for even the far better documented and more heavily studied societies of Roman Italy within our timeframe of the second and first centuries BCE have run into major methodological issues and disputes, illustrating the folly it would be attempt a similar approach to Gaul.<sup>118</sup> As such, statistical analysis regarding demographic composition is a toolset closed to us for the purposes of this project.

The final main area of hampering absence in evidence is that of prosopography. However extensive the appendix listing historical figures of reference in this thesis might appear at first glance, our knowledge of identifiable individual people amongst the communities of the Late Iron Age and Early Roman Gaul is extremely limited and inconsistent. A point of comparison may be made with the venerable work of Syme (1939) on the 'Revolution' of the first century BCE Roman Civil Wars and advent of the Principate, which was able to reconstruct the importance of factional allegiance and conflict to the events in question through comprehensive identification, biographical tracking, and categorisation of named

---

<sup>117</sup> See Williams, 2001: 112.

<sup>118</sup> For attempts at population surveys of Roman Italy and the resulting problems see Launaro, 2011: 164 and De Ligt, 2012: 9-34.

individuals across the span of the Roman ruling class of the time. Nothing remotely similar may be attempted here. The Gallic Julii of Drinkwater's hypothesis loom large not merely because of their apparent dominant status amidst their communities, but often because they are only names with which we are provided.

There is a final point to note on evidence we are lacking, somewhat different from the main three, that nevertheless requires consideration. The available canon of textual, archaeological, and iconographic sources we possess skews very heavily towards representations of the elite of Late Iron Age and Early Roman Gallic societies, at the expense of other, less prestigious sectors of society. On the one hand, this is the kind of evidence most pertinent to our particular research questions. On the other, the extremely limited information we can gather regarding non-elite sectors of these communities makes it harder establish clarity in terms of divisions between rulers and ruled, and of potential divisions and hierarchies amongst subaltern groups within the community. Since we cannot place assemblages of data concerning ruling class individuals or groups alongside data concerning those from lower social strata, our estimates for where the lines separated one from the other are largely abstract rather than concrete.

## 1.7 Methods and Approaches

Having reviewed the state of the evidence available, questions arise as to the ways in which can build upon it to reach conclusions to our chosen research questions. How do we effectively weave our disparate and often incomplete threads of evidence into a coherent tapestry? What can we do to bridge the gaps in our knowledge in

ways that do not lead us into realms of fantasy? In the following section, we will introduce some of the theoretical models and frameworks necessary to cohere the evidence we have into information that addresses the question of who were the ruling classes of the Gallic Rhône Basin over the period c.120-10BCE and what happened to them in response to their conquest at Roman hands.

A point that will bear repeating and reconsidering throughout this thesis is that the limitations we face in terms of available evidence and methodologies mean that many of the results of our investigations can only be considered matters of hypothesis and, at best, theory, rather than proven, falsifiable fact. Our task is to assess the range and probability of a multiplicity of viable historical scenarios in relation to the context in question rather than attempt to make a definitive statement on what, exactly, occurred.

### 1.7.1 Technologies of Social Power

Since we have no clear and exact description to cite regarding who held power on a general basis within the communities of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin prior to and during the Roman conquest, a productive approach which we can take is to break down aspects of power as it can be wielded in society into smaller fragments based on what we can reconstruct about certain interactions and dynamics. By examining how power was wielded in scenarios both practical and hypothetical we can potentially reconstruct the dynamics of power relations in the context of our period and region of study.<sup>119</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup> For more theoretical, philosophical approaches to the idea of 'power' as it functions in society, especially in relation to ruling classes versus subaltern

In this way, we can think of technologies of social power, not in the mechanical sense per se, but in the manner of techniques and practices that structure relationships between individuals and groups. They can take many forms, varying from organisations of the roles played by material objects in society (e.g. codifying commercial value of goods into regulated currency) to largely abstract matters of behaviour (e.g. the use of linguistic shibboleths to distinguish the prestigious from the lowly). A strong example for our context, noted by Fernández-Götz, is that emergence of fortified citadels as component of Gallic oppida settlements around the turn of the second and first centuries BCE represented a new technology of social power, and a multifaceted one at that.<sup>120</sup> Occupying such a site with a controlling interest would entail increased capacities of surveillance over the landscape, concentration of goods, livestock, and/or people in a delimited space, control of access to said space, and possibly even certain military advantages to its denizens. Furthermore, the construction of such monumental architecture would seem to indicate a capacity for the command and mobilisation of substantial quantities of manual labour on the part of those who would occupy such citadels. These matters are explored at greater length in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis. For a textually derived example of a Gallic technology of social power, we can point to Posidonian fragments describing the acquisition and maintenance of severed human heads as a social custom imbued with prestige

---

populations see Baratz, 1970: 6-29; Lukes, 1974: 17-55; and Giddens, 2002: 152-62. Bourdieu's ideas on the Theory of Practice and concept of *habitus* (1980-9) can also be brought into consideration, especially regarding the archaeology of identity, but, due to their reliance on a totalising perspective on the experiences of its subjects, we lack sufficient evidence to use them as reconstructive tools.

<sup>120</sup> Fernández-Götz, 2017: 283-4.

amongst the Gauls (Strab. *Geog.* 4.4.6). While the thought-worlds of those who apparently practiced such a grisly tradition are not available to us to explain the precise rationales behind it, we can both investigate the evidence behind it and, fitting it into the wider framework evidence, consider what it indicates and entails about how social prestige was reckoned and distributed within those communities and why. Further discussion of the evidence for Gallic headhunting and its analyses can be found in Chapter 4.2 of this thesis.

Central to our investigation of social power in protohistorical and historical contexts is the work of Mann and the IEMP (Ideological, Economic, Military, Political) model. What defines the ruling class in this schema is their capacity to either monopolise available technologies of social power or at least possess and wield them to greater effect than any other social group. In this way, by mutually reinforcing their position in one way or another, they can continue to “organisationally outflank” individuals and groups subordinate to them.<sup>121</sup>

In his grand historical sweep from earliest origins to present day, Mann lavishes most of his direct attention on the best documented societies of the Ancient World (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome), with the Iron Age communities in other parts of Europe, Western Asia, and Africa receiving serviceable but rather cursory treatment.<sup>122</sup> His theoretical schema is however, adaptable enough

---

<sup>121</sup> Mann, 1986: 7.

<sup>122</sup> His particularly emphasises the technological developments of ironworking and ploughshares as potentially implicated in the Bronze Age Collapse of c.1200BCE and resultant realignment of power networks towards decentralisation and collaboration. Mann, 1986: 183-9.

to make an effective guideline for how to approach questions of social power in the context of the second and first centuries BCE Rhône Basin. Certain modifications are required, though, to better align with the parameters of our evidence and certain other concerns, detailed below. Most notably, the 'I' component of the IEMP model, 'Ideological Power' is, in the absence of clear statements of social values surviving from members of Gallic societies (and our only sources being heavily filtered through other ideologies), something of a non-starter.

This thesis examines the technologies of social power which can be identified as available to the peoples of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin within four main groupings, pertaining to spheres of influence. Each is covered by their own chapter within this thesis. They are:

Firstly, political power, indicating the ability to govern others as subjects, to make laws and enforce them over the general populace, or at least to have meaningful influence over those processes. Most of our potential evidence for this area of investigation necessarily comes from textual sources offering descriptions of Gallic political structures and practices (requiring heavy scrutiny for misrepresentation). However, we can relate the data derived from material remains and iconography, especially from coinage, statuary, and the organisation of settlements around monuments and/or public meeting spaces, to our considerations of how political power was organised and wielded, nuancing interpretations of textual information. Investigating this area can also give us an idea of how many ruling classes scattered across the Rhône Basin in the



late second and first centuries BCE we are dealing with, and to what extent, if any they related to each other.

Second is military power, relating to matters of organised violence, whether threatened or enacted, as means of controlling others. Attempting to reconstruct the military efficacy of any Gallic polity or coalition of allied polities on the basis of modern approaches to strategy in anything more than broad strokes is likely to be both fruitless given our state of evidence and somewhat beside the point. Instead, more pertinent to our lines of investigation are questions of how forms of military power were distributed within such communities and what paradigms of status and prestige they served. In contrast with political power, archaeological and iconographic evidence can take a more direct role in evincing this area, as the preservation of military equipment as grave goods or its depiction in Gallic sculptural and/or numismatic art can provide us with much information. Caesar, as a descriptor of war against (and in many cases alongside) Gallic troops, provides a complement of fairly rich but inevitably problematic material regarding armed conflict and its significance to Rhône Gallic societies, while our other textual sources' interest in war sees them provide less detailed but potentially useful supplementary information on the topic.

Thirdly, there is economic power, covering areas of control over material resources and means of production. Again, the goal is not to reconstruct a totalising vision of the economies of Late Iron Age Gaul on the basis of contemporary academic principles. Rather it is to investigate the roles that wealth or material inequality more generally may have played in the division of Late Iron Age Gallic

societies and the power wielded by those in positions of dominance. Due to its material basis, this is one area of analysis in which archaeology takes complete precedence over historiography, with textual sources playing the role of nuancing or adding points of clarity to data-driven models. Coins, unsurprisingly, are a large factor in this, but, as noted above, come with their own methodological challenges. Other factors of evidence can be found in the ways that remains of manufacturing facilities in the archaeological record imply forms of control over the means of production, as well as distributions of trade goods and/or stockpiling of staple resources.

Fourthly and finally, we examine cultural power, concerning matters of social status marked by cultural expressions and communicative symbology, particularly in the forms of art, language, and personal dress. This will cover investigations of how aspects of these areas of life may have been used to broadcast prestige and social status and maintain distinctions between rulers and ruled. This vein of investigation in many ways replaces Mann's inutile approach of ideological power as it better reflects our state of evidence. In looking for evidence for how elite groups distinguished themselves from the masses in terms of public appearance and behaviour, iconography plays an important role since it is often our best source of evidence for the former. Funerary archaeology (in which items of personal adornment are preserved) can also provide, but has its limitations, as do, of course, textual descriptions of Gallic dress, grooming, and adornment. Epigraphy also contributes its largest share of material to this area of investigation, being our primary

source of data on the use of the Gaulish language and its relationships with Greek, Latin, and other Mediterranean tongues.

The four groupings (Political, Military, Economic, and Cultural Power) are not exhaustive in covering every conceivable aspect of power relations within the societies of Late Iron Age Gaul. Due to both the limitations of our evidence and the limitations of this thesis as a research medium, there are areas to which we cannot do proper justice. Religion as a sphere of life and power is one that almost certainly played heavily into the role of the ruling classes of Gaul throughout the period in question.<sup>123</sup> However, it is also one for which the available evidence presents too many and too complex questions to be addressed in the same vein as the four groupings introduced above. Similar problems attend matters of gender and sexuality, which, while they almost certainly played vital roles in the construction of elite identities amongst the Gauls, have woefully too little clear and effective evidence available for us to treat with similar methods.

Part of the crux of our method for assessing how the transition from independence to provincial status as a result of conquest impacted the ruling classes of the region lies in considering how the technologies of social power we have identified in Iron Age contexts would have been affected moving into a Roman one. What practices would have been viable to continue or would have to be abandoned? Also crucial is the question of what technologies of social power might the new context have made available to the

---

<sup>123</sup> For examples see Woolf, 2001: 178; Häußler, 2008: 14-29 and 2010: 202-10; and Johnston, 2017: 64-5.

communities of the Rhône Basin that were not before? If the new world order of Roman dominance brought with it novel opportunities then we might argue in favour of the emergence of a new ruling class. This does not mean that technologies of social power can be taken as discrete units of behaviour that can be decontextualised in our viewpoint to be directly attributed in a blithe fashion to both 'Gallic' and 'Roman' spheres (e.g. both Roman and Gallic cultures possessed 'Epigraphy' as a technology of social power), as to do so unhelpfully abstracts our grasp of the evidence and invites dangerously teleological assumptions. We can, however, consider how commensurable similar types of behaviour and power relationships were between the relevant cultures as they interacted with one another.

### 1.7.2 Ideology and Legitimation

Technologies of social power in the sense of individual, fragmentary approaches and capacities for exercising domination over others form of our basis of our investigation, but they alone do not constitute the nature of a ruling class and successes. Those who dominate society cannot rely on force and coercion alone to maintain their power and position or be constantly fighting to maintain their hold on the reins of control. Instead, the ordered running of societies relies on the populace's acceptance of the status quo, generally buttressed by a shared belief in, or at least grudging resignation to, the idea that the governing elite are right to occupy their place. We may describe this belief-driven system of control, itself relying on an aggregation of multiple technologies of social power, ideology.

The ability of the ruling class to justify not only their power but, more importantly, their exclusivity pertains closely to our main question. Analysing the bases on which their ideologies were founded is vital to investigating the extent to which it would have been forced to change in relation to the advent of Roman power. Reconstructing these largely abstract aspects of social organisation, particularly with the state of our evidence, is a daunting task, requiring theoretical approaches.

The early twentieth century Italian Marxist Gramsci offers a potential insight. His observations on the nature of ruling classes and their ability to maintain their monopoly on power, taken against the backdrop of revolutions both successful and failed and reaching back to both Medieval and Ancient forms of political thought, presents a theoretical framework widely adopted by other thinkers.<sup>124</sup> In this train of thought, he divides the supporting factors of a ruling class's position into two areas: 'dominion', representing the repressive, coercive hard power that they could wield against potential rebels or dissidents, and 'hegemony', representing the indoctrinating, legitimising 'soft power' that they could wield to preemptively maintain quiescent acceptance and docility amongst the populace.<sup>125</sup>

Due to the vast gulfs of difference in historical circumstances between twentieth century CE Europe and its second-first century BCE counterpart, Gramsci's ideas require a great deal of

---

<sup>124</sup> Gramsci, 1971: 17-37, 140-1, and 199-200. Femia, 1981: 13-33. Ekers and Loftus, 2013: 23.

<sup>125</sup> Gramsci, 1971: 12 and 55.

modification before they can be applied to the situation of Iron Age Gaul. We cannot, for example, look for the roles played by mass print media or public education in disseminating and inculcating the hegemonic ideologies of Late Iron Age Gallic ruling classes, nor can we necessarily look for evidence of the kind of revolutionary processes he described.<sup>126</sup> However, it is worth considering that while military defeat at foreign hands might remove a governmental regime with its basis in hard power, the hegemonic power held by the ruling classes of that society might buttress them against revolutionary overthrow from beneath. Drinkwater's theory of the rise of the Julii from the ashes of their predecessors' downfall echoes aspects of the Gramscian revolutionary model, as it presupposes that the loss of dominion on the part of the earlier Gallic aristocracies in the Caesarian Gallic Wars must have resulted in their complete loss of power and position. Re-examining the evidence with an eye towards what hegemonic power established elite groups around the Rhône Basin may have held in their communities can allow us to better assess the probability of such a radical social upheaval and transformation.

Looking to those who wished to address the societies of the Ancient World in terms of ideological hegemony, Richards and Van Buren (2000) emphasise the concept of 'legitimacy', in which members of ancient elite classes exercised control of cultural symbolism and cosmological belief systems to solidify and maintain their position. This theory is largely developed in relation to Bronze Age Egyptian and Mesopotamian contexts, with their strongly

---

<sup>126</sup> Crehan, 2002: 124-5.

evidenced regimes of theocratically enforced social and cosmological hierarchy, and may not apply neatly to the Iron Age world of Gaul, wherein evidence of belief systems held by the locals is notably unavailable to us.<sup>127</sup> Although we do not have the same insights concerning how perceptions of the moral and spiritual order of the universe may have been marshalled in support of their status, we can examine how members of Late Iron Age Gallic ruling classes represented themselves in symbolically in art and look for similar echoes of cultural display in textual descriptions of their behaviour and interpretations of the archaeological remains left behind by their activities. An important to note on this front is that while the legitimacy of Bronze Age ruling classes rested on their status as 'inner elites' (defined by their ontological distinction in the minds of their subjects), an alternative approach to legitimacy is suggested for other contexts and later periods is made in the shape of 'autonomous elites' whose dominance is predicated on their perceived greater merit and ability than their subordinates.<sup>128</sup> Considering the latter option, that members of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin ruling classes based their right to rule on their perceived (if not real) possession of culturally favoured qualities above others, gives us potential avenues of investigation especially in tandem with our methodology of technologies of social power.

---

<sup>127</sup> Richards and Van Buren, 2000: 4. For considerations of how this model might face problems in application to other historical contexts, especially those of the Greek and Roman worlds, and might overplay the agency of ruling classes at the expense of subaltern groups see Brumfels, 2000: 133 and Alcock, 2000: 110.

<sup>128</sup> Although the argument made by the originators offers perhaps a little too much credit to the universalising, humanist philosophical tendencies of the 'Axial Age' (c.500-1BCE) in a perceived shift from 'inner' to 'autonomous' elites in the Mediterranean/Near Eastern world, it is a framework that has a surprising amount of utility in varying historical contexts. Baines and Yoffee, 2000: 16.

Through this lens, we can read the self-representation of Gallic ruling class individuals through coinage they commissioned as emphasising the quality they wished to display for public prestige, such as martial prowess in the case of Dubnoreix's overtly militaristic designs (DLT 5026) or the importance of plutocratic wealth and trade suggested by the depiction of amphorae amongst the issues of the early first century Arverni (DLT 3745, 3758, 3777-8).<sup>129</sup> Similarly, though clouded by the filters of external observation and retelling, Appian's account of bardic praise given to Bituitos and his agents (*Emb.* 12) could include echoes of qualities most prized as part of their legitimising ideology.

Given the strict limitations of our available evidence, any conclusions we reach on the matter of what ideologies governed the Late Iron Age Gallic polities of the Rhône Basin will be largely hypothetical rather than falsifiable. We cannot, however, ignore this vital component of social power relations.

### 1.7.3 Class and Rank

While we have discussed how protohistoric ruling classes might be identified by the powers at their disposal and considered how we might reconstruct their ideologies of legitimation and exclusivity, it is necessary to consider how a 'class', as a social group, may be defined.

Finley (1976), more recently supported and refined by Wallace-Hadrill (2008), has offered a persuasive argument that the Marxian categorisation of 'class' in economic terms makes for a poor fit with

---

<sup>129</sup> Poux, 2004: 130-1.



the social organisations of the Ancient World.<sup>130</sup> The main problem being that, whereas in an industrial society the ruling class of capitalists can be defined by their largely exclusive position as owners of rather than participants in the means of production, in the agrarian world of Antiquity both ruling aristocrats and rank-and-file citizens shared the same basis of wealth in their holding of farmland.<sup>131</sup> These considerations, combined with our even greater dearth of solid evidence and understandings of land tenure, wealth, and even property rights amongst the pre-conquest people of Gaul, mean that 'class' in the strict Marxian sense is thus unavailable as a tool for analytical use. The suggestion of 'rank', proffered by Finley and Wallace-Hadrill, as an alternative, however, does not offer much more clarity, as it relies heavily on the prescriptive frameworks for denoting social status in better documented societies such as Classical Athens and Late Republican/Early Imperial Rome and adapts poorly to other contexts.

Since we find no ready-made model to use for our specific context, it falls to us instead to attempt construction of our own to meet the necessary parameters as best we can. In this framework, we will use 'class' and 'rank' as distinct but related categorisations with their own definitions. 'Class' in the usage of this thesis refers to a grouping of people within society on predicated on the collective level of power they possess. Following our focus on technologies of social power as a means of interpreting evidence, we can assign a categorisation of those who either monopolise such technologies, or

---

<sup>130</sup> For the Marxian schema of class division and dialectics see Marx and Engels, 1968: 1-61 and Marx, 1867/1887: 506-49.

<sup>131</sup> Finley, 1973: 44-50. Wallace-Hadrill, 2008: 354-61.

at least possess and wield controlling interests in them far outweighing others, as ruling classes. This goes beyond the more strictly economic construction of Orthodox Marxist tradition to encompass the broader concerns of politics, military activity etc. By investigations in this vein, we might also be able to uncover signs that Gallic polities may have predicated their ruling classes on bases like plutocratic wealth, hereditary aristocracy, or some other qualifier entirely. 'Rank', by contrast, is used as a more individual metric, determining the precise place within a social hierarchy occupied by one person at any given time. Members of the same class would recognise each other as such despite differences in rank between individuals. For example, Caesar's *Commentarii* frequently describe certain Gauls in terms of their pre-eminence, variously on the basis of official positions held or by their sheer personal prestige and may be contrasted with others from the same community on that score. Put in simpler terms, 'class', in our model, describes the kind of people within society who could wield power and occupy positions of authority (acting as kind of minimum requirement for qualification on those terms), while 'rank' indicates who precisely amongst those considered qualified held power and authority at any given moment.

If we may attempt to draw analogy with Rome, as our closest contemporaneous point of comparison, to illustrate; we can compare 'class' to the concept of *ordo*, which distinguished social strata of senators from equites and those below them, on the basis of wealth primarily (but complicated by factors of ancestry), while 'rank' would stand for individual position and *dignitas* amongst the senate for the Roman ruling class of the Late Republic, with individuals of

quaestoral and consular status being members of the same class but of different rank.<sup>132</sup> This analogy is decidedly imperfect for direct importation onto the context of Late Iron Age Gaul, as the organisation of class and rank divisions at Rome relies on mechanisms (census-taking, collegiate magisterial office-holding) for which we have very little if any evidence to suggest existed amongst the polities of the Rhône Basin. However, it may serve to offer a theoretical framework to aid in visualising the concepts discussed, and possibly provide something of a backdrop against which to consider the commensurability of Rhône Gallic and Roman understandings of social power and elite status in their post-conquest imperial relationship. On which note, we turn to more specifically address issues of colonial/imperial interaction in the context of the Roman conquests of Gaul.

#### 1.7.4 Agency and Adaptation in Colonial Settings

As seen from our literature review, Postcolonial studies and more general approaches to understanding imperialism are a major concern of studies of provincial societies under the shadow of Rome. As a key part of our research question ties to the impact of an imperial takeover of the societies under scrutiny, it is vital to engage with these perspectives and consider how both the initial impact of conquest and the aftermath of it would have affected the technologies of social power and ideological viability of Gallic ruling classes in the Rhône Basin region.

---

<sup>132</sup> On reconstructing Roman class divisions and ranked magistracies see North, 2006: 263-9; Morley, 2006: 304-6; Rosenstein, 2006: 371-7; Yakobson, 2006: 390-3; and Winterling, 2009: 1-30.

A first point of consideration in the theoretical understanding of imperialism/colonialism is that the relationship between the coloniser and colonised cannot be viewed as a simplistically linear one of active and passive parties. Dietler (2010), in his study of colonial interactions between Greek (and other Mediterranean) settlers and indigenous Gauls along what is now the southern French coast in the Early Iron Age before our period, emphasises the concept of 'entanglement' with both colonisers and colonised in a state of dynamic change as each affects the other through their encounters.<sup>133</sup> This is not, in any sense, to suggest an equitable relationship between conquerors and conquered. However, most pertinently for the context which we are investigating, the latter are not generally left devoid of agency vis à vis the former. The power dynamics which existed between provincial elites and agents of imperial administration in the Roman Late Republic and Early Empire need to be viewed as forms of negotiation rather than mere coercion.<sup>134</sup> In terms of reading through the lines of textual evidence that obscures the agency and independent thought of colonised subjects through its colonial viewpoint, Spurr (1993) provides an effective framework of rhetorical tricks to observe, which, while predicated on nineteenth and twentieth century examples, is well-suited for adaptation to the Ancient World in many ways.<sup>135</sup> Sahlins (1985), meanwhile, provides cautions and advice for navigating the

---

<sup>133</sup> Dietler, 2010: 10.

<sup>134</sup> For views on how this negotiated relationship of power might be expressed in the realm of art see Webster, 2003: 34-44.

<sup>135</sup> His conceptual work on mechanics of othering, appropriation, and negation adapts especially well to Roman and Greek encounters with Gaul. Spurr, 1993: 31-134.

dangerous lines between historiography and ethnography as disciplines, especially considering protohistorical contexts.<sup>136</sup>

In basing our approach on identifying and contextualising technologies of social power available to local groups (especially those constituting ruling classes), the impact of Roman Imperialism is a vital consideration in terms of how it would curtail the effectiveness and/or accessibility of certain technologies of power previously utilised and potentially introduce new ones. Considering how the realms of political, military, economic, and cultural power would have been influenced by the shifting landscape can give us insight into the possibilities of change amongst the ruling classes of the region along the lines of the theorised Julii. For example, a ruling class whose mechanisms for legitimation rested on heavily on their capacity to maintain military supremacy over their neighbours would have found defeat and annexation at Roman hands difficult to weather, even if new outlets for military participation were proffered by their new imperial masters. By contrast, a Gallic ruling class whose pre-eminence rested on its members' capacity to maintain lucrative trade relations with the Roman world may have faced a setback in the economic upheavals entailed by war but would likely be able to adapt to the new order and possibly even thrive on the back of increased access to Italian goods they could enjoy as a result.

In the application of postcolonial theoretical approaches to the context of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin, there are two further factors we need to consider. Firstly, in contrast with many of the

---

<sup>136</sup> Sahlins, 1985: 32-54.

colonial encounters that defined the Modern period, between European colonists and the indigenous populations of the American and Oceanian 'New World', the peoples of southern and central Gaul and those of the Mediterranean had been in contact with one another for centuries before the late second century BCE and onset of conquest.<sup>137</sup> Due to the relevant cultures' relative, longstanding familiarity with each other, the new technologies of social power and changes in material culture that emerged in the post-conquest milieu of the region should not be seen as alien introductions and impositions but viewed in relation to pre-existing local conditions.<sup>138</sup> The second factor to consider is a complication to the idea of Gallic 'independence', particularly in any sense of sovereignty we might reconstruct, in contexts both before and after the Roman conquests of the late second and mid-first centuries BCE. As Arbabe (2017) most notably, but earlier commentators as well, have pointed out, the political landscape of Gaul in the later Iron Age was one of shifting alliances, coalitions, and spheres of influence, in which certain polities dominated others.<sup>139</sup> As such, while we might use the term 'independent' to describe areas of Gaul prior to their formal annexation into the Roman provincial system, it is important to consider that experiences and conceptions of independence would likely have differed between the ruling classes of dominant Gallic

---

<sup>137</sup> Versluys, 2015: 145. For considerations of the afterlife of Roman colonialism in Gaul in its historical reception amidst French colonialism in Vietnam see Nguyen, 2020.

<sup>138</sup> For an example of this standpoint, in relation to the world of Iron Age Gallic sculptural technique and sophistication see Bessac, 1991: 47-50.

<sup>139</sup> Arbabe 2017: 28-47. Lewuillon, 1975: 442-74. Fichtl, 2004: 125-133.

polities like the Aedui or Arverni, and seemingly secondary ones like the Segusiavi or Cavares.

### 1.7.5 Stratification and Mobility

An important nuance to be considered in the model of 'class' and 'rank' which we are constructing is the idea of stratification versus mobility. These two concepts, in our framework, can be taken to form a spectrum of how rigid or permeable the barriers between classes and ranks were in the communities we are studying. A more stratified situation is one in which advancement (and/or demotion) from one social group to another is circumscribed by certain barriers, while a mobile one allows for greater fluidity either for gains or losses of status. This kind of stratification/mobility spectrum need not have been applied to both class and rank identically, and, indeed, may often have been quite different. Stratification of class, particularly in relation to the ideological exclusivity of the ruling class, may have been paired with a much greater degree of mobility in terms of fluidity of rank amongst members of the ruling class, especially in situations wherein precise wealth levels would fluctuate or positions of political office would frequently rotate between holders. Conversely, in frameworks like monarchies, in which power was theoretically monopolised by a single ruling individual, but that individual relied on the support of a cadre of elites of similar background to maintain their position, we can see stratification of rank combining with that of class. Ruling classes do not have to be characterised as being especially narrow and/or rarefied but could have had relatively wide franchises of membership. This is likely to have been especially true of societies in which there was a fluidity

and dynamism of rank, with the highest levels of power shared around on a frequent basis rather than hoarded by a tight knit few (at least on a *de iure*/theoretical basis).

Given our lack of clear evidence about the precise composition and lines of demarcation for Late Iron Age Gallic ruling classes, how can we investigate the potentially even more elusive topic of stratification versus mobility amongst them? In considering this through our lens of technologies of social power, we have two main lines of inquiry that can be pursued. Firstly, stratification, at least, can be indicated by evidence of concentration of technologies of power, in forms like material wealth, military activity, or political participation, amongst the few, leaving little to spare for the many. For example, stark differentiations in distributions of material remains identifiable as prestige goods (such as wine amphorae or high-quality jewellery) between certain settlement sites and others might suggest a profound wealth gap stratifying some communities against others, a potentially difficult division to bridge for aspiring parvenus.

As its impact upon the technologies of social power available to members of Rhône Gallic societies would have been significant, we must also consider what impact the coming of Roman domination over the region would have upon stratifications of class and rank therein. Would the weakening of some approaches to power and emergence of new opportunities for gaining and wielding it have removed potential barriers to advancement or raised new ones? Worth considering here is another point made as part of Mann's



configuration of social power; the idea of 'interstitial emergence'.<sup>140</sup>

In a counterpoint to the phenomenon of violent, dialectical revolution as a feature of class struggle, this theory sees the emergence of new technologies of social power, driven by advances in material technology, new horizons of intercultural contact, or other factors, as generating new networks of power relations which exist in complement with pre-existing ones rather than in necessarily in competition. This leads to a gradual modification of ruling classes as they negotiate shared access to power over society. The primary historical examples cited of such processes by Mann are the rise of mercantilist networks of power on the fringes of worlds dominated by monarchical, theocratic, and or feudal ones, such as the Phoenician city states of the Ancient Near East or Medieval European merchant guilds.<sup>141</sup> The possibility exists, particularly considering the emphasis laid by recent scholars on the heterogeneity and municipalisation of Gallo-Roman local elites of the Imperial period, that the new technologies of social power introduced to the region by the Roman conquest may have paved the way for the interstitial emergence of powerbrokers quite different from their predecessors but existing in tandem with, rather than replacement of, them.

The importance of considerations of stratification versus mobility to our methodology and research project, enough to merit their place in the thesis title, rests largely on the fact that they have been

---

<sup>140</sup> Mann, 1986: 16. It should be noted that, in its original context, this idea primarily serves as a critique of the Marxist conception of the 'Bourgeois Revolution', arguing that mercantile and agricultural sources of elite wealth have tended to be collaborative in their interests of dominance of society rather than diametrically opposed, as the interests of working and capitalist classes are in industrial society.

<sup>141</sup> Mann, 1986: 188.

neglected by previous scholarship. As we have seen, rather than envisioning possibilities of shifts between class groups and/or within the structure of elite groups, those like Drinkwater, Crumley, or Lewuillon (and even Woolf to a lesser extent) have tended to assuming more and more rival classes within their reconstructions of Gallic society whose members were bound to narrowly defined, factional interests. Assessing the possible evidence of social stratification and mobility amongst the Rhône Gallic peoples, and the impact that the Roman annexations had upon it, is vital to understanding the possibilities of change and revolution we are investigating. A society in which mobility between classes, based on accessibility of technologies of social power, is a greater possibility is one that would likely be more susceptible to the kind of mass demographic shift of elites that Drinkwater's Julii theory supposes, while a highly stratified one, in which gaining access to the tools of elite power by those outside the ruling class was difficult, would make such a development unlikely without serious external intervention and/or upheaval.

#### 1.7.6 Summary

By interpreting our available evidence as pertaining to technologies of social power (grouped into four main categories) and analysing how they might fit together into a coherent ideology of legitimation and exclusion, we can attempt to reconstruct the character of the ruling classes of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin. These 'ruling classes' are categorised on the basis of the amount of social power they can be reconstructed as having possessed and effectively used. From there, with investigations into the projected

impact of the Roman conquests and their resulting imperial domination of the regions and its peoples on the technologies of social power that could be wielded, as well as into what evidence there may be of chinks in the exclusivity of existing ruling classes, we can assess the probability of a class replacement/revolution along the lines of Drinkwater's Julii theory.

## 2 - Rome and the Rhône c.125-10BCE

Between the late second and late first centuries BCE, the relationship between Rome and the Rhône Basin region of Gaul changed dramatically. It began as one of relatively limited contact as occasional trade partners and indirect adversaries. It concluded as one of imperial metropolis and colonised provincial land. This chapter charts the developments that saw the rise of Roman imperial and colonial power over the Rhône Basin region and establishes the contexts in which varying groups active in the area can be assigned elite, sub-elite, and subaltern status respectively.

### 2.1 Beyond the Alps – The establishment of Roman

#### Power in the Lower Rhône Valley c.125-90BCE

Before c.125BCE, Rome exerted little, if any, direct power over the lands north and west of the Alps. The Republic's imperial perspective and intentions focused on Italy, central North Africa, Greece, and the Iberian Peninsula. By the mid-to-late second century BCE it had firmly conquered and heavily colonised the lands Gallia Cisalpina (i.e., the Po Valley regions of the far north of Italy),

after a series of lengthy conflicts with the inhabitants.<sup>142</sup> However, since at least c.190BCE, the Republic had made no efforts to continue any wars against the Gauls beyond the southern foothills of the Alps. The move to invest resources in the subjugation and occupation of new lands in a new region was thus not an idle one and its impacts are worth examining in greater detail.

### 2.1.1 The Saluvian-Allobrogan Wars c.125-120BCE

The Roman Republic militarily annexed an irregular strip of land between the south-western foothills of the Alps and the Pyrenees, a salient of which stretched northwards to incorporate all of the Lower Rhône Valley below the Saône confluence, in a period of roughly five years at the start of the last quarter of the second century BCE. Historical details for the process by which this occurred are sparse, as the narratives dealing with it survive only in epitome and summary. However, all extant texts appear to agree that the Roman Republic became involved in an escalating series of local conflicts based in the Lower Rhône Valley itself. What precisely provided the initial impetus for this remains enigmatic.

The conflict can briefly be summarised thusly: in the years c.125-123BCE, Massalia, an ally of the Roman Republic, requested military aid against aggression from the Saluvii on at least two occasions, the latter of which resulted in the destruction of Entremont (power centre of the Saluvian ruling class). The former

---

<sup>142</sup> Our main primary source for these Cisalpine 'Gallic Wars' is Polybius (2.17-35), with supplemental material extractable from summaries of Livy's lost books (*Epit.* 12 and 20) and Appian's *Celtic Wars* (2). For a historical overview see Rosenstein, 2012: 117-39. For a consideration of the cultural significance of these conflicts in the Roman thought-world see Williams, 2001: 3-47. For other critical responses see Erdkamp, 2011: 59-65, and Loreto, 2011: 184-5.

leader of the Saluvii, named Toutomotulos, is said to have fled from the conquering Roman forces and taken up refuge amongst the neighbouring Allobroges to the north. Together they proceeded to forge an alliance with the Arverni to the west, under their leader Bituitos, and wage war both on the Romans and their local allies the Aedui.<sup>143</sup> The narrative of this conflict is sparse, discussing only a handful seemingly pivotal defeats for the Gauls at Roman hands in the year 121BCE, culminating in the capture and imprisonment of Bituitos and the acceptance of the Allobroges into a state of *deditio in fidem*.<sup>144</sup>

As they represent at least three (arguably four) discrete events of Roman military campaigning under different commanders, we should be wary of conflating the disparate components of the conquest into a single, streamlined process of annexation. However, it is potentially profitable to take a somewhat Thucydidean approach in treating them, with hindsight, as emergent expressions of the same underlying conflict, especially from the perspectives of the Gallic elites who resisted and suffered as a result of their defeat.

The central figure throughout the conflict is Toutomotulos, a leader of the Saluvii endowed with potentially monarchical power.<sup>145</sup> We may fairly presume, though not confirm, that it was under his

---

<sup>143</sup> Annaeus Florus *Historia Romanum* Ep.37 has the war undertaken by Rome as a direct result of calls for help from their Aeduan allies, allowing the situation to mirror that of Massalian complaints precipitating the Saluvian War. Notably, the inclusion of the Aedui in accounts of the war of c.123-121BCE marks their earliest chronological mention in Classical textual sources, leaving the origins of their alliance with Rome largely untraceable. Ebel, 1976: 70.

<sup>144</sup> For definitions of the rite of *deditio in fidem* and its political significance see Burton, 2016: 857-8; Burton, 2009: 237-52; and Eckstein, 2009: 253-67.

<sup>145</sup> For further discussion concerning interpretations of monarchical or tyrannical regimes amongst the Gallic polities of the Rhône Basin, see Chapter 3.2.

auspices that the initial attack upon Massalia was undertaken in 125BCE, it was his ousting from Entremont that concluded the campaign of 123BCE, and it was seemingly his agitation that prompted the Allobrogan-Arvernian alliance against Rome whose defeat resulted in the annexation of the Lower Rhône Valley and adjoining lands to Roman dominion.

The initial defeat of the Saluvii in defence of the beleaguered inhabitants of Massalia consisted of two campaigns undertaken by different commanders.<sup>146</sup> The first was one led by M. Fulvius Flaccus during his term of consulship in 125BCE and resulted in a triumph celebrated two years later. Of particular interest was the fact this was, according to most reckonings, the first time a Roman army had been led over the Alps to attack the lands beyond (Livy *Epit.* 60).<sup>147</sup> By contrast, the expulsion of Toutomotulos and the breaking of Saluvian power in the region were achieved in 123BCE by G. Sextius Calvinus as pro-consul.<sup>148</sup>

Despite the sparseness of available textual sources for these events, archaeological evidence speaks to their credibility. Excavations at the site of Entremont revealed that the *oppidum* was attacked at least twice by Roman forces (possibly once per

---

<sup>146</sup> Ebel, 1976: 66-69.

<sup>147</sup> Roman military campaigns in the Iberian Peninsula and the Greek world had been ongoing for decades beforehand but had habitually utilised marine transport to reach their intended theatre of war rather than take arduous and uncertain routes overland. Ebel argues that, on the basis of Fulvius' status as a controversial former ally of the populist Gracchi in the Senate, this campaign was largely undertaken as an opportunistic source of political capital with little consideration of its longer-term impact on Gallic geopolitics; Ebel, 1976: 66-8. This is not an unreasonable conclusion, but it does rely on foregrounding internal Roman politics as a factor of greater significance than anything occurring in Gaul itself.

<sup>148</sup> Degrassi, 1954: 105-106.

campaign), as between the building remains and impacts of ammunition from war engines on the structure, there are signs that elements of the fortifications were rapidly reconstructed before being destroyed again.<sup>149</sup> Further surveys of the surrounding area revealed that other fortified sites within Saluvian territory, such as Baou-Roux, Roquepertuse, and La Courtine d'Ollioules also faced bombardment from Roman artillery.<sup>150</sup> While it is very possible that these could have been secondary holdouts of the Saluvii besieged during one or both of the campaigns, another option, in the absence of support from other sources, it may be thought that they were destroyed as a punitive or pre-emptive measure to weaken local defences against the possibility of later rebellion. In addition to the destruction which he wrought on the strongholds of the area, Sextius is also credited with the foundation of a Roman military base at Aquae Sextiae (Aix-en-Provence) in their former territory c.123BCE (Livy *Epit.* 61). Both impacts of the campaign offer a stark demonstration of Roman determination to mark their power on the landscape and demonstrate their superior status to that of any ambitious Saluvians.

The fragmentary remains of Book 34 of Diodorus' *Library of History* offer further anecdotes pertaining to the conquest of the Saluvii; stating that Calvinus enslaved the defeated population of the "city of

---

<sup>149</sup> Ebel, 1976: 68, following the excavation work of Benoit, 1968: 9-13. Given the relatively short length of the campaigning season before troops would be expected to return over the Alps for demobilisation within the consular years of either 125 or 123BCE, there is no reason to assume that two separate attacks, with enough breathing room between to allow for visible reconstruction efforts, could have occurred within any one campaign.

<sup>150</sup> Rivet, 1988: 40.

the Gauls” (‘Γαλατῶν πολίῳ’, presumably Entremont) *en masse*.<sup>151</sup> However, he was persuaded to spare a man named Crato, who had been a political supporter of Rome (‘φιλορώμαιοϲ’) and maltreated as such by the rest of the Saluvii, along with 900 of his compatriots (34.23). Intriguingly, the text describes the forces of Toutomotulos as “rebels” (‘ἀποστάντων’). This may indicate another factor (beyond defence of Massalia) in the otherwise poorly attested motivations for the campaign of 123BCE: that of a civil war amongst the Saluvii. The reasoned assumption would follow that Toutomotulos seized power to continue aggression with Massalia and Rome from a prior regime which had been on better terms with the Republic.<sup>152</sup>

The campaign against the triple alliance of Saluvian exiles, Allobroges, and Arverni is given greater weight in available sources. While no full narrative survives, it is treated as a major affair, especially its climax at the Battle of Vindalium. The Saluvian campaigns had been spring/summer affairs consisting of a single campaigning foray with a single commander. The new conflict was serious enough that not only was Gn. Domitius Ahenobarbus, consul of 122BCE, granted pro-consular *provincia* to continue prosecuting it after the end of his term of office, but he was also joined by a supplementary campaigning force led by his consular successor Q. Fabius Maximus.<sup>153</sup> The Livian summary speaks of tens of thousands of troops marshalled to face the Roman invaders and of

---

<sup>151</sup> Pralon, 1998: 22. The mass taking of captives for sale into slavery was a normative aspect of Roman *praedia* protocol and offered a key source of revenue for both the commander-in-chief’s personal coffers and the salaries of the troops themselves. On this point in relation to Diodorus’ idealising characterisation of Roman rule see Yarrow, 2006: 238.

<sup>152</sup> Dyson, 1985: 136-7.

<sup>153</sup> Rafferty, 2019: 158.



Domitius bringing elephants with him to terrify and crush the unprepared Gauls (*Epit.* 61). The final defeat saw the Allobroges make a decision to offer their formal surrender to his Fabius Maximus, despite the bulk of their losses being at Domitius' hands. The newly named Q. Fabius Maximus Allobrogicus is credited with memorialising his achievement in the form of the Fornix Fabiana at Rome, and in fulfilment of vows, dedicating new temples to the deities Feber, Mars, and Hercules. According to Annaeus Florus (*Ep.*37), both of the victorious commanders, unusually for the time, had *tropaea*, stone pillars adorned with collections of the arms and armour of the defeated, erected on the site of their battles.<sup>154</sup> Although primarily framed as an expression of the generals' rivalry over the social capital of military success, the rarity of this approach forces us to consider that the Romans were in unfamiliar territory, attempting to project and communicate their power over a relatively distant region to a populace with little experience of their presence.<sup>155</sup> As described in greater detail below, the Roman state and people were not necessarily primed to exploit or extract the resources of the Lower Rhône Valley in their wake of their initial conquest but were nonetheless determined that its inhabitants must know themselves to be subjugated.

---

<sup>154</sup> For the significance of victory monuments such as this in the ideology and administration of Roman imperialism see Hölscher, 2006: 32.

<sup>155</sup> Contact with the peoples of Gaul beyond the Alps was not unprecedented for Rome at this point, as their alliance with the Aedui appears to predate these events, and during the late third century BCE groups from the region had offered aid to Rome's enemies during the conquest of the Po Valley and Hannibalic War (Polyb. 2.22, 3.40). However, such exchanges were largely on a distant, indirect basis. See Williams, 2001: 56-78.

Despite both being defeated by Roman arms, only the Allobroges appear to have been led into a state of formal submission and annexation, while the Arverni seem to have been spared it.<sup>156</sup> This disparity impacted the development of the new province of Gallia Transalpina in geographical terms. Although the territory under Roman administration would have been far more fluid than the starkly delineated boundaries of modern maps would suggest, the conquest gave rise to a province that rather closely hugged the coastline in the west, stopping short of the Massif Central, but followed the course of the Rhône far deeper into the interior of Gaul in the east.

Due to the sparsity of clear evidence, the exact reasons for the Roman Republic's annexation of the Lower Rhône, and wider area of Mediterranean Gaul, remain a matter of academic dispute. From the available evidence, the primary factors appear to have related to geopolitics: aiding, protecting, and empowering the allied state of Massalia against local aggression may have been a priority. Due to the comparatively large role they play in the limited textual sources, Toutomotulos and Bituitos have attracted a certain amount of scholarly suggestions that their regimes were key factors in the overall conflict.<sup>157</sup> Dyson interprets the conflict against these local

---

<sup>156</sup> It should be noted that the precise status of the Arverni vis à vis the Roman state after their defeat is an ambiguous matter that Latin sources present rather equivocally. Caesar later made an argument, in his writings, that the defeat of the Arverni by Fabius Maximus rendered them and all Gauls under their hegemony at the time as protectorates of Rome (*BG* 1.45).

<sup>157</sup> Bituitos' polychromatic armour and regal chariot apparently made for a memorable spectacle when displayed as part of the 120BCE triumphal procession (*Flor.* 1.37.2), Beard 2007: 135. His fate of permanent hostage status in Italy may also have influenced his portrayal in later Latin and Greek historiography (*Val. Max.* 9.6.3-4).

figures of power as reflecting a policy of opposing the development and centralisation of independent Gallic power in the region.<sup>158</sup>

While an approach of removing potential military threats makes a straightforward strategic sense, as discussed in our literature review, the notion of 'frontier policy' on the part of the Roman Republic relies on a thoroughly debunked, anachronistic approach to ancient governmental and military thought.<sup>159</sup> The relatively late imposition of formal treaties and provincial government upon the region in comparison with neighbouring areas such as Gallia Cisalpina and the Mediterranean littoral of Hispania suggest that it was of lesser importance to Roman foreign policy overall, and that its conquest may have been more of a matter of political opportunism than practical or ideological impetus.<sup>160</sup>

Regardless of what factors may have motivated the promulgation of wars of conquest against them, by 120BCE the fact remained that the peoples of the Lower Rhône, from the Allobroges to Volcae Arecomici, were now to be treated as subordinate protectorates of the Roman Republic. The stage was set for colonial impositions to be placed upon them and for the eventual expansion of Roman power over lands further from the Mediterranean to the north.

---

<sup>158</sup> Dyson, 1985: 136-7.

<sup>159</sup> For comprehensive argument against strategic Roman 'frontier' policies (though largely based on the Imperial rather than Republican period) see Isaac, 1991: 378-95, Whittaker, 1994: 25-30, and Elton, 1996: 7. For explorations of pre-Imperial Roman attitudes to foreign policy and their impact on war-making see Eckstein, 2006: 17-34 and Gruen, 2004: 32-7.

<sup>160</sup> The contrast with the prolonged, intensive, and often bloody wars of conquest fought to break the power of the Gallic peoples of northern Italy and incorporate their former territory as the heavily colonised province of Gallia Cisalpina is especially noteworthy. Williams, 2001: 3.

### 2.1.2 The Via Domitia

The pro-consular *provincia* held by Domitius Ahenobarbus over the lands of Gaul did not conclude with his and Fabius Maximus' victory in 121BCE but continued for at least another three years afterward. The task, seemingly, was to stabilise the new lands appended to the expanding provincial holdings of the Roman Republic, for which the pro-consul applied two primary measures of which we are informed. These were the foundation of a *colonia* on the south-western Gallic coast at Narbo Martius and the development of a new major roadway: the Via Domitia. Contrary to the proverb, this route did not in fact connect the newly annexed lands to Italy and Rome, but instead stretched from the western banks of the Rhône Delta to the Pyrenees, joining the emerging road network of the province of Hispania Citerior.<sup>161</sup> The choice of route speaks to a pair of concerns: first, a desire for access to the Rhône river as a highway of transport and trade and, second, the primacy of interest in the Iberian Peninsula over lands further north in Roman politics of the time.

The route of the Via Domitia overland was likely well-established prior to its formal construction, making much of the work a matter of renovating and expanding extant roadways rather than building projects on virgin soil.<sup>162</sup> The formal process of creating the road would only directly impact those Gallic peoples living near to the coast and west of the river. By contrast, provincial groups living

---

<sup>161</sup> The mountainous regions of western Liguria, the Maritime Alps, and what is now eastern Provence were considered a wild, bandit-haunted country unsuitable for travel and transport at the time. They would only come under formal Roman control over a century later during the Augustan Era.

<sup>162</sup> Ebel, 1976: 80.

further inland, such as the Helvii and Allobroges, would have little interaction with the roadbuilders and the Via Domitia's impact on their lives would have been indirect. For those it touched upon, however, the main effect was likely of a political nature. Both in the temporary presence of Roman troops, administrative staff, and engineers during the building works themselves and the permanent presence of Latin inscribed milestones along the road's length, the Via Domitia would have served as a potent statement of Rome's power over the region.<sup>163</sup>

### 2.1.3 The Impact of the Cimbric Wars c.107-102BCE

A little over a decade after the Roman conquest of the region, the Lower Rhône Valley would again suffer invasion and bitter war. This invasion came the north-east, however, and was unsuccessful in dislodging Roman control in favour of a new regime. Nevertheless, this conflict formed part of a wider series of struggles across central and western Europe known as the Cimbric Wars and had profound implications for the development of the province of Gallia Transalpina, and the peoples of the Rhône Basin in particular.

A source of frustration for historians studying the Cimbric Wars is that, although references and allusions are relatively frequent in the extant corpus of Classical Literature, the only surviving narrative accounts derive from texts composed centuries after their occurrence. The most detailed of these is found in the biography of Gaius Marius written in the early second century CE by Plutarch.<sup>164</sup>

---

<sup>163</sup> Hölscher, 2006: 32.

<sup>164</sup> For specific issues that attend Plutarch's use as a source in this case see Geiger, 2014: 295-7; Stadter, 2014: 25; and Schettino, 2014: 428.

Other accounts can be gleaned from the epitomes of Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* (*Epit.* 63-68), Diodorus' *Library of History* (32.1), and Tacitus' *De Situ et Origine Germanorum* (37). The origins of the invaders later labelled 'Cimbri' and 'Teutones' are uncertain and much disputed. The bulk of ancient textual sources regard them as hordes of armed migrants from a remote part of northern Europe seeking new land to forcibly settle (Livy *Epit.* 63, Plut. *Mar.* 11.2, Flor.1.38.1-4).<sup>165</sup> However, a remark by Plutarch (*Mar.* 11.3) that the term 'Cimbri' was used to denote robbers or bandits among those Germanic peoples in contact with the Roman Empire has given rise to an alternate theory: that the marauding forces were not unified by ethnic origin, but were instead a patchwork of dispossessed warriors of varying backgrounds, arguably more interested in plunder than land.<sup>166</sup> Regardless, it is well beyond the bounds of this thesis to fully investigate, let alone solve, this venerable mystery. What can be identified is that the invaders made their first definite contact with the Roman Republic in 113BCE when they defeated the army of Cn. Papirius Carbo at a battle in the eastern Alps (Livy *Epit.* 63). These hordes proceeded to ravage their way across most of western Europe, defeating several Roman armies sent to stop them in the process, before being defeated and massacred in a pair of great battles, the first at Aquae Sextiae in

---

<sup>165</sup> Interestingly, the textual sources left to us seem to expend as much, if not, more effort arguing against theories of whence and why the Cimbri and Teutones began their wanderings as on advancing their own. Strabo *Geography* 7.2.1. See Woolf, 2011: 77. For potential archaeological evidence of the hordes' violent migrations across northern Europe see Cunliffe, 1997: 127. For an overview of theories of explaining the origins and aims of the Cimbri and Teutones as presented in Greek and Latin sources see Hyden, 2017: 93-102.

<sup>166</sup> Burns, 2003: 84-5.

south-eastern Gaul c.102BCE, and the second at Vercellae in northern Italy c.101BCE (Plut. *Mar.* 21.1-3 and 26.4).

The matter of interest here is how the Cimbric Wars affected the lands and peoples of the Rhône, both in terms of the immediate impact of violence, military campaigning, and mass population movement, and the legacy they left behind in the decades afterward. Roughly between 107 and 102BCE, the war made its mark on the Rhône region through either its inhabitants' participation or the land's role as a battleground or staging point for campaigns.

The Tigurini, identified (Caes. *BG* 1.7, Strab. *Geog.* 4.3.3) as a *pagos* of the Helvetii, appear to have forged an alliance of mutual benefit with the Cimbri and Teutones (or simply to have made an opportunity of the disruption to ape their example) to launch a military expedition into western Gaul.<sup>167</sup> This force, whose aims are unclear but are suggested to have been either forcible occupation or mass pillage, clashed with a Roman army under consular command c.107BCE near the settlement of Burdigala (Livy *Epit.* 65).<sup>168</sup> This battle proved to be a stinging defeat for the forces of the Republic, with such a sensational reputation that it would continue to be a rhetorical *topos* in Rome and a sore point in relations with the Helvetii for decades to come.<sup>169</sup> Given the combination of chronological distance and rhetorical charge in the textual evidence relating to the event, it is difficult to trust any of the information given

---

<sup>167</sup> For further discussion of *pagi* as units of Gallic social organisation, see Chapter 3.1.

<sup>168</sup> The Roman forces are thought to have been in the region on a mission to pacify the lands surrounding the new *colonia* at Narbo Martius. Dyson, 1976: 356.

<sup>169</sup> Caesar notably makes use of it to cast aspersions on the national character of the Helvetii in his later war against them (*BG* 1.7) and frame his violence against them as a form of justified vengeance (*BG* 1.12).

regarding it. It is possible that a Helvetian military force was active in the south-west of Gaul during the Cimbri and Teutones' wanderings across the land, which, if true, would speak to the reach of their military logistics and organisation, and to the apparent security they felt against the possible threat posed by the invaders.<sup>170</sup> However, we currently have no way of confirming or negating this scenario.

Two years later, in 105BCE, the marauding hordes would clash with Roman forces, this time in the heart of the Rhône Valley itself at Arausio. Joint armies lead by the consul Gn. Mallius Maximus and pro-consul Q. Servilius Caepio were slaughtered by the northerners (Livy *Epit.* 67).<sup>171</sup> A later estimate, almost certainly inflated, placed the casualties of Roman and Italian allied troops at 60,000, their loss creating a crisis of available recruits to replace them across the peninsula (Diod. 36.1). With their opponents swept aside, the Cimbri and Teutones descended on southern Gaul, apparently laying waste to all in their path.

Passing through the region, the invaders sowed destruction and discord in their wake, notably prompting a local revolt against Roman rule at Tolosa (Dio Cass. *frg.*27.90), possibly motivated by a failure to offer adequate protection from the marauders. Continuing south-west, the Cimbri and Teutones allowed both the Gallic

---

<sup>170</sup> By contrast, Caesar puts a speech in the mouth of an Arvernian named Critognatos in his *Commentarii* (BG 7.77) that describes his people's forebears responding to the threat of the Cimbri and Teutones by retreating to their fortified oppida and holding out as long as they could (even resorting to cannibalism if necessary). Even more than most Caesarian rhetoric as found in the *Commentarii*, these assertions are lacking in credibility due to their overt demonisation of military opponents in the context of the pro-consul's potentially questionable actions during the Siege of Alésia c.52BCE. See Riggsby, 2006: 103-4.

<sup>171</sup> Most retellings of the event blame either one or both of the commanders for refusing to coalesce their troops into a single, defensible position for the scale of the defeat. Rafferty, 2019: 164.



peoples and Roman forces some respite as they headed into the Iberian Peninsula to continue their rampage (Livy *Epit.* 67). They would return, however, in the year 102BCE, with the apparent intention of invading the Italian Peninsula itself. In order to achieve this, the horde split into two groups, who would cross the Alps in a pincer formation in the hope of either outmanoeuvring or overwhelming Roman forces. One group, primarily composed of the Teutones, marched through southern Gaul to take the coastal route into Italy.<sup>172</sup> In response, the consul Marius gathered his forces and made camp at the head of the Rhône Delta (possibly near Arelate), digging in with fortifications and a canal to help ferry in supplies from the Mediterranean (Plut. *Mar.* 15.1-3). Here they would wait.

After attempts to storm the Roman fortifications proved ineffective, the invaders resolved to bypass them instead, resuming their eastward march toward Italy. Thereafter Marius and his forces followed (Plut. *Mar.* 18.1-3). In this way, Aquae Sextiae, lying at the foot of the former Saluvian stronghold of Entremont, became a battle-site once more. According to Plutarch, the hot springs for which the site was named became the setting of an ambush, with the Teutones caught bathing by a combined force of legionaries and local auxiliaries (*Mar.* 19.1-4). It was here that their wanderings ended, the entire horde massacred in such a bloodbath that, legendarily at least, the piled carcasses fertilised the soil of the area for years afterward (Plut. *Mar.* 21.3). While the Cimbri themselves

---

<sup>172</sup> Evans, 1994: 86.

would not be defeated until months later, the Rhône Valley was spared any further part in the conflict.

What is perhaps unsurprising but nevertheless noteworthy about our sparse array of textual records regarding the wars is how limited a role indigenous Gallic communities play in them. With the exceptions of the rather tangentially related Battle of Burdigala and Revolt of Tolosa, all attention is focussed on the role of Roman commanders and their almost exclusively Italian troops taking action against the Cimbri and Teutones, rather than local responses to the invasion. Land which had only been annexed by the Republic fifteen to twenty years previously is unproblematically treated as provincial territory meant to support Roman military occupation. Much of this tendency can be attributed to a combination of literary convention and potential anachronism.<sup>173</sup> However, it falls to us to glean what interpretations we can as to whether this apparent silence indicates an impotent passivity in the face of aggression on the part of the Cavares, Saluvii, and other recently conquered communities in the Lower Rhône region or if it hides activities considered beneath notice by later Latin and Greek chroniclers.

Though Marius had ended the threat posed by the invaders by the turn of the century, the fallout of their presence and clashes with Roman armies was still felt upon the landscape. The otherwise well-preserved site of Glanum in the Alpilles hills east of the Rhône shows a destruction layer in its stratigraphy dating to the late second century BCE, widely thought to coincide with the advent of the

---

<sup>173</sup> Geiger, 2014: 295.

hordes. The next phase of reconstruction and occupation shows drastic changes in the layout of the settlement.<sup>174</sup> The reorganisation of Glanum, though, coincides with the construction of more overtly Hellenic buildings, including a *bouleterion* adjoining an *agora* space, a colonnaded temple, and a number of peristyle houses.<sup>175</sup> Between this and finds of similar remains from the same timeframe at Arelate and Aquae Sextiae, it has been argued that, in the wake of wars which weakened local Gallic polities such as the Saluvii, Massaliot settlers began to put down roots further into the interior of southern Gaul than before, and demonstrating their increasing cultural confidence.<sup>176</sup> This approach relies rather heavily on colonialist assumptions that more recent linguistic and archaeological research has argued against in the case of ‘Hellenisation’ of south-eastern Gaul.<sup>177</sup> Instead, we should potentially see the changes as representing a cultural shift towards conciliation and accommodation of Mediterranean connections rather than resistance, a possibility explored in Chapter 6.

The passage of the conflict also appears to have seriously disrupted the patterns of landholding across the Lower Rhône region, with Teutonic violence and temporary occupation having displaced substantial numbers of the native inhabitants. While this may reflect a short-term rise in Massaliot landlordism over Gallic tenant communities in the region, Italian colonists also appear to have been keen to exploit the situation, with Saturninus and other

---

<sup>174</sup> Clavel-Lévêque and Lévêque, 1982: 676-7.

<sup>175</sup> Kleiner, 1973: 381. Halles, 2003: 175.

<sup>176</sup> Verdin, 1998: 33.

<sup>177</sup> For the tendency of overvaluation of Massaliot contributions to Iron Age Gaul see

political populists at Rome calling for the territory to be redistributed to impoverished citizens rather than returned to Gallic hands.<sup>178</sup>

The latter half of the second century BCE was a time of protracted violence and disruption for the Lower Rhône Valley. Far from the creation of the Roman Province of Gallia Transalpina being a swift and smooth transition in the wake of a short war of conquest, the available evidence suggests piecemeal processes of integration marked by contestation, negotiation, and opportunism. This state of simmering tensions would continue into the first century BCE.

#### 2.1.4 The Revolt of c.90BCE

A final event to be addressed in this early period before moving on to the next phase of the historical overview is an apparent revolt led by the Saluvii around 90BCE, roughly a decade after the Battle of Aquae Sextiae. Evidence for this incident is particularly slim and largely oblique, primarily coming from a single line in a summary of Book 73 of Livy (otherwise recounting events of the Social War in Italy), attributing the defeat of the “*Saluvios rebellantes*” (‘Saluvii in rebellion’) to a C. Caecilius.<sup>179</sup> If what little information is available to us can be trusted at all, it would appear that by this time, factions within the Saluvii (and possibly neighbouring communities) had regathered enough strength to launch some kind of challenge to

---

<sup>178</sup> Accounts of the ‘*lex Appuleia agraria*’ 100BCE emphasise its aims to publicly acquire and redistribute those lands within Italy north of the Po that had briefly been held by the Cimbri (App. Civ. 1.4.29). However, given that it also is supposed to have included provisions for citizen *coloniae* in Gallia Transalpina it may well have applied a similar approach to areas in the provinces. See Dyson, 1985: 164.

<sup>179</sup> Badian and Rivet both argue that this is a misrendering of C. Coelius Calvus, consul of 94BCE, who governed the provinces of Gallia Cisalpina and Transalpina at the time. While not beyond the bounds of possibility, the fact no ‘Gaius Caecilius’ of praetorian or consular rank is identifiable at the time suggests that the name is an error either on the part of Livy himself or, more probably, of later transcribers. Rivet, 1988: 54-5. Rafferty, 2019: 170.

Roman dominion. In a point explored further in Chapter 4 of this thesis, we should not necessarily assume that the language of ‘revolt’ and ‘rebellion’ indicates an intentional strategic plan to secure independence through military force. As has been, and continues to be, the case across contexts, such an uprising could well have been an escalation of smaller scale unrest (motivated by anything from dissatisfaction with Massaliot or Italian colonial landlordism to internal factional conflict) that was treated as rebellious in clashes with suppressing Roman forces.<sup>180</sup>

What little can be concluded from this enigmatic incident of conflict is that, regardless of Marius’ usage of the region as a supply base during his earlier campaigns, eastern Gallia Transalpina (the areas adjoining the Rhône Valley) was not a ‘pacified’ region whose acceptance and assimilation to Roman dominion could be relied upon at this time.

## 2.2 Expanding Networks, Rising Tensions – Rome and the Rhône Basin c.90-65BCE

### 2.2.1 Gallia Transalpina and the Roman West c.90-70BCE

The imposition of Roman provincial administration on the Lower Rhône Valley, as well as the rest of the new province of Gallia Transalpina, was by no means a smooth process. Resistance to foreign dominance from at least some quarters continued throughout this period, whether in the form of armed uprisings or in legal/political challenges to the Roman regime. It is important to

---

<sup>180</sup> On the rhetorical issues of terminology of ‘rebellion’ in Latin (and to a lesser extent Greek) historiography in Roman contexts see Ando, 2000: 30, and Woolf, 1998: 30-1.

note, however, that the experiences of the Lower Rhône peoples and their relationships with Rome cannot be taken as a unit in this period and varied widely from region to region.

While the Saluvii appear to have been sufficiently chastened by their three earlier defeats at Roman hands, other groups were not so acquiescent. The Allobroges proved a frequent thorn in the side of provincial administrators, attempting armed rebellion on several occasions discussed further below. Even the Helvii, who go largely unmentioned in textual sources of the period may have been involved in a clash with Roman forces in the early first century BCE. An *oppidum* in their territory, known as Jastre-Nord, was constructed at this time, incorporating thick stone walls and a pair of rectangular towers, seemingly replacing the older, adjacent, and less formidable fortifications of Jastre-Sud.<sup>181</sup> At least one textual source might allude to a Helvian-Roman conflict at the time. According to Caesar (*BC* 1.35) during this period a Roman leader, heavily implied to be Pompey, travelling through Gallia Transalpina *en route* to war in Hispania c.76BCE, ended a local disturbance and substantially increased the power of Massalia in the region, granting them either ownership (or at least taxation rights) to lands previously held by the Helvii and Volcae Arecomici.<sup>182</sup> As was the apparent case with the colonisation of disputed Saluvian territory following the disruptions of the Cimbric Wars, the Roman provincial regime rested heavily on the weakening of local communities through the stripping of land rights.

---

<sup>181</sup> Rivet, 1988: 58.

<sup>182</sup> Leach, 2015: 45. For a contrasting view, see Southern, 2002: 43.

By contrast, there is a significant group within the region with no known conflicts with Rome to their name: the Cavares. Between the absence of either textual or archaeological evidence of conquest by Roman forces, and descriptions of their settlements of Cabello (Cavaillon) and Auennio (Avignon) as being founded by Massalioes in later Greek sources (notably Stephen of Byzantium 1.258 f, quoting Artemidorus GGM 1,574-576), it may well be the case that the Cavares maintained a firm alliance with Massalia throughout the period in question, likely placing them on good terms with the Roman Republic as a co-ally of the *polis*.<sup>183</sup> If we can assume that this was their policy, we have no way of interpreting how it was promulgated or maintained. One interpretation that could be made is that, as the territory of the Cavares appears to have been a battleground for other groups during the earlier wars of conquest (Vindalium being the prime example), that they had previously been a subject populace to another Gallic polity and had enjoyed a relatively liberated status as a result of their previous overlords' defeat at Roman hands. In the absence of greater evidence, this must remain a hypothesis.

A crucial figure in the history of Roman gubernatorial rule over Gallia Transalpina at this time is G. Valerius Flaccus, who appears to have held an unusually long and wide-ranging pro-consular *provincia* over the western territories of the Republic in the 80sBCE. In addition to the relatively new Gallic province, he also appears to have held power over the majority of the Iberian territories previously annexed by the Republic, with the former's treatment as something

---

<sup>183</sup> Rivet, 1988: 42.

as an appendage to the latter. This aligns well with the status of the Via Domitia as a road between Hispania and the Rhône rather than between Rome and Gaul.<sup>184</sup>

A textual source on the relationship between the Roman provincial administration and the inhabitants of the Lower Rhône Valley comes from Cicero's defence speech on behalf of a certain Fonteius, who had served as pro-praetorian governor of Gallia Transalpina for some time between 75 and 71 BCE. In 69 BCE, after the completion of his term of office, Fonteius was accused of having used his position to illegally extort funds and resources from the Gallic peoples of the province, in breach of the *lex Cornelia de repetundis*.<sup>185</sup> No full account of who, precisely, brought charges against the former governor survives. What is known is that the witnesses called by the prosecution to testify against Fonteius included Indutiomarus, a leader amongst the Allobroges, and representatives from the Volcae, Ruteni, and other southern Gallic peoples, both from the Lower Rhône region and further west (*Font.* 3.4, 12.26, and 21.47). Fonteius' regime had placed a great deal of pressure on local resources, so Cicero relates, for two main reasons. Firstly, having apparently crushed a minor revolt in the region, the governor had ordered defeated rebels be summarily evicted, as their lands were legally forfeited for making war on Rome. Secondly, in aid of the ongoing war effort to defeat a larger rebellion against Roman rule in the Iberian Peninsula, Fonteius had

---

<sup>184</sup> For a hypothesis that the relatively late formal annexation and provincialisation of Gallia Transalpina was related to its treatment as an extension of the pre-existing province of Hispania Citerior see Ebel, 1976: 2-3.

<sup>185</sup> Lintott, 2008: 101.



raised several large regiments of auxiliary cavalry from the Gallic populace (whose wages were provided from taxes collected from their own communities) and levied vast amounts of local grain to be shipped as supplies to Roman armies in the field (*Font.* 6.14).

Notably, Cicero's primary line of defence for his client rested on casting suspicion on the reliability of the Gallic prosecution witnesses in the minds of the jury, framing them as motivated by revenge and antipathy to Rome, supported by an appeal to the defence of the Republic and its provinces as a cause.<sup>186</sup> That this tactic was considered persuasive suggests both the strength of anti-Gallic sentiment in metropolitan Roman society and a perception, accurate or otherwise, of instability and simmering violence in the context of Gallia Transalpina. Cicero also makes the assertion that during this time, many Gauls had taken out sizeable loans from Roman citizen merchants operating in the Transalpina province, a group which, he claims, had a hand in every transaction in the area (*Font.* 5.12). While this latter point is clearly an exaggeration, even in the rhetorical context of its author's speechifying, the extent to which economic power in the region rested in the hands of colonial Roman merchants over and against indigenous communities is a major point of exploration in Chapter 5.<sup>187</sup>

The Allobroges appear to have mounted a revolt in the province during the governorship of C. Calpurnius Piso 67-66BCE (*Cic. Att.*

---

<sup>186</sup> Lintott, 2008: 102-3. For the prevalence of impugning national character as a tactic in Late Republican forensic oratory see Vasaly, 1993: 191-2. For the strong colonial undertones of Cicero's rhetoric see Ebel, 1988: 573.

<sup>187</sup> For the existence and roles of colonial Italian diaspora communities in provincial settings, and their relationship with later Augustan *coloniae* foundations, see Purcell, 2005: 97.

1.13.2). However, given that this the sole surviving allusion to the event, and that it was mentioned merely in the context of discussing its pacifier's career and accomplishments in passing, we may assume that the incident was not a significant one and posed little trouble to the Roman administration. Taken in the context of Fonteius' apparent efforts to suppress unrest and, as we shall see, subsequent conflict between the Allobroges and Roman administration, this could be another indication that rather than attempted wars of independence (in which the weight of resources and strategic consideration would be inveighed against the problem of continued Roman rule) such conflicts were far more localised and sporadic.

We conclude this section seeing that by c.65BCE Roman power was securely imposed on the lands of Gallia Transalpina, not merely in the sense of military dominance but in more general methods of colonial exploitation and hegemony. Several decades after their annexation by the Republic, the southerly regions of the Rhône Basin had at last begun to interact with Roman political and cultural systems in ways that might provide ways for a provincial sub-elite to secure their position in relation to the colonial ruling class. However, such processes were still very much in their infancy, with what indications there are pointing to greatly limited agency on the part of local communities in relation to imperial power. This agency was also unevenly distributed, with the Allobroges especially seeming to suffer in an adversarial relationship with gubernatorial authorities (the fuller extent of which is explored in the following section).

## 2.3 Crisis and Conquest – The Origins and Impact of the Caesarian Gallic Wars c.65-50BCE

Although the southern reaches of the Rhône Basin had been annexed by Rome in the late second century, the lands north of the Saône Confluence had remained largely free of direct occupation. The great turning point, in which vast swathes of north-western Europe and its people were subjugated by Roman arms, came with the Gallic Wars of c.58-50BCE prosecuted by G. Julius Caesar in his capacity as pro-consul. In addition to tracking their course of the wars themselves and their impact across Gaul, it is also vital to understand the context out of which they arose.<sup>188</sup> This section will attempt to briefly interrogate how strained relations between Rome and the peoples of the Rhône helped precipitate a world-shattering series of conquests and what roles those communities played in the conflicts themselves.<sup>189</sup>

### 2.3.1 Rome and the Allobroges c.65-60BCE – A prelude?

In the later 60sBCE, the political issues of southern Gaul and its debt crises would flare up again and impinge, as in the case of Fonteius, upon Cicero's career. In 63BCE, a dissident, financially insolvent Roman senator, L. Sergius Catilina, gathered allies in an alleged conspiracy to overthrow the Republic in a coup (Plut. *Cic.*

---

<sup>188</sup> Treating the Gallic Wars, much as they are presented in Caesar's *Commentarii* alone and/or only within the context of Caesar's career and political developments at Rome itself without holistic consideration of their broader impact has long been an unfortunate trait of Anglophone scholarship on the matter. For examples see Jiménez, 1996: 46 and Rosenstein, 2009: 88. For a consideration of Caesar's approach to war-making against the backdrop of Late Republican Roman politics see Brunt, 1978: 177-81.

<sup>189</sup> For the scale of the Gallic Wars as military actions and their significance in terms of both Roman Imperial and wider European history see Woolf, 2019: 14-15.

10.2-4). The conspirators made contact with envoys of the Allobroges present in Rome through Publius Umbrenus, a freedman (Cic. *Cat.* III.15) whose work as a *negotiator* to the province made him familiar to them (Sall. *Bell. Cat.* 40.1). For the conspirators, the Allobroges could provide much-needed cavalry to support the infantry forces they had raised in Etruria (Cic. *Cat.* III.9). Conversely, for the Allobroges the main enticement to support the rebels was the promise of relief from the crushing burden of debt (“*aes alienum*”) imposed on them by the gubernatorial regime (Sall. *Cat.* 41.1-3). Sallust emphasises the susceptibility of the Gallic envoys to revolutionary overtures regarding the hopeless plight of their people before the greed of Roman magistrates and the indifference of the Senate (*Cat.* 40.2-3).

It may be noted that Umbrenus’ status as a freedman complicates the impression made by Cicero that financial matters in Transalpina lay in the hands of those holding Roman citizenship. However, given that the *negotiator* was to act as agent and intermediary for higher status employers, Cicero’s rhetorical flourish regarding Roman mercantile interests (Cic. III 8-15) might simply be an indication of metaphorical fingers in pies rather than a statement of business being personally handled by citizen merchants. Indeed, both the fact that it was Allobrogan envoys in Rome who were approached by the conspirators, and that the Allobrogan “*dux*” Indutiomarus made an appearance as a witness in a trial before the Senate, indicate a crucial point: this was a world where Gauls, regardless of their status in their own societies, came to Rome to do business rather than vice versa. The high-ranking envoys who came to plead their

case to the Senate in 63BCE are described as treating a freed slave as a familiar business partner and confidante, which, while not unheard of amongst Romans of at least equestrian rank, might indicate that they occupied a lower rung of the social ladder in the context of Rome itself.

However, the proposed alliance proved to be the conspiracy's undoing. After having been informed of the plans and the identities of their supporters, the Gauls experienced second thoughts. Rather than risk involvement in a war against the full might of Rome, they elected to disclose their intelligence to their patron, Q. Fabius Sanga, who, in turn, passed it to Cicero, then consul of Rome (Sall. *Cat.* 41.4-5). Cicero then proceeded to use the Allobrogan envoys as part of a counter-conspiracy to entrap and unmask his foes, sending them back to Lentulus with instructions to demand an oath of loyalty from those conspirators present.<sup>190</sup> Between having secured this oath, being entrusted with a letter for Catilina detailing plans for the alliance, as well as leading Lentulus' envoy Volturcius into an ambush for his arrest, the evidence and testimony provided by the Allobroges proved crucial to exposing the plot and prosecuting its supporters.<sup>191</sup>

Despite this great service to the Republic, for which the envoys were apparently personally rewarded (*Cat.* 49.3), the Allobroges' grievances with Rome were left unanswered. Two years later in 61BCE a revolt broke out among them led by Catagnatos, identified by Cassius Dio as being a military leader ('στρατηγός') of the whole

---

<sup>190</sup> Pagán, 2004: 48.

<sup>191</sup> Phillips, 1976: 446.

people (38.47).<sup>192</sup> This uprising was swiftly crushed by the Propraetorian governor G. Pomptinus at a battle near Solonium (Livy *Epit.* 103, Cic. *Prov. Cons.* 13). The textual sources we have, being either fragmentary or somewhat tangential, offer little insight as to what, if any, policies of peace-making or reintegration were employed with the Allobroges in the wake of the conflict. However, this appears to have been the last recorded gasp of resistance to Roman domination on the part of south-eastern Gaul. After 60BCE references to conflict, whether military or civilian, within the region seem to disappear from Roman and Greek sources. Nor is there any archaeological evidence to suggest that battles between the armies of the Republic and local warriors continued.

Understanding and considering these events is crucial for our topic of study because of what they reveal about the relative agency of Allobrogan, and thus potentially other provincial communities, elites under the gubernatorial regimes of the Late Republic.<sup>193</sup> These groups were not passively resigned to their subjugated, exploited status, but their options for negotiation and resistance were limited in scope and efficacy. On the other hand, the conspirators' attempts to enlist the Allobroges as allies and the unrest that followed reveal two important factors from the perspective of the ruling Roman elite. Firstly, that the peoples of the Lower Rhône were a potential force (or resource) worth factoring into the increasingly complex

---

<sup>192</sup> Drinkwater, 1983: 7-8.

<sup>193</sup> For a more detailed examination of this specific case study (i.e., the experiences and capacities of the Allobroges as a subject community under Republic Roman governance) see Moore, 2021.

calculations of Roman power politics.<sup>194</sup> Secondly, that Gaul, provincial or otherwise, remained an area of instability whose pacification and loyalty could not be taken for granted.

### 2.3.2 The Gallic Crisis c.65-58BCE

After Fabius Maximus' acceptance of the Allobroges into a state of *deditio*, the armies of the Roman Republic would not push further up the Rhône in wars of conquest for many decades. However, as noted above, this did not mean that Rome had no interest in the regions beyond what was, ultimately, a very informal provincial boundary.<sup>195</sup> Increased contact with, and knowledge of, the Upper Rhône in the first half of the first century BCE on the part of Mediterranean cultures allows more of a glimpse into the politics and society of the area than had been previously possible. The latter half of the 60sBCE saw that, along with increased friction with the Allobroges, the Republic's more indirect diplomatic and surveillance reach into areas further north pointed to simmering tensions between groups in the region threatening to bubble over into crisis. And where there is crisis, there is opportunity.

By 65BCE the Upper Rhône Basin appears to have been a focus point for potential hegemony over the wider realm of Gallia Comata and, as such, for fierce contestation over it. These events are primarily evinced by Greek and Latin sources written long after the conclusion of such contests, making them difficult to reconstruct in

---

<sup>194</sup> For a consideration of the role played by provincial territory as a source of financial and military resources amongst the Roman political elite of the first century BCE see

<sup>195</sup> Elton, 1996: 7. For the ambiguity of the term '*provincia*' in relation to territorial control in Republican political culture see Jiménez, 2016: 18.

their entirety with confidence. Surveys of archaeological evidence in terms of flows of trade goods and comparative density and scale of settlement patterns can point to the significance of east central Gaul as a centre of gravity in the wider La Tène world of the time, but it cannot elucidate specific political/military events with precision. Ultimately, the crux of the conflict appears to have been rivalry over control of the Saône, and its opportunities for transport, trade, and taxation, between the Aedui occupying its western bank and the Sequani on the eastern. Each side drew in allies and dependents from further afield.<sup>196</sup> The struggle over the Saône appears to have reached its climax in the years c.63-59BCE. However, due to the either limited or suspect way in which available sources describe them, it is difficult to reconstruct the correct order and specific context in which they occurred. What can be understood is that during the years in question, the Aedui, holding firm as allies of Rome, were intermittently engaged in war with the Sequani, Helvetii, possibly the Arverni, and, at the last, invading groups of Germani either individually or in varying combinations. We can catch glimpses of the fighting and political manoeuvring that occurred, as and when they drew the attention of Roman onlookers and make an attempt to find narrative threads.

Caesar offers a version of events by way of preamble to a war he would undertake in the region in 58BCE (*BG* 1.31). Although his account is closest chronologically and has arguably the best claim to first-hand sources, its heavily propagandistic and seemingly

---

<sup>196</sup> See Fig. 6.



contrived nature make it problematic to credit.<sup>197</sup> It recounts that an alliance of the Sequani and Arverni, having failed in repeated attempts to challenge the hegemony of the Aedui over central Gaul, expanded their coalition through diplomatic overtures to a force of the Germani under the leadership of a warlord named Ariovistus, requesting military aid in exchange for promises of land grants. At a point within the timeframe of 63-61BCE a climactic battle occurred at the settlement of Magetobriga (thought to be modern Amage near Luxeill) between the Aedui and the newly formed Sequani-Germani coalition, resulting in the defeat of the Aedui and the end of their dominance in the region. Despite their initial success, though, according to Caesar, the Sequani found themselves hoisted by their own petard as the Germani turned on them, using their fearsome reputation to extort further and further concessions as their numbers were swelled by further migrations.

Strabo offers a superficially similar story (*Geog.* 4.3.2), though his foregrounds the struggle over control of the Saône as the root of conflict and alludes to the Sequani having made multiple uses of Germanic auxiliaries over the course of their long struggle with the Aedui before the coming of Ariovistus. Unfortunately, it gives no precise timeframe other than that these events had occurred long before the Roman conquest.<sup>198</sup> An anecdote related by Pliny the Elder, but originally attributed to Nepos, would appear to confirm Ariovistus' presence in Gaul by 60-59BCE. He records that Q. Metellus Celer, consul in 60BCE, while serving as pro-consular

---

<sup>197</sup> For further discussion see next section.

<sup>198</sup> Dueck, 2000: 14. Woolf, 2012: 59-60.

governor of Gaul made contact with a “Suebic king” and exchanged diplomatic gifts (*NH* 2.67).<sup>199</sup> While this would fit within the timeframe established by other sources, the anecdote itself is meant to illustrate the existence of a sea route around the eastern end of the inhabited world providing a link between India and Germania, making its validity dubious.

Cicero, inevitably, provides some allusions to the conflict, which, thanks to their relatively precise dating can help piece together a chronology. However, being in the context of correspondence with friends and fellow political commentators, the information is spare at best and predicated more on distant rumblings of the Gallic situation’s effects on Roman politics than on eye-witness accounts of its immediate comings and goings. In a letter to Atticus dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 60BCE (*Att.* 1.19), he mentions a great disturbance in Gaul after the loss of a significant battle by the Aedui (which might suggest 61BCE as a more likely date for the Battle of Magetobriga), but, interestingly, does not identify the victors. Instead of the Sequani or Germani, it is the Helvetii who are described as a marauding threat. The situation appears to have been resolved swiftly, as Cicero’s next letter to Atticus (*Att.* 1.20), dated to 12<sup>th</sup> May of the same year, mentions the restoration of peace in Gaul, to the apparent disappointment of the sitting consul. On this basis, the Helvetii certainly seem to have been involved in the ongoing conflicts of the Upper Rhône region in the years 61-59BCE, but in what precise capacity remains uncertain. Caesar (*BG* 1.2-4)

---

<sup>199</sup> While his forces are described as a broad coalition of Germanic peoples from varying groups (Caes. *BG* 1.51) Ariovistus himself appears to have been Suebic (*BG* 1.54).

provides some clues as to what the Helvetii were doing in this period. These activities included stockpiling supplies and forging secret alliances with dissident factions of the Aedui and Sequani for a great military campaign under a leader named Orgetorix. However, this account, for reasons explored more fully in the succeeding section, presents more problems than viable answers.

By the end of 59BCE, a tentative peace appears to have been reached in the Upper Rhône region, with the new Germanic 'king' and his forces acting as the hegemonic stabilising agent favoured by the Roman Republic. This situation, however, set the stage for an even greater sea change in the history of the Rhône Basin and its peoples: the coming of Caesar and the Roman conquest of Gaul in its entirety.

### 2.3.3 The Helvetian and Ariovistan Wars c.58BCE

Upon his accession as pro-consul at the start of 58BCE, Caesar was not, by most accounts, preparing for a campaign in Gaul. Of the four legions under his command, three were stationed at Aquileia (at the northern tip of the Adriatic), with only one left in Gallia Transalpina, likely as a deterrent against further rebellion from the restive Allobroges or attempted raiding from the north. It is widely hypothesised, on the basis of this deployment, that Caesar's plans for a great military campaign to make his career and fortune were aimed at the Dacian state expanding out from the Carpathian Basin under its leader Burebista.<sup>200</sup> It was only some months later, in the Spring of that year, that Caesar's attentions were directed back to

---

<sup>200</sup> Drinkwater, 1983: 15. Goudineau, 1990: 130-1. Jiménez 1996: 46

Gaul. The wars of conquest and forcible pacification that brought all of Gaul under Roman domination had their inception in the Rhône Basin.

According to Caesar's version of events (*BG* 1.2-5) the trouble had begun brewing with the Helvetii around the year 61BCE. A man of unusual prosperity and status among them, known as Orgetorix, is said to have hatched a plot to overthrow the status quo and establish himself as a dictator. In addition to securing rule over his own people, his schemes would also secure autocratic power for his secret cohorts, Dubnoreix and Casticos, in the neighbouring Aedui and Sequani respectively. Together, this triple alliance would dominate Gaul with unquestionable might. In order for these ambitions to be realised, however, Orgetorix sought to convince his restive, warlike compatriots that they should migrate, *en masse*, from their alpine homeland, whose geography hampered their capacity to attack neighbours at will, and settle in the territory of the Santones far to the west. The preparations for this great, armed exodus, in the stockpiling of crops, livestock, and wagons for the journey, was to take place over the following two years. Orgetorix, however, would never see his design achieved. The details of his conspiracy were exposed to the Helvetian public, and he was put on trial for treason. After a scuffle and threatened riot between Orgetorix' followers and those loyal to the state, the would-be dictator fled and possibly committed suicide in disgrace. Despite the loss of its chief instigator preparations for the planned migration continued regardless.

Two years later, in 58BCE, with those preparations complete, the assembled Helvetii set out. To set an absolute seal on their departure, they burned their homes and fields, leaving no option to waver or retreat. Events came to head, however, with their chosen route. Exiting the Swiss Plateau to the south-west would take them through the lands of the Allobroges and thus the Roman Province of Gallia Transalpina (*BG* 1.6), where they would almost certainly raid and devastate the countryside. Caesar, as pro-consular governor of the province, could not allow this. After initially delaying the Helvetii with promises of negotiations with the Senate, Caesar made haste to summon his legions to Gaul, and, when the migrants tried their luck against his hastily constructed fortifications in the pass, war was declared. The Helvetii were forced to take an alternative route further north, while Roman forces, upon arrival in the province, gave chase.

There are several reasons to doubt Caesar's version of events, even beyond the basic level of scepticism merited by the text overall. For one, the archaeological record challenges many of his claims. No evidence of the kind of burn layer that would result from the mass conflagration of settlements and arable land he describes has ever been found in the Swiss Plateau.<sup>201</sup> Similarly, the geographical realities of the Helvetii's proposed departure route complicate the picture. The uneven terrain of the environs of Geneva would have made it difficult to construct the low walls and ditches used in Roman military fortifications as a functional barrier at

---

<sup>201</sup> Sauter, 1976: 146. For a view that is more positive regarding Caesar's testimony, though not crediting it as necessarily the whole truth, see Kaenel, 2019: 79.

short notice.<sup>202</sup> Even if Caesar's soldiers had managed to do so, a single legion, even at full strength, would have been too thinly stretched to effectively defend the entrenchment against an attacking force of equal size, let alone the vast horde of hundreds of thousands the author describes.<sup>203</sup>

Even the narrative itself appears inconsistent with information given in later chapters. By Caesar's own description (*BG* 1.31), Orgetorix's conspiracy in 60BCE would have coincided with the mass defeat of eastern Gallic forces by Ariovistus and the Germanic occupation of the Sequani. In this situation, neither the downtrodden Sequani nor chastened Aedui would be in much of a position to aid Orgetorix in his quest for autocracy and the proposed alliance would face a serious challenge to their hegemony over Gaul from the Germanic invaders. Caesar, as author, seems to have arranged the text in order to keep Ariovistus conveniently waiting in the wings until Caesar, as protagonist, can heroically deal with him, rather than allow the implications of his regime to touch earlier sections of the work.<sup>204</sup>

---

<sup>202</sup> A point first raised by Napoleon III's surveyors working on the site, who, despite their failings as archaeologists, may be fairly credited for their capacities as military engineers in recognising the tactical implications of a landscape. Napoleon III, 1866: 54. More recent archaeological investigations at Geneva itself have also failed to find evidence to match Caesar's descriptions of fortifications, or even a bridge. Kaenel, 2019: 82.

<sup>203</sup> Thorne, 2007: 32. Omrani, conversely, argues that a full legion (approx. 5,600 soldiers) would have been perfectly capable of holding the Geneva Pass against a larger, but more believably numbered, force, but that Caesar deliberately allowed the Helvetii to leave by another route, allowing him to gather more military resources for himself and engineer a more dramatic, pitched battle for greater political capital. Omrani, 2017: 72.

<sup>204</sup> Kraus notes that the composition of the narrative of Book 1 of the commentaries place Caesar very much in a reactive role (first appearing as a character referred to in the dative case seven chapters in) and argues that this is deliberately contrived to maximise his appearance as a heroic saviour figure. Kraus, 2009: 169.

Is it then possible to reconstruct a more accurate version of events?

One theory for what the Helvetii were actually doing at this time that might have warranted Roman military responses is offered by Delbrück, who argues that they were in fact attempting to liberate their Sequanian allies from Germanic oppression by means of a large-scale military operation.<sup>205</sup> Since Ariovistus, was, at this point, still enjoying his position as *Rex et Amicus Populi Romani*, a position he acquired under Caesar's consulship, it fell to the pro-consular governor of Gallia Transalpina to prevent this attempted attack on an ally. While the basic premise of this theory is sound, it runs into difficulties in explaining how it relates to Caesar's description of events and a lack of real verifiability. Delbrück's suggestion that the planned mass migration was a ruse propagated by the Helvetii themselves in order to disguise their real aim seems somewhat farfetched and overly credulous of Caesar's testimony regarding it.

There are several factors that could explain why Caesar would dishonestly portray the Helvetii's military campaign as a mass exodus. By doing so he could frame the Helvetii as a threat on par with the Cimbri and Teutones in their migratory invasion, especially given the role of the Tigurini during the Cimbric Wars.<sup>206</sup> Viewed in this light, the Senate could do little to fault his military actions against them or reject any requests he made for greater military resources. Furthermore, this later plays into the construction of the

---

<sup>205</sup> Delbrück, 1975: 459-60.

<sup>206</sup> Omrani, 2017: 71.

threat to the Republic posed by Ariovistus and the immigrating Germani, as it gives the writer both a ready example to point to of Gauls being motivated to migrate if pushed from their lands (*BG* 1.31) and the ability to continue the theme with regard to the Germani themselves (1.33).

While the possibility that the Helvetii were attempting to attack Ariovistus and liberate the Sequani in the Spring of 58BCE remains plausible, there are other workable hypotheses. A more prosaic one is that the Helvetii were simply making war on the Aedui, as they had attempted to do two years earlier, perhaps hoping to make themselves hegemon of east-central Gaul or perhaps merely raiding for plunder. In any case, the outbreak of war illustrated the failure of Ariovistus to act as a stabilising agent and prompted Caesar's full commitment of military resources to Gaul.

The fallout of the Helvetian War, whatever its origins, is one that Caesar frames in particularly stark terms. Vast swathes of the population, including almost the entirety of the Tigurini *pagos*, were slaughtered by the legions in a pair of engagements, one at a crossing of the Saône (*BG* 1.12), another in the vicinity of the Aeduan settlement of Bibracte (*BG* 1.26). The shattered survivors of the conflict were ordered by Caesar to resettle their homeland, there acting as a bulwark against the threat of incursions from the Germani (*BG* 1.29). This bloody picture is echoed in the works of later writers, who offer little suggestion that the slaughter and abject defeat of the Helvetii was in any way ameliorated.<sup>207</sup>

---

<sup>207</sup> Pliny the Elder (*NH* 7.92) calculates a staggering casualty rate of over a million souls for Caesar's military campaigns overall (in which the Gallic Wars account



The second major campaign of the Gallic Wars also occurred primarily in the Upper Rhône Basin. Apparently petitioned by Dividiacos of the Aedui, Caesar sent envoys to Ariovistus, demanding that he cease the encroachment of the Germani on Gallic lands and restore all hostages taken from the Aedui and Sequani to freedom (*BG* 1.32-35). At first these demands were indignantly refused, prompting Caesar to set off with his forces towards Ariovistus' position, hoping that a face-to-face meeting might persuade him to see reason. Instead, it provided the opportunity for the warlord to further lambast Roman interference in the region, betray parlay with an attack on Caesar's escort, and imprison the emissary sent as a last resort afterwards (*BG* 1.42-48). The struggle culminated in the Battle of Vosges in which Ariovistus and his army were soundly defeated (*BG* 1.51-54). The Germanic warlord himself is said to have escaped during the general rout, presumably returning to the lands beyond the Rhine, and is heard from no more in the *Commentarii*. With the power of the Germani broken, and the campaigning legions garrisoned among the Sequani, the previous state of Aeduan pre-eminence with Roman backing was seemingly restored.<sup>208</sup>

While lacking the egregiousness of his account of the Helvetian War, Caesar's description of these events cannot be taken at face

---

arguably account for the largest part), interrupting an otherwise encomiastic passage on the historical figure to criticise his bloodstained, arguably genocidal actions. Pitcher, 2009: 268. Both Plutarch's (*Caes.* 15) and Suetonius' (*Jul.* 1.24.3) biographies of Caesar emphasise the sheer, arguably unmatched scale of devastation his Gallic campaigns wrought.

<sup>208</sup> For a comprehensive breakdown of the evidence pertaining to interactions between Caesar and Ariovistus and the complications of the former's rhetorical lens in portraying them see Tarpin, 2013: 671-9.

value. Suspicions should be aroused by the contrast between the general's infallible, patient reasonability and his opponent's brutish obstinacy and repeated treachery.<sup>209</sup> Indeed, the apparent dissonance between Ariovistus' former status as an ally of Rome, complete with senatorial recognition, and his appearance as a megalomaniacal, volatile enemy in Caesar's writings suggest that his behaviour in the *Commentarii* is misrepresented in order to provide better justification for Caesar's war against him.<sup>210</sup> Despite this dubiousness, Caesar's dispatches to the Senate concerning Ariovistus must have been highly persuasive, likely playing up the image of the Germanic menace to its fullest extent, in order to justify the apparent betrayal of an ally.<sup>211</sup> Indeed, this can be observed in the way that Cicero's *De Provinciis Consularibus* (13.32), defending the extension of Caesar's command in Gaul in 56BCE, cites his defeat of the Germani as a key demonstration of the importance of his activities and of his success thus far.

In addition to the wars against the Helvetii and Germani, Caesar's initial foray into central Gaul apparently exposed growing political tensions within the Aedui, which are framed as programmatic for the rest of the region.<sup>212</sup> The struggle here is not merely between differing factions or political persuasions but encapsulated in the rivalry of two brothers for mastery of the state. On the one hand, Divitiacos, the sympathetic, long-suffering ally of Caesar and

---

<sup>209</sup> Vasaly, 2009: 251.

<sup>210</sup> Sherwin-White, 1967: 14. Kraus, 2009: 169.

<sup>211</sup> Osgood, 2009: 339-40. Gardner, 1983: 184.

<sup>212</sup> The notion of binary divisions as a feature of Gallic society and politics appears to have been a favoured thematic motif of Caesar's, serving to underpin an ethnic portrait of volatility and the need for Roman governance. Riggsby, 2006: 63.

defender of Roman interests, and, on the other, the conniving, ambitious demagogue Dubnoreixs (*BG* 1.19-20). This rivalry, and its legacy of the failed Conspiracy of Orgetorixs, manifests during the campaign in the form of subtle acts of sabotage towards the Caesarian war effort on the part of Dubnoreixs and his followers, most notably in delaying delivery of Aeduan grain supplies to the legions (*BG* 1.16) and leading his cavalry detachment to intentionally spark a rout in a skirmish against the Helvetii during Caesar's pursuit (*BG* 1.18). Despite his efforts, the loyalist brother simply lacked sufficient sway amongst the populace to constrain his more influential sibling's followers against their dissident designs (*BG* 1.19). As with the rest of Book 1 of the *Commentarii*, this information cannot be taken at face value, and appears to fit a recurring theme throughout the text, but may nevertheless provide a glimpse at the complexity and issues facing Gallic political structures at the time.<sup>213</sup>

However we interpret the mess of Caesar's testimony regarding the events of that year, by the conclusion of the campaigning season of 58BCE, most of the Upper Rhône Basin was no longer a place of proxy conflicts for the Roman Republic but directly under its dominion.

### 2.3.2 The Revolt of Vercingetorixs c.52BCE

After the defeat of Ariovistus, the Caesarian Gallic Wars did not feature another serious campaign in the Rhône Basin until near their end, when conflict broke out anew in central Gaul. A rapidly

---

<sup>213</sup> Dunham, 1995: 112.

spreading revolt against Caesar and the threat his forces represented to its peoples' independence impinged heavily on those living around the Rhône and Saône. This prompted a return of the Pro-consul's actively campaigning forces.

At the beginning of the seventh book of his commentaries, Caesar introduces the character of Vercingetorix, a young Arvernian nobleman, who, after gathering a force of dependents and dissidents, led a coup amongst his people, and was declared 'King' over them. He proceeded to forge an alliance of Gallic peoples against Caesar and Rome (*BG 7.4*). Caesar's response was characteristically rapid and decisive. After placing garrisons in the lands of several southern Gallic states, including the Volcae Arecomici, he had all his remaining troops drawn from Italy and Transalpina muster in the lands of the Helvii and prepare to attack the Arverni (*BG 7.7*). Vercingetorix initially retreated from battle against the Pro-consul, then sought to weaken the latter's standing among his Gallic allies by striking vulnerable targets amongst them, whilst Caesar attempted to re-occupy the rebel states further north.

Whilst the rebel and Roman forces clashed throughout northern and western Gaul, discord arose among the Aedui, whom Caesar was heavily dependent upon for support and supplies. The renewed troubles apparently derived from a dispute over the exercise of magisterial power and office, not unlike that of Divitiacos and Dubnoreixs some years earlier. However, in this case the conflict was between Convictolitavis, a candidate who claimed the office of \**Vergobretos* having been chosen by the priests ("sacerdotes") in the traditional manner (*BG 7.33*), and Cotos, who had attained the

position in succession from his brother, Valetiacos, breaking several constitutional laws in the process (*BG* 7.32).<sup>214</sup> Eager to return to the more urgent campaign against Vercingetorix, Caesar decided in favour of Convictolitavis and promptly departed.

The new \**Vergobretos*, however, was soon approached by representatives of the Arverni, offering a bribe for his support, and began to reconsider whether the best interests of the Aedui lay with Rome after all (*BG* 7.37). With the aid of a military commander named Litaviccus, Convictolitavis enacted a scheme wherein the Aeduan troops levied by Caesar were told that several of their leaders had been falsely accused of treachery against Rome and put to death. Thereby, they were persuaded to support Vercingetorix and the cause of Gallic liberty instead (*BG* 7.38).<sup>215</sup> Though the scheme was partially foiled, due to the cooperation of two of the nobles falsely reported as dead, Eporedorix and Viridomarus, Litaviccus and those troops personally loyal to him escaped and made for the rebel stronghold of Gergovia (*BG* 7.39-40). Similarly, Convictolitavis, still in power, persuaded the remaining Aedui to acts of violence and plunder against the Roman merchants living in their territory (*BG* 7.42).

With his forces occupied by the ongoing siege of the Arvernian stronghold at Gergovia, Caesar allowed Eporedorix and

---

<sup>214</sup> For a deeper look at the constitutional laws governing candidacy for the office of \**Vergobretos* among the Aedui as Caesar relates them (*BG* 7.32), and their potential significance for understanding Gallic political culture of the time, see Chapter 3.

<sup>215</sup> The thrust of the argument being that continued loyalty in the face of treachery and abuse from Rome was fruitless, and that their interests would be better served by securing of independence under Vercingetorix's leadership. For Caesar's stereotyping of the Gallic obsession with gossip and tendency to rashly act on rumours see Schadee, 2008: 168 and Murphy, 1977: 234-41.

Viridomaros to return to Aeduan lands with their warriors and restore order (*BG* 7.54). However, upon their arrival they discovered that Convictolitavis had not only swayed the majority of the Aeduan nobility to his cause but forged an alliance with Vercingetorix. Faced with such a daunting prospect, the two opted to betray the Romans and join forces with their compatriots. Together, they captured and burned the settlement of Noviodunum, which Caesar had been using as a supply depot for cash, grain, horses, and political hostages for his Gallic campaigns, taking the spoils to Bibracte (*BG* 7.55). This forced Caesar and those troops under his direct command to abandon their siege of Gergovia and head for the friendly regions of southern Gaul, where they might resupply with all speed. News of the Aeduan uprising spread rapidly through Gaul, prompting other peoples to join the swelling rebellion. A general council of Gauls assembled at Bibracte and unanimously approved Vercingetorix as their “*imperator*” (‘commander-in-chief’, *BG* 7.63). Thus, it was in the Rhône Basin of eastern Gaul that the climax of the Gallic Wars began in earnest.

Vercingetorix first had the Aedui and Segusiavi assemble a force and appointed Eporedorix as its commander, sending them south to attack the Allobroges within Gallia Transalpina (*BG* 7.64). This assault on the Roman Province was three pronged, with another army drawn from the Arverni and Gabali sent against the Helvii, and the third drawn from the Ruteni and Cadurci sent against the Volcae Arecomici. This incursion was, however, repelled by a combined Roman, Helvian, and Allobrogan effort (*BG* 7.65-67), forcing Vercingetorix and the rebels to retreat. The fact that the latter two

groups are not only explicitly credited but described as participating of their own initiative (albeit due to circumstances of duress) is noteworthy in its contrast with accounts of the Cimbric Wars and other earlier conflicts. We may simply be benefitting from the greater state of preservation of the *Commentarii* in comparison with the reduction of other historical narratives to epitomes. However, Caesar's specific mention of both Helvian and Allobrogan military responses to rebel aggression from the north (the former resulting in the heroic death of G. Valerius Donnotaurus as leader of the Helvii) is an important reminder of the provincial communities' relative political and military autonomy. Furthermore, the fact that the Allobroges themselves resisted overtures from Vercingetorix to defect (the text citing their troubled history with Roman rule, *BG* 7.64) and defended their borders in praiseworthy fashion ("*cum cura et diligentia*" *BG* 7.65) offers an indication that they made a conscious choice to align with Caesar and act against the rebels (as they had in the Catilinarian Conspiracy) rather than existing in a state of total impotence against the power and control of others.<sup>216</sup>

The grisly end of the Revolt of Vercingetorix, and, arguably, the fight for Gallic independence from Roman domination, came with the Siege of Alésia. The precise location of the settlement, described by Caesar as a hill-top *oppidum* of the Mandubii people (*BG* 7.68-69), has courted a certain amount of academic controversy.<sup>217</sup> The site

---

<sup>216</sup> Caesar also makes specific mention of his use of the site of Vienna as a military camp to gather forces early in 52BCE (*BG* 7.9), implying a perception of Allobrogan territory as safe and thus good relations with its inhabitants. Lucas, 2018: 37-8.

<sup>217</sup> The precise standing and identity of the Mandubii as a community within Gaul is debated. The two predominant suggestions are that they were either a vassal polity of the Aedui or a *pagos* of the same. See Omrani, 2017: 158.

generally favoured, and now crowned with a reconstruction exhibit, was first identified by the archaeological surveys of Emperor Napoleon III, whose unrefined methodology and highly politicised underpinnings have made many of its findings suspect.<sup>218</sup> What is clear, however, is that the siege proved the decisive moment of the revolt, and arguably the entirety of the Gallic Wars. With Vercingetorix trapped, the rebel polities, including the Aedui, Sequani, and even Helvetii, called another general council, summoning vast contingents of reinforcements from every corner of Gaul to serve as a relief force (*BG* 7.75). Despite their efforts, Caesar's legions proved victorious, killing or routing the vast majority of the Gallic troops and forcing Vercingetorix to surrender (*BG* 7.88). Upon this point, Drinkwater hangs one of the key planks of his thesis; that the violent denouement at Alésia resulted in the mass death of members of the Gallic ruling classes opening the way for social mobility from below to fill the resulting vacuum.<sup>219</sup> How far this can be credited, however, is difficult to establish due to Caesar's language being characteristically ambiguous in its brevity. The relevant chapter emphasises that the result of the clash between the relieving Gallic cavalry and heavily dug-in legionaries was both a great slaughter ("*fit magna caedes*") and a rout ("*fugam*"), in which

---

<sup>218</sup> For a survey of criticisms of the Napoleonic identification and excavation of 'Alésia' see Goudineau, 1990: 12-13. Arguments for an alternative site to identified as the ancient settlement and battle site have coalesced around Chaux-des-Crotenay in the Jura, Franche-Comté, as championed by Berthier and Wartelle, 1990. The latter site is argued to better fit Caesar's topographical description in the text, though the evidence of dense coin-hoards from highly varied sources (seemingly reflecting a large, diverse Gallic military garrison) at the former has been a key plank of continuing identification, see Colbert de Beaulieu and Fischer, 1998: 238-40, 311-12, 463-4; Nash, 1987: 34; Allen and Mays, 1995: 92-3; Hostein, 2010: 54; and Cassibry, 2016: 138.

<sup>219</sup> Drinkwater, 1978: 824-5.



the death in battle of Sedulios, leader of the Lemovices, is balanced by the capture of the Arvernian commander Vercassivellaunos as a prisoner of war whilst fleeing, suggesting that while many were killed, many also survived as captives. While the precise fate of those members of the Gallic ruling classes taken alive by Roman forces is impossible to reconstruct in the overwhelming majority of cases, Drinkwater's assumption that it must have either been death or ruin to the point of loss of status seems presumptive.<sup>220</sup> It must, firstly, be contrasted with the recorded treatment of other Gallic communities whose ruling classes were explicitly subjected to policies of extermination in Caesar's accounts (discussed in the section below), and, secondly, with the resultant descriptions of pacification that followed. Had most communities lost the bulk of their ruling classes in a single fell swoop, we might imagine the result to have been one of revolutionary instability and internecine tension rather than of cowed docility.

Flushed with their victory at Alésia, the Roman forces returned to the lands of the Aedui to restore their allegiance, designating the towns of Cabillonum and Matisco, on the Saône, as grain depots, and establishing winter quarters for the main army at Bibracte, while smaller detachments were sent to secure and garrison other areas of Gaul (*BG* 7.90). With the revolt crushed, the lands of the Upper Rhône Basin seemingly returned to a state of submission to Rome, and those of the Lower Rhône were spared any further threat of

---

<sup>220</sup> The main exception being, of course, the fate of Vercingetorix, which is recorded elsewhere (Plut. *Caes.* 27.5; Dio Cass. 43.19.4) as one of imprisonment at Rome before being dramatically put to death as part of the festivities of Caesar's Triumphal celebrations 46BCE.

violence from the north. The interpolated eighth book of the *Commentarii*, penned by Caesar's *legatus* G. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus (Caes. *BG* 8.1-55), describes continuations of conflict localised in the west and north-east of Gaul in the years c.51-50BCE, requiring suppression by legionary forces stationed in those areas. These did not appear to have had much, if any, impact on the Rhône Basin regions, however.

To understand what made the two singular campaigns based in the Upper Rhône region that bracketed the main narrative of Caesar's conquests and their results distinct from those which occurred in other areas, we must engage with a little *comparanda* and examine the other forms of impact the Gallic Wars had upon the region beyond military annexation and suppression of revolt.

### 2.3.3 The Toll of War

Following the defeat of Ariovistus and his Germanic followers, the focus of Caesar's campaigning turned away from the Rhône Basin. Over the following five years, he and his troops would wage war in Belgica in the far north-east of Gaul (*BG* 2.4-33), Armorica (modern Brittany, 3.8-17), and Aquitania (3.20-27), launch expeditions into Germania beyond the Rhine (4.16-19) and to Britain across the sea (4.23-36, 5.12-23), as well see off attempted foreign incursions (4.4-15) and local uprisings (5.26-55, 6.29-44).<sup>221</sup> Although during this time the brunt of conflict was occurring elsewhere, the ongoing

---

<sup>221</sup> For an examination of Caesar's potential motivations for expeditions into Germania and Britannia, or at least the functions he assigns to them in the *Commentarii*, as ventures and their later reception, see Krebs, 2006: 118-29.

Gallic Wars, as they became known, nevertheless had their effects on the peoples of the Rhône region.

In addition to actively campaigning over the eight years of war in Gaul, Caesar's legions also spent periods of time garrisoning sensitive regions or billeted in winter quarters. The imposition of several thousand troops, as well as camp followers, pack mules etc., on the war-torn lands of Gaul would likely have had a considerable impact on local economies and the relationships between Roman soldiers and Gallic civilians.<sup>222</sup> Although from his account, Caesar primarily relied on shipping grain from Mediterranean sources up the Rhône and Saône to keep his troops fed during the Helvetian War of 58BCE (*BG* 1.16), the later campaigns were supplied by a combination of levies of grain taken from the Aedui, Sequani, and some of their neighbours (*BG* 1.37, 1.40, 6.44, 7.16) and of raids undertaken to seize granaries and livestock from enemy communities (*BG* 4.19, 7.32, 7.56). The impact of demands for wheat, barley, and (at least occasionally) beef, upon the agricultural economies of Gaul would have been severe, potentially

---

<sup>222</sup> Assuming an average fighting strength of a Caesarian legion at approx. 5,000, and with the inclusion of accompanying auxiliaries, and the several hundred baggage handlers and muleteers attached to each legion, by 52BCE (with ten legions under Caesar's command) the pro-consul's active, mobile forces could have totalled as much as 75,000, supported by as many as 21,000 animals (horses, mules, donkeys, oxen etc.). The resources required to feed and shelter such vast numbers on the move would have required a gargantuan logistical undertaking. Merrow, von Hassell, and Starace, 2020: 16-17. Following calculations based on Polybius' description of rations assigned to serving Roman troops (6.39) Southern (2006: 220-2) argues that it would require roughly 10 acres of land to produce the standard amount of wheat taken to sustain a legion every day, as well as potentially similar demands of barley production to provide fodder for pack animals and cavalry mounts. As Caesar's campaign forces swelled from four legions at the beginning of 58BCE to ten by 52BCE, even counting unreplenished losses from battle, disease, and other factors, the demand for provisions would have swelled enormously and placed substantial strain on the agricultural capacities of Gaul. For a discussion of logistical issues of the Gallic Wars in terms of transport and infrastructure see Gleason, 2013: 25-39.

necessitating social movements to ensure maintenance of adequate supplies for both occupiers and local civilians. For further examination of this point see Chapter 5.2-3. We must also consider the impact of the taking of *praeda* (loot) following victories over armies and besieged settlements in terms of the stripping of Gallic material wealth both within and beyond the Rhône Basin as another aspect of the changes caused by Caesar's campaigning.<sup>223</sup>

The placement of garrisons and winter quarters is an administrative detail that Caesar's *Commentarii* are relatively scrupulous in recording. Notably, however, the Rhône Basin was largely spared the burden of encamped legionaries during the Gallic Wars, wherein most years saw the soldiers billeted in areas further north. Only on three occasions were legionary garrisons posted to the lands of the Rhône by Caesar. Firstly, in the winter of 58-57BCE, wherein at least two of the four legions were billeted in the lands of the Sequani (*BG* 1.54). This seems to have been following standard procedure for keeping newly pacified land under watch, though the threat of renewed Germanic incursions may have been another factor. Legio XII, singularly, spent the winter of 57-56BCE among the Allobroges after having campaigned to secure the route of the Great St Bernard Pass over the Alps against local Gallic demands of tolls on travellers (*BG* 3.6). Lastly, after the defeat of Vercingetorix in 52BCE, when Caesar had ten legions under his command, he wintered all but five of them in the Rhône Basin, two among the Sequani, and the other four among the Aedui (*BG* 7.90). This concentration of troops is

---

<sup>223</sup> For discussions of the practice of Roman military pillaging see Phang, 2008: 157; and Patterson, 1993: 99.

stated to have been partially motivated by the need to secure key grain stockpiles in the Aeduan settlements of Cabillonum and Matisco, but other factors likely included the desire to help stabilise the delicate political situation there and secure easier access to Italy. The presence of wintering legions would likely have had mixed effects on local Gallic economies. On the one hand, as noted above, the demand for levied grain necessary for the soldiers' rations and their pack animals' fodder is likely to have reduced any surpluses local farmers hoped to sell for profit. Conversely, the presence of substantial numbers of salaried troops in the region constituted a ready market for any goods and services (especially comestibles and entertainment) that were for sale, with a tendency to pay in coin rather than barter.<sup>224</sup>

In addition to considering the more indirect impacts of Caesar's campaigning further afield, examining of his accounts provide useful opportunities for comparison between the experiences of certain Gallic communities and those of others. One of the most striking differences to be observed between the c.58 and c.52BCE campaigns in east central Gaul and those of the intervening years, is his reported scale of destruction in relation to local political structures. Although the Helvetii are stated to have suffered heavy losses from the massacres at the Saône crossing and near Bibracte, theirs is the sole (highly questionable) case of recorded mass violence against Gallic populations in the greater Rhône region. No clear point is made regarding the state of their political organisation

---

<sup>224</sup> To what extent soldiers looking to spend their wages would have interacted with Gallic merchants or colonial Roman ones establishing enclaves in occupied territory is a matter further explored in Chapter 6.

afterward. By contrast, Caesar's records of the devastation wreaked on the populations of the remoter regions of northern Gaul are explicit. Following a crushing defeat at Roman hands, the surviving civilian populace of the Nervii of Belgica complained that their governing 'senatus' ('senate') had been reduced from 600 members to just 3, and their combat-capable population from 60,000 to barely 500 (*BG* 2.28).<sup>225</sup> Regardless of the statistical exaggerations, the inclusion of this assertion (next to which even the slaughter of the Helvetii pales in comparison) indicates that Caesar's account is not hesitant to specify the extent of damage his activities could inflict. An even worse fate is said to have befallen the Veneti of Armorica; with the pro-consul having their entire 'senatus' massacred, and the apparent totality of their adult male populace enslaved (*BG* 3.16). Later, in the campaign of 53BCE, the Eburones of the Rhine Valley lost both of their apparent rulers and, even after heavy pillaging by their neighbours, have every settlement and building in their territory burned by Roman forces (*BG* 6.31-43). The fact that Caesar takes care to establish patterns of utter devastation as a practice against enemies in multiple cases in the *Commentarii* but makes no such clear assertions in the case of the Aedui, Arverni, and other Upper Rhône communities in the wake of Alésia lends credence to the idea that actual casualties among their ruling classes were comparatively limited. Why, exactly, Caesar would make this distinction of treatment is uncertain, but probable factors include the lesser fallout attending the brutalisation of remote and marginal communities than

---

<sup>225</sup> For some of the issues with Caesar's terminology in cases such as this see Arbabe, 2017: 13. A fuller discussion can also be found in Chapter 4. For a survey of archaeological evidence of mass, potentially genocidal, violence from Caesar's forces in north-eastern Gaul in the period see Roymans, 2018: 167-82.

ones closer to the Mediterranean Basin and his greater reliance on the Aedui and Sequani in particular for maintenance of supplies.<sup>226</sup>

Something that goes unmentioned in Caesar's commentaries on his Gallic campaigns, but is referred to in his writings on the civil war that followed them, is that, presumably at some point during his tenure as pro-consular governor of the Gallic provinces, he defeated the Saluvii and assigned "*vectigalia*" (a tax on all imports and exports equating to a twentieth of their value) from their lands to Massalia (BC 1.35). Given that no other historical source mentions a revolt of the Saluvii in the mid-first century BCE, it is difficult to contextualise this assertion fully. However, given that this is mentioned in the same breath as the slightly better evidenced land grants to Massalia by Pompey in the 70sBCE, and given the rather contrived narrative of Book 1 of *De Bello Gallico*, it is possible that Caesar may have put down a minor unrest among the Saluvii very early in his term as Pro-consular governor in 58BCE, prior to the outbreak of the Helvetian War, and followed precedent in enriching Massalia, as an allied state, at the expense of defeated locals in the south east.<sup>227</sup>

The Gallic Wars conducted by Caesar had a significant impact on the Rhône Basin and its peoples in a number of crucial ways.

Perhaps the most notable was the forceful pacification of the region: in putting an end to the Aeduan-Sequanian struggle over the Saône,

---

<sup>226</sup> For a potentially relevant observation that Caesar appears to reserve most of his cases of negative stereotyping on the basis of 'Gallic' ethnicity for groups away from the east central region of the Upper Rhône Basin (e.g., the Belgae and Armorici) see Gardner, 1983: 185-6.

<sup>227</sup> For an analysis of Caesar's testimony and references to the earlier Pompeian land confiscations mentioned in Cic. *Font.* 6.14, see Christol, 1999: 5-6. See also Christol and Goudineau, 1987: 88.

heavily reducing the military strength of the Helvetii, and imposing strict treaty obligations against the resumption of violence by the conquered, the pro-consul would have greatly reduced both the threat and opportunities of warfare across the region. Although opportunities for war against each other may have been curtailed as a result of Caesar's conquest, due to shifts in the internal politics of the Roman world, the Gauls would soon have many opponents further afield if they fought in service of their subjugator.

#### 2.4 Pawns and Powerbrokers – The Rhône Basin in the Age of the Roman Civil Wars c.50-30BCE

For most of the two decades following Caesar's victory over the varied forces of Gallia Comata, the Mediterranean Basin was subjected to a series of large scale, brutal civil wars between opposing factions of the Roman Republic. The first round of conflict saw Caesar and his supporters clash with those accusing him of tyranny and claiming to fight for the traditional constitution of the state, initially led by his former ally Pompey and later various members of the *nobiles* senatorial clique. Following Caesar's securing of power at Rome 46BCE (marked by an unusually lavish celebration of multiple triumphs including one marking his victories in Gaul) and his assassination by conspirators in 44BCE, renewed incidents of war broke between splintering parties of Caesarians, 'Liberators', and other opportunists, culminating in a clash between Caesar's former *legatus* Mark Antony and adopted son Octavian (later to become Augustus) for sole control of the Roman world c.32-



31BCE.<sup>228</sup> The impacts of these conflicts on the Rhône Basin were largely indirect, involving resources and individuals derived from it participating in events elsewhere, but were no less significant for that. Gaul had forcibly become part of the Roman world at a time when that world erupted into internecine warfare in which the resources of annexed territories and the contested loyalties of subject populations were flashpoints. For those from the Rhône Basin who had successfully survived and navigated the wars of conquest, the roles they would play in these new wars would shape their position in the imperial order of things to come.

While most of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey was fought elsewhere, one act of the conflict had a major impact on the Lower Rhône Valley: the Siege of Massalia 49BCE. Though initially claiming neutrality in the conflict, the city was persuaded to bar its gates to Caesar, enlisting the Albici as allies against him. Caesar's own version of events, related in his commentaries on the civil war, emphasises the treachery of the Massalians and manipulation of the situation by Pompeian forces (*BC* 1.34). He states that, before his flight from Rome, Pompey had sent home all Massalians with reminders of the favours he had previously lavished on their city, helping to draw them to his side. Furthermore, L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, consul and senatorially appointed governor of the Gallic provinces for that year, had taken refuge in Massalia after an

---

<sup>228</sup> For a highly detailed, prosopographic breakdown of the Roman Civil Wars from the assassination of Caesar onwards and the resulting collapse of the Republic see Syme, 1939. For more recent, concise accounts see Mackay (2009), Richardson (2012), and Alston (2015). Primary sources for the era include Caesar's own later *Commentarii* (*De Bellum Civile*, *Bellum Alexandrianum*, *Bellum Africanum*, and *Bellum Hispanicum*), as well as Appian's *Civil Wars*, Dio Cassius Books 41-50, and Summaries of Livy 109-134.

initial defeat at Caesar's hands at Corfinium, and was given charge of the war effort there.<sup>229</sup>

While he did supervise the initial stages of the siege, including ordering the rapid construction of a fleet of twelve warships at Arelate to blockade the city's access to the sea, Caesar left command of the operation to his *legatus* G. Trebonius before departing to attack Pompeian forces occupying Hispania (*BC* 1.36). In due course, after a naval blockade and landward siege of several months, Massalia fell. Thanks, supposedly, to Caesar's notorious magnanimity to defeated foes, neither the city itself nor its population suffered extensive damage following its surrender. Two of the three legions who had participated in the operation were left behind as a garrison (*BC* 2.22).<sup>230</sup> In addition to this humiliating defeat, Massalia's economic and political influence in the region appears to have lessened considerably. Land previously rendered to the city-state for rent/taxation in the surrounding area was confiscated, either for the *deductio* of the *colonia* of Arelate formerly founded by Caesar in 45BCE or returned to the control of local Gallic communities (presumably reversing earlier Caesarian and Pompeian grants of Saluvian, Helvian, or Vocontian territory).

While this would be the only formal act of warfare in the Roman Civil Wars of c.50-30BCE to take place in the vicinity of the Rhône, the conflicts nevertheless had an indirect impact on the region

---

<sup>229</sup> Ebel, 1976: 85-6. For Domitius appointment as governor of Gaul see Caes. *BC* 1.6. Later historians, such as Cassius Dio (41.19-21), tended to offer accounts more sympathetic to the Massaliot cause, lending further weight to the notion of propagandistic bias on Caesar's part.

<sup>230</sup> Frustratingly, in contrast to several other passages of the commentaries, Caesar does not identify which of his legions were deployed in this context.

through the participation of locally raised auxiliary soldiers. Caesar made heavy use of Gallic troops throughout his campaigns against Pompey and the dissident elements of the Senate, raising a full 22 cohorts of them during an initial levy at the outbreak of war in 49BCE (*BC* 1.6), of which a substantial number are likely to have been drawn from peoples such as the Allobroges and Aedui. While the fuller implications of this phenomenon are discussed in Chapter 4, for now it is worth observing two points regarding it. Firstly, that the previous nine years of warfare across the region had not resulted in sufficient devastation of all areas of Gaul to render it unable to produce substantial numbers of active military personnel. Secondly, that, while a certain amount of duress may be suspected in the relationship between conqueror and conquered, the peoples of Gaul do not appear to have made any attempt to reject Caesar's authority in favour of his opponents in the Roman Senate (such as the 'rightful' governor of the province Domitius Ahenobarbus) or negotiate some form of neutrality (as the Massaliots had). We should be careful in our assumptions of how much knowledge members of the various Gallic ruling classes had of the internecine conflicts of Roman politics, and thus how much informed agency they may have had in relation to the outbreak of civil war. Nonetheless, those polities who answered Caesar's call for troops did so in the belief that it was either their best or only option; their loyalties lay with Caesar the warlord and his party, rather than with the Senate and People of Rome itself.

Following Caesar's assassination in 44BCE, control of Gaul was frequently argued over and transferred from one of Caesar's former

allies to another. According to surviving records of the assassinated dictator's will, the province of Transalpina (into which Gallia Comata was now folded) was originally allotted to M. Aemilius Lepidus (Dio Cass. 43.51.7, App. *B Civ.* 3.30), along with Hispania Citerior, for the year 43BCE.<sup>231</sup> This was, however, initially opposed by Antony and by the resident sitting governor L. Munatius Plancus. A rare, almost blow-by-blow account of Plancus' manoeuvrings while leading the provincial armies of Gaul in 43BCE, reacting to developments in Italy and attempting to fend off encroachments on the region from both Antony and Lepidus' forces, comes to us from correspondence between the governor and Cicero, in the latter's attempts to keep abreast of developments from Rome (*Fam.* 10.9, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, and 23). While armies passed through the region, Gaul appears to have successfully avoided becoming a theatre of full-scale conflict during the wars of the Second Triumvirate, which were instead largely fought in Italy, Greece, and the eastern Mediterranean.

The relationships forged between Gallic soldiers from the Rhône Basin (as well as their home communities) and Roman commanders over the transition from Republic to Principate would have greatly aided in solidifying the former's allegiance to the Roman state. Similarly, the combination of soldiers' rewards for their efforts, in campaign pay and acquired booty, and the relative respite from conflict after the devastation of the Gallic Wars would have been stimuli to the reconstruction and gradual transformation of the

---

<sup>231</sup> *Fasti Capitolini/Inscriptiones Italianum* 13.1.58-9, Richardson, 2012: 15. Alston, 2015: 127. During Caesar's time as *dictator* of Rome, Lepidus had held the position of *magister equitum* (roughly equivalent to second-in-command).

Rhône Basin into developed, integrated provincial territory of the Roman Empire.

## 2.5 Restoration and Reconstruction? – The Provincial Rhône Basin in the Early Augustan Era c.30-10BCE

The conclusion of the Civil Wars of the late first century BCE left the Roman world irrevocably changed. Although official changes to the constitution were limited, the victory of Octavian over Antony at the naval Battle of Actium in 31BCE had left him the sole military power and de facto ruler of the Republic. Over the next two decades, as the newly redubbed *princeps* Augustus, his regime would see sweeping changes to the administration of the provinces of the Roman state including Gaul and the Rhône Basin.<sup>232</sup>

### 2.5.1 The Augustan Revolution

At the settlement reached with the Senate regarding the constitutional powers of the Princeps, and the supposed 'Restoration of the Republic' in 28BCE, Gaul in its entirety was allotted to Augustus' remit.<sup>233</sup> The sheer vastness of the conglomerated entity of former provincial Transalpina and the newly provincialised Comata prompted a reorganisation of the territory to simplify its administration. North-eastern, central/north-western, and south-western Gaul were split between the novel provincial units of Belgica, Lugdunensis, and Aquitania respectively. This move resulted in the driving of a metaphorical wedge through lands of the Upper Rhône, with the Saône acting as a boundary between Gallia

---

<sup>232</sup> For the use of the title '*princeps*' by Augustus and its significance see Syme, 1939: 311-12; Glinister, 2006: 24; and Baraz, 2018: 45-53.

<sup>233</sup> Richardson, 2012: 87. Alston, 2015: 235.

Belgica and Lugdunensis. Especially given that the divisions made by Augustus differ sharply from those sketched by Caesar in his description of a tripartite Gaul (*BG* 1.1), it is likely that this approach had at least some motivation in the management of local political relationships, ensuring the separation of the Sequani and Helvetii from the Aedui (in turn separated from the Arverni in Aquitania) into distinct jurisdictions to discourage either conflict or the possibility of a revived anti-Roman alliance in the vein of Vercingetorix's coalition.<sup>234</sup> Other more mundane factors, notably aiming for a relative balance between the three new provinces in terms of territory and population, almost certainly would have played a role in the reform.<sup>235</sup> However, whatever motivations we may ascribe to the decision (lacking any account of its promulgation), the division of Gallia Comata that emerged demonstrates a colonialist vision of Gaul that placed far greater emphasis on provincial administration as an apparatus of control and resource extraction for the wider Roman Empire than on any relationship it might have to the cultures and political frameworks of the indigenous populations.<sup>236</sup>

The former province of Gallia Transalpina was renamed Narbonensis (after the long-standing *colonia* of Narbo Martius) and

---

<sup>234</sup> Drinkwater, 1983: 94.

<sup>235</sup> Caesar's definition of 'Aquitania', consisting of those lands between the Garonne and Pyrenees, would have made for a very small, thinly populated provincial unit of administration, and his 'Belgica', while larger and more densely inhabited, would nevertheless be heavily overshadowed in terms of size, population, and wealth by a province based on his description of 'Gallia Celtica'.

<sup>236</sup> Johnston 2017 et al. have made strong cases for local expressions of cultural/ethnic distinction within Roman Aquitania between groups of Aquitani proper and Gallic communities, such as the Bituriges, who were only 'Aquitani' by artificial affiliation. For a further examination of the material pertaining to this argument, and issues of ethno-cultural identity in the Gallic world more generally, see Chapter 4.1.

was returned to senatorial control in 20BCE (Dio Cass. 54.4.1), having been deemed sufficiently pacified that it no longer required the military supervision of the princeps.<sup>237</sup> For 38 years, since Caesar had first taken it up as part of his pro-consular provincial mandate, the prior system of pro-praetorian or pro-consular governors drawn from various senatorial factions and families holding office for between one and three years had been suspended. In its place had come a succession of generals, exercising varying degrees of real and theoretical control over the area, and predominantly doing so from a distance. This shift in administrative practices, among several other factors, likely altered the relationship between the local populace and the Roman state in a significant way, de-emphasising connections with the Senate as an institution in favour of links with the ruling dynasty and its allies. For the newly organised 'Tres Galliae' ('three Gauls') of former Gallia Comata, including the Upper Rhône Basin, however, the earlier Republican approach to provincial governorship was never implemented. These lands would remain firmly under the aegis of the Princeps, and the military institutions over which he presided, throughout the Augustan Era and beyond.

Under the reforms of Augustus, the peoples of Gaul were formally, politically reorganised into subject *civitates* of varying legal status. Under this system, several of the people groups mentioned by Caesar appear to have vanished, perhaps conglomerated with their

---

<sup>237</sup> Richardson, 2012: 115. Drinkwater presents the conventional view that the combination of Caesarian favour shown to its communities during the Gallic Wars and the foundation of multiple *coloniae* within it during the late first century BCE marked the point of its true pacification and integration into the Roman world proper. Drinkwater, 1983: 17-18.

neighbours into larger administrative units. While this may have been a matter of governmental convenience, it could also reflect the significant devastation and population loss entailed by the Gallic Wars, with whole *pagi* or nations decimated or even wiped out.<sup>238</sup> The Mandubii, whose *oppidum* of Alésia was the site of the bloody, climactic siege, are an example of a disappearing Gallic people group in the Rhône Basin. The exact nature of the Gallic *civitas* as a political and legal entity remains a matter of much debate, discussed further in Chapter 3.1.

The political integration of the Rhône Basin into a part of the Roman Empire was thus the result of changes within the Roman political system itself and its treatment of conquered territory, rather than an extension of policies previously employed elsewhere. By 10BCE, the region was still in the grip of ongoing cultural, economic, and political metamorphoses, but had already changed substantially from its position at the first advent of Roman conquest over a century beforehand.

## 3 Rule of Law? - Political Power

### 3.1 Defining Political Power

Political power, following Mann's IEMP model, can be defined as the capacity of lawmakers to affect the lives of those under their jurisdiction, largely in the vein of bureaucratic administrations. Given the nature of the evidence investigated in this chapter, and its limitations, we may offer a slightly looser definition to better reflect the concerns of this thesis. The political aspect of power within a

---

<sup>238</sup> Omrani, 2017: 158.



community is closely tied to law and civil administration, and cleaves well to Mann's emphasis on the ruling class's ability to "organisationally outflank" those they dominate, but should not be predicated on the notion of bureaucratic organs of governance in the style of modern industrial and post-industrial states.<sup>239</sup> Oral codes of law, their juridical enforcement and legislative revision, should be treated with no less validity as technologies of social power than those committed to the written word and archival records. Furthermore, this sphere of power is not limited to those endowed with rule, as kings, governors, or magistrates, but also includes the possibilities of wielding influence as a form of indirect control and participation in mass politics through elections or demonstrations. The technologies of social power investigated in this chapter are those which entail the capacity of a ruling class to maintain their position against rivals and dissidents through means of enforceable laws, social customs, and public policies.<sup>240</sup> In terms of the Gramscian dyad of dominion and hegemony, we can view political power as encompassing both the hard power of inflicting carceral violence or outlawry and the soft power of consensus manufacture and influence building.

The relationship between political power and social status is arguably one of the most crucial for understanding communal hierarchy, due to the former's ubiquity in everyday life, but are not necessarily synonymous. As noted, individuals of high political standing might have limitations on the military power they could, and

---

<sup>239</sup> Mann, 1986: 7.

<sup>240</sup> Excluding, for now, those areas which can be tied specifically to the realm of 'religion' in terms of ritual, spirituality, and theology.

vice versa. Similarly, wealth could potentially secure great influence but be insufficient to guarantee access to the political process itself. In an age long before the essays of Montesquieu and Tocqueville, the notion of a separation of aspects of political power by institutional competence is a largely foreign one. As such, there would appear to be little distinction between juridical, legislative, and executive forms of political power in the context of the second to first century BCE Rhône Basin. The tasks of drafting laws and enforcing them appear to have fallen largely to the same offices. There will, however, be a distinction drawn between political power in the sense of civic administration and military power. The reasons for this approach are as follows. Firstly, as should become clearer over the course of the thesis, there appears to be evidence that military and civil affairs were considered distinct spheres of influence in the society of Late Iron Age Rhône Gaul. Secondly, with the advent of Roman domination and provincialisation, matters of military activity and local civic administration were treated in very distinct as part of the new regime.

Facing the characteristic limitations and lacunae of the canon of evidence available to us in textual, archaeological, and iconographic formats, solid and definitive conclusions are likely to be few. The focus instead is on marking out the range of potentially viable hypotheses and denoting those areas on which there is little ground to productively pontificate.

This chapter divides its subject into four main topic areas. Firstly, in keeping with the importance of the territoriality of jurisdictions as a component of political power, we will examine the evidence for how

the Rhône Basin Gallic communities enumerated in Appendix 1 were politically constituted and, potentially, sub-divided into smaller administrative units. The second topic area examines the constitutional forms that these political communities took, especially regarding the often equivocal or conflicting evidence pointing to systems of monarchy or of oligarchy on the part of groups such as the Arverni and Saluvii. The third section analyses evidence of political office-holding among said groups, both in terms of the structural power that such offices may have wielded and the cultural norms that governed the accessibility of such offices to potential candidates. The fourth and final topic area of this chapter examines the impact of Roman conquest on the three preceding areas in terms of the imposition of provincial structures of administration and their relationship (or lack thereof) with local political systems. Overall, this may give us a better idea about how the structuring of political power in these societies, over the late second and first centuries BCE, engendered social hierarchies, and how rigid or flexible such hierarchies in the face of disruption.

### 3.2 Ethnic/National Identity and State-building

To properly consider and analyse how political power and influence factored into the social hierarchies of Rhône Gallic peoples in the late second and first centuries BCE, it is important to have some understanding of what frameworks they used for the state as a political institution and ethnic/group identities as bases for political communities. This section is not intended as a comprehensive or definitive examination of Late Iron Age Gallic ethno-political identity,

even for the Rhône Basin alone, but is necessary to the purposes of the thesis' wider analyses.

### 3.2.1 *Nationes, Gentes, and Pagi*

One of the most basic challenges in understanding and reconstructing Gallic political organisation is the question of what constituted a polity in the context of Late Iron Age Western Europe. Lacking anything by way of indigenous textual sources describing how they organised themselves, we are forced to rely on accounts by Roman and Greek authors, with all the issues entailed therein, and attempts to map information onto, and sometimes against, the landscape of material evidence.

One of the problems faced in attempting to utilise textual sources for this topic is the lack of clarity and consistency in the terminology used by Mediterranean writers in describing the communities of Gaul. Groups are variously labelled '*civitates*', '*nationes*', '*gentes*', or '*ἔθνη*' depending on language, text, writer, or circumstances of description.<sup>241</sup> In addition to the general lack of strict ethnographic discipline in ancient writings, this fluidity of vocabulary may relate to rhetorical needs for stereotyping Othered populations, with words of varying connotation employed tactically to engender responses from readers rather than typify fact-based categories.<sup>242</sup> While, by the Imperial period, the ethnopolitical units of Gaul were generally referred to as *civitates*, if the definition of a *civitas* attributed to

---

<sup>241</sup> Although the plurality of Latin terms make their varying connotations of usage difficult to pin down, the stricter Greek usage of '*ἔθνη*', with contrasting uses of '*πολις*' only to describe settlements (somewhat analogously to the Latin usage of '*oppidum*'), suggests a clear connotation of rustic primitivism in contrast with the ideal of Aristotelian urbanism. Arbabe, 2017: 9-10.

<sup>242</sup> See Riggsby, 2006: 58 and Schadee, 2008: 159.

Augustan Era scholar Verrius Flaccus by Aulus Gellius (NA 18.7.5) is one that would have been understood and applied throughout the Latin-speaking world, it makes for an uncomfortable fit for dealing with the pre- and immediate post-conquest periods.<sup>243</sup> The major issue with the term and concept lies in its assumptions of urbanism, or at least urban-centrism, in terms of political community, which simply did not hold true of the La Tène World's greater spatial diversity and dispersal in settlement patterns.<sup>244</sup> Regardless of what terms external observers applied to them, between the descriptions they offered and interpretations of the material evidence of settlement distribution, it would appear that Gallic political communities were by no means small or parochial but were complex societies with tens or hundreds of thousands of members and

---

<sup>243</sup> *“Misit autem paulo post Favorino librum quem promiserat – Verri, opinor, Flacci erat – in quo scripta ad hoc genus quaestionis pertinentia haec fuerunt: “senatum” dici et pro loco et pro hominibus, “civitatem” et pro loco et oppido et pro iure quoque omnium et pro hominum multitudine, “tribus” quoque et “decurias” dici et pro loco et pro iure et pro hominibus...” / “But a little later Domitius sent Favorinus the book which he had promised—I think it was one by Verrius Flaccus—in which the following was written with regard to questions of that kind: that senatus (senate) was used both of a place and of persons; civitas (state) of a situation and a town, also of the rights of a community, and of a body of men; further that tribus (tribes) and decuriae (decuries) designated places, privileges and persons,”. Fichtl, 2004: 7.*

<sup>244</sup> Debate around to what extent late second/early first century BCE Gallic society could be considered ‘proto-urban’ is a feature of a good deal of literature on the topic. For favourable voices to the idea of Late Iron Age Gallic ‘Proto-Urbanism’ see Jones, 1987: 47, and Buchsenschutz, 2007: 423-8. Alternatively, Woolf argues that, while grander in scale, *oppida* seem to have little differentiation in social function from earlier settlement types and cannot be compared to Mediterranean urban centres as undisputed centres of all aspects of life. Woolf, 1998: 111.

swathes of territory larger in scale than the majority of contemporary Greek ‘*πολεις*’ or Italian ‘*urbes*’.<sup>245</sup>

In the face of the available evidence, two primary competing theories have emerged as to how to characterise Late Iron Age Gallic social structure.

The first theory is sometimes referred to as the ‘segmentary model’ and is often credited to Roymans as an original source.<sup>246</sup> Based primarily on the ethnographic excursuses contained within Caesar’s *De Bello Gallico*, it envisions a framework of tiered units of social organisation in ascending orders of magnitude existing in relation to each other, maintaining ties and conflicts across transverse lines.<sup>247</sup> Utilising predominantly Latin terminology, the segmentary model sees four main levels of organisation, in ascending order; the *domus* (household), the *familia* (extended family or ‘clan’), the *pagos* (‘canton’ or regional polity), and the *civitas* (state or polity). This tiered model of social organisation would suggest a considerably hierarchical and possibly stratified

---

<sup>245</sup> Primary sources on the matter include Diodorus (*Lib. Hist.* 5.25.1), Strabo (*Geog.* 4.1.11, 4.2.3, 4.3.3, 4.4.3), and Caesar (*BG* 1.29). See also Fernández-Götz, 2014: 58, Arbabe, 2017: 9-10, Fichtl, 2004: 65, and Kaenel, 2019: 79.

<sup>246</sup> Roymans, 1990: 16-18.

<sup>247</sup> “*In Gallia non solum in omnibus civitatibus atque in omnibus pagis partibusque, sed paene etiam in singulis domibus factions sunt, earumque factionum principes sunt qui summam auctoritatem eorum iudicio habere existimantur, quorum ad arbitrium iudiciumque summa omnium rerum consiliorumque redeat.*”/“*In Gaul there are factions not only in all the states, and in all the cantons and their divisions, but almost in each family, and of these factions those are the leaders who are considered according to their judgment to possess the greatest influence, upon whose will and determination the management of all affairs and measures depends.*” Caes. *BG* 6.11. Verger, 2009: 62.

society, with multiple ascending layers of power and leadership over differing units.

The alternative model, largely promulgated as a criticism of the first one, can be labelled the 'chiefdom model'. Whereas the segmentary model rests on the interrelationship of differing units of social identity, the 'chiefdom model' foregrounds interpersonal relations with tensions between centripetal forces of charismatic leadership (i.e. that of 'chiefs') and centrifugal forces of disparate personal interests.<sup>248</sup> Under this schema, socio-political units functioned as extensions of interpersonal networks of power and influence, defaulting to a state of relative equilibrium between over-expansion and dissolution. In the view of scholars such as Crumley and Brun, this 'chiefdom' model was, by the late second/early first centuries BCE, evolving into a stabler, more complex form of 'state' organisation with the rise of specialised, interdependent sectors of craft specialisation and stratified class relationships eroding the fluidity on which the equilibrium of chiefdoms relied.<sup>249</sup>

Both models present promising evidence and problematic flaws. On the one hand, Quintela's main criticisms of Roymans hold water: evidence for concrete social units below the level of the *pagos* is slim to non-existent, being based on a single Caesarian aside (*BG* 6.11) whose function is more likely that of an exaggerated rhetorical device than an exhaustive statement of fact.<sup>250</sup> On the other, the

---

<sup>248</sup> Quintela, 2012: 457-9.

<sup>249</sup> Brun, 1995: 20 and Crumley, 1995: 27-8. For the anthropological framework backing this notion see Earle, 1991: 4.

<sup>250</sup> Caesar's comment is that the factionalism he observes as a feature of Gallic society is found not only in every polity and subdivision thereof, but even within households themselves ("*non solum in omnibus civitatibus atque in omnibus pagis partibusque, sed paene etiam in singulis dominibus factiones sunt*" *BG* 6.11). This

'chiefdom' model not only imports many of the methodological issues with Crumley's approach to the subject matter generally and relies on a teleological framework of social development, but also presents a rather misleading view of the available evidence.<sup>251</sup> As this and the two following chapters of this thesis will demonstrate, charismatic leadership and affiliation were important features of Gallic society and the power of the ruling classes thereof. However, these took the form of factional allegiances existing transverse to other social units and power structures (à la Verger) rather than the foundations of social organisation from which other aspects diverged.

The best convergence of evidence and theory that can currently be constructed is that both polities (at the *civitas* level) and *pagi* existed as real and meaningful units of social organisation in Late Iron Age Gaul, existing independently of 'chiefdoms', with the former mostly functioning as confederations of the latter (rather than *pagi* as devolutions of larger polities).<sup>252</sup> As Roymans observed, regional variation in the relationship between the two levels of social organisation is very likely to have existed, with more northerly (and/or Belgic) polities possibly being organised on looser bases to the benefit of *pagi*, while groups such as the Aedui further south appear to have had a stronger tendency toward centralisation.<sup>253</sup>

---

cleaves strongly to the author's favoured stereotype of the Gauls (i.e. a people too mercurial to be left ungoverned) and smacks of comedic effect (i.e. the Gauls cannot even rely on their families to maintain a unified front).

<sup>251</sup> For criticisms of the 'chiefdom' model as a tool for anthropological and archaeological categorisation see Yoffee, 2005: 23-37.

<sup>252</sup> A point on which Quintela, Fernández-Götz et al. find themselves in agreement. Quintela, 2012: 450, Fernández-Götz, 2013: 12-13.

<sup>253</sup> Roymans, 1990: 27.



Furthermore, while it can well be imagined that Late Iron Age Gallic societies had complex conceptions of familial and/or household groupings, we can currently only speculate as to what those might be and how they related to matters of politics outside of a few specific instances.

The nature of the *pagos* as a unit of social organisation remains elusive. One theory holds that *pagi* were communities based on ties of fictive kinship to a distant, possibly mythological ancestor. A point of evidence in favour of this notion is that of the very few *pagi* with attested names, two contain the particle ‘-gen(us)’, specifically the Verbigeni and Toygeni subdivisions of the Helvetii, suggesting common descent from a singular figure, a social construction that may have had similarities with the *gentes* of Rome.<sup>254</sup> A difficulty faced in terms of understanding the interaction of Roman and Gallic cultural registers with regard to *pagi* and their relationship with ancestry is the uncertainty of reconstructing how well each context’s understanding of ‘family’ and related concepts aligned with that of the other. Lewuillon’s investigation into the matter turns up several potentially significant points. For example, Caesar never uses the common Latin term ‘*gens*’ in reference to Gallic familial and ethno-political structures, which may suggest that in his interactions he never observed a viable equivalent or anything that reasonably fit the expected connotations.<sup>255</sup> A possibility on this front is that, while Gallic *pagi* and Latin *gentes* may have had similar origins (as

---

<sup>254</sup> Fernandez-Götz, 2013: 15. For further examination of possible evidence of cultic ancestor veneration and its potential role in Gallic culture see Häussler, 2010: 200-227.

<sup>255</sup> Lewuillon, 1990: 315.

descent-groups based on largely fictive ties to legendary or mythological progenitors) they ultimately played very different roles in their respective societies at the time, with the latter functioning in the vein of semi-dynastic extended families and the former as geopolitical units for which the Roman system had no direct analogue. Furthermore, a key difference perhaps more pertinent to discussions of status and mobility lay in the fact that Roman *gentes* were groupings of individuals of at least comparable, if not necessarily equal, status, while *pagi* could be considered inclusive of almost all levels of society, from elite to masses.<sup>256</sup>

We should not assume that across the various regions and people-groups of the Rhône Basin that all units of social organisation were of a similar size and character. For example, while the Helvetii are described as consisting of four *pagi*, the Saluvii are described as being comprised of ten constituent groups (Strab. *Geog.* 4.1.3). Reports of ethnic groups known as the Tricorii and Petrocorii (deriving from the Gaulish terms for ‘three’ and ‘four’ respectively combined with *\*corios* meaning ‘troop/warband’), likely representing federations of three and four *pagi* respectively, can also be taken as an indicator that the *pagos* was the basic unit of social organisation.<sup>257</sup> Accounts pertaining to the Tigurini and, arguably, Rauraci could support a theory, promulgated by Peyre and Goudineau, would appear to support this theory, with the larger entities that would become *civitates* originating as confederations of

---

<sup>256</sup> Morley, 2006: 304.

<sup>257</sup> Quintel, 2012: 450. The Petrocorii lived somewhere in the region between the Loire and Garonne seemingly west of the lands of the Arverni (Strabo *Geog.* 4.2.2). The Tricorii, meanwhile, are described as dwelling on the south-eastern coast of Gaul (Plin. *NH* 3.5).

autonomous *pagi*.<sup>258</sup> If we follow Kaenel's model, in interpreting Caesar's population figures for the Helvetii c.58BCE (*BG* 1.29) as internally consistent and roughly accurate, and assume a roughly equal share of population and associated settlements between *pagi*, we reach a rough estimate of 3 *oppida*, 99 *vici* ('villages'), and 990 *aedificia* ('farms/homesteads') or approximately 65,000 individuals per *pagos*.<sup>259</sup> This would accord well with Diodorus' description (*Lib.Hist.* 5.25.1) of Gallic "ἔθνη" generally being between 50,000 and 200,000 strong in terms of adult males, and Strabo's comments on the relatively dense population of Gaul on the whole (*Geog.* 4.1.1, 4.4.2). The Helvetii, and their constituent *pagi*, may have been unusually large in their numerical composition, and it is probable that the subdivisions of groups such as the Saluvii may have been smaller and/or more irregular in relation to one another. While the purported population statistics can be debated, it is clear that these were comprehensively large population units, covering multiple settlements and substantial swathes of land, rather than small communities.<sup>260</sup> The Late Iron Age Rhône was not limited to 'face-to-face' societies and as such the gulfs of status and lived experience

---

<sup>258</sup> Fernandez-Götz, 2013: 12-13. This approach is largely based on textual accounts which appear to suggest that the Tigurini may have previously acted as a military and/or political entity distinct from the Helvetii *in toto* during the late second century BCE resulting in the 107BCE Battle of Burdigala, as discussed in Chapter 2.1.3.

<sup>259</sup> Kaenel, 2019: 79. That the *pagi* of the Helvetii were of similar size to each other is argued for by Caesar's comment (*BG* 1.12) that the primarily Tigurini forces met by Caesar waiting to cross the Saône constituted a quarter of the total number.

<sup>260</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1.6.11, attempting to generate viable population statistics for ancient societies, even far more extensively sourced ones like Late Republican Roman Italy, faces a bewildering array of methodological obstacles, and so is not engaged in here. See de Ligt, 2012: 9-19.

between the ruling elite and the common masses were potentially vast.

By the first century BCE at least, it would appear that a greater degree of centralisation was developing amongst powerful groups such as the Aedui, though this perception may be chalked up to Caesar's solely discussing in terms of an apparently singular, unitary political entity with any constituent *pagi* going unmentioned throughout his writings.<sup>261</sup> A possible reason for the apparent decline in the significance of *pagi*, moving towards their eventual disappearance in the Imperial period, is a potential shift in the underpinnings of Gallic social structure in the late second/early first century BCE. Crumley theorises an earlier stage of social development in which kinship was the primary basis for status and interpersonal relationships (aligning well with the notion that *pagi* reflected notions of extended fictive kinship), which was superseded by the significance of patron-client relations in the Late Iron Age, which allowed for greater emphasis on the overarching, confederated polity (sometimes referred to as a *civitas*) as the primary unit of political organisation.<sup>262</sup>

Although seemingly predicated on population groupings based on fictive kinship ties, both *pagi* and Gallic confederal polities nonetheless appear to have had a strong territorial aspect to their organisation. Caesar makes liberal use of the term '*finis*' ('limits/borders') to describe the relationship between Gallic groups and the lands they inhabited and controlled, suggesting clearly

---

<sup>261</sup> Fichtl, 2004: 17-18.

<sup>262</sup> Crumley, 1974: 76-7.

defined units of space governed by differing regimes rather than vague spheres of influence.<sup>263</sup> Similarly, accounts of treaties between regimes ceding territory to one another in defined ways (most notably the fallout of the Battle of Magetobriga in which the Sequani were obliged to render a third of their lands to Ariovistus, *BG* 1.31 and 6.12) suggests the presence of a system of territorial organisation that would make land division and transfer a viable procedure.<sup>264</sup> Archaeological surveys of sites of habitation across Gaul have also pointed to complex networks of spatial organisation and hierarchy between settlements, with a diversity of sites from humble farmsteads to monumental *oppida* mutually reinforcing each other.<sup>265</sup> Although we have too little information to reconstruct exact boundary lines and territorial areas for the known polities of Late Iron Age, and it should be noted that these boundaries were subject to changes over time, but we can reasonably assume that they existed, and thus regulated aspects of political power (and status in relation to it).<sup>266</sup>

### 3.2.3 Provincialisation and Development of Gallo-Roman

#### *Civitates*

As noted in the previous chapter, the Augustan territorial reorganisation of Gaul saw the Rhône Basin and its environs divided

---

<sup>263</sup> Examples include *BG* 1.2-12 (repeated usage), 2.15, 3.20, 4.10, 5.46, 6.42-4, 7.7, and 8.6. See Fichtl, 2004: 31.

<sup>264</sup> Lewuillon, 1975: 432. Some other historically recorded incidents of political land transfers in the Rhône Basin are discussed in Chapter 2, while evidence of Gallic approaches to land tenure (and attendant resources) is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>265</sup> Cowley, Fernandez-Götz, Romankiewicz, and Wendling, 2019: 14.

<sup>266</sup> One archaeological issue with reconstructing Gallic geopolitical units is that it cannot be assumed that sites representing socio-political centres of gravity (e.g. *oppida*) functioned as spatial centres of territorial extent.

amongst all four emergent provinces. This division appears to have paid little to no attention to the ethno-cultural boundaries noted by both Caesar and Strabo, most notably in the stark discrepancy between their definition of Aquitania and the much more expansive namesake province created under the new regime. The exact reasoning behind this approach on the part of the imperial administration is unknown but appears to have predicated largely on political expedience. A theory favoured by Drinkwater is that agents of the Princeps sought to separate the potential power blocks of the Aedui, Arverni, and Sequani (as well as the Helvetii) under different gubernatorial regimes and maintain the split between the older 'Province' and former Gallia Comata.<sup>267</sup> It is highly unlikely, however, that this provoked changes in how the members of those groups saw themselves, that the Arverni would think themselves transformed into Aquitani or the Sequani into Belgae as a result of the reorganisation. It is notable that both Strabo and Pliny the Elder, describing the geography of Gaul in the early and late first century CE respectively, note the Augustan division of the '*Tres Galliae*' provinces but tend to adhere to the older Caesarian division of peoples along cultural lines in their accounts, with the former particularly opining on the artificiality of the administrative groupings (Strab. *Geog.* 4.1.1).<sup>268</sup> The precise level of continuity of Gallic socio-political units in the *longue durée* (from Early Iron Age to Late

---

<sup>267</sup> Drinkwater, 1983: 94.

<sup>268</sup> Strabo makes it clear that while the administrative boundaries place the Sequani and Helvetii in Belgica (*Geog.* 4.3.1), they culturally and geographically belong with the other peoples of Gallia Celtica/Lugdunensis. Pliny the Elder does list *civitates* by their official provinces but opens his description of temperate Gaul by employing the Caesarian schema of cultural divisions by river systems (with the Belgae between the Scheldt and Seine, the Celtae between the Seine and Garonne, and the Aquitani between the Garonne and Pyrenees, *NH* 4.31).

Antiquity at the most generous potential count) remains a matter of much debate. However, Lewis' notion that Gallic polities remained a relatively unchanging core aspect of local socio-political organisation from the coming of Caesar to that of Clovis may be a little over-optimistic.<sup>269</sup>

With the rise of the formal *civitates* as legally defined groups under Roman *fides*, though, it appears that certain previously attested local groups vanished from the map. There are at least two possible explanations for this phenomenon. One of the most notable examples of the trend is the apparent disappearance of the Mandubii of the northern Saône Valley, which may have been a result of the devastating losses of population and infrastructure they suffered from the Siege of Alésia (their *oppidum*), forcing their assimilation into a larger ethno-political unit. An alternative explanation or possible factor, if the Mandubii are more correctly to be viewed as a *pagos* of the Aedui or a neighbouring group, is that the reformation process into provincial *civitates* increasingly erased the autonomy and distinct identity of *pagi* as political units.<sup>270</sup> A contributing factor in this process likely lay in the fact that the emergent *civitates* of conquered Gaul owed their legal existence to the *foedi* ('treaties') made between them and Roman forces at the point of military defeat, a process which made no distinctions between *pagi* and the larger confederations into which they were organised, and likely crystallised formerly ad-hoc political units into

---

<sup>269</sup> Lewis, 2000: 71-2. For a map of Gallic *civitates* as they are thought to have existed under the Roman Empire see Fig. 7.

<sup>270</sup> Fichtl, 2004: 18.

relatively permanent ones.<sup>271</sup> The geo-political landscape of the Rhône Basin thus underwent significant changes as a result of the new legal regime dominating it.

Differences emerging between descriptions of the peoples of Gaul between the works of Strabo and Pliny the Elder may have value as potential guides to the changes in the geopolitical landscape between the immediate post-conquest period and the later first century CE.<sup>272</sup> Thollard theorises that the disparity between them is indicative of an intermediary phase, wherein the organisation of Gallic polities was altered by the initial waves of colonial foundations and grants of Latin rights to specific settlements and/or communities in the region, a notion supported by Pliny's framing of the description around enumeration of the *coloniae* and bearers of the *ius Latii* rather than on ethnic groups themselves.<sup>273</sup> These somewhat piecemeal changes in the legal standing of those living in the Rhône Basin would likely have prompted the reorientation of administrative divisions around specific sites which would serve as 'central places' of greater significance than before. It is difficult to ascertain to what extent, if any, pre-conquest Rhône Gallic groups practiced a concept analogous to citizenship as Roman or Greek authors would understand it.<sup>274</sup> The closest indication available for potential

---

<sup>271</sup> Lafon, 2009: 290.

<sup>272</sup> Pliny's account of the geography of Gallia Narbonensis (*NH* 3.5) offers a bewildering array of ethnonyms in reference to the Lower Rhône and its tributaries, many without clear antecedents in earlier literature such as the Avatici, Anatilii, Dexivates, Segovallauni, Vulgientes, and Memini. Thollard, 2009: 83. See Table 1 for further details.

<sup>273</sup> Thollard, 2009: 84-5.

<sup>274</sup> For more on the Latin concept of '*civitas*' in relation to the activity of being a '*cives*' in the Late Republic see Morley, 2006: 308-9, Yakobson, 2006: 390-3; Deniaux, 2006: 415-16; and Rhodes, 2013: 67-8. For a similar discussion of



disparities of legal status and/or privileges between Gallic groups in a Late Iron Age context comes from Caesar's description of resettling the survivors of the migratory Boii on Aeduan lands in 58BCE, mandating that they be given "*parem iuris libertatisque*" ('equal rights and liberties' *BG* 1.28) with the local populace. That such an order was worth noting would suggest that the Aeduan legal system was capable of distinguishing between full members of the polity and outsiders who could be disadvantaged. Even if a similar situation did not hold true amongst other polities, the proximity of the province of Gallia Transalpina, in which the differing legal status of *peregrini* and Roman citizens was a common fact of life, and interaction with enfranchised Gallic individuals employed by Roman officials as envoys, aids, and translators would likely have meant that Roman citizenship in a provincial was something with which they had at least a passing familiarity prior to its fuller imposition further north.<sup>275</sup> The changes in legal status per residence location as a result of the Triumviral and Augustan Reforms would likely have marked a shift in the exact orientation and arrangement of the pre-existing spatial networks of Rhône Gallic communities, rather than a wholesale replacement of them. The urbanisation process saw elites previously dispersed in their domiciles across swathes of territory gather into coalesced urban communities (e.g., Augustodunum for the Aedui), bringing with them many of their

---

Classical and Hellenistic concepts of '*πολιτεία*' see Mitchell, 2006: 369-71 and Rhodes, 2013: 60-1.

<sup>275</sup> Examples of enfranchised Gauls acting as go-betweens for Roman employers include C. Valerius Procillus of the Helvii (Caes. *BG* 1.19) and the father of the historian Pompeius Trogus of the Vocontii (Just. *Ep.*43.11). Both are discussed further in Chapters 3.4.2 and 4.4.2.

followers and supporters.<sup>276</sup> Greater disruptions were likely caused as a result of the foundation of citizen *coloniae* such as Arelate and Arausio, since they involved the deduction of land and the imposition of a new, non-native community on the landscape.<sup>277</sup>

Overall, the shift from Late Iron Age polities to provincial *civitates* would likely have prompted significant changes in the ways in which social status, mobility, and stratification were conceived and practiced in Rhône Gallic society, both amongst themselves but perhaps especially in communicating those concepts to ethnic outsiders (such as Roman colonists or government representatives). However, by 10BCE, this process was still for the most part in its infancy, with more clearer signs of transformation emerging after the turn of the millennium.

---

<sup>276</sup> Drinkwater, 1985: 51. Woolf, 1998: 113-15.

<sup>277</sup> The centuriations of deducted land at Arausio, or at least their later reforms and redistributions, are recorded epigraphically (*AE* 1986, 00475). For further analysis of the phenomenon see Campbell, 1996: 81-2.

Table 1: Comparison of Strabonic and Plinian Descriptions of the peoples and settlements of the Rhône Basin.

	<b>People Groups</b>	<b>Coloniae</b>	<b>Oppida Latina</b>	<b>Oppida Ignobilia</b>
<b>Strabo</b>	Sequani, Helvetii, Aedui, Segusiavi (Lugdunensis), Arverni, Mandubii (Aquitania), Sallyes/Salluvii , Cavari/Cavare s, Vocontii, Tricorii, Iconii, Medulii, Allobroges, Volcae Arecomici	Lugdunum	Nemausus	24 attached to Nemausus
<b>Pliny the Elder</b>	Sequani, Helvetii (Belgica), Aedui, Boii, Secusiani (Lugdunensis), Arverni	Iulia Equestris, Augusta Raurica, Lugdunum , Arelate, Arausio,	Aquae Sextiae (Salluvii), Avennio (Cavares), Apta Iulia (Vulgientes)	43 in Narbonensi s (19 of which are tied to Nemausus)

(Aquitania), Anatili, Dexivates, Cavares, Tricorii, Vocontii, Segovellauni, Allobroges, Saluvii, Vulgientes, Helvii, Memini, Libii, Arecomici, Vocontii (Narbonensis).	Valentia, Vienna.	, Alba (Helvii), Cabellio, Carpentorat e (Memini), Forum Voconi, Glanum (Libii), Nemausus (Arecomici), Vasio and Lucas Augusti (Vocontii).	
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

### 3.3 Political Organisation

Having investigated the nature of the political units and communities into which the peoples of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin organised themselves in relation to each, we now turn to the meatier subject of the internal divisions and

stratifications of Gallic populations of the time.

#### 3.3.1 Class and Social Organisation

To understand the complexities of political power and influence therein it is necessary to examine frameworks of broader social organisation. To what extent and on what bases did the Gauls of the second and first centuries Rhône Basin divide themselves by social class? How much influence could those outside of the elite wield over political processes?

As we have previously noted, societies across north-western Europe had been organised along inegalitarian lines of class division

for centuries (if not millennia) before the Late Iron Age.<sup>278</sup> However, the conceptual shape that such divisions would give to social organisation remain a source of speculation and debate. It is increasingly (and wisely) agreed upon that a straightforward pyramidal concept of hierarchy, with an extremely narrow, enclosed ruling class dominating gradually widening strata of lower echelons, does not align well with the available evidence for Late La Tène communities.

Funerary archaeology, often a strong indicator of hierarchical distinctions between individuals and social groups, offers little clear evidence of a small ruling class far removed from the masses.<sup>279</sup> The predominant funerary ritual format across most of southern Gaul during the later Iron Age was one of 'token burial', in which a small portion of the deceased's ashes were interred after cremation, a practice that did not particularly lend itself to varying displays of prestige versus humility.<sup>280</sup> Burial complexes containing grave goods are more common further north, but are not particularly marked by exteriors designed for prestige display, and whose contents are largely subject to interpretation in terms of class distinctions rather than lending obvious answers.<sup>281</sup> Large, ornate tombs seemingly designed for living audiences were a trend that only emerged in Gaul (the Rhône Basin specifically) in the later first century BCE with the advent of Roman colonisation and responses thereto.<sup>282</sup>

---

<sup>278</sup> Fernández-Götz, 2014: 17.

<sup>279</sup> Fernández-Götz, 2014: 183.

<sup>280</sup> Häussler, 2010: 209.

<sup>281</sup> Pleiner, 1993: 58-9, Poux, 2004: 155 and 223-5, Pernet, 2010: 139-41. All cases explored in greater detail in succeeding chapters of this thesis.

<sup>282</sup> Gros, 1986: 74-6. Roth-Congès, 1993: 390.

A concept whose relevance to this area has been particularly championed by Crumley is that of heterarchy. However, the exact meaning of the term and its application to the world of Late Iron Age Gaul is less clear cut. Crumley herself has tended to argue for it as reflecting a decentralised dispersal of power through multiple networked sites rather than a singular concentration.<sup>283</sup> Although an important rebuke to assumptions of hierarchy grounded in teleological evolutionist attitudes to past societies, the specific model favoured by Crumley relies too heavily on a speculative framework for the Iron Age Gallic economy and its impact on social relations. A reformulation of 'heterarchy' as representing not the absence of hierarchy but its multiplicity within society, with several metaphorical ladders dividing the populace by strata on slightly differing bases and creating a composite rather than homogenous ruling class offers a more apposite and useful approach.<sup>284</sup> Fernández-Götz argues for rejecting the pyramid in favour of a rectangular or trapezoidal model of visualising class divisions in Iron Age Gallic social organisations, with a relatively broad ruling class resting on an even broader base of mass support, with the gulf between them relatively small (though not necessarily particularly permeable) gulf of separation between them.<sup>285</sup> Based on the available evidence such a model would appear to be the best suited for conceptualising the communities we are dealing with.<sup>286</sup> This aligns better with the suggestion, as per Chapter 1.7.2, that the ruling classes of Late Iron

---

<sup>283</sup> Crumley, 1995: 28.

<sup>284</sup> Yoffee, 2005: 34-5.

<sup>285</sup> Fernández-Götz, 2014: 35-6.

<sup>286</sup> For a contrasting visualisation of pyramidal and trapezoidal models of social organisation see Fig. 8.

Age Gaul functioned more in the manner of 'autonomous elites' than 'inner' ones.

The question then remains, on what basis were the ruling classes of late second/first century BCE communities like the Aedui or Allobroges distinguished from those they held power over? What qualities did they appear to possess in superiority to those they ruled? Issues of wealth, military power, and certain aspects of self-representation are reserved for the following chapters of this thesis.

One option the suggests itself is that Gallic ruling classes were defined, at least in part, by their ancestry. As noted with theories relating to the organisation of *pagi* as social units, kinship, whether real or fictive, was seemingly a fundamental organising principle in Iron Age Gallic societies. On this basis, certain lineages seem to have been imbued with a concept of nobility that separated their members from others in terms of social respect and proximity to power. Given the limited available material from funerary archaeology, most of the evidence for this suggestion derives from Greek and Latin textual sources.

In a surviving fragment Appian's work (*Emb.* 4.12), the historian describes an encounter between the consul Gn. Domitius Ahenobarbus and an envoy of Bituitos (here incorrectly identified as ruler of the Allobroges, rather than the Arverni) during the conflict of c.123BCE. Accompanying the embassy were musicians singing panegyrically of three qualities possessed by both the king and his unnamed representative: in addition to their courage/prowess ('ἀνδρεία') and wealth ('περιουσία'), the first quality noted was their ancestry ('γένος'). Alongside Appian's references to the importance

of ancestry in Gallic society, the appearance of a 'noble' caste of Gauls is a consistent trait across most ethnographic literature dealing with the region. Diodorus (*Lib. Hist.* 5.27.3) speaks of Gallic "εὐγενεῖς" (lit. 'those of good/high birth'), who can be recognised by their distinctive grooming practices.<sup>287</sup> Caesar's writings refer to aristocratic lineage and attendant 'nobility' in a few, potentially significant, ways. The Latin terms '*nobiles*' and '*nobilitas*', referring to individuals of noble blood and the concept or collective are used in multiple occasions throughout the work.<sup>288</sup> Uniquely, though, the superlative form of the related adjective, '*nobilis*' is only used in relation to the Helvetii (of whom Orgetorix is "*longe nobilissimus*", *BG* 1.2, and whose diplomatic legation to Caesar is composed of other "*nobilissimos*" individuals, *BG* 1.7).<sup>289</sup> The use of this term is potentially deceptive, however, due to its nuanced connotations in the Latin usage of the Late Republic. Etymologically, the adjective '*nobilis*' is thought to have originally indicated renown, celebrity, or high repute, and became a byword for the Roman aristocracy, from their prizing such qualities. By the mid-first century BCE, however, particularly in Ciceronian usage, the term '*nobiles*' had become a reference to a social group within the Roman elite who sought to use their ancestral pedigree of illustrious office-holders in favour of their own careerism to the exclusion of '*novi homines*' (those without senatorial forebears).<sup>290</sup> Given these complications it is difficult to be

---

<sup>287</sup> Shaven cheeks and chin complemented by a luxuriantly broad and bushy moustache. Between this description and the similar appearance of the 'Ludovisi Gaul' Roman statue, this has become something a standard means of depicting of Iron Age Gauls from nineteenth century historical illustrations to the works of Goscinny and Uderzo.

<sup>288</sup> Instances occur at: *BG* 1.2, 1.7, 1.31, 7.38.

<sup>289</sup> Barlow, 1998: 141.

<sup>290</sup> Rosenstein, 2006: 377.



certain if Caesar's intended meaning was that Orgetorix and his fellow conspirators are individuals of the highest renown and reputation among the Helvetii or that they constituted a lineage-based elite. An alternate approach employed by the pro-consul is to describe Gallic individuals in terms of their birth and/or family, examples including the Aeduans Litaviccus ("*amplissima familia*", BG 7.37), Eporedorix ("*summo loco natus*" and "*summae domi potentiae*" BG 7.39), and Cotos ("*antiquissima familia*" BG 7.32). Others have the 'noble' quality of their ancestry implied by stating their descent from figures of high status, such as Casticos (whose father was 'rex' of the Sequani, BG 1.3) and Vercingetorix (whose father was considered the most preeminent man in Gaul and whose paternal uncle was a man of high status amongst the Arverni, BG 7.4). The streak of Caesarian evidence for the importance of family connections in Gallic power politics is also marked by an emphasis on dynastic intermarriage as a means of securing influence and position, with Dubnoreix seemingly the example *par excellence* in his prestigious marital ties to Orgetorix through his wife (BG 1.3) and to influential men among the Bituriges and other states through his mother and sisters (BG 1.18).<sup>291</sup>

These tendencies also suggest that the dominant lineages of varying polities recognised each other as members of same social bracket (i.e., the ruling class). In addition to the evidence for the role played by familial connections of ancestry and dynastic marriage, there is a fair degree of source material pointing to Gallic

---

<sup>291</sup> For further consideration of the roles played by dynastic marriage in Gallic politics and society see Crumley, 1974: 24; Lewuillon, 1990: 312-13; and Fichtl, 2014: 173.

conceptions of personal status not only in relation to local communities but on a broader inter-polity basis, both in the upper and lower regions of the Rhône Basin. Cicero identifies one of the key prosecution witnesses in the case against Fonteius as one Indutiomaros, not only a leader of the Allobroges but “*ceterorumque Gallorum*” (‘and of the rest of the Gauls’ Cic. *Font.* 21.47). Caesar’s *Commentarii* offer mentions of Gallic individuals known for their pre-eminence not only among their own peoples but recognised across Gaul as a whole, though mostly as historical rather than contemporary figures.<sup>292</sup> First century BCE Gallic society, it would seem, understood the status of its members in a much broader and more nuanced context than merely their perceived ranking amongst their own clan, *pagos*, or even polity. This was not a world of isolated, parochial backwaters suddenly confronted by the increasingly globalised reach of Rome, but one of great self-awareness and far-ranging connections.

The notion of a hereditary nobility among Iron Age Gallic groups, at least in the Lower Rhône region, can also potentially be interpreted in archaeological and artistic remains with the posthumous treatment of skulls at sanctuary sites such as Entremont, Roquepertuse, and Grezan indicating the veneration of noble ancestors.<sup>293</sup> However, without further verification this approach could slide into circularity.

---

<sup>292</sup> Examples include Celtillos, deceased father of Vercingetorix, among the Arverni (Caes. *BG* 7.4) and Divitiacos of the Suessiones (Caes. *BG* 2.4).

<sup>293</sup> Häußler, 2010: 207, and 2008: 19. See also Armit, 2012: 102-3.

Since both Latin and Greek-speaking external observers appear to have been able to discern and comment upon the role of descent-based distinctions of class amongst the Gauls, separating families of aristocratic status from others, we can theorise that it was a key aspect of ruling class ideology in those communities. However, taken in line with the other evidence and interpretations marshalled above, it would be wise to interpret this Gallic nobility not as a small, isolated component of the demography but as a substantial minority within the population overall.

The testimony of even our most abundant Mediterranean textual sources is far from clear-cut on the identity and demography of the Gallic ruling classes. One of the many areas of frustrating ambiguity in Caesar's writings is his use of the term '*princeps*' and derivations thereof (e.g., the abstract noun '*principatus*'). The term, as of course later used by Augustus in the context of Roman politics, carries connotations of pre-eminence amongst a collegiate group (if not precisely '*primus inter pares*').<sup>294</sup> In contrast to certain other words which he is perhaps more precise, this one is used for a variety of situations, whose precise indications are vague, seemingly as something of a placeholder rather than delve into the underlying complexities of Gallic politics.<sup>295</sup> The most common usage of the plural '*principes*' appears to function as a general reference to the social elite of Gallic communities, who exist in contrast with the masses (referred to primarily as '*plebes*' but otherwise as

---

<sup>294</sup> On the use and development of the title to refer to Augustus and his successors, see Syme, 1939: 311-12.

<sup>295</sup> To illustrate, '*princeps/principatus*' is used to cover everything from indicating the lead spokesperson of a diplomatic delegation (*BG* 1.13) to alluding to being in a position of highest influence and respect in all of Gaul (*BG* 7.4).

'*multitudines*' or similar).<sup>296</sup> The former term can, therefore, be used as a means of referring collectively to the ruling class of the Rhône Gallic peoples as they existed in the early to mid-first century BCE. While it does not appear to be the case that '*nobiles*' and '*principes*' can be considered synonymous in Caesar's writings, there are few indications that individuals not of noble lineage could secure positions of high status and power. The sole instance in which someone is explicitly described as originating from a humble background ("*humili loco*" BG 7.39) is that of Viridomaros, a young Aeduan cavalry commander and peer of Eporedorix, whose rise to "*summam dignitatem*" is stated to have occurred as a result of patronage from both Dividiacos (primarily) and Caesar (secondarily) in exchange for his services to them.<sup>297</sup> This could indicate some room for meritocratic status advancements in first century BCE Aeduan society, but rather than offering gifted, industrious individuals the chance to advance on their own initiative, their status was gained as a direct result of their relationships with other, pre-established elites.

A further problem with reconstructing the demography and ideology of Late Iron Age Gallic ruling classes created by Caesar's writings is the ambiguity introduced by his ethnographic excursus in Book 6 on the general construction of Gallic society. This excursus makes rather sweeping, generalised assertions, introduces terminology that

---

<sup>296</sup> '*Princeps*' or '*Principes*' utilised in this context: BG 1.16, 1.19, 1.31, 2.14, 5.3, 5.41, 6.8, 6.11-12, 7.1, 7.4, 7.32, 7.38-9, 7.64, 7.65, 7.75. Lafon, 2009: 298.

Contrasting references to the masses: BG 1.3, 1.17, 2.14, 5.3, 6.13.

<sup>297</sup> Dividiacos is recorded to have earlier acted in a similarly patronal capacity for his brother Dubnoreix, before the latter's power came to rival or even eclipse his own (BG 1.20).

is used nowhere else in the text, and has certain discrepancies with similar ethnographic accounts produced by Greek authors like Diodorus and Strabo that invite analysis, comment, and debate. Separate from his general tendency to make simple distinctions between Gallic elites (*'principes/nobiles'*) and masses (*'plebes/multitudines'*), in *BG* 6.13-15 Caesar instead introduces a tripartite social organisation in which the common populace are separated from two distinct high-status groups; the *'druides'* and *'equites'*.

While this thesis does not focus much on the *'druides'* as a group due to their primarily religious significance, it is worth noting some key specifics of their societal role and relation to other groups as described by Caesar and other ancient authors. This is also, however, a task complicated by frequently equivocal testimony from the ancients and certain tendencies towards unhelpful romanticism or analogization by more modern commentators.<sup>298</sup> As Caesar (*BG* 6.14), Strabo (*Geog.* 4.4.4), and Diodorus (*Lib. Hist.* 5.31.3) all concur, the Gallic druids are an institutional group whose membership is defined by initiation and training rather than ancestry (though they tend to prefer recruits of noble birth). Caesar's ambiguous, possibly contradictory, picture of the *druides* has invited contrasting interpretations. On the one hand, Crumley holds that if the *druides* represent the dominant ruling class then it would follow that most, if not all, of the named potentates appearing in Caesar's narrative (including Dividiacus and his brother Dubnoreixs) must be

---

<sup>298</sup> Examples of unhelpfully anachronistic approaches are more common in earlier scholarship but can still be found in more recent works. These include Piggott 1968: 32-3; de la Bédoyere 2003: 56; and Delaney 1986: 94-5.

members of it, and that the assertion that the *druides* are largely non-participatory in war in contrast to the more militant *equites* must be mistaken.<sup>299</sup> On the other, it may be observed on close reading that Caesar does not necessarily state that the Druids cannot or do not engage in warfare, only that they are exempt from compulsory service and, in the author's vague terms, tend not to participate. Similarly, although the *druides* are accorded great influence in legal matters, diplomacy, and public decision making, the only solid indication of an overlap between them and the ruling class of '*principes*' comes from identification of Divitiacos of the Aedui as a druid (the only such individual in the extant historical record) in a separate and largely unrelated text (Cic. *Div.* 1.90). One instance does not a pattern make. There is no reason to assume that Divitiacos' status as a druid either indicates that his brother Dubnoreixs should be considered one or that it was common for druids to hold political offices.<sup>300</sup>

It should also be noted that Caesar offers no direct indication as to relative weighting of the *equites* and *druides* as social groups in either number or status. As regards their introduction in the *Commentarii* (BG 6.13), though their identification with the term '*genus*' is often translated as 'class', its Latin usage is fundamentally

---

<sup>299</sup> Crumley, 1974: 18.

<sup>300</sup> The interlocutor of the text (Cicero's brother Quintus) identifies Divitiacos of the Aedui, a personal acquaintance of the author, as a druid in the context of his status as a practitioner of the art of divination. This comment acts as an exemplum that divination is accepted and valued even amongst barbarian peoples, but there is no guarantee that the identification is correct in the first place: see Jiménez, 1996: 147.

generic in Latin, and can be taken to indicate a 'kind of individuals' rather than a social class in a Marxist or similar sense. The specific characteristics associated with the druids (religious officiation, institutionalised knowledge etc.) go largely unmentioned in other parts of the text, while those associated with the equites (military command and factional leadership) are both well represented in the *Commentarii* generally and seemingly supported by other sources (textual, archaeological, and iconographic). On this basis, we may hypothesise that the former represented a small but distinct minority group within the broader demography of Gallic ruling classes. Thus, if we are to give Caesar's model of social organisation from Book 6 of the *Commentarii* any credit in our interpretation, it may be better assumed that the majority of Gallic '*principes*' fit his categorisation of '*equites*' rather than '*druides*'.

Having dealt with the confusions raised by Caesar's description of Gallic ruling classes taking two forms as best we can, it is time to return to the arguably more pertinent and intriguing aspect of his ethnographic excursus: the apparently stark division in social status between elites and masses. He asserts that the Gallic masses have little more status than slaves (*BG* 6.13).<sup>301</sup> As with the rest of the section discussed above, there are reasons to doubt or at least nuance this assertion. Crumley firmly argues that Caesar's ethnographic sketch of Gallic social structure is inaccurate, relying largely on archaeological evidence for more complex levels of

---

<sup>301</sup> If Caesar's description here was dependent on now lost aspects of Posidonius' writings, it is possible that it may be more reflective of the lands immediately surrounding Massalia in the wake of the conquest of the Saluvii than it was of Gallia Comata some decades later.

internal stratification than a yawning gulf between elite and masses.<sup>302</sup> Her main support for this claim is the extrapolation that the rise of *oppida* and other densely populated nucleated or networked settlements would have necessitated the development of local bureaucracies, staffed by educated non-elite individuals, to manage the gatherings of artisans, merchants, and farmers.<sup>303</sup> While that suggestion remains open to further examination, the records of funerary archaeology and other related areas discussed above do pour a certain amount of cold water on Caesar's assertion. Furthermore, treatments of the Gallic lower classes by Latin and Greek writers (near universally of elite extraction themselves) very likely obscure whatever distinctions amongst those groups may have existed. The Gaulish loanword '\**ambactos*' (Latinised as '*ambactus*') is a prime source of debate on this point. Caesar's use is characteristically vague, pairing it with '*clientes*' (*BG* 6.15) in definition of subordination to the power of Gallic *equites*, seeming to portray them as servants, cronies, and essentially slaves of the elites upon whom he focusses. Similarly, a note in Paul. Fest. 4.20 Lindsay (going back to either Festus' text of the second century BCE or to Verrius' Augustan original) includes a quotation from Ennius (*Ann.* 610 Skutsch), claiming to identify '*ambactus*' as the Gaulish word for '*servus*' ('slave') further suggesting low social status for those to whom it applied. Enright has theorised, not unreasonably, however, that such terms could well have marked subtler and more complex distinctions of rank and gradations of legal status than a

---

<sup>302</sup> Crumley, 1974: 75-6.

<sup>303</sup> Crumley, 1974: 47.



binary model of 'free' and 'slave'.<sup>304</sup> Further, given the fact it later give rise to the French and English terms for the relatively high status positions of 'ambassador', if we read Caesar's assertion of the adherence of '*ambacti*' itself being a source of power and status for Gallic elites (especially on the model of client retinues explored further in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis), we may hypothesise that the position of '\**ambactos*' within Gallic society was one of subordination but relative privilege amongst the lower classes, acting as the personal attendant/retainer of a member of the *principes*.

Evidence for the possible roles played by the general populace outside the ruling classes in the politics of Late Iron Age Gallic societies is explored at greater length in section 3.3.3.

In the meantime, we can summarise that the communities of Late Iron Age Gaul, especially those located beyond the boundaries of the province of Gallia Transalpina in the early first century BCE, were dominated by a relatively broad, numerous ruling class (members of which recognised themselves and each other at a level that transcended localised affiliations) that maintained a level of internal diversity rather than homogeneity but was at least partly predicated on notions of familial nobility in its distinction from the lower echelons of society.

---

<sup>304</sup> Enright, 1996: 204.

### 3.3.2 Monarchy, Oligarchy, and Constitutionality in Late Iron Age Gaul

In terms of applying both Mann's and Gramsci's ideas of the political power of the ruling class to the communities of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin, one crucial question that arises is in what format they wielded it. To whom, precisely, was political power given and what, if any, limitations, checks, or balances, *de facto* or *de jure*, did they face? The limited available evidence raises far more questions and speculations than definitive answers on this topic. However, arguably the most significant question for our purposes is that of constitutionality: were the Gallic polities of the region in the late second and first centuries BCE monarchies (in which power was invested in the ruling individual) or republics (with power shared between multiple members of the community)? Did some polities belong to one category and some to the other, and might their constitutions have changed over time? Analysing what we can about this topic should give us a great deal of useful material in considering the composition of Gallic ruling classes as they faced Roman imperialism and to what extent they fostered stratification or mobility in access to power and status.

The reconstruction of the political transformations of Gallic polities on a textual basis derives from a synthesis of fragments of information contained in the extant canon of Classical historiography and ethnography. Texts which identify or describe Gallic monarchies include Livy, Diodorus, Appian, Plutarch, and even, to a certain extent, Polybius. Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, in both its surviving sections and those remaining only in epitomes, provide several

explicit references to Gallic kingship in the broad timeframe of the seventh to second centuries BCE, including the hegemonic regime of King Ambigatos of the Bituriges (5.34). Bituitos, though mistakenly identified as a ruler of the Allobroges, is also vibrantly described in fragments of Appian's *Embassies* (12.1). Polybius, in discussing both the third century BCE Cisalpine Gauls of northern Italy and their allies from Gaul proper describes them as being led by kings (Polyb. *Hist.* 2.22, 2.28, 2.31), specifically identifying Concolitanos and Aneroëstos as kings of the Gaesatae, a highly mercenary warrior people living near the Rhône, in the context of the conflict of 225BCE.<sup>305</sup> Diodorus delves little into the political structure of the Gauls but does describe a legendary or even mythological king among them, in the form of Galates, son of Herakles, and his unnamed maternal grandfather, using the explicit term *βασίλεια* ('kingship' Diod. *Lib. Hist.* 5.24) to refer to their power over the region in the very distant past.<sup>306</sup>

Two fundamental problems we face in using the testimony of Caesar and other Latin writers as evidence for Late Iron Age Gallic political structures lie in the somewhat impoverished vocabulary of the Latin language for foreign institutions and the complexities of Late Republican Roman rhetoric. The terms *'rex'* (most literally 'king') and *'regnum'* ('kingship/kingdom') are employed with little, if any, discrimination to describe a wide array of connotatively different

---

<sup>305</sup> On interpretations of Polybius' accounts of Gallic political organisation see Williams, 2001: 80, and Jensen, 2018: 136-8.

<sup>306</sup> This, however, is another instance of Diodorus' approach of slapping a very thin, Hellenocentric veneer onto the very different cultural thought-world of Gaul rather than likely reflective of any genuine Gallic traditions, a point further explored in Chapter 6.3 of this thesis.

phenomena.<sup>307</sup> Most significantly for our discussion, these terms were utilised for both monarchies in the Aristotelian constitutional sense (describing kings with socially legitimised power and position e.g., Cic. *Rep.* 1.44-6) and for non-constitutional tyrants and autocrats, in the latter case being a frequent feature of polemical discourse within the Republic.<sup>308</sup> Cicero (*Off.* 3.40) and Livy (2.1.9-2.2.6) portray Roman antipathy to monarchy, and the perception of republicanism as antithetical to it, as deep-rooted, being part of L. Junius Brutus' formulation of the new constitution to attach the opprobrium of the deposed Tarquinius' vices not only to his name and dynasty but to the words '*rex*', '*regnum*' and '*regnare*' (the verb 'to reign') themselves.<sup>309</sup> By contrast, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, providing a Greek perspective on Roman history during the early Augustan Principate, argued that between memories of the Regal period and the Republican office of 'dictator', Aristotelian constitutional monarchy was a well-regarded component of Roman political culture until the abuses of Marius and Sulla soured public perceptions of terminology relating to the concept (*Rom. Ant.* 5.77). The volatility of evolving Roman perceptions of kingship as a concept and perceived relationships between foreign monarchies and the Republic during the mid-first century BCE complicate

---

<sup>307</sup> Notably contrasting with the distinction in Greek between '*βασιλεία*' ('kingship' in the legitimised, positive sense) and '*τυρρανεία*' ('tyranny'). Glinister, 2006: 24. For Ancient Greek categorisations of constitution in political theory and their application to historiography and ethnography see Arist. *Pol.* 2.1265b-1266a, Polyb. *Hist.* 6.3-9, and Strab. *Geog.* 1.1.19.

<sup>308</sup> For example, Cicero applies regal terminology as invective against the dictatorial regime of Sulla and Cinna (*Har. resp.* 54), the populist reformist efforts of tribune Tiberius Gracchus (*Amic.* 41), and the triumviral influence wielded by both Pompey and Caesar (*Att.* 8.11.2). Baraz, 2018: 53.

<sup>309</sup> Baraz, 2018: 45-6.

interpretation of Caesar's usage of regal terminology in the *Commentarii*.<sup>310</sup>

Caesar uses the terms '*rex*' and '*regnum*' on multiple occasions throughout the *Commentarii* and attempting to decode which sense of their usage he is attempting to convey in any given situation requires further examination.

In terms of the peoples and polities of the Greater Rhône Basin, three instances of dealing with '*reges*'/'*regna*' emerge. Firstly, there is the Conspiracy of Orgetorix, in which a member of the Helvetian ruling class apparently schemed with both his compatriot followers and a pair of allies amongst the Aedui (Dubnoriges) and Sequani (Casticos) for them each to seize the '*regnum*' of their respective communities (*BG* 1.3). Secondly, we have Ariovistus, a figure identified as '*rex Germanorum*' ('king of the Germani' *BG* 1.31). Thirdly, we have the ascendancy of Vercingetorix, who is stated to be called '*rex*' after seizing power over the Arverni (*BG* 7.4).

Of these three, the first instance would appear to be the most clear-cut. Caesar is here using the term '*regnum*' in the sense of unconstitutional tyranny, with autocratic power secured by unlawful conspiracy and force. The Aedui explicitly (*BG* 1.16-19, 7.32-3), and the Helvetii by strong implication (*BG* 1.4), are to be read as governed by republican (presumably oligarchic) constitutions which the conspirators aimed to subvert and overthrow. The position of the

---

<sup>310</sup> A point even further exacerbated by the uncertain timeframe of their dissemination amongst Roman readers, see Chapter 1.6.1. Yarrow, 2022, provides a useful commentary on the rapidly evolving trends in reception of both foreign monarchies (especially the Ptolemaic Dynasty of Egypt) and the possibility of monarchical power within Rome, using both textual and numismatic evidence.

Sequani is less certain. It is implied that Casticos' proposed seizure of autocratic power would be constitutionally illegitimate, by virtue of its comparison with the Aeduan and Helvetian situations. However, Casticos himself is identified by Caesar as the son of Catamantaloedes, who had previously held the '*regnum*' of the Sequani and was known as '*amicus*' of the Roman people, quite probably in the sense of '*rex et amicus*'. This raises the possibility that, in contrast with the republics of the Aedui and Helvetii, the Sequani of the 60sBCE were a functioning monarchy in which the throne was, at the time, held by someone other than Casticos. If the case were so, the sense of '*rex*'-as-tyrant would still apply to all three key figures in the conspiracy, as Casticos would be seizing the position and power of Sequanian kingship illegitimately. On the question of the early first century BCE Sequanian constitution at least, multiple lines of inquiry must remain open as there is insufficient evidence to draw a definitive conclusion.

The second case of '*rex/regnum*' examined here, that of Ariovistus, raises even more uncertainties than the first. That Ariovistus was recognised by the Roman Senate as '*rex et amicus*', seemingly thanks to Caesar's own advocacy while consul in 59BCE, seems secure. The ambiguities arise from the questions as to what or who he is to be identified as '*rex*' of and what implications for his power and role in the Gallic political landscape the answers might hold. For one option, we may see in Pliny the Elder's description of a "*rex Sueborum*" ('king of the Suebi') encountered by Q. Metellus Celer during his pro-consular governorate of Gaul c.60BCE (*NH* 2.67), an indication that Ariovistus owed his position of leadership to a pre-

existing monarchical (or at least elevated) status amongst his own people. However, given the explicitly diverse origins of Ariovistus' Germanic supporters in Gaul (*BG* 1.51) and the highly debated, enigmatic nature of social institutions of the communities labelled '*Germani*' by Caesar and other Latin and Greek authors, there is little solid support for this suggestion.<sup>311</sup> The possibility observed in the previous paragraph, that the Sequani may have been monarchical in their constitution, raises the suggestion that Ariovistus was functionally 'King of the Sequani', but had acquired that position under circumstances of questionable legitimacy. Caesar's characterisation of Ariovistus and his exercise of power in eastern Gaul provides almost a textbook example of the polemical rhetoric of tyranny in Late Republican Latin contexts.<sup>312</sup> He is a ruler who governs through coercion rather than consent, holding the members of prominent families amongst both the Sequani and Aedui hostage to secure their obedience and seizing his subjects' property to maintain and increase his rapacious horde of warriors (*BG* 1.40-1). Ariovistus, in Caesar's framework, thus arguably represents a strong example of the entwining of multiple connotations that '*rex*' could hold in Late Republican Latin usage; he is a 'king' in a sense of officiality (with recognition from no less

---

<sup>311</sup> Caesar's description of Ariovistus' forces marshalled for the Battle of the Vosges lists members of the Harudes, Marcomanni, Triboci, Vangiones, Nemetes, Sedusii, and Suebi peoples represented amongst them. On the highly fraught and enigmatic nature of Iron Age Germanic political structures see Krebs, 2006: 121-2.

<sup>312</sup> Vasaly, 2009: 248-9. See also Riggsby, 2006: 185-6. Evidence of Caesar's warping of the narrative of his interactions with Ariovistus for his own ends can also be found in comparing the *Commentarii* against Dio Cassius' rendering of the same events (38.47-8), thought to be drawn from the lost writings of Asinius Pollio, which portray both parties in a somewhat more neutral light. Tarpin, 2013: 674.

authority than the Roman Senate initially), but he is nevertheless a tyrant in his manner of rule.

The third and final of our three main cases is that of Vercingetorix, which raises many similar questions and possibilities to that of Casticos. By Caesar's account, the Arvernian youth was the son of Celtillos, a man who had been put to death for seeking ("*appetebat*" BG 7.4) *regnum*, and that after an attempt to excite violent anti-Roman activity amongst his people was foiled by a group of nobles led by Vercingetorix's paternal uncle Gobannitio, he secured popular support for a coup and, being successful, was afterward called ("*appellatur*") 'rex'. In this instance there is evidence to support multiple interpretations of the nature of position that Vercingetorix held. At first glance, taking Caesar's testimony in isolation, the assumed meaning of 'rex' is one of Vercingetorix as unconstitutional, illegitimate tyrant and demagogue overthrowing an oligarchic republic, merely succeeding where his father and others had failed. This reading is primarily supported by the fact that Vercingetorix's initial obstacle was a plurality of rival politicians, his uncle being one of the multiple "*principes*" amongst the Arverni, who were able to use their power to oppose him. This would suggest a constitutional format of oligarchic power-sharing amongst the ruling class, who had previously acted against Celtillos to preserve the status-quo from his over-weening power and ambition. When viewed in the wider parameters of the history of the Arverni, so far as it can be extracted from Greek and Latin sources, Vercingetorix's acquired position can be read in at least two other lights. Crucially, the second century BCE leaders of the Arverni, Louernios and Bituitos,



are frequently described with the terminology of kings in both Latin ('*rex*') and Greek ('*βασιλεύς*'), and their father-son relationship implies dynastic succession.<sup>313</sup> The suggestion then arises that the Arverni were a monarchy by constitution in the period c.150-120BCE, precipitating two possible scenarios. The first scenario is that, at some point between c.120 and 52BCE, the Arverni had undergone a regime change which replaced the defeated monarchy with an oligarchy. In response, at some point in the intervening decades, Celtillus had attempted to revive the defunct Arvernian monarchy.<sup>314</sup> Where he failed, his son later succeeded. The second scenario is that the Arverni remained a functional monarchy throughout the period in question. Under this interpretation, Gobannitio was, in fact, the reigning king, whose rule had been unsuccessfully challenged by his brother Celtillus (being the younger or otherwise less favoured son). Vercingetorix, by contrast, was able to depose his uncle and take the throne for himself. Given our lack of solid evidence, both the two scenarios and the underlying suggestion remain matters of speculation, projected onto lacunae, rather than falsifiable fact.

Caesar's phraseology in describing Vercingetorix's ascension to power is potentially significant. His use of the passive voice, that Vercingetorix "is called king by his followers" ("*rex ab suis appellatur*" BG 7.4), rather than an active formulation, implies that it was not a title he fashioned for himself but one bestowed upon him.

---

<sup>313</sup> The dynastic aspect is further suggested by mention of Bituitos' own son, Congonnetiacos, being taken as a prisoner to Rome (Livy *Epit.* 61) and potentially used as a hostage.

<sup>314</sup> A possibility suggested by Fichtl and supported by Pernet. Fichtl, 2004: 118. Pernet, 2010: 150-1.

One possibility is that, given the apparent close cognate status between Latin 'rex' and Gaulish '\*rixs', Vercingetorix's title amongst his people was the latter but was rendered as the former either by Caesar's interpreter or Caesar himself, ignoring any differences of connotation the two words may have in their respective usages.<sup>315</sup>

What unites Vercingetorix's and Ariovistus' position as 'reges' in a Gallic context is that they held both civic and military power simultaneously, in contrast with the apparent separation of those spheres under oligarchic constitutions like that of the Aedui. Leading troops in war does not appear to have been merely a duty of office, however, especially for Rhône Gallic 'kings' of the second century BCE. In addition to having bards praise his courage, Bituitos apparently demonstrated it through taking part in battle clad in high visible, multi-coloured armour, riding in silver-embossed chariot, in which he was later displayed during the triumphal procession of 120BCE (Florus *Ep. Rom.* 37.3.2). Being an effective warrior and warlord, by both reputation and demonstrated ability, thus seems to have been a key qualification for kings in Late Iron Age Gaul.<sup>316</sup> It could be argued that the ability of kings to secure prestige through their martial conduct and leadership was a core component of their ideological claim to dominance and power over potential rivals in the Gallic elite classes.

Evidence for monarchies in the Aristotelian sense as a feature of the Iron Age Gallic political landscape, even beyond the ambiguous

---

<sup>315</sup> Delamarre, 2003: 260-1. Saignac, 2014: 291-2.

<sup>316</sup> For a further examination of the distinction between martial and civil political power in relation to Gallic constitutional organisations see Lewuillon, 1975: 551-2, 2002: 245, and Fichtl, 2004: 115-17.

cases drawn from Caesar's *Commentarii* described above, is rather equivocal.<sup>317</sup> While identified with regal terminology in some cases, not all sources employ it and descriptions of the regimes of Louernios, Toutomotulos, and Bituitos in extant texts place the basis on which they wielded power in doubt.

The most extensive description of Louernios comes, supposedly from Posidonius, via the perhaps surprising medium of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* (4.152). The Arvernian ruler's actions of providing a generous public feast and largesse of gold and silver to all attendees is ascribed the motivation of increasing his influence amongst the populace in, nor is he ever given the title 'βασιλεύς'. If Louernios' position was that of an anointed king, imbued with legitimised constitutional power as sole governor of the Arverni, it would presumably have been unnecessary for him to court his people's favour. Conversely, although either Posidonius or Athenaeus (from their alienated perspectives) may have interpreted the phenomenon through a Hellenic lens of demagogic bribery, provision of public festivities in the manner of feasts and material redistribution could well have been a core feature of Arvernian kingship.<sup>318</sup> Louernios' behaviour, in this framework, would not be motivated so much by a need to increase his general popularity but rather to fulfil the obligations of his position and reinforce his worthiness of it. From what little can be gathered, Louernios is another figure who straddles the uncertain lines between tyrant and

---

<sup>317</sup> For Arbabe's attempt to map it onto the landscape of mid-first century BCE Gaul see Fig. 9.

<sup>318</sup> Lampinen, 2014: 234-5. For reconsiderations of feasting and its relationship with political power and position in Late Iron Age Gallic society see Poux, 2004: 131-3, and Loughton, 2009: 77-87.

king and may have been a rare case of an individual who was able to transition from one category to the other, paving the way for a dynasty to follow him (for at least one more generation).

The information available on Toutomotulos' rule of the late second century BCE Saluvii, though sparse, raises similar suggestions that his authority rested on tyrannical rather than monarchical approaches. Our sole surviving reference to the figure in question is drawn from the summary of the now lost Book 61 of Livy's history, identifying him as "*rex Saluviorum*" ('King of the Saluvii' *Epit.* 61) in describing his flight to sanctuary among the Allobroges and the ensuing conflict thereupon. Diodorus' account of the Sack of Entremont c.123BCE is marked by a description of Sextius Calvinus' encounter with Saluvian captives claiming to have been pro-Roman partisans prior to the conflict (and having suffered abuse as a result), led by an aristocrat bearing the intriguingly Hellenic name 'Crato' (34.23).<sup>319</sup> The implication, as favoured particularly by Dyson, attempting to link and reconcile the two sources, is that Crato and his followers were political rivals of Toutomotulos, abused and intimidated to secure his dictatorial control of the community.<sup>320</sup> A potential counterpoint to this is the fact that allegations of torture and mistreatment of critics does not disqualify Toutomotulos from

---

<sup>319</sup> The focus of the vignette is on Sextius Calvinus' magnanimity to defeated foes, liberating 900 captives on report of their pro-Roman views, establishing his demonstration of good Roman protocol. The fact that Crato is given a name that is both overtly Greek and allusive to Greek aristocratic norms might be linked to undertones of Homeric heroism found in the passage. Pralon, 1998: 23.

<sup>320</sup> Unfortunately, the scholar appears to possibly conflate the limited available accounts from Diodorus and summaries of Livy's lost books with an earlier passage of *Ab Urbe Condita* (21.20) concerning Roman efforts to enlist the aid of Gallic communities against Hannibal during the Second Punic War. Dyson, 1985: 136-7.

identification with kingship; he could be read as a legitimate but simply cruel and authoritarian one, responding to those who upset him with ruthlessness. The problem is that Diodorus makes no mention of the Saluvian 'king', however, attributing the mistreatment that Crato received to his fellow citizens ("πολιτῶν") and, all the more intriguingly, identifying them as "rebels" ("ἀποστάτων"). Against whom or what these Saluvian dissidents may have been rebelling is left unsaid and remains uncertain. However, if we are to link these individuals with Toutomotulos, the suggestion would appear that the latter was a rebel leader (whose success propelled him to the status of tyrant) rather than an established king.<sup>321</sup> Similarly, Appian's account of the events, while providing one of the only attestations of Bituitos as 'βασιλεύς' (*Emb.* 12), makes no mention of Toutomotulos, speaking instead of the flight of plural Saluvian "δυνάσται" ('chieftains/nobles') to their allies.<sup>322</sup> This lends further credence to the idea that, rather than a king among the Saluvii, Toutomotulos should more readily be identified as a factional leader amongst an oligarchic ruling class. As Toutomotulos is the only figure from the Gallic communities of the Lower Rhône ever attested in a regal fashion in extant sources, there is little reason to assume the presence of 'kings' or monarchies amongst neighbouring peoples like the Allobroges, Cavares, or Volcae Arecomici in the late second or early first centuries BCE.<sup>323</sup>

---

<sup>321</sup> Dyson, 1985: 149-50. On this point also see Ebel, 1976: 68-9.

<sup>322</sup> Appian, however, mistakenly identifies Bituitos' kingship with the Allobroges rather than the Arverni, possibly due a conflation based on their alliance in the conflict against Rome c.123-120BCE.

<sup>323</sup> For a further musing on the idea of the Allobroges having a relatively broad aristocratic franchise in their community, and issues arising therefrom in their

Turning our attention to rulers in Gaul beyond the Rhône Basin labelled as kings by Caesar, it does not appear that they held power as dynastic autocrats either. While the pro-consul does identify Galba as king of both the Suessiones and Remi in Belgica, he also explicitly states that the latter group, at least, have a senate (*BG* 2.5), implying some level of mixed constitution, with other members of the aristocracy having some share in the rule of their community.<sup>324</sup> An even stronger indication of the limited power held by Belgic kings at the time comes from the reported address of the Eburonian dyarch Ambiorix to Caesar's representatives, explaining that the nature of his "*imperium*" was such that he was as much bound to execute his people's wishes as they were bound to execute his (*BG* 5.27).<sup>325</sup> Given the potential cultural differences between the Belgae of the north-east and the Gallic peoples of the Rhône, we cannot take these cases as indicative of what it meant to be a '*rex*' among the latter, but we can use them to nuance our understanding of Caesar's usage of the term in northern European

---

relationship with the Roman Republic in the early-to-mid first century BCE see Moore, 2021: 39-40.

<sup>324</sup> Lewuillon argues that this may be explained by Gallic kingships existing somewhat independently from actual ethno-political units as they evolved in the Late Iron Age, with Galba's relationship to the Remi being more a vestigial, ceremonial figure than an active head of state, with the Remian Senate being their primary governing body. Given the overall weight of evidence, however, it is more plausible that constitutions in which royal power was balanced by advisory councils (i.e., senates) were the norm. Lewuillon, 2002: 245. On the coexistence of 'kings' and 'senates' in Late Iron Age Gallic polities see also Fichtl, 2004: 119.

<sup>325</sup> Ambiorix' co-king is identified as Catuvolcos (*BG* 5.24, 6.31) but it is not made abundantly clear how the dyarchy functioned in practice. Although it is later revealed in the narrative that much of Ambiorix' reported overtures to Roman forces were prevarications (about the specific points of a conspiracy among the Belgae to attack the legions in their winter quarters), the notion of Eburonian royal power being limited by the will of the people would fit better with the general contextual evidence and overall Caesarian characterisation of Gallic politics than for an autocratic regime to temporarily and successfully disguise itself as a republican one.

contexts and provide relevant comparanda for neighbouring societies.

The conclusion that most strongly suggests itself is that key elements we might attach to the concept of 'kingship', namely legally legitimised autocracy and dynasticism, were rare and abnormal in Late Iron Age Gallic society both within and beyond the Greater Rhône Basin. Caesar's *Commentarii* also note harsh penalties applied to those found guilty of attempting to subvert their constitutions and make themselves autocrats over their peoples, as occurred to Orgetorix among the Helvetii c.60BCE (*BG* 1.4) and to the Arvernian Celtulos at an unspecified time prior to 52BCE (*BG* 7.4), suggesting that an underlying commitment to power-sharing amongst the ruling class was a well-established feature of their constitutions and/or political cultures.<sup>326</sup> This would further accord well with Strabo's assertion that, prior to Roman conquest and loss of independence, the majority of Gallic polities were 'aristocracies' (i.e., constitutional oligarchies, *Geog.* 4.4.4), bearing the same designation ("ἀριστοκρατικά") that the author applies (with praise) to the Greek colonial government of Massalia earlier in the text (*Geog.* 4.1.6).

Attempting to explain or resolve the apparent discrepancies between sources regarding the appearance of monarchies versus oligarchies and individuals who may or may not be kings amongst the Gauls, as well as considering how this issue may affect

---

<sup>326</sup> Caesar notes the legal process and penalty among the Helvetii, being publicly tried while bound in chains and punished with execution by burning upon a guilty verdict, whilst in the Arvernian case it is simply stated that the apparent aspiring monarch was put to death by the community. See also Verger, 2009: 65.

archaeological interpretations, has attracted no small amount of scholarship. The primary line of thinking, seeming to proceed largely from Jullian, is that the majority of Gallic polities were once monarchical in earlier periods, but by the Late Iron Age had either undergone revolutionary shifts into oligarchy, persisted as conservative royal holdouts, and/or were experiencing ongoing tensions and conflict between revolutionary and counterrevolutionary social forces.<sup>327</sup> Jullian's approach rests largely on a combination of stadial models of historical development and the imposition of Athenian and Roman narratives onto foreign contexts. It may be further criticised it as relying on the author's ideological patriotism and framing of the Gauls as direct forerunners of the French, making his theory of an evolutionary move from monarchies to constitutional oligarchies a foreshadowing of the downfall of the *Ancien Régime* and Napoleonic dictatorships in favour of his own Third Republic.<sup>328</sup> Lewuillon's view on the matter nuances Jullian's approach by framing the potential similarities between the Roman and Gallic revolutions as circumstantial and analogous rather than born of a common thread of progress. He argues that the collegiate system of magistracies that arose in second/first century Gaul was based on dividing the powers and responsibilities formerly united in the person of the king amongst multiple office-holders, particularly distinguishing areas of civil/judicial administration from those of military power.<sup>329</sup> The assumed motivation for this was to avert the

---

<sup>327</sup> Both Fichtl (2004: 118-19) and Quintela (2012: 450-2) make arguments in favour of this viewpoint.

<sup>328</sup> Jullian (2015/1895: 26-43).

<sup>329</sup> A third possible area of distinction was the spiritual authority of sacral kingship, though this will not be explored further in the thesis due to the treatment of religious matters as a separate area of study. Lewuillon, 2002: 244.



possibility of tyrannical abuse of power in a manner analogous to the Roman constitution's division of royal authority in response to the abuses of Tarquinius Superbus and his son. On the one hand, the point of divisions and/or unifications of power, especially as regards the separation of military and civil powers in Gallic oligarchies versus their combination for 'kings' like Bituitos, Vercingetorix, or Ariovistus, might offer some support for this hypothesis. On the other, given our extremely limited knowledge of both how any individual Gallic constitution may have functioned and the many issues attendant on the enigmas of early Roman history, the hypothesis requires stretching very little evidence of substance a long way. Operating on a similar basis, Crumley advances a theory that the second century BCE saw a shift in conceptions of power relations in Gallic society away from one predicated on kinship relations to one of patron-client relationships and political factionalism.<sup>330</sup> While her view relates to the economic class development (a point examined further in the next chapter), a social shift in which power was no longer primarily held dynastically but increasingly required influence among one's peers and support from the masses would align well with the move from kingship to aristocracy. However, like much of her approach, this hypothesis remains intriguing but largely speculative. Overall, the assumption that Gallic oligarchies must have succeeded earlier, more primitive Gallic monarchies and has little to recommend it.<sup>331</sup>

---

<sup>330</sup> Crumley, 1974: 16, 76-7.

<sup>331</sup> Quintela, 2012: 457.

Despite its vagueness, and the many attendant problems of his testimony, there is little reason to doubt Caesar's assertion (*BG* 7.32) that the Aedui's republican constitution was a venerable, longstanding one, nor any reason to assume that there had once been a King of the Aedui to be overthrown and replaced for it to come into existence. Instead, we must look to other potential explanations for the discrepancy of terms used in extant sources. Collis raises the possibility that 'rex' in Latin was used as a catch-all term for a variety of positions in Gallic society for which there was no ready Roman equivalent, including regional chieftains and clan patriarchs.<sup>332</sup> This is a possibility to take into consideration, and may offer explanations for phenomena like the limited regal powers wielded by Ambiorix (i.e., that rather than a 'king' in a strict or despotic sense he was more properly a chieftain or patriarchal figure with defined obligations to his community), but for the moment it remains a hypothesis rather than provable theory. A similar point to be made is that, if we accept the segmentary model of Gallic social organisation discussed in the preceding section (with polities being a conglomeration of *pagi* in turn composed of smaller clans and households), then we may interpret certain descriptions of '*principes*' (per Caesar) as representing 'petty-kings' or 'chieftains' of individual *pagi* and/or clans comprising the wider political community.<sup>333</sup> In such a framework, the 'rex' of a Gallic polity could have merely been the most prominent and favoured of a confederated group of '*principes*', rather than occupying a distinct and separate political

---

<sup>332</sup> He is particularly of the belief that Louernios (along with others of his ilk) was closer to tyrant than king in his status, with functional monarchy being largely non-existent in Iron Age Gallic contexts. Collis, 2007: 526.

<sup>333</sup> Fernández-Götz, 2013: 17-18.

niche. While all of these options are worth considering, the simplest solution going forward, it may be argued, is that while Caesar's use of regal terminology may have tended towards the sense of 'tyrant' rather than 'king' in Rhône Gallic contexts, his semantics were more makeshift than technical, with both Latin and Greek authors who utilised his testimony as a source for their own writings following his lead.<sup>334</sup>

Instead of a landscape wherein certain political communities conservatively held onto their monarchies where others progressed into oligarchic republics, it may be more accurate to see La Tène Gaul as a world generally dominated by competitive, power-sharing aristocracies which occasionally produced aristocrats of such extensive wealth, influence, and/or puissance that they could dominate their communities as *de facto* rulers. The presentation of the Aedui, primarily, Helvetii, secondarily, and Sequani and Arverni, tertiarily, on the part of Caesar et al. is one of ruling classes practicing collegiate power-sharing agreements (as we might characterise oligarchic republican constitutions) marked by relatively fluid, dynamic intra-elite competition in which members of a plurality of aristocratic families jostled for position and prestige.<sup>335</sup> Gallic tyrants or kings, however we might seek to label them, ruled not through a demand for constitutional change (vesting themselves

---

<sup>334</sup> For Caesar's possibly deliberate omission of civil administrative matters, both in relation to his own gubernatorial activities and in relation to the governments with which it interacted, in the *Commentarii* see Riggsby, 2006: 6. Arbabe sees an example of Caesar's framework influencing later authors in the application of the term 'rex' to the possibly legendary, Early Iron Age figure Ambigatos in Livy (5.34). Arbabe, 2017: 39.

<sup>335</sup> On intra-elite competition especially see Quintela, 2012: 454. For mappings of recorded Gallic oligarchies and leaders in the mid-to-late first century BCE see Fig. 10-11.

and/or their dynasties with supreme executive power) but through succeeding in the competitive activities of the ruling classes to which they belonged to the point of virtual monopoly.

As such, in considering the composition, ideology, and fate of the Rhône Gallic ruling classes in the face of Roman Imperialism, two points of note emerge on this topic. The first is the tendency towards intra-class mobility: these were societies marked by competition amongst elites and plurality of dynastic/patrilineal groups with a claim to power and prestige. The second is one of pre-existing tension and potential instability. The Conspiracy of Orgetorix and the constitutional ambiguities presented by our episodic glimpses into Arvernian history, point to a political landscape of frequent conflict, not necessarily between neatly defined groups of monarchists and republicans, but between rival cliques and aspiring tyrants. This was not a landscape onto which Rome could easily impose stable and effective delegate regimes (as Caesar's failures with Ariovistus illustrate), but with which it would have to negotiate settlements involving multiple interested parties.

### 3.3.3 Magistracy, Senates, and Officeholding in Late Iron Age Gaul

The political organisation of the nations of the Rhône Basin is difficult to reconstruct in any significant detail with any confidence, but it is possible to do so in relatively broad strokes for certain groups and areas in the context of the early to mid-first century BCE at least. It is necessary to attempt to do so in an analysis of social status and mobility in the historical context in order to understand constructions of power, prestige, and competition therein.

Based on available evidence, the nominally independent polities of the upper Rhône Basin (i.e., the Aedui, Arverni, Helvetii, Sequani, Segusiavi etc.) were by c.60BCE (the opening of the era in which descriptions of them provided by Caesar, Cicero, Strabo, and other Latin and Greek authors begin to provide accounts of them) operating on the basis of oligarchic constitutions with systems of officeholding (with occasional forays into more dictatorial forms of politics). That is, political power was regulated into a series of institutional positions accorded with checks and balances, rather than predicated on individual, charismatic leadership alone.

While Caesar provides a relatively large amount of information concerning the political system of the Aedui during the Gallic Wars, our information concerning the governments of the Arverni, Sequani, Helvetii, and other polities of the Rhône Basin is more limited and incidental. However, given that it is established that all of these are established to have been non-monarchical in the period c.61-52BCE and that senates and magisterial offices were common to many groups across Gaul, it is a relatively safe assumption that these groups would have been structured in a similar way, with a ruling legislative council headed by collegiate officeholders.<sup>336</sup>

A common term for the highest office of the executive seems to have been ‘\**Vergobretos*’.<sup>337</sup> Caesar’s account observes this term only in relation to the Aedui (*BG* 1.16), about whose political organisation he provides by far the most information. However, it can reasonably be assumed that the word was employed more

---

<sup>336</sup> Fichtl, 2004: 115-17.

<sup>337</sup> Latinised as ‘*Vergobretus*’ and often Anglicised as ‘*Vergobret*’.

generally, since it is also found in numismatic and later epigraphic contexts elsewhere, and the *Commentarii* refer to equivalent positions for other people groups by a variety of periphrastic but essentially synonymous Latin terms.<sup>338</sup> One problem with the latter form of evidence, is that, in its numismatic appearances in the form ‘*VERCOBRETO*’ its case and number are ambiguous to our limited understanding of Gaulish linguistics.<sup>339</sup> In light of this, it could, at least in certain contexts, have been an office held by two or more individuals at a time (perhaps similarly to the dual annual consuls of the Roman Republic) or indicated a system wherein former office-holders maintained an elevated role. The internecine conflict of early 52BCE, in which two individuals claimed the right to govern as \**Vergobretos* (*BG* 7.32-3), each disputing the validity of the other’s election, offers a reasonably strong argument that, among the Aedui, the highest magistracy was an office held by a singular holder at a time, rather than existing in plural form.

The power of the Aeduan \**Vergobretos* was subject an extensive array of limitations. As was the case for most Roman political offices, it held a term limit of a single year (*Caes. BG* 1.16). In contrast with Latin norms, however, the officeholder was not permitted to leave Aeduan territory during their term, the electoral process was primarily carried about by the “*sacerdotes*” of the nation, and laws forbade two members of the same family from either holding the office whilst both were alive (*BG* 7.33). If Caesar’s description can be taken as mostly reflective of reality, it would

---

<sup>338</sup> These include ‘*magistratus*’ and possibly ‘*princeps civitatis*’. Fichtl, 2004: 115-17.

<sup>339</sup> Lewullion, 2002: 249.

suggest a number of points distinguishing the political cultures of Rome and the Aedui in more general ways. Notably, the singular \**Vergobretos* appears to have had a somewhat more prescribed, purely civic administrative role than the dual consuls of Rome, being unable to lead forces on campaign abroad. The focus on the role of priests in filling the position could, on the one hand, indicate that rather than being elected by popular (albeit class-weighted) vote, the magistracy was a role appointed by a narrow, closed institutional group.<sup>340</sup> On the other hand, Caesar's typically terse prose and the breadth of meaning covered by the Latin "*more*" ('by custom'), could support an interpretation that the support of the Aeduan priesthood (in a collegiate sense) was a traditional but not absolute guarantor of electoral victory for candidates for the position of \**Vergobretos*. In that case, in the disputed election of 52BCE, Caesar opted to use this a justification of his initial choice of candidate in his role as third-party mediator. The apparent injunction against multiple members of a single family occupying any form of political office would seem to be a strong indicator of the significance of dynastic ties in Gallic social construction and a desire to mitigate against how this might have allowed certain families to dominate or even monopolise the political framework at the expense of others.<sup>341</sup>

The ambiguity/equivocality of Caesar's descriptions, in which the terms '*vergobretus*' and '*summus magisratus*' are not used

---

<sup>340</sup> The electoral process for consuls and other governmental offices of the Roman Republic in the first century BCE was a matter of block voting by century, which likely gave an advantage to the wealthier upper centuries but did not necessarily outweigh the potential voting power of the masses. Yakobson, 2006: 393.

<sup>341</sup> Verger, 2009: 65. Roman political culture of the Republic could as be characterised by a struggle with striking balances between forces of dynasticism (including ancestor veneration) and oligarchic power-sharing.

consistently, defaulting to simply '*magistratus*' (though described in the same terms) in the case of the disputed election of 52BCE, leaves upon the possibility that no meaningful ranks existed between the baseline members of the Aeduan senate and the \**Vergobretos* himself. If this is true then, in contrast with the Roman Republic, there would exist no equivalent to the *cursus honorum* and, as such, likely rather different approaches to ideas of political 'career' and 'competition' between the two cultures. Caesar also describes the existence of 'senates' among numerous Gallic peoples he encounters, both oligarchical ones such as the Aedui (*BG* 1.31) and monarchies such as that of Suessiones of Belgica (*BG* 2.5). The demographic composition of first century BCE Gallic 'senates', in relation to the other components of elite society and governmental structures, is one of the significant known unknowns with which we are left by Caesar's writings. The one case in which the pro-consul gives greater detail is that of the Nervii during the Belgic War of 57BCE, in which the formerly 600 strong senate is reduced to three survivors after a disastrous defeat (*BG* 2.28). This is mentioned in concert with the full population of adult males as 60,000 prior to the slaughter, seemingly indicating a rather broad franchise in which roughly 1 in every 100 Nervian men was a serving senator.<sup>342</sup> This highlights a difficulty in decoding Caesar's terminology and its relationship with the Roman political system. All serving members of the Roman Senate were former holders of at

---

<sup>342</sup> By contrast, in the mid-first century BCE the Roman Senate consisted of roughly 500 members out of a total adult male citizen population thought to be a little under 500,000; a ratio of 1:1000. While exact statistics of this kind remains highly debateable, the difference in order of magnitude is clear. For estimated population figures see Brunt, 1971: 168, De Ligt, 2012: 9-16.



least one magisterial office, ranked in dignity according to which post they had most recently held.<sup>343</sup> Does Caesar's use of the term 'senatus' in relation to the Aedui and others indicate that such groups were similarly composed of former magistrates? If, as is possible, the office of \*Vergobretos was the only real magistracy (apart from military commands), would that mean that all Aeduan senators were former chief magistrates? If the Aeduan senatorial franchise was noticeably narrower than the Nervian one, for example, it may be that 'senators' and 'magistrates' amongst them might essentially refer to the same group. However, Caesar's wording in describing the strictures against familial power-sharing, in relation to the disputed election of c.52BCE, utilising contrasting "non solum...sed etiam" ('not only...but even', BG 7.33) clauses to describe magisterial officeholding and senatorial membership, indicates a perceived distinction between the two.<sup>344</sup>

The theory that a division existed between civic administrative offices and those of military command in Late Iron Age Gallic governmental structure rests on a few, relatively firm points of textual source materials. Strabo asserts that, prior to the conquest, the Gauls habitually appointed a man other than their ruler as their chief commander in war (Geog. 4.4.2). This point is further supported by multiple inferences from Caesar's *commentarii*, including the description of strictures against the \*Vergobretos leaving the territory they administered while in office (BG 7.33),

---

<sup>343</sup> North, 2006: 266.

<sup>344</sup> Notably, while Caesar is happy to use the collective noun 'senatus' and plural 'senatores', no singular individual in the text is ever identified as a 'senator' in a manner that might elucidate the meanings ascribed to the terms. Arbabe, 2017: 13.

which would severely limit their capabilities as a commander.<sup>345</sup>

Lewuillon argues for an identification of Caesar's use of the term '*imperium*' (when not referring to his own plenipotentiary functions as pro-consul) indicates the institution of military command amongst the Gauls, with those endowed with it identified by the titles '*dux*' or '*imperator*', standing in contrast to figures endowed with power in a more civic, political sense for which other terms tend to be used.<sup>346</sup>

While many of Lewuillon's points can be suspect, and this one relies partly on the unreliable ground of Caesar's terminology, this one is made more convincing in having a broader base of text-derived data (both from Caesar and other writers) than many of his other assertions.

Another point derived from Caesar's writings that may be relevant to both the idea of Gallic 'senates' and the military/civil separation of powers is that a number of figures rising to prominence in the context Gallic wars are identified with the term '*adulescens*'; a word generally used to indicate men between the ages of 15 and 30.<sup>347</sup> This includes Vercingetorix (*BG* 7.4), and Aeduan military leaders

---

<sup>345</sup> The conceptual distinction of the *druides* as largely non-martial in contrast with the warlike *equites* amongst the aristocracy is also a point in favour of a distinction between military and civil spheres in Late Iron Age Gallic society but rests on a highly problematic section of the text (*BG* 6.14-15). For issues with this section of the *Commentarii* and their usage as a source see Chapter 1 Section 6.1.

<sup>346</sup> Examples in the context of Rhône Gallic forces include Vercingetorix in his capacity as military leader of the rebellion of 52BCE (*BG* 7.21) and Divico of the Helvetii/Tigurini in 58BCE (*BG* 1.13), Lewuillon, 1975: 551. Arbabe argues that, particularly in the use of '*summa imperii*', the terms may relate more specifically to military powers granted to commanders of coalition forces of allied of polities, a point explored further in Chapter 5 of this thesis. Arbabe, 2017: 39.

<sup>347</sup> While primarily used for men in this age-range, the term is recorded as having been used in cases of individuals between 30 and 40 years old as a means of rhetorical contrast between age ranges rather than exact categorisation. For example, Cic. *Phil.* 2.44 sees the orator contrast his activities in defence of the Republic as an '*adulescens*' earlier in his political career (between the ages of 30 and 50) and his status as a '*senex*' at the age of 63 in the wake of Caesar's death.

Litaviccus (along with his brothers, *BG* 7.37), Eporedorix, and Viridomaros (*BG* 7.39). If the text accurately relays their age-range, it marks a potential difference with Roman tradition in which high offices were reserved for men over a certain age, with 30 being the baseline for membership of the Roman Senate itself.<sup>348</sup> If Caesar is utilising the term ‘*senatus*’ to refer not simply to legislative bodies but in the fuller sense of a council of elders, it may be that a limiting factor on the membership of senates among the ruling classes of Gallic polities was age, with only more venerable statesmen taking on the tasks of administrative magistracy while their youthful counterparts focussed more on martial pursuits. The apparent tendency to bestow military command on young individuals is illustrated by Caesar’s reports that Eporedorix (still under the age of 30 by 52BCE) had previously acted as ‘*dux*’ in their war against the Sequani prior to his coming to Gaul (in the period c.61-59BCE, *BG* 7.67).<sup>349</sup> It might also explain the assertion that Divico, meeting

---

<sup>348</sup> Relating to its etymological origins from the Latin ‘*senex*’ (‘old man’). Higher offices in the Roman senate similarly had age restrictions, with the consulship only permitted to those of at least 42 (if of Plebeian background) or 44 (for member of Patrician families). North, 2006: 263.

<sup>349</sup> Hostein (among others) has argued that the Eporedorix involved in the mutiny of Aeduan cavalry at Gergovia (*BG* 7.37-8) and the one captured in the later rebel ambush on Caesar’s supply train (*BG* 7.67) are two different individuals who happened to share the same given name. Hostein, 2010: 49. However, this remains a speculative point, as the text offers no clear suggestion of such. Two potential indicators may be observed. Firstly, that Cotos, making a reappearance in the latter instance, is explicitly identified as the failed claimant for \**Vergobretos* from the earlier conflict (*BG* 7.32-3), and Litaviccus goes unqualified, the Eporedorix of *BG* 7.67 is given a previously unmentioned qualifier, possibly indicating a distinction between him and the Eporedorix previously introduced in the text. Secondly, the Eporedorix of *BG* 7.37-8 is characterised as a pro-Roman partisan amongst the Aedui while that of *BG* 7.67 is a member of the rebel army. This latter point may be challenged, though, by the fact that the events of 7.67 occur after the Aeduan state under Convictolatis had formerly defected to Vercingetorix’s alliance and thus possibly changed Eporedorix’s circumstances of allegiance. While the evidence is ambiguous enough to leave room for doubt, Occam’s Razor would argue that an assumption of one individual rather than two is the safer one.

Caesar as a legate of the Tigurini in 58BCE, had led his people in battle against the Roman consul Cassius in 107BCE, nearly a half-a-century earlier (*BG* 1.13).<sup>350</sup> On the other hand, Dubnoreixs may be noted as a Gallic military leader whose age is never asserted, suggesting that he may have been older in the timeframe of his activities in the Caesarian conflict, but, if the Aeduan law forbidding senatorial membership to relatives of other living members (*BG* 7.33) held true prior to 52BCE, then as long as Dividiacos lived his brother would only have access to official political power and could only exercise his authority through military and economic means.<sup>351</sup> This is not to argue for an absolute rule in Late Iron Age Gallic societies (from the Rhône Basin or otherwise) in which military commands were reserved for younger men or, at least among the Aedui, the brothers of sitting senators and magistrates. It is, however, a potential reconstructive model that better fits the limited available evidence and imports fewer anachronistic assumptions than others.

One of the points of tension that the political situation of the Aedui highlights in Book 1 is that of the application of Roman concepts of '*potestas*' and '*auctoritas*' to Gallic contexts.<sup>352</sup> '*Auctoritas*', in the political culture of the Roman Republic, tended to refer to the perceived seniority of sitting senators, in relation to the magisterial

---

<sup>350</sup> i.e., if it was expected for Gallic military leaders to be in their twenties, then for the same individual to be found in a place of honour decades later (as a presumable septuagenarian) is far more believable than for a society like that of Late Republican Rome in which most high military posts were occupied by middle-aged or even elderly men.

<sup>351</sup> Fichtl, 2014: 177.

<sup>352</sup> For the significance of pro and anti-Caesarian figures and forces in the *Commentarii's* depiction of Gallic politics, see Barlow, 1998: 158.

ranks they had held, as well as other factors such as age, achievements, or familial associations.<sup>353</sup> It is tempting to view these concepts as a dichotomy of 'hard' versus 'soft' power analogous to the Gramscian dyad of 'dominion' and 'hegemony', but Late Republican usage is somewhat more slippery in its nuance. Cicero's reading of the Law of Twelve Tables (*Off.* 1.37) emphasises hard legalistic quality of possession that '*auctoritas*' can imply, while Caesar's account of the taking of Alexandria in 48BCE (*BC* 3.109) compares the '*auctoritas*' of the Egyptian king to command his subject's obedience with the '*potestas*' he wields through his seizure of custody over the king. The \**Vergobretos*, as an office, is stated to have the '*potestas*' of life and death over the Aeduan people, a point strongly suggestive of its juridical role (*BG* 1.16). However, there are individuals who lack any magisterial office (in this case Dubnoreixs) who, through their '*auctoritas*', hold even greater sway over the populace than those who do. Caesar may be exaggerating quite how much sway Dubnoreixs, whom he frames a particular thorn in his side for much of the early years of the Gallic campaigns, held over the Aeduan populace in comparison to rightful officeholders as a conceit of his framing of events. Perhaps noteworthy, Caesar does not at any point describe the office of the \**Vergobretos* in terms of the powers attributed to the Roman consulship, those of '*imperium*' and '*auspicium*'.<sup>354</sup> The former term, which entailed the power to legally command the obedience of otherwise free men (either militarily or in civilian circumstances), is utilised by Caesar in

---

<sup>353</sup> North, 2006: 266.

<sup>354</sup> For these qualities in relation to the Republican Consulship see North, 2006: 263.

relation Gallic individuals in the *Commentarii* but appears to refer more exclusively to powers of military leadership. 'Auspicium', meanwhile, referring to the right and responsibility of conducting ceremonies to ascertain the favour of gods for a course of public action (i.e., taking the 'auspices'), would, in the context of Gallic society as described by Caesar, fall primarily within the purview of the *druides* rather than necessarily being the prerogative of the chief magistrate.

A key area of equivocalty and ambiguity in the textual and archaeological evidence for Gallic political organisation is the role played by the common populace, both in terms of what popular support may have meant to members of the ruling class against others and what, if any, power they may have had to wield in their own right.

The ethnographic excursus in Book 6 of the *commentarii*, notably, asserts that outside of the ruling '*druides*' and '*equites*' the Gallic masses have little more status than slaves (*BG* 6.11), implying that they were devoid of political agency. However, this does not appear to align with ways in which Caesar outlines political situations as they occurred historically, especially in Book 1 of the text, in which the capacity of leaders such as Orgetorix and Dubnoreixs to act as demagogues, securing the affection and support of the masses, is what makes them truly powerful, and protects both (though in subtly different ways) from facing judgement over their treasonous actions.<sup>355</sup> While it has been noted that 'persuasion' acts a literary

---

<sup>355</sup> Orgetorix's sheer number of loyal followers attending his trial allows them to mob the event and help their patron escape, though only for him to die in

theme or motif in this section of the text, and is less foregrounded in others, it would appear that, from Caesar's perspective at least, the political will of the masses was a force to be reckoned with in the societies of the Rhône Basin. The oligarchic regimes of eastern and central Gaul may have concentrated a greater amount of legal and political power in the hands of the nobility than the Roman constitution, with its Centuriate Assembly and Tribune of the Plebeians, but it cannot be fairly assumed that they left the common people utterly powerless. The *Commentarii* themselves emphasise the relationship between political power and mass, popular support among the peoples of the Rhône Basin. Orgetorix's plans for taking control of the Helvetii rest upon his ability to persuade the populace to enact them (*BG* 1.2), rather than simply securing a position from which he can simply order them to do so.<sup>356</sup> Meanwhile, both Orgetorix's escape from trial (*BG* 1.4) and Vercingetorix's coup (*BG* 7.4) demonstrate the apparent capacity of lower status supporters of aspiring political leaders to exercise agency, even if somewhat unconstitutionally.<sup>357</sup>

Reading between the lines of both Caesar's and Strabo's descriptions of Gallic societies, public assemblies appear to have been the primary means of juridical, political, and, indeed, military action amongst the Gauls of the first century BCE Rhône Basin. The

---

mysterious, possibly suicidal, circumstances shortly afterwards (*BG* 1.4). Dubnoreix, despite actively hampering the Aeduan-Roman war effort against the Helvetii, is protected against Caesar's intended reprisal by Divitiacos' warnings that to do so would incur the wrath of the Aeduan populace and harm his, pro-Roman, position of influence among them (*BG* 1.20).

<sup>356</sup> Caesar's repeated usage of the verb *persuadere* in relation to Orgetorix in Book 1 is a key component of the text's theme of shrewd, often underhanded political manoeuvring. See Murphy, 1977: 234-5.

<sup>357</sup> Verger, 2009: 71-2.

narrative of the *Commentarii* refers to gatherings of various forms across the Gallic world in relation to major political decision-making, juridical procedure, and, in perhaps the strongest terms, military organisation, while its ethnographic excursus emphasises the utmost importance that information and its disclosure in relation to public gatherings has within Gallic society (*BG* 6.20).<sup>358</sup> Strabo's description similarly offers a description of the significance and high formality placed on public assemblies and speaking arrangements thereupon (*Geog.* 4.4.3). To further the point by contrast, in Caesar's writings especially, attempts to manage political affairs in irregular circumstances, especially secret ones, are portrayed in a consistently negative light, as conspiracies and/or attempts at constitutional subversion.<sup>359</sup> As the pro-consul's descriptions of Gallic assemblies tend to be relatively oblique, offering snippets, references, or allusions rather than fuller accounts, his terminology for them appears imprecise. Lewuillon has attempted to categorise them by the terminology used for each, especially on the potential distinctions between the uses of '*Concilium*' and '*conventus*', but it is uncertain if this can be taken as representing events genuinely different in kind or mere ad-hoc significations.<sup>360</sup> Notably, terms with specific political connotations in a Roman context, such as '*comitium*' (an assembly held for formal votes and elections) and '*contio*' (an assembly held for formal political debate and public

---

<sup>358</sup> Caesar's references to important meetings: *BG* 1.4, 1.19, 1.31, 5.6, 5.56, 6.13, 6.20, 7.1, 7.33, 7.75.

<sup>359</sup> Notable examples in relation to Rhône Basin contexts being the conspiracy of Orgetorix (*BG* 1.2) and the illicit attempted elevation of Cottos to \**Vergobretos* of the Aedui (*BG* 7.33).

<sup>360</sup> Lewuillon, 1975: 559-62.



consultation), are never used.<sup>361</sup> This would suggest that, despite their clear significance in Gallic society and political organisation, the assemblies as observed by Caesar were not sufficiently similar to those practiced at Rome for easy one-to-one comparisons.

Archaeological evidence also would appear to point to connections between Gallic *oppida* as centres of power and large-scale popular assemblies, rather than small gatherings of rarefied elites. Near Bibracte, an uncovered wide rectangular space of raised ground protected by earthworks is theorised to have been a campground for large-scale assemblies, such as the *concilia totius Galliae* mentioned to have been held there on at least two occasions (*BG* 1.31 and 7.75).<sup>362</sup> Moore, similarly, argues for a view of *oppida* as sites of mass population gathering on temporary bases (of which political assemblies would have been a key part) comparing the large enclosed interior spaces with limited evidence of permanent constructions to similar assembly venues in other cultures (such as Thingvellir Plain in the Icelandic Commonwealth, the Hill of Tara in Early Medieval Ireland, and Great Zimbabwe).<sup>363</sup> The contrast between this emphasis on large, open-air gathering spaces as part of *oppida* as monumental centres and the dearth of archaeological evidence for elite palatial residences is rather suggestive of a public rather than private approach to political decision-making. Rather

---

<sup>361</sup> North, 2006: 261-2.

<sup>362</sup> The oppidum site of Titelburg (in the territory of the Treveri) also preserves signs of raised palisade corridors opening perpendicular to the settlement's main thoroughfare in a style that has been interpreted as reminiscent of the '*saeptae*' voting booths of the Roman Campus Martius. Fichtl, 2012: 44-8.

<sup>363</sup> For a comparison closer in time and space to Late Iron Age Gaul, the author notes that Strabo's reference to British 'cities' as gathering places for people and livestock fenced by woodland and earthworks (*Geog.* 4.5.1) maps well onto his theory regarding continental oppida. Moore, 2017: 290-3.

than a narrow elite who ruled and managed affairs behind closed doors (actual or metaphorical), the *'principes'* of Late Iron Age Gaul seem to have conducted their business in the public eye in accordance with established (albeit not necessarily written) bodies of law.

The low standing of Gallic *'plebes'* as seen by the two authors is arguable best understood through the lens of their being relatively discriminated against in their legal standing to speak at public assemblies. In contrast with the ideals of Athenian Democracy (in which all citizens were theoretically equal before the *'Εκκλησία* under the rights of *ίσηγορία*) and the Roman Late Republic (in which the Centuriate Assembly was theoretically endowed with sovereignty and the Tribune of the Plebeians existed as a check on the aristocratic power of the Senate), the Gallic masses lacked a guarantor of their political rights as individuals either in the form of legal precept or institutional representation.<sup>364</sup> A key role of the Gallic *'magistratus'* as described by Caesar, though with some ambiguity as to whether he refers to magistrates collegially or to the *'summus magistratus'* alone, is the handling of sensitive information in regard to public assemblies (*BG* 6.20). As it derives from the highly suspect ethnographic excursus of the *Commentarii* and forms part of the Othering characterisation of Gallic irrational mercuriality, we should treat this assertion with scepticism. However, in contrast to the descriptions of the Druids, however, it does at least relate to descriptions of popular assemblies as mentioned elsewhere in the

---

<sup>364</sup> For the rights of ordinary citizens in Roman and Athenian political assemblies see Mitchell, 2006: 371; Raaflaub, 2006: 398; North, 2006: 261-2; Yakobson, 2006: 391-3; and Cartledge, 2013: 151-4.

text and by other sources (most notably Strabo). If credited, Caesar's testimony would suggest that magistrates were charged with the convening and management of public assemblies, as organs of policy. However, considering the importance of public assemblies as a venue of political decision-making and the apparent basis of the ruling classes' power in their support from factions of the populace, it would follow that elites as faction leaders could utilise their position to push their agendas effectively. Our available sources suggest that oratory was a key part of their way of life and encouraged as a source of power, honour, and status, implying a political culture of discourse, debate, and consensus-building rather than straightforward diktat.<sup>365</sup> Officeholders may have had the theoretical power to control the flow of sensitive information and organise the holding of assemblies, but that did not necessarily mean they had complete control of how said assemblies went. An important point here is that the ruling class largely derived their power and influence in the context of assemblies from their leadership and/or standing within factions and other groups bound by ties of support and obligation. They were treated as authorities over, and representatives of, larger swathes of the populace, giving their voices in council far greater weight than any individual Gallic peasant could have, and only matched by the special reverence afforded to the learned advice of the druids.

---

<sup>365</sup> Verger, 2009: 67. Latin references to Gallic enthusiasm for rhetoric are common across a broad chronological spectrum, ranging from fragments of the second century BCE Cato the Elder (who comments that the Gauls favour public speaking and martial prowess above all things, *Origines* Fr.33 Cornell, 2013: 176-6), through first and second century authors such as Tacitus (*Agr.* 21) and Juvenal (*Sat.* 15.110-112), to later Gallo-Roman writers such as Ausonius (*Prof. Burd.* especially).

The overall impression given by available sources of the political system as practiced by the early to mid-first century BCE Aedui (and presumably their neighbours in the Upper Rhône Basin) is of one with many similarities to that of the Roman Republic but several key differences. For the Roman Republic, the concept of service to the '*res publica*' was the driving force behind the operation of government (as magisterial offices had no attached salary and there was no professional bureaucracy) and was the sole legitimate source of social status and advancement.<sup>366</sup> For the Aedui *et al.*, amongst whom there is no clearly established *cursus honorum* of sequential honours, factionalism was apparently ubiquitous and culturally favoured, and private citizens held potentially greater sway over public opinion than senators or officials, it would seem that this was not the case.

The political structures of the peoples of the Lower Rhône Valley, especially after their incorporation into the province of Gallia Transalpina, are even harder to reconstruct than those of their nominally independent counterparts further north. Caesar provides titbits of information on them at only three instances in the *Commentarii*. At the height of the revolt of 52BCE, Vercingetorix attempted to secure the loyalty of the Allobroges (known for their earlier rebellions against Roman rule) by offering gifts of money to their '*principes*' (suggesting possession of a relatively similar elite class among them as amongst the Aedui *et al.*) and the promise of granting them "*imperium*" over the other peoples of the province

---

<sup>366</sup> Rosenstein, 2006, p371.

(implying a hierarchy of relations with each other).<sup>367</sup> Elsewhere, two members of a pre-eminent family among the Helvii (and/or Allobroges) are introduced; Gaius Valerius Procillus, son of G. Valerius Caburus, who is introduced acting as Caesar's interpreter and envoy (*BG* 1.19), another '*adulescens*' and a second generation Roman citizen whose father was enfranchised by G. Valerius Flaccus during his governorate of Transalpina (c.83BCE), and later his brother, G. Valerius Donnotaurus, described as "*princeps civitatis*" amongst his people during the conflict of 52BCE.<sup>368</sup>

The consistent impression left by the sources is of a society in which fierce competition existed for status and pre-eminence amongst members of the elite, in which each members' position relative to others was keenly observed and frequently contested. While a relatively impermeable barrier appears to have existed between the ruling class and the masses, the ruling class itself was a dynamic group in which individuals could rise and fall dramatically.

### 3.3.3 Gallo-Roman Provincial Political Offices

Following the Augustan Settlement and the provincial reforms undertaken by the new princeps, the changing political landscape of the Rhône Basin provided new challenges and opportunities for its inhabitants. Local constitutions adapted and evolved in response to changes in population groupings and new relationships to Roman

---

<sup>367</sup> Caesar was, at this time, governor of the province itself and thus had broad latitude to make such promises and act upon them. For powers of first century BCE pro-consular provincial governors see Barrandon and Hurllet, 2009: 57-8.

<sup>368</sup> Procillus is recorded to have been imprisoned by Ariovistus and narrowly escaped being used as a human sacrifice (*BG* 1.47-52) but does not appear in later parts of the work. Between his stated youth and his brother's stated status, it is possible that Procillus is the younger of the two, with Donnotaurus as the primary heir to Caburus and leader of the Helvii.

provincial government including the distribution of Latin rights to certain groups and settlements but not to others. A stumbling block to examining the evolution of local politics and officeholding in the late first century BCE Rhône Basin is the dearth of contemporary written evidence from the period. It is possible, for the most part, to reconstruct the constitutions of many Gallo-Roman settlements in periods after the turn of the millennium, many decades later, on the basis of their epigraphic records.<sup>369</sup> The difficulty there, however, is ascertaining in how far these later stages of development can be reliably traced back to their earlier origins.

The degree to which the shift from older regimes to that of Roman provincial *civitates* was radical one in terms of officeholding is debateable. On the one hand, government by elected officials drawn from the local ruling class on basis of limited magistracies had been a well-established norm. On the other, the change of venue from oppida, shrines, or other rural meeting places to appointed urban centres and the recording, if not conducting, of government business in the Latin language was a substantial departure.<sup>370</sup> This movement from indigenous Gallic to more overtly Roman political structures and offices was likely a gradual rather than immediate one, with the transformation only complete in most *civitates* by the later first century CE.<sup>371</sup>

The key vectors of potential change in the powers of the ruling classes (and social mobility or stratification) revolve both around

---

<sup>369</sup> For a good survey of the available evidence in this vein, though focussed on the *Tres Galliae* rather than the Rhône Basin specifically, see Dondin-Payre, 1999: 134-6.

<sup>370</sup> MacMullen, 2000: 96.

<sup>371</sup> Jullian, 2015/1898: 129.

potential differences between the powers and responsibilities entailed by pre- and post-conquest magisterial offices and around who was able to run for and acquire such positions.

The majority of settlements granted the *ius Latii* in the Triumviral and Augustan Eras of the late first century BCE were located in the Lower Rhône Valley. While precise dates and circumstances of their legal elevation remains a matter of contention due to the dearth of clear evidence, major examples include Nemausus, Avennio, Carpentorate, Apta, Vasio, and Valentia.<sup>372</sup> Aside from being a means to reward and elevate Gallic groups perceived as useful allies by the Roman government, a potential motivation for granting Latin rights to specific settlements and their inhabitants (rather than enfranchise individuals and/or their families as could be done with citizenship itself) was to reshape the local juridical landscape along more familiar, urbanised lines for the benefit of Roman administrators.<sup>373</sup> Alongside the creation of Narbonensis as a 'senatorial' province of the new Roman Empire and the creation of citizen *coloniae* at Arelate, Arausio, and Lugdunum, this was likely a major contributing factor in the evolving cultural divide between the Lower and Upper areas of the Rhône Basin, and the former's increasing alignment with the world of Rome and Italy.

Strabo's description of the region gives us a rare insight into the political landscape of the Lower Rhône Valley in the Augustan Era, particularly focussed on Nemausus. He records (*Geog.* 4.1.12) that the settlement was headed by magistrates bearing the titles of

---

<sup>372</sup> See Table 1.

<sup>373</sup> Fournier, 2009: 208.

'aedile' and 'quaestor', who, by dint of their office, were automatically granted Roman citizenship. If the same, or at least a similar, arrangement, held true for other settlements in Narbonensis endowed with the *ius Latii* then this could have led to the enfranchisement of substantial numbers of Gallic elites in the region over the course of the Augustan Era.<sup>374</sup> Given the very real benefits that this legal elevation could give individuals and their families (if passed on), this development likely created a much greater emphasis on officeholding itself as a means of gaining and exercising power, as opposed to earlier situations like that of Dubnoreix's extra-constitutional control over Aeduan politics through his factional influence.

A change brought about by the new regime, then, would seem to be a much closer alignment of officialdom (in so far as it can be said to have existed) and influence over matters of policy. While it is likely that traditional factional and communal ties remained alive and well in the decades following the conclusion of the Gallic Wars, changes in the constitutional frameworks and processes that governed the civic administration (and military organisation) of Gallic communities in the Rhône Basin would have considerably weakened the power that could be wielded by such groups against the power of officials now backed by the institutional might of Rome.

---

<sup>374</sup> Ebel suggests as many as 7,000 new citizens over a period of 20 years in the late first century BCE, but this may well be an overestimate and relies on Nemausan magistracies operating on the same basis as those in Roman Italy, which they may not have done. Ebel, 1988: 590.



## 3.4 Colonial and Imperial Interactions

### 3.4.1 Provincial Governors and Agents in the Rhône Region

Following the initial campaigning forays by Roman forces into the Lower Rhône region in the 120sBCE, more and more of the territory adjoining the river system came under the dominance of the Roman state, whose most direct supervision and administration came in the form of provincial governors and their agents. Although the precise date and circumstances at which the area came under the purview of regularised provincial government remain debated, largely due to paucity of hard evidence, it is clear that Roman officials were exercising power over the region from the early first century BCE onwards.<sup>375</sup> To what extent and in what ways, then, did those who wielded this power shape and influence the political landscape and status competitions of the region?

Within the political system of the Roman Republic, there was no singular institutional position of 'provincial governor', with prescribed remits and limitations, but rather a variety of diversely titled officials who acted in a supervisory role over a territorial province.<sup>376</sup>

Following its conquest and incorporation, Gallia Transalpina was among the provinces available to both pro-praetors and pro-consuls upon completion of their year in office. It, however, tended to be a consular rather than praetorian assignment, due to the perception

---

<sup>375</sup> It is possible that the area was not designated a formal province until the time of the Sertorian War, with Fonteius being its inaugural governor, assigned to assist to Pompey as a kind of regional deputy. There is ultimately, however, too little evidence to offer a firm conclusion. Kirbiher, 2009: 31.

<sup>376</sup> Barrandon and Hurlet, 2009: 35-6. It should be remembered that the Latin term '*provincia*' originally designated a sphere of political competence rather than a territorial unit, with 'provincial' assignments including war efforts, judicial activities, or even public building projects in addition to annexed regions. For the gradual evolution of the significances see Badian, 2012; and Drogula, 2015: 296-7.

that it would entail a substantial amount of military activity and the grave responsibility of using one's position there to defend Italy from potential threats from the north.<sup>377</sup> The more limited plenipotentiary latitude granted to pro-praetors in matters of diplomacy and war-making mean that their military role as provincial governors could be analogised to that of local garrison commanders in contrast to the more expansionistic role played by pro-consuls.<sup>378</sup>

Aside from using provinces as a military base from which to counter local insurgencies or launch wars of conquest further afield, the primary responsibilities for those acting as provincial governors in the Late Republican and Augustan Eras were the dispensation of local justice and the supervision of tax collection.<sup>379</sup> The former activity was largely practiced through the holding of the '*conventus*', a form of local assizes. Unfortunately, almost all available evidence for how these operated derives from imperial period Egypt and Africa Proconsularis (with a few chronologically late traces of it in Baetica), making it difficult to apply such information to the very different contexts of Late Republican Gallia Transalpina and the Triumviral/early Augustan Gallic provinces.<sup>380</sup> Provincial tax collection was not carried out by the governor's staff themselves, but rather through *publicani* (privatised tax farmers employed by the Roman state under contract).<sup>381</sup> The governor's role in such affairs appears to have been largely concerned with the mediation of rather

---

<sup>377</sup> Barrandon and Hurlet, 2009: 39.

<sup>378</sup> Drogula, 2015: 301.

<sup>379</sup> Barrandon and Hurlet, 2009: 52.

<sup>380</sup> Fournier, 2009: 213-14.

<sup>381</sup> For Late Republican Provincial tax collections see Hopkins, 1980: 122; D'Arms, 1986: 24-30; Kehoe, 2013: 36-7; and Dench, 2018: 81.

inevitable conflicts between collection agents and the local populace. Taxes were raised in a number of ways, ranging from the common '*vectigalia*' (traditionally a levy on imports and exports equivalent to a twentieth of the value of the goods in question), to forms of '*stipendium*' and '*tributum*' which varied on the treaty statuses of specific communities of *peregrini*.<sup>382</sup> The vested authority of Late Republican provincial governors of Gallia Transalpina, especially of pro-consular rank, over their lands should be not be underestimated. In 67-66BCE, then governor G. Calpurnius Piso utilised his power over the region to deny access to its land and resources to Pompey in his Mediterranean-wide campaign against piracy under the *lex Gabinia* (which Piso had vehemently opposed when consul).<sup>383</sup>

The picture painted by the available textual evidence of relations between the Gauls of the Lower Rhône and pre-Caesarian Republican administrative regimes is a consistently bleak one. Jullian, writing in the 1890s, was quick to compare the perceived attitudes of Roman governors of the first century BCE to the rapacious, exploitative practices of his contemporaries in the colonial regimes of the British Raj and French Indochina.<sup>384</sup> This picture has largely been echoed by later scholars.<sup>385</sup> Some nuancing of the matter can be achieved, however. A point made clearer by recent studies is that provincial governor posts did not provide many opportunities for personal enrichment, especially for pro-praetors

---

<sup>382</sup> For local taxation regimes see Drinkwater, 1983: 100. For the treaty statuses of conquered Gallic communities see Lafon, 2009: 290 and Thollard, 2009: 84-5.

<sup>383</sup> Plut. *Pomp.* 27.1; Dio 36.37.2-3. Drogula, 2015: 322.

<sup>384</sup> Jullian, 2015: 106

<sup>385</sup> Barrandon and Hurlet, 2009: 66.

unable to start wars of conquest, as most of the revenue generated by 'pacified' provinces went to the *publicani* active there rather than the governor.<sup>386</sup> Trials for extortion and malpractice in the conduct of governorship appear to have had potentially serious consequences for the accused.<sup>387</sup> Much of Fonteius' rapacity of the resources of the Gauls, as his apparent defence at trial attempted to make clear, was done on the basis of providing supplies and auxiliary troops to the ongoing war effort, led by Pompey, against Sertorius in Hispania, rather than for his own benefit.<sup>388</sup> In light of these factors, it is perhaps not surprising that provincial commands do not appear to have been especially popular among the early first century BCE Roman political class, and the passing of the *lex Pompeia de provinciis* (making it compulsory for ex-magistrates to take up a governorship within five years of leaving office) in 52BCE, intended to ensure sufficient recruits to manage the outlying regions of the empire.<sup>389</sup>

The position of provincial governor within the society of early first century BCE Gallia Transalpina was a complex one. On the one hand, as the vested representative of the hegemonic Roman state in

---

<sup>386</sup> Blösel, 2016: 76-7.

<sup>387</sup> The archetypal example is Cicero's early case against G. Verres, pro-praetorian governor of Sicily 73-71BCE, whose corruption (up to and including stripping the ornamentation from local temples) and disregard for legality (to the point of visiting torture on Roman citizens) are painted in vivid colours in the surviving court oratory of the *In Verrem*. Upon conviction, the defendant went into permanent exile from Rome, apparently taking up residence in Massalia.

<sup>388</sup> This can be taken as support of Erdkamp's summation that economic exploitation of conquered regions was, somewhat ironically, more of a by-product of Rome's continued imperial expansionism rather than a motivating factor for it. Rossignol, 2009: 89.

<sup>389</sup> Against traditionalist suggestions that provincial posts were typically utilised by aspiring politicians to build up funds for consular campaigns after the conclusion of their praetorian terms of office, a survey of the available *fasti* of c.80-50BCE suggests that as many as 50% of all pro-praetors (and many pro-consuls) refused such a command. Blösel, 2016: 72-4.

the region, they had unchallengeable pre-eminence in power and status over both the *peregrini* communities and Roman citizens (whether resident or visiting). On the other, as the official representative of the Roman state, they were bound to heed the instructions given to them by the senate and sitting magistrates and had a number of limitations on the actions they were permitted to take (depending on their specific rank).<sup>390</sup> The gradual trend towards greater provincial permanence and longer terms of office for governing officials likely encouraged better relations with local communities due to sustained interaction, in contrast with earlier tendencies towards short-term military campaigning before returning to Rome.<sup>391</sup> For the Gallic peoples of the region, the governor and his staff were the first port-of-call for all political and legal matters relating to Roman rule.

As previously mentioned, while Gallia Narbonensis returned to the status of 'senatorial' province governed by a former Roman magistrate under Augustus, the new '*Tres Galliae*' further north remained part of the princeps' administrative remit and were governed by his appointed officers. Furthermore, Lugdunum itself acted as a base for Augustus and his court during the c.16-13BCE Germanic campaigns, giving the Gauls dwelling in the vicinity (and those with the ability to travel there) potential access to the Princeps himself, or at least his more immediate underlings.<sup>392</sup>

---

<sup>390</sup> Barrandon and Hurlet, 2009: 47-57.

<sup>391</sup> Drogula, 2015: 303-4.

<sup>392</sup> Tchernia, 2016: 106.

Strabo's description of Nemausus and the operation of the Latin right there (*Geog.* 4.1.12) also stresses that the privilege granted the political community of the settlement, as well as the wider Volcae Arecomici as a people, were granted a measure of autonomy from the commands of the “στρατηγῶν” (‘generals’) sent by Rome to the province. While the assumption would be that this referred to the provincial governors dispatched by the Senate, the potential ambiguity of the wording and use of Greek over Latin terminology leave the exact parameters of this status uncertain.<sup>393</sup> At the very least it would suggest that a substantial part of the provincial population could no longer be treated with the kind of predatory greed that appears to have been the order of the day in the early first century BCE. Another sign, it would seem, that the acquisition and maintenance power and status among the peoples of the Rhône Valley were intimately tied to integration with Roman models of political culture.

### 3.4.2 Roman Senatorial, Triumviral, and Imperial Patrons for Gallic Clients

A technology of social power that cannot be ignored in this discussion is the ways in which the Gallic peoples of the Rhône Basin entered into relationships with leading figures of Roman politics through bonds of patronage and clientship.<sup>394</sup> These

---

<sup>393</sup> E.g., if this was a unique condition of the Volcae Arecomici unshared by their neighbours, if it was an exemption from the governors' rights of *imperium* or merely from the *conventus* etc.

<sup>394</sup> The primary evidence for the process of '*deditio in finem*' engendering formal patron-client relations between the conquering commander and conquered populace is drawn from Cicero *Off.* 1.35, but appears to be supported by other allusions and references, explored further below. See also Lafon, 2009: 298-9, Arbabe, 2017: 123-4, and Dench, 2018: 31.

relationships, and the reciprocal responsibilities they entailed, were inherited by said commander's heirs, providing a certain amount of continuity.<sup>395</sup> The most notable example of this trend can be found in the relationship between the Allobroges and the *gens Fabia* as a result of Fabius Maximus Allobrogicus' acceptance of the Allobroges' formal surrender in the campaign of 121BCE.<sup>396</sup>

The political efficacy of this bond, and others like it, however, appears to have been limited. The clout wielded by patrons such as the Fabii waxed and waned with the often rapidly shifting tides of Senatorial politics.<sup>397</sup> It must be observed that, as dependent peoples, the Gauls of the Lower Rhône could not summon Roman officials to observe conditions or resolve issues within the province of Gallia Transalpina but were forced to send envoys (often of high standing) to Rome itself to seek redress of grievances. If Sallust's accounts of their experiences there can be taken as truthful and typical, then, once there, such emissaries could easily be fobbed off by an unsympathetic Senate and forced to treat with freedmen and other retainers acting as go-betweens (Sall. *Cat.* 40.1-3). While the Allobroges did possess a senatorial hereditary patron at Rome in the 60sBCE, in the person of Q. Fabius Sanga, his influence was not

---

<sup>395</sup> The heredity of patron-client relations in Roman society is said to have originated with Romulus himself (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.9.2-3). Deniaux, 2006: 401. See also Eckstein, 2009: 253-5 and Burton, 2016: 857-8.

<sup>396</sup> For a case study on this specific topic see Moore, 2021: 32-45.

<sup>397</sup> Q. Fabius Sanga, patron of the Allobroges during the Catilinarian Conspiracy 63BCE (Sall. *Cat.* 40.5-41.5), while a senator, is securely known only from this reference, suggesting comparative obscurity, while the grandson of Allobrogicus, Q. Fabius Maximus, only began climbing the *cursus honorum* in 57BCE (Broughton, 1951: 201), the intervening generation having apparently produced no noteworthy political success. As such the familial line endowed with the crucial patronage would likely have had limited *auctoritas* to sway matters on behalf of the Allobroges between the late second century BCE and mid-first.

expansive and there is no way of knowing how committed he was to advocacy for his Gallic clients beyond the demands of familial duty.<sup>398</sup>

In addition to relationships between entire provincial communities and prominent Roman families, those between prominent Gallic and Roman individuals as clients and patrons could also be significant. Both Pompeii and Caesar inculcated patron-client relations with members of the ruling classes of Gallic polities, which frequently involved the latter's enfranchisement as a *'beneficium'*.<sup>399</sup> As well as Pompeii and Julii, the period also saw the emergence of southern Gallic Valerii (enfranchised by G. Valerius Flaccus, including the apparent ruling dynasty of the Helvii) and Corneli (possibly enfranchised by L. Cornelius Balbus or by P. Cornelius Lentulus Crus), whose descendants appear frequently in imperial era textual sources and epigraphy, point to this exchange of citizenship in return for support and favours was a common practice in Gallia Transalpina/Narbonensis, and must have entailed mutual advantages.<sup>400</sup>

The Gallic Wars and Triumviral Period, as with so many things, marked a point of sea change in patron-client relations between the Gauls of the Rhône and the ruling elite of Rome. To be a client of Caesar was not to have a single advocate of variable influence and possible suspect commitment but to have the aid and protection of

---

<sup>398</sup> Deniaux, 2006: 411.

<sup>399</sup> Deniaux, 2006: 415-16.

<sup>400</sup> It may also be noted that the rarity of appearance of Claudii, Flavii, Ulpii, or Aurelii in the records of the area suggests that the social hierarchy of the region remained dominated by those families whose citizen status originated in the first century BCE, with little sign of being replaced by proteges of later Imperial monarchs or dynasties. Christol, 2015: 157-8.



the most powerful individual in Gaul (c.58-50BCE) and later the Roman world itself. The advent of the Principate brought this shift even further. With a single, permanent ruler with which to entreat, the peoples of the Rhône were no longer dependent on the unreliable mercies of the Senate to seek resolution of political matters.<sup>401</sup> Those who enjoyed the favour of Augustus, or his associates, held a place high honour and influence that could scarcely be challenged.

The relationship between Rhône Gallic clients and Roman patrons, especially those of a personal rather than communal basis, was consistently a major factor in the formers' advancement and security of social status, only becoming more important over time. The practice, did, however, underline the inequality of the two cultures.

### 3.5 Conclusions

Having examined the available evidence and its viable interpretations a few generalisations about the nature of political organisation and power in the Late Iron Age Gallic societies of the Rhône Basin emerge. From what can be gathered, these communities were dominated collectively by a demographically relatively large ruling class defined in part by aristocratic ancestry and reproduced (in a very literal sense) by practices of exogamy between political groups. This aristocratic form of social organisation was reflected in a broad tendency toward oligarchic political organisation, with constitutions designed to share power between a variety of offices and limit the capacity of particular dynasties to

---

<sup>401</sup> Arbabe, 2017: 123-4.

monopolise leadership. However, the emphasis laid on mass assemblies as organs of politics and military activity and the formation of factions out of retinues of clients, *\*ambacti*, and other dependents engendered the competitive norms of these oligarchies with currents of tension and, at times, outright conflict.

The impression we receive from Caesar is one of a pre-existing state of crisis in political culture, with the Aeduan, Helvetian, and Arvernian constitutions under strain from the unchecked power of non-state actors amongst the elite, while the Sequanian one began the period of conquest utterly overrun by a foreign autocrat. If we are correct to assume that the regimes of figures like Toutomotulos and Bituitos were tyrannical rather than legitimately monarchical, it would follow that the instability of Gallic political regimes was not limited to the upper reaches of the Rhône Basin in the mid-first century BCE. What is lacking from this impression, however, is any real evidence of class struggle. The various would-be or successful tyrants of Late Iron Age Rhône Gaul may have relied on popular support, but they were very much members of the established nobility and frequently close relatives of their more constitutionally empowered rivals.<sup>402</sup> Rather than revolutions in the Marxist sense, such conflicts and crises were struggles between factions within and/or individual members of the extant ruling class, providing little if any opportunity for social mobility from below.

The primary impacts of Roman conquest and the provincial reforms of the Early Augustan Era on the political cultures of the Rhône

---

<sup>402</sup> The fraternal relationship of Dubnoreix and Dividiacos and the avuncular one between Vercingetorix and Gobanniðio being the strongest examples.

Basin were to enforce a greater rigidity of constitutional norms and powers of local governance, weaken the capacities of local elites to build influential retinues separate from conventional lawmakers, and reinforce the importance of patronal ties to members of the Roman ruling class as a factor of power and influence. The result being a decline in the intra-class mobility of the local ruling classes in favour of increased stratification of rank. The Julii of the region were those who could parlay their status as Gallic aristocrats into Gallo-Roman *nobiles* whose acquisition of '*principatus*' status was no longer a matter of marshalling factional resources but increasingly of assured dynastic succession.

## 4 Those who live by the Sword - Military Power

### 4.1 Defining Military Power

Following our modified version of Mann's IEMP model, as we have done so far throughout the thesis, military power can be defined, in the simplest terms, as the capacity for organised violence either in threat or in deed. In the Gramscian lens, it is the rawest and most basic component of dominion: the capacity of a ruling class to coerce and repress its subjects by force. The ideological aspect of military power, and its analysis in terms of technologies of social power, as explored in this chapter requires some further definition, however. Beyond the simple capacity to enact violence, at any level from the individual combatant to the fully constituted and logistically supported army, it is important to interrogate the role that violence plays in the composition of elite ideology. A key aspect of this ideological fashioning lies in how a distinction can be drawn

between armed violence (or threat) considered 'legitimate' (in that it is legally, political, and/or culturally sanctioned) and that which is considered 'illegitimate' (in the case of behaviour considered criminal and/or immoral), although something of a grey area exists regarding activities of rebellion/insurgency. Another, closely related, aspect to consider is how much weight military capacity, and in what formats, was given as a constituent component of elite identity relative to other qualities.

Through the lens of social hierarchy, and the stratification and mobility thereof, military activity, defined as legitimated violence, provides at least two differing but complimentary perspectives. On the one hand, at the simplest level, the ability to inflict or threaten violence can affect one's status, especially if utilised in a transactional context such as serving higher status individuals as a warrior in exchange for rewards. On the other, military power can mean the capacity to command others to perform military activities on one's behalf, and to utilise this to maintain or increase one's social power in other vectors (e.g., acquisition of wealth through plunder, military victory as a source of political capital etc.).

On these bases, this chapter is divided into four main sections examining different areas of the subject of military power in the context of Rhône Gallic societies c.125-10BCE. The first examines evidence for the status of local elite classes as warriors and the potential role of interpersonal violence as a defining characteristic of rank within those social brackets. The second considers evidence pertaining to the organisation of military matters (especially as entails issues of command) and what that reveals about the hard

power that local elites could wield, and its relation to structures of civil administration. The third section examines evidence of participation in military activity on the part of the non-ruling classes of the communities in question and what opportunities, if any, this may have provided for social mobility in either direction. The fourth and final of these sections considers the impact of Roman conquest and domination on these areas, in the realignment of borders of legitimate and illegitimate violence under a new regime and the roles and experiences of Rhône Gallic warriors as allied and/or auxiliary troops serving under Roman commanders during our period of study.

As should be consistently noted, there are many things we cannot reliably reconstruct due to lack of evidence. For example, we have way of knowing how individual Gallic warriors or soldiers may have reacted to their experiences of combat or what their aspirations for advancement may have been. Unable to give every question a definitive answer, our primary concern should again be to consider which hypotheses can be considered plausible and which not.

## 4.2 Prowess – The Indigenous ‘Warrior Elite’ of the Rhône Basin

To understand how interaction with the Roman world affected the relationship between military activity and social status among the peoples of the Rhône Basin, it is necessary to first examine how that relationship may have functioned prior to the Roman conquest. War and violence were factors of life in second and first century BCE western Europe, presenting both threats to be addressed and opportunities for those who could exploit them. Relevant questions

on this issue include what motivated individuals and/or groups to take up arms, who had the authority to lead them, and what impacts did armed conflict have on the social fabric?

Although this thesis is not aimed at reaching a more definitive understanding of war and military organisation in Late Iron Age Gaul, it is necessary to examine theoretical models, predicated on the available evidence, for reconstructing how the peoples of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin conceptualised military affairs in order to consider how they related to the potential maintenance, advancement, or loss of social status. This will be done by examining both how military matters contributed to the power of ruling classes/upper strata of society and how they contributed to the mobility or stratification of the rest of the populace.

#### 4.2.1 Heroes of Old?

When describing the describing the cultures and particularly the attitudes to war held by the Gauls, Greek and Latin authors tended to frame them in terms of martial heroism, painting tableaux of boastful, raucous warriors vying for supremacy, eager to demonstrate their prowess and jealous of their reputations, often invoking the Homeric epics either directly or indirectly for analogy.<sup>403</sup> An anecdotal description of Gallic banqueting practices, related by Athenaeus (*Deip.* 4.40) but originally attributed to Posidonius, alludes to the importance of martial prowess and display to the societies of the early first century Lower Rhône. Duels, sparring

---

<sup>403</sup> This can be viewed in relation to the tendencies towards varieties of ideological primitivism in ancient Greek ethnography. For overviews of these trends see Woolf, 2011 and Krebs, 2011.

sessions, and battle drills, in which there was apparently genuine danger of violence escalating to fatality, were a customary part of the festivities. Furthermore, duels to the death were fought over the choice thigh portion of meat served, reserved for the one reputed the best warrior present. A similar picture is drawn by Diodorus, whose Gauls reward good men with the finest cuts of meat (illustrated with an Iliadic parallel) and are quick to seize on even trivial matters upon which to provoke fights to the death over dinner (*Lib. Hist.* 5.28.4-5). In a society described as such, the social technology of martial prowess, both demonstrable and reputed, was an important source of prestige and social capital, and would appear to indicate a hierarchy in which the physically mighty ruled and/or could advance and the weak were ruled and/or would fall. Was the Rhône Basin then a world dominated by heroic warriors prior to the advent of Roman domination?

The picture is, on reflection, complicated by a variety of factors when archaeological, iconographic, and a wider variety of textual sources, as well as greater contextualisation and close reading, are taken into account. If the 'heroic' culture described by Posidonius and Diodorus was in any way informed by reality, it is most likely to have reflected a way of life practiced only by the social elite, rather than by the population generally. The promise that poets would sing one's praises in victory or eulogise one's glorious death may well have been an effective motivation for a well-equipped member of the nobility whose name was widely recognised. But could an ordinary foot-soldier, armed with little more than spear and shield, whose identity was likely known only to his close friends and family

members, expect to perform and be recognised for glorious feats on the battlefield? If this was the case, we would expect to find evidence (archaeological, textual, or iconographic) of a high-ranking warrior class, with an emphasis on display and visibility, existing in distinction from the wider populace.

A possible iconographic/archaeological source for a heroic warrior aristocracy can be drawn from *accroupis* statues gathered at Entremont, which would appear to be representations of warriors as figures of prestige, even veneration. Furthermore, the figures are depicted wearing a form of leather and metal cuirass, physical remains of which are almost entirely absent in the archaeological record of contemporaneous burials.<sup>404</sup> This absence could be taken to indicate great rarity of certain forms of elite military equipment, in turn suggestive of an overt distinction between the venerated martial ruling class and the common folk in the third and second century BCE Lower Rhône Valley.

Further evidence for a possible distinction between a warrior class and the rest of the populace, as well as the former's associations with feasting, could be drawn from the burial complex site of St-Laurent-des-Arbres near Nîmes, where a prominent grave is marked by the inclusion of a sword and helmet (but also a ladle), contrasted with at least 42 other burials lacking martial grave goods.<sup>405</sup> A further point of differentiation in terms of equipment could take the form of helmets, whose combined rarity in Gallic archaeological contexts and apparent emphasis on ornamentation (in the form of attached

---

<sup>404</sup> Lantier, 1951: 279.

<sup>405</sup> Pleiner, 1993: 45.



figural forms, horns, or crests) over combat efficacy may have made them prestige items used to distinguish and identify members of the ruling elite on the battlefield.<sup>406</sup>

Turning to textual evidence for a heroic warrior aristocracy, descriptions of Bituitos, leader of the Arverni at the time of the Saluvian-Allobrogan War (c.125-123BCE), and his associates preserve some possible indications of a culture of warrior heroism on the part of Gallic ruling classes. According to Appian's *Embassies* (12.1), the king's ambassador met the forces of Domitius Ahenobarbus clad in ornate robes and accompanied by bodyguards, guard-dogs and, most significantly, a musician singing praise of both the king and his envoy. The content of this lyrical laudation rested on the trio of its subjects' ancestry, courage, and wealth, pointing the significance of genealogy and performance of martial feats to the dominant ideology of the culture, but also emphasising the importance of political and economic power rather than militarism alone. Bituitos himself makes an appearance in Florus (1.37.2), put on display as part of the triumphal procession of Fabius Maximus, with his polychromatic armour and silver war-chariot ("just as he had appeared in battle") providing spectacle for the crowd.<sup>407</sup> All this finery and spectacle fits well with Greek and Latin stereotypes of the Gauls as immoderate and vain, but also alludes to a world in which display and reputation, closely tied to military success, were of great importance to the exercise and maintenance of power.<sup>408</sup>

---

<sup>406</sup> Brunaux and Lambot, 1987: 102-104.

<sup>407</sup> Beard, 2007: 135. Further support for the reality of this spectacle can be found in denarius issues of 118BCE (during Fabius Maximus tenure as one of the *tresviri monetales*) showing a Gallic warrior riding in a chariot. Östenberg, 2009: 35-6.

<sup>408</sup> Omrani, 2017: 34.

A phenomenon that could be reflective of the importance of individualised martial prowess and displays pertaining to it to the culture of prestige in the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin is the theorised Gallic practice of headhunting; that is the ritualised taking of and prominent display of severed heads from slain foes as trophies attesting to one's skill at arms. Posidonius, via Strabo (*Geog.* 4.4.5), speaks of Gallic warriors returning from battle with the heads of enemies hung from the reins of their horses, and of personally seeing such grisly trophies nailed above the entranceways of Gallic homes during his time there c.90BCE.<sup>409</sup> The same passage speaks of how the heads of enemies of high status (“τὰς δὲ τῶν ἐυδόξων κεφαλὰς”) were carefully embalmed in cedar oil to preserve their integrity, displayed to visitors, and their owners apparently refused even the most generous attempts by their dead foes' relatives to ransom their remains back.<sup>410</sup> Such a practice would, on first reading, certainly support an impression of a culture of rather brutal, ritualised heroic warfare, in which the slaying of enemies and display of their remains was a source of prestige and possible advancement.

The evidence for the practice of headhunting, and its relationship with prestige and status, in the Late Iron Age Rhône region is, however, more complex and equivocal than Strabo's rendering of Posidonius' testimony would suggest. On the one hand, Classical

---

<sup>409</sup> It is theorised that descriptive differences between those who appear to have relied most heavily on Posidonius for their ethnography and the writings of Caesar may reflect differences in Gallic material culture and society in the shift from the La Tène II/C to La Tène III/D periods. Nash, 1976: 122-3.

<sup>410</sup> This point is echoed by Diodorus (5.29.1-5), likely drawing on the same Posidonian source material. Tierney, 1960: 203-7.

authors describe multiple incidences of decapitation in the context of ‘Celtic’ wars, every instance of such occurs with rather prosaic motivations in the veins of revenge, intimidation, or swift, expedient killing, rather than any deeper ceremony.<sup>411</sup> Similarly, although the martial statuary found at Iron Age sites in the Lower Rhône Valley such as Entremont, Roquepertuse, and Grezan includes disembodied heads as a significant aspect of its iconography (variously in the form of sculpted heads appearing the laps of seated warriors and in the placing of real human skulls in niches built into lintel posts), it is debatable if these represent/constitute martial trophies taken from foes slain in combat or something else entirely.<sup>412</sup> On the other, Armit’s comprehensive study of the phenomenon of ritual decapitation in the European Iron Age and potential anthropological comparanda for the practice notes the unusually dense conglomeration of evidence relating to the Rhône Basin.<sup>413</sup> Strabo’s vivid detail of severed heads hung from the reins of warhorses appears to be supported by finds of traced engravings of armed horsemen accompanied by their gruesome trophies, one taken from a pottery fragment unearthed at Aulnat (dated c.120-80BCE) and another found on a stone pillar at Entremont (third to

---

<sup>411</sup> Notable instances include the slaying of the consul Gaius Aemilius at the Battle of Telamon (Polyb. *Hist.* 2.28), the similar fate of Lucius Postumius during the Second Punic War (Livy 23.24), the death of King Ptolemy ‘Keraunos’ of Macedonia and use of his remains as a trophy by Gallic invaders in 279BCE (Diod. *Lib. Hist.* 14.115), and the vengeance of Chiomara, wife of the Galatian leader Ortiagon, against a Roman guard for sexual assault (Polyb. *Hist.* 21.38, Livy 38.24). See LaBelle, 2015: 3.

<sup>412</sup> Profound distinctions between the treatment of skulls and other human remains at Late Iron Age cultic sites in northern Gaul (notably including Gournay-sur-Aronde and Ribemont-sur-Ancre) and their presentation in the aforementioned southern Gallic contexts has led Häussler to suggest that the latter were remains and/or representations of venerated ancestors rather than defeated enemies. Häussler, 2008: 19. See also Armit, 2012: 99.

<sup>413</sup> Armit, 2012: 15.

second century BCE).<sup>414</sup> A later incidence of prominent severed head iconography can be found in the Aeduan coinage of c.58-4BCE minted under the auspices of Dubnoreixs, wherein a figure of a warrior holding up a severed head takes the central position.<sup>415</sup>

The taking and display of the heads of enemies killed in combat does appear to have been practiced to a certain degree in the region prior to the Roman conquest. However, it was not a standard aspect of Gallic warfare but a specific custom in which members of the elite sought to prove their legitimacy through ritualised duels with enemy leaders and champions.<sup>416</sup> That no references to ritualised duelling or head-taking appear at any point in Caesar's account of the Gallic Wars would suggest that either it was considered inappropriate for the kind of warfare being undertaken at the time or that it had fallen out of favour by the mid-first century BCE.<sup>417</sup>

The concept of warrior heroism is thus one that requires nuance rather than liberality in its application to the late Iron Age Rhône Basin. The heroic ethos suggested by textual, archaeological, and iconographic evidence was one related specifically to issues concerning struggles between factions within the ruling class to maintain dynastic power and build broader hegemonies against each other.<sup>418</sup> In particular, this mode of heroic competition seems to

---

<sup>414</sup> Armit, 2012: 27. See Fig. 13.

<sup>415</sup> Allen and Nash, 1980: 92. See Fig. 14.

<sup>416</sup> In addition to the Iliadic aspects of much this imagery, a point of comparison may be found with the archaic Roman custom of *spolia opima*, a trophy of arms dedicated by a Roman general who had slain an opposing commander in single combat, legendarily instituted by Romulus himself (Livy 1.10, Plut. *Rom.* 16). It may also be suggested, on this basis, that the purpose of ritual head-taking was not to demonstrate one's martial prowess itself *per se* but to emphasise the victorious resolution of conflicts between rival leaders.

<sup>417</sup> Rawlings, 1998: 181.

<sup>418</sup> On this point see Chapter 1 section 7.2 as well as Baines and Yoffee, 2000: 16.

have been tied to expressions of autocratic/monarchical power within the Rhône Basin, whether extant ones like those of Toutomotulos and Bituitos or attempted ones such as that of Dubnoreixs. Thus, they may not have been favoured, or even accepted, in the oligarchic regimes of the middle first century described by Caesar. Ultimately, while aspects of heroic warrior culture were a source of prestige for the ruling elite and their immediate underlings in the mid-to-late second century BCE Rhône Basin, it was never in-and-of-itself a sufficient condition for social power and advancement, as it could only function within the confines of classes already greatly privileged with wealth and perceptions of aristocratic lineage, emphasising the concomitant importance of economic and political power. The pseudo-Homeric picture of their society derived from Posidonian fragments portrays rituals and relationships that are either misrepresented (in terms of simplification, decontextualization, and/or exaggeration), highly localised, or simply anachronistic. While the ruling classes of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin could pull on symbolic representations of warrior heroism to boost their prestige in certain contexts, they were not dependent on proving themselves as heroes in combat to buttress their ideological hegemony.

#### 4.2.2 A War-Mad Race?

While we have argued against the idea that it was by reputations of heroic martial prowess that the elites of Late Iron Age Gallic communities in the Rhône region secured their right to rule, a question does arise as to what extent the ruling classes may have dominated or even monopolised participation in military activity. A

‘warrior elite’ may not necessarily be defined by their capacity for individual skill at arms alone, but rest on the notion that their unique suitability for martial pursuits as a group qualify them to rule over other classes, whose lot is to support them. The concept of ‘*militärische Demokratie*’ or even the ‘Germanic mode’ of production in early Marxian parlance is taken to describe earlier societies which may have existed on this model.<sup>419</sup> The question then is: was armed conflict a sphere of activity in which participation was restricted to certain sectors of Late Iron Age Rhône Gallic society based on status or one in which the majority of the populace could take part?

A common form of ethnographic categorisation of the Gauls favoured by ancient authors is that of a people marked by their bellicose enthusiasm and mass participation in war. Strabo, infamously, asserts that the entire Gallic race is “war-mad” (“*ἀρριμάνιον*” *Geog.* 4.4.2) and eagerly quick to fight. This apparently proverbial quality of Gallic pugnacity is shared in varying forms across the canon of both Greek and Latin descriptions of their culture.<sup>420</sup> While much of this approach boils down to prejudicial generalisation, it would appear to reflect a society in which

---

<sup>419</sup> Kristiansen, 1991: 19. For Engels’ coining of the terms in relationship to descriptions of Iron Age Germanic societies afforded by Caesar and Tacitus see Engels, 2010/1892: 75-9.

<sup>420</sup> Examples can be found in Livy (10.16.6-7, 10.26.8-15, *Ep.* 103-106), Plutarch (*Cam.* 23.4), Sallust (*Cat.* 40.1-2, 53.3-4), Cicero (*Font.* 5.12-13; *Prov. Cons.* 14.34-5; *Rep.* 3.9.16), and Appian (*Celt.* Ep.1-4). Caesar nuances the picture somewhat in shifting the stereotype of Gallic high-spiritedness and emotionality towards flightiness and short-lived enthusiasm for new endeavours and limiting characterisations of militarism to certain Gallic groups (notably the Helvetii and Belgae) and the Germani. Woolf, 2011: 87-8, and Gruen, 2011: 153-5. A Late Antique vignette which takes the characterisation *ad absurdum* is provided by Ammianus Marcellinus, who describes Gallic women as being even more formidable in their strength and ferocity than their male counterparts, utilising an exaggerated simile to compare the force of their blows to that of a catapult (15.12.1).

substantial numbers of the population engaged in warfare, and, if their apparent enthusiasm for it was in any way real, could expect to benefit as a result. What evidence then is there for the Gallic masses taking up arms and participating in conflict and what may have motivated them to do so?

The evidence for mass military participation, especially on an apparently voluntary basis, is unfortunately heavily weighted toward textual sources. Relevant archaeological material in such forms as finds of military equipment, military encampments or battlefields are both relatively rare and difficult to contextualise in relation to class and status. In practical terms, the fighting populace would likely have been distinguished from the social elite in taking to the field in terms of available equipment, but this is based on limited available data.<sup>421</sup> Iconographic sources are similarly few, far between, and weighted towards the social elite.

The available textual evidence regarding Rhône Gallic mass participation in warfare, unsurprisingly, derives foremost from Caesar and secondarily from Strabo. The simplest way in which these writers indicate that, for the Gauls of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin, war was an activity which involved large swathes of the population lies in their testimony to the numbers fielded in conflicts. The Helvetii and Arverni are stated to have campaigned with forces

---

<sup>421</sup> While spears/javelins and shields are comparatively common in La Tène D funerary deposits containing military equipment, the rarity of swords, helmets, and cuirasses suggests were used only by the upper strata of society. Brunaux and Lambot, 1987: 87-104. For the high-status significance of swords see Pleiner, 1993: 35-7. A possible, but likely garbled, distinction between armoured elite Gallic warriors and their unarmoured common counterparts might be found in Diodorus (*Lib. Hist.* 5.30.3), with a description of some Gauls going to battle with mail cuirasses, others wearing tunics overlaid with decorated belts, and others going nude.

hundreds of thousands strong in the second and first centuries BCE, a point which Strabo is keen to link directly with population size based on Gallic women's supposed fecundity (*Geog.* 4.4.3). Appian's account of the Gallic campaign of Fabius Maximus Allobrogicus c.123BCE speaks of a battle in which 120,000 of the foe were slain (*Celt.* Ep.4.2). Caesar's testimony of the defeated Helvetii in their attempted migration (*BG* 1.29) provides more direct confirmation of vast numbers. Furthermore, he notes the apparent discovery of written population records in the Helvetian camp with a division between (adult male) combatants and non-combatants (women, children, the elderly, and infirm). Similarly, Caesar describes debate at the general council taken by Vercingetorix's allies over the raising of relief forces for the Siege of Alésia (*BG* 7.75), with the possibility of conscripting all individuals capable of bearing arms discussed but dismissed on logistical grounds, in favour of imposing a recruitment quota upon each attending delegate to be drawn from their own people. Taken together, these accounts give the impression that the Gallic peoples he encountered had, and frequently utilised, means of assessing their military resources on the basis of the entire community, rather than a limited cadre of warriors distinct from the rest of the populace.

The assumption of military readiness on the part of the general populace in Late Iron Age Gaul may be supported by Caesar's ethnographic description of sons' segregation from their fathers in public (on pain of disgrace) until they are of age to become warriors (*BG* 6.18). If this assertion can be taken as accurate it would imply the existence of a significant rite of passage linked to military activity



separating childhood from adulthood or adolescence in Gallic society, and, in turn, implying that all free male members of society could be expected to participate in warfare.<sup>422</sup> The apparent ubiquity of military capability and even potential access to weapons of war in central and eastern Gaul at this time, is further seemingly evidenced by events c.52BCE, as both Vercingetorix and his partisan Drappes were able to recruit from those at lowest end of the social scale (beggars, outcasts, and even slaves, *BG* 7.4 and 8.30) for their endeavours. This practice, if it did in fact occur, was likely a highly unusual occurrence arising in the strained circumstances of the Caesarian conquest. Considering Caesar's accounts of military assemblies (*BG* 5.56) and ethnographic detail of children below the age at which they are considered militarily competent being excluded from public life (*BG* 6.18), suggestions have made of a strong connection or even synonymity between a concept of citizenship and warrior status in Gallic societies.<sup>423</sup> While this a hypothesis with some promise, it runs the risk of ignoring more holistic views of the evidence, particularly in relation to political and economic factors of social power. If we are to believe Caesar that warrior-status was a mark of acceptance into the adult political community, why should we not also take into account his assertion, only a few chapters earlier, that ordinary Gallic 'citizens' had very little political power outside of their capacity to serve factional leaders?

---

<sup>422</sup> Brunaux and Lambot, 1987: 48. Brunaux, 2004: 85-6. Rubio, 2018: 90.

<sup>423</sup> Brunaux and Lambot, 1987: 20.

A similar theory that may hold more water is one of a link between *pagi* as a unit of social organisation and equivalent divisions of military participation in Iron Age Gallic contexts. Reading Caesar's descriptions of actions undertaken by the Tigurini as a *pagos* of the Helvetii both in the earlier Cimbric Wars and the Helvetic War of c.58BCE (*BG* 1.12), in which they seem to demonstrate a substantial amount of military autonomy and initiative, leads Fichtl to suggest that they functioned as divisions of available troops, as much if not more than, divisions of civilian populace and/or territory.<sup>424</sup> Closely related to this is the linguistic reconstruction of the term *\*corios* (from which 'Tricorii' and 'Petrocorii' derive) as, roughly, 'warband' or even 'army', again pointing to a link between fundamental social units and organised military activity.<sup>425</sup> However, certain issues do arise as to how synonymous, or at least equivalent, '*pagos*' and '*\*corios*' can be taken to have been.

What archaeological evidence of military equipment and activity that can be collated for the La Tène also argues for an interpretation of relatively broad popular participation in war against one of a narrow, exclusive 'warrior elite'. Sketching the developing archaeological trends of European warfare and military organisation over the *longue durée* of pre- and protohistory, Randsborg notes that the Iron Age saw the overall decline of earlier elite-based combat with bronze swords, heavy armour, and chariotry in favour of a somewhat more inclusive, collaborative way of war predicated on clashes of infantry formations armed with shields and iron-tipped

---

<sup>424</sup> Fichtl, 2004: 16.

<sup>425</sup> Quintela, 2012: 450. Fernández-Götz, 2014: 53. Rubio, 2018: 97.

spears.<sup>426</sup> This approach to warfare would have favoured a culture of communal solidarity in battle over competitive individualism. Similarly, Pleiner notes that the record of La Tène burials across most of Gaul involving military grave goods are surprisingly uniform with little, if anything, to firmly distinguish military leaders from other warriors.<sup>427</sup>

Sources written purely by outsiders, especially with potential biases toward hostility and/or obfuscation, make for rather poor indicators of what may have motivated lower status Gauls to support and participate in military endeavours, but reconstructions must be attempted. Lower class Gallic military culture likely revolved less around individual prestige and more around communal values of vertical service (to patrons or political leaders) and/or horizontal solidarity (with peers and fellow members of the in-group). Both Caesar and Strabo offer evidence of communal solidarity as a core aspect of Gallic war-making. The former's sketch of endemic factionalism within Gallic society is underscored by the assertion that all members of the same 'party' are bound to aid one another against external threats on pain of losing all honour (*BG* 6.11). Strabo's account concurs, emphasising that the Gauls are enthusiastically wont to gather and collectively seek vengeance for their wronged compatriots with military force if necessary (*Geog.* 4.4.2). Although Orgetorix himself died in disgrace before his plans for a campaign of foreign conquest came to fruition, that the Helvetii put them into practice regardless suggests that they saw them as

---

<sup>426</sup> Randsborg, 1999: 199-200.

<sup>427</sup> Pleiner, 1993: 58-59.

collectively beneficial (*BG* 1.4). These descriptions would imply that motivations for military participation were largely predicated on group-based factors rather than individual identity and status. However, failure to perform would likely harm one's standing, making maintenance of one's position, and membership of a group (whether ethnopolitical or factional) successful in war may have brought status benefits with it.<sup>428</sup> A further possibility, relating especially to the description of the material rewards that Orgetorix's plans for the Helvetii are said to have promised (*BG* 1.2-3), is that the proceeds of successful war, in the form of spoils or tribute, would be distributed amongst the participating masses.<sup>429</sup> Although certain textual vignettes relating to earlier Gallic conflicts could be taken to support this, this must remain a theory until such a time as greater evidence comes to light.<sup>430</sup>

On balance, however, evidence does not support a contention that the societies of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin held much distinction between a privileged class of warriors and a comparatively disenfranchised mass of non-combatants. Fighting itself was not a

---

<sup>428</sup> It may be observed that in discussing the various sub-groups of Gauls living beyond the Alps, both Caesar and Strabo emphasise their varying reputations for military power and success as key aspects of their ethnographic characterisation (*BG* 1.1; *Geog.* 4.4.2-3). Caesar, notably, places a good deal of this description in the mouths of Gallic characters themselves, notably assertions of the martial prowess of the Belgae in those of the Remi envoys, Iccios and Andecumborios (*BG* 2.4). This could be an indication of the importance of military reputation to intergroup relations and diplomacy within Gaul. Rawlings, 1998: 176-7. For the significance of Caesar's use of Gallic characters as ethnographic mouthpieces see Vasaly, 2009: 248-9.

<sup>429</sup> Military activity in the form of raiding for plunder is thought to have been a common part of life in Late Iron Age Gaul. Brunaux and Lambot, 1987: 27.

<sup>430</sup> Examples of textual sources suggesting plunder as a motivation for Gallic military aggression include Cic. *Font.* 14.30-32, and Strab. *Geog.* 7.2.2 (speaking of the Tigurini's decision to ape the Cimbri and Teutones in their mass looting of Gaul and other lands).

qualifying factor in the hegemony of the ruling classes, but a potential part of life across most, if not all, levels of society.

### 4.3 Command – Indigenous Gallic Military Organisation and its Socio-Political Ramifications

Since it cannot be said that the Gallic ruling classes of the Late Iron Age Rhône Basin constituted a ‘warrior elite’ in the senses of either individual heroism or exclusivity, it would appear instead that their mark of distinction in military matters was their right to lead others in conflict. We must then investigate how command was allotted and/or restricted in accessibility, and, if possible, on what grounds.

#### 4.3.1 Generals and Officers

As seen in the previous section of this chapter, our available textual sources frame war as an activity in which the general populace of Gallic communities (especially Comatan ones) participated in, potentially with great enthusiasm at times. A poorly framed stereotype that continues to crop up in scholarship despite its lack of supporting evidence is the idea of Gallic (and other north-western European) warriors as an undisciplined mob without a command structure beyond the charismatic leadership of a chieftain or demagogue amongst them.<sup>431</sup> This does not match the literary evidence, provided mostly by Caesar (but with supporting vignettes from other authors), of organised military forces engaging in strategically driven campaigns and seemingly politically motivated

---

<sup>431</sup> A rather egregious example of such stereotyping comes from Eckstein, 2005: 490-1. For a slightly more nuanced approach to differentiating the military ethos of Gallic warriors from Roman and other Mediterranean soldiers that nevertheless touches on similar issues see Rawlings, 1996: 88. For further criticism of the trend and its implications see Collis, 1996: 172.

wars. An issue then arises as to who, precisely, had the power to call people into service for war?

As touched upon in the previous chapter of this thesis, Caesarian and Strabonic accounts of Gallic society imply a division between civic and military responsibilities in matters of political office. Caesar's description of the Aeduan \**Vergobretos* (*BG* 1.16, 7.32) heavily implies a non-martial role due to limitations placed on the holder, while Strabo's references to the government of the Gauls in times past ("*τὸ παλαιόν*" *Geog.* 4.4.3) point to separate offices of civic magistracy and military command. The political leaders of Gallic communities like the Aedui and their neighbours may have been involved in the processes of promulgating war, but they did not marshal and direct the military resources of their communities themselves.

The impression the *Commentarii* give, as suggested by the preceding discussion on public participation, is that wars amongst the Gauls were a matter for public debate rather than governmental diktat. Orgetorix, despite his apparent wealth and power, could not simply command but had to persuade the Helvetii to embark on his plans for conquest.<sup>432</sup> The inception of Vercingetorix's Revolt also derives from his hortatory overtures to the populace (*BG* 7.4). Similarly, returning to Strabo's phrasing regarding Iron Age Gallic government (*Geog.* 4.4.3), the implication is that it was by election of the populace that generals were chosen, further suggesting a connection between military activity and the power of the masses.

---

<sup>432</sup> For the significance of persuasion as a literary theme in Book 1 of *De Bello Gallico* see Murphy, 1977: 234-5.

Large scale war, in second/first century BCE Gaul at least, was something that had to be done with the consent and support of the populace. If Strabo is correct, it would also follow that an important facet of attaining the highest official capacity for military power, that of wartime commander-in-chief, was dependent on popularity as much as considerations of meritocratic ability, wealth, or aristocratic privilege. Aspiring Gallic generals, it seems, were expected to be great orators as much, if not more than, great warriors. Charisma can, thus, be said to have played a role in Late Iron Age Gallic military leadership, but as a qualification for institutional positions of power rather than a basis in its own right.

It is also important to note that Caesar's writings imply that such official positions of military leadership were temporary and subject to change and replacement. The Eoredorixs captured alongside Cotos amongst rebel forces c.52BCE is mentioned as having been the general (*'dux'*) of the Aedui in their war with the Sequani around a decade prior, but held a different, lesser position even amongst the Aeduan contingent of troops under Vercingetorixs (*BG 7.67*). If we closely follow Strabo's description (*Geog. 4.4.3*), the suggestion appears to be that the *'στρατηγός'* ('general') of a Gallic polity was appointed on an annual basis, similarly to the chief magistrate, and, potentially, only in times of war (*"εἰς πόλεμον"*). It would appear that, although institutionalised, positions of command over the military resources of polities were provisional rather than permanent and could thus serve as opportunities for a multiplicity of candidates on differing occasions rather than a narrow, fixed elite.

In the vein of qualifications for military leadership, we must consider what governed the pool of candidates from which commanders could be chosen, especially on the matter of class and status. As may be expected, the majority of named Gallic figures from the Rhône Basin communities associated with military command in the *Commentarii* are noted for their aristocratic background. The three Aeduan captives of *BG* 7.67 are identified as “*nobilissim*”, and while Viridomaros, as a cavalry officer, is described as being of lower birth (“*genere dispar*” *BG* 7.39), the comparative is with Eporedorix, whose pedigree is expressed in the superlative. The former may not have originated amidst the crème-de-la-crème of Aeduan nobility but his coming from a ruling class family of secondary rank is likely. Similarly, for all of Fichtl’s theorising that Dubnoreix was something of a parvenu, the evidence to support his conclusions remains lacking, and the warlord’s status as the brother of a former of a former \**Vergobretos* strongly suggests their place amongst the aristocracy.<sup>433</sup> Other examples from Caesar’s writings include Vercassivellaunos (identified as Vercingetorix’s cousin *BG* 7.76), Divico (*BG* 1.13), and Litaviccus (*BG* 7.37). Appian’s comments (*Emb.* 12) similarly argue for the aristocratic role of Bituitos as a military commander, both in the poets’ praises of his ancestry and in his status as the son of Louernios. Ultimately, while we do not possess confirmation that no member of the lower classes amongst the Rhône Gallic communities could ever attain a position of military command, the

---

<sup>433</sup> Fichtl, 2014: 171-7.



weight of available evidence suggests that such opportunities were the preserve of the aristocracy.<sup>434</sup>

As noted in the discussion of Gallic senates in the previous chapter of this thesis, Caesar's descriptions would appear to frame those holding military command in Comatan Gallic societies at least as being relatively young in contrast with potentially older individuals with offices of civic magistracy, or, in the case of the Aedui, as an option for junior siblings of civic magistrates.<sup>435</sup>

Frustratingly, Caesar follows his usual habit of using vague, conventional language rather than specific terminology in his discussion of Gallic activities. While individuals introduced in the text are described variously as '*praefectus*' or '*dux*' over their forces, his work offers little clarity of what processes were involved in the declaration of war, especially under circumstances other than his campaigns. Gallic '*praefecti*' include the Aeduans Cottos and Cavarillos (*BG* 7.67) as well as Commios, Viridomaros, and Vercassivellaunos (*BG* 7.76). Gallic '*duces*' are, for the most part, described in the past tense (i.e., having acted as field commanders in previous conflicts) and include the Helvetian Divico (*BG* 1.13) and the Aeduan Eporedorix (*BG* 7.67). Lewuillon makes the bold, but ultimately speculative, suggestion of the reconstructed Gaulish word '\**vellaunos*' (most literally translated as 'chief' or 'leader') as a

---

<sup>434</sup> For a comparative look at similar questions of power, command, status, and class in contemporaneous Roman contexts see Rosenstein, 2007: 133-40.

<sup>435</sup> On considerations of the idea of 'age classes' as an aspect of social organisation and identity in Iron Age Gallic communities (albeit on an earlier basis) see Pope, 2021: 15.

possible gloss for Caesar's use of 'dux', but beyond offering a close cognate this does little to clarify the situation.<sup>436</sup>

An aspect of this area emphasised by Arbabe in his recent reconsideration of the Gallic political landscape from the Late Iron Age onwards is the role and significance of coalitions in military matters. While Webster's caution that our sources tend to represent unusual circumstances more than the norm should be heeded, they rarely, if ever, point to wars with individual polities but to larger alliances between communities working toward a common goal.<sup>437</sup> Vercingetorix functioned as the leader of such a coalition of forces, and it is about his actions as a commander and about the structure of whose chain of command that we possess the most description. At the great 'concilium' of polities held at Bibracte c.52BCE, which saw the Aedui join Vercingetorix's Revolt, the author uses both the terms "*summa imperi*" and "*principatu*" to describe the leadership of the military coalition that is assigned to Vercingetorix as "*imperator*" within the same chapter (*BG* 7.63). The account of the second *concilium* of rebel forces, formulating plans to relieve those besieged at Alésia, introduces further ambiguity, as it again uses the term "*summa imperi*" to describe military command, but applies it to not one but four individuals, who are collectively referred to as "*praefecti*" rather than '*imperatores*' or '*duces*' (*BG* 7.76). In this case we might proffer the assumption that, as Vercingetorix still

---

<sup>436</sup> Lewuillon, 2002: 247. Savignac, 2014: 97-8.

<sup>437</sup> Arbabe, 2017: 58-63. In addition to Vercingetorix, Arbabe argues persuasively for interpreting Bituitos as a coalition leader of forces drawn from the Arverni, Allobroges, Saluvian dissidents and others against Rome and the Aedui c.122-121BCE and for the possibility of the Gallic forces arrayed at Magetobriga against Ariovistus being a coalition led by Eporodorix or another unnamed leader.

held the highest authority, these four (Comnios of the Atrebates, Viridomaros and Eporedorixs of the Aedui, and Vercassivellaunos of the Arverni) were subordinate to him and in charge of three or four different campaigning forces, but the lack of clarity on hierarchy and division of responsibilities remains. Similarly, in recounting the aftermath of his defeat of the rebel cavalry in their raids on the Roman baggage train shortly afterwards, Caesar describes the three notable Aeduan captives returned to him with a variety of approaches. To Cotos, the erstwhile claimant for \**Vergobretos*, he gives the official capacity of '*praefectus equitum*', Cavarillos is described as having "*pedestribus copiis praefuerat*" ('been placed over the infantry'), while Eporedorixs, whose position amongst the rebel forces is left unstated, is credited with having been '*dux*' of the Aedui in an earlier conflict (*BG* 7.67). Southern theorises that if we are to take Caesar's language as roughly maintaining consistency across books of the *Commentarii* then we may attribute the office of *praefectus equitum* to Dubnoreixs amongst Aeduan forces against the Helvetii in c.58BCE based on conventional use of the verb "*praeeerat*" in the same manner as the description of Cavarillos (*BG* 1.19).<sup>438</sup>

One detail that Arbabe astutely picks out of Caesar's vocabulary is the use of '*consilium*' in relation to commands assigned to Vercingetorixs and other rebel leaders (*BG* 7.76), a usage that suggests a staff of advisors and subordinates.<sup>439</sup> While it relies on analogy with an explicitly Roman approach to hierarchies and

---

<sup>438</sup> Southern, 2006: 120.

<sup>439</sup> Arbabe, 2017: 75-6.

practices of command, the fact that Caesar can envisage an analogous phenomenon amongst the Gauls, and ask his audience to imagine it as well, suggests a level of collegiality and discipline that would be impossible under the framework of favoured by Eckstein.

The precise level of power that military officers of whatever rank held over their troops and subordinates once appointed remains uncertain. The *Commentarii* suggest variously through the description of military assemblies (*BG* 5.56) and levying processes promulgated by the *concilia* of the rebel forces of c.52BCE (*BG* 7.64, 7.75-6) that conscription was a standard practice, with potentially harsh penalties for deserters, giving commanders a potentially great deal of control over the populations to which they had access. When it comes to matters of Gallic discipline, however, Caesar's writings should be taken as suspect, due to his employment of stereotypes of mercuriality on the part of the Gauls and his aspects of his characterisations of figures like Dubnoreixs and Vercingetorixs.<sup>440</sup> The point that the Gallic Wars, especially the climactic revolt of c.52BCE, represented a conflict of highly unusual magnitude and conduct on the part of the communities of the Rhône Basin also comes through strongly here.

Overall, the evidence available to us, drawn most heavily from Caesar's *Commentarii*, gives the impression that the Gauls of the Rhône Basin practiced institutional posts of command when leading

---

<sup>440</sup> Riggsby, particularly, scrutinises Vercingetorixs' characterisation in the *Commentarii* as presenting him as a worthy opponent to Caesar who elevates the capacities of his people rather than as a representative either of his actual actions or of Gallic military leadership generally. Riggsby, 2006: 99-104. On the problems of stereotypical consistency on the text, see also Schadee, 2008: 161

troops to war, with individuals appointed to specific positions with defined responsibilities and hierarchical relationships. However, these sources provide too little clear and specific information to reconstruct the positions themselves in any detail, let alone offer a definitive and falsifiable account of them. They were, it seems, primarily filled by younger members of the established aristocracy who secured them through reputation, perceived merit, and influence amongst the populace at the assembly level. How they may have secured these reputations and influence is partly explored in the following section of this chapter.

#### 4.3.2 Warlords and Warbands

While the framework of command that first century BCE Gauls of the Rhône Basin utilised in full-scale wars remains an indistinct outline, there are hints to be taken from the available forms of evidence of another register of armed conflict which held significance in these societies. In addition to the culture of mass participation and military assemblies described by Caesar and Strabo, certain vignettes of description from Classical authors also point to another aspect of Gallic martial organisation in the Late Iron Age: that of specialised retinues of dedicated warriors and/or mercenaries serving at the behest of specific masters.

'Warbands', as we may call them, are a key feature of Greek ethnographies of the Gauls from Polybius (*Hist.* 2.17.11-12) to Diodorus (*Lib. Hist.* 5.29.2). Caesar also provides substantial evidence for the presence and great significance of retinues of

warriors in the service of individual members of the social elite.<sup>441</sup>

The description of the '*equites*' group of nobility in Gallic society (*BG* 6.15) notes that their maintenance of followings of warriors is the key component of their authority and yardstick for status competition between them.<sup>442</sup> Beyond this generalising assertion, the *Commentarii* also include a number of examples, perhaps most notably the Aeduan magnate Dubnoreix is noted for his unit of cavalry maintained at his own expense (*BG* 1.18).<sup>443</sup> As with much pertaining to Dubnoreix as he appears in Caesar's writings, however, it is uncertain if this was a common practice or a result of his unusual wealth and prestige. At the least, having a private retinue of horsemen does not appear to have met with any meaningful disapproval or censure.

Though primarily dealing with material from Germanic cultures, Enright has theorised that the *comitatus* of Tacitus' ethnography (*Germ.* 13), as well as its successor institutions, may have their origins in Iron Age Gaul. He defines the *Männerbund* or *Gefolgschaft* warband of the Iron Age as an institution based on lasting associations between warriors and their commander, with the former materially supported by the latter, existing outside the standard framework of ethno-political structures.<sup>444</sup> Another crucial aspect of his theorised framework is that these warbands were

---

<sup>441</sup> Rawlings, 1998: 183.

<sup>442</sup> Caesar's terminology for those in bonds of clientship in Gallic society, including the use of the loanword '*ambactus*', and what significance it may have are discussed at greater length in Chapters 3 and 5 of this thesis.

<sup>443</sup> Others include the '*Soldurii*' under Adiatunnus of the Sotiates (*BG* 3.22, discussed further below) and Treveran horsemen attached to their leader Indutiomarus (*BG* 5.57-8).

<sup>444</sup> Enright, 1996: 195.

characterised by bonding rituals and oaths, ministered by attendant religious specialists, sealing their loyalty to their leaders and to each other.<sup>445</sup> Textual evidence for the existence of warbands on Enright's model can be found in certain areas. Caesar's commentaries describe the '*soldurii*' of the Aquitanian leader Adiatunnus, a 600 strong group of men oathbound to share everything in life with their comrades as well as face death with them or commit suicide if they fail to do so (*BG* 3.22). Classical descriptions of the supposed '*furor*', or irrational ferocity, displayed in battle by Gallic warriors may reflect a similar belief system of self-sacrifice on behalf of commanders.<sup>446</sup>

However, the notion that mid-first century cavalry or other warriors drawn from the Upper Rhône Basin functioned as highly ritualised warbands or warrior societies like the Aquitanian *Soldurii* or the later Germanic *comitatus* is not reflected in Caesar's writings. The large cavalry force assembled by Vercingetorix in 52BCE are said to have sworn an oath before departure to not be received under any roof nor make any contact with their families until they had twice broken through the enemy's marching column (*BG* 7.66). Were these men already bound by vows of martial service to their superiors and devoted to a life of combat, such an oath would, presumably, have been unnecessary. The implication is that these were individuals with strong ties to civilian life, pledging their honour to the completion of a military operation, rather than warriors whose sole ties were to each other and their commander. All the more

---

<sup>445</sup> These specialists are to be identified with the *parasitai* of Posidonios' reconstructed ethnography, in their capacity as heraldic retainers of warlords. Enright, 1996: 176.

<sup>446</sup> Brunaux and Lambot, 1987: 45.

telling on this point is Caesar's account of Dubnoreix's demise. Following his desertion and attempt to take the Aeduan auxiliary cavalry with him, Caesar's agents caught and slew him, after which the horsemen returned to the Roman fold without apparent incident (*BG* 5.7). While they may have enjoyed Dubnoreix's financial support they, in stark contrast with the rule of the *Soldurii*, appear to have been under no obligation to stand by their patron regardless of circumstances or join him in death.<sup>447</sup> Caesar's accounts thus challenge the picture of Gallic warriors driven by devotion unto death, suggesting that such practices, even if practiced elsewhere in the 'Celtic' world, were rare or even absent in the Rhône Basin by the mid-first century BCE.<sup>448</sup>

Rather than ritualised institutions of warrior bondsmen tied to their lords by oaths of loyalty, it would appear that the primary form of warbands active in the Late Iron Age Rhône were instead units of mercenaries engaged in military service in exchange for payment. Itinerant warbands, often functioning as mercenaries for foreign paymasters, are a feature of descriptions of earlier (c.400-200BCE) Gauls as an ethnic category applied by Greek and Roman authors, especially in relation to the Italian Peninsula and the advent of the Galatians of Asia Minor.<sup>449</sup> It is less clear, however, how these

---

<sup>447</sup> It may be noted that, rather than marking an evolution from an earlier heroic age, mercenaryism is one of the notable, stereotypical qualities used to distinguish the Gauls at war from their Italian counterparts in both Polybius' and Livy's descriptions of the Cisalpine Gallic Wars c.400-200BCE. Williams, 2001: 91-93.

<sup>448</sup> We may compare accounts of the *devotiones* of the Celtiberian peoples, oathbound to serve their commanders until death or slay themselves for failure to protect them and demarcated from the remainder of the populace by funerary rites of excarnation rather than cremation. Allen, 2007: 82.

<sup>449</sup> See Cunliffe, 1998: 4, Mitchell, 2005: 280-1, Cassibry, 2017: 10-17, Pope, 2021: 495.



groups related to the populations of areas like the Rhône Basin; for example if they existed in distinction from the civilian populace of the Gallic heartlands or if mercenaries were a common feature across the La Tène world. One theory that has arisen cites changing geopolitical landscapes, and the opportunities they provided, as an impetus for shifting trends from abroad to home.<sup>450</sup> Roman victory over Carthage in the Second Punic War (218-201BCE) brought with it the loss of an important market for Gallic mercenary services in the Mediterranean and the imported coinage it generated. In response, the theory goes, over the course of the second and early first centuries BCE members of the Gallic ruling classes began producing their own coinage in order to employ warriors for conflicts with neighbouring rivals.<sup>451</sup> These coins thus appear to have been key to forming retinues around local warlords.<sup>452</sup> This theory, of a long term coalescence of previously dispersed military resources in communities like those around the Rhône exploited by ambitious, well-resourced warlords, relies heavily on a limited, disparate array of numismatic, archaeological, and textual source data supporting multiple suppositions. However, it does provide a relatively plausible explanation for the emergency of two seemingly distinct registers of war-making and recruitment in Gallic society by the time of Caesar.

The notion of a link between the emergence of coin minting and the development of mercenary retinues as a feature of Iron Age Gallic society might also tie in with another new form of social technology

---

<sup>450</sup> Fitzpatrick, 1989: 31.

<sup>451</sup> Nash, 1987: 25. Further supported by Cassibry, 2016: 138.

<sup>452</sup> For contrasting views on the level of monetisation present in late Iron Age Gaul compare Howgego, 2013: 27, and Crumley, 1995: 28.

arising around the turn of the second and first centuries BCE: the oppidum. Although these fortified settlements had multiple uses and motivating factors in their construction, they appear to have provided concentrations of facilities that would have attracted and supported standing mercenary troops. The presence of craft workshops, especially for metalwork, alongside coin hoards and the paraphernalia of wine consumption, in the interiors of oppida might suggest that they could function as bases for resident warlords to maintain and equip their warrior retinues.<sup>453</sup> The role of *oppida*, most notably amongst the Arverni and Aedui, as centres of collation and redistribution of imported wine and theories concerning its use as a form for warriors and/or artisans (supplying warriors) is explored in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

In addition to the political clout Caesar (*BG* 2.1, 6.15) asserts that these mercenary warbands provided for their masters, they offered the promise of '*potestas*' in more material ways as well. While their maintenance would have incurred substantial costs for aspiring warlords, they would have also provided means for economic gain as a force for engaging in raiding practices, primarily for the seizing of livestock, but perhaps also for prisoners to ransom or enslave.<sup>454</sup> This points to the importance of economic power as both a supporting factor and a goal in the construction of military power within first century BCE Gallic society.

---

<sup>453</sup> Wells, 1995: 90. Poux, 2004: 210-23. Loughton, 2009: 92. Further discussion of the role of manufacturing and its relation to social hierarchy to be included in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

<sup>454</sup> Brunaux and Lambot, 1987: 27. Fentress (2018, 2019) has particularly explored and emphasised the possibility of slave-raiding for export as a feature of Late Iron Age societies in the Upper Rhône Basin. For issues with the framework she constructs, however, see Chapter 5 of this thesis.

While the maintenance of warrior bands provided clear opportunities for those of a certain level of means to increase their status through the acquisition of greater wealth and power, less certain is the relationship between warbands and the social status of their members. Certain evidence suggests that kept warriors were drawn from the lower social strata, and that their recruitment might have offered chances of advancement. On the textual side of things, we have Caesar's description of Dubnoreix's cavalry living at their master's expense, which might suggest that they either were not or did not have to be independently wealthy and could have been drawn from humble backgrounds. Diodorus' Gallic ethnography also suggests the recruitment of poorer individuals by wealthy warriors, though he describes them serving as shield-bearers and charioteers rather than mercenary troops or bodyguards (*Lib. Hist.* 5.29.2).<sup>455</sup>

The existence of warbands of paid warriors serving individual members of the Gallic ruling classes illustrates, in tandem with the evidence for the widespread access to weapons on the part of the masses, that the use of armed force was not monopolised by the state. Though, as noted above, military offices of state did exist times of war, the ability of elites to act as warlords independently through maintenance of retinues may have allowed for potential candidates of those offices to forge reputations for military success through smaller scale skirmishes or raiding. It may also have

---

<sup>455</sup> This may reflect an attempt to describe a Gallic/Galatian custom described by Pausanias (10.19.10-11) known as '*Trimarcisia*', in which each cavalryman was accompanied by a pair of attendants who would take his place on the field in the event of injury or death, through Diodorus' preferred lens of pseudo-Homeric primitivism.

allowed elites primarily engaged in civic political careers to exercise a certain level martial clout in their own right.

A further point of note, looking through the lens of Rhône Gallic society's capacity to adapt to Roman domination during and after conquest, is that the existence of mercenary retinues indicates familiarity with the concept of military service as a unit in exchange for compensation. This would likely have supported a transition into serving as auxiliary troops alongside Roman forces.

#### 4.4 Service - Gallic Warriors, Roman Commanders

Having examined how military activity factored into the construction of status and social hierarchy in Late Iron Age Gallic society, it is necessary to look next at how such systems adapted to existence under Roman domination.

One of the main ways in which local military traditions could be incorporated into the Roman provincial system was through service in the *auxilia*. It is necessary to note that the term 'auxiliary' (and its Latin root-words) here is used to cover a relatively broad range of troops active in the period c.120-10BCE, including warriors provided by allied states as well as those levied from provincial peoples on the basis of treaty obligation. It denotes all those in arms serving under the command of Roman leaders but not integrated as members of the legions. In addition to service, and its possibilities for integration and social advancement or downfall, we must consider how military organisation and culture in the Rhône Basin shaped resistance and negotiation with the power of Rome in the region.

#### 4.4.1 Warriors of the Lower Rhône Valley and the Roman Province c.120-60BCE

After the brutal campaigns of conquest of c.125-3BCE and the devastation of the Cimbric Wars c.107-2BCE, the military systems of the peoples of the Lower Rhône Valley had borne the brunt of repeated defeats and humiliations. Moving into the first century BCE, their options for engaging in military pursuits remained profoundly limited in comparison to those which they may have enjoyed during their independence, by the demands of peace treaties and provincial government imposed by Rome.

Despite these tribulations, however, the peoples of the region do not appear to have abandoned military pursuits or display as technologies of social power in the early first century BCE. The funerary archaeology of Volcae Arecomici territory in the period presents some of the strongest arguments that martial exercise remained a core aspect of local ruling class ideology, thanks to the presence of lavish military equipment in what appear to be high status burials. This caste of elite warriors appears to have survived, even thrived, thanks to its seeming integration into the Roman auxiliary corps. On the basis of his methodological focus on the cultural blending of militaria in provincial contexts, Pernet sees the find of an overtly Italian style helmet in the tomb site of Saint-Laurent-des-Arbres (N25) in the midst of an otherwise La Tène D1 panoply of sword, spear, and shield as an indication of a local high-status warrior having served with Rome, most likely in the context of

the Sertorian War c.80-72BCE.<sup>456</sup> The Allobroges are similarly represented by an impressive burial site containing weapons and a mix of weaponry and high quality Mediterranean drinking equipment (considered the accoutrements of a *symposium* form of conviviality) at the site of Verna in the Isère Valley.<sup>457</sup>

The various treaty statuses, and new agreements made in the wake of failed insurrections, of the differing groups had varying stipulations for the provisions of troops. There is very little evidence, either textual or archaeological, for the Saluvii entering auxiliary service in any meaningful capacity in the first century BCE, possibly as a result of their military weakening in the campaigns of 125-123BCE and their status as *dedictii in fidem* stipulating a general disarmament of the populace.<sup>458</sup> By contrast, there are sources pointing to the presence of Allobroges, and Vocontii, as well as the aforementioned Volcae Arecomici as auxiliaries in the forces of the Late Republic.

The participation of the Vocontii in the first century BCE *auxilia* is indicated mostly by extrapolation from later textual and epigraphic sources. In addition to Trogus' testimony of Vocontian service as auxiliary cavalry under Pompey in both the Sertorian and Third Mithridatic War (73-63BCE), the later existence of two dedicated *Alae Vocontiorum* in the military records of the Julio-Claudian Era suggest a continued tradition of service, or at least availability thereof, throughout the Late Republican and Early Imperial

---

<sup>456</sup> Pernet, 2010: 141. On Late Republican Roman military equipment and its relationship with Gallic armaments see Goldman, 2013: 135-6.

<sup>457</sup> Poux, 2004: 155. Pernet, 2019: 190.

<sup>458</sup> Pernet, 2010: 142.

periods.<sup>459</sup> The textual evidence of the Vocontii's participation in auxiliary service at this time suggests that, in addition to a chance to demonstrate their military prowess with Roman sanction, it could also result in other rewards. A significant such benefit was the possibility of enfranchisement as Roman citizens. Justin's *Epitomes* of Pompeius Trogus (43.5.11) recount that the historian's family had received their citizenship (and equestrian rank) as a result of their military service to Pompey.<sup>460</sup> This particular form of military activity then, could offer ways of increasing one's status in relation to the provincial administration and Roman colonial milieu as well as in Gallic communities.

It is, however, the Allobroges whose service as auxiliaries, particularly as cavalry, that appears to have warranted the most attention from Roman writers of the Late Republic. Cicero's *Pro Fonteio*, while not specific as to which communities provided troops, describes the Allobroges, including their "*dux*" Indutiomaros, as the major complainants in the case against Fonteius, suggesting that they were major contributors to the units raised and populations taxed to support them (6.14, 21.47). Allobrogan cavalry are also sought after by the Catilinarian Conspiracy to supplement their largely infantry-based Italian forces (Cic. *Cat.* 3.9), pointing to their

---

<sup>459</sup> Epigraphic evidence places these later iterations of the Vocontian auxiliary units variously in Egypt, Britain, and the Rhine Frontier (*AE* 1907,00090; *AE* 1996,01647; *CIL* 7,01080; *CIL* 13,08655). These specific units are theorised by Gayet to have originated in the War of the Second Triumvirate during Agrippa's governorship of Gaul 39-37BCE, though this may very well have been a process of recalling and/or organising local troops employed in previous conflicts rather than of raw recruitment. Gayet, 2006: 72.

<sup>460</sup> Demougin, 2000: 68.

military value to Roman commanders.<sup>461</sup> In contrast with the Saluvii, it would seem, the Allobroges' conquest and repeated insurrections against provincial rule do not appear to have prompted their disarmament, suggesting that their use as a source of troops was worth putting up with the occasional armed rebellion.

It is important to remember that in the period c.120-60BCE service as auxiliary soldiers for provincial *peregrini* was not a standardised component of the Roman military system, but rather an ad hoc one designed to make use of available, arguably even expendable, resources for active war efforts.<sup>462</sup> The most notable literary evidence for the recruitment and deployment of Rhône Gallic auxiliaries from this time, the biographical sections of the Epitomes of Trogus and Cicero's *Pro Fonteio*, both relate to campaigns undertaken by Pompey in varying theatres of war.<sup>463</sup> These were conflicts far from the Rhône Basin, in which Gallic troops and their home polities had no role in promulgating, leaving their capacity for meaningful engagement entirely at the mercy of their Roman dominators.

The rewards for military service under Roman standards in the early first century BCE could be uncertain and complex in their implications. While the Pompeii Trogi of the Vocontii were rewarded for their work with enfranchisement, Indutiomaros of the Allobroges (if we are correct in assuming that he served as an auxiliary *dux*

---

<sup>461</sup> Their apparent desirability is further supported by a reference to the evocation of a previously demobilised Allobrogan mounted regiment by Munatius Plancus in the wake of Caesar's death (Cic. *Fam.* 11.13a.1).

<sup>462</sup> Speidel, 2016: 87.

<sup>463</sup> Specifically, the Sertorian War in the Iberian Peninsula 80-72BCE and the Third Mithridatic War in Asia Minor and the Eastern Mediterranean 73-63BCE.



during Fonteius' governorate) appears not to have been.<sup>464</sup> This would imply that citizenship was awarded unevenly and perhaps arbitrarily, meaning that auxiliary service was not, even for the highest-ranking warriors participating, a clear path to integration and advancement in Roman society. Similarly, although the *Pro Fonteio* makes it clear that levied Gallic troops did receive payment for their services (6.14), this payment was drawn not from Roman coffers but from taxes levied on the Gallic civilian populace, a point prompting much of their latent hostility to Fonteius as governor. This may well have been a point of culture clash, as the material rewards of military activity in indigenous Gallic culture, explored in the previous section, tended to be based on plunder taken on campaign or derived from the commanding officer's own pool of funds, and was frequently conducted on the basis of perceived public benefit. Fighting in a war that instead threatened to impoverish the populace and was conducted in far distant lands on the initiative of foreign overlords would undoubtedly provide consternation to the Allobroges of the early first century BCE.

Revolts, rebellions, and other instance of conflict within the province of Gallia Transalpina are recorded or alluded to in several instances in the early-to-mid first century BCE. These include the c.90BCE Revolt of the Saluvii, an apparent struggle with the Helvii (and possibly Volcae Arecomici) c.76BCE, and repeated conflicts with the Allobroges in the 70s and 60sBCE, culminating in the best

---

<sup>464</sup> A potential point of note is the later enfranchised Pompeii Trogi may well have been directly recruited by Pompey during his stint in Transalpina c.76BCE before heading on to Hispania, making for a more direct relationship, while Fonteius' governorate c.75-73BCE saw him raise local units to be sent off to the Iberian Peninsula rather than accompanied by him as a commander.

evidenced Allobrogan Revolt of c.61BCE.<sup>465</sup> We should be wary of conceptualising these incidents as considered attempts at gaining independence from Roman rule through promulgated war. Given the sparse, off-hand descriptions they warrant in surviving accounts, it is possible, even likely, that they may have originated from engagements in raiding or feuding between provincial groups, prompting Roman intervention as these actions violated terms of peace treaties.<sup>466</sup> The description of punitive confiscations of Gallic territories by the victorious provincial governor in the *Pro Fonteio* (6.14) might also support an interpretation that deliberately provoking military confrontation with local groups may have been a useful way for pro-praetors assigned to Transalpina to enrich themselves and/or their supporters.<sup>467</sup>

For the people of the Rhône regions of the Gallia Transalpina province, military activity as a source of status was curtailed in many ways by the Roman administration while offering only certain sanctioned opportunities for participation and social advancement. While certain local warlords may have had the chance to lead their warriors as paid auxiliaries to Roman forces, they had no control over the circumstances in which such recruitment could take place.

---

<sup>465</sup> For the Saluvian Revolt of c.90BCE see Dyson, 1985: 150. For the proposed Helvian conflict of the early to mid-70sBCE see Caes. *BC* 1.35, and Rivet, 1988: 58. For the Allobrogan Revolts of the early and late 60sBCE, see Cic. *Att.* 1.13.2, Dio 38.47, Livy *Epit.* 103, and Cic. *Prov. Cons.* 13. Chapter 2 of this thesis recounts and contextualises these events in greater detail.

<sup>466</sup> For the limitations imposed on provincial communities by peace treaties of the Late Republic see Barton, 2007: 251-2 and Brunt, 1978: 174-5.

<sup>467</sup> For the temptations of first century BCE governors to use their provincial commands for personal gain and the methods available to them see Blösel, 2016: 76-7.

#### 4.4.2 Serving with Caesar? c.60-30BCE

The period c.60-30BCE brought significant changes to the ways in which the warriors of the Rhône Basin interacted with the Roman military. Caesar's campaigns in Gaul c.58-50BC brought an extensive theatre of war in which auxiliaries from the province were utilised far closer to home and with far greater impact on their relationships with their neighbours, as well as seeing the first extensive use of troops drawn from the Upper Rhône regions and further north by Roman forces. The civil wars of the Roman world prosecuted by Caesar and his triumviral successors in the wake of the Gallic conquests also saw the widespread evocation, recruitment, and deployment of Rhône Gallic troops in ways that altered their relationships with service to Roman commanders and the implications thereof.

Caesar's writings, unsurprisingly, provide us with a great deal more information about how the implementation of Gallic warriors as auxiliary troops functioned than that available regarding earlier periods.

The recruitment of local auxiliaries, especially cavalry, throughout the Gallic Wars was carried out on a largely ad-hoc, short term basis, with troops levied at the beginning of the campaigning season for each year than disbanded as part of the army's overwintering arrangements.<sup>468</sup> This localism of recruitment meant that the peoples of the Rhône were heavily implicated in certain campaigns,

---

<sup>468</sup> A key piece of evidence for this can be seen in the dearth of mounted troops at Caesar's disposal to relieve the siege of Q. Cicero's winter camp by the Nervii in 54BCE (*BG* 5.46). Cagniard, 1992: 74.

most notably the Helvetian and Ariovistan campaigns of c.58BCE and the Revolt of Vercingetorix c.52BCE, but less so in others such as the Venetic Revolt of c.56BCE. The Aedui appear to have borne much of the brunt of this, likely due to a combination of their perceived reliability as longstanding Roman allies and their wealth and hegemonic status giving large populations to recruit from.<sup>469</sup> However, territories associated with the Aedui ironically have thus far produced the least amount of archaeological evidence for auxiliary service, in terms of assemblages of grave goods combining La Tène and Roman equipment or similarly mixed coin hoards.<sup>470</sup> Possible explanations for this apparent discrepancy might include idiosyncrasies of Aeduan funerary culture and/or issues with Dubnoreix's legacy as a military leader amongst the group.

Debate concerning the genuine military efficacy of Gallic cavalry units, especially those drawn from extra-provincial allies, has given rise to questions as to what role they played in Caesar's forces. Cagniard, notably, has interpreted Caesar's accounts as painting them as unreliable and of limited value in pitched battle.<sup>471</sup> While cavalry certainly had uses in other military contexts (notably for reconnaissance, field communication, and as ambush forces), it can be argued that their main significance may have been as pseudo-hostages, specifically levied and kept with the campaigning forces in

---

<sup>469</sup> Fichtl, 2004: 108-9.

<sup>470</sup> Pernet, 2019: 188.

<sup>471</sup> For a perhaps overly charitable view of the quality of mid-first century Gallic cavalry and their efficacy see Wilcox and Trevio, 2002: 73-4. *Contra* Cagniard, 1992: 76-7. A point to note is that technological limitations meant that cavalry of this period could not function in the manner of their Medieval or Early Modern counterparts, that of shock troops whose charge would break lines of opposing infantry, lacking stirrups to absorb impact on collision and horseshoes to help negotiate uneven terrain.

order to ensure their peoples' compliance and limit their own ability to participate in Gaul's infamously volatile local politics.<sup>472</sup> On this interpretation, auxiliary service, during the Gallic Wars at least, could have constituted a means of neutralising the power and status of those who participated in it rather than offering opportunities for its exercise or advancement.

Against Cagniard's negative assessment of the efficacy and reliability of auxiliary Gallic cavalry, accounts of Caesar's later campaigns penned by anonymous supporters present a far more positive picture of their quality as warriors. The surviving commentary on the African Campaign of 47BCE against the forces of Scipio emphasises a contrast between the Gallic (sometimes Gallo-Germanic) and local cavalry units employed by both sides throughout the conflict. During the Siege of Hadrumentum, a single *turma*, less than 30 strong, of Caesar's Gallic horseman was able to rout 2,000 Scipionic Mauretanian riders (*BA* 6).<sup>473</sup> At the later Battle of Ruspina, the anti-Caesarian cavalry were split when the Numidian contingent fled as the battle turned against them while their Gallic counterparts stood their ground and were massacred (*BA* 40). The narrative takes a moment to eulogise the fallen, noting that they had come to their fate honestly whether out of personal loyalty to Labienus, fair promises of reward, or defection out of necessity. The presence of substantial contingents of Gallic auxiliaries (The *Commentarii de Bellum Civile* suggest that at least 2,500 were

---

<sup>472</sup> Moscovich, 1980: 125-7.

<sup>473</sup> This appears to be an inversion of an instance in *De Bello Gallico* (1.18) in which the Caesarian Gallic cavalry under Dubnoreixs are routed by a much smaller force of Helvetian horsemen.

involved in the campaign) in North Africa at the time is evinced by finds of late La Tène military equipment on multiple archaeological sites in Algeria.<sup>474</sup>

Part of Cagniard's view of the Caesarian use of Gallic cavalry relies heavily on Caesar's decision not to use them as an honour guard for the mounted parlay with Ariovistus (*BG* 1.42), instead having Gallic allies hand over their horses to soldiers of the *Legio X* to serve in their stead, a choice he attributes to a perception of the former as either incompetent or unreliable.<sup>475</sup> However, in addition to purely military considerations, there were political aspects to this action. In presenting an entirely Roman deputation to Ariovistus, Caesar identified himself not as an envoy speaking for the Gauls but as a representative of Rome backed by its full legal and military might. Furthermore, by having his Gallic allies, some of whom may well have been of high social standing, hand over their mounts to rank-and-file Roman soldiers, the pro-consul re-emphasised a pecking order in which his troops were prioritised over non-citizen allies at every turn.

The precise social status and role of Gallic cavalry units of the Gallic War era is uncertain, thanks to Caesar's rather equivocal testimony. On at least two occasions, outside of the problematic ethnographic description of the '*equites*', the *Commentarii* suggest a link between cavalry service and high social status. In the first (*BG* 5.5), Caesar forms a unit of 4,000 horsemen for his second

---

<sup>474</sup> Pernet, 2010: 177.

<sup>475</sup> Cagniard, 1992: 76-7.

expedition to Britain by selecting *principes* to accompany him.<sup>476</sup> Secondly, in Litaviccus' ruse to turn the Aedui against Caesar in favour of Vercingetorix (*BG* 7.38), he describes the, fictitious, execution of a cavalry contingent as representing the loss of all the *nobilitas* of the nation. Archaeological evidence for the investment of resources in cavalry can be found in signs of stockbreeding to produce more effective warhorses.<sup>477</sup> However, the sheer number of troops employed by Roman forces over the course of the first century BCE would seem to argue against them being drawn exclusively from the upper echelons of society.<sup>478</sup> Although Dubnoreix's ability to maintain a retinue of horsemen at all times out of his own pocket seems to be a demonstration of his unusual wealth and standing, it could also be that such an arrangement was not entirely unique. It could well be that the rank-and-file of auxiliary cavalry units was composed of lower ranking individuals whose mounts were provided at the expense of their patrons or communities.<sup>479</sup>

An intriguing case of textual, numismatic, and iconographic evidence coming together on the subject of Gallic auxiliary service in the mid-first century BCE is found in coins issued in the name of Epadnactos among the Arverni. The silver issues BN3885 and 3903/DLT3900 are each marked on their reverses with a warrior in

---

<sup>476</sup> Those selected played a double role as both cavalry officers and hostages to guarantee the good behaviour of their peoples. Cunliffe, 1997: 108.

<sup>477</sup> Allen, 2007: 132.

<sup>478</sup> The *commentarii* generally give figures of 4-5,000 levied for differing campaign seasons (*BG* 1.15, 4.12, 5.5-8), with the available supply of Gallic horsemen only drying up in 52BCE due to mass participation in the Revolt of Vercingetorix. Cagniat, 1992: 73.

<sup>479</sup> Roman cavalry of the Republican period involved a potentially similar distinction between those who served *equo suo* and *equo publico*.

rather Roman looking armour carrying a winged *signum* (standard).<sup>480</sup> The usage of such devices strongly suggests that Epađnactos derived prestige from his ability to provide and/or lead auxiliary cavalry troops in Roman service, creating something close to an iconographic foil to the coinage of Dubnoreixs in the process. Furthermore, the widespread distribution of these coins across many sites in Gaul (including Corent and Gergovia but also Bibracte, Alésia, as far west as Saint-Fort-sur-Gironde and as far north as Rouen) would suggest a wide and influential dispersal of the troops he commanded both during and after their terms of service.

In terms of recruitment and deployment of Gallic troops, especially provincial ones, Caesar's account (*BC* 3.59-60) of an incident at the Siege of Dyrrhachium 48BCE involving Gallic cavalry reveals several key points about how such troops were organised and led in the context of the Civil Wars. Among the leaders of the auxiliary horsemen were a pair of Allobrogan brothers, Roucillos and Egos, sons of Adbucillos. Though they were of high birth, their father having been '*princeps*' of their people in the past and had been rewarded for their earlier service to Caesar with both monetary prizes and landed estates in their home territory, they had been discovered embezzling the pay of their troops. After exposure, and a failed attempt on the life of their immediate superior, the Roman *praefectus equitum*, they fled and deserted to Pompey's army. The two were later apparently slain in a cavalry skirmish at the Battle of Pharsalus (*BC* 3.84). This incident presents us with several nuggets of potentially useful information. It offers a strong indication that, for

---

<sup>480</sup> Colbert de Beaulieu and Fischer, 1998: 160-1. Pernet, 2019: 190. See Fig. 17.



the ruling classes of the Rhône Basin peoples, military service under Caesar in the Gallic and Civil Wars could be a means of cementing or even advancing their status and power within their societies. It also reveals that the pay of such *auxilia* was organised through their leading members, given *stipendium* for redistribution, rather than through the legionary chain-of-command.<sup>481</sup> This would appear to support Pernet's view of Caesarian auxiliary recruitment operating on the basis of enlisting local communities leaders and having them levy their clients, dependents, and supporters into service.<sup>482</sup> As noted in the previous section, the notion of explicit legal Gallic clientship as the basis of military service may be overplayed, since in the case of Roucillos and Egos Caesar's account suggests that, as for Dubnoreixs, their troops did not die, or even desert, along with their leader.

However, rather than consistently relying on native leadership (and thus providing broader opportunities for privileged service and advancement), many of the Gallic auxiliary cavalry units of the era of the Civil Wars were commanded by Roman officers as *praefecti equitum* or *decuriones*. These men were drawn from varying backgrounds, some promoted to the position from veterancy as *primipilares*, others of equestrian, or even senatorial, background taking at as an early rung of their military careers.<sup>483</sup> A notable example is the *Ala Scaeva*, named after its commander, a centurion promoted to equestrian *praefectus* by Caesar for meritorious service

---

<sup>481</sup> Speidel, 2016: 94.

<sup>482</sup> Pernet, 2010: 176.

<sup>483</sup> Birley, 1978: 257.

at Dyrrhachium, formed primarily of southern Gallic troops.<sup>484</sup>

Similarly, although Dubnoreix was an important and influential figure amongst the 4,000 strong mounted force Caesar mustered for the Helvetian Campaign, he also mentions the *decurio* L. Aemilius as an officer from whom some of the Gallic cavalry deserted during the conflict (*BG* 1.23). While it is possible that Aemilius was an enfranchised Gaul, the simpler explanation is that he was a Roman officer appointed to lead auxiliary troops.

It would appear that there was an upper limit to the advancement that the native leaders of Gallic auxiliary units could achieve within the ranks of the Roman military system in the Caesarian and Triumviral eras, nor could they rely on enjoying a monopoly on positions of leading contingents of their own compatriots. While their service often resulted in substantial rewards, these were primarily focused on the framework of their home communities and did not necessarily translate into status within the echelons of Roman/Italian society.

Service in the auxiliary cavalry of Caesarian and Triumviral forces appears to have contributed more to the stratification of society in the Lower Rhône than to class mobility. Power over military matters remained firmly in the hands of pre-established social elites who could use their political clout to secure positions of command and their resources to outfit their followers as warriors. Furthermore, once in service, such elites could secure rewards for themselves

---

<sup>484</sup> For Scaeva see Caes. *BC* 3.53. For the *Ala Scaeva* see *CIL* 10,06011. Gayet, 2006: 72.

through successful networking with Roman commanders, while controlling access to pay and other benefits for their followers.

#### 4.4.3 A Gallic Legion? – The Case of the *Alaudae*

While the predominant capacity in which indigenous Gauls from the Rhône Basin militarily served under Roman commanders was as *auxilia/socii*, one contrasting case study from the period demands our consideration.

As part of the massing of military resources in response to Vercingetorix's Revolt c.52BCE, Caesar is said to have recruited a legion from his province of Gallia Transalpina (“*ex Transalpinis conscriptam*” Suet. *Jul.* 24), a force which afterwards became known as the *Legio V Alaudae*. The unusual epithet they bore is thought to be derived from a Gaulish word for the horned lark, noted for its pair of horn-like projections of head feathers (Plin. *NH* 11.44), which resembled the pair of plumes soldiers of the legion habitually wore in their helmets (in contrast with the more usual crests worn by other legionaries).<sup>485</sup>

On the one hand, some evidence would suggest that the first iteration of the *Alaudae* were, at least partly, indigenous recruits from communities such as the Volcae Arecomici, Cavares, and others, beyond their use of a Gaulish loanword as a nickname.<sup>486</sup>

For one thing, the event preceded the institutionalisation of auxiliary

---

<sup>485</sup> Bishop, 1990: 161-2. Gaulish ‘\**alauda*’ is thought to have etymologically given rise to the modern French ‘*alouette*’ (‘lark’). Savignac, 2014: 45.

<sup>486</sup> It is worth noting that the epithet is one of the earliest recorded for use in distinguishing a legion (rather than reference by number) and differs from others that emerged in later decades in that it takes the form of a plural noun (singular ‘*alauda*’) rather than an adjective (e.g., *Legio VI ‘Ferrata’*, *Legio X ‘Equestris’*). Keppie, 1983: 30.

service as distinct from legionary service implemented by the reforms of Augustus, meaning that it was not impossible for non-citizens to be enrolled as legionaries.<sup>487</sup> Indeed, Caesar himself is likely to have drawn heavily on the Transpadane communities of Cisalpina, who possessed the *ius Latii* but not formal citizenship at the time, for recruits to form other legions deployed throughout the Gallic Wars.<sup>488</sup> Suetonius' account of the unit's creation heavily suggests that the recruits were Gauls of *peregrini* status, noting that they were only enfranchised after completion of their initial terms of service and emphasising that they were equipped and trained at Caesar's expense in the Roman style ("*quam disciplina cultuque Romanum institutam et ornatam postea universam civitate donavit*" Suet. *Jul.* 24).<sup>489</sup>

On the other, a case against the Gallic identity of the *Alaudae* can be mounted. Caesar's recruits may have been drawn from colonial rather than indigenous communities, emphasising the *colonia* of Narbo and the nearby settlements of Tolosa and Carcaso (heavily settled by Roman traders and ranchers).<sup>490</sup> Comparative cases, wherein legions were either recruited or supplemented from provincial populations during the first century BCE, tend to specify their use of Roman citizens living there rather than local *peregrini*, the two main examples being Pompey's enrolment of Iberian and

---

<sup>487</sup> Haynes, 2013: 37-42.

<sup>488</sup> Keppie, 1984: 98. The heavy contribution of far northern Italian populations to the legions and Praetorian Guard in the Augustan and Tiberian Eras is noted by Strabo (*Geog.* 5.1.12) and may reflect longstanding traditions of enrolment from before their full enfranchisement. See Brunt, 1971: 199-200.

<sup>489</sup> A fact that would, presumably, have been redundant to state if describing men of Roman origins taking up arms.

<sup>490</sup> Mann, 1983: 3

North African citizens in a civil war context (Caes. *BH* 7.4) and Cicero's levy of citizens in Cilicia for military service during his stint as provincial governor (*Att.* 5.18). Cicero's comments on the *Alaudae* themselves might also discourage impressions of Gallic origin, as his suggestion that, for all their faults, they would make more trustworthy and reliable candidates for jurymen at Rome than the motley crews favoured by Mark Antony (*Phil.* 1.8.21) is phrased in terms of rhetoric concerning common soldiery and their social position rather than any suggestion of foreignness.<sup>491</sup>

Furthermore, while the evidence of the *Alaudae*'s Gallicity remains equivocal, service in this legion does not appear to have been a source of notable prestige or advancement in the social frameworks of Gaul for its members. The Late Republican legions do not appear to have generally functioned as a path to social mobility for recruits, as their rewards, both material and immaterial, were often limited and unreliable.<sup>492</sup> The *Legio V* itself would decamp from Gaul with the advent of the Civil Wars and was not stationed there again, separating any Gallic recruits from their homeland for the duration of their service.<sup>493</sup>

What this tangent of investigation reveals is that, even under circumstances wherein indigenous Gauls, from the south at least,

---

<sup>491</sup> Keppie, 1997: 90.

<sup>492</sup> As salaries for lower ranking soldiers were rather meagre and terms of service often irregular, the primary attraction of service was the largely random opportunities for wealth offered by the promise of *praeda* (loot). Patterson, 1993: 99. See also Gabba, 1973: 24-5.

<sup>493</sup> The *Alaudae* later fought in North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula, only returning to Gaul c.17BCE wherein it met defeat at the hands of Germanic raiders crossing the Rhine (Cass. Dio. 54.20; Vell. Pat. 2.97) and thereafter appear to have been primarily stationed along the Rhine Frontier thereafter. Pollard and Berry, 2012:78-9.

could potentially access forms of Roman military service theoretically privileged above that of the *auxilia* it does not appear to have translated into meaningful prestige or advancement amongst their native communities. For the Gallic ruling classes of the first century Rhône Basin, it seems to have been preferable to hold a higher position within the lesser institution (i.e., being an appointed *praefectus* or other officer rank amongst the *auxilia*) than to be a foot-soldier in the greater one (i.e., a legionary).

#### 4.4.4 Impact of the Augustan Military Reforms c.30-10BCE

The shift from the Gallic Wars to the Caesarian and Triumviral Civil Wars marks a more significant change in the experiences and organisation of Gallic auxiliary troops. With the move from local to distant theatres of operation, the *auxilia* would have to accompany Roman forces over periods of years, from one campaign to the next, rather than return demobilising after a few months.<sup>494</sup> The further major changes made to the Roman military system by the regime of Augustus as *princeps* also had significant impact on the organisation and experiences of auxiliary troops. Their role within the Roman Army shifted from that of ad-hoc conscripts used to fill spare tactical niches and supplement the legions on campaign to that of garrison troops and second-tier soldiers bound to lengthy terms of service.<sup>495</sup>

The Early Imperial period saw Gaul as a whole provide a vast amount of auxiliary troops to the Roman army, with calculations of

---

<sup>494</sup> Examples included the 10,000 Iberian and Gallic cavalry employed by Mark Antony for campaigns against the Parthians (c.40-36BCE, Plut. *Ant.* 37.3), survivors of whom first fought against then deserted to Octavian's forces following the Battle of Actium 31BCE, some of them even participating in Augustus' Triumph in 29BCE (Hor. *Epod.* 9.17).

<sup>495</sup> Speidel, 2016: 87.

between 28,000 and 40,000 individuals under arms at any one time over the course of the first century CE, though the bulk of these appear to have been raised from Belgica and the northern coastal regions rather than the Rhône Basin.<sup>496</sup> Augustus' reforming legislation of 13BCE substantially altered the payment and affiliation systems for auxiliary soldiers under Roman leadership, with their *stipendia* being drawn directly from the imperial treasury rather than the funds of their field commander, and the 500-strong *ala* replacing the much smaller *turma* as the primary unit of cavalry organisation.<sup>497</sup> This would have brought auxiliary cavalry (as well as infantry) into a closer, more standardised relationship with centralised Roman authority through the military institutional framework, rather than relying on a chain of relationships between troopers, their native leaders, and individual generals. While the upper-most echelons of the army continued to be the province of senatorial or equestrian citizens of Italian or colonial origins, those high-status Gauls who entered the army bringing with them their bands of auxiliary followers were likely given positions such as *tribunus militum* or *praefectus fabrum* as reflections of their rank.<sup>498</sup> It is also during this time that the weapon burials which provided much of the evidence of auxiliary service and leadership amongst Rhône Gallic peoples begin to disappear from the archaeological record.<sup>499</sup>

---

<sup>496</sup> Gayet, 2006: 99-100.

<sup>497</sup> Suet. *Aug.*49.2; Liv.25.3-6; *Inscrit.* XIII 2.189, 2.208, 2.476. Speidal, 2016: 81.

<sup>498</sup> Drinkwater, 1978: 848-9.

<sup>499</sup> Pernet, 2019: 194.

The new military regimen into which the *auxilia* transformed under the Principate was one in which the experiences of service differed substantially from that under the Republic; in many cases constituting a genuine career for recruits rather than a temporary jaunt.<sup>500</sup> Gallic auxiliaries could enjoy a firm position in the army with a regular, potentially substantial salary and access to at least some of the benefits of encampment. However, they did so at the expense of increasing dislocation from their home communities through long terms of service, whose length was yet to be fixed at the standard of 25 years and could potentially exceed it, in distant postings.<sup>501</sup> Furthermore, it must be noted that prior to the reign of Claudius in the mid-first century CE, there appears to have been no standard protocol for the enfranchisement of veterans as citizens upon discharge, with grants offered sporadically rather than systematically, and, even when given, may not have always included provisions for the inheritance of citizenship by the descendants of the discharged.<sup>502</sup> Service as an auxiliary trooper in the Augustan Era may have offered Rhône Gallic warriors opportunities to gain a certain amount of wealth and positional stability for themselves as individuals, but, between its geographical and temporal dislocation and comparatively limited pensionary

---

<sup>500</sup> Southern, 2006: 122.

<sup>501</sup> Although evidence for the precise deployment of units during the Augustan Era is sparse, attested postings of Gallic auxiliary *cohortes* and *alae* either known to be or likely to be from the Rhône region from the first century CE include the *Ala Veterana Gallica* (*CIL* 3,55; *CIL* 16,3) and *Ala Vocontiorum* (*P.Mich.* III,159; *P.Wisc.* II,53; *P.Hamb.* I,2) in Egypt (Alston, 1995: 167-172), the *Cohors III Gallorum Equitata* (*AE* 1975,0633) in Germania Inferior, and the *Cohortes III-VII Gallorum* (*AE* 1980,0788) in Moesia Superior.

<sup>502</sup> A significant and relevant case is that of Nertus Dumnotali, a Gallic veteran of the *Ala Hispanorum* buried at Aquincum in the first century CE without the *tria nomina* or any other sign of Roman citizenship despite having served for a term of 36 years (*CIL* 3,10514). Lavan, 2019: 28-9.



benefits, it does not appear to have been a meaningful avenue of social mobility.

#### 4.5 Conclusions

Of all the vectors of social power that the ruling classes of the Greater Rhône Basin wielded, military power is the area in which the changes wrought by Roman domination are the clearest. The major knock-on effect of the securing of *deditio in fidem* was the curtailing of Gallic elites' capacity to act as warriors and commanders independently of service to members of the Roman ruling class. Access to the economies of social and real capital based on raiding were lost and any form of military career available were then tied solely to experiences with Roman forces and divorced from the context of local communities and political spheres.

Contrary to certain stereotypes, the ideological aspects of military activity to Late Iron Age Gallic ruling class ideologies (in the Rhône Basin at least) do not appear to have been heavily based either on the individual martial prowess of members of the elite or on their capabilities as warlords on an unstructured, charismatic basis. That the communities of the region did not practice a strict state monopoly on violence (as characteristic of modern nation states) nor operate their militaries on the same bases as their contemporaries in Italy or the Aegean does not indicate that they lacked structure in their attitudes and practices regarding armed conflict. Prestige and advancement for members of the ruling classes were the rewards of proven track records of success as military commanders and maintainers of effective warrior retinues rather than as duellists or brawlers.

Our findings here put two major dampeners on Drinkwater's assessment of the fate of Late Iron Age Gallic ruling classes at the conclusion of the Gallic Wars. Firstly, that, even in the event of mass death in battle, such ruling classes would be demographically annihilated is undercut by the fact that certain sectors of the elite would not have been actively participating in military matters c.52-50BCE (due to age and/or secured positions of civic office). Secondly, there is little, if any, hard evidence to suggest that, for aristocratic warriors in mid-first century BCE central and eastern Gaul death in battle was held preferable to defeat, or that defeat itself would render such an irrecoverable loss of prestige that they would no longer be able to function as members of the ruling class.

Stratification is writ large in the changes that occurred in relation to Roman rule. Service as an auxiliary officer in the first century BCE was closely tied to patron/client relationships with individual Roman senators and warlords and predicated on Gallic individuals' sufficient prominence in their own communities to catch the eye of visiting commanders. The rewards of service and patronage seem to have primarily served to secure the pre-eminence of successful returning commanders and their families over their peers, sharpening the divisions between levels of elite classes. Auxiliary service in this vein was a key factor in the rise to prominence of the Julii of Glanum, the Vocontian Pompeii Trogi, and the Aeduan Julii Caleni (descendants of Eoredorixs).<sup>503</sup> As such, the value of military activity as a facet of ideology on the part of Rhône Gallic ruling classes was not voided post conquest. However, the levels at which it was possible to

---

<sup>503</sup> For the Julii Caleni see Hostein, 2010: 49-71.

participate in such activity and the manner in which it could be performed had to be radically adapted to better suit the needs and preferences of the new colonial apparatus. At the close of the first century BCE, at least some of the elites of southern and eastern Gaul could derive prestige from war, but no longer as warriors of their people, only as soldiers of Augustus.