

CAESAR'S CONSTRUCTION OF NORTHERN EUROPE: INQUIRY, CONTACT AND CORRUPTION IN *DE BELLO GALLICO**

That Caesar's plain prose does not make him a straightforward author needs no argument.¹ Yet Caesar's organising hand is more readily recognised in his portrayal of the protagonists of *De Bello Gallico* and their actions, than in the geographical setting in which they operate.² Moreover, Caesar's characterisations of northern Europe appear acceptable because they agree, to some extent, with our own conceptions of Europe. The reason for this correspondence is, of course, that Caesar's conquests and their presentation formed an inspiration for many classical, early modern and modern historians and statesmen, on whose visions our notions are in part dependent.

Yet Caesar's ethnographies are not intended as straightforward observations of reality.³ The present article seeks to contribute to previous scholarship on this matter by demonstrating the interrelation of the various ethnographies in *De Bello Gallico*,⁴

* I should like to thank Nicholas Purcell, Katherine Clarke, Christopher Pelling, Miriam Griffin and the readers and editors of this journal for their comments on various versions of this article.

¹ Key texts on Caesar's narrative strategies, especially concerning the *Bellum Gallicum*, remain C.E. Stevens, 'The *Bellum Gallicum* as a work of propaganda', *Latomus* 11 (1952), 3–18; 165–79, with B. Levick's appraisal 'The Veneti revisited: C.E. Stevens and the tradition on Caesar the propagandist', in K. Welch and A. Powell (edd.), *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter: The War Commentaries as Political Instruments* (London, 1998), 61–83; G. Walser, *Caesar und die Germanen. Studien zur politischen Tendenz römischer Feldzugsberichte*, Historia Einzelschriften 1 (Wiesbaden, 1956); and M. Rambaud, *L'art de la déformation historique dans les commentaires de César* (Paris, 1966 2nd ed.), with P.-M. Duval, 'Autour de César. 2. La déformation historique dans les Commentaires d'après Michel Rambaud', in id., *Travaux sur la Gaule (1946–1986)*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1989), 139–61. A discussion of scholarship on the subject is available in M. Rambaud, 'Un bilan des études césariennes', in R. Chevallier (ed.), *Présence de César* (Paris, 1985), 7–24; for more recent studies see the bibliography of D. Burgersdijk, 'Een nieuwe Caesar. Over het onderzoek naar 'lezersturing' in *De Bello Gallico*', *Lampas* 34 (2001), 242–60.

² For instance G. Walser, 'Zu Caesars Tendenz in der geographischen Beschreibung Galliens', *Klio* 77 (1995), 217–33 as a complement to his *Caesar und die Germanen*.

³ This point of view underlies N. Holzberg, 'Die ethnographischen Exkurse in Caesars *Bellum Gallicum* als erzählstrategisches Mittel', *Anregung* 33 (1987), 85–98; P.-M. Duval, 'Autour de César. 1. La "Relation des exploits de Jules César. La guerre des Gaules"', in id., *Travaux sur la Gaule*, vol. 1, 111–37; Walser, (n. 2); A. Lund, 'Caesar als Ethnograph', *Der Altsprachliche Unterricht* 39 (1996), 12–23; G. Dobesch, 'Caesar als Ethnograph (mit Zusätzen 1999)', in id., *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna, 2001), 453–505 = *Wiener Humanistische Blätter* 31 (1989), 16–51; C.B. Krebs, ' "Imaginary geography" in Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*', *AJPh* 127 (2006), 111–36, and, from a different perspective, T.S. Burns, 'Through Caesar's eyes', in id., *Rome and the Barbarians, 100 B.C. – A.D. 400* (Baltimore/London, 2003), 88–139.

⁴ Some of the ethnographical and geographical descriptions discussed in this paper have been suspected of being interpolations, on the grounds of their style and contents. This longstanding debate, outlined in W. Hering, 'Die Interpolation im Prooemium des *Bellum Gallicum*', *Philologus* 100 (1956), 67–99 at 67–70, treated by T. Berres, 'Die geographischen Interpolationen in Caesars *Bellum Gallicum*', *Hermes* 98 (1970), 154–77, has not yielded, and perhaps cannot yield, definitive conclusions. The stylistic argument will be left to those more competent in the field; regarding the contents of the descriptions, the present article seeks to show that they are interrelated throughout *De Bello Gallico*, as well as supporting Caesar's requirements in each individual campaign.

and by examining a hitherto unstudied strategy in Caesar's structuring of northern Europe: his presentation of inquiry and the connected *topoi* of contact and corruption.⁵ It will be argued that, using a series of stereotypes, contrasts and parallels, changing definitions and narrative modes, Caesar puts northern Europe on the map, in a way that justifies his chosen fields of action and magnifies his achievements by suggesting the novelty and completion of his campaigns.

If the ethnographies in *De Bello Gallico* are no easy source of information about the reality of northern Europe, they are all the more telling about Caesar's aims. They show why, and how, Caesar parcels out Europe in sections more or less suitable to eventual incorporation into the Roman empire. Inquiry, contact and corruption are concepts employed by Caesar to this end. But these are not 'merely' narrative devices. Inquiry also appears as an aspect of Caesar's interpretation of his command. Increasingly, extending the European map features as an objective in its own right, on occasion competing with direct military advantage.

This study of Caesar's ethnographies is based on a close reading of the text.⁶ The order of Caesar's account will be followed, so that we see the map of Europe unfolding in the same way as his Roman audience would have done: through Caesar's eyes. This does most justice to the persuasive power of his construction of Europe and brings out his ways of adapting to the demands of each particular campaign.⁷ It is also the most convenient format for demonstrating changes in Caesar's intentions in the course of *De Bello Gallico*.

PLOTTING GAUL

Like Nabokov's *Lolita*, the *Commentaries* of C. Julius Caesar begin with the name of the object of conquest. Unlike Nabokov, Caesar does not distance himself from his account with the help of several (mock) prefaces and editorial notes. Nevertheless, Caesar appears initially absent from what pretends to be a factual representation. In the opening sequence of the *Commentaries*, the reader is left alone with the subject matter: *Gallia*. This directness however appears as carefully designed as Nabokov's construct and the more beguiling for its apparent artlessness. Already in this same first sentence, Caesar is ambiguous about what constitutes Gaul, an ambiguity all the more remarkable because it is in a sentence that purports to define. It is an ambiguity that Caesar does not resolve throughout his text.

⁵ Caesar's sources of information and their written reflections form the subject matter of H. Montgomery, 'Caesar und die Grenzen: Information und Propaganda in den Commentarii de bello Gallico', *Symbolae Osloenses* 49 (1973), 57–92, but his focus is on whether these were part of Caesar's reports to the Senate, see n. 7, and consequently on their veracity.

⁶ Caesar will be cited according to W. Hering, *C. Iulii Caesaris commentarii rerum gestarum, Vol. I: Bellum Gallicum* (Bibl. Teubneriana) (Leipzig, 1987). Translations are taken from C. Hammond, *Caesar: The Gallic War*, trans. and introd. (Oxford, 1996).

⁷ This touches upon the question of when Caesar's *Commentaries* were published. Most scholars favour a publication of the first seven books jointly in 52 or 51 B.C., although recently T.P. Wiseman, 'The publication of *De Bello Gallico*', in Welch and Powell (edd.), *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter*, 1–9 has restated the case for annual publication. Either way, during his campaigns Caesar sent reports to the Senate, many of whose members, moreover, were informed of his exploits through their contacts with those serving in his army. In these circumstances, 'It would be impossible grossly to garble facts already on record, though the point of view in presenting them could be altered', Stevens (n. 1), at 4. The function of the ethnographical and geographical descriptions in *De Bello Gallico* in imposing Caesar's viewpoints forms the subject of this article.

The first thing we learn about Gaul is that it is a whole, the next thing that it is divided: *Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres (B Gall. 1.1.1)*. As we continue, the differences are stressed: *quarum unam incolunt Belgae, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur. hi omnes lingua, institutis, legibus inter se differunt (B Gall. 1.1.1)*. In itself this is not surprising, it is indeed an elaboration of the first statement. Yet, as the differences Caesar mentions are all attributes of a state⁸ – language, institutions and laws – it is not altogether clear why we should see Gaul as one instead of three. This question, however, does not necessarily occur to the reader: Caesar's terse prose and the seemingly factual topographical contents, by their lack of rhetorical flourish, paradoxically deflect attention.

The confusion is added to by the names of the inhabitants of the three unnamed parts. The part of the Belgae one might want to call Belgium, the part of the Aquitani Aquitania, and what could the part of the Galli be but Gallia? Yet Gallia, as we have learnt, is a whole of which the Galli occupy only a third.⁹ Caesar does not spend time explaining this, or even indicating how he will use his terms in what follows. Following the letter of the text, there is Gallia, divided in three sections, one of which is inhabited by people called Celtae/Galli; by contrast the impression created in the reader is of Gauls living in Gaul and some other peoples as well. In this image, the Galli take precedence over the Belgae and the Aquitani, not only because of the associations of their name, but also because they are the only group about whom more information is provided – their name in their own language – and thereby more individuality. They are also the ones with whom Caesar's description continues and whose territory is defined: *Gallos ab Aquitanis Garunna flumen, a Belgis Matrona et Sequana dividit (B Gall. 1.1.2)*.¹⁰ In that process the Aquitani and Belgae are placed on the map, but only in relation to the Galli: their other borders are not mentioned. This treatment of tripartite Gaul suggests that the part occupied by the Galli is the part that matters: Gallia proper.

In the next chapter Caesar informs us that in 61 B.C. the Helvetii were persuaded to march out of their cramped territory, because, according to the conspirator Orgetorix: *perfacile esse, cum virtute omnibus praestarent, totius Galliae imperio potiri (B Gall. 1.2.2)*.¹¹ Caesar has already told us that the Helvetii *reliquos Gallos virtute praecedunt (B Gall. 1.1.4)*, so that the Helvetian sentiment appears acceptable; yet in fact this should not mean that the Helvetii are fit to obtain mastery over *totius Galliae*.¹² The whole of Gallia includes, besides the Galli, the Belgae and Aquitani:

⁸ C. Torigian, 'The *Λόγος* of Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*, especially as revealed in its first five chapters', in Welch and Powell (edd.), *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter*, 45–60, at 47.

⁹ For the meaning of the terms Galli and Gallia before Caesar, see P.-M. Duval, 'Les noms de la Gaule', in id., *Travaux sur la Gaule*, vol. 2, 709–20; G. Dobesch, 'Das Europäische "Barbaricum" und die Zone der Mediterrankultur: Ihre historische Wechselwirkung und das Geschichtsbild des Poseidonios', *Supplementband 2 Tyche* (Wien, 1995), 5–118; J.H.C. Williams, *Beyond the Rubicon. Romans and Gauls in Republican Italy* (Oxford, 2001), at 19–35, 48–67 and 127–39; for Caesar's innovations Lund (n. 3), at 12–14.

¹⁰ For rivers as boundaries in *De Bello Gallico* see n. 22.

¹¹ For this campaign, see W. Wimmel, 'Caesar und die Helvetier', *Rh. Mus.* 123 (1980), 126–37, and *ibid.* 125 (1982), 59–66; F. Fischer, 'Caesar und die Helvetier: Neue Überlegungen zu einem alten Thema', *Bonner Jahrb.* 185 (1985), 1–26; and G. Walser, *Bellum Helveticum. Studien zum Beginn der caesarischen Eroberung von Gallien*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 118 (Stuttgart, 1998).

¹² Orgetorix uses the phrase *totius Galliae* twice more in the following chapter, *B Gall.* 1.3.7; 8.

Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae (*B Gall.* 1.1.3). While the Helvetii outshine the other Galli in force, the Belgae rank highest among all inhabitants of Gallia.

That this is not a matter of barbarian hubris on the part of Orgetorix, but rather of changing terminology on the part of Caesar, is suggested by the fact that Caesar later has his allies the Aedui – Galli as well – also speak of *totius Galliae* to designate the area over which they and the Arverni – again Galli – used to hold primacy, before the Sequani – Galli once more – took over their position.¹³ The Belgae (and Aquitani) have by now dropped out of the picture. Caesar does not challenge the Aeduan account and even upholds their claim to primacy in his parley with the Germanic king Ariovistus, *ut omni tempore totius Galliae principatum Haedui tenuissent* (*B Gall.* 1.43.7). We must conclude, then, that Caesar, prefigured by Orgetorix, covertly employs the term Gallia in the narrative differently from one of the senses – the first and more general one – of Gallia in the prooemium. The reader probably will be unaware of this transition and unaware of the exact extent of Gaul.

Caesar's motive for this change in definitions is quite simple. Before the final battle of Book 1, Caesar has Ariovistus insolently claim that *provinciam suam hanc esse Galliam, sicut illam nostram* (*B Gall.* 1.44.8), and that never before had a Roman army ventured out of the province. The Germanic king, just as everyone in the narrative of Book 1, thinks of non-Roman Gaul as one whole; which is to say that Caesar wants the reader to think that way. The threat posed by a barbarian realm with aspirations similar to those of Rome and situated at its very borders, contributes towards justifying Caesar's choice of enemy. Moreover, having defeated Ariovistus as overlord, Caesar would naturally take over his position and so control both spheres of influence. The Roman empire can be extended either by battle or by alliance, and Caesar, in fighting the Germans and placing the Gallic allies under obligation towards him, appears to have brought greater Gaul under his *imperium*. On Ariovistus' claim, Caesar was the first Roman to even consider doing so.¹⁴

Thus the confusion Caesar created about the term Gallia helps him to magnify his success. At the end of Book 1, a reader would believe Caesar to be in control of the whole of Gaul, instead of the Gallic area of the tripartite division.

INQUIRY AND STEREOTYPE: THE GALLI CONTRASTED WITH THE BELGAE AND NERVII

In the first chapter of the second book it becomes clear that Caesar has conquered smaller Gaul only, when he reverts to the terminology of the prooemium: *omnes Belgas, quam tertiam esse Galliae partem dixeramus* (*B Gall.* 2.1.1), are said to be plotting against the Romans. Upon this information Caesar levies troops and moves north, where he questions the legates of the pro-Roman Remi concerning the bellicose tribes. This is straightforward behaviour for a commander, but it is worth noting the difference from Book 1, in which there are no indications of Caesar making inquiries about the Helvetii or Ariovistus before commencing his campaign. Neither is a source given for his opening ethnography. One assumes that this is a

¹³ *B Gall.* 1.31.3; 10 and 1.17.3–5.

¹⁴ For Caesar's dealings with Ariovistus, see K. Christ, 'Caesar und der Ariovist', *Chiron* 4 (1974), 251–92.

difference in what Caesar chooses to tell us rather than in what he did¹⁵ – and this poses the question why Caesar made this choice.¹⁶

By leaving out all indications of inquiry, Caesar in Book 1 presents Gaul as a known entity.¹⁷ This is advantageous on three scores. First, it shows Caesar to be in control: he knows what peoples he will be facing and he knows where to find them. This is significant, since before Caesar's *Commentaries*, Roman knowledge of northern Europe was very limited.¹⁸ Within a lifetime, the incursions of the Cimbri and Teutones, defeated by Caesar's uncle Marius in 101 B.C., had reinforced the memory of the fourth-century Gallic sack of Rome. In 60 B.C. fears were rekindled by reports that the Helvetii were planning to march forth.¹⁹ Caesar's confident exposition counters ignorance and anxiety by imposing order on previously undifferentiated lands and peoples. Intellectual conquest thus paves the way for military conquest. Secondly, it enhances the apparent objectivity of Caesar's account. The information the reader needs is either told by an omniscient narrator (*B Gall.* 1.1–6) or through intermediaries²⁰ (the Aedui Liscus and Diviciacus), and thus remains unconnected to Caesar's organising mind. In the same way that Caesar's seemingly straightforward style deflects attention from the ambiguity of the word *Gallia*, so this impersonal method of introduction forestalls doubts about the geography of *Gallia*. This means that, when the omniscient narrator claims the river Rhine is the border between *Gallia* and *Germania* (*B Gall.* 1.1.3), and the natives corroborate this in their account (*B Gall.* 1.31), there appears to be no reason to doubt what we are told. In actual fact, the abundant archaeological evidence shows great similarity on both sides of the Rhine, place names on either side are Celtic, and of Caesar's own *Germani* only the Suebi have an undisputed Germanic name.²¹ None of this constitutes firm proof of the ethnic identity of the inhabitants of the region, but it does make Caesar's Rhine demarcation less than self-explanatory – which should be remembered especially

¹⁵ For Roman generals, and Caesar in particular, relying on intelligence gathered in the field, see A.C. Bertrand, 'Stumbling through Gaul: maps, intelligence and Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*', *Ancient History Bulletin* 11 (1997), 107–22.

¹⁶ It could be argued that the Helvetii have been introduced by the account of Orgetorix' conspiracy, and that we know enough about Ariovistus from Caesar's report of Diviciacus' speech. But this only confirms the need to consider why Caesar favours such methods over a more direct approach.

¹⁷ See also Krebs (n. 3), at 113–17.

¹⁸ For contemporary Roman knowledge of northern Europe see, in addition to nn. 9 and 15, Walser (n. 1), at 55–8; and more generally E. Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (Baltimore, 1985), at 250–66. C. Nicolet, *Space, Geography and Politics in the early Roman Empire* (University of Michigan, 1991), trans. of *L'Inventaire du monde* (Paris, 1988) by H. Leclerc, at 1–14 observes the correlation between intellectual and physical control of space; A.M. Riggsby, *Caesar in Gaul and Rome. War in Words* (University of Texas, 2006), at 22–4, 28–32 and 59–62, comments on the characteristics of space in *De Bello Gallico*.

¹⁹ *in re publica nunc quidem maxime Gallici belli versatur metus*, Cic. *Att.* 1.19.2. Speaking on Caesar's behalf in 56 B.C., Cicero recalls the perennial Gallic threat, *Prov. cons.* esp. 32–4; Marius halting the Gallic invasion of Italy is referred to explicitly in 19, 26 and 32. Caesar himself, however, makes remarkably little capital out of the Cimbri and Teutones. The Belgae and Galli he twice presents as opposing them. Fear of a recurrence of their incursions Caesar only evokes, also twice, as justification for his attack on the Germanic king Ariovistus. This treatment may perhaps be explained as an instance – others will be discussed below – of Caesar's desire to transfer Gallic barbarity on to the *Germani*. J.F. Gardner, 'The "Gallic menace" in Caesar's propaganda', *G&R* 30 (1983), 181–9, and Williams (n. 9) examine the consequences of the Gallic threat; neither, however, comments on its relative absence in Caesar.

²⁰ *B Gall.* 1.17–18; 31.

²¹ P.S. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak* (Princeton, 1999), at 113 and 49.

when reading *B Gall.* 4.1–3 and 6.11–28, where Caesar emphasises the cultural differences between the Galli and Germani.²² Which brings us to the third advantage of Caesar's assured definition of Gaul. Setting up the Rhine as boundary, Caesar has created an apparently objective limit to his campaign. He has neatly separated Gallia from the uncharted vastness of northern Europe, which allows him to define success by claiming completion.

In the second book, the approach is quite the contrary. The campaign against the Belgae takes its inception not from knowledge, but from hearsay. Instead of possessing all information from the start, Caesar finds out over time by rumours and reports from Labienus (*B Gall.* 2.1.1). This lack of knowledge is then remedied when Caesar asks the legates of the Remi the very basic questions, *quae civitates quantaque in armis essent et quid in bello possent* (*B Gall.* 2.4.1). Caesar places himself on a par with his readership, for both he and we learn the answers from the legates' response: *sic reperiebat* (*B Gall.* 2.4.1) introduces the description of the Belgae. After some remarks about this description, it will be suggested how Caesar's claim to make inquiries in the second book, in contrast to the first book, serves a function in the picture he desires to draw of the Belgae.

The characterisation of the Belgae put in the mouth of the Remi is hardly surprising, considering the fact that Caesar will spend the rest of the year fighting them: he needs an enemy of stature and one is duly delivered. Most Belgae, we are told, are of Germanic origin, having settled in Gallia for its fertility, driving out the natives.²³ There are reverberations here of a tradition in classical ethnography, henceforward labelled as 'Hippocratic', which holds that the physiology and character of a people are determined, at least in their basic characteristics, by the conditions, climate and topography of the land they live in.²⁴ Generally speaking, harsh conditions were believed to create strong, courageous, but not very smart people; and a mild climate was held responsible for handsome and clever, but weak and cowardly men. These stereotypes took on political consequence: the 'weak' barbarians, located south or east, were seen as fit to be governed by despots, while the 'tough' barbarian from the north or west treasured their liberty, but, as a result, were unable to organise themselves into a state. As such, the Belgae, originating in infertile lands, are immediately characterised as fiercer men than the Gauls whom they supplant. This harks back to the statement in the prooemium that the Belgae were the strongest of all Gauls, as reasons for which were given that *a cultu atque humanitate provinciae longissime absunt minimeque ad eos mercatores saepe commeant atque ea, quae ad effeminandos animos pertinent, important* (*B Gall.* 1.1.3). Thus the distance of their

²² On the Rhine as demarcation between Gallia and Germania, see Walser (n. 1) at 37–51; Dobesch (n. 9), *vide* Index: Rhein, Rheingrenze; Lund (n. 3) at 12–4; Riggsby (n. 18) and at 64–5; more generally P.J. Jones, *Reading Rivers in Roman Literature and Culture* (Oxford, 2005), esp. at 37–47 and 71–80.

²³ There is a contradiction here if not with the letter, at least with the spirit, of the opening ethnography of *B Gall.* 1.1, where the Belgae appeared to be kinsmen of the Galli. However, the emphasis on their strength, also mentioned in 1.1, probably renders their relation to the Germani acceptable.

²⁴ The literature is extensive. See e.g. A.O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore, 1935); A.N. Sherwin-White, *Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome* (Cambridge, 1967); R.F. Thomas, *Lands and Peoples in Roman Poetry: the Ethnographical Tradition* (Cambridge, 1982); E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford, 1989); and K. Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (Oxford, 1999). A succinct exposition of the 'Hippocratic' tradition can be found in A. Vasaly, *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1993), at 143–50.

northern abodes protects the Belgae from corruption from the south. The Remi's assertion that they are the only people to have resisted the Cimbri and Teutones completes the portrayal of the Belgae as dangerous foes (*B Gall.* 2.4.2).²⁵ This passage is followed by the Remi's information concerning the number of warriors of individual tribes. Whereas the latter is certainly strategic intelligence and probably previously unknown, it is hard to believe that the former was news to Caesar for which he needed the Remi as source. Nothing is said about the Belgae that a classical ethnographer could not say, *mutatis mutandis*, about any northern tribe and its fierceness. The Hippocratic note and the mentioning of the Cimbri and Teutones point to a Roman rather than Belgic mind behind this passage.

Why then this fiction of inquiry? Arguably, the suggestion that Caesar did not know his prospective opponents serves a function in that it places them outside the Roman world. Intellectual distance is easily read as a parallel to physical distance and the act of inquiry tallies with the outcome: on both scores remoteness is the theme (in terms of physical distance through the Hippocratic stereotype that equals fierce people and far-north abodes). And if remoteness enhances the Belgae as enemies, it also enhances Caesar as innovative campaigner: here, for the first time, Caesar is seen to cross the boundaries of known Gaul. The excitement generated in Rome by Caesar's explorations is evoked to great effect by Cicero in his *De provinciis consularibus*, delivered for Caesar in the next year.²⁶ The Aedui and Ariovistus of the first book had been hailed as friends of the Roman people, the Arverni were defeated enemies. In the Belgae Caesar reaches a people as yet undefined in relation to Rome.²⁷

Of course each question asked and answered will add to a body of knowledge, and so it may seem a vapid thing to say that Caesar enlarges the Roman world view. But the alleged inquiries about the Belgae are more significant than just any question, for the relevance lies not in a couple of facts, but in the extension of the Roman horizon. It is in the first place the question, rather than the answer, that defines the location and therefore the nature of the Belgae: their absence from the Roman consciousness matches the distance of the Belgae from Rome, and thus, paradoxically, it is Caesar's ignorance of them that locates them on the map. But answering the question, remedying lack of knowledge by supposed research, Caesar extends the Roman map to include the Belgae;²⁸ and then sets out to force the Belgae into a relationship that suits Rome.

²⁵ See n. 19. On the corruption that the exchange of money and commodities might entail in classical thought, see C.S. Kraus, 'Jugurtine disorder', in ead. (ed.), *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts* (Leiden, 1999), 217–47, at 221–3, and the bibliography listed at 223, n. 21.

²⁶ Esp. chaps. 22 and 33. *Q Fr.* 3.6(8).2 suggests that Cicero's personal opinion on the appeal of the unknown was different.

²⁷ The general who most famously extended the boundaries of the known world was of course Alexander the Great. P. Green, 'Caesar and Alexander: *aemulatio, imitatio, comparatio*', *AJAH* 3 (1978), 1–26, has convincingly argued that Caesar did not, in fact, model himself on Alexander. But that does not diminish the lure of the unknown. At a time when the Roman empire began to be seen as coterminous with the *oikoumenê*, extending both was arguably the ultimate achievement of her generals. It was also what Pompey the Great – with whom Caesar certainly did compete – claimed to have accomplished in the East. See Nicolet (n. 18), at 29–56 for first-century B.C. views on Rome and the *oikoumenê*, and at 32 for Pompey's eastern inscription; see also n. 35.

²⁸ Tacitus similarly alters the location of the object of conquest on the mental map in *Agricola*; see K. Clarke, 'An island nation: re-reading Tacitus' *Agricola*', *JRS* 91 (2001), 94–112, at 98–104, 106.

Inquiry and stereotype are present again in Caesar's description of the Nervii, his final Belgic foes. Or so they seem, for in fact the impression that the Nervii are the ultimate target, which Caesar has met when he vanquishes them towards the end of Book 2, is the result of Caesar's method of introduction: he is never explicit about his aims in this expedition. Yet because of the ring composition Caesar creates – form and contents of the introduction of the Nervii mirror that used for the Belgae as a whole – the Nervii seem to round off his campaign. The characterisation of the Nervii is in fact the more extended, confirming their importance in the reader's mind. Still, the apparent detail is equally stereotypical and reflects Roman concepts rather than Belgic culture. Refusing merchants and the import of wine, the Nervii guard themselves from effeminacy, *nullum esse aditum ad eos mercatoribus; nihil pati vini reliquarumque rerum ad luxuriam pertinentium inferri, quod iis rebus relanguescere animos eorum virtutemque remitti existimarent* (*B Gall.* 2.15.4), keeping classical civilisation and its exponents at bay; and thus emphasising that distance from the Roman world Caesar is set to overcome. Their extreme valour (*B Gall.* 2.15.5) also locates them in the extreme north of the whole of the Belgae. This remoteness once more is introduced by Caesar explicitly making inquiries: *eorum fines Nervii attingebant, quorum de natura moribusque Caesar cum quaereret, sic reperiebat* (*B Gall.* 2.15.3). Harking back to what was said of the Belgae as a whole, but more elaborately, the Nervii seem to be the most 'Belgic' of all Belgae, the most extreme and hence the furthest to the north, and signal Caesar's subjugation of the Belgae in their entirety.

So besides setting Caesar up as an explorer who added to Roman knowledge, this passage also serves a strategic purpose in indicating the completion of Caesar's Belgic campaign. We have seen above how at the end of his first campaigning season, by changing his terminology, Caesar appeared to have conquered the whole of Gaul rather than one third of it. At the end of his second season, Caesar similarly suggests the subjugation of an entire nation and one that was, moreover, previously beyond the bounds of the Roman world.²⁹

NOVELTY DEMONSTRATED: THE MARITIME STATES

In the third season Caesar cannot extend his map of Europe by entering new territory,³⁰ for a revolt compels him to return to peoples he had already considered pacified: the Essuvii, Coriosolitae and Veneti of *B Gall.* 3.7.4, together with the Osismi, Lexovii, Namnetes, Ambiliati, Morini, Diablintes, Menapii of *B Gall.* 3.9.10.³¹ Nevertheless, Caesar manages to create the impression of operating in a new area, on account of the picture he draws of the maritime states. In *B Gall.* 2.34 largely the same tribes were dealt with – introduced and finished off – in one chapter, consisting of one sentence only: *Eodem tempore a Publio Crasso, quem cum legione*

²⁹ This may contribute to an explanation of Caesar's statement that the Belgae descended from the Germani, see n. 23. If, the impressions of Book 1 notwithstanding, the Belgae were no Celts, it is easier to claim their conquest as independent from the operations in the first year and similar to those in scale.

³⁰ Even though entering radically new territory in all likelihood was already on his mind: Stevens (n. 1), at 8–12, with Levick (n. 1), at 66–7; 72–5, argued that Caesar intended to sail to Britannia and for that purpose built the *naves longae* (*B Gall.* 3.9.1), which turned out to be unsuitable for the operations against the maritime tribes in which they were used instead. Caesar's ambitions in this respect, and their impetus, will be further discussed below, and see n. 47.

³¹ The Morini and the Menapii have been numbered amongst the Belgae in *B Gall.* 2.4.9.

una miserat ad Venetos, V<e>nellos, Osismos, Coriosolitas, Essuvios, Aulercos, R[h]jedones, quae sunt maritimae civitates Oceanumque attingunt, certior factus est omnes eas civitates in dicionem potestatemque p. R. esse redactas. This treatment does not impress the reader, neither in form, nor in contents: apparently, a young legate could be trusted to reduce these tribes, and one legion was deemed sufficient against seven states. In Book 3, faced by Caesar himself upon his enforced return – he tells us that he was on his way to his third pro-consular province, Illyricum (*B Gall.* 3.7.1) – they warrant four chapters in which the narrative of the war is interspersed with ethnographical and geographical detail.³²

These chapters present us with most unusual landscapes and peoples. The roads are intersected by estuaries, the tides are strong and the weather foul, harbours are scarce, corn provision difficult. The Veneti, the ringleaders of the revolt, appear almost amphibious: their strongholds were ‘placed on headlands projecting into the sea and could not be approached on foot when the tide rushed in from the sea... Nor could they be approached by ship at low tide, because then the vessels would run into troubles in the shallows’ (*B Gall.* 3.12.1). The Romans, unaccustomed to navigating a non-landlocked sea, are out of their depth in this oceanic environment (*B Gall.* 3.9.6); whereas the Veneti, when, difficulties notwithstanding, the Romans are about to overtake their fortifications, ‘would bring a large number of ships to land (a task at which they were especially skilled), take all their property out to sea and sail off to the nearest town. There they would once again put up their defences, with the same advantages of position’ (*B Gall.* 3.12.3-4). Against mighty Ariovistus Caesar did not sound this exasperated.

People and lands thus conspire against Caesar in an unaccustomed way. But the Veneti are not just products of nature that mirror their changeable environment by their adaptability. They are also rational human beings, as is proven by their shipbuilding skill, which merits the term *scientia* (*B Gall.* 3.8.1). The ships that Caesar had ordered to be built in *B Gall.* 3.9.1 turn out to be inadequate in *B Gall.* 3.12.1, whilst *B Gall.* 3.13.7 describes the Gallic ships that are *aptiora et accommodatiora* to the situation.³³ The intelligence of the maritime peoples may well strike a Hippocratic ethnographer as the result of the demanding circumstances of their habitat.³⁴ In this way both mankind and environment serve to define another corner of the Roman mental map of barbaric Europe.

The contrasts between the treatments the maritime states receive in Book 2 and in Book 3 are thus abundant. Certainly another war necessitates further strategic information, amongst other things pertaining to the creation of a suitably impressive opponent. Yet the crucial point is that Caesar, meeting these requirements, seizes the opportunity to conjure up a distinct area, unlike anything we have encountered before in terms of landscape and peoples. In this way he salvages the novelty factor which appeared lost when he found himself retracing Crassus’ steps. Novelty here could not be indicated by the fiction of inquiry, as that is more appropriate to a distant and barbaric tribe, and also would imply that Crassus had not done his job well the previous year. A downright barbaric people would have been inappropriate because the similarities to the Belgae, and Nervii specifically, would have compromised the portrayal of a unique part of Gaul. An omniscient narrator on the other hand would

³² *B Gall.* 3.8–9; 12–13.

³³ For this situation Caesar may have had only himself to blame, see n. 30.

³⁴ On Caesar’s characterisations of the Veneti, see B. Erickson, ‘Falling masts, rising masters: the ethnography of virtue in Caesar’s account of the Veneti’, *AJPh* 123 (2002), 601–22.

have detracted from Caesar's achievement of introducing the Veneti *cum suis* to the Roman world. His choice of an eyewitness account, in which the reader observes through the commander, avoids both traps.

THE STRUCTURE OF EUROPE AND CAESAR'S EVASIVE ENEMIES: THE SUEBI

The Germanic ethnography of *B Gall.* 4.1–3 is crucial to our understanding of Caesar's portrayal of northern Europe. When we compare Caesar's description of the Germani to that of the Belgae, it becomes clear that he employs what could be envisaged as a graduated structure, in which the characteristics of those furthest away and most unlike Gaul – and Rome – are prefigured by those nearer and relatively familiar. In Hippocratic fashion, this pattern is borne out by the qualities of the natives and their territories – but Caesar makes a point of showing that the barbarians are no passive creations of their circumstances. Instead, they make a concerted effort to preserve the qualities that result from their abodes. They become increasingly resistant to contact, rejecting the corruption that civilisation would entail. The Germanic Suebi are at the extreme of Caesar's connective structure and consequently they appear to be beyond the inquisitive grasp of Rome. Caesar's information about them is imprecise, which he does not remedy by investigation. This apparent resignation is telling about the objectives of Caesar's Germanic ethnography, which may reflect those of his campaign in Germania.

In the fourth book, there is no need to create a new entity within a known area, for Caesar unequivocally goes where no Roman commander has gone before. Any reader, impressed by Caesar's initial ethnography in which the Rhine appeared a firm boundary between Gallia and Germania, and aware that Rome had not crossed it before, will have shared the excitement of Caesar's exploration. Nevertheless, Caesar capitalises on the novelty of the Rhine crossing by prefacing the fourth book with an ethnography that sets the Germani apart from the Gauls once more.³⁵

The Germani are the same type of barbarians as the Belgae,³⁶ and the Germanic Suebi are most so.³⁷ They embody both the strength and savagery and the freedom of the stereotypical northern barbarian. They are *inmani corporum magnitudine homines* which is due to their *libertate vitae, quod a pueris nullo officio aut disciplina adsuefacti nihil omnino contra voluntatem faciunt* and also to their exercise and diet (*B Gall.* 4.1.9). They live off milk and meat, supplemented with game, and use little corn

³⁵ In the North, the Rhine that parcelled off Gallia from Germania was a world-defining feature second only to Oceanus, which not only divided Gallia and Britannia, but circled the entire *oikoumenē*. On the significance of reaching – let alone crossing – Oceanus see J.S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton, 1992), at 121–49, esp. at 137–41; and Clarke (n. 28) for the importance of crossings for redrawing boundaries and redefining territories, esp. at 95–104. The glory that indeed accrued to Caesar from being the first to cross the Rhine can be surmised from Suet. *Iul.* 25.2, and Plut. *Caes.* 22.6; and, in combination with crossing Oceanus, from the twenty days *supplicatio* he was voted in 55 B.C. (*B Gall.* 4.38.5).

³⁶ They are indeed said to be related in *B Gall.* 2.4.1, but not in Books 1 and 4, see nn. 23 and 29. It appears that the Germani are presented as separate when Caesar is concerned with the Rhine as boundary, and as related to other tribes when Caesar wants to magnify their supposed kin.

³⁷ Literature on the ancient conception of the Germani can be found in W. Pohl, *Die Germanen* (Enzyklopädie Deutscher Geschichte 57) (Oldenbourg, 2000), at 51–3.

(*B Gall.* 4.1.8).³⁸ This lifestyle, which *vires alit* (*B Gall.* 4.1.9), they consciously preserve. They allow merchants, but for selling loot rather than for buying, and prohibit the import of wine, *quod ea re ad laborem ferendum remollescere homines atque effeminari arbitrantur* (*B Gall.* 4.2.5). The Suebi are thus a more extreme version of the Nervii, who were a more extreme version of the Belgae in general.

In this, the Suebi differ from another Germanic tribe – the Ubii – who as a result have been made their tributaries. Of them Caesar says that they were once prosperous, by Germanic standards, and *paulo sunt quam eiusdem generis ceteri humaniores*. This is *propterea quod Rhenum attingunt multumque ad eos mercatores ventitant*, and *ipsi propter propinquitatem [quod] Gallicis sunt moribus adsuefacti* (*B Gall.* 4.3.3). Their connections with more civilised Gaul are thus corrupting contacts, of the type the Suebi consciously avoided. Such contacts become more frequent with civilisation: the Galli, Caesar informs us a little later, ‘make a practice of obliging travellers to stop, even against their will, and of questioning them as to what each one has heard or discovered on any subject. In the towns a crowd surrounds traders and forces them to declare every place they have come from and every matter they learned there’ (*B Gall.* 4.5.2). This indicates the level of Gallic culture, but the implications are not unreservedly positive for the Gauls. As a result of their taste for gossip, ‘they are slaves to vacillating rumours’ (*B Gall.* 4.5.3). By contrast, few traders are admitted in Germania and no Germanic town features in *De Bello Gallico*. The Germani, especially the Suebi, are autarchic and uninterested in other peoples; they are also independent.

Their wilful isolation ties in with the lack of definite information Caesar appears to possess about the Suebi. *hi centum pagos habere dicuntur, ex quibus quotannis singula milia armatorum bellandi causa suis ex finibus educunt* (*B Gall.* 4.1.4): the word *dicuntur* signals that Caesar cannot certify this. The location of the *pagi* likewise is not specified. Moreover, Caesar tells us that the Suebi do not allow themselves to live in the same place for over a year (*B Gall.* 4.1.7). This nomadism means that, in constant flux, the Suebi cannot be located with precision. When we do hear about borders, Caesar does not locate them topographically, and rather than being formed by a river or mountain range, they are indicated by nothingness.³⁹ This is because the Suebi believe that untenanted land around them signifies that no state can withstand their force: *itaque una ex parte a Suebis circiter milia passuum sescenta agri vacare dicuntur* (*B Gall.* 4.3.2), as fits their reclusive character. In the Roman law of property, land was defined in relation to its neighbours: thus the Suebi truly defy description. The word *dicuntur* once more indicates that the truth of this assertion is unknown, which, considering the nature of the Suebi just described, strikes one as not unreasonable. And yet one may wonder why, in that case, Caesar does not make inquiries, in the way he claimed to have done about the Belgae and Nervii.⁴⁰ The implication is that the Suebi are not just unknown, but also unknowable.⁴¹

³⁸ On this diet as an ethnographical *topos* indicating a lack of civilisation, see B. Shaw, ‘“Eaters of flesh; drinkers of milk”: The ancient Mediterranean ideology of the pastoral nomad’, *Ancient Society* 13/14 (1982/3), 5–31.

³⁹ This point is also made by Krebs (n. 3), at 121–2.

⁴⁰ *His de rebus Caesar certior factus* in *B Gall.* 4.5.1 does not refer to the Germanic ethnography of 4.1–3, but to the skirmishes of the Germani and Menapii in 4.4.3–7.

⁴¹ On Caesar’s description of the Suebi as ‘the purest antithesis of the Romans’, see Burns (n. 3), at 128, who adds that the Suebi were certainly not semi-nomadic and were usually employed as mercenaries by Celtic or Roman masters. See also n. 59.

And yet this very lack of knowledge about the Suebi is informative. In his introduction of Gallia, Caesar took care to present her as a known entity. Already in his opening ethnography, relayed by the omniscient narrator, Caesar showed himself to be in control of Gaul, an intellectual conquest that heralded military domination. In the second book, Caesar did not possess knowledge from the start, but his successful inquiries about the Belgae and Nervii preceded their subjugation. In Caesar's connective lay-out of Europe, Roman knowledge decreases according to distance, whilst the natives' purposeful seclusion increases, protecting them from civilisation and corruption. The Suebi are at the end of this chain: they are the lock rather than a link. With them Caesar's exploration of northern Europe terminates. Caesar's picture of Germania suggests that it is unknowable, incorruptible and therefore unconquerable.⁴²

In this light, it may seem inappropriate that the Germanic ethnography of *B Gall.* 4.1–3 is told by an omniscient narrator. Yet, paradoxically, this authorial mode confirms that knowledge is impossible: even the narrator who supposedly knows all there is to know – the same voice to lay out Gaul – can say no more about the Germani than what hearsay has. Referring back to the opening ethnography of Gaul through the choice of authorial mode has a further advantage: as a result, the ethnography of the Germani reads as a second prooemium and as such appears to introduce a new and equally important phase in Caesar's operations in northern Europe. It strikes one as odd, then, that the suggestion borne out by this prooemium is that Germania will not be conquered. This issue is addressed in the next section.

CAESAR AT THE CROSSING

Caesar cites several reasons for crossing the Rhine – he was keen to assist the Ubii and demanded the surrender of protégés of the Sugambri, another Germanic tribe – *quarum illa fuit iustissima*, namely that, since the Germani were so easily induced to cross into Gaul, he wanted to scare them by showing *et posse et audere p. R. exercitum Rhenum transire* (*B Gall.* 4.16.1). Interestingly, the Sugambri – Caesar tells us truly or falsely – replied that *p. R. imperium Rhenum finire: si se invito Germanos in Galliam transire non aequum existimaret, cur sui quicquam esse imperii aut potestatis trans Rhenum postulet?* (*B Gall.* 4.16.4). This assertion fits Caesar's division of Europe so nicely that it is hard not to suspect his authorship, but it is just about conceivable that the Sugambri had acquired sufficient insight into the Roman mindset to use their views, ironically, against them. In either case, the irony turns out to be on the Sugambri, who seem to believe that the same rights pertain to them as to the Romans and that Caesar cannot do himself what he forbids others to attempt.⁴³ The Roman audience knows better: the empire was claimed, firstly, to be the embodiment of imperial justice and, secondly, to have no boundaries and include the whole *oikoumenê*.⁴⁴ Indeed, for convenience's sake the empire may choose not to enforce its power and take a river as an administrative border; yet this is at Rome's discretion and not an arrangement that barbarians can appeal to. This Roman line is endorsed,

⁴² Tacitus appears to make the same points in his *Germania*, when he describes Germania as separated from Gaul through fear and mountains, having thus become known to the Romans only recently, 1.1; and the Germani, on account of their inaccessibility, as untainted by intermarriage with other peoples, and therefore resembling only themselves, 2.1 and 4.1.

⁴³ Ariovistus' indignation when Caesar does not treat his authority as equal to that of the Romans offers a parallel, *B Gall.* 1.34 and 36.

⁴⁴ Nicolet (n. 18), as in n. 27.

and the Sugambri proven wrong, two chapters later in *B Gall.* 4.18.2, when Caesar crosses the Rhine without so much as answering the Sugambri's objections. As such, their seemingly fair protestations actually only prove Caesar's first point, that it is necessary for the Romans to be seen to be capable of crossing.

When he withdraws, Caesar recapitulates his considerations (*B Gall.* 4.19.4): *omnibus iis rebus confectis, quarum rerum causa traducere exercitum constituerat, ut Germanis metum iniceret, ut Sugambros ulcisceretur, ut Ubios obsidione liberaret, diebus omnino decem et octo trans Rhenum consumptis, satis et ad laudem et ad utilitatem profectum arbitratus.* Whilst *utilitas* could be attributed to all these dealings with the Germanic tribes, *laus* most likely pertains in particular to the eighteen days Caesar spent across the Rhine and the fear this was supposed to have instilled in his opponents. Whether to make a point to the barbarians⁴⁵ or to his Roman audience, the crossing of the Rhine is of momentous importance: it upholds a distinct aspect of the Roman empire, namely that it is unbounded, and it promotes Caesar as a worthy exponent of that empire, one who is prepared to go into the unknown. From this point of view, it seems very plausible that Caesar had no more – and no less – in mind than showing his presence on the east bank of the Rhine to Romans and barbarians alike, adding to Roman prestige and knowledge, if not necessarily to Roman power.

Germania as a place to explore rather than conquer – and explore for not too long and not too far from the Rhine – tallies with the impression we got of the Suebi. Their military prowess Caesar might have dealt with, as he dealt with the Nervii, but their nomadic nature in an undefined and undefinable area renders them outside the Roman grasp. The unbounded realm of the Suebi in fact parallels that of the Romans, if in a different fashion. This correspondence may contribute to a justification for peaceful coexistence instead of conquest.

Of course, the argument could be reversed. Since Caesar wrote after the event, it is conceivable that he did intend to overcome the Suebi and, when he failed, devised the opening ethnography in *B Gall.* 4.1–3 and revised 4.16–19 to make the crossing of the Rhine appear more like an exploration and less like a war of conquest. But if we accept that Caesar saw his role as explorer of the north as advantageous, and that this was at least part of the reason for his venture into Germania, we are helped in understanding Caesar's journey to Britannia. Likewise an expedition into the unknown, this followed immediately on his Germanic exploits; probably it had been intended to take place already the year before.⁴⁶

This invites the question of what advantages Caesar envisaged his exploration of the north would bring. It has often been noted that Caesar needed to safeguard his command, which was far from secure.⁴⁷ Gallia Cisalpina and Illyricum, voted to him under the *lex Vatinia*, would be his for five years; however, the command of Gallia Transalpina, granted through a *senatus consultum*, might be withdrawn when the war could reasonably be said to be over. Manoeuvrings to this end may have been underway in Rome already by 57 B.C. The situation was all the more urgent because of

⁴⁵ This is seen as a necessity by A.N. Sherwin-White, 'Caesar as an imperialist', *G&R* 4 (1957), 36–45, at 40.

⁴⁶ See nn. 30 and 47.

⁴⁷ As is attested by Cicero's *Prov. cons.*, esp. 17, 19, 22, 36–7 and 39, delivered in 56 B.C. precisely to prevent the reallocation of either or both Gallic provinces. On the political manoeuvrings in Rome and their impact on Caesar's actions, see Stevens (n. 1), at 12–4 with Levick (n. 1) at 67; 69–75; J.F. Lazenby, 'The conference of Luca and the Gallic War: a study in Roman politics 57–55 B.C.', *Latomus* 18 (1959), 67–76; and E.S. Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (Berkeley/London, 1974), at 100–10 for the larger Roman picture.

the 56 B.C. candidature for the consulship of 55 B.C. of L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, who had strong inherited ties to Gaul and was a political opponent of Caesar's. There was no doubt that, if the province were available for 54 B.C. – that is to say if it had been sufficiently pacified – Ahenobarbus would move to replace Caesar as proconsul. Thus Caesar's claims for the completion of his campaigns, whilst enhancing his stature, worked against him on a political level. To ensure that the war continued he is likely to have planned the invasion of Britannia for 56 B.C., but the revolt of the Veneti compelled him to remain in Gaul. The election of Crassus and Pompey as consuls for 55 B.C. brought only temporary respite, as Ahenobarbus immediately sought, and obtained, the consulship of 54 B.C. The political situation that may have inspired an invasion of Britannia in the third season therefore remained largely the same in 55 B.C. However, the circumstances in Gaul had altered. As Caesar himself admits, the Morini were under arms again in 55 B.C. – and joined by the other maritime tribes and many of the Belgae in 54 B.C. – so in order merely to prolong the war no new enterprises were required. Yet Britannia offered two things not, or not to the same extent, available in Gaul. One was the mineral wealth the island was rumoured to possess;⁴⁸ the other the glory to be had by Caesar for being the pioneer who led her into the Roman world. This achievement could never be rivalled by Caesar's opponents. As to Germania, no claims were made for her wealth, but here, too, unique glory would accrue to the first Roman who made the crossing. Thus the novelty of both Germania and Britannia, quite apart from any intrinsic interest they may have exercised, appears to have allured Caesar as – one of his – means to maintain the upper hand over his political opponents. The Roman people cannot but have delighted in what was accomplished in their name; even Caesar's most ardent senatorial adversaries were forced to approve – to which the unprecedented twenty days *supplicatio* he was voted at the end of 55 B.C. testifies.

Yet despite these similarities in the objects and objectives of Caesar's explorations, the images of Germania and Britannia are quite different when it comes to the matter of (eventual) conquest. To compare them we will continue with an investigation of Caesar's Britannic ethnography, bearing in mind the idea of Caesar's role as explorer.

THE FIRST BRITISH EXPEDITION

Crossing Oceanus involved an undeniable innovation, of greater import still than crossing the Rhine.⁴⁹ The lure of Britannia was such that Caesar calls another campaign against the maritime Morini a trifle by comparison: *neque has tantularum rerum occupationes Britanniae antependendas iudicabat* (*B Gall.* 4.22.2). In this he disregarded military expediency, for the Morini played up again in the last chapter of Book 4, as did the other maritime states, and a great number of the Belgae, the year after, as noted above.

Caesar nevertheless cites military concerns for getting involved with Britain: *in Britanniam proficisci contendit, quod omnibus fere bellis Gallicis hostibus nostris inde subministrata auxilia intellegebat* (*B Gall.* 4.20.1). This is a little surprising, since

⁴⁸ Strabo in his *Geography* comments on Britannia's economic resources, in particular her mineral wealth, 4.5.2. S. Mitchell, 'Cornish tin, Iulius Caesar and the invasion of Britain', in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History III*, (Brussels, 1983), 80–99 details the economic impetus for invading Britannia. E. Badian, *Roman Imperialism in the Late Republic* (Ithaca, 1967), 80–99 at 89–91 gives an indication of the finances Caesar harvested in Gaul and how these were used to boost his political stature.

⁴⁹ See n. 35.

Caesar has mentioned British support only once (*B Gall.* 3.9.10), and also sits rather uncomfortably with his assertion, a couple of lines later, that the Gauls are unfamiliar with the island and its inhabitants, *quae omnia fere Gallis erant incognita* (*B Gall.* 4.20.2). Caesar probably intends to demonstrate, by advocating its necessity, that the campaign is part of his warrant as proconsul of Gallia Transalpina. The word *nostris* also seems a carefully placed reminder that Caesar is undertaking this expedition not for reckless self-aggrandisement, as one might be inclined to think, but rather for the sake of the *res publica*.⁵⁰ At the same time, Caesar wants to leave no doubt about the boldness of his step into the unknown. And of course, the two are not mutually exclusive. Successful exploration is the best precursor to conquest: the Belgae and Nervii, and conversely the Germani, provide precedents.

As befits the novelty of Britannia and the importance Caesar attaches to his investigation, he does not simply make his inquiries on the eve of his campaign, as was the case in the previous books. Instead, Caesar designs the entire first crossing as an investigative expedition, of which he may reap the fruits another season: *si tempus anni ad bellum gerendum deficeret, tamen magno sibi usui fore arbitrabatur, si modo insulam adisset, genus hominum perspexisset, loca, portus, aditus cognovisset* (*B Gall.* 4.20.1). Inquiry, in the earlier books only reported in terms of its outcome before the actual military accounts, now has become part of the narrative. Moreover, this exploration is itself preceded by a reconnaissance. Having in vain questioned Gauls about the size of the island, the number and strength of its tribes, its suitable harbours and more, Caesar sends his agent Volusenus *ad haec cognoscenda* (*B Gall.* 4.21.1). It is worth noting here that *Volusenus, perspectis regionibus omnibus quantum ei facultatis dari potuit qui navi egredi ac se barbaris committere non auderet, quinto die ad Caesarem revertitur, quaeque ibi perspexisset renuntiat* (*B Gall.* 4.21.9): the honour of being the first on British soil remains reserved for Caesar. Still, the contrast with Germania could not be greater: though unknown, Britannia is not unknowable, nor, therefore, unconquerable.

This outcome is intimated by the behaviour of the natives. The Britons welcome Gallic traders, who connect them to Gaul and thereby bring them into the Roman world (*B Gall.* 4.20.4). The Gauls, we remember, compelled merchants to halt, for their information as much as for their trade, both of which are agents of corruption. The Germani did not purchase imports, did not interact with other nations and remained unknown and unconquered. Britannia, although an island, is not autarchic and may be weakened by goods or rumours.

This process is set in motion already in the following chapter. Through traders, the news of Caesar's coming is reported to the Britons, as a result of which some states seek peace with him (*B Gall.* 4.21.1). When Caesar's fleet appears on their coast, however, they join those fighting the Romans. Defeated, they ask Caesar's pardon, citing ignorance as reason for their behaviour. The image of ignorant barbarians – ignorant of Roman *mores*, that is – once more enhances the intellectual distance between Rome and Britannia. Caesar responds by complaining that they made war on him *sine causa* (*B Gall.* 4.27.5) (what counts as provocation if not the invasion of their island we should not ponder), yet forgiving them because they were indeed unaware of their wrongdoings, and demanding hostages. Thus Caesar puts their blissful

⁵⁰ It is remarkable that Caesar chooses not to mention economic motives for invading Britannia, advantageous as they might be to the Republic, but prefers to gain glory from the immaterial accretion of information; on this see Mitchell (n. 48), at 97.

ignorance irreversibly to an end and forces the Britons to accept a relationship on Rome's terms.

THE SECOND BRITISH EXPEDITION

Caesar's account of the second expedition to Britannia in 54 B.C. contains the same elements. Once more, Caesar values involvement with Britannia over another Gallic war: *ne aestatem in Treveris consumere cogeret omnibus rebus ad Britannicum bellum comparatis* (*B Gall.* 5.4.1), he merely demands hostages from the rebellious tribe. In doing so he again disregards military requirements, for the Treveri are on the attack again at the end of the season and the year after. Once more, Caesar presents himself as an explorer of unknown territory, in which he pays attention to the process of discovery as much as to its outcome. Once more, he shows the lands and peoples of Britannia to be appropriate for conquest.

Caesar emphasises his role as explorer by showing his progress, both in comparison to the previous year and in the course of this campaign. The reader learns about Britannia at the same time that Caesar does, from observations he appears to make on the spot. As fits a narrative of discovery, the reader experiences the overnight crossing with Caesar and through his eyes sees Britannia to port at sunrise.⁵¹ Caesar then makes for that part of the coast he has found the previous year to be most suitable for disembarkation, which emphasises both the value of the earlier reconnaissance, and the importance of this year's expedition, that will proceed beyond the former. For although Britannia's harbours are now known, the lands as yet are not, and after the first engagement, in the next chapter, Caesar does not allow his troops to pursue the enemy far, *quod loci naturam ignorabat* (*B Gall.* 5.8.9). Intelligence increases when Caesar in his battle description details the fortifications of his British enemies, which he reckons were erected for a previous internal war (*B Gall.* 5.9.4). Two chapters later, Caesar is certain that there have indeed been wars between the British king Cassivellaunus and the maritime communities. Caesar here strives for an image of investigation: although of course both chapters were written at the same time, his further knowledge appears to be the result of inquiry *in situ*. This Cassivellaunus, Caesar now learns, has been appointed by common consent commander of all Britons against Rome, which information prompts his ethnography of the whole of Britannia in the next chapter. After the digression (*B Gall.* 5.12–14), Caesar continues the military narrative, without indication of a change of subject. This, too, contributes to the impression that the information contained in the ethnography was gained in Britannia itself, as part and parcel of Caesar's military intelligence. As such, the ethnography forms the culmination of Caesar's efforts to gain knowledge of Britannia and proves the success, in that respect, of the current expedition.

The ethnography of Britannia, like the Gallic and Germanic ethnographies that came before, is told by an omniscient narrator. One would call it the third prooemium, if not for its placement in the midst of military events, whereas its predecessors opened Book 1 and 4 respectively. By using the same authorial mode, however, Caesar confirms the magnitude of his undertaking, setting up the Britons as the third separate entity of northern Europe. However, it could be argued that Caesar's claims for Britannia go further even than that. The inland part of Britannia, Caesar tells us,

⁵¹ *ipse...solis occasu naves solvit et leni Africo provectus media circiter nocte vento intermisso cursum non tenuit, et longius delatus aestu orta luce sub sinistra Britanniam relictam conspexit* (*B Gall.* 5.8.2).

is inhabited by peoples who claim to be indigenous to the island. In the coastal zone live tribes who migrated from Belgium at an earlier time (*B Gall.* 5.12.2). Of all the Britons, *longe sunt humanissimi, qui Cantium incolunt, quae regio est maritima omnis, neque multum a Gallica differunt consuetudine* (*B Gall.* 5.14.1).⁵² The inlanders, by contrast, *plerique frumenta non serunt, sed lacte et carne vivunt pellibusque sunt vestiti* (*B Gall.* 5.14.2). This is identical to what Caesar remarked about the Suebi on the same matters: *neque multum frumento, sed maximam partem lacte atque pecore vivunt* (*B Gall.* 4.1.8) and *neque vestitus praeter pelles habeant quicquam* (*B Gall.* 4.1.10). The Suebi populate the barbaric depths of Europe, which are surrounded by a more civilised coastal zone: in the north west Gallia, especially the maritime states, and in the south the entire Mediterranean. In the same way, Britannia could be said to comprise a rough inland core, under a smoother skin formed by the maritime region. On this view, Britannia appears to be not just a third entity within Europe, but a second Europe, smaller in size but similar in structure.⁵³

All the Britons in Caesar's ethnography are partial to some barbaric customs: they dye themselves with woad (*B Gall.* 5.14.2) and practice a peculiar type of polygamy (*B Gall.* 5.14.4–5). Nevertheless, an image of civilisation prevails. The Britons use coined money and keep geese *animi voluptatisque causa* (*B Gall.* 5.12.6). Their farmhouses are found very close together and are much like those of the Gauls. As in Gaul, there is timber of almost every kind. Caesar's Britons thus are similar to the Gauls, or more gentle, an impression confirmed by his assertion about the climate that *loca sunt temperatiora quam in Gallia remissioribus frigoribus* (*B Gall.* 5.12.6).

As such, the Britons appear to be equally or more suitable for conquest than the Gauls, with whom they were indeed in contact via traders. Yet the surest signs of Caesar's ultimate aims with Britannia are to be found in his geography of the island itself. It is the reverse of his definition, or lack thereof, of the lands of the Suebi. In their case, Caesar could not define boundaries except by nothingness, a nothingness, moreover, that was unverifiable. Britannia, being an island, is naturally circumscribed by the sea. Yet Caesar goes beyond this natural boundary and defines Britannia by abstract measurements.⁵⁴ The shape of Britannia he likens to a triangle, of which he plots the corners as facing east, south and towards Germania. Its sides he puts on the map as being opposite, respectively, Gallia, Hispania and the west, and the open sea in the north. Of all three sides, he gives their length in miles and from that calculates the circumference of Britannia. To the west, by the same distance as Britannia is from Gallia, he locates Hibernia and the Isle of Man which lies in that strait. Caesar even defines time, using a clepsydra to ascertain that the nights in Britannia are shorter

⁵² This connection to the Belgae, who, we were told in *B Gall.* 2.4.2, descended from invading Germani, seems out of place in a portrayal of civilisation. Conceivably Caesar is referring to the earlier inhabitants of the region, whom the Germanic invaders drove out. See also nn. 23, 29 and 36.

⁵³ Interestingly, the panegyrist of Constantius Caesar claims – wrongly – that '[Iulius] Caesar... alium se orbem terrarum scripsit reperisse, tantae magnitudinis arbitratus ut non circumfusa Oceano sed complexa ipsum Oceanum videretur'. *Pan. Lat.* 8.11.2. Perhaps he drew upon Fronto's lost panegyric of Antoninus Pius, see C.E. Nixon and B.S. Rodgers, *In Praise of the Later Roman Emperors* (California, 1994), at 126 n. 37. The point, in any case, seems to be to invoke Julius Caesar's authority for the size of Britannia, and hence by implication for the magnitude of its restoration to the empire by Constantius Caesar – who, the panegyrist suggests, faced a more difficult task than his predecessor, as the Britons at the time of the first conquest were so primitive that they *facile Romanis armis signisque cesserunt*, 11.4.

⁵⁴ All references in this paragraph are to *B Gall.* 5.13.

than on the continent. The truth or untruth of these statements is irrelevant: it is the attempt at exactness (or suggestion of an attempt at exactness)⁵⁵ that matters. Barbarian lands in *De Bello Gallico* are usually delineated by reference to rivers and mountains, less commonly by measures in miles and never, except here, by geometry. Caesar's description of Britannia is an achievement in itself: he is the first to incorporate the island in Roman knowledge with such scientific precision. But it also indicates the possibility of a second achievement: controlling the island intellectually, Rome can control it militarily.⁵⁶

GALLIA AND GERMANIA REVISITED

Perhaps this promising image was intended to compensate for, and deflect attention from, the difficulties of both British campaigns. Caesar was faced with defeats, bad weather, wrecked ships; moreover there were commotions in Gaul. At the end of 54 B.C., therefore, Caesar accepts Cassivellaunus' initiative for peace, demands hostages and determines tribute and sets out to winter on the continent (*B Gall.* 5.22). With this, Caesar's exploration of northern Europe comes to an end and with it our study of the ways in which Caesar extends the Roman map. From now on, Caesar is compelled to concentrate on Gaul itself. At the end of the season Caesar only *pauloque habuit... Galliam quietiorem* (*B Gall.* 5.58.7), and in 53 B.C. the revolt of the Belgae spreads further through Gaul, leading to the pan-Gallic revolt under Vercingetorix of 52 B.C. And yet Caesar's most extensive, most famous and most often quoted ethnography is still to follow, in *B Gall.* 6.11–28. It is an ethnography not of newly encountered tribes, but of two peoples we are fairly familiar with by now: the Galli and the Germani. Clearly this is not an explorative ethnography, widening Roman horizons. Instead, now that Caesar is forced to abandon exploration in favour of consolidation, he employs the ethnography towards three other ends.⁵⁷ Firstly, the ethnography distracts from the relative failure of Caesar's second Germanic sojourn: he withdraws without any action being undertaken, on which see below. Secondly, by elaborating on the Gauls on an unprecedented scale, Caesar salvages some of the novelty factor that he has had to give up on by constricting himself to known territory. Thirdly, by once more underscoring the differences between the Galli and the Germani and showing the latter to be unfit for conquest, the ethnography helps to justify the attention Caesar pays to the pacification of the former. The patterns and stereotypes we have encountered before, about primitivism and military zeal, corruption through contact, isolation and definition or the lack thereof, are used to this effect.

Caesar's second crossing of the Rhine, in 53 B.C., is due solely to military concerns: the Germani have sent auxiliaries to the Galli and Caesar wants to prevent a Gallic

⁵⁵ P.C.N. Stewart, 'Inventing Britain: The Roman creation and adaptation of an image', *Britannia* 26 (1995), 1–10 at 2 points out that the variability of the length of British nights had been a *topos* since Pytheas, who according to Pliny used a clepsydra for these measurements. Likewise, Pytheas and Cleomedes were said to have recorded the circumference of Britannia.

⁵⁶ The idea that Britannia can be contained, in both senses of the word, is expressed in Tacitus' *Agricola* through circumnavigations of the island. Before Agricola's advent, Britannia has never been circumnavigated, 10; but during his campaigns the Usipi are the first to do so, 28; then the Romans follow, 38. See Clarke (n. 28), at 109–12.

⁵⁷ For the narrative uses of this ethnography, see also W.M. Zeitler, 'Zum Germanenbegriff Caesars: Der Germanenexkurs im sechsten Buch von Caesars *Bellum Gallicum*', in H. Beck (ed.), *Germanenprobleme in heutiger Sicht* (Berlin, 1986), 41–52.

leader from retreating to them (*B Gall.* 6.9.1–2). Once he is in Germania, Caesar learns that the supporting troops were sent by the Suebi, who, upon hearing of his arrival, have withdrawn to the Bacenis forest at the far end of their territory (*B Gall.* 6.10.4–5). This information prompts Caesar's ethnography of Gallia and Germania, in which the differences between the two receive particular emphasis: *Quoniam ad hunc locum perventum est, non alienum esse videtur de Galliae Germaniaeque moribus et, quo differant hae nationes inter sese, proponere* (*B Gall.* 6.11.1). Hence Caesar is content to repeat, literally at times, statements made in Book 4 about the Suebi, which he now applies to the Germani as a whole – an extension that is understandable since it is now the whole of Germania that Caesar wants to exempt from Roman attention, in favour of focussing on Gallia. The additional information labours the same points about the nature of the Germani. Caesar shows their primitivism in terms of livelihood – hunting and war (*B Gall.* 6.21.2) but no agriculture (*B Gall.* 6.22.1)⁵⁸ – and institutions, both political and religious. Any *princeps* can announce himself *dux* during a public assembly and is then followed by those who approve; a *communis magistratus* they have only in times of war (*B Gall.* 6.23.4–5). They have no druids either, make no sacrifices and worship only *Solem et Vulcanum et Lunam. reliquos ne fama quidem acceperunt* (*B Gall.* 6.21.2). This fits the isolation of the Germani that Caesar again elaborates on: they devastate their boundaries and hence are surrounded by areas of wasteland, and count it as a sign of valour when no other tribe dares to settle nearby (*B Gall.* 6.23.1–2). Other habits – nomadism, prohibitions on private property and so on – are equally incompatible with Roman values. Moreover, we are told again that the Germani have adopted these customs to prevent a more settled and civilised lifestyle from corrupting their valour (*B Gall.* 6.22.3–4). Thus the Germani are stagnant, and Caesar's presence does not appear to have made a difference to their situation, as the many repetitions in this ethnography confirm. On all scores, therefore, the Germani are unsuitable for incorporation into the Roman world.

About Gaul, however, we learn a lot that is new. This is due to the fact that when Caesar last described Gaul as a whole, in the first book, his requirements were quite different. Then, Gallia was inevitably barbaric, as the sole standard of comparison was Rome. Moreover, although Gaul had to be presented as fit for conquest, emphasis on its civilisation would have detracted from the excitement of Caesar's first venture into barbarian Europe. In later books the progress of Caesar's exploration was demonstrated by implicitly or explicitly comparing new barbarian nations to Gaul, which served as a relatively civilised touchstone. Now, in the sixth book, Gaul's advanced culture sets it apart from the barbaric segment of northern Europe and shows it to be the most appropriate addition to the Roman empire.⁵⁹ Moreover,

⁵⁸ On agriculture as a hallmark of civilisation, see Shaw (n. 38), esp. at 8–12; 15–6.

⁵⁹ This shifting conceptualisation of Gaul compared to Germania is reminiscent of Hartog's concept of a 'double mirror' in Herodotus' description of the Greeks, Persians and Scythians. The Persians, the 'others' when contrasted with the Greeks, become conventional in comparison to the Scythians: F. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History* (London, 1988), trans. of J. Lloyd, *Le Miroir d' Hérodote: Essai sur la représentation de l'autre* (Paris, 1980), at 34–40, 44–57, 197–9, 202. In the same manner, the Scythians become more 'Greek' when faced with the 'otherness' of the Amazons, at 215–24. Furthermore, similarities between the Greeks and the Scythians develop in the face of their common Persian enemy, esp. at 34–40. This may furnish a parallel to Caesar's Suebi *vis-à-vis* Rome: the Suebi are the purest antithesis to the Romans, see n. 41, and yet they are also comparable to Rome in as much as they are boundless and unconquerable. Krebs (n. 3) explores the similarities between Caesar's Germania and Herodotus' Scythia, at 130–2.

certain innovations in Gaul result from Caesar's presence, indicating that Gaul can be remoulded on a Roman model.⁶⁰

Civilisation is the theme of Caesar's portrayal of Gallia. The Gauls have a political system comprising two factions, which operate in every state and district down to almost every household and also in the whole of Gaul (*B Gall.* 6.11.2–5). Socially the Gauls are stratified too: besides the commoners who are virtually slaves, there is a class of knights and one of druids (*B Gall.* 6.13.1–3). To the latter Caesar dedicates two long chapters,⁶¹ detailing their social and religious functions, their education and their doctrines. The druids' foremost belief is in reincarnation, besides which they discuss *de sideribus atque eorum motu, de mundi ac terrarum magnitudine, de rerum natura, de deorum immortalium vi ac potestate* (*B Gall.* 6.14.6). These topics are all amongst the ones that classical philosophy was concerned with and form further proof of the civilisation of Gaul. The Gallic polytheistic pantheon likewise comprises the same deities as Rome's, of which *eandem fere quam reliquae gentes habent opinionem* (*B Gall.* 6.17.2).

The druids connect the whole of Gaul, in that they have a common chief, who holds the highest authority, and in that they convene once a year in what was considered the centre of Gaul. To this place, people from all regions assemble, in order to have their disputes settled. The druids also link Gaul to the other civilised area of the north, Britannia, for there their discipline was believed to have been discovered and there they still travel to learn it more accurately (*B Gall.* 6.13.11–2). The interconnectedness of the Gauls is also indicated by their taste for rumour. Caesar assigns a whole chapter to this (*B Gall.* 6.20), informing us that those states who are deemed to have the best administration make provisions to curtail the spread of rumour among commoners, so that the people are not misguided by false information. Predictably, the Gauls' openness to contact has brought about their decline. There was a time in the past, Caesar states, when they were stronger than the Germani and even settled across the Rhine. This claim contradicts all previous portrayals of both nations, but it serves to enhance Gaul's fall from its uncorrupted pristine state. For now, the Galli have become accustomed to defeat and do not even compare themselves in strength to the Germani. As cause Caesar once more adduces *provinciarum propinquitatis et transmarinarum rerum notitia multa ad copiam atque usus largitur* (*B Gall.* 6.24.5).

The influence of Rome on Gaul has grown with Caesar's presence, confirming Gaul's capacity for change, in contrast to stagnant Germania. Caesar repeats a political history of Gaul that he put in the mouth of the Aeduan Diviciacus in the first book, but this time the focus is on the changes that have occurred since his arrival. In 58 B.C. the threat of Ariovistus caused turmoil in Gaul, as was indicated not just by the facts of Diviciacus' account but also by his emotional tone and the weeping of his Gallic audience (*B Gall.* 1.31.2). In the sixth season, *adventu Caesaris facta commutatione rerum* (*B Gall.* 6.12.6), order has been imposed on Gaul. Rome's allies, the Aedui, have been restored to their ancient primacy and a second position of authority is held by the loyal Remi. Moreover, through Caesar's efforts new tribes have joined the Aedui as clients. This is because those who are on friendly terms with them and thus with Rome *meliore condicione atque aequiore imperio se uti*

⁶⁰ This capacity of Gaul for pacification and romanisation is commented on by Tacitus in the *Agricola*; he draws the same – but bleaker – image of southern Britannia, chaps. 11 and 21.

⁶¹ *B Gall.* 6.13.4–11 and 6.14.

videbant (*B Gall.* 6.12.6). The reorganisation of Gaul therefore is not only brought about by Rome, but also renders Gaul a step closer to Roman civilisation.

FORESTS

Caesar's ethnography of Gallia and Germania ends with a section on a particular part of Germania, the Hercynian forest. Its seemingly excessive length – four out of the eight Germanic chapters are allotted to it – and its unlikely contents – remarkable animals – have puzzled commentators.⁶² However, when the themes of this digression are compared to those of the Germanic ethnography as a whole, and indeed to previous ethnographies in *De Bello Gallico*, it becomes clear that they support Caesar's image of Germania. Moreover, the Hercynian forest provides a closure to the ethnography of Germania, after which Caesar can rightfully return to Gaul once more.

The very fact that half the Germanic ethnography is spent on a forest, is typical for the state of Germania. Ten chapters were devoted to the complex social structure of the Gauls; the Germani merit only four, and apparently there is as much mileage in Germania's nature and its animals. Forests can be seen as the antithesis of civilisation: they are primeval landscape, untouched by human activities such as agriculture or the building of towns. The length of the digression on the Hercynian forest suggests that such uncultured lands constitute a significant aspect of Germania, and indeed Caesar claims the forest covers an immense area. Nevertheless, although the Hercynian forest is grotesquely large, a world-defining feature, it cannot be defined itself. Its breadth, Caesar states, is a nine days' journey for an unencumbered person: *non enim aliter finire potest neque mensuras iterum noverunt* (*B Gall.* 6.25.1) – a far cry from the abstract measurements Caesar provided for Britannia. Its length cannot be indicated even in this primitive fashion: *neque quisquam est huius Germaniae, qui se [aut audisse] aut adisse ad initium eius silvae dicat, cum dierum iter LX processerit, aut quo ex loco oriatur, acceperit* (*B Gall.* 6.25.4). The Hercynian forest thus resists knowledge and even rumour. These characteristics of Germania's nature agree with what we have learned about its inhabitants: both the Suebi and the Hercynian forest defy definition.

Beyond the reach of human knowledge and culture, the Hercynian forest forms the natural realm of several exceptional animals. We have seen how the Hippocratic stereotype equates distant abodes with human populations that differ from the Mediterranean norm, and the same pattern holds true for other species. Herodotus and his successors described the edges of the world as home to both mythical peoples and beasts;⁶³ Caesar's reference to *quibusdam Gr<a>ecis* who knew of the forest through *fama* (*B Gall.* 6.24.2) perhaps intimates the intellectual context in which his description should be read. His more expansive style, from the introduction of the animals that *memoriae prodenda videantur* (*B Gall.* 6.25.5), may be intended to fit into this tradition, recalling for instance Herodotus' concern with recording the wonders

⁶² Doubts about the authenticity of this passage are persistent, see G. Dobesch, 'Zum Exkurs über den herzynischen Wald in Caesars Bellum Gallicum', in id., *Ausgewählte Schriften* (n. 3), 439–52 = *Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia 'Kliment Ohridski', Faculté d'Histoire* 77 (1985) = *Studia in honorem Christo M. Danov Univ. Prof. D. Dr. collegae et discipuli dedicaverunt. Terra Antiqua Balcanica II*, 105–15.

⁶³ Romm (n. 35), esp. at 69–71 and 78–81; Shaw (n. 38) at 10.

of the world.⁶⁴ In the Hercynian forest live many animals *quae reliquis in locis visa non sint*, of which Caesar singles out for description those *quae maxime differant a ceteris* (*B Gall.* 6.25.5): the one-horned ox shaped like a stag, the elk without knee joints and the ferocious ure-ox almost the size of an elephant (*B Gall.* 6.26, 27 and 28 respectively). These animals are not quite the stuff of legend, but they are not within the realm of the ordinary either and therefore mark the forest as a unique and extreme part of the world. In this way, even if the Hercynian forest cannot be defined geographically, the semi-mythical beasts inhabiting it signal its position on the edges of the known world.

The chapter on the ure-ox concludes Caesar's digression on the Hercynian forest and thereby his ethnography of Gallia and Germania. We return to the military narrative with the information that the Suebi *sece in silvas receperunt* (*B Gall.* 6.29.1), and that Caesar decides to advance no further. In the light of the undefinable, semi-mythical nature of the Hercynian forest and its position at the edges of the known world, one can only agree that this is prudent. This overlooks, however, the fact that we are dealing with two different forests entirely. The report that the Suebi had withdrawn to the edge of a forest called Bacenis formed the impetus for Caesar's ethnography of Gallia and Germania. When Caesar resumes the narrative, the Bacenis forest is where they must still be. Yet after an ethnography of eighteen chapters the reader cannot be expected to remember, and following on four chapters about the Hercynian forest, it is inevitably assumed that this is the forest into which the Suebi retreated. The digression on the Hercynian forest thus not only confirms the image of Germania and extends its characteristics from its peoples to its nature, but also serves as a seemingly objective terminus, which justifies Caesar's return to Gaul.

CONCLUSION

The themes that structure Caesar's Europe concern primitivism and military prowess, corruption through contact, and isolation and definition or the reverse. All these are linked to the possibility or impossibility of investigation; and the portrayal of inquiry is Caesar's foremost tool both for defining Europe and for enhancing his achievements. Inquiry demonstrates the novelty of his campaigns and paves the way for military domination. By the fourth season, inquiry appears an objective in its own right, yielding glory even when military domination does not follow.

As the varying success of Caesar's investigations is paralleled by the natives' levels of resistance to contact and corruption, the impossibility of exploration indicates that military control is equally unattainable. Caesar's Germania, therefore, is firmly beyond the grasp of Rome, whereas Britannia is appropriate for incorporation into the Roman empire, just like Gallia.

Caesar's sources for his ethnographical information have received a fair amount of attention.⁶⁵ But it would be interesting to know more about any models for his method of ethnography, his approach to mapping and manipulating unknown and semi-known territories. The influence of Caesar's ethnographical techniques on subsequent authors also merits further study. Some references have been made here to

⁶⁴ As famously put in the Prologue to his *Histories*, 1.1, undertaken in order that the exploits of men, and great and wondrous deeds, may not be forgotten by time and lose their fame.

⁶⁵ See nn. 9, 18, 22, 24 and 37.

the obvious comparison, Tacitus in his *Agricola* and *Germania*. There certainly is scope for a more detailed analysis of Tacitus' interaction with Caesar's text, as well as for an examination of its influence on other authors, in antiquity and beyond.

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