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The Celts and the Greeks

I

You must not tell a citizen of Marseilles that Petronius, the author of the *Satyricon*, was not born near the Vieux-Port. Sidonius Apollinaris' lines

et te Massiliensium per hortos
sacri stipitis, Arbiter, colonum (*Carmen* 23.155-6)

'You, Petronius, who in the gardens of Marseilles were the worshipper of the sacred tree-stock' are given as evidence for the Massaliote origins of Petronius. They simply prove, as was seen long ago by Conrad Cichorius (*Römische Studien*, 438-42), that an episode in the lost parts of the *Satyricon* was located in Massalia.

But Marseilles could do with another writer. Between Salvian in the fifth century A.D. and our friend Henri-Irénée Marrou in the twentieth century very few names of French intellectuals can be connected with Marseilles. Even now the men who gesticulate along La Canebière look towards the sea rather than towards France. The strong tradition of autonomy which goes back to 600 B.C. survived the guns of Louis XIV and turned a marching song composed at Strasbourg into La Marseillaise.

My tale for today takes us back to the origins of the resistance of Marseilles to the seductions of the Celtic mainland.

II

The epic story of how the citizens of Phocaea abandoned their town rather than submit to the Persians is told by Herodotus 1.163 ff. No story conveys a better impression of the unity of the Mediterranean world in the sixth century B.C. Waves of emotion spread from Asia Minor to Spain as soon as a new protagonist - Persia - disturbed the existing equilibrium of friendships, political alliances and commercial interests. As usual, Delphi had to save its face. Having advised the Phocaeans to settle in Corsica, it had to explain why the enterprise had failed. Some of the Phocaeans had been stoned to death by the Etruscans of Caere, traditional philhellenes; some had to move to Elea in southern Italy. In so far as it justified the oracle, the story of Herodotus was first broadcast from Delphi. But the rest, which starts with the sympathy of Arganthonius, King of Tartessus, for the Phocaeans, was no doubt of Phocaean origin. For it must be admitted that the courageous citizens of Phocaea were among the most consistently self-righteous colonizers of the Greek commonwealth. In founding Lampsacus they killed off all the natives, but they did it in self-defence; the daughter of the local king had warned them of the impending attack. The story was told in detail by a descendant of these settlers, the historian Charon, who, being one of the earliest Greek historians, was in a position to set up a model. The other Phocaean settlement in Ligurian territory at Massalia was described in the same spirit. The story of how the foundation of Massalia was no violent encroachment upon alien territory was already reported by Aristotle (fr. 549 Rose). A Phocaean aristocrat happened to be the guest of the king of the Ligurian tribe of the Segobrigi when the king's daughter was made to choose a husband at a banquet. Needless to say, she chose the Phocaean guest, who became the founder of Massalia on land given to him by his father-in-law. The same story could be read in an expanded and slightly modified form in the *Historiae Philippicae* by Trogus Pompeius, a Celt

who retailed Massaliote traditions and nostalgias at the time of Augustus. Trogus explains how the idyll between Greeks and natives came to an end. The Ligurians tried to take Massalia by surprise during a festival. Duly betrayed by one of their women, they were punished (43.4). After that the Massalioes closed the gates of their city and kept permanent watch. Here Trogus introduces a note of realism which is echoed by Livy when he describes how at the beginning of the second century B.C. a third of the Greeks of Ampurias – a secondary settlement of the same Phocaeans – manned their walls every night in fear of the neighbouring Iberians (34.9). But Trogus soon falls back into imaginary history when he tells the episode of the chieftain Catumarandus, who had been persuaded in a dream by a goddess to make peace with Massalia. Trogus goes on to explain that a little later – that is about 390 B.C. – the Massalioes emptied their treasure to ransom the Romans from the Gauls. I am not the first to suspect that the inhabitants of Massalia spent their money to ransom themselves from Catumarandus rather than the Romans from Brennus. The Phocaeans relied on the help of their virgin goddess Artemis, but even more on the love of native princesses – which has seemed un-Hellenic behaviour to many a modern scholar.

Inevitably, the history of Massalia was one of sharp-eyed vigilance against her neighbours. It will have been noticed that the Ligurians, in whose territory the city had been founded, bore the very Celtic name of Segobrigii. Whatever the explanation of this fact may be, at least from the late fifth century B.C. onwards true La Tène Celts watched from their fortified hills the movements of their Greek neighbours. For all practical purposes the Massalioes had to deal with men who in language, art, tribal customs and, presumably, Druidic wisdom belonged to the fluid Celtic civilization. It was altogether a history of successful preservation of traditional political, social and cultural values by a conservative *élite* against all odds; even Caesar's move to punish Massalia, as the ally of Pompey, did not spell disaster. Massalia was cer-

tainly helped in its trade by the other Greek colonies along the coasts of France and Spain, which, if not by origin, at least in fact were its own subsidiaries: Nicaea, Antipolis, Rhode, Emporiae, Mainace, etc. But it is difficult to measure the effort in military and social co-ordination which such isolated outposts must have required: they were a liability just as much as a help.

Massalia poses two problems in relation to the Celtic world. One is the problem of the contribution of Massalia to the Hellenization of the Celts. The other is the effect of the neighbourhood of the Celts on Massalia, and through Massalia on the Greeks in general. The former problem has been much discussed; the second, though no less curious, is much less spoken about.

At least in the present stage of research, it would be ridiculous to try to isolate the Massaliote component in the process of penetration of Greek material and spiritual goods into Celtic territory. This was a territory which at least in the fourth and third centuries B.C. extended from Spain to the Black Sea, included northern Italy and large patches of the Danubian regions, and after 279 B.C. had reached the heart of Asia Minor – the new Galatia. The points of contact with the Greek world were innumerable and were increased by the use of Celts as mercenaries in Italy and practically everywhere else. In 186 B.C. there were Galatian mercenaries in Egypt who were able to announce to the world in perfect Greek from the little temple of Horus in Abydos 'We of the corps of the Galatians have come and have captured a fox' (Dittenberger, *OGIS* 757). Careful historians, incidentally, warn us that it could not be a fox, but must have been a jackal.

Even if we confine ourselves for the moment to the late sixth and fifth centuries B.C., when the options were more limited, the road of the Rhône was not the only route for traffic between Celts and Greeks. There were other roads through the Alps, and other intermediaries: certainly the Etruscans and probably the Phoenicians, with whom the Massalioes had hostile encounters (Thucyd. 1.13.6; Paus.

10.18.7). We do not know whether the Lady of Vix received her gigantic vase – a Laconian one? – through Massalia. Nor do we know whether Massaliote technicians rebuilt in the Greek style the fortress on the Danube at Heuneburg in Württemberg at the end of the sixth century. Only late Gallic coinage imitates Massaliote issues; in the fourth–third centuries B.C. it was distinctly under Macedonian influence. But ‘au Pègue’, 150 miles north of Massalia, the sixth-century pottery is Ionian – that is, presumably, from Marseilles. At Ensérune the wealth of Greek pottery is hardly to be dissociated from Marseilles. What is more, Celtic and German dialects received very early the Greek verb ἐμφύτεύω in the sense of ‘to graft’: it has given ‘enter’ in French, ‘impfen’ in German, and I like to remember that I first met this word in my childhood as a current term of Piedmontese agriculture. The communication of such a word implies the communication of the technique of grafting and cannot be explained except as a Massaliote loan-word. This brings us near to the suggestion that it was Massalia which provided the Celtic chieftains with a new, more exciting, way of getting drunk at their famous hierarchically organized banquets: wine made mead and beer less prestigious. The Greeks sold wine to the Celts, but also taught them to produce it. It remains true that we do not know when Marseilles became the main receiving point of the tin which was carried on horseback for thirty days from the British Channel. The direct evidence belongs to the first century B.C. (Diod. 5.22.4). But some tin, iron, slaves, hides, wool and gold must have reached Massalia very early, in exchange for wine, oil, salt, bronze and clay vases and mirrors. The spreading of the Greek alphabet among the Celts is again due to Massaliote influence. It may be a development of the third–second centuries B.C. This seems to be the date of Gallic inscriptions in Greek characters. In the first century B.C. Gauls near Massalia wrote their contracts in Greek (Strabo 4.1.5). Caesar found a census of the population in the Greek script when he took over the camp of the Helvetii (*Bell. Gall.*

1.29). We owe to the same Caesar the information that the Druids used the Greek alphabet (6.14).

At least in the Hellenistic age Celts went to Massalia to learn Greek manners and language; this city was a school for the barbarians, according to Strabo (4.1.5; Justin 43.4.1). The suggestion by Justin that the barbarians also learnt something about urbanization is amply confirmed by archaeology, from the Ensérune settlement of the fifth century B.C. to Glanum and the *oppidum* of Entremont in the Hellenistic period. Glanum has become the textbook example of a Celtic settlement according to Greek principles. The human figures found at Entremont indicate that the Celts were at last persuaded to abandon their prejudice against the representation of the human form. And when Caesar mentions six hundred senators among the Nervii (*B.G.* 2.28), it is natural to ask whether the six hundred life senators – *timouchoi* – of Marseilles were their model.

The citizens of Massalia in their turn could not remain insensitive to the surrounding civilization. They used Celtic mercenaries for their own defence, according to Polybius (3.41). They even came to incorporate a small tribe of native neighbours as permanent auxiliary troops; this at least is the information conveyed by Caesar (*B. Civ.* 1.34.4). Varro seems to have stated that in his time Massalia was trilingual, the two foreign languages being of course Latin and Celtic. We would like to have the context of this statement which is transmitted by St Jerome (*In Galat.* 2.426, p. 543 Migne) and Isidore of Seville (15.1.63). At least one Massaliote in the service of the Ptolemies in the second century B.C. has a name, Cinto, probably of Celtic origin (U. Wilcken, *Zeitschr. f. Aegypt. Sprache* 60 (1925), 97). Ancient students of folklore attributed to Celtic influence one of the details of the famous Massaliote hospitality. When friends parted, they exchanged loans of money to be returned in the next life. Being neighbours of the Celts (Valerius Maximus explains), the Massaliotes had learnt from them to believe in the immortality of the soul, a belief not to be despised, as it was shared

by the Pythagoreans: 'dicerem stultos, nisi idem bractati sensissent quod palliatus Pythagoras credidit' (2.6.10). Consequently Livy attributes to the consul Cn. Manlius Vulso a speech in 189 B.C. in which, to encourage in the Roman legionaries a contempt for the Galatians, he finds traces of Celtic barbarism even in Massalia: 'Massilia inter Gallos sita, traxit aliquantum ab accolis animorum' (38.17.11). Massalia's prestige among the Celts was high. In 195 B.C. Lamp-sacus registered the help which her Phocaean sister-city Massalia had given to her, not only at Rome, but also in relations with the Celts of Asiatic Galatia (Dittenberger, *Syll.* 591).

All this evidence only goes to show how easy it would be to build up a completely distorted picture of the life of Massalia in the Hellenistic period. Livy himself, in another context, makes a Rhodian ambassador praise in the Roman Senate the tenacity with which the Massalites adhered to Greek traditions, 'ac si medium umbilicum Graeciae incolerent' (37.54.21). The general impression of Massalia in ancient sources is of a city which had decided to remain unchanged in its archaic Hellenic shape. The comparison with Venice is only too obvious; the difference from the Greek colonies of the Black Sea, Olbia, Panticapaeum, etc., is equally obvious. The Massalites feared contamination from their neighbours. As Silius Italicus summed up (*Pun.* 15.169-72): 'The settlers from Phocaea, though surrounded by arrogant tribes and kept in awe by the savage rites of their barbarous neighbours, still retain the manners and dress of their ancient home among warlike populations.' Aristotle knows of a time in which the constitution of Massalia had been even more oligarchic than it was in his time (*Pol.* 5.5.2). He recognized that the *plebs* participated to some extent in the affairs of the city (6.4.5). But the constitution was oligarchic enough when Strabo – or his source – described it. Six hundred senators chosen for life ruled the city: they had to be married, to have children and to be sons and grandsons of citizens. We do not know how they were elected; but in practice it can hardly have been more than a co-optation.

There was a smaller executive body of fifteen, and three of these fifteen were apparently the yearly heads of the state. No foreigner was allowed to carry weapons; and no woman was allowed to drink wine (Theophrastus fr. 117 Wimmer = Aelian. *V.H.* 2.38). The morality of public shows was closely controlled. Whoever wanted to commit suicide asked for authorization from the senators; if his reasons were good, he was given his hemlock free of charge. A master who freed a slave could take back his freedom three times in succession; after the third time it was assumed that the judgement of the master could no longer be trusted. This severity of customs was inseparable from the old friendship with Rome. Massalia claimed alliance with Rome from the origins. The friendship was certainly very old, because the Romans deposited in the treasury of the Massalites their offering to Delphi after the capture of Veii in 390 B.C. (Diod. 14.93.4; App. *Ital.* 8.11). Common experience of Celtic attacks consolidated the friendship in the fourth century. Towards the end of the third century Hannibal created a new bond between the two cities, as he clearly tried to use the Celts against both. Massalia seemed to the Romans of the late Republic and the early Empire to be a relic of the good old days: 'disciplinae gravitas, prisci moris observantia' (Val. Max. 2.6.7); exactly the place for Agricola to be educated.

So absorbed was Massalia in her effort to remain Greek – and aristocratic – that, to all appearances, she never organized any exploration of the interior of Gaul, and never transmitted any precise knowledge of Celtic institutions and customs to the other Greeks. Here again the difference from the Black Sea colonies which studied the natives and informed Herodotus is obvious. Nobody can doubt that the Massalites explored seas and coasts. It was their life. They went round the coasts as far as the Carthaginians allowed them to go. Euthymenes, the explorer of the western African coasts, may well be earlier than Herodotus, and even than Hecataeus, as F. Jacoby suggested (*P.-W.*, s.v.). The *Ora Maritima* by Avienus may be based on a Massalite *periplous* of the sixth

or fifth century B.C. (though this is a modern conjecture on shaky foundations). Pytheas, who probably lived in the fourth century, does not seem to have travelled inside Gaul. His enemies among the ancient geographers attacked him for what he reported about the mysterious North – Great Britain, Jutland, and whatever Thule was. But nobody attacked him for his information about France; which shows that he gave none. Until the second century B.C. the Greeks knew deplorably little about the Celtic world – and France in particular. Whatever information they had came from such second-hand reports as they were bound to pick up either in Marseilles or in Italy or in the Balkans, without having to visit the country for themselves. The first authorities we meet on the Celts, Ephorus and Timaeus, are typical armchair historians. They were pioneers, simply because the Massaliotes never made any effort to know their neighbours. Ephorus, who wrote his first books about 350 B.C., included the Celts in his description of the world. He put the Celts at one of the four corners of the world. They were philhellenes, fined young people who were too fat, and did not abandon their houses when they were invaded by water (Strabo 4.4.6, 7.2.1). Timaeus, who about 280 B.C. followed Ephorus in prefacing his history with a geographical introduction, was perhaps better informed. He could talk about the mouth of the river Rhône and about the influence of the Atlantic rivers on the tides of the ocean. He was interested in Massalia and must have reflected Massaliote opinions about the rest of Gaul. Polybius, who did not like Timaeus, admitted that he had taken trouble to get information about the West. No other writer of the late fourth or early third century could compete with either Ephorus or Timaeus about the Celts. Aristotle, no doubt, must have included them in his lost work on the customs of the barbarians. In his *Politics* he knew just enough to make sense of their institutions within the context of his classification. Though a military race, the Celts, unlike the Spartans, were not controlled by women, because they inclined to homosexuality; but, like the Spartans, they brought

up their children austerely. Outside politics Aristotle has the usual mixture of odd bits of information – for instance that in certain parts of the Celtic land it is too cold for donkeys to procreate (*De gener. anim.* 2.8.748a). He does not seem to have done much research on Celts. But even Ephorus and Timaeus were later found to be superficial informants on them. Indeed, not even Eratosthenes presented what could be considered a decent amount of information according to the standards of later times. He is in fact specifically accused of ignorance about the Celts by Strabo (2.2.41). If one takes this attack by Strabo into account, it seems strange that specialists on the ancient sources about Gaul, such as P. Duval, can still believe that Eratosthenes wrote at least thirty-three books of *Galatica* on the Celts. One has simply to glance at the few fragments of these *Galatica* (745 Jacoby) – all quoted by Stephanus of Byzantium – to be persuaded that the author of the *Galatica* is a younger namesake of the great Eratosthenes – perhaps a descendant who noticed the lacunae in the geography of his predecessor. The *Galatica* by Eratosthenes were probably written after 156 B.C., because they allude to a war between Attalus II and Prusias. It is also certain that the number thirty-three in one of the quotations is a textual corruption: the *Galatica* may have had fewer books. Even so, they belong to the new era of Celtic studies which, as we shall soon see, was inaugurated and encouraged by the Romans.

Before the Romans came on the scene, the Greeks knew little about the Celts. Their geography, their institutions, and their economy were studied only from afar and superficially. The Greeks of Massalia, which would have been the obvious centre for the exploration of the Celtic world, never went beyond the coasts. Even the Druids emerged slowly and rather unexcitingly in the late third century B.C. in Sotion, the historian of Greek philosophy (Diog. Laertius, Introduction), and in a treatise on magic attributed by somebody to Aristotle, but more probably composed by the Peripatetic Antisthenes of Rhodes who lived about 200 B.C. (*Suda*). With

all the interest in wise men of the barbarian world – Brahmins, Magi, Jewish and Egyptian priests – very little was made of the Druids. Sotion and Ps.-Aristotle quoted them to confirm the remote origin of philosophy outside the Greek world; but the main argument was represented by Magi and Brahmins who had a better and older reputation among Greek thinkers and historians (Diog. Laertius, *Introd.* 1).

Poor knowledge of the Celts does not mean that the Greeks were indifferent to them. They could hardly have afforded to be so. Since the beginning of the fourth century B.C. the Celts had been a factor to be reckoned with everywhere in the Mediterranean world. The first event of Roman history contemporary Greeks witnessed with interest, and perhaps with apprehension, was the sack of Rome by the Gauls. This was registered with due emphasis by Theopompus, Aristotle and Heraclides Ponticus. About 338 Scylax, or rather pseudo-Scylax (§ 18), noticed the presence of Celts on the Adriatic north of Ravenna in a region which was of direct commercial interest to the Greeks. Celtic mercenaries were enrolled by Dionysius the Elder in southern Italy. The Celts were pressing on the Macedonian frontiers at the time of Philip II and of Alexander the Great. Fifty years later they captured Delphi, if only for a brief period. Immediately afterwards they established themselves in Asia Minor – a constant source of trouble for all the powers concerned: Galatic mercenaries even conspired against Ptolemy II. Each of these interventions of the Celts proved their importance by producing major developments in the political systems which they attacked. Rome emerged as the greatest power in Italy when the Latins, for fear of the Celts, had to give up their independence about 350 B.C. The new kingdom of Macedonia under the firm hand of Antigonos Gonatas was the direct outcome of the Celtic invasion of Macedonia and Greece. The victory over the Galatians consolidated the state of Pergamum and probably provided Attalus I with the right occasion for declaring himself king. Finally it was Gnaeus Manlius Vulso's victory over the Galatians in 189 B.C.

which justified the intervention of the Romans in Asia Minor and furnished them with the clients they needed in order to control the ambitions of Pergamum. Hopeless in their attacks against states defended by phalanx or legion, the Celts had the numbers, the courage and the swiftness of the perfect marauder.

The Greeks were too busy celebrating their victories against the Celts in verse or marble to give serious thought to the causes of such commotions. Patriotism and religion combined in what must surely be one of the most emotional reactions of the Greeks to the impact of an alien society. Though the sack of Delphi by the Celts is a legend, Apollo's city had been in actual danger of being sacked. Religious emotions led to the foundation of the *Soteria*, one of the most important festivals of the Hellenistic world. An inscription of Cos (*Syll.*³ 398) expresses the spontaneous enthusiasm of the inhabitants of this island on learning the news of the Gallic retreat from Delphi in 278; that was a day of victory and salvation for the whole Greek world. Aratus wrote his hymn to Pan after Antigonos Gonatas' victory over the Gauls in the following year. Callimachus must have followed this up with his epic poem *Galatea*, which (as Rudolf Pfeiffer suggested) presented the Nereid Galatea as the mother of Galatos, the ancestor of the Galatians (fr. 378–9 Pfeiffer). Later Callimachus spoke of the 'foolish tribe of the Galatians' in his fourth hymn to Delos (l. 184) after Ptolemy Philadelphus had punished his rebel Celtic mercenaries. The Galatians even became an ingredient of comedy, to judge from a fragment of the *Galatai* by Sopatros of Paphos, who lived in Egypt about 280–270 B.C. (fr. 6 Kaibel). Every Hellenistic hymn to Apollo came naturally to include an allusion to the god's triumph over the Celts. Limenios' paean inscribed at Delphi with its musical notation about 120 B.C. still repeats the commonplace (Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina*, 149). Other poets celebrated the victories of the Seleucids and of the Attalids against the same barbarians. According to the *Suda*, Simonides of Magnesia sang of a

victory by Antiochus III over the Gauls, about which we know nothing – unless it is to be identified with the episode to which II Maccabees refers as a success by eight thousand Babylonian Jews and four thousand Macedonians against Galatian raiders (8.20). A fragment of a poem in a Berlin papyrus edited by Wilamowitz alludes to an episode involving a Hellenistic king against the Gauls: the rest is left to our imagination (D. L. Page, *Greek Literary Papyri* 1, 463).

Figurative arts, even more than poetry, expressed the mixed feelings of elation over past victories and fear of future incursions which the Celts inspired. Four episodes seem to have attracted the attention of the artists – or of their patrons. One was of course the attack on Delphi. Propertius saw 'deiectos Parnassi vertice Gallos' (Gauls hurled down from Parnassus) even on a door of the temple of Apollo on the Palatine (2.31.13). Another was the suicide of Brennus after his retreat from Delphi, which may be represented in a famous bronze of the museum of Naples. The third episode was the victory of Attalus I in 241 which was commemorated by initiative of the king himself, both in Pergamum and in Athens. Finally, Mario Segre in one of the most brilliant of his early studies argued that many of the Italian scenes with Gauls – such as the frieze of Civit  Alba in Picenum, which was discovered at the end of the last century – may represent a Celtic attack on the temple of Apollo and Artemis at Didyma near Miletus, which was sacked in 277/6 B.C. (*Studi Etruschi* 8 (1934), 137–42). Pergamene propaganda made the victory of Attalus pre-eminent. The kings of Pergamum, as the monument on the Athenian Acropolis shows, wished to appear as the protagonists of a new Gigantomachia – the defenders of the divine order of Hellenic civilization against the northern barbarians. Yet the artists engaged in these works were in no mood to present the barbarians as the incarnation of evil forces. They underlined the pain inflicted on the conquered Gauls and their courage in facing death – alone or with their families. The success with which these statues met shows that the public shared the feeling of the

artists. Though we have no contemporary commentary on the Pergamene works we can hardly go wrong if we choose to see in them a monument to human pain made somehow more tolerable to contemplate because embodied in barbarians.

There were other more crude or more generic representations of the victories over the Celts. But it still remains significant that some of the pathetic figures are to be found on funerary urns. The visitor to the Museo Guarnacci of Volterra is not likely to forget the series of urns with strange scenes of marauding Celts who run away from a Fury. The Etruscans of the second century B.C. must have discovered some allegory of death in such episodes. On the other hand the south Italian potters of Cales must have found customers for their cups which through their imagery reminded the drinkers of the impious Celts in action: were they too a 'memento mori' or were they an invitation to rejoice in a world where barbarians are sure to be defeated?

The strong emotions provoked by the Celts became symbolic of human existence and developed in inverse proportion to the critical evaluation of Celtic society. We must of course make full allowance for the disappearance of the most important historical sources of the third century B.C. Hieronymus of Cardia is likely to have given a precise account of the Celtic events of 280–275 B.C. Later Phylarchus continued the story. We have two fragments by him (frs. 2 and 9 Jacoby) which can pass for Celtic ethnography; one is a tall story about a Celtic *potlatch*. But serious students of the Celtic world such as Strabo never refer to these third-century historians. We can see why, if we turn the pages of the only surviving detailed account of the Celtic invasion of 278 B.C. in Pausanias, Book 10. It has long been recognized that Pausanias gave a Herodotean dress and added some comments of his own to what must ultimately be a third-century B.C. account of the Celtic attack (O. Regenbogen, P.-W., s.v. Pausanias, Suppl. VIII, 1076). Now one of the comments of Pausanias is that before a battle the Celts neither employed

a Greek soothsayer nor made sacrifices according to national custom – if indeed, as Pausanias pointedly remarks (10.21.1), there is such a thing as Celtic divination. What Pausanias implies is that he found nothing in his source about the Celtic art of divination which had been extolled by Posidonius and other authorities. Pausanias obviously enjoyed a dig at these famous scholars. But we shall not be surprised if in their turn the specialists refused to take seriously what they considered the uninformed accounts of writers like Pausanias' source. Indeed, Pausanias shows us what an account of a war with the Celts looked like in the pre-scientific days of Celtic studies, in the third century B.C. Direct contacts with the Celts seem to have been confined to prisoners or to mercenaries, bad subjects for ethnographic research.

III

The Romans had gone through similar emotions. For two centuries they had faced Celtic attacks. When they had decisively defeated the Gauls in the battle of Telamon in 225 B.C. they had commemorated the victory by a temple on the site, in which the Celts appeared as the modern counterpart of the Seven against Thebes. The Romans entered the *tumultus gallicus* in their laws as a recognized emergency. The levy in mass against the Gauls is still mentioned in the charter granted to the 'colonia Genetiva Julia' in Spain in 44 B.C., when it was presumably a simple piece of antiquarianism, if it did not allude to Caesar's recent wars. But since the beginning of the third century B.C. the Romans had also started a policy of occupation of Gallic territory. This occupation (at least with the Senones of the Adriatic coast and the Boii north of the Apennines) was at first equivalent to an extermination of Celtic tribes. Slowly, however, the Romans had to learn to govern Celts, and this became an even more pressing responsibility when Spain was organized in two provinces in 197 B.C. For three centuries the Romans were steadily engaged – among their multifarious commitments –

in annexing territories which were partially or totally Celtic until they came to control the greater part of the Celtic-speaking world. They became interested in the peculiarities of the Celtic society they tried to control and subdue.

Cato the Censor fought as a very young man at the battle of the Metaurus where Hasdrubal had been heavily supported by Gaulish troops. He started his political career at the time when the Cenomani of Brixia answered the call to rebellion from the last Punic commander in Italy, Hamilcar. He was in Spain as a consul in 195 to lay the foundations of the Roman administration. He reported about Cantabrian customs (fr. 94 Peter). Cato had an instinctive interest and perhaps respect for the conquered populations of Italy and the provinces. He observed the Celts with care and seems to have been the first to find them witty: 'pleraque Gallia duas res industriosissime persequitur, rem militarem et argute loqui' (fr. 34 Peter). The emendation of 'argute loqui' into 'agriculturam' proposed by a distinguished Celtic scholar must be the least argute emendation of any text (G. Dottin, *Mélanges L. Havet* (1909), 119). The Celts loomed large in Cato's *Origines*. He tried to achieve clarity on places and names. He found a branch of the dangerous Cenomani among the Volcae not far from Marseilles. He was probably the first to include the Gauls in a history of Italy, though Fabius Pictor who fought against them in 225 B.C. was bound to have said something about their characteristics. The example of Cato must have been decisive. While Cato was still alive the Roman governing class made a determined effort to get to know the Celts better. Much could be learnt from day by day contacts. But the science of geography was Greek. If the Romans wanted systematic information about the Celtic lands and institutions they had to recruit Greek scholars. Under Augustus or Tiberius Strabo still stated, as an evident fact, that in the study of little-known countries 'the Roman writers are imitators of the Greeks and they do not carry their imitation very far, for what they relate they merely translate from the Greeks' (3.4.19). The Greeks

worked hard to describe the Celtic world of Spain and Gaul in the service of Roman expansion. What they had not done when the Celts were plundering Greece and Asia Minor, they did later for the benefit of the Romans. Greek technicians probably helped in the routine work of mapping the conquered countries. One likes to think that Demetrius 'the topographer', who put Ptolemy Philometor up when he went to Rome as a suppliant, made his precarious living by this kind of work (Diodor. 31.18). But what the Romans really needed from the Greeks was the description and interpretation of a foreign land as a whole; they lacked orientation in ethnography.

Polybius was available. Even Cato could not conceal a grudging sympathy for him. Polybius travelled in Celtic lands under Roman auspices and with Roman help and protection. The details are notoriously uncertain. He probably went twice to Spain with Scipio Aemilianus, in 151 and in 134; on his first journey he must have visited southern France, including Marseilles (Polyb. 3.59.7). Between these two journeys, in 147-6, he was given ships by Scipio to explore the coasts of Africa (Plin. *N.H.* 5.9-10). It is not impossible that on this sea voyage he was accompanied by Panaetius, who, according to a very fragmentary and dubious passage of the *Index Stoicorum*, apparently travelled by sea with Scipio at about this time (col. 56, ed. Traversa p. 78). Polybius was the first to give a first-hand account of the interior of Spain. He described Gaul – or at least southern Gaul – in a way which represented a novelty for the Greek public (3.59.7). We can see how he used his knowledge for the chapters on Hannibal in Gaul of Book 3 of his histories; but Book 24 in which he summarized his findings is lost. When he claimed in Book 12 that, contrary to Timaeus, he had taken the trouble to visit the lands of the Ligurians and of the Gauls, he was being true to the facts. But at least in Book 3 and in Book 12 he forgot to say that his explorations were made possible by the Romans and would benefit the Romans. Cato had realistically encouraged the Romans to do

what no Greek had done before – to study the Celts in their own land. Now we see how the Roman leading class accepted his advice and hired the Greeks to do the work for them.

It is impossible to say whether the younger Eratosthenes (*F.Gr.H.* no. 745 Jacoby) who wrote his books on Gaul about this time, 150 B.C., had been encouraged by the Romans. A younger Callisthenes quoted as an authority on Gaul by Ps.-Plutarch, *De fluviis* 6.1 (= Jacoby, no. 291, 5) is said to have been born in southern Italy, that is, in territory under Roman control. But like many other authors quoted by Ps.-Plutarch, he may never have existed. We can be more definite about Artemidorus of Ephesus and Posidonius of Rhodes whom Strabo treated as his most authoritative sources for Spain and Gaul. Both were ambassadors to Rome for their own cities – that is, they were very acceptable to the governing class of Rome. In his celebrated visit to Posidonius' house in Rhodes, Pompey made it clear that the Roman fasces had to bow down before philosophy; they certainly had nothing to fear from it. It is evident that Artemidorus and Posidonius travelled in Spain and Gaul with the support of the Roman authorities. In any case, the situation was such that the Romans were bound to derive advantage from their observations. Artemidorus wrote before Posidonius, who occasionally disagreed with him: he must have travelled about 100 B.C. He seems to have done particularly useful work on the geography of Spain where he had the advantage of a century of Roman administration. But he had ethnographic remarks to make about both Spain (Strabo 3.4.17) and Gaul (4.4.6), and he seems to have prepared the way for the far more comprehensive enquiry of Posidonius.

Whatever may be our private feelings about the modern scholarship on Posidonius, one of its most durable results is the reconstruction of Posidonius' chapters on the Celts. A few impressive verbatim quotations by Athenaeus and some references in Strabo were the starting point. The discovery that Diodorus V contained a paraphrase of the same basic text gave an altogether different dimension to Posidonius' work.

After that, it was easier to see that Strabo himself largely depended on Posidonius and that Caesar, too, must have used Posidonius in the ethnographic excursions of the *Bellum Gallicum*.

For many years the dependence of Strabo on Posidonius was obscured by the theory of Alfred Klotz (*Caesarstudien*, 1910) that Strabo used Posidonius only indirectly through his older contemporary Timagenes. It was an unlikely theory even at first sight. Strabo quotes Timagenes only once (4.1.13) to say that Posidonius was right and Timagenes was wrong on the origins of the *aurum tolosanum*, the gold from Tolosa which ruined the career of Caepio. It is difficult to infer from this passage that Strabo trusted Timagenes about the Celts and never made use of the original text of Posidonius – who had been directly or indirectly his own teacher. Strabo had an independent mind. If he did not copy Timagenes, he should not be suspected of having copied Posidonius. He was acquainted with many sources of the Caesarian and Augustan age; he even quotes Caesar's *Commentarii* (4.1.1). It is furthermore clear that when he expressed a favourable judgement on the Romanization of Spain and Gaul he was not copying what his most recent editor, F. Lasserre, has imagined to be a panegyric of Augustus. Strabo himself was the apologist. That much said, it remains true that Strabo never went north of Populonia in Etruria, knew little Latin and was bound to depend on written Greek sources for his account of the Celtic lands. We are fortunate in his choice of Posidonius as his main source.

Posidonius wrote a monograph about the Oceans. But what he wrote on the Celts was mainly to be found in the history of the period *circa* 146–80, and in his books on Pompey's wars. He wrote *because* of the Roman progress in Spain and in Gaul, and therefore in full awareness of the new reality. If he appears to have produced a static image of Celtic society, as if the Roman impact was not yet to be observed, he must have known what he was doing. Posidonius was

capable of recognizing a change when he saw one. His approach to the Celts was deliberate; he intended to preserve the physiognomy of a world in danger of disappearing. At least in one case he almost says so – in the history of Lovernius, to which I shall return.

Ancient ethnography gives little space to language. Comparative philology had not been invented. Ethnic groups were defined in terms of common descent and of common institutions. Posidonius was not a discoverer of a new ethnographical method. But he was very systematic in his descriptions and had a rare gift for the significant detail. Furthermore, he needed amusement and knew how to get it. He loved the hierarchical structure of Celtic society because it was hierarchical, but also because it was extravagant. The Rhodian aristocratic merchants among whom he lived had hierarchy, but not extravagance. Posidonius enjoyed describing those strictly hierarchical banquets of the Celts in which people challenged each other to mortal duels on fine points of honour, such as the best piece of meat. He contemplated with relish large retinues of clients singing the praises of their patrons. Permanent clientship was a good thing. It gave the Celts delightful chieftains, such as Lovernius who entertained hugely: 'And when at length he fixed a day for the ending of the feast, a Celtic poet who arrived too late met Lovernius and composed a song magnifying his greatness and lamenting his own late arrival. Lovernius was very pleased and asked for a bag of gold and threw it to the poet who ran beside his chariot. The poet picked it up and sang another song...' (Athenaeus 4.37, p. 152). Alas, there was no chance of another Lovernius. As Posidonius remarks in passing, he was 'the father of Bituis who was dethroned by the Romans'. Posidonius confessed that at first he had been disturbed by the spectacle of human heads nailed up at the entrance of the aristocratic Celtic houses, but afterwards 'becoming used to it he could bear it with equanimity' (Strabo 4.4.5).

It was Posidonius who defined the place of the Druids,

the *vates*, and the bards in Celtic society. All the later tradition virtually depends on him. Here again he was alerted by a long tradition of Greek search for barbarian philosophers and seers. But his sympathy for the Druids, the *vates* and the bards implies an authentic recognition of their function in the Celtic world. The Druids were for Posidonius more important than the other two groups because they provided leadership, moral and religious ideas, and justice. They preserved something of the golden age when, as Seneca says, 'penes sapientes fuisse regnum Posidonius indicat' (*Ep.* 90). When we read in Strabo, certainly from Posidonius, that the Druids 'have pronounced that men's souls and the universe are indestructible, although at times fire or water may temporarily prevail' (4.4.4), it is easy to suspect that Posidonius attributed ordinary Stoic doctrines to his Druids. Yet the situation is not so simple. Posidonius had to interpret the strong belief in the other world which we know from independent evidence to have existed among the Celts of his time. Furthermore, even before Posidonius, the Druids may well have heard about Greek doctrines of immortality either from oral tradition in Massalia or by honest purchase of Greek books. They cared for learning. Later, if we are to believe Cicero, *De divinatione* 1.90, his friend and guest, the Druid Divitiacus, gave answers in perfect Posidonian style: 'et naturae rationem quam φυσιολογίαν Graeci appellant, notam esse sibi profitebatur'. Perhaps Divitiacus had read his Posidonius – or somebody had read Posidonius to him. For it must be remembered that Divitiacus does not seem to have been in perfect command either of Greek or of Latin. Caesar used an interpreter in his formal meeting with him about his brother Dumnorix (*B.G.* 1.19).

Druidism was, however, only a small portion of Posidonius' picture of Celtic society, and we must ask ourselves what impression such a picture would make on his contemporaries. As for his Greek readers, the only certain fact is that he was famous enough to be copied – or summarized

– by his younger contemporary Diodorus. But after the sack of Athens by Sulla and the destruction of the Seleucid state by Pompey the taste for the quiet contemplation of world history which Posidonius encouraged must have been confined to provincial corners like Rhodes itself, or Agyrium, the Sicilian birthplace of Diodorus.

The reaction in Latium is more distinctly recognizable. It includes the significant silence of Cicero who knew his Posidonius. Cicero denigrated the Gauls in the *Pro Fonteio* about 69 B.C. because his client Fonteius had been accused by them. He did not need to turn to Posidonius for his cheap ethnography – assuming, what is by no means certain, that about 69 B.C. Posidonius' history had already been published. Later, as far as we know, Cicero never seriously returned to the subject of the Celtic society – not even in his speech for Caesar *De provinciis consularibus*. Books, and there are so many of them, on Cicero's political thought might at least note the desperate vagueness of his ideas on the provincials, which in the case of the Gauls amounted to contempt. Varro studied the Celts and appeared to St Jerome to be a great authority on them (*P.L.* 26.353). Posidonius was of course behind him. Perhaps encouraged by Varro, Caesar went to conquer Gaul with Posidonius in his satchel. The ethnographical excursuses of the *Bellum Gallicum*, which few nowadays would consider interpolated, are similar in content and style to the Posidonian sections of Diodorus and Strabo. Notice that Caesar never mentions the Druids except in the long ethnographic digression of Book 6.11–28. He did not encounter the Druids in his campaigns, but in his literary sources – whatever the explanation of their absence from the battlefield may be.

As Caesar wrote his ethnography towards the end of the war, he was in a position to mix his own observations with what he found in his sources. Any attempt to separate the old and the new is hopeless. But in its broad outlines his image of the Celtic society coincides with that of Posidonius. Like Posidonius he stresses the internal factions and the

strife of the Celts, and the volatile character of their decisions. Michel Rambaud took all the passages in which Caesar mentioned the 'mobilitas et levitas animi' (2.1.3), the 'Gallorum subita et repentina consilia' (3.8.3), the 'Gallorum infirmitas' (4.13.3) etc. as typical examples of 'déformation historique' (*La déformation historique dans les Commentaires de César* (Paris, 1953), 326). If it was a deformation, it was anticipated by Posidonius. Caesar found in him not only valuable factual information about places and institutions, but an encouraging analysis of the weakness of Celtic society.

It is certainly a paradox that Posidonius, the friend and protégé of Pompey, should help Caesar through his historical work to conquer Gaul and therefore to destroy his rival.

As we have tried to explain, the exploitation of Greek ethnography by Roman leaders had started much earlier. The Celts had been sadly overlooked by the Greeks. When they invaded Greek territories emotions prevailed over analysis. The systematic study of Celtic lands was made by Greeks under the Roman hegemony and with Roman encouragement. Now we can see the results. The importance of the names involved – Polybius, Artemidorus, Posidonius – corresponds to the magnitude of the prize. It was by conquering the Celts, in Italy, Gaul, Spain, Britain and Danubian countries, that the Roman Empire consolidated itself as a world power. It was also in the Celtic countries that Romanization celebrated its most truculent triumph. Celtic civilization was wiped out or driven underground.

The Druids re-emerged in the nostalgia of the Gallic aristocrats of the fourth century and in the irresponsible imagination of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. Remarkably enough, female Druids, not documented before, prevailed in these late phantasies. There may be more than mere nostalgia in all this. Celtae was the name of one of the best units in Julian's army (Ammianus 20.4.2), and Julian himself says that it was inconceivable to all men that a

Celtic or Galatian soldier should turn his back to the enemy (*Orat.* 1, *Paneg. Const.* 36B). Claudian repeats the claim (*Bell. Gild.* 1.431): 'Sitque palam Gallos causa, non robore vinci.' Celtic self-awareness may be traced in the popular rebellions of the fifth century, especially in Armorica (*Zosim.* 6.5.3). A desire to remind Rome of its arrogance remained latent in the Celtic underground. It received its best expression in that story of the *Mabinogion* about 'The Dream of Macsen Wledig', the dream of the Emperor Maximus. As you will remember, the Emperor Maximus, having married the British princess Elen, remained in this island for seven years and therefore lost his right to return to Rome. A new emperor was elected. Maximus tried to reconquer Rome but failed and had to call in the help of his British brothers-in-law. The Britons observed that 'everyday at midday the two (rival) emperors would take their meat, and on both sides they would cease fighting till all had finished eating. But the men of the Island of Britain took their meat in the morning and drank till they were in-spirited. And while the two emperors were at meat the Britons approached the rampart and planted their ladders against it' (transl. Gwyn and Thomas Jones, *Everyman*, p. 86). The rest is obvious. Here for the first time a Celtic writer proclaimed the superiority of British early breakfast over Latin siesta.

IN. ALLEN WISDOM