

## Oil for the Wheels in Teaching Caesar: Yesterday and Today<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This article examines some ways of enlivening Caesar's *De bello Gallico* in the classroom. It begins by considering the pedagogical methods of Mary E. Harwood, a Latin teacher in the early 1900s. Since Ms. Harwood's students often found Caesar to be a boring, irrelevant text, she developed some creative teaching methods to lessen her own sense of frustration and to help her students better understand, visualize, and appreciate the text. The author argues that even though some of Ms. Harwood's early twentieth-century strategies would not necessarily work in twenty-first-century Advanced Placement classrooms, her general philosophy of teaching Caesar is still quite germane. In addition to considering Ms. Harwood's suggestions for teaching Caesar, the article also offers some examples of how the author approaches the challenges of teaching Caesar in his own AP class, in particular by drawing upon popular culture and current events.

### KEYWORDS

Advanced Placement, Caesar, *De bello Gallico*, pedagogy, film

If you were to think about the Latin teachers of the early 1900s, you would probably imagine rigid grammarians and stern taskmasters who resisted any sort of progress and innovation. After all, this was some seventy years before the development of textbooks like *Cambridge* and *Ecce Romani*—books that take a kinder, gentler approach to Latin—and by today's standards, these early twentieth-century teachers covered an astonishing amount of material: all basic Latin grammar in the first year, Caesar in the second year, Cicero in year three, and Vergil in year four. We see these types of instructors depicted in films set during this time period, teachers like Mr. Hopkins in *The Happy Years*, hammering his students incessantly on gerunds and gerundives, and Mr. Chipping in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*, stubbornly refusing

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to make any changes to the status quo and dismissing progressive pedagogy as “pop-pycock” (Sellers).

Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Chipping, however, are fictional characters. In the real-world classrooms of the early 1900s, there were actually many Latin teachers who were less than thrilled with the prospect of frogmarching a bunch of fourteen-year-olds through fifty lines of *De bello Gallico* every day. An article published by Arthur Tappan Walker in 1912, as a matter of fact, makes it clear that frustration with Caesar was common: “In recent years, the perennial dissatisfaction with Caesar as the second-year Latin text seems to be finding expression more often and more strongly than usual. There is scarcely a classical association meeting or a paper on second-year Latin work without its attack on Caesar” (234).<sup>2</sup>

One of these dissatisfied teachers was a woman named Mary E. Harwood, a Latin teacher at The Girls’ Latin School in Baltimore, Maryland. In April of 1908, at a meeting of the Classical Association of the Atlantic States, Ms. Harwood presented a paper on the difficulties of teaching Caesar, a paper she later published as an article in the *Classical Weekly*. In the article, she explains that her students found Caesar to be complicated and tedious, and it was often hard for them to see the text as anything more than “an endless confusion of camps, marches, and grammatical constructions.” She characterizes the disconnect between Caesar and her students as a seemingly “hopeless” situation, and she punctuates her frustration with a bit of tongue-in-cheek hyperbole: “I determined that if anything could be found to create an interest and lessen the drudgery, I would find it or die!” (98).

One hundred years later, teachers of the twenty-first-century [Advanced Placement Caesar syllabus](#) still face the same essential challenges encountered by Ms. Harwood. How can we teach *De bello Gallico* to modern-day teenagers? How can we keep Caesar relevant and interesting? How can we push students through all of the lines required by the curriculum while still keeping them motivated and engaged?

I will begin by examining Ms. Harwood’s suggestions for coping with these challenges. Since she desperately wanted her students to appreciate Caesar, she developed some creative teaching strategies to give her students a break from the daily grind of grammar and translation, to appeal to different styles of learning, and to help her students see *De bello Gallico*, not simply as a boring jumble of obscure Celtic tribes and thorny indirect statements, but instead as a “moving picture of

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<sup>2</sup> Wyke summarizes the state of Caesar in American schools in the early twentieth century (21-46).

thrilling dramatic action.” I will then offer some examples of how I practice this same philosophy of teaching Caesar in my own classroom, in particular by employing the very technology which Ms. Harwood imagines but which she would not have had at her disposal in her classroom in the early 1900s—the moving picture.

### STORIES AND PROJECTS

To begin with, one of the simplest strategies Ms. Harwood employed to break up the monotony of grammar and translation and to help her students visualize life in ancient Rome was the time-honored educational practice of story time. In fifteen-minute segments, she would read her students stories about the typical daily routine of a Roman senator in the late Republic:

The scene, laid in the home of an old Senator of the late Republic, and the story opening with the scurry of slaves in the morning, cleaning the house as the first beams of the sun strike the statue of Jupiter in his great *quadriga* on the Capitol, take them into a Rome full of life. They follow the old Senator and his friends to the Forum, the senate, the chariot-race and the bath; they see him reading and writing in his library, giving a banquet and attending the funeral of one of his friends. (98)<sup>3</sup>

Although reading the students a story might seem like an antiquated teaching method, modern educational research supports the practice of reading aloud to students as an effective technique for capturing their attention and developing their vocabulary (Kindle 202).<sup>4</sup> Moreover, in recognizing the value of a continuous storyline about everyday Roman life, Ms. Harwood was actually more than a half century ahead of her time; textbooks such as *Cambridge* and *Ecce Romani*, of course, would later be written according to this same model. She was also well ahead of her time in what today’s educational jargon would classify as “integrated teaching”—i.e.,

<sup>3</sup> “I read to them during the first semester, what they are pleased to call a story. It is on Roman life, with a few characters strung together for a thread of narrative” (98). Ms. Harwood does not offer any sort of citation for the story in question, so it is not clear whether she was reading from a published source or from something of her own creation.

<sup>4</sup> Although this practice is primarily associated with the elementary school classroom, it can also be an effective strategy in the content-specific courses students take in middle school and high school (Ivey and Fisher 32 ff).

encouraging students to recognize the parallels between academic disciplines—for she would ask the English teachers in her school to allow the students to write their required compositions about Roman life, thereby reinforcing the material they were learning from her stories.<sup>5</sup>

When Ms. Harwood finished the stories about the Roman senator, she gave her students a concise overview—“in one-syllable English,” as she puts it—of the political situation in Rome during the late Republic, and then she began reading them stories about the life of Julius Caesar.<sup>6</sup> She wanted her students to develop a comprehensive understanding of what she calls Caesar’s “wonderful personality,” an understanding that is difficult for students to glean from *De bello Gallico* itself, since Caesar characterizes himself in such a decidedly impersonal fashion. Her stories were designed to help the students see Caesar, not just as the disembodied narrator of an ancient war journal, but as a skilled politician, soldier, and orator, a man who was capable of “changing a panicky army, terror-stricken at the reports about the ferocious Germans, to enthusiastic legions wild with desire to get at the enemy” (99).

In addition to story time, Ms. Harwood also employed a variety of project-based learning activities to help the students visualize the things happening in Caesar’s commentary: designing and wearing Roman military costumes; dressing up dolls like Roman soldiers; constructing maps of Gaul; building models of Roman camps; designing battlefields with sand, twigs, chalk, and match-stick soldiers; recreating the naval battle against the Veneti in a pool of water.<sup>7</sup> She even had her students measure out a thousand footsteps across campus in order to give them a small taste of Roman military marching and to help them avoid embarrassing mistranslations of the phrase *milia passuum*: “True, I get distances varying from one-fourth to three-fourths of a mile only, for like Ascanius, they trot along with childish steps, but I find it likely to fix the idiom” (99).

In considering the feasibility of incorporating Ms. Harwood’s methods into the modern AP Caesar classroom, there are some important factors to keep in mind. First of all, Ms. Harwood was teaching in the early twentieth century, long before the advent of the technological innovations (and distractions) that our twenty-first-

5 Such integrated approaches to teaching often improve student motivation and academic performance (Drake 9).

6 No source is provided.

7 Helle et al. give a good overview of the characteristics and potential benefits of project-based learning (288-297).

century students have grown up with. Second, she actually implemented these activities in Latin One in order to prepare her students to read Caesar the following year: “Perhaps this paper,” she explains, “should have been entitled ‘Preparations for Studying Caesar,’ for a great deal of interest can be aroused, I find, during the first year of Latin, and it is here that I count on making real progress” (98). Thus, Ms. Harwood’s students were quite a bit younger than today’s AP Latin students, most of whom are juniors or seniors in high school. Third, Ms. Harwood admits that she did not have enough class time for these special activities, so she worked them in on an extracurricular basis. If her students seemed reluctant to attend these after-school or Saturday morning sessions, she would bribe them with “the magic word refreshments . . . or, in extreme cases” by offering them “a club pin.” And finally, it is important to remember that Ms. Harwood was teaching in an all-girls school, and at least one of her projects—dressing up dolls in Roman costume—certainly seems to have been designed with a single-sex classroom in mind.

Therefore, some of Ms. Harwood’s teaching methods would probably work in the modern AP classroom; others would need to be adapted to meet the sensibilities of twenty-first-century students. But even though I would not necessarily adopt all of her specific ideas, I absolutely agree with the larger point that she makes in her article—namely, that we have to do some things in the classroom to make *De bello Gallico* interesting and relevant for our students, and we have to help them visualize the things described in Caesar’s text.

### THE MOVING PICTURE

Whereas Ms. Harwood tried to achieve these objectives through old-fashioned storytelling and project-based learning activities, I try to achieve them, at least in part, through the use of videos. As Martin Winkler explains in the introduction to *Classics and Cinema*, film can be an effective resource for bridging the gap between the ancient civilization of the Greeks and Romans and the popular culture of modern-day American students: “At a time when humanities in general and classics in particular are no longer the bedrock of education they once were, the use of film within a traditional and largely nonvisual curriculum can provide an excellent means to reach students” (11). In fact, as Winkler points out in a later book, *Classical Myth and Culture in the Cinema*, even educators in the early twentieth century—Ms. Harwood’s time period—recognized the potential pedagogical value of the motion picture (5-9). B.L. Ullman, for example, made this argument in 1915, just a

few years after Ms. Harwood wrote her article about teaching Caesar: “Moving pictures are an excellent means of showing that the Classics are not dead. The classical teacher not only makes Latin and Greek alive, but makes the Greeks and Romans seem like living beings . . . Here is where the cinematograph plays its part” (201).

To be clear, I don’t want to give the impression that I burn a lot of time in class showing movies. As all AP teachers know, there are a lot of lines on the syllabus, and class time is valuable. This was the case for Ms. Harwood, too, as she points out that “one of the great difficulties of the Caesar year is lack of time” (98). Therefore, I usually only show videos that are about five to ten minutes in length—brief clips that are long enough to offer some visual stimulation and provide a much-needed respite from the intensive translation work that AP Latin requires, but at the same time short enough to hold the students’ attention and avoid impeding our progress through the syllabus.

For example, in Book Four of *De bello Gallico* (4.24 and following), Caesar describes his initial landing on the southeast coast of Britain. As the *Britanni* are defending their shoreline against the Romans, they are comfortable and confident: they are fighting on dry land, they don’t have to carry any unnecessary equipment or baggage, they are in a familiar environment, and they have the benefit of fighting with horses and war chariots. The Romans, on the other hand, are at a significant disadvantage:

*Erat ob has causas summa difficultas, quod naves propter magnitudinem nisi in alto constitui non poterant, militibus autem, ignotis locis, impeditis manibus, magno et gravi onere armorum oppressis simul et de navibus desiliendum et in fluctibus consistendum et cum hostibus erat pugnandum. (4.24)*

This led to extreme difficulties, because the ships were too large to be beached except in deep water, while the soldiers, ignorant of the land, their hands full, weighed down by the size and weight of their weapons, at one and the same time had to jump down from the ships, find their feet in the surf, and fight the enemy. (Hammond 82)

As a result, the Roman soldiers are absolutely terrified, and they are completely incapable of functioning with their usual efficiency and enthusiasm.

This passage always reminds me of the [opening scene](#) in [Saving Private Ryan](#), which I like to use in class as a complement to Caesar's narrative.<sup>8</sup> The beginning of the film depicts the Omaha Beach landing of an American squadron during the D-Day operation of World War II. (The Allies, of course, were crossing the same body of water as Caesar in *De bello Gallico*, only they were going in the opposite direction.) Just as the Romans in Caesar's text, the Americans in the film face the daunting challenge of maneuvering through the water while encountering heavy resistance from the defenders on shore. And just as Caesar helps his terrified soldiers by stepping in to provide decisive leadership in the heat of the battle (4.25), an American captain (portrayed by Tom Hanks) plays the same role for his men in *Saving Private Ryan*. To be sure, this scene is incredibly violent, but it helps the students visualize the adversity faced by Caesar's men. It also underscores one of the most important—but, at the same time, most understated—themes of *De bello Gallico*: the brutality of warfare.

In Book Five, the AP syllabus turns to the episode involving the Roman legates Quintus Titurius Sabinus and Lucius Aurunculeius Cotta (5.26–5.37). These men are in charge of a Roman winter camp (*hiberna*) located in the territory of the Eburones in northeast Gaul. Isolated from Caesar and the other Roman legates, Sabinus and Cotta are facing the threat of annihilation, not only from the rebellious Eburones nearby but also from the menacing Germans across the Rhine River. As conditions for the Romans continue to deteriorate, a Celtic leader named Ambiorix makes the legates an offer: if the Romans abandon their camp, he will—as a personal favor to Caesar, who has treated him generously in the past—guarantee them safe passage to another Roman camp in the area (5.27).

A vigorous debate between the two Roman legates then ensues (5.28–5.31). First, Cotta argues that they should reject the offer of Ambiorix (5.28). Calm and pragmatic, he explains that there is no reason for the Romans to make a rash decision, and as a loyal lieutenant in Caesar's army, he emphasizes that nothing should be done without the explicit instructions of their commanding officer. Sabinus, on the other hand, endorses the proposal of Ambiorix. Instead of appealing to logic and reason, though, he relies on pure emotion. He literally shouts down Cotta during the

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<sup>8</sup> The scene begins at the 4:35 mark and continues all the way to 28:30. However, I usually just show the first five or ten minutes.

debate (*clamitabat*, 5.29, and *clariore voce*, 5.30), and he supports his argument by terrifying the soldiers in the camp with images of isolation, starvation, and death (*reieci et relgati longe ab ceteris aut ferro aut fame intereant*, 5.30). The two legates are polar opposites, and the episode makes for a fascinating examination of contrasting styles of leadership.<sup>9</sup>

The Sabinus-Cotta debate certainly makes for one of the most interesting parts of the AP Caesar syllabus, but it also makes for one of the most difficult. The syntax is confusing—long, protracted indirect statements that keep going and going and going—and the students often have a hard time keeping the two Roman commanders straight. In my class, the solution is to refer to Cotta as “Mr. Cotta”—as the verb *docebant* suggests, he is, in a manner of speaking, a teacher, explaining his position in the debate clearly and logically:

*Lucius Aurunculeius [Cotta] compluresque tribuni militum et primorum ordinum centuriones nihil temere agendum neque ex hibernis iniussu Caesaris discedendum existimabant: quantavis magnas copias etiam Germanorum sustineri posse munitis hibernis docebant . . . (5.28)*

Cotta, together with a number of the military tribunes and leading centurions, thought that nothing should be done on the spur of the moment, and that they should not leave their winter quarters without orders from Caesar. They argued that the German forces, however large, could be held off if their winter camp were fortified. (Hammond 103)

Showing some ridiculous [scene](#) from the 1970s program [Welcome Back, Kotter](#)—or “Cotta,” as John Travolta’s character always pronounces it—serves to cement the association, and from that point on, the students usually have no problem remembering which Roman legate is which.

On a more sophisticated note, I also like to employ video to draw parallels between the argument of Sabinus and Cotta and modern-day political debate. When I was teaching this syllabus for the first time, in fact, it was the fall of 2012, and

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed analysis of this episode (and the Pullo-Vorenus scene later in Book Five), see Brown (292-308).



President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney were in the midst of their three presidential debates. After we finished the debate of the Roman legates (concluding in 5.31), I took a few minutes to show some clips from the [first Obama-Romney debate](#) and then asked the students to draw some comparisons.<sup>10</sup> They quickly noticed that the forceful, aggressive Romney (qua Sabinus) seemed much more magnetic and persuasive than the aloof, professorial Obama (qua Cotta), and just as Sabinus wins the debate in the Roman camp, most journalists and pundits agreed that Romney won the first presidential debate easily.<sup>11</sup>

After Sabinus wins the debate, the Romans abandon the security of their camp, accepting Ambiorix's promise to give them a free pass through barbarian territory (5.32 and following). Just a couple of miles into the march, though, Ambiorix and his men ambush the Romans. Caesar's description of the violent attack is vivid and terrifying. The Romans are caught completely off guard, and their usual system of well-disciplined organization breaks down into total chaos and hysteria:

*Praeterea accidit, quod fieri necesse erat, ut vulgo milites ab signis discederent, quae eorum carissima haberet, ab impedimentis petere atque arripere properaret, clamore et fletu omnia complerentur. (5.33)*

Another consequence, inevitably, was that soldiers everywhere started to abandon their standards, and all hurried to look for their most treasured possessions among the baggage and hold on to them. Shouting and weeping filled the air. (Hammond 105-106)

A few survivors manage to slip away, but most of the Romans, including the legates Sabinus and Cotta, are killed:

*Interim, dum de condicionibus inter se agunt longiorque consulto ab Ambiorige instituitur sermo, [Sabinus] paulatim circumventus interficitur. Tum vero suo more victoriam conclamant atque ululatum tollunt impetuque in nostros facto ordines perturbant.*

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<sup>10</sup> The debate took place at the University of Denver on October 3, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> As the *New York Times* put it, "The president at times acted more as if he were addressing reporters in the Rose Garden than beating back a challenger intent on taking his job."

*Ibi Lucius Cotta pugnans interficitur cum maxima parte militum. (5.37)*

In the meantime, while they negotiated terms, Ambiorix deliberately dragged out their discussion: Sabinus was gradually surrounded and killed. Then indeed they proclaimed the victory after their own fashion by raising a howl, made an attack on our ranks, and scattered them. There Lucius Cotta fell fighting, together with most of our soldiers. (Hammond 107)

To my knowledge, this specific episode of the Gallic Wars has never been depicted in film, but there is, however, an uncannily similar scene in [The Last of the Mohicans](#), when a British regiment leaves the security of their camp during the French and Indian War, only to suffer a gruesome massacre at the hands of a duplicitous tribal leader named Magua.<sup>12</sup> Showing this clip in class helps AP students visualize the military tactics used by Ambiorix, and it gives them a clear sense of the terror that would have swept through the ranks of the Roman soldiers.

Later in Book Five, when the narrative shifts to the camp of Quintus Cicero, we meet the centurions Titus Pullo and Lucius Vorenus—the same characters whom the HBO [Rome](#) series elevates to a position of historical prominence that Caesar never could have imagined (Cooke):

*Erant in ea legione fortissimi viri, centuriones, qui primis ordinibus appropinquarent, Titus Pullo et Lucius Vorenus. Hi perpetuas inter se controversias habebant, quinam anteferretur, omnibusque annis de locis summis simultatibus contendebant. (5.44)*

In this legion were two centurions, both men of great courage, and close to reaching senior rank. Their names were Titus Pullo and Lucius Vorenus. There was always a dispute going on between them as to which had precedence over the other, and every year

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<sup>12</sup> The negotiations for surrender begin at the 1:04:28 mark. The attack on the unsuspecting soldiers runs from 1:14:10 to 1:21:10.

they clashed in fierce rivalry over the most important posts. (Hammond 110-111)

In Caesar's commentary, both men are supposed to be defending the camp against a barbarian attack. Pullo, however, in an attempt to outshine Vorenus and demonstrate his superior *virtus* once and for all, rushes outside of the fortification, plunging himself into the thick of the enemy line. Vorenus, concerned that the other men in the camp will question his courage, quickly follows his rival. On the battlefield, the two centurions manage to put aside their rivalry to help each other survive against the Gauls, and when they return to Cicero's camp, they are immediately received as triumphant heroes (*summa cum laude sese intra munitiones recipiunt*).

The [first few minutes](#) of the first episode of the HBO *Rome* series are based directly on Caesar's narrative. Just as in *De bello Gallico*, the scene begins with Pullo, in a zealous effort to kill as many barbarians as possible, breaking formation in battle. As in Caesar's commentary, Vorenus follows Pullo out, but a key difference is that he follows, not as an eager colleague, but as a stern commanding officer. Vorenus reprimands Pullo for his careless disobedience—"Get back in formation, you drunken fool!"—and when Pullo retaliates by punching him in the face, Vorenus has him escorted back to the camp where, in the subsequent scene, he is flogged for insubordination. The HBO version of this episode, therefore, offers the students a different perspective on Caesar's text, and the adaptation makes for an interesting class discussion on the expectations of Roman soldiers. The students often observe that the "fictional" HBO scene, in which Pullo is severely disciplined for his irresponsible bravado in battle, seems, in many ways, more realistic than the "historical" Caesar version, in which the author spins the recklessness of Pullo (and Vorenus) as a laudable manifestation of *virtus*.

Immediately after the Pullo and Vorenus episode, Caesar gives us a chilling description of Roman captives being tortured by barbarians right outside of the Roman camp: *quorum pars deprehensa in conspectu nostrorum militum cum cruciatu necabatur* (5.45). This is a very similar scenario to the one depicted in [The Road Warrior](#), a classic dystopian siege movie about a group of virtuous Australians who work hard to defend an oil refinery from an onslaught of leather-clad barbarians.<sup>13</sup> Just as the Nervii dangle captured Roman soldiers right outside of the camp of Quintus Cicero, torturing them within sight of the Romans on the inside, the barbarians

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<sup>13</sup> The film was released as *The Road Warrior* in North America. In Australia, the original title was *Mad Max 2*.

in *The Road Warrior* employ the same gruesome [intimidation tactics](#).<sup>14</sup> In this same scene, it's also interesting that the Lord Humungus, the leader of the barbarians in the film, makes the inhabitants of the camp a very similar offer to the one offered to Sabinus and Cotta by Ambiorix: "There has been too much violence, too much pain. None here are without sin. But I have an honorable compromise: just walk away. . . . I'll give you safe passage in the wasteland. Just walk away, and there will be an end to the horror." The besieged Australians in *The Road Warrior*, however, are not as gullible as the Romans in *De bello Gallico*, and they wisely refuse the offer.

Finally, as we approach the end of the AP Caesar semester, I assign the students a more in-depth film study project that I call "Cinema Caesarea." I divide them into groups and assign each group some film of relevance to *De bello Gallico*. Instead of films like *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Last of the Mohicans*, in which only certain scenes have parallels to *De bello Gallico*, I try to focus on films with a more direct overall connection to Caesar's text. The students have to watch their assigned film on their own time and then prepare a fifteen-minute class presentation, during which they show some clips and explain the parallels to *De bello Gallico*. Some of the titles I've assigned for this project include: [Asterix the Gaul](#), the classic animated [film](#) that presents the war from the Celtic perspective; [Druids](#), a French film about the life of Vercingetorix; [The Wicker Man](#), an unintentionally hilarious Nicolas Cage movie about neo-Celtic human sacrifice (by means of the eponymous structures, described by Caesar in 6.16); and [Terry Jones' Barbarians](#), an entertaining documentary from a former member of the Monty Python comedy troupe that challenges traditional stereotypes about both the Romans and the so-called "barbarians" they conquered.<sup>15</sup> All in all, the Cinema Caesarea project helps the students see *De bello Gallico* through the lens of popular culture, and it makes for a fun, informative activity at the end of the semester when everyone's energy level is low.<sup>16</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Of course, these videos and activities that I use in my Caesar class are in no way meant to replace or diminish the demanding requirements of the Advanced Placement syllabus. As Ms. Harwood is careful to emphasize in her article, these

<sup>14</sup> The scene runs from 28:31 to 34:42.

<sup>15</sup> The original version of *The Wicker Man* (1973) stars Edward Woodward and Christopher Lee. I assign the ridiculous Nicolas Cage remake to provide some much-needed late-semester comic relief.

<sup>16</sup> In the appendix, I've included a more detailed list of instructions for this project and a suggested rubric for grading.

sorts of innovative methods should be used simply as “oil for the wheels” and “not at all as substitutes for the unceasing work in forms and translation so necessary” (100) to meet all of the required objectives. In the day-to-day grind of the rigorous AP curriculum, however, where the work often does seem to be “unceasing,” it’s easy for the students to lose sight of the big picture, the things that I ultimately want them to take away from the experience of studying *De bello Gallico* . . . things like the meaning of leadership, the ramifications of warfare, and the implications of cross-cultural encounters. If taking a short break from the “unceasing work” of grammar and translation does provide some “oil for the wheels” and enables the students to better understand, visualize, and appreciate these important themes in Caesar’s narrative, then the small amount of class time this requires is time well spent.

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## APPENDIX. CINEMA CAESAREA

### Instructions for Students / Grading Rubric

#### 1. Each group will be assigned one of these films:

- *Asterix the Gaul* (1967)—An animated film depicting the war in Gaul from the French perspective.
- *Druids* (2001)—A movie about Vercingetorix. Stars Christopher Lambert (from *Highlander* fame).
- *The Wicker Man* (2006)—With Nicolas Cage. Enough said.
- *Terry Jones' Barbarians* (2008)—A documentary that explores common perceptions of “barbarians” and why these perceptions are flawed. You should focus on the episode called “The Primitive Celts.”

#### 2. Class presentation:

- Video presentation (ca. 5-10 minutes in length). Choose a clip that is relevant and appropriate to be shown in class. (In other words, no nudity. Check with me first about language and violence.)
- Oral presentation (ca. 5-10 minutes in length). Each member of the group should play an active role in the presentation. Suggested distribution of labor:
  - One person can give a general summary of the film.
  - One person can talk about the specific clip(s) you will show to the class.
  - One person can explain the relevance of the film to the themes we've been exploring in class (Caesar, the war in Gaul, *De bello Gallico*, the Roman military, leadership, warfare, Celtic society, etc.).



I am tentatively planning to have these presentations the last two weeks of the semester. I will develop a more specific schedule as this time period approaches. This will be a quiz grade out of 50 points. It will be graded according to the following criteria:

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Visual impact of video clip(s)                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Overall summary of film                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Explanation of clip(s)                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Explanation of connections to <i>De bello Gallico</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Overall impression of presentation                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Everyone in the group will receive the exact same grade.