

## *A Note to the Teacher:*

**ADULT READERS** of historical fiction approach the experience with eager anticipation of being led into a world different than the familiar “everyday” life around us.

Middle school students may be familiar with a variety of fantasy worlds -- superheros, wizards and witches and celebrities -- yet lack an understanding of how life has changed through history. The main characters of the novel, Getorix and Lucius, idolize the heroes of their own cultral mythologies in much the same way. Asking students to suspend their need for the comfort of the familiar in the same way they do every time they watch a fantasy on television or a movie, or read a fantasy novel, may help them approach the novel with appropriate openness.

\* The next two pages may be photocopied as a handout for students before they begin reading the novel: *GETORIX: The Eagle and The Bull*.

Students' introduction to GETORIX: The Eagle and The Bull a Celtic adventure in ancient Rome  
by Judith Geary

## *Dear Reader,*

I invite you to join me on a journey to a land long ago and far away. In many ways it will be like reading a fantasy novel; some things will be familiar, while others will seem strange. But ancient Rome really existed, as did many of the people of the novel. In most cases, unfamiliar words and strange customs will be explained as you read farther.

Before you begin reading the novel, you may want to look through the maps and notes at the beginning and the end. You may want to read and study them carefully, or you may want to just look through to see what's included so you know where to look when you have questions that are not answered in your reading.

Getorix, the novel's hero, is the son of a Celtic chief. The Celts organized themselves as tribes with different tribal names, and sometimes made war against each other, but the languages they spoke were similar enough that they could make themselves understood to each other.

Celtic tribes who lived in Scandinavia migrated south when storms and floods made their homeland inhabitable, looking for new places to live. They came up against the people already living in Europe, and against Roman legions protecting their trading interests in the region. The Romans were also afraid that the Celts would migrate over the Alps into the beautiful lands of the Italian peninsula. Italy was not yet united into one country, but the tribes there were allies, and the leaders of Rome felt they were protecting their home from invasion.

The Romans had been at war with tribes of the Celts for many years. The Celts had won many battles and destroyed several legions. When the Romans, led by Gaius Marius and Quintus Lutatius Catulus, finally won a decisive battle, it was cause for great celebration. The triumph parade, depicted in the opening scene of the novel, is this celebration.

The novel opens at the end of the Roman triumph parade. Getorix and his father Claodicos have been marched through the streets of Rome as part of the captured booty displayed for the Roman people. The parade also included wagons, much like parade floats today, decorated with paintings of battle scenes (showing the Romans winning, of course), captured cattle and horses, slaves (marched in rows chained together as if they were cattle) and the victorious legions.

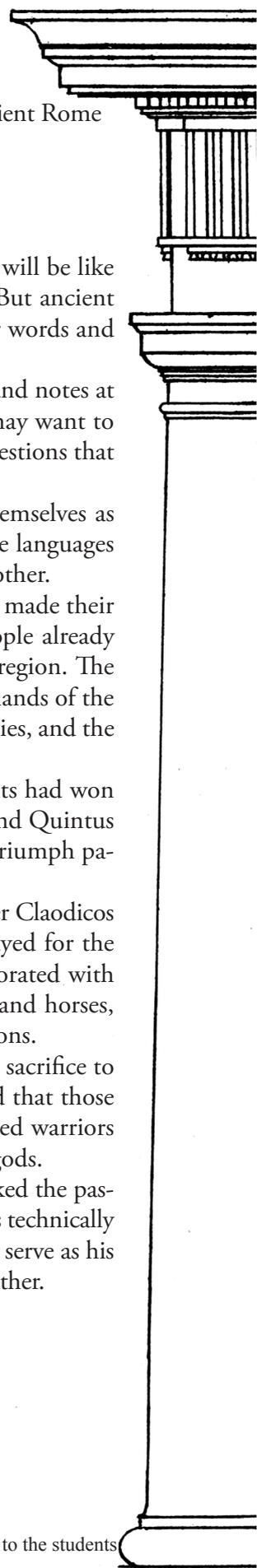
Getorix and his father believe that the Roman triumph will end with a human sacrifice to the Roman god Jupiter. Celts had a strong belief in a world after death. They believed that those who died heroically in battle had a special place of honor in this Otherworld. Defeated warriors might gain honor in the Otherworld by dying as a sacrifice – as a “messenger” to the gods.

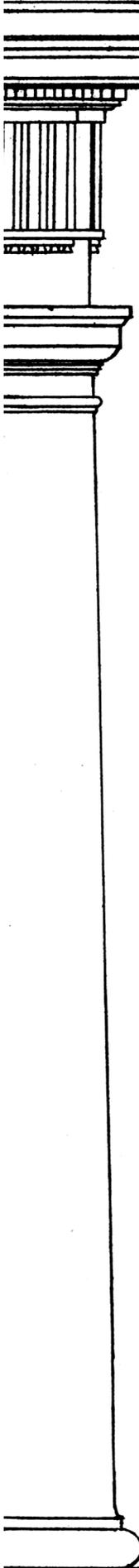
Celtic customs also included a trial of courage and strength as a ritual that marked the passage of a boy into manhood. Getorix missed out on the ritual ordeal of manhood, so he is technically still a boy. Getorix believes that facing death as a human sacrifice to the Roman god will serve as his ritual ordeal of manhood and enable him to enter the Otherworld as a hero beside his father.

As you will see, he faces entirely different challenges.

Enjoy the adventure!

*Judith Geary*





## Historical Notes for the Reader:

Roman civilization lasted over a thousand years, from 753 B.C. (according to our calendar) to the fifth century A.D. (or C.E.) This novel is set at about the middle of that time in 101 B.C.E. (or B.C.) You can find the date and some of the other events in Roman history on the timeline in the back of your book or on a timeline your teacher provides.

At this time, the Roman government consisted of mostly elected leaders. They had a Senate and magistrates in charge of everything from coinage to the “grain dole”. At the head of the government were two consuls, elected every year. They also served as generals in the legion, and might continue as a general after their term of office as consul ended. In the novel, Gaius Marius is consul for the year and Quintus Lutatius Catulus is a general who was consul the previous year.

People who identified themselves as Celts lived all through Europe from Asia Minor to the tip of the Iberian Peninsula and from Scandinavia to the Alps. You may check the map in your book or a modern map to see this land. Some of the tribes were considered “friends of Rome.” Others, as you see, were not.

Some of the names in the book may be unfamiliar to you. Most of them are pronounced differently today than they would have been two thousand years ago, so if giving them modern “nicknames” helps, feel free to do that. However, the list below may help:

Notes: All “Cs” are pronounced like “K”. “A” is usually broad like in cat.

Aedui -- Ah dwee	Pellia – Pee lee ah
Atlas – At’ las	Quintus – Kwin’ tuss
Aurelia – Awe ree’ lee a	Selia – See lee ah
Boiorix – Boy or rix	Senius – Sin’ e us
Brosch – Brosh (like the “o” in pond.)	Servilia – Sir vee’ lee ah
Caesar – Use the modern pronunciation here	Starkaos – Star’ ka ose
– See’ zar	Teutobod – Two’ toe bod
Cardeus – Car day’ us	Theano – Tea ah’ no
Catulus – Kah too luss (cub)	Thorvaldt – Thor’ vault
Chrysogonus – Chrys sah’ go nus	
Cimbri -- Kim bree	
Claodicos – Kla o’ de cose	
Cornelius – Kor nee’ lee us	
Eumaios – U may’ ose	
Gaius – Guy’ uss	
Getorix – Gay tor ix	
Idios – (like idiot – at least that’s how Getorix would pronounce it.)	
Julius – Joo’ lee us	
Keltus – Kel’ tus	
Leia – Lay’ a (like the princess in Star Wars)	
Lucius – Loo’ shus (It would have been pronounced: “Loo key’ uss” at the time.)	
Lutatius – Loo tah’ tee uss	
Malumpus – Mah lum’ pus	
Marius – Mah’ ree uss	
Olav – Oh’ lav	