

Lesson 11

Julius Caesar, Gallic War: De Bello Gallico 6.13

Sed de his duobus generibus alterum est druidum, alterum equitum. Illi rebus divinis intersunt, sacrificia privata et publica procurant, religiones interpretantur. Ad hos magnus adulescentium numerus disciplinae causa concurrat, magnoque hi sunt apud eos honore. Nam fere de omnibus controversiis publicis privatisque constituunt, et si quod est admissum facinus, si caedes facta, si de hereditate, de finibus controversia est, idem decernunt, praemia poenasque constituunt. Si qui aut privatus aut populus eorum decreto non stetit, sacrificiis interdicunt; haec poena apud eos est gravissima. Quibus ita est interdictum, hi numero impiorum ac sceleratorum habentur, his omnes decedunt, aditum sermonemque defugiunt, ne quid ex contagione incommodi accipiant; neque his petentibus ius redditur, neque honos ullus communicatur. His autem omnibus druidibus praeest unus, qui summam inter eos habet auctoritatem. Hoc mortuo, aut si qui ex reliquis excellit dignitate succedit, aut si sunt plures pares, suffragio druidum, nonnumquam etiam armis de principatu contendunt.

Translation A J. G. F. Powell

Of these two classes one consists of druids, the other of knights. The druids attend religious ceremonies, arrange sacrifices both public and private, and pronounce on questions of religion. A large number of young men flock to them for their education; and they are held in high honour among the people. They decide virtually all disputes whether public or private; if a crime is committed, if there has been a murder, or if there is a quarrel about inheritance or a boundary dispute, it is they who make the decision and who settle any award or penalty. Any individual or community which fails to abide by their decision is debarred from the sacrifices; this is the severest penalty among them. Those who are so debarred are regarded as impious and criminal; everyone avoids them; they will not approach them or talk to them, so as to avoid any misfortune as a result of contact with them. They have no redress for their claims, and they are barred from any office. One of the druids presides over all the rest, and has the highest authority in the community. When he dies, either there is an obvious successor who is more suitable than the rest, or else, if there are several candidates of equal merit, they compete for the leadership in an election among the druids, and sometimes also by armed combat.

Translation B H.J. Edwards (Loeb)

Of the two classes above mentioned one consists of Druids, the other of knights. The former are concerned with divine worship, the due performance of sacrifices, public and private, and the interpretation of ritual questions: a great number of young men gather about them for the sake of instruction and hold them in great honour. In fact, it is they who decide in almost all disputes, public and private; and if any crime has been committed, or murder done, or there is any dispute about succession or boundaries, they also decide it, determining rewards and penalties: if any person or people does not abide by their decision, they ban such from sacrifice, which is their heaviest penalty. Those that are so banned are reckoned as impious and criminal; all men move out of their path and shun their approach and conversation, for fear they may get some harm from their contact, and no justice is done if they seek it, no distinction falls to their share. Of all these druids one is chief, who has the highest authority among them. At his death, either any other that is pre-eminent in position succeeds, or, if there be several of equal standing, they strive for the primacy by the vote of the Druids, or sometimes even with armed force.

Translation C S. A. Handford (Penguin)

The two privileged classes are the Druids and the Knights. The Druids officiate at the worship of the gods, regulate public and private sacrifices, and give rulings on all religious questions. Large numbers of young men flock to them for instruction, and they are held in great honour by the people. They act as judges in practically all disputes, whether between tribes or between individuals; when any crime is committed, or a murder takes place, or a dispute arises about an inheritance or a boundary, it is they who adjudicate the matter and appoint the compensation to be paid and received by the parties concerned. Any individual or tribe failing to accept their award is banned from taking part in sacrifice - the heaviest punishment that can be inflicted upon a Gaul. Those who are laid under such a ban are regarded as impious criminals. Everyone shuns them and avoids going near or speaking to them, for fear of taking some harm by contact with what is unclean; if they appear as plaintiffs, justice is denied them, and they are excluded from a share in any honour. All the Druids are under one head, whom they hold in the highest respect. On his death, if any one of the rest is of outstanding merit, he succeeds to the vacant place; if several have equal

claims, the Druids usually decide the election by voting, though sometimes they actually fight it out.

Questions

1. Give the cases, nominative singular forms and meanings of *druidum* and *equitum*.

2. What case is *rebus*, and why is it in this case? Give the dictionary (nom. sing.) form. What agrees with *rebus* here?

3.

1. "attend religious ceremonies"
2. "are concerned with divine worship"
3. "officiate at the worship of the gods"

Identify the Latin clause which these translate, give a translation closer to the Latin structure and vocabulary, and compare the Latin with versions A, B and C. What are the differences?

Which translation do you think the best, and why?

4. What case is *disciplinae*, and why? Give its dictionary form and range of meanings.

5.

1. "flock to them for their education"
2. "gather about them for the sake of instruction"
3. "flock to them for instruction"

Find the Latin which these translate, and give your own translation. Compare the Latin with versions A, B and C.

6. Give the case of *finibus*, its dictionary form, and range of meanings. How is it translated in versions A, B and C?

7. Translate

Nam fere de omnibus controversiis publicis privatisque constituunt, et si quod est admissum facinus, si caedes facta, si de hereditate, de finibus controversia est, idem decernunt, praemia poenasque constituunt

Comment on the style of this sentence.

8. *habentur*: identify the form, and give a range of meanings for the verb.

How does version A translate this?

9. *hi numero impiorum ac sceleratorum habentur*

Translate this clause. Find the equivalents in A, B and C, and compare these versions with the Latin.

10. Find the Latin represented by each of the following sets of three translations. Compare the translations with the Latin in terms of sense and, where appropriate, style.

1.
 - a. "if there has been a murder"
 - b. "or murder done"
 - c. "or a murder takes place"
2.
 - a. "is debarred from the sacrifices"
 - b. "they ban such from sacrifice"
 - c. "is banned from taking part in sacrifice"
3.
 - a. "everyone avoids them; they will not approach them or talk to them"
 - b. "all men move out of their path and shun their approach and conversation"
 - c. "Everyone shuns them and avoids going near or speaking to them"

11. Identify *petentibus* in detail. What agrees with it here? Translate the phrase made up by these words.

12. They have no redress for their claims, they are banned from any office (translation A)

Find the Latin which this sentence represents, and give your own translation.

Compare the Latin with the translation given in A.

13. What case is *druidibus* here, and why? What other words agree with it?

14. *hoc mortuo*: identify the forms, and give a little translation of the phrase.

15. *si qui ex reliquis excellit dignitate succedit*

Translate. Find the equivalents in versions A, B and C, and compare these with the Latin.