

# THE GREATNESS AND DECLINE OF THE CELTS

## CHAPTER III (part 1)

### THE CELTS IN THE WEST. ITALY AND SPAIN

#### I

#### THE BELGÆ IN ITALY

FROM the end of the third century onwards, the Belgæ are to be found taking a part in every movement which occurs in the Celtic world. The other Gauls seek their help for special purposes, defend themselves against them, or follow them. While they are trying to carve out an empire for themselves on the Danube and in the East, new bodies descend on Italy and Spain. The political events of the second century bring the Celts into contact with a great organized state, a creator of order in its own fashion, the Roman Republic. The history of these peoples is henceforward the story of their struggle with Rome, in which, from the west of the Mediterranean to the east, they are vanquished, and it is through the ups and downs of that story that we catch glimpses of their internal life.

Yet another danger threatens them. To the north, over an area of the same extent, the Celtic world has at the same time to suffer encroachments and advances on the part of men of inferior civilization, speaking another language and forming another group, who have begun to move in the wake of the Belgæ, a hundred years after them. These are the Germans, whose name has already turned up in the course of this history, in Ireland, then in Italy, and finally in Spain, though in this last country its meaning is uncertain. [Livy, x, 107; Polyb., ii, 19, 1.]

A century after the first invasion, the peace of the Gauls of the Po valley was disturbed by the arrival of a large body of men from over the Alps. [Homo, CCCXLI, English, pp. 191 ff.] The Gauls treated with them, and succeeded in diverting their attention to Rome, which was then engaged in the fourth Samnite War. [Livy, x, 10, 10; Jullian, CCCXLVII, i, p. 285.] The Samnites had as allies the Etruscans, to whom the Gauls offered their assistance and that of the newcomers, who asked for land and a home in return. [Cf. d'Arbois, CCCI, ii, p. 389.] The Gauls descended into Etruria and slaughtered

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a legion at Clusium, on the usual road taken by invaders. In 295 they found themselves faced by a larger Roman army at Sentinum on the eastern slope of the Apennines, near the source of the *Æsis*. In spite of their valour and dash, they were crushed. [Polyb., ii, 19, 7 - 8.]

Ten years later the Gauls appear again, this time alone. They besieged Arretium [Livy, xxi, 20, 6.] on the Clusium road. A Roman army came to the relief of the town, and lost many prisoners. Envoys, sent to obtain an exchange of captives, were ill received. In 283 the Romans took the offensive and invaded the country of the Senones, [Suet., *Tib.*, 8.] whom they utterly defeated. According to a family tradition of the Livii, the Consul M. Livius Drusus found among them the thousand pounds of gold which had been paid in ransom of the Capitol. In any case, he was able to collect enough booty without that. The Etruscans had meanwhile taken up arms again, and while the Senones were getting beaten an army of Boii had come down into Etruria. It passed Clusium and Volsinii and was defeated on the shores of the small lake of Vadimo (Bassano), close to the Tiber between Volsinii and Falerii. [Polyb., ii, 20, 1 - 5.] The Boii made peace, and it lasted for forty-five years, giving the Romans time to finish the Samnite War, to dispose of Pyrrhos, and to conduct the first Punic War without having anything to fear from the Gauls.

They had considered it wise to keep a foothold in the country. The colony of Sena Gallica [Vell. Paterc., i, 14, 7.] was probably founded in 283. The circumstances which led to the establishment of a colony at Ariminum [App., *Celt.*, ii; Polyb., ii, 19, 12.] in the north of the Senonian territory in 268 are unknown to us. This was the terminus of the Via Flaminia, which was not finished until 221. Possibly it was already planned. Meanwhile, the Senones did not recover anything like their former power in the district and the Romans were consolidating their positions. It was not until 232 that the Lex Flaminia ordered that this territory should be divided up. [Id., ii, 21 - 2.] This was a serious matter. The Gallic settlements might be able to suffer small losses of ground and the foundation of colonies in towns which were hardly Gallic, but the dividing-up of the country meant eviction, and evicted they were.

This incident produced the greatest indignation, if not among all the Gauls, at least among the Boii and the Insubres, who had already, in 238 or 236, begun to call upon the Transalpine peoples [Id., ii, 21, 5.] whom they had received with mixed feelings in 299. An army had at that time entered the country, and had advanced as far as Ariminum. They do not seem to have been received with open arms by the greater part of the population, for there was a rising against the Boian kings Atis and Galatos, [Id., ii, 23, 1.] who came with them. The two kings were slain and the

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expedition came to nothing. No doubt there was some question of a division of land, and the Gauls were not fond of such methods. But in 232 the alarm occasioned by another division of land was general. Once more appeal was made to the men beyond the Alps.

These latter took their time to prepare for their invasion. But they seem to have managed things well, and it was a large and well-armed force which was sent into the plain of the Po in 225, led by the kings Concolitanus, Aneroestus, [Id., i, 10 = ii, 4 - 3.] and Britomarus. [Id., ii, 21, 4 - 6; Cf. Homo, op. cit., English, pp. 281 ff.] The report of this new Gallic incursion was not without influence on the negotiations which brought the first Punic War to an end.

One of the Consuls of that year, L. Æmilius Papus, awaited the Gauls at Ariminum. [Polyb., ii, 25, 2.] The other, C. Attilius Regulus, was engaged in Sardinia. In Etruria there was a small army under the command of a Praetor. The Gauls, with a force of 50,000 foot and 20,000 horse and chariots, having struck right across the Apennines, once again came down the central road of Etruria, again appeared before Clusium, and surprised the small army of the Praetor in a fashion which proves that their leader was not without military skill. [Id., ii, 27 - 31; Cf. Homo, op. cit., English, pp. 282 - 3 and fig. 10.] The return of L. Æmilius caused them to change their route. They turned towards the coast, which they reached at Telamon, north of Orbetello. [Polyb., ii, 22, 7 - 8; Dion, xii, 43. Cf. Jullian, CCCXLVII, i, p.326.] There they were met by all the Roman forces and with them those of the whole of Italy. This time the Gauls were not quite of one mind. The Cenomani had stood apart, and the Romans had obtained from them not only neutrality but an auxiliary corps, [A. J. Reinach, in CVII, 19, p. 174.] which marched with a body of Veneti, forming with it a unit of about 20,000 men. This was one of the great encounters between the Gauls and the peoples of Italy. The Gauls were thoroughly worsted; their army was destroyed. Concolitanus was taken prisoner and Aneroestus killed himself. [Milani, DXXXIII, i, pp. 125 - 143.] In memory of this battle a magnificent temple was built at Telamon, containing a symbolic arsenal and relics from the battlefield. [Polyb., ii, 31, 8; 35, 2.] Excavation has yielded a bronze statuette of a fallen Gallic chief and terra-cotta fragments of pediments. One of these latter represented the two leaders of the Transalpine tribes in the guise of Adrastos and Amphiaraos, two of the Seven against Thebes, Adrastos falling into an abyss made by a thunderbolt, and Amphiaraos dragged away on his chariot by a Fury.

Next year the Roman army ravaged the country of the Boii, [Homo, op. cit., Eng., p. 284; Jullian op. cit., i, pp. 449 - 450.] who begged for peace and submitted, as did the

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Lingones. In 223 the Romans, supported by the Anamari, attempted to cross the Po near the mouth of the Addua, but they were beaten and secured their escape by negotiation. They returned to the attack with the support of the Cenomani, and drove the Insubres as far as Milan. The Insubres raised 50,000 men and brought out of the temple of their goddess certain gold standards, which must have been the symbol of their possession of the place. The Romans were victorious, we are told, but they retired.

The Insubres took advantage of this to bring in, next year, an army of 30,000 Transalpine warriors, led by a chief named Viridomar, who called himself a son of the Rhine. The collision took place on the right bank of the Po, at Clastidium, southwest of Comillomagus. The Consul M. Claudius Marcellus is said to have slain Viridomar with his own hand in single combat. The Gauls, flying with the Romans close at their heels, crossed the Po near the mouth of the Addua, abandoned Acerrae, and retreated to Milan, which was in its turn taken by the Consul. Peace was made, the Insubres surrendering part of their territory and giving hostages.

As they had done among the Senones, the Romans founded two colonies, one at Placentia on the right bank of the Po, among the Boii, and the other at Cremona on the left bank, among the Insubres. Mutina was held by a garrison, which commanded the road from Placentia to Ariminum, later the Via Æmilia.

In spite of the succession of reinforcements from across the Alps which they received during more than a hundred years, the Cisalpine Gauls did not succeed in extending their territory, and still less did they get the better of the Romans. On the contrary, they lost considerable ground to them, and above all lost their independence. [Polyb., ii, 15, 22.] They were either allies or subjects of Rome. What independence they retained was precarious. They were to make a timid attempt to renew the struggle on the advent of Hannibal, only to fall still lower.

The newcomers who took part in the struggle of the Cisalpine Gauls against the Roman Republic are represented as Gauls of the Alps, the Rhone, or the region between them. [Id., ii, 34, 2. Cf. Jullian, op. cit., i, p. 450, n. 2.] The contingents of 232 are said to have come from the remotest part of Gaul and from the Rhine district. [Polyb., ii, 22; Bertrand (CCCIII, p. 453) observes that Polybios seems to have used the name of Galatians to designate them, for choice, but not exclusively.] So they must have passed the Rhone and the Alps on their way, and their predecessors may have done so too.

According to the ancient historians, the Cisalpines regarded them as kinsmen of their own, being like them descended from the Gauls who took Rome. [Polyb., ii, 22, 1; Oros., iv, 15, 5. Cf. CXC, 38, p. 324.] They are described as a *Gaisatai*. This was a name

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which was known to have a meaning. Polybios [Polyb., loc. cit.; Virg., *Æn.*, viii, 661 ff.; Polyaen., vii, 33, 156 Eustath., ii, 774; Cæs., *Gall. War*, iii, 4, 1.] suggests an etymology: “They are called *Gaisatai* because they are mercenaries, for that is what the word means.” We have no confirmation or explanation of this etymology. There is another interpretation of the term - that the *Gaisatai* are Germans armed with a spear or javelin, the *gaesum*. [Livy, ix, 36, 6; xxviii, 45.] It is perfectly true that the word *gaesum* is a transcription of a Gallic name, but the Latins used it with a wrong meaning. They confused the new weapon with other javelins, which had long been used by the Etruscans [Id., viii, 8, 5.] and the Roman light infantry. [CVIII, vi, p. 188.] But they did not confuse it with the *pilum* - a mistake of which some modern archæologists have been guilty.

Other documents, mainly inscriptions, mention *Germani* and *Rheti Gaesati*. [II, vii, 1092; I, viii, 2786; vii, 1002; xiii, 1041.] These were probably bodies raised in the Alps or in Germany. The population of the Roman Germanies was for the greater part Belgic. The *Germani Gaesati* were Belgæ. Of this we have proof. Just as they introduced the name of *gaesum* into Italy, the Belgæ who went warring in Ireland took into that country the weapon which has exactly the same name. [Irish *gai, gae*; Corn. *gwaw*.] They arrived with a better armament than that of the natives, and the thought of those terrible weapons (among which there was a special spear or javelin) [Rhys, CCCCL, ii, pp. 205, 207.] is bound up with the memory of them. So the Gaesati or *Gaisatai* were Belgæ, or at least there were a great many Belgæ among them. [Jullian, CCCXLVII, i, p. 315, n. 6.] Perhaps this is why the ancient writers, who so often confuse the Belgæ with the Germans, describe the Gaesati as *Semigermani* or *Germani*. [See *Rise*, p. 13.] Moreover, the Gaesati had other characteristics of the Belgæ. Like them they wore baggy trousers. [Like the Gaul of Alesia and other representations of Gauls of the Alexandrian age.] The historians who describe the battle of Telamon describe them as fighting naked, that is to say, naked down to the waist but wearing trousers. [Polyb., ii, 28, 4.]

But these were not the same Belgæ as those who invaded the Danube valley and the East. They were not confused with the Taurisci, who also figured in the army defeated at Telamon. Moreover, they still had the war-chariot, the *essedum*, which was no longer used by the army of Brennus or the Galatians of Asia. If there is one thing to remember in the battles in which the Gaesati engaged, it is the use of the large, heavy sword, made for cutting-strokes which were parried with the shield, and never bending save in the heat of funeral pyres, but less useful for hand-to-hand fighting than the *gladius* which the Romans had copied from their predecessors.

At all events, their expeditions in the south of the Celtic world contributed to

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the unification of Gallic civilization during the second La Tène period.

### II

#### THE BELGÆ IN SPAIN. THE CELTIBERIANS

At the same time new bodies of Celts were entering Spain, which had for two centuries been separated from the rest of the Celtic world by the Iberian invasion of Languedoc and the valley of the Garonne. [See *Rise*, pp. 298 ff.]

All through this period, the civilization of the Gallic settlements had developed on independent lines. [For post-Hallstatt civilization, see Bosch Gimpera, DV; Pericot, DXV, pp. 51 ff.; Schulten, DXVII, pp. 187 - 9; Siret, in CXXXVI, 1909.] In the place of the La Tène I brooches, which are only found exceptionally, there are quantities of very curious types, transitional between Hallstatt and La Tène. The great sword of the first La Tène period is likewise absent. Down to the third century, its place is taken by small swords derived from the dagger with antennæ. All these objects can be dated fairly exactly by the Greek vases found with them in the same cemeteries.

This archaic civilization is succeeded immediately by that of La Tène II. The largest group of finds belongs to the Castilian cemeteries of Aguilar de Anguita, Arcobriga, and Luzaga, some of the tombs in which contained brooches, swords, and shield-bosses of this period. [Déchelette, in LVIII, 1912, p. 433; Cerralbo, DVIII] Some of the brooches and swords belong to earlier types. In Catalonia outside the old limit of Celtic settlements the cemetery of Cabrera de Mataro (Barcelona) [Bosch, CCCCXCIX.] and in Andalusia that of Torre de Villaricos (Almeria) [L. Siret, in CXXXVI, Déchelette, DIX, p. 65.] have yielded many Campanian vases of the third century. But swords are still very rare. At that time the Celts used a kind of sabre with a hilt shaped like a horse's head, which archæologists call the Almedinilla sword. [Paris, DXIV, ii, pp. 277 ff.] This weapon is found in the graves, bent in the Celtic fashion, as are the small antenna-sword and that of La Tène II. It is shown on the Osuna relief [Couissin, in CXXXIX, 1923, 2, p. 62.] in the hands of a warrior who carries a great Celtic shield with a central rib. It has been suggested that this weapon is of the Thracians and Eastern peoples, imported into Spain by the Greeks. But it seems rather to have spread by the Celtic land-routes. The weapon is depicted in a caricature of a Galatian warrior on a crater of the third century found at Volterra [Déchelette, ii, 1, p. 435, fig. 178.] and in the Telamon

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statuette. Sabres have been found in burials of La Tène II in Illyria and Germanic countries. [Déchelette, ii, 2, 691.] The weapon is the sister of the cutlass which takes the place of the sword in many Gallic tombs [H. Hubert, in CXL, 1925, p. 259.]; it is the result of an evolution of Hallstatt weapons parallel to that of the sword, and it came from Central Europe to Thrace, Greece, and Italy. Whether it originated in Celtic countries or was copied by the Celts on their Eastern expeditions, it was from the north that it entered Spain with the Celts of La Tène II.

In the Celtic place-names of Spain we can see a second stratum, [D'Arbois, CCX-CIX, p. 185.] which appears to date from this second Celtic occupation. These are names of fortified towns ending in *-dunum*. [Ibid., pp. 111 - 112.] There are only four of these - Caladunum (Calahorra, near Monte Alegre in the Portuguese province of Tras-os-Montes) among the Callaici, who were Iberians; Estledunum (Estola, near Luque, province of Cordova) in the country of the Turduli, who were not Gauls; Sebeldunum (in Catalonia, south of Gerona) among the Ausetani; and Arialdunum, the site of which is uncertain. We may also add Berdum in the province of Huesca and Verdu in that of Lerida, which were originally called Virodunum. The name of Cogos, in the province of Gerona, recalls that of Cucullae. There was a town of the Arevaci called Clunia. Lastly, a Gallic leader slain by the Romans in 179 bore the name of Moenicaptus, "Slave of the Main." [Ibid., p. 16.]

There are names corresponding to this series at the other ends of the Celtic world. Most of those ending in *-dunum* have been discovered north of the Seine and east of the Cevennes. [Ibid., p. 110.] There is a whole string of places called Virodunum from Tarn-et-Garonne to Germany. Kuchl in the province of Salzburg and Cogolo in the Tyrol were once Cucullae. [Ibid., p. 123.]

These analogies suggest that it is in the north and in the east that we should seek the starting-point of the new body of invaders, and many of them were certainly Belgæ. In Hispania Tarraconensis there were a Belgida, [Oros., v, 23, 2; Diod., xxxi, 39; App., *Hispan.*, 100; II, viii, 439.] site unknown, and a Belgica, which is also written Vellica. A third city, Suessatum, [Schulten, DXIX, pp. 10, 106.] recalls the name of the Suessiones, who were a Belgic people.

Lastly, we find in Spain people called Germani, [Ibid., p. 124.] and that among the Oretani, who were Celtiberians according to a statement of Pliny the Elder. [Pliny, iii, 25.] These again are Belgæ, whether they actually bore the name, which is clearly of Celtic origin, or it was given to them by analogy.

We may try to imagine the order of events. Of the portions of Celtic peoples which made for Italy in the fourth century, some stopped or were stopped along the

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Garonne towards the mouth - Bituriges Vivisci at Bordeaux [Strabo, xiv, 2, 1; Cf. Jullian, CCCXLVII, i, p. 309.] and probably Senones at Cenon, opposite the town on the other side of the river, [Jullian, op. cit., p. 305. Cenon is written Senon in the Chartulary of St. Seurin (pp. 26, 93).] and Lingones at Langon, higher up. [Jullian, loc. cit. Langon is called Portus Alingonis in the *Letters* of Sidonius Apollinaris (viii, 12, 3). This name may be derived from an ancient name *ad Lingones*.] At the other end of the Pyrenees there were Volcae - Volcae Tectosages south of Narbonne and Volcae Arecomici (or Arecomii) between that town and the Rhone. These last, who took the place of the Iberians and Ligurians in Languedoc, came from the same regions as the first Celtic occupants of Aquitania. They did not enter Spain. But we may suppose that they were followed by Belgæ who managed to make their way to the Pass of Roncesvalles on the one side and into Catalonia on the other. These newcomers cannot have been very numerous.

All this doubtless happened between 350 and 250. [Ephoros (*F.H.G.*, i, 245, fr. 43) includes the greater part of Spain in the Celtic world (341 B.C.).] It may possibly have been some years before the irruption of the Gauls into the Balkan Peninsula and the later Italian expeditions.

In what condition did the arrival of the Belgæ leave the Celtic settlements in Spain?

The Peninsula had been a Celtic land. Then it had become "Iberia", and seems to have been given this name in Greek geography for the first time about 230 by Eratosthenes. [Schulten, DXIX, i, p. 97. Cf. Eph., fr. 38.] The peoples of the interior, roughly from the fourth century onwards, are called Celtiberians, [Ibid.] and this appellation probably goes back to Timaeos, about 260. It must have had a fairly precise meaning, for the Celtici of the south and west kept it, whereas the Berones are called simply Celts by Strabo. [Ibid., p. 111.] What, then, were the Celtiberians? A mere formation. But of what kind? What proportion of Celtic elements did it contain?

The most generally accepted notion, which is based on the sentiment of the ancient writers, [Pliny, xiv, 3, 13.] is that the Celtiberians were not very different from the Celts who were known to be in the Peninsula before the new name came to prevail. They were Celts of Iberia, mixed in various degrees with Iberian elements. This is not the view of Herr Schulten. [Schulten, op. cit., i, p. 19.] He regards the Celtiberians as Iberians who had settled in the country of the Celts and had then moved towards the Pyrenees from 350 onwards under the pressure of the Ligurians and Celts; these Iberians tried to extend their ground in Spain, and established themselves on the plateau, going up the valleys. [Id., DXVII, p. 80.] The new peoples



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whose names the historians then give - Oretani, Carpetani, Lusitani, Vettones, Arevaci, Vaccaei, Lusones, Belli, and Titti - are Iberian, not Celtic tribes. [Polybios (iii, 14) mentions only Celts in the south-west and north-west. In Hannibal's time, the centre is occupied by Iberians only.] Polybios, too, describes the Celtiberian Oretani, Carpetani, and Vaccaei as Iberians. The Celts, driven from their settlements on the central plateau, retreated westwards or were reduced to subjection or assimilated by the conquerors. [One should add, to understand Herr Schulten's argument, that the Celtic invaders of the fifth century had found the country in which they settled occupied, not by Iberians, but by Ligurians. The Iberians were strangers in Spain, colonists and conquerors from Africa.] But why, then, the name Celtiberians, which cannot in any way be taken as a national designation? It is a Greek ethnographic term formed like the word "Libyphoenicians", which obviously means Phoenicians settled on Libyan territory. [Schulten, DXIX, 19.] In fact, even if these terms are fundamentally ancient, their meaning is vague, and is intended to be so.

One thing at least is certain: the Iberian civilization reached the plateau. [Bosch, in XIV, vi, p. 671. For the excavation of Celtiberian sites on the plateau see B. Taracena Aguirre, "Excavaciones en las provincias de Soria y Logroño," in XCIX, No. 103 (1929).] In their states in the south, where they were in contact with the Greek colonies, the Iberians in the fifth and fourth centuries developed a culture some aspects of which are now well known - towns with stone ramparts and stone houses, large temples inhabited by a host of statues and statuettes, and painted pottery with geometric, animal, and vegetable ornament. [Paris, DXIV; R. Lantier, DXI; Bosch, DI.] This culture, which had its birth in the south-eastern corner of the Peninsula, whence it spread in the fifth century along the east coast to the Rhone, makes its appearance in the fourth century in the upper valley of the Ebro, and then, gradually advancing, arrives a hundred years later in Castile, in the country which had once belonged to the Celts. There it spread in the southern part of the territory occupied by the Oretani, and further north in that of the Carpetani. It also made its way into the northern parts of the domain of the Arevaci and into some of the groups established on the plateau. The scarcity of Iberian objects in the country of the Vaccaei, Vettones, and Lusitani seems to indicate that these peoples were less strongly Ibericized. The distinction made by the ancient historians between *Celtiberi citeriores* (closer to the coast) and *Celtiberi ulteriores* (further from the coast and wilder) may also have corresponded to a difference of race. [Jullian, CCCXLVII, i, p. 307.]

Altogether, then, there is nothing against the supposition that the racial framework of the country was usually supplied by the Iberians. The Oretani and Carpetani have Iberian names similar to that of the Turdetani, for example, who are outside the Celtic area. The Lusitani are probably a branch of the Lusones which

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had advanced westwards, and we may by analogy suppose that the Arevaci and Vaccaei were likewise of Iberian origin, [Schulten, DXIX, i, pp. 247 - 8.] But all these peoples allowed a considerable number of Celts to stay in the country and absorbed them. This is shown by the names which appear in the inscriptions of Celtiberian towns. Such Celtic names as Acco, Atto, Boutius, and Reburus are frequent. They prove that Celtic elements lived on in the country and maintained their family organization.

But they did not live in a subordinate position. The leaders, the heroes in the Celtiberian war of independence are Celts - Rhetogenes (Rectugenos) Caraunios, Caros, Ambon (Ammo?), Leukon, Megaravicus, and Auaros. Orosius [v. 8, 1.] relates that after the fall of Numantia, Scipio asked a Celtic prince named Thyresius why the city had held out so long. Lastly, even if the Lusitani were Iberians, their chief Viriathus had a Celtic name. [Schulten, op. cit., i, p. 100.]

To explain this state of things, we may suppose that Celtic families which had been previously settled in the country entered the Iberian tribes or survived alongside of them. We may also suppose that the meeting of the Celts and the Belgæ who arrived on the Iberian plateau at the same time, moving in opposite directions, led to agreements by which the smaller body was incorporated in the larger.

The two hypotheses are equally reasonable and account for many features of Celtic civilization, [Ibid., pp. 246 ff.] which are attested by archæology and by the ancient writers, in the Celtiberian tribes - the survival of cults such as that of Epona and that of the Lugoves, the observation of Celtic funeral rites in the cemeteries of Castile, the survival of Gallic armament, the use of horse and foot together in tactical formation, the use of standards and trumpets, the wearing of the *sagum*, the drinking of beer.

But while something of Celtic civilization survived, there were no vestiges of Celtic states (if they had ever existed) in the centre of the Peninsula about the middle of the third century. The coming of the Belgæ had neither revived old political units nor created new ones.