



FRANCE

Famous Water Routes and Bridges in Roman Gaul

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The cultural identity and heritage of present-day French people has been persistently impacted by the influence of the Romans, who started to include the area of what is now Languedoc and Provence as Gallia Transalpina in 123 BC and between 58 and 51 BC expanded their empire through Julius Caesar's conquest of large areas that in modern-day territorial terms cover the remainder of France, the totality of Belgium and parts of Germany and Switzerland. Over the next five centuries the Celtic and Roman cultures intermingled, creating the hybridized Gallo-Roman culture that eventually allowed for the development of a wealth of architecture, art and eventually the French language.

Caius Iulius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, I, 1:

Caesar's firsthand account of the Gallic Wars adopts the geostrategic perspective of a general who recounts his victory over the Celts with great pride and satisfaction, considering what he is offering to Rome.



Figure 30: Mont-Saint-Michel

1 Gallia est¹ omnis divisa¹ in partes tres, quarum² unam³
 incolunt Belgae, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua
 Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur. Hi omnes lingua, institutis⁴,
 legibus inter se differunt. Gallos ab Aquitanis Garunna
5 flumen, a Belgis Matrona et Sequana dividit. Horum
 omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae, propterea quod a cultu atque
 humanitate⁵ provinciae longissime absunt, minimeque⁶ ad
 eos mercatores saepe⁶ commeant⁷ atque ea quae ad
 effeminandos⁸ animos pertinent⁹ important, proximique
10 sunt Germanis, qui trans¹⁰ Rhenum incolunt, quibuscum
 continenter¹¹ bellum gerunt. ... Eorum¹² una pars, quam¹³
 Gallos obtinere dictum est¹³, initium capit a flumine

1. **divisa** (the present participle here functions as an adjective, which means that the preceding est is the present tense) 2. **quarum** (partitive genitive) 3. **unam** <partem>
4. **institutum**, -i n.: custom

5. **humanitas**, -tatis f.: refinement 6. **minime** ... **saepe**: least frequently 7. **commeo** 1: to resort to
8. **effemino** 1: make effeminate, sissyish
9. **pertineo** 2, pertinui: to tend to
10. **trans** (prep.): beyond
11. **continenter** (adv.): continually
12. **eorum** <partium>
13. **quam Gallos obtainere dictum est** = quam Galli obtainere dicti sunt: which it has been said that the Gauls occupy