

CHAPTER

6

Present Tense and Present Infinitive of *Sum* and *Possum*; Complementary Infinitive; Transitive and Intransitive Verbs



In Bellini's opera *Norma*, composed in the nineteenth century, the main character was Norma, a high priestess of the Druids and a leader to her people who were in a struggle against the occupying Romans. Norma, however, has secretly borne children to the Roman pro-consul. In this scene, Norma confesses her guilt to the Druids.

MEMORĀBILE DICTŪ

Iacta ālea est.

“The die is cast.” (Suetonius, *The Life of Julius Caesar*, 33).

These words were reportedly said by Julius Caesar when he crossed the Rubicon River into Italy with his victorious armies after his conquest of Gaul, disregarding the Senate's order to disband his forces. The saying has become symbolic of the state of mind of a person who has made a fateful decision and is prepared to accept the outcome.

READING

Together with Mārcus Tullius Cicero, Gāius Iūlius Caesar (100–44 BCE) is a chief author of the classical epoch of Roman literature.

Two principal works of Caesar survive: one is his account of his own conquest of Gaul (*Dē bellō Gallicō*, “On the Gallic War”), the region that English speakers now call France; the other is his description of the civil conflicts in which he was the leader of the anti-senatorial faction (*Dē bellō cīvīlī*, “On the Civil War”). Though Caesar emerged victorious, and in virtual control of the Roman state, he was murdered by his enemies at the Theatre of Pompey, where the senate was meeting, on the famous Ides of March, 44 BCE. Caesar’s works are a gold mine of information about the late Roman republic, and especially the impressive Roman military machine. He was also an excellent observer of the customs and habits of other peoples. In the passage below he describes the Druids, the high priests who constituted a ruling class in the Celtic society of the Gauls.

DĒ DRUIDIBUS

- 1 Inter Gallōs sunt virī māgnī quī vocantur Druidēs. Sacra Gallōrum ā
Druidibus cūrāntur. Druidēs ā Gallīs valdē timentur: nam auctōritātem
māgnam habent, et dē virīs bonīs et malīs iūdicāre solent. Praemia et
poenae ā Druidibus dantur. Vīta Gallōrum ā Druidibus cūrātur.
- 5 Propter Druidum scientiam māgnam multī puerī cum Druidibus diū
manent. Puerī ā Druidibus discunt: Druidēs puerōs docent. Druidēs
dē sacrīs scientiam māgnam habent, sed librōs et litterās nōn amant.
Nam sacra Gallīs videntur esse māgna, sī in tenebrīs iacent. Itaque sacra
Gallōrum nōn litterīs, sed memoriā servantur. Druidēs scientiam
- 10 māgnam memoriā servāre possunt. Itaque dum Druidēs exempla
docent et fābulās nārrant, puerī memoriā firmant.





READING VOCABULARY

auctōritātem (accusative singular feminine) – authority

discunt – (they) learn

*doceō, docēre, docuī, doctum – to teach (sometimes both the thing taught and the person being taught are in the accusative case)

Druidēs, m. pl. – the Druids

Druidibus (ablative case) – Druids

Druidum (genitive case) – Druids

*dum (conj.) – while

*exemplum, exempli, n. – example

*firmō, firmāre, firmāvī, firmātum – strengthen

Gallī, Gallōrum, m. pl. – the Gauls

*iaceō, iacēre, iacuī, — – to lie down, to be inert

inter + accusative – among

*iūdicō, iūdicāre, iūdicāvī, iūdicātum – to judge

*liber, librī, m. – book

*littera, litterae, f. – letter of the alphabet; pl. literature, letter (epistle)

*maneō, manēre, mānsī, mānsūm – to remain

*memoria, memoriae, f. – memory

*multus, multa, multum – much, many

poena, poenae, f. – punishment

*possum, posse, potuī, — – to be able, can

*propter + accusative – because of, on account of
quī (masculine nominative pl.) – who

sacra, sacrōrum, n. pl. – religious rites

saepe (adv.) – often

scientia, scientiae, f. – knowledge

*servō, servāre, servāvī, servātum – to save, to preserve
sī – if

*soleō, solēre, solitus sum + infinitive – to be accustomed

*sum, esse, fuī, — – to be

sunt (third person singular of *sum*) – there are

*tenebrae, tenebrārum, f. pl. – shadows, darkness

videntur – note that often (as here) the passive of *videō* means “to seem”

*vīta, vitae, f. – life

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do the Gauls fear the Druids?
2. Why do many boys among the Gauls attach themselves to the Druids?
3. Why do the Druids make little use of books and writing?
4. How are the sacred rites of the Gauls preserved?
5. What faculty/skill must the students of the Druids develop with special care?

