Thesis

*The Gallic War: A Reassessment of Caesar’s Interpretation of Gallic Leadership and Military Response to Rome*

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Statement of Originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University’s Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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Synopsis

Julius Caesar invaded Gaul in 58BC and spent the best part of a decade bringing the various communities of Gaul under Roman Control. Caesar has left a detailed and insightful account of the people he fought and the social and political systems that govern them. In particular, Caesar wrote a concise ethnographic account in Book Six of how he believed Gallic society functioned. This study has been looked at in detail and stands as an important starting point for any study of Celtic people but it is limited. The statements made in the balance of Caesar’s *Gallic War* suggest that the Celtic people of late Iron Age Europe enjoyed a variety of social and political development that impacted on the way they fought. By adding archaeological evidence to Caesar’s commentaries we begin to see more of these dynamic people whose social order was characterised by diversity and while this picture is becoming larger, there are still gaps in the information on these Gallic communities who fought Caesar. This comes from the fact that Gallic people and their warfare is generally placed within Roman context.

In this thesis, I have applied a comparative model by measuring Gallic society against the Māori of nineteenth century Aotearoa/New Zealand. This approach has allowed for a new method to re-assess Caesar’s interpretation of Gallic society, as it became clear that both the Iron Age Celts and the Māori operated as autonomous political units at the clan or hapū level. This level of development often determined Gallic reaction to Roman invasion. It is expected that this thesis will present an alternative model to challenge the current thinking around Gallic society and further increase our understanding of their political systems, leadership and motivations for fighting that was set out by Caesar.
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