Elżbieta Olechowska, "Entry on: Vercingetorix against Julius Ceasar [Vercingétorix contre Jules César] by Glen Chapron, Hélène Montardre ", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1235. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Glen Chapron , Hélène Montardre

Vercingetorix against Julius Ceasar [Vercingétorix contre Jules César]

France (2015)

TAGS: Aedui Alesia Arverni Avaricum Bituriges Cadurci Caesar Critognatos Gallic Wars Gaul Gergovia Germani Parisii Pictones Roman Army Roman History Senonii Vercingetorix





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Vercingetorix against Julius Ceasar [Vercingétorix contre Jules César]
Country of the First Edition	France
Country/countries of popularity	France and French-speaking countries
Original Language	French
First Edition Date	2015
First Edition Details	Hélène Montardre, *Vercingétorix contre Jules César* [Vercingetorix against Julius Ceasar], ill. Glen Chapron, Little Stories from History [Petites histoires de l'HISTOIRE] 2. Paris: Nathan, 2015, 63 pp.
ISBN	9782092556870
Genre	Biographies, Historical fiction
Target Audience	Children (12 years+)
Author of the Entry	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaounde 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

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Creators



Glen Chapron , b. 1982
(Illustrator)

Born in western Brittany (Finistère, France), Glen Chapron currently lives in Nantes on the Loire River, in Upper Brittany. He attended École Estienne in Paris learning printmaking, then moved to Strasbourg to study illustration at the School of Decorative Arts. In his artistic activity, he focuses on drawing comic books and illustrating children's literature for a variety of French publishers, such as Nathan, Casterman, Sarbacane, Glénat, Bayard, Milan or Flammarion.

Chapron illustrated several novels for children written by Hélène Montardre, including *Vercingétorix contre Jules César* et *Catastrophe à Pompéi*.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: June 18, 2021).

Profile at lambiek.net (accessed: June 18, 2021).

Profile at glenat.com (accessed: June 18, 2021).

Profile at bayard-editions.com (accessed: June 18, 2021).

Profile at chocolat-jeunesse.com (accessed: June 18, 2021).

Profile at babelio.com (accessed: June 18, 2021).

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Portrait, courtesy of Univers Jeunesse–Nathan–Syros–Pocket Jeunesse.

Hélène Montardre , b. 1954
(Author)

Born in 1954 in Montreuil, in a family with origins in the Forez Mountains. Because of her father's occupation (the writer Georges Montforez, 1921–1974), during her childhood and adolescence she frequently moved and lived in many different places: Saint-Étienne, Marvejols, Nantes, Loudun, Issoire. She studied English at the University of Clermont-Ferrand, where she obtained her PhD (*L'image des personnages féminins dans la littérature de jeunesse française contemporaine de 1975 à 1995*. Lille: Presses universitaires du Septentrion) in 1999. For the last forty years or so, she has lived with her family in the Haute-Garonne, Occitanie. During the last decade, she wrote a number of books based on a variety of Greek myths, with illustrations by Nicholas Duffaut; the books appeared in two series published by Nathan and called: *Petites histoires de la mythologie* and *Contes et légendes jeunesse*.

She has written over fifty books, mainly for children and received many literary awards:

- 1995 2nd prize for roman jeunesse du Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports;
- 1998 Price Livrami of the city of Pithiviers;
- 2003–2004 Price Tatoulu ;
- 2004 Price Livre, mon ami, New Caledonia;
- 2007 Price of the City of Cherbourg-Octeville, XVIIIe Livre d'Or des Jeunes Lecteurs Valenciennois, Price Ruralivres en Pas-de-Calais, Price Latulu des collégiens du Maine-et-Loire;
- 2007 and 2008 Price of Readers' Spring, Narbonne, 2007–2008 Literary price of the Montagnes d'Auvergne;
- 2008 Price Jasmin, Agen, Price Trégor ados, Price Livrentête Culture et Bibliothèques Pour Tous, category Junior Novel.

Chronological bibliography of Hélène Montardre's books related to classical antiquity

Non-fiction

- Hélène Montardre. *L'Empire romain, Les Essentiels Junior*. Toulouse: Milan, 2004.

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- Hélène Montardre. *La Grèce ancienne, Les Encyclopes.* Toulouse: Milan, 2004.
- Hélène Montardre. *La mythologie grecque, Les Encyclopes*. Toulouse: Milan, 2008.

Series *Petites histoires de la mythologie*

- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Dans le ventre du cheval de Troie*. Paris: Nathan, 2010.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Orphée aus Enfers*, Paris: Nathan, 2013.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Les douze travaux d'Hercule*. Paris: Nathan, 2011.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Zeus le roi des dieux*. Paris: Nathan, 2013.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Héphaïstos et l'amour d'Aphrodite*. Paris: Nathan, 2013.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Thésée contre le Minotaure*. Paris :Nathan, 2013.

Series *Contes et légendes jeunesse*

- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Persée et la Gorgone*. Paris: Nathan, 2010.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Jason et la Toison d'or*. Paris: Nathan, 2011.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Le labyrinthe de Dédale*. Paris: Nathan, 2011.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Ulysse et le Cyclope*. Paris: Nathan, 2011.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *L'enlèvement de Perséphone*. Paris: Nathan, 2012.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Achille le guerrier.* Paris: Nathan, 2012.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Pégase, l'indomptable*. Paris: Nathan, 2012.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Prométhée, le voleur de feu*. Paris: Nathan, 2012.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Apollon, le dieu dauphin*. Paris: Nathan, 2015.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Les monstres de l'Odyssée*. Paris: Nathan, 2016.
- Hélène Montardre, Nicolas Duffaut, ill. *Hermès Le dieu aux*

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mille dons. Paris: Nathan, 2017.

Source:

Website of the Maison des écrivains et de la littérature (accessed: June 26, 2018).

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Additional information

Summary

Like in the other books in the series *Les petites histoires de l'HISTOIRE*, the first two pages before the story *sensu stricto* are entitled *The Adventure Begins…* They provide answers to the questions: when, where, who, and "so what". In 52 BCE, in the territory of today's France, some Gallic tribes had already made agreements with Rome; others were nervously awaiting the results of Caesar's attempts to conquer them all.

Against this background, a young Gaul, Samonios hears the message transmitted by loud voices from village to village in the traditional oral communication: *Avaricum had fallen!* Vercingetorix, the Averni's chieftain, had wanted to destroy the fortified town and deprive Romans of food and fodder, forcing them to return to Rome. The other chiefs had considered Avaricum impossible to conquer and had refused to destroy it. The message received now reveals the already legendary Avernian to have been proven right. The loss of Avaricum unites the various Gallic tribes under Vercingetorix.

Samonios, with his friend Bebros and other warriors from the same village, go to join the great chieftain. He is very impressive – a head taller than the tallest Gauls – and without pity for his enemies and his disloyal allies alike. The Gallic army waits in the camp, but in the meantime, the news breaks that Caesar has left Avaricum and is with his Aeduan friends, who try to revolt but are quickly brought back to heel. The Parisii also refuse to submit to Caesar, who sends four legions against them. Vercingetorix, knowing that the Romans are going to his home, Gergovia, the Avernian capital, takes his army, cavalry and infantry, in the same direction.

Soon, the Gauls can observe the legions advancing on the opposite shore of the river Elaver. They cannot cross because the Gauls destroyed the bridges. A few days later, Caesar and his legions cross the Elaver river to the Gauls' stupefaction: they have been watching the Roman army advancing in parallel on the opposite shore; focused on the troops ostensibly marching along the river, the Gauls did not notice that part of the army stopped to build new bridges, and once they were ready, the troops turned back and crossed, now pursuing the Gallic army.

Vercingetorix is convinced that they have no chance of beating the

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Romans on the plain; they must go to Gergovia and make a stand there. Caesar advances and begins a state-of-the-art siege, building two camps linked by a deep ditch allowing safe communication between them. Vercingetorix fortifies Gergovia's defenses; the Romans attack but are pushed away in several hours of long and chaotic battle. New legions come to tempt the Gauls to a battle on the plain. The Gallic chieftain knows better than to accept this invitation.

After several days of Roman maneuvres on the plain, Caesar and his troops break camp and start to leave. Vercingetorix decides to attack them; his enthusiastic army pledges not to go home before a victory. All seems to go well when, suddenly, the cavalry of the Germani join the battle against the Gauls and a massacre begins. Vercingetorix orders an immediate withdrawal to Alesia, where the Gauls could safely endure several weeks of siege, waiting to be rescued by their allies.

Caesar immediately begins investing Alesia with double fortifications to keep the besieged Gauls inside and prevent the relief forces from reaching the town. When help does not come, and there is almost nothing left to eat, one of the Arverni chieftains, Critognatos, counsels cannibalism, apparently practiced during the wars with Cimbri and Teutones. Still, finally, they send out women, children, and older people outside the walls to beg the enemy soldiers to be taken into captivity. The Romans have orders not to save them, and the Gauls in Alesia do not reopen the gates, leaving their women, children, and elders to die of thirst.

When the relief troops finally arrive, they attack the legions three times, only to be defeated each time. The soldiers from Alesia join the battles; during the last one, Samonios' friend Bebros is killed. Finally, it becomes clear to Vercingetorix that all is lost. To end his people's pointless suffering, he gives himself up to Caesar, who exercises his famous clemency by letting go all Aedui and Arverni free as future allies. He then distributes members of the remaining tribes to Roman legionaries as slaves. Vercingetorix is taken to Rome, where, in 46 BCE, he marches in Caesar's triumph and is later executed in prison. The young Gaul, Samonios, hears of his death in a message transmitted from village to village, the same way he heard about Avaricum's fall at the beginning of the book. He refuses to transmit this news.

Like all volumes in both series, *Les petites histoires de l'HISTOIRE*

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and *Les petites histoires de la mythologie*, the book ends with a section called *Pour en savoir plus…* [To learn more about it] providing data on sources for the story, its characters, events, and locations. This information is presented in easy to read, short, individual Q&A sections, e.g., Who was Vercingetorix? Who was Julius Caesar? Where is Gergovia? Where is Alesia? How did Gaul become Roman?

Analysis

The motto of the series – *Vis l'Histoire comme une aventure* [Experience history as an adventure] clarifies how the conflict between Rome and the Gallic tribes is presented in the book. We learn about what happened through the eyes of a young Gaul who joins Vercingetorix forces and takes part in the Gallic army's progress, in the siege of Gergovia, Alesia, and its tragic outcome and aftermath. The story follows Caesar's *De bello Gallico*. These events are naturally part of France's national history and, as such, of special interest to French children. Vercingetorix is an admirable character who managed to unite traditionally hostile tribes. His fate in the Tullianum jail and death are moving and tragic events, symbolizing the hopeless struggle for independence from Rome.

The addition of a young fictional protagonist and his friend increases the narrative's charm and attraction. Readers learn about historical facts and are able to imagine emotions related to the described events and at least partially, to grasp the reality of Gaul over two thousand years ago. The siege warfare, as conducted by Caesar, is explained and described in a manner simple enough for a young teenager, but at the same time, accurate and credible. Presentation of social structures existing in Gaul of the 1st century BCE highlights aspects of life in a community that the young reader can compare to personal experience. Strongly male-centric, the novel appeals to boys, rather then girls. The only women in the story are the tragic Gallic characters who die between Alesia and the Roman siege.

A contemporary, unpretentious vocabulary and natural dialogues make the text easily accessible and attractive to children.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and

Aedui Alesia Arverni Avaricum Bituriges Cadurci Caesar Critognatos Gallic Wars Gaul Gergovia Germani Parisii Pictones Roman Army Roman History Senonii Vercingetorix

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Concepts

Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Conflict Relationships Values War

Further Reading

Beard, Mary, *SPQR. A History of Ancient Rome*, London: Profile Books, 2016 (ed. pr. 2015).

Brunaux, Jean-Louis, *Les Gaulois. (Guides Belles Lettres Des Civilisations)*, Paris: Les Belles lettres, 2005.

Caesar, *The Gallic War*, trans. H. J. Edwards (*Loeb Classical Library* 72), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917.

Drinkwater, John F., *Roman Gaul. The Three Provinces, 58 BC–260 AD*, Routledge Revivals, Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2014 (ed. pr. 1983).

Addenda

Genre: Short profiles of famous historical figures for children.

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