



## VERCINGETORIX

In the second year of High School Latin; i.e., the first year of the second year of Latin (whoever heard of anyone remetriculating in a Latin Class he had flunked [i.e., in an unremarkable village located in North America? I was engaged in the retaking of an anachronism. If you had been my father who was born into the last days of the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg Empire you would not regard the study of Latin as anything but vital to your prospects, even though the Status Quo in the AHHE was a stratified, hierarchical affair. Knowledge of Latin made of one a ready gardener, or bird watcher, zoo-ologist, or conversant in anatomical parts; and prepared one to recite certain verses, and parts of the Mass verbatim Latinim. If you were an Eyetalatina, or a Franko-Gaul, a Spaneeard, or a Britonian, the root of your spake was found therein. Somehow this all relates to Vercingetorix, since he became the object of study as part of Caesar's doings; he who spread Latin.

I missed the first six weeks of Latin II. With my brain and 'get-up-and-go', I suffered under a dire handicap with regard to getting the message in any language. Besides I was more interested in Marie Scali (oddly Latin sounding); so I missed a lot of what was being said by Rosie McKean, of the aforementioned Gallic Chieftian. I suspected he had something to do with our present civilization. He was a General; sometimes Generals become Presidents, Premiers, Emperors, and Fiats. If I had offered such generalization in my New York State Regents examination (written in a little Blue Covered Note Book) it is no wonder I flunked. Rosie had provided a simple solution for filling in the gaps in translation; when one came to an untranslatable passage he was instructed to say or write "something or other". Latin sentences almost invariably placed the verb at the end of the sentence. Nouns were full of cases like Nominative, Possessive, Ablative, Dative and Objective (I was a hard case). In translating some fast moving action between Vercingetorix and Caesar I might translate, "*Caesar* 'something or other' without (*sine*) 'something or other', and (*et*) 'something or other' toward (*ad*) 'something or other' *Vercingetorix*."

It was Marie Scali's fault. Marie looked a little like Shirley Temple at one of her stages of growth, or one of her growth stages. She wound up as a Black adviser to Ronnie and George (oops, awful pun) (not Marie, Shoylie). Marie was a chesty creature (I do not know why this fascination with chests, but there it is). Sometimes demure, but often with projection; one is supposed to

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blush when he looks, or secret the looks in some manner. Marie always buttoned up pretty tight so there was little danger of exposure to the roving eye. (Some women are loose up front, and complain when a roving eye fires a direct glance at pertinent suspensions [there are a lot of hang-ups in this area of sight-seeing]). Marie was proper. She was also a round-faced pretty - without character, rather proud and stiff, seldom given to frivolity. She would have been one rose amongst many, appearing in the bud with much promise; in the end, while in full flower, undistinguished, like most of us.

Marie cheerlead. Cart and I (I did little, or little Later, when I was wrasling got him in my famous to howl, Cart bashed me one hit a man when he's to Marie. I don't know what but during the Senior Trip to



the way to the with Marie; sweaty hands went down the into the sunset footballled, and cows; he was So Shirley a McEnroe.



Bates (he basketballed) did) wrote her joint 'notes'. Myron, his brother, and scissors grip causing him in the kisser (its easier to down). No more joint notes Cart got to do with Marie, Our Capital, I walked all top of George's Big Thing that's the time I got holding hers. Then she elevator with Leo, and off with him (Leo basketballed, baseballed; and milked also a Catholic like Marie). became a Black, and Marie

Vercingetorix lost out, as, in the end, I did with Marie.

But in my second assault I faired better (in Latin II). It wasn't necessary to use a sledgehammer the second time even though I still didn't learn anything in particular. (Marie had passed on her first try.)

I am still possessed by this Latin hangover, as I am by many things that happened to me when young and impressionable. I am able to perceive the roots and derivation of much of my own spake, and often I discover certain Latin idioms or expressions more to the point in their brevity (although I tend to be longwinded) than the wordier and less explicit anglicizations.

Vercingetorix, by the way, if you are still with me (sorry about Shirley and Marie; somehow their diversion is just as relevant to me as Vercingetorix), was a valiant fellow; a Gaul who could not prevail against Caesar (not Sid Caesar), Julius (not Orange Julius), but Julius Caesar of Rome (not Caesar Romero); that is, he could not prevail against Caesar's Armies (I do not know if they ever engaged in a 'sudden death' encounter for all the marbles).



Vercingetorix was eventually strangled in the dungeons after being allowed (being ordered to) 'grace the triumph' (everyone I read on the subject [in English] uses the same expression 'grace the triumph' [somewhere there is a tomeite (a virus) inserting the expression in every reference to Caesar] as a scholarly plagiarism of convenience, for the lack of a better expression); 'grace the triumph' of Caesar's (oh what the hell) triumphal march through Rome, celebrating the conquest of Gaul, the defeat of Ptolmey, a victory over Pharnaces, and the overthrow of Juba; a conquest of, a defeat of, a victory over, and an overthrow of, were all celebrated much to the chagrin of Vercingetorix, who apparently took the end like a man, or like a Gaul.

Earlier, in Latin II, I believed Vercingetorix was one of Jason's Argonauts. Christ, no wonder teachers have fits. Marie Scali doesn't have the faintest notion of how much irreparable harm her presence caused my intellectual pursuits.

