

Latin Text, DĒ BELLŌ GALLICŌ 6.17.1–5, p. 166

- [6.17] Deum maximē Mercurium colunt. *Huius sunt plūrima simulācra: hunc omnium inventōrem artium ferunt, hunc viārum atque itinerum ducem, hunc ad quaestūs pecūniae mercātūrāsque habēre vim maximam arbitrantur.* Post hunc
- 5 Apollinem et Mārtem et Iovem et Minervam.

Literal Translation Molinarius

They especially worship the god Mercury. Of this [god] there are very many likenesses: they consider this [god] the discoverer of all skills, this [god they consider] a guide for all roads and travels, [and] they think that this [god] has the greatest force for the acquiring of money and [for] commercial activities. After this [god (i.e., next in rank to him), they worship] Apollo and Mars and Minerva.

Literal Translation McDevitte

They worship as their divinity, Mercury in particular, and have many images of him, and regard him as the inventor of all arts, they consider him the guide of their journeys and marches, and believe him to have great influence over the acquisition of gain and mercantile transactions. Next to him they worship Apollo, and Mars, and Jupiter, and Minerva;

Discussion Questions

1. Upper-class Romans did not engage in trade (that is, the buying and selling of merchandise). This was considered beneath their social status, dignity, and prestige. Upper-class Romans engaged in politics and agriculture. This was at least the ideal, although not all political leaders lived up to it. What does Caesar imply about Gallic values by placing Mercury ahead of Rome's chief god, lord of the skies, Jupiter (who, we might add, also appears as one among many with Apollo, Mars, and Minerva)?
2. Does Mercury seem like the god who would have been most important to the Druids? Why might he have been more important to those engaged in practical activities than he was to Druid priests?