Narratives of Impiety and Epiphany: Delphic Galatomachy and Roman Traditions of the Gallic Sack

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In discussing the Gallic Sack of Rome, S. P. Oakley notes that ”[*o*]*nly three things are certain about this episode: that it happened, that it left Rome with a long-lasting fear of Celts, and that virtually everything that our sources say about it is unbelievable*” (Oakley 2004, 23). While this statement is, in essence, very true indeed, it is the word ‘unbelievable’ that I would like to draw attention to, for it could be argued that the ancient accounts mentioned by Oakley are not so much unbelievable as ill-understood. That they tell us frustratingly little of the actual nature of the historical incident is undeniable; as a source of Roman imagologies and narrative *topoi* concerning Gauls and their perceived antagonism towards Romans, however, these accounts are extremely useful. The allegedly unbelievable nature of our Roman sources that by its various discrepant narratives and suspicious duplicate scenes forms such a formidable barrier to a historian trying to uncover the hard facts surrounding the incident, can be explained and understood by analysing the literary context of its formation and imagological content.

In this paper I study the formation and nature of Roman Republican literary narratives of the Gauls and their actions in Italy, beginning with earlier Greek accounts, which wielded considerable influence on later Roman conceptions of northern barbarians – especially when it comes to imagining the Gauls as impious despoilers and cruel adversaries of both gods and men.[1] These images of religious as well as factual animosity are the essence of classical galatomachy, or depictions of Celts (or Gauls) as partially mythologised adversaries either in art or in literature, constructed with the help of the narrative motif of barbarism vs. civilisation. Galatomachy as a general term is not found in our ancient sources, but was coined by modern art historians in describing Greek and Etruscan iconographic depictions of struggle against the northern barbarians. It can, however, be used as a convenient designation of aggressively imposed otherness in literary depictions, as well. The rise of galatomachy as a literary and artistic motif or *topos* in antiquity

1 It could even be argued that the Victorian image of a stereotypical Catholic Irishman owes something of its essence to the classical depictions of Celtic impiety and ferocity as they are found in Cicero, Caesar and Tacitus. The later stages of this literary “celtophobia” fall, however, entirely outside the scope of current study.

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may be attributed to narrative techniques of exclusion and alienation in meeting the barbarian "other". As a method of representing the other (and defining the self), galatomachy can be found in the Pergamene sculptural iconography of vanquished Gauls as well as in the religiously polarised anti-Gallic sentiments so apparent in Ciceronian *Oratio pro Marco Fonteio*. This current study is devoted to examining the topical images of religious otherness of Gauls as they were adapted from Greek sources to Roman ones, with particular attention paid to the theme of inviolability of the sacred site, as well as to the literary context of this imagological adaptation.

1. On the formation of greek galatomachy

a. The earliest Greek images of *Galatai*

In discussing the formation of Greek images concerning the Celts, two different phases should be distinguished. First there is the situation during the classical era, which uses ethnological characteristics to only a limited extent in describing the Celts, and secondly there is the much more radically formative phase, which we shall deal with presently.

The first Greek writer to explicitly mention the Celts, albeit in a very cursory way, seems to have been Hecataeus of Miletus (*fl.* c. 500 BCE); his passing remarks are preserved by Stephanus of Byzantium.[2] However, already slightly earlier there may have been some knowledge of Celts as denizens of Western Europe; in his *Ora maritima* Avienus seems to be quoting a nameless source from the mid-sixth century BCE concerning past rivalries between Ligurians and Celts.[3] These references are all very generalised and vague, with Celts hazily recognised simply as a barbarian people from the farthest West, barely emerging from the realm of mythic obscurity.

Plato describes the Celts as warlike—a *topos* which is surely familiar to anyone who has read ancient sources on the Celts. In the Greek imagination, however, warlikeness had nothing specifically Celtic to it; the *topos* was applied to a variety of barbarian peoples, including Scythians, Persians, Thracians, Iberians and Carthaginians (Plat. *legg.* 637 d-e). In the beginning of his work Thucydides

2 For Narbo, 'emporium and city of Celts', FGrH 1 Hecataeus fr. 54 *apud* Steph. Byz. *s.v. Narbōn*; of Massilia, which is described as being situated close to Celtic lands, FGrH 1 Hecataeus fr. 55 *apud* Steph. Byz. *s.v. Massalia*; of the city of Nyrax (possibly Noreia in the area later known as Noricum) FGrH 1 Hecataeus fr. 56 *apud* Steph. Byz. *s.v. Nyrax*.

3 […] *caespitem Ligurum subit cassum incolarum: namque Celtarum manu, crebrisque dudum proeliis vacuata sunt.* Avien. *ora.* 132-4. Avienus' source may well have been a Massilian *periplous*, or possibly Euthymenes' lost treatise on the Atlantic. Avienus has also preserved acknowledged fragments of the Carthaginian Himilco. Rankin 1989, 4; Tierney 1976, 259.

describes the mores of early Greeks as very similar to those of contemporary barbarians, using the word *sidērophorountes* to denote their custom of going about fully armed. The expression seems to have been a sort of *topos* in connection with notions of an 'archaic' way of life; it is also found in Aristotle, and Ephorus seems to have used it specifically of Celts.[4] In this early stage the Celts, despite their perceived warlike character, were not seen as particularly dangerous to the Hellenes, and Ephorus goes even as far as to call them *philellēnes*—undoubtedly based on the vast amounts of Greek wine that were brought in a peaceful manner through Massilia into continental Gaul.[5] The *topoi* exploited in descriptions of Celts were those used in connection with a wide array of barbarian peoples, with almost nothing to suggest the profound change that was about to happen in the Greek iconosphere concerning the Celts, as the true impact of meeting the northern barbarism began to require a fully-formed characterisation of Celtic otherness.

b. Celtic attack on Delphi and Greek narratives of *sōtēriā*

During the years following Alexander's death and the demise of the Argeads, the Greek world was embroiled in continuous warfare and intrigue as his generals and their descendants engaged in a struggle for supremacy and simple survival. Macedonians, Antigonids and the free cities of Greece alike seemed oblivious to the great pressure of tribal populations that was mounting in the Balkans, no longer bound by the oaths of peace and friendship sworn to Philip and Alexander.[6] As such it must have come as a nasty surprise to the Greeks when in 298 BCE a Celtic warlord named Cambaules led his contingent into Macedonia to raid and pillage. The real threat, however, was to come in 280-79 BCE, when three large Celtic armies invaded Macedonia and Greece. The one led by Bolgios (or Belgios) actually managed to slaughter the Macedonian army and slay their king Ptolemaeus Ceraunus before being beaten back by a certain Sosthenes; two other armies, led by Brennos[7] and Acichorios, forced their way through Macedonia and into Greece. Outflanking the Greeks arrayed to defend Thermopylae, the Celts turned towards

4 Arist. *eth. Nic*. 1336 a, *pol.* 1269 b 26-7; Thuc. 1.6.7; a fragment of Nicolaus of Damascus preserved by John Stobaeus may originally have come from Ephorus: FGrH 90 Nic. Dam. fr. 103 e *apud* Stob. *anth.* 4.2.25.

5 Eph. fr. 131 *apud* Str. 4.4.6. Strabo adds—perhaps with a touch of sourness—that Ephorus wrote many things concerning Celts that were not true anymore in Strabo's lifetime.

6 On the Celtic embassy from Illyria to Alexander, Str. 7.3.8.

7 The name *Brennos*, which is also encountered in the Latin accounts of the Gallic sack of Rome in the form of Brennus, is probably rather a title for an elected leader of the armed force than any personal name. Thus it would be a cognate of the Cymric *breinhin*: see Pokorny 1959-69, 141, 167. For another derivative of the same root see Tac. *hist.* 4.15, in which the name is Brinno (among the Canninefates); also Fenestella *apud* Lyd. *de mag.* 3.74.

Delphi—driven, according to both Pausanias and Justin, by impious greed for the sanctuary's vast wealth and by a general contempt for the Hellenic gods.[8] From this point on, the Greek narratives of the invasion and the Aetolian defence of Delphi are dominated by powerful images of barbaric *hybris*, heroic resistance and divine intervention to such an extent that a reconstruction of the historic truth is well-nigh impossible. Whatever the real reasons behind the Celtic defeat, all the Greek accounts describe a resounding victory for Hellenic arms, and the canonical accounts of Justin and Pausanias agree in adding to the human defensive factor both natural phenomena and divine epiphany. Thus, metonymically, the whole cosmos joined in the expulsion of the godless Celts from the holy centre of the world that was Delphi.

It was very soon after the victory at Delphi that this miraculous *sōtēriā*, or deliverance, from the barbarian menace came to be viewed as the work of divine agency. In our sources this notion manifests itself in the first place as the tradition of Apollonian epiphany (joined by the virgin goddesses Artemis and Athena) during the battle, and secondly as the panic that was described as crippling the Celts in their camp and making them fight each other in the manner of beasts (implying the influence of mountain-dwelling Pan).[9] In addition, for the intensely mythopoeic Greek mind the comparison of the Celtic menace to the earlier Persian attack on Delphi was far too dramatic and alluring to let pass. Thus many of the accounts of the Celtic attack came to include various allusions to the Persian wars.[10] Hieronymus of Cardia was probably among the first historians to utilise this comparison; he was closely followed by the pro-Athenian Pausanias, who actually refers to the Celtic invasion as the greatest foreign—that is, barbarian—peril in Greek history (10.19.5). Slightly later than Hieronymus, a fragmentary papyrus refers to *thouros anēr Galatēs*, comparing him to a Persian (*Coll. Alex.* 131).

A strikingly barbaromachic passage in the Delian hymn of Callimachus can be used to explicate the mythologising tendencies current in the Hellenistic literary culture in connection with the images of northern barbarians. The passage takes

8 The whole description of the Celtic invasion in Pausanias (1.4, 10.19-23), although admittedly rather late, is largely based on Hieronymus of Cardia, a historian of the third century BCE, whose nearly contemporary narrative of the Celts and their aggression against the Hellenes proved to be most influential. Hieronymus seems to have been the first to compare the Celtic menace to that of Persia two hundred years earlier; this image came to dominate many accounts. Another important narrative, although one whose sources are much harder to discern, is found in Justin's *Epitome* of Pompeius Trogus' lost *Historiae Philippicae*; Just. *epit.* 24.4-8.

9 An inscription uncovered at Kos (SIG[4] 398), dated approximately to 278/7 BCE, celebrates the Delphic deliverance and (besides downplaying the role of Aetolians in the defence) mentions Apollo frequently, in lines 1-4, 16-18, 20, 24, 28, and 40.

10 Polyb. 2.35.7; Plut. *Cim.* 1.1; compare also Hdt. 8.36 to Paus. 10.22.12 and Diod. 22.9.5. For the barbaromachic similarities between Herodotus and Pausanias, see Mitchell 2003, 281-3.

the form of a prophecy uttered by the still unborn Apollo from the womb of his mother Leto, in which he warns her not to give birth on the island of Kos, since it has already been reserved as the birthplace of another god. This refers implicitly to Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the patron of Callimachus. Next Apollo proceeds to describe the common struggle which one day will come upon both of the gods, himself and Ptolemy.[11] Apollo will vanquish "the senseless race of Gauls" at Delphi, just as Ptolemy will quell the uprising of his Celtic mercenaries in Egypt.[12] Thus both can be seen as apotropaic deities defending the civilized world (i.e. Greeks) from the depredations of barbarism's chaotic forces. Besides this there may quite possibly have been a political aspect to the Ptolemies' galatomachy, designed to answer the need of cities in western Asia Minor for protection against the Celts of Galatia. Slightly later this role was fulfilled by the Attalids of Pergamum, but at the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus there probably was a comparatively realistic wish in Egypt to incorporate parts of Asia Minor into their realm. The support of the Ptolemies for the great oracular centre at Didyma (which was plundered by the Celts in 277/6 BCE) can also be seen in this light. Callimachus' hymn was probably written between 274 and 272, and thus forms possibly our earliest literary source for the reaction among the Greeks to the Celtic attack.

c. The myth of Delphic inviolability

In nearly all of the extant Greek sources the narrative seems quite consistent: the greedy Celts proceed to lay waste to the plain of Krisa surrounding the Delphic sanctuary, but while trying to attack the shrine are repelled by human and divine forces alike. Delphi is delivered, and no barbarian damage is recorded. Indeed, the archaeological excavations at Delphi have not revealed any layers of destruction corresponding to the Celtic sack. The historical record of ancient sources, however, includes at least two discordant notes that complicate the overall picture. While the question, strictly speaking, falls outside the scope both of the current investigation and of imagological research more generally, it may be enlightening to examine briefly the evidence.

First of all, there is the tradition that the ill-fated treasure found by Servilius Caepio at Tolosa had an originally Delphian provenance. The narrative is recorded

11 'Yea and one day hereafter there shall come upon us a common struggle, when the latter-day Titans shall rouse up against the Hellenes their barbarian sword and Celtic war, rushing from the furthest West like a snowstorm, as numerous as the nightly stars when they most thickly crowd the sky.' Callim. *hymn IV* 171-6.

12 The uprising has been dated to 274-2 BCE. The Celts quickly became a notable candidate for those looking for mercenaries in the region of Eastern Mediterranean (as attested eg. by Just. *epit.* 25.2.8-11), and Ptolemy II Philadelphus contracted the Celts in preparation to his war with Magas of Cyrene. The Celts, however, tried to stage a coup in Egypt, and were confined, unarmed and with their families, to an island in the Nile, where before long they starved to death. See eg. Fraser 1972, 660.

by Strabo, but he is merely presenting a fragment from Timagenes, an Alexandrian writing in Rome at the time of Augustus.[13] Timagenes has been considered by some to have been rather a barbarophile in his approach to historiography,[14] and this may be one reason for his divergent testimony. In its *topoi* the narrative of *aurum Tolosanum* includes traditional elements of the 'Cursed Treasure' motif, examples of which can also be found in Herodotus' historical narrative.[15]

Secondly there is the passage in Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca* describing Brennus' derision when observing the anthropomorphic cult-statues at Delphi (22.9.4). This information seems quite hard to reconcile with the idea of a preserved sanctuary, unless one is to postulate only a very momentary intrusion of Celts into the temple before being banished from the sacred *temenos*. A much more plausible explanation would be to presume the fall to the Gallic invaders of the outlying sanctuary of Athena Pronaea, which was not protected by a *peribolos* wall. It is quite feasible that the Gauls could plunder this smaller sanctuary at their leisure, with the outnumbered Aetolians busily defending the sanctuary proper. The main point is that early Greek sources show certain ambivalence concerning the fate of Delphi, analogously to the Roman tradition concerning the fall of Capitol.

2. Gauls in Italy and the earliest Italic tradition as preserved in the Livian narrative

a. The Gallic attack on Rome and the defence of the Capitolium

The Romans had encountered the Celts nearly a hundred years before the Greeks did, and had thus already formed an image of Gauls based on their own experience before coming into contact with Greek historiography and its alluring mythopoeia. Essentially, the Roman image was not unlike the Greek one in terms of hostility and barbarism; it did, however, develop certain idiosyncratic tendencies based on current sociocultural conditions at Rome and also visible in the literary sources.

As noted at the start, the facts concerning the Gallic Sack boil down to a rather sketchy series of events. The Gauls of Northern Italy and the Adriatic littoral (which was occupied by the Senones, traditionally the tribe who sacked Rome) habitually made forays and raids south, even all the way to Campania, where they were often hired as mercenaries by Sicilian Greeks, as attested by Xenophon.[16] The

13 Of Caepio and the *aurum Tolosanum*: Timagenes fr. 11 FGrH 88 *apud* Str. 4.1.13.

14 Of Timagenes and his character, see eg. Sordi 1982, *passim*.

15 Some examples include the fable of King Midas' foolishness (Hdt. 8.138ff) and the narrative of Polycrates' ring (Hdt. 3.39ff).

16 Xen. *hell.* 7.1.20-23, 28-31 mentions Gallic mercenaries being sent to Sparta from Sicily.

attack on Rome traditionally took place in July 390 BCE (if one gives credence to Livy) or in 386 BCE (if Polybius' account is followed instead). The factual date and precise course of the incident, however, are trivial in terms of the imagological evaluation of our ancient sources. Our focus of attention is thus the narrative of Livy, which established itself as the most authoritative and influential source for the cataclysmic event (and indeed was the main factor in forming the lasting image of Gallic Sack as a cataclysmic event).[17] Especially significant are the elements constructing (or rather, preserving) a dichotomy between plebs and patricians, as well as the emphasis on cultic continuity.

Having described the origins of the Gauls and their migrations across the Alps and into Italy, Livy begins his grand narrative with the arrival of the Senones in the area of Clusium, the people of which send the Romans a plea for help. Only a little earlier the Romans have left unheeded a preternatural voice called Aius Locutius, warning of an unknown menace. The Senate sends three of the sons of Fabius Ambustus as envoys to negotiate a settlement between the two peoples. However, a fight breaks out between the Gauls and the Clusini, and the three Fabii join the mêlée "impelled by the fate, which was even then urging Rome to its doom"; they actually kill the leader of the Gauls, thus aggravating their crime *contra ius gentium*. The Gauls, understandably enraged, send an embassy to Romans to demand the surrender of the Fabii for punishment. The Senate disapproves of the brothers' actions, but out of wariness delegates the decision to the People (or the plebs), who (dazed as they are by the wealth and martial glory of the ancient, patrician *gens Fabia*) deny the request. The Gauls depart, swearing retribution. The Fabii are even elected military tribunes with consular powers.

Livy continues his account with wrathful Gauls marching "swiftly and noisily" towards Rome, where preparations are carelessly directed by the Fabii. The nadir of Roman impiety is reached when the tribunes draw the Roman battleline at the River Allia, eleven miles north of the city, completely disregarding the taking of auspices and sacrificial omens. The Gallic victory is total and sudden, taking even the invaders themselves by surprise.[18] The remnants of the Roman host flee for Veii, leaving open the road to Rome, which the Gauls take, apprehensive at first of a stratagem. The Gallic army camps in front of the Roman walls, spreading panic among the populace. Notably, the Vestals transfer the cultic objects (*sacra*) to the Etruscan town of Caere for safety; at this point Livy introduces the motif of cultic continuity, with the Romans slowly starting to realise the need to restore their

17 The main narrative in Livy is presented in 5.34-51.

18 Liv. 5.39.1. Plutarch *Cam.* 19.1 states that the catastrophe at Allia occurred on the anniversary of another famous defeat, that of the 300 brave Fabii at the hands of the Etruscans. The notable point here is of course the complicity of the *gens Fabia*, though Plutarch's deep fascination with parallelisms should also be taken into account.

ancient piety. The old senators decide to dedicate themselves to death in order to preserve the state, following an ancient ritual of *dedicatio*, and famously remain in their houses to be slain, while the rest of the people withdraw to the Capitoline Hill, the northern spur of which acted as the citadel, or Arx.[19]

The Gauls invade the city, slay the senators in their plundering spree, and besiege the Capitolium with its temple of Jupiter, the focal point of the Roman state religion. At one point in the siege a young patrician, Fabius Dorsuo, performs a celebrated feat by breaking through the siege lines to perform the traditional sacrifice of the *gens Fabia* on the Aventine Hill. Another patrician who distinguishes himself in the defence of the Capitolium is Manlius Capitolinus, who repulses a Gallic surprise attack with some help from Juno's sacred geese. Shortly after these acts of bravery the exiled Roman patrician hero Marcus Furius Camillus returns at the head of an army from Veii, and drives the Gauls away after a battle fought in the ruins of Rome. A fifth part of the spoil is dedicated to Delphian Apollo. Livy's narrative of the Gallic attack concludes with an uplifting speech by Camillus, in which he extols the sanctity of Roman city, the bond between the gods and the Romans, and the providence of Roman Fortune, ever steering the history of Romans.

b. Roman family traditions

The most obvious tendency in the Livian narrative of crisis and survival is the recurring theme of patrician fallibility vs. patrician piety. In addition to the motif (*topos*) of a duel between a Roman and a Gaul (which is not very relevant in the present context, though extremely interesting otherwise) this socio-religious aspect of galatomachy is at the heart of indigenous Roman narratives of Gallic antagonism towards the Roman state. The main reason for this is the intense domestic tension within the Roman state between the lower and higher classes in the few centuries immediately following the Gallic Sack. In their effort to preserve their traditional privileges the patricians had to resort to the state religion as their last line of defence.[20] The old priesthoods and religious functions were relatively long restricted strictly to the members of the oldest noble families.

At the same time these families preserved a vivid oral tradition concerning their own members, with ancestral exploits being continuously reiterated in funerary eulogia and other laudatory performances.[21] These family traditions formed an important source for the nascent Roman historiography in the second century BCE,

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19 Notably, in Plutarch *Cam* 22.1 the *pontifex maximus* who performs the ritual dedication is called Fabius. Livy names him as Marcus Folius.

20 For the connection between the class struggle and traditional Roman religion see Linderski 1990, *passim*.

21 Cic. *Brut.* 61-2 is a *locus classicus* concerning the factionalism and partiality of the Roman family traditions.

the writers of which were often themselves members of patrician *gentes*.[22] Thus it is not improbable that we should find our early sources—as well as their most diligent preserver, Livy, who used them extensively—rather biased in their accounts of the great patrician heroes of the Valerii, the Fabii, the Claudii and so on. The major role given to Camillus and his famous piety in the Livian narrative also mirrors this predisposition to present patricians as the proper defenders of the old religious rites and traditional piety—the main weapons with which to defeat the godless Celts.

Obviously, the composition of our extant sources is not this homogeneous. Even a brief examination of the Livian narrative, not to mention other, more fragmentary and less elaborated accounts, uncovers several themes that fit poorly with the image of the good, pious patrician as the Roman secret weapon against the Gauls. The three impious sons of Fabius Ambustus are the main factor contributing to the Roman defeat by the Gauls, and it seems probable that their defamation in the historiographical tradition is a relic of the plebeian reaction to the patrician monopoly of the highest republican offices. Another element of the plebeian narrative is the person of Lucius Albinus, a plebeian who in Livy offers his own cart to the Vestals needing transport for the *sacra*, without the preservation of which the Roman cultic continuity would have been broken. The plebeian narratives seem to have implied that the patricians were no longer capable of performing their monopolised duties as guardians of the Roman religion.

Thus the Livian account of the Gallic attack is a conflation of patrician and plebeian family traditions, mixed with the historian's own narrative and moralistic aspirations. In addition, the Roman historiographical tradition itself was partly the product of the strong influx of Greek culture of the second century BCE, and came to incorporate many of the *topoi* evident in the Greek literature. The case of the Gallic narratives is not an exception.

22 Eg. Fabius Pictor, Valerius Antias, Licinius Macer and Claudius Quadrigarius. All of these authors are preserved only as fragments in the works of other writers such as Livy, Polybius and Sallust. Pictor wrote in Greek, though this did not become a norm among later writers.

3. The composite nature of the Roman galatomachic tradition

a. The Fabii and emerging contacts between the Greek and Roman traditions

Quintus Fabius Pictor, the first Roman historian, seems to be a significant figure in the transmission of certain Greek themes into the Roman iconosphere concerning the Celts. Himself a member of one of the oldest patrician *gentes*, the Fabii, which moreover had an honourable tradition of fighting the Gauls, Pictor took part in the great battle at Telamon, which dealt a serious blow to the Celts of Northern Italy in 222 BCE. After the battle part of the spoils was sent to Apollo of Delphi. Even more importantly, it was Fabius Pictor who led the Roman embassy to Delphi after the disastrous battle of Cannae in 216 BCE. Galatomachic themes were then entirely current at Delphi, as evidenced at an even later date by the two preserved Delphic paeans with inscriptions mentioning the Celts.[23] According to Emilio Gabba, Pictor seems to have been relatively interested in religious themes (1991, 134-5), which may partly explain his choice as the leading patrician of the Roman embassy to Delphi. It should also be noted that two other members of the *gens Fabia* acted as emissaries to Ptolemaic Alexandria, which had its own contacts to Greek galatomachy—as we have seen, there were Celtic mercenaries in Egypt, and it was at Alexandria that Callimachus wrote his hymns.

Pictor wrote his pioneering historical work after his trip to Delphi, and it wasn't very hard for him to connect the Greek *Galatai* with the Galli giving so much trouble to Romans (Williams 2001, 19), especially since he had read Western Greek historians, such as Timaeus, who mentioned the Celtic attack on Delphi (CAH² 8.432, Badian 1966, 3). It is known that he included in his book an eyewitness account of the battle at Telamon, which later was used as a source by Polybius.[24] In addition to this, it is conceivable that he came to incorporate in his historical narrative some elements of the Fabian family lore—and if so, he probably choose the variants most flattering to his own gens. Thus it is not at all impossible that the bravery of young Fabius Dorsuo in Livy's narrative is an expression of the Fabian clan's attempt to counter the slander directed at them by the plebeian oral tradition, whether taken first-hand from Pictor or acquired via some other way. On the other hand, the *pontifex* Fabius who we find dedicating the brave old senators in Plutarch may originate from a Pictorian account as well. Livy, who naturally is much better

23 Pictor present at Telamon: Eutr. 3.5; Oros. 4.13.6; Plin. *HN.* 10.71; Pictor leading the Roman embassy to Delphi: Liv. 22.57, 23.11, 28.45.12; the Delphic paeans *Coll. Alex.* 149, see also the modern standard edition of Pöhlmann & West 2001, 74-85; for commentary see West 1992, 288-301.

24 Polyb. 2.23-32 has certain 'Pictorian' tendencies, such as a propensity toward odd and exotic details; Walbank 1957-79, 1.184, 193, 205.

informed than Plutarch in minor patrician houses of middle-Republic, calls him Folius.

In addition to promoting the patrician view of religion as a potent security against the Gauls, Roman Republican imagology concerning the northern Celtic barbarians came to incorporate some decisively Greek elements and *topoi*. One fine example of this is the famous frieze of Civitalba, originating from the area formerly belonging to the Senones and tentatively dated to about 191-187 BCE (Holliday 1994, 40). The fragment of a temple frieze shows moustached, naked Celts fleeing from a group or pair of pursuing deities, their expressions betraying superstitious fear and barbarian incontinence (Verzar 1978, 196-203). The iconography is that of the famous Pergamene sculptures of dying Gauls combined to the Delphic theme of divine retribution and epiphany. It does not need to be linked to any definite act of plundering a temple, though this has been proposed several times;[25] rather, it should be viewed as a generalised, Greek-originated image of impious and greedy Celts being punished by divine forces—a potent narrative and pictorial *topos* remotely rooted in the Delphic experience of the Greeks. Gauls defeated by supernatural forces were also depicted later on the doors of the Palatine temple of Apollo, as attested by Propertius (2.31.13).

Another telling example of Greek influence on the Roman image of Gauls is a passage in Plautus' *Aulularia* (c. 195 BCE), in which the miserly Euclio, terrified that someone is about to steal his eponymous pot of gold, invokes Apollo to stop the thieves as he has done before.[26] This should be interpreted as an indirect reference to the role of Apollo as a manifest punisher of temple-robbing Gauls, though whether the allusion was borrowed from a Greek original or made up by Plautus himself is unclear. However, it is certainly clear that by the first century BCE Greek and Roman notions of galatomachy, whether religiously, politically or otherwise motivated, had formed an imagological complex in which the Delphian Apollo, the religious inferiority of the Celts, and divine retribution for their violation of the normal divino-human relationship all played a major role.

25 Peyre 1970, 294-296 proposes the temple of Uni-Juno-Astarte at Pyrgi; Didymeion of Branchidae seems to have been advocated by M. Segre, *Studi Etruschi* 8 (1934), 137-42 [*non vidi*], see also Momigliano 1975, 62; Holliday 1994, 39 seems to consider Civitalba's pictorial motif of galatomachy a conscious import from Pergamum, orchestrated by the state.

26 'Woe is me, by Hercules! They're stealing my gold, searching for the pot! Oh, heed my plea, Apollo, help me, save me! Shoot your arrows at the treasure thieves, if ever you've helped anyone in such a plight!' Plaut. *aul.* 391-7.

b. The Roman notions of Capitoline inviolability and the Delphic influence

In the case of the Capitolium too, there are certain sources that seem to represent the tradition that it *did* fall to the Gauls.[27] Most of these sources are Greek, not entirely surprisingly, but some Latin authors seem to have adopted an ambivalent position in relation to the differing traditions. Aristotle, Heraclides Ponticus and Theopompus are all relatively early authors, but their accounts of the event have only been preserved as fragments.[28] Of the Latin authors, Ennius is preserved only in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, while Virgil is very ambivalent (probably on purpose).[29]

Fabius Pictor seems also to have been the author who decisively established the preservation of the Capitolium from the Gallic despoilers (Horsfall 1980-81, 299), although even earlier there could conceivably have been some pressure in the Roman family traditions to downplay the possible fall of the Capitolium. Especially as Greek accounts of the Gallic attack on Delphi became better known among Roman writers and elite, the pressure to promote the integrity of the Capitolium was notably increased. The temples of the Capitolium itself came to represent the sanctity and stability of Roman power (Williams 2001, 156, 170-1). A fine example of the mentalities involved in the question of the fate of Rome's most holy temples is provided by Justin in a passage quoting the Aetolians' rebuke to the Romans, when the latter try to meddle in the affairs of Greece sometime during the 220s BCE.[30] After denouncing them on account of their poor performance against the Celts, the Aetolians continue to heap abuse on Romans, deriding in particular their lowly origins and foundation story tarnished by impious fratricide. The Gauls had evidently become the measure against which the probity, piety and bravery of all civilized nations were to be compared, and the Romans were surely quick to notice this. Thus it was necessary for the Capitolium to have remained intact.

27 See eg. Ogilvie 1965, 720.

28 Arist. *apud* Plut. *Cam.* 22.3; Heraclid. Pont. *apud* Plut. *Cam.* 22.3; Theopomp. *apud* Plin. *HN* 3.57 (cf. Just. 20.5.4; Simylos *apud.* Plut. *Rom.* 17.5 is extremely doubtful, and discussed in detail by Horsfall 1980-81, 306.

29 Enn. *ann. apud.* Macrob. *Sat.* 1.4.17; Verg. *Aen.* 8.652; Tac. *hist.* 3.72.1; Sil. 1.625, 4.150, 6.555; Tert. *apol.* 40.9.

30 "The Romans, they said, had been unable to protect their own city against the Gauls and, when it was captured, had not defended it with cold steel but paid a ransom for it in gold. But when the same people invaded Greece with a somewhat larger force, they added, the Greeks had totally annihilated them, not only unaided by troops from abroad but without even using all their domestic forces, and where the Gauls had intended to establish cities and the seat of their empire the Greeks had given them a burial ground. So the Romans should drive the Gauls from Italy before threatening the Aetolians, and defend their own territory before attacking that of the other." Just. *epit.* 28.2.4-7. A parallel account for this passage is found in Polyb. 2.2ff. The source for Justin may be either Polybius or Timagenes.

Late in the Republican period Cicero would use the Capitolium and its temples as a backdrop for one of his more barbarophobic speeches, in which he famously defended Marcus Fonteius against the charges mounted by his former provincial subjects, the Gauls of Narbonensis. More than simply denying the accusation, the famed orator is concerned to demonstrate the utter worthlessness of the Gallic testimony; the whole race is notoriously deceitful and devoid of all reverence towards the gods. Cicero uses the well-known theme of temple-plundering to construct a dichotomy that takes on a much more sinister hue than the purely economic character of the accusation would account for. The Gauls wage war against all religions and cults, and even against the gods themselves (with an explicit mention of Delphic Apollo). They once threatened the Capitoline Jupiter himself, warden of all vows and dispenser of justice. They use human victims in their sacrifices (*Font.* 30-31). Even their breeches are reprehensible (*Font.* 33). Finally, Cicero delivers his *coup de grâce* by urging the jury to consider Fonteius' sister, who just happens to be a Vestal virgin, and to give more credence to the pleas of the one who oversees their sacrifices than to the threats of those who wage war against the religions and temples of all nations (*Font.* 49). This masterful combination of a vast array of negative stereotypes attached to the Gauls effectively sums up the Roman Republican image of impious Gaul, while invoking powerful images of cultic continuity, divine favour and proper religion in the historical consciousness of the audience.

What, then, can be said of the Sack of Rome and the fate of the Capitolium in the hands of Gallic invaders? Hardly more than Professor Oakley did at the beginning of this article; hopefully, however, the general tenor and quality of the extant Greek and Roman sources may now appear in a slightly less "unbelievable" light. After examining the techniques and traditions of representing the Celtic other—through which both the Greeks and the Romans imagined their northern adversaries (and defined by contrast what was Greek or Roman)—the elements of Gallic imagology, as well as their respective differences among the Greeks and Romans, can be briefly summarised. Since the attack on Delphi the Greeks had tended to represent Gauls in starkly negative tones as ferocious, even inhuman adversaries of both gods and men against whom it was the sacred duty of pious Greeks to fight. Thus they were mythologised as successors of both mythical and historical adversaries of Hellas, such as Titans and Persians. Later the philosophical speculations of Alexandrian scholars began to contribute to a more multifaceted imagology on the Celts, though this later, ethnographic phase is not particularly relevant to the themes examined in the current paper, rather forming a subject of some further study.

The birth of Roman historiography was largely synchronous with both active Delphic propaganda regarding the danger posed by the Celts to civilised peoples, and an intense period of warlike contact with the Gauls of Northern Italy. Thus it

is no great wonder that the first Roman historian, Fabius Pictor—himself a man of both Greek erudition and old Roman galatomachic family traditions—probably introduced some notions of Delphic inviolability and Gallic impiety to Roman historical narratives. The historical context of the birth of Roman historiography evidently contributed to Roman galatomachy in other ways as well, since there is in Greek galatomachic accounts nothing that could be compared with the strong Roman undercurrent of patrician and plebeian manoeuvring for the oldest and most prestigious offices of the state cult, so evident in the contrasting class traditions preserved in the compiled account of Livy.

For Romans the story of the Capitoline defence and inviolability was, in the words of T. P. Wiseman, "a story that *ought* to be true" (2004, 129-30). What matters for an imagological study of the subject is not whether the Capitolium fell to the Gauls or remained intact, but rather the reasons why the Romans chose to construct their history in such narratives as they did. The images represented by the literary tradition tell only little "wie es eigentlich gewesen" in the sense of historical 'facts', and perhaps even less of the real Celts of antiquity—but in striving for a fuller understanding of our ancient sources, with regard both to history and to the place of Celts in it, examining the motives, motifs and imagologies inherent in classical sources plays a significant part in Classical and Celtic studies alike.

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