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The Galatian Mercenaries of Egypt

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Introduction

The meaning of the terms "Galatians" and "Celts" has been a subject of discussion, debate and reconsideration in modern scholarship, therefore there are some clarifications that need to be made about the usage of these terms in this text. Contemporary scholarly consensus is skeptical about the assumption that this terminology refers to an ethnicity or an ethnic identity, with the most dominant idea being that in reality things be might more complex, as groups of people that shared similar ethnic origins might not share the same cultural characteristics, as well as the opposite¹. Indeed, people that originated from beyond the Alps were broadly characterized by similar cultural patterns², but their ethnic identities and their origins were probably less homogeneous. Especially in Central Europe during the Iron Age it is known by archaeological data that not only cultural developments but even the adoption of languages might not necessarily overlap with movements of populations³. Consequently, there is a difficulty in the attempts of modern research to shed light into the history of these groups of people since the term "Celtic" can potentially refer to different populations according to whether it is used in reference to archaeological material or in the context of linguistics⁴. Taking this into consideration, when the terms "Galatians" and "Celts" are mentioned in this text, they are used to describe a group of people with similar linguistic characteristics, corresponding to a Celtic language, and a relative homogeneity in practices and material culture, that for the most part draw it's origins from the Transalpine region⁵. After all, in the case of Ptolemaic Egypt it was exactly material culture and language that was setting the Galatians apart from all other cultural or ethnic groups.

Although the connections between the so-called Celts and the people who inhabited the regions of Greek and Roman sphere of cultural influence can be traced to the Archaic period, the first time that the men of Gaulish origin had settled in Egypt was during the first half of the 3rd century B.C. Originally they were brought to the Ptolemaic kingdom as mercenaries under the command of Ptolemy II Philadelphus whose military forces at the time were being prepared in order to be engaged into a dynastic conflict with his half-brother, Magas. However, according to the indications of the available historiographical and archaeological sources these soldiers would not

1 Haussler 2013: 15

2 Coleman 2012: 1

3 Collis 2018: 38

4 Falileyev 2013: 6

5 Haussler 2007: 45

remain faithful to the ruler who had hired them and they would mutiny, with Ptolemy quenching this rebellion with their total extermination. After this victory of the king against the Celtic mercenaries all of the major instruments of royal propaganda would be actualized in order to commemorate and celebrate the event, such as poetry, coinage, sculpture and royal feasts. As a result, already from the early Hellenistic period an important part of the narrative of the Ptolemaic kingdom would make constant references to the Galatians. The ideological value of the Celtic mercenary armies during that era is also evident by the fact that Philadelphus was in reality planning to form a permanent unit of these men into the Egyptian army, and for that reason he imported more Galatians into his kingdom after the defeat of the rebelled army which was the first one to arrive. That was because in the consciousness of the Greco-Roman people the Celts would be imagined as savage but uncivilized warriors and as such the rulers who used to control them would be deemed to possess a tremendously destructive weapon, or in case they would defeat them in battle they could render themselves to be saviors of Greek civilization against Chaos.

Men of Celtic origin were arriving into the region throughout the whole course of Hellenistic and Roman times and they would originate from a variety of places such as the kingdom of Galatia in Asia Minor, the Balkan kingdom of Tyllis, Gaul, and after a certain period even Britain or Iberia. These people would settle in Egypt with their families, as it was usual among the Gaulish mercenaries to migrate with their women and children to all of the different places where they would move in order to fight, and as a consequence they would end up being a distinctive part of the Ptolemaic kingdom's social fabric. While it is attested by the majority of the relevant sources that the Gauls used to be fierce warriors in battle, their greatest value was definitely ideological, and as such the Celtic populations of Egypt would often be segregated in order for their unique cultural features to be maintained. Surely, for the centuries that the Galatians would reside in Egypt the most usual occupations they used to hold were related to the military, yet according to some archaeological evidence it is known that they could potentially be practicing any kind of manual labor.

The purpose of this text is to analyze the history of the Galatian mercenaries of Egypt and of the rest of the demographic minority of Celtic origin in the region by collecting and combining the attestations of many different kinds of sources such as historiographical texts, epigraphy and material remains. At the same time through the study of the history of these soldiers a lot of different aspects of the propaganda and ideology of the Ptolemaic kingdom, as well as of the Hellenistic period in general, can be understood deeper.

Chapter I: The Long Interaction Between Galatians and Greeks

1. Early References in Literature and Explorative Missions

Before proceeding into the details about the Galatian presence in Egypt from the time of their arrival as mercenaries at the kingdom of the Ptolemies throughout the rest of Hellenistic period and the Roman times, a brief examination of the interaction between the Galatians and the Greco-Roman world needs to be made. This is necessary in order to understand not only the circumstances of their arrival in Egypt, but also the nature of their relationship and the cultural exchange with the local populations, as well as to interpret the Ptolemaic propaganda that was related to this group of people. This is because this kind of propaganda was developed for a great part by the opinions that the inhabitants of Egypt and the rest of the Greco-Roman world had about the Celts based on their centuries-long interaction.

Beginning the narrative from the early Archaic period it should be mentioned that already from that time there were significant trade routes between the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia and the Galatians. Moreover, the artifacts from the Greek world were considered to be objects of significant value and probably symbols of high status within Galatian societies, as it can be known by the study of relevant burial sites. On the other side, the Greeks were importing a great number of raw materials from the Celtic lands, such as tin, lead, gold, silver, iron as well as various minerals.

The very first time that the Galatians were mentioned in the broader corpus of classical literature was in the geographical work of Hecataeus of Miletus, which was the first Greek author to write a "Circuit of the Earth". Whilst the work of the ancient writer follows the tradition of the "periploi" (circuits), and as such the details which he gives are mostly about the coastal places of the Mediterranean, there is also some brief information in certain cases about the interior of the lands which he wrote about⁶. Although his two books on the ethnological geography of Europe, Asia and Africa have not survived, there are some excerpts that have been preserved in the work of the Late Antique writer Stephanus of Byzantium. Indeed, as it can be seen through these fragmentary pieces of Hecataeus' writing, the Milesian author mentions some Celtic cities as important trade centres⁷. More specifically, there are two fragments of the work of the ancient geographer that are relevant.

6 Alonso 2025: 134

7 Ellis 1997: 32

In the first one of the surviving fragments he makes mention of a city to which he gives the name "Nyra" and he calls it to be a "Celtic City" (F56). Traditionally, this place is identified with the ancient city of Noreia that is located in the region where the Roman province of Noricum would be in the next centuries and where now is modern-day Austria. In case this interpretation is correct, a speculation has been made that this place could be an important trading centre for the routes of the salt trade at the time⁸ However the proposition has also been made that the city could be located somewhere near Sardinia since the word "Nyra" could be related with the word "nurágha", that is a word of a pre-Roman unknown origin which is used to refer to the a type of prehistoric forts that exist in the island of Sardinia⁹. The second fragment of the Milesian author that is related to these primary interactions between the two worlds is the one where he makes a reference to the Phocaeen colony of Massalia (F55), that is modern-day Marseille, which he locates in the region that was occupied by the Ligurians while he also writes that beyond it lies a land which he calls "Keltike". It is interesting that in his account the ancient geographer makes a distinction between the land of the Celts and the land of the Ligurians, meaning that for him the term "Celts" was not referring generally to Northern or Western barbarian populations, but to a more specific group of people¹⁰.



Figure 1.1: Map based on the accounts of Hecataeus

8 Pope, 2018:32

9 Sims-Williams, 2016: 9

10 Sims-Williams, 2016: 10

After Hecataeus the next mention of the Galatians would be made by Herodotus in the first proper historiographical work ever written. Herodotus makes a reference to the Celts in the second and the fourth books of his monumental work and interestingly he doesn't write only about the Galatians of the Transalpine regions but also about the ones in Iberia. During this period the Greek authors used to write about the Celts mostly as populations that lived in distant and difficult to reach lands, and sometimes they are portrayed as the inhabitants of the outskirts of the world.

That river (Ister) flows from the land of the Celtae and the city of Pyrene through the very midst of Europe; now the Celtae dwell beyond, the pillars of Heracles being neighbours of the Cynesii, who are the westernmost of all nations inhabiting Europe.

-Herodotus, *Histories*, Book II, Chapter 33¹¹

...for the Ister traverses the whole of Europe, rising among the Celts who, save only the Cynetes, are the most westerly dwellers in Europe, and flowing thus clean across Europe it issues forth along the borders of Scythia.

-Herodotus, *Histories*, Book IV, Chapter 49¹²

As it can be seen by the passage, for Herodotus the Celts were one of the westernmost groups of people to inhabit the world as it was imagined by him, with the only populations that would inhabit a place even more western than them being the people of the Iberian Peninsula, namely the Cynesii-Cynetes. These were one of people who occupied the south-eastern part of the region and more specifically they were located in the southern tip of modern-day Portugal. Taking into account that the "city of Pyrene" is usually identified as a place which is located in the Pyrenees and that the Cynesii were in fact living in a location that does not border this mountain range, it can be assumed that possibly Herodotus believed that these people used to occupy a region far greater than the one which they did in reality, and that it was extended all across Outer Hispania until it could reach a point where it bordered with Gaul¹³. As for the identity of the Cynesii, while modern

11 Herodotus *Histories* (Translation by George Rawlinson 1880).

12 Herodotus *Histories* (Translation by George Rawlinson 1880).

13 Alonso, 2025: 150

research is indeed not in agreement with the geographical information of Herodotus about the locations where they used to live in, it is true that according to linguistic evidence they were neither of Galatian origin nor related to the Celtiberians. As it is revealed by the study of approximately one hundred funerary stelae that were found in an area which is placed about 100 km west of Guadalquivir valley, this group of people were the speakers of a pre-Indo-European language, and thus they were not directly related to the Celts¹⁴.

For the place which Herodotus names "city of Pyrene" there have been many different propositions about its proper identification, with the most dominant explanation being that it was a place which according to the assertion of the ancient writer was located to the Pyrenee mountains, as it is mentioned before. Yet, it needs to be clarified that it is unknown whether this city that is mentioned in the text really existed, and of course the source of the river Ister, that is the ancient Greek name for river Danube, is not located at the Pyrenees. A possible explanation for this problem could be that the ancient author made actually a mistake in his attempt to locate the source of the river correctly, probably because he already knew where was the opposite end of Danube in the Black Sea and since it was indeed widely known to be a long river that was extending inland and westwards for a great distance, he could place it's source at the Pyrenees out of his own speculation¹⁵.

After all, it is known that although the importance of Herodotus' work is beyond measure, the main theme of his books are the Persian Wars, thus the data which is included in his text and that is related to the regions and cultures which are not central to his main topic is many times unspecific, brief, and difficult to interpret. In addition, there is also another proposition about answering the question of why would Herodotus give this seemingly inaccurate information to the reader through his work, and this is because according to some scholars he wanted to correct a misconception which existed during his time according to which the source of the Danube was in Hyperborea¹⁶. For instance, certain poets such as Pindar (Pythian Ode 10.3) had stated that thing in their works. However, Herodotus prefers to follow an older tradition that is exemplified by Hesiod (CW.F40) and that wants the Hyperboreans to be located in a region more eastern than the source of the Danube. So the ancient author could have made the choice to connect the beginning of the river with a location that would be considered primarily Celtic just in order to avoid popularizing even more an incorrect idea that was becoming relatively dominant during his time or by some time

14 Alonso 2025: 136

15 Alonso 2025: 140

16 Pope, 2021: 43

before.

Another important written source about the contacts between the people of the Mediterranean and the inhabitants of the Celtic sphere of cultural influence appears in the late 6th century B.C. or in the early 5th century B.C., and that is the book of Himilco, a Carthaginian explorer which is probably the first navigator from the Mediterranean region that travelled to the British Isles. This Phoenician explorer wrote an account of his journey, that has not survived to the present day, but it is known that he mentioned the islands of modern day Ireland and Britain through references made by classical authors. Strangely, although Himilco mentions the British Isles, he doesn't make any reference or comment about Transalpine Gaul. The original work of this navigator, that was written in Phoenician, is completely lost, but in the 3rd century a translation in Greek was made by Eratosthenes of Cyrene, the chief librarian of the Library of Alexandria. This translated text is entirely lost too, however its content survived in a work written by *Rufius Festus Avienius*, which is called "*Ora Maritima*" (§ 107-137), . This text is a description of the coasts of the known world and the main source of *Avienius* is the Greek translation of Himilco's account that was made by Eratosthenes, although he might have used other sources too. Even though *Ora Maritima* was written in the 4th century A.D. it is accepted nowadays that this text preserves opinions and accounts from the Archaic period¹⁷, and there are references to the people of Britain, which are mentioned by the name "*Albiones*", as well as the people of Ireland, which are mentioned as "*Iernes*". In this text, which probably contains Archaic accounts that shaped the view of the Mediterranean people about the Celts, the inhabitants of these islands are described as "strong, proud and clever". Additionally, apart from the narratives about Himilco's journey, *Ora Maritima* contains some information about an anonymous work which is now lost and had the name "Massalioi Periplus", that was written probably around the late 7th or 6th century B.C. According to this work the Celts were populations which occupied the coasts of northern France, but it also mentions that these lands were taken by Ligurians, that were the original inhabitants of the place, meaning that for the writer of this work the term "Celts" was mostly referring to the people of the Western European inland¹⁸.

*This Island lied as an expanse of ground amid the waves
And the people of the Hierni cultivate it all over.*

17 Ellis 1997: 33

18 Pope, 2021: 18

The island of the Albiones also lies nearby.

-Avienus, *Ora Maritima*, 107-109¹⁹

In general, usually the island of Ierne-Hierne is mentioned in relation to Albion, suggesting that the two places probably shared similar ethnological features²⁰. Moreover, in case certain passages about the British Isles indeed originate from Massaliot Periplus they could possibly be the earliest references to the place in known literature²¹.

*In the northern sky, he would come upon the land of the Ligurians,
Devoid of inhabitants. For the fields have been empty
For a long time because of a band of Celts and frequent battles
And the Ligures were driven out, as fortune often drives out others
And came to those places, which they possess amid plenty of bristling bushes*

-Avienus, *Ora Maritima*, 130-133²²

From the aforementioned passage it can be assumed that for the sources which the writer of *Ora Maritima* utilised, and which originated from a period way older than his own, there was also a distinction between the people which are called "Celts" and the "Ligurians", with the first ones being identified as the people which historically occupied the interior part of western and central Europe while the second group was traditionally placed in the coastal regions. It could even be asserted that in certain cases these terms were even used in ancient literature as convenient shorthands for the non-Iberian coastal and non-coastal populations of western Europe respectively²³.

The next person after Himilco that would manage to make an explorative mission in a land that was inhabited by tribes which are considered to be culturally "Celtic" is a Greek navigator, namely Pytheas from Massalia, that is modern day Marseille. The Massaliote's journey resembles

¹⁹ Avienus *Ora Maritima* (Translation by Ralph B. Morley 1992).

²⁰ André 2012: 15

²¹ Taylor 2016: 5

²² Avienus *Ora Maritima* (Translation by Ralph B. Morley 1992).

²³ Pope, 2021: 30

very much the voyage of Himilco, yet he travelled even further and reached a land north of Britain to which he gives the name "Thule". Claudius Ptolemy used to maintain the idea that this land corresponds with the Shetland Islands (II.2), however there are many different contemporary interpretations that don't necessarily justify this claim. Not unlike the work of Himilco, Pytheas' text has not been preserved, yet scholars claim that his narratives survive in the description of the British Isles made by Ptolemy. This assumption can be reached because the names of the tribes as well as of the locations that are given in the work of the Roman geographer are not relevant to his own time, but they probably represent a way older historical reality.

Apart from the enigmatic "Thule", Pytheas also makes a reference to a place that he names "*Keltike*", which corresponds to the region of Gaul, extending from the city of Marseille all the way north until the English Channel. Although it is clear that the explorer made a distinction between "*Keltike*" and Britain supporting that the two places are some days sail apart, there is a probability that this differentiation was not based on ethnology or linguistics, but it was merely used in order to make a separation among the two different geographical regions, meaning that the British Isles were probably inhabited by populations which were culturally not very different from ones of mainland Europe²⁴. In addition, it is important to note that Pytheas made also a clear distinction between Celts and Germanic people²⁵.

The accounts of Pytheas were for the most part not accepted by the majority of the Greek and Roman authors of his own time as well as of the next few centuries, rendering the lands that were located the furthest in his narrations to be a places whose characteristics were mostly speculated rather than being known for sure, with some ancient authors even denying the existence of places such as the British Isles altogether²⁶. A significant example of that case was Herodotus, who even supported the idea that a group of people which could be identified with the Hyperboreans never really existed at all (IV, 32).

As for the motives behind Pytheas' great expedition, it is suggested that since the explorer's journey took place during the mid-4th century B.C., and thus it happened approximately at the same time with the Galatian migrations, which was a period of great turmoil for the interior of central and Western Europe, the explorer could have possibly made this journey in order to search for new trade routes through the sea. Until that time Massalia and the Mediterranean coast of Gaul were

24 Sims-Williams, 2016: 24

25 Pope, 2021: 49

26 Taylor 2016: 3

connected through the land with Brittany, with which they were participating in commercial exchanges, with the trade of tin being of high importance. As it can be assumed, during this period any attempt of land trade through the interior of Gaul would have been way more unreliable and with a higher risk, so naturally new routes had to be utilised. Even more so, the proposition has been made that the reason behind the absence of more explorers similar to Pytheas in historical record for a considerable amount of time was exactly because in reality the journey from Massalia to Brittany was neither shorter nor less costly than reaching the northern side of Gaul through the land²⁷.

2. The Galatians as Invaders, Soldiers and Mercenaries

Around the same period as the travel of Pytheas we are able to witness the first time that the Galatians were used as mercenaries in Southern Europe, or at least the first time that a case like this would be recorded into the historiographical sources. More specifically, in 367 B.C. Dionysius of Syracuse hired a number of Gauls and sent them in aid of the Spartans in their war against the Thebans. The participation of these mercenaries in the conflict between Sparta and Thebes was recorded by two ancient historiographers, namely Xenophon and Diodorus Siculus. In the 7th book of "Hellenica", Xenophon (7.1.20) mentions the arrival of the Celtic soldiers along with Iberian ones, and although he doesn't give a specific number of their total force he writes that they arrived in "more than thirty triremes", as well as the fact that about fifty of them were horsemen. Moreover, the historiographer proceeds by describing some of the tactics that the Galatians used in conflict. It is important to note that Xenophon mentions that before these mercenaries sailed back to Sicily, they invaded the territory of the Sicyonians and caused great turmoil into the land. A battle was fought between the Galatians and the Sicyonians, in which about seventy Sicyonians were killed and the Galatians emerged victorious, as well as that after their victory the mercenaries captured the stronghold of Deras.

The other important source about the role of these soldiers is Diodorus Siculus, and more specifically the 15th book of his *Biblioteca Historica*. Even though Diodorus gives a more brief narrative of the events, there is still information of great importance in his account. More precisely, he counts their number to be two thousand, and he also writes that the Spartans had granted awards to these mercenaries because of their good services. Another noteworthy information is that the

27 Taylor 2016: 14

historiographer writes that the Galatians had "won the repute of superior dexterity and courage" (XV, 15, 1).

As it can be assumed, these victories were crucial for the way that the Galatians were perceived by the inhabitants of the Greek world, and it was a fact that they were already famous as fearless and powerful warriors. At the same time, taking into consideration the events in Sicyon too, it can also be assumed that their attack to the land of the Sicyonians had also reinforced their reputation as violent and avaricious bandits, in case incidents of plunder had taken place.

At this point it is important to mention the account of a narrative about a meeting between an embassy of Galatians and Alexander of Macedon that took place in 335 B.C or 334 B.C. Arrian in the first book of his "Anabasis of Alexander" narrates this encounter (I,4), in which the ambassadors sent by the Celts approached the Macedonian king to ask for his friendship. Interestingly, it is indicated by the historiographer that this embassy was sent by a Celtic tribe that inhabited an area which is located close to the Ionian Gulf, and as such it is suggested that it could be identified with the renowned tribe of the Senones. As it is known, Alexander's answer was positive, and thus mutual amity was agreed between the two sides. Arrian's description of the Galatians is relatively similar to those of the previous sources, describing them as "of high stature and prideful", however there is one more detail that is interesting about the text. The fact that Alexander preferred to grant his friendship to the Galatians instead of intimidating them or being indifferent to their approach reveals that probably this group of people was already considered to be a challenging opponent or at least a worthy rival that the king had to be in good terms with in order to actualise his plans to the East. Although "Anabasis" was written in the 2nd century A.D., it is known that Arrian used many sources which were way older than his own period and these stereotypes that already existed about the Galatians in Alexander's time shaped among other things the perception of the people of the hellenised world about them.

After the death of the Macedonian king the Galatians tried several times to penetrate into the regions of the Southern Balkans, probably because at this time they could take advantage of the absence of a powerful ruler such as Alexander and of the political and military turmoil that was caused after he passed away. However it is difficult to trace the exact movements of these advancements in order to create an accurate and coherent narrative of the events in a linear way, since the accounts of the ancient authors don't agree with each other into the details of the information that they give. What is suggested by modern research is that through the extensive and

syncretic study of the ancient sources it can be assumed that there were four main movements of Galatian invasions into the southern part of the Balkan peninsula before they would finally establish their settlement into the region and then proceed further into the south-eastern side of the Mediterranean²⁸.

The first one of these attempts in a chronological sequence would be an expedition by a man named Cambaules, that took place probably somewhere at the turn of the 4th century B.C. and the beginning of the 3rd century B.C., and is mentioned by Pausanias.

The Celts conducted their first foreign expedition under the leadership of Cambaules. Advancing as far as Thrace they lost heart and broke off their march, realizing that they were too few in number to be match for the Greeks.

-Pausanias, 10.19.5²⁹

It can be seen that Cambaule's expedition was probably a mere attempt to pillage without any aspiration to reach deep into Greece³⁰. Indeed, this movement was able to advance until some point into the region of Thrace but it was surely not successful, in view of the fact that according to the ancient writer the Galatians lost their will to march further when they came into the realisation that their numbers were not adequate in order to be involved into a conflict with the Greeks, hence their campaign ended at an early stage. Yet, an intriguing fact about this account is that this failed expedition under the leadership of Cambaules could be linked to a victory of Cassander against the Galatians at Haemus Mons which is known to have taken place around the same period. More specifically, although there is not a complete agreement about the exact date of this battle, it is usually placed either around 310 BC or 298 B.C., which roughly corresponds with the time of this first Celtic expedition. As a consequence, there is a possibility that this wave of Galatians had to abandon this campaign because they were defeated in a battle against Cassander after they had penetrated as deep into Thrace as the mountains of Haemus, and not because of their own realisation of military insufficiency against the Macedonian kingdom. In any case, it needs to be clarified that the connection between the two events remains only a suggestion. It is also probable

28 Boteva 2010: 46

29 Pausanias *Description of Greece* (Translation by W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod 1918).

30 Lampinen 2008: 40

that around the same time the Celtic tribe of the Serdi managed to reach the location of the city that in the contemporary time is called Sofia and is the capital of modern-day Bulgaria, and that in antiquity was likely a Thracian settlement in its primal phase. This tribe would inhabit the place and give to it the name by which it would be known for the rest of antiquity, that is none other than "Serdica".

The second main movement corresponds with the events of the more renowned expeditions that were initiated either in 280 B.C. or in 279 B.C., one of which would be the great expedition against Greece which would be stopped by the Aetolian League. In 281 B.C. the king of Macedonia and Thrace, Lysimachus, was killed at the Battle of Curopedium against Seleucus I Nicator (Pausanias I,10,5), and once again the absence of competent leadership in the region permitted the Gauls to proceed into the initiation of expeditions that were directed towards the Southern Balkans with the goal of plundering the riches of the Greek kingdoms and city-states. Indeed, in one of the two aforementioned dates there was the beginning of an activity among the Celtic tribes that were located beyond the northern borders of the kingdom of Macedon, which during that time was ruled by Ptolemy Ceraunus. This time the Celtic invaders were divided into three large groups which under the leadership of their chieftains would unleash three separate attacks on different directions. It is worthy of mentioning that according to Pausanias the commanders that were in charge of these three campaigns were also prominent soldiers of the previous wave of invasion, although one should be careful about the total reliance on the accounts of ancient sources about this kind of details that are related to these events.

But when they decided to invade foreign territory a second time, so great was the influence of Cambaules' veterans, who had tasted the joy of plunder and acquired a passion for robbery and plunder, that a large force of infantry and no small number of mounted men attended the muster.

-Pausanias 10.19.6³¹

More specifically, one of the three groups was decided to be under the leadership of Cerethrius and it was intended to march at the direction of Thrace. However there is a dispute in modern scholarship about whether this particular campaign was truly actualized or if it was

31 Pausanias *Description of Greece* (Translation by W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod 1918).

abandoned for unknown reasons, with the future actions of this commander to remain unclear³². The second group would be the one led by Bolgius, and it would target Macedonia and Illyria. At first the Galatian chief would attempt ask for a price of a considerable high from the king of Macedonia, which at the time was Ptolemy Ceraunus, with the exchange of not attacking his kingdom. Ceraunus rejected the offer and the men of Bolgius faced the Macedonian army in battle in 279 B.C., where they would emerge victorious. The Greek king lost his life into the battle, and in this way his short reign would be finished. Soon after a Macedonian nobleman named Sosthenes would move against the men of Bolgius, forcing this specific group of Galatians to draw back.

The third army would be assembled under the leadership of the renowned chieftains Brennus and Acichorius, and would later manage to invade as south as the central Greece. An important detail that needs to be clarified at this point is that it is probable that the name "Brennus" could be simply a title that the leaders of the Galatians would obtain, and not a personal name, as it is usually mentioned³³. In any case, the region that this group initially had as their target to invade was Paeonia, and as such it is suggested that while they were on their route to that location a part of them was separated from the main movement somewhere in Dardania. This band, which included members of the tribes of Trocmi, Tolistobogii and Tectosages, would break from the army of Brennus and Acichorius and under the guidance of two other men, that were named Leonorius and Lutarius, another expedition towards South-Eastern Thrace would be initiated, where they would ultimately reach the city of Byzantium. Apart from the areas around Byzantium these Galatians would eventually occupy other places too, such as Lysimachia and the region of Hellespont.

Because of some conflict between the two chieftains the Galatians would be divided once more with the men of Leonorius remaining in Thrace, while the Gauls of Lutarius would manage to pass into Asia Minor by using the straits of the Dardanelles in order to cross to the other side of the sea. This particular group that was guided by Lutarius would be the first population of Galatians to step into Asia Minor³⁴. Still, it would be very soon that the Galatians of Leonorius would pass into the other side of the Hellespont, while a civil war would break in 278 B.C. between two successors of the kingdom of Bithynia. During this time Nicomedes I would be in conflict for the dynastic succession with his younger brother Zipoetes II, and the first would hire both the warriors of Lutarius as well as the ones of Leonorius as mercenaries, a role that would arguably define the Galatians of the Eastern Mediterranean for the rest of the Hellenistic period.

32 Boteva 2010: 47

33 Ellis 1997: 14

34 Boteva 2010: 47

Thus, the bands of Leonorius and Lutarius would be united again on the other side of the Sea of Marmara. After the end of the war with the victory of Nicomedes, the Gauls came into an agreement with the king that they would be allowed to inhabit a relatively large area in central Anatolia -which from this point onwards would be known as Galatia- and that they would form an alliance with him. Part of the agreement was that the Gauls would have friendly or hostile relations with the neighbouring states according to the benefit of Nicomedes, but in return they would be free to sack the wealth of their common enemies in case of conflict. A detail that should be added at this point is that the 1st century historiographer Memnon of Heraclea writes that the actual number of the Galatian chieftains at the time in Asia Minor was in reality 17, with Leonorius and Lutarius being the only ones whose names are known. In any case, throughout the centuries the Celts of Asia Minor would become a considerable factor in the shaping of the history of this region for the rest of the antiquity, as well as into the formation of the cultural identity of the place.

Meanwhile, the division that was commanded by Brennus and Acichorius decided to venture deeper into the Greek mainland, probably because of a rise in their morality after the previous victory of Bolgius against Ptolemy. In 279 B.C. the Galatians clashed with an army of united Greek forces, that was consisted mainly of Aetolians, Euboeans, Phocaeans, Atheneans, Megareans, and soldiers from the island of Atalanta, which is located at the Euboean Gulf. On the side of the Greeks there were also minor units from Macedonia, some Greek cities of Asia Minor and Syria³⁵. The battle took place at Thermopylae and lasted several days until the Greeks would finally retreat and the Galatians would be able to move even deeper into the heart of the Hellenic world. At this point Brennus was under the choice of directing the men of his division towards Athens or towards the sanctuary of Delphi, which was dedicated to Apollo. Evidently, he made the second choice since he probably knew already about the treasures that were kept in the sanctuary, and the immediate goal of these expeditions was mainly sacking and the acquisition of wealth.

The information which is given by the ancient sources concerning the events that took place after the arrival of the Celts at Delphi is contradicting. Some Greek writers, such as Pausanias, mention that the Galatians never managed to pillage the place and that they were stopped by the Greeks somewhere close to the sanctuary, while other sources mention that the invaders had stolen the treasures of Delphi and that they were ultimately pushed away from Greece shortly after the sack³⁶. An important example of an ancient writer that supports the second narrative is the 2nd

35 Ellis 1997: 14

36 Ellis 1997:94

century A.D. historian Justin, which epitomises the lost work of the Augustan writer *Pompeius Trogus* (Epitome of Pompeius Trogus, Book 24, 4-8). In both cases, it can be definitely assumed that the horde of the Galatians came into direct conflict with an army of united Greeks for a second time, but on this battle the Greeks were victorious and the foreign soldiers were pushed away from the heartland of the Greek world, without the possibility of another expedition towards that place. In a similar way, all sources agree that Brennus died at the time of the Galatian defeat at Delphi but there is no clear information about the details of his death: it is a point of dispute whether he perished during the fight or whether he committed suicide after the battle was lost.

After their defeat at Delphi and their retreat from Greece a group of Celts that was originally part of Brennus' and Acichorius' force managed to make their way until Hellespont, this time being under the leadership of Comontorius. This certain activity could be classified as the third major movement of the Galatians in South-Eastern Europe until their settlement was utterly finalised. Comontorius decided to avoid crossing on the other side of the Dardanelles, but instead he directed his men towards Thrace and after conquering a part of the region he found the kingdom of Tylis in 277 B.C. Although the city of Tylis was surely the capital of this state at some point, a part of modern scholarship challenges the fact that it was the original capital of the kingdom, proposing that Seuthopolis was the first capital before Tylis was founded³⁷. The kingdom of Tylis was short-lived, yet it definitely became a regional power for half a century to the extent that less competent neighbouring cities would pay of tributes of a considerable size to it, and among these cities was Byzantium.

Ultimately, the fourth and final major movement of the Galatians within the Balkan region would take place, with the main actors being some soldiers that initially constituted a part of Brennus' army which he would command to stay behind before he would proceed into his expedition at the Greek hinterland, so that they could defend him from the northern side in case of potential attacks. These Galatians would never move into central Greece, but they would remain in Macedonia and Thrace and at some point they would be involved in conflict with the Getae and the Triballi, where they would be victorious against both tribes. Somewhere around 277 B.C. Antigonus Gonatas arrived in Thrace in order to wage a war against Sosthenes, that was still in charge of the Macedonian army, and to claim the throne of Macedon for himself. At the time of his arrival these Gauls would approach Antigonus by sending ambassadors to the would-be king with the offer of not attacking his army in exchange for a price. Yet, the wealth of Antigonus would be so abundant

³⁷ Manov 2010: 92

that the Galatians would attempt to invade his camp during the nighttime in order to loot it, probably even before the negotiations were over. There they would suffer a defeat by the army of the Macedonian king. Although commonly the location of this battle is believed to be somewhere near Lysimachia in Eastern Thrace, in reality there is disagreement among researchers about the real location of the event, with a part of them suggesting that it could have taken place at some coastal region of Central Macedonia.

After this incident the Celts would move eastwards and they would manage to cross into Asia following a path that has not yet been completely clarified by modern scholars³⁸. Yet, according to Pausanias the Galatians arrived for the first time in Egypt approximately during the same period of the aforementioned events, and their movement is connected to this specific victory of Antigonus. The ancient writer narrates that after this battle there were about 4.000 Celtic warriors who moved to Egypt with their families in the very same year. As it has already been clarified, the account of Pausanias is one of the many different narratives about the multiple movements of the Galatians into the Mediterranean, but in case one decides to trust this source their arrival in Egypt could be placed somewhere at this point into the sequence of the events. Thus, it was in such a way that the large movements and the major settlements of the Celts into the Eastern Mediterranean would be completed, with some less significant developments taking place within the next decade.

However, in order to completely understand the complex relations between the Hellenic world and the Galatians either before or at the time of their arrival in Egypt, the war that was waged by Pyrrhus against the Roman Republic around the same time needs to be examined too. In the time between the Battle of Heraclea in 280 B.C. and the Battle of Asclum in 279 B.C., the Epirote king had received emissaries from the Galatian tribes of Cisalpine Gaul during his stay in Apulia. More precisely, he was approached by soldiers of the tribes of the Insubres and the Senones³⁹, which had a generally hostile relationship with Rome for more than a century. Yet, these Galatians did not come into contact with Pyrrhus with the intention to be hired as mercenaries like in many other cases, but they arrived as ambassadors of their tribes with the purpose of helping the king to put an end to the constantly spreading influence of the Roman Republic into the Italian peninsula. After all, if Rome was able to control the Greek city-states of Southern Italy it would be a matter of time until she was able to dominate the Cisalpine too.

38 Boteva 2010: 48

39 Ellis 1997: 101

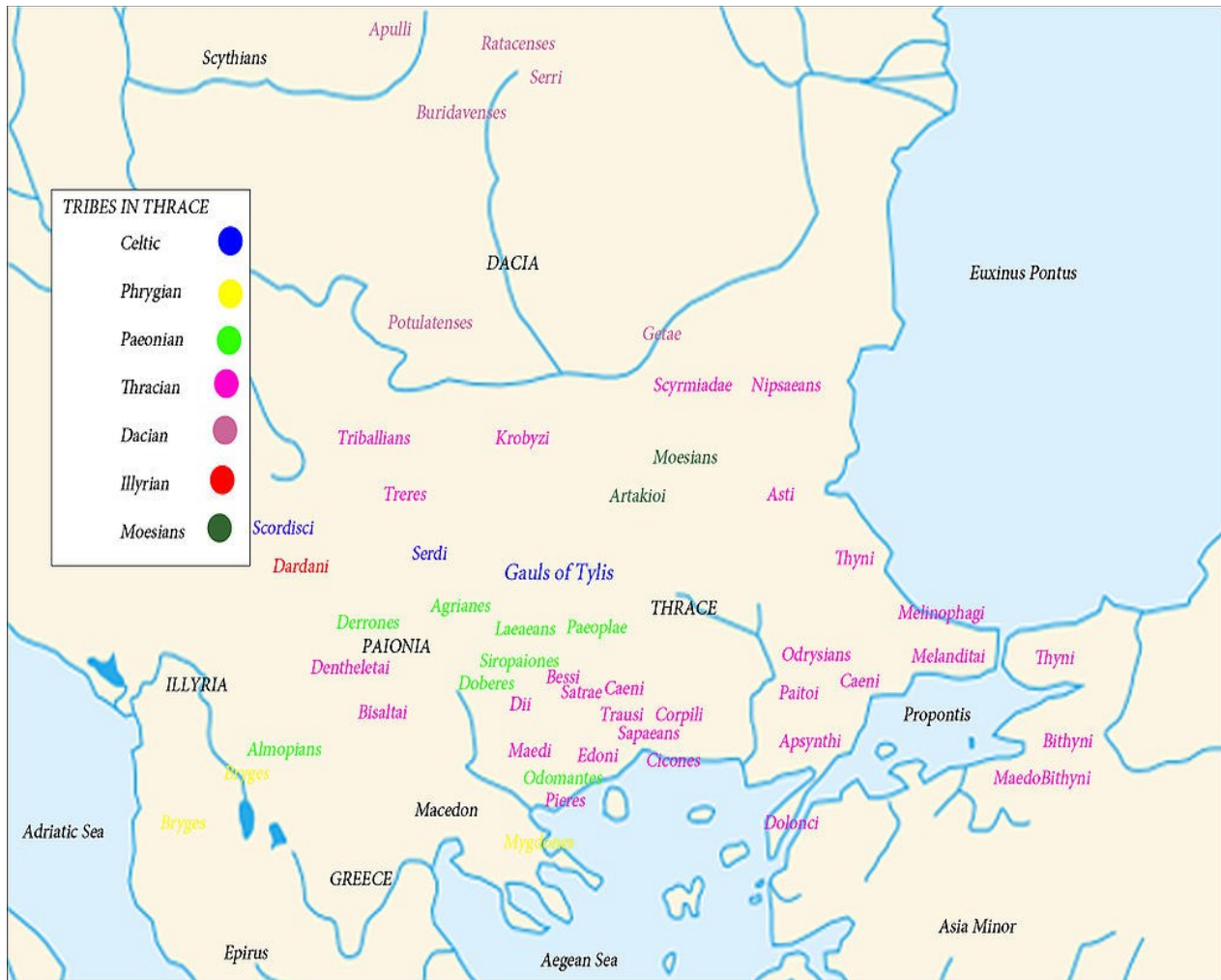


Figure 1.2: Map with the locations of the different populations during the 3rd century B.C.

At this point it should also be taken into consideration that into the very recent past the Roman Republic was involved into a fight with the Galatian tribes of Northern Italy in 284 B.C., when the last ones had besieged the city of *Arretium* in Etruria. This quarrel would be resolved with a battle near Lake Vadimo that took place in the following year when *Manius Curius Dentatus* won a victory against an allied force of the Celtic tribe of the Boii and the Etruscans. Of course, the Romans were victorious but the Galatians had indeed managed once again to march until a region that was in close proximity to Rome, where Lake Vadimo is located. In fact, the warfare did not cease immediately after this Roman victory, as the Romans at that point decided to proceed into launching more military operations against the Celtic tribes that inhabited the Adriatic coast, until they finally conquered the land and gave to it the name "*Ager Gallicus*". The last tribe to be subdued to the Roman rule were the Boii, which according to Polybius (II,20) did not proceed into any

negotiations for peace until some point a little bit later than 281 B.C.⁴⁰, placing the ultimate end of the conflict around the same time as the beginning of the Pyrrhic War.

Still, apart from certain Galatians that may have collaborated with Pyrrhus without being hired as mercenaries, there is also a suggestion that another part of them may have indeed been paid for their services. According to numismatic evidence from the region of Picardy in Belgium it can be assumed that Galatian soldiers were fighting in Southern Italy somewhere between the late 4th century and the early 3rd century B.C. More specifically, in this place a large amount of Tarentine coins which are dated from the period between 334 B.C. and 272 B.C. have been discovered, so the assumption can be made that some of them could be part of the army of Pyrrhus.

Moreover, in order to understand sufficiently the impact of the Galatian movements, invasions and settlements in the Eastern Mediterranean during the first decades of the Hellenistic period, the different events need to be analysed within the frame of interconnectedness that characterises the period. For example, it is supported that the main reason that Pyrrhus was unable to transport military reinforcements from Epirus after the Battle of Asclum, was because during exactly this time Macedonia as well as Greece in general was raided by the hordes of the Galatian invaders⁴¹. As it is known, although Pyrrhus was initially victorious for two times against the Roman Republic, these two victories had caused severe damage both to the number of his soldiers as well as to the number of the competent commanders in his army, and these losses were the main cause of his following defeat. As a result it is visible that apart from the direct impact that the Galatian invasions had into the eastern side of the Mediterranean basin, at the same time there was an indirect impact of these movements and expeditions into the Italian peninsula during time of the expansion of the Roman Republic into the region at the decades before the First Punic War.

This was a description of the most important events that led to the arrival of the Galatians in Egypt at the first half of the 3rd century B.C., and also a narrative of the different and complex interactions between them and the Greco-Roman world, with a main emphasis on their connections with the Greeks. In such a way a proper context for the period and the place of the Gauls within the Mediterranean societies can be given, before proceeding into a deeper analysis of the history of the Celtic mercenaries of Egypt. Indeed, through the study of the events before the arrival of the Galatians into Ptolemy's kingdom not only the reasons behind their coming to Egypt can be

40 Kent 2020: 27

41 Ellis 1997: 102

understood more properly, but also the different ways that the Hellenistic kings would use the Galatians as part of their propaganda can be analysed more deeply, as it will be done into the next chapters of this work.

Yet, although the Galatians arrived in Egypt probably around 278 B.C. there are a few noteworthy events that took place within the following years in Greece and are relevant to the analysis of the history of the Galatian mercenaries of Egypt too. As it is known, after Pyrrhus arrived in Greece he was involved into a conflict with Antigonus about the leadership of the Macedonian kingdom· both kings had Celtic mercenaries as part of their armies. For the case of Antigonus it is believed that he hired these mercenaries after his victory over the Galatians in 277 or 278 B.C., yet for the case of Pyrrhus it is not clear whether he incorporated these warriors into his army after his arrival in Greece or whether they were part of his forces in Italy and they followed him after his departure. Not only the king from Epirus already had a part of his army that was constituted by Galatian mercenaries, but also when he conquered the city of Aigai he placed these soldiers there in order to guard the location, so they settled into that region too.

It is visible that already by the time of the first years of their spread into the Eastern Mediterranean the Galatians were immediately used as mercenaries by different kings. Their military capabilities were recognised even by their first interactions with the local rulers, so that by the moment the Celts were unable to impose military dominance upon the kings of the region, they would be hired as part of their army. In these cases for the most part they would be soldiers of the infantry, although there are speculations that Celtic cavalry units may have existed too, as it can be assumed by the study of funerary monuments⁴². Probably apart from the competence of the Galatians in the battlefield another reason that would make the different rulers to choose them so frequently as mercenaries, would be that the Gauls in most of the occasions were not primarily interested in conquering and expanding lands, but the primal focus of their campaigns was the acquisition of spoils of war. As such, the Celtic populations would be adequate for the formation of powerful army units which would not attempt to make any unexpected moves as long as they would be paid for their services, or at least this would probably be the initial expectations of the kings that used to hire them. Furthermore, as it has already been clarified, the people of Gaul were perceived as fierce warriors but also as uncivilised barbarians already by that time, an image that would be crucial for the propaganda that was related to them. During the Hellenistic period the Celts would be at the same time a symbol of power for the rulers which would control them, but also a repulsive

42 Reynach, 1911: 54

enemy that the hellenised world should never befall into it's hands, in case a ruler would defeat them in battle.

Chapter II: The Arrival of the Galatians in Egypt

To begin the narration of the history of the Galatian mercenaries in Egypt, as well as of the Celtic presence in the region in general, it would be reasonable to start by analysing some events from the time of the reign of Ptolemy I Soter. This is because the relationship between the different members of the Lagide dynasty needs to be understood in order to clarify the reasons behind the arrival of the Celts into the Ptolemaic kingdom and the role they played during the first years of their service.

After his first two weddings, one being with the hetera Thais and the other with the Persian noblewoman named Artakama, Ptolemy I had proceeded into a third marriage in 322 B.C. This time the woman whom he chose to marry was Eurydice, the daughter of Antipater, the well-known regent of Macedonia during Alexander's expedition and the father of Cassander. From their union Ptolemy Ceraunus was born, as well as Meleager, Argaeus, Ptolemais and Lysandra, and another son who is an obscure figure and whose name remains unknown to this day. Finally, in 317 B.C. Ptolemy married for one final time with Berenice, the cousin of Eurydice from the side of her father, Magas, that was a Macedonian nobleman and a son of Antipater's brother.

Before her arrival in Egypt and her marriage to Ptolemy, Berenice was already married to a Macedonian nobleman named Philip, that was one of the officers of Alexander during his campaign in Asia. From this first marriage she already had three children, namely Magas, Antigone, and Theoxena, before the death of her husband at some time around 318 B.C. This is when Berenice came to Egypt in order to fulfill the role of the lady-in-waiting for queen Eurydice, who at the time was already married to Ptolemy. Not long after her arrival she formed an affair with the king, and the two were married in 317 B.C., after Ptolemy had dissolved his marriage with Eurydice. From this fourth and final wedding of Soter one son and two daughters were born, that were Ptolemy Philadelphus, which would become the king's successor, Arsinoe II and Philotera. Since Soter had possible heirs to his kingdom from two wives he had to make a choice for the succession, and thus he chose to put aside the sons of Eurydice in favour of the child of his final wife. This would be the reason that made Eurydice leave Egypt for the rest of her life. In the same way her son, Ptolemy Ceraunus, would also depart from Egypt at some time around the year 287 B.C.

It was the year 284 B.C. when Ptolemy II was declared to be co-regent by his father, and two

years later he would formally become the second pharaoh of the Ptolemaic dynasty by succeeding him, with the day of his coronation probably being the 7th of January of the year 282 B.C.⁴³ Although Ptolemy II, that is also known as Philadelphus, was indeed the most preferred child of Soter to be chosen as a heir, his reign was one of great unease and fear of rebellion. It is known that he had ordered the execution of both his half-brother, Argaeus, and also of his other half-brother by Eurydice whose name is not known, under the accusations of plotting to rebel against him⁴⁴. Taking also into consideration the departure of Ceraunus from Egypt it is not difficult to understand that the constant fear of rebellion would have been a reality for Philadelphus, and as it is known by the events, many times this concern would be a reasonable one. Thus, in a similar way a tension would also be developed between Philadelphus and his half-brother Magas, that would become the governor Cyrene at some time around 303 B.C., which was previously under the administration of Ophellas, one of the soldiers of which took part in Alexander's campaign.

As a consequence, it was an expected thing that a military conflict would emerge between the two half-brothers, although the clear motives of both of them remain a matter of dispute. Some scholars suggest that it was the constant fear of rebellion that possessed Philadelphus which had created an environment of unease for Magas, and as a result the last one desired to become independent⁴⁵. On the other hand it has been proposed by others that Ptolemy's half-brother aspired to replace him as king of Egypt and claim the whole kingdom for himself, taking advantage of the instability and turmoil which still existed after Alexander's death⁴⁶. Indeed, considering the general situation of the period it is probable that Magas could have had much greater plans than just achieving autonomy for Cyrene out of fear of the consequences of his brother's distrust for other members the family. Furthermore, it is not difficult to assume that in case that the ruler of Cyrene was actually planning to overthrow his half-brother, he could have used the recent marriage of Ptolemy with his sister, Arsinoe II, as a convincing excuse. That is because while this union was in line with the Egyptian customs, it was in total opposition with the traditions of the Greeks, so it was easy for the king of Egypt to loose legitimacy among the rest of the rulers and the aristocracies of the time.

Yet, to truly understand the conflict between the two half-brothers it is also essential to analyse the different alliances of the period. More specifically, it was at this time when Antigonus

43 Hölbl 2000: 35

44 Ellis 1997: 111

45 Ellis 1997: 111

46 Reynach 1911: 35

Gonatas was claiming the throne of Macedon for himself while his relations with Antiochus I were becoming increasingly friendly. So the probability of being in the unfavourable position of participating in a conflict against two major military powers at the same time was a natural concern for Ptolemy⁴⁷. From his own side, Antiochus I tried to strengthen his connection with Magas by giving to him his daughter, Apama II, in order to become his wife and thus sealing an alliance with both geopolitical and propagandistic value. It was exactly by the realization of this marriage that the prospect of a double-fronted conflict became a thing which at the moment seemed to be unavoidable from the side of the Egyptian king. In the meanwhile, this union had a great symbolic value too, it was a way to show recognition for Magas by another king of the same Macedonian origin and an indirect rejection for Philadelphus, which could have no claim to rule a part that once belonged to Alexander's empire after he was involved into a marriage that was containing the element of incest within it, and as it is mentioned before, by embracing customs that were unacceptable for the Greeks and even more so for the Greek rulers. Certainly, for Ptolemy this would be an exceptionally agitating situation, since he was already under the constant fear of rebellion for a long time, and it was probably already clear for both sides that there would soon be an open military conflict.

As it is mentioned in the previous chapter, it was approximately at the same period when the Galatian mercenaries came to Egypt for the first time. And probably they arrived in the region with the prospect of this specific conflict between the two half-brothers. As such, it would be relevant at this point for some things to be mentioned about the way through which these soldiers were hired and were remunerated during the time of these events to the extent that it is possible according to the available sources. A speculation could be made about the process of the accession of the Galatian military units within the armies of the Hellenistic period by taking into consideration a passage from the work of the 2nd century A.D. author Polyæn (*Strategemata* VI,6,17) where he writes about the way in which Antigonus Gonatas had recruited Celtic mercenaries under his own leadership. Indeed, Gonatas had already used Galatian soldiers in his conflict with Pyrrhus for dominance over Macedonia. Through the analysis of this passage it is actually possible to reconstruct to an extent the way in which the Galatians were hired before they would be sent to the different places where they would fulfil their services.

In particular, Polyæn in his fourth book of *Strategemata* describes the process through which Antigonus enlisted 9.000 Galatians during his conflict with Antipater, and it can be assumed

47 Hölbl 2000: 39

that the Celtic mercenaries who were sent to Egypt could be hired in a similar manner. According to the ancient author the process was that the hirer would agree on a certain amount of payment with mercenaries and that this amount would be measured by the number of the fighting men, or "shieldbearers" as they are mentioned in the text. This amount of payment would be equal for each one of them, and more specifically it would be one golden stater per soldier. At the same time the king would also give to the Galatians some men and children of noble families as hostages so that there would be a way for the mercenaries to be sure that their payment was guaranteed. However, according to the text, when the time for the payment actually arrived after a victorious fight, the Celts would demand the amount that was agreed, yet not just for every fighting man according to the original deal, but for the women and children too.

Antigonus took into pay some Gallic mercenaries under the command of Ciderius, at the rate of a gold Macedonian coin each; and gave up to them, as hostages in security of payment, some men and boys of rank and family. Antipater, against whom the Gauls were engaged by Antigonus, brought him to action: after which the mercenaries demanded their pay. But when Antigonus directed payment to be made to all, that bore arms, according to his agreement; the Gauls demanded pay for all that attended the army, whether they bore arms, or not, even women and children: alleging, that the agreement was to pay every Gaul a gold Macedonian coin. The sum to be paid, if only every soldier received pay, would amount to thirty talents; but, if paid to all indiscriminately, to a hundred talents.

-Polyaen, *Stratagemata*, 4.6.17⁴⁸

There is no reason to avoid the assumption that for the case of the Galatian mercenaries who were sent to Ptolemy, the process of enlistment and the amount of payment would be similar, yet it cannot really be known if in this case the pact would be made entailing payment by head for each warrior or for each Galatian in general. What is also interesting about the passage is that it is mentioned once more that these populations would move with their families wherever they would be called to service.

As for the number of these Galatians who arrived in Egypt in that specific time, there is a

48 Polyaenus *Stratagemata* (Translation by Richard Scepherd 1793)

certain passage from the first book of Pausanias' work where he mentions that Ptolemy had 4.000 Galatians in his army in order to fight against Magas, while he briefly outlines the main events of the conflict.

Ptolemy fortified the entrance into Egypt and awaited the attack of the Cyreneans. But while on the march Magas was informed that the Marmaridae, a tribe of Libyan nomads, had revolted, and thereupon fell back upon Cyrene. Ptolemy resolved to pursue, but was checked owing to the following circumstance. When he was preparing to meet the attack of Magas, he engaged mercenaries, including some four thousand Gauls. Discovering that they were plotting to seize Egypt, he led them through the river to a deserted island. There they perished at one another's hands or by famine.

-Pausanias, I.7.2⁴⁹

At the same time, we can go back to Polyaeus' text that is cited above, where it is mentioned that after the 9.000 Galatians who were recruited by Antigonos against Antipater demanded to be paid not by the number of soldiers who had participated in combat, but by the number of their whole population including women and children, the king gave to them a price more than triple than the original agreement. In case we can trust the account of Pausanias about the 4.000 Galatian soldiers and in the instance that a similar analogy existed between the fighting men and the general population for the mercenaries that were hired for Ptolemy, the total number of the Galatians which arrived in Alexandria during that time would probably be more than 12.000 people.

The question of whether there was a particular reason behind the choice of Philadelphus to hire foreign soldiers as mercenaries could probably be answered by the fact that in the years before the conflict he would be pressured at the same time both by the prospect of a civil war as well as the impeachment of his legitimacy because of his marriage, as it was mentioned before. The result could have probably been that he was not able to trust entirely his own men for conducting the fight against Magas⁵⁰. Interestingly, there is a probability that the Celts who arrived in Egypt in order to become part of Philadelphus' manpower were a portion of the same group of warriors who recently

49 Pausanias *Description of Greece* (Translation by W. H. S. Jones and A. H. Ormerod 1918).

50 Saveur 2019: 35

had killed his half-brother, Ptolemy Ceraunus, during their victorious battle against him in northern Greece⁵¹. However, the assertion has also been made that there could not be any real connection between the two groups and that the fact that these soldiers were originally part of Brennus' forces was a fabrication of Callimachus in order to create a connection between the crushing of the rebellion of the Gallic mercenaries by Philadelphus and the victory of the Aetolians at Delphi⁵².

The conflict erupted a few years after the arrival of the Gauls in Egypt, that is at some point in the mid-270s, when Magas took the initiative of capturing the city of Paraitonion, which is located at coastal zone of the kingdom and west of Alexandria⁵³. Of course, the usurper proceeded further into marching against the capital, that was situated three days distance from the newly conquered locality⁵⁴. However, when he decided to march even further against Philadelphus there was an unexpected attack at his rear. It was exactly at this moment when there was a revolution of the tribes which inhabited the region of Marmarica, a coastal zone between Cyrenaica and Egypt that was under the command of Magas. These people are known under the name of Marmaridae, that is a term used to describe the many different groups of populations by which this land was inhabited. As the revolt forced the ruler of Cyrene to annul the attack to Alexandria since he was obliged to return back in order to deal with the rebelled tribes, Philadelphus was preparing his own advance since this would be the perfect chance for him to strike by pursuing his half-brother and finishing the war. Yet, another unforeseen event happened that was a second revolt, which this time took place on his own side. More specifically, it was his Galatians mercenaries who rebelled against him, rendering him unable to proceed into making his own move in the conflict before dealing with the situation.

About the reasons that caused this revolt there are different accounts and propositions both by ancient authors as well as by modern scholars. In particular, there are two ancient sources which narrate this specific event, with the one being the work of Pausanias, and more specifically the passage which is mentioned above, and the other being a hymn by Callimachus. Each one of these sources provide different explanation for the motives behind the revolt. As it can be seen by the aforementioned passage of Pausanias, according to his narrative this rebellion of mercenaries was in reality part of a plot from the side of the Celts to overthrow Ptolemy and conquer all of his kingdom.

51 Mac Gongale 2013: 10

52 Nelson, 2018: 16

53 Hölbl 2000: 39

54 Reynach 1911: 39

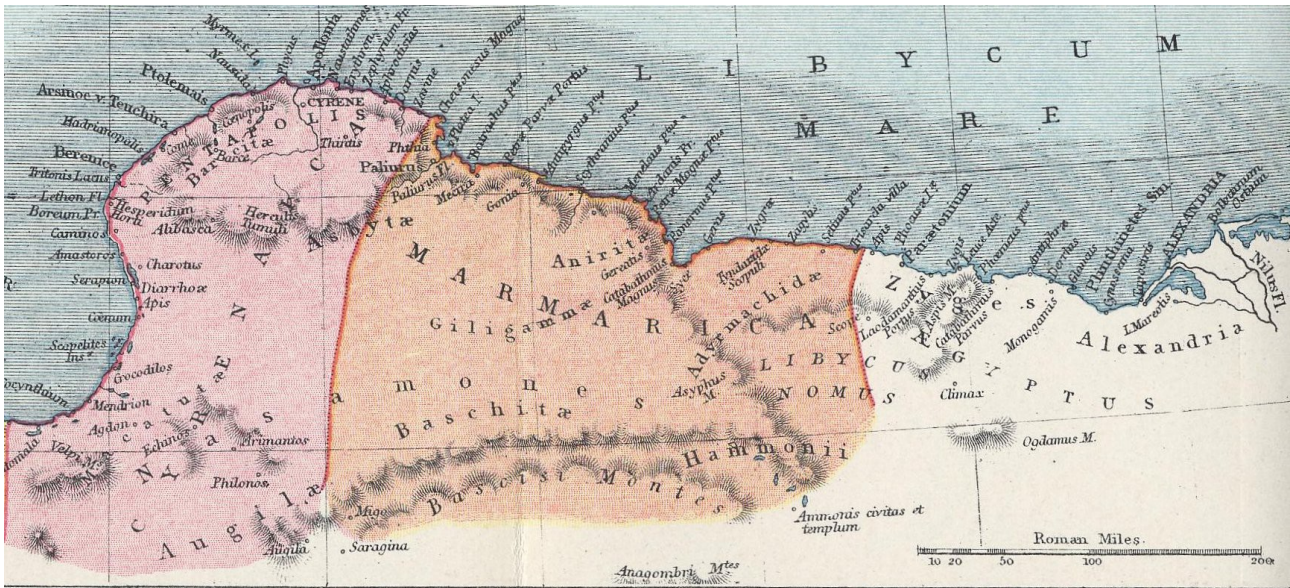


Figure 2.1: Map of Cyrenaica and Marmarica during the Roman Period by Samuel Butler, 1907.

On the other hand there is the account of the poet Callimachus for the events, which in his work "Hymn to Delos" praises the victories over the Galatians not only in Greece but also in Egypt, and he makes a mention to this particular revolt. This source is exceptionally interesting not only because the poet was alive during the time of the rebellion, but also for the reason that he was in Alexandria at the moment of the event.

...but already beside the temple behold the ranks of the foemen, and already beside my tripods the swords and cruel belts and hateful shields, which shall cause an evil journey to the foolish tribe of the Galatians. Of these shields some shall be my guerdon; others, when they have seen the wearers perish amid fire, shall be set by the banks of Nile to be the prizes of a king who laboured much. O Ptolemy who art to be, these prophecies I declare for thee. Greatly shalt thou praise in all the days to be him that prophesied while yet in his mother's womb.

-Callimachus, Hymn to Delos, 180⁵⁵

55 Callimachus *Hymns* (Translated by Alexander William Mair 1921).

For Callimachus the motives behind the actions of the Celts were much more moderate than in the narrative of Pausanias, since for him they would naturally aspire only to loot the royal treasury and not to proceed as far as to overthrow the king and seize power in Egypt⁵⁶. And indeed, for them the conflict between Philadelphus and his half-brother was providing the perfect opportunity to actualize this plan.

Another thing that needs to be taken into consideration in order to understand the history of the Galatians in Egypt and the role that they were fulfilling within the society of their time as well as the related references in the poetic work of Callimachus is that the arts and culture of the period were one of the main tools of propaganda. In reality, it was a common thing for the majority of the Hellenistic monarchs to be patrons of several Greek poets and to establish them as some of the creators of their royal narratives. Yet, this was even more noticeable in the case of the Ptolemies, with the Ptolemy II probably being one of the most characteristic examples⁵⁷. It is widely known that Philadelphus was responsible for a period of vivid cultural life in Alexandria, with some of the most exceptional literary figures of the time being hosted into the city. Of course, apart from Callimachus himself, this would also be the case for personalities like Apollonius of Rhodes, Theocritus and Posidippus. However, this impressive cultural production of the time was naturally happening under the providence and the direction of the state. As a result, certain institutions like the *Mouseion* (Museum) or the Library were responsible among other things for the creation of a crucial part of the royal propaganda⁵⁸. As such, the usual trope of the period can be witnessed once again, according to which a Hellenistic monarch who emerged victorious from a clash against the Galatians would incorporate this victory against them into his royal image and the propaganda of his state. In fact, in many cases a hellenising ruler would attempt to portray himself as a saviour of the Greek culture and civilisation through his deed of rescuing a part of the civilised world -that was considered to be the hellenised world- from the Galatians, which for a great portion of the public opinion would become an epitome of the strong and lethal but uncivilised barbarians that were always prone to pillage and destruction. For example, this was also the case for Antiochus I who gained the title "Soter", that means "Saviour", after he defeated the Galatians in Asia Minor at the Battle of the Elephants, an event which is traditionally dated between 277 and 274 B.C.⁵⁹ Moreover, Callimachus makes a mention to the Galatian shield, which is an object that is almost constantly used in case there is a reference to the Celtic warriors especially in the artistic iconography and

56 Ellis 1997: 112

57 Strootman 2005: 137

58 Muccioli 2019: 79

59 Muccioli 2019: 78

poetry of the Hellenistic times.

Furthermore, the assertion can also be made that there could possibly be a disagreement or a fraud between one of the two sides when the time for the payment actually arrived, and this may have been a motive behind the outbreak of the mercenary revolt⁶⁰. In case a thing like this was truly the reason behind the dispute, it could be a similar situation with the events that are described by Polyæn into the passage which was given before regarding the dispute between Antigonus and the Galatian troops that he had under his own service. Still, although we can not be sure if a similar dissent actually had taken place between Philadelphus and his mercenaries, we can assume that situations like these would not be unusual when a hirer had to come into agreements with the Galatians.

The response of Philadelphus to this rebellion was to show no mercy to the mercenaries. As such, the soldiers who did not die during the uprising were transported to a small desert isle that is located to the Sebennytic branch of the Nile, one of the seven ancient mouths of the Delta. Upon this isle they were left to die of hunger, with some of them perishing indeed in such a way while others committed suicide, which in most cases would be attempted by throwing themselves into a fire or by killing one another⁶¹.

60 Reynach 1911: 35

61 Reynach 1911: 40

Chapter III: The Ideological Value of the Galatian Mercenaries

Certainly, this victory over the Galatians was celebrated loudly and it became an element of the royal propaganda too. It is known that Ptolemy raised a monument in order to commemorate the defeat of the rebellion⁶². However, in the present day only fragments of the sculptures which used to decorate the structure survive, while the rest of the composition is lost. Among the surviving fragments the most famous piece is one head of a Gaul which is broken from the rest of the body, and was excavated at Giza⁶³, while today it is held at the Museum of Cairo. In the characteristics of this head the distinctive features are recognised with whom the Galatians are usually depicted into the art of the Hellenistic period, such as the moustache and the typical hair. Moreover, what is also visible is that there is an expression of pain into the face of the man who is depicted. Other parts of the composition that have survived are the head of another sculpture that was depicting a young Celt and a headless body.

Parallels may also be drawn between the fragment with the head of a Gaul from Giza and the famous Roman copy of a Greek sculpture which is known as "The Dying Gaul". In particular, both pieces of art were created in order to celebrate a victory against the Galatians while the depicted figures appear to have similar physical features. "The Dying Gaul" was likely created after the command of Attalus I at some point between 230 B.C. and 220 B.C. in order to commemorate his own victory against an army of Celtic soldiers in a manner similar to Philadelphus. Apparently, both sculptures may be examined within the same context of propaganda of the Hellenistic times, as Attalus I had received the name Soter, that means Saviour, after his victory and thus he also rendered himself to be a protector of Greek civilization.

62 Ellis 1997: 112

63 Zaied 2019: 4



*Figure 3.1: Piece of sculpture that is depicting the Head of a Gaul.
Nowadays held at the Museum of Cairo.*



Figure 3.2: Roman copy of the Greek sculpture that is known as "The Dying Gaul". Created between 60 B.C. and 40 B.C. Nowadays held at the Capitoline Museums in Rome (S 747).



Figure 3.3: Picture showing the face of the depicted figure of "The Dying Gaul" sculpture. Many parallels may be drawn between the features of this Galatian soldier and the head of a Gaul from Cairo.

The king decided to make reference to this victory through other crucial instruments of his royal narrative, such as coins and maybe even feasts. More specifically, during his reign Ptolemy II had struck a coin with the depiction of a Celtic shield. This type of coinage was originally produced in Alexandria in silver or gold, but either around the same time or at some point later it begun to also be produced in Cyprus. Variations of these coins have also been found in Eastern Sicily⁶⁴, with some of the chronologically earlier types discovered at Messina and with later ones been in higher concentration at Noto⁶⁵. As for the reason behind the existence of this type of coinage in Sicily there are different speculations, but a final conclusion have not been reached until nowadays.

One of these propositions suggest that the coins with the Galatian shields were actually found at that place due to the trade lines which existed between Sicily and Rhodes, that used to have Delos as their primal centre, and which would be used in order to exchange Rhodian wine with Sicilian grain⁶⁶. In case this assumption is correct the coins would have probably been brought into Sicily somewhere between the years 240-108 B.C. This is because it can be indicated that the period of the highest amount of imported goods from Rhodes was probably during that time, as it can be calculated by the number of the stamped Rhodian amphora handles which were found on the island and which are dated within those years⁶⁷.

Yet, there is a high probability that this assumption may not be correct, as the trade of Rhodian wine with Sicily reached it's peak during the reign of Ptolemy III, but the majority of the coins found originate predominantly from the period of Ptolemy II. This fact may lead to the conclusion that Ptolemaic coins may have not been used as a medium of exchange for this specific type of trade, as in this case the number of coins struck by Philadelphus' successors that could be found on the island would be higher in number in analogy with the rise of the trade with Rhodes⁶⁸.

Another possible explanation is that these coins were brought to Sicily by Sicilian soldiers who served in Egypt for a time or that they could have obtained them as they would pass through some of the main naval centres of the period, such as Piraeus, Delos or Alexandria. In this instance the coins could have been collected as souvenirs or with the prospect of been exchanged with local Sicilian ones in case that it would be possible. However, not unlike the previous speculation this

64 Lorber, Wolf 2011: 19

65 Lorber, Wolf 2011: 16

66 Lorber, Wolf 2011: 17

67 Lorber, Wolf 2011: 21

68 Lorber, Wolf 2011: 18

proposition is also problematic as although there is indeed evidence for the presence of Syracusan mercenaries serving temporarily in the Arsinoite, their existence corresponds chronologically with the reign of Ptolemy III, and all of the previous mercenaries from Syracuse in Egypt were cleruchs, and as such they were permanent settlers. Interestingly, a significant number of this type of coins have also been found in Attica and it is supported that their existence in the region is related with the Chremonidian War, and thus with the period between the year 268 BC and 261 B.C.⁶⁹

Ultimately, another suggestion could be made according to which this specific variation of the coins with the Galatian shield was actually struck by Hieron II, the tyrant of Syracuse, which at the time was fighting a war against the Carthaginians and there is a probability that Ptolemy II had sent Egyptian troops at his aid while he had also covered the expense of their payment. Therefore, there are suggestions that during this period there were temporary minting activities in the island of Sicily under the supervision of Alexandrian specialists for the remuneration of these soldiers who arrived from Egypt⁷⁰. After all, it is known that this was a period in which Ptolemy II would make the effort to portray himself as a liberator of the Greek cities. The fact that the king had the aspiration to construct this narrative was significantly visible during the time of the Chremonidian War some years later. Consequently, there is a chance that he had begun to create this portrayal of himself already by the first years of Hieron II's reign by aiding him against the Carthaginians.

Apart from coinage the king also decided to incorporate the theme of his victory against the Galatians in his royal feasts too. One remarkable example was in a celebration that is referred to as the Great Festival. It is known that the king had demanded the creation of a pavillion in Alexandria in order to host the guests in which among other artifacts and objects there were shields placed on the walls whose typology may be identified as non-Greek⁷¹. This festival as well as the description of the pavillion and its decoration are mentioned by Athenaeus of Naucratis, an author who lived during the Roman period, in his dialogue named "Deipnosophists" (Book V, 196A-197C). In the part of the text where the ancient writer decides to make a reference to this grand feast of Ptolemy II he mentions that the description of the event survives through a book about the city of Alexandria, which he supports that was written by an author named Callixenus of Rhodes who lived during the time of Ptolemy II. None of the works of Callixenus is preserved to the modern day, yet Athenaeus makes a relatively detailed report of what was written in the lost work of the Rhodian about the festivity.

69 Lorber, Wolf 2011: 22

70 Lorber, Wolf 2011: 33

71 Calandra 2011, 132



Figure 3.4: *Tetradrachm of Ptolemy II Philadelphus with the Ptolemaic eagle on the reverse and a Galatian shield on it's right side. From the mint of Ptolemis-Ake. Struck circa 275-262/1 B.C.*



Figure 3.5: *Diobol of Ptolemy II Philadelphus with eagle with open wings on the reverse and a Galatian shield below a monogram of the letter Sigma (Σ) on the left, Alexandrian mint, struck circa 275/4-246 B.C. The diobol in the picture above was minted in Alexandria and it represents a local style, the Sicilian variations that were mentioned earlier were similar but without the letter Sigma (Σ).*

At the columns which supported the pavilion were placed marble figures, a hundred in all, the work of the foremost artists. In the intercolumniations were paintings by artists of the Sicyonian school, alternating with a great variety of selected portraits; also there were tunics of cloth of gold and most beautiful military cloaks, some having portraits of the kings woven in them, others depicting subjects taken from mythology. Above these oblong shields were hung all round, alternately of silver and of gold.

-Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, 196E-196F⁷²

As it is visible in the passage, Athenaeus writes about some oblong shields (*thyreoi*) which were placed upon the walls as parts of the decoration. This type of armour was likely "barbaric" and not corresponding with the round shields (*aspides*) of the Greek soldiers, so it can not only be assumed that there is a chance that they were actually trophies of war, but also that their typology could correspond with the one of the Galatian shields⁷³. After all, the use of shields that were spoils of war in monumental buildings in this particular manner was an exceptionally frequent phenomenon during the Hellenistic times. For example, it is known that Gallic shields were placed by the Aetolians in the metopes of west and south sides of Apollo's Pythian temple as a commemoration for their victory at Delphi at 279/8 B.C. The west and south sides of the building were already filled with the Persian shields that were acquired at the battle of Marathon, hence by doing so the Aetolians were trying to equate their deeds with the ones of the Athenians⁷⁴. Another prominent example is the one of Pyrrhus, who had done a similar thing after he emerged victorious from a battle against Antigonos Gonatas in Macedon. It is known that Gonatas also had Celtic mercenaries under his service during that conflict and after the Epirote king defeated his army their shields were taken as trophies and were dedicated to the temple of Athena Itonis, where they were suspended for everyone to behold⁷⁵. This event is narrated by Plutarch (*Life of Pyrrhus*, 26.5) and what is also noteworthy is that according to the biographer this victory of the king against an army of Galatians was presented as his most bright success among the many which he had achieved up to this point. Once again, the same narrative of a king who gained acknowledgement and glory through a triumph against the lethal and uncivilised Gauls appears, as well as the analogous propaganda which always followed such an event.

⁷² Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* (Translation by Charles Burton Gulick 1928).

⁷³ Saveur 2019: 45

⁷⁴ Nelson, 2018: 7

⁷⁵ Saveur 2019: 46

So Antigonus took to flight with a few of his horsemen, and occupied some of the seaboard cities; while Pyrrhus, thinking that amid so many successes his achievement against the Gauls conduced most to his glory, dedicated the most beautiful and splendid of his spoils in the temple of Athena Itonis with the following elegiac inscription:

"These shields, now suspended here as a gift to Athena Itonis, Pyrrhus the Molossian took from valiant Gauls, after defeating the entire army of Antigonus; which is no great wonder; for now, as well as in olden time, the Aeacidae are great spearmen."

-Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus*, 26.5⁷⁶

Taking into consideration that in the original text Plutarch is using the exact same word to make reference to the oblong shields of the Galatians with Athenaeus (*thyreoi*), it would not be daring if the assertion was made that the shields in Philadelphus' feast could be the ones of the Celtic type. Yet, it needs to be clarified that this specific word is used to refer to any kind of rectangular or "door-shaped" shields, not specifically to the ones of the Gaulish form, and as such the aforementioned assumption can not be supported with total certainty.

Another important thing about this festivity in which the majority of the most important aspects of Philadelphus' propaganda were highlighted is that parts of the decoration were also certain figures which were representations of a number of Greek cities, implying that the king of Egypt was in reality their protector⁷⁷. This information is relevant in relation to the theory about the existence of the Ptolemaic coins with the Galatian shield in Sicily that is explained in a previous part of the text according to which Philadelphus aided Hieron II in his war against Carthage both militarily as well as economically, exactly because he aspired to establish himself as the protector of the Greeks.

At this point it would be necessary for some things about the connection between the royal propaganda of the Ptolemies and the Galatians to be analysed, as well as about the role of this particular group of people into the narratives of the Hellenistic world in general. This is essential in order for the ideological value of the events which are narrated in this chapter to be more deeply understood. Of course, as it has been mentioned repeatedly before, the Galatians were considered to

⁷⁶ Plutarch *Life of Pyrrhus* (Translation by Bernardotte Perrin 1923).

⁷⁷ Hölbl 2000: 39

be savage and uncivilised warriors, that from the Greek and the Roman perspective were a formidable but culturally inferior foe. What is intriguing however is that this conception about the Gauls actually stemmed from a broader understanding of the world which would occasionally become a dominant point of view among the Greeks and the Romans. In fact, ideas about a supposed inferior civilizational level in reference to the Celts seem to have appeared way earlier than the Hellenistic period, and for sure notions of this kind were already present by the time of Herodotus. More particularly, the father of history had supported a view according to which the most developed civilizations used to occupy the centre of the world as it was imagined by the people of the time, while the cultures which inhabited the peripheral places were significantly less sophisticated, with the Galatians being one of these examples⁷⁸. These views of Herodotus are particularly visible throughout a great part of the 4th book of his Histories where he writes about various groups of people who occupied the most remote locations of the different sides of the Earth. This specific view is exceptionally interesting in combination with the fact that the belief was also present among the Greeks during the ancient times that Delphi was the Earth's centre, or the *omphalos* (navel) of the World. As a result, an attack from a group of intruders that originated from the Earth's fringes could be interpreted as a direct offence of Chaos itself at the heart of Civilisation⁷⁹.

In a similar manner, Aristotle had famously described the Celts as a warlike group of people:

and also among all the non-Hellenic nations that are strong enough to expand at the expense of others, military strength has been held in honor; for example, among the Scythians, Persians, Thracians and Celts.

-Aristotle, Politics, Book, VII, 1324b⁸⁰

However, the philosopher did not hesitate to clarify in his text that although the inhabitants of Northern Europe were indeed formidable warriors⁸¹, at the same time they were lacking the ability or interest to excel in the arts or generally in more sophisticated mental activities. According

78 Gieseke 2018: 10

79 Strootman 2005: 136

80 Aristotle *Politics* (Translation by Harris Rackham 1944).

81 Gieseke, 2018: 4

to Aristotle these people were also unable to harness their chaotic nature and develop their societies in consonance with the rules of proper political organisation. Of course, the Galatians would have surely been one of the most characteristic examples in case the author would be in need to illustrate the reader.

The nations inhabiting the cold places and those of Europe are full of spirit but somewhat deficient in intelligence and skill, so that they continue comparatively free, but lacking in political organization and capacity to rule their neighbors.

-Aristotle, Politics, Book VII, 1327b⁸²

In general, by taking into account the texts of the writers before the Hellenistic period it is clearly evident that a certain number of beliefs and stereotypes about the Celts were present in the Greek world already from a long time before the Gaulish invasion of 279 B.C.⁸³. Furthermore, considering that the Gallic sack of Rome in 390 B.C. should have been an exceptionally traumatic experience for the inhabitants of the city as well as the fact that early Roman authors were making use of the term *metus gallicus* (Gallic dread) in their texts⁸⁴, it can be assumed that certain beliefs about the Galatians could have been dominant in the totality of the Greco-Roman world already existed from a relatively early period.

For the case of the Ptolemaic kingdom, which is the main area of focus for this text, all of the elements that constituted the propaganda of the states of the Hellenistic period in relation to the Galatians were surely present. A distinguishing example would clearly be the case of an elegiac papyrus that originates from the 3rd or 2nd century B.C. on a surviving fragment of which a direct parallel is drawn between the Galatians and the Persians.

The impetuous Galatian man does not certainly | [follow a way of life similar] to the rich Medes; | for he does not recline in purple garments, nor does he ... , | anointing his delicate skin with unguents, | but rests on the ground and lives in the open [all year round].

⁸² Aristotle *Politics* (Translation by Harris Rackham 1944).

⁸³ Freeman 1996: 32

⁸⁴ Gieseke 2018: 4

This passage is a part of a poem that was likely written in order to celebrate Ptolemy's victory against the Galatians and it is a typical example of the narratives that were reproduced during this period⁸⁵. As it can be seen, the enemies of the king are mentioned together with the Persians, who are called Medes, as adversaries of the civilised world, that was represented by Hellenism. Yet, a distinction seems to be made between the luxurious and unhardened Eastern people and the Celts, that according to the passage did not enjoy all of the comforts which the Medes did. About this particular text the suggestion has also been proposed that the reference to the "Medes" could probably be an allusion to the Seleucids, however this idea has not become the dominant interpretation of the passage. In any case, it can be seen for sure that the Galatians and the Persians were deeply related in the consciousness of the people of the time.

Still, there were more components by which the royal narrative would be composed in the particular case of Egypt. More precisely, the Egyptian pharaohs were considered to be the earthly incarnations of the god Horus, and at the same time this particular deity would be identified with Apollo. As a result, the victory of Philadelphus over the Galatians could also be parallelised with the successful struggle of Horus against Seth, apart from the triumph of Greek civilisation over the barbarians. There is a certain passage from the work of Herodotus that illustrates in a very insightful way this specific aspect of Pharaonic ideology which connects the rulers of Egypt with Horus, and where the connection between this deity and Apollo is also highlighted.

Before these men, they said, the rulers of Egypt were gods, but none had been contemporary with the human priests. Of these gods one or another had in succession been supreme; the last of them to rule the country was Osiris' son Horus, whom the Greeks call Apollo; he deposed Typhon, and was the last divine king of Egypt.

-Herodotus II, 144⁸⁶

Of course, Apollo was the god of order. And as such in an Egyptian context Ptolemy's victory could be interpreted as the fact that ma'at (order) was re-established by a new pharaoh that was a true successor to the previous rulers of the land, who represented the divine presence of

85 Nelson 2022: 7

86 Herodotus *Histories* (Translated by George Rawlinson 1880).

Horus at the head of society. Yet, although it would be reasonable to underline the existence of Egyptian themes in Philadelphus' royal propaganda, the centrality of subjects that were non-Greek in the narrative of the state should not be overestimated. That is because in reality the interest of the kings of the Ptolemaic dynasty into the native culture of Egypt would begin to intensify only in a period later than the time of Philadelphus⁸⁷.

Until this point the main events about the victory of Ptolemy II against the rebelled Celtic mercenaries have been narrated, as well as the different aspects of the relevant royal propaganda of the Ptolemaic kingdom, that was clearly connected with the nature and the evolution of the general monarchical narratives of the period. Apparently there were not many notable things that happened during the reign of Philadelphus after this point which are related to the Galatians and which have been recorded in any possible way. The only exception could be the fact that the king hired and imported Galatian mercenaries to Egypt once again after the events of the rebellion and the extermination of the previous military unit⁸⁸. By this action it can be assumed that Ptolemy II had planned to establish a permanent Celtic contingent into the Egyptian army⁸⁹, a fact that is also in accordance with the constant relevance of the Galatians both into the narrative of the Ptolemaic state as well as of the Hellenistic royal propaganda in general.

87 Nelson 2022: 17

88 Ellis 1997: 112

89 Ellis 1997: 112

Chapter IV: The Galatians in Egypt as Permanent Residents

1. Military Activities After Ptolemy II's Reign

Philadelphus' successor became the ruler of Egypt around the year 247 B.C, and he was none other than Ptolemy III Euergetes, whose reign came to begin immediately with a grand-scale military conflict. More precisely, in the year 246 B.C. erupted a war between the Seleucid Empire and the Ptolemaic kingdom that would be known as the Third Syrian War.

Hence, Euergetes marched against the Seleucid Empire and although at the same time there was a rebellion or some kind of internal turmoil in Egypt he managed to prevail on both sides. During his campaign he was able to reach as far north as Antioch and after that he turned his army towards other directions, such as Mesopotamia, Babylon, Media, and a Persia. What is relevant is that it is known that the army of Philadelphus contained a Galatian unit which was part of the king's forces throughout this long march, as well as that this unit was a powerful part of Ptolemaeus' overall strength⁹⁰.

Another period that is interesting for a variety of reasons for the study of the history of the Galatian presence in Egypt was the time of Euergetes' successor, Ptolemy IV Philopator, whose reign lasted from 221 B.C. to 204 B.C. For instance, a story is known according to which there was lunar eclipse at some date around the year 220 B.C. that the Celts used to interpret as a bad omen which would lead to a military defeat in case it appeared before a battle⁹¹. The result was that a certain number of them refused to fight when they were called to do so by Philopator, whose original reaction to the event was that he was considering the idea of exterminating them all, not only the mercenaries themselves but also the women and the children. Finally, according to the story his will was changed and he decided to send the Galatians back to the place from where he they were hired, namely the region of Hellespont. In case this story describes real events it can be among the many narratives which justify the notion that existed at the time according to which the Galatians were tremendously superstitious.

In the case of military matters the most essential thing from the period when Philopator was

90 Ellis 1997: 113

91 Ellis 1997: 113

the king of Egypt which is related to the Celts is their participation in the Fourth Syrian War, that took place between 219 and 217 B.C., and most importantly in the Battle of Raphia, which is one of the greatest battles of the Hellenistic era. The battle of Raphia was indeed a phenomenal event for the period, and it is known that both the army of Antiochus as well as the one of Ptolemy contained Celtic mercenaries among their units. For the side of the Seleucids Polybius mentions that there were one thousand Galatian soldiers from the tribe of the Cardaces under the leadership of a man named Lysimachus the Gaul (Histories, Book V, 79, 11). The name of this chieftain may give certain hints according to what extent the Galatian men of the Eastern Mediterranean were hellenised during the late 3rd century B.C. On the other hand, on the side of the Egyptian army Polybius narrates that Sosibius managed to gather a number of 4.000 Galatians and Thracians among the ones who had already settled into the kingdom, and in them there were added 2.000 more that were not coming from Egypt.

The total native Egyptian force consisted of about twenty thousand heavy-armed men, and was commanded by Sosibius, and they had also collected a force of Thracians and Gauls, about four thousand of them from among settlers in Egypt and their descendants, and two thousand lately raised elsewhere. These were commanded by Dionysius the Thracian.

-Polybius, Histories V, 65, 9-10⁹²

An interesting detail is that in the original text the ancient writer uses the words "*katoikoi*" (inhabitants) and "*epigonoi*" (descendants) in order to make reference to the portion of the Celtic and Thracian mercenaries which were raised from within the borders of the Ptolemaic kingdom itself. As such, the usual habit of the Gauls could be witnessed once again according to which they would be accompanied with their families to all those distant places where they would venture to go in order to fight as mercenaries and that after the combat was finished they would potentially settle on the place for many generations.

This specific extract may also provide valuable information for a potential calculation of a minimal population of the Galatian men in Egypt during the time of Philopator's reign. In case the daring assumption is made that the Galatian and Thracians mercenaries at the Battle of Raphia

⁹² Polybius *Histories* (Translation by W. R. Paton 1922).

could be roughly equal in number, within these 4.000 soldiers who were raised among the settlers there could be approximately 2.000 Celts, meaning that this could be the loose number of the Galatian men in Egypt which were able to be called to arms in the year 217 B.C.⁹³

As for their role into the battle itself, the Celtic and the Thracian mercenaries along with the Thessalian cavalry, that was under the guidance of Echeocrates, formed the right flank of Ptolemy's frontline. For sure, according to the written sources all of the Galatians soldiers were part of the infantry, but on the other hand there is a different kind of source material which may indicate another thing. Two stelae have been found in Alexandria that reveal the possibility of existence of a Celtic cavalry unit during that time, this is the case of the so-called stela of Polyxenos and another one which is anonymous. More specifically, they refer to a particular type of combat that was uniquely Galatian and that was called *trimarcisia*, according to which each and every horseman would be followed by one or two grooms. The name probably originates from the ancient Gaulish word "*marca*" which means "horse" and the word "*tri*" that means "three".

During the battle itself Antiochus was initially successful as he managed to achieve a devastating strike on the left side of Ptolemy's army, however things would soon be turned in favour of the Egyptians, as Antiochus decided to chase the men of that part of Philopator's lines which had collapsed and this move would bring a great turmoil into his own infantry. This is when the Egyptian army would strike back by giving a fatal blow to the Seleucid forces, and at this moment the Galatians would face the Syrian infantry that was placed exactly on their opposite side⁹⁴. As it is known, the famous Battle of Raphia was a victory for Philopator and the losses for the Seleucid army would be many with the casualties numbering 14.000 men and the hostages taken by the Egyptians numbering 4.000 men.

At this point it would be reasonable for some things about the fighting tactics and the combat styles of the Celts to be analysed. There is some archaeological material which has been useful in every effort to acquire knowledge about the equipment of the ancient Gallic mercenaries in Egypt. More specifically, into the necropolis that is located at Hadra, which is near Alexandria, three funerary stelae have been found upon which there are three different depictions of Galatians. What is also important about this specific finding is that this is one of the exceptionally rare cases of Celtic self-representation in Egypt. It is one of the infrequent sources that were not produced by the

93 Reynach 1911: 53

94 Ellis 1997: 114

Greeks or Romans, who usually not only entailed but also maximised all of the stereotypes about the Gaulish people in their depictions. Upon the stelae there were three different figures of men and all of them were wearing blue cloaks, while one of them is shown to be carrying weapons and to be holding a shield, and as such it can be assumed that he is probably a soldier. Thus, it could be speculated that the blue cloak may have not been only an ethnic signifier of the Galatians in Egypt, but also a part of their military attire. In spite of that, it should be clarified that the blue cloak has not been found in any other depiction of the Gaulish people in the region, so it would be daring to assert with certainty that this was a widespread piece of their outfit. Yet, it could be assumed that particularly for the Celtic mercenaries of Hadra this might have been the situation⁹⁵.

As it was mentioned before, funerary monuments reveal that the most probable thing is that cavalymen existed among the Galatian mercenaries of the Ptolemaic kingdom at a certain time. Nevertheless, there is a number of questions which still remain unanswered about this specific subgroup of the Gaulish warriors of Egypt. For instance, it is not known whether the Galatian cavalry used to form its own hipparchy within the Ptolemaic army, with the Celtic mercenaries ultimately being divided into two groups: the infantry forming a chiliarchy and the cavalry forming an hipparchy⁹⁶.

After the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator the next time that any type of data that might be essential in order to study the history of the Galatian mercenaries of Egypt can be found is during the reign of his successor, Ptolemy V Epiphanes. Ptolemy V was the son of Philopator and his cousin Arsinoe III, the daughter of Ptolemy III Euergetes and Berenice II, and while he formally became a king in 204 B.C. at the age of five, he was constantly under the supervision of regents of questionable skill until he came of age in 196 B.C. The period when these regents held the responsibilities of governance was in reality a time of great turmoil, popular dissatisfaction, rebellion, and ultimately loss of control of many territories that were once ruled by the kingdom.

Not only the Seleucid Emperor Antiochus III and the Antigonid king Philip V seized the chance which the internal problems within the Ptolemaic state would offer in order to create a double front against Egypt by initiating the Fifth Syrian War in 202 B.C., but at the same time there would be a rebellion within the Egyptian kingdom itself at 206 B.C., which would ultimately cause the independence of a large portion of Upper Egypt.

95 Coleman 2016: 5

96 Reinach 1911: 54

This was the demanding situation that Epiphanes was called to handle when he came of age in 196 B.C. and was crowned as a pharaoh at Memphis. Still, no matter his losses by the conflict with the neighbouring kingdoms, Ptolemy was certainly successful at regaining the control of the totality of Upper Egypt by crushing the local rebellion. It was exactly in this campaign into these southern regions that the Galatian mercenaries were mobilised and they marched across the Nile in order to crush the mutineers⁹⁷. In addition, one of the most important written sources about the Celtic presence in Egypt is related to this military operation, and it is an inscription that was carved at the sanctuary of Horus, which is located at the tomb of Seti I at Karnak. This inscription was apparently written by five Galatian mercenaries that wrote their names into the place, where they also mentioned that they caught a fox, likely during a break from their service. Firstly, solely for the sake of information it needs to be clarified that in reality the animal that they actually captured was probably a jackal and that they confused it with the foxes which live in Europe, that would have probably been the place of their origin or of their ancestors. Secondly, the important thing about this source is that the Galatians were speaking and writing in Greek, with certain scholars asserting that their writing is so correct that it could have been their primary language after residing for a certain number of generations into the hellenised Ptolemaic Egypt⁹⁸. Even more so, during that period Greek was the common language of the mercenaries that would offer their services to any one of the states of the Hellenistic world, so it would not be an uncommon thing for the Celts to be familiar with this language. Below there is a translation of the inscription from 185/186 B.C.:

Of the Galatians

Thoas Callistratus

Acannon

Apollonius

we came

and a fox

we got here

And here is a transcription of the inscription:

97 Ellis 1997: 114

98 Ellis 1997: 115

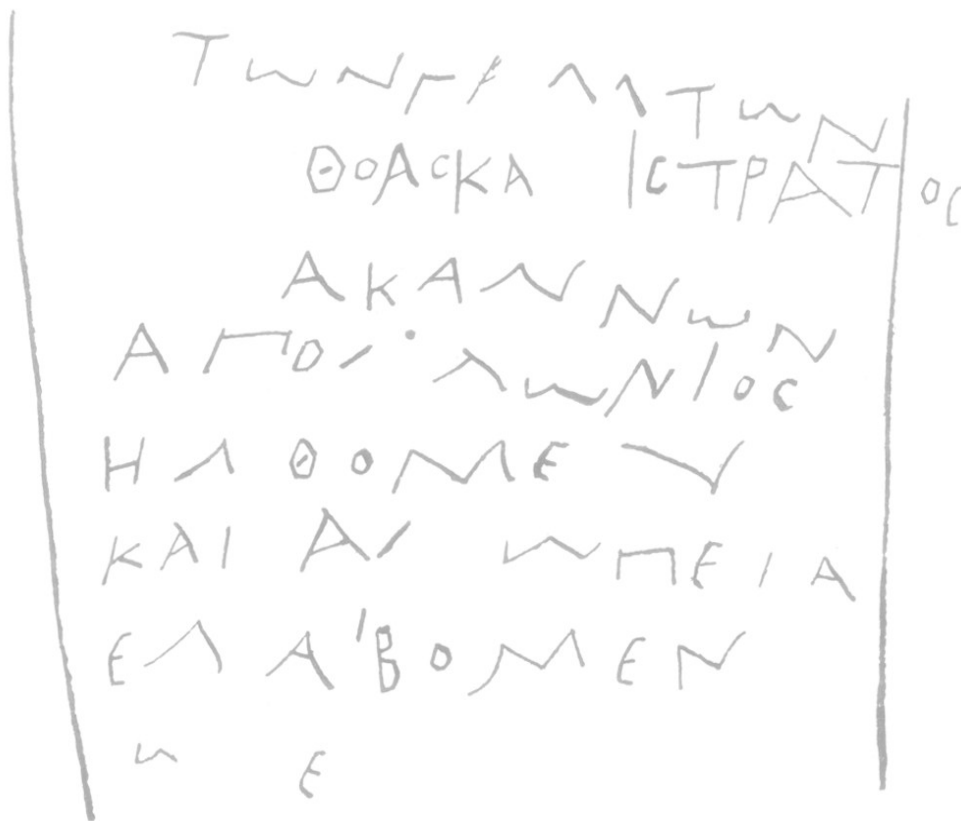


Figure 4.1: Transcription of the inscription at the temple of Horus at Karnak that was created by Galatian mercenaries at 186 B.C. or 185 B.C. (*Oriens Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae [OGIS] n. 575*).⁹⁹

What is also significant about this particular piece of writing is that only one of these five mercenaries has a Galatian name, a fact that would reinforce even more the assumption that these populations were actually assimilated rather quickly and to a great degree within the society of the Ptolemaic kingdom¹⁰⁰. Moreover, the story behind the creation of this piece of writing could strengthen even further the popular narrative that the Galatians were impious savages with no respect for the gods and the temples, as they did not hesitate to chase a jackal into the sanctuary of Horus and vandalise the place by carving their names along with a testimony of the event for no obvious reason than solely their entertainment.

The inscription which is mentioned above is in fact the last written testament that may reveal information about the Celtic mercenaries of the Ptolemaic kingdom for more than a century. Indeed, in historical data there is a gap during which these mercenaries disappear from the written records

⁹⁹ Transcription taken from the book *Les Gaulois en Égypte* by Adolphe Reynach. (1911).

¹⁰⁰ Reynach 1911: 57

between the time of Epiphanes and the reign of Cleopatra VII, which is placed between 69 B.C. and 30 BC.¹⁰¹

2. The Galatians During Times of Peace

Furthermore, at this point the reasonable question would arise about what would these soldiers do during periods of peace. After their arrival in Egypt and their settlement -which was intended to be permanent by the kings that originally hired them- the Galatians would live into the Ptolemaic kingdom by maintaining the status of cleruchs. More specifically, the cleruchs used to be a part of the Ptolemaic army that was kept as a reservation and that would be called to arms only occasionally when the need would arise. The case for this specific part of the Egyptian army was that certain plots of land would be given to these soldiers in order to support themselves when there was no need for them to participate in military conflict, instead of being paid in coin for their services. Naturally, the composition of the army of cleruchs was constituted by people who had migrated from lands that were not in control of the Ptolemies as well as by their descendants for a great number of generations. This was the case especially in the period before the end of the 3rd century B.C. when indeed the army of the cleruchs was for the greatest part constituted by immigrants¹⁰², a time which aligns with the arrival of the Galatians in Egypt.

In general, it could be supported that the population of Galatians in Egypt was relatively low in relation to most of the other ethnic minorities. As such, the Celts would have been rare within the entirety of the kingdom's social fabric¹⁰³, while for the greatest part their main occupation would be their participation into the army of the kingdom, since it is known that eleven out thirteen of them were soldiers¹⁰⁴. Even though the majority of the Gauls would be found in Alexandria or in locations that were in vicinity to the city, such as the town of Hadra where a necropolis have been discovered in which there was a number of funerary stelae that were produced by the Galatians, there is also evidence that could support the hypothesis according to which they had probably settled in other places too. For example, a shield has been discovered at the small town of Kasr El-Harit, that is located at the region of Fayum. The shield is dated in 186 B.C.¹⁰⁵, and according to the

101 Ellis 1997: 115

102 Sanger 2015: 232

103Launey 1949: 516

104Fischer-Bovet: 193

105Coleman 2016: 3

extent that the finding can be studied today, it may have been a Galatian piece of military attire. For this reason it has been rendered to be an exceptionally noteworthy discovery due to its uniqueness. In this case the speculation can be done about Celtic presence in the location where this archaeological discovery was made too. Finally, there is also an indirect reference to the possibility of the existence of Galatian colonies within the Ptolemaic territory into the ancient literature, and more specifically into a passage of the historiographical work of Polybius where he narrates the events of the Battle of Raphia.

The total native Egyptian force consisted of about twenty thousand heavy-armed men, and was commanded by Sosibius, and they had also collected a force of Thracians and Gauls, about four thousand of them from among settlers in Egypt and their descendants, and two thousand lately raised elsewhere. These were commanded by Dionysius the Thracian.

-Polybius, V, 65¹⁰⁶

As it can be seen through the passage, Polybius makes a mention of the Galatian men which were enlisted among the settlers as well as of their descendants. Therefore, taking into account all of the evidence which is available until nowadays the possibility that not only one Celtic colony may have been established somewhere in Egypt, but even the fact that there could have been multiple, does not seem to be unrealistic. There is indeed a chance that although certain colonies were existing, any information about them might have not been recorded at all into the amount of papyri that has been studied up to this day. This might be a case either because the Galatians were not so many in number, and thus they did not constitute a significant minority with a noticeable presence in the records, or for the reason that there could be a high number of concentration of Celtic people in very few places, which may have not been more than two or three, and that they have not been discovered up to this day¹⁰⁷.

As for their demographic composition it is known that the rulers of Egypt had probably imported Celtic mercenaries multiple times either from Asia Minor¹⁰⁸ or from the Gaulish kingdom

106 Polybius *Histories* (Translation by W. R. Paton 1922).

107 Launey 1949: 514

108 Reynach 1911: 60

of Tylis, that was located in the Balkans¹⁰⁹. Moreover, there is also a suggestion that new migration movements could have taken place after the destruction of the kingdom of Tylis by the Thracians in 212 B.C., and that a number of Celts could have relocated themselves in Egypt in search of a new homeland¹¹⁰.

A discovery of significant importance is a group of funerary stelae which were found at the necropolis of Hadra, that is located close to Alexandria, and which today are kept at Louvre Museum in France and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art at the city of New York in the United States. Primarily, it needs to be clarified that the findings which are kept in each one of the two Museums were discovered in two different tombs of the same necropolis at Hadra, since there is often the confusion that they were found at the same place¹¹¹.

For the case of the stelae which today are situated in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, they were acquired in early 1884 by Elbert E. Farman, the American Consul General to Egypt, during a diplomatic mission in Alexandria¹¹², where he gained access to one of the tombs by a local antiquarian whose name is unknown. The Consul General returned to the United States the following year when the objects that he had collected from Egypt had been loaned by him to the Metropolitan Museum for exhibition. Later, in the year 1904 Farman sold his collection to Darius O. Mills who in return offered them back to the Museum as a gift, where they are still retained until this day¹¹³.

The other group of stelae, which is kept nowadays at the Louvre Museum in France, was found in a different tomb, that is conventionally known by the name "Tomb of the Mercenaries" or "Soldier's Tomb" for the reason that a great number of monuments in that place were created for the commemoration of mercenaries of foreign origin. Although the site was excavated formally by Giuseppe Botti in 1892, the stelae had been displaced from their original position already from a long time before the excavation had taken place¹¹⁴. Their total number was twenty two, with three of them being painted with depictions that probably represent figures of Galatians while they are also having inscriptions carved upon them. It was in 1886 when the collector Pietro Puglioli had acquired these findings through the French archaeologist and antiquarian Albert Daninos Pacha, that is six

109 Reynach 1911: 54

110 Reynach 1911: 53

111 Abramitis, Abbe 2019: 62

112 Abramitis, Abbe 2019: 61

113 Abramitis, Abbe 2019: 62

114 Rouveret 1998: 175

years prior to Botti's excavation on the site.

As it can be seen, the objects that were found at the necropolis of Hadra were sold in many museums all over Europe and America, and this particular thing would create serious obstacles in the scientific research which is related to the site, since this spread of the findings had destroyed the archaeological context. On the other hand, although the disposition of the remains in a manner which is in complete discordance with the scientific methodology and that was a commonality during the period when antiquarianism was popular has of caused a number of irreparable problems in the study of the site of Hadra, the paintings which are drawn upon the stelae have been preserved in an exceptionally good condition. The most probable reason for this fine preservation of the drawings could likely be the fact that they were placed since antiquity in the hypogea of the necropolis where there was a stable environment¹¹⁵.

By studying the inscriptions upon the stelae as well as the paintings that decorate them it can be known that at least eight of them belong to Galatians¹¹⁶, and also that the buried men were mercenaries. The fact that the occupation of these men was related to the army is also proven by the location where their tombs were found, that was east of the city of Alexandria, where the garrison that was composed by soldiers of foreign origin was stationed¹¹⁷. In addition, it can also be easily assumed that the number of the Galatians within the mercenary army that was composed by soldiers of many different ethnicities was probably remarkably great, since the analogy of the tombs that used to belong to men of their origin was higher than the ones of the other ethnicities¹¹⁸.

In one of these three stelae the following inscription can be found:

.....Ι C Ι Δ Ω Ρ Ο C
 Γ Α Λ Α Τ Η C

This particular finding is known by the name "Funerary Stela of Isidoros" and is dated somewhere between 250 B.C. and 200 B.C., which is approximately the same period when the rest

115Abramitis, Abbe 2019: 63

116Launey 1949: 530

117Merriam 1887: 267

118Launey 1949: 513

of the stelae of the necropolis are dated¹¹⁹. Furthermore, it has been suggested that this stela was probably placed upon a burial niche which contained the ashes of the dead person in order to be used as a seal, while the name of the buried man is commemorated in the inscription, that was Isidoros, along with his ethnicity. In the painted scene upon the stela the Galatian soldier is depicted with a blue cloak, which is a typical piece of attire in the representations of the Celts in art, while at the same time there are two figures of small girls dressed in brown garments on the left side of the picture, which probably represent in a symbolic way two souls greeting the deceased man.



Figure 4.2: *Funerary Stela of Isidoros. 250-200 BC, Metropolitan Museum of Art. United States. 04.17.4.*¹²⁰

On another stela there is the following inscription carved upon it's architrave:

119Launey 1949: 511

120 Picture taken from: <https://isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/wgre/highlights/funerary-stela-of-isidoros>

ΒΙΤΟΣ ΛΟΣΤΟΙΕΚ ΓΑΛΑΤΗΣ

Βίτος Λόστοιεκ Γαλάτης

Although the painting on this particular stela is not preserved in a good condition it can be clearly identified with a Galatian soldier, as it can be also proven by the inscription which reveals the ethnicity of the deceased man (Figure 4.3). On this image most of the characteristic features of the Celtic mercenaries can be identified, such as long spear and the oval shield of big size. Moreover, the chlamyde of the figure has the distinctive blue colour with which the Galatian warriors have often been depicted in art. In this case it is the more specific shade that is called Egyptian blue, which in this particular painting is mixed with white lead probably in order to add more brightness and to strengthen the opacity of the painting layer¹²¹. At the same time large pieces of ground crystals have been added to the mixture so that the colour can be reflected in a better way.

Furthermore, by studying the depictions upon the stelae it can be seen that apart from some pieces of equipment that were especially characteristic of the Celtic mercenaries and which are already mentioned, the rest of their attire appears to be in many cases identical with the one of the Greeks¹²². Indeed, it can be assumed that by that time the equipment of the Galatians was probably hellenised¹²³.

Among the rest of the stelae there is one that is decorated with the painted figure of a rider who is followed by his groom while he is running with his horse and that has sparked a debate among scholars as to whether the horseman that is depicted is a Galatian. Although there is an inscription carved upon the finding, it has faded so heavily that it has become exceedingly challenging to be read. Thus, there are two possible interpretations about the content of the inscription, with the one suggesting that the written phrase is "ξένος [Γ]αλάτης" (foreign Galatian), while the other one being "ξένος [Μακε]δών" (foreign Macedonian)¹²⁴. Even though there has not been a completely dominant interpretation up to this day, there is a possibility that the man to whom the funerary stela belonged would have indeed been a Macedonian¹²⁵, since his attire as well as his

121Abramitis, Abbe 2013: 66

122Reynach 1911: 51

123Launey 1949: 533

124Rouveret 1998: 177

125Cole 2019: 8

overall features did not really resemble those of the Gauls¹²⁶. Still, there is also a chance that the appearance of the soldier might not necessarily reveal his ethnicity because it is probable that the equipment of the Galatians could have been hellenised over the course of the decades after their settlement into Egypt, as it has been mentioned before.

Interestingly, among the archaeological discoveries there is also evidence about the existence of women in the city of Hadra. For example, there is a stela that bears an inscription which reveals that it belongs to a woman named Philisteia, that was the wife of a man named Sisonon, and which is also decorated with a painted figure of a warrior¹²⁷. Furthermore, at Hadra a funerary hydria has also been found at the necropolis and it belongs to a Galatian woman named Boudoris who is believed to be the wife of a soldier of the same ethnicity, while her name could likely be the hellenised version a Celtic name similar to "Boudica"¹²⁸.

By taking into consideration all of the findings at the necropolis of Hadra in Alexandria it can be understood that the discovery of the funerary stelae along with the rest of the archaeological remains were important for the study of the history of the mercenaries of the Ptolemaic kingdom, and especially for gaining more information about the soldiers of Celtic origin who are the central topic of this text. Through these discoveries modern research is able to shed more light into several aspects of life of these largely undocumented populations such as their onomastics, military equipment, funerary customs, as well as the places where they used to settle. Finally, it should also be mentioned that it is exceptionally important that there are at least some surviving works of art from Egypt whose iconographic content constitutes a very rare case of Galatian self-representation. This is because for a great part the information that is available nowadays about the Gauls is usually received through the sources of Greco-Roman literature or through Classical art, which was highly propagandistic. As such, through the discovery of these stelae modern research is able to understand to a certain degree the way in which the Galatians would perceive themselves without the lens of the Greek and Roman authors and artists, who most of the times would represent a biased point of view.

126 Cole 2019: 6

127 Launey 1949: 512

128 Reynach 1911: 50



Figure 4.3: Funerary stela with a depiction which represents the figure of a Galatian soldier.

Today it is kept at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, United States. 04.17.5.¹²⁹

Among the archaeological remains which have been discovered in Egypt and which have been relevant to the topic of this text is a terracotta figurine that was found in the site of the ancient city of Naucratis -that is modern-day Kom-Gieif- and which nowadays is retained at the Cairo Museum. The artifact represents the figure of a young man clad with the skin of a lion holding a water skin and bending over it in a way that functions as a base for the statuette. It can be assumed that the depicted man is an irrigator, while the quite uncommon posture of the figure could probably mean that he is trying to fill the water skin from a source of water, that could probably be a fountain. This can be also understood by the direction of the figure's face and by the expression of its facial features which are incised in an unusually skilful manner compared to the majority of terracotta figurines and reveal that the young man is focusing his attention on the work that he is doing. This piece of art is not of a considerable size, since its height is 5,5 cm, its length is 10 cm and its width is 5 cm. The reason that this specific artifact is relevant to the study of the Celtic

¹²⁹ Picture taken from: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/247110>

presence in Egypt is because there is a high probability that the man which is represented by the figure could be identified as a Galatian.

Indeed, the represented man could be a person of Celtic origin, since his physical characteristics bear significant similarities with other pieces of art that depict men of the same ancestry, such as the fragment of a sculpture with the head of a Gaul that is held at the Museum of Cairo (Figure 3.1)¹³⁰. Especially on the thick and loose hair which is hang back, as well as on the dense eyebrows and the narrow foreheads there are many resemblances between the two figures.

Moreover, the hair of the figurine appear to be similar not only with many other depictions of the Gauls in art, but also with the way in which they are described in literature. For instance, it can be seen in the work of Diodorus Siculus that the Celts used to apply lime on their hair in order to shape it into coarse and pointy locks that would create the illusion that their heads and their bodies were larger, while they would also gain an intimidating appearance (Diodorus Siculus, Histories, V, 28,1). The most probable date for the creation of this terracotta statuette is placed at some point between the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D.¹³¹, and in case the depicted man was indeed a Galatian useful information can be drawn about the role of this minority group within the Egyptian society during this period. It is known that in the city of Naucratis there was a sudden growth of population around the time when this particular artifact was created¹³² and there is a chance that at least some Galatians might have had migrated to that place in order to practice certain occupations which used to be more widespread among the lower societal strata, such as the profession of the irrigator. Furthermore, in antiquity artifacts that were created by terracotta were mostly produced by members of the less prosperous economic classes and as such the iconographic themes would entail scenes from daily life that might have not been common in other forms of art. As a consequence, the study of figurines similar to this particular one may offer at least some information about aspects of Egyptian society which are difficult to be understood otherwise. Eventually, this artifact is a source which may be enlightening about the life and the role of the Gaulish people within the Ptolemaic kingdom in the unusual case that they would not hold an occupation that was related to the army. More specifically, it can be known that in certain instances they would be engaged in manual labour, such as the profession of the irrigator.

130 Zaied 2019: 4

131 Zaied 2019: 6

132 Zaied 2019: 7



Figure 4.4: Terracotta Figurine which probably represents the a young Galatian man that works as an irrigator. Late 1st century B.C. to 1st century A.D. Cairo Museum.



Figure 4.5: Terracotta Figurine which probably represents a young Galatian man that works as an irrigator. 1st century B.C. to 1st century A.D. Cairo Museum.

Among the archaeological material which is relevant to the topic of this text there is also a number of terracotta statuettes representing the Egyptian god Bes in different scenes that contain Galatian shields. More precisely, in one of these statuettes, which is nowadays held at the Museum of Art and History at Geneva, Bes is depicted to be holding the type of Celtic shield that is identified with the particular kind of large oblong shields that are named "*thyreoi*" in Greek literature. Even though the exact origins of this peculiar type of iconography have not been clarified with absolute certainty, it is believed that this manner of depicting Bes is witnessed for the first time at some point after Philadelphus' victory over the mutinied Galatian mercenaries that were initially hired by him at some point within the decade between 270 B.C. and 280 B.C. As a matter of fact, it has been proposed that the depictions of Bes which entail pieces of Galatian equipment are related to Ptolemy II's propaganda that was developed in reference to the event, as other similar statuettes of the deity have also been discovered on which the god is depicted to be trampling on a Celtic shield instead of holding it¹³³. As a result, it can be assumed that this artifact was created within the context of the overall attempt of the king to construct a part of his royal narrative based on the defeat of the Gaulish mercenaries by his army. After all, this particular manner of depicting the Galatians as inferior foes that were utterly destroyed by the might of the rulers of the Hellenistic world was not uncommon, as it is also evident by another figure of a Celtic soldier which is trampled by an elephant that was created to commemorate the victory of Antiochus I Soter over the Celts in the so-called "Battle of the Elephants"¹³⁴. At the same time parallels can also be drawn between this terracotta figure and representations of Delian Apollo crushing Gaulish weaponry, meaning that Philadelphus' victory over the rebellious mercenaries could have been attributed to the god Bes in the same way that the Aetolian victory over the army of Brennus was believed to have been achieved by the intervention of Apollo¹³⁵.

Therefore, even in the case of the specific statuette on which Bes is depicted to be holding the Galatian oblong shield instead of trampling on it there could be a clear propagandistic tone, since it can be speculated that the god is actually brandishing the shield as a trophy of war while at the same time he is dressed in Greek military attire¹³⁶.

As it has been mentioned earlier, the oblong shields were in fact an exceptionally distinctive symbol of the Galatians among the people of the Greco-Roman world that had been used repeatedly

133 Volokhine 2003: 158

134 Gale 2017: 109

135 Launey 1949: 499

136 Volokhine 2003: 160

in a propagandistic context, such as in the creation of coins (Figure 3.4). Ultimately, it can be asserted that the various statuettes of Bes which depict the god with Celtic equipment in multiple scenes were probably created in order to commemorate the specific event of Philadelphus' victory over the revolted Gaulish army of mercenaries.



Figure 4.6: Statuette of Bes holding a Galatian Shield. Museum of Art and History. Geneva. (Clicked by Yuri Volokhine)

V. The Galatians Towards the End of the Hellenistic Period

The next time in the history of the Ptolemaic kingdom when the Galatians would gain once again a noticeable role in a series of crucial events for the Egyptian state would be during the final decades of the Hellenistic period. More particularly, at the time when Ptolemy XII Auletes was residing in Rome during his exile from Egypt due to popular discontent an agreement would take place between him, Pompey and Caesar in order for the king to be assisted on his attempt to reinstate himself on the throne. The task of aiding Auletes would be assigned to *Aulus Gabinius*, that was the proconsul of Syria and a man who would usually be in close collaboration with Pompey, and he would gather his forces with the intention of intervening to the Egyptian affairs in the years 55 and 54 B.C.

It is known that when *Gabinius* would move towards Alexandria with his army there would be Mark Antony at the command of his cavalry, who was a young man during this time, and that a part of the horsemen would be Celts as well as people of Germanic origin¹³⁷. It can be presumed that these soldiers were probably members of the Gaulish tribes of the Vocontii and the Allobroges who were raised by *Marcus Fonteius* in the year 76 B.C. or a short time later. More specifically, *Fonteius* had been appointed by Pompey as the governor of *Gallia Norbonensis* (Cicero, *Pro Fonteio*, 5) and at some point he had requested that a large number of cavalymen would be gathered in order to be sent as an assistance to the army of the triumvir. As a result, it would be probable that these men were part of his units when he intervened in Palestine in 63 B.C., since it is likely that the composition of his forces did not change at all after the year 67 B.C. when he had set foot in Asia Minor. Moreover, the fact that in this particular case the Celtic soldiers were mentioned to be fighting alongside with the Germans is a further proof that this cavalry unit was in all probability originating from Gaul and not from any other land where Galatians used to reside, like the Galatian kingdom of Asia Minor. Indeed, by the time that *Fonteius* had recruited the cavalymen there would also be a number of Germanic people in the area between the rivers Rhine and Saône, who had been advanced in this land under the leadership of *Ariovistus*.

Another noteworthy detail about the unit of Galatian cavalymen which arrived under the leadership of *Gabinius* in Egypt is that one of their leaders was the paternal uncle of the historian *Gnaeus Pompeius Trogus*, who is known to draw his ancestry from the tribe of the Vocontii. More

137 Reynach 1911: 60

particularly, in the text of Justin, who lived during the 2nd century A.D. and wrote a summary of the historiographical work of *Trogus*, there is some information which comes from the Galatian historian himself about his lineage.

At the end of this book Trogus relates that his ancestors had their origin from the Vocontii that his grandfather, Trogus Pompeius, received the right of citizenship from Cnaeus Pompeius in the war against Sertorius that his uncle led a troop of cavalry under the same Pompeius in the war with Mithridates; and that his father served under Caius Caesar and had the charge of his correspondence, of receiving embassies and of his ring.

-Justin, *Epitome of Phillipic History of Pompeius Trogus*, 43, 5, 11¹³⁸

From Justin's passage it can be seen that the uncle of *Pompeius Trogus* was actually a commander of a cavalry unit, and this information supports the assertion about the existence of squadrons of Celtic horsemen in Pompey's army, since the possibility that a man of Galatian origin would become a leader of soldiers from Italy seems improbable.

After the restoration of Ptolemy XII on the throne, which took place at some point within the year 55 B.C., *Gabinus* left a number of soldiers from his men to reside in Egypt in order to protect the newly enthroned king because popular dissatisfaction and unrest were still present among the people Alexandria and there was a need for the creation of a secure environment. Thus, a part of *Gabinus'* army stayed into the city and these men came to be known as the *Gabiniani* among them there would be many Galatians as well as Germans under the command of *Lucius Septimius*¹³⁹. Indeed, the choice of the Roman proconsul to leave men of Northern European origin in Egypt under a Roman commander could be considered an acute one for the reason that these soldiers were not familiar with the land as well as the local conflicts and disputes at all and as such it would be very difficult for them to potentially side with anyone else apart with the Roman commanders who had brought them into the region. However, by the events of the following years it would be proven once again that in reality it was much more difficult for the Gauls to be absolutely controlled.

138 Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus* (Translation by J. S. Watson 1853).

139 Reynach 1911: 61

In the year 51 B.C. Ptolemy XII Auletes passed away and Ptolemy XIII Theos Philopator along with Cleopatra VII were rendered co-rulers of Egypt according to the will of their father. A year later the new governor of Syria, *Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus*, decided to recant the *Gabiniani* back to their original position, that was the region under his supervision, since the pressure of a growing threat that was created by the Parthians was a reality during that time, taking into consideration that the ruinous defeat at Carrhae had occurred only three years before. Yet, the soldiers refused to leave probably because they did not had the wish to participate into this conflict after they had settled in Alexandria for a long time. In view of the fact that among these warriors would be men of Gaulish origin too, it becomes visible that the stereotype of the ancient times according to which the Galatians would be untrustworthy soldiers or allies whose power was a strenuous task to be controlled would be evinced to be true once more.

Finally, these Galatians and Germans that were brought to Egypt by *Gabinus* were managed to be removed from their new residence only by Pompey's son, who had the same name with his father, in order to participate in the Battle of Pharsalus, which took place in 48 B.C. More specifically, the number of Celtic soldiers that was asked by Cleopatra to give in assistance to Pompey is estimated to be between 500 and 1.500 men. In addition, it is probable that a portion of them was also cavalry men and as such they would serve under the command of *Titus Labienus* during the most crucial moment of the battle, whose outcome would indeed be judged by the cavalry¹⁴⁰. Of course, the battle would end up on a defeat for Pompey and after that the majority of the Celtic and German soldiers would be settled once again in Alexandria, while a small number of them followed *Labienus* on his escape to Africa.

Furthermore, these Galatian soldiers participated in the events of the Siege of Alexandria, which took place in the next year after the engagement at Pharsalus and the assassination of Pompey. On the one hand, it is known that among the army of *Achillas*, that was the enemy of Caesar and whose forces were comprised of 20.000 soldiers of infantry and 2.000 horsemen, the *Gabiniani* would constitute a large portion of his overall force while at the same time the cavalry would be formed exclusively by them. As such, it can be assumed that a number of Celtic warriors were part of *Achillas'* militia both in the infantry as well as in his cavalry. On the other side, men that originated from Galatia would not only be part of Caesar's army too, but they had also contributed greatly during some of the most crucial moments of the conflicts which took place in Alexandria and the neighbouring regions in the years 48 B.C. and 47 B.C. For example, in the

140 Reynach 1911: 63

commentarial work that is named *De Bello Alexandrino* -the author of which remains unknown to this day- it is mentioned that Caesar had utilised his Galatian cavalry along with the most experienced men of his infantry in order to capture the island of Pharos during the the time he was besieged in the palace district of Alexandria by the supporters of Ptolemy XIII.

To prevent the possibility of this kind of thing occurring to him too frequently, Caesar thought that he ought at all costs to make an effort to gain control of the island and the mole extending to it. For as his entrenchments in the town were in the main completed, he was confident that a simultaneous attempt could be made against both island and city. Having formed this plan, he embarked in smaller craft and pinnaces ten cohorts, some picked light-armed troops and such of his Gallic cavalry as he deemed suitable; and, to distract the enemy garrison, he launched an attack with decked ships upon the other side of the island, offering large rewards to the first to capture it.

-De Bello Alexandrino, 17¹⁴¹

However, the presence of Galatian soldiers in Egypt during this pivotal phase of the region's history was not only confined among the forces of Caesar and of his opponents. It is also probable that men from the land of Galatia in Asia Minor would also constitute a part of the army which arrived in Egypt under the leadership of Mithridates II of Bosphorus in order to reinforce the Roman dictator, and which would take part into the Battle of the Nile in the year 47 B.C. in the Canopic branch of the river. Indeed, it is likely Celtic soldiers would have been brought to Egypt by Mithridates, since he was the son of the king of Pontus and the Galatian princess Adobogiona the Elder, who was the daughter the tetrach of the tribe of the Trokmi in Galatia of Asia Minor, that was named Brogitaros¹⁴². At the same time this tetrach was the son-in-law of Deiotarus, who was already willing to help Caesar in order to be atoned for his previous allegiance to Pompey. Taking into consideration all of the previous, it is almost certain that there would be Gaulish men among the reinforcements which arrived in Egypt. Thus, since Caesar united his own forces with the soldiers of the Pontic nobleman before facing the army of Ptolemy XIII, it can be presumed almost with certitude that soldiers of Celtic ancestry would have fought on his own side, both among his

141 *De Bello Alexandrino* (Translation by A. G. Way 1955).

142 Reynach 1911: 65

own men as well as among the newly arrived forces. At the same time, there is a possibility that Gallic men would also form a portion of the opposite side's army, since the *Gabiniani* were present at the fight and there was indeed a number of them among their cohorts, as it has already been mentioned before.

After the events which took place in Alexandria in the years 48 B.C. and 47 B.C. there would still be Galatian populations in the city as well as in Egypt in general. More precisely, the historical account of *Flavius Josephus* supports that there would be Celtic units within the army of the Ptolemaic kingdom until the very end of the Hellenistic period, while at the same time the intriguing detail can be known through his work that 400 Galatian men used to form the royal guard of queen Cleopatra VII. By the fact that this particular group of soldiers used to fulfil this prominent and highly symbolic role it can be asserted that the propagandistic value of the Celtic mercenaries had not faded until the very end the Ptolemaic kingdom, as well as that a certain part of the narrative of the state that was related to them remained similar through the course of the centuries.

After Cleopatra's death it is known that this military contingent was given by Augustus to king Herod the Great as a gift, according to the narrative of *Josephus* in his work "The Jewish War".

It was therefore the opinion, both of Caesar and of his soldiers, that Herod's kingdom was too small for those generous presents he made them; for which reason, when Caesar was come into Egypt, and Cleopatra and Antony were dead, he did not only bestow other marks of honor upon him, but made an addition to his kingdom, by giving him not only the country which had been taken from him by Cleopatra, but besides that, Gadara, and Hippos, and Samaria; and moreover, of the maritime cities, Gaza and Anthedon, and Joppa, and Strato's Tower. He also made him a present of four hundred Galls [Galatians] as a guard for his body, which they had been to Cleopatra before. Nor did any thing so strongly induce Caesar to make these presents as the generosity of him that received them.

- Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*, I.20.3¹⁴³

Apparently, the king had maintained this Galatian guard among the soldiers that were under

143 Flavius Josephus *The Jewish War* (Translation by William Whiston 1737).

his rule until his death in 4 B.C., as it can be seen by a passage of the same work in which the funeral procession of Herod the Great is described by *Josephus*.

There was a bier all of gold, embroidered with precious stones, and a purple bed of various contexture, with the dead body upon it, covered with purple; and a diadem was put upon his head, and a crown of gold above it, and a sceptre in his right hand; and near to the bier were Herod's sons, and a multitude of his kindred; next to which came his guards, and the regiment of Thracians, the Germans. also and Gauls, all accounted as if they were going to war

-Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*, I.33.9¹⁴⁴

Furthermore, the Jewish writer has also devoted a few lines of his other major work, "The Antiquities of the Jews", in order to illustrate the same procession and the Gauls are mentioned again in a passage that is almost identical with the one in "The Jewish War".

The body was carried upon a golden bier, embroidered with very precious stones of great variety, and it was covered over with purple, as well as the body itself; he had a diadem upon his head, and above it a crown of gold: he also had a scepter in his right hand. About the bier were his sons and his numerous relations; next to these was the soldiery, distinguished according to their several countries and denominations; and they were put into the following order: First of all went his guards, then the band of Thracians, and after them the Germans; and next the band of Galatians, every one in their habiliments of war

-Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 17. 8. 3¹⁴⁵

By the information which is provided by *Josephus* it can be estimated that a Galatian guard was lodged in Judea for approximately 26 years, that is from the death of Cleopatra until the death of Herod. Yet, it is not difficult to speculate that in all probability the soldiers who constituted the

144 Flavius Josephus *The Jewish War* (Translation by William Whiston 1737).

145 Flavius Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews* (Translation by William Whiston 1737).

king's guard until his death would have not been the same men with the ones that arrived from Egypt under the command of Octavian, since the time between the demise of the two rulers is too large for this case to be true. Thus, it can be assumed that Herod was probably renewing the members of his Celtic guard in order to maintain its existence, probably by hiring men from Galatia in Asia Minor¹⁴⁶.

Until this point, the most essential aspects of the history of the Galatian mercenaries of Egypt during the course of the Hellenistic period have been analysed, as well as the most important archaeological findings that are related to the Celtic presence in the kingdom of the Ptolemies. From their advent in the region during the reign of Ptolemy II until the death of the last Hellenistic ruler they managed to become a permanent part of the kingdom's armed forces and in spite of the fact that their number was never large in comparison to other contingents, they became a crucial part of the Ptolemaic military. Their value was not only measured by their prowess in battle, which can be known with certainty through the historiographical sources, but also by the fact that a major part of the royal propaganda was related to them. In a similar manner with other states of the time the Celtic mercenaries quickly became a symbol of military prestige and power that was connected with the kings that would have these men under their command. Even though the vast majority of the Gauls in Egypt were occupied in professions that were related to the military, a certain number of them, which is often overlooked, was working in many different jobs of manual labour in the lower strata of society in Alexandria as well as in other places. For instance, people of Gallic origin would become potters or irrigators. This would be the situation until the end of the Hellenistic period, while with the beginning of the Roman times when many reforms were made in the military a great number of Celts in Egypt that used to be part of the dissolved kingdom's armed forces would be recruited into many newly formed legions.

146 Ellis 1997: 115

VI. The Galatians in the Roman Times

After the dissolution of the last of the kingdoms of the Hellenistic period, that was the kingdom of the Ptolemies, the Galatians were not only still present in Egypt, but they were once again holding occupations which for the greatest part were related to the military. Although the permanent locations of the legions during the early Imperial period is not known, with the years between Augustus and Nero being the ones with the least available information on the subject, it is accepted that a significant number of Celtic soldiers was stationed in the region during that time. More particularly, during the 1st century A.D. there were three legions stationed in Egypt and two of them were including Gauls among their ranks¹⁴⁷. These legions were *legio XXII Deiotariana*, *legio III Cyrenaica* and a third one that is unknown, and for the largest part of the first half of the 1st century were placed in Alexandria, Thebes and the Babylon Fortress which is located in the region that is nowadays known as Old Cairo. By the year 23 A.D. the unknown third legion was transported to a different location, that was probably Syria, while the other two were moved at Nicopolis, which is a town at the eastern outskirts Alexandria. There the legions were garrisoned on a specific place that used to be known under the name *castra Caesaris*, which is modern-day Kasr Kayasira, under the governorship of a *praefectus Aegypti*, that was an equestrian¹⁴⁸. In reality, this *castra Caesaris* was the exact place where the camp of Octavian had been set before his final battle against Mark Anthony.

XXII Deiotariana was predominantly composed by men from the recently dissolved kingdom of Galatia in Asia Minor, the lands of which had passed under direct Roman control after the death of the last king of that state in 25 B.C., that was Amyntas¹⁴⁹, with some of them being former soldiers of the army of Deiotarus¹⁵⁰. In fact, soldiers of the Galatian kingdom used to receive training in the Roman way and to also make use of Roman weaponry already by the time when king Deiotarus was reigning, who was famous for having friendly tendencies towards the Romans as well as for collaborating with many of the protagonists of the Civil Wars. Yet, there was never an official recognition of this military regiment to be a legion until the time of Amyntas' death and the annexation of his kingdom into the territories of direct Roman control¹⁵¹. In a similar manner, a part

147 Wheeler 2007: 250

148 Keppie 1984: 136

149 Syme 1933: 19

150 Gilliver 2007: 188

151 Keppie 1984: 121

of *III Cyrenaica* could have also been staffed with Galatian men from that place.

These legions were not only preoccupied with strictly military matters, but they were utilized as instruments for the governance of the Egyptian province in general. For example, a number of documents exist in which it is attested that men who were part of *legio XXII Deiotariana* were assigned with the task of supervising the transport of grain through the river as well as with other responsibilities of a similar kind¹⁵². It is expected that traditionally this type of duties were for the greatest part among the responsibilities of *XXII Deiotariana* since that particular legion had always been garrisoned close to Alexandria from the time of its arrival in Egypt and this city used to be the terminal point of the transportations of grain¹⁵³. Yet, it can also be assumed that after *III Cyrenaica* was moved to Nicopolis the soldiers by whom this legion was constituted would probably share the same responsibilities with *Deiotariana*.

At the same time, it is important to mention that at least until the time of Domitian a number of these Galatians might have gained Roman citizenship, since there are documents which mention that men of *XXII Deiotariana* had acquired it under the permission of the emperor himself¹⁵⁴. Moreover, it is attested that Domitian in certain cases had also granted to the soldiers of *XXII* not only the Roman citizenship but also the *conubium*, that was the right to form a marriage and manage inheritance according to the Roman law. Consequently, the assumption can be made that at least during the Imperial times the Galatian inhabitants of Egypt were not necessarily confined within the lower social strata. Even more so, during the time of Domitian there is evidence about the existence of a unit with the name *ala Gallica*¹⁵⁵ and also of a cohort with the name "*I Hispanorum*", that was probably a cavalry unit¹⁵⁶. As such, it is revealed that there were also soldiers of Iberian or Celtiberian origin in Egypt during the final decades of the 1st century A.D.

There are also some things which can be known about the religious beliefs of these Galatian men that were stationed in Egypt during the first century of the Roman period. It is attested that in certain cases military regiments of the Roman army would maintain cults that used to be unique for each specific unit in the form of worshipping tutelary deities, and that the soldiers of *III Cyrenaica* would venerate Zeus-Ammon-Sarapis. Information about this cult can be drawn by the study of private correspondence as well as of inscriptions on buildings, such as the ones which were found in

152 Daris 2000: 365

153 Daris 2000: 366

154 Daris 2000: 366

155 Reynach 1911: 71

156 Reynach 1911: 69

the city of Bostra, that is in modern-day Syria, where the *III Cyrenaica* had been redeployed in 106 A.D., as well as in many of the legion's quarters in Arabia¹⁵⁷. Furthermore, local Bostrean coinage has been useful in the study of this regimental worship. According to these sources in order for reference to be made to this god, that was a patron of the regiment, names would be used such as "*Theos Patroos*", "*Genius Sanctus*", "Conservator" and "God of home". In addition, a temple for this deity was constructed in a location that was in proximity to the garrison of the legion in modern-day Syria where a silver statue used to be kept. This temple was destroyed by the Palmyrenes in 270 A.D. As such, modern research is able to gain a partial knowledge of the religious beliefs that at least a portion of the Galatian population in Egypt used to maintain during the Imperial times, since it is likely that *III Cyrenaica* had indeed recruited soldiers of Celtic origins among its ranks and at the same time the worship of this regimental protector deity was originating from a period way before the dislocation of the legion from Alexandria.

Legio XXII Deiotariana was probably dislocated from Egypt and was dispatched to Judaea around the year 117 A.D. when it was replaced by *legio II Traiana Fortis*¹⁵⁸, while *legio III Cyrenaica* had been moved to the city of Bostra around the same period. The ultimate fate of *XXII Deiotariana* was that it had been dissolved under the command of Hadrian a few decades later after it had suffered a tremendous defeat during the Jewish rebellion of the years 132-135 A.D., possibly due to the enormous losses of soldiers¹⁵⁹.

After *XXII Deiotariana* and *III Cyrenaica* had been removed from Egypt, the main Roman military force in the region was *II Traiana Fortis*. Although the newly arrived regiment did not originally contain a significant number of Galatian men among its soldiers there would still be many Celtic warriors from Gaul and Spain that were recruited when there would be a need for more military personnel. Although two thirds of the unit's men would still be Egyptians¹⁶⁰, at least a number of soldiers of the cavalry and the light infantry of *II Traiana Fortis* would be of Gaulish or Iberian ancestry.

From the period of the Antoninian dynasty there is also an interesting inscription that is found in the region of Thebes and more specifically at the Colossi of Memnon. In particular, in the year 122 A.D. or 123 A.D. a man named *Servius Sulpicius*, that was a tribune of *XXII Deiotariana*

157 Stoll 2007: 471

158 Urloiu 2010: 9

159 Urloiu 2010: 10

160 Reynach 1911: 69

at some point in his life, had written his name on the site. During the time that the inscription was created or a few years later *Sulpicius* had managed to become the commander of an *ala* that was constituted by men of the tribe of the Vocontii and while his headquarters used to be at Coptos, that is modern-day Qift, as it can be known by the study of a papyrus that is dated in the year 134 A.D.¹⁶¹.

The next time when a significant number of men of Celtic ancestry would be imported to Egypt was during the time of Diocletian, when the emperor had transported the *legio III Gallica* to the region as part of his general reforms on the defence of the province. More particularly, it is known that in the early 4th century A.D. there would be a *vexillatio* of this legion that was stationed at Coptos and that in a short period of time it would be transferred to Aswan. It is likely that *III Gallica* was raised by Caesar in 48 B.C. with the original composition of the legion being unknown for sure. In fact, there is a debate in modern scholarship about whether this unit was formed primarily by Caesar's veterans which had previously fought in Gaul or whether this name was given to it simply because it was stationed in that place¹⁶². In both cases, there would be Celtic men recruited among its ranks.

Furthermore, according to the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a document from the Late Roman period which contains a detailed list of the most important civic and military offices of the empire, during the first part of the 4th century A.D. there were still men of Celtic origin in Egypt. In particular, by studying the names of the military units which are mentioned in the text it can be known that the Egyptian military used to include men of Celtic ancestry from Asia Minor, such as the men of *cohors III Galatarum*, but also men from Britain and Spain as it can be indicated by the names of units such as the *ala VI Brittorum*, the *cohors I Lusitanorum* and the *cohors II Asturum*. However, it is clear that by this time onwards the number of Galatians in Egypt would be gradually decreased, since this was the period when the migrations of the multiple Germanic tribes would begin to be set in motion and as such the populations of the regions from where the Celtic soldiers would be usually recruited in order for the legions to be staffed would be mixed and partially replaced by the new inhabitants of Western Europe. Indeed, approximately during the same time the appearance of military units with names such as *ala Germanorum*, *cohors IX Alamanorum* and *ala I Francorum* is witnessed¹⁶³.

161 Reynach 1911: 70

162 Dabrowa 2000: 309

163 Reynach 1911: 73

Taking everything into consideration, it is evident that there was an unceasing presence of Celtic soldiers in Egypt during the Roman period until their numbers were beginning to decrease during the Late Antique times, and more specifically by the initiation of the large scale migrations of the 4th century A.D. In a manner similar to that of the Ptolemaic era they were for the most part members of the army as they were regularly recruited in the legions that were present in the Egyptian province, but unlike the Hellenistic times it could be asserted that their position within society was not confined primarily on the lower classes. This is because it is attested that many men of Celtic ancestry had acquired Roman citizenship and more often than not they could be found in almost all of the different levels within the military, that was from the lowest to the relatively prominent positions. At the same time the politics of segregation that were common at the time of the reign of the Ptolemies in order to preserve the unique cultural characteristic of the Galatians did not seem to be present during the Principate as the Celtic soldiers of the Roman period in Egypt seem to have been romanized to a considerable degree. As such, it can also be seen that although the common trope of recruiting Galatians in order to fill the positions of different military units was still present and that they indeed never ceased to hold the occupation of being military professionals the ideological and propagandistic patterns which were evident during the Hellenistic period were for a great part obsolete. Originally, the majority of these Celts used to draw their ancestry from no other place than Galatia in Asia Minor, but by the passing of time there are sources which mention the presence of men from Gaul and Britain, as well as from certain regions of modern-day Spain, were the inhabitants of these places could also share many cultural characteristics or even a common ancestry with the people who were usually referred to as "Celts". Finally, it is clear that the constant presence of people from the aforementioned places within the army of Egypt was uninterrupted from the time of their first arrival around the year 278 B.C. during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus until the period of Constantine's rule. The Galatians in Egypt seemed to gradually disappear only when their populations would become mixed or even partially replaced in their own places of origin, from where they would be recruited.

Conclusion

It is known that there have been connections between the Hellenic world and the people of Gaul already from the very ancient times primarily through trade routes but also through explorative missions. In fact, from the time of its beginning Greek historiography managed to make mentions about the Galatians as well as the people of Northern and North-Western Europe in general, with one prominent example being the work of Herodotus. These early accounts are crucial for the view which the inhabitants of Southern Mediterranean regions would form about these people, and as a result for the construction of the related propagandistic narratives of the Hellenistic times.

After a ferocious invasion in Greece the populations of Gaulish origin would settle in many places of the Eastern Mediterranean. Moreover, because of their skill in battle as well as of their fame of being savage warriors they could be found in many armies of the Hellenistic kings as mercenaries already from the first years of their settlement. As a matter of course, a number of patterns in the propagandistic narratives of the period that were connected to the Galatian mercenary units were visible for the totality of the Hellenistic times highlighting the power which the kings would possess and potentially unleash by commanding these soldiers.

Moreover, in the worldview of the Greek or Roman people -or in other cases, of the people who had received classical education and had adopted the Greco-Roman culture- the Celts were originating from far away lands that were located on the fringes of the world and had attempted to invade the centre of civilisation, that was none other than Greece. In fact, in many ancient sources the notion is evident that the more distant a location is from the world's centre the further it lies from the places where civilisation flourishes. Through this lense the many different kings of the Hellenistic times who had managed to achieve a military victory over the Gauls had every right to present themselves as saviours of civilisation and just in a few decades a fight against an army of Celtic plunderers would end up to be perceived more as an opportunity by the leaders of the different states.

The situation for Egypt was for the most part not significantly different. A force of Galatian soldiers arrived in Ptolemy II's kingdom along with their families somewhere in the middle of the decade between 280 B.C. and 270 B.C. in numbers which could render them a visible demographic

minority in the places where they would settle. Although they were exterminated under the command of the king due to their disloyalty during the dynastic conflict in which they were called to participate, the import of new Celtic soldiers in Egypt would never cease completely. Through this fact it is revealed that from the first time when Ptolemy II decided to hire the first group of Galatian mercenaries there was an intention of forming a permanent military unit of men of Celtic origin within his army, as it is also visible by the propaganda that was reproduced during his reign as well as of his successors.

More particularly, by studying coinage, sculpture and also the public life of the period, such as festivals and celebrations, similar patterns with the rest of the states of the time can be found in the royal narrative of the Ptolemies in relation to the Galatians. The soldiers of Gaul are presented once again as formidable and savage warriors who would still end up being crushed by Ptolemy in a triumphal victory no matter their prowess. As a result, Philadelphus would be deemed to be a saviour of Greek culture from the threat of these uncivilised and dangerous warriors who had plundered the regions of the Eastern Mediterranean more than once. This particular narrative would become exceptionally relevant when Ptolemy had offered support to the Greek cities of Sicily in their fight against the Carthaginians or at the time of his involvement into the Chraemonidean Wars acts through which the king of Egypt would attempt to render himself as a patron of the Greek world.

Although all of the typical elements of the Hellenistic royal propaganda about the Galatian armies were present in the case of Ptolemaic kingdom, it needs to be clarified that some unique Egyptian elements were visible too. For instance, there used to be many references to the local mythological traditions, with the king of the land being identified with Horus' bodily incarnation and his strife against the chaotic Galatians being parallelised with the fight between this deity and Seth.

During the time of their residence in Egypt the Galatians could be found in many different places both near Alexandria as well as in other locations, such as for example the city of Naucratis. Moreover, through the study of material remains it is possible to gain some information about their way of life, their occupations and their cultural features which would potentially set them apart from the rest of the populations that used to inhabit the kingdom of the Ptolemies.

A site that is of significant importance for this reason is the necropolis of Hadra, which is

located near Alexandria, where a number of funerary stelae and inscribed objects have been found. These stelae have been enlightening in order to understand aspects of the lives of the Galatians in Egypt that are otherwise neglected by the historiographical sources. In fact, this particular cemetery was a place where mercenaries would be buried the majority of the cases with the names of the deceased being carved upon the stelae along with a portrait painted on the surface. As such, modern scholars are able to have access to information about onomastics, appearance, clothing and even beliefs that were related to the afterlife. In general, the Celtic inhabitants of Egypt seemed to both have adopted Greek names as well as to have passed down their own names of Galatian origin into the next generations while they would modify them into some hellenised forms. A typical example of this is the female name "Boudoris", that is probably be a hellenised version of the Celtic name "Boudica".

In addition, in many cases the paintings which can be found upon the stelae reveal that the appearance and the vestments of the Gauls seemed to not be overly different than the descriptions of the ancient writers, with the large oblong shields, the long lances and the blue chlamys' being present in many depictions. Still, the findings of this particular site remain to be of exceptional importance since they are among the sources that were produced by the Galatians themselves, and as a result they are some of the exceptionally rare cases that allow modern research to have access to sources about the Celtic people that were not made by Greeks or Romans. This is important since the majority of the related available evidence was indeed created by the Greco-Roman authors or artists and as such it represents a biased point of view, while more than a few times they it would be highly propagandistic. For the aforementioned reasons the discoveries at the necropolis of Hadra continue to be exceptionally valuable for the study of the history of the Galatian minority in Egypt, but also about the research that is related to the mercenary armies of the Ptolemaic kingdom in general.

Even more so, by the study of the related material evidence there are questions which could be raised about the possibility of existence of Galatian colonies in Egypt that have not been discovered until nowadays. For instance, there is a variety of archaeological findings and inscriptions which might have been produced by the Galatians and that are scattered throughout the country, which have led to the speculation that there might have been a number colonies with high concentration of remains that have not yet been brought to light.

It is known that for the greatest part the life of the Galatians would never stop to be related

to the army. Indeed, the majority of them would possess the status of the *cleruchs* and they would provide their services in the different wars into which the Egyptian kingdom would take part when they were called. Through this fact it can be assumed that the idea according to which the Gauls would be people closely connected with war and soldiery life never ceased to exist in Egyptian society from the first time they arrived to the land as mercenaries at least until the end of the Hellenistic times. Yet, a minority of the Galatian population could be found in other professions which would usually be practised by people of the lower societal strata. For example, some of them could be potters while there is also evidence that they could maintain the profession of the irrigator, and that they could potentially practice any kind of manual labour. Once again, archaeological material is important in order to study this aspect of their daily life, with certain remains such as terracotta figurines being essential sources.

After their arrival in Egypt the Galatian soldiers would take part in many important moments and pivotal points of the history of the Ptolemaic kingdom until its final dissolution and transformation into a Roman province. For instance, they would participate into the Syrian Wars as well as the Siege of Alexandria in both sides of the combat. Indeed, it is visible that they would always constitute a part of the Egyptian army which although would have not been large in numbers, it would still be capable and present in most of the important conflicts.

During the final years of the Hellenistic period a number of Galatians used to form the royal guard of queen Cleopatra, and through this task that was assigned to them it can be revealed that the same ideological patterns which were related to the Celtic soldiers were still present. After the queen's demise this guard was gifted by Augustus to king Herod, who would also maintain the unit in existence until his own death.

Although there was a number of reforms by the advent of the Imperial times the Galatian soldiers would never cease to reside in Egypt. More specifically, the legions that used to be stationed at the province would often be staffed with men of Galatian origin that were usually imported from Asia Minor, while in other cases they would often draw their ancestry from Gaul, Spain or even Britain. The ultimate historiographical source where the Galatians would be mentioned originates from the Late Antique period and it is no other than the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Through the study of this text it can be revealed that there used to be a significant number of men in the Roman army that originated from a variety of different lands that used to be inhabited by people which can be considered culturally or ethnologically Celtic. Indeed, at least until the first part of the

4th century A.D. the presence of Galatian men in most of the ranks of the legions or the *vexillaria* that were residing in Egypt can not be neglected. Yet, it is visible that after this time the number of Celtic soldiers would gradually be reduced as they were to be replaced by men of Germanic origins since the composition of the army could not remain unaffected by the immense demographic changes of the Late Antiquity.

Overall, it is clearly evident that the units of the army of Egypt during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods which were constituted by Galatian soldiers were an integral part of the region's military. However, their importance was great not because of their size but primarily due to their ideological and propagandistic value. Indeed, written sources as well as art and coinage reveal in multiple ways the different patterns of the royal narratives of the Hellenistic states, with the Ptolemaic kingdom being not an exception to the rule, while at the same time it would maintain its own unique characteristics in its propaganda. Taking everything into consideration, the history of the Galatian demographic minority in Egypt is revealing for the understanding of a great number of aspects of society and ideology of the period and it should be studied further by modern research.

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