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Geese and Gauls – the Capitol in the Social Memory of the ‘Gallic Disaster’

Summary

This paper examines some aspects of the ‘Gallic Disaster’ in Roman memory culture, especially the role of the capitol. The capitol as a symbol of Roman resistance against foreign enemies and her dominance over the Mediterranean is the result of a longer development of cultural traditions and included a stylization after Greek accounts of the Persian capture of Athens. It can be shown that the sight of the Capitol stimulated the invention of different versions of the course of events during the siege, the use of historical *exempla* in speeches, and the development of ritual processions. As a result, the capitol was integrated in the memorial landscape of the city, and the ‘Gallic disaster’ was remembered as an important part of the history of the religious and political center of Rome.

Keywords: Roman Republic; Battle of the Allia; Gauls; ‘Gallic Disaster’; Rome; Capitol; Roman memory culture.

Diese Studie widmet sich einigen Aspekten des ‚Gallischen Desasters‘ in der römischen Erinnerungskultur, insbesondere der Rolle des Kapitols. Das Kapitol als Symbol des römischen Widerstands und der Vorherrschaft im mediterranen Raum ist das Ergebnis einer Traditionsentwicklung, die u.a. eine Stilisierung nach griechischen Berichten über die persische Eroberung Athens in sich aufgenommen hat. Es kann gezeigt werden, dass der Anblick des Kapitols diverse Versionen über den Verlauf der Belagerung, den Gebrauch historischer *exempla* sowie die Entwicklung ritueller Prozessionen förderte. Als Ergebnis war das Kapitol in die Erinnerungslandschaft der Stadt integriert und das ‚Gallische Desaster‘ wurde als bedeutendes Geschichtsereignis des religiösen und politischen Zentrums Rom erinnert.

Keywords: Römische Republik; Schlacht an der Allia; Gallier; ‚Gallische Katastrophe‘; Rom; Kapitol; römische Erinnerungskultur.

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1 A great fire and a strange procession – two testimonies from the Imperial era

In the fall of the year AD 69, the civil war between the new emperor-designate T. Flavius Vespasianus and his opponent Vitellius reached the capital of the Roman Empire. In the fierce fighting between the two sides, not even the Capitoline Hill – the political and religious center of the Roman world – was spared. It was there that, according to Roman tradition, the last king of the city, Tarquinius Superbus, had once built the temple of Iupiter Optimus Maximus, as a sign that Rome's power was under the protection of this powerful deity.¹

But now not even Iupiter's greatest and most important temple was spared. In the course of the heavy fighting in the capital, fire was thrown onto the roofs of the buildings of the Capitoline Hill – Tacitus (ca. AD 56–120) could not decide whether this was done by the besiegers or the besieged – and ultimately spread to the temple itself.² The historian does not leave his readers in any doubt about the gravity of this offence:

Id facinus post conditam urbem luctuosissimum foedissimumque rei publicae populi Romani accidit, nullo externo hoste, propitiis, si per mores nostros liceret, deis, sedem Iovis Optimi Maximi auspicato a maioribus pignus imperii conditam, quam non Porsenna dedita urbe neque Galli capta temerare potuissent, furore principum excindi.³

Evidently, Tacitus had to reach far back into the glorious and mostly successful history of the Romans to find events that seemed to him – at least almost – as dreadful as the destruction of the temple in the year of the four emperors. The attempt of the Etruscan king Lars Porsenna to capture the city of Rome dates back to the very beginning of the Republic and the capture of Rome by the Gauls to somewhere in the beginning of the fourth century.⁴

1 For the course of events in AD 69, see Flaig 1992, 240–410. – Cf. Rea 2007, 44–63, on the Capitoline “as the physical marker of the seat of Roman power” (61).

2 Tac. *Hist.* 3.71.

3 Tac. *Hist.* 3.72: “This was the saddest and most shameful crime that the Roman state had ever suffered since its foundation. Rome had no foreign foe; the gods were ready to be propitious if our characters had allowed; and yet the home of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, founded after due auspices by our ancestors as a pledge of empire, which neither Porsenna, when the city gave itself up to him, nor the Gauls when they captured it, could violate – this

was the shrine that the mad fury of emperors destroyed!” (Translation by Clifford Moore). See Wiseman 1978 for this passage, esp. 171–172.

4 Unless otherwise specified, all dates refer to years BC. On Porsenna's attempt see Cornell 1995, 217–218; Forsythe 2005, 148–149. Porsenna can probably be seen as a historical figure, although the endeavors in the later tradition to disguise the fact that he did occupy Rome makes it very difficult to reconstruct the course of events. See Liv. 2.9.1–13.4; Val. Max. 3.3.1; Flor. *Epit.* 1.10; Mart. 1.21; Plut. *Poplic.* 17, who all present the Roman defense as successful. Pliny the Elder also seems to support the version known to Tacitus (Plin. *Nat.* 34.139). A fragment

Tacitus was not the only one in imperial Rome who remembered the so-called Gallic disaster. The Greek scholar Plutarch (ca. AD 46–120) describes a strange procession which took place in Rome presumably every year: “And even to this day, in memory of these events, there are borne in solemn procession a dog impaled on a stake, but a goose perched in state upon a costly coverlet in a litter.”⁵

Both authors are referring to an event that happened nearly half a millennium before their own times: the ‘Gallic disaster,’ when Celtic warriors occupied the city of Rome at the beginning of the fourth century BC.

In this contribution, I want to discuss some aspects of the complex and, as the two quotations cited above testify, enduring afterlife of this event in the Roman ‘social memory’ or ‘Geschichtskultur’ – two concepts which are relatively similar.⁶ I will focus on the role and the image of the Capitol in the course of the Gallic disaster.

2 Tradition and history – the Gauls and the sack of Rome

The fact that at some point in the early fourth century a group of Celtic warriors captured the city of Rome is undisputed.⁷ The exact date⁸ of the occupation and the detailed course of events are, however, not easy to reconstruct, so for the purpose of this article

of Cassius Hemina (apud Non. p. 408 L) indicates a relatively early appearance of the more famous stories, which better suited to the way most Romans wanted to see their past. See Beck and Walter 2005, 261–262.

- 5 Plut. *fort. Rom.* 12. Also attested in Aelian *nat.* 12.30; Serv. *Aen.* 8.625; Lyd. *Mens.* 4.114. See von Ungern-Sternberg 2000, 216–217, who thinks not only that Plutarch was the earliest source to attest to the procession but also that it was not even invented until the imperial era.
- 6 For the concept of ‘social memory’ see Burke 1991; Fentress and Wickham 1992, 47–48; Erl 2005, 44–45, 52–55. For ‘Geschichtskultur’ see now Rösen 2008. See also the study of Walter 2004; he describes several aspects of the Roman ‘Geschichtskultur’ in particular, with a trenchant description of the concept: “Geschichtskultur’ umfaßt das synchrone und diachrone soziale Gedächtnis eines Kollektivs. Im Sinne von ‘gruppenbezogen’ ist das Attribut ‘sozial’ hier geeigneter als das in der Literatur überwiegend verwendete Attribut ‘kollektiv’, weil in letzterem strenggenommen eine holistische Implikation liegt und die Möglichkeit segmentärer oder konkurrierender Gruppengedächtnisse – etwa eines der Plebs

beziehungsweise der Popularen – ausgeschlossen wird” (Walter 2004, 20). Cf. Confino 1997, 1399–1402. For approaches similar to the one of this article, see von Ungern-Sternberg 2000; Williams 2001, 140–184; Rosenberger 2003; Richardson 2012, 116–152. Cf. also Walter 2004, 386–396, for the development of the legend of Camillus as an aspect which is closely connected with the Gallic disaster in several points. Cf. further Beck 2006 who examines the battle of Cannae as another famous defeat in Roman history and Kath 2004 who attempts to take a broader point of view as she wants to examine Roman defeats in Roman political culture in general, but gives no detailed interpretation of the respective sources.

- 7 See for example Ogilvie 1965, 719–720: “The fact of the occupation is indisputable and has left its mark archaeologically [...] but the extent of it is less certain.”; Cornell 1995, 314: “That it happened is certain.” This view is also supported by scholars who examine the history of early Rome in a very critical way: Kolb 2002, 140–141; Forsythe 2005, 252–253.
- 8 For the date see Beloch 1926, 313–314; Baudy 1991, 16–18; Cornell 1995, 314, 399–402; Rosenberger 2003, 47.

it seems best to take a minimalistic point of view.⁹ A group of Celtic warriors, perhaps mercenaries enlisted by the Greek tyrant Dionysius I of Syracuse for his war against Italian Greeks in southern Italy, marched southwards from the Po valley to reach their new employer. On their way, they crossed the Apennines and reached the Tiber valley, where they defeated a Roman army at the river Allia. Then they occupied Rome. It may be that the Gauls just carried away whatever they wanted as loot, but it also seems possible, and perhaps more likely, that the Romans paid a ransom to make the Gauls leave quickly, in order to prevent further destruction in their city.¹⁰ It appears that later the Gallic mercenaries (or some portion of them), having successfully besieged Rhegium, were defeated somewhere in central Italy – there are various and seemingly non-Roman traditions about such a battle and the recovery of gold from the Gauls.¹¹

Obviously, the effects of this defeat of the Romans, who were on their way to military success and expansion on the Italian peninsula, could not have been as severe as the often exaggerated accounts in ancient traditions suggest, because it was only a few decades later that Rome achieved hegemony in Middle Italy.¹² But modern scholars agree about the profound and enduring effect that it had on the social memory of the Romans in the

- 9 Cf. for the following Ogilvie 1965, 699–752; Cornell 1995, 313–318; Heuß 1998, 23–24; Williams 2001, 142–150; Kolb 2002, 140–141; Forsythe 2005, 251–259 and now Richardson 2012, 123–130. Important sources are Diod. 14.113–116; Liv. 5.32.6–49.7; Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 13.6–12; Plut. *Cam.* 14–32. Further references are collected at Schwegler 1872, 234–275 in his full discussion of the ancient evidence. Mommsen 1878 also provides an in-depth discussion of them.
- 10 This reconstruction would at least explain the absence of any evidence in the archaeological record which would indicate a large amount of destruction in the city for this period. On this point see, for example Horsfall 1987, 70; Cornell 1995, 318; Kolb 2002, 140–141; Rosenberger 2003, 47–48. However, Richardson 2012, 129 thinks that it is more plausible that no money or gold was paid and that the Gauls simply took whatever they wanted as their loot away with them.
- 11 In Livy's account, M. Furius Camillus defeats the Gauls and recovers the gold from them (Liv. 5.49.1–7). Plutarch agrees with Livy on this point (Plut. *Cam.* 29). Diodor also has Camillus as the hero who saves the day, but while the result is the same, in his account the dictator defeats the Gauls not while they are still in Rome but on a later occasion (Diod. 14.117.5). Strabo (Strab. 5.2.3) notes that the people of Caere recovered the gold, and Sueton offers another version where a certain Livius Drusus, as a *propraetor*, kills an enemy leader called Drausus and, on that occasion, recovers the gold that had once been paid to the Senones (Suet. *Tib.* 3.2). It should be noted that Polybius does not mention any recovery of the ransom at all: in his account the Gauls leave Rome and Latium undefeated (Pol. 2.18.3). For these variant traditions and further references see Mommsen 1878, 534–535, 539–541; Ogilvie 1965, 736; Sordi 1984, 88–89; Cornell 1995, 317; von Ungern-Sternberg 2000, 217–218; Williams 2001, 143; Walter 2004, 386–387; Forsythe 2005, 255–256; Richardson 2012, 127–128.
- 12 Beloch 1926, 311–320 supports the view of Livy and other ancient authors. But see only Cornell 1995, 318; Oakley 1997, 344–347; Heuß 1998, 23; Forsythe 2005, 258–259; Kolb 2002, 140–141. See also Hölkeskamp 2011 [1987], 39, who points out that the Gallic disaster resulted in an increase in economic and social pressure on the plebs and so might be seen as an important factor in the struggle of the orders. Cf. Cornell 1995, 330 on this, he supports the view that the Gallic sack would have been a difficult setback especially for Romans living as peasants “on the margins of subsistence”. See also Heuß 1998, 23–24.

time of the Republic and even later.¹³ When one traces the Gallic disaster through the complex and sometimes anarchic Roman memory culture, a intricate amalgam of Greek influences, Italian oral tradition and written records, Roman tradition, historiography and literature, aetiologies and other ways of thinking about the past influenced by early and later experiences soon reveals itself.¹⁴

If one takes a closer look at the tradition concerning the sack of Rome, it is evident that the battle at the Allia itself is usually not central in the accounts in most sources. Most of the various fragments and references that can be connected to the Gallic disaster belong to events that – allegedly – took place in the city of Rome and here again a great part is in one or more ways related to the Capitol.¹⁵

Among the surviving sources, Livy (59 BC–AD 17) gives the most complete account of the course of events which led to the occupation by the Gauls. In it, the Capitol first comes into focus when the battle at the Allia has been lost and a portion of the surviving Romans seek refuge in their city.¹⁶ There, the Romans come to the conclusion that there is not sufficient space for all of them on the Capitol and especially in the *arx*. So they decide that only men of military age should be allowed to seek refuge there,

13 Kremer 1994, 11, 62–63, 68; Cornell 1995, 318: “The sack was a severe psychological blow, ...” and see also Cornell 1995, 325; Heuß 1998, 23: “Der Tag an der Allia [...] schuf jenes Trauma, welches die Römer hinfort in eine mörderische Angst vor jedem nordländischen Angriff versetzte”; Grünewald 2001, 286–287; Williams 2001, 140–141; Kolb 2002, 140–141: “Um so schwerer verheilten offensichtlich die psychischen Verletzungen der Katastrophe an der Allia, wie die ständige Verwendung dieses Vorfalles als Menetekel in der römischen Literatur bezeugt”; Walter 2004, 206–207; Forsythe 2005, 253; Kath 2004, 160–161.

14 Cf. Horsfall 1987, 63; Williams 2001, 148–150. See also von Ungern-Sternberg 2000, 207, n. 5.

15 On the Capitol during the Gallic disaster, see Schwegler 1872, 254–269; Mommsen 1878, 528–535, and Ogilvie 1965, 730–741, all with extensive references to the sources. See more recently Wiseman 1979; Horsfall 1987; von Ungern-Sternberg 2000, 213–217; Williams 2001, 150–184, and Richardson 2012, 121–123, 127–129, 132–134. Another place associated, at least in later times, with the time of the sack of Rome by the Gauls is for example the shrine erected in honor of a warning voice which gave the Romans the – unfortunately unheeded – advice to (re-)construct the walls of their city to prevent its occupation (Cic. *Div.* 1.101,

2.69 and the quotation of Varro in Gell. 16.17.2). According to the tradition, this voice was deified as *Aius Locutius* and in a – surely later – version (Plut. *Cam.* 30.3) it was no other than Camillus who set up the shrine (Cf. only von Ungern-Sternberg 2000, 208–209, and Aronen 1993, 29, for further references). The sources also mention a place called the *Busta Gallica*, where the corpses of the fallen Gauls were allegedly burnt and buried after the retaking of the city, which is probably an *aition* invented later. See CIL I² 809; Varro *ling.* 5.157 and also Liv. 5.48.1–3 and 22.14.11, in which Livy again mentions this place but unfortunately gives no exact (“media in urbe”) location for it. Cf. also Sil. 8.642. For scholarly discussion see Ogilvie 1965, 737; Coarelli 1993; von Ungern-Sternberg 2000, 217. Another example of what is surely a tradition invented later is a place called *Doliola*, where according to *one* version some sacred objects were hidden from the Gauls: Liv. 5.40.7–8; Plut. *Cam.* 20.7–8. In another version these objects were buried after the death of king Numa Pompilius (Varro *ling.* 5.157). For further references see again Ogilvie 1965, 723–724; Coarelli 1995 and von Ungern-Sternberg 2000, 211. Once again, the variety may indicate later inventions conceived to find explanations for the forgotten origins of names, places or customs.

16 Liv. 5.39.9–13.

along with their wives and children – of course in order to defend the heart of the city. While the *flamen* and the priestesses of Vesta are asked to bring the *sacra publica* to a more secure place, a great number of plebeians leave their houses and make their way to the Ianiculum.¹⁷ But by far the greatest sacrifice is made by the elder senators, who simply wait in the *atria* of their homes, where they will be killed by the Gauls.¹⁸

While reading these passages in Livy, one may ask oneself why the Romans gave up the larger part of their city, leaving it to be looted by the enemy. Modern scholars have a relatively easy explanation for this problem: the walls and fortifications of the city, which would later surrounded Rome, had simply not yet been built to an extent that could serve as protection from even a relatively small group of Celtic warriors.¹⁹ Some ancient historians present another more surprising answer: the Romans apparently just failed to close the gates, which allowed the Gauls to enter the city without any fighting.²⁰ It seems very clear that the construction of what is known as the Servian Wall was more likely a reaction to the Gallic disaster than a fortification erected under the glorious reign of King Servius Tullius (6th century).²¹ In fact, Livy himself mentions some decisions made by the Romans to fortify the city with stronger walls only a couple of years after the Gallic occupation.²² But apparently the parts of the tradition which wanted to ascribe this achievement to King Servius were very strong and in some way convincing, and not only for Livy.²³ Thus another explanation had to be found, leading to the strange story of the open gates – in Livy's account, the Gauls, at any rate, are apparently surprised at this failure on the part of the Romans.²⁴

As mentioned above, Livy and other authors report that a group of Romans fortified the area on the Capitoline Hill, while the Gauls, having taken the rest of the city, killed whomever they found, looted the temples and houses and then burnt down the whole city.²⁵ These accounts are inconsistent and not very reliable in several points – cf., for example the strange case of the open gates. Based on the results of archaeological excavations conducted a few decades ago, it is now certain that ancient accounts of the huge destruction caused by the great 'Gallic fire' are extremely exaggerated – the Gauls did not burnt down the city of Rome at any point in the fourth century.²⁶ Therefore the prominent position of the Capitol as the last and successfully defended stronghold in

17 Liv. 5.40.5.

18 Liv. 5.39.13, 5.41.1–10.

19 See for example Ogilvie 1965, 719: Rome's "defences at this time amounted to a ditch and turf-wall which were inadequate to withstand a resolute assault"; Alföldi 1963, 322, 356; Cornell 1995, 200; Kolb 2002, 97–101, esp. 100; Forsythe 2005, 107, 259, and now Richardson 2012, 131–132.

20 Liv. 5.39.2, 5.41.4; Plut. *Cam.* 22. Cf. Mommsen 1878, 527; Ogilvie 1965, 720. Diod. 14.115 has a

detail different to Livy: the walls and gates are undefended but the Gauls have to break the gates.

21 Cf. the annotations given above (n. 19).

22 Liv. 6.32.1, 7.20.9. Cf. Oakley 1997, 636.

23 Liv. 1.44.3; Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 4.13.5, 9.68.1.

24 Liv. 5.39.2.

25 Liv. 5.41.10–42.8; Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 13.12.2. Note that Diod. 14.115.6 reports that some houses on the Palatine were not destroyed also. Cf. Mommsen 1878, 527–528.

26 See above n. 7.

the destroyed city seems to be even more stylized than it already appeared at first sight. So two questions arise: why were the accounts of the Gallic disaster so ‘expanded’ and why was the extent of the destruction so exaggerated?²⁷ How did the Capitol come to have the prominent position it takes in these traditions?

3 A great exemplum – Athens and Rome

Some parallels to another famous occupation of a ‘civilized’ city by a ‘barbarian’ army were revealed early on in the scholarly discussion about the account of the Gallic disaster. At issue is Herodotus’ (ca. 485–424) account of how the Persian troops of Xerxes conquered the city of Athens in 480 BC.²⁸ The Athenians also abandon the major part of their city to the enemy, and only a very small number of defenders remain on the Acropolis in order to protect the temple of Athena – obviously, at least in the eyes of Themistocles, badly misinterpreting the famous advice of the Delphic oracle to seek shelter behind a wooden wall, which in Themistocles’ interpretation meant to go aboard the ships and fight against the Persian fleet.²⁹

Apparently there are some differences between the two accounts, and we will come back to one major difference soon. Nevertheless, the fact that there are parallels between these two accounts can scarcely be dismissed, even though their number and exact form is still open to debate.³⁰ Here we may perhaps find a key to give *one* possible answer to the first question asked above. For both sides, Gauls and Romans, the historical event itself was in fact not very remarkable at first.³¹ But recasting the apparently not very spectacular episode in the style of a central part of the Greek tradition of the greatest fight against a barbarian army ever fought offered an opportunity to raise this part of the Roman history to another level.³² Of course, the enemies in the Greek case were the Persians and here they were Gauls, but at least both were barbarians in Greek eyes

27 Cf. Ernst Badian’s famous article “The Expansion of the past” (Badian 1966, 11).

28 See already Niebuhr 1846, 381: “[D]ie Erzählung ist sehr schön und erinnert an die von der Einnahme der Akropolis von Athen durch die Perser”; Soltau 1909, 80, 113–114; Ogilvie 1965, 720. Cf. more recently Sordi 1984, 86–88; Horsfall 1987, 72–73; Williams 2001, 152–155; Rosenberger 2003, 47; Richardson 2012, 130–138.

29 Hdt. 7.141.3. Cf. Richardson 2012, 130–131.

30 And given the fact that in any way the account of Herodotus was much older than even the oldest attempts of Fabius Pictor and his successors but also of works from historians from the *Magna Graecia* who knew about the sack of Rome and wanted to

put it in their works, it is of course clear which example influenced the other. See Vattuone 2007 for some candidates among the western Greek historians. They recognized Rome early in the history of the Republic and it seems that they integrated it in their accounts.

31 Cf. Urban 2004, 686; Walter 2004, 387 (“das Scharmützel von 387”).

32 Cf. Richardson 2012, 133: “Nonetheless, this tradition [which greatly exaggerates the degree of destruction], unlikely as it is, exists and it does so in all probability because the tradition of the Gallic sack of Rome was heavily based upon the tradition of the Persian sack of Athens.”

and so in some way the events seemed to be comparable.³³ Connections between Romans and Greeks and influences of Greek culture in Italy and Rome can be traced to a very early date in the history of the Roman Republic and in fact as far back as the regal period.³⁴ And it seems, too, that some Romans of an early stage did seek ways to present themselves to Greek eyes not only as non-barbarians but also as somehow standing on the same level as that of the evidently highly cultured Greek world they were confronted with every day. The stories of the Trojan descent of the Romans, which can be found in the earliest records, are only one part of this intercultural communication – the stylization of the story of the Gallic disaster may just be another.³⁵ There are many other examples for the way that early Roman history was modeled after Greek traditions and/or ways of thinking and interpreting earlier times.³⁶

We do not know whose idea it was initially to recast the story of the Gallic sack of Rome in the style of Herodotus' account of the Persian capture of Athens. The earliest preserved account about the defense of the Capitol can be found in Polybius' (born before 199/died after 120) summary of the wars the Romans fought against the Gauls in Italy in the generations before the Second Punic War.³⁷ Q. Fabius Pictor (born ca. 270) is held by most scholars to be Polybius' source of information about this period.³⁸ It is not clear from the extant fragments, if presenting the Gallic disaster in the style of the account of the fall of the Acropolis was already part of Pictor's work.³⁹ Even if this could be proven, however, it would still be perfectly possible that the story's inventor was someone other than Pictor or indeed any other Roman historian, such as a Greek historian from *Magna Graecia*.⁴⁰

In any case, it is clear that such a stylization could only have been carried out in this medium of 'historiography,' which Fabius Pictor, as the first Roman historian, took over,

33 Cf. Dihle 1994.

34 Wiseman 1989, 131–133; Wiseman 2007, 67–73; Purcell 2003; Walter 2004, 72–73; Beck and Walter 2005, 22–24.

35 See the works cited in annotation 34 and for the alleged descent from Troy see Galinsky 1969; Wiseman 1974; Gruen 1992, 6–51 and Hölkeskamp 2004 [1999], 201–203.

36 See only the examples in Forsythe 2005, *passim* and the references in Richardson 2012, 138, n. 113.

37 Pol. 2.18.3. A fragment of Cassius Hemina also suggests that the story of the defense was accepted, as it mentions the sacrifice made by Fabius Dorsuo: F 22 FRH 6 (= App. *Celt. fr.* 6 = F 19 Peter = F 23 Santini). But most scholars tend towards a dating of

Hemina that is later than that for Polybius (cf. Beck and Walter 2005, 242 with further references).

38 Mommsen 1878, 516; Walbank 1957, 184; Sordi 1984, 83, *passim*; Williams 2001, 150. Cf. Schwegler 1872, 234 who thinks that Fabius Pictor is probably an early source for the account of Diodor and maybe also for Polybius.

39 For Sordi 1984, 87, however, the case is clear: "Fabio aveva dunque modellato su Erodoto il suo racconto della catastrofe gallica". But cf. Williams 2001, 152–154 who is skeptical about this idea. He prefers to see not so much a "direct, literary borrowing or translation of motifs from the Greek to the Roman context" but similarities which are caused by "the similarity of the situation and of the Romans' later reflections upon their history" (154).

40 As Richardson 2012, 137 assumes.

in an adapted form, from the Greek world.⁴¹ It is certainly true that in general we have to include “changes in Roman conceptions, religious and historical” in our interpretation, and in fact “there was clearly much more to the creation of early Roman history than the succession of early historians and annalists from Fabius Pictor onwards.”⁴² To study and explore the ‘social memory’ or ‘Geschichtskultur’ of Roman societies means exactly this.⁴³ But it is, nonetheless, indisputable that such stylization requires a form and a medium that allows the drawing of parallels, the integration of details in a broader context of interpretation and the development of new concepts in working with history.⁴⁴

If this form of tradition was invented to contribute to the attempt to present the Romans to a Greek public as their equals in their long and arduous history of fighting against the barbarians of the north and as being – at least nearly – on the same cultural level, then this would fit with what we know about Pictor, his aims and the historical and socio-cultural background of the time in which he lived and wrote his text.⁴⁵ It seems clear that one of the reasons that Fabius began his project was to give a Greek reading public what he viewed as a suitable impression of Roman culture and history.⁴⁶

Whoever the first person to write the account of the Gallic disaster in this specific way, which reminds readers of the capture of Athens, may have been: it is not necessary to claim that this inventor had the intentions described above. It is absolutely possible, and perhaps more probable, that some historian was simply searching for a model for how to tell the tale of this Roman disaster and found it in Herodotus, without any political intentions. But once set against background of the famous fight of Athens in the Persian war, the sack of Rome had to take on greater dimensions and once established and transmitted, this kind of account could also serve to integrate the Romans in this longstanding and prominent narrative about the fight of the few civilized nations against a world of barbarians. The Romans had the same sort of enemy to face, they, too, had to suffer a huge defeat. And just as the Greeks at Salamis and Plataiai finally defeated the Persians, the Romans also finally forced the Gauls to withdraw. Their city did not fall to a foreign enemy again, at any rate not until late antiquity.

41 For the opportunities to present history in this medium, which cannot be realized in other forms of a respective ‘Geschichtskultur’, see Walter 2001, esp. 256, and Walter 2004, 214–220, for the Roman case. Cf. Erll 2004 for an outline of the topic (“Medien des kollektiven Gedächtnisses”).

42 Williams 2001, 157.

43 See only the wide range of media and *modi* which Walter 2004 has collected.

44 Cf. for example Erll 2004, 4–6; Walter 2001; Walter 2004, 214–217. See also Timpe 1988, 274.

45 For Fabius Pictor and his aims see Badian 1966, 2–6; Timpe 1972; Oakley 1997, 22–23; Walter 2004, 229–255; Beck 2003; Beck and Walter 2005, 55–61; Wiseman 2007, 74–75 (all with further references). See also above n. 34.

46 See for example Wiseman 2007, 74. But it must be noted that it is highly probable that Fabius did not write his work for only *one* group of readers, but for – at least – *two*: Romans and Greeks, especially those of Middle and Southern Italy (Beck and Walter 2005, 58–59).

Of course, the complexity of these processes of intercultural contact is described in a very simple way here. Moreover, it should also be noted that this stylization is only *one* aspect of the presence and development of the Gallic disaster in the Roman ‘Geschichtskultur.’ It can therefore only serve as *one* explanation of why the tradition of the Gallic disaster was broadened in so many ways.

For my present purpose, however, it may be enough that we are allowed to say that at least some Romans (and Greeks!) apparently liked the idea so much that they stylized the story of the raid by a few Gallic mercenaries, who were able to force the Romans to pay a ransom, in a way that made the defeat seemed much greater than it really was.⁴⁷ We will soon come back to this point, but first we will look at a detail which amounts to a significant difference between the accounts of these two events – a difference which might appear inconsistent with the interpretation given here: the Acropolis was taken by the enemy, but the Capitol was not taken by the Gauls.⁴⁸

4 ‘The fall of the Capitol?’

An interpretation offered by Nicholas Horsfall about one detail in the accounts of the two events may provide one explanation.⁴⁹ According to Herodotus, it was “said by the Athenians that a great snake lives in their temple, to guard the acropolis; in proof whereof they do ever duly set out a honey-cake as a monthly offering for it; this cake had ever before been consumed, but was now left untouched.”⁵⁰ The Athenians took this as another bad omen, which supported the interpretation of the oracle given by Themistocles. But in Rome the geese on the Capitol were spared, despite the famine among the defenders during the Gauls’ siege of the hill.⁵¹ So this part of the story may be seen as a “calculated antithesis” (Horsfall): in Rome *pietas* was preserved and the gods did not abandon the city – in this respect the Romans did not just keep level with the Athenians but surpassed them.⁵² It should be noted, however, that there are some difficulties with Horsfall’s argument: Plutarch does not mention that the geese were fed but in fact mentions that they were hungry.⁵³

47 Cf. the references quoted above (n. 28). It is not necessary to point out here that one of the most prominent individuals among the Greeks who saw the Roman not as barbarians and aimed to spread this message in the Greek world was Polybius. See Williams 2001, 161–165, and cf. Walbank 1967, 176: “P. himself never calls the Romans barbarians”

48 Cf. Sordi 1984, 87–88; Williams 2001, 152–154, thinks that this difference indicates that it is improbable that Fabius used Herodotus account in this way.

49 Horsfall 1987, 72.

50 Herod. 8.41 (translation: A. D. Godley).

51 Liv. 5.47.4.

52 Horsfall 1987, 72.

53 Plut. *Cam.* 27.2–3. Cf. Richardson 2012, 135, n. 104.

Be that as it may, even if one wants to follow Horsfall here this detail, rather than being the origin of the tradition of the successfully defended Capitol, is perhaps more appropriately viewed as an embellishment added when this tradition became widespread.

It should be mentioned, however, that some scholars support the view that a, perhaps older but certainly different tradition existed in Roman literature, according to which the Capitol also fell to the Gauls – similar to the Acropolis in Athens. Otto Skutsch collected some pieces of evidence supporting this view, which included a few fragmentary lines by the Roman poet Q. Ennius (ca. 239–169) that are central for his line of argument: “qua Galli furtim noctu summa arcis adorti moenia concubia uigilesque repente cruentant.”⁵⁴

In Skutsch’s view, which met with both agreement and disagreement by others scholars, this fragment, taken together with other evidence, proves that another version existed, in which the Capitol falls to the Gauls like the rest of the city.⁵⁵ But the arguments that were brought against this interpretation cannot just be set aside: it seems possible that in these verses Ennius was describing a scene in which the Gauls slaughtered

54 Enn. *Ann.* 227–228; Skutsch 1985, 405 (“And at that bedding down time of night [noctu concubia] the Gauls stole over the citadel’s topmost walls and suddenly bloodied the watch”). This fragment was preserved from Macrobius (*Macr.* 1.4.17) and the relevant passage is: “Ennius enim – nisi cui uidetur inter nostrae aetatis politiones munditias respuendus – noctu concubia dixit his uersibus: ‘qua Galli furtim noctu summa arcis adorti moenia concubia uigilesque repente cruentant.’ [...] et hoc posuit in *Annalium* septimo, ...” (“For Ennius – unless one thinks he fails the test of elegance in our refined age – used the phrase noctu concubia in these verses: ‘And at that bedding down time of night [noctu concubia] the Gauls stole over the citadel’s topmost walls and suddenly bloodied the watch: [...] This was in Book 7 of the *Annals*, ...’; translation by Robert A. Kaster). The position of this fragment in the seventh book might seem strange at first, because in this part of the *Annales* Ennius was describing the period of the first two Punic Wars, or rather the years between them and not the fourth century with the Gallic catastrophe (Cf. Walter 2004, 267–

268, with further references). But this objection can easily be dealt with if we assume that these lines were a part of a retrospective view of the events of the Gallic disaster in the seventh book. This is an explanation that can be supported by some lines in Polybius as well as in Silius Italicus, in which Gauls who look back on those events are described (*Pol.* 2.22.4, 2.23.7; *Sil.* 6.555–559). See Skutsch 1953, 77, with further references and Ribbeck 1856, 276–277, who already considered this idea. Of course, it should be noted that Theodor Mommsen questioned whether these lines really refer to the Gallic disaster (Mommsen 1879, 298, n. 3), and it is at least possible that his doubts were justified.

55 Skutsch 1953; Skutsch 1978; Skutsch 1985, 405–408. See also Horsfall 1987; Perl 2007 and further Sordi 1984, 88, who supports Skutsch’s view. Cf. Cornell 1986, 247–248; Cornell 1995, 317, and Forsythe 2005, 254, who are skeptical about this point. Cf. also Ogilvie 1965, 720; von Ungern-Sternberg 2000, 215; Williams 2001, 144–145; Walter 2004, 269, who think that no clear decision could be made.

a few guardians, after which the Romans (under the command of Manlius?) expelled them.⁵⁶ So the existence of this ‘deviant’ tradition is still open to doubt.⁵⁷

However, if there was such a tradition about the fall of the Capitol, the parallel to the fall of the Athenian Acropolis would fit in another detail.⁵⁸ What we can say with certainty is that in one, far more widespread, tradition the Gauls failed to take the Capitol because the geese cackled and Manlius repelled the barbarians.⁵⁹ If one wishes to follow Skutsch, then one might assume that at some point in Roman history a change occurred in the tradition about the Gallic sack: from the ‘Fall of the Capitol’ to its successful defense.⁶⁰ That, it should be noted, would not necessarily mean that such an alternative version represented the *true* course of events.⁶¹ One reason for such a change may be that the Romans in the time of the ‘Imperial Republic’, having achieved hegemony in the Mediterranean, did not want to remember that once even the heart of their city was conquered. But if this is so, it is not easy to explain why Ennius should have promoted the older (?) and now unfashionable version.

5 ‘The head of the world’

Whether or not one wishes to follow Skutsch’s arguments, the fact remains that a tradition took shape in which the Capitol stood at the center of a series of patriotic stories.⁶²

It now appears that the fragments of Fabius’ work preserve another important story pointing to the important role that was apparently ascribed to the Capitol from the late third century onwards in Roman historical thought – the discovery of the so-called *caput Oli* allegedly during the construction work on the temple of Iupiter Optimus Max-

56 Cornell 1986, 248: “These lines do not say that the Gauls massacred the garrison, but rather that they killed the *vigiles*, a very different matter. [...] In Livy the sentries were asleep; in Ennius they were surprised (while sleeping?) and dispatched.” According to Cornell 1986, 248, the passages in later texts like those in the *Punica* of Silius, which seem to indicate that the Capitol was taken “could be explained by the fact that in the canonical version the Roman garrison was eventually starved into submission and forced to hand over a large payment of gold to make the Gauls withdraw” or have to be seen as “rhetorical exaggeration” (for example in Lucan. 5.27).

57 Cf. Cornell 1986, 248; Walter 2004, 269, n. 255.

58 Cf. Richardson 2012, 132–133, n. 90.

59 Schwegler 1872, 256–258, collects the evidence for this version. See below n. 69.

60 Williams 2001, 145. The parallel existence of different versions in Roman social memory would be perfectly possible. Cf. Sordi 1984, 88; Williams 2001, 142; Richardson 2012, 128.

61 Although Perl 2007 seems to assume that. But cf. Williams 2001, 145.

62 Cf. above n. 7. See also Walbank 1957, 185 (“Later legends elaborated the defence of the Capitol [...]; but perhaps no serious attempt was made against it”).

imus.⁶³ The quotation from Fabius is preserved in the work of Arnobius (around AD 300), but it is Livy who gives a full account and an adequate interpretation:

caput humanum integra facie aperientibus fundamenta templi dicitur apparuisse. Quae visa species haud per ambages arcem eam imperii caputque rerum fore portendebat, idque ita cecinere vates, quique in urbe errant quosque ad eam rem consultandam ex Etruria acciverant.⁶⁴

Caput rerum – the head of the world: the origins of this story might be older but this interpretation seems better suited to a time when Rome was challenged by setbacks and defeats that needed to be countered by a narrative that promised a victory. After the wars against Pyrrhus (281–275) and the Carthaginians (264–241; 218–202), the Romans started to realize the new opportunities of expansion of various kinds which followed this victory.⁶⁵ The Romans had not yet reached their *imperium sine fine* at this time, and they were probably still far from having the developed form of the ideology of domination of the world, which is attested for the age of Augustus.⁶⁶ But if a tradition according to which the Capitol itself had fallen to a ‘horde of barbarians’ did exist, it would now seem inappropriate to say the least. And of course it is tempting to point to the way the Capitol and Rome itself were seen after Rome’s victories against Carthage and the Hellenistic kingdoms of the east to explain the supposed alteration of such a variant tradition if it did exist.⁶⁷ But as has been said above, this is possible but not verifiable.

63 F 16 FRH 1 (= Arnob. 6,7 = F 12 Peter = F 11 Jacoby). See also Liv. 1.55.5, 5.54.7; Valerius Antias F 14 FRH 15 (= F 13 Peter); Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 4.59–61; Plin. *Nat.* 28.15. See for example Ogilvie 1965, 211–212; Sordi 1984, 84–85; Cornell 1995, 145 (“A tradition that is at least as old as Fabius Pictor..”); Williams 2001, 157; Hölkeskamp 2004 [2001], 138; Hölkeskamp 2006, 480. Note however that Chassignet 1996, 83, doubts that the fragment really belongs to Pictor.

64 Liv. 1.55.5–6: “A human head, its features intact, was found, so it is said, by the men who were digging for the foundations of the temple. This appearance plainly foreshowed that here was to be the citadel

of the empire and the head of the world, and such was the interpretation of the soothsayers, both those who were in the City and those who were called in from Etruria to consider the matter” (translation by G. P. Goold).

65 See for example Ogilvie 1965, 183, 211–212; Sordi 1984, 91; Williams 2001, 156–157, and Hölkeskamp 2004 [2001], 137, all with further references.

66 Verg. *Aen.* 1.279. See Galinsky 1996, 210–211; Hölkeskamp 2004 [2001], 140–141; Hölkeskamp 2006, 480–481.

67 Cf. only Williams 2001, 152–153; Richardson 2012, 132–133, n. 90.

6 Topography and historiography

In Roman historiographical accounts we can find a series of examples describing the Capitol as the last refuge and stronghold during the Gallic disaster.⁶⁸ Apparently this image stimulated various versions.

As mentioned above, in a widely spread version, perhaps the most famous one, it was M. Manlius Capitolinus who successfully defended the Capitol when the Gauls made their most dangerous attempt to end the siege by a nightly attack.⁶⁹ It is not clear when this story was first created. Some scholars want to date its origins to the middle of the fourth century; many take the position that it was created as an aetiological story to explain the cognomen Capitolinus.⁷⁰ For the present purpose it is not necessary to discuss these considerations in detail, though they do offer many interesting insights into the tradition of early Rome. What is more interesting for this analysis is the way the topography of the Capitoline Hill seemed to inspire some inhabitants of Rome to develop and change the account of the Gallic disaster.

In Livy, Diodor and Plutarch, a young Roman named Pontius Cominius climbs up the hill from the side where the Tiber passes the Capitol to bring messages from the Romans who have fled to Veii and/or to bring Furius Camillus a message from Rome asking him come back to the city as *dictator*.⁷¹ The Gauls find Cominius' footprints and follow them up the hill, "near the shrine of Carmentis", where they are then beaten by

- 68 See only Walter 2004, 229–334, for the Roman historiographical tradition from the third to the first century.
- 69 Liv. 5.47; Diod. 14.116; Plut. *Cam.* 27; Zon. 7.23. See Schwegler 1872, 256, n. 5, for further references. Cf. a discussion of the evidence Mommsen 1878, 532–533; Ogilvie 1965, 734–735; Wiseman 1979; Sordi 1984, 88–89.
- 70 Ogilvie 1965, 734, is optimistic about the authenticity of the episode ("authentic stuff of history"). Cornell 1995, 317, is more skeptical. Horsfall 1987, 74; Forsythe 2005, 256; Richardson 2012, 120–121, place the origin of the story in the year 345, because Livy reports for that year that a certain Cn. Manlius Capitolinus was *magister equitum* of the dictator L. Furius Camillus. Both men had vowed a temple for Iuno Moneta on the *arx*. It is not unlikely that their names were preserved in a dedicatory inscription and that perhaps "later popular tradition might have wrongly construed these names as referring to the great Camillus and the infamous demagogue M. Manlius Capitolinus" (Forsythe 2005, 256) and

so also confused the tradition about the Gallic disaster. Perhaps this linkage could serve as another explanation for the prominence of the Capitol and the geese in Iuno's temple in the tradition about the Gallic occupation. It should be noted, in this connection, that Schwegler 1872, 258–260, thinks that elements of the story were invented to explain some old religious rites in which geese and the sacrifice of dogs played an important role and whose original meaning had been forgotten. But this notion is rejected by Horsfall 1987, 75: "Schwegler's suggestion that the story explains the origin of the rituals is not mandatory". Flower 2006, 48–50, sees the story as an attempt to explain the *cognomen* Capitolinus. So we do not know when and for what reasons this story was invented or how it was developed in the early tradition, but it was in any case an old element of the tradition. See also the close reading of the career of Manlius Capitolinus in Jaeger 1997, 57–93.

- 71 Ogilvie 1965, 732, proposes that the worries about the legality of the election are to be attributed to C. Licinius Macer.

Manlius and the other guardians who come to his aid.⁷² In the account of the trial of Manlius after his alleged attempt to become a tyrant in the sixth and seventh books, though, Livy gives some information that does not fit his account of the Gauls’ attempt in the fifth book. Here the Gauls climbed the hill by way of the Tarpeian Rock on the south-east flank.⁷³ Peter Wiseman and Stephen Oakley have suggested a convincing explanation for this confusion.⁷⁴ The wish of some annalists to change and develop the story of Manlius in order to make it more sensational may have led to the version in which Manlius is flung from the Tarpeian Rock. From that version, it was a short step to the idea that it would seem even more dramatic to change the location of the Gallic attack: now Manlius was executed on the place of his great and heroic deed “and the same spot served to commemorate extraordinary fame and the extremity of punishment, as experienced by the self-same man.”⁷⁵ So in this episode the demands of both a dramatic arrangement of the story and a didactic function of historiography, came together.

7 Rhetoric and internal enemies

It is absolutely possible, and in my opinion also probable, that the story, or rather the stories of Manlius, the geese and the siege of the Capitol, were preserved and discussed outside of the realm of historiography as well and known to others besides experts such as Livy and his predecessors. But unfortunately it is only barely possible to verify any kind of daily, informal talk about history for the republican period in general.⁷⁶ Still, a few traces pointing to a somewhat broader knowledge of the Gallic disaster do exist. For example, Cicero (106–43) referred to this event in the defense of his client M. Fonteius, the former *propraetor* of Gallia Narbonensis, before the *quaestio repetundarum*, probably in the year 69. Fonteius was accused of extortion by his former subjects. Cicero, who puts forth multiple arguments to defend Fonteius, attacks the Gallic provincials with a reference to the apparently widely known siege of the Capitol by the Gauls:

Hae sunt nationes, quae quondam tam longe ab suis sedibus Delphos usque ad Apolinem Pythium atque ad oraculum orbis terrae vexandum ac spoliandum profectae sunt. Ab isdem gentibus sanctis et in testimonio religiosis obsessum Capitolium est atque ille Iuppiter, cuius nomine mairos nostri vinctam testimoniorum fidem esse voluerunt.⁷⁷

72 Liv. 5.46.8; Diod. 14.116; Plut. *Cam.* 25. See Ogilvie 1965, 732 for a short discussion.

73 Liv. 6.20.12, 6.17.4, 7.10.3.

74 See for the following Wiseman 1979 and Oakley 1997, 490–492. Cf. Jaeger 1997, 74–87.

75 Liv. 6.20.12: “locusque idem in uno homine et eximiae gloriae monumentum et poenae ultimae fuit.” (translation by G. P. Goold).

76 Walter 2004, 70–71, with further references.

77 Cic. *Font.* 30: “These are the tribes which in old days set forth upon a far journey from their homes and

On another occasion Cicero came forward with another reference to the Gallic siege of the Capitol, or rather the Gallic attempts to capture it: in his third Philippic, in December 44, Cicero attacks M. Antonius, who had summoned the Senate, by emphasizing that this enemy of the people had been climbing up the Capitoline Hill along the very same route the Gauls had once taken: “adesse in Capitolio iussit; quod in templum ipse nescio qua per Gallorum cuniculum ascendit.”⁷⁸ Cicero would not have chosen these examples if he had not assumed that his audience would understand them.⁷⁹ Indeed, he very probably anticipated that jurors in the process against Fonteius, as well as senators, would not only understand his allusions to the Gallic disaster but would also share his interpretation of them. It is not difficult to imagine what this interpretation consisted of. But we do not know what exactly came into the minds of Cicero’s listeners and/or readers as they listened to his speech or read it later. We do not know how deep their knowledge about the Gallic disaster was. Probably the degree of knowledge was highly variable: ranging from those who knew little more than that at some time, long ago in the early years of the Republic, some Gauls, presumably coming from the north, took all of Rome, except for the Capitol, to those who had perhaps read contemporary or even older works by historians and were familiar with their account in some level of detail. But one should not be overly optimistic about the size of the latter group. Cicero himself was no professional historian.⁸⁰ Rather he got his knowledge about historical *exempla* of more distant times from his rhetorical education.⁸¹ So it does not seem far-fetched to assume that *exempla* like the two cited here were also used by other orators from time to time and were as a result familiar at least to those who usually listened to the speeches of orators in the senate, in the courts or in the forum.⁸²

These *exempla* functioned as a kind of narrative shorthand, which implies that they were elements of the popular knowledge about the past.⁸³ The pairing of Gauls/Capitol

came to the oracle of the Pythian Apollo at Delphi, the resort of the whole world, to harry and to despoil. It was these same tribes of upright and punctilious oath-regarders who beset the Capitol and the temple of that Jove with whose name our ancestors chose to seal their plighted troth.” (translation by N. H. Watts). Cf. Kremer 1994, 83–104; Bücher 2006, 181.

- 78 Cic. *Phil.* 3.20: “He ordered that it take place on the Capitol and himself made his way up to the temple through some Gauls’ tunnel.” (translation by D. R. Shackleton Bailey). Cf. Bücher 2006, 182, 253; See Cic. *Caec.* 88, where Cicero also mentions this *cuniculum*.
- 79 Cf. Kremer 1994, 104. For the use of *exempla* in Cicero’s speeches see Bücher 2006, for example 155 (*exempla* need “den Hintergrund und das Umfeld

einer allgemein geteilten Kenntnis, eines allgemein verbreiteten Verständnisses von Geschichte, das Reaktionen [...] berechenbar macht”). Cf. Hölkeskamp 2014, 67.

- 80 Walter 2004, 361–373; Bücher 2006, 141–147. Cicero intensified his historical studies only when he was in exile.
- 81 Bücher 2006, 52–74. Cf. Bücher 2006, 146: “Aus der Geschichte braucht der Redner Cicero pointierte Stichwörter, eine Botschaft, die er an den Mann bringen will, aber keine ausführlichen Darstellungen von Ereignissen.”
- 82 It should be admitted, though, that Cicero did not give these two speeches in the *forum*.
- 83 Rösen 2008, 19–20: “Diese narrativen Abkürzungen oder Ultrakurzgeschichten gehören zum festen Inventar jeder Kommunikation, und zwar auf allen

may have worked as an example of such shorthand that was easy to remember – last but not least because of the visual presence of the Capitol in the ‘memory landscape’ of the city itself and the prominent position of the Capitol within this landscape.⁸⁴ In Greek and Roman literature, this pairing lasted well up to the imperial era. Hence the passage from Tacitus which was quoted at the beginning of this article is only one of a series of examples.⁸⁵

8 A strange procession and Rome’s ‘memory landscape’

“Any group”, Jan Assmann notes in *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, “that wants to consolidate itself will make an effort to find and establish a base for itself, not only to provide a setting for its interactions but also to symbolize its identity and to provide points of reverence for its memories. Memory needs places and tends towards spatialization.”⁸⁶

In Rome the Capitol was such a place. It was not only one of the centers of the political and religious life of the Republic, it was also a space that contained various ‘Erinnerungs- und Gedächtnisorte’ that reminded the city’s inhabitants about its founding as well as about their own glorious history.⁸⁷ We do not know which stories and episodes from this long history an average Roman would have remembered as he or she walked to or around the *Forum Romanum* or the Capitol. As in the now famous anecdote in Maurice Halbwachs’ *On Collective Memory* about the various memories that came to a stroller’s mind on his walk through London, a range of different memories would certainly also have come to the mind of a Roman stroller walking through the area of the Capitol.⁸⁸ Perhaps he or she would have known stories about the building of the great temple for Jupiter, about Tarpeia or Manlius Capitolinus or about the Gallic siege of the hill many generations ago from various sources, perhaps even have been familiar with

Ebenen – von der alltäglichen Rede bis zur hochstilisierten Interpretation menschlicher Lebensumstände. [...] Sie signalisieren historische Erinnerungen, die so in die Umgangssprache eingelagert sind, daß sie nicht als ausgeführte Geschichten auftreten müssen, um verstanden zu werden.”

84 See Hölkeskamp 2004 [1996]; Hölkeskamp 2004 [2001]; Hölkeskamp 2006, 488; Hölkeskamp 2012, esp. 386–387, 406–407; Cf. Walter 2004, 131–188, for an overview of the ‘memory landscape’ of the city of Rome. The Capitol can certainly be called a Roman *lieu de mémoire* (see Walter 2004, 160–161). A short introduction into the concept is given by Nora 1998, 11–42. See Hölkeskamp and Stein-

Hölkeskamp 2011, esp. 41–42, for problems and opportunities of transferring Nora’s concept to the Roman world.

85 See for example Verg. *Aen.* 8.652–662; Stat. *Silv.* 5.3.188; Tac. *Ann.* 11.23.3–4.

86 Assmann 2011 [1992], 25; cf. Hölkeskamp 2006, 481–482.

87 Beck 2005, 79: “Zumeist waren in diesen Räumen auch Erinnerungs- und Gedächtnisorte gelegen, die die *memoria* an die Gründung der Stadt wachhielten und von ihrer ruhmreichen Geschichte zeugten.” Cf. Jaeger 1997, 4–5, 56; Hölkeskamp 2004 [2001], 144–147; Hölkeskamp 2006, 488–490; Rea 2007, 44–63.

88 Halbwachs 1967 [1950], 2–3.

more than one version thereof. The visibility of the places where these stories took place in such a prominent area of the city could then serve to bring back the memories of these stories to a stroller's mind. Of course the more someone knew about the city's past the more that person would recognize during his walk. And many powerful and rich individuals tried to draw their fellow citizens' attention to specific parts of Roman history, which could serve to enhance the glory of their own family. They erected statues and monuments, not only but especially, in the central areas of the Forum and the Capitol intended to remind the community about successes in wars and battles fought for the *res publica*.⁸⁹ This 'memorial landscape' of the city was interconnected not only through stories told and transmitted in media like oral tradition, poetry or historiography but also through rituals. Some of the various *pompae* that were familiar to the inhabitants of Rome led through these areas.⁹⁰ The route of the triumphal procession led the participants over the Forum to the Capitol and past various monuments and temples that were erected in direct connection of earlier triumphs. So the city's history was connected in a way to the latest event. Another procession, the *pompa circensis*, celebrated the religious and social unity as well as the hierarchy of the Roman society.⁹¹ According to the Roman tradition, this procession was inaugurated at the beginning of the 5th century. From this time on, its route (from the Capitol to the Circus Maximus) and its elements allegedly remained unchanged, which could serve to show the continuity and permanence of the republic. Thus the Capitol was involved in more than one procession that celebrated the recent or more distant history of the city and its community.

It would be interesting to know in this regard along what path the strange procession described by Plutarch and mentioned at the beginning of this contribution proceeded.⁹² It does not seem completely unlikely that the route of this procession included some of the places in the city that were connected to the historical memory of the Gallic disaster. Given the fact that the useless dogs as well as the praised geese were connected with the Capitol it is possible, although on the basis of our preserved sources not attestable, that they marched from, to or around the Capitol, which would thus be included in another way in the 'memorial landscape' of the city. If Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg is right to think that Plutarch is the earliest source attesting to this procession and that it was not even invented before the imperial era, this would be an interesting aspect that shows in another way that the social memory of the 'Gallic disaster' was still vital in Plutarch's time.

89 See for example Hölkeskamp 2004 [2001], 148–157; Hölkeskamp 2006, 485–487; Walter 2004, 139–143.

90 For the various *pompae* see for example Hölkeskamp 2006, 483–485; Hölkeskamp 2008; Walter 2004, 89–

108 (for the *pompa funebris*); Itgenshorst 2005 (for the *pompa triumphalis*).

91 Beck 2005, 90–96 with further references.

92 See above n. 5.

Even if this was the case, this would have been only one procession among the various *pompae* that were familiar to the inhabitants of the city of Rome. And the *pompa triumphalis* was not the only one among them to offer the Romans far more glamour and spectacle than the impaled dog and the praised goose described by Plutarch. This procession and the other evidence which was discussed in this contribution certainly do not transform the most successful state of the ancient world into one with a ‘culture of defeat.’

It has been possible to show, though, that the Romans, in addition to all their glorious victories, were reminded from time to time of one of the darkest chapters of their history and that the place which they themselves valued as the center and head of their world, the Capitol, played an important role in this memory.

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