Recent Research on Ancient Galatia (Central Turkey) in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods

21 years ago, the first (and so far only) synthesis of Ancient Galatia was published by S. Mitchell. The workshop at Waterloo addressed a wealth of new findings and approaches, representing a milestone towards an updated treatment. It was introduced by ALTAY COŞKUN (Waterloo) with a brief overview ranging from the 19th-century explorers to some of the large-scale present-day research projects.

WILLIAM BURGHART (Maryland) offered a refreshing discussion of the early Galatians’ roles within the power games of an anarchical environment. Modern views continue to repeat ancient biases in that they tend to reduce the Galatians to mercenaries, or allies at best. Burghart made an emblematic choice when speaking of “Galatian Kingdoms”: he thus not only recalls the plurality of Galatian political entities, but also their own (very effective) agency. Though the surrounding kingdoms may well have checked the power of the Galatians, they never managed to subjugate them as a whole. Victories over the Galatians might have been fodder for propaganda, but their continued value for such propaganda implies that a substantial military power base continued to exist. Moreover, a reassessment of political goals was called for, since the Galatians showed much more ambition towards accumulating wealth than establishing territorial rule.

ADRIAN G. DUMITRU (Bucharest/Cincinnati) presented a systematic study of the attestation of Galatians in the Seleucid Army. He presented, in chronological order, the most prominent cases of interaction between the two, as attested from the Elephant Victory of Antiochus I until the victory parade of Daphne under Antiochus IV. Among other things, he argued for Thrace as a potential recruitment area besides central Anatolia. The ensuing discussion further involved notions such as multiple ethnic identities on the one hand, and pseudo-ethnic army units in Hellenistic and Roman warfare.

KONSTANTIN BOSHNAKOV (Toronto) focussed on the prehistory of the Galatian raids into Macedon and the Greek motherland as well as on further interactions of Celts and Thracians prior to and during the 3rd and 2nd centuries. He paid much attention to possible itineraries of raiding or migrating hordes, including the implication for the development of external relations and the creation of ethnic identities. He also aimed at reconstructing the “cognitive maps” of the Celts, as they were beginning to develop an awareness of common ethnicity on the one hand, and leading a ruinous lifestyle that prevented their ethnic integration into the Early Hellenistic environment on the other.

The keynote speaker MUSTAFA ADAK (Antalya) presented the recent research of the highly productive team of Akdeniz University. Thanks to the reconstruction of the Stadiasmus Patarensis S. Şahin/M. Adak, Stadiasmus Patarensis. Itinerae Romana Provinciae Lyciae, Istanbul 2007 Gephyra [15, 2013] contains Parerga zum Stadiasmus Patarensis 9–14. they were able to uncover hundreds of kilometers of Roman roads in Lycia, together with several settlements and monuments hitherto unknown. Other recent epigraphic surveys have helped to specify the location of the Pisidian Homonadeis, the killers of Amyntas, the last king of the Galatians, as well as the sep-
aration of the southern parts from the province of Galatia under Vespasian.

OLEG GABELKO (Moscow) discussed those Galatians who owe their ‘existence’ either to scribal errors of medieval copyists or to erroneous conclusions of ancient writers. He suggests that the Rhigosages in Antiochus III’s army should be identified with the better-known Aegosages from Thrace; that the Tosiopoi be read as Tolistobogioi and Gazetai mentioned by Stephanos of Byzantium no longer be understood as an ethnic but as a military unit. While Gabelko advocated a broad source basis for his onomastic analyses, he very strongly leaned towards the linguistic approach of the Celtologist Alexander Falilleyev (Aberystwyth), accepting as Celtic only what can be clearly identified as Celtic lexemes and morphemes. At least in some cases, this may be too narrow an approach, given that Galatian/Gaulish is known to us only in fragments and that languages tend to include foreign elements through intercultural contact. So at least in the case of the Tosiopoi, genealogical and historical aspects seem to speak against their identification with the Tolistobogioi.

THOMAS NELSON (Oxford) rehearsed and systematically compared the most famous expressions of victories won over Galatians by Hellenistic kings, such as the Callimachean Hymn to Delos, the Attalid Great Altar and Lucian’s Zeuxis which attests the ‘Elephant Victory’ of Antiochus I. Traces that seem to reveal distinctly orientalising motifs were contextualized within a long line of representations of eastern victories, presenting the Seleucid kings as the heirs of the Achaemenids. Such an affirmation of continuity can be paralleled elsewhere in Seleucid propaganda, and would suggest that the Ptolemaic vilification of the Seleucids as ‘new Persians’ was actually rooted in the Asian Kings’ own self-presentation.

BRETT BARTLETT (Waterloo) offered a close reading of Livy’s account of the campaign of Cn. Manlius Vulso in 189 and of the ensuing controversy about his triumph. Bartlett explained the several inconsistencies and blunt contradictions by the multiple purposes underlying Livy’s narrative. The traditional theme of the fear-inspiring Galatians which served to enhance the glory of their defeater was gradually superseded by the consul’s (or the historiographer’s) caution that not those barbarians but rather Asia’s amoenitas, a contagio disciplinae morisque (Liv. 38.17.18), was the more dangerous threat to the Roman soldiers. This subtle analysis of the Gallograeci exemplified the degree of flexibility that constructions, deconstructions and reconstructions of anti-Galatian stereotypes show.

ELIZABETH KOSMETATOU (Springfield, Ill.) revisited the Galatian victory of Philetaerus, the dedicatee of a honorific monument on Delos attested in the accompanying inscription IG XI2 1105. While this dynast had previously been identified with either the founder of the Attalid dynasty or the brother of King Eumenes II, Kosmetatou put forward compelling arguments against the assumption of a military defeat of the Celts by either of them. Palaeography suggests a date in the later 3rd century BC for the inscription. Philetaerus’ presumed victory could thus be evinced as a product of the Pergamene fiction that projected back Attalus I’s real successes against the Galatians, in order to legitimize his own power and relatively recently acquired royal title.

RYAN WALSH (Hamilton) discussed Plutarch’s descriptions of three Galatian women (mor. 257e-258a): Chiomara, wife of King Orthion, who returned home from captivity with the head of her own violator; Camma, who poisoned herself in order to also kill the murderer of her husband; and Stratonice, who offered her maiden Electra to her royal husband to ensure him dynastic continuity without being repudiated herself. Although they crossed the ethical boundaries of Plutarch’s times, they are presented with much sympathy. Walsh specified that, rather than queenly virtues, illustration of philandria was at the heart of these stories: the transgression of gender-defined boundaries was justified since male relatives had fallen short of their moral obligations, thus urging women to act as substitutes.

The panel on Pessinous and Cybele had to be cut short, which is lamentable given the extent of most recent discoveries of the Melbourne Excavation Team since 2009. Angelo Verlinde had intended to present the Roman temple in a new light: based on the first stratified analysis of pottery, combined with the style of the architectural decor, he now suggests a late Augustan (instead of a late Tiberian date) for the foremost temple of Roman Pessinous, though maintaining the prevailing view that this sanctuary was a temple for Augustus. In contrast, ALTAY COŞKUN (Waterloo) preferred to ascribe the sanctuary to Cybele. This identification was part of his argument on the Imperial cult. Coşkun followed the observations by Philip Harland (2003) who highlighted frequent associations of Augustus with the private mystic circles of Ephesus. However, the evidence from Galatia points a public role of the cult. A better understanding of the diverse evidence was approached by emphasizing the permeation of the religious and political landscapes...
by the imperial cult: the most effective method of spreading the emperor’s cult was not constructing new temples, but introducing his statue into existing sanctuaries, into which he was received as a temple-sharing god (synaodos theos). Mystery elements attested in the Imperial cult of Galatia can thus be traced back to its connection with the cult of Pessinontian Cybele.

FELIX JOHN (Kiel) started his paper on Paul’s Galatians by resuming the old question of the addressees: were they the descendants of the Celts who had settled in the region of Ancyra or rather the Roman, Hellenistic or Phrygian inhabitants of Antioch near Pisidia in the south of the province? Opting for the latter interpretation, he tried to establish the Lebenswelt of the recipients of the letter, convincingly ruling out the hidden persistence of either Phrygian or ruler cults as Paul’s main concern. Nor do we have to reckon with a Jewish community in Antioch, but rather with Judaizing missionaries. In the discussion, it was pointed out that a compelling decision on the addressees has not yet been made: the Anglophone south-Galatian hypothesis promoted by William Ramsey is deeply rooted in anti-Galatian bias that denied urban life in Ancyra before the 2nd century AD; in contrast, the north-Galatian hypothesis, until recently prevalent in German scholarship, was no less prejudiced in that it took for granted sustained urbanization efforts as early as under Augustus. Latest archaeological and epigraphic work allows us to reconstruct the histories of Ancyra (and Pessinous!) in much more detail, information that has yet to inform the debates on Paul’s Galatians.

AITOR BLANCO PEREZ (Oxford/Princeton) presented a case study on the multicultural colony of Antioch near Pisidia and its sanctuary of Mên Askænos. Based on repeated attestations of the verb ‘tekmoreuein in the context of that sanctuary as well as of Xenoï Tekmoreoi, he tried to reconstruct a continuity of Phrygian cultic activities well into the 3rd century AD. This interpretation was contextualized among further local substrata shining through the epigraphic record of the High Empire.

CHRISTIAN WALLNER (Graz/Klagenfurt) gave an overview of the Galatian city of Tavium and the surveys conducted there by the Tavium International Research Project under the direction of Karl Strobel and Christian Gerber (1997-2009). The focus was on the epigraphic material, predominantly early Byzantine tomb inscriptions, though the chronological imbalance is due to the fact that the high imperial and Hellenistic layers have not yet been excavated. On the basis of four examples, aspects of the history of Tavium were showcased. Most interesting were two inscriptions that allow us to reconstruct the Trocmian family of Gutumaros, his son Bellon and grandsons’ Grimitalos and Andromachos, evidence that sparked a stimulating discussion on intercultural onomastics in Galatia.

WOJCIECH SOWA (Cracow) presented a systematic analysis of the Galatian language – seemingly, a fourth version of “Galatische Sprachreste”, following Leo Weisgerber (1931), who first collected and classified the material; Karlhorst Schmidt (1994), who presented a morphological typology of the evidence; Philip Freeman (2001), whose collection added source-references. Sowa’s study, however, is the first that is truly intercultural in that it gives due consideration to the multifarious linguistic context: the Old Anatolian languages (Hittite, Luwian), Phrygian, Greek and Latin, all of which impacted not only the Celtic-speaking inhabitants of central Anatolia, but also the transliteration of Galatian names, especially in Greek and Roman inscriptions. He pointed out that Vindia, the settlement that superseded Gordium in Roman times, can be read as either Anatolian or Celtic. In the ensuing discussion it was emphasized that such ambiguity was sufficiently widespread to claim that reinterpretation (folk-etymology) is typical for appropriations of space in intercultural contexts.

Finally, ERGÜN LAFLI (Izmir) presented the results of recent surveys conducted around Kulu and Ilgin located in-between Ancyra and Konya. The evidence produced fit the mix of Anatolian, Phrygian and Greco-Roman traditions to be expected from the area, while specifically Galatian names or Latene objects have not yet been attested. Also the dates of the evidence, ranging from the 2nd to the 7th centuries AD, reflect the well-known urbanizing dynamism visible throughout the Roman Empire since the 1st century AD, being also in line with the continuation of polis life until the Arabic invasions of the 7th and 8th centuries. More specific information can only be gained from systematic excavations.

The workshop clearly succeeded in showcasing the breadth of current research regarding the landscape of Galatia and the chronological limits of Galatian History from the early Hellenistic to the early Byzantine periods. The substantial progress made in recent years is owing to some important excavations (those of Gordium, Ancyra and Germia have unfortunately not been covered adequately at the workshop), more field surveys (such as in Tavium or the Konya province), the publication of epi-
graphic and numismatic corpora (or preparation thereof), and most of all to the several attempts at reconsidering who the Galatians or the inhabitants of Galatia were and how they interacted with their environment politically, socially and culturally. It was shown that the study of the broader Hellenistic and Roman contexts not only supports the interpretation of the (still lacunose) evidence, but that the available evidence for the Galatians has much to offer to enhance our understanding of the conditions under which royal and imperial rules were established, legitimized, challenged and redefined.

Conference Overview:

William Burghart (Maryland), When Gauls Attack: an Examination of the Impact of the Galatian Kingdoms on the International Affairs of Hellenistic Asia Minor

Adrian Dumitru (Bucharest/Cincinnati), The Galatians and the Seleucid Army

Konstantin Boshnakov (Toronto), ‘Cognitive Map’ and ‘Spatial Syntax’ of the Celtic Raids on the Eastern Mediterranean (3rd-2nd Centuries BC)

Mustafa Adak (Antalya), Reading the Landscape: Environmental Archaeology in Southern Anatolia

Oleg Gabelko (Moscow), ‘Pseudo-Galatians’ and ‘Pseudo-Galatia’ in the Ancient Sources

Thomas Nelson (Oxford), Ideologies of Galatian Victories – a Comparative Approach

Brett Bartlett (Waterloo), Gallograeci, Cn. Manlius Vulso, and Livy’s Sources: Examples of Degeneration

Elizabeth Kosmetatou (Springfield, Ill.), The Eunuch Philetairos: Galatian-Slayer and Pergamene Founding Father

Ryan Walsh (Hamilton), Representation of Galatian Royal Women

Felix John (Kiel), The Letter to the Galatians and its Context

Aitor Blanco Perez (Oxford/Princeton), *tekmoreuein and the Phrygian Substratum of Roman Galatia in the High Imperial Period

Altay Coşkun (Waterloo), Mystery Aspects of the Imperial Cult in Galatia

Christian Wallner (Graz/Klagenfurt), Inscriptions of the Tavium Area

Wojciech Sowa (Cracow), Linguistic and Cross-Cultural Relations in and around Galatia (3rd Century BCE – 3rd Century CE).

Ergün Laflı (Izmir), Recent Studies on Kulu and Ilgın in Galatia

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