In the last decades of the fourth century CE, the historian Ammianus Marcellinus writes about Julian's mission into Gaul. He digresses from the narrative in order to include a brief ethnography of the Gallic people, describing them as ferocious and warlike barbarians.[1] By this time, however, the province of Gaul was populated by Roman citizens, speaking Latin, living in Roman cities, surrounded by Classical-style monuments and houses, and consuming Roman goods. In fact, the Gauls Ammianus describes have more in common with the Gauls described by Polybius some five hundred years earlier than with the inhabitants of 4th-century Roman Gaul. This similarity is due to the fact that both authors are drawing upon the ethnographic tradition as a source of information. This tradition, already formulated in early Greek literature, established a certain script for how classical authors ought to characterize the "other". The tradition had such stability that it continued long after relations between the two groups had changed, and even after the "other" had become something more familiar. In the case of Gaul, the other had become Roman. The question then arises if any deviations from this tradition ever occurred, and if so, are the differences simply another literary tool employed by the authors or might the deviations be influenced by reality….

The Ethnographic Tradition

While the selection from Ammianus is an excellent example of Latin appropriation of the ethnographic tradition, the writing of ethnographies began much earlier in Classical literature. Although modern scholars acknowledge that ancient authors did not recognize ethnography as a separate genre of literature, as they did for epic or oratory, these ancient authors did create a formulaic writing style, which described the physical characteristics of other places and the nature and customs of their populations. Specifically, Greek and Roman writers used ethnographic writings to "depict the diversity of mankind, and thereby to reach a fuller

[1] Amm. 15.11.

understanding of their own cultures and of their place in the world."[2] Therefore, the ethnographic tradition contains geographical and ethnographical information. The standard topics included in the ethnographies by both Greek and Roman authors are: physical geography of the region, climate, organization of the society, agriculture and resources, origins and appearance of the local population, and customs and behavior of the local society.[3]

Along with a set of topics that an ethnography should cover, there was also a traditional way of talking about foreign groups. Specifically, Greek and Roman authors viewed a foreign nation as the "other" and referred to foreign geography, appearance, and behavior in terms of similarity or dissimilarity to their own culture. Most often these comparisons are given in moral terms, as behavior that is different from one's own is often seen as inherently bad. A characterization of foreign nations as barbarian and the emphasis on non-Greek (i.e. uncivilized) behavior developed around the time of the Persian Wars in the early 5th century.[4] Although traditionally those people furthest removed from "civilization" were seen as the most barbaric, and so the most morally corrupt, sometimes an author will take the opposite perspective and see that those removed from a life of luxury and wealth are actually more morally pure and less corrupt than the Greeks or Romans (or at least what the Greeks or Romans had become).[5]

The ethnographic tradition seems to have arisen from an early interest on the part of the Greeks in foreign cultures, which first appears in Greek literature as early as the 8th century in the

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[2] Thomas 1982, p. 1; see also Jacoby 1956, pp. 26-34; Müller 1972-1980

[3] Thomas 1982, p. 2; Rives 1999, p. 15; see also Trüdinger 1918; Wolff 1934, p. 136; Müller 1972-1980.

[4] Rives 1999, p. 16; Jüthner 1923; E. Hall, 1989; J. Hall, 1997, pp. 44-9; Rives 1999, p. 12; Nippel 2002, p. 283; Browning 2002; in fact, the word, *barbaros*, does not appear in Archaic literature and seems to have entered Greek vocabulary in the early 5th century (E. Hall 1989, pp. 10-11); for more a discussion on this division specifically in the Roman world, see Dauge 1981.

[5] See Herodotus 4.62-65, where he describes the Scythians as nomadic cannibals; Strabo, however, depicts the Scythians as just and peaceful nomads (*Geog*. 7.3.9); Hartog 1988; Bohak 2005; for depictions of the noble savage in Classical literature, see Lovejoy and Boas 1935; Shaw 1982-3.

Homeric descriptions of the both real and mythical people and places.[6] These earliest references to other ethnic groups, derived from a general curiosity about different cultures, often included strange or fantastic behaviors, such as only subsisting on milk or practicing cannibalism, especially when authors were dealing with the borders of the world.[7] The 6th and 5th centuries, however, saw the formation of an ethnographic tradition as such, beginning with the *Periêgêsis* (leading around) of Hecataeus of Miletus in 500 BCE. This literary tour of Europe, Asia, Egypt and Libya was in essence a traveler's guide with information on territorial boundaries, the heritage of the indigenous population, their customs, and local facts.[8] After this work, ethnographies begin to appear in a variety of forms, including as part of an historical framework, like Herodotus' description of the Egyptians and Scythians.[9]

Early on in the ethnographic tradition, many authors proposed (and accepted) the theory that climate was a determining factor in both the physical characteristics and the behavior of people. Already in Herodotus we have the idea that soft countries produce soft men. Not long after, the author of *Airs, Waters, Places,* a Hippocratic treatise, espouses more specific theoretical relationship between character and climate, which divides the people of Asia and Europe, and claims that those from Europe are more warlike on account of the violent changes in weather. This climatic framework resulted in the ethnographic conclusion that people from the north and west (i.e. Europe) are large, fierce, and warlike due to their harsh climate, whereas people from

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[6] Rives 1999, p. 11; for Homeric references to the Cyclopes and Lotus-Eaters, see *Od.* Bk. 9; for Homeric references to the Paphlagonians, see *Ill.* 2.851, 5.576-7, Bohak 2005, p. 210; for Homeric references to the Phoenicians, see *Od.* 14.285-315, 15.403-84; for ethnographies in Homer in general, see Murray 1989. The interest in other cultures at this time period most likely reflects the increased contact that the Greeks had with other nations through trade and colonization; both Rives (1999, pp. 11-12) and Nippel (2002, pp. 278-282) connect the increased contact to the increased interest in the "other".

[7] Nippel 2002, p. 282; Romm (1992) and Bohak (2005) both provide an analysis of some of these early Greek stereotypes; Romm is concerned especially with those cultures at the edges of the *oikumene*.

[8] Jacoby 1912; Rives 1999, p. 12; Nippel 2002, p. 282.

[9] Rives (1999, p. 12-13) identifies these three strands of ethnography. Periegetic ethnographies include Strabo's *Geography* and Arrian's *Periplus of the Black Sea*; ethnographic monographs include the *Aigyptiaka* and *Persika* by Hellanicus of Lesbos, and *Lydiaka* by Xanthus the Lydian; Hdt. Bk 4; see also *Hérodote et les Peuples non-Grecs* 1988; Hartog 1988; Caesar's ethnography of Gaul in *De Bello Gallico* is included in a historical framework.

the south and east are smaller and less aggressive because of the extreme heat. Arguably at this point in time, the tradition was established and the "diction and form became fixed".[10] Philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, added ethical and moral components to their ethnographies.[11] Finally, in the early Hellenistic period there is an increased interest in the *thaumata* (wondrous things) found in foreign places and ethnographies, especially of more remote peoples, take on a mythical and legendary element.[12]

The Ethnography of Gaul before the Conquest of Caesar

After having established the origins of the ethnographic tradition and its standard elements, we identify the traditional stereotype of Gaul present in the literature before the conquest. As mentioned above, at an early date authors were writing their ethnographies under the belief that climate was a primary factor in determining a people's appearance and behavior. According to this climatic theory, people from the north and west were under-civilized (e.g. nomadic), taller, and more courageous than people from the south or the east, but they also had "sluggish minds", which meant they would rush into battle without thinking.[13] In the 4th century, Ephorus composed a history that situated the Celts in the west, neighbors to the Scythians in the north (with the Indians and the Ethiopians occupying the east and south respectively), thus establishing in the Greek mind that the Gauls and the Scythians made up all the peoples to the north.[14] In the eyes of the Greeks and Romans these neighbors were the barbarians of western

[10] Hdt. 9.122; *Airs, Waters, Places* 16 and 23; Thomas 1982, p. 2; cf. Pseudo-Aristotelian text *Problemata* 909a-910b; This climatic division also corresponds with the astrological explanation for ethnic differences espoused by the astronomer Ptolemy, who adds that the region of the sky over Europe makes the Europeans warlike, industrious, and independent (Ptolemy *Tetr*. 2.3.61-2).
[11] Plato *Resp*. 4.435e; Artist. *Pol*. 7.7.1327b 18.
[12] Thomas 1982, p. 2; Romm 1996.
[13] Vitr. 6.1.9-10.
[14] Ephorus *FGH* 70f30; Arist. (*de Gen. Anim*. 748a 25-26) also mentions the *Keltoi* living in the west, beyond Iberia; Herodotus first mentions the *Keltoi* as a people living in the far west (Hdt. 2.33.2-3; 4.49.3); for more discussion on

and northern Europe; they shared many of the same qualities and attributes. The Scythians, who were better known to the early Greeks, served as a model for the development of the ethnic portrait of the Gauls.[15]

Greek literature uses the terms *Galatae* (Γαλάται) and *Keltoi* (Κελτοί) to refer to the groups of people living west of the Scythians and north of Italy. After the invasions in the 3rd century BCE, Greek authors also refer to the nomadic tribes of Asia Minor as *Galatae* since these tribes were seen as identical to the Gallic ethnic group of Western Europe. The Latin sources usually refer to the people north and west of Italy as *Galli* and the nomadic tribes in Asia Minor as *Galli* or *Galatae.* Although the authors are aware of the multiple tribes that make up this larger ethnic group of Gauls, little is done to distinguish between these groups in much of the literature. Generally, however, there seems to be little distinction in the ethnic portraits between *Galatae, Galli,* and *Keltoi*.[16]

While Greek authors, such as Herodotus, Ephorus, and Aristotle, recognized that Gaul was somewhere to west, they provide little information regarding the actual geography of Gaul.[17] Herodotus mentions some of the rivers in Gaul, but completely ignores the Alps (4.49.2).[18] In fact, early literary interest in the physical region of Gaul focused primarily on the mythical connections to the landscape and the rivers as the source of amber.[19] Polybius provides a more detailed picture of the Gallic landscape, but primarily the areas with which he was most familiar,

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this passage, see Fischer 1972; The Germans, as a group living between the Gauls and Scythians, are a later addition to the ethnographic tradition, see Rives 1999, pp. 21-27; see also Freeman 1996.

[15] Hdt. Book 4; for analysis of the Scythian ethnography in Herodotus, see Hartog 1988; where applicable I will try to identify qualities attributed to Gauls that also belong to the Scythians.

[16] Jervis 2001, p. 20; Cic. *Pro Font.* 30; Livy (38.17.7) implies that the Asian *Galli* are from the same ethnic group as the *Galli* in Europe (Jervis 2001, p. 20, n. 13); for the purpose of this report I will be primarily using Gaul or Gallic to refer to the tribes known to the ancients by any one of their three names.

[17] Arist (*de Gen. Anim*, 748a 25-26) does emphasize the cold temperature of Gaul.

[18] A poetic description of the Celtic territory in northern Italy is given by Apollonios Rhodius (4.618-55).

[19] Timaeus (*FGH* 566f 62-74) claims that Gauls are from the Cyclopes and the nymph, Galatea; Dionysius Periegetes 5.228ff (also mentions that the source of amber is the tears of the Heliades); Nonnus *Dion.* 2.153; for ancient literature on the source of amber, see Mastrocinque 1991, pp. 11-56. Many of these references are also mentioned by Pliny the Elder (*NH* 37.30-46).

namely northern Italy and the coast of the Mediterranean (2.14-35).[20] In the ethnographic tradition, the interior of Gaul remained indistinct, undivided, and largely unknown.

The political organization and social structure of Gaul also remained vague in the early literature. Much like the Scythians, the Gauls were nomadic people, grouped together in a number of mobile tribes. For Herodotus, the Scythians' nomadic lifestyle was beneficial to them since there was nothing for Darius to destroy when he went to attack them—they carried their homes with them (4.46). The late-4th-century-BCE *Periplous* by Pseudo-Scylax lists a number of different Gallic tribes that occupy Northern Italy and the coast of the western Mediterranean (14-19). Polybius remarks that the Gauls live without the standards of civilization—they have no agriculture and their only possessions are cattle and gold, which are easy to transport (2.17.8-11). The marauding nature of the Gauls also resulted in their migrations into Asia Minor and the devastating sacks of Rome in ca. 390 BCE and Delphi in 279 BCE.[21] These migrations are often characterized by authors as a necessity in order to obtain more land or as a need to satisfy the greed of the Gauls by winning spoils. The Greeks (and Romans) saw this unsettled lifestyle as the antithesis to their urban-based civilization and characteristic of northern peoples.[22]

The Gauls upheld the stereotype of the northern barbarian by being frightening in appearance. They were differentiated from the Greeks and Romans by their pale skin, light eyes, and long, reddish or blond hair.[23] Most importantly, however, the Gauls were taller than the Greeks and the Romans. Their height was often emphasized in one-on-one battle scenes, such as

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[20] For a more detailed discussion of this section and Polybius' view of Northern Italy, see Williams 2001.
[21] Livy 7.25.3, Plut. *Marius* 11 (Gauls in Asia Minor); Cato *Origin.* 2.5 Chassignet = 36 Peter; Livy 5.34.2 (Gauls sack Rome); Pausanias 10.19.8 (Gauls sack Delphi). Livy does write after the period and so his presence as a reference to Gauls before that period may seem contradictory, but as Jervis (2001, p. 4, n. 3) notes, it is generally accepted that Livy was relying on earlier republican annalistic sources, including Cornelius Piso, Valerias Antias, Claudius Quadirarius, and Polybius. As future references will show, his representation of the Gauls coincides with the other earlier, middle-Republican sources.
[22] In Livy 5.41.5, the Gauls enter Rome in search of spoils; on the nomadic lifestyle of the Scythians in Herodotus, see Hartog 1988, pp. 12-60; Shaw 1982-3; for the migrations of Gallic tribes, see Zecchini 1994.
[23] Livy 38.17.3; the area of Gaul farthest from Italy was referred to as *Gallia Comata*, long-haired Gaul.

Livy's account of Torquatus defeating a towering Gaul in combat.[24] Additionally, they also fought in the nude wearing gold jewelry. When they were not fighting, the Gauls—as well as many other barbarian groups—stood apart from Greeks and Romans because they wore pants, which even earned one area of Gaul the name *Gallia Bracata* (Trouser-wearing Gaul). The Gauls were also known for wearing a heavy woolen cloak, known as a *saga*.[25] The image of the Gauls in Greek and Latin literature before the 1st century was one of a pale-faced, wild, tall and strangely dressed "other".

Most early references to the Gauls, however, focus on their behavior, particularly their courageous and warlike nature. Already, before the sack of Delphi, the Greeks mentioned the violence and fearlessness of the Gauls. Ephorus says that the Gauls are daring and Aristotle brands them irrational because they were unafraid of earthquakes and the ocean. Cato remarks that the art of warfare is one of the two things that Gauls pursue most eagerly (the other being eloquent speech).[26] Although they were the threatening enemies that sacked Rome, they were notorious for their inability to sustain battle. The northern climate in which the Gauls lived made them unable to stand the heat of the battle and they were frequently depicted as being averse to hard work and giving up easily.[27] Other, more general characterizations of Gauls in the early literature include their treachery and disloyalty, which was marked by an inclination to switch

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[24] Livy 7.9.8; cf. Poly. 2.29.7; for more discussion, see Kremer 1994, pp. 21-2; Sherwin-White 1967, pp. 57-58.
[25] Poly. 2.28.7-9; 29.7-8; cf. Livy 22.46 (Fighting nude); Polyb. 2.28.7; 2.30.1 (pants); 2.28.7; 2.30.1 (cloak); in a fragment from a comic poet, Afrianus makes fun of a Gaul for wearing his cloak and being stuffed with lard (Fr. 288 in Daviault 1981).
[26] FGrH70 F 132; Arist. *Eth. Nic*. 3.7.1115b 28; *Eth. Eud.* 1229b 28; cf. *Politics* 1324b 10; Plat. *Legg*. 637d; The *Keltoi* were also known to the Greeks through their participation in the hegemonic wars of the 4th century in Greece. Dionysius I of Syracuse sent Gallic mercenaries to fight with the Spartans in 367 BCE (Xen. *Hell*. 7.1.20-23, 28-31; Diod. 15.70.1; Cato *Orig.* 2.3 Chassignet = Peter 34).
[27] Poly. 2.18.8; 3.79.3-4; Livy 33.36; 5.48; for more discussion of this paradoxical image of the Gauls as fierce warriors, but with no staying power, see Jervis 2001, pp. 17-34.

sides in the middle of a battle. They were known for their overindulgence of alcohol, especially wine, and food, and their lust for spoils.[28]

In the beginning of the 1st century BCE, one of the most important figures for Greek and Roman ethnography, Posidonius, wrote his *Historiae*.[29] Although much of this work is lost to us, sections of his discussion of the Celts are quoted by Athenaeus in his 2nd century CE work, *Deipnosophistae*.[30] Posidoinius spent time in Gaul, and he also had connections with the Roman elite, such as Pompey and Cicero. Because of his achievements and his connections he was of integral importance in the transmission of ethnographic material to the Greek and Roman authors of the subsequent periods.[31] In what survives of his ethnography, we receive no picture of the geography of Gaul or even much of the political or social organization of the people living there. It does seem clear that Posidonius recognizes a distinction between the Gauls and the Germans. Either they are two separate groups, or the Germans are a large subset of the Gauls; whatever Posidonius's precise understanding of their ethnicity, he discusses the customs of the Germans in a separate book from the Gauls.[32]

Nothing survives from Posidonius on the appearance of Gauls, but we do have references to their behavior that conforms to the pre-existing stereotype created by the earlier tradition. The Gauls are prone to fighting at banquets for prizes; this reflects both their warlike/combative nature and their love of spoils (Ath. 5.154b-d). Posidonius remarks that the Gauls eagerly

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[28] For Gallic unreliability, see Poly 3.49.3, 67, 69, 70.4; Livy 21.45; see also Jervis 2001, pp. 31-34; for more discussion of disloyalty in Polybius, see Williams 2001, pp. 82-87; for the specific instance of Hannibal's reliance on the Gauls as allies, see Rawlings 1996, pp. 88-9; for Gallic overindulgence, see Livy 5.33; Poly. 2.19.4; for spoils, see Livy 5.41.5.

[29] For the work of Posidonius in general, see Edelstein and Kidd 1972; for more Posidonius' treatment of the Gauls, see Tierney 1960, Nash 1976.

[30] Subsequent references to Posidonius will be given in the corresponding passage in Athenaeus; these sections, however, are mainly concerned with Gallic dining customs (Riggsby 2006, p. 47).

[31] Edelstein and Kidd 1972, pp. 10-12; Thomas 1982, p. 2; Kidd 1988.

[32] Germans: Book 30 (Ath. 4.153e); Gauls: Book 23 (Ath. 4.152f, 154a).

engaged in homosexual behavior with young boys, preferring to do so with two at a time.[33] Also, he says that the Gauls eat large quantities of meat and drink milk and unmixed wine (Ath. 4.151e-153e). The eating of meat and drinking of milk were two defining characteristics of the nomadic cultures, who could not subsist off of agriculture, and the drinking of unmixed wines was a standard characterization of an uncivilized barbarian.[34]

The first Latin author in the 1st century BCE to add to our picture of Gaul is Cicero, writing shortly after Posidonius and just before (and during) Caesar's conquest. Cicero gives two speeches that date before the complete conquest of Gaul and both of these depict Gaul in a way congruent with the ethnographic tradition. He emphasizes their barbarity and the threat the Gauls pose toward Rome.[35] In his speech on behalf of Marcus Fonteius, given in 69 BCE, Cicero proclaims that the Gauls used to wage bitter wars with Rome and should be considered a threat (12-13, 44-45). They are sacrilegious, as demonstrated by their sack of the Capitolium and Delphi. They also practice the barbarian custom of human sacrifice (*immanem ac barbaram consuetudinem*) (31).[36] Cicero further emphasizes the barbarism of the Gauls by claiming that Indutiomarus, the leader of the Gauls, will tear his client, Fonteius, from the arms of his mother (44-6). In terms of appearance, Cicero describes the Gauls as cloaked and trousered (*sagatos bracatosque*), and in their traditional Gallic dress they go through the forum making the threats of barbarians (33).[37] In his work, *De Provinciis Consularibus*, (56 BCE) Cicero emphasizes the necessity of leaving Caesar in charge of Gaul because these are powerful people (*maximae*

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[33] Ath. 13.603a.
[34] Hdt. 4.2 (Scythians drink milk and eat meat); Homer *Il.* 13.4-6 (the northern Hippemolgi are referred to as milk-drinkers); Eur. *Cyc.* 134-6 (the Cyclopes drink large amounts of both milk and wine), which is an interesting similarity, since Timaeus linked the Cyclopes as the ancestor of the Celts (*FGH* 566f69); Hdt. 6.84 8 (Scythians); Eur. Fr. 907 (a reference to barbarians' love of immoderate drinking).
[35] For more discussion of representations of the "other" in Cicero, see Vasaly 1993 (esp. pp. 193-198, for *Pro Fonteio*).
[36] Cicero refers to them as threatening Rome again at *Pro Font.* 33, 35, and 36.
[37] Cicero criticizes Antony on his return from Gaul because the Roman was seen wearing Gallic dress (Cic. *Phil*. 2.76).

nationes), not subdued by laws or peace (19). He contends that the Gauls are the greatest threat to Rome because of their strength and their number; the province is peopled by tribes hostile to Rome—wild (*immanibus*), savage (*barbaris*), and warlike (*bellicosis*) (33-4).[38] Shortly after this speech, in his work *De Re Publica* (51 BCE), Cicero claims that the Gauls disdain manual labor and would rather spend their time engaged in battle and plundering from the fields of others (3.15). Although in a few instances Cicero grants the provinces of Gaul varying degrees of civility, overall his characterization of the Gallic people is taken largely from the pages of the ethnographic tradition, which emphasizes the barbarian (uncivilized) and warlike nature of the Gauls.[39]

Cicero is the last author in our study of Gallic ethnography before the conquest. In addition to establishing the literary stereotype of Gaul before Caesar, this brief survey of Gallic ethnography has demonstrated the importance of the ethnographic tradition to Classical authors. Both Polybius and Posidonius spent time in Gaul and yet both characterize the Gauls in terms of the ethnographic tradition, either employing the standard tropes and behavior established by previous authors or emphasizing the Gallic traits that supported the tradition. For these authors, the tradition was more important than their own observations.[40] Therefore, if the ethnographic tradition has such stability, then it is significant when an author depicts the Gauls as other than warlike barbarians. The ethnographic picture of Gaul before the conquest, however, is largely uniform in the literary source. By the 1st century BCE, Greek and Roman authors had inherited a fairly clear picture of the Gauls as nomadic barbarians from the north, organized into tribes, who

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[38] Cf. Cic. *Ad Fam.* 1.1.27.

[39] In his speech on behalf of Publius Quinctius, Cicero optimistically proclaims that Gallia Narbonensis is perhaps a great change of place from Italy, but not of character (*Fit magna mutatio loci, nec ingenii*) (12). In his work on Roman oratory, *Brutus*, Cicero remarks that Gallic oratory has many of the same characteristics as Roman, but lacks the 'urbane coloring' (*urbanitate quadam quasi colorata*) (170-2). This statement supports Cato's earlier mention of the Gauls eagerly pursuing eloquent speech (Cato *Orig.* 2.3 Chassignet = Peter 34).

[40] Woolf (2008) refers to the "apparent imperviousness to new information" that is characteristic of the ethnographic tradition.

stood apart from the Greeks and Romans in their appearance and in their behavior. The uncivilized Gauls were violent, quick to arms, and courageous fighters, but they tired quickly and were unable to sustain their initial burst of vigor. This uniform characterization of Gallic barbarians began to change in the first century BCE, beginning with Caesar.

The Ethnography of Gaul from Caesar to Tacitus

In the previous section we established the basic tenets of the ethnographic tradition in Classical literature, and more specifically, the characterization of Gaul and the Gallic people that appeared in literature before the conquest of Gaul by Caesar. Despite coming into more and more frequent contact with the classical world, the Gauls had remained up to their conquest, viewed as the traditional "other", the northern barbarian, characterized by their uncivilized and warlike behavior. Beginning with the conquest, however, that picture becomes much more nuanced, and while the tradition is maintained by some authors, others present the Gauls in a different light, disregarding the standard tropes. The reasons why these deviations may have taken place will be explored in the next section, but first it is necessary to identify both the continuation of the tradition through the first century CE and also to identify the specific authors who deviate from the tradition and in what ways they do so.

The characterization of the Gauls began to change in Caesar's commentary on his conquest of Gaul, *De Bello Gallico*.[41] Although Caesar is not writing an ethnography, throughout his commentary he refers to the people and places of Gaul and Germany and even includes formal ethnographic excursus on the Gauls, Germans, and the German tribe, the Suebi.[42] The ethnographic references begin with the opening lines of the work and they are a startling

[41] For more discussion on the dates of composition and publication, see Barwick 1938, pp. 100-123; Gesche 1976, pp. 78-83; Lieberg 1998, pp. 17-19; Riggsby 2006, pp. 9-15.
[42] *BG* 6.11-20 (Gauls), 6.21-28 (Germans), 4.1-3 (Suebi).

departure from the previous tradition: *Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres* (All Gaul is divided into three parts) (1.1.1). Deviating from the vague geographical picture of Gaul that was passed on in the ethnographic tradition, Caesar opens by breaking up the interior of Gaul. He continues by naming three different groups that make up Gaul, only one of which is called *Galli*, and he locates these groups in between rivers, the Garonne, the Marne, and the Seine (1.1.2).[43] Furthermore, he claims that these groups are distinguished from one another by their "language, customs, and laws" (*lingua, institutis, legibus*) (1.1.2). The cultures also differ from one another in military ability: since the Helvetii and Belgae are farthest from the Roman province and closest to the Germans, they excel in valor and courage. Already in the first lines of *De Bello Gallico*, Caesar departs from the ethnographic tradition; the people and landscape of Gaul no longer retain the nomadic fluidity and geographic ambiguity of the previous tradition. Caesar divides Gaul "in name, people, culture, and physical region".[44]

Despite the tribal division that Caesar stresses at the beginning of his narrative, throughout the commentary the tribes are not as carefully divided, and one can speak of a uniform character of the Gauls.[45] Caesar's Gauls, however, have lost their nomadic character, which was so essential to the northern barbarian in the previous tradition. The Gauls in *De Bello Gallico* live in cities and fortified towns, which the Romans besieged on a number of occasions, such as in Book 2 against the Suessiones (2.12.5) and in Book 3 against the Sontiates (3.21.2-3). On one occasion, the Gauls resort to nomadism when Vercingetorix instructs the Gauls to burn the fields and their houses to cut off the Romans source of supplies (7.14).[46] The nomadism

[43] The other two groups are the Aquitani and the Belgae.
[44] Riggsby 2006, p. 60.
[45] For exceptions to this uniform character, see 1.4.1 (Helvetii); 7.33.3 (Aedui); 7.75.4 (Aremoricae); see Riggsby 2006, p. 70.
[46] Cf. Hdt. 4.62.

encouraged by Vercingetorix and practiced by the Gauls in *De Bello Gallico* is a very different thing from the Gallic paradigm of earlier authors; it is a military strategy, not a way of life.

Caesar also describes the social hierarchy and organization of the Gauls. He insists upon a binary division of the Gallic people, first between the aristocracy and the masses; then he divides the elite between the druids and the knights (6.13.1-2). By the end of the work, there is a clear idea of central leadership under Vercingetorix. He is able to unite many of the Gallic tribes, which throughout the narrative were regarded regularly as divided.[47] Caesar uses Latin political terminology to describe some of the groups in Gaul. He compares the social structure to the Roman patron-client system, refers to the people as *plebs*, and describes the cavalry as *equites*.[48] Counter to this civilized vision of Gaul, however, he refers to the cruel and backward practices of the Gallic family structure, which permits the torture of wives and forbids sons to approach their fathers in public.[49] The Gauls are also cruel in another way. Although they do have a legal system and punish crimes, such as banditry (*latrocinum*), their punishment is human sacrifice—burning the condemned alive (3.17.4, 6.16.4-5). Thus, the Gauls have an identifiable society, much more stable and organized than the previous tradition granted, but this society is backwards, and, in the eyes of the Romans, "perverse and even corrupt".[50]

The Gauls still maintain, however, a number of traits established in the previous tradition. They are tall, treacherous and warlike.[51] Although Caesar uses the term *perfida* to describe Gallic treachery only once (7.17.7), there are a number of instances in the commentary in which the Gauls are characterized as unreliable and deceitful, just as Polybius characterized them.[52] For

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[47] Riggsby 2006, p. 97.
[48] 6.12.2 (clientage); 6.13.1 (*plebs*); 6.13.3 and 6.15 (*equites*).
[49] *BG* 6.19.3 (wives are tortured in the investigation of their husband's death), 6.18.3 (boys cannot approach their father in public until he is old enough for military service).
[50] Riggsby 2006, p. 64.
[51] Caesar notes the size of the Gauls on several occasions, *BG* 2.30.4, 3.8.3, 3.19.6, 7.42.2.
[52] For example, *BG* 2.17.2, 2.32-3, 5.37.1-2; cf. Poly. 3.49; 3.67-70.

example, in Book 4, Caesar notes the Gallic habit of unplanned rebellion, from which he concludes that they cannot be trusted (*nihil his committendum his existimavit*) (4.5.1). Just as Polybius described the fickle nature of Gallic allies, in *De Bello Gallico* the tribe of the Treviri abandons their Roman allies as soon as the battle turns against them (2.24).[53]

The Gauls also retain their most notorious characteristic—their warlike nature. Because of their belief in metempsychosis, the Gauls set aside a fear of death and have great courage and bravery (6.14.5). Their numerous and continuous revolts are another indication of their bellicose character. The Belgae revolt in Book 2 because they are eager for a new order (*novis imperiis studebant*) (2.1.3). In Book 3, Caesar describes the Gauls in terms that appeared to be borrowed from the ethnographic traditions, namely that the Gauls are brave, but are unable to withstand combat: "for just as the Gallic spirit is eager and quick to engage in battle, their minds are soft and do not withstand catastrophes that must be endured" (*Nam ut ad bella suscipienda Gallorum alacer ac promptus est animus, sic mollis ac minime resistens ad calamitates perferendas mens eorum est*) (3.19.6). But this description does not appear elsewhere in the narrative. The frequent references to revolt in the *De Bello Gallico* contradict this depiction. Additionally, on a number of occasions, Caesar even attributes *virtus* to a number of Gallic tribes as an acknowledgement of their bravery.[54] Therefore, although certain tribes are described occasionally as being cowardly, their ability to overcome setbacks and their bravery gives a different picture from the Gauls in Polybius, the ones that could not sustain battle.[55]

Overall, Caesar's Gauls are no longer the northern nomadic barbarians that existed in the Greek (and Roman) ethnographic tradition. Gaul has geographical divisions and the Gauls have

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[53] The Gauls hold back some weapons and then attack the unsuspecting Romans after agreeing to surrender (*BG* 2.32-3); they also successfully trap the Romans on two occasions in Book 5, 5.27-36 and 5.41.
[54] Jervis (2001) analyzes the use of the word, *virtus*, in *De Bello Gallico*. Some of her conclusions will be relevant in the subsequent section.
[55] Jervis 2001, p. 57.

distinct tribes and social structure (although it is minimal). They retain their warlike attitude and their treacherous behavior, and live a cruel and backward lifestyle. But they are progressing from barbarism to civilization, trend reinforced by their *virtus*. It is actually the Germans in *De Bello Gallico* that Caesar depicts as the stereotypical northern barbarian. Germania has no internal divisions, beyond two large forests; the Germans are nomadic people with no leadership; they are notably tall, worship only a few gods, eat large amounts of meat and consume unmixed wine.[56] Interestingly, it is only in the ethnography of the Germans that Caesar includes *thaumata* (wondrous things), which are an integral part of the ethnographic tradition. The Hercynian forest is home to one-horned oxen, oversized, kneeless elks, and bulls almost as large as elephants (6.26-28). These kinds of mythical elements do not appear in the Gallic ethnography; Gaul is no longer depicted as a fictional place on the edges of the earth, but as a real place possessing striking similarities to Roman culture.[57] Thus, in *De Bello Gallico* there is a tripartite division, in which the Germans conform to the established stereotype of a northern barbarian, while the Gauls fit somewhere in between barbarian and civilized.[58] Overall, the Gauls in *De Bello Gallico* are not the same Gauls from the previous ethnographies; these Gauls are a novel creation that have some characteristics of the stereotypical "other", but also possess notable traits that assimilate them to the Romans.

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[56] *BG* 6.10.5, 6.25.1 (Bacenis and Hercynian forests); 4.1.4-6, 6.22.3 (alternating between war and farming); 6.23.5 (no leadership); 1.39.1 (height); 6.21.1-2 (no priests and limited gods); 4.1.8, 6.22.1 (diet); for more discussion, see Krebs 2006; Riggsby 2006, pp. 60-62; Balsdon remarks that, "Germans were 'wild' lacking the potential of civilisation which Spaniards and Gauls possessed in the view of Caesar, Strabo, and (except in the *Germania*) Tacitus" (1979, p. 64, n. 26); cf. Sherwin-White 1967, p. 1-61.

[57] See O'Gorman 1993; Riggsby 2006, chapter 3.

[58] Riggsby (2006) notes the novelty of this tripartite division and also analyzes why Caesar makes these distinctions. His conclusions will be explored in the following section.