

DEFENDERS, CONQUERORS AND VANQUISHED

Lecture 27: The Galatians and the formation of the Attalid kingdom

Galatian invasion of Greece 280-79

- ❑ **Main source: Pausanias, drawing on a good Hellenistic historian (?Hieronymus of Cardia)**
- ❑ **The invasion compared to the Persian invasion of Greece in 480/79 BC**



Galatian invasion of Greece 280-79

The fate of the Callians at the hands of Combutis and Orestorius is the most wicked ever heard of and is without parallel in the crimes of men. Every male they put to the sword, and there were butchered old men equally with children at their mothers' breasts. The more plump of these suckling babes the Gauls killed, drinking their blood and eating their flesh. Women and adult maidens, if they had any spirit at all in them, anticipated their end when the city was captured. Those who survived suffered under imperious violence every form of outrage at the hands of men equally void of pity and of love. Every woman who chanced to find a Gallic sword committed suicide. The others were soon to die of hunger or want of sleep, the incontinent barbarians outraging them by turns, and sating their lust even on the dying and the dead.

Pausanias 10.22.

Delphi and the Celts

□ Gauls driven back from Delphi by epiphanies of the gods Apollo and Pan, and a snow-storm miracle:

So they tried to save Greece in the way described, but the Gauls, now south of the Gates, cared not at all to capture the other towns, but were very eager to sack Delphi and the treasures of the god. They were opposed by the Delphians themselves and the Phocians of the cities around Parnassus; a force of Aetolians also joined the defenders, for the Aetolians at this time were pre-eminent for their vigorous activity. When the forces engaged, not only were thunderbolts and rocks broken off from Parnassus hurled against the Gauls, but terrible shapes as armed warriors haunted the foreigners. They say that two of them, Hyperochus and Amadocus, came from the Hyperboreans, and that the third was Pyrrhus son of Achilles. Because of this help in battle the Delphians sacrifice to Pyrrhus as to a hero, although formerly they held even his tomb in dishonor, as being that of an enemy.

Pausanias 1.4.4

Myth Making

Inscribed Decree of Cos 278 BC

Diokles son of Philinos proposed: since, when the barbarians had made an expedition against the Greeks and the sanctuary at Delphi, it had been reported that those who attacked the sanctuary had encountered vengeance from the god and from the men who had come to the aid of the sanctuary on the occasion of the barbarian invasion, and the temple had been protected and adorned with the shields of the attackers, and that most of the remaining fighting men had perished in the battles with the Greeks - so that the people of Cos may demonstrate its joy at the moment of the sanctuary's peril and **for the safety of the Greeks**, it was resolved that

Hellenistic kings against the Galatians

- 'Saviours of the Greeks from the barbarians'
 - ▣ Antigonos Gonatas 277 BC - battle of Lysimacheia
 - ▣ Antiochus I 268 BC - Battle of the Elephants?
 - ▣ Attalos I (of Pergamon), c. 240 BC - Battle at River Caicus
 - ▣ Eumenes II (of Pergamon) 184 BC

This ideology helped to transform the Macedonian successor kingdoms from being oppressors of Greek Liberty to saviours and protectors of Greek cities and Hellenic culture.

Who is a Celt?

The Gauls are tall, with moist white flesh; their hair is not only naturally blond but they also make artificial attempts to lighten its colour by washing it frequently in lime water. They pull it back from the top of the head to the nape of the neck. Thanks to this their hair thickens until it is just like a horse's mane..... They wear amazing clothes, tunics dyed in every colour and trousers that they call bracae (breeches). They pin striped cloaks on top of thick cloth in winter and light material in summer, decorated with small densely packed, multi coloured squares.

Diodorus Siculus ,1 st century BC.



Pergamon and the Gauls

They (the Pergamenes) have spoils from the Gauls, and a painting which portrays their deed against them. The land they dwell in was, they say, in ancient times sacred to the Cabeiri, and they claim that they are themselves Arcadians, being of those who crossed into Asia with Telephus. Of the wars that they have waged no account has been published to the world, except that they have accomplished three most notable achievements; the subjection of the coast region of Asia, the expulsion of the Gauls there from, and the exploit of Telephus against the followers of Agamemnon, at a time when the Greeks after missing Troy, were plundering the Meian plain thinking it Trojan territory. Now I will return from my digression.

Pausanias 1.4.6

Attalus and a new kingdom

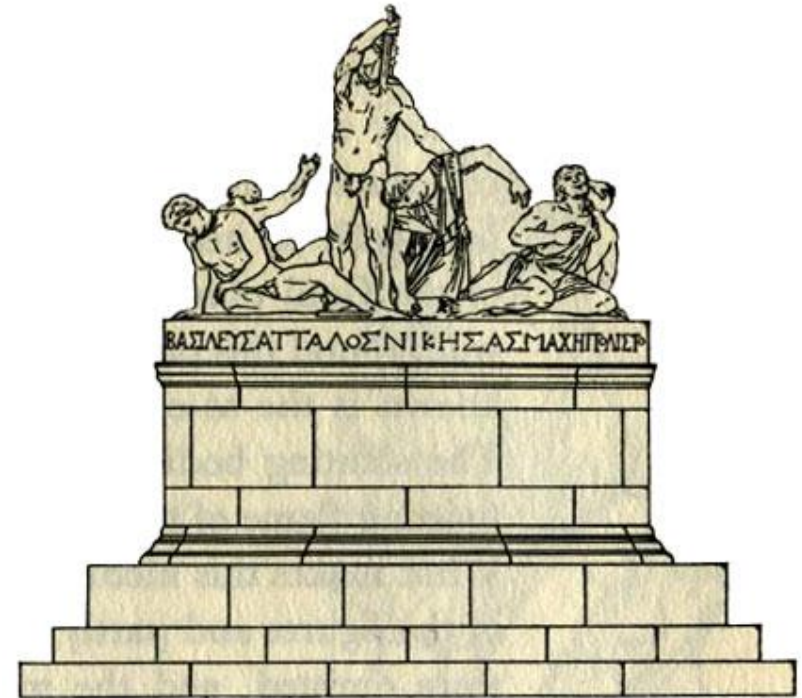
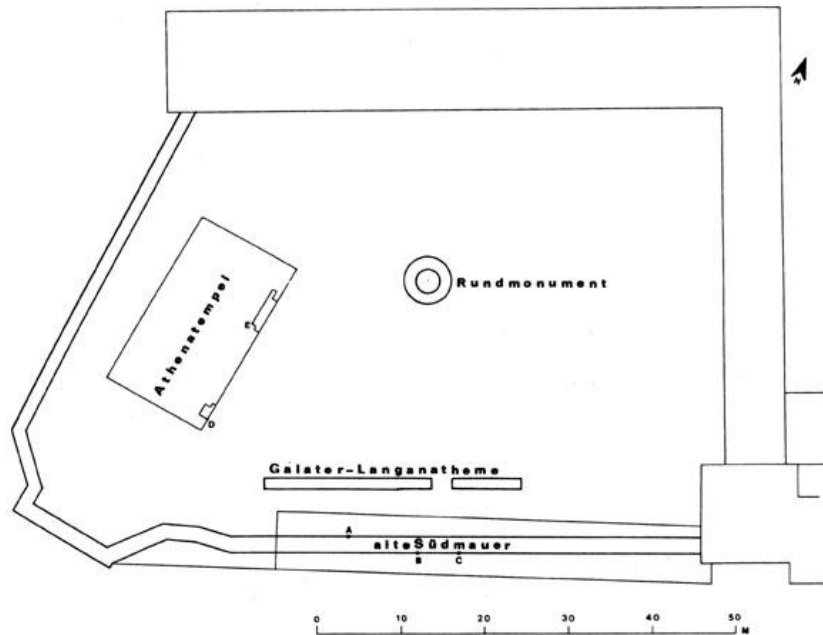
So died Attalus, and justice demands, as is my practice in the case of others, I should pronounce a few befitting words over his grave. He possessed at the outset no other quality fitting him to rule over those outside his own household but wealth, a thing that when used with intelligence and daring is of real service in all enterprises but, when these virtues are absent, proves in most cases the cause of disaster and in fact of utter ruin. For it is the source of jealousy and plotting, and contributes more than anything else to the corruption of body and soul. Those souls indeed are few who can arrest these consequences by the mere power that riches give. We should therefore reverence this king's loftiness of mind, in that he did not attempt to use his great possessions for any other purpose than the attainment of sovereignty, a thing than which nothing greater or more splendid can be named. **He laid the foundation of his design not only by the largesses and favours he conferred on his friends, but by his success in war. For having conquered the Gauls, then the most formidable and warlike nation in Asia Minor, he built upon this foundation, and then first showed he was really a king.** And after he had received this honourable title, he lived until the age of seventy-two and reigned for forty-four years, ever most virtuous and austere as husband and father, never breaking his faith to his friends and allies, and finally dying when engaged on his best work, fighting for the liberties of Greece. Add to this what is most remarkable of all, that having four grown-up sons, he so disposed of his kingdom that he handed on the crown in undisputed succession to his children's children.

Creation of Pergamon

‘King Eumenes, **our savior and benefactor**, took up the war not only on behalf of his own subjects, but also on behalf of the other inhabitants of Asia, and surmounted the danger, **having summoned the gods to his assistance** and struggled against Prusias and Ortiagon and the Galatians and their allies, he triumphed brilliantly and splendidly and so as to make us give thanks to the gods.’

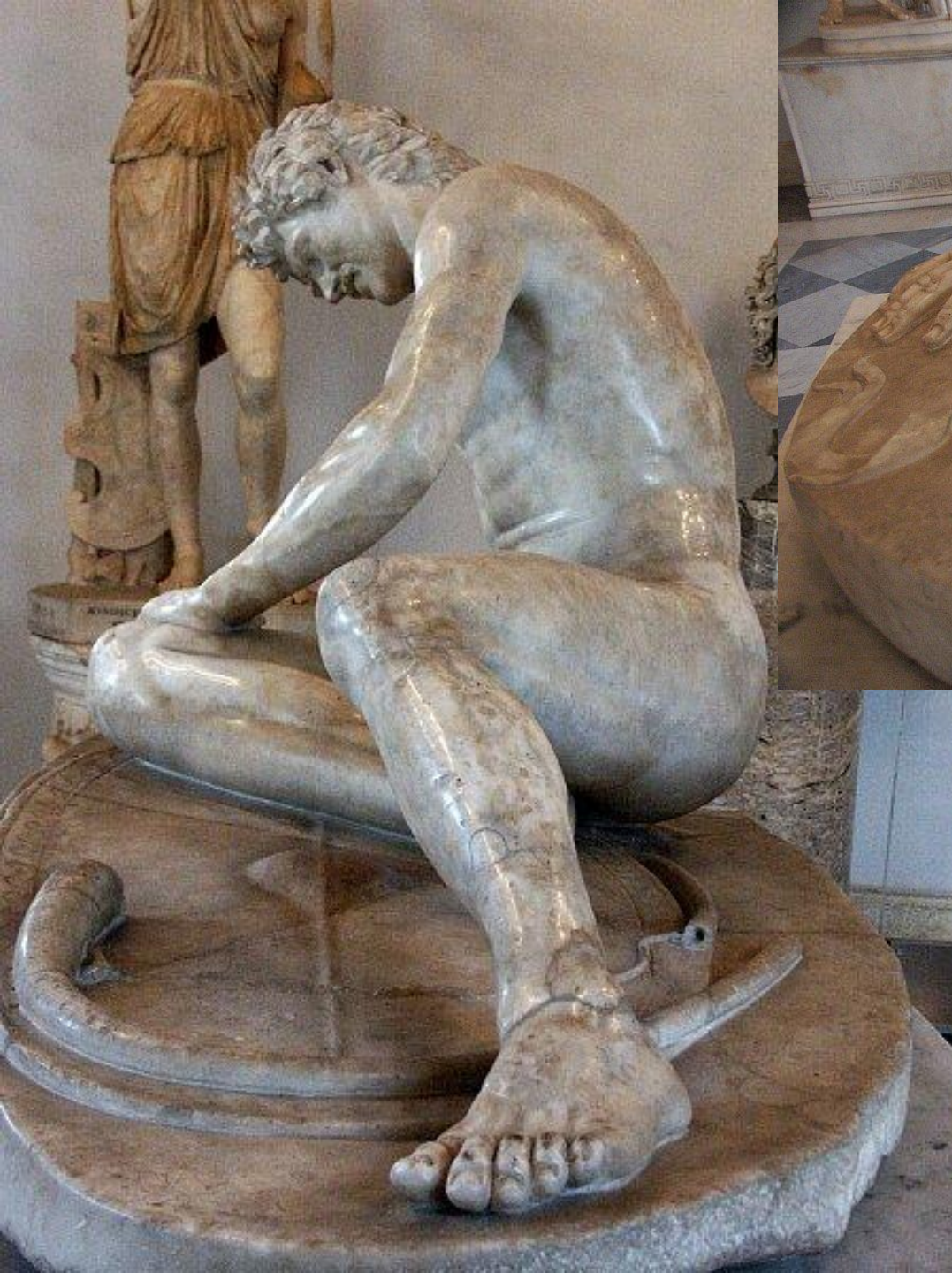
Inscription from Lycia honouring Eumenes II for his victories over Galatians and others in 184 BC:

Galatian victory monument on Acropolis of Pergamon





'Ludovisi' Galatian chieftain and his slain wife



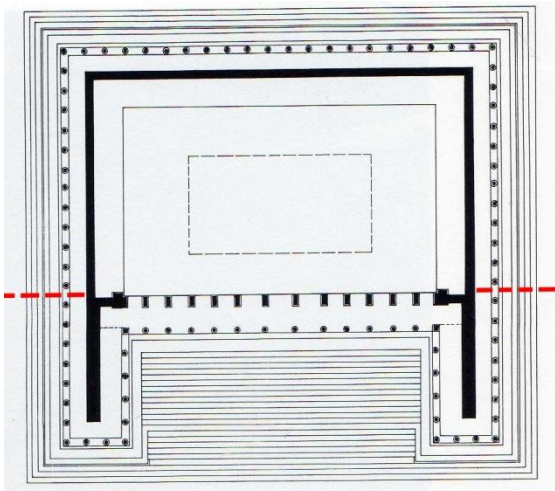
Dying Gaul - sword and drinking
horn

Dying Gaul - trumpet (left)

Defeat of the new barbarians

- New 'image of the barbarian'. Giant bearded figures from northern Europe derived from the image of the Galatians
- Replace previous Greek 'image of the barbarian' which was based on Persians from the East. The Greek Hellenistic kingdoms now occupied the earlier Persian empire!
- The Galatians were represented as enemies of civilization, just as the Giants in Greek mythology had been enemies of the Olympian Gods
- The Attalid kings by defeating the Galatians and saving Greece placed themselves on a level with the Olympians who saved the world from the Giants the Giants, and the Athenians who saved Greece from the Persians
- The Attalids place their monuments in all the great centres of Greek culture: Athens, Delphi, Delos

Pergamon Great Altar



Ground Plan (left)

Zeus and Athena panels from East frieze
(above)



ATHENA



HERMES

Attalus' Athenian Monuments



Next to the south wall (of the acropolis) Attalos set up a monument depicting the legendary war of the giants, who had lived around Thrace and on the Isthmus of Pallene, the battle of the Athenians against the Amazons, the struggle at marathón against the Persians, and the defeat of the Galatians in Mysia. Every figures was two cubits high.

Pausanias 1.25.2

Small Galatian warrior (Louvre). Roman copy of Greek original

Attack on Asia Minor in 278 BC

Nicomedes king of Bithynia arranged to bring them across on friendly terms. The terms were: the barbarians would always maintain a friendly attitude towards Nicomedes and his descendants, and without the approval of Nicomedes they would ally with none of those who sent embassies to them, but they would be friends with his friends and enemies to those who were not his friends; and they would also ally with the Byzantines, if by chance there were need, and with the Tians and the Herakleotes and the Chalkedonians and the citizens of Kieros and with some rulers of other peoples. On these terms Nicomedes brought the Galatian hordes into Asia, There were seventeen prominent leaders, and of these the most eminent and chief were Leonnorios and Luturios. At first the crossing of the Galatians into Asia was believed to have led to harm for the inhabitants, but the result proved to have been to their advantage. For while the (Seleukid) kings were eager to deprive the cities of their democracy, the Galatians especially secured it by opposing those attacking it.

Celts in Asia Minor

- Raids and plundering of western Asia Minor
 - ▣ (evidence from Cyzicus, Didyma, Priene, Miletus, Erythrai, Ephesus)
- Settlement in former Phrygian territory of central Turkey
 - ▣ Many fortresses (*phrouria*) attached to agricultural settlements
 - ▣ Agriculturalists and warriors
- Galatian raiding as war bands; also acted as mercenaries for Hellenistic kingdoms
- Tribal society which developed a more formal structure by 1st century BC
 - ▣ Three main tribes: Tolistobogii; Tectosages, Trocmi, later divided into 'tetrarchies'
- Used Celtic language; Celtic religious practices
 - ▣ Celtic personal names (eg Brennos, Deiotaros) and place names (eg Eccobriga)
- Gradual hellenisation, but no cities
- Greek language used by mercenaries and later by tribal leaders



Fig 1. Map 1 showing migrations of Celtic peoples, ca. 400-270 BC (after Cunliffe 1997: fig 55)

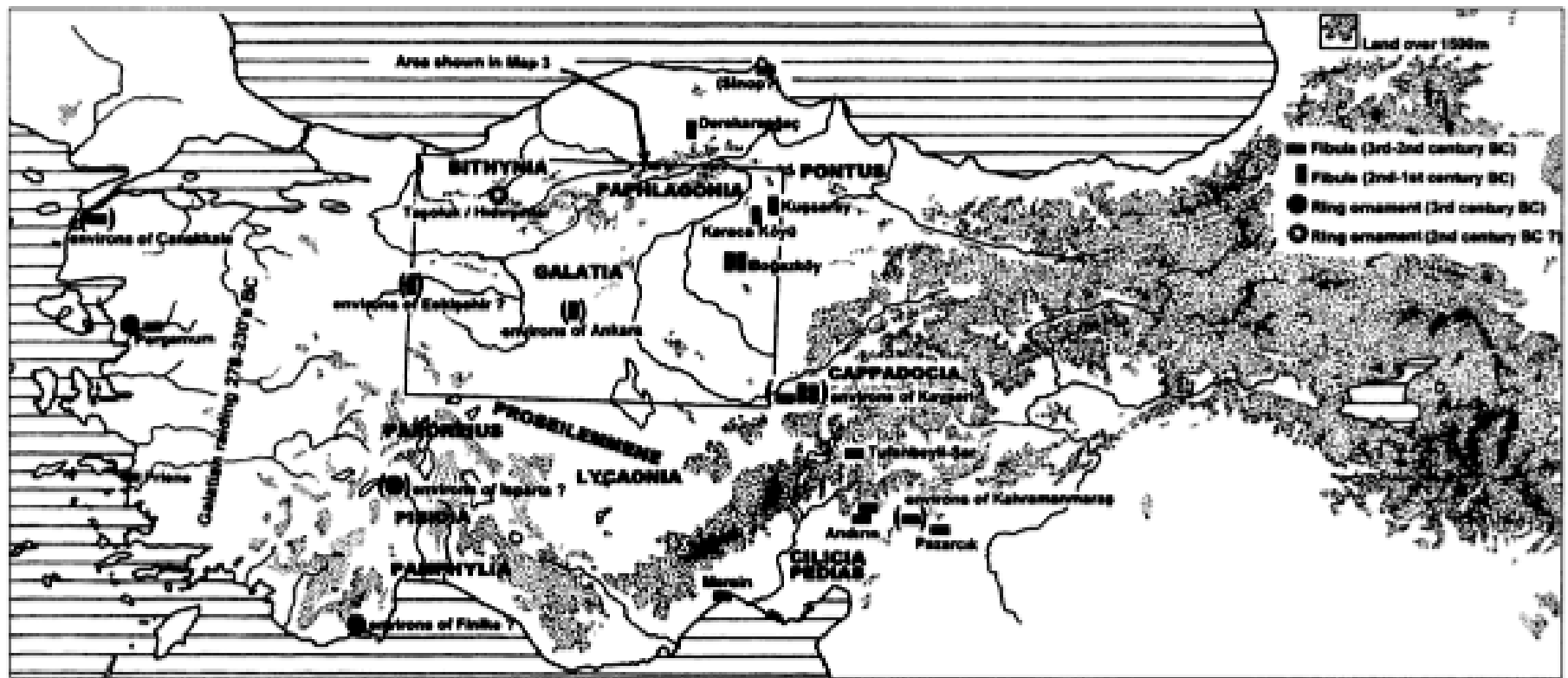


Fig 2. Map 2 showing findspots of La Tène type metalwork in Turkey (after Müller-Karpe 1998: fig 2)

- Not much material archaeological evidence for the Galatians in Asia Minor

Galatian Tribal Organisation

The three tribes used the same language and differed from one another in no other respect; they were divided each into four sections, and called them tetrachies. Each having its own tetrarch, one judge, one military commanders, subordinate to the tetrarch, and two junior commanders. The council of the twelve tetrarchs consisted of 300 men. And they assembled at the so-called *Drynemetos* (= 'Oak-grove sanctuary'). The council decided major cases, the tetrarchs and the judges all the others.

Strabo 12.5.1

Follow-up reading

- L. Hannestad, 'Greeks and Celts', P. Bilde etc., *Centre and Periphery in the Hellenistic World* (1994), 15-37
- S. Mitchell, *Anatolia. Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor I* (1993), 13-41
- S. Mitchell, 'The Galatians: representation and reality', in A. Erskine (ed.), *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Blackwell 2003), 280-93