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**Storia Militare Antica**

a cura di

MARCO BETTALLI ed ELENA FRANCHI



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Direzione, Via Bosco degli Arvali 24, 00148 Roma  
Contatti: [direzione@nam-sigm.org](mailto:direzione@nam-sigm.org) ; [virgilio.ilari@gmail.com](mailto:virgilio.ilari@gmail.com)

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Museo Carnuntinum (Bassa Austria). Pettorale come parte dell'equipaggiamento per cavalli (I secolo) del Reno Settentrionale (?), ritrovamento fluviale.  
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## *Terror Gallicus:* Gallic Warriors and Captive Enemies in Roman Visual Culture

By ALYSON ROY

**ABSTRACT:** In his history of the Second Punic War, Livy describes in grisly detail the final moments of L. Postumius Albinus (pr. 216 BCE), who fell in battle to the Gallic Boii: “The Boii stripped his body of its spoils and cut off the head and bore them in triumph to the most sacred of their temples. According to their custom they cleaned out the skull and covered the scalp with beaten gold; it was then used as a vessel for libations” (23.24.6-13). Livy’s Gauls were wild, fierce, and wholly barbaric to Roman eyes. Such depictions were a common literary *topos* but differ starkly from the visual stereotype of the Gallic warrior that developed beginning in the second century BCE: the subdued and bound captive. By tracing the origins and function of the Gallic warrior *topos* in Roman visual culture, this paper argues that the very dissonance of these representations lent symbolic power to the image of the captured Gaul. In stamping such images on the coins that funded further war efforts, the Romans made potent claims to dominance over Gallic peoples. These martial coins, however, did not serve merely as a vehicle for Roman self-fashioning, they circulated among conquered peoples, whose own coin iconography adapted to and reacted against Roman authority. Drawing on the same visual language that rendered them permanently captive, Gallic elites carved out their own potent claims to power within the new landscape of Roman dominance.

**KEYWORDS:** ROMAN REPUBLIC; GALLIC WARRIORS; CAPTIVES; ROMAN VISUAL CULTURE

«**T**he Romans... were terrified by the fine order of the Celtic host and the dreadful din, for there were innumerable horn-blowers and trumpeters... very terrifying too were the appearance and the gestures of the naked warriors in front, all in the prime of life, and finely built men, and all in the leading companies richly adorned with gold torques and armlets. The sight of them indeed dismayed the Romans, but at the same time the

prospect of winning such spoils made them twice as keen for the fight.»<sup>1</sup>

In this passage during his description of the Gallic War (225-222 BCE), Polybius neatly encapsulated almost all the stereotypes about Gallic warriors that permeated Greek and Latin literature in the Republican period. Beginning with the stories surrounding the supposed Celtic invasion of Italy and the eventual sack of Rome in 387 BCE, these stories adduced key “Gallic” features drawn from both Greek and Roman experiences against armies they labeled as Celtic/Gallic, but also from their ethnographic constructs of barbarian others. These depictions of barbaric Gauls were rife in Roman literature and visual culture, and continued to resonate with Roman audiences into the late Roman Empire.<sup>2</sup> In particular, Gallic peoples were linked to their love of warfare, and to the paraphernalia they carried into battle: war trumpets (carnyx/carnyces); shields; decorated, often horned helmets; and torques; as well as physical features such as longer, wild hair, mustaches, and, at times, nakedness in battle.<sup>3</sup> These became the ethnic “identifiers” for Gallic peoples in Roman visual culture. As Kimberley Cassibry asserted in discussing Gallic stereotypes, shields and other instruments of war were “a key component in the stereotype’s synecdochic mode, wherein defeated Celts were represented indirectly through arms and armor stripped from their bodies.”<sup>4</sup>

Such objects became proxies for defeated Gallic enemies predominantly because they were seized as spoils of war and paraded back to the city in Roman triumphal parades, and decorated trophies both during the parade and in sculptural

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1 Polyb. 2.29.5-9.

2 Gallic stereotypes were still invoked by Ammianus Marcellinus in the fourth century CE. See Greg WOLF, “Saving the Barbarian,” in Erich GRUEN (ed.), *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, Getty Research Institute, 2011a.

3 In a relatively short passage, Polybius managed to mention almost all these characteristics, except the helmets (2.28.1-30.6). He also included chariots. Gallic shields also appeared on the coinage of Ptolemy II in the 270s and 260s BCE (American Numismatic Society, 1944.100.75455). See Kimberley CASSIBRY, “The Tyranny of the Dying Gaul: Confronting an Ethnic Stereotype in Ancient Art,” *The Art Bulletin* 99, 2 (2017), p. 10.

4 CASSIBRY 2017, p. 10. Cassibry continued, “This mode had its roots in the Greek votive practice of erecting trophies on the battlefield and dedicating a representative sample of the rest of the spoils in sanctuaries.” See also CASSIBRY, “Coins before Conquest in Celtic France: An Art Lost to Empire.” In S. ALCOCK, M. EGRI, and J. FRANKS, (eds.), *Beyond Boundaries: Connecting Visual Cultures in the Provinces of Ancient Rome*, Getty Publications, 2016.

reliefs and on coins. Depictions of Gallic weaponry drew their symbolic power from the synecdoche that Cassibry described, but also from the cultural value that Gallic peoples placed on them in their own visual culture. In other words, these were not wholly invented traditions that bore no connection to battlefield realities; in fact, Gallic peoples also invested significant cultural capital in their battle accoutrements, and thus coopting them for use in Roman visual culture added an additional layer of meaning to underscore Roman power.

Despite that, these ethnic markers were also the product of Roman othering. They broadly denoted people the Romans labeled “Gauls,” though Gallic/Celtic was not a definable, pre-Roman ethnic group, but rather was an invented category utilized by Greek and Roman ethnographers.<sup>5</sup> Even the names Romans provided for tribes were not always reflective of any social reality.<sup>6</sup> In other words, Gallic peoples were constructed in Roman narratives both as a people and as a literary and visual topos. Depending on the political exigencies of the present, Roman writers and artists could pull from a variety of stock images of Gallic peoples to find stereotypes that fit the rhetorical purposes of the creator, in both written and visual form.<sup>7</sup>

The development of literary and visual topoi about Gallic peoples has been the subject of significant study in recent years, focusing particularly on Greek and Roman ethnography and on what I.M. Ferris called the “pornography of political violence” in Roman art.<sup>8</sup> That is, the widespread imagery of Gallic

5 Ralph HÄUSSLER, “De-constructing Ethnic Identities: Becoming Roman in Western Cisalpine Gaul?” In Andrew GARDNER, Edward HERRING, and Kathryn LOMAS (eds.), *Creating Ethnicities & Identities in the Roman World*, BICS Supplement, 120, London, 2013, pp. 38. For more on Roman ethnography in the west, see Greg WOOLF, *Tales of the Barbarians: Ethnography and Empire in the Roman West*, John Wiley & Sons, 2011b, pp.19-24; 33-42. The question of Celtic ethnicity remains a popular subject of debate. See for example, Franc’s attempt to reconstruct the ethnonym *Boii*: Eric FRANC, “L’etnicità delle popolazioni estinte: il caso dei Boii Cisalpini a partire dalle fonti testuali,” *IpoTESI Di Preistoria* 13, 1 (2020), pp.89-212.

6 The label “Ligurian,” for example, was ascribed to numerous peoples in northwestern Italy.

7 WOOLF 2011a: 262.

8 I.M. FERRIS, “The Pity of War: Representations of Gauls and Germans in Roman Art,” In Erich GRUEN (ed.), *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, Getty Research Institute, 2011: 197. For more on depictions of Gallic peoples in Roman art, see CASSIBRY 2017; I.M. FERRIS, *Enemies of Rome: Barbarians through Roman Eyes*, Stroud: Sutton, 2000; Hélène WALTER, *Les Barbares de l’Occident romain: corpus des Gaules et des provinces*

defeat, subjugation, and death in Roman commemorative monuments. Catharine Edwards, for example, analyzed how the abundant statues and reliefs of Gallic peoples on Roman monuments fixed the Gaul in a moment of “perpetual submission as a permanent reminder of Roman superiority.”<sup>9</sup> What the various strands of scholarly inquiry have highlighted is that portrayals of Gallic peoples were more reflective of Roman identity than indigenous, and played a critical role in how the Romans conceived of barbarians as a collective category, and in how they narrated conquest.<sup>10</sup> While these studies have brilliantly analyzed the changing nature of Graeco-Roman stereotypes and the purpose they served in literature and art, few authors centralize the role of coinage in the perpetuation of these stereotypes or as a form of mass communication of Roman cultural motifs about Gallic subjugation.

This study traces the development of visual tropes grounded in Roman perceptions of Gallic peoples in Roman coin iconography.<sup>11</sup> By anchoring visual tropes in specific historical moments, this study demonstrates that Roman perceptions about Gallic peoples developed and circulated through both rearticulation of existing ethnographic stereotypes and ongoing imperialist interactions between the Romans and those they conquered. Since coins paid Roman armies (and were seized as booty from conquered peoples) they became

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*de Germanie*, Paris: Belles lettres, 1993; Fraser HUNTER, “The carnyx and other trumpets on Celtic coins,” In Johan VAN HEESCH and Inge HEEREN (eds.), *Coinage in the Iron Age: essays in honour of Simone Scheers* (2009a), pp. 231-248; Sarah SCOTT and Jane WEBSTER (eds.), *Roman Imperialism and Provincial Art*, Cambridge University Press, 2003. For more on Greek and Roman ethnography on Gallic peoples, see Christopher KREBS, “Borealism: Caesar, Seneca, Tacitus, and the Roman Discourse about the Germanic North,” In Erich GRUEN (ed.), *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean*, Getty Research Institute, 2011, pp. 202-221; Andrew RIGGSBY, *Caesar in Gaul and Rome: War in Words*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006; Edith HALL, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989; Ton DERKS and Niko ROYMANS (eds.), *Ethnic Constructs in Antiquity: The Role of Power and Tradition*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009; Woolf 2011a.

9 Catharine EDWARDS, “Incorporating the Alien: The Art of Conquest.” In EDWARDS and WOOLF (eds.), *Rome the Cosmopolis*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 67.

10 The Romans alternated as needed between lumping all Gallic peoples together and delineating individual ethnic groups, particularly in triumphal inscriptions such as those of Augustus at La Turbie, in the Alps. As Woolf noted, they did so depending on their rhetorical needs at that moment. See fn. 7.

11 My forthcoming book project explores conquest imagery’s role in the development of a visual language of power in the Republican period in significant depth.

inextricably linked with Roman conquest. Through coin imagery, Roman stereotypes of Gallic peoples proliferated, and new tropes were added to the visual lexicon, particularly that of the subdued and bound captive. Depictions of Gallic defeat became a way for Roman generals to signal their own prowess and compete with political rivals. Roman visual tropes did not, however, develop solely through one-way interaction. Ongoing military confrontations between Romans and Gauls shaped both groups' visual semantics. Because coins were mobile and had inherent monetary value, they circulated far beyond whatever intended Roman audience the moneymakers targeted, and likely moved through the hands of local peoples.<sup>12</sup> Gallic self-representation and reception of Roman imagery is thus a critical component in understanding how Gallic warriors and Gallic captives became central to Rome's visual language of power. It is this dialogue between Roman and Gallic visuality that provided a space in which Gallic elites could negotiate their own identities and embrace visual culture as the prevailing method of articulating their wealth and power.<sup>13</sup>

### *Tracing Gallic Stereotypes through the Conquest Period*

In the early fourth century BCE, the city of Rome faced one of its greatest existential crises. The Senones, headed by their leader Brennus, defeated the Romans in battle at the Allia River and sacked the city.<sup>14</sup> The episode cemented the Gauls in the Roman mind as a terrifying enemy. The loss was so inauspicious that the date of the battle at the Allia River and the sack of Rome entered the Roman calendar as unlucky days and marked the first time that a foreign enemy

12 Kenneth HARL, *Coinage in the Roman Economy, 300 BC to AD 700*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1996, pp. 60-61. For the spread of Roman coinage in Cisalpine Gaul, particularly in the Veneto, for example, see Giovanni GORINI, "Alcuni aspetti della romanizzazione nel Veronese attraverso le Monete," *Est enim ille flos Italiae. Vita economica e sociale nella Cisalpina. Atti della giornata di studi in onore di Ezio Buchi, 30 novembre- 1 dicembre 2006 a cura di P. Basso, A. Buonopane, A. Cavarzere, S. Pesavento Mattioli*, (2008), pp.475-484.

13 The role of local agency in the development of visual culture in the provinces has received significant attention in recent years. See for example Amy RUSSELL and Monica HELLSTRÖM (eds.), *The Social Dynamics of Roman Imperial Imagery*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020; Ralph HÄUSSLER and Jane WEBSTER, "Creolage. A Bottom-Up Approach to Cultural Change in Roman Times." *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal*, 3, 1, no. 5. (2020), pp. 1-22.

14 Plut. *Cam.* 17-30; Livy 5.34-49; Diod. 14.113-117; Dion. Hal. *A.R.* 13.6-10.

sacked the city.<sup>15</sup> Despite the terror, the Romans, under the leadership of M. Furius Camillus, were ultimately successful in driving back the Senones. The Gallic sack loomed large in Roman historical writing, painting Gallic warriors as wild, fierce, and unpredictable, able to overcome Roman armies and yet also incapable of capitalizing on their victories.<sup>16</sup> In spite of its fame, historical accounts of the sack of Rome and Rome's initial interactions with the Gauls in northern Italy are mired in contradictions and remain controversial.<sup>17</sup> In some cases, the initial invasion was linked to a semi-mythical story of the Etruscan elite, Arruns of Clusium, who purportedly enticed the Gauls with fine food and wine to ravage Italy in retribution for being cuckolded by his ward.<sup>18</sup> Other narratives divorced the invasion from this mythology, and argued for external social and environmental factors as the prime cause.<sup>19</sup> Overwhelmingly, though, the sources focused on how, as J.H.C. Williams put it, "Gauls came to be where they should not have been, that is in Italy, in the first place."<sup>20</sup> As Williams argued, regardless of the version of the story presented, they reveal more about how Greeks and Romans constructed narratives around Gallic peoples than they do about any historical event.<sup>21</sup> These ethnographic tropes circulated enough to percolate into the visual cultures of both Rome and the Hellenistic East, such as in the famous third-century BCE monument of Attalos I of Pergamon.<sup>22</sup> What broadly connected the myriad literary accounts was an emphasis on the Gallic passion for war, an

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15 Though Roman sources did not always agree on which day the battle occurred. See Livy 6.1.11-12; Tacit. *Ann.* 15.41. See also A.T. GRAFTON and N.M. SWERDLOW. "Calendar Dates and Ominous Days in Ancient Historiography." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 51 (1988), pp. 14-42.

16 For more on these literary stereotypes, see KREBS 2011; WOOLF 2011a; WOOLF 2011b.

17 WILLIAMS 2001, p. 101.

18 Dion. Hal. *A.R.* 13.10-11.

19 Livy (5.33), for example, acknowledged the Arruns story but believed that it could not be connected to the Gallic migration/invasion because the Gauls had already been in northern Italy for two hundred years.

20 J.H.C. WILLIAMS, *Beyond the Rubicon: Romans and Gauls in Republican Italy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 101.

21 There is significant debate about the historicity of both the invasion and the sack of Rome. For syntheses of those debates, see WILLIAMS 2001 (especially chapters 3 and 4) and Kathryn LOMAS, *The Rise of Rome: From the Iron Age to the Punic Wars*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018, pp.168-9, 207.

22 The Attalid monument popularized the images of Gallic defeat and death enough to result in statue copies such as the Dying Gaul and the Ludovisi Gaul.

internal lack of cohesion that tended to prevent Gauls from capitalizing on their victories – thus opening the door for Hellenistic, or Roman, triumph – and an unpredictability that exacerbated Greek and Roman fears.<sup>23</sup>

The circulation of these stereotypes through Greek and Roman literature shaped later Roman interaction with Gallic peoples and influenced how Gallic peoples entered Roman visual culture. The Roman “Gaul” was cunning and fierce, but also easily distracted and fickle.<sup>24</sup> The very contradictions inherent in Roman literary depictions demonstrate how thorny a problem the Gauls presented as a representation of Roman domination. They were simultaneously the fierce enemy that terrorized Roman legions and beheaded consuls; the disorganized, self-defeating force that spent too much time quarreling amongst themselves; and the subdued captives paraded in Roman triumphs.<sup>25</sup>

While these stereotypes were rooted in Greek antecedents, they were strengthened in Roman literature and imagination through military experience. The historical Roman conquest of the Gallic provinces took place in multiple phases between the third and first centuries BCE, with the earliest phase occurring in Cisalpine Gaul, the region of northern Italy.<sup>26</sup> There, the Romans fought intermittent wars with various Gallic peoples throughout the third and second centuries BCE. Polybius’ narration of these wars highlights how difficult an enemy they were for the Romans, and how much anxiety about the potential for

23 Polybius, for example, highlighted the unpredictability of the Gauls, which he saw as their downfall, and their ability to inspire terror (2.28-35).

24 Our most complete narratives of the Roman conquest of the Gallic provinces are found in writers of the late Republic, most notably Livy, Strabo, and other Augustan or imperial writers. Livy was fond of reading back more contemporary attitudes into a much earlier period. While Livy and others suggested that Gallic stereotypes date to the initial phase of contact in the fourth century BCE, that remains uncertain since many of the original sources used by Augustan and imperial writers are now lost.

25 For Gauls as the fierce enemy, see Livy 23.24.11-12; Polyb. 2.28.10. For the purported self-defeating tendencies of the Gauls, see Polyb. 2.21.3-9.

26 For more on the conquest and consolidation of Transalpine Gaul, see for example Charles EBEL, *Transalpine Gaul: The Emergence of a Roman Province*, Leiden: Brill, 1976; Greg WOOLF, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Monographs on Cisalpine Gaul, on the other hand, focus less on the conquest and more on the long durée from pre-Roman through Roman northern Italy. See for example Carolynn RONCAGLIA, *Northern Italy in the Roman World: From the Bronze Age to Late Antiquity*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018; Ralph HÄUSSLER, *Becoming Roman? Diverging Identities and Experiences in Northwest Italy*, UCL Institute of Archaeology Series, 2013.

another Gallic invasion preoccupied the Roman people.<sup>27</sup> By the time Massalia (Marseilles) in Transalpine Gaul requested Roman aid against the Salluvii in the late second century BCE, the Roman people had already fixed Gallic peoples as a perennial threat that must be met with force and eagerly agreed to intervene. Rome's conquest of Transalpine Gaul (or Gallia Narbonensis) took place between 124 and 121 BCE, but Rome would be drawn back repeatedly to deal with perceived – and at times very real – threats, culminating in Caesar's conquest of Gaul in the mid-first century BCE.

The conquest of Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul firmly cemented Gallic stereotypes in Roman literature. At the same time, the third and second centuries BCE witnessed a rapid expansion in the visual commemoration of Roman conquest, and inextricably bound conquest and visual culture together. Gallic peoples found themselves etched onto temples, arches, reliefs, and statue bases.<sup>28</sup> And while fixed monuments remained an important platform for narrating conquest, perhaps the most fascinating impact that the Gallic conquest had on Roman visual culture was their shift from fixed monuments onto coins. Coinage offered a significantly wider audience. With fixed monuments, the burden was on the viewer to travel to see it. Coinage offered a way to render the fixed monument mobile, and to transform the ephemeral moment of the triumphal parade into a permanent, traveling representation of Roman dominion. Through coins, Roman moneyers could deploy a variety of images that bolstered Roman claims to power that could circulate not only through and with the Roman and Italian merchants and soldiers who were paid in coin, but also potentially into the hands of non-Italian audiences through trade and protracted military occupation. After the second-century victories in Transalpine Gaul, Roman coins incorporated potent images of Gallic subjugation, images that circulated far beyond the intended Roman

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27 Indeed, an argument can be made that the Roman treaty with Carthage that fixed the Ebro River as the northernmost point of Carthaginian-held Spain stemmed from a Roman need to focus on subduing the Gallic threat in northern Italy. See Arthur ECKSTEIN, "Polybius, the Gallic Crisis, and the Ebro Treaty." *Classical Philology*, 107, 3 (2012), pp. 206-229.

28 FERRIS noted that many of the fixed monuments depicting Gallic captives in Gallia Narbonensis dated to after the Gallic peoples had already been incorporated into the empire and some to after they had already received citizenship. As he stated, "Becoming Roman in parts of Gaul involved many things... but it certainly involved coming to terms with striking visual reminders... of ancestral defeat and humiliation and of cultural heritage curtailed by conquest" (2011, p. 190).

audiences. Coinage, therefore, offers a quantifiable path for understanding how conquest imagery circulated and was refined in the expanding Roman Empire. At the same time, coinage played a vital role in that very expansion, funding Roman armies and underwriting the colonization of the provinces. Thus, both the coins themselves and their iconography facilitated an ongoing exchange, both economic and symbolic, between Romans and local populations.

### *The Role of the Gaul in Roman Visual Culture*

From the first military interactions between Gallic tribes and the Romans in the early fourth century BCE, the Gallic warrior played a key role in Roman imagery as a fierce, but barbaric enemy. Gallic social norms at times baffled the Romans, and their – to Roman eyes – wild and unkempt appearance with long hair and mustaches made them visually an “other.”<sup>29</sup> However, in their wars of expansion, the Romans faced many other enemies who fit this generic trope of barbarian, as well as other powerful enemies. Yet the Gauls were the first to appear in Roman coin iconography and appeared more frequently on Republican coinage than any other enemy. Why the Gauls figured so prominently on Roman coinage came down, in many ways, to timing. The initial conquest of Transalpine Gaul occurred in an era when the Romans were facing significant political crises and would in the decade that followed be involved in numerous wars and suffer numerous defeats. The Romans needed a clear enemy to commemorate in times of both victory and defeat, and this cemented Gallic captives as a form of Roman self-expression that, over time, influenced the development of a genre within the visual language of power that would define Roman visual culture for centuries, that of the defeated enemy.

Gallic captives first entered the Roman visual lexicon with the coinage minted in honor of the triumphs of the consuls Q. Fabius Maximus and Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus in 119/118 BCE. Their coins (RRC 281/1 and 282/1) memorialized their victories over the combined armies of the Gallic Arverni, the Allobroges, and their allies in 120 BCE. Only one coin depicting a probable defeated enemy

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29 Incorporating alien bodies into Rome – both living slaves and bronze and marble representations – contributed to layered meanings in the social and urban topography of ancient Rome, forcing confrontations between subject and viewer. At the same time, those viewers were not always Roman, and thus these alien bodies could and likely were read in diverse ways depending on the social perspective of the viewer (Edwards 2003, pp. 44-70).

predates these, RRC 232/1 from 138 BCE, but its reference remains unidentified.<sup>30</sup> After these initial coins were issued, coins with Gallic references remained commonplace in Republican iconography through Caesar's campaigns. Through each of these successive waves of Gallic imagery, Roman moneyers added layers to the Gallic symbols. While some of these coin issues were of limited size, and thus likely did not circulate widely, they attest to the Roman preoccupation with exerting their dominance over conquered peoples in tangible, visual ways, and likely reflect the existence of now-lost monuments in Rome erected to celebrate Gallic triumphs.

The coinage of 119/118 commemorating the conquest of Transalpine Gaul drew upon key markers of Gallic identity. They included the boar's head helmet, *carnyx*, and Gallic shield (RRC 281/1), as well as a naked warrior driving a chariot (RRC 282/1). The naked warrior of Domitius' coinage – possibly the Arverni chieftain Bituitus, whom Domitius defeated in battle – is depicted not as a bound captive, but as a powerful warrior amid an attack (fig. 1). With his long hair flowing behind him, he hurls his spear from his chariot, his horses galloping, his *carnyx* propped up next to him and his shield in front of him, protecting his bare torso. This pose drew on common Roman coin images depicting Roman gods and goddesses in chariots, holding or hurling an array of objects, including the ever-present coin type of the goddess Victory driving a *biga*.<sup>31</sup> This first overt Gallic reference is unusual in light of the later, more commonplace depictions of subdued captives, since it did not depict the Gallic warrior in a clear pose of defeat. The coins honoring the victories of Fabius and Domitius were also remarkable in that they attested to recent events rather than the distant past.

Gallic imagery did, however, feature in familial remembrances of long-distant victories RRC 319/1, for example, minted by Q. Minucius Thermus in 103 BCE,

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30 The coin depicts a warrior in a quadriga holding a shield in his left hand and grasping a captive beside him with his right hand. Crawford identified the warrior as possibly Mars and left the other figure as an unidentified captive. If this coin evoked a particular contemporary victory, it would likely be to a minor victory in the Lusitanian War in Hispania. However, since many Roman coins made generic references to victory that were not grounded in specifics, it is difficult to say for sure. See Michael CRAWFORD, *Roman Republican Coinage I*, Cambridge University Press, 1974, p. 265.

31 For example, RRC 244/1 (134 BCE) depicts Mars in a quadriga (four-horse chariot) holding a spear, shield, and trophy. 271/1 (125 BCE) shows Jupiter in a quadriga holding a spear and thunderbolt. Most numismatists follow Crawford, who agreed RRC 232/1 depicts a Gaul, though he stopped short of affirming that it must be Bituitus (1974, p. 299).



Figure 1: RRC 281/1, minted in 119 BCE by M. Furius Philus.

The coin depicts the laureate head of Janus on the obverse (front), with the inscription M.FOVRI.L.F. (Marcus Furius, son of Lucius). The reverse (back) shows the goddess Roma crowning a trophy. The trophy is surmounted by a boar's head helmet. Two shields and two carnyces (war trumpets) flank the trophy, which also holds a shield and a sword, with the inscription ROMA. Image is in the public domain, courtesy of the American Numismatic Society, Inventory No. 1944.100.561, Coinage of the Roman Republic Online Database.

portrays a Roman soldier fighting a barbarian soldier to protect a fallen comrade (fig. 2). This coin honored the moneyer's ancestor, Q. Minucius Thermus, who, as proconsul in 191-190, campaigned against the people the Romans called Ligurians in northwest Italy and earned the *corona civica* (civic crown) by saving the life of a fellow citizen in battle, as is evinced on the coin's reverse. Michael Crawford merely identified the opponent as a barbarian, but the horned helmet he is wearing and the fact that Thermus fought against a people the Romans routinely classed as "Gallic" indicates this coin should be included in the lexicon of Gallic-inspired Roman coins. Furthermore, the coin was minted during the campaigns against the Cimbri and the Teutones, when Roman anxiety over the Gallic threat – since they lumped Germanic peoples in with those they called Gauls – was on the rise.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> For more on the conflation of German and Gaul, see FERRIS 2011.



Figure 2: RRC 319/1, minted in 103 BCE by Q. Minucius Thermus.

The obverse shows the helmeted head of Mars. The reverse has a Roman soldier fighting a barbarian while protecting a fallen soldier. The inscription reads Q.THERM.MF (Quintus Thermus, son of Marcus). Image is in the public domain, courtesy of the American Numismatic Society, Inventory No. 1987.26.42, Coinage of the Roman Republic Online Database.

The wars against the Cimbri and Teutones (c.113-101 BCE) renewed Roman fears of Gallic invasion. This fear was not helped by the massive defeat the Romans had suffered at Arausio in 105 BCE, two years prior to Q. Minucius Thermus' coin issue. Livy claimed that the Romans lost 80,000 men and 40,000 servants and attendants in that defeat.<sup>33</sup> The battle also saw the one of the consuls, Cn. Mallius Maximus, lose two of his sons, and his legate, M. Aemilius Scaurus, was captured and executed by the Cimbrian chieftain, Boiorix, according to Livy.<sup>34</sup> Sallust, reflecting on the loss at Arausio, stated that "the terror of this had made all Italy tremble... with the Gauls they fought for life and not for glory."<sup>35</sup> Marius defeated the Teutones at Aquae Sextiae in 102 BCE.<sup>36</sup> Livy alleged that Marius killed an absurdly high number of Teutones, 200,000, and captured 90,000.<sup>37</sup> Roman fears over Gallic threats led to intensive troop levies, and likely increased the minting of coins to pay those soldiers. Furthermore, Roman moneyers sought to advertise

<sup>33</sup> Livy *Per.* 67.1-2.

<sup>34</sup> Livy *Per.* 67.1-2.

<sup>35</sup> Sall. *Iug.* 114.2.

<sup>36</sup> Livy (*Per.* 68.5) noted that Marius postponed his triumph over the Teutones to defeat the Cimbrians.

<sup>37</sup> Livy *Per.* 68.3.

Rome's ultimate success against these threats through their coin issues.

The coinage minted in honor of Marius' triumph after the Cimbric Wars attests to the celebration of Roman prowess. RRC 326/2 (fig. 3), minted by C. Fundanius in 101 BCE, exalted Marius as *imperator*, an epithet often granted by soldiers to their victorious general. The coin also underscored Marius' success in ending the threat of Gallic invasion by depicting a bound and kneeling captive. With the goddess Victory looming above him, the Gallic captive kneels on one leg with his hands bound behind his back. A horned helmet sits atop the trophy before which the captive kneels, and a *carynx* sits next to him, resting against the trophy. While it is difficult to make out the captive's features with the wear on most of the extant coins, he seems to have the characteristic longer hair that the Romans associated with Gallic men. The wear also obscures the captive's hands, but it seems likely that they are bound, perhaps even to the trophy, emphasizing his symbolic role as a captive in Marius' triumphal procession in the same year that the coin was minted, 101 BCE.<sup>38</sup> Marius' triumph is also evoked in another coin issued by Fundanius, RRC 326/1.

The coin likely depicted Marius in his triumphal chariot, perhaps along with his young son, who rode in the parade with him (fig. 4).<sup>39</sup> Both coin series celebrated Marius as the savior of the state, since his victories in Transalpine and Cisalpine Gaul prevented a repeat of the Gallic sack of Rome in 387 BCE.

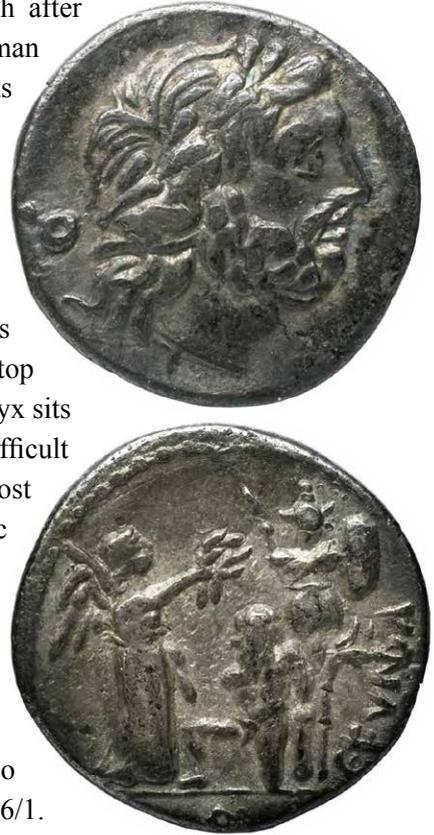


Figure 3: RRC 326/2, minted in 101 BCE by C. Fundanius. It was minted in honor of Marius' triumph. The obverse has a laureate head of Jupiter. The reverse depicts the goddess Victory crowning a trophy with a wreath. At the base of the trophy, a Gallic captive kneels with his hands bound behind his back. To the captive's left is a *carynx*, a clear Gallic reference. The trophy is also decorated with a horned helmet and an oblong shield, also Gallic references. Image is in the Public Domain, from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Notice no. FRBNF41986186.

38 The image of a captive bound to the base of a trophy is most clearly illustrated in the marble relief from the Temple of Apollo Sosianus from the Augustan period.

39 CRAWFORD 1974, p. 328.



Figure 4: RRC 326/1, minted in 101 BCE by C. Fundanius. The obverse depicts the helmeted head of Roma. The reverse shows a triumphal general, Marius, in a triumphal chariot (quadriga). The other figure is likely his young son. Part of the moneyer's name is visible on the reverse. Image is in the public domain, courtesy of the American Numismatic Society, Inventory No. 1937.158.51, Coinage of the Roman Republic Online Database.

In 98 BCE, the moneyer Titus Cloelius issued a series of quinarii (RRC 332/1a-c) that elaborated on the theme presented in Fundanius' earlier coinage (fig. 5). His reverse image has Victory crowning a trophy but sitting on the ground at the base of the trophy is a captive with his hands bound behind his back. Next to the trophy is a *carnyx* and the trophy itself seems to be wearing a horned helmet. Both the *carnyx* and the horned helmet have strong Gallic associations. The various coins issued by C. Fundanius and T. Cloelius are present in hoards of denarii in both Gallic provinces. While such coins rarely appear in more than single-digit examples in Roman coin hoards, their presence indicates that these coins traveled, likely through Roman or Italian hands, into the regions whose defeat they celebrated, underscoring for their Italian audiences the superiority of Roman forces.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Fundanius' coinage memorialized contemporary

<sup>40</sup> RRC 326/1, 326/2, and 332/1a-c appear variously in the following northern Italian hoards, which range in date from 100 BCE, to 4 CE: the two hoards from Ancona (AN1, AN2, in Bevagna (BVG), Borzano, the two hoards from Carbonara (CR1, CR2), Cingoli, Civitella in Val di Chiana, Compito, Este (ES2), Fiesole, Fossalta (Portogruaro), Gallignano, Hoffman, Imola, Maleo, Meolo (Albaredo d'Adige), Monte Codruzzo, Mornico Losana, Olmeneta, Ossero, Ossolaro, Padova 6, Palazzo Canavese, Pieve-Quinta, San Bartolomeo in Sassoforte, San Miniato al Tedesco, Santa Ana, Sustinenza, and Vico Pisano. Their pre-



Figure 5: RRC 332/1b, minted in 98 BCE by T. Cloelius. The obverse shows the laureate head of Jupiter. The reverse has Victory crowning a trophy, with a captive, hands bound, at the base of the trophy. A carnyx rests behind the shoulder of the captive, and the trophy wears a horned helmet. Image is in the public domain, from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Notice no. FRBNF41980707.

events rather than the achievements of moneymen's ancestors. These Gallic coin references thus spoke to a Roman and Italian audience that had just experienced, if tangentially, the events evinced on the coins.

With Rome's renewed aggression in Transalpine Gaul in the 50s BCE, however, the Gallic captive returned to the stage, so to speak, commemorating both ancestral achievements and recent events. While the coinage of Caesar is, for good reason, the most famous of these coins, an earlier coin commemorating the achievements of C. Coelius Caldus (cos. 94) deserves some attention (RRC 437/2 series; fig. 6). Minted in 51 BCE, likely by C. Coelius Caldus's son, the coin has one of the most complicated of any Roman coin image.<sup>41</sup> It depicts a

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sence in the hoard at Olmeneta is suggestive, since that hoard is dated to 100 BCE, so the coins reached Cisalpine Gaul almost immediately upon being minted. The same coins also appear in the following hoards in France: Beauvoisin, Bessan, Bourgueil, Noyer, Peyriac-sur-Mer, and Villette. The wide date range of these hoards indicates the coins likely remained in circulation through the remainder of the Republican period. See Appendix for a chronological list of hoards.

41 See Bernhard WOYTEK and Anna ZAWADZKA, "Ockham's Razor. A Structural Analysis of the Denarii of Coelius Caldus ("RRC 437")," *The Numismatic Chronicle*, 176 (2016), pp. 135-153.

figure preparing a ritual feast at a table bearing the coin's inscription. To the left stands a trophy holding a Macedonian shield. To the right is a trophy holding a carnyx and oval shield. The carnyx had by this point become the most identifiable reference to Gallic defeat in visual culture. The oval shield was also a common Gallic attribute, on both Gallic coins and in depictions of Gallic trophies, such as on the coins of Julius Caesar (RRC 452/1-2).

While the Macedonian shield referenced an unknown Macedonian victory, the trophy with the Gallic accoutrements referenced the elder Coelius Calvus' (cos. 94) victory over the Gallic Salluvii.<sup>42</sup> The coin's obverse depicts a standard with a boar's head with the inscription HIS, referencing his victories in Hispania Citerior, though the boar's head is also a Gallic reference.<sup>43</sup> The moneyer went a step further, however, by adding a vertical inscription to the right of the Gallic trophy that says IMP.A.X. Unabbreviated, this means Imperator, Augur, and Xvir (Decemvir). Calvus was hailed *imperator*, an honorific granted to victorious generals by their troops, for his victory over the Salluvii. Crawford argued that the position of the inscription clearly associates it with the Gallic trophy, underscoring the importance of the victory to the elder Calvus' career. The placement of the Iberian and Gallic references in the overall composition clearly indicates the symbolic value that Coelius Calvus saw in his father's victories over two "Celtic" peoples.<sup>44</sup>

The coinage of Julius Caesar drew upon all the different visual symbols of victories over Gallic peoples that had accrued by the mid-first century BCE in

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42 It should be noted that the Gallic Salluvii were also the tribe that Massalia requested Roman aid to defend against, which sparked the initial conquest of Transalpine Gaul in 125 BCE. While it is not possible to say with any certainty that Coelius Calvus' son was highlighting his father's campaigns against the Salluvii to cement his father's position within this long history of conquest, it seems probable considering Roman elite tendencies to provide a clear and favorable family narrative on coins.

43 For the boar's head as a Gallic reference, see: CRAWFORD 1974, p. 459; CASSIBRY 2017, p. 25. Another member of the family, L. Coelius Calvus, even had a boar's head floor mosaic at his house in Pompeii (M. DELLA CORTE, *Case ed abitanti*, 190). The boar's head was also the emblem of the Iberian city of Clunia.

44 Celtic and Gallic are used interchangeably in Greek and Roman sources, leading to some confusion about exactly who the Greeks and Romans classed as Celtic/Gallic. Celtic comes from the Greek *Keltos*, while Gallic comes from the Latin *Gallus*. The peoples of northern Iberia were associated with the Celts in the Greek sources, who called them Celtiberians, a name used in Roman sources as well.



Figure 6: RRC 437/2b, minted in 51 BCE by C. Coelius Calvus. The obverse shows the head of C. Coelius Calvus (cos. 94 BCE), with a military standard in the form of a boar behind. The inscription reads: C.COEL.CALDVS COS HIS (Gaius Coelius Calvus, Consul of Hispania). The reverse has a table with a figure (L. Cloelius Calvus) behind, preparing an epulum (ritual feast). On the left is a trophy with a Macedonian shield. On the right is a trophy with a carnyx and an oval shield. The inscription reads: L.CALDVS/VIIIVIR/EPVL CCALDVIS IMP.A.X (Lucius Calvus, triumvir for the epulum, Gaius Calvus, imperator, augur, decemvir). Image is in the public domain, from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Notice no. FRBNF41981126.

Roman visual culture.<sup>45</sup> From carnyces to shields to bearded warriors to trophies, Caesar's coinage evoked every part of the process of conquering, subjugating, and displaying Gallic captives. This is particularly poignant considering that Caesar's campaign is generally credited with the deaths of a million Gallic people, with another million being sold into slavery. The high quality of the coin dies also meant that the images appeared in much better detail than on previous coins, making the references to Caesar's devastation in Gaul highly evocative. Take, for example, RRC 448/2a, minted in 48 BCE (fig. 7). The front of the coin displays the bust of a bearded Gallic warrior with his wild hair fanning out behind him, wearing a torque around his neck. In case the viewer held in any doubt that this man was a Gallic warrior, a Gallic shield sits behind his head. The coin's reverse shows a chariot driver spurring on his horses while his companion faces backward, holding his shield in one hand and throwing his spear with the

<sup>45</sup> It was more typical to put family, personal, and triumphal references on the reverse of a coin, whereas the obverse was reserved for gods and goddesses.



Figure 7: RRC 448/2a, minted in 48 BCE by L. Hostilius Saserna. Minted in honor of Julius Caesar, this coin depicts a Gallic warrior and shield on the obverse and another Gallic warrior in a chariot facing backwards holding a shield in one hand while hurling his spear with the other. The reverse inscription reads: L.HOSTILIVS SASERN. Image is in the public domain, courtesy of the American Numismatic Society, Inventory No. 1961.37.1, from the Coinage of the Roman Republic Online Database.

other. The practice of depicting living men on the front of coins was fairly new in Rome, and this is the first to depict a non-Roman.

Caesar's subsequent coinage repeated the Gallic patterns of previous moneymers, displaying trophies, shields, and carnyces, but two other coins deserve greater attention for what they contribute to the visual language of power. The first is RRC 452/5 (48 BCE), which elaborated upon the image of Gallic warrior as captive subject – introduced over seventy years earlier – by depicting the bound captive kneeling in front of the statue looking up at the trophy (fig. 8). The captive is seated with his legs contorted, his hands bound behind his back and likely tied to the trophy. His head is twisted back and up over his right shoulder in an uncomfortable position so that he can look at the trophy, decorated with a captured Gallic shield and carnyx. One can almost see a look of pain on his face and can just make out a torque or chain around his neck. The inscription CAESAR horizontally bisects the poignant image. This coin advertised Caesar's achievements in Transalpine Gaul to a Roman and Italian audience during his civil war against Pompey and the Senate, and thus at a time when he had no real legal status in Rome. His coin issue, therefore, drew on Gallic stereotypes to bolster his own claims to power.



Figure 8: RRC 452/5, minted in 48/47 BCE by Julius Caesar. The obverse has a female head wearing an oak-wreath and a diadem. The reverse shows a trophy holding a Gallic shield and a carnyx. Below rests a bound captive, looking up at the trophy. Image is in the public domain, courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Notice no. FRBNF41987482.



Figure 9: RRC 468/1, minted in 46/45 BCE by Julius Caesar. The obverse shows the head of Venus wearing a diadem. The reverse has a trophy, holding an oval shield and a carnyx in each hand. Seated on the bottom left is a female figure with her hand in her hand as a sign of mourning. On the bottom right is a bearded male captive, hands bound, looking up at the trophy. Image is in the public domain, courtesy of the American Numismatic Society, Inventory No. 1974.26.84, from the Coinage of the Roman Republic Online Database.

The second coin, 468/1, has, as was now typical, a Roman trophy at the center of the image (fig. 9). This trophy displays Gallic shields, spears, and carnyces on either side and is surmounted by a horned helmet. At the base of the trophy, directly underneath each shield, are two captives. The captive on the right is reminiscent of Caesar's earlier coin and is seated with his hands bound behind his back and his face upturned toward the trophy. The second captive is a woman, who rests her head in her unbound hands. These two Caesarian coins offer the most pointed images of subjugation of Gallic peoples, with the male captive visually acknowledging the trophy marking his defeat, and with the first overtly non-combatant captive depicted, the woman with her head buried in her hands, signaling both grief and shame.

### *Roman and Gallic Visual Exchanges*

Caesar's wild-haired Gauls, with faces burdened by defeat, likely referenced Hellenistic portrayals of Celtic warriors, such as those made famous by the third-century BCE Attalid victory monument, and popularized in Roman copies, such as the statue now housed in the Capitoline Museum, popularly referred to as the "Dying Gaul." Like Caesar's coins, this first or second century CE Roman copy of one of the Attalid statues underscores that by the imperial period, the "Gallic captive" had become a fully-fledged ethnographic stereotype within the wider Roman visual language of power.<sup>46</sup> Other statues and marble reliefs reinforce that idea, and one can see echoes of the trope in other depictions of defeated enemies, most overtly in the depictions of barbarians on the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius. But while it is not unexpected that the Gallic captive became a common trope in the Roman visual language of power, especially considering Rome's longstanding fascination and discomfort with Gallic soldiers, the influence of these images on Gallic self-representation in the late Republic and early Empire demonstrates how successfully the Romans deployed these images as symbols of Roman power and authority.

Scholarship on Celtic numismatics has often stressed the imitative nature of Celtic coin production, often ascribing labels such as "crude" to local emissions.<sup>47</sup> However, some scholars, such as John Creighton, have challenged

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<sup>46</sup> For more on the Dying Gaul statue as an ethnographic stereotype, see CASSIBRY 2017, pp. 6-40.

<sup>47</sup> JOHN CREIGHTON, *Coins and Power in Late Iron Age Britain*. Cambridge University Press,

that perception. Indeed, Celtic/Gallic coin imagery suggests significantly more purpose behind the stylized visuality of local coinage. Furthermore, through these local emissions, we can see multi-lateral influences occurring, with local Gallic coinage drawing upon Massiliote and Roman traditions, and Roman coin iconography invoking specific Celtic symbols. The most overt example of this sort of visual dialogue between Gallic and Roman iconography is severed head imagery. Head-hunting was a well-attested practice in Iron Age Europe, particularly among Gallic cultures.<sup>48</sup> Severed head trophies held both martial and ritual significance in numerous Gallic communities.<sup>49</sup> Skulls or representations of severed heads formed a part of the ritual and commemorative landscape in these cultures, so their appearance on Gallic coins is unsurprising. The practice was one that terrified Romans. Severed heads appear in multiple media in Gallic visual culture, including engraved pillars with severed heads, plaster severed heads, and severed heads depicted as an accessory to warrior statues. Many of these are attested at the Salluvian oppidum of Entremont, in southern France.<sup>50</sup> Severed heads made their way onto Gallic gold and silver coins by at least the second century BCE, particularly in central Gaul (fig. 10; fig. 11).

On coinage of the Veneti (located in the Loire valley), severed heads appear as if floating, tethered to a central, possibly heroic, figure.<sup>51</sup> This floating head type evoked the ritual significance of severed head trophies. John Creighton argued that they represented altered states of consciousness from Gallic rituals.<sup>52</sup> Besides the Veneti, other Gallic peoples in the Loire Valley utilized the same iconography. The Namnetes deployed the style of the central heroic figure surrounded by severed heads, while the Pictones circulated coins with a human-headed horse

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2000. The tendency to view Celtic coinage as overwhelmingly imitative is still pervasive in the field. See Giovanni GORINI, "Ricerche di numismatica celtica," *Dialoghi di numismatica* vol. 1, (2019), pp. 175-184.

48 Head-hunting was well attested in many other cultures as well, from the Americas to southeast Asia to Oceania. See Ian Armit, *Headhunting and the Body in Iron Age Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, p. 122.

49 ARMIT, 2017, pp. 74-119.

50 Ibid., pp. 184-187.

51 Derek ALLEN, *The Coins of the Ancient Celts*, Edinburgh University Press, 1980, p. 135, cited in CREIGHTON, 2000, p. 45. Allen argued that the floating heads represented severed head trophies.

52 CREIGHTON 2000, p. 45.

and a severed head between the horse's hooves.<sup>53</sup> Outside of the Loire Valley, the Bituriges, in central Gaul, portrayed a horseman holding an oblong shield, with the severed head beneath the horse (fig. 11). Creighton argued that Gallic coin imagery represented, sometimes abstractly, important social rituals, and that is evident in the severed head coinage.

Head-hunting practices played a critical role in Gallic self-representation, but they were also deployed in Roman literature and visual culture as a symbol of Roman victory over barbaric peoples. This was particularly true in the imperial period, as I.M. Ferris demonstrated, when they became, on the column of Marcus Aurelius, an image imbued with profound violence that potentially held an echo of pity for the defeated enemy.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, Roman literary depictions from the Republic illustrated the fear that Gallic head-hunting instilled in Roman soldiers, as is attested in a passage from Livy where he described the defeat and death of the praetor L. Postumius Albinus (pr. 216 BCE), who fell in battle to the Gallic Boii:

The Boii stripped his body of its spoils and cut off the head, and carried them in triumph to their most sacred temples. They cleaned the skull according to custom and gilded the scalp with gold; it was then used as a vessel for libations *spolia corporis caputque praecisum ducis Boii ouantes templo quod sanctissimum est apud eos intulere. purgato inde capite, ut mos iis est, caluam auro caelauere, idque sacrum uas iis erat quo sollemnibus libarent poculumque idem sacerdoti esset ac templi antistitibus* (23.24.11-12).

While Romans may not have directly encountered many Gallic severed head coins, they certainly were aware of Gallic practices, and would have encountered the imagery in other media during the initial conquest of Transalpine Gaul, thus associating the imagery with Gallic representations of victory.<sup>55</sup> The appearance of the severed head trope on a Roman coin issue highlights the influence of this imagery on Roman conceptions of Gallic peoples and demonstrates how the Romans incorporated a Gallic symbol of victory into a Roman portrayal of Gallic defeat. While the severed head only appeared on one Roman coin issue, that of M. Sergius Silus (RRC 286/1, fig. 12), it was a massive issue, appearing in over two-hundred coin hoards. Minted in 116/115 BCE, two years after the founding

<sup>53</sup> Inventory no. 1887.A.157, from the Ambiani online database.

<sup>54</sup> FERRIS 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Though it should be noted that coinage was a common form of plunder, so at least some Roman soldiers could have encountered severed head coins during the campaigns in 124-120 BCE.



Figure 10: Gallic gold quarter stater of the Veneti (NW Gaul), second century BCE. The obverse depicts a central figure, with beads leading out to severed heads. The reverse depicts a rider on a human-headed horse jumping over a winged figure. The rider holds a stimulus ending in a fringed vexillum, or standard. Image is in the public domain, courtesy of the Ambiani online database, Inventory no. 1887.A.223.



Figure 11: Gallic silver denarius of the Bituriges Cubes, in Central Gaul. The obverse depicts a male head, and the reverse depicts a horseman turning back to the left and holding a shield in his right hand and the reins in his left. Below the horse is a severed head. Image is in the public domain, courtesy of the Ambiani online database, Inventory no. 1887.A.144.

of the colony at Narbo, and in the wake of at least three successive triumphs over Gallic peoples in both Transalpine and Cisalpine Gaul, Silus' coin circulated in a historical moment in which Gallic warriors were very much on the minds of everyday Romans.<sup>56</sup>

Silus' coin also appeared one-hundred years after the death and decapitation of L. Postumius Albinus. The coin's reverse depicted a horseman on a rearing horse, holding a sword and a severed head in his left hand. Stamping a horseman holding a severed head, one that evoked Gallic hairstyles, suggests a clear dialogue with Gallic imagery. By displaying the severed head, the horseman demonstrated martial superiority over the Gauls, while also invoking a social practice that had significant value to Gallic peoples. Most scholars argue that coin imagery was intended to speak predominantly to an in-group, in this case the Romans. Roman, as well as Greek, audiences would understand the implicit hierarchy represented through the choice of hairstyle for the severed head, as such hairstyles were common stereotypes of "barbarians," a group into which Gallic peoples often fell in both Greek and Roman ethnographic writing. At the same time, we cannot discount that Gallic peoples confronted this particular coin image. In fact, the coin appears in at least thirteen hoards in Transalpine Gaul, Gallia Comata, and Germania, and over thirty hoards in Cisalpina Gaul.<sup>57</sup> Two of the hoards in central Gaul were also in the Loire Valley, the region where severed head coinage was most prominent. While there is no clear proof that Silus' coin intentionally invoked Gallic severed head coins for its style, he clearly drew upon a broader Gallic cultural image that circulated widely both among the Gauls themselves and among the Romans in both written and artistic form. Furthermore, the coin demonstrates a sort of ambiguity through which, depending on the cultural perspective of the viewer, the coin could read as more Roman or more Gallic in its composition.<sup>58</sup>

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56 Q. Fabius Maximus Allobrogicus and Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus celebrated triumphs in 119/118 BCE over the Arverni and Allobroges in central Gaul; Q. Marcius Rex celebrated a triumph over the Stoeni in Liguria in Cisalpine Gaul in 117 BCE, and M. Aemilius Scaurus celebrated a triumph *de Galleis Karneis* in 115 BCE.

57 Silus' coin is present in forty-six of the eighty-seven datable hoards in Cisalpine Gaul (52.8%), and nine of the twenty-one datable hoards in Transalpine Gaul and Gallia Comata (42.8%). But, for comparison, the coin only appears in one of the eight datable hoards in Greece (12.5%). It is present in forty-four of the eighty-five evaluated coin hoards in the rest of Italy (51.7%), and eleven of twenty-five datable hoards (that include denarii) in the Iberian Peninsula (44%).

58 Indigenous coin iconography in Cisalpine Gaul reveals that from at least the second cen-



Figure 12: RRC 286/1, minted in 116/115 BCE by M. Sergius Silus.

The obverse has the helmeted head of Roma. reverse image depicts a horseman holding a sword and a severed head in his left hand. Note the hint of longer hair on the severed head, a trait found among Roman depictions of Gallic warriors. Image is in the public domain, courtesy of the American Numismatic Society, Inventory no: 1941.131.92, from the Coinage of the Roman Republic Online Database.

While Silus' coin might seem like an isolated example, it fits within a broader framework of ambiguous visual interplay that helped the Romans communicate and negotiate their hegemony. Many coins from late Republican Roman Iberia, for example, demonstrate a similar fluidity in their imagery, allowing for diverse interpretations or re-readings of the image depending on cultural perspective. Coins such as Silus' suggest more adaptation of indigenous imagery and cultural values into Rome's visual language of power than studies of fixed media such as triumphal arches and other commemorative monuments in the Republican period have generally allowed. In his study of Roman depictions of Gallic and German peoples, I.M. Ferris stated, "Becoming Roman in parts of Gaul involved many things... but it certainly involved coming to terms with striking visual

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ture BCE, local coinage already intertwined local imagery with Massiliote and Roman. See for example Federico BIONDANI, "Lo scavo di località Casaletti di San Giorgio di Valpolicella. Le monete celtiche di imitazione massiliota e le monete romane repubblicane," *Quaderni di archeologia del Veneto* (2003), p. 101-108. The appearance of both local Transpadane and Roman coins in necropoleis in the Veneto also indicates that both local and Roman coins offered cultural capital to local elites. See, for example, Biondani's work on the area around Verona: BIONDANI, "Monete Celtico-Padane e Monete Romane nelle Necropoli Celtiche del Veronese," in *Les Celtes et le Nord de l'Italie, Actes du XXXVI colloque international de l'A.F.E.A.F.* (2014), p. 489-494.

reminders... of ancestral defeat and humiliation and of cultural heritage curtailed by conquest.”<sup>59</sup> While certainly true, and ultimately representative of the complex web of “entangled objects” that Gallic peoples had to negotiate under Roman hegemony, this statement does not necessarily take into consideration the potential influence of indigenous imagery on the construction of the Gallic warrior within Roman visual culture.<sup>60</sup> Representations, both direct and abstract, of victory and defeated enemies were also produced among Gallic peoples, particularly those in southern France such as the Salluvii, whose head-hunting imagery still decorates the oppidum of Entremont.

### *Conclusion*

The coin imagery produced during and after the conquest of the Gallic provinces effectively illustrates what Carlos Noreña termed the “long-term diffusion” of imperial ideals.<sup>61</sup> He argued that no coin could have significant short-term impact with its topical message, because there were simply too many coins circulating at any given time to target a particular audience. However, these coins circulated for generations, and the proliferation of coins that narrated Roman cultural values meant that one was routinely interacting with the broad spectrum of this imagery. Collectively, therefore, these coins helped to communicate and strengthen Roman hegemony. At the same time, coins such as those of Q. Sergius Silus evoked what Clare Rowan suggested was an intentional ambiguity by coopting elements of local imagery onto Roman coins, allowing the viewer to read or re-read the coin from diverse perspectives.<sup>62</sup> This ambiguity helped the Romans negotiate their hegemony and facilitated the internalization of Roman imperial imagery. While monuments and arches were also read ambiguously depending on one’s cultural background, coins were mobile and thus disseminated Roman perceptions of Gallic peoples far beyond the city of Rome, or even beyond Gaul itself.

Coinage played a key role in fixing the Gallic body in visual culture as the “permanent reminder of Roman superiority” that Catharine Edwards attributed

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59 FERRIS 2011, p. 190.

60 I am borrowing the phrase “entangled objects” from Clare ROWAN, “Ambiguity, Iconology and Entangled Objects on Coinage of the Republican World,” *Journal of Roman Studies*, 106 (2016), pp. 21-57.

61 Carlos NOREÑA, *Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 18.

62 ROWAN 2016.

to victory monuments.<sup>63</sup> Coins depicting Gallic captives could very well be proxies for now-lost victory monuments erected during the wars of conquest, but, unlike those monuments, these coins traveled. They circulated among the Roman soldiers who were actively conquering Gallic peoples, they circulated among Italian merchants operating in the Gallic provinces, and they likely ended up in Gallic hands through ongoing economic interaction with Rome. In other words, far earlier than the famous triumphal arches that dotted Gallia Narbonensis, these coins facilitated a confrontation with, as Ferris argued, visual reminders of ancestral humiliation. And, by the late Republic, we begin to see elements of these depictions be deployed by Gallic peoples as representations of their close association with Rome and their local power. The cenotaph of the Julii in Glanum, for example, displayed pseudo-mythical battles between Gauls and Romans to underscore the likely participation of the cenotaph's honoree in Caesar's army, and the likely citizenship that resulted from that loyalty. Similarly, the city of Antipolis (Antibes), in southern France, broadcast their support of Julius Caesar during the civil wars by minting bronze coins with Roman trophies on them. Though, it should be noted that they only selectively borrowed from Roman imagery and did not include the bound Gallic captive that circulated on Caesar's coinage. This suggests that these coin images were quite legible to a Gallic audience, and they chose to utilize only the more generic victory imagery.

The Gallo-Roman adaptation of Roman conquest imagery illustrates what Andrew Johnston termed the "forgetfulness of empire," denoting the process through which peoples in the western provinces selectively "forgot" elements of their past to negotiate a place for themselves in the Roman Empire.<sup>64</sup> As Johnston noted, this was a complicated process. Local peoples did not simply forget their past; their self-representation in the form of coins, inscriptions, and monuments in the early imperial period reflects a conscious melding of local and Roman memories. Perhaps, therefore, we should not think of it as the forgetfulness of empire, but the reimagination of empire as a unifying visual culture in which people from across the empire could equally participate. And as a testament to their significance, coins both circulated and paid for this visual culture.

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63 EDWARDS 2003, p. 67.

64 Andrew JOHNSTON, *The Sons of Remus: Identity in Roman Gaul and Spain*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017, p. 4. See also Clifford ANDO, "The Changing Face of Cisalpine Identity," *A Companion to Roman Italy* 125, 2016, p. 271-287.

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