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Gallic Identity in Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum*

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In *Bellum Gallicum* Caesar introduces his readers to unfamiliar places and peoples in the course of his conquests in Britain, Germany, and Gaul. While most of the text is devoted to people, events, and problems within Gaul, the questions of who is a Gaul and what is Gaul endure throughout the text. In *Bellum Gallicum*, Gauls are often defined externally, through their relationship to other peoples and places, rather than internally, according to their own traits or characteristics. A similar situation exists for the idea of Gaul as a place. Gallic characters are portrayed as inferior to Romans and Germans throughout the text, and Gaul as a country is constantly under the threat of foreign domination. Throughout *Bellum Gallicum*, Caesar creates and explains a Gallic identity which is constructed similarly to a modern Orientalist identity. This paper will first explain the idea of Borealism, which is a useful way of thinking about the portrayal of northern barbarians in Caesar's thought, and then will move on to examine the relationship between Gauls and Germans, the portrayals of Gauls independent from comparison with other peoples, and the relationship between Gauls and Romans. In doing so it will explain how and why Caesar constructs the identity that he does for the Gauls.

Before we can explain how Caesar defines Gallic identity, it will be useful to have a framework for discussing foreign construction of identity. Edward Said sets up such a framework, Orientalism, which he explains as "a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western

experience.”¹ While Said is focused on the Arab world, Persia, and India in relation to European colonialism, the system he describes seems applicable to non-Roman peoples north of the Republic in the 1st century BCE.² Said explains that “The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture.”³ This is certainly true of the role of Britain, Gaul, and Germany in Caesar’s day, as evidenced by the fact that Caesar mentions trade with the Gauls (and to a lesser extent Britain and Germany) in *Bellum Gallicum* 1.1 and throughout the text. Said continues: “Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.”⁴ Here, too, there are parallels with Roman Gaul, which certainly has its own colonial bureaucracy and styles, and for which Caesar presents scholarship, ideology, and vocabulary (such as in the ethnography in book 6). As Krebs points out, Roman knowledge of “the North” is tinged with political facts every bit as much as Western knowledge of “the Orient” is today;⁵ and so we arrive at Borealism. Borealism is the framework for Roman dominion of “the North” in Roman thought, parallel to Orientalism as the framework for Western dominion of the Orient in modern Western thought.⁶ While Krebs applies Said’s ideas to Germans in Roman thought, the Gauls receive a related treatment from Caesar. Since the Gauls cannot describe themselves in Roman literature, they must be silent or they must be spoken for, and when Caesar speaks for them, his remarks occur within the framework of Borealism. Due to the political realities of Roman involvement in Gaul, Britain, and Germany during *Bellum Gallicum*, Caesar’s writing has to navigate both the realities he experienced and the ideological justification for Roman expansion. Caesar’s Boralist thought about the Gauls and Gaul is a way to synthesize these two factors in *Bellum Gallicum*.

The next question at hand is “What is Gaul?” Caesar’s explanation of the place where *Bellum Gallicum* takes place is confusing in light of the events which happen there. The text begins with a brief description of Gaul. Notably, only one of the

1 Said (1994, p. 1).

2 Krebs (2010, p. 202).

3 Said (1994, p. 2).

4 Said (1994, p. 2).

5 Krebs (2010, p. 202).

6 There is also Orientalism in Roman thought, but that is beyond the scope of this essay. For a simple example, though, consider how Vergil portrays the eastern armies of Anthony in the Battle of Actium on the shield of Aeneas at the end of *Aeneid* 8.

three parts of Gaul is actually inhabited by Gauls (Celtae). It is unclear why exactly the Belgae and the Aquitani are lumped in with the Gauls, other than that it is convenient for Caesar.⁷ Because Caesar uses the term Gaul inclusively, he makes his later campaigns against the Aquitani and Belgae seem more natural, since they are just more Gauls to deal with, rather than a whole new challenge like Germany or Britain. They are explicitly not part of the group the Romans have traditionally called Gauls.⁸ Aside from that, the supposed boundaries of what Caesar calls Gaul are porous when *Bellum Gallicum* begins. The Rhine is a natural barrier, to be sure, but one that people regularly cross. We hear about the Menapii in 4.4, for instance: *Hi ad utramque ripam fluminis agros, aedificia vicisque habebant*. There are also Gauls living in Germany (6.24) and Germans living in Gaul (1.31), as we learn throughout the text. Moreover, the culture of the Gauls (the people who call themselves Celtae) seems closely linked to Britain, where their Druids go for education (6.13). Even the British Channel is therefore an open border. All of this is evidence that “Gaul” is loosely defined at best, and that the boundaries of Gaul are nebulous when Caesar arrives.

During the course of *Bellum Gallicum*, the definition of Gaul shifts as well. *Trans Rhenum* as a phrase appears 15 times in the text, but only 4 of them are in the first three books. In other words, the Rhine becomes a much more important problem for Caesar as he remains longer in Gaul, and he makes it into a firmer boundary than it is initially. When Caesar arrives in Gaul, thousands of Germans live west of the Rhine and thousands of Gauls live east of the Rhine. By expelling Ariovistus and pushing out subsequent German incursions in books 4 and 6, Caesar makes the Rhine a closed border rather than an open one. Similarly, his expeditions to Britain punish the British for their involvement in Gaul, which seems to have gone on since time immemorial. These expeditions make the Channel a firm boundary for Gaul. Caesar, to a large extent, invents Gaul by defining it as the space he can hold onto.⁹ If Caesar had conquered territory across the Rhine or in Britain, then he would likely have defined Gaul more broadly. If the Aquitani or Belgae had resisted Roman rule, then Gaul might well be smaller than it is in *Bellum Gallicum*.

7 Schadee (2008, p. 160).

8 This is clear from *Bellum Gallicum* itself, since in 1.1.1 Caesar explicitly says that the Belgae and Aquitani are not Galli (Celtae). Galli must refer, at least originally, to the Celtae in order for this statement to make sense, even if Caesar uses it more broadly. Krebs (2010, p. 204).

9 Krebs (2010, pp. 204–205) and Schadee (2008, p. 159).

We can see, therefore, that if Gaul is where the Gauls live, and if Caesar is the driving force behind firm boundaries for Gaul, then Gallic identity is also defined by Caesar. Of course, there were Gauls (the *Celtae* from *BG* 1.1) long before Caesar was born, but the definition seems to have been different before he arrived in the area. The sack of Rome in 390 by the Gauls was an enduring image in the Roman mind in Caesar's day (Livy 5.39-48 was written just one generation after *Bellum Gallicum*). Even Caesar mentions past troubles in Gaul, such as the humiliation of a Roman army and death of Lucius Cassius at the hands of the Helvetii (1.7), which happened a few years before Caesar was born. Gauls, therefore, play an important role in Roman history long before Caesar. Caesar's unique position is to explore, explain, and subjugate what was once a strange land in the distant north. The Gauls he presents in *Bellum Gallicum* are consistent with earlier notions of Gaul, but presented in a way that is also in keeping with Caesar's ideological goals (to justify his conquests). In other words, all definition of Gauls in *Bellum Gallicum* is really external definition, even if it is presented as Gallic definition of Gaul, because it must conform with Caesar's goals for the text.¹⁰ In addition, Caesar is able to redefine the old-fashioned view of Gaul and Gauls in *Bellum Gallicum* because he brings new information about Gaul back to Rome.¹¹ His explorations and familiarity with the territories and peoples give him the credibility to change the Roman view of Gaul and Gauls.

This redefinition is revealed by Caesar's portrayal of Gallic attacks on Romans in the text. The Helvetii, for instance, are an old Roman enemy who rise up once more to threaten the province. Caesar defeats them and puts them back in their place. But in doing so he reveals the weakness of the Gallic chiefs, as seen at 1.30 and 1.31. Although the threat of a Gallic invasion is a familiar theme in Roman history, Caesar has used it for new ideological ends. That is to say, he is using the threat of the Helvetii to avoid questions about his adventures in Gaul to the Roman people and the Gauls themselves. This is a strategy to smooth over the fact that he is conquering huge swathes of territory of his own accord. He continues this theme throughout the text. Throughout his time as proconsul in Gaul he takes advantage of conflicts among Gauls, Britons, and Germans to extend his own power further north. In doing so, Caesar justifies his expansion to the Romans and makes it more palatable to his Gallic allies, like the Aedui.

10 Schadee remarks that Caesar wants to "[parcel] out Europe in sections more or less suitable to eventual incorporation into the Roman empire" (2008, p. 159). I agree with her that this is one of Caesar's goals for the text. He is breaking Gaul, Britain, and Germany apart so that they appear like manageable additions to the empire.

11 Schadee (2008, p. 159).

Let us consider Vercingetorix and the Borealist characterization Caesar gives us of him as an example of Caesar's careful construction of a useful Gallic character. In 7.4 we learn that Vercingetorix is the best Gaul of all time. Caesar heaps superlatives onto him, such as *summa potentia* and *summae diligentiae summam imperi servitatem addit*, which are otherwise rare in *BG*. 4.2% of instances of *summa* in the text are in 7.4 referring to Vercingetorix (a vast overrepresentation, given that this is half a page out of about two hundred twenty-five pages of text). This is the best Gaul Caesar faces in the text, and the biggest threat to Roman domination of Gaul. In some respects, such as his cruelty (7.4.10), Vercingetorix represents the worst of northern barbarism in the Roman mind. Compare Brennus, the Gallic chief who sacks Rome in Livy, and his cruelty in burning the city and mistreating the surrendering Romans (Livy, 5.48). Vercingetorix, the noble, brave, cruel barbarian hero, fits into the Borealist narrative perfectly. He is a way of coming to terms with the north as it relates to Rome. The figure of a worthy foe explains the setbacks Rome faces by creating an enemy that Romans are able to lose to with dignity. The Borealist framework through which Romans view Gauls allows them to accept the possibility of defeat at the hands of a savage Gaul, especially since the Gauls burned Rome in the distant past. It is a way to rationalize defeat by a seemingly inferior people. But Caesar, of course, manages to defeat Vercingetorix. He creates a stock character, a noble savage, and elevates himself through defeating him. *Bellum Gallicum* shows us how Caesar and his Roman readers could engage with Gauls through Vercingetorix, not how Gauls would interact with him. The information in the text about how Gauls felt about Vercingetorix and his uprising are only available through the Caesarian lens. Even remarks about the willingness of Gauls to follow Vercingetorix only allow Romans to rationalize the uprising, and do not represent actual Gallic viewpoints. He is therefore an element of external definition of Gaul, despite being a strong Gallic character in the text. Despite the apparent positive traits of Vercingetorix, he is a tool for Caesar's domination of Gaul.

A word about geographical determinism is also in order before we proceed. Geographical determinism is, broadly speaking, the idea that a people's physical environment determines their character. For instance, Thomas Jefferson believed that Africans were lazy and uncivilized by nature due to the warm climate of West Africa.¹² Geographical determinism is found in antiquity in Hippocrates, among other writers. The tropes he uses to describe the tribes of Europe are similar to the descriptions given by Caesar.

¹² Gates (2011, pp. 17-24).

ὀκόσοι μὲν χῶρην ὀρεινὴν τε οἰκέουσι καὶ τρηχεῖαν καὶ ὑψηλὴν
καὶ ἔνυδρον, καὶ αἱ μεταβολαὶ αὐτοῖσι γίνονται τῶν ὠρέων μέγα
διάφοροι, ἐνταῦθα εἰκὸς εἶδεα μεγάλα εἶναι καὶ πρὸς τὸ ταλαίπωρον
καὶ τὸ ἀνδρεῖον εὖ πεφυκότα, καὶ τό τε ἄγριον καὶ τὸ θηριῶδες αἰ
τοιαῦται φύσιες οὐχ ἥκιστα ἔχουσιν.

(Hippocrates, *Airs, Waters, Places* 24)

The Helvetii, who come from a land which is τραχύς and ὑψηλός (the Alps) and ἔνυδρος (Lake Geneva and the Rhone), fit the stereotype that Hippocrates gives for certain types of European peoples. Caesar's portrayal of them, such as the *gloria belli atque fortitudinis* that he mentions (*BG* 1.2.6) is consistent with the stereotype found in *Airs, Waters, Places*. This kind of determinist thinking is common in *Bellum Gallicum*. For instance, Caesar implies that the harsher living conditions in Germany make the Germans a hardier people when he describes their meagre clothes and habit of bathing in rivers in 6.21. As a further example, in 6.24 we learn that the Volgae Tectosages are Gauls who have retained their ancient hardiness by moving into Germany, while other Gauls have grown soft. An outstanding question is whether it is proximity to Rome or the land of Gaul itself that makes the Gauls softer than the Germans, and I will say more on this later.¹³ For now it is enough to note that the strange creatures (6.25-27) and harsh climate of Germany are seen to make the Germans a strong people.¹⁴ By comparison, the Gauls are consistently portrayed as soft and weak due in part to their environment (1.1.3, 6.24). Just as Jefferson used his views on the “natural” character of Africans due to their climate to justify slavery, Caesar is able to use the “natural” weakness of the Gauls, which he attributes to their fertile, forgiving environment, to justify bringing Gaul under Roman rule.

The idea of strong Germans and weak Gauls leads nicely to the comparison of Gauls and Germans in the text. One of the primary ways that Caesar creates an identity for Gaul and Gauls is to compare them with their German neighbors. It is unclear what exactly defines “Gaul” as a place at the start of the *Bellum Gallicum*, since it is divided into three parts and inhabited by hundreds of tribes with their own ways and customs. One of the only common factors of all of the “Gauls” then is

13 The text provides statements that support both ideas. At 1.1.3 Caesar comments on the “feminizing” influence of Roman trade, but in 6.24 we learn that living in harsh conditions has protected the Volgae Tectosages from the degeneration other Gauls have experienced.

14 Allen-Hornblower (2015, p. 683).

that they are not Germans.¹⁵ Indeed, a major thread throughout the *Bellum Gallicum* is the conflict between Gauls and Germans. Ariovistus in book 1 is one iteration of years of conflict as Germans cross the Rhine to take advantage of instability and weakness in Gaul. Ariovistus's presence west of the Rhine gives Caesar an opportunity to define Gallic character in book 1, when the Gallic chiefs beg him for help.

Horum primo circiter milia XV Rhenum transisse; postea quam agros et cultum et copias Gallorum homines feri ac barbari adamassent, traductos plures; nunc esse in Gallia ad C et XX milium numerum.

(BG 1.31.4)

This tells us a few things about the Gauls: (i) they see the Germans as *feri*, (ii) Gaul is more fertile and desirable than Germany, and (iii) the Gauls cannot prevent the Germans from crossing the Rhine. The first and second points reinforce the idea of geographical determinism as a reason for Gallic weakness. The Germans covet Gaul because it is good, fertile land (and one whose inhabitants cannot defend it), and the people who live west of the Rhine see the Germans as ferocious barbarians because they come from a less forgiving country. The savagery that is causing the Gauls so much trouble is linked to the nature of the two countries on either side of the Rhine. It does not really matter that the eastern banks of the Rhine are no less fertile than the western ones, only that Caesar sees it in this way because the far side is uncultivated. The effect of this lack of cultivation is to make the Germans seem more frightening and foreign to readers. That said, the soft Gauls are unable to protect themselves from the ferocious Germans, which more or less sets the scene for future Germano-Gallic conflicts in this text.

Due to this ongoing inability of the Gauls to keep the Germans across the Rhine, during the course of Caesar's involvement in Gaul the Gauls become more and more dependent on Roman help to keep the Germans out. Two things deserve notice here. One is that the best of the Gauls are those who fight the Germans the most often. The Belgae (1.1) and the Helvetii (1.2) are both better warriors than the rest of the Gauls, and bigger problems for Caesar. The Gauls who do not need Caesar's help to avoid German domination are praised in the text as the best of their countrymen. But, for the most part, Caesar is called in to help the Gauls when the Germans invade. In 1.31, the Gallic chiefs beg Caesar to deliver them from the Ger-

15 Despite German heritage, *plerosque Belgas esse ortos a Germanis* (2.4) does not lead Caesar to lump the Belgae in with the Germans, and their lands are explicitly said to be part of Gaul in 1.1.

mans, *flentes* (1.31.2), because the German chief Ariovistus has defeated the Aedui and Sequani, the two strongest Gallic tribes. Caesar defeats Ariovistus (revealing that Caesar's army is more powerful than the strongest Gallic tribes are) and "saves" Gaul from the Germans. Perhaps at this point the Gauls do not realize that by inviting Caesar to remove the Germans, they are setting themselves up to call on German aid to remove the Romans later on. When Caesar repels the German invasion in book 4 and crosses the Rhine, we see the Gallic reliance on Rome again. Without Caesar the Germans would have moved freely into Gaul and taken much of the country from the Gauls, but the Romans' act of keeping the Germans out makes the Gauls more dependent on Rome for support. In 5.55 Indutiomarus tries to bring Germans across the Rhine to fight the Romans, but they refuse to cross due to their recent defeats at Caesar's hands. Eventually in 6.2 the Treviri succeed in bringing Germans into Gaul to help them fight Caesar, but the only Germans who will come are those who have not fought Caesar before. Throughout *Bellum Gallicum*, Gaul is caught in a tug of war between the Germans and Caesar. The Gauls, as Caesar tells it, can do little more than align themselves with one or the other.

With that in mind, let us turn to the relationship between Gauls and Romans in the text. Caesar tells us that Roman trade has a feminizing influence on the Gauls. The Belgae are introduced in 1.1 in part as people *ea quae ad effeminandos animos pertinent important* (BG 1.1.3). In other words, the goods the Romans sell to the Gauls are a feminizing influence from Caesar's point of view. But the Romans and their trade also bring *cultus atque humanitas* (1.1.3) to the Gauls. These two ideas seem to be in tension, since presumably Caesar considers feminizing influence a bad thing and *cultus et humanitas* good things. In practice, it seems that feminization and culture both have the same outcome for the Gauls, namely to make them weaker than the Romans and Germans. Caesar makes several comparisons, explicit and implicit, between Gauls and Romans which explain why the Romans can have wine and cloth and such without becoming weak, while the Gauls are undermined by them.¹⁶

Caesar holds a low opinion of the Gallic national character. BG 7.42.2 is a good example of this: *Impellit alios avaritia, alios iracundia et temeritas, quae maxime illi hominum generi est innata, ut levem auditionem habeant pro re comperta*. The Gauls are vulnerable to *avaritia*, *iracundia*, and *temeritas*, all of which are sins of their race rather than of any one Gaul, according to Caesar. Perhaps individual Romans suffer

16 Of course, some Romans were unhappy with the proliferation of luxury goods in Rome, and *luxuria* is one of the bywords of Livy and Vergil a generation later as antithetical to *Romanitas*. For discussion of which, see Feldherr (1998, pp. 155-156) and Syed (2007, pp. 184-187).

from these things, but they are not sins of the Romans as a nation. Since this is a condemnation of all Gauls, it taints each Gaul we meet in the text. Moreover, in 4.5, Caesar is worried because of the *infirmitas Gallorum* (he repeats the idea in 4.13 and 7.26 with *infirmitas* again). At 3.8, he remarks *ut sunt Gallorum subita et repentina consilia*. In 3.19, he makes a stronger condemnation of the Gauls: *Nam ut ad bella suscipienda Gallorum alacer ac promptus est animus, sic mollis ac minime resistens ad calamitates ferendas mens eorum est*. From remarks like these throughout the text Caesar constructs a picture of a Gallic people who are flighty and unreliable. He is not the only author to do so. Strabo (4.4.2, 4) and Diodorus Siculus (5.26, 28, 29) make similar remarks.¹⁷ The natural point of comparison is the well disciplined and more restrained Romans, who are presumably more able to handle defeat, if the Gallic conduct in 3.19 merits such a response. Indeed, this superior *virtus* is an important component of Roman success over the Aquitani in book 3.¹⁸ Superior *virtus* and other traits allow the Romans to be superior to other Gauls throughout the text as well.

This characterization of the Gauls is unfair because (i) it generalizes all the Gauls and (ii) it is proven untrue by Caesar's narrative in *Bellum Gallicum*. During the course of this text, Caesar fights Gauls (Celtae), Aquitani, and Belgae, who all live in what he calls Gaul. There is no one group of Gauls that he can paint with as broad a brush as he uses in the remarks above. He is making generalizations about broad groups of people based on unrepresentative sections of the population of one of those groups at any given time. As Said might put it, these generalizations about so-called Gallic character (as opposed to Roman character) are a way of coming to terms with an unfamiliar place and people. They are part of the Borealist narrative Caesar is building in *Bellum Gallicum*. But even beyond that, these generalizations are untrue. Caesar's own narrative shows that the Gauls are cunning and tenacious in the face of the Roman foe. The plot of *Bellum Gallicum* is basically that every year Caesar is in Gaul, some group of Gauls resists Roman expansion into Gaul. This willingness to fight for their homes against greater and greater odds hardly seems to demonstrate *infirmitas Gallorum*. Nor is every Gallic plan foolish and adopted too hastily. The plan Ambiorix explains in 5.27 is hardly ill advised or adopted without thought. The best hope of the Gauls to free their homelands (*de recuperanda communi libertate* 5.27.6) probably was to strike while the Romans were divided, Caesar was

17 Gardner (1983, pp. 185-186).

18 Erickson (2002, p. 601) points out that the Veneti are never said to show *virtus* in the text, whereas other Gauls are, presumably because they lack this trait. Instead they rely on skill and knowledge to fight Caesar. Some other Gauls have *virtus*, but lack any other traits to do battle with the Romans.

away, and the soldiers were reliant on Gauls for supplies, which is precisely what they are in book 5. Caesar tells the reader that the national character of the Gauls is poor and so they are weak, but this generalization is so broad that it has little meaning, and the text does not uphold his judgement.

The British used a similar line of justification for their occupation of Egypt in the 19th century, claiming that local rule was much worse off than British rule because people who live in the East are less suited to rule than those in the West. Said quotes Arthur James Balfour (a prominent MP at the turn of the 20th century) on the subject of Egypt:

Western nations as soon as they emerge into history show the beginnings of those capacities for self-government ... having merits of their own ... You may look through the whole history of the Orientals in what is called, broadly speaking, the East, and you never find traces of self-government.¹⁹

This is not so dissimilar from the idea of Gauls as flighty, untrustworthy, and incapable of self defence. We can see that the attitudes that made Orientalism a useful ideology for British imperialism in Egypt are similar to the attitude Caesar takes towards the Gauls to justify Roman intervention in Gaul. That is to say that the idea of a people incapable of self governance and in need of domination by a nation better suited to rulership is as useful to Caesar as it is to Balfour. Said goes on to summarize Balfour's logic:

England knows Egypt; Egypt is what England knows; England knows that Egypt cannot have self-government; England confirms that by occupying Egypt; for the Egyptians, Egypt is what England has occupied and now governs; foreign occupation therefore becomes "the very basis" of contemporary Egyptian civilization; Egypt requires, indeed insists upon, British occupation.²⁰

Caesar is not as far down this road as Balfour (or Said's Balfour, at any rate), but *Bellum Gallicum* reveals similar logic. Caesar knows Gaul, as he demonstrates with his ethnography and geography. Gaul is what Caesar knows, as is revealed by his redefinition of Gaul throughout the text. Gaul cannot have self-government, which

19 Said (1994, p. 40).

20 Said (1994, p. 42).

is confirmed by Gallic inability to resist the Germans. Caesar confirms the Gallic inability to govern themselves by occupying Gaul. Caesar did not live long enough to see the process completed, but *Bellum Gallicum* shows steps down the same road.

Let us consider another of Said's remarks on the relationship between the Orient and Occident. "Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles."²¹ We see this phenomenon in Gaul in the form of the title *amicus populi Romani* (such as at 1.3.3). The nature of *amicitia* in the late Roman Republic is murky. It seems to have been a way to convey limited judicial and legal privileges to those who performed some service to the Roman people.²² It is a legal relationship between non-Roman people and the Roman state. This is a supporting institution to the Romans' Boreal interaction with the Gauls. It is a way for the Romans to ask something of and reward natives who prove useful to their ambitions in the province, and later beyond. Even Ariovistus was an *amicus populi Romani* (1.35), so the phenomenon extends far beyond the limits of the province and well into Gaul. Here the *amicitia* is a tool for Caesar to try to manipulate Ariovistus into retiring from Gaul so that Caesar can take a larger role in the country. The institution is also used to bind useful Gauls to the Romans, and Caesar often relies on these Gauls to take action against their countrymen, such as his allies the Aedui. We can see, therefore, that *amicitia* is an institution which supports Roman imperialism, and in doing so strengthens the Borealism inherent to Rome's relations with the Gauls (and Germans). It creates a framework in which Roman friendship is expected of "good" Gauls and that friendship requires Gauls (and Germans) to act in Rome's interests, even though Rome has no claim to Gaul beyond the province.

This leads into one of the driving ideas behind this text, which is the Gallic need for Roman rule. Above I mentioned that the Romans are the only ones able to keep the Germans on the east side of the Rhine. But there is more to the issue of a Roman "duty" in Gaul than just the threat of German invasion. Caesar shows us many Gallic tribes, like the Aedui, who want his help in the country. Gaul is divided between many different factions, and Caesar is the only agent in the region with enough power to overcome these divisions. This idea is introduced at 1.31.3: *Galliae totius factiones esse duas*. The idea of *factiones* recurs throughout *Bellum Gallicum*, at 5.56 and at 6.11, 6.12, and 6.22. And even when the word is not mentioned, there is

21 Said (1994, p. 2).

22 Marshall (1968, p. 40).

still factionalism in Gaul. Those who cast in their lot with Vercingetorix and those who hold back are one example. The Aedui, ever Caesar's friends (and friends of the Roman people, one may add), are the leaders of the pro-Caesar faction in book 7 as before. Because no Gallic tribe is strong enough to dominate all the others (even Vercingetorix leads only with their consent, as we can see from the accusation of treason in 7.20.1), there would be no end to the fighting in Gaul without a powerful outside actor to intervene. Perhaps it could have been Ariovistus, but ultimately the Romans fill this power vacuum. Caesar presents a group of people who are doomed to constant war without his help, which legitimizes his interventions throughout Gaul as *Bellum Gallicum* progresses. This smooths over the fact that there is constant fighting during his adventures in Gaul, of course. Moreover, he uses the institution of *amicitia* to justify interventions to prevent factional violence against the *amici Romani populi*, even when the conflicts are far outside the province. This factional violence, and the division of Gaul into pro and anti-Roman factions, is part of how Caesar establishes Gaul as something for Rome to involve itself in, rather than a mysterious north. Moreover, the tendency towards factions and strife is one of the traits he uses to characterize the Gauls as one people, despite their diverse cultures and many states.

My last point about Romano-Gallic relations is about the idea of the pacification of Gaul. Caesar is fond of declaring *Gallia pacata* before he departs to manage his province or deal with trouble in Rome. *Omni Gallia pacata* is found at 2.1, 2.34, 3.26, and *parte Galliae pacata* at 6.5. Book 7 begins with *quieta Gallia*, as a nice change of pace. In *Bellum Gallicum* Caesar creates the idea that Gaul is one nation which he can pacify through military action. The people who live there would likely disagree. On the one hand, they did not consider themselves as one nation, as Caesar acknowledges when he breaks Gaul into three parts of which only one is inhabited by Gauls (Celtae). And on the other hand, *Gallia* is never truly *pacata* in *Bellum Gallicum*. Long after Caesar's death insurrections continued in Gaul, even though it was absorbed into the fledgling empire by that point. Not until well into the 1st century CE could it truly be claimed that *omnia Gallia pacata*.²³ But Caesar's narrative demands a way for Roman readers to come to terms with his conquests. As Gaul becomes a more integral part of Roman material wealth and culture during the course of his proconsulate²⁴, there is a need for a narrative that can explain Roman

23 Drinkwater (2014, pp. 24–25): Managing Gaul and keeping the peace was a major project for Augustus and Tiberius, particularly after the failed attempt to conquer Germany under Augustus.

24 Said (1994, p. 10): The Orient is an integral material part of the Occident. Gaul similarly becomes an

relations with Gaul.²⁵ Caesar creates a narrative, however divorced from reality it may be, that Gaul is quiet and safe for Roman trade and exploitation, which allows the Roman reader to come to terms with the idea of Gaul in the Roman world. After all, in quite a short time Gaul has changed from an open to a closed question. By this I mean that, before Caesar, further expansion of the province is still possible but not mandatory. Gaul is a frontier into which Rome could expand at its leisure, if the Romans so pleased. Caesar shifts the question from “if” to “how” when he moves out of the province to subjugate all of what he calls Gaul. Establishing firm boundaries and narratives for Gaul is an important part of this process. Tacitus will later explore the still open (and never closed) German question in similar terms in his *Germania*.²⁶ As Krebs points out, Caesar introduces the Germans as a third northern people between the Gauls and the Scythians in Roman geography.²⁷ An effect of this change in the narrative of northern Europe is that Gaul suddenly becomes manageable and domestic, and the foreignness and mystery of Gaul are transferred over the Rhine to Germany.²⁸ Germany is the open question in Roman policy after Caesar *omnia Gallia pacata*.

Caesar shifts the narrative surrounding the Gauls over the course of *Bellum Gallicum* by inventing a clearly defined Gaul and identifying everyone who lives there as Gallic, whether or not they are *Celtae*. The identity he constructs for the Gauls as a divided, weak people in need of Roman rule is a departure from the traditional notion of Gauls as threatening warriors in the mysterious north. While Caesar does not deny the courage of the Gauls, he portrays them as so flawed in comparison to the Germans (who take up the mantle of frightening northern barbarians in *Bellum Gallicum*) and Romans that they cannot sustain independence. Even Vercingetorix, the best of the Gauls, is unable to unite the country (such as it

integral part of Roman material culture due to Caesar’s campaigns as money, slaves, and trade draw Rome closer to Gaul.

25 As Osgood (2009, pp. 342–343) notes, the wealth flowing to Romans from Gaul was important not only to the officers accompanying Caesar, like Quintus Cicero, but also those back at Rome who borrowed against Caesar’s immense booty from the conquest.

26 Krebs (2010, pp. 203–205).

27 Krebs (2010, p. 203).

28 As an aside, Caesar also acclimates Romans to the idea of Britain, though he never managed to hold it. Caesar transformed Britain from a loose idea into an open question, one which he attempted to broach, albeit without success. Claudius responded to the open question of Britain, and Tacitus used it as a setting for his writing in the *Agricola*, but the question arises in *Bellum Gallicum*. Stewart (1995) explains the literary environment in which Caesar constructs his narrative about Britain.

is) to defeat the Romans. Moreover, the lens through which Caesar sees the Gauls is one which allows him to justify and explain Gaul's increased material importance in the Roman world. After all, Caesar's adventures are about treasure and wealth, although he covers this up in *Bellum Gallicum*.²⁹ The ideas of Gauls as divided, as dependent on Romans, and as having a flawed national character are all part of the Borealist narrative that explains why Romans are in Gaul and how they will continue to dominate the country. It is parallel to the Orientalist narrative constructed by the British in Egypt and elsewhere in the modern period. But the events of Caesar's campaigns in Gaul show that this identity is one Caesar constructs rather than one founded on the truth. He is faced, on the one hand, with material circumstances in Gaul of persistent, tenacious resistance to Roman rule, and a country which is actually porous and divided. On the other hand, he has the ideological need to justify his own involvement in the country and Roman domination of *Celtae*, Belgae, and Aquitani (but not Britons or Germans). The synthesis of these competing ideas is an identity for Gauls and a definition for Gaul that smooths over the inconsistencies between the material circumstances and the ideological needs of the Roman conquest, and this is the identity we see presented in *Bellum Gallicum*.

29 Osgood (2009, p. 332).

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