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**OLD TALES FOR A NEW GENS.
ALBERIC OF TROIS-FONTAINES' GRAFTING
OF HISTORY***

Abstract

Throughout the Middle Ages, waves of people came to the lands once been a part of the Roman Empire. At the same time, lands yet unknown encountered the successors of the Empire. These *gentes* sometimes preserved a long history of their paths to their new homelands. The Longobards, the Saxons, and many others had an *origo gentis*, where gods played an important role. These narrations were incorporated into a historiography that was almost entirely Christian.

This article is concerned with the methods used to find harmony between the past and present by Alberic of Trois-Fontaines when writing about the Semigallians. The narrative of their origins used established motifs and themes that made it possible to include the invented history of the gens into the then-established universal history. This was done through the etymology of names or the erudite use of the writings of other authors. These new *gentes* were grafted onto the trees of old tales.

Keywords: Cistercians, Semigallia, *origo gentis*, grafting, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Troy

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I

In this article, I discuss the way authors fit the origins of nations into established history. While learning about new lands and people, authors had to provide order to the past and make it cohesive. The tales of the origins of new peoples/nations – *origo gentis*¹ – could not operate independently from the universal history. These tales had to be harmonised with the established vision of the past. There was a clear need to find order and see history as a homogeneous phenomenon, not as a multiplicity of different accounts.²

This was not a medieval development. In ancient Rome, there were multiple examples of implanting new histories into established traditions, like the Trojan origins of the city. This trend was then continued, as seen in the case of the Scripture's historical narrative, which was fitted into the timeline of Greek and Roman history. New peoples could not appear on the scene just like that, and they had to be connected with the accepted and rationalised versions of the past.³ Sometimes this connecting meant reimagining existing peoples, like

¹ They are treated here neither as a genre, nor *genus mixtum*, but as a category of tales about origins and have no bearing on the nature of the text it contains. Cf. Robert Kasperski, 'Problem etnogenezy Gotów w ujęciu Herwiga Wolframa: refleksje nad metodą', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, cxviii, 3 (2011), 399–430 (here 419); Herwig Wolfram, 'Origo Gentis: The Literature of German Origins', in Brian Murdoch and Malcolm Read (eds), *Early Germanic Literature and Culture* (Rochester, NY, 2004), 39–54 (here 39). It is worthwhile to note that Wolfram gave a lot of thought to the question whether there was a genre of *origo gentis*, and only after some time concluded it was *genus mixtum*, see *id.*, 'Le genre de l'Origo gentis', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, lxxviii, 4 (1990), 789–801 (here 789); *id.*, *Gotische Studien: Volk und Herrschaft im Frühen Mittelalter* (München, 2005), 207.

² This was an almost typical reaction to the emergence of new people, as the same thing took place in the late antiquity in the written texts on the barbarian world. Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (New York, 1988), 39.

³ Walter Pohl, 'Narratives of Origin and Migration in Early Medieval Europe: Problems of Interpretation', *Medieval History Journal*, xxi, 2 (2018), 192–221 (here 193–5); *id.*, 'Historiography and Identity: Methodological Perspectives', in Walter Pohl and Veronika Wieser (eds), *Historiography and Identity I: Ancient and Early Christian Narratives of Community* (Turnhout, 2019), 7–50 (here 33–4); J.H.C. Williams, *Beyond the Rubicon: Romans and Gauls in Republican Italy* (Oxford–New York, 2001), 26–7, 54, 122–3; Elias J. Bickerman, 'Origines Gentium', *Classical Philology*, xlvii, 2 (1952), 65–81, especially 73–5, 77–8; Susan Reynolds, 'Medieval Origines Gentium and the Community of the Realm', *History*, lxxviii, 224 (1983), 375–90 (here 376–7).

the Hungarians, who were turned into the much better-known Gog and Magog.⁴ Some saw it as an example of the Roman Empire shaping the past of the subjugated. However, the political and cultural centres made it possible to create a universal history, which means both the Empire and those subjugated needed each other to construct it.⁵

New narratives were implanted on older histories, like a plant grafted onto the root of a different one to make it grow better. These narratives were not a corruption of history, nor were they in contradiction with it. They should instead be seen as an expansion of the existing history. The discussed authors did not invent such an operation. Instead, it was the continuation of a practice deeply rooted in historical writing, the aim of which was not to insert history but rather to expand upon the history already known. While implanting new narratives on older ones was a common practice, redefining it as ‘expanding’ history provides a better insight into how history was shaped and used. The medieval authors did not wish just to insert the new histories into the old ones. The idea was to make the new histories potent enough to sustain further historical development. Therefore use of the term ‘grafting’ when referring to this well-known phenomenon is a relevant term that clarifies what happened in these texts, and we consider it much more appropriate than the sometimes-used expression ‘inserting’.

Looking at the narratives through this lens also highlights the literary structures that shaped them. I will show that these tales are not a recollection of oral traditions but rather are literary constructs that use different motifs to explain the present through the ideas about the past. The inquiry into the process of implanting new histories onto old ones offers additional arguments in the discussion of ethnogenesis, marked by the debate between the so-called Vienna and Toronto schools, where (and here I am simplifying) the former sees *origo* tales as actual accounts of ethnogenesis, while the latter sees them as literary constructs. The expansion of the discussion outside of the typically-questioned early medieval texts shows that, as will be exemplified,

⁴ For example, István Vásáry, ‘Medieval Theories Concerning the Primordial Homeland of the Hungarians’, in *Popoli delle steppe: Unni, Avari, Ungari* (Spoleto, 1988), 213–44 (here 218).

⁵ Greg Woolf, *Tales of the Barbarians: Ethnography and Empire in the Roman West* (Malden, 2011), 5, 60, 72.

the very foundations of the Vienna school's evolving concepts are in doubt.

The truth is that the origin narratives did not come from some sort of ethnic memory, but they were the consequence of the encounter with the new. The authors of these and other similar narratives did not always aim at providing self-identification for the group. There was no difference between creating the origin of their own people and writing about a foreign one. The example of Alberic's tales shows that the origin narratives came from the writing of historical narratives, and not from the recollection of ancient happenings.

The object of discussion here will be Alberic of Trois-Fontaines'⁶ account of the origins of the Franks and Semigallians. Alberic was a Cistercian monk from the Trois-Fontaines abbey, born in the late twelfth century and probably died sometime after June 1252.⁷ Using more than 160 texts and an extensive network of oral sources, he wrote a vast universal chronicle that encompassed the history from the beginning of the world until the year 1240. He wrote not only about France and the Empire, but also about Wales, the Holy Land, and Poland. His information is sometimes surprisingly detailed, making him one of the most well-versed authors of his age. He presented the ancient history of the well-known people to whom he was an insider, the Franks. He then used a similar method to establish the history of the Semigallians, a mostly unknown people at the time in Western Europe.⁸

⁶ For more on Alberic, see Antoni Grabowski, 'Polska i Polacy w średniowiecznej wspólnocie europejskiej – świadectwo Alberyka z Trois-Fontaines', in Jacek Banaszkiewicz, Andrzej Dąbrowka, and Piotr Węcowski (eds), *Przeszłość w kulturze średniowiecznej Polski*, i (Warszawa, 2018), 207–39; Stefano Mula, 'Looking for an Author: Alberic of Trois Fontaines and the *Chronicon Clarevallense*', *Citeaux*, lx (2009), 5–23; Andrzej M. Wyrwa, 'Alberyk z Trois-Fontaines i jego średniowieczna Kronika świata', in Dariusz Andrzej Sikorski and Andrzej M. Wyrwa (eds), *Cognitioni gestorum: studia z dziejów średniowiecza dedykowane Profesorowi Jerzemu Strzelczykowi* (Poznań, 2006), 319–44; Mireille Schmidt-Chazan, 'Aubri de Trois-Fontaines, un historien entre la France et l'Empire', *Annales de l'Est*, 36 (1984), 163–92. The edition used here is that of Paul Scheffer-Boichorst: Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, 'Albrici monachi Triumfontium Chronicon' ed. by Paul Scheffer-Boichorst, in *Chronica aevi Suevici* (Hannover, 1874), 631–950 (the references are shortened to Alberic [date]).

⁷ Wyrwa, 'Alberyk z Trois-Fontaines', 327.

⁸ Apart from sources discussed here, Semigallia was mentioned among Livonian bishoprics in the context of Christianisation of the region by Alberic's contemporary: Alexander of Bremen (Alexander Minorita), Alexander Minorita, *Expositio*

They lived in a region that could be called a frontier between Christianity and Paganism.⁹

The extent and the intricate nature of his tales on peoples' origins make it possible to treat them as a mirror to other similar narratives of the thirteenth century. Alberic not only described the ancient history of Franks and Semigallians, but at the same time, he was also keen to provide an order in his narrative, correcting the dates and giving extensive genealogies. Thus, these tales were part of an elaborate text on the history of the whole world. Simultaneously, Alberic was a critical reader, differentiating between true and false in the existing accounts of history. For example, he immediately noted that Woden (Wotan) from the genealogies of English kings and the one from the *Hystoria Longobardorum* were the same person, but he also included Paul Deacon's notion that Mercurius was another name for him.¹⁰ In Alberic's view, he lived in Gotland and was alive around the year 274 AD.¹¹ This quick and rational view exemplifies Alberic's approach. It does not mean that there are no miracles and demons in his chronicle, but they were included only when they were a part of history.

in *Apocalypsim*, ed. by Alois Wachtel (Weimar, 1955), chapt. XX, 439–40. It was also, unsurprisingly, mentioned by Henry of Livonia 64 times, although he never discussed the origins of Semigallians. Leonid Arbusow and Albert Bauer (eds), *Heinrichs Livländische Chronik* (Hannover, 1955), *passim*. Also, in late thirteenth-century *Annales Ryenses* it is mentioned that during the reign of Lothnøknut (Knut), the son of Horik II, a third of the servants and many people conquered *Pruciam, Semigaliam et terram Carelorum* and remained there to the times of the author. This account sometimes was viewed as the earliest mention of Semigallia and the events were dated to 870. As this is a mythological creation, the date and the claim to primacy among the mentions are false. The name Semigallia appears though in sagas from the eleventh century (as Seimgaler), Cf. I.M. Lappenberg (ed.), 'Annales Ryenses', in *Annales aevi Suevici* (Hannover, 1859), 386–410, here 398; Alfrēds Gätters, *Die lettische Sprache und ihre Dialekte* (Hague–Paris–New York, 1977), 4–5.

⁹ Rasa Mažeika, 'Granting Power to Enemy Gods in the Chronicles of the Baltic Crusades', in David Abulafia and Nora Berend (eds), *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices* (London, 2002), 153–71 (here 156); for more on frontiers using the example of Hungary, see Nora Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom. Jews, Muslims and 'Pagans' in Medieval Hungary, c. 1000 – c. 1300* (Cambridge, 2001), 6–41.

¹⁰ Paul Deacon, 'Historia Gentis Langobardorum', ed. by Ludwig Bethmann and Georg Waitz, in *Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum Saec. VI–IX* (Hannover, 1878), 12–197 (here I.9, 53).

¹¹ Alberic, 274, 856.

It also needs to be stressed that Alberic was not overly keen on writing about the origins of all the various peoples. There is no information on the ancient past of most of the people present in the narrative. For example, there is no mention of the ancient history of Bohemia. He also only rarely provided etymologies and explanations of the names. It seems thus that the inclusion of the Semigallian *origo* came about because Alberic viewed it as reliable and, at the same time, interesting.

The creation of origin tales thus did not contradict history but rather fulfilled it. It was not a “pseudo-historical construct” (to borrow Walter Pohl’s expression),¹² but proper history. At the same time, the origin tales were not records of traditions about actual events that in some cases needed only an editorial excision of legends.¹³ In the Early Middle Ages, such tales provided a legitimisation or an expression of identity, or that they were based on oral tradition.¹⁴ In the case of the Semigallians, however, there is no such connection. Nevertheless, as Pohl noted about the early medieval narratives, the narrative was made “in sophisticated ways”.¹⁵

Alberic did not have, in this case, any *carmina antiqua*, or ethnic tradition.¹⁶ The tale is a fictitious creation, but this opinion is not based on the tale itself. There is no substantial difference between the

¹² Pohl, ‘Narratives of Origin’, 209–10.

¹³ Walter Pohl, ‘Debating Ethnicity in Post-Roman Historiography’, in Helmut Reimitz and Gerda Heydemann (eds), *Historiography and Identity II: Post-Roman Multiplicity and New Political Identities* (Turnhout, 2020), 27–69 (here 45–6).

¹⁴ Cf. Pohl, ‘Debating Ethnicity’, 53–4; Herwig Wolfram, ‘Auf der Suche nach den Ursprüngen’, in Walter Pohl (ed.), *Die Suche nach den Ursprüngen: von der Bedeutung des frühen Mittelalters* (Wien, 2004), 11–22 (here 15–16); and also on this Kasperski, ‘Problem Etnogenezy Gotów’, 411–12.

¹⁵ Pohl, ‘Debating Ethnicity’, 57.

¹⁶ Wolfram, ‘Auf der Suche’, 16; Walter Pohl, ‘Introduction – Strategies of Identification: A Methodological Profile’, in Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (eds), *Strategies of Identification* (Turnhout, 2013), 1–64 (here 9–10); in general, see Walter Pohl, ‘Von der Ethnogenese zur Identitätsforschung’, in Walter Pohl, Maximilian Diesenberger, and Bernhard Zeller (eds), *Neue Wege der Frühmittelalterforschung: Bilanz und Perspektiven* (Wien, 2018), 9–33; Robert Kasperski, ‘Ethnicity, Ethnogenesis, and the Vandals: Some Remarks on a Theory of Emergence of the Barbarian Gens’, *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 112 (2015), 201–42 (here 209–10); Herwig Wolfram, ‘Terminologisches’, in Uwe Ludwig and Thomas Schilp (eds), *Nomen et Fraternitas. Festschrift für Dieter Geuenich zum 65. Geburtstag* (Berlin–New York, 2008), 787–802 (here 793–7).

Semigallians and Widukind's connection of Saxons with Alexander the Great's army.¹⁷ The note about the lack of support in ethnic/local tradition is needed, as Herwig Wolfram, in constructing his concept of *origo gentis*, highlighted that it contained "pre-ethnographic, orally transmitted data". This made it possible for him to place the composition of *origo gentis* tales between 500 and 1200 AD, the latter date referring to Saxo Grammaticus. He elaborated that this relates to the tales of origin, which were based on etymologies and contained pre-ethnographic matter.¹⁸ This range of dates is obviously wrong, as will be shown in this article. Such origin tales were not limited to those years proposed by Wolfram.

Alberic's position as an outsider who created the origin myth of the Semigallians also fits the general view of how the barbarian *gentes* emerged. These *gentes* acquired their identity thanks to meeting Romans and appropriating the Roman categories of ethnography, politics, and morality.¹⁹ The Semigallians acquired their identity through Alberic's writings. The chronicler made an *interpretatio romana* of the origins of a new people. He used the cultural categories of his Cistercian and Christian milieu, including the forms and structures of a narrative text, to describe people outside this sphere.²⁰

Sometimes it is proposed to regard these tales as attempts at the justification of political actions. Thus, the *Annales Ryenses* claim that the ancient Danes conquered Prussia, Semigallia, and Courland. The premise that their descendants were still living there was seen as an excuse for the Danish expansion in the region in the late twelfth/early thirteenth century.²¹ However, Alberic's account shows that

¹⁷ Widukind of Corvey, *Die Sachsengeschichte des Widukind von Korvei*, ed. by Hans-Eberhard Lohmann and Paul Hirsch (Hannover, 1935), I,2, 4–5.

¹⁸ Wolfram, 'Origo Gentis', 39–40; *id.*, *Gotische Studien*, 209.

¹⁹ Kasperski, 'Ethnicity, Ethnogenesis'; Geary, *Before France and Germany*, 218–22; Walter Goffart, 'Rome's Final Conquest: The Barbarians', *History Compass*, vi, 3 (2008), 855–83 (here 871).

²⁰ Woolf, *Tales of the Barbarians*, 104; Geary, *Before France and Germany*, 39–40; cf. Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800), Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), 37–8.

²¹ Stella Maria Szacherska, 'Valdemar II's Expedition to Pruthenia and the Mission of Bishop Christian', *Medieval Scandinavia*, xii (1988), 44–75 (here 54); *ead.*, 'Opactwo oliwskie a próba ekspansji duńskiej w Prusach', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, lxxiv, 4 (1967), 923–44 (here 928–9).

politics were not the only cause for giving grand origins to people. In a broader sense, it was a part of placing new people in the common past. The Baltics were a part of Europe, and European institutions like bishoprics and the church began creeping in there from the late twelfth century onward.²²

Even after their Christianisation, the people populating those lands could still be seen as barbaric, and the dichotomy of civilisation/barbarism on the one hand and Christian/non-Christian on the other were not the same. Even the Christian lands that were perceived as barbaric could be seen as lands to be conquered.²³ What this means is that for the Semigallians to become Europeans, they had to shed their barbarism. One of the elements that could help attain this was to have a common and shared past with Rome. By adopting cultural motifs, the lands at the borders of Christendom became not only Christian but also shared the unifying motifs of the ancient past. They became Europeanised.²⁴ In many ways, this was an effect of the natural progress of inculturation of the alien into the familiar.

When looking at the medieval narratives on origins, it is vital to view them as constructions wherein providing the order was crucial, and where the past and present had to be in harmony. In this article, I show how this was done. Their authors did not create false narratives, nor they could be called ignorant. On the contrary, they demonstrated profound knowledge that gave them material to fill in the existing gaps in the knowledge of history. Alberic's approach to the origin tales was not unique. There are many other examples of authors who 'grafted', i.e. attached new histories to the old ones, such as (to list only those discussed in this text): William Breton, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Vincentius Kadłubek.

²² Cf. Karl Joseph Leyser, 'Concepts of Europe in the Early and High Middle Ages', *Past and Present*, cxxxvii, 1 (1992), 25–47 (here 28); Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (London, 1993), 17–18.

²³ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 22–3, 250–5.

²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 270. The subject of Europeanisation of the Baltic region was discussed by Nils Blomkvist, although he did not consider it from the angle proposed here; Nils Blomkvist, *The Discovery of the Baltic: The Reception of a Catholic World-System in the European North (AD 1075–1225)* (Leiden–Boston, 2005).

II THE FRANKS AS TROJANS

Alberic negotiated the past with the authorities he had at hand. He wanted not only to include information on far and distant lands, but also to make those histories and facts fit into the established history. *Origo gentis* narratives explain the names, places, and meanings of the past. An example of his approach is his presentation of the very well-known Trojan origins of the Franks.²⁵

As the descendants of the Trojans built Rome, other cities in the Italian peninsula, like Pisa, wanted to acquire such high origins,²⁶ making Trojan origins a popular motif. The twelfth-century historian Henry of Huntingdon attested to its popularity in his *History of the English People*. During the fights between English Henry I and French Louis VI in 1127–8, the former inquired into the origin and history of the Franks. The reply he got from the “educated” was that they came “like most nations in Europe” from the Trojans. Next in Henry’s text, there is a genealogy of the kings of the Franks from Antenor up

²⁵ On the Franks as descendants of the Trojans, see for example: Magali Coumert, ‘La mémoire de Troie en Occident, d’Orose à Benoît de Sainte-Maure’, *Actes de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l’enseignement supérieur public*, xxxvi, 1 (2005), 327–47; N. Kivilcim Yavuz, ‘From Caesar to Charlemagne: The Tradition of Trojan Origins’, *Medieval History Journal*, xxi, 2 (2018), 251–90; Jerzy Pysiak, ‘Filip August, Paryż i trojański rodowód Królestwa Francji’, *Przegląd Historyczny*, xcv, 4 (2004), 485–92; Jonathan Barlow, ‘Gregory of Tours and the Myth of the Trojan Origins of the Franks’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, xxix (1995), 86–95; Hans Hubert Anton, ‘Troja-Herkunft, origo gentis und frühe Verfaßtheit der Franken in der gallisch-fränkischen Tradition des 5. bis 8. Jahrhunderts’, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, cviii (2000), 1–30; Andrea Giardina, ‘Le origini troiane dall’impero alla nazione’, in *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1998), 177–210; cf. Teresa Shawcross, ‘Re-Inventing the Honteland in the Historiography of Frankish Greece: The Fourth Crusade and the Legend of the Trojan War’, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, xxvii, 1 (2003), 120–52 (here 122–3). The Frankish *origo* has been extensively discussed, and a full bibliography of the subject would easily take volumes.

²⁶ Michele Campopiano, ‘Le mythe troyen et les origines de Rome et de Pise dans la culture pisane au début du XIIe siècle’, in Jean-Christophe Cassard, Elisabeth Gaucher, and Jean Kerhervé (eds), *Vérité poétique, vérité politique: mythes, modèles et idéologies politiques au Moyen Âge ; actes du colloque de Brest, 22–24 septembre 2005* (Brest, 2007), 47–57.

to Louis VI described in a way that shows that Louis did not inherit the greatness of his ancestors.²⁷

While there are many references to Frankish *origo gentis* in Alberic's chronicle (for example, under the year 389), in the most extensive commentary on the subject, he followed William Breton, who in turn also based his account on older versions. Alberic's chronicle's narration is a combination of genealogical information and tales about the migration of people. According to it, Francio, son of Priam, son of Hector, had a brother Troilus who had a son Turcus, who went to Scythia. The Turks,²⁸ Goths, Ostrogoths, Yppogoths, Vandals, and Normans descended from this Turcus. Francio, on the other hand, went to the city called Sicambria.²⁹ After two hundred and thirty years, a certain otherwise not mentioned Ybor, together with twenty-three thousand people, went to Gaul and established the city of Paris, which took its name from Priam's son (Paris). Alberic also added that they did not have a king for a long time, just like the Romans. However, not all Franks came with Ybor, as the rest stayed in Sicambria until the death of the king of Austria named Priam. Marchomir (father of the first king Pharamond) then led them to modern-day France. In this way, both the Gauls and the Franks had the same origin.³⁰ Alberic did not follow William's text word for word.³¹ His narrative is a simplification of the larger tale, which was itself based on Rigord's story.³²

²⁷ "non indoctus ... sicut plereque gentes Europe". Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. by Diana E. Greenway (Oxford, 1996), 558–82 (here 478–80).

²⁸ The Turkish and Frankish mythical brotherhood is discussed in Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, 2008); 26–64; cf. Margaret Meserve, 'Medieval Sources for Renaissance Theories on the Origins of the Ottoman Turks', in Bodo Guthmüller and Wilhelm Kühlmann (eds), *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance* (Berlin–Boston, 2000), 409–36; Thomas J. MacMaster, 'The Origin of the Origins: Trojans, Turks and the Birth of the Myth of Trojan Origins in the Medieval World', *Atlantide*, 2 (2014), <http://atlantide.univ-nantes.fr/The-origin-of-the-origins-Trojans> [Accessed: 10 Nov. 2021].

²⁹ On Sicambria, see, for example, Anton, 'Troja-Herkunft', 14–15, 27–30.

³⁰ Cf. Colette Beaune, 'L'utilisation politique du mythe des origines troyennes en France à la fin du Moyen Âge', in *Lectures médiévales de Virgile. Actes du colloque de Rome (25–28 octobre 1982)* (Rome, 1985), 331–55 (here 334).

³¹ Willelmus Armoricus, 'Gesta Philippi Augusti, Francorum Regis', in Michael-Jean-Joseph Brial (ed.), *Contenant la première livraison des monumens des Règnes de Philippe-Auguste et de Louis VIII, depuis l'an MCLXXX jusqu'en MCCXXVI* (Paris, 1878),

Alberic put this *origo gentis* in the entry for the year 1185, which underscores one element of the chronicle's construction. It is introduced as a reaction to the mention of the city of Paris, where it explains the name through the *origo gentis* tale. This is in no way a unique construction, as there are many other examples where such a note sparks a larger narrative. In the Franks' case, an example of such a jump-start tale can be found in Rigord's *Gesta Philippi Augusti*, where the story of the ancient history of the Franks appears as a reaction to the mention of Philip August renovating the streets of Paris.³³

III SEMIGALLIA AND GAUL IN ALBERIC OF TROIS-FONTAINES' CHRONICLE

Alberic often introduced tales in such a manner. In the entry under the year 1232, he recorded the adventures of Balduin of Alna, sent

62–116 (here 63); Guillelmus Armoricus, 'Gesta Philippi Augusti', in Rigord and Guillaume le Breton, *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume Le Breton, historiens de Philippe-Auguste*, ed. by Henri-François Delaborde, i (Paris, 1882), 168–320 (here 169–70).

³² Rigord, 'Gesta Philippi Augusti', in Rigord and Guillaume le Breton, *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume Le Breton*, 1–167, c. 38, 59; Jerzy Pysiak, 'Pogańska przeszłość Franków w świetle kilku kronik francuskich z czasów Filipa Augusta i Ludwika Świętego', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, cx, 1 (2003), 5–28 (here 16–18). In the manuscript of Rigord's chronicle held in Paris, next to a discussion of the Trojan origins is a small genealogical tree (absent from the Vatican manuscript of the chronicle), Rigord, 'Gesta Philippi Augusti', c. 37, 55; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereinafter: BNF), Lat. 5925, 259v; cf. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (hereinafter: BAV) Reg. Lat. 88, 182v. This tree is not the only such visual marker of Trojan origins. In the Paris manuscript containing Egidius (Giles) of Paris' *Karolinus*, there is an Egidius' genealogical tree of kings of France. There the line begins with a gate – probably representing Scambria and Troy mentioned in the accompanying text – and leads to Louis VIII, BNF Lat. 6191, 46v–48v. For more on this, see Andrew W. Lewis, 'Dynastic Structures and Capetian Throne-Right: The Views of Giles of Paris', *Traditio*, xxxiii (1977), 225–52; Marigold Anne Norbye, 'Arbor Genealogiae: Manifestations of the Tree in French Royal Genealogies', in Pippa Saloni and Andrea Worm (eds), *The Tree: Symbol, Allegory, and Mnemonic Device in Medieval Art and Thought* (Turnhout, 2014), 69–93 (here 75–7); Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *L'ombre des ancêtres: essai sur l'imaginaire médiéval de la parenté* (Paris, 2000), 163–6.

³³ Rigord, 'Gesta Philippi Augusti', c. 37, 53–5; in next chapter Rigord explained how the Franks might have descended from the Trojans (c. 38, at 55–61); Pysiak, 'Filip August', 486–7; *id.*, 'Pogańska przeszłość', 13–15.

to Livonia by a papal legate for Germany, cardinal Otto.³⁴ In the end, Pope made Balduin a bishop of Semigallia – one of the historical regions of Latvia, located in the south of modern-day Latvia – and also a legate for all of Livonia.³⁵ We need to note that Marek Tamm proposed, although without decisive proof, that Balduin was the source of Alberic's information on Livonia.³⁶

Afterwards, Alberic wrote that the first bishop of Selonia (an eastern part of Semigallia)³⁷ was Bernard of Lippe; the second was Lambert; and the third was Balduin mentioned above, who was also called the bishop of Semigallia. Next, Alberic proceeded to explain the name of this land. He implored the reader to look back (*revolve*) to the history of Brennus and Belinus³⁸ and the Senones Gauls who captured Rome. We will examine them later, but for now, let us remain

³⁴ On him, see Pietro Silanos, 'Ottone Da Tonengo', in *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani*, lxxx (Roma, 2014), 4–7.

³⁵ See here Hermann Hildebrand (ed.), *Livonica, Vornämlich aus dem 13. Jahrhundert, im Vaticanischen Archiv*, 21 (Riga, 1887), 39–49; Anti Selart, *Livonia, Rus' and the Baltic Crusades in the Thirteenth Century*, transl. Fiona Robb (Leiden–Boston, 2015), 129–41. A German/Sword Brothers perspective is presented in Friedrich Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder: Fratres Milicie Christi de Livonia* (Köln, 1965), 269–301; a more nuanced outlook is in Anti Selart, 'Balduin von Alna, Dänemark und Russland. Zur politischen Geschichte Livlands in den 1230er Jahren', in Jörn Staecker (ed.), *The Reception of Medieval Europe in the Baltic Sea Region: Papers of the XIIth Visby Symposium, Held at Gotland University, Visby, Acta Visbyensia*, 12 (Visby, 2009), 59–74; cf. Mihkel Mäesalu, 'Päpstliche und kaiserliche Machtansprüche im livländischen Kreuzzugsgebiet im 13. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift Für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, lxii, 3 (2013), 472–89 (here 480–5).

³⁶ Marek Tamm, 'Communicating Crusade. Livonian Mission and the Cistercian Network in the Thirteenth Century', *Ajalooline Ajakiri*, cxxx/cxxx, 3/4 (2009), 341–72 (here 359–60); Andris Levāns, 'Vertraute Geschichtsbilder. Die Entstehung historischer Vorstellungen von Livland in der Geschichtsschreibung des 13. Jahrhunderts' (Riga, 2014), 233–42.

³⁷ This bishopric was rather ephemeral, created in 1218 and then evolved/moved into a bishopric of Semigallia and was later abolished and incorporated into the Rigan bishopric. For more on this, see Benninghoven, *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder*, 254–69.

³⁸ Paul Scheffer-Boichorst, in his edition, presents two versions of this name. Under 122 *anno consulum* there is 'Belio' (i.e., Belius), and under the year 1232, there is 'Beli' (i.e., Belus). On the other hand, in the oldest manuscript of Alberic's chronicle (BNF Lat. 4896A), under the year 122 *anno consulum* there is clearly 'Belino' (that is Belinus) – 2v – and under 1232 'Beli' (i.e., Belus) – 253v/246. In the Hannover manuscript (Hannover, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek

with the narration under the entry for 1232. The Gauls captured Rome, and next, they built Siena (*Sena vetus*), Senigallia (*Senegallia*), and a few other Italian cities.³⁹ Some Gauls then travelled to the Black Sea through the Adriatic Sea and Hellespont, called the Arm of Saint George. From there, travelling up the river ‘Nepre’, they occupied a province near Rus’, which they called ‘Semigallia’. The story ends with the sentence: “such is the agreement between new and old”.⁴⁰

The tale follows a well-established scheme often found in narratives talking about *origo gentis*.⁴¹ There is a migration of people and a military victory that has a pivotal role in making a new people. There is also a connection to the broader history that often appears in such narratives, here in the form of the capture of Rome. Typically, these narratives also provide a name for the people, which could come from a divine inspiration – like in the case of the Longobards, named by Woden⁴² – or from a special hero whose name became the people’s calling like in the Cosmas of Prague narration about Czechs.⁴³ In Alberic’s

XIII.748) there is clearly on 2v ‘Belino’, but in the entry for 1232 (206v) there is ‘Beli’, as in Belus.

³⁹ Sometimes the Roman view of the Gauls was that of destroyers of the cities during the invasions on the Italian peninsula, although this was not a universal view; see Williams, *Beyond the Rubicon*, 111, 113.

⁴⁰ [T]alis est concordia novorum et veterum, Alberic 1232; Andris Levāns speculated that under *novorum* and *veterum* Alberic meant the old authors – Livy for example – and modern authors like Bartholomeus Anglicus – who is referred to below – but this is nothing more than a hypothesis by Levāns, ‘Vertraute Geschichtsbilder’, 232.

⁴¹ On motifs in *origo gentis* narratives, see Herwig Wolfram, ‘*Origo et Religio*. Ethnic Traditions and Literature in Early Medieval Texts’, *Early Medieval Europe*, iii, 1 (1994), 19–38 (here 35–6).

⁴² *Origo Gentis Langobardorum*, c. 1, 2–3; Walter Pohl, ‘Ethnonyms and Early Medieval Ethnicity: Methodological Reflections’, *Hungarian Historical Review*, vii, 1 (2018), 5–17 (here 6); Wolfram, ‘*Origo Gentis*’, 42–3, see also the version of this story in Paul Deacon, ‘*Historia Gentis Langobardorum*’, I.7–9, 52–3. Woden used the name Longobards for women who put their long hair in a way that made them look like beards. As Robert Kasperski pointed out, this was an element of changing the passive (*Vanir*) Winnili into a warrior (*Æsir*) Longobards, Robert Kasperski, “Kobiety z długimi brodami” kontra “mężczyźni z kobiecymi włosami”, czyli o *Origo gentis Langobardorum* uwag kilka’, in Grzegorz Pac and Krzysztof Skwierczyński (eds), *Liber Romani. Studia ofiarowane Romanowi Michałowskiemu w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin* (Warszawa, 2020), 112–22, especially 118–25.

⁴³ This is Boemus, from whom the name *Boemia* came, Cosmas of Prague, *Chronica Boemorum*, ed. by Bertold Bretholz (Berlin, 1923), 1.2, 7; for more on

tale, instead of hero-eponymous, there is Semigallians' natio-eponymous, as their name was derived from the name of Senones Gauls.

Alberic did not refer to his sources of information here. It seems possible that he heard about Semigallian origins from Balduin, but I would argue that it was – at least in large part – his own creation. An argument for this is the name 'Nepre' appearing in the description of the Gauls' journey, which is the ancient Borysthenes or Danaper⁴⁴ and the modern-day Dnieper. While the difference between 'Danaper' and 'Neper' might not seem large, it is still a different word. So, from where could Alberic have gotten this strange spelling? Alberic knew the relation of Giovanni da Pian del Carpine from his travel to the Mongol court. While there appears to be no direct quotation from it, Alberic asked those who would like to learn more about "Tartari" to read Giovanni's relation.⁴⁵ When explaining the European leg of the journey, Giovanni mentioned the river 'Nepre'.⁴⁶

this see Marie Bláhová, 'The Function of the Saints in Early Bohemian Historical Writing', in Lars Boje Mortensen (ed.), *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom* (Copenhagen, 2006), 83–119 (here 99–100). For more on this *origo gentis* see Alheydis Plassmann, *Origo gentis: Identitäts- und Legitimitätsstiftung in früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Herkunftserzählungen* (Berlin, 2006), 152; Richard Waswo, 'Our Ancestors, the Trojans: Inventing Cultural Identity in the Middle Ages', *Exemplaria*, vii, 2 (1995), 269–90 (here 276, 282–3).

⁴⁴ Danaper is mentioned in *Ravenna Cosmography* as *Danapris*, Geographus Ravenas, 'Cosmographia', in *Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia et Gvidonis Geographica*, ed. by Gustav Parthey and Moritz Pinder (Berolini, 1860), 1–445, 4.5, 179; cf. Charles Raymond Beazley (ed.), *The Texts and Versions of John de Plano Carpini and William de Rubruquis, as Printed for the First Time by Hakluyt in 1598, Together with Some Shorter Pieces* (London, 1903), 288–9, fn. 4. Stéphane Mund added Snorri Sturluson's *Nepri*, Benedict Pole's *Nepere*. He also includes Gervase of Tilbury's *Aper*, but this is a mistake as under this name the author meant the *Wieprz* River (translated to Hog), which was in Poland and not – as some older editions claimed – *Danaper*. Stéphane Mund, 'Constitution et diffusion d'un savoir occidental sur le monde "russe" au Moyen Âge (fin Xe–milieu XV^e siècle) (2^e partie)', *Le Moyen Age*, cx, 3 (2004), 539–93 (here 547), fn. 29; Stanisław Kętrzyński, 'Ze studyów nad Gerwazym z Tilbury. Mistrz Wincenty i Gerwazy – Provinciale Gervasium', *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności. Wydział historyczno - filozoficzny. Serya II* 21 (1903), 152–89 (here 157–8). Dnieper was also called Nepr in Scandinavian sagas and other texts, see Tatjana N. Jackson, *Eastern Europe in Icelandic Sagas* (Leeds, 2019), 45–6, 56–7.

⁴⁵ Alberic 1239.

⁴⁶ Johannes de Plano Carpini, *Storia Dei Mongoli; Historia Mongalorum*, ed. by Enrico Menestò, transl. Maria Cristiana Lungarotti (Spoleto, 1989), *passim*.

Obviously, this is far from iron-clad proof, but it is a coincidence that should not be easily disregarded. While the connection of the Gauls with Semigallia might not have been original, it seems that their travel was more an invention of Alberic. It followed the trade routes between Constantinople and Scandinavia, which had a strong presence in Icelandic Sagas.⁴⁷

IV

BARTHOLOMEUS ANGLICUS' ORIGINS OF SEMIGALLIA

One more text should be looked into in the context of the Semigallians: Bartholomeus Anglicus' *De proprietatibus rerum*, a popular medieval encyclopaedia written in the 1240s, probably in Magdeburg.⁴⁸ Bartholomeus called Semigallia a small province on the Baltic coast close to Osel island and Livonia. It got its name from being occupied by the Galates, who mixed with the local population. Therefore, they were called Semigalli, as they descended from the union of the Gauls

⁴⁷ Jackson, *Eastern Europe in Icelandic Sagas*, 43–51.

⁴⁸ For more on Bartholomeus, see Marek Tamm, 'Les signes d'altérité. La représentation de la Baltique orientale dans le *De proprietatibus rerum* de Barthélemy l'Anglais (vers 1245)', in Outi Merisalo and Päivi Pahta (eds), *Frontiers in the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the Third European Congress of Medieval Studies (Jyväskylä, 10–14 June 2003)* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2006), 147–70 (here 153); Michael Charles Seymour (ed.), *Bartholomaeus Anglicus and His Encyclopedia* (Aldershot, 1992), 1–10; on date of writing of *De Proprietatibus rebus*, see Tamm, 'Les signes d'altérité', 155; and Seymour (ed.), *Bartholomaeus Anglicus*, 29–35; Elizabeth Keen, *The Journey of a Book: Bartholomew the Englishman and the Properties of Things* (Canberra, 2007), 6; Levāns, 'Vertraute Geschichtsbilder', 222. See also *Bartholomaeus Anglicus, De proprietatibus rerum: texte latin*; especially the chapter by Brigitte Prévot where she discussed Bartholomeus take on land and water. She highlighted that Bartholomeus not only provided material for preaching and teaching but also that the knowledge about nature and geography "permet de mieux aimer Dieu". Brigitte Prévot, 'Terre et eau dans le *Liber de proprietatibus rerum*: des éléments pour quelle géographie?', in *Bartholomaeus Anglicus, De proprietatibus rerum: texte latin et réception vernaculaire = Lateinischer Text und volkssprachige Rezeption: actes du colloque international = Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums, Münster, 9.–11.10.2003*, ed. by Baudouin van den Abeele and Heinz Meyer (Turnhout, 2005), 185–202 (here 202). There is an ongoing attempt at presenting a critical edition of Bartholomeus work, of which a first volume has now appeared. It does not cover the narration discussed here. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, ed. Baudouin van den Abeele *et al.*, i (N.S. 41) (Turnhout, 2007).

(*Gallis*)/Galates (*Galatis*) and natives, with Semigallia meaning half-Gauls.⁴⁹ Bartholomeus' source of information is unknown, however, it was speculated that it was the elusive Erodauts, the unknown author of an unknown geographical work written probably during or for his missionary activities.⁵⁰

It seems that the term *semi* was here a derogatory statement.⁵¹ In ancient writings, there are many other examples of negative views on mixed blood. They can be found in Livy's version of Gnaeus Manlius Vulso's speech on Gallo-Greeks (Galatians) and on the Macedonians whom he claimed to have degenerated into Syrians, Parthians, and Egyptians.⁵² An adverse opinion on blood mixing was also present in the Middle Ages, as attested to in the Frankish *origo*, where the Gauls and the Franks were given the same ancestry.⁵³ The proper descent (from the Trojans) should not be diminished by mixing with other nations. For example, the late medieval French chroniclers rejected the English claims to such ancestry. They pointed

⁴⁹ It was not the only instance in Livonia when there was a perceived mixing of the blood. For example, Saxo Grammaticus claimed that once Sambia was conquered by Danes who killed all men and took women as their wives. This way the Samlanders were relatives to Danes. Such ethnic connection via sexual relations and paternity was something common. It was not always about whole groups of people – sometimes only a hero was needed, like in the case of one of the tales about Herakles who with Celtic woman fathered a child Galates, who in turn was hero-eponymous of Galates. In another variant he fathered Celtus who gave name to the Celts. Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum* =: *The History of the Danes*, ed. by Karsten Friis-Jensen, transl. Peter Fisher, i (Oxford, 2015¹), X.5, 694; Woolf, *Tales of the Barbarians*, 19–25.

⁵⁰ Seymour (ed.), *Bartholomaeus Anglicus*, endnote 167 to 793.9 and 807.23–808.12 at 169.

⁵¹ Levāns, 'Vertraute Geschichtsbilder', 223.

⁵² Livy, *History of Rome*, ed. by J. C. Yardley, xi: Books 38–40 (Cambridge, MA, 2018), 38.17, 56. It needs to be noted that Livy writing on the events happening before the speech noted that the Gallo-Greeks were warlike people as they still retained their Gallic nature. Livy, *History of Rome*, 37.8, 310–12; cf. Lucius Annaeus Florus, *Epitome of Roman History*, transl. E. S. Forster (Cambridge, MA, 1995), I.27, 126. It is not always clear if the degeneration of the people came from intermarriage or the geographical location and climate. Nevertheless, intermarriage was treated as wrong and pure blood as positive quality. For more on this, see Benjamin H. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 2006), in particular 89–91, 139–40, 307–9.

⁵³ Beaune, 'L'utilisation politique', 334.

out that the Anglo-Saxon blood was dominant, while true Trojans-Britons were exterminated.⁵⁴

Finally, Bartholomeus added that the lands of Semigallians were fertile and good, but the people were cruel and barbaric.⁵⁵ This was an example of the *topoi* pertaining to frontier regions, where the quality of soil was combined with the ferociousness of the people.⁵⁶

While this might seem like a corroboration of Alberic's tale, this would be a false impression since it is an independent description. The connection between Alberic's and Bartholomeus' versions ends at the typical basing of an origin tale on the name's etymology.⁵⁷ There are many examples of connecting names with origins, like, for example, the Veneti, who were seen as Trojans because their name sounded close to Homer's term *Enetoi*.⁵⁸ This method was popular throughout history, as Dudo of Saint-Quentin made a similar name-connection with Danes and Daces and Danai, thus establishing the Normans as descendants of Troy.⁵⁹

Additionally, the meaning of both narratives is different. Alberic had people coming to these lands and giving it its name, while Bartholomeus saw it as diluting the Gallic blood in the native element. His text thus shows the importance of etymology as a starting point

⁵⁴ André Bossuat, 'Les origines troyennes: leur rôle dans la littérature historique au XVe siècle', *Annales de Normandie*, viii, 2 (1958), 187–97 (here 194–6).

⁵⁵ *De Semigallia. Semigallia est provincia modica ultra mare Balticum constituta, iuxta Osiliam et Livoniam sita, in Mesia inferiori, sic vocata quasi a Galatis ipsam occupantibus cum incolis terrae mixtis est inhabitata. Unde Semigalli sunt dicti, qui ex Gallis, sive Galatis, et illis populis processerunt. Terra bona et fertilis in annonae, in pascuis, in pratis, sed gens barbara et inculta, aspera et severa.* Bartholomeus Anglicus, *De Genuinis Rerum Coelestium, Terrestrium et Inferarum Proprietatibus*, ed. by Georgius Bartholdus Ponsanus a Braitenberg (Francofurti, 1601), 15.144, 699. Marek Tamm published his reading of the Baltic material from the oldest extant manuscript of Bartholomeus' work (BNF Lat. 16098, 148r): *Semigallia est provincia modica ultra mare Balticum constituta, iuxta Osiliam et Liuoniam sita in Sicilia inferiori. Sic vocata, quare a Galatis ipsam occupantibus, cum incolis terre mixtis est inhabitata. Vnde Semigalli sunt dicti qui ex Gallis sive Galatis et illis populis processerunt. Terra bona et fertilis in annonae, in pascuis et in pratis, sed gens barbara et inculta, aspera et seuera.* Tamm, 'Les signes d'altérité', 170. The 'in Sicilia' is Tamm's correction of the manuscript's 'insia'.

⁵⁶ Tamm, 'Les signes d'altérité', 159–66.

⁵⁷ For more on this medieval method, see Levāns, 'Vertraute Geschichtsbilder', 224–6.

⁵⁸ Williams, *Beyond the Rubicon*, 76.

⁵⁹ Cf. Coumert, 'La mémoire de Troie', 337.

in creating history. Here ‘gallia’ automatically leads to constructing the narrative connected to the Gauls.⁶⁰

V

BRENNUS AND BELINUS AND THE SOURCES
OF THE GALLIC HISTORY

The aforementioned Brennus and Belinus were commanders of Gauls. Alberic wrote: “And in [year] 122 Senones Gauls under Brennus and Belinus invaded Rome”.⁶¹ This date is in the consul years, i.e. the years counted from the introduction of the consulate in Rome. Scheffer-Boichorst saw it based on Jerome’s chronicle, but with the date converted from XCVII Olympiads to consul years.⁶² While Jerome noted the invasion, his text is short: “Senones Gauls took Rome apart from Capitol”.⁶³ It is thus clear that it could not provide Alberic with the narrative present in his chronicle.

So what then was the source of Alberic’s information on Brennus and Belinus? It seems best to first look at Hugh of Fleury’s chronicle from the early twelfth century, which Alberic often used (it was his fifth-most often directly referenced source).⁶⁴ Hugh wrote how three

⁶⁰ Cf. Beaune, ‘L’utilisation politique’, 352–3.

⁶¹ *Et 122. Senones Galli sub Brennio et Belio Romam invaserunt*, Alberic 122 *anno consulum*.

⁶² Alberic, when changing the date, supposedly used Hugh of Saint Victor’s chronicle: *Liber de tribus maximis circumstantiis gestorum, id est personis, locis, temporibus* – Scheffer-Boichorst used in his edition a manuscript of it that is held in Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig (MS 350). Dionysius of Halicarnassus also gave *anno consulum* for the attack/invasion, but dated it to the first year of XCVIII Olympiad and 120 *anno consulum*. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Roman antiquities*, i: Books 1–2, ed. by Earnest Cary (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 1.74.4-6, 246–8. The Roman myth of the Brennus and other invasions by the Gauls was discussed extensively, including in sources not discussed in present article. Williams, *Beyond the Rubicon*, especially 142–84; see also Antti Lampinen, ‘Narratives of Impiety and Epiphany: Delphic Galatomachy and Roman Traditions of the Gallic Sack’, *Studia Celtica Fennica*, v (2008), 39–54.

⁶³ *Galli Senones Romam invaserunt, excepto Capitolio*, Jerome, *Chronicle*, ed. by Roger Pearse, 2005, https://www.tertullian.org/fathers/jerome_chronicle_06_latin_part2.htm [Accessed: 15 Nov. 2021] 200; Eusebius and Hieronymus, *Die Chronik des Hieronymus / Hieronymi Chronicon*, ed. by Rudolf Helm (Berlin, 1956), 118.

⁶⁴ The specific nature of Alberic’s usage of Hugh of Fleury’s chronicle is a subject that still needs research. Nevertheless, judging from Scheffer-Boichorst edition

hundred thousand Gauls led by Brennus attacked Rome and killed many citizens. Finally, they besieged the Capitol, but they did not capture it, and for not doing so, they were paid one thousand pounds of silver. Soon they spread through Greece, Macedonia, Thrace, and the whole of Asia. They were fierce warriors whose renown was so great that every king of the East had them in their army. They also established their own country, known as Gallogrecia.⁶⁵

Hugh later noted that Emilia, Flaminia, Liguria, and Venetia were once called Cisalpine Gaul because Brennus, who ruled near the city Sens, went to Italy with three hundred thousand Gauls. He spread his reign as far as the city of Senigallia over the Adriatic. The Gauls dispersed from there, with one hundred thousand going to Delphi and another one hundred thousand remaining among the Greeks. From these came the Gallogreci, who, because of their white skin, were later known as the Galathes.⁶⁶ The remaining one hundred thousand stayed in Italia, where they built Pavia, Milan, Bergamo, and Brescia. From them came the name Cisalpine Gaul.⁶⁷

However, Hugh's narrative is not the only source of Alberic's information. Alberic mentioned that not only Brennus was the conqueror of Rome. The name of Belinus appears in neither ancient sources nor the texts based on them. Andris Levāns identified him with Bellovesus, another Gallic commander from the sixth century BC.⁶⁸ Robert Maxwell Ogilvie saw Livius' narrative on Bellovesus as a creation from the Greek motifs of wandering people, which were applied to Gauls. According to Livius, he was sent with his brother Segovesus from the overpopulated Gaul, with as many people as possible, to find new settlements. The gods directed Segovesus to the Hercynian Forest and Bellovesus to Italy.⁶⁹ Also, Justin's *Epitome* of Pompeius

of Alberic and comparing it with the edition of Hugh of Fleury it is possible to say that Alberic made about hundred quotations or paraphrases of its text.

⁶⁵ Hugo van Fleury, *Historia Ecclesiastica, editio altera*, ed. by Leendert de Ruiter (Groningen, 2016), 1. 569–85, 20.

⁶⁶ It seems that this was a conflation of two different Gallic invasions led by two different commanders both named Brennus. The first took place in 390 BC and the one in Greece in approximately 279 BC.

⁶⁷ Hugo van Fleury, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 3. prologus, 128–45, 46.

⁶⁸ Levāns, 'Vertraute Geschichtsbilder', 227, fn. 1029.

⁶⁹ Livy, *History of Rome*, transl. B.O. Foster, iii: Books 5–7 (Cambridge, MA, 1924), 5.34, 116–18; cf. Strabo, *Geography*, ii: Books 3–5, ed. Horace Leonard Jones

Trogus contains a description of the Gallic invasions of Greece, from which Belgus led first and Brennus second.⁷⁰

However, there was a much more straightforward source of information for Alberic than a tale about Bellovesus, which is also from the twelfth century: Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie*, where Brennus and Belinus led the Gauls to conquer Rome.⁷¹ It also connects to the ancient sources, as John T. Koch proposed that Justin's Belgus was the source of a name for Geoffrey. He knew from the Welsh material that there was Brân, a son of Dumngual Moilmut and the similarly legendary Beli. These two characters were combined into brothers, later Latinised by Geoffrey into Belgus and Brennus. Koch also saw Brân and his story in the Second Branch of *Mabinogi* as

(Cambridge, MA, 1999), 5.2.3, 338–40; Williams, *Beyond the Rubicon*, 117–18; Robert Maxwell Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy: Books 1–5* (Oxford, 1965), 706–13; for more on Bellovesus and Segovesus see the entries in Venceslas Kruta, *Les Celtes: histoire et dictionnaire des origines à la romanisation et au christianisme* (Paris, 2000), 462, 813.

⁷⁰ Justinus, *Epitoma Historiarum Philippicarum Pompeii Trogi*, ed. by Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, 2003, https://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost04/Iustinus/ius_e000.html, Book 24, chapt. 4–8 [Accessed 15 Nov. 2021].

⁷¹ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, i: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS. 568, ed. by Neil Wright (Cambridge, 2001), 35–44, 24–30. The narration is later referenced on cards (c.) 159–60, at pages 113–15. The text is also in First Variant, a later redaction of Geoffrey's work, *id.*, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth*. ii: *The First Variant Version: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Neil Wright (Cambridge, 1988), c. 35–44, 31–39 and c. 159, 153–4. On the absence of c. 160 in the First Variant, see there XXXVI–XXXVIII. See also the new (complete) edition of the text: Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain: An Edition and Translation of the De Gestis Britonum (Historia Regum Britanniae)*, ed. by Michael D. Reeve, transl. Neil Wright (Woodbridge, 2007), c. 35–44, 49–59 and c. 159–60, 217–19. A version of the tale is in Henry of Huntingdon's letter to Warin the Breton. He explained he was unable to write on the times from Brutus to Caesar, as he could not find any text on it. Things changed when he discovered, on the road to Rome in the abbey Le Bec, an account (c. 1, at 558) which he called "Geoffrey Arthur's great book" (*librum grandem Galfridi Arthuri*, c. 10, at pp. 582–83). What followed was a shortened version of Geoffrey's work (c. 3–4, at 566–68). The story is mostly the same, but the end is different. Brennus rejects the offer of acquiring half of the kingdom, takes gold, and attacks Rome, becoming the first to conquer it. After taking all the gold and silver from Italy, he subjugated Greece and "in Asia he kept kingdoms for himself or gave them to his men" (*in Asia que uoluit sibi regna retinuit, que uoluit suis dedit*, c. 4, at 568–9). Henry of Huntingdon, 'Exemplar Avtem Secvnde Epostole, de Serie Britonvm Hoc Est', in Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 558–82.

based on Brennus, as remembered in the Gallo-Celtic world.⁷² Geoffrey not only used Brennus, but also referred to the Trojan origins of the British people.⁷³

Geoffrey invented the story of how Brennus and Belinus conquered Rome; however, Alberic could learn it indirectly. While he refers to *Historia Brittonum* by title, the information could be taken from Guido of Bazoches' chronicle, which provided a clear narration that skips rhetorical flourishes.⁷⁴ The constraints of this paper do not permit a complete description of the whole complicated narrative present in Geoffrey's chronicle, but I will offer its brief outline hereinbelow.

Brennus and Belinus were brothers. The latter was older and inherited the reign over Britain from their father, Dunwallo Molmutius. Brennus, pushed by those around him, rebelled, but after he lost, he had to run away to Gaul, where after some time, he became king. He took the Gauls and attacked Britain, but then their mother, Tonwenna, appeared. She acted as a female mediator, soothing Brennus' anger with a speech where she pointed out that through Belinus' actions, he (Brennus) acquired what he wanted (a crown). She also made a ritual-like act of showing bare breasts as a form of shock-calming action, which appears throughout various texts, from Caesar's *Gallic Wars* to the story about Cúchulainn. It highlighted the contrast between aggression and fight on one side and peace and the community's

⁷² John T. Koch, 'Brân, Brennos: An Instance of Early Gallo-Brittonic History and Mythology', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, xx (1990), 1–20.

⁷³ See Waswo, 'Our Ancestors'.

⁷⁴ The Guido of Bazoches' chronicle called *Cronosgraphia* (in the only complete manuscript it is preceded by *Apologia contra maledicos* and *Libellus de regionibus mundi*) is still unedited. Bennis and Belinus discussed in BNF Lat. 4998, 46r; BAV Reg. lat. 778, 20v. For more on the chronicle and its manuscript tradition, see Thomas A.-P. Klein, 'Editing the Chronicle of Gui de Bazoches', *Journal of Medieval Latin*, iii (1993), 27–33.

Both Brennus and Belinus were mentioned in *Explanatio Prophetiae Merlini*, formerly attributed to Alain of Lille but the more probable author is Alain of Flanders. This is not surprising as it was a work about Geoffrey of Monmouth's narrations. Alberic did know this text and at least twice he quoted it, although not in his story on Brennus and Belinus. Alain's notes are rather rudimentary and much less detailed than Guido's version, Clara Wille (ed.), *Prophetie und Politik: Die "Explanatio in Prophetia Merlini Ambrosii" des Alanus Flandrensis – Edition mit Übersetzung und Kommentar*, Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters (Bern, 2015), c. I.39, IV.33, V.25, respectively 115, 202, 223.

prosperity on the other. The revealed bare breasts were to be protected, as attackers were calmed and abstained from killing.⁷⁵

Peace was made, and both brothers decided to attack Rome. There the Roman leaders – consuls Gabius and Porsena – submitted the city to the might of the British and Gallic forces, who next moved on to attack the Germanic people. It was then that the Romans changed their attitude and decided to abrogate their treaty with Brennus and Belinus. They decided to help the Germanic people and attack the brothers' army. The reaction was swift as the brothers, angered by the betrayal, divided the army and Brennus led the Gauls against Rome. As Belinus heard about the Roman army moving to attack his brother, he took his British troops and attacked and destroyed it. After the invaders ravaged Italy, Belinus returned to Britain, while Brennus remained in the peninsula. The victory over the Romans made them independent from Rome.⁷⁶

What Geoffrey accomplished was the implantation of the invented British history into the established tradition. Since Belinus was the brother of Brennus, this gave him the glory of the conqueror of Rome. It provided the narrative with the appropriate gravitas, and the elaborate origin story of the British gave them a glorious past.

But there is a difference between Alberic's account and Geoffrey's version of the invasion of Rome. When we read both texts, it becomes clear that while Alberic took Belinus from Geoffrey's work or its derivative, he based the details on different sources. Geoffrey did not give the dates when the attack occurred, and those came most probably from Jerome. It seems that Alberic combined the different versions of the invasion – Geoffrey's, Hugh's, and Jerome's – and shortened it to create an elementary account. He added the connection to the Semigallia to this tale. The idea behind it is the similarity of the names.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Jacek Banaszkiwicz, *Polskie dzieje bajeczne mistrza Wincentego Kadlubka* (Wrocław, 1998), 69, 71, 72–4.

⁷⁶ Cf. Coumert, 'La mémoire de Troie', 336, 339–4. Brennus and Belinus operate here in a fashion somewhat similar to the Dioscuri brothers that are often present in the *origo gentis* narrations. Jacek Banaszkiwicz, 'Slawische Sagen "De Origine Gentis" (al-Masudi, Nestor, Kadlubek, Kosmas). Dioskurische Matrizen der Überlieferung', *Medievalia Historica Bohemica*, iii (1993), 29–58.

⁷⁷ The connection of the Semigallians with Gauls did not attain popularity, although there is some minimal reception of it (though rather from Bartholomeus

VI
KING OF CRACOW

I have mentioned that Alberic strove for order in history. Another example of him searching for concord between the past and present is in the account of the attack on Gaul by Vandal king Crocus/Chrocus/Croscus in 413. This story was a composite creation of a few subsequent rewrites by the early medieval chroniclers. Crocus appears in sixth-century Gregory of Tours' *Ten Books of History*, in a tale taking place under the reign of emperors Valerian and Gallienus. He led the army of Alemanni on Gaul, where he committed many acts of violence. The Alemanni killed Privatus, bishop of Javols, near the mountain Mimat (mont des Mendois) near Mende. However, Crocus was soon captured near Arles and executed after being tortured.⁷⁸ Another Crocus appears in *Epitome de Caesaribus*, where he was the king of the Alemanni present in Britannia when Constantine the Great took his father's inheritance.⁷⁹

The Crocus that appears in Alberic's chronicle comes from Fredegar. As Gerald Schwedler convincingly demonstrated, Fredegar took the information from Gregory's *Ten Books of History* but moved the date to 406/407. As the Alemanni did not fit this date, Fredegar put the Vandals, Alans, and Suebi in their place, adding that it was Marius who captured Crocus.⁸⁰

than Alberic), like Albert Krantz, *Wandalia* (Hanovia, 1619), I.11, 10; Stefan Donecker, *Origines Livonorum: frühneuzeitliche Hypothesen zur Herkunft der Esten und Letten* (Köln, 2017), 114. In contrast, early modern Lithuania looked for Rome as ancestor (Italia – Litalia); see, for example, Ewa Semenowicz, 'Wokół genealogii Litwinów. U źródeł mitu i sporu historyczno-kulturowego', *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, xlvii (2011): 13–41 (here 17–20).

⁷⁸ Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum X (Gregorii Turonensis Opera, Teil 1)*, ed. by Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison (Hannover, 1951), 1.32 and 1.34, 24–5, 26.

⁷⁹ Sexti Aurelii Victoris, 'Epitome de Caesaribus', in Franz Pichlmayr (ed.) *Sexti Avrelii Victoris Liber de Caesaribus. Praecedunt Origo Gentis Romanae et Liber De Viris Illvstribus Vrbs Romae. Subsequitur Epitome de Caesaribus* (Leipzig, 1970), 133–76, c. 41, 166. On this Crocus, see John F. Drinkwater, 'Crocus, "King of the Alamanni"', *Britannia*, 40 (2009), 185–96; Ian N. Wood, 'The Crocus Conundrum', in Elizabeth Hartley et al. (eds), *Constantine the Great: York's Roman Emperor* (Aldershot, UK, 2006), 77–84.

⁸⁰ Fredegarus, *Fredegarii et Aliorum Chronica. Vitae Sanctorum (Generis Regii)*, ed. by Bruno Krusch (Hannover, 1888), 2.60, 84; Gerald Schwedler, 'Lethe and "Delete" – Discarding the Past in the Early Middle Ages: The Case of Fredegar', in

Alberic provided the date of the attack and who the attackers were – the Vandals – and the saints-martyrs that emerged from it: Desiderius of Langres, Antidius of Besançon, and Privatus of Javols.⁸¹ To this, he added one hitherto unknown detail: Crocus was a king of Cracow.⁸² How was this possible? It is explained in a note under the year 319, a distant echo of Siegebert of Gembloux’s chronicle. Siegebert wrote, at the beginning of his narrative on the Goths and Vandals’ invading the Roman Empire, that “Vandals likewise from Scythia originating, by Goths defeated, began invading other lands”.⁸³ Alberic’s version

Anja-Silvia Goeing et al. (eds), *Collectors’ Knowledge: What Is Kept, What Is Discarded = Aufbewahren oder wegwerfen: wie Sammler entscheiden* (Leiden–Boston, 2013), 71–96 (here 79–80, 82). On Crocus and question of his historicity, see also: Émilienne Demougeot, ‘Les martyrs imputés à Chrocus et les invasions alamanniques en Gaule méridionale’, *Annales du Midi : revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale*, lxxiv, 57 (1962), 5–28.

⁸¹ Privatus was not mentioned in 413, but appeared in Alberic’s recollection of the attack in 837. In the chronicle, he is called *Mimatensis*, taken from the place of his martyrdom: Mende. For more on this saint, see Gustave Bardy, ‘Recherches sur un cycle hagiographique. Les martyrs de Chrocus’, *Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France*, xxi, 90 (1935), 5–29.

⁸² In Paul Scheffer-Boichorst’s edition, there is a rather unknown *rex Craconie*. The manuscript in Paris could as well be read as having *Cracovie* (BNF Lat. 4896A, 10r). Not only that, but Leibniz in his edition put there *Cracovia*: Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, *Alberici monachi Triumfontium Chronicon, e manuscriptis nunc primum editum*, ed. by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (Lipsia, 1698), 33. If that was not compelling enough, in other places of the chronicle’s text, where Alberic wrote about Cracow in the Paris manuscript, one finds *Cranoine* with a correction in the margin to *Cracovie* and also with – although it is unclear if it was made before or after the margin correction – the addition of a letter ‘c’ in the main text over ‘n’ and adding a line at the end signifying that the second to last letter was ‘i’ (Alberic 1227), BNF Lat. 4896A, 249r; Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, ‘Alberici monachi Triumfontium Chronicon’, 921. Although on fol. 8v of the Hannover manuscript (Hannover, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek XIII.748), where Alberic wrote about Crocus, there is without doubt *dux craconie*, on fol. 202r *dux Lestco* is called *dux craconie*. Thus, it seems that both places should read Cracow, even though in the same entry under the year 1227 a bit later one finds *Cracovia*. The text makes it clear that the same city is being discussed. Therefore, it seems that the whole problem came from a common scribal mistake in the reading of the original copy of Alberic’s work, mixing ‘v’ with ‘n’.

⁸³ *Wandali quoque de Scythia oriundi, á Gothis victi, alias terras invadere ceperunt*, Siegebert of Gembloux, ‘Chronographi’ ed. by D. Ludowicus Conradus Bethmann, in *Chronica et annales aevi Salici* (Hannover, 1844), 268–374 (here 301).

is as follows: “That year in which Saint Martin is born, Vandals from Poland originating, by Goths expelled, entered Pannonia”.⁸⁴

In this way, the Vandals were deemed to have come from Poland – they were neither Poles nor their ancestors, but they lived there. This is an important distinction, as it is well known that in the Middle Ages the Slavs as a whole and especially Poles were often called Vandals in the Western sources. It is generally accepted that the conflation came from the similarity of the sound Vandal and Wenden, which denoted one of the Western Slavs’ groups. This connection of the Slavs with the ancient people was quite popular, and the Poles themselves accepted it, as attested to by Vincentius Kadłubek’s chronicle. Roland Steinacher, in his meticulous study of the subject, correctly brought up the fact that for Vincentius, the name Vandals came from the name Wanda, the daughter of the founder of Cracow. From her name, not only people but also a river Wisła (Vistula), took its name and was known as *Wandalum*.⁸⁵

Independently, Gervase of Tilbury also attested that the Wisła was known as *Wandalum*.⁸⁶ Alberic, on the other hand, calls it *Wissela*.⁸⁷ Moreover, throughout the whole chronicle, there is no other indication that he saw the Poles as connected with Vandals. Even though he knew that Wenden (*Winidi*) were Slavs, as attested by a note added to the text borrowed from Hélinand of Froidmont,⁸⁸ he never connected them to Vandals.

Crocus then, as a Vandal king, had to rule in the lands from where Vandals came and preside over the most important city of his fatherland.

⁸⁴ *Eodem anno quo natus est beatus Martinus, Wandali de Polonia orti, a Gothis expulsi, Pannonias intraverunt*, Alberic 319.

⁸⁵ Wincenty Kadłubek, *Mistrza Wincentego zwanego Kadłubkiem Kronika polska*, ed. by Marian Plezia (Kraków, 1994), I.7, 4, 13; Roland Steinacher, ‘Wenden, Slawen, Vandalen. Eine frühmittelalterliche pseudologische Gleichsetzung und ihre Nachwirkungen’, in Walter Pohl (ed.), *Die Suche nach den Ursprüngen*, 329–53 (here 346).

⁸⁶ Steinacher wanted to see Gervase as someone acquainted with Vincentius or his work, but there is no basis for this. Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor*, ed. by S. E. Banks and J. W. Binns (Oxford, 2002), II.7, 238, 244; Steinacher, ‘Wenden, Slawen, Vandalen’, 342. On the joining of Vandals with Poles see also Jerzy Strzelczyk, *Wandalowie i ich afrykańskie państwo* (Warszawa, 2005), 311–35; Banaszkiwicz, *Polskie dzieje bajeczne*, 102–19.

⁸⁷ Alberic 1205.

⁸⁸ Alberic 751.

As Alberic wrote about Cracow as the Polish kingdom's capital,⁸⁹ it had to have the same role in the distant past: Crocus was, therefore, the king of Cracow. The fact that the Vandals were expelled from the Polish lands long before Crocus' attack could be called a contradiction, but such inconsistencies are not something unusual.

It needs to be added that while Alberic could see Crocus as a ruler of Cracow just because of the similarity of the names of Crocus and Cracow, this seems doubtful. The resemblance is not significant. Even so, when another educated author wanted to create an ancient ruler of Cracow, he went with a different name. Vincentius Kadłubek gave him the name Grakchus (Krak), which sounds much more similar to Cracow.⁹⁰ Moreover, the name Krak had a specific meaning, as it referred to the sacral and judicial power symbolised by a staff called *krakula*.⁹¹ Thus, the name refers to a term connected to authority.

VI CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, I have presented examples of the implantation of new histories to ancient history by various chroniclers. They made these additions and expansions utilising a specific set of motifs.⁹² While my main focus has been on Alberic, and in the discussion, I referred to authors such as Geoffrey and Bartholomeus, it would be wrong to limit this phenomenon to them. It was a popular method, and it was utilised by, for example, Vincentius Kadłubek, who implanted the invented ancient history of Poles into the history of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar.⁹³

⁸⁹ Alberic 1227; Grabowski, 'Polska i Polacy', 212, 220.

⁹⁰ Wincenty Kadłubek, *Mistrza Wincentego*, I.3–5, 8–11.

⁹¹ Banaszkiwicz, *Polskie dzieje bajeczne*, 39–44.

⁹² Sławomir Gawlas, 'Pytania o tożsamość średniowiecznych Polaków w świetle współczesnych dyskusji humanistyki', in Sławomir Gawlas and Paweł Żmudzki (eds), *Symboliczne i realne podstawy tożsamości społecznej w średniowieczu* (Warszawa, 2017), 15–82, especially 66.

⁹³ Wincenty Kadłubek, *Mistrza Wincentego*, I.3, 1.9–11, 8, 14–18; for more on this, see Rafał Rutkowski, 'Jak opowiedzieć o zwycięstwie nad Cezarem? Próba nowego spojrzenia na przekaz Mistrza Wincentego (I, 17)', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, cxxvi, 3 (2019), 453–80. Therefore, Alain Schnapp was at least somewhat misguided when he stated that in the thirteenth century those in the Northern and Central Europe

Thus, when Alberic or his sources came upon the name of Semigallia, he was aware of what he had to do. He knew of other examples of *origo gentis* narratives and had all the tools he needed. He knew the Frankish *origo*, the story that was deeply rooted in the prior historiography. Alberic not only used similar schemes of how the new nations were introduced, but also applied virtually the same method of hooking them into the general narrative. The literary structure could influence the historical narrative and shape it to fit the established views on how the narration should flow.⁹⁴ Therefore, Alberic could make the Semigallians a part of the established history because of the similarity of the names. What Alberic did was in itself based on the previous similar implantation of British history into Roman history. It could be said then that Alberic added to it another branch without any problem.⁹⁵

The ease with which the tale on the origins of Semigallians followed the patterns of origin narrations shows that, contrary to Pohl's opinion, it is fruitful to look at the medieval texts along the lines of scripts and *topoi*, as it shows the meaning of the narrative. This does not mean that the narratives fall into formal schemes, which Pohl interpreted from Hayden White's works.⁹⁶ Instead, the narratives combine, mix, and exchange various schemes, styles and *topoi*. There are very few pure comedies, romances, or tragedies, but there are equally few topically pure historiographical narratives.

Even more, Alberic's tale of the Semigallians' origins shows that the *origo gentis* as a theme was well alive in the thirteenth century

were less interested in the ancient times; see Alain Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past: The Origins of Archaeology*, transl. Ian Kinnes and Gillian Vardell (London, 1996), 104–5.

⁹⁴ The use of established structures made narratives plausible and reliable, Hayden White, *The Content of the Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987), 27–8, 43–6, 57, 172–3, 178; Pohl, 'Debating Ethnicity', 35–6; Goffart, *The Narrators*, 17–18.

⁹⁵ Levāns speculated that the tale was meant to strengthen Balduin's position in the conflicts with local German knights. The narration, which he could spread on the road from Rome to Livonia, was both pointing to the common origin and, more importantly, it created community – unity, with Bishop as its leader. But why, if it was to be propagated, did only Alberic record it? To what extent could such a narration help Balduin? There is no answer to these questions; Levāns, 'Vertraute Geschichtsbilder', 235–42.

⁹⁶ Pohl, 'Debating Ethnicity', 35–6.

(and long afterwards). Wolfram's claim about the end date of such tales being 1200 could only stand if there were no pre-ethnographic materials in Alberic's account. On the other hand, Wolfram pointed out that the authors of *origo gentis* tales looked through and took what they liked from the "tribal sagas".⁹⁷ How then does this differ from Alberic's looking through Geoffrey of Monmouth's and Hugh of Fleury's works? What differentiated Semigallians from Franks? It could also be argued that etymologies stood behind the many ideas about the early medieval *origo gentis*, and the Longobards did not differ in this respect from Vincentius Kadłubek's Vandals or even Alberic's Semigallians.

Wolfram is aware that the narrations he used in his discussions were most often written by outsiders, who applied their motifs, concepts, and views to describe various people. He acknowledges that the origins of these *gentes* were changed and gives as an example the story of the Goths, who were turned into Noah's descendants. Nevertheless, he sees the ethnic group behind all this literary paint. According to him, the truth was retained by tradition.⁹⁸ While the texts did not convey the tradition entirely, Wolfram was, in his view, able to take up the real elements (genealogies, names) from the literary additions.⁹⁹

Wolfram criticised Walter Goffart for viewing the *origo* tales as "author's creation *ex nihilo*". Instead, they had elements taken from the tradition.¹⁰⁰ The question then is: where did the tradition come from? Even such essential aspects of the *origo gentis* tales like migration and movement of the people could easily be found and marked as literary motifs coming at least from the Greeks and various myths connected with the spreading colonisation, including the gods' approval. Similarly, a Roman account of the Gauls coming to the Italian peninsula was seen by some as a relic of the original Gaulic 'folk memory', or, as Pohl and Wolfram would call it, oral tradition.¹⁰¹

In trying to rationalise Livy's view on the Gauls origins, J.H.C. Williams saw it as an 'indigenous tale' adapted to rules of Greek origin tales.¹⁰² Also, it was not uncommon for Roman ethnographers to claim

⁹⁷ Wolfram, 'Origo et Religio', 26.

⁹⁸ *Id.*, 'Terminologisches', 795.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 798.

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*, 'Origo et Religio', 36–7.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Williams, *Beyond the Rubicon*, 111, 119.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 119.

local sources and written traditions of the described people. Greg Woolf saw in these tales a combination of the local traditions of conquered people and the Greco-Roman worldview. The invented past was designed to give the conquered a place in the world of the conquerors.¹⁰³

The notion of oral traditions needs to be confronted with the fact that ethnographic narrations since ancient times were often written in cultural centres and not in the described lands themselves. The authors worked with libraries, not with people – they were a sort of curule-seat-ethnographers.¹⁰⁴ Many late antique and early medieval *origo* tales show signs of being based on older written accounts and not on oral traditions.¹⁰⁵

The connection, by the name of the Semigallians with the Gauls of Sens, was a typical ethnographic interpretation. I have already noted similar names that led to the identification. Still, Alberic was not content to rely solely on that. Instead, the connection sparked a narrative explaining it. He did the same connecting Priam's son with Paris, or highlighting the hero-eponymous Francio as the ancestor of Franks. Alberic's account of the Trojans as ancestors of the Franks is similar to the tale of Gauls as ancestors of Semigallians.

It also needs to be highlighted that making the Semigallians into Gauls was meaningless in the sense that it did not give the people any special quality. While it was sometimes noted that the name informed about the people's nature – like in the case of the Longobards or Saxons¹⁰⁶ – Alberic did not mention the Semigallians' wars or abilities. In a way, this is similar to Gallus Anonymous' note about Prussians as being the descendants of Saxons who refused both Christianity and Charlemagne's rule. The connection between the Saxons and Prussians is their opposition towards the two great powers of the Early Middle Ages, and nothing more is made of that by Gallus.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Woolf, *Tales of the Barbarians*, 27–8.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 66–7.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 116–17; Reynolds, 'Medieval Origenes', 375; Walter Goffart, 'Two Notes on Germanic Antiquity Today', *Traditio*, 1 (1995), 9–30 (here 28); Magali Coumert, 'L'identité ethnique dans les récits d'origine: l'exemple des Goths', in Véronique Gazeau, Pierre Bauduin, and Yves Modéran (eds), *Identité et ethnicité: concepts, débats historiographiques, exemples (III^e–XII^e siècle)* (Caen, 2008), 49–73 (here 63–6, 73).

¹⁰⁶ Pohl, 'Ethnonyms', 7.

¹⁰⁷ Gallus Anonymous, *Galli Anonymi Cronica et Gesta Ducum Sive Principum Polonorum*, ed. by Karol Maleczyński (Kraków, 1952), II.42, 112; Robert Bartlett, 'From

The described histories were implanted into the ancient ones to provide peoples with a glorious past and give them origins. It was applied to the Franks, Britons, Turks, and Poles. It was not a phenomenon limited to the Middle Ages, as for example can be seen in the case of Georgius Sabinus, who was the first rector of Albertina (University of Königsberg) in the first half of the sixteenth century and wrote about the ancient history of Brandenburg. This humanist, poet, and scholar wrote that Brandenburg was created from two cities, of which one was built by the already known to us Brennus, who led the Senones Gauls to Rome 416 years before Christ, while the other was founded by Brando, son of Marcomir, in AD 270. Then he informed his readers that the men led by Brennus were not Gauls but Germans, *a Senonibus Suevis*, who lived in Swabia.¹⁰⁸

In using such a construction, history becomes an ever-expanding tree. There is no problem in building upon it and adding a new branch. The way history works reminds us of Paul's letter to the Romans, where he described wild olives (Gentiles) being grafted onto Israel's noble tree, and by this means, they acquired the glory of salvation.¹⁰⁹ Hence such expansions of the narratives should not be viewed as any sort of corruption of the old tales or mere insertions of a new matter. They were – to use the botanical expression – grafts; additions that made history better and more enjoyable. The inclusion of things previously unknown meant that it was a better narrative, even if modern historiography rejects many of these expansions. Thus, instead of a selective reading of these narratives to extract the supposed facts and traditions, it is much more enriching to look at them as cultural constructs, and to investigate them with a particular interest in the construction, motifs used, and their sources.¹¹⁰ Thanks to this, it is possible to examine the cultural worldview of the author.

proofreading James Hartzell

Paganism to Christianity in Medieval Europe', in Nora Berend (ed.), *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy* (Cambridge, 2007), 47–72 (here 66–7).

¹⁰⁸ Georgius Sabinus, 'De Brandeburgo Metropoli Marchiae', in *Scriptores Rerum Brandenburgensium*, vol. 2.2 (Francofurti ad Viadrum, 1752), 274–8 (here 274).

¹⁰⁹ Rom. 11,16–24; interestingly Livy, in discussing the Gauls and Galates noted that the latter degenerated as it was typical for plants that were put in a foreign soil to lose their qualities, Livy, *History of Rome*, XI, 38.17, 58; Williams, *Beyond the Rubicon*, 71.

¹¹⁰ Cf. White, *The Content of the Form*, 193.

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