



Finding Troy in the Rhineland: Phonology, Fredegar and the Frankish Founding Myth

Fabian Zuk

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TEORÍA, METODOLOGÍA Y CASOS DE ESTUDIO

Antonio Juanes Cortés
Paula Ortega Martínez
Verónica Pérez de Dios
M^a Pamela Rubio Velasco
M^a de los Reyes de Soto García

Editores

Miguel Artola Blanco
José Miguel Hernández Barral

Prólogo



Colección Temas y perspectivas de la Historia, número 6

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FINDING TROY IN THE RHINELAND: PHONOLOGY, FREDEGAR AND THE FRANKISH FOUNDING MYTH

*Hallando Troya en Renania:
la fonética, Fredegar y el mito fundador de los francos*

Fabián Zuk

Université de Montréal/Lyon III
dfab.zuk@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT: Early medieval sources attribute Trojan origins to the Franks. Staab (2007), Wallace-Hadrill (1956) and others suggest that *Troia* must refer to the castra of *Colonia Ulpia Traiana* near modern Xanten in Germany. It is an intriguing explanation of the Frankish origins myth but is it supported by the archaeology and is the etymology viable? This article compares candidates for Troy on the Rhine through the application of historical linguistics so to demonstrate how linguistic palaeontology can act as a method of historical research.

Keywords: Early Middle Ages. *Colonia Trajana*. Xanten. Paleo-Linguistics. Frankish. Gaulish Language.

RESUMEN: Las fuentes medievales indican que los francos tenían orígenes troyanos. Staab (2007), Wallace-Hadrill (1956) y otros sugieren que *Troia* se refiere al *castellum* de *Colonia Ulpia Traiana* cerca de la Santen moderna en Alemania. Se trata de una explicación seductora del mito de los orígenes de los francos pero, ¿sería viable en el plan etimológico y por la arqueología? Este artículo, utilizando métodos de la lingüística histórica, compara candidatos por Troya en Renania, demostrando así cómo la paleontología lingüística puede actuar como método de investigación histórica.

Palabras clave: Edad Media. *Colonia Traiana*. *Ad Santos*. Franco. Galo.

1. EARLY ATTESTATION OF THE MYTH

In the early middle ages, The Franks, like the Gauls before them, claimed to be descendants of Troy. Historians attracted to the origin of

the Franks have either attributed the legend to the imagination of Fredegar a sixth-century chronicler, assigned it to an older story propagated by Ammanianus Marcellinus and which circulated among the educated Gallo-Roman elite, or sought to confirm the existence of a Frankish Troy¹.

Though Gregory of Tours made no mention of such a Frankish Troy, the Burgundian chronicler Fredegar (c.658), tasked to write a history of the Merovingian kingdom over a century later, recounts legendary origins of the Franks². Fredegar presents a Trojan prince and his followers escaping the burning city, wandering the Balkans until they reach a spot along the Rhine where they established a new home³. “*Reni ripam occupant, nec procul a Reno civitatem ad instar Trogiae nominis aedificare conati sunt. Ceptum quidem, sed imperfectum opus remansit*”⁴.

Its unlikely that the Franks, a nominally Germanic people, had descended from Anatolian princes, but one need not look far to find the utility of such an origins myth⁵. Virgil after all had woven Troy into the origin of the Romans and the budding Merovingian kings whose kingdom by the late fifth century sprawled over large swaths of the fallen empire, surely desired equally prestigious origins⁶. Until the very end of the middle ages, Troy granted a mythological foundation to the Frankish kingdom, heroic origins and ethnic unity to the Frankish nobility⁷.

1 FARAL, E. *La légende Arthurienne*. Paris, Champion, 1929.

2 WALLACE-HADRILL, J. M. “Fredegar and the History of France”. *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 1958, p. 536; Amm. Marc. *Rer. Gest. Lib.* XV, 9, 5 claims that fugitive Trojans settled in Gaul and they are likewise praised by Ausonius, *Lib.* VI, *Epitaphia Heroum*. JULIAN, C. *De la Gaule à la France: nos origines historiques*. Paris, Hachette, 1922, p. 200 supports this fourth century origin of the Trojan legend.

3 GOFFART, W. “The Fredegar Problem Reconsidered”. *Speculum*, 38/2, 1963, pp. 206-241.

4 Fred. *Chron.* I, 5. “And they sought to build a city with a name resembling Troy’s not far from the Rhine. This work was begun but was left uncompleted”.

5 Germanic here refers to a family of languages as does Anatolian. The mythical Trojans were perhaps speakers of Lemnian. See KLOEKHORST, A. “The Language of Troy”. In Kelder, J.; Uslu, G.; Şerifoglu, O. F., *Troy City, Homer and Turkey*. Boerendanserdijk, W Books, 2012, p. 50.

6 WALLACE-HADRILL, J. M. “Fredegar and the History of France”. *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 1958 writes “[the myth] satisfies racial pride in a new way it encapsulates the Franks in the history of the great powers of the Mediterranean world, namely the Church of Rome and the Eastern Empire, while at the same time giving them the dignity of historical independence.

7 BEAUNE C. “L’utilisation politique du mythe des origines troyennes en France à la fin du

Though one may be tempted to attribute the Trojan Myth to Fredegar alone, the eighth century Neustrian *liber historiae francorum* completed in 727 by an unknown author in the area north of Paris also presents a Trojan origin myth though entirely independently of Fredegar, suggesting that a pre-existing Gallo-Roman legend was inherited by seventh century Frankish intellectuals⁸. This is also confirmed by a contemporary travel document, the *Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia*, an itinerary composed c.700 in Ravenna which served as a roadmap for messengers and merchants in their travels. Its twenty-fourth itinerary indicates a road through Rhenish Francia, previously Belgian Gaul along whose path one surprisingly finds a town: *Troia*. Thus the *Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia*, itinerary 24 reads:

6 Maguntia > 8 Bodorecas > 10 Confluentes > 12 Rigo. Magus >
 14 Colonia Agripina > 17 Novesio > 19 Asciburgio > 2 Troia >
 4 Coadulfaveis > 7 Matellionem > 7 Bingum > 9 Bosalvia > 11
 Anternacha > 13 Bonne > 15 Rungon > 16 Serima > 18 Trepitia >
 1 Beurtina > 3 Noita > 5 Evitano > 6 Fletione

The *Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia* appears to corroborate what Fredegar had written in his chronicle: Halfway along the course from Maguntia to Fletione appears the very name *Troia*. For Hommel (1956), Wallace-Hadrill (1958) and Franz Staab (1997) this *Troia* corresponds to the *Troigia* of Fredegar's chronicle. Staab most notably and Ewig theorise the existence of a Frankish kingdom based around the area of modern Xanten in Germany⁹. But how far is the identification of Xanten with *Troia* supported by the archaeological and linguistic evidence? The remainder of this article intends to attack that question precisely and demonstrate the contribution of historical phonology in the identification of *Troia ad Rhenum*.

Moyen Âge". *Publications de l'école française de Rome: Lectures Médiévales de Virgile*, 80/1, 1958, p. 332.

8 GREREBERDING, R. A. *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987.

9 HOMMEL, H., "Die Trojanische Herkunft der Franken". In *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie, Neue Folge*, 99/4, 1956, pp. 323-341; STAAB, F. "Les royaumes francs au Ve siècle". In ROUCHE, M. *Clovis histoire et mémoire*. Paris, Publications de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 1997, p. 539-566; EWIG, E. *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich*. Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1988, pp. 82-86.

2. CANDIDATES FOR A POSSIBLE *TROY ON THE RHINE*

Along with Xanten, I see two other cities in the Frankish kingdoms which could have propelled the legend of Trojan origin: Troyes (France) whose name is homophonous with Troy and Utrecht (Netherlands) which lies in the Salian Frank heartland. The *pros* and *cons* of each hypothesis are as follows:

2.1. Troyes, France

- ✓ *Troyes'* modern name aligns perfectly with that of the ancient Anatolian city, *Troia* which in modern French are both pronounced [trɔwɑ]. Furthermore 18th century documents attest to a spelling *Troy*¹⁰.
- ✓ As of the fifth century *Troyes* was at the heart of Frankish Neustria. Captured in 484 by Clovis, Troyes is no more than 15 kilometres from the battle site of the *campus Catalaunicus* where Frankish chief Merovech is said to have aided the *magister militum* Aëtius, Visigothic King Theodoric and their allies in the 451 confrontation against Attila the Hun¹¹.
- ✓ Its proximity to Rheims, the city where Clovis was baptised, suggests that the whole region was francicised at an early date.
- ✗ At some 280 kilometres from the Rhine we can hardly make this identification in the face of our sources which state the city was built *procul a Reno*, i.e., near the Rhine¹².
- ✗ The toponyme *Troyes* is the phonetic evolution of *Tricassium* and only came to be pronounced [trɔwɑ] around the thirteenth century, thus far too late to act as a potential candidate for an early medieval Troy¹³.

10 RICARD, J.-M.; DU CHEMIN, M. *Traité des donations entre-vifs et testamentaires*. Paris, Didot, 1754, p. 88.

11 Jord. Get, 41.217; cf. HUGHES, I. *Aëtius: Attila's Nemesis*. Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Books, 2012.

12 Fred., Chron. III, 2.

13 In Fred. Chron, IV, 54, the fourth century the city is known as civitas Tricassium and in the seventh century as Trecassis, in the ninth as Trecasadens, Treci in 890, Treche in 1218 and in the thirteenth as Troies from a presumed proto-form Treies. See NÈGRE, E. *Toponymie générale de la France*, vol. 1. Genève, Librairie Droz, 1991; DAUZAT, A.; ROSTAING, C. *Dictionnaire étymologique des noms de lieux en France*, Paris, éditions Larousse 1968.

- ✗ Germanic settlement is only attested as of the fifth century, which is rather late.

2.2. Utrecht, Netherlands

- ✓ On archaeological grounds Utrecht appears an excellent candidate for the homeland of the Franks, not the least because of its location just 30 kilometres from an inscription which may be a very early attestation of the Frankish language; uncovered in 1996; a silver gilded scabbard bearing runic inscription at Bergakker near Tiel, a region which was once the homeland of the *Batavi*. Similar ornamentation has been found in the lower and middle Rhineland as well as in the North of Gaul and in Northern Germany suggesting it of a Frankish / Roman Auxiliary style¹⁴.
- ✓ Around year 50 AD, the Romans erected a *castellum* here as part of the *Limes Germanicus*. It housed about 500 soldiers and the nearby settlement their wives, children and artisans. The *castellum* was destroyed shortly before 270 when the Franks invaded. The city's destruction may be echoed in our sources' *Ceptum quidem, sed imperfectum opus remansit*¹⁵.
- ✓ In the anonymous *Cosmographia* of Ravenna (IV. 26) a city noted as *Trega* has been associated with Utrecht¹⁶.
- ✗ Utrecht only became an important city as of 690 when the Anglo-Saxon missionary Willibrord transformed it into a major site of Christianisation.
- ✗ The city's Latin name *Traiectum* developed into Dutch as *Trecht*, Frisian as *Utert*, locally it is pronounced *Utereg*, and in Old French *Trit*, none of which resembles *Troia*¹⁷.
- ✗ Its only as of the XIIth century that the Flemish counts claimed 'Trojan origins'¹⁸.

14 LOOIJENGA, T. "History, Archaeology and Rune". In *Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions*. Leiden, Brill, 2003, pp. 72-77.

15 Fred. *Chron.* III, 2.

16 But in all likelihood this *Trega* must refer to Maastricht as this particular course of the Itinerary follows the Meuse

17 BOREL, P. *Dictionnaire des termes du vieux français ou trésors de recherches et antiquités gauloises et françaises*. Paris, Briasson, 1750, p. 433.

18 BEAUNE, C. "L'utilisation politique du..., p. 345.

2.3. Xanten, Germany

- ✓ Before the Romans established a *castra* here in 15 BC, the region was occupied by Celts. Before its destruction in 70 AD the castra was inhabited by 8000-10000 legionaries a number which was augmented to perhaps as many as 15000 legionaries after 110 when it was made a Colonia by emperor Marcus Ulpius Traianus. The colonia became an important trading post, surpassed in Germania Inferior only by Colonia Agrippensis (Cologne).
- ✓ In the later 250s, Gaul was ravaged by the Franks who make their appearance in our sources and in 275 the *colonia* was almost destroyed. These Franks along with other Germanic peoples were officially settled west of the Rhine as *foederati* by Diocletian (r. 284-305)¹⁹.
- ✓ A new settlement *Tricensimae* was founded on the ruins of *Colonia Traiana* and at latest by the fifth century, the Franks began to settle the area. By the time a church was built here in the eighth century the colony was known as *Sanctos super Rhenum*. According to legend, Victor of Xanten had been executed here in 363 along with 360 other legionaries of the Theban legion²⁰. The *Itineraria Antonina* refers to this *colonia* variably as *Leg. XXX. Ulpia* or as *Coloniam Traianam*.
- ✗ The Roman *castra* no longer exists and Frankish occupation is only attested in the archaeological record as of the fifth century.

3. THE LINGUISTIC ARGUMENT

This volume is dedicated to historical methodologies, which is why the remainder of the article will serve as an introduction to the tools of linguistic palaeontology. What I mean by this is that historical linguistics, like archaeology, history genetics, etc is another tool which can be used to investigate past societies. Language is a system of logical correspondences and changes in the sounds and structures of a language are never random but rather they occur in distinct traceable patterns. These changes not

19 “Franks”. In FRASSETTTO, M. *Encyclopedia of Barbarian Europe: Society in Transformation*. Santa Barbara, Clio, 2003, pp. 164-165.

20 OTTO, W. *Saint Maurice et la légion thébaine*. Fribourg, Academic Press Fribourg, 2005. p. 29; Siegfried was born at “Santen an dem Rhine”, see *Nibelungenlied*, 2.

only alter the physical appearance of words but also the very grammar of a language. For that reason, it's not sufficient to seek homonymy or external resemblance when mapping medieval place names to their classical or modern equivalents. One must demonstrate the evolution of a name through morphological change and regular sound change.

From a purely historical or archaeological perspective *Colonia Traiana*/Xanten appears the most likely candidate, but even in the best of cases the derivation of *Troia* from *Tricasses*, *Traianum* or *Traiectum* should be supported by our understanding of diachronic phonology. On the surface our candidates all bear a certain resemblance to *Troia*, no doubt. Language however is a system of logical correspondences between its elements; phonetic change, i.e. changes to the acoustic realisation of sounds and to their interpretation by an interlocutor is never random, but rather occurs in distinct patterns which we can seek to understand. These changes not only alter the physical appearance of words but also the very grammar of a language.

The systematicity of sound change or *regularity* as it was called by the 19th century *Junggrammatiker* is a cornerstone of historical linguistics. For our case study this means that we should be able to explain each sound change leading from *TRAIANUM*, *TRAIECTUM*, or whatever other source leading to our target: *Troia*. The evolution from an ancient form to a newer one should have parallels of correspondence with other words in the language built on a similar structure²¹. In the potential evolution of *TRAIANUM* or *TRAIECTUM* to *Troia* is the change of the initial Latin vowel [a] to [o]. Therefore to legitimise this identification we must find conditions, what historical phonologists call “sound laws”, capable of explaining the change in the vowel's quality.

3.1 Gallo-Romance Weighs In

As stated in the *Cosmographia*, the Rhine frontier was once part of the Roman province of *Gallia Belgica Alobrites* directly west of the Rhine²². On

21 In the nineteenth century, these sound laws were thought to be exceptionless, though more recently LABOV, W. *Principles of Language Change*. Cambridge, Blackwell, 1994; and KIPARSKY, P. “The Phonological Basis of Sound Change”. In Goldsmith, John A. (ed.). *The Handbook of Phonological Theory*, Cambridge, Blackwell, 1995 have theorised on the need to recognise diffusion through a subset of the lexicon.

22 *Rav. Cos.* 24. “Francia Rinensis que antiquitus Gallia Belgica Alobrites dicitur”.

this account we presume that *Colonia traiana* was part of the Gallo-Romance dialectal area. Gallo-Romance is the name given to dialectal Latin as it was spoken in the Gauls and it is the direct ancestor of French, Walloon, Occitan, Catalan, and the various *patois* such as those spoken of in the Aoste valley and elsewhere on the territory that made up Gaul.

Because the transformation of Latin into French has been the subject of important research the chronology of sound changes is well established and it is possible to draw a line of evolution from a historical form to a modern or intermediary one with a great deal of accuracy and demonstrate the progression of a given form over the course of its history²³. Regarding Gallo-Roman toponyms, we must make a few notes on their evolution in Late Antiquity and the early middle ages:

1. While the Romans tended to grant composite names to their settlements: AUGUSTA for distinguished peoples, *Colonia* for veterans housing, etc. followed by a tribal adjective corresponding to natives of that region, the first purely roman element was rarely maintained with rare exceptions such as Cologne < *Colonia Agrippensis*.
2. In late antiquity, around the early fourth century many place names abandoned their Roman epithet, especially in northern Gaul, in favour of a simple tribal name.
3. By the early fifth century, adjectival and genitive-structure toponymes were largely remodeled as accusative or ablative plurals. When theses cases collapsed in Gallo-Romance, due to the elimination of atonic vowels, both patterns resulted in toponyms ending in –s²⁴.

23 In French see ZINK, G. *Phonétique historique du français*. Paris, PUF, 1986. For a concise but accessible overview of French language history see PERRET, M. *Introduction à l'histoire de langue française*. [4e édition]. Paris, Armand Colin, 2014. In the English literature see AYERS-BENNETT, W. *History of the French Language Through Texts*. New York, Routledge, 1996; PRICE, G. *The French Language: Present and Past*. London, Grant and Cutler, 1984. Here we present the basic concepts of linguistic reconstruction; for an in depth and more technical analysis of the problem please see ZUK, F. *Gaulish and Germanic in Contact on the Rhine* (Forthcoming).

24 CHAMBON, J. P; GREUB, Y. “Données nouvelles pour la linguistique Gallo-Romaine: Les légendes monétaires mérovingiennes”. *Bulletin de la Société de linguistique de Paris*, XCV, 2000, p.155.

4. Second declension names are often found in a singular ablative form, or as a nominative in –a, as numerous of this toponymes demonstrate: Tère < Taranis, Thièvre < Tevara, Tille < Tila. For others an adjectival form is also preserved Terain < Taranis and Seine < Sequana.

3.1.1 Troyes

As noted in § 2.2, the modern name *Troyes* is perfectly homophonous with *Troies*, the French name for Troy but this was not yet the case in the early middle ages. The late imperial toponym *Tricassis* evolved through a late Latin [tre.'kas] through Paleo-French ['trei.ʒes] which underwent rounding in Classical Old French [troj.əs] and results in the Modern French *Troyes* [tʁwa], though this is far too late to serve an explanatory role in the Frankish origins and highlights the danger of employing amateur/folk etymologies.

3.1.2 Ultra Traiectum

Ultra traiectum, literally the “upper crossing/upper ford”, was a defended river crossing of the Rhine and corresponds to the modern Dutch city of Utrecht. Though Classical *traiectum* [tra.jek.tum] outwardly has a certain resemblance to *Troia*. When phonological laws are called upon however, the evolution of *traiectum* > *Troia* is impossible. Latin *Traiectum* underwent a reconfiguration of its vowel system in Vulgar Latin emerging as *[tra.'jek.tum] and has its atonic vowel reduced and prenasal vowels nasalised in Gallo-Romance *[trɛ.'jɛtɔ̃]. Finally in the latest stages the final vowel disappears entirely and the consonant cluster C+T is palatalised to [jt], cf. the same change in *noctem* > [nojte] > *nuit*, cf. Spanish *noche*. Then the final /ə/ lost into Paleo-French *[trɛ.'jɪt]. By the twelfth century the pre-tonic vowel had also fallen leading to the attested form in Old French, *Trit*. Despite strong evidence from the archaeology and geography, diachronic phonetics exclude *Ultra traiectum* as a candidate for Frankish *Troia*. This leaves us with a final candidate *Colonia Traiana* which we'll now explore in greater detail.

3.1.3. Colonia Traiana

Our final candidate for *Troia* and that favoured by Mommsen, Wallace-Hadrill and Staab is *Colonia Traiana*. When the points layed out in 3.1 are taken into account and applied to potential *troia* it bears *Colonia*

Traiana > *Traianarum* > *Traiana* > *Traia*. As toponymy confirms, the same Latin etymon has sometimes descended to us in both a nominal form and an adjectival one. This is the case for the River Thérain, a tributary of the Oise River in France which is also attested as Thère in the name of a nearby commune *Villers-sur-Thère*. Both lexemes descending from an etymon *Taranis* the Gallic god of Thunder (fig. 1).

As demonstrated above, *Colonia Traiana*, if the name were preserved would have the reflexes Tréyenne and Trèye in modern French. The Potvin first name *Tràe*, also spelled *Trè* or *Traye* is a local reflex of *Traianus* with morphological loss of *-n*. cf. Rom. *Trajan* where the */n/* is preserved²⁵. The Potvin form is also attested in two manuscripts (ms. B1 and B2) of *Le Contrefait de Regnart* which unmistakably refers to the emperor *TRAIANUS* as *Traye*²⁶. The mediaeval manuscript evidence confirms the until-now-hypothetical evolution of *Traye* in the Gallo-Romance speech area. Unfortunately, it does not allow us to assign the name *Troia* to the *Colonia Traiana* because */o:/* and */a:/* remain distinct phonemes in both Latin and Gallo-Romance. Therefore, *Troia* and *Traia* could not be ‘easily’ confused on account of homophony or lazy “careless speech” as suggested by Hommel²⁷. Moving forward we must rely on the archaeology.

4. ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORICAL SOURCES

Caesar describes the ethnic make up of the Gauls and Germania in his *de bello gallica* notably in book VI. Though he offers an ethnological description of both peoples, he fails to distinguish between their languages. The Sicambri,

25 NOWAK, E. *Les prénoms en Poitou-Charentes-Vendée du XIIe au XXIe siècle*. La Crèche, Geste Éditions, 2003.

26 *Le Contrefait de Regnart* “Après Nerve, tint l’empire de Romme, Traye qui fut homme de grant justice et monlt conmanda”. Any ambiguity of *Traye* as emperor is removed in the following lines “il fist la tierce percecusion aux Crestiens. Soubz lui morust saint Jehan l’apostre, saint Clement, saint Ygnace, saint Eustace, lequel avoit esté chevalier de Traye, l’empereur”.

27 “lässig gesprochen” HOMMEL, H. “Die Trojanische Herkunft der Franken”. In *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie, Neue Folge*, 99/4, 1956, p. 326, who was on the right track but lacked the formalisation to defend his argument. Also, the evolution of the */a/* vowel in Paleo French results in */a/* differentiating itself even further from */o/* through a process of fronting, i.e. the vowel moving forward in the oral cavity: e.g. *Marem* > *mer*; *Carus* > *cher*, etc. FARAL, E. *La légende Arthurienne*. Paris, Champion, 1929 rather, believed that Fredigar confused *Troia* with “Thoringia” as attested in Gregory of Tours’ histories. The evolution of Thoringia > *Troia* is unlikely by any regular sound change.

Etymon	TARANIS		TRĀIANA	
	↙	↘	↙	↘
Fifth Century	*tæ.ra	*tæ.ræn	*træ.je	*træ.jæn
	↓	↓	↓	↓
Eighth Century	*te.re	*te.rēn	*tre.je	*tre.je.nē
	↓	↓	↓	↓
Thirteenth Cent.	*ter	*te.rē	*trej	*tre.jen
	↓	↓	↓	↓
Modern Name	Thère “Villers sur Thère”	Thérain “Le Thérain”	*Trēye Traye	*Trēyenne

Fig. 1: *Double Evolution of an Etymon*

who he describes as Germans crossed the Rhine, initially to plunder the Gaul and who later launched an attack on Caesar’s defenses, are unequivocally treated as ‘Germans’ in Caesar’s account, but this probably has more to do with their semi-nomadic way of life than on account of their language²⁸.

In 13/12 BC the Roman general Nero Claudius Drusus erected a defensive fort (*castrum*) on the hilltop now known as Fürstenberg at the confluence of the rivers Lippe and Rhine. Then in 8 AD the future emperor Tiberius who had succeeded Drusus as commander of the Rhine frontier launched a campaign against the Sicambri who lived on the right bank of the Rhine between the Ruhr and Sieg Rivers²⁹. After their defeat at the hands of the Romans, numerous Sicambri were taken into Roman territory as prisoners where they served as *dedicati*³⁰. Thus already in the

28 Caesar. *BGall*, VI, 35. “Trans Rhenum ad Germanos pervenit fama, diripi Eburones atque untro omnes ad praedam evocari. Cogunt equitum duo milia Sugambri qui sunt proximi Rheno, a quibus receptos ex fuga Tencteros atque Usipete supra docuimus”. *Sugambri* ‘Sicambri’ here attested with a lenis [g] sound may very well demonstrate Celtic lenition, either 1) because they were themselves speakers of Gaulish or 2) the tribe’s name came to the Romans via their Gaulish allies.

29 Their name *Sicambri* may be a derivation of Sieg the river, or a deformation of Cimbri or perhaps a combination of both Sig+C i/a mbri. This point remains to be explored.

30 The *dedicati* were barbarians defeated by the Roman army and resettled in Roman lands, in the later empire they were known as *laeti* < Germanic *lātaz* “free” cf. *released*. They were given land to work and were subjected to military service. The *dedicati* remained directly overseen by the Roman military and therefore Romanisation was less intense than for other conquered people such as the Gallo-Romans.

first century BC there was a trans-Rhenic presence, and we can imagine that a number of these prisoners were settled in the fields (*agri*) around Drusus's colony on the Fürstenberg³¹.

In 70 AD the peoples bordering the Rhine rose up against Roman oppression in what is known as the Batavian revolts and at this time the first *castrum* was destroyed and its legions defeated³². The following year, in 71, the *castrum* was reconstructed on a new rectangular plan, and given paved streets, temples, a forum amphitheatre, walls and towers, then c.100 Emperor Marcus Ulpius Traianus made it his namesake and granted the *castra* the name *Colonia Ulpia Traiana*³³. For its construction, the quarrying of stones was probably carried out by the surviving *dedicati*, partially Romanised Germanics, and the local Gauls. For a century and a half, the city prospered, but the silting up of the Rhine made the port unusable leading to its decline. Then in 259 the Franks attempted to capture the city, an effort which initially failed, but which was successful the second time in 275/276 when the city was pillaged and destroyed.

Under Constantine the city was restored, and as of 310 was known as TRICENSIMAE “Town of the thirtieth legion” on account of the Legio xxx Ulpia Victrix which was stationed there as the primary defense of the lower Rhine until 351³⁴. For reasons that are unclear the *castellum* was abandoned in the fifth century, though people continued to reside in the small community of Ad Santos (Xanten) which had grown up beside the fortress. In the middle ages, its walls and monuments were quarried for stone to build Ad Santos' cathedral and churches. Afterwards the abandoned *castrum* was converted into Farmland³⁵.

31 Sueton. In Augusto c. 21 “Suevos ac Sigambros dedentes se traduxit in Galliam atque in proximis Rheno agris collocavit. Sueton, in Tiberio c. 9: Bello hoc Germanico patrato, XLM (alii XCM) deditionum traiecit in Galliam justaque ripam Rheni in sedibus assignatis collocavit”.

32 The Batavians were a Belgian tribe, probably Gauls who were germanised no later than the third century AD. They occupied the Rhine delta and as certain wooden tablets have demonstrated some had even learned to write Latin. In the third century they were overwhelmed and assimilated to the Franks. Cf. Bowman, A. K.; Thomas, J. D. *The Vindolanda Tablets*. London, British Museum Press, 1994.

33 LANDSCHAFTSVERBAND R. *Denkmal an Natur. Schutz von Natur und Bodendenkmal im Archäologischen Park Xanten*. Kleve, Xanten, Archaeological Park, 2003, p. 18.

34 Amm. Marc, 18, 2, 4; 20, 10, 1. “Oppidum Tricensimae”.

35 SCHÄDLER, U. “Xanten/Colonia Ulpia Traiana (Allemagne)”. In *Capitales éphémères: Des*

As indicated by the archaeology and our sources, the region became violent in the last quarter of the third century, and tradition holds that Rome sent soldiers from Egypt (its so called Theban legion) to crush a rebellion in Burgundy³⁶. This eastern legion however had many Christians among it (saints Mauritius, Candidus, Innocentus, Exuperius as well as Victor who is said to have been executed in Tricensimae's amphitheatre along with 360 of his legionnaires in year 363, a time when Christians were still widely persecuted³⁷. In the following decades a shrine to the martyrs may have been established, followed by a church, cathedral and all the amenities of a late-antique *civitas*/early medieval town. In this regard it is not surprising that the fortress at *Colonia Traiana* / *Tricensimae* was eclipsed by the adjacent town of Ad Santos³⁸.

5. LANGUAGE CONTACT IN LATE ANTIQUITY

As we have seen (§4), the archaeology and sources provides a potential context for the identification of *Colonia Traiana* with a Frankish *Troia*: on one hand, excavations confirm that the *castrum* was once a vital hub for commerce on the Rhine and the presence of Frankish style graves are attested no later than the fifth century, while on the other historical sources, namely Suetonius also confirm that tribes were taken as prisoners from across the Rhine at a very early date in the first century, providing us with sufficient suspicion that some Germanic dialect was spoken on the left bank of the Rhine early on. Likewise, the destruction of the Roman city and the arrival of the Germanic peoples provide reasonable context by which the toponyme

Capitales de cités perdent leur statut dans l'Antiquité tardive. Actes du colloque Tours 6-8 mars 2003. Tours, Fédération pour l'édition de la revue archéologique du Centre de la France, 2004, p. 507.

36 Euch Lug, cf. DUPRAZ, L. *Les passions de st. Maurice d'Againe: Essai sur l'historicité de la tradition et contribution à l'étude de l'armée pré-Dioclétienne (260–286) et des canonisations tardives de la fin du IV^e siècle*. Fribourg, Édition Universitaires, 1961. Cf. The Theban Legion is recorded in the Notitia Dignitatum, VII as *Maximiana Thebaeorum*.

37 SAUSER, E. "Victor von Xanten: hl. Märtyrer". In Bautz, Traugott. *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, 21. Nordhausen, Bautz. col. 1511, 2003, pp. 1458-1459.

38 The Shift of populations from the centre to the periphery is known elsewhere in the Roman world, none the least in Barcino (Barcelona) and in Madrid where the medieval cities sprung up around a peripheral church in the case of Barcelona, or a nearby monastery at Complutense near Madrid. See ZUK, F. *De Episcopis Hispaniarum*. Thesis. Université de Montréal, 2015, p. 104.

Troia could have disappeared from general use on account of a massive shift of population from the fortress to the growing *faubourg* of Xanten. However, it may be the linguistic argument which ultimately provides the best evidence for the association of *Colonia Traiana* and *Troia*.

We should recall that Latin was not the only language spoken in the Rhineland; Gaulish too was spoken probably into the fifth or sixth century AD despite Latin acting as the official language of administration, education and the military. Two features of Gaulish interest us here. First, we notice that Latin long-*ō* is adapted as Gaulish long-*ū* because Middle Gaulish, known both through inscriptions and the comparative method, lacked a long [o:] phoneme³⁹. Thus when the Gauls heard a Latin word with long-*ō*, they mapped the Latin vowel to the closest one in their own phonology, the long high and back [u:] vowel, as in *Rōmānis* >> *rūmānis*.

Second, when Gaulish borrowed words from Latin or Latin from Gaulish there was a regular correspondence between Latin *ā* and Gaulish *ā* which implies that they were similar ‘enough’. We see this correspondence in Gaulish **brākes* borrowed into Latin as *brācas*. Likewise, Latin *Rōmānis* is borrowed into Gaulish as *rūmānis*. These forms indicate that Lat. *ā* = Gaul. *ā*. However, The lack of a long /o:/ phoneme in Gaulish wasn’t without consequences however and as sociolinguistic research confirms: ‘holes’ in the vowel system tend to be filled by neighbouring phonemes. The long-*ā* vowel of Gaulish was thus phonetically quite back and rounded, resulting in a long /a:/ phoneme with a phonetic quality somewhere between [o:] and [a:] probably realised similarly to a long open-[ɔ:] or the slightly more open [ɒ], i.e. a lax, posterior and rounded vowel⁴⁰. Evidence from the Gallo-Romance dialects also supports this hypothesis. As for our toponym, we predict that the Gauls pronounced *Traiana* as [trɔ̃ːjɑ.nɑ] or [trɔ̃ːjɐ] on account of morphological remodeling.

This hypothesis becomes particularly interesting however when we look at contact between Gaulish and Western Germanic. We should

39 Pre-Celtic *ō* and *ā* merged in Celtic as a long /a:/ phoneme. Short-*ō* and *ā* did however remain distinct. See ZUK, F. *Gaulish and Germanic in contact on the Rhine* (forthcoming) for detailed explanation of the phonological systems of fifth century Gaulish and Western Germanic.

40 A very similar vocal configuration endures in Laurentian French where /a/ at the end of a word is realised as open-o [ɔ] in the basilect or in careful acrolectal speech with back-a, [ɑ].

recall that by the time *Troia/Trogia* is attested in the early middle ages, the Rhineland was predominantly a Germanic speaking region. With this in mind, its perhaps not Gallo-Romance phonology, but rather Germanic that can exempt of confirm the identification of *Troia* with *Colonia Traiana*. Simply put, Germanic does not simply replace Latin long-/a:/ with an [o]-like vowel. In fact the opposite is true: Latin long-ā tends to undergo fronting in all Germanic dialects which is seen in the Latin words borrowed into Germanic: e.g. *pālus* >> OHG *phāl*, *casens* >> OHG *käsi*, Eng. *cheese*, as well as the OHG agentive suffix -*āri* < -*arius*⁴¹. Elsewhere long-ā was preserved as in *strāta* >> OHG *strāzga*, but dialectally as attested by the fronting seen in Eng. *street*. There are some curious exceptions to this however, most notably the integration of Lat. *Rōmānis* into Gothic as *Rumoneis* rather than the expected **Romaneis* with conservation of the long-/a:/.

Stiffler demonstrated a series of correspondences between the long-ā of Gaulish and the long-ō of Germanic, both of which approximated [ɔ:] in their articulation, i.e. they were low, round and back. Stiffler describes this as a bidirectional equivalency indicated with a double ended arrow: ↔. He therefor concludes that Gaul. ā ↔ Gmc. ō. Our evidence relies on number of correspondences, one of which is provided by Caesar in his *de bello Gallico*. Caesar report of a *Bācenis silva* “beechwood forest” presumably derived from Germanic **bōkeniz* “beechen”⁴². But unless we find a consistent correspondence of Germanic long-ō with Latin long-ā we must find an explanation elsewhere for the vowel discrepancy. Stiffler therefor postulate that the name of the “beechwood forest” came to the Romans through reports of their Gallic allies. Already in 1898, Hirt supposed that the name reached the Romans “via Gaulish transmission”⁴³.

41 Examples from STIFFLER, D. “The Proto-Germanic shift *ā > *ō and early Germanic linguistic contacts”. In *Historische Sprachforschung / Historical Linguistics*, bb. 122, 2009, p. 269. KLUGE, F. *Urgermanisch Vorgeschichte der altgermanischen Dialekte*. Strasburg, Trübner, 1913, pp. 23-24.

42 NEUMANN, G. “Bacenis”. In BECK, H. JANKIHN, H.; KUHN, H., RANKE, K., WENSKUS, R., *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde. Von Johannes Hoops. Zweite, völlig neu bearbeitete und stark erweiterte Auflage. Erster Band. Achen – Bajuwaren*. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1973, p. 572

43 STIFFLER, D. “The Proto-Germanic shift *ā > *ō and early Germanic linguistic contacts”. In *Historische Sprachforschung / Historical Linguistics*, bb. 122, 2009, p. 274.

Thus when Gaulish traders (or warriors) came into contact with the Germanic inhabitants of that forest, who presumably in their own language called it the **bōkeniȝ walpuȝ* ‘the beechen wold/forest’, the Gauls interpreted it as /ba:kenis/, pronounced [bɔ:kəniz]⁴⁴. Then by the time it was reported to Roman officers no later than the first century BC, prior to Roman excursions over the Rhine, it was integrated into Latin as a proper name, *the forest of Bacen: Bācenis silva*⁴⁵. In consequence we can conclude that Gaulish /a:/, though rounded, was /a/-like enough, i.e., low enough, that the Romans mapped it to their own /a:/ vowel and not to Latin /o:/.

Another example is the concordance of OE sg. *brēc* pl. *brēc*, ON *brók*, pl. *broker* which continue Proto-Germanic **brōk*, pl. **brōkeiȝ* meaning “breeches” and which was borrowed into Gaulish as **brāka* and into Latin as plural *Brācae* in the satires of C. Lucilius (c. 180-103 BC)⁴⁶. *Brācae*, despite its Germanic origin, was definitely transmitted to Latin through Gaulish. This is the opinion of all antique authors writing on the subject⁴⁷. Again we have an example of bidirectional equivalency between Germanic long-ō and Gaulish long-ā⁴⁸.

The correspondence of Gaulish long-ā and Germanic long-ō is perhaps more interesting still because it provides evidence for something most Germanicist already believe: that Early-Germanic had a long-ō whose quality was [ɔ], i.e. a lax, posterior and rounded vowel⁴⁹. As we have seen, this was likely also the pronunciation of Gaulish long-ā. When these words were borrowed from one language into another, rather than a drastic shift from a low unrounded vowel /a/ to a back and round /o/ it is more convincing

44 Caes. *BGall.* VI, 10. *Silvam esse ibi infinita magnitudine quae appellatur Bacensis.*

45 SIFTER, D. “The Proto-Germanic shift **ā > *ō* and early Germanic linguistic contacts”. In *Historische Sprachforschung / Historical Linguistics*, bb. 122, 2009, p. 274.

46 KRAMER, J. “Papyrusbelege für fünf germanische Wörter: αρμαλαυσιον, βανδον, βουρδων, βρακιον, σαρωνιον”. *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 42, 1, pp. 119-120.

47 Posidonius (early 1st century BC) writes of Gaulish βράκας; Hesychius (fifth or sixth century AD) mentions Celtic βράκες.

48 Fred. *Chron.* 4, 20, attests to a *fluvio aroanna* (which corresponds to the modern Orvanne river (Franche Comté). This archaic spelling also suggests that Gallo-Romance /a/ → /o/ in parts of the Rhineland.

49 SIFTER, D. “The Proto-Germanic shift **ā > *ō* and early Germanic linguistic contacts”. In *Historische Sprachforschung / Historical Linguistics*, bb. 122, 2009, pp. 268-283.

to postulate that the acoustic quality [ɐ̃] was simply mapped differently: to a phoneme /a:/ in Gaulish and /o:/ in Germanic⁵⁰. Acoustically, neither was significantly different from the other. Rather, what differed was its position system-internally vis-à-vis other vowels in the language. More clearly, when a (probably bilingual) Gaul spoke a Latin word containing a long-ā, he pronounced it with some rounding of the lips which in turn allowed the vowel to be interpreted by a Germanic speaker as /o:/ which in his own Germanic language was likely produced very low in the vocal tract⁵¹.

A final example: reconstructed Gaulish **Rūmāe* ‘Rome, dat. sg’ and **Rūmānis* ‘Roman, dat. pl.’ has a perfect parallel in the attested Gothic forms *Rumai* and *Rumoneis*. Leaving aside the case endings (Stiffler: 270 treats these further), the vowel alternation between **Rūmanis* and *Rumoneis*, both ultimately go back to a Latin *Rōmānis*⁵². In these forms, Latin long-ō is represented both in Gaulish and Germanic as long-ū while Latin long-ā emerges as expected long-ā [ɐ̃:] in Gaulish and long-ō [ɔ:] in early Germanic.

Whereas Gaulish-Roman contact has existed at least since the fourth century BC, contact with Germanic speakers is only attested as of the second century BC. But the Germanic tribes were surely aware of Rome even before their peoples came into contact. Thus it seems that the noun *Rome* and the adjective *Roman* must have reached the Goths first via Gaulish transmission⁵³. When we recall that Germanic peoples “were surrounded by Celts in every direction which could lead to Rome”, it becomes increasingly convincing that Celtic phonology played a role in the transmission of some early loan words, none the least *TRAIANA*⁵⁴.

50 This occurred sometime in the Proto-Germanic period. HOLLIFIELD, P. “Raising in Unaccented Syllables in Germanic”. *Die Sprache*, 30, 1984, p. 65.

51 One of the key transformations in the vocalic system of Germanic is the merger of Indo-European long-ō and long-ā as [ɔ:] and Indo-European short-ō and short-ā as [a]. This is significant evidence that the length of back vowel was partially realised as rounding in Germanic, while lack of rounding was associated with frontness.

52 STREITBERG, W. *Die gotische Bibel. Zweiter Teil: Gotisch-griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch*. Heidelberg, Carl Winter’s Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1910, p. 112.

53 CORAZZA, V. *Le parole latine in gotico*, Roma, Academia Nazionale dei Lincei. 1969, p. 40.

54 SIFTER, D. “The Proto-Germanic shift *ā > *ō and early Germanic linguistic contacts”. In *Historische Sprachforschung / Historical Linguistics*, bb. 122, 2009, p. 272.

6. CONCLUSION

Just when was *Traiana* borrowed and transformed into *Troia*? My suspicion is that the Gallic Trojan myth arose at a time when the lower Rhine was still primarily Gaulish, perhaps even in the first century AD. Both linguistic groups were already in an intimate coexistence and remained so until the dying out of Gaulish in the fifth or sixth century. the line between Celts and Germans was blurry as attested to by Gregory of Tours who writes that on the 25th of December 506, when the Frankish king Chlodoweg (Clovis) came to Rheims to be baptised, the then bishop Remigius ceremonially initiated his baptism with the words: “*Mitis, depone colla, Sigamber, adora quod incendisti, incendi quod adorasti...*”⁵⁵

The line is dramatic as Clovis bows his neck to the bishop’s authority, abandoning behind his pagan ways. More dramatic still is the use of *Sicamber* to refer to Chlodoweg king of the Salian Franks. Is this poetic license as per Schönfeld (1931) or insight into Frankish prehistory⁵⁶? Recall that the *Sicambri* were settled on farmland around the Rhine in that same area which Fredegar claims the Franks sought to built a city with a name like Troy’s.

The linguistic evidence confirms that *Troia* *[trɔ̃.ja] is a possible Germanic reflex of Latin *Troia* via Gaulish transmission, itself a derivation of *Traiana* and almost certainly corresponding to the Rhine *castra* of *Colonia Ulpia Traiana* whose ruins lie just metres beyond the modern German town of Xanten. In this case diachronic phonology has provided evidence which corroborates what Staab, Ewig and others had already suspected. Going forward theoretical diachronic linguistics will open new methods of investigating early medieval history, much as here, I hope, it has demonstrated possibilities for renewed investigation into the early history of the Franks.

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55 Greg. Tur. *Hist.* 2, 31. “Oh now gentle Sicamber, bow you neck, admire what you have burned, and burn what you have admired”. Author’s translation.

56 SCHÖNFELD, M. “Sugambri”. In *Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft* [Pauly-Wissowa], 4 A/1. Stuttgart, J. B. Metzler, 1931, pp. 659-662.

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