

ADOPTION AND INNOVATION: CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND THE INDIVIDUAL ON
ROME'S GERMAN FRONTIER

By

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Preface

This dissertation is the cumulative product of efforts to answer a single question that has garnered my fullest attention throughout graduate school: what was the nature of cultural development in the Roman world? Attempting to fulfill such a simplistically formulated and overarching mandate is, no doubt, typical of fledgling scholars whose aims often amount to nothing short of a desire to reinvent the proverbial wheel within their respective disciplines. However, there is clarity in naivety – a perspective not yet privy to the intricacies and strictures of evidence, untrammelled by awareness of contentious historiographical debates, and uncontaminated by prevailing academic currents. Although these factors have naturally refined my original line of inquiry, its foundational impulse always remained a guideline for my research.

Providing a comprehensive solution for my query soon became an intractable goal when faced with the confounding multitude of fragmentary sources culled from across the ancient Mediterranean. Therefore, I limited the scope of my project according to dimensions of time, place, and evidence base in order to establish useful analytical boundaries that would yield meaningful results, potentially capable of being applied elsewhere in the Roman Empire. The German frontier region furnished some of the most innovative cultural artifacts preserved still to this day, and quickly became an obvious choice for this study's environmental setting. Moreover, the status of the *limes* as a borderland between Roman society and *barbaricum* created additional opportunities to examine cultural transformation in a newly created, artificial, and obscure setting that exhibited great social contrast during the conquest period and its immediate aftermath, followed by a long process of provincial consolidation. Over the course of

the early imperial period, Roman military enclaves gradually burgeoned into sprawling civic centers that integrated with the surrounding populations as well as with the scores of migrants – both military and civilian – arriving from across the Empire. At all stages, the process of cultural dialogue amongst inhabitants of the frontier is evident in the artifact-oriented case studies I have compiled.

Demonstrating the mechanics of exchange reflected in these artifacts based on their cultural attributes was only one element of this project. How to interpret them in relation to the unverifiable processes of interaction that took place was another question altogether – one laden with a pedigree of contentious scholarship. This dissertation endeavors to circumvent the explanatory quagmire that has emerged over decades regarding the nature of cultural interactions in the Roman world. It is a repudiation of adherence to paradigms and a call to move forward by returning to evidence-based analysis, devoid of ideological framework

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I would also like to express my gratitude for the faculty members and administrative staff in the Department of History and in the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies. Since my first day in the program, Professor Marc Kleijwegt has always allowed me to define my own research path. Countless engaging, fruitful discussions have stemmed from our meetings together, during which he offered meaningful advice that challenged me to strengthen my grasp of the evidence at hand, state my argument as effectively as possible, and defend my conclusions with vigor. As a mentor, Professor Nandini Pandey consistently pushed me to be bold in my assertions, and to aim high in my goals in a way that always reminded me I had something valuable to contribute. Her enthusiasm for our shared field of ancient studies has been a perpetual inspiration. Professor Taylor was a pillar of aid throughout my tenure at UW-Madison, variously providing constructive commentary on my work, as well as practical advice for navigating the realm of academia. Professor Nelsestuen never lacked jovial eagerness to help me in any way possible, including overseeing the development of my first publication while still in graduate school. I am as grateful to have benefitted from the tutelage of these wonderful scholars as I am fortunate that they took such lively interest in me and my education. Finally, special thanks are owed to Leslie Abadie, Graduate Program Advisor for the Department of History,

who kept me on track in a new world of unfamiliar requirements, deadlines, and procedures. Over the years, Leslie delivered meticulous, pragmatic guidance for grappling with the often-daunting realities of doctoral study.

As a child, my parents always told me that “being smart” was my job, and, as I grew older, they encouraged me at every opportunity to pursue my education further. They were perhaps unaware that the assiduous pedant in their son would apparently take them quite literally, resulting in an extensive journey through postsecondary training. I certainly owe my appetite for inquiry, knowledge, and discussion entirely to Diane, Robert, and David, without whose support I would never have embarked upon the incredibly rewarding path which I am thankful to have chosen.

The creation of any monograph demands substantial sacrifices of time and attention, the most valuable of which have been shouldered by my beloved and selfless wife, Kym, as well as our two daughters, Lucilla and Josephine. Prolonged research and writing in isolation has too often translated in practice to my absence during the simple joys attendant upon everyday activities that we did not experience together because of my work. Retaining concentration after viewing tender moments I had missed through a phone screen, or while hearing my daughters’ infectious laughter filtering in from another room, proved to be the most difficult task assigned to me during my graduate studies. Their love and support throughout this process has been inestimable, and I can only hope that the quality of my work measures up in some small way to the sacrifices they made on my behalf. It is with boundless love and appreciation that I dedicate this dissertation to them.

Introduction

The Roman Empire was vast. Bounded on all sides by either naturally delimiting topographies or indomitable peoples, the sheer geographic space occupied throughout its tenure as the leading Mediterranean hegemon was immense, even when juxtaposed with other imperial superpowers, both ancient and modern. The gradual assignment of virtually all governmental matters to the powers of the emperor during the reign of Augustus bookended the preceding internecine instability of the late Republic and established a centralized administration more adept at managing such a colossal domain. Enormity of both territory and authority were conducive to the ensuing period of relative security and prosperity. During this time, expansion slowed and borders became more reified, save for the occasional intrepid emperor whose ambition ventured to add provinces to Rome's holdings here and there. Consequently, as Aelius Aristides boasts in his paeon to Rome, inhabitants of the Empire were more capable of freely interacting than ever before within a protected environment replete with diverse populations and customs that seemed to represent the entire *oikumene*.¹ The individuals participating in these heterogeneous cultural interactions and the tangible artifacts they produced as a result are the subject of this dissertation.

¹ Ael. Ar. *Orat.* 26.70-1, 101-02; Strab. 2.5.26 also commends Rome's ability to connect previously isolated peoples; for cultural interactions as a result of Rome's imposed peace, see Saddington, "Parameters of Romanization," 417.

Cultural Exchange

While all fields of study concerning antiquity are plagued to some extent by a dearth of source material, it is ironic that we enjoy no shortage of cultural artifacts from the Roman world, yet its cultural realm is one of the most obscure and debated aspects. Shipwrecks, for example, provide scholars with data from which they can model patterns and quantities of economic activity, and examination of organic remains can help us better understand dietary intake, agriculture, disease, and life expectancy. However, the mechanisms of cultural development and the worldviews of the vast majority of people in the Roman world seem perennially elusive. To an extent, we have the ability to trace particular characteristics and trends in the material, visual, and epigraphic records, as well as the ways in which these were combined and transformed over time and across different settings. On the other hand, it is much more difficult to surmise the intangible elements of a person's state of mind when crafting or commissioning the creation of an object, such as an elaborate tombstone or votive altar.

Part of the problem is perhaps the nature of the question. After all, what is to be gained by asking how cultural exchange took place in the manner that we do? Scholars, quite understandably, tend to view intensely localized phenomena against the backdrop broader social developments within the Empire in an effort to build a more detailed, overarching narrative of the past. The problem here is that, although these countless, micro-level anecdotes correspond with widespread cultural transformations in the Roman world that we readily discern from our modern vantage point, they were almost certainly not envisioned as such by agents on the ground, whose concerns were more immediate and fleeting. In other words, a disconnect exists between the intentionality behind the creation of artifacts and the interpretive framework applied to them. This disparity crops up and leads to all the more debate in proportion to the sweeping

impact of the claim. For example, the influx of *terra sigillata* pottery within one province may be explained as part of a ubiquitous Romanization process just as easily as its absence elsewhere can be viewed through the lens of indigenous resistance to imperial overtures. Evidence can be endlessly accommodating. In addition, our understanding of ancient cultures is distorted by a modern, normative approach,² which oversimplifies complex interactions through labels such as “Roman,” “native,” and “indigenous” in an attempt to impose order on the available material, which is at once both fragmentary in terms of quantity and overwhelming in its variety.

Cultural development does not follow a set of rules. Each belief, custom, or object has before it an array of integrative pathways on the spectrum of assimilation, which are context-dependent.³ The particulars of an environment and the makeup of the societies in question render an infinite number of possible interactive scenarios. A parsing of the term “cultural exchange” reveals the myriad complexities buried in the concept itself. While “culture” may quite basically, yet reasonably, be described as the collective beliefs, institutions, and even material attributes shared by a social group or groups, howsoever defined, it is clear that this definition cannot be all-encompassing in its application. Many subcultures exist within a larger cultural network, with the former operating as constituent elements of the latter, and with fluid membership between the two, despite varying social stations, ideological predilections, and so forth between individuals. So-called “Roman” or “Celtic” cultures, for example, serve merely as convenient designations for aggregate constellations of customs which are not exhaustive in their representation and could vary greatly across time and locations. Likewise, the term “exchange” denotes a process that is not linear, but multi-directional; the adoption, integration, and adaptation of cultural

² Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 8.

³ Van der Leeuw “Acculturation as Information Processing,” 24f. outlines several important avenues of potential development: incorporation, substitution, syncretism, isolation, and reactive adaptation; see also Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 127.

characteristics occurred unpredictably. Cultural exchange therefore appears to be a chaotic, never ending dialogue between social groups concerning customs and practices that are themselves products of the very same, unending discourse.⁴

Does this realization lead to any helpful deduction, or merely to an irresolvable quagmire wherein all cultural interaction can be summarized as an erratic, unorganized process leading to equally unforeseeable results? One response might be to eschew the task of explaining the process of exchange altogether due to its seemingly infinite complexity and unknowability. To be sure, this obscurity is compounded when examining the ancient world, given our temporal distance, small evidentiary sample size relative to other historical periods, as well as our modern ignorance regarding ancient cultural signification. An alternative method relies upon the meticulous categorization of artifacts according to their attributes in an effort to detect the spread of particular characteristics from one culture to others. This “trait-list” approach, however, generally avoids addressing the processual aspects of exchange, opting instead to simplify culture to the sum of its parts, which are ostensibly traceable.⁵ Moreover, designated groupings tend to be treated monolithically for descriptive convenience, returning us to the previously noted problems associated with defining “culture.” Robin Osborne deftly summarizes this aporetic situation:

For the historian the challenge remains not just to expose and classify products of cultural contact but to explain why particular cultural elements get adopted or adapted and others get neglected or abused...But as soon as we face up to the broader patterns of cultural encounter, the characterisations of what happens when cultures rub up against each other as borrowing, inference, code-switching and the like, on the one hand, or as influence, hybridity, hybridisation or any other sort of –isation (Orientalisation, Hellenisation, Romanisation), on the other, all seem unhelpfully crude.⁶

⁴ Hodos, “Local and Global Perspectives,” 15.

⁵ For a critique of the “trait-list approach,” see Slofstra, “An Anthropological Approach,” 72, 74; a subsequent example of this approach can be found in Reece, “Romanization: A Point of View,” 31.

⁶ Osborne, “Cultures as Languages,” 333.

Within this assessment also lies a mandate: to account for cultural interactions with meaningful specificity that goes beyond mere antiquarian tabulation and simultaneously avoids narrative overreach. Sweeping interpretive models like Romanization sacrifice precision for workable, albeit low-resolution, representations of cultural developments. Often times, claims made using this approach are not incorrect per se, but offer limited utility due to the paradigm's selective inclusion of evidence and bounded perspective. For example, the proliferative use of Latin in broadly Celtic territory can most certainly be viewed as a form of Romanization in that it would have been unlikely without the expansion of Roman power as well as the gradual spread of the hegemon's language amongst local populations. However, to view this phenomenon so narrowly does a disservice to the countless, nuanced interactions occurring between individuals of all social stations over long stretches of time that comprise the collective result. Latin spread for a multitude of reasons, many of which had little to do with "becoming Roman" as the term Romanization suggests. Conversely, smaller claims gain accuracy at the expense of macro-level explanatory potential. Studies that pursue reasonable analytical outcomes and operate within the boundaries of manageable data afford the most cogent inferences. Faced with this dilemma, it is necessary to properly calibrate our approach according to what we hope to achieve when assessing cultural exchange in the Roman world. In order to evade the hazards of ideological oversimplification attendant on grand narratives while also retaining a firm, evidence-based methodology, I will argue that it is necessary to embrace the inherent, infinite complexity and obscurity of an individual-focused approach to cultural exchange.

The Material

Efforts to sketch the contours of cultural exchange yield more accurate results if several steps are taken to define and limit the scope of inquiry to a degree that is at once both practicable and meaningful. To begin, the evidence base must be made explicit. I have selected four material sources, organized by chapter, which function concurrently as both self-contained case studies and a unified compendium of cultural developments on Rome's Germanic frontier. Chapter 1 analyses the gravestones of cavalrymen in the Roman army, primarily in the *auxilia*, during the first century AD. Frequently sporting elaborate battle scenes which depict the deceased in his capacity as an unassailable warrior, they also reveal claims to elevated status and aspirations of social mobility through the adoption of civic motifs. The cavalrymen toyed with these modes of self-presentation as they generated two distinct styles of gravestone – one which remained primarily along the Rhineland frontier, and another which was exported to Britain by a unit of indigenous German troops who brought their predilections with them. Thus, the tombstones represent a medium by which soldiers could express themselves as both individuals and members of a cohesive social group in innovative and fashionable ways.

In Chapter 2, I examine votive altars of the female deities commonly referred to as the *Matronae* and *Matres* – two cults with more or less interchangeable iconographic attributes and practical functions for their dedicants. In order to recognize this commonality and to highlight the diverse spectrum of identification associated with these deities, I employ the term “Rhineland Mother Goddesses” (RMG) in reference to both. The widespread worship of the RMG in Ubian territory contrasts with Dea Nehalennia, whose cult is the subject of Chapter 3. Established through votives and temples in just two locations within present-day Holland, Nehalennia is a paragon for the type of intensely localized religious innovation taking place throughout the

provinces that drew inspiration from broader iconographic trends circulating throughout the Empire. Nehalennia's evolution and popularity were greatly linked with cross-Channel trade networks along the North Sea coast, which rendered her additional status that should be taken into account when evaluating the impact of economic expansion on cultural traditions. Finally, Chapter 4 addresses the largely indigenous practice of weapon deposition amongst soldiers in the Roman army for its multicultural blend of ritual influences and identity signification. Individuals belonging to the legions as well as those from the *auxilia* incorporated the habit of dedicating items from their panoply of arms to deities, and were also sometimes interred with them.

These data were selected for important reasons. Much of the material herein has a long history of scholarly attention, particularly the auxiliary cavalrymen's tombstones, the Rhineland Mother Goddesses, and the cult of Nehalennia. Rather than prioritize novel material, my aim has been to draw upon artifacts that are numerous, elaborately detailed, well established, and more or less "settled" in terms of academic debate so that I might offer a fresh perspective on familiar evidence, no longer shrouded by the uncertainty of its initial period of discovery. By contrast, each evidentiary base represents stylistic and ritual trends whose fashionability was temporally and geographically limited, thereby contributing to their usefulness as snapshots of cultural interaction during the Roman period. The case studies also overlap with one another in terms of their developmental relationships. Nehalennia shares iconographic attributes with the Rhineland Mother Goddesses significant enough to indicate an oblique connection. Likewise, funerary testaments and grave deposits of auxiliary and legionary soldiers offer a useful fount from which to extract individual as well as collective self-perceptions of identity in two commemorative spheres. Collectively, the studies underscore the fundamental topics of identity and religion by evaluating these changing variables against the backdrop of constants, such as the long-standing

presence of the Roman army in a concentrated geographic zone, in order to demonstrate the creative ways individuals brought the two into expressive convergence.

Importantly, these case studies highlight the variation in execution within each body of evidence. This phenomenon cannot be understated or dismissed as trivial artistic divergence from prepackaged patterns of display or ritual practice. Despite being largely identical to one another, each grouping exhibits notable *internal* differences that are products of individual personalization on the part of artists and dedicants alike. As there is no smaller unit for assessing cultural development than the individual, calling attention to the customized and disparate attributes of certain objects existing within a pool of standardized motifs breaks down convenient categories and approaches the evidence from a fresh, bottom-up perspective. Another benefit to this method is its inclusion of substantial non-elite testimony. While the definition of an “elite” source is both largely subjective and relative, inquiring into the personal beliefs and practices of individual soldiers and merchants – two all-pervasive social groups at the *limes* – must certainly constitute a worthwhile endeavor to advance our understanding cultural of exchange amongst a broad swathe of the frontier population.⁷ The massive hierarchical network of troops from myriad ethnicities and cultures – especially within the auxiliary forces during the early imperial period – made the Roman army itself a canvas for cultural interactions.⁸ Beyond the military camps lay pre-existing tribal centers and newly founded *civitates*, both of which were soon inundated with a miscellany of influences and contributed as nodes of intensified cultural interaction.

⁷ Soldiers: James, “‘Romanization’ and the Peoples,” 197, 201f.

⁸ *Auxilia*: Saddington, “Parameters of Romanization,” 414.

The Frontier

Due to the plethora of archaeological material they provide, frontiers have been an important and longstanding subfield of Roman studies.⁹ Their historical significance is most commonly associated with discussions of military campaigns, defensive functions, and the overall strategy of the imperial administration, insofar as such policy can be scrutinized.¹⁰ Contrasting with Frederick Jackson Turner's seminal thesis which assigned the American frontier its own peculiar spirit of development and forward momentum,¹¹ Roman imperial frontiers have traditionally been interpreted in more modern terms as linear protective barriers.¹² In reality, it is unclear to what degree the Romans themselves conceived of their territory in this manner, if at all.¹³ The *limites* ironically seem to have had more overlap with Turner's diagnosis than with the rigid borders of nation-states. The Germanic frontier was a region comprised of a bustling medley of ethnicities, customs, goods, and beliefs within a relatively compact environment that is best described as a zone of interaction and creation.¹⁴

Although geography and defense were important aspects of the frontier,¹⁵ its defining characteristic was the intensity of activity and exchange on all levels – economic, social, cultural – at the fringe of Roman authority.¹⁶ Trade flourished along and across the Rhine with colonial

⁹ Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*; Whittaker, *Rome and its Frontiers*; Dyson, *Creation of the Roman Frontier*; Cherry, *Frontier and Society*; Breeze, *Frontiers of Imperial Rome*; Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*.

¹⁰ For discussions of “grand strategy,” see Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 52, 372-418; Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 35-43, 62-70; Whittaker, *Rome and its Frontiers*, Ch. 2; Breeze, *Frontiers of Imperial Rome*, 14-24, 85-91, 181-83. For ambiguities about Rome's imperial boundaries, see Hanson, “Across the Frontier,” 376.

¹¹ Turner, *Frontier in American History*; see also Hudson, “Theory and Methodology,” 24.

¹² Dyson, *Creation of the Roman Frontier*; Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 1-9, 71; Cherry, *Frontier and Society*, 24f. with additional historiography on the topic.

¹³ Hanson, “Across the Frontier,” 376; Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 17, 28, 68, 86f, 96f., 198; Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, 372-418; Mann, “Frontiers of the Principate,” 532; Cherry, *Frontier and Society*, 25.

¹⁴ Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 8, 62, 71, 84. Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 65f. emphasizes this aspect of the frontier in his assessment of the Rhineland *Matronae*. This creative aspect of frontiers is also noted in comparative historical examples: Rodseth and Parker, “Theoretical Considerations,” 4, also 10.

¹⁵ Dyson, *Creation of the Roman Frontier*; Whittaker *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 70-84; Breeze, *Frontiers of Imperial Rome*, esp. 14-24, 205, 211.

¹⁶ Whittaker, *Rome and its Frontiers*, 3-4; Lefferts, “Frontier Demography,” 36, also 53.

centers burgeoning out of the initial legionary camps, creating a new system of economic interdependence between Rome, the provincial population, and the tribes in *Germania libera*.¹⁷ Eventual grants of citizenship to the populations of vitally important cities like *Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium* (Cologne), combined with the enfranchisement of auxiliary troops following their term of service, meant the social structure of this region steadily came into alignment with Roman civic tradition. Finally, the frontier's cultural sphere has yielded some of the most inventive tangibles of the dynamic exchange, as evidenced in the following case studies.

The manifold, animated developments occurring along the Rhine can best be understood by viewing *frontiers as a process* that manifests itself differently according to time and place, rather than simply as a kind of static borderland.¹⁸ The necessity of the frontier's existence – that is, for Rome's formal power to reach its practical limit¹⁹ – in the case of Germania meant that personnel and infrastructure were funneled into a relatively narrow space, arranged at various times for offense,²⁰ defense, and often basic stability.²¹ During the first century AD, eight legions comprised of some 40,000 soldiers were stationed in the Rhineland, and these were mirrored by a roughly equal number of more ethnically diverse auxiliary units drawn from across the Empire. The permanent presence of the army meant that a constant stream of new recruits was needed to replace superannuated veterans on a regular basis. Along with the army came various hangers-

¹⁷ Cunliffe, *Greeks, Romans, and Barbarians*, 10, also 184, 201.

¹⁸ Breeze, *Frontiers of Imperial Rome*, 3f.; Mann, "Frontiers of the Principate," 532; Whittaker, *Rome and its Frontiers*, 6; Cherry, *Frontier and Society*, viii, 28; Rodseth and Parker, "Theoretical Considerations," 16.

¹⁹ Wells, *German Policy of Augustus*, 10-13; Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 17, 28, 85-97, 101.

²⁰ Whittaker, *Rome and its Frontiers*, 8-11, 37, 39f., 43f.; Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, 20, 56-78, 201. Wells, *German Policy of Augustus*, 248f. states that Roman influence stretched beyond the *limes* into *Barbaricum*, noting that Augustus is reported (Suet. *Aug.* 48) to have considered client kings as *membra partesque imperii*; see also Hanson, "Across the Frontier," 375f.

²¹ Often, frontiers were intended to *control* movement of peoples and goods, not to prevent it: Cherry, *Frontier and Society*, 33f.; Carroll, *Romans, Celts and Germans*, 39, also 99.

on, including administrative staff, slaves, artisans, merchants, as well as a succession of migrants seeking to capitalize on the new opportunities that such a new and frenetic environment like the frontier could provide.²² This significant population turnover rate was paralleled by a high number of imported beliefs and customs – two factors which worked in tandem to facilitate a thoroughly open ideological environment in which inhabitants variously altered and incorporated foreign cultural elements into their lives.²³ In other words, the accumulation of sundry peoples positioned directly and spurred indirectly through imperial machinations led to a cascade of cultural developments that were autonomous of administrative control. In this respect, the frontier itself was not simply a landscape but an engine of change.

This type of environment, characterized by non-interventionist, organic cultural interchange is often conceived as a “middle ground” in frontier studies.²⁴ Essential to Richard White’s definition for the creation and maintenance of a neutral space in which societies with little in common can successfully coexist is the inability for one group to dominate the other. Without a “monopoly on violence,”²⁵ each side must make concessions they would otherwise reject under circumstances more favorable to its goals. The resulting nuanced relationship generated out of necessity produces hybrid cultural artifacts and practices as attendant, adaptive responses. There are important observations to be made when considering this concept as an interpretive tool for the Roman world. Although its formal boundaries ended at the Rhine, Rome’s power there was anything but fragile. European frontiers in particular never held the status of peripheral backwater environments with only scant traces of the hegemon’s presence

²² Hudson, “Theory and Methodology,” 18; Lefferts, “Frontier Demography,” 37.

²³ For the spread of cults in this type of dynamic environment, see Collar, *Religious Networks*, 145, also 72f.; Whittaker, *Rome and its Frontiers*, 3f. stresses the creative aspect of the frontier.

²⁴ White, *The Middle Ground*, esp. 50-53 for the author’s defining attributes of the term; for its relevance to the ancient world, see Hodos, “Local and Global Perspectives,” 21f.

²⁵ White, *The Middle Ground*, 52: “The middle ground depended on the inability of both sides to gain their ends through force.”; White, *The Middle Ground*, 76, 78 further develop this concept.

that one might expect for a “middle ground” to emerge.²⁶ The aforementioned, heavily concentrated military presence availed emperors the prospect of imposing any cultural mandates they may have desired, yet there was no such program. In essence, we encounter an inversion of the conditions for White’s “middle ground”: whereas Europeans wished to fundamentally alter Native American mores to reflect their own but simply could not effectuate this transition during the period in which the “middle ground” flourished, Rome, by contrast, held no such aspirations, despite possessing the means to attempt forced cultural conversion.²⁷ Therefore, a power vacuum cannot be the crucial prerequisite for an ideologically receptive atmosphere to take shape in a colonial frontier environment. Moreover, it is clear that an imperial hegemon, ensconced in unrivaled regional authority but wholly lacking the desire to impose rigid adherence to nonnative customs, may unintentionally create the conditions for cultural exchange to take place virtually unchecked.

Romanization, Empire, and Power Dynamics

The problems with a theory of Romanization as an evolutionary process of acculturation, whereby barbarians gradually become enlightened members of a superior civilization, have been exhaustively addressed in scholarship for the greater part of the last century. As a hypothesis, the concept suffers from a binary outlook which interprets all evidence through the categories of “Roman” and “non-Roman” or “native,” assigns purportedly objective values to cultures, and assumes that cultural influence flows unidirectionally from Rome to its subjects in a more or less

²⁶ A weak imperial presence as a definitional characteristic of comparative frontiers is evident; see Parker and Rodseth (eds.), *Untaming the Frontier*, 23f..

²⁷ European attitudes: Miller and Savage, “Ethnic Stereotypes,” 123. For Rome’s comparative cultural laxity, see Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 130f.

predictable manner.²⁸ Additionally, it seems to interpret the results of cultural development rather than offer any explanation as to *how* and *why* change occurred, beyond positing a presumptive trickle-down flow from advanced to primitive societies.²⁹ Finally, the development of Romanization theory seems inextricably connected with and contaminated by imperial apologist reasoning prevalent during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, evident, for example, in the work of Francis Haverfield.³⁰

A paradigm shift away from this traditional view of Romanization has resulted in many alternative approaches to cultural change. Some have sought to preserve the term by excising the most out of date, offensive elements and rebranding Romanization as a useful, umbrella-like label for cultural changes in the Mediterranean world during the Roman period,³¹ thereby placing emphasis on the range of interactions as opposed to any predominance on Rome's part. Still others have endeavored to discard the stigmatized designation altogether and to forge new catchwords and interpretive models to account for cultural transformation. However, terms such as "hybridization," "creolization," and "globalization" have gained either limited purchase or are employed in a nebulous manner that does not satisfy the yearning for a comprehensive explanatory model to replace Romanization as it slowly fades from the discussion.³² It is

²⁸ Barrett, "Romanization: A Critical Comment," 236; Mattingly, "Introduction," 9; Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity*, xxvi, 207; Hingley, "Past, Present and Future"; Hingley, "Cultural Diversity," 57; Webster, "Creolizing the Roman Provinces," esp. 210, 214; Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 126f. Cf. the positive assessment of Drinkwater, "For Better or Worse?" 210 that "despite the immediate distress involved, the Roman conquest and the process of Romanization that followed fairly quickly (in a matter of a generation or so) led to a general amelioration in the lives of the subject peoples."

²⁹ For the lacking explanatory potential of Romanization, see Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 7.

³⁰ Haverfield, *Roman Occupation of Britain*, 173, 175, 286. To a certain degree, however, this characterization of Romanization theory as strongly acculturative in its outlook is overstated. Haverfield, *Roman Occupation of Britain*, 175 himself noted that the process was "in the main a voluntary movement," marked by the "absence of any coercion"; on this point, see also Morley, *The Roman Empire*, 108f.

³¹ van Es, "Introduction," 5; Woolf, "Formation of Roman Provincial Cultures," 10, 12; Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 7; Roselaar, "Introduction," 4 n.8; see also the many contributions in Key and Terrenato, *Italy and the West*, as well as the response article of Mattingly, "Vulgar and Weak 'Romanization.'"

³² Pitts and Versluys, "Globalisation and the Roman World," 5f. discuss how acknowledging the diversity and multicultural nature of the ancient world is only a first step, not a meaningful conclusion to explain cultural

generally accepted that Roman sovereignty resulted in momentous structural changes to the political and economic makeup of conquered societies,³³ but debate persistently centers on the interplay between Rome's position as hegemon and processes of cultural exchange.³⁴

Postcolonial scholarship seems to have regressed to the same argument as the previously dominant Romanization theory, which saw power as the primary determinant of culture, distinguishing itself only by an inversion of perspective from Rome to the oppressed populations.³⁵ Force and power asymmetries are key components of postcolonial reasoning for all changes in the Roman period, and indeed all developments under an imperial power.³⁶ To be sure, culture can indeed be an effective weapon of empire, and the two have often been conceptually and practically linked in modern instances.³⁷ However, two points must be stressed in the case of the Roman Empire. First, there exists no convincing evidence that the Roman administration employed or sought any sort of acculturation policy,³⁸ notwithstanding ambiguous primary source material that may indicate to a prevailing desire for Roman culture to take hold in

interactions; on this general observation, see also Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalisation and Culture*, 122; additionally, hybridity as a concept demands clearly defined separation between two or more cultural concepts, thereby limiting analysis to what Versluys, "Roman Visual Material Culture," 153 n.31 terms "container thinking," and Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalisation and Culture*, also 102, 108, 196 labels "boundary fetishism"; on this point, see also Gosden, *Archaeology and Colonialism*, 69; Antonnacio, "(Re)Defining Ethnicity," 45. Creolization: Webster, "Creolizing the Roman Provinces."

³³ Romanization as structural changes: Woolf, *Becoming Roman*, 127; Roselaar, "Introduction," 10f., 12, 17; Keay, "Romanization and the Hispaniae," 137; Okun, "Pluralism in Germania Superior," 438; Bekker-Nielsen, *Geography of Power*, esp. 2, 45-49, 67.

³⁴ Woolf, "Formation of Roman Provincial Cultures," 14.

³⁵ Woolf, "Beyond Romans and Natives," 340; Dyson, *The Roman Countryside*, 88.

³⁶ Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity*, 96; Keay, "Romanization and the Hispaniae," 123; Webster, "Creolizing the Roman Provinces," 211.

³⁷ Bush, *Imperialism and Postcolonialism*, 135; Dirks, "Introduction," 3; Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xiv, 9.

³⁸ MacMullen, *Romanization*, 113, 135; MacMullen, *Changes in the Roman Empire*, 57; Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 143. Regarding religion, Gruen argues that even the notion of Roman "tolerance" for foreign practices is inaccurate: "Acceptance and embrace of alien cults was simply a long-standing ingredient of Roman identity." Gruen, "Religious Pluralism," 174. Roselaar, "Introduction," 2f. emphasizes the agency of individuals in deciding their level of engagement with "the opportunities offered by Rome's expansion," without state compulsion in most cases.

the provinces.³⁹ Second, in lieu of direct evidence for such a program or widespread mindset, postcolonial scholars have made the *choice* to operate within an interpretive framework that is as equally ideologically possessed as any imperial apologia.⁴⁰ Whereas Romanization theory rightly failed not least because of its inclination to “label complex realities with terms that exaggerate the degree of homogeneity,”⁴¹ postcolonial theory likewise reduces intricate relationships and activities into simplified terms of power dynamics between oppressor and oppressed, subjugation and resistance.⁴²

Religious developments in the Roman Empire have served as especially fecund ground for postcolonial approaches to take root due both to their ubiquitous visibility as well as the irreducibility of their cultural value to banal material exchange in an increasingly globalized Mediterranean marketplace. Unlike other quotidian objects such as pottery, which, despite presenting a fusion of styles and techniques, may or may not have held very much significance to those using them, religious artifacts are endowed with a particular cultural value that resonates beyond the mundane. Votive offerings provide a window through which to assess, albeit imperfectly, the varying characteristics of many cults across the Roman landscape, as well as the ways in which people syncretized new religious elements they encountered with their own

³⁹ Literary examples of this include Agricola’s renowned inducements to the people of Britannia (Tac. *Agr.* 21), as well as Strabo’s pride in the spread of Latin (Strabo 4.1.12) and general transformation of provincial societies to Roman ways (Strabo 3.2.15, 4.1.5). Archaeology, too, has uncovered Roman style settlements in transrhene Germany, such as at Waldgirmes, that were established prior to the Varian disaster, during the phase of occupation and provincialization; see Wigg, “Roman and Native.”

⁴⁰ See, for example, the injunction of Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity*, 20 to reveal “the sinister side...of power”; cf. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 343, 356.

⁴¹ Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity*, 207.

⁴² For example, Mattingly, “Africa: A Landscape of Opportunity,” 133 interprets “sedentary farming and traditional pastoralists” in Roman Africa as “latent resistance to the state.” Interestingly, the term “latent resistance” is quite similar to the observation in Haverfield, *Roman Occupation of Britain*, 22 that native customs enjoyed “latent persistence” amongst non-elites, save for Mattingly’s efforts to inject this phenomenon with quasi-subversive undertones; on this, see also Webster, “Creolizing the Roman Provinces,” 215f. Whittaker, “Imperialism and Culture,” 156 cautions against reading patterns of resistance into various forms of cultural diversity; see also Whittaker, “Integration,” 19.

worldviews. However, instead of viewing these artifacts as products of cultural dialogue and innovation, postcolonial discourse too often confines these interactions to the sphere of macro level power asymmetries, wherein the rich spectrum of creative fusion is recast as the incidental result of structural exploitation playing itself out.⁴³

Two well-known religious phenomena may serve as useful exempla: *interpretatio romana* and name-pairing. Tacitus coins the first process when describing the rites of the Germanic Nahanarvali tribe, whose deity, Alcis, he effectively associates with the Roman Dioscuri.⁴⁴ A postcolonial reading of this passage assumes from the onset both authorial ignorance of as well as hostility toward indigenous tradition; *interpretatio*, and indeed any Roman account of or interaction with native customs, cannot be rendered as anything but imperious.⁴⁵ Likewise, the process of name-pairing, whereby a Roman and native deity share a collective appellation, is deemed equally laden with hierarchies of power on account of the frequency with which non-Roman deities appear in secondary position to their Roman counterparts (e.g. Mars Nodens, Apollo Grannus).⁴⁶ Even in scenarios where an attempt has been made to translate an individual native deity accurately (as far as we can tell), the agent's very ability to do so is said to reflect a form of domination;⁴⁷ the Latinization of the native name equates to "linguistic imperialism" in which the "'weaker' languages...in practice submit to forcible translation."⁴⁸

⁴³ Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity*, 231; Webster, "Negotiated Syncretism," 172; Webster, "Translation and Subjection," 179. Regarding hybridity more broadly, Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture*, 82 asserts that power asymmetries are always present.

⁴⁴ Tac. *Ger.* 43: *apud Naharvalos antiquae religionis lucus ostenditur. Praesidet sacerdos muliebri ornatu, sed deos interpretatione Romana Castorem Pollucemque memorant. ea vis numini, nomen Alcis.*

⁴⁵ Webster, "Translation and Subjection," 175.

⁴⁶ Webster, "Translation and Subjection," 178.

⁴⁷ Webster, "Translation and Subjection," 178; Webster, "A Dirty Window," 136; see also Hodder, *The Meaning of Things*, 69f.

⁴⁸ Webster, "Translation and Subjection," 178.

A lucid and convincing counter case can be made for each of these interpretive points. Erich Gruen has expounded on the concept of *interpretatio* in Tacitus, underscoring the complete absence of any evident wish to subjugate the native deities under a foreign religious rubric.⁴⁹ The oft-cited xenophobic and chauvinistic commentaries present in ancient sources do not warrant injecting this passage with meaning that the text itself does not support, as convenient as it may be.⁵⁰ Instead, this notorious concept of *interpretatio* seems to reflect Tacitus' desire to convey knowledge about unfamiliar customs and beliefs to his Roman audience in terms appropriate to their cultural background. This method of elucidation through juxtaposition may commonly imbue the comparative material with one's own values;⁵¹ however, Tacitus makes a concerted effort to avoid doing this when addressing native deities precisely because it is his aim to underscore the contrasts between the two societies, *not* to elide them, as the usual understanding of *interpretatio* would have it.⁵²

Name-pairing as a symbol of dominance is similarly problematic. Although, as Webster emphasizes, a majority of inscriptions place the Roman deity before its native counterpart,⁵³ this statistic does not necessarily denote a pervasive imperial mindset; disparity does not always indicate intent. The number of instances where this formula is inverted, with the native divinity placed before the Roman equivalent, reveals telling aspects to the process of exchange taking place. Native deities taking precedence works against the collective notion of cultural domination, signaling instead the openness to alternative religious conceptions and formulations

⁴⁹ Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 175f.

⁵⁰ Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 343, 356.

⁵¹ For example, Tacitus' comment that the priest of Alcis are dressed in "feminine attire" (*muliebri ornatu*) (Tac. *Ger.* 43) clearly embeds Roman notions of gendered dress into his assessment.

⁵² Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 176.

⁵³ Webster, "Translation and Subjection," 178: "Celtic divine names are placed before Classical ones only six times." This number has increased with time, but the general disparity does indeed still hold true; see also Derks, *Gods, Temples and Ritual Practices*, 93; Zoll, "A View Through Inscriptions," 135.

that typified the provinces, and indicating that there was no injunction or social stigma against ordering the divinities howsoever one might wish. Outliers matter, and they are not to be dismissed for their statistical insignificance, but instead to be thoroughly examined and appreciated for their qualitative worth – especially when discussing a topic as intricate as cultural exchange. They are not exceptions which prove the rule,⁵⁴ but illustrative of a diverse, unpredictable, and creative environment.

Finally, the *individual* veneration of native deities such as Epona and Nehalennia dispels the notion that imperial power asymmetries invariably subsumed or otherwise fundamentally transformed indigenous deities by attaching them to Roman gods, either through direct *interpretatio*, name-pairing, or “divine marriage.”⁵⁵ In order to explain Epona’s lack of coupling with a Graeco-Roman god, Webster frames this characteristic as the goddesses “resistance to the married state.”⁵⁶ Thus, an unfalsifiable interpretive feedback loop is created, wherein *interpretatio* and name-pairing denote overt repression or piecemeal dilution of native customs, and the worship of individual gods calls attention to elements of indigenous religion that defied the cultural onslaught of Roman foreign influence.⁵⁷ Even when a Graeco-Roman god has been thoroughly localized, as in the example from Asia Minor of Apollo depicted on horseback and with a bow– a veritable *interpretatio indigena* –⁵⁸ it is to be deemed part of “a discourse initiated by the colonizer.”⁵⁹ This approach simply returns us to the binary of Roman vs. native, oppressor vs. oppressed, without requisite appreciation for the inherent complexity of cultural

⁵⁴ Webster, “Creolizing the Roman Provinces,” 222 n.113.

⁵⁵ This is not to say that the native deities carried on unchanged from their pre-conquest condition, as no element of culture remains static. The features and importance of deities such as the Rhineland Mother Goddesses and Nehalennia certainly changed over time; see Derks, *Gods, Temples and Ritual Practices*, 91, 128-30, 144, 232.

⁵⁶ Webster, “Creolizing the Roman Provinces,” 222, also 220.

⁵⁷ For example, Webster, “Creolizing the Roman Provinces,” 222 frames singular depictions of Epona as “resistance to the married state.”

⁵⁸ Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 144f., Fig. 5.1

⁵⁹ Webster, “Translation and Subjection,” 177.

interactions.⁶⁰ At this point, we might ask whether an honest and neutral (i.e. power-free) interaction is even possible under a postcolonial blueprint, which seems perpetually intent on discovering the relational imbalances presupposed to undergird all scenarios, thereby ascribing to a model of incessant cultural combat rather than dialogue.⁶¹

Toward a New Theory of Cultural Exchange

Furnishing the gap Romanization theory has left behind with a suitable replacement paradigm has thus proven to be an exceptionally difficult task. Having recognized that a postcolonial lens hinders more than it advances worthwhile analytical progress,⁶² we must still identify the primary mechanisms that fueled cultural development in a manner attuned to both heterogeneity and uniformity at the local and global level,⁶³ and devoid of ideologically-laden interpretive methodology.⁶⁴ I would like to suggest that studies have endeavored in vain to discover an all-encompassing model to explain cultural exchange because the need for one has become obviated by widespread recognition of the bewildering medley of cultural influences in the Roman world. That the Empire was a fundamentally pluralist, hybrid collection of widely varying traditions has become the accepted baseline for scholarship today. In other words, acknowledging diversity is viewed as merely the starting point for analysis, not any sort of meaningful conclusion in and of itself.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Woolf, "Beyond Romans and Natives," 341.

⁶¹ Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture*, 82 implies that whenever a power imbalance is *not* found, it must in all cases be due to the observer's lacking perspicacity.

⁶² Laurence and Trifilò, "The Global and the Local," 103; Pitts, "Globalisation, Circulation and Mass Consumption," 80, 92f.

⁶³ Pitts and Versluys, "Globalisation and the Roman World," 10; Laurence and Trifilò, "The Global and the Local," 116; Hodos, "Global, Local and in Between," 246; Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 86.

⁶⁴ Hingley, "Cultural Diversity and Unity," 55, 61f., 64 cautions against allowing currently fashionable worldviews to skew our interpretations of the past.

⁶⁵ Witcher, "Globalisation and Roman Cultural Heritage," 205, 210; Pitts and Versluys, "Globalisation and the Roman World," 5f.; Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture*, 122.

However, upon closer inspection, this tenet represents more than just a banal observation about the presence of cultural variety. Given the Mediterranean-wide environment in which plurality was ubiquitous, and where the Roman state assumed a laissez-faire attitude toward the social mores of those under its authority, it is not surprising that a uniform model of cultural development remains elusive; there simply was no comprehensive driving force behind cultural exchange. Erich Gruen's conclusions about Roman tolerance and diversity are instructive:

How then to characterize a Roman outlook on external religions and national identity? "Tolerance" of other sects is a term often applied. But that misconceives the essential disposition. The very notion of tolerance (no Latin word exists for it in this sense) implies a central and uniform religious structure that indulged in lenience toward deviant sects or practices. The concept simply does not apply to the fundamentally pluralist and polytheistic society of Rome. Romans were neither tolerant nor intolerant. The embrace of ostensibly alien cults was an ingredient of Roman identity, not a matter of broad-mindedness or liberality.⁶⁶

As this passage suggests, it is our own inability to properly characterize the intellectual landscape of the past that restricts our understanding – hindered as we are by an inherited reliance upon simplistic categories of inclusion and exclusion. An ideologically open, interconnected environment like the Roman Empire, with no centralized arbiter dictating acceptable cultural values, meant that individuals and self-organizing groups were the primary agents empowered with assigning meaning to beliefs, practices, and identities as they saw fit. Therefore, while the existence of plurality does not elucidate the processes behind cultural developments, its prevalence highlights the wide distribution of agency in the Roman world.

⁶⁶ Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 349.

Stochastic Cultural Exchange

To the modern observer, evidence for cultural interactions in the ancient world conveys a distinctly chaotic impression that is comprised of two main components. The first is the enduring problem of fragmentary material serving as a sample size by which to effectively assess cultural development, which can be understood as observational noise.⁶⁷ Chance survival and transmission of literary and archaeological sources require us to extract meaning from a patchwork of incomplete information. The second chaotic factor lies with the non-uniformity and sheer complexity inherent in extant evidence. J.C. Barrett has offered the following observation regarding our conceptualization of the Roman Empire which can equally be applied to current attempts to understand processes of cultural exchange:

[The Roman Empire is] a single word which was constituted by...a diverse range of historical forces which operated differently upon different groups of people in different places and at different times...an image or model which we and others have constructed out of our desires to give tangible form and coherency to historical processes, events and outcomes which would otherwise bewilder us with their complexity.⁶⁸

In other words, the fundamental intricacies of material evidence are too often unproductively counterbalanced by a modern penchant for oversimplification in the name of imposing order upon otherwise intractable data. Despite reflecting a high degree of similarity in certain respects, epigraphic formulae and iconographic motifs all across the Roman world fluctuate to such an extent that their divergent elements demand elucidation beyond relegation to the status of insignificant variation.⁶⁹ The variety present in the corpus of evidence should not be harnessed or molded to accord with comprehensive models of cultural development; rather, it should be

⁶⁷ Collar, *Religious Networks*, 37; Haensch, "Inscriptions as Sources," 176, 187.

⁶⁸ Barrett, "Romanization: A Critical Comment," 52.

⁶⁹ Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 4, 15, 17, 25.

embraced as palpable testimony to the diverse and enterprising ways by which individuals and groups expressed themselves within a bounded system lacking constraints on cultural innovation.

Chaos, however, is not an entirely accurate way of characterizing cultural development in the Roman period. While the process certainly followed a non-linear trajectory that was highly dependent upon social and geographical contexts serving as input stimuli for transformation, cultural exchange lacks the deterministic qualities inherent in true chaotic systems, which function quite predictably depending on how much information is known about initial conditions. By contrast, culture under Roman sway functioned as a more genuinely unpredictable system because interactive outcomes were always different, even when initial conditions were essentially identical. For example, the presence of broadly conceived Roman, Germanic, and Gallic cultural elements within Ubian territory initiated religious dialogue that produced an abundance of localized deities known generally as the Rhineland Matronae, and assessed in Chapter 2 of this work as the Rhineland Mother Goddesses (RMG). While we may parse the fashionable spread and mixture of symbols, motifs, and beliefs, it would have been impossible to foresee any particular course of evolution because of the fundamental volatility of cultural interaction, even from a theoretically omniscient vantage point. This developmental process is best described as *stochastic cultural exchange*.

Anna Collar has previously applied the concept of stochastic growth to the spread of religious practices in the Roman world using network theory,⁷⁰ and this approach is of great relevance for the evidence arrayed here. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, a large proportion of dedicants to Nehalennia can be categorized as merchants (*negotiatores*) operating within a trade network which included the North Sea coast, where the goddess' sanctuaries were located.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Collar, *Religious Networks*, 32, 39.

⁷¹ Derks, *Gods, Temples and Ritual Practices*, 232; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 131.

Whether originally indigenous or foreign, Nehalennia's popularity in the region is assuredly owed to this coterie of followers, whose professional associations and predilections were key to her establishment and spread as an epigraphically and iconographically attested deity.

Nehalennia also exhibits overlapping similarities in visual representation with the more geographically widespread RMG, indicating that their social networks existed in cultural dialogue with one another. Some of the material in the following case studies can be bounded primarily within certain social groups and particular areas, such as the merchant devotees to Nehalennia at two locations, or the auxiliary soldiers' formulaic TIP (Totenmahl–Inscription–Pferdevorführung) style gravestones near military installations along the Rhine. On the other hand, the rider tombstone motif enjoyed significant popularity beyond the Rhineland, having been exported to Britannia. Likewise, some RMG were relegated to just one or two locations, whereas the *Matronae Aufaniae* have a more extensive footprint throughout the Rhineland. The case studies examined here therefore demonstrate a range of local, regional, and empire-wide cultural phenomena occurring in an assortment of snapshots.

Individuality

It is my aim to push the theory of stochastic cultural development past the level of network connectivity to incorporate innovation at the *individual* level, though the two are inextricably linked.⁷² Whereas a network approach invaluable maps the proliferation of specific cultural novelties according to the social pathways through which they blossomed,⁷³ I examine the stochastic process from a bottom-up, less deterministic perspective, namely, through individual

⁷² Hulin, "The Diffusion of Religious Symbols," 90; Hodos, "Global, Local and in Between," 251.

⁷³ Collar, *Religious Networks*, 287.

adaptations to practices and beliefs which were themselves in a nascent state.⁷⁴ Of course, cultural exchange was not absolutely random in a practical sense, because the process was still subject to contemporary social constraints and established patterns of tradition.⁷⁵ Structural restrictions put in place by Rome as well as preexisting indigenous mores limited the range of individual creativity for manifesting one's identity and religious affiliations. Nevertheless, these circumstances provided an extremely generous expressive landscape within which the individual could shine through in imaginative and original ways.⁷⁶ Personal intentionality represented the random, stochastic element that combined with cultural trends to produce the customized material artifacts assessed here.

Modern emphasis on the primacy of the individual in society resulting from centuries of development in the West might suggest that viewing antiquity with an eye toward individualism is conceptually anachronistic.⁷⁷ It would be imprudent to fall once again into the trap of dogmatism by replacing one ideologically-driven interpretive paradigm, such as Romanization or postcolonialism, with another. Indeed, religion and identity in the Roman world were each imbued with a strong communal focus that would ostensibly operate against any widespread sense of individuality.⁷⁸ Jorg Rüpke has addressed the reflexive nature of one's social presence and individuality through his concept of "lived ancient religion," and "individuation" in the Roman world. Highlighting scholars' hesitancy to address personal agency in ancient religious

⁷⁴ Cf. Collar, *Religious Networks*, 288.

⁷⁵ Hodos, "Local and Global Perspectives," 18, 19 discusses the performative, social aspect of using material culture to express identity.

⁷⁶ Rüpke, "Individualization and Individuation," 14; Collar, *Religious Networks*, 62; Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 105. Britan and Denich, "Environment and Choice," 57: "An artificial dichotomy has been created between systems and individuals."

⁷⁷ For discussion, see Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 5, 8, 11-13; Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 105. Woolf, "Ritual and the Individual," 154 stresses the distinction between ancient and more modern notions of individualization.

⁷⁸ Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 106; Collar, *Religious Networks*, 35, 54; Scheid, *Introduction to Roman Religion*; Woolf, "Ritual and the Individual," 154.

practice,⁷⁹ Rüpke calls attention to the practical ways in which religion often served as an outlet for personal expression and creativity.⁸⁰ Many of Rüpke's observations about individual agency in religion can also be transferred to other aspects of cultural development, including identity construction within social groups, such as the soldiers and merchants examined here.⁸¹

Importantly, Rüpke's approach retains a strong deterministic component in that individuation stresses "the biographical development of a single human being from a point of view that supplements the perspective of socialization."⁸² While it is certainly the case that social circumstances delimit the range of an individual's actions and perceptions,⁸³ I argue that the boundaries of acceptable deviation from and innovation upon cultural elements were regularly faint enough so as to render them essentially meaningless for those personnel actually participating in exchange. People think of themselves as individuals, even in highly regimented, status-oriented systems like Roman society.⁸⁴ The value of one's social position that is distinctly conveyed via textual and epigraphic sources should not blind us to the reality that people perceived and exhibited themselves as individuals *within* that structure, not as carbon copies adhering to prepackaged personae.⁸⁵ The desire to stand out amidst a sea of conventionalized

⁷⁹ Rüpke, "Individualization and Individuation," 7; Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 1. Mattingly, *Imperialism, Power, and Identity*, 216 shows aversion to the term "agency," which he believes places undue importance on individual choices as opposed to constraints brought on by imperial power asymmetries; Mattingly, "Cultural Crossovers," 290. See also Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 4, 128, which discusses the validity of this objection and Rüpke's position.

⁸⁰ Rüpke, "Religious Agency," 22 defines the concept of "lived ancient religion," which "refer[s] to individual religious practices beyond established traditions and institutionalized forms of religion"; see also Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 4, 7.

⁸¹ Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 121.

⁸² Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 17, also 14, 16, 20.

⁸³ Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 17.

⁸⁴ *Contra* Woolf, "Ritual and the Individual," 153f. By contrast, Wiessner, "Style and Changing Relations," 57 highlights the individual impulse to stand out even within conformist social systems.

⁸⁵ Woolf, "Ritual and the Individual," 154 views ancient religious identities in terms of "from ready-made models." Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 16 instead notes that social expectations do not preclude the presence of individual agency and choice.

templates and motifs is clear from a judicious assessment of altars and tombstones – mediums which allowed the character of the dedicant/deceased to be effectively manifested.

This yearning for visibility through personalization may take the form of direct expressions of status, such as listing one’s military rank or profession in addition to their name.⁸⁶ Alternatively, the individual can be discerned through statements about their intentions or concerns, which can break significantly from standardized formulae. For example, one centurion makes explicit that he was fulfilling a vow to *Matronae Aufaniae* that he previously made holding the rank of *optio*,⁸⁷ thereby demonstrating the internalized religious connection between the individual’s personal identity, his hierarchical success in the Roman army, and the perceived functional religious impact of the *Matronae*. Numerous other altar inscriptions indicate a direct relationship with the deity in question through mentions of dreams or visions (*ex visu*) and commands (*ex iussu* or *ex imperio*),⁸⁸ which Rüpke characterizes as “visionary individuality.”⁸⁹ Weapon deposits – both funerary and votive – likewise reflect dedications and memorials which were tailored to the individual’s circumstances, given that military equipment could be endlessly personalized, and would in any case have been imbued with an intense sentimental value. Recent research on Palmyrene funerary portraiture has revealed the stunning individuality that these artifacts could express through the varying attributes depicted with the deceased,⁹⁰ and this investigative approach is advantageous for assessing the characteristics of auxiliary tombstones

⁸⁶ Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 21 labels this “expressive individuality.”; see also Wiessner, “Style and Social Information,” 257f.

⁸⁷ *quod optio voverati*: Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” Nr. 9 = Nesselhauf, “Neue Inschriften,” Nr. 155. See Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 247; Nesselhauf, *Neue Inschriften*, Nr. 155.

⁸⁸ For discussion of these phrases, including their cultural associations, see Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 152, 180; Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 118 = CIL 13, 8211; ILS 3160; Haensch, “Inscriptions as Sources,” 182.

⁸⁹ Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 23, 131.

⁹⁰ Heyn and Raja, “Attributes in Palmyrene Funerary Sculpture,” 5 impart how attributes could be applied to individual attributes funerary portraits in order to create a customized artifact that would stand out from other examples of the same style.

of the Rhineland, which exhibit a similar phenomenon. From these and other examples, we recognize that individuals maintained a high degree of agency in the customization of religious and personal artifacts, even with regard to mediums like tombstones and votives, which are conventionally viewed as derivative replications, perfunctorily churned out by workshops to largely indifferent clientele.⁹¹

The Roman administration's overall lack of concern regarding provincial matters beyond maintaining order and ensuring steady tax revenue equated to a hands-off cultural policy.⁹² This absence of invasive oversight is especially apparent in the realm of religion – a social component of paramount importance that was simultaneously open to some of the most diverse innovations.⁹³ Roman authority established conditions for cultural exchange to flourish through the creation of a stable environment open to religious interaction as well as through the introduction of heterogeneous cultural influences in the region out of military necessity for frontier security. The receptive predispositions of the cultures that flooded this zone were likewise a boon for the process of exchange.⁹⁴ Ultimately, the processes of constructing identity and religious practices must be viewed as an open-market, wherein individuals retained a high degree of freedom in their choices to adopt, eschew, or adapt upon customs, symbols, and fashions they encountered. While a distinction is to be made between prescribed public cult *practices* of society and a person's religious *beliefs*,⁹⁵ this fact in no way nullifies the reality that individuals were permitted to manifest their piety largely as they wished.⁹⁶ A certain level of

⁹¹ Consumer agency in crafting religious imagery: Green, *Symbol and Image*, 6; Busch and von Hesburg, "Provincial Art," 329.

⁹² Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 186, also 187f.; see footnote 38 above.

⁹³ Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 85, also 45, 182-201.

⁹⁴ Bendlin, "Peripheral Centres," 35, 53; Wightman, "Pagan Cults," 548.

⁹⁵ Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 44f., 47, 49; Collar, *Religious Networks*, 54, 63; Woolf, "Polis-Religion," 76, 79f.

⁹⁶ Henig, "*Ita intellexit numine*," 159, 168; Häußler and King, "Crefyddau Celtaid," 5, 23.

autonomous religious competency was actually expected when carrying out commonplace rites that did not necessarily adhere to the same rigorous standards as public cults.⁹⁷ The dedicatory pit deposits within army camps serve as a prime example of individuals' capacity to execute private religious rites.⁹⁸

The limitations and makeup of evidence available preclude the formation of reliable explanatory patterns, and support the acceptance of an unrestricted, erratic, and individualist interpretation of cultural exchange.⁹⁹ For example, onomastic analysis of epigraphically attested names has proven to be an unreliable method for discerning the ethnic – and to a certain extent, civic – associations of those setting up altars and of the deceased memorialized on gravestones.¹⁰⁰ Thus, a critical aspect of these individuals' identities is frequently left in obscurity, thereby requiring us to make tenuous assumptions and deductions in an attempt to categorize and extrapolate from the meager information provided. We must also contend with our inability to confirm authorial intent with regard to votive inscriptions. Even when deities are explicitly addressed, the miscellany of supplemental epithets frequently assigned calls into question their nature and relationship to one another.¹⁰¹ There is also the potential for “user error” to have occurred in any given example, since, in addition to innovation,

⁹⁷ Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 28, 43; Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 20, 122, 130, 134; Collar, *Religious Networks*, 63. See also the discussion in Rives, *Religious Networks*, 22f. of Dio Chrysostom's admission (Dio Chrys. *Orat.* 12.44-46) that artisans contribute to the visual understanding of deities through their depictions, which speak to the masses.

⁹⁸ At Köln, two ritual deposits were discovered at a naval base next to a path between barracks. These included complete pots, remains of a sacrificed lamb, a sheep skull, and a coin. Höpken, “Religion, Cult, and Burial Customs,” 267f. suggests these were part of private rites performed by sailors in the Roman fleet. At Nijmegen, an Augustan era pit contained crockery, animal remains of piglets and ducks, two *unguentaria*, a gaming token, and a lamp. Höpken, “Religion, Cult, and Burial Customs,” 268 likewise suggests ritual motivation.

⁹⁹ Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 10 notes the centrality of individual action in the creation of religious artifacts. MacMullen, *Changes in the Roman Empire*, 61 discusses the lack of available evidence needed to properly quantify cultural exchange in the Roman world.

¹⁰⁰ Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 398f., 402, 406. Roman nomenclature is not a helpful metric; see Haensch, “Inscriptions as Sources,” 180; Wightman, “Pagan Cults,” 577, 583.

¹⁰¹ Häussler and King, “Crefyddau Celtaid,” 19.

miscommunication between all parties involved in the translation of a divinity across cultural gaps was inevitable.¹⁰² Under such conditions, it is best to temper our prospects for definitive conclusions, and to accept the uncertainty pervading the evidence, which reflects the fluid and unpredictable state of identity and religious experience in the Roman world.

Additionally, outlier variations on themes in the corpus denote the intricacies behind adoption and innovation processes that should be reckoned with in a manner that does not dismiss them as one-off anomalies whose eccentricities need to be pared down and shaped to fit an orderly theory.¹⁰³ Dedicants plainly coordinated with artisans to express their religious devotion by appropriating various cult symbols, such as the Celtic wheel, and repurposing them on altars in novel ways that evince conscious agency.¹⁰⁴ They also actively combined various deities of their choosing in votive formulae, and commonly employed imprecise terminology to address the complexity of the divine realm as best they knew how.¹⁰⁵ In the case of one dedication to the *dis deabusque omnibus Matribus Vapthiabus et Genio loci*,¹⁰⁶ it seems that the *beneficiarius* sought to propitiate the divinities believed to be active in this locale with which he was unfamiliar. From this example, we may glean a bit about the soldier's perceptions, as well as his ability to freely commission a *votum* that addressed his concerns and reflected his personal understanding of the gods. Thus, people enjoyed the ability to positively draw from an

¹⁰² Häussler and King, "Crefyddau Celtaid," 7; Green, "Jupiter, Taranis," 67; Wightman, "Pagan Cults," 545, 549, 570. Collar, *Religious Networks*, 77, 81 notes our inability to precisely discern the internal reasoning behind one's religious choices from the available material evidence, which only contributes further to the issue of miscommunication.

¹⁰³ Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 4, 17f., 25.

¹⁰⁴ Hodos, "Global, Local and in Between," 247-48; Hodos, "Local and Global Perspectives," 23f. Celtic wheel: Green, "Jupiter, Taranis," 70.

¹⁰⁵ Haensch, "Inscriptions as Sources," 182 addresses the tendency for scholarship to assume dedicators were uninvolved in the crafting epigraphic formulae; Pascal, *Cults of Cisalpine Gaul*, 9f. notes the creation of vague forms of non-specific evocation, such as *sive deus sive dea*, which plainly reflect the individual dedicant's level of religious familiarity and caution when addressing the gods.

¹⁰⁶ CIL 13, 08841.

increasingly globalized repertoire of imagery, concepts, and styles which they could redeploy as they saw fit with an equal degree of innovative license.¹⁰⁷

This phenomenon of “practical syncretism” produced myriad, customized artifacts that should be understood first as personal objects before being grouped into broader categories where the individual’s expressive input is diminished.¹⁰⁸ Two sublimely idiosyncratic examples from the following case studies illustrate this point. Rather than depicting the RMG on his altar in fairly common fashion, one legionary soldier opted to incorporate an image of himself in battle against an opponent clad in Eastern attire.¹⁰⁹ Likewise, an extant votive to Nehalennia portrays three female figures, standing in stark contrast with the remaining corpus wherein the goddess is always presented alone on the obverse of her altars. Given the proximity of Nehalennia’s cult with the RMG, as well as the tendency for the latter to be depicted in the form of a trinity, the dedicant seems to have either combined or conflated the imagery and motifs of these deities. Conventionally, these outliers are sorted according to the respective divinities to which they were consecrated; however, doing so subsumes their individual distinctiveness under more basic categories, and projects a macro-level significance onto material which was intensely personal by nature.¹¹⁰ Regardless of the relative uniformity present in the material discussed here, customized, individual expression was always the aim of those who commissioned altars and tombstones, or deposited weapons in either cultic or funerary contexts.¹¹¹

It is important to clarify that the aim of this present work is not to diminish the value of theory to the point where no substantial conclusions can be gleaned from material sources

¹⁰⁷ Hölscher, *The Language of Images*, 125f.; Versluys, “Roman Visual Material Culture,” 154-58; “This is not rejection, denigration, or distancing – but rather appropriation.” Gruen, *Rethinking the Other*, 4f., 357.

¹⁰⁸ For “practical syncretism,” see Schwertheim, “orientalischen Religionen,” 809f.

¹⁰⁹ See chapter 2, Fig. 10.

¹¹⁰ Roselaar, “Introduction,” 8f.

¹¹¹ Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 122.

beyond individual perceptions. Rather, my intention is to further refine our attempts to understand cultural exchange in a manner that best accords with the evidence available. Elevating the analytical value of the individual does not banish scholars to a postmodern quagmire of infinite regress.¹¹² Categories and interpretive paradigms remain fruitful, necessary aspects of analysis that help us recognize developmental patterns and establish narrative frameworks from which we may continue to expand our knowledge by asking novel questions.¹¹³ Despite the emphasis placed upon stochastic, individualized examples in the following chapters, fashionable trends and group dynamics remain an integral part of the heterogeneous cultural tapestry that was the Roman world. Indeed, military identity and communal religious activity feature prominently in my discussion, registering as aspects of cultural coalescence.¹¹⁴ However, it is critical to recognize that the paradox of unity and diversity in the Roman Empire converges at the level of individual – the agent who could epitomize the increasingly interconnected world (e.g. an itinerant administrative official), local traditions (e.g. indigenous farmers), or any incalculable variant in between.¹¹⁵

¹¹² On postmodern deconstruction, see Hodos, “Local and Global Perspectives,” 9.

¹¹³ Woolf, “Polis-Religion,” 71f.; Lulić, “Theorizing Romanization,” 33.

¹¹⁴ “after all, a certain standardisation of cult architecture in the Roman period (the so-called *Romano-Celtic temple*, *Umgangstempel* or *fanum*, relatively square temples, usually with an ambulatory, quite unlike a Roman temple) shows an astonishing degree of religious communication between provinces.” Häußler and King, “Crefyddau Celtaid,” 11.

¹¹⁵ Pitts and Versluys, “Globalisation and the Roman World,” 10; Hodos, “Global, Local and in Between,” 242f., 247f.; Hodos, “Local and Global Perspectives,” 23f.; Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture*, 73.

CHAPTER 1

Military Tombstones

Introduction

The establishment of the Principate brought with it prolonged peace to the Roman world after a century racked with civil war. The centralization of power under the position of the emperor yielded many cascading effects in the functioning of the Empire that extended beyond merely administrative restructuring at the highest levels. Along with this transition came important changes which drastically altered the socio-cultural landscapes of the territories and their inhabitants. The nuanced effort to urbanize the recently conquered areas of northwestern Europe by way of integrating local elites into the Roman social and political system, for example, has been well addressed in scholarship, and has been generally accepted as the standard Roman *modus operandi* in the western provinces. Likewise, the founding of a standing army at the beginning of the imperial period entailed formal changes to the previous system which affected the lives of soldiers in unprecedented ways. With the reforms of Augustus, the military hierarchy was soon replete with standardized formulae for recruitment, pay, and terms of service regarding Roman citizens serving in the legions as well as *peregrini* in the *auxilia* that would continue to be honed over the course of the first century. Myriad studies have assessed the finer logistical details of this process and have therefore allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the Roman army from a functional standpoint. However, just as there were rippling socio-cultural effects which came about as a result of civilian provincialization, so too existed a rapid development within the military sphere of a new cultural framework.

This chapter will focus on the cultural dynamics exhibited within the Roman army regarding individual and collective identity, primarily in auxiliary units during the first century AD. I will assess two styles of funerary monuments which were frequently chosen by members of cavalry units in the Roman *auxilia* – the *alae* and the *cohortes equitatae* – for their contributions to our understanding of auxiliaries’ self-presentation. The first of these styles is comprised of three elements set on a single stele (**Fig. 1, 2, 6, 9**): a so-called Totenmahl (“death banquet”) motif, which has a long-established Greco-Roman pedigree;¹¹⁶ a Latin inscription that is modelled from standardized commemorative formulae for legionaries; and a scene depicting a *calo* (military servant – often translated as a “groom”) leading a horse. This final and somewhat cryptic scene is often appropriately referred to as a “Pferdevorführung” (“horse presentation”). For the sake of brevity, this particular combination of images will be referred to as the TIP (Totenmahl–inscription–Pferdevorführung) motif. I have developed this designation as a novel way to identify stelae with these three very particular features in order to differentiate them from the standard Totenmahl motif, under which they are normally subsumed in scholarship.¹¹⁷ As TIP gravestones are limited within the Rhineland to the first century – with the last example dating to the Trajanic period (**Fig. 2**)¹¹⁸ they provide a unique snapshot of data which allows for analysis of a localized fashion, particularly in the cities of modern Mainz and Cologne.

¹¹⁶ Heidenreich, “Self-Presentation of the Roman Soldier,” 93-94 has acknowledged, “a comprehensive study is still lacking” for instances of the Totenmahl theme. However, the scholarship of Peter Noelke has been integral in the efforts to further understanding of Totenmahl imagery. Over 150 examples of Mahlrelief imagery in all of its various sculpted forms have been accounted for; see: Noelke et al., “Zu den Grabreliefs,” 155-56; Noelke, “Grabreliefs mit Mahldarstellung,” 399-418.

¹¹⁷ For example, see Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 10; Bishop, *Life and Letters*, 67.

¹¹⁸ CIL 13, 8670 = CSIR Deutschland III 1 Nr. 29 = Lehner, *Die antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 654.



Fig. 1: Tombstone of Marcus Aemilius Durises
 CIL 13, 8331 = Lupa 20474
 Lehner, *Das Provinzialmuseum in Bonn*, Taf. VIII, 3

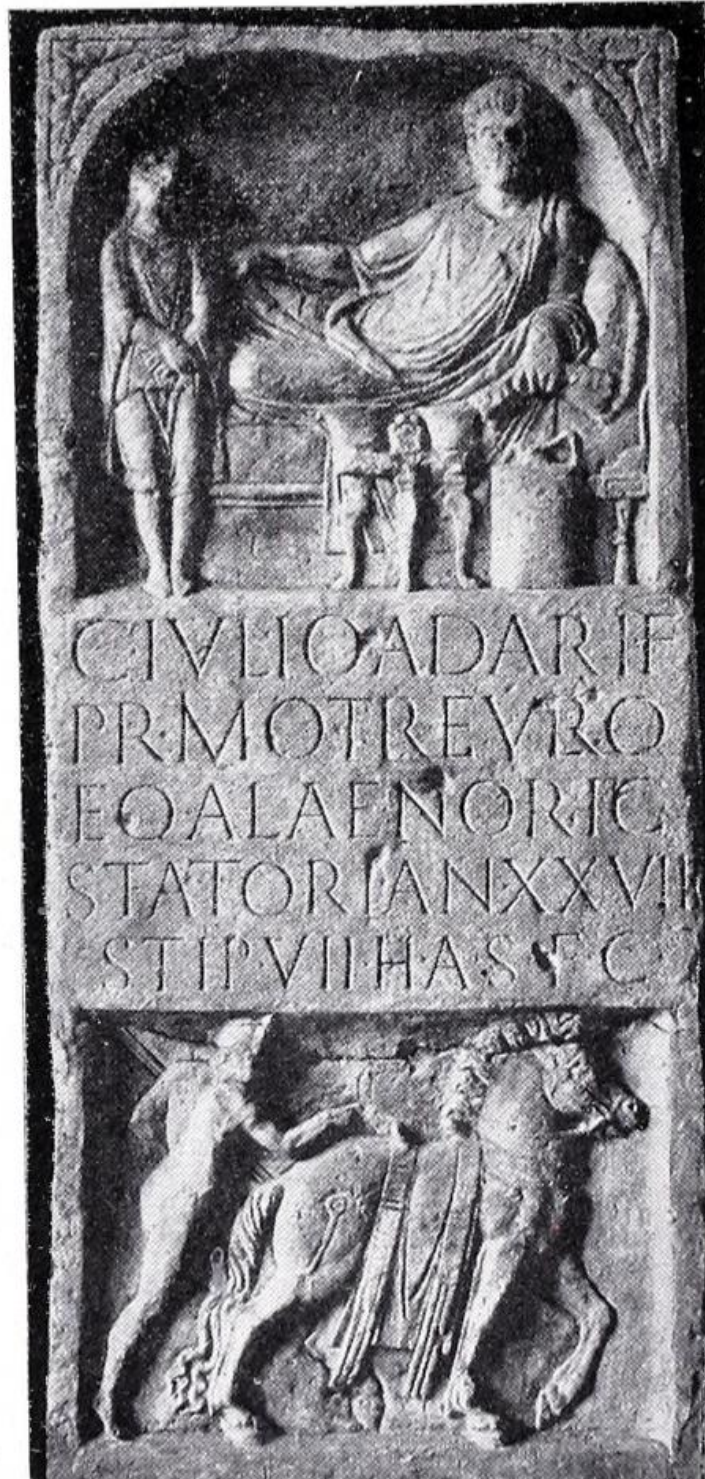


Fig. 2: Tombstone of Caius Julius Primus
 CIL 13, 8670
 Lehner, *Das Provinzialmuseum in Bonn*, VIII, 4

The second type of monument I will examine is much more prevalent amongst auxiliary cavalrymen across the Empire, and is identified as a “rider relief,” (Fig. 3, 10-21) due simply to its iconography depicting a mounted *eques*, clad in military attire, and often about to spear a prostrate opponent who is being trampled underfoot.¹¹⁹ The widespread nature of rider reliefs provides a helpful contrast to the localized TIP gravestones by illustrating how constructed and fashionable trends may be disseminated within the globalized network that was the Roman army.

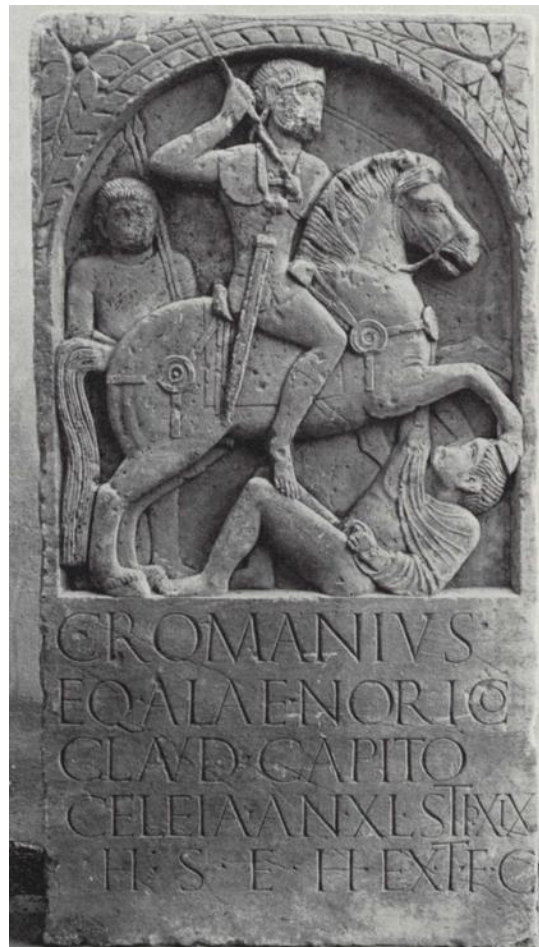


Fig. 3: Gravestone of C. Romanus Capito
CIL 13, 7029

Gabelmann, “römische Grabmonumente,” 166, Fig. 26

¹¹⁹ Mathilde Schleiermacher has compiled the known examples of rider tombstones; see Schleiermacher, *Römische Reitergrabsteine*.

Each of these monument types will be deconstructed and assessed for the value of its separate components, and then reconsidered holistically and comparatively with one another. The overall importance of each, however, will be shown to stem not from systematic dissection and isolated analysis of their details, but rather from the intended purpose of both forms of tombstones: as a completed whole, with a collective message.¹²⁰ I will argue that these two bodies of evidence reflect aspects of both adoption and innovation on the part of the cavalrymen to (re)create their identities in the wake of recent Roman conquest, and within the newly established auxiliary structure. As they embraced certain aspects of Roman cultural identification such as using Latin in their everyday routine, soldiers of the the *auxilia* also exhibit the ability and desire to invent new ways of expressing distinctive characteristics of their lifeworld which drew on both Roman concepts and native traditions. This amalgamation can be considered a new aspect of their own subset of military culture, the uniqueness of which is magnified ever more by the circumstances of the highly diversified and bustling frontier environment in which it developed. Finally, the auxiliaries' presentation provides an opportunity for scholars to advance the perennially stagnate debate over theories of Romanization and acculturation by emphasizing the fluid and composite makeup of each soldier's self-perception. The creation of the cavalrymen's identities as reflected in their choices of monuments is the product of individual choice, environmental influences, and a strong martial ethos that permeated and bound military networks throughout the Empire. These men occupied an extraordinarily unique social position, and their funerary material offers a rare look at how liminal figures within the imperial system made use of various visual motifs, funerary traditions, and cultural mores to craft a novel form of self-expression and group affiliation.

¹²⁰ Hope, "Inscriptions and Sculpture," 159; Hope, "Constructing Roman Identity," 106.

Roman military identity is a topic which has traditionally been largely overlooked in scholarly analysis, or otherwise relegated to more traditional forms of military history centering on training, unit structure, engagements, and service records.¹²¹ Underneath this highly impersonal surface lies a wealth of evidence that offers a window into the mindset of soldiers, which scholarship has rightfully integrated into Roman army studies in recent decades. A fine instance of this is exhibited in efforts to plumb the writing tablets of Vindolanda.¹²² Even here though, much of the information to be extracted from the evidence pertains not to the complexity of a soldier's cultural identity, but with everyday life that he endured. This is partly due to the nature of the material provided. For example, we cannot expect requests for leave to tell us very much about a soldier's perception of himself and his identification with Roman or indigenous cultural practices.¹²³ There is another issue which is something of a paradox: while a person's identity is ultimately an expression or understanding of their being, it is almost never something that can be easily defined or gleaned as a perfect representation from material evidence.¹²⁴ In the first place, the connection between an artifact and the reality of the past is certainly not direct, but open to interpretation. Erecting a tombstone with particular iconography and epigraphic statements sought to convey a message constructed by the dedicator that may correspond with or deviate from their perceived reality in any number of ways in order to provide a manufactured

¹²¹ Haynes, "Introduction," 8. Examples of this approach can be found in von Domaszewski, *Rangordnung des Römischen Heeres*; Kraft, *Zur Rekrutierung*; Cheesman, *The Auxilia*; Holder, "Studies in the Auxilia"; Saddington, *Development of the Roman Auxiliary*; as well as the revisions to Conrad Cichorius' work in Spaul, *Ala 2*; Spaul, *Cohors 2*.

¹²² See Bowman, *Life and Letters*; Birley, *Garrison Life at Vindolanda*.

¹²³ For examples, see Bowman, *Life and Letters*, Appendix II, *Tab. Vindol. II* 174, 175; Birley, *Garrison Life at Vindolanda*, 85. Nevertheless, Birley, *Garrison Life at Vindolanda*, 11 shows that even these logistical documents can reveal more subtle, relational dynamics between soldiers through the terms they use for one another (e.g. *commilitio*, *contubernalis*, *frater*, *carissimus*).

¹²⁴ Astrid Van Oyen and Martin Pitts have provided a helpful cautionary note for those adopting a purely representational approach to material culture under the Roman Empire; see van Oyen and Pitts, "What Did Objects Do."

representation for others to take in.¹²⁵ Furthermore, a person's identity is so multifaceted that it is often not on the forefront of their mind when making decisions. Rather, it is frequently in the background, acting as a reservoir of experiences and ideals upon which they might draw either consciously or unconsciously when acting in ways that we might interpret to be reflective of their "identity."¹²⁶ These issues pose a great challenge for the scholar attempting to make claims about group or individual identities in the past, and will be duly considered in the following analysis.

It is often taken for granted that the *auxilia* were an instrumental factor in provincials becoming "Roman."¹²⁷ Being either recruited or conscripted from their homelands, they were required to learn Latin to some functional degree, and also came into contact with many cultural practices inherited from the Roman world, such as bathing conventions and patterns of consumption. Over the course of twenty-five years of service, these cultural habits naturally became inculcated into the soldiers' lives, and often their very worldview and sense of self. If they were fortunate enough to fulfill their term of service, the reward would be Roman citizenship. However, it would be a grave error to assume that soldiers who were part of this heavily structured system invariably became "Romanized" to such a degree that the choices they made regarding self-presentation, in addition to their internal sense of self, were fairly predictable.¹²⁸ In fact, funerary evidence has the astounding ability to reveal just how complicated these issues could be for auxiliaries. Even with the perpetual bombardment of Roman-style influence on them throughout their careers in the army, these men were not simply passive figures serving as cogs in the systematic expansion of imperial culture. Instead, in

¹²⁵ Hope, "Inscriptions and Sculpture," 156, 178.

¹²⁶ Hodos, "Local and Global Perspectives," 20.

¹²⁷ Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 4, 21-2 provides a helpful critique of this position.

¹²⁸ Saddington, "How Roman did Auxiliaries Become?," 1023.

accordance with the material evidence, they should be understood as active participants in the creation of their own, unique forms of identification which were heavily imbued with characteristics of their Roman military lifestyle and pre-existing native cultures.

Certain scholars have already touched on some of the points that are central to my argument, such as military identity¹²⁹ and pre-existing martial values;¹³⁰ however, few have addressed the notion of the frontier environment itself serving as an accelerated incubator for the development of a new cultural identity.¹³¹ In addition, comparing TIP gravestones with the much more prevalent rider examples points out the nuanced ways in which auxiliaries experimented with certain designs and adapted them to their particular contexts. This approach also illustrates how certain funerary styles became fashionable and spread across the Empire, as is the case with rider iconography, while others, such as the TIP tombstones, were relegated to a short, highly localized lifespan along the Rhineland. Finally, my approach will stress the idiosyncratic character of each tombstone beyond the typological categories with which they align. These artifacts reveal as much about the individual soldier and the choices made to memorialize him as they do about his collective group identity forged within the *auxilia*.

Totenmahl (“Death Banquet”)

The Totenmahl motif can be considered the most unvarying portion of the TIP tombstones. Only the formulaic repetition of the Latin inscriptions accompanying it, which will

¹²⁹ James, “Community of Soldiers,” 14-18, 24; Holder, “Studies in the Auxilia,” 142; Hope, “Inscriptions and Sculpture,” 173, 177; Hope, “Trophies and Tombstones,” 85-87; M.A. Speidel, “The Roman Army,” 326; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, esp. 10-11, 26-27.

¹³⁰ Roymans, *Tribal Societies*; Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation”; Roymans, “Sword or the Plough”; Derks, *Gods, Temples*; Nicolay, “Use and Significance”; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*.

¹³¹ Anderson, *Roman Military Tombstones*, 28 comes close in his assertion, for example, that the Rhineland became a “fertile breeding ground for new designs”; yet, even here, the emphasis lies with artistic motifs, and not the associations with identity which likely accompanied them.

be addressed below, exhibit comparable repetition. However, unlike inscriptions, the banquet scene does not emphasize the deceased's individuality. Instead, this section of the tombstone adheres largely to the precedent set in the Roman, and, before that, the Hellenistic world.¹³² In the Rhineland examples, the deceased is depicted in thoroughly Mediterranean fashion: *togatus*, reclined upon a dining couch with a cup in his hand taken from the small table placed in the foreground, and with a slave waiting in attendance (**Fig. 1, 2, 6, 7, 9**). Beyond these basic design elements, there is a specificity to the way in which each element is executed as well: the deceased is always laying on his left side with his right leg somewhat elevated; the three-legged table holding up additional drinking vessels; the slave standing to the viewer's left with the same posture of having his hands clasped as he awaits further instruction. This level of uniformity reflects how closely artists adhered to a standardized theme, and presumably also how auxiliaries themselves desired to be portrayed.¹³³ Yet even within this generalized template, there was ample opportunity for the client to customize the product they had commissioned. Despite the relative uniformity of the Totenmahl portion of the TIP motif, the tombstone of Oclatius (**Fig. 4**) of the *ala Afrorum* underscores a patent desire to project the deceased in a particular manner by replacing the typical banquet scene with an image of the deceased in uniform with a military standard, in accordance with his role as a *signifer*. This instance demonstrates the willingness and ability of both artisans and customers to experiment with emergent designs to create idiosyncratic monuments.

¹³² Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, 104.

¹³³ Tombstones were most often put up by an heir – presumably a fellow soldier. However, I will discuss below why this is not problematic for examining the perspective of auxiliaries; see footnote 157. The *alae* used banquet reliefs as a general type most regularly in the first and second centuries; see Noelke, “Zur Chronologie der Grabreliefs,” 61.

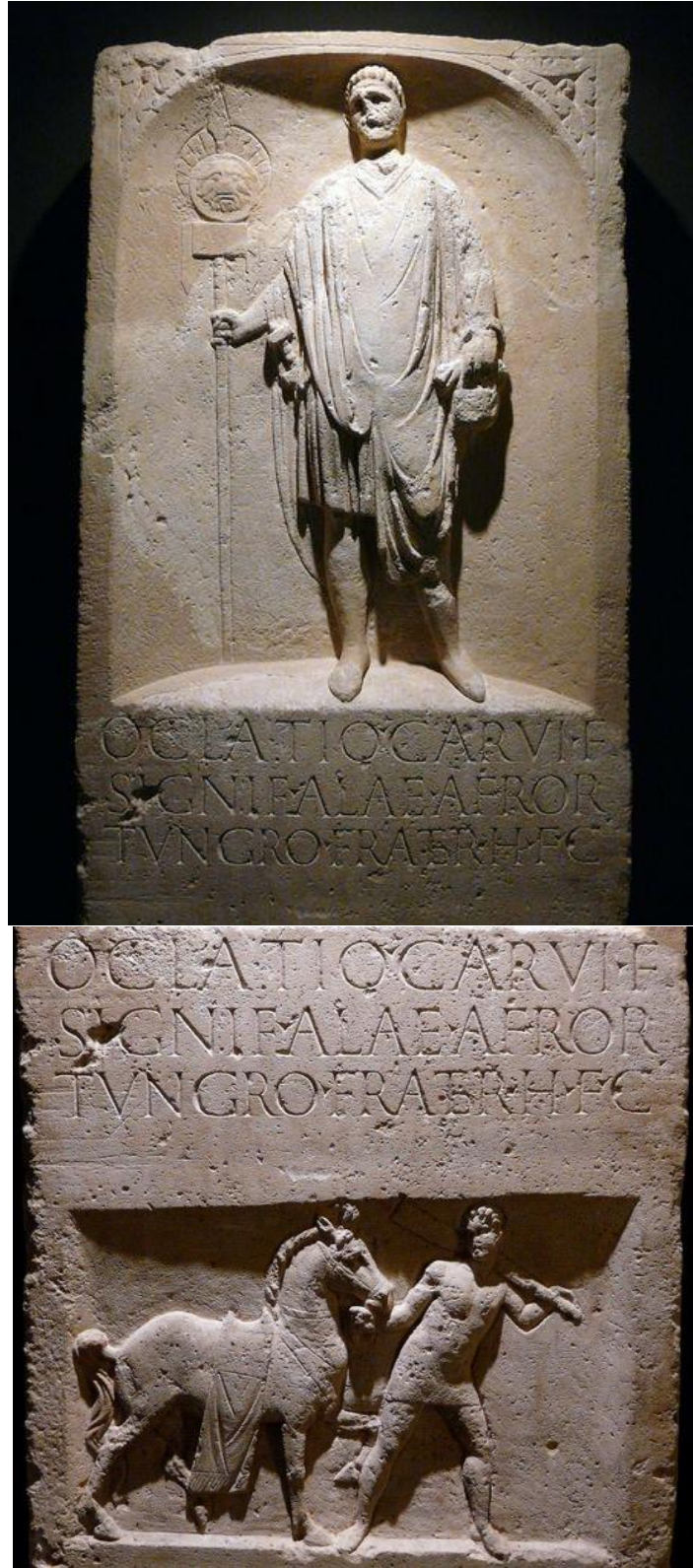


Fig. 4: Tombstone of Oclatius, *signifer* of the *ala Afrorum*
 AE 1924, 21

The question then becomes: how did the auxiliaries come into contact with this artistic representation, and why did it appeal to the native recruits over the course of the first century? The concept of the funerary banquet may have been introduced to the Rhineland in any number of ways.¹³⁴ Some have suggested that the similarities present on both Rhine and Balkan examples likely indicate that the connection between the two lies with Thracian auxiliary soldiers, who were transferred to the German frontier throughout the first century.¹³⁵ This is certainly a valid possibility, massive troop transfers occurred during and after the Batavian uprising beginning in 69 AD. An *equus* of the *ala Afrorum* by the name of Romanus identifies himself as *Dardanus* (**Fig. 5**) – a member of the Dardanian tribe, located in Illyria, which would become part of the Roman Province of Moesia Superior.¹³⁶ His tombstone, which has been dated to the Flavian period, currently exists only in part, but likely included a Totenmahl scene, judging by its similarity to other TIP models.¹³⁷ Romanus therefore definitely aids the interpretation that the Totenmahl could have been introduced by auxiliaries from eastern Europe, as his tombstone coincides both ethnically and temporally with the emergence of the TIP style in the Rhineland.

¹³⁴ Holder traces the introduction of Totenmahl reliefs in Lower Germany to the 80s AD, and in Upper Germany to the reign of Vespasian; see Holder, “Studies in the Auxilia,” 146 and 148, respectively.

¹³⁵ Noelke, “Grabreliefs mit Mahldarstellung,” 416; Stewart, “Totenmahl Reliefs,” 256.

¹³⁶ CIL 13, 8305 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 356.

¹³⁷ A view also shared by Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 356.



Fig. 5: Partial TIP tombstone of Romanus
CIL 13, 8305

It is not clear, however, that this is the only viable method of introduction. There are examples of TIP gravestone belonging to auxiliary cavalrymen serving on the German *limes* at the same time as the Dardanian Romanus which proudly display their personal tribal connections that are geographically much closer to the frontier. One such example belongs to an *equus* of the *ala I Flaviania* named Muranus who identifies himself as a Sequanian citizen (**Fig. 6**).¹³⁸

¹³⁸ CIL 13, 7579. Muranus and the following two examples all date to the Flavian period (i.e. contemporaneous with Romanus). A partial cavalryman tombstone belonging Silvanus, which exists now only as a heavily damaged Totenmahl scene; however, a drawing of the original exists, with an inscription indicating that the deceased was a Treveran; see CIL 13, 8655 = CSIR Deutschland III 1 Nr. 22. An *equus* by the name of Silius served in the Gallic unit of the *ala Picentiana*, but his gravestone does not provide any expressed tribal affiliation as those of Muranus and Silvanus do; see CIL 13, 6277.



Fig. 6: TIP tombstone of Muranus
CIL 13, 7579

The origins of these cavalymen and the tendency for their monuments to be dedicated in the TIP fashion complicate the argument that Totenmahl iconography was introduced by Thracian auxiliaries, as it seems completely plausible for their interest in the Totenmahl design to have developed along the frontier itself, and do not require the import of Thracian troops to be explained. Auxiliaries, who frequently modelled so much of their military experience from their legionary counterparts, might just as easily have been exposed to the Totenmahl motif through iconographic patterns already known to soldiers in the Roman army. For example, legionary

Titus Iulius Tuttius is depicted on his gravestone in the Totenmahl fashion (**Fig.7**).¹³⁹ Although his tombstone dates to the period of Domitian, his *stipendia* (years of service) and his unit affiliation make it clear that Titus served on the German *limes* around the time of the Batavian revolt.¹⁴⁰ Yet even here, it must be noted that Titus hails from Virunum in the province of Noricum, which is itself perhaps not so far removed from the supposed Thraco-Balkan origins of the Totenmahl concept.

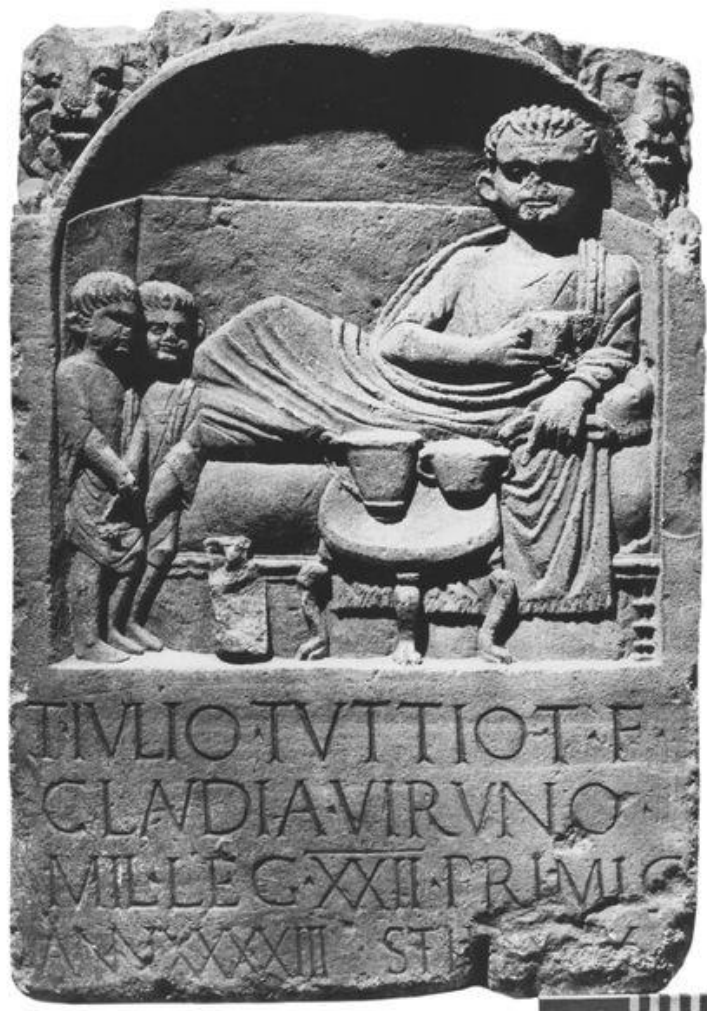


Fig. 7: Tombstone of legionary Titus Iulius Tuttius
CIL 13, 8289

¹³⁹ CIL 13, 8289 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 327.

¹⁴⁰ Titus lived forty-three years, serving eighteen in the army. By accepting a Domitianic date for the tombstone, his enrollment in the army can be placed at anywhere between 65-78 AD. *Ibid.*

Nevertheless, it must be remembered that banqueting iconography had a long pedigree in the sphere of the Roman world reaching back to Etruscan funerary culture. The so-called “Tomb of Hunting and Fishing,” dating to the 6th century BC, features a painted pediment depicting a banqueting couple, replete with servants, as does the 5th century “Tomb of the Leopards” (**Fig. 8**). We may therefore consider the general concept of the Totenmahl to have long-established Italic roots as well, which could easily have permeated the Germanic frontier through native contact with Roman soldiers. There is, in other words, no inherent need for a Thracian origin of the motif.¹⁴¹ In fact, it is best to interpret the design as an adaptable iconographic element circulating the Mediterranean region more generally across a vast span of time.

¹⁴¹ See Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, 25-33 for a brief sketch of banqueting iconography in Etruscan tradition. See also footnote 146 below on *kline* monuments.



Fig. 8: Tomb of the Leopards, Tarquinia

The genesis of Totenmahl iconography matters only insofar as we are concerned with determining whence auxiliaries absorbed concepts which they then applied for their own, entirely distinctive purposes. It must be remembered that the significance of imagery can vary in different settings for different people. In other words, the source matters less than the practical and ideological function, which, in the case of TIP gravestones, was to aid in constructing auxiliary identity within the heterogeneous frontier setting. It must be acknowledged from the onset that it is impossible to assign meaning to Totenmahl reliefs with any real precision; its eventual ubiquity across the Empire dilutes any possibility for ascertaining a uniform and diachronic cultural message. Instead, as Katherine Dunbabin and others have suggested, we

should view the Totenmahl design as one that is primed for adaptation to a variety of contexts.¹⁴² Since the motif itself has no obvious connection to the military domain,¹⁴³ we must speculate as to its appeal for members of the *auxilia*. While scholars have often appropriately related funerary banquet imagery to conceptions about the afterlife,¹⁴⁴ this chapter is primarily concerned with the earthly significance of the tombstones as representations of the identity of the deceased. To this end, there are a range of possible values and intended meanings associated with Totenmahl iconography.¹⁴⁵ They are clearly aspirational, and are “buying into traditional genres” of the Graeco-Roman world associated with a non-military lifestyle which emphasized characteristics of an elite civilian life marked by leisure, thereby reflecting an implicit status claim.¹⁴⁶ Peter Noelke has posited that banqueting iconography in the context of lower ranking soldiers, including our cavalrymen, likely reflect aspirations of a life not lived,¹⁴⁷ especially given the many examples whose listed *stipendia* indicate the soldier died before finishing his term of service. In this sense, the soldiers intended to portray themselves or their fallen comrades misleadingly to onlookers as individuals who had attained a respectable civic station in addition to – and indeed as a result of – meritorious service in the Roman army, as indicated on TIP inscriptions. This disparity speaks to the liminal status of auxiliaries, as well as to their methods

¹⁴² Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, 7; Stewart, “Totenmahl Reliefs,” 270-1.

¹⁴³ This is to say that soldiers were unlikely to have taken part in banquets of this kind on the frontier; see Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, 34.

¹⁴⁴ Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, 108 addresses this trend in scholarship. Dunbabin notes the tombstone of C. Rubrius Urbanus, which, amazingly enough, actually explains the intention behind the banquet iconography on his gravestone – depicting how he would like to have lived, and how he hopes to exist in the afterlife; see Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, 1; CIL 6, 2553; see also Stewart, “Totenmahl Reliefs,” 255.

¹⁴⁵ Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, 7.

¹⁴⁶ Quote from Coulston, “Military Identity,” 149; see also Hope, “Words and Pictures,” 253; Hope, “Inscriptions and Sculpture,” 176. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, 110-14 uses the similarly styled *kline* monuments popular in Rome during the first and second centuries AD to illustrate the attempts by non-elite sections of Roman society to assert their status.

¹⁴⁷ Noelke, “Grabreliefs mit Mahldarstellung,” 411.

of constructing their own identities as they countenanced a decades long period of transition from *peregrinus* to *civis*.

Finally, we must address the question of the degree to which we may consider these Totenmahl reliefs to be reflective of an auxiliary soldier's "Roman" identity. It would, of course, be senseless to assume that exposure to the overwhelming prevalence of banqueting iconography in the Graeco-Roman world had little effect on native soldiers stationed along the Rhine. The *auxilia* clearly adopted the theme, in one way or another, from their conquerors – be it through contact with Roman soldiers and civilian traders, or via the arrival of Thracian troops in service of Rome. However, it would also be wholly inaccurate to view Totenmahl iconography as mere appropriation of Roman culture. Valerie Hope finds that, while auxiliary monuments frequently aspire to reflect a certain element of "Romanness"¹⁴⁸ there was a "fluidity and adaptability of *Romanitas*."¹⁴⁹ The banquet does not represent the Roman status of the auxiliaries, but rather, the *claim* to Roman status, which eluded them unless they were fortunate enough to fulfill their mandatory twenty-five years of service.¹⁵⁰ There is therefore perhaps a sense of compensation on display for their perceived inferiority as marginal figures within the Roman world.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, for however much these cavalymen adopted the Totenmahl theme in order to display "Roman" aspects of their identities, its purpose was entirely unique to their own social position as non-citizen, non-Italic soldiers. Whether intending to assert claims to wealth, civil status, the hope for a pleasant afterlife – or indeed a combination of these and other desires – having themselves depicted in the fashion of Totenmahl iconography allowed auxiliaries to help

¹⁴⁸ Hope, "Words and Pictures," 257.

¹⁴⁹ Hope, "Constructing Roman Identity," 117.

¹⁵⁰ Hope, "Words and Pictures," 257. It is perhaps not surprising that, of the TIP tombstones I have compiled, there is not one instance of a cavalryman who has completed his twenty-five years. The closest is that of Silius, who died just short of achieving discharge, having served twenty-four years in the *auxilia*; see CIL 13, 6277.

¹⁵¹ Hope, "Inscriptions and Sculpture," 179.

negotiate their place in the new, highly structured world and social position which they now inhabited.

Inscriptions

The amount of space dedicated to the epigraphic portion of TIP monuments is often equivalent to the iconography situated above and below it.¹⁵² This would seem to indicate that the text holds no greater or lesser prominence for the ancient dedicator wishing to imbue the gravestone with meaning, and therefore gives us an even greater incentive to interpret the text and images holistically and in a complimentary way. Much like the presence of the Totenmahl motif, the inscriptions on military tombstones initially give the viewer a distinctly “Roman” impression. They are, of course, in Latin script, which has been one of the main qualities scholars have emphasized when situating auxiliary epigraphic material within the framework of Romanization. It is obvious that any familiarity with Latin acquired by these soldiers likely occurred within the context of their service in the army. This is especially true for the first century – the period in which the tombstones included in this study were created, and a time when Rome’s cultural presence along the Rhine was only beginning to impact local societies. However, certain aspects of the inscriptions allow for a deeper analysis, and the possibility to broaden them from being merely a mark of native acculturation via military service to a declaration of the soldier’s individual and collective identity.

In order to advance beyond classifying auxiliary inscriptions as simply an obvious mark of Romanization, it is first necessary to define the characteristics which would make them

¹⁵² e.g. CIL 13, 8303: *L(ucius) Crispi f(ilius) cives Marsacus*; CIL 13, 8304: *Oluper Cergaepuri f(ilius)*; CIL 13, 8519: *Albanus Vitalus*; CIL 13, 8309 *Marcus Sacrius Primigenius*. See also the example of CIL 13, 8312: *Longinus Biarta Bessus*, which stands out for the extraordinary primacy given to imagery over text, with the inscription being placed between the Totenmahl and Pferdevorführung scene as a thin strip.

“Roman,” and those which might incorporate foreign elements into a distinctly Roman practice. Valerie Hope states quite straightforwardly that, “to erect a tombstone inscribed with a Latin epitaph was a Roman act” which encapsulated the soldier’s desire to lay claim to his place in Roman society.¹⁵³ Similarly, Jonathan Edmondson has concluded from his study into the native writing practices in Roman Lusitania that an epitaph should be considered as “a distinctly *Roman* cultural act.”¹⁵⁴ It follows then that before the actual text on the tombstones is even considered, the desire to put up a tombstone, and to do so in Latin, is already to be understood as an adopted, internalized Roman cultural practice.¹⁵⁵ This is surely the case, as we have no indications of a similar practice existing in the late pre-Roman Iron Age Celtic and Germanic societies. However, any assertion or adoption of Roman identity in the process of erecting a tombstone does not preclude the potential for alternative, native cultural traits to exist simultaneously. In other words, erecting a tombstone in Latin is not *only* a Roman cultural act.

Moving past the practice of setting up a tombstone itself to the actual textual content of the inscriptions, it becomes clear that the auxiliaries composed a nuanced presentation of themselves which could deviate from what has been described as the “almost suffocating sameness of Roman epigraphy,”¹⁵⁶ exemplified perhaps most clearly in the formulaic style of military tombstone inscriptions. Legionary inscriptions often included particular information about the deceased in an unvarying manner: name, father’s name, tribe, rank, unit, years of service (*stipendia*), and sometimes the dedicator of the tombstone itself.¹⁵⁷ Auxiliary tombstones

¹⁵³ Hope, “Constructing Roman Identity,” 117; see also Saddington, *Development of the Roman Auxiliary*, 192.

¹⁵⁴ Edmondson, “Writing Latin,” 43 (author’s original emphasis).

¹⁵⁵ Meyer, “Explaining the Epigraphic Habit,” 83.

¹⁵⁶ Edmondson, “Writing Latin,” 57.

¹⁵⁷ The final piece of information may seem troublesome for my analysis which seeks to explicate the connection between the identity of the deceased auxiliary cavalryman and his tombstone, since in most cases it was an anonymous *heres* who had it erected. This is not so much of a concern, however, since the dedicators in question were themselves likely also fellow soldiers. This deduction stems from the fact that most of the *equites alarum/cohortum* on these tombstones had not completed their mandatory twenty-five years of service at the time of

are patently based on this legionary model, adopting the same format and exhibiting the same information. Yet within this seemingly unoriginal, recurrent structure, lies the potential for a measure of individual expression through the retention of native identity markers, such as filiation via the inclusion of a patronymic and the presence of tribal affiliations. Both of these characteristics feature prominently on legionary tombstones as well, making the addition of tribe and filiation to one's monument a convention which auxiliaries adopted from their Roman comrades. Nevertheless, regardless of formulaic indistinguishability in the case of both auxiliary and legionary inscriptions, the personal information provided was included with clear intent: to serve as distinguishing markers of the deceased's individuality.

It may be argued that, despite the inclusion of new Celtic and Germanic names and tribes, auxiliaries did not innovate upon conventional epigraphic practice. In my view, however, accepting this position would miss the essential point of the tombstones, since expressions of identity need not stand out from a corpus of more or less uniform evidence in order to hold significance. Rather, it is necessary to consider how ancient persons would have valued their presentation, which may not have necessarily deemed individuality to stem from deviation. In fact, collective social identity seems instead to have been a powerful impetus behind the desire to erect a monument. Auxiliaries therefore signaled their communal affiliation by adhering to the customary military inscription format, which simultaneously accommodated the projection of one's individual identity within the broader group environment.

their death, making them ineligible for an official Roman will to designate an heir, and were therefore reliant on their *commilitones* to see to their burial. And so, the choices of the dedicators would likely have been incredibly close to how the deceased would have wanted to be remembered; see Hope, "Inscriptions and Sculpture," 177; see also the tombstone of Caius Iulius Primus (**Fig. 2**), CIL 13, 8670: *heres amico suo*.

Epigraphic materials reflect the ability for both the Latin language and the practice of inscribing to exhibit a fascinating degree of retention of and accommodation to foreign elements. J.N. Adams has addressed the value of patronymic filiation in inscriptions, and has shown that names, perhaps not surprisingly, have the incredible capacity at times to resist change. To illustrate this, Adams uses several instances of Greek filiations from Delos being rendered into Latin, but with the original Greek genitive ending (-ου) retained through transliteration (i.e. Ἀπροδισίου = Aprodisiu).¹⁵⁸ At the same time, “old names may be adapted morphologically to the new language.”¹⁵⁹ In the context of auxiliary tombstones, this phenomenon is present in the patronymic inclusions, where non-Roman names are altered to reflect *Latin* morphology. An instance of this practice can be seen, for example, with a cavalryman of the *ala Afrorum*: *Oluper Cergaepuri filius* (**Fig. 9**).¹⁶⁰ While we may presume that the stem of the father’s name likely reflects its original native pronunciation to some degree, it seems even more likely that the genitive Latin ending was imposed in order to accommodate the Roman patronymic formula: genitive + *filius*. The result is a mixture of Roman and native identifiers, which highlights the importance of both for the deceased.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Adams, *Bilingualism*, 377.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 753, also 576.

¹⁶⁰ CIL 13, 8304; Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 354 interpret both names as Thracian in origin, and, in any case, “lassen eine nichtrömische Herkunft vermuten.”

¹⁶¹ Saddington, *Development of the Roman Auxiliary*, 192 recognizes this phenomenon, but his interpretation is too simplistic in its position that auxiliaries were mimicking Roman ways to inferior effect.



Fig. 9: Tombstone of Oluper, son of Cergaeurus
CIL 13, 8304

It might be objected that such a small inclusion of “native” markers amounts to little in the context of such an overwhelmingly Roman-style inscription. However, Adams has posited that the minimal inclusion of native elements has the practical effect of actually highlighting its importance, “mak[ing] their alien identity far more vivid.”¹⁶² Paul Holder has similarly argued that the native use of a father’s *cognomen* offered an individual the ability to “more easily retain his tribal identity, especially as Latin *cognomina* rather than local ones were being increasingly used.”¹⁶³ Finally, it is probably best to approach the evidence from the perspective that everything included in an inscription is equally informative. For monuments as detailed and expensive as the ones in question, it seems that cost would inhibit the inclusion of all but the most important and meaningful information for the deceased, and incentivize the client’s input on customized features – especially unit, tribal, and familial affiliations.

Auxiliary inscriptions were therefore aimed at highlighting connections with various groups as well as emphasizing the personal attributes of the individual cavalryman. More generally, we should not ignore the value that the detailed, if entirely formulaic, structure of military inscriptions could convey. Again, similarity does not equate to a lack of individuality. The particular combinations that were crafted on each auxiliary’s tombstone *were* individualized expression of a soldier’s own personal story. In a sense, the formula of a military tombstone was not a banal declaration in a sea of near identical examples, but instead “offered a partial remedy to the problem of how to surpass and conform at the same time.”¹⁶⁴ This was individuality with a purpose: to illustrate one’s singular position within a wider military network which was to be respected. Ralph Häussler finds that under the Empire, inscriptions set up by natives adopted the

¹⁶² Adams, *Bilingualism*, 283.

¹⁶³ Holder, “Studies in the Auxilia,” 52. In addition, Holder finds that the inclusion of filiation for tribal association seems to be a frequent tendency “in Celtic areas.”

¹⁶⁴ Woolf, “Monumental Writing,” 32, also 29; see also Alston, “The Ties that Bind,” 190.

Roman precedent of emphasizing career achievements,¹⁶⁵ and that, along with taking on amalgamated Romano-native names, this “reflects an attempt to express self-identity within both Roman power structures and local traditions.”¹⁶⁶ Under the Empire then, the Latin language developed a particular association with civic and military professions, which is clearly reflected in auxiliary tombstones as the proper outlet through which a soldier is expected to represent himself.¹⁶⁷ Adams highlights the special value that Latin developed within the army, as it “became a marker of military identity,” most prominently for soldiers who were incorporated from areas which were not originally Latin-speaking.¹⁶⁸

The military connections inherent in soldiers’ tombstones should not be taken to reflect their comprehensive identity, and one should exhibit due caution when labeling “Roman” even those who are lacking native characteristics. In fact, Saddington has warned against necessarily interpreting auxiliaries using the *tria nomina* as being Roman citizens, due to the fact that the combination was also used by auxiliaries who had not yet completed their term of service.¹⁶⁹ He concludes that the enlisted *auxilia* who were adopting the *tria nomina* formulation must have been using it in a military capacity, against which there was apparently no penalty. This position has the effect of bolstering the connection between Latinity and military identity in the Roman army. Once again, as with auxiliaries who employed the Totenmahl motif discussed above, we encounter non-citizens who recognized the prestige associated with having a Roman name and sought to project themselves accordingly,¹⁷⁰ as can be gleaned from the often-cited letter of an

¹⁶⁵ Häussler, “Writing Latin,” 69.

¹⁶⁶ Häussler, “Writing Latin,” 73.

¹⁶⁷ Adams, *Bilingualism*, 356 discusses professional associations that language usage can develop.

¹⁶⁸ Adams, *Bilingualism*, 760.

¹⁶⁹ Saddington, “Sorts of Names Used,” 163, 175. Additionally, Holder, “Studies in the Auxilia,” 53 posits that a lacking *tria nomina* can in no way “be taken as definite proof of peregrine status. In sum, the presence or lack of the *tria nomina* is less useful for determining actual citizenship status than it is for the individual’s *projected* identity.

¹⁷⁰ Saddington, “Sorts of Names Used,” 176.

ebullient recruit named Apion in which he informs his family of his new “Roman name,” Antonius Maximus, given to him upon joining the navy.¹⁷¹ Evidence in support of this position is also present in auxiliary tombstones that exhibit a disparity between the Roman name of the deceased and their length of service (*stipendia*) listed in number of years. Caius Romanus, an *eques* of the *ala Noricorum*, boasts a name with clear Roman influence, despite having served only 19 of the typical 25 years of service in order to earn Roman citizenship.¹⁷² Likewise, Caius Iulius Primus bears a *tria nomina* with no trace of indigenous roots, despite having only served seven years in the *auxilia* (**Fig. 2**).¹⁷³ By contrast, the tombstone of Titus Flavius Bassus (**Fig. 11**) indicates that he served 26 years in the very same unit as Romanus – a fact that is commensurately reflected in his use of the *tria nomina*.¹⁷⁴ However, soldiers did not always promulgate their Roman moniker in a predictable manner, even when they had legally acquired citizenship. This is vividly expressed in the case of a soldier who had achieved veteran status (*missicius*), yet wished to be known (*ex testamento*) only as Leubius.¹⁷⁵ These examples demonstrate the inherent unreliability when looking to names as a method for deducing status, the freedom soldiers had to identify themselves as they wished on their tombstones, as well as

¹⁷¹ BGU II 423 (P. 7950). Some believe that this soldier’s status changed when joining the particular branch of service (the fleet at Misenum), granting him *Latinitas* (the Latin Right); see Winter, “In the Service of Rome,” 238f. n.1; Marotta, “Egyptians and Citizenship,” 185f.; Palme, “Alltagsgeschichte und Papyrologie,” 187. However, others argue that Roman names were given without a binding legal change in their status; see Saddington, “Sorts of Names Used,” 175 n.108, 176; Salomies, “Observations on Some Names,” 169f.; Lavan, “The Army and the Spread,” 36f. Similarly, Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army*, 166 implies that Apion would not have received citizenship until completing the standard 26 years of service for the Roman navy. See also Mann, “The Development of Auxiliary”; Hengstl, Nr. 84: “Brief eines jungen Flottensoldaten,” 215. For further examples of *peregrini* who were given Roman names while in service without the attendant citizenship, see Lavan, “The Army and the Spread,” 37 n.70.

¹⁷² CIL 13, 7029. Interestingly, patronymic information is absent, but this may simply be attributed to a lack of knowledge on the part of those erecting the monument to Romanus (i.e. a comrade designated as *heres*).

¹⁷³ CIL 7, 68 = RIB 1, 109. It is possible that Primus already enjoyed Roman citizenship prior to joining the *auxilia*; however, the patronymic filiation (*Adari filius*) suggests that the cavalryman’s father was not a citizen, and that Primus himself was not born with citizenship; similarly, Sextus Valerius Genialis (**Fig. 15**) served twenty years.

¹⁷⁴ CIL 13, 8308.

¹⁷⁵ CIL 13, 11709. For the early imperial preference to list a single name, see Saddington, “Sorts of Names Used,” 174. See also the tombstone of Licinius (CIL 13, 6234), who served 26 years, yet whose heir, Tiberius Iulius Capito, opted only to include a patronym (*Clossi filius*) and a tribal identity (*Helvetius*) as additional information.

the unpredictable and personalized ways in which soldiers chose to employ or avoid the use of Roman names.

Similarly, Häussler states that Latin names used in an “official” capacity within the military sphere “may not have corresponded with someone’s identity within private social groups such as the family.”¹⁷⁶ In other words, the extraordinarily brief summary of the soldier’s life provided by an inscription must not be taken as conveying his identity in its entirety. There are many ways in which the text could be potentially misleading. The tombstone may have been seen by some as a medium on which to present the most “Roman self” possible by adopting a *tria nomina* combination which spoke very little to their conventional identity. Alternatively, as we have seen, the retention of native elements alongside standardized military expressions could also be seen as a fusion of two or more cultures. There is simply no way of ascertaining a soldier’s intention behind his use or avoidance of Latin.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the overwhelming uniformity of the auxiliary inscriptions in their capacity to present a more Roman depiction of the deceased is probably best understood to represent his “aspired displayed identity” for those intended to see it.¹⁷⁸

This brings us to the question of who the target audience was for these monuments, which also requires a discussion on displays of power. While the imagery and textual references in the TIP and rider tombstones were almost certainly most comprehensible to other military personnel, Hope reminds us that “the impact of such memorials...on the wider indigenous audience should not be underestimated.”¹⁷⁹ Not only could images be readily perceived by all natives, but inscriptions themselves could serve a function as mnemonic devices which had the

¹⁷⁶ Häussler, “Writing Latin,” 67.

¹⁷⁷ Adams, *Bilingualism*, 760.

¹⁷⁸ Gavrielatos, “Latinate Nomenclature,” 159; also, Häussler, “Writing Latin,” 66.

¹⁷⁹ Hope, “Trophies and Tombstones,” 87; also, Coulston, “Military Identity,” 150.

ability to impart a powerful presence, even on the illiterate.¹⁸⁰ The reason for this was because of the clear connections to Roman power, which the very use of Latin in and of itself had the ability to communicate.¹⁸¹ To see a tombstone in the language of the conqueror, in short, instantly conjured up a whole host of connections in the mind of the viewer. This fact was not likely lost on the dedicator, as soldiers' tombstones of the first century were found along heavily militarized zones which also had a great number of native inhabitants and civilian traffic and used such locations to their fullest effect.¹⁸² The graves sought to tap into the prestige value that Latin held at the time,¹⁸³ which simultaneously spoke to those who could read and appreciate the facility of the deceased with such a commodity, as well as to those who were outside of the circle of knowledge – in either case, the intention was one and the same: an expression of power and achievement.¹⁸⁴ Underneath these claims, however, may lie a measure of diffidence and a mindset of inferiority.¹⁸⁵ If auxiliary tombstones were indeed more aspirational than reflective,¹⁸⁶ then it is possible that they stood as a way to compensate for anxieties about the deceased's social status as a peregrine, and attempt to ensure a lasting, respected presence, and a “claimed authority.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁰ On gravestones functioning as mnemonic devices for both the literate and non-literate through their symbolism, see Woolf, “Monumental Writing,” 25, 27f.; Edmondson, “Writing Latin,” 48.

¹⁸¹ Adams acknowledges the ways in which language may be used as a demonstration of power, such as in the case of a Roman soldier choosing to speak Latin to a native whom he knows to be a non-speaker; see Adams, *Bilingualism*, 413, 576f.

¹⁸² Woolf, “Monumental Writing,” 32.

¹⁸³ Adams, *Bilingualism*, 759; Edmondson, “Writing Latin,” 43; see also Woolf, “Power and the Spread,” 95.

¹⁸⁴ Speidel, “The Roman Army,” 326 argues that the tombstones were primarily intended to speak to a military audience, based on their content and location.

¹⁸⁵ For example, Hope interprets the inclusion of native names as representing the auxiliary soldier's inferiority, for which the images were meant to negate. Hope, “Inscriptions and Sculpture,” 176. cf. footnote 146. This is not wholly convincing, since, as discussed above, the dedicator could have easily omitted native elements, and even adopted a *tria nomina*; see Saddington, “Sorts of Names Used,” 163, 175.

¹⁸⁶ See footnote 143.

¹⁸⁷ Woolf, “Monumental Writing,” 28, 31.

Pferdevorführung (“Horse Presentation”)

The third and final portion of the TIP tombstone type consists of a scene often referred to as a *Pferdevorführung*, which is undoubtedly the most peculiar portion of the TIP combination due to its restriction to the Rhine frontier during the period in question, as well as for its relatively overlooked significance. The motif consists of a centrally placed horse, equipped with a saddle, bardings (body armour), chamfrons (head protection), and other assorted military accoutrements (**Fig. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9**),¹⁸⁸ as well as a nearby male figure who is often identified as a *calo* (servant/groom).¹⁸⁹ The horse is either in standing or walking/trotting pose facing the viewer’s right, with the accompanying male normally behind the horse,¹⁹⁰ and clearly leading the horse in both forms. Finer details of the iconography will be assessed below for their worth in interpreting the scene.

While the imagery of the *Pferdevorführung* is regularly acknowledged in works associated with funeral commemoration associated with auxiliary cavalrymen, the discussion is nevertheless typically framed within the context of the upper *Totenmahl* theme. The *Pferdevorführung* motif is therefore simply appended to the death banquet as a variation of the “*Totenmahl* style” tombstones.¹⁹¹ This is almost certainly the result of a lacking solid precedent for this imagery from which scholars can draw conclusions about the scene’s meaning and purpose on military tombstones. The result has been a lack of engagement with the

¹⁸⁸ A particularly detailed example can be observed in the example of M. Aemilius Durises (CIL 13, 8311).

¹⁸⁹ Speidel, “The Soldiers’ Servants”; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 266.

¹⁹⁰ The male figure can be found in front of the horse on the tombstone of *Silius Attonis filius* (CIL 13, 6277). A fragment of what was likely a TIP stone exists which also seems to depict a man leading a horse from the front (CIL 13, 11948). A drawing of a previously well-preserved gravestone of Silvanus (CIL 13, 8655) also indicates that the *Pferdevorführung* scene originally had the male figure in front of the horse.

¹⁹¹ Instances of the *Pferdevorführung* scene being subsumed under the *Totenmahl* model can be found in Noelke, “Zur Chronologie der Grabreliefs,” 61; Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, 34; Stewart, “*Totenmahl* Reliefs,” 271; Hope, “Inscriptions and Sculpture,” 175; Hope, “Words and Pictures,” 253; Heidenreich, “Self-Presentation of the Roman Soldier,” 102 refers to the tombstone of M. Sacrius Primigenius (CIL 13, 8309) directly as “a funerary banquet type,” despite the presence of a *Pferdevorführung* scene making up a large portion of the piece.

Pferdevorführung theme and its combination with both banqueting imagery and military inscriptions. Rather than dismiss the design as merely a variation on the popular Totenmahl type gravestone, I suggest that a more fruitful approach would be to examine why this scene was chosen to be incorporated in certain gravestones, and to recognize the degree of innovation that was employed in the development of Pferdevorführung iconography. As in the above discussion of military inscriptions, we should approach tombstone iconography in a similar manner by adopting the principle that everything included holds some level of significance. From this perspective, a more holistic understanding of the tombstones can be achieved, with each of their constituent parts contributing to the overall intended message concerning the deceased's identity.

The depiction of a horse being led on funerary iconography did not, of course, originate on the Rhine frontier. As a generalized concept, it had a long tradition stemming from the east which can be traced back centuries.¹⁹² However, within the environment of the Roman military, this theme was perhaps appropriated by and adapted to the circumstances of the *auxilia*. In the first place, a proper identification of the figures in the imagery is necessary before any purpose of the scene can be posited. As previously stated, since the horse is normally clad in military paraphernalia, it is obviously meant to refer the individual cavalryman's *equus*. In contrast, the significance of the male figure present has been a topic of some debate. Most scholars have accepted that the person should be understood as a *calo*, or servant, of the *eques*.¹⁹³ Addressing this issue directly, M.P. Speidel has concluded that the figure must be a *calo* for several reasons. First, by assessing a 3rd century duty roster for the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* found at Dura-

¹⁹² Gabelmann, "Pantherfellschabracken," 26. Gabelmann also provides an example of this from Larissa-Bahnhof, which dates somewhere between the 4th-2nd c. BC. Ibid, fig. 4., 27; Mattern, "Bilder römischer Reitkunst," 291 follows this approach as well.

¹⁹³ Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 266 accepts that the figure is a "groom/slave"; see also Noelke, "Grabreliefs mit Mahldarstellung," 407; Noelke, "Zur Chronologie der Grabreliefs," 61; Hope, "Inscriptions and Sculpture," 175; Hope, "Words and Pictures," 253.

Europos, Speidel notes that cavalymen in the unit were allotted double rations, which were likely meant for their accompanying servants.¹⁹⁴ Second, since later tombstones found in Rome belonging to the *equites singulares* include the pattern developed on the Rhine and clearly display the elite cavalymen's servants, we can deduce retrospectively that that the figure is the same as in our TIP gravestones.¹⁹⁵

Other scholars have left open the possibility that the *calo* figure could instead represent the *eques* himself. While acknowledging that the figure potentially represents a slave, Dixon and Southern highlight the fact that we cannot be absolutely certain that every enlisted man owned a slave, and that responsibility for the horse ultimately fell upon the rider himself.¹⁹⁶ Similarly, Mattern notes how the figure is frequently armed, making him unlikely to have been a *calo*.¹⁹⁷ This issue of armament, however, can be discounted by considering descriptions of the soldiers' slaves from ancient sources and by comparing the potential *calo* in the *Pferdevorführung* with the virtually identical and incontestable *calo* standing behind the *eques* in the rider reliefs, which will be discussed below. Josephus in particular showers praise on the Romans for having the foresight to use their servants in a military capacity while on campaign. They were trained to take part in all of their masters' dangers in battle, and this seems to be reflected in the rider tombstones, which depict the *calo* assisting during combat as a reliable bearer of equipment.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Speidel, "The Soldiers' Servants," 241-2.

¹⁹⁵ Speidel, "The Soldiers' Servants," 241.

¹⁹⁶ Dixon and Southern, *The Roman Cavalry*, 204. Using the TIP gravestone of M. Sacrius Primigenius, the authors interpret the *calo* figure to actually be Primigenius himself. *Ibid.*, fig. 15.

¹⁹⁷ Mattern, "Bilder Römischer Reitkunst," 294-95 uses the gravestone of Silius Attonis f(i)lius (CIL 13, 6277) in her conclusion.

¹⁹⁸ Caesar (Caes. *Bell. Af.* 85) mentions that his camp was defended while the army was away by *servitiis puerisque*, which plausibly included *calones*. Their usage of *lapis pilisque* indicates that they were well prepared for such an exigency. Josephus (Jos. *B.I. III.* 69-71) uses two terms – *θεραπόντων* and *τὸ οἰκετικὸν* – in his discussion to refer to the soldiers' attendants, which would seem to indicate that servants must have also been slaves. Speidel, "The Soldiers' Servants," 244-5 argues that these accounts provide sound evidence to accept that *calones* were often armed and armored.

Furthermore, from a compositional standpoint, it seems likely that the figure is a *calo*. The intended focus of the scene is undoubtedly the horse itself, bedecked as it is with wartime trappings, and occupying the bottom central position of the tombstone. In contrast, the *calo* in almost all cases stands behind the horse, on the viewer's left, and is minimally decorated (if at all) in the reliefs.¹⁹⁹ Compared with the orientation of the Totenmahl image above, it becomes clear that there is a manifest correspondence between the reclined figure above and the horse below, as well as the servant at the banquet and the *calo* figure in the *Pferdevorführung* below him. In keeping with the desire to memorialize the deceased, it would make little sense to place him in such a seemingly marginal role as the *calo* fills in the *Pferdevorführung* scene. Why, for example, would the *equus* be dressed less ostentatiously than the horse accompanying him? At the banquet above, he is represented as *togatus*, making claim to his status. Moreover, the clear presence of a servant in the Totenmahl motif would reasonably be mirrored in the horse display below, as a similar marker of the cavalryman's prestige. Additionally, by comparing the *calo* figure in the *Pferdevorführung* with rider gravestones also depicting a servant, clear parallels can be drawn. In both styles, the *calo* occupies a marginal position to the side of the horse, and is lightly armed – sometimes with a helmet and holding spare javelins for his master.²⁰⁰ Given the similarities between the figures on the two different types of gravestones, it is reasonable to

¹⁹⁹ A relief taken by itself can potentially be misleading, since additional detail could have been rendered through paint; see Mattern, "Bilder Römischer Reitkunst," 301. The gravestone of G. Iulius Primus (**Fig. 2**) (CIL 13, 8670) depicts a *calo* who, as the relief now stands, appears entirely nude. In this instance, we may be inclined to believe that clothing was previously painted on; however, this is far from necessary in every case, since clothing also appears chiseled into the stone.

²⁰⁰ For instances of *calones* in the horse presentation bearing both spears and what appear to be helmets of some kind: CIL 13, 8303, 8305, 8309, 8311, 8312. For riders with *calones* who have both helmets and javelins: CIL 13, 7023, 7029, 7034, 7585, 8308, 1170.

conclude that the servant figure in the rider reliefs properly informs us that the person in the Perdevorführung is also a *calo*.²⁰¹

Interpreting the *calo* and his relationship to the imagery in the Totenmahl helps us transition to the overall purpose of the Pferdevorführung scene – a matter similarly lacking consensus. As mentioned above, Valerie Hope finds that the entirety of TIP tombstones reflects a feeling of social inferiority on the part of the cavalymen, and stand as an effort to compensate for this marginal social rank.²⁰² From this perspective, each element of the tombstone has its own way of contributing to its overall status claim, which, in the case of the Pferdevorführung design, is displayed in the presence of the horse and *calo* – two indicators of the cavalryman’s power and prestige.²⁰³ Emblems such as these were intended to convey this message to both military and civilian onlookers alike.²⁰⁴ There may have been a special significance for other soldiers as they recognized that the deceased was a member of a mounted unit rather than a foot soldier, and that he also had a personal *calo* under his command. While we cannot be sure that every type of soldier in the Roman army had a servant assigned to him,²⁰⁵ the presence of a *calo* on gravestones would seem to convey a desire to differentiate the deceased from others who probably did not enjoy the same privilege, which is certainly the case with the inclusion of the horse itself.²⁰⁶ Wealth was intimately linked with conceptions of status in the Roman world, and this also applied to the structure of the army. Some scholars have therefore also viewed the

²⁰¹ Chronology of the monument type is also informative. The TIP format came into fashion *after* the prevalence of the rider relief type. Therefore, the image of the *calo* in the latter was likely incorporated into the former. Heidenreich, “Self-Presentation of the Roman Soldier,” 102 helps to corroborate this.

²⁰² Hope, “Inscriptions and Sculpture,” 179.

²⁰³ Hope, “Inscriptions and Sculpture,” 176.

²⁰⁴ See footnotes 57-58 above.

²⁰⁵ Speidel argues that each cavalryman certainly did, but notes that it is unclear in the case of other soldiers. Speidel, “The Soldiers’ Servants,” 240, 247.

²⁰⁶ Mattern, “Bilder Römischer Reitkunst,” 305 finds the Pferdevorführung scene to be an attempt at differentiation even within the Roman cavalry.

iconography of the cavalymen's tombstones as speaking to their wealth beyond the obvious monetary ostentation of having such a relief commissioned in their honor in the first place.²⁰⁷ As with the Totenmahl motif, the visual language of the *Pferdevorführung* had the potential to convey a variety of messages – *Romanitas*, wealth, elevated military rank – pertaining to the status of the deceased. This flexibility likely factored into the allure of selecting this type of gravestone. Finally, the scene is specifically tailored to the military values which pervaded the cavalymen's lives, illustrating the remarkable degree to which decorative patterns can exhibit alteration and innovation over time and in particular contexts as a result of individual personalization and developing group fashion.²⁰⁸

Rider Reliefs

Transitioning from TIP gravestones to those depicting the rider motif, one finds an incredibly different iconographic configuration, comprised of a single image rather than two separate scenes, and making an even more direct association with the military profession of the *equus* rendered in stone. However, for all of its differences from the TIP type, the rider reliefs nevertheless emphasize many of the same personal attributes of the deceased through the information they display: namely, status claims within the new Roman military system relating to wealth, honor, and prestige. As with the TIP model discussed above, the rider model demonstrates the capacity for auxiliaries to experiment with their iconographic representation during the first century by adopting certain “Roman” traits and adapting the gravestone to their particular environment. The result was, once again, an entirely new and composite style that

²⁰⁷ Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 266. Coulston, “Military Identity,” 149 states that the *calo* and horse combination found on the *Pferdevorführung* scenes signifies wealth.

²⁰⁸ Mattern, “Bilder Römischer Reitkunst,” 291, 296 notes that the previous *Pferdevorführung* theme was “vielfach variiert und rationalistisch umgedeutet” along the Rhine.

allowed for innovative customizations and gained a popularity with soldiers far beyond the Rhineland, most prominently in Britannia.

In general, the rider theme consists of the *eques* atop his warhorse while in motion – either galloping or, at least, trotting – and with each bedecked in military attire. The kinetic nature of the imagery is similar to that present in the *Pferdevorführung*, but evokes a much more intense reaction from the viewer, particularly for the violence that is frequently depicted. From the surviving exempla, the rider tombstones seem first to have developed in what would become Germania Superior, at Mogontiacum (Mainz).²⁰⁹ There is some debate as to how the style came into fashion, with some scholars positing that it was introduced through ethnically Thracian auxiliary units being transferred to the Rhine frontier, as with the *Totenmahl* theme.²¹⁰ It is argued that these soldiers brought with them the penchant for rider depictions stemming from pre-existing Thracian and Danubian rider cult representations from their homelands in the east.²¹¹ This interpretation has not gone unchallenged. Marjorie Mackintosh has claimed that, although there is a broad precedent for rider imagery in the Hellenistic realm which can be seen in examples such as the *Dexileos* relief,²¹² its introduction to the Rhine was more likely through

²⁰⁹ Gabelmann, “Römische Grabmonumente,” 157-59, fig. 23, 24 = CIL 13, 7026, CIL 13, 7050; Anderson, *Roman Military Tombstones*, 18.

²¹⁰ Noelke, “Grabreliefs mit Mahldarstellung,” 416; Stewart, “*Totenmahl* Reliefs,” 256. Anderson, while not committing to this theory, acknowledges that there is a correspondence between the rise in the rider style and the presence of Thracian units in the region; see Anderson, *Roman Military Tombstones*, 19, 21. The gravestone of C. Tutius (CIL 13, 7050) provides a prime example of this sort of correspondence: he served in the *Cohors (equitata) IV Thracum* and is identified as coming from the *Dansala* tribe in Thrace. A cavalry tombstone of the *ala Noricorum* from the Flavian period, Titus Flavius Bassus (CIL 13, 8308), also references his origins in this tribe; see Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 362. Pliny (Plin. *N.H.* 4.18) refers to the “*Denseletae*” of Thrace.

²¹¹ For a helpful overview of the development of the Thracian rider iconography and the ways it differs from the Danubian rider, see Dimitrova, “Inscriptions and Iconography,” see esp. 220-221; see also Mackintosh, *The Divine Rider*, 59. Mackintosh, *The Divine Rider*, 60 also notes the “close association of the cult with the military” in terms of the auxiliary tombstones that appear in Danubian territories.

²¹² Mackintosh, “Sources of the Horsemen,” 2, 4, 13.

an Italian intermediary, such as artists' familiarity with Etruscan funerary urns.²¹³ As with the Totenmahl and Pferdevorführung, however, the origins of the motif are significant for this study only up to a certain point. Exactly how the *auxilia* chose to adapt this generalized concept of depicting a rider to their environment and their military associations is of far greater import for questions of identity.²¹⁴

Alastair Anderson classified the different rider types according to certain figural attributes which are frequently included on the reliefs: namely, the presence of a barbarian enemy being trampled and a *calo* standing behind the *eques*.²¹⁵ In addition, the rendering of the cavalryman himself can show an incredible degree of variation, particularly with regard to his military paraphernalia. The stele of Rufus Sita (**Fig. 10**) from Gloucester depicts the rider with a standard Roman Mainz – Weisenau type helmet and cavalry *spatha* trampling over and in the process of impaling a barbarian enemy with a spear.²¹⁶ A similar but far more detailed example can be seen in the gravestone of Titus Flavius Bassus (**Fig. 11**) from Cologne, which also includes a *calo* in the background holding two spears for his master.²¹⁷ By comparing these two monuments, erected so very far from one another, we recognize the common attributes of military identity and personal valor that made this style of tombstone so popular amongst cavalrymen.

²¹³ Mackintosh, "Sources of the Horsemen," 5; see also Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 265; Schleiermacher, *Römische Reitergrabsteine*, 61, 64; Hope, "Inscriptions and Sculpture," 169. By contrast, Gabelmann, "Römische Grabmonumente," 158 argues that the early examples of rider tombstones from Mainz indicate that the Italian artists were unfamiliar with how to properly render the motif, given the inaccurate proportions of the figures on the tombstones. This, of course, presumes that these early artists must have been Italian, which is not necessarily the case.

²¹⁴ Schleiermacher, *Römische Reitergrabsteine*, 65: "Das Reiterbild bezeugt aber außerdem die Tapferkeit und Virtus des gefallenen Kriegers und versinnbildlicht die Idee des römischen Sieges."

²¹⁵ Anderson, *Roman Military Tombstones*, 18.

²¹⁶ RIB 121.

²¹⁷ CIL 13, 8308.

Despite largely adhering to a preconfigured design, rider reliefs show clear indications of customer input, notably – and unsurprisingly – regarding the rendition of the deceased himself. Longinus Sdapeze (**Fig. 12**) trots past his enemy as opposed to violently treading over him, perhaps representing an alternative aspect of the soldier’s dominance, that is, lording over an opponent in a state of submissive humiliation rather than conveying the actual moment of death found on so many other similar reliefs. Longinus is also equipped with an intricately carved scale armor (*lorica squamata*), an added expense that was also presumably by request (*ex testamento*).²¹⁸ Similarly, Insus (**Fig. 13**) presides over an already defeated opponent – a point made explicit in this case by the cavalryman parading his enemy’s severed head in a state of triumph. This gruesome imagery combines with other unique attributes on the tombstone, such as Insus’ flowing cape and plumed helmet, to provide one of the most distinctive examples in the corpus of rider reliefs. Like Insus, Flavinus (**Fig. 14**) wears a three-plumed helmet and holds a radial standard in his right hand in accordance with his military role as a *signifer*. Sextus Valerius Genialis (**Fig. 15**) also appears to possess a type of *signum*, either held in his left hand or attached to his harness somehow, although the accompanying inscription does not specify any military function other than *eques*.²¹⁹ Finally, the tombstone at Mainz adapted the rider motif to accommodate the deceased Maris (**Fig. 16**) in his role as an archer in the *ala Parthorum et Araborum* – a unit famed for its employment of expert bowmen.²²⁰ Nods to his cultural

²¹⁸ Scale armor also appears on Rhineland examples (e.g. CIL 13, 8095).

²¹⁹ Webster, “Standards and Standard-Bearers,” 108f.

²²⁰ Dating from the early first century, perhaps the Tiberian period, it is likely that Maris was indeed recruited from an eastern region, due not only to the Semitic origin of his name, but also to the ethnic composition of such units, which, largely corresponded with their appellations during the early imperial period; see Traina, “Some Remarks on the Inscription,” esp. 64f., 70; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 288f. Regarding those who erected the tombstone in Maris’ honor Traina, “Some Remarks on the Inscription,” 66 seems to suggest that, while both patrons were likely fellow soldiers, only one was actually related to the deceased. For the continued recruitment of Parthian units and their status as *sagittarii*, see Kennedy, “Parthian Regiments,” esp. 525, 527.

background are also apparent in Maris' dress, which include pants, and, according to Haynes, offer "clear testimony to the wearing of traditional clothing in Roman service."²²¹

Other elements of the reliefs likewise reflect the potential customization each artifact could reflect within a generalized motif, as well as the local contexts in which they were created. The appearance of the trampled barbarian on Sita's grave seems intended to embody at least the stereotypical version of a British opponent from a Roman perspective. Longer, unkempt hair is common in depictions of enemies in this province, and can also be seen on the tombstones of Insus (**Fig. 13**), as well as Longinus Sdapeze (**Fig. 12**), Sextus Valerius Genialis (**Fig. 15**), and Flavinus (**Fig. 14**) whereon the foes all sport full beards. By contrast, a trimmed hairstyle is applied to Bassus' enemy in alignment with fashionable depictions in the Rhineland (**Fig. 11**).²²² However, it is also important to acknowledge the variation that occurred on examples from Upper and Lower Germany. The tombstone of an *eques* named Andes (**Fig. 17**) from Mainz displays the prostrate barbarian in a manner similar to British examples, with long hair and a beard. Another fragmentary relief retains a clear portrait of the enemy's head, which appears to show a loosened version of the renowned Suebian knot (**Fig. 18**).²²³

²²¹ Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 288. While Haynes also notes that this may be a stereotypical projection onto the soldier, as Haynes notes, an inaccurate depiction seems less likely on account of the benefactors' cultural and likely military overlap.

²²² Other examples of barbarians with short hair on Rhineland rider reliefs: CIL 13, 11709, 7025, 7052, 7029, 7585.

²²³ Tac. *Germ.* 38.

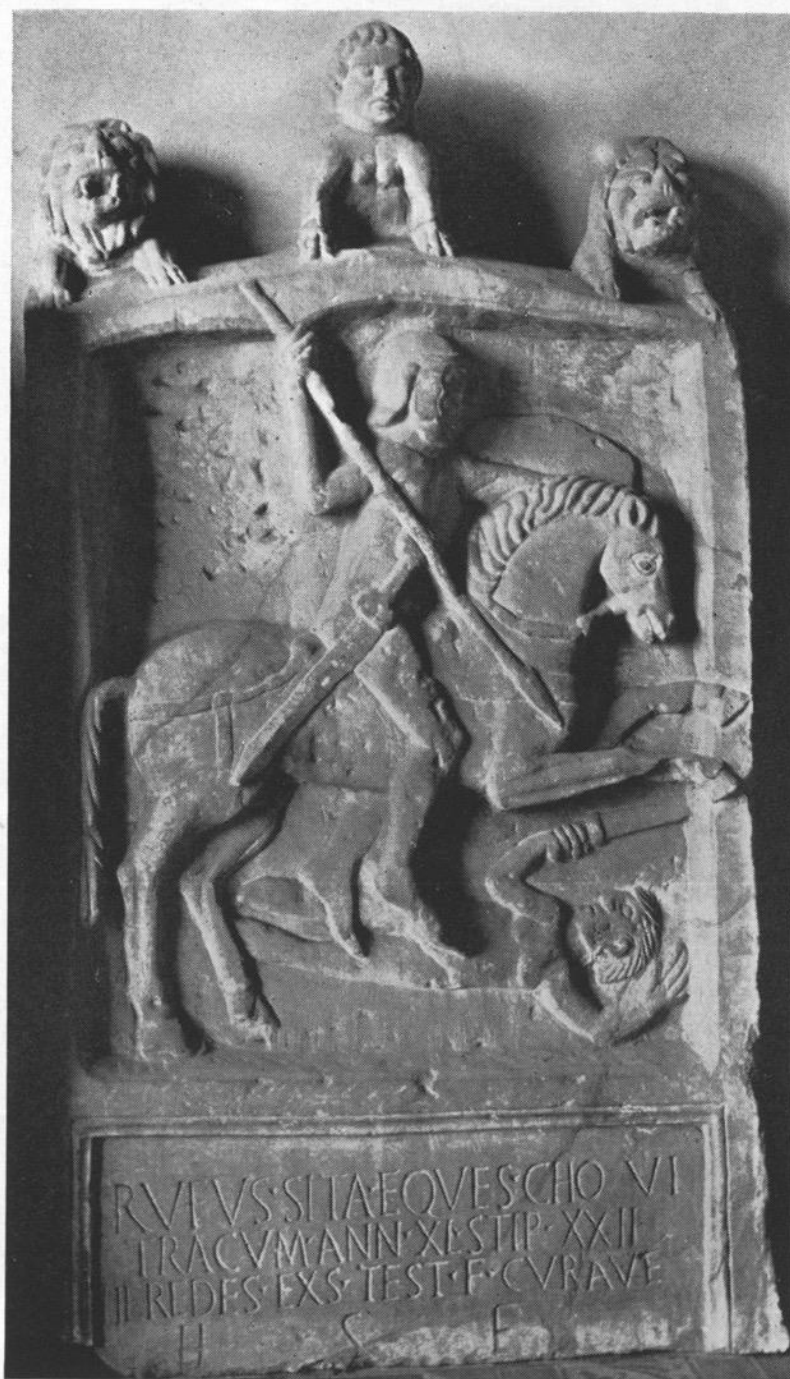


Fig. 10: Tombstone of Rufus Sita
CIL 7, 67 = RIB 121

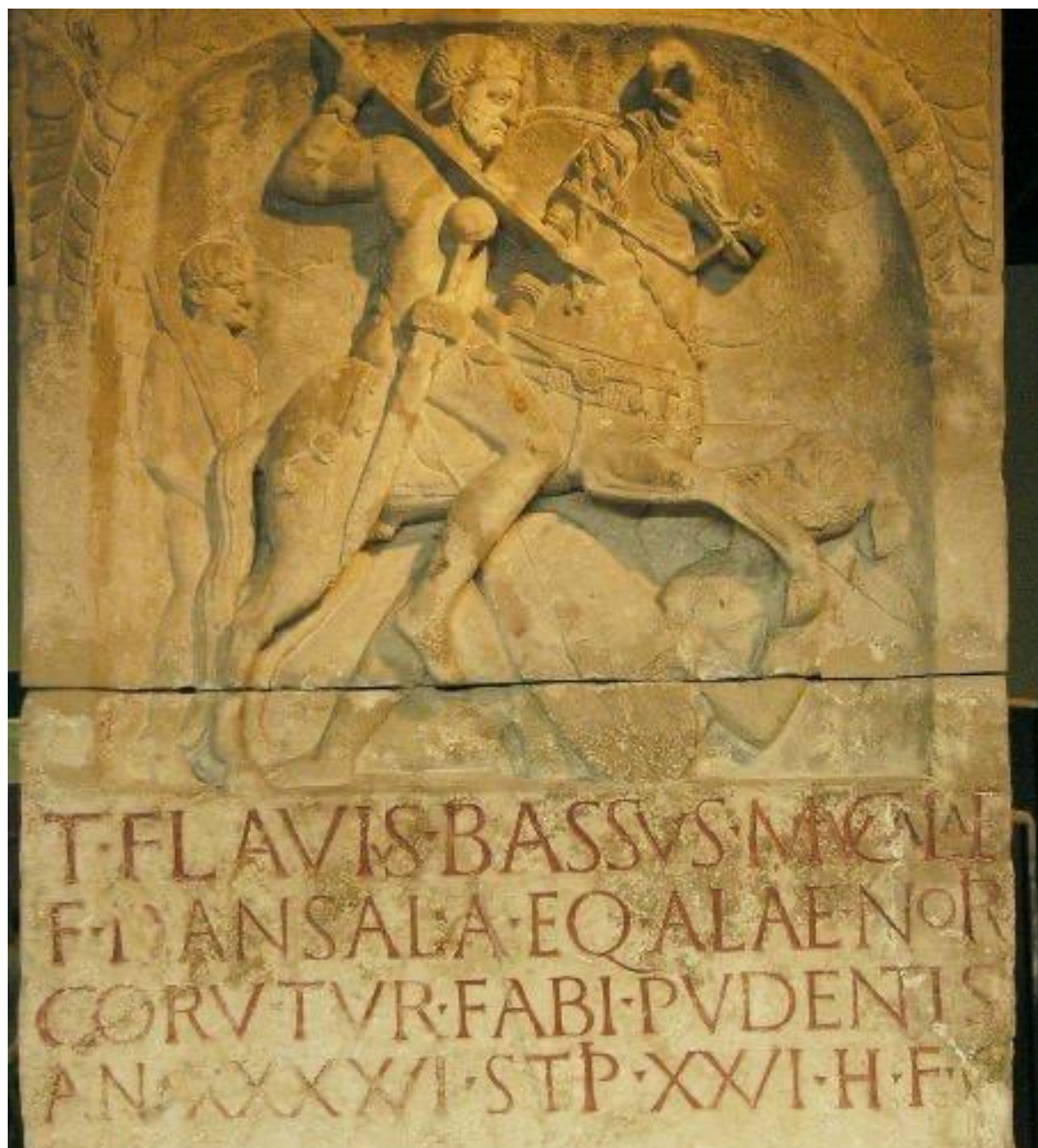


Fig. 11: Tombstone of Titus Flavius Bassus
 CIL 13, 8308



Fig. 12: Longinus Sdapeze presiding over a defeated enemy, clad in *lorica squamata* armor
AE 1928, 156 = RIB 201



Fig. 13: Personalized tombstone of Insus from Britain
 RIB 3185 = AE 2006, 750= Lupa 21081



Fig. 14: Flavinus, bearing his *signum*, with plumed helmet like Insus
RIB 1172





Fig. 15: Tombstone of Sextus Valerius Genialis from Cirencester
CIL 7, 68 = RIB 1, 109

Bottom picture from Webster, "Standards and Standard-Bearers," 109, fig. 2



Fig. 16: Tombstone of Maris depicted as an archer
AE 1959, 188



Fig. 17: Tombstone of Andes
CIL 13, 7023



Fig. 18: Fragmentary rider relief depicting a defeated enemy with a Suebian knot
CIL 13, 7033

All of these exempla demonstrate the intricacy of highly personalized products that could be created within a thoroughly Roman military context.²²⁴ Any iconography that was inherited from the east directly or by way of percolation through Italy was altered to such a degree in order to suit the auxiliaries' demands that it should properly be considered a new form altogether.²²⁵ The initial, misproportioned examples from Mainz make plain the effort that seems to have been put in by artists to satisfy the new and specific requests from their customers (**Fig. 19**).²²⁶ Therefore, it is unlikely that the sculptors were simply importing designs from Italian tradition with minimal deviation.²²⁷ Instead, influence should be seen as functioning differently: auxiliaries' desires to be depicted in a particular fashion determined the nature of sculptors' reliefs, not the other way around.²²⁸ The desire for personalized monuments drawing from the rider motif filtered through to legionaries as well. The gravestone of Caius Marius (**Fig. 20**) from Bonn more or less copies the typical rider theme, with one significant modification: the trampled enemy has been replaced by the soldier's belt harness, which is laden with military decorations whose specificity no doubt represents awards which the legionary earned.²²⁹ Far from the frontier, at Philippi, we find a truly exquisite memorial to Tiberius Claudius Maximus (**Fig. 21**), a legionary whose inscription, in addition to listing a detailed outline of his entire military career, boasts to have captured the enemy king, Decebalus, and to have delivered his head during

²²⁴ See Schleiermacher's connection to Roman "Siegesikonographie" above, footnote 214; Schleiermacher, *Römische Reitergrabsteine*, 65.

²²⁵ Moreover, the military on the frontier developed idiosyncratic styles of their own that were not in vogue elsewhere; see Anderson, *Roman Military Tombstones*, 27; Gabelmann, "Römische Grabmonumente," 170.

²²⁶ For artists' lack of dexterity in the initial rider examples, see Gabelmann, "Römische Grabmonumente," 157-59, fig. 23, 24 = CIL 13, 7026, CIL 13, 7050.

²²⁷ *Contra* Mackintosh, who stresses the similarity between the images; see Mackintosh, "Sources of the Horsemen," 6-7, 13.

²²⁸ Discussing the degree of deviation present on rider reliefs from Britain compared to their Rhineland forbears, Mattern, "reliefverzierten römischen Grabstelen," 717 acknowledges the potential influence of the customer on the product.

²²⁹ Lehner identifies them as 4 *torques*, 2 *armillae*, and 9 *phalerae*; see Lehner, *Die antiken Steindenkmäler*, 224f., Nr. 602.

Trajan's Dacian Wars (*cepisset Decebalum et caput eius pertulisset*).²³⁰ The inscription's length takes primacy on the monument by necessity; however, a significant portion of the upper register is dedicated to a rider relief, presumably portraying the capture of Decebalus.²³¹ Below this relief lies another, which displays military decorations in a fashion similar to Caius Marius.²³² These legionary exempla call attention to the fluid, interactive military environment that fueled the creation of new styles of funerary monuments amongst the differing soldier classes. These motifs then spread to other parts of the Empire where they were further adapted according to developing fashion and the inclinations of individual soldiers.

²³⁰ Speidel, "The Captor of Decebalus," esp. 143, 149-51; Schleiermacher, *Römische Reitergrabsteine*, Nr. 98.

²³¹ The enemy can be identified as a Dacian in any case due to his clothing, as well as the Dacian *falx*; see Speidel, "The Captor of Decebalus," 149, Pl. XV.

²³² Speidel, "The Captor of Decebalus." 148.

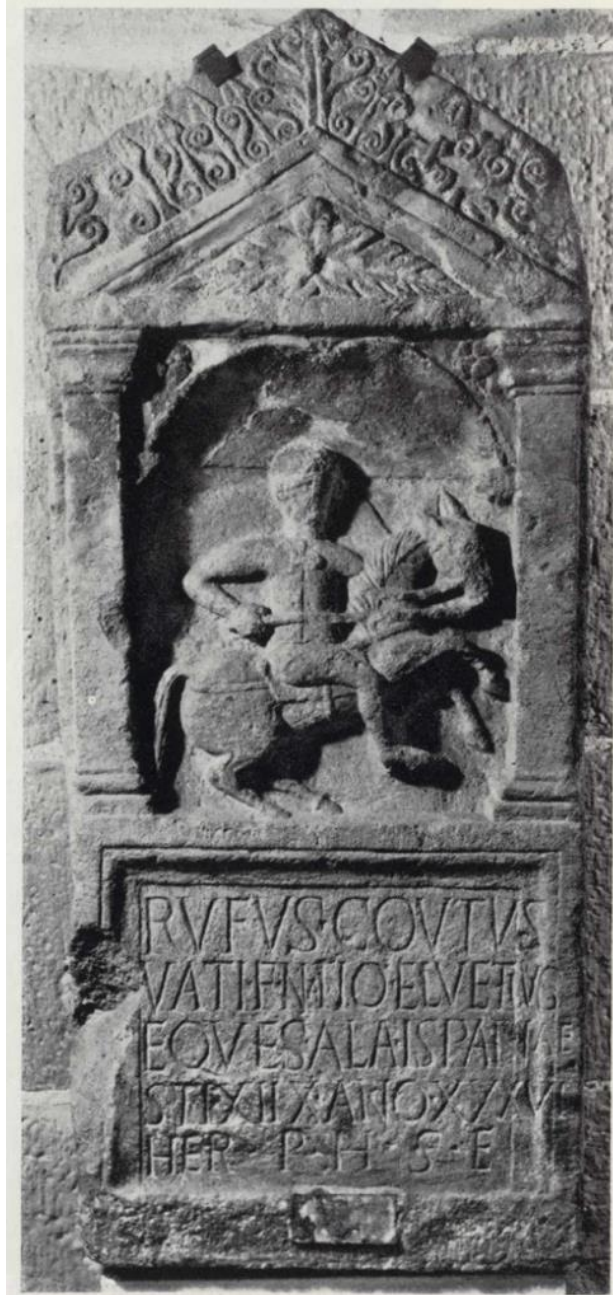


Fig. 19: Tombstone of Rufus reflecting early stages of the rider motif
CIL 13, 7026

Gabelmann, "römische Grabmonumente," 157, fig. 23.



Fig. 20: Tombstone of Caius Marius, cavalryman of the First Legion
 In place of the usual trampled opponent we find a belt of military decorations
 CIL 13, 8059 = Lehner, *Die antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 602
 Lehner, *Das Provinzialmuseum in Bonn*, Taf. 7,1



Fig. 21: Legionary Rider relief of Tiberius Claudius Maximus from Philippi
AE 1974, 589

Speidel, "The Captor of Decebalus," Pl. XIII

The spectrum of potential deviations from any inherited rider pattern – as can be seen in the instances listed above – indicate that specificity was integral to the entire process.²³³ Scholars who have seen in the rider stela artistic renditions which, for the most part, stem from a similar design concept – perhaps even copybooks –²³⁴ discount the ability for individual customization to exist within a pre-existing framework. This, in my estimation, is more of an issue with modern interpretations of what an “original” sculpture might consist. It is a mistake to deem the cavalry tombstones as lacking innovation or novelty simply because they adhere to a widespread, generalized template. It has already been suggested above that the observance of customary funerary inscriptions on the part of the *auxilia* in no way precluded them from distinguishing themselves from the gravestones around them. From this, we can confidently assume moreover that any deviations or peculiarities in *visual* form would have had an even greater effect on the viewer than any impression gained from an inscription alone. Since the rider reliefs “can often be executed with conspicuous regard to detail,”²³⁵ we should not overlook the cumulative effect that individual markers likely created, despite following an established design type.

Innovative Military Identity

By this point, I hope to have established that auxiliaries were able to express their own, personal identities within the framework of traditional Roman means and motifs of commemoration. We should not compare these artifacts against modern conceptions of “originality” or “individuality”, but realize instead the value that these tombstones had for each auxiliary in his desire to stand out amongst his comrades, as well as their actual ability to

²³³ *Contra* Hope’s appraisal that the reproduction of the same rider motif minimized opportunities for personalization; see Hope, “Inscriptions and Sculpture,” 165.

²³⁴ Mackintosh, “Sources of the Horsemen,” 13.

²³⁵ Anderson, *Roman Military Tombstones*, 18.

accomplish this. Unique self-representation could certainly be achieved within conventional forms of funerary commemoration, as illustrated in the discussion above. It remains now to be assessed exactly how the capacity for soldiers to innovate with their self-presentation on tombstones contributed to the creation of a new, auxiliary identity in the first century. Preexisting martial traits among Celtic tribes were an important factor which was transferred and adapted to the auxiliaries' new, Roman backdrop, and took the form of status symbols such as slaves, horses, and weaponry – all of which are prominent on the rider and TIP tombstones. Two other contributing factors to this process were the extensive connections between military networks and the nature of the frontier environments at which the majority of troops were stationed, such as the Rhineland and Britain. Within the army, certain styles such as the rider motif became fashionable across the Empire over a long period of time through troop movements and stylistic imitation, whereas others like the TIP model were short lived and relegated to a much smaller geographic scope. Collective group identity within the newly restructured military was itself entirely new in the first century, and auxiliaries helped contribute to the creation of this nascent institution.

The lifestyle of the Roman army – with its regimentation, discipline, and duration of prescribed service – was extremely different from the preexisting situation for native warriors in the western provinces. However, there was a fundamentally important degree of cultural overlap between the two regarding deference paid to martiality. A martial ethos permeated both the Roman world and Celtic societies, albeit in vastly different ways. Whereas Roman pride in conquering had been channeled into the army as a state institution by the time of the Principate in contrast to the “citizen-soldier” model of the Republic, northern tribes had developed a distinctly separate method of fulfilling bellicose impulses in the form of small scale raids. Local

chieftains would sustain their cadre of warriors through excursions into neighboring territory to gain loot, thereby establishing the practice as essential to Celtic and Germanic social makeup and identity.²³⁶ This pre-Roman custom, often referred to as the *Gefolgschaft* system,²³⁷ is defined by its decentralized, highly personal operation, whereby a mutual dependency exists between a warlord and his followers depending on the number of gifts that the former can distribute to the latter.²³⁸ Engaging in this practice was so embedded in Celtic and Germanic societies that it “was considered a logical phase in the life-cycle of men of aristocratic rank and...the commoners,”²³⁹ and must therefore be taken into consideration when discussing the construction of auxiliary identity in the early post-conquest period.

The notion of so-called “martial races” has not gone unchallenged. Carol van Driel-Murray has argued that the idea is a product of empire itself, invented by the state to serve imperial goals, and indulged in by natives who subscribed to the concept which they perceived to be beneficial. In her view, “approaching tribal societies from this perspective is actually a form of Orientalist discourse”²⁴⁰ which only replicates an imperialist perspective. Although there is certainly some truth to the intentional projection of stereotypical traits associated with native populations on the part the Romans, inter-tribal warfare certainly had an extensive presence in the pre-Roman era. In addition to ancient accounts of native practices – albeit heavily biased and no doubt misinformed in their characterizations to a certain degree –²⁴¹ the deposition of weapons as grave goods in particular indicates the presence of a strong martial tradition.²⁴² It is

²³⁶ Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 29, 39-45; Roymans, “Sword or the Plough,” 13-20; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 45; Nicolay, “Use and Significance,” 359-61; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 110.

²³⁷ *Gefolgschaft*: Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 39; Nicolay, “Use and Significance,” 359.

²³⁸ Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 34-36; Nicolay, “Use and Significance,” 359, 361.

²³⁹ Roymans, “Sword or the Plough,” 13 (quote), also 14, 39; Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 43.

²⁴⁰ Van-Driel-Murray, “Ethnic Soldiers,” 202, also 201-203 in general.

²⁴¹ Gauls: Caes. *BG.* 1.1-2, 1.44, 2.29, 6.14, 7.67; Germans: Caes. *BG.* 6.21-22. Tac. *Germ.* 13, 14, 31.

²⁴² The practice continued into the Roman period; see Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 46; Roymans, “Sword or the Plough,” 28-35.

therefore not inappropriate to conceive of recruits as having a strong militaristic mindset already formed and woven into their worldview as a result of their cultural background.

Rome's entry into Celtic and Germanic territories resulted in a clash of cultures in many ways, to be sure; however, the professionalized martial ethos of the legions corresponded well with the preexisting, "comparable 'warrior' value systems" to the north.²⁴³ Just as the Roman administration was most successful establishing its rule in areas with extant political factions, the army was likewise able to capitalize on the militaristic ethos of the tribal institutions by serving as an outlet for local practices to continue to be fulfilled, but with an altered form and meaning.²⁴⁴ The auxiliary recruit did not simply adopt a new identity that was solely associated with the Roman military, but instead built upon native traditions which had already been inculcated into his sense of self.²⁴⁵ For the native elites who cooperated with Rome, this meant that their social position was retained or elevated under the new system of recruitment, particularly since they were initially able to serve as commanders of local auxiliary units.²⁴⁶ Advantages were also available to common soldiers serving in the *auxilia* within the context of local traditions. In addition to the obvious benefits of long-term service in the army – food, shelter, a guaranteed income, and perhaps even citizenship – the basic auxiliary soldier could now adopt status symbols previously reserved only for their native social superiors, as, for example, by serving in the cavalry.²⁴⁷ Ian Haynes characterizes this phenomenon well by stating

²⁴³ James, "'Romanness of the Soldiers,'" 101.

²⁴⁴ Roymans, "Sword or the Plough," 37, also 24; Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 40. See also Woolf, "Formation of Roman Provincial Cultures," 12 who discusses the potential disruptions Roman peace could bring about within a martial society unable to retain its traditions.

²⁴⁵ James, "Community of Soldiers," 16.

²⁴⁶ Social continuity: Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 40f. Native commanders: Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 50.

²⁴⁷ Lower class warriors of the pre-Roman period also aped the practice of elites by depositing weapons as grave goods. Roymans, "Sword or the Plough," 13.

that, “at first glance every man appeared as a chieftain, every soldier resembled a war leader.”²⁴⁸ It is impossible to estimate the elevated sense of self-worth that local recruits, now clad in polished Roman military regalia and riding atop a warhorse as a member of an auxiliary *turma* (squadron), would have felt, but it must have been a considerable increase beyond their previous status. Additionally, since the arrival of the Romans effectively disarmed local populations, military service was virtually the only way to retain traditional connections between the ownership of and right to carry weapons and attendant concepts of masculinity and social status.²⁴⁹ Discussing the Batavians, Ton Derks finds that, “incorporation in the Roman army was seen...as a privilege and a special honour.”²⁵⁰ This conclusion is surely also applicable to other, recently-conquered tribes near the frontier zone with similar martial traditions.

Cavalrymen’s tombstones now become clear manifestations of the auxiliaries’ efforts to import native values, at least in part, into the Roman military system of funerary display. Their iconographical emphasis on martial prowess and ownership of status symbols such as horses and slaves can be seen as a way to assert their prominence in both native and Roman terms. The army was an instrument of social advancement for natives willing and able to serve, and the potential for indigenous soldiers to simultaneously fulfill social expectations pertaining to military glory in two separate cultures was an even greater boon. Both the rider and the TIP style gravestones illustrate the capacity for a recognizably “Roman” mode of expression to be used in new and unique ways, which spoke to the soldiers’ personal identities as members of both cultures in the heterogeneous frontier environment. As discussed above, the visual impact of an inscribed monument would have been felt by fellow soldiers as well as local inhabitants. Foreign

²⁴⁸ Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 252.

²⁴⁹ Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 252f.; James, “Community of Soldiers,” 18.

²⁵⁰ Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 51.

material culture becomes fashionable for its ability to satisfy local demand, and within the context of the *auxilia* stationed along the Rhine, the desire by troops to stand out amongst their comrades and in a traditionally warlike society resulted in the adoption of Roman style tombstones with ubiquitous markers of prestige.²⁵¹ The cultural overlap in terms of martiality between Roman, Germanic, and Celtic societies therefore operated as a bridge by which new, composite auxiliary identity could be crafted. By commissioning particular representations on tombstones which spoke to these cultural values, the auxiliaries were taking part in the process of identity creation through the consumption of a new and specialized material good.²⁵² At the same time, the motifs that became fashionable also allowed conceptual room for the individual to shine through by way of customization.

The TIP and rider tombstones of the *auxilia* each developed initially along the German *limes* at different times during the first century, but were disseminated across the Empire to different degrees. The rider tombstones were generated first, with examples being found as early as the Tiberian period.²⁵³ They then appear soon after the invasion of Britannia,²⁵⁴ and are unsurprisingly associated with units which had been transferred from the Germanic frontier. This correspondence between styles indicates that, as auxiliaries brought their pre-fashioned conceptions about military service with them while being relocated, they continued to find appeal in the rider motif for portraying their identity. It is important to emphasize this phenomenon, as it demonstrates several facts about the soldiers. First, the ways in which they

²⁵¹ Cooper, "Searching for the Blank Generation," 91 stresses the ability of indigenous populations to assimilate outside influences, materials, and styles to their pre-existing cultural mores.

²⁵² Hodos, "Local and Global Perspectives," 20f. discusses the connection between consumption and identity alteration/formation.

²⁵³ CIL 13, 6230, 6233, 6235, 7026, 7585 AE 1967, 339 = CSIRD II 5 Nr. 29.

²⁵⁴ RIB 108, 109, 201, 3185. RIB 121 belongs to Rufus Sita who was a member of the *cohors VI Thracum equitata*, which is first attested in Britain, and it cannot therefore be ascertained whether the unit was previously stationed in Germany.

envisaged themselves became so concretized and closely related to unit affiliation that such concepts could remain relevant at different times and in different locations. Soldiers themselves were active in creating a “self-conscious ‘imagined community,’”²⁵⁵ which often functioned as autonomous societies at the unit level within the broader makeup of the Roman army,²⁵⁶ and could retain its perceived identity while campaigning far and wide. Second, this continued self-perception could be made into a tangible reality in part through the production of very similar tombstones across the Empire, as is the case with the rider reliefs. Demand for the style persisted in different environments, and, as stated above, should be seen as having driven availability of sculptors capable of executing their clients’ wishes.

This form of fashionability based on unit movement can also be seen in other modes of military expression, and demonstrates the ability of armies to borrow and disseminate ideas and trends through contact with one another. A prominent example of this is the soldiers’ uniforms and armament styles. Despite the fact that, as James has pointed out, “there is no evidence for centralised manufacture of clothing or equipment at the time,” Roman soldiers seem, by and large to have been clad in remarkably similar types of dress.²⁵⁷ This apparent disparity can be explained by a process of self-driven imitation of styles between military units as they came into contact with one another.²⁵⁸ Although the precise manner by which fashions and the attendant military values attributed to them were diffused cannot be fully understood, “somehow, assumptions as to the most appropriate forms of weaponry and clothing were disseminated

²⁵⁵ James, “Community of Soldiers,” 15, also 18.

²⁵⁶ James, “Community of Soldiers,” 14 rejects the concept of a monolithic Roman army, arguing instead that “we should start to think and speak of ‘the soldiers,’ and of Roman armies in the plural...[which is] much closer to ancient understandings of the military.” Additionally, he notes the tiered makeup of group affiliations in the army, which should complicate our view of military identity; *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁵⁷ James, “Community of Soldiers,” 19.

²⁵⁸ James, “Community of Soldiers,” 19; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 249.

across the Empire.”²⁵⁹ From this fact alone, we can recognize the extraordinary degree to which “patterns of communication and exchange...bound Rome’s armies together.”²⁶⁰ Interconnected armies, which simultaneously also frequently functioned as autonomous entities, incorporated styles, techniques, and customs learned from other units into their own practices and traditions in a continually evolving process. As a result, particular styles of expression, be it in the style of a soldier’s uniform or gravestone, gained traction at various times and locations.

In contrast to the rider reliefs, the extant sample of TIP tombstones indicates that the style was more limited to the Rhineland.²⁶¹ Any attempt to explain why this motif did not become self-perpetuating within the military in the same way that the rider iconography did would be speculation on a void in the archaeological record. It is much more difficult to demonstrate why something did not happen than it is to account for what actually occurred. With this hazard in mind, assessing the circulation of the two styles nevertheless seems to be a worthwhile comparison for discussing the fashionability and appeal of particular identity representations within the army. It seems to be a valid assumption that the TIP motif did not hold the same enduring attraction for the soldiers that rider iconography retained. A potential answer for this could lie with the versatility of the combined imagery, which was also likely part of the reason it became popular in the first place. TIP gravestones spoke to different aspects of the soldier’s identity, highlighting his military affiliations on the inscription and *Pferdevorführung*, as well as making civilian status claims via the *Totenmahl*. Rider reliefs had the ability to avoid this comparatively subtle messaging with their kinetic flamboyancy in a way that connected with the

²⁵⁹ Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 249.

²⁶⁰ Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 242.

²⁶¹ Funerary banquet iconography would continue, being adapted to represent soldiers’ families (the so-called *Familienmahl*) as opposed to only himself, and the *Pferdevorführung* would be adopted by the *equites singulares* in Rome. However, the idiosyncratic TIP combination would disappear soon after the turn of the century.

auxiliary in a more straightforward manner, and also offered a higher possibility of catching the viewer's attention. Additionally, the rider motif allowed for a much more condensed version of the same basic message found on TIP tombstones to be presented. In a single scene, the deceased could be depicted atop his warhorse with an accompanying *calo*, each of which combined to indicate his prominent position within the army, the glory associated with his deeds, and his elevated status as someone who directs his own servant.

Opportunities for military fashion to develop new styles of representation and adornment were the product of large, permanent armies stationed for long periods of time on Rome's most hostile peripheries. Along with the presence of the armies came a host of camp-followers, slaves, and merchants who flocked around the main centers of activity. The frontier environment should therefore be viewed as a kind of incubator for adoption and innovation, characterized by a constant supply of people and products streaming into the region from the Gallic hinterland and *Germania libera* which converged at the *limes*. By espousing this perspective, it becomes less surprising that the Rhineland was a main source for stylistic developments in the first century, as it saw one of the highest troop concentration in Rome's history, and an incredibly high degree of accompanying commercial activity. Alastair Anderson accurately characterized the region as being "a fertile breeding ground for new [tombstone] designs."²⁶² Because native recruitment tended to be at its highest near the frontier,²⁶³ pre-existing martial values were likewise

²⁶² Anderson, *Roman Military Tombstones*, 28.

²⁶³ For Roman recruitment focusing on the Rhineland for local service, see Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 50; Roymans, "Sword or the Plough," 21ff., fig 4.; Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 39-40, fig. 3. The hinterland of Gallia Belgica provided much fewer recruits, which Roymans has taken to reflect the territory's demilitarization and the disappearance of martial ideology; see Roymans, "Sword or the Plough," 37f.; Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 40.

sustained,²⁶⁴ and a mutually supporting cycle was created.²⁶⁵ At the same time, this estuary-like setting opened up a surplus of concepts, symbols, iconography, and material culture to natives who were previously limited in their exposure to outside cultures. This is not to say that they now simply had the option to consume readymade, pre-packaged Roman ideas and goods. Rather, they could become a part of the cultural interchange occurring at the frontier – able to select, reject, adapt, and invent new, fashionable representations of themselves as they (re)constructed their personal identities through military service.

The Germanic frontier was not only an engine for generating new styles but also a means by which fashions took hold amongst auxiliaries. This can be observed in the cosmopolitan makeup of the *alae* and *cohortes equitatae* – a significant number of whom originated in other, distant provinces, despite a large portion of the Rhineland *auxilia* being recruited locally. Two cavalymen tombstones found in Cologne represent examples of the TIP motif, yet their unit – the *ala Afrorum* – was not raised locally,²⁶⁶ and the tribal affiliation listed for one Romanus indicates that he is Dardanian, from the territory of what would become the province of Moesia Superior.²⁶⁷ Similarly, the other soldier’s name, Oluper, has been traced to Thracian lands.²⁶⁸ These men were transferred to the region, and, during their years of service, seem to have acclimated to the cultural developments occurring at the frontier to the point that their comrades saw fit to represent them with the TIP format. A third *eques* from the very same unit and period

²⁶⁴ At least until the end of the first century, when Roymans finds the process of demilitarisation to have spread to the Rhineland populations; see Roymans, “Sword or the Plough,” 41. Hope similarly points out the decline in monuments on the frontier as the military situation there stabilized, suggesting a declining premium placed on martial imagery; see Hope, “Words and Pictures,” 249, 255.

²⁶⁵ Nicolay, “Use and Significance,” 366: “Young men at the imperial frontiers still had the opportunity...to display their military skills and to acquire glory.”

²⁶⁶ Originally created in North Africa, it was transferred to the Rhine during the Batavian Revolt.

²⁶⁷ CIL 13, 8305: *Romanus Atti f(ilius) Dardanus*; see Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 356.

²⁶⁸ CIL 13, 8304: *Oluper Cergaepuri f(ilius)*; see Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 355.

by the name of Lucius is identified as a member of the local Germanic Marsacii.²⁶⁹ The fact that both he and his comrades are rendered in precisely the same fashion despite being of disparate ethnic origins denotes that the allure of the motif, which had developed within the army and the frontier environment, was the overriding factor in the dedicator's mind. As mentioned briefly above,²⁷⁰ it may be argued that the choice of funerary representations made by the dedicators does not necessarily reflect the identities of the deceased. While this is admittedly impossible to ascertain, it seems likely that the heirs of the dead would be most familiar with his wishes regarding funerary representation, particularly since the *heres* was himself probably a close comrade in the same unit.²⁷¹ However, even in conceding that the personal desires of the deceased soldier are unknowable, there is no great loss with regard to the subject auxiliary self-presentation. The dedicator was nevertheless an auxiliary himself, and the selections made can be taken either as his steadfast fulfillment of the wishes of the dead, or stand as a projection of how he would like to be memorialized. Whichever the case may be, the choice of funerary representation was selected from styles developed along the frontier, indicating that the environment itself held great influence on the options available to satisfy the evolving preferences of the auxiliaries.

²⁶⁹ CIL 13, 8303: *L(ucius) Crispi f(ilius) Marsacus*.

²⁷⁰ See footnote 157.

²⁷¹ See, for example, the gravestone of Oluper (CIL 13, 8304) discussed above, whereon the inscription explicitly states it was erected *ex t(estamento)*.

Conclusion

This chapter has built upon Roman army studies relating to the construction of individualized military identity in an effort to highlight the frequency of indigenous adoption and innovation within the realm of funerary monuments. By comparing evidence of two different but related styles of representation, I have established the high degree of variability that can be seen not only in the iconographic and epigraphic display itself, but also in the distributions of each sample. TIP tombstones were created in much lower numbers, and are relegated to parts of the Germanic frontier during the second half of the first century, whereas rider reliefs have been found throughout the Empire, beginning in the Julio-Claudian period, and extend well beyond the first century. Rather than attempting to fully explain this trend, I have used its existence as a comparative case study of a localized phenomenon (TIP gravestones) and a more widespread, enduring tradition (rider reliefs) within the army in order to emphasize the process of cultural dialogue. In both bodies of evidence, there is a high level of auxiliary appropriation of Roman habits, such as the Totenmahl motif, as well as the very practice of erecting a tombstone in Latin. However, many subtle novelties were created and combined with these properties in ways which reflect more than just native acceptance of a Roman cultural practice. Martial ideals, patronymic references, and symbols of social status were translated into a Roman medium, but retained a message that would simultaneously speak to an auxiliary's native cultural background as well.

Frontier conditions and military connectivity were a driving force in this process. The concentration of the Roman army along the Germanic *limes* brought with it an unprecedented degree of personnel and commercial activity which created an environment teeming with diverse influences, cultural practices, and commodities. As a result, this diverse zone became a focal point for the emergence of new conceptions of individual and group identity, which can be seen

prominently in the funerary iconography it produced. Native associations could be retained as they were incorporated into a Roman style, but with important deviations from the standardized framework, which should be seen as novel contributions to the spectrum of identity display. In addition to serving as a gestational setting, the frontier also functioned as a vehicle for the dissemination of new concepts, which can be seen in the survival of funerary representations that first developed there, as well as the later appropriation of certain themes by the *equites singulares* at Rome.²⁷² Integral to this spread was the newly developed imperial military system, which instituted standing armies and a thoroughly connected network between provincial armies. The stationing of soldiers on the frontier during prolonged terms of service allowed for distinct military identities to develop, and for soldiers to locate themselves within this structure as individuals. While the TIP and rider tombstones cannot and should not be interpreted as direct representations of the cavalymen's identities, they nevertheless at least provide a small window through which we can begin to better observe and understand how auxiliaries (re)constructed their individual and group identities during the bustling and often tempestuous post-conquest period.

²⁷² See Speidel, *Riding for Caesar*, figs. 2, 9, 12, 15.

CHAPTER 2

The Rhineland Mother Goddesses (RMG)

Introduction

Under Roman rule, religious influences from all over the Empire flooded the Rhineland, increasingly so as time passed and the *limes Germanicus* developed into a more solidified borderland. By the second century AD, foreign cults from as far as Persia took hold and became especially prominent amongst members of the Roman army, as in the case of Mithraism. Amidst waves of foreign cults and practices entering the region by way of troop movements, the fragments of what had once been indigenous religious belief originating in the German provinces themselves also remained and fused with the deluge of newly introduced cults. The Rhineland *Matronae*, as they are often referred to,²⁷³ offer some of the most striking, well known, and numerous examples of this phenomenon.²⁷⁴ The goddesses are represented iconographically and epigraphically in the form of votive altars crafted in most cases between mid-second century into the mid-third century,²⁷⁵ and are primarily confined to a relatively small territory along the Lower Rhine in the province of Germania Inferior, encompassing modern Cologne, Bonn, and their hinterlands west of the Rhine.²⁷⁶ In addition to their distribution range, the *Matronae* are

²⁷³ Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*; Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*.

²⁷⁴ Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 353; see also pp. 364-65 for tallied data.

²⁷⁵ There is some debate as to which RMG example is the earliest. Previously, C.B. Rüger posited that the renowned example of Q. Vettius Severus (AE 1930, 19; **Fig. 1**) was the oldest depiction of the Rhineland *Matronae*; see Rüger, "Beobachtungen," 10f. However, newer findings have pointed to instances which demonstrate that the *Matronae* were venerated earlier, between 70-120 AD, epigraphically, and also in terms of iconography; for discussion, see Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 61-62 esp. n.201, n.202, and 91; see also footnote 379 below on dating. There are two known weapon dedications to the *Matronae* and *Matres*, which indicate that veneration was not strictly limited to votive altars; see Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 34; CIL 13, 5158.

²⁷⁶ Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 31 sets the boundaries roughly between Krefeld and Remagen to the north and south, respectively, and between Jülich from the west to Cologne on the Rhine; see also Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 9-10, 158-9; Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 155; for *matronae* distributions in terms of geographic characteristics, altars, and inscriptions, see Rüger, "Beobachtungen," 5, Fig. 1; Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 32, Fig. 1; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 387, Fig. 6; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 129, Fig. 3.19.

also distinctive for the peculiar forms in which they are depicted and referred to.²⁷⁷ Their reliefs frequently sport large bonnets, multi-layered and easily-recognizable coats, as well as jewelry. In sum, their representation as deities is almost wholly proprietary. Finally, the goddesses appear in a bewildering assortment of local varieties, and are distinguishable epigraphically by the epithets attached to the general “*Matronae*” and “*Matres*” monikers (e.g. *Matronae Aufaniae*, *Matronae Axsinginehae*).²⁷⁸

As a result of their uniqueness, much scholarship has pointed to the cult of the *Matronae* as one of the clearest examples of hybridized religious development in a provincial setting.²⁷⁹ However, there is still more we can extract from the *Matronae* with regard to the process of cultural exchange at the frontier. This chapter will assess these mother goddesses from a new perspective by deviating from previous interpretations, which saw these cults (with emphasis on their plurality) as a hybrid, but ultimately monolithic, creation of Romano-native interaction.²⁸⁰ I will first assess so-called “native” and “Roman” characteristics present on the altars in order to then demonstrate that neither category holds much value for the period in question, and that we must instead view these dedications in a new way which emphasizes the spectrum of cultural knowledge and exchange occurring, as well as one which acknowledges the uniqueness of

²⁷⁷ There are about 350 votives and fragments which have some form of decoration which can be associated with the cult, 67 of which depict the trinity of matrons motif; see Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 31-2; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 144.

²⁷⁸ Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 60.

²⁷⁹ Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, esp. 61-77; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 119-30.

²⁸⁰ Although referring to the process as “inherently dynamic,” Burns nevertheless compresses the intricacy of the cults and the artifacts they produced as “a provincial religion in a Greco-Roman context”; see Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 270. Ultimately, his interpretation reverts back to viewing this “hybrid religion” as a form of *interpretatio romana*, despite noting “a wide variety of *matronae* cults.” *Ibid.*, 154, 287-88; see also pp. 269-70, 320. To understand these goddesses as a local cult pared to fit a Mediterranean religious mold is to vastly oversimplify the process of cultural exchange and to relegate it to a bifurcated Roman/native system of acculturation. Garman similarly vacillates between recognizing the “very unique and dynamic shared culture [which] was created,” and assigning the goddesses to a predominantly Roman form of existence; see Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 86. Furthermore, he also rejects the need for the term “creolization,” preferring instead to operate within the existing processual models of Romanization, Germanization, and Celtization, whose processes remain largely unexplored and assumed; *Ibid.*, 2, 24, 30.

localized religious development.²⁸¹ I will break down the generalized understanding of the *Matronae* as a singular cult form by highlighting their lack of uniformity. The observable diversity in these artifacts does not reflect marginal variation – commonplace in ancient polytheism – but instead indicates the process of ideological interaction, which can never occur in a uniform manner. Instead, the altars demonstrate a fluctuating degree of familiarity with and innovative deviation from localized styles of the cults in ways which cannot be pigeonholed into standardized categories.²⁸² My aim will be to highlight the complexity of the configurations encountered, to deconstruct the linearity of current interpretations, and finally, to reassess what the *Matronae* can tell us about the process of cultural exchange. To this end, I will highlight unique visual and epigraphic characteristics, as well as several social groups associated with worship which can be readily identified – mostly within the military – and which serve as minor case studies for evaluating cultural integration taking place. The result of this examination will reveal the unpredictable process of adoption and innovation that occurred as indigenous inhabitants and foreigners alike interacted with the localized branches of the *Matronae* cults. The altars represent individuals living in a bustling environment, sorting through the myriad influences they encountered by accepting, rejecting, and integrating them in real time with their own cultural worldview.

²⁸¹ Though referring to a uniform process of “Romanization,” Haselgrove’s sentiment that cultural exchange is a local phenomenon is still quite accurate; see Haselgrove, “Romanization of Belgic Gaul,” 46.

²⁸² Avoiding simplistic categories: Zoll, “A View Through Inscriptions,” 129; Barrett, “Afterward: Render unto Caesar,” 235-36.

Defining the Material and Scope: “The Rhineland Mother Goddesses” (RMG)

From the onset, there is an inherent definitional problem in referring to these goddesses as the “Rhineland *Matronae*,” due to the existence of similar deities outside of the distribution area generally designated for the *Matronae* discussed here. While it seems clear that the votives in Lower Germany are different enough in both inscriptional style, imagery, and chronology from dedications to generalized *Matronae* (i.e. without epithets) found in Cisalpine Gaul to warrant their own category, this distinction does not preclude the possibility of a connection between the two.²⁸³ Romans entering the Rhineland before and after the turn of the millennium may have already been previously familiar with a form of mother goddess worship from the Italian peninsula, and therefore engaged in a form of *interpretatio romana* upon encountering German cults which seemed similar enough for them to integrate the two.²⁸⁴ Ironically, however, the Cisalpine cult of the *Matronae* itself may have at least partially non-Italic origins.²⁸⁵ Already, then, the lines begin to blur when attempting to verify the origin of *any Matronae* cult: if the soldiers entering the Rhineland were injecting their own cultural program into their surroundings, it may well be the case that their inherited tradition was itself a product of religious influence more similar to their new posting than they could have known. As we will see, however, it is much more likely that the *Matronae* found in the Rhineland do in fact represent local deities.²⁸⁶

Moreover, the existence of another form of similar, maternal deities – the *Matres* – provides even further difficulties for isolating the Rhineland *Matronae* as wholly unique for their

²⁸³ For the Cisalpine *Matronae*, see Rüger, “Beobachtungen,” 13 for a brief summary; Pascal, *Cults of Cisalpine Gaul*, 116-23 provides more elaboration.

²⁸⁴ Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 30; Hahl, “Zur Matronenverehrung,” 263.

²⁸⁵ Pascal, *Cults of Cisalpine Gaul*, 118, 189. Garman is more insistent that the cult is of Celto-Germanic origin, having entered Italy in the 4th century BC; see Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 71.

²⁸⁶ Häussler and King, “Crefyddau Celtaid,” 15.

area of distribution. First, the two titles are often used interchangeably,²⁸⁷ meaning that we encounter goddesses with the same epithet identifying them variously as *Matres* and *Matronae*.²⁸⁸ Additionally, the terms are often found within the same geographic zone along the Rhine, resulting in a mix of dedications to particular mother goddesses which vary in their form of address and can even use both titles in the same inscription, as in the previous example. To make matters more obscure, the spectrum of distribution for the *Matres* is much broader than that of the *Matronae*. Their presence has been discovered throughout Gaul, the Rhineland, and even in Britain.²⁸⁹ Therefore, it is important to consider the relationship between the two, and to demarcate similarities and any possible distinctions. Some general trends regarding how the *Matres* are venerated within and beyond the Rhineland provide evidence to suggest that, while the *Matres* and *Matronae* are both mother goddesses, we should consider their essence and purpose to be categorically unique within the frontier region.²⁹⁰ The *Matres* from elsewhere are often represented as a trinity in much the same way the Rhineland *Matronae* are; however, the accoutrements normally associated with the *Matres* indicate that they are iconographically, and therefore fundamentally, distinct.²⁹¹

²⁸⁷ Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 144, Nr. 317; Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 117; Pascal, *Cults of Cisalpine Gaul*, 119; Rüger, “Beobachtungen,” 15; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 120; Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 31-34; Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 136.

²⁸⁸ e.g. *Matronis Aufaniabus*: AE 1930, 30; *Matribus Aufanis*: CIL 13, 11988; *Matribus sive Matronis Aufaniabus*: CIL 13, 8021 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 144, Nr. 317; see also Neumann, “germanischen Matronen-Beinamen,” 129; *Matronis Aumenahenis*: CIL 13, 8215 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 135, Nr. 138; *Matribus Aumenahenis*: CIL 13, 12054 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 135-36, Nr. 139.

²⁸⁹ For a map of their distribution, see Rüger, “Beobachtungen,” 7, Fig. 3.

²⁹⁰ Veneration of mother goddesses within the territory of the Treveri provides an instructive example of localized variation that could occur; Wightman, *Roman Trier*, 217: “The name *Matronae*, so common among the Ubii, is scarcely found in the Treveran territory, and the Treveran mothers are normally depicted singly, instead of in triplicate as in the Rhineland, frequently also lacking the high, smooth bonnet of the Ubian goddesses.”

²⁹¹ The *Matres* from outside the Rhineland lack the idiosyncratic paraphernalia associated with the German *Matronae/Matres*, which will be discussed below, and seem to have a direct and emphatic connection to motherhood; see Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 30f. For general trinity characteristics of the *Matronae*, see Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 145. For *Matres* iconography as distinct from *Matronae*, see Schauerte, “Darstellungen mütterlicher Gottheiten,” esp. Taf. 14-18.

Therefore, since I am concerned with the process of cultural exchange at the frontier and not the potential arguments to be made concerning the *Matronae* originating in Cisalpine Gaul, or their degree of similarity with the *Matres* found elsewhere, I have chosen “Rhineland mother goddesses” (RMG) as a more accurate title for the dedications I will focus on in this chapter. This approach has the dual benefit of linguistic inclusion and geographic delimitation: I will consider the usage of *all* forms of the goddesses present within the Rhineland region.²⁹² We can be certain both that the various monikers – *Matres*, *Matronae*, *Deae*, etc. – are referring to the same deities because of the qualifying epithets which follow them (e.g. *Aufanis*, *Vacallinehis*). In addition, we are justified in imposing loose geographic boundaries since these particular goddesses are concentrated within a fairly well-recognizable area. Approaching the Rhineland mother goddesses from this perspective hones in on the specifics which qualify them as being unique in their names and depictions without confining them to existence in a vacuum. The frontier was a place comprised of overlapping cultural concepts, as evidenced especially in religious artifacts, and there is no need to force nominal rigidity where it clearly did not exist. The mother goddesses assessed here represent the product of cultural interaction in constant flux, with influences both local and foreign appearing in a baffling array of novel assortments. This is reflected first and foremost in the interchangeability of their titles, which already display the presence of cultural fusion through non-linear variation.

²⁹² Beyond *Matres* and *Matronae*, epithets for the goddesses are also variously accompanied by such generalized religious titles as *Deae*, *Sanctae*, and *Iunones*. See Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 127 for worship of ancestral mothers outside of Ubian territory.

“Native” Imagery

I will now turn to the imagery of the votive altars to first indicate the so-called “native” and “Roman” characteristics, which will then provide a platform for deconstructing these terms. I will instead opt to interpret the dedications as new creations which speak iconographically in the rich language of cultural exchange occurring.²⁹³ To begin, the garments of the Rhineland goddesses provide some of the most prominent characteristics which make them visually one of a kind.²⁹⁴ Three features in particular – bonnets, coats, and jewelry – aid in highlighting the supposed “nativeness” of their depictions. The relief commissioned by Q. Vettius Severus (**Fig. 1**) has garnered renown for its exquisite attention to detail in rendering the goddesses, and therefore provides a helpful reference point for assessing traits which appear on other votives in less elaborate or currently deteriorated form.²⁹⁵ The oversized and flamboyant bonnet is immediately noticeable on the two flanking females, but is absent from the central woman, who instead sports long hair bedecked with jewelry.²⁹⁶ Next, we can observe that all of the figures are wearing a unique overcoat, replete with long, flowing sleeves,²⁹⁷ held together at mid-torso with a brooch.²⁹⁸ Underneath are additional layers of cloth which are likewise presented with many

²⁹³ Spickermann has admonished that distinguishing between “Roman” and “non-Roman” frequently overlooks the developmental process of provincial trends. The usage of the *ex imperio/iussu* formula stands as an example; see Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 75, 279. *Contra* Alföldy, “Epigraphisches aus dem Rheinland III.” 81f.

²⁹⁴ Wild, “Frauentracht der Ubier,” 67; Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 36-7.

²⁹⁵ AE 1930, 19 = Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” Nr. 19, Taf. 8.

²⁹⁶ Hahl, “Zur Erklärung,” 13 describes the jewelry found on **Fig. 1**, linking it with other similar examples. Hahl also catalogues monuments with head jewelry from across the Empire in Catalog 1 of the same work; *Matronae* examples: Hahl, “Zur Erklärung,” 11-13, Nr. 1-28. The central woman’s hairstyle in trinity imagery has been interpreted as an ornately decorated configuration; see Hahl, “Zur Erklärung,” 47; other examples seem to demonstrate this point as well; see Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 36, Taf. 1,3 = Rüger, “Römische Inschriften,” Nr. 4, Abb. 4. *Contra* an older interpretation which viewed the middle figure’s hair as loosened; see Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” 35; Bickel, “Die Matronenhaube,” 215.

²⁹⁷ A rare, detailed view of RMG attire in a standing position allows for a better understanding of how the garments were draped; see Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” Nr. 33, Taf. XVIII = Nesselhauf, “Neue Inschriften,” Nr. 173

²⁹⁸ However, the coat may be unfastened as well, revealing a better view of the garment underneath which is usually not visible; see Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 36, Taf. 1,3 = Rüger, “Römische Inschriften,” Nr. 4, Abb. 4. Rüger, “Römische Inschriften,” 115-16 describes the unique aspects of the *Matronae* coat.

detailed folds, adding to the texture and regality of the goddesses' presentation. Beyond the head jewelry of the middle figure,²⁹⁹ all on almost every depiction wear necklaces with pendants which come either in the form of *lunulae* or full rings.³⁰⁰ In sum, the totality of visual characteristics in their presentation attest to the distinctive qualities of these Rhineland goddesses, especially in contrast to similar maternal deities from outside of the region.³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ The jewelry is not always apparent due to weathering; see Hahl, "Zur Erklärung," 13, Nr. 28.

³⁰⁰ Horn calculates that the presence of this jewelry on reliefs which depict the trinity of matrons to be the 95%; Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 36, Taf. 1,3 = Rüger, "Römische Inschriften," Nr. 4, Abb. 4.

³⁰¹ Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 43-4.

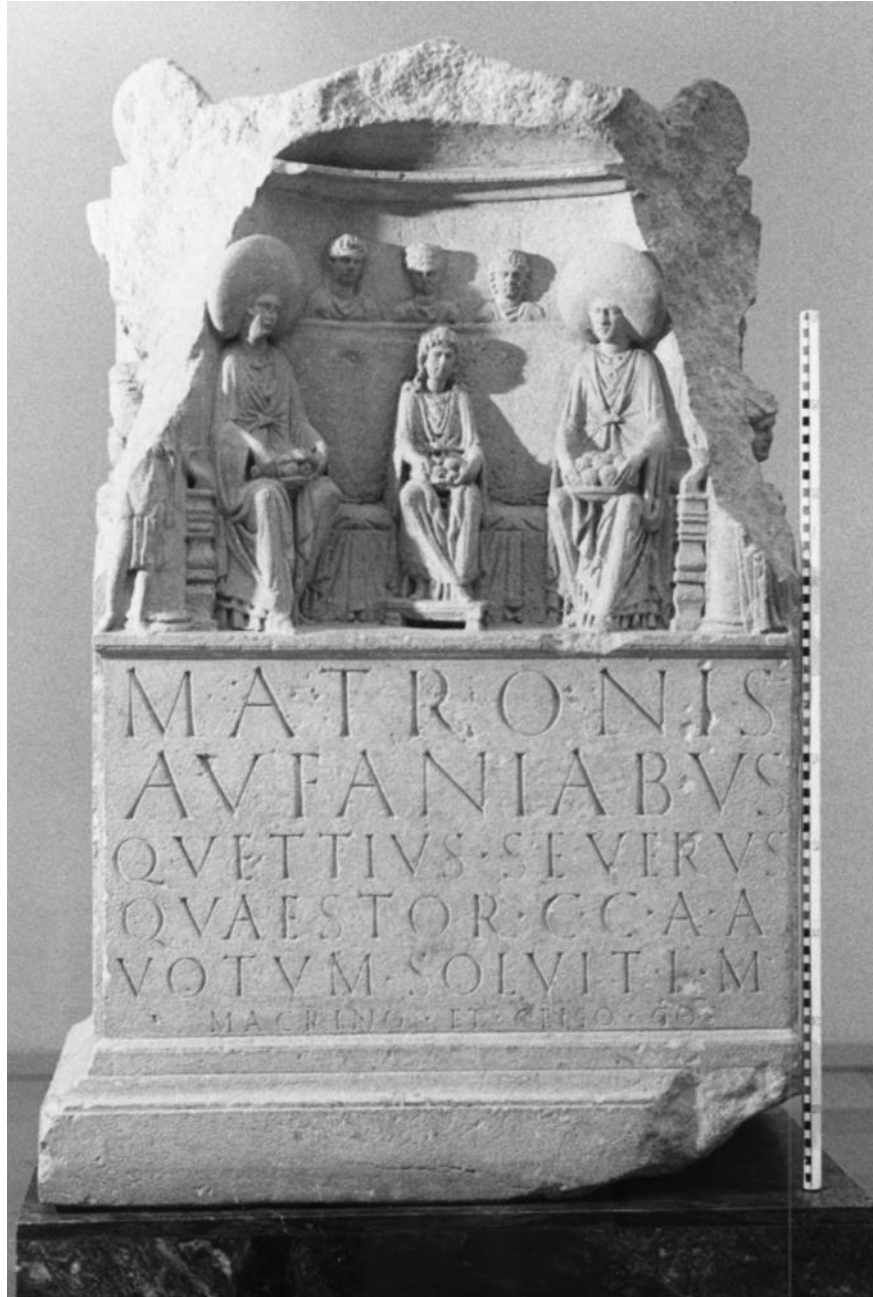


Fig. 1: Votive of Q. Vettius Severus
 AE 1930, 19
 Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn

In addition to the clothing worn by the mother goddesses, the reliefs are also frequently laden with other imagery, including baskets of fruit,³⁰² as well a mysterious emphasis given to the presence of a tree. The former can be easily linked with the concept of fecundity and plenty, since many altars also include one or more depictions of a cornucopia on the sides of the altars.³⁰³ Fruit also seems to have served as a form of offering to the goddesses, judging by the way either dedicants or servants wield them on reliefs,³⁰⁴ as well as the unique way fashioned in stone atop the altar as a faux offering.³⁰⁵ The near-ubiquitous presence of a tree in some form on the reliefs has been interpreted as an archaic feature of the cult during its pre-anthropomorphic stage; however, it is unclear whether the origin of this motif is indigenous or foreign, or indeed if it can be restricted to religious imagery at all.³⁰⁶ It is commonly found on the sides of the altars,³⁰⁷ or, in several rare instances, become the dominating focal point, taking up the entire back side of the *votum*.³⁰⁸

³⁰² For fruit types and their value as symbols of the *Matronae* linked with fortune and blessings, similar to Roman Fortuna, see Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 45-46, 54.

³⁰³ Bickel, "Die Matronenhaube," 217; Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 30; Lehner, "Römische Steindenkmäler," 37; Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 46 n.62 tallies 55 occurrences of cornucopiae on *Matronae* stones; examples of cornucopiae on the sides of altars: CIL 13, 11989= Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 283; CIL 13, 8571; CIL 13, 7934 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 254; CIL 13, 7926 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 260; CIL 13, 12068 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 335; CIL 13, 7851 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 510; CIL 13, 7909 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 515; CIL 13, 7926; AE 1931, 14.

³⁰⁴ Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 47, Taf. 6,3; 9.

³⁰⁵ E.g. Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 284 = CIL 13, 11990; AE 1931, 14.

³⁰⁶ Often a laurel tree; see Hahl, "Zur Matronenverehrung," 260. Tree imagery evoking pre-Roman, aniconic associations of the *Matronae*: Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 50-1; Rüger, "Husband for the Mother Goddesses," 214. However, the frequent presence of a snake and bird nest in the trees depicted on RMG altars is a theme found elsewhere as well; see Künzl, "Dekorierte Gladii," 49f.

³⁰⁷ E.g. CIL 13, 12057; CIL 13, 11984; CIL 13, 12027; AE 1930, 21; AE 1930, 24; Nesselhauf, "Neue Inschriften," Nr. 172.

³⁰⁸ E.g. AE 1930, 30; AE 1931, 12.

“Roman” Imagery

In terms of Roman influences found on the altars, we may first note the most obvious fact that the very form of the stone altar is a Mediterranean tradition which was introduced to the German provinces after conquest and allowed new, tangible religious expressions of local deities to emerge.³⁰⁹ While there is little doubt that votive offerings to deities existed in the northern territories prior to the advent of the Romans,³¹⁰ it seems clear that they were not carried out in the same fashion, as we have found no physical traces of them, and ancient literary sources suggest very different forms of indigenous worship – none of which mention the use of physical altars.³¹¹ Erecting a monument with an inscription attesting to the fulfillment of a vow by a specific individual is certainly a practice imbued with prominent Greco-Roman character. Moreover, a number of these votive altars themselves have depictions of altar sacrifices on them in a typical Roman format (i.e. a *togatus* approaching or at an altar in the act of offering),³¹² indicating that those commissioning these dedications were familiar with this practice, if not directly attesting to the presence of the ritual in this region on behalf of the RMG. Minor, Roman-inspired emblems are commonly found on these altars alongside the typical “native”

³⁰⁹ Ferlut, “Celtic Goddesses,” 363.

³¹⁰ Pre-Roman cult sites have been identified in the form of ossuaries – prominently at Gournay and Ribemont – and so-called Viereckschanzen upon which later Romano-Celtic temples were built; see King, *Roman Gaul and Germany*, 136-38; Okun, *The Early Roman Frontier*, 110, 114.

³¹¹ Caes. *BG.* 6.16-17 identifies Gauls making use of vows, human sacrifices, and the dedication of war booty to the gods; Tac. *Germ.* 9 identifies human sacrifice, the consecration of wooded areas, and the lacking interest in depicting the gods in anthropomorphized form. Tac. *Hist.* 4.61. is a potentially useful source, as it provides a description of Julius Civilis fulfilling a barbarian vow (*barbaro voto...deposuit*) by cutting his hair after triumphing over Roman forces, as well as a reference to the veneration of maidens which bears similarities to the mother goddesses under discussion here: [*Veleda*] *ea virgo nationis Bructerae late imperitabat, vetere apud Germanos more, quo plerasque feminarum fatidicas et augescente superstitione arbitrantur deas.* Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 234-35 briefly addresses some of these as well as other examples in his assessment of vows; see also: Derks, “Ritual of the Vow,” 111-1; Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 80f. For the existence of wooden cult idols attested in literature, see Caes. *BG.* 6.17.1; Tac. *Germ.* 7; Tac. *Hist.* 4.22; Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 62. Green, “Gods and the Supernatural,” 466 notes the inescapable reality that the lack of pre-Roman religious imagery makes us perpetually reliant on Roman-influenced versions of indigenous deities that emerged in the post-conquest period.

³¹² E.g. AE 1930, 21; AE 1931, 18; CIL 13, 7895; CIL 13, 12057; Nesselhauf, “Neue Inschriften,” Nr. 172; Nesselhauf, “Neue Inschriften,” Nr. 179. CIL 5, 6641 from Pallanza provides an early 1st century instance of a sacrificial relief, which, in addition, is dedicated to the *Matronae* in Cisalpine Gaul.

ones. The narrow sides of the stones are a particularly favored location to place symbolically-suggestive imagery, such as the cornucopia mentioned above. Additionally, one regularly encounters acanthus plants flowing in elaborate manner out of a vase,³¹³ as well as a three-legged table which is often strewn with sacrificial items.³¹⁴ Servants (or dedicants?) are also represented on the sides, carrying either sacrificial animals,³¹⁵ or related paraphernalia.³¹⁶ Finally, architectural features display clear Roman influence, with the RMG sitting in an *aedicula* frame, often flanked with Corinthian columns (**Fig. 2**).³¹⁷

³¹³ E.g. CIL 13, 7936 = Lehner 256; CIL 13, 7889 = Lehner 332; CIL 13, 8571 = Lehner 336; CIL 13, 7822 = Lehner 524; AE 1931, 12.

³¹⁴ Jugs: CIL 13, 11989 = Lehner 283. Fruit bowl: CIL 13, 7850 = Lehner 512. Basket: CIL 13, 7908 = Lehner 516. Sacrificial table: Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 48; the three-legged table is also a core component of the Totenmahl ("death banquet") motif, commonly found on gravestones in the region and elsewhere; for example, see CIL 13, 8289 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 327.

³¹⁵ E.g. CIL 13, 7907; AE 1931, 18; see also Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 48, Taf. 4, 12. The presence of a pig, for example, should perhaps be connected with an imported Mediterranean sacrificial tradition; see Hahl, "Zur Matronenverehrung," 256.

³¹⁶ Servant with *patera*: CIL 13, 7889; CIL 13, 7907; with fruit baskets: AE 1930, 19; AE 1930, 29. See also Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 223-24.

³¹⁷ E.g. CIL 13, 11984; CIL 13, 8571; CIL 13, 11989; CIL 13, 7933.

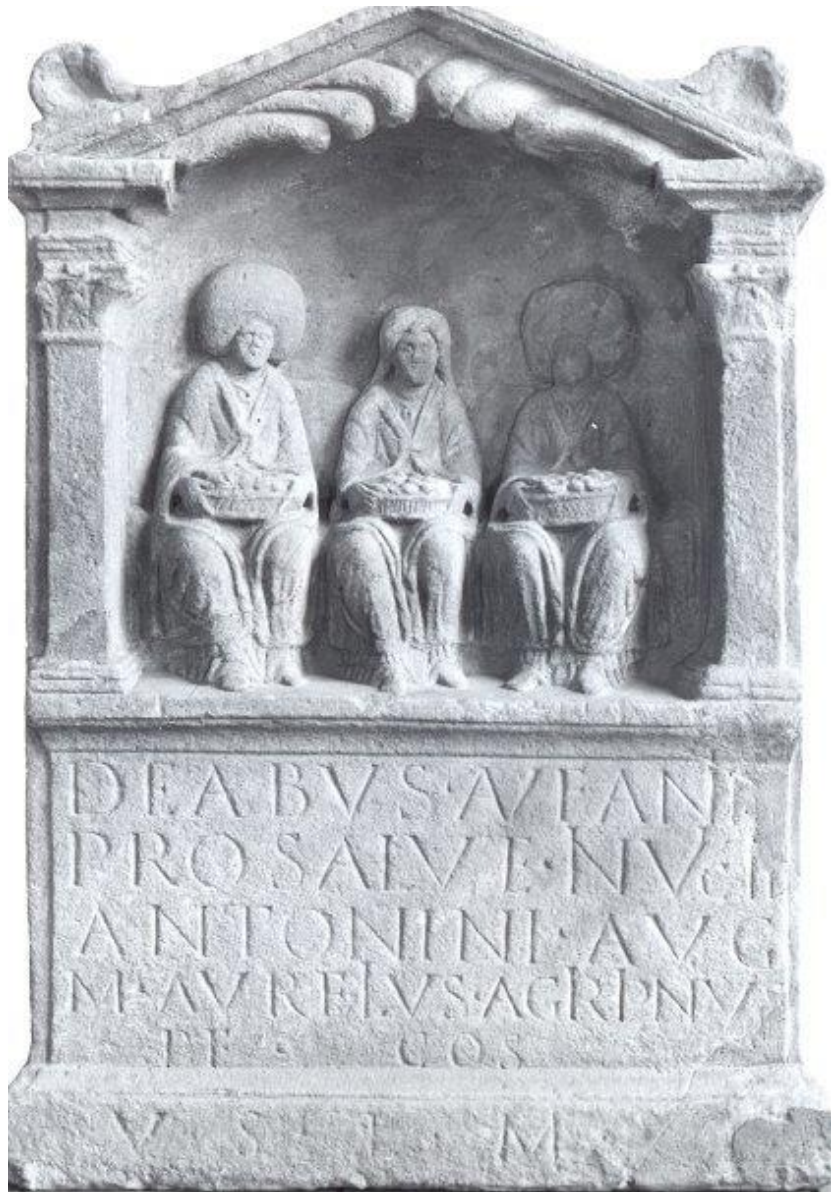


Fig. 2: Aufanian Mothers depicted within Roman style *aedicula*
CIL 13, 11984

Deconstructing Categories, Blurring Distinctions

Now that general distinctions have been made between what can be only in the loosest sense understood as “native” and “Roman” characteristics present on the RMG dedications, it is possible to address the innovation of individuals on the ground who toyed with design patterns and religious concepts to create truly unique cultural artifacts.³¹⁸ While eschewing rigid categories like “Roman” and “native,” it is equally important to avoid the habit of tallying the mixed examples we examine under the heading “provincial” in any sort of way which boxes them into a monolithic category. Nor should it be acceptable to dismiss ingenuity as merely variations on or minor deviations from well-established styles. This avenue of thought is detrimental to both the evidence itself, as well as historical analysis through its tendency to subsume anomalous features under prepackaged themes and categories. The remainder of this chapter will highlight the novelty of various altars in terms of their visual and epigraphic qualities. Particular emphasis must be given to the individuality of each *votum*, as well as the ways in which it conforms to or deviates from “standardized” motifs and formulae. Dedicants operated within a spectrum of familiarity with the cultural symbols and language which they invoked as they wished, making every altar a distinct narrative snapshot of active exchange.

First, the visual traits present on the RMG can be found on other reliefs depicting female figures clad in virtually identical attire in different religious as well as non-religious contexts. The ostentatious bonnet occurs on at least two other dedications from the region: one discovered northwest of Bonn at Sechtem bei Bornheim addressed to Mercury (**Fig. 3**), and another on the base of a Jupiter Column dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus from Cologne.³¹⁹ Both reliefs

³¹⁸ See Slofstra, “Integration, Culture and Ideology,” 4.

³¹⁹ Mercury: Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 158f., Nr. 171 = CIL 13, 8234; Hahl, “Zur Erklärung,” 43-44 n. 95. Jupiter: Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 111, Nr. 104; Noeike, “Eine neue Iuppitersäule”; Galsterer and Galsterer, “Romanisation und einheimische Traditionen,” 381.

include a single woman wearing the bonnet accompanying others in the act of sacrifice upon an altar. On the dedication to Jupiter, the woman stands next to a man and a child, presumably representing a family of dedicants.³²⁰ The inscription on the *votum* to Mercury confirms that it was commissioned by two female dedicants, which likely correspond to the two female figures on the relief itself, as in the previous case.³²¹ These two examples are instructive, since they confirm the bonnet is not limited to RMG iconography, but instead indicate the headgear as something which was actually worn by women in the province – at least during certain religious ceremonies.³²²

³²⁰ Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 111, Nr. 104.

³²¹ Interestingly, although the heads of the female figures are largely unrecognizable, it seems clear that only one wears the bonnet, which brings the relationship of the two into question, since it represents dual dedication by two, apparently unrelated women.

³²² Hahl, “Zur Erklärung,” 44 goes perhaps too far in asserting it as “everyday dress” (“alltäglichen Tracht”); however, the bonnet was clearly prevalent outside of the RMG cults, and had a broader cultural significance. See also Hahl, “Zur Matronenverehrung,” 254; Galsterer and Galsterer, “Romanisation und einheimische Traditionen,” 381; Galsterer et al., “Mercurius Valdivahanus,” 488.



Fig. 3: Dedication to Mercury by Iulia Tertia and Navita
CIL 13, 8234
Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Köln

Outside the sphere of religion, RMG characteristics can be observed on gravestones personalized with likenesses of the deceased as they themselves wished to be displayed, or, at the very least, how the dedicator saw fit to present them. An evident example of the bonnet and what

appears to be a *lunula* pendant is the well-known sarcophagus from Cologne of Traiana Herodiana dedicated to her by her husband, who is also present on the relatively small and somewhat basic relief (**Fig. 4**).³²³ A gravestone fragment from Heerlen likely depicts a married couple, with the woman clad in what seems clearly to be a bonnet of the RMG variety, albeit not nearly as large.³²⁴ A somewhat obscure example from Maastricht in the form of a fragmentary funeral stele depicts three individuals: a woman on the left facing a man to her opposite, with another woman just behind her.³²⁵ Although only the upper portion now intact, we are fortunately still able to assess the general makeup and important details of their heads. While the definite borders of it have faded, a bonnet seems to be clearly discernable on the woman in the background, judging by its large, globular outline and the distance it protrudes from the sides of her head well past the ears.³²⁶

³²³ CIL 13, 8426 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 462; Hahl, “Zur Matronenverehrung,” 254, Taf. 50,1. Horn, “Bilddenkmäler des Matronenkultes,” 37, Taf. 1,4 dates this to the second half of the second century AD.

³²⁴ Espérandieu, *Recueil de la Gaule romaine [Vol] IX*, 51, Nr. 6635 seems to suggest that there is no bonnet present, but that it is the woman’s hairstyle. Hahl, “Zur Matronenverehrung,” 254, Taf. 51,1 is more definitive in identifying it as “eine Haube.”

³²⁵ Espérandieu interprets this as a funerary banquet scene; see Espérandieu, *Recueil de la Gaule romaine [Vol] XIV*, 24, Nr. 8380, Pl. XXIII.

³²⁶ Wild cites this woman as one of several gravestones which display the conventional bonnet of the *Matronae*; see Wild, “Frauentracht der Ubier,” 68 n.7. Espérandieu had previously interpreted it as a cap of some kind; see Espérandieu, *Recueil de la Gaule romaine [Vol] XIV*, 24, Nr. 8380, Pl. XXIII.



Fig. 4: Sarcophagus of Traiania Herodiana
CIL 13, 8426
Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Köln

What can we take from the fact that the bonnet, coat, and jewelry comprised a distinct combination of garments which was applied to the visual presentation of local women as well as the personification of the RMG in stone? Long ago, Hahl posed the important question of asking how much native tradition we can infer by analyzing these reliefs.³²⁷ In the resulting state of aporia regarding the “true” nature of the RMG, scholarship has largely limited itself to isolating “Roman” and “native” traits. It seems clear that the espousal of these items by some female inhabitants points to the presence of a loosely “provincial” fashion which was applied to the goddesses, and not the other way around. Simply put, people did not dress like their gods; rather, they projected contemporary clothing styles onto their conception of how their deities should be

³²⁷ Hahl, “Zur Matronenverehrung,” 264.

depicted. This is especially important if in fact the RMG had only recently been anthropomorphized, since there would have been no preexisting tradition or standards for creating their likeness. The RMG dedications therefore allow us to witness the process of religious imagery being invented in real time by individuals who took inspiration from the many cultural influences present in the region. The bonnet provides a clear instance of this process, as it has been argued to represent the mark of a married woman.³²⁸ If this is indeed the case, then it indicates that these goddesses reflect the contemporary social order of those living in the province.

It is tempting to interpret the characteristics unique to the RMG and to women in the surrounding territory as indications of unadulterated native tradition having found its way into popular provincial cults and fashion trends after two centuries of occupation.³²⁹ Many scholars have in fact done just this, frequently referring to *Matronae* and women on other altars and gravestones as being clad in traditional Ubian dress.³³⁰ More generally, the zone of active worship of the *Matronae* is regularly described as being roughly limited to the territory of the Ubii.³³¹ However, it is necessary to first ask what the term “Ubian” can even represent by the time the majority of datable RMG altars and funerary reliefs with similar iconography came into existence ca. mid-second century AD. The designation refers to the tribe first mentioned in

³²⁸ Hahl, “Zur Matronenverehrung,” 253-55; Hahl, “Zur Erklärung,” 36f.; Wild, “Frauentracht der Ubier,” 69; Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 37; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 119; Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 35-6; Galsterer and Galsterer, “Romanisation und einheimische Traditionen,” 381.

³²⁹ As per the so-called “Celtic Renaissance”; see MacMullen, “The Celtic Renaissance,” esp. 100-01; see also Bickel, “Die Matronenhaube,” 218-19; Carroll, *Romans, Celts and Germans*, 119.

³³⁰ Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 37 refers to the sarcophagus of Traiana Herodiana and likewise the *Matronae* in this manner, and goes on to surmise that the women present in sacrifice scenes on the altars are dressed “in festlicher Landestracht”. See also Rüger, “Beobachtungen,” 25-6; Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 35, 46; Wild, “Frauentracht der Ubier,” esp. 67-8, 73. Brigitte and Helmut Galsterer are more cautious when referring to “die sogenannte ubische Frauentracht”; however, they nevertheless frame traits such as the bonnet and coat within the context of “indigene Elemente” during the supposed revival of native traditions during the second century; see Galsterer and Galsterer, “Romanisation und einheimische Traditionen,” 381-82.

³³¹ Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 116, 129, 155; Rüger, “Beobachtungen,” 13, 23; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 119-20; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 76-84.

Caesar's *Gallic War* who, on the whole, remained faithful supporters of the Romans from the onset, and seem to have willingly assimilated into the new imperial order with great alacrity after their resettlement within Roman territory.³³² Tacitus claims that the Ubii had relinquished any claims to their native German ancestry, and instead preferred to be called "Agrippinenses" following the upgraded status of their main settlement (*oppidum Ubiorum*) to that of a Roman colony (*Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium*) ca. 50 AD.³³³ This pride in highlighting their imperial connection is reflected in material evidence as well. Ubian names and those identifying themselves as being of Ubian lineage (e.g. *natione Ubius*) drop off by the end of the first century AD in correspondence with the general decline in "native" names during this period,³³⁴ whereas a profundity of "Agrippinenses" exists in the epigraphic record thereafter.³³⁵ The degree to which the Ubii have been recorded as having acclimated to Roman social and cultural mores makes it highly unlikely that prominent religious cults like the mother goddesses would have gone unchanged during the almost two centuries since Caesar's conquests.

Clearly then, it makes little sense to refer to the visual traits of the RMG as "Ubian," either in a practical sense or as a cultural moniker: following their resettlement on the West side of the Rhine, the Ubii nominally ceased to exist around mid-first century, and their cultural identity readily integrated with Rome. What we identify as "indigenous" remnants of Ubian

³³² Ubii as allies of Caesar: Caes. *BG.* 1.54, 4.3, 4.8, 4.16, 4.19 6.9-10, 6.29. Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 76-84 provides a comprehensive overview of the history of the Ubii. For Ubian assimilation, see Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 56; Roymans, "Romanization, Cultural Identity," 62.

³³³ Tac. *Germ.* 28; Tac. *Hist.* 4.28.

³³⁴ Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 86: "Only one Ubian name survives in literature (AD 70) and only thirteen Ubii are known from epigraphy, none after ca. 100 AD"; see also *Ibid.*, 109; Weisgerber, *Die Namen der Ubier*, 339, 411; Galsterer and Galsterer, "Romanisation und einheimische Traditionen," 377-78.

³³⁵ For *Ubii* and *Agrippinenses*, see Weisgerber, *Die Namen der Ubier*, 335-39, 410-16; e.g. AE 1960, 139: *natione Agrippin(ensis)*; CIL 12, 2397: *Agrippinens(is) M(arcus) Aurel(ius) Auditor*; CIL 13, 8336: *C(aio) Frontinio Candido Agrip(p)inen(si)*; CIL 13, 8091 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 409 = CSIRD III, 1: Nr. 34: *T(ito) Manilio Geniali Agrippin(ensi)*; CIL 13, 8283 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 315: *M(arcus) Val(erius) Celerinus...cives Agrippine(nsis)*; CIL 10, 3896: *natus col(onia) Agrippinense*; AE 2006, 394: *natio(ne) Agrippine(n)si[s]*; CIL 13, 1904: *Victoriae Ursulae...civi Agrippinens(i)*; CIL 13, 1905: *Vindiciae Lupercae civi Agrippinensi*.

culture can only rightly be deemed a loosely contemporary “provincial” style in the sense that they were the product of continued exchange, adaptation, and invention over the course of centuries, which we can observe as snapshots in time on the RMG *vota*.³³⁶ Therefore, we should not assume that the bonnet and coat are automatically a reflection of “native” style simply due to their anomalous standing when compared with generalized Mediterranean trends,³³⁷ and instead recognize that they themselves are already the product of cultural fusion by the time they become detectable in the material record. The fact that the goddesses do not appear until after two centuries of Roman occupation should admonish us that we have no basis to claim that what appears to be “native” is anything other than the contemporary provincial understanding of deities which likely have indigenous religious connections. In other words, they are “native” only insofar as the term refers to the fashion of the territory at the time, and not to static features of archaic Germanic religious worship or an unchanging style. In fact, the very presentation of the RMG in stone form indicates an alteration of the cult to such an extent that it can no longer be deemed pristine. Once altered by the effects of outside influences, a cultural practice is hybridized by definition. In the case of the RMG, unlike more modern instances of creolized religions, the difficulties of tracing back the origins of the cults, their worship, and their iconography is impossible due to a lack of documentation and other pertinent evidence. An example of this can be seen, once again, in the jewelry worn by the RMG, including the *lunulae* as well as the jewelry evident in the middle goddess’ hairstyle. It is not obvious that their presence is linked with any traditional, indigenous practice, and may actually represent a kind of

³³⁶ Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 406: “We cannot make guesses on ethnic origins, which, after two centuries of Roman influence and occupation, were largely irrelevant.”; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 65.

³³⁷ Galsterer and Galsterer, “Romanisation und einheimische Traditionen,” 377 describe the cultural developments of the second century AD in terms of the re-appearance of indigenous cultural elements that cannot be associated with Italian, Spanish, or North African Roman cultures. However, this description betrays the oversimplification of what “Roman” itself can even mean by collapsing three vast territories of the Empire under an artificial heading.

Roman exoticization of the cults though emphasizing or embellishing particular details.³³⁸ It is for this reason that I have chosen to describe evidence in terms of *characteristics* rather than *categories*, as it otherwise becomes too convenient to fall into the habit of using “Ubian dress” as a designation.

Adoption and Innovation: Novelty from Variety

The previous sections have broken down the rigid categories of “Roman” and “native,” and demonstrated that what has been traditionally understood to be “native” has little value in terms of the time period discussed here, as these characteristics were neither restricted to the religious sphere, nor did they comprise a definitive provincial style. Finally, they cannot be taken to represent some form of static indigenous custom. Instead, the visual traits on the RMG *vota* were embedded within the array of options available to dedicants, who made use of them as they saw fit on altars and funerary iconography. It has not been my intention to suggest that certain cultural trends did not take shape over time. Clearly, there is a level of consistency in how the RMG are depicted alongside as well as in the hinterlands of the Lower Rhine. However, it is necessary to understand these trends both in terms of localized fashion and along a spectrum of cultural exchange. It will be the goal of the following section to highlight particular instances which exemplify either a small-scale, localized fashion, or uniquely anomalous individual choices which demonstrate the degree of adoption and innovation taking place in the region as people created novel cultural artifacts from the variety of influences and styles at their disposal. These deviations from the standardized depiction are frequently dismissed as marginal variations

³³⁸ Hahl, “Zur Erklärung,” 47-8. Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 267 contemplates the possibility that votives to the *Aufaniae* may have resulted from elite, antiquarian interest in the cult.

of the general RMG triad motif;³³⁹ however, it is precisely these anomalous instances which provide the most interesting material to complicate the process of cultural exchange. We should resist the urge to subsume outlier data under categories which seem more convenient for constructing a narrative.

We may first observe the variation present even within the frequent and seemingly uniform depiction of the RMG in the form of a trinity (**Fig. 1** and **Fig. 2**). In one example (**Fig. 5**),³⁴⁰ a dedication to the *Matres Suebae* portrays the deities sitting alongside one another in the conventional format, and with many of the same attributes as other RMG altars (i.e. baskets of fruit and a long-sleeved coat clasped together at the chest with a fibula of some kind). However, the bonnet is conspicuously missing from the two figures on the ends. Although the details of the heads and faces on the relief have deteriorated with time, it is obvious from the proportions of the engraved space alone that nothing akin to the size of the “Ubian” bonnet is present. This is not to say that another form of headdress – perhaps even a variation of the “Ubian” bonnet – can be ruled out; however, in either case we are left with a unique representation of the RMG which demonstrates an alternative perspective of how one could envision the goddesses. The omission of a garment seemingly so indispensable to the RMG iconography cannot be disregarded as mere variation. It is also important to note that this example was discovered at Cologne, which points to a lack of uniform conception of the RMG, even in the supposed Ubian cultural epicenter.

³³⁹ *Contra* Wild, “Frauentracht der Ubier,” 67; Schauerte, “Darstellungen mütterlicher Gottheiten,” 58; Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 44.

³⁴⁰ AE 1998, 963 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 156.



Fig. 5: Dedication to the *Matres Suebae* lacking the typical Ubian bonnet
 AE 1998, 963
 Römisch-Germanisches Museum Köln

Another relief fragment from Bonn provides a panoramic view of the RMG trinity, and what appears to be a procession of dedicants, who are dressed in similar fashion, replete with the typical large bonnets in some cases which are still discernable (**Fig. 6**).³⁴¹ An important aspect of this image that leads to more questions lies in its visual compression of what are normally

³⁴¹ The heads are in all cases either missing or starkly damaged. For description and discussion of the procession scene, see Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 42, Taf. 6, 3 = Lehner, "Römische Steindenkmäler," 19, Nr. 42, Taf. XIX, 2; Rüger, "Beobachtungen," 25-26.

considered the goddesses themselves and their earthly followers. Are we to interpret this scene as one of human dedicants or cult personnel, dressed in religious attire and approaching some type priestess representatives of the goddesses?³⁴² Or does the relief attempt to bridge the conceptual gap between the divine and human realm by metaphorically depicting interaction with the RMG themselves?³⁴³ In other words, are we looking at something akin to an *actual* procession which was part of the RMG's ritual practices, or is the image the product of a more imaginative creation on the part of the dedicator (or at least the artist)?³⁴⁴ While it seems the answer to this is beyond our comprehension, the important points are that the people carving and erecting this relief believed they had a sufficient understanding of the RMG, and that they expressed their understanding of the cult in this unique way. The elaborate detail suggests that a high level of familiarity, as well as a conscious desire to display this knowledge. Unfortunately, as there is no extant inscription accompanying the relief, our inability to assess the dedicator in terms of their personal status – i.e. foreigner/local, male/female, Roman citizen/*peregrinus*, military/civilian – likewise limits our capacity to gauge the extent of cultural exchange taking place. As we will see below, however, even in cases which provide the names of the dedicant(s), attempts to verify ethnicity or origin are often not only moot but also irrelevant.³⁴⁵ The lacking certainty we are left with regarding the dedicants' backgrounds and intentions are reflective of the frontier cultural environment in general: unpredictable, composite, and ultimately elusive.

³⁴² For early suggestions regarding the ambiguity of the figures' human/divine status, see Lehner, "Römische Steindenkmäler," 35; Bickel, "Die Matronenhaube," 215; both suggest the possibility of the middle, younger-looking goddess being conceived of as human rather than divine.

³⁴³ Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 223 n.33; see also footnote 361 below.

³⁴⁴ A similar phenomenon occurs in **Fig. 1**, where three individuals are visible just behind the bench of the *Matronae*.

³⁴⁵ See footnotes 334 and 336; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 398, 406.



Fig. 6: Procession Scene
Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," Taf. 6,3
Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn

Two examples depict the RMG in tondo or medallion form. The first,³⁴⁶ although severely damaged and existing only as a fragment, provides enough information through its inscription to confirm that it is a *Matronae* dedication. Above the text is a circular image in which the three RMG are aligned next to one another and are portrayed from the chest up. In the second instance (**Fig. 7**),³⁴⁷ each goddess is presented in their own tondo of equal size, and the edges of the outside two overlapping with the borders of the central figure. The distinctive presentation of the goddesses on these stones should alter our conception of them in several ways. The emphasis on the presentation of the goddesses themselves has been abbreviated, and the imagery on the front of the altar has been reduced considerably. While in most other trinity

³⁴⁶ CIL 13, 11991 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 285; Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 44 Taf. 7, 2.

³⁴⁷ CIL 13, 7907 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 522.

depictions the entirety of the setting is manifest, with the RMG clearly sitting in some sort of defined location, these tondo portraits greatly diminish or eliminate this feature. It seems clear that there was no sense of urgency on the part of the dedicant to recreate detailed likenesses of the goddesses in their usual form, since each bust on **Fig. 7** is roughly the same height as a letter on the inscription. Even when accounting for the heavily deteriorated state of the RMG heads, there would not have been much space available for elaboration. The RMG in this case seem instead to represent avatars which have been condensed to their most salient features (i.e. two with bonnets, one without). The dedicant and artist demonstrate a degree of comfort and familiarity in representing the deities in this way and giving primacy to the textual dedication on the front of the altar instead. The sides of **Fig. 7**, however, include much larger and more elaborate reliefs of servants carrying sacrificial objects – a woman with a jug and what appears to be a *patera*, and a man holding a dead animal by its feet at head level.³⁴⁸ This level of embellishment indicates that expense was unlikely to have been a limiting factor for the dedicant, and reinforces the interpretation that the understated representation of the RMG themselves was a conscious choice. Therefore, it becomes patent that people in this frontier region were improvising the visual format of their dedications as they saw fit. The medallion format curtails the dominance of the RMG on the front of the stone and allows for the primacy of the inscription, which deviates from the more common, frontal depiction of the goddesses. It has been suggested that contemporary gravestone fashions of the third century influenced this style of RMG dedications, which would indicate a further link between cultural trends and newly developed forms of veneration.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁸ Horn suggests the possibility of the animal being either a dog or fox; see Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 48, Taf. 12, 2.

³⁴⁹ Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 44 n.53; see also Bauchhenß, *Germania Inferior*, 8, 29-32, Taf. 14-15 for medallion portraits of the third century; see CIL 13, 8350 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 426 for a funerary portrait medallion example from Cologne.



Fig. 7: *Matronae* depicted in tondo/medallion form
CIL 13, 7907

Other reliefs deviate from the trinity motif by reducing or omitting it completely, and opt for the inclusion of sacrificial altar scenes which fluctuates in their emphasis on the RMG as they present the dedicant in the act of offering.³⁵⁰ One altar to the *Matronae Cuchenehae* from Zülpich depicts a man providing an offering at an altar in the presence of three women standing opposite of him (**Fig. 8**).³⁵¹ The female figures have been interpreted to be representations of the

³⁵⁰ Wild, "Frauentracht der Ubier," 68 notes the frequency in the Lower Rhine region of including the dedicant in sacrifice scenes on *Matronae* altars.

³⁵¹ CIL 13, 7923 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 323.

Matronae themselves, given that they seem to be dressed in the standard garb associated with the goddesses.³⁵² However, only one of the figures sports the typical bonnet, and another seems to be much younger than the usual depiction of the “maiden” in the trinity of matrons, judging by her size in relation to the others. Moreover, the young girl is not positioned in between the two mature females, which also breaks from the established trinity motif. In sum, we have no way of knowing who exactly these figures are supposed to represent. The obvious choice would seem to be that they are likenesses of the goddesses, but they might just as easily be priestesses of some kind who are associated with the cult,³⁵³ or even family members of the dedicant.³⁵⁴ As with the procession relief discussed above (**Fig. 6**), it is not clear whether this image is meant to recreate an actual religious rite or a symbolic interaction with the RMG. If it is assumed that the *Matronae* are intended, then we are observing a complete deviation from the standard depiction of the goddesses: removed from their typical setting – seated together in a particular order upon a bench – they have gained a kind of interactive mobility with the cult’s rituals as well as those who are venerating them. Once again, mere variety should not be considered a valid explanation for the distinctiveness of such reliefs; rather, they represent an idiosyncratic interpretation of the RMG, which is the product of cultural exchange and subsequent innovation on the part of the dedicant.³⁵⁵

³⁵² Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 147; Espérandieu, *Recueil de la Gaule romaine [Vol VIII]*, 6358.

³⁵³ Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 146f.

³⁵⁴ Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 48 n.78.

³⁵⁵ Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 48 notes the particular frequency of sacrifice scenes on RMG dedications.



Fig. 8: Sacrifice scene on an altar to the *Matronae Cuchenehae* by Lucius Marcius Verecundus
CIL 13, 7923

Another altar from Bonn to the *Matronae Aufaniae* (**Fig. 9**) contains a complete inscription as well as a highly detailed, yet also highly fragmentary relief which depicts a sacrifice similar to the scene found in **Fig. 8**.³⁵⁶ Although only two partial torso sections of the figures on the relief are visible, several important details can still be gleaned. First, the figure on

³⁵⁶ Nesselhauf, "Neue Inschriften," Nr. 179 = Lehner, "Römische Steindenkmäler," 15-16, Nr. 30, Taf. XVII.

the right is clearly standing next to an altar, and is in the act of placing his offering on it. Second, the dedicant appears to be *togatus*, as does the person opposite of him. Judging by the amount of space which these two figures occupy in the relief, it seems unlikely that there would have originally been others depicted, save for perhaps one, centrally located behind the altar itself.³⁵⁷ Therefore, when considering the overall style of the altar we are left with a highly “Roman” sacrifice scene to the *Matronae*, which in all likelihood excluded images of the goddesses in its emphasis on the *togati* figures. We may use a very similar and intact example from nearby Cologne to help supplement what the completed relief may have resembled.³⁵⁸ The dedication is to an entirely different goddess (*Dea Vagdavercustis*); however, the format of the two is the same: text above a scene of sacrifice. Moreover, a fragment of the *Matronae* altar mirrors the *togatus* figure of the *Vagdavercustis* dedication, allowing us to safely reconstruct the remainder of the relief.³⁵⁹ Rather than portraying the *Matronae* in any way, the front slab is likely meant to represent the two men on whose behalf the *votum* was erected. The altar is therefore almost entirely void of any RMG imagery. It is only on the narrow sides of the stone that the *Matronae* are visible, and even here it is in unusually diminutive form. They appear to be statues – one wearing a bonnet while seated, the other standing – placed atop arched structures with servants underneath,³⁶⁰ who are much larger, and occupy most of the narrow space. The dedicant’s decision to adopt a typical and fairly banal Roman style sacrifice scene is counterbalanced by the novel inclusion of the *Matronae* in a highly unconventional manner. They are presented neither as a trinity, nor at the altar itself, but instead appear to be shoehorned

³⁵⁷ Lehner opined that “Reste von drei Personen sind erhalten,” but did not speculate further; see Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” 15, Nr. 30.

³⁵⁸ CIL 13, 12057 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 185-86, Nr. 207.

³⁵⁹ Another nearly identical scene can be found on an altar to the *Matronae Aufaniae* (AE 1931, 18).

³⁶⁰ Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” 16 provides a detailed description.

into the imagery of the *votum* with minimal focus. As with the tondo reliefs of **Fig. 7**, the *Matronae* seem to be understood here as avatars which the dedicant and artist could toy with and include howsoever they wished, possibly reflecting their familiarity with the cult.

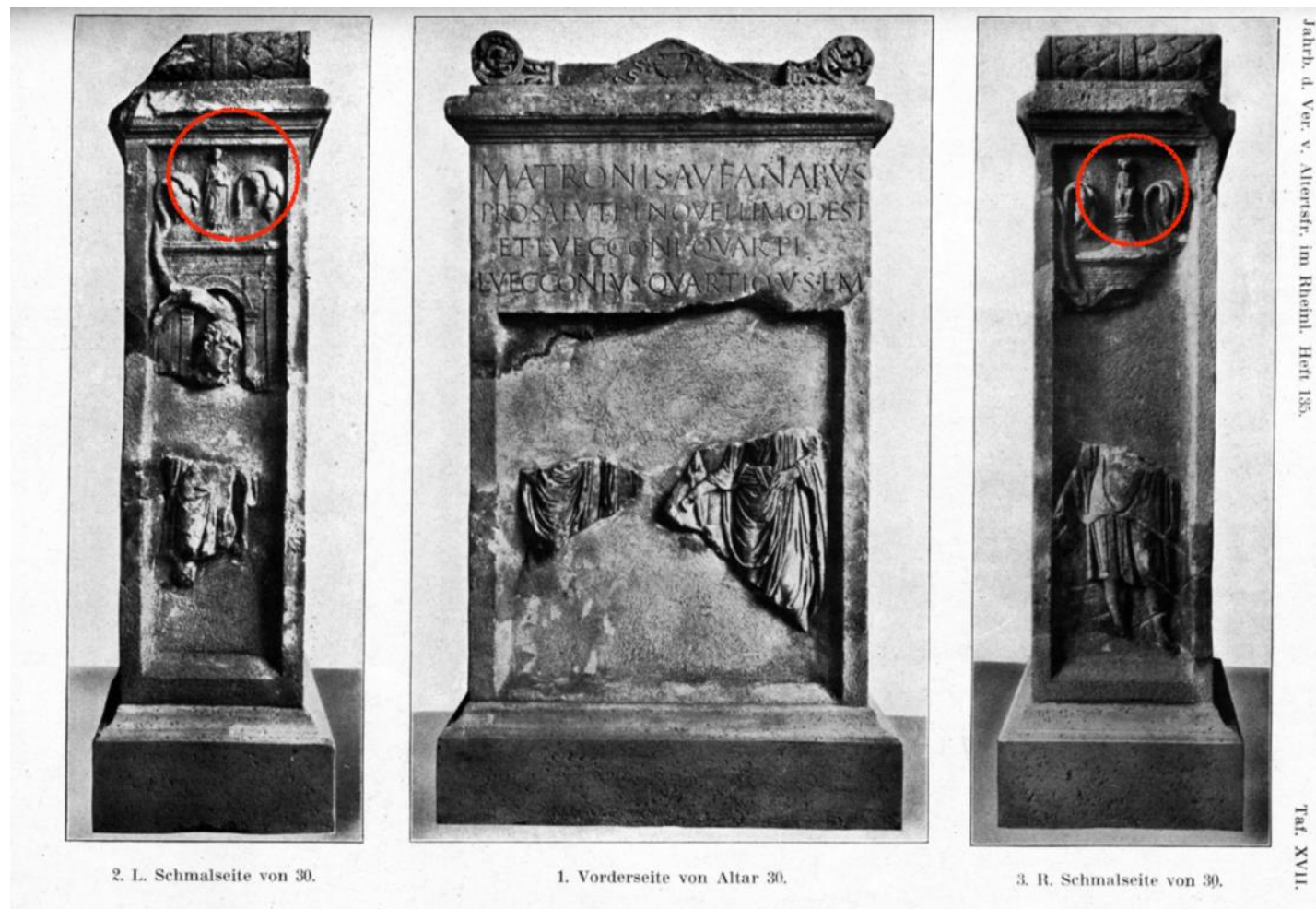


Fig. 9: RMG depicted in miniature form on the sides of an altar
 Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” 15-16, Nr. 30, Taf. XVII
 Nesselhauf, “Neue Inschriften,” Nr. 179

Perhaps the clearest and most undervalued instances of innovation regarding RMG imagery come in the form of altars which make use of two motifs – the RMG trinity and the altar sacrifice scene – either stacked directly on top of one another or with an inscription nestled between the two. The format shares clear similarities with the style of the TIP tombstones

(Chapter 1) by combining two separate scenes on the front of a stele in separate panels. Moreover, as with the tombstones, these stratified artifacts provide indications of cultural exchange occurring, as well as the construction of the dedicant's public identity. The extant number of instances is in no way large enough to deem this a widespread "provincial" style. Instead, the handful of examples are relegated mostly to Bonn. The limited number as well as the confined distribution of this *votum* type highlights the process of localization so common to the frontier region. We should recognize that this variation indicates a particular perspective of each dedicant and avoid dismissing the inclusion of a sacrifice scene simply as an addendum to the typical trinity motif.³⁶¹

One example from Bonn (**Fig. 10**),³⁶² which unfortunately exists in a damaged and highly weathered state, demonstrates the degree of personalization which could be included in the sacrifice scenes. The male dedicant, likely *togatus*,³⁶³ stands at the altar in the conventional manner. However, the figures around him probably represent his family as opposed to any cult representatives or any of the RMG themselves. The group – two children, another *togatus* male figure, and what appears to be a female beside the male dedicant who pours the offering upon the altar – seems to form a collective unit as opposed to a mix of dedicants and servants helping to administer the sacrifice, since no one appears to be holding ritual paraphernalia as they are in **Fig. 11**. Potential confirmation that a family portrait is intended can be found in the inscription, which indicates that it was commissioned by man and wife – *Iul(ius) Pomponianus et Bassiana Gailla* – for the well-being of their family (*pro se et suis*). This *votum* to the *Matronae* therefore

³⁶¹ As in Noelke, "Ara et Aedicula," 85. Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 223 n.33 interprets the stacking of the two scenes to reflect a greater significance, mirroring the unequal relationship between mankind and the gods; see also footnotes 341 and 343 above.

³⁶² Nesselhauf, "Neue Inschriften," Nr. 172 = Lehner, "Römische Steindenkmäler," Nr. 28, Taf. XV.

³⁶³ For *togati* as dedicants, see Lehner, "Römische Steindenkmäler," 36; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 222.

includes a conscious representation of a family adhering to a traditional, “Roman” style of sacrifice, which they incorporated into worship of the deities. On another partially damaged altar from the same location (**Fig. 11**),³⁶⁴ we find a very different presentation of the sacrifice scene underneath the RMG trinity. The dedicant is once again portrayed *capite velato* in the act of offering.³⁶⁵ However, in this case, servants accompany him carrying with them additional ritual objects, including an incense box, a double-barreled *tibia*, and a jug.³⁶⁶ This adherence to a standardized form of sacrifice may be an attempt to emphasize the Roman status of the dedicant – a *decurio* of *Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium* – while fulfilling a vow to the domestic RMG.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁴ AE 1931, 18 = Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” 11-12, Nr. 20, Taf. X.

³⁶⁵ Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” 36; Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 48.

³⁶⁶ Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” 11-12, 36 Nr. 20.

³⁶⁷ Wild, “Frauentracht der Ubier,” 68.



Fig. 10: Stratified, “family offering” RMG dedication
Nesselhauf, “Neue Inschriften,” Nr. 172



Fig. 11: Dedication to the *Aufaniae* by C. Candidinius Verus, Decurion of Cologne
AE 1931, 18

Three other altars which adopt this stratified format include female figures with RMG characteristics in their sacrifice scenes, similar to **Fig. 3** and **Fig. 7** discussed above. In one example from modern Jülich/Bettenhoven (**Fig. 12**),³⁶⁸ the dedicant faces the RMG figures on the other side of the altar, who are curiously only presented here as a duo. Although their number can perhaps be explained by reasons of lacking space,³⁶⁹ this would nevertheless indicate that the presentation of the RMG as a trinity is flexible, and susceptible to omission if it is to better suit the overall visual composition of the altar. For example, a third RMG could have easily been included in this scene, either by situating her behind the altar itself, as in **Fig. 8**, or by shifting the altar to the right and perhaps removing the other *togatus* figure. However, if we note the central alignment of the altar with the middle RMG above, as well as the two figures on each side, it seems clear that creators of the altar valued symmetry over any potential compulsion to present the RMG in some typical manner. The remaining altars reduce the RMG even further in their sacrifice scenes by including only one female figure with a bonnet and overcoat.³⁷⁰ We can once again glean from stylistic choices that one's ability to portray the RMG was not bound by convention; the nature of their inclusion accorded with the wishes of the dedicator, who could use the space to demonstrate their affiliation and familiarity with the deities as they saw fit.

³⁶⁸ CIL 13, 7895 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 326.

³⁶⁹ Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 148.

³⁷⁰ AE 1930, 21; Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 205, Nr. 540 = Lehner, *Provinzialmuseum in Bonn*, Taf. XII, 2. Lehner believed the second example to portray three women – either three *Matronae*, three dedicants, or two dedicants and a single goddess accepting the sacrifice. The figure behind the altar is holding a box of incense, therefore making them more likely to be a servant as opposed to a dedicant or goddess. The sex of the figure on the left is unclear due to the weathering on the relief; however, judging from other similar instances, this is more likely to be a *togatus* male dedicant facing the RMG figure. There is also an additional female figure in the upper panel to the side of the seated RMG, breaking their depiction as a “trinity.”

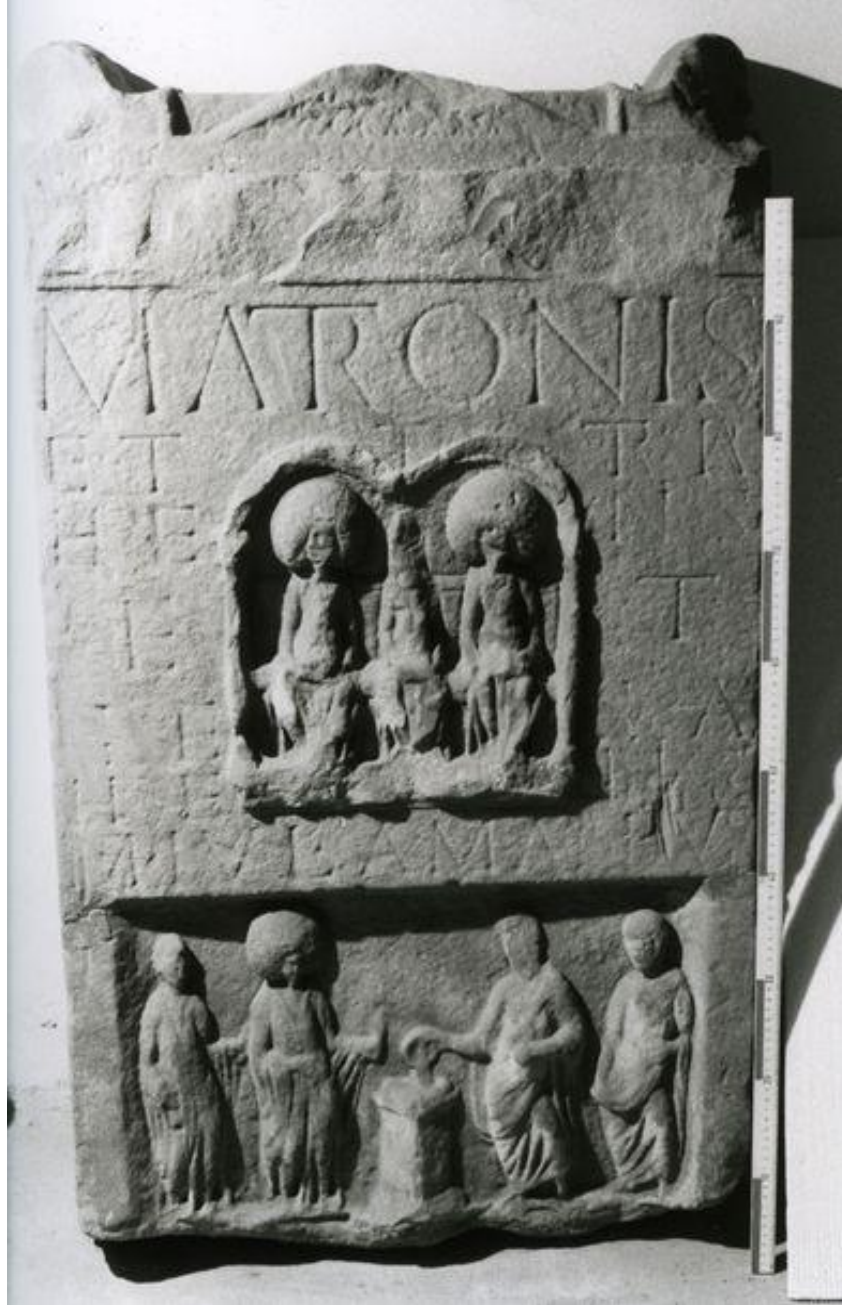


Fig. 12: Stratified dedication with the RMG in upper and lower registers
CIL 13, 7895

These altars with stacked imagery point to the high degree of personalization which could factor into creating dedications to the RMG, and indicate that the cult was used as an opportunity for one's self-presentation and public identity construction as well.³⁷¹ Moreover, this creative process reflects the broader cultural exchange occurring amidst the swirling mix of influences within the frontier region, as it highlights the many ways in which dedicants chose to adopt and develop these characteristics to make them their own. Several instances mentioned above speak to this phenomenon, including the sacrifice scene which includes the male and female dedicants and/or their family (**Fig. 8**, **Fig. 10**, **Fig. 12**). The first of these (**Fig. 8**) is particularly valuable for its correspondence with epigraphic information provided and the depiction of the dedicant on the relief. Lucius Marcius Verecundus identifies himself as a soldier (*miles*) of the First Legion Minervia, which was stationed at Bonn since 107 AD.³⁷² Rather than opting for the more commonly attested *togatus* portrayal, Verecundus chose to reify his military identity in this sacrifice scene by being depicted in a soldier's tunic with his left hand resting on the hilt of his sword.³⁷³ When considering Verecundus' representation alongside the presence of what are either the RMG themselves or his own family, this altar stands as a prime example of how personalized and imbued with one's cultural milieu the RMG dedications could be.

A final example which sublimely demonstrates the combination of personal representation and RMG worship comes from another soldier of the very same Bonn legion, dedicated to the *Matronae Aufaniae* (**Fig. 13**).³⁷⁴ Once again, the dedicant conspicuously displays his military identity by making it the sole emphasis of the relief's front panel. Whereas

³⁷¹ Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 48 notes fourteen relief depictions of dedicants, family, and cult personnel at sacrifice scenes, and provides two examples: CIL 13, 7895 (**Fig. 12**), CIL 13, 7923 (**Fig. 8**).

³⁷² Rüger, "Beobachtungen," 24.

³⁷³ Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 48 n.78; Wild, "Frauentracht der Ubier," 68; Espérandieu, *Recueil de la Gaule romaine [Vol VIII]*, 6358.

³⁷⁴ AE 1931, 17; Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 45, Taf. 7,3.

on Verecundus' altar there is a mix of focal elements – i.e. the dedicant's depiction, the RMG figure(s), the act of sacrificing itself – this altar of Aulus Albanus Super places sole visual focus on his military prowess. Super is portrayed in battle dress, charging forward with his *scutum* against a suppliant opponent who is usually identified as a Parthian soldier on account of his clothing – Phrygian cap and *bracae* – as well as the campaign history of Super's legion.³⁷⁵ While it is not uncommon to see such battle scenes on soldiers' gravestones as a mark of pride in their military careers (see the rider reliefs of chapter 1), it is quite unique for one to appear on a religious dedication. Here, the dedicant has altered the normal iconographic focus of the RMG as bringers of good fortune to project his own personal conception of his deeds,³⁷⁶ which indicates the level of flexible innovation and identity display one could incorporate into their *votum*, both in terms of individual creativity as well as accepted cult practice.

³⁷⁵ Suppliant Parthian: Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 192-96. First Legion Minervia in the Parthian campaigns beginning in 161 AD: Rüger, "Beobachtungen," 24.

³⁷⁶ Horn, "Bilddenkmäler," 45.

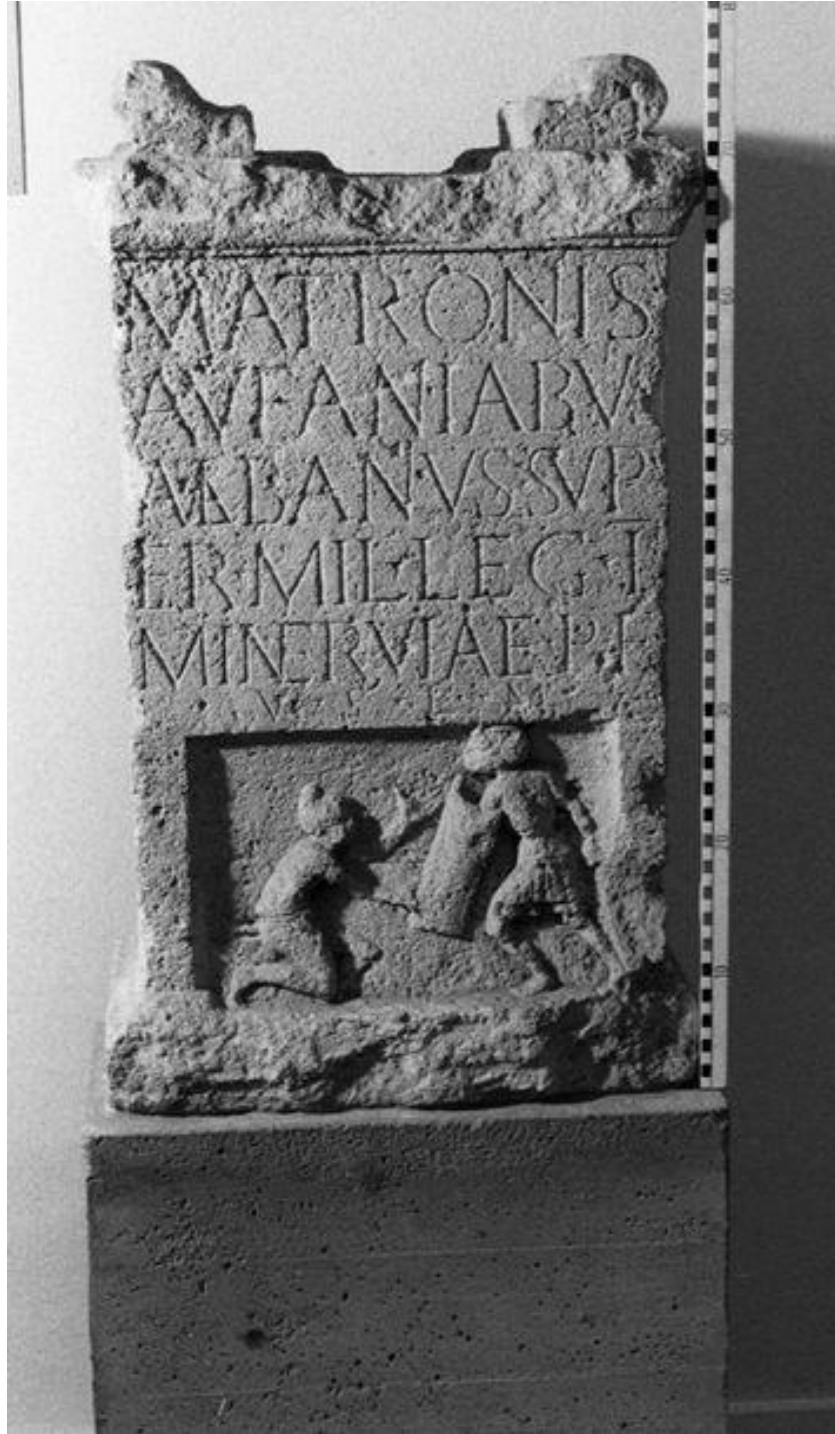


Fig. 13: Battle scene on an altar to the *Matronae Aufaniae* dedicated by a soldier of the First Legion Minervia
 AE 1931, 17
 Nesselhauf, "Neue Inschriften," Nr. 160

It has been suggested that the numerous dedications to the *Matronae Aufaniae* by soldiers of the Bonn legion stem from the unit's sudden appropriation – at least in the material record – of the cult as protective deities in response to its participation in the Antonine Parthian campaigns.³⁷⁷ The possible validity of this explanation allows us to consider how it would complicate or clarify our understanding of cultural exchange at the time. It seems unlikely that the soldiers would have previously been unfamiliar with the deities, since the legion had already been stationed at Bonn for over fifty years, and legionary recruitment patterns by that time had become almost entirely localized.³⁷⁸ Moreover, the lacking evidence for the RMG during the first century does not rule out the possibility that they were worshiped in some other way.³⁷⁹ However, the sudden materialization of the RMG, perhaps brought on by external deployment, nevertheless points to the beginning of a process in which these goddesses were (re)invented. Whatever indigenous pedigree they may have had was molded to reflect contemporary local fashion and belief. This can be seen in the portrayal of the RMG as well as the *togatus* figure in sacrifice scenes – both of which indicate the development of certain iconographic trends (e.g. the trinity motif), but also the freedom of the dedicant to innovate within the *votum* format by adding more personalized scenes as they wished. The altars of Verecundus (**Fig. 8**) and Super (**Fig. 13**) stand as some of the most unique instances of this phenomenon. They simultaneously point to the tendency to operate within developing iconographic conventions as well as a process

³⁷⁷ Rüger, “Beobachtungen,” 24; von Petrikovits, “Matronen und verwandte Gottheiten,” 253. The earliest *votum* is dated to 164 AD (AE 1930, 19), though it was dedicated by a civilian quaestor of Cologne; see Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 190-96. Relationship between the First Legion and the *Aufaniae*: Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 234; Birley, “Religion of the Roman Army,” 1526.

³⁷⁸ Localized recruitment: Mann, *Legionary Recruitment*, 26-7; von Petrikovits, “Matronen und verwandte Gottheiten,” 253.

³⁷⁹ On the appearance of indigenous deities during the second century, see Galsterer and Galsterer, “Romanisation und einheimische Traditionen,” 377, 382. Bauchhenß, “Götterweihungen aus Städten,” 337 argues against the possibility of indigenous deities re-emerging after a long period of absent worship. For the possibility of dating several *Matronae* dedications to the first century AD, see Haensche, “frühesten Inschriften für Matronen”; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 127; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 91, also 62 n.202, 134, Table 2, 136.

whereby individuals sifted through a multitude of cultural influences and personal priorities to create individualized dedications which reflected characteristics of their identities (i.e. status, family, profession, etc.). The altars therefore represent tangible products of cultural exchange in action.

Finally, the novelty of the RMG altar form itself as well as the overall act of venerating the goddesses in this manner should be addressed, since they too exemplify the innovation present in this frontier environment. The various iconographic elements on the reliefs have been discussed; however, the actual components of the altar also indicate a new conception of the *votum* format itself, which Noelke has referred to as an “*aedicula*-altar.”³⁸⁰ Atop the *aedicula* section in which the RMG trinity can be found, there is a pediment which has been fused with a platform above it, upon which sacrificial fruit offerings are carved (**Fig. 14**).³⁸¹ Importantly, this altar type was not used outside of Lower Germany, making it an internally crafted, unique provincial cultural style, first appearing in the context of RMG worship.³⁸² Functionally, the combined elements of this altar type may have also served the pragmatic needs of the dedicants:

The votive altar appears to be a permanent and symbolic representation of the offering, in which all the stages which we were able to distinguish in the model for the final ceremony of the public *votum* have been ingeniously summarised.³⁸³

The altar was therefore intended to serve as a public announcement that one had fulfilled their vow to the RMG – through the inscription and perhaps also via the inclusion of a sacrifice scene – as well as a kind of continuous, figurative offering to the deities themselves with the

³⁸⁰ Noelke, “Ara et Aedicula,” 84f. Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 130 views the appearance of these altars as an adaptive process in which native custom was transformed into a “Roman-style *votum*.”

³⁸¹ Noelke, “Ara et Aedicula,” 83-84 categorizes this as the “Grundtypus” (“basic type”).

³⁸² Noelke, “Ara et Aedicula,” 93-4; Bauchhenß, “Götterweihungen aus Städten,” 329.

³⁸³ Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 224; see also *Ibid.*, 232-33.

incorporation of the offering plate atop the stone.³⁸⁴ The collective meaning behind the *votum* is compressed into a single object and expressed through these visual and textual components. In addition to the innovation present in the overall altar form, we must also acknowledge the adaptation which the pre-existing RMG likely underwent in order to be venerated in this fashion. For example, if we are to take the inclusion of sacrifice scenes on the altars as representative of actual cult practices which occurred, then a distinctly “Roman” element of worship seems clear.³⁸⁵ Once again, this is not to say that a pre-existing votive tradition was absent in the region before conquest; however, available evidence suggests that the form of fulfillment to the RMG must have been quite different from what we find in the second and third centuries.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁴ Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 128 discusses the notion of “perpetuated action.”

³⁸⁵ Horn, “Bilddenkmäler,” 48; Derks, “Ritual of the Vow,” 115, 117.

³⁸⁶ See footnotes 310 and 311.



Fig. 14: Altar with fruit plate offering carved into the *mensa*
CIL 13, 11990

Importantly, none of these characteristics present on the RMG altars should be viewed as a form of “Romanization.” It is clear the Romans did not initiate any uniform program of religious change which could apply to the RMG, nor can we readily identify any pattern of development for the goddesses which points to a progressively “Roman” stylistic flavor. Instead, the process by which inhabitants fused broadly “Roman” and “native” religious beliefs occurred spontaneously during the second century at more localized levels, and exhibited a degree of

variety and innovation which is indicative of a much more erratic and individualized evolution.³⁸⁷ Moreover, the fact that many of the dedications demonstrate that adoption of new and different cultural practices was not limited to indigenous populations should immediately eliminate “Romanization” as a plausible explanation; locals as well as foreigners to the region engaged with the RMG. We should also be wary of accepting any notion of “Germanization” or “Celticization” as a helpful analytical tool, since both these and “Romanization” suffer from the same fatal flaws: assessing artifacts through a lens of limited characteristics (e.g. the use of Latin or the worship of traditionally non-Roman gods) which are assigned to broadly defined cultural categories (i.e. “Roman,” “German,” “Celtic”).³⁸⁸ The result is always a deceptively convenient argument that one seemingly monolithic culture altered another, or was consciously resisted by native inhabitants by simply continuing pre-conquest practices.³⁸⁹ Instead, the multi-directional nature of exchange as well as the breadth of individuals’ improvisation should serve as a primer for how best to approach cultural development.

³⁸⁷ Derks, “Ritual of the Vow,” 123. Derks, however, also interprets the creation of a public vow as indicating adherence “to the new dominant ideologies in society,” which in my opinion, oversimplifies the process of invention and exchange; see Derks, “Ritual of the Vow,” 122.

³⁸⁸ Garman argues for the presence of *both* “Germanization” and “Romanization” in the Rhineland. While this comes closer to describing the process of cultural exchange which occurred, the tendency to render the situation in these over-simplified terms in my view does a disservice to the complexity of the situation on the ground; see Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 2; also Okun, *Early Roman Frontier*, 13. Millett, “Rethinking Religion,” 99 frames military members appropriating native gods as a kind of indigenization of the Roman army while also explicitly stating that the process “represent[s] Roman worship of native gods, not a synthesis.” However, it is unclear what exactly could qualify as a genuine product of cultural synthesis if not the RMG. See also, Bloemers, “Acculturation in the Rhine-Meuse Basin,” 165-66.

³⁸⁹ Okun, *Early Roman Frontier*, 113-14 uses the gravestone of Menimane and her husband (CIL 13, 7067) as an example of this; Wells, *Beyond Celts*, 128 also takes Menimane’s presentation in “indigenous dress” as a kind of resistance to Roman identification.

Inscriptions

Thus far, this chapter has focused primarily on the visual characteristics occurring on certain *RMG* votives by breaking down established notions of what “Roman” and “native” iconography can even amount to, and by demonstrating that the altars’ inventive varieties represent individuals sifting through, adopting, and altering cultural ideas and symbols as they saw fit. However, the inscriptions we have been provided with are just as useful for observing the process of exchange. These expressions of veneration reflect the same degree of incorporation and adaptation which people along the frontier developed in order to accurately represent their religious beliefs, which were themselves a product of an extremely diverse environment. Although dedications, like tombstones, often embody the usual “suffocating sameness of Roman epigraphy,”³⁹⁰ they nevertheless include elements which can be expounded upon to demonstrate the presence of cultural fusion. These elements are comprised of particular writing conventions, such as the new “half H” symbol (-l) and the novel construction of mixed epithets with native roots as well as Latin and Germanic suffixes. As a result, we must abandon the notion that *RMG* titles represent pristine indications of the goddesses’ “native” sides, and instead understand them equally as a synthetic byproduct of exchange.³⁹¹

The “half H” symbol present in several *Matronae* epithets (**Fig. 15**)³⁹² stands as an example of epigraphic innovation stemming from Roman-style inscriptions accommodating indigenous linguistic oddities which could not be easily transliterated into Latin without the development of a new character.³⁹³ Therefore, it is a novel writing convention resulting from

³⁹⁰ Edmondson, “Writing Latin,” 57.

³⁹¹ Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 128.

³⁹² For examples of *Matronae* epithets which variously make use of the “half H,” see Vennemann, “Morphologie der niederrheinischen Matronennamen,” 274, 291 n.62, 293 n. 71, 295 n.80.

³⁹³ Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 318, 336-36; Herz, “Einheimische Kulte und ethnische Strukturen,” 210; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 65.

individuals sorting through different cultural influences and attempting to finely hone and accurately represent what the dedicant intended to convey in their *votum*.³⁹⁴ Scholars have focused more on the phonetic value of the symbol rather than what its existence means as an indication of cultural fusion.³⁹⁵ However, some have rightly noted that the interchangeability or combination of certain letters represents a process of reconciling non-Latin sounds (i.e. indigenous to the Rhineland) with the framework of a Latin alphabet.³⁹⁶ The invention of the “half H” embodies the creativity of this estuary-like linguistic environment.³⁹⁷ It is possible to identify which letters the symbol was interchangeable with by observing its presence in certain RMG epithets, as well as how Latin characters were substituted in its absence. For the *Matronae Fa(ch)ineihae*, the -| is sometime preceded by a “c,” as in **Fig. 14**;³⁹⁸ however, other examples demonstrate that the “half H” could absorb the “c” and stand by itself.³⁹⁹ In some cases, the -| is not present at all, and “ch” is used instead.⁴⁰⁰ Therefore, the -| was variously combined with “c,” and stood in place of “ch,” apparently with no strict rules of usage being followed.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁴ A similar innovation occurs on an altar to Sirona from Treveran territory; Wightman, *Roman Trier*, 222: “the ‘S’ of Sirona is drawn with a horizontal stroke through it, to denote a sound unknown in Latin.” Moreover, this creative phenomenon is also present in the usage of the *ex imperio/iussu* formulae that frequent the RMG altars; see Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 279.

³⁹⁵ For a brief summary of the debate on the standing of the -|, see Neumann, *Namenstudien zum Altgermanischen*, 404; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 318. Rüger, “Beobachtungen,” 25 believes the symbol represents an aspirated velar equivalent to the Greek “chi”. By contrast, Vennemann, “Morphologie der niederrheinischen Matronennamen,” 276 n.13 believes that in certain positions the -| can represent a standard “H.” See also Scardigli, “Sprache im Umkreis,” 147; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 66.

³⁹⁶ Neumann, “germanischen Matronen-Beinamen,” 105; Scardigli, “Sprache im Umkreis,” 146-47.

³⁹⁷ Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 66; Spickermann and de Bernardo Stempel, “Keltische Götter,” 130; Rüger, “Beobachtungen,” 25.

³⁹⁸ See also CIL 13, 7830 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 149, Nr. 327.

³⁹⁹ *Fa-/inehis*: CIL 13, 7970 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 150, Nr. 329; AE 1977, 563a-b.

⁴⁰⁰ See two instances of the *Matronae Chu(ch)enehae*: *Chuchenehis* (CIL 13, 12008 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 147, Nr. 324); *Chu-/ene-/is* (CIL 13, 12009 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 147-48, Nr. 325). Note also the use of the -| in the latter instance to simply replace an “h,” which also seems to be the case in the second -| of (**Fig. 15**).

⁴⁰¹ Neumann, “germanischen Matronen-Beinamen,” 118. With the “chi” as the main sound intended, the -| can be considered alongside “ch” and “c.”



Fig. 15: Votive fragment to the *Matronae Fac-|inei-|ae*, demonstrating the “half H” symbol
CIL 13, 7829

Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 149-50, Nr. 328

Of course, the creation of a new symbol should not count as operating within the parameters of an existing alphabet, regardless of how similar it may appear to a Latin character (“H”), or its interchangeability with standard Latin letters (“ch”). This new mark is a localized development which highlights the creative adaptivity of individuals in the province. It is also important to stress that the “half H” was used rather infrequently and inconsistently, indicating that the symbol enjoyed only a limited degree of fashionability. It was not wholly adopted by

dedicants of any one cult, but seems to have been used spontaneously for various RMG in different locales.⁴⁰² Why such non-uniformity? Does this represent indigenous persons attempting to emphasize their Germanic heritage, potentially even as an act of resistance to Roman culture? It is impossible to determine the ethnicity of the population due to the unreliability of onomastic analysis for this period.⁴⁰³ It is just as likely, for example, that the symbol is sometimes the result of Roman foreigners adopting German pronunciation in their appropriation of the indigenous RMG. The uncertainty regarding the dedicants' ethnicity is perhaps quite appropriate, since it faithfully depicts the nature of the frontier environment: a heterogeneous medley of cultural influences which were often not easily discernable. The variety and interchangeability present in the usage of the "half H" perfectly represents the process of cultural exchange, which occurred freely, unpredictably, and at the inclination of the individual.

Holdovers from indigenous Germanic and Celtic cultures also stand out in the root words and suffixes of RMG epithets.⁴⁰⁴ It is generally accepted that most roots of the RMG are locative – either referring to particular places or natural objects (rivers, trees, etc.),⁴⁰⁵ or to tribal associations.⁴⁰⁶ The presence of non-Roman stems being incorporated into provincial cults is

⁴⁰² There is a small concentration of its usage around Zülpich, Euskirchen, and Zingsheim, for example, but these few instances are counterbalanced by other, sporadic finds elsewhere in the Rhineland. See Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 322-25, 327-29 for Chu(ch)enehae and Fa(ch)inehae examples, as well as CIL 13, 7986 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 266 and CIL 13, 7989 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 270, both of which were found further east near Berkum, and are dedicated to the *Matronae Atufrafinehae*.

⁴⁰³ See footnotes 334 and 336 above; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 398-99, 406, esp. Appendix 2. Even those displaying the traditional marker of a Roman citizen – the *tria nomina* – should not be above suspicion, since non-citizens were also known to make use of it; see Saddington, "Sorts of Names Used," 163, 175; Holder, *Studies in the Auxilia*, 53.

⁴⁰⁴ Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 65.

⁴⁰⁵ E.g. The *Matronae Aufaniae* stem from the Germanic root for "swamp" or "marsh"; see Neumann, "germanischen Matronen-Beinamen," 114-15; for additional discussion of the possible roots of the *Aufaniae*, see Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 159-60. For the locative nature of epithets, see also Neumann, "germanischen Matronen-Beinamen," 103-04; 127-28; Neumann, *Namenstudien zum Altgermanischen*, 403-04; Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 20, 73-4.

⁴⁰⁶ For example, AE 1962, 102 is dedicated to the *Matronis Austriatum*; the use of the genitive plural would seem to imply that the *Matronae* in question were associated with the *Austriates* tribe. This is also present on AE 1967, 344: *Matronis Gesationum*. See Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 156, 371; Rüger, "Beobachtungen," 13;

clearly indicative of cultural exchange taking place, though it was not unusual for foreign words to enter the Latin lexicon. However, not all of the epithets can be so readily traced back, and some actually seem to be Germano-Celtic constructions or based on Roman-influenced titles.⁴⁰⁷ Addressing these particular epithets allows us to emphasize that the process of cultural exchange took place at many levels, not only between “Roman” and “native,” but also between so-called “natives” populations themselves. The products of these erratic interactions are RMG names which variously incorporate and alter different roots and constructions of deities and languages.

The Germano-Celtic creations can be identified by noting the assorted spellings which existed for what were apparently the same goddesses. These variations in turn point to their non-uniform linguistic origins. Schmidt and others have addressed several overt instances of this fusion,⁴⁰⁸ including comparisons between dedications to the (*Matronis*) *Ollogabiabus* and to the *Matronis Alagabiabus*.⁴⁰⁹ In this case, the difference has been explained as a “Keltisierung von *ala-* zu *ollo-*.”⁴¹⁰ This sort of transformation is also present on *vota* to (*Matronis*) *Ambiomarcis* and to (*Matronis*) *Ambiamarcis*,⁴¹¹ once again “mit keltisiertem ersten Glied” attached in this case to a Germanic stem.⁴¹² Ostensibly minor spelling variations such as these may be interpreted as part and parcel of what we should expect to find in a cosmopolitan, polytheistic environment.⁴¹³ However, it would be dismissive to view them as ordinary deviations or even

Neumann, “germanischen Matronen-Beinamen,” 111; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 119-20, 122-23. Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 60, 62 notes that the variety of RMG names reflect numerous, smaller scale tribal affiliations.

⁴⁰⁷ Spickermann agrees with Herz that there is no single approach which can explain the spectrum of names encountered; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 66; Herz, “Matronenkult und kultische Mahlzeiten,” 144.

⁴⁰⁸ Schmidt, “Die keltischen Matronennamen,” esp. 144, 1; Untermann, “Sprachvergleichung und Sprachidentität,” 235-37; Neumann, *Namenstudien zum Altgermanischen*, 404.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ollogabiabus*: e.g. CIL 13, 7280; CIL 13, 6751; *Alagabiabus*: e.g. AE 2014, 913; CIL 13, 8529; see also Schmidt, “Die keltischen Matronennamen,” 144.

⁴¹⁰ Schmidt, “Die keltischen Matronennamen,” 144.

⁴¹¹ *Ambiomarcis*: CIL 13, 7789 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 99; *Ambiamarcis*: AE 1981, 660 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 3; AE 1968, 403.

⁴¹² Schmidt, “Die keltischen Matronennamen,” 144 (quote). For a different example of the same phenomenon, see Neumann, *Namenstudien zum Altgermanischen*, 404.

⁴¹³ Allason-Jones and McKay, *Coventina’s Well*, 3 notes the frequency of misspelled names.

mistakes, since it seems clear that the etymological foundations upon which these epithets were built represent something more: they reveal either the dedicants' or the stonecutters' familiarity with a particular version of the goddesses, which is itself indicative cultural knowledge and fusion. We might imagine a customer either making a specific spelling request, or allowing the stonecutter the liberty to inscribe as they saw fit on the assumption that they were more experienced with appropriate forms of address. In either case, the decision maker imparted to the *vota* their religious knowledge and understanding, which, in the matter of Germano-Celtic epithets, was the outcome of cultural exchange occurring at some point, primarily at the “native” level rather than simply between “Roman” and “native.”

Additionally, the retention of indigenous grammatical morphology in certain cases epitomizes the process whereby individuals sifted through cultural influences and improvised their dedications. The most prominent example of this is the Germanic plural ending (*-ims*), which was used interchangeably with the more familiar, Latinized endings (*-is*, *-abus*) with respect to three RMG epithets: *Aflims*, *Saitchamims*, and *Vatuims*.⁴¹⁴ As with the use of the “half H,” we may consider the degree to which the use of this ending injects a certain “Germanic” quality into the epithet, beyond the stems which are themselves of either Celtic or Germanic origin.⁴¹⁵ The use of culturally influenced spelling variations may be intentionally or unintentionally significant – a point which is tremendously important when assessing the overall aims of the *vota*. For example, it may be the case that dedicants selected the *-ims* ending as an homage to the indigeneity of the RMG, perhaps even as a small-but-public form of “resistance” to the perceived Roman encroachment and adulteration. As stated earlier, however, by the mid-

⁴¹⁴ E.g. Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 120, Nr. 251. See Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 120, 161; Untermann, “Sprachvergleichung und Sprachidentität,” 233; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 317-18, 363.

⁴¹⁵ Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 161-65 discusses the roots of these three epithets.

second century AD, the populations of the Rhine would have already been so intermixed that the notion of cultural “resistance” against any one particular cultural segment seems extremely improbable.⁴¹⁶ It is far more likely, as other scholars have recognized, that the *-ims* ending simply indicates the presence of those who were familiar with the prevalent Germanic language,⁴¹⁷ which, of course, does not preclude “non-Germans” from also making use of it.⁴¹⁸ Alternatively, the ending may very well have been employed for stylistic reasons which were void of any cultural awareness, with the dedicant or stonecutter choosing the form with which they were most familiar. In this case, the unconscious decision to use a particular form is nevertheless representative of cultural exchange which has created a fashionable option for addressing the RMG.

While the instances of *Vatuims* cluster around Rödingen and Bedburg, roughly equal numbers of *Vatuiabus* dedications have been found in the same area, making the *-ims* ending for the *Vatuias* simultaneously a localized but not necessarily predominant form.⁴¹⁹ This overlapping geographic mixture of endings can also be observed for the *Aflims* and *Afliabus*, with exceptions

⁴¹⁶ Tac. Hist. 4.65 suggests that the mixing of different ethnicities had already been well underway by the time of the Batavian Revolt in 69 AD, with the *Agrippinenses* refusing to murder those perceived as Romans due to their familial ties: *deductis olim et nobiscum per conubium sociatis quique mox provenerunt haec patria est; nec vos adeo iniquos existimamus ut interfici a nobis parentes fratres liberos nostros velitis*. An epigraphic instance of this can be found in a gravestone which a Roman set up to his wife, designated as *Ubia* (CIL 13, 8565). See Saddington, “Parameters of Romanization,” 415. The effects of an additional century on top of this process can only surmised, but the likelihood of a cultural division between “Roman” and “native” suddenly appearing seems quite unreasonable; see Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 265; Galsterer and Galsterer, “Romanisation und einheimische Traditionen,” 377.

⁴¹⁷ Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 162; Vennemann, “Morphologie der niederrheinischen Matronennamen,” 271-72. Untermann asks the important question of how representative this grammatical usage is of the wider population, ultimately concluding that there must have been a substratum of Germans or a supply of immigrants to the region who spoke German; see Untermann, “Sprachvergleichung und Sprachidentität,” 234, 238.

⁴¹⁸ Neumann has suggested that the dedicants’ familiarity with and insistence upon using a Germanic language permeated their interaction with the cult; see Neumann, “Sprachverhältnisse,” 1071.

⁴¹⁹ Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 161-62 is partially outdated in the number of finds listed, but is still useful. *Vatuvae*: Weisgerber, *Die Namen der Ubier*, 257-58. Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 318 interprets the split between Germanic and Latin-influenced endings as evidence that epithets were open to Romanization. This approach is problematic in its assumption of a one-way exchange, since the development of the *-ims* ending may equally be interpreted as a “Germanization” of extant Latin morphology. It is better to remove both terms (“Romanization”, “Germanization”) and view the disparity in terms of open exchange and dialogue.

being made for the instances which are attested at Cologne, the nearest large metropolitan center with a concentration of many RMG.⁴²⁰ The close proximity of these varying dedications suggests that those venerating the RMG were operating within a spectrum of culturally infused options. Variety is therefore representative of more than just variety; it signals exchange occurring within a heterogeneous environment amongst individuals opting to adhere to or deviate from certain styles amidst the many choices available to them, and even craft new ones. The *-ims* ending is just one of the many chaotic micro-trends which developed along the frontier.

Some RMG dedications also reveal a strong degree of creativity in terms of how individuals crafted distinctive epithets. In several instances, we can observe the presence of compound epithets, which combine familiar RMG names with an additional title. One such example from Pesch is dedicated to *[Matronis] Vacallin(ehis) Leudinis*. Lehner noted long ago the presence of a second epithet in the title, and interpreted it as an additional name for the goddesses;⁴²¹ however, the originality of this detail has largely been overlooked. While it is true that the *Vacallinehae* have a very strong concentration in the territory around Pesch, and that other inscriptions to the *Leudinis* have been found in the same area,⁴²² any potential interchangeability of the two monikers to refer to the same goddesses is complicated by the presence of *Leudinis* on another dedication to Mercury from Weisweiler.⁴²³ It is possible, and perhaps likely, that *Vacallinehae* and *Leudinae* epithets have a locative value,⁴²⁴ but they are unlikely to represent the same location for several reasons. First, the presence of both on a single inscription would be redundant. Second, the dedicant's emphasis on providing additional

⁴²⁰ Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 130; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 316.

⁴²¹ Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 163, Nr. 364. = CIL 13, 12020.

⁴²² Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 365; AE 1968, 359.

⁴²³ *[Mer]curio Leud/[]ano*: CIL 13, 07859.

⁴²⁴ Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 163 suggests a possible location named "Leudium."

specifications would seem to indicate a desire that no misunderstanding should occur, which of course implies that one indeed could err without such precision. Thus, the *votum* seems instead to represent a conscious blending of either two different groups of deities, or the appropriation of the *Matronae Vacallinehae* for a particular town. Once again, cultural exchange is evident in either case.

Two other examples from Cologne, dedicated to the *Matribus Suebis*, display a similar tendency toward fusing monikers for the RMG. One to the *Matribus meis Suebis Hieudungis*,⁴²⁵ and another to the *Matribus Suebis [Hi]euthungabus*.⁴²⁶ The presence of two epithets for the goddesses is clear, which, once again, signals the dedicant's intention to properly specify the variant of deities he wished to address. The addition of *meis* also inserts an especially personalized character to the *votum*, and seems to represent an ethnic identification with the territory in which the RMG reside.⁴²⁷ The main settlement for the *Suebae* was the transrhenane *Civitas Ulpia Sueborum Nicrensium* (modern Ladenburg) ca. 250 km away from Cologne, and so the *Matres Suebae* are obviously a transplanted cult in this instance.⁴²⁸ Moreover, they also appear in several permutations which reflect the idiosyncrasy of their dedicants' efforts. The variants at Cologne range from more generalized *vota* – *Matribus meis Germanis Suebis*,⁴²⁹ *Matribus Suebis*⁴³⁰ – to those with more specific epithets like *Hieudungis/[Hi]euthungabus* and

⁴²⁵ Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 148-49, Nr. 157.

⁴²⁶ CIL 13, 8225 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 149-50, Nr. 158.

⁴²⁷ Also present on CIL 13, 8224 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 144.

Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 144 notes the personal connection of the dedicant in additional epithets such as *meis*, *suis*, *paternis*, *maternis*, *domesticis*. The use of more general tribe names may also signal a desire to emphasize an ethnic connection; see, for example, CIL 13, 8634 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 157, Nr. 345. See also Neumann, "germanischen Matronen-Beinamen," 111; Neumann, *Namenstudien zum Altgermanischen*, 403; von Petrikovits, "Matronen und verwandte Gottheiten," 252.

⁴²⁸ The fact that this inscription was erected by a merchant – *negotiator commerciator infect(orius)* – supports the foreign basis of these goddesses. There is also another dedication from Cologne to the *[M]atribus meis Germanis Suebis* by a *negotiator*; see CIL 13, 8224 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 144.

⁴²⁹ CIL 13, 8224 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 144.

⁴³⁰ E.g. AE 1998, 963 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 156; CIL 13, 8497 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 155.

also *Sidinis*.⁴³¹ The practice of merging of locative epithets extends beyond provincial capitals like Cologne and into the hinterland of the frontier, as is evidenced by a *votum* to *Matronis Vatiuiabus Nersiahenis* from Jülich, which seems to have invoked a version of the *Vatuias* associated with the river Niers.⁴³²

As the tradition of associating RMG with locations was carried over into the Roman period, some epithets came to bear strong indications of having been influenced by settlements with Roman titles.⁴³³ A dedication to the *Matronae Iulineihae* is likely to reference the RMG associated with the town of Iuliacum in which it was found.⁴³⁴ In this case, the (re) naming of the site sometime in the post-conquest era had, by the second century, become so integrated with the indigenous custom of venerating locative RMG that the town had developed its own, localized version, based on a clear Latin root (*Iul-*). This is the only attestation of the *Iulineihae*, which seems unusual, given the apparent correspondence between the deities and the location. Iuliacum is actually fairly unique, given the variety of RMG worshipped in a relatively small locale, and the lacking predominance of any one cult.⁴³⁵ It is possible that this solitary *votum* illustrates an extreme form of innovation; namely, the dedicant in a sense “creating” the *Iulineihae* as his attempt to venerate the mother goddess of the town as best he knew how to. Another ostensibly obvious connection with the Romans’ presence can be observed on votives to the *Rumanehae*. Unlike the *Iulineihae*, these goddesses cannot be assigned to any one location; however, it has been suggested that they nevertheless exhibit an association with a Roman settlement which has

⁴³¹ *Matribus Sueb[i]s Sidinis*: AE 1984, 655 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 159.

⁴³² CIL 13, 7883 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 163; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 317-18; Neumann, *Namenstudien zum Altgermanischen*, 403.

⁴³³ Schmidt, “Die keltischen Matronennamen,” 146; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 66.

⁴³⁴ CIL 13, 7882; Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 188; Herz, “Einheimische Kulte und ethnische Strukturen,” 210.

⁴³⁵ Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 67.

not yet been identified.⁴³⁶ While the connection must remain tentative, other votives which display their Latin influence more plainly increase the likelihood that the *Rumanehae* may also fit into this category. *Domesticis* is a noteworthy epithet which is often used as a substitute for a more specific designation,⁴³⁷ or, in one instance, is appended to a RMG title.⁴³⁸ The appellation served either as a way to call upon the indigenous mother goddesses of a particular region in lieu of further information about them – similar to vows to *genii loci* – or as a reference to the deities whom the worshipper venerated in his home.⁴³⁹ The dedication *Matribus sive Matronis Aufaniabus Domesticis* surely indicates a high degree of uncertainty on the part of the devotee with regard to the RMG he wished to appease. Along the Rhine and in its hinterlands, Rome's presence served to collect and add to a miscellany of cultural influences. The resulting artifacts exemplify the degree to which inventive religious exchange at the individual and local level became a standard feature of life in this heterogeneous, estuary-like frontier environment.

Personnel

Those who opted to venerate the RMG did not come from a particular social sect or ethnicity, but instead are representative of the diverse population which inhabited the Rhineland.⁴⁴⁰ Yet, there is a sense that members of the military especially favored the RMG, and the number of dedications in the material record would certainly seem to confirm such a

⁴³⁶ Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 177 suggests something akin to “*vicus Romanus*”; see also Scardigli, “Sprache im Umkreis,” 152. One inscription even has a spelling variant which yields *Romanehis* (CIL 13, 7973), potentially making the connection to the Romans even more patent. Vennemann finds the link to be less overt, and likely more coincidental; see Vennemann, “Morphologie der niederrheinischen Matronennamen,” 276 n.13.

⁴³⁷ *Matribus/Matronis Domesticis* (Rhineland): e.g. AE 1931, 24; CIL 13, 8022 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 535; CIL 13, 8023 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 535; CIL 13, 8024 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 533; CIL 13, 8026 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 532; AE 1931, 15; CIL 13, 12056 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 200; AE 1989, 574; CIL 13, 11800.

⁴³⁸ *Matribus sive Matronis Aufaniabus Domesticis*: CIL 13, 8021 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 202, Nr. 532.

⁴³⁹ Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 163; Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” 9, Nr. 13.

⁴⁴⁰ Horn, “Bildendenkmäler,” 54.

predilection. While this may simply be due to the generally disproportionate degree to which military personnel set up monuments, it is nonetheless worthwhile to analyze the trends which appear within this sample. One group within the Roman army which seems to have had a particular affinity for making dedications to the RMG is the *beneficarii*.⁴⁴¹ This lower level officer class was attached to a higher official who had promoted them through a *beneficium*, and this is reflected in their titles (e.g. *beneficiarius consularis*, *beneficiarius tribuni*, *beneficiarius legati legionis*). Despite their seemingly distinguished status, *beneficarii* were numerous, and it is their activity at their posts along the Roman roadways (*stationes*) which is of primary concern for the purpose of assessing cultural exchange.⁴⁴²

Beneficarii seem to have been especially partial to the *Matronae Aufaniae*, in addition to the extant votives provided by regular soldiers (*milites*), Lucius Marcius Verecundus (**Fig. 8**) Aulus Albanus Super (**Fig. 13**) – both of whom erected extensively personalized altars.⁴⁴³ The relatively large number of dedications to this specific RMG cult by military members has even led some to believe that the *Legio I Minervia* stationed at Bonn had either officially or unofficially adopted the goddesses as protective deities.⁴⁴⁴ Since it was common for soldiers across the Empire to worship local divinities, the question is whether the RMG dedications

⁴⁴¹ The overwhelming majority of *beneficarii* who erected *vota* to the RMG were *beneficarii consulares*, although those with the rank of *beneficiarius* also served on the staffs of various provincial officials; *beneficarii*: MacMullen, “The Celtic Renaissance,” 39, 54, 58-59, 66-69, 157; Watson, *The Roman Soldier*, 85 n. 199, 146 n.509; Schallmayer, “Zur Herkunft und Funktion”; Le Bohec, *Imperial Roman Army*, 48, 156.

⁴⁴² Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 170.

⁴⁴³ *Beneficarii* votives to the *Aufaniae*: e.g. CIL 13, 11991; CIL 13, 11985; CIL 13, 11984; Lehner, *Die Antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 278-85; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 250-51; four votives to the *Aufaniae* exist in the Rhineland by *milites*: CIL 13, 8021 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 317; AE 1931, 17; CIL 13, 8213 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 129; CIL 13, 11991 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 285. Burns provides a useful list of dedications set up by regular soldiers. Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 270-72.

⁴⁴⁴ Beyond the quantity of votives by soldiers of the legion to the *Aufaniae*, this position is based on the interpretation that soldiers *Legio I Minervia* adopted the cult for protection during the Parthian campaigns as well as the subsequent Antonine Plague; see Siebourg, “Der Matronenkult,” 115-16, 118, 120-122; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 234, 240; Garman, *Cult of the Matronae*, 53.

reflect troops *adopting* deities which were otherwise unknown to them prior to joining the army and reaching their Rhineland post, or if their dedications are more representative of an “indigenization” of the Roman military as it was filled with troops of local origin.⁴⁴⁵ There are indications that the former scenario is likely in at least some cases. In one instance, a *miles* demonstrates his insufficient knowledge concerning the RMG he is trying to propitiate – *Matribus sive Matronis Aufaniabus Domesticis*.⁴⁴⁶ The foreign nature of the dedicant can sometimes also be deduced from the position they held, as seen in the *vota* consecrated at Bonn by high-ranking officials (*legati Augusti*) and their wives, who were surely assigned to the area from elsewhere.⁴⁴⁷

The fact that soldiers, and the *beneficarii* especially, also used generalized appellations in their attempts to appease local spirits, including the *genii loci*,⁴⁴⁸ points to their lacking familiarity with the proper titles for the local deities. We might say that the soldiers’ fondness for the RMG in many cases therefore stems from a much more basic and inveterate appeal to deities believed to inhabit a particular location rather than to the RMG proper. This tendency may be connected with the nature of the duties *beneficarii* fulfilled, posted as they were at *stationes* on important roads. The impulse to satisfy local spirits in this context would seem appropriate, and almost part and parcel of one’s assignment.⁴⁴⁹ On the other hand, *beneficarii* votives also show a

⁴⁴⁵ Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 233.

⁴⁴⁶ CIL 13, 8021 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, 202, Nr. 532.

⁴⁴⁷ Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 240, also 241; AE 1930, 24 = Nesselhauf, “Neue Inschriften,” Nr. 146; AE 1930, 27 = Nesselhauf, “Neue Inschriften,” Nr. 147; Nesselhauf, “Neue Inschriften,” 148; AE 1930, 30 = Nesselhauf, “Neue Inschriften,” Nr. 149; *legati*: cf. Le Bohec, *Imperial Roman Army*, 38.

⁴⁴⁸ Helgeland, “Roman Army Religion,” 1499-500; Speidel, “Cult of the Genii,” 1550. *Beneficarii* to *genio loci*: e.g. CIL 13, 7791; CIL 13, 8205; CIL 13, 8206; CIL 13, 8207; CIL 13, 8015; see Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 171 n.10, 253-54. Dedication to the *Tutelae loci*: CIL 13, 6665. Dedication to the *flumini Rheno*: CIL 13, 7791. Dedications to the Celtic crossroad deities, the *Quadriviae*: AE 1927, 66; AE 1977, 576; CIL 13, 6437; CIL 13, 6731.

⁴⁴⁹ Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 171 n.10, 254; Rürger, “Beobachtungen,” 25; the phrase *iterata statione* is used by a *beneficiarius consularis* in one instance on a votive to the *Aufaniae*: CIL 13, 11989 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 283; however, forms of this expression appear elsewhere in the Empire on *beneficarii*

great deal of precision in addressing particular RMG deities, which could mean that the soldiers were native-born or that they had come to familiarize themselves with the goddesses during their tenure at their post. For example, dedications to the *Aufaniae* at Nettersheim are fairly numerous,⁴⁵⁰ but it is unclear whether or not the soldiers had any pre-existing attachment to or even awareness of the goddesses.

A gradual transition from the veneration of non-specific locative spirits to the RMG over time may have taken place,⁴⁵¹ but it is difficult to substantiate this interpretation, given the fact that one of the earliest datable RMG altars (**Fig. 1**) already displays a highly specific form of address – *Matronis Aufanis*. Additionally, the great majority of inscriptions are not able to be dated with precision due to lacking consular references. Therefore, it is best for scholars to resist the urge to impose artificially created developmental trajectories regarding ethnic affiliation with the RMG as well as temporal transition from using general to specific epithets. There seems to have been no clear point of transformation from *genii loci* to RMG worship, nor can we be even remotely certain about most of the dedicant's ethnicities.⁴⁵² Instead, we ought to adopt a principle of indeterminacy similar to that of the “Schrödinger’s cat” thought experiment; namely, to assume in lieu of more accurate information that dedications to a wide variety of locative deities existed simultaneously over time (*genii loci*, *Matronae*, etc.), and that both foreigners and those indigenous to the region alike erected them. Approaching the matter from this perspective avoids interpretive overreach with the evidence available to us, and places emphasis upon the

dedications, and may have simply been an aspect of their self-identification; e.g. CIL 3, 3949; CIL 13, 6440; AE 1994, 1405-06; AE 1994, 1412.

⁴⁵⁰ I am aware of eight examples; see Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 278-85; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 249-51.

⁴⁵¹ Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 228, 234, 261; Millett, “Rethinking Religion,” 99.

⁴⁵² See footnotes 334 and 336; Watson, *The Roman Soldier*, 23; Mann, *Legionary Recruitment*, 26-7; Saddington, “Parameters of Romanization,” 414; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 398, 406; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 65.

unpredictable environment in which these artifacts were conceived and crafted. For the purpose of assessing cultural exchange, *who* is offering these dedications in the sense of their origins matters less than the *process* by which they adapted religious concepts and motifs into novel forms. This process was dependent upon the individual's personal knowledge of the cults, as well as their desire to espouse pre-existing styles of veneration or innovate upon them as they saw fit. The *beneficarii* provide a useful sample size to highlight the distributive, small-scale blending of cultural components which occurred naturally as a result of frequent interaction between various populations.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to expand our current understanding of the Rhineland mother goddesses and to emphasize their value for conceptualizing how cultural exchange operated on the Germanic frontier. During the second and third centuries, the process of adoption and innovation within the religious sphere was defined by a sundry blend of influences which had converged on the Rhineland and provided a spectrum of cultural options for inhabitants of all standings and statuses to interact with as they wished. The RMG are one, highly notable instance of this phenomenon, and provide a helpful way to view both the macro and micro development of fashion at the time. On a grand scale, the RMG were a reasonably minor collection of comparable cults which were largely relegated to the German provinces – Germania Inferior most especially. Although they also share certain characteristics with ostensibly similar cults which can be found outside of the Rhineland (i.e. the *Matres* in Gaul, and the *Matronae* Northern Italy), the unique combination of iconographic and epigraphic idiosyncrasies present along the Rhine and its hinterlands allow for a reasonable demarcation of the RMG.

It is only upon magnifying our view of the goddesses that we can begin to appreciate the complexity of their development at the intra-provincial level. Inhabitants of the territory did not uniformly adopt the RMG in prepackaged form, but instead engaged as individuals with local variants of these provincial cults to create, in many cases, highly personalized dedications which reflect their familiarity with the deities as well as their desire and freedom to improvise. Along the spectrum of similarity to and difference from one another, we may loosely plot *vota* which exhibit more traditionally “Roman” characteristics – *togati* dedicants, Romanized epithets (e.g. *Iulinehabus, Domesticis*) – in contrast with those which include what seem to be “native” influences – Germano-Celtic epithets, the Germanic dative (*-ims*). However, despite investigation into the pedigrees of these characteristics, our understanding of the forms which we encounter must move beyond a “trait-list” approach, which ultimately subsumes diversity and innovation under jejune categories like “Roman” and “native.”⁴⁵³ Instead, we must first recognize that the RMG dedications are provincial artifacts, which is to say that they are broadly the products of cultural fusion within a territory and are to be treated as original creations in their own right, as opposed to indications of a “Romanized” indigenous population, or a “nativized” Roman segment. Next, it is imperative that we accept the inherently unpredictable, non-linear nature of cultural exchange, which the German frontier amplified by creating vibrant environments defined by a constant influx and exchange of goods and personnel from throughout the Empire and beyond.⁴⁵⁴ This amalgam of influences, traditions, and concepts generated a unique geographic zone which developed small-scale cultural fashionable trends rather than establishing widespread regional patterns. Some cosmopolitan centers existed, such as Cologne

⁴⁵³ Slofstra, “An Anthropological Approach,” 72, 74.

⁴⁵⁴ Increase in range of goods and options: Haselgrove, “Romanization of Belgic Gaul,” 54. The theme of supplementation over replacement is also prominent in Okun’s work, ranging from technological adaptations to self-presentation; see Okun, *Early Roman Frontier*, esp. 84, 104.

and Jülich, which housed votives to many different RMG.⁴⁵⁵ In other locations, a particular variant of the RMG predominated, as in the case of the *Veteranehae* at Nideggen as well as the *Vacallinehae* at Pesch.⁴⁵⁶ However, the overall impression to be gleaned from the evidence is one of enthusiastic invention, development, and distribution.

Adoption and innovation therefore occurred with minimal-to-no consistency and in a multi-directional manner between inhabitants of all social and ethnic backgrounds. It is within this setting that we are capable of interpreting what might otherwise be understood as mere variety to actually represent the process of cultural exchange without constraints or compulsion.⁴⁵⁷ As has been demonstrated in this chapter, individual choice in crafting the RMG votives shines through most conspicuously. Citizens, soldiers, foreigners, and locals opted to venerate the goddesses of their preference as seemed most appropriate to them, given their circumstances. In some cases, the RMG became so engrained in a person's identity and repertoire of worship that they traveled with them throughout the course of their life,⁴⁵⁸ while in others, a dedication to the RMG also stood as an outlet for highly personalized forms of self-presentation. The deities fulfilled many purposes for individuals, ranging from association with one's profession, as in the case of the *beneficarii*, to overlooking the general welfare of oneself and family (*pro se et suis*),⁴⁵⁹ and being espoused on behalf of the imperial house.⁴⁶⁰ The RMG

⁴⁵⁵ Cologne: Gutenbrunner, *germanischen Götternamen*, 130; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 67.

⁴⁵⁶ Nideggen: Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 391, Fig. 10. Pesch: Alföldy, "Epigraphisches aus dem Rheinland III." 33-89.

⁴⁵⁷ Woolf has stressed the need to recognize "the autonomy of culture" when approaching provincial exchange. Woolf, "Formation of Roman Provincial Cultures," 14.

⁴⁵⁸ On one example, a soldier fulfills his vow to the Aufanian mothers after having been promoted from *optio* to *centurio*. Importantly, he was transferred from the First Legion Minervia stationed at Bonn, where he likely first encountered the *Aufaniae*, to the *VIII Augusta* at Strasbourg, where he executed the vow; see Lehner, "Römische Steindenkmäler," Nr. 9 = Nesselhauf, "Neue Inschriften," Nr. 155.

⁴⁵⁹ Nesselhauf, "Neue Inschriften," Nr. 172 = Lehner, "Römische Steindenkmäler," Nr. 28, Taf. XV.

⁴⁶⁰ *Pro salute Invicti Antonini Augusti*: CIL 13, 11984 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 278; *in honorem domus divinae*: CIL 13, 11987 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 281.

cults were founded upon archaic deities, indigenous to the Rhineland; however, their presence as committed to stone during the second and third centuries calls attention to the chaotic makeup of the German frontier – an environment which reshaped the eclecticism of conceptual ingredients to reflect contemporary, localized provincial culture, and offered individuals options with which to create new forms of expressive worship.

CHAPTER 3

Dea Nehalennia

Introduction

Further north, where the confluence of the Rhine, Meuse, and Scheldt creates a labyrinthine tributary delta, the continental river system ends. It is here, along the North Sea coast, that one of the most prominent deities of Lower Germany can be found: Dea Nehalennia. The goddess' value for observing the localized process of cultural exchange in an even more condensed setting than the Rhineland Mother Goddesses (RMG) is enormous. First, the sheer number of dedications in her honor has rightfully earned much scholarly attention. When combined with the vota to the various RMG, the altars to Nehalennia help to account for almost two-thirds of all religious dedications in the province of Germania Inferior.⁴⁶¹ Tabulating these religious groupings together is quite appropriate, as the two have a great deal in common with respect to their visual and epigraphic characteristics, as well as the apparently connected nature of their development over time. While other provincial deities display similar clustering (e.g. Hercules Magusanus among the Batavi, and Lenus Mars among the Treveri) or intense popularity (e.g. Epona), the RMG and Nehalennia outweigh these instances by far.

Second, the geographic concentration of Nehalennia's altars is striking in that she is attested at only two main locations in what are today parts of the Netherlands: Domburg and Colijnsplaat (ancient *Ganuenta*).⁴⁶² It has been suggested that the latter served as the *civitas*

⁴⁶¹ Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 364; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 129, 133; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 129 calculates a total of 835 dedications to *Matronae*, and 245 to Nehalennia, representing 48.5% and 14.5% of the total dedications in Lower Germany, respectively.

⁴⁶² Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 136 after Bogaers and Gysseling, "Over de naam." Two outlier instances have been found at Köln-Deutz, and will be discussed below: CIL 13, 8498-99 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 181-82 = H. Nr. 44-45; see also Hassall, "Britain and the Rhine Provinces," 44. On the possibility of a third sanctuary to the north of Colijnsplaat and Domburg at Westenscouwen, see Spickermann,

capital of the Frisiavones,⁴⁶³ while Domburg may have been officially part of the *civitas Menapiorum*.⁴⁶⁴ We may circumvent the difficulties in attempting to verify the exact jurisdiction of each sanctuary by acknowledging more useful details regarding their existence; namely, the peculiar status they held on multiple fringes of Roman power – continental, provincial, imperial – while simultaneously operating at a critical juncture of cross-channel trade (**Fig. 1**). Worship of Nehalennia did not develop on the frontier in a military context per se, as the *limes* is traditionally understood. Domburg and Colijnsplaat do not owe their foundations to an implanted Roman fort which thereafter burgeoned into a large city, as, for example, in the case of *Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium*. Like many of the RMG sites, Nehalennia thrived in the mostly non-urbanized hinterland of the military's presence along the Rhine, and owed a great deal of her growth to convenient, arterial positioning within the Roman economic system. However, whereas RMG sanctuaries were frequently associated with land transport routes and the *stationes* of *beneficarii*, Nehalennia finds significance in the context of Rome's fluvial and overseas waterscapes.⁴⁶⁵

Germania Inferior, 236; Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 361. For the site histories of Domburg and Colijnsplaat, including details of the altars' discoveries in 1646-47 and 1970 respectively, see Domburg: Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 7-10; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 11f.; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 235; Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 199-201. Colijnsplaat: Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 12-14; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 236; Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 199-201. For the three votives discovered at Cologne in 1776, see Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 24, Fig. 8.

⁴⁶³ Bogaers and Gysseling, "Nehalennia, Gimio en Ganuenta," 89; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 44; Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 616. For the changes in the topography which have occurred since the Roman period, see Hassall, "Britain and the Rhine Provinces," 43; Taylor and Cleere, "Editors' Forward," viii.

⁴⁶⁴ Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 616. Both sites were located at the border of *Germania Inferior*, and therefore may have existed as part of *Gallia Belgica*; see Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 616; Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 211, 217; De Laet, "Nehalennia," 160.

⁴⁶⁵ Purcell, "Rivers and Geography," 383.

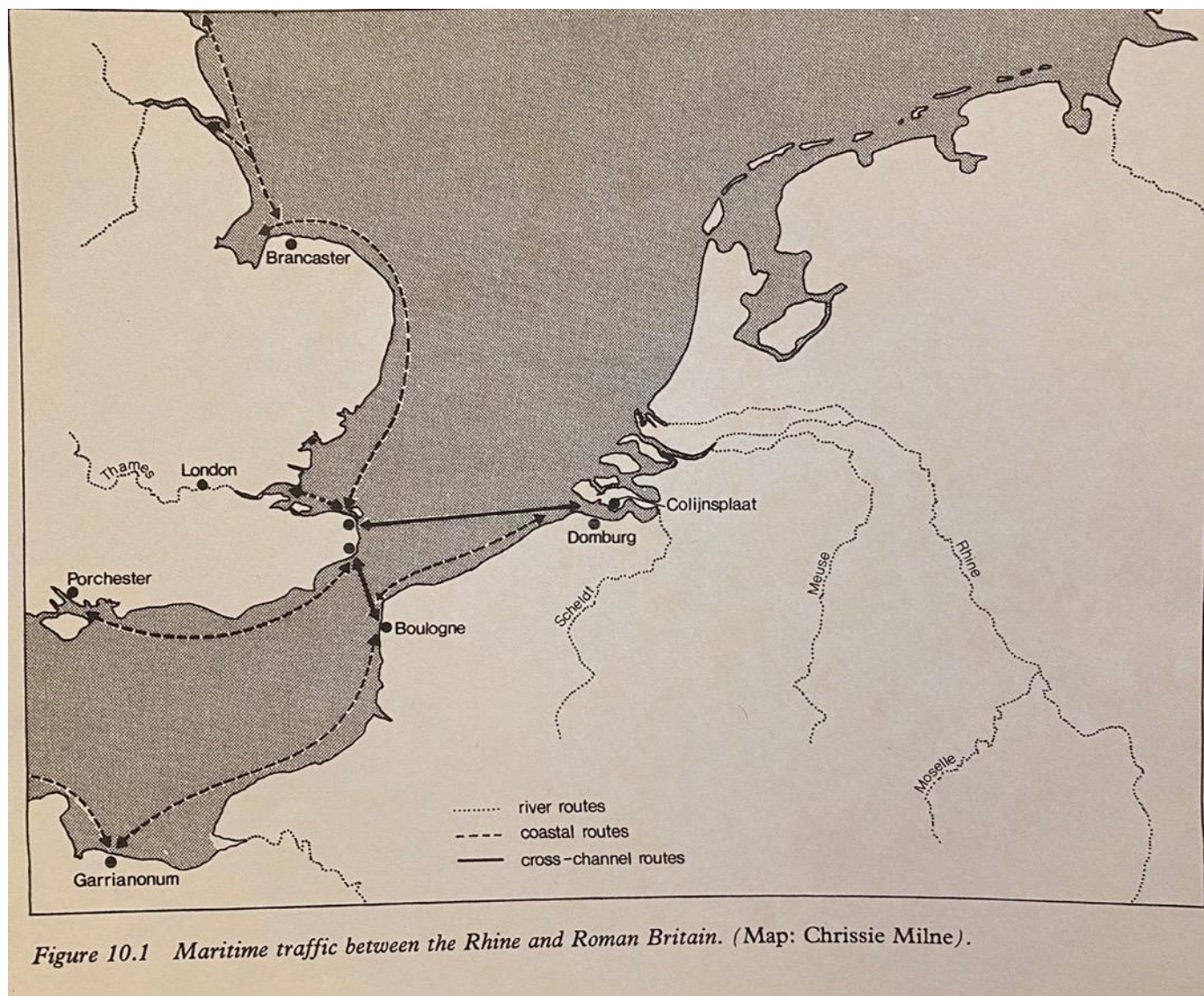


Fig. 1: Roman trade routes between Britannia and Continental Europe
After Milne, "Maritime Traffic," Fig. 10.1

These numerical and geographic factors help underscore the uniqueness of the altars as cultural artifacts, especially upon consideration of the time frame during which they were created. Based on stylistic characteristics, scholars have roughly estimated that the materials were created ca. 150-250 AD,⁴⁶⁶ making Nehalennia a well represented, intensely localized, and

⁴⁶⁶ Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 239; Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 363; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 134; Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 24. Follmann-Schulz placed the development later, nearer to the turn of the third century; see Follmann-Schulz, "Tempelanlagen," 717-18. We may also address the issue of dating

relatively short-lived deity. By ca. 270 AD, both sites had been abandoned due to rising sea levels as well as pressure from frequent Germanic incursions.⁴⁶⁷ The cult therefore presents an ideal case study for assessing the fairly rapid processes of cultural exchange and development which brought Nehalennia into being as we encounter her through iconography and inscriptions.

Altars to Nehalennia come in two forms: those which depict her likeness in either a sitting (**Fig. 2**) or standing (**Fig. 3**) motif, along with an accompanying inscription, and those which do not include a rendering of her at all.⁴⁶⁸ There are several distinct accoutrements which dedicants frequently appended to Nehalennia, including a dog at her side, a rudder, and baskets of fruit. When standing, she can be seen with her foot on the prow of a ship. In every style of altar, the side panels almost always sport a pictorial relief of some kind, with the cornucopia and laurel tree occurring very regularly.⁴⁶⁹ Standing out most clearly from these characteristics is Nehalennia's association with seafaring objects, as well as her connection with RMG imagery by way of the fruit baskets and laurel trees. Both topics will be addressed below in an expanded discussion of Nehalennia's traits.

more specifically, according to each site. For Domburg, Hondius-Crone follows Hahl's previous work in estimating that the altars were created between 190-240 AD, with most having been put up at the beginning of the third century AD; see Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 15 esp. n.36, 101. For Colijnsplaat, the presence of consular dating on 5-6 altars yields the following dates: (A54) = 188; (A33) = 193; (A5) = 223; (B37) = 227; (A39) = 222?; see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 40-41, 43.

⁴⁶⁷ Morris, *North Sea and Channel*, 136. These pressures likewise caused the Romans to abandon the nearby military *castellum* at Aardenburg; see Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 61f.

⁴⁶⁸ All references to those examples found in Hondius-Crone's *The Temple of Nehalennia at Domburg* will be cited with "H. Nr.," followed by their catalog number. References to Stuart and Bogaers' *Nehalennia: Römische Steindenkmäler aus der Oosterschelde bei Colijnsplaat* will follow the authors' catalog system, with "A" referring to altars with Nehalennia imagery on their front side, numbers with "B" referring to altars without imagery, and numbers with "D" referring to statues. Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 104-05 addresses the possible Greco-Roman origins of the standing and sitting variants – Types A and B, respectively; for Stuart and Bogaers' discussion on this topic, see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 20-22. Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 21: "Nehalennia ist fast immer sitzend dargestellt (A 1-53), selten stehend (A 54-58, und in Domburg H. Nr. 2, 3, 4)."

⁴⁶⁹ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 22f.



Fig. 2: Nehalennia depicted seated
A2 = AE 2001, 1445



Fig. 3: Nehalennia depicted standing with her foot on the prow of a ship
A57 = AE 1973, 372

Inquiry into the origins, meaning, and makeup of Nehalennia's cult has the resulted in a range of interpretations which are often relegated to speculation due to the nature of available evidence. The etymology of her name serves as a case in point. Although there is a general consensus that "Nehalennia" must likely translate to something like "leader" or "steerswoman,"⁴⁷⁰ precision is nevertheless lacking.⁴⁷¹ Ultimately, as Crone noted long ago, there is no comprehensive and fully satisfying account for the name or her origins.⁴⁷² Regarding her iconography and essence, the same lack of certainty is present, and must remain so, due to our dearth of knowledge relating to the cult. On the one hand, the complexity of Nehalennia's existence has been acknowledged, as she is situated within the more recent academic paradigm which views new, provincial religions as ethnically hybridized.⁴⁷³ However, even when noting the clearly heterogeneous influences that helped shape her worship, there is a perceptible tendency for scholars to fall back upon methods which simplify how Nehalennia was conceived and presented, rather than expanding upon the altars' variety and complex representation.⁴⁷⁴ Additionally, as we have seen with the RMG, the presence of bifurcated, Roman/native distinctions likewise persist in analyses of Nehalennia, leading to familiar, linear explanations

⁴⁷⁰ Green, *Symbol and Image*, 11; also, Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 619, after Bogaers and Gysseling, "Over de naam," 229-30; Cramer-Peeters, "Zur Deutung des Namens," 2 after Gutenbrunner, *Die germanischen Götternamen*, 75, 81f.; Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 167, Nr. 181.

⁴⁷¹ Celtic roots: Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 362; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 236; Spickermann and de Bernardo Stempel, "Keltische Götter," 141. De Laet, "Nehalennia," 162; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 43. De Bernardo Stempel has also noted that the name may have a connection with salt water; see de Bernardo-Stempel, "Nehalen(n)ia," 187.

⁴⁷² Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 101, with further discussion of interpretations; see also Wagenvoort, "Nehalennia," 274, 276; Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 364 n.79; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 239; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 135 n.59.

⁴⁷³ See Spickermann and de Bernardo Stempel, "Keltische Götter," 125. For hybridity, see esp. Webster, "Creolizing the Roman Provinces."

⁴⁷⁴ Green, *Symbol and Image*, 10,16; Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 216, somewhat contradictorily, refers to the similarity of Nehalennia's altars while arguing how personalized they could be through painting, form, and size in juxtaposition to one another.

with homogenized groupings.⁴⁷⁵ This approach of tallying up features appearing on altars in an effort to meticulously catalog them according to stylistic traits in many ways does a disservice to the extant and remarkable blending of details which incline against simple classification.⁴⁷⁶

Context and Approach

Facing material evidence which, despite being elaborately detailed and highly informative in many ways, is nevertheless ultimately of limited value for understanding the cult itself, it is important to establish the boundaries and aims of this investigation. As with the RMG, my approach will be to delve into the material record provided by votive altars in an effort to better characterize the *process* of cultural exchange in action. Determining the exact ethnic origins and nature of Nehalennia's cult is of far less importance for my assessment than the ways in which her dedicants crafted their own conception of and uses for her in real time. It is enough to acknowledge that her pedigree is clearly comprised of both "Roman" and "native" – or, more accurately, "foreign" and "local" – influences. Instead, I will emphasize the individuality of expression which is clearly present on many altars in order to further break down the concept of homogenized "provincial" or "regional" religious phenomena.⁴⁷⁷ It is only by highlighting personalized instances of innovation that we can begin to understand the processual development of cultural exchange taking place at particular locales which led to entirely novel creations. It is then possible to build up awareness of highly localized micro trends of fashion, with Nehalennia being one of the examples par excellence to demonstrate this fact.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁵ See, for example, Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 44. Green, *Symbol and Image*, 224 is sensitive to the need to appreciate localized peculiarities, but still relies upon a generalized Roman/native distinction.

⁴⁷⁶ Derks breaks up the material into three altar groupings; see Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 202-06; see also Noelke, "Ara et Aedicula," for further elaboration on the aedicula-altar style.

⁴⁷⁷ Spickermann and de Bernardo Stempel, "Keltische Götter," 125.

⁴⁷⁸ Roselaar, "Introduction," 1 emphasizes the uniqueness of cultural exchange that place in each location.

Upon taking into account the many ways people blended existing and invented new visual traits, dedicatory formulae, and forms of self-expression in their worship, it becomes clear that any explanatory model must adopt a bottom-up methodology which can effectively sift through and reckon with anomalous examples in any body of evidence without treating them as dismissible outliers in an attempt to create orderly categories.⁴⁷⁹ It must recognize that anomalies, in fact, frequently become the norm, which is to say that there are relatively few instances in which the altars adhere to a prefabricated standard. Deviations from what might be deemed a “pattern” occur so regularly that they undermine the notion that there was any standard to begin with. In a very real way, those venerating Nehalennia as well as the RMG were crafting religion as they wished. The openness and mutability of polytheism under Roman rule allowed for dedicants to take part in the development of worship and belief at the personal level.⁴⁸⁰ Often, this took the form of adopting symbols from various sources and creatively injecting them into the altar in question for reasons of practicality.⁴⁸¹

Finally, it is particularly important in the case of Nehalennia to recognize that religious changes can and should be seen as embedded within the socio-political and economic changes brought on by conquest.⁴⁸² While politics and economics are still considered valid realms in which to speak of Romanization theory (i.e. forced integration), culture has come to be treated as

⁴⁷⁹ Lulić, “Theorizing Romanization,” 25, also 23-25.

⁴⁸⁰ Henig, “*Ita intellexit numine*,” 159; Schwertheim, “orientalische Religionen,” 810f.; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 8-9. This perspective of the ancient world being comprised of an open religious environment wherein people were largely free to develop and invent religious beliefs and worship runs counter to scholars who instead opt to situate the discussion within the framework of power dynamics; see Webster, “Translation and Subjection,” 175.

⁴⁸¹ Schwertheim, “orientalische Religionen,” 807; Green, “Jupiter, Taranis,” 70 provides a helpful example of this creative practicality: “Frequently...the Celtic wheel is balanced by other, Roman, sky-signs such as thunderbolt and eagle, as if the worshipper is either thinking of the sky-god as a true blend of ethnic concepts, and cramming as many different sky-symbols as possible onto one stone to increase its potency, or is covering all eventualities in propitiating native and intrusive god alike.” Roselaar, “Introduction,” 6 notes that cultural adaptations were often embedded in wider social concerns regarding status and success.

⁴⁸² Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 10-11, esp. note 55.

a separate category.⁴⁸³ Nevertheless, it is also important to accept that opportunities of all sorts – economic, political, and even cultural – “were unthinkable without the institutions, materials, and rituals provided by the empire.”⁴⁸⁴ The freedom to make individual choices regarding religious beliefs as well as the wide variety of cultural influences available for provincials to choose from were only possible within the realm that Roman power had created.⁴⁸⁵ It is here, at the intersection of these two schools of thought regarding individual freedom and imperial regulation, that we must interpret Nehalennia, whose cult demonstrates cultural exchange in her development as the representative of no particular “culture” (i.e. tribe, clan, ethnic group) at all,⁴⁸⁶ but as a conglomeration of different cultural influences which was essentially created by and attached to a mercantile network operating along the North Sea coast. Through “the net moving of ideas and people,” with probable influences from the RMG along Rhine trade routes, Nehalennia grew into a *locally* as well as *professionally* important goddess.⁴⁸⁷

This chapter will thoroughly examine visual and epigraphic characteristics of the Nehalennia dedications which denote the altars’ value for assessing cultural exchange and expressive religious innovation. As with the RMG, whose influences on and connections with Nehalennia’s worship will also be addressed, particular attention will be paid to the complex blending of features, symbols, and motifs on an individual basis so as to resist the urge to compress the altars into basic and homogenized categories (e.g. standing, sitting, with dog,

⁴⁸³ Structural Romanization: Roselaar, “Introduction,” 11. Autonomy of culture: Woolf, “Formation of Roman Provincial Cultures,” 14.

⁴⁸⁴ Roth, “Introduction,” 9.

⁴⁸⁵ Of course, by creating the new environment, Rome constrained options even as it allowed significant leeway for expression, if only by its ubiquitous presence; see Roselaar, “Introduction,” 8, 17.

⁴⁸⁶ Jones, *Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 130f. provides a helpful cautionary note on the scholarly tendency to associate artifact groupings with cultural blocs that are assumed to be unified, which results in an interpretive disservice to the heterogeneity of the evidence.

⁴⁸⁷ Purcell, “Rivers and Geography,” 383. In Nehalennia’s case, veneration seems largely to have remained within the mercantile community.

without dog, etc.). Instead, I will show that the breadth of interactions concentrated in this extremely confined environment led to the creation of these unique cultural artifacts, whose novelty stems from the variety of personalization we can observe in them. Proper contextualization must also be given to the geographic as well as economic factors which heavily influenced the creation of – and the very desire to create – votives to Nehalennia. Finally, Nehalennia’s existence as a highly localized goddess needs to be appreciated against the broader backdrop of the Empire itself. It is no coincidence that she burgeoned into one of the most venerated deities within the province of Germania Inferior in the time, places, and manner which she did. The personnel who favored Nehalennia and their networks of operation along the frontier system help us to better chart her cult as a local phenomenon, but one which was also imbued with a more global (i.e. imperial) significance.

Characteristics in Common with the RMG

Immediately apparent to anyone viewing the Nehalennia altars are the iconographic and epigraphic traits they share with the RMG dedications originating further up the Rhine. Due to a significant overlap between the two, I will mention only a few of the most prominent features, which have already been noted.⁴⁸⁸ From a structural perspective, both make extensive use of the aedicula-altar style, which was common to Lower Germany, its place of origin.⁴⁸⁹ Nehalennia’s imagery does portray her under a distinctive “shell-shaped canopy (**Fig. 2**),”⁴⁹⁰ which differentiates her from the RMG, who are rarely rendered with this umbrella-like motif above

⁴⁸⁸ See Chapter 2. Other overlapping features include the seated position, as well as the presence of standardized sacrificial items and personnel, such as the three-legged table (A23, A44); see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 24.

⁴⁸⁹ Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 236; Spickermann, “Matronen und Nehalennia,” 362, 365; Noelke, “Ara et Aedicula,” 93-94.

⁴⁹⁰ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 102.

their heads;⁴⁹¹ however, this baldachin is more proprietary to the region in general than to her specifically.⁴⁹² Turning to the particular visible traits on the altars themselves, we can recognize the profundity of cornucopiae. This motif is especially common on the side panels, but also finds new significance on Nehalennia dedications in which cornucopiae may be an appendage of the goddess herself on the front of the altar.⁴⁹³ A connection between the RMG and Nehalennia via cornucopia imagery is quite logical, as the design represented “a ubiquitous symbol of prosperity and fertility among Romano-Celtic deities.”⁴⁹⁴ Moreover, other artistic renderings of cornucopiae from the Roman world testify to the object’s widespread value as a symbol of abundance and success in many contexts.⁴⁹⁵ Finally, several Nehalennia altars display the “half H” (-|) (**Fig. 4**) which saw more utilization amongst the many RMG votives.⁴⁹⁶ The relatively close proximity of the Nehalennia and RMG dedications suggests a common cultural milieu in which people developed the symbol.

⁴⁹¹ E.g. CIL 13, 8216; AE 1998, 963. The motif is also much less pronounced on RMG dedications when compared to Nehalennia’s, taking up less space as well as lacking the more pointed ends and deep curves.

⁴⁹² This shell or umbrella-like canopy can also be found on dedications to other goddesses, as well as on tombstones; see Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 102; for an especially prominent example to Iuno Regina and Minerva from Xanten, see Noelke, “Ara et Aedicula,” 91, Fig. 8a (CIL 13, 8625 = Lehner, *antiken Steindenkmäler*, Nr. 110). Cramer-Peeters, “Zur Deutung des Namens,” 11 notes how the canopy conveys Nehalennia’s significance, but mistakenly takes this to mean that Nehalennia cannot be a local goddess. In reality, this artistic feature does not necessitate any broader swathe of worship, only the incorporation of fashionable representation from elsewhere; an example of the baldachin can be seen on CIL 13, 6386c; Espérandieu, *Recueil de la Germanie*, 322f., Nr. 496 interprets this instance as a funerary monument.

⁴⁹³ H. Nr. 15, A39, A41, A42; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 26.

⁴⁹⁴ Green, *Symbol and Image*, 7; Wagenvoort, “Nehalennia,” 284.

⁴⁹⁵ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 45; De Bernardo-Stempel, “Nehalen(n)ia,” 189. Jucker, *Das Bildnis im Blätterkelch*, 153 notes that the cornucopia was originally linked with Pluto and his blessings. The combined imagery of cornucopiae and laurel trees hearkens back to their status as common symbols of “Augustan victory” which the dedicant chose to apply to the perceived blessings received from the goddess(es); see Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 204. Applying this established Roman pedigree to the cornucopia’s presence on Nehalennia altars may indicate an ideological connection with Fortuna; see Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 167, Nr. 181 = CIL 13, 8498; see footnote 509 for a similar connection to Fortuna via the combination of rudder and globe; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 45. However, I am hesitant to accept such a neat and simple interpretation, which obfuscates the complexity of ideological innovation while also reinforcing the Roman/native binary.

⁴⁹⁶ B3, and B31 use -| itself, whereas “ch” is present on B5 – once again indicating the symbol’s phonetic value; see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 28; Spickermann, “Matronen und Nehalennia,” 362, 365; Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 128 n.13. The symbol only appears on altars at Colijnsplaat; see Stolte, “Religiöse Verhältnisse,” 619 n.94.

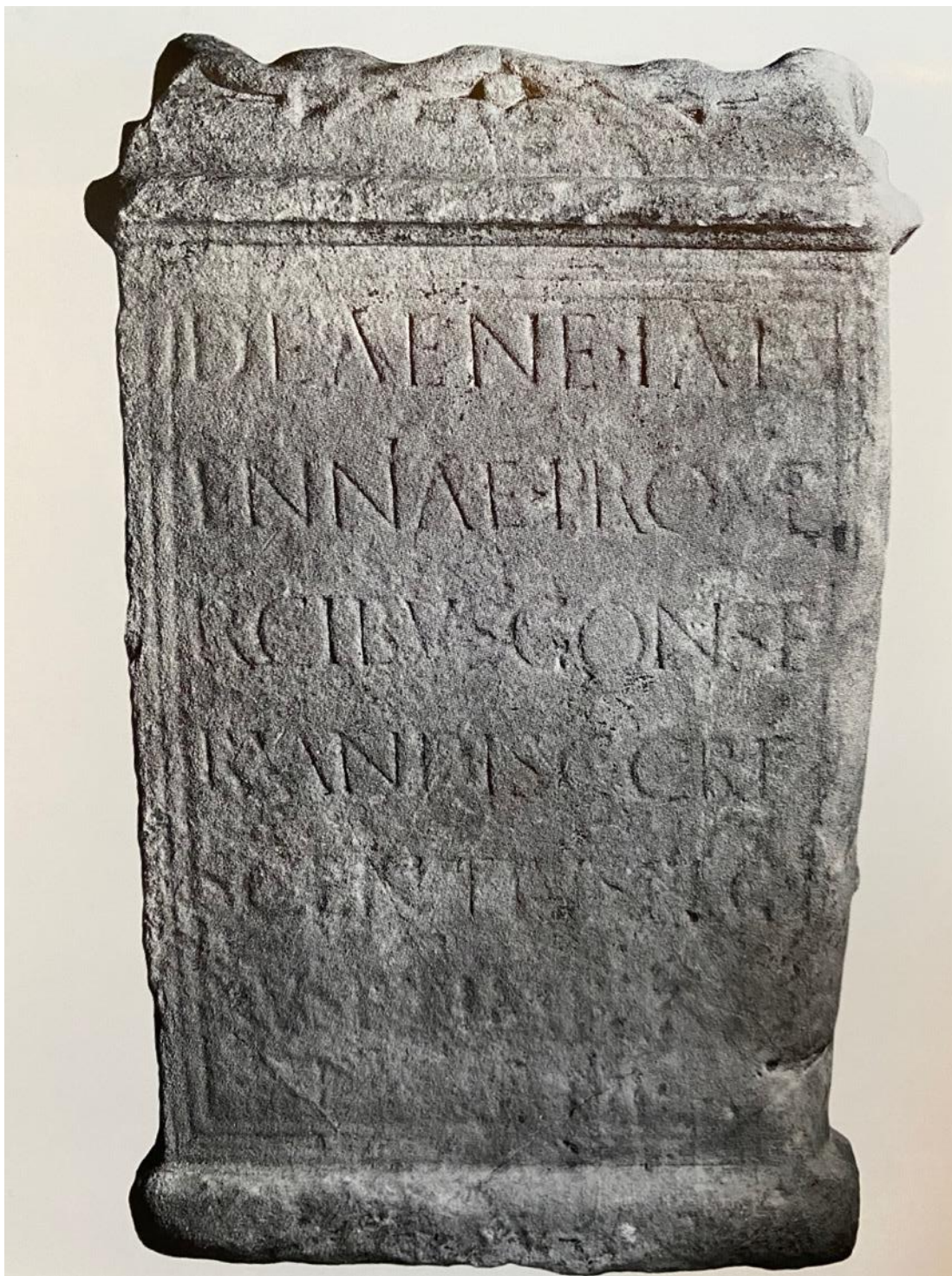


Fig. 4: Nehalennia altar with the half H (-) character
B3 = AE 1975, 647

This degree of shared characteristics indicates a clear developmental connection between the RMG and Nehalennia. More specifically, it is likely that particular stylistic elements permeated northward after having first been created at or near cosmopolitan centers such as Cologne and Bonn.⁴⁹⁷ If those venerating the RMG were indeed first to experiment with and establish dedicatory patterns which we also find amongst Nehalennia dedications, this theory would explain the low number of *direct* imitations of particular motifs found in the Scheldt region as well as the high number of similarities. Several trends would appear to validate this: the “half H” (**Fig. 4**), the stacked style of imagery (**Fig. 15; Fig. 16; Fig. 18**),⁴⁹⁸ sacrificial scenes (**Fig. 18**),⁴⁹⁹ and, curiously, even two instances of trinity representations (**Fig. 17**).⁵⁰⁰

Perhaps the single most defining trait of the RMG – the large, globular bonnet – even seems to have percolated through to the North Sea coast. No consensus exists on whether renderings of Nehalennia present her in some type of proprietary headgear or hairstyle.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁷ Stuart and Bogaers posit a clear influence from Cologne, particularly due to the number of dedicants hailing from CCAA, as well as the small number of Nehalennia inscriptions found at Köln-Deutz; see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 46; CIL 13, 8498-99 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 181-82. Six residents of CCAA have been found at Colijnsplaat; Stolte, “Religiöse Verhältnisse,” 616; Moreover, Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 45f. note that the style of sculpture is not very different from Rhineland fashions. For the aedicula-altar originating at Cologne and Bonn: Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 215 after Noelke, “Bildhauerwerkstätten”. It has been suggested that A71 was manufactured near Cologne; see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 46; Kakoschke, “Agrippinenser an der Nordsee,” Nr. 14. Of the altars to Nehalennia found in Cologne, only the upper portion of one example remains; Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 24 posits that the difference in design that this altar exhibits when compared to those discovered in Nehalennia’s cult territory indicate “that the particular workshop in Cologne was not aware of the exact conventions for the depiction of Nehalennia.”

⁴⁹⁸ Stacked imagery: A8, H. Nr. 16.

⁴⁹⁹ Only one sacrificial scene exists on the front of a Nehalennia altar (H. Nr. 16). However, as with the RMG, numerous direct and indirect allusions to sacrifice appear on side panels, including sacrificial servants/dedicants, animals, and equipment: A2, A3, A39, A41, A43, A44, B5, H. Nr. 21, 31; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 23 n.64.

⁵⁰⁰ A71, H. Nr. 15; Stolte, “Religiöse Verhältnisse,” 620-21; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 46; Kakoschke, “Agrippinenser an der Nordsee,” Nr. 14; Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 205; Green, *Symbol and Image*, 188. These may have originated at CCAA; see Spickermann, “Matronen und Nehalennia,” 365.

⁵⁰¹ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 102; Jenkins, “Nameless or Nehalennia,” 195. Stuart and Bogaers contend that Nehalennia sports a particular hairstyle, and that previous scholars had mistakenly relied upon 17th century sketches of the Domburg altars, which injected contemporary fashion into her depictions; see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 21 n.42; this phenomenon is most evident in the cap of H. Nr. 19B (**Fig. 5**), and also in the depiction of the “hunter” of H. Nr. 21, who also incorporates a clothing style more early modern than ancient in appearance.

Several fairly detailed reliefs do indeed give the impression of a hairstyle which has been pinned up and parted down the middle (**Fig. 6**).⁵⁰² Still others, including a statue, seem to portray either a matted down coiffure or a close-fitting cap which thickens at the brim (**Fig. 2; Fig. 7**).⁵⁰³

⁵⁰² A1, A12.

⁵⁰³ A2, A27, A49, D1; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 46 note the atypicality of A49. Of course, the very observation that this instance is unusual reflects the variability within the motif itself. A15, A26, and A39 may also fall within this category; however, their style is more elevated and inflated while still retaining the clear impression of hair. A56 almost certainly depicts hair, as it seems far too shallow and close-fitting to be a cap. The same is valid for the trinity example (A71).

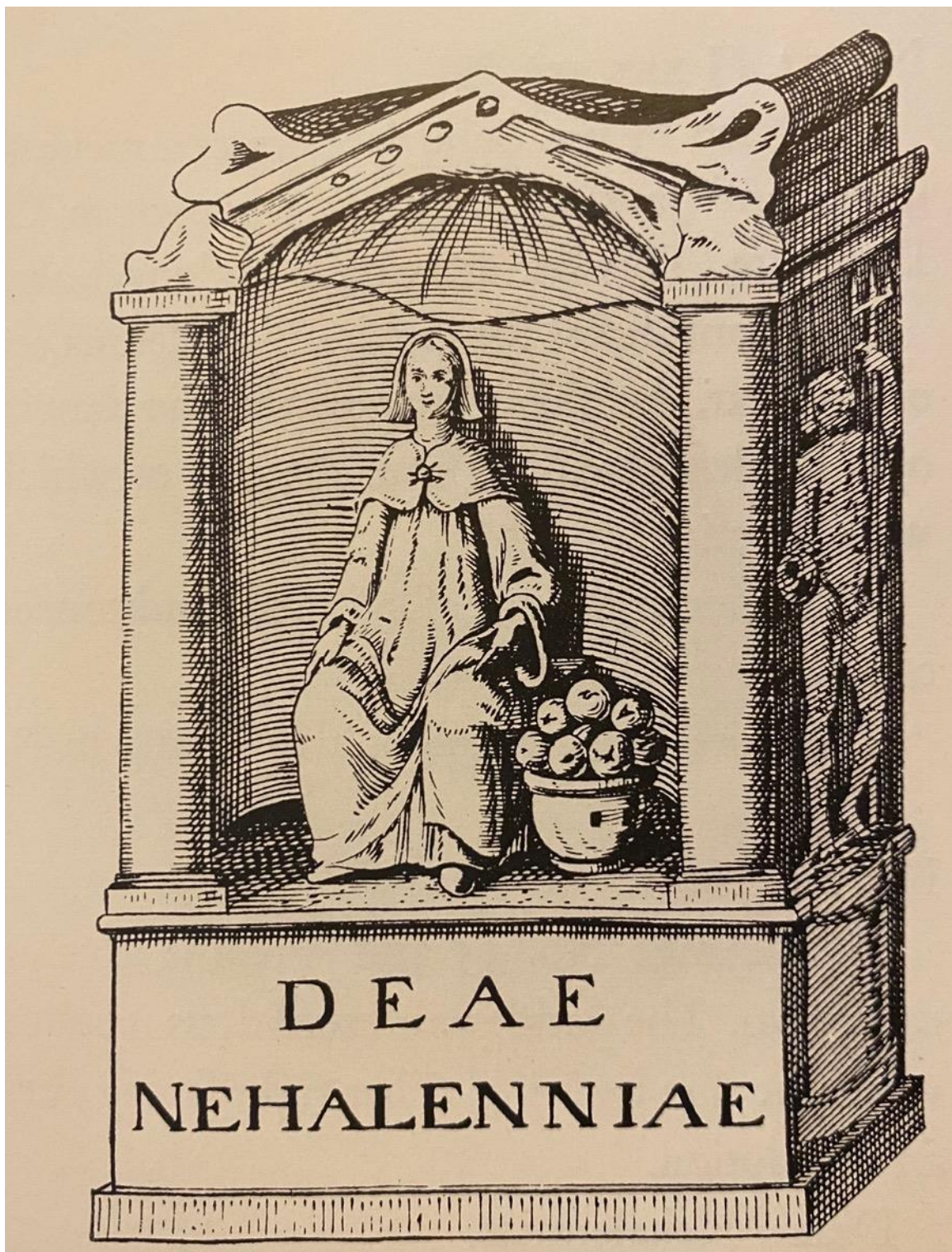


Fig. 5: 17th century drawing of a Nehalennia altar
H. Nr. 19B = CIL 13, 8780

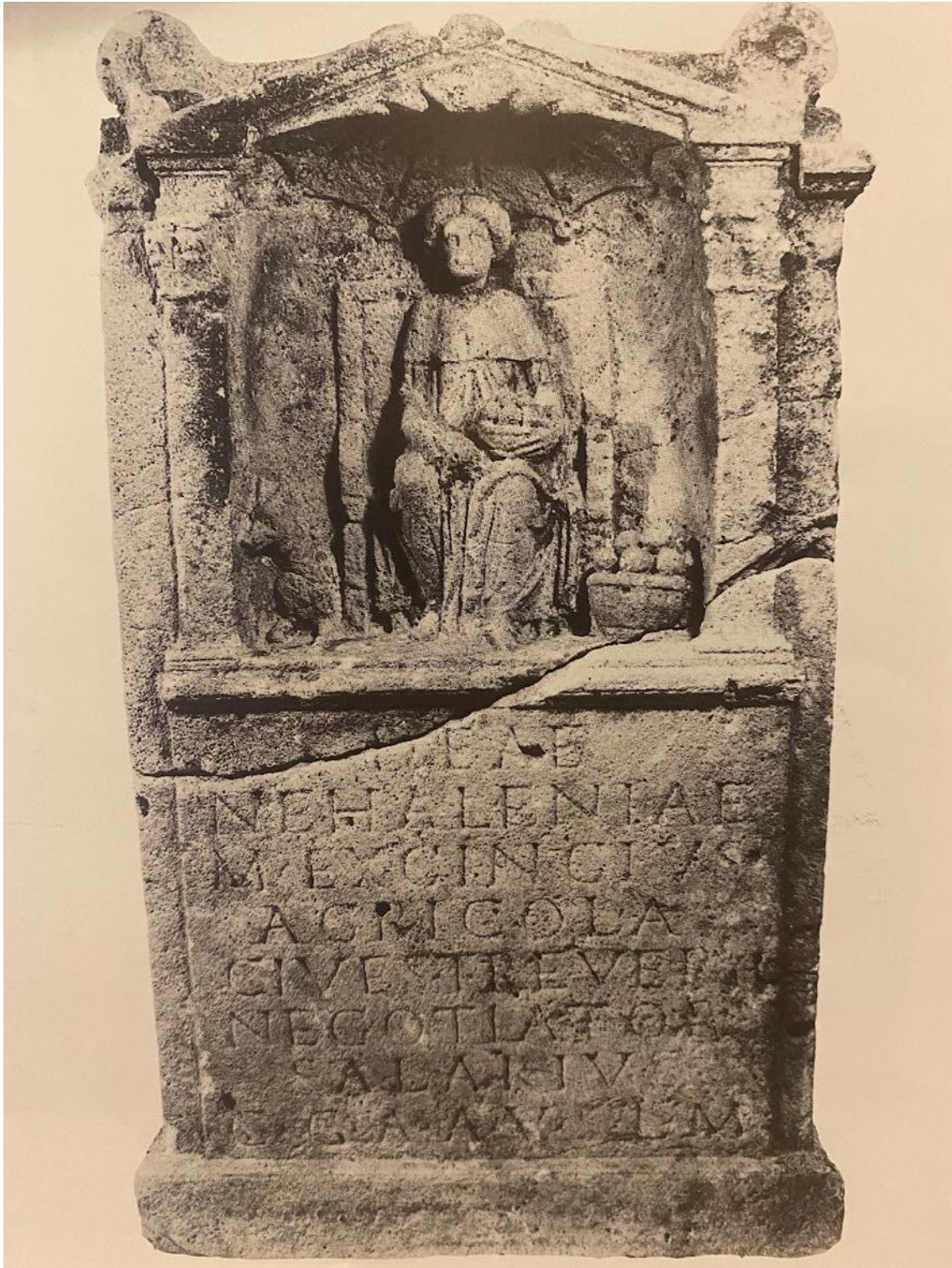


Fig. 6: Nehalennia depicted with parted hair
A1 = AE 1973, 362



Fig. 7: Statue of Nehalennia. Note the three-dimensional perspective of her hair/cap and her distinctive short cape

D1

However, I would like to suggest an imperfect connection with the RMG in at least a few altars which are extremely reminiscent of the Rhineland bonnet's shape, save for their smaller size (**Fig. 8; Fig. 9**).⁵⁰⁴ Perhaps the most conspicuous instance can be found on A4 (**Fig. 8**), whereon Nehalennia's tumescent headpiece retains its spherical uniformity and lacks a visible part which might otherwise suggest a depiction of hair. Although terribly weathered, the headpiece of A10 (**Fig. 9**), too, strongly resemble a bonnet, and almost certainly could not represent hair, given the way it rests high up, entirely above brow level. Finally, a relief of Nehalennia (A48) (**Fig. 10**)

⁵⁰⁴ A4, A10, A48.

with her head slightly turned offers us a slanted, more three-dimensional perspective of her head. Once again, despite the deterioration, the headpiece conforms to the basic shape of the Rhineland bonnet, displaying a thick, raised arrangement which encompasses the top portion of Nehalennia's head from the upper forehead in the front to the base of the skull in the back. Moreover, Nehalennia's garb in this particular instance is striking in its similarity to that of the RMG.⁵⁰⁵ Lacking her distinctive shoulder cape, she instead sports a robe which is clasped at mid-chest level in identical fashion to the RMG. From these examples, it becomes clear that the bonnet was not a stylistic characteristic which was so intensely replicated and adhered to that it drifted northward from Cologne and Bonn without alterations being made to suit its new environment.⁵⁰⁶ The intermittent incorporation of the bonnet-like headgear on Nehalennia altars denotes the ways in which those venerating Nehalennia toyed with and invented religious tradition alongside various other options.

⁵⁰⁵ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 46f. contend that this altar, along with A71, likely came from elsewhere; however, in the case of A48, their reasoning relies upon the possible presence of other deities alongside Nehalennia rather than her own similarity with the RMG.

⁵⁰⁶ Rothe, "Veiling in Pannonia," 99: "It is only by loosening the typological grip of the set of 'folk costumes' defined in traditional scholarship on dress...that we can begin to see...the complexity and dynamism of these dress styles." Although referring specifically to the presence of veils in depictions from Pannonia, Rothe expands this point to the Celtic world more broadly; *Ibid.*, 93. Of course, I would add that the RMG and Nehalennia demonstrate that there is also great variety *within* population groupings and at particular locations. The inability to define Nehalennia's headgear stands as a primary example of this chaotic blending, as does the variety of RMG bonnets discussed in Chapter 2.



Fig. 8: Nehalennia likely depicted with a bonnet similar to the RMG
A4 = AE 2001, 1446



Fig. 9: Nehalennia depicted with a smaller version of the RMG bonnet
A10 = AE 1991, 1253



Fig. 10: Nehalennia prominently displaying clear RMG attributes (i.e. bonnet and robes clasped mid-chest)

A48

Even more important than comparing the quantity of shared discernible traits, however, are the ways in which the Nehalennia altars deviate from the tendencies of RMG altars.⁵⁰⁷ By and large, worshippers of Nehalennia selectively adopted key RMG elements and applied them to a different cult as they simultaneously innovated new iconographic and epigraphic styles to meet the specific needs of their situation and to harmonize with their understanding of the maritime goddess. Nehalennia's relationship with the RMG is therefore a critical aspect of her existence, because it illuminates the evolutionary process of fashion within an environment that was as ideologically open as it was culturally diverse. The process of adoption and innovation was endless, with the RMG themselves emerging from a fusion of disparate influences and, in turn, affecting the trajectory of Nehalennia's worship.

Characteristics Unique to Nehalennia

Despite plain similarities between the two, however, it would be a mistake to downplay Nehalennia's truly unique characteristics or elide them into an analysis of the RMG.⁵⁰⁸ Her distinctive attributes speak to the specific motivations behind her followers' propitiatory efforts. Whereas the ubiquity of cornucopiae and fruit on RMG altars disclose dedicant's vague hope for prosperity or security of some kind, there is less ambiguity in the mixture of seafaring imagery and commercial formulae present on Nehalennia altars, which frequently have overt economic foci. The presence of ships (**Fig. 3; Fig. 12; Fig. 13; Fig. 15; Fig. 16; Fig. 20**) and naval paraphernalia in general, such as rudders (**Fig. 11**), stress the goddess' conceptual domain

⁵⁰⁷ I specifically employ the term "tendencies" here to avoid boxing the RMG alters into any kind of rigid standard, since, as Chapter 2 demonstrated, their internal stylistic variety dispels any notion of homogeneity.

⁵⁰⁸ As in Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 366. Green emphasizes the distinctive, localized forms that can develop, even amongst depictions of goddesses with similar functions; see Green, *Symbol and Image*, 10, 16.

amongst her dedicants as the protectress of those taking to the sea.⁵⁰⁹ A dog appears on almost every depiction of Nehalennia, sitting obediently beside her (**Fig. 2; Fig. 3; Fig. 6; Fig. 7; Fig. 9**).⁵¹⁰ Finally, she wears a distinctive short cape or shawl draped over her shoulders (**Fig. 2; Fig. 3; Fig. 5; Fig. 6; Fig. 7; Fig. 8; Fig. 9**), which is entirely unique to her.⁵¹¹ It is therefore likely that this garment reflects a local style of dress in the same way that the bonnet and robes of the RMG do for the territory surrounding Cologne and Bonn.⁵¹² I introduce these characteristics here only cursorily so that they may be assessed in the context of particular examples below. This approach retains the benefit of viewing comprehensively how individuals employed certain characteristics in practice rather than extracting all instances with, say, ship imagery, and addressing them as if they were an established motif. It is important to highlight the individuality of each altar by giving emphasis to their various combinations and innovations so as to stress the flexibility of religious dedications as well as the creativity of dedicants.

⁵⁰⁹ Ship: Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 102. Rudder: Jucker, *Das Bildnis im Blätterkelch*, 152 n.8. The combination of rudder and globe imagery: Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 45. As a general protectress of those taking to the sea: Green, *Symbol and Image*, 11.

⁵¹⁰ Depictions of dogs appear on dedications to other deities on the continent as well as Britain, including Epona, Sirona, Sequana, and Nodens; see Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life*, 123-24; Jenkins, "Role of the Dog," 60, 73f. Therefore, while the dog motif is not exclusive to Nehalennia, its absence from RMG altars makes its presence on the former in combination with visual traits from the latter's repertoire a noteworthy mark of innovation.

⁵¹¹ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 50, 102; Jenkins, "Nameless or Nehalennia," 195; Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 617; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 46. For particularly well-defined examples of the cape, see A11, A27, A52.

⁵¹² Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 102; Jenkins, "Nameless or Nehalennia," 11-12; Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 617; Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 26. If the cape is an instance of localized fashion, it may also indicate a certain continuity in the process of cultural fusion; see Wild, "Textiles and Dress," 305. Of course, to say that an item or symbol is localized in no way requires it to be static over time or unadulterated in its tradition. All we may say with certainty about the cape is that it is unique to Nehalennia. Whether it is the product of archaic native custom or was more recently developed is unknowable. However, as with the clothing of the RMG, the cape's presence on these altars illustrates innovative and idiosyncratic cultural expression in any case.



Fig. 11: Side panels of a Nehalennia altar with a rudder and globe
A16 = AE 2001, 1451



Fig. 12: Neptune and Hercules displayed on a reconstructed sketch of a Nehalennia altar
H. Nr. 3 = CIL 13, 8801



Fig. 13: Nehalennia and Neptune portrayed similarly with their feet placed upon a ship's prow
A54 = AE 1997, 1162

The presence of other deities at Nehalennia sanctuaries as well as on Nehalennia altars themselves also separates her from dedicatory practices to the RMG. At Domburg votives and statues to other deities can be found, the majority of which are traditionally Roman: Victory, Jupiter, and Neptune; however, there is also a singular dedication to Burorina, a non-Roman

goddess.⁵¹³ While, in contrast to Domburg, Colijnsplaat yields only dedications to Nehalennia,⁵¹⁴ both sites include various deities on the side panels of altars to the seafaring goddess. Neptune and Hercules occur together six times at Domburg, and twice at Colijnsplaat (**Fig. 12**).⁵¹⁵ The presence of other gods and goddesses on votives to Nehalennia denotes active fusion of deities who are perceived to have related or complimentary functions. Obviously, Neptune's connection with the sea corresponds to Nehalennia's status as a goddess related to sea travel. Similarly, Hercules was traditionally associated with travelers.⁵¹⁶ The combination of the two on dedications to Nehalennia was best explained by Hondius-Crone: "Hercules' long journeys overland end[s] at the shore of 'Oceanus', where the realm of Neptune begins. So the Domburg harbour meant also a meeting-place between them."⁵¹⁷ This interpretation points to the convergence of these various deities, and recognizes the ideological assimilation taking place in the dedicants' minds. Pairing "Roman" and "native" deities was a common practice which also reflects a process of syncretism; however, the addition of other gods in honor of Nehalennia is somewhat peculiar for several reasons. First, while other paired dedications included both a relief

⁵¹³ Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 616; Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 363; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 128; Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 210; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 45 compile them. There are two statues to Victory: H. Nr. 28-29; two altars to Jupiter: H. Nr. 31-32; one statue to Neptune: H. Nr. 34; two altars to Neptune: H. Nr. 33, 36; Hondius-Crone is confident that H. Nr. 35 (now lost) depicts the head of a bearded Neptune based on a 17th century drawing by Hendrik van Schuylenburg; however, Stuart and Bogaers exhibit caution in their designation. For Neptune at Domburg, see also Wagenvoort, "Nehalennia," 285. Burorina: H. Nr. 38. A dedication to Hercules Magusanus (CIL 13, 8777) discovered at nearby Westkapelle may have originally been located at Domburg; see Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 616 n.71.

⁵¹⁴ Cramer-Peeters, "Zur Deutung des Namens," 5; Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 615-16; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 45; Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 363; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 128-29.

⁵¹⁵ H. Nr. 3, 4, 6, 10, 12, 19, A54, A55; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 23 n.65-66 *contra* Stolte's previous statement that Neptune and Hercules occur together only once; see Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 616. The rendering of what is potentially Hercules in A54 is heavily damaged. Only in A55 – also heavily weathered – is his club visible at his side. Hercules and Neptune also appear separately on A41 (Neptune) and B6 (Hercules); see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 23 n.65.

⁵¹⁶ Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 362; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 128; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 114f.

⁵¹⁷ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 106. It is also interesting to note that this description of Nehalennia as a deity who exists at the meeting juncture of Hercules and Neptune is accurately reflected in her position on the center panel between the two gods who inhabit the panels to her sides.

of the deities and a corresponding inscription which identified them, Nehalennia votives make no mention of the other gods.⁵¹⁸ Second, imagery of other deities appears *only* on the sides of altars and *never* on the front, which Nehalennia alone dominates. This is an important deviation from other paired deities, whose “marriage” is reflected in their conjoined presence on the same image.⁵¹⁹

These details raise questions about Nehalennia’s relationship with Neptune and Hercules beyond the conceptual associations established above. Are these attempts to equate her with other gods,⁵²⁰ or merely subtle efforts to promote a loose affiliation between them by harvesting a constellation of similar religious iconography centered on travel and the sea? In the case of Neptune, an equation is at least conceivable, albeit unprovable on epigraphic grounds, given the similarity between their domains of operation.⁵²¹ A tangible visual equivalency also seems possible on A54 (**Fig. 13**), which depicts Nehalennia on the front panel, standing with her left foot elevated atop the prow of a ship, and Neptune on the right, side panel in virtually identical fashion.⁵²² However, since all inscriptions make it clear that the dedications are to Nehalennia alone, the argument for equivalency must ultimately rest on shaky footing – especially since

⁵¹⁸ Interestingly, the opposite phenomenon is true for the RMG – no other deities are included on their altars’ reliefs, but inscriptions are sometimes addressed to other gods and spirits alongside the RMG; e.g. CIL 13, 8841: *dis deabusque omnibus Matribus Vapthiabus et Genio loci*; see Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 185 to *praesentissimis numinibus* and an unidentifiable *Matronae* group; see also Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 52 = CIL 13, 8492 to a miscellany of deities which possibly includes *Matronis Abirenibus*.

⁵¹⁹ See, for example, the many instances from Gaul and the Germanies of Rosmerta and Mercury paired; e.g. CIL 13, 11696.

⁵²⁰ Schwertheim, “orientalische Religionen,” 810 notes the frequency of this phenomenon.

⁵²¹ H. Nr. 36 to *Deo Neptuno*. Indigeneous deities are sometimes assumed to have been called upon via Roman names; see Stolte, “Religiöse Verhältnisse,” 637f. Other *Deo Neptuno* dedications from Cologne: CIL 13, 8239 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 183; AE 2010, 1008 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 184. The noteworthy frequency of Neptune on votives in Lower Germany seems directly related to his presence on Nehalennia dedications, indicating that there was an understood association between the two; on this point, see Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 129f. which also charts the number of iconographic representations and epigraphic attestations of deities in Lower Germany.

⁵²² Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 45.

Neptune was venerated individually at Domburg, and features prominently on the side panels of Nehalennia altars. If Nehalennia's existence was being elided into Neptune's, it does not follow that each would be venerated and rendered as two distinctly separate deities. Additionally, the dedicant is clearly not making an effort to "pair" her with Neptune and Hercules in the way we normally encounter – as, for example, in the "marriage" of Roman Mercury and Rosmerta – since they are never depicted together in the same image.⁵²³ This lack of "pairing" places Nehalennia outside the discussion of imperial cultural subjection and hierarchies of power, which, in any case, she would stand atop at these locations. While Nehalennia's primacy on her altars as the main iconographic and sole epigraphic focus admonishes against any kind of direct equivalence with or subordinate role to the other gods, the latter's' presence nevertheless requires explanation. These unique combinations are most likely the results of innovative experimentation: dedicants appropriated symbols from a panoply of religious traditions available to them, and clustered those they perceived to be most salient on their votive altars. By creating new conceptual associations and forging them into tangible reality, dedicants were inventing religious practice as they saw fit, in real time.⁵²⁴

Polyvalency

The unique visual characteristics of Nehalennia's altars inevitably lead us to question how we should interpret her function as a goddess. As with the RMG, Nehalennia seems to have embodied a polyvalent essence, which can be gleaned from their shared usage of cornucopia and

⁵²³ Mercury and Rosmerta: CIL 13, 11696; see also Green, *Symbol and Image*, 7.

⁵²⁴ Green perfectly summarized a similar phenomenon regarding Roman and Celtic mixtures of sky-oriented religious imagery; see Green, "Jupiter, Taranis," 70; see footnote 481 above.

fruit imagery – both generalized symbols of prosperity and fecundity, as previously discussed.⁵²⁵ However, some of these valences are more directed in Nehalennia’s case. Due to the relegation of her worship largely to just two locations along the North Sea coast, it is likely that Nehalennia’s indigenous influences stem from the very same territory, either as a goddess of a particular tribe or the region in general.⁵²⁶ Moreover, from her imagery and dedicatory inscriptions, she seems clearly to be the patroness of merchants and sea travel more broadly.⁵²⁷ This patent economic aura will be further developed below in my analysis of altars with overt mercantile imagery and dedicatory formulae. Finally, Nehalennia has also been interpreted as a goddess with connections to the underworld because of her iconographic attributes; namely, her faithful companion, the ubiquitous dog,⁵²⁸ as well as the distinctive and intriguing curtain motif (**Fig. 14**) carved into the back of several altars.⁵²⁹ Some have suggested the curtain to represent “a veiling of the future which awaits the souls of the dead.”⁵³⁰ Of course, it may just as easily have served as a decorative element so that no side of the altar would be left unadorned, or as an imitation of actual curtains which protected shrines from the elements.⁵³¹ In the end, it is entirely possible that Nehalennia embodied all of these interpretations to some degree, and there is

⁵²⁵ Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 167, Nr. 181; Spickermann, “Matronen und Nehalennia,” 362; Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 362.

⁵²⁶ Spickermann, “Matronen und Nehalennia,” 363, 366; Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 133.

⁵²⁷ Wagenvoort, “Nehalennia,” 277; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 33, 43, 45; Bogaers and Gyseling, “Over de naam”; Stolte, “Religiöse Verhältnisse,” 615, 618; Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 168, Nr. 181; Kakoschke, “Agrippinenser an der Nordsee,” 255. See footnotes 470 and 471 for the etymological connections with the sea.

⁵²⁸ Cramer-Peeters, “Zur Deutung des Namens,” 11; Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 103; Green, *Symbol and Image*, 11; Stolte, “Religiöse Verhältnisse,” 615; de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, 316.

⁵²⁹ Curtained altars: H. Nrs. 5, 6, 10, 14, A1, A25, A43, A48, A54, A56; Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 108; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, Taf. 117-18.

⁵³⁰ Wagenvoort, “Nehalennia,” 280, also 283. *Contra* Schrier, “Nehalennia,” which seeks largely to disprove Wagenvoort’s theory; Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 103 also inclines against an underworld connection, opting instead to stress Nehalennia’s connections with fertility and fecundity.

⁵³¹ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 108; Schrier, “Nehalennia,” 156-57 interprets the curtain as “purely decorative,” and points to its presence on other statues depicting Jupiter; Stolte, “Religiöse Verhältnisse,” 618-19 provides a helpful discussion of the connections between the curtain and the underworld, but ultimately concludes that it represents decoration in Nehalennia’s case.

perhaps good reason to think that she did indeed have a polyvalent character.⁵³² This composite understanding would best account for the apparently diverse qualities which dedicants variously called upon when commissioning the altars.

⁵³² Hondius-Crone sees Nehalennia in general as “having the double character of life and death”; Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 104; see also Wagenvoort, “Nehalennia,” 283; Cramer-Peeters, “Zur Deutung des Namens,” 11; Spickermann, “Matronen und Nehalennia,” 362; Green, *Symbol and Image*, 9. Wagenvoort, “Nehalennia,” 82 also suggests that Nehalennia’s essence varied by location, with her presence at Domburg associated with the souls of the dead, whereas at Colijnsplaat she was more so connected with trade and sea travel.



Fig. 14: Backside of a Nehalennia altar displaying the veiled curtain motif
A56 = AE 1973, 371

Interpreting a deity with indigenous roots as being “polyvalent,” however, has not gone without criticism. Jane Webster attempted to dispel the notion that Celtic gods were inherently polyvalent by linking the practice of *interpretatio* with imperial power dynamics and modern overreliance upon post-conquest source material:

For most writers...there is no divine order, only chaos. The multitude of localised deities is held up as an example of the pluralism of belief and practice which is perceived to characterise Celtic religion. However, clear evidence for localisation is not evidence for polyvalency...Rather, it is reliance on name-paired *interpretatio* which has created Celtic polyvalency.⁵³³

This passage’s effort to combat the idea of “chaos” within indigenous religious belief is misguided. While there are obvious instances of an imperial mindset attempting to translate “native” deities into more familiar, Roman context,⁵³⁴ these straightforward equations do not represent ground level, long term cultural exchange in the least. Commentaries by Caesar or Tacitus, for example, on the worship of non-Roman deities reflect the perspective of itinerant elites writing within an exoticizing, sensationalist ethnographic tradition. It is one thing to acknowledge these patent cases of *interpretatio* for the colonialist attitudes they typify; however, it would be quite something else to assume that such a mindset permeated the millions of idiosyncratic cultural encounters and religious exchanges which took place throughout the motley regions of the Empire.⁵³⁵ Even in examples of name-pairing, there is frequently no clear reason to surmise that the native deity was pruned of their peculiar characteristics so that they might align more easily with a Roman counterpart, or that the former was understood to be

⁵³³ Webster, “Translation and Subjection,” 176.

⁵³⁴ E.g. Caes. *BG.* 6.17-18, Tac. *Germ.* 43.4.

⁵³⁵ Roselaar highlights the need to examine the more commonplace instances of interaction if we are to construct an accurate picture of social and cultural development; see Roselaar, “Introduction,” 2, 6. Pitts, “Globalisation, Circulation and Mass Consumption,” 80 cautions against weighing daily life in the provinces against macro-level, imperial power relations.

subservient to the latter in terms of asymmetrical power hierarchies.⁵³⁶ Moreover, labeling indigenous (Celtic, Germanic, etc.) deities as polyvalent need not be an observation laden with imperial undertones,⁵³⁷ but can simply serve as an appraisal of ancient polytheism more broadly. As Webster herself points out, even deities from the Roman pantheon developed specific associations which evolved over time, such as Mars, who transitioned from being solely a fertility god to gaining the more familiar, martial connotation.⁵³⁸ Webster's "rejection of divine anarchy" applied to Celtic religion is unnecessary because multi-faceted links and understandings also existed for Roman deities.⁵³⁹ Identifying chaotic processes in ancient polytheism does not necessitate the espousal of imperial, discriminatory value judgements by Romans or modern scholars alike. Instead, recognizing the ideological and expressive creativity which ancient peoples employed opens up to us a more refined – if infinitely more complex and elusive – understanding of contemporary religious exchange.

Finally, as noted in Chapter 2, we should not overestimate the impact of Roman hegemony, or assume that it continued to have an intrusive and suppressive impact on indigenous cultures centuries after the initial conquest and successful provincial integration, when novel forms of deity worship like Nehalennia were being developed. Imperial policy was essentially "hands-off" regarding virtually all indigenous customs,⁵⁴⁰ making the realm of

⁵³⁶ Webster, "Translation and Subjection," 178 posits: "The secondary ranking of Celtic deity names within a name-pairing is also worth noting here: Celtic divine names are placed before Classical ones only six times." Curiously, the instances of Celtic names preceding Roman names are dismissed as outlier examples in no need of explanation. In reality, they should be seen as pivotal for constructing an understanding of religious practice which was, by and large, ideologically-open, and unbounded by stringent and intrusive imperial exertions – intentional or otherwise.

⁵³⁷ See Webster, "Creolizing the Roman Provinces," 211.

⁵³⁸ Webster, "Translation and Subjection," 176.

⁵³⁹ Webster, "Translation and Subjection," 177.

⁵⁴⁰ Save for the bans on human sacrifice and civilians' ability to carry weapons, to name two prominent examples. Evidence for the weapons ban relies upon the *Lex Iulia de Vi Publica* (*Dig.* 48.6.1-2), while Pliny the Elder boasts of Rome's immeasurably positive impact with regard to the elimination of human sacrificial rites (*Plin. Nat.* 30.13); see Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 253, esp. n.18 for further literature; for "new prohibitions" brought in the wake of Roman conquest, see Woolf, "Formation of Roman Provincial Cultures," 12. In terms of cultural enforcement, one might look to the diffusion of the imperial cult; see Fishwick, *The Imperial Cult*; McIntyre, *Imperial Cult*.

religious development an overwhelmingly independent, organic phenomenon.⁵⁴¹ The frontier's distance from the Empire's capital and low administrative bureaucracy prohibited the possibility of strict cultural oversight, even if the government had wished to make it so. This is especially true for such remote and relatively underdeveloped locations as Domburg and Colijnsplaat. In fact, worship of Nehalennia and the RMG attests directly to the willingness of outsiders (including imperial officials) to pay homage to localized deities *without* any attempts to either equate them with or to cast them as unequal consorts of more "palatable" Roman gods. Moreover, by the second and third centuries, the people of the Rhineland frontier had become a disparate mix of ethnicities, traditions, and social statuses,⁵⁴² making it impossible to determine the boundaries between colonial infringement and indigenous agency. To simplify the intricacy of these circumstances to a jejune "imperial dialogue" is highly unproductive and not reflective of the material evidence. If, as Webster argues, "polyvalency offers an immediate indication of a too-ready appropriation of post-Conquest data in defining pre-Conquest deity," we should espouse equal skepticism regarding the ease with which scholars look to *modern* colonial programs as templates for understanding cultural exchange within ancient imperial encounters.

Individuality: Novelty from Variety of Personalization and Conception of Nehalennia

As with the RMG, the sheer profundity of iconographic and epigraphic variation present among Nehalennia dedications operates against the idea that these altars were primarily churned out of local workshops as prefabricated items with minimal input from clientele.⁵⁴³ The sculptors

⁵⁴¹ Roselaar, "Introduction," 2-3, 6.

⁵⁴² Green, *Symbol and Image*, 11 points to the wide variety of Nehalennia's dedicants.

⁵⁴³ *Contra* Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 239; Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 363; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 133-34. Because of the frequency of Nehalennia's unique attributes (e.g. cape, dog), Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 46 conclude that the altars must have been sculpted locally.

must have incorporated customer requests in their work, even in the case of Nehalennia's "canonical" attributes.⁵⁴⁴ For example, dedicants must have requested the inclusion of the near-ubiquitous short cape at some point prior to it becoming an essential feature in the goddesses' visual representation,⁵⁴⁵ since fashionable trends begin first with innovation. Similarly, the relatively small number of altars which depict a curtain on the backside indicate that artists either recognized a marketable trait which spoke to customers' desires, or were specifically asked to add it to the altars. If Nehalennia was indeed understood to have connections with the underworld, including the curtain could, in turn, reflect an individual's awareness of this fact as well as his desire to display and emphasize it. In short, within the "gamut of hybridization,"⁵⁴⁶ there was ample room for individual choice and personalization to shine through, even within the realm of constantly evolving and seemingly uniform motifs.⁵⁴⁷ Altars should therefore be viewed as tangible products of a creative process between the artist and the customer rather than objects which the artist manufactured perfunctorily and always according to preconfigured designs.⁵⁴⁸ To the end of fully capturing the personalization of Nehalennia altars, the following sections will elaborate upon several trends which nevertheless display meaningful customization, individuality, and religious understanding through their execution.

Seafaring, Economic Attributes, and Identity Display

The most persistent theme to be gleaned from the altars is the dedicants' overwhelming emphasis on their own seafaring economic activities and the concomitant identity display

⁵⁴⁴ *Contra* Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 46.

⁵⁴⁵ See Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 102. If the short cape represents local dress, then its inclusion is particularly representative of local fashion percolating into Nehalennia's representation by request from customers.

⁵⁴⁶ Green, *Symbol and Image*, 6-7.

⁵⁴⁷ Roselaar, "Introduction," 2-3, 6.

⁵⁴⁸ Green, *Symbol and Image*, 6; Rüpke, *On Roman Religion*, 4f.

associated with their professions. Ships are not included only as attributes of Nehalennia herself when she is depicted standing, but are sometimes also incorporated as maritime objects peculiar to the dedicants themselves. In A8 (**Fig. 15**) a ship is displayed on the front of the altar below an inscription and fragmentary depiction of Nehalennia, while on the side panel of A41 (**Fig. 16**) there is a ship below Neptune. The two examples both clearly show what appear to be wine barrels loaded onto the ships, which, along with the presence of grapevines on the side panel of A8, stand as indirect evidence that the dedicants were wine merchants, despite no such indication existing in the accompanying inscriptions.⁵⁴⁹



Fig. 15: Nehalennia altar with stratified imagery and allusions to the wine trade
A8 = AE 1975, 650

⁵⁴⁹ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 23, 36; Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 209; de Bernardo-Stempel, “Nehalen(n)ia,” 189; Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 131; Hassall, “Britain and the Rhine Provinces,” 45; Morris, *North Sea and Channel*, 106.



Fig. 16: Side panel of a Nehalennia altar displaying Neptune atop a ship carrying barrels
A41 = AE 1980, 658

The infusion of personal identity in these customized designs also extends to the level of detail shown to the ships themselves. A8 depicts a type of smaller river barge not intended for travel at sea, which was a common method of transportation in northern Europe.⁵⁵⁰ Two oarsmen provide direction and propulsion for the craft – possibly by way of “punting”⁵⁵¹ – whereas, in contrast, A41 includes a ship with its sail clearly loosened. This distinction, though small, is nevertheless significant, since it most likely discloses the dedicants’ respective roles within the mercantile network – with A8 being river-based and A41 responsible for transport across the Channel. Moreover, the positioning of Neptune above the seagoing vessel on A41 would seem to invoke his protection on the turbulent North Sea.

Nautical symbols are also occasionally shoehorned into the imagery of the side panels. While Nehalennia frequently grasps a rudder on the main imagery above inscriptions,⁵⁵² a woman (possibly Nehalennia herself) is portrayed on the side of A43 holding one in similar fashion.⁵⁵³ A rudder is also appended to the widespread cornucopia in certain instances, as is a globe in others.⁵⁵⁴ Placing these symbols together – often physically touching – indicates a conscious blending of two concepts which can only point to the dedicant’s hope for prosperity through successful sea travel. Importantly, the addition of these symbols, situated as they are around the central figure of the unvarying cornucopia, seems to imply that they were an afterthought to the original altar design. Moreover, the rudders and globes are not always carved

⁵⁵⁰ Milne, “Maritime Traffic,” 82.

⁵⁵¹ Punting: Ellmers, “Shipping on the Rhine,” 10, Fig. 15.

⁵⁵² A43-48, A54-55; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 21 n.44. In my view, A54 and A55 appear to be too damaged to make a definitive statement as to whether or not a rudder is present, while in A46 a table or basket seems much more likely.

⁵⁵³ I cautiously suggest the possibility that this image could represent Nehalennia because of the presence of an oar as well as the woman’s garb, which could possibly reflect a Nehalennia-style coat and hairstyle/cap. Additionally, there is a similar instance in the case of the RMG in which they are also depicted on side panels. See Chapter 2, Fig. 9; Nesselhauf, “Neue Inschriften,” Nr. 179; Lehner, “Römische Steindenkmäler,” 15-16, Nr. 30, Taf. XVII.

⁵⁵⁴ Rudder: A9, A16, A49. Globe: A16, A24; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 23.

or positioned in the same manner. Therefore, while this phenomenon attests to the presence of at least partially pre-fabricated templates with the basic cornucopia iconography, it simultaneously calls attention to the modular nature of symbols associated with Nehalennia, which could be included or excluded at will.

Beyond inexplicit visual references, there are numerous instances in which dedicants broadcast incredibly specific details about their professions – unsurprisingly, mercantile and maritime in nature.⁵⁵⁵ The trend is particularly apparent at Colijnsplaat, which contains the highest concentration of epigraphically attested merchants at a single location in the Roman world.⁵⁵⁶ While many dedicants opted to identify simply as *negotiatores*,⁵⁵⁷ others distinguished themselves by appending to their profession the goods which they purveyed. Thus, we encounter *negotiatores salarii* (salt), *cretarii* (pottery/pipe-clay), and *allecarii* (fish sauce).⁵⁵⁸ Still others included *Britannicianus* in the description of their economic activities, thereby confirming a connection with cross-Channel trade.⁵⁵⁹ Amongst the dedicants, mercantile expression varies even further to include other related descriptions and duties.⁵⁶⁰ One vaguely declares that he is a mariner (*nauta*), which Stuart and Bogaers posit should mean something like “shipowner” here, as opposed to merely “sailor.”⁵⁶¹ Two men state their particular role on board their vessels.

⁵⁵⁵ Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 208f., also Fig. 8, 9; Hassall, “Britain and the Rhine Provinces,” 43, Table 1.

⁵⁵⁶ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 34; Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 131.

⁵⁵⁷ There are 12 unspecified *negotiatores* at Colijnsplaat; see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 36; Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 131. Only one *negotiator* has been discovered at Domburg (H. Nr. 23).

⁵⁵⁸ For *negotiatores* categorized by merchandise, see Hassall, “Britain and the Rhine Provinces,” 43-45, Table I; Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 131; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 34-38. *Cretarii*: H. Nr. 23, A3; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 34f.; for a discussion of the uncertainty surrounding *cretarii*, see Wagenvoort, “Nehalennia,” 278 n.2. *Allecarii*: A34, A39, B44; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 34; Curtis, “Negotiatores Allecarii,” esp. 149, 151. *Salarii*: A1, A26, A49, B1; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 35f.

⁵⁵⁹ H. Nr. 23, A3, A6, A11, B10; Hassall, “Britain and the Rhine Provinces,” 43-45, Table I; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 35, 37.

⁵⁶⁰ Harris, “Trade [70-192 AD],” 178. Nehalennia’s dedicants exhibit this wide range well, including a freedman, shipowner, and avowed agent of a business partner.

⁵⁶¹ While A57 is the only inscription which includes the term *nauta* Stuart and Bogaers also include B2 and B4 in their list of *nautae* because they were both erected by the same dedicant – Mercatorius Amabilis, who makes it clear

Bosiconius Quartus (B38) goes so far as to provide the name of the ship which he captains – the *Florus Severus* –⁵⁶² while M. Cupitius Victor (A29) declares that he is the *agens rem adiutor* for a man named Caius.⁵⁶³ The motivation for such precision stemmed in part from a desire to exhibit and boast one’s own identity, in addition to the practical significance of providing a wholly accurate inscription to the deity so as to avoid confusion. On both counts, the key takeaway is that these dedicants viewed mercantile and seafaring self-characterization as some of the most important details to impart to the goddess in such brief inscriptions. Identity display was a crucial aspect of erecting *vota* to Nehalennia, and the flexibility of the altar offered the perfect communicatory medium for personal expression in addition to religious practice.

Trinity Depictions

Two remarkably idiosyncratic altars which portray trinity representations attest to the complexity and innovation involved in creating votives to Nehalennia.⁵⁶⁴ Their strong deviations from any apparent iconographic patterns in Nehalennia’s representation, as well as their conspicuous similarities with RMG altars,⁵⁶⁵ demand further analysis. The first example from Colijnsplaat (A71) (**Fig. 17**) is fairly well preserved, and depicts the trinity mother goddess motif found elsewhere in Gaul, the Rhineland, and beyond.

that he is the owner of several ships (*pro navibus*) in B2; see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 36f; see also de Bernardo-Stempel, “Nehalen(n)ia,” 189.

⁵⁶² *Actor navis*: Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 37; De Bernardo-Stempel, “Nehalen(n)ia,” 189; see also Hassall, “Britain and the Rhine Provinces,” 46.

⁵⁶³ There is some dispute about how to translate this phrase. Stuart and Bogaers have opined “Sachverwalter und Helfer” *contra* de Bernardo-Stempel, who takes this to be *agens remigium adiutor*, “Rudererantreiber”; see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 37; De Bernardo-Stempel, “Nehalen(n)ia,” 189f.

⁵⁶⁴ A71, H. Nr. 16. Spickermann, “Matronen und Nehalennia,” 365 mistakenly tallies three trinity examples.

⁵⁶⁵ Green, *Symbol and Image*, 188.



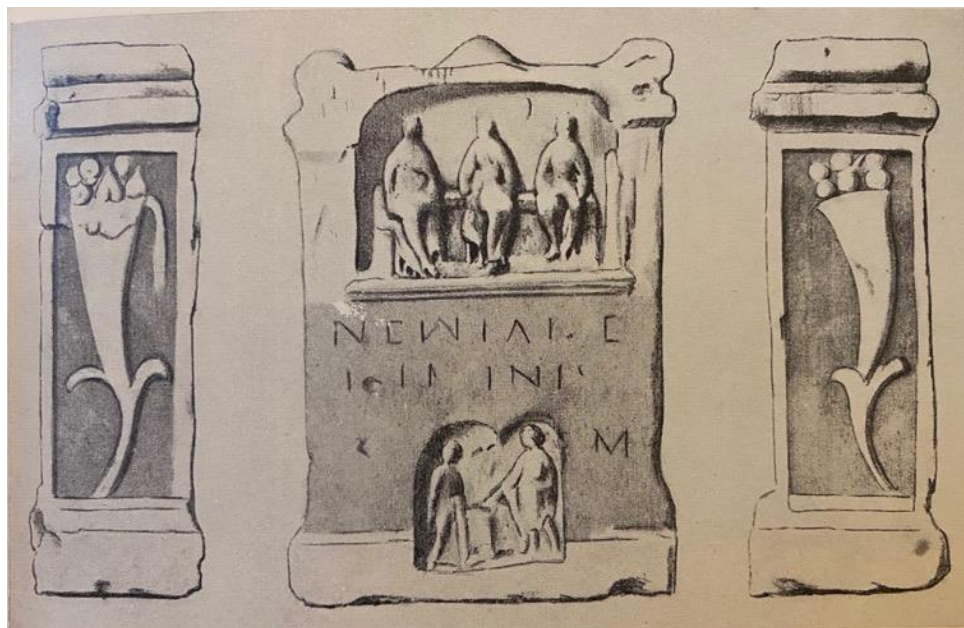
Fig. 17: Nehalennia trinity depiction
A71 = AE 1997, 1159

Two women of relatively equal height sit on both sides of another, central female figure who is slightly shorter. It is possible that the size disparity between the central figure and those at her flanks is meant to reflect a corresponding gap in their respective ages – a prominent feature in RMG iconography,⁵⁶⁶ which is normally further emphasized by the contrasting headgear the goddesses wear. However, in A71, there is no discernible variance between any of the garments or attributes of the three women depicted: each of them sports the familiar, RMG-style overcoat with a clasp placed just below the sternum, resulting in a distinctive X-shape, and their headgear

⁵⁶⁶ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 105.

appears much more akin to Nehalennia's modest cap than the ostentatious bonnets of the RMG.⁵⁶⁷ Additionally, the female figures of A71 hold baskets on their laps in the same manner as the RMG. The canopy above is identical to the baldachin frequently found on other Nehalennia altars, in contrast with the few present on RMG reliefs, which instead tend to either omit the canopy motif altogether or fill space above the goddesses by rendering the high bank of their shared bench.⁵⁶⁸ The altar therefore displays a mix of attributes from the repertoires of both Nehalennia and the RMG.

At Domburg (H. Nr. 16) (**Fig. 18**) we find another "Nehalennian triad."⁵⁶⁹ Although the condition is much more weathered than A71, thereby preventing a detailed assessment of the garb and attributes of the goddess(es), there is an unmistakable trinity representation on the upper register.



⁵⁶⁷ However, there was significant variation even within this telltale marker of the RMG, just as Nehalennia's own headgear exhibits a lacking uniformity, as discussed above. See Chapter 2, Fig. 5.

⁵⁶⁸ High bank on RMG: CIL 13, 11989; CIL 13, 7889; AE 1930, 19; AE 1998, 963. Chapter 2, Fig. 5 contains a small canopy over the RMG, and greatly resembles A71 insofar as the three goddesses are depicted uniformly.

⁵⁶⁹ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 105.

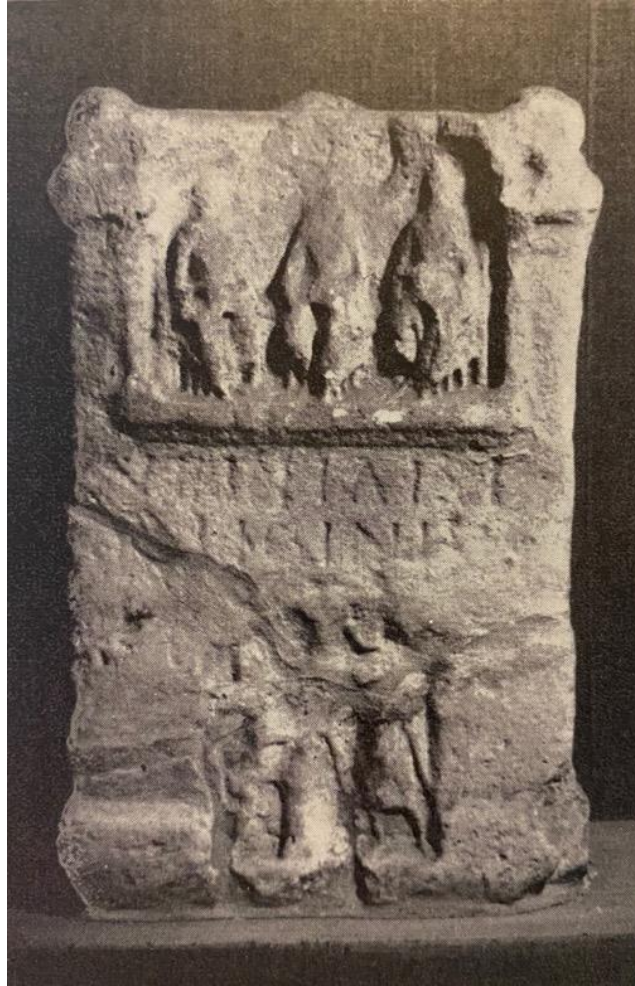


Fig. 18: Nehalennia altar displaying stacked imagery with a sacrifice scene and the goddess in triplicate
H. Nr. 16 = CIL 13, 8798

This altar, like A8 (**Fig. 15**), makes use of the stacked imagery motif commonly found on auxiliary gravestones, as well as a number of RMG votives. As with similar RMG examples, the votive inscription is sandwiched between the top panel representing the goddess(es), and the bottom panel portraying a sacrifice scene. In the latter, two figures stand on opposite sides of an altar: the *togatus* dedicant reaching out in the act of offering, and the assisting *camillus*.⁵⁷⁰ While depictions of sacrifice at an altar represent a basic motif which was commonly appended to

⁵⁷⁰ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 58; Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 205.

religious dedications,⁵⁷¹ they have also been shown to embody a high level of flexibility, with the number and type of individuals depicted varying widely.⁵⁷² H. Nr. 16 therefore largely adheres to the grouping of RMG *vota* which incorporate the stacked trinity-plus-sacrifice format, but within the context of an entirely separate cult.⁵⁷³

Why did these dedicants opt to break from the more frequent, localized iconographic templates available for worshipping Nehalennia, and instead choose to adopt RMG motifs and to blend them with their votives to the North Sea goddess? The prevailing explanation is that A71 and H. Nr. 16 were not produced near the Nehalennia shrines, but outside her primary area of worship – likely *Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium (CCAA)*.⁵⁷⁴ In this interpretation, a local stonecutter would have finished the altar, having been largely prefabricated elsewhere, by applying the inscription according to the customer’s wishes. Ton Derks has posed the open question as to whether or not a dedicant would have been satisfied with this form of transaction,⁵⁷⁵ which clearly limited the consumer’s artistic input to available templates intended for unrelated deities. Although A71 and H. Nr. 16 display no combination of attributes which are peculiar to Nehalennia (e.g. dog, ship, rudder, canopy), we should first consider possible alternative explanations as to why this is the case before dismissing the female figures as RMG who have been sloppily inducted into the cult of Nehalennia.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷¹ Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 221-24; Kakoschke, “Agrippinenser an der Nordsee,” 262f., Nr. 13.

⁵⁷² See Chapter 2, Fig. 8-12.

⁵⁷³ Stolte, “Religiöse Verhältnisse,” 620f.

⁵⁷⁴ A71: Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 46; Kakoschke, “Agrippinenser an der Nordsee,” 263, Nr. 14. H. Nr. 16: Kakoschke, “Agrippinenser an der Nordsee,” 262f., Nr. 13.

⁵⁷⁵ Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 205 n.30.

⁵⁷⁶ Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 128 refers to the grouping in A71 as a “Matronendreiheit.”

The trinity motif, for example, might simply be explained in terms of the dedicant's attempt to increase Nehalennia's potency by multiplying her presence on the altar itself.⁵⁷⁷

Miranda Green's assessment is instructive:

The triplicated depiction is notable in that Nehalennia is represented identically as triplets seated side by side and, significantly, the accompanying dedication is to 'Nehalennia' in the singular, not 'the Nehalennias.' So here we have an example of simple intensification: the goddess is regarded as a single entity, but her portrayal as three beings gives intensity to the imagery and the power of the dedication.⁵⁷⁸

Two factors should therefore caution against assuming these are RMG as opposed to multiple images of Nehalennia herself: their visual uniformity, and the dedicants' style of address.

Hondius-Crone observed that the figures on H. Nr. 16 are identical,⁵⁷⁹ and it has already been noted that the same is true for those on A71, save for the slightly smaller size of the central woman. The near indistinguishable female figures of the Nehalennian triad incline against the notion that the two altars were originally crafted for the RMG, who, in contrast, can be differentiated from one another on individual altars based on visual characteristics.⁵⁸⁰ If these two examples were truly manufactured in CCAA and originally intended for the RMG as part of a prepackaged design, why would the goddess(es) portrayed on them display such homogeneity rather than adhere to the more common RMG designs churned out of the cults' epicenter?

Bonnets of any kind are absent from the altars, and A71 in particular depicts either identical caps or hairstyles which appear much more akin to Nehalennia's headgear than to the RMG.

⁵⁷⁷ Schauerte, "Darstellungen mütterlicher Gottheiten," 59.

⁵⁷⁸ Green, *Symbol and Image*, 188.

⁵⁷⁹ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 105.

⁵⁸⁰ Chapter 2, Fig. 5 comes closest to displaying the uniformity of A71, except the central female clearly does not wear a cap like those beside her. Outside of the Rhineland, depictions of *Matres* exhibit greater uniformity; e.g. Espérandieu, *Recueil de la Gaule romaine [Vol] IV*, 336, Nr. 3377 = Schauerte, "Darstellungen mütterlicher Gottheiten," Taf. 17, 1; Schauerte, "Darstellungen mütterlicher Gottheiten," Taf. 18, 1.

Others have also noted a discrepancy between the dedications to Nehalennia, which are in the singular, and the triad depicted on the reliefs. As an explanation, they have relied upon the previously mentioned view that the altars were likely prefabricated for the RMG elsewhere and only applied to Nehalennia's cult later.⁵⁸¹ While the numerical disparity could be taken to support this theory, the conspicuous triplism of identical female figures offers an equally valid, and perhaps more accurate, solution to the puzzle: the dedicants' altars were always intended for Nehalennia, a single goddess, whose likeness was replicated in an effort to magnify the power of the votive itself.⁵⁸² This effort on the part of the dedicant and/or artist would also seem to be evidenced by the three corresponding cornucopiae found on the side panels of A71 rather than the more conventional two.⁵⁸³ There is also the lingering question of why someone would not have simply had the altars inscribed at CCAA – a bustling hub of religious activity which produced dedications to myriad deities, including two votives to Nehalennia.⁵⁸⁴

Ultimately, assuming these two altars were simply produced in CCAA for the RMG and dedicated to Nehalennia at their final destinations is unsatisfactory. Their similarities with comparable Rhineland examples account for neither the deviations from RMG patterns in the case of A71, nor the process by which RMG iconographic traits were integrated with worship of Nehalennia. It is better to approach the evidence from the perspective that dedicants were informed about and in control of their altars' creation rather than supposing they were trying to fit a metaphorical square peg (i.e. a Nehalennia dedication) into a round hole (i.e. a prefabricated RMG altar). However, even if the latter scenario *were* the case, the intentional appropriation and

⁵⁸¹ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 46; Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 205 n.30 seems to tentatively accept this view.

⁵⁸² Hence, Hondius-Crone's description of H. Nr. 16 as an "altar to a triad Nehalennia"; see Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 58.

⁵⁸³ H. Nr. 16 depicts only two cornucopiae on its side panels.

⁵⁸⁴ CIL 13, 8498 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 181; CIL 13, 8499 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, 182. These are the only two dedications which have been discovered outside of Nehalennia's main zone of worship.

application of the RMG to a Nehalennian context should be cause for further analysis, as it demonstrates the flexibility with which the goddess could be conceived. The transposition of an intended RMG altar to a foreign setting would provide evidence for two essential points regarding cultural exchange. It would simultaneously underscore the dedicant's freedom to substantiate their worship howsoever they wished, as well as the ideologically open environment which accepted unconventional iconographic depictions of the goddess. The altars embody obvious RMG traits, such as the characteristic robes, triad depiction, and even a sacrifice scene. Far from representing anomalous cases of mismatched religious concepts, the presence of RMG traits attests to the adaptive flow of iconographic styles insofar as they could be selected, transported downriver to a foreign cult zone, and integrated with Nehalennia's worship. The mystery of whether A71 and H. Nr.16 were indeed conveyed to the North Sea coast from upriver or were designed locally seems to matter very little in the end, since the flexibility and modularity of religious exchange shines through in either case. The assessment of these altars – normally dismissed as outliers in the sample of Nehalennia dedications – calls attention to the importance of looking more closely at abnormal examples which have the ability to demonstrate the process of individualized cultural exchange and personal expression.⁵⁸⁵

Solar Connection

Several dedicants appear either to have had a special awareness of Nehalennia's connection with the sun, or developed this concept on their own. Two fragments from Domburg provide evidence for this association; however, their deteriorated state requires us to rely upon drawings which were previously collected and sparsely published over the course of the 17th,

⁵⁸⁵ See the battle scene on a dedication to the *Matronae Aufaniae* Chapter 2, Fig. 13.

18th, and 19th centuries.⁵⁸⁶ The first example (H. Nr. 15; **Fig. 19**) comes from an altar which was almost entirely destroyed in the fire of 1848. A comprehensive drawing provided by L.J.F. Janssen, however, allows us to see that an image of a sun along with fruit was carved into the mensa.⁵⁸⁷ Wagenvoort took this oddity as an indication that Nehalennia was understood to be a “light goddess,” with the sun meant “to express symbolically their [the dedicant’s] hope of a happier life after death.”⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁶ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 8-10 provides a concise and detailed history of how drawings and lithographs of the Domburg altars were created, compiled, and transmitted over this long period of time, replete with references.

⁵⁸⁷ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 109, also 56.

⁵⁸⁸ Wagenvoort, “Nehalennia,” 286, also 285.

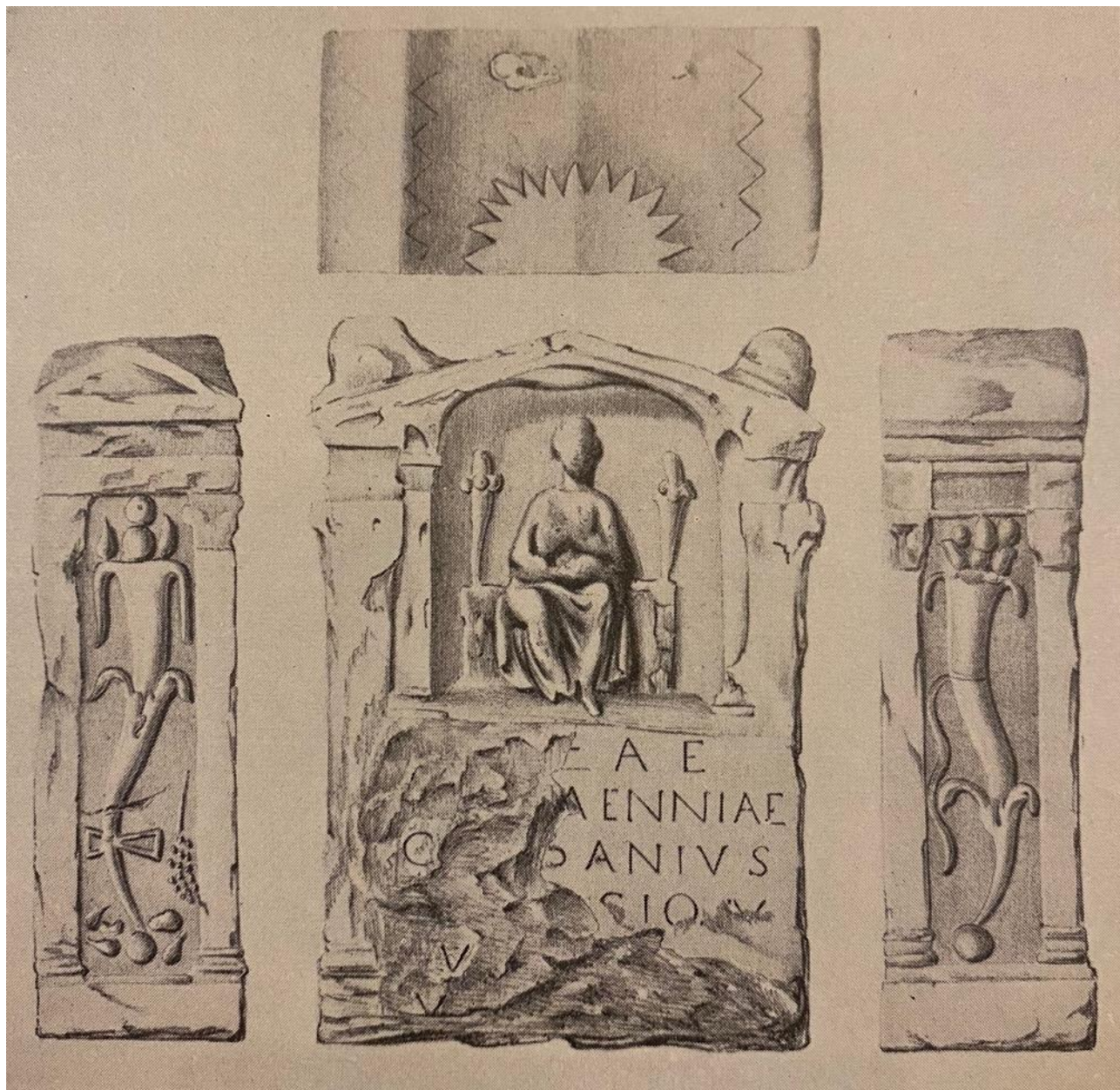


Fig. 19: Drawing of Nehalennia altar with potential solar imagery
H. Nr. 15 = CIL 13, 8800

A second example (H. Nr. 1; **Fig. 20**) comes in the form of a small statue of Nehalennia which we can tell from drawings included a brooch claspng her cape that appears to be a spoked wheel representing the sun.⁵⁸⁹ Hondius-Crone interprets the sun's presence in both instances as an

⁵⁸⁹ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 109; Green, *Symbol and Image*, 16.

indication that Nehalennia was ideologically linked with Jupiter, who is also attested in dedications at Domburg,⁵⁹⁰ as well as pre-Roman solar worship personified by the spoked wheel.⁵⁹¹ A final fragment of a solar wheel also exists at Domburg (H. Nr. 12a), but it is unclear whether it was originally part of an altar to Nehalennia or to another deity.⁵⁹²

⁵⁹⁰ H. Nrs. 30-32.

⁵⁹¹ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 109; Green, "Jupiter, Taranis," 68f. The spoked wheel also appears on dedications to Jupiter from elsewhere; e.g. at Nîmes: Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 97, 107 = Espérandieu, *Recueil de la Gaule romaine [Vol] IX* 167f., Nr. 6849; at Cologne: CIL 13, 9194 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 69; Green, "Jupiter, Taranis," 70f., Fig. 8.

⁵⁹² Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 51, 107.



Fig. 20: Drawing of Nehalennia statue with spoked wheel brooch
H. Nr. 1 = CIL 13, 8781

As with the debate over Nehalennia's essence discussed above, reaching a consensus regarding the sun and spoked wheel's significance is likely both impossible and ultimately irrelevant to cultural exchange as a *process*. The spoked wheel symbol, for instance, "occurs

consistently in company with representations of anthropomorphic divinity all over the Romano-Celtic world, implying a certain universality of cult expression.”⁵⁹³ Yet, at the same time, the symbol’s omnipresence dilutes its idiosyncratic value in any given example, indicating that its inclusion “could merely have been ‘good luck’ or apotropaic.”⁵⁹⁴ Although we cannot determine what the precise meanings of the sun and wheel were for the dedicants, their limited distribution in the sample of Nehalennia’s iconography – albeit small and incomplete – is nonetheless meaningful. The spoked wheel brooch demonstrates Nehalennia’s connection to a wider world of religious symbolism which was popular across the northwestern portion of the Empire, and, in this instance, was apparently integrated with her cult. The sun relief atop the mensa in H. Nr. 15 is singularly different; so far as I am aware, there is no comparable example for religious altars, which means that the dedicant or artist likely took his liberty to either invent or appeal to a symbolic association and fuse it with the altar in an imaginative and novel way. Even if the value of these symbols amounted to nothing more than fashionable emblems for display, the individual dedicant’s choice to include them – in contrast with their absence on other examples – crystallizes the personalization and creativity which could go into each votive.

Epigraphic Peculiarities

The inscriptions of Nehalennia’s altars, like those of the RMG, provide equally distinctive examples of personalization, and compliment the iconographic innovations discussed above. The first tendency pertains to the presence of many different spelling variations of the

⁵⁹³ Green, “Jupiter, Taranis,” 68; see also Webster, “What Britons Required,” 61, 63, Fig. 1-2, which includes a spoked wheel offering from London and two examples of spoked wheels integrated with depictions of Fortuna-Rosmerta from Germany. Webster, however, interprets the symbol as “the wheel of Fortuna,” rather than a solar marking. Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 78 discusses the wheel as a late La Tène religious symbol.

⁵⁹⁴ Green, “Jupiter, Taranis,” 73.

goddess herself at both Domburg and Colijnsplaat. I provide the following list as an easy reference for several trends which demonstrate the breadth of alterations:

- (B3) *Ne-/alaenniae*
- (B5) *Nechaleniae*
- (B15) *Nehalenn* (abbv.)
- (B31) *Nei-/alenniae*
- (H. Nr. 6) *Nehalenneae*
- (H. Nr. 8) *Nehalennie*
- (H. Nr. 16) *Nehalleniae*

Upon viewing this sample, it becomes clear that dedicants and/or artists constructing a moniker for Nehalennia could have quite different ideas about the proper form of address. The number of “n”s one used was clearly mutable,⁵⁹⁵ and dedicants variously opted to include the diphthong -*ae-* in the root of the name.⁵⁹⁶ The resultant spellings “Nehalenia” and “Nehalaennia” have been interpreted by Bogaers and Gysseling to “betray Latin influence,”⁵⁹⁷ due to the inclusion of the Latin diphthong and the elimination of the geminated consonants in the suffix – a sign of Celtic linguistics.⁵⁹⁸ At the same time, we can observe in inscriptions to Nehalennia (B3, B31) the familiar “half H” symbol (**Fig. 4**) which also had a scattered presence in RMG dedications (see Chapter 2).⁵⁹⁹ Again, as with the RMG, the symbol demonstrates a “clearly autochthonous” influence, since it represents an effort “to approximate speech,” and is itself a frontier creation which pervaded inscriptions of Germania Inferior.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁵ The more common, geminated “n” is often reduced to one: H. Nr. 4, H. Nr. 16, H. Nr. 25, A1, A26, A27, A47, A71, B5, B20, B30, B37, B41, B56, B57, and possibly B85. Stuart and Bogaers count 12 instances of “Nehaleniae” at Colijnsplaat; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 27.

⁵⁹⁶ The diphthong -*ae-* also appears in: B37, B47, B48, B49. Stuart and Bogaers count 8 instances of “Nehalaen(n)ia” at Colijnsplaat; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 47.

⁵⁹⁷ Bogaers and Gysseling, “Over de naam,” 227.

⁵⁹⁸ Gemination used for Celtic place names: Bogaers and Gysseling, “Over de naam,” 227. Weisgerber, *Die Namen der Ubier*, 376-79 shows that gemination is common in personal names within Remi and Lingones territory of Belgic Gaul. In Nehalennia’s case, Bogaers and Gysseling, “Over de naam,” 230 likewise interpret the gemination as Belgic.

⁵⁹⁹ For examples of *Matronae* epithets which variously make use of the “half H,” see Vennemann, “Morphologie,” 274, 291 n.62, 293 n. 71, 295 n.80.

⁶⁰⁰ Bogaers and Gysseling, “Over de naam,” 227-28. For the development of the “half H,” see Neumann, “Germanischen Matronen-Beinamen,” 105; Scardigli, “Sprache im Umkreis,” 146-47; Spickermann, *Germania*

Of course, these details should not be taken as a foundation upon which to divide altars into “more Roman,” or “more native” categories, since there is no consistent, identifiable pattern regarding the presence or lack of any given trait. Altars which make use of the single “n” spelling, the *-ae-* diphthong, or the “half H” share much of the same characteristics which occur on other altars.⁶⁰¹ Moreover, even individual spellings demonstrate blended traits. B3, for example, makes use of a “Latinized” diphthong while also retaining the more indigenous geminated “n,” as well as the localized “half H.” Consistency sometimes even lacks when the same dedicant can be identified on two different altars, as in the case of Q. Phoebius Hilarius, who erected one votive using “Nehalaenia” (B37) and another with the more common “Nehalennia” (B63).⁶⁰² In this case, the lack of spelling consistency suggests that dedicants could and did remit the matter to the knowledge of the artists, who, in turn, had widely different notions about how to address this developing goddess. Whether the stonecutter inscribing Hilarius’ altars was the same person or two separate people, the use of variation betrays a hazy familiarity with Nehalennia. The fluid spelling of Nehalennia runs counter to what one might expect for a cult with such limited distribution,⁶⁰³ unless of course our evidence sample includes examples from the nascent, developmental phase of worship and artisans who lacked a fixed understanding of the goddess because of this. Clearly then, any effort to disentangle the constituent “Roman” and “Native” parts of the altars at both the micro and macro level would be

Inferior, 66; Spickermann and de Bernardo Stempel, “Keltische Götter,” 130. As with the RMG, “half H” can be assigned the value of a *ch* or χ by comparing Nehalennia altars. Its position in B3 and B31 is identical to the *ch* in B5; see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 28; Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 127f.

⁶⁰¹ H. Nr. 16 and A71 are unique for their trinity depictions, and, as discussed above, it is possible that they came from elsewhere. However, their use of the geminated “n” cannot be taken as a mark of their foreignness, because this characteristic is also shared with altars which were likely carved locally.

⁶⁰² Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 27f.

⁶⁰³ While misspellings of deity names are not uncommon in the northern provinces, Nehalennia’s extremely localized existence should probably yield more uniformity if we are dealing with only a small number of stone masons producing the votives; see Allason-Jones and McKay, *Coventina’s Well*, 3.

fruitless. Instead, the mottled tapestry of influences on display in Nehalennia's inscriptions and imagery alike reflect the ad hoc inclusion of ingredients at the individual's discretion as cult worship was continually evolving.

A number of phrases which are exclusive to Nehalennia's votives also embody the same economic focus reflected in the altars' iconography. These expressions provide indirect evidence for the dedicants' involvement in mercantile activities in lieu of straightforward promulgations that they were *negiatores*,⁶⁰⁴ and represent a kind of collective "commercial language" all its own.⁶⁰⁵ One formula – *pro mercibus conservandis* – petitioned Nehalennia for the preservation of the one's merchandise on its way across the tempestuous Channel.⁶⁰⁶ Its complimentary phrase – *ob merces conservatas* – fulfilled a previously made vow, following the safe passage of goods.⁶⁰⁷ We are fortunate enough to have two dedications from Q. Phoebius Hilarius (B37, B63), which illustrate that merchants and mariners did indeed erect altars before and after their trips.⁶⁰⁸ Another plea for safeguarding one's investment – *pro navibus* (B2) – indicates that the dedicant, Mercatorius Amabilis, owned and operated multiple ships along the trade route which

⁶⁰⁴ Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 208f.; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 39f.; e.g. A42, A62, B3, B37, B56, B63. However, it should be noted that the formulas can also accompany direct statements that the dedicant was a merchant; e.g. H. Nr. 23, A3, A9. B10 was dedicated by a *libertus negotiatoris*, and so it can also be assumed that he, too, was involved in trade to some capacity.

⁶⁰⁵ Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 211.

⁶⁰⁶ *pro mercibus conservandis*: A62, B3, B63; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 39f. Derks, in contrast, argues that only B3 can be positively identified as using this formula; Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 212 n.60. For compiled instances of this phrase at Colijnsplaat, see also Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 130 n.29; Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 208.

⁶⁰⁷ *ob merces conservatas*: A3, A9, A42, B10, B37, H. No. 23; Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 39f.; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 130n.28; Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 8.

⁶⁰⁸ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 40; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 237; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 130. Others, however, have suggested that the two dedications might not belong to the same person; Hassall, "Britain and the Rhine Provinces," 44 after Bogaers, "Van Nijmegen Naar Nehal(a)en(n)ia." Other double dedications also exist, but do not always exhibit the same formulaic symmetry as Hilarius' example. M. Secundinius Silvanus (H. Nr. 23, A3), for example, erected an identical inscription – *ob merces recte conservatas* – at Colijnsplaat and Domburg. See also, B3, B11, B 15, B56. Derks notes the importance of repetition in the renewal of one's vows; see Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 212, 213 n.63. However, it would have been prohibitively expensive to erect an altar dedication to Nehalennia upon completion of every successful voyage; see Hassall, "Britain and the Rhine Provinces," 44.

traversed Nehalennia's zone of worship.⁶⁰⁹ Amabilis dutifully fulfilled this or a separate vow – *ex voto* – at the same location.⁶¹⁰ Stuart and Bogaers have interpreted this phrase as a variant of *pro mercibus conservandis*,⁶¹¹ which accentuates the personalization that could go into one's inscription, even when conveying the same essential message as the more frequent formula. In other words, by comparing *how* dedicants asked and thanked Nehalennia for her beneficence, we can observe expressive, individualized phrasing even within the fairly small sample of dedications, which are already exceedingly unique for the idiosyncratic dedicatory phrases they developed. T. Calvisius Secundus (H. Nr. 9) crafted his own expression of gratitude by including *ob meliores actus* on his altar.⁶¹² In the final two instances, it seems especially unlikely that the artist would have been able to develop these distinctive terms without customer input, since they are not merely banal expressions of hope or thanks, but are instead clearly tailored to the dedicant's individual circumstances – a fact which is confirmed all the more by their singular attestations within the epigraphic record.

Global and Local Contexts: Geography, Economy, and Culture

Geography

Comparing the geographic distribution of both Nehalennia and the RMG elicits fascinating results which foreground important distinctions between the two. The RMG often originated in cosmopolitan centers along the Rhine, and were therefore not necessarily crafted for a strictly local purpose. Cologne and Bonn each housed a miscellany of RMG,⁶¹³

⁶⁰⁹ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 37; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 237.

⁶¹⁰ B4. Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 40; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 130.

⁶¹¹ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 40.

⁶¹² Wagenvoort, "Nehalennia," 279 translates this phrase to mean "on account of profitable business."

⁶¹³ Cologne: Gutenbrunner, *Die germanischen Götternamen*, 130; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 67.

distinguished from one another by their particular epithets – some of which enjoyed a more collected cult following in the hinterlands to the west.⁶¹⁴ The RMG therefore represent *distributed*, yet sometimes highly localized instances of cultural exchange between outsiders stationed there and permanent residents. In contrast, Nehalennia’s altars indicate a much more *concentrated*, and thoroughly localized form of exchange. They were erected within a narrow geographic area, and crafted for a more singular purpose which was embedded in the broader economic importance of the Scheldt estuary region.⁶¹⁵ It was here, at these relatively marginal locations, where the commercial interests of the wider imperial apparatus converged to create a unique, transitory world of incessant travelers, which in turn provided the necessary fuel for cultural exchange to occur.

Domburg and Colijnsplaat stood out as “trans-shipment centres” where river barges passed on their cargo to seaworthy vessels bound for Britannia, and incoming traffic from the island province was directed inland to be further distributed.⁶¹⁶ As the last and first stops made on a merchant’s unpredictable journey across the North Sea (**Fig. 1**),⁶¹⁷ it is therefore unsurprising to find the particular inscriptions discussed above, which embody both hope and thanks for Nehalennia’s mercantile protection.⁶¹⁸ From a global perspective, the sites stood at an essential juncture for material exchange between Britain and the Continent. At the same time,

⁶¹⁴ For example, the *Vacallinehae* concentrate at Pesch; see Rüger, “Beobachtungen,” 25; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 390, Fig. 9. The *Veteranehae* center around Nideggen; see Alföldy, “Epigraphisches aus dem Rheinland III,” 33-89; Burns, *Romanization and Acculturation*, 391, Fig. 10.

⁶¹⁵ Morris provides three general maritime economic systems of the Channel and the North Sea; see Morris, *North Sea and Channel*, Fig. 1.1; for more detailed diagrams of cross-Channel trade routes based on Strabo (Strabo 4.5.2), see Cunliffe, “Relations Between Britain and Gaul,” 7, Fig. 2; Milne, “Maritime Traffic,” 83, Fig. 10.1.

⁶¹⁶ Milne, “Maritime Traffic,” 82-83; Ellmers, “Shipping on the Rhine,” 14; Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 14.

⁶¹⁷ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 34. L. Viducius Placidus (A6, RIB 3, 3195 = AE 1977, 512) is the only *negotiator* attested on both sides of the Channel; see Hassall, “Britain and the Rhine Provinces,” 46; Verboven, “Good for Business,” 307f.

⁶¹⁸ This is especially prominent in the case of Q. Phoebius Hilarius (B37, B63).

they also represent “points of contact” at the fringe of the Empire where Rome’s official presence was minimal. Saskia Roselaar’s assessment of situational exchange within this sort of environment is instructive:

Essential for a clearer understanding of integration in the Empire is therefore a focus on the ‘points of contact’ between Rome and its subjects, and between incorporated people of different ethnic backgrounds without direct intervention from Rome. Only if we know in which day-to-day contexts the inhabitants of the Empire interacted with Romans and with each other can we judge how such contacts led to cultural, social, and legal integration in the Empire.⁶¹⁹

When applied to Nehalennia, this approach emphasizes the goddess’ value for evaluating micro-level cultural development within the context of a much larger system which constantly replenished the area of study with new peoples and influences. If Nehalennia was a local deity who was primarily brought into the spotlight of popular fashion by a mercantile class, then it is also necessary to evaluate her relation to the surrounding population. While there must have been a strong “devotional industry” nearby the shrines themselves, including workshops,⁶²⁰ it is problematic that the sites themselves are not clearly linked with the nearby settlements which must have existed.⁶²¹ Lacking traditionally identifiable markers of communal “Roman” habitation, some have suggested that the surrounding populace must not have lived in an economic or cultural style which corresponds to that of the merchant dedicants to Nehalennia.⁶²²

The material evidence therefore amplifies the apparent rift between itinerant *negotiatores* milling

⁶¹⁹ Roselaar, “Introduction,” 2.

⁶²⁰ Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 239; Spickermann, “Matronen und Nehalennia,” 366.

⁶²¹ Spickermann, “Matronen und Nehalennia,” 363f.; Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 239; Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 134; Raepsaet-Charlier, “Nouveaux cultores,” 300; Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 14 posited that a village connected to the cite must have existed, and attributed the lack of archaeological evidence to the disposable materials with which the structures were built. In contrast with Domburg, Besuijen argues that “a substantial Roman settlement” existed at Colijnsplaat; see Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 23f., 26.

⁶²² Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 33; Raepsaet-Charlier, “Nouveaux cultores,” 300; Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 210 notes the almost complete lack of gravestones and altars from the surrounding area, indicating that those erecting Nehalennia altars must have originated from elsewhere.

about the harbors and the local populations of Domburg and Colijnsplaat. For example, we find no collective dedications to the Nehalennia like we do elsewhere by whole communities to localized native deities,⁶²³ and it is possible, if not likely, that the local population worshipped Nehalennia by different means than the altars we see.⁶²⁴ Despite this, however, it is inconceivable that the temples to Nehalennia could have been constructed and maintained without the existence of a permanent community of some sort. The level of trade we see funneling through the two locations, as well as the expenditure of coin which went into Nehalennia's cult, would have demanded local harbors, labor, and manufacturing which strongly imply the presence of dependent villages.⁶²⁵

Economy

Domburg and Colijnsplaat were vital locations along "Rhine-axis" transport routes which flourished during the late 2nd century,⁶²⁶ but gradually slipped into disuse during the late 3rd century.⁶²⁷ From the two locations alone, we can conclude that there was a vibrant exchange of goods between Britannia and the Continent, encompassing a variety of essential wares.⁶²⁸

⁶²³ E.g. CIL 13, 8815 in which the *cives Tungri et nautae qui Fectione consistunt* dedicated to a local goddess; see Hassall, "Britain and the Rhine Provinces," 45; CIL 13, 11983 = Lehner, *Die Antiken Steindenkmäler*, 277 in which the local *vicani* dedicate to the *Matronae Aufaniabus*.

⁶²⁴ Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 366. We are, of course, also uninformed as to the nature of pre-Roman Nehalennian worship, if any, as well as whether or not it took place at the same locations; see Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 364. Jenkins, "Nameless or Nehalennia," 195-97 assesses the possible worship of Nehalennia outside the Scheldt region in the form of cheaper, clay figurines due to overlapping attributes (i.e. baskets of fruits, dog). De Laet, "Nehalennia," 162 contends that Nehalennia was worshipped across Gaul.

⁶²⁵ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 44; Raepsaet-Charlier, "Nouveaux cultores," 300; Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 363; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 134. Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 34 argue that *allec* production likely took place near the Nehalennia sanctuaries; see the two *negotiatores allecarii* from Colijnsplaat: A34, A39, B44.

⁶²⁶ Morris, *North Sea and Channel*, 109, 153; Hassall, "Britain and the Rhine Provinces," 44; Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 25.

⁶²⁷ Milne, "Maritime Traffic," 84; Morris, *North Sea and Channel*, 136; Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 23f., 35.

⁶²⁸ Hassall, "Britain and the Rhine Provinces," 45; Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 25. In reality, we cannot be certain of the directional flow of particular goods. For example, *allec*, may just as easily have been produced near the Nehalennia shrines for export to Britain, or even further up the Rhine; see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 34. Nevertheless, attested professional affiliations confirm that mercantile hubs existed for particular goods, as in the case of

Nehalennia's worship therefore coincides with the period of booming economic activity in the Scheldt region, which, for a time, seems to have taken precedence as the primary cross-Channel route.⁶²⁹ Koenraad Verboven calculates that “326 inscriptions attesting 240 individual businessmen record *negotiatores*” in the Roman world, a plurality of which (almost 32%) come from Gaul, the Germanies, or Britannia.⁶³⁰ Of these, Nehalennia's *negotiatores* represent 14 of the 35 within Germania Inferior – 40% of the entire province – putting Domburg and Colijnsplaat on par with much larger cosmopoleis like CCAA and Mogontiacum in terms of mercantile activity within the epigraphic record.⁶³¹ Of course, all of these commercial centers were connected in some way or another along the essential fluvial network of the Rhineland,⁶³² with merchant dedicants from far and wide converging and operating in the Scheldt as part of this elaborate supply matrix.⁶³³

Howsoever Nehalennia may have been worshipped prior to the era of Roman hegemony, it is within this extensive economic framework that we must situate the development of her worship – namely, as a product of religio-economic necessity in a post-conquest world:

It is thanks to these men [merchant dedicants] that Nehalennia developed from some unremarkable local goddess to one of the most powerful protectresses of man and cargo against the perils of the sea. And if the goddess did not owe the very foundation of her Zeeland sanctuaries to them, their earlier phase of existence must have been rather inconspicuous.⁶³⁴

Cologne's role in the salt trade; see Jaschke and Schmitz, “Das römische Köln,” 331; Stockinger argues that most salt in the northwestern provinces was produced from seawater, thus making coastal sites like Domburg and Colijnsplaat probable producers as well as waypoints for the salt trade; see Stockinger, “Salzproduktion und Salzhandel,” 452, also *abb. 2*; Oenbrink “Der Niederrhein und Britannien,” 523 makes explicit the two-way travel of salt produced at the coast – across the Channel to Britain, and inland toward major trading centers like CCAA.

⁶²⁹ Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 35.

⁶³⁰ Verboven, “Good for Business,” 299.

⁶³¹ Verboven, “Good for Business,” 300.

⁶³² Kakoschke, “Agrippinenser an der Nordsee,” 265; Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 213, 215.

⁶³³ Hassall, “Britain and the Rhine Provinces,” 44.

⁶³⁴ Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 144.

Derks' perspicacious summary offers much to consider. As has been established, Nehalennia was intensely associated with traders of all kinds who funneled through the region, being the primary local deity upon whom travelers relied for protection and prosperity.⁶³⁵ Moreover, beyond identifying Nehalennia's significance amongst her dedicants, we must also examine the parallel and reflexive development of her cult *in response to* the advent of a mobilized, mercantile class. Nehalennia was not a readymade goddess who could allay all of the concerns which *negotiatores* had as they established and maintained trading points along the blustery North Sea. Instead, as Derks points out, Nehalennia's renown during the 2nd and 3rd centuries was fundamentally intertwined with the itinerant merchants, whose requirements of the goddess were embedded in the socio-economic conditions which brought her out of a materially obscure, purely local existence. For these merchants, a goddess was needed who accorded with the magnitude and majesty of highly organized, long distance travel, as well as with commercial freight of immensely greater proportions than what had previously traversed the region.⁶³⁶ The fact that we only encounter Nehalennia on stone altars should certainly not blind us to the possibility of worship by other means prior to – and perhaps even during – Roman occupation. However, since these altars are our only evidence, and because they seem generally to have been erected by a particular social class within the Roman world, it is likewise vital to acknowledge that Nehalennia's transformation, which included novel associations, made her a fundamentally different entity. Nehalennia's newfound essential characteristics (e.g. stone altars, Latin dedications, merchant dedicants, Roman and localized physical attributes) make clear that her

⁶³⁵ Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 366; see also Purcell, "Rivers and Geography," 383.

⁶³⁶ Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 366. The quantity of shipping in the Roman world is endemically difficult to answer. Harris, "Trade [70-192 AD]," 160 states that, while ships carrying 340 tons can be found, most vessels not carrying grain were significantly smaller, often with capacities of 20-40 tons. For cross-Channel transport, which was relatively short, we should probably envision smaller craft comprising a large amount of the traffic to and from the Scheldt region.

extant form was contingent upon the environmental circumstances. Therefore, in her hybridity, she was a new goddess, appropriated and applied to new religious, economic, and social contexts which had not previously existed.

A similar case study from the Eastern Mediterranean offers a helpful comparison with which to contextualize Nehalennia's religious and economic development in the Roman world. Enora Le Quéré's evaluation of Melos' economic integration into the Empire provides striking parallels to Domburg and Colijnsplaat. Like the Scheldt region, "the commercial destination of this island [Melos] was increased and stressed under the Roman Empire only because the Roman power had created (and perhaps imposed?) favourable conditions for it,"⁶³⁷ despite existing "on the fringe of the Empire, far from the centers of political power."⁶³⁸ All three locations therefore became important to the increasingly interconnected mercantile world Rome had created by virtue of what they had to offer to the system itself, and not because of any imposed Roman presence.⁶³⁹ Whereas a plethora of natural resources useful for cosmetics, textiles, and other industries underscored Melos' value,⁶⁴⁰ Domburg and Colijnsplaat owed their newfound prominence to fortuitous positioning along Rome's trans-provincial commercial network. These locations conform with with Le Quéré's observation that, "under Roman rule, some other less central and more remote regions experienced unprecedented economic exploitation" due to their transformed value in a reorganized, Roman structure.⁶⁴¹ Rome created both the demand and

⁶³⁷ Le Quéré, "Opportunistic Exploitation," 235f., also 224, 234.

⁶³⁸ Le Quéré, "Opportunistic Exploitation," 223.

⁶³⁹ Le Quéré, "Opportunistic Exploitation," 224: "Clearly, political dominance alone is not sufficient to explain integration."

⁶⁴⁰ Le Quéré, "Opportunistic Exploitation," 224f.

⁶⁴¹ Le Quéré, "Opportunistic Exploitation," 233; Le Quéré has in mind extractive and thoroughly exploitative activities like mining, but this approach can also be extended to the development of harbors and markets which certainly existed at Domburg and Colijnsplaat.

opportunity for autonomous market development – a challenge which entrepreneurial merchants fulfilled with celerity.⁶⁴²

Global and Local Contexts

So far as we can tell, Nehalennia was undoubtedly a *local* deity in the dual sense that her worship was overwhelmingly confined to just two locations to which she also likely owed her roots.⁶⁴³ On the other hand, as discussed above, Nehalennia is also distinctly *non-local* in that the creation of her recognizable form stemmed from the needs of a much larger, interconnected world, with merchant dedicants in many cases explicitly hailing from elsewhere.⁶⁴⁴ The flow of these itinerant worshippers was the natural result of Rome's conquest and assimilation of the region, which, in turn, introduced various other non-local (i.e. "Roman") influences to indigenous localities. If Nehalennia's pre-Roman religious essence was indeed broadly associated with seaborne travel,⁶⁴⁵ her function during Roman period was almost entirely repurposed toward protecting cargo moving along long-distance shipping routes as well as people – most of whom have no apparent local ties. Therefore, we reach something of an existential quandary: Nehalennia is simultaneously *local* in origin and distribution, *non-local* due

⁶⁴² Harris, "Roman Governments and Commerce," 207; for example, regarding the all-important commodity of wine, its circulation flourished without state organization; see Harris, "Trade [70-192 AD]." However, Harris, "Trade [70-192 AD]," 184f. also notes that "The prevailing system was certainly not pure *laissez-faire*," citing instances of imperial and local metropolitan supply of wheat, olive oil. For the presence of market exchange in the Roman world, see Temin, *Roman Market Economy*, esp. 2, 4, and 6 for distillations of his overall argument.

⁶⁴³ Two examples outside of the Scheldt region have been found at Köln-Deutz: CIL 13, 8498-99 = Galsterer and Galsterer, *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln*, Nr. 181-82 = H. Nr. 44-45. For the possibility of a broader zone of Nehalennia worship, see footnote 462 above; Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 617, 620; De Laet, "Nehalennia," 162 argues that Nehalennia was worshipped across Gaul; Green, *Symbol and Image*, 11 suggests Nehalennia may have been a goddess of the Morini.

⁶⁴⁴ Only one dedicant, Gimio, claims to be *Ganuenta consistens* (B50), whom some scholars view to be a local inhabitant; see Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 33; Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 365. Gimio might just as well have been a trader who had taken up residence at Ganuenta as part of an enclave merchant community. Cunliffe, "Britain and the Continent," 8 notes the habit of merchants settling in local towns evidenced both in ancient literature and archaeological data.

⁶⁴⁵ See footnotes 470 and 471 above.

to the foreign characteristics and function appended to her, and *localized* in terms of how all these ingredients combined to make her a novel, remarkably distinctive, and concentrated goddess.

Globalization theory has become an increasingly popular lens through which to view and interpret issues surrounding cultural development in the Roman world,⁶⁴⁶ and may offer a solution to this impasse.⁶⁴⁷ Rather than falling into the familiar trap of tallying objects' traits according to oversimplified categories in an effort to discover their "Romanness" or "nativeness," we might instead recognize that "[i]n many ways, the local and the global cannot be separated from one another – they are part of a whole or two parts of a dialectic."⁶⁴⁸ Inhabitants of Domburg and Colijnsplaat certainly must have had the sense that these locations were merely cogs within a vast system, which was itself embedded within an even larger world – regardless of whether or not they themselves traveled extensively as part of it. Likewise, those with detailed knowledge of Roman riverine and trans-provincial trade routes must have considered what is now the Scheldt estuary to be nothing more than a conventional, and perhaps relatively insignificant, way station. Nevertheless, both groups contributed to the "creation" of Nehalennia: locals, by conveying the original mythology of their local goddess; non-locals, by adopting the goddess and adapting her to their own social context. But even this is too tidy an

⁶⁴⁶ Hodos, "Global, Local and in Between," 252; see also the other contributions to that the edited volume.

⁶⁴⁷ In order to avoid definitional debates surrounding the term itself, I adopt the accessible and useful description provided by Pitts and Versluys, "Globalisation and the Roman World," 11: "In the most simple of terms, globalisation can be described as processes by which localities and people become increasingly interconnected and interdependent." The authors themselves are careful to acknowledge the scholarly dispute over whether or not globalization can be applied to the ancient world, with opponents claiming that it is a uniquely modern phenomenon. However, I am in agreement with their sentiment that viewing globalization as a more basic process of increasing interconnectivity bypasses any charge of anachronistic thinking; see Pitts and Versluys, "Globalisation and the Roman World," 13. Moreover, Pitts and Versluys, "Globalisation and the Roman World," 17 note that degrees of connectivity can be further qualified as uniquely extensive and complex at certain points in history, as in the case of the Roman empire.

⁶⁴⁸ Laurence and Trifilò, "The Global and the Local," 116 (quote), also 117.

explanation. Since inscriptions make it clear that dedicants' homelands varied as widely as their ethnicities,⁶⁴⁹ condensing all outsiders into one mammoth group will not suffice. Each dedicant would have carried with him his own heritage of customs, beliefs, and personal inclinations within a system that facilitated multi-directional cultural exchange. Interactions between Romans, non-Romans, Germans, Celts, and every conceivable combination in between render the impulse to project further order onto these cultural encounters obsolete.

The emphasis on networks and connectivity within globalization theory provides a way to distill this *mélange* and to interpret the inherently unpredictable process of cultural exchange.⁶⁵⁰ As discussed above, the geographic value of Domburg and Colijnsplaat combined with the broader economic necessity for cross-Channel trade to make these locations valuable junctions within Roman trade networks of the Rhineland frontier and beyond.⁶⁵¹ Over time, this economic importance eventually came to develop its own, localized religious significance, making the Scheldt, in effect, a semi-pilgrimage destination.⁶⁵² Therefore, it would be a mistake to discuss Nehalennia's worship solely in terms of categories like economics, religion, and culture as if they were somehow divergent.⁶⁵³ In reality, a strong interplay existed between all aspects of her

⁶⁴⁹ *Agrippinenses*: A26, A49. Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 32; Kakoschke, "Agrippinenser an der Nordsee." Various other *cives* designations: A1, A6, A57, B44; Green, *Symbol and Image*, 11. Raepsaet-Charlier, "Nouveaux cultores," 300 breaks down the dedicants' names according to various categories, including citizen, peregrine, Latinized, Celtic, Germanic, etc.; for origins, see also Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 44, 32f.; Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 616; Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 101. Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 238 shows that there is a preponderance of Latin names; however, Derks, "Die Weihealtäre," 209f. notes that the *gentilica* and *cognomina* are of mixed ethnic origins.

⁶⁵⁰ Networks and connectivity: Nederveen Pieterse, "Ancient Rome and Globalisation," 229; Hodos, "Global, Local and in Between," 249, also 247f., 250f.

⁶⁵¹ Hondius-Crone, *Temple of Nehalennia*, 14. Laurence and Trifilò discuss the importance of using an approach which centers on towns as "nodes of cultural change," due to their connectivity within broader networks; see Laurence and Trifilò, "The Global and the Local," 103, 110; see also Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 33.

⁶⁵² Spickermann does not view the temples as true pilgrimage destinations, since they represent neither the end point of the travelers' journeys, nor the impetus for it; see Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 363; Spickermann, "Religion an der Nordseeküste," 134. While this is certainly true, the locations' status as something of a religious gateway – with dedicants submitting altars as rites of passage for success – nevertheless underline its indispensable geographic and religious importance.

⁶⁵³ Besuijen, *Rodanum*, 33 notes the economic impetus behind the region's overall process of "Romanization." Spickermann places more value on Nehalennia's social and economic role than on her place within Roman religion;

development, with socio-economic circumstances affecting the religious sphere, and the global affecting the local.⁶⁵⁴ For the dedicants, “most of [whom] came from the same circle of traders, merchants and sailors,”⁶⁵⁵ Nehalennia gained an eminent, yet transitory, religious appeal.⁶⁵⁶ These men were members of what can be deemed a “business class,”⁶⁵⁷ who must have been sharply attuned to the habits of others within the groups which traversed and interacted along the same trade routes.⁶⁵⁸ Judging by the qualitative similarities and differences within the artistic spectrum of the altars erected by this network of merchants, a sense of competitive professional display seems to have developed.⁶⁵⁹ This enclosed dedicatory competitiveness reflects the desire for one to stress both group and individual identity – to simultaneously adhere to the developing, fashionable cultural practice as well as to distinguish oneself within a broader, more global network.⁶⁶⁰

Although Nehalennia’s creation was the product of global forces converging and fusing with local tradition to create her recognizable form, it is important to note that she did *not*

see Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 240; Spickermann, “Matronen und Nehalennia,” 364; Spickermann, “Religion an der Nordseeküste,” 135.

⁶⁵⁴ The term “glocalization” has been used to describe this phenomenon; see Pitts and Versluys, “Globalisation and the Roman World,” 14; Pitts, “Globalisation, Circulation and Mass Consumption,” 84f.; 86f.; Robertson, *Globalization*, 97-114.

⁶⁵⁵ Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 232.

⁶⁵⁶ Stuart and Bogaers refer to the dedicants as “die Besucher,” which accurately captures their temporary presence, and thereby highlights the value of their religious activity during their brief stay. Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 34; see also Spickermann, *Germania Inferior*, 239.

⁶⁵⁷ Verboven, “Good for Business,” 296f. provides characteristics that reasonably comprise a “business class,” which are ultimately centered around personalized, risk-taking investments in order to gain greater monetary rewards within a market environment; see also Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 211 who emphasizes the “kaufmännische Sprache” evident in Nehalennia inscriptions.

⁶⁵⁸ Business class identity: Verboven, “Good for Business,” 297; Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 207 n.36-37, 209; Hassall, “Britain and the Rhine Provinces,” 45; Wagenvoort, “Nehalennia,” 82; see examples A27, A35, A39, B8, B15, B45.

⁶⁵⁹ Social comparison: Wiessner, “Style and Changing Relations,” 56, also 57; Jones, *Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 134. For Roselaar, culture itself is a visual method of identity display toward others; see Roselaar, “Introduction,” 7.

⁶⁶⁰ Wiessner, “Style and Changing Relations,” 57, 59 discusses the mutual relationship between individual and group identity construction. Competition amongst dedicants: Derks, “Die Weihealtäre,” 202, 216. The atypical choice for these dedicants to mention their professional roles with such specificity may be a part of this competitive drive; see Verboven, “Good for Business,” 302.

recirculate back into the wider system to any meaningful degree.⁶⁶¹ And while the tendency for local identity to be reinforced in response to an increasingly globalized world is quite common,⁶⁶² this phenomenon certainly cannot explain the popularity of Nehalennia's cult, since those venerating her were largely outside agents acting locally. Therefore, with Nehalennia being an overwhelmingly "commercialized" deity, we might justifiably ask the degree to which she was essentially appropriated, developed, and implanted for a pragmatic purpose – speaking only to the needs of a transient population for a local protector.⁶⁶³ This question also extends to her fundamental characteristics and worship, and leads us to consider the level of exchange actually taking place.⁶⁶⁴ From a post-colonial perspective, foreign merchants adopting and transforming a local deity might denote a revealing instance of imperial cultural domination, thereby minimizing Nehalennia's localness.⁶⁶⁵ However, this view does not account for the autonomous nature of cultural interaction occurring at Domburg and Colijnsplaat. These were not hubs of Roman administrative control, and the shrines themselves do not seem to have been connected with any "Romanized" settlements nearby. In short, whatever adaptations made to Nehalennia which contrasted with her pre-Roman worship occurred without compulsion, and as a result of "free market" religious exchange – that is, as a result of individuals making conscious decisions in own interests within an environment which fostered such creativity. Rome's footprint on the region created new pathways for goods and networks of connectivity; however, it was those

⁶⁶¹ See the two instances at Köln-Deutz.

⁶⁶² Versluys, "Roman Visual Material Culture," 161, 163, after Jennings, *Globalizations in the Ancient World*, Chapter 7; Hodos, "Global, Local and in Between," 242f., 246-48.

⁶⁶³ Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 144; Spickermann, "Matronen und Nehalennia," 367.

⁶⁶⁴ Stuart and Bogaers, *Nehalennia*, 43 discuss our lack of certitude regarding Nehalennia's development, and whether she was originally envisioned as a protectress of seafarers or if this association developed as a result of foreign influence; see also Wagenvoort, "Nehalennia," 277; Stolte, "Religiöse Verhältnisse," 618 after de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, 315f.

⁶⁶⁵ Webster, "Translation and Subjection," 175, 178.

sundry people voluntarily operating at these nodes of interaction who ultimately account for the processes of cultural development taking place which generated Nehalennia's cult.

Importantly, the influence of particular mercantile social segments need not invalidate the level of multi-directional cultural exchange and religious innovation which took place during Nehalennia's development. The local population of the Scheldt estuary actively collaborated with merchant dedicants to adapt their goddess. L. Carless Hulin supplies a comparable summation of entwined economic growth and religious development on Cyprus from 1700-1400

BC:

[Cyprus' development from] isolated village-based culture to an international city-oriented metal-producing society...involved an absorption into the belief system of a number of symbols derived from the metallurgical industry. Clearly, the structure of society was changing so fundamentally that religious ideology had to modify itself in order to maintain its authority, and did so by identifying its interests with those of the newly emergent group.⁶⁶⁶

In the case of Cyprus, there is a clear correspondence between burgeoning metallurgical production and local religious practices in that the latter seems to have catered to the former through self-adaptation.⁶⁶⁷ Of course, there are significant differences between Cyprus' and Nehalennia's religious development: the extreme chronological gap; Domburg and Colijnsplaat's marginal place within a much larger, imperial system; as well as the fact that Cyprus was its own, self-contained locus of growth and change rather than simply a lucrative point on the fringes of administrative reach. Nevertheless, a common thread of local religious accommodation to emerging commercial interests exists between the two. As discussed above, economic symbols as well as novel epigraphic formulae pertaining to the dedicants' professional

⁶⁶⁶ Hulin, "The Diffusion of Religious Symbols," 94.

⁶⁶⁷ Hulin, "The Diffusion of Religious Symbols," 93 associates this process with the general flexibility of religious institutions which, in their view, serve "to legitimate existing social categories."

identities pervade Nehalennia's altars. Regardless of whatever Nehalennia's pre-conquest associations and functions may have been, the altars demonstrate that her *new* context was one fully adapted to the *post*-conquest Roman world, which allowed traveling merchants and the local population alike to interact with one another at this critical geographic juncture. Outsiders took to venerating the local goddess in the hope of protecting their cargo and lives as they crossed the Channel – effectively making Nehalennia an extension of their own identities – and the local population furnished travelers with a goddess modified for these particular needs.⁶⁶⁸ Nehalennia's popularity is the product of a remarkable confluence of an ideal geographic setting, expanding commercial traffic, and a local deity suitable for refashioning. Moreover, it is at the frontiers of political and administrative control, “where some measure of SG [small group] autonomy is favoured, [that] innovation is encouraged through the spread of the system.”⁶⁶⁹ In the case of Nehalennia, the main agents of change appear to have been *negotiatores* who freely improvised with the material available to them – both tangible and ideological – to create personalized expressions of religious worship.⁶⁷⁰

Conclusion

The distinctiveness of the votive altars discussed in this chapter engenders an inherent fascination with Nehalennia, who surely emerges as one of the most unique and concentrated deities in the Roman world. Found almost entirely at just two locations – Domburg and Colijnsplaat – and enjoying a relatively brief period of demonstrable worship (c.150-250 A.D.),

⁶⁶⁸ Hulin, “The Diffusion of Religious Symbols,” 92, 94 discusses the adaptivity of religious symbols and systems in order to retain social relevance.

⁶⁶⁹ Hulin, “The Diffusion of Religious Symbols,” 93.

⁶⁷⁰ Hulin, “The Diffusion of Religious Symbols,” 90 stresses both the individuality of innovation and the importance of group identity, which, in this study, may be applied to the *negotiatores* dedicating to Nehalennia.

Nehalennia represents a condensed and limited case study for assessing cultural exchange. Nehalennia herself exhibits an individuality which manifests first by way of her iconography. Certain traits frequently recur on the altars and in depictions of Nehalennia's likeness which are wholly proprietary to her, such as the ubiquitous short cape, and the seemingly inexplicable curtain on the backs of several stones. Epigraphic eccentricities also contribute to Nehalennia's novelty, both in the form of numerous and explicit economic and maritime accentuations (e.g. *pro mercibus conservandis; ob merces conservatas*), as well as in the mutable spelling of her name. The refined mercantile focus which pervades the iconography and inscriptions of the altars evokes Nehalennia's exclusive purpose – not simply a generalized protectress for mariners, but the specific deity upon whom to call when embarking on cross-Channel trade along the Scheldt route. The idiosyncratic conceptual characteristics of Nehalennia were the collective product of religio-economic necessity and individuals' ability to freely engage and innovate with local folklore by contributing original material to the cult's worship practices. Moreover, the dedicants' opportunity to essentially invent tradition as they went according to their cultural predispositions, practical desiderata, and local customs stemmed from the openly modular nature of polytheism in the Roman world. At these frontier outposts, where mercantile exigencies took precedence over any direct imperial authority regarding cultural development, individuals were able to introduce new associations to Nehalennia's cult which sometimes became somewhat regularized, such as the visual presence of Neptune, cornucopiae representing abundance and prosperity, and specific dedicatory formulae aimed at economic success. On the other hand, expressive liberty also produced anomalous instances of personalization under the umbrella of commercial aspirations (e.g. *ob meliores actus* of H. Nr. 9; the presence of commercial ships on A8 and A41), and in renderings of Nehalennia (e.g. the varieties of hairstyles/caps/bonnets; the

stacked imagery of H. Nr. 16 and A8; the trinity depiction of A71). Within the network of merchant dedicants who traversed the Empire's increasingly interconnected trade routes, ideas and symbols were in constant flux, and subject to adaptation and innovation. The outcome of the chaotic blend of influences, economic priorities, and environmental conditions which converged at the Scheldt estuary was Nehalennia – a goddess whose worship represents a sublime example of both the general openness and flexibility of cultural exchange, as well as the highly personalized ways by which individuals operated within this process to create novel cultural artifacts.

CHAPTER 4

Weapon Deposits

Introduction

The frontier region along the Rhineland experienced intense, dynamic changes prior to the turn of the millennium, and throughout the first century AD. Roman attempts to provincialize Germanic territory all the way up to the Elbe, which had been conquered during the campaigns of Drusus the Elder and his military successors, were finally aborted following the *clades Variana* of 9 AD. Although the Rhine became the new *de facto* border of the Empire, neither Rome's presence and interest in the region nor the level of geographically focused hostilities waned. Retributive expeditions of Germanicus as well as Domitian's incursions into Chattian lands combine with frequent uprisings of both Roman and native origin to depict a large swath of territory disrupted by a nearly incessant state of tumult. It is not surprising then that the eventual provinces of Germania Superior and Inferior boast the highest troop concentration of the first century, with around half of the occupying force comprised of auxiliaries indigenous to the region.⁶⁷¹ This high degree of localized recruitment ensured that native populations would be integral to both macro-level frontier developments, such as the campaigns and rebellions mentioned above, as well the more durative and nuanced processes of cultural exchange during the early imperial period.

⁶⁷¹ Alföldy, *Hilfstruppen der römischen Provinz*, 141 estimates troops on the Lower Rhine to have numbered 42,000 under Tiberius – some 22,000 legionaries alongside 20,000 auxiliaries; see also Roymans, “Ethnic Recruitment,” 140 n.8. The aftermath of the Batavian Revolt of 69-70 AD resulted in an initial reshuffling of auxiliary units to prevent them from serving in their home provinces; however, local recruits would have once again filled the ranks of the garrison thereafter; see Nicolay, “Interpreting Roman Military Equipment,” 59; Alföldy, *Die Hilfstruppen*, 99-104; Holder, *Studies in the Auxilia*, 109ff.

As discussed in the previous chapter on cavalry tombstones, auxiliary troops in the Roman army straddled the line between their respective native cultures and the new, and altogether Roman, military environment that became integrated with their own sense of identity over the course of their lengthy careers in service. At no other time would the distinction between “Roman” and “native” have been greater than during the first century, when the Augustan era reformation of the army first organized the *auxilia* into formal, permanently established units, and ushered in the unprecedented assemblage of soldiers at the Rhine frontier. This mass recruitment of indigenous persons from the surrounding territories, as well as from across the Empire, placed them alongside citizen legionaries who must have been almost entirely foreign at the initial stages,⁶⁷² thereby creating a *mélange* of contrasting ideals, beliefs, and traditions which ultimately led to new, hybridized forms of cultural expression.

Weapon deposits, like gravestones, provide an extremely helpful window through which to observe the process of cultural exchange in action within the context of the Roman army, as well as in various non-military locales across the wider frontier environment. Weapons, armor, and other personal equipment related to their service were, quite simply, a soldier’s livelihood. They were the daily accoutrements which cumulatively represented his status in the world around him – amongst other soldiers and civilians alike – and became constitutive features of his own identity over the course of a multi-decade career in the Roman army. The consequent import which must have been attached to these objects cannot be overstated. Additionally, the fact that they were also undoubtedly the most expensive items the soldier possessed likewise makes their final deposition an incredibly valuable asset when addressing cultural developments, such as identity construction and religious worship.

⁶⁷² Roymans, “Ethnic Recruitment,” 140. This would have lessened with time as citizenship levels grew through imperial grants to entire indigenous communities and meritorious service in the *auxilia*.

The purpose of this chapter will be to examine patterns of weapon deposits in the frontier region, using their particularities as a tool for furthering our understanding of cultural exchange.⁶⁷³ I will analyze weapons and other military equipment associated with the Roman soldier which have been found in a variety of contexts, and can be associated with intentional depositions that are either cultic or funerary in character. These include prominent grave finds within Treveran territory, sanctuaries in both Upper and Lower Germany, and river accumulations which qualify at least in part as votive offerings. In order to properly frame the evidence, I will also compare material from the frontier during the Roman period with deposits from the pre-Roman Iron Age as well as bog and grave finds from beyond the Empire in *Germania Libera*. This approach will provide a diachronic and trans-regional understanding of weapon deposition as a practice, and clarify its particular development on the frontier during the first century AD under newly established, Roman military conditions.⁶⁷⁴ As with the other chapters, I will simultaneously highlight the apparent lack of uniformity and the personal character of the deposits in an effort to complicate our current understanding of the material, and to unveil the imaginative nature of cultural exchange in this particular region and period.

Approach

Departing from the method of previous chapters which focused overwhelmingly on the visual details of votive altars and tombstones in demonstrating the creativity and non-uniformity of those artifacts, the following analysis will instead place primacy on the *act* of weapon

⁶⁷³ Patterns of weapon deposits: Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 87, also 199f., 224; Roymans, “Sword or the Plough,” 28ff. Hunter, “Interpreting Celtic Art,” 726 notes that different groupings of objects reveal patterns of cultural choices.

⁶⁷⁴ First century weapon deposits unique to the frontier zone: Roymans, “Sword or the Plough,” 28-41; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 87.

deposition itself. Individual customization of equipment will be noted only to further underscore the personal value for the soldier and his decision to either offer it in fulfillment of a vow, or to carry it to the grave.⁶⁷⁵ By comparatively assessing the practice against the backdrop of different periods ranging from the pre-Roman Iron Age to beyond the first century, as well as a mixture of settings, we are able to enhance our understanding of how depositing weapons became fashionable amongst Roman soldiers at the German frontier during the early Empire. Moreover, weapon depositions hold a dual significance, speaking at once to the expression of a soldier's self-perceived identity, and to religious behavior – both of which underwent intense transformation during the first century. In short, much more can be gained regarding cultural exchange by focusing on the process and development of weapon deposits as opposed to a strict, visual analysis of the composite attributes of the items themselves.

A significant feature of my approach will be to blur the distinction between Roman legionary and native auxiliary through a close assessment of the equipment deposited in cult locations and graves. Even during the first century, when, as mentioned above, the Roman/native contrast was at its apex, we can already observe blended customs of weapon deposition emerging, with the equipment of both being consigned essentially interchangeably in novel ways. The quintessential symbols of the Roman legionary – the *gladius*, *pilum* and curved shield – can be found in native cemeteries in accordance with the thoroughly non-Roman practice of interment, as well as in pre-Roman cult locations which continued to be used under the Empire. Likewise, we also encounter indigenous weaponry and standard issue equipment of the *auxilia* in these same types of location, as well as more overtly Roman contexts, such as army camps.

⁶⁷⁵ Of course, the deceased may not have been responsible for the choice of grave goods, and the decision to outfit him with particular items in many instances would have been left to his heirs. However, as in the case of soldiers' tombstones which were frequently erected by their comrades, those empowered with such an important task would have been best informed as to the soldier's wishes.

Roman weaponry was therefore adapted to local contexts and traditions by actors of varying statuses, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds. This would have involved an open exchange of ideas and customs between those officially categorized as legionary and auxiliary soldiers which resulted in the wholly non-linear development of weapon deposition as a shared practice.

Any interpretation of the weapon deposits within this frontier context has important consequences for debates over the Romanization of native societies as well as the indigenization of the Roman army. While previous views have long held legions as the primary agents of a Roman acculturation process, increased focus on auxiliaries has likewise emphasized their role in spreading Roman cultural forms.⁶⁷⁶ However, expanding the theory of Romanization to include the activities and collective influence of new personnel does not change the fact that the model itself is still prohibitively acculturative. In order to explain the weapon deposits of the region, it is necessary to realize that cultural exchange on the frontier was not a one-directional process, even within the framework of the Roman army, where we might imagine the imposition of values to be strongest. Ideas and customs circulated within the nominally closed system of the army and traveled beyond the walls of the *castra* and *castella*, just as interactions with and recruitment from local populations ensured that soldiers were peppered with new practices and beliefs during the early Empire. As with previous chapters, I will assess the evidence according to its “Roman” and “native” components in an effort to demonstrate that this largely artificial binary is of little worth when evaluating weapon deposits. Instead, I will argue that the material typifies the free-flowing interchange of cultural concepts and rituals present in the Rhineland during the volatile development of the German frontier.

⁶⁷⁶ Roymans, “Ethnic Recruitment,” 139f. highlights the prominence legionary veterans hold in discussions on Romanization while also noting the importance of auxiliaries serving as cultural intermediaries in the process.

I will first establish that weapon deposition on this frontier is a custom of non-Roman origin which was maintained in altered form during the post-conquest period. Northern Gaul and the Rhineland yield numerous sites where weapons were deposited during the pre-Roman, late La Tène period. Many of these locations maintained a cultic significance under Roman hegemony, albeit with a rapid change in the type of equipment accumulated – shifting from entirely indigenous to almost exclusively Roman. Discovered paraphernalia that was used by the *auxilia* attest to a transference of this native practice by indigenous troops to a new, Roman context now defined by service in a permanent standing army and a newfound social status as a professional soldier. Next, I will assess military gear regularly associated with legionaries found in identical location types connected with either local burial practices or cult worship in order to broaden the depositional pattern to include Roman soldiers of foreign origin, not just indigenous troops. With the lines between legionary and auxiliary blurred, I will then move on to discuss the various types of sites and their specific findings, including the prominent river deposits from the Rhine and Waal, the temples in Batavian territory likely associated with Hercules Magusanus, and the multitude of graves in Treveran territory. Similar finds from the second century AD and beyond in *Barbaricum* supplement those of the Rhineland by underscoring both the contrast as well as the overlap the two share, and illuminate how the practice of weapon deposition varied in its fashionability according to time, place, and social environment. Finally, I will argue that the dynamic creativity displayed by soldiers in crafting their own hybridized identities and religious practices with personal items from their service critically informs us about the process of cultural exchange in the frontier zone.

Weapon Deposition as a Native Practice

In keeping with the method of previous chapters, this section will first identify simplified “Roman” and “native” characteristics in the material which generally hold true in order to then complicate and blur such distinctions and reveal the chaotic reality of the cultural discourse that took place during the first century. Weapon deposition in both graves and cult locations had a long prehistory in the northern territories which would eventually come under Roman rule, and may on the whole be classified as a “native,” non-Roman practice (**Fig. 1**).⁶⁷⁷ Brunaux may have painted with too broad a brush in stating that “the Celts [were] quintessentially warrior peoples”;⁶⁷⁸ however, the fundamental significance of warriorship within Celtic and Germanic societies remains valid,⁶⁷⁹ and military items found in cultic or funerary contexts are clearly associated with this widespread cultural value.⁶⁸⁰ Moreover, Brunaux’s estimation of the role of weaponry amongst the soldiering class is instructive: “weapons were more than an attribute: they served as the insignia of a warrior.”⁶⁸¹ This vital aspect of what it meant to soldier would be transformed during the Roman period, but retain fundamental aspects of its original significance, exemplified by the personal and religious import of depositing one’s military equipment.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁷ Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 88f. discusses this prehistory of deposition, which fluctuated during the Bronze and Iron Ages. For the non-Roman nature of the practice, see Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 47; Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 34; Fitzpatrick, “Deposition of La Tène,” 181, 183; Thiel and Zanier, “Römische Dolche,” 69; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 177, 240, Fig. 7.1. For the growing popularity of weapon burials across Europe, see Schultze, “Bemerkungen,” 115.

⁶⁷⁸ Brunaux, *The Celtic Gauls*, 99.

⁶⁷⁹ Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 13-20.

⁶⁸⁰ Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 35.

⁶⁸¹ Brunaux, *The Celtic Gauls*, 100.

⁶⁸² Haynes, “Religion in the Roman Army,” 123.

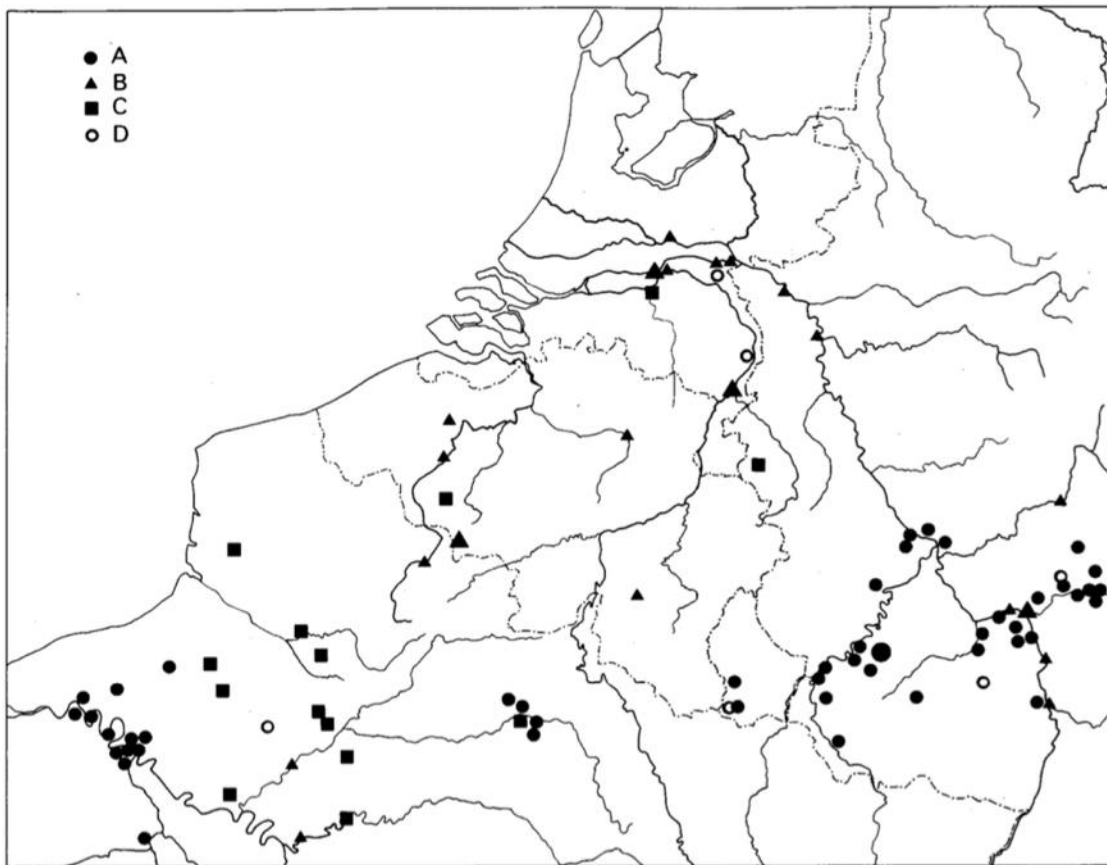


Fig. 1. — Distribution of Late La Tène swords in Northern Gaul and their archaeological context. After Roymans 1990, figs. 4.15 and 9.16, with additions.
A. grave find(s); B. river find(s), large symbol more than 5 examples; C. from cultplace; D. settlement find or context unknown.

Fig. 1: La Tène sword finds of in Northern Gaul
Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” Fig. 1

While offering votives to deities was a ubiquitous custom in antiquity, particularities emerge regarding how this process was carried out according to cultural norms that could vary widely by location. This is especially true for weapon dedications and their inherent affiliation with warfare,⁶⁸³ – a conceptual link that seems to have enjoyed exceptional appeal in Northern Europe as a main focus of religious practice.⁶⁸⁴ Further accentuating its variance with Roman

⁶⁸³ Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 84.

⁶⁸⁴ Brunaux, *The Celtic Gauls*, 103.

tradition, this form of vow did not entail an accompanying inscription,⁶⁸⁵ and it could be comprised of either weaponry taken as booty from the enemy, or the dedicant's own equipment in exchange for divine protection in battle.⁶⁸⁶ The accumulation of military objects at certain points of river courses and at identifiable sanctuaries on land make evident their ritual character, as does the ritual damage frequently applied to weapons and shields which transitioned them “to the world beyond” (**Fig. 2**).⁶⁸⁷

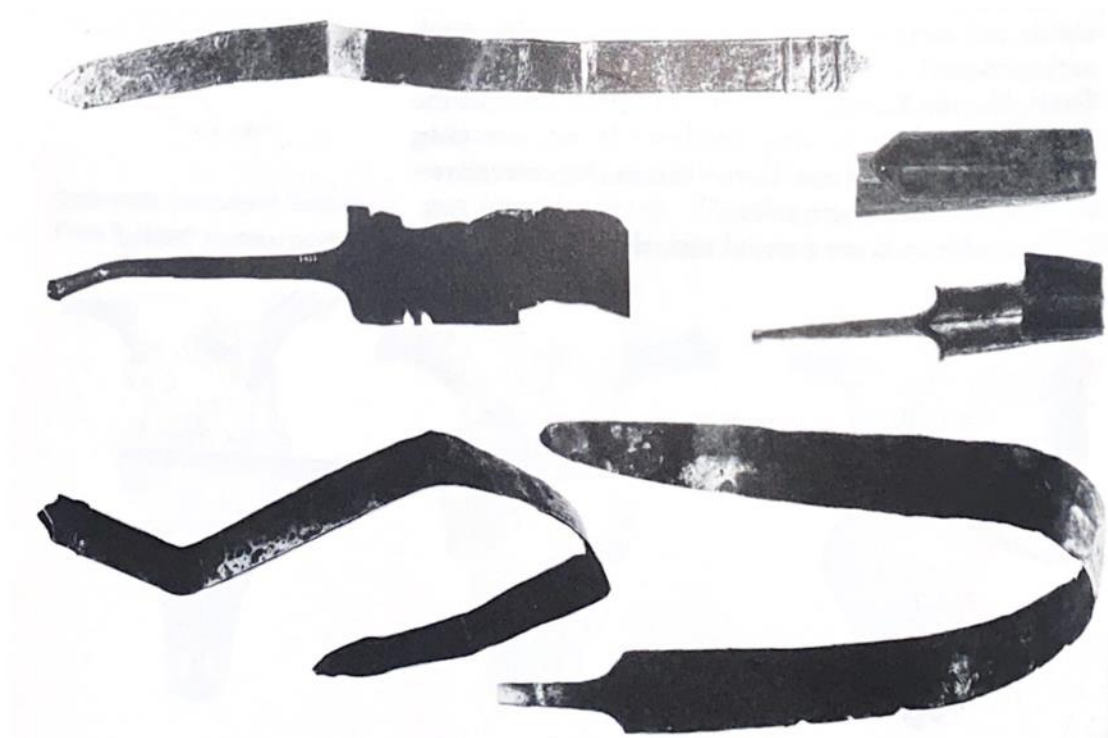


Fig. 2: Sacrificed swords and scabbards from Gournay.
Brunaux, *The Celtic Gauls*, 126

⁶⁸⁵ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 184. Caes. *BG.* 6.17 relates that Gauls dedicated objects to Mars which had been taken in war in the form of large heaps at sacred locations, with no mention of attendant inscriptions. While the composition of these sacrificial items is unclear, weapons taken as booty almost certainly number among them.

⁶⁸⁶ Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 83; Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 31.

⁶⁸⁷ Wightman, *Roman Trier*, 243; see also Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 241; Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 82f.; Roymans, “Ethnic Recruitment,” 108; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 46f.; Brunaux, *The Celtic Gauls*, 127; Schultze, “Zu den Grab- und Bestattungssitten,” 211. Wightman also notes that damage to weapons in the context of grave deposits would likewise render them useless to any potential robbers; Wightman, *Roman Trier*, 243.

Beyond the realm of votives, grave deposits offer an equally expressive body of evidence which speaks to indigenous ritual practices. As with offerings in rivers, weapon interment of weapons is also of non-Roman origin.⁶⁸⁸ The practice exhibits some regional variation, with certain territories providing clusters of similar finds that contrast with material from other sites. Roymans notes that Late La Tène swords dated to ca. 125-15 BC “In the Middle Rhine area, the northeastern part of the French Marne region and the Lower Seine valley...occur predominantly in graves” and likely represent elite burials, whereas swords from Treveran territory “are regularly found in graves of persons belonging to lower social groups.”⁶⁸⁹ This concurrent similarity and dissimilarity of tradition in the wider Celto-Germanic world indicates that communities often had their own interpretations of widespread customs which could develop into a localized fashion.⁶⁹⁰ Frequent interactions between the many diverse ethnicities and tribes allowed for the process of cultural adoption and innovation to occur with respect to weapon burials well before the advent of Rome.⁶⁹¹ Overall, the practice of furnishing burials with weapons became increasingly recurrent across Northern Europe throughout the final century BC, though it took on different manifestations and a non-uniform pace.⁶⁹²

⁶⁸⁸ Schönberger, “Provinzialrömische Gräber,” 53; Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, 51; Wightman, *Roman Trier*, 243.

⁶⁸⁹ Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 36.

⁶⁹⁰ This includes territories east of the Rhine which would remain outside Rome’s control as time passed; see Schultze, “Bemerkungen,” 115, also 118; Schultze, “Verbreitung von Waffenbeigaben,” 93.

⁶⁹¹ Schultze refers to the practice of weapon interment as one of many “keltische Impulse” which Celtic peoples transmitted to their German counterparts; see Schultze, “Zu den Grab- und Bestattungssitten,” 211; Schultze, “Verbreitung von Waffenbeigaben,” 95, 110. This process was intensified even more starting around the founding of the Principate due to the prevalence of war, especially with Rome; see Schultze, “Verbreitung von Waffenbeigaben,” 95, Abb.2, Abb.3.

⁶⁹² Schultze notes that the cemetery at Gräfenhainichen yielded only 3 graves outfitted with weapons out of a total 120 instances. Schultze, “Bemerkungen,” 115. Also, although there is a significant clustering of weapons graves in the area around the Elbe at the end of the first century BC, a large proportion of the overall graves are “beigabenlos”; see Schultze, “Zu den Grab- und Bestattungssitten,” 207; Schultze, “Verbreitung von Waffenbeigaben,” 93, 98; Schultze, “Bemerkungen,” 119. This should remind us that the increasing number of weapon graves was not a universal custom.

Following the immediate post-conquest period and subsequent reorganization of Gaul under Augustus, the practice of weapon deposition underwent a similar transformative process which drastically altered its makeup and application. In the newly provincialized *civitates* of the Gallic interior – that is, away from the Rhineland frontier – there is a quite sudden break in tradition, and we no longer find weapons at locations which previously held immense ritual value.⁶⁹³ It seems that social fashion in these areas had moved beyond emphasis on displays of martiality to embrace a civic orientation which was more agreeable to Roman governance.⁶⁹⁴ Of course, weapon deposits of the old variety did not fall completely by the wayside. Instead, the practice enjoyed a newfound intensity in the frontier region where Rome’s troop concentrations and recruitment policies allowed a composite population to generate novel forms of expression.⁶⁹⁵ It seems then that the significance of the well-established indigenous custom was potent enough to withstand the severe social alterations Rome contrived in those locations where the old martial traditions could be integrated with imperial aims.⁶⁹⁶

Auxiliary Weapon Deposits

Having established that the deposition of weapons in a variety of ritual contexts was a custom of non-Roman origin which continued during the Roman period, this section will now demonstrate that indigenous auxiliary troops adapted the practice to their new social circumstances as professional soldiers during the early Empire. It is not my aim to assess in detail the myriad examples of military equipment, and the constraints of the present work would

⁶⁹³ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 244; Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 44, 46; Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 84.

⁶⁹⁴ With the Gallic hinterland no longer being used for recruitment Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 40 suggests they were now primarily used as a source of tax revenue.

⁶⁹⁵ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 2, 88, 199, Fig. 3.12; Roymans, “Sword or the Plough,” 34; Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 46; De Laet and van Doorselaer, “Gräber der römischen Kaiserzeit,” 54, 61.

⁶⁹⁶ Schumacher, “Ein Trevererkrieger,” 271.

make such a gargantuan task impossible in any event. Rather, in this section and beyond, I intend to provide indicative samples within the body of available material evidence which demonstrate general patterns and aid analysis of cultural exchange.

Roman military equipment finds have long been associated with auxiliary troops, particularly when discovered in non-military contexts holding ritual significance (i.e. cult locations and graves), and they are normally framed within the narrative of continued native tradition, especially within Treveran territory (**Fig. 3**).⁶⁹⁷ The Lower Rhine region represents an exception, since where there was no meaningful pre-existing history of weapon deposition in graves, and only limited occurrence during the Roman period.⁶⁹⁸ Given the debated efficacy of the imperial ban on civilian possession of weapons, due caution should be employed when connecting weapon graves with native veterans of the Roman army.⁶⁹⁹ However, many deposits contain equipment that would certainly have fallen outside the possession of civilians, and must be associated with troops (**Fig. 4**). Grave 2215 from the Treveran cemetery of Wederath-Belginum contains the remains of what must have been a soldier and his equipment buried in keeping with local tradition (**Fig. 5**).⁷⁰⁰ Included amongst pottery and coins were an iron lance head, an axe head, and a sword whose shape is unmistakably that of a Mainz type *gladius* which

⁶⁹⁷ Schönberger, "Provinzialrömische Gräber," 53 n.4; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 2, 61, 87, 199f., 246, Fig. 7.5, Tab. 2.1; Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 46, Fig. 5; Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, 89, Abb. 36.

⁶⁹⁸ Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 90; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 24, 82, 200, Fig. 5.20. More than forty Gallo-Roman graves have been uncovered from Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg with one or more attack weapons (lance heads, pila, javelins, swords, daggers); see Laet and van Doorselaer, "Gräber der römischen Kaiserzeit," 56ff., list B. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 119 argues that weapon burials evidence the creation of new identities as a result of cultural adaptation to Rome.

⁶⁹⁹ See Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 254; Wightman, *Roman Trier*, 243. Weapons ban: *Dig.* 48.6.

⁷⁰⁰ Other swords have also been uncovered from the cemetery which are more obviously of native manufacture and better accord with the native practice of applying ritual damage to deposited equipment; see Haffner, "Wederath-Belginum 2. Teil," 10, 57, 62f., Nrs. 481, 776, 805, 809, Taf. 148, 198, 206, 207. Two swords from Wederath include handles comprised of stacked bronze discs similar to Kessel variant swords which are of La Tène origin and occur in the frontier region and beyond; see Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 109f., Fig. 7.4, 7.5. For the longevity of the Wederath cemetery and its use for gauging ritual observance and change over time, see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 200.

corresponds with the Claudian dating (ca. 40-50 AD) of the grave.⁷⁰¹ Much the same can be said for the contents of Grave 1344 found in the same cemetery which also included a Mainz type sword and a shield umbo (**Fig. 6**). While civilians may indeed have concealed weapons which defied the *Lex Julia de Vi Publica, gladii* struck specifically for use in the Roman army would not have been available for public consumption.⁷⁰² It is therefore much more likely that we are dealing with veterans of the Roman army who, given the early date of the find, may have served in an auxiliary unit and returned to their homeland.⁷⁰³ The burial according to local tradition illustrates a final integration of this soldiering aspect of their identities with cultural norms embedded prior to recruitment.

⁷⁰¹ Schumacher, "Ein Trevererkrieger," 269; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 200.

⁷⁰² Schumacher, "Ein Trevererkrieger," 269-71. A military *gladius* certainly did not fall under the exception to the law for hunting or travel (*Dig. 48.6.1: praeter usum venationis vel itineris vel navigationis*). And although military items could be passed down through inheritance (*Dig. 48.6.2: excipiuntur autem arma, quae quis hereditateve ei obvenerint*), it would seem much more likely that the soldier himself would be buried with military items of personal significance as opposed to one of his descendants.

⁷⁰³ Schumacher assigns Grave 2215 to a cavalryman of the *ala Treverorum*, but Nicolay notes that the presence of a *gladius* makes it more likely that the deceased served in an auxiliary cohort; see Schumacher, "Ein Trevererkrieger," 271-74; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 200 n.205. Waurick also believes the inclusion of a short sword in the grave eliminates association with a cavalry unit, and that the addition of a native spearhead accords with local tradition; Waurick, "Zur Rüstung," 22, 15, respectively. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 119f. believes the grave belonged to a local Treveran soldier as well. Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, 67 argue that both Grave 1344 and Grave 2215 belong to an auxiliary who died during service on account of their age. It is unclear why the soldiers would not have been interred near their camp in the usual fashion. If they were transferred home for burial, this would explain the lack of similar examples to be found from Wederath-Belginum, since it is unlikely to have been common practice.

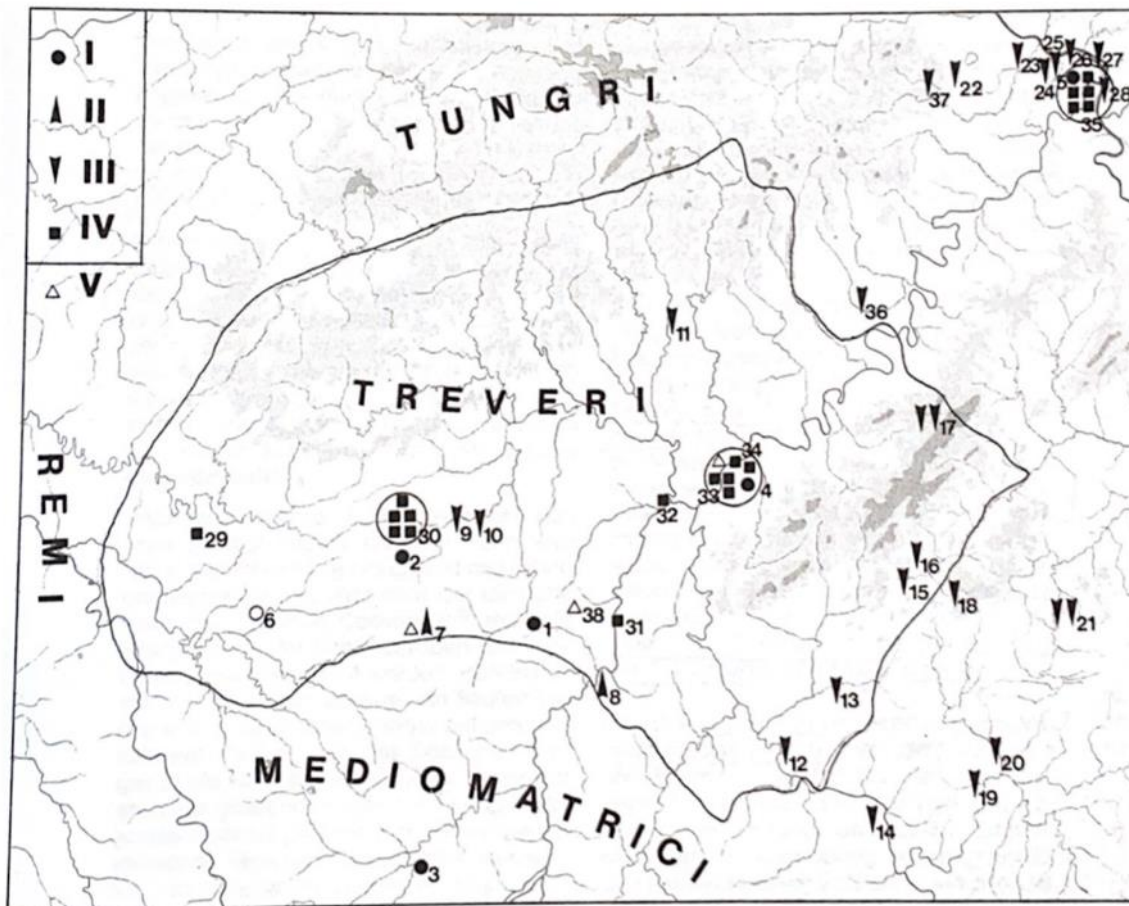


Abb. 36 : Funde aus dem militärischen Zusammenhang im Moselgebiet (mit der möglichen Grenze der civitas Treverorum nach 17 n. Chr.) I. Helmgräber: 1. Hellingen (L) ; 2. Weyler (B) ; 3. Conflans (F) ; 4. Trier-Olewig (D) ; 5. Koblenz-Bubenheim (D) ; (6. Couvreur/Villers-la-Loue (B)). II. Dolche: 7. Titelberg (L) ; 8. Petite-Hettange (F). III. Gräber mit Gladius-Belgabe: 9. Septfontaines (L) ; 10. Goeblingen-Nospelt (L) ; 11. Nattenheim (D) ; 12. Ensdorf (D) ; 13. Lebach (D) ; 14. Saarbrücken (D) ; 15. Neunkirch/Nahe (D) ; 16. Sötern (D) ; 17. Wederath (D) ; 18. Hirstein (D) ; 19. Limbach (D) ; 20. Lautzkirchen (D) ; 21. Mühlbach/Glan (D) ; 22. Bell (D) ; 23. Andernach (D) ; 24-25. Mühlheim-Kärllich (D) ; 26. Urmitz (D) ; 27. Koblenz-Neuendorf (D) ; 28. Koblenz (D) ; 36. Bausendorf (D) ; 37. Kirchwald (D). IV. Grabmonumente: 29. Chameleux (B) ; 30. Arlon (B) ; 31. Nennig (D) ; 32. Wasserbillig (L) ; 33. Trier-Süd (D) ; 34. Trier-Nord (D) ; 35. Koblenz (D). V. Schleuderbleie: 7. Titelberg (L) ; 33. Trier (D) ; 38. Dalheim (L).

Fig. 3: Military finds from the Moselle region
Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, Abb. 36

| site | weapon type | dating |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Someren | Mainz type <i>gladius</i> | Augustan |
| Conflance (F) | masked helmet | first half 1st century |
| Neeritter | Mainz type <i>gladius</i> | pre-Flavian |
| Wederath (B) | Mainz type <i>gladius</i> (2x) | mid-1st century |
| Septfontaines (L) | <i>gladius</i> | mid-1st century |
| Weiler (B) | Weiler type helmet | mid-1st century |
| Hellingen (L) | masked helmet | mid-1st century |
| Maasbree | <i>gladius</i> | 1st century |
| Haldern (G) | <i>gladius</i> | 1st century |
| Köln-Marienburg (G) | <i>gladius</i> | 1st century |
| Temse (B) | <i>gladius</i> | 1st century |
| Koblenz-Bubenheim (G) | Weiler type helmet | second half 1st century |

Table. 2.1. Sword and helmet finds from 1st-century weapon graves in Germania Inferior and Northern Gaul (after Roymans 1996, appendices 1–2)

Fig. 4: Sword and helmet finds from first century AD graves
Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, Tab. 2.1



3 Die eisernen Waffen und Geräte nach der Restaurierung. Zur Ausstattung des treverischen Kriegers gehörten (von unten nach oben) eine Pickelaxt, eine Lanze, ein Kurzsword und eine Schere.

Fig. 5: Contents of Treveran Grave 2215
Schumacher, "Ein Trevererkrieger," Fig. 3



Abb. 45 :
Grab 1344 aus
Wederath

Fig. 6: Contents of Treveran Grave 1344
Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, Abb. 45

Roman military items interred with the dead also included defensive equipment which connect more directly with the *auxilia*. Cavalry helmets outfitted with face masks are one of the best indicators of a mounted soldier of an *ala* division. A prominent Tiberian-era grave from Hellingen, Luxembourg contained one such face mask along with a cinerary urn and glassware (**Fig. 7**). The deposition of helmets and masks in graves was a quite infrequent practice in this region when compared to their relative profundity in rivers of the Lower Rhine region (**Fig. 8**). Therefore, it is likely in this case, as with other similar examples,⁷⁰⁴ that the deceased was an

⁷⁰⁴ Other cases of Rhineland graves with cavalry helmets have been discovered at Weyler (Belgium) Conflans (France) from the first century AD; see Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 256.

auxiliary veteran who saw particular significance in returning to his original homeland following his discharge and retaining his equipment.⁷⁰⁵ Krier and Reinert highlight the mixture of traditions present in the Hellange burial, noting that while weapon deposition was common in the area, the use of cinerary urns was still only a nascent fashion around the middle of the first century, indicating a potent Roman influence.⁷⁰⁶ Of course, it is possible the soldier's family selected the method of burial, as well as the grave goods. However, even if this occurred, it would nevertheless reflect a less direct process of cultural exchange taking place – one in which the deceased's identity was projected onto him by those who were most familiar with his attributes and inclinations.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁵ Krier and Reinert, "La tombe au casque," 144; Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 46. Krier and Reinert, "La tombe au casque," 146 are clear that burial with such items must be an indication of veterans, as opposed to soldiers who had died while on active duty.

⁷⁰⁶ Krier and Reinert, "La tombe au casque," 144. The desire to accord with "Roman" styles may indicate the deceased was a local elite; see Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 46; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 200.

⁷⁰⁷ Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, 53.

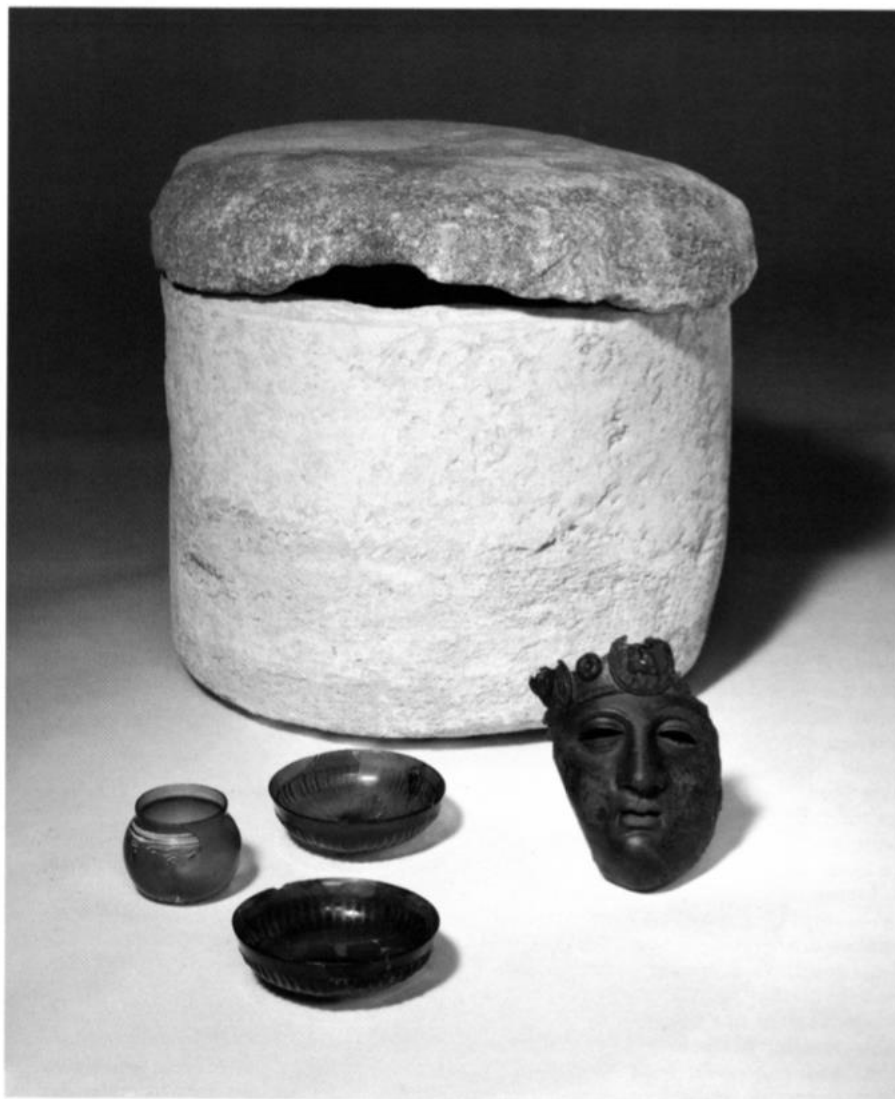


Fig. 7: Contents of Hellange grave, including a cavalry face mask
Krier and Reinert, "La tombe au casque de Hellange," Fig. 7

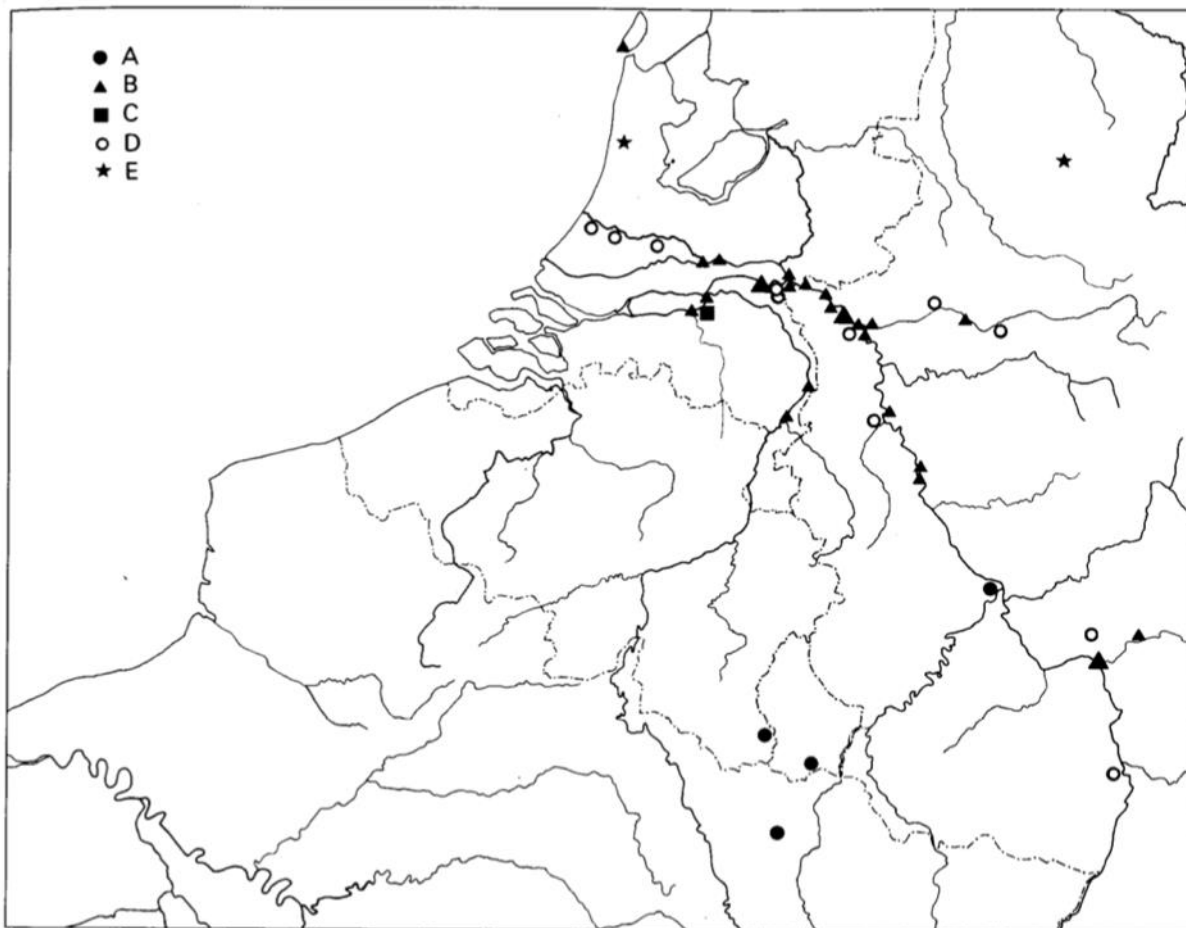


Fig. 6. — Distribution of 1st-century AD Roman helmets in Belgic Gaul and the Rhineland. After Roymans, in press.
 A. grave find; B. river find(s), large symbol more than 5 examples; C. from cultplace; D. from Roman military camp; E. from (native) sites in *Germania libera*.

Fig. 8: Distribution of first century AD Roman helmets
 Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” Fig. 6

At Voerde-Mehrum, Germany, amidst a small necropolis of nine extant graves lay the remains of a warrior interred with his weapons, dating to the 60s AD.⁷⁰⁸ The contents include a sword, a triangular dagger and a military belt – all of which show a striking similarity to equipment of the Roman army, upon which they are clearly modeled – as well as a bronze bucket serving as a cinerary urn and the remnants of a drinking horn.⁷⁰⁹ The curious mixture of objects

⁷⁰⁸ Gechter and Kunow, “frühkaiserzeitliche Grabfund von Mehrum,” 451f. Currently found across the Rhine, the site would have been cisrhenane during the Roman era, which has implications for the status of the warrior. Gechter and Kunow, “frühkaiserzeitliche Grabfund von Mehrum,” 450.

⁷⁰⁹ See esp. Gechter and Kunow, “frühkaiserzeitliche Grabfund von Mehrum,” 449, 452.

leads to questions surrounding the identity of the Mehrum warrior.⁷¹⁰ While the sword and dagger were close imitations of their Roman equivalents,⁷¹¹ the lance and shield umbo seem to be authentic products of the Roman military.⁷¹² The non-military artifacts reflect the same sort of heterogeneity, with the Germanic drinking horn counterbalanced by the inclusion of more obviously Roman tableware.⁷¹³ Gechter and Kunow believed the Mehrum warrior was likely to have been the leader of an irregular native tribal unit which the Romans continued to employ intermittently during the early first century,⁷¹⁴ and *not* a member of the Roman *auxilia* due to the mixture and lack of particular equipment types, such as a helmet and armor.⁷¹⁵ To a certain extent, the question of whether the deceased was officially enlisted as an auxiliary is irrelevant. An affiliation with the army is virtually assured, based on: ownership of and interment with a combination of weapons clearly meant for warfare; the presence of Roman weaponry (shield and lance), which must have been procured through official channels; the fact that the grave was within the Empire's borders.⁷¹⁶ Together, these details attest to a professional warrior who could only have found employment for this vocation through some sort of service to the Roman army –

⁷¹⁰ For comparative graves with mixed weapons and Roman-native ceramics on Rhine from Andernach, Urmitz, Koblenz-Neuendorf, see Gechter and Kunow, "frühkaiserzeitliche Grabfund von Mehrum," 453.

⁷¹¹ Gechter and Kunow, "frühkaiserzeitliche Grabfund von Mehrum," 452. The sword in particular cannot be a *gladius* of the first century, due to its short tip; see Gechter and Kunow, "frühkaiserzeitliche Grabfund von Mehrum," 464, Kat. Nr. 6; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 26.

⁷¹² Gechter and Kunow, "frühkaiserzeitliche Grabfund von Mehrum," 452; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 200.

⁷¹³ Gechter and Kunow, "frühkaiserzeitliche Grabfund von Mehrum," 453f.

⁷¹⁴ Gechter and Kunow, "frühkaiserzeitliche Grabfund von Mehrum," 454f. For this unit type, see Alföldy, *Die Hilfstruppen*, 77f.

⁷¹⁵ Gechter and Kunow, "frühkaiserzeitliche Grabfund von Mehrum," 453.

⁷¹⁶ The notion that he had fought against the Romans but was subsequently allowed to settle within the Empire is untenable, as is the possibility that he was a German mercenary unconnected with the Roman army who was granted the privilege of retaining arms within a Roman province without having rendered meritorious service. Frank, "Römisches Militär in germanischen Gräbern," 9f. posits that this grave was actually located outside the Empire's borders, but it is unclear from his assessment exactly how this deduction was reached. In any case, given that "das Grab sicherlich auf barbarischem Boden direkt an der Reichsgrenze angelegt wurde," I have difficulty accepting at face value that enemies of Rome could be interred in close proximity with imperial troops – especially those whose prized possessions included captured Roman arms. Additionally, Rome's presence did not end at the *limes*. Roman activity across the Rhine decreases the probability that the Mehrum grave belonged to an enemy, and greatly increases the likelihood that the soldier was affiliated with the Roman army in some way.

making him, in the broadest sense if not in fact, an auxiliary.⁷¹⁷ The assortment of grave goods indicates that, by the end of his life, the Mehrum warrior was imbued with significant Roman influence (i.e. service weapons, dining patterns, cremation) which he had assimilated with his indigenous objects and customs (i.e. imitation weapons, drinking horn, weapon deposition).

Beyond grave goods, auxiliary helmets could also serve a votive function. At modern Nijmegen (*oppidum Batavorum*, later *Ulpia Noviomagus*), the Augustan era saw the establishment of a legionary base on the Hunerberg as well as various encampments for supporting *auxilia*, which are attested especially at the nearby Kops Plateau.⁷¹⁸ Most of the helmets deposits cluster at the southern portion of the camp, and were buried in small, fairly shallow pits which include a similar range of items.⁷¹⁹ Four auxiliary cavalry helmets of the Weiler type as well as three cavalry sport helmets and their face masks (**Fig. 9**) number among the most prominent finds, dating to the Claudio-Neronian period.⁷²⁰ Six of the helmets included intentionally broken pottery, which may have contained food and drink for a deity in fulfillment of a vow.⁷²¹ One such pit even included the remains of a chicken, all but assuring a ritual act had taken place.⁷²² No indications of a sanctuary exist on the Kops Plateau, and the pits contain no

⁷¹⁷ Roymans, "Sword or the Plough," 35. Roymans considers Gechter and Kunow's position that the warrior must have come from beyond the Rhine untenable. *Ibid.*, 35 n.77.

⁷¹⁸ For the history of Roman occupation at this site, beginning ca. 19 BC, see van Enckevort and Willems, "Roman Cavalry Helmets," 125f.; van Enckevort, "Die Belegerung," 555f.; Willems and van Enckevort, *Ulpia Noviomagus*, 7, 17-28, Fig.4. Auxiliary presence is attested by cavalry equipment, such as spurs, Weiler type helmet, as well as the stall complex at the southern entrance to the legionary camp. Although legions retained their own detachments of cavalry, the character of the finds more likely reflect an auxiliary soldier; see van Enckevort, "Die Belegerung," 560-62. Bells which may have been part of a horse harness: van Enckevort and Willems, "Roman Cavalry Helmets," Fig. 7. Cavalry spurs: van Enckevort, "Die Belegerung," Fig. 6.124.

⁷¹⁹ van Enckevort and Willems, "Roman Cavalry Helmets," 128.

⁷²⁰ Helmets and masks: van Enckevort and Willems, "Roman Cavalry Helmets," 127f.; van Enckevort, "Die Belegerung," 561. It seems that this location may have housed the *ala Batavorum*; see van Enckevort and Willems, "Roman Cavalry Helmets," 125f., 135; van Enckevort, "Die Belegerung," 562; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 197.

⁷²¹ Food: van Enckevort, "Die Belegerung," 562. Vow: van Enckevort, "Die Belegerung," 562. Pottery: van Enckevort and Willems, "Roman Cavalry Helmets," 131. See also Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 196. By contrast, Bishop, "O Fortuna," 5 has argued that equipment deposits discovered inside of military encampments were part of typical "cleaning-up operations." However, while many items may have been found in wells or sewers, the composition of the pits containing expensive helmets would seem to rule out Bishop's theory of deposition.

⁷²² Van Enckevort and Willems, "Roman Cavalry Helmets," 131; van Enckevort, "Die Belegerung," 562.

inscriptions or other clues as to the identity of the deities in question; however, fulfillment of a vow upon completion of service is likely.⁷²³ The form and contents of the deposits indicate adherence to indigenous practice which the auxiliaries must have retained throughout time in the army. Perhaps even more astoundingly, the dedicants refashioned the originally non-Roman custom to suit their new environment as professional soldiers in the Roman army. Expensive, Roman-made cavalry helmets and the *castra* of their unit had gained new meaning as both respective objects and viable zones for dedication. Given the limited number of helmets, this custom was clearly not universally practiced amongst the soldiers at Nijmegen, making the rarity of the instances we are privy to all the more fascinating as snapshots of cultural hybridization in action during a narrow period of time.



Fig. 5: Three face masks from the Kops Plateau after restoration. The height of the mask in front is ca. 16.5 cm. Photo ROB.

Fig. 9: Face masks recovered from the Kops Plateau
van Enckevort and Willems, “Roman Cavalry Helmets,” Fig. 5

⁷²³ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 179.

This section has demonstrated how indigenous soldiers exhibited a range of responses to service in the Roman army as they negotiated their new status during the first century. All of the grave examples presented – Wederath, Hellange, Voerde-Mehrum – comprise burials which accord with the native practice of interring the dead with weapons. The finds variously include Roman as well as native-made weaponry, further increasing the likelihood that we are observing the practices of auxiliaries who had integrated their Roman service weapons and professional identities as soldiers with their pre-existing cultural worldview concerning burial customs. Although the deceased may not have selected the items to be interred with, there are nevertheless clear indications that the process of cultural fusion had taken place. First, those responsible for the burial would have been most familiar with the soldier's predilections. Second, the blending of indigenous weapon interment with Roman-influenced cremation reflects specific decisions which would have almost certainly been informed by the deceased's wishes. At Voerde-Mehrum Roman influence is obvious in the modeling of the weapons on Roman styles, and is likewise reflected in the substitution of a bronze bucket as a makeshift cinerary urn. Finally, the votive pits from the Kops Plateau include helmets which are unambiguous in their connection with the *auxilia*, and illustrate how cavalymen adapted the native convention of offering military equipment within the context of a Roman army camp. In all of these cases, the weapon depositions register as highly personalized manifestations of cultural exchange.

Legionary/Roman Weapon Deposits

Having established that auxiliaries of the Roman army continued to practice the ritualistic deposition of weapons in a manner that was affiliated with their military service, the role of legionaries in the development of this tradition can provide additional nuance to the process of

exchange taking place at the frontier. Confining analysis of “native” depositions within the context of indigenous auxiliary units renders a picture of ritual development which is incomplete.

Ian Haynes’ conclusions on the Romanization of the *auxilia* are instructive here:

The native gods of the areas in which he [the auxiliary soldier] served also claimed his attention and through their worship he developed closer links with his new social environment. These new stimuli did not necessarily compete to win his allegiance away from the beliefs with which he was raised; they could complement them, but they inevitably changed his perceptions of the gods and the world around him. It may not, therefore, have been intended that the religious practices of the army would Romanise the auxiliary soldier, but it was inevitable that they would serve to transform his cultural identity.⁷²⁴

Several important features emerge from this assessment and combine to depict a highly integrative experience for auxiliary soldiers which resulted in a composite perspective – one which could equally apply to legionaries. Each recruit would have entered the army with pre-existing mores from his cultural background. These predispositions would then be exposed to foreign practices and beliefs during the course of his service through both the structure and composite makeup of the army itself as well as the surrounding cultural environment of his post. As a result of these encounters, each soldier could adopt, alter, or reject many new ideas and beliefs at their own discretion. However, regardless of the choices the individual made in this respect, it was highly unlikely that the soldier’s worldview and self-perception would have remained static by the end of his enlistment; an alteration to his identity was assured to some degree or another. When distilled to these basic features of cultural interaction, it becomes clear that the experiences of auxiliaries in the Roman army must have been comparable to those of legionaries, and that we should assess possible legionary weapon deposits in the same manner as we have done with auxiliaries.

⁷²⁴ Haynes, “Romanisation of Religion,” 157.

One piece of equipment which allows for clear delineation between legionaries and auxiliaries during the early imperial period is the helmet. Although ubiquitous among all soldiers in the Roman army, helpful distinctions can be observed between helmet variants and their employment according to the type of unit (i.e. legionary/auxiliary, infantry/cavalry) at different points in time (**Fig. 10**).

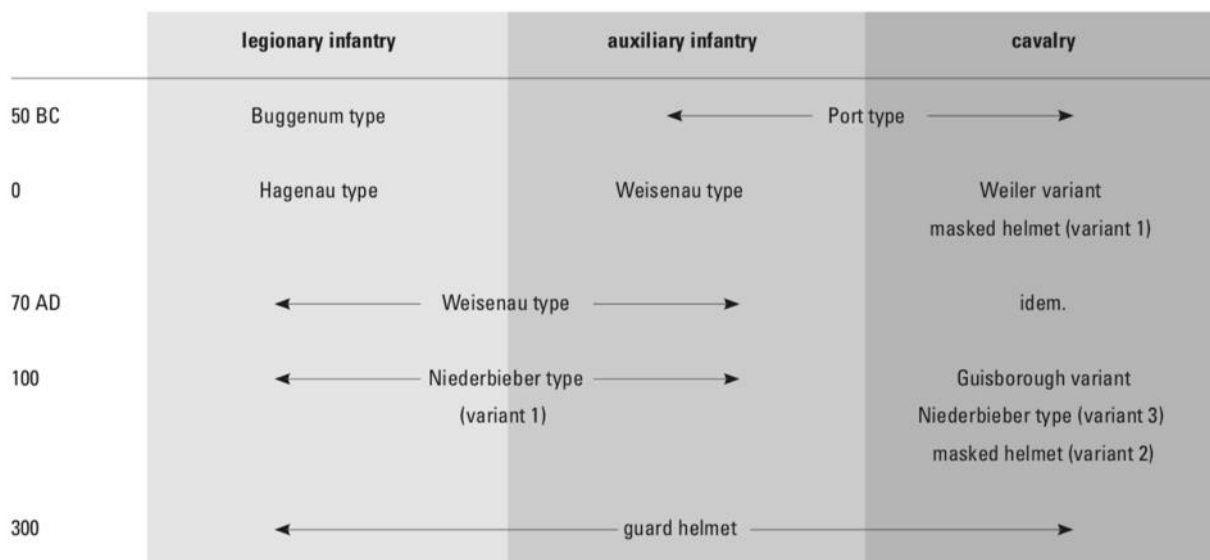


Fig. 2.2. Chronological overview of the helmet types used by the different army units during the Roman era.

Fig. 10: Chronology of helmet type usage
Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, Fig. 2.2

Since the contrast between legionary and auxiliary was strongest during the first century,⁷²⁵ the material record allows us to more readily distinguish between the two and to therefore also better detect the process of exchange during this transformative period. For the Lower Rhine region, there are a number of legionary examples which come from river contexts and may reflect the

⁷²⁵ Roymans, "Ethnic Recruitment," 140.

adoption and the native practice of depositing weapons by non-local, Roman soldiers.⁷²⁶ Two complete helmets from the River Waal at Millingen and Pannerden near Nijmegen (**Fig. 11**) have been identified as a transitional Montefortino/Hagenau type,⁷²⁷ thereby dating them to the early imperial period and assigning them to legionary use. Other Hagenau type helmets have been discovered in river contexts, and sometimes reveal details of their owners through *punctum* inscriptions.⁷²⁸ One such example from the Waal at Nijmegen includes the soldier's name as well as his century on the nape: Ɔ (centuria) SEX(ti) DVLLI T(iti) VETTI.⁷²⁹ The helmet is highly unlikely to have belonged to an indigenous, "Romanized" soldier from the Rhineland, given its early date, legionary character, and the thoroughly Latin name of its owner. Provided that this and other similar riverine deposits were intentional, they speak to early legionary (i.e. Roman) acceptance of local tradition.⁷³⁰

⁷²⁶ The practice of water deposition will be discussed in detail below. For Hagenau type helmets from Lower Germany which include many river deposits, see Klumbach, *Römische Helme*, 23-35; Robinson, *Armour of Imperial Rome*, 26-41. Whereas Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 47 believes that helmet offerings in the Lower Rhine during the pre-Flavian era belonged to native auxiliaries, despite conceding that this is a difficult position to prove definitively, Van Enckevort and Willems, "Roman Cavalry Helmets," 134 point to the fact that early finds also yield legionary helmets.

⁷²⁷ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 17, also 16, Fig. 2.3; Klumbach, *Römische Helme*, 22, Nr. 7.

⁷²⁸ See Klumbach, *Römische Helme*, Nrs. 9, 14, 17, 19, 22-25.

⁷²⁹ Klumbach, *Römische Helme*, 33, Nr. 23, Taf. 23. Klumbach accepts that the lack of cognomina dates the helmet to some time prior to 30 AD. From its characteristics, Nicolay also traces the helmet to the early first century AD; see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 17, Fig. 2.3, Tab. 5.3, Nr. 12.

⁷³⁰ See Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 179, 186, 189. Haynes, "Religion in the Roman Army," 113, 124 notes the varied responses soldiers exhibited when encountering the many local religious phenomena of their posts.



Fig. 11: Legionary Motefortino/Hagenau (early first century AD) transition helmets
 Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, Fig. 2.3
 After Klumbach, *Römische Helme*, Taf. 7-8

Finds from the temple complex at Empel have yielded direct evidence for worship at the site by a legionary soldier in the form of a votive inscription on a metal plaque (**Fig. 12**).⁷³¹ The dedicant, *Iulius Genialis*, identifies himself as a veteran of the Tenth Legion, which was stationed at Nijmegen following the Batavian Revolt of 69-70 AD until its transfer to serve in Trajan's Dacian Wars at the beginning of the second century.⁷³² Given that the other finds from the temple largely consist of weaponry and military equipment of various kinds,⁷³³ this example is all the more remarkable for its singularity at Empel. It seems that the legionary either broke with the native custom of offering weaponry to Hercules Magusanus by opting instead for a traditional, Roman-style votive inscription, or he modified convention by adding an inscription

⁷³¹ AE 1990, 740: *Herculi Magusen(o) Iulius Genialis veter(anus) leg(ionis) X G(eminae) P(iae) F(idelis) v(otum) s(olvit) l(aetus) l(ibens) m(erito)*; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 181, Fig. 5.10.

⁷³² Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 112 n.152 dates the inscription to sometime after 96 AD due to "the absence of the honorary title *Domitiana* which originally belonged to it but which was later discarded." This would mean that the dedicant was recruited in the aftermath of the Batavian Revolt in 71 AD.

⁷³³ Finds from Empel and other cult locations will be discussed in detail below.

to his weapon offering which is now lost to us.⁷³⁴ Both scenarios are equally fascinating for their demonstration of cultural exchange taking place. If the veteran merely offered an inscription, it would mean that we are dealing with a kind of *interpretatio Romana*, whereby the expected weapon offering has been supplanted by a foreign method of fulfilling a vow. In this scenario, Genialis could have been a legionary originating from elsewhere who sought to venerate the local deity in the standard, Roman fashion. Alternatively, he may have been a Batavian who wholly embraced a Roman method of religious worship. To complicate the matter further, the plaque might have been affixed to a piece of military equipment, indicating that the inscription served as an additive foreign element to a native practice in this instance. This latter possibility seems more likely when considering both the small size of the plaque (9cm) and the overwhelming prevalence of arms at the site. Moreover, the purpose behind the dedication, coming as it does from a veteran, likely corresponds to the motivations of other adherents to Hercules Magusanus whose *militaria* were probably deposited in thanks for the god's protection during their service.⁷³⁵ In all cases, the plaque clearly imparts that legionaries could take an active part in the process of cultural experimentation at this frontier location, which held particular significance for its military affiliation.

⁷³⁴ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 179 believes we should deduce a connection between the inscriptions and equipment found at the site.

⁷³⁵ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 181.



Fig. 5.10. Votive inscription from the temple complex of Empel-‘De Werf’, dedicated by the legionary veteran Julius Genialis to Hercules Magusenus. Height approx. 9 cm.

Fig. 12: Votive plaque on behalf of Julius Genialis to Hercules Magusenus from Empel Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, Fig. 5.10

Although weapon deposits of the northern provinces are most often connected with a patent, long-standing, and broadly distributed indigenous tradition, the practice is not entirely absent from the Roman world elsewhere. Undoubtedly influenced by Greek precedent, several prominent examples also attest that the Romans developed an analogous custom.⁷³⁶ An inscription from a sanctuary of Venus at Erice, Sicily (Venus Erycina) by a legionary tribune mentions the dedication of his *felicem gladium* in 20 AD following a military victory against

⁷³⁶ Greek precedent: Bishop, “O Fortuna,” 3; Brunaux, *The Celtic Gauls*, 126; Künzl “Wasserfunde Römischer Gladii,” 564; Künzl, “Die Sakralen Objekte,” 98f.

Tacfarinas (**Fig. 13**).⁷³⁷ Roman literary sources also provide other purported instances of weapon dedications. Suetonius details three moments in his account of Vitellius in which offensive weapons are noted as acceptable offerings to Roman gods. When his soldiers acclaimed him emperor, Vitellius received a *gladius* of Julius Caesar which had originally been placed in a temple of Mars, presumably as a votive.⁷³⁸ The new emperor also sent the dagger with which his rival, Otho, had killed himself to *Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium* to be dedicated to Mars (*Marti dedicandum*).⁷³⁹ Finally, in a feigned attempt to verify his desire for peace, Vitellius nearly dedicates his own *pugio* to Concord.⁷⁴⁰ Tacitus also relates that Nero offered his enemy's dagger to Jupiter "The Avenger," upon which the emperor also included an inscription.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁷ CIL 10, 7257; see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 178f.; Thiel and Zanier, "Römische Dolche," 69. The dedicant, L. Apronius Caesianus, was the son of the proconsul of Africa, L. Apronius; see Tac. *Ann.* 3.21.1.

⁷³⁸ Suet. *Vit.* 8: *circumlatusque per celeberrimos vicos, strictum Divi Iulii gladium tenens detractum delubro Martis atque in prima gratulatione porrectum sibi a quodam*; see also Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 179; Künzl, "Die Sakralen Objekte," 99.

⁷³⁹ Suet. *Vit.* 10: *pugionemque, quo is se [Othonem] occiderat, in Agrippinensem coloniam misit Marti dedicandum*; see also Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 178f.

⁷⁴⁰ Suet. *Vit.* 15: *tunc solutum a latere pugionem...quasi in aede Concordiae positurus abscessit*; see also Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 178f.

⁷⁴¹ Tac. *Ann.* 15.74: *ipse eum pugionem apud Capitolium sacraavit inscripsitque Iovi Vindici*; see also Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 179; Künzl, "Die Sakralen Objekte," 99.



Fig. 13: *felicem gladium* dedication from Sicily
CIL 10, 7257

These literary and epigraphic accounts comprise a chronological range which spans well over a hundred years, from the time of Caesar to the Year of the Four Emperors. Regardless of their potential validity, the casualness with which Suetonius and Tacitus inject these anecdotes into their narratives signifies that the practice would not have come as a shock to a Roman audience. In fact, it is portrayed as having established validity by way of its longevity, thereby perhaps appealing to the custom's *vetustas* in the Roman world. Moreover, Caesianus' Sicilian inscription provides tangible evidence that the practice of weapon consecration existed within the ambit of acceptable Roman offerings, uncommon as they may have been elsewhere in the

Empire at the time. The accounts make clear the variety of acceptable dedicatory circumstances and conditions: an offensive weapon – belonging to the dedicant himself or his enemy– may be offered to any number of deities related or unrelated to warfare; however, the motivation itself is always associated with victory. Additionally, the offering itself may be inscribed, as with Nero’s *pugio*, or an inscription may accompany it, as in the case of Caesianus’ *felicem gladium*. All of these details confirm that weapon dedications had an accepted, albeit sporadic, tradition within the Roman military, if only among elite officers and commanders,⁷⁴² and that they were subject to variation and innovation. Consequently, a certain degree of cultural overlap may have existed between legionaries and auxiliaries stationed along the Rhine regarding weapons as potential votive offerings. At the very least, the practice would not have been disparaged as a non-Roman, barbarian custom, thereby allowing both Roman and non-Roman adherents alike to circulate and transform it in this new, frontier environment through prolonged exposure.

Legionary and Auxiliary Weapon Compatibility

In contrast with tombstones and traditional, Greco-Roman *vota* erected by soldiers, we are almost completely uninformed as to the unit affiliations of individuals who deposited weapons in either cultic or funerary settings. The typical method of dealing with this problem is to assign particular equipment – and therefore customs – to the legions and to the *auxilia*. However, this approach is not without its flaws, as it presumes a tidy material distinction between the two broad categories. Nevertheless, the previous sections have largely adhered to this approach for two reasons. First, it is important to acknowledge contrasts which can emerge

⁷⁴² Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 179 notes that it would have been an uncommon practice amongst regular soldiers due to the expense and punishment to be incurred for losing one’s equipment. The situation was, of course, altered once a soldier completed his term and was free to dispose of his equipment as he wished, provided that it was paid off.

within the material record, such as the propensity for interment as opposed to cremation amongst indigenous populations of the north, as well as the general tradition of weapon deposits which existed there. These practices sometimes correspond with material discovered from the Roman period which may indicate the presence of auxiliaries (e.g. the graves at Wederath and Voerde-Mehrum; the helmet deposits of the Kops Plateau). Second, as in other chapters, the establishment of simplistic distinctions allows for a coarse baseline from which to refine analysis with intricate examples. The discussion above concerning legionary and Roman deposits has endeavored to complicate the matter of weapon depositions by suggesting that Roman soldiers also took part in this custom due to a preexisting cultural overlap and prolonged exposure to it while stationed on the Germanic frontier. This section will further blur the distinction between legionary and auxiliary by closing the supposed gap between their equipment types during the first century, thereby increasing the ambiguity of dedicants' identities, and highlighting a shared practice of weapon deposition.

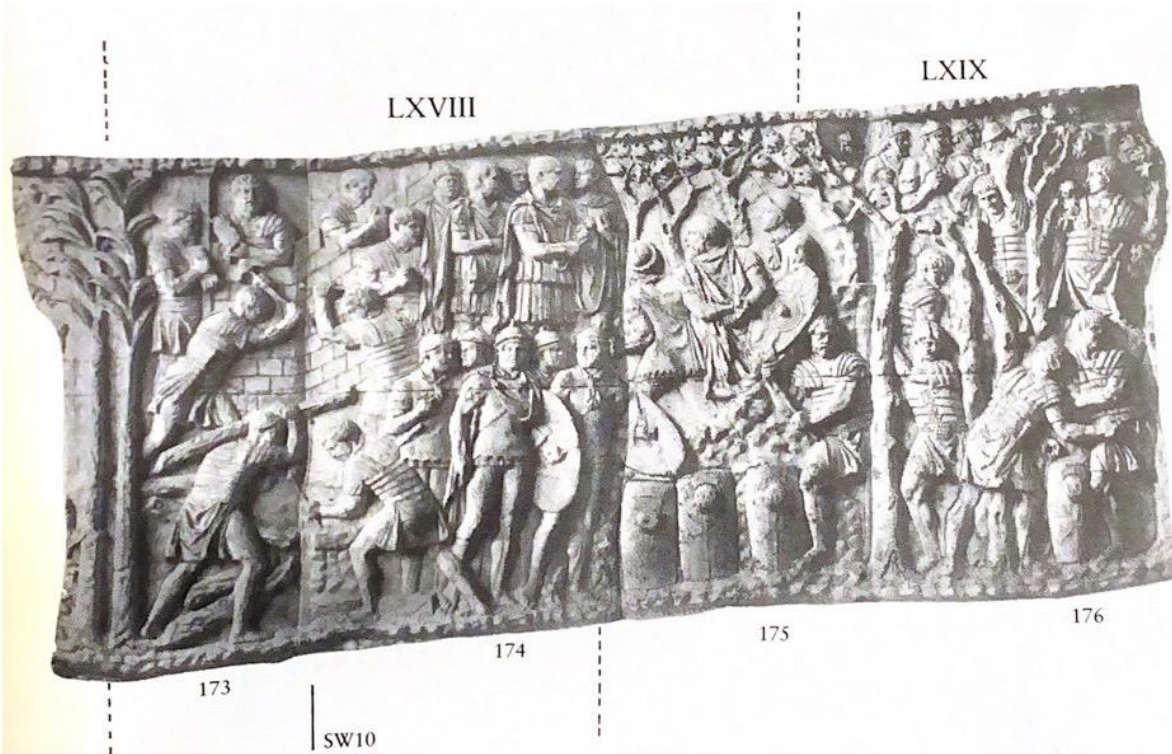


PLATE XLIX: Scene lxviii, 'A prisoner is brought in'; Scene lxix, 'Legionaries wood-clearing'

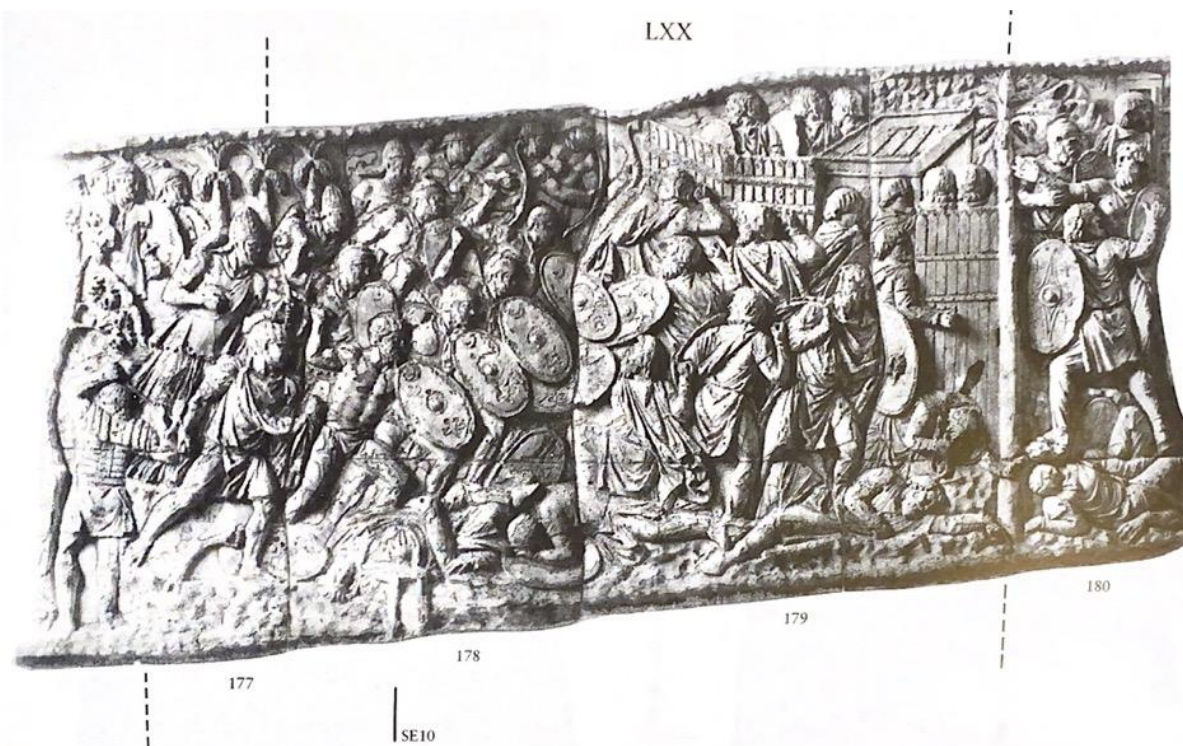


PLATE L: Scene lxx, 'The advance-guard in action'; Scene lxxi, 'Storming of a Dacian fortress'

Fig. 14: Plate XLIX, Scene lxxix and Plate L, Scene lxx of Trajan's Column panel implying distinction in uniform between legionaries and auxiliaries

After Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*.

The authors also identify the attacking Roman forces on Panel L, Scene lxx as "auxiliaries and irregular troops." Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, 108.

To highlight the differences between the equipment of legionary and auxiliary soldiers, scholars have mainly used visual evidence in the form of stone depictions. Trajan's Column provides one of the clearest and most referenced sources for this position due to its straightforward and consistent separation of the two types (**Fig. 14**):

It has been a long-standing tacit assumption that auxiliary and legionary soldiers were differently equipped. This notion is founded on Trajan's Column, which shows several types of troops in Roman use, particularly two distinct classes of infantry. On the one hand there are those equipped with curved, rectangular shields, segmental armour, and practising engineering and specialist duties; on the other, there are those with flat, oval shields, mail shirts, and leggings. Suffice to say, the men in segmental armour perform tasks expected of legionary troops and are associated with legionary and Praetorian

standards. The other class of infantry are identical to cavalrymen with horses, so they may be identified as auxiliary infantry.⁷⁴³

Bishop and Coulston's concise description of the monument's patent contrast between the two groups highlights some of the main defensive gear which are most pertinent for this chapter; namely, shield and armor designs. Other military items also tend to fall in line with this categorization. Gravestones often give the impression that the *pilum* was emblematic of the legionary, as in the case of Caius Valerius Crispus whose Eighth Legion was stationed in Germania Superior during the latter first century AD onward (**Fig. 15**).⁷⁴⁴ Along with the *pilum*, the deceased Crispus is portrayed with the aforementioned curved, rectangular shield, and a *gladius*. One can therefore speak to a certain level of congruence between public and private depictions of legionaries. Moreover, this correspondence extends to the literary sphere as well.⁷⁴⁵ Following a Roman rout of Caratacus' army during the invasion of Britain, Tacitus renders an unequivocal distinction: legionaries carry the *pilum* and *gladius*, while the *auxilia* are armed with spears (*hastae*) and the longer broadsword (*spatha*).⁷⁴⁶ Some archaeological finds also sustain a distinction in soldiers' paraphernalia during the first century, with legionaries adhering primarily to the Hagenau type helmet and slowly adopting the auxiliary Weisenau type over time (**Fig.**

⁷⁴³ Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 254.

⁷⁴⁴ CIL 13, 7574. Pictorial evidence associating *pila* with legionaries and praetorians: Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 129, 150 225; Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 258; see also Coulston, "Three Legionaries," 11f.

⁷⁴⁵ For literary references which connect legionaries with the *pilum*, see Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 257 n.11. For a general discussion of the archaeological, visual, and literary evidence supporting a legionary/auxiliary equipment distinction, see Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 257-259. Schumacher "Ein Trevererkrieger," 273, claims that Tacitus (Tac. *Ann.* 3.42) describes Treveran defectors during the revolt of Florus and Sacrovir of 21 AD as having been armed similarly to legionaries. However, this is not the case, as Tacitus merely claims that the Treveran cavalry were imbued with training and service (*militia disciplinaque nostra habebatur*) in the Roman army.

⁷⁴⁶ Tac. *Ann.* 12.35: *et si auxiliaribus resisterent, gladiis ac pilis legionariorum, si huc verterent, spathis et hastis auxiliarium sternebantur.*

10).⁷⁴⁷ Given the combination of mutually supportive source material, an equipment-based division of legionaries and auxiliaries seems initially acceptable,⁷⁴⁸ and it would further buttress the socio-cultural gulf which existed between Roman legionaries and the reformed *auxilia* of the first century AD.⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁷ For the period 12 BC – AD 120, legionary and auxiliary equipment exhibited clear distinctions, with legionaries typically carrying Hagenau helmets and rectangular shields, and auxiliaries carrying Weisenau helmets and oval shields; see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 61, also Fig. 2.2.

⁷⁴⁸ Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 255; Coulston, “Three Legionaries,” 11f.

⁷⁴⁹ Roymans, “Ethnic Recruitment,” 140.



Fig. 15: Tombstone of fully equipped legionary of the 1st c. AD
CIL 13, 7574
Wiesbaden

Simplistic categories are inherently attractive for the structured foundation they bring to otherwise bewildering, non-linear arrays of evidence, but they often dissolve upon closer scrutiny. While the disparity between legionary and auxiliary was assuredly strongest during the first century, the process of assimilation was also underway, continuously narrowing the gulf so that distinctions between the two had largely vanished by the third century AD.⁷⁵⁰ In revisiting several examples already noted above, we can see that they break from a tidy separation between legionaries and auxiliaries. The equipment distinctions present on Trajan's Column are so unvarying and comprehensive that they must be largely symbolic, perhaps to reinforce the differing social status of the soldiers to onlookers.⁷⁵¹ Additionally, the manner in which the monument almost universally depicts auxiliaries as frontline shock troops while legionaries either wait in the rear or busy themselves with construction activities evokes Tacitus' claim that victory gained without loss of Roman blood is all the more glorious.⁷⁵² This, too, was an artificial representation which adhered more to an ideal than to reality, making the Column an imperfect source for plumbing the finer details of soldiers' kits. Turning back to the tombstone of Crispus mentioned above, it is possible to discern peculiarities in his equipment which further break down the dichotomy between legionary and auxiliary soldiers. While it is evident that Crispus carries the *pilum* and a curved shield – telltale attributes of the legions – he is also clearly wearing the leggings and non-segmental, chainmail armor (*lorica hamata*) which is presumed to have been assigned to the *auxilia*.⁷⁵³ The *frater* who commissioned this final representation of the deceased would have been at pains to customize the relief to his fellow

⁷⁵⁰ Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 259; Coulston, "Three Legionaries," 12; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 62.

⁷⁵¹ Maxfield, "Pre-Flavian Forts," 66f.; Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 259.

⁷⁵² Tac. Agr. 35: *ingens victoriae decus citra Romanum sanguinem bellandi, et auxilium, si pellerentur*; see also Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 259.

⁷⁵³ Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 95, 254.

soldier as much as possible, making this tombstone and others like it more reliable sources for gauging the actual circumstances on the ground when compared to official artwork of the Roman state.

Inspection of other artifacts from the frontier indicate that the degree of overlap between equipment types within army units extends beyond pictorial representations. The previously discussed graves at Wederath serve as prime examples of this phenomenon. While Grave 2215 and Grave 1344 represent continuity of pre-Roman burial practices, the interred objects signal a mixture of supposedly distinct legionary and auxiliary gear. Grave 2215 contains both a native-made spearhead and an axe head,⁷⁵⁴ the latter being commonly associated with the legionary's toolkit and function as both soldier and builder while on campaign, as depicted on Trajan's Column.⁷⁵⁵ Similarly, Grave 1344 includes a *pilum* head, which Nicolay renders as "atypical" for a grave he believes probably belonged to an auxiliary soldier, in keeping with the Middle Rhine's maintenance of weapon deposition.⁷⁵⁶ However, we must balance any atypicality in the material record against our own preconceptions of what we expect to find, as well as the interpretive tools available to us. While the *pilum* is often assumed to have been primarily confined to legionaries,⁷⁵⁷ its presence at Wederath in graves which most scholars assign to auxiliary soldiers requires a reassessment of our analytical framework.⁷⁵⁸ The weapon may very

⁷⁵⁴ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 200; Schumacher, "Ein Trevererkrieger," 266, 267f., Fig. 3; Waurick, "Zur Rüstung," 14.

⁷⁵⁵ Schumacher, "Ein Trevererkrieger," 271, Fig. 4, 5. Tac. *Ann.* 3.46 also clearly indicates that the *dolabra* could be used as a weapon for the *acies legionum* if the *pilum* and *gladius* were ineffective.

⁷⁵⁶ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 200; see also Waurick, "Zur Rüstung," 15, 22f. For *pila* in other graves at Wederath: Haffner, "Wederath-Belginum 1. Teil," Nr. 689, Taf. 184; Haffner, "Wederath-Belginum 2. Teil," 45, Nr. 697, Taf. 222.3.

⁷⁵⁷ Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 258.

⁷⁵⁸ Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 120 finds the *pilum* to have been "typical equipment of an auxiliary soldier."

well have not only belonged to an auxiliary, but also have been of native manufacture.⁷⁵⁹ As another example, it is unclear whether the Mainz type *gladii* found in both graves are authentic products of the army, or native imitations, thereby rendering the all-important identity of their owner debatable.⁷⁶⁰ The uncertainty of these particular cases is compounded by the wider debate concerning whether or not auxiliaries carried the *gladius* at all, and the pace of its adoption within the *auxilia*.⁷⁶¹ Emphasis should therefore be placed on the holistic composition of the graves rather than on any number of individual items.⁷⁶² When viewed in this light, the two Wederath graves exhibit a range of objects which defy simple categorization, comprised as they are of various native, Roman, and Roman imitation weaponry and goods. In summary, the fact that these graves harmonize with pre-Roman burial patterns with newly appended equipment from service in the army is insufficient to automatically assign them to auxiliary troops indigenous to the region, unless we are willing to relinquish the notion of clear-cut equipment distinctions.

Auxiliary camps of the frontier also indicate that a variety of items traditionally earmarked for legionaries within scholarship must have also been fairly common amongst the *auxilia* during the early Empire.⁷⁶³ Despite Tacitus' claim that the *gladius* and *pilum* were reserved for the legions, excavations have unearthed both weapon types at auxiliary installations,

⁷⁵⁹ In order to categorize the finds of Grave 1344 with a Roman unit type, Wells argues that the *pilum*, in conjunction with the *gladius* and shield, was standard for *auxilia*; see Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 120. Native manufacture: Waurick, "Zur Rüstung," 15.

⁷⁶⁰ Whereas Nicolay believes the *gladius* of Grave 2215 to be Roman, Schumacher finds that the *gladii* of both graves are imitations of Roman models, due to their lack of inscriptions, stamps, or any other markings which would indicate official Roman military production; see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 200; Schumacher, "Ein Trevererkrieger," 269, 271; see also Waurick, "Zur Rüstung," 15.

⁷⁶¹ Maxfield, "Pre-Flavian Forts," 71 notes that auxiliary infantry would have the same basic need for a short sword as their legionary counterparts. Compare with Tac. *Ann.* 12.35. Roymans, "Ethnic Recruitment," 140 n.11 argues that there was a "rapid replacement" of native swords with Roman *gladii* during the early Empire.

⁷⁶² Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 255.

⁷⁶³ Oldenstein, *Zur Ausrüstung*, 55; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 61.

confirming – in concert with grave deposits – their prevalence amongst indigenous troops.⁷⁶⁴ Similarly, while the majority of daggers (*pugiones*) have been found in legionary fortresses, auxiliary encampments have also yielded a significant number, indicating a clear overlap in usage between the two forces.⁷⁶⁵ The iconic *lorica segmentata* so famously designated for legionaries on Trajan’s Column seems to have been available to auxiliaries as well, with fragments of the armor discovered at various installations associated with the *auxilia*.⁷⁶⁶ Together, the distribution of equipment at military bases and outposts conveys a picture of the Roman army in which weaponry and armor were used fairly interchangeably amongst the different infantry types.⁷⁶⁷

Other aspects of the Roman state’s recruitment efforts and the progression of armament support the lack of distinction between the equipment of both types of troops. Arguably one of the most influential results of the Augustan military reforms was the creation of the *auxilia* as a genuine and permanent apparatus of the Roman army.⁷⁶⁸ Along with this consolidation came proportional changes in the realm of outfitting the new units. Although there was no strict uniformity, a degree of regularization seems to have granted auxiliaries access to the cache of Roman army equipment and increasingly exempted them from having to furnish their irregular units with weapons.⁷⁶⁹ Moreover, citizenship grants to auxiliaries who completed their term of

⁷⁶⁴ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 30, also 61; auxiliary camps: Deschler-Erb, *Ad Arma!*, 19.

⁷⁶⁵ Thiel and Zanier, “Römische Dolche,” 63 tally 90 daggers or dagger components from legionary locations, 24 pieces from auxiliary installations, and 32 pieces from military locations where there is ambiguity as to the composition of the occupying force.

⁷⁶⁶ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 21; Maxfield, “Pre-Flavian Forts,” 66, 68-71; see also Deschler-Erb, “Römische Militaria,” 19 n.79. Bishop and Coulston are more hesitant in their assessment, claiming that, while equipment overlap certainly may have occurred, segmental armor was typically reserved for legionaries; see Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 95, 98, 259. Coulston elsewhere suggested that the *lorica segmentata* was not conducive to the skirmishing combat associated with the *auxilia*; see Coulston, “Three Legionaries,” 11f.

⁷⁶⁷ Maxfield, “Pre-Flavian Forts,” 72.

⁷⁶⁸ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 60f.

⁷⁶⁹ The earliest auxiliaries likely provided their own arms; see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 60, 166.

service also meant that the number of subsequently eligible men for the legions increased by way of indigenous veterans' children. Enfranchisement through the military would have had an especially magnified effect on the German frontier, where troop concentration was the highest of the first century.⁷⁷⁰ These important facts complicate the notion of weapon exclusivity, as well as the equation of auxiliaries with natives and legionaries with non-natives. The resulting ambiguity will have important consequences for interpreting equipment from ritual environments to be discussed below.

River Deposits

So far, this chapter has blurred distinctions between two potential analytical binaries – Roman/native weapon deposition and legionary/auxiliary weapon distribution. Having verified that significant overlap existed amongst these categories, the following sections will now turn to the evidence of deposits organized by find context using the interpretive framework established above. Various regions along the Rhine demonstrate prolonged periods of water deposition, ranging from pre-conquest to well into the Roman era.⁷⁷¹ Whereas previous examples have suggested a measure of uncertainty in the identities of the dedicants or the deceased (e.g. the Wederath graves, Vettius' legionary helmet from the Waal), votives retrieved from rivers and cult sites are rife with interpretive ambiguity.⁷⁷² This section will operate within this obscure realm to suggest that the mixed composition of weaponry retrieved from rivers can often safely

⁷⁷⁰ Derks and Roymans, "Returning Auxiliary Veterans," 124, 127 observe that while the Batavians had a long history of being recruited for the *auxilia*, they would have increasingly served in the legions as citizenship spread. The authors date the earliest attested Batavian legionary veterans (CIL 13, 7577; AE 1990, 740) to the early second century; *Ibid.*, 124 n.17.

⁷⁷¹ Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 37, 47; Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 32. For a catalogue and map of La Tène metal objects dredged from northern Gaul, see Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 84-87, Fig. 4.15.

⁷⁷² Riverine deposits are particularly difficult to assess; see Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 87; Künzl, "Gladiusdekorationen," 439; Künzl "Wasserfunde Römischer Gladii," 548; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 124; Brunaux, *The Celtic Gauls*, 95.

be interpreted as votive offerings from both legionary and auxiliary troops, indicating a shared ritual practice of deposition amongst soldiers of varying cultural backgrounds.

Overall, deposits in the Rhineland increased dramatically with the placement of an enormous number of troops there during the Roman period, and cluster mostly in the first century AD.⁷⁷³ Batavian territory is particularly well represented in terms of *militaria* recovered from rivers,⁷⁷⁴ which principally consist of both offensive and defensive weaponry,⁷⁷⁵ including a significant number of helmets found in the Rhine Delta and surrounding territories.⁷⁷⁶ The Waal at Nijmegen offers a robust example of the concentration of equipment which includes auxiliary and legionary gear at a location with no history of water deposition.⁷⁷⁷ Among the so-called legionary items is a square-socketed *pilum* head as well as fittings belonging to plate armor.⁷⁷⁸ Of course, as we have seen, auxiliaries also seem to have had access to these pieces. Likewise, a shield *umbo*, two Mainz type *gladii*, and a number of helmets dredged from the watercourse comprise an equally mixed variety and cannot be definitively assigned to either group of soldiers.⁷⁷⁹ Further upriver at Mogontiacum, fifteen Mainz type *gladii* and *cingula* as

⁷⁷³ Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 47; Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 32f.; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 71.

⁷⁷⁴ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 17, 87.

⁷⁷⁵ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 71.

⁷⁷⁶ 44 helmets or components are documented from non-military contexts in Rhine Delta region Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 16. Roymans counts 60 helmets during the entire Roman period which have been recovered from water. 48 of these have been discovered in the first century AD, and most of these from the pre-Flavian period; see Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 32f., also 32 n.73, Fig. 12, Appendix 2.

⁷⁷⁷ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 185f. For a detailed discussion of the finds from the Waal at Nijmegen, see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 126-28.

⁷⁷⁸ *Pilum*: Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 30, Pl.27. Plate armor: Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 22, Pl. 8.

⁷⁷⁹ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 126 suggests that the bronze *umbo* probably belonged to a first century auxiliary. However, Nicolay also states that three shield bosses from Rhine and Waal may have belonged to either legionaries or auxiliaries; *Ibid.*, 24, Fig. 2.6. Swords: Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 126. Helmets: Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 126, Fig. 2.3. These helmets run the gamut of types traditionally associated with legionary, auxiliary cohort, and auxiliary cavalry. See also, Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 186.

well as eight *pugiones* were also retrieved from the Rhine dating to ca. 27 AD, adding to the overwhelming tally of early imperial equipment discovered.⁷⁸⁰

One might simply attribute these accumulations at Nijmegen and Mainz to the extensive military presence at both locations and to the accidental loss of items attendant upon such large operations.⁷⁸¹ It is a basic truism that more Roman army traffic along and across the Rhine around the turn of the millennium equates to an increased likelihood of accidental equipment loss.⁷⁸² Accidental loss of equipment is indeed attested on a Carlisle writing tablet on which a decurion reports the gear missing from his cavalry *turma*.⁷⁸³ Extending this phenomenon elsewhere would seem to account for the large concentrations of weapons at Mainz and other locations along the Lower Rhine where there was frequent cross-traffic during the turbulent early Principate as nothing more than transport leakage and oversight.⁷⁸⁴ Moreover, changing environmental circumstances over long periods of time could also result in chance depositions of material from settlements or camps, especially along riverbanks.⁷⁸⁵ Finally, none of the recovered objects bear a dedicatory inscription typically accompanying a votive within the Empire.⁷⁸⁶

Although the arguments in favor of accidental equipment loss appear valid from a general perspective, a comprehensive assessment of the evidence more attuned to the specifics of ritual

⁷⁸⁰ Künzl “Wasserfunde Römischer *Gladii*,” 550.

⁷⁸¹ Proponents of accidental loss: Klumbach, *Römische Helme*; Robinson, *Armour of Imperial Rome*; Künzl “Wasserfunde Römischer *Gladii*.” See also Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 29 n.29; Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 44; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 181 n.130.

⁷⁸² Künzl “Wasserfunde Römischer *Gladii*,” 551.

⁷⁸³ Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 263; see also Tomlin, “Roman Manuscripts,” 55-63.

⁷⁸⁴ The military layout of Mainz included a *castellum* across the Rhine. Künzl, “Gladiusdekorationen,” “Abb. 22; Wells, *German Policy of Augustus*, Fig. 7. Loss during transport: Künzl “Wasserfunde Römischer *Gladii*,” 564; Künzl, “Gladiusdekorationen,” 438ff. See Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 183f. for an extensive rebuttal of Künzl’s position. See also Klumbach, “Ein römischer Legionarshelm,” 98-100; Robinson, *Armour of Imperial Rome*, 58.

⁷⁸⁵ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 181; Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 47 n.57.

⁷⁸⁶ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 189.

deposition indicates that the situation is more complicated. First, the sheer number of weapons retrieved from rivers in the frontier region outweighs by far those found on land. For example, around eighty percent of imperial helmets listed in the catalogues of Klumbach and Robinson were discovered in watery contexts.⁷⁸⁷ While we must account for the likelihood of unintended depositions,⁷⁸⁸ it is unwise to interpret all river finds as the result of river battles or incautious soldiers losing only certain types of equipment while crossing (**Fig. 16**).⁷⁸⁹ If accidental loss were the primary mode of deposition on the reasoning that more troops and conflict equate to higher numbers of gear, then we should expect to find, for example, a great many specimens dating from the great Augustan campaigns into Germania Libera. However, despite being a fundamental base of operations for Drusus' offensives, only two "legionary" Hagenau type helmets have been found in the Rhine by Mainz.⁷⁹⁰ In total, fifty-four helmets have been recovered from the Lower Rhine, forty-two of which date to the first century AD and focus primarily in the pre-Flavian period. Therefore, numerical concentrations offer the first step toward challenging the position of purely accidental loss.⁷⁹¹

⁷⁸⁷ Oldenstein, "Two Roman Helmets," 36; van Enkevort and Willems, "Roman Cavalry Helmets," 133f.; Klumbach, "Ein römischer Legionarshelm"; Klumbach, *Römische Helme*, Taf. 55; Robinson, *Armour of Imperial Rome*.

⁷⁸⁸ Thiel and Zanier, "Römische Dolche," 59, 65; Wegner, *Die vorgeschichtlichen Flußfunde*, 65; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 182, 184.

⁷⁸⁹ Thiel and Zanier, "Römische Dolche," 65; Oldenstein, "Two Roman Helmets," 36; Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 30f.; Bishop, "O Fortuna," 2f.

⁷⁹⁰ Helmets: Wegner, *Die vorgeschichtlichen Flußfunde*, 65; see also Thiel and Zanier, "Römische Dolche," 65. Wegner also notes the curious fact that we only encounter items along the riverbanks, and not in the middle of the river itself, requiring us to believe that troops only lost gear upon entering and exiting the river rather than at the deepest point where the current is strongest. Mainz and its military value: Wells, *German Policy of Augustus*, 95f., 100, 138-46.

⁷⁹¹ Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 47; Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 33.

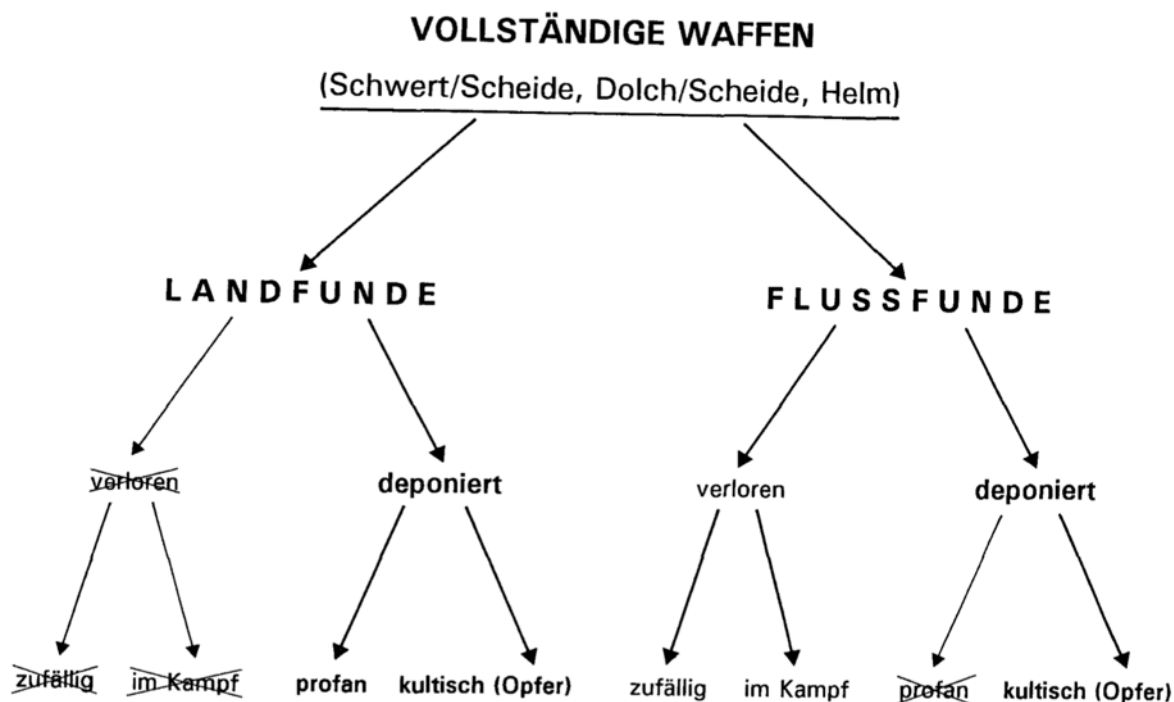


Abb. 1: Theoretisches Verlustmodell vollständiger oder fast vollständiger römischer Waffen.

Fig. 16: Theoretical model for land and water depositions of *militaria*
Thiel and Zanier, “Römische Dolche,” Abb. 1

Chronological patterns also suggest that river finds are perhaps even more likely to represent votive offerings rather than lost items. Nicolay has observed the existence of certain quantitative “peaks” in water deposits at specific locations in the Batavian territory, which reach their apex during the first century AD.⁷⁹² These high numbers can only partially be attributed to Rome’s more fortified presence in the area, and much more credibly overlap with the long-standing indigenous custom of making river offerings which prevailed during the pre-Roman

⁷⁹² Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 182, 184; Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 88; see also, Fitzpatrick, “Deposition of La Tène,” 181.

period.⁷⁹³ This correspondence reflects a continuity of practice rather than a developing trend of accidental loss.⁷⁹⁴

Finally, we must consider the value of the weapons in both a literal and figurative sense. Since the cost of basic weaponry was deducted from a soldier's pay,⁷⁹⁵ each man would have treated his service equipment with the utmost care, making it highly unlikely that deposits should be found in such prevailing concentrations as the results of accidental loss. Furthermore, many of the items recovered, such as helmets and daggers, would have been conspicuously expensive purchases for the individual soldier, given their level of ornamentation (**Fig. 17**).⁷⁹⁶ Their elevated monetary worth would certainly have carried equally heightened concern for their preservation, particularly when the owner was confronted with the precarious task of crossing a river.⁷⁹⁷ Seventy-five percent of daggers recovered from rivers were discovered in their sheaths but without their related *cingula*.⁷⁹⁸ The strong uniformity of find circumstances for this weapon type, combined with the fact that swords, daggers, and scabbards do not come loose from *cingula* by accident, make chance loss unlikely.⁷⁹⁹ Rather, the *pugio* seems to have been an item selected for offering specifically because of its prestigious status in terms of both expense, ostentation, and intimate connection with the soldier dedicant. If chance loss were the primary mode of deposition, one would expect the find material to include much more varied equipment;

⁷⁹³ Haynes, "Religion in the Roman Army," 119; Laursen, "Weapons in Water," 17, 19.

⁷⁹⁴ Haynes, "Religion in the Roman Army," 116f.; Laursen, "Weapons in Water," 16f., 19; Wegner, *Die vorgeschichtlichen Flußfunde*, 25.

⁷⁹⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 1.17: *denis in diem assibus animam et corpus aestimari: hinc vestem arma tentoria... redimi*; MacMullen, "Inscriptions on Armor," 24; Gilliam, "Deposita," 237f.; Breeze et al., "Soldiers' Burials at Camelon," 93-95; Speidel, "Weapons Keeper," 132, 134.

⁷⁹⁶ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 170-72.

⁷⁹⁷ Bishop, "O Fortuna," 6.

⁷⁹⁸ Thiel and Zanier, "Römische Dolche," 63, also 66, Abb.3.

⁷⁹⁹ Thiel and Zanier, "Römische Dolche," 68 stress the completeness of weapons found in all contexts as a deciding factor for interpreting them as votive offerings.

however, *militaria* dredged from rivers are surprisingly consistent in that they represent some of the costliest and most personal gear a soldier carried.⁸⁰⁰



Fig. 17: Cavalry helmet from Xanten-Wardt
Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, Abb. 29

⁸⁰⁰ Thiel and Zanier, "Römische Dolche," 66.

Roman army veterans dedicating one or more items of their gear are the most probable candidates for the river depositions we encounter. The average active-duty soldier would not have been monetarily capable of parting with such valuable weaponry which was indispensable to his profession. Only upon earning his *honesta missio* would much of the soldier's kit – presumably fully paid off by that point – become functionally useless, and therefore open for him to sell or offer as a votive to the river deity which protected him during his long term of service at the post.⁸⁰¹ Rather than indicating accumulations of accidental loss, the profundity of weapon finds near army camps from this perspective instead “suggests that veterans deposited equipment within sight of their former post immediately after discharge.”⁸⁰² Strong evidence for the continued indigenous practice of river worship can be found in the numerous inscribed dedications to the Rhine which also firmly substantiate its perceived significance amongst the military community (**Fig. 18**).⁸⁰³

⁸⁰¹ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 189; Roymans, “Sword or the Plough,” 34; Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 47; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 140. Officers represent a prominent exception, and could afford to offer weapons while on active duty; see CIL 10, 7257 discussed above.

⁸⁰² Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 189.

⁸⁰³ E.g. CIL 13, 7790: *IOM et Genio loci et Rheno*; CIL 13, 7791: *IOM genio loci flumini Rhe[no]*; CIL 13, 8810: *IOM dis patriis et praesidibus huius loci Oceanique et R(h)eno*; CIL 13, 8811: *IOM Iunoni Reginae et Minerviae Sanctae Genio huiusque loci Neptuno Oceano et Rheno dis omnibusque*; AE 1969/70, 434: *Rheno Patri*. It is notable that these more formal, inscribed dedications were erected at the behest of officers – *beneficarii consulares* and *legati Augusti/legionis*. In the case of AE 1969/70, 434, the dedicant, Oppius Severus, has been identified as belonging to the Opii of the Picenum region of Italy, making his dedication to “Father Rhine” all the more eminent for its cultural adaptation; see Kuhnle, *Argentorate*, 46f. Veteran dedications to river deities: Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 140.



Fig. 18: Votive altar to *Rheno Patri*
AE 1969/70, 434

In contrast with these more traditionally Roman dedications, one of the most striking aspects of weapon votive deposits is their private, intensely personalized nature. Lacking dedicatory inscriptions, the objects connect “to the pre-Roman origin of weapon deposition at cult places and in rivers, which did not involve the addition of inscriptions to votive

offerings,”⁸⁰⁴ and signify the individual’s private connection with the deity.⁸⁰⁵ However, this is not proof that dedicants were all indigenous soldiers who simply transferred an esteemed cultural practice from their homelands to their new vocation in the Roman army.⁸⁰⁶ The absence of votive inscriptions which might otherwise detail a dedicant’s legion, cohort, or *ala*, as well as the shared armament reservoir between legionary and auxiliary forces demand that the river deposits retain their ambiguous status with regard to unit types. Nevertheless, this uncertainty is not such a great obstacle for identifying the process of cultural exchange if we interpret it as reflective of a developing votive practice within the Roman army during the first century. The obscurity of the weapons’ owners echoes the chaotic interchanges of ideas and customs occurring between Roman and non-Roman during the early Empire which resulted in new and distinctive water offerings specifically tailored to soldiers in all branches of the army.⁸⁰⁷ Operational proximity and a common livelihood placed legionaries and auxiliaries in constant cultural dialogue, and led to the frequent borrowing of concepts and styles to craft a shared military experience.⁸⁰⁸ Rather than interpreting weapon deposition as an archaic, indigenous, holdover tradition which “survived” into the Roman period due to the influx of auxiliary troops who may have subsequently influenced legionaries,⁸⁰⁹ I suggest that the custom was fundamentally altered with

⁸⁰⁴ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 184. *Punctim* inscriptions found on helmets existed only to denote belonging within a military setting and it is doubtful they have any ritual significance. By contrast, Künzl places great emphasis on the need for inscriptions, which he believes should serve as “das erste Kriterium” for assigning a religious character to an object; see Künzl “Wasserfunde Römischer *Gladii*,” 563, also 555, 557.

⁸⁰⁵ Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 75.

⁸⁰⁶ Roymans notes that offering weapons in rivers was probably practiced by native auxiliaries, but also recognizes the possible involvement of legionaries; compare Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 47 and Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 34.

⁸⁰⁷ Laursen, “Weapons in Water,” 7 notes that waterborne objects should be viewed as a series of categories occurring over long periods of time rather than as a uniform phenomenon.

⁸⁰⁸ See the development of auxiliary cavalry tombstone designs in Chapter 1.

⁸⁰⁹ As in Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 184.

the advent of Rome as the new frontier created a novel environment in which soldiers – both legionary and auxiliary – acted as individual cultural agents and reshaped its significance.

Weapon Deposits at Empel

Whereas interpreting weapon deposits obtained from rivers is laden with ambiguity due to environmental circumstances and the possibility of accidental loss, archaeologically attested sanctuaries provide no such difficulty. These cult places embody a more formal significance in the sense that they are clearly designated locations with demarcated ritual spaces, and contain identifiable structures. Furthermore, they frequently have a long pedigree of deposition which pre-dates the Roman period, similar to that of rivers. Under the early Empire, many pre-Roman sanctuaries continued to function, and even gained newfound significance as their former open-air layouts were furnished with stone structures, and, in some cases, eventually with monumental Gallo-Roman edifices around 100 AD.⁸¹⁰ As with river deposits, some of these cult places yield a great number of weapons, indicating that their main function was to service the martial nature of warriors and the deities whom they sought out for protection during both the La Tène and Roman eras.⁸¹¹ Therefore, river and sanctuary equipment finds render mutually supportive evidence for the existence of a shared military cultic practice,⁸¹² which reached its apex during the first century.⁸¹³

The cult place at modern Empel (**Fig. 19; Fig. 20**) is a particularly important location for the assessment of frontier weapon deposition in that it represents “the first native-Roman

⁸¹⁰ Roymans, “Hercules,” 230.

⁸¹¹ Pre-Roman deposits in Northern Gaul: Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 36f.; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 177, 237-44, Appendix 4. First century deposits along the frontier: Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 87.

⁸¹² Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 90.

⁸¹³ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 177, 181, 251.

sanctuary in the Lower Rhine area with a definitely Late Iron Age (= pre-Augustan) origin” that included a number of military weapons, but no buildings.⁸¹⁴ The earliest stage can be dated to ca. 100 BC and seems to have been comprised of a stake palisade demarcating ritual space.⁸¹⁵ Just as the sanctuary itself was refashioned to include a stone temple under the Principate (**Fig. 21**),⁸¹⁶ the practice of depositing weapons at the site was also transformed by new adherents in the Roman army.⁸¹⁷ This section will evaluate the weapon finds deposited at Empel as well as their utility in gauging the process of cultural exchange which transpired and resulted in a localized expression of religion and martiality during the first century.⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁴ Roymans and Derks, “Summary,” 192. Weaponry: Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 242; Roymans and Derks, “Der Tempel von Empel,” 489; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 81.

⁸¹⁵ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 120, 210; Spickermann, “Als die Götter,” 252.

⁸¹⁶ For a reconstruction of the Gallo-Roman temple, see Roymans and Derks, “Der Tempel von Empel,” Abb. 3.

⁸¹⁷ Continuity of depositional practices: van Driel–Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 92; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 233. A monumental stone temple was added during Flavian period, possibly preceded by a smaller, wooden structure; see Roymans and Derks, “Summary,” 192; Roymans and Derks, “Ein keltisch-Römischer Kultbezirk,” 447; Roymans and Aarts, “Coins, Soldiers,” 345; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 120.

⁸¹⁸ First century concentration of deposits at Empel: Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 49; Roymans and Derks, “Summary,” 193; van Driel–Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 102; Roymans and Derks, “Der Tempel von Empel,” 489f.; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 71, 81, 121f. Since there are no indications of settlements surrounding the temple, the finds must be associated with the temple itself; see Roymans and Derks, “Der Tempel von Empel,” 485; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 123f. The site was abandoned sometime during the third century AD; see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 71, 82, 120.

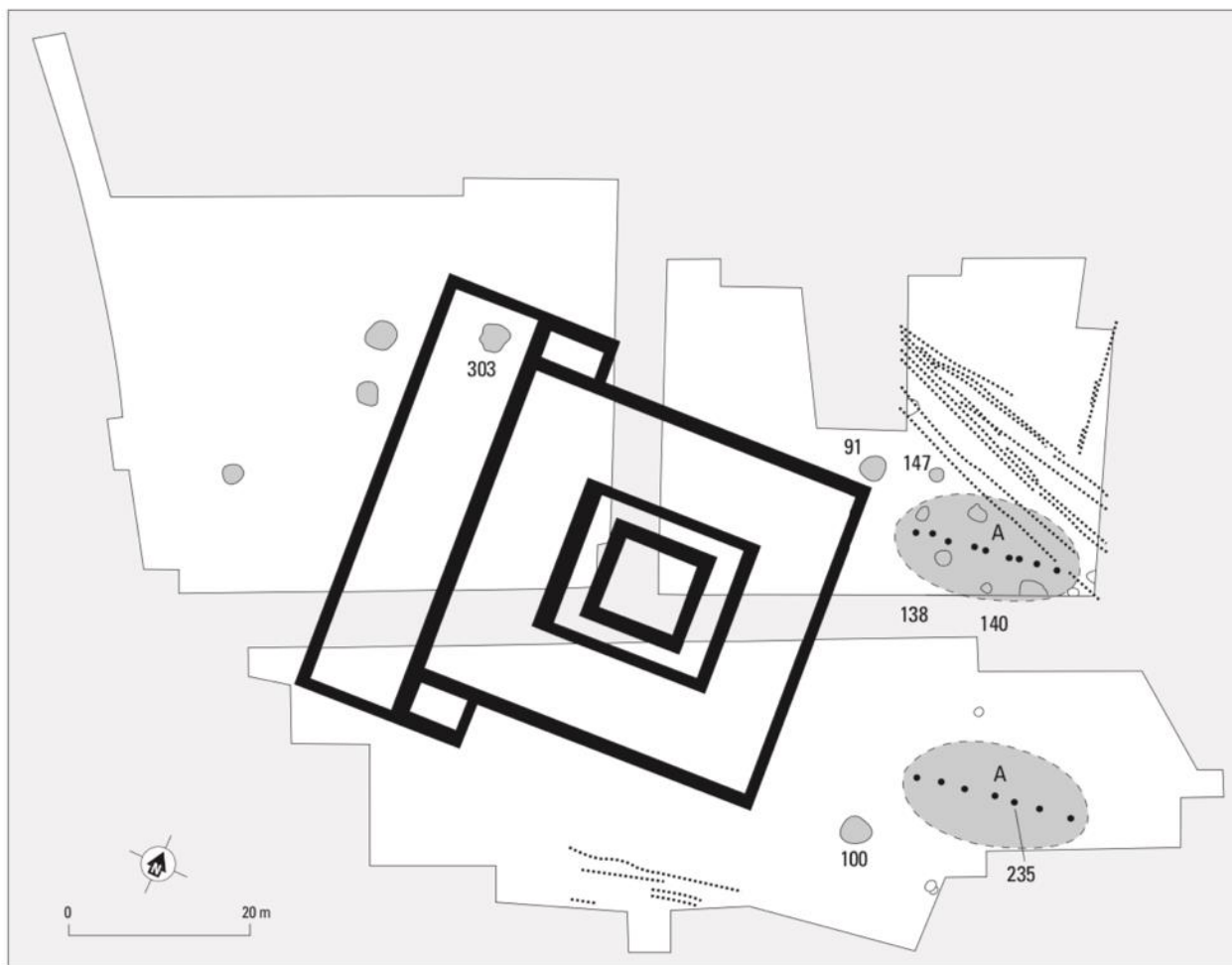


Fig. 3.27. The most important find locations of militaria at the cult place of Empel-'De Werf'. The numbers refer to the find contexts in table 3.6. Based partly on Roymans/Derks 1994, fig. 6.

A concentration of metal finds around both palisades of the open-air sanctuary.

Fig. 19: Layout and find locations at Empel
Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, Fig. 3.27

| object | period | find context | context dating | cat.nr. |
|---------------------------------|--------|-----------------|----------------|--|
| plate armour (type C2) | 2 | pit (140) | 25-40 | 82.9, 17, 19-21, 23 |
| <i>spatha</i> blade | 2 | idem. | 25-40 | 82.54 |
| lancehead (?) | LT | pit (138) | 40-50 | 82.53 |
| lancehead (2x) | - | idem | 40-50 | 82.47-48 |
| catapult bolt | - | idem | 40-50 | 82.41 |
| lance/spearhead | - | pit (147) | - | 82.46 |
| spearhead | LT | post hole (235) | - | 82.52 |
| shield grip, 'Germanic' | 3 | well (100) | 150-175 | 82.34 |
| lancehead | - | idem. | 150-175 | 82.49 |
| apron fitting | 2 | idem. | 150-175 | 82.73 |
| ring buckle fastener | 3 | idem. | 150-175 | 82.85 |
| pendant hg | 2 | idem. | 150-175 | 82.119 |
| looped strap fitting hg (2x) | 2 | idem. | 150-175 | 82.111-112 |
| bell hg | 2 | idem. | 150-175 | 82.96 |
| pendant hg | 3 | idem. | 150-175 | 82.123 |
| bit hg | - | idem. | 150-175 | 82.89 |
| <i>gladius</i> scabbard fitting | 2 | well (91) | c. 200 | 82.63 |
| set of hg (10 or 13x) | 2 | idem. | c. 200 | 82.127-128, 138-145 (82.106, 109-110) |
| complete helmet | 3 | well (303) | c. 200 | 82.25 |
| 'Germanic' <i>umbo</i> | 3 | idem. | c. 200 | 82.33 |
| chainmail fragment | 2 | idem. | c. 200 | 82.1 |
| bit fitting hg | 2 | idem. | c. 200 | 82.91 |
| strap fitting hg | 3 | idem. | c. 200 | 82.178 |
| bit hg | - | idem. | c. 200 | 82.88 |

Table 3.6. Overview of the militaria from Empel-'De Werf', with known find contexts and context datings (AD) (LT: La Tène, hg: horse gear). The well datings are based on Hiddink 1994.

Fig. 20: Military objects from Empel with known provenance
Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, Tab. 3.6

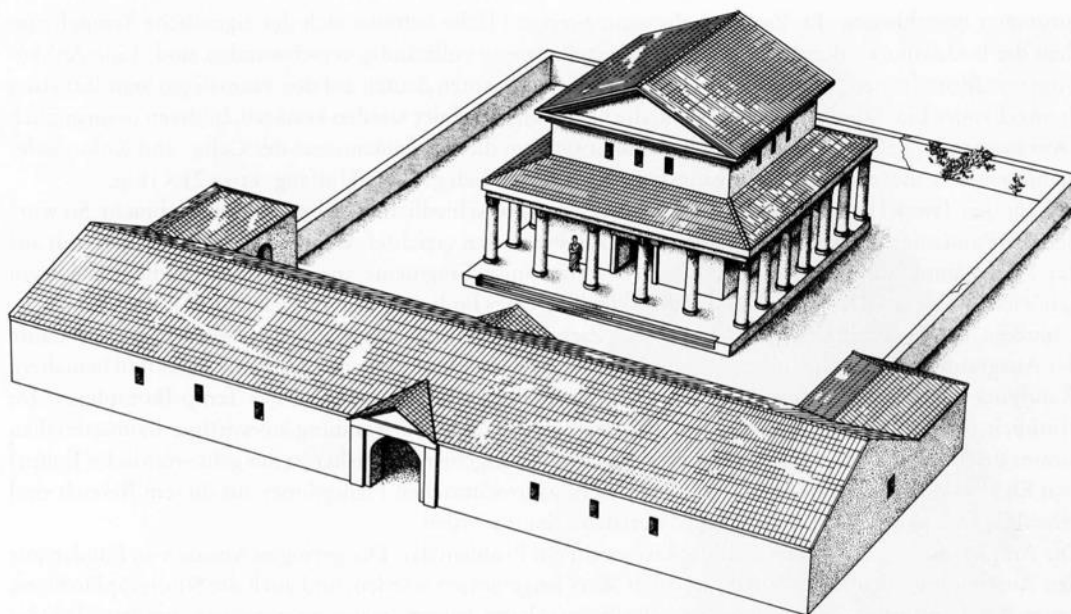


Abb. 3 Rekonstruktionsversuch des gallo-römischen Tempelkomplexes von Empel.

Fig. 21: Reconstruction of the temple complex at Empel
Roymans and Derks, “Der Tempel von Empel,” Abb. 3

Similar to the material found in river deposits, Empel boasts a variety of military equipment that cannot be restricted to a particular type of unit, with much of the gear retaining a high degree of ambiguity in this regard. Some of the items likely belonged to auxiliaries, especially given the copious amount of horse-related paraphernalia such as entire harnesses.⁸¹⁹ Additionally, two blade fragments probably came from *spathae* which were primarily reserved for auxiliary cavalry during the first century (**Fig. 22**),⁸²⁰ though legionary contingents should not be ruled out. Two spearheads found in Pit 138 date from the middle of the first century AD,⁸²¹ and would seem to accord with typical auxiliary armament, based on tombstone

⁸¹⁹ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 122; van Driel-Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 93.

⁸²⁰ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 27f., 121, Pl. 19; Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 82.

⁸²¹ van Driel-Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 99.

depictions and written accounts.⁸²² A *pilum* head recovered is presumed to have belonged to a legionary;⁸²³ however, as previously discussed, this is based upon a simplistic model of assigning weapons to either auxiliary or legionary soldiers that is not wholly accurate.⁸²⁴ Likewise, one cannot interpret the twenty-two plate armor components from Empel as distinctly “legionary.”⁸²⁵ Lastly, portions of sacrificed belt plates and chainmail could equally have belonged to legionaries or auxiliaries, since both are known to have worn *cingula* and *lorica hamata*.⁸²⁶

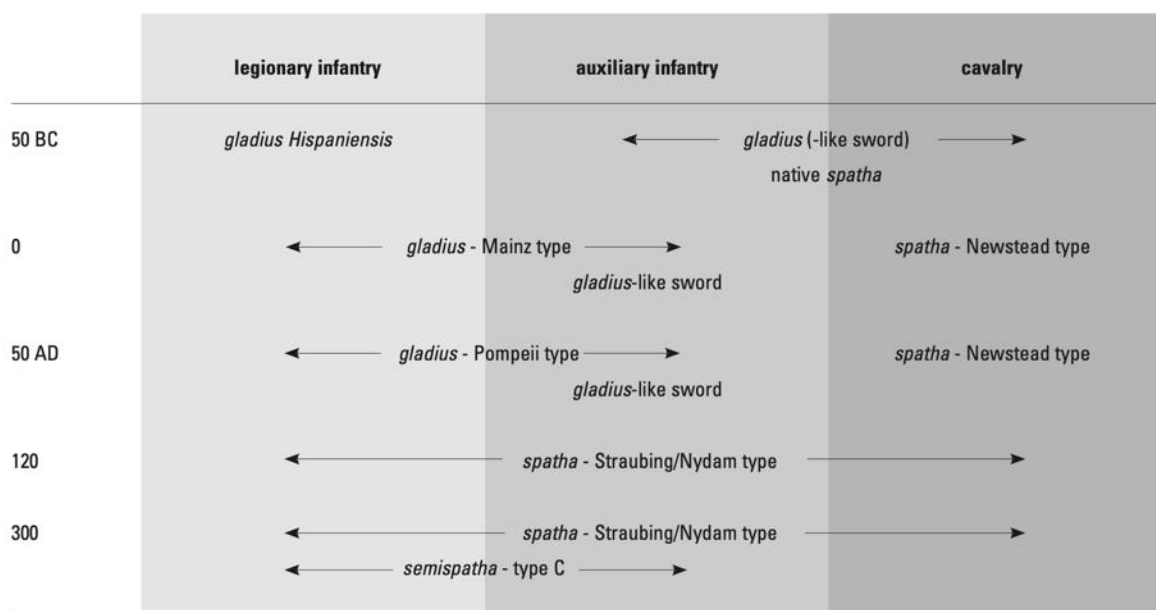


Fig. 2.7. Chronological survey of the types of sword used by the different military units during the Roman period.

Fig. 22: Chronological employment of sword variants according to unit type
Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, Fig. 2.7

⁸²² van Driel-Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 98; Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 78; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 30; Tac. *Ann.* 12.35; see footnote 745.

⁸²³ van Driel-Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 99, Fig. 8-11; An additional wooden shaft with a bronze socket has also been preserved, but should probably be associated with artillery due to its weight; see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 31, Pl. 28.

⁸²⁴ See Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 30.

⁸²⁵ Plate armor components: Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 22, 121, Fig. 2.5. Assignment to legionaries: van Driel-Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 99.

⁸²⁶ Van Driel-Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 99; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 21, Pl. 7.

Once again, our inability to readily delineate military equipment according to unit type should correspondingly inform our understanding of how cult worship developed over time at Empel. Despite passing recognition of the fact that the evidence includes both legionary and auxiliary materials,⁸²⁷ the discussion is largely framed as a matter of *continued* indigenous practice rather than a developing one that was marked with novelty and innovation.⁸²⁸ It is assumed that the massive influx of auxiliary recruits catalyzed the ritual evolution at Empel, namely, through Batavian veterans returning to their homeland.⁸²⁹ However, Haynes has challenged this interpretation, noting that there is “plenty of evidence to indicate that soldiers did dispose of their weaponry while in service,” as in the case of the previously discussed Kops Plateau deposits, which were placed in or near active army encampments.⁸³⁰ Moreover, as van Driel-Murray has pointed out, the presence of legionary equipment complicates the notion that Empel was strictly a Batavian cult site for native troops.⁸³¹ As we have seen, it is unproblematic to accept that auxiliaries, armed with what are often assumed to be uniquely legionary equipment (e.g. *pilum*, *lorica segmentata*), could have deposited the weapons at Empel. However, finds from the sanctuary also include a bronze plaque – perhaps originally affixed to a piece of equipment – with an inscription to the god Hercules Magusanus (Fig.12) that confirms legionaries were indeed active participants in the cult.⁸³² The dedicant, Julius Genialis, was

⁸²⁷ Van Driel-Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 99; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 179.

⁸²⁸ See Roymans and Derks, “Summary,” 193; Roymans and Derks, “Der Tempel von Empel,” 490f. Van Driel-Murray acknowledges that the custom underwent changes, but her discussion is centered on the maintenance of Batavian tradition; see Van Driel-Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 92. Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 233 cautions against assuming basic continuity.

⁸²⁹ Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 134 n.342; Roymans and Derks, “Der Tempel von Empel,” 490f.; Roymans and Derks, “Het heiligdom te Empel,” 10-39; van Driel-Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 106; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 52; Roymans, “Sword or the Plough,” 31f.; Roymans, “Hercules,” 232; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 181 Spickermann, “Als die Götter,” 253 argues that the issue of whether the dedicants were Batavian soldiers and veterans or civilians must remain open, but nevertheless believes a Batavian identity to be essential.

⁸³⁰ Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 234, also 195-97.

⁸³¹ van Driel-Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 106.

⁸³² In addition to a variety of weapons and the inscription, many other objects were discovered, including fibulae, coins, as well as a bronze figurine of Hercules Magusanus; see Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 46;

perhaps a native Batavian eligible for legionary service due to his family's prior enfranchisement – hence, the Julian *nomen*.⁸³³ Yet, however “theoretically possible” it is for Genialis to have been of local origin,⁸³⁴ the question itself is unnecessary for assessing cultural development at the sanctuary. Genialis might very well have been a legionary of non-Batavian origin who simply chose to engage with a deity of great importance in the region to which he was stationed. Together, the inscription as well as the equipment commonly associated with legions (e.g. *pila*, plate armor) indicate that Empel was not simply a religious installation for Batavians in the Roman army, but rather a zone of interaction for overlapping segments of natives, outsiders, and all classes of troops who wished to participate.

Bypassing the question of ethnicity and dialing down the focus on unit distinction offers several advantages for crafting a more comprehensive understanding of cultural exchange at Empel and elsewhere. First, it allows us to wholly abandon the notion of ritual continuity and its attendant inclination toward a static, unrealistic perspective of culture in this region.⁸³⁵ The long history and persistence of weapon deposition in what is referred to as Batavian territory cannot be regarded as an “indigenous” tradition upon considering the extended timeline of the practice,⁸³⁶ the ethnogenesis of the Batavii following Rome's resettlement program,⁸³⁷ as well as

Roymans and Derks, “Summary,” 192; Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 112f.; Roymans, “Hercules,” 227f., Fig. 3; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 234f. Hercules Magusanus as the main deity of the temple: Roymans and Derks, “Het heiligdom te Empel,” 26. Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 234 suggests that the plaque was originally affixed to an item.

⁸³³ Roymans suggests a potential Batavian parallel to the Gallic *Iulii*; Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 42, Fig. 4; see also Drinkwater, “Rise and Fall.”

⁸³⁴ Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 112f. esp n.52. It is also worthy of note that the *Legio X* was only stationed in Germania Inferior for a relatively brief period between the Batavian Revolt and Trajan's first campaigns in Dacia.

⁸³⁵ Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 26. Roymans' approach to socio-political circumstances is equally applicable to *cultural* developments during tumultuous periods of change. These would include tribal resettlement and massive troop occupation during the Augustan era, which elicited intensified cultural exchange.

⁸³⁶ Laursen, “Weapons in Water,” 7.

⁸³⁷ Roymans highlights how the creation of the Batavii was itself an active process of cultural fusion; see Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 27, also 24-26, 209, 249, Figs. 3.1, 3.2. See also Roymans, “Hercules,” 235; Willems and van Enkevort, *Ulpia Noviomagus*, 81, 111; Tac. *Hist.* 4.12; Tac. *Germ.* 29.

the altered character of sites and finds under the Principate. Second, it also recasts the roles of auxiliaries and legionaries in the process of cultural exchange. The construction of Roman-style temples, the inclusion of inscriptions, and the newfound significance of depositing weapons through service in the Roman army rather than the native tradition of *Gefolgschaft* demonstrate that local adherents, including those in the *auxilia*, were receptive to outside influences, and active in reshaping their own traditions.⁸³⁸ Similarly, legionaries participated in the persistent cultural dialogue occurring in this borderland environment, and contributed to it in their own ways. For example, it seems probable that they would have introduced or at least have initially been the main purveyors of written votives and the visual representation of Hercules in religious contexts.⁸³⁹ It is important to note that these observations are in no way disposed toward the old notion of Romanization, in which outside cultural agents altered local practices to the glee – or at least passivity – of the dominated. Instead, evaluating material evidence with a reduced emphasis on power dynamics reveals an ideologically unrestrained environment which allowed a multitude of individuals of varying backgrounds to actively contribute to a changing cultural tapestry of worship over time.⁸⁴⁰ While the weapon deposits at Empel speak to the martial draw Hercules Magusanus embodied for soldiers,⁸⁴¹ the great panoply of gifts offered additionally reflect the idiosyncratic relationships between other, presumably non-military, dedicants and the god.⁸⁴²

⁸³⁸ *Gefolgschaft*: Roymans, *Tribal Societies*, 40; Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 19f.; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 248, also 249-51.

⁸³⁹ Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 88, 238; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 234; One of the earliest dedications to Hercules Magusanus in Batavian territory at modern Ruimel comes from a civilian with the title of *summus magistratus* who seems to have adhered to a pre-established worship tradition of Hercules; see Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 244 n.605, also 14, 64, 200, Fig. 8.2.

⁸⁴⁰ *Contra* Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 234f., who sees the development of worship at Empel largely as one of Roman intrusion and gradual domination.

⁸⁴¹ Roymans and Derks, “Der Tempel von Empel,” 484f.

⁸⁴² Roymans and Derks, “Der Tempel von Empel,” 485; Spickermann, “Als die Götter,” 252.

The co-equal interchange of concepts, beliefs, and practices amongst individuals and groups alike defined this environment.

Weapon Deposits at Kessel-Lith, Elst, and the Mainz Region

Having established Empel as an anchor point for discussing the significance of weapon deposits at sanctuaries on land, this section will demonstrate how cult worship incorporating military equipment could vary by location, despite a substantial overlap ritual practice. Kessel-Lith represents another chief cult location in Batavian territory which has yielded an impressive amount of weapon finds from the pre-Roman and early imperial periods.⁸⁴³ Unlike Empel, whose cult site lacked settlement features,⁸⁴⁴ Kessel-Lith enjoyed a sizeable local population in addition to its standing as a religious center.⁸⁴⁵ Additionally, the site held a dual significance in terms of its role as a center for depositions. The largest concentration of river finds dates to the late La Tène and early Roman periods and comprises a diverse body of material, including military equipment, pottery, tools, fibulae, and even human remains.⁸⁴⁶ The circumstances of the finds have led scholars to interpret Kessel-Lith as an important river cult site for riverine votive deposition in accordance with widespread tradition in the Celtic world.⁸⁴⁷ So far, twenty-two late La Tène swords have been dredged from Kessel-Lith, some with ritual damage, likewise reflecting a native practice.⁸⁴⁸ This pre-Roman function was altered during the Roman era when

⁸⁴³ Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 131.

⁸⁴⁴ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 123.

⁸⁴⁵ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 125; Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 144-46; The authors note that the settlement may be the location known as Vada in Tac. *Hist.* 5.20-21.

⁸⁴⁶ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 125, 185; ter Schegget, "Late Iron Age," 208, 223f.; Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 133.

⁸⁴⁷ ter Schegget, "Late Iron Age," 224; Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 107, 134; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 244.

⁸⁴⁸ Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 108; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 244. Twelve swords are clearly of the Kessel-Lith type; see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 81, 125. 10 other swords belong to the late La Tène period; see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 125 n.9, also 126. For Kessel type swords, see Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 109, Fig. 7.4.

a monumental temple complex was constructed during the latter first century AD.⁸⁴⁹ Noteworthy early Roman *militaria* that have been dredged include shield components (edging, *umbo*, and grip), spearheads, horse gear, one Mainz Type *gladius*, two or three *spathae*, and a Port style helmet.⁸⁵⁰ Thus, the material and votive practice at Kessel-Lith exhibit great overlap with those at Empel,⁸⁵¹ and its concentration of military equipment may indicate that it, too, was a sanctuary for Hercules Magusanus,⁸⁵² which Batavians continued to frequent while they served as auxiliaries in the Roman army.⁸⁵³ However, Kessel-Lith seems to have originated as a *river* cult site which then expanded to include a land function through its Roman-era temple complex, whereas Empel's stone structures correspond with the site's roots as an open-air sanctuary.

At Elst, two cult sites also reveal depositions and a pattern of construction similar to that at Empel. A simple stone temple was constructed at Elst around 50 AD, followed by a monumental Gallo-Roman temple during the Flavian period.⁸⁵⁴ At nearby Elst-Westeraam, two wooden constructions preceded the monumental temple that was built around 100 AD.⁸⁵⁵ Recovered items at both sites have thus far been scant, in contrast with Empel and Kessel-Lith, but nevertheless include *militaria*.⁸⁵⁶ It has also been suggested that Hercules Magusanus was the principal deity worshipped at Elst due not only to the presence of military equipment, but also because of fragments of a bronze Hercules figurine and a votive altar.⁸⁵⁷ To summarize, Empel,

⁸⁴⁹ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 185; Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 103, 134-44. For reconstructions of Gallo-Roman temple at Kessel, see Roymans, "Hercules," Fig. 6; Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, Fig. 7.23.

⁸⁵⁰ Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 108, 112f.; Tab. 7.1; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 126.

⁸⁵¹ Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 134; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 128.

⁸⁵² Roymans, "Hercules," 228. Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 144 posits that Kessel, not Empel, may have been the central location for the worship of Batavian Hercules.

⁸⁵³ Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 134; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 81, 128, 185.

⁸⁵⁴ A pre-Roman, open-air sanctuary is also likely, based on the ritual deposition of animal bones; see Spickermann Spickermann, "Als die Götter," 252.

⁸⁵⁵ Spickermann, "Als die Götter," 252; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 253 n.94.

⁸⁵⁶ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 76, 81f., 120; Spickermann, "Als die Götter," 252f.

⁸⁵⁷ Roymans, "Hercules," 227f., Fig. 5. Spickermann is hesitant to say whether Hercules was the main god at Empel and Elst based on the small number of finds which directly connect him, especially at Elst; see Spickermann, "Als die Götter," 252-53.

Kessel-Lith, and both sites at Elst all manifest specific developmental characteristics including period of monumentalization and deposition,⁸⁵⁸ as well as potential overlap as cult centers for Hercules Magusanus. However, their similitude should be tempered with emphasis on their significant differences. As we have seen, each cult location retained its own unique course of development. Empel and Elst began as open-air sanctuaries, whereas Kessel-Lith has its origins as a site for river deposition. Moreover, while all contained military items that were dedicated to the god, the quantities discovered at Elst so far pale in comparison to both Empel and Kessel-Lith, indicating “that weapons deposition was not a uniform practice at all cult places in the [Batavian] region.”⁸⁵⁹ These different religious pathways speak to the diversity in votive fashion occurring within a condensed setting between sites within thirty miles (48 km) of each another.

Further upriver at Mainz and the adjoining Treveran *civitas*, we encounter entirely dissimilar depositional phenomena for weapons and military equipment that underscore the local influence upon which this pre-Roman practice was contingent during the early Empire.⁸⁶⁰ Among the Treveran sanctuaries, Roman *militaria* are conspicuously lacking in large numbers. As van Driel-Murray has noted, only spearheads occur with some regularity, and are likely attributable to hunting,⁸⁶¹ thereby demonstrating creative, non-military adaptation to the general Roman ban on weaponry, save for particular circumstances. While this practice may be framed in terms of ritual “survival,” it is more accurate to cast it as “transformation”: The values previously associated with weapon deposition developed a new, non-warrior following, which

⁸⁵⁸ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 252.

⁸⁵⁹ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 120.

⁸⁶⁰ The Aresaces native to the Mainz region were culturally connected with the Treveri; see Wightman, *Roman Trier*, 127.

⁸⁶¹ van Driel-Murray, “Wapentuig voor Hercules,” 105.

civilians could fulfill. Even weapons dedicated by soldiers in this region often followed a conspicuously different path than those in the Lower Rhine region.

At sanctuaries near Mainz, the spear served as a motif for decorative offerings as opposed to practical equipment that was refashioned for votive purposes along the Lower Rhine. Three enormous spear heads found at Ober-Olm and Klein-Winternheim represent distinctive examples that highlight the symbolic power of this weapon type, as well as the innovation that could go into crafting these items with a ritual use specifically in mind.⁸⁶² In contrast with the civilian votives, these oversized spear tips were likely ornamental from their conception, holding no functional value due to their unwieldiness, and unsharpened edges.⁸⁶³ Additionally, the slits and holes present on one spearhead may have even served as mounts for *tabulae ansatae* (**Fig. 23**),⁸⁶⁴ and would have otherwise affected the effectiveness of the weapon. This feature is mirrored in miniature spearheads from Mainz and elsewhere that took various forms, such as fibulae and belt fittings,⁸⁶⁵ which may have served as uniform accoutrements and likely also had a religious function as protective talismans.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶² Oversized spearheads: Klein, "Votivwaffen," esp. 87f., Abb. 1, 3; Behrens, "Mars-Weihungen," 19; Schumacher, "Votivfunde," 109, Nrs. 256-58. Other weapons were also found, including a Pompeii type *gladius* as well as a dagger and *pilum* tip, but lance and spear tips predominate; see Klein, "Votivwaffen," 87; Schumacher, "Votivfunde," 110, Nrs. 363-64.

⁸⁶³ Klein, "Votivwaffen," 87. Klein, "Votivwaffen," 93 also postulates that these particular lances could have been created to commemorate the emperor's visit relating to a campaign, given that their large size marks them as "Insignie staatlicher Gewalt." For other sparse instances of oversized spears, see Schumacher, "Votivfunde," 109.

⁸⁶⁴ Parallel examples can be found for the Mainz example elsewhere; see Klein, "Votivwaffen," 88f., Abb. 3-5.

⁸⁶⁵ Klein, "Votivwaffen," 88, Abb. 6-10; Behrens, "Mars-Weihungen," 19-21, Abb. 18, 22. A *tabula ansata* is perhaps visible on a gravestone from Aquincum (Budapest) which bears a spearhead; see Behrens, "Mars-Weihungen," 20, Abb. 21.

⁸⁶⁶ Behrens, "Mars-Weihungen," 19, Nrs. 2, 5, Abb. 18.4, 18.6. The find contexts of similar examples from *castella* or watchtowers makes the military association of these miniatures clear; see Behrens, "Mars-Weihungen," 20f., Abb. 22. For discussion of the function of miniature spear tips, see Klein, "Votivwaffen," 90f.; Petculescu, "Miniature Spearhead Fittings," 181, 192f. These spear-shaped belt fittings are similar in appearance to lances associated with *beneficarii*, which were offered elsewhere; see Schallmayer, "Kultzentrum der Römer," 407, Nr. 15, Abb. 607.

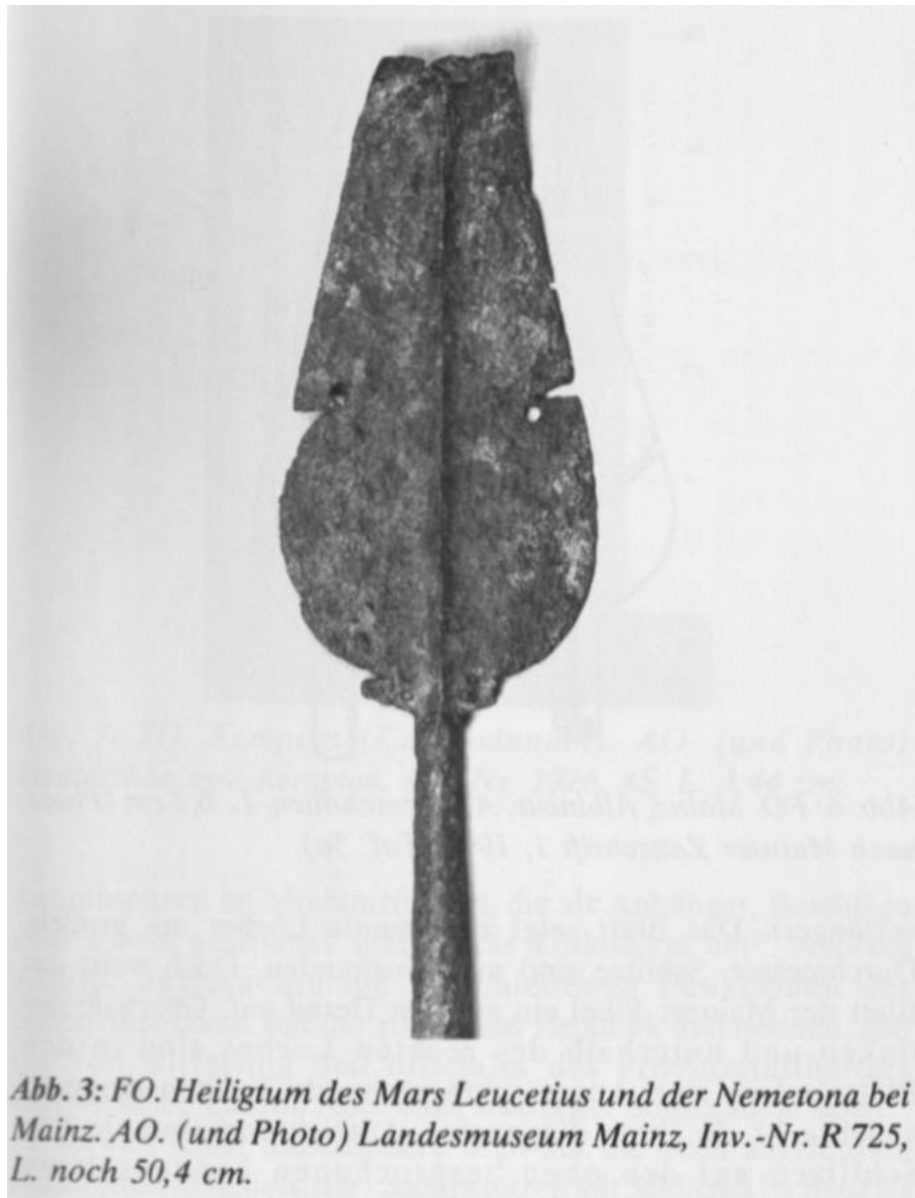


Fig. 23: Oversized spear dedication
Klein, "Votivwaffen," Abb. 3

A comparison of weapons and *militaria* discovered in ritual contexts at Mainz and within Treveran territory with those from the Lower Rhine region therefore reveals striking differences in the tradition of weapon deposition and its development during the Roman period. A great amount of material from Batavian territory stems from a more intensive practice of river offerings when juxtaposed with other locations. Even at land sanctuaries along the Lower Rhine,

the profundity of weapons and military equipment that was both functional and used by soldiers is extraordinary. Germania Superior, by contrast, is marked with a conspicuous paucity of items which suffused the religious sites of its neighboring province, including swords, daggers, and equestrian gear. Instead, spear dedications symbolize the adaptive measures which civilians took in order to maintain a time-honored indigenous ritual in the face of a ban on the carrying of weapons in public. Within the military, a localized fashion also emerged which promoted the symbolic value of spears in both oversized and miniature forms. Notably, however, offensive weaponry was also dedicated in this area, albeit in vastly reduced numbers. A *gladius* and *pugio* were retrieved from Klein-Winternheim – a cult site whose weapons are otherwise limited to lance and spear tips.⁸⁶⁷ Scattered dagger deposits also occur at Mainz, having been discovered in military contexts similar to the previously discussed material from the Kops Plateau at Nijmegen.⁸⁶⁸ These anomalous examples should remind us that, even within developing cultural trends of a given area, the ultimate arbiter of votive propriety was the individual.

Returning Veterans, Hybrid Identity Construction and Religious Practice

Specific examples mentioned above have cursorily addressed the role of Roman army veterans in the deposition of *militaria*. To a certain extent, this connection is self-explanatory, given soldiers' exclusive access to military equipment. However, receiving one's *honesta missio* marked a crucial transition in the lives of both legionaries and auxiliaries which requires more discussion. Discharge brought practical benefits: monetary compensation, *conubium*, land

⁸⁶⁷ Schumacher, "Votivfunde," 110, Nrs. 363-64.

⁸⁶⁸ Thiel and Zanier, "Römische Dolche," 68, also n. 41, Mainz: Nrs. 31, 32, Dangstetten: Nr. 37, Carnuntum: Nr. 49.

allotments, and, in the case of the *auxilia*, hard-earned citizen status.⁸⁶⁹ Most importantly, it finally granted soldiers control over their lives for the first time since their enlistment or conscription. One of the first decisions these newly autonomous individuals faced would have been what to do with their equipment. If the entire kit had been paid off over the course of their service, soldiers could sell items back to the army or, presumably, in the private market. Given the necessity of his equipment as a soldier and the attendant personal connection to it which must have developed over the course of perhaps decades, a sizeable portion of troops must have opted to retain their *militaria*, either for dedicatory purposes or to keep at home (**Fig. 24**).⁸⁷⁰ After first establishing the presence of veterans in the frontier region, and thereby making them likely agents of deposition, this section will stress the importance of the ritual afterlives assigned to weapons which reflect the culturally influenced choices of individual soldiers in this variegated environment.

⁸⁶⁹ Watson, *The Roman Soldier*, 133f., 136-38, 147-54; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 249; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 347f.

⁸⁷⁰ For a discussion of soldiers' options regarding their weapons following discharge, see Speidel, "Weapons Keeper," 134; Derks and Roymans, "Returning Auxiliary Veterans," 131; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 173, 176.

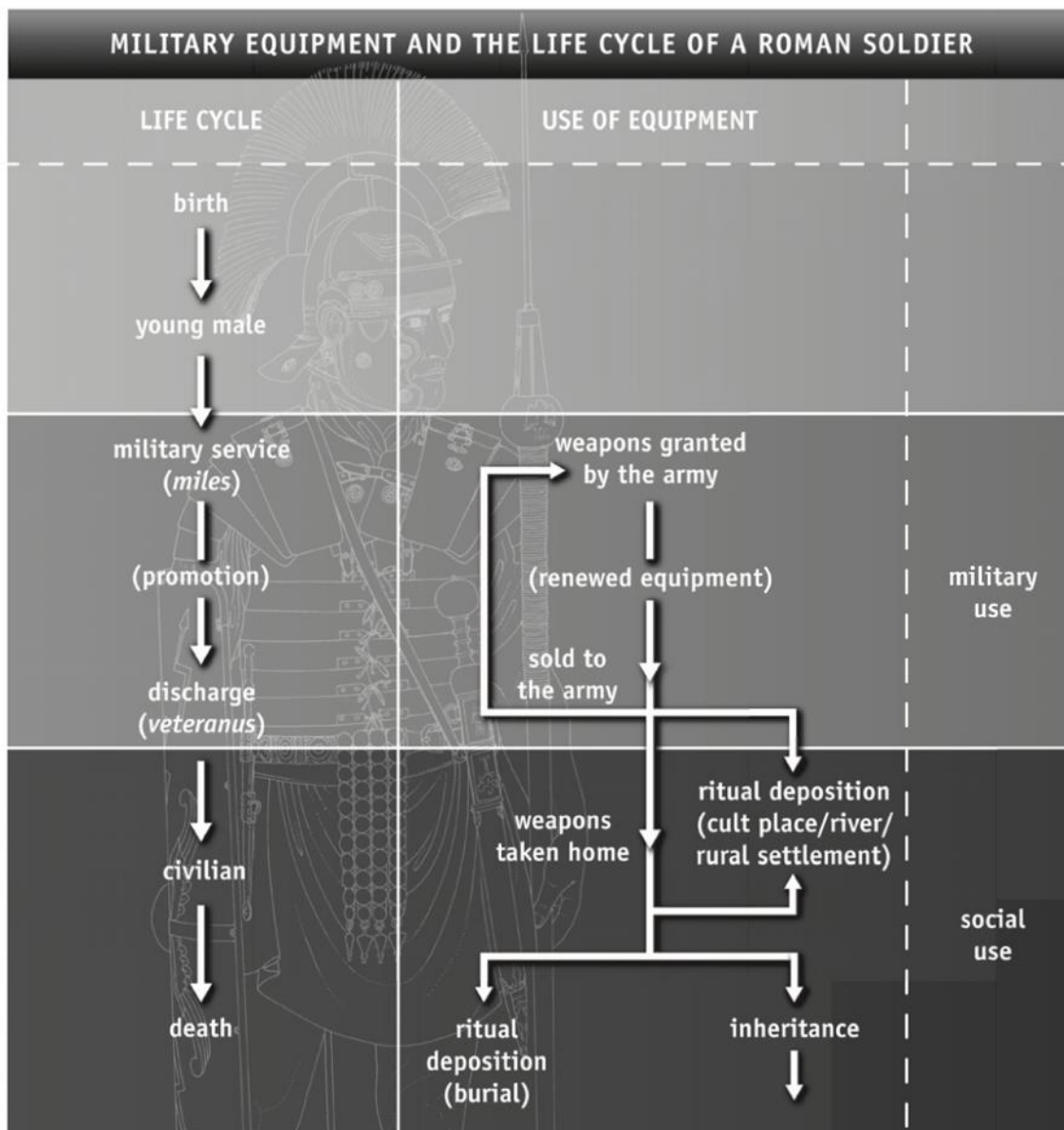


Fig. 5.1. The use of military equipment during the life of a Roman soldier.

Fig. 24: Life cycle of a Roman soldier's *militaria*
Nicolay *Armed Batavians*, Fig. 5.1

Settlement patterns, military diplomas granted, inscriptions, and equipment deposits provide helpful indications regarding the tendency for auxiliaries to return to their homelands or retire elsewhere.⁸⁷¹ Although Thracian soldiers seem to have displayed a notable preference for

⁸⁷¹ Diplomas: Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 342; Alföldy, *Kaiser, Heer und Gesellschaft*; Mann, "Development of Auxiliary," esp. 233.

returning home somewhat regularly, despite the potentially massive distance between their starting point and their final destination,⁸⁷² an overwhelming majority of auxiliaries opted to settle in the province of their last posting.⁸⁷³ Among these men, there was also a clear preference to remain near their former army camps or cities, which were often synonymous.⁸⁷⁴ Epigraphic sources from Batavian territory, including a small number of diplomas,⁸⁷⁵ also indicate that there was a significant veteran presence in the countryside, likely comprised of local recruits.⁸⁷⁶ Military equipment is also found at ca. 250 rural settlements in this region, thus reinforcing the profound engagement between the Batavi and the Roman army, the frequency of veteran weapon retention, and the high number of returning auxiliary veterans.⁸⁷⁷ As previously discussed, it has also been suggested that weapons deposited in native cemeteries in the Rhineland belonged to discharged auxiliaries, given the indigeneity of the practice and the inclusion of non-Roman items in the graves.⁸⁷⁸

The establishment and evolution of weapon deposits as a collective phenomenon was not limited to the Roman side of the *limes*. Across the Rhine, Barbaricum finds yield an astonishing

⁸⁷² Roxan, "Settlements of Veterans," 484, 486 n.4; De Bruin, *Border Communities*, 9; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 344. Roxan also notes the diplomas of two veterans who had served in Britannia which were discovered in Spain, indicating that they too likely travelled to their homelands upon discharge; see Roxan, "Settlements of Veterans," 486. Derks and Roymans have compiled a list of diplomas issued to men who served on the Lower Rhine who settled elsewhere upon discharge; Derks and Roymans, "Returning Auxiliary Veterans," Tab. 2.

⁸⁷³ Derks and Roymans, "Returning Auxiliary Veterans," 121 estimate about 80%. These numbers vary by province, as Roxan illustrates in her studies on auxiliary settlement in Britannia, the Pannonias, and Germania; see Roxan, "Settlements of Veterans,"; Roxan, "Veteran Settlement." Nicolay tallies Batavian who served in Britannia and then returned home; see Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 162f. Tab 5.1 Nrs. 4, 6.

⁸⁷⁴ De Bruin, *Border Communities*, 9; Roymans, "Ethnic Recruitment," 141.

⁸⁷⁵ There are ten examples; see Roymans, "Ethnic Recruitment," 141, Fig. 2; Derks and Roymans, "Returning Auxiliary Veterans," 126f., Fig. 3, Tab. 1. One diploma was discovered from Elst; see Roxan and Holder, *Roman Military Diplomas*, 420-22, Nr. 216.

⁸⁷⁶ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 162f., Tab. 5.1.

⁸⁷⁷ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 173, 176, 193, 195; van Driel-Murray, "Wapentuig voor Hercules," 105; Roymans, "Ethnic Recruitment," 155, 157; Derks and Roymans, "Returning Auxiliary Veterans," 131, 133; Roymans, "Ethnic Recruitment," 143, Fig. 4. For discussions on the impact of recruitment on the Batavian population, see Willems, *Romans and Batavians*, 236f; Derks and Roymans, "Returning Auxiliary Veterans," 123.

⁸⁷⁸ Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 46.

quantity of Roman *militaria*,⁸⁷⁹ the vast majority of which are from bog and grave deposits. Serious difficulties plague attempts to interpret material from across the frontier, where social and archaeological contexts are especially hazy.⁸⁸⁰ In addition, we cannot be sure of the transmission method whereby Roman equipment found its way well into Germania Libera and beyond; possibilities include commercial and/or illegal trade, diplomatic gifts, plunder, mercenaries, and even auxiliary soldiers.⁸⁸¹ As Grane has pointed out, our current knowledge of transrhene deposits does not allow for a precise identification of Roman veterans.⁸⁸² An exception is perhaps the cremation grave at Hedegård, which contained one of only three *pugiones* discovered beyond the frontier.⁸⁸³ Nevertheless, the emergence of ritual weapon deposition as a result of contact with the Roman world – more specifically, with practices occurring at the Roman frontier – is assured.⁸⁸⁴ There is also no possibility of accidental deposition, given the find circumstances in graves and ancient lakes, meaning that these items were intentionally placed for ritual purposes, likely either as war booty by Germanic soldiers, or as grave goods belonging to retired Roman army veterans similar to instances discussed

⁸⁷⁹ Denmark contains the largest collection of Roman swords, which comprise over half of all extant specimens; see Rald 1994: 227ff.; Biborski, “Römische Schwerter,” 193; Fabech, “Booty Sacrifices,” 136; Jørgensen, “The Spoils of Victory,” 16; Imer, “Greek and Latin Inscriptions,” 35.

⁸⁸⁰ Bog finds are not precisely stratified, thereby limiting our ability to effectively date recovered objects; see Oldenstein, *Zur Ausrüstung*, 66.

⁸⁸¹ Fulford, “Roman Material,” 91; Erdrich, “Waffen im mitteleuropäischen Barbaricum,” 201-03; Rald, “Roman Swords,” 237-39.

⁸⁸² Grane, “Germanic Veterans,” 463.

⁸⁸³ Grane, “Germanic Veterans,” 461. Jørgensen et al., *The Spoils of Victory*, 386, Cat. Nr. 3.18 note that these daggers were artifacts from the first half of the first century AD, and reserved for high-ranking officers.

⁸⁸⁴ The most renowned bog deposits at Thorsbjerg, Illerup Ådal, Vimose, Kragehul, Ejsbøl, and Nydam occurred between the later second and the sixth century, with particular concentrations in the second and third centuries; see Biborski, “Römische Schwerter,” 175, 177; Erdrich, “Waffen im mitteleuropäischen Barbaricum,” 199f.; Fabech, “Booty Sacrifices,” 135f.; Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 3. Imer, “Greek and Latin Inscriptions,” 34 argues for a transition from pre-Roman offerings of human remains and small amounts of military equipment to much larger, more concentrated deposits of booty during the Roman-era. Hjortspring breaks from the established timeline of bog deposits, dating as it does to the middle of the fourth century BC; see Fabech, “Booty Sacrifices,” 135; Christensen, “Sacrificial Bogs,” 347; Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 253.

above.⁸⁸⁵ Germanic warriors may have also acquired items through trade channels and deposited them on an individual basis;⁸⁸⁶ however, even in this scenario, importation of the practice is clear, based on the chronology of the evidence.

Veterans of the *auxilia* are the most obvious social figures to assess regarding cultural exchange within the army. During the early Empire, cultural distinctions between auxiliary recruits and legionaries would have been most marked; indigenous persons were plucked from their homelands to serve in a foreign army that was both heavily influenced by Roman culture, as well as replete with its own institutional values. As Haynes has prudently expressed, “it is difficult to say how much a Belgic soldier’s service in the Roman army might have influenced his beliefs, but it is unlikely that they remained unaffected.”⁸⁸⁷ Auxiliary tombstones certainly illustrate the extent to which decades of undergoing a Roman military lifestyle could permeate a soldier’s self-perception. By the end of their service, equipment would have also represented a tangible form of an auxiliary’s identity warranting special treatment for many veterans, as evidenced by the plethora of weapon finds in non-military contexts within the frontier zone and even in Barbaricum.⁸⁸⁸ According to the “veteran model” developed by Roymans and Derks, the distinctly Roman elements of soldiers’ experiences percolated through to indigenous cultures by

⁸⁸⁵ Excavations seem to support the war booty theory for bog deposits; see Fabech, “Booty Sacrifices,” 135; Ilkjaer and Lønstrup, “Great Votive Deposits,” esp. 101; Imer, “Greek and Latin Inscription,” 34ff. Fabech argues that equipment with *punctim* inscriptions found in bogs were likely booty stripped from Romans; Fabech, “Booty Sacrifices,” 136. For a general overview of the bog finds, see Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 234f., 253-55; Jørgensen, “The Spoils of Victory,” esp. 16, as well as other entries in that volume. Grane, “Germanic Veterans,” 463, 461 claims that certain objects discovered in bogs, such as baldric plates with Latin inscriptions indicate some sort of connection with the Roman army, though he admits they might also be war booty. See discussion of a shield boss marked *AEL•AELIANUS* (Thorsbjerg) and an ornamental baldric plate with the phrase *OPTIME MAXIME CON* (Illerup Ådal) in Imer, “Greek and Latin Inscriptions,” 41. Transrhenane weapon burials first begin to appear during the late first century BC during the start of Rome’s extensive recruitment from tribal groups in this region; see Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 254; Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 119, 238f.

⁸⁸⁶ Grane, “Germanic Veterans,” 41.

⁸⁸⁷ Haynes, “Romanisation of Religion,” 153 (quote), 157; see also Roymans, “Ethnic Recruitment,” 156.

⁸⁸⁸ For *gladii* and *gladius*-like swords, they are more concentrated in areas with the highest recruitment; see Roymans, “Ethnic Recruitment,” 143, Fig. 3. Regarding the finds of Germania Libera, Wells, *The Barbarians Speak*, 238 assumes that most stem from soldiers returning home.

way of native veterans returning to their homelands, especially in the Batavian region where recruitment was extremely high.⁸⁸⁹ However, in the case of *militaria*, it was the soldier's Roman equipment which was repurposed to accommodate the overwhelmingly *indigenous* practices of cult and grave deposition. Within the Celto-Germanic world, a man's transition from adolescent to warrior was commemorated with the first adoption of arms,⁸⁹⁰ and the same ritual significance accompanied the laying down of arms as part of the stages of life for soldiers during the Roman period at the frontier.⁸⁹¹ Native recruits therefore clearly remained culturally imbued with the traditions of their homeland throughout their service, and subsequently assimilated their developed identities as soldiers of the Roman army with their ritual preconceptions when they reintegrated into civilian society by way of weapon depositions. As previous examples have demonstrated, this phenomenon took on localized forms, including Treveran grave goods,⁸⁹² as well as the many cult deposits in the Lower Rhine region.⁸⁹³

Although returning auxiliaries were fundamental to the creation of an adapted native practice of weapon deposition, it is clear that local veterans were not the only agents depositing military equipment in these regions. Legionaries also took part in the custom, as confirmed not least by the singular inscription recovered from Empel, examined above. It may be that Iulius Genialis qualified for service in the more reputable legions as a second-generation Batavian

⁸⁸⁹ Derks and Roymans, "Returning Auxiliary Veterans," 133; Roymans, "Ethnic Recruitment," 155-57; De Bruin, *Border Communities*, 8; van den Broeke, "Native Settlements," 93.

⁸⁹⁰ Brunaux, *The Celtic Gauls*, 78, also 99f.; Roymans and Aarts, "Coins, Soldiers," 354; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 239f.; Tac. *Germ.* 13; Caes. *BG.* 6.18.

⁸⁹¹ Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 47; Roymans, "Sword or the Plough," 34f.; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 157, 181; see CIL 13, 1906. Veterans at Empel: Roymans and Derks, "Der Tempel von Empel," 490f.; van Driel-Murray, "Wapentuig voor Hercules," 106.

⁸⁹² Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 250.

⁸⁹³ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 174, 176; Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 134 n.342; Roymans, "Hercules," 232; Roymans, "Sword or the Plough," 31-2; Nicolay, "Interpreting Roman Military Equipment."

whose ancestors had earned citizenship,⁸⁹⁴ making this case seemingly a simple extension of a “native” custom that is on par with the practice of returning auxiliary veterans. However, there is sufficient ambiguity in the material evidence to suggest that non-local troops of all types probably took part in some form of weapon deposition within the frontier region. From the perspective of armament, it has been established that there are no hard and fast distinctions evident in the archaeological record between the legions and the *auxilia*; the same equipment was likely available to both types of units, despite the simple and tidy impression provided by ancient sources like Tacitus.⁸⁹⁵ This important fact should increase our receptivity to the very real likelihood that non-local soldiers also deposited weapons for ritual purposes, as it would be credulous to regard all *militaria* discovered in these contexts as products of either local legionaries or auxiliaries.

The assumption that graves which include weaponry automatically represent indigenous soldiers is also problematic. The inhabitants of Graves 2215 and 1344 at Wederath are normally construed as local Treveran cavalry veterans, but the presence of two Mainz type *gladii* and an axe head would seem to belie this interpretation, given the former’s connection with foot soldiers and the latter’s association with legionary building activities.⁸⁹⁶ Likewise, four graves outside of a temple district at Dhronacken from the first century AD yielded weapons, including a *gladius*.⁸⁹⁷ Realistically, foreign soldiers may very well have taken a liking to local forms of

⁸⁹⁴ Genialis’ status: Derks, *Gods, Temples*, 112 n.152. The massive recruitment from local Rhineland populations during the early Empire meant that the Batavian population would have gradually included more and more legionary veterans as well; see Derks and Roymans, “Returning Auxiliary Veterans,” 124, 127. For the earliest Batavian legionary veterans from the Rhineland, dating to the early second century AD, see *Ibid.*, 124 n.17; CIL 13, 7577; AE 1990, 740.

⁸⁹⁵ This, of course is not to say that trends did not exist. The *spatha* for example, is much more practically suited to cavalry units due to its length when compared to the *gladius*. Likewise, the bulky *lorica segmentata* was not ideal for the *alae*, but would have offered ideal shoulder protection for foot soldiers.

⁸⁹⁶ Despite acknowledging that the axe typically belonged to legionary kits, Schumacher nevertheless concludes that Grave 2215 belonged to a veteran of the *ala Treverorum*; see Schumacher, “Ein Trevererkrieger,” 271-74, Taf. 4-5.

⁸⁹⁷ Hettner, *Drei Tempelbezirke*, 40f.

interment during their deployment in the region or upon discharge.⁸⁹⁸ Their untimely death may have also simply resulted in a perfunctory burial according to local practice. Therefore, the inclination to link each and every deposit with indigenous troops according to preconceived ethnic categories mars the evidence.⁸⁹⁹ This approach embodies a one-way model of acculturation, typified by the premise that indigenous persons readily integrated Roman material with their native customs, but that outsiders were unlikely or unwilling to espouse local practices without first subjecting them to *interpretatio Romana* for the sake of palatability. In reality, the options available for dispensing with sentimentally and monetarily valuable equipment were the same for all soldiers, legionary and auxiliary alike: sell them back to the army, dedicate them, or take them home. Prolonged exposure to embedded cultural predispositions toward either dedicating or retaining weaponry to be used later as grave goods offered an alluring outlet for legionary self-expression, just as the impulse to preserve one's indigenous cultural heritage pervaded local auxiliary recruits to a particular degree.

At first glance, this claim of depositional obscurity does not appear to add substantial novelty to the topic of cultural exchange, since there is no definitive way to identify foreign legionaries, native auxiliaries, or any combination thereof. However, since it is dubious to assume that indigenous personnel produced all of the deposits, a sufficient, yet probable, alternative within the realm of ambiguity is needed. As with the unclear developmental connection between the Rhineland Mother Goddesses (RMG) and *genii loci*,⁹⁰⁰ applying the indeterminacy of the “Schrödinger’s cat” thought experiment is likewise helpful when assessing

⁸⁹⁸ Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, 89, Abb. 36.

⁸⁹⁹ With regard to the ownership of legionary helmets deposited in rivers, van Enkevort and Willems offer explanations which are tied to the notion of ethnic exclusivity rather than acknowledging the possibility of foreigners, say from Italy or Spain, adopting a local custom; see van Enkevort and Willems, “Roman Cavalry Helmets,” 134.

⁹⁰⁰ See Chapter 2.

our imperfect knowledge of weapon deposits. Simply put, the evidence dictates we accept that people of all sorts variously embraced the custom on individual and sometimes group bases, despite our lacking certainty of this fact. To eschew this position implicitly adopts the view that foreign and local troops lived in completely bifurcated worlds – an impossibility, given the myriad examples of soldiers interacting as composite units, borrowing from the cultural traditions of their members as well as from the surrounding social environment.⁹⁰¹

Some have noted the mixture of legionary and auxiliary weapon dedications in passing, but the implications of this fact regarding the process of cultural exchange have largely been left unexplored.⁹⁰² To an extent, this has reinforced an interpretive model of continued indigenous praxis and the retention of largely unaltered native beliefs in the face of Roman occupation; weapon deposits are linked with a martial ethos that was carried over into the Roman world.⁹⁰³ However, approaching finds from the perspective of adapted continuity on the part of local populations does not properly account for the innovation that comprised this new, synthetic practice. Similarly, the development of Hercules Magusanus serves as a useful case to illustrate this point. Firstly, tribal resettlement programs of the Augustan era witnessed the melding and creation of various peoples, including the Batavi mentioned above.⁹⁰⁴ Their ethnogenesis calls into question any true indigeneity of the Germanic Magusanus to what became Batavian territory, since it is unclear whether Chattian migrants transplanted him to their new home, adopted his worship from the local population, or participated in his creation as a blended

⁹⁰¹ Haynes, “Romanisation of Religion,” 157; Haynes, “Religion in the Roman Army,” 114. See also the eclectic auxiliary tombstones as well as the many *RMG* dedications by *beneficarii* discussed in chapters 1 and 2.

⁹⁰² Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 179, 184; van Enkevort and Willems, “Roman Cavalry Helmets,” 134.

⁹⁰³ Roymans, “Romanisation and Transformation,” 43, also 48; Roymans and Derks, “Der Tempel von Empel,” 491; Roymans, “Sword or the Plough,” 34, also 35, 37-41; van Enkevort and Willems, “Roman Cavalry Helmets,” 134; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 184, 241, 246.

⁹⁰⁴ Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 24-28, Fig. 3.2. Considering the accepted resettlement of the Ubii and other tribes under Agrippa’s governorships beginning in 38 BC, we should perhaps also consider the Batavi to number among these groups; see Rüger, *Germania Inferior*, 34; Cass. Dio. *Hist. Rom.* 48.49; Strab. 4.3.

deity.⁹⁰⁵ Secondly, to speak of “the creation of a Batavian self-image...shaped to a significant degree by interaction with the Roman world” implies the existence of a fairly rigid social segmentation.⁹⁰⁶ Roymans frames the construction of a uniform Batavian military identity as a process of manipulation by the Romans and willing submission by local recruits who embraced their stereotypical role as warriors.⁹⁰⁷ In his view, Batavian elites also likely initiated a mythical tribal affiliation with Hercules as a way to foster a shared cultural past and ingratiate their community with Rome in a manner similar to tribal nobility elsewhere.⁹⁰⁸ However, this picture does not recognize the nuanced, collective transformation of localized religious practice resulting from unique frontier conditions, replete with external cultural influences that would have ensured many outsiders also took part in Hercules Magusanus’ creation and development, including foreign elements of the freshly contrived Batavi.⁹⁰⁹ Therefore, the prism of martial continuity founders on two points: individual creativity and power dynamics. By sacrificing the former to the latter in order to preserve a cogent narrative of competing elite political interests,⁹¹⁰ a bifurcated model transpires to eclipse the significance of individuals in the process of cultural exchange. Whereas the mechanisms which initiated Hercules Magusanus can only be the subject of speculation, material evidence for weapon deposition soundly aids the interpretation that the

⁹⁰⁵ Haynes cautions against accepting a continuous indigenous tradition for Hercules Magusanus, due to the changing social dynamics among the Batavi, as well as context of the ritual offerings in light of transformative Roman influence. Moreover, given that the Batavi were a relocated, and, to an extent, artificially created tribe, Magusanus may have been a transplanted god; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 33, 234. For evidence in favor of supposed Germanic affinity for Hercules, see Roymans, “Hercules,” 224, 231; Tac. *Germ.* 3.

⁹⁰⁶ Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 221.

⁹⁰⁷ Roymans argues that the Romans applied a stereotype of bellicosity to Batavians, but that Batavian soldiers seem also to have embraced this image; see Roymans, *Ethnic Identity*, 221, 227, 230, 234.

⁹⁰⁸ Roymans, “Hercules,” 221, 228-31, 235.

⁹⁰⁹ Spickermann, “Als die Götter,” 253.

⁹¹⁰ Roymans, “Hercules,” 220: “The myths were a declaration of political loyalty to the new regime”; see also pp. 221-23.

practice evolved from the ground-up as a product of multi-way dialogue between auxiliaries and legionaries.

Military equipment represented a particularly useful outlet for a soldier's identity to shine through in a variety of situations, ranging from the practical to the ceremonial. On the battlefield, "Romans of every rank and status made considerable efforts with their dress and equipment to ensure they stood out" in competitions of individual display with one another.⁹¹¹ This was rendered all the more achievable by the absence of an official Roman "uniform" in the term's most modern sense of an unvaryingly consistent, prescribed attire.⁹¹² Without rigid control, design, or dissemination of equipment by military command, and in lieu of formal and inflexible injunctions regarding their kit's ornamentation, soldiers were largely free to embellish paraphernalia as they saw fit in order to suit their own inclinations,⁹¹³ as well as to differentiate themselves within their units.⁹¹⁴ The resulting interplay between craftsmen and their clientele in such an artistically accommodating military environment resulted in highly expressive pieces of equipment.⁹¹⁵ For example, based on surviving specimens, shield covers were likely quite colorful and design-laden with an emphasis on differentiation.⁹¹⁶ Personalization even filtered down to the specific content of one's awards, such as *phalerae* worn on the chest or emblazoned on cavalry helmets.⁹¹⁷ The cheek flap of one such helmet from the Waal at Nijmegen echoes the

⁹¹¹ Gilliver, "Display in Roman Warfare," 14, also 19-21; see also Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 13. This practice is exemplified in the bombastic depiction of a centurion named Cornidius, whose helmet was said to have contained a pan of coals which emitted intimidating flames when the soldier moved; see Flor. *Epit.* 2.26.16.

⁹¹² Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 253 note that equipment was a stronger mark of identity.

⁹¹³ Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, 267.

⁹¹⁴ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 172.

⁹¹⁵ Bishop, "Military Fabrica," 13; Bishop, "Military Fabrica," 14.

⁹¹⁶ Van Driel-Murray, "Rectangular Shield Cover," 49, 51.

⁹¹⁷ Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, 42. For prominent examples of personalized awards such as the *corona muralis* and *corona civica* as well as other decorations found on the brow bands of various rider helmets, see Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, 41, Abb. 19, 22-23, 29-30; Krier and Reinert, "La tombe au casque," 134-142, Abb. 29-36.

rider imagery which so frequently adorned auxiliary tombstones during the first century by portraying the cavalryman attacking a defeated enemy from horseback (**Fig. 25**).⁹¹⁸ Helmets also display functional adaptations clearly implemented at the behest of their owners, as in the case of a Tiberian Imperial-Gallic type found in a Kops Plateau pit,⁹¹⁹ and two early imperial helmets from a former Rhine watercourse at Eich.⁹²⁰

⁹¹⁸ Klumbach, *Römische Helme*, 47, Nr. 33, Taf. 33.

⁹¹⁹ Van Enckevort and Willems, "Roman Cavalry Helmets," 126 note that elements of the helmet are conspicuously absent, as if the owner had the helmet modified.

⁹²⁰ The two helmets attest to the non-uniform transition between Hagenau and Weisenau types, as well as improvements which could be applied to specimens on an individual basis. Oldenstein has argued that the ear cutouts were added subsequent to their original creation; see Oldenstein, "Two Roman Helmets," esp. 29-36, Fig. 1, 3-6.



Fig. 25: Highly ornamented cavalry helmet retrieved from the Waal at Nijmegen
Klumbach, *Römische Helme*, Nr. 33, Taf. 33

Personal display within the Roman army translated to individual expressions of identity off the battlefield and outside the *castra* in both the religious and funerary realms.⁹²¹ In particular, the choice of military equipment to be consecrated or interred speaks to the private significance of the object(s) for the dedicant or deceased. For several reasons, we cannot know which objects soldiers were likely to keep with them when leaving the army.⁹²² First, there is only limited consistency in the range of *militaria* recovered, such as the high concentration of helmets retrieved from the Lower Rhine. Second, the monetary circumstances of each soldier upon discharge would have been idiosyncratic. For example, we might imagine an infantryman requiring a new *gladius* near the end of his service, and who therefore opted to return it to the *custos armorum* when his term expired rather than complete payments in order to retain it. Similarly, cost may have been a primary factor to consider when assessing deposited equipment such as arrowheads or even *pila* tips, but it was plainly not a limitation for the soldiers dedicating their elaborately decorated cavalry helmets or other expensive items. Third, and perhaps most importantly, each soldier would have developed their own sentimental attachment to various pieces of equipment, having been assigned intentionally or according to circumstance (e.g. the helmet which saved their life on countless occasions).

While it is unknowable “what subtle forces are at work, unseen, selecting which items are to be offered,”⁹²³ we *can* be certain that the process was an individualized one, as attested by the non-uniformity of *militaria* at find locations and by unique outlier instances. Riverine deposits, although sporting a high concentration of helmets, also variously include daggers, *gladii*, horse

⁹²¹ Gilliver, “Display in Roman Warfare,” 14 emphasizes the attention given to military decorations on soldiers’ tombstones; see the customization of tombstones in Chapter 1.

⁹²² Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 176.

⁹²³ Bishop, “O Fortuna,” 3.

gear, shield bosses, and plate armor components.⁹²⁴ Likewise, land sanctuaries containing equipment supply an equally varied mixture of defensive and offensive objects. Numerous, erratic grave deposits also emphasize the unique circumstances of each burial.⁹²⁵ First century cavalry helmets were discovered at Weiler, Hellange, and Conflans, but none of these grave assemblages yielded other *militaria*.⁹²⁶ The peculiar decision to include a single article that lavishly referenced the deceased's military career reflects the nostalgic personal value these helmets embodied for the deceased soldiers.⁹²⁷ Similarly, at Blicquy, a solitary *pilum* head represents the only weapon discovered amongst some 250 other graves.⁹²⁸ Graves 1344 and 2215 discussed above also comprise the totality of military equipment finds within the substantial cemetery at Wederath-Belginum.⁹²⁹

The specificity of these anomalous burials, as well as the particular makeup of offerings at cult locations render them all the more invaluable for assessing the practice of weapon deposition. If, in the case of votive offerings, we are to accept the notion that a rite of passage was being fulfilled “by consecrating, say, a helmet or a sword,”⁹³⁰ then we must recognize that this seemingly random process of item selection was fundamentally dependent upon each soldier's predilection and circumstances as they consciously affixed meaning to the equipment by selecting it for consignment. Moreover, the fact that that both legionaries and auxiliaries

⁹²⁴ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, esp. 124-28; Thiel and Zanier, “Römische Dolche.”

⁹²⁵ Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 259 notes that weapon burials were not a widespread phenomenon. This fact imbues the finds of each instance with even more value.

⁹²⁶ Krier and Reinert, “La tombe au casque,” 146; Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, 29, 34, 55, 57, Abb. 38-39; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 256. The dearth extends to the Mosel region; see Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, 57.

⁹²⁷ The fact that helmets were the only military items discovered in these graves greatly increases the likelihood that the soldiers had disclosed their wish to be interred with them. At the very least, the soldiers' fondness for their memorabilia was known to their heirs, and convinced them to include the helmets.

⁹²⁸ De Laet and van Doorselaer, “Gräber der römischen Kaiserzeit,” 56, Abb.3.

⁹²⁹ Krier and Reinert, *Das Reitergrab von Hellingen*, 67.

⁹³⁰ Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 181.

participated in these rituals indicates we are witnessing cultural exchange and ritual redefinition in action – a dialogue taking place between foreign and indigenous personnel during the early Empire within the uniquely flexible religious landscape. Whatever ritual expectations or prescriptions that may have been connected with the practice of weapon deposition – now undisclosed to us – they were either sufficiently generalized or malleable enough to afford individual soldiers the freedom to innovate upon tradition and inject fresh contributions over time. New identity markers indicating affiliation with the Roman army replaced the typical items consecrated and interred during the previous period by members of tribal war bands. This cannot simply be dismissed as a matter of the army monopolizing the supply of weaponry in the post-conquest period, because tombstones additionally reveal that military service altered the self-perceptions of native soldiers in elemental ways. As the first century progressed, novel contexts for votive deposits were also introduced as Late Pre-Roman Iron Age sites became monumentalized with Gallo-Roman temples. An environment of conglomerate religious influences and emergent identity symbols furnished the abundant and diverse garrison of frontier troops with opportunities to express their military status, and to participate in articulating a religious practice which suited their profession. The *militaria* contained in graves and accumulated at cult sites reflect the ways in which individual soldiers opted to tangibly manifest this central aspect of their identity as they saw fit.

Conclusion

Weapon deposition emerges as an incredibly important, yet ultimately transitory, practice for assessing cultural exchange. Modes of expression continued to undergo modification over time, and during the second century the popularity of depositing weaponry began to wane as

non-martial *vota* became more fashionable around the end of the first century AD.⁹³¹ Although the custom prevailed in the pre-Roman period across the northern territories, it gained a newfound, intensified significance and concentration along the Rhineland frontier amongst Roman soldiers during the early Empire. Within this functionally monolithic social group, individual soldiers of various backgrounds exhibited a range of cultural responses as they adapted to the unique circumstances of the heterogeneous borderland environment. For indigenous troops recruited from the very occupied territories in which they would be stationed, remodeling the native tradition of offering and interring weapons to accord with their newly acquired status as professional soldiers in the Roman army became an ideal method to bridge the gap between these two contending aspects of their identities. Foreign legionaries and auxiliaries assigned to the *limes* would undergo a similar process of cultural adjustment as they reckoned with the new peoples and customs of their surroundings. Recognizing the potent martial overlap between weapon deposition with their vocation, outsiders assimilated the tradition with their self-perceptions and worldviews. And so, multi-directional cultural exchange witnessed native soldiers incorporating their new military personae into their ancestral belief structures, as well as Roman legionaries subscribing to new deities and votive forms.

While the identities of those consecrating and interring *militaria* cannot be claimed with absolute precision, this chapter has endeavored to operate within the ineluctable realm of evidentiary obscurity to emphasize the chaotic and individualized process of cultural exchange in action. Although we cannot be sure in most cases which items were deposited by legionaries or auxiliaries, whatever uncertainty lies in their demonstrated overlap in military equipment provides us with as much reason to accept a diversity of personnel partaking in the custom. It is

⁹³¹ Roymans, "Romanisation and Transformation," 49; Nicolay, *Armed Batavians*, 69, 71, 81, 128, 177, 181, 252, 254, Fig. 3.5, 3.9, Appendix 4; Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 257.

by far more plausible that foreigners in all branches of the army also variously chose to adopt the practice of weapon deposition than it is to contend that each burial and votive must have resulted from an indigenous soldier returning to their homelands and perpetuating tradition. A surfeit of artifacts from the frontier substantiate that it was a place where cultural agents from all over the Empire routinely engaged in localized forms of religious worship, as well as individual and group methods of identity display. As members of the army's assorted units embraced the practice of weapon deposition, each contributed to the collective formation of something new. Regional trends took shape, such as the predominance of water deposition on the Lower Rhine and the continued weapon burials in Treveran territory, and locations were bestrewn with novel elements in terms of objects (Roman *militaria*), contexts (Roman soldiering), and edifices (monumental temples). As such, weapon deposition is best understood in terms of transformation and innovation rather than continuity. At the same time, the great diversity of finds also reflect the soldier's *personal* connection with their equipment and the significance of their military self-perception as they variously assigned worth to items by selecting them for interment of consecration.

Conclusion

The aims of this study were manifold. Primary among them, from which all others followed, was to formulate an explanatory theory of cultural development that would account for the bewildering complexity inherent in the artifacts assessed and thereby overcome the static interpretive imbroglio afflicting scholarship. Early theories of cultural change in the Roman world were hindered by a two-pronged, structural drawback of ideological commitment and narrative oversimplification. Permeating the Romanization model was the partisan belief that Rome had admirably spread civilization to unrefined barbarian territories through conquest. As a result of the decolonization movements during the mid-twentieth century, notions of cultural resistance to imperial powers became fashionable, and were applied to the Roman Empire. More recent approaches have acknowledged the need to abandon such deficient interpretive lenses, and instead drew increasing attention to the complexity and diversity of cultural interactions. However, recognition of the heterogeneity present in artifacts has since served as the exclusive overlapping tenet amongst these perspectives, which have not made much headway in terms of crafting a universal replacement theory of cultural exchange.

Plurality as a concept is largely descriptive, and would seem devoid of any useful explanatory power. However, as an accurate characterization of the Roman cultural landscape, it holds further revelatory prospects. Stylistic diversity and non-uniformity of artifacts indicate that there was no overriding force behind cultural interactions. In contrast with more modern imperial undertakings, Rome interfered little with the customs and preferences of its inhabitants, opting instead for a more laissez-faire approach to the cultural sphere. This open system of intellectual exchange is especially prominent along the Rhineland frontier, where Roman authority was

persistently focused, and where the most unencumbered interactions took place, resulting in the creation of artifacts emblematic of the vibrant cultural dialogue transpiring. Consequently, the focus placed upon asymmetrical power dynamics in previous approaches to cultural development should be greatly reduced. Moreover, we should not aim to contrive a novel and uniform theory that can satisfactorily account for the immense variety pervading the material record along normative lines, because such a theory would inevitably discount valuable data that falls outside of its explanatory paradigm.

The optimal approach, which I have laid out in this dissertation, is to accept and embrace the inherently unpredictable, non-linear, and multi-directional developmental nature of culture, and to recognize that the main arbiters of change in the Roman world were individuals and groups who created meaning for themselves in an ideologically open and culturally diverse imperial environment. The artifacts I have examined demonstrate that individuals were able to forge intensely personalized objects that exhibited numerous cultural influences as they saw fit. I have shown that idiosyncratic variations hold more interpretive value than previously thought, and that they should be integrated with analysis of burgeoning, expressive fashions of identity display and religious activity. This approach effectively resolves the paradox of local heterogeneity and global uniformity by positing that unity and diversity converge at the level of the individual, whose atomized contributions to our understanding of cultural exchange have much yet to tell us.

In chapter one, I examined two generalized styles of tombstone favored especially by cavalrymen in the Roman army's auxiliary forces. The first is comprised of a commemorative inscription sandwiched in between two stratified reliefs depicting Totenmahl ("death banquet") and Pferdevorführung ("horse presentation") scenes. I applied a novel appellation – TIP

(Totenmahl–Inscription–Pferdevorführung) – to this design in order to distinguish it from the more recurring and widespread Totenmahl iconography found across the Roman world. By contrast, the TIP motif was largely confined to the Rhineland *limes* during the first century AD, and is normally appended to Totenmahl designs in scholarship. The second type of military tombstone I surveyed includes a depiction of the deceased cavalryman in what is commonly referred to as a “rider relief.” The presence of this motif stretches across the Empire, and reflects significant variation in its execution. While prominent along the Germanic *limes*, rider imagery also became fashionable amongst auxiliaries in Britannia who seem to have brought their iconographic predilections with them following the conquest period. The soldier is memorialized clad in military attire, charging forward upon his warhorse, very often toward a prostrate opponent about to be either trampled or impaled by the rider’s spear. A *calo* is also commonly shown, situated behind the cavalryman and conspicuously prepared to supplement his master’s battle exploits.

A comparison of the two ostentatious tombstones styles reveals a great deal about the soldiers’ intentions when erecting them for their comrades, which inform us about broader cultural development within the Roman army network at the frontier during this period. In addition to the very act of putting up a Roman style tombstone, iconographic elements of these designs reflect a desire to project one’s status to onlookers while variously adhering to and innovating upon conventional artistic patterns. The combined presence of banqueting and horse imagery, each replete with servants, aimed to convey the soldier’s elevating social standing. This status may have been grounded in reality, as reflected in the cavalryman’s horse ownership and access to attendants. Alternatively, the portrayal may have taken on a more aspirational aspect, as reflected in the Totenmahl scenes. The rider relief design condensed these prestigious

elements into a single image which added a more direct and violent reference to the military prowess of the deceased.

TIP and rider reliefs exhibit customization that reflects the identity of the deceased, thereby indicating that these artifacts could be tailored according to the wishes of the client. This is most apparent in examples which stand out from more regular imagery through their meaningful deviations. The designs could be remodeled to accommodate the deceased's military identity, ranging from customized armor and helmet to bearing particular weaponry and apparatuses in order to denote his martial function and valor. However, even when largely adhering to preconceived designs, a holistic approach to the tombstones suggests that soldiers nevertheless sought to establish the deceased as an individual. Inscriptions, formulaic though they are, highlight the personal attributes of the soldier, including their tribal and familial associations. Within the close-knit community of the Roman army, a spectrum of options existed for soldiers' self-presentation that was supplemented by the heterogeneous influences circulating at the frontier, effectively allowing individuals to construct their place within military networks as they wished.

Chapter two addressed the worship of numerous female deities with overlapping practical functions whom I designated the Rhineland Mother Goddesses (RMG) for several reasons. By deploying the RMG title I was able to circumvent the problem of distinguishing between dedications to the *Matronae* and the *Matres*, both of which occur simultaneously in the Rhineland – often to goddesses with identical qualifying epithets (e.g. *Matres/Matronae Aufaniae*, *Matres/Matronae Vacallinehae*). Moreover, this approach lays emphasis upon the interchangeability of these divinities in the minds of their dedicants, who were in constant cultural dialogue regarding how best to conceptualize and venerate the RMG. The diversity that

imbues the RMG votives provide snapshots of the process of religious development concentrated within roughly Ubiian territory during the second and third centuries AD.

As with the military tombstones of chapter one, the customized variation present on RMG *vota* reflect the many cultural influences permeating the environment as well as the personal concerns of individual dedicants. Methods of visualizing and addressing the RMG showed impressive flexibility and innovation within this relatively bounded geographic zone along the frontier and its hinterlands. Although they are typically depicted as a seated trinity with the flanking members sporting the noted globular, oversized bonnets, representations of the RMG could vary quite substantially. In fact, the presence of the deities themselves served as a kind of adaptable motif. Dedicants regularly broke from the usual seated configuration and instead employed the RMG in idiosyncratic ways. The deities could serve as ornamental tondo reliefs, diminutive figures atop the side panels of the altar, and even guiding hands to the dedicants in scenes of sacrifice. Additionally, statements of uncertainty and alternatively spelled epithets when calling upon the RMG support the notion that the goddesses were, collectively, a developing cult within a polytheistic social world that provided ample room for personal error,⁹³² and innovation. This creativity resulted in expressive forms of worship in which individual dedicants could forge personal connections with the deities on the altar by having themselves rendered along with the RMG in distinctive ways, or by emphasizing a particular acquaintance with them.⁹³³ Such malleability in both iconographic and epigraphic form suggests that individuals enjoyed much leeway when committing their apprehension of the RMG to stone, which resulted in the crafting of novel methods of worship.

⁹³² e.g. *Matribus sive Matronis Aufaniabus Domesticis*: CIL 13, 8021.

⁹³³ e.g. *Matribus meis*: AE 2010, 1005, CIL 13, 8224; *Matribus suis*: CIL 13, 7982; *Matronis suis*: AE 1984, 669; *Matribus Paternis*: CIL 13, 8219; *ex imperio ipsarum*: AE 1984, 669, CIL 13, 7864.

Chapter three turned to the cult of Nehalennia to examine an even more localized process of customized religious veneration. With the extent of the cult being relegated to just two locations in modern day Holland, the concentrated variation on Nehalennia's altars provides an intense example of cultural exchange and religious development. The goddess of the Scheldt estuary sometimes shares characteristics in common with the RMG, including headgear that, in several instances, seems almost identical to the typical bonnets of the RMG. Dedicants in the Rhineland drew from an overlapping repertoire of symbols and styles that they deployed at will, such as the "half H" character (-|) and trinity imagery present on both RMG and Nehalennia altars, in micro-acts of cultural interaction. However, Nehalennia possesses her own iconographic and epigraphic peculiarities, the most prominent of which relate to her capacity as a nautical and fluvial deity, as well as protectress of cross-Channel mercantile activity. She is frequently depicted standing with one foot elevated upon the prow of a ship, and boats of various types are present on the front and side panels of numerous altars.

Dedicants actively contributed to Nehalennia's maritime and commercial aura by constructing personalized altars that reinforced these associations. Whatever preexisting status Nehalennia may have had with the sea or trade as an indigenous goddess, individuals refashioned her essence to accord with new Roman economic networks that had emerged since the conquest period. Wine barrels and grape vines appeared on *vota* to reflect the commodities that were carried in transit through the junctions at Domburg and Colijnsplaat and for which many dedicants sought Nehalennia's protection. Inscriptional evidence confirms that merchants operating in the region viewed Nehalennia as their patron. Many dedicants identify themselves as *negotiatores* – frequently even specifying the particular goods of which they were purveyors – and some commit either their *nuncupatio* (*pro mercibus conservandis*) or their *solutio* (*ob*

merces conservatas) to stone. Such detailed information about the dedicants combined with abundant nautical imagery to fulfill the dual role of an ostentatious business transaction with Nehalennia, and a personalized instance of identity display. An intimate aspect of religious reverence can be found on vows professed to have been made *ex imperio ipsius*, indicating that the personal commitment to Nehalennia went beyond perfunctory occupational necessity. As with the RMG, Nehalennia's cult sublimely demonstrates the open nature of cultural exchange in the bustling frontier environment, wherein individuals and groups could establish original forms of public expression that represented their personal interests, concerns, and communal affiliations utilizing influences from their surrounding milieu.

The final chapter in my series of case studies addressed the practice of weapon deposition along the Rhineland frontier in cultic and funerary settings. In many ways, this section serves as a culmination of the topics discussed in previous chapters through its extreme focus on individual examples. The military tombstones assessed were distributed throughout the borderland, while RMG dedications were primarily confined to the territory of the Ubii, and Nehalennia altars are found at just two locations. Thus, the course of this dissertation has progressed, chapter-by-chapter, toward an ever-greater focus on individualized phenomena. At the same time, I framed these acutely personal actions, which were highly reflective of an individual's identity, within broader social customs. Weapon deposits embodied a desire to symbolize the military identity of the deceased in a manner similar to TIP and rider tombstones, just as they represent ceremonial and religious behavior parallel to the votives of the RMG and of Nehalennia.

The weapon deposits of chapter four reflect the degree of martial overlap present amongst preexisting native tradition and incoming foreign soldiers, which found its point of

convergence in the Roman army. Dedicating and interring weapons with the dead was practiced throughout broadly Celtic territories prior to Rome's conquest, and indigenous soldiers recruited into the auxiliary forces during the first century AD adapted this convention to the social environment of their new profession. At the same, material evidence confirms that legionary soldiers with Roman citizenship also embraced the local practice of depositing their weapons at burgeoning cult centers like those at Elst, Empel, and Kessel-Lith. We can therefore discern multi-directional cultural exchange taking place during a period of great tumult – that is, the first century – which also contained the greatest ethnic and civic distinctions amongst frontier populations. Not limited to or representative of any one social segment, weapon deposition came to be a feature of the frontier landscape in which soldiers could opt to participate. The exclusive connection soldiers had with their equipment imbues each deposition with an increased level of personal significance. These were not items manufactured for consecration, but everyday articles emblematic of a soldier's individual and group identities which they were selected to represent. Finally, the material of this chapter epitomizes an overall aim of the entire project, which has been to embrace the non-linear makeup of cultural developments in the Roman world. A thorough assessment of the *militaria* deposited blurs distinctions between auxiliary and legionary troops, thereby highlighting the obscurity of those consecrating equipment, and emphasizing the unpredictable makeup of cultural exchange.

I chose to structure this inquiry on the basis of largely self-contained case studies for several reasons. The limited evidential breadth of each chapter allowed for reasonable and significant conclusions to be reached through a meticulous assessment of the material. At the same time, I demonstrated that a common process of stochastic cultural exchange occurred in each instance against the backdrop of a vibrant frontier environment that was conducive to

cultural exchange. Individualized artifacts drawing from a panoply of ethnic, ideological, and stylistic influences represent the countless distributed results of this process. Looking ahead, it is my hope that the conclusions of this study might be weighed against evidence from elsewhere in the Empire, thereby contributing to continued efforts to both broaden the scope and refine our understanding of cultural exchange in the Roman world.

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