DIETRICH BOSCHUNG, ALEXANDRA W. BUSCH
AND MIGUEL JOHN VERSLUYS (EDS.)

# REINVENTING
# 'THE INVENTION OF TRADITION'?

Indigenous Pasts and
the Roman Present

MORPHOMATA

Thirty years ago Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger introduced *The invention of tradition* as a concept to explain the creation and rise of certain traditions in times of profound cultural change. Taking stock of current theoretical understandings and focusing on the Roman world, this volume explores the concept of 'inventing traditions' as a means to understand processes of continuity, change and cultural innovation. The notion has been highly influential among studies concerned with the Greek and Roman eastern Mediterranean. Elsewhere in the Roman world and traditions other than Greek, however, have been neglected. This volume aims to evaluate critically the usefulness of the idea of 'inventing traditions' for the successor culture that was Rome. It focuses on the western part of the Roman Empire, which has been virtually ignored by such studies, and on non-Greek traditions. Why, in the Roman present, were some (indigenous) traditions forgotten while others invented or maintained? Using the past for reasons of legitimation in a highly volatile present is a cultural strategy that (also) characterises our present-day, globalized world. Can 'inventing traditions' be regarded as a common human characteristic occurring throughout world history?

BOSCHUNG, BUSCH, VERSLUYS (EDS.) –
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EDITED BY DIETRICH BOSCHUNG, ALEXANDRA W.
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# REINVENTING 'THE INVENTION OF TRADITION'?

## Indigenous Pasts and the Roman Present

# INHALT

**INVENTING TRADITIONS IN THE ROMAN WEST**

ALEXANDRA W. BUSCH AND MIGUEL JOHN VERSLUYS

# INDIGENOUS PASTS AND THE ROMAN PRESENT

## INVENTING TRADITIONS

The concept of 'inventing traditions', the central theme of the present volume, almost seems to have been created to analyse the Roman world in particular. Rome was a successor culture and was constantly looking back and around, trying to formulate its own identity towards the Mediterranean, the Near East, Egypt, and temperate Europe. Two (overlapping) aspects can be distinguished in this respect.

On the one hand, there were the culture areas that the Romans *conquered*, full of Iberians, Gauls, Germans, Celts, Greeks, Asians, Egyptians, Africans, and many others. Through the successes of Roman imperialism, amongst other factors, the Mediterranean network got more intensively connected than ever before. Rome now also became strongly linked, through the Eastern Mediterranean in particular, with other important (Eurasian, Asian, and African) 'world-systems'. As a result of this remarkable punctuation of connectivity, all those participating in the network created a new world: a process we call, for better or worse, Romanisation.[1]

On the other hand, there were culture areas in the sense of how the Romans *perceived* them. In this respect, as in many others, Rome was firmly part of the Hellenistic world from which it originated. Hellenistic perceptions about how to understand the various cultural traditions of the Mediterranean, the Near East, Egypt, and temperate Europe therefore mattered greatly to the Romans—they were certainly not merely a playground for intellectuals. Instead, these perceptions were an im-

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**1** For Rome as globalised and globalising see Pitts/Versluys 2015. For Romanisation, see the debate in: Archaeological Dialogues 21, 1 (2014), 1–64.

portant source of social and political power. This second aspect can be characterised through the concept of memory.[2]

The addition of the concept of memory to the characterisation of how Roman identity was built up and developed through conquering the Other is crucial. It explains how the Romans were able to conquer Greece, the Near East, Egypt as well as large parts of Europe, and develop an imperialist, sometimes even colonialist, discourse with regard to those cultures and their inhabitants, while simultaneously they were actively engaged in the process of building their *Romanitas* on those same cultures.

This, in fact, is not an inconsistency but a well-known principle throughout world history, and a strategy still visible today. When we say that Greece is important for Europe we most often mean ancient, classical Greece—or rather, we refer to ideas within our own culture that we have projected onto classical Greece in a fascinating exercise of double hermeneutics. The Romans did something similar, and as a result they had a lot of *Erinnerungsarbeit* to do in order to keep separating the imaginary, remembered Other from the real, present-day Other.

Although attitudes toward the Other were, of course, far from uniform (see further below), we might distinguish, for the sake of analysis, two main categories of the Other functioning in the Roman world. First, there is the Other in terms of what anthropologists call a negative self-definition. This is the stereotypical Other that personified everything that an ideal definition of Roman did *not* entail. These include effeminate and corrupted contemporary Greeks and other Easterners, for instance, or ferocious but underdeveloped western Barbarians. This is the domain of Imagology.[3] Secondly, there is the Other in terms of appropriation; the Other that became Roman. These include the ancient civilisations of Greece and the East full of wisdom, knowledge, religion, and culture that were to be constructed as the predecessors of Rome; or Celtic knowledge in metallurgy that was to innovate the Roman army.

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**2** Recent additions to a still growing bibliography that already is immense include Gallia 2012 and Ker/Pieper 2014. Assmann 1992 remains fundamental.

**3** For the field of Imagology, see Beller/Leersen 2007.

## PLAYING WITH CULTURE IN AN INTRA-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Putting the concept of 'inventing traditions' central to analyses of the Roman world implies a focus on the latter strategy. But are the two really that different? From an ethnographic perspective it is only logical that the Roman literary discourse portrayed everything that was *not Roman* as (eastern or western) *Barbarian*. But this was, so it seems, mainly an intellectual, mental construction in order to arrive at definitions of *Romanitas*.[4] Putting all the negative stereotypes one finds in literary sources together may easily result in the conclusion that there were strongly demarcated borders between Romans and Natives. Reality, however, often was very different. All those negative stereotypes, in fact, seem to show that the Other had already become part of Rome, and that it just had to be allotted its proper place. Recent scholarship, therefore, now often understands all these negative stereotypes as a form of *framing*.[5] The fact that all 'Natives' would become 'Roman' in 212 AD through the edict of Caracalla is a case in point here, and only the result of a much longer development.

This definition of Roman as 'fundamentally multicultural' in recent scholarship implies, therefore, that the categories of the real, present-day Other on the one hand and the imaginary, remembered Other on the other are, in fact, contextual and often overlapping. In a recent study on Siberia and 'traditional' Koryak traditions, the anthropologist Alexander D. King has beautifully shown how "the explicit discourse of cultural compartimentalism denies the lived realities".[6] And this is how we would like to approach the functions of the Other, and the traditions of the Other, in the Roman world. There is explicit discourse, there is lived reality as something very different, and there is even explicit discourse as lived reality. Traditions were borrowed, manipulated, and transformed by all involved, and the boundaries between Self and Other were constantly (re)defined.

This volume tries to understand the world touched by Rome as a zone of intra-cultural rather than inter-cultural connectivity.[7] The invention of tradition, as such, may then well become, to borrow from

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**4** "Telling tales on the Middle Ground", as Woolf 2011 eloquently puts it.
**5** Rosen/Sluiter 2010; Gruen 2011; Ker/Pieper 2014.
**6** King 2011, 238.
**7** Jennings (forthcoming).

King's subtitle, "playing with culture".[8] This is not to say that differences between Roman and Native did not matter—they mattered a lot—but rather that we would be dealing, to a large extent, with *constructed* ethnic and cultural identities that were fluid and permeable. Roman cultural innovation was, in fact, dependent on (Native) Others—as all cultural innovation is.

It is important to realise that both categories of the Other—the real Other and the imaginary Other—can be called Greek (or Egyptian or Near Eastern or Celtic), but that these terms often indicate something very different. *Graecus*, for instance, can mean Greek in the sense of an ethnic denomination; it can also mean what is understood as 'doing or being Greek' in a Roman context.[9] These two are not as directly related as scholars often imagine them to be: one did not need *to be* Greek in order *to do* Greek. *Doing Greek* was performing what had been defined as 'the iconic', and trying to do this in the right way was very much *being Roman*. Doing Greek, therefore, was valued in the Roman world because it was, what anthropologists call, an 'indexical-iconic figure'.[10] Concepts like authenticity and copy make little sense in such a context.

### REINVENTING *THE INVENTION OF TRADITION*?

The 'constructedness' of societies and cultures is heavily debated these days; something that undoubtedly has to do with the decline of the nation state and the impact of globalisation processes.[11] This development resonates strongly with new approaches to the history and archaeology of the Roman world.[12] It is against this background that the *Morphomata* workshop, and the present volume that is its result, evaluates the concept of 'inventing traditions'.[13] Although the 'constructedness' of societies and cultures, also of the Roman world, had always been realised and studied, the process as such was firmly put back on the intellectual agenda again through the publication of a collection of essays entitled *The invention*

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**8** King 2011, the full subtitle of his study is 'Playing with culture in Siberia'.
**9** Dupont/Valette-Cagnac 2005.
**10** Silverstein 2006.
**11** Appadurai 2013.
**12** Pitts/Versluys 2015.
**13** 'Reinventing "The Invention of Tradition"? Indiginious Pasts and the Roman Present'; Cologne 14th–15th November 2013.

*of tradition* edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in 1983. This concept has now become known as a standard interpretation for historical research; and the book has grown into a modern classic that is often referred to, also in Classical studies.[14]

Placed within this theoretical context, the present volume has two main goals.

First, it wants to take a critical look at the concept of 'the invention of tradition' itself, thirty years after Hobsbawm and Ranger.[15] How influential has it really been? How did it change our views on the Roman world? Is it still useful to us? How can it be elaborated upon? And should we indeed reinvent 'the invention of tradition'? The latter question is, of course, mainly rhetorical. We are not interested in reinventing the concept as such, but we are in trying to expand, enrich, and push forward analyses of Rome's 'constructedness'.

Secondly, the present volume aims to bring together debates and interpretations on this *bricolage* by Roman society as they have been developed for both the Roman East *and* the Roman West. The past decade has seen an important discussion on the so-called Second Sophistic in the Eastern Mediterranean, and scholars have been analysing a Celtic Renaissance in the Western Mediterranean and temperate Europe simultaneously —to give but two examples.[16] We think that these two developments are quintessentially Roman and strongly intertwined. The concept of 'the invention of tradition' is a worthwhile point of departure to try and study them in relation to one another as well as to try and bridge various debates that are basically talking about the same thing.

Central questions explored in the various articles are therefore: Why were some traditions forgotten, others invented, and some (simply) continuing? What traditions did Rome actually invent as being its own; how did this process work and why were some traditions strongly capitalised upon while others were neglected? When thinking about 'the invention

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**14** Exemplary is the recent volume (14) of the *Acta Hyperborea* (Danish Studies in Classical Archaeology) dedicated to *Tradition. Transmission of culture in the ancient world* (Fejfer/Moltesen/Rathje 2015) in which the concept can be found used and quoted throughout.

**15** Note that the concept as such was defined and elaborated upon by Hobsbawm only in his introduction to the volume (Hobsbawm 1983). Other such attempts that inspired us include Salber Phillips 2004 and Rogister/Vergati 2004.

**16** See Whitmarsh 2005 for the first and Reuter 2003 for the latter.

of tradition' in the Roman Empire, we should not forget the 'indigenous' perspective either: How were the local populations from various parts of the Empire linked to their pre-Roman pasts? Are there hints of continuity, in certain parts of their social lives at least? What about the omnipresence of a landscape that was filled with strong and ancient reminiscences? Can we see a revival or even a creation of practises and forms of expression that refer to a pre-Roman past? And—because memory is as much about forgetting as it is about remembering—what about the forgetfulness of indigenous pasts in the Roman present?

Tradition is not the opposite of change and inventing traditions, therefore, is very much about the present and how people live their lives.[17] In this way, the pre-Roman pasts played an important role in the cultural transformation of various parts of the Empire. This was also the case, we argue, in temperate Europe, where the assumed forgetfulness or 'historical amnesia' seems to be the result of the absence of sources clearly referring to a pre-Roman past—such as coins, memorial monuments, and texts as known from the eastern part of the Empire—in combination with an unhealthy dichotomy between debates in Prehistory and 'Provincial Roman Archaeology'. The concept of *Erinnerungskultur* also matters for the Roman West. But this is only one of the misbalances that the present volume aims to address. Although concepts like memory and tradition had a much stronger impact on the history and archaeology of other areas of the Roman world, the focus of scholarly analysis has almost exclusively been on Greece. But it is clear that, for Rome, there were more traditions than Greek ones alone, like those from the Near East and Egypt. This volume therefore investigates the role of indigenous pasts in the Roman present for the Roman East *and* the Roman West in relation to one another, and also moves *beyond Greece* by looking at Eastern, Egyptian, and Celtic traditions as well. In none of these aspects it aims to be comprehensive or to provide an overview.

The volume is structured as follows. Two case studies from different periods and regions around the world (presented by Andreas Niehaus and Michael Zelle) serve as theoretical introductions in order to analyse how 'the invention of tradition' works as a cultural process (*Inventing traditions in the 19th and 20th centuries*).

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17 Wagner 1981 already showed and analysed how tradition is the ground upon which people innovate.

A first set of four essays (*Inventing traditions in Greece, Rome and the Roman East*) follows up on this by first looking at the role of tradition and memory in relation to Rome's great example Greece (Katja Sporn) to focus subsequently on how processes of 'inventing traditions' were played out in the Roman present with regard to Greek pasts (Onno van Nijf and Christina G. Williamson), Near Eastern pasts (Michael Sommer), and Egyptian pasts (Miguel John Versluys).

A second set of four articles focuses on indigenous pasts in the Roman present of Northwestern Europe (*Inventing traditions in the Roman West*). Using source material and frameworks of interpretation that differ from the previous section, the essays by Peter Wells, David Fontijn, Alexandra Busch, and Hella Eckardt clearly illustrate how important the concept of *Erinnerungskultur* is for the Roman West, as well as how much scholarly debates on the Roman East and the Roman West could profit from one another in studying 'the invention of tradition'.

Like all societies, Rome was constructed from what came before and what was available around it. As such, Rome could very well be described as a specific form that was given shape and then was received and passed on as cultural practice.[18] Herein lies the relevance of the present volume for the research project *Morphomata* and it is this perspective in particular that it wants to put forward for discussion.[19]

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[18] For Rome as 'aggregative cultural praxis' see Versluys 2015.

[19] This volume has grown out of intensive discussions between the authors of this Introduction after having met at the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (DAI) in the city of Rome in 2012. The enthusiasm and support of Dietrich Boschung and *Morphomata* enabled us to materialise our ideas. We are very grateful to Dietrich Boschung and his *Morphomata* staff for their generous support of both the conference and this publication; and to the participants of the conference and the authors of this book for their intellectual engagement.

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# INVENTING TRADITIONS IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

ANDREAS NIEHAUS

# "WE ARE CHILDREN OF THE SEA". SWIMMING AS PERFORMATIVE TRADITION IN MODERNIZING JAPAN

*Traditions are invented, but it is equally important to realise that the invention of tradition is a cultural practice in itself. The performative character of tradition, however, is often overlooked in recent research that focuses too exclusively on the discursive aspect of tradition.[1] Approaching tradition in the context of nation building and national identity therefore also has to integrate the perspective of performativity through the body – the one that is "doing" practice – in order to exemplify that tradition is kept alive by and does not exist without practice. Bodies are culturally encoded (cultivated) and as such they are products of culture, but at the same time bodies actively produce culture. By focusing on swimming and swim techniques in Japan during the 19th century, this paper will argue that swimming bodies in Japan were connected to the nation-building process, the self-identity as an island nation, and served to represent the constructed national characteristics of the Japanese people, as swimming could be located within the discourse of an idealized past. In swimming traditional techniques the swimmer performed his (male) Japaneseness and was turned into an ideal member of the ideal nation. Additionally, existing political conflicts were discursively negotiated and Japanese swimmers were able to symbolically reconquer the waters that had been occupied by Western powers since Commodore Perry forced the opening of Japanese harbors.*

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**1** This article is based on earlier publications (Niehaus 2010 and 2011) and further develops the line of argument of those prior publications.

INTRODUCTION

On September 9, 2011 the Nagasaki-based Kobori-ryū swim style or-
ganized a swim meet to display "traditional" Japanese swimming tech-
niques. One striking feature of this event was the writing of calligraphy
while swimming (*suisho*) in the pool. The striking message communicat-
ed was – not some philosophical concept or the name of the swim style
as is common in such performances – but a message to the Japanese na-
tion following the triple disaster[2] in March 2011: "Japan, let's keep fight-
ing" (Gambarō Nippon).[3] However, during that meet participants were
not only showing their skills in different pre-modern swim techniques,
but the procession of a lord and his encourage was also staged and relo-
cated into the pool (*daimyō gyōretsu*). In the case of the Kobori-ryū swim
meet, children crossed the pool holding fake *naginata* (halberds), guns;
even sedans, in which the *daimyō* of Nagasaki (played by the mayor)
and a princess (played by a young girl) dressed in fake-historical outfits
were seated, crossed the pool on the shoulders of swimmers. During
the Edo-period (1600–1867) lords had to leave their domains on regular
intervals and travel to Edo, the seat of the central government (*bakufu*).
The *daimyo gyōretsu* was a means of the central government to control
the fiefs, but it also gave the local rulers a means to display their own
wealth and power to their subjects. These processions even became tour-
ist attractions along the main Tōkaidō road that connected Kyōto and
Edo as well as a pastime for the locals in Edo that could rely on printed
guides to "read" the processions. Recently *daimyō* processions have be-
come part of prefectural and local identity-formation and re-enactments
serve to remind the locals of past glory and, more importantly, serve
to attract tourists. As the participants in the case of Kobori-ryū were
mainly children, they were not only introduced into the local history of
their town and prefecture, but they also – by actively participating in the
"re-enactment" as well as by performing "traditional body techniques" –
gave life to tradition.

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2 Great Tōhoku Earthquake (*Tōhoku daijinsai*), tsunami and the nuclear
catastrophe in Fukushima.
3 <http://portal.nifty.com/kiji/110909147800_2.htm> (2014–05–28) http://
www.chiba-c.ed.jp/awakon/homepage/sc/club/sports/h_t_swimming/
eihouzukai.html (2015-06-10), and for Kobori-ryū see Shirayama 1975, 143–
157 and 191–192.

This paper will focus on the process of traditionalization of Japanese swimming during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the (performative) epiphanies of that (invented) tradition. Traditionalization claims function as "ideology" in times of rapid social change and times of anxiety; anxiety produced by the speed of social, economical and political changes.[4] In Japan also the "birth" of an ideology that wanted to absorb Japanese pasts into the culturally homogenizing project of building a nation-state in the 19th century can be observed. In these times the idea of harmony, the idea of a fixed set of authentic and unchanging performances, in contrast to the "spectacle of ceaseless change",[5] gave a sense of security with the past as point of reference. Dipesh Chakrabarty stated that: "Ideas acquire materiality through the history of bodily practices."[6] Thus, different from the established paradigm that sees culture as a collective system of meaning and reduces culture to a set of signs, I will focus on the performative dimension of culture and argue that culture is shaped, produced and reproduced through cultural practice.[7]

Approaching Japanese swim traditions in the context of nation building and national identity therefore has to integrate the perspective of the body – the one that is "doing" practice – in order to exemplify that tradition is kept alive by and does not exist without bodily practice.[8]

Hobsbawn and Ranger have historised tradition and have stressed the fact that traditions are invented.[9] Their approach has been criticized mainly on theoretical grounds, but Stephen Vlastos (1998) has already pointed out that the "primary value of the invention of tradition to the critical study of culture is heuristic rather than theoretical"[10], and it is as such that I will use the concept in this study. Applying the concept of invented tradition will give us a better understanding of how modern cultures and societies are constructed.

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**4** See Ivy 1995, 3, 9–11, 15–18.
**5** Harootunian 2000, p. XIX.
**6** Chakrabarty 1998, 295.
**7** For performativity and culture as practice see the introduction to this volume as well as Wirth 2002, Hörning 2004 and Niehuas 2012.
**8** See also Surak 2013.
**9** Hobsbawn/Ranger 1983.
**10** Vlastos 1998, 5.

Sport as a cultural activity is, as has already been argued by Johan Huizinga,[11] not only expressing culture, but also forming cultures and societies. The idea of sports in the 19th century, especially in the An-glo-Saxon cultural environment, was rather exclusive as doing sports was considered to be an activity for the 'civilized' gentleman. Sport and play became a yardstick for a society's enlightenment and athletic endeavour for record performance came to be seen as a distinctive marker for the West in contrast to the Orient, as for example the German historian and archaeologist Ernst Curtius had expressed.[12] That perspective also im-plies that non-European or non-North American societies were excluded from sport "by nature". The Anthropological Days in St. Louis (1904)[13] are a prominent example reflecting this idea, which was also observed by Pierre de Coubertin, who writes in his "Memoire Olympique" (1930): "Sport is the prerogative of all races. It is not so long since Asiatics were actually considered excluded by nature."[14] The idea of sports can thus firmly be placed in the imperialistic discourse as it is also expressed by Frost (2010):

> [...] 'teaching' sports to the Japanese was as much about Westerners confirming their own superiority as it was sharing a 'love for the game'. The Japanese acceptance of, and eventual success in, sports provided further proof, ex post facto, of claims to universality. From a Euro-American perspective, Japanese interest in sports proved that the West had been right about sports all along. But Japanese success-es in sports also revealed the tensions inherent in what was, as its very core, a co-constitutional process.[15]

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**11** Huizinga 1939, esp. Chapter 1 'Wesen und Bedeutung des Spiels als Kul-turerscheinung', 1–44.

**12** Ernst Curtius writes in Altertum und Gegenwart (1903): "My idea is to reveal and unfold the agonistic character of Greek life [...] to show how the entirety of Greek life was a competition between tribes and cities, in war and peace, in art and scholarship, contrary to the life of pleasure in the Orient, with an overestimation of possessions and the desire to possess." Quoted Mangan 2002, 19.

**13** See esp. Brownell 2008 and Sanada 2007.

**14** Coubertin 2000, 748.

**15** Frost 2010, 5.

In sport activities and in sport competitions that were based on a fixed set of rules, the Western elites not just expressed and staged themselves, but indeed produced and ensured their own existence. Representatives of foreign nations, teachers, merchants, and others settling in Japan following the opening of Japanese ports nursed and cultivated these components of individual, collective and cultural construction of meaning. When sport started to spread in Japan it was exercised not by the general population, but by the new and future political, economic and intellectual leaders, who came into contact with Western sport in schools and universities or through observing competitions of expats in Kōbe and Yokohama as well as in foreign countries. Here the young Japanese elite learned not only to play, but also to incorporate the meaning of bodily practice. Doing sports became a symbol of new times and was exercised by the intellectual elite of Japan as a way to participate and incorporate modernity. At the same time, however, pre-modern Japanese body techniques became considered to be inferior to Western body techniques during the first half of the Meiji-period (1868–1912). They disappeared, were marginalized or modernized according to the needs of the time. The pendulum swung back only from around the '80s of the 19th century, when, with growing national, cultural and collective self-confidence and the coining of a national identity, 'tradition' came back into bodily practice.

My paper is organized in five sections that will be summarized in a conclusion: Following a brief outline of the characteristics of pre-modern Japanese swimming, I will focus on how 'Japaneseness' came to be defined by ideologizing 'traditional' bodily practices. Section III then will apply the example of time in modernizing Japan and time keeping in sport, in order to show the processes by which 'traditional' practices became a signifier of modernity and civilisation. The focus in section IV will be on the question how swimming was placed in the context of nation-building and identity-formation in political as well as cultural discourses. This will be exemplified by looking at the mechanisms of how the idea of a pre-modern samurai was discursively linked to the image of the modern swimming athlete (section 5).

## I. CHARACTERISTICS OF PRE-MODERN JAPANESE SWIMMING

The Japanese Swimming Federation today recognizes twelve pre-modern swim schools.[16] The main characteristic of these schools is that they are rooted in the history of martial education, which taught swimming to the warrior elite not as leisure activity, or a sport, but as martial skill. Swimming was included into the specific organizational structure as well as ideological framework of Japanese war arts and was included into the Japanese canon of eighteen martial abilities (*bugei jūhappan*).[17] The techniques that were taught in these schools focused on pragmatic abilities for warfare, including swimming in armour, crossing a river on horse, swimming against currents, or shooting arrows from the water.[18] The war epic Heike monogatari (early 14th centruy), in which the war between the two warrior houses Taira and Minamoto during the late Heian period (794–1185) is told, already mentions techniques to cross a river by horse (*suiba*). In chapter 11 we read about the warrior Ashikaga no Tadatsuna:

> 'We are the warriors of the east. Our enemy awaits us on the other side of the river. Why do we worry about depths and shallows? This river is only more or less deep and swift as the Toné river. Follow me.' With this shout, Tadatsuna plunged into the stream. Those who followed where Ōgo, Ōmuro, Fukasu, Yamagami, Nawa no Tarō, Sanuki no Hirotsuna, Onodera no Zenji Tarō, Heyako no Shirō, and the clansmen Ubukata no Jitrō, Kiryu no Rokurō, and Tanaka no Muneda. Some three hundred mounted soldiers followed the leaders and galloped into the river. 'Turn the heads of the stronger horses upstream, those of the weaker downstream! If the horses keep their feet, give them rein and let them walk. If they lose their footing, give them their heads and let them swim. If you are swept downstream,

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**16** These are Suifu-ryū, Suifu-ryū Ōta-ha, Mukai-ryū, Kankai-ryū, Nōjima-ryū, Iwakura-ryū, Koike-ryū, Shinden-ryū, Suitō-ryū, Yamauchi-ryū, Kobori-ryū, Shintō-ryū; see Shirayama 1975.
**17** In the Ming-period Chinese source, on which the Japanese 18 martial arts are based, swimming is not listed as one of the necessary skills. For poems of swim schools that express the ideological integration into the martial tradition see Imamaura, 1989 (vol. 1).
**18** In Kankai-ryū swimmers had to cover long distances, accompanied by the sound of drums and exclamations (*kakegoe*) of 'Yoikora'. See Shirayama 1975, 85.

thrust the butt of your bow into the bottom. Join hands and go across in a line. If your horse's head goes down, pull it up, but not too far, or you will fall off backward. Sit tight in the saddle and keep your feet firm in the stirrups. Where the water is deep, get up on your horse's rump. Be gentle to your horse, but firm against the stream. Do not shoot while you are in the river. Even if the enemy shoots, do not shoot back. Keep your head down and your neckplate bent forward, but do not crouch too far or you will be shot in the crown of your helmet. Do not go straight across – the current will carry you away. Ride with the stream.'[19]

During the Edo-period (1600–1867) the number of swim schools increased and they were increasingly (and that in accordance with the development in other martial art forms) characterized by specialization, professional-ization and diversification. Martial training was generally considered to have a positive effect on the moral development and mental condition of the warriors. As swimming was part of the martial education for war-riors, swim styles not only followed the same organizational structures, but also incorporated the philosophical and ideological framework of martial arts as can already be shown by the terms that were used in the Edo-period to refer to swimming, as they often comprised the word *dō* (way), like *suieidō* 水泳道, *suirendō* 水練道, *shūdō* 泅道; terms that can all be translated as "way of swimming". The word "way" as expressed by *dō* (*michi*) is rooted in Taoism, Zen-Buddhism and Confucianism and thus has strong ideological and philosophical connotations.[20]

Already in the above mentioned Heike monogatari chapter, brave warriors like the Minamoto general Shigeta,[21] are characterized also by their swimming abilities. Tadatsune began his speech by referring to the courage of Nitta no Nyūdō, who crossed the Tone river with his horse. Crossing a river clad in armour is here considered to be an act of bravery

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**19** The Tale of Heike (early 14th century), see Kitagawa/Tsuchida 1975, 267. Yet another account concerning warriors crossing a river on horse can be found in the Konjaku monogatari (early 12th century) chapter 'How the Noble Minamoto no Yorinobu called Taira no Tadatsune to Account'. See Wilson 1973, 215. The Konjaku monogatari is also one of the first sources to mention a specific technique: *tachi oyogi* (upright swimming); a technique that is used in basically all pre-modern swim styles.
**20** See Ishikawa 1960, 23–24.
**21** The Tale of Heike, see Kitagawa/Tsuchida 1975, 513.

and shows not only outstanding fighting skills, but also nobility in mind and in fact in pedigree. Epic warrior stories like the Heike monogatari were popular during the Edo-period and helped to form the image of the ideal, loyal warrior, who would sacrifice his life for his lord. This image of the warrior was officially supported and propagated by the central government, which introduced Neo-Confucianism as state philosophy and also supported Zen Buddhism. The ideology of the ruling warrior elite, with a strong focus on loyalty and virtue, is then also mirrored in texts of different swim schools. For example, the Suifu-ryū summarizes the essence of swimming in the phrase: *suishin itchi* (水心一致): "Swimming and heart are one".[22] According to Confucian thinking, the heart is the seat of the original nature of man, engulfing the five cardinal virtues that make man a social being. The aphorism *suishin itchi*, however, can also be connected to a Zen-Buddhist tradition. Influenced by this tradition, martial schools, from the second half of the Edo-period onwards, sometimes integrated the aspects of mindlessness, unintentionality of the warrior, and the ideal state of mind, in which a unity of mind and action is achieved. This idea is most prominent in the numerous sword styles, where it is expressed in mottos like *kenzen itchi* 剣禅一致 "sword and Zen are one". Also several swim styles adapt this final goal of exercise in order to reach a point of fearless and instinctive action. For example, the Kōike-ryū captures this idea by the phrase *kyoshin zenshū* 虚心善泅 "Without mind / Good swimming". The term *zen* (善) refers to an act that is done for the good of society. Yet, another aspect that refers to a religious component in swimming is that of enlightenment. In the Shinden-ryū swim it reads accordingly *Mizu wa godō no gaku, shogei no haha* 水は悟道の学、諸芸の母: "Swimming is the teaching of the way how to reach enlightenment. It is the mother of all arts".[23]

Swimming as a martial ability was closely connected to power and authority and as such not only encouraged by the fiefs, but also exercised by members of the ruling Tokugawa family. Already the first Tokugawa ruler Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) valued swimming, and sources

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**22** Literally "Water and heart are one". *Shin* can also be translated as 'mind'. Vgl. Shirayama 1975, 179–180 and Ishikawa 1960, 26.
**23** Ishikawa 1960, 26 and Shirayama 1975, 180.

suggest that he swam until the age of 69.[24] Provinces like Wakayama,[25] Mito and Takamatsu (Matsudaira) that were under direct control of the Tokugawa family, and fiefs closely connected to the centre of feudal power, developed into centres for swimming.

Threats from foreign powers in the first half of the 19th century resulted in an increasing fortification of Japanese coastlines and swimming as a means for national defence came to be discussed. When the government founded its first military academy Kōseisho in 1855, also swimming was included into the school's curriculum. The academy invited swim instructors from different schools to teach their specific swim techniques. The appointment of instructors of different swim styles was necessary as swim schools applied swimming techniques that were selective, as they reflected geographical imperatives. For example, swimming in a river asks for different techniques than swimming in the open sea or in lakes. Bringing together teachers from different schools and different parts of the country to create a form of unified swimming style for soldiers also mirrors early reactions to the forces of modernity asking for unification and centralisation. Consequently, the Meiji-period (1867–1912) as well as the Taishō-period (1912–1926) saw attempts to unify pre-modern swim styles in order to invent a 'Japanese' swim style that could be connected to the nation, rather than swim styles that were connected to provinces and fiefs, whose claim of local identity and authenticity in the late Edo period and early Meiji years still posed a potential threat to the national unification process.[26]

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**24** The appendix of the *Tōshōgū gojikki* mentions that Ieyasu used to swim in a river close to Okazaki castle in his youth, and that also his followers (*gokenin*) were skilled swimmers. Swimming was stimulated especially under the rule of the third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu (1603–1651), and eighth shogun, Yoshimune (1677–1751). Tokugawa Yorinobu (1602–1671) was according to the records able to peel a melon or shoot ducks while performing the technique of upright swimming (*tate oyogi*). See Shirayama 1975, 23 and 26.

**25** Wakayama e. g. is home to three pre-modern swim schools: Kōike-ryū, Iwakura-ryū and Nōjima-ryū.

**26** E. g. Kanō Jigorō who developed his own swim style, which was called *Zōshikai suijutsu*. Kanō had based his style on the book *Nihon Yūeijutsu* written by Ōta Sutezo. In his book also Ōta tried to establish a Japanese swim style, by combining techniques from different schools. See Sanada/Tsubakimoto/Takagi 2007.

## II. TRADITION MEETS MODERNITY: SWIMMING JAPANESE STYLE IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS

The characteristic feature of modern swimming is that it is a competitive sport.[27] Although swimming in early modern Japan was a martial skill, and swimming against time was unknown, it nevertheless had a competitive element; as for example races to reach objects floating in or under water were exercised.[28] The most common form of competition in pre-modern swim schools were long distance races that focused on stamina rather than on speed. The introduction of competitive swimming as practiced in the West began only during the '90s of the 19th century. The encounter between competitive swimming in Western style and pre-modern forms of Japanese swimming resulted in the adaptation of Western style competition into the indigenous swim schools. However, Western style competition underwent a process of acculturation and traditionalization. It was ideologized to demonstrate that Japanese body techniques and the Japanese body were equal or even superior to their Western opponents. In this process of acculturation and traditionalization, there is one early sport event recorded that exemplifies these transformation processes and that highly influenced the perception of Japanese swim techniques as being traditional body techniques superior to modern Western techniques.

In 1897 more than thirty members of the pre-modern Suifu-ryū Ōta-ha[29] swim style organized a swim meet in Mukōjima in the East of Tōkyō. According to the implemented narrative, passing members of the Yokohama Amateur Rowing Club, a sport club for expats in Japan, were amused about the performance by the Japanese swimmers. Humiliated by this reaction, the Japanese swimmers seemed to have challenged the foreign swimmers and a meet (that was advertised widely in the newspa-

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**27** For a discussion on the characteristics of modern sport see Guttmann 2004a.

**28** The *Yūei dōyu* (1878) lists an exercise named *ukimono torikachi*, for which swimmers need to reach a floating object as fast as possible. Takeda 1984, 383–407, see also Ishikawa 1960, 26. For a discussion concerning elements of modernity or modern sport in pre-modern Japanese sport see Guttmann 2004b.

**29** The Ōta-school was established as independent of the Suifu-ryū swimming in 1878 in Tōkyō. The main school, Suifu-ryū, was founded in 1619 by Shimamura Magoemon Masahiro in the Mito fief.

pers) was arranged for August 13, 1898 at 16 o'clock at Yokohama's West Quai in front of the Grand Hotel.[30] Two boats positioned in a distance of 100 yards marked the course. Many spectators followed the swim race from boats that were floating along the course. Four swimmers at the time (two from Ōta-ha and two from the Yokohama Rowing Club) competed in three disciplines: 100, 440 and 880 yard. Where the Western swimmers used the Trudge(o)n and the overarm stroke, the Japanese swimmers swam techniques named *konukite* and *hitoenoshi*. The results of the race came to be a surprise for the spectators: the distance of 100 yard was won by Mizoguchi Mikitomo (who later became coach of the Japanese swimming team, for the Far Eastern Championship Games) in 1:20, and his brother Mizoguchi Kanju beat his opponents on the 440 yard course, by swimming 8:20. Only the 880 yard distance could be won (16:45) by a representative of the Yokohama Amateur Rowing Club. The return meet that was arranged one year later equally resulted in two Japanese wins.[31] The victories not only established the Ota-ha's reputation as leading "traditional" Japanese swim school. Following this international meet, competitive swimming in Japan became more popular and meets were organized throughout the country, especially in the Kantō and Kansai area: the centres of modernization and industrialization.[32]

The discussion of using certain swimming techniques in this context not only became a question of physics and effectiveness, as could be expected in modern competitive sport, but also touched upon questions of cultural identity, since swimming in Japan meant to actively remem-

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**30** The first international swimming competition probably took already place in April 1884 between Japanese and American swimmers. However neither times, distances or disciplines are recorded. (Ishikawa 1960, 117) Also Watanabe does not list this competition in his detailed chart on international meets. Watanabe, however, mentions a swimmer named Sakamoto, who was a pupil of the Victoria Public School, participating in the swim meets of the Yokohama Amateur Rowing Club in 1896 and 1897. See Watanabe 1976, 22 and 26.

**31** Ishikawa 1960, 117–119 and Nihon Suiei Renmei 1969, 10.

**32** Nihon Suiei Renmei 1969, 11. In those days there was no fixed term for swim competition/race. Katō/Mukai (1905) use *"kyōyu"*. At the same time (1898), however, also the current Japanese term for modern competitive swimming, *kyōei*, came into use. *Kyōei* was then also officially adopted by the Kyōto based Martial Virtue Society (*Butokukai*). See Ishikawa 1960, 24.

ber pre-modern body techniques.[33] When Japanese swimmers started to compete internationally in the Far Eastern Championships in 1913, they were able to dominate the events by swimming in a traditional style. At the Olympic Games of Antwerp (1920), however, it became evident that Japanese techniques were inferior to the newly developed front crawl.[34] In a magazine with the title "Orinpia" from 1918 we already find an article by Kyōda Takeo, in which he argues that certain swim techniques like the crawl are un-Japanese and as such should not be trained. However, the fact that Japanese swimmers are not winning in international competitions anymore is not linked to the superiority of the crawl as a swim technique. The explanation for defeat is sought instead in the swimmer's inability to master Japanese body techniques, in his lacking attitude. Following these arguments, modern Japanese swimmers would have lost their connection to the Japanese tradition and in the end would also have lost their Japaneseness.

But swimming is a modern sport, based on the principles of effectiveness and optimization, and the front crawl consequently spread in Japan. Yet the discourse ascribed a certain 'Japaneseness' to the way these modern techniques were realized and exercised: the front crawl was first named Ibaraki-ryū *kurōru,* after Ibaraki Middle School, from where the style started to spread following the Antwerp Games. Around the time of the Los Angeles Games in 1932, the terms *nippon-kurōru* (Japanese crawl) and *nipponshiki suiei* (Japanese swimming) came into use, implying a Japanization of competitive swimming concerning techniques as well as training methods. *Nippon-kurōru,* the front crawl preferred by the Japanese swimmers at that time, was indeed different from the American front crawl, as it used strong leg movements in addition to a considerable rolling of the body and a shorter arm stroke than, for example, Johnny Weissmuller. The term *nipponshiki suiei,* on the other hand, refers not so much to certain techniques as to rigid training methods, the stress on leg exercises, and the importance of gymnastics as part of training and

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**33** One good example occurred in 1918 when a discussion on the Japanese-ness of the breaststroke was held in the magazine *Orinpia* between Kyōda Takeo and Iwamoto Tadatsugu. Kyōda, who is also famous as radio commentator for the first radio broadcast in Japan (1925), which he started by "A, A, A kikoemasu ka" (Eh, eh, eh. Can you hear me?), argues that the Japanese success in the Far Eastern Championships of 1917 is based on the training of indigenous Japanese swimming techniques.

**34** For the development of the front crawl see Colwin 2002.

warm-up, which greatly differed from the Western approach.[35] Ultimately, the body of the swimming athlete came to personify the body of the nation, as expressed in the lyrics of the Asahi Shimbun Olympic support song for 1932 titled *'Hashire! Daichi wo'* (Run! Across the earth): Run across the earth with all your might, Swim that the water splashes, Your arms and your legs, Are the arms and legs, Of Our Japan, Our Noble Japan.[36]

### III. TIMING THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF TRADITION

In the contemporary discourse and also later on (e.g. in the "40 Years' History of the Japan Swimming Association", 1969), it is striking that the first international competitions are contextualized and interpreted against the narrative of national humiliation, following the opening of Japanese harbours and the signing of unequal treaties as well as a felt need for political 'revenge' in the late 19th century. Swimming faster, swimming a better time, was ideologized as the results were reached by means of 'traditional' Japanese body techniques in a discipline dominated and – more importantly – defined by the West.

The aspect of time as characteristic for modern sport events is noteworthy in the context of the traditionalization of swimming and national identity, as time is related to the question of modernity and nation-building in Meiji-period Japan. The Gregorian calendar had only been introduced in Japan in 1873, replacing the agricultural lunisolar calendar. The introduction of this new time system was seen as an important step towards modernizing Japan and it highly influenced the way time was felt in Japan. Western time-keeping devices were known in pre-modern Japan, but were mainly used as decorative objects. The wide

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**35** For the Japanese training style, see Saito, 'How we coach'. Also the swimwear showed a certain deviation from international standards. Although the primary swimsuit for men in the 1920s and 1930s at international competitions was a one piece swimsuit, and Western as well as Japanese swimmers can also be seen in swim shorts, Japanese swimmers were occasionally using the 'traditional' *rokushaku fundoshi* (length of cloth used as underwear, but could also be used for swimming).

**36** The chosen lyrics were that of a fourth grade college boy from Tōkyō and were recorded and distributed by Columbia.

usage of the clock as "the key-machine of the modern industrial age",[37] following the introduction of equal time, was the prerequisite to make competitive swimming, namely swimming against time rather than an opponent, possible.[38] Walter Benjamin argues in his notes of the earliest version of his book *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* that the human being in modern sport is increasingly measured by machines, or rather by the clock, and ultimately by time:

> The foundation of sport is a system of instructions, which at last guides human behaviour towards measurement against elementary physical scales: measurement by seconds and centimetres. It is these measurements that establish sport records. The old form of agon noticeably disappears from modern sport exercise, which distances itself from rivalries, which measure humans against humans. Not for nothing it is said that Nurmi ran against the clock. Thereby the current position of sport exercise has been established. It detaches itself from agon, in order to pursue the direction of a test. Nothing is more familiar to the test in its modern appearance than to measure the human being against a machine.[39]

Sport competitions like swimming, in which time was measured, are thus characteristic of and for modernity. The swimming individual placed himself in the objectified time of modernity and the swimmers' time actually placed him in society; a society in which fastness has been ascribed not only quantitative but also qualitative value. However, time does not only place the 'fast' or 'slow' individual in society, it also serves as indicator of civilisation and enlightenment of a nation in comparison to other nations. Instead of rejecting speed as a symbol of modernity in pre-modern swim styles, it was proven that fastness was a characteristic of pre-modern Japan as well, and as Japanese swimmers outperformed their Western opponents, Japan also proved to be at least equally enlight-

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**37** Mumford 1934, 14–15.

**38** For the history of the clock see Dohrn-van Rossum 2007; for the significance of timekeeping for British sport see esp. Brailsford 1991 and Brailsford 1992, 84–88.

**39** See Tiedemann/Schweppenhäuser 1991, 1039 (translation by the author). Speed and the fast body become economic capital in a Marxian sense, where economy is in the end economy of time, and in the logic of Virilio (1992), who argues that power in history was always the power of the faster.

ened. The significance of time for enlightenment is also stressed by the Japanese intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi in his "Defence of the calendar reform" (Kaireki-ben): "Despite uneducated illiterates nobody can question the rationality of this reform. [...] This reform will therefore serve as a testing ground to separate the enlightened from the stupid Japanese."[40] Here also the aspect of power comes into focus. The ability to control time can be translated into political as well as economical power. Measurability is a prerogative of constructing history. Recorded times allow for comparison with the past, a retrospective view at the performances of the past and place the now not only against the past, but also becomes the starting point for future generations. The aspect of measurability and objectivity is not only valid for time but also for the body. Only the act of breaking records can give meaning, following the logic of modernity, and the record hunt becomes an existential need for the sporting individual as well as for society. This ubiquitous ban on rest in modernity, which dictates to move, is already expressed by Goethe, when Faust seals the pact with Mephistoteles with the words:

> If to the moment I shall ever say/ 'Ah, linger on, thou art so fair!'/ Then may you fetters on me lay,/ Then will I perish, then and there!/ Then may the death-bell toll, recalling/ Then from your service you are free;/ The clock may stop, the pointer falling,/ And time itself be past for me!

## IV. IDENTITY, NATION BUILDING, AND MORAL EDUCATION

Maguire has already stated that "[n]ational culture and identity are also represented by an emphasis on origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness"[41] and 19th and early 20th century writings on swimming in Japan bear witness to an attempt to create a history of swimming that is based on continuity, stability and timelessness; connecting the origin of swimming in Japan with the foundation myths of the nation, like the creators of the world the gods Izanami and Izanagi.[42] Swimming in traditional style also received special significance in the discourse, as it could be linked to the definition of the Japanese nation as being an

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**40** Quoted after Tomonaga 2003, 54–55.
**41** Maguire 1999, 178.
**42** Katō/Mukai 1905, 4.

"island nation" threatened by foreign powers. According to Oguma Eiji this element of Japanese self-identity was only invented, when Japan was "faced with the external threat posed by the West" in the middle of the 19th century.[43] The sea became not only the bridge to the "other", in terms of cultural, intellectual and economic exchange, but also the bridge over which the "other" could invade Japan. The American "black ships" that enforced an opening of Japanese harbours became symbols of national defeat and helplessness, and politicians as well as military leaders were aware of the necessity to control the waters around Japan. In this context, swimming becomes a means to physically, morally and intellectually strengthen the Japanese nation, and numerous educators and swim instructors published books and articles in order to promote what became to be termed "Japanese swimming". Takahashi Yūji (1919), who had studied the traditional style of Suifu-ryū Ōta-ha, argued in his book on Japanese swim techniques that all Japanese have to study the techniques of swimming in order to fulfil their duty (*kokumin gimu*) towards the Japanese nation.[44] He argues in favour of swimming as a form of national physical education and lists several positive properties of swimming, like protection of life (*jinmei hogo*), effect on moral education (*tokuikujō no kekka*), recreation of the mind (*seishin no hoyō*), and a positive effect on physical education (*kyōiku ue no kekka*).[45] Another pioneer that propagated swimming for the masses was Ishii Shimei, a swim instructor trained in the Shinden-ryū. In an article series entitled "About the art of swimming" (*Suieijutsu no hanashi*) published by the magazine Bugei[46], he argues – quite similar to Takahashi – that swimming is suited for physical education not only because it develops the entire body, but especially because it effects the mind (*seishin*), and because swimming

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[43] Oguma 2002, 185.

[44] Takahashi bases his arguments on the fact that Japan is an island nation. Japan not only hast to rely on the navy to defend the country, but is also economically depending on water. Knowledge of martime topics, which can be acquired through swimming are thus considered to be the duty of good citizens. Also the author of the introduction, Kanō Jigorō, stressed the meaning of swimming for the nation and recommends swimming as physical education for the people (*kokumin taiiku*). See Kanō 1919, 1–5.

[45] Takahashi 1919, 1. See in that volume also the preface written by Kanō Jigorō.

[46] The article series compromises five articles and began in the first edition of the magazine *Bugei* (1915) and can be seen as an introduction into the Shinden-ry*ū* swim style. See Ishii 1915.

furthermore takes away anxiety, develops energy (*kiroku*) and self-confidence (*jishin*) and makes the hardships of life in general disappear. Certainly one of the most prominent and most influential advocates for swimming was Kanō Jigorō, founder of judo, head of the Higher Normal School in Tokyo (Tōkyō Kōtō Shihan Gakkō), member of the IOC since 1909[47], and well-connected to political circles. He supported swimming as physical education in schools and as a national sport. Kanō explicitly based his arguments on the notion of Japan being an island surrounded by water. Kanō himself developed a swim style, which united the main pre-modern swim styles (esp. Kankai-ryū, Shinden-ryū and Suifu-ryū) into one style, which he named Kōshi eihō (Swim style of the Higher Normal School), and an introductory course of two weeks became obligatory for students at the Higher Normal School. For his organization *Zōshikai* (Society to educate patriots, 1898), which was founded in 1898, he also introduced a swim system, which he named *Zōshikai-suijutsu*. In an article entitled *"Waga kokumin to mizu"* (Our Nation and Water), Kanō also refers to the idea of the Japanese nation as an island nation:

> Many people have thorough knowledge concerning water and must provide their service with regard to water. Above that, the navy in our country needs to prosper for our defence; this aspect is also connected to water. If we want our nation to develop significantly in terms of water, we must train a great number of citizens to love and not to fear water. What can we do best, in order to reach that goal? I think that we widely have to encourage swimming. Every Japanese, be they old or young, man or woman must be able to swim.[48]

Water is, in these and other texts, an important economical and military factor, and the ability to control the waters around Japan is seen as an element that will influence the future well-being of the nation in terms of politics and economy. Physical educators as well as representatives of the traditional swimming styles, in accordance with the politics of the education ministry, successfully placed swimming in the discourse of nation-building and national identity. Additionally, swimming was promoted for the development and strengthening of certain positive quali-

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**47** The Higher Normal School in Tokyo has to be seen as one of the leading institutions concerning the popularisation of swimming in Japan.
**48** Kanō 1917, 271.

ties like brave character (*daitan kishō*) and stamina (*nintairyoku*)[49] – qualities that were considered to be general qualities of the male Japanese.[50]

## V. SPORT IDEOLOGY AND THE SWIMMER AS SAMURAI:

Swimming in modern Japan then came to be seen as an activity with which the swimmer could reconnect to the pre-modern concept of *bushidō* (way of the warrior); an ideology that in itself was actually only invented during the late Meiji-period, where it served to define intellectual and moral values as well as moral characteristics of the Japanese people. The superiority of Japanese style swimming, with its roots in martial history, is generally also linked to the moral superiority of not only the individual swimmer, who, when indeed winning, demonstrates his Japaneseness, but also of the nation, which proves to still possess the values that make the nation Japanese. The described traditionalization and ideologization of swimming in the context of nation-building is in essence epiphanic: an idea that views tradition not as something that has been lost and has to be brought back, but rather as something that is always present, but concealed.[51] However, I argue, the hidden can be brought back to life through bodily practice. The practice of swimming brought back to light not only the values of *bushidō* (way of the warrior), but the *samurai* himself; or at least what was considered to be the *samurai*.

Japanese historians and sociologists like Abe Ikuo, Kiyohara Yasuharu, Nakajima Ken (1992), Irie Katsumi (1986; 1991), and Sakaue Yasuhiro (1998) have shown that sport in the early 20th century was increasingly ideologized and integrated into the process of total social militarization and *'Gleichschaltung'*. Local and national sport competitions were designed to foster the spiritual development of the nation and to provide strong young soldiers. In oral and textual communication, the athlete was consequently placed in the semantic proximity of the samurai and his modern reincarnation: the soldier. Placing the athlete in the context of the pre-modern samurai and the spirit of *bushidō* became common in sport media. This process went hand-in-hand with a translation and adaption of the English concept of 'sportsmanship' into the Japanese context. In 1903, Takeda Chiyosaburō had already connected 'sportsman-

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**49** Kanō 1912, 147–154; also Kanō 1914, 21.
**50** See Kyōda 1925, 1; Ueno 1943, 3; Nihon Suijō kyōgi renmei 1937.
**51** See Chakrabarty 1998, 289–290.

ship' with the ethical values of the pre-modern warrior class in his work *Riron Jikken Kyōgi Undō*.[52] Takeda also coined the term *kyōgidō*, 'way of athletic competition', and by using the word *dō* (way) and its philosophical and ideological embeddedness thus connected athleticism with the ethical tradition of Japanese martial ways.

However, the discursive transfer of the idea of the *samurai* to the idea of a modern athlete was influenced by different and often contradictory discourses. The image of a warrior devoted to his lord certainly contradicts the idea of a warrior who is on a lonesome intellectual or spiritual pilgrimage, as presented, for example, in the article Gorufu Musha shugyō, by the politician Hatoyama Ichirō, which was published in Bungei Shunjū in 1935.[53] But the dominating narrative is that of a *samurai*, who is devoted and loyal to his master, ready to sacrifice his life. Loyalty, self-sacrifice, endurance of pain, and hardship are identified as the main legacy of the code of the warrior as well as the dominating forces in 'Japanese sportsmanship' ideology. Swimming is no exception in its contribution to the official narrative of the athlete as *samurai*. And especially in swimming had the modern sport discursively been turned into a traditional Japanese sport that could present the superiority of the Japanese nation. For instance in the case of the Los Angeles Olympics of 1932, the swimmers were addressed as *samurai* or warriors in foreign as well as national press. To name just one example, the Kashu Mainichi Daily News of 14 August 1932, an American newspaper for Japanese living in the US, writes:

> As we turn our eyes upon a Japanese lad who stands on the top platform gazing up for the Japanese flag that he helped to raise, we see not just a Japanese boy, but a true son of Japanese warrior-samurai [...] The living memory of those men of ancient Japan who built the tradition of Bushido becomes a guiding spirit of a new generation.[54]

The political context of the 1930s also provided the narrative of the athlete as *samurai* and warrior. This especially becomes evident when we consider that only one day following the victory parade for the return of the commander in chief of the Kwantung Army, Honjō Shigeru, Olympic athletes also were celebrated by a victory parade. The Tōkyō

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**52** See Abe 2009, 297.
**53** See Bungei Shunjū 1988, 204–209.
**54** See Yamamoto 2000, 399–400.

Asahi evening edition of 9 September featured two photographs under the headline 'Two glorious returns' (*Futatsu no gaisen*): one of the Olympic team paying their respect to the Meiji-shrine and the other of the return of Honjō on his way to the Imperial Palace. The athletes' return is juxtaposed with that of a war hero, and the athletes' participation in the Olympic Games becomes – in this discourse – part of the same political and ideological agenda as the war in China.[55] As Honjō had conquered China, the Japanese athletes had, so to speak, conquered the United States and had to be remembered as heroes.[56]

## VI. CONCLUSION

The history of swimming in modern Japan is, I have argued, closely related to questions of national, cultural and collective identity. Pre-modern Japanese swimming was traditionalized during the late 19th and 20th centuries and served to represent the constructed national characteristics of the Japanese people as it could be located within the discourse of an idealised martial past and the ideology of *bushidō*. Japanese swimmers winning in a Western sport discipline with 'traditional' techniques symbolised the value of Japanese body techniques and became equal to a rehabilitation of 'something' that was considered to have always been there, but hidden. Its continuities with doing things in another way in Japan made swimming a "Japanese" experience and a lived tradition: not just in terms of semiotics, but its combination with practicing the past. By swimming "traditional" techniques the swimmer performed his (male) Japaneseness and was turned into an ideal representative of the ideal na-

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[55] The discursive parallelism of military- and sport-heroism is displayed in an article in the October 1932 edition of the magazine Gakkō Kyōiku written by a primary school teacher. The author identifies two events in 1932 that moved the Japanese population and that will have a 'lasting value for national education': one of these events is the Olympic Games and the other is the story of the 'Three Flesh Bullet Patriots' (*nikudan san yūshi/ bakudan san yūshi*) about three soldiers killed during the First Shanghai Incident (28 January 1932 to 3 March 1932) while trying to bomb the defences of the Chinese troops and whose story became very popular during that time.
[56] Bungei Shunjū published an interview with Japanese Olympic athletes, including swimmers, entitled 'Olympic Heroes' (*Orinpikku eiyūtachi*) in 1932. See Bungei Shunjū, 1988, 132–139.

tion.[57] Additionally, the Japanese self-image of being an "island-nation" also served to promote swimming as a tool to develop and strengthen Japanese self-identity.

It could be shown that existing political conflicts were discursively negotiated in the pool, and that Japanese swimmers were able to symbolically re-conquer the waters that had been occupied by Western powers since Commodore Perry forced the opening of Japanese harbours in 1854. Challenging the members of the Yokohama Rowing Club symbolised not only the (re)discovery of 'tradition', but also mirrors a growing collective self-confidence, by relying on tradition as potential reference point for national and cultural identity and as a counter-draft to Western modernity. Japanese swimming and swimmers came to represent a modern nation that at least equalled, if not surpassed Western nations. The effort to internationally be accepted as an equal nation therefore should be seen as a crucial catalyst for international sport competitions that served as a stage upon which the actors symbolically 'played' for political and social order.

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**57** For performance see also above and the introduction to this volume.

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MICHAEL ZELLE

# ARMINIUS – CHERUSKERFÜRST UND DEUTSCHER HELD. ZUR REZEPTIONSGESCHICHTE EINER ANTIKEN FIGUR IN DER NEUZEIT

*Der cheruskische Stammesfürst Arminius vernichtete im Jahre 9 n. Chr. mit zahlreichen germanischen Verbündeten ein römisches Heer unter dem Statthalter Publius Quinctilius Varus. Rückblickend betrachtet beeinflusste er dadurch den Verlauf der Weltgeschichte. Seit der Renaissance avancierte Arminius zum Freiheitsheld, Einiger und Gründungsvater der Deutschen Nation. Insbesondere im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert entwickelte sich eine umfangreiche Rezeption des antiken Helden. Die Germanen wurden als Vorfahren der Deutschen und Arminius, der inzwischen unter dem Namen Hermann firmierte, als Einiger der Deutschen Nation und Kämpfer gegen Unterdrückung von außen gefeiert. Bildnisse eroberten den öffentlichen Raum, erreichten die Alltagskultur und schufen dadurch vermeintliche historische Gewissheiten. Der Mythos um Arminius bot zahlreiche Möglichkeiten, in den unterschiedlichen Epochen deutscher Geschichte instrumentalisiert zu werden und eine glorreiche vaterländische Vergangenheit zu konstruieren. Er ist damit ein besonders prägnantes Beispiel für die vielschichtige Rezeptionsgeschichte einer antiken Figur im Dienste moderner Nationalstaatsbildung.*

Seit der frühen Neuzeit und insbesondere im 19. Jahrhundert avancierten zahlreiche historische Gestalten der Antike zu Gründungsheroen und antike Völker zu den Vorfahren moderner Nationalstaaten.[1] Dies ging einher mit der Suche nach nationaler Identität, eine große, lange und erfolgreiche Geschichte der sich herausbildenden Nationen mit in-

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**1** Schnapp 2008, 17–26; Löttel 2009, 155–163.

**1** François-Émile Ehrmann: *Vercingetorix ruft die Gallier zur Verteidigung von Alesia auf*, 1869, Musée d'Art Roger Quillot Clermont-Ferrand.

begriffen. So erfuhr der Averner Vercingetorix (Abb. 1) in Frankreich, der Eburone Ambiorix in Belgien, der Bataver Civilis (Abb. 2) in den Niederlanden und die Icenerin Boudicca in England entsprechende Verehrung. Diese Liste ließe sich ohne weiteres erweitern. Selbstverständlich waren diese antiken Figuren nicht immer die alleinigen Symbole der aufstrebenden Nationalstaaten. Auch solche aus der mittelalterlichen und neuzeitlichen Geschichte haben diesen besonderen Status erreicht.[2]

Auffällig an der Reihe der hier als Beispiele genannten Nationalstaaten ist, dass es vor allem die Länder sind, in denen sich zahlreiche

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**2** Kerssen 1975, 97–105.
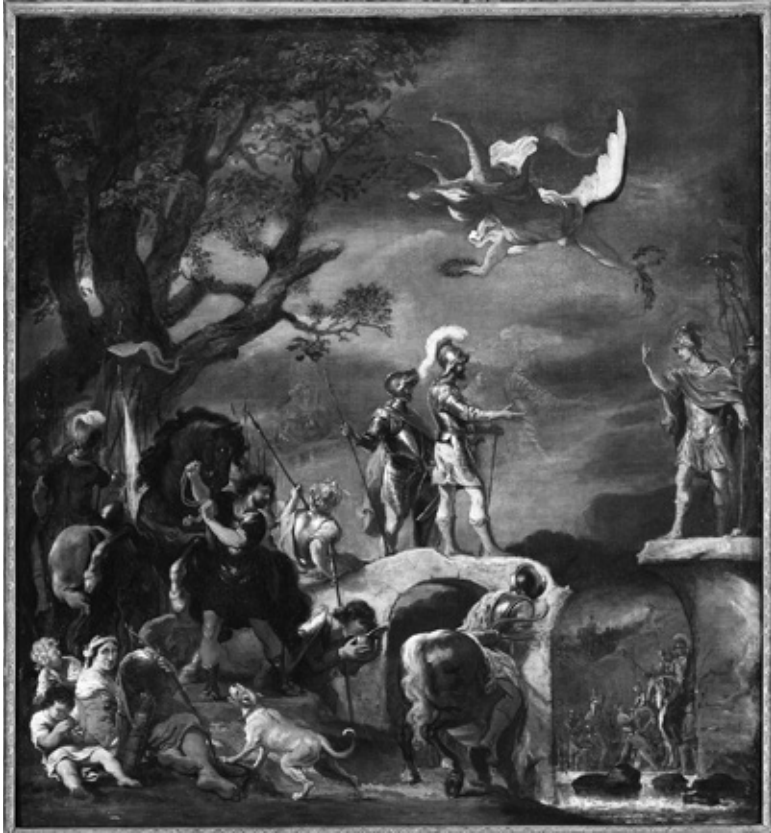
**2** Ferdinand Bol: *Verhandlungen zwischen Claudius Civilis und Petillius Cerealis*, ca. 1658, Collectie Rijksmusem Amsterdam.

Gelehrte seit der Renaissance intensiv mit antiken Schriftstellern auseinander setzten. Diese antiken Schriftsteller waren es, die die Kunde über die antiken Figuren in die Neuzeit trugen und der Nachwelt einen entsprechenden Interpretationsspielraum hinsichtlich ebendieser Figuren lieferte. Letztere stammten zumeist aus schriftlosen Kulturen im Umfeld des Imperium Romanum, so dass die wenigen erhaltenen Informationen über sie aus der Perspektive ihrer damaligen politischen, militärischen und kulturellen Gegner stammen. Diese Berichte sind also tendenziös und bildeten dennoch die Grundlage für die spätere Rezeption. Es wurden somit Figuren geschaffen, die durch eine mehrfache Rezeption überprägt wurden und mit den historischen Realitäten nicht mehr viel zu tun hatten. Ein besonders prägnantes Beispiel ist der Cherusker Ar-

minius (Abb. 3), seit dem frühen 16. Jahrhundert auch als Hermann der Cherusker bekannt, der im deutschen Kulturraum zum Gründungsvater der deutschen Nation avancierte. Im Folgenden soll in knapper Form die vielschichtige Entwicklung der Rezeption des Arminius nachgezeichnet und gezeigt werden, wie im Sinne Hobsbawns geschichtliche Traditionen geschaffen und den Notwendigkeiten der jeweiligen Epoche angepasst werden können.

## 1. DER ANTIKE ARMINIUS

Arminius war in der Zeit um Christi Geburt durch seinen Sieg in der so genannten Schlacht im Teutoburger Wald und die Kämpfe gegen den römischen Feldherren Germanicus eine der markantesten Persönlichkeiten im rechtsrheinischen Germanien.[3] Damals hatte Augustus versucht, das rechtsrheinische Germanien in das Imperium Romanum einzugliedern. Mit welchem zeitweiligen Erfolg wurde in der Forschung der letzten Jahre gründlich diskutiert und muss an dieser Stelle nicht wiederholt werden.[4]

Arminius wurde zwischen 18 und 16 v. Chr. im Weserraum geboren. Es ist unbekannt, ob er in seiner Heimat aufwuchs oder zeitweise als politische Geisel in Rom lebte. Ab etwa 4 n. Chr. führte er als Offizier einen cheruskischen Truppenverband in römischen Diensten und spätestens Anfang 9 n. Chr. genoss er im Stab des Statthalters P. Quinctilius Varus eine besondere Vertrauensstellung. Im gleichen Jahr gelang es ihm, eine Koalition aus verschiedenen germanischen Stämmen zu schmieden und das Heer des Varus, bestehend aus drei Legionen und zahlreichen Hilfstruppen, vernichtend zu schlagen. Dieser Sieg, obwohl aus Sicht der althistorischen Forschung kein Wendepunkt der Geschichte[5], sicherte Arminius die glänzende Karriere in der deutschen Rezeptionsgeschichte.

Nach seinen Erfolgen in der Varusschlacht konnte er sich in den Feldzügen des Germanicus gegen diesen behaupten. Als Rom seine Truppen aus den rechtsrheinischen Gebieten 16 n. Chr. zurückgezogen

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**3** Zu Arminius und den im Folgenden kurz skizzierten Informationen über ihn siehe u. a. Petrikovits 1966, 175–193; Timpe 1970, passim; Kehne 2009, 104–113.

**4** Siehe u. a. Eck 2004, 11–22; Eck 2009, 188–195. Zu einer Detailstudie siehe Zelle 2008, 157–160.

**5** Siehe u. a. Wiegels 2007, 14–17.

**3** Statue des Hermannsdenkmals bei Detmold.

hatte, versuchte Arminius erfolglos seine politische Stellung auszubauen und wurde nach einem unentschiedenen Krieg gegen das rivalisierende Markomannenreich unter Marbod etwa im Jahre 21 n. Chr. von seinen eigenen Verwandten ermordet.

Der römische Schriftsteller Velleius Paterculus bescheinigt ihm, dass er persönlich tapfer, von schneller Auffassungsgabe, über das Maß von Barbaren hinaus begabt gewesen sei und das Feuer seines Geistes sich schon in seinem Blick verriet.[6] Offenbar war er eine ausgesprochen charismatische Persönlichkeit.

Arminius stammte aus einer führenden Familie der Cherusker, von der verschiedene Personen wie z. B. Segimer und Inguiomer überliefert

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**6** Velleius Paterculus, *Historiae Romanae* 2, 118, 2.

sind.[7] Sicher ist, das Arminius durch die politischen Umstände mit der römischen Kultur in Verbindung kam: Er erlernte die lateinische Sprache, erhielt das römische Bürgerrecht und wurde in den Ritterstand aufgenommen, war also auch römischer Bürger.

Arminius brach aber mit Rom und entschloss sich, dessen Repräsentanten aus dem rechtsrheinischen Germanien zu vertreiben. Seine Motive sind nicht ganz klar, doch dürfte die Unzufriedenheit über die Einführung des römischen Rechtswesens und eingeforderte Tribute ebenso eine Rolle gespielt haben wie persönliches Machtstreben.[8]

Die Nachrichten über Arminius sind also überschaubar. Hinzu kommt, dass diese Informationen allein aus römischer Feder, vor allem von Velleius Paterculus, Tacitus, Cassius Dio[9] stammen und somit als nicht objektiv gelten können; insbesondere wenn man bedenkt, dass die Figur Arminius als Gegenbild zum versagenden römischen Statthalter Varus oder zum Princeps Tiberius konstruiert wurde.[10] Somit wird klar, dass bereits ein historisches Zerrbild Grundlage für weitere Geschichtskonstruktionen wurde.

Im Wesentlichen sind es drei Aussagen über Arminius, die sich für die Definition zunächst einer deutschen Kulturnation und später dann auch einer politischen Nation hervorragend eigneten:

1. Arminius werden herausragende Charaktereigenschaften zugesprochen, die ihn zu einer moralisch positiven Figur werden lassen.
2. Er hat zerstrittene Stämme geeint und sie zu einem großen, gemeinsamen Erfolg geführt.
3. Tacitus benennt ihn als ›Befreier Germaniens‹ von Fremdherrschaft.

Daneben sei kurz auf einen weiteren rezeptionsgeschichtlichen Strang verwiesen, der für das Verständnis der Arminius-Rezeption von großer Bedeutung ist. In der *Germania* des Tacitus werden zahlreiche Aussagen über die Lebensweisen und Charaktereigenschaften der Germanen getroffen, die es dem neuzeitlichen Deutschland leicht gemacht haben,

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**7** Siehe u. a. Wolters 2008, 93–97.
**8** Wolters 2008, 97–99.
**9** Timpe 1970, 126–137.
**10** Ebd., 11–49.

sie zu Vorfahren der Deutschen zu erklären.[11] Tacitus beschrieb spezifische Eigenschaften der Germanen um ein ›ursprüngliches‹, bäuerlich geprägtes und den Lastern der Zivilisation nicht verfallenes Volk seinen, in seiner Sicht verdorbenen Standesgenossen der römischen Oberschicht gegenüberstellen zu können. Insofern haben wir es auch hier mit einer vielschichtigen Geschichtskonstruktionen zu tun.

Zurück zu Arminius: In der römischen Geschichtsschreibung blieb er eine Randfigur, verschwand spätestens im frühen Mittelalter aus dem Blick der Gebildeten und erfuhr im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert eine Wiederentdeckung. Im Folgenden seien die wesentlichen Stationen der Rezeptionsgeschichte des Arminius kurz skizziert.[12]

## 2. WIEDERENTDECKUNG UND SCHAFFUNG EINES HELDEN

Die Wiederentdeckung der *Germania* des Tacitus um 1450 und seiner *Annalen* im Kloster Corvey im Jahre 1507 machten Geschichtsabläufe in Germanien und die Schlacht im Teutoburger Wald als historisches Ereignis erstmals wieder bekannt. Entdeckungen weiterer antiker Werke, die ebenfalls Informationen zu Germanien und den Geschehnissen um Christi Geburt ebendort liefern, folgten.[13] Tacitus wurde für Jahrhunderte der wichtigste Gewährsmann für Germanien und dessen Bewohner.

Die *Germania* erlaubte es den deutschen Humanisten, ihre Herkunft gegenüber der italienischen und später auch französischen Kultur aufzuwerten. Sie entwarfen ein von der römisch-griechischen Überlieferung unabhängiges ›deutsches Altertum‹. Dabei griffen sie auf Tacitus' Lob der germanischen Sittenreinheit, des germanischen Kampfesmutes, Familiensinns, Körperstärke und Gastfreundschaft zurück und zeichneten das Bild eines goldenen Zeitalters.[14]

Arminius gewinnt hierbei als herausragender Protagonist der Germanen und als Kämpfer gegen Rom, welches sich treffend mit zeit-

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**11** Günnewig 2009, 30–34.

**12** Stellvertretend für die umfangreiche Literatur zum Thema sei die umfassende Arbeit von K. Kösters inklusive dem dort ausgeführten Literaturverzeichnis genannt: Kösters 2009. Siehe auch die einschlägigen Beiträge in: 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht. Mythos. Begleitband zur Ausstellung Imperium, Konflikt, Mythos: 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht. Stuttgart 2009, passim.

**13** Kösters 2009, 19–53.

**14** Ebd., 46–51.

**4** Publikation von Burkhardt Waldis: ›Ursprung und Herkummen der zwoelff ersten alten Koenig und Fuersten Deutschen Nation‹ mit der Darstellung des *Arminius* von H. Brosamer von 1543, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

genössischer italienischen Kultur und der römisch-katholischen Kirche parallelisieren ließ, für die deutschen Humanisten und Reformatoren zunehmend an Profil. Georg Spalatin, Martin Luther, Ulrich von Hutten, Burkhard Waldis (Abb. 4) und andere setzen sich mit Arminius in zahlreichen Schriften auseinander und etablieren ihn als mythischen germanisch-deutschen Fürsten und Vorkämpfer germanisch-deutscher Eigenart.[15] Man bemühte sich sogar um eine Eindeutschung des vermeintlich römischen Namens Arminius in Hermann.[16]

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**15** Ebd., 65–73.
**16** Ebd., 61–64.

## 3. LITERARISCHE HELDENVEREHRUNG IM 17. JAHRHUNDERT

In der Literatur des 17. Jahrhunderts ist Arminius als deutscher Held fest etabliert. In der Krisenzeit des Dreißigjährigen Krieges und der französischen Kriege in der zweiten Hälfte des Jahrhunderts tritt Arminius als Verteidiger der guten alten deutschen Sitten und Verteidiger der bedrohten Reichseinheit auf. Das monumentale Werk ›Großmüthiger Feldherr Arminius…‹ von 1689–1646, eine Staats-, Helden- und Liebes-



**5** *Arminius in Verhandlungen* aus Daniel Caspar von Lohensteins ›Großmüthiger Feldherr Arminius oder Herrmann‹ von 1689, Lippische Landesbibliothek Detmold.

geschichte von Daniel Caspar von Lohenstein stellt einen Höhepunkt der Arminiusverehrung dieser Zeit dar (Abb. 5), in welchem sowohl ein Loblied auf die Deutschen gesungen wird wie auch Arminius und Kaiser Leopold I. quasi gleichgesetzt werden.[17]

## 4. ARMINIUS AUF DER INTERNATIONALEN OPERNBÜHNE

Im weiteren Verlauf des 17. Jahrhunderts machte Arminius als Held und galanter Liebhaber auf der internationalen Opernbühne Karriere. Ausgehend von französischen Roman- und Theaterfassungen entstanden mehrere italienische Libretti, die von Komponisten wie Alessandro Scarlatti (1703–24), Johann Adolf Hasse (1730–1761) oder Georg Friedrich Händel (1737) vertont wurden.[18] Bis 1800 entstanden mindestens 50 Arminiusopern und Singspiele. Die Handlung entspricht dabei weniger den historischen Ereignissen als den Erfordernissen der barocken *Opera seria*, die im Rahmen einer vorgegebenen Personenkonstellation Wert auf die Darstellung von Affekten der Protagonisten legte und sich bühnenwirksam umsetzen ließen. Arminius war in diesem Sujet jedoch nur einer von vielen mythischen und historischen Figuren, deren Geschichten und Taten in den Opern Verwendung fanden.

## 5. EIN DEUTSCHER THEATERHELD

In Auseinandersetzung mit der Vorrangstellung der französisch-höfischen Kultur im Zeitalter des Absolutismus mehrten sich in Deutschland patriotische Stimmen, die sich von der französischen Klassik abgrenzen und Deutschland als eigenständige Kulturnation verstehen wollten. Auf der Suche nach nationalen Themen zeigten Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, Johann Elias Schlegel und andere Autoren der 2. Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts Arminius in ihren Dramen als Befreier und Einiger Deutschlands (Abb. 6), während eine neue Wertschätzung der Germanen zu der Suche nach historisch-politischer Identität führte: in den Werken von Justus Möser verbunden mit einem Lob des deutschen Partikularismus, in denen von Gottfried Herder mit einem neuen his-

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**17** Spellerberg 1995, 249–263.
**18** Forchert 1975, 43–57; Kösters 2009, 99–108.

**6** Johann Heinrich Tischbein d. Ä.: *Szene aus Klopstocks Drama ›Hermanns Schlacht‹*, ca. 1770, Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold.



**7** Karl Russ: *Hermann zersprengt die Ketten von Germania*, 1813, Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg.

**8** Das Hermannsdenkmal bei Detmold.

torisch-politischen Volksbegriff (Volksgeist).[19] Der Germanen- und Arminius-Mythos wurde für die Behauptung einer althergebrachten moralischen Überlegenheit der Deutschen vor allem gegenüber französischen Modernisierungstendenzen benutzt. Die Hinwendung zu deutscher Geschichte und Kultur war auch verbunden mit einem bürgerlichen Selbstverständnis, das sich gegen den Adel sowie den Glanz und Müßiggang an deutschen Höfen richtete.

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**19** Kösters 2009, 125–131.

## 6. DER BEFREIER DEUTSCHLANDS

Mit den Befreiungskriegen gegen die napoleonische Besetzung Deutschlands zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts wandelt sich die Funktion des Arminius. Seine internationale Karriere‹ endet und er wird zu einem Symbol des deutschen Widerstands gegen die fremden Besatzer, Vorbild für die Befreiung und Einigung Deutschlands (Abb. 7). Die deutsche Nation wird nicht länger nur kulturell, sondern nun politisch verstanden und Arminius zum deutschen Nationalhelden. Als Höhepunkt dieser ›militanten‹ Wendung des Hermann-Mythos ist Kleists ›Hermannsschlacht‹ zu verstehen. Nach der gescheiterten nationalstaatlichen Einigung Deutschlands 1815 wird der Hermannmythos zur Projektionsfläche der deutschen Einheitssehnsucht.[20]

## 7. EIN DENKMALHELD

Zahlreiche nationale Denkmäler entstehen in der 1. Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts, um die nationale Einheit zu beschwören und die Bürger zu Tugend und Vaterlandsliebe zu erziehen. Auch Hermann und der Sieg über die römischen Eroberer werden denkmalwürdig, wie zahlreiche Entwürfe, zumeist initiiert von Mitgliedern des Niederen deutschen Adels, zeigen.[21] Das Hermannsdenkmal bei Detmold des Bildhauers Ernst von Bandel (Abb. 8) war zunächst als Sinnbild der Einheit Deutschlands konzipiert.[22] Arminius galt als erster Einiger der ›deutschen‹ Stämme und historisches Vorbild für die ersehnte politische Einigung Deutschlands nach dem Wiener Kongress. Zahlreiche Denkmalsvereine und Privatleute spendeten für den Bau.[23]

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**20** Ebd., 177–234.
**21** Sandow 1975, 105–127; vergleiche auch die kurze Übersicht bei Zelle 2014, 4–5 Abb. 5–7.
**22** Mellies 2009, 15–20; Barmeyer 2012, 287–314.
**23** Schmidt 1974, 11–20; Tacke 1995, 140–174.

## 8. DER GRÜNDUNGSVATER DER DEUTSCHEN NATION

Der deutsche Nationalstaat wurde 1871 schließlich nach einer Reihe von militärischen Auseinandersetzungen geschaffen und formierte sich in Abgrenzung zu äußeren Feinden, wie vor allem Frankreich. Aber dieser Nationalstaat war keineswegs homogen. Die Frage nach der nationalen Identität wurde durchaus von Katholiken und Protestanten, von Liberalen, Konservativen und Sozialisten, von Norddeutschen und Süddeutschen anders beantwortet. Eine Epoche war allerdings konsensfähig: die germanische Frühzeit.[24]

Der Hermannsmythos wurde zur Gründungslegende des Kaiserreichs, Hermann zum Gründungsvater der Deutschen Nation. Seine Popularität lag einerseits darin begründet, dass man die Konstellation



**9** Johannes Gehrts: *Armin verabschiedet sich von Thusnelda*, 1884, Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold.

›Germanen gegen Römer‹ einfach auf Deutschland und den aktuellen ›Erbfeind‹ Frankreich übertragen und an die Tradition der Befreiungskriege anknüpfen konnte.[25] Andererseits erschien das neue deutsche Reich als Vollendung einer Jahrtausende währenden Geschichte, die mit den Germanenkriegen unter Arminius begann und durch die lange Dauer metaphysisch überhöht wurde.

Die Schlacht im Teutoburger Wald markierte in den Augen der Zeitgenossen einen konkreten, klar umrissenen Gründungsakt der deutschen Nation, der in Analogie zur Gegenwart eine militärische, in Abgrenzung gegen einen äußeren Gegner gewonnene Identität begründete.

Diese Wendung zeigt nicht nur die Umwidmung des Hermannsdenkmals zu einem militanten Symbol deutscher Stärke und Einheit, sondern spiegelt sich auch in zahlreichen Historienbildern, Theaterstücken, Romanen wieder (Abb. 9–10).[26] Das erhobene Schwert des Hermannsdenkmals und die dort angebrachten Inschriften betonen eine kriegerische Traditionslinie, welche die Schlacht im Teutoburger Wald, die sogenannten Befreiungskriege 1813–15 und den Deutsch-Französischen Krieg von 1870/71 in eine historische Kontinuität setzt. Kaiser Wilhelm I. erscheint in gedruckten Bildwerken sowie solchen des öffentlichen Raumes wie z. B. am Hermannnsdenkmal als der Nachfolger des Arminius (Abb. 11). Zahlreiche Gegenstände mit Darstellungen des Arminius und der Schlacht zeigen die Bedeutung von vaterländischen Geschichtsmythen im Alltagsleben, aber auch wie stark die nationale Identität der Deutschen in dieser Zeit auch militärisch verstanden wird.

## 9. DER AHNHERR ALLER GERMANEN-DEUTSCHEN

Angesichts der deutschen Niederlage im 1. Weltkrieg und dem damit verbundenen Ansehensverlustes der Deutschen wird Arminius in der Weimarer Republik zum Symbol einstiger und wiedererwarteter deutscher Kraft und Stärke, aber auch zur nationalen Märtyrergestalt (Abb. 12). In dieser Zeit wird das Hermannsdenkmal zum beliebten Treffpunkt insbesondere völkisch-national gesinnter Gruppierungen.

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**24** Kipper 2009, 210–214.
**25** Kösters 2009, 239–244.
**26** Ebd., 259–280.

**10** Peter Janssen d. Ä.: *Die Schlacht im Teutoburger Wald*, 1870/73, Kunst-
museen Krefeld.
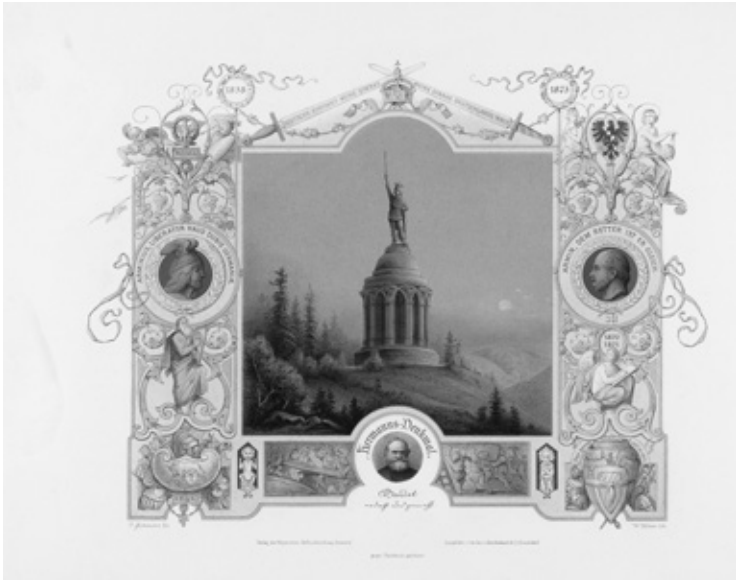


**11** Caspar Johann Nepomuk Scheuren: *Darstellung des Hermanns-
denkmals mit der Gleichsetzung der Taten des Arminius und Wilhelms I.*,
1875, Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold.

**12** Völkische Hoffnung ins Bild gesetzt. Ludwig
Fahrenkrog: *Germania, es kommt dein Tag*, nach
1918, Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold.

Während der Herrschaft des Nationalsozialismus schließlich war
die Rolle des Arminius dagegen ambivalent. Während Adolf Hitler im
symbolisch wichtigen Landeswahlkampf im Bundesstaat Lippe 1933
ganz bewusst den Hermannmythos als Wahlkampfmaschine einsetzte
(Abb. 13), ging er in der Folgezeit mehr auf Distanz.[27] Zahlreiche Romane
und historische Abhandlungen zeigen dennoch die ungebrochene
Popularität des Hermannmythos, der mit der NS-Ideologie von der
biologisch überlegenen nordischen Rasse verschmilzt.[28]

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**27** Wolters 2008, 197–198; Mellies 2009, 19.
**28** Ein charakteristisches Beispiel ist der Roman ›Der erste Deutsche‹ von
Hjalmar Kutzleb aus dem Jahr 1934: Kutzleb 1934.

**13** Plakat zum Wahlkampf Januar 1933 im Land Lippe, Lippische Landesbibliothek Detmold.



**14** Arminius im Gartenzwerg-Format: *Zwermann*, Werbeagentur K-Konzept, 2008, Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold.



**15** Logo der Region Ostwestfalen-Lippe mit Bezug zum Hermanns-denkmal, 2008.

## 10. DAS LOGO

Nach dem 2. Weltkrieg spielten in Deutschland nationale Themen aus nachvollziehbaren Gründen keine große Rolle mehr. Dementsprechend wurde die offizielle Erinnerung an Arminius und mit ihr das sichtbarste Symbol, das Hermannsdenkmal zunehmend entpolitisiert (Abb. 14). Heute spielt Hermann in Deutschland vor allem eine regionale Rolle als Identitätsstifter für die im östlichen Westfalen und Weserbergland alteingesessene Bevölkerung. Das Hermanndenkmal dient als Logo einer Region, die Attraktivität des Denkmals in reizvoller Umgebung als Freizeitziel ganz dem Zeitgeist entsprechend als wirtschaftlicher Standortvorteil (Abb. 15). Im Rahmen des zusammenwachsenden Europas scheinen nationale Helden, die eher auf Abgrenzung als Integration zielen, offenbar keine große Rolle mehr zu spielen. Das als großes Ereignis begangene 2000jährige Jubiläum der Schlacht im Teutoburger Wald im Jahre 2009 ist vorüber und kaum jemand spricht noch davon. So hat man das Gefühl, dass Arminius derzeit nur noch eines von vielen austauschbaren und kurzlebigen Themen einer Eventkultur sein kann.

Die hier in knapper Form vorgetragene Rezeptionsgeschichte des Arminius erweist sich als ein außerordentlich markantes Beispiel für die Etablierung eines, in diesem Fall deutschen Geschichtsbildes. Mit Bezug auf antike Figuren und Geschehnisse wird die Entstehungs- bzw. Herkunftsgeschichte eines Volkes konstruiert um eine spezifische Identität zu schaffen und weiterzuentwickeln. Historische Fakten und deren Auslegung schaffen vermeintliche historische Gewissheiten und Selbstsicherheit. Gerade die Geschichte des Arminius zeigt, dass derartige Geschichtskonstruktionen sehr langlebig sein können und sich vor allem wandeln können. Allein dies erscheint wie eine Überlebensgarantie solcher Mythen. Das besonders markante Beispiel des ›konstruierten‹ Arminius kann uns auch helfen, ähnliche Mechanismen bei der Konstruktion von ›erfolgreicher‹ Geschichte und vermeintlicher Gewissheiten im antiken Rom deutlicher zu erkennen.

## ABBILDUNGSNACHWEISE

**Abb. 1** Musée d'Art Roger Quillot Clermont-Ferrand
**Abb. 2. 4. 7** Nach: 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht. Mythos. Begleitband zur Ausstellung Imperium, Konflikt, Mythos: 2000 Jahre Varusschlacht. Stuttgart 2009, 150. 168. 375
**Abb. 3** Landesverband Lippe
**Abb. 5** Lippische Landesbibliothek Detmold
**Abb. 6. 8. 9. 11.–15** Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold
**Abb. 10** Kunstmuseen Krefeld

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# INVENTING TRADITIONS IN GREECE, ROME AND THE ROMAN EAST

KATJA SPORN

# VERGANGENHEIT IN DER GEGENWART. SPUREN-SUCHE IN DER GRIECHISCHEN ANTIKE*

*In dem Beitrag geht es um Spuren der Vergangenheit, auf die bereits in der griechischen Antike Bezug genommen wurde. In einer Vorbemerkung wird zunächst erläutert, wie nach Eric Hobsbawm Traditionen auch durch Erfindung konstruiert werden können. Schlaglichtartig werden dann verschiedene Aspekte beleuchtet, wie bronzezeitliche Siedlungen und Paläste als Stätten späteren Kults, die intentionelle Sichtbarkeit älterer (Stadt)mauern, bronzezeitliche Gräber und Heiligtümer als Stätten von Kult und das Problem der Naturräume als Stätten von Kult. Ferner wird besprochen, wie Heroen zur Mythenbildung in griechischen Poleis verwendet, ältere Stilformeln als Zeichen von Tradition eingesetzt und gerade bei veränderten Machtverhältnissen Traditionen häufig konstruiert wurden. Schließlich werden einige Überlegungen angestellt, warum gerade in manchen Phasen der griechischen Antike die Konstruktion der Vergangenheit eine besondere Rolle spielte.*

Der Titel des Beitrages ist bewusst weit gefasst. Im Rahmen der Tagung, die besonders die Konstruktion von Traditionen in der römischen Antike in den Mittelpunkt stellt, sollen einige Schlaglichter auf weitaus besser untersuchte vergleichbare Phänomene in der griechischen Antike gesetzt werden[1]. Zur Verdeutlichung der Fragestellung wird zunächst der

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**1** S. dazu unten Anm. 5. Erweiterte Teile dieses Beitrages erscheinen demnächst in Sporn (im Druck).

von Eric Hobsbawm geprägte Begriff ‚invention of tradition' nochmals erläutert[2].

Traditionen sind häufig weniger alt als allgemein angenommen und werden tatsächlich häufig konstruiert. Die Konstruktion von Tradition kann durch die Anknüpfung an eine reale Begebenheit oder einen Zustand gebildet werden oder aber reine Erfindung einer solchen sein, wobei Hobsbawm sich gerade mit der Erfindung intensiv auseinandergesetzt hat. Diese findet auf mehreren Ebenen statt und konnte in der Regel offiziell oder inoffiziell erfolgen, wobei die ersten Erfindungen politisch, die zweiten sozial konnotiert sind. Im zweiten Fall handelt es sich nach Hobsbawm um Erfindungen von sozialen Gruppen, die zuvor nicht als solche konstituiert waren, oder die nicht explizit oder bewusst politisch waren, wie Clubs und Vereine. Als Beispiele für offizielle Erfindungen nennt er neue Staatsfeiertage, Zeremonien, Heroen oder Symbole. Konstruierte Traditionen kommen – so weiter nach Hobsbawm – vor, »[...] when there are sufficiently large and rapid changes on the demand or the supply side«[3]. Er schreibt auch »[i]nventing traditions (as is assumed here) is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition«[4].

In jüngerer Zeit wurde das Phänomen der Konstruktion von Tradition oder Erinnerung gerade für die griechische Antike immer wieder unter verschiedenen Aspekten untersucht. Zu nennen sind dabei besonders die Arbeiten von Althistorikern wie Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Elke Stein-Hölkeskamp und Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, Christoph Ulf und Simon Price, aber auch von Archäologen, einerseits von Spezialisten der Frühen Eisenzeit, andererseits der Klassik und des Hellenismus[5]. Im Folgenden

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**2** Hobsbawm 1983, 263.

**3** Ebd., 5.

**4** Ebd., 4.

**5** Archäologische Beiträge: Antonaccio 1994; Förtsch 1995 (grundlegender Überblick über das Phänomen von geometrischer bis hellenistische Zeit); Hölscher 1998; Finkelberg 2005 (Bezug zur Prähistorie); Prent 2005 (Kreta in Früher Eisenzeit); Maran 2011 (Bronzezeit); Hölscher 2014; mit historisch-philologischem Schwerpunkt: Gehrke 1994; Gehrke 2010; Higbie 2003 (Chronik von Lindos); Scheer 2003 (Hellenismus); Hartmann 2010 (materielle Relikte); Dignas/Smith 2012 (historische und religiöse Erinnerung); Marincola/Llewellyn-Jones/Maciver 2012; Price 2008 = Price 2012; Ulf 2008; Stein-Hölkeskamp/Hölkeskamp 2010 (Erinnerungsorte); Steinbock 2013 (Rolle Thebens im Athen des 4. Jh. v. Chr., »social memory«); Gehrke 2014. Zum westlichen römischen Reich: Alcock 2001.

sollen gerade die Breite des Phänomens sowie unterschiedliche Hintergründe und Zielsetzungen in den verschiedenen Phasen der griechischen Antike vor Augen geführt werden. Der Beitrag gliedert sich in folgende Abschnitte:

1. Bronzezeitliche Siedlungen und Paläste als Stätten späteren Kults
2. Intentionelle Sichtbarkeit älterer (Stadt)mauern
3. Bronzezeitliche Gräber als Stätten von Kult
4. Bronzezeitliche Heiligtümer als Stätten von Kult
5. Naturräume als Stätten von Kult
6. Heroen und Mythenbildung
7. Verwendung älterer Stilformen als Zeichen von Tradition
8. Erfundene Tradition bei neuen Machtverhältnissen

Vom archäologischen Standpunkt her setzt die Konstruktion von Tradition durch die Anknüpfung an eine real existente Begebenheit oder einen Zustand zumindest einen Bruch voraus – also eine Phase des Ausbleibens einer bestimmten Tradition (Abbruch einer Besiedlung, einer Bildtradition etc.) und ein darauf folgendes Wiedereinsetzen oder Wiederbeleben, möglicherweise auch mit einer anderen Intention oder Zielsetzung. Archäologisch ist es dabei häufig schwer zu unterscheiden, ob eine Tradition vollständig erfunden oder aus bestehenden Einzelelementen konstruiert wurde. Im Folgenden wird daher der Begriff ›Konstruktion‹ als Oberbegriff verwendet, nur wenn sich eine Erfindung tatsächlich nachweisen lässt, wird der spezifischere Begriff verwendet.

## 1. BRONZEZEITLICHE SIEDLUNGEN UND PALÄSTE ALS STÄTTEN SPÄTEREN KULTS

Konstruktionen von Traditionen beginnen nicht erst im 1. Jt. v. Chr., sondern bereits früher. Es erweist sich aber als ein methodisches Problem, entsprechende archäologische Befunde der Bronzezeit (und zum großen Teil auch der frühen Eisenzeit) ohne Schriftquellen adäquat zu deuten. So wurden an aufgelassenen Siedlungen der frühen und mittleren Bronzezeit bereits in der späten Bronzezeit Kulte ausgeübt, wofür ich hier nur zwei Beispiele nennen möchte. Im Südareal der neupalastzeitlichen Villa von Kannià bei Phaistos auf Kreta wurde in der Phase SM III B–C nach Ausweis von in dieser Zeit typischem Kultinventar (Göttinnen mit erhobenen Händen, *kalathoi*, Fußschalen, Muscheln) ein

**1** Modell von Tiryns nach der Zerstörung der Paläste im 12. Jh. v. Chr.

Kult eingerichtet[6]. Nach neueren Untersuchungen ist auch das früher als Heratempel begriffene Gebäude im Megaron von Tiryns bereits in der Phase SH III C errichtet worden und diente einer männlichen Trink- und Speisegemeinschaft als Versammlungsort (Abb. 1)[7]. Joseph Maran spricht sich dafür aus, dass in Tiryns bereits in dieser Phase (12. Jh. v. Chr.) ein bewusster Rückgriff auf die vergangene Palastzeit vollzogen wurde, die sich auch in der Verwendung von früherer Keramik (eventuell aus älteren Kammergräbern) und von neuer Ware, die von älterer Keramik inspiriert war, äußert. Nach Maran entstand dieser Vergangenheitsbezug weniger als ein Zeichen eines kollektiven Aktes, sondern vielmehr als Zeichen verschiedener um Vergangenheitskonstruktionen konkurrierender Clans[8]. Es handelt sich ihm zufolge dabei dennoch nicht so sehr um ein Beispiel ›kommunikativer Erinnerung‹, die nach Jan Assmann eine kurzlebige Erinnerung ist und durch lebendige Zeitzeugen

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**6** Cucuzza 2009.

**7** Maran 2001 mit Taf. 31–33; Maran 2011, 172 f. Die Existenz eines archaischen Tempels muss nach Ausweis von *ex situ* gefundenen Baugliedern des frühen 6. Jhs. v. Chr. (Kapitell und Antenkapitell) in Tiryns dennoch postuliert werden, s. dazu Schwandner 1988, 269–284; Barletta 2001, 54–66.

**8** Maran 2011.

übertragen wird. Vielmehr war nach dem Zusammenbruch der Paläste der Rückgriff auf diese Zeit doch so fern, dass dies Formen der ›kulturellen Erinnerung‹ birgt, die sich auf eine weit vergangene Zeit bezieht und durch institutionelle Formen der Kommunikation (Dichter, Priester, Politiker etc.) mit Hilfe von Texten, Bildern und anderen materiellen Zeugnissen übertragen wird. Der Rückgriff zeigt sich auch darin, dass das neue Gebäude T, das einen eigenen Platz in einer Ruinenlandschaft erhielt, durch das Fehlen eines Altares eine Umnutzung erfuhr. Der Altar auf dem großen Platz davor stand frei, dass er für die Bevölkerung allgemein sichtbar war.

Die beiden Beispiele aus der ausgehenden Bronzezeit illustrieren ein Phänomen, das sich besonders in der frühen Eisenzeit in Griechenland häufig wiederholt: die Einrichtung eines Kultes im direkten Umfeld oder direkt auf älteren Siedlungsresten. Die Kultinhalte selbst sind dabei nicht immer sicher. Was wiederum das eisenzeitliche Kreta betrifft, so hat Mieke Prent[9] zu zeigen versucht, dass besonders bei sichtbaren monumentalen Quadermauern von Palästen oder Bauten entsprechender öffentlicher Tragweite aus der Bronzezeit solche Kulte eingeführt wurden, die hier – nach Ausweis freilich jüngerer Schriftquellen – meist Göttern und nicht Heroen galten: Dies betrifft etwa Amnisos (Zeus), Phaistos (Rhea), Aghia Triada (unklar), Tylissos (unklar), Kommos (eventuell Apollon, aber auch Athena und Zeus sind genannt), Palaikastro (Zeus), Knossos (Rhea). Die genannten bronzezeitlichen Plätze wurden im 13. Jh. v. Chr. verlassen; die Kulte wurden zwischen dem 10. und 7. Jh. v. Chr. eingerichtet und sind bisweilen – mit Unterbrechungen – bis in die Kaiserzeit belegt. Die Kulte wurden offenbar zunächst unter freiem Himmeln ausgeführt, beinhalteten aber bereits rituelles Speisen und Trinken, bisweilen auch die Stiftung wertvoller Weihegaben aus Bronze. So fanden sich Schilde, Dreifüße und Kessel in Amnisos, Phaistos, Kommos und Palaikastro. Offenbar waren die Orte Versammlungsstätten der damaligen kriegerischen Eliten, die bei ihren Zusammenkünften an vergangene Größen erinnern wollten.

Auch auf dem griechischen Festland sind seit geometrischer Zeit Kulte im Bereich von älteren Siedlungs- und Palastarealen zu konstatieren, wofür etwa die Akropolis von Athen ein prägnantes Beispiel ist

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**9** Prent 2003; zu früheisenzeitlichen Heiligtümern auf Kreta s. auch Prent 2005.

**2** Athen, Akropolis, ältere Mauern bei den Propyläen.



**3** Ägina Kolonna, Orthophoto 2012, Westkomplex (ganz links) und Innenstadt mit dem Großsteinbau und den Naiskoi (im Rechteck).

(Abb. 2)[10]. Dabei wird nicht nur der monumentale Mauerwerksstil (sog. Kyklopenmauern) der älteren Mauern im Vordergrund gestanden haben, sondern vielmehr die Tatsache, dass der Ort als seit alter Zeit besiedelt galt und man einen Anknüpfungspunkt an eine große Vergangenheit suchte. Häufig aber werden an diesen ehemaligen Palastarealen oder umwehrten Orten Kulte eingerichtet, die zumindest später zentralen Göttern der griechischen Poleis gelten: Athena in Athen und Mykene, wahrscheinlich Apoll in Kolonna auf Ägina und Hera im Heraion von Samos. Auffällig ist, dass bisweilen gerade ein zentraler mykenischer Bau bzw. ein Megaron für den neuen Kultort vereinnahmt wird, wie es in Mykene und wahrscheinlich in Tiryns der Fall war. Carla Antonaccio versteht die Einrichtung von Kulten in Palastanlagen konkret im Kontext eines als göttliches Wesen verstandenen mykenischen Königs. Sie schreibt: »The notion follows that Dark Age basileis were kings who assumed authority from the Mycenaean wanax, and then passed it to the polis. Citadel sanctuaries, serving the tutelary deity of the polis, would then be the last link in an unbroken chain«[11]. Allerdings werden solche Kulte nicht nur in geometrischer Zeit eingeführt, sondern bisweilen auch erst in hellenistischer Zeit, wie das Beispiel von Ägina Kolonna verdeutlichen kann (Abb. 3). Westlich des spätarchaischen Tempels, über der prähistorischen Innenstadt im Bereich des sog. Großsteinbaus aus der Phase MH II (1750–1700 v. Chr.) wurden in hellenistischer Zeit, konkret wohl in der Zeit der pergamenischen Herrschaft über Ägina, drei Architekturen aus Spolien archaischer Zeit errichtet: zwei Rechteckbauten (Naiskoi) sowie ein Rundbau (Tholos). Ihre genaue Funktion ist freilich unklar und selbst eine kultische Nutzung ist strittig. Während der Rundbau ursprünglich von Gabriel Welter als Grab des Heros Phokos angesehen wurde, wurde in einem der Rechteckbauten das für Ägina inschriftlich belegte Attaleion gesucht. Dieses war der Verehrungsort der attalidischen Könige, die hier aufgrund ihrer gemeinschaftlichen Abstammung von Herakles über Aiakos Synnaoi im alten Aiakeion wurden[12]. Die mythische Abstammung von Herakles und Te-

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**10** Antonaccio 1994, 92 f. Speziell zur Akropolis von Athen in der Frühzeit: Scholl 2006.

**11** Antonaccio 1994, 88.

**12** Welter 1938a, 52 (zur Identifizierung als Phokosgrab); Scheer 1993, 127 f.; Pollhammer 2004, 169–171 (zur Datierung der Strukturen in die Zeit von Attalos I., auch anhand von Fundkeramik); gegen die Verbindung von Herakles und dem Aiakeion ist Polinskaya 2013, 129–134, die *synnaos* wörtlich

lephos ist, wie Tanja Scheer überzeugend nachweisen konnte, ein Konstrukt eben jener Zeit der frühen Attaliden[13].

## 2. INTENTIONELLE SICHTBARKEIT ÄLTERER (STADT-)MAUERN

Bisweilen wurden die älteren Kyklopenmauern auch bewusst neben oder unter den neuen Quadermauern aus Marmor zur Schau gestellt. Dies ist etwa auf der Akropolis von Athen der Fall[14]. Hier wurden Teile des sogenannten Pelargikons vor dem hochklassischen Parthenon gezeigt und Teile der mykenischen Mauer deutlich sichtbar in die mnesikleischen Propyläen integriert[15]. Dies betrifft nicht nur Kultplätze, sondern auch Stadtmauern: Die lysimacheischen Mauern von Troja beziehen ebenfalls die bronzezeitlichen der Phase VI deutlich sichtbar ein[16]. Ziel dieser Zurschaustellung von Alter war wohl die Anknüpfung und die Vereinnahmung der älteren Stätten als diejenigen der eigenen Vorfahren.

## 3. BRONZEZEITLICHE GRÄBER ALS STÄTTEN VON KULT

Das Phänomen des Kultes an bronzezeitlichen Gräbern im Griechenland geometrischer Zeit ist hinlänglich bekannt[17]. Ob es sich eher um einen Grabkult für ein Individuum oder einen Heroenkult für eine mythische Person handelte, ist im Einzelfall abzuwägen. Antonaccio[18] unterscheidet zwischen einerseits singulärem, nicht institutionellem Grabkult an anonymen bronzezeitlichen Gräbern und andererseits dem besonders in archaischen und klassischen Quellen überlieferten Heroenkult, der

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nimmt (»gemeinsame Tempelbewohner«) und mangels eines Tempels die Verbindung bezweifelt. Diese wörtliche Lesung ist jedoch nicht plausibel. S. demnächst Sporn (im Druck).

**13** Scheer 1993, 71–152; Scheer 2003, 220–226. Eine mögliche frühere Datierung erwägt Dignas 2012.

**14** Kousser 2009. Allgemein: Ulf 2010.

**15** Hurwit 1999, 76. 124 f; Dinsmoor 1980, 17 f. Taf. 3. 9. 10; Kousser 2009, Abb. 7; S. 276 Abb. 13; Hölscher 2010, 132.

**16** Hertel 2003; Hertel (im Druck).

**17** Antonaccio 1994, 90–92; Deoudi 1999 passim. Zur Bezugnahme auf geometrische Gräber in archaischer Zeit (am Beispiel vom Kerameikos) s. Kistler 1998.

**18** Antonaccio 1994, 90.

sich um ein Heroengrab und einen Reliquienkult gruppiert. Ein Problem stellt jedoch dar, dass allein aufgrund des Negativbefundes von fehlenden Quellen ein Heroenkult nicht auszuschließen ist. Auch die Existenz von Knochen im Grab ist nicht ausschlaggebend, da sie auch mythischen Heroengräbern beigegeben worden sein können: Gerade in archaischer und klassischer Zeit spielen Reliquienkult und die vermeintliche Wiederentdeckung oder Rückführung von meist überdimensional großen Knochen, die einem mythischen Heros zugewiesen werden, eine wichtige Rolle. Zu erinnern ist dabei etwa an die Überführung der Theseus zugeschriebenen Gebeine durch Kimon nach Athen und deren feierliche Bestattung im Theseion. Theseus soll Kimon persönlichen Beistand bei den Perserkriegen geleistet haben[19]. Jedenfalls konnten ältere Gräber sowohl für den Kult von Individuen als auch von mythischen Personen vereinnahmt werden, und auch Kenotaphe können Stätten des Heroenkultes sein. Da das Phänomen weit verbreitet war, möchte ich hier auf zwei etwas weniger bekannte Beispiele hinweisen (Abb. 3).

Bei den Ausgrabungen von Ägina Kolonna in den Jahren 2002–2011 wurden ein Komplex freigelegt, der im Anschluss an vorangegangene, ältere Grabungen durch Gabriel Welter in den 30er Jahren des 20. Jhs. als Attaleion firmierte, heute aber als »Westkomplex« bezeichnet wird. Über bronzezeitlichen (Siedlungs[?]-)Resten fanden sich proto- und frühgeometrische Bestattungen besonders von Kindern, teils aber auch von Erwachsenen, die mitunter mit grob zugerichteten Steinmarkern versehen und mit Opferplattformen assoziiert waren. Im 7. Jh. v. Chr. wurden hier Planierungen mit groben Steinrollierungen vorgenommen, bei denen die älteren Stelenmarker offenbar intentionell sichtbar blieben. Am Ende des 6. Jhs. v. Chr. entstand ein Gebäudekomplex in Quader- und Orthostatenbauweise (Phase I)[20]. Dieser besteht aus offenen Höfen und angegliederten Räumen, die im Laufe des 5. Jhs. v. Chr. ergänzt wurden (Phase II–III) – die Stele im Ostraum vom Südbau blieb weiterhin durch eine Ausnehmung in der Unterkante der Orthostaten in situ belassen[21]. Ungefähr zu Beginn des letzten Drittels des 5. Jhs. v. Chr. wurde der Bau regelrecht niedergerissen und geschleift (Phase IV), was zurecht mit der Vertreibung der Ägineten durch die Athener 431 v. Chr. in Verbindung gebracht wurde. Das Areal verödete für die nächsten zwei Jahrhunderte

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**19** Reliquienkult: Pfister 1909; Hartmann 2010; Neri 2010. Theseus: Hölscher 2010, 132; von den Hoff 2010.

**20** Sog. Südbau, im Norden der Westraum und der Ostraum sowie Ostbau I.

**21** Felten et al. 2006, 13 f. Abb. 5, 1. 8, 2; Felten et al. 2007, 91 f. Abb. 2. 3.

und wurde für den Verkehr genutzt, wie Schleifspuren von Wagen auf den Mauern verdeutlichen. Erst gegen Ende des 3. Jhs. v. Chr. (Phase V) wurde das Gelände wieder neu erschlossen, der Kernbau neu errichtet und im Norden ein 15 m langes mehrräumiges Bankettgebäude (Nordostbau) errichtet. Eine Pflasterstraße führte nach Osten in Richtung Apollonheiligtum. Zahlreiche Zeugnisse von Symposiengeschirr in allen Phasen legen in Verbindung mit Bothroi und deren steinernen Aufsätzen, Heroenaltäre bzw. sog. *Omphaloi*, von denen einer mit Inschrift φρα(τρίας) beschrieben war, Kulthandlungen in Zusammenhang mit einem Gentilizkult nahe[22]. Im Ganzen findet der Komplex etwa Parallelen im Befund der Grabung bei der Metropolis in Naxos, dem *Sacred House* in Eleusis, in Eretria und in einem Gebäude in der Nekropole von Itanos auf Kreta, wo mit Gelagen verbundene Riten bei älteren Gräbern in geometrisch-archaischer Zeit systematisch durchgeführt wurden[23].

Auch im näheren Umfeld von Ägina, bei der mykenischen Siedlung von Kanakia im südwestlichen Salamis, wird ein Befund als mykenischer Kenotaph gedeutet, in dessen Nähe im frühen 5. Jh. v. Chr. ein mit Speisungen assoziierter Temenosbezirk angelegt wurde[24].

Der Fall von Ägina lässt sich wahrscheinlich am ehesten so interpretieren, dass aus einem Grabkult in archaischer Zeit ein Phratrienkult entstanden war, also ein Vorfahrenkult der Ägineten. Ob dieser Kult von Vertretern der gesamten Gemeinschaft der Ägineten oder nur von einzelnen Clans, Gene, in denen die äginetische Aristokratie organisiert war, getragen wurde, lässt sich nicht feststellen. Kommunale Speisungen wären in beiden Fällen möglich.

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**22** Welter 1932, 162 Abb. 21; Welter 1938b, 494 f. Abb. 21–23; S. 507; Herrmann 1959, 67 Taf. 7, 2 (Heroen einer oder mehrerer Phratrien); Felten 2001, 128 f.; Felten et al. 2006, 19 Anm. 40 (mit Nennung von acht Exemplaren); IG IV² 2, 1002. 1003 (2. Hälfte 6. Jh. v. Chr.). Zu *theoi patrooi* und Phratrienkulten s. Parker 2008. Auf die neue Grabung im Westkomplex geht er noch nicht ein, bemerkt aber (S. 209), dass bei Pindar immer wieder patronyme Gesellschaftsgruppen auf der Insel bezeugt sind. Ob diese in einem gemeinsamen Phratrienheiligtum wie auf Thasos oder in getrennten wie an vielen anderen Orten verehrt wurden, muss er offen lassen.

**23** Vgl. zum *Sacred House* in Eleusis Mazarakis-Ainian/Alexandridou 2011, zu Itanos Viviers 2009, 210–213 Abb. 2. Das neue belgisch-englische Projekt ›Polis‹ geht nun diesem Phänomen anhand ausgewählter Orte nach, s. <http://crea.ulb.ac.be/Polis.html> (24. November 2014).

**24** Zuletzt Lolos 2012, 35–39.

## 4. BRONZEZEITLICHE HEILIGTÜMER ALS STÄTTEN VON KULT

Gerade im Fall von griechischen Heiligtümern ist die Frage ihrer Anfänge in der Bronzezeit intensiv und kontrovers diskutiert. Während Martin Nilsson für zahlreiche griechische Heiligtümer eine Kontinuität von der Bronze- zur Eisenzeit angenommen hat, wird eine solche ununterbrochene Nutzung in jüngerer Zeit nur noch wenigen Heiligtümern zugestanden[25]. Nach François de Polignac sind dagegen viele eisenzeitliche Heiligtümer, besonders außerstädtische, an Stellen bronzezeitlichen Kults entstanden[26]. Allerdings erklärt er nicht (wie bereits Antonaccio bemerkte), wie diese Kultplätze ausgesehen haben. Mangels architektonischer Funde wird hier meist von hypäthralen Kultplätzen ausgegangen. Die Frage der ungebrochenen Kultausübung von der mykenischen Zeit in die frühe Eisenzeit ist besonders mit der Frage verbunden, ob der Kult in der frühen Eisenzeit veränderte Empfänger und Rituale mit sich zog. Dies wurde besonders in Zusammenhang mit dem Zuzug neuer Bevölkerungsmaßen erklärt, wobei aber von einer Vorstellung von vom Norden eingewanderten Doriern heute meist Abstand genommen wird. Da offenbar weitgehend gleiche Bevölkerungsteile in der frühen Eisenzeit an der gleichen Stelle einen Kult häufiger wiederaufnehmen als beibehalten, ist das Phänomen in unserem Zusammenhang interessant. Hier hat die Aufnahme (eher als Erfindung) einer Tradition zum Ziel, den Schutz der Götter zu erwirken. Gleichzeitig bedeutet aber – nach der Argumentation von Polignac – die Inanspruchnahme der heiligen Stätte die Rechtfertigung eines territorialen Anspruchs.

## 5. NATURRÄUME ALS STÄTTEN VON KULT

Tatsächlich wurden Naturräume oder Strukturen in der Natur gerne als Zeichen für ein besonderes Alter angesehen, die mit einem ätiologischen Mythos verbunden wurden. So wurden etwa rohe Felsen bisweilen in den Kult einbezogen, wie etwa im Fall des sog. Leokoreion (*crossroad*

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**25** Dazu zählt etwa das Heiligtum von Kalapodi, s. Niemeier 2013 mit einer Zusammenfassung der älteren Forschungsliteratur. – Zum Aspekt des Wiederauflebens von Palastkulten: Antonaccio 1994, 86–90, die aber auch Athen, Tiryns und Mykene darunter fasst.
**26** De Polignac 1983, 38 f. mit Anm. 42; Antonaccio 1994, 89.

*enclosure*) an der Nordseite der Agora von Athen (Abb. 4)[27]. Ob er hier konkret als Altar verwendet wurde, mag dahingestellt sein, auf jeden Fall galt die Stelle aus einem uns heute nicht mehr erschließbaren Grund als besonders – nachweisbare Kultspuren stammen aber erst aus dem 3. Viertel des 5. Jhs. v. Chr. Prägnanter ist ein Befund von Selinunt: Auf der dortigen Agora trat in einer Felsbarre eine 6,70 × 8,60 m messende Umfriedung zutage, in der ein bei Ausgrabung leider fundleeres, wohl bereits ausgeraubtes Kistengrab eingetieft war[28]. Der Ausgräber Dieter Mertens deutete den Befund zurecht als eine Art Heroon, das für die Identitätsbildung der Stadt von großer Bedeutung war und verweist auf innerstädtische Heroa von Megara Nisaia über Megara Hyblaia, der Mutterstadt von Selinunt.

## 6. HEROEN UND MYTHENBILDUNG

Kultplätze von Heroen, die oft mit einem Grab oder Kenotaph verbunden sind, sind *per se* Elemente der erfundenen Vergangenheit, wie die Heroen ja selbst konstruiert sind, um Identität zu erzeugen. Keine griechische Stadt kam ohne Heroen aus, wir kennen von vielen Orten entweder aus der literarischen Überlieferung oder dem archäologischen Befund zahlreiche Vertreter. Athen verfügte, wie bereits antike Schriftsteller bemerkten, über besonders viele von ihnen. Die Athener verwiesen auch in ihrer Bildwelt immer wieder auf sie. So stellen nicht nur die Themen, sondern die konkrete Bildauswahl der Metopen des klassischen Parthenon einen Verweis auf die heroische Vergangenheit der Athener dar (Abb. 5). Der nach den Perserkriegen entstandene Parthenon zeigt zwar nicht historische Darstellungen – wie keine der Tempelskulpturen archaischer und klassischer Zeit –, aber den Perserkriegen wurde eine heroische Bedeutung zugemessen, da sie als Endpunkt eines trans-

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**27** Zur Identifizierung: Wycherley 1972, 121–123; Camp 1989, 79–81. Dort gefundene Keramik stammt erst aus dem 3. Viertel des 5. Jhs. v. Chr., das Leokoreion muss nach Ausweis der Schriftquellen aber bereits im 6. Jh. v. Chr. existiert haben, Skepsis an der Identifizierung äußern: Kron 1976, 199 f.; Rotroff 1978, 207 Anm. 53; Camp 1989, 88 Abb. 55. Nach Rupp 1983, 102 ist die Einbeziehung solcher unbearbeiteter Felsmale mindestens seit archaischer und klassischer Zeit besser bezeugt; er ordnet den Befund auf der Athener Agora der Kategorie der Felsaltäre zu.
**28** Mertens 2006, 178 Abb. 310.
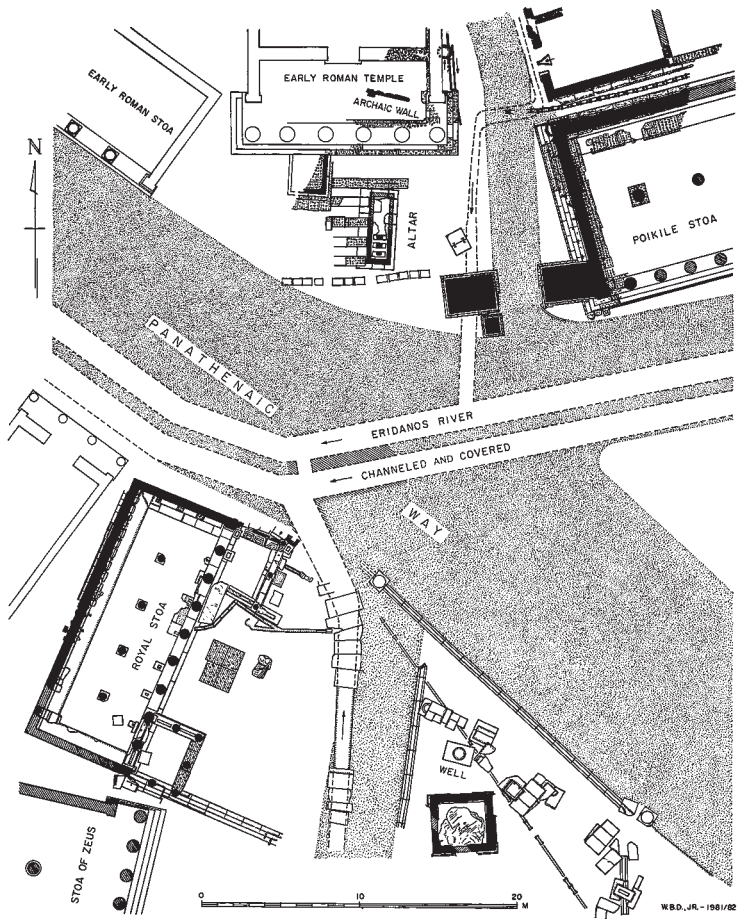
**4** Das »crossroads enclosure« auf der Athener Agora.

zendentalen Kampfes zwischen dem Guten und dem Bösen (Rachel Kousser) bzw. gegen die Bedrohung der Lebenswelt von außen (Tonio Hölscher) aufgefasst wurden[29]. In Stein gemeißelte historische Bilder waren im Griechenland besonders der archaischen und früh- bis hoch-

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[29] Kousser 2009, 275–277; Hölscher 2010, 143 f. Zu den ›Tatenkatalogen‹ der Athener, die sich in der Bauplastik manifestieren, s. Knell 1990, 95–108. 140–149; Schwab 2005, 178–190; Shapiro 2012.

**5** Athen, Parthenon, von Westen.

klassischen Zeit immer zahlenmäßig den mythischen Bildern unterlegen: Diese beherrschten die Vasenbilder, die Münzbilder, die Bauskulpturen griechischer Tempel und lange Zeit auch die Freiplastik[30].

## 7. VERWENDUNG ÄLTERER STILFORMEN ALS ZEICHEN VON TRADITION

Vielerorts wurden ältere Stilformen bewusst eingesetzt, um ein hohes Alter entweder der Gemeinschaft oder eines Baus bzw. eines Kults vorzutäuschen. Bereits in klassischer Zeit wurden archaische Stilformeln zu diesem Zweck eingesetzt (Hermes des Alkamenes – der schon immer die Akropolis geschützt hat, Abb. 6), seit dem 4. Jh. v. Chr. galt die Hochklassik als der Inbegriff für Tradition[31]. So wurden auch motivische Elemente der Hochklassik, etwa der schwere Peplos, gern im 4. Jh. v. Chr. und später zur Zurschaustellung von Alter eingesetzt.

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**30** Vgl. Stähler 1992; Hölscher 1998.
**31** S. dazu Borbein 2002.

**6** Hermes des Alkamenes, Istanbul, Archäologisches
Museum Inv.-Nr. 1433t.

Eklatanter ist dies in der Architektur. Hier galt ebenfalls seit dem
4. Jh. v. Chr. der dorische Stil als altertümlich, aber klassisch. Mancher-
orts wurde er aber bewusst für Tempel, Altäre, aber auch an Stadtmauern
eingesetzt[32]. Zu erinnern ist etwa an das hellenistische Pergamon[33].
Dieses versuchte, sein Alter und seinen Machtanspruch mitunter durch
die Errichtung eines dorischen Tempels und die Aufstellung einer Statue
im altehrwürdigen Typ der Athena Parthenos zu legitimieren. Pergamon
verstand sich als ein Nachfolger des kulturellen wie politischen Erbes
der ehemaligen Hegemonialmacht Athen. Somit parallelisierten die Per-

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**32** Knell 1983 zu dorischen Tempeln der Spätklassik.
**33** Vgl. zu Folgendem Rhodes 1995, 156–160; zuletzt Niemeier 2011.

gamener ihre Erfolge gegen die Kelten mit denen der Athener gegen die Perser. Die attalidischen Weihgeschenke auf der Akropolis von Athen stellen in diesem Sinn auch eine kontinuierliche Traditionslinie ihrer Errungenschaften dar, über die der Athener zurück bis zu den mythischen Kämpfen gegen die Amazonen und die Giganten. Damit erweiterten die Pergamener die Darstellungen der Athener am Parthenon mit den impliziten Verweisen auf jüngst vergangene Geschichte durch konkrete historische bzw. historisierende Bilder.

## 8. ERFUNDENE TRADITION BEI NEUEN MACHTVERHÄLTNISSEN

Ohnehin sind im Hellenismus vielerorts Zeichen der erfundenen Geschichte festzustellen, für die der Historiker Gehrke den Begriff »intentional history« geprägt hat, während Hölscher von »autoritativer Geschichte« spricht[34]. Die Vertreter der neu gegründeten Reiche versuchten eine Legitimation ihres Machtanspruchs durch einen Rückbezug auf mythische Heroen. Herakles war einer von diesen, ihn verstanden die Pergamener als Vorvater. Im Hellenismus sind aber auch zahlreiche staatliche Feiertage für historische, weit zurückliegende Ereignisse belegt. Oft sind dies Siegesfeiern für Kriege, besonders für siegreiche Schlachten bei den Perserkriegen[35]. In Athen feierte man etwa im Hellenismus noch die Siege von Marathon, Salamis und Plataiai mit Opfern am Polyandreion, wobei natürlich auch die mündliche Erzählung der Siegestaten eine wichtige Rolle spielte[36]. Andernorts sind diese Gedenktage gerade für die Persersiege bis weit in die Kaiserzeit belegt[37]. Die Feiern fanden mitunter bei den Gefallenengräbern statt. Tatsächlich gibt es in Griechenland Kenotaphe, die für Gefallenengräber gehalten wurden, und deren Erinnerung auch Jahrhunderte nach ihrem Entstehen hochgehalten wurde. Archäologisch lässt sich dies für das Kenotaph vor den Toren

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**34** Hölscher 2014, zum Begriff speziell S. 265. Foxhall/Gehrke/Luraghi 2010; Gehrke 2014.

**35** Zu Gedenktagen bei den Griechen s. Chaniotis 1991.

**36** IG II² 1006, 26–28 (122/121 v. Chr.); IG II² 3149a (Fest der Eleutheria, an denen Plataiai gefeiert wurde, s. Chaniotis 1991, 124). Zu städtischen Festen im Hellenismus s. Wiemer 2009.

**37** Chaniotis 1991, 124 zu Sparta und Megara. Zur Bedeutung der Schlacht von Marathon im kulturellen Gedächtnis der Griechen s. Gehrke 2009.

**7** Kenotaph von Ambrakia.

von Ambrakia gut zeigen (Abb. 7)[38]. Hier wurde im 4. Jh. v. Chr. in einem ca. 200 Jahre älteren Kenotaph ein neues Grab angelegt. Zu dieser Zeit wurde wohl auch die Gefallenenliste (neu) aufgestellt. Ob das Kenotaph ursprünglich bereits für den gleichen Anlass errichtet wurde, ist dabei nicht mehr zu rekonstruieren. Auf jeden Fall bildet es den Anfangspunkt der großartigen Gräberstraße von Ambrakia vor den Toren der Stadt.

Solche jüngeren Inschriften können natürlich einerseits Teil der Memorialkultur und der Erneuerung der Erinnerung, aber auch Zeichen für die Usurpation eines älteren Monumentes sein, deren eigentliche Hintergründe vielleicht zu jener Zeit nicht mehr verstanden werden[39]. Ausführlich untersucht wurde dieses Phänomen für die Athener Akropolis, wo in der frühen Kaiserzeit teils explizit Inschriften von Statuenbasen in einem älteren Duktus ausgeführt wurden[40]. Es wäre etwa auch beim Naxierkuros zu diskutieren, der im 4. Jh. v. Chr. mit einer Inschrift versehen wurde, die die Naxier als Stifter bezeichnen[41]. Doch war dies wirk-

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**38** Andreou 1986; neue Lesungen: Matthaiou 1990/1991 (Ende 6. Jh. v. Chr.); Bousquet 1992, 596–605 (Mitte 6. Jh. v. Chr.); SEG XLI 540; D'Alessio 1995; Sporn 2009, 161. 289; Angeli 2013, 181 Abb. 6.

**39** Zu alten Schriften auf jüngeren Denkmälern s. Jeffrey 1967. Vgl. zu Weihungen mythischer Personen in der sikyonischen und lindischen Anagraphe auch Czech-Schneider 1998, 24.

**40** Krumeich/Witschel 2010, 27 f.

**41** Guarducci 1959/1960 (zur Datierung der Inschrift); Giuliani 2006. Vergleichbar ist die Situation mit der Inschrift des 4. Jhs. v. Chr. auf dem wiederverwendeten spätarchaischen Votivkapitell im Archilocheion auf

lich so? Ein bisschen fühlt man sich an die Statue des Renaissance-Komponisten Orlando di Lasso (geboren 1532) in München erinnert, vor dem nun ein Memorialort für Michael Jackson entstanden ist[42]. Warum: Weil Michael Jackson im Hotel Bayerischer Hof, das an der Langseite des Platzes liegt, bei seinen München-Aufenthalten übernachtete – die Stätte wurde nach seinem plötzlichen Tod 2009 von Fans eingerichtet und besteht seither.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Was die griechische Antike betrifft, so scheinen mir in den nachfolgend aufgeführten Phasen Konstruktionen oder Erfindungen von Tradition belegt zu sein. Es sind tatsächlich vier Phasen, die ganz im Sinne Hobsbawms Hintergründe für erfundene Traditionen mit großen Umbrüchen in Griechenland verbinden:

- das geometrische Griechenland, die Phase der Siedlungsentwicklungen,
- das archaische Griechenland, die Phase der frühen griechischen Polis mit Legitimationsansprüchen aristokratischer Clans,
- die Klassik, die Phase der Politisierung der griechischen Welt[43],
- die hellenistische Phase, in der nach dem Auseinanderbrechen des Alexanderreiches eine Neuordnung der Machtverhältnisse in Griechenland vonstatten ging.

Die aufgezeigten Ebenen, auf denen wir entsprechende Phänomene fassen können, sind vielschichtig und konnten hier nur grob skizziert werden. Zu den vier Kontexten, in denen nach Price[44] Erinnerung geschaffen werden, nämlich: (a) *objects and representations* (unsere Beispiele: Bildbezüge auf die Vergangenheit etwa in Athen), (b) *places* (Wiederverwendung älterer Ruinen), (c) *ritual behaviour and associated myths*

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Paros, vgl. zuletzt Ohnesorg 2008 und der späteren (römischen?) Inschrift auf dem Schatzhaus von Megara in Olympia, s. Dittenberger/Purgold 1896, Nr. 653.

**42** <http://www.senger-stiftung.de/orlando_di_lasso.html> (24. November 2014).

**43** Hölscher 2010, 136.

**44** Price 2008, Wiederabdruck: Price 2012.

(Kult an älteren Plätzen, mythische Bezüge) und (d) *textual narratives* (Tradition der Siegesfeiern im Zuge der Perserkriege), kann die letzte noch erweitert werden durch (e) Sprache und Schrift. Zwar lässt sich für die griechische Antike nicht die Einführung einer Kunstsprache belegen, die einer kleinen Elite vorbehalten ist und meist nur eine kurze Dauer hat[45] – wie dies etwa im modernen Griechenland mit der Hochsprache (*Katharevousa*) der Fall ist. Aber durch Auftragen oder Erneuern von Inschriften (etwa Stiftungs-, Besitzinschriften, aber auch Gesetzestexten und Eidesinschriften oder sog. Heiligen Gesetzen) oder der Verwendung älterer Buchstabenformen kann eine Tradition erfunden werden. Wie Stephen Lambert[46] bemerkt, gibt es in attischen Inschriften (Gesetzestexten und Dekreten) vor 350 v. Chr. keine spezifischen Bezüge zur Vergangenheit. Eine Zunahme dieser Bezüge ist erst ab der Bedrohung durch die Makedonen und dann besonders ab der Zeit Lykurgs festzustellen. Es wäre lohnenswert, vor diesem Hintergrund einerseits andere Materialgattungen aus der 2. Hälfte des 4. Jhs. v. Chr. in Athen andererseits die besonders im 4. Jh. v. Chr. verstärkt einsetzende Beschriftung bestehender Denkmäler in Griechenland systematisch nach Rückgriffen zu untersuchen.

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## ABBILDUNGSNACHWEISE

**Abb. 1** Nach Maran 2011, Abb. 1, freundliche Genehmigung von Joseph Maran.
**Abb. 2** DAI Athen Neg. Kleemann 518.
**Abb. 3** Universität Salzburg, FB Altertumswissenschaften in Kooperation mit Z_GIS.
**Abb. 4** Zeichnung William B. Dinsmoor, Jr., mit freundlicher Genehmigung der Athenian Agora Excavations, American School of Classical Studies.
**Abb. 5** DAI Athen Neg. 1975/526.
**Abb. 6** DAI Athen Neg. Pergamon 561.
**Abb. 7** Nach Angeli 2013, 184 Abb. 6, freundliche Genehmigung von Anthi Angeli.

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**45** S. dazu Hobsbawm 1983, 14.
**46** Lambert 2012, 257. 259.

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ONNO M. VAN NIJF AND CHRISTINA G. WILLIAMSON

# RE-INVENTING TRADITIONS: CONNECTING CONTESTS IN THE HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN WORLD

*Panhellenic festivals were central to ancient Greek self-understanding from Archaic times until well into the Roman empire. Historic festivals like those at Olympia or Delphi provided a convenient anchoring point for the imagined community of the Greeks. In the Hellenistic period, several Greek cities began to organise panhellenic festivals of their own at their main sanctuaries, connecting themselves to an expanding Greek world. From the second century BCE onwards, these same traditions were invented and re-invented as the Greek world adapted itself to the demand of a present that was dominated by Rome. This paper investigates some aspects of this transformation of indigenous traditions, and argues that the re-invention of tradition did not follow a pre-determined path, but rested on a continuous process of trial and error.[1]*

## INTRODUCTION

From our modern perspective, we are bound to look at ancient Greek history from a paradigm that was largely formed in response to the rise of the modern nation state – history was first and foremost national history. However, the Greek nation was not a state for most of its history, but an invented community – a geographic diaspora held together by a

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**1** This paper is intended as a preliminary study for a research project 'Connecting Contests in the Hellenistic and Roman World' that is carried out by the authors at the University of Groningen and Brown University. This project forms part of 'Anchoring innovation' a research initiative of

common language, the notion of a common descent, and a set of practices and traditions that together defined *to Hellenikon* – 'the Greek thing'.[2] Among the most enduring and fascinating of Greek cultural traditions was the development of a highly complex agonistic (festival) culture that took the form of athletic and cultural competitions, open to all Greeks. The most famous manifestations are of course the great panhellenic games that the Greeks had celebrated since the Archaic period, especially at Delphi, Olympia, Isthmia, and Nemea, and that they continued to celebrate well into the Imperial period. With a history of more than a thousand years, these Greek festivals may be counted among the most successful of cultural traditions in history. Looking from some distance, we may be struck by how conservative a tradition this appears to have been: the contests of the Imperial period may have been more similar to those of the Classical period than the modern Olympic Games are to the Athenian games of 1896. This is no coincidence, of course: the Greeks from the Imperial ages posed as cultural conservatives, whose cultural and literary tastes were deliberately modelled on those of their classical ancestors; and as the world of athletic and artistic context was closely integrated with that of *paideia* in general, the general outlook of organisers and participants was equally conservative.[3]

Yet at close inspection it becomes clear that the Greek festival tradition was not immutable: festival traditions were revised and re-invented over time in order to remain relevant.

It is necessary to elaborate first on the role of re-invention and revision involved in the 'invention of traditions'. When Hobsbawm and Ranger coined the phrase in the early 1980s, their intention was to correct contemporary views (both in academia and among the wider public) of the great national traditions of modern Britain. The great advantage of the concept was that it punctured the pretences of longevity and stability of certain modern traditions, especially those that were connected with the exercise of (British) political and colonial power. The volume showed beyond doubt that certain cultural forms that derived their au-

OIKOS, the Dutch national Research School in Classical Studies. It draws in part on the following works: Van Nijf 2010; Van Nijf 2012; Williamson 2012a; Williamson 2012b; Van Nijf/Williamson 2014.

**2** Fundamental on the constructed nature of Greek identity: Hall 2002, see also Cartledge 1993, and Van Nijf 2009.

**3** For the link between athletics and traditional Greek *paideia*: Van Nijf 2003. On the second sophistic: Whitmarsh 2005.

thority from a perceived perception with the past were relatively recent inventions. In some cases they were even able to pinpoint a particular moment of creation, and identify a 'first inventor'.[4]

The main advantage of the notion was that it alerted scholars (and perhaps the wider public as well) to the constructedness of seemingly unchanging traditions.[5] However, in many cases it is not so easy to pinpoint a precise moment of invention, nor is the question of agency easily resolved.

In his review of the volume, Peter Burke pointed out that the invention of tradition is a "process that may be more or less deliberate, more or less sudden". Given the fact that all traditions have to start at some time, and that all traditions change over time, while adapting themselves to different political or cultural circumstances, it may not always be possible or useful to specifically distinguish 'invented' traditions from 'genuine', or 'authentic' traditions.[6]

Moreover, there has been a tendency to overestimate the importance of the individual inventor. This seems to be the case particularly when we are dealing with traditions that are part of (and even form a link between) different cultural and political systems, where new traditions may be the result of cultural misunderstandings rather than of deliberate manipulation by dominant groups or individuals. A recent critique on the most famous case study in Hobsbawm and Ranger, on the invention of the Highland dress, argues for a greater role in the process of invention for local actors.[7] Indeed, the (adapted) Highland traditions were only a success, "because certain interests within the region wanted it to be so".[8]

The above does not imply that we have to jettison the concept. Around the same time that *The Invention of Tradition* appeared, Simon Price effectively demonstrated how one particular complex tradition, the Roman Imperial cult, should be understood. "The Imperial cult was far

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**4** The most famous (or infamous) example is Hugh Trevor-Roper's debunking of the Highland traditions (Trevor-Roper 1983). David Cannadine's discussion on the rituals and pageantry of the British monarchy is likewise an excellent example of such debunking (Cannadine 1983).

**5** It should be noted that the volume was part of a wider trend of 'constructivism' that also affected other disciplines, such as cultural anthropology. The classic study is Anderson 1991.

**6** Burke 1986.

**7** (on Trevor-Roper 1983).

**8** Dziennik 2012, 119.

from being a static monolithic structure, erected once and for all. Cults were constantly being invented and revised".[9] The process of (re-)invention was conducted within the framework of a system of symbolic exchange between Greek cities and Roman officials and emperors, who thus shared agency. This paper proposes to regard the development of agonistic traditions in the later Hellenistic period against this background also – and suggests that these traditions may best be understood in the light of a process of invention, adaptation, and revision.

Changes to Greek festival traditions were often in response to changing political circumstances – the modern idea that sport and politics should not be mixed would have been incomprehensible to any Greek. One dimension of the Greek festival tradition that changed over time was its geographical extent. Greek festivals were in principle open only to those with a full share in the wider imagined community of Greeks; however, the composition of this community changed over time to include ever-broadening circles. Gaining momentum after Alexander, this development culminated in the Roman era, which was in many respects the acme of the Greek festival tradition. An important result of this was that more and more (local) festivals were held, dramatically increasing over time. The numbers started to rise during the Hellenistic period, but under the emperors they must have run in the hundreds if not thousands.[10] Most of these festivals may not have had more than a local or regional appeal – but an increasing number of festival organisers were clearly more ambitious: they aimed for panhellenic status. That is, they wanted the victories at their games to be recognised by other Greeks, and especially by other Greek cities, and ultimately by the Roman Emperor. The first of these new panhellenic festivals were organised by, or in honour of, the new Hellenistic rulers of the Greek world but the great majority was organised by local communities, from old and new Greek cities, who used these festivals to define and enhance their position in the expanding Greek world. In this new order, Greek cities found themselves in a new multi-polar order that John Ma has described in terms of 'peer-polity interaction', drawing attention to the way in which these nominally equal cities established and maintained mutual connections though diplomatic means and symbolic practices, such as kinship di-

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**9** Price 1984, 61.

**10** For a recent overview of Greek festivals in the Hellenistic and Roman periods and references to earlier literature, see: Pleket 2014.

plomacy, and indeed agonistic festival traditions.[11] But this panhellenic world changed over time. After Hellenistic kings had dominated parts of the scene for a long time, the entire Mediterranean ultimately became a single interconnected geo-political and cultural system under the domination of Rome, and Greek festival traditions played an important part in this development. Rome's generals and *imperatores* were integrated into the festival system, and their role was later taken over by the emperors. In the Imperial period, the emperors became the judges of all things Greek, and the recognition of a festival's status came to depend on imperial approbation. Imperial self-interest and *raison d'état* will have played a part here, as Greek agonistic festivals became a vehicle for the imperial cult and imperial propaganda.[12] Athletes and other performers were recruited from among an increasingly expanding geographical area to ultimately cover the entire civilised (that is, Greek-speaking) world or *oikoumene*. It comes as no surprise that the associations of athletes and artists that flourished in the Imperial period sported the title *oikoumenikos*, to indicate that they represented a world-wide movement. However, the concept *oikoumene* now also had strong political overtones, as this old theoretical term had come to denote a political as well as a cultural entity.[13]

The history of the transformation of these Greek festival traditions from the Hellenistic to the Roman period still remains to be fully examined. This paper merely puts the spotlight on some episodes from its long process of transformation. We shall first examine how festival traditions actually operated in the Hellenistic world, using as case study the example of Magnesia on the Maeander, which re-invented the traditional festival of Artemis Leukophryene in the late third century BCE to stake out its claim to status in the wider Greek world. Our second case study is that of Stratonikeia, which shows how these festival traditions were yet again re-invented to account for the growing power of Rome. We shall conclude with some remarks on how these festival traditions may have been perceived from a Roman perspective.

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**11** Ma 2003. The role of festivals and especially of festival diplomacy in this process was discussed by Ian Rutherford, see now: Rutherford 2013.
**12** Imperial cult: Price 1984; Mitchell 1990.
**13** Van Nijf 2011.

## MAGNESIA ON THE MAEANDER AND THE FESTIVAL NETWORK OF ARTEMIS LEUKOPHRYENE

One of the best documented cases of the re-invention of Greek festival traditions can be found in the city of Magnesia on the Maeander, where the celebration of its patron goddess Artemis Leukophryene was turned into a 'world-wide' event. The process can be followed via an immense epigraphic dossier that was published by Otto Kern in 1900 and re-published, commented on, and translated by Rigsby, Slater and Summa, and Peter Thonemann.[14] At the border between Karia and Ionia, Magnesia was a city that had maintained close ties with the Greek world since the fifth century BCE, but that nevertheless remained at the margins. In 212 BCE, however, a unique opportunity to rectify this situation presented itself to the inhabitants, when during a siege the tutelary goddess Artemis Leukophryene manifested herself on the walls of the city.[15] Naturally, the enemies fled and the city was saved. The Magnesians seized this opportunity to prove and improve their status to their peers. They immediately sent an embassy to the oracle in Delphi for advice, which was indeed a very Greek thing to do and something that nearly ipso facto proved their Greek status.

The oracle gave instructions on how to upgrade their local festival for Artemis to panhellenic status. The festival was meant to be recognised as a crown contest (stephanitic) by their peers, the other Greek cities.[16] Unfortunately for the Magnesians, however, the project seems to have stalled. Some years later they attempted to obtain the desired recognition for a second time: they launched a considerable diplomatic offensive, sending out embassies and delegations to Greek cities all across the known world. This time they succeeded, presumably because they had also acquired crucial support from several Hellenistic rulers who recognised the festivals and urged dependent cities to attend. The effect of each celebration of the festival (every four years) was to position Magnesia temporarily at the focus of a festival network of its own making, a representation of the Greek world in which Magnesia could take its place with pride at the very centre, at least for the duration of the festival.

We know this because the results of their efforts (i. e., the letters of acceptance that were sent by some 100 Greek cities, leagues of cities,

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**14** Kern 1900; Rigsby 1996, 179–279; Slater/Summa 2006; Thonemann 2010.
**15** Recorded at the beginning of *I.Magnesia* 16.16. See: Rigsby 1996, 179–190.
**16** Slater/Summa 2006. See also: Remijsen 2011.

Hellenistic rulers, and a synod of *technitai*, or dramatic performers) were engraved on the walls of the stoa that surrounded the great agora. This impressive dossier, which contained more than one hundred documents, thus formed a monumental reminder of the efforts of the Magnesian diplomats.[17]

The monuments and the lists of cities were meant to make permanent the connection of the Magnesians with their peers, to impress visitors and delegates during the festivals, and perhaps most importantly to remind the Magnesians themselves on an everyday basis that they were indeed an important hub in the wider network of Greek cities.[18]

The case of Magnesia is exceptionally well documented, but it was not at all unique. Hundreds of inscriptions testify to the attempts by other cities to achieve a similar success. However, our second case study, Stratonikeia in Karia, was chosen to show what could happen when Rome entered the field. This case study not only demonstrates the opportunities for connecting, but also the issues faced by Greek cities that looked for wider recognition.

### STRATONIKEIA AND THE FESTIVAL NETWORK OF HEKATE AT LAGINA

Stratonikeia was founded by the Seleukid kings as a Greek colony among older Karian communities that were combined as demes in the new polis.[19] One of these demes was Koranza, some eight kilometers north of the new urban centre, which had a sanctuary for Hekate at Lagina. As the young polis expanded, it adopted Hekate at Lagina as its patron goddess. In this way, the sanctuary became an important node in the local network of this new interconnected community. Over time Lagina played an increasingly important role in the widening of the political network of Stratonikeia at an international level. In the later part of the second century BC, the shrine at Lagina was turned into a major civic sanctuary with a large stoa complex surrounding the altar and temple, of which the friezes are the best known and among the founding pieces of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.[20]

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**17** Plate featured in: Kern 1900.

**18** See: Ma 2003, 19–21 on such lists of inscriptions as cognitive maps, also discussed below.

**19** Debord 2001; Van Bremen 2000.

**20** For a comprehensive overview, see: Baumeister 2007.

In the second century, Stratonikeia became an ally of Rome and remained loyal during the Mithridatic wars of the early first century, despite its continued occupation. This turned out to be a good choice, as Stratonikeia discovered after reminding commander Sulla of its sufferings during the war. Just before Sulla left Asia, he imposed a huge fine on the cities that had supported Mithridates, but he also rewarded Rome's allies. Stratonikeia obtained several important privileges, including a significant expansion of its territory, making it one of the largest cities in the region.[21] Equally significant was the privileged status of asylia, or inviolability, which Rome awarded to the sanctuary of Hekate at Lagina and to her festival, the Hekatesia. The city repaid the compliment by including the goddess Thea Roma in the festival, which was now named the Hekatesia-Rōmaia. This turned the festival into a simultaneous demonstration of Stratonikeia's Greek identity and its friendly and strong relationship with the new superpower Rome. As with the Magnesians, the Stratonikeians also wished to commemorate their gratitude and their civic pride in a monumental epigraphic fashion. They made sure to obtain a confirmation from Rome of the privileges granted by Sulla, and the text of this Senatus Consultum was displayed with other relevant documents in a central public place. Instead of the town centre, they chose the walls of the temple of Hekate in Lagina to inscribe the Roman decree that now declared it inviolate. The monumental inscriptions and the public nature of their locations fixed these privileges for all time – or so the Stratonikeians hoped.

But the asylia did more than simply raise the status of the festival: it was also meant to secure Stratonikeia's central role in its own festival network. Like the Magnesians, the Stratonikeians wished to attain an international recognition that corresponded with their new status. They apparently also sent out embassies and delegations across the Greek world, as we can read in the fragments of a civic decree concerning the cities, kings, and dynasts that responded by recognising the asylia of the temple and the festivals.[22] This decree ends with a list of the 57 cities that complied; perhaps less impressive than the longer list of cities at Magnesia, but the overall aim was very similar, namely to claim a central place in the greater Greek world – of which Rome was now a part.

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**21** *I.Stratonikeia* 505 is the *Senatus consultum de Stratonicensibus*, discussed in *RDGE* no. 63.
**22** *I.Stratonikeia* 507; the cities are listed in *I.Stratonikeia* 508.

The list is composed more or less geographically, beginning with other Greek cities in Karia and Asia Minor, then turning towards 'Old Greece' with Delphi, Olympia and Elis, Athens, Argos (all renowned festival sites), and finally also addressing a number of other new Seleukid cities in the Greek East: Damascus, and Seleukeia in Pieria. Scholars have generally held that this inscription was placed on the northeast temple wall, under the enigmatic frieze showing amicable Amazons and Greeks, which is traditionally interpreted as representing a pact between Stratonikeia and Rome.[23] Riet van Bremen, however, has argued that the inscriptions were more likely located along the southwest wall, where there would have been more space.[24] This setting certainly makes sense in light of the topography of the shrine. Immediately facing this side of the temple was a stand for spectators, incorporated in the southwest wing of the stoa. From here, the citizens and their guests could watch ceremonies against the backdrop of this important dossier, making it a perfect setting for the Stratonikeians to assert civic identity and their position at the centre of this new festival network.

The list of cities inscribed on the temple wall, following the decree by the Roman Senate, is of particular interest in light of Ma's observation:

> "The asylia dossiers, inscribed at length in sites of high visibility ... are maps of relations between one place and a plethora of other, similar places: civic self-esteem is mapped out across an imagined homogeneous world of appreciative peers."[25]

As at Magnesia, such a public list of participating cities displayed the cognitive map of the Greek world that mattered to the polis, it also positioned itself at the hub of this world via the sanctuary of Hekate. Stratonikeia was able to go a step further than Magnesia in securing its position in this network by publicly highlighting its relationship with the rising power of Rome – a relationship that the other Greek cities also acknowledged through the asylia granted by Rome and the incorporation of the cult of Thea Roma. Stratonikeia thus skilfully used the event to achieve 'global' recognition not only for the sanctuary, but also for the young polis itself; the organization of the festival of the two goddesses ensured a strong network of allies who were obliged to participate, for

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**23** Baumeister 2007, 35–40 and 219–227.
**24** Van Bremen 2010.
**25** Ma 2003, 20–21.

reasons of both cult and politics. The package deal that Stratonikeia created in observance of Rome, towards interaction with their peers, and for the element of inter-polis competition was presented as an offer that was difficult to refuse.

## THE ROMAN PERSPECTIVE

So far we have discussed the development of Greek festivals from a purely Greek perspective, but what happened to Greek festival traditions when Rome became the dominant power in the eastern Mediterranean? Rome had its own festival culture, with much less emphasis on the organisation of athletic contests, and a markedly different attitude than the Greek tradition, for example in regard to nudity. Nonetheless, from early on there appears to have been a strong Roman interest in Greek athletic practices. Romans started to compete in Greek contests from the second century BCE onwards.[26] However, as we shall see, the Romans did not simply embrace the Greek agonistic traditions, but re-invented and adapted them to their own needs. Invention of tradition thus became a two-way process in which Greeks and Romans were jointly involved.

From the earliest days of Roman presence in the Greek world, Greek festivals provided a major locus to forge relationships between Greece and Rome – and Greek festival networks were exploited to impose Rome's hegemonic position. The adaptation of Greek festival traditions to the new political situation relied on a process of trial and error to see what would work and what would not. Flamininus was the first to exploit the gathering of Greeks from all over the world at a panhellenic festival to present his message that the Roman conquest should be seen as a form of liberation; a claim that several of his successors, up to the emperor Nero, were to repeat. Flamininus was even appointed as agonothete of the Nemean games, although he merely presided over them, leaving the organisation in local hands.[27] After this event, the entanglement of Romans in the Greek festival tradition would only increase.

Various strategies were open to both parties, but in most cases the Greeks seem to have taken the initiative. One strategy was based on the linguistic coincidence that the very name of the city that was now the

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**26** Up-to-date discussions on various aspects of Roman festival culture can be found in: Christesen/Kyle 2014.
**27** Plutarch *Life of Flamininus* 10–2–6; Livy 33.32.

most powerful in the Mediterranean sounded much like the Greek word for strength: ῥώμη. Rome could be worshipped as a Greek goddess – and an (agonistic) festival could be added. Rōmaia (Rome-games) such as those at Lagina, gained in popularity after their inception in the second century BCE.[28]

Another strategy was to adopt the traditional festival language that had been employed to connect Hellenistic rulers from Alexander onwards to the imagined community of Greeks, and adapt it for Roman consuls and imperators, thus offering them cults and the accompanying festivals as well. But as Roman consuls were not Hellenistic kings, the result could be mixed. Sometimes Greek models were followed closely. When Aemillius Paullus agreed to hold his victory celebration in Amphipolis, it was presented as the culmination of his 'pilgrimage' along Greece's main sanctuary sites. The victory games were in the best of Greek traditions, and may have been modelled on those for Ptolemy II, or on the Nikephoria of Eumenes II.[29] Paullus clearly respected established Greek traditions and to a Greek audience this will have looked like a seamless integration of the new rulers – but the integration of other Romans led to different degrees of revision and re-invention.

Aemilius Paullus does not seem to have been worshipped himself, but the Greeks offered cult practices and related contests to some of his successors. The most famous of them was Quintus Mucius Scaevola, who made himself popular through his strict attitude to the Roman publicani. He was honoured with a statue at Olympia as *sōtēr kai euergetēs*, and received festivals throughout Asia in his name, the *Sōtēria kai Moukieia*, while in Rome he merely acted as the *patronus* of Greek cities.[30] Such ambiguous relationships were viewed with some suspicion in Rome because they could easily be abused, as Scaevola experienced himself when he was charged with corruption (*repetundarum crimen*) on his return. Scaevola was cleared, however, and it would seem that, in general, honours by provincials, including statues and festivals, were formally not liable to charges of corruption. However, governors were allowed to accept a cash-equivalent, provided that it would be used for the actual celebrations that had to take place within five years, and this will certainly have opened up the way to corruption. The most obvious

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**28** On the cult of Thea Rome, see: Mellor 1975, 207–228, for a list of more than 200 inscription. See also: Erskine 1994.

**29** Ferrary 1988, esp. 547–572.

**30** Kallet-Marx 1995, 138–148; *OGIS* 438–439; *I.Pergamon* 268.

case is provided by Cicero's *Pro Flacco*, in which he defended the son of the proconsul of Asia in 63 BCE against a charge of embezzlement. Although Flaccus Jr. walked free, we need not doubt that the Flacci had indeed taken the money.[31] It is impossible to say how many other Roman dignitaries got away with similar offences.

Romans were not only involved as (passive) recipients of Greek festivals: some Romans appear to have interfered more actively in these traditions. The case of Stratonikeia offers a convenient starting point for the discussion, as it draws attention to the crucial role of the Roman commander Sulla.[32] The asylia and other privileges awarded to the shrine and the Hekatesia were not the only occasion when he made a significant contribution to Greek festival life; he interfered several times, both while he was in Greece and in Asia Minor. In fact, his career is a good illustration of the multifarious ways in which Roman politics and military strategies had become intimately connected with Greek festival traditions.

When in early 87 Sulla came to Greece to fight Mithridates' troops, he appears to have given a large impulse along the way to the restoration of agonistic life in Boiotia, which had almost come to a standstill during the previous decades. Even though we cannot follow the events in detail, his presence seems to have generated a renewal of festival traditions in places such as Thespiai and Oropos. In Thespiai, the Erōtideia were restored and celebrated as the Erōtideia Rōmaia, presumably after Sulla's restitution of the famous statue of Eros by Praxiteles to the city[33]. In Oropos, he endowed the sanctuary with large tracts of tax-free land (much against the wishes of the Roman publicani[34]). As a fitting response to this benefaction, the local games of the Amphiareia, which had also fallen to disuse, were re-instated as the Amphiareia-Rōmaia. Therefore, as if to underline that this Greek tradition was now dependent on Roman support, a new item was added to the programme: the formal proclamation of Rome's victory. Moreover, a larger than life-size equestrian statue of Sulla was set up overlooking the entire site.[35]

Likewise, he had left his mark on other events. After his success at Chaeroneia, Sulla organised victory games at Thebes: these were pre-

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**31** Erkelenz 1999.
**32** Santangelo 2007.
**33** *SEG* 47, 518; Knoepfler 1997.
**34** *RDGE* 23.
**35** Petrakos 1974.

sumably held *à la grecque*, but Sulla interfered with the Greek tradition by insisting that the members of the jury were to be recruited from outside Thebes, to show his displeasure with the Theban attitude during the war.[36] Another example of a more directive attitude may have been the introduction of Sulleia – Sullan games– in Athens.[37] We do not know anything about the festival's inception, but as the city had resisted Sulla to the end, and in view of the destruction and bloodshed that accompanied Sulla's siege, it seems unlikely that they were a spontaneous offering by grateful Athenians to their benefactor. It seems more probable that these celebrations were forced upon them by Sulla or by one of his henchmen.

Sulla made his engagement with Greek festival culture felt in another way as well: an inscription from Kos shows that at the behest of his friend, the actor Alexander, he granted immunity to an association of actors.[38] Apparently this immunity was challenged by the city of Kos, and had to be confirmed by the Roman Senate some years later, which goes to show that Roman interference in Greek festival traditions could have the outcome of pitting one group of Greek provincials against another. Finally, it would appear that Sulla also wanted to exploit the propaganda value of Greek festival traditions in Rome itself. According to Appian, Sulla not only celebrated traditional victory games in Italy, but he also had the Olympic games transferred from Elis to Rome – as if to mark the central position that Rome now occupied in the panhellenic festival network.[39] This latest innovation did not last, however, and the following editions of the Olympic games were celebrated again in the Peloponnese.

Therefore, when we look at the developments of different festivals, we can get some idea of the complex and subtle ways in which Greek festival traditions were adapted, changed, and re-invented in the Hellenistic period and again under the aegis of Rome. We have argued that Greek festival traditions had been a powerful instrument for the many new Greek cities to claim a place at the heart of the panhellenic community; it was a way for them to reiterate their cultural ties while promoting their own status. In the early Roman period, festivals remained an important manifestation of Greek identity, but the traditions were once more crucially amended and adapted as a result of (often complex) interactions

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36 Plutarch *Life of Sulla* 19, 11–12.
37 *IG II–III*, 1039 = *SEG* 22, 110.
38 *RDGE* 49.
39 Appian *Bella Civilia* 1.99.

between Greek cities and their new Roman overlords. In this way, the horizontal action of these festivals, in bringing cities together, was combined with the vertical action of positioning them in relation to their new rulers. The variations that were found within this re-invented festival tradition show that it was not simply a question of copying one pre-existing model. To be Greek under Rome, each city had to work out for itself what they needed to do, and how they had to adapt and re-invent their own practices in order to keep their festival tradition alive. Greek athletic festival 'invention' was not a one-off event, imposed upon the Greek cities from above, but rather a protracted process that was locally interpreted, nowhere exactly the same, and that never came to an end.[40]

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MICHAEL SOMMER

# THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS – ZENOBIA AND 'ORIENTALISM'*

*Zenobia, who ruled over most of the Roman eastern provinces from Palmyra in the early 270s AD, became the focal point of two diverging narratives. In the Arabo-Persian tradition, she became an Arab warrior queen, known as al-Zabba, entangled in the tribal conflicts of the pre-Islamic period. In the west, her name became connected to an 'oriental' rebellion against Roman rule; in this tradition, Zenobia is made an exotic desert queen who challenges the empire and its ruler. This paper traces back both invented traditions to their origins and to the historical settings that gave rise to such contradictory narratives.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

To most people, in Europe at least, antiquity is 'classical' antiquity. The fact that there are other 'antiquities', which were neither Greek nor Roman, is often ignored. Underneath the Roman empire's political umbrella, there were countless other 'presences', all with their own traditions, narratives and identities, which were, to some extent, absorbed into the 'classical' meta-narrative. One such presence was the Aramaic-speaking east, where the oasis city of Palmyra became, for a short moment in his-

tory, a political centre in its own right. The protagonist of this process was Zenobia, who succeeded her husband Odaenathus in a monarchic role unique in the Roman world. From a Roman point of view, Zenobia and her son Vaballathus were mere usurpers, who challenged the emperor's authority. But from a local perspective, they defended their birthright against centralist infringement.

The difference in perspective has given rise to radically differing narratives in west and east. In both worlds, the historical Zenobia has given way to invented characters playing their roles in invented traditions. In the west, Zenobia appears as the wildly exotic desert queen defying the mighty Roman empire and its ruler, the emperor Aurelian (AD 270–275); in the east, she became a key-player in an inner-Arab strife for power. Both traditions approach the historical twilight of the late antique Near East from a different angle: while the western tradition emphasises the growing political and cultural gap between the empire and its eastern fringe, the eastern tradition looks at hostilities between the Arab tribal confederations emerging in the Romano-Persian frontier zone from the 4th century AD onwards. The western Zenobia neatly fits into a broader narrative that was first developed in the 5th century BC – in classical Greece – and saw various revivals in the Roman period[1]: the construction of a supposedly insurmountable rift between 'East' and 'West', a 'clash of civilisations' inescapably resulting in hostility and conflict. As in other historical settings too, such an invented tradition emphasising alterity serves as a building block for constructing and reassuring identity: Zenobia is the oriental 'alter' against which the western 'ego' of the later Roman empire is silhouetted.

## 2. AL-ZABBA AND ZENOBIA

Al-Zabba, the 'hairy one', was beautiful, warlike, cunning and in the bondage of luxury. She was the daughter of a king, Umar ben Darb, the ruler of Tadmur and all the Arabs of Northern Syria. When fighting his enemy Jadhima al-Abrash, the King of the Tanukh at al-Hira, he could count on an army composed of several tribes from the Syrian Desert. Yet, finally, he was defeated and killed by Jadhima: al-Zabba inherited

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**1** For instance the defamation, under Augustus, of Mark Antony and Cleopatra as 'Oriental despots'.

a troubled kingdom. She prepared for war, but was persuaded by her sister, Zubayba, that Jadhima could only be overcome by insidiousness. Al-Zabba sent a messenger to Jadhima offering marriage. Despite the warnings of his friend Qasir, the King of the Tanukh agreed and came to Tadmur, where al-Zabba greeted him. When she lifted her skirt showing her plaited pubic hair (hence her name), she exclaimed: "O Jadhima, do you see the concern of a bride?" Now Jadhima realised that he had been tricked. Al-Zabba had him filled with wine until he became intoxicated. Then she let him bleed to death.

Jadhima's nephew Umar ben Adi refused to take revenge, arguing that al-Zabba was invincible: "How can I fight al-Zabba, when she is stronger than an eagle?" But infallibly, Qasir's revenge came upon the Queen of Tadmur. The faithful friend came to al-Zabba pretending that he had escaped from Umar ben Addi. He offered to go back to Hira with a caravan in order to reclaim his possessions. Twice, Qasir arrived at Tadmur with precious merchandise from the east – silk, perfumes and jewellery. But when he returned for the third time, the caravan was loaded with soldiers who, after nightfall, jumped from their boxes and massacred al-Zabba's guards. The queen hastily swallowed the poison she had kept in her ring and died before she could be taken prisoner.

This is the version of Zenobia's history from the Persian historian at-Tabari.[2] It contains many typical elements of an invented tradition, a myth[3]: a genealogy explaining al-Zabba's family roots is hinted at; actors take refuge in deceitfulness – in the case of Qasir, similarities to the story of the Trojan Horse seem too obvious to be accidental; the episode serves to explain al-Zabba's name; finally, it explores the roots of the rise of al-Hira, which was later to become the urban centre of the Sasanian-sponsored tribe of the Lakhmids.[4] In a way, ad-Tabari's version of the story of Zenobia, who is none other than al-Zabba, is a charter myth for the Lakhmid tribal confederacy, which had its origins in the 260s and 270s, and which was to become a major player in the Roman-Persian antagonism of the 4th to 6th centuries.

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**2** At-Tabari, *Ta'rikh al-Rusul*, vol. 1, 364–365; 450. A similar account is included in Ibn Khaldun's *Book of Lessons* (vol. 2, 260–261). Cf. Zahran 2003, 67–75.
**3** The definition of myth here being based upon Assmann ²1997, 52: "Mythos ist eine fundierende Geschichte, eine Geschichte, die erzählt wird, um eine Gegenwart vom Ursprung her zu erhellen."
**4** Cf. now Fisher 2011, 49–70, esp. 65–69.

Unmistakably, al-Zabba is Zenobia and Tadmur is Palmyra. The setting is the Syrian desert, al-Zabba is a warlike queen, beautiful and ruthless, much like the Zenobia we know from Roman texts. Yet the story feels utterly unfamiliar when read through a western lens. Zenobia, the daughter of a king? Where is Odaenathus, who was made, by the Roman emperor Gallienus, ruler of the whole east (*corrector totius orientis*), and who fought back the Persian king Shapur after the Roman Valerian's, Gallienus' father's, defeat in the battle of Edessa in AD 260? Where is Vaballathus, Odaenathus' son from Zenobia and her co-ruler? And where is Aurelian, whom we are used to see as Zenobia's great antagonist? The Roman emperor, who conquered Palmyra in 272 and re-united the eastern provinces with Rome, is totally absent from ad-Tabari's narrative – as are the Romans altogether. In western tradition, on the other hand, Zenobia is immortalised as the exotic desert queen who defied the Roman empire.

## 3. ZENOBIA

We encounter a lively reflection of this tradition in Tommaso Albinoni's opera in four acts, *Zenobia, regina de Palmireni*, first performed in Venice on 13 November 1693. The libretto, written by the relative unknown author Antonio Marchi, comes up with an impressive array of stereotypes about Zenobia, Palmyra and the Near East in general. The story is unsurprisingly hair-raising: Aureliano, the Roman emperor, has defeated Zenobia at Emesa and is about to attack Palmyra. The emperor is visited in his camp by Ormonte, the *governatore* of Palmyra, whom Zenobia had sent in order to negotiate a peace. At Emesa, Aureliano had become infatuated with Ormonte's daughter Filidea, who is engaged with a Greek prince. The treacherous Ormonte promises Filidea to Aureliano and, at night, opens the gates for Aureliano, who invades Palmyra. Having captured her city, Aureliano falls in love with Zenobia, thus breaking the agreement with Ormonte. The infuriated *governatore* now suggests to Zenobia to plot against Aureliano, which she rejects, enraged. An impressed Aureliano hands Palmyra back to Zenobia, whom he places 'sul trono dell'Oriente'.[5]

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**5** Selfridge-Field 2007, 209.

Like ad-Tabari's narrative, this story is saturated with stereotypes. Unlike al-Zabba, the opera's Zenobia is a noble character, who, in the end, will be rewarded for her loyalty. But like her counterpart from the Persian tradition, she is, as the introduction to the libretto points out, a *Regina Guerriera*, who would have stripped her enemy of the entire Orient "with her valour". By turning western gender roles upside down, Zenobia is the representative of a counter-world, an archetypical alter juxtaposed to the European ego incarnated by Aurelian. The treacherous element inherent in the oriental 'character' is represented by Ormonte, who betrays two allies in a row. In putting together an exotic setting with a fictional love story and a selection of rather randomly combined elements from the classical tradition, *Zenobia, regina de Palmireni* is a typical *dramma per musica* of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, very similar to Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas*, Vivaldi's *L'incoronazione di Dario* and even Mozart's *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, which was based on a drama by Racine.

Albinoni's opera is rarely performed today, though curiously, in 2008, *Zenobia, regina de Palmireni* was staged in Syria, with a European ensemble of musicians specialised in baroque opera performing. It is not altogether surprising that present-day Arab nationalists such as Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad prefer the western tradition over the eastern one, as far as Zenobia is concerned. While al-Zabba epitomises inner-Arab rivalry and is, in the scope of her actions, restricted to the Syrian-Mesopotamian theatre, the western Zenobia has much more to offer to those who are concerned about Arab identity and the politico-cultural gap between the Occident and the Orient. Hence up until the present day, Zenobia has played a prominent role in the Ba'ath party's nationalist propaganda: hotels, streets and squares are named after her, she is the heroine of TV dramas, and until recently her portrait adorned the 500 pounds note, the second highest, of the Bank of Syria.[6] Like Arminius in 19th century Germany, the Arab Zenobia has become the

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**6** On Zenobia's reception in the Arab world Hartmann 2001, 475. Evidence for the use of Zenobia for the construction of Arab nationalist narratives is also provided by Zahran 2003 itself, which falls short of a scholarly work in more than one respect.

focal point of a national charter myth.[7] The irony lies in the fact that the tradition used for the myth has been invented in the West.[8]

## 4. ZENOBIA AND ROMAN ORIENTALISM

Where did this invented tradition originate? How and when was Zenobia, the ruler of Palmyra, transformed into Zenobia, the oriental desert queen? How was the narrative handed down – and why did it become so prominent in western tradition in the first place? There is no single point of reference for the western tradition: the oldest narratives dealing with Zenobia and her family are in the books *Gallieni duo*, *Tyranni triginta*, *Divus Claudius*, and *Divus Aurelianus* of the Historia Augusta, but Byzantine historians of the 6th to 12th centuries – Zosimos, Iohannes Malalas, Petros Patrikios, Iohannes of Antioch, Agathias, Georgios Synkellos, Photios, and Iohannes Zonaras – could still use sources from the 4th and possibly even the 3rd century and thus add a few details otherwise unknown to us. Perhaps not surprisingly, all these texts are largely in agreement about Zenobia and her role in the events of the 270s.[9]

This is not the place to engage in the debate about single vs. multiple authorship of the Historia Augusta, nor indeed about the likewise complicated issues of its chronological setting and political tendencies;[10] it is suffice to say that the Historia Augusta reflects a political reality in which (a) the Roman-Sasanian dualism in the East ranked highly on the agenda of Roman policy-makers, and (b) the presence of tribal confederations of Arab origin had become a prime factor in the desert triangle between the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia.[11] We should further assume that any author would view Zenobia and the events unfolding in the 270s against the background of the political conditions from his own period.

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**7** On Arminius and the construction of a 'German' prehistory see Dreyer 2009, 225–247; Wolters 2008, 174–201.

**8** On the importance of narratives of the past for the construction of (national) identities see Anderson [7]1996, 187–206. For classical, in particular Greek, antiquity, the role of *mythos* – 'intentional history' in the rise of collective identities has been highlighted by Gehrke 1994; Gehrke 2003a; Gehrke 2003b; Gehrke 2004.

**9** Hartmann 2001, 17–44.

**10** For further scholarship see Meißner 1997.

**11** For the historical background see Fisher 2011, 72–127.

What we should expect from a historical narrative about the earlier history of the empire is material that foreshadows the situation in which the author(s) and the readers of the 4th century find themselves – a history from which we learn why the nomadic populations of the Syrian Desert pose such a lethal threat to the west. Into such a history a culturally and politically alien desert queen actively promoting the Roman empire's dismantling fits a lot better than a Zenobia who usurped power from within this empire. What needs to be established for this purpose is the protagonist's utter alien-ness as seen from a Greek or Roman point of view. In the Historia Augusta's *Vita Gallienorum duorum*, Zenobia is briefly introduced as a woman who "ruled for a long time, not in feminine fashion or with the ways of a woman, but surpassing in courage and skill not merely Gallienus, than whom any girl could have ruled more successfully, but also many an emperor" (13, 3). In the same paragraph, it is pointed out that Zenobia "was ruling Palmyra and most of the East with the vigour of a man" (13, 5). Here, Zenobia is used to discredit Gallienus who acts more cowardly than a woman. The *Vita divi Claudii*, on the other hand, looks at Zenobia through the eyes of the Roman senators, who, in a religious ceremony, implore the emperor Claudius to "set us free from Zenobia" (4, 4). Claudius is reported to have written a letter to the senate in which he complains about the desolate state of the empire, vast portions of which are controlled by Tetricus, the Gallic emperor, and – "I blush to say it" (7, 5) – Zenobia. Here, Zenobia's exceptional skills as a ruler are not praised, but perceived as a threat to the empire. The empire must be truly in a poor shape if it is brought to knees by a woman!

By far the most detailed accounts are given in the lives of *Divus Aurelianus* and the *Tyranni triginta*. The story in the former develops from the point of view of Aurelian, who, after having defeated Germanic tribes in the Balkans, was free to settle old scores. Through Asia Minor and across the Syrian Gates he marched against Zenobia, who, "in the name of her sons [*filiorum nomine*] held an imperium over the East [*orientale tenebat imperium*]" (22, 1). Aurelian captures Tyana in Cappadocia and Antioch, and then defeats the Palmyrene forces near Emesa. All this is described in a matter-of-fact style, with hardly any details. The narrative gets denser when Aurelian puts Palmyra under siege. Fictional letters (from Aurelian to the officer Mucapor, from Aurelian to Zenobia and back from Zenobia to Aurelian) are exchanged in which the events are highlighted from subjective, individual perspectives: to Mucapor, Aurelian describes the stresses and strains his army endures while fighting a

fierce, well-prepared enemy. "She fears like a woman, and fights as one who fears punishment" (26, 5), he writes about Zenobia. In his letter to Zenobia, the "Emperor or the Roman world and recoverer of the East" explains his terms of surrender: Zenobia will be spared, the rights of the Palmyrenes preserved; but Zenobia will be his prisoner, her possessions – "your jewels, gold, silver, silks, horses, camels" (26, 9) – will be handed over to the Roman treasury.

To this, Zenobia replied "with more pride and insolence than befitted her fortunes" (27, 1). According to the letter she sent to Aurelian, *Persae*, *Saraceni*, *Armeni*, and *latrones Syriae* were fighting the Romans along the Palmyrenians. Explicitly, Zenobia compares herself to another female, 'oriental' ruler: Cleopatra, who "preferred to die a Queen rather than remain alive" (27, 3). On an interesting side note, the author mentions that she dictated her letter in "the Syrian tongue" (27, 6) to a certain Nicomachus, who then translated it into Greek.

Zenobia's letter enrages Aurelian who, without further ado, conquers Palmyra and captures the queen. The emperor then had Zenobia, who had tried to escape on camels, put in chains, and he rounded up the Persians, Armenians, and Saracens and gathered Zenobia's valuables. The soldiers demanded that Zenobia be executed, but Aurelian, "deeming it improper that a woman should be put to death" (30, 2), denied their request. Finally, in order to explain Palmyra's revolt in the subsequent year, the author takes refuge in an ethnic stereotype: "It is a rare thing, or rather, a difficult thing, for the Syrians to keep faith" (31, 1). Little is said about Zenobia in this narrative other than the fact that, by turning down Aurelian's peace offer, she overplayed her hand.

So far, Zenobia is merely used as a dramaturgical tool to expose the respective Roman rulers as cowards (Gallienus) or heroes (Aurelian). Quite a different Zenobia appears in the section of the *Tyranni triginta* dedicated to the desert queen, not by accident the longest of the entire book. In this text, Zenobia is more than a 'mirror' reflecting the behaviour of Roman rulers, but a historical protagonist in her own right, who incorporates the tensions and dynamic changes of the period. The narrative proceeds from Zenobia coming to power (*imperavit*, 30, 2) upon her husband Odaenathus' death to a letter allegedly written by Aurelian, in which the emperor draws a lively portrayal of his enemy, and finally to a collection of anecdotes that further characterise Zenobia. The queen is introduced as a woman and a foreigner, who, as a ruler, outclasses Gallienus. Several times she is presented as a worthy successor to Cleo-

patra[12]: she claims to be her descendent (30, 2); she uses Cleopatra's tableware and jewels (30, 19); she speaks Egyptian (30, 21) and she is well versed in the history of "Alexandria and the Orient" (30, 22). Both by Aurelian in his letter and in the author's narrative, Zenobia is presented as a wise ruler who, despite challenging the Roman emperors' authority, acted in the best interest of the Romans by holding the empire's enemies at bay. While she gives an example of chastity as a woman, she stands her man in public: she rides horses, uses a chariot, marches with soldiers, takes part in hunting, and drinks with her officers and even with the enemy. When she addresses her soldiers, she wears a helmet "in the manner of a Roman emperor" (30, 14) and speaks with a clear, manly voice. In appearance and habitus she is most exotic: her face is dark, the eyes black, the teeth white and her beauty beyond belief. According to circumstances, she can be stern or clement; generous or mean. She is fluent in Greek and well-versed in Latin, which she orders taught to her sons. Finally, her luxurious lifestyle is a recurrent theme of the narrative.

A similar, yet much more prosaic version of the story is told by the late antique historiographer Zosimos, who wrote in the early 6th century AD. Zosimos introduces Zenobia as "the wife of Odonathus [sic]", who, however, "had the courage of a man" and thus "took upon her the administration of affairs" after Odaenathus' death (1, 39, 5). Zosimos largely abstains from direct comments on, and valuations of, Zenobia's personality, but she emerges from his narrative as a vigorous and courageous ruler, who leads her army efficiently and plans her political actions wisely. In Zosimos' account, Zenobia attempts to escape from Palmyra with the intention to call the Persians for assistance. Like Zosimos, the later Byzantine historians follow the narrative of the Historia Augusta in most details, with the exception of her death: the Historia Augusta claims that Zenobia, deported to Rome, spent her days in a Villa at Tibur, while Zosimos reports that she died en route to Rome, either from a disease or from starving herself to death. Zonaras leaves the choice between the two versions to his readers. As a character, Zenobia remains relatively bland in all texts except the Historia Augusta.

Taken together, the Historia Augusta's various accounts contain most of the elements from which the later stories are woven together: Zenobia is a warrior queen who takes on formidable enemies; in her strife for power, she acts like a man; yet she is chaste and beautiful like a

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**12** Hartmann 2000, 498.

woman. Depending on perspective, she can be viewed as a deadly menace or as a ruler with a legitimate cause – or indeed even as a champion of the Roman cause in the Near East. Conspicuously absent from all these accounts are the circumstances that brought Zenobia to power. In the *Vita Gallienorum duorum* and in Zosimos' account, it is insinuated that, after Odaenathus' sudden death, Zenobia took affairs into her own hands. The *Vita* of Aurelian attributes to her the fantasy title of "Queen of the East" (27, 2). The same text and the *Tyranni triginta* call her authority over the east an *imperium*.

Despite using this Roman term, the Historia Augusta introduces Zenobia as a disturbingly foreign element to the political playground of the Roman Near East. Women are dangerous beings anyway, as had repeatedly been pointed out by Roman historians before, from Tacitus to Herodian; not in the least it had been emphasised by the poet Juvenal, whom, as Diederik Burgersdijk has recently demonstrated, the author of the Historia Augusta's Zenobia section knew and held in great esteem. It is indeed true that the Zenobia we encounter here represents the full array of threatening qualities Juvenal finds in women.[13]

Yet the narrative function of Zenobia and the Palmyra episode goes a lot further than this, I think. No woman except Cleopatra, with whom Zenobia is repeatedly associated here, ever wielded power in her own right. Not even Iulia Domna, Septimius Severus' wife, whom Cassius Dio (78, 10, 4) and Herodian (3, 15, 6; 4, 3, 5; 5, 3, 2) describe as exceptionally influential, comes anywhere near this formidable warrior queen. With Cleopatra, Zenobia shares the quality of intrinsic alien-ness when seen from a Roman point of view. Cleopatra seduced Mark Antony and turned him into an external enemy – according to Augustus who unified Italy against this foreign menace. No male ruler ever epitomised the profound otherness of the 'Orient' better than Cleopatra – and Zenobia, who precisely because of the *virtus* she possesses represents an anti-Rome that is alien and threatening, effeminate, yet lethally dangerous.[14]

This 'Orient' stands indeed for everything that Rome is not. In the Orient, women decide, fight, and dominate; in Rome they do not; in the Orient the face of power is seductive, in Rome it is not; in the Orient, the rulers accumulate wealth and luxury beyond belief; in Rome they do

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**13** Burgersdijk 2004–2005, 141–142.
**14** Schäfer 2006; Strootman 2010.

not.[15] Zenobia may be an enemy not without honour, but an enemy she still is, and a dangerous one at that. As Cleopatra did with Mark Antony, she mercilessly exposes the weaknesses of Rome's political class. Aurelian defeats her with the utmost effort; Claudius is too busy in the west to tackle her; Gallienus stands no chance against her. Zenobia's *imperium* is the writing on the wall that Rome's rule in the east may indeed come to an end one day.

## 5. HERALDING THE CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS: ZENOBIA AS HISTORY

Finally: Zenobia foreshadows an age in which the Roman empire no longer deals with isolated, fragmented enemies along its eastern frontier. Zenobia's rule may initially have been beneficial for Rome; in the end, when she is under attack from Aurelian, she teams up with Rome's enemies in the region: *Persae*, *Saraceni*, *Armeni*, and *latrones Syriae*. This is roughly the coalition the empire faces after Julian's catastrophic defeat in 363: Sasanians, Sasanian-controlled Armenia, Arab tribes, and internal troublemakers.

The Historia Augusta's Zenobia is a herald of the east vs. west antagonism that dominated most of the 4th century AD. The episode of which she is the protagonist is a powerful narrative constructing the 'Orient' as an essentially alien sphere against which Rome can only bear up when it is united under a strong leadership (Aurelian) determined to defeat the enemy at all costs. It is a tale about weaknesses and strengths: cowards like Gallienus will get the short end of the stick. The discourse about the 'Orient' serves a veritable domestic cause: Rome cannot afford to be ruled by emperors like Gallienus, neither in the 3rd nor in the 4th century.

Like most invented traditions, the one of Zenobia, the "Queen of the East", is eminently political. It tells its audience a great deal about what Rome is – and even more about how it should be, according to the empire's culturally conservative intellectual elite. The pivotal Roman value is *virtus*, and Rome should be ruled by a man who embodies that *virtus* like how Zenobia, a woman, does for the 'Orient'. The powerhouses of Rome's empire are Italy and the west, and it is Aurelian's mission to pro-

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**15** On Graeco-Roman stereotypes concerning the Orient's addiction to luxury and the effeminate habitus of 'Orientals' Icks 2011, 105; Kuefler 2001, 47. See also Gruen 2011, 71–72 on the 'infiltration of luxury' from the east in Herodotus.

tect them. Alterity is the complement of identity, and hence the alterity surfacing in the invented tradition about the 'Orient' accentuates a Roman imperial identity that for centuries, even after Augustus' creation of the principate, had remained elusive. Seeking the historical personality behind the Historia Augusta's Zenobia is a pointless undertaking; what we should seek instead in that absorbing story is the perpetual construction site that was Roman identity.

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MIGUEL JOHN VERSLUYS

# HAUNTING TRADITIONS. THE (MATERIAL) PRESENCE OF EGYPT IN THE ROMAN WORLD

*The concept of 'the invention of tradition' is good to think with when analysing cultures and cultural change. It underlines that continuity is a historical product and that cultures are always and constantly in the making through processes of bricolage and re-creation, in which the past plays a major role as point of reference. Our convenient characterisation of the Romans as having a Greco-Roman culture suggests that this also, and perhaps even especially, applies to the Roman Empire. In this essay I will briefly analyse the Roman world from this perspective, but focus on Egypt instead of Greece. What kinds of Roman traditions were rooted in an Egyptian past? To what extent did Egyptian traditions become Roman ones? How did these processes materialise, and what were their results? Arguing for a distinction between peoples, ideas, and objects, the analysis will show that there is more at stake than inventing traditions alone. In the Roman world some traditions, like Egyptian ones, were perceived as so powerful that they simply could not be ignored: these were haunting traditions with power and agency of their own. The final part of this essay argues that the power of Egyptian traditions in the Roman world has to be accounted for by looking at the various stages of their cultural biographies as they stretch back in time. Material culture plays a key role in the working of this agency through processes of material entanglement.*

## INVENTING TRADITIONS: ROME AND THE MEMORY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Rome stood in the shadow of earlier Others to such a great extent, that we conveniently talk about Greco-Roman culture as if the latter would be an inevitable continuation of the first. In reality, however, continuity

always is a historical construct, and so it was for the Romans.[1] This is where, among other things, the importance of the concept of the invention of tradition lies for understanding the Roman Empire.[2] It makes clear that the Romans had agency; they made choices, and one of their very important choices was to take the concept of Greece as their main cultural constituent. If we use the term Greco-Roman in this sense, as does Paul Veyne, for instance, by talking about *L'Empire gréco-romain*, we are taking into account that to give Roman history its placid *Roman* appearance, a lot of structural work needed to be done indeed.[3] It is important to underline that we do not strictly analyse cultural processes in terms of distinct cultural groups then, because what we are dealing with is not *Hellenisation*.[4] Rather, it is the conscious appropriation of things Greek in a specific time and a specific context for specific reasons; what is called *Hellenism*.[5] *Hellenisation* is about culture contact between different regions and thus about the *inter-cultural*. *Hellenism* is about concepts associated with those cultures and applied to a different region and/or time period and thus about the *intra-cultural*. *Hellenism*, in other words, is always and inherently about social imaginary and about cultural memory.[6] *Hellenism*, therefore, primarily belongs to the field of cultural production[7].

Talking about the Greco-Roman Empire is therefore certainly warranted when we understand it in terms of *Hellenism*. But even then, I

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**1** For this notion that there is always continuity in change and change in continuity, see Sahlins 1999 and Sahlins 2000.

**2** For definitions of, reactions on, and bibliography regarding the concept, I refer to the Introduction of the present volume and the conclusion to this article.

**3** Veyne 2005, an important volume that is best consulted together with the equally important review by Le Roux 2008.

**4** For a critique on the notion of distinct cultural groups to analyse Roman (material) culture more in general, see Gotter 2001, Török 2011 and Versluys 2015.

**5** For the concept of Hellenism and its power in the ancient world, see, e. g., Goldhill 2002, Gruen 1998, Kaldellis 2007 and Zacharia 2008.

**6** The bibliography on these concepts is extensive. For our period and with a discussion of the earlier (general) bibliography, see, e. g., Stavrianopoulou 2013 for the first and Gallia 2012 for the latter.

**7** And should thus primaliry be analysed in those terms: Bourdieu 1993. King 2011 for an anthropological application of this perspective in a rather different context.

would argue that its use as a general characterisation of the Roman world remains problematic. There are three main aspects to this problem.

(1) Talking about Rome in terms of Greco-Roman suggests that Greece was the only Other that Rome seriously considered in terms of the symbolic construction of cultural memory and identity, while this is not the case.[8] Recent debates on Romanisation might serve as an example of this problem. Romanisation is now often considered to be a process of cultural formation that involved *all* (European, Mediterranean, Near Eastern and Egyptian) participants. The agency, therefore, was certainly not Rome's alone; as the example of Greece makes perfectly clear in regard to the cultural sphere. What we call Romanisation is therefore as much about 'Native > Roman' as it is about 'Roman > Native'.[9] However, a recent and important book like *Rome's Cultural Revolution* that laudably has this understanding of Romanisation as its defining characteristic, almost exclusively looks at Greece when trying to understand how 'Native' makes up 'Roman'.[10] Egypt, for instance, hardly plays any role; and if so only in terms of 'Egyptomania'.[11] Nor does Wallace-Hadrill's interpretation of transformation in and around the Augustan era deals with how the (conquered) peoples of north-western Europe shaped the Roman world.[12] Understanding Romanisation as a process of change and transformation beyond Roman versus Native —

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**8** This probably has to do with the strength, until present day, of the idea of the classical tradition as being exclusively a Greco-Roman one. Note how in the (splendid) volume edited by Kallendorf (2010) traditions other than Greco-Roman do not play any role of significance: Egypt, for instance, is only dealt with in the essay on the Baroque (Rowland 2010).

**9** The only logical consequence being that, when understood in an essentialist way, these categories make no sense when trying to understand processes of cultural formation in the Roman Republic and Empire, see Versluys 2014a, also for the Romanisation debate more in general.

**10** Wallace-Hadrill 2008, for this critique see already: Osborne/Vout 2010, who note the conspicuous absence of Egypt.

**11** The term Egyptomania is, in fact, very inappropriate as it describes as *mania* what is actually an important process of cultural transference and innovation, see already the critique by Curran 1996. At the very same time, however, our description of this process as *mania* says a lot about how we perceive the remarkable strength of Egypt's agency throughout history.

**12** Although a (very well received) book by Peter S. Wells from 1999 illustrated and analysed such processes extensively. Cf. Baratte et al. 2008 for a recent overview of the debate.

that is, in terms of connected histories[13] — is an important first step. In analysing that process, looking at more than Greece alone is certainly a next important step to take.

(2) Talking about Rome in terms of Greco-Roman suggests that there would be a clearly definable concept or tradition that was (understood as) Greek, while this is not the case. *Greek* as a cultural concept developed rapidly in Antiquity: in fact, we should not speak about *Hellenism*, but about many different and differing *Hellenisms*. Because the cultural concept Greek was taken up and reworked in many different contexts, it was enabled to quickly build up a remarkable cultural biography.[14] Many Greek things in the Roman world, for instance, are in fact Hellenistic. And it is often this particular Hellenistic phase (and context) from their cultural biography that explains their appropriation as symbolic good in a Roman context. Augustus *also* looked at classical Athens because this was a very Hellenistic thing to do.

(3) Talking about Greco-Roman (often) takes the important question *how* for granted. How did it become manifest that Rome was spellbound by cultural memories revolving around concepts of Greece? In answering that question, this article suggests that material culture would have played a crucial role. Memory studies have demonstrated that memory lasts for a generation or three; after that, is has to be codified and institutionalised in order to survive.[15] Objects usually are around much longer than people, and thus they are excellently suited to function as a kind of repository of cultural memory. To phrase the (possible) implications of this 'material-cultural' or 'material agency' perspective radically: there may have been no *Hellenisms* without Greek material culture; no *Empire gréco-romain* without Greek-looking objects (and their agency) in a Roman context.[16]

Taking the three aspects of critique formulated above as points of departure, this article aims to outline an alternative interpretation of the

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**13** See Subrahmanyam 1997.

**14** The concept as it was formulated by Kopytoff 1986 has resulted in a large bibliography and can at present also be seen discussed under the heading of 'itineraries' (Hahn/Weiss 2013). Particularly relevant for this essay are Gosden/Marshall 1999 and Hoskins 2006. See also further below.

**15** Though not undisputed, with regard to the ancient world, Assmann 1992 remains the best overview.

**16** For (theoretical background to) this perspective see Boivin 2008, Hicks 2010, Jones/Boivin 2010, Versluys 2014a and Versluys 2015.

Roman world as invented tradition. First, therefore, we will move beyond Greece and focus on Rome and Egypt in terms of connected histories. To this purpose, a distinction will be made between peoples, ideas and objects: the three main protagonists of inventing traditions, which are often lumped together haphazardly. After having concluded that there were many *Egyptianisms* (produced) in the Roman world indeed, we will, secondly, try to find out why they were appropriated, what they meant when they became Roman and where they came from. Therefore it is necessary to chart their (cultural) biographies. Lastly, the *how* question and the role of material culture in transferring Egypt will be briefly explored. From this tripartite analysis it will become clear that there is more to Egyptian traditions than (Roman) invention alone. Through their dense and rich cultural biographies, Egyptian traditions were, in fact, haunting the Romans as well; material culture playing a crucial role with that process.[17]

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[17] The term 'haunting' I owe to Assmann 1997, 9 who writes: "The past is not simply 'received' by the present. The present is 'haunted' by the past and the past is modeled, invented, reinvented, and reconstructed by the present. To be sure, all this implies the tasks and techniques of transmitting and receiving, but much more is involved in the dynamics of cultural memory than is covered by the notion of reception. It makes much more sense to speak of Europe having been 'haunted' by Egypt, than of Egypt having been 'received' by Europe. There were, of course, several discoveries and receptions of Egypt, in the same way as that there were multiple discoveries and receptions of China, India, or Mexico. But independent of these discoveries was always the image of Egypt as the past of both Israel and Greece, and thus of Europe. This fact makes the case of Egypt radically different from that of China, India, or 'Orientalism' in general."
I used this quote as device in Versluys (in press a). What this essay hopes to add to Assmann's pertaining analysis is the (independent) role of material culture with this. Focusing on material culture in its own right is *not* to say that concepts and ideas as they have come down to us through texts do not play a major role. They certainly do, forming a crucially important part of the triptych of peoples, concepts/ideas and objects we call Egypt or Egyptian. Focussing on material culture in its own right, therefore, serves as an additional perspective to investigate the causally determinant position of things, as this perspective has not yet had the attention it deserves (see also Versluys 2014a and n. 16 above).

## 1. EGYPT AS A FOUNDATION OF ROME: PEOPLES, CONCEPTS, AND OBJECTS

Can we speak of Egyptian-Roman Antiquity, *L'Empire egypto-romain*? Not really, or at least not in the way we can speak about *L'Empire gré-co-romain*. Still, there is a lot of Egypt invented and appropriated in a Roman context.[18] In studying that process it seems useful, first, to move beyond the colonial/post-colonial dilemma and understand it as dialectical history, a process of (cultural) innovation, in which both Rome and Egypt have agency[19]; and, secondly, to distinguish between three different categories (of historical analysis): peoples, ideas or concepts, and objects.[20]

The Roman Empire saw unprecedented levels of human mobility in comparison to other periods in the history of the (ancient) world. Not only were soldiers, traders, slaves, pilgrims and craftsmen constantly on the move; there were also genuine diasporas.[21] It is only logical, therefore, that Egyptians are to be found in Rome and all over the Empire.[22] The Ptolemaic queen Cleopatra is undoubtedly the best-known example, and her influence on Rome was profound.[23] But although there are certainly more Egyptians playing a part in Roman history; as a(n) (ethnic) group they do not seem to play a significant role on the socio-political stage.[24]

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**18** Bricault/Versluys 2007 and Capriotti Vittozzi 2013 provide general overviews.

**19** For the relations between Egypt and the Mediterranean as dialectical history, see Moyer 2011.

**20** Versluys 2014a extensively accounts for the first proposition; Versluys 2015 for the latter. I refer to those articles for an overview of the two debates with their rich bibliography.

**21** See recently Isayev 2015, with an overview of the (definitional) debate and earlier bibliography.

**22** Ricci 1993 provided an overview and counted 43 Egyptians; his work has been regularly updated since. See most recently Podvin 2007 (with all bibliography) also for the discussion on the difference between Egyptians and Alexandrians.

**23** As recent research on this important Hellenistic queen that has liberated itself from Orientalising tropes shows time and again; Strootman 2010 is an illuminating example.

**24** There were, of course, Egyptian traders and religious specialists, and figures like the philosopher-historian Chaeremon of Alexandria, who came to Rome as Nero's tutor (Van der Horst 1984). As the overview provided by

This is very different, for example, with elites from Gaul and the western part of the Roman world, who play a much bigger part in constituting an equilibrium that was recently summarised as follows[25]:

> The legions, the core of the army and the mainstay of empire, were increasingly recruited from the provinces, with Italian representation dropping to around 60% under the first three emperors, 20% under the Flavians and Trajan and less than 1% thereafter. The change extended even to the highest ranks of the imperial elite. On one estimate, the representation of provincials in the equestrian order grew from 4% in the Republic to 32% under the Julio-Claudians and reached 68% by the end of the second century. The same process was at work in the Senate itself, albeit at a slower pace. The handful of provincial senators in the last generation of the Republic, grew to around 20% under the Flavians and reached almost 60% under Severus.

In terms of (political) integration, therefore, the Roman Empire proved to be highly mobile as well. In due time this resulted in the emperorship of people from *Hispania* (Hadrian, Trajan) or *Africa* (Septimius Severus). But there never was an emperor (or empress) born in Egypt or with an Egyptian background; nor was there ever someone (originally) from Egypt in the Roman Senate. And even if that would have been the case, the question remains, of course, how important this 'Egyptianness' would have been in terms of cultural formation and identity.

When we move from people to concepts and ideas, the picture changes dramatically. Whereas the role of people from Egypt remained rather limited, as we have seen above, the influence of concepts of Egypt was enormous. Egypt is a strong symbolic currency in the Roman world, as for instance testified by literary sources. There is almost no Roman author who does *not* mention (ideas associated with) Egypt; and Egypt can be made to function in the Roman literary discourse in many different ways.[26] Concepts of Egypt had known such a central place in the

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Podvin (2007) makes clear, however, as a(n) ethnic group Egyptians do not seem to play a prominent role – very much unlike Greeks.

**25** Lavan 2013, 16.

**26** Lavan 2013, 168–175 discusses a telling example from Pliny's *Panegyricus* (30–32) that recalls how Trajan saved Egypt from the effects of a drought. In this fragment Egypt is represented as slave, subject, debtor, and woman;

(Greek and Hellenistic) intellectual discourse for a long time already; and Egypt's main *topoi* had become (simultaneously) *ancient, wise, religious* and *exotically Other*.[27] It is only logical, therefore, that ideas about Egypt can be seen used in (literature from) Rome and all over the Empire – thus 'becoming Roman'.[28] Whereas earlier research was keen to underline the fact that Egypt was very often made into the (exotic) Other, recent investigations show that such an approach is one-sided and that Egypt was made to do many other things as well. Thus, there are much more concepts of Egypt in the Roman literary discourse and intellectual imagination than stereotypes developed in the context of the civil war between Octavian and Mark Antony alone. This makes them into important sources for understanding how concepts of Egypt contributed to the make-up of Rome. To mention but one example: Egypt had a great appeal because of its Antiquity and the wisdom associated with that.[29] Rome was characterised by the notion of (what Jan Assmann has called) a "Gestaffelte Tiefenzeit"[30]: the idea that behind Greece there were the high civilisations of the Orient — Egypt most particularly — as cultural foundation of Rome. The literary sources then, testify to the wide ranging influence that both Egyptian ideas and ideas about Egypt had on the Romans. This very much was dialectical history, with the Hellenistic period playing a key role.[31]

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all metaphors aimed at masking Rome's dependency on a province in something as important and imperial as food distribution. For the 'framing' of Egypt in the Roman literary discourse more in general, see now Leemreize 2014.

**27** See, out of an extensive bibliography, Vasunia 2001 for Antiquity and Glück/Morenz 2007 for its continuation into later periods.

**28** See Manolaraki 2013 and Leemreize 2014. The latter discuses examples of Roman admiration, emulation and incorporation of (concepts of) Egypt; her PhD on the subject is forthcoming.

**29** Both Cicero (*Atticus* 2.5.1: *iam pridem cupio Alexandream reliquamque Aegyptum visere.* / Yes, I am eager, and have been for long enough, to visit Alexandria and the rest of Egypt) and Germanicus (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.59.1: *M. Silano L. Norbano consulibus Germanicus Aegyptum proficiscitur cognoscendae antiquitatis.* / In the consulship of Marcus Silanus and Lucius Norbanus, Germanicus set out for Egypt to study its antiquity) were eager to visit the country at the Nile; cf. Leemreize 2014, 58–60.

**30** For this concept, see Assmann 1997 and Assmann 2009.

**31** Moyer 2011.

Providing a full overview of *L'Empire egypto-romain* from this perspective falls outside the scope of this essay, and I will therefore only name but a few post-Augustan examples of Egyptian concepts we find in the Roman world. The Egyptian gods figure prominently in that respect.[32] Together with Sarapis, the (originally Egyptian) goddess Isis would develop into a tutelary deity of the Roman Emperor, something exemplified by the Flavians going to great lengths to build the *Iseum Campense*. The Flavians even seem to legitimise their own beginnings as imperial dynasty through Egyptian references.[33]

For Hadrian, Egypt matters a lot in providing the Empire with a new cultural foundation as well, as is vividly demonstrated in the *Villa Hadriana*.[34] Religion is key here too, but part of a much wider cultural package that locates the Roman present in an Egyptian past. In late Antiquity the Egyptian gods can sometimes even been seen used as metaphors of Greco-Roman paganism[35], before concepts of Egypt are radically reformulated within Christianity and the Biblical tradition. These few examples already show that there was no single concept of Egypt in the Roman world. Egypt was a mirror-palace; a prism through which Rome was able to see, define and build itself. Thus there were many 'Egypts' in the Roman world, up to the point that the concept itself seems to evaporate.[36] In this respect, all traditions are indeed invented traditions, with our terminology often being unhelpful: many Egyptian ideas in the Roman world in fact seem to have been Hellenistic re-creations and, moreover, what we call Egyptian ideas might well be Roman concepts constructed through Egypt.

Egyptian (looking) objects or *aegyptiaca*, lastly, are everywhere in the Roman world, especially in Rome itself.[37] They were there already for a long time: Egypt and the Italic peninsula had been part of shared

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32 Bricault/Versluys 2014 for a recent overview and earlier bibliography.
33 Versluys (in press a) with earlier bibliography.
34 Versluys 2012 with earlier bibliography.
35 See most recently Bricault 2014.
36 For this important and difficult (conceptual) problem, see extensively Mol 2012, Müskens 2015 and Versluys 2015, especially 146–152.
37 Capriotti Vittozzi 2013 provides the most recent (interpretative) overview for the city of Rome and its surroundings. For the category of *aegyptiaca* (and its deconstruction) see Mol 2012 and Müskens 2015. For Manetho's Egyptian history entitled *Aegyptiaca* (something rather different) see Moyer 2011, Chapter 2.

(commercial and other) networks from the late Bronze Age onwards. The Augustan period, however, seems to be a watershed, also in this respect. Things Egyptian may have something to do with Egyptians in that context; but very often that is not the case. They are frequently connected to ideas about Egypt (like Egyptian religion); but not necessarily so. As recent research continues to show, objects looking Egyptian to us now (and interpreted consequently in terms of Egyptian ideas) might not have been perceived as Egyptian in a Roman context, at all.[38] The obelisk serves well as an example.[39] Quintessentially Egyptian to us, in Late Antiquity obelisks were primarily perceived, so it seems, as symbols of the dynastic power of the Roman emperors. Calling them Egyptian seems to add little to their contextual interpretation; it is their appropriation, their re-creation, the Roman phase of their cultural biography that matters in the first place.[40] *Aegyptiaca Romana*, therefore, always have to be understood from their Roman context in the first place. It might well turn out then that their 'Egyptianness' does not play a role and that they belong to a different (conceptual) category like, for instance, dynastic legitimation. Moreover, as the example of the late Antique obelisks has also made clear, they are not at all necessarily linked with ethnic-geographical concepts of Egypt (people from the land of the Nile) or socio-cultural concepts (ideas about the land of the Nile) – although such relations certainly *could* exist or have been produced.

In other respects, however, it seems that objects *cannot* be manipulated to do or mean anything in subsequent phases of their biography. Things in the Mediterranean are characterised by motion and they therefore may acquire a myriad different meanings in a myriad different contexts.[41] At the same time, however, "the structural object is itself defined by survival and persistence, rather than by movement".[42] To understand

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**38** For this question see Versluys 2010 and in particular Mol 2012 as well as her forthcoming monograph on the subject.

**39** Note, however, that we should be very careful with generalising conclusions on obelisks for the category of *aegyptiaca* as a whole.

**40** For the notion of appropriation in relation to its implications for the biography of objects see Hahn 2008, Fontijn 2013, Hahn/Weiss 2013, Versluys 2015 and further below.

**41** On connectivity, see Morris 2005 (calling it Mediterraneanization) and Pitts/Versluys 2015 (calling it Globalisation). For material connections in particular, see Van Dommelen/Knapp 2010.

**42** Knappett 2013, 39.

the *structural* character of objects, therefore, we have to look at their agency through time or, in other words, at their cultural biographies. The obelisk indeed became a symbol of the Roman Emperor, but was that phase of its cultural biography able to eliminate its 'Egyptian' character? Would a viewer in Late Antiquity just have understood the obelisk as yet another imperial symbol alone? In order to take these questions (and hence the (ontological) difference between ideas and objects) seriously, this essay suggests that *aegyptiaca* are more than representations of (Roman, Egyptian or Romano-Egyptian) concepts alone: they are also acting themselves through other properties.[43] This argument will be elaborated upon further in section 3 below. First, however, section 2 will investigate what the cultural biography of 'Egypt' consists of and investigate whether that biography matters to processes of the invention of tradition occurring in the Roman world.

## 2. EGYPTIANISMS: ON THE CULTURAL BIOGRAPHY OF EGYPT IN ANTIQUITY

Egypt has a long and rich cultural biography or *mnemohistory*. With its Old, Middle and New kingdoms, Egyptian history itself can already be usefully described as a continuation of (continuously reinvented) traditions.[44] Many characteristics that developed during the Old Kingdom would become normative for the continuing course of Egyptian history. That history is therefore not unchangeable and rigid, as is often assumed, but characterised by (apparent) uniformity because of constant references to the past. That what we consider typically Egyptian often originates from Old Kingdom traditions; and these characteristics are reconfirmed through their continuous renaissances in later times. Well-known is the case of Ramses II (c. 1279 – 1212 BC), who refers back so actively to the 12th dynasty pharaohs Sesostris I and II from the begin-

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**43** See already some observations in Mol/Versluys 2015 on how *aegyptiaca* created the (imagined) community of Isis followers. On material culture as constituting a separate ontology, a debate I will not deal with here, see Gosden 2008.

**44** The Budapester exhibition catalogue *Egyptian Renaissance. Archaism and the sense of history in Ancient Egypt* (Tiradritti 2008) provides a useful overview and bibliography. The work by Jan Assmann is fundamental to this approach, see, e. g., Assmann 1992, 1996, 1997 and 2009.

ning of the second millennium BC, that in the Late Period he is amalgamated with them into a single figure. From all over Egypt, Ramses II had statues of (earlier) kings and gods brought to his new capital in the Delta and had them rededicated. Archaism and kingship thus seem to be strongly related.[45] During the middle of the first millennium BC we see these processes taking place on a very large scale, both qualitatively and quantitatively; Peter Der Manuelian has even characterised this as "living in the past".[46] For some archaeological pieces, for instance, it is still debated whether they belong to the 12th dynasty or the 26th. There is, therefore, a lot of invention of tradition in Egypt itself. But so there is outside Egypt. Below, I will briefly discuss two Hellenistic period stages in the *re-creation* of Egypt that seem to be directly relevant to its Roman appropriation, and focus on the relation between concepts and objects.

Appropriating distinctly Egyptian-style material culture is well-documented in (Meroitic) Nubia during the last three centuries BC: many things Nubian often look distinctly Egyptian.[47] Such forms of appropriation had a long history in the region. The Nubian kingdom of Kerma, for instance, already made extensive use of 'the Egyptian' as early as the mid-second millennium BC.[48] The Meroitic adoption of elements from the classical Egyptian idiom would therefore be part of a (longstanding) Nubian cultural tradition that "may be described as a continuous formation of a special dialect of art that was destined to articulate Nubian messages and not repeat Egyptian ones".[49] Around the middle of the first millennium BC, Kushite kings, for instance, were often shown wearing a leather cap, *not* surmounted by the heads of a vulture and cobra – symbols of Egyptian kingship – but by two cobras. Egyptian royal symbols were thus selectively adopted and transformed, apparently because the Egyptian language of forms and the concepts associated with it was a strong symbolic currency. The habit of the Kushite kings to be buried in the architectural form of the pyramid underlines this. Throughout the

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**45** Cf. Baines/Riggs 2001.

**46** Der Manuelian 1994. "Jetzt nehmen diese Rückgriffe einen Umgang an, der auch für Ägyptische Verhältnisse völlig ungewöhnlich ist und die Bezeichnung 'Renaissance' verdient", as Jan Assmann (1996, 377) writes about this period.

**47** Török 2011 provides an overview of the debate as well as many examples and a rich bibliography.

**48** See Valbelle 2004.

**49** Török 2011, 310.

entire period, Egyptian (style) objects played an important role within these processes of cultural entanglement.[50]

This is evident from the Ptolemies as well. Ptolemaic kingship, for instance, clearly shows the practice of genuine code-switching between a visual language we call Greek and one we call Egyptian. From many Ptolemaic rulers, therefore, official portraits in both a (naturalistic) Greek style and a (more rigid and uniform) Egyptian style have been preserved.[51] That the foundation plaques of the famous Sarapeum from Alexandria are inscribed in both Greek and Hieroglyphic can be understood well against this background. The most spectacular example of inventing and thereby underlining tradition, probably, consists of the Macedonians presenting themselves to the Mediterranean world distinctly as Egyptian pharaohs at the foot of the Pharos lighthouse in Alexandria.[52] To underline this claim, they not only had themselves displayed in a Pharaonic style, but they had also brought a large amount of Pharaonica to Alexandria.[53] Was material culture provisional for their claim of kingship to really function? Apparently the concept of Pharaonic kingship could not be communicated without Pharaonic material culture – and the cultural memory this brought with it – to drive the message home.

Let us now move to yet another phase in the cultural biography of Egypt: Augustan Rome. Which Egyptian tradition does Augustus invent? How is that invention related to (the Hellenistic phase of) its biography? And how do concepts and objects we both call Egyptian actually relate to one another? These questions will be explored by briefly sketching the cultural biography of a specific (and quintessentially) Egyptian element: the Egyptian obelisk from Heliopolis, re-erected on the *spina* of the Circus Maximus by Augustus in 10 BC (Fig. 1).[54]

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**50** See Van Pelt 2013 who rightly privileges this term over 'Egyptianisation'.
**51** See Stanwick 2002 and, for 'seeing double' more in general Stephens 2003.
**52** See Guimier-Sorbets 2007, with further references.
**53** Savvopoulos 2010 provides an overview of the debate.
**54** The following part is based on an article that I published, on the obelisk, in Dutch: Versluys 2014b. See those texts for an extensive bibliography. My observations owe a great deal to the work by Marike Van Aerde (2015). For a similar analysis of the other obelisk brought to Rome by Augustus (although with somewhat different conclusions) see Swetnam-Burland 2010. For such an approach towards Greek statuary, see Kousser 2005.

**1** The Egyptian obelisk from Heliopolis, re-erected on the *spina* of the Circus Maximus by Augustus in 10 BC and now on *Piazza del Popolo*, Rome (the so-called Circus obelisk).

The carving of the obelisk was begun in the 13th century BC by order of pharaoh Sethi I. During this time already, the concept of the obelisk was steeped in symbolism. Obelisks originate from the beginning of the Old Kingdom (circa 2500 BC), and were closely connected with the sun-god Re-Atum from the start, as well as with the concept of the pharaoh as personification of the country's unity and as mediator between earth and the heavens. Sethi I's important conquests in Asia Minor enabled him to realise his ambition and to represent himself as a truly great pharaoh, for which there was no symbol more suitable than an obelisk. However, the pharaoh died before the obelisk could be erected. His son, Ramses II, did not hesitate for a moment: he appropriated the obelisk, and with it the memory and ambitions of his father. He achieved this by having the decorations completed (the great difference in execution of Sethi I's hieroglyphs and of those added by Ramses II is clearly visible) and by having the obelisk erected at Heliopolis in his own name. With this, Ramses II's legitimacy as lawful pharaoh was elevated beyond any doubt. The obelisk stood at this centre of the Egyptian sun-cult for over a millennium. We have seen above that the Ptolemies appropriated obelisks and other ancient Egyptian materials on a large scale and that they

displayed these in Alexandria, in order to enforce their own legitimacy as lawful Pharaonic dynasty. But the obelisk of Sethi I and Ramses II was not part of this.

After the Roman conquest of Egypt in 30 BC, however, (Octavian) Augustus had the obelisk transported from Heliopolis, via Alexandria, to Rome. There does not appear to have been a specific reason for his choice of this particular obelisk; the Augustan appropriation revolved around its inherent symbolism. The importance of this strategic move cannot be underestimated. In social and cultural regard, Augustus in specific and the Romans in general were newcomers on the historical stage of the Mediterranean and the Near East. By submitting himself to the power of the obelisk, Augustus placed himself in a direct line with both the Egyptian pharaohs and the Hellenistic dynasty of the Ptolemies. If there was any way imaginable to show the *oikumene* with one broad overwhelming gesture that Augustus was now the lawful ruler of all, it was through this gesture. At the same time, this crossing also had far-reaching consequences for the obelisk as a concept by itself. Its appropriation by Augustus added yet another layer of meaning to its already rich patina. To explicate this, an (identical) inscription was added to its north and south sides. This inscription tells how the emperor Augustus (son of the divine Caesar, imperator for the twelfth time, consul for the eleventh time, and endowed with the power of tribune of the populace for the fourteenth time) had dedicated this obelisk "to the sun as a gift, when Egypt was brought under the rule of the Roman people" (CIL VI.701). With wonderful subtlety, we here see the interplay between Egypt as Other and as Self simultaneously. On the one hand, Egypt is represented as the conquered Other, and this obelisk hence becomes a clear sign of victory for Roman imperialism. On the other hand, Augustus dedicated the obelisk to the sun. With this, he shows that he is not only aware of the Egyptian background of the object, but moreover he acts like a pharaoh. Perhaps even more important is the fact that Augustus matches the obelisk in this way to his own protector deity, the sungod Apollo; and like this makes it part of his 'cultural revolution'. It was for good reason that the obelisk was erected in the *Circus* in such a way that it could almost be seen as a monument marking the access to the Apollo temple on the Palatine. The naming of all his titles, finally, contributes to the equation of subject (Augustus) and object (obelisk); similar to how, in the Old Kingdom, the obelisk symbolised the pharaoh's personification of the unity of the country (and in this case of the entire *oikumene*) and his role as mediator between people and gods.

The above analysis illustrates how much more than Roman triumph alone is going on with the re-erection of the Egyptian obelisk in the Roman *Circus* by Augustus. It was a trophy for sure, but it was also a monument that showed how Rome now aligned itself with 'Egyptian' traditions in several respects. Looking at the cultural biography of the (Hellenistic) appropriation of Egyptian elements in Nubia and Alexandria in general and the symbol of the obelisk in particular has suggested a reason for this. We have seen above that Ramses II already linked archaism and kingship by using the Pharaonic model to underline his royal status; that the rulers of Kerma and Kush did likewise, and that the Ptolemies used this strategy as one of their main instruments of legitimation as well. There clearly seems to have been a relation between the appropriation of a Pharaonic model and the legitimation of dynastic power.[55] What mattered for Augustus was therefore not so much the original meaning of the obelisk as an Egyptian object; what mattered were the meanings that had become attached to these kinds of objects in their continuous appropriation over time. The Roman imperial phase of its biography would, in turn, strongly influence the Popes, who began re-erecting obelisks on a grand scale in order to show that their (second) Rome equalled that of the emperors. For them the obelisks seem to have been, first and foremost, symbols of ancient, Imperial Rome (Fig. 2).

The question then remains, however, why Augustus was going at such an incredibly great length to get original Egyptian obelisks to Rome, because he certainly could have invented Egyptian traditions in another way. This was, in the first place, a major investment project without precedent; even special boats had to be built for the occasion. It was also a great risk. Imagine what would happen when a prestigious imperial project like this failed; would Augustus' *auctoritas* sink to the bottom of the Mediterranean along with the obelisks? This surely, then, would be an example of a failed invented tradition.[56] And lastly, there was the problem of earlier phases in the cultural biography in the life of the obelisk, and other aspects than the ones convenient to Augustus. Although it was clearly possible to find useful associations, like those between the Sun and Apollo, there were in principle mainly negative associations, as Egypt had just been presented, in Augustan propaganda, as Rome's arch-enemy in the Civil War. We know nothing about prob-

**55** Baines/Riggs 2001.
**56** Cf. the interesting case study presented by Ozan Erözden 2013.

**2** The *Circus* obelisk.

lems regarding the appropriation of already much-used symbolism with its unintended consequences for the Augustan period. With regard to the Papal appropriation, however, it is clear that their intention to see the obelisks as symbols of the grandeur of imperial Rome alone failed. From their rediscovery and re-erection onwards obelisks were (immediately) perceived as doing more than that the Popes intended them to do. Also earlier phases of their cultural biography – the fact that they were *Egyptian* and that through this association the obelisks triggered ideas

about, for instance, time, religion and about the exotic Other – played an important, and sometimes even conflicting, role.[57]

Transporting an obelisk from Heliopolis to the very centre of the new capital of the Mediterranean turned out to be a brilliant move for Augustus, with long-lasting consequences for Roman history and beyond. Egypt had always been part of the memory of the Mediterranean, but through Augustus the *mnemohistory* of Egypt became an even more important part of Roman (and subsequently European) cultural identity. Material culture played a pivotal role with this process of cultural transference. The concept of cultural biography has turned out to be important with that in two somewhat paradoxically related respects. It has shown, firstly, that to understand the Augustan appropriation we should focus on the previous (Hellenistic) stages of its biography instead of its 'Egyptianness'. But is has also suggested, secondly, that the more structural characteristics defining that 'Egyptianness' continue to play a role in one way or another. Concept and object therefore might be as intimately related as they are fundamentally disconnected.[58] *Aegyptiaca*, therefore, certainly are something of an imprint; but the question is from what particular phase(s) of their cultural biography.[59]

## 3. TEMPORALITY AND (EGYPTIAN) MATERIAL CULTURE

The section above has suggested that the material agency of *aegyptiaca* mattered greatly to the transference of Egyptian traditions into a Roman context. For an *Empire egypto-romain*, one could almost say, we would not so much need Egyptians themselves or Egyptian ideas on an abstract, mental level, but instead the presence of Egyptian objects as a kind of imprints.[60] But could the agency *aegyptiaca* had acquired through their cultural biography also set limits to their functioning within a novel

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**57** Curran et al. 2009, especially Chapter VI.

**58** Cf. Osborne 2007 and Versluys 2015 (arguing for the importance of processes of universalisation and particularisation to understand this relationship).

**59** Cf. Knappett 2013, with references to the works by Aby Warburg and Georges Didi-Huberman usually ignored by archaeologists. For an analysis of the 'Egyptian' gods in the Roman world from this perspective, see Versluys 2013.

**60** Cf. Knappett 2013.

context? Or trigger and influence their appropriation? Are *aegyptiaca* a separate (ontological) category?

Objects we call Egyptian often have rather similar characteristics and seem to share specific stylistic and material properties throughout millennia. Such stylistic and material properties were (often) considered on purpose in a Roman context; which suggests that the material agency of *aegyptiaca* was clearly felt and understood.[61] To mention just one example: Domitian had an obelisk made to present himself as *Autocrator Caesar Domitianus, beloved of Isis* in the courtyard of the *Iseum Campense*. Another part of the same (hieroglyphic) inscription mentions that the obelisk was *in real granite*: style (obelisk, hieroglyphs) and material (granite) thus seem to reinforce one another.[62] Can we still call this imperial Roman monument an Egyptian obelisk, then? I think we can, but only if we realise that with the term Egyptian we do not so much primarily refer to ethnic-geographical or socio-cultural concepts. In the first place, I would suggest, Egyptian should serve here to indicate the specific form of (stylistic and material) agency of the monument. And then (but only then) there are, of course, many possible links imaginable between people, ideas, and objects that we call Egyptian. People from the country of the Nile *might* have carved the hieroglyphs or advised on the content of the inscription; adding to its 'authenticity'.[63] Concepts of and ideas about Egypt *can* play a role with specific forms of agency of *aegyptiaca*; and in this case they probably do because the obelisk stood in a sanctuary for Isis.[64] But the agency of the obelisk likewise revolved around the fact that erecting such a monument was an Augustan tradition.

On the one hand, therefore, it is clear that Egyptian objects — like Egyptians (although not so much) and ideas about Egypt (much more) — make up Rome and thus become Roman.[65] On the other hand, however, Egyptian objects seem to have had a rather strong and specific form

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[61] My observations owe a great deal to the forthcoming monograph on this underexplored subject by S. Müskens.

[62] See Bülow Clausen 2015, one of the few publications so far that tries to take the material agency of *aegyptiaca* seriously.

[63] For creating authenticity (or authentication) as a process, see Geurds/ Van Broekhoven 2013.

[64] For this aspect, see Capriotti Vittozzi 2014.

[65] They are part and parcel of almost all Augustan building projects, as has been established by Van Aerde 2015, as well as of the 'cultural revolutions' of the *Flavii* and Hadrian: *aegyptiaca* were everywhere in the Roman cityscape.

of material agency that was not easily neutralised in a Roman context. *Aegyptiaca*, in other words, brought with them specific stylistic and material properties that had a distinct form of agency through their cultural biography. As objects present in a Roman context (and thus as *Roman* material culture) they brought with them a revival of the past. It is this double temporality we are alluding to when we say that *aegyptiaca* are very much Roman and very much Egyptian at the very same time.

We have seen that the remarkable performance that is the re-erection of the *Heliopolis* obelisk by Augustus brilliantly capitalised on this double temporality.[66] It has also become clear, however, that it is not only Augustus' agency that is at work here. Augustus appropriated the obelisk because Egyptian material culture, with its specific material and stylistic properties, had done very well in the domain of dynastic legitimation before. As such it is the question whether it would have been possible for Augustus *not* to get the obelisk from Egypt as part of his cultural revolution. In fact, the tradition seems to have been haunting him – which seems to be the only way to explain his undertaking altogether. The Augustan performance would add significantly to the cultural biography of the object-form we call obelisk. The Popes could therefore not afford *not* to re-erect obelisks; at least when they were confronted with the objects themselves. Through its cultural biography, stretching back far into Pharaonic times, the obelisk now had become a meta-symbol with so much agency that we find it today in Paris, London, Istanbul, and New York, as well as in thousands of other contexts that are certainly less grand but are looking for a similar grandeur.

### CONCLUSION: HAUNTING TRADITIONS AND THE TRIPTYCH PEOPLES-CONCEPTS-OBJECTS

It is useful to think about *L'Empire egypto-romain* in order to underline that the Roman world is often about the re-creation of Mediterranean memories and to contextualise the persistent focus on all things Greek. But of course it is not the same as *L'Empire gréco-romain*, an important

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To what extent this was true outside the cosmopolis as well is a matter of debate.

**66** Cobb/King 2005 reach a similar conclusion for their (Mississipian) case study, using the invention of tradition as one of their theoretical concepts and drawing in Augustan Rome as a useful comparison.

complication being the fact that for Rome, Egypt already was part of a Greek and Hellenistic tradition as well. But Egypt was certainly more than a Hellenistic *mirage* alone, because it is especially through Rome that the tradition of Egypt keeps haunting us to this very day.

Is the placement of the Heliopolis obelisk on the spina of the *Circus Maximus* in Rome by Augustus in 10 BC an example of the invention of tradition as Hobsbawm meant it? In some respects it certainly is, as we can define it as "a practice of a ritual and symbolic nature which seeks to inculcate values and norms of behaviour by repetition, with automatically implies continuity with the past." And, to apply another part of Hobsbawm's definition, it also is "a response to a novel situation which takes the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition."[67] But there are also problems to use the concept as it was initially formulated for our case. The main problem here seems to be that Hobsbawm put the notion of invariance at the core of his definition: "The object and characteristic of 'traditions', included invented ones, is invariance", he writes.[68] And this is clearly what we do *not* see with the Augustan example of cultural innovation: his appropriation of the obelisk is both a copy *and* an original.[69] I think one can account for these problems in two (different) ways: one general/ theoretical and one concerned with the Roman world in particular. The general aspect is that, as a result of the publication of *The Invention of Tradition*, its subsequent success and the research it inspired, we have become so accustomed to invented traditions that we have reached the point where one conveniently considers all traditions as invented ones. As Mark Salber Phillips wrote already a decade ago: "What is tradition when it is not invented"![70] This perspective has been radicalized by the anthropologist Maurice Bloch as follows[71]:

> "The implications of focusing on the ability of humans to imitate and to borrow information and then to pass it on to another by non-genetic means is genuinely far-reaching. It is what makes culture possible. Since people borrow cultural traits from another, they

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**67** Hobsbawm 1983, 1–2.
**68** Hobsbawm 1983, 2.
**69** Cf. King 2011, especially 246.
**70** Salber Phillips 2004.
**71** Bloch 2005, 7.

can individually combine bits and pieces from different individuals.
It follows that there are no cultural groups, tribes, peoples, etc."

This indeed implies that all traditions are borrowed or (re-)invented
ones. It seems that 'appropriation' or 're-creation' might therefore be a
more general and better term to use in order to analyse continuity and
change. That is, appropriation as part of an on-going process of cultural
innovation.

The second reason why the invention of tradition is perhaps not
such an appropriate concept to understand the Roman world in particu-
lar is because of the fact that, in terms of cultural innovation, Rome was
very different from the emerging 19th-century nation states' plundering
of the past. A crucially important difference seems to be that where these
nation states thought of themselves as making modernity from scratch –
or at least not in any way influenced by any non-European Other – the
Romans, on the contrary, perceived themselves as almost being overtak-
en by the history of the (eastern) Mediterranean. Of course they were
inventing traditions, as this seems to be an ongoing cultural process in
all societies, but at the same time Rome was clearly *haunted* by certain
(Mediterranean and Near Eastern) traditions.[72]

This is where, in rather more general terms, the importance of the
concept of the invention of tradition for the Roman world still lies. It
reminds us of the fact that in the process of Roman cultural innovation
some traditions were continuing and others were not; and this had im-
mense consequences for both Rome and those traditions. It therefore
usefully points us in the direction of 're-creation' for understanding the
transmission of culture.

Cultures change, they always have, and they will continue to do so.
Reifying terms like loss, authenticity and also tradition are little useful
then, if not understood as a form of 'playing with culture'.[73] From such a
perspective, tradition indeed is:

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**72** See Assmann 1997, 9 and his idea of a "Gestaffelte Tiefenzeit" mentioned
above.
**73** King 2011 for the phrasing; Geurds/Van Broekhoven 2013.

"the semiotic milieu into which a person is socialized (in which) the age of traditional practices / beliefs / things is not as important as their general acceptance as traditional by the community in question".[74]

To better understand and fill in processes of inventing *and* haunting, throughout this essay the concept of cultural biography has been applied. In fact, the concept of cultural biography itself as formulated by Kopytoff (1986) already argued for the existence of both inventing and haunting; because for Kopytoff the term biography not only served to analyse shifts in meaning. The addition 'cultural' was added to indicate that there was (cultural) perception involved; that there are do's and don'ts regarding (classes of) objects.[75] His analysis already implies, in other words, that there were limits: not only to what you could invent but also to what objects you could use to back up that claim. And perhaps even more importantly: that there were traditions and objects that had such agency that they simply could not be ignored.

Specifying the concept of inventing traditions through the notion of 'haunting traditions' and, as an explanation of their haunting character, 'cultural biography', has made clear that the frequently invoked triptych of people-ideas-objects is more problematical to analyse the transmission of culture than often realised. For a proper understanding we first need to disentangle their relation as a one-to-one correspondence – as this essay has shown throughout – but subsequently we also need to deconstruct these categories themselves. A diaspora of people may be important in explaining cultural change but should take into account processes like code-switching and contextual identification: *the* Egyptians do not exist. The category of concepts and ideas is perhaps even more elusive through the ubiquity of processes like framing and the fact that ideas tend to float freely (in-) between cultural traditions: there is not *a* concept of Egypt. The category of objects, lastly, cannot simply be used as a representation of people and ideas that happen to carry the same name: *aegyptiaca* often they are imprints of something very different. And they are more than imprints. Objects may be appropriated and re-created for very different reasons having to do with, for instance, the

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**74** King 2011, 245.
**75** As rightly underlined by Fontijn 2013.

material they are made of, the technique they are made in, their (supposed) aesthetics, their (supposed) origin, etc.

## OUTLOOK: MATERIAL ENTANGLEMENT

Egypt was a strong tradition to become part of Rome, and so were other traditions, most prominently Greece. Could this have something to do with material culture in the first place? Especially from the Middle Republican period onwards, material culture from all over the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt and the Near East was overflowing the banks of the Tiber in a process of accelerating connectivity. These (material) connections would, in the end, make up Rome. We have seen that people living in the Roman world indeed appropriated various (cultural) traditions, but that at the very same time these traditions were, in fact, appropriating them. But why do some traditions matter so much more than others? Why will the capital of the Empire end up looking Greek, Egyptian, and 'Oriental', but not Celtic? – although there certainly were all kinds of transferences with that cultural tradition as well.[76] What, in other words, constituted the strength of certain (cultural) traditions?

There are big differences in how the various traditions available to Rome to create its own identity are dealt with. What this essay puts forward as a hypothesis is that objects and the (cultural) memory they were able to evoke play an important role with this. We do not speak about *L'Empire celto-romain*, perhaps, for two (related) reasons. 'Celtic civilisation' had a limited cultural biography for the Romans. It played, in other words, not a major role in Roman cultural memory because, in their view, its temporality was restricted.[77] Moreover, it had not that distinct culture-style at its disposal to become a haunting tradition that would live on through the Roman Empire. This is not to say that 'Celtic art' did not have its particular and strong form of agency – it certainly had[78]. The possibility of material entanglement with that culture-style, apparently, was rather limited for the Romans.[79]

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**76** See Frère 2006, Py 2009 and Py 2011.
**77** As illustrated by Kistler 2009 and Ferris 2011 and, although from a different perspective, Ker/Pieper 2014.
**78** Gosden/Garrow 2012 is a fundamental contribution to this debate.
**79** To fully understand this, of course, it is imperative to know more about Celtic concepts and ideas and their relations to both peoples and objects.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## PHOTO CREDITS

**Fig. 1-2** Photo: M. Termeer.

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# INVENTING TRADITIONS IN THE ROMAN WEST

PETER S. WELLS

# INDIGENOUS FORMS, STYLES, AND PRACTICES IN PROVINCIAL ROMAN EUROPE.
# CONTINUITY, REINVENTION, OR REFASHIONING?*

*The occurrence of material culture similar to that of the pre-conquest Iron Age in the Roman provinces of temperate Europe during the second and third centuries AD has been noted for well over a century. Yet the significance of this phenomenon has remained unclear. An examination of traditional features in sculpture, burial practice, and personal ornaments during the late first, second, and third centuries AD, considered in the context of large-scale changes throughout Europe, suggests ways in which the phenomenon can be understood. Some aspects of pre-Roman cultural traditions were maintained throughout the Roman period, including stylistic features and cultural practices. During the late second and third centuries AD, when Roman political control and cultural influence were waning and new configurations of peoples were taking shape across the frontier, it is likely that individuals and communities made conscious decisions to turn to earlier traditions in order to fashion and express new conceptions of themselves as different from Romans. The result was a rich, multifarious, and ever-changing combination of characteristics of pre-Roman and Roman cultural traditions. Hobsbawm's concept of "the invention of tradition" provides a useful way of thinking about the changes that were taking place and the reasons for them.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the Roman provinces of temperate Europe, significant aspects of material culture from the second and third centuries AD bear striking resemblance to that of the pre-Roman Iron Age. The best known of these features are metal ornaments that are particularly common in military contexts along the Rhine, the *limes*, and the Danube frontiers. These ornaments have attracted considerable scholarly attention and have been the basis for the concept of a "Celtic Renaissance".[1] But the links with pre-Roman material culture, traditions, beliefs, and practices are much more extensive. Pre-Roman deities are represented well in stone sculpture of the Roman Period,[2] implying that they continued to be revered. Burial practices reflect continuity from pre-Roman into Roman times.[3] And different categories of material culture show continuous manufacture and use, including pottery,[4] fibulae,[5] and decorative materials, especially enamel.[6]

What processes can account for these striking similarities? And what is the significance of these links with the pre-Roman past? Do they represent a "renaissance" – a rebirth of long defunct materials and practices? Or are they the result of long-term continuities that have not been examined systematically? Or do they represent expressions of resistence to Roman rule, using pre-Roman symbols, practices, and behaviors? Most importantly, what is the meaning, or meanings, of these phenomena for our understanding of the processes of widespread change that were taking place during the Roman Period and that directly influenced the course of later developments throughout Europe?

Eric Hobsbawm argued that at times of social and political disruption, when people feel stressed and disoriented, they tend to "invent traditions" in order to create forms and practices fashioned that link with the past in such a way as to seem actually derived from the past.[7] Do circumstances in second and third century AD temperate Europe conform to Hobsbawm's theory?

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**1** MacMullen 1965; Schleiermacher 1965; Reuter 2003; Schorer 2012.
**2** Wells 1999, 184–185; van Andringa 2006.
**3** Wells 1999, 159–163; Müller 2009, 147–150.
**4** Von Schnurbein 1993; Willburger 2012a.
**5** Völling 1994.
**6** Bateson 1981; Cordie-Hackenberg 1989, 336.
**7** Hobsbawm 1983, 4.

## 2. METHOD AND THEORY

Modern approaches to the Roman Period are dominated by our familiarity with Roman texts. Even those of us who work principally with archaeological data cannot escape from the fact that we feel a certain connection with the Roman world that is based on our shared practice of literacy. When we read Caesar or Tacitus, the authors' descriptions often seem very familiar, and we can easily imagine ourselves in their situations and sharing their perspectives. It is much more difficult for us to imagine, without any self-referencing texts by the Iron Age peoples, what it would have been like to have been a native of pre-Roman temperate Europe.[8]

Archaeology of the Roman Period also tends to be dominated by thinking that is closely aligned to Rome and its material culture, even when the subject at hand is the indigenous peoples of Europe. You find what you look for, and specialists in the archaeology of Roman Period Europe tend to find things that "look Roman". The organization of the discipline, with prehistoric archaeology and provincial Roman archaeology often treated as distinct sub-disciplines, reflects this situation.[9]

The methodology of much archaeological study is based on the appearance of new forms, such as new fibula types, new kinds of pottery, and new burial practices. Such new types and practices mark the beginning of what we call the "Roman Period". But in any consideration of human cultural behavior, it is essential to consider what has survived from the past. In every aspect of human practice and belief, what has happened before plays an important role.[10] But the typological approach in archaeology tends to deemphasize this role. One result is that archaeologists often do not recognize the persistence of traditional forms and practices after new ones have been introduced.[11]

In examining the questions posed here, it is important to take account of social differences within the communities of Roman Period Europe. Elite individuals and groups tend to adopt new styles and products first – they are more likely to have the means to do so, and they often are motivated to display their connections with other communities and other societies. Non-elite groups are less likely to adopt new products and

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**8** See Brück 2005.
**9** See discussion in Woolf 1997.
**10** Desjarlais/Throop 2011, 88.
**11** See discussion in Adams 2003.

styles early. Elites are over-represented in the archaeological record, because their material culture was generally more abundant and more durable, and hence they are easier for archaeologists to identify and study. And elites are much better represented in texts, because Roman writers were much more likely to have direct or indirect contact with members of elite groups than with typical members of provincial societies, a situation that is common in many contexts of cross-cultural interaction.

People use material culture to create and to shape meaning in their lives; in other words, to fashion their identities – their sense of who they are and how they relate to other people. In a context such as Roman Period Europe, where a range of new goods and practices were introduced after conquest, people had a certain amount of choice as to whether they accepted new goods and practices, maintained their traditional objects and behaviors, or selected some but not all new items as they became available and integrated them with traditional ones.[12]

## 3. PAST APPROACHES

As Marcus Reuter's recent overview shows, the occurrence of La Tène-style ornament during the latter half of the second and the third centuries AD in the Roman provinces of the Rhineland, the Danube valley, and Britain has been recognized as significant at least since Alois Riegl's work of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[13] Ramsey Mac-Mullen and Wilhelm Schleiermacher both discussed the phenomenon, and Ludwig Berger's study of 2002 and Reuter's of 2003 brought the discussion up to date.[14]

Berger highlights two themes from La Tène Period metalwork that appear in the Roman provinces: trumpet shapes and openwork ornament.[15] Among the categories of metal objects decorated with these elements in the Roman Period are fibulae, belt attachments, pendants, and dagger sheaths. In Berger's analysis, he finds no apparent continuity in the use of these elements on the continent, and suggests that the patterns may have been used continuously in Britain, and from there were rein-

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**12** Wells 1999, 148–170, 187–223.
**13** Reuter 2003; Riegl 1927.
**14** MacMullen 1965; Schleiermacher 1965; Berger 2002; for recent summaries, see Müller 2009, 151–153; Willburger 2012a.
**15** Berger 2002, 16.

troduced to the continent, perhaps by soldiers from Britain stationed in continental forts. He also notes the possiblity that the style was applied to organic materials that ordinarily do not survive.[16]

Reuter observes that along with the metal ornaments in La Tène style, certain shapes of ceramic vessels of Late La Tène character continued to be components of pottery assemblages in parts of the Roman provinces in temperate Europe, especially southern Germany and Switzerland.[17]

To place the phenomenon in a larger context, Reuter makes note of evidence for other significant changes in the northwest provinces of the Roman Empire.[18] The range of Roman ceramics and of foods imported from the Mediterranean coastal lands, especially olive oil and oysters, declined after the first century AD. The manufacture of tiles was less active than it had been in the provinces, and Roman architecture became less complex. These changes suggest a general decline in the quantities of Roman products that were being brought northward into temperate Europe, along with a weakening of the Roman economy there. Following the first century trend toward unification and homogenization of the culture of the new provinces, in the second century AD the archaeological evidence indicates an increase in the expression of regional identity, including the rise in importance of regional cults, a phenomen that Greg Woolf has noted in reference to the celebration of the mother goddesses of the Rhineland.[19] Reuter's analysis suggests that as Roman cultural influence declined during the second century AD, other cultural forces replaced the Roman, and these were largely based on local traditions.[20]

## 4. THE LARGER HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

All human expression and practice take place within specific social, cultural, and historical contexts. In addition to the changes that Reuter notes in the archaeological evidence from the first and second centuries AD, it is important to take account of the larger-scale changes that were happening in Europe as a whole.

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16 Berger 2002, 19, 20.
17 Reuter 2003, 23.
18 Reuter 2003, 24.
19 Woolf 2003.
20 Reuter 2003, 26.

In order to understand the role that native traditions played in Roman Period Europe, it is necessary to begin before the conquests in temperate Europe. During the second century BC, interactions between Roman Italy and temperate Europe intensified, as is apparent from the vast quantities of amphorae and bronze vessels from the Roman world that have been recovered from settlements and burials. The intensification of interaction with the Mediterranean world was accompanied by widespread changes in temperate Europe, including mass production of pottery and iron tools, the creation of a three-metal coinage (gold, silver, and bronze), and the practice of inscribing coins and other objects using Latin and Greek alphabets.[21] Communities of temperate Europe were becoming "entangled" with Rome from the second century BC on, at least as far as elites were concerned, and many of them were eager to adopt Roman and other Mediterranean objects and practices, as is clear from the burial evidence from the second and final centuries BC. For many, the conquests in Gaul, in the lands south of the Danube, and in Britain did not radically change their perceptions of, or relations with, Rome.

The greatest flourishing of the Roman Rhine and Danube provinces was in the first century AD, when building activity, resource extraction, industrial production, and trade reached their highest levels.[22] Woolf has described these provinces as "very cosmopolitan" during the second century AD, with a rich variety of cultural influences affecting social and cultural life.[23] But conflicts along the frontier were an increasing threat, and the construction of the *limes* system from the second quarter of the second century AD attests to concerns about incursions from outside the boundaries of the Empire.[24] Especially during the second half of the second century AD, conflicts developed along the frontiers of the provinces, including the so-called Marcomannic Wars of 166–180 AD, which directly impacted the lands along the upper and middle Danube. But other crises also loomed – the Parthian Wars, plagues, and general economic decline, evident throughout the European provinces of the Empire.[25]

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**21** Wells 2012, 176–187, 196–199.
**22** Horn 1987; Müller 2009.
**23** Woolf 2003.
**24** Schallmayer 2000; Sommer 2011.
**25** Burns 2003, 140–247; Reuter 2003, 24, 25; Perring 2011.

**1** Map showing locations of sites mentioned in the text.

Significant changes were taking place across the frontier in northern Europe as well. During the second and third centuries AD, burials that contained Roman imports were becoming richer, both in Roman objects and in local ornaments. During the latter half of the final century BC and the first century AD, Roman objects transmitted across the frontier, as at the Putensen cemetery (Fig. 1), consisted mainly of bronze vessels; associated local ornaments were of relatively simple character.[26] After the middle of the second century AD, larger quantities of imported Roman vessels were placed in the wealthier graves, some of silver; personal ornaments of silver and gold, often elaborately decorated, were common, like they were in graves at Marwedel, Mušov, Hassleben, and Gommern.[27]

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[26] Wegewitz 1972.
[27] Laux 1992; Peška/Tejral 2002; Schulz 1933; Becker 2000; discussion in Wells 2013.

This pattern of increasing wealth in elite burials across the frontier indicates that powerful individuals in these regions were becoming ever more important to Rome, both as allies – "client kings", a role suggested especially for Mušov – and for how they supplied the provinces with a variety of goods, including foodstuffs and materials such as leather, perhaps also slaves, as well as soldiers to serve as auxiliary troops in the frontier forts.[28] The simulaneous weakening of the Roman provinces and strengthening of groups across the frontier created conditions for substantial disruption to the balance of power.

Major social and economic changes were also underway in regions well beyond the frontiers. In parts of northern Europe the efficiency of agriculture was increasing, and substantial portions of the population were moving from small villages into larger, often enclosed, settlements.[29] In Denmark and Sweden to the north, and in Poland to the east, new centers of political and military power were developing hundreds of kilometers from the Roman provinces. These include the centers of Gudme on Fyn in Denmark, Uppåkra in southern Sweden, and Jakuszowice in Poland.[30] The Roman imports at these and other centers make clear that the communities were in contact with the Roman provinces. The large numbers of Roman swords and other objects that were ritually deposited in watery places (now bogs) in northern Germany and Denmark are significant signs of the relationship between the northern societies and the Roman world.[31] The increasing complexity of these societies is evident from the development of runes, probably during the second century AD, by a person or group familiar with the Latin alphabet.[32]

Thus it is clear that the second and third centuries AD were times of rapid and profound change throughout temperate Europe, both within and beyond the Roman provinces – times of "rapid transformation of society", to use Hobsbawm's terminology.[33] The principal question for this paper is: how did these changes relate to the apparent resurrection of Iron Age styles and practices during the Roman Period?

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[28] Braund 1984; Wells 1999, 238–239.
[29] Storgaard 2003, 108–109.
[30] Nielsen et al. 1994; Larsson 2011; Godłowski 1991.
[31] Ilkjaer 2003.
[32] Stoklund 2003.
[33] Hobsbawm 1983, 4.

## 5. THE APPROACH

To address this question, I examine evidence provided by three catego-
ries of archaeological material that pertains to how people used their
local traditions on the one hand, and Roman techniques and practices
on the other, to create and shape their world. To what extent did people
express their identities as members of indigenous societies, and to what
extent as "provincial Romans"? How did the content of these expressions
change between the first and the third centuries AD? Ideally we would
consider these questions on different levels, because the changing prac-
tices and behaviors varied by region, different communities responded
in different ways, and even individuals responded differently from one
another (as we can see from evidence in burials). In the space of this
paper, only some of these aspects can be examined.

The three categories of evidence relate to thinking, doing, and sign-
ing. The first is stone sculpture, in which we see reflected the continua-
tion of local beliefs in the indigenous deities of temperate Europe, in rep-
resentations that integrate them with the material culture and stylistic
techniques from the Mediterranean world. The second is the practice of
performing funerary rituals that involved objects of local character and
significance, integrated with new forms introduced into the provincial
Roman context. The third category I call signing. Here I examine the use
of specific objects that bore important cultural significance, in this case
fibulae and enamel, as signs worn by individuals.

### 5.1 SCULPTURE – SHAPING THE VISUAL LANDSCAPE, EXPRESSING TRADITIONAL BELIEFS

Beliefs in traditional deities remained important well into the Roman Pe-
riod.[34] Stone sculptures of anthropomorphic deities were fashioned and
erected to express ideas about supernatural powers. They became part of
the visual landscape of the Roman provinces and are likely to have been
seen regularly by members of local communities, thereby reenforcing
people's ideas about, and attitudes toward, the supernatural powers that
were believed to govern human lives.

Although anthropomorphic stone sculptures are known from
pre-Roman times, the style of representation that we find during the

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**34** Van Andringe 2006; Willburger 2012a, 446.

Early Roman Period reflects the adoption of Roman sculptural techniques and its application to the representation of native deities.

REIMS STELE (Fig. 2) A stele from Reims in northern France represents the Roman gods Apollo and Mercury, identifiable by their attributes, flanking a figure seated in a cross-legged posture, with stubs of antlers or horns on his head, holding on his lap a bag from which masses of coins spill. The posture and attributes of the figure, including the ring around his neck, match those of a number of pre-Roman representations, and the figure is commonly identified as Cernunnos, whose name is attested only once, on a monument in Paris.[35] Beneath the seated figure are two animals, a bull on the left and a stag on the right, both of which are commonly represented in Iron Age iconography. Although we cannot be fully confident in identifying this figure as Cernunnos, it is clear that it differs in style of representation from that of the two identifiable Mediterranean deities. His presence represents the continuation of belief in a native deity and the integration of this deity into the provincial Roman pantheon.

MOTHER GODDESSES (Fig. 3) Sculptures of mother goddesses, typically represented in groups of three and holding bowls of fruit, are especially common in the Lower Rhine region. Like the central figure in the Reims stele, they are of non-Roman character and thought to represent divinities of Iron Age tradition, represented for the first time in anthropomorphic form with the introduction of Roman sculptural techniques and styles. Woolf suggests that the apparent rise and spread of local cults celebrating the mother goddesses constituted assertions of identity on the part of native groups in the face of the "globalization" represented by the Roman Empire.[36]

EPONA (Fig. 4) Epona was a goddess linked to horses. Sculptural representations are abundant, and she was especially revered by cavalry troops in the Roman military, many of whom were auxiliaries. As with the mother goddesses, we do not know in what physical form she was worshipped before the adoption of Roman sculptural techniques and styles, but she is very well represented during the Early Roman Period, especially along the frontiers.[37]

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**35** Altjohann 2003.

**36** Von Petrikovits 1987; Woolf 2003.

**37** Euskirchen 1993; Willburger 2012b.
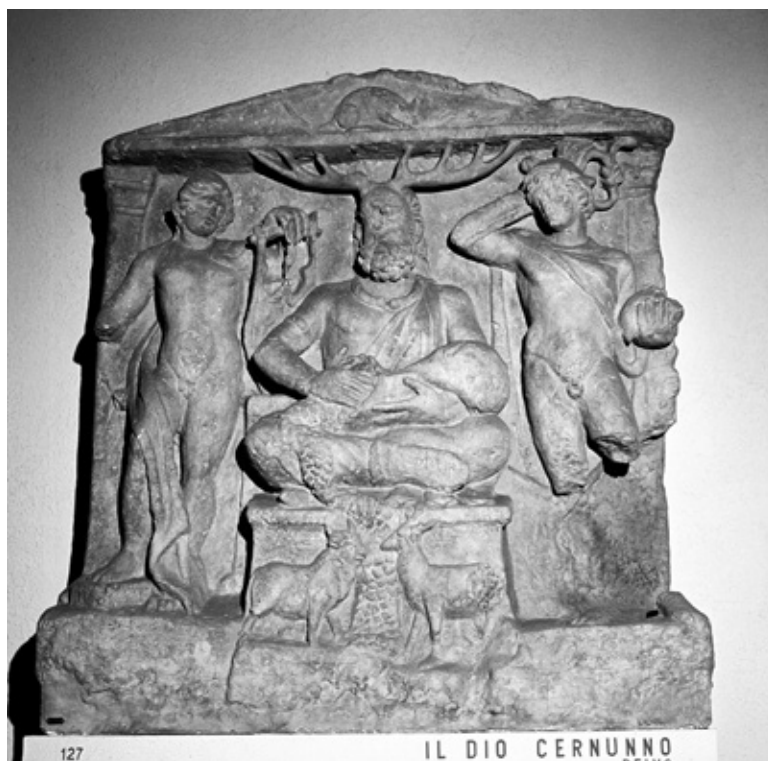
**2** Stone sculpture from Reims, France.


## 5.2 PERFORMING COMMUNITY RITUALS

Burials can be especially useful for what they can tell us about community performances with respect to the disposal of the dead. Funerary rituals, including burial, are ordinarily community events at which substantial numbers of people participate. During both the prehistoric Iron Age and the Roman Period in temperate Europe, it was common practice to place objects in burials. As I have argued elsewhere, we can understand both the selection and the arrangement of objects in a burial as a "diagram", as argued by John Bender and Michael Marrinen, of the way that the community that performed the burial understood itself and its place in the world.[38] From the choice of objects that were included with the deceased, we can judge the relative status of objects of local tra-

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**38** Wells 2012, 131–154; Bender/Marrinan 2010.

**3** Stone sculpture of mother goddesses. Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn, Germany.

ditional signficance; of adopted Roman goods; and of "hybrid" goods,[39] newly fashioned in the complex contexts of provincial Roman Europe.

## 5.2.A MUŠOV

At Mušov in Moravia, about 50 km north of the Danube frontier, archaeologists excavated a rich burial which had been looted in antiquity but still contained over 150 objects. They indicate a date around 180 AD. Although the grave was situated north of the Danube, during the second century, the region was highly "Romanized", with a Roman fort built at Burgstall nearby and with considerable other Roman activity in the area. Among many items associated with feasting – Roman bronze and silver tableware, glass vessels, local pottery – were a bronze cauldron with two

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**39** Thomas 1996; Papalexandrou 2010.

**4** Stone sculpture of Epona, from Gannat, France. MAN 35454.

iron ring handles and two andirons. The presence of this rich assemblage of feasting equipment, as well as weapons and no fewer than 17 ornate spurs, indicate that this was a very un-Roman style of grave. The abundance of imported Roman feasting vessels and the general wealth of ornaments including gold and silver lead to the interpretation of this burial as that of a "client king" of Rome, an interpretation supported by extensive Roman-style architectural remains in the vicinity.[40]

Of particular interest are the two andirons.[41] In his analysis of these objects, Michel Feugère argues that they were over 200 years old when buried – they belong to a group of some 35 andirons recovered in wealthy burials of the second and first centuries BC. These two objects raise

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**40** Peška/Tejral 2002; Tejral 2002.
**41** Feugère 2002.

important questions about this complex burial and its "hybrid" contents that bear directly on Hobsbawm's model.

Are these centuries-old objects that had been curated over multiple generations, finally to be buried with this individual whose status with respect to Rome and with respect to the local community is well-represented in the grave? Or are they more recent versions of what had been standard accouterments of elite Late Iron Age chiefs? In his analysis of the hearth-related objects in this grave, Martin Schönfelder[42] argues that the andirons are not products of the late prehistoric Iron Age, but rather more recent creations. Either way, they tell us important things about the integration of old and new, traditional and Roman. If they are more recent products, then they show that the elites represented in the grave were refashioning objects of great importance in the representation of high status in the second half of the second century AD in this region just beyond the Roman frontier. Andirons were highly visible components of the metal feasting paraphernalia that characterized wealthy burials of the Late La Tène Period. Their association with fire and the hearth played a part in their ritual and social significance. The presence of the two andirons in the Mušov burial represents their deep "entanglement", in the vein of Jonas Grethlein and James Whitley[43], with cultural meanings of the past.

### 5.2.B ERGOLDING

From the "kingly" burial at Mušov with its mixed material culture of pre-Roman and Roman character, we move to a typical rural cemetery within the Roman province of Raetia.

At Ergolding in Bavaria, a cemetery of 79 cremation burials was excavated in 1979. The cemetery is believed to represent the community resident at a villa between around 150 and 250 AD, with an adult population of around 25 individuals at any one time.[44] Whereas Mušov shows a rich mixture of goods of varied origins, at Ergolding we can distinguish individual graves that were marked by their contents as more Roman in character, and those represented as more local, with their grave goods similar to Iron Age objects.

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**42** Schönfelder 2009.
**43** Grethlein 2008; Whitley 2013, 402.
**44** Struck 1996.

The cemetery extends over an area of around 75 m in northwest-southeast orientation, with a maximum width of about 22 m. Near the southeast end of the cemetery is a kind of grave that is different from the rest. Grave 50 had a stone circle surrounding the burial pit, which contained by far the most items of any grave in the cemetery, including special objects such as a bronze seal capsule and remains of bronze vessels.

In her analysis, Manuela Struck makes an important observation about the spatial arrangement of the burials. She notes that the graves that contain objects more characteristic of typical "Roman" burials – ceramic lamps, incense burners, libation vessels, and coins – are concentrated in the central part of the cemetery, while graves further removed from the center, especially in the northwest half, contain more local-style and fewer "Roman" objects. These include handmade pottery of local forms, similar to Late La Tène pottery from the site of Hascherkeller, 2 km to the east. The fibulae in the cemetery also derive largely from local La Tène forms.

This spatial distinction could be interpreted in two ways. Places in the cemetery closest to the center, next to Grave 50, may have been reserved for members of the family of the owner of the villa, and their graves may express a more "Roman" identity through the choice of grave goods, while other members of the community were buried further from the center and without the same quantity of Roman goods. Or the distinction could be mainly chronological. Perhaps the first graves were situated in what became the center of the cemetery, later graves at ever-greater remove from the center. If this was the pattern, then we can note that in the earlier phase of the cemetery – roughly 150–200 AD – Roman-style objects were favored as grave goods, and in the later phase – 200–250 AD – local-style objects had greater attraction.

The Ergolding cemetery represents a population of the late second and early third centuries AD that maintained significant material connections with the pre-conquest communities of the area, still producing pottery and fibulae in forms similar to those that had been made generations earlier. It is apparent that in the performance of their funerary ceremonies, those conducting the rituals were making extensive use of objects that belonged to local traditions, but at the same time were integrating them with new materials of provincial Roman character to create a "hybrid" material culture in the cemetery. It is significant to note that in the specially delineated Grave 50, with its great wealth in Roman goods, two bronze openwork attachments were found, with S-shapes

in the center, which belong firmly in the category of La Tène-derived forms.[45]

## 5.3 PERSONAL SIGNS: MARKING THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE COMMUNITY

### 5.3.A FIBULAE

Ornamental metalwork played a special role, both in signaling individuals' identities and status (as is apparent in burials) and as objects of ritual significance (apparent in deposits of various kinds) in Iron Age and Roman Europe.[46] The most characteristic and chronologically and culturally diagnostic type of object associated with individuals was the fibula.

For the people who made, wore, and deposited them, fibulae were critically important in both social and ritual ways. They served as markers of identity for the individuals who wore them, and they were prime media of ritual performance. They were commonly used in ritual deposits, from the Early Iron Age into Roman times. Examples from the Iron Age include the deposits of some 850 fibulae in the spring at Duchcov in the Czech Republic and of over 300 at the site of La Tène in Switzerland. At Empel in the Netherlands, quantities of fibulae were deposited at the sanctuary site during both the Late La Tène Period and the Early Roman Period, providing an important example of the continuity of ritual practice into Roman times. Nina Crummy has shown that in Roman Britain, specific types of fibula were associated with particular Roman deities.[47]

The representation of fibulae in other media underscores their roles as objects that were used to communicate information. They are represented on Late Iron Age pottery, sometimes as incised forms, sometimes by being pressed into the clay before firing to leave an impression. And fibulae are represented pictorially on Late Iron Age coins.[48]

While the use of fibulae in deposits and represented on pottery and coins indicates their significance in social contexts, to be displayed on objects that many people would see, their frequent occurrence in graves shows their association with individuals. As Astrid Böhme-Schönberger

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**45** Struck 1996, 184 plate 70, 37–38.
**46** Garrow/Gosden 2012, 305–306; Wells 2012, 99–111.
**47** Kruta 1991; Lejars 2007, 363; Roymans/Derks 1994; Crummy 2007.
**48** Krämer 1996.

and others have noted, the wearing of fibulae was not a Roman custom, but one characteristic of temperate Europe.[49] The practice of wearing fibulae was adopted by Roman soldiers in the European provinces (to what extent by non-legionary auxiliaries and to what extent by the legionaries themselves is not clear). While fibulae underwent typological changes during the Roman Period, many Late Iron Age forms persisted, completely or in part, well into the Roman Period.[50]

The special role of fibulae as traditional media with respect to representing the identity of the individual and the group is reinforced by Kurt Exner's observation that fibulae are significantly underrepresented in sculpture of the Roman Period, relative to their presence in graves.[51] What people were practicing in their daily lives and in their rituals – wearing fibulae during their lives, and burying them with individuals in their graves, maintained a tradition that was centuries old. But in the stone anthropomorphic sculptures, executed in the new Roman style, these traditional items were commonly "left out of the picture". This is an interesting case of the adopting of a new medium of visual representation – stone sculpture – but at the same time omitting a common element of traditional practice (wearing fibulae) from representations, even though the wearing of fibulae continued in daily life.

### 5.3.B ENAMEL

Like fibulae, the use of enamel was a characteristic of Iron Age temperate Europe, not of early Rome. In temperate Europe enamel is well-represented as a decorative material on personal ornaments from the fifth century BC onwards. After the Roman conquest, local industries in enamel production developed in the Rhineland and other regions of northwestern Europe, especially Britain.[52] Bateson notes a striking increase in the production of enamel during the second century AD – the same time that economic, military, and political problems began to overwhelm Rome and that exceptionally wealthy import-containing graves appear across the frontier.[53] Horn uses the term "reborn" to characterize the great increase in enamel production in the Rhineland in the second half of the

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**49** Böhme-Schönberger 1994; Müller 2009, 150; Willburger 2012a, 444.

**50** Völling 1994.

**51** Exner 1939, 45.

**52** Exner 1939; Willburger 2012c, 454.

**53** Bateson 1981, 115; Cordie-Hackenberg 1989, 336.

second century AD, referring to the Iron Age tradition of work in this material.[54]

### 5.3.C ARRANGEMENT IN GRAVES – DIAGRAMS OF COMMUNITIES

The ways in which objects were arranged in graves can tell us a great deal about how people regarded those objects and the relationships between them. Chamber burials, with flat floors on which different objects were placed in relation to the body or the cremated remains, offer the best evidence for this kind of investigation. Here I use a grave from the cemetery of Wederath in the Mosel region of Germany to illustrate this principle.

Grave 2255 at Wederath was one of the richest Roman Period graves excavated at this large cemetery.[55] The grave was situated in the center of a large square stone-built enclosure, and it was in a chamber constructed of stone blocks. Physical anthropological analysis of the cremated remains indicate that they were those of a child 7–13 years old. The personal ornaments are those associated with women in this context, hence the remains are thought to be those of a pre-adolescent girl.

Objects placed in the grave included eight pottery vessels, both fine Roman pottery and coarse local ware; a lamp; a glass urn; a pair of iron shears; two terracotta statuettes, one of the enthroned Minerva, the other of a pair of lovers; an iron needle; a bronze disc fibula; two hinged fibulae decorated with enamel and niello; five Roman bronze coins; and a number of small objects, largely fragmentary. The coins provide a *terminus post quem* of 114 AD.

Both the objects chosen for the burial and the way in which they were arranged result from the community's decisions about how to represent the deceased individual in the context of her community. As Joanna Brück reminds us,[56] the contents of burials do not reflect the individual as much as they do the group to which she belonged. In our modern world, information about the buried individual and the community to which he or she belonged is frequently inscribed on a gravestone. In societies that did not practice writing, such information was transmitted through objects and their arrangement.

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**54** Horn 1987, 262.
**55** Cordie-Hackenberg 1989.
**56** Brück 2004.

The plan of the grave provides important information about the arrangement of objects (Fig. 5).[57] All of the surviving objects were in the northwest half of the grave; the southeast half was empty, except for a stone that had apparently fallen in. (There may have been organic materials in that half that did not preserve, but given the care and precision of the excavation, it is unlikely that even ephemeral traces were missed.) The large vessels in the grave form a boundary between the northwest and the southeast halves. On the inverted ceramic lid at the northwestern edge of the grave were arranged 10 objects that are likely to have had special "agency"[58] by virtue of their being figural representations – the two terracotta figurines and five Roman coins – and significant personal identifiers of long-standing local tradition – the three fibulae. The special arrangement of these 10 objects together on the lid shows the conjoining of traditional fibulae with figurative representations characteristic of new styles of the Roman Period.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Hobsbawm's model for "invention of tradition" provides a valuable framework for examining the ways in which styles, practices, and objects from the past were used as reference points for the creation of new motifs and practices during the Roman Period in temperate Europe. As the examples above show, application of Hobsbawm's framework to analyse cultural patterns during the first, second, and third centuries AD results in the recognition of complex, diverse, and ever-changing patterns in people's practices and material expressions. It is perhaps the practices that stand out as most important here. New versions of traditional objects can be fashioned and new styles of ornament and representation created without a great deal of disruption to traditional patterns, but the

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**57** The large circle represents the floor of the grave. The four circles in a row represent the large vessels lined up across the grave floor, constituting a barrier between the arranged objects in the grave to the northwest and the open space to the southeast. The form with linear hatching represents a flat slab of stone, on which an ornate double-handled beaker had been placed. The circle with fine shading represents the upturned lid on which were arranged the two figural sculptures, the five Roman coins, and the three fibulae, two of them with enamel ornament.
**58** Gell 1998.
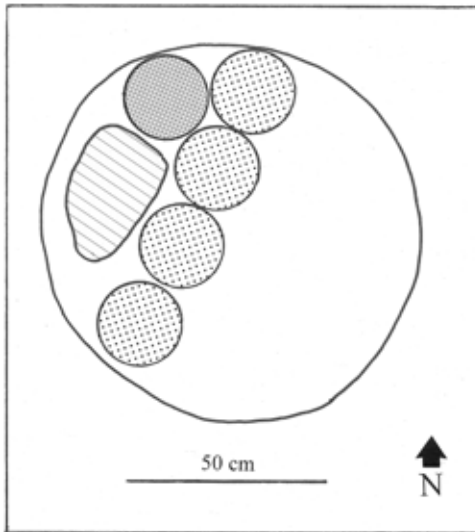
**5** Schematic plan of the floor of Grave 2255 at
Wederath, Germany.

persistence or variation of practices – the way that people do things –
would seem to be of more fundamental significance. It is through em-
bodied practice that people fashion and reaffirm their identities.

Stone sculpture of pre-Roman deities shows not only that pre-con-
quest beliefs persisted, but also that they were integrated with Roman
beliefs and represented with a new kind of iconography, adapting Roman
sculptural techniques to local traditional meanings and in some cas-
es integrating local and Roman deities in single representations. Stone
sculpture was ordinarily used in open public spaces and became part
of the visual world in which people lived and acted. People's responses
to these components of the built environment would be worth further
investigation.

Burial evidence pertaining to performance of funerary rituals
during the second and third centuries shows continuity of tradition,
adoption of new practices, and melding of old and new, as exemplified
by the diverse patterns of grave goods at Ergolding. The old andirons
in the Mušov grave show the purposeful display of traditional signs
of status in a new context which was otherwise dominated by Roman
feasting paraphernalia. For this and other examples of the display and
burial of old objects that had powerful social and ritual meanings in
earlier contexts, the application of entanglement theory could prove

productive.[59] In typical cemeteries such as Ergolding, the persistence of pottery and fibulae bearing the characteristics of technology and style of the prehistoric Iron Age makes it clear that these elements continued in use well into the Roman Period.

In the arrangement of objects in Grave 2255 at Wederath, we see the purposeful association, in a highly ritual context, of objects of long-standing importance in marking the identity of the individual, together with objects representing both religious culture and political power of the Roman province.

## 7. CONCLUSION

To conclude, I return to the situating of these practices into the larger context of Roman Period Europe. How can close examination of specific examples, such as those considered above, help us to understand the character of culture and society of the first three centuries AD in temperate Europe, in light of Hobsbawm's theory? Terms such as "hybridity" have been used in reference to the combining of traits of pre-Roman societies with those introduced by Rome. Objections can be raised to the application of such terms. As Palmié emphasizes, use of such terms implies that there existed "pure" cultures beforehand; but all cultures, including those of Iron Age Europe and of Rome, were always comprised of diverse elements from different sources, and they were always changing.[60]

The societies of Roman Period Europe were neither as uniform nor as static as these terms suggest. Examination of specific settlements and cemeteries shows that every community was different from every other one, and that all were changing constantly. Every individual had a distinct identity, with respect to age, gender, status, family, community, occupation, and other attributes, at least some of which are apparent in burial practices.[61] Blanket terms such as "Gallo-Roman" and "Roman" gloss over the complex reality of very diverse communities.

As Roman power and political authority faltered from the second half of the second century AD and the availability of Roman goods declined, material culture in the local traditional style was expanded to fill the opening space. Part of this process may have been the purposeful

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**59** Hodder 2012; Stockhammer 2012; Whitley 2013, 409.
**60** Palmié 2013; Whitley 2013, 409.
**61** Derks 2009.

emphasis of the local traditional styles and practices, as communities began to assert new identities in the face of weakening Rome. It may be no coincidence that from the beginning of the third century AD, Roman texts tell of the formation of large confederations in central and northern Europe, and the names Alamanni, Burgundians, Franks, Saxons, and other groups first become known to us.

These questions and this preliminary analysis of examples suggest that investigating these issues further would be a fruitful direction for research. I would suggest two main lines of inquiry. First, close examination of specific sites, as I have suggested for Mušov, Ergolding, and Wederath, would enable us to identify in detail the interplay between traditional styles and practices and new ones introduced following the Roman conquests. Second, consideration of other instances from different contexts could be highly illuminating, such as David Hackett Fischer's study of the survival of cultural practices over several centuries in early modern and modern times. Hackett examines the persistence of a range of cultural practices, including family structure, foods, religion, and clothing, brought by migrating communities from four different regions of England and settling in four different parts of North America. His point is that these practices persist and are reinforced by the different communities over hundreds of years. Maxwell Hearn's catalog of contemporary visual art in China provides a striking example of the resurrection of old styles and themes and the refashioning of them to serve modern social and cultural purposes.[62] In both of these examples, abundant textual as well as material evidence enables us to examine mechanisms that could help us understand the phenomenon in Roman Period Europe.

The circumstances investigated are illuminated usefully through consideration of Hobsbawm's model. In a time of radical cultural transformation between the first and third centuries AD, symbols, styles, and practices from the past were reemphasized and given new power and authority. As the preceding discussion has suggested, Hobsbawm's framework is useful for considering these phenomena in Roman Period temperate Europe. But the new traditions were not invented. The best word to characterize the process succinctly may be "refashioned". As I have argued, the traditional styles and practices never disappeared, and

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**62** Fischer 1989; Hearn 2013; see also Fulford 2001, 215 on Roman Period "referencing back to the past" in Britain. Also relevant here are Hunter 2008 and Mattingly 2008.

if we look closely at the archaeological evidence, we discern them.[63] By separating public monuments (the stone sculpture), community performances (burial ritual), and personal expression (fibulae), we can see just how pervasive the survival of beliefs, styles, and practices was and also how these were transformed and integrated – refashioned – into new cultural configurations.

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## PHOTO CREDITS

**Fig. 1** Drawing by P. S. Wells.
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**Fig. 4** Loïc Hamon. Musée d'Archéologie Nationale. Copyright RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY.
**Fig. 5** Drawing by P. S. Wells (based on information in Cordie-Hackenberg 1989).

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**63** Discussions in Müller 2009 and Willburger 2012a are especially relevant.

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DAVID FONTIJN

# REINVENTING TRADITION IN THE ROMAN WEST? SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE RE-USE OF PRE-HISTORIC BURIAL MOUNDS*

Prof. Dr. Willem Willems *in memoriam*

*This contribution discusses the re-use of prehistoric burial monuments during the Roman Period in the continental part of the Roman West. It is argued that a general forgetfulness does not seem to have been prevalent for the pre-Roman past, as has been suggested for Gaul. Corroborating ideas previously published by Hiddink, the re-use of prehistoric burial mounds and cemeteries did take place, but only incidentally and during a long period of time. A hypothesis in need of further empirical testing is that prehistoric monuments were re-used when they happened to be visually prominent in the landscape of daily life during the Roman Period. It is argued that, in some cases, prehistoric and Roman Period funerary landscapes and landscapes usages merged to such an extent that a distinction between a prehistoric 'then' and a Roman Period*

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* When this text was in press, an interesting publication came out that also includes some new information on Roman Period re-uses (Van Beek, R./G. De Mulder: Circles, Cycles and Ancestral Connotations. The long-term history and Perception of late prehistoric Barrows and urnfields in Flanders (Belgium). In: Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society 79 [2014], 1–28). Unfortunately, I have not been able to incorporate their findings here. A quick glance at this publication shows that the patterns of reuse in Flanders agree with those identified by Hiddink (2003) and the remarks made in the present paper. Van Beek and De Mulder describe the "creation of links" as something that was "optional" (ibid. 19).

*'now' does not always seem to have been truly relevant to the communities involved. A distinction between 'Roman' and 'Non-Roman' is argued to be unhelpful to explain the observed patterns of re-use.*

There is hardly any other part of the Roman Empire imaginable that underwent more drastic changes than the Roman West in general and the provinces of Germania Inferior and Gallia Belgica in particular.[1] In the course of less than 75 years, this region was transformed from an essentially tribal area into a state. Towns and infrastructure were created out of nothing.[2] An entirely new (visual) material culture including images, statues, and wheel-thrown pottery was rapidly introduced. Although the rate of transformation varied considerably, every single hamlet in the Roman West felt the influence of being part of the Roman Empire, by having to pay taxes, by becoming part of the Roman economic system, or by joining the army.[3] In marked contrast to Egypt, Greece or the Near Eastern parts of the Empire, the Germanic West was a region that generally lacked impressive architecture or lasting town-like settlements (like the oppida and fortified settlements in Gaul)[4] and the first impression may be that its indigenous material culture hardly contributed to the cultural melting pot of the Roman Empire.

However, when Drusus' legions conquered parts of Germania, they entered a landscape rich in visible signs of an age-old native past. The land was marked with thousands of burial mounds and urnfield cemeteries that were often constructed hundreds of years before. Woolf has argued that for Gaul, there seems to have been a general "forgetfulness" about the pre-Roman past.[5] The present contribution will argue that in the northernmost provinces of the west, Germania Inferior and Gallia Belgica, this might have been somewhat different. Focusing on the case of prehistoric burial mounds, it will be argued that these were sometimes destroyed, often left alone but sometimes also re-used and re-vitalized. In some cases, the Roman 'now' therefore seems to have merged with a pre-Roman 'then'. It is argued that new evidence supports ideas that were previously published on this topic by Henk Hiddink.[6] The point

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**1** Metzler et al. 1995.
**2** Metzler et al. 1995; Willems 1984.
**3** Roymans 1996, 84–87.
**4** Cf. Roymans 1990, Fig. 8.12.
**5** Woolf 1996, 361ff.
**6** Hiddink 2003.

is made that there does not seem to have been a general, punctuated trend to legitimize power claims by emphasizing access to the past. It is suggested that it is also unlikely that true memory steered the kinds of re-use that took place.

## PREHISTORIC BARROWS AND ROMAN PERIOD GRAVES – SOME EXAMPLES AND TRENDS

Leiden University recently excavated a number of Roman Period cremation graves at a town called Slabroek in the southern Netherlands.[7] Like those of the Iron Age, Roman Period funerary practices usually involved cremation.[8] Yet, in terms of the provision of grave goods, they differed considerably from those of the previous Late Iron Age. The latter rarely contain any grave gifts and usually a small pit filled with cremated bone is all that is left.[9] In the Roman Period graves of Slabroek, however, different kinds of objects were deposited in the burial pit. The deceased were furnished with wheel-thrown pottery, unknown in Prehistory in this part of the world, and the ceramics had shapes and colours that contrast markedly with those of the hand-made local pottery.[10]

So, the first impression upon excavation is that the Roman Period graves represent a type of funeral that differs markedly from the prehistoric burial practices that took place in this region only 75 years earlier. However, the Roman Period graves of Slabroek appear to have been flat graves that were inserted in between what must have been rather impressive prehistoric burial mounds (Fig. 1).[11] The excavators found traces of large burial mounds dating to the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, covering an area of several hectares (Fig. 2).[12] A fascinating discovery is the fact that the available data indicate that people stopped building those prehistoric mounds at Slabroek around 500 BC (around the beginning

**7** Jansen et al. 2011; Jansen (in prep.); Van Wijk/Van Eijk 2011.
**8** Hiddink 2003.
**9** Roymans 1990, 220–221; 232–237; Hiddink 2003, 7–10.
**10** Cf. Van den Broeke 2012 for an overview of Iron Age and Roman Period hand-made local pottery.
**11** Jansen et al. 2011, 115: see plan of cemetery.
**12** Jansen et al. 2011; Van Wijk/Van Eijk 2011.

**1** A Roman Period grave (S19.5) from the Slabroek cemetery.



**2** The leveled remnants of one of the Early Iron Age burial mounds of the Slabroek cemetery. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the original mounds were still visible (Van Wijk/Van Eijk 2011).

of the Middle Iron Age).[13] The Roman Period Slabroek graves appear to have been additions to what must have been by then already a very old prehistoric barrow group of monuments.

The prehistoric urnfield of Someren presents another intriguing example of such a re-use after centuries.[14] A Roman Period grave dating to the first half of the first century AD was found here. The deceased was interred with wheel-thrown pottery from the Rhineland that had no logical precursor in the prehistoric repertoire, and was also equipped with a sword, a gladius, the sword type in use in the Roman army.[15] Burying a deceased with weapons was quite unusual for this period.[16] Zooming out, again we see that this peculiar Roman Period grave was buried in a large Early Iron Age urnfield, with a very long so-called "langbed".[17] The grave was inserted into the ditch demarcation of this long barrow.[18] Again, this cemetery went out of use around 450 BC,[19] so centuries passed before the Roman Period grave was added to it.

Much further to the south, at Itteren (in the Netherlands, close to Dutch-Belgian border), excavators of the Archol BV company discovered a more enigmatic case.[20] A group of Middle Iron Age graves was found situated within an area that was enclosed by a rectangular ditch.[21] The available evidence implies that after 150 BC, no graves were added here. It is only in the Middle Roman Period, after 150 AD – after a hiatus of 300 years – that (at least) eleven new graves were inserted into this enclosed area (Fig. 3).[22] This implies that a much older Iron Age rectangular enclosure was re-used in the Middle Roman Period after some

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**13** Jansen et al. 2011, 114–115; personal communication R. Jansen December 2013. – In a broader survey on the prehistoric history of urnfields Roymans 1995, 2–24 and Gerritsen 2003, 119. 131–135 argue this was a general trend. Even though there is now some evidence that Middle Iron Age graves were sometimes positioned around older urnfields (Kortlang 1999, 162), the general trend seems to be that people stopped using these by the Middle and Late Iron Age.

**14** Hiddink 2003, 48; Kortlang 1999; Roymans/Kortlang 1993.

**15** Roymans/Kortlang 1993, 32–36; Hiddink 2003, 48.

**16** Roymans/Kortlang 1993, 35.

**17** Ibid. Fig. 3.

**18** Ibid. 32.

**19** Kortlang 1999.

**20** Meurkens/Tol 2011.

**21** Meurkens 2011, 61–70.

**22** Meurkens/Heunks 2011, 206, 211.

**3** Two rectangular Iron Age enclosures from Itteren-Emmaus, excavated by Archol BV. Iron Age graves (no. 1, 3, 6, 14, 15, 19), Roman Period graves (no. 2, 4–5, 7–13, 18), "dating unknown" (no. 16–17).

300 years of neglect. This poses some interpretive problems. Unlike in the cases of Slabroek and Someren, there are no indications that these Iron Age predecessor graves were visually marked with mounds. According to the excavators,[23] the only element that might still have had some visibility in the Roman Period would have been the large rectangular ditch that surrounded the Iron Age graves. Perhaps, there was also a low earthen wall marking it, but this is not clearly supported by the observed features.[24] The ditch, however, is likely to have silted up and would prob-

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**23** Meurkens/Heunks 2011, 211; and personal comment L. Meurkens, December 2014.
**24** Personal comment L. Meurkens, December 2014.

ably have been little more than a shallow depression.[25] Would the Roman Period community still have remembered that the area enclosed by this ditch had been used as a cemetery 300 years previously? Is this sheer coincidence, or a case where an old "tradition" was being "re-invented"?[26]

## A CULTURAL WISH TO RETURN TO THE PAST?

The above examples may give the impression that communities in this part of the Empire in general wished to return to pre-Roman Period monuments, and turned to a positive appraisal of the pre-Roman past. This might have motivated them not to destroy prehistoric cemeteries and in some cases even to re-use them.[27] Many prehistoric burial monuments indeed survived the Roman Period (i. e., were not levelled) and some were even re-used. For the Dutch-Belgian Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region, Hiddink mentions 25 examples from where prehistoric burial monuments and/or cemeteries seem to have been re-used in one way or other for burial during the Roman Period.[28] Hiddink argues that linking Roman Period deceased to much older ones, may have been perceived as a way to make distant predecessors into ancestors.[29] Emphasizing bonds with the former owners of the land may have been a way to legitimize power claims in contemporary Roman society.[30] Re-use of much older monuments is widely known from Prehistory.[31] What happened in the Roman Period, then, might be considered a continuation of such prehistoric practices.

However, as Hiddink already pointed out, for the present case, there are some problems in identifying the kinds of activities that fall under the umbrella term of "re-use". He questions the representativity of such data, and the general low quality of much of the archaeological evidence

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**25** L. Meurkens, personal communication, November 2014.
**26** Cf. Hobsbawm/Ranger 2013.
**27** Roymans 1995, 9.
**28** Hiddink 2003, 48. 67–69.
**29** Hiddink 2003, 50.
**30** Hiddink 2003, 51.
**31** E. g. Bourgeois 2013; Bradley 1999; Fontijn 1996; Gerritsen 2007; Hingley 1996; Lohof 1994; Sopp 1999.

on cemetery re-use.[32] As Gerritsen demonstrates for the Iron Age,[33] it is also problematic that the umbrella phrase 're-use' may entail different sorts of practices. Some of the practices described by Gerritsen find a parallel in the examples described in this paper. At Slabroek, Roman Period graves were usually located close to prehistoric graves.[34] At Someren, the Roman Period grave was inserted *into* the ditch fill of a prehistoric long barrow.[35] It is well conceivable – but difficult to prove – that the latter action implied a more intimate act on the part of the Roman Period community than the former. At Itteren it seems that after a hiatus of several centuries, a (still visible?) old burial site was used again to enclose graves.[36]

Even though motivations and intentions on the part of the Roman Period mourners may have differed from case to case, in general the question can be asked: why were ancient burial locations re-used? Both for Prehistory and the Roman Period, archaeologists tend to see such practices as a way to legitimize power claims.[37] Following Gerritsen's summary,[38] the argument goes: by re-using an old burial place, communities link their own deceased to remains of people who inhabited the land before them. Forging links between their direct forebears and deceased from a remote past can be a way to root their community in the past and therewith, to lay claims on the land.[39] Hiddink also interprets some of the re-use of prehistoric cemeteries during the Roman Period in such a way.[40] If this holds true, it implies that there was a need to claim power in the first place. It therefore seems interesting to verify in which periods exactly communities chose to bury their dead in prehistoric cemeteries, in order to investigate whether re-use indeed took place

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**32** Hiddink 2003, 47, see also the meagre and sometimes ambiguous data listed in his overview at 67–69.

**33** Gerritsen 2007.

**34** Jansen et al. 2011, 115, see plan of cemetery.

**35** Roymans/Kortlang 1993, 32–33; Hiddink 2003, 48.

**36** Meurkens/Heunks 2011.

**37** Bradley 1999; Hiddink 2003, 54; Hingley 1996.

**38** Gerritsen 2007, 341.

**39** There are several versions of this argument, which goes back to debates on the role of prehistoric monuments as territorial markers (Chapman 1981; Renfrew 1976). For an adequate overview of this discussion and of the many publications on this topic, Richard Bradley's seminal book 'The Past in Prehistoric Societies' (1999) is a key text.

**40** Hiddink 2003, 50–52.

in periods in which power relations and land ownership may have been contested.

Hiddink's data provide some information on the dating of the Roman Period graves found in association with prehistoric cemeteries/ burial mounds.[41] Re-use happened several times during the first century AD. In the Dutch river area and the Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region, the period from 15 BC to 48 AD must have been a period of massive change and major disruption. The area was conquered by the Roman legions, annexed into the Empire and subjected to a *civitas* administration.[42] Also the later parts of the first century AD up until the Flavian Period of consolidation (the so-called Batavian revolt) must have been a time of change and social unrest.[43] It is well conceivable that these were times in which power relations were fluid and changing, and perhaps this was a context in which (true or claimed) ancestors were valorised – motivating people to link up with visual remnants of a pre-Roman past. However, the number of prehistoric burial sites where we have evidence of re-use is actually very low. Based upon the data collected by Hiddink, out of a total of c. 400 Roman Period cemeteries,[44] for only ten cases there is evidence that first century AD graves were associated with prehistoric cemeteries and barrows.[45] Even though the majority of the Roman Period cemeteries were incompletely excavated, it would go much too far to suppose that there was a broad trend to position Roman Period graves in association to prehistoric ones during that period of rapid transformation.

Hiddink lists cases where it seems as if re-use of prehistoric cemeteries also took place in the second and even in the third century AD.[46]

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**41** Hiddink 2003, 67–69.

**42** Willems 1984, 226–239.

**43** Slofstra 2001; Willems 1984, 240–242.

**44** Hiddink 2003, 19, 71–5.

**45** Based on the site list from Hiddink 2003, 67–69 (with further, detailed, references): no. 267 Alverna-Heumensweg I; no. 269 Alverna-Heumensweg II; no. 2 Beesel-Dreesen Campken; no. 335 Cuijk-Heeswijkse Kampen; no. 299 Donsbrüggen-Sandgruben, it should be noted that it remains uncertain whether the two ring ditches discovered here really represent the remnants of prehistoric barrows; no. 12 Echt-Diergaarde; no. 194 Elsloo-Hoogenbosch; no. 357 Geldermalsen-Middengebied; no. 341 Someren-Waterdael; no. 117 Uden-Slabroek (see Jansen et al. 2011 and Jansen [in prep.] for new data).

**46** Based on the site list from Hiddink 2003, 67–69 (with further, detailed, references): no. 104 Esch-Hoogkeiteren (2nd–3rd century AD); no. 92

When compared to the first century up until the Flavian Period, the last part of the first and most of the second century was an entirely different period in this realm, mostly a relatively quiet period of consolidation.[47] However, as Hiddink himself emphasizes,[48] the data on re-use should be interpreted with caution. Even a brief look at the lists provided by him makes clear that in many cases the quality of the data is often poor.[49] For example, the fact that for some cases the oldest Roman Period grave dates to the second century AD does not automatically imply that Roman Period use started in that century. It is well possible that there were already burials placed there in the first century AD that were lost to archaeology, or simply have not been discovered yet. Most of the sites mentioned in Hiddink's list are incompletely excavated sites and many data are of (very) poor quality. On the other hand, in well-preserved cases like at Itteren, graves dating to the first century AD were not found in the Iron Age enclosure, and the excavators argue that there was a 300 year hiatus between the last Iron Age burial and the first Roman Period burial here that was buried in the late 2nd century AD.[50]

Interestingly, Hiddink[51] and other authors before him remark that there are also cases where the Roman population in this part of the Empire destroyed prehistoric burial monuments. For example, this happened at the Nijmegen-Hunerberg and Nijmegen-Kops Plateau, where dozens of barrows were levelled before vast military fortresses were constructed during the first phase of the conquest of the Roman West.[52] In the case of the Kops Plateau, Van Enckevort and Zee argue that we are

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Grootlinden-De Romein, according to Hiddink no more precise dating than "middle Roman Period". The association with prehistoric urns is unclear (DF); no. 27 Kesseleik-Steenbos, 2nd–IIIA AD, but Hiddink also mentions the find of a first century AD pottery fragment; no. 167 Overpelt-Kruiskiezel 2nd–3rd century AD; no. 344 Weert-Kampershoek, c. 200 AD. For the following cases, Hiddink does not provide precise datings: no. 090 Baarle-Nassau – Molenheide; no. 336 Geleen-Janskamperveld; no. 107 Hoogeloon-Kaboutersberg; no. 123 Holthees-Vliegenberg; no. 363 Kervendonk-Haus Brembt; no. 121 Knegsel-Oude Dijk; no 339 Mierlo-Hout-Ashorst; no. 441 Steensel-Heiblom; no. 263 Wijchen-Valendries.

47 Willems 1984, 242–247.
48 Hiddink 2003, 47–48.
49 See also notes 46 and 47.
50 Meurkens/Heunks 2011, 206.
51 Hiddink 2003, 48–9.
52 Van Enckevort/Zee 1996; Fontijn 1996; Louwe Kooijmans 1973.

dealing with legions, initially manned by soldiers from abroad.[53] It might have been possible that such people did not value such ancient monuments, as they were not known in their land of origin. However, it was not just the invading Roman army that should be mentioned here. Wesselingh pointed out that the same happened in rural landscapes like at Oss-IJsselstraat[54] – a region where all archaeological evidence indicates that it was continuously inhabited from the Early Iron Age onwards.[55]

It is even possible that Iron Age rather than Roman Period communities were responsible for the destruction of prehistoric barrows and cemeteries. There are some indications that the long-standing tradition of using urnfield cemeteries for burial was already on the wane by the Middle Iron Age, long before it became part of the Roman Empire.[56] It is not clear whether the levelling of urnfields like Oss-IJsselstraat was done by Late Iron Age or Early Roman Period communities. In fact, even for the destruction of barrows at the site of the Nijmegen military camps it cannot be excluded that this happened before the coming of the Roman legions. At any rate, even when it happened during the Roman Period, monuments were removed that usually would already have gone out of use a long time ago. All this makes the occasional return to urnfields and barrows in the Roman Period only more remarkable.

Summing up, for large parts of Germania Inferior and Gallia Belgica (the Meuse-Demer-Scheldt-region), there is no evidence that in the Roman Period there was a broadly shared trend to locate deceased close to prehistoric burial places. Although some prehistoric burial places indeed seem to have been forgotten, or were even destroyed, there is no reason

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**53** Van Enckevort/Zee 1996, 38–39. Van Enckevort and Zee's idea is based on graffiti on pottery found here. As some have three names, indicating Roman citizenship, they hold it for unlikely that the construction of this camp was done by indigenous auxiliaries. Instead, they argue legionary soldiers must have been involved and around 10 BC, when the Kops Plateau was built, such soldiers must have come from abroad (in their view the Mediterranean: Van Enckevort/Zee 1996, 38). The assumption is that indigenous auxiliaries in this part of the Empire were probably no Roman citizens at such an early stage. If it was the building of the camps at Kops Plateau that necessitated the levelling of prehistoric barrows, there is reason to suppose that the destruction was probably primarily done by soldiers coming from beyond Germania.

**54** Wesselingh 1993.

**55** Schinkel 1998; Wesselingh 2000.

**56** Fontijn 1996, 82–84; Gerritsen 2003, 119, 131–135; also Hiddink 2003.

to think there was a broad trend of deliberate "forgetfulness" of the past, as Woolf assumes for Roman Gaul.[57] New evidence of sites like Slabroek and Itteren supports Hiddink's view that the attitude towards prehistoric monuments could be positive, albeit various in practicalities.[58] As Hiddink sets out, this variety might purely reflect local idiosyncrasies and contingencies. At any rate, several prehistoric burial sites were re-visited and re-used by Roman Period communities, and sites like Itteren,[59] Slabroek[60] and Someren[61] show that Roman-Period re-use could take place centuries after prehistoric cemeteries went out of use.

## A REMEMBERED PAST? MEASUREMENT AND PERCEPTION OF TIME

The re-use of pre-Roman burial sites in the West seems to have been an example of Hobsbawm and Ranger 's "invention of tradition" rather than a continuity of tradition itself.[62] As remarked above, in the Middle and Late Iron Age of the Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region, monumental markers as known from the Bronze Age were probably not built anymore:[63] Middle and Late Iron Age graves in the Meuse-Demer- Scheldt region usually consisted of small clusters of flat graves with cremation remains.[64] On top of that, most large Early Iron Age urnfield cemeteries seem to have gone out of use.[65] Archaeological dating, an un-precise proxy for time measurement[66], demonstrates that probably some hundreds of years passed between the last prehistoric funeral in the Someren barrow and the first burial of a deceased there by Roman Period communities.[67] However, was this also the view of these mourners? Did communities from the Roman Period truly remember that people were buried here so many centuries ago? Could they make out that some mounds were even

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[57] Woolf 1996.
[58] Hiddink 2003, 51–52.
[59] Meurkens/Tol 2011.
[60] Jansen et al. 2011.
[61] Roymans/Kortlang 1993.
[62] Hobsbawm/Ranger 2013 [1983].
[63] Hiddink 2003, 9.
[64] Roymans 1990, 233–236; Hiddink 2003, 9–10.
[65] Roymans 1995, 9.
[66] Cf. the discussion in Lucas 2005, 27–28.
[67] Kortlang 1999; Roymans/Kortlang 1993.

much older than other ones in this cemetery, as archaeologists nowadays can (for example: distinguishing 2nd millennium BC Bronze Age barrows from early first millennium BC Early Iron Age ones)?

Although every individual can remember things by the neural function of her or his brains, according to Halbwachs, it is essential to structure what is seen in order to remember it.[68] In his seminal book "How ancient Europeans saw the World",[69] Wells makes the point that seeing is, in a way, based on what was seen before. He bases himself on the work of the psychologist Gregory,[70] who argues that in order to interpret what we see, our brain seems to use templates or hypotheses that are founded on previous observations and encounters. Although not based on this kind of neuroscience or psychology, Halbwachs already argued that the structure that we need to remember is conditioned:[71] in his view, we pick out those things that allow us to function in social life and that link us to the social world. As Assmann puts it,[72] in Halbwachs' view, memory is primarily "socially conditioned". Assmann's own view, however, is that memory is more than social memory. Assmann argues that structuring experiences is also about selecting visual and material impressions, and about framing them in a cultural way to make sense of them.[73] Translated, rather crudely, to our case, all this could mean that the landscape of everyday routines would be essential to the construction of cultural memory. *Visuality*[74] and daily encounters may have provided the basis for their narratives of the past.[75] It may therefore have been significant that, in the northern provinces, burial mounds were an essential element of the visual landscape in many places.

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**68** Halbwachs 1975. Assmann, describing Halbwachs' ideas, states that, according to Halbwachs, "in the act of remembering" an "order" and a "structure" are introduced (Assmann 2006, 1–2).
**69** Wells 2013, 12.
**70** Gregory 1998; 2009.
**71** Halbwachs 1975.
**72** Assmann 2006, 2.
**73** Assmann 2006, 8–9.
**74** Gibson 1979.
**75** Wells 2013, 22–23.

## PREHISTORIC BURIAL MONUMENTS IN THE LANDSCAPE OF DAILY LIFE DURING THE ROMAN PERIOD

Although drastically changed by the construction of towns, roads, fortresses and so on, the landscape of Roman society in this part of Europe was still a landscape marked with vast numbers of visible round burial mounds from a pre-Roman past. Barrows on open landscapes, particularly heaths, were a *longue durée* element of the local landscape on the sandy soils in later Prehistory (Fig. 4).[76] Even though several barrows were destroyed in the later Iron Age or Roman Period, the numerous remaining ones must have been a persistent visual element in the landscape. There is no reason to assume that this was any different during the Roman Period. In general, the landscape of the latter period seems to have been an open one, although – admittedly – it was divided and parcelled with vast human-made boundaries, like ditch systems.[77] However, there were still heaths and unbuilt, open areas in between settlements during the Roman Period. In that respect, particularly the non-parcelled landscape in such areas apparently did not look fundamentally different from that of the later Bronze Age and Iron Age.[78] The 2nd century AD Roman camp at Ermelo, in Germania libera, was located very close to several Late Neolithic and Bronze Age barrows.[79] There are indications that the large Roman Period barrow of Hoogeloon and other more modest graves were situated along a Roman Period road, which crossed a stream with a dam.[80] These Roman Period barrows and graves were located close to a prehistoric urnfield.[81] A Roman Period burial landscape more or less 'merged' with a prehistoric one; therefore, it might be ventured that it was not barrows in general that mattered to the Roman Period

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[76] Doorenbosch 2013. Fig. 4 is based on excavations by the Faculty of Archaeology, University of Leiden and vegetation reconstructions by Doorenbosch (2013). This site is situated in a zone north of the limes, but in vegetation it is comparable to heaths with barrows on the sandy soils of Germania Inferior.

[77] Wesselingh 2000.

[78] For vegetation reconstructions: see for example Bakels 2014; Kooistra 2008; Van der Sanden/Van der Klift 1984. For archaeological indications that the Roman landscape in the first and second century AD was an open one: Wesselingh 2000.

[79] Bourgeois 2013, 78 ff.; Hulst/Vredenberg 2007.

[80] Roymans/Sprengers 2012, 82–83.

[81] Hiddink 2003, 68: no. 10.

**4** Reconstruction of the heath landscape around two Iron Age barrows at Apeldoorn-the Echoput.

communities, *but rather those barrows that were part and parcel of their daily routines*.[82] One of the most monumental barrow groups of the Low Countries, the barrow landscape of Oss-Vorstendonk and Zevenbergen was never re-used by Roman Period communities.[83] Was this because in the Roman Period it was situated in a remote position, removed from Roman Period settlements and roads? It goes without saying that such questions about the reasons behind non-use are open ones that cannot be answered at this moment. However, for some cases, such ideas could be tested by modelling Roman Period vegetation and infrastructure in

**82** For the significance of mobility and routines in the perception of the landscape, see for example the work of Ingold (2000) and Barrett 1999, 257–260.
**83** Fontijn/Van der Vaart/Jansen 2013; Fokkens/Jansen 1998.

GIS "digital gardening viewshed models"[84] like those that were success-fully created by Bourgeois and Doorenbosch for prehistoric barrow land-scapes.[85] Such models could be used to provide evidence-based answers to questions like: which barrows and cemeteries were clearly visible in the landscape of daily life in the Roman Period? Which ones were situ-ated along pivotal routes and locations in the landscape, and may have imposed themselves on passers-by? Were these kinds of barrows and cemeteries re-used specifically? And what about the use of those prehis-toric burial monuments that were clearly far removed from such pivotal locations and routes in the landscape?

### ROMAN BURIAL LANDSCAPES 'MERGING' WITH PREHISTORIC ONES

In some places, Roman Period communities started to build barrows themselves that in outline and shape are not very different from prehis-toric ones.[86] Many of the barrows one would see on the road to the town of Tongres would be Roman Period ones.[87] An important point to realize is that without prior knowledge, it is often not so easy to set the Roman barrows apart from the prehistoric ones, if one only bases him-/herself on how these barrows look from the outside. Roman Period barrows would stand out if they had stone markers. So far, there are no indications that these were common in the area under study.[88] The barrow from Alphen was generally thought to be one of the many Bronze Age barrows in this region, until pollen analysis showed it to be a Roman monument.[89] So, in some places, the Roman 'now' had visual similarity to the pre-Roman 'then'. In some places, the Roman way of burial 'merged' with what was conventional in the landscape.

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**84** These 'Digital Gardening' techniques in GIS-applications have been developed by Geary/Chapman 2006.
**85** Bourgeois 2013; Doorenbosch 2013.
**86** E. g. the one from Alphen; Van der Sanden/Van der Klift 1984.
**87** Vanderhoeven 1996, Fig. 21.
**88** Cf. Hiddink 2003.
**89** Van der Sanden/Van der Klift 1984.

## A LANDSCAPE WITH BURIAL MOUNDS – (RE-)INVENTING TRADITION?

Germania Inferior was an area in which large towns developed like in Gaul. At the same time, it was also a landscape where, when leaving town, one would encounter a landscape that bears the visual marks of a pre-Roman past. At Slabroek, Roman Period graves were modestly inserted among the more impressive monuments of this pre-Roman past. However, the mourners and audiences involved might have come from the rural settlement of Nistelrode-Zwarte Molen (c. 1.5 km to the west), a settlement that in outlook and lay-out was very different from anything considered common in Prehistory.[90] In the Roman Period, both landscapes were part of the same world. Whereas it is undeniable that in certain contexts, the local world was indeed rapidly and massively changing during one's life time (e.g. the building of new towns and camps), there may have been other contexts in which behaviour and attitudes were much more steered by wishes to do things in the same way as they were done before. The burial practices discussed in this Chapter are an instance of the latter.

The social anthropologist Bloch has argued that in certain ritual contexts, there seems to have been a clear wish to repeat what was done before.[91] Reviewing discussions on the question whether the Balinese have "a non-durational notion of time", he argues that "*Sometimes* and in *some* contexts they do, sometimes and in other contexts they do not".[92] Bradley has used Bloch's view to make sense of the long-term stability of ritualized behaviour around monuments during the Neolithic,[93] at a time when food procurement strategies and ways of life were changing. Bloch's and Bradley's perspective may also be helpful to understand the re-use of prehistoric monuments in the Roman Period. Regardless of everything that was changing in the field of settlement, town building, land division and infrastructure, in certain contexts and for certain practices there seems to have been a desire to link up with the past and to do things in a similar way as before. In some cases, Roman Period

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[90] Jansen/de Leeuwe/Godijn 2005. For example, in the presence of a 'porticus' house, in the use of tegulae in house constructions, and in its regular measurement dimensioning (Jansen 2007).

[91] Bloch 1989, 1–18.

[92] Ibid. 10; italics as in original.

[93] Bradley 1998: Chapter 6.

graves were inserted in (remnants of) pre-Roman monuments.[94] In others, pre-Roman urnfields were extended with Roman Period cremation graves.[95]

As argued above, it is unlikely that these cases reflect real memories and links, transferred orally from generation to generation. At Itteren, Roman Period mourners re-used a burial place that went out of use some 300 years before.[96] At Slabroek and Someren the gap in time even seems to be close to half a millennium.[97] Roman Period communities may have acted from a desire to link up with acts from "mythical" former inhabitants of the land[98], and to do the same things they did. As argued before by Hiddink,[99] this re-use was not a general trend – it was only done in particular cases. The (meagre) evidence suggests it took place throughout the first to the third century AD in this region and there is so far no reason to suppose it was related to periods in which power relations were in a state of flux. Roman Period communities might have had a preference for pre-Roman monuments as these had visual similarities to their own, were ubiquitous in the landscape and perhaps for that reason seen as embodying the long history of human settlement in their region. A hypothesis in need of further testing is that they particularly selected pre-Roman monuments that happened to be visible and prominent in daily life, like monuments situated along routes or crossings.

To come back to the theme of Hobsbawm/Ranger's book:[100] by such re-use, a barrow "tradition" was "invented" in the Roman Period. Perhaps, it is more appropriate to state that it was the 'sense of tradition' that was emphasized. After all, from the first century AD on, cemeteries were built everywhere and in much larger numbers than in the later part of the Iron Age[101]. Many Roman Period graves are likely to have had

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**94** E. g. Someren (Roymans/Kortlang 1993) or Itteren (Meurkens/Heunks 2011).

**95** Slabroek; Jansen et al. 2011.

**96** Meurkens/Heunks 2011, 206.

**97** Jansen et al. 2011, 114–115; Kortlang 1999.

**98** For the difference between "genealogical" and "mythical" ancestors, see Lohof 1994, 102. Hiddink (2003, 50) also uses this term (Dutch: "mythische voorouders").

**99** Hiddink 2003.

**100** Hobsbawm/Ranger 2013.

**101** For the Meuse-Demer-Scheldt region, Hiddink mentions some 36 cemeteries for the Middle and Late Iron Age, and some 400 cemeteries for the Roman Period (Hiddink 2003, 19 and Table 1).

visible mounds, the large ones like Bronze Age barrows, and the smaller ones like those from pre-Roman urnfields. Many Roman Period cemeteries are in shape of the burial monuments and general lay-out of the cemetery not that different from an Iron Age urnfield.[102] In some places, the landscape outside settlements increasingly must have become a mixture of pre-Roman and Roman Period burial monuments[103] – gradually obliterating differences between the pre-Roman and Roman landscape. All this suggests that the distinction between the pre-Roman and Roman Period that is emphasised in archaeological studies and reified in institutionalized academic divisions as prehistoric versus provincial Roman archaeology, may have been much less relevant for the Roman Period communities involved.

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**102** Cf. Hiddink 2003, Table 2, Fig. 4, 5A, 5C and 6.
**103** E. g. Slabroek (Jansen et al. 2011) or Hoogeloon (Roymans/Sprengers 2012, 82–83; Hiddink 2003, 68: no. 10).
**104** Fontijn/Jansen 2007.

reconstruction shown in Fig. 4. Some of the ideas put forward here lean heavily on the data and theories from the book by Dr. Henk Hiddink (Hendrik Brunsting Stichting of the Free University of Amsterdam): "Het grafritueel in de Late IJzertijd en Romeinse Tijd in het Maas-De-mer-Scheldegebied" (2003). Without Henk's work, it would have been impossible to write this paper and I look forward to his critical comments. Many special thanks are due to Marike van Aerde (RMA, Leiden University), who helped me so much to finalise this text. This contribution is dedicated to Prof. Dr. Willem Willems. Willem was the one who set me on the path of provincial Roman Archaeology by hiring me as a student assistant at his excavation at the Kops Plateau in Nijmegen. Years later, he was my director again, this time as Dean of the Faculty of Archaeology of the University of Leiden, where I was appointed lecturer in Prehistory. This article went to press at the immensely sad moment of hearing about Willem's death. I would like to dedicate this paper on memory in the Roman Period to the memory of Willem, in appreciation of everything he did for archaeology.

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## PHOTO CREDITS

**Fig. 1–2** Photograph by A. Louwen, Faculty of Archaeology, University of Leiden.

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**Fig. 4** Figure by Mikko Kriek (BCL-Archaeological Support) for the municipality of Apeldoorn, the Netherlands. Reproduced with kind permission of the municipal archaeologist of Apeldoorn, M. Parlevliet.

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ALEXANDRA W. BUSCH

# BACK TO THE ROOTS – INDIGENOUS PAST(S) AND THE ROMAN PRESENT IN NORTH-WESTERN EUROPE

*The Roman conquest of Northwest and Central Europe and their subsequent integration into the Roman Empire brought profound changes to the socio-political, economic and cultural order of their indigenous populations.[1] In order to explore and better understand cultural innovation in these regions, it is reasonable to focus on the mechanisms that enabled the indigenous populations to cope with the new situation. One of these, inherent in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Rangers' useful concept of "invented traditions", is the cultural practise of "looking back" to selected pasts. This paper examines whether such practises – well-known from other parts of the empire – can also be determined in the West, and whether it is possible to find "native traditions" that are again emphasised, after having been silent for quite some time. In some regions of the Roman West, moreover, the Roman presence seems to have led to a focus on the pre-Roman past of the indigenous culture as a means of cultural innovation. This observation contradicts the idea of forgetfulness in the West. Furthermore, with regard to pre-Roman traditions, striking similarities that relate to a cross-cultural phenomenon can be observed across broad geographical contexts.*

## INTRODUCTION

In an article published in the mid-1990s, Greg Woolf postulated a kind of historical amnesia for the western provinces of the Roman Empire.

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**1** For an introduction see: Woolf 1998; Schörner 2005.

He wrote: "One of the most striking features of the early Roman culture of the western provinces of the empire is the absence of any independent memory of a past before the conquest by Rome."[2] At first glance Woolf seems to be right: primary sources, such as coins, that represent founders or founding myths are as absent as written sources or monuments that refer to historical events and, as such, would maintain their memory[3]. However, does the lack of these sources from the western provinces, in contrast to the many known sources from the eastern part of the Empire, from North Africa and Italy, necessarily mean that between Britain and Thrace there was no actual memory of the time before the Roman occupation? Does it mean that the past of the indigenous populations became meaningless after the conquest, and that new systems of references replaced its memory?[4] Did the Iron Age communities have no historical consciousness, in the end, or did they lose it in the course of the profound changes that resulted from the conquest by Rome? Eric Hobsbawm suggests something different with the concept of the invention of tradition: he regards references to a suitable past and the creation of traditions as useful means to construct and affirm identity for societies that are under social pressure or in situations of profound cultural changes.[5] Why should such practises not have occurred in the West? Could they simply have appeared in a different way? Could it be possible that "native traditions" were emphasised again, after having been silent for a long period?

In this paper I will try to find answers to these questions. Looking at certain phenomena in the provinces of Noricum and Gallia Belgica in the first and early second century AD, I will examine 1) whether and, if so, what kinds of references to indigenous pasts can be determined, 2) who the protagonists were behind these references, and 3) what the reasons were to refer to a pre-Roman past after the Roman occupation. Why were some traditions forgotten, others invented and some (simply) continuing?

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**2** Woolf 1996, 361.
**3** Woolf underlines, however, that the media and institutions used in the East did exist in the West, but that they were not used to refer to a past. Woolf 1996, 361.
**4** Woolf 1996, 375–377.
**5** Hobsbawm 1983, 4.

To come to a better understanding of these patterns, it is important to examine analogous developments, such as the sudden appearance, disappearance, or reappearance of traditions that referred to pre-Roman times. Certain phenomena seem to indicate that the cultural transformation of provincial societies was not only determined by regional influences and individual cultural peculiarities, but also by cross-cultural phenomena and timeless cultural practices. However, can they really be interpreted as cross-cultural phenomena?

How should we approach the subject, if the usual sources that clearly refer to a pre-Roman past are missing? What other sources can provide information about the link between indigenous communities and their own past instead? If we look at the material evidence from the north-western provinces, specific monuments or objects that – in an understandable way for us – recall historical events may not have existed, but there are monuments, archaeological contexts, and objects from different spheres of life that are meaningful to our questions. Besides Iron Age ritual sites and sanctuaries that were continuously used, it could be enlightening, for example, to look at what happened to former "places of power".[6] In this paper I will focus on another category, which is most interesting in this context: burial monuments and burial customs.

As visible markers, burial monuments were symbolic carriers of various messages directed to an audience. The choice for the form of a monument communicated certain cultural ideas. Grave monuments and burial rites, therefore, provide useful information about the self-understanding and self-representation of individuals and groups, as well as about social core values, norms, and standards of individuals, specific groups or entire societies.[7] Even though it is clear that the analysis of burial rites and grave monuments is not sufficient to understand the cultural consciousness of a society[8], they are of a special relevance because the monuments were created to remember the deceased permanently. They were embedded into performative acts, funerary rituals, and death cults. Thus, these monuments have a different quality and significance than, for example, settlement features. In regard to our question about the role of the indigenous past in north-western Europe after the Roman

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**6** Woolf 1996, 375–376; the Martberg would be an example of such a sanctuary. See: Nickel 2008.

**7** Von Hesberg/Zanker 1987; Zanker 1992, 339; Struck 1993; Heinzelmann et al. 2001.

**8** Brather 2004, 328–330.
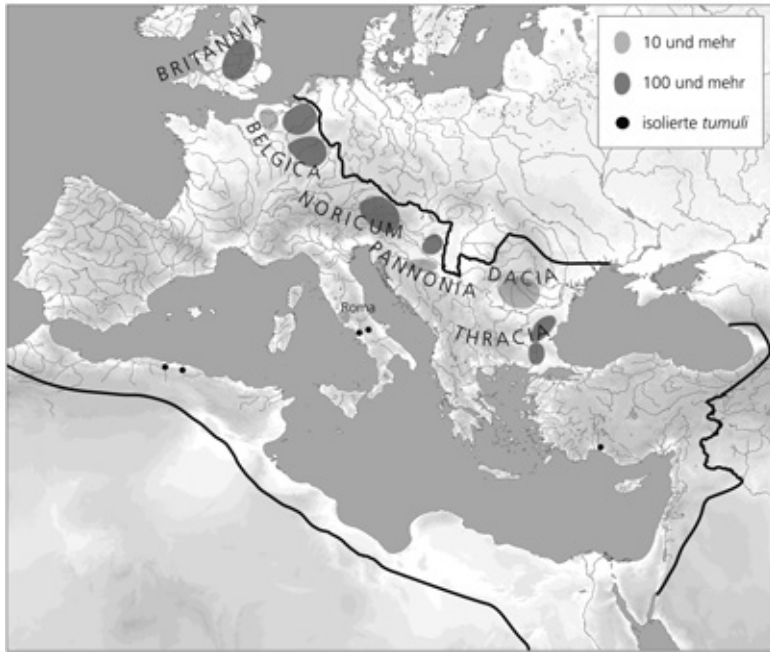
**1** Distribution of burial mounds in the imperial period.

occupation, one particular type of grave monument is most relevant: the burial mound or barrow. Barrows appeared in various regions of the Roman Empire's north-western provinces during the early and middle imperial period. They spread from Britannia, via Lower Germany and Gallia Belgica, to Noricum and Pannonia up to Thrace (Fig. 1).[9] They developed over a long period within these regional groups, and differed remarkably in their design and dimensions; however, in the published maps they are differentiated neither formally nor chronologically.[10] This might be one of the reasons for the misinterpretation of the monuments as local adaptations of Italian *tumuli*. Thomas Fischer wrote in his book on Noricum in 2002: "Hügelgräber stellen in Noricum keine Übernahme oder gar Weiterführung vorrömisch-keltischer Traditionen dar, sondern wurden ab der claudischen Zeit aus Italien übernommen."[11] Their appearance was also seen as an indicator of the newly established "Roman"

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**9** Amand 1985, 7–11; Schwarz 2002, 99 ff.; Hudeczek 2004, 527.
**10** See below and Hudeczek 2004, 527; Schwarz 2002, 99–111.
**11** Fischer 2002, 127.

identity of the indigenous population, which would provide information about the level of "Romanisation" of the deceased.[12] If one examines the monuments and contexts more closely, however, it becomes clear that the burial mounds, which misleadingly have been put together in regional groups, show in their variety and manifold formal designs that very different approaches to dealing with the new influences. In short: burial mound does not equal burial mound.[13]

Among the first century monuments, there are *tumuli* that can be derived from Italian models, but they vary greatly from one another in terms of size, layout, and material.[14] If one mapped their distribution, one would find them initially near Roman military camps, newly founded towns, and settlements, like the monuments in the necropolis of the legionary camp of Carnuntum in Pannonia.[15] The *tumuli* excavated in the cemetery near the legionary fortress of Haltern (G) show furthermore that the cylinder of an Italian *tumulus* did not necessarily have to be made of stone, but could also be constructed from wood that was decorated with stucco and paintings.[16] Apart from the described Italian form, hundreds of examples that did not have a distinctive architectural frame can be encountered throughout the north-western provinces of the Roman Empire.[17] As these are of particular importance to our question, I will now concentrate on them and start with examples from Noricum, a region that was in contact with Rome in the 1st century BC, was occupied under Augustus, and became part of the Empire under Claudius.[18]

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**12** Toynbee 1971, 179–188; Pochmarski/Hainzmann 1994, 39 f.; Fasold 1990, 126.

**13** For the variety see: Urban 1984, 49–55; Palágyi 1997, 11–27.

**14** Italian *tumuli* are characterised by a round architectural enclosure of the central burial chamber and an earth mound above the grave. The proportions of the round substructure or enclosure and the earth mound can vary, as can their size. Eisner 1986, 164 ff.; von Hesberg 1992, 94 ff.; Wigg 1998, 298; Schwarz 2002, 48 f.; Wigg 1998, 301–303 fig. 3.

**15** See Kandler 1997 for Carnuntum (Pannonia).

**16** Berke 1991, 152 f. fig. 2.

**17** See Urban 1984 for Noricum/Pannonia; Ebel 1989 and Wigg 1993 for Gallia Belgica.

**18** Alföldy 1974.

## THE SO-CALLED NORIC-PANNONIAN BURIAL MOUNDS

The so-called Noric-Pannonian burial mounds first appear in Augustan times, and increasingly from the Claudian period onwards, in different parts of the province of Noricum and in neighbouring Pannonia (Fig. 2). Their size and layout vary, as do the installations around the burial.[19] Their form corresponds to examples from prehistoric periods in these regions. It is remarkable, even if barrows in that region had a certain tradition dating back to the Bronze or early Iron Age, that there was no continuity from the early prehistoric monuments to the ones that were erected in the Roman period.[20] This gap in continuity led to the already preferred idea that the barrows from the imperial period were a result of Italian influence. They were interpreted as local receptions of the Italian *tumulus*, or even as a reflection of the mausoleum of Augustus in Rome.[21] Another, even cruder explanation for the sudden occurrence of *tumuli* – at least in regard to the Noric-Pannonian region – was based on an ethnic interpretation of the phenomenon. The monuments were said to be a result of the immigration of a subpopulation from the area of modern Slovenia.[22] Apart from the fundamental problem of the direct connection between material culture and ethnic groups[23], neither the design of the barrows nor the grave goods support such an ethnic interpretation of the 'norisch-pannonische Hügelgräber' as coming from Slovenia. What did cause the sudden upsurge of burial mounds, some 400 years after this form was no longer in use in the area? What social phenomena can be observed as part of the process, and how is this linked to "the invention of tradition"?

The Noric-Pannonian burial mounds evolved, with the exception of the ones in Flavia Solva, mainly far away from towns, in rural areas where the Italic influence was much less present and would have taken longer to make an impact on the indigenous population than in provincial centres, such as Virinum, or along the *limes* (Fig. 2).[24] The

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**19** An overview of the different forms is given by: Klaus 1997, 86–87 fig. 1, 2.
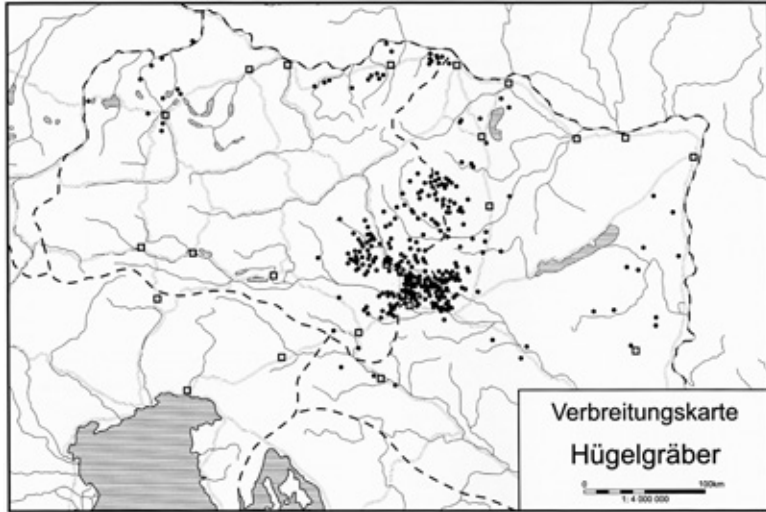**20** Urban 1984, 155–158; Ebel 1989, 4; Wigg 1998, 295; Roymans 2009, 92.
**21** Toynbee 1971, 179–188; Pochmarski/Hainzmann 1994, 39 f.; Fischer 2002, 127.
**22** Fitz 1958, 9.
**23** Brather 2004, 615–632.
**24** Urban 1984, 136–138; Palágyi 1997, 11 f.

**2** Distribution of 'noric-pannonian' burial mounds.

appearance of mounds in the necropolis of Flavia Solva – our first case study – is exceptional, and also particularly interesting.

## THE BURIAL MOUNDS OF FLAVIA SOLVA AND GLEISDORF

A large necropolis stretched along one of the main roads leading out of the Roman *municipium* of Flavia Solva, in which concentrations of different types of graves have been identified (Fig. 3).[25] Right next to the road lay the so-called *Spitalsgelände* necropolis, which was in use from the 1st to the 4th century.[26] In addition to a variety of smaller graves with gravestones, this cemetery contained the remains of larger grave monuments made of stone, as well as grave enclosures that show similarities with the necropolis of Aquileia and those of other Italian towns (Fig. 3).[27] To the north-west, farther away from the town, there was another burial ground, approximately 400 × 1.000 m in size: the so-called Hügelgräberfeld *Altenmarkt*. Characteristic of this necropolis[28], which was in use

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25 For an overview, see Fuchs 1984.
26 Fuchs 1984, 76.
27 Pammer-Hudeczek/Hudeczek 2002.
28 Hudeczek 2003, 199.

**3** The *necropoleis* of Flavia Solva (Noricum).

from the 1st to the end of the 2nd century, is the dominance of so-called Noric-Pannonian burial mounds.[29] In addition to the examples from the Roman period, seven burial mounds from the Hallstatt period have been identified at the western and eastern ends of the cemetery (Fig. 4).[30] In these two *necropoleis* different forms and funerary traditions were used contemporaneously, but also separately from one another, by the local population. Clearly behind this phenomenon – the diverse forms of funerary traditions used contemporaneously by the local population in the two *necropoleis* – lay different concepts and ideas.

Similar observations can be made in regard to grave types and their arrangement in the necropolis of the *vicus* of Gleisdorf, which belongs to the territory of Flavia Solva.[31] Whereas the *Ziegelei Strobl/Hartbergerstrasse* necropolis contained a large number of grave monuments, which are rectangular or square in shape (Fig. 5), 250 m to the northwest of the so-called cemetery Weizerstrasse, there are also remains of several Noric-Pannonian burial mounds (Fig. 6).[32] The grave goods indicate that both cemeteries were at their peak in the 2nd century AD.[33]
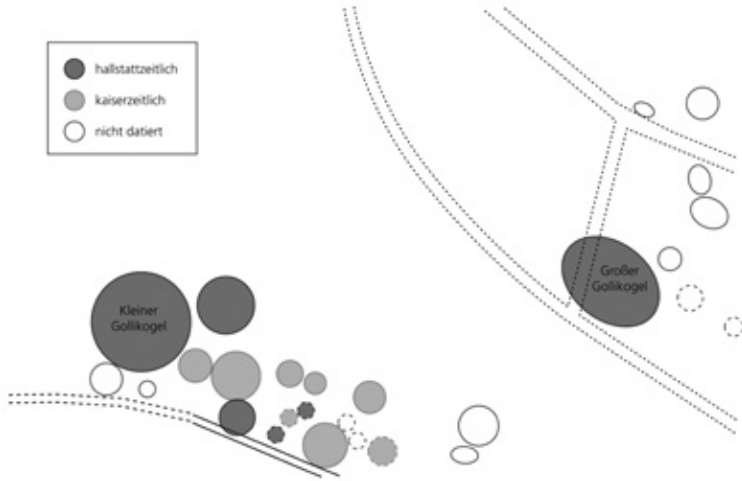
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**29** Fuchs 1984, 82 tab. 1.
**30** Fuchs 1984, 75.
**31** See Artner 1994.
**32** Artner 1994, plan 2.
**33** Artner 1994, plan 3.

**4** Distribution of burial mounds in the *necropoleis* Altenmarkt (Flavia Solva).

In both Flavia Solva and Gleisdorf there is a clear spatial separation between the different forms used within the *necropolis*. As the sites were in use contemporaneously, the reasons for this separation are obviously not chronological and must be sought elsewhere. The grave monuments that were predominant in the Spitalsgasse cemetery in Flavia Solva and Ziegelei Strobel in Gleisdorf show close connections to Italic *necropoleis*, particularly to the ones in northern Italy.[34] In addition to altars and *aedicula* monuments, other burial enclosures and monumental tombs have been identified that cannot be fully reconstructed due to their bad state of preservation.[35] The Italian influence in the described cemeteries is also demonstrated by the large number of grave reliefs and architectural decorations, which were new media in the area, as stone reliefs and sculptured architectural decorations were not used in the Iron Age.[36]

However, the *necropoleis* of the *municipium* and the *vicus* were not only characterised by grave monuments with an Italic influence, but also contained a great number of barrows that differed in their composition from Italic *tumuli* and had forms reminiscent of the late Bronze and

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**34** See e. g. for Aquileia: Verzàr-Bass 1998.
**35** Pammer-Hudeczek/Hudeczek 2002, 451–454.
**36** Fuchs 1984, 77 f. Other sculptured monuments from the necropolis of Flavia Solva can be found in Schloss Seggau in Leibnitz. For these, see: Pochmarski/Hainzmann 1994.
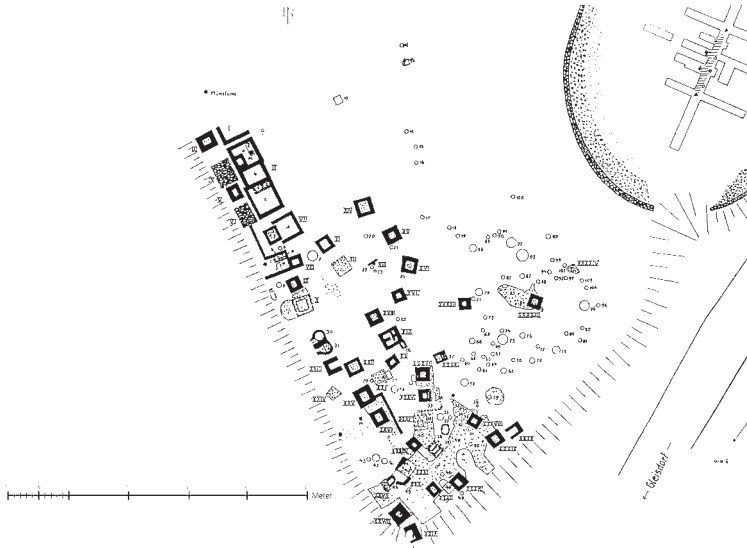
**5** Remains of sepulchral monuments in the *necropolis* 'Hartbergerstraße, Ziegelei Strobel' at Gleisdorf (Noricum).

early Iron Age. These imperial period burial mounds of Flavia Solva and Gleisdorf, which resembled Iron-Age mounds, represent a kind of recourse to a monument form that had not been in use for several centuries. The fact that this was indeed intended as a reference to Bronze Age monuments is not only evident from their layout, but also from their spatial connection to the older Hallstatt-barrows (Fig. 7). The Noric-Pannonian burial mounds seem to seek out proximity to older examples. It is also important to observe that a high number of burials is recorded in these late Bronze and early Iron Age grave mounds from the imperial period, to which I will refer later.

First we should ask who the people were that erected these burial monuments in "Retro-style", and why they chose a form that had been out of use for so long. The site of Rassach provides interesting evidence in this regard. Far from long-distance traffic routes and beyond the area of early Roman influence in Noricum, a Noric-Pannonian barrow was erected over a so-called Celtic weapon grave.[37] The burial can be dated to the Augustan period and therefore presents not only a convincing argument against an Italic origin of the Noric-Pannonian barrows, but also

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**37** Fuchs/Hinker 2003; Hudeczek 2004, 531.
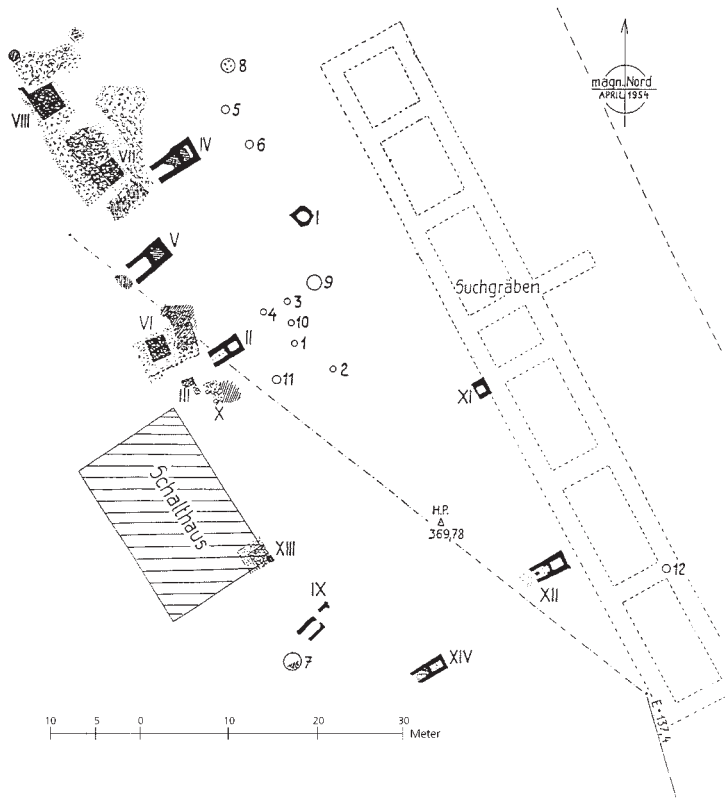
**6** Remains of 'noric-pannonian' burial mounds in the *necropolis* 'Weizer-straße' at Gleisdorf (Noricum).

shows that the form arose in an indigenous context[38] Further examples of early barrows from the Roman period that resemble examples from the early Iron Age have been found in Leibenfeld.[39] The grave goods of these burial mounds strongly reflect Iron Age traditions and therefore lead to the same interpretation as the barrow of Rassach.[40] The revival of burial mounds can therefore be traced back to the indigenous population, which developed a form that had been out of use for several centuries. Other examples of the same phenomenon can be found in Gallia Belgica, our next case-study.

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**38** Fuchs/Hinker 2003, 145.
**39** Hudeczek 1997.
**40** Hudeczek 1997, 70.
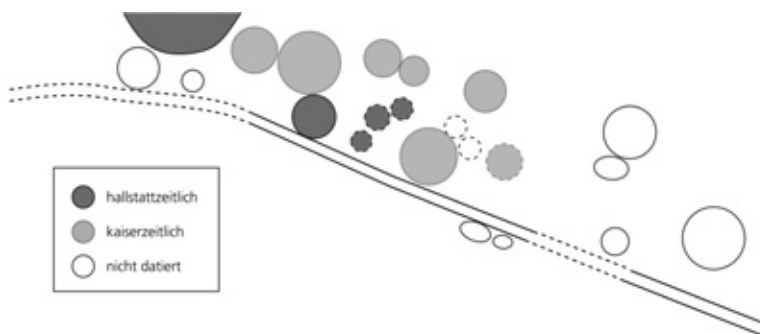
**7** Distribution of burial mounds in the *necropoleis* Altenmarkt (Flavia Solva).
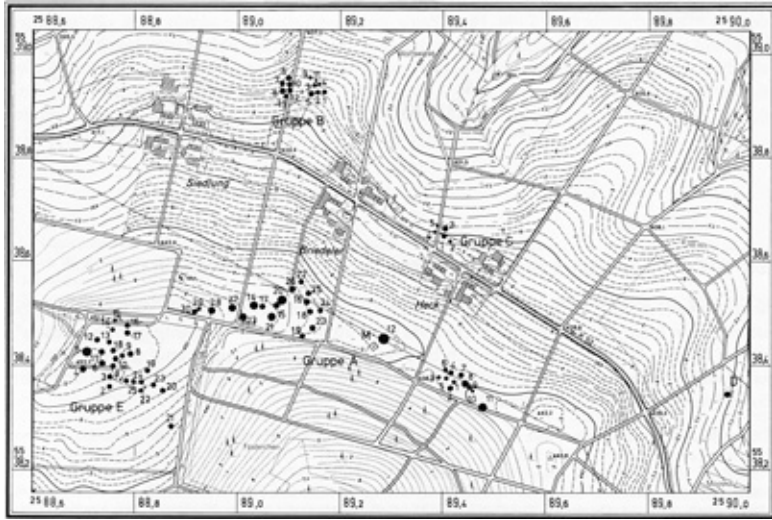
## THE BURIAL-MOUNDS OF GALLIA BELGICA

In the southern part of the province – the area of the Treviri – burial mounds occurred from the mid-first century AD in rural areas, far from urban settlements.[41] Their form was reminiscent of older barrows from the late Bronze to the middle Iron Age, which had been in use slightly longer than those in the Noric-Pannonian region, but just like in Noricum there seemed to be no continuity.[42] The majority of the burial mounds in the region do not have any architectural frame, but correspond in their design to early middle Iron Age examples, namely those of the so-called Hunsrück-Eifel culture.[43] In the first phase, which lasted until circa 70 AD, the grave goods and the design of the tombs showed no sign of Italian influence; instead, they conformed to late Iron Age traditions, as was the case in Rassach and Leibenfeld. Imported artefacts that are often described as 'Roman' were generally absent. The barrows of Goeblingen-Nospelt that could be connected to the local elite that was in close contact with Rome appear to be an exception. This is not only evident from the rich grave goods that are composed of both Italic imports and 'Celtic' objects, but also underlined by written sources that tell us about the existence of relations between these local elites and the Romans.[44] In the Gallia Belgica as in Noricum, the burial mounds from the imperial period are often situated next to older examples. Moreover,

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41 Ebel 1989, 97–103, 127–129; Wigg 1998, 295.
42 Ebel 1989, 127–129.
43 Wigg 1998, 301; Ebel 1989, 103.
44 Metzler 1984, 87 ff.; Tacitus *Annals* 3, 40.

**8** *Necropoleis* of Briedel (Gallia Belgica).

burials from the imperial period can be found in Bronze or Iron Age barrows.[45] In Briedel on the Moselle both phenomena can be identified.[46] During the first century AD, several burial mounds were erected near a large barrow cemetery of the Hunsrück-Eifel culture. A burial from the imperial period has been placed in the Iron Age barrow B1 (Fig. 8).

Such forms of reuse can be recognised in many places. Besides the revival of the burial tradition, the sudden reuse and integration of prehistoric monuments in funerary rituals of the imperial period are remarkable, especially in regard to our question. Some of the Bronze and Iron Age monuments were even restored, like the example in Enkirch, where the burial mound was (re-)decorated 350 year after it was built (Fig. 9).[47]

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45 Ebel 1989, 97, 101.
46 Joachim 1982, 83–84.
47 Haffner 1979, 68–72; 85–89.

**HÜGEL 1**

*Planum 1*

A — — — — — — — — — — B

Störung

N

*Planum 2*

Scherben

Störung im Steinkranz
Auf der Sohle röm. Scherben

B = geschmolzene Bronzereste
E = Eisenrest
$\ast$ = Leichenbrand

Störung

0 1 2 3 4 5 m

a = Fels – Schiefer
b = verwitterter graubrauner Schieferboden
c = tiefschwarze Ascheschicht
d = wie b, weniger humose Aufschüttung
e = Waldhumus

*Profil*

Störung

A B

alte Oberfläche
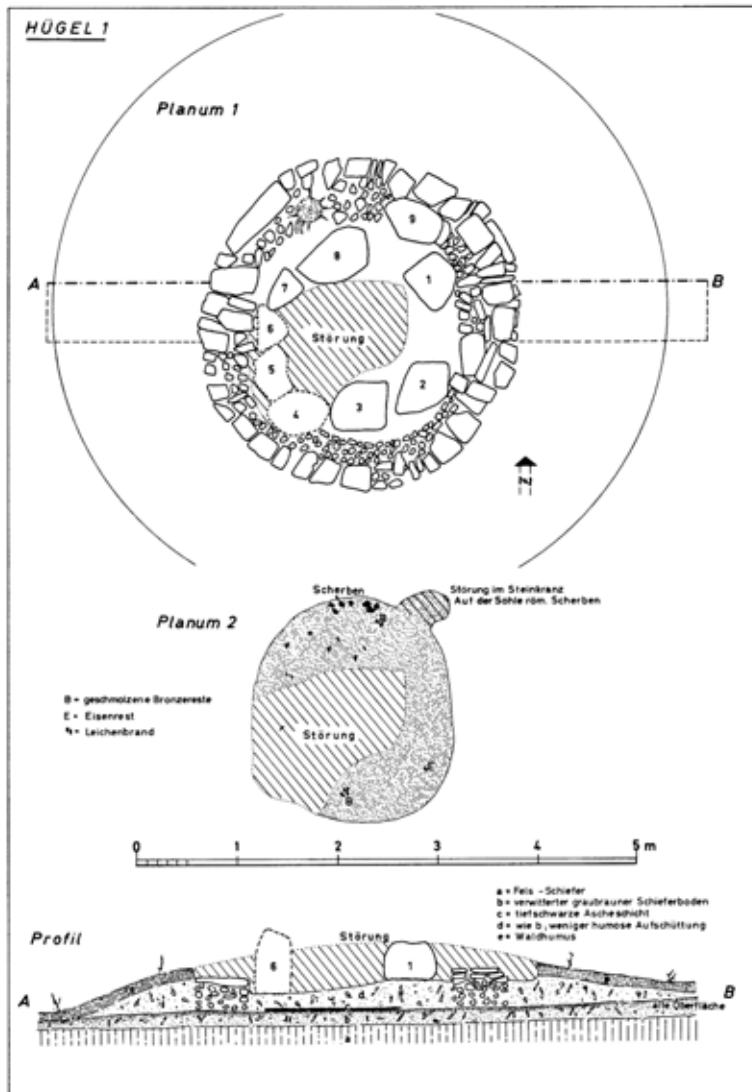
**9** Enkrich, plan and section of barrow 1.

## THE REVIVAL OF THE BARROWS – FORMATTING A CULTURAL IDENTITY

The list of case studies could be continued, as similar observations can be made in Britannia and lower Germany[48] (Fig. 1), but the principle of recourse to a bygone monument form by a part of the population should have become clear. In all these areas there were obviously groups of people that did not show an interest in adopting new Mediterranean forms for their burials, and who instead revived ancient, indigenous forms to mark their tombs after the Roman occupation. At the same time, there were representatives of the local population that adopted Italic monuments (already in the early 1st century AD), as can be seen from depictions of the local women's dress on grave reliefs or Celtic names mentioned in grave inscriptions.[49] The differentiation that can be identified in the *necropoleis* of Flavia Solva and Gleisdorf, therefore, does not reflect different population groups in the sense of a contrast between the indigenous population and Italic immigrants, but it demonstrates an inner segmentation of the indigenous population. The typical Italic grave monuments would either represent a part of the population susceptible to the strong Italic influence, or it would represent individuals that were receptive to Roman cultural forms.[50] In contrast to these, a second group, chose a form of burial monument that had not been used since the beginning of the La Tène period, and emphasised references to their pre-Roman past by means of seeking out the vicinity of early Iron Age burial mounds that were still visible in the area, or even by means of reusing them.[51]

It is remarkable that in none of the areas burial mounds were used continuously. Only in the course of, or rather due to the Roman occupation did they undergo a kind of renaissance. It was therefore not a survival of an indigenous tradition, but rather the creation of a new

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**48** Cf. Fontijn in this book; see also: Roymans 2009, for similar conclusions for the Batavian river area.

**49** Urban 1984, 154–155.

**50** 'Roman' cultural forms are not understood as cultural habits coming from the empire's capital, but in a broader sense as cultural habits that were widespread in the Mediterranean and not common in north-western Europe before the occupation. The Roman legionary troops, their baggage and administrative authorities played an important role in their transfer.

**51** Cf. Fontijn in this book.

**10** 'Noric-pannonian' women's dress.

tradition that was seen as old: an almost classic example of an "invention of tradition".

Why would a part of the indigenous population suddenly refer to a long-gone past?[52] Why would they create a new tradition? We can see a certain desire to distance themselves from the new influences not only in their choice of monuments, but also in the territorial separation of burial sites. Instead of adapting new forms, they develop their own forms of expression by reviving ancient burial traditions and thus by referring to

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52 Comparable phenomena can also be determined in other periods and regions. See Sopp 1999; Thäte 1996.

a pre-Roman past. In doing so, the group expressed their own identity. The wish for these indigenous people to find their own way of expression seems to have developed in the course of the Roman occupation and during the creation of the province of Noricum, a time of profound political and social changes, as described by Hobsbawm[53]. Even if there was no direct connection to the ancient burial form, it was undoubtedly seen as adequate to express cultural Otherness. There cannot be any doubt that Bronze and Iron Age burial mounds were seen as something indigenous, something that belonged to their own culture, as the inhabitants of these regions had grown up in the presence of these impressive landmarks.[54] The territorial connection between the barrows of the Roman period and those of the earlier Hallstatt period underlines that the indigenous population wanted to refer to something that was regarded as their own past. In this context it is also important to remember that there were no other monuments with a similar durability. Even if they had not been used for hundreds of years, the knowledge of their function must have been conveyed through common memory.[55] They were part of the communicative memory.[56] The people knew that these monuments were tombs; they knew that their ancestors had buried their dead in this way.[57] The recourse to a pre-Roman past helped to assure them of their own culture, underlined their claim to the territory, and stood in stark contrast to the innovations and the political, social, and economic upheavals of that current period.

The same phenomenon, namely the expression and redefinition of a distinctive cultural identity as a reaction to the Roman occupation, can also be observed in the development of a special type of dress for women, which occurred around the same time as the creation of the barrows.[58] The resurgence of this type of burial monument and the development

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**53** Hobsbawm 2013, 4.

**54** See the contribution of David Fontijn in this volume.

**55** Assmann 1992, 60; for the importance of visuality see also Fontijn in this book.

**56** Brather 2009, 248. In Axum (Ethiopia) a monumental tomb complex had been connected to king Kaleb and his son Gabra Masqal by oral tradition for more than eight centuries.

**57** It is of minor importance, if the deceased were really the ancestors, as the monuments served as examples to confirm a long presence of the territory. See: Gehrke 2000.

**58** Garbsch 1965.

of a special kind of dress can both be regarded as the formation of an indigenous cultural awareness, driven by the Roman conquest and the subsequent provincialisation of the region. Thus we can identify similar processes and patterns throughout different spheres of life.

## PHOTO CREDITS

**Fig. 1** V. Kassühlke, RGZM on the basis of: Amand 1985, fig. 1.
**Fig. 2** Urban 1984, fig. 3.
**Fig. 3** V. Kassühlke, RGZM on the basis of: Hudeczek 2003, fig. 4.
**Fig. 4/Fig. 7** V. Kassühlke, RGZM on the basis of: Fuchs 1980, tab. 1–2.
**Fig. 5-6** Artner 1994, plan 2–3.
**Fig. 8** Haffner 1979, fig. 4.
**Fig. 9** Joachim 1982, fig. 3.
**Fig. 10** Garbsch 1985, fig. 3.

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HELLA ECKARDT

# MEMORIES OF HOME? INDIGENOUS AND MIGRANT IDENTITIES IN ROMAN BRITAIN*

*Portable material culture generally, and dress ornaments in particular, are sometimes used to distinguish between locals and immigrants, but recent work on skeletons from Later Roman Britain shows that there is not always a straightforward link between identities as expressed through material culture and geographical origin as defined by isotopic signatures. The Roman Empire was characterised by high levels of mobility, and memories of a real or imagined homeland are an important strategy employed by diaspora communities. This paper discusses whether burial rites often viewed as intrusive in Britain (such as the wearing of crossbow brooches and belts in death) can be related to geographical origin. The paper argues that individuals of diverse origins but with strong professional identities may have been buried in ways that represent inventions of traditions, possibly due to a lack of ritual specialists from their original homelands. In other cases traditions may have been preserved by the parents of individuals born in the new homeland.*

## INTRODUCTION

It is often thought that the Roman Empire was characterised by high levels of mobility, especially in urban and military contexts; the individuals and groups who moved across the Empire included forced migrants such as slaves but also included colonial or imperial diasporas of soldiers, administrators, merchants and their families. This paper

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suggests that memories of a real or imagined homeland may have been an important strategy employed by these diaspora communities. Equally, in certain circumstances new traditions may have been invented by individuals who struggled to maintain links with their homeland, in particular where funerary or ritual specialists may have not made the move to a new homeland. The data presented here builds on recent and ongoing research on the relationship between cultural identities as expressed through grave goods and burial rites and biological identities as reflected in isotope signatures. Are burial rites often viewed as intrusive in Britain (such as the wearing of crossbow brooches and belts in death) related to geographical origin? Is there evidence for the invention and modification of traditions, and does it matter whether the objects themselves are imported or locally made? In the case of younger individuals buried with unusual, imported objects but with a local isotopic signature, are we witnessing the preservation of cultural memories and traditions by their parents or other family members?

How the past was viewed in the past has been a theme explored by anthropologists, historians and archaeologist for a considerable time now[1]. There is now also a considerable amount of academic literature on the heterogeneous and complex ways in which 'the Romans' interacted with past monuments, objects and histories of the many cultures and societies they encountered. Simplistic models of 're-use' have largely been replaced by more nuanced approaches, which consider the role of power in the present, the importance of forgetting as well as remembering and regional and historically specific differences across the Empire[2]. Recent examples include a discussion of the ways in which the use of *spolia* in the Arch of Constantine relates to notions of time (and timelessness), memory and power and the evidence for Roman-period activity on prehistoric ritual sites in Britain[3].

The theme of the colloquium published in this volume concerned the concept of 'invented traditions', ritual or symbolic practices that imply continuity with the past and that were first studied in relation to royal, imperial and national traditions developed in the last 200 years or so[4]. The material I wish to discuss here is perhaps more accurately concerned with what they term *custom*, a concept that "does not preclude

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**1** E. g. Bradley 2002; Bradley/Williams 1998.
**2** E. g. Alcock 2002; Borić 2010; Woolf 1996; cf. Eckardt 2004.
**3** Gutteridge 2010; Hutton 2011.
**4** Hobsbawm/Ranger 2003.

innovation and change up to a point, though evidently the requirement that it must appear compatible or even identical with precedent imposes substantial limitations on it"[5]. There are of course also genuine (rather than invented) traditions, which can in turn be defined as "specific and strongly binding social practices"[6]. This paper argues that issues of memory and identity are especially pronounced in diaspora situations, and in the context of funeral and burial rites.

### DIASPORAS, MEMORY AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE POST-ROMAN WORLD

An "individual living in the diaspora experience experiences a dynamic tension every day between living 'here' and remembering 'there', between memories of places of origin and entanglements with places of residence …".[7]

Memories of a homeland but also the process of integration and interaction with new host communities, which always requires adaptation, and the 'forgetting' of some traditions, are important aspects of diaspora theory. Diasporas in general are defined by initial dispersal (be it forced or voluntary), a distinction from the host society and a continuous social or spiritual link to the homeland[8]. Most of the initial research on diasporas has focused on so-called victim diasporas (e. g. the Jewish and Afro-Caribbean diasporas) but it may be that models of trade and colonial diasporas have even more relevance to the Roman world. These describe "the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial and/or imperial ambitions"[9]. Archaeological case studies on trade diasporas have largely focused on early modern communities[10] and there are multiple early modern examples of imperial diasporas, such as the European and British colonization of the Americas, Australia and India. The colonizers maintain a real or symbolic connection with their original homeland, they may imitate its social and political institutions

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**5** Hobsbawm 2003, 2.
**6** Ibid., p. 10.
**7** Agnew 2005, 4.
**8** Lilley 2004, 291.
**9** Cohen 2008, Table 1.1.
**10** E. g. Voss 2005.

and they may feel part of an 'imperial design'[11]. Interestingly, the model allows us to consider the experiences of both the incomers and the indigenous population within such imperial contexts, providing clear parallels for the Roman world[12]. For these reasons I would argue that the concept of diasporas is a useful one, even if its widespread use in modern literature has been challenged[13], and in the following I will focus in particular on how it may relate to memory.

The importance for diasporic communities of a collective memory and myth about the homeland has long been stressed and there is now a host of anthropological and sociological literature on this subject[14]. All this work shows that migration has a profound impact on identity formation: it challenges existing ideas of self and creates new hybrid identities. Rosínska[15] has argued that even when migration is voluntary it is often accompanied by a sense of loss and melancholy; it is also important to consider that in most pre-modern cases (and many modern ones) there is an inability to return, meaning that memories are all that remain of the homeland. Both the past and the present are socially constructed and can be contested; different members of a group may have very different memories depending, for example, on their gender, age and status[16]. For example, recent work has stressed the varied diasporic experiences of Eritrean, Chinese and South Asian women[17].

In many of the modern case studies, self-definitions and self-perceptions are shaped by the often hostile responses of host societies. "The migrant, severed from his roots, often transplanted into a new language, always obliged to learn the ways of a new community, is forced to confront the great question of change and adaption; but many migrants faced with the sheer existential difficulty of making such changes, and also, often, with the sheer 'alienness' and defensive hostility of the peoples among whom they find themselves, retreat from such questions behind the walls of the old culture they have both brought along and left behind. The running man, rejected by those peoples who have built great

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11 Cohen 2008, 69; cf. Lilley 2004.
12 E. g. Casella 2005; Lawrence 2003; Lilley 2006.
13 Brubaker 2005.
14 E. g. Glynn/Kleist 2012; Creet/Kitzmann 2011; Agnew 2005.
15 Rosínska 2011.
16 Agnew 2005, 3.
17 Papers in: Agnew 2005.

walls to keep him out, leaps into a confining stockade of his own"[18]. This sentiment may well be true for modern case studies such as the Kurdish diaspora in France or German expellees in Canada[19] but in my view is rather less relevant for the Roman world, where individuals of very diverse origins move within a shared overarching cultural framework (of, for example, language and law) and where at least some of these individuals are in positions of power (see below).

Much of the literature on memory and diasporas is about personal and communal narratives, and traditions expressed through song or foodways as well as religious practices. For the purposes of this paper it is perhaps more relevant to consider occasions where material culture, with all its permanence and materiality, is used explicitly to act as a mnemonic device. Thus costume jewellery based on the Tara brooch or 'Celtic' tattoos can become ways of commemorating origins and publicly displaying cultural (in this case Irish) identity[20]. Gold jewellery and coins can become a memento of not only her mother but the family's transition from Pakistan to Canada for Agnew[21]. Objects, by their physicality, durability and their impact on all the human senses, play an important role in memory work and bodily practices relating to memory, and this has been explored by numerous archaeological and anthropological studies[22].

Even under conditions of forcible displacement people may not just take items of practical use for survival (such as valuables and clothes) but also objects such as photos, a bible or, in the case of Somalian women, beads denoting their marital status[23]. The latter can be described as 'mementoes of sentiment and cultural knowledge' and are significant because they may be used to "re-establish or re-define personal and collective origins" once people have resettled[24]. A related concept, applicable not just to refugees or diaspora communities, is that of the biography of objects[25]; this approach "seeks to understand the way objects become invested with meaning through the social interactions they are caught

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18 Rushdie 2002, 356, cited in: Agnew 2005, 14.
19 Creet/Kitzmann 2011.
20 Williams 2012.
21 Agnew 2005.
22 E. g. Jones 2007; Barbiera/Choyke/Rasson 2009; Mines/Weiss 1993.
23 Parkin 1999, 312–317.
24 Parkin 1999, 303.
25 Kopytoff 1986; Appadurai 1986.

up in"[26]. These biographies thus do not necessarily represent a faithful preservation of some kind of historic truth, but can be about forgetting and invention, as in the case of some medieval relics[27]. Of most relevance to our study may be objects that have accumulated histories, and are associated with specific people, events or actions but where those people or the places where those events and actions occurred can no longer be accessed, adding a poignant significance to them (see heirlooms below).

## DIASPORAS AND MEMORIES IN THE ROMAN WORLD

The notion of diaspora communities and how memories and traditions may have been maintained away from home is especially important in the Roman period, which saw high levels of mobility. Most work on this subject has focused on the epigraphic evidence, and there are obvious pitfalls in terms of the uneven spread of the epigraphic habit, and in the perceived need to record origin in inscriptions. Nevertheless a whole series of studies examining inscription from Britain, Gaul and the City of Rome has suggested that on about 5% of these inscriptions a foreign origin is either recorded explicitly or can be deduced on the basis of the name[28]. The richness of the epigraphic data provides fascinating insights into the life stories of these individuals, and into the age, gender and professional identities of these travellers[29]. Scheidel[30] incorporated other written evidence and demographic data and suggested a much higher proportion of mobile individuals, suggesting that in the early Augustan period 40% of Italian Roman citizens over the age of 45 would not have lived in the place where they were born. Isotope analysis of Roman period burials has suggested high proportions of incomers, in several cases of about 30%[31]. Clearly, all of these estimates are based on partial and often difficult evidence; for example, there are issues around the epigraphic habit and about how and why individuals may or may not specify their *origo*. Similarly, isotope analysis is a rapidly developing discipline where the boundaries of what is considered local are continuously reviewed and

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26 Marshall/Gosden 1999, 170.
27 Devlin 2007, 19–21.
28 Rowland 1976; Wierschowski 2001; Noy 2000; cf. Eckardt 2010, 103–107.
29 E.g Handley 2011.
30 Scheidel 2004, 21.
31 Prowse et al. 2007; Schweissing/Grupe 2003; Eckardt 2010, Table 7.2.

the skeletons sampled are not representative of populations as a whole[32]. No doubt estimates of Roman mobility will continue to be reviewed but for the purposes of this paper there is no doubt that many people moved, and that some moved over very significant distances. In addition, there is considerable evidence for the wide range of reasons that people travelled for; these included business and employment but also family affairs and even holidays[33].

Returning to the theme of trade and imperial diasporas raised above, there are obvious Roman examples such as the famous Barates of Palmyra, who set up the grave-stone for his British wife Regina in Southshields[34]. A recent perceptive paper by Maureen Carroll[35] demonstrates the complex identities expressed by the monument. Thus Regina is depicted in indigenous British (or provincial) clothing similar to that worn by women on the Rhine and Danube and with a 'torque', possibly as a symbolic reference to older British traditions. Her costume and jewellery seem to show no Palmyrene influences but her tombstone appears to have been carved by a Palmyrene sculptor on the basis of its style and the Aramaic inscription. Her tombstone in itself is an expression of status and wealth, but both Regina and Barates were non-citizens and she was a freed slave. It is not certain whether they were legally married, so the use of the term *conuinx* and the emphasis on matronly, feminine virtue (through the depiction of a wool basket and spinning equipment) may be an assertion of a status aspired to, rather than achieved. Carroll's study well illustrates the subtle messages about complex diasporic identities (e. g. ethnic, gender, status and difference) that could be expressed in a single monument.

## DIASPORAS, MEMORIES AND FUNERARY TRADITIONS

In the remainder of this section I will consider funerary rites and their importance for diasporic communities in particular: how are familial memories, local and regional customs and funerary traditions maintained by migrants through burial rites and material culture?

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[32] Bruun 2010; Eckardt/Müldner (forthcoming); Evans/Chenery/Montgomery 2012; Pollard 2011; see below.
[33] Adams/Laurence 2001; Foubert/Breeze 2014; Handley 2011.
[34] Nesbitt (forthcoming); Carroll 2012.
[35] Carroll 2012.

We have already touched upon the concept of object biographies and the significance of objects may be especially marked in funerary contexts[36]. Thus contemporary studies show that the elderly about to move into a nursing home can use artefacts to project a particular self-image and influence memory, for example through the passing on of certain objects in wills or as gifts before death[37]. In heirlooms a part of a person lives on in the objects associated with them; often such objects are actively used to commemorate the dead, but their meaning may change depending on, for example, whether an individual had a personal relationship with the previous owner of an object. In anthropology, heirlooms have been linked to hereditary power, and this concept can also be applied to archaeology[38]. It can be difficult to distinguish heirlooms from residual or intrusive objects, but for example, in some closely dated and well-excavated medieval contexts it has been possible to identify objects that were between fifty and three hundred years old when deposited, demonstrating that they were curated and valued for considerable time periods, and presumably imbued with a range of meanings[39].

Work on modern Africa demonstrates the importance placed on the correct treatment of the dead even by refugees and poor migrants. For example, in modern Johannesburg individuals (often supported by organisations such as funerary parlours and burial societies) go to considerable lengths to repatriate bodies[40]. Anthropological examples from modern African refugees also demonstrate that despite a lack of resources refugees try to maintain traditional burial practices (although adapted to new circumstances) and invest heavily in funeral and burial rites. Harrell-Bond and Wilson[41] provide examples of refugees appearing to be more concerned with executing the correct funerary sites and thereby appeasing ancestors and maintaining family status than simple material welfare. Thus blankets and food meant for the living are used as shrouds and for funerary feasts and concrete meant for a school building is 'diverted' to construct grave markers, leading to misunderstanding and conflict with western aid agencies.

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**36** Cf. Hallam/Hockey 2001.
**37** Devlin 2007, 22–24.
**38** Lillios 1999.
**39** Gilchrist 2012, 237–251.
**40** Nunez/Wheeler 2012.
**41** Harrell-Bond/Wilson 1990.

It is therefore no surprise that burial rites also take on great importance in the creation and maintenance of more settled migrant communities, who are not affected by the immediate trauma and deprivation of refugees. Cemeteries are often thought to be culturally conservative and were perhaps especially important for immigrant communities who desire a sense of stability, continuity and tradition in a new country and surrounded by a new local mainstream culture[42]. For example, Ukrainian tombstones may be decorated with geometric designs derived from traditional woodcarving or embroidery; the Chinese commemorate the dead with food offerings at the graveside and the tombstones of many immigrant groups carry inscriptions in their home languages[43]. While the emphasis on origin myths and communal identities in these ethnic cemeteries may not be surprising, the case studies also show evidence for assimilation and innovation, such as the adoption of inscriptions in English and the introduction of laser photoengraving.

The ways in which places, monuments and objects can be used as technologies of memory and forgetting specifically in funerary contexts has been explored in depth for the early medieval period[44].

Memory (and how it could be destroyed) was of course also central to Roman society[45] and of particular relevance in the funerary context, where tombstones and other monuments, literary texts as well as busts and masks played an important part[46]. The dead could also be remembered through ritual actions such as offerings at the grave or interactions with statues and portraits[47]. Roman mourners are also attested to have used personal mementoes, such as a bracelet inscribed with his lover's name worn by a male mourner or a silver cup belonging to his grandmother used by the emperor Vespasian only on festival days; however, it can be difficult to identify heirlooms and commemorative items in the archaeological record[48].

Returning to the specific question of how memories and identities were expressed by migrants dying far from home, it appears that all

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**42** Meyer 1993a, 3–4.
**43** Meyer 1993b.
**44** Williams 2003, 1–11; Devlin 2007.
**45** E. g. Gowing 2005; Flower 2006; Varner 2004.
**46** E. g. Carroll 2006; Hope 2003; Hope 2011; Hope/Huskinson 2011; Toynbee 1971.
**47** Graham 2005; Hope 2011, 182–186.
**48** Hope 2011, 186–190.

across the Empire there is profound mixing of peoples of very different origins, and this is likely to have affected funerary rites in many ways. There is no one specific homeland from which people migrated, and both forced and voluntary migration took place within an Empire that provided an overarching political and social framework, and which has been described in terms of a globalising culture[49]. Rather than looking for the transplantation of whole groups who may have been able to maintain traditional rites, perhaps a more applicable parallel is that of an individual from Rimrock, New Mexico, who was a Ramah Navajo Indian but married to a Zuni wife and steeped in the traditions of Mormon church; this individual constantly crossed boundaries and his multi-layered cultural identity was reflected in the social practices carried out at his funeral[50]. This also raises the obvious and often-made point that funeral rites are carried out for and not by the dead, and this may be a particular issue at times of increased mobility. In a modern example, we can consider mourning rituals in rural Greece, which were traditionally carried out by older women, who sing laments at funerals, memorial services and exhumations[51]. However, rapid change occurred since the 1960s with the movement of younger members of the community to large towns and indeed abroad. "Given the rapid rate of urbanization and modernization in Greece, it is not surprising that most younger women do not know laments, do not approve of them, and anticipate that they will not be sung at death rites for which they will be responsible in the future"[52]. Younger members of the community may therefore chose (or be forced to accept) a loss of tradition, and develop new ways of marking a funeral. Such a situation may be paralleled in the Roman world, where young males may have moved over considerable distances with the imperial army and administration, and therefore lost the knowledge that was provided by older ritual specialists (see below). Alternatively, individuals could be brought 'home' after death, something often expressed in wills and on monuments, as well as attested for important figures such as Drusus[53].

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**49** Hingley 2005.
**50** Cunningham 1993.
**51** E. g. Danforth 1982; Seremetakis 1991.
**52** Danforth 1982, 72.
**53** Noy 2011, 14–17.

In the following, let us examine some case studies from Roman Britain to explore the complicated relationship between artefacts and identity in more detail.

## MEMORIES OF HOME AT SCORTON AND LANKHILLS?

In this paper I will mainly draw on data from two studies, focusing on the late Roman cemetery at Lankhills, Winchester[54] and the much smaller cemetery at Scorton[55]. In both studies newly available isotopic data can be contrasted with traditional archaeological identifications of material culture. All these case studies build on the results of the 'Diasporas in Roman Britain' project, which examined archaeological and isotopic evidence for migration from ca. 150 skeletons from Roman Britain.

This is not the place to discuss the method in detail, but, in brief, strontium ($^{87}$Sr/$^{86}$Sr) and oxygen ($\delta^{18}$O) isotope analysis can be used to distinguish between locals and foreigners; "isotopic signatures" are incorporated into the body tissues of humans and animals through the food and drink they ingested at the time of tissue formation[56]. The strontium and oxygen isotope composition of tooth enamel (using the 2$^{nd}$ or 3$^{rd}$ permanent molar and representing an enamel development period between c. 3 to 13 years of age), allows us to to broadly characterise an individual's place of childhood residence in terms of geology and climate.

Carbon and nitrogen stable isotopes of skeletal collagen reflect the main sources of dietary protein consumed by an individual, and differences between bone (reflecting the last 10–30+ years of an individual's life) and dentine (reflecting the childhood signature) isotope values indicate a significant change in diet in the life-time of an individual, which could be explained by a change in location[57]. 'Isotopic signatures' can then be compared to available background data to assess whether an individual's isotope values match those at the place of burial; in that case the individual was probably indeed local, although it must always

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**54** Booth et al. 2010; Clarke 1979; Eckardt et al. 2009; Evans/Stoodley/Chenery 2006.
**55** Eckardt/Müldner/Speed (forthcoming (2015)).
**56** E. g. Chenery/Eckardt/Müldner 2011; Montgomery 2010; Evans/Chenery/Montgomery 2012; Whittle/Bickle 2013.
**57** For a convenient summary using Romano-British data see Müldner 2013.

be born in mind that many other places may share a similar geology and climate. Where the isotope values exclude a local origin, the information contained in the isotopic signal can be used to narrow down potential places of childhood residence but again it should be noted that many areas share the same strontium and oxygen isotope characteristics and the technique often works better when used to exclude areas of origin suggested on the basis of other evidence such as inscriptions or artefacts[58].

There has now been a considerable amount of isotope analysis research on Roman-period burials, ranging from southern Germany[59], Italy[60], Roman Britain[61] and Roman Jordan[62]. Almost all the sites sampled showed considerable diversity, with a range of values that may reflect locals (within 30km radius of the site), mid-distance and long-distance migrants. Of course these data have to be used very cautiously as isotope analysis is a rapidly developing scientific discipline and the interpretation of isotope data is continuously evolving as methodological issues are addressed and more data points become available[63].

Winchester is a *civitas* capital in southern Britain, and two major excavation campaigns of its northern cemetery at Lankhills revealed more than 750 inhumation burials[64]. In a much debated identification Clarke defined 16 individuals as incomers on the basis of the burial rite (e.g. items of personal adornment worn or pottery vessels placed at the right foot) and suggested that they may have originated from the Danube area of Central Europe[65]. This suggestion was tested by Evans et al. (2006), who provided oxygen and strontium isotope analyses for 18 individuals, drawn equally from the perceived 'Pannonian' and 'local' populations. A further 40 skeletons from the recent Oxford Archaeology excavations were sampled by Eckardt et al. (2009), applying Clarke's criteria to distinguish archaeologically between possible Pannonians and possible

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**58** Montgomery 2010, 336.
**59** Schweissing/Grupe 2003.
**60** Prowse et al. 2007; Killgrove 2010b.
**61** Evans/Stoodley/Chenery 2006; Chenery/Eckardt/Müldner 2011; Chenery et al. 2010; Leach et al. 2009; Leach et al. 2010; Müldner/Chenery/Eckardt 2011; Eckardt et al. 2009.
**62** Perry et al. 2009, 2011.
**63** Brettell/Montgomery/Evans 2012; Eckardt/Müldner (forthcoming); Evans/Chenery/Montgomery 2012; Pollard 2011.
**64** Clarke 1979; Booth et al. 2010; Wacher 1992, 277–288.
**65** Clarke 1979, 377–389; cf. Baldwin, 1985; Swift 2000, 69–77.
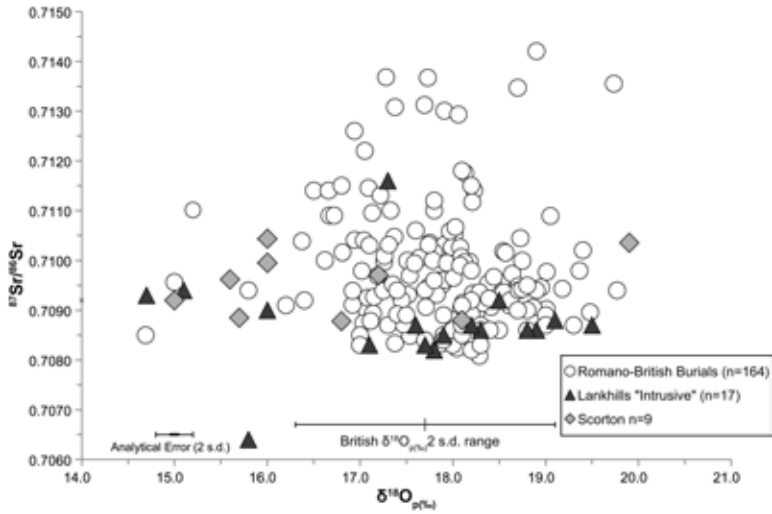
**1** Isotope values for Roman Britain, with data for 'archaeologically intrusive' individuals from Lankhills and Scorton highlighted.

locals. Both studies identified individuals that grew up outside of the UK, but the relationship between burial rites, grave goods and isotopic signature is clearly complicated (see Fig. 1). While many of the so-called immigrants did indeed have non-UK origins, they clearly came from very diverse environments rather than a common area of origin. Conversely, some presumed locals are in fact isotopically incomers. In summary, while archaeological criteria identify some 'locals' and 'incomers', there is a significant divergence from the biological evidence. We have argued elsewhere that these results ought to be seen as an opportunity to explore ethnic identity at Lankhills and elsewhere in line with more recent theoretical work, which sees ethnicity as fluid and constructed rather than fixed[66]. It appears that in many cases burial practice was dictated by factors other than 'ethnicity' or place of origin, but rather reveals the presence of second generation immigrants and perhaps the impact of kinship groups, intermarriage, assimilation or cultural and political preferences. It can be further suggested that in some cases we may be seeing familial memories or traditions, carried out by one or both parents. As in the ethnographic case studies discussed above, the context of the funeral (and perhaps especially the funeral of an individ-

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**66** E. g. Jones 1997; Roymans 2004, 1–7; Derks/Roymans 2009.

**2** Reconstruction based on Girl 323 from Lankhills.

ual or group living in a new cultural milieu) is one in which heirlooms, traditional practices as well as innovation and modification are played out. Just such an example may be represented by a young girl (323) at Lankhills whose grave is characterised by some unusual grave goods and who was buried wearing multiple bracelets on her left arm, but appears to be local isotopically (see Fig. 2)[67]. While the headband decorated with copper-alloy shells and some of the beads are considered exotic, as is the practice of wearing multiple bracelets in death, it is important to note that some of these bracelets are of local, British manufacture (i.e. cog-wheel bracelets). We should also take into consideration that in Roman Britain the graves of young girls frequently contain significant amounts of often unusual jewellery; this may lead archaeologists to make assumptions about ethnicity but may in fact be more closely related to the age and gender of the deceased, possibly acting as a symbolic compensation for a non-attained wedding[68].

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[67] Swift 2000b, 74; Evans/Stoodley/Chenery 2006, 271.
[68] Cool 2010a, 307; Cool 2010b, 30–34.

The small but unusual cemetery at Scorton (Hollow Banks Quarry) is located just north of the Roman town and fort of Catterick. Here, of 15 almost exclusively male burials dated to the 4th century AD an unusually large proportion had items of personal adornment. Thus 4 out of 15 individuals had crossbow brooches, which is remarkable when compared to Lankhills where the comparable numbers are 8/444 for Clarke's and 6/307 for Booth et al.'s excavations. The occurrence of this particular brooch type and of the belt fittings suggests that these men may have been serving in the late Roman army or administration[69]. It also raises questions as to whether some or all of these men may have come to Scorton from the continent. Following Clarke's criteria, those men buried wearing the crossbow brooches and belt fittings may be seen as immigrants, while those buried with these objects placed by their feet or without surviving grave goods may be classified as locals. In fact, multi-isotope analyses (carbon, nitrogen, oxygen and strontium) of nine sufficiently well-preserved individuals indicates that seven males, all equipped with crossbow brooches and/or belt fittings, were not local to the Catterick area and at least six of them probably came from the European mainland (see Fig. 1)[70]. There was no clear link between isotopically defined origin and whether crossbow brooches and belts were worn or placed in the graves. It appears that the mere inclusion of these important elements of the late Roman military and administrative 'uniform'[71] may point to a foreign origin – but it may be that these were included in the graves of these young men not to signal their 'foreignness' but to stress their specific status and role within this small northern community. Especially at a time of potential conflict and stress, it may have been important for this group to assert these aspects of their identity. It could also be suggested that young men stationed on military postings a long way from their home, and associating there with men of very different origins, had little opportunity to access the 'traditional' funereray practices of their homelands. As with the Greek rural population in the 20th century, older ritual specialists may have been left at home, leading to a need to create and invent new traditions and rites within the context of the late Roman military and administration.

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69 E. g. Swift 2000, 3–4; cf. Stout 1994, 85.
70 Eckardt/Müldner/Speed (forthcoming).
71 Von Rummel 2007, 210.

CONCLUSION

Memory is central to creating and maintaining identities – for example, the origins of both Barates and Regina are stated, and presumably they had other ways of remembering their respective past. Portable material culture generally, and dress ornaments in particular, are sometimes used to distinguish between locals and immigrants, but recent work on skeletons from Later Roman Britain shows that there is not always a straightforward link between identities as expressed through material culture and geographical origin as defined by isotopic signatures. This should not surprise us, as all identities are continually constructed and continue to develop, often in a dialogue between traditions and new influences. On occasion we may have evidence for nostalgic practices, perhaps especially in emotionally highly charged funerary contexts. Thus in the case of Girl 323 from Winchester Lankhills one or both parents may have been maintaining traditions by burying her dressed with an unusual range of personal adornments. Were they attempting to preserve familial memories by placing particular objects into the grave in a certain way? However, the isotopic analysis suggests that the girl grew up in southern Britain, and her age and gender rather than her ethnicity played an important, perhaps the most important, role in determining the burial rite. Another important factor relates to the influences of the host communities, which go far beyond the availability of new forms of material culture, such as the cogwheel bracelets in her grave. Remembering and forgetting are active and dynamic processes and we can consider the reworking of old objects in new social and symbolic contexts by comparing the use of 'intrusive' artefacts on some Romano-British sites.

At Brougham in Cumbria very exotic objects such as bucket pendants and unusual practices such as horse cremations point to this being the cemetery of a whole military community, including women and children associated with a 3<sup>rd</sup> century fort and *vicus*[72]. By contrast at Scorton in Yorkshire, a discreet cemetery likely associated with the 4<sup>th</sup> century military and civil administration of the Catterick region, the objects found, namely crossbow brooches and belts, are not in themselves unusual. Such objects are made in standardised forms across the provinces, but it is their inclusion in the grave that is highly unusual in a Romano-British context. There may have been a need to create obvious

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**72** Cool 2004.

outward expressions of professional and social identities especially at a time of considerable economic and political change. At Scorton, we may thus see groups of men of disparate origins creating a tradition of crossbows and belts displayed in death (regardless of whether worn or placed in the grave). Older members of their diverse original communities may not have travelled with them, so in any case it would not have been possible to maintain some kind of pure tradition. Rather, we may be dealing with constructed identities or constructed shared cultural traditions. In other words, an imagined community of the Late Roman military and administration may have been more important than expressing specific 'ethnic' identities. The same would apply to Lankhills near Winchester; at both the latter sites their proximity to urban sites may have offered greater scope for cultural and social interactions than the isolated military community at Brougham[73].

Traditions, memories and identities are intimately linked to the body, and dress in the broadest sense is a fruitful but complicated field of study, especially when used to try and identify immigrants in the archaeological, iconographical and historical record[74]. This paper has attempted to show that scientific techniques such as isotope analysis can add a further dimension to these debates by allowing us to contrast cultural and biological identities in specific regional contexts.

PHOTO CREDITS:

**Fig. 1** Gundula Müldner, University of Reading.
**Fig. 2** Aaron Watson; the illustrated artefacts were made available by Helen Rees (Winchester Museums), with kind permission of the Winchester Excavation Committee.

**73** Reece 2005, 680.
**74** E. g. von Rummel 2007.

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# CONTRIBUTORS

**ALEXANDRA W. BUSCH** (Roman Archaeology), Director at the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Leibniz-Research Institute of Archaeology at Mainz. Recent publications include: (edited with Alfred Schäfer) Römische Weihealtäre im Kontext. Friedberg 2014; Militär in Rom. Militärische und paramilitärische Einheiten im kaiserzeitlichen Stadtbild. Palilia 20. Wiesbaden 2011.

**HELLA ECKARDT** (Roman Archaeology and Material Culture Studies), Professor at the University of Reading. Recent publications include: Objects and identities. Roman Britain and the North-Western provinces. Oxford 2014; (edited with S. Rippon) Living and Working in the Roman World. Essays in Honour of Michael Fulford. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 95. Portsmouth, Rhode Island 2013.

**DAVID FONTIJN** (European Prehistory), Professor of World Prehistory at Leiden University. Recent publications include: (edited with S. van der Vaart and R. Jansen) Transformation through Destruction. A Monumental and Extraordinary Early Iron Age Hallstatt C Barrow from the Ritual Landscape of Oss-Zevenbergen. Leiden 2013.

**ANDREAS NIEHAUS** (East Asian Cultures), Professor of Japanese Studies at Ghent University. Recent publications include: (edited with Christian Tagsold) Sport, Memory, and Nationhood in Japan: Remembering the Glory Days. Sport in Global Society – Contemporary Perspectives. New York 2012.

**ONNO M. VAN NIJF** (Greek, Hellenistic and Roman History), Professor of Ancient History at Groningen University. Recent publications include: (edited with Richard Alston) Political Culture in the Greek City after the Classical Age. Leuven 2011.

**MICHAEL SOMMER** (Ancient History), Professor of Ancient History at the University of Oldenburg. Recent publications include: Römische Geschichte I. Rom und die antike Welt bis zum Ende der Republik. II. Rom und sein Imperium in der Kaiserzeit. Stuttgart 2013/2014.

**KATJA SPORN** (Classical Archaeology), Director of the German Archaeological Institute at Athens. Recent Publications include: (ed.) Griechische Grabbezirke klassischer Zeit. Normen und Regionalismen. Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums am Deutschen Archäologischen Institut, Abteilung Athen, 20.–21. November 2009, Athenaia 6. Munich 2013; (ed. with S. Ladstädter and M. Kerschner) Natur – Kult – Raum, Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums an der Paris-Lodron-Universität Salzburg, 20.–22. January 2012, Sonderschriften ÖAI 51, Vienna 2015.

**MIGUEL JOHN VERSLUYS** (Archaeology and Cultural History of Antiquity), Associate Professor of Classical & Mediterranean Archaeology at Leiden University. Recent publications include: (edited with Martin Pitts) Globalisation and the Roman World. World History, Connectivity and Material Culture. Cambridge 2015.

**PETER S. WELLS** (The Archaeology of Pre- and Protohistoric Europe), Professor of Anthropology at the University of Minnesota. Recent publications include: How Ancient Europeans Saw the World. Vision, Patterns, and the Shaping of the Mind in Prehistoric Times. Princeton 2012.

**CHRISTINA G. WILLIAMSON** (Greek, Hellenistic and Roman History), Lecturer and Researcher at Groningen University. Recent publications include: (edited with Richard Alston and Onno van Nijf) Cults, Creeds and Identities in the Greek City after the Classical Age. Leuven 2013.

**MICHAEL ZELLE** (Classical Archaeology), Director of the Lippisches Landesmuseum Detmold. Recent publications include: (edited with Beate Herring and Elke Treude) Römer und Germanen in Ostwestfalen Lippe. Untersuchungen zu kulturhistorischen Entwicklungen von der Mittellatènezeit bis zur jüngeren römischen Kaiserzeit 1–2. Oldenburg 2011/2013.

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