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Towards Romanization 2.0

High-Definition Narratives in the Roman North-West

ABSTRACT This article explores the implications of studying Romanization 2.0, a concept that entails putting connectivity and human-object entanglements at the centre of new high-definition narratives. While this perspective brings important payoffs, decentring Rome in historical narratives and moving beyond the methodological nationalism that has often dogged studies of Roman imperialism, it also presents archaeologists with an array of methodological challenges. How can the Big Data of multiple localities connected by flows of objects and people be appropriately visualized and analysed? To address this question, I present some results from a project concerning the selection of standardized objects in funerary contexts and their impacts on local communities in Britannia, Gallia Belgica, and Germania Inferior, *c.* 100 BC–AD 100, drawing on a database of over three thousand grave assemblages.

KEYWORDS Romanization 2.0; funerary assemblages; standardization; pottery; fibulae.

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Romanization 2.0

The idea of Romanization 2.0 refers to a new way of conceptualizing and interpreting the Roman world and its material culture. It was first coined in a discussion article in *Archaeological Dialogues* by Miguel John Versluys (2014, 6; Woolf 2014). The novelty of this concept lies in its explicit use of perspectives deriving from the historical study of globalization and the so-called 'material turn'. In the first place, globalization theory encourages researchers to rethink issues of analytical scale to address the 'global' and 'local' simultaneously (Pitts 2017a). Here 'global' is taken to denote pan-regional scales of analysis and may correspond with emic cultural constructs such as *oikumene* and *orbis terrarium*, as opposed to being global in a literal planetary sense. Following this line of inquiry entails doing away with the boundaries that artificially constrain the analysis of moving people and objects in a highly interconnected Roman world. In this way, the perspective marks a considerable break with scholarly traditions in which histories and archaeologies of individual provinces are commonplace, especially when those provinces broadly correspond with modern nation-state boundaries (e.g. Britannia and Britain). From an archaeological standpoint, it also necessitates a move away from ingrained approaches to individual archaeological sites 'in context', towards the simultaneous comparison of multiple sites at once, as part of a larger connected empire. An emphasis on globalization helps us to think of the Roman world less in terms of separate containers (Roman, native, Gallic, Greek, military, civilian, urban, rural, etc.), but rather a single container variously characterized by flows and blockages in the movement of people and objects. Privileging connectivity and mobility facilitates narratives that decentre Rome and a more complex polycentric conceptualization of empire.

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If the contribution of globalization thinking to Romanization 2.0 mainly concerns the adoption of new conceptual and analytical scales, the material turn helps to flesh out the picture — literally and figuratively. At the most basic level this requires objects and material culture to be pushed to the forefront of historical investigation, since it is primarily (and arguably only) through the movement of objects, styles, and materials that globalization may be reliably and consistently studied in a connected Roman world. Versluys (2014, 15) provocatively asks us to imagine a Roman world in which none of the extant Roman literary sources had survived for modern audiences. The result of this thought experiment, he proposes, is not so much a bounded empire divided into cellular provinces, but rather a picture of Eurasia characterized by diasporas of objects, in turn producing varied repertoires of material culture and specific forms of human–thing entanglements, or objectscapes (Versluys 2017; Pitts and Versluys 2021). Putting objects centre-stage ought to involve addressing the fundamental questions of what objects *did*, by privileging their stylistic, material, and contextual properties. In this way, Romanization 2.0 asks its adherents to attempt to go 'beyond representation', by placing secondary emphasis on the older paradigm that prioritized the question of what objects *meant* (Van Oyen and Pitts 2017). For example, the imitation of *terra sigillata* designs in the local pottery repertoires of early Roman Europe was once variously interpreted representationally in terms of progressive emulation of Roman symbols (Millett 1990, 38), the creation of new local consensus of taste (Woolf 1998, 202), and the spread of luxury (Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 421). In contrast, the new paradigm demands a more rigorous investigation of the genealogies, functions, and trajectories of the specific designs being imitated (e.g. Van Oyen 2016; Pitts 2017b; Swift 2017; cf. Gosden 2005), providing a more holistic analysis of archaeological variability, which might in turn provide the basis of a less partial 'representational' interpretation. More radically perhaps, Romanization 2.0 also provides a context for exploring the roles of objects as *agents*. From this perspective, the phenomenon of *terra sigillata* imitation may have had less to do with the realm of cultural politics than is often assumed, and a lot more to do with the machinations of the inter-artefactual domain, in which 'the only factor which governs the visual appearance of artefacts is their relationship to other artefacts in the same style' (Gell 1998, 216).

This perspective has several important implications for the study of urban contexts. For the Roman world, globalizing processes were highly dependent on urbanization and the development of an interconnected network of cities and other settlements with essentially urban functions (i.e. military bases). As the north-west Roman provinces demonstrate, where cities did not already exist it became necessary to create them. As well as being highly connected environments, Roman cities were also made up of mega-conglomerations of objects with diverse stylistic properties. Roman cities can therefore be understood to have functioned as key interfaces between the 'global' inter-artefactual domain of the Roman world (as centres for the influx of objects and styles with inter-provincial circulations), and the local inter-artefactual domains of individual regions (each with their own long-lived traditions and objectscapes). While not exclusively about urbanism, Romanization 2.0 puts the role of cities into wider contexts, at both local and global scales of analysis. In this way, urban centres ought to contribute rich bodies of data to drive future applications of Romanization 2.0.

High-Definition Narratives

Having briefly outlined Romanization 2.0, it follows to consider how this ambitious vision might be best realized and studied archaeologically. Given its object-centred approach and the much-lauded wealth of material evidence that exists from the Roman period (e.g. Gardner 2003; Van Oyen and Pitts 2017), a clear desideratum of Romanization 2.0 is to generate new high-definition narratives of the Roman world and its material culture. At this point, it is worth exploring what exactly 'high-definition' ought to entail. For some archaeologists, high-definition may refer to a certain level of chronological precision and accuracy in the dating of stratigraphy and broader horizons. While such a perspective is undoubtedly important to operationalizing Romanization 2.0, it is arguably not such an important missing piece in the Roman puzzle. After all, Roman archaeology has been long-blessed by tight chronological frameworks informed by the extant historical narrative, high rates of coin-loss, and the deposition of other highly standardized artefacts such as stamped *terra sigillata* pottery, in addition to other relative and absolute dating methods. In contrast, the high-definition approaches I deem essential to the success of Romanization 2.0 instead concern how archaeologists deal with the complexity and granularity of material-culture data within already tightly defined chronological horizons. The challenge involves comparing and visualizing 'Big

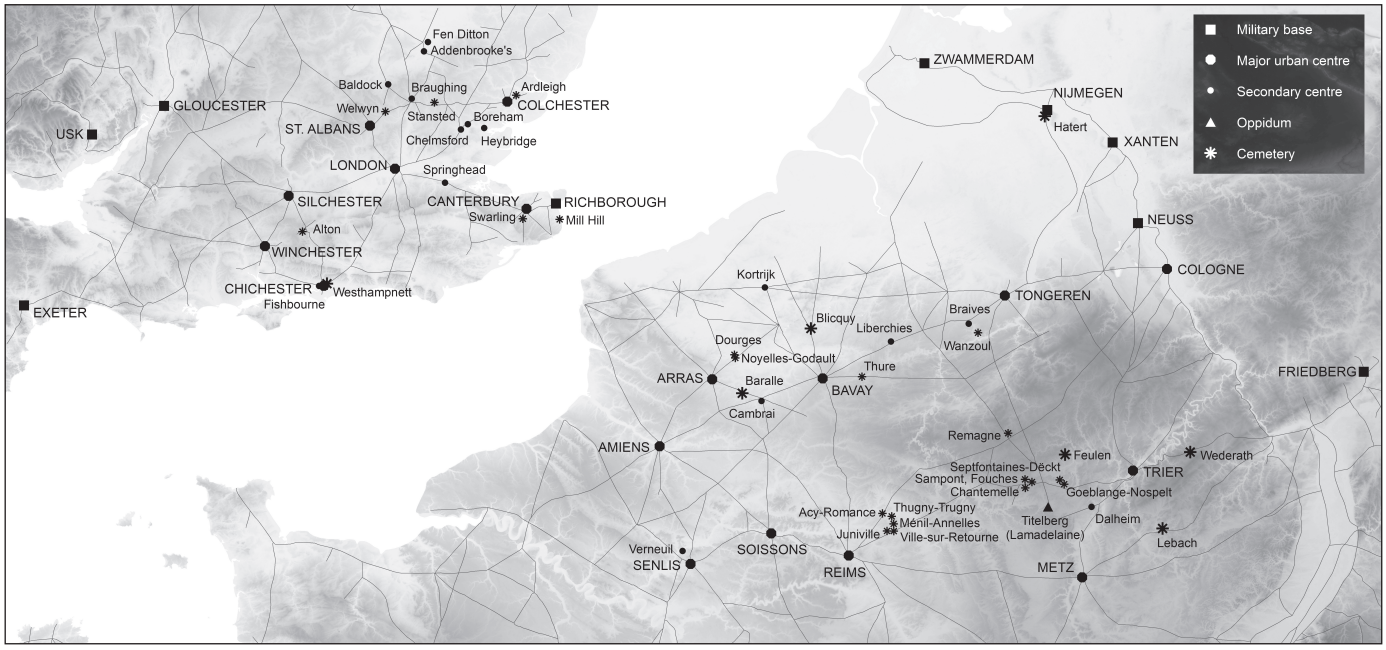

Figure 8.1. Map showing sites and cemeteries scrutinized in Pitts 2019. Map by author (Pitts 2019, 22, fig. 1.6).

Data' across multiple provinces, without sacrificing the high-definition rendering of patterns at a local or assemblage level.[1]

The methodological challenge of implementing Romanization 2.0 and creating new high-definition perspectives on the Roman world is undoubtedly substantial. The sheer scale of the task of comparing large bodies of complex data across multiple provinces may often be only achieved through bigger programmes involving multiple researchers (Laurence and Trifilò 2015; Gardner 2017). Other obstacles include the persistence of national traditions in recording, classifying, quantifying, and publishing the same kinds of artefacts, and the need to read specialist reports in multiple languages, which impede easy comparisons of material culture between many different localities at once. It is thus no surprise that when bigger comparisons have been attempted they tend to scrutinize classes of evidence with more universal and standardized descriptive languages, such as inscriptions and *terra sigillata* pottery, as opposed to, for example, coarse-ware pottery and the eclectic category of 'small finds'. However, these challenges should not be over-emphasized, or seen as absolute barriers. Even large collaborative projects cannot do everything at once. Arguably the most pertinent challenge is for researchers to move out of their comfort zones to consider areas of study framed not by predetermined sites and regions, but rather by the circulation of objects. At least from an artefactual perspective, the most important methodological provisos for studying Romanization 2.0 consist of a) an appropriate *scale* of analysis to examine the impacts of circulating objects beyond individual localities and 'bounded' regions; and b) the retention of high-definition perspectives that allow the granularity of local patterns and experiences to be explored in depth and compared with other connected localities, going beyond the top-down perspective of 'dots on a map' and the complexities concealed by such visualizations (Pitts 2020).

The high-definition approach to Romanization 2.0 that I wish to explore in the present article involves both chronological precision and contextual granularity. More specifically, this entails taking well-defined assemblages or packages of objects that might normally form the basis of detailed intra-site analyses (e.g. Pitts 2010), and instead comparing them simultaneously at a pan-regional scale with hundreds of other contemporaneous assemblages. By repeating the exercise for successive tightly-dated chronological horizons, this should create a platform for new high-resolution narratives of big-picture phenomena without sacrificing the specificity of local perspectives. By retaining individual stratigraphically definable assemblages as the basic units of analysis, and by resisting the urge to condense the complexity of this archaeological data into the reductive categories of whole sites and regions, this kind of approach facilitates the simultaneous analysis of the 'global'

1 Although not specifically addressing Romanization 2.0, see contributions in Allison, Pitts, and Colley 2018.

and 'local' together. Comparisons of this sort can be performed relatively easily using multivariate statistics such as Correspondence Analysis, which can take large contingency tables of data consisting of varying quantities of a plethora of different types of artefacts found in hundreds if not thousands of different assemblages. Appropriately applied, this method may be able to give a visual indication of whether an individual assemblage is typical for its region or locality, or instead more closely aligned with pan-regional or 'international' patterns in the selection of objects. In this way, it may be possible to establish, for example, high-definition pictures of economic and cultural practices across wide territorial vistas, illustrating the extent to which 'objectscapes' were actively constituted by their involvement in larger urban networks, or were more firmly anchored in their immediate local contexts.

To illustrate the potential of multivariate approaches to illuminate Romanization 2.0 and produce new kinds of high-definition narratives, the rest of this article turns to the case study of early Roman north-west Europe. The examples and trends I refer to derive from a much larger project based on the analysis of a database consisting of over eighty thousand objects, the majority consisting of pottery vessels and fibulae (Pitts 2019). The project places particular emphasis on the impact and circulation of standardized objects in the period *c*. 100 BC–AD 100, in an area taking in what would become the provincial territories of Britannia, Gallia Belgica, and Germania Inferior (Fig. 8.1). While a variety of settlement assemblages are scrutinized, a major component of the data consists of over three thousand complete grave assemblages, the majority of which can be confidently assigned to ten- to forty-year date ranges. It is these data that I wish to discuss as the basis for new high-definition narratives of the period. Given the complexity of the analyses in this project, it is not possible to repeat them in their entirety in a single article. Instead, I have chosen to illuminate key aspects of the resultant high-definition narratives through a series of individual grave assemblages.

There are several good reasons why repertoires of objects in funerary contexts are especially well suited to explorations of Romanization 2.0. The first of these concerns the ease of which data can be gathered and compared across multiple national traditions of archaeological classification and publication. In most cases, the complete contents of grave assemblages are routinely published in their entirety in the modern countries that make up the study area of this project, namely Belgium, Britain, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Germany. Unlike equivalent 'legacy data' in published and grey-literature reports from settlements, however, which tend to be inconsistently and incompletely published in a variety of formats in these countries, very little time needs to be taken in reconstructing the complete contents of the original grave assemblages. Indeed, the practice of fully illustrating funerary assemblages greatly assists the process of assigning objects to a unified system of types and styles, and the necessity of reassigning some older descriptions to newer pan-regional typological conventions.[2]

Another methodological benefit of privileging funerary assemblages is the consistency of their character and make-up in the Late Iron Age to Roman period. Since the graves in question feature just over five objects each on average, they form robust units for comparison using techniques such as Correspondence Analysis, often with the effect of producing clearer scatter plots that are not over-clustered. Crucially, the potential for high-definition narratives is greatly improved when dealing with hundreds of assemblages each composed of a limited number of discrete object selections (graves), as opposed to a smaller number of large assemblages that are the products of many individual deposition events over time (e.g. assemblages from urban settlement sequences). Perhaps most importantly, as the product of deliberate and conscious cultural selections, the study of funerary assemblages has the potential to cut to the core of the aims of Romanization 2.0, by putting human–thing entanglements at the centre of analysis (Versluys 2014; cf. Hodder 2012). This is a rather different priority to the processual archaeology of the 1970s and 1980s which privileged narratives of change based on robust urban sequences and large groups of artefacts that were statistically representative of large-scale patterns of supply and deposition. In that paradigm, which continues to inform more recent frameworks for research into the impact of urbanism (e.g. Perring 2002; Perring and Pitts 2013), funerary assemblages are typically avoided because they are regarded as being formed by economically irrational patterns of behaviour. While this criticism has little bearing on the usefulness of using grave assemblages as evidence of cultural patterning, it also urges some caution against going beyond what funerary data can tell us more generally. For this reason, the project in question (Pitts 2019) includes appropriate data from larger settlement assemblages to contextualize the selections of objects made in the funerary sphere with broader-brush data on the circulation, breakage, and loss of equivalent objects at a range of different sites and settlements.

2 E.g. Deru 1996, for so-called 'Gallo-Belgic' wares.

Table 8.1. Numbers of graves and major classes of objects scrutinized in Pitts 2019.

Phase	Era (*c.*)	Graves	Coarse pottery	Fine pottery	Fibulae	Glass vessels	Animal remains	Martial equipment
1	100–25 BC	697	2494	—	608	—	207	161
2	25 BC–AD 40	783	1439	1132	594	25	97	56
3	AD 40–70	985	1843	1581	461	162	40	20
4	AD 70–100	801	1883	1551	179	183	26	7
Grand totals		**3266**	**7659**	**4267**	**1842**	**370**	**370**	**244**

Humans and Things HD: Funerary Object Selection in North-West Europe, *c.* 30 BC–AD 100

Using a series of graves as illustrative examples of larger phenomena, this section aims to provide a sense of what high-definition narratives of Romanization 2.0 might look like. To do so, these graves are discussed in the context of wider patterns in the deliberate selection of objects among connected societies at the interfaces of what would become the Roman provinces of Britannia, Gallia Belgica, and Germania Inferior.[3] For the convenience of storytelling, I have structured the narrative into three major periods of change, even though more fine-grained perspectives are possible. I have also left out the Late Iron Age part of the story, which before the sudden injection of standardized objects *c.* 30–25 BC, is of a qualitatively different nature. Suffice to say that a handful of societies were practising the rite of accompanied cremation in flat-grave cemeteries across the region at the start of the first century BC, often with the inclusion of pottery and fibulae, and to a much lesser degree of frequency, Italian wine amphorae, hearth and feasting equipment, weaponry, and items of personal adornment. While the historically significant campaigns of Julius Caesar in the 50s BC brought significant social upheaval, its impact on the funerary record is barely discernible. However, as the early Roman period wore on, the rite of accompanied cremation became more widespread amongst not only local societies, but also communities of soldiers and colonists, thus presenting an excellent medium for exploring the evolving entanglements of humans and objects in this formative era of European history.

Before delving into the detail of object selection, it is worth considering some low-definition patterns in the make-up of funerary assemblages in the data compiled for the periods in question (Table 8.1). Major headlines coinciding with an Augustan object-boom (phase 2) include the rise of fine standardized pottery (including *terra sigillata*), the gradual introduction of glass vessels, and corresponding declines in the deliberate placement of fibulae, animal remains, and weaponry in funerary contexts. Taken together, these dramatic changes underline the extent to which new configurations of objects were at the heart of cultural change. In this way, Romanization 2.0 in north-west Europe was not just about the selection of new combinations of objects drawn from an increasingly globalized repertoire, it also involved re-evaluating older selections of objects with more regional and local circulations. Whereas innovative new Augustan styles of fibulae helped to extend the Iron Age practice of placing brooches in graves for a few generations, sharper declines in the practices of depositing martial equipment and animal offerings may well have been hastened by the increased weight of their 'barbarian' connotations, especially amidst the bewildering new world of Roman things and urbanized environments. For further insights, let us now consider some high-definition perspectives on these changes for each of the periods in question.

Augustan-Tiberian Assemblages: The Beginnings of an Object Revolution

To begin a brief high-definition narrative of Romanization 2.0 and human–object entanglements in north-west Europe, let us consider the objects placed in two graves of Augustan-Tiberian date (Fig. 8.2). Both have been deliberately selected as relatively modestly furnished graves from cemeteries associated with Iron Age societies, to gauge the impact of what I have described as the 'Roman object revolution' amid two communities separated by nearly 450 miles as the crow flies. The cemetery at Lebach was in use much earlier in the first cen-

3 Further outlined in Pitts 2019.

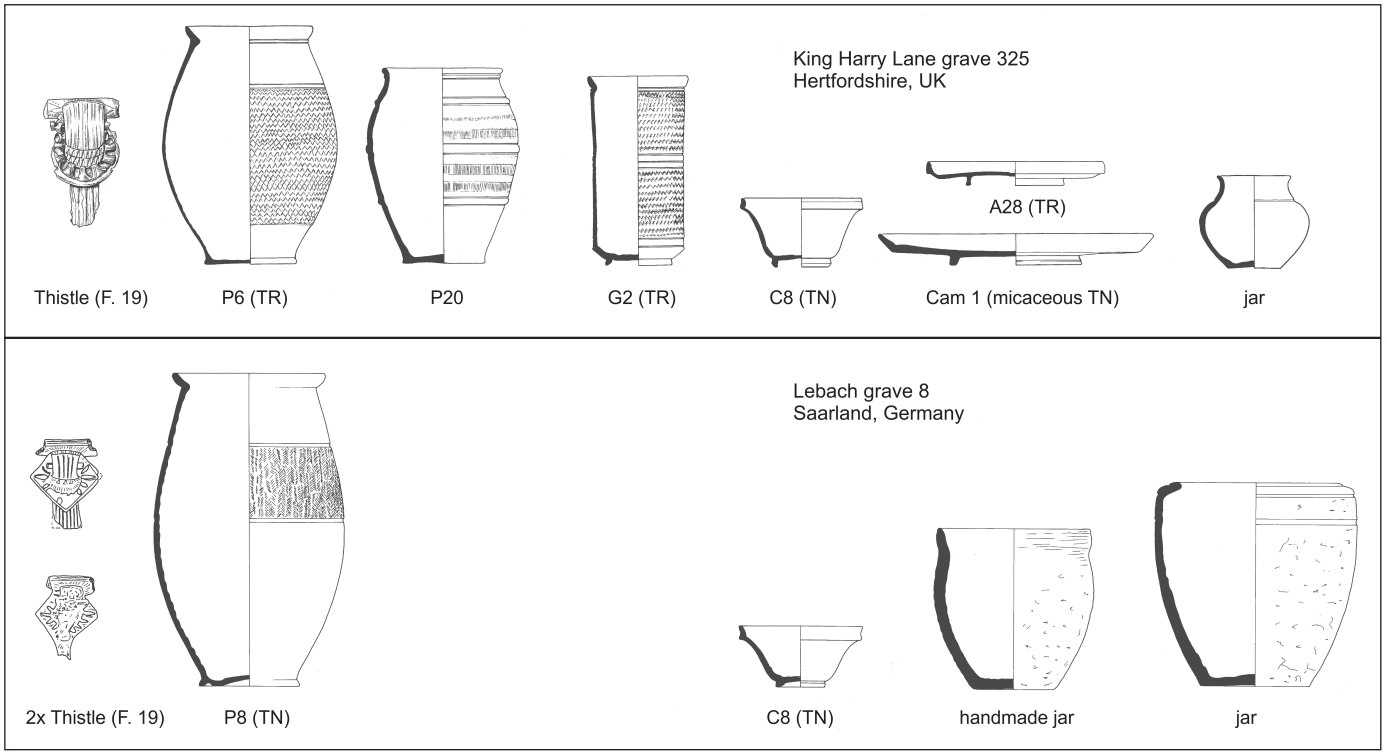

Figure 8.2. Grave 325 at King Harry Lane, St Albans (after Stead and Rigby 1989, 365) and grave 8 at Lebach (after Gerlach 1976, Taf. 9). Drawn by author.

tury BC (Gerlach 1976), whereas the first graves from the King Harry Lane cemetery at St Albans date to the last decades of the first century BC (Stead and Rigby 1989), long before the Roman annexation of south-east Britain in AD 43. Although broadly contemporary, the grave from Lebach is slightly earlier (*c.* 30 BC–AD 10) than the one from St Albans (*c.* 15 BC–AD 30). Considering the objects placed in the graves, both assemblages attest to the sudden and widespread proliferation of a new range of standardized objects. Furthermore, there are several striking similarities in the appearance and even types of objects placed in each grave. This is because the graves in question were not only selected because they belonged to cemeteries with similar origins and funerary rites, but also because they shared similar statistical properties when compared in Correspondence Analysis of over six hundred graves from the period (Pitts 2019, 103, fig. 3.21). What can the selections of objects tell us about processes of change, and why are they so similar?

Perhaps the most striking feature linking grave 325 at King Harry Lane and grave 8 at Lebach is the presence of standardized objects. Both include distinctive Thistle brooches (Feugère 1985, type 19), a new Augustan kind of highly decorative and outwardly visible fibula, which were not so much identically replicated but serialized according to the repetition of specific stylistic criteria. The type circulated widely in south-east Britain and the new Roman province of Gallia Belgica, and was not uncommon in the cemeteries of local communities at the time. Both graves also include two identical *terra nigra* cups (Deru 1996, type C8), which had probably been manufactured regionally at one of the major new urban centres recently established at Reims or Trier. Significantly, the types in question have distinct Mediterranean genealogy, deriving from the Italian *terra sigillata* form Cons. 17 (Deru 1996, 63), a phenomenon shared with the pair of platters in the grave from St Albans. Taken together, these object selections illustrate a phenomenon by which local communities were able to draw upon a new circulating repertoire of artefacts for use in the social sphere of funerary display, both within (Lebach) and outside (St Albans) the bounds of the Roman Empire. While phenomena such as this suggest the existence of a shared cultural milieu spanning political boundaries and materialized through the deliberate and highly specific use of objects, the tendency towards increased homogenization was but one facet of the revolutionary changes taking place at the time.

Another important feature of the Roman object revolution in north-west Europe was the emergence of new objects that constitute important regional innovations that simultaneously referenced more

universal styles of object with pan-regional distribution. This phenomenon can be most strongly seen in the emergence of a new category of drinking vessels, the butt-beaker, which was originally produced in Gallo-Belgic pottery fabrics but soon developed distinct regional variations. A similar process can be seen with the emergence of the Kragenfibel brooch (not present in either of the graves in question), which derived from universal styles of decorative fibulae like the Thistle, but this time with a highly specific distribution roughly coinciding with the territory of the Treveri in south-east Belgium, Luxembourg, and south-west Germany. Crucially, butt-beakers were produced in significant quantities, and constitute the single most common standardized object type in funerary assemblages in this period. Although they draw upon elements of Mediterranean design,[4] unlike the Gallo-Belgic plates and cups that imitated *terra sigillata*, the new butt-beakers can be considered genuine innovations of north-west Europe. The popularity of the butt-beaker in funerary contexts surely had a lot to do with the affordances of the vessel, with its capacious shape fitting with the Late Iron Age predilection for large drinking vessels, and its fine-ware style and fabric sharing elements with other new standardized ceramics of more direct Mediterranean lineage.

Butt-beakers form a dominant component of their respective graves in Figure 8.2. Two are present in the grave from St Albans, including the universally circulating form P6, and form P20, which would give birth to the distinctive P21, the only Gallo-Belgic butt-beaker form produced in quantity in south-east Britain (Hawkes and Hull 1947, form 113, see Fig. 8.3 in this article). The emergence of the latter form is testament to the nature of a connected environment that allowed communities in Britain to develop their own variant of a 'global' design, even though they were not formally part of the Roman Empire at the time. A similar phenomenon can be seen elsewhere in the region. The P8 vessel included in Lebach grave 8 not only shares a close connection with the universally circulating P6, but crucially includes a band of decoration that evoked the P1 form (not illustrated), another regionally rooted design, again with close links with the Treveri.[5] These innovations are highly significant, not only in demonstrating the agency of local communities (and styles of objects) in cultural change, but also for revealing the existence of shared practices and frames of reference that had little to do with the machinations of Roman imperialism. From this perspective we should not forget the remaining vessels in the graves, which comprise three jars made in fundamentally local traditions of pottery production. The inclusion of a single handmade (non-wheelthrown) jar at Lebach serves to remind us that we are still essentially dealing with Iron Age societies in the Augustan-Tiberian period, albeit those that were undergoing rapid social changes involving a new and potentially bewildering array of objects.

The selections of objects in the Augustan-Tiberian graves at Lebach and St Albans are hugely illuminative, especially when compared against the backdrop of the equivalent selections in hundreds of contemporary grave assemblages. The graves in question clearly demonstrate how the inter-artefactual domain (Gell 1998) may have informed both the appearances of objects and even the relations between different kinds of objects in funerary assemblages. Although *terra sigillata* is not present, its appearance in the region, notably at military bases and fledgling urban centres, stimulated the transfer of designs from the Italian *sigillata* repertoire into the production of new Gallo-Belgic fine wares, perhaps with the initial assistance of expertise from potters linked to the Roman military. At the same time, innovations within the Gallo-Belgic repertoire, most notably the emergence of the butt-beaker, were simultaneously universalized in the wider region and re-particularized through the development of distinct local varieties. That elements of all these repertoires and others feature so prominently in the logics of object selection in funerary assemblages, from unconquered south-east Britain to south-west Germany, is highly suggestive of the existence of a single integrated inter-artefactual domain, which surely came into being through the increased connectivity of the early Roman period. While elements of an integrated inter-artefactual domain can be seen in the Late Iron Age, most notably in the circulation of some fibula types and shared strategies for the display of status among some communities, the sudden injection of large quantities of standardized objects from the Augustan era onwards represented a genuine step-change in the pan-regional configurations of human–object entanglements. Standardized objects fostered the creation of a new globalizing *koine* (see Versluys 2015) which allowed communities and individuals to variously signal their participation in the social and cultural transformations of the age, while simultaneously offering opportunities to distinguish themselves in new ways.

4 Cf. the thin-walled beakers more commonly found in Roman military contexts at the time; Brulet, Vilvorder, and Delage 2010.

5 On object rootedness, see Van Oyen 2016.

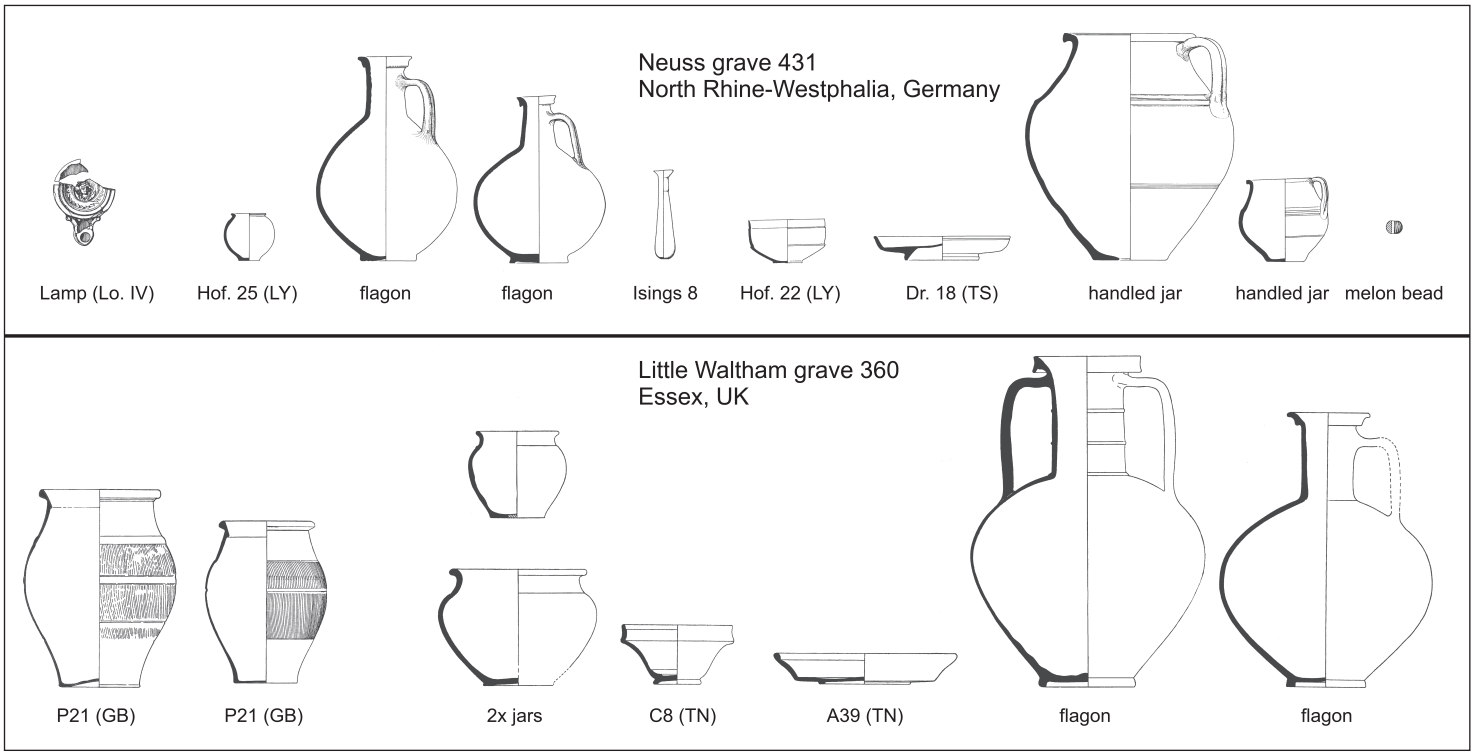

Figure 8.3. Grave 431 at Neuss (Novaesium) (after Müller 1977, Taf. 82) and grave 360 at Little Waltham (Drury 1978; reconstructed using standard types from Hawkes and Hull 1947). Drawn by author.

Claudio-Neronian Assemblages: Deterritorialized Styles of Consumption

By the middle of the first century AD, a lot had changed in north-west Europe's geopolitical landscape. A large part of Britain had now been annexed by Rome, with the beginnings of imperial infrastructure already taking shape in the new province in the form of military bases, colonies, urban centres, and roads. Elsewhere, there was renewed impetus to the development of the urban network in Gallia Belgica and the Rhineland, with new or extended street grids at Bavay, Tongeren, and Trier, and a new veteran colony at Cologne. Against this background of transformation, I have selected two graves that are this time from opposing ends of the inter-artefactual domain, at least as determined through the Correspondence Analysis of over eight hundred graves from the wider region (Pitts 2019, 155, fig. 4.20).

Grave 360 from Little Waltham, Essex (Fig. 8.3), dating to *c.* AD 50–60, comes from a relatively low-status rural settlement located roughly halfway between the new towns of London and Colchester (Drury 1978). The selections of objects in the Little Waltham grave place it firmly in the south-east Britain end of the spectrum. Indeed, its ensemble of objects shares much in common with grave 325 at St Albans in the preceding period: a pair of butt-beakers, this time of the distinctive British variety (P21), an identical C8 *terra nigra* cup, and equivalent inclusions of platters and jars. Aside from the more up-to-date butt-beaker designs, and the presence of a couple of flagons, there is little to indicate that the practice of selecting objects for funerals had changed much in over fifty years. The selections of objects are certainly more conservative in character compared with those of the local aristocracy at Stanway, Colchester (Crummy and others 2007), which blend the basic logic of selections at Little Waltham with newer objects in use at the nearby fortress and later veteran colony at Colonia Victricencis (Colchester). If anything, the ensemble of objects at Little Waltham grave 360 can be taken to illustrate the late flourishing of patterns established in Britain in the late Augustan period. Graves of this character were increasingly widespread by the Claudio-Neronian period in south-east Britain, going beyond their earlier concentrations at pre-conquest oppida and equivalent centres. However, despite some conservative traits, including the provision of some animal offerings, as with the preceding period, the pattern of object selection in the grave from Little Waltham remains entirely consistent with patterns across the Channel in rural cemeteries in Gallia Belgica, such as Feulen, Luxembourg (Schendzielorz 2006). Such similarities suggest relatively limited change in the

inter-artefactual domain after the watershed transformations of the Augustan era, but as we shall see, this is only half of the picture.

The second grave illustrated in Figure 8.3 comes from the cemetery associated with the Roman fortress at Neuss (Novaesium) in the Rhineland north of Cologne, and dates to *c.* AD 50–70 (Müller 1977). Although far removed from rural Essex, it so happens that the legion based at Colchester in the 40s AD had in fact been previously stationed at Novaesium before the Roman invasion of Britain. In this way, the selections of objects in grave 431 at Neuss are strongly reminiscent of those in the cemetery associated with Colchester's fortress and veteran colony, at Beverley Road (May 1930; Pitts 2019). A quick visual comparison reveals that the pattern of object selection in the grave from Neuss is entirely different to that of Little Waltham, and indeed the older traditions of local burying communities in north-west Europe at the time. Not only are the objects very different in their appearances, but so is the overall style of consumption. Large drinking vessels rooted in later Iron Age styles of display are completely absent, and the emphasis is instead on individual consumption through smaller cups and plates. Perhaps most striking is the presence of a clay lamp and a glass phial, categories of objects that were seldom found outside military bases and major cities in this period. Likewise, the inclusion of *terra sigillata*, and especially Lyon ware, are much more in keeping with a broad military template for consumption in the mid-first century AD. Even the distinctive melon bead is an item with strong representational links with the military, appearing on the tombstone of cavalryman Titus Flavius Bassus at Cologne (Bishop 1988, 71). This all begs the question of whether the selection of grave goods had more to do with underlying patterns of military supply, as opposed to innate socio-cultural logics.

Seen in its wider regional context, the object selections in Neuss grave 431 certainly fit a bigger pattern for military and colonial societies in north-west Europe. Was this simply a factor of the state-sponsoring of supply for Rome's northern imperial infrastructure, which led to concentrations of objects like *terra sigillata* and glass at military bases? While overarching supply systems certainly played a large role in influencing the kinds of objects at the disposal of military and colonial communities, they could not dictate the precise combinations of objects deliberately placed in graves. Indeed, by comparing a large corpus of graves, a very similar logic of object selection repeated across north-west Europe is revealed, often constituting variations on a single lamp, a glass vessel, a hemispherical cup (variously in *sigillata* or Lyon ware), a plate or dish, and at least one flagon. Crucially, this combination is virtually exclusively repeated in substantial connected centres associated with Rome's imperial project, including military bases (e.g. Neuss and Exeter), veteran colonies (e.g. Colchester and Cologne), and major cities (e.g. Trier and Nijmegen). A significant difference with many grave assemblages of the cemeteries of local communities is the absence of ensembles geared towards communal consumption, with repeated combinations of standardized objects, as if to cater for multiple guests at a banquet — likely a hangover from Late Iron Age styles of consumption.

Taken together, the two graves in Figure 8.3 can be considered, in effect, to belong to two very different pan-regional deterritorialized styles of consumption, one rooted in the newly transformed Iron Age societies of north-west Europe, and the other closely connected to the new imperial and essentially urban culture of Rome's military and colonial outposts. At this point it is important to stress that the two constellations of objects cannot be simply reduced to the old binary opposition of 'Roman' and 'native'. Significantly, many of the constituent elements of the extra-imperial style of consumption increasingly used by local burying communities in this period were themselves dependent on relatively new designs of objects of Mediterranean genealogy, alongside important local innovations in media like Gallo-Belgic ware. Likewise, although two broadly different styles of consumption can be identified, these increasingly overlapped and merged by the end of the Claudio-Neronian era, as illustrated, for example, by the appearance of flagons in the grave at Little Waltham. In a connected Roman world, an increasingly integrated inter-artefactual domain ensured that differences between the objectscapes of military and civilian could not remain so distinct as time progressed.

Flavian Assemblages: Transformation and Rebirth

In the final decades of the first century AD, the Roman object revolution in north-west Europe took a decidedly new direction. Historically framed by the new Flavian dynasty (AD 69–96), this period saw further consolidation and urban development in the aftermath of major revolts in south-east Britain (AD 61), and among the Batavi (AD 69–70), with the creation of the new province of Germania Inferior, and the conquest of Britain reaching its greatest territorial extent under the governorship of Agricola. The graves I have selected illustrate the complexity of change at both global and local levels, and this time derive

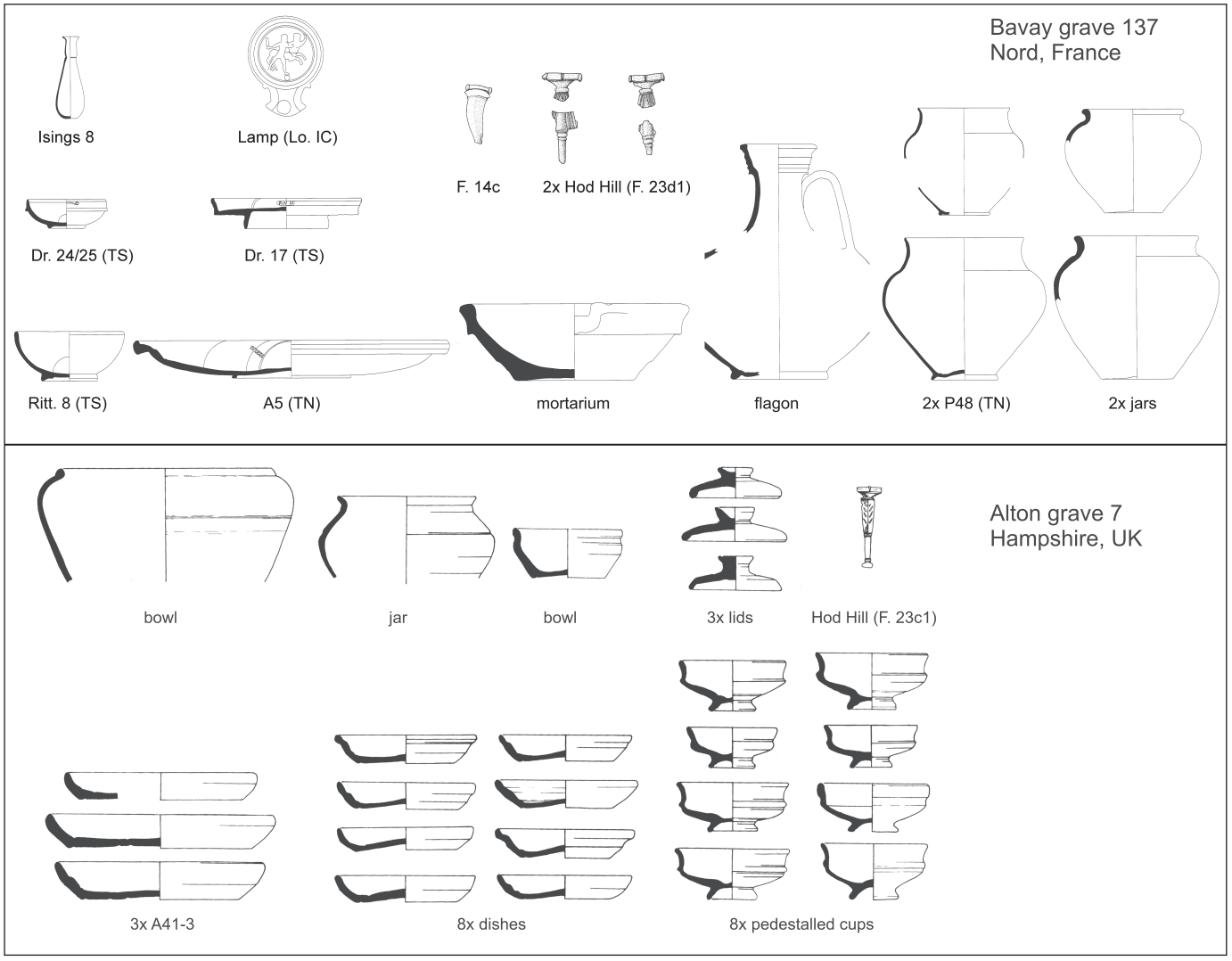

Figure 8.4. Grave 135 at La Fache des Près Aulnoys, Bavay (after Loridant and Deru 2009, 160) and grave 7 at Alton (after Millett 1986, 72). Drawn by author.

from the Correspondence Analysis of seven hundred graves of Flavian date (Pitts 2019, 195, fig. 5.12).

The first grave we shall consider in Figure 8.4 comes from the cemetery of La Fache des Près Aulnoys, located along a major road leading out of the city of Bavay, and dating to *c.* AD 70–90 (Loridant and Deru 2009). While not belonging to the richest tier of graves from the period, the inclusions in the grave indicate that it was better furnished than most. In effect, the selections of objects appear to draw in roughly equal measure on each of the two broadly different pan-regional styles of consumption described above for the Claudio-Neronian period. On the one hand, the lamp, glass phial, suite of *terra sigillata* vessels, and to some extent the flagon and mortarium all strongly evoke combinations of objects once more exclusively seen in military and colonial cemeteries. At the same time, the inclusion of fibulae alongside contemporary vessels with northern European genealogy in *terra nigra* (P48 jars) firmly anchor the grave in its regional context. While butt-beakers had largely gone out of fashion by this time, perhaps because they no longer fitted with the renewed emphasis on urban sociability in funerary assemblages (Pearce 2015), there were still plenty of objects in circulation that could evoke older Iron Age practices. With the 'fibula abandonment horizon' now in full swing (Cool and Baxter 2016), the deliberate inclusion of brooches in this grave is a strong indicator of the prevailing logics of the local, traditional end of the inter-artefactual domain. Taken together, the cross-pollination of imperial and regional elements can be seen as a result of urban elites and groups of middling wealth increasingly drawing upon object repertoires previously used by military and colonial communities alone. Such a process was aided

by the increased circulation of *terra sigillata*, as well as the continued machinations of the inter-artefactual domain, in which the make-up of an individual grave assemblage was to a certain degree in dialogue with others in a connected system.

In its wider context, the selection of objects in grave 135 at Bavay very much echoes equivalent contemporary graves in urban cemeteries across northwest Europe, in which larger quantities of objects like *terra sigillata* and glass vessels became the norm alongside objects associated with quintessential Roman pursuits, such as literacy and bathing.[6] This phenomenon is attested in several exceptionally rich graves of the Flavian era, perhaps most strongly illustrated by those in the cemetery of Ulpia Noviomagus (Nijmegen), which has been associated with the city's municipal elite (Koster 2013). A crucial difference which sets graves from this milieu apart from their counterparts in military and colonial sphere of the Claudio-Neronian era is the sheer quantity of objects involved. Whereas graves like Neuss 431 are characterized by services of vessels and objects geared towards the needs of the individual, the rich municipal graves of the Flavian era feature images of feasting and the provision of commensal hospitality for multiple guests. This element of communally orientated suites of objects seems to represent a continuity of older Iron Age practices, in which large numbers of objects in the richest graves served to underline the importance of feasting as a mechanism for social interaction, as well as an effective form of funerary display for the buriers.

The inherent fusion of objectscapes and funerary practices from previously separate cultural traditions in the Flavian era is undeniable. But alongside such tendencies towards convergence, it is also possible to discern several important and pronounced divergences from the increasingly global template of funerary display. One such local 'particularization of the universal' can be seen in the rural cemetery of Alton, Hampshire (Millett 1986). Here, a distinctive new regional rite emerged, as illustrated by the contents of grave 7, dating to *c.* AD 70–100 (Fig. 8.4). An overwhelming feature of this assemblage is the large number of standardized objects, especially pottery. At face value, such a large collection might well fit the richest tier of Flavian graves described above, despite large contrasts with the objects selected in grave 135 at Bavay. An important distinction to make with Alton is that all the objects are of local manufacture, with the exception of a single fibula, which is of a more universally circulating design. While the sheer quantity of ceramic vessels in the grave evokes the graves of the municipal elite, as seen nearby, for example, at Winchester Grange Road (Biddle 1967), the pots at Alton were clearly of inferior quality compared with the *sigillata* and other imported vessels in cemeteries associated with new urban environments, such as Bavay. Likewise, the inclusion of other elements, such as the fibula and a range of animal offerings, are further indications of the vestiges of older Iron Age practices.

The regionally distinct rite that emerged at Alton can be interpreted as an attempt by rural societies to compete with the increasingly lavish funerary repertoires of their urban counterparts. At the same time, the rite can also be understood as a distinctive innovation that would not have been otherwise possible without immersion in a highly connected environment, with a well-integrated inter-artefactual domain. The rite at Alton is therefore a classic example of the phenomenon of 'glocalization', whereby new local forms are created through explicit reference to elements of pan-regional or global culture (Pitts and Versluys 2015, 14; Robertson 1992, 173–74). This phenomenon is mirrored in the Flavian era by the parallel emergence of strikingly 'glocal' funerary practices at other rural cemeteries, most notably among the Nervii (Gallia Belgica) and Batavi (Germania Inferior). Taking both graves in Figure 8.4 together, the overwhelming picture that emerges from the last decades of the first century AD is the emergence of a single, broadly shared imperial style of consumption for the increasingly urbanized local elite, to be set against increasingly regionalized and local divergences in practice at the sub-elite level. In other words, what we are left with is a mature template of the familiar notions of unity and diversity that would go on to characterize Roman provincial culture for at least the next two centuries (Hingley 2005).

Conclusions

Stepping back from the detailed narratives of object selection in the preceding sections, several observations may be made. Although illuminated by a sample of only six individual graves, the preceding discussion would have been impossible without a much larger body of data to draw from, and crucially, appropriate multivariate analyses that allowed me to pinpoint representative graves and qualify the extent of their participation in local and pan-regional phenomena (Pitts 2019). If we are to move towards genuinely high-definition narratives of Romanization

6 I use Roman in the sense of the ideal of *humanitas*, following Woolf 1998.

2.0, it follows that these need to be informed by not only the chronological precision and contextual granularity of individual examples, but also methodological strategies that allow such specificity to be understood in the context of the hugely complex and (almost) endlessly diverse Roman world. Many of the larger pan-regional trends discussed in the previous narrative have seldom been discussed in older scholarship largely as a result of site-based and regional archaeological research strategies confined by modern nation-state boundaries. In a world of new digital technologies and Big Data, Roman archaeologists (and artefact specialists in particular) must find new ways of overcoming the hurdles of national research frameworks and embrace the challenge of studying the connected Roman world in all its complexity.

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