

The Material Culture of Small Rural Settlements in the Batavian Area: a Case Study on Discrepant Experience, Creolisation, Romanisation or Globalisation?

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Introduction

For the last 25 years, most of the research on social change in the early Roman period involved deconstruction of the term romanisation in varying degrees. The debate focused on the colonial background of the scholars that introduced the concept and the unwanted colonial implications of the term itself. Although valuable insights were gained and improvements were made in our approach to integrational processes after the Roman conquest, the debate sometimes became political in nature rather than archaeological. Some contributions declared the term romanisation a taboo and doing away with it seemed to be a goal in itself, though the proposed alternatives do not always explain the archaeological material better. This article aims to provide a case study of everyday archaeological finds and will argue in what aspects of the evidence the alternatives offer good insights into social change and its causes in the first century. In the final paragraph, the term romanisation is revived and reformulated.

In order to pay enough attention to the case study, the introduction concerning the romanisation debate is limited in extent: main lines and important publications are highlighted, but of course this will be far from a complete overview. The second section introduces the study area and the case study, and this too will be in short. The third section focuses on the material culture and its contexts, and forms the main part of this contribution. Finally, the material culture is analysed in the light of romanisation studies and some of the proposed alternatives.

The romanisation debate in short

The word romanisation was introduced in the nineteenth century. The German scholar Mommsen understood romanisation as the cultural influence of Rome at the level of larger institutions like Roman cities, religion, and a monetary economy that were installed in the conquered provinces. Francis Haverfield introduced the term in the United Kingdom in 1905. More so than Mommsen, Haverfield was an archaeologist used to dealing with finds, and he understood romanisation at the level of a native population that adopted Roman customs and objects, for example samian ware. Both Mommsen and Haverfield were thoroughly influenced by Western colonial rule

over other parts of the world, and pictured the Roman period likewise (Freeman 1997: 37–45; Webster 2001: 211).

The political decolonisation of former colonies since the 1930s only took hold in archaeological theory in the 1960s (Derks 1998: 5–8). The relationship between the colonial force and conquered societies was the subject of new thinking. Acculturation theory stated that the influence was not unidirectional, but worked both ways (Slofstra 1983). Although the subjected people were treated with more respect, Rome was still the dominant party in these theories.

This thoroughly changed with Millett's *The Romanisation of Britain: an essay in archaeological interpretation* (1990). He stated that Rome was the dominant military party, but that romanisation, the adoption of certain aspects of Roman culture, was a strategy by the native elite to retain their influence. By adopting Roman customs they hoped to act as middle-men between Rome and their own tribes, thereby keeping their privileged position in this changed political situation. Although this book was termed the new orthodoxy of romanisation (Hanson 1997: 67; Grahame 1998: 1), it also met a lot of criticism. Six points of critique are outlined here:

1. Parallel to the colonising ethos of the international politics of the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, romanisation was in the early years pictured as a deliberate civilising mission (Grahame 1998; Webster 2001). Contrastingly, Millett now proposed *aemulatio*, self-romanisation of indigenous elites. Woolf reacted to this by asserting that that Rome did have an active role, for instance by implanting cities and, if needed, by continuing support for them (Woolf 1995). Although the motivation of Rome for spreading civilisation can be discussed, the active role of Rome is clear.

2. Romanisation was reproached for being an elite perspective. By understanding romanisation as an elite strategy, 95% of the population would not have taken part in it (Freeman 1993; Mattingly 2004: 9–13).

3. The term romanisation itself implies a unilinear development towards Roman-ness. This does not allow for uprisings and the lack of receptivity towards aspects of Roman culture known from written sources (Webster 2001; Hingley 2005: 37–40). Moreover, it is implied that one identical process took place in all conquered areas while demonstrably the integrational processes varied in the different provinces (Hingley 1996; Wells 1999: 127; Mattingly 1997: 9; Keay & Terrenato 2001 for case studies).

4. In romanisation studies, Roman culture was taken for granted as a self-evident entity. But what was Roman culture exactly? Roman culture as such was deconstructed and identified as a Mediterranean culture, without truly having its 'own' aspects (Freeman 1993; Barrett 1997). In older works, Roman culture was pictured as homogenous and superior, but in fact neither in art, nor in buildings, or otherwise can Roman culture be seen as uniform (Huskinson 2000). Woolf stated that 'Roman' should be seen as a mosaic of regional cultures. Local elites could enter Roman civil service and their choices reflect one of many possible forms of Romanness (Woolf 1998).

5. Concerning material culture, romanisation studies restricted the vocabulary to either Roman or native forms. Post-colonial scholars pointed out that material culture changes meaning, depending on the use that people make of it, and that fixed terms like Roman or native are unhelpful descriptions (Woolf 1996; Forcey 1997; Van Dommelen 1999; Webster 2001). Rather than romanisation, Webster proposed to label the process of change 'creolisation', employing a term derived from linguistics, which means the process by which foreign influences transform an existing language, thereby evolving into a new language. In the case of material culture, objects of European descent were used by slaves in a different way than their original meaning, thereby

creating new cultural meaning. Moreover, the power imbalance of the European slave owners and the African slaves play a role: the creolisation of objects is partly a way of dealing with the slave-master relationship (Webster 2001: 217–219). The situation in the conquered provinces of Rome can be understood along the same lines: new provincial cultures evolve, which are neither Roman nor native, but a new hybrid form. Concerning material culture we must take into account that native populations used Roman objects to other ends than their original function and that common farmers used the objects differently than tribal leaders.

Some groups of material culture have been understood as essentially Roman, for instance samian ware. However, even samian ware is made in different areas in different styles, and is in fact a provincial product. Many objects are not appreciated because they are Roman, but because they are new, modern, or tasty (Freeman 1993: 443–444; Wells 1999: 127–128; Hingley 1996: 42). Moreover, objects that may originate from the Mediterranean, could have been used later in a different way, even to stress opposite meanings (Willis 1996; Grahame 1998; Webster 2001: 215–218; Mattingly 2004: 7). As a last point concerning material culture, many objects labelled ‘Roman’ do in fact precede the Roman conquest of Britain, and it is doubtful whether they were seen as Roman. These changes are not connected to direct Roman influence, and globalisation as an alternative should therefore be considered (Hingley 2005).

6. Inherent in many romanisation studies is a positive attitude towards Rome. The benefits of roads, cities, bathhouses and writing are stressed, while negative aspects of the presence of Rome like the massive killing of people in war, coercion, and violence towards civilian people are glossed over. Mattingly introduced discrepant experience as a term to stress that different people had varying experiences with Rome: some people would have gained by the coming of the Roman armies; other people may have suffered from Rome’s representatives, and develop a hostile attitude towards Rome. And of course lots of people may have found other factors like age, occupation or religion far more important and had no explicit ideas pro or contra Rome (Mattingly 1997; 2004; 2006; also Webster 2001: 214–215).

To summarise, romanisation was deconstructed and many alternatives were proposed. However, none of the alternatives met with general approval. The need for a process term like romanisation was still felt, and during meetings, the word romanisation was used while a speaker gestured brackets, or it was called ‘the R-word’. A quote from 2005 is enlightening: ‘Ever since TRAC exists, we try not to talk about romanisation. This year we discovered a new way of not talking about romanisation. A next step would be not to talk about romanisation and not saying we are not talking about romanisation’ (Greg Woolf, in his review of the session *Roman imperialism in the contemporary world* during the sixth RAC, Birmingham 2005).’

The Batavian area and its settlements

The eastern river area of the Netherlands is the area where the Batavi are localised, a tribe that emerged in the period between the campaigns of Caesar and the conquest under emperor Augustus. During the Augustan formation of provinces, the Batavian *civitas* was formed in the military frontier-zone of Gallia Belgica, with Nijmegen as the capital. Tacitus informs us that a treaty existed between the Roman authorities and the Batavians in which the latter were exempt from paying tribute, in exchange for recruits for the Roman army. No less than nine auxiliary *cohortes* and one *ala* are known from written sources and epigraphy, and the emperor’s bodyguard also included many Batavians (Roymans 1996; 2004).

The area of the Batavians is bordered by the Rhine in the north, and the south of the area includes a stretch of land on the other side of the Meuse river. The western and eastern limits are not known exactly, but must lie between Nijmegen and Xanten in the east and between Nijmegen and Voorburg in the west.

Apart from the written sources the area is also well known by archaeology. The settlements tend to lie immediately beneath the ground surface and already in the nineteenth century the higher ground has been field-walked in order to collect antiquities. Metal detectorists find high numbers of metal finds as the riverine clay has preserved these well. An estimate has been made that the Batavian area had approximately 1250 settlements (Vossen 2003). A substantial number have been excavated, most to a limited extent only, but some more fully. The most complete excavation providing the case study for this article is Tiel-Passewaaij. The total complex of Tiel-Passewaaij holds four settlements and two cemeteries; two settlements and a central cemetery have been excavated to a large extent (Heeren 2006; 2009; Aarts and Heeren 2011).



Figure 1: The phasing of the Tiel-Passewaaij complex. 1 settlement Oude Tielseweg. 2 central cemetery. 3 off-site ditches. 4 settlement Passewaaijse Hogeweg.

The chronology of the Tiel-Passewaaij complex ranges from the end of the Late Iron Age, approximately 50 B.C., to the Late Roman period, around A.D. 400. A phasing of thirty to fifty years per (sub)phase was possible (Fig. 1), because the orientation of houses and other features, the style of the farmhouses and the portable material culture in the features showed gradual but distinct changes over time.

In the earliest phases, long byre-houses are situated with their long sides along the residual channel, which still held some water in the first decades of the first century. Around the middle of the first century, shorter houses were built, and they were erected away from the residual channel, which silted up and became less important. The cemetery consisting of circular and rectangular ditches around cremation pits and small mounds was in use from this period as well. In the late first century the houses were still being (re)built in the same yards but were a little larger and sometimes a wooden *portico* surrounded the traditional houses. Two consecutive granaries, the younger larger than the older, were built next to the largest farmhouse in the settlement, and its ground plan shows similarity to military style granaries. Up until the middle of the second century, Tiel-Passewaaij and its buildings are exemplary for many other settlements and can be understood as an average settlement (Heeren 2009). This article concerns the settlement and its material culture in the first and early second century only.

The material culture of Tiel-Passewaaij

From handmade to wheel-thrown ware: economic integration

In this subsection, a range of five ceramic assemblages from farmyards that were in consecutive use is studied. All of these assemblages are collected from ditches or pits directly surrounding byre-houses of the first century. The aim is to detect changes in the local consumption of the pottery. The underlying assumption is that if the pottery is produced locally, the local economy is self-sufficient to a large degree, and if a large proportion of the pottery is wheel-thrown, this material must have been acquired from the market, implying the exchange of the local agrarian products on a market.

Assemblage A is retrieved from a ditch demarcating the yard of house 16 and was dated to the Late Iron Age. The assemblage contained 293 sherds of at least 23 vessels. No wheel-thrown wares occur. Handmade imports do occur in this period sometimes, for instance salt containers, but are limited to a very small proportion (2 sherds, probably of 1 vessel). More than 99% of the pottery is locally produced in this period.

Assemblage B concerns the sherds from several ditches surrounding house 14 and holds 1093 sherds of at least 56 vessels. The assemblage is dated to the Augustan (or early Tiberian) period. Just two of the vessels are wheel-thrown (3.5%), all others are locally made (Fig. 2). More than 96% of the pottery (number of vessels) is locally produced in this period.

Assemblage C (645 sherds) is retrieved from the ditches surrounding house 1 and is dated to the later Tiberian or early Claudian period. The ratio handmade versus wheel-thrown is 88:12 when calculated in total number of sherds (568 and 77) or 77:23 when calculated in vessels (17 and 5). The imported wares of assemblage C are a Belgic beaker, a fish-sauce amphora and coarse ware pots from the Rhineland, which may have contained food. A comparable but smaller assemblage is pit 72, which contained an olive oil amphora and five vessels of handmade ware. Between 77 and 88% of the pottery is locally produced in this period.

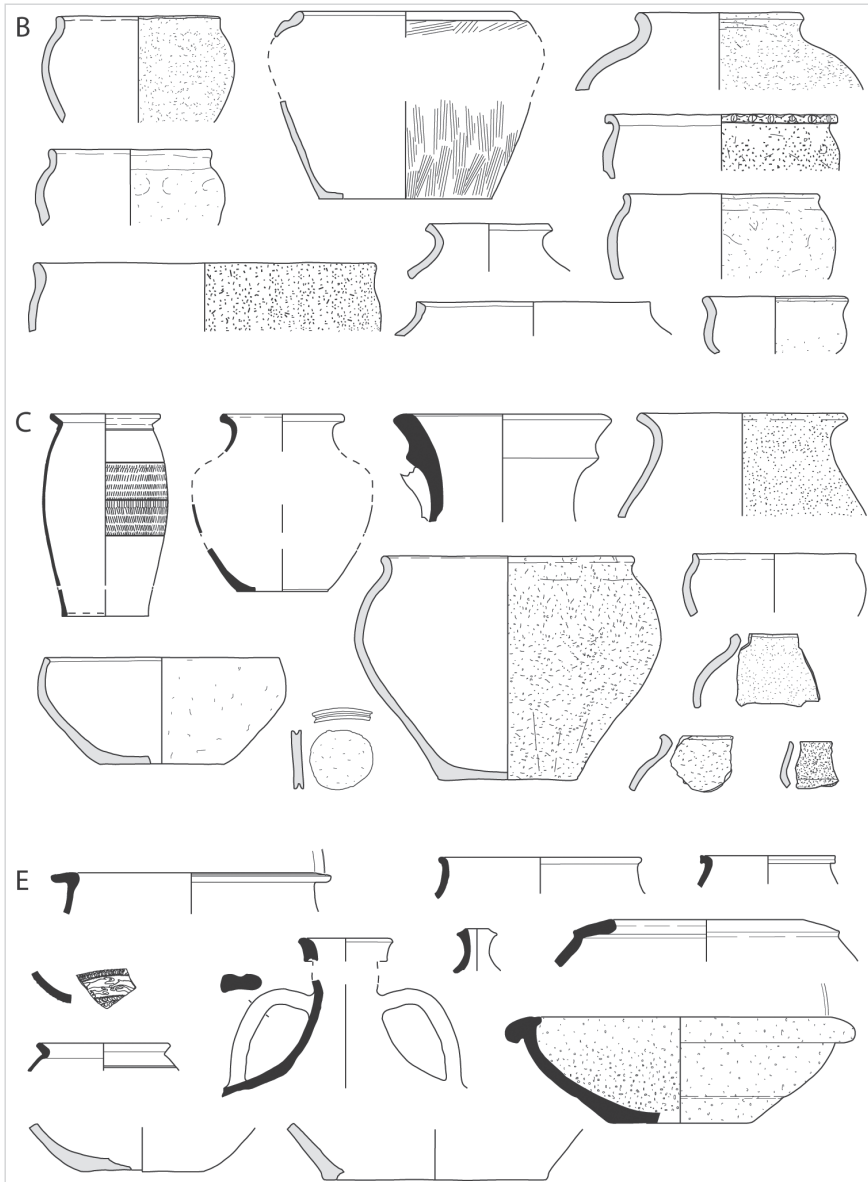


Figure 2: Selection of the ceramic assemblages C, D and E of the settlement Tiel-Passewaijse Hogeweg. Sherds with grey fill are handmade, sherds with black fill are wheelthrown. Scale 1:6.

Regrettably, a suitable context for the Claudian-Neronian period is lacking. There are clusters of pits from this period (assemblage D) which show a lot of handmade ware and an occasional flagon and the earliest colour-coated ware, but unlike the other assemblages, there is no obvious relationship between these scattered pits and a house plan. Moreover, residual material from older habitation is a problem here.

Assemblage E comprises a large amount of pottery (568 sherds of at least 22 vessels) from one feature, well 5. On the basis of samian ware and a few simple wire brooches, the assemblage is dated to the early Flavian period. Of the 22 vessels only three (two certainly, one possible) are of the local handmade ware, so the proportion of wheel-thrown ware amounts to 86-90%. Just 10% or 13% of the pottery (number of vessels) is locally produced in this period.

In the contexts dated to the period A.D. 90–120, no handmade wares are observed, apart from very fragmented residual material. To conclude, a gradual shift is observed from 100% handmade wares in the Late Iron Age to 100% wheel-thrown ware at the very end of the first century.

Along with the disappearance of handmade ware, the spindle whorls, indicators for local textile production, also decline in numbers. As far as we can observe by archaeology these are not replaced by other materials, like metal. We can therefore establish that the local population acquired their pottery and textile from the market. They must, therefore, have brought goods to the market for exchange such as an agrarian surplus. This is not just argued from the pottery, but also the size of the outbuildings, the emergence of larger granaries, and the botanical as well as the zoological material point to changes in local production (Groot *et al.* 2009).

To summarise: we observe the growing economic integration of rural communities. Local farmers produced an agrarian surplus, which was sold at the market. In exchange they received money, textiles and foodstuffs in pottery, which exempt them from other local production and thus enabled economical specialisation, i.e. a further increased agrarian production. Judging from the proportion of handmade versus wheel-thrown ware, this was limited in scope in the first half of the first century, and almost complete in the Flavian period.

Eating and cooking

In the above presented pottery assemblages, some of the imports point to the introduction of foreign foodstuffs. As early as the Tiberian or early Claudian period (assemblage C and pit 72) olive oil and fish sauce is used. Coriander is not found in these contexts specifically, but is regularly observed in botanical studies of this area (Heeren 2009, note 550 for sites). These foodstuffs are elements of a Mediterranean diet (Meadows 1994). Their presence is common for cities or army camps, but quite surprising for the countryside in this early period. We would not argue for the complete abandonment of the local diet in favour of Mediterranean meals, but at least some Mediterranean ingredients are added to the traditional meals of these settlements.

Connected to the introduction of foreign ingredients are the ways of consumption. Beakers and plates are unknown in the local handmade ware, and these forms of tableware are introduced gradually in the course of the first century. Of course these new forms are not necessarily used on the countryside in the way they would have been used in cities and army camps. It remains therefore uncertain whether Mediterranean ways of consuming the food were practiced here.

Another foreign element concerning the meal relates to food preparation. In Tiel-Passewaaij the Flavian assemblage E holds a complete *mortarium* and is the earliest in both settlement and cemetery contexts. The *mortarium* is a Mediterranean item used for grinding herbs and preparing sauces. This form is completely unknown in northwestern Europe before the arrival of the Roman armies (Baatz 1977). However, the use of a *mortarium* is not limited to Mediterranean sauces and can be applied in varying ways that differ from the original Mediterranean use (Cramp, Evershed and Eckardt 2012; Cool 2004).

To summarise on eating and cooking, Mediterranean ingredients were added to the traditional meal already quite early, in the Tiberian or early Claudian period. The introduction of new ceramic

forms for consuming and preparing the food is noticeable some decades later. Although these new forms were adopted, we do not know how they were used exactly and it is possible that the kitchen and tablewares were put to uses that differed from their original function.

Reading, writing and calculating

Seal boxes are used to seal a range of items, and written documents in particular. These seal boxes occur in surprising numbers on the Batavian countryside, and were interpreted as a sign for widespread literacy (Derks and Roymans 2002). Recently it was argued that seal boxes closed bags containing valuables and this would impair the interpretation of widespread literacy (Andrews 2012). However, the presence of literacy in the Batavian countryside is supported by other evidence like *stili* from several sites and a preserved writing tablet from a rural settlement in Ophemert, very close to Tiel (Derks and Roymans 2002, 97–99). Therefore, the seal boxes are also most likely connected to writing.

At Tiel-Passewaaij, eight seal boxes have been found, most of them in the topsoil, one in a context dating to the early first century, one dating to the Flavian period, and two from a later date (Heeren 2009, table 42). A total of 42 finger-rings were found, of which 17 are real signet rings. Four of these had a typical first century form (Riha 1990, type 2.1.2; Heeren 2009, table 48). Some rings and seal boxes are shown in the middle section of Fig. 3.

Apart from reading and writing, there are some indications of calculating and measuring too. Scales were used to measure the weight of certain goods and are usually connected to market transactions. Eight scale-weights and two parts of the scale itself were found, again mostly in the topsoil, but one comes from a first century context (Heeren 2009, table 43).

To summarise this evidence we can observe that objects relating to these practices are present in Tiel-Passewaaij. Although some doubt may be cast over their exact function, objects from neighbouring settlements do point towards the knowledge of literacy. With some reservations, it seems probable that some knowledge of writing was present, maybe restricted to a few people per generation.

Body care

‘Toilet instruments’ is an umbrella term for small finds related to body care: glass ointment bottles, small spatulas, tweezers, mirrors, and *strigiles*. Typically, these finds are associated with bathhouses in cities or army camps. Their occurrence in the countryside in settlements consisting of wooden byre-houses, is surprising. The handling of these objects implies that Mediterranean ideas about body care are adopted to a certain degree (Hill 1997). There are also indications that some objects were connected to native ideas about grooming (Eckardt and Crummy 2008). This may be the case for Britain, where toilet instruments are known for the Iron Age as well. In the Netherlands, no Iron Age specimens are known. Of course we do not exclude the possibility that native customs persisted, but the objects relating to body care are Roman imports or derived from Roman examples.

For Tiel-Passewaaij a total of 81 finds were listed as toilet instruments, the majority of which are spatulas, small spoons, mirrors, and ointment bottles (Fig. 3, below). A nail cleaner and one *strigilis* are more singular. It is uncertain whether a bone comb should be seen as a body care item, since it could also have been destined for weaving. Apart from the bone comb of very early first century date, the ‘real’ toilet instruments start to appear at the end of the first

century (period 90–120 A.D.) and become numerous around the middle of the second century (Heeren 2009, table 46).

Militaria and horse gear

At Tiel-Passewaaij, 144 small finds of militaria and horse gear were found. Some of the decorative fittings of horse gear can date as late as the second and third centuries, but most of the horse gear and all of the militaria, including a helmet part, armour fittings, belt and sheath fittings are of a first century type (Nicolay 2007) (Fig. 3, top). This settlement is not an exception, but the pattern is also seen in many other settlements of the region. The military finds in civilian contexts are interpreted as the personal items of returned veterans. Nicolay states that soldiers owned their military gear, and that Batavian soldiers usually took home their kit. Parts of it may have been offered to the gods in a cult place, to thank the god for the safe return after a life long military service, and parts of it will have been brought to the settlements where they (re)settled (Nicolay 2007). The Batavian *civitas* is known to supply many young men to the auxiliary units of the Roman army: nine cohorts and one *ala*, as well as a part of the imperial bodyguard. In total, an estimated 5500 Batavian men served in the Roman army, which is more than any other tribe (Nicolay 2007; Roymans 2004).

A military-initiated model of social change

In the above sections, many groups of objects were described and related to changing cultural practices. There are two important questions to clarify. First, how did the inhabitants of a simple agrarian settlement get hold of this material culture? Second, why would they want the new material culture in the first place?

The second question will be answered first. The large-scale recruitment to the Roman army in the Batavian area, which started under Augustus, resulted in the return of veterans who had served for twenty or twenty-five years from the reign of Tiberius onwards. The once Batavian young men returned as Roman veterans. In their military service they dressed as soldiers, ate a soldier's meal, and slept in barracks. Apart from occasional fighting they would have assisted in building infrastructural works involving measurement and often learned how to write in Latin. The Vindolanda tablets have many different handwritings and Bowman assumes that every letter was written in draft by the soldiers themselves (Bowman 1994: 88). Occasionally the soldiers frequented bathhouses, either in a city or in one of the larger military bases. In other words, the veterans returning to the settlements of their origin had in practice to some extent become Romans. Some had become Roman in the juridical sense too, bearing citizenship. Back in the settlements of their home land, it is the veterans who will have read the letters of comrades under arms to the families that received the letters, and it is also the veterans who wanted to add fish-sauce to the traditional meals and introduce *mortaria* in order to cook the meals they had become used to. It is also the veterans (or their wives) who had become used to Roman style body care, and continued to practice this in the wooden byre houses, even if no bathhouse was near. Some of these practices will have been executed exactly as they had seen earlier. Some practices will have been adapted according to personal taste or limitations of availability. After the veterans had introduced the knowledge of these practices and created the first demand for the products attached to these customs, their sons, families or neighbours will have carried these practices further. The veterans were the transcultural mediators in the process of change in the first century Batavian countryside (Derks and Roymans 2006).

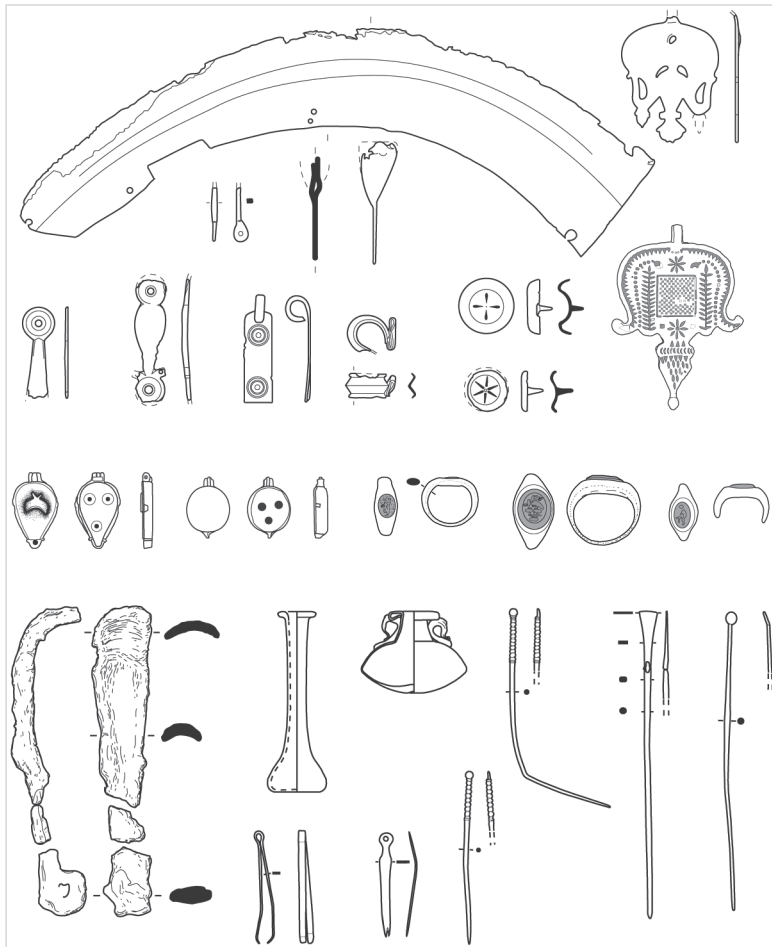


Figure 3: Selection of militaria, seal boxes, signet rings and toilet instruments. Scale 1:3.

Then to the other question: how did the agrarian communities of the Batavian countryside get hold of the foodstuffs and other items connected to the new practices? Analysing the first century ceramic assemblages, it was proposed that local production of ceramics and textiles gradually decreased, and that these goods were acquired more and more from the market, enabling the people to concentrate on their agricultural production instead of crafts, increasing their agricultural output. This shift from self-support to an integrated market took place from the early to the late first century: by the late Flavian period the process was complete. This 'market' was not only the *civitas* capital at Nijmegen, but more importantly the *castella* of the *limes*, which were put in place from the early 40's onwards and in increased number from the 70's of the first century.

One could get the impression that by the end of the first century, everything had changed in the rural communities of the Batavian area. This is not the case. Two important factors did not develop towards Roman styles or customs. The first is the traditions of house-building. It would be imprecise to call house architecture unchanged, since changes in the size and interior

of the farmhouses certainly occurred, but the point is that the essential feature of a farmhouse combining people and animals under one roof did not change, nor the wooden building materials. There is no trend towards villa-like architecture, though to some houses a wooden *portico* was added, possibly an imitation of the soldiers' barracks (Vos 2009: 237–251).

The second factor is the burial ritual. This too, actually developed fast. A shift is observed from a family-based inconspicuous burial ritual in the Late Iron Age towards a collective burial ground in use by the inhabitants of three settlements, and consisting of small burial mounds with a ditch around them (Aarts and Heeren 2011; Aarts and Heeren, in press). These small monuments put up by three co-resident communities are a real claim to the land, and more importantly, the change is dated to the middle of the first century, approximately A.D. 40–60. This is exactly the period that the *limes* was put in place. At the very time the communities were asked (or forced?) to deliver an agrarian surplus, their burial ritual developed towards a defensive symbolic claim. Although this burial ritual is new, there are no Roman traits visible: no references to the deceased's identity and no stone monuments or inscriptions (Aarts and Heeren, in press).

To summarise: the military-initiated model of social change on the Batavian countryside concentrates on veterans, whose knowledge and experiences created the demand for and acceptance of Roman or Mediterranean products and practices, which spread to families and neighbours in the following decades. Additionally, the installation of army camps created huge demands, which were met to a large degree by agrarian communities in the Batavian area. The selling of a surplus enabled the agrarian communities to acquire new foodstuffs and items connected to dress, taste and body care. Joining the Roman army or producing an agrarian surplus were the Batavian ways of being Roman. At the same time, the burial ritual and settlement architecture remained conservative.

Discrepant experience, creolisation, globalisation or...romanisation?

The last question to resolve is that of the label: what to call these developments? The terminology proposed in the romanisation debate will be compared to the presented case study.

Arguably, the paradox of the Tiel-Passewaaij material culture of the settlement (many items referring to Mediterranean customs) versus the cemetery (a conservative burial ritual with defensive symbolism) fits discrepant experiences very well. Some of the inhabitants of the Tiel-Passewaaij community took part in the Roman society to a large degree, but the community as a whole was at the same time confronted with the coercive military apparatus and expressed this in the choices concerning the burial ritual. However, what the model of discrepant experience does not explain very well is where the changes come from, the social mechanisms behind it. Discrepant experience centres on diversity and on description of the varying identity of people or groups. Its descriptive potential is higher than its explanatory power. It is not so much a replacement for romanisation, which is a process-term, but rather a different approach.

The described paradox between the material culture of the settlements and that of the cemetery fits the aspect of power-imbalance of the creolisation model too. This is also the case with the toilet instruments. Practices around body care that originated in bathhouses were adopted by the local population and taken further in a different setting, using the items connected to the practices out of their original context. Thus in describing the processes taking place at the local level, creolisation is observed in the case study. By placing emphasis on the local processes, however, the origins of the changes receive less attention. In the Batavian case, the Roman army

is the bringer of change, and this aspect should be highlighted. In the Late Iron Age, the lower Rhine delta lies outside the zone of *oppida*, the pre-urban central places of Gaul and Middle Europe, and few Roman imports like Dressel 1 amphorae or high-status goods were traded as far north as the Batavian area. With the Late Iron Age social change and long distance contacts being hardly visible, the changes taking place in the decades after the arrival of the Roman army were dramatic indeed. We are so well informed about the early developments leading to the changes (the large scale recruitment and the imposition of the *limes*), that describing the process taking place at the local level only, as is the focus of creolisation studies, is too limited.

A good case can be made for globalisation. A lot of processes at work in the case study can be described as globalisation, for instance the integration of small settlements into the economical networks of expanding markets, as well as the introduction of new customs, habits and tastes, with a changing material culture as a result. But of course in the modern world the exposure to the new connections, ideas and peoples is to a large degree due to market expansion by commercial enterprises and mass media, which are absent in the Roman period. These modernist issues are no real objection, since all other terms proposed are essentially modernist as well. It is legitimate to look for the Roman period version of the modern processes, as long as the moving forces and resulting processes are in broad lines comparable. One minor objection against globalisation could be the same as for creolisation: if we return to the question who or what created a globalised world, we return to Rome as the initiator of change.

If this observation that the Roman Empire is central to all changes occurring (in the Batavian area by the recruitment and the imposition of the *limes*, in the case of Britain by trade at first) proves to be so important for the case study, the oft-despised word romanisation holds explanatory power after all. It is not the old understanding of romanisation with a normative Roman-centred approach as a unilinear process that is meant here, but a term encompassing all kinds of changes resulting from the connection with the Roman state. It could be worthwhile to reformulate the model of romanisation. Reformulation and adaptation is after all, a good academic practice.

The veteran model outlined above is a promising start of a reformulation since many of the initial objections to the romanisation concept are resolved there. The case study centres on agrarian communities and soldiers, so this is clearly not an elite perspective. Since the changes were set in motion by the Roman army, the objects may well have had Roman connotations to the local communities for some decades, although the objects and practices may not have been Roman *per se*. romanisation studies were reproached for having an unhelpful Roman versus native dichotomy, but as was shown in the above examples, the pottery can also be used in another way as an economic indicator. Moreover, material culture is not static, but is used and transformed according to the local circumstances, as we have seen with the toilet instruments. The last point is that in traditional romanisation studies, Rome is considered a benevolent power, while negative sides were glossed over. The case study above also touches aspects in which the local community showed a defensive attitude and the reserves against Rome became clear.

Of course not all objections are solved, for instance the word romanisation, which implies uniformity. However, the few problems that remain are, in the author's opinion, less problematic than the total abandonment of the term and turning to alternatives that also have shortcomings. romanisation can be reformulated to mean all processes resulting from expanding Roman influence, either economic or political-military, leading to various and differing reactions in the affected regions. Reactions encompass selective or partial adoption and creative adaption of ideas, customs and items that were originally Roman or thought to be Roman, by individuals or groups in all strata of society in a way that suited their own identity and interests.

In the above evaluation, all the alternatives proved to be good analytical tools. The point made here is that they all highlight different aspects, but play down the role of Rome, which is, in one form or another, the force that initiated the changes. We acknowledge that discrepant experience, creolisation and globalisation are all visible in the case study, but we propose romanisation, or perhaps the process of social change resulting from Roman expansion, as the umbrella term for the various forms of these processes.

I hope to have shown that the focus on material culture, the archaeologist's basic source, is helpful to evaluate the practical use of theoretical labels. Through this approach some points of friction within a theoretical debate could be solved.

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