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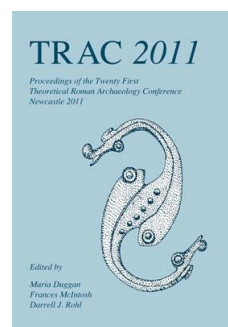
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Author: Karim Mata

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Anthropological Perspectives on Colonialism, Globalisation and Rural Lifeways: Expanding the Limits of Archaeological Interpretation in the Lower Rhineland

Karim Mata

Introduction: Romanisation in the Lower Rhineland, a Familiar Narrative

Lower Rhineland communities were first directly affected by Roman expansion at the time of Caesar's Gallic Wars (58–51 B.C.). Within decades of these interactions, new tribal groups were inserted in the area south of the Rhine—the Cananefates in the western coastal area and the Batavi in the central and eastern river area—while the Frisii remained the main trans-Rhenian tribal grouping in the region (Willems 1986; Galestin 1997, 2010; Slofstra 2002). Tributary arrangements were made with all frontier communities to secure submission to Roman rule, and the recruitment of tribal units for military service. After Augustus, a permanent frontier system was gradually established consisting of military installations and infrastructure. Initially, the region remained under strict military control but from the second half of the first century A.D. onwards a Roman-style municipal order was established leading to the official incorporation of the Rhineland into the Roman provincial system as *Germania Inferior* c. A.D. 83–84. The area experienced increasing municipalisation and economic development (expansion of local production, participation in trade networks and adoption of a base coinage system) with an important role attributed to military demands (Aarts 2003; Groot *et al.* 2009).

Urban life never seemed to have caught on among locals, and houses in the capitals of the Cananefates and Batavi were typically those of foreign traders and craftsmen. The Batavian capital and its hinterland in particular seemed to have housed a large international community of soldiers and civilians (Haalebos 2000: 467). Initially, Batavian elites continued to inhabit the rural settlements in the countryside amongst their social powerbase, but this changed towards the end of the first century A.D., when martial elites were gradually replaced by a landowning and mercantile elite (Roymans 1996: 40–42). Landowners, traders and industrial entrepreneurs gradually expanded their power networks and elite competition moved to the civic sphere. There is scant evidence for public monuments outside the *civitas* capitals, and while the urbanisation process was largely driven by Roman initiatives, the presence of 'Roman' elements in rural contexts (e.g. monumental sanctuaries) is commonly attributed to native elite efforts (Carroll-Spillecke 2001; Roymans 1993). However, in recent years attention has turned to military veterans, who are increasingly treated as the primary 'transcultural mediators' of Roman culture in the region (Derks and Roymans 2006).

Farmhouses excavated near the Cananefatian (Bloemers 1978) and Batavian (Willems *et al.* 2009) capitals show how different architectural elements, construction techniques and materials came into use, changes typically interpreted as signaling the 'Romanisation' of traditional house forms. In the Lower Rhineland, Roman villas start to appear in the countryside around the beginning of the second century A.D., and continuity between these

and older indigenous settlements suggests that they were inhabited by 'Romanised' natives (Slofstra 1983: 85). The adoption of the villa-mode of production is taken as evidence of integration into a formal Roman economy, a turn away from subsistence regimes to market-oriented agricultural production. However, such economic re-orientation apparently did not depend on the adoption of the villa form since non-villa settlements in the central river area appear to have produced for markets as well (Groot *et al.* 2009).

Despite some of the highest recruitment rates known for the Roman Empire (Alföldy 1968; Roymans 2004), and the permanent presence of Roman army units, the material record of indigenous settlements in the Lower Rhineland does not show significant change until the Flavian period (A.D. 69–96). Expansion of local production and subsequent rise in foreign imports is then primarily attested in the immediate hinterland of the Batavian capital where soldiers and veterans were settled (Van Enckevort 2005). Communities from beyond these urban hinterlands may not have become involved in the formal economy until the second century A.D., when epigraphic evidence for the first time points to the activities of merchants of local origin (Wierschowski 2000).

This brief historical outline will strike a familiar chord with many Roman provincial archaeologists as some of its themes have been part-and-parcel of Romanisation narratives for some time (Laurence 2001; Versluys 2001; Slofstra 2002). In the Netherlands, such archaeological narratives continue to be reproduced in a field shaped by national heritage interests and the institutionalized division of archaeological activity. Excavation is almost entirely planned and executed in the private sector, while centralized efforts by the National Service for Cultural Heritage are increasingly limited to setting quality guidelines. Within this national framework, a common research agenda has been proposed intermittently through collaborative efforts, but this has mainly reinforced shared interests for reconstructing a unique regional trajectory within the Roman Empire, in which the Batavian case features importantly. Synthesizing research is produced in piece-meal fashion by an academic sector that is deemed best equipped for such work, but there, theoretical innovation and interdisciplinary exploration remain seriously hampered by an institutional impermeability that effectively blocks the advancement of young scholars and fresh perspectives alike. The persistence of strong positivist interests for modeling and quantification to aid the analysis of historical process further compounds this. In the context of European heritage management there is nothing uniquely Dutch about this situation, but it is a state-of-affairs that encourages interpretive conservatism and the steady reproduction of existing narratives.

My goal for this paper is to expand current interpretations of material culture in the Lower Rhineland by using an exploratory framework based in anthropological and ethnographic knowledge. Calls for a larger role for anthropology have been expressed before (Slofstra 1983) and several prominent archaeological studies published in recent years incorporate anthropological and ethnographic information (Roymans 1983; Bazelmans 1999; Gerritsen 2003; van Driel-Murray 2003). Within the context of Dutch heritage archaeology, however, anthropologically-inspired discussions remain somewhat isolated, in part perhaps, because critical engagement with the scholarly debates where conceptual borrowings originate has been limited. More serious, however, is the observation that the potential of anthropological knowledge for archaeological interpretation remains unrecognized by archaeologists who see historical meta-narratives as their discipline's main product (Johnson 1999: 154; Kolen 2009: 221).

Social processes unfold, and are experienced, differentially within and among communities, across regions and over time, as certain social spheres react to local transitions

and as historical actors experiment with diverse strategies in negotiating the colonial and globalising conditions of the Roman Empire. Uncovering the specific historicity of past communities in transition depends on our ability to extract shared and discrepant experiences 'locked away' in material assemblages. In this light, the archaeological data from rural settlements in the Lower Rhineland allow for expanding questions and interpretations. To achieve this, I propose increased engagement with three particular fields of anthropological study: archaeological work on colonial encounters with specific attention to issues of power, hybridity and material culture; social theory for conceptualising social reproduction and human agency; and, economic anthropology for complicating the history and sociology of rural communities under globalising conditions. Insights drawn from this comprehensive body of scholarship can be used to examine the different ways in which rural communities were successful in negotiating Roman colonial imposition and globalising processes in a provincial setting.

Colonial Entanglements

Archaeologists studying colonial encounters (Rowlands 1998; Van Dommelen 2002; Gosden 2004; Stein 2005) have followed in the footsteps of historical anthropologists by approaching local contexts as complex entanglements shaped by 'historically contingent process[es] of creative appropriation, manipulation and transformation played out by individuals and social groups with a variety of competing interests and strategies of action embedded in local political relations, cultural perceptions, and cosmologies' (Dietler 2010: 10). Colonial situations are examined with attention for the participation of individuals and communities in a variety of new and existing networks of interaction, at different rates of commitment and frequency. It is through such networks that extra-local forms and phenomena are negotiated and 'recontextualised' (Thomas 1991), primarily through everyday practices and interactions (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991).

Colonial situations typically display a striking asymmetry in power relations, but power operates differentially, depending on time, place and the agents involved. When thinking about the manifestation of power it is important to consider how colonial practices and imperial discourses together may cause structural change in particular social domains when local lifeways become articulated against new relations of power, colonial institutions, landscapes, social categories or cosmological constructs. Local processes of social reproduction can be greatly disrupted by the policies, institutions and agents of the colonial state, but, at the same time, the colonial power is rarely able to consistently (or even directly) impose the will and worldviews of its leadership upon indigenous populations; colonial imposition is never uniform or complete (Comaroff 1987: 304).

Recent work on hybridisation and creolisation (Dawdy 2000; Webster 2001; Van Dommelen 2005) is especially helpful for understanding such complex entanglements of power and agency because it has turned the archeological gaze increasingly unto the contexts of agentive action; towards the situated constraints and affordances exploited by groups and individuals participating in a variety of social networks. Central to much of this work are recent insights into human agency, and the role of the material world in processes of social reproduction (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984; Appadurai 1986). Anthropologists treat material culture and society as mutually established, whereby human agents use objects for improvisational action while at the same time materials structure their behavior (Dobres and Robb 2000; Mullins 2004). Importantly, such processes operate throughout society such that

no single class or social sphere (e.g. elites or veterans) should be treated as the primary motor of social reproduction. Objections can be raised, then, against structuralist approaches that emphasize environmental and economic imperatives (e.g. ‘modes of existence’ in Derks 1998), or search for core cultural determinants that structure all social behavior (e.g. ‘cultural focus’ in Roymans 1993). Instead, what must be considered for each context, is how opportunities could likely have been perceived by situated agents, while it needs to be shown empirically to what degree agentive power could actually be realised (Cooper 2005: 231). This requires focusing on the contexts of interaction and the elements by which such interaction was made possible. In Given’s words, we need to find ways of reconstructing the contingent ‘mechanisms by which the living created their own roles in society’ (Given 2004: 13).

Globalisation

Globalisation is used here to denote a variety of processes that are the result of an intensification of extra-local relations, whereby local events and developments become intricately linked to those occurring elsewhere. Globalising processes unfold in a global space that exists beyond the localities they structure and by which they, at the same time, are structured. In this vein, globalisation is not a uniquely modern phenomenon since past instances of state expansion generally involved such developments (Hingley 2005). Globalizing processes certainly strengthened under Roman colonialism, forcing local responses at multiple levels of social experience. The literature on globalisation is, therefore, a valuable source of theoretical and ethnographic information for Roman archaeologists to engage with. Beyond offering a vocabulary to assist the exploration of processes that transcend the local (Witcher 2000: 214), anthropological work on globalisation offers important insights which can help conceptualise the interplay of local agency and macro-scale processes (Haugerud *et al.* 2000; Rees and Smart 2001; Nederveen-Pieterse 2007; Inda and Rosaldo 2008).

Globalisation scholarship also allows for exploring the unintentional consequences of the practical/ideological projects of Roman colonialism/imperialism, making it possible, for example, to think of frontier communities not merely in terms of colonial imposition, but, in terms of globalisation, as de-territorialised multi-ethnic communities where homogenising cosmopolitan worldviews came to be nurtured in a global ‘hyperspace’ (Kearney 1995: 553). Indeed, a marked consequence of globalisation is the formation of a variety of such hyperspaces (e.g. communities, places, or events) where global goods, attitudes and identities intersect, and which local groups and individuals interact with at varying degrees of frequency and intensity.

Three important insights can serve our understanding of contexts of increased local/global interactions. First, local communities typically experience an expansion of the world, whereby people move in, and are aware of, a larger world in which there is potential for wider social interaction (Witcher 2000: 215). Such processes are usually put in terms of a ‘space-time compression’ due to increased rates of communication, mobility, interaction, interconnection, and interdependence (Pitts 2008). Thus, globalization involves more individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds interacting more regularly and intensely, thereby stimulating new modes of thinking and behaving. And, each of these phenomena of space-time compression has the potential for causing important shifts in local lifeways.

Second, globalising processes always involve the cultural dislocation of goods, ideas and identities as they become de-territorialised and re-contextualised. This means that local re-

insertion involves the actions of unevenly informed agents; or in other words, local groups and individuals negotiate these extra-local forms and phenomena with different understandings of the cultural, social and economic conditions that gave rise to them. Crucially, the new hybrid forms that are constructed will eventually be put in terms of local continuity as they are naturalised, a process whereby imperfect knowledge becomes traditional knowledge.

Lastly, globalising processes always involve developments that will seem discrepant and conflictual (e.g. integration/disintegration, growth/decline, and individualisation/socialisation) because they give rise to a range of responses with multiple outcomes in specific localities (Rees and Smart 2001). The distribution of the effects of globalisation is therefore universally uneven.

Rural Lifeways

Recent work in economic anthropology shares important conceptual insights with this literature on colonial entanglements and globalisation (Granovetter 2005; Wilk and Cliggett 2007; Smelser and Swedberg 2005; Jackson 2009). Relevant for this discussion is the now common dismissal of assumptions associated with core-periphery models regarding the conservatism and backwardness of peasants—how isolation from, and subordination to, macro-scale processes shapes peasant lifeways in supposedly universal ways. In actuality, morphologically and behaviorally, rural households can be quite heterogeneous, showing great variability in composition, internal relations, organisation and economic activity (Ellis 1993; Roseberry 1995; Djurfeldt 1999; Harris 2005). Rural households are always structured by a complex web of internal and external factors, such that no *a priori* assumptions about gender roles, land-ownership, commitment to agriculture or market-involvement can be made. The continuous balancing of individual and social needs with cultural norms and value systems shapes the objectives of rural households and always involves rational assessment that is contingent rather than universal. Furthermore, rural households operate at different levels of socioeconomic integration such that they are not universally peripheral to larger historical trends. On the one hand, the social, cultural and historical are ever-present factors in the constitution of the local and the intimate, but they are never determined by such forces; rather, here as well we must think in dialectic terms.

Despite such heterogeneity, comparative studies of rural communities can shed light on cross-contextual patterns, which can inform the interpretive imagination of Roman archaeologists interested in understanding how colonial and globalising experiences may have been shared by rural communities. Useful are ethnographic case-studies that can show how a turn away from subsistence strategies towards market involvement was negotiated at multiple levels of social experience. Illustrative in this respect is the Kekchi Maya case (Wilk 1990) which highlights developments that are of some relevance to the Roman context I will discuss below. At the community level, subsistence strategies among the Kekchi involve shared land tenure and agricultural production. Membership in the community is considered a matter of survival, such that community relations are usually deemed more important than kinship ties. Independent nuclear households predominate and there is typically a high level of exchange and mobility between households and settlements (e.g. reciprocity and marriage). Houses tend to be dispersed and evenly placed near communally held land. While all household members may become involved in productive labor (which has no market-value), male and female spheres are only poorly differentiated, and disposable income is divided among all members. Measures exist to prevent social disruption caused by, for example, competition between

households. Such social mechanisms may be aimed at promoting egalitarian ideologies and social uniformity (e.g. in the built environment), placing social constraints on conspicuous consumption, and participating in practices that benefit the community-at-large (e.g. obligatory generosity).

Through the exploitation of economic opportunities beyond the local community (e.g. through market-involvement or immigrant labor) households may gain economic independence, which can have significant consequences for individuals, households and communities. The independence gained by households is typically followed by a loss of community support, further increasing reliance on outside sources for goods and income. Wealth allocation problems between household members may arise because labor now has a market-value and commodities a cash-value. This, in turn, may lead to more strongly defined gender-based divisions of labor, while younger household members, who tend to be more successful in exploiting new economic opportunities, are allowed more consumption liberties. The younger generation not only tends to be less interested in contributing to communal expenditures, they actively challenge social norms by their increased rates of consumption. Some allocation problems may be solved by investment in household property (e.g. buildings and furnishings), while resources are also pooled to provide economic security. Such investment in the household serves to keep the family together and may further encourage independence from the community. Competition between independent households may increase, while the formation of extended family households stimulates increases in house size or for the houses of family members to cluster. Competition for land or productive forces tend to make family ties and inheritance more important, leading to long-term continuity between family and house site. Ethnographic cases such as the one described here serve well in illustrating the range of social tensions and responses that might follow the exploitation of new economic opportunities and the expansion of social relations beyond local systems.

Breaking Interpretative Barriers—the Rural Settlement at Tiel-Passewaaij

Anthropological and ethnographic insights of this kind can be used to explore the archaeological interpretations of a rural settlement excavated at Tiel-Passewaaij in the Dutch central river area (Roymans *et al.* 2007; Groot 2008; Heeren 2009). Such close engagement with a single site is useful because it allows for direct engagement with the questions and perceptions currently entertained by archaeologists working within the framework of the so-called ‘veteran-model’ in which native military veterans serve as the primary agents in local acculturation processes. Tiel-Passewaaij is viewed as a typical rural settlement that follows a general pattern recognised for the *civitas Batavorum*, the territory of the Batavian ‘military community’ for which much archaeological, epigraphic and historical data is available. The discussion will focus on five analytical domains: economy, dress, burial, commensality and housing.

Economy

For Tiel-Passewaaij, as with other rural settlements in the Lower Rhineland, the mobilisation of local productive forces to service a military frontier system is viewed as the main impetus behind local economic transformations (Vossen and Groot 2008). This involved the establishment of a market-economy in which autonomous economic agents could operate in accordance with principles of supply-and-demand. Economic integration followed a

predictable process whereby participation in market exchanges offered access to specialised goods; this freed-up local labour, which in turn, led to increased specialisation and further expansion of agrarian production. The degree to which local communities were integrated economically is measured by quantification of local/import ratios. For example, the abundance of local hand-shaped pottery in earlier contexts is typically associated with self-sufficient economies of agrarian and craft production operating at the household level. By contrast, the growing proportion of imported wheel-thrown wares in local assemblages is taken to reflect the gradual integration of local communities into the Roman economy. The expansion of the local economy led to a rise in consumption whereby wealth was primarily transformed into ceramics, food stuffs and personal *mobilia* to satisfy newly developed 'Roman' tastes (Roymans *et al.* 2007: 28).

Emphasising a linear development from a self-sufficient to a market-exchange model (Groot 2008: 95) risks ignoring a whole range of economic responses that local agents could explore through contingent rational behaviors. For example, importance may be given to the fact that, despite changes in local economic practices, hand-shaped pottery continued to be produced throughout the Roman period. In fact, it is not uncommon to find rural settlements dated to the second and early third century AD where more than half of the ceramic assemblage consists of such local ceramics (Bink 2009: 207). If this type of pottery may indeed be associated with production at the household level, then the increased variation in production techniques and stylistic variation noted for the Early Roman (ER) period speaks to important changes occurring at that particular level of social organization; in other words, households perceiving, acting and relating in new socially significant ways around the time of incorporation into the Roman Empire. At this point, not enough is known about handshaped wares to conclude that these were not traded throughout the region in similar ways as the ubiquitous salt containers produced along the west coast (for suggestive arguments see Van Heeringen 1989: 219; Taayke 2002: 216). The continuation of such household-based activities alongside those of specialist workshops suggests the co-occurrence of a variety of socioeconomic relations, both formal and informal. Current interpretations risk ignoring or trivialising (Slofstra 1991: 186) variability in economic strategies operating at the household and settlement level, or indeed other sorts of informal economic relations that may arise in colonial situations (Sheets 2000; Hauser 2008), that could be looked for.

Dress

Large numbers of brooches were encountered at Tiel-Passewaaij, mostly among settlement refuse and in far lesser numbers in the cemetery (Roymans *et al.* 2007: 24). These *fibulae* may have been relatively low-cost items and consumed in large numbers as they were frequently replaced to suit personal tastes and local fashions. While brooches were already used in pre-Roman times, there was a marked increase in consumption and stylistic variation in the ER period. New forms of personal adornment and body-care arrived in this period as well, such as rings and toiletry implements. For all these materials, it is thought that military service resulted in the acculturation of native soldiers who became the primary consumers of these 'Roman' goods and promoters of associated practices.

Materials are used in networks of social interaction in accordance with contingent logics, and not as determined by rational economic or cultural hegemonic imperatives. Crucially, consumption patterns already show significant changes in the ER period before the suggested integration and expansion of the local economy. For example, there was a sharp increase in the

consumption of brooches at a time when stylistic variation was greatest (Heeren 2009: 147), which suggests shifting fashions and personal tastes may have been crucial aspects. The historical context of these changes, furthermore, suggests new social perceptions and behaviors under the unique circumstances of the ER period. It could be argued, for example, that the changing use of brooches at this time resulted from the formation of new social identities and proliferation of new identitarian practices focused on dress (clothes, ornaments, and body care). Indeed, this growing importance of the manipulation of outward appearance in social relations is suggested by the increased consumption of personal toiletries and ornamentation in general.

It is worth emphasizing that a good portion of the disposable wealth, which coin distribution analysis suggests was primarily collected by military men in service of Rome (Aarts 2007: 121), was spent on ornaments and toiletries; interestingly, hairpins, commonly viewed as female adornments, do not occur in substantial numbers until the second century A.D. (Heeren 2009: 142). This may reflect how in this early phase of colonial interactions, a context of unique historical circumstances, a generation of young men was able to leverage opportunities outside existing economic structures with interesting social consequences. The social disruptions and consequent realignments that followed such exploitation of new opportunities by a distinct segment of the local community have yet to be fully explored.

Burial

The analysis of the cemetery at Tiel-Passewaaij (Aarts and Heeren 2007; Heeren 2009) shows how, around the middle of the first century A.D., the Late Iron Age (LIA) and ER tradition of maintaining individual family burial sites was replaced by the communal use of a single cemetery. This development is linked to the rise of a shared identity following interactions with the colonial power. It was at the communal level that taxation, military supply and recruitment were handled through community representatives. The graves also appear to reflect an egalitarian ideology since there are no clear indications (e.g. in burial form, cemetery layout, or grave goods) for socio-economic differentiation or personal identity. The vast majority of graves contain ceramic tableware and this is primarily discussed in terms of the local adoption of 'Roman' foodways (Roymans *et al.* 2007: 29; Heeren 2009: 106).

Clearly, social interactions will not have been limited to those with the colonial power, such that the burial evidence may be interpreted as a communal response to increased relations with both proximate and distant 'others' (e.g. colonial agents, neighboring households and settlements, soldiers, traders and urbanites); in other words, increased participation of individuals and communities in both local and extra-local interactions. Interestingly, this occurs at a time when Batavian units were removed from the region to serve abroad, which may have led local households to rely more on social support systems and to emphasize communal values in the sudden absence of men (van Driel-Murray 2008). The introduction of collective burials does indeed suggest the rise of a new communal identity, while the uniformity of grave goods seems to reflect a shared ideology that emphasises socio-economic equality.

But, further details can yet be gleaned from the burial evidence, for example, where this concerns the assumed social dominance of martial and pastoral ideologies (Roymans 1996; Derks 1998). For one, the absence of *militaria* from burials possibly suggests rather mundane attitudes towards military service from the very start of the cemetery. This may reflect a broader development across the *civitas Batavorum* where these materials are increasingly

present in settlement contexts (Nicolay 2007), while martial depositions in sanctuaries all but ceased (Roymans and Aarts 2005). The impetus for such transformations may have been the regularization of auxiliary recruitment and ongoing frontier consolidation under Claudius. In similar terms, the absence of cattle bones in the ritual meals associated with burial ceremonies, despite their pervasive presence in settlement contexts (Roymans *et al.* 2007: 26), suggests similar mundane attitudes towards cattle-rearing and its products. In the cemetery, chicken, goose and pig were added to the burning pyres upon which the deceased were cremated (Groot 2008: 180) while sheep/goat was consumed by those household and community members who took part in the cremation ceremony, or afterwards at a time when cremated remains were buried. Horse and cattle parts were brought to the grave mound after it was built and this may symbolise the association of the deceased with a specific economic focus, namely horse and cattle breeding. It may have been one socially acceptable way in which certain households were allowed to differentiate themselves within the context of the cemetery.

Interestingly, the burial evidence from the second century A.D. suggests a watershed for social change. About half a century after the establishment of the cemetery, and about a century after the Roman conquest, coins were used in burial rituals, though never commonly and always involving single depositions. They initially only occur in primary (cremation and burial) rites and gradually only in secondary (revisiting) rites. Perhaps here as well we are seeing the development of an economic focus of ritual practices, such that these coins were given to deceased relatives to symbolize their continued association with the economic prosperity of the household of which they remained a contributing member. A shift of focus from the larger community to households at this time is also shown by demographic analysis, where a change in the ratio between number of burials and in-use farmhouses suggests a general increase in household size (Aarts and Heeren 2007: 73). Furthermore, individual child burials occur mostly in the second century A.D. when they are also given substantial grave goods, and such special care for child graves may point at a shift in household attitudes. Child mortality rates were also lowest in the stable political and economic conditions of the second century A.D., circumstances under which more family members may have assisted in child-rearing. Furthermore, the practice of sorting out the cremated remains from the pyre debris decreases in the second century A.D., when more grave goods are burned because they are placed on the pyres alone and no longer afterwards in the burial where the sorted cremated remains were previously placed (*ibid.*: 80). If the use of costly finewares served to flaunt the prosperity of households, this would only make sense in ceremonies where these would have been prominently in sight with spectators present. If the earlier rituals of burning, sorting and burying involved the participation of the larger community, the changes noted for the second century A.D. may reflect how burial ceremonies had become restricted to household members.

Commensality

The presence of imported ceramics and foodstuffs in burial and settlement contexts is generally taken to signal the adoption of new foodways, both in preparation and consumption. While some argue that the adoption of new commensal practices should not be directly associated with a Roman identity (Roymans *et al.* 2007: 29), others have emphasised this association because of the arrival of new materials and behaviours through the military sphere (Heeren 2007: 155). Crucially, the prominence of ceramic tableware in the burial assemblage points to the social significance of commensal practices, or eating and drinking together. During the ER period, handshaped wares were typically consumed in far larger volumes than

imported wares, and this at a time when the former show more variation in production techniques and stylistic variation compared with LIA wares. This, together with the fact that some disposable income immediately went to the consumption of imported finewares and foodstuffs (undoubtedly considered luxurious novelties at the time) suggests that a need existed already which was primarily met by local producers. A similar process later unfolds in burial rituals where handshaped forms were used in the earliest graves, with finewares only arriving later; hence, rituals existed already for which the more costly finewares came to be used at a later time. Because of the time-lapse of this process between settlement and cemetery contexts, the availability of these materials seems less important a factor than the social developments that guided demand. Commensality seems to have been an important social mechanism through which a new collective identity and ideology were maintained by the living community, and through which the encounter between people with diverse backgrounds could be mediated. In other words, commensality was a very significant part of the social relations maintained by the community in various contexts, initially shaping the demand for local products and then increasingly imported goods. Over time, particular commensal practices became the socially acceptable thing to share in for increasing numbers of people, and preferably, with nice wares and interesting foods to gloat about.

Housing

Where developments in housing are concerned, the adoption of new structural features and building techniques, together with the construction of larger and sturdier farmhouses, are taken as indications for increased economic wealth, subscription to Roman cultural values, and the continued importance of the local byre-house tradition. Over the years, two principle arguments have been put forward to explain the predominance of non-villa house forms in the Lower Rhineland (Wesselingh 2000: 224; Heeren 2009: 154). From an economic point-of-view, it is suggested that stock farming and military service prevented the accumulation of wealth required for investment in costly villas. From an ideational perspective, it is argued that persistent pastoral ideologies ensured the continuation of the byre-house tradition. For Tiel-Passewaaij specifically, the argument is made that the expansion of the local economy, together with the new attitudes of well-to-do native veterans, led to innovative investment in traditional farmhouses, for example, the incorporation of what has been interpreted as a Roman-style *porticus* into existing byre-house architecture (Heeren 2009: 155).

At Tiel-Passewaaij, no villas were built and no substantial investments made in new building materials despite their availability through existing distribution networks. Important changes in construction and layout did occur, but, interestingly, not until the second century A.D. when changing burial customs point at a growing importance of households. In explaining such developments, it serves to consider the Kekchi case, where Wilk (1990) explores the range of social and economic factors that shape the built environment of rural communities. Wilk describes the actual human decisions that shape the formation of house and household—‘the choices, negotiations, disagreements and compromises that are involved in the construction, purchase, and use of a house’—a range of considerations in which cultural tradition is rarely a crucial factor (*ibid*: 35). At Tiel-Passewaaij, changes in house form and construction likely reflect the creative and socially significant negotiation of a new social reality forming in the second century A.D., and, by looking at what such innovations actually achieved we might be able to speak to this. For example, noteworthy for some farmhouses is the creation of larger open indoor space that could facilitate new forms of social interaction

and performance. This undoubtedly involved the reorganisation of domestic life, for example, by raising the roof and adding lofts that could be used for extra storage or as dormitory space for a growing household, something the innovations in construction techniques would have made possible. Such structural changes may actually have necessitated the use of external supports that surround some farmhouses, and which are currently interpreted, in acculturative terms, as the adoption of a Roman-style *porticus*.

Conclusion

Such reflection on specific domains of study can tease out information on the social transformations that followed Roman colonialism and globalization in a rural setting. Insights drawn from economic anthropology help in unpacking commonly held economic perceptions, while urging attention for various economic strategies that past social agents, motivated by situated attitudes, relations and structures, could have engaged in. Further consideration of the social significance of 'dress' and 'commensality' likewise shows a need for highlighting the contingent logics maintained by historical actors within specific networks of interaction. Cultural hegemonic and rational economic perspectives can be nuanced by sociological and anthropological perspectives that approach objects and behaviors as facilitating social relations. Ethnographic case-studies, furthermore, show how globalizing processes can trigger social disruption and realignment when extra-local systems are accessed by local actors, and such changes might also be found reflected in the available evidence for Tiel-Passewaaij and the Batavian community. Lastly, the evidence from 'burial' and 'housing' is used to show how local responses to Roman colonialism and globalisation might have led to the shifting prominence of community and household and associated behaviors and attitudes.

Close engagement with the archaeological interpretations of a single rural settlement in the Lower Rhineland serves its purpose, but the broader aim should be understood: there is a need for comparative exercises to expose the shared and discrepant experiences that can be reconstructed for this part of the Roman Empire. Such studies should engage closely with anthropological and ethnographic scholarship for guiding the exploration and comparison of local contexts at multiple levels of social experience against a background of historically situated macro-scale structures and processes. My own interests for understanding rural transformations in the Lower Rhineland led to closer engagement with anthropological work on colonial entanglements, globalisation and rural lifeways.

Rural contexts are best understood as local spaces that structure and are structured by macro-scale processes differentially, due to the creative negotiation of constraints and affordances by unevenly situated agents through a variety of local, regional and global networks of interaction; our subjects, in turn, as social agents with pluriform identities who uphold complex behavioral and discursive practices as they participate in a variety of social networks. It was through local mechanisms of social reproduction that rural communities were able to negotiate and contribute to the Roman colonial project, as well as an expanding global order. The spaces, materials and objects they engaged with facilitated a wide range of social interactions, and always in accordance with local logics. Under Roman colonial and globalizing conditions, contingent re-contextualisation of non-local elements further shaped such interactions and allowed for tensions between the local and the global to be negotiated in dynamic, and often creative, ways.

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