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Roman Period Statuettes in the Netherlands and beyond

REPRESENTATION AND RITUAL USE IN CONTEXT

CHRISTEL VEEN

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"It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts."

Sherlock Holmes in *A Scandal in Bohemia*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

1 A rare category of artefacts

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of this book are bronze and terracotta statuettes that represent deities, human figures and animals. They were introduced in the northwestern provinces by Roman troops from the end of the 1st century BCE onwards.[1] The statuettes have been recovered from military and non-military settlements, the surrounding landscape and, to a lesser extent, from sanctuaries and graves. The first chapter deals with the objective and approach of this study, followed by a description of the dataset and the research area, the definitions of terms and the structure of the complete text. This introduction comprises a summary of how the study area became politically divided in the 1st century.

The first Roman troops arrived between 19 and 16 BCE in the easternmost part of the region nowadays known as the Netherlands. They built the first military base on the Hunerberg at Nijmegen. Later, other military camps would follow. When Drusus led his army through Frisian territory in 12 BCE, he did not meet with any resistance and placed a moderate tax on the Frisii in the form of cow-hides. In 28, the first documented fight in the area took place when the Frisii revolted against the Roman prefect Olennius. According to Tacitus, Olennius demanded larger hides, the size of the much larger aurochs or their equivalent in domestic cow-hides. The Frisii could not meet his demands and handed in their herds and their land, and sent their wives and children into slavery. Since the Romans remained deaf to their complaints, the Frisii sought remedy in war. They hanged the soldiers who came to collect the taxes and Olennius fled to a nearby fort, which Tacitus calls Flevum.[2] When the provincial governor, Lucius Apronius, arrived at the fort with his troops, the Frisian insurgents who had besieged it had already left to protect their own possessions.[3] Apronius ordered his men to go after the enemy and a battle followed. The Romans were defeated and suffered great losses, but for some reason did not seek revenge. They did not succeed in bringing the northern tribes back into line, which, from now on, no longer paid taxes. This situation became definitive in 47, when the emperor Claudius (41-54) ordered all Roman troops to retreat behind the Rhine.

The political division between the regions north and south of the Rhine had far reaching consequences for the socio-economic and cultural development of their respective populations. Yet, the division did not bring an end to the contacts between Romans and northern tribes. Hoards of *denarii* dating to the 2nd and 3rd centuries testify to a continuing contact with the Romans. Epigraphic evidence demonstrates that men from the Frisii enlisted in the Roman army. Moreover, to prevent raids from the north, Roman authorities also tried to maintain friendly relationships with northern tribal leaders. Apart from Germanic men who joined the Roman army, contacts between northern tribes and the Romans were from now on limited to trade and barter on a small scale.

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[1] Only years preceding the Common Era are referred to as BCE.

[2] Tac. *Ann.* 4.72: *Tributum iis Drusus iusserat modicum pro angustia rerum, ut in usus militares coria boum penderent, non intenta cuiusquam cura, quae firmitudo, quae mensura, donec Olennius e primipilaribus regendis Frisiis inpositus terga urorum delegit, quorum ad formam acciperentur. Id aliis quoque nationibus arduum apud Germanos difficilius tolerabatur, quis ingentium beluarum feraces saltus, modica domi armenta sunt. Ac primo boves ipsos, mox agros, postremo* corpora coniugum aut liberorum servitio tradebant. Hinc ira et questus, et postquam non subveniebatur, remedium ex bello. Rapti qui tributo aderant milites et patibulo adfixi: Olennius infensos fuga praevenit, receptus castello, cui nomen Flevum.

[3] Tac. *Ann.* 4.73: *Quod ubi L. Apronio inferioris Germaniae pro praetore cognitum, vexilla legionum e superiore provincia peditumque et equitum auxiliarium delectos accivit ac simul utrumque exercitum Rheno devectum Frisiis intulit, soluto iam castelli obsidio et ad sua tutanda degressis rebellibus.*

After 47, the river Rhine was no longer just a natural barrier, but also Rome's northern frontier on the continent. The frontier zone was consolidated by the construction of forts and watchtowers on the left bank of the Rhine between Nijmegen and the North Sea coast. Military units were now stationed here for longer periods of time. A new infrastructure was created with roads and bridges to facilitate the transport of men and goods. The Roman forts attracted all kinds of people who wanted to make a living out of the army. They settled down near the forts, where settlements developed that probably were melting pots of people from throughout the Empire. In Batavian territory, a civil settlement was founded around 10 BCE.[4] According to written sources, this settlement was Oppidum Batavorum, situated in Nijmegen's modern city centre. After its destruction during the Batavian revolt in 69/70, a new settlement was established on the left bank of the river Waal. It became the new *civitas* capital of the Batavians: Ulpia Noviomagus.[5] More to the west and slightly later, a settlement in the western coastal area known as Municipium Aelium Cananefatium became the *civitas* capital of the Cananefates.[6] Some civil *vici* developed into successful small towns, like Maastricht and Heerlen, which became known as Mosa Trajectum and Coriovallum.[7] Together with Ulpia Noviomagus and Municipium Aelium Cananefatium, Mosa Trajectum and Coriovallum developed into regional centres with urban characteristics. In the course of the 1st and 2nd centuries, Roman building techniques, building material, pottery and other artefacts also appeared in smaller settlements. Farmers, who until the conquest were mostly self-sufficient, now produced crops and livestock for the Roman army. With the profits they made, they built larger farmsteads and villas that were modelled on those in the more central parts of the Empire, with baths, heated rooms, marble wall coverings and wall paintings.

1.2 THEORIES ON ROMANIZATION

The impact of the Roman occupation on the conquered peoples has been central to a debate that started at the beginning of the 20th century and later became known as 'the Romanization debate'. Since numerous publications on this topic have seen the light, I will confine myself to some of the more important insights and to the consequences of the debate for the subject of this study.[8]

Until the second half of the 1980s, theories on Romanization mainly focused on changes in the social, economic and political organization. The first systematic studies on the transformation of religion in the Roman West appeared from the second half of the 1980s onwards.[9] In 1993, it was one of the topics at an international conference held in Luxembourg, entitled *Integration in the Early Roman West. The role of culture and ideology*. As of the late 1990s, several studies on the Gallic and Germanic provinces saw the light that have contributed importantly to our knowledge of the transformation of religion under Roman rule.[10]

[4] Except for the northern Rhine frontier, the exact boundaries of the Batavian territory are unknown. It probably covered the region between the line Woerden-Gorinchem in the west and the modern Dutch-German border in the east. The southern part may have included a part of the sandy soils of the modern province of North Brabant: Nicolay 2007, 3-4 and fig. 1.1.

[5] The name of the settlement is uncertain. It may have been Noviomagus or Batavodurum before it became known as Ulpia Noviomagus. The names Municipium Batavorum and Ulpia Noviomagus occur on altars and grave markers from the second half of the 2nd century onwards. The name Municipium Batavorum Ulpia Noviomagus has not been attested so far. For practical reasons, I use the name Ulpia Noviomagus for the settlement at Nijmegen-West that took off in 70 and

remained occupied until 260/270. See for the discussion on the settlement and its name: Bogaers 1960, 276-312; Haalebos 2000, 14, 35-39; Van Enckevort/Thijssen 2005a, 104-107.

[6] See for the name of the settlement Bogaers 1960, 303-309 and 2.3.2. The most recent study on the Cananefates is the reworked PhD-thesis of Jasper de Bruin: De Bruin 2019.

[7] See for the name Mosa Trajectum 2.3.5.

[8] For this overview I follow Jeremia Pelgrom's introduction to the subject, which provides a good and clear outline of the debate: Pelgrom 2009.

[9] Birley 1986; Derks 1991.

[10] See, for instance, Haynes 1993, 1997; Cancik/Rüpke 1997; Derks 1998; Spickermann *et al.* 2001; Spickermann 2008; Van Andringa 2002, 2007, 2011.

2

Central to most studies are the cult places and ritual practices of public religion. However, how and at what pace the transformation of religion and its material culture took place outside the public context has remained largely unclear. Studies on the subject only dealt with the description and classification of artefacts dissociated from their contexts. Their invisibility in the archaeological landscape, the sparse analytic studies within Roman archaeology on private forms of worship and the absence of native written sources on this subject account for our faulty knowledge.[11]

According to the Romanization model proposed by Martin Millett in 1990, Rome conducted a non-intervention policy.[12] This implied that local elites were maintained in power, as long as they paid taxes and conformed to Roman principles with respect to the administration of their territory. Since the display of weaponry was forbidden by the *lex Julia de vi publica*, weapons could no longer function as symbols of power, as traditionally had been the case.[13] Consequently, to express their authority and to distinguish themselves from lower social strata, native elites chose Roman artefacts and practices as new symbols of power. According to Millett, these symbols gradually penetrated the lower classes of society. This phenomenon of voluntarily embraced aspects of Roman culture became known as *aemulatio*, emulation or self-Romanization.

Postmodernist critics rejected the passivity of the lower classes implied in Millett's model. They argued that a society is a diverse collective of social groups, each with its own ideologies, ideas, norms and values. Moreover, Millett's model only focused on socio-economic and political processes, while omitting ideological aspects. The idea was advanced that the acceptance of Roman culture depended primarily on the ideologies, norms and values of native groups.[14] In more recent studies it is pointed out that, especially under Augustus, the concept of *humanitas* was used to define Roman identity.[15] The degree of *humanitas* determined the success of local elites.[16] The more 'Roman' elites looked and behaved, the more successful they were within the imperial administrative organisation.

These theories restored the presumed leading role of local elites and, again, marginalised the role of the lower classes in processes of change. In order to explain how the lower social classes played a decisive role in the acceptance or refusal of practices and the material culture of a new culture, post-colonial theories on Romanization looked at our colonial past. Colonised peoples did not take over the language and culture of the colonizer, but created a new language and culture. The acceptance of elements of the colonizer's culture did not mean that colonised peoples took over the ideas behind these elements. They took over what they appreciated or could use.

Likewise, conquered peoples in the Roman period could embrace Roman artefacts and practices, they could attribute new meanings to such artefacts and practices, they could also refuse elements of Roman culture and emphasize their non-Roman identity.[17] Described as flexible, discrepant or fragmented identities, they allowed people to function in varying situations and in different communities.[18] Immigrants and natives could be portrayed on grave *stelai* wearing Roman clothing, native garments, or both.[19] Groups and individuals could appropriate and reinterpret cultural elements and social practices, creating new cultural identities, processes referred to as creolisation, *bricolage* or hybridisation. It has been argued that especially in frontier zones, a variety of cultural elements and influences were picked up and mixed, resulting in a 'frontier style',

[11] In the past, studies on Roman private religion have focused on Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia and are predominantly descriptive. See, for instance, Boyce 1937; Orr 1972; for private religion in Ostia Bakker 1994.

[12] Millett 1990a, 1990b.

[13] *Dig.* 48.6.1; Millett 1990b, 37-38.

[14] Pelgrom 2009, 161-163 and note 17.

[15] *Humanitas* in the Imperial period stood for a combination of qualities such as humanity, literacy and civilisation. It embodied what it meant to be Roman: Woolf 1998, 54-60.

[16] Pelgrom 2009, 164.

[17] Pelgrom 2009, 165-167.

[18] See for the term 'discrepant identities' Mattingly 2006, 203-245; for 'fragmenting identities' Hingley 2005, 91-116.

[19] Ursula Rothe has investigated people portrayed on grave *stelai* in the Rhine-Moselle area. She has demonstrated that attributing a native or non-native identity based on clothing is dangerous. It also appears from her study that there were regional differences in the way people adopted Roman-style monuments and Roman dress: Rothe 2009.
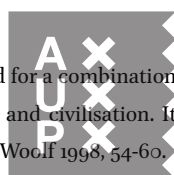
a distinct frontier material culture along the borders of the Roman Empire.[20] An example is the grave stele commissioned by the Syrian Barates for his wife Regina, a Catuvellaunian freedwoman at Arbeia (modern South Shields), a *vicus* and Roman fort on Hadrian's Wall. The stele dates to the second half of the 2nd century and is a typical Roman funerary monument, but the sculptural style and epitaph, written in Latin and flawless Aramic, testify to the presence of a Syrian community on Hadrian's Wall. The seated woman in the relief wears garments that resemble the ethnic clothing of a variety of groups in the western Roman provinces. As a Syrian, Barates could have chosen a typical Palmyrene funerary bust to commemorate his wife, but instead, he commissioned a typical Roman funerary monument to communicate the couple's integration as an immigrant and an ex-slave in the diverse and complex society in the British northern *limes* zone. The depicted spinning paraphernalia and basket filled with wool point at Regina's skills in spinning and wool working. She is presented as a respectable, industrious wife, which must have been an equally important message in a community where legal constraints prevented valid Roman marriage.[21]

When studying a group of artefacts, a large research area or a large dataset is required, as well as dateable artefacts and find-contexts.[22] These conditions do not apply to the study area and the majority of statuettes that are central to this study. Moreover, although the changing appearance of statuettes suggest a transformation of cults, the identities of the owners of these statuettes remain invisible to us. Therefore, the issue of Romanization is not put central here. However, the third chapter deals with the adoption and adjustment of Roman and indigenous iconographic elements of two statuette groups.

The focus of this study is on a specific aspect of religion within the wider subject of its transformation in the Roman period: how people used statuettes in everyday life. I have chosen this approach because most find-spots of statuettes are located in or near settlements. Only a very small number come from sanctuaries. It is often stated in Dutch archaeological reports that statuettes were set up in household shrines. This practice is known from Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia.[23] Evidence of household shrines in the Roman West is scarce and nearly absent in the study area.[24] This suggests that, if statuettes were set up in houses, they were placed in very simple, wooden shrines that have not survived. Cupboards may also have been used to set up statuettes, and small tables.[25] In the words of Jörg Rüpke, the home was, 'without a doubt the most important location for individual religious practices, for the consumption of objects distinguished as instruments or reminders of religious communication because they represented gods and myths.'[26] It seems, therefore, fruitful to regard practices with statuettes as an important part of everyday, lived religion.

[20] Hoss 2015, 136-137.

[21] Carroll 2012, 281-311.

[22] See for the impossibility of establishing production or deposition dates of statuettes this chapter.

[23] See for Pompeii, for instance: Krzyszowska 2002. For Herculaneum: Losansky 2015. Annemarie Kaufmann-Heinimann has studied find complexes consisting of bronze statuettes, often buried together with other metal objects. She interprets the find-assemblages as the contents of household shrines and sanctuaries and argues that the assemblages were buried because of impending danger, the so-called *Angstdepots*, as booty, or as metal hoards intended for recycling: Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, 182-192. The focus of her study is on Augusta Raurica (Augst, Switzerland), but she has also incorporated find-complexes from other sites in Europe and northern Africa. Other sources of information are Roman authors who have written about statuettes and rituals with statuettes in domestic contexts. See, for instance, Juv. 9.138; Ov. *Fast.* 6.310; Petron. *Sat.* 29.8.

[24] A wooden fragment of a household shrine comes from Velsen, North Holland: Lange, 2021, 104, 256 and plate LXXV, 331, f3367. A rare example from the western provinces is a shrine with statuettes found *in situ*. It is in fact a niche in the exterior wall of an early 2nd-century bath complex at Rezé (Loire-Atlantique), France. The shrine probably protected the people living in this quarter of the town. Three shrines have been found in Germany: two household shrines in Xanten and one in a villa in Neuenahr-Ahrweiler. Fragments of a limestone *aedicula* have been recovered from a Claudio-Neronic layer at Augst, Switzerland: Kaufmann Heinimann 1998, 96-97, 186, figs. 56-57 and note 642.

[25] We know from Pompeii and Herculaneum that cupboards may have functioned as household shrines. See, for instance, Mols 1999, 36-39, 56, 60, note 307.

[26] Rüpke 2018, 218.

1.3   LIVED RELIGION

The notion of lived religion has been introduced in the field by Rüpke, who in 2012 started a research programme on ancient religion drawing on this concept.[27] It had its precursors in the 20th century, such as *la religion vécue* in France and *Alltagsreligion* in Germany. In 2008, Meredith McQuire's *Lived Religion. Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* saw the light and put the study of lived religion on a new footing. She has stated: 'Scholars of religion, especially sociologists, must re-examine their assumptions about individuals' religious lives. What might we discover if, instead of looking at affiliation or organizational participation, we focused first on individuals, the experiences they consider most important, and the concrete practices that make up their personal religious experience and expression? What if we think of religion, at the individual level, as an ever-changing, multifaceted, or messy – even contradictory – amalgam of beliefs and practices that are not necessarily those religious institutions consider important?'[28] Her work inspired Rüpke and other ancient historians. Instead of focusing on public or *polis* religion, cities and peoples, a spearhead of the project is the individual as religious agent.[29]

So, lived religion is what this study is about: exploring how Roman period statuettes functioned in the individual's everyday life and what the meaning and purpose of these artefacts could have been.[30] I consider the concept of lived religion not the opposite of public or *polis* religion or a conscious deviation from norms or rules that were imposed by Roman authorities, but an indispensable complement. In my opinion, lived religion in the Roman period includes all religious and ritual activities which extended beyond what religious organizations dictated. These ritual activities must not be seen as resistance or rebellion against Roman religious order, but as the expression of what a person considered necessary or desirable at a certain moment in his or her life, for the well-being or protection of him-/herself or others. Although statuettes of Roman deities were common religious symbols, selecting statuettes for one's house was a private matter. Moreover, the statuettes were often combined with all kinds of objects that played a significant role in people's lives and were set up together in rooms in the house. These combinations were very personal.[31]

The same may also apply to ritual activities involving the deposition of statuettes in and around settlements. These statuettes, too, were often buried together with other objects. Such combinations, however, were probably not always or not solely the result of individual choice and may have been based on traditions that remain hidden from us.[32]

1.4   THE LIFE PATH OF STATUETTES

Objects can follow different life paths, which become salient when studying their cultural biography. The idea that things, like people, have different cultural biographies has been developed by the anthropologist Igor Kopytoff (1986). If we study a person, we can draw up a psychological, professional, economic, political or social biography by selecting or discarding certain aspects. The same applies to objects. A car has a technical biography which can be traced by studying its repair record. For its economic biography we can assemble data of the value from the beginning to the end of a car's life cycle. Cars also offer social and cultural biographies. We can study relations between its owners, or the meanings and role of a car in different societies.[33]

In general, cars follow more or less the same life path. After they have left the factory, they are distributed and sold to their first owner, who after some time sells it to the next, until the last owner brings it to the junkyard. Some cars, however, acquire special meanings and become icons, symbols for nations, groups of people or individuals. This happens to specimens of, for instance, the Citroen 2CV, Volkswagen Beetle and Aston Martin. Being collector's items, they are kept in garages, cherished by generations in a family. A few have appeared in movies, or are on display in museums. Their biographies differ from those of most other cars and, like most collector's items, they probably do not end up at the local junkyard.

The studies by David Fontijn and Fokke Gerritsen have demonstrated the usefulness of Kopytoff's theory for examining patterns of ritual deposits of weaponry and other objects in special places in the landscape and in settlements, from the prehistoric into the Roman period. Fontijn noted that 'as objects may accumulate special meanings on their life path, selective deposition implies that the meanings themselves vary. Thus, there must have been different kinds of biographies'.[34] With respect to the life cycle of houses, Gerritsen has stated that 'biographies can also be written for prehistoric houses, and can provide insights into the cultural dynamics of house building, habitation and house abandonment'.[35] The importance of these phases appears from ritual deposits in and around houses.[36]

Not all metal and terracotta statuettes began their life cycle as personifications of supernatural powers that would ensure prosperity, fertility, health or protection. There is evidence of statuettes being dolls and children's toys, especially statuettes of animals. Some have movable body parts, or holes for a small wheel axle.[37] Animal figurines were also used as cheaper replacements for animal sacrifices.[38] Moreover, statuettes may also have had a purely decorative function, as an exotic object or souvenir, for instance. At the end of their life path, some were offered in a sanctuary, while others were placed as a gift in a grave.[39] Like pottery, weaponry and bones, the majority ended up in the ground or in the water, either as refuse, as part of an offering, or as a result of another ritual. To the last two possibilities I will return at the end of the paragraph. First, I will briefly address the scarcity of statuettes in the study area.

A dataset of nearly 700 items contrasts sharply with the millions of potsherds and other artefacts that have been recovered during excavations since the beginning of the 20th century. Undoubtedly, a substantial part of the metal specimens has been melted down for recycling. In our time, many metal objects have been retrieved from the archaeological record by detectorists.[40] Yet, before the invention of the portable metal detector and a long time before organised excavations started, people already collected artefacts from the past, collections that have not been preserved or documented, or only partially.

An illustrative example is the collection of Johannes Smetius (1590-1651), a minister at Nijmegen and a collector of antique objects.[41] In *Antiquitates Neomagenses* (1678), his eponymous son states having over fifty figurines made of silver, bronze, ivory, stone and clay. He also mentions having over a hundred silver, bronze, marble and glass fragments of statuettes of male and female deities, emperors, human figures and animals.[42] Unfortunately, his collection got dispersed after his death, and many items have disappeared.

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[34] Fontijn 2002, 26-27.

[35] Gerritsen 2003, 38.

[36] Gerritsen 2003, 63-66 and table 3.5.

[37] See, for instance, Willemsen 2003, figs. 79-80, 84, 86.

[38] Kyll 1966, 64-66; Von Gonzenbach 1967, 8.

[39] See for toys in ritual deposits and graves Willemsen 2003, 135-139.

[40] Fortunately, more and more detectorists report their finds and the exact find-spot to provincial archaeological registration points. The Portable Antiquities of the Netherlands Project or PAN project of VU University Amsterdam has

started an online database with finds from amateur archaeologists and detectorists. See for the website: https://www.portable-antiquities.nl/pan/#/public.

[41] Smetius' collection comprised large objects like altars, inscribed marble and stone objects, fragments and heads of statues or busts, bronze and pottery vessels, but also numerous small objects like pieces of jewellery, coins, gems, *fibulae*, amulets and oil lamps, statuettes and fragments of statuettes: Nellissen 2004, 20-104, 108.

[42] Nellissen 2004, 81-94.

Since the large majority of statuettes come from settlements and their surroundings, their presence raises some questions. Why would people leave statuettes behind when they abandoned their habitations? Bronze statuettes as well as complete and fragmented terracotta figurines have been recovered from pits and watery places in and around settlements. Had they been discarded because they were worn or broken? May be, but if the statuette had been an object of worship this is unlikely. In the case of bronze statuettes it is inconceivable that people would discard them as refuse, no matter what their function had been, because bronze objects retained their intrinsic value and could be recycled.

When studying archaeological publications on settlement excavations I noted that, like ritual deposits of bronze objects, pottery vessels and bones, statuettes and statuette fragments have been recovered from features like pits, ditches and wells.[43] It could be advanced that these features often contain potsherds, bones and other artefacts, since they are known to act as artefact traps, places where artefacts pile up through post-depositional processes. Therefore, these recurring find-spots may seem to present a pattern in itself, but from the artefacts that are caught in these traps only a random distribution pattern will emerge. The same applies to objects that were accidentally lost.[44] Explanations such as 'loss' and 'artefact traps', are, therefore, not a credible solution for the presence of a single object or a striking assemblage of objects in these features, such as single bones of different animals, a single complete statuette or a statuette fragment, accompanied by a metal or ceramic object, a weapon, jewellery, coins or a combination of these objects.[45]

In the fourth chapter it will be examined which statuettes from settlements and the surrounding landscape may have been left behind as ritual deposits. Criteria have been formulated to recognise such deposits. Until now, an analytic study of deposits of statuettes in and around settlements has not been undertaken.

1.5   DISTRIBUTION AND USE

Bronze and terracotta statuettes have been recovered from settlements, cemeteries and the surrounding landscape, generating catalogues focusing on provenance, distribution and iconography.[46] Apart from a few studies, the function and meaning of these figurines have seldom been questioned or analysed in relation to their find-spots.[47] Furthermore, studies on statuettes usually focus on either bronze or clay figurines, as if they were two separate categories of artefacts, which, in my opinion, they are not.[48] It is an artificial distinction that should not be made in an analytic study on distribution, function and iconography. Moreover, it provides a distorted picture of people's preferences for certain deities, since it appears from this study that male deities are usually depicted in bronze, while female figures are predominantly depicted in clay. Therefore, the dataset of this study comprises all Roman period bronze and terracotta statuettes and identifiable statuette fragments from established find-spots in the Netherlands.[49]

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[43]   See, for instance, Merrifield 1987.

[44]   Fontijn 2002, 37.

[45]   Besides deposits of complete objects, inside and outside the study area there is also evidence of deposits comprising fragmented or destroyed artefacts, selected bones, intentionally broken pottery vessels and 'killed' or bent metal artefacts: Cunliffe 1993, 12-13; Pleiner 1993, 161 and fig. 19; Clarke 1999, 24; Groot 2008, 117-133; Groot 2009; Nieuwhof 2015, 128-148, 176, 190-193.

[46]   See, for instance, Zadoks *et al.*1967, 1969, 1973; Zadoks/Gerhartl-Witteveen 1983; Boucher 1970, 1971, 1973, 1976, 1983; Boucher/Tassinari 1976; Boucher/Boucher 1988; Boucher/Oggiano-Bitar 1993; Van Boekel 1987, 1989, 1993, 1996; Fai-

der-Feytmans 1979; Menzel 1960, 1966, 1986; Manfrini-Aragno 1987.

[47]   See for a functional analysis of terracotta figurines from Belgium De Beenhouwer 2005, 823-841; for bronze statuettes from Roman period graves Bolla 2013; for infant figurines Derks 2014a.

[48]   See, for example, the studies by Van Boekel (terracotta statuettes), Kaufmann-Heinimann (bronze statuettes), De Beenhouwer (terracotta statuettes) and Bolla (bronze statuettes).

[49]   Although not all find-spots are exact and sometimes based on second-hand information, for instance in the case of several detector finds, statuettes from the terp region and specimens in museum collections.

The objective of this study is to gain more insight in the use of Roman period statuettes through a comparative analysis of find-spots, iconography and ritual behaviour in the study area, the modern Netherlands, during the Roman period. In its second chapter a short account of the development of each area is given, followed by a description of find-spots of statuettes and statuette fragments per area. In the third chapter a spatial and iconographic analysis is made of statuettes, identifiable statuette fragments and their find-spots in three areas in the Netherlands: the area north of the *limes*, the *limes* zone and the area south of the *limes* zone, in order to find answers to the following two research questions:

1 Can we observe relations between size, material and subject of statuettes and their find-spots in the three areas and if so, how can we explain these relations?
2 Were there preferences for specific subjects or iconographies in the three areas and if so, how can we explain these preferences?

The fourth chapter focuses on rituals with statuettes. These rituals raise all kinds of questions, many of which cannot be answered. Therefore, I will focus on two questions which possibly can be answered from the data presented in this study:

3 How can we identify ritual deposits of statuettes?
4 Are there any indications for the ritual deposition of statuette fragments?

1.6   THE DATASET

Controlled excavations, construction works, stray finds by amateur archaeologists and coincidental finds in the Netherlands have yielded nearly seven hundred bronze and terracotta statuettes and statuette fragments. They have been divided into three main categories: deities, human figures and animals.

The dataset consists of published and unpublished statuettes. The first group comprises specimens from catalogues, museum collections, archaeological studies and reports. The second group includes hitherto unpublished specimens from excavations, archaeological databases, stray finds and statuettes belonging to private collections.[50] All items have been sorted by subject and find-spot and fed into a database. Although a substantial number of figurines have been found during controlled excavations, the exact find-spots of an equally substantial number have not been documented in detail. Nevertheless, in many cases it was possible to establish their find-spot in a broader sense. Statuettes of unknown provenance have not been included, but I have made a few exceptions in the case of an approximate provenance, by which I mean that the city or province is known, but not the exact find-spot.

Only figurines have been incorporated that were not part of a utilitarian object. Therefore, moulds and figurative appliques on vessels, cutlery, furniture, and other objects have been excluded from this study.[51] I have made this distinction in order to demarcate the dataset from objects with a practical function. The objection could be raised that also utilitarian objects like drinking vessels at some point could have a ritual function, but without a clear find-context this function usually escapes us. Furthermore, we do not know if an object with a decoration in the shape of a deity was bought because of this deity, or because the buyer simply needed that specific object and took the decoration for granted.

A few items constitute a 'grey area'. The first group comprises figurines without traces of a fitting or a hole for a fitting. Still, they could have been part of a utilitarian object, because comparable figurines have fittings or holes, indicating that they were once part of a drinking vessel, jar, support, and so on. The second group consists of a few figurines which originally were attached to a large object such as a piece of furniture. They have been recovered from specific find-contexts and will be discussed in chapter 4.

To conclude this section, it should be noted that the results of this study are based on small numbers. Therefore, I will not draw generalising conclusions based exclusively on numerical dominance. Besides ratio, only a comparison of the results with those from other studies and areas can provide meaningful insights into, for instance, the preferences of people for specific representations or ritual practices.

1.7 THE AREAS NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE RHINE AND THE DUTCH PART OF THE ROMAN LIMES ZONE

The study area, the modern Netherlands, comprises three geographical zones: the areas north and south of the Rhine and the *limes* zone. It is commoner nowadays to define regions ecologically or in relation to the political geography of the period. For this study, one would expect an investigation of, for instance, all statuettes found in Germania Inferior. Nevertheless, I have confined the study area to the modern Netherlands. I have done this for two reasons. The first is the accessibility of finds. Terracotta statuettes usually have been preserved only fragmentarily, the fragments ending up in carton boxes on shelves in archaeological depots. For various reasons, it has proven to be very time-consuming to gather all data.[52] The second reason is the political division of the study area in the Roman period, the northern region being part of 'Germania Libera' after 47 and the southern half initially belonging to Gallia Belgica and from around 84 to Germania Inferior (see 1.1). To what extent the political division of the study area in 47 had consequences for the availability, distribution and choice of statuettes, will be explored in the third chapter. Therefore, I distinguish between the areas north and south of the Rhine.

Figurines have been found in settlements north and south of the Rhine, as well as in and around military settlements in the *limes* zone along the Rhine and North Sea coast. The third reason for the division into these three areas are the theories and ideas that have been advanced to account for different developments in urban, rural and military environments.[53]

Starting with the region north of the Rhine, this is a rural region where Roman period settlements with urban characteristics are absent. The Roman period graves that came to light in this area did not contain any statuettes.[54] The only Roman forts in the north are the two forts at Velsen (North Holland). These forts will be discussed together with the military settlements in the *limes* zone.

South of the Rhine, numerous Roman period settlements have come to light through excavations, ground surveys and geo-archaeology.[55] These settlements could consist of one to several farmhouses and annexes. Farmsteads with a stone built main house are often referred to in literature as villas. They show a wide variety in layout and size.[56]

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[52] I would like to stress that this has nothing to do with the staff of archaeological depots and museums. They have been very cooperative and helpful.

[53] See, for instance, Roymans 1995; Roymans/Derks 2011. See for Britain Mattingly 2006. See for military contexts, for instance, Haynes 1993, 1997, 1999, 2013.

[54] The only exception of a cemetery north of the Rhine that has yielded a Roman period statuette is Rhenen (Utrecht). Excavations in 1951 at the Donderberg site produced an

early Medieval cemetery, dating between the 4th and 8th centuries. In or before 1834, a Roman period statuette was found here. See for Rhenen 2.3.3. The mother goddess figurine is a stray find. Since a small number of the earliest graves contained Roman coins and terra sigillata vessels, the figurine may have come from one of these graves: Huiskes 2011, 19-26, 41-48.

[55] See, for the latter, for instance, Jeneson 2013.

[56] See for a definition of a villa 2.3.1.
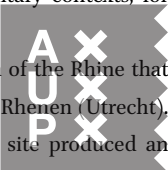
The four largest settlements possess urban characteristics: Nijmegen, Voorburg, Maastricht and Heerlen. It is beyond any doubt that there were cemeteries belonging to these towns but so far, they have only come to light at Nijmegen and Heerlen. Nijmegen and Voorburg became the *civitas* capitals of the Batavi and Cananefates: Ulpia Noviomagus, the settlement that was founded after the destruction of Oppidum Batavorum and Municipium Aelium Cananefatium, nowadays part of modern Voorburg. Nijmegen and Voorburg meet most of the criteria for urban communities as defined by Jürgen Kunow.[57] Maastricht and Heerlen were *vici* that developed into successful small towns. Since only small parts of these settlements have been excavated, it is uncertain to what degree they meet Kunow's criteria in the Roman period. We can only assume that all four settlements possessed the characteristics that are considered manifestations of Roman urbanism: the presence of temples, a *forum*, a *porticus*, stone monuments, baths, a defensive wall, and evidence of the use of the Latin language. Temples have only been found at Nijmegen and Maastricht, whereas *basilicae* or theatres have not been found in any of the four settlements. The only characteristics that have been attested with certainty in all four settlements are houses, workshops and public baths. Still, there is no doubt about their function as regional, economic centres located on important routes over land and water.

Several definitions have been given for the Dutch part of the Roman *limes*. Since a precise demarcation of this zone to the south cannot be given, the following definition will be employed in this study: the military installations and immediately associated features (extramural settlements, cemeteries) on the river deposits on the left bank of the river Rhine, from the German border in the east to the North Sea in the west, the forts at Velsen (North Holland) and those along the North Sea coast between Katwijk (South Holland) and Aardenburg (Zeeland).

The research period spans from around 50 BCE, the time of the first Roman military campaigns in this region, until the 5th century, when statuettes disappeared from the living context.

1.8   DEFINITION OF TERMS

• **Statuette**
'Statuette' in this study is used for all small-size freestanding representations of deities, human figures and animals. They are made predominantly of metal and clay, a few from other materials like stone, amber or chalk. The dataset also includes busts and one herm, which is a bust on a shaft. The height of the statuettes varies between 50 and 320 mm.

• **Bronze**
Apart from one silver and a few lead specimens, all metal figurines from the dataset have been termed 'bronze'. Yet, in this case bronze is an umbrella term. Strictly speaking, bronze is a copper-tin alloy, with trace elements like arsenic, silver or bismuth. Messing is a copper-zinc alloy with characteristics that differ substantially from copper-tin alloys. Lead could be added to a copper-tin alloy, for instance to lower the melting point. Roman bronze often contains a percentage of lead between ten and twenty, but this percentage can be much higher. A copper-tin alloy with more than ten percent lead is called 'leaded tin bronze'. By adding zinc, the product is easier to work after casting.[58] The large majority of the metal statuettes are made from bronze alloys. Since the difference between these alloys is seldom visible to the naked eye, I use the term 'bronze' for all figurines made from copper-tin and copper-zinc alloys.

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[57]   Kunow 1992, 143-142. See for the urban character of Ulpia Noviomagus also Driessen 2007, 148-164.

[58]   Riederer 1987, 116; 2000, 575-583.
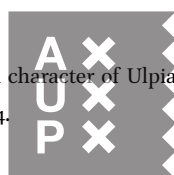
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- **Terracotta**

The colour of unpainted clay figurines after firing varies from white to orange-red and brown. The colour of the clay is the result of its composition, the iron and calcium content in particular, and the conditions during firing.[59] White clay figurines are often termed pipe-clay figurines because in early modern and modern times white clay was used for the manufacturing of smoking pipes. It is, therefore, a misconception that terracotta figurines are always orange-red or brown. The term simply means 'fired clay', which is why I in this study refer to all fired clay statuettes with the term 'terracotta'. For this study, I have not examined the composition of the clay or metal alloys used, the type of moulds or the manufacture techniques of figurines that hitherto were unpublished. These data are not relevant to the research questions formulated in the previous section.

- **Find-spot**

The find-spot is the place where a statuette or statuette fragment has been found, either in the area north of the *limes*, south of the *limes* or in the *limes* zone. The description of find-spots in literature varies from indefinite indications such as 'near settlement x' to more precise descriptions such as 'in the southwest corner of building y'. Examples of categories of find-spots are: in or near a military fort, settlement, building, cemetery, river, stream or other watery place. Special features in the landscape that existed in antiquity could be considered as find-spots with particular characteristics, but they are often hard to recognise today. The same applies to watery places which now have disappeared or dried up. Therefore, these find-spots do not fall into the category find-context (see hereafter).

- **Find-context**

In this study, the find-context is a find-spot that distinguishes itself from other find-spots through specific characteristics. These characteristics are recognisable in the archaeological record and, together, constitute different types of archaeological contexts. The find-contexts in this study comprise graves, pits, wells, cisterns, drains, ditches and post holes. According to this definition, a find-spot can contain a varying number of find-contexts.

- **Votive deposit**

Richard Bradley remarks at the beginning of his book *A Geography of Offerings* that all terms relating to hoards and deposits give problems and that the term votive deposit 'was treated as a residual category made up of collections of objects whose composition resisted a practical interpretation'.[60]

   Those who study the ancient Mediterranean world, and the Graeco-Roman period in particular, point out that the meaning of the noun 'votive', is derived from the Latin verb *vovere*, which means 'to promise solemnly or sacredly, to devote, dedicate, to consecrate something to a deity'. In a paper about the definition of ritual and religious concepts, Andreas Murgan has pointed out that the terms in modern archaeological literature are loosely used, as if they are interchangeable, without considering the complexity of original and actual meanings hiding behind notions such as *bothros, favissa, stipe*, votive deposit and so on.[61] According to Murgan, a correct use of the word votive with all its compounds can only be made when there is a relation between offering and vow.[62]

   In 1996, Jelle Bouma dedicated a chapter in his PhD thesis to the same problem, citing Tony Hackens who had studied the original meanings and use of these terms in different contexts.[63] By combining literary and archaeological evidence, Hackens arrived at a typology of containers and depositions of votive material.[64]

[59] See for a detailed explanation of the manufacture process of terracotta statuettes and characteristics of workshops in Cologne, Central-Gaul and the Rhine-Moselle area Van Boekel 1987; De Beenhouwer 2005, 2014.

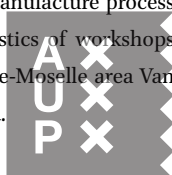[60] Bradley 2017, 1.

[61] Murgan 2016. I thank Andreas Murgan for providing the text of his paper.

[62] Murgan 2016, 89-90. See on the ritual of the *votum* also 4.2.6.

[63] Bouma 1996, 43-50.

[64] Hackens 1963, 84-97; Bouma 1996, 51 and note 149.

Bouma concludes from Hackens' typology that no words in antiquity are known that distinguish between open and closed deposits, or between deposits made in- and outside sanctuaries. Neither are there specific words in antiquity to distinguish between deposits made in a sanctuary and deposits made in watery places, caves, marshes or other features in the landscape.[65]

Offerings were gifts for a deity or deities, which could be the deity or deities to which a sanctuary was dedicated. Offerings made in settlements could be gifts for a supernatural power, too, although this might not always have been the case with respect to closing or abandonment rituals. Peter van den Broeke prefers the more neutral term abandonment deposit over offerings to describe ritual deposits in pits filled with potsherds and other objects in association with houses. He argues that, although the pits were dug as part of a ritual, it is doubtful that their contents must be seen as gifts to a supernatural power.[66]

Considering the difficulties related to the term 'votive', I will avoid the terms votive deposit and ex-voto. Instead, I will name all deposits with an alleged ritual meaning ritual deposits, sometimes alternated by the terms special and specialised deposit, to avoid annoying repetition.

- **Ritual**

Before defining what is meant by a ritual deposit in this study, it is necessary to define ritual. Although many scholars have theorized about the nature of rituals, there is no all-comprising definition for what ritual exactly is. In *Day of Shining Red: An Essay on Understanding Ritual* (1980), the British anthropologist Gilbert Lewis argues that ritual and art share several similarities. Both lack a commonly agreed definition, and with both there are performers and performances, interpreters and beholders. The lack of a definition seems not to bother Lewis, since he claims that anthropologists often intuitively recognise a ritual, even without understanding its meaning or the symbols involved. He points out that understanding and interpreting symbols or behaviour is a skill we can learn, just as we can learn to interpret the tracks of animals in the snow.[67]

My objection to Lewis' view is that anthropologists as well as archaeologists must provide arguments in support of their claim that a ritual is involved. Before we are able to recognise the track pattern of a mountain lion in the snow, we must learn how to identify the tracks of the mountain lion in order to distinguish them from those of other mammals. It has nothing to do with intuition, but everything with knowledge and definition.

The American religious studies scholar Catherine Bell is the author of two influential works on ritual, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (1992) and *Ritual: perspective and dimensions* (2009). According to Bell, rituals in general share one or more of the following features: formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism and performance. Unfortunately, the archaeologist might only see a few elements of past rituals: the objects that have been used at the time the ritual was performed, sometimes accompanied by the remains of offerings or traces of fire, and the ritual's ambience. Other elements of the ritual usually remain invisible: the persons involved in the ritual, the gestures, the accompanying words, the choreography, and so on.

Rituals are based on tradition and custom and are often a repetition of activities from the past.[68] In most cases, the archaeologist is only able to recognise rituals in the archaeological record if they are performed in the same way over a long period of time. This does not imply that the intentions, meanings and objects involved in the ritual have remained unchanged. Recognising rituals with 'new' objects is possible by comparing such ritual deposits to the characteristics of traditional ones, which is the central topic of the fourth chapter.

The last feature Bell has formulated is sacral symbolism and involves the use of special objects when an appeal is made to supernatural powers. The appeal can be direct, by addressing them orally, or more indirect, by written dedications. The objects symbolise the appeal to or the communication with the supernatural, and include imagery and objects such as amulets.[69]

[65] Bouma 1996, 51.

[66] Van den Broeke 2015, 89.

[67] Lewis 1980, 6-9.

[68] Bell 1997, 145-150.

[69] Bell 1997, 153-154.

- **Ritual deposit**

Establishing definitions or criteria is necessary to create a point of departure. An example of the necessity to establish criteria for the study of societal phenomena is dancing. How do we define dance? How do we distinguish dance movements from everyday movements? The main difference is the way in which they are used. According to some definitions, dance movements are a form of non-verbal communication. Communication implies a form of interaction between the dancer(s) and the audience. The movements are meaningful to the audience, which also implies that we have to understand the societal context in which dance is being performed.[70]

The criteria in this section are based on patterns and characteristics that have emerged from previous studies on ritual deposition of pottery, bones and weaponry from the Bronze Age into the Medieval period.[71] To make a reasonable cause for the distinction between ritual and secular deposits of statuettes and statuette fragments, I will take into account the composition of deposits, the condition of the objects involved and the observed deposition patterns in other studies. If a deposit of a statuette or a statuette fragment occurs repeatedly in recurring find-contexts, alone or together with other, selected artefacts, it could be intentionally deposited as part of a ritual. Thus the key words are 'patterning' and 'repetition'. If a deposit contains a single statuette fragment, only fragments have been incorporated which depict an important and easily recognisable part of the statuette, which is why I have incorporated only heads and heads with the upper part of the torso. Patterning and repetition can be detected if a deposit meets at least two of the following criteria: one of the first two (1 or 2) *and* one of the last two (3 or 4).

1. A deposit includes at least one complete or substantially complete statuette, sometimes accompanied by a striking assemblage of other objects, or:
2. A deposit includes a statuette head/head-torso fragment, sometimes accompanied by a striking assemblage of other objects. Other fragments of the statuette are absent.
3. A statuette or statuette head/head-torso fragment is buried in or next to a building in a settlement: under a floor, demolition layer, under or near the entrance, in a corner, posthole, or:
4. A statuette or statuette head/head-torso fragment is deposited in a ditch, pit, well, drain or cistern associated with a building or settlement.

Deposits with the abovementioned characteristics are considered ritual deposits, once repetition and patterning have been recognised.

- **Sanctuaries and alleged cult places**

Sanctuaries are the first place where one would expect to find statuettes. Yet, it appears from this study that less than six percent of all statuettes come from sanctuaries and alleged cult places.

For the Roman period, the French historian and archaeologist John Scheid distinguishes two types of sacred places. The first category is often recognisable in the archaeological record: man-made sanctuaries, usually with a specific layout, ranging from simple religious precincts with an altar to impressive temple complexes with colonnades and secondary buildings. The second category consists of natural places that were considered to be residences the gods had chosen for themselves: groves, mountain tops, large caves, springs and deep pools.[72] Of course, these natural features were the result of human choice as much as the first category and in some cases, they were turned into formal sanctuaries, like the sanctuary of Sulis-Minerva at Bath, Britain and the cult place of Sources de la Seine, Fontes Sequanae, north-west of Dijon, France. Since architectural remains are lacking, only the combination of a striking feature in the landscape and an accumulation of specific finds such as figurines can reveal the existence of sites belonging to the second category.

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[70]   Naerebout 1997, 161-166.

[71]   See, for instance, Merrifield 1987; Fontijn 2002; Gerritsen 2003; Therkorn 2004; Groot 2009; Nieuwhof 2015.

[72]   Scheid 2003, 63-64, 73-74.

Sanctuaries with architectural remains and a Gallo-Roman ground plan come from Empel (North Brabant), Elst and Nijmegen-Maasplein (Gelderland).[73] The first has yielded one bronze statuette, a stray find. The sanctuary at Elst has produced one bronze statuette fragment and no statuettes have been recovered from the temple precinct at Nijmegen-Maasplein.[74] In Maastricht (Limburg) the northwestern corner of a temple has been discovered. Despite the impressive architectural remains that have come to light, the lay-out of this temple has to remain largely speculative, since the site is located in Maastricht's city centre. The site has not yielded any statuettes, only a bronze applique of a male head.[75] A fourth sanctuary with architectural remains stood at Buchten (Limburg).[76] Just outside the sanctuary's precinct, but near the enclosure wall, a pit was found with a bronze statuette of a cockerel and several other small metal objects. A sanctuary of which only traces of the stone foundations have been preserved stood on the premises of the Aardenburg *castellum* (Zeeland). On the terrain of this small, square building a fragment of a terracotta statuette of one of the Parcae came to light. Just outside the precinct a small, sandstone votive altar has been recovered.[77]

The existence of two sanctuaries at Colijnsplaat and Domburg (Zeeland) is inferred from roof tiles, architectural fragments, stone altars and statues that have been recovered from the sea and the beach. A bronze statuette and a fragment of a terracotta statuette may have come from these two sanctuaries.

At Wijchen-Tienakker (Gelderland) a post-built structure in the vicinity of a villa may have been an open-air sanctuary. This interpretation is based on the square lay-out of the structure and the discovery of a bronze statuette and a small tuff stone altar in a pit within the structure.[78]

Three sites in the study area could fall into Scheid's second category, but this is uncertain. The first was situated in the vicinity of a military fort: The Hague-Scheveningseweg (South Holland).[79] The site has yielded hundreds of fragments of at least twenty terracotta statuettes. The identification of the site as a possible cult place is based on the number of statuettes and a few pits with a striking content.

Excavations at Bergen op Zoom (North Brabant) have uncovered a site where hundreds of miniature vessels and at least one terracotta statuette were deposited in a fen.[80] North of the Rhine, at Noordbarge (Drenthe), some twenty objects, mostly bronze and terracotta statuette fragments, were recovered from elevated terrain near a native Roman period settlement.

At Hoogeloon-Kerkakkers (North-Brabant), a square terrain with an enclosure ditch, two rows of deep postholes and several pits has been interpreted as traces of a sanctuary. A terracotta statuette fragment was recovered from the enclosure ditch.

What becomes clear from this overview is that the identification of these sites as cult places is largely or solely based on finds, which could result in circular reasoning. Nevertheless, the fen at Bergen op Zoom and the elevated terrain at Noordbarge constituted a distinct feature in the landscape in the Roman period and, therefore, provide an additional argument for the interpretation 'cult place' as defined by Scheid. The miniature vessels at Bergen op Zoom came to light during controlled excavations, but the Noordbarge statuettes were found in the 1860s by people digging for loam, which is why the presence of a cult place at Noordbarge must remain hypothetical.

Two conclusions can be drawn: very few statuettes have been recovered from sanctuaries and the identification of several sites as open-air sanctuaries or cult places is uncertain.

[73] See for a definition of Gallo-Roman temples and variations of the scheme, for instance, Derks 1998, 146-152.

[74] Like villa sites, finds from these sanctuaries may have been removed by collectors of antiquities. Alleged cult places on the sites The Hague-Scheveningseweg and Noordbarge have yielded a striking number of statuettes, probably because they lack architectural remains that could be recognised by treasure hunters. The same applies to the hundreds of altars from the sanctuaries at Colijnsplaat and Domburg, which have been preserved because they were hidden under water.

[75] See for the ground plan of the temple Panhuysen 1996, 46-49 and figs. 11-12. See for the temple 2.3.5.

[76] Derks/De Fraiture 2015.

[77] See for Aardenburg 2.4.2.

[78] See for Wijchen 2.3.4.

[79] See for The Hague-Scheveningseweg 2.4.2.

[80] The number of deposited statuettes is unknown, since mainly tiny fragments have been found: see 2.3.5.

- **Military or civil?**

The terms 'military' and 'civil' are essential in this study, since a distinction is made between military and non-military communities. It has been argued that before the Roman conquest a division between soldiers and civilians not really existed. Warriorship was a key value in Celtic-Germanic societies where farmers had to leave their farms and cattle to fight in times of war and then turned back to farming again.[81] Therefore, the distinction between civilian and soldier that was introduced in the Roman period had a great impact on local communities. The Roman camps along the Rhine attracted craftsmen, traders and lots of other people who could make a living out of the army. Around these military forts and fortresses, *canabae legionis* and *vici* developed: settlements where people lived who provided services for the army. Research in the last decades has demonstrated that military forts could house not only soldiers, but also their families, servants and tradesmen that depended on them, while soldiers could live with their families in the associated *canabae* and *vici*.[82]

Data from recent excavations obscure the distinction even more. Evidence from the earliest Roman civil settlement in the Netherlands, Oppidum Batavorum (ca. 10 BCE- 69/70), suggests that the settlement comprised at least one military building.[83] At Ulpia Noviomagus, Nijmegen, stamped building material indicates that the Roman army was involved in the construction of the town. It is also argued that the capital of the *civitas Batavorum*, may have housed small military units after the Tenth Legion had left the fortress on the Hunerberg.[84] At Heerlen, too, archaeological evidence testifies to the presence of veterans and Romans.[85] At Voorburg, too, the involvement of the Roman army in construction works is suggested by military stamps on building material. Also, *militaria* and inscriptions by soldiers testify to a military presence at Voorburg.[86] According to Ian Haynes, 'Even in provinces with a substantial number of forts and fortresses, there are good reasons to believe that soldiers were stationed in towns.'[87] However, little is known about how many civilians lived in forts and how many soldiers lived with their families in *canabae* and *vici*. Moreover, it remains uncertain whether soldiers were stationed in the urban communities in the study area, let alone how many.

This implies that a rigid distinction between civil and military in settlements cannot be made. As a consequence of the strict definition of the *limes* zone, military communities in this study are the castra and forts, as well as the associated *canabae legionis* and *vici*. *Vici* and urban settlements outside the *limes* zone are regarded as civil communities, even though the presence of soldiers and returning veterans in some of these settlements is suggested by the use of military building techniques and/or *militaria* or inscriptions.

- *Vicus*

It results from the distinction between military and civil that the term *vicus* is confusing. Besides the *vici* that developed near military camps, there were also civil *vici*. After all, the word *vicus* itself means no more than 'dwelling place'. Some of these *vici* must be considered as regional centres within *civitates*.[88] They were smaller than *civitas* capitals, but housed small production centres for the regional market and provided facilities like public baths and sanctuaries. Examples of civil *vici* are Maastricht, Heerlen (Limburg), Cuijk (North Brabant) and, possibly, Venlo (Limburg).[89] The latter could be an example of a civil *vicus* developing from a military *vicus*. The presence of a small Augustan military post was suspected at Venlo because of its strategic location, but traces of the fort itself have not been found, only finds that point at a military presence between 19 BCE and 9.[90]

[81] Nicolay 2007, 10-11, 237-244, with reference to further literature.

[82] Van Driel-Murray 1995, 3-21; 2008, 82-86; Haynes 2013, 14-17, 157-160.

[83] Van Enckevort/Heirbaut 2010, 85-91.

[84] Nicolay 2007, 192.
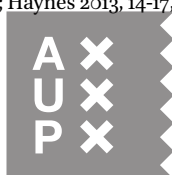
[85] Jeneson/Vos 2020, 159-160.

[86] De Bruin 2019, 139-141.

[87] Haynes 2013, 155 and note 44.

[88] Van Es 1994, 55.

[89] The presence of an early Roman fort at Cuijk is doubtful: Haalebos *et al.* 2002, 23-24. See for the Augustan military post and *vicus* at Venlo: Van der Velde *et al.* 2009, 635-642.

[90] Van der Velde *et al.* 2009, 640-641.

In a few cases the distinction between military and civil *vici* is less evident. At the site The Hague-Scheveningseweg, the second habitation phase of an initially civil settlement has yielded a large quantity of imported goods, including *militaria* and casting moulds for *militaria* such as armour fragments, swords, arrow and spear heads.[91] Based on similarities with The Hague-Ockenburgh, De Bruin has suggested that the settlement was used by the military between 190 and 250.[92]

At Naaldwijk-Hoogwerf (South Holland), radical changes are visible in the layout and organisation of the settlement at the end of the 2nd century. A strong increase in imported pottery, Roman coins and inscription fragments points at intensified contacts with Romans, even though the quantity of imported pottery and *militaria* is smaller than in military *vici*.[93] Moreover, many stamps on building material and a fragmentary bronze plate mention the Classis Germanica. Bronze fragments of a large inscription plate, as well as bronze fragments of statues of emperors stood at Naaldwijk, which would be less likely in a civil *vicus*.[94]

At Ouddorp (South Holland), the use of Roman building techniques suggests a military presence, but it is not clear to what extent the army stimulated the building of the settlement. Research has demonstrated that Ouddorp and its harbour had an important regional function, but the quantity of military finds from this settlement is not as striking as at Naaldwijk-Hoogwerf and The Hague-Scheveningseweg.[95]

No Roman military base has been found near Ouddorp, Naaldwijk-Hoogwerf and The Hague-Scheveningseweg (South Holland), which implies that they should fall outside the *limes* zone as defined above. However, in the case of Naaldwijk-Hoogwerf and The Hague-Scheveningseweg, the nature and quantity of finds strongly point at the presence of a military base nearby, which also changed these settlements after the first habitation phase. It, is therefore, fruitful to (re)assess the find-assemblages to gain more insight in the nature of such settlements and their inhabitants. In this study, Naaldwijk-Hoogwerf and The Hague-Scheveningseweg are regarded as military settlements, whereas Ouddorp is considered a civil *vicus*.

- **Production date and deposition date**

In the course of my research, I have noticed that in many publications no clear distinction is made between the production and deposition date, in which case the given date can be confusing. The deposition date is the moment or period in which a statuette somehow ended up in the ground or in the water. A precise production date of bronze statuettes cannot be determined. This is a consequence of the impossibility to establish an absolute production date through technical analysis. Moreover, there was no standardized process for the production of metal statuettes. They were cast hollow or solid, often with the help of a wax working model, with or without negative moulds.[96] Since there is no evidence for workshops specialized in the production of bronze statuettes in the Roman West, we can only establish a date for their deposition, which is often based on the occupation period of the settlement where the statuette was found.[97] For example, Ulpia Noviomagus was inhabited between 70 and 270. This provides a *terminus post quem* and a *terminus ante quem* for the deposition of artefacts. If a statuette is found together with dateable objects like coins, of which the latest was struck in 150, the deposition date of the statuette probably lies between 150 and 270. Unfortunately, such detailed find circumstances rarely occur. This implies that in most cases deposition dates can only be based on the settlement's history, which does not add much value to our understanding of the use of statuettes. And lastly, it cannot be ruled out that some statuettes ended up in the ground after 270.[98]

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[91] Magendans/Waasdorp 1986, 297-300; Waasdorp 1999, 171; Mijle Meijer 2011, 8.

[92] De Bruin 2019, 103-105.

[93] See for Naaldwijk-Hoogwerf 2.4.2.

[94] De Bruin 2019, 105-108.

[95] See for Ouddorp De Bruin 2012 and 2.3.2.

[96] See for the production technique of bronze statues and statuettes Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, 16-20; Veen 2014a, 137-138 and 3.13.1. See for a discussion on serial production: Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, 18-20.

[97] Bronze statuettes in the Roman West are often dated to the first two or three centuries.

[98] Before 70 is also possible, but less likely.
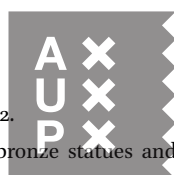
In the case of terracotta figurines, we sometimes have a rough production date. A few modellers have signed their work. Their signature is sometimes accompanied by a consul name or the place where they were active, in which case we know in which period and where the figurine was made. Moreover, several figurines without a signature can be ascribed to a certain modeller.[99] The modeller Servandus, for instance, was active in Cologne between around 150 and 180. Then the terracotta production in Cologne stopped, maybe because of an epidemic, or as a result of competition from other firms.[100] This means that a figurine signed by Servandus found in Ulpia Noviomagus probably has a deposition date between 150 and 270.[101]

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

This study comprises five chapters, this being the first. The second chapter is a catalogue, with the find-spots of statuettes described per area, province and municipality. The description includes the most relevant archaeological data of each find-spot and find-context, serving as the starting point for the spatial and iconographic analysis in the third chapter. The spatial analysis aims at exploring to what degree the presumed distinctiveness of the three areas is reflected by the distribution of statuettes in each area. Further, it will be examined whether there are relations between find-spot, size, material, subject and function. The paragraphs about specific iconographies of statuette groups focus on the impact of *interpretatio* and creolisation. Also, striking iconographies of single statuettes will be discussed.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the identification of ritual deposits of bronze and terracotta statuettes. The first inventory consists of alleged ritual deposits of statuettes in the study area. A second inventory comprises possible deposits of statuettes in Britain, in order to explore whether there are recurring depositional patterns in the two areas, which together constituted the northwestern frontier of the Roman Empire.

The second issue that will be explored is the deliberate fragmentation of statuettes and deposition of statuette fragments from the Neolithic onward. The third subject that will be addressed concerns a special type of statuette deposits related to so-called magical practices.

The fifth and final chapter summarises the conclusions from the four chapters and includes suggestions for further research.

The Greek and Latin citations as well as the quoted translations in this study come from the Loeb Classical Library Online. For the cited Latin inscriptions I follow the EDCS online database, with references to the CIL, AE and RIB numbers, or, if not available, the EDCS number. See for the list of abbreviations page 213.

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99 See, for instance, Van Boekel 1987, 207-213; De Beenhouwer 2014. 22-23.

100 Van Boekel 1987, 210.

101 See also De Beenhouwer 2005, 30.