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The Roman Object Revolution

OBJECTSCAPES AND INTRA-CULTURAL CONNECTIVITY IN NORTHWEST EUROPE

MARTIN PITTS

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Preface

This study addresses a major step-change in Eurasian history: the revolutionary boom in standardised objects at the start of the Roman era. Was it really a revolution? The new object-rich environments that emerged matter greatly for how we understand the transition from Iron Age to Roman Europe. They embody major changes in everyday life and social display, from eating and drinking to bodily adornment and the treatment of the dead; they tell stories of cultural transformation through innovative styles of consumption that relied on new combinations of 'things'; and they reveal new fault lines of regionalism, status, wealth, inequality, and knowledge amongst nascent Roman provincial communities. The object boom did not simply come about through the presence of Roman merchants, soldiers, and colonists, nor did it happen only after conquest. Northern European Iron Age communities were active participants rather than accidental consumers caught at the fringes of the Mediterranean net, despite the popular image of princely 'barbarian' graves filled with Italian wine containers and other exotica. The beginnings of object standardisation were well underway in northwest Europe before the arrival of Rome, with the spread of the potter's wheel, and the appearance of fibulae with pan-regional distributions. Roman expansion greatly intensified these developments, with an influx of new people, production technologies, commodities, styles, and customs. The Roman influx of standardised objects was not the end of the story, however. A second watershed involving synchronous transformation in the make-up of object-worlds in the last decades of the first century AD saw the object revolution undergo a major reinvigoration, with significant long-term ramifications for provincial societies.

By considering standardised objects, their stylistic innovations, distributions, local combinations, and changing social uses, this book contributes to a new kind of history in which 'things' take centre-stage. A great deal has been written on the historical scenario in which Rome established dominion over the 'barbarian' societies of northwest Europe, beginning with the campaigns of Julius Caesar in the 50s BC. Rather than re-tell this story fleshed out with archaeological finds, I have pushed narratives of battles and territorial advance into the background. By exploring the emerging riches of archaeological data on the styles, uses, and associations of a plethora of objects, this book has a different approach to such traditional history, and tells a different story. A core aim is to compare combinations of objects as they were placed together in graves and settlements by people in the past – in effect to re-constitute the basis of what I have termed past 'objectscapes' – rather than examining individual classes of artefacts in isolation (e.g. only looking at *terra sigillata* pottery). This kind of approach is essential for an anthropological perspective that seeks to understand the selections and uses of objects in the past. As such, this study would not be possible without decades of dedicated work by archaeologists and especially pottery and finds specialists, who have painstakingly compiled the raw data on which this research is based.

To do justice to the potential of objects to shed light on Iron Age to Roman northwest Europe, I have adopted an explicitly comparative perspective. This not only entails breaking down the artificial boundaries that separate prehistory from history, but also transcending the modern nation-state boundaries that have fostered different and often separate regional traditions in the study of archaeological data, often to the detriment of comparison. If later Iron Age societies exerted a major influence on the development of early Roman landscapes, cityscapes, and objectscapes, equivalent influence should be expected to have passed between neighbouring provinces that shared connections before and after conquest. While writing this book it has become increasingly apparent that to properly appreciate the significance of material culture in early Roman Britain (for example), archaeologists not only need a detailed knowledge of pre-

ceding Iron Age developments, but also parallel understandings of connected societies in Gallia Belgica and on the Rhine axis (and vice versa).

This book seeks to overcome some of the obstacles to cross-regional and inter-provincial perspectives on material culture in the northwest Roman empire. Rather than providing a comprehensive account, it attempts a context-sensitive and object-centred analysis of the bigger picture and detailed site-based evidence, using some of the best quality data currently available. The database that forms the basis of this research takes in over 100 archaeological sites and cemeteries, over 3250 grave assemblages, and over 80,000 objects in total, all confidently dated to the period c. 120/100 BC – AD 100/120. This sample is of course partial in certain respects. I privileged better-published sites and classes of archaeological material for which contextual analysis is possible, while striving for a sample that is representative and balanced in terms of its geographic and temporal coverage. Accepting the limitations of archaeological data is important, but not to the point of impeding progress. As pointed out by Greg Woolf in his preface to *Becoming Roman* (1998), archaeological data are by their very nature incomplete, but there is little point in collecting it in the first place if works of broader analysis and synthesis are not attempted.

The research underpinning this book has had a long genesis, and it would not be possible without the help and support of many people. In the first place, it develops some ideas that formed during my doctoral studies in the Department of Archaeology at the University of York (2002-5), where my supervisors Dominic Perring and Steve Roskams provided much inspiration, and James Barrett introduced me to multivariate statistics. The idea of a comparative pottery-driven project spanning Britain and Gaul originated as a research proposal for postdoctoral study, for which Colin Haselgrove and David Mattingly provided valuable input in 2006. Elena Isayev has been a mentor for over a decade at the University of Exeter and must take the credit for introducing me to the world of Chinese porcelain. I was fortunate to meet Miguel John Versluys in Amsterdam in 2008, and since then our work together on globalisation and objectscapes (a term I borrow from him) has transformed my outlook on the Roman world and its material culture. Working with Astrid Van Oyen convinced me of the need to confront some ingrained assumptions about approaching material culture, as well as opening my eyes to exciting new possibilities. I benefited greatly from working with Tamar Hodos on a much larger project concerning the role of objects in longer-term histories of globalisation. My indebtedness to Miguel John, Astrid, and Tamar can be seen in the volumes *Globalisation and the Roman World* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), *Materialising Roman Histories* (Oxbow, 2017), and *The Routledge Handbook of Archeology and Globalization* (Routledge, 2017), which had no small impact on shaping the approach and arguments in this monograph. Dominic, Astrid, and the members of Miguel John's NWO VICI project 'Innovating objects: the impact of global connections and the formation of the Roman empire' at Leiden University all generously commented on the draft text, for which it is much stronger.

A big challenge in writing this book was to build up a robust body of data. To this end, the College of Humanities and Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Exeter generously provided study leave in 2015/16. The project benefited immensely from running alongside the AHRC-funded network 'Big Data on the Roman Table' which I co-led with Pim Allison. I extend special thanks to Xavier Deru, who kindly sent reports and drew my attention to relevant literature from Belgium, France and Luxembourg. His typology of Gallo-Belgic wares proved to be enormously useful in aiding comparisons drawn across multiple provinces and national archaeological traditions. Likewise, I am grateful to Harry van Enckevort and Rien Polak for sending digital data and information from Nijmegen, including the Kops Plateau, which provides an important case-study in Chapter 3. I also thank Edward Biddulph (Oxford Archaeology), Thomas Cadbury (Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter), Glynn Davis (Colchester and Ipswich Museums), Annelies Koster (Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen), Harry van Enckevort (Municipality of Nijmegen), and David Thorold (Verulamium Museum) for their assistance in helping me locate suitable images. All elevation maps (Figs. 1.6, 2.3, 2.5, 3.1, 4.5, and 5.4) are produced in ArcGIS using the Ancient World Mapping Centre's 'carte_background' and 'ba_roads.shp' files, available

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I dedicate this book to Jess and Orson.

A list of common abbreviations used in tables and figures is as follows:

GB – Gallo-Belgic ware
hand. – handmade pottery
ISS – Italian-style *terra sigillata*
LY – Lyon ware or colour-coated pottery
SGS – south Gaulish *terra sigillata*
TN – *terra nigra*
TR – *terra rubra*
TS – *terra sigillata*
TW – thin-walled ware
vs – vessels
wheel. – wheelthrown pottery

1 Standardised objects as historical agents

1.1 THE GENEALOGY OF THE SAUCER

Consider the saucer. For most of my life I have taken saucers for granted, as one of many objects encountered in the routine of everyday life. Without thinking too hard, I associate saucers with cups, drinking tea, and a vague sense of Englishness. Thinking a little harder, I realise these associations are historically contingent. Around four centuries ago, very few people in Europe had tasted tea, let alone drank it using a cup and saucer. How did this familiar association of saucers, cups, and tea come into being? A clue is provided in the records of the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, or VOC) of 1645, detailing the specifications and quantities of Chinese porcelain deemed likely to sell in the port of Mocha (now Yemen):

> *50,000 flat small dishes as large as a tasting-dish without foot, some with and also some without a small rim as thick as a straw at the base, to be used to hand over thereon the small, fine, newly-devised tea-cups which nowadays is a habit among the Turks; together with the coffee-cups they could bring in 3 R. p.c., or 7500 reals*[1]

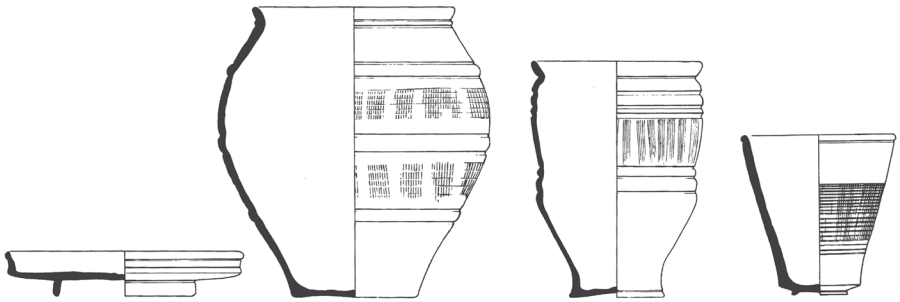
Volker, from whose book *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company* I take this example, considered this to be the first reference for the now ubiquitous cup-and-saucer combination, which he believed to be a Turkish innovation of 1645, or shortly before. Since the English lagged behind the Dutch in the trade of tea and porcelain from China, it was probably not until several decades later in the early 18th century that the popular practice of drinking tea with a cup-and-saucer combination really took off in England.[2] This brief example demonstrates how cultural practices often rely on combinations of standardised objects that are the products of highly specific historical circumstances and connections. The genealogy of what is now seen as a quintessentially English practice probably not only involved the appropriation of a Turkish custom, but was dependent on the global trade networks of the English East India Company to obtain tea and the porcelain vessels from China necessary for polite consumption – and all of this in some sense physically embodied by the mundane saucer. It follows that paying closer attention to seemingly humdrum standardised objects – objects which nevertheless would often travel hundreds or thousands of miles from the source of their manufacture – has great potential to shed new light on the past. Can the same be said of standardised objects in the Roman era, roughly two millennia ago?

1.2 THE BRIGHT RED PLATE AT THE FUNERAL

The first documented European encounter with the saucer and its later mass appropriation is a powerful example of how a chain of long-distance material exchanges turned an alien object into something that has become deeply familiar and mundane. Of course, deep-rooted changes like this did not simply occur overnight. It would take several decades for the cup-and-saucer combination to take root in European

[1] Volker 1954, 100.

[2] Godden 1979, 19.



Type:	Cons. 18	P20	P29	Ob. 37 (derivative)
Form:	platter	butt-beaker	girth-beaker	conical beaker
Fabric:	*terra sigillata*	grog-tempered	*terra rubra*	grog-tempered
Provenance:	Lyon (La Muette)	local	Reims	local
Design:	Italy (Arezzo)	N. Gaul	N. Gaul	N. Italy

Figure 1.1. Finds from grave 328 at King Harry Lane, St. Albans, c. 15 BC-AD 30 (after Stead/Rigby 1989, 364).

society as a routine custom for the mass consumption of tea and coffee, as we shall see later in this chapter. At this point, however, a comparative example from the Roman world may serve to reinforce the message and illustrate the transformative power of standardised objects in moments of historical change. Let us now consider a single episode in the early spread of standardised bright red Italian-style *terra sigillata* pots in northwest Europe – a phenomenon considered to be directly analogous to the European obsession with Chinese porcelain in the 17th and 18th centuries.[3]

Sometime in the decades after Julius Caesar's inconclusive campaigns that brought part of southern Britain under Roman influence, if not direct control, an Italian-style *terra sigillata* plate was placed alongside the cremated remains of a young person of indeterminate sex. The plate was stamped with the serial name 'Ateius' and was probably made at a branch workshop at Lyon (La Muette).[4] It was accompanied by three other pottery vessels (Fig. 1.1). The grave in question was one of over seventy excavated in the earliest phase of the large King Harry Lane cemetery at St. Albans,[5] most likely dated to the turn of the first millennium (c. 15 BC – AD 30), and adjacent to the settlement that would later become the Roman town of Verulamium. While the standardised *sigillata* plate, of type Conspectus 18, was comparatively rare in late Iron Age Britain, it was one of the most common types in circulation in northwest Europe at the time. Very little else about this grave stands out, at least at first glance. It is not especially well-furnished in either the quality or quantity of objects present. The other pots in the grave take the guise of large beakers, which are typical for the cemetery. At face value, everything points to the chance incorporation of a stray imported Italian-style plate as an item of exotica in an otherwise thoroughly late Iron Age funerary practice. What is wrong with this interpretation?

To explore further, let us first consider the other three vessels found in the grave in more detail. In the first place, the *sigillata* plate is not the only import present. It was accompanied by a girth beaker of standardised design that had been produced across the Channel in the new Roman province of Gallia Belgica. While this vessel was made in an orange-red Gallo-Belgic fabric called *terra rubra*, a technologically inferior imitation of *terra sigillata*, its shape as a large and elaborately decorated drinking vessel sug-

[3] For example, Reece 1988, 8; Cool 2006a, 157-8; Pitts 2013, 2015, 80-88.

[4] For a recent summary of debates on the relationship between *sigillata* workshops associated with Ateius in Lyon and Italy, see Van Oyen 2015, 286.

[5] Stead/Rigby 1989. The grave in question is 328.

gests that its design owed much more to northern European inspiration. Capacious beakers associated with the conspicuous or communal consumption of alcohol in northern Europe were virtually absent from the *terra sigillata* repertoire, which was instead geared towards the world of Mediterranean dining and dominated by smaller cups and platters. In a similar vein, the second vessel found with the *sigillata* plate is an even larger butt-beaker, this time made in local grog-tempered fabric, but crucially in a standardised shape that replicated another innovative vessel in circulation in northern Gaul in the late Augustan period.[6] The last of the three is a beaker of conical design, also made of local grog-tempered ware, seemingly completing the overarching emphasis on large drinking vessels in the assemblage. However, not only is this vessel unique in the King Harry Lane cemetery, its shape imitates another standardised continental design, not from Gallia Belgica, but instead an Italian thin-walled ware beaker that is seldom found outside of Augustan-Tiberian Roman military bases in northwest Europe.[7]

Why do the design and provenance of the beakers found with the *terra sigillata* plate in King Harry Lane grave 328 matter? All four vessels collectively embody, either directly or through careful local imitation, each of the three major innovative repertoires of *standardised* pottery that had begun to circulate in northwest Europe from the Augustan period – Italian-style *terra sigillata*, thin-walled wares, and Gallo-Belgic wares. As we shall see later in this book (Chapter 3), each of these repertoires had separate origins and tended to occur in specific configurations at different locations in continental Europe. The diverse genealogies of the beakers in the grave underline that the *terra sigillata* plate was not so unique or exotic after all. It was instead symptomatic of a series of material exchanges that connected the selections of objects in the grave to the 'objectscapes' of northern Gaul, the Rhineland, and even as far away as northern and central Italy. Not only were these objects deliberately selected in preference to those of local design that were more common in the cemetery, but two of the designs had been manufactured locally to a high-degree of precision so that they could be typologically connected to objects produced in far-away places: the new standardised continental designs of pottery clearly mattered to the buriers.

Taken together, the contents of grave 328 present a globalising scenario in which the design, production, and selection of objects was framed by deliberate engagement with circulating styles and objects whose origins were anything but local, instead deriving from multiple distant (but above all) *connected* localities.[8] While it may seem paradoxical, this statement does not contradict the idea that the contents of the grave, dominated by what appear to be large drinking vessels, can be placed firmly in the traditions of later Iron Age feasting in southeast Britain. In this context, it would be somewhat wide of the mark to claim that the presence of the *sigillata* plate represents an ideologically-driven attempt to create a Roman image, either of the deceased, or those responsible for the funeral. While the assemblage is dominated by beakers, the selection of a plate is likewise unremarkable, with 25 such vessels in this phase of cemetery, most of which being imitations of *sigillata* forms in either Gallo-Belgic or local fabrics. Instead, much like the example of the saucer, the ensemble of objects in the grave highlights a high degree of local

6 Deru 1996, form P20. This vessel held the cremated remains of the deceased.

7 Brulet/Vilvorder/Delage 2010, 300-302, type Oberaden 37 (compare Fig. 3.4, this volume). The vessel in grave 328 features a developed footring recalling thin-walled type Ob. 39, whereas its decoration closely parallels type Ob. 35. Vessels with similar typological features can be seen in the pedestal beaker series in Gallo-Belgic wares (i.e. KL1-5; Deru 1996), which was more directly influenced by the potting practices of Roman military communities on the Rhine. The most likely conduit for the design to have reached potters in Britain is therefore through intermediaries in Gallia Belgica.

8 The grave in question is included in correspondence analysis in Chapter 3, Fig. 3.21 (KHL328). Note that it is an outlier that is roughly equidistant between three major clusters of grave assemblages: those from southeast Britain (where the butt-beaker types are more common); those from Gallia Belgica (where girth-beakers are more common); and those associated with military communities and fledgling urban centres (where thin-walled wares and *terra sigillata* are more common).

agency in selecting elements from wider circulating repertoires that offered the best fit with local needs and practices.

There are many implications that can be taken from the examples of the *china* saucer and the *terra sigillata* plate. Both cases make it abundantly clear that historical studies of localities in isolation are inherently partial. To fully appreciate the local significance of material culture it must be studied in the context of much wider patterns of circulation and genealogy. These tenets are especially applicable to the early Roman and early modern periods, as globalising moments in world history that were characterised by, amongst other things, an influx of *standardised* objects that moved over ever-increasing distances, and formed the basis of truly pan-regional frames of reference, which had no small impact on the development of local object-worlds.[9] Why did the movement of standardised objects suddenly come to matter, and what exactly was their impact on the various societies that used and reproduced them? To do justice to these questions, we must examine the big picture of multiple localities in new ways, as 'objectscapes' transformed by sudden surges in pan-regional connectivity.

1.3 BACK TO THE BIG PICTURE: ON GLOBALISATION AND ROMAN CONNECTIVITY

The big picture has always mattered to modern understandings of the Roman world. From Hollywood to political discourse on the future of Europe, the perceived universality and homogeneity of Roman culture is a source of continued fascination. However, if Rome is to serve as a robust exemplum for the present, popular notions of the Roman empire must be reinterpreted. For over a century, Roman archaeologists and historians have sought to understand the apparent forging of cultural unity across the patchwork of Eurasian societies conquered by Rome. Until the last decades of the 20th century, this scholarly fascination was often bound-up with contemporary European imperial discourse.[10] The idea of Romanisation was a synonym for the blanket civilising of passive 'native' societies encountered by Rome, with cultural innovation emanating from the empire's core to its peripheral provinces. To its benefit, recent scholarship rejects these out-dated perspectives.[11] As a result, narratives of cultural change tend to consider the stories of local communities in their regional contexts – from self-identifying groups such as the Batavi and Treveri,[12] to urban communities in their provincial contexts.[13] In these accounts, big concepts like imperialism are often given explanatory power, but are seldom investigated across larger vistas of *connected* localities that made up the Roman world. Indeed, the very success of these regional studies suggest that it is time for big picture cultural analyses to go back on the agenda.

To move beyond the perceived dichotomy of context-sensitive local approaches versus the bigger picture of a 'global' Roman world, I wish to emphasise mobility rather than regions and boundedness as an important point of departure. This entails examining the connections between territories and communities that have all too often been studied in isolation. One way of approaching these connections is to marry ideas from the study of globalisation with a methodological emphasis on the impacts of circulating objects.[14] Following benchmark applications of the concept in historical and archaeological studies,[15] I define globalisation as a condition in which marked increases in connectivity – evident in inter-regional flows of people, things and ideas, not necessarily in conjunction – foster pan-regional consciousness and shared practices. Globalisation thinking adds two crucial perspectives to studies of the Roman world

9 Pitts/Versluys 2015a, 16-18.

10 Hingley 2000; Mattingly 2011.

11 Substantial works include Woolf 1998; Wells 1999; Mattingly 2006, 2011; Wallace-Hadrill 2008; Dietler 2010; Eckardt 2014.

12 Roymans 2004 and Fernández-Götz 2014 respectively.

13 Creighton 2006; Revell 2009.

14 Pitts/Versluys 2015b, cf. Versluys 2014; Witcher 2017.

15 A.G. Hopkins 2002; Jennings 2011.

and its material culture. The first of these is to break with the insularity implicit in the writing of much 'provincial' Roman archaeology. The Roman world is not well served by a situation in which provinces are viewed through the methodological lens of modern nation-state boundaries. The persistent treatment of 'Roman Britain' as an island in isolation, for example, often fails to reflect the realities of Britannia's relationship to a connected Roman empire.[16] While Britannia was a Roman province in its own right, even the most cursory examination of material culture in southeast Britain often reveals greater similarity with northern France and Belgium than it does with the rest of England, from the late Iron Age onwards. Likewise, the tendency to separate the study of Roman military communities from their civilian counterparts can only serve to reinforce old soldier-civilian dichotomies, thus limiting scope for understanding the important contribution of military personnel in the development of provincial societies, and vice-versa. Deeper methodological acknowledgement by archaeologists and historians of the dynamics of these kinds of connectivities is long overdue.

To do justice to the application of globalisation ideas to the Roman world, Laurence and Trifilò suggest there is a need 'to shift the academic focus of the disciplines of Roman archaeology and history from a focus on region/single province study to a wider viewpoint accounting for more material'.[17] For this reason, this book addresses a single swathe of connected territory at the interface of the Roman provinces of Gallia Belgica, Britannia, and Germania Inferior, corresponding to an area presently spanned by parts of six nation-states: southern Britain, northern France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and western Germany. As one of the more intensely studied parts of the Roman world, it may seem surprising that inter-provincial comparisons of material culture in this region are not already commonplace. While it is true that many comparisons exist,[18] and that archaeologists have a working awareness of the shared chronological horizons of standardised objects,[19] more extensive works of genuine like-for-like cross-provincial analysis and synthesis are scarce for portable artefacts that were produced and consumed *en masse*, like pottery and fibulae.

A second advantage of globalisation is that it fosters a new kind of history in which analysing the *movement* of objects between localities forms a methodological priority. Unlike concepts such as imperialism, historical studies of globalisation do not assume the *a priori* importance of institutions or mechanisms that explain the distribution of material culture and its interpretation. For example, this perspective raises the possibility of identifying pan-regional cultural networks that were independent of, or only indirectly influenced by, the Roman state. In this sense, some of the common criticisms of globalisation turn into assets, namely the uncertain location of agency in the process, and its paradoxical character as both process and outcome.[20] The study of globalisation raises important new questions about the roles of objects in historical change and requires new ways of describing and visualising archaeological data. In this vein, an emphasis on tracing the paths of objects-in-motion, for example, makes it clear that standardised objects had far from universal cultural trajectories or 'meanings', as the examples at the start of this chapter illustrate. Globalisation ideas encourage archaeologists to focus attention on the fundamental question of what objects do, rather than (only) recourse to the older question of what objects mean.[21] This subtle shift in emphasis fosters

16 These conceptions of Roman Britain's boundedness probably owe much (indirectly) to the impact of connectivity in setting the boundaries of Britain as a modern nation-state, i.e. the Channel as an obstacle for frequent exchange with mainland Europe, while simultaneously offering opportunities for longer-distance maritime connections involving bulk goods.

17 Laurence/Trifilò 2015, 99.

18 Notable examples of inter-provincial studies of material culture spanning the NW provinces include works of synthesis on epigraphy (Saller/Shaw 1984), inscriptions (Blagg 1990), the consumption of animals (King 2001), and urbanism (Laurence/Esmonde-Cleary/Sears 2011). Likewise, Willis 2011 includes brief comparisons of *terra sigillata* in Britain with those of selected locations elsewhere in the western empire.

19 Such as *terra sigillata* pottery, and its relationship with short-lived Rhine military bases like Haltern (Loeschcke 1909).

20 Morley 2015, cf. Rosenberg 2000.

21 Van Oyen/Pitts 2017a.

a more holistic and open understanding of the roles of objects in history, rather than limiting the use of material culture to proxy evidence for abstract concepts like 'economic growth' and 'social identities'. This point of view is vital for the identification of historical patterns not easily explained by existing models, and guards against falling into outdated positions that equated artefacts with 'cultures'.[22]

While it is clear that many latent possibilities exist for the study of the big picture, there are several practical obstacles to realising the potential of of circulating objects *en masse* in Roman northwest Europe. Artefacts like pottery first require careful typological analysis at a site- and regional level to fit local wares into the established chronologies of objects with interprovincial circulation, such as amphorae and *terra sigillata*. While a typology can be used to categorise pottery from a region, the typology becomes less useful the further one gets from the original type-site. As a postgraduate student, it took a month for me to learn the Chelmsford typology for Roman pottery in Essex.[23] While this typology formed the basis for a regional study of pottery consumption north of the Thames,[24] it is unsuitable for understanding Roman pottery in areas further afield. Wider artefactual comparisons rely upon the development of concordances between regional typologies. Here language forms an extra barrier. Whilst most Roman inscriptions from northwest Europe are written in Latin and therefore predisposed to universal cataloguing systems, specialist artefact reports are produced variously in Dutch, English, French, and German.

Despite obstacles to studying the phenomenon, there are nonetheless many clues that pan-regional horizons of cultural sharing existed in parts of northwest Europe long before the arrival of Rome. This is evidenced in terms of synchronous changes in similar (if not identically replicated) material practices between various communities, in which circulating objects formed common points of reference. It is attested in late Iron Age southeast Britain, for example, in the use of coinage and the selection of coin imagery, the adoption of the rite of cremation accompanied by certain forms of grave goods, the organisation of spaces for ritual, networks for the movement of Mediterranean goods, the use of the potter's wheel, and stylistic similarities in pottery production.[25] The existence of such a broad cultural milieu was of course not lost on Caesar as early as the 50s BC (as explored in Chapter 2), nor Theodore Mommsen, one of the founding fathers of Roman provincial studies, writing in 1887:

> *This nation [Britain] was to all appearances more connected than separated by the narrow arm of the sea which parts England and France; the same names of peoples meet us on the one side and on the other; the bounds of the individual states often reach over the Channel; the chief seat of the priestly system [Druidism], which here more than anywhere else pervaded the whole nationality, was from of the islands of the North Sea.*[26]

It is revealing that this quote essentially reflects the state of knowledge that may be gleaned from ancient texts written by ancient authors such as Caesar and Tacitus, rather than archaeological research, which was in its infancy at the time Mommsen was writing. At the same time, Mommsen's claim has yet to be verified at a more substantive level. To what extent did cross-Channel, pan-regional and inter-provincial connections matter in Iron Age to Roman northwest Europe, and what roles did objects play in these connections? While several researchers have broached the topic with success from an archaeological perspective, these works are often more concerned with the Iron Age than the Roman period,[27] and are badly in need of updating to consider new data and methodological approaches. Furthermore, a significant gap exists between studies that scrutinise low-resolution archaeological data *en masse* across multiple

22 Trigger 2006, 211-313 provides an excellent summary of the 'culture-historical' approach in archaeology.

23 Going 1987.

24 Perring/Pitts 2013.

25 Creighton 2000; Hill 2002; Champion 2016; Moore 2016.

26 Mommsen 1968 [1887], 182.

27 Nash 1984; Cunliffe 1988; Champion 2016. Morris 2010 takes a longer-term economic perspective, whereas Moore 2016 summarises pre- and post-conquest developments.

provinces, such as the consumption of pigs, cattle, and sheep/goat,[28] and distribution and chronology of *terra sigillata*,[29] and those undertaking more detailed contextual analysis of scarce objects with thin distributions, such as particular types of black gloss and thin-walled pottery.[30] Ultimately, doing justice to cross-provincial interaction requires a multi-scalar approach featuring the interrogation of big data to establish large-scale patterning, combined with more sensitive contextual analysis to determine the impacts of moving objects at a local level.

Taking up the challenge of the big picture without sacrificing contextual detail, this book attempts to clarify the extent, timing, and agency of pan-regional connections in the late Iron Age and early Roman northwest – as well as examining historical contexts characterised by cultural difference, and blockages in the flows of circulating objects. The study focuses on the most common varieties of standardised artefacts, notably pottery and fibulae, which are well-recorded from excavations from across northwest Europe, and for which concordances exist between the relevant modern national archaeological traditions. An emphasis on standardised objects is not only desirable for methodological convenience.[31] A major reason for privileging standardised things in a study of Roman mass consumption is that they provide a benchmark to compare the various societies and historical contexts that made use of them. Standardised ceramics and fibulae were increasingly produced *en masse* and circulated widely in northwest Europe from the Augustan period onward. Both repertoires have an innate capacity to reveal and embody cultural differences, through the selections and combinations of specific types, and their participation in different forms of social practice, including bodily adornment, eating and drinking, and their use as funerary offerings. Studied appropriately at multiple scales of analysis across a connected expanse of territory, they may also reveal something of the extent of inter-provincial shared practices in the Roman empire.

1.4 TOWARDS OBJECTSCAPES: A MULTI-SCALAR APPROACH TO OBJECTS EN MASSE

To better understand the circulations and impacts of standardised objects, from artefacts placed in individual graves to the vast numbers used across an expansive connected empire, I introduce the term 'objectscape'. For the purposes of this study, an objectscape consists of the repertoires of objects at hand in a given locality in a particular historical moment.[32] While there is some overlap between the notions of 'objectscape' and 'assemblage', an assemblage refers more specifically to a discrete and quantifiable group of artefacts, often with a direct relationship to their archaeological contexts, from the contents of a pit fill to the finds from a whole archaeological site. By contrast, objectscapes go beyond the static archaeological idea of the assemblage by emphasising the dynamic roles of objects in past societies, thus aiding the writing of material histories in which objects play vital roles in human-thing entanglements.[33] In more practical terms, the objectscape provides a starting point to use archaeological data to explore the multifarious selections and combinations of objects *en masse* at a variety of scales, placing the relationality of material culture at the centre of analysis. This perspective is especially valuable for understanding scenarios in which societies are suddenly exposed to larger networks of moving people and things. The precise configuration of object-object relations in such historical scenarios can have profound social and cultural implications,[34] as the

[28] King 1999; 2001.

[29] Mees/Polak 2013.

[30] For example, Cosyns 2015 (black glass ware) and van Enckevort 2009 (black eggshell ware).

[31] Other practical advantages of standardised objects include their general ubiquity and tendency to be easily datable in the period/region in question.

[32] For initial discussion on this concept, see Pitts 2017b, 53; Versluys 2017a, 196-199.

[33] Hodder 2012.

[34] In this way, objectscapes may be considered analogous to the notion of 'relational constellations' (Van Oyen 2016b).

examples at the start of this chapter demonstrate. Prioritising this relationality fosters better understandings of what objects did in the past, helping to evade the partial representational logic in many archaeological studies in which objects are reduced to proxies for abstract processes (e.g. Romanisation) or social categories (e.g. ethnicities and identities).[35] To explore the concept of objectscapes in an applied sense, I now turn to a case-study that showcases the impacts of innovative standardised objects in a more recent historical setting, by reprising the example of Chinese porcelain in early modern Europe.

1.4.1 Case-study: the agency of China in Europe, 1600 – 1800

To illustrate the impact of standardised objects-in-motion on objectscapes in the short- and longer-term, I return to the example of the saucer and explore the historical scenario that gave birth to it in greater depth. By providing a historical slant on the well-documented origins of everyday objects used in the modern world, I hope to introduce some useful perspectives and concepts to inform the analysis of Roman period objectscapes.

How did the saucer fit and find a place in the context of bigger objectscapes? From a modern perspective, it is tempting to think of the rise of the tea cup-and-saucer with a degree of inevitability, as the 'correct' thing to do when tea first became available as a mass commodity. Saucers did not simply materialise in response to European need, however. By making objects the focus of historical inquiry, it is possible for different stories to emerge. For this purpose, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) records of the early 17th century provide fascinating insights into the quantities of vessels ordered and shipped, despite some gaps.[36] These records detail not only porcelain sent to the Netherlands, but also to Dutch overseas settlements such as Batavia (Jakarta) and Formosa (Taiwan), and other localities not controlled by the Dutch, including Safavid Persia, Tokugawa Japan, and the port of Mocha (Yemen), one of the first places in the world to supply Europe with coffee.[37] Using these data, Fig. 1.2 provides a snapshot of the different vessels used in several Chinese porcelain-using locations in the 1640s, which happens to represent one of the better documented decades of the VOC's porcelain trade in the 17th century. This decade was a high point for VOC Chinese porcelain imports to the Netherlands, after the Dutch took over the trade monopoly from the Portuguese at the start of the 17th century, coinciding with the peak of so-called Kraak (carrack) porcelain production before the tumultuous end of the Chinese Ming dynasty.[38]

Among the most striking features of Fig. 1.2 are the similar shapes and ratios of Chinese porcelain vessels shipped to Amsterdam and the Dutch overseas settlements of Batavia (Jakarta) and Formosa (Taiwan), compared with material sent to the non-Dutch localities. The two Persian locations, Basra (Iraq) and Gamron (Bandar Abbas, Iran) also share consistent combinations of porcelain forms, but these are different again to those sent to Mocha (Yemen) and especially Nagasaki (Japan). These data and the surviving commentaries of Volker indicate that the global trade of the VOC produced very different porcelain objectscapes in different localities, which were seemingly driven by the specific cultural demands of the communities in question. By adopting a global perspective on Chinese porcelain shipped by the VOC, Fig. 1.2 illustrates how comparing combinations of objects has the capacity to reveal something of local preferences and styles of consumption. The destination with the highest proportion of saucers relative to other vessels is Mocha, which fits well with the order from 1645 for tea cups, saucers, and coffee cups.[39]

[35] This perspective is discussed at length in Van Oyen/Pitts 2017b.

[36] Volker 1954. Records for the 18th century are published with greater completeness by Jörg 1982. For further analysis of these data, see Pitts 2017a; for comparisons with Roman ceramics, see Pitts 2013; 2015.

[37] Chaudhuri 1978, 359; Pendergrast 2001, 5-6.

[38] Rinaldi 1989, 62.

[39] Although frequently noted in orders, coffee cups are not always mentioned specifically in the bills of lading for this period.

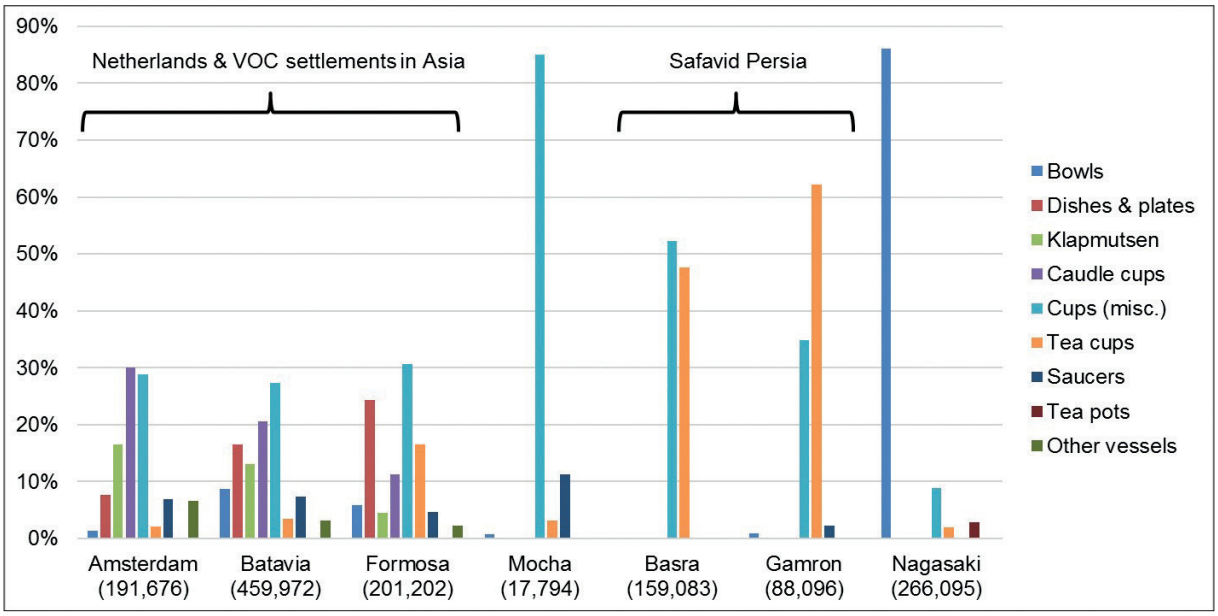


Figure 1.2. Chinese porcelain shipped by the Dutch East India Company, c. 1640-1649 (total no. of vessels per location given in brackets). Data from Volker (1954).

Although better-known as a centre for coffee drinking, Mocha is the only locality in Fig. 1.2 for which the association of cups and saucers for drinking tea is well-represented. Elsewhere, the practice of using tea cups without a saucer was well-established in Persia in the 1640s, where the highest number of cups specified for tea drinking were shipped, and Nagasaki, where the predilection for bowls alongside smaller quantities of tea pots hints at the different needs of the Japanese tea ceremony.

Compared with other regions, Amsterdam received a much smaller proportion of tea cups and saucers in the 1640s. At this time, cups specified for purposes other than tea-drinking dominate the records of porcelain shipped to the Netherlands. Since tea was only exported to the Netherlands as a bulk commodity from 1637,[40] the infrequency of designated tea-vessels in records of Dutch imports suggests that most porcelain cups imported to Amsterdam at this time would have been used for different, local beverages,[41] very much evoking the scenario of the Iron Age grave filled with large beakers of northern Gallic design at the start of this chapter. A loosely parallel practice to later Iron Age drinking can be seen centuries later with the near-exclusive Dutch preference for the klapmuts, a soup bowl shaped like an upside-down hat with an everted rim. In contrast with more typical steep-sided Chinese porcelain bowls, the klapmuts was better-suited to resting a spoon of European design while keeping the bowl flat on a table.[42] Had an equivalent kind of local use for porcelain cups in the Netherlands prevailed (i.e. for consuming alcoholic spirits or other beverages), the saucer may not have come to enjoy its position in the modern global repertoire of tea drinking vessels.

So far, our story of the saucer and its selective adoption by different porcelain-consuming cultures around the world has focused exclusively on Chinese porcelain. However, it is worth pointing out that even during the height of Dutch *china*-mania in the 17th century, *china* only constituted a small percentage of pottery available for eating and drinking. Fig. 1.3 details the proportions of different pottery vessels from the Dutch towns of Dordrecht and Nijmegen at the start of the 17th century (c. 1600 – 1650).[43]

[40] Volker 1954, 48-49.

[41] Rinaldi 1989, 154; Viallé 2014; Pitts 2015, 81-85.

[42] Rinaldi 1989, 118-119; Brook 2008, 75-77.

[43] Data from Bartels 1999, taking assemblages with a median date falling into the first fifty years of the century.

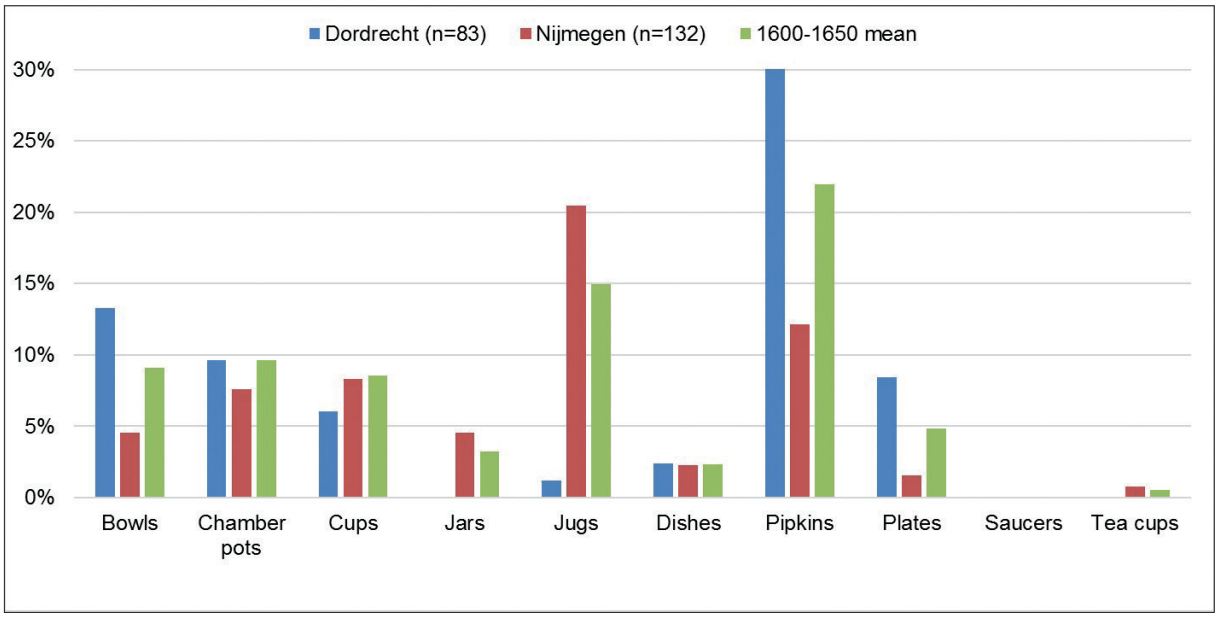


Figure 1.3. Ceramic assemblages from Dutch cities, c. 1600-1650. Data from Bartels (1999).

The graph does not distinguish between different wares and their origins, but since only one *china* vessel was reported amongst 215 vessels, we can assume most of the vessels are of local or regional manufacture. Examining the graph, it is revealing that the most common vessel shapes are crude coarse ware jugs and pipkins (cooking pots with tripods and spouts), illustrating just how radically different the new Chinese porcelain vessels must have seemed compared with their locally-made counterparts.

An illuminative way of assessing the impact of Chinese porcelain on European objectscapes is to fast forward 150 years or so and repeat the experiment. Fig. 1.4 uses equivalent data for the late 18th century (c. 1750 – 1800) from the towns of Deventer, Nijmegen, and Tiel, providing a sense of the local agency and replication of Chinese porcelain forms, and a glimpse at the longer-term evolution of local objectscapes. Fig. 1.4 effectively presents a mirror image of the scenario in the early 17th century. Crudely fashioned jugs and pipkins are now in the minority, whereas vessels previously favoured in porcelain (plates, tea cups and saucers) have come to dominate. This fundamental shift in the styles and combinations of European dining ceramics shows a clear impact of designs that first appeared in Chinese porcelain at the start of the 17th century. While historians and sociologists have viewed the arrival of Chinese porcelain in Europe as a symptom of phenomena such as the rise of civilised manners and capitalism,[44] it is arguable that the porcelain *itself* was an instigator of change, as a historical agent in its own right.[45] Put simply, without the appearance of Chinese porcelain in Europe in the 17th century there would be no polite ensembles for tea-drinking and dining for Europeans to adopt. Indeed, without an influx of *china*, it is debatable whether domestic pottery would have changed in the way it did in the 18th century, further jeopardising later phenomena like the development of European porcelain, familiar modern brands like Wedgwood, and above all, the very ways that tea and coffee are consumed today.

All of this, and more, is embodied in the stylistic genealogy of the saucer. Consider, for example, a saucer and cup dating from the first half of the 18th century that I purchased in Exeter (Fig. 1.5). The wide availability of these vessels as antiques in the 21st century is a powerful testament to the scale of their importation to Europe nearly three centuries ago. Even at the height of European porcelain produc-

[44] Elias 2000 [1939]; Sombart 1967.

[45] Pitts 2017a.

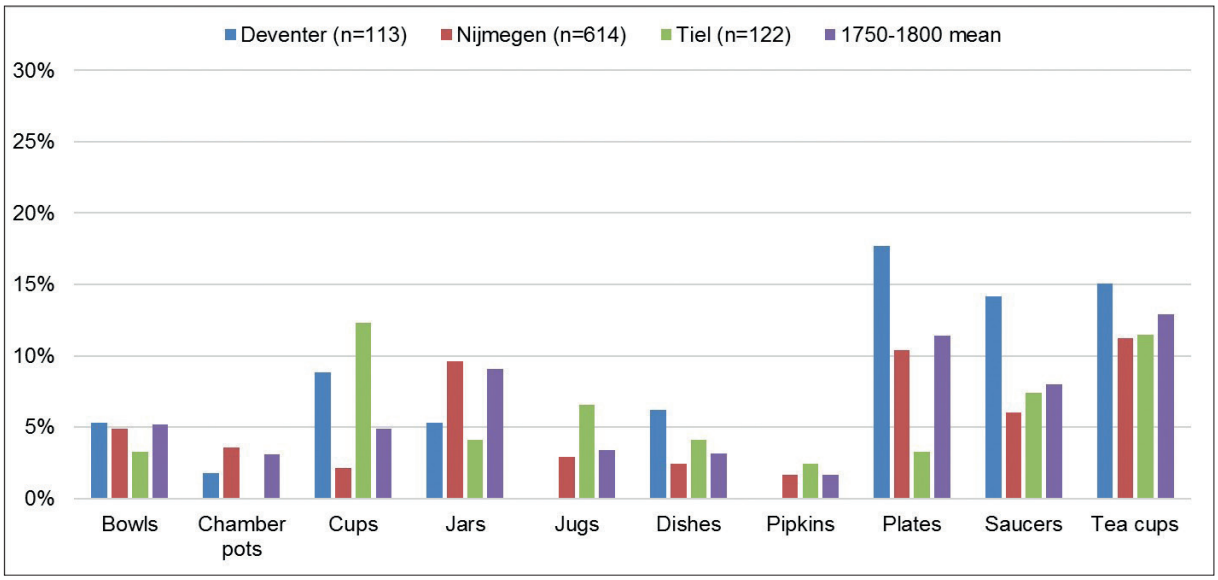


Figure 1.4. Ceramic assemblages from Dutch cities, c. 1750-1800. Data from Bartels (1999).

tion in the 18th century it is likely that Chinese vessels in European circulation vastly outnumbered the combined outputs of the European factories.[46] Data compiled by Christiaan Jörg records that the VOC imported over half a million (631,470) cups-and-saucers of the scarcer kind illustrated in Fig. 1.5 during the 18th century, i.e. varieties with Imari decoration (blue underglaze, red enamel and gold gilding), and lacking handles.[47] The decoration was in fact a Chinese attempt to imitate a style of Japanese porcelain that was no longer shipped by the VOC after 1682,[48] itself a Japanese innovation on the universal Chinese product – a scenario that in turn evokes the complex range of genealogical influences seen in our late Iron Age grave considered at the start of this chapter.

The decoration of the tea-drinking ensemble in Fig. 1.5 suggests a mass market destination. It clearly lacks the artistic execution of the armorial porcelain commissioned for wealthy families and savoured by latter-day collectors, and would most likely have been the kind of *china* used in a public tea house or by a family of modest means. Nevertheless, the act of holding the cup-and-saucer in one's hands heightens a sense of rupture with everyday ceramics of the 21st century. The cup is considerably smaller than modern European tea cups, the walls are exceptionally thin and delicate, and for someone used to holding a tea cup by a handle, the absence of a handle makes for a certain amount of awkward experimentation in the best way to drink from the vessel. The lack of a handle underlines the essential Chinese genealogy of the tea cup, as well as specific economic constraints that affected the global trade in *china*. Despite European preferences for cups with handles, the extra cost of adding a handle to Chinese porcelain cups was evidently not worth the risk of breakage in transit, since cups with handles never exceeded more than five percent of VOC orders.[49] The matching decoration of the cup-and-saucer attests not only to the universalisation of the Middle Eastern practice of using this combination of vessels for drinking tea or

[46] Godden 1979, 15.

[47] Jörg 1982. The same records specify a minimum of 8.5 million Chinese porcelain cups-and-saucers imported to the Netherlands by the VOC in the same period, which of course, was separate from supplies obtained by the English East India Company.

[48] Jörg 1982, 157. Imari wares cost twice as much to produce as blue and white porcelain, but did not yield equivalent returns in European markets, hence its comparative scarceness.

[49] Pitts 2017a, 575-577.

Figure 1.5. Early/mid-18th century export Chinese porcelain saucer (with cup, right), with Imari decoration and mostly worn overglaze gold enamel (copyright: author).

coffee, but also the ability of Europeans to order vessels to their own specifications after direct trade with the Chinese at Canton had been established in the early 18th century. In this case, the Chinese figures attest to the phenomenon of *chinoiserie*, the prominence of selected images of China in European popular culture, which simultaneously helped to cast China as the Other in the European cultural imagination.[50]

The cultural connections, entanglements, and innovations evoked by just a single object can be vast, even for an object as seemingly mundane and ordinary as a saucer. This example demonstrates how a familiar modern object has a rich cultural heritage, a heritage that has nonetheless become obscured by many generations of production and design evolution, in which the saucer was gradually disassociated from the cultural contexts that gave birth to it, and re-embedded in a newly transformed cultural setting. In discussing the saucer, I have identified several themes with the potential to provide similarly new insights into the objectscapes of other periods, not least that of Iron Age to Roman northwest Europe, which I consider in further detail in the following sections.

1.5 THE IMPACTS OF STANDARDISED THINGS-IN-MOTION ON OBJECTSCAPES

The examples of the saucer and the impact of *china* on European objectscapes and cultural practices highlight clear potential for bringing new understandings to the role of standardised objects in analogous processes in the Roman period.[51] Indeed, the mass availability of objects for everyday use has become a substantial topic in recent scholarship in Roman archaeology and history. Rather than reviewing these developments in detail, for which good summaries exist,[52] the aim of this section is to set out a blueprint

[50] Berg 2005, 49-52.

[51] For a different account of the impacts of mechanical reproduction and connectivity in deep history, see Wengrow 2013, which deals with matters of cognition and visual representation rather than standardised objects *per se*.

[52] Woolf 1998, 169-205; Cool 2006a; Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 315-440; Greene 2008; Dietler 2010; Eckardt 2014; Pitts 2015; Swift 2017.

for the analysis of the roles of standardised objects in objectscapes in Iron Age and Roman northwest Europe in this book. What can the circulation of standardised objects reveal about the ways in which European Iron Age societies transformed themselves (and were transformed) within the expanding Roman empire, and how exactly should this question be addressed in practical terms?

1.5.1 WHAT DO OBJECTSCAPES DO?

> *It is an illusion to think that in most cases there are informants who can provide an 'emic' representation of [these] material phenomena that gives immediate access to their cultural implications – in short, that you need only ask your informants. …micro-scale analysis of objects, which is the staple of archaeological enquiry, is dealing with material which provides enormously rich evidence for social relations, yet is often neglected in ethnographic enquiry, precisely because of the existence of other, more easily available, sources of evidence. A society studied through its material rather than its linguistic manifestations is in no less sense immediate or less real.*[53]
> Daniel Miller, *Artefacts as categories*

As we have seen in the opening examples in this chapter, standardised mass-produced objects are especially prone to being used in distinctive combinations as part of objectscapes associated with enacting certain social tasks, from Iron Age funerals to 18th century tea drinking. Pushing this idea further, it follows that the configuration of objectscapes can help channel the possibilities for specific social actions and practices.[54] This is an important perspective for the purposes of Roman cultural history, since it has direct implications for understanding the first arrivals and impacts of standardised goods in processes of cultural change, goods that tended to appear in the context of contact with the Mediterranean world. Taking this approach seriously requires new ways of analysing and visualising artefactual data, not least because many traditional archaeological methodologies are not well-suited to dealing with multiple combinations of different types of objects at once – including distribution maps, biographies of individual types of object, and graphs describing the composition of finds assemblages at a given site. Studying objectscapes from an archaeological perspective entails the analysis of the recurrent contextual associations of object-types across multiple contemporaneous assemblages, placing emphasis on relationships, ratios, and combinations. At a micro-level, an underlying assumption is that objects used together will probably be broken and deposited together, most commonly through accidental breakage and refuse disposal, but also in forms of ritual practice, such as the deliberate act of placing grave goods with the dead.[55] Studying objectscapes means that these kinds of relational associations between objects must be pushed to the forefront of analysis.

Prior to writing this book, I considered aspects of the relationality within objectscapes through the ways in which 'suites' of fine pottery came to be deposited together at the ends of their use-lives, whether broken on settlements or as whole vessels in graves.[56] The results underlined the likelihood that fine ware vessels made in the same fabric (especially *terra sigillata*) were often used together in life, and were separated from coarser pottery, in ways analogous to the use of 'best *china*' for the consumption of food and drink in early modern societies. The analyses also revealed recurrent associations of fine pottery with other distinctive wares, other objects such as fibulae, and animal species consumed for their meat.[57]

53 Miller 1985, 197-198.

54 Robb 2015, 167.

55 It is less likely that there will be a direct link between the spatial locus of use or consumption and the place of deposition (so-called 'primary deposition'). An ethnographic study of 79 cultural groups revealed that primary deposition is the fate of few material residues of household consumption (Murray 1980).

56 Pitts/Perring 2006; Pitts 2007a, cf. Van Oyen 2016a, 115-130, for later patterns in the same region of Roman Essex.

57 Pitts 2010b; Perring/Pitts 2013, 231-238.

While the constituent elements of the assemblages in question were often fragmentary, confidence that the patterns resembled meaningful use-life combinations was founded on the basis of two factors: the sheer frequency of contextual linkages between the same kinds of objects in multiple assemblages; and the occurrence of similar combinations of objects in contemporary graves, in which the objects had been consciously and deliberately placed. While methodologically promising, the scale of these analyses was insufficient to effectively determine the extent to which the make-up of such 'suites' was governed by innovative local customs or informed by practices in neighbouring Roman provinces.

Building on the relational methodology of my older work focused on individual sites and smaller regions, the approach to objectscapes in this book places emphasis on the relational properties of *mobile* standardised objects in a wider connected milieu, by considering the objects available to multiple communities rather than just a single locality. Placing the onus on standardised objects-in-motion has the advantage of illuminating the nature of objectscapes in multiple cultural scenarios at once, as the case-study on Chinese porcelain demonstrates. The various combinations of porcelain vessels shipped by the VOC in the 1640s arguably had very little to do with those favoured by the Chinese (or even the Dutch), but everything to do with a complex global network of interconnected local preferences. Such perspectives have long been advocated in anthropology and archaeology under the heading of the cultural biographies of things,[58] and have more recently been advocated as a means of mapping the effects of contemporary globalisation.[59] Putting this into practice entails fleshing out the connection between the big picture of mass consumption and the micro-scale of selections made in local contexts, and rejecting the assumption that the spread of standardised objects has the lone outcome of fostering cultural homogenisation. Instead, a much more complicated process seems to be commonplace, in which universal standardised goods are particularised to suit local consumer cultures and are often later re-universalised in the form of innovative new styles and combinations: the particularisation of the universal hand-in-hand with the universalisation of the particular.[60]

1.5.2 WHY DID PAST OBJECTSCAPES LOOK THE WAY THEY DID?

Having briefly sketched some implications for studying the workings of past objectscapes, I turn to address the fundamental issue of why objectscapes took the form they did in different times and places in history. A tremendously helpful concept in this regard is Alfred Gell's notion of the 'inter-artefactual domain'.[61] In the second half of his influential posthumous book, *Art and Agency* (1998), Gell stressed that the appearance of objects is governed neither by culture nor ethnicity, but rather relationships with other objects of similar style within the inter-artefactual domain. At a basic level, this observation is evidenced by the fact that most objects share some common stylistic or genealogical features with other artefacts in the same objectscape:

> *…it is an error to imagine that 'culture' in some general sense, is responsible for the visual style of artefacts. Culture may dictate the practical and/or symbolic significance of artefacts, and their iconographic interpretation; but* **the only factor which governs the visual appearance of artefacts is their relationship to other artefacts in the same style**. *Visual culture is an autonomous domain in the sense that it is*

[58] Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986; Thomas 1991. Hahn/Weiss 2013 prefer the metaphor of 'itineraries' to 'biographies', due to the difficulty of pinpointing moments of object birth and death. While 'itineraries' and 'trajectories' seem more appropriate to mass-produced objects studied *en masse*, it is arguable that 'biography' retains its value as an analytical concept for the discussion of individual objects, cf. Fontijn 2013.

[59] Foster 2006, cf. Pitts 2015, 80-88, for applications to the Roman world.

[60] Versluys 2015a, 152-158.

> *only definable in terms of relationships between artefacts and other artefacts; it is a mistake to think of 'culture' as a kind of 'head office' which decrees, on the one hand, what form political competition will assume, and on the other, what artefacts will look like.* **Artefacts are shaped in the 'inter-artefactual domain'***, obeying the immanent injunctions governing formal stylistic relationships among artefacts, not in response to external injunctions from some imaginary 'head office'.*[62]

There are several important points to take away from Gell's powerful statement on the inter-artefactual domain. In the first place, Gell's emphasis on understanding the relationality between objects underlines its suitability for explaining aspects of objectscapes, as defined in this study. Second, while seemingly concerned with the appearance of individual objects, the examples used by Gell, most notably his study of the Maori meeting house,[63] highlight the possibility that discrete conglomerations of objects such as houses and grave assemblages are also subject to the inter-artefactual domain,[64] and in turn, that the concept has significant potential to explain aspects of the make-up of objectscapes and not just individual objects. In this way, if the appearance of an object is primarily influenced by its relationship to extant objects *in the same style*, then it follows that the collective form of a bounded conglomeration of objects – such as the architectural components of a house, or goods placed in a grave – is thus influenced by the make-up of existing object packages *used for the same social function*. A third important facet of the inter-artefactual domain not considered in detail by Gell is its relationship with connectivity. In a globalised context such as the Roman empire, the impact of connectivity might entail, in effect, the creation of a single merged inter-artefactual domain spanning large swathes of imperial territory. A significant caveat here is that the integration or consistency of the Roman inter-artefactual domain in each region would depend upon the degree of local connectivity. For example, at major hubs characterised by high rates of circulating objects and associated producer and consumer knowledge, we might expect the emergence of more stylistically-eclectic objectscapes. In contrast, scenarios characterised by weak connectivity and blockages in the flows of objects and commodities might be expected to produce more regionally-distinctive objectscapes with a more conservative or 'traditional' character. This may be an attractive line of reasoning to account for synchronous and (more or less) universal material changes across large parts of the Roman world, alongside the emergence of distinctive local objectscapes forged in dialogue with much bigger frames of reference.[65]

Gell's inter-artefactual domain seemingly offers a powerful tool for explaining aspects of the make-up of objectscapes in situations of variable connectivity. However, we should be cautious about invoking the concept as a kind of *deus ex machina* to explain all aspects of changing objectscapes. An obvious criticism of this kind of explanatory framework is that it removes a great deal of agency from human actors.[66] Objects, of course, cannot reproduce themselves without help from people. Reflecting on these concerns, it is important to consider that the material changes most strongly governed by the inter-

61 Gell 1998, 216. Gell's work in general has become influential in the recent material turn in anthropology, archaeology and other cognate disciplines. As Küchler 2013, 25 puts it, Gell's *Art and Agency* offers a new direction 'by challenging the assumed primacy of the social over the material and the cultural'.

62 Gell 1998, 216, my emphasis, cf. Garrow/Gosden 2012, 26.

63 Gell 1998, 255, Fig. 9.6/3.

64 Larson 2007, 99.

65 This possibility is compatible with the suggestion that Roman expansion necessitated the creation of a single sign system in the Latin West that cross-cut the local and regional value systems of the later Iron Age (Woolf 1998, 181, cf. Jiménez 2017 on material synchronisation and Roman 'standard time').

66 Criticism of Gell's inter-artefactual domain tends to revolve around this point. For example, as Morphy 2009, 21 forcefully puts it, 'objects do not breed as Gell seems to suggest…', highlighting the need to examine production in the context of knowledge systems and relevant historical factors. Further critique *Art and Agency* points out that objects in Gell's explanations only really have agency in the context of human interaction (Webmoor 2007, 568), or that 'objects can only have effect as representations of others' minds and agency' (Leach 2007, 182).

artefactual domain are incremental in nature. The more substantial the material change, the greater the rupture with the past styles and objectscapes, and the more likely it is that human agency takes primacy, as seen for example, in the early onset of *china*-mania in Europe, when Chinese porcelain was consciously sought out and imitated by Europeans to varying degrees of success. However, one could persuasively argue that it was through the longer-term workings of the inter-artefactual domain that Chinese porcelain irrevocably altered European objectscapes in the decades and generations that followed. In this way, while the inter-artefactual domain can account for a *spectrum of possibilities* for the appearances of objects and make-up of objectscapes in a given moment, it is the interface with human decision making that determines their final configurations. In this way, through the inter-artefactual domain objects become part of the human 'extended mind',[67] by informing and channeling the reproduction of material conditions and social practices.

In sum, the idea of the inter-artefactual domain has great potential to shed new light on the relationship between short-term changes in material culture and longer-term trajectories in the make-up of objectscapes. To consider the relationship between objectscapes and the inter-artefactual domain in less abstract terms, I introduce three further concepts: **stylistic genealogy**, the historical influences embodied in the design of an object and in the constitution of objectscapes; **local agency and replication**, the capacity of mobile objects to instigate the reproduction of some of their design traits in local cultural contexts; and **longer-term evolution**, addressing the changing styles of objects and the make-up of objectscapes over multiple generations. These concepts are now considered with reference to the roles of standardised objects in Roman history.

1.5.3 STYLISTIC GENEALOGY

Unlike handmade objects, whose uniqueness can evoke something of the social frames of reference of the producer, standardised objects arguably provide a more limited number of possible interpretations,[68] engendering a greater sense of functionality, and obscuring their genealogies as individual objects. This is certainly true of long-lived objects such as the modern saucer, a taken for granted constituent of modern objectscapes associated with tea and coffee drinking that was universalised some centuries ago. By promoting instant evaluation and minimising cultural ambiguity and uncertainty,[69] standardised objects have the capacity to promote cultural sharing by encouraging conformity in practice.[70] It is therefore no surprise that generations of Roman archaeologists viewed the spread of *terra sigillata* pottery in the Roman empire as a universal indicator of Romanisation. However, if the cultural knowledge for such instant evaluation is lacking, and standardised objects pass into different regimes of cultural value, standardised objects can paradoxically offer a greater number of potential interpretations to their users, precisely because they are no longer connected to a specific cultural trajectory. The idea of the universal evaluation of *terra sigillata* in the Roman empire is flawed precisely because of the diversity of cultural scenarios and practices that it is known to have participated in, much like Chinese porcelain in more recent global history. We should consider that the very success of *terra sigillata* in the Roman northwest may have been in part due to its obscured genealogy and lack of particular cultural connection to various pre-existing local regimes of value.[71] It follows that the standardised constituents of objectscapes may have had very different cultural genealogies, however much these may be disguised in a given moment (e.g. the assemblage accompanying our *terra sigillata* plate in the example at the start of this chapter). This is an important perspective, not

[67] Gell 1998, 221-258, cf. Gosden 2013, 43.

[68] Robb 2015, 174

[69] Gosden 2013, 45.

[70] Robb 2015, 171-174.

[71] Van Oyen 2016a, 128.

only for understanding how objectscapes retain some traits, and absorb innovations over time, but also for understanding the design and functions of individual objects in a given moment.[72]

A good example of the benefits of examining the genealogies of standardised objects is provided by the case of so-called Gallo-Belgic wares.[73] Gallo-Belgic wares were produced at several locations in the new province of Gallia Belgica from the late first century BC to the late first century AD. Roughly half of the vessel designs in this repertoire can be seen to derive from prototypes in Italian-style *terra sigillata*, with a Mediterranean genealogy. The other half of Gallo-Belgic vessel designs may be instead viewed as emerging from a genuine fusion of northern European and Mediterranean traditions of pottery production. Crucially, the genealogy of the different Gallo-Belgic vessels seems to have mattered greatly to people at the time. Objectscapes associated with the pre-conquest aristocracy in southern Britain, for example, show a particular preference for Gallo-Belgic pots with more innovative Gallic designs (e.g. so-called butt- and girth-beakers), whereas the same designs tend to be less popular and are even eschewed by Roman military communities in Britain.[74] This kind of patterning highlights the 'rootedness' of vessels with northern European genealogies, which seem to have been created as regional categories distinct from vessel shapes in the universal *terra sigillata* repertoire.[75] Unlike the many Gallo-Belgic bowls, cups, and plates that resembled designs in *terra sigillata*, it seems that those with northern European genealogy were treated differently precisely because ancient consumers had some awareness of this rootedness.

1.5.4 LOCAL AGENCY AND REPLICATION

An obvious indicator of the impact of goods exchanged over long-distances is their local replication, even if the new objects are not made to identical specifications, materialising real and imagined links with distant people, places, and objectscapes.[76] While Chinese porcelain designs and decorations were eagerly imitated in European tin-glazed wares such as Delftware and Maiolica in the 17th century, porcelain itself was not mastered by Europeans on an industrial scale until well into the 18th century.[77] Such developments are testament to the cultural impact of mobile objects and the technical proficiency of local artisans – a phenomenon also testified in the local reproduction of Gallic and Mediterranean ceramics in the late Iron Age grave considered at the start of this chapter. The relationship between mobile objects and their so-called local 'copies' and imitations, as well as the reproduction of particular combinations of objects, are both subjects that require further study in Roman archaeology, moving analyses of objects beyond the reductive application of paradigms like Romanisation.[78]

Less obvious indicators of the local agency of mobile objects can be accessed by considering the active uses of the objects in question.[79] On this issue, important considerations include the quantities and social distribution of mobile objects in circulation at a given moment, the degree of their participation in everyday use versus more ritualised forms of practice (such as feasts and funerals), and the extent to which such practices may be considered novel or traditional. Mobile objects may likewise play a vital

72 Gosden 2005, 203-207.

73 Pitts 2017b, cf. Gosden 2005, 205-207.

74 Pitts 2014.

75 Van Oyen 2016a, 107-113, for further explanation of this concept and application to Trier Rhenish wares.

76 On the local transformative potential of itinerant copies, see Stockhammer/Forberg 2017.

77 Weber 2017 provides fascinating insights into the process by which Meissen porcelain came to be valued by Europeans over Asian 'originals' at this time.

78 For example, see the exploration of meme theory to explain the imitation of *terra sigillata* (Biddulph 2013), and the cultural selection of objects for funerary assemblages (Biddulph 2012). On copies and copying, see Forberg/Stockhammer (2017).

79 Swift 2017 emphasises the benefits of detailed characterisation of object function through use-wear and experimental studies.

role in 'the invention of tradition' through processes of material entanglement,[80] a classic example being the conscious cultural appropriation of things Greek (Hellenism as opposed to Hellenisation) that came to be a defining feature of what has been termed the Augustan cultural revolution in Rome.[81] Was a less grandiose, but no less important 'invention of tradition' fostered in the Roman northwest with the spread of new cultural practices dependent on standardised objects with Mediterranean genealogy, such as oil lamps, *terra sigillata*, glass ware, and amphora-borne commodities such as fish sauce, olive oil, and wine?

1.5.5 LONGER-TERM EVOLUTION

The short-term impact of mobile objects can be overwhelming. In recent decades, there has been a noticeable emphasis in archaeological research on the immediate social contexts in which material culture was used. Less attention tends to be given to longer-term shifts in material culture that may not have been perceptible within a given generation, i.e. greater than a period of 20-50 years or more. Investigating such pan-generational change in material culture is not only essential for understanding how objectscapes are capable of channelling human action in the longer-term,[82] but also for evaluating more far-reaching impacts of circulating objects over time.

Studying the longer-term evolution of standardised objects forms a vital counterpart to the analysis of their impact in a given moment, in a way analogous to Appadurai's distinction between the *social histories of things*, taking into account longer-term shifts and larger-scale dynamics, and *cultural biographies of things*, dealing with specific objects and historical contexts.[83] From a methodological point of view the so-called culture-historical approach in archaeology has much to offer this kind of perspective. Although rightly discredited for its one-to-one correlations of material culture with ethnicity, and its explanatory reliance on external factors like invasion, migration, and diffusion, the enduring value of this approach is its ability 'to trace real lineages of the development of material culture in the archaeological record'.[84] It follows that the analysis of longer-term changes in material culture should not be confined to object typologies, but rather the constitution of objectscapes. Indeed, the notion of objectscapes has some resonance with the culture-historical concept of the archaeological culture, famously defined by Gordon Childe as 'certain remains – pots, implements, ornaments, burial rites, house forms – constantly recurring together'.[85] A radically rehabilitated version of this concept has much potential, divorced from the reductive connotations of fossilised ethnicities, and applied with greater methodological sophistication than many clumsy 20th century narratives that merely sought to fill in gaps in the record of written history. In this vein, there are notable echoes of the typological approach in Gell's idea of the inter-artefactual domain,[86] whose practical application requires 'carefully tracking and recording the variety of material forms an object takes within a specified region, through time and space.'[87]

What kind of insights may be expected by considering the longer-term evolution of objects? We have already seen how Dutch domestic pottery assemblages at the end of the 18th century came to be dominated by tea cups, saucers, and plates as a direct impact of the influx of Chinese porcelain imports a century or so earlier, while Chinese exports became increasingly subject to European design preferences. By the same token, it is well-documented that the standardised repertoire of *terra sigillata* pottery did not

[80] On the invention of tradition, see Hobsbawn/Ranger 1983, cf. Boschung/Busch/Versluys 2015 on application to the Roman world.

[81] Versluys 2015b, cf. Wallace-Hadrill 2008.

[82] Gosden 2006.

[83] Appadurai 1986, 34, cf. Van Oyen 2016a, 131-135 on object trajectories.

[84] Trigger 2006, 313.

[85] Childe 1929, v-vi.

[86] Gosden 2013, 43.

[87] Larsen 2007, 99.

remain static in the Roman period. A glance over the changing appearance of *terra sigillata* vessels from the middle of the first century AD to the end of the second century AD reveals that plates are replaced by deeper dishes, and bowls and cups become larger.[88] It is likely that these changes reflect changes in eating and drinking, such as a shift from wine to beer consumption,[89] and the longer-term influence of other northern European foodstuffs on the diet of the Roman military. As *sigillata* production slowly gravitated towards northwest Europe, its changing appearance seems to be a good example of local feedback influencing the long-term design trajectories of a product with inter-provincial reach. Nevertheless, the reasons for this change, and many others, including the continued evolution of some forms and the steep decline in others, require further investigation.

1.5.6 FROM OBJECTSCAPES TO STYLES OF CONSUMPTION

Using objectscapes as a basic methodological concept, explored variously by addressing the themes of stylistic genealogy, local innovation and replication, and longer-term evolution, this book aims to provide a new history of mass consumption in Iron Age to Roman northwest Europe. If objectscapes channel the possibilities for collective social action, the resulting actions may be described in terms of styles of consumption. In this way, a focus on the context and constitution of objectscapes provides a methodology to address the call of Greg Woolf 'to draw a distinction between the consumption of Roman goods and Roman styles of consumption.'[90] The contextual information needed to make this distinction may take many guises. For the uses of Chinese porcelain in the 18th century, modern historians are blessed with a wealth of information, including descriptions of vessels in orders and bills of lading, as well as contemporary written accounts and artworks – so much data that the archaeological approach to material culture has for decades played second-fiddle to art- and documentary history.[91] The absence of equivalent riches for the study of Roman Europe entails privileging the growing corpus of published archaeological data, used alongside surviving textual sources which offer many valuable insights, such as accounts of an ethnographic disposition.[92] Taken together, archaeological and historical sources are able to offer vital contextual information, such as the history of relevant customs and practices in the society in question; understandings of the location of a community in wider political and economic networks (e.g. a city's legal designation); and details of the archaeological contexts in which the mobile objects were found, combined with the analysis of any associations with objects of local provenance.

1.6 THE STRUCTURE, DATA, AND METHODS USED IN THIS BOOK

The chronological remit of this study spans the vital two centuries in which northwest Europe became intertwined and integrated within the Roman world (c. 120/100 BC-AD 100/120). For analytical convenience, this rough 200-year span is broken down and analysed in four period-themed chapters that follow. Chapter 2, 'The roles of objects in later Iron Age societies', addresses the phenomena of standardisation and consumption practices prior to Roman military conquest, with emphasis on the selection of objects *en masse* in funerary contexts (c. 120/100-25 BC). On the eve of Caesar's conquests in the

88 Webster 1996, 113-116.

89 Dannell 2006.

90 Woolf 1998, 176.

91 This situation is changing, as demonstrated by Gerritsen/Riello 2015. Porcelain figures strongly in this resurgence of interest in material culture within historical studies.

92 Woolf 2011.

region in the 50s BC, the appearance of standardised objects in the guise of Italian wine amphorae are linked with the emergence of new funerary practices that connected several distantly spread societies. At the same time, weaker emerging forms of standardisation in the designs of fibulae and locally-made pottery attest to the development of a series of loosely-linked regional inter-artefactual domains and ever-intensifying levels connectivity between late Iron Age communities.

Chapter 3, 'The object revolution in northwest Europe', is concerned with the fundamental changes to objectscapes that began in the Augustan period, which coincided with the reorganisation of the Gallic provinces, and the building up of a permanent Roman military garrison along the Rhine (c. 25 BC-AD 40). Describing the changes in this period as a revolution evokes a series of landmark studies on the world of Augustan Rome, from Syme to Wallace-Hadrill,[93] albeit with an important difference. Whereas those influential works situate major innovations primarily in the realms of politics, society, and culture, this chapter (and book) addresses transformations in the world of objects that had arguably even more tangible and far-reaching consequences for people in northwest Europe.[94] The dramatic proliferation of widely-circulating standardised objects in this period, both locally-made and imported, marked a genuine step-change in which the entire region can be described as belonging to a single fully-integrated inter-artefactual domain, facilitated by surges in imperial connectivity and intensifying relations of clientship and kinship between societies across northern Gaul and southern Britain. This scenario fostered the emergence of two different, if occasionally overlapping pan-regional styles of consumption, related to the objectscapes of military and colonial communities (as seen in the case study of the Kops Plateau military command post, Nijmegen), and those of a series of rapidly changing local societies conquered by Rome (based on examples drawn from across the region).

Following the revolutionary new Augustan template, similar consumption patterns continued to be followed into the mid-first century AD, when the re-configuration of objectscapes in colonial situations is examined in more detail in Chapter 4, 'Objectscapes, cityscapes, and colonial encounters'. This chapter examines the Claudian conquest of Britain alongside parallel developments taking place in Gallia Belgica and the Rhineland (c. AD 40-70). While recent scholarship tends to frame the archaeology of Roman conquest in terms of a series of disconnected local responses to Roman imperialism, this chapter contrasts such perspectives by placing objectscapes from the micro-historical scenario of Colchester's colonial landscape in the wider context of fresh inter-provincial comparisons. The analyses in this chapter highlight phenomena in which local selections of objects were made and evaluated in the context of a broader shared material-cultural milieu, made up of multiple connected localities across northwest Europe.

Chapter 5, 'Local elites, imperial culture, and provincial objectscapes' considers another major watershed in object design and circulation that went on to inform the appearance of provincial material culture well into the second century AD, and beyond. This chapter begins with a focus on the material choices of local elites, and the genesis of more diagnostically provincial objectscapes that began to emerge in the Flavian period (c. AD 70-100). The resulting analysis of the stylistic evolutions of objects and their deliberate selection in funerary contexts singles out this period as the most globalised in historical terms, being marked by widespread synchronous universalisation of objectscapes on one hand, and a series of dramatic regional divergences that were informed by fundamentally *pan-regional* frames of reference. These important Flavian changes represent less of revolution as a significant reinvigoration and reembedding of changes to objectscapes set in motion over a century earlier. A final concluding chapter, 'Historical change and the Roman inter-artefactual domain', evaluates the main findings of the analysis with respect to the themes outlined in this introductory chapter.

[93] Syme 1939; Wallace-Hadrill 2008. Kay 2014 envisages an equivalent economic revolution for roughly the same period.

[94] Although cf. Woolf 2001, who draws an implicit connection between the multiplicity of Augustan innovations in Rome and material changes in the provinces.

In geographical terms, the focus of this study is on changing objectscapes at the provincial interface between Britannia, Gallia Belgica, and Germania Inferior, and corresponding regions in the preceding Iron Age. In the modern world, this area spans a large swathe of territory taking in southeast Britain, northern France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and western Germany. Fig. 1.6 provides a comprehensive map of the major archaeological sites contributing data to this study. In assembling the database upon which this study is based, priority was accorded to putting together a series of assemblages that sampled multiple locales that would permit comparative analysis of the larger study region through time. A secondary objective was the incorporation of high-quality case-studies to illuminate the roles of objects in certain historical scenarios. While the database makes no pretense of being comprehensive, the emphasis on the selection of large and high-quality samples of archaeological data lends a great deal of confidence to the representativeness and robustness of the resulting analysis. All 80,000+ objects under scrutiny have some form of archaeological context, with the detail of this contextual information ranging from presence at an archaeological site in a stratigraphically-determined period, to more specific information such as presence in a sub-site, area, grave, pit, ditch, or layer, in addition to relations with other objects found in the same context. This variable level of contextual detail permits multiple scales of analysis to maximise the analytical potential of the data.

The primary emphases in this study are on the two largest extant categories of objects that were produced and consumed *en masse* in the period: standardised pottery and fibulae. For the Roman period it is often possible to obtain comprehensive lists of these artefacts from the relevant phases of published archaeological sites. While such basic data harvesting can form the basis of useful comparisons between sites,[95] it is less helpful for a more sensitive analysis of patterns of deposition, which require a minimum level of contextual information that is only inconsistently provided in published excavation reports. At the same time, the lack of standardised pottery (by Roman period standards) in the late Iron Age means that equivalent lists of fine ware ceramics simply do not exist for this vital period. To overcome these methodological obstacles, an important element of data collection for each stage of analysis was to build up a large enough sample of objects from funerary contexts, which have the advantage of being routinely published in their entirety, often with complete lists and illustrations of all the objects recovered from each grave. Funerary assemblages are particularly attractive since they constitute individual episodes of the deliberate object selection. The grave can thus form an excellent unit of analysis for studying webs of object-object and object-human relationships, and how these changed through time. In this respect, it made sense to gather data on not just fine pottery and fibulae, but all the other kinds of objects that were placed in graves, for a more holistic perspective on processes of object selection and objectscapes in Iron Age to Roman northwest Europe.

While funerary assemblages provide an especially rich source of information on the make-up of Iron Age and Roman objectscapes, they are nevertheless the product of a highly-specific cultural practice, and cannot be assumed to be directly representative of the roles of objects in everyday social settings.[96] For this reason, a substantial amount of the data gathered for this study comes from settlement contexts, not only as a means of testing the representativeness of selection patterns emerging from the funerary sphere, but also to provide comparative insights into the roles of equivalent objects in different social and cultural settings. In most cases, data included in this study allow basic comparisons of the quantities of different circulating fine ware and fibulae types. To facilitate such comparisons, the data have been re-classified according to a unified system using suitable overarching and geographically wide-ranging typologies, such as Xavier Deru's Gallo-Belgic ware series,[97] and Michel Feugère's fibula typology from southern Gaul.[98] These typological classifications are supplemented by the adoption of basic descriptions devised

[95] See Pitts 2014; 2017b, which outline pilot research making use of such broad-brush comparisons.

[96] Tuffreau-Libre 2000; Biddulph 2005.

[97] Deru 1996.

[98] Feugère 1985.

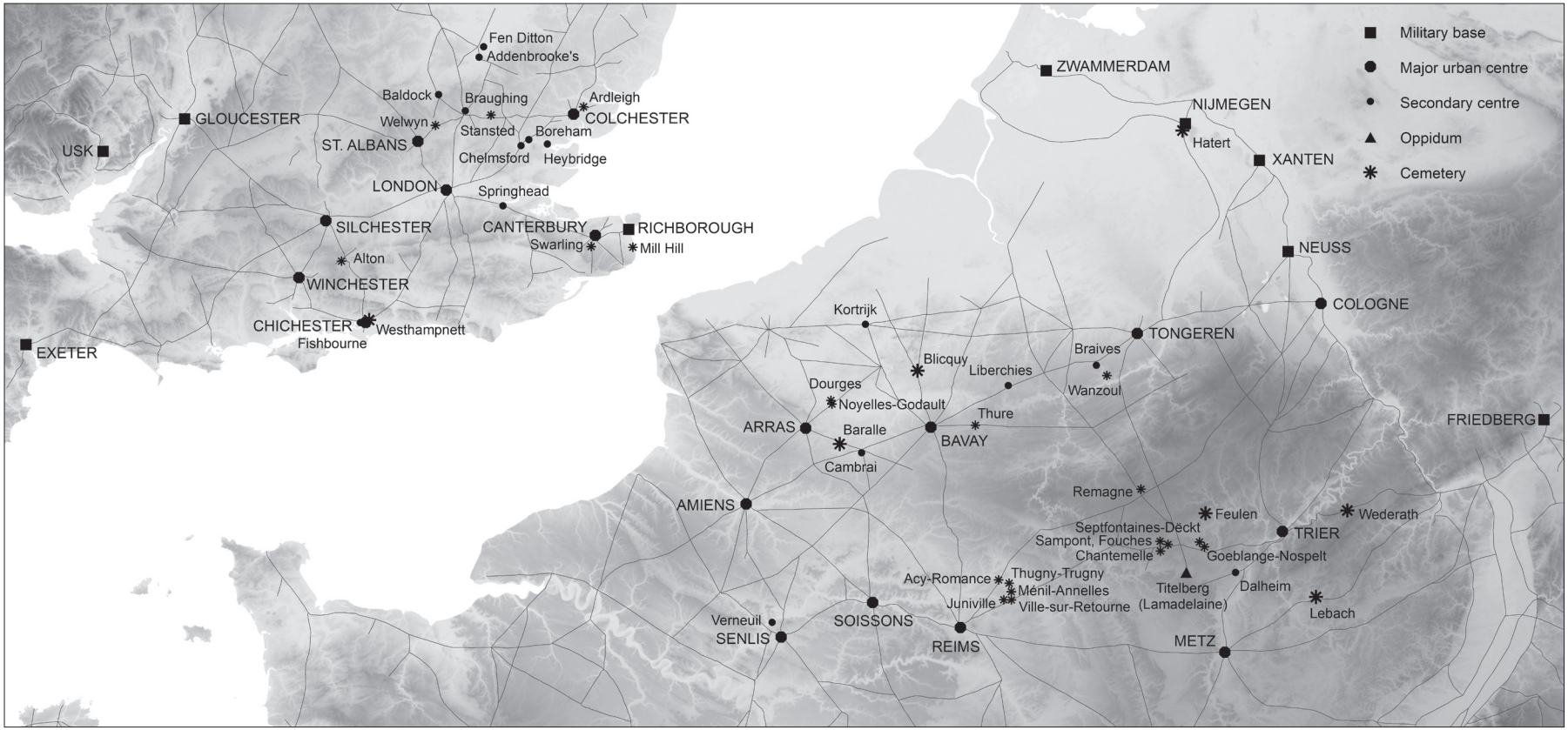


Figure 1.6. The locations of major late Iron Age and early Roman cemeteries and settlements considered in this study, in relation to the Roman road network.

for this study, for example, to facilitate the morphological comparison of late Iron Age and coarse pottery using a consistent language (e.g. shallow bowls and pear-shaped jars). Further details of these classificatory schemes are discussed in the chapters that follow and are outlined alongside common typological conventions in Appendix 2. This general approach to data collection is supplemented by the inclusion of several settlements that permit more detailed spatial and contextual analysis, forming the basis of more substantial case-studies of intra-site object selection and use, such as the Kops Plateau (Nijmegen, Chapter 3), and various localities at Camulodunum (Colchester, Chapter 4).

1.6.1 THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF THE DATA: SAMPLES AND COVERAGE

The breadth and coverage of the database assembled for this study is summarised in Tables 1.1 to 1.6. Table 1.1 breaks down the coverage of broad categories of object included from funerary assemblages by four main periods of interest. While it is not possible to gauge the representativeness of general patterns in this table, the large numbers of graves per period allow room for some cautious initial discussion. General trends include a gradual decline in the placement of fibulae in graves into the early Roman period, most pronounced in the final decades of the first century AD, a tendency also observable in weaponry, faunal remains, and alloy vessels, coupled with a steady increase in the numbers of glass and fine pottery vessels (per grave). The inclusion of coins and lamps in funerary contexts both gradually increase before a dip in the Flavian period. Delving deeper, Table 1.2 breaks down the same data into more specific object categories, highlighting increasing numbers of *terra sigillata* pots in funerary contexts over time, as well as an increased ratio of copper alloy to iron brooches. While the coverage of objects from non-funerary contexts is more uneven and weighted towards the pre-Flavian period (Table 1.3), equivalent patterns are observable within the primary categories of circulating fine ware pottery and fibulae. At a basic level, these patterns effectively illustrate the changed priorities in the use and deposition of material culture as later Iron Age objectscapes transformed into Roman objectscapes.

Table 1.4 summarises the regional and chronological distribution of the 3250+ graves. Despite the inevitable weighting towards larger cemeteries with several hundred graves each, such as Blicquy (Hainaut), King Harry Lane, St. Albans (Hertfordshire), and Wederath (Rhineland-Pfalz), data collected from a multitude of smaller cemeteries has greatly evened the geographical coverage of funerary assemblages for each major period. It is likely that most large gaps in geographical and chronological coverage are as much the product of real lacunae (i.e. in the uptake of accompanied cremation as a mortuary ritual) as opposed to biases of modern fieldwork and data collection for this project. The equivalent table concerning the coverage of data from settlements (Table 1.5) appears sparse in comparison, in large part resulting from the inconsistent approaches to the recording and complete publication of quantitative data from settlement contexts across the various modern national archaeological traditions, which impeded the collection of further data for this study. Although data for late Iron Age settlements (before the arrival of truly standardised forms) is lacking, funerary assemblages from this period provide a solid basis to examine the transition towards the use and selection of new kinds of standardised objects alongside other material culture in later periods.

Lastly, Table 1.6 gives a rough indication of the chronological spread of the data in terms of the kinds of settlement contexts and associated cemeteries selected for analysis. At one level, this categorisation overlooks important distinctions, for example between major civilian centres and those founded as *coloniae*, as well as a variety of status distinctions between cemeteries not associated with major cities or military bases that have been lumped into the 'secondary centre' category. Such distinctions are more easily examined in the chapters that follow. While the 'military' category appears noticeably smaller than the others, a more detailed assessment of the Roman military influence or presence at settlements and cemeteries lacking diagnostic military architecture and settlement morphology is likewise provided in Chapters 3-5.

Phase	Era (c.)	Graves	Coarse pottery	Fine pottery	Fibulae	Other objects	Coins	Glass vs	Animal remains	Martial	Lamps	Alloy vs
1	100 – 25 BC	697	2494	-	608	597	17	-	207	161	1	45
2	25 BC – AD 40	783	1439	1132	594	384	101	25	97	56	20	43
3	AD 40 – 70	985	1843	1581	461	419	237	162	40	20	106	32
4	AD 70 – 100	801	1883	1551	179	370	107	183	26	7	65	19
Grand totals		**3266**	**7659**	**4267**	**1842**	**1770**	**462**	**370**	**370**	**244**	**192**	**139**

Table 1.1. Numbers of graves and associated classes of objects included in the project database.

Funerary assemblages		Pottery						Fibulae		
Phase	Era (c.)	GB	SGS	Misc.	LY	ISS	TW	Cu	Fe	Ag
1	100 – 25 BC	-	-	-	-	-	-	222	386	-
2	25 BC – AD 40	1090	3	9		22	6	495	96	3
3	AD 40 – 70	1270	227	8	54	20	1	399	58	4
4	AD 70 – 100	1052	361	86	50			153	24	2
Grand totals		**3412**	**591**	**103**	**104**	**42**	**7**	**1269**	**564**	**9**

Table 1.2. The quantities of fine ware pottery and fibulae from funerary contexts in the project database.

Settlement assemblages		Pottery						Fibulae		
Phase	Era (c.)	GB	SGS	ISS	LY	TW	Misc.	Cu	Fe	Ag
Fibula horizon	100 BC – AD 70	-	-	-	-	-	-	3559	597	1
2	25 BC – AD 40	2982	23	4151	-	991	12	123	19	-
2-3	25 BC – AD 70	10304	2966	411	490	129	391	-	-	-
3	AD 40 – 70	6571	13438	1197	984	406	319	683	40	13
4	AD 70 – 100	1432	548	3	57	-	-	3	-	-
Grand totals		**21289**	**16975**	**5762**	**1531**	**1526**	**722**	**4368**	**656**	**14**

Table 1.3. The quantities of fine ware pottery and fibulae from settlement contexts in the project database.

Having outlined the rough extent and sub-division of the data that forms the basis of the analysis in this book, it is important to explain the deliberate exclusion of some attributes. While funerary evidence forms a substantial focus, a primary aim of this study is to shed new light on the roles of circulating objects on the constitution of larger objectscapes. The aim is not to provide a comprehensive account of changing funerary practice, or an in-depth study of the elaboration of identity through mortuary remains, for which good accounts already exist for the majority of cemeteries considered.[99] As such, information on the age and sex of the deceased, as well as the various stages of the cremation rite, was excluded from the outset. The main justification for this is the highly patchy and incomplete nature of these data, which greatly reduces the scope for meaningful intra- and inter-cemetery comparisons, let alone those

[99] See Pearce 2013 for funerary practice in Britain, with extensive continental comparanda.

Funerary assemblages		United Kingdom					France			Belgium				Luxem-bourg	Nether-lands	Germany		
Phase	Era (c.)	West Britain	Sussex-Hampshire	Hertfordshire	Essex	Kent	Pas-de-Calais	Nord	Ardennes	West Vlaanderen	Hainaut	Liège-Limburg	Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Gelderland	North Rhine-Westphalia	Rhineland-Pfalz	Saarland
1	100 – 25 BC	-	154	7	19	26	-	7	61	-	-	3	12	98	-	-	304	6
2	25 BC – AD 40	-	1	271	7	7	23	2	8	1	1	3	57	79	15	3	270	35
3	AD 40 – 70	8	4	161	62	60	33	23	3	23	38	9	85	26	106	30	256	58
4	AD 70 – 100	1	20	5	10	62	76	34		22	293	17	22	44	81	46	25	43
Grand totals		**9**	**179**	**444**	**98**	**155**	**132**	**66**	**72**	**46**	**332**	**32**	**176**	**247**	**202**	**79**	**855**	**142**

Table 1.4. Locations of funerary assemblages in the project database, by modern administrative boundaries.

Settlements		United Kingdom					France					Belgium		Luxem-bourg	Nether-lands		Germany	
Phase	Era (c.)	West Britain	Sussex-Hampshire	Hertfordshire	Essex & London	Kent	Somme	Oise	Aisne	Marne	Moselle	Hainaut	Liège-Limburg	Luxembourg	South Holland	Gelderland	North Rhine-Westphalia	Hesse
Fibula horizon	100 BC – AD 70	1	3	4	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
1	100 – 25 BC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	25 BC – AD 40	-	1	3	1	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	2	1	-	1	2	1
2-3	25 BC – AD 70	-	3	3	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
3	AD 40 – 70	2	2	1	4	1	-	2	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	-
4	AD 70 – 100	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1.5. Locations of settlement assemblages in the project database, by modern administrative boundaries.

at inter-regional scales of analysis. For example, considering the small number of cemeteries for which reliable data exist on the age and sex of the deceased, only a minority of graves in a given cemetery can be reliably assigned to firm age and gender categories due to the destructive and selective nature of the prevailing cremation rite. This problem is compounded by the tendency for gender to be assigned on the basis of grave goods in many older cemetery reports.[100] While the discussions that follow do not completely ignore these sorts of information, I chose to avoid the battle of diminishing returns associated with building such variables into analysis in a more comprehensive manner.

[100] Fernández-Götz 2017, 115.

		Major urban		Military		Major *oppida*		Secondary centres	
Phase	**Era (c.)**	**Settlements**	**Graves**	**Settlements**	**Graves**	**Settlements**	**Graves**	**Settlements**	**Graves**
Fibula horizon	100 BC – AD 70	7	-	2	-	5	-	8	-
1	100 – 25 BC	-	-	-	-	1	49	-	648
2	25 BC – AD 40	4	37	4	10	2	300	4	436
2-3	25 BC – AD 70	4	-	-	-	4	-	4	-
3	AD 40 – 70	11	212	6	31	-	175	5	567
4	AD 70 – 100	8	105	-	27	-	-	1	659

Table 1.6. Numbers of settlement and funerary assemblages included the project database, by settlement-type.

1.6.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO HANDLING DATA

Since this book is all about objects *en masse*, a quantitative approach is essential to tease out historically significant patterns. At the same time, a multi-pronged methodology is required to deal with very different kinds of data, at contrasting scales of analytical resolution. As a basic rule of thumb, the widest regional and chronological comparisons need to be able to consider as much data as possible, and therefore require a 'lowest common denominator' approach to ensure parity and robustness. Basic descriptive statistics such as tables and bar charts are often most appropriate for these kinds of comparisons, e.g. to compare the proportions of different types of *terra sigillata* in fine ware assemblages across the wider region in a given period. For the most part, such comparisons are easy to make based on shared typological and quantification conventions for the recording and publication of fine ware ceramics across northern Europe.[101] However, there are limits to the use of basic descriptive statistics, not least because they often fail to do justice to the complexity of the archaeological record and the relational make-up of objectscapes. To this end, where high-quality complex data exist, more advanced analytical tools and methods are deployed to maximise the scope for detailed analyses that have the potential to characterise more nuanced patterns in the selection, use, and deposition of objects. This kind of analysis entails the simultaneous comparison of patterns of association of thousands of objects, split into hundreds of standardised types, and deposited in thousands of different contexts. Having taken the time to catalogue the full contents of over 3250 graves, it would be wasteful not to make use of this granular level of detail, and only compare the total quantities of objects in different cemeteries, for example. Likewise, where data are available, it is desirable to not only compare the supply of different kinds of objects at the level of different archaeological sites and settlements, but also the associations of objects as they were thrown away in hundreds and thousands of different contexts and episodes of deposition.

To undertake the more important and ambitious forms of analysis involving thousands of objects, hundreds of object categories and thousands of graves or settlement contexts, this study makes judicious use of the multivariate statistical technique of Correspondence Analysis (hereafter CA). This is a method that has enjoyed wide usage in archaeology in recent decades, with several profitable applications

[101] Quantification of fibulae by basic counts, and fine pottery by minimum or estimated number of vessels, greatly improve the ease of comparing assemblages across multiple national traditions in this study. This observation does not extend to coarse ware pottery, for example, where the use of Estimated Vessel Equivalent (EVE) in the UK has improved the statistical robustness of narratives at a regional level (e.g. Perring/Pitts 2013), arguably at the cost of creating obstacles for conducting cross-provincial comparisons. EVEs cannot be compared directly with other means of quantification.

to Roman material culture.[102] However, CA is often less than intuitive to use and interpret, especially compared with more common means of summarising patterns in quantitative data, and for these reasons I have restricted its use in this book to important comparisons which are simply impossible using other means of displaying data. Indeed, by routinely comparing several hundred grave assemblages simultaneously, the analyses included in this book are some of the most ambitious applications of CA that I have attempted.[103]

CA is a powerful tool for analysing 'Big Data', and its use for revealing material and cultural phenomena has a long lineage, including its famous application by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to elucidate tastes in Classical music and cuisine in 20th century France.[104] Applied archaeologically, the essential basis of CA is to reduce the complexity of numerical associations between different categories of objects and their contexts to a simplified 2-dimensional visual representation, configured in such a way to account for the maximum amount of variability in the sample. The main benefit of using CA is that it allows comparisons to be drawn between large numbers of complex assemblages that are made-up of similarly large numbers of different kinds of objects. In this way, it must be remembered that CA is an exercise in data reduction. CA removes the necessity of producing and analysing huge contingency tables with hundreds of objects (columns) set against thousands of archaeological contexts or graves (rows). The method works by summarising tabulated data in terms of dominant patterns of similarity and difference. It is most useful to ascertain whether particular kinds of objects (say, for example, a Dressel 1 amphora) are most commonly associated with particular kinds of site or context (e.g. richly-furnished graves), and indeed, other kinds of object (e.g. bronze cauldrons). CA typically produces one or two graphical outputs in which object types with recurrent contextual associations are plotted together (e.g. *terra sigillata* cups with *terra sigillata* platters), corresponding with labelled assemblages in which those kinds of objects make up the largest proportion (e.g. pits from urban sites). In this way, CA provides a summary picture, in which a given assemblage or object type are compared against the spectrum of other objects and assemblages in the entire data-set, plotted in such a way as to highlight the most statistically striking patterning.

1.6.3 Interpreting and using correspondence analysis (CA)

CA plots can be confusing to read and interpret. This is because CA plots cannot be understood in the same manner as standard bar-charts and scatter-graphs, in which it is possible to read-off the numbers or proportions of different objects in an assemblage. Indeed, this kind of information cannot be extracted directly from reading a CA plot, but it does constitute the raw data that is fed into CA in the form of a contingency table of rows (typically assemblages) and columns (typically object types), with different quantities of objects in the cells of the table. The axes of CA plots measure the degree of statistical difference between the various row and column elements, following thousands of calculations made simultaneously by the computer software. Reading the axes, therefore, can only give a sense of how far removed a given object or assemblage is from a hypothetical 'average' object or assemblage plotted at the axial intersection (0, 0). What tends to happen in a useful CA plot is that multiple clusters of objects and assemblages appear in different parts of the plot. Another common outcome with a larger number of assemblages is the appearance of a multi-pronged continuum of points. Interpretation of CA revolves around understanding the basis of these clusters, or the extremities of a continuum, which may sometimes require some cursory checking against the original tabulated data. Some basic rules of thumb are

[102] For examples, see applications to Roman ceramics (Biddulph 2005), coins (Lockyear 2000), glass (Cool/Baxter 1999), plant remains (van der Veen et al. 2008), objects in military bases (Allison 2013, 377-81), and multiple strands of artefactual data (Perring/Pitts 2013).

[103] For methodological literature, see Pitts 2007a, 2010b, 2014; Perring/Pitts 2013, 137-162; 231-242.

that a) objects plotted close together in a given cluster probably occur in assemblages of similar character or make-up; b) assemblages plotted close together in a cluster probably have similar artefactual attributes; and c) corresponding objects and assemblages tend to be linked contextually and/or chronologically. In this way, CA can be useful for a range of archaeological tasks, including determining chronological patterns in artefactual use across different contexts (seriation), uncovering spatial and contextual tendencies in the deposition of objects within a settlement (spatial analysis), as well as isolating patterns in the use and association of objects *en masse* between multiple sites, contexts, cemeteries, and graves (contextual analysis).

Before meaningful patterning can be isolated, there are certain caveats that apply to the use of CA, both in general, and in specific reference to this study. While the software used typically produces a range of accompanying statistics that measure the contribution of each individual object or assemblage to the overall pattern,[105] this information is not always obvious from examining the visual outputs alone, and may need further verification. This means that CA is often best used as a starting point, helping to flag important patterns that once isolated are better presented using simpler graphs or tables. Alternatively, if basic information about patterning a data-set is already known, CA can be used to clarify the nuances of relationships in a large data-set, or as a means of summarising the big picture constitution of objectscapes. Since CA is set up to highlight difference, it is common for CA plots to be over-affected by a small number of outliers, which typically consist of assemblages with high proportions of unusual objects (unusual being defined in relation to the contents of the other assemblages in the sample). In such cases, the outliers are so different (statistically) that the rest of the data points can be forced to cluster at the centre of the plot, making it virtually impossible to spot any further variability or even read the labels of the points. This situation is easily remedied by re-running the CA once the outliers are removed and understood, called 'peeling the onion',[106] or instead zooming-in to parts of the CA plot that are otherwise too clustered to be visually interpreted. In my own experience, the risk of outliers is best reduced at the stage of tabulating data, by insisting upon minimum numbers of objects for each object category or type, and amalgamating object types that fall below a certain threshold (e.g. lumping rarer *terra sigillata* types if there are less than ten vessels in a given contingency table). This approach produces clear and usable CA plots without recourse to removing outliers, and is used throughout this book.

Ultimately, CA is a flexible and robust tool that can cope with lots of highly variable data. It is well-disposed to compare large and small assemblages simultaneously. As such, it is ideal for investigating and comparing the fundamental make-up of different objectscapes. While there are no minimum or maximum assemblage sizes as such, there is little point in running small contingency tables through CA that can be easily interpreted without complex visualisation, using basic descriptive statistics. At the same time, while smaller assemblages can be compared, their inclusion should depend on the aim of the exercise, since large assemblages will inevitably produce more robust results. For example, when comparing assemblages that are used to stand for activity from whole sites or settlements, each assemblage should ideally consist of at least 25 or more objects for inclusion in CA (and the greater the number of categories of objects, the higher this threshold needs to be). At the same time, however, if the goal is to look at aggregative patterns in funerary practice at the level of hundreds of individual graves, a minimum of only two objects per grave is all that is needed to isolate meaningful patterns of association in the placement of different kinds of objects.[107] In this way, the use of CA in this book is restricted to instances when it is needed the most, when dealing with vary large numbers of assemblages and/or object types at once, which need to be compared simultaneously – in other words, to characterise the make-up of objectscapes, from object-rich locales to pan-regional vistas.

[104] Bourdieu 1984 [1979], 266, 340.

[105] Minitab 17 was used throughout this project.

[106] Cool/Baxter 1999.

[107] No minimum number of objects is really necessary for this, although removing all the graves with just one object can help reduce clustering in the CA plot.