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Ethnicity and gender in Roman funerary commemoration: Case studies from the empire's frontiers

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Abstract: An investigation of Roman funerary monuments erected to remember the dead gives us profound insight into the ways in which texts and images were employed to convey information on individual lives. The frontiers of the empire are fruitful ground for an investigation of the means by which different ethnic groups perceived and negotiated their identities, in life and in death, in the wake of population movements precipitated by the Roman conquest. Case studies taken from the Rhine and Danube frontiers demonstrate that changing cultural identity manifested itself in the use of tombs with Latin inscriptions and in the way men and women chose to depict themselves in their funerary portraits. The representation of 'self' through ethnic dress and bodily adornment was visibly and publicly communicated in such images. The funerary monument –a Roman cultural vehicle- became a forum for expressing ethnic affiliations and gendered behaviour.

Introduction

Funerary practices and ritual activities associated with death were of central importance in the life of ancient Romans. The concern for a proper burial, the hope of being remembered, and the need to honour the dead were common preoccupations in Roman society. On account of the high mortality rate and the public nature of the disposal and commemoration of the dead, people could not help but be conscious of death around them.

When someone died, their body was prepared for burial and transported to the cemetery. At least for those with financial means, funeral processions accompanying the body to its ultimate destination involved an array of participants, including the family and friends, pallbearers, musicians, and professional mourners (Bodel 1999, 2004). In the Roman world, the dead could be cremated or inhumed depending on place and time, although changes from one rite to another, for example from cremation in the first century A.D. to inhumation in and after the third century in Italy and western Europe, was not completely straightforward, with various regions and ethnic groups continuing, to some extent, to practice their traditional burial rites (Morris 1992: 48-68). While Toynbee (1971) broadly surveyed tombs and funerary monuments throughout the Roman world, more recent archaeological studies on death and burial have concentrated on human remains, grave goods, mortuary customs and memory (Hinard 1987; von Hesberg and Zanker 1987; Pearce et al. 2000; Hope 2000b; Heinzelmann et al. 2001; Graham 2006; Hope 2010). Furthermore, excavation reports from various cemeteries in Italy and the Roman provinces illustrate the kinds of data that archaeological exploration can generate for studies on health, human mortality and demographics (Calza 1940; D'Ambrosio and De Caro 1987; Witteyer and Fasold 1995; Mackinder 2000; Heinzelmann 2000; Cipollone 2002; Rebillard 2009).

Many types of above-ground tombs could mark the last place of rest, including brick-built house tombs and stone mausolea, as well as a variety of stone grave markers of different sizes and shapes with portraits of the deceased and Latin texts naming the dead (Kockel 1983; Frenz 1985; Kleiner 1987; Pflug 1989; Baldassare et al. 1996; Patterson 2000). Often being commissioned *ante mortem* by the tomb owner, funerary monuments reflected personal choices in the way individuals

defined their social image. Monuments built *post mortem* by surviving kin to commemorate their loved ones equally attest to a desire to present the family in a particular light. Status, wealth, origin, citizenship, careers, family relations and age were regularly recorded and advertised for posterity in the epitaphs (Carroll 2006). This kind of detailed information generally can only be provided by funerary inscriptions, although skeletal and artefactual evidence can certainly also tell us something about the physical condition and financial status of the deceased. The use of portraits and depictions of the deceased in various attitudes and poses on tombs and grave markers also was common, but particularly so amongst the middle classes of society, demonstrating what Zanker (1992) has referred to as "bourgeois self-representation" (bürgerliche Selbstdarstellung). In reflecting the social life and social values of the living community, tombs needed and addressed an audience. Because memorials to the dead characteristically occupied highly visible spaces along the main roads outside Roman settlements, that audience was guaranteed (Koortbojian 1996).

There was a very real concern for the survival and perpetuation of the memory of the dead and a tangible anxiety for the individual to overcome death by leaving a lasting memorial that seemingly defied time. There were, however, many people in the empire who were not commemorated in this way, either because they could not afford the expense of a permanent memorial, or because they not adopt this Roman cultural practice. Nevertheless, at least 200,000 inscribed funerary monuments survive today from across the empire, most, but not all, of them having been removed from their original cemetery context and displayed in museums (Saller and Shaw 1984; Carroll 2006: 15).

More Roman funerary monuments were erected in antiquity and survive today in Italy than anywhere else, although the commemorative customs of Roman Italy were embraced in many other parts of the Roman world. In this paper, two peripheral regions on the western and northern frontiers of the Roman empire –the Rhine and Danube- are examined in their adoption of the Italo-Roman approach to funerary display. These regions are fruitful ground for an investigation of the means by which people perceived, negotiated and displayed their identities in the wake of population movements and cultural change set in motion by the Roman conquest. Particularly in the first century A.D. societies on the Roman frontiers found themselves in a state of transition, a situation that triggered an increased need for people to assert their identity in taking up their place individually and collectively in a (for them) new imperial world.

The Rhine frontier was not only a zone in which thousands of Roman soldiers were permanently stationed, but also an area which was home to local Gallic and Germanic civilians as well as Romans from various parts of the empire (Wells 1972; Horn 1987; Roymans 1990; Wolters 2001; Von Schnurbein 2003). Under the emperor Augustus in the late first century B.C., a restructuring of tribes and sub-tribes in the Rhineland was undertaken, sometimes involving the resettling of Germanic groups, such as the Ubii, from the east bank of the river to the west bank (Carroll 2001: 29-32, 123-131). This region was administered as the Roman provinces of Germania Inferior and Germania Superior. On the Danube, by the same token, various ethnic populations, including the Celtic Eravisci, as well as Roman military personnel and immigrant civilians from vastly different parts of the empire, settled and merged in various ways in the late first century B.C. and early first century A.D. (Mócsy 1974; Fitz 1980; Alföldy 1995). The Roman state organized this region into the province of Pannonia.

In both areas under discussion, socially and culturally dislocated newcomers existed who had to arrange themselves with differing cultural traditions (Carroll 2002). In such periods of culture contact and change, ethnic groups can make choices and follow strategies that are attractive to them, one of them being to emphasize ethnic identity "to develop new positions and patterns to

organize activities in those sectors formerly not found in their society" (Barth 1969: 33). Such choices can be recognized in the way that people commemorated their dead. There had been no pre-Roman tradition on the Rhine and Danube rivers of erecting stone monuments with texts and images, and the first exposure to Roman funerary commemoration came with the arrival of the Roman army who remembered their dead in this way and marked the different and distinctive identity of the Roman soldier from the local and non-Roman civilian (Hope 1997: 255). With the army also came stonemasons, primarily from northern Italy, whose services then found use among the civilian populations (Gabelmann 1972: 93-94). Not only in life, but also in death, these indigenous and immigrant groups found ways of negotiating and expressing identities within acceptable parameters of society, both on the local level and in the context of belonging to the larger Roman empire. In fact, burial and commemoration served as a particularly useful forum for articulating ethnic groups and expressing the consolidation of ethnic, non-Roman traditions. The adoption of Roman funerary customs allowed identities to be displayed in a visible and public way.

In the following, the principal avenue of enquiry pursued is to explore how stone funerary monuments with images and texts played a role in defining ethnic and gender relationships on the frontiers. Funerary monuments, despite the fact that their form and content were generally confined by convention, have the ability to convey information of central relevance to these issues. My contribution begins with an analysis of two gravestones that eloquently communicate various levels of identity and demonstrate what can be read from such memorials. It then proceeds to a discussion of commemorative inscriptions in conveying ethnic identity, and finally explores figurative tombstones to gain insight into the construction of ethnicity and gender, primarily through dress and bodily adornment. This pictorial evidence for clothing and costume is particularly important, given the almost complete lack of textile remains and the limited survival of metal objects of dress accessories such as pins and brooches that would have been worn in life.

Illustrating the multi-faceted nature of identity
Commemoration by means of a stone marker or a masonry structure bearing an inscription is linked intimately to the expression of different facets of identity. In adopting this Roman form of memory preservation, the peoples on the frontiers of the empire commemorated their dead in the Roman fashion, using Latin epitaphs and Roman images, and they were able to compete in this very Roman form of public display.

A tall limestone grave marker of the late first or early second century A.D. in Cologne is an excellent starting point for the exploration of the construction and expression of identities in Roman funerary commemoration (Galsterer and Galsterer 1975: Cat. No. 219, pl. 47; Noelke 2005: 172-173, fig. 17; Fig. 1). This monument with its inscribed Latin text and relief decoration presents a condensed history of the owner's life in a form that conveys succinctly what aspects of his identities he considered important and worth preserving for posterity. The man commemorated is Marcus Valerius Celerinus, a Spanish-born Roman citizen from the Roman province of Baetica, in particular from the town of Astigi (modern Écija). Celerinus was registered, as a Roman citizen, in the voting district of Papiria in which Astigi was located. He served in *Legio X Gemina Pia Fidelis*, and was honourably discharged to live out the rest of his life as an army veteran. Archaeological and historical evidence for this legion places it between A.D. 71-103 outside the Roman town of Noviomagus, today's Nijmegen in the Netherlands, and this will have been where Celerinus had his last posting (Kunow 1987: 63-64, fig. 31; Haalebos 2000; Van Enckevort and Thijsssen 2003). Upon retirement, he settled further south in the Roman colony of Cologne, where he became a registered citizen of that city and where he ultimately died

and was buried. The text also tells us that Celerinus was married to a woman named Marcia Procula, and that he had this monument made for himself and his wife during his lifetime.

The pictorial depiction of Celerinus as a man of leisure and social standing, reclining in Roman manner to dine in the company of his wife and servants, identifies him as a culturally informed participant in Roman society (Dunbabin 2003; Noelke 2005; Carroll 2005). The gender roles of the couple are also constructed in line with Roman social expectations and influenced by cultural notions such as chastity and virility (Gilchrist 1999: 77). Celerinus is seen to have fulfilled a classic masculine role, having once been a soldier, and he wears the toga, the garment that only Roman citizen men were entitled to wear (Stone 1994; Christ 1997; Davies 2005; Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 41-51). Roman men were of "the toga-clad race", their clothing signaling that they were "the masters of the world" (Suetonius, *Augustus* 40.5); Roman women, by the same token, were to conduct themselves properly and dress in a manner to express and protect their chastity (Sebesta 1998). Marcia Procula's moral character and matronly qualities are suggested appropriately by the long, heavy garments that indicate her modesty (*pudicitia*) and by her association with a basket of wool, the spinning of wool being a task traditionally carried out by the woman of the house (Larsson Lovén 2007). Marcia Procula may have been a local woman (of Ubian extraction?), but her name gives no clear clue about her ethnic origins (Weisgerber 1968). The total or partial adoption of Roman names often can be seen in funerary inscriptions in the provinces, so a name is anyway not always a reliable ethnic indicator (Hatt 1951: 28-31; Drinkwater 1978: 846-847; Freigang 1997, 356-358). Nor does she wear the traditional ethnic costume of the Ubii as we know it from funerary portraits and votive reliefs (Wild 1968; Wild 1985: 402-403; Carroll 2001: 117-120; Fig. 2). Both husband and wife are totally assimilated into provincial Roman society, and they use a Roman cultural vehicle –the gravestone- to display this. In one single document, therefore, individuals are able to express a whole range of civic, social, gender, cultural and professional identities at the same time.

Roman funerary monuments also were adopted by peoples who were only just becoming Roman and thereby in the process of actively negotiating and constructing their identity in contemporary provincial society. Illuminating in regard to the progressive changes in the expression of ethnic and cultural identity is a memorial associated with a *tumulus* or barrow tomb of the mid-first century A.D. of an indigenous Celtic family at Nickenich on the middle Rhine. A large Latin inscription inserted into the masonry of the *tumulus* commemorates a woman named Contuinda, daughter of Esucco, and her son Silvanus Ategnissa (Weisgerber 1933). The names of the woman and her father are Celtic, but the son has both a Latin (Silvanus) and a Celtic (Ategnissa) name.

Portraits of four individuals are preserved in large stone panels joined together and associated with the barrow (Neuffer 1932; Wild 1985: 394, pl. 8.25; Fig. 3). The niche on the middle panel is filled with the figures of a woman and a boy, almost certainly Contuinda and her young son Silvanus Ategnissa. She wears a Roman mantle or wrap (*palla*), a garment that distinguished the elite Roman woman, but she wears it over a long-sleeved Celtic tunic typical of indigenous costume on the middle Rhine (Scholz 1992: 100-107). Her heavy neck-ring (*torques*) is also an element of Celtic bodily adornment. Her young son and two other adult males on the other panels, however, wear Graeco-Roman costume that was unambiguous in its meaning in Roman society. The Greek *pallium* worn by the boy and one of the men was the garment of the scholar and the philosopher, and the Roman toga worn by the other adult man was symbolic of full Roman citizenship (Borg 2004; Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 45-51). Thus, the males of the family are represented in idealised form as elite, classically educated, Roman citizens, something certainly prestigious here on the frontier and a mark of status non-Romans strove to attain. Contuinda and her family belonged to a generation still rooted in Celtic tradition that publically was

adopting at least some Roman cultural symbols. They and many of their contemporaries in the region chose Roman forms of memorials to preserve the memory of their families for posterity in a changing community. Their choice also to adopt a Roman personal name or combine it with an indigenous, non-Roman name as well as to use the Latin language to communicate with an audience reflects a profound transformation in social and cultural identity.

Ethnicity and 'otherness' in Roman funerary texts
In the context of funerary monuments, information on ethnicity could be conveyed in the inscribed text, or through carved images, or both in combination. In the following discussion, inscriptions are investigated first before moving on to an investigation of funerary portraits.

A personal detail frequently recorded in epitaphs of Roman civilians, but especially on the gravestones of soldiers who died far away from home, is the origin (Latin *origo*) of the individual. Roman society was both socially and physically mobile, and people in death tended to highlight where they came from and to which ethnic group they belonged when they died as immigrants outside their home region. Lyon (ancient Lugdunum), for example, as a major economic and political hub on the Rhône river, attracted a very diverse immigrant population, the tribal affiliations of these people being recorded for posterity in funerary epitaphs. These include, among others, individuals from many tribes in Gaul, the German provinces, Britain, the Balkans and North Africa (Carroll 2006: 218-224). Soldiers stationed abroad and immigrant civilians far more frequently than other people included their place of origin in their funerary epitaphs precisely because they were outsiders. The *origo* was particularly important for the legionary soldier, for example, who, as a citizen, had the right to vote and was a member of a voting district (*tribus*) in the region of his origin. His Roman citizenship was immediately apparent to anyone who read the epitaph, and this legal status often made him appear distinctive and of superior status in communities with a high proportion of non-citizens (Hope 2000a). For auxiliary troops who were not in possession of Roman citizenship, by the same token, ethnic origin is expressed in funerary epitaphs by the inclusion of the term *cives* or *natione*, meaning a 'citizen of' or 'member of' a particular tribe.

A unit of troops made up of non-citizen men, and a particularly important one for the safety of the emperor, was the Germanic imperial bodyguard, the *Germani corporis custodes* (Bellen 1981; Speidel 1984). The men who served in this unit were all recruited from population groups on the lower Rhine, and when they died on active duty in the empire's capital they were commemorated with inscriptions that record them as Germanic in origin. The Roman historian Tacitus (*Annals* 3.24, 15.58) referred to them as "the flower of the German troops", saying that they were trusted by the emperors "because they were foreigners". They were probably too foreign and too barbarian, in the Roman mind, to have had a taste for or an understanding of internal power struggles in Rome. The *Germani corporis custodes*, until their dissolution in A.D. 68, formed a formidable foreign military presence in Rome, and during that time the city's inhabitants looked on these men with fear and disdain. Employing such men from frontier regions sparked criticism because the troops were considered to be savage and boorish in their appearance and their (Latin) speech (Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 75.2.6). Romans thought of the Germanic bodyguard as *Germani*, grouping the men together as an ethnic unit, as the title of the garrison indicates. In death the Germanic bodyguard were indeed a rather homogeneous community of 'others'. The bodyguard, unlike regular Roman soldiers, formed their own formal organisation of Germans from various tribes that arranged for the burials of these men in Rome, and the gravestones from their communal cemetery on the opposite bank of the Tiber in Rome are similar in form, size, and Latin text so that they stand apart distinctly from other contemporary funerary monuments of civilians (Bellen 1981; Hope 1998: 192; Noy 2000: 222-223). There is, however, no evidence to suggest that a kind of *national* identity existed in the minds of Germanic peoples, and it cannot

be demonstrated that they used a collective proper name at this time. Not until they were artificially joined by external Roman agency to a larger group do we hear of *Germani* (Carroll 2001: 112-115). Instead, when members of Germanic and Gallic tribes record their names on their gravestones or votive dedications in northwest Europe, they state their tribal affiliation. Likewise, the comrades of those Germanic bodyguards who died in Rome –comrades from other Rhineland tribes- were far more specific in recording their ethnicity in terms of tribal affiliation. The epitaphs give their origins as *natione Batavus*, *natione Ubius*, *natione Suebus* or *natione Baetasius* (Noy 2000: 216-217). This indicates that these men perceived their ethnicity perhaps as Germanic but as ethnic Germans of particular tribal groups.

Very occasionally self-reference to 'otherness' and even being a barbarian appears in Roman epitaphs. Gaius Murranus, on his third-century gravestone in Sulmo (modern Sulmona) in southern Italy, refers to himself as "a barbarian by birth from Pannonia" and he asks the reader of his inscription to pardon him "if some mistake escapes" him in the Latin text which he personally composed (*Année Épigraphique* 1989: No. 247; Bodel 2001: 16). Now people who actually came from Pannonia and who happened to die in Rome could leave behind epitaphs using the name "Pannonian" in reference only to the province or to the ethnic group on which the name was based (Noy 2000: 218). But Murranus seems to play with the common opinion in Rome and in Italy that held northerners such as him as barbaric through their 'otherness'. The Roman historian Cassius Dio (*Roman History* 49.36.2) makes this clear when he refers to the Pannonians being "high-spirited and blood thirsty, as men who possess nothing that makes an honourable life worthwhile". This is a clear, literary value judgement from the point of view of a Greek of high status in Roman society in Italy. Furthermore, Murranus's claim not to be master of the Latin language is purely literary conceit; there is nothing wrong with his Latin in this epitaph.

A form of 'otherness' based on physical appearance also is apparent in the funerary portraits of the indigenous population of Gaius Murranus's home province of Pannonia. These images, as well as those found on the gravestones of the frontier peoples on the Rhine, are discussed in the following section.

Ethnicity, gender and Roman funerary images
Many funerary monuments were adorned with carved portraits of the deceased, and they are particularly worth exploring to see how people visually represented themselves and, in particular, what they wore. Dress can function as a form of code through which people communicate to their audience their place in society, or identity (Davis 1992; Lurie 1992; Eicher 1995; Hägg 1996). Clothing in the ancient world could express many levels of identity including that related to ethnic group, gender, status or profession (Sebesta and Bonfante 1994; Cleland, Harlow and Llewellyn-Jones 2005; Olson 2008; Edmondson and Keith 2008; Rothe 2009). Dress also could incorporate those who dressed the same way into a group identity and exclude those who dressed differently. By the same token, clothing choice, being both public and personal, was influenced by social constraints and by individual preference. As in the case of Contuinda and her family discussed above, the inhabitants of Rome's provinces often negotiated their ethnic identity by wearing a mixture of indigenous and Roman clothes in a variety of combinations.

An example of how clothing served as an ethnic marker is illustrated in Cassius Dio's description of the magnificent funeral of the emperor Pertinax in A.D. 193 in Rome: paraded in the funeral procession were bronze figures of all the subject nations "attired in native dress", their costumes allowing the identification of their ethnic origins (*Roman History* 75.4.5). From the first century A.D., as we have seen in the case of the tomb of Contuinda, people especially in the frontier provinces wore the native costume or ethnic dress of their region, as well as Roman or Italian

dress, or they combined the two (Figs. 2-3). Wearing ethnic dress rather than Roman garments in the Roman period was a personal choice, and to be displayed on a Roman funerary monument wearing it was an assertion of ethnic identity as well as a statement of the adherence to traditional customs and a mark of status within the indigenous community. Ethnic identities in this fluid society in the first two centuries A.D. could be expressed not only in the clothes people wore in life but also in the way they dressed for eternity.

We are left in no doubt about the ethnic origins of an 80-year-old woman named Flavia Usaiu, daughter of Tattu, for several reasons, one of which has to do with the clothing she is wearing in her funerary portrait (*RIU* 6, 1548a; Fig. 4). The woman's son, Quintus Flavius Titucus, a Roman citizen, commissioned this grave stele in the early second century A.D. and had it erected in their home community of Gorsium in Pannonia (modern Tác in Hungary). This region on the Danube was the homeland of the Celtic Eravisci, and Flavia Usaiu is depicted in the splendid regional costume that we know from many other Roman funerary portraits in Eraviscan territory (Fitz 1957; Garbsch 1965; Facsády 1997 and 2001). She wears an elaborately wrapped turban-like headdress and a veil, a tunic and over-garment or pinafore held on the shoulders by large fibulae, a thick twisted neck ring and several bracelets on either wrist. Occasionally such dress accessories and objects of bodily adornment survive in Pannonian graves of the Roman period (Facsády 1994; Facsády 2001: 44-46; Szeőke 2000). Flavia Usaiu's finery radiates wealth and power; she is certainly dressed in her best clothes. Her attire also is a clear statement of her ethnic affiliation, and the Latin epitaph reinforces this by stating unambiguously that she is Eraviscan. Furthermore, her personal name is a mixture of Roman (Flavia) and Celtic (Usaiu), whilst her father's name (Tattu) is purely Celtic and an indicator that he was not in possession of Roman citizenship, unlike his grandson. The spindle and distaff she holds highlight matronly values rooted in Roman, and possibly Eraviscan, society. As in the case of Marcia Procula and her wool basket discussed above, female roles are expressed here on the empire's frontiers with such visual devices. In Rome, on the other hand, they are more likely to be praised in the inscribed text for keeping the house and working in wool, but both the portraits and the texts reflect the construction of the same gendered behaviour (Lefkowitz and Fant 1992, No. 39, 41). This illustrates how different sources from different contexts might influence our understanding of social and gender roles.

The specific roles a Roman woman had to play -wife and mother- were therefore common to women in Rome itself and to the women of the frontier provinces. But there is a duality here, as we cannot be certain that provincial women necessarily internalised or valued exactly the same qualities in the same way, yet the paradigm of the Roman role model is adopted in provincial funerary art. This duality, even on the northernmost fringes of the empire, is exemplified by the large and elaborate funerary monument of Regina, a native British woman who died at the Roman fort of Arbeia (South Shields) on Hadrian's Wall. Her ethnic origin is recorded in the Latin epitaph, -she was from the tribe of the Catuvellauni whose territory lay in south-east Britain-, and her ethnic identity is manifest also in the non-Roman clothing and jewellery she wears (*RIB* 1065, pl. 15; Smith 1959; Hope 1997, pl. 16B). She had once been the slave of Barates, a Syrian from Palmyra at the opposite end of the empire, and he had freed and married her. It is worth stressing again that the erection of an inscribed and decorated grave stele such as Regina's is a statement of Roman-ness, and that one type of ethnic identity is expressed here in a medium that asserted another. Barates provided the Latin text of her monument, but he also provided an Aramaic text written in Palmyrene letters below, a feature that reflects his own ethnicity. Presumably it was also he who chose the imagery of domesticity and matronly behaviour by having a basket full of wool placed at Regina's feet.

But it was not always the husband who projected this image of an ideal Roman wife. Women also constructed their own images and were responsible for this sort of representation. The double-sided grave stele of Menimane and Blussus, a Celtic couple from Mogontiacum (modern Mainz) on the middle Rhine, for example, was commissioned by her during her lifetime, as the Latin epitaph tells us, almost certainly on the occasion of her husband's death (Boppert 1992: Cat. No. 2, 53-59, pl. 6; Carroll 2006: 119-120, fig. 44; Fig. 5). She adopted a Roman cultural vehicle –the carved and inscribed gravestone- to display ethnic affiliation and status in frontier society in the mid-first century A.D. Her many-layered garments, headdress and jewellery are Celtic and typical for the region, similar objects having survived in funerary contexts in Bonn, for example (Boöhme-Schönberger, 1997: 32, pl. 19). Menimane's clothing and bodily adornment probably were also of the highest quality to advertise the family's wealth (Wild 1985: 393-399, pl. 2.5; Böhme-Schönberger 1995; Böhme-Schönberger 2003: 285-287, fig. 1, 4). In choosing her funerary portrait to depict herself as a wealthy local Celt, however, she also displays herself as a Roman *matrona* holding the familiar symbol of diligence within the marriage, a spindle and distaff, even though her name indicates that she was not in possession of Roman citizenship (von Hesberg 2008: 267).

This convention of representation and its symbolic meaning depended on the common knowledge in Roman society of how a woman was to participate in a social world, even if that world was far away from Rome. In funerary art, the public appearance of Marcia Procula from Cologne, Flavia Usaiu from Gorsium, Regina from South Shields or Menimane from Mainz is symbolic of what was perceived as appropriate behaviour. Rather than reflect reality in absolute terms, memorials such as these might construct ideals. They may also reflect a "nostalgic realism" of a bygone era when 'proper' Roman women in Italy spun and wove the family's clothing (Wallace-Hadrill 1996: 107). Spinning and weaving, of course, may also have been a traditional woman's task in indigenous northern societies, and, as such, weaving paraphernalia depicted on funerary reliefs on the Roman frontiers function as 'multi-lingual' imagery reflecting the feminine qualities of wives. The construction of ideals relevant to matrimony was particularly relevant on the Roman frontiers where the actively serving soldiers of the forts could not legally marry their local 'wives', the wives, therefore, being outsiders in a physical and legal sense in these military communities (Hope 1997: 256). Their desire to appear as legitimate wives and Roman *matronae*, at least in death, is understandable. Thus, appearing to be Roman in this situation was derived from a "conscious attachment to distinct moral values and social customs" (Cornell 1997: 11).

Although female costume is worthy of study in its own right, of particular interest in regard to ethnic dress is the role that it played in gendered behaviour. This manifests itself in the fact that women more often than the men were depicted wearing indigenous clothing rather than Roman attire. Sometimes the men were army veterans and they depicted themselves in Roman civilian dress, the toga, or in Roman military dress, the tunic and cloak or *sagum*. With a career in the Roman army behind them and, consequently, having had exposure for at least twenty-five years to a Roman cultural and social environment, this is perhaps not so surprising. However even men with indigenous names and no obvious connection to the army wore Roman tunics and cloaks in their funerary portraits, and many more whose names have not survived wore the toga. Typical of this arrangement is a grave stele of ca. A.D. 100 belonging to a local Eraviscan couple from Ulcisia Castra in Pannonia (modern Szentendre), Massuia and Namio, son of Atun (*RIU* 3, 911; Maróti 2003: 11, Cat. No. 5; Fig. 6). Massuia is depicted in her tribal dress and with a turban and veil, neck-ring and fibulae, as well as multiple bracelets; Namio, on the other hand, wears a tunic and *sagum*. A survey of portraits of frontier women with their children furthermore suggests that ethnic costume and traditional dress were handed down maternally, with youthfulness and maturity being recognisable in slight differences in attire, particularly in the type of headdresses.

All the funerary portraits of women in ethnic dress discussed here were commissioned and set up in the communities in which these women were at home. They wore the local dress familiar to their peers. But ethnic costume also could be depicted on the gravestones of people who died abroad and who wanted to be recognised there as different or who sought legitimacy by displaying themselves in elaborate memorials. This is well illustrated in the funerary monument of the late first century A.D. belonging to Silvanus and Prima in Xanten on the lower Rhine (Boppert 1992: 25, fig. 3; Noelke 2005: 183-184, Cat. No. 12, fig. 9-10). Silvanus was an auxiliary soldier of the *ala Vocontiorum* who died at the age of 30. He is dressed as a Roman, and only the epitaph reveals that he was a man of the Treveri tribe. His sister Prima had the stone made for him, and it was her choice to be depicted in the Celtic dress of the middle Rhine and Moselle valley, whence the Treveri came. Only her costume tells us this, as her Treveran origin is not mentioned in the inscription. It is, in fact, the same costume that Menimane from Mainz (see above) wears in her self-commissioned gravestone. This was not the local dress worn in the territory of the Cugerni around Xanten, and for that reason Prima's dress selection immediately signals ethnic 'otherness' to that community.

This real dichotomy between female ethnic dress and male Roman clothing may, in part, be a result of the conservativeness of female dress, but the gender-specific depiction of clothing is probably also a reflection of the contrast between private and public. Perhaps what we see here is the need for men to behave and dress in Roman fashion because they operated with much greater regularity in the public arena and wanted to appear as Roman citizens. The toga was precisely *the* garment a Roman citizen man would wear in public and which even the emperor would have close to hand for official business and public appearances (Edmondson 2008: 33). Women, whose activities related primarily to the private domestic sphere, on the other hand, probably played a greater role as transmitters of traditional values, ideals and identities expressed through clothing and bodily adornment. Women on the lower Rhine and Danube, for example, continued to wear traditional ethnic costume for at least two centuries, although they were familiar with the latest Italo-Roman dress. Whereas men could achieve status and rank in society through honours, public offices and professional connections, all of which are regularly highlighted in epitaphs accompanying funerary portraits, women could use only limited means to create a social persona for themselves, and dress was one of the most important of these (Olson 2008: 104).

To a Roman from Italy, these ethnic costumes would have looked decidedly foreign; dress, in this case, visibly demarcated non-Romans and 'others' from Romans. To an Ubian or Eraviscan woman, or any frontier women who utilised ethnic dress in the presentation of 'self' on their memorials, on the other hand, these garments would have communicated not only ethnic affiliation but also information about wealth, power, status and life-stage to their peers who knew and understood indigenous costume and therefore were able to interpret many nuances of the visual messages conveyed by that dress.

Conclusion

This examination has focused on the funerary monuments that were erected by people in the lands bordering on the Rhine and Danube rivers to ensure remembrance after death. Because these memorials were commissioned by the deceased during their lifetime or by the surviving family, they offer especially important insight into the perception and representation of 'self' and the visual showcasing of various aspects of identities. By commemorating the dead in Roman style, ethnic groups defined and negotiated aspects of both local and Roman identities, especially when their societies were in a state of transition or in need of legitimacy. In the pluralistic and

poly-ethnic society of the empire, there was ample room to express belonging on the local level and also to convey a participatory role in the larger collectivity that was the Roman world.

Aspects of identity relating to ethnicity and gender are of particular interest in this context. Ethnicity was expressed not only in the statement of tribal affiliation in epitaphs on funerary monuments, but also in portraits that depicted the deceased -especially women- in ethnic costume. Roman gender values, manifest, among other things, in the depiction of the industrious family-orientated *matrona* and the man with a public, masculine career in the civic or military realm, were also an essential element of funerary imagery. Despite the adoption in peripheral regions of Roman paradigms such as these, a duality is tangible not only in the negotiation of cultural and social symbols but also, most importantly, in the sense that non-Romans used the Roman public arena of funerary commemoration and the Latin language to construct and make visible their own identities and to communicate their self-perception to others. In essence, these peoples expressed an ethnic identity in a medium that asserted another cultural identity.

Acknowledgements

Suggested Further Reading

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Bodel, J. 2004. The Organization of the Funerary Trade at Puteoli and Cumae, *Libitina e Dintorni. Atti dell'XI Rencontre franco-italienne sur l'épigraphie* (*Libitina* 3). Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 147-172
Bodel's work are important studies on the Roman funeral and the organization of the funerary industry.

Böhme-Schönberger, A. 1997. *Kleidung und Schmuck in Rom und den Provinzen*. Stuttgart: Württembergisches Landesmuseum
A general overview of clothing in the provinces.

Carroll, M. 2006. *Spirits of the Dead. Roman Funerary Commemoration in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
This book focuses primarily on funerary inscriptions and their contribution towards understanding life and death in the Roman world, but it also explores the location, meaning and social significance of inscribed tombs.

Cleland, L., Harlow, M. and Llewellyn-Jones, L. (eds.) 2005. *The Clothed Body in the Ancient World*. Oxford: Oxbow
This edited volume contains a collection of papers on many aspects of Roman dress as evidenced in art and literature.

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An interesting book exploring the role of dress and identity.

Edmondson, J. and Keith, A. (eds.) 2008. *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press
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Eicher, J. B. (ed.) 1995. *Dress and Ethnicity: Change Across Space and Time*. Oxford and Washington, D.C.: Berg
An interesting collection of modern studies on the role of dress and identity.

Garbsch, J. 1965. *Die norisch-pannonische Tracht*. Munich: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung
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This work remains the most comprehensive overview of the archaeological evidence for burial sites and tomb types in the Roman empire.

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This book provides a general introduction to Roman textiles and clothing in the frontier zones, particularly in Gaul and Germany, by an authority in the field.

Abbreviations

RIU
Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns. Amsterdam and Bonn: Rudolf Habelt Verlag, 1972-2001.

RIB
Collingwood, R.G. and R.P. Wright, *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* (Vol 1). Stroud: Sutton, 1995.

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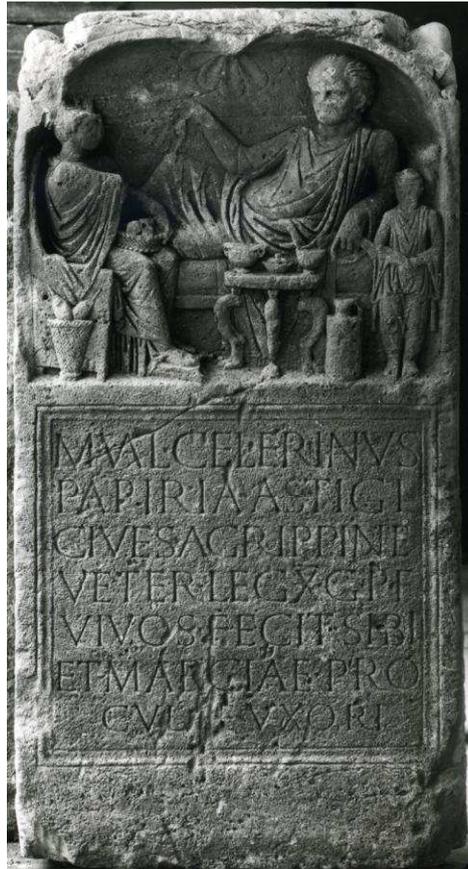
Fig. 1   Marcus Lucius Celerinus, a Roman army veteran from Spain, and his wife on a funerary monument in Cologne, Germany, ca. A.D. 100. Photo: Rheinisches Bildarchiv.

Fig. 2   Traiana Herodiana, an Ubian woman wearing ethnic costume (note the voluminous headdress), and her husband on their sarcophagus in Cologne, Germany, late second-early third century A.D. Photo: Author.

Fig. 3   Grave reliefs depicting Contuinda in Celtic costume and her son Silvanus Ategnissa and other male members of the family in Graeco-Roman dress at Nickenich, Germany, ca. A.D. 50. Photo: Author.

Fig. 4   Funerary portrait of the Eraviscan woman Flavia Usaiu in Gorsium, Hungary, early second century A.D. Drawing: Jerneja Willmott
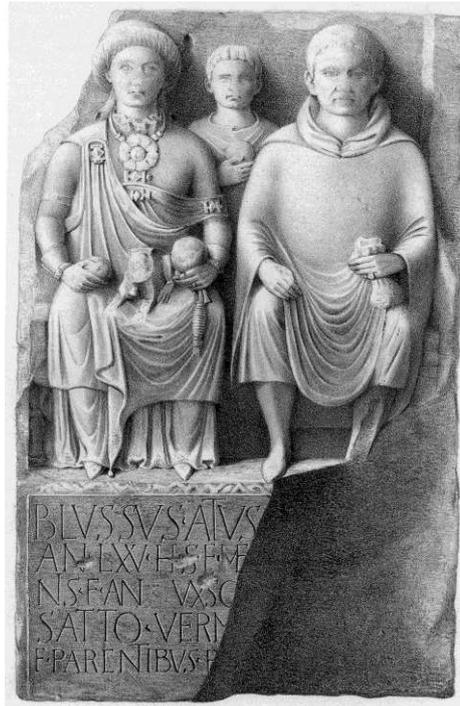
Fig. 5   Funerary monument of Menimane and Blussus, a Celtic couple from Mainz, Germany, depicting her in local ethnic dress, ca. A.D. 50. Photo: After Klein 1848, pl. 1.

Fig. 6   Funerary portraits of Massuia and Namio on their gravestone in Szentendre, Hungary, depicting her in Eraviscan costume, ca. A.D. 100. Photo: Author.