Assertive Mimesis: A Comparative Analysis of Religious Sculptures from the Roman Provinces

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Abstract

The religious statues and reliefs of the Roman provinces are diverse, existing on a spectrum of those which wholly conform to Classical ideals of representation to those which radically diverge from it. Previously any statuary or reliefs that diverged from the Classical norms of representation were denigrated as the work of a poor artist - a failed attempt to emulate a Roman avatar. Following the postcolonial turn in Roman archaeology however, it came to be argued that these divergences were deliberate and intentional, that some of these so called ‘low quality’ sculptures looked exactly as they were intended; that is, to do something other than to be bound to and conform to the Roman ideals of representation. Whilst a large body of work has subsequently been undertaken on the reception and transformation of Classical art and religion in the Roman provinces, little of this work has considered the role of mimesis, and specifically the body of work on assertive mimesis in colonial contexts undertaken by anthropologists such as Taussig (1993), Stoller (1995) and Howey (2011). Mimesis in this capacity is taken as ‘the faculty to copy, to imitate’ whereby ‘the making and existence of the artefact that portrays something gives one power over that which is portrayed’ (Taussig 1993: 13). Although some work on provincial mimesis is now appearing in the research of scholars such as Alicia Jimenez (2010), there is very little in the way of sustained case studies. Drawing upon the body of anthropological work on (assertive) mimesis, this thesis provides a new framework through which to analyse provincial religious sculptures, using Roman Britain and North Africa as case studies. This analysis of how assertive mimesis operated in the production of provincial statuary provides a unique insight into the ways in which the divine world was drawn into the complex processes of adoption and adaptation that typified colonial interactions, and how power and identity were negotiated in the provinces.

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Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................................................... i
Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................................................... ii
Table of Contents ........................................................................................................................................................ iii
List of Figures ........................................................................................................................................................... ix
List of Abbreviations .................................................................................................................................................... xiii

Chapter 1. Assertive Mimesis: A Comparative Analysis of Religious Sculptures from the Roman Provinces ................................................................................................................................. 1
  1.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................................................................... 1
  1.2 The Need for a New Approach ....................................................................................................................... 3
  1.3 Developing New Approaches to Provincial Religious Statuary: Aims and Objectives .............................. 9
  1.4: Aims and Objectives: Discussion ................................................................................................................ 11
  1.5 Key terms and Definitions .......................................................................................................................... 14

Chapter 2. Roman Statuary: A History of Thought Part I ..................................................................................... 16
  2.1 The Reception of Statuary: An introduction ................................................................................................. 16
  2.2 Greek Aesthetics: Roman Statues ................................................................................................................ 16
  2.3 Defining the Roman Statue: Origins and Definitions ............................................................................... 20
  2.4 Religious Statuary ....................................................................................................................................... 20
  2.5 The Statuary of Augustus ........................................................................................................................... 23
  2.7 Divine Symbolism Outside of the Imperial Sphere ................................................................................... 28
  2.8 Divine Iconography: A Summary ................................................................................................................ 29
  2.9 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................................................... 29

Chapter 3. Roman Statuary: A History of Thought Part II ................................................................................... 31
  3.1 The Reception of Roman Statuary: An Introduction .................................................................................. 31
  3.2 Roman Britain and North Africa in Context ............................................................................................... 32
  3.3 Antiquarianism ............................................................................................................................................. 33
  3.4 Revisionist and Postcolonial Roman Archaeology in Britain .................................................................. 41
  3.4.1 Syncretism ............................................................................................................................................... 43
    3.4.1.1 Interpretatio Romana ..................................................................................................................... 44
    3.4.1.2 Divine marriage ............................................................................................................................ 50
    3.4.1.3 Creolisation .................................................................................................................................. 51
  3.5 Religious change in Roman Africa .............................................................................................................. 52
Chapter 7. The Stelae of Pre-Roman North Africa .............................................................. 120
  7.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................. 120
  7.2 The Phoenician Origins of Punic North Africa ............................................................ 122
  7.3 The Rise and Fall of the Phoenician States .................................................................... 124
  7.4 Carthaginian Colonialism and Punic North Africa ....................................................... 125
  7.5 The Cultural Milieu of the Iron Age North Africa: The Carthaginians and Libyans ... 128
  7.6 Religion in the Punic North Africa .............................................................................. 132
  7.7 Cosmology, Religious beliefs and Mythology ............................................................... 136
  7.8 The Tophet ................................................................................................................... 139
  7.9 The Stelae of the Tophet ............................................................................................. 142
    7.9.1 The Caduceus ........................................................................................................ 145
    7.9.2 The Raised Hand .................................................................................................. 146
    7.9.3 The Crescent Moon and Disc ............................................................................... 146
    7.9.4 The Betyl and the Sign of Tanit ............................................................................ 147
  7.10 Anthropomorphic Representation ............................................................................. 153
  7.11 Conclusion ................................................................................................................. 157

Chapter 8. Romano-British Sculpture through the Mimetic Lens ...................................... 159
  8.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................. 159
  8.2 The Religious statuary of Roman Britain ..................................................................... 159
  8.3 Category 1 .................................................................................................................... 161
    1. Mercury ....................................................................................................................... 161
    2. Mars ............................................................................................................................ 169
    3. Genius ........................................................................................................................ 172
    4. Fortuna ........................................................................................................................ 175
    5. Hercules ...................................................................................................................... 177
    6. Sol ............................................................................................................................... 178
    7. Victory ......................................................................................................................... 179
    8. Minerva ....................................................................................................................... 180
    9. Triton ........................................................................................................................... 180
   10. Venus ........................................................................................................................... 181
   11. Vulcan ........................................................................................................................ 182
  8.3.1 Category 1 Summary ............................................................................................... 182
  8.4 Category 2 .................................................................................................................... 184
  8.4.1 Category 2 Summary ............................................................................................... 187
  8.5 Analysis and Discussion .............................................................................................. 188
  8.6 Divine pairing .............................................................................................................. 207
8.7 Summary .................................................................................................................. 217

Chapter 9. Roman North Africa: Religious Sculpture through the Mimetic Lens ........... 219
9.1: Introduction ............................................................................................................ 219
9.2 The Stelae ................................................................................................................ 225
9.2.1 Summary .......................................................................................................... 237
9.3 Discussion – Introduction ...................................................................................... 238
9.4 Recognising Diversity in Mimetic Strategies ...................................................... 240
9.5 The dedicant .......................................................................................................... 255
9.6 Dating .................................................................................................................... 256
9.7 Conclusion .............................................................................................................. 257

Chapter 10. Mimetic Practice in the Production of Provincial Religious Sculpture: A Summary and Concluding Thoughts .......................................................... 259
10.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................... 259
10.2 Review: Mimetic Theory in Roman Archaeology ................................................ 259
10.3 Response One: Absence of Divine Similarity .................................................... 263
10.4 Response Two: The Presence of Divine Similarity ............................................ 264
10.5 Mimesis as a concept of cultural interaction ...................................................... 273
10.6 Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 277
10.7 Future Research .................................................................................................. 279

Appendix A: Gods of the Roman Pantheon and their Attributes ................................. 282
Appendix B: Responses to Cultural Interaction: Spectrum of Possibilities .............. 286
Appendix C: Database of Statuary and Reliefs from Roman Britain ............................ 289
Appendix D: Database of Statuary and Reliefs from Roman Britain ............................ 290
Appendix F: Religious Interaction: Spectrum of Possibilities: Revised ....................... 292
Appendix G: Enlarged Photographs of Statues and Reliefs and Roman Britain and North Africa .. 294

Figure 55: Relief ID RBr 1, Mercury ............................................................................ 294
Figure 56: Relief ID RBr 2, Mercury ............................................................................ 295
Figure 57: Relief ID RBr 3, Mercury ............................................................................ 296
Figure 58: Relief ID RBr 4, Mercury ............................................................................ 297
Figure 59: Relief ID RBr 5, Mercury ............................................................................ 298
Figure 60: Relief ID RBr 6, Mercury ............................................................................ 299
Figure 61: Relied ID RBr 7, Mercury .......................................................................... 300
Figure 62: Relief ID RBr 8, Mercury ............................................................................ 301
Figure 63: Relief ID RBr 9, Mercury ............................................................................ 302
Figure 64: Relief ID RBr 10, Mercury ......................................................................... 303
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 11, Mercury.</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 12, Mercury.</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 13, Mercury.</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 14, Mercury.</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 16, Mercury.</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 17, Mercury.</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 18, Mars.</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 19, Mars.</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 20, Mars.</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Relied ID RBr 21, Mars.</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 22, Mars.</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 23, Mars.</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 24, Mars.</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 25, Mars.</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 26, Genius.</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 27, Genius.</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 28, Genius.</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 29, Genius.</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 30, Genius.</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 31, Genius.</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 32, Fortuna.</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 33, Fortuna.</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 34, Fortuna.</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 35, Fortuna.</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 36, Hercules.</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 37, Hercules.</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 38, Sol.</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 39, Sol.</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 40, Victory.</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 41, Victory.</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 42, Minerva.</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 43, Triton.</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 44, Venus.</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 45, Vulcan.</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 46, Mercury and Rosmerta.</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Relief ID RBr 47, Mercury and Rosmerta.</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 102: Relief ID RBr 48, Mercury, Rosmerta and Fortuna. ............................................................341
Figure 103: Relief ID RBr 49, Mercury and Rosmerta. .................................................................342
Figure 104: Relief ID RBr 50, Mercury and Rosmerta. .................................................................343
Figure 105: Stele ID RNA 1, Victory .........................................................................................344
Figure 106: Stele ID RNA 2, Victories. .........................................................................................345
Figure 107: Stele ID RNA 3, Venus and Liber Pater. .....................................................................346
Figure 108: Stele ID RNA 4, Cupid, Venus and Liber Pater. .........................................................347
Figure 109: Stele ID RNA 5, Cupid, Venus and Liber Pater. .........................................................348
Figure 110: Stele ID RNA 6, Victory, Venus and Liber Pater .......................................................349
Figure 111: Stele ID RNA 7, Venus and Liber Pater. .....................................................................350
Figure 112: Stele ID RNA 8, Venus and Liber Pater. .....................................................................351
Figure 113: Stele ID RNA 9, Venus. ............................................................................................352
Figure 114: Stele ID RNA 10, Venus, Cupid, Liber Pater and Sol. ................................................353
Figure 115: Stele ID RNA 11, Saturn. ..........................................................................................354
Figure 116: Stele ID RNA 12, Saturn. ..........................................................................................355
Figure 117: Stele ID RNA 13, Saturn and the Dioscuri ...............................................................356
Figure 118: Stele ID RNA 14, Saturn and the Dioscuri ...............................................................357
Figure 119: Stele ID RNA 15, Saturn and the Dioscuri ...............................................................358
Figure 120: Stele ID RNA 16, Saturn ..........................................................................................359
Figure 121: Stele ID RNA 17, Saturn ..........................................................................................360
Figure 122: Stele ID RNA 18, Saturn ..........................................................................................361
Figure 123: Stele ID RNA 19, Saturn ..........................................................................................362
Figure 124: Stele ID RNA 20, Saturn ..........................................................................................363
Figure 125: Stele ID RNA 21, Saturn ..........................................................................................364
Figure 126: Stele ID RNA 22, Saturn ..........................................................................................365
Figure 127: Stele ID RNA 23, Saturn ..........................................................................................366
Figure 128: Stele ID RNA 24, Saturn ..........................................................................................367
Appendix H: Summary of Excavation Data and Reports for the Religious statuary of Roman Britain drawn upon in this Thesis .................................................................368
Appendix I: Known Military Units in Britain at Sculpture find sites and their Origins .................375
Bibliography ..................................................................................................................................381
List of Figures

Figure 1: The Papcastle Relief. Image from Megan Stoakley / Wardell Armstrong Archaeology. ..........4
Figure 2: A conventional Graeco-Roman representation of a Genius, Vatican Museums. Author’s own image..................................................................................................................................................4
Figure 3: Portrait bust of a man from 1st century BC Rome in the veristic style (left). Image from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. ........................................................................................................25
Figure 4: Veiled head of Emperor Augustus from the 1st century AD (right). Image from the Museo de Arte Romano, Merida, Badajoz, Spain, Bridgeman Images. .............................................................25
Figure 5: The Augustus of Primaporta, c. 20 BC (left). Image from Vatican Museums, Rome ..........26
Figure 6: Doryphoros, copy of a Greek original by Polykleitos (right). Image from Tarker / Bridgeman Images. ........................................................................................................................................26
Figure 7: Commodus as Hercules, 2nd century AD (left). Image from Ghigo Roli / Bridgeman Images. ..................................................................................................................................................27
Figure 8: The emperor Claudius as Jupiter, 1st century AD (right). Vatican Museums, author’s own image.................................................................................................................................................... 27
Figure 9: Cast of a set of reliefs from the Arch of Trajan Beneventum. Original dated to AD 114. Image from Bridgeman Images..................................................................................................................................................27
Figure 10: A relief of Lenus Mars from Gloucestershire. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 32 .......49
Figure 11: Painted Cuna nuchukana of a man and woman in European dress, early 20th century (left). Image from Werner Forman Archive / Bridgeman Images.................................................................................65
Figure 12: Wooden bowl containing several nuchukana (right). Image from Fortis (2004: 25) ........65
Figure 13: Baule figure representing a spirit wife (left). Image from Werner Forman Archive/Bridgeman Images.........................................................................................................................................................68
Figure 14: Baule figure representing a spirit husband (right). Image from Heini Schneebeli/Bridgeman Images.....................................................................................................................................................68
Figure 15: Baule sculpture of a spirit husband wearing European attire. Image from the Museum of African Art (left), and a collection of spirit husbands wearing French colonial military uniforms (centre left, centre right and right) images from Ravenhill (1980: 29).................................................................70
Figure 16: A Mbari house of the Igbo peoples, Nigeria. On the left is a colonial court messenger and on the right a policeman. Image from Cole (n.d.).........................................................................................................71
Figure 17: Anthropomorphic funerary carvings from Guinea Bissau with European attire. Images from Carvalho (2002: 106) .................................................................................................................................................. 73
Figure 18: A creole altar to Chango and St. Barbara. Image from Secretos de Cuba .........................83
Figure 19: Responses to Cultural Interaction: Spectrum of possibilities ............................................86
Figure 20: Chronological scheme for the British Late Bronze and Iron Age. Image from Cunliffe (2004: 31) .........................................................................................................................................................90
Figure 22: The Desborough Mirror, late insular style c. 50 BC – AD 50. Image from the British Museum .......................................................................................................................................................... 92
Figure 23: The Wandsworth Shield decorated with a combination of repousse and incision techniques with two large birds whose wings develop into tendril motifs. Image from the Werner Forman Archive / Bridgeman Images. .................................................................................................................. 98
Figure 24: Iron Age representations of the head, including: the Snettisham torc (left). Image from the British Museum. The Aylesford bucket mount (centre). Image from the Werner Forman Archive / Bridgeman Images. The North Grimston sword mount (right). Image from Hull Heritage Learning. 100

Figure 25: A summary of features of Iron Age heads .......................................................... 101

Figure 26: A male head in the La Tène style, found within a sacred enclosure at Mšecké Žehrovice. Image from of Werner Forman Archive / Bridgeman Images. .................................................... 102

Figure 27: Wooden figurines, including: The Ballachulish Figure (left). Image from the National Museums of Scotland. The Roos Carr figures (centre). Image from Hull Museums. The Kingsteignton figure (right). Image from the Royal Albert Memorial Museum .................................................. 104

Figure 28: Iron Age Chalk figurines from Yorkshire. Image from Hull and East Riding Museum. ...... 106

Figure 29: The Deal figurine. Image (left) from Devon Museum and drawings (right) from Wendy Williams in Parfitt and Green (1987: 296) ........................................................................................................ 107

Figure 30: Armed figurines, including: the Glauberg figure (left). Image from the Kelltwenwelt Museum. The Hirschlanden Figure (right). Image from Stuttgart Württembergisches Landesmuseum. .................................................................................................................. 108

Figure 31: A reconstruction of Accroupi fiurines from Roquepertuse (left). Image from the musée d’archéologie méditerranéenne. An Accroupi figure from Entremont (right) dated to the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. Image from Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence. .................................................... 109

Figure 32: A bronze knife from Chiswell Green with a bird and vegetal design (left). Image from Megaw and Megaw (2005: 28). ............................................................................................................................................ 111

Figure 33: The Stanwick horse mask (right) c. 50 BC- AD 100. Image from the British Museum...... 111

Figure 34: Details of the Holcombe mirror, c. AD 30-70. Image from the British Museum .......... 111

Figure 35: Iron Age boar imagery, including: the Witham shield (left) c. 400-300 BC. Image from the British Museum. Bronze boars from the Hounslow Hoard (right) c. 100 BC and 100 AD. Image from the British Museum........................................................................................................................................ 112

Figure 36: Bronze decoration from a (c.75-25 BC) wooden bucket from Aylesford. Image from the British Museum........................................................................................................................................ 114

Figure 37: Iron Age horned helmets, including: the Waterloo helmet, c. 150-50 BC (left). Image from the British Museum. The Torrs pony cap, c. 300-100 BC (right). Image from the Museum of Scotland .................................................................................................................................................. 117

Figure 38: Map of Africa Proconsularis. Image from Moore (2000: 344)........................................ 122

Figure 39: A map of the Phoenician colonies c.550 BCE. Image from Geography online. ............ 124

Figure 40: Map of Carthaginian influence c.5th century BC, image from the British Museum’s ‘The wealth of Africa: carthage’ (n.d.) ........................................................................................................ 128

Figure 41: A stela from Bir Hadad featuring Melqart. Image from Pitard (1988: 499). ................. 136

Figure 42: Stelae from the tophet at Carthage depicting a priest and young child. Image from Markoe (2000:47). ................................................................................................................................................. 140

Figure 43: Various symbols featuring on the La Ghorna stelae at the British Museum – left to right: caduceus, raised hand and disc and crescent. Images from the British Museum. Images from the British Museum. ................................................................. 143

Figure 44: The sign of Tanit from a stele at Carthage (left) and various manifestations of the symbol on the La Ghorna stelae at the British Museum (right). Images from the British Museum .......... 149

Figure 45: A Phoenician (left) and 5th-4th century BC Punic stelae (right) carved with a human figure. Images from of Sader (1995: 33) ........................................................................................................................................ 150

Figure 46: Funerary markers from Carthage, dated c.4th-2nd BC. Image from the British Museum 151

Figure 47: Various anthropomorphic representations on Punic stelae. Left to right: an individual holding an ankh from La Ghorna, a women holding a disc to her chest, from carthage, and a further
Figure 53: The tripartite construction of a stele from La Ghorfa. Image from the British Museum (left) and Picard (2011: 129) (right) ................................................................. 152
Figure 48: Anthropomorphic images from the La Ghorfa stelae depicted in an indigenous style.
Images from the British Museum. ........................................................................................................ 153
Figure 49: A female head from nimrud (8th century BC) (left) and a plaquette of the woman in the window from nimrud (8th century BC) (right). Images from from Uberti (2001: 246-71) .......... 155
Figure 50: Mirror handles with female figures from Carthage (3rd-2nd centuries BC). Images from Uberti (2001: 246-71) ................................................................. 156
Figure 51: A terracotta mask from Carthage (c.6th century BC). Image from Lancel (1995) ........ 157
Figure 52: A relief of Jupiter from Corbridge with female genitalia, image from Phillips (1977) fig. 10. ................................................................. 216

Figure 54: A Roman period stele from Ain Nechma featuring a disc and crescent and dedication to Saturn, image from Wilson (2003: 405)........................................ 251
Figure 55: Relief ID RBr 1, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 21 ........................................... 294
Figure 56: Relief ID RBr 2, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 24 ........................................... 295
Figure 57: Relief ID RBr 3, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 25 ........................................... 296
Figure 58: Relief ID RBr 4, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 27 ........................................... 297
Figure 59: Relief ID RBr 5, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 206 ........................................... 298
Figure 60: Relief ID RBr 6, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 207 ........................................... 299
Figure 61: Relied ID RBr 7, Mercury: Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 325 ........................................... 300
Figure 62: Relief ID RBr 8, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 338 ........................................... 301
Figure 63: Relief ID RBr 9, Mercury. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 72 ........................................ 302
Figure 64: Relief ID RBr 10, Mercury. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 75 ........................................ 303
Figure 65: Relief ID RBr 11, Mercury. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 76 ........................................ 304
Figure 66: Relief ID RBr 12, Mercury. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 77 ........................................ 305
Figure 67: Relief ID RBr 13, Mercury. Image from Tufi (1983), fig. 7 .................................................... 306
Figure 68: Relief ID RBr 14, Mercury. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 76 ...................... 307
Figure 69: Relief ID RBr 15, Mercury. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988) fig. 81 ...................... 308
Figure 70: Relief ID RBr 16, Mercury. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 83 ...................... 309
Figure 71: Relief ID RBr 17, Mercury. Image from Brewer (1986), fig. 10 .......................................... 310
Figure 72: Relief ID RBr 18, Mars. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 199 .............................................. 311
Figure 73: Relief ID RBr 19, Mars. Image from Keppie and Arnold (1984), fig. 130 ............................ 312
Figure 74: Relief ID RBr 20, Mars. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 52 .......................................... 313
Figure 75: Relied ID RBr 21, Mars. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 123 .......................................... 314
Figure 76: Relief ID RBr 22, Mars. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 130 .......................................... 315
Figure 77: Relief ID RBr 23, Mars. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 72 .......................... 316
Figure 78: Relief ID RBr 24, Mars. Image from Brewer (1986), fig. 9 ............................................... 317
Figure 79: Relief ID RBr 25, Mars. Image from Brewer (1986), fig. 15 ............................................... 318
Figure 80: Relief ID RBr 26, Genius. Image from Tufi (1983), fig.19 .................................................. 319
Figure 81: Relief ID RBr 27, Genius. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 22 ...................... 320
Figure 82: Relief ID RBr 28, Genius. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 25 ...................... 321
Figure 83: Relief ID RBr 29, Genius. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 469 ..................... 322
Figure 84: Relief ID RBr 30, Genius. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 470 ..................... 323
Figure 85: Relief ID RBr 31, Genius. Image from Henig et al (2004), fig. 161 ................................. 324
Figure 86: Relief ID RBr 32, Fortuna. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 183 ........................................ 325
Figure 87: Relief ID RBr 33, Fortuna. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 187 ........................................ 326
Figure 88: Relief ID RBr 34, Fortuna. Image from Keppie and Arnold (1984), fig. 76 ....................... 327
List of Abbreviations

CSIR – Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani
JRA – Journal of Roman Archaeology
CSIR volumes:
BWE - Bath and Wessex
CDC - Cotswolds, Devon and Cornwall
EE - Eastern England
HWE - Hadrian’s Wall East of the Tyne and Corbridge
HWW - Hadrian’s Wall West of the Tyne and Carlisle
LSE - London and the South East
NWM - North West Midlands
SCO - Scotland
WAL - Wales
YOR - Yorkshire
Chapter 1. Assertive Mimesis: A Comparative Analysis of Religious Sculptures from the Roman Provinces

1.1 Introduction

The religious sculptures of the Roman provinces are diverse, ranging from artefacts which, at one end of the spectrum, wholly conform to Classical ideals of representation to those which, at the other, radically diverge from it. Traditionally, irrespective of where provincial statuary or reliefs were positioned on this spectrum, it tended to be interpreted in terms of emulation; that is, it was presumed to aspire to reproduce the Classical form. This emulative perspective was in part a legacy of Romanisation, an acculturative model for provincial social change that positioned Roman material culture as a universal ideal. Statuary and reliefs diverging from Roman norms was, as a result, considered simply as the work of poor artists. Whilst the paradigm of Romanisation has been increasingly challenged as an overly simplistic model that has failed to consider the range of provincial responses to the Roman presence, the emulative approach that it conditioned has had a significant impact on the analyses of provincial sculpture. Evidence of this can be found in numerous analyses of Roman statuary and reliefs, including the Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani series (CSIR), a collection cataloguing statuary from the Roman world. Coulston and Philips (1988: 69) for example, whilst discussing a sculpture of Mercury from Hadrian’s Wall stated that ‘it is clear that this figure is an inferior copy of [a] Classical model’. Statuary diverging from Classical models has been consistently branded as ‘crude’ (Tufi 1983: 4; Mendleson 2003: 46), ‘clumsy’ (Phillips 1977: 60) and ‘naïve’ (Keppie and Arnold 1984: 30), and whilst the presence of indigenous stylistic characteristics in some provincial statuary has been noted, the significance of this characteristic has been widely overlooked. Martin Henig for example, wrote that the provincial sculpture of Roman Britain was ‘always intended to be read in the Roman way’, in spite of the ‘Celtic idiosyncrasies’ present in some of this sculpture (1995: 99).

Whilst this emulative perspective remains deeply embedded in the analysis of provincial statuary, there is now an awareness that the emulation of the Classical form may not have been the primary motivation in the production of all provincial material statuary. As the 20th century drew to a close, Roman archaeology witnessed a paradigm shift, not only in terms
of how the Roman presence and responses to it in the provinces were understood, but concerning how images and specifically objects of ‘art’ were conceptualised. These shifting trajectories, with their roots in the postcolonial movement, have had a significant impact on how the statuary and reliefs of the Roman Empire have been interpreted. Rather than passive objects that reflected little more than aesthetic ideals, statues were reconceptualised as artefacts through which individuals could explore concepts of the physical and spiritual world, embody or challenge identities and negotiate relationships (D'Ambra 1998: 10; Elsner 1998: 3; Johns 2003: 9; Scott 2003: 4; Webster 2003: 24; Lopez-Bertran 2016: 413). These shifting conceptualisations transformed how Roman statues and reliefs have been perceived, particularly in terms of creating an understanding of their diverse roles in the societies that produced them – yet the statues and reliefs of the provinces have the potential to reveal so much more in terms of indigenous responses to the Roman presence, and concerning how power and identity were negotiated under Roman rule.

To capitalise on the potential of this statuary to reveal new insights into indigenous responses to the Roman presence in the provinces, this investigation will develop an approach that draws upon a very specific strand of postcolonial theory – namely, that of (assertive) mimesis. As conceptualised in postcolonial theory, (assertive) mimesis offers an exciting avenue through which provincial statuary and reliefs can be explored and reinterpreted. As conceived by postcolonial anthropologists, (assertive) mimesis denotes the faculty to ‘copy and to imitate’, a mechanism through which to appropriate the power of the other. This mimetic practice is grounded upon the notion that a copy can share in or acquire the power of that which it resembles (Taussig 1993: 47-48). The purpose of the present investigation is thus to explore the extent to which, and the ways in which (assertive) mimesis was practised amongst some of the peoples who came to be absorbed into the Roman Empire in Roman Britain and North Africa. Much anthropological work on (assertive) mimesis focuses on representations of the person and of the divine, and provincial images of Graeco-Roman gods thus provide fertile ground for exploring such mimetic strategies. As will become clear following the discussion of mimesis in Chapter 4, mimesis can operate in a range of guises. For the purpose of clarity, I will refer to the
specific aspect of mimesis that is the focus of the present investigation as assertive mimesis: a concept which is described in more detail in Chapter 4.

The use of assertive mimetic theory to interpret provincial statuary marks a sustained attempt to contribute to a body of work, grounded in the application of postcolonial theory, which is attempting to (re)interpret provincial material culture, and to demonstrate the value and insights that can be gained from such approaches (see Webster 2001; van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran 2003; Revell 2007 and Mattingly 2010). Whilst the potential new insights that can be gained in Roman archaeology by engaging with postcolonial theory has long been recognised, the engagement with postcolonial theory in this field has to a large extent thus far centred upon analysing the production of archaeological research and discourse. This focus has come at the expense of utilising postcolonial theory to reinterpret the colonial context itself, and the material culture that it produced (see van Dommelen 2010, 2011: 3), perhaps the result of a tendency of much postcolonial Roman archaeology to draw up on the literary theory of Said and Bhabha. Assertive mimesis, as described in postcolonial theory, has the potential to transform the way that provincial religious statuary is understood, but specifically how this can be achieved and why fresh insights are required requires further discussion.

1.2 The Need for a New Approach

The need for more nuanced approaches to provincial statuary is perhaps most easily demonstrated via the analysis of a relief found at the Papcastle site in Cockermouth, England, during excavations in 2014 (fig. 1).
This relief was claimed to represent a fertility genius (Wardell Armstrong Archaeology 2014), based upon the presence of a number of attributes conventionally associated with the Genius in Graeco-Roman representations. The Romans employed an established visual vocabulary of imagery that made it easy to read and identify divine statues based upon standardised, universal codes (see Chapter 2). The Genius for example, considered the guardian spirit of a place or individual, was conventionally represented with a cornucopia, patera and was clothed in a toga (fig. 2).

Figure 1: The Papcastle Relief. Image from Megan Stoakley / Wardell Armstrong Archaeology.

Figure 2: A conventional Graeco-Roman representation of a Genius, Vatican Museums. Author’s own image.
The Papcastle relief does draw to some extent upon this visual vocabulary of Graeco-Roman representation, depicting an individual with the attributes commonly associated with the Graeco-Roman Genius. On the basis of these attributes members of the excavation team at Wardell Armstrong Archaeology (2014) concluded that the relief depicted a ‘fertility Genius...a local deity representative of an area’. The interpretation of this relief as depicting a Roman Genius can however be argued to reflect the continuation of an analytical art-historical approach dominated by the concept of emulation – where the relief is seen only in terms of the desire to replicate the Roman form. What has been overlooked are the ways in which this relief diverges from conventional Graeco-Roman representations of the Genius; the large head and facial features, for example, are characteristic of Iron Age British representation (see Chapter 6). Also notable is the absence of clothing, which is integral to conventional representations of the Genius in Graeco-Roman art. To simply call this a relief of a Genius overlooks these points of divergence, which may arguably be the most intriguing thing about it.

This art-historical approach that originated in the Enlightenment period dominated the analysis of Roman and provincial art for centuries (see Chapter 3). The resurgent interest in Classical statuary during the Renaissance was formative in the development of 18th century concepts of art which held that aesthetic values were timeless, unchanging and universal, ensuring that all art could be understood as an expression of these timeless aesthetic ideals. For the influential scholar Winckelmann (2007), the Classical Greek form, which was argued to have continued under Roman rule, was considered to represent the pinnacle of artistic achievement, and thus was the form to which all art aspired (see Chapter 3). All art was considered to move towards or away from this ideal, reflecting the level of civilisation of the society that produced it. This critical assumption had a significant impact upon the interpretation of the Roman statue, which came to be seen simply as an object of aesthetic enjoyment and an expression of timeless aesthetic values. Consequently, a theoretical wall was built, divorcing the statue from the political, social and religious roles it had occupied during antiquity (Friedland 2003). As the 19th century drew to a close, Enlightenment concepts privileging the aesthetic as a measure of civilisation fused with archaeological thought in the form of Haverfield’s (1923) influential model of Romanisation. This model proposed a linear transfer of values and ideas from Rome to the provinces, whereby
indigenous populations universally emulated and aspired to a superior Roman way of life, adopting the culture, politics and religion of Rome.

It is now well understood that Romanisation, as conceived by Haverfield and others, reflected the Victorian preoccupation with colonial expansion and imperial ideologies (Hingley 2005; van Dommelen 1997: 306). Such ideologies were employed to justify colonial intervention by equating it to the dissemination of civilisation. The Romans, just like modern Europeans, were considered emissaries of the civilised world, with a duty to bring the ‘barbarian’ under the progressive influence of the enlightened. In this way a reading of colonial encounters, both past and present, was created which stressed only the benefits and progressive nature of imperial rule; one where subjugation was welcomed and desired, where a superior coloniser culture took hold and replaced indigenous traditions. These readings of Roman imperialism propagated a view of provincial material culture that was built upon an assumed universal desire to emulate the Roman form. The concept of the Classical form as a measure of civilisation became endemic in the analysis of provincial artefacts, whose form was considered only in terms of the emulation of the superior Classical form. Haverfield (1923: 19) for example wrote:

‘In material culture Romanisation advanced quickly. One uniform fashion spread from the Mediterranean...driving out native art and substituting a conventional copy of Graeco-Roman or Italian art’

Whilst Haverfield argued that Roman fashions spread throughout the province of Britannia, and faithful reproductions were the intended outcome, he noted that indigenous attempts to reproduce Graeco-Roman forms were not always successful. Whilst discussing provincial statuary and indigenous attempts to reproduce Graeco-Roman models, he commented that:

‘Now and then he succeeded; more often he failed; his Hercules and Hesione are not fantastic but grotesque’ (1923: 51).

What it is important to note here however, is that instances of a lack of conformity of provincial material to Graeco-Roman artistic traditions were given little consideration, being interpreted simply as the work of unsuccessful artists.

Although this high opinion of Roman culture was not shared by all (Collingwood for example attacked Roman art for its ‘vulgar efficiency and lack of taste’ (1937: 247)), provincial statues and reliefs continued to be valued and measured in terms of their ability
to reproduce the naturalism, idealism and the perfection of form that guided the production of Roman statuary. The aesthetic merit of provincial artefacts continued to hold primacy in academic enquiry and these artefacts were analysed only in terms of their level of conformity to Classical ideals. Consequently, only provincial art that closely reproduced the Graeco-Roman form was ‘deemed worthy of serious study’ (Scott 2003: 2; see Mattingly 2003: 153 and Chapter 3 for definitions of these terms and a more in depth discussion).

This perspective on provincial art was however to become increasingly challenged by models emphasising the diverse perceptions and functions of the statue in antiquity. Much of this work owes its origins to Alfred Gell’s seminal text Art and Anthropology (1998), where it was argued that the analysis of artistic objects should centre on ‘the social context of art production, circulation and reception’ (1998: 4). Gell (1998) argued that it was vital to move beyond evaluating objects simply in terms of aesthetics, to consider how these aesthetic principles operated in their social contexts. Central to this new approach to art was the recognition that aesthetics and social context were intimately linked and that aesthetic principles were mobilised as a means through express and negotiate relationships. Crucially, art, as Gell (1998) surmised, ‘is a system of action, intended to change the world rather than encode symbolic propositions about it’. This conceptualisation of art as a social agent found currency in the study and analysis of the statuary of Iron Age and Roman Britain, and parallel ideas relating to the function of art underpin the work of scholars such as Webster (2001, 2003), Scott (2003), Garrow and Gosden (2012) and Aldhouse-Green (2012). Central to the work of these scholars, and others such Johns (2003), Revell (2007) and Mattingly (2010) is an appreciation of what provincial material culture could reveal about life under Roman rule, particularly concerning how power and identity was formed and negotiated. For this group of scholars, the material culture of the provinces was seen to provide unique insights into the character of provincial societies and responses to the Roman Empire. An appreciation of the active role of the statue lies at the heart of many of these analyses: an understanding that statues embody ideas and messages that could be accepted, challenged, negotiated and denied. Crucially, provincial statues that diverged from Classical norms were for the first time said to look exactly as their makers intended, that is to say, they were not entirely bound to or meant to conform to Graeco-Roman ideals of representation (Green 1998: 27). It was argued that messages contained within art, and
the role of art as a tool through which to embody social norms and express, negotiate and think about the mortal and/or divine world were more important than conforming to Classical ideals of naturalism (Aldhouse-Green 2012). This body of scholarship signalled a concerted effort to take statuary out of the traditional, restrictive emulative context, to appreciate its polyvocality and to appreciate the unique insights that statuary could provide into the nature of life in the Roman provinces.

Like provincial statuary, conceptualisations of religious interactions in the provinces have been subject to increasing scrutiny (see Chapter 3). The religions of the provinces were conventionally interpreted as reflective of a neutral, laissez-faire syncretism whereby polytheistic peoples willingly welcomed new divinities and/or drew equivalences between indigenous and non-indigenous deities (Haverfield 1923; see Green 1995, 2008; Webster 2001, 1995; Aldhouse-Green 2003, 2012 for a discussion of this, and Chapter 3). This process of recognising equivalence has at times been accompanied by an implicit assumption that one cultural form took precedence over the other, in this case the Roman form over the provincial form – an essentially acculturative paradigm. As the indigenous name of a divinity was replaced with a Roman one, so too it was believed were the myths and stories associated with this divine being (Rives 2006). With these processes came the adoption of an array of Roman religious conventions. Perhaps the most fundamental of these was anthropomorphic representation of the gods: something that had been on the whole absent in a number of the pre-conquest provinces, including Britain. Such readings of religious interactions have been problematised, and are argued to obscure the indigenous negotiations, adaptations, and resistances through which provincial religions were born.

Religious syncretism has, for example, been argued to reflect a process implemented and directed by Rome rather than a benign, universal phenomenon (see Chapter 3). Alternative approaches to provincial religion, found notably in the works of Webster (1995, 2001, 2003), Green (1995, 2012) and Revell (2007), emphasise that whilst religious syncretism was embraced by some, for others religion became a complex arena of contestation and negotiation. Central to these models has been the recognition that religious interactions took place in the context of the unequal power dynamics that marked colonial encounters (again see Chapter 3).
If we return to the analysis of the Papcastle relief and its designation as a Genius, it may be argued that those who designated it as a Genius have perhaps given too little consideration to the work of the postcolonial Roman archaeologists and the existence of Iron Age stylistic features. It is against this backdrop of, on the one hand, the deconstruction and reorientation of conventional understandings of the provincial statue, and on the other the continuing reliance on an entrenched art historical approach (with its faith in the notion that provincial art aspired only to emulate Classical models) that the present study is situated. The intention of this investigation is to build upon the foundation of the growing body of postcolonial work that reconceptualises the role and understanding of the statue, to provide new insights and models of interpretation of statuary that move beyond simplistic acculturative models. Whilst it has become increasingly accepted that divergences in provincial statuary from Graeco-Roman norms were deliberate and intentional, there remains huge scope to investigate what this divergence may have signified and how these statues operated in provincial society. A foundational tenet of this investigation has been to develop a model that can draw out how this divergent provincial statuary operated in provincial society, and what it can reveal about the processes of identity formation and negotiation in the Roman provinces. How this can be achieved is discussed below, with a breakdown of the overarching objectives of this thesis.

### 1.3 Developing New Approaches to Provincial Religious Statuary: Aims and Objectives

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Associated Chapter(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aim 1:</strong> Critically assess the traditional and current interpretations of provincial statuary and demonstrate the need for a new model of interpretation.</td>
<td><strong>Objective 1.1</strong> Address the multiple roles and the reception of statuary in Rome and the provinces, drawing upon its Greek origins and the universal visual vocabulary that it employed.</td>
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<td><strong>Objective 1.2</strong> Analyse the historical origins of modern conceptualisations of the statue, and the role of Romanisation and Enlightenment concepts of art that valorised the Classical form as the aesthetic ideal.</td>
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<td><strong>Objective 1.3</strong> Review the more recent scholarship that has</td>
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sought to deconstruct the acculturative models that have dominated traditional interpretations of provincial statuary.

**Objective 1.4**
Consider how this recent work is beginning to redefine modern perceptions of provincial statuary and the scope for new avenues of enquiry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim 2:</th>
<th>Objective 2.1</th>
<th>Analyse the development of assertive mimetic theory and the origins of its role in anthropological enquiry.</th>
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<td>Objective 2.2</td>
<td>Ascertain the central tenets of assertive mimetic theory and practice through analysing a range of anthropological case studies.</td>
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<td>Objective 2.3</td>
<td>Review the application of assertive mimetic analysis in postcolonial anthropological studies and consider how it has facilitated new insights into colonial interchanges, power dynamics and identity formation during modern colonial encounters.</td>
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**Aim 3:**
Assess the suitability and the potential of assertive mimetic theory as a means to analyse encounters in the Roman provinces, and particularly the production and reception of provincial material culture.

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<th>Objective 3.1</th>
<th>Review the emergence of postcolonial theory in the field of Roman archaeology and the extent to assertive mimesis has been drawn upon as a means to interpret the encounters between Rome and the provinces.</th>
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<td><strong>Objective 3.2</strong>  Consider specifically the insights that could be gained by engaging with assertive mimetic strategies as a way to interpret the material culture of the Roman provinces.</td>
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<td><strong>Objective 3.3</strong>  Suggest where an interpretive model built upon the concept of assertive mimesis would sit in relation to pre-existing models of</td>
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1.4: Aims and Objectives: Discussion

The purpose of this research is to provide new insights into provincial religious statuary by drawing upon the postcolonial concept of assertive mimesis. It is essential to ground this enquiry in an appreciation of the multiple roles of statuary in Rome and the provinces, and the impact that modern concepts of the statue have had on the interpretation of Roman statuary. These themes will be considered more extensively in Chapters 2 and 3. Exploring perceptions of the statue from the Roman to the modern period will facilitate not only an

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<th>Aim 4</th>
<th>Objective 4.1</th>
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<th>Objective 4.3</th>
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<td>Develop assertive mimesis as an interpretive paradigm and apply this to a body of provincial religious statuary to consider what it may reveal about processes of identity formation and negotiation in the Roman provinces, and how these may vary depending on the province in question.</td>
<td>Analyse pre and post conquest material culture from Britain and North Africa, two culturally diverse regions with markedly different pre-Roman cultures, to identify similarities and emerging variations characteristics between pre and post conquest provincial material culture.</td>
<td>Identify provincial religious sculpture from Britain and North Africa that potentially exhibits assertive mimetic characteristics.</td>
<td>Compile a database of religious statuary from Roman Britain and North Africa that may exhibit assertive mimetic characteristics.</td>
<td>Consider the motivations and multiple ways in which assertive mimesis may have been employed by indigenous populations in the production of provincial religious statuary.</td>
<td>Analyse the similarities and divergences in the use of assertive mimetic strategies employed in Roman Britain and North Africa.</td>
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| | | | | | 6-7 |
| | | | | | 8-9 |
| | | | Appendices C-D | | 8-10 |
| | | | | | 10 |
analysis centred upon how the statue operated within its specific indigenous contexts, but an awareness of the development of current approaches to statuary. Chapter 2 will focus exclusively on the roles and varying conceptualisations of the statue in Rome and the provinces, drawing upon its Greek origins, before moving on to consider the varying roles and perceptions of religious statuary, and the universal visual vocabulary that artists employed. Chapter 3 is dedicated to an analysis of the historical origins of the traditional, modern conceptualisation of the statue, centred upon Enlightenment concepts of art as simply as a reflection of (Classical) aesthetic ideals. The impact of the synthesis of this reading of the statue with the archaeological model of Romanisation will form a significant area of enquiry, with a particular focus on the role that this model played in the development of the perception of provincial statuary as emulative. The central tenets of this emulative approach and its impact upon the interpretation of provincial statuary will be considered, followed by an overview of the scholarship that has sought to deconstruct this notion of universal emulation. Specifically, this section will explore how this work has redefined modern perceptions of the statue and the new avenues of enquiry that have emerged as a result.

Against this background of the varying approaches to and interpretations of religious statuary, I will make the case for continued enquiry into the role, production and purpose of provincial statuary, drawing upon the potential insights that the application of assertive mimetic theory may offer. Chapter 4 will focus specifically on exploring the concept of assertive mimesis, drawing upon the nuanced ways in which assertive mimetic strategies are mobilised and materialised. It will feature a range of case studies that demonstrate the use of assertive mimetic strategies in modern colonial contexts, reflecting upon the ways in which non-indigenous traditions were drawn upon by indigenous populations for purposes that extended far beyond simple acculturative practices. From the analysis of these case studies the hallmarks and characteristics of assertive mimetic strategies will be drawn out, and the insights gained thereby will be used to consider the possibility and the extent to which a body of provincial statuary may exhibit assertive mimetic characteristics. The development a model of assertive mimesis that can be used to analyse the statuary from the provinces provides a new (and arguably much needed) addition to the body of work.
relating to cultural interaction, and a discussion of where this model fits in relation to the existing models of cultural interaction can be found in Chapters 5 and 8-10.

Central to postcolonial readings of assertive mimetic strategies are the processes by which foreign symbols or practices are drawn into indigenous systems, and it is thus essential that this enquiry into assertive mimesis in provincial statuary is grounded in an understanding of pre-Roman traditions in Britain and North Africa. An overview of the stylistic traditions and of the presence or absence of divine anthropomorphic imagery in these regions prior to their absorption into the Roman Empire can be found in Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 will deal specifically with the traditions of Iron Age Britain, whilst Chapter 7 will cover pre-Roman North Africa. In Chapters 8 and 9 I use the insights gained from the investigation into assertive mimetic strategies in modern colonial contexts to consider the ways in which provincial statuary may indicate the mobilisation of assertive mimetic strategies. This enquiry is built upon an analysis of the specific stylistic techniques employed to represent a particular Graeco-Roman divinity, and in particular the representation of clothing, facial features and the presence of divine attributes or attendants. Detailed attention is given to cases whereby Classical deities are depicted in ways that diverge from Graeco-Roman norms of representation. That is to say, cases where a Graeco-Roman deity is depicted in such a manner that parallels can be drawn with the stylistic traditions of Iron Age Britain or North Africa. For Roman Britain, the sculptures have been drawn from the Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani (CSIR) series. This series catalogues the sculptures of Roman Britain over ten volumes according to their geographical location. The regions covered include Corbridge, Hadrian’s Wall east of the North Tyne; Bath and Wessex; Yorkshire; Scotland; Wales; Hadrian’s Wall west of the North Tyne and Carlisle; the Cotswolds, Devon and Cornwall; Eastern England, North-West Midlands, and London and the South East. For North Africa, the stelae have been drawn from the British Museum’s ‘La Ghorfa’ collection and from Marcel Leglay’s corpus Saturne Africain, which catalogues Roman period stelae from across North Africa argued to feature the Graeco-Roman deity Saturn.

The subsequent analysis and discussion of these collections focuses on the significance of the possible mobilisation of assertive mimetic strategies in the provinces, and asks what insights this may reveal into the processes of power and identity formation and negotiation
in the provinces. This discussion covers issues ranging from where this specific form of mimesis sits in relation to others, the mechanisms by which assertive mimesis was effective, who may have employed such strategies, and the possible Roman responses to this. The analysis of British statuary can be found in Chapter 8 and that of North Africa in Chapter 9. The final chapter summarises the key findings of this investigation and considers the similarities and differences observable in the mobilisation of assertive mimetic strategies in these provinces, addressing where assertive mimesis sits as model of cultural interaction and summarising the overall impact of this study.

1.5 Key terms and Definitions

As a final note, it is necessary to address the use of particular terms that will be drawn upon throughout this analysis. First, it is important to clarify that in employing the term ‘Roman’, I am in no way implying that the Roman people, particularly those encountered in the provinces, were a monolithic group. For the purpose of this enquiry, I have drawn upon the term Roman simply as a label and means through which to study religious interaction in the Roman provinces, whilst recognising that its use is not without issue (something strongly emphasised by Mattingly 2010: 7). The use of the term Roman in this thesis reflects an understanding that the term embodies a collective of people, including the soldiers of the Roman army, possessing diverse religious beliefs and occupying varying aspects of the social, political and economic spectrum. Similarly, the use of the word ‘indigenous’ should not be taken to suggest the presence of a homogeneous group with which the Romans came into contact, it is used simply as a label for the pre-Roman populations of Iron Age Britain and North Africa. It is used with an acknowledgement of the diversity that existed within these indigenous populations and the varying political, social and economic standings of its peoples (see sections 8.5 and 9.3 for a discussion of this variation). By ‘tradition’, I ascribe to Darville’s (2006: 466) definition of the term as describing the persistence in a given area over a period of time individual attributes, artefact types, technologies or culture. Specifically here, I refer to the artistic traditions of Iron Age Britain (see Chapter 6 for a discussion of this and the relationship between artistic traditions in Britain and the continent) and Pre-Roman North Africa (see Chapter 7). Finally, it is left to acknowledge the difficulties that arise with the use of the term ‘local’. This specific term, and what it
encompasses has at times proven highly ambiguous. It can be employed in a geographical sense (which thus could incorporate colonists and their descendents) and as a temporal classification, which Hodos (2006: 15) argues can be used to differentiate between pre-existing populations and their traditions and the traditions of colonists. Such conceptualisations are however open to debate, and to circumvent these difficulties, the term will be avoided and replaced with the term indigenous to indicate the pre-Roman populations of Britain and North Africa and their traditions.
Chapter 2. Roman Statuary: A History of Thought Part I

2.1 The Reception of Statuary: An introduction

In establishing the research context of this investigation, I touched upon the fusion, which occurred in the 20th century, between the notion of Romanisation and the art-historical concept of the statue as simply an object of art (see section 1.2). Whilst the latter (like the former) was to have an enduring legacy in Roman archaeology, it must be recognised that such conceptualisations of the statue were product of modern thought, and not necessarily an accurate reflection of how statuary was conceptualised in antiquity. Instead, I would argue that the statue was an amalgamation of aesthetic principles mobilised in specific social contexts and for that reason, it is necessary to offer at the outset a consideration of how statuary was perceived and the contexts in which it operated, in Rome and the provinces. Chapters 2 and 3 are thus dedicated to providing a historiography of the conceptualisation of the Roman statue from antiquity to the present. Central to this diachronic enquiry is an examination of the evolving (or static) perceptions of the function, purpose and effect of the Roman statue; that is, an examination of how statues were given meaning and interpreted over time. The frameworks which directed the perceptions of statuary will be considered, alongside an examination the fundamental influences and beliefs upon which these frameworks were founded. In order to consider the range of responses to and perceptions of Roman statuary, this study will draw upon Classical literary sources, as well as upon modern readings and interpretations of these sources. The present chapter will focus upon the perceptions of the statue in antiquity, whilst Chapter 3 will consider modern conceptualisation of the statue.

2.2 Greek Aesthetics: Roman Statues

Sculptural reliefs and statues were ubiquitous in the Roman world. The public squares, bath complexes, temple sanctuaries, and private gardens of Rome were graced with statues of Gods, emperors and society’s notables (Vermeule 1968: 545; Kleiner 1994: 1-5; Elsner 1998: 11-14; Stewart 2011: 6). Pliny (34.17) for example, recorded the display of 3,000 statues on the stage of a theatre under the ædileship of M. Scaurus and commented that:
‘[they had] flourished [in Rome] to such an extraordinary degree, that an account of it would fill many volumes, if we were desirous of making an extensive acquaintance with the subject: but as to learning everything connected with it, who could do it?’ (Pliny, *Natural History* 34.16),

But what did Roman society think of and expect from this vast collection? Our first insight comes from the Roman statue’s Hellenic predecessor, as the Greek origins of Roman statuary are left in no doubt by Pliny (*ibid.* 34.10). The Roman world came into increasing contact with the Greek via the Greek colonies of southern Italy and Sicily. Following military victories in Syracuse, Tarentum and Corinth in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, Greek art took centre stage in the Roman triumphal parades (Pollit 1978; Woodford 1982; Lytteleton and Forman 1985: 41; Zanker 2012: 1, 83). With this, the Greek statue entered into the mainstream of Roman culture (Pollitt 1978: 155; Woodford 1982: 83; Kleiner 1992: 54; Gazda 1995: 130; D’Ambra 1998: 17; Elsner 1998: 2; Thompson 2007). As the Greek statues, taken as spoils of war, decorated temples and public spaces, they came to be seen as indispensable features of public and private buildings (Pollitt 1978: 157; Zanker 2012: 3). With the burgeoning popularity of the Greek statue, Roman demand was satisfied with imitations of Greek Gods, Kings, heroes and athletes (Stevenson 1998: 47). In some cases, demand was driven by the desire to portray an image of social superiority through acquiring and displaying Greek statuary. In this sense, the Roman taste for Greek culture served to reduce the Greek statue from its complex social role and meaning to a decorative piece used as an indicator of social status of the owner, reflected in the ability to acquire Greek statues for private residences and an accompanying knowledge of Greek culture (Kleiner 1995).

The popularity of Greek statuary is demonstrated by Cicero’s sentiments expressed in a letter sent in 67 BC:

‘As to your Hermae of Pentelic marble with bronze heads, about which you wrote to me—I have fallen in love with them on the spot. So pray send both them and the statues, and anything else that may appear to you to suit the place you know of, my passion, and your taste—as large a supply and as early as possible. Above all, anything you think appropriate to a gymnasium and terrace.’ (Cicero, *Epistulae Ad Atticum* 1.8, 7-10)
To see the statue only in terms of an expression of social status and an aesthetic ideal in the private sphere would however be erroneous, and overlooks the complex role of the statue in Roman society. It was not only replicas of Greek forms which entered into the Roman mainstream, but Greek inspired statues that were commissioned and produced to suit Roman beliefs and values. Statues of deities were commissioned by individuals and placed in temples or public places, serving both as a demonstration of piety and as an indicator of social standing (by virtue of the ability to dedicate a statue and as an act of largesse which would ensure divine favour for the whole community). In addition to this divine statuary, statues were frequently commissioned to preserve the memory of individuals, as a means for clients to honour patrons (Pliny: 34.9), and to commemorate and honour military valour or successes and political service to the state, again serving to enhance the social standing of those who were the recipient of such dedications (Roller 2004). These statues became embedded in a complex network of political, social and cultural practices that borrowed heavily from the Greek tradition of the statue as a funerary monument, tool of political propaganda, self-promotion and ancestor veneration, as a cult dedication or as an honorific reward to promote and commemorate exemplary behaviour (Walker 1995: 15, 21; D’Ambra 1998: 17; Stephenson 1998: 51; Kampen 2003: 371; Thompson 2007: 21; Stewart 2012: 83,223). With such a broad sculptural tradition, a consideration of each type and its uses is beyond the scope of the present chapter, which is concerned primarily with religious reliefs and sculptures, and specifically with anthropomorphic representations of the gods (for comprehensive studies relating to the role and function of honorific portraiture and exemplarity however see Roller (2004) Stevenson (1998) and Chenault (2012); for Greek copies consult Vermeule (1968) and Gazda (1995) and on social identity see Walker (1995)).

Before continuing with a more in-depth consideration of the role and function of divine, anthropomorphic statuary in Roman society, it is worth reiterating an important point concerning the nature of Greek influence on the form of anthropomorphic imagery in Rome. The Roman statue drew heavily upon a specifically Greek set of aesthetic values, referred to as the Classical style, a term first documented in the 16th century. This style flourished in 5th century BC Greece, and was centred upon concepts of idealised naturalism\(^2\), harmony and

\(^2\) Naturalism is defined as the style in which an artist intends to represent a subject as it appears in the natural world (Lindgen 1980) Idealization is defined as representation of things according to a preconception of ideal form or type (Lindgren 1980)
unity (Schein 2008: 79; Lindgren 1981: 2). The use of the Classical form in Roman art came to mark a symbolic cultural appropriation, whereby Rome sought to share in the prestigious cultural heritage Greece by emphasising a shared heritage (Elsner 1998: 12). The Classical style became so synonymous with Roman statuary that the term Classical was extended to cover the art of Rome, and subsequently any art inspired by the Greek and Roman form (Lindgren 1980: 2; Hardwick and Stray 2008). Whilst Greek aesthetic values were thus undeniably an important element of Roman statuary, it should be remembered that this aesthetic style was employed to portray a particular set of ideals and ideologies (discussed below). These aesthetic ideals did not operate independently of, but were a vital component of the social, political and religious functions of the statue. From its Greek ancestry, the form and function of the Roman statue was adapted to suit Roman society, so that statuary conformed to and represented the particular ideals and values of Rome (Richter 1951: 186; Vermeule 1968: 546, 557; Pollit 1978: 158; Kleiner 1992: 15; Woodcroft 1992: 94; Gazda 1995: 122; D’Ambra 1998: 10; Stevenson 1998: 51; Thompson 2007: 1).

Following this discussion of the Classical form, it is necessary to address an important, wider issue, concerning the definition and conceptualisation of the term ‘Roman art’. It has long been recognised that there was not a single, homogenous culture originating from Rome that was ultimately disseminated into the provinces (Mattingly 2010:37; Brendel 1979: 6; Lindgren 1980: 1-2; Hingley). The art of the Roman Empire was dynamic, drawing upon the diverse cultural traditions of the provinces. The Classical form was thus one component of a complex material culture found throughout Rome and its empire. The eclectic nature of Roman art has been emphasised by scholars such as Bandinelli (1970: 51-81), who suggested that a ‘plebeian art’ existed alongside art of a more Classical nature. This plebeian art, according to Bandinelli, was a synthesis of iconographic traditions and formal rules that borrowed from the mid-Italic tradition. As opposed to Classical traditions, plebeian art was distinguished by the presence of disproportionate figures, the depiction of individuals on a uniform plane and the presentation of the most important individual front on. This art, according to Bandinelli (ibid. 60) was an ‘expression of self-assertion’, and an indication that neo-Atticism, which closely followed the Classical style, was confined to a small circle of elites. Whilst it is therefore necessary to recognise the eclecticism of Roman art throughout the empire, it is similarly important to recognise that the statues and reliefs
drawn upon in this research were assumed to have derived from Classical prototypes and have traditionally been analysed in terms of the extent to which they successfully emulate the Classical form. It is indeed the domination of this approach in early Roman archaeology and the very processes by which these Classical prototypes were adopted and adapted according to provincial artistic traditions that lies at the heart of this enquiry, and a further discussion of this can be found in Chapters 3 and 8-10.

2.3 Defining the Roman Statue: Origins and Definitions

Contemporary definitions of the Roman statue provide a valuable insight into its function and perception in antiquity. Weddle (2010) and Stewart (2012) provide a comprehensive analysis of Classical sources, lucidly demonstrating the way in which statues were referred to by ‘type’. The ‘type’ of the statue was assigned according to who was depicted and how the statue was used and functioned in a particular setting. The common ‘types’ referred to in ancient sources include *statua, simulacrum and signum*. Cicero’s statement that ‘the images of the immortal gods were moved, and the statues of many ancient men were thrown down’ (*Oratio In Catilinam*, 3.19) demonstrates that both the divine and mortals were represented in statuary, and statuary depicting mortals and those depicting gods were typically distinguished from each other. *Simulacrum* and *signum* generally denoted a statue of a God, whilst *statua* referred to representations of human subjects. *Simulacra* and *signa* were further distinguished, with *simulacra* associated with cult images acting as a focus of devotion and *signa* denoting a representation of a god which was not venerated (Stewart 2012: 22). The creation of ‘types’ thus expressed the Roman desire to distinguish between cult statues, divine images and images of mortals – a distinction which determined how the statue was perceived, treated and functioned. The remainder of the present chapter is concerned primarily with the form, function and perception of religious statuary.

2.4 Religious Statuary

In a highly illiterate world, the image was integral in shaping an individual’s understanding of the divine (Rives 2006: 36). The Classical Gods were considered to share an appearance with mortals and as such a visual vocabulary was created which would allow
the viewer of a statue to readily distinguish between representation of gods and mortals. Partial nudity, perfection of form and the presence of particular attributes set the image of the God apart from the mortal being. But it is perhaps the ‘attributes’, a set of objects that represent the divine powers of a particular deity which most clearly serve to identify a deity and his/her precise powers (ibid.). The attributes of Jupiter offer a clear example; the sceptre symbolised his total hegemony, and the thunder bolt his control over the skies (ibid. 36). Most deities were identifiable through their associated attributes; Mercury for example was commonly represented with a winged petasus, caduceus and money bag and Minerva was depicted with a shield, spear and gorgon medallion. In this way, it can be said that there was an established visual vocabulary which accompanied divine imagery. A list of the Roman deities featured in this investigation and their common attributes, can be found in Appendix A.

A clear set of conventions thus distinguished the statua (images of humans) from the simulacra and signa. But by what conventions could the simulacrum and signum be distinguished from each other? It has previously been established that they were conceptualised differently and thus performed very different functions, and it is therefore important to take a closer look at these two types of statue. Most commonly, signa were offered as gifts to the gods as a token of piety (Stewart 2012: 186). They were considered as ‘notable works of art’, yet this was not their only function. They also operated as a visible display of the wealth, status and of course as previously mentioned the piety of the dedicant. Signa do not appear to have been employed to facilitate interactions with the divine world; this was a role reserved for simulacra. As the focus of active worship, simulacra could be bathed, clothed, fed, kissed, carried in procession or adorned with ribbons, flowers and accessories (Perry 2015). As such interactions are difficult to trace in the archaeological record, Classical sources provide an invaluable and often our only insight into the treatment and perception of religious statues and reliefs. Before drawing upon a number of the Classical sources relating to religious statuary, it is important to note that Roman religion was not dogmatic, and comprised of a loose set of beliefs and approaches to the divine (Weddle 2010; Rives 2006). Individuals were not required to prescribe or conform to a certain view of how religious statues operated, and were free to form their own views
and interpretations. As a result, attitudes towards, and beliefs associated with religious imagery in the Roman world were incredibly diverse (Weddle 2010: 24).

Amongst the diverse beliefs that permeated the Roman world, there was one in particular that came to be intensely debated by Classical authors. This debate concerned the nature of the statue as a physical manifestation of the divine. Whilst not without its detractors, the idea that a statue was synonymous with a deity appears to have been deeply ingrained and widespread. In De Natura Deorum, Cicero introduces the concept of a divine presence in or of statues, suggesting that it was:

‘...a superstition to supply images for men to worship in the belief that in so doing they had direct access to the divine presence.’ (1.37)

The perceived qualities of statues of gods as a manifestation of the god itself was undoubtedly present in Rome. The classical author Callistratus for example articulated the belief that the statue was not just a passive, lifeless object, but became that which it represented:

‘The Eros, the workmanship of Praxiteles, was Eros himself, a boy in the bloom of youth with wings and bow. Bronze gave expression to him, and as though giving expression to Eros as a great and dominating god, it was itself subdued by Eros; for it could not endure to be only bronze, but it became Eros just as he was.’ (Callistratus, Descriptiones, 3.2-5)

On the statue of Paean, Callistratus (ibid. 10.7-10) also commented:

‘To me, at any rate, the object before our eyes seems to be, not an image, but a modelled presentment of truth; for see how Art not only is not without power to delineate character, but, after having portrayed the god in an image, it even passes over into the god himself.’

These examples are drawn from an extensive range of Classical texts, including those of Livy and Plutarch that discuss the concept of the divine nature of statues. Whilst it is not necessary to recount each of these sources here (a comprehensive analysis of such texts can be found in Weddle 2010 and Perry 2015), it is important to draw out the essential beliefs shared by those ascribing to the notion of the divine nature of a statue. Many accounts of statuary centre around their apparent ability to sweat, speak, bleed, cry and move. As a deity was believed to be presenced through an image, it was held that that the statue possessed the power to intervene in the realm of the living (Elsner 1998: 203), as well as to
facilitate a relationship between an individual and a particular deity (Stewart 2012: 27; Elsner 1996: 523); so much so that Sulla was reported to have taken a statue of Apollo to each battle in the belief that it would bring protection (Perry 2015).

Whilst the belief in the power of the statue to presence a deity, or to contain its essence was undeniably popular in Rome, such ideas were not without opposition (see for example Varro, cited by Augustine in De civitate Dei contra paganos (4.31) who argued that anthropomorphic conceptualisations of the divine were erroneous, and Cicero (De Natura Deorum, 1.77) who emphasised the need to exercise caution when attributing the animation of statues to a divine presence). For those who believed that the statue was synonymous with and thus housed the essence of deity, it must be noted that this belief did not indiscriminately apply to all representations of a deity. Thus it became necessary to distinguish between images of a genuinely religious nature and function, and those which were more a token of respect and piety – and so between the simulacrum and signum (Stewart 2012: 32, 186).

For the modern viewer it is often impossible to distinguish whether a particular statue was perceived to embody a divinity (simulacrum) or was not the focus of active worship (signum).Whilst ultimately, we may never be able to determine whether a statue was considered as a simulacrum or signum (or both – as different people may have viewed the same statue very differently) what the religious statuary of Rome shows, whether simulacrum or signum, is the presence of a universally accepted visual vocabulary. This visual vocabulary allowed individuals to read statues, to understand the nature of the gods and to know what they looked like. The images of the gods, along with associated myths defined who the gods were, their powers and functions (Elsner 1998: 199). As explored below, the visual vocabulary of divine imagery the iconography of religious statues came to be extensively appropriated not only by the wider populace but by the imperial regime itself. This is a point of considerable importance to the present thesis.

2.5 The Statuary of Augustus

In the introduction to this chapter, I drew upon the diverse functions of the Roman statue, a diversity encapsulated particularly in imperial statuary. Through the statue, the image of the emperor was introduced to people unlikely to ever see him; it could serve as
an object of cult and devotion following the apotheosis of a deceased emperor (Elsner 1998: 12; Walker 1995: 68), as well as operating as a means to obtain asylum³. Perhaps one function of the statue that became more strongly utilised under the imperial regime was the promotion of an image of power. Augustus was astute in recognising the means by which the portrait could serve as a conduit through which to create an image of power and serve political ambitions (Kleiner 1992: 3; Walker 1995: 12; Elsner 1998: 53; Trentellina 2003). The intention to create an individual likeness was married with the desire to portray particular virtues or characteristics of an emperor, which was often achieved through the appropriation of divine symbolism (Woodford 1982: 85; Trentinella 2005). As Galinsky (1998: 165-6) noted:

'The function of the Roman portrait was more than the mere reflection of a likeness. Rather, its aim was to convey a deliberate message’.

The image of the emperor was thus carefully crafted to portray a physical resemblance whilst simultaneously embellishing reality to project an image of divine sanction and dynastic lineage.

The portraiture of Augustus marked a radical departure from the distinctive ‘hyperrealism’ of Republican portraiture (Kleiner 1992: 59; Walker 1995: 13, 66; Stevenson 1998: 45-47; Trentellina 2005; Thompson 2007: 36, 40 and Zanker 2012). The veristic style⁴ of the Republic intentionally emphasised an individual’s age and experience to portray the Republican ideal of the experienced and dedicated statesman or military commander (Kleiner 1992: 51; D’Ambra 1998: 28; Stephenson 1998: 45-47; Chenault 2012: 212). Fleshy jowls, wrinkles, baldness, and physical imperfections thus became the hallmark of Republican statuary as a means through which to depict life-long dedication to Rome (Thompson 2007: 35). This style stands in stark contrast to the youthful look of Augustus’ statuary - which remained constant irrespective of his age - featuring smooth cheeks and a full head of hair. This changing style of representation, demonstrated in figs. 3 and 4, has been interpreted as an attempt to emphasise the power of the new imperial regime and to portray a prestigious ancestry shared with Classical Greece (Elsner 1998: 3).

³ Perry (2015) records that by the 2nd century, slaves could flee to an imperial statue. If they were found to have been mistreated, their master could be forced to sell them
⁴ Jackson (1987: 32) defines verism as ‘a form of ultra-physical realism which avoids or rejects idealizing tendencies in preference for the prosaic, and which tends to make a virtue of rendering detail and tangibility: warts, moles, creases, and wrinkles appear as though facial texture was the artist’s sole concern.’
Augustan portraiture drew heavily upon the Greek form, yet this was not adopted wholesale but manipulated to construct an image that was consistent with Roman values and expectations (Woodford 1982: 83; Stevenson 1998: 51; see also section 2.2). The statue of Augustus from Primaporta (fig. 5) perfectly demonstrates this adaptation, whereby the form of the statue was modelled on the Greek Doryphorus by Polyclitus (fig. 6), with a number of modifications to suit Roman tastes: Doryphorus’ nudity was at odds with Augustus’ image as the upholder of propriety and so was replaced with a suit of armour (Woodford 1982: 85). The depiction of Cupid at the base of the statue appears to have been a deliberate strategy to connect the Augustan regime to the celestial world – a symbol of divine ancestry and a reminder that the Julian family was descended from Venus. What this signalled, was an increasing use of religious iconography and imagery in imperial contexts. It is this that I will now consider in greater detail.
2.6 Divine and Heroic Symbolism

Augustus ushered in the Roman practice of appropriating religious iconography to imply shared virtues and characteristics between an individual and a particular deity (Stevenson 1998: 45). The appropriation of divine symbolism became a recurrent theme in imperial portraiture: a projection of the ideal ruler via an association with a universally known deity, inviting comparisons between an emperor and the qualities of particular gods (Gazda 1995: 142-142; D’Ambra 1996: 219-232). The portraiture of Commodus for example (fig. 7) depicts the Emperor as Hercules, complete with lion skin, club and apples of Hesperides (Woodcroft 1991: 87; Kleiner 1992: 276; D’Ambra 1998: 111), whilst the statue of Claudius (fig. 8) from Lanuvium AD 42 features an individualised portrayal of Claudius’ head on the torso of Jupiter. Successive emperors also sought to legitimise their authority and power through portraying their divine sanction to rule (D’Ambra 1998; Kleiner 1992: 114, 281; Walker 1995: 12). The arch of Trajan at Benevento, for example, is widely held to depict Jupiter extending a thunderbolt to Trajan, representing the divine sanction of the imperial regime (fig. 9).

Figure 5: The Augustus of Primaporta, c. 20 BC (left). Image from Vatican Museums, Rome.
Figure 6: Doryphoros, copy of a Greek original by Polykleitos (right). Image from Tarker / Bridgeman Images.
The drastic change in the style of representation of individuals under Augustus, and the use of divine imagery may be due in part to a shifting emphasis concerning how power and political agency was legitimated. During the Republic, it was assumed that positions of power could only be acquired through life-long service to the state. Under Augustus, the emphasis shifted to divine sanction and dynastic lineage. Augustus sought to legitimise his
authority through his relationship with his adoptive father Caesar, and by drawing upon a
lengthier lineage that stretched back to Aeneas, the son of Venus and one of Rome’s
founders, rather than through age as proof of years of dedicated service to Rome (Kleiner
1992: 102; Walker 1995: 64). Imperial statuary was thus manipulated to present a
calculated image of the emperor which imbued him with a sense of power, authority and
divine sanction through drawing upon religious iconographies. The desire to be portrayed as
a member of a dynastic lineage became a hugely important mechanism deployed by
successive emperors as a symbol of legitimacy, which became particularly powerful
following the apotheosis of an emperor. The manipulation of statuary and the careful
appropriation of particular divine iconographies became an effective means by which this
could be achieved.

2.7 Divine Symbolism Outside of the Imperial Sphere

The appropriation of divine and heroic symbolism, a recurrent theme in imperial
portraiture, was not limited to the imperial elite (Gazda 1995: 39, 142; D’Ambra 1998: 31;
Stewart 2012: 92). It was a practice that became popular amongst the nobility as well as
freedmen and women, as the Flavian period portraits of Venus illustrate (Kleiner 1992: 281;
D’Ambra 1998). As was the case with imperial portraiture, it has been postulated that a
universally accepted and understood visual vocabulary of religious and heroic statuary was
employed by individuals to infer their own characteristics and virtues (rather than implying
certain deities and iconographic themes which proved consistently popular with particular
social groups. The selection of iconography used appears to have based upon congruencies,
or desired congruencies, between an individual and a deity in terms of character, virtues
and circumstance such as gender, age and profession. Whilst many men were, for example,
depicted as Hercules, business owners were often presented as Mercury, whose powers
related to wealth and commerce (Kleiner 1992: 312). It was also common for girls who
passed away at a young age to be depicted as Diana, who as the goddess of hunting - a
masculine endeavour - was considered to possess qualities more suited to a young girl, who
in passing away, was denied the opportunity to develop the qualities associated with
2.8 Divine Iconography: A Summary

This brief survey of imperial and non-imperial statuary has demonstrated the prolific use of religious iconographies outside of the religious sphere. What can we learn from this? The focus of the present investigation is after all provincial religious statuary featuring Graeco-Roman gods, not emperors or people. The reason that I have drawn upon this body of statuary is that it provides a very important lesson concerning the use of religious imagery in Roman society. It shows, first, that there was established visual vocabulary of religious imagery and divine representation. Second, it shows that this established visual iconography could be, and was, manipulated by individuals, from emperors to freedmen. Whilst imagery was conventionally used to convey an image of power or divine legitimation in the case of the emperor, or to infer characteristics of individuals from lower social groups, it is possible that provincial subjects, introduced to this visual vocabulary, sought to manipulate it in their own way. This point will be returned to throughout the following chapters.

2.9 Conclusion

The statuary of Rome proved an effective medium through which to articulate a range of values and beliefs. Its effectiveness lay in a universally recognised visual vocabulary (Gazda 1995: 147). The ubiquitous sculpture and statuary of Rome drew upon a visual code to reflect and serve political, social and crucially here, religious ideology (Stevenson 1998: 47; Kleiner 1992: 113). It may be questioned why a discussion of the Roman perceptions and beliefs in the religious statue features so heavily in an enquiry that is based upon provincial statuary. First, this is because Classical models directly impacted the reception of Classical statuary in the provinces, and have also informed modern conceptualisations of provincial statuary. Second, the introduction of Roman statuary to the provinces saw the introduction of a new set of visual codes, and an extensive set of social, cultural and religious values associated with the production and consumption of statuary. The established iconography of statuary was open to reinterpretation and manipulation, allowing for nuances which reflected complex identities and desires amongst Roman provincial subjects (D’Ambra 1998: 167). This overview has demonstrated how religious imagery was manipulated by the emperors and non-elites of Rome, and it is perhaps just as likely that provincial subjects
sought to manipulate imagery too. The possibility that the established visual iconography of Rome may have been manipulated by some members of the provincial population opens up exciting new avenues of interpretation, providing new opportunities to consider the ways in which indigenous populations contested and constructed their own identity in the provinces.
Chapter 3. Roman Statuary: A History of Thought Part II

3.1 The Reception of Roman Statuary: An Introduction

The previous chapter explored the varying functions of, and perceptions of the statue according to the Roman viewer, demonstrating, with a particular focus on religious statuary, how these statues operated within a vast and complicated network of belief and practice. The present chapter will consider the conceptualisation of Roman statuary in modern academic thought. It will focus upon the mechanisms and processes by which the modern and ancient viewer came to conceptualise statuary very differently, and the more recent attempts to place the statue back in to the context of Roman society. To the Roman viewer, the statue was rarely intended to function simply as an object of aesthetic enjoyment. The aesthetic component was integral to very specific cultural, political and religious functions but crucially, did not operate independently from these (Squire 2010: 144). The more recent fixation on and reduction of the statue to an expression of an aesthetic ideal can be said – at least until relatively recently - to have divorced the aesthetic from the cultural, religious and political functions of the statue (Elsner 1996: 515). I will consider just how this approach to statuary, with its roots in the Enlightenment, became embedded in modern academic thought. I will also address the more recent challenges which have been mounted against such conceptualisations by borrowing from postcolonial theory. This discussion will focus primarily on modern conceptualisations of the Roman statue in Britain and North Africa, the reason for which is two-fold. Firstly, because of the geographical interest of the thesis, and secondly because these are the two regions in which critique of the model of Romanisation has (for rather different reasons) been most trenchant. Britain was the place where, as its own 19th century empire emerged, the concept of Romanisation was most fully developed – and has since been most fully critiqued. North Africa has a complex history of colonial intervention and witnessed the development of the first ‘nativist’ critiques of the Roman Empire during the postcolonial period.
3.2 Roman Britain and North Africa in Context

Whilst it is unnecessary to go into the history of these regions prior to the Roman conquest in detail, it is perhaps useful to provide a brief summary in order to better understand the processes through which they were incorporated into the Roman Empire, and the resulting cultural milieu of these provinces. I will begin first with Roman Britain. Between 55 BC and 54 BC, Britain was subject to two attempted invasions by Julius Caesar. Whilst the invasions proved unsuccessful in terms of conquest, they served to both create and strengthen relationships between Rome and a number of British tribes (James 2001: 77; Shotter 1998: 13). The strength of these relationships and the perceptions of Rome varied greatly amongst British tribal groups, ranging from the pro-Roman Atrebates to the anti-Roman Catuvellaunni. Whilst the South East adopted a client king structure with strong economic and political ties with Rome, Mattingly (2006: 75) suggests that other areas remained ‘culturally conservative’, with regions in the north remaining outside of a client network with Rome.

Roman forces entered Britain once again in April 43 AD, this time with greater success. By July of that year, Rome had received the surrender of 11 kings (Lindgren 1980; Salway 1993; Mattingly 1996: 97). This victory did not however bring total submission and pockets of resistance remained. A revolt by the Iceni in 47 AD was followed by unrest at Brigante, whilst Governor Gaius Suetonius Paulinus campaigned in Wales in the face of staunch opposition. In AD 60 perhaps the most famous uprising in Roman Britain of Boudicca ensued. Hostilities against the Roman presence continued into AD61 and beyond, with almost continuous unrest in the North during the Antonine period (Lindgren 1980; see Solway 1993 for a discussion of unrest and revolts during the Roman occupation of Britain). Between AD 43-83, it is estimated that 100-250,000 British were killed, of a population of c. 2million (Mattingly 1996: 9). This unrest continued in the 3rd century, when Septimius Severus campaigned against the Caledonians (AD 208-9) and perhaps reached its zenith when central power disintegrated and emperors were constantly threatened by revolt and mutiny (Lindgren 1980).

Whilst Britannia was a relatively small province on the northern boundary of the empire, at its fullest extent, Roman Africa was over 2,000 miles in length, stretching from the
Atlantic to Egypt (Canter 1940: 196). Africa Proconsularis consisted of the territory of Carthage, annexed following a drawn out and brutal conflict with Rome (the three Punic wars spanned 363-241 BC, 218-201 BC and 149-146 BC), and Tripolis, following the Jugurthine War in 104 BC (Miles 2010). Numidia was annexed by Caesar in 46 BC following the former’s support for Pompey during the civil war. The 1st to the 3rd centuries AD were marked by period of prosperity, owing in no small part to a flourishing export industry in cereals, fruits and olives. Large, private estates appeared alongside a plethora of public buildings. This was not however a period without unrest. From the mid 3rd century AD, towns were beset by economic difficulties and building slowed, as a result revolts and unrest was frequent between 253 and 288 AD (Canter 1940; Moore 2000). It is against this backdrop that provincial sculpture was produced and circulated, yet in many early analyses, the diverse responses to the Roman presence and its impact on the production of provincial statuary was overlooked. It is to these accounts, their underlying ideologies and their impact on interpretations of provincial statuary that I will now turn.

3.3 Antiquarianism

Following the dismantling of the Roman Empire, Roman statuary courted little interest. So the situation remained until the Renaissance, when an interest in the statuary of Greece and Rome began to flourish (Gazda 1995: 124). However, for the Roman and the contemporary viewer, separated by a vast expanse of time, the Roman statue came to embody a very different set of values and functions. The Enlightenment movement generated a perception of art and material culture that privileged a particular understanding of aesthetic principles. Crucially, the dominant frameworks of art and aesthetics formulated during the 18th century were imposed on the material culture of antiquity, particularly statuary, based on the belief that aesthetic values were timeless and universal (Squire 2010: 135). In other words, there was only one ‘aesthetic’ — that is, the Greek understandings of the ideal form of anthropomorphic representation: a critical assumption which came to have a dramatic impact on the interpretation of the Roman statue. How did such views, which radically altered the concept of the importance which the Classical world attached to aesthetic values, come into being?
Kristeller (1980) suggests that during the Enlightenment, the concept of the Greek aesthetic, just one of many notions of what constituted the statue in antiquity (such as its political, social and religious function), was taken out of context, reinterpreted and re-emphasised – resulting in the domination of and all encompassing focus on the aesthetic. J. J. Winckelmann, who sought to chronicle the evolution of art, played a pivotal role in embedding concepts that privileged the aesthetic (Potts 2007: 1). He argued that Greek art of the 5th and 4th centuries BC was the ‘true standard of beauty’ based upon its harmony, balance, and consistency (Winckelmann 2007: 3; Schein 2008: 77). Winckelmann (2007) analysed all art in terms of it building towards or moving away from this Greek ideal, which was considered to reflect the political freedoms afforded to artists in Greece. This was important as it marked the association of art and civilisation, whereby the former was a reflection of the latter. It was proposed by Winckelmann that Roman art was simply part of a continuation of Greek art - that there was no Roman art simply a Greek art under the Romans (Brendel 1979: 72). According to Winckelmann’s schema, Greek art was subject to cycles of growth and decline, whereby art in the Roman period was in a stage of decline (ibid. 23) and the art of the Roman Republic and early Empire was more Classical in concept than later Roman and provincial Roman forms (Gazda 1995: 122, 126; Kampen 2003: 371; Scott 2006: 633; Potts 2007).

Such conceptualisations of art proved compatible with 18th century political and social ideologies, which were built upon concepts of progress and decline (Gosden 1999: 26). At a time when the knowledge of the Classical was seen an essential means to achieve and maintain power and status, the analysis of Classical ‘art’ became increasingly dominated by an all-encompassing focus on aesthetics (Thompson 2007: 10; Hardwick and Stray 2008: 1; Schein 2008: 77). From the mid 17th century, ‘The Grand Tour’, a trip around Europe undertaken by young, elite men to study and visit the sites of antiquity, became almost a pre-requisite of status and social advancement (Freeman 1996; Hingley 2000: 8, van Dommelen 2012: 397). Greek and Roman artefacts, genuine or replicas, were highly sought after as individuals sought to recreate the cultural milieu of Greece and Rome upon returning home. Classical models not only inspired 18th century art and architecture, but came to occupy an important strand of thought in conceptualising progress, drawn upon to support ideas concerning Rome as the fount of civilisation. The presence of Classical
statuary recovered during early excavations in Britain was argued to show the civilised nature of cities, whereas artefacts diverging from Classical forms were denigrated as the result of poor workmanship. Upon visiting the remains of the temple at Bath in 1791 for example, Sir Henry Englefield was underwhelmed by the Roman sculpture and architecture, commenting that it looked as though it was constructed in

‘...a period when architecture had considerably sunk from the elegance of the best Roman times: and the inaccurate execution of the ornaments, particularly the fragments of the human figures; indicate that the skills of the workmen were still inferior to that of the architect.’ (Quoted in Hingley 2008: 242)

Provincial art, or art diverging from Classical norms was thus almost wholly overlooked by scholars, deemed too divergent from the ideal Classical form (Scott 2003: 1).

As the 19th century drew to a close, Enlightenment concepts privileging the Classical aesthetic as a measure of civilisation fused with archaeological thought in the form of Haverfield’s influential model of Romanisation (1923). This model, building upon the earlier work of the German archaeologist Theodore Mommsen proposed a linear transfer of values and ideas from Rome to the provinces. The culture, religion and politics of Rome were argued to have supplanted indigenous counterparts, as indigenous populations recognised the superiority of Rome and willingly abandoned indigenous traditions. The Classical Roman form was thus considered to have been idealised; a stimulus to indigenous groups and the example to which all people aspired:

‘...the coherent culture of Rome took hold on uncivilized but intelligent provincials and planted in them the wish to learn its language and share its benefits.’ (Haverfield 1923: 14)

For almost a century, the concept of Romanisation dominated the interpretation of provincial material culture, yet how did such a model come to be? As argued by Hingley (2005: 15), Romanisation should be considered a ‘cultural construct rather than a self-evident entity’, reflecting the ideology and cultural milieu of Victorian Britain rather than the realities of the Roman Empire. It has become increasingly recognised that the past is inevitably interpreted in the context of the present, and the concept of Romanisation reflected the Victorian concerns and preoccupation with colonial expansion and imperial ideologies (Hingley 2001: 111; 2003; Webster 2003; Mattingly 2010: 8). The Victorians sought to draw upon Roman insights and ideas to guide imperial policy, whilst also using
their own colonial experiences to guide interpretations of Roman expansionism. Such ideologies were used to justify colonial intervention by equating it to the dissemination of civilisation; Romans, just like modern Europeans had a duty to bring the barbaric under the progressive influence of the enlightened (Hingley 2000: 128). In this way, a reading of colonial encounters, both past and present, was created which stressed only the benefits and progressive nature of imperial rule, an encounter wherein subjugation was welcomed and desired, and where a superior colonising culture took hold and replaced indigenous traditions. This reading of Roman imperialism propagated a view of provincial material culture built upon the assumption of a universal desire to emulate the (superior) Roman form. Artefacts which diverged from the Classical norm were denigrated as poor imitations of Rome owing to a supposed lack of technical ability of provincial artists (Scott 2006: 633). Dominated by analytical frameworks that operated only in terms of emulation, the possibility that these provincial artefacts were deliberately constructed to do something other than conform to superior Roman ideals of representation was almost entirely overlooked.

This reading of provincial Roman art, although dominant, was not however shared by all. The British archaeologist Robin Collingwood attacked the Roman form, commenting that ‘the empire was not an age of good taste’ (1937: 249). He did not stop at critiquing the Roman form, but saved his most damning verdict for the art of Roman Britain:

‘There is perhaps no province where local attempts to reproduce them [Roman forms] failed so dismally as they failed in Britain. On any Romano-British site the impression that constantly haunts the archaeologist like that of a bad smell or a stickiness on the fingers, is that of an ugliness which pervades the place like a London fog: not merely the common vulgar ugliness of the Roman empire, but a blundering, stupid ugliness that cannot even rise to that level of vulgarity.’ (Collingwood 1937: 249-50)

Collingwood diverged from mainstream opinion not only in his condemnation of the Roman form, but also through questioning of the existence of a universal Greek aesthetic ideal. He came to hypothesise that the production of material culture in indigenous populations may have been motivated by different aesthetic values, or different motivations altogether, arguing that the ‘Roman style did not arouse the interests of British designers...who fulfilled demands in a perfunctory and manner’ (ibid. 256). Collingwood
suggested that what was considered to be a badness of Romano-British art was not due to a lack of ability to faithfully reproduce Classical avatars, but in fact reflected the indigenous desire to keep alive the Celtic tradition, where a Celtic style ‘remained alive behind the façade of Romanisation’ (1937: 256)\(^5\). In terms of statuary, Collingwood commented that ‘the Celtic spirit here and there reveals itself…by some un-Roman treatment of a conventional Roman motive (ibid. 257). In spite of Collingwood’s assertion that the Roman form was simply a veneer under which Celtic culture continued to flourish, provincial statuary continued to be analysed by successive scholars in terms of emulation (see Scott 2006 and Webster 2006 for a discussion of this). The all-encompassing focus on the Greek aesthetic and the belief that provincial artists necessarily aspired to a classical ideal perpetuated the view of provincial art as a poor imitation of Classical avatars (Scott 2006: 633), a view propagated by Toynbee (1962) who divided Roman-British art into three categories:

- High quality imported
- High quality provincial attributed to Gauls
- Low quality art usually produced by British craftsmen.

Echoing Haverfield, Toynbee’s work was built upon the assumption of a desired (and failed) attempt by provincial artisans to conform to the aesthetic values of Rome (Scott 2003: 2). Such views remained entrenched in some of the analyses of provincial material culture well into the 1990s, as demonstrated by Henig’s (1997: 18) suggestion that the Romans guided and led a culture in an adolescent state of development, which would have otherwise died out (ibid. 23). For Henig, Celtic culture was ‘too limited to merit the term civilisation’ (1997: 10) and lacked ‘the essential human dimension of sympathy...which informs the great artistic traditions of Europe’ (ibid. 22). Although noting that some provincial sculptures had ‘Celtic idiosyncrasies’ (ibid. 22), Henig argued that the use of Iron Age stylistic techniques had little to do with resistance to Rome. In spite of the recognition that Classical art forms were adapted to conform to indigenous expression (see also

\(^5\) Of interest here is Collingwood’s reading of the past and its relationship to the present, detailed in his ‘incapsulation theory’. Central to this reading is the idea of a ‘living past’; that the past in encapsulated in the present. The past that is studied is not dead, but lives on, in some capacity in the present. As Collingwood phrases it, ‘in history there are no beginnings and no ending’ (1978: 96). Processes and phases, Collingwood suggested, did not end, but turned in to one another, thus traces of one period can always be found in that succeeding it.
Lindgren 1980), there was little discussion of the significance of this adaptation and what it might reveal about the processes of identity formation and negotiation under Roman rule.

It was not only the interpretation of the archaeology of Britain which was prejudiced by notions of imperialism and colonialism. The interpretation and presentation of archaeological evidence in Africa was also heavily influenced by colonialist frameworks built upon the interactions between modern and ancient colonialism (Reynolds 1976; Mattingly 1996; Munzi 2012). The French and Italians, like the British, presented themselves as the descendants and thus successors of Rome as a means to justify their presence in North Africa. Under modern colonial administrators, contemporary experiences of colonialism and historical interpretations coalesced to perpetuate a view of indigenous African populations as barbarians, who would remain underdeveloped without the intervention of Europeans. The role of indigenous populations was relegated to that of passive receptors of culture, during both the Roman and modern periods. The experiences of modern French and Italian colonial forces in Africa were thus, just as in Britain, used to shape interpretations of Roman history, and to guide modern imperial policies (Mattingly 1996; 2010: 43). Such conceptualisations had a formative impact on perceptions of provincial art in North Africa, which like its British counterpart was considered in terms of a never wholly fulfilled desire to reproduce the Classical form. Such sentiments are reflected in Frend’s analysis of sculpture from Roman North Africa. He wrote of the North African provincial:

‘In the larger Roman cities his attempts to imitate Roman sculpture were passable, but further away from the main centres of Romanization his copy became increasingly barbarous.’ (Frend 1942: 343).

Such perceptions of the barbarous nature of indigenous populations and their passive acceptance of Roman civilisation came to be contested, notably by Laroui in The History of the Maghreb (Laroui 1970). Laroui shifted the emphasis from an all-encompassing focus on the benefits and successes of Roman rule and instead focussed on what he considered as an ever present resistance to Roman rule. This deconstruction of accounts of Roman North Africa, dominated by colonial ideologies and dichotomies, was continued by Marcel Benabou (1976), who argued that indigenous populations opposed Roman rule through cultural resistance and the active maintenance of indigenous traditions (see Mattingly 1996; Mattingly 2010: 57). This assertion has been contested by Garnsey (1978: 252-254), who
questioned the extent to which the continuation of indigenous traditions under Roman rule could and should be seen as indicative of indigenous resistance. Garnsey’s argument consisted of a two pronged approach; the first considering if indeed cultural uniformity and the adoption of Roman material culture in provincial populations was a central tenet of Roman rule; secondly, a consideration of the extent to which resistance to Roman material culture was a conscious as opposed to an unconscious decision. On the former, Garnsey argues that there is no strong evidence to suggest that Roman authorities peddled a universal programme of cultural assimilation, as so called civilising programmes appear to have been limited in nature and restricted to elite groups (see for example Tacitus’ Agricola). On the latter, Garnsey warned against a simplistic equation between the survival of indigenous traditions and resistance to Roman rule. Indigenous religious traditions were widely tolerated by Roman authorities across the empire and thus the continuation of indigenous traditions should not simply be interpreted as an act of resistance. In the same vein, Rives (1995: 148: 150) has argued against simplistic interpretations of cultural interaction as either passive acceptance of or resistance to Roman rule. In championing a more nuanced approach, Rives explored the dynamic cultural interactions occurring between the cult of Saturn and Baal Hammon, suggesting that Saturn was a Romanised form of the cult of Baal Hammon (for a discussion of this and opponents of this idea see section 3.4). According to Rives, this process was sponsored and developed by elite groups who sought to both maintain this indigenous cult and to express a Roman identity. Consequently, ‘the cult became Roman at the same time as embodying local traditions’ (Rives 1995: 140). Whilst also critiqued for moving from one binary opposition to another and simply shifting the emphasis from the Romans to indigenous populations, this new strand of ‘nativist’ thinking marked a pivotal moment whereby the emphasis on acculturative processes and the benefits of Rome shifted to consider indigenous responses. Such accounts proved particularly provocative in the context of the burgeoning postcolonial movement and it is this and its impact on Roman archaeology that I will now consider.

3.2 The Postcolonial Turn

The postcolonial movement is an umbrella term for the variety of models, theories and criticisms intended to provide a new way in which to interpret and understand colonial encounters. These approaches marked an attempt to deconstruct conventional narratives of
colonial encounters, based upon the recognition that these earlier narratives were
dominated by and perpetuated the very ideas and categories that colonialism itself
produced and was based upon (Prakash 1995; Chakrabarty 2000; Couze 2006: 3; Ashcroft et al 2008). Central to these colonial narratives were concepts of European superiority, the
importance of the West in human history, and the binary opposition of the European and
non-European - the civilised and the barbaric, the self and the other. Colonial encounters
prior to the postcolonial turn were interpreted in essentialist terms, as encounters between
two distinct, homogeneous groups (Young 1995; van Dommelen 1997: 307). Non-European
civilisations were considered inherently inferior to the West, and it was the duty of the West
to bring the gift of civilisation to these nations (Gosden 1999: 18; Pieterse 2001: 225;
Ashcroft et al 2008: 41). Indigenous groups were considered as passive receptors of
European culture, which supplanted indigenous traditions. Replacing this essentialism and
the emphasis on passive acculturation, the postcolonial movement sought to recognise the
active role and heterogeneity of indigenous populations in colonial encounters. The
movement gained momentum after the publication of Said’s (1978) seminal text
Orientalism, which evidenced how the image of the East was constructed in the West,
framing this process in terms of discourse analysis, and drawing upon Foucault’s concept of
knowledge and power (those in power control what is known and how it is known, those
with knowledge have power). Said argued that images of the East as constructed by the
West constituted a means by which the West legitimised its actions in the East. Whilst Said,
like the nativist accounts of North Africa, has been criticised for continuing to operate in
terms of the binary oppositions inherent in colonial narratives, his work proved provocative
and stimulated the development of postcolonial theory.

Concepts related to hybridity and third space interactions have become increasingly
prominent in postcolonial theory, stimulated by the influential work of Homi Bhabha (see
Hodos 2006, 2009 and van Dommelen 2012 for example). In The Location of Culture (1994),
Bhabha exposed and drew upon the inherent ambiguity of colonial discourse, wherein the
colonised were desired by colonisers to be the same as the colonisers, but not quite. The
contradictory nature of this discourse, that is, the desire for colonial subjects to be the same
but not quite, was argued to leave it open to resistance, which indigenous populations could
exploit, mock and manipulate (Kapoor 2003: 565). Colonial culture could be reinterpreted
and appropriated, imbued with new meanings that contradicted the notion that colonial culture was the unchangeable and internally stable original culture. This production of new meaning took place in what Bhabha (1993: 37) called the third space, a space ‘in between’ where the cultures of the colonised and colonisers interact, and where the hybrid comes into being (Loren 2013; Gosden 1999: 201). Through Bhabha’s work, the hybrid was reconceptualised as a means through which to explore the complex dynamics of colonial encounters. Rather than a simple, passive blending of indigenous and coloniser cultures, the hybrid was considered in terms of a deliberate ‘reworking’ of both cultures by the colonised (van Dommelen 1997: 307; Jimenez 2011: 117). Central to these readings of hybridity is a recognition that colonial interactions did not take place between a homogeneous indigenous group and homogeneous colonial group but between diverse social, cultural and economic groups. From these interactions, diverse new identities, practices and cultures were said to arise, distinct from both the pre-existing indigenous and colonial cultures (van Dommelen 2012: 403).

With the prolific use of hybridity theory, concerns have been raised that it is at risk of oversimplification, employed as an adjective, rather than an analytical framework, that it may become a fixed category in itself that fails to account for mechanisms and processes of interaction. Such issues are summarised by Revell (2007: 210), who writes that in designating something as hybrid, as Romano-Celtic for example, ‘there is the temptation to concentrate on the identification of the Celtic (or pre-Roman) and Roman elements, and then to think about them in isolation, downplaying the dynamic way in which the people of the provinces negotiated their way through the new imperial context’. It is important then that the designation of an object as a hybrid marks the beginning of an analysis not the end; an analysis which considers how and why these objects were created and how they operated in the society that produced them (Stewart 2011; Stockhammer 2013; Langin-Hooper 2013; Quinn 2013: 191).

3.4 Revisionist and Postcolonial Roman Archaeology in Britain

Revisionist accounts and postcolonial approaches have had a notable impact upon Roman archaeology, shifting the trajectory from acculturative models and an emphasis on the Romans to a focus on indigenous responses to the Roman presence. One of the earliest
and most well-known revisionist accounts of Romanisation is Martin Millet’s concept of elite emulation discussed in *Romanisation: historical issues and archaeological interpretation* (1990). Millet proposed that the adoption of Roman material culture was a strategic response by provincial elites seeking to secure their own power and status. Emulation was therefore not simply the recognition of and the desire to adopt the trappings of a superior culture, but was saturated with the politics of power. Whilst Millet’s reading re-orientated Romanisation, situating in terms of indigenous agency rather than a passive process, at its core, this model is one of acculturation. It remained dominated by a focus on stylistic analyses of provincial material culture and perpetuated the idea that indigenous populations aspired to the culture of Rome and thus directly and uncritically emulated it. Following Millet’s publication, there was an increasing recognition of the need to move away from acculturative models, and to recognise not only the importance of indigenous responses to Rome, but the diversity of these complex and multifaceted responses. Hill (2001: 12) for example emphasised the need to see Romanisation not as a static, homogeneous process but as ‘a discrepant and diverse experience, one in which people actively participated in different ways’. This, he argued, had been overlooked through a polarisation of concepts of identity, where both Romans and indigenous peoples were seen as having fixed, homogeneous identities. This recognition led to a range of new approaches that acknowledged that there was no single Roman life to be adopted, nor a single indigenous life to be replaced, and that Roman-indigenous interaction took place in the context of diverse power dynamics (ibid. 12-14).

A number of interpretive frameworks were thus developed to analyse this diversity (see for example Webster and Cooper 1994; Woolf 1997; Barrett 1997; Terrenato 1998; Hingley 2000; Wells 2001 and Mattingly 2010). The intention of much of this work was to challenge colonial discourse in Roman archaeology by focusing on the range of responses elicited by the colonial encounter, from collaboration and adaptation to resistance and contestation. There was an increasing emphasis on the heterogeneous nature of provincial societies, marked by class, ethnic and gender divisions which in turn conditioned the varying responses to the Roman presence. Central to these readings was a recognition that each of these groups was able to shape their world, actively rather than passively participating in complex webs of interaction and power relations, continually redefining indigenous
identities in the wider context of the Empire (Gosden 2001: 242-249; Wells 2001; van Dommelen 1997: 307).

In the continuing efforts to break free from the binary oppositions that have dominated conventional narratives of the Roman Empire, an increasing number of scholars turned to the concept of globalisation. Globalisation is argued to encapsulate the many ways in which indigenous populations were transformed through increasing interconnectivity, not simply through processes of homogenisation (Jennings 2010). A range of responses and tensions were argued to have been evoked as indigenous populations drew upon the novel and the traditional to various extents in varying contexts, resulting in a balance between cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity. Similarly, rather than conceptualising provincial responses as loci for the interaction between two homogeneous, distinct cultures (where Roman culture supplanted indigenous culture) Woolf (1997: 341) has argued that the process should be considered as the ‘emergence of a new, highly differentiated social formation incorporating a new cultural logic and a new configuration of power’. (see also Hingley 2005; Hodos 2009; Jennings 2010; Gardener 2013; Versulys and Pitts 2014).

This general overview of the growth of postcolonial perspectives in terms of Roman archaeology has taken us far away from concepts of the statue and religious statuary, and it is to this I will now return to consider specifically the impact of postcolonial insights on the interpretation of Roman and provincial statuary. The religion and religious iconography of the provinces has, like other forms of material culture, conventionally been understood as being transformed through a process of Romanisation. This process and the resulting statuary has however come to provide fertile ground for postcolonial Roman archaeologists exploring the means through which the colonial encounter embodied a range of responses – from self-interested adoption and collaboration to overt resistance. Specifically how religious interactions and statuary were traditionally conceptualised, and how these conceptualisations have been transformed through the adoption of postcolonial theory will now be considered.

3.4.1 Syncretism

Whilst Stewart and Shaw (2004: I) describe syncretism as ‘the synthesis of different religious forms’, in the field of anthropology in particular, there has emerged a long standing
awareness of the complexities of this term and its diverging conceptualisations. Syncretism has variously been conceptualised as a feature of all religions, continually borrowing from one another, and as a ‘deviant’ form of religion. In the context of the Roman Empire, it has for example been cited as both an imperialist tool of assimilation and as a form of resistance. The nuanced way in which this term has been employed by various scholars and the impact that this had had upon our understandings of provincial religion is thus the focus of the present discussion.

It is perhaps most fruitful then to begin this enquiry by noting the various mechanisms and processes that have been collected under the banner of syncretism. Syncretism has been used to encapsulate both ‘the deliberate equation of two or more deities (Rives 2006: 143) and ‘the result of the spontaneous desire of polytheistic peoples to accommodate each other’s gods’ (Webster 1997: 328). In many uses of the term syncretism, there is a lack of clarity as to what the term has been employed to denote; the equation of deities and the accommodation of a new deity is often treated as one and the same. It is however arguably important to keep this rigid distinction, as each approach draws upon nuanced strategies and reflects varying conceptualisation and approaches to the divine. What these strategies encapsulate will now be considered, beginning with the aspect of syncretism that concerns the equation of deities.

3.4.1.1 *Interpretatio Romana*

‘...but the gods they speak of in connection with it [a grove of immemorial sanctity] are, to give them their Roman name Castor and Pollux.’

Tacitus’ passage in *Germania* (42.23-4) is commonly taken to refer to the Roman interpretation of foreign divinities, or ‘*Interpretatio Romana*’, yet Tacitus’ specific sense of what *Interpretatio* encapsulated is unclear and contested (see Ando 2005: 41; 2009). The nature of *Interpretatio* and what it entails has thus stimulated polemical debate. Ando (*ibid.*), for example, questioned whether implicit in processes of *Interpretatio* was an assumption that ‘the gods in question were both ontologically prior to human language and everywhere the same’. If so, did *Interpretatio* represent the identification of a deity by its Roman name, or a belief that deities were somehow the same but also different?
Traditional interpretations of the phenomenon have centred upon the former reading, whereby Roman and indigenous peoples were said to recognise that a deity known to them by two different names was the same or equivalent. The process of equating non-Graeco-Roman deities to Classical counterparts was, according to Bober (1951: 15), indicative of the Roman belief that the gods of other peoples were simply ‘members of their own [Roman] pantheon under foreign designation’. An example of this practice can be found in Caesar’s commentary of the Gallic wars where he wrote that the Gauls worshipped Mercury, Apollo, Mars, Jupiter and Minerva (De Bello Gallico: 6.17). It was widely assumed that indigenous populations either carried out their own processes of Interpretatio, or readily accepted the Roman equations of indigenous and Graeco-Roman divinities. Syncretism in this capacity was thus said to indicate the belief that a particular Classical and non-Classical deity were the same or equivalent; what differed was the name, cult and mythology (Rives 2006; Webster 1995, 2015).

Following a recognition of equivalence between a Roman and non-Roman deity, a number of responses were open to its practitioners. One such response was the indigenous adoption of Classical conventions of representation and religious cult, where Roman myths, forms and names took precedence, replacing the indigenous counterparts (Haverfield 1923; Rives 2006). This process of equating a Roman and indigenous deity was thus framed in terms of Romanisation, where ‘the ruling element was Roman’ (Haverfield 1923: 67). As Webster (1986: 42) put it, the Classical deity was held to ‘represent the new face of the same god or goddess’. Whilst both Roman and indigenous peoples may have performed or accepted readings of Interpretatio and adopted Classical forms of representation, Woolf (2000: 230) warns against assuming that the motivations behind such acts were universal. Rather than a benign process of acceptance, Woolf (ibid.) suggests that Interpretatio Gallica may at times have operated as a strategy whereby a Roman god was used to disguise the continued worship of an indigenous god. The nature of this strategy is such that it will remain invisible in the archaeological record, as if the disguise was successful, the image of Roman deity standing for an indigenous deity will be indistinguishable from the image of a Roman deity used solely to worship that Roman deity. It is thus important to acknowledge that in using the term Interpretatio ‘it is possible that the lines between different approaches to religious interpretation have become blurred’ and that Interpretatio may
have consisted of various strategies employed by diverse groups at different times (ibid. 232).

It is to another of these varying strategies that I will now turn; the deliberate combination of Roman and non-Roman elements, which may, as Woolf (1997: 81; 2000: 234) suggests reflect a Roman approach which encouraged the acceptance of foreign cults and the practice of translation. The production of statuary and adherence to beliefs that conformed wholly to the Roman ideals of representation as discussed previously, was thus not the only means by which syncretism (as a means of expressing equivalence) could be articulated. Alternatively, syncretism could manifest itself through divine name pairing, consisting of the combination of an indigenous and a Classical divine name, such as Sulis-Minerva and Mars-Belatucadros (see Webster 1997 and Aldhouse-Green 2003 for further examples). According to Haverfield (1923: 68), this represented ‘local cults [that had] crystallised around Roman names’, and like the adoption of Classical forms of representation, was considered a benign, universal phenomenon. This reading of name pairing as reflecting a belief in the equivalence of a Roman and non-Roman deity has had a significant impact on the understanding of indigenous divinities. The well documented Classical gods and their standardised forms of representation stand in stark contrast to their supposed indigenous counterparts, where there is little evidence to suggest that they were represented anthropomorphically at all, and we know nothing of their names or domain. The nature and divine influence of an indigenous deity was thus inferred from its Classical counterpart, predicated on the assumption that this name pairing was the result of perceived similarities (Webster 1986: 54; Newell 1934: 77).

This conceptualisation of name pairing has been increasingly problematised, as has the notion of Interpretatio as a benign, universal phenomenon (see the discussion of Woolf above). Like Woolf, Ando (2009: 44) has raised concerns with such readings of Interpretatio, and predominantly, the uncritical way in which concepts of Interpretatio have been drawn upon. Ando (ibid.) claims that there has been a general absence of any attempt to consider Tacitus’ passage on Interpretatio in the context of the provinces and in conjunction with other Roman literature on religion, citing Georg Wissowa as an early, rare example of such recognition. Likewise, in his discussions of Interpretatio Africana Shaw (1995: 19) emphasises the extent to which we are restricted in our understanding of the process due
to limitations in available evidence. The consequence of this, according to Shaw is an over reliance for example on epigraphy, resulting in a simplistic reading and understanding of the phenomenon. Amongst the growing critiques of traditional accounts of *Interpretatio*, there has been an emphasis on syncretism in this capacity as a process implemented and directed by the Romans rather than being a universal phenomenon (see for example Webster 1995). The notion of syncretism as a benign policy of religious interaction, ‘a desire on all sides to play safe with the heavens by invoking multiple gods’ (Webster 1995: 156), has been deconstructed and the trajectory shifted to consider the ways in which syncretism operated as a form cultural imperialism. In the analysis of provincial religion in Roman Britain, Webster (*ibid.*) draws upon Hartog’s (1988) analysis of Herodotus, which suggested that the process of divine translation or equation was a means of superimposing one belief system over another. Webster (1995: 156) suggested that a similar process was implemented in Roman Britain on the basis that the Romans considered the divine world everywhere as the same as their own. The equivalence drawn between an indigenous and Classical deity were argued to result from a limited and superficial Roman understanding of indigenous belief systems, and as such, indigenous deities were said to have been ‘squeezed, with varying degrees of discomfort, into imported conceptual moulds’ (Webster 1995: 156), something that indigenous populations were perhaps more reluctant to do. These new readings of syncretism thus emphasise its one sided nature - the preserve of high ranking military officials and indigenous elites rather than a universal phenomenon that indigenous populations willingly accepted. Such arguments are supported by the epigraphic evidence from Roman Britain, as over half of the cases of epigraphic name pairings in Roman Britain, a phenomenon considered indicative of syncretism, were dedicated by individuals associated with the army (Zoll 1994). Zoll has also emphasised the ambiguous nature of name pairing, stating that whilst it has traditionally been used to support the case of Romanisation, it has also been posited as a mechanism through which indigenous populations were able to continue indigenous traditions through a Roman veneer. It can be argued that both of these conceptualisations overlook the complexity of the encounter between Rome and provincial populations, implying either the complete acceptance or total rejection of Roman religion or deities, without considering that there were fundamental changes to both religions (see also Woolf’s discussion on Hercules Magusanus (2009: 244) and van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran 2003). Rather than focusing on the extent to which a
cult was Romanised, Woolf advocates a consideration of the extent to which absorption into the Empire changed local approaches to the divine (2000: 210).

Aside from elucidating cultural and social nuances in the groups employing divine name pairing, this epigraphic evidence emphasises the need to consider the multiple responses, approaches and strategies which inform religious interactions in the provinces. There are a number of divinities, of both Roman and non-Roman origin, such as Venus and the Genii Cucullati, that are represented anthropomorphically in the provinces, but remain resistant to name pairing or and more broadly the epigraphic habit in general. What this would suggest, is that there were multiple ways in which indigenous populations interacted with and perceived Roman divinities.

Before bringing this discussion to a close, it is important to note the absence of anthropomorphic representation in many known cases of name pairing. We cannot therefore say with any certainty if the Roman form took precedence in terms of representation, or if the recognition of similarity between deities resulted in new, hybrid conceptualisations that drew upon both Roman and indigenous traditions (just like we cannot be certain as to whether name pairing indicated that the two deities were one and the same, or whether they were similar). One notable example from Gloucestershire supporting the latter consists of an inscription indicative of name pairing ([L]EN(o) M(arti)) and an accompanying depiction (see fig. 10). This individual is radically different from conventional representations of Mars (see Appendix A) and suggests that indigenous traditions were not always entirely abandoned, but used to co-create something new. What this emphasises is that the responses to and representations of deities epigraphically name paired most likely encapsulated diverging beliefs and forms of representation.
3.3.1.2 Divine Accommodation

Divine accommodation as with Interpretatio, has conventionally been conceptualised as a laissez-faire phenomenon, reflecting the desire of polytheistic peoples to accommodate each other’s gods. This process is not predicated upon the idea that an indigenous and Roman deity is the same, but a recognition that even if similarities can be drawn between two deities, they remain distinct entities. It may be recalled from the discussion above, that it is often ambiguous as to whether name pairing indicated the presence of similar but distinct Roman and non-Roman deities and thus the accommodation of a new divinity into a belief system, or a single deity, and as is the case with interpretatio, the phenomenon of divine accommodation up until the advent of postcolonialism, was rarely problematised.

Following the Roman conquest, what may have been indigenous British Iron Age deities came to be represented anthropomorphically for the first time, a process said to have been stimulated by the Roman presence and their traditions of divine representation. It appears that the Iron Age populations of Roman Britain were reluctant to represent their gods anthropomorphically, as there is not one firmly dated example of a divine, anthropomorphic image from this period. Some of these so called indigenous deities (I say so called as there is no evidence of their pre-existence prior to the Roman conquest, see Webster 2015 for further discussion), such as Sulis and Lenus, came to be represented with typical Roman divine attributes, such as the cornucopia and patera. Others featured more indigenous attributes, such as the wheel, or like the goddess Epona simply lacked any conventional
Roman attributes. As early as 1934, Newell argued that this iconography indicated that these deities were not simply Romanised, yet this was left largely untouched for decades. The fact that these supposed indigenous deities were presented anthropomorphically at all was considered evidence enough that Romanisation was at play (see Green 1996: 466; 1998: 16; Webster 2015: 132 for a discussion of this). These indigenous deities, such as Epona, were then held to have been worshipped by the indigenous population and Romans alike.

The phenomenon of divine accommodation, like name pairing has been subject to increasing revision, with attention drawn to the alternate and multiple readings present in these divine pairings. Below I will consider specifically the case of divine marriage, setting out the conventional interpretations of this process the more recent work which has sought to understand such processes in terms of power dynamics and the context of colonial encounters.

3.4.1.2 Divine marriage

Divine marriage refers to the pairing of a Roman and non-Roman deity that do not appear to have been considered as equivalents. Conventionally, the pairing of (most commonly) a male Roman deity with an indigenous female deity was considered an expression of the famed syncretic tendency of polytheistic religions to happily accept and accommodate each others’ gods. In some of the most notable and influential discussions of divine marriage however, Miranda Aldhouse-Green (2003; 2012) offers a number of alternative readings of the phenomenon that diverge from conventional interpretations which emphasise both the dominance of Rome and the passive acceptance of non-indigenous divinities. Aldhouse-Green (2012: 62-66) for example scrutinises this tendency of a divine couple to consist of a Roman male deity and indigenous female deity and begins by drawing upon the depiction of female personifications of countries in imperial imagery, particularly those relating to military victory. Often such imagery consisted of the male emperor humiliating or raping the female personification of a city, and it was suggested (ibid.) that divine pairings may have operated on a similar ideological level, in that the depiction of a male Roman divinity symbolised the dominance of Rome, which presents itself as paternalistic, protecting and providing for the provinces. It came to be argued that
whilst for the Roman viewer such pairings may have symbolised the dominant status of Rome, for the indigenous population, it could have signified something quite different. Drawing upon early insular myth, it was suggested by Aldhouse-Green (*ibid.*) that the imagery of fertility and abundance consistently attributed to the female of the divine couple may reflect the indigenous belief in a dominant female deity who entered into a ritual marriage with an inferior being (god or mortal) to ensure the prosperity of the land. Such conceptualisations of an all powerful female may invert the conventional readings of divine marriage, replacing the concept of Roman domination with one of indigenous superiority. Aldhouse-Green (*ibid.*) has also highlighted the tendency of the representations to feature a mirroring of divine attributes, held by an equally sized male and female. Such a phenomenon, it was suggested, may have constituted a deliberate stylistic technique employed to convey notions of equality. That the representations of divine couples could be read in very different ways emphasises the ambiguous, polyvocal nature of these representations, and it was suggested that divine pairings reflected the contested and ambiguous nature of the encounter between Rome and the provinces. The subtle use and manipulation of iconography was seen to mark a deliberate attempt to convey multiple and often contradictory messages, based on the assumption that the relief or sculpture is actively interpreted by its different viewers and their differing responses to the Roman presence (*ibid.*). These new approaches to divine statuary reveal the subtle ways that divine iconography could be manipulated, and crucially, actively interpreted by its different viewers according to their differing responses to the Roman presence (Aldhouse-Green 2003: 116).

3.4.1.3 Creolisation

The growing body of provincial statuary subject to postcolonial revisionism has also been added to by the application of Creolisation theory to the study of the Roman provinces (Webster 2001). Webster argued that a model whose foundational tenet was to consider how cultural change arose in the context of unequal power relations was perfectly suited to analyse the encounters of imperial Rome. The tendency of the Creole religions of the Caribbean to embrace elements from both indigenous belief systems and the religion of the colonisers was argued to be present in the religion of the provinces too. Drawing comparisons to the Virgin of Guadalupe (Mexico), and the Orishas (spirit guides) of Cuban
Santeria, Webster (ibid.) proposed that a collection of so-called Celtic deities including Epona, Cernunnos, and Sucellus could more accurately be described as Creole. These deities were not of Graeco-Roman origin but they were transformed through interactions with the Roman world. Most notably, they came to be represented anthropomorphically for the first time. This very fact is traditionally taken as indicative of the process of Romanisation (see above), yet Webster (ibid.) argues that these gods also exhibit a degree of resistance to Romanisation. Epona, for example, does not appear to have entered into a divine marriage, or to have been name paired with a Roman divinity, suggesting that in some ways she was resistant to the processes of Romanisation.

3.5 Religious change in Roman Africa

The dominant 19th and early 20th century acculturative paradigm of religious change in Roman Britain was mirrored in interpretations of religious change in Roman Africa. Through the process of interpretatio or syncretism, it was argued that an indigenous, Punic deity was universally given a Roman name and represented according to Roman conventions. Baal Hammon became Saturn; Tanit, Caelestis; Baal Addir, Mercury; Astarte, Venus; Shadrappa, Liber and Melqart, Hercules (Shaw 2007; Rives 2007: 71; Hoyos 2010). In one of the most famous publications on religious change and statuary in Roman Africa, Leglay (1966) argued in Saturne Africain that Saturn was the successor of the Punic god Baal, an assumption that is widely held to this day (Wilson 2003; McCarty 2010). Such assertions have however become increasingly challenged, supported by a growing body of evidence that not all members of the indigenous population translated Baal Hammon into the Roman deity Saturn. Moore (2000: 35) for example draws upon the evidence from Medeïna (Alrhiburos), where in spite of the continuation of cult activity at the site there is no epigraphic reference to nor iconographic representations of Saturn. Similarly, at Maktar, Baal Hammon continued to be the focus of cult activity and dedication, receiving hundreds of Neopunic inscriptions, with no evidence to suggest that Saturn replaced or succeeded him. Moore’s (ibid.) assertion that indigenous cults continued in to the Roman period without being superseded or replaced by Roman forms finds parallels in the work of Alain Cadotte (2007), who emphasises the complexities of religious interaction and particularly the phenomenon of interpretatio and continuing indigenous influences. He argued that African deities continued to operate and preserve their original nature under Roman appearances. Whilst serving to
shift the trajectory from Roman led processes whereby indigenous populations were passive receptors of change, a caveat with such an approach is once again centred on the danger of implying either the complete acceptance or total rejection of Roman religion or deities, without considering that there were fundamental changes to both religions. Van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran (2013: 275) have argued that religious rituals and material culture was complex and that cross cultural contact should be understood in more nuanced ways. In their study of the cult of the Graeco-Roman goddess Demeter in Punic cities, van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran (ibid.) argued that the assumption that the cult of Tanit was replaced by that of Demeter is too simplistic and fails to account for the complex interactions that occurred. Instead, van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran (ibid.) argued that rather than conceptualising the process as one of either indigenous ritual and ideological continuity or total replacement, specific elements of foreign cults were adopted for indigenous reasons and integrated with indigenous traditions, resulting in something that was new and different, and which referenced both indigenous and non-indigenous traditions. This insight serves to emphasise the shortcomings of some syncretic accounts as overly simplistic, failing to account for the dynamic and complex processes of adaptation, negotiation and rejection (see also Garnsey 1978: 252-254 and Rives 1995: 148: 150 in section 3.2).

The appreciation of the diverse and complex responses to the Roman presence in North Africa has had a significant impact upon the interpretation not only of religious interaction more generally but specifically in terms of the analysis of tophet stelae, a major focus of the present study (see Chapters 7 and 9). In his discussion of the worship of Baal/Saturn in North Africa, Wilson (2003: 408) emphasised the diversity of responses to Roman traditions and thus of the stelae produced. Wilson argued that in the stelae of some of the former Numidian regions, Roman influence was ‘very limited and superficial’, operating as a veneer of language and dress, but ‘leaving artistic expression and cult practice (posture of the dedicant, ritual equipment) as it was’ (ibid.). Wilson then turned to the stelae from the coloniae and military vici in Numidia, which he argued exhibited a higher degree of Roman influence and cultural assimilation relating to representations of Saturn, contrasting these to what he considered as the more indigenous influenced stelae.
3.6 Mimesis and postcolonial Roman archaeology

The body of work from both Britain and North Africa discussed above has been drawn upon to demonstrate the impact of postcolonial analyses on the understanding and interpretation of Roman provincial religion and religious material culture. Whilst this work has radically transformed conceptualisations of religious interactions in the provinces, there remains huge scope for future enquiry. Strangely, mimesis, a concept much discussed in postcolonial theory elsewhere, (see Chapter 4) has been largely overlooked in Roman archaeology, with the noticeable exception of Alicia Jimenez’s study *Reproducing difference: Mimesis and Colonialism in Roman Hispania* (2010). This work provides an important foundation for the use of mimetic strategies to interpret provincial material culture, situating mimesis as a creative process with complex motivations. Jimenez uses a number of case studies from Roman Hispania to suggest that the statues of the capitals of Hispania, which recall the ancestral portrait galleries of Augustus’s forum, were ‘never intended be an exact copy of the Roman forum but a local recreation of it, meaningful in local terms’ (Jimenez 2010: 44). Alongside this public statuary, Jimenez draws upon religious imagery from the private sphere, suggesting that the official symbols of Rome were transformed in their new local contexts. Crucially, Jimenez relates the ‘conscious drive to imitate Rome’ (*ibid*. 53) in the provinces to the concept of mockery through mimesis discussed in the work of Bhabha (see above, and Chapter 4). Jimenez suggests, for example, that the ‘grotesque’ local reproduction of the Roman imagery of Anchises, Aeneas and Ascanius served to mock these well-known Roman heroes. Rather than evidencing a lack of ability on the part off the local artist, representations of these individuals which diverged from the Roman norm were attributed to an ‘only too well-informed’ practitioner of mimesis (*ibid*. 48).

Whilst Jimenez’ work marks a crucial point in the recognition of mimesis as operating beyond an acculturative capacity in a Roman provincial context, there is much scope to build upon her insights. Whilst Jimenez (*ibid.*) recognised that symbols of colonial authority were often turned to new meanings through mimesis, she offers little in-depth discussion of the purpose and possible multiple outcomes of mimetic strategies. What is lacking in Roman archaeology on the whole is a sustained engagement with postcolonial anthropology, drawing upon the insights that such studies may provide into the use and effect of mimetic
strategies. By engaging with anthropological case studies, we may be provided with an insight into the strategic use and consequences of mimetic processes in the provinces – furnishing us with new insights into the processes of power and identity formation and negotiation in the provinces (see Chapter 4).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the impact of postcolonial perspectives on interpretations of provincial encounters with Rome. The recognition that identity formation in the provinces took place in the context of uneven power relationships has allowed for an appreciation of the creative processes by which Roman forms were appropriated and manipulated (Webster 1995, 2001; Jimenez 2010; Green 2012). A recognition of the multiple, varied responses to the Roman presence have informed more nuanced readings of provincial society, and specifically in terms of this study, of provincial statuary. The all-encompassing focus on Graeco-Roman aesthetic values as a measure of civilisation – the product of enlightenment ideologies combined with Haverfield’s model of Romanisation – has been eroded and replaced with a growing awareness of the polyvocality and ambiguity which reflected the diversity of responses to the Roman presence, providing new perspectives on provincial statuary. As I have previously argued however, the full potential of this statuary to provide nuanced insights into power and identity formation and negotiation in the provinces has yet to be fully capitalised upon; and specifically there has been little engagement with the promising concept of mimesis. To appreciate what mimesis can offer in terms of understanding the provincial responses to Rome, it is necessary to draw upon modern anthropological case studies, where the concept has been employed to great effect. An introduction to and an analysis of the concept of mimesis, employing detailed case studies is thus the focus of the subsequent chapter.
Chapter 4. Mimesis in Colonial Contexts over the Last 400 Years

4.1 Introduction

 Whilst postcolonial research has entered the domain of Roman archaeology, providing new ways in which to interpret and understand the complex negotiations occurring in the Roman provinces, what is lacking is a sustained engagement with the body of work on (assertive) mimesis in colonial contexts undertaken by anthropologists such as Taussig (1993), Stoller (1995) and Howey (2011). The present chapter will look specifically at what (assertive) mimesis encapsulates within these postcolonial anthropological contexts to consider how the concept can be extended to the study of the Roman provinces. The conceptualisations of (assertive) mimesis employed within these studies are the result of specific continuities and transformations of a term which has its origins in antiquity. It is therefore most useful to begin this enquiry with an analysis of the term’s evolution. This will be followed by an analysis of how postcolonial anthropologists arrived at their particular conceptualisations of (assertive) mimesis, in which I will present a number of case studies which clearly demonstrate the potential of this theoretical concept to elucidate the dynamic interactions occurring during cultural encounters, including encounters in the Roman provinces.

4.2 Mimesis in Antiquity

 From its early origins, a universal agreement on the precise nature of mimesis proved elusive (Potolsky 2006: 3). Whilst initially, mimesis referred only to the physical act of miming or mimicking, the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle came to extend this term to the arts. Their respective conceptualisations of mimesis were however notably different, diverging specifically as to whether mimesis has its roots in ‘nature and objective reality or in culture and custom’ (Potolsky 2006: 3). Plato, subscribing to the former, first came to extend the concept of mimesis to the sphere of art in The Republic (c. 380 BCE), arguing that art was an imitation of life. Plato considered art as a reflection of the world as it was, reflection being the crucial term. Plato contended that artistic images reproduced the appearance of that which was imitated, but did not recreate the ‘thing’ as it really was.
Whilst artistic images may have *copied* a material reality of the physical world, these images were merely semblances of real things; art was thus an imitation. This marked a radical departure from conventional conceptualisations of images, which had been considered as the embodiment of something. Plato considered art an imitation of the physical world, which itself was an imitation of perfect, original forms. Thus as a copy of a copy, Plato derided art for confusing the senses (Doak 2015: 22).

Challenging these assertions, Aristotle argued that art did not replicate something but was a simulation of it. An exact copy of an original was impossible; the act of mimesis therefore always entailed a degree of interpretation and translation. This simulation was a reflection of a perceived reality rather than an actual reality, driven by an individual’s way of knowing and understanding the world. In his volume *Poetics* (c. 360-320 BCE), Aristotle contended that as a result of cultural perceptions, art can provide an insight into human thoughts and beliefs. Whilst Plato denigrated mimesis for its confusing influence, Aristotle argued that mimesis was a natural mechanism through which all humans learned and developed. These antithetical values of mimesis belonging to Plato and Aristotle are perhaps most neatly summarised by Potolsky (2006: 4), who writes that whereas for Plato art was a reflection of the world as it is, albeit a poor copy, for Aristotle, art was a reflection of the spectator and his or her beliefs and how they see the world.

4.3 Re-inventing Mimesis

Redefining art as mimetic was a pivotal moment in the history of the concept of mimesis, and whilst the concept of mimesis remained tightly bound to the study of art from the classical period onwards, mimesis has always remained tied to broader concepts of human characteristics (Puettz 2002). The late 19th century marked a revived interest in mimetic theory, particularly the idea shared by both Plato and Aristotle that mimesis was an inherent human characteristic (see for example Benjamin (1933) and Caillois (1984)6). Whilst

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6 Walter Benjamin’s the *Mimetic Faculty* (1933) expanded upon this concept of mimesis as an inherent human characteristic. Although said to possess the highest capabilities to produce similarities, Benjamin argued that the current mimetic capability of humans is only a ‘weak rudiment of the formerly powerful compulsion to become similar and also to behave mimetically’ (1933: 69). The innate compulsion to emulate has been diminished, argued Benjamin, as a result of the constraining impact of scientific thought. In contrast to Benjamin’s idea that the mimetic capability has not only contracted but been transformed over the centuries, French sociologist Callois considered mimesis as a universal, unchanging characteristic of all organisms (Potolsky 2006: 142). He argued that mimesis constitutes part of the wider relationship between an organism and its environment where the ‘end would appear to be assimilation to the surrounding’ (Caillois 1984: 26; Potolsky 2006: 142). Mimesis was argued to be a universal urge, a ‘temptation by space’ where an organism is almost overcome
psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists drew up mimetic theory as a way to interpret social and cultural behaviour (Potolsky 2006, 136), the focus of the present enquiry is specifically upon how mimetic strategies were conceptualised and employed in anthropological analyses. The resurgent interest in mimetic theory in anthropology ran parallel to, and was in part stimulated by the growing interaction between Western Europe and the rest of the world during the 17th century. As the western world came into increasing contact with new and different cultures, an awareness developed of the nuanced ways in which mimesis could be understood. In the late 19th century, the British anthropologist James Frazer attributed indigenous behaviour at colonial outposts to a belief in the concept of magic, in which mimesis played a key role. Magic he argued was governed by a theory of sympathy – a belief that humans, animals and objects were bound in a sympathetic network of shared influence (Frazer 1935: 11). Mimesis was said to operate through two key principles; similarity and contagiousness. Similarity related to the principle of producing an effect through imitation. For example, a hunter believed he could capture an animal through mimicking its behaviour. Similarly, a copy could be produced; the copy acquired the power of the original thus providing its creator with mastery of and therefore power over the original. Contagiousness on the other hand referred to the belief that once having been in contact, things will continue to act upon and influence each other. Body parts or personal belongings for example could be used to affect a person with whom they were once in contact.

Such conceptualisations of (assertive) mimesis marked a radical departure from Plato’s assertion that mimesis produced a copy that was a mere semblance of the original and as such not the same as it (Potolsky 2006: 138). Frazer wrote that the indigenous populations

by its environment (Callois 1984: 27). Callois linked this phenomenon to sympathetic magic and the ‘overwhelming tendency to imitate’ (Callois 1984: 27), whereby the imitative insect and the imitative aspect of sympathetic magic were argued to constitute a universal mimetic desire that operates beyond usefulness or survival. To support his case, he drew upon the examples of organisms not subject to predation, which continue to employ mimetic strategies to blend into their environment. He also noted that the organisms preyed upon by predators which hunt by smell rather than sight utilised mimetic strategies to blend into their environment arguing that this showed that mimesis had little to do with a survival advantage: ‘predators are not at all fooled by homomorphy or homochromy: they eat crickets that mingle with the foliage of oak trees or weevils that resemble small stones, completely invisible to man’ (Callois 1984: 25). Callois applied these ideas of mimesis derived from the natural world to human interactions, arguing that mimesis constituted an innate characteristic which still remains strong in ‘civilised’ man (Callois 1984: 21).
he encountered believed that that the copy, through the power of (assertive) mimesis was the same as the original. Such beliefs were interpreted by Frazer as symbolic of the primitive nature of the indigenous populations that he studied, a view that reflected the prevailing imperialistic ideologies of the time. In the west, he argued, science had prevailed over superstition, whilst in the ‘backward societies’ that he studied, events were wrongly attributed to (assertive) mimesis (Frazer 1935: 11).

Frazer’s attribution of (assertive) mimetic practice as a mark of the primitive brings us to an important point regarding the role and perception of (assertive) mimesis in colonial discourse. This discourse was centred on concepts such as civilisation, education and advancement, whereby the perceived duty, or ‘white man’s burden’ to civilise those considered incapable of self advancement was used to legitimise colonial projects. (Assertive) mimesis came to operate as a central tenet of this discourse, considered indicative of the ‘primitive and child like’ indigenous populations encountered by Europeans during colonial encounters. It was this primitiveness which was believed to enable the colonised to mimic civilised colonial culture (Huggan 1997: 94; the ambiguity of this discourse has been discussed in Chapter 3). Charles Darwin for example, on describing his first contact with the people of Tierra del Fuego noted how this group possessed extensive (assertive) mimetic capabilities (Taussig 1993). This ability, he argued, may have been the result of their so called savage state. Conceptualised in terms of magic and witchcraft, (assertive) mimesis was cited as evidence of a way of thinking that modern Europeans had progressed from, but that non-Europeans were incapable of progressing from without European intervention (Frazer 1935; also see Moore and Sanders 2002: 2; Tylor 2010; Levy-Bruhl 2010).

The practice of magic was thus the focus of much anthropological enquiry from the 19th century; implicit within these accounts were notions of magic and (assertive) mimesis as the mark of the barbaric and uncivilised. The notion of magic as synonymous with primitive, whilst entrenched in anthropological analyses, came to be increasingly challenged from the mid 20th century. In an influential text, the functionalist anthropologist Evans-Pritchard (1937) stimulated the reconceptualisation of magic, arguing that witchcraft was not an illogical, irrational phenomena, but made sense when considered in context. Rather than framing magic in terms of modernist, progressive accounts evolution, the
anthropological enquiry of the 1950s and 60s focussed upon analysing magic in terms of its purpose and intention (Levi-Strauss 1968: 8; see Moore and Sanders 2002 for a comprehensive bibliography). The result of this scholarly endeavour transformed conceptualisations of (assertive) mimesis (and magic more generally) from operating as a mark of the primitive, to a recognition of mimesis as a means to serve those who practiced it.

Whilst the concept of (assertive) mimesis had been used by colonial authorities to legitimise European colonial endeavours, there was an increasing recognition that it also had the potential to unsettle the colonial project. The role of (assertive) mimesis as a component in colonial discourse became the subject of increasing scrutiny following the postcolonial movement, and Potolsky (2006: 35) drew upon the work of Frantz Fanon to consider the impact of this. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (2007) discussed the coloniser/colonised relationship suggesting that although the colonised adopted the traits and characteristics of the colonisers, they were not considered the same as the colonisers and remained outsiders (*ibid.* 147). This was both the product of and exposed the ambivalence of the colonial project, which wanted indigenous populations to become like the Europeans but not quite (see also Chapter 3). It is in this context of colonial ambivalence that Bhabha (1984: 1994) considers the role and significance of (assertive) mimesis. The colonial project sought to create indigenous populations that replicated European civilizations, which were the same but not quite as the Europeans. This notion of the same but not quite was critical to colonial discourse. If the non-Europeans became exactly like Europeans, this would remove all justification for continued European control. Potolsky (2006: 133) has drawn comparisons between Bhabha’s conceptualisation of (assertive) mimesis in colonial discourse and concept of the Platonic copy, that is as a semblance of something else, a mere imitation that is not the same thing as the original. The colonised populations were said to be able to exploit this contradictory and ambiguous discourse, as mimicry became a vehicle for mockery (Kapoor 2003: 565), with ‘the native threatening to deny (or denying) her master’s desire for recognition or imitation’ (*ibid.*). The indigenous use of (assertive) mimetic strategies as a means to appropriate, and possibly subvert the coloniser culture and thus colonial authority proved particularly engaging to anthropologists, offering a way through which to consider how identity, power and world
beliefs were negotiated and changed as a result of the colonial encounter. Propelled by new readings of (assertive) mimesis as an intrinsic human characteristic rather than simply the mark of the primitive, mimesis offered a way through which conceptualise colonial encounters. In this way, the foundations were laid for postcolonial anthropological readings of (assertive) mimesis, and it is to these readings that I will now turn.

4.4 Defining Postcolonial Mimesis

As conceptualised in postcolonial anthropology, mimesis came to engender something quite different from its Platonic predecessor, although similarities can be drawn with the Aristotelian concept of art as a simulation which can provide an insight into human thoughts and beliefs. Specifically, postcolonial (assertive) mimesis is described as process of imitative representation that involves the manipulation of material culture, and of the symbolic systems that artefacts are perceived to encode. According to Taussig (1993: xiii), it is the capacity to ‘copy’ or to ‘imitate’. Its power derives from the ‘copy drawing on the character and power of the original such that in some way or another the making and existence of the artefact that portrays something gives one power over that which is portrayed’ (Taussig 1993: 13; see also Gell 1998: 99; Harrison 2003: 327; Frazer 1935: 12–55; Ragazzi 2013).

Rather than being a false representation as Plato suggested, Taussig argued that the mimetic copy was the same as the original. There was, he argued, no difference between a copy and its original, as the representation shares in or takes power from the represented (Taussig 1993: 2). This idea owes its direct lineage to Frazer’s concept of sympathetic magic, although the idea of (assertive) mimesis as a primitive act has been discarded. Through (assertive) mimesis, it is argued that material culture operates not simply as a means of emulation and an expression of an aesthetic ideal, but as an object of power itself.

The idea that (assertive) mimetic strategies facilitated the absorption of and access to powerful forces proved particularly compelling when considering the colonial encounter which was traditionally characterised by asymmetrical power relations. The possible use of (assertive) mimetic strategies thus became the subject of extensive anthropological study in a range of colonial contexts. Amongst these were Michael Taussig’s (1993) analysis of the Cuna Indian curing figurines; Paul Stoller’s (1995) study of the Mbari houses, Hauka cults and Baule figurines; Rodney Harrison’s (2003) study of Aboriginal glass knapping and
Meghan Howey’s (2011) study of a Native American ceramic skeuomorph of a European kettle. As diverse as these studies may be, in terms of the broad cultural groups and material culture analysed, they share an emphasis on the way in which mimetic strategies were used as a means to negotiate the colonial encounter. A number of these studies, (Stoller 1995; Harrison 2003; Howey 2011) draw specifically upon Taussig’s (1993, 47-48) idea of (assertive) mimesis as a mechanism by which to appropriate the power of the other: the notion that a copy can share in or acquire the power of that which it resembles. Taussig developed a reading of (assertive) mimesis drawing upon a number of resources and anthropological studies, including Charles Darwin’s records of the first contact with the Fuegian Indians, and *nuchukana* (Cuna Indian curing figurines) recorded by the Swedish ethnologist Baron Erland Nordenskiold. These *nuchukana* came to be carved in the style and dress of Europeans but as the embodiment of Cuna spirits, and will be discussed in detail below (see section 4.5.1) (Taussig 1993; Huggan 1997: 93).

The body of research that Taussig’s analysis inspired captures the power dynamics that (assertive) mimetic acts encapsulate, manifest both in material culture and physical acts (see for example the Hauka ceremonies discussed by Stoller 1995 and the Cargo Cults of Melanesia and West Africa, whereby the material wealth of the other was perceived as obtainable through rituals and practices imitating western things and activities). Just as Aristotle contended that art was not simply a direct imitation of reality, it has come to be argued that (assertive) mimesis was not simply an imitation of the colonial other. (Assertive) mimesis looks beyond emulation as a reflection of the desire to be European and re-orientates it as deliberate strategy to appropriate or access European power. By drawing upon European symbols and embedding them within indigenous frameworks, (assertive) mimesis was a political, social and magical act, drawing upon the perceived powers of the Europeans to serve indigenous agendas (Huggan 1997: 101). As such (assertive) mimesis became a powerful tool through which to negotiate the colonial encounter, providing a means to invoke change through the medium of material objects, at times perceived as just as or more powerful than the use of violent force (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993: 22).

With the advent of colonialism, the Europeans came to be perceived by many indigenous groups as possessing a great power – primarily through their military prowess and ability to control large colonial populations (Stoller 1995: 87). (Assertive) mimetic
strategies were argued to have been increasingly mobilised by indigenous peoples during the modern colonial encounter as a means to access and utilise for their own means the ‘unfathomable power of the white man’ (Stoller 1995: 87). This is not to say that all (assertive) mimetic strategies arose as a direct result of the colonial encounter: rather, they were in the case of some African countries at least, an extension of varied, long standing cultural traditions that pre-dated colonial interactions. The case of the Songhay of Mali demonstrates that (assertive) mimesis was a component of inter-societal indigenous relationships, not exclusively indigenous-coloniser. Songhay sorcerers produced copies of magical bows and arrows that were said to belong to a particular Songhay deity. The copied arrow was launched in the direction of an intended victim’s dwelling. As the replica fell to the ground, the ‘inner arrow’ continued on its trajectory to strike the intended victim. The victim became increasingly debilitated; succumbing to death should a cure not be sought. Implicit within this act is the belief that the copy has acquired the power of that which is copied, in this case, the magic of the bow and arrow of a god (Stoller 1995: 87). The arrow thus has real properties of its own, a direct contradiction of Plato’s hypothesis. What is important to stress here is that it is a divine attribute rather than a divinity that is copied. This demonstrates that (assertive) mimetic strategies were not restricted to a divinity per se but also embraced their perceived powers or particular elements of that power.

4.5 Case Studies of Mimetic Strategies and Cultural Encounters

Having considered the definition of (assertive) mimesis developed by Taussig and what it is perceived to encapsulate, I will now present a number of case studies to draw out the motivations for employing such mimetic strategies and their intended or expected efficacy. The case studies are drawn from areas across the globe, from Guinea to South America to demonstrate the widespread nature of (assertive) mimesis, although Africa features prominently as it has been the focus of much anthropological research. The case studies selected draw heavily upon anthropomorphic practices, as anthropomorphic representation is central to this thesis. It is important to recognise however that mimetic strategies were not restricted to anthropomorphic representations. Whilst it is not possible to discuss this at any length here, it is important to acknowledge the phenomenon that Howey (2010) refers to as material mimesis, where indigenous groups remade colonial objects in an indigenous material. Drawing upon the work of Bhabha, both Howey - who
analysed a Native American ceramic reproduction of copper European kettle - and Harrison (2003) - who discussed of European tools reproduced in glass by Australian aboriginals - argued that material mimesis provided a way to subvert colonial discourse by remaking symbols of the coloniser in the indigenous image. Whilst invaluable to the wider study of mimetic strategies, the purpose of this thesis is to consider the alternative ways that mimetic strategies operated, other than or beyond subversion. It is for this reason that Taussig’s definition forms the basis of this research, a definition which recognises and draws upon this so called ‘magical element’ of mimesis, where a copy can obtain or draw upon the power of that which it represents. The strength of this approach to the study of colonial interactions is that it moves beyond conceptualising mimesis simply as subversive (prominent in the work of Jimenez and Bhabha), which runs the risk of overlooking the complexity of mimesis, and perpetuating binary analyses of colonial encounters seen only in terms of dominant colonial powers and resistant indigenous populations. Mimeses is a dynamic, multifarious strategy, and whilst it may have been employed in a subversive manner to unsettle the colonial project, it may have also been employed as a way to negotiate power and identity under colonial rule. What Taussig’s definition allows for, is a consideration of the polyvocal responses to the colonial presence and the multiple ways that mimetic strategies may have been exercised, where indigenous populations did not simply reject or engage with colonial material culture in ways that were simply acculturative, but where new symbols were drawn into indigenous belief systems. It is because of this potential of mimesis, as a means for indigenous groups to actively engage with non-indigenous culture in processes of identity formation and negotiation that this particular form of mimesis has been distinguished from others, and is referred to throughout as assertive mimesis, a reference to the active role played by indigenous populations in social and colonial interactions.

4.5.1 The Cuna Nunchukana, Panama

I will begin with a case study drawn upon by Taussig in developing his influential conceptualisation of (assertive) mimesis - the Cuna nuchukana. The Cuna Indians were the focus of Baron Nordenskiold’s anthropological investigation and the resulting publication (1938) provided an insight into the material culture and world views of the Cuna. What proved particularly intriguing to Taussig were the wooden curing figurines. These figurines,
known to the Cuna as nuchukana (or nuchu singular) were all claimed by Nordenskiold to ‘represent European types’, who added that ‘to judge by the kind of clothes, are from the 18th and possibly 17th century, or at least have been copied from old pictures from that time’ (Nordenskiold 1938: 345 in Taussig 1993: 3). Amongst the Cuna, these figurines were considered a vital component of curing ceremonies, leading Taussig to question why such culturally significant objects would be carved in the form of Europeans (Taussig 1993, 7; see figs. 11 and 12).

Intrigued by the notion of a magical power invested in the wood itself, Taussig considered why the wood was carved at all as ‘it is not the outer form which determines its efficacy’ (Taussig 1993: 8). In order to answer this, what was required first and foremost was an understanding as to how the nuchukana were believed to operate. Referring back to Nordenskiold, Taussig suggests that tutelary spirits were drawn to nunchukana through chants performed by a seer, who then undertook a journey in search for the soul of the sick (ibid. 12).

Having established their function and thus arriving back at the issue of carving of nuchukana, Taussig pulled together a range of anthropological studies, including the works of Nordenskiold (1938) and Chapin (1983) to consider what he refers to as the ‘soul of the mimetic world’. All things, both natural and man-made are said by the Cuna to have a spiritual counterpart, a spirit double: ‘the world of spirit underlies the world of substance,
resides in it, and provides it with vital force’ (Chapin 1983: 77 in Taussig 1993: 103). This spirit world can not only interfere with and influence the physical world, but can be ‘tapped in to’ (Taussig 1993: 103). To make a copy of something was said to invoke the soul, drawing the spirit into the physical world (Taussig 1993: 104), and crucially, according to Taussig, this copy ‘gave one power over that which is portrayed’ (ibid. 13).

The notion that power can be gained over something through replication, as well as knowledge, was a pervasive Cuna belief. The concept of power through replication has already been touched upon, but the idea that a power can be accessed and controlled through the possessing a knowledge of it requires further explanation. The most informative insight on this can be found in Taussig’s discussion of Cuna medical chants, which demonstrates the intimate nature of knowledge and the production of a copy. Taussig details specifically how power is said to be gained over the thing described: ‘a detailed and exact description of an object, including representations of its spirit language in conversational form and its daily round of activities, demonstrates to it (really to its spirit) that the performer of the ikar [chant] has intimate knowledge of it and can control it’ (Sherzer 1983: 215 in Taussig 1993: 105). During the chant, it is believed that the seer creates a copy of the spirit by depicting its actions and characteristics. Chanting about the ‘secrets’ and the origin of the spirit then brings it under the control of the seer, who is then able to manipulate it. Knowledge of the ‘secret’ is the key to control; and control of the spirit world leads to control of the physical world, as actions in the spiritual realm are replicated in the physical world. Taussig compares this directly to sympathetic magic, only demonstrated with words and song rather than objects. This phenomenon was argued to show that spirits could be invoked and duplicated through the power of words, not only through the creation of physical objects (Taussig 1993: 105).

What is striking about the case of the nuchukana is that they appear to be a relatively recent phenomenon, perhaps inspired by the observation of Catholic saints. There is no mention of the nuchukana in Lionel Wafer’s account of 1681 which extensively detailed healing rituals (ibid. 105). If we continue to work within the boundaries of the current Cuna belief system, that there is a spiritual realm existing alongside the physical, where the soul of all objects and things reside, it is possible to extend our understandings of the European inspired nuchukana by delving further into how assertive mimetic strategies are believed to
operate. When Taussig questioned why these figurines, so crucial to Cuna curing were carved in the form of European types, I would argue it was because of the power that the European was believed to hold in terms of health. When the Europeans arrived in the New World, they brought with them a raft of infectious diseases which decimated indigenous populations. It is possible to speculate that European resistance to these diseases resulting from previous exposure was perceived by indigenous populations as a form of European power, spiritual protection or divine favour that indigenous populations did not possess.

If we go back to the function of the nuchukana, we are reminded that it was intended to draw a tutelary spirit to it which would then search for the soul of those struck with illness. The spirit drawn, according to (assertive) mimetic principles, corresponds to that which is portrayed, in this case the European, a different spirit to that originally possessed by the wood. I suggest that the European spirit was drawn upon precisely because it was perceived to possess specific powers that protected Europeans from illness that the Cuna did not possess. A seer could control this spirit and its powers during the healing ritual. What happened (and could be controlled by a seer) in the spirit world would produce a like action or event in the physical world. Through accessing the powerful European spirit, it may have been believed that members of the indigenous population could be provided protection from illness possessed by Europeans. A European was thus carved not because of the desire to be European, but to access the powers of the European and draw these into indigenous systems.

4.5.2 Baule Spirit Partners, Ghana and the Ivory Coast

The Baule are one of the largest Akan ethnic groups living in Ghana and Cote d’Ivorie. Colonised by France in 1889, the Baule engaged their colonial overseers in the longest war of independence of any West African country, which ran from 1893 to 1911. The following case study relates specifically to the Baule spirit partners, a sub-group of sculpted figures called Waka sran – or ‘person in wood’ and the carving of these traditional sculptures with European characteristics during the colonial occupation (1889-1960) (Ravenhill 1980: 1). Sculpture is an integral component of Baule cultural life and to understand the importance of Waka sran figures and their changes under colonial rule, it is necessary to consider the Baule world views which conditioned their production.
A traditional Baule belief is that a spirit world, the blolo, exists parallel to the world experienced by man. All human experience is said to be bound to and arise from this spirit world, the world in which ancestors and the spirits of newborns reside. Each Baule existed in this spirit world before they were born, where they had a spirit partner (Ravenhill 2000: 2). This spirit partner was believed to impact all aspects of the life of the earthly partner (Vogel 1997: 247). Problems were thought to arise when this spirit partner felt neglected or jealous of its partner’s mate in the human realm, causing marital or fertility problems. When such problems arose a figure of this spirit partner was often carved and placated with offerings of time, food and money. The sculptures were carved to reflect Baule cultural values (Ravenhill 2000: 62, see figs. 13 and 14), and that the statue must be aesthetically pleasing to the spirit partner conditioned the reflection of desirable cultural traits and characteristics (Warren 1981: 80).

The spirit partner was believed to manifest itself and its desires regarding the appearance of its carving to the carpenter or through the dreams of the earthly partner (Ravenhill 1980: 6). Styled hair and scarification reflected the quality of being civilised; the youthful appearance an indicator of fertility; whilst the strong calves, thighs and buttocks reflected the capacity for hard work and a long neck personal honour (ibid.).

![Figure 13: Baule figure representing a spirit wife (left). Image from Werner Forman Archive/Bridgeman Images.](image1)

![Figure 14: Baule figure representing a spirit husband (right). Image from Heini Schneebeli/Bridgeman Images.](image2)
Following colonial occupation, some of these traditional sculptures came to be carved bearing European characteristics (Ravenhill 1980: 11; Stoller 1995: 84; see fig. 15). The pith helmet was a common attribute, as was the addition of clothing and military uniform, with the sculptures previously having been naked. It is notable that the addition of male European characteristics to Baule spirit spouses appears to be more prevalent than is the case for female characteristics – this however could be explained by the disproportionate presence of European males in the African colonies.

To understand why these new cultural symbols were incorporated into an important and long sculptural tradition necessitates an understanding of the colonial society in which they operated (Ravenhill 1980: 12). Vogel (1997) and Ravenhill (1980), having conducted extensive anthropological work with the Baule explained the phenomenon in their reports:

‘A Baule statue in European garb is neither a replica of a European nor an expression of a wish for a European other world lover, but rather the desire that the Baule other world lover exhibit signs of success or status that dominate the white orientated or dominated world.’ (Ravenhill 1980: 2).

The addition of European-like characteristics was thus argued to mark an attempt to appropriate and redirect the power of the European and give meaning to the new forces arising from colonialism through assertive mimetic strategies (Weiskel 1980). The introduction of European characteristics transformed the traditional sculpture, appropriating and incorporating symbols of a new power and world order so that they could be drawn upon to serve the indigenous population. As previously stated, the spirit spouse was carved to reflect Baule ideals – including economic success and superiority, both physically and socially (Vogel 1997: 255). Like individuals of the physical realm, spirit partners were unique, with their own characteristics and desires, yet always reflected a physical and social ideal (Vogel 1997: 265). The desire for the power and fortune possessed by Europeans, and the attempt to access this was said to have perhaps been reflected in the sculpture of the Baule under colonial rule.
4.5.3 Mbari Houses

The Mbari houses of the Owerri Igbo in Nigeria provide a further example of the ways in which assertive mimetic strategies could be employed during colonial encounters, in this case those encounters between Nigeria and Western Europe between 1800 and 1960 (see fig. 16). These Mbari houses were an integral component of Igbo religious life, built to appease and propitiate a deity. Mud sculptures of the Igbo gods and animals were placed within these houses (Huggan 1997: 96). Such acts, requiring a considerable financial investment, were believed help win the favour of the gods, ensuring good rainfall, harvests and fortune. The Mbari houses were thus employed by the Igbo as a means to exert control over a universe inhabited by capricious gods and fraught with danger, to which the ‘unfathomable power of the white man’ was soon to be added (Stoller 1995: 87; see also Huggan 1997: 96).

Alongside figures of indigenous goddesses, animals, children and ‘spirit workers’, European individuals and objects were crafted and placed within the Mbari houses. The objects selected for representation ranged from European colonial officers themselves to the technology and supplies that they possessed, such as bikes, binoculars and umbrellas (Cole n.d.; 1982). To consider what such acts signified and meant to the Igbo, Stoller (1995:
88) refers to an earlier ethnographic account, which attributed the inclusion of European objects in the religious Mbari to the desire of the Igbo to control or capture the perceived omnipotence of the European. It was suggested that the success of the Europeans in the colonies was perceived by the Igbo as the result of a power possessed by the white man, that somehow these Europeans were ‘not quite human’ (Stoller 1995, 88). Drawing upon Taussig’s (1993) concept of (assertive) mimesis, where a copy allows one to obtain the power of something, Stoller (1995: 88 -90) argues that Europeanness as depicted in the sculptures represents a source of power that the Igbo wished to appropriate and gain control of. The belief that Mbari houses could be used to gain influence, control or access to something is demonstrated in one particular example drawn upon by Cole (nd, 13) where indigenous peoples crafted a replica of a maternity unit to place in a Mbari house in the hope that a maternity unit would be opened in the community. These sculpted European objects were argued by Huggan (1997: 96) to have been crafted by the Igbo as a means to draw upon and access the power of the European.

Figure 16: A Mbari house of the Igbo peoples, Nigeria. On the left is a colonial court messenger and on the right a policeman. Image from Cole (n.d.).

This desire to gain access to and control the power of the white man may have run alongside a wish of the Igbo to rid themselves of the oppressive Europeans. Stoller (1995: 89) recalls an account which suggests that the representation and placement of European
objects in the Mbari may have been an attempt to anger the gods, who in their rage would kill the European. Possible parallels can be drawn with Cuna beliefs of events in the spiritual world being replicated and causing a like event in the physical. If the soul of the European is summoned through its representation in the Mbari house through the magic of assertive mimesis, it may indicate an Igbo belief that should the angered gods destroy the soul of the European in the spiritual world, this will make true in the physical world and thus the Igbo will be rid of the European.

4.5.4 Caió Post-mortem statuary

Assertive mimetic strategies stimulated by the colonial encounter are similarly observable in the post-mortem statuary in the Cacheu Region in Guinea-Bissau (1920-67). Prior to colonial contact, a number of houses in the region had a dedicated area, a site at which wooden sticks were placed to invoke the ancestors of the house. These sticks were placed in the ground following the death of a relative, during a ceremony which Carvalho (2002: 104) reports served as a second funeral. During this ceremony, the deceased was said to be established as an ancestor of the house. According to Carvalho (2002: 104), the régulos (chiefs) were the ‘main characters to be honoured in this way’.

It was common for the earliest forms of these sticks to consist of a forked or straight piece of wood, occasionally displaying engraved parallel lines. With the onset of colonialism and the scramble for Africa, this pre-existing indigenous sculptural tradition was transformed. The straight or forked sticks came to display anthropomorphic tendencies. It is not just this increasing anthropomorphism that is intriguing, but that anthropomorphism included the addition of European style clothing and the representation of a specific European physiognomy (ibid. 105-108).

Carvalho (2002: 104-108) presents the case of a house in Belabate, where sculptures representing a long lineage of régulos and their spouses who have become ancestors of the house can be found. Whilst the earliest of these representations have not survived, of great interest are those representing three indigenous chiefs of the 20th century (1920-1967). These appear to represent Europeans, not only through physical features but through European military or civilian clothing (see fig. 17). To answer why these foreign elements were incorporated into a pre-existing cultural tradition, Carvalho draws upon the work of
Taussig (1993) and Stoller (1995), suggesting that assertive mimesis, as a political act, offered a means to understand these Europeanised representations of the régulos (chiefs). Anthropomorphic and Europeanised representations provided the régulo-ancestor with attributes of power, ‘mimetically integrating the symbols of an alien power as a way to control it’ (Carvalho 2002: 109). Through combining elements of a new power in a traditional figuration, this anthropomorphic statuary was argued to reflect indigenous attempts to integrate and to control powerful forces and symbols of the coloniser.

Figure 17: Anthropomorphic funerary carvings from Guinea Bissau with European attire. Images from Carvalho (2002: 106)

4.6 Discussion

In spite of the diverse nature of the cultural groups drawn upon above, common approaches, practices and beliefs associated with mimetic strategies can be isolated in these case studies. Whilst not intended to imply that such beliefs and practices will be shared by all cultural groups practicing assertive mimesis, and whilst noting also that not all cultural groups may have employed this form of mimesis, these studies provide an important starting point to consider what may be shared beliefs relating to a particular mimetic practice amongst broad cultural groups. At the core of the groups studied, there appears to be a shared belief in the presence of a spirit world, which has the ability to interfere with and affect change in the physical world. In the case of the Cuna, Baule, Owerri Igbo and Ciao, assertive mimetic strategies were perceived of as a mechanism through which to facilitate and exact change in this spirit world, which would produce particular benefits in
the physical world. For the Owerii Igbo and Cuna, drawing upon European symbols and incorporating them into indigenous belief systems was believed to provide living individuals with access to European powers, whilst for the Ciao and Baule, it was recently deceased ancestors and spirit partners that were able to draw upon this power.

Each of the case studies was deliberately selected due to the presence of anthropomorphic representation. In each of these modern colonial contexts, the anthropomorphic representations discussed appear to have been individuals rather than divinities (although the Cuna figures may have copied European saints) perhaps due to the monotheistic nature of Christian religion. What this phenomenon may represent, is the desire of colonised groups to access the power that European colonisers themselves were perceived to possess, powers that were not attributed to a particular divinity. This stands in contrast to the Roman colonies (where many people did not have a tradition of deity anthropomorphisation before the conquest), where there were numerous gods to copy and where colonized subjects appear to have opted to worship divinities, and emperors as divinities. It is also worth noting that the Owerri Igbo - as well as European colonial officers - placed models of European goods in Mbari houses, suggesting that it was not simply characteristics or powers that were desired by colonised groups, but that assertive mimetic practices could also operate as an attempt to acquire or acquire power over physical goods.

In each of these case studies then, it can be said that European symbols were incorporated into and presented in a material and manner that belong to lengthy indigenous traditions. It is important to remember however, that these traditions are diverse, and the means by which European symbols were incorporated were variable. Returning to the Baule spirit spouse statuary, a tradition pre-dating European colonial intervention, it will be recalled that these statuettes came to be represented with pith helmets and colonial uniforms for example. It may also be recalled that in the case of the Ciao, European figures came to be carved on post mortem statuary, a practice which although previously lacking anthropomorphism, predated European interaction. This difference is an important one, as it emphasises the varying ways that colonial interaction facilitated changes to indigenous traditions. For the Baule, this involved primarily superficial changes to the clothing of a pre-existing statuette type, whose distinctive and culturally desirable physiognomy remained unchanged. In the case of the Ciao, previously non-
anthropomorphic funerary representations became anthropomorphic, and crucially, were depicted with European features. What is common to both cases, in spite of the lack of anthropomorphic tradition in Caio funerary practices, is that European traditions are drawn in some way into pre-existing traditions, rather than replacing indigenous traditions. The important point to take from this, is that there were multiple, diverse ways in which European symbols, or the symbols of a colonising power were drawn into indigenous belief systems, and that the presence of these coloniser or European symbols is not necessarily indicative of an acculturative process, but rather of an engagement with these symbols. It is this engagement, and the way that European or coloniser symbols can be drawn into indigenous systems that can reveal new insights into colonial interactions – crucially we must consider the various ways that these symbols may have been engaged with without simply seeing something as acculturative.

4.7 Conclusion

The case studies presented here were selected on the basis that they relate to the production of sculpture and reliefs, the focus of this investigation. It is important to emphasise that assertive mimetic strategies were not exclusively employed in the production of statuary but across a wide range of processes and interactions (see Frazer 1935). What these case studies have demonstrated is that to analyse material culture in terms of assertive mimesis rather than simple emulation provides an insight into the interchanges, belief systems, power relations and modes of identity that marked cultural encounters. Assertive mimesis was a powerful tool in the indigenous-coloniser dialogue, a means to disrupt the colonial encounter through the appropriation and control the symbols and power of the coloniser. The incorporation of European symbols was not simply indicative of an acceptance of a European way, or the desire to become European, it was a means through which indigenous populations were able to contest and construct their own power and identity in a much changed world using the power of assertive mimesis, representing an indigenous engagement with new goods, ideas and beliefs. To consider artefacts through an assertive mimetic lens provides a radical new way of analysing artefacts, and specifically a way in which to analyse artefacts of the Roman provinces. The case studies presented above demonstrate how assertive mimesis has had a wide currency
in the recent colonial past – so why not consider this phenomenon in the Roman past too?

Whilst scholars, particularly anthropologists, have engaged with assertive mimetic theory, the purpose of this thesis is to consider what assertive mimesis may have accomplished in the Roman provinces, beyond operating as a strategy of subversion (see the discussion of Jimenez in Chapter 3). The forthcoming chapters will present in more detail the ways in which assertive mimetic concepts can be used to provide more nuanced understandings of Roman statuary.
Chapter 5. Religious Interaction in the Roman provinces: Reconciling Approaches and Recognising Ambiguity

5.1 Introduction

Through the body of work presented in the preceding chapter, I have sought to situate assertive mimesis as a strategy employed to negotiate colonial encounters. Conceptualising assertive mimesis in this way will naturally raise the wider question of where this model sits in relation to other concepts of cultural mixing – is it simply another synonym for hybridity and syncretism, or, does it provide for a more nuanced understanding of the complex processes at play during colonial encounters? To answer this, it is essential to draw upon the discussion in Chapter 3 to consider how the various models of interpretation have impacted the understandings of provincial statuary; how these may overlap, where they diverge and the issues arising from the use of particular approaches or terminology.

As may be recalled from Chapter 1, it was shown that this research is taking place in the context of a deconstruction and reorientation of conventional understandings of the provincial statue (owing largely to postcolonial approaches) on the one hand, and on the other, the entrenched nature of the emulative art-historical approach that continues to influence current interpretations. Whilst the postcolonial turn in Roman archaeology has brought new interpretations of cultural interactions, against the backdrop of this tension between old and new approaches there has been a tendency to overlook the need to clearly define what is encompassed by the use of a particular term and the multiple ways that statuary can be interpreted. The resulting milieu is a confused web of ill-defined terms built upon this lack of discussion. In some cases, the various terms of cultural mixing have been used interchangeably having become synonymous with one another, whilst in other cases, the same term has been used with great disparity (Stewart 1999: 2007, 2011; Knorr 2010: 731). The ensuing discussion aims to not only allay some of the confusion arising from the often synonymous and interchangeable terms of cultural mixing, but to highlight the tendency to conceptualise each strategy as distinct and bounded, and, crucially, as mutually
exclusive. The problem with such a rigid approach is that it blinds us to the often multiple strategies and ambiguous messages encoded in artefacts, or the multiple ways in which they can be interpreted. To deem an artefact simply as acculturative, for example, immediately limits our interpretation – it leaves no room to consider how acceptance and resistance to a colonial presence may have been coeval, or how different viewers may have interpreted a statue in diverging ways. To argue that each strategy was mutually exclusive and that characteristics were unique to each strategy does an injustice to the complex and intricate process of cultural interaction and identity negotiation. As I will demonstrate, many of the characteristics which have been deemed exclusive to one particular strategy of cultural mixing, can in fact be shown to straddle a range of strategies – a feature, it can be argued, that facilitates or contributes to the intentional or unintentional ambiguity of representation (see Aldhouse-Green 2012 on flexible intention, where the artist has no control over how an object is interpreted by others).

5.2 Analysing Provincial Religious Sculpture

As discussed in Chapter 3, the intimate association between Romanisation and some readings of syncretism has had an important impact on how provincial religion and statuary was understood. Syncretism, encapsulating a variety of responses, whether representing indigenous deities welcomed into the Roman pantheon in accordance with Roman norms, the equation of an indigenous and a Roman deity, or the welcoming a Graeco-Roman deity into an indigenous belief system, was understood by scholars such as Haverfield (1923) and Henig (1997) in terms of Romanisation. As a result, it may be recalled, in terms of divine representation the Classical form was considered the standard to which all indigenous forms aspired. Any divergence from this Classical form was attributed to a lack of ability among provincial artists rather than being seen as a deliberate action to articulate something other than the total acceptance of the Roman world view or religion.

From this arises a pressing issue which primarily concerns the judgement of artefacts deemed emulative. Provincial statues were scrutinised according to Classical aesthetic ideals, based upon the aforementioned assumption that all provincial forms aspired to look like their Classical counterparts (also see Chapter 3 for a discussion of this process). The existence of a universal desire to reproduce a Classical prototype was not questioned. What
was open to discussion however was the competence of the execution – specifically, if an artefact should be judged as a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ copy.

The idea that an artefact could be judged in relation to the Classical exemplar however introduces ambiguity and instability into the classification and creates the potential for multiple interpretations (which may or may not have been the artist’s intention). It is now that I return to the earlier statement concerning the rigid ascription of a particular characteristic of representation to one sole strategy of cultural mixing; I want to consider here what this means for the reproduction of the Roman form. As has been discussed, the reproduction of the Roman form has been traditionally been ascribed as emulative, regardless of the competency or faithfulness of reproduction. A ‘poor’ copy was still considered emulative, as it was said to aspire to the Classical form. But what if it did not aspire to look wholly Roman, but was guided by alternative principles of production? The problem with bracketing everything that exhibits some form of correspondence to the Roman form as emulative is that it completely overlooks the fact that alternate strategies of cultural interaction which present similarly to emulation may be at play. Whilst in some cases ‘poor’ copies may have been due to a lack of artistic ability – in other cases this divergence was undoubtedly deliberate and intentional. The postcolonial turn in Roman archaeology shifted the trajectory of enquiry beyond the simple emulative assumption that every statue diverging from Classical norms was a crude example of a Classical model. With reference to the many instances whereby a statue has simply been deemed as a poor attempt to copy a Roman model – it began to be argued that this was perhaps intentional, that something other than the desire to directly emulate the Roman form was at play (Webster 1995; Green 2003, 2012).

The postcolonial readings of provincial statuary not only provided new ways in which to think about cultural interaction in the provinces, but highlighted the possibility that multiple provincial strategies and approaches to Roman material culture could in fact present in the same way. It is precisely because of this that issues related to terminology and representation become clear. To discuss first the issue of representation, we can take the example of Creolisation (see section 3.3.1.3). This model was applied to the study of provincial statuary by Webster (2001) to demonstrate that an engagement with the material culture of a coloniser was not simply an acculturative practice, but a means for subjugated
populations to construct their own identity. In terms of statuary, Creole processes are said to be manifest through the blending of elements from both cultures. Whilst proponents of the Creole model would then argue that provincial statuary diverging from Classical models may indicate the blending of indigenous and non-indigenous iconography and belief, adherents of the syncretism as Romanisation approach could likewise argue that what is really shown, is a poor attempt to copy a Roman model, or a benign process of accommodation whereby indigenous groups welcomed Graeco-Roman deities. The use of Roman stylistic traditions including divine anthropomorphic representation to represent indigenous deities, alongside the addition of typical indigenous attributes, such as horns and torcs to representations of Classical deities, were under this syncretism as Romanisation approach either entirely overlooked or considered as indicative of a laissez-faire syncretism, rather than reflecting the complex and dynamic process of religious interaction in the provinces. This stands in contrast to the Creole model of interpretation, which is built upon a scrutiny of these juxtaposed symbols and conventions in such a way that it provides an insight into the negotiations, tensions and power dynamics that mark the colonial encounter that extends way beyond the simplistic syncretic approach.

The discussion above has highlighted that are the multiple and divergent ways that a single provincial statue, and processes of syncretism, can be interpreted. The presence of indigenous and non-indigenous attributes in the divine representations of Roman Britain (or any other province) could be interpreted as indicative of either a benign process of syncretism, or as a contested encounter reflecting the power asymmetries of the prevailing situation. It has become increasingly argued that such statuary may perhaps be intentionally or unintentionally ambiguous, so that it could reflect varying processes of religious interaction, read by individual viewers in accordance to their own beliefs.

The diversity of these interpretations and diverging viewpoints of what provincial statuary may signify reinforces the need for a clear, well defined use of terms and approaches, and it is now that I turn to the issues arising from the use of ill-defined terminology. The terms syncretic and Creole have been used interchangeably to describe for example the Virgin of Guadalupe and the Orishas of Santeria, yet syncretism in the Creole sense encapsulates something rather different to the passive conceptualisation of syncretism inherent in some earlier readings for example (see section 3.4.1 for a discussion

80
of the complexities of syncretism). In colonial settings, marked by great power inequalities, subjugated indigenous populations or non-indigenous slave populations were forced to conform to the religion of the dominant colonial group. Creole religions often resulted from the desire to continue aspects of indigenous worship under enforced acceptance of a dominant religion. One strategy consisted of finding similarities between an indigenous and non-indigenous deity, using the deity of a dominant religion as a mask through which to worship an indigenous deity. This recognition of similarity was only the beginning of a process however, not the end. It did not simply reflect the benign accommodation of a new god or the acceptance of a new religion. What resulted was an integration of culture and religion resulting in new and variable forms. To provide an insight into the nuances and complexities of this particular religious interaction in the specific context of colonial domination, I will draw upon the religion of Santeria.

In 1511, the first of 702,000 African slaves arrived in Cuba, many whom were of Yoruban origin (Lefever 1996: 319). The enslaved, as elsewhere in the colonies, were prohibited from practicing their indigenous religion. In spite of this oppression, many of their religious traditions survived in the religion which came to be practiced by the slave population, known as Santeria or the way of the saints. How did this religion come to be? Was it syncretic, as in the benign accommodation of non-indigenous deities, or syncretic in a Creole sense? To answer this we must consider the processes of religious oppression and integration. The slave populations of Cuba were subject to intense religious oppression, expected to conform to Catholicism and abandon their own beliefs. Catholicism however became a means through which the Yoruba were able to continue their religious beliefs. Like Catholics, the Yoruba believed in intermediaries that operated between an all powerful god and man. For the Catholics, these were the saints, and for the Yoruba, Orishas. As parallels were drawn between particular saints and Orishas, the Regla de Ocha (the cult of the Orisha) was born (Brody 1993). Taken at face value, this process of association between a Catholic saint and Yoruban Orisha was and has continued to be considered as syncretic in an acculturative sense. The ‘Seven African Powers’ have been cited as evidencing such a process, as seven Catholic saints surrounding a crucified Christ are each inscribed with the name of an Orisha, a process considered to identify a particular saint with a particular Orisha. Here similarities can be drawn with the processes of Interpretatio and acculturation
in the Roman provinces discussed previously. This syncretic approach to interpretation however only scratches the surface and is limited in its understanding, based upon the assumption of a simple and complete equation of two deities or saints. What this overlooks are the dynamic processes of interaction – and crucially, that the African legacy in Santeria was the result of resistance to religious oppression.

Whilst the Catholic saints came to occupy an important place in Santerian worship, Catholicism was not passively accepted on the basis that the saints were direct equivalents of particular Orishas. Rather, the Catholic cult of the saints became a means through which indigenous traditions could continue and through which new traditions evolved. The result was a thoughtfully and deliberately constructed religion, where Catholic saints played an important role but critically did not supplant or assume primacy over the Orishas, nor did they operate as a simple façade to conceal the illicit worship of Orishas (Murphy 2011: 139). Whilst the beliefs associated with the interactions of the saints and Orishas varied amongst adherents according to their level of religious knowledge (see section 8.5), crucially, it was held that the saints and Orishas could be at once both the same and different, operating as an aspect of one another where you ‘acquire strengths from both but don’t get them confused’ (Murphy 2011: 157).

Santerian shrines, if one looks closely, illustrate this Creole nature. Ostensibly, to an outsider, the shrine is devoted to a Catholic saint, as images of saints often provide the only example of religious anthropomorphic representation. The lack of anthropomorphic representation of the Orishas does not however mean that the Orishas are not represented, quite the contrary. Each Orisha has a panoply of associated accoutrements and paraphernalia, including colours, plants, animals, foods and beads (Brody 1993: 7). These attributes can be found adorning the shrine of their associated Orisha. An altar to Chango for example, will often feature his sacred stone, the otan, housed in a wooden bowl decorated with red and white beads. An array of accoutrement associated with Chango - his double bladed thunder axe (oche), beaded ram’s horns (ogues) and bata drums usually complete a Chango altar (Murphy 2011: 146). On a Creole Chango altar (see fig. 18), these accoutrements are conventionally accompanied by an image of Saint Barbara (Brody 1993).
Parallels were drawn between Chango and Saint Barbara due to their association with fire and lightening, and specifically the means by which lightening was used to attain retribution for wrongdoing. Additionally, both Saint Barbara and Chango were seen to provide protection against injustice (Murphy 2011: 147). It was such parallels which resulted in the syncretism between the two, ultimately resulting in this creolised phenomenon whereby they were not simply considered the equivalent of one another, but one component of each other. Their interactions served to enhance the spiritual experience of a follower, creating new beliefs systems rooted in both the new and the traditional. What this powerfully demonstrates, it that whilst something Creole is often considered syncretic, and the two terms often used interchangeably, the conceptualisation of syncretism as employed in terms of Creolisation stands in stark contrast to the syncretism that is employed in an acculturative sense. It is for this reason, that defining what it meant by a particular term is crucial, yet often lacking in many discussions of religious interaction and contributing to the arising confusion.

5.3 Discussion

The dominant concept of Romanisation, intimately linked with the idea of laissez-faire syncretism, perpetuated a restricted approach to religious mixture that was blind to the array of complex strategies employed by those absorbed into the Roman Empire. It is
perhaps not surprising that the concept of Romanisation, once dominant in 20th century Roman archaeology (and remaining so to an extent), was to have such a formative impact on the interpretation of religious change in the provinces. After all, provincial religious statuary could easily be made to fit into the acculturative paradigm. Religious sculptures that conformed to or drew upon the Roman form in any way could be said to be indicative of Romanisation. As we have seen, even those which radically diverged from the Classical form were said to have ultimately aspired to look Roman, the reason they did not, was, traditionally, attributed to artistic incompetence. That provincial material culture ostensibly conformed to or drew upon the Roman form was seen to corroborate the existence of a universal desire to become Roman.

The revisionist accounts and postcolonial turn encapsulated the desire to problematise the previous analyses of what were undoubtedly complex and dynamic processes (see section 3.4). The engagement with new models of cultural interaction widened the interpretive repertoire, so that it was possible to better understand the complex and dynamic changes and responses to Roman hegemony. The complex and multifaceted nature of syncretism and the diverse approaches that it encapsulates is now widely acknowledged by scholars (see section 3.4) and the tools of analysis at our disposal are argued to have revealed not only the multiple strategies open to provincial populations, but the propensity of these multiple strategies of cultural interaction to present in very similar ways – something which has also contributed to the confused definition and interchangability of terms. It is therefore crucial to define clearly what is encapsulated in the use of the term syncretism. Whilst this recognition of the diverse and multiple strategies open to indigenous populations has enhanced our understanding of the complexities of the relationships in the provinces, it brings with it a new set of issues. If the strategies exercised and manifest through statuary have very different intentions but are presented in the same or similar ways, how will we ever know the true intentions behind its production? Is this ambiguity intentional?

There is no one simple answer although an in-depth contextual analysis may support specific interpretations. Whilst it is important to remember that not all statues were ambiguous and may have simply reflected the desire to Romanise, others were undoubtedly ambiguous, perhaps intentionally so. The multiple ways that a statue or relief can be
interpreted has been represented in the diagram shown in fig. 19 and an annotated version can be found in Appendix B. In this diagram, I have drawn upon several representations of Mercury (including one of divine marriage) to demonstrate how these statues and reliefs can be variously interpreted. I have placed acculturation (taken as indicative of the equivalence between an indigenous and Graeco-Roman deity but where the Graeco-Roman form of representation takes precedence) and acculturative accommodation (the acceptance of Graeco-Roman deities into indigenous belief systems where there are no perceived indigenous equivalents) under the broader title of passive syncretism. The reason for this is that both processes have been conventionally understood to arise from the benign willingness of polytheistic religions to accommodate one another’s gods, either as equivalents of indigenous deities or as new entities. Both of these processes have previously been understood by some scholars in terms of Romanisation, where either the Roman forms take precedence in cases of equivalence, or where indigenous populations willingly adhere to the superior Roman culture, and thus Roman religion (see for example Henig 1997). As both processes are manifest in the same way, it is difficult to establish the particular process that is represented. It is perhaps the case that different people interpreted the same representation differently, as either indicating equivalence or the acceptance of a new deity. It is possible however that some individuals, in spite of recognising equivalences between an indigenous and Graeco-Roman divinity were unwilling to consider them as one and the same. Whilst the large head and schematic body typical of these representations can be seen as a poor attempt to reproduce the Classical form, they can, through the lens of postcolonialism be read entirely differently. The ‘wings’ on the head of Mercury may be read as horns, representing a deliberate strategy that has resulted from comparisons and similarities drawn between Mercury and an indigenous, horn bearing deity, resulting in something completely new as a result of Creole processes. For these sculptures then, we must develop a flexible approach which recognises and allows for polyvocal interpretations, rather than insisting upon on interpretation, and one reading of it, or another. Central to these analyses must be the recognition that these sculptures were perhaps intentionally ambiguous, communicating at once different messages to different audiences, or were unintentionally read as such.
Figure 19: Responses to Cultural Interaction: Spectrum of possibilities
5.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this discussion has been to emphasise the issues and complexities associated with interpreting provincial statuary, and the dangers of the desire to produce neat, bounded interpretations. What I have suggested is that in many cases it is not possible to definitively designate a statue or relief as the product of a single model of cultural interaction, as neat and desirable as this may be. The reality is murky and complex, and whether or not a statue deliberately employed and thus displayed the hallmarks of multiple strategies of cultural mixing, it is clear that the statuary can be read in multiple ways. It is within this complex milieu that I propose to add the concept of assertive mimesis: not to argue that it was the only strategy that was open to or employed by provincial populations, but in order to demonstrate that this was one of many strategies that may have been adopted. In positioning assertive mimesis as a strategy employed by indigenous populations as part of the complex process of identity formation and negotiation in the provinces, we are provided with new insights into provincial statuary. The discussion above serves as a reminder of the multiple approaches to and interpretations of provincial statuary, and as an acknowledgement that assertive mimesis is but one of collective of approaches that may have been employed by indigenous populations. This model of interpretation is not positioned as a universal model to interpret all provincial statuary, but a means to provide new insights into a body of statuary that is typically overlooked. How the consideration of assertive mimetic strategies may add to or change understandings of provincial statuary can be found in an amended version of the aforementioned diagram and flowchart, found in Appendices E and F which complements the discussion in the forthcoming chapters.

Having stated that assertive mimesis is conceptualised in this thesis as a discreet strategy of cultural interactivity, there is scope to consider in more depth where this sits specifically in relation to other models of cultural interaction, and how such models may be intricately bound. To accomplish this however, a thorough analysis of how assertive mimetic strategies were employed in the provinces, and what this was intended to achieve is required. This analysis can be found in Chapters 8-10.
Chapter 6. Iron Age Britain

6.1 Introduction

Under the dominion of Rome, a body of statuary was produced in Britain that in terms of content and style was unlike anything that had gone before it. The subject of this sculpture included the gods of the Roman pantheon, depicted in a manner that both conformed to and diverged from Classical norms of representation. Whilst the recognisable attributes of the gods remained, there were clear divergences from the conventional Graeco-Roman forms of representation. The purpose of this thesis is to consider if these divergences were the result of the mobilisation of assertive mimetic strategies, whereby non-indigenous symbols or deities were appropriated and drawn into indigenous belief systems, and what this could reveal about processes of interaction in the provinces. The present chapter will focus on the religion and stylistic repertoire of British Iron Age art to consider the ways in which Graeco-Roman deities were drawn into the indigenous belief system, and how this was manifest with reference to divine and figural representation. An awareness of varying British Iron Age stylistic techniques will facilitate the identification of their continued use and influence upon Romano-British statuary. The discussion will touch upon various issues which continue to have a far reaching impact on current understandings of British Iron Age art, and I will begin the chapter by addressing a number of caveats concerning particular terms and concepts that will be used throughout, including the idea of pan-Celtic identity and the impact this idea has had on the use of the phrase ‘Celtic art’. This will be followed by a discussion and analysis of the genesis of Iron Age art on the continent and its impact in Britain, as well as addressing the relationship between art, religion and society.

6.1 The Invention of a Pan-Celtic Identity

The term ‘Celtic’ has been used to describe the prehistoric peoples inhabiting central and Western Europe as well as their art, implying the existence of a homogenous cultural group with a shared ethnicity. The use of term can be traced to Classical Greece, where Hecataeus (c. 500 BC) and Herodotus (c. 450 BC) referred to the ‘Keltoi’ who inhabited broad areas of Western Europe (Taylor 2012: 267; Champion 2012: 268; Cunliffe 2004: 2; Harding 2007: 3). By the 18th century, the term was adopted by linguists in their assertion of a family of Iron Age European languages; and the concept of a shared language was
extended to imply a shared ethnicity and a pan-Celtic identity, a belief which came to dominate perceptions of the European Iron Age (James 1993: 8; James 2011).

This idea of a pan-Celtic identity has been increasingly challenged, cited as a modern invention that does not reflect the reality of Iron Age Europe (Collis 2003; Harding 2007; James 2011; Champion 2012: 268; Taylor 2012: 268; Webster, 2015;). Whilst Iron Age Europeans may have shared particular cultural traits, they were in no way a homogenous ethnic group. The use of the term ‘Celtic’ as an ethnic marker has thus been increasingly denigrated as inappropriate and misleading, not only in the wider European sense but also in the context of the British Iron Age. The diversity exhibited in terms of settlement patterns, trade connections, disposal of the dead and material culture present a reality that appears far removed from this idea of a culturally homogeneous group (Cunliffe 2004: 70). Britain, like the continent, was not a single cultural unit, but a conglomeration of disparate peoples. Broad cultural trends, including art, may have been shared across a range of indigenous groups and geographical locations, but this by no means should be taken as indicative of cultural homogeneity. The deconstruction of this notion of homogeneity is integral to developing our understanding of the European Iron Age and whilst it is not possible to discuss the finer details of regional variation here, Cunliffe (2004) provides an intricately detailed exploration of regional diversity in his study of Iron Age Britain.

The notion of a pan-Celtic identity had a formative impact on the interpretation of Iron Age art. ‘Celtic’ art became a catch all term encompassing work ranging from La Tène metalwork to medieval manuscripts (Webster 2015: 123-124). Just as the notion of a pan Celtic deity has been subject to mounting criticism, so too has the concept of ‘Celtic’ art. The notion of a homogenous artistic style that extended throughout Iron Age Europe (and into the medieval period) has been increasingly denigrated as a misleading and gross oversimplification of regional and wider geographical trends. As such, the term ‘Celtic’ has been abandoned in this study, both in terms of art and as an ethnic marker, and is used only when quoting the work of other scholars. Whilst rejecting the idea that there is a ‘Celtic’ art extending throughout Europe during the Iron Age and into the medieval period, the art of Iron Age Europe can be described as a broadly similar complex, with artistic trends shared across Iron Age Europe. It is for this reason that both British and continental examples will be drawn upon in this chapter.
6.2 Iron Age Art: A Timeline of Development

The Hallstatt period, the name of which was taken from an Austrian type site, refers to the late Bronze and early Iron Age of central and Western Europe. This period has conventionally been divided into four phases, A to D, where a period in phase C (c. 800-750 BC) marked the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age (Cunliffe 2004: 3). It was during this period that iron came in to general use, not entirely replacing but co-existing alongside the use of bronze. Typical Hallstatt objects ranged from weaponry such as swords, axes, javelins, daggers, spears and shields to jewellery including brooches, rings and glass beads. These objects were typically decorated with geometric patterns, bird motifs, spirals and knot work. The Hallstatt D period (c. 650-457) was succeeded by the La Tène period which has been traditionally cited as the birth of ‘Celtic’ art. Owing to the above discussion however, I will refer to this art simply as La Tène rather than ‘Celtic’ (see fig. 20) (Garrow and Gosden 2012: 16; Garrow et al. 2009; Cunliffe 2004). It is important to emphasise here that in using the term ‘La Tène’ to denote a characteristic body of art, I am not implying that this existed in any pure, fixed form. Just as Roman art has been increasingly conceptualised as fluid, it is beneficial to view La Tène art as such, that is, as the result of diverse traditions interacting, shifting and evolving.

La Tène art, like its Hallstatt predecessor did not remain static, and was transformed by internal and external influences, including Greek and Etruscan designs. Its varying forms on
the continent were categorised and dated, most notably by Paul Jacobsthal (1944), whose framework providing broad chronologies for La Tène styles is summarised below (fig. 21).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I: Early</td>
<td>c500-475 BC</td>
<td>Classical floral and geometric, non-continuous patterns with Classical and oriental influences</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II: Waldalgesheim</td>
<td>350 BC</td>
<td>Continuous tendril and swirled vegetal style with human and animal faces.</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III: Sword style</td>
<td>250 BC</td>
<td>Sub-type of Waldalgesheim, influenced by Hellenistic art</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III: Plastic style</td>
<td>250 BC</td>
<td>Stylised human and animal forms, bossed and curved Pieces</td>
<td><img src="https://example.com/image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


6.3 The Birth of La Tène Art in Britain

La Tène art originating in continental Europe during the La Tène A period (c. 475 BC) was believed to have entered Britain via the movement of goods, peoples and or ideas. The relative weighting and influence of each of these factors on the presence and growth of art in Iron Age Britain has been widely debated. Whilst earlier narratives attributed the introduction and evolution of La Tène art wholly to the migration of continental Europeans, recent analyses have favoured a more balanced approach, which considers the growth of art in Iron Age Britain as a culmination of strong trade links and the movement of people and
ideass (Giles 2012; Cunliffe 2004). Whilst within such conceptualisations the migration of Europeans is still considered as a factor in introduction and development of British art forms, this is in a much reduced capacity, where the numbers and scale of movement is minimal (Cunliffe 2004: 6-31, 83; Gosden et al 2009: 92; Champion 2012: 268).

From this La Tène art, a distinctive insular style arose in Britain, leading de Navarro in 1952 (Cunliffe 2004: 515) and later Stead (1985) to modify Jacobsthal’s continental framework (Taylor 2012: 267). Stead suggested that the style categorised by Jacobsthal as Stage III gave rise to the insular style which he designated as Stage IV, which ran between 250 and 100 BC. This was argued to have been succeeded by stage V, which spanned the 1st centuries BC and AD (see fig. 22). These insular styles which drew upon the continental Waldalgesheim style were characterised by loose tendrils and palmettes, and the use of hatching and stippling. The illusionary nature and ambiguous forms inherent of La Tène art contribute to what Gosden and Garrow (2012, 4) refer to as the performative aspect of Iron Age art, whereby it provided a means to express and think about relationships between the mortal and supernatural world (see also Gosden et al 2009: 93, Harding 2007: 126 and Green 2013).

Figure 22: The Desborough Mirror, late insular style c. 50 BC – AD 50. Image from the British Museum

6.4 Dating Issues

 Whilst continental chronologies or associations with objects of an absolute date have been used to provide dates for British artefacts, this has not been without problem
(Hamilton et al 2015: 1; Garrow and Gosden 2012: 79). Most notably, when such approaches have been used as the basis for dating British material, there is a distinct lack of La Tène style artefacts that can be dated to the period between 4th and 2nd centuries BC. The majority of the material has been dated to the 1st century BC or later, which puts it at a much later date than on the continent (Cunliffe 2004; Garrow and Gosden 2012: 79). British La Tène art was thus seen to flourish just as it tapered off on the continent (Garrow and Gosden 2012: 92). Recent investigations have sought to address these issues, citing assumptions and poorly understood archaeological contexts as the possible cause of dating discrepancies (Garrow and Gosden 2012: 112).

The most substantial of these investigations was undertaken by Garrow and Gosden (2012), who sought to produce a set of radiocarbon determinations for Iron Age material culture of a ‘Celtic’ style. The results led the investigators to conclude that the dating of some elements of British ‘Celtic’ art might be pushed back to an earlier date. The possibility that groups of British artefacts previously assigned a later date may have been in use between the 5th and 4th centuries BC has important ramifications. The attribution of earlier dates to insular style artefacts may reveal that rather than a direct (and later) adoption and adaptation of continental forms, development in Britain ran parallel to the continent. The findings have also had important implications regarding the typological frameworks of Jacobsthal and Stead, suggesting that rather than a succession of stages whereby one style replaced the other, there was an accumulation of motifs and styles, so whilst Stage II preceded Stage III which preceded Stage IV, Stage III did not replace Stage II and so on, so that varying styles were coeval on some pieces (Garrow and Gosden 2012: 105).

Having covered the genesis of Iron Age art and addressed a number of issues related to the terminology and dating of Iron Age material culture, there is one additional element which needs to be addressed before specific examples of Iron Age British art can be considered. Traditional studies of Iron Age art have been dominated by art-historical approaches focussing on stylistic sequences and chronologies. Whilst important, there was little attempt to consider the role and operation of art within Iron Age societies, the importance of which was discussed in Chapter 1. Gell (1998) argued that rather than a reflection of aesthetic ideals, art was imbued with agency, playing an active role in relationships that shaped daily life. To understand the art of the British Iron Age then, it
must be put into the wider context of everyday life. The following will thus provide a brief overview of the current knowledge concerning Iron Age cosmologies and belief systems, providing an essential base through which to explore the concepts, themes and purpose of the art of the Iron Age.

6.5 Iron Age Cosmologies and Belief Systems

The pre and later proto-historic nature of the British Iron Age means that we have little written evidence to illuminate contemporary world views and beliefs of Iron Age Britons. Much of what is known, particularly about the divine is derived from inference, an approach which as discussed in Chapter 3 is considerably problematic. Although the accounts of Caesar and other Classical authors may be illuminating, they must be used with caution, as should vernacular literature. Archaeological evidence may provide the most tantalising glimpse into what was undoubtedly a complex set of world views, with burial practices and votive deposits forming the basis of much of the available evidence (Cunliffe 2004: 183). From this evidence, it has been widely agreed that Iron Age religion was animistic, centred upon the worship of nature and the elements and formed an integral part of daily life, where natural features such as lakes, mountains and rivers were regarded as the dwelling places of the divine, and the divine themselves were associated with or conceptualised as natural features, or particular birds or animals (Fliegel 1990: 95; James 2003: 88). It is unlikely that there was a universal pantheon of Iron Age deities, but rather that worship was centred on highly localised deities (Newell 1934: 74; Ross 1959: 41; Ledwith 1979: 56; Webster 1986: 23; Green 1996: 465; Cunliffe 2004: 566; Joy 2011: 407; Giles 2012: 37; Garrow and Gosden 2012: 23). The moon and trees, symbolic of the transformative cycles of death, resurrection and renewal may also have been the focus of much worship. The presence of sacred groves noted in a number of Classical sources would appear to confirm the numinosity associated with trees (Ledwith 1979: 297; Webster 1986: 17; Garrow and Gosden 2012: 7).

Religious beliefs, that is, those beliefs related to the supernatural world, are closely entwined with cosmology, defined as the ways in which people understand the world they live in and their place within it (Armit 2012: 13). Combined, the cosmologies and religion of the Iron Age gave rise to a set of powerful and enduring traditions, which were subject to
local understanding and interpretation, modified, contested and reconstructed throughout the period. Contrary to modern conceptualisations of art fostered during the Enlightenment, art in the Iron Age did not exist in isolation to these world views and beliefs, but played an active role in facilitating, maintaining and structuring relationships with the supernatural and each other. The deposition of items in water sources or in the earth has for example been interpreted as the manifestation of the reciprocity upon which Iron Age social and religious systems were based – marking an attempt to propitiate the gods to ensure divine favour. The interconnected nature of belief systems, expressed and facilitated through art is a key thematic trend of this chapter and where possible, descriptive analyses are accompanied by discussions of the wider possible roles and function of this art.

In seeking to draw out the interconnectedness of belief systems, daily life and art, it is helpful to consider how belief systems may have found expression in other media, to emphasise the interconnectedness of belief systems with all aspects of Iron Age life. It has become increasingly accepted that religion was inseparable from everyday life, embedded within, and indivisible from, the world of the everyday (Bradley 2003). The interpretation of Iron Age sites across Britain has led to a growing awareness of the potential impact of cosmological beliefs and principles in the ordering and structuring of everyday life (Parker-Pearson 1999: 43; Bradley 2003). The cycles of transformation marking the human life course are believed to have been ascribed with great importance, enmeshed in a wider web encompassing the divine, cycles of solar and lunar activity, harvesting and settlement occupation (Ledwith 1979: 297; Garrow and Gosden 2012: 7). These transformative processes were intricately bound to the notion of reciprocity, whereby individuals and groups were bound in reciprocal relationship with each other and the supernatural (Garrow and Gosden 2012: 7). Events and phenomena such as the choice and placement of grave goods, and the orientation of doorways may have been deliberate strategies which reflect, conform to or participate in specific cosmologies and belief systems - strategies that may have been designed to maintain the productive capacities of world.

The role of cosmologies in shaping the lives and practices of Iron Age communities was the subject of Parker-Pearson’s investigation into architectural design and burial rites. Drawing together evidence from across the British Isles, Parker-Pearson (1999: 43) concluded that the orientation of roundhouse doorways operated as a symbolic feature
rather than to serve any practical purpose, such as allowing in maximal sunlight. The position of the doorway was tied to the movement and pattern of the sun, so that the door was aligned on sunrise at the equinoxes or at midwinter. The path of the sun was also considered to dictate the ordering of daily activities in the roundhouse, whereby daytime tasks such as food preparation were performed in the south of the house, and night time activities such as sleeping were confined to the northern areas (Parker-Pearson 1999: 49). Furthermore architectural features, such as the use of internal stone placements may have served to recreate the path of the sun by guiding movement around the house in a sun like direction, as evidenced at A’Cheardach Bheag and Sollas (see Fairhurst 1971; Campbell 1991 in Parker-Pearson 1999: 49). The specific orientation of doorways may also have had a social dimension, whereby the reversal of the prominent tradition of E/SE facing doorways was used as a means to convey social differentiation, drawing upon ideas associated with the rising sun. Parker-Pearson (1999: 49) suggests that it may have been employed to signal elite status, as an individual would occupy the east side of the house and be approached by others from the west, the east being linked again through the movement of and beliefs associated with the sun.7

The material expression of cosmological and religious beliefs may also be apparent in particular burial traditions, including those of the Arras group. In this area of East Yorkshire, the dead were interred in a gravel pit surrounded by a ditched enclosure, a form of burial that was unique in Britain, but with parallels on the continent. Amongst a number of these interments a dismantled cart was placed over or next to the deceased (Giles 2012: 8). The individuals of the cart burials at Kirkburn and Garton Station were oriented in a north-south direction, with the head facing east (Giles 2012: 8; Parker-Pearson 1999: 54). Placed around them were the remains of a pig. Far from a random assortment, the selection and placement of particular anatomical features of the pig appears to have been carefully controlled. The skull and front legs were divided into their left and right components, with the left portion placed on the north end of the body, and the right portion to the south. This phenomenon has been explained by Parker-Pearson (1999: 52) as the manifestation of a

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7 For a critique of this approach see Rachel Pope (2007), who argues that sun-based traditions manifest primarily in communal sites, having little impact on the use of domestic space. Pope nevertheless emphasises the role of cosmology in guiding human action, but warns against attempting to understand these cosmologies though a ‘top-down’ structuralism.
'cosmological grid'. This grid is however reversed in the case of the single female cart burial and may relate to gender and the reversal of particular roles. Such reversals are also apparent in the less ostentatious burials of the region, where the burial goods consisted of a pot and or the humerus of a sheep. The placement of these goods varied according to the gender of the deceased, placed by the feet of a male burial, but in the head and hands of female burials. Whilst the exact meaning of such deliberate acts is likely to remain unknown, the presence of deliberate distinction between placements suggests some form of underlying cosmological principles.

This has been only a brief foray into the cosmologies and religious beliefs of Iron Age societies, some covering broad geographic areas, and other confined to small regional units. The purpose of this is to emphasise the need to put art and material culture into the wider context of Iron Age life. Art and material objects were intimately linked to the performance of religion and expression of cosmological beliefs. An intricately bound web of cosmology and religion structured and organised everyday life - art was one medium to negotiate the world and these beliefs, and it is against this background that Iron Age art must be considered. It is important to consider for example how art relates to cosmology – such as comparing the choice of animals in figurative art with their role and associated beliefs in Iron Age society.

6.6 The Art of Iron Age Britain

The prominent role of Iron Age art in everyday life is demonstrated by its presence in diverse contexts across Britain, from settlements to burials, hoards and rivers. The range of La Tène artefacts produced was broad. Swords, shields, mirrors and torcs were prevalent La Tène objects, whilst animal and human figurines although present appear to have had a more limited distribution (Garrow and Gosden 2012: 31). Whilst the various styles or typologies of Iron Age art have been addressed above, including the development of insular styles, it is important to again emphasise that against the background of transformation and regional variation, one aspect of Iron Age art that was consistent was its complex and ambiguous forms, where abstract designs often give way to human faces, vegetation, or animals (Green 1993: 243; 1998: 23; Gosden and Garrow 2012: 5, 33; see for example the
Wandsworth Shield (fig 23). I previously touched upon the ambiguity and performative aspect of La Tène art and it is to this that I will now return. The ambiguity of La Tène art has come increasingly to be seen as an intentional act of design, indicative of the role of art in the negotiation and expression of relationships between humans and the supernatural world (Gosden and Garrow 2012: 33; Megaw and Megaw 2005: 22). In the following section, the thematic complexes which appear with great frequency in Iron Age art both in Britain and Europe, including animals, will be considered in terms of the broader implications of its use in terms of religion and cosmology, as well as the stylistic techniques used in its presentation, beginning with the head.

Figure 23: The Wandsworth Shield decorated with a combination of repousse and incision techniques with two large birds whose wings develop into tendril motifs. Image from the Werner Forman Archive / Bridgeman Images.

6.7 The Head in Iron Age Art

Imagery relating to the human head is widespread in continental and insular Iron Age art, featuring on a diverse array of accoutrements, from scabbards and belt buckles to brooches, coins and buckets (Fliegel 1990: 88; Green 1993: 242; 1998: 18). The frequency with which the head was depicted in Iron Age art and the presence of curated or modified skull fragments in Iron Age settlements has been linked to Classical sources referring to the Iron Age peoples of Europe as head-hunters (Fliegel 1990: 89; Ross 1992; Green 1993). Consequently, head-hunting came to be seen as a ‘pan-Celtic’ tradition and a central
component of ‘Celtic’ identity. This concept of head-hunting as a ‘pan-Celtic’ tradition has, as with the idea of a ‘pan-Celtic’ identity itself been subject to intense scrutiny over recent years (Armit 2012: 9). In perhaps one of the most influential deconstructions of the concept of a ‘pan-Celtic’ head-hunting tradition, Armit (2012) has argued that although the importance attributed to the head was a European (and wider) phenomenon, the treatment of the head across Europe was diverse. The range of treatments of the head, he argued, reflected various and at times highly localised cosmologies and religious beliefs and accordingly should not be grouped under one ‘pan-Celtic’ tradition.

Certainly across Iron Age Britain it is evident that disparate groups of people employed a range of practices related to the curation and display of the human head (Armit 2012: 8). Whilst regional variations should not be overlooked, the presence of the head motif across wide geographical areas during the Iron Age does provide an insight into broad cosmological beliefs, and a level of importance attached to the head. Some of these beliefs related to the head may have been linked to concepts of fertility and the reproductive aspects of the land (Armit 2012: 43). Other beliefs may have considered the head as the seat of the soul, the source of powerful forces of life, regeneration and wisdom (Lindgren 1980: 8; Webster 1986: 39; Clarke 2002: 107; Megaw and Megaw 2005: 10; Armit 2012: 9; Hutton 2014: 223). It was perhaps thought by some that the head retained this life force and magical powers after death and thus the power of an enemy could be obtained and controlled through the removal and ownership of his head (Webster 1986: 40; Fliegel 1990: 91; Armit 2012: 9). The power of the skull would not only be added to and thus enhance the power of its new owner, but simultaneously ensured that the deceased lacked sufficient power to exact revenge (Cunliffe 2004: 210). Where such beliefs were attributed to the head, it is possible not only heads of enemies that were curated, but also those belonging to powerful or important individuals following their death. It is clear that whilst the head played a central role in artistic representation and was most likely imbued with some sense of spiritual importance, it appears increasingly unlikely that a single cult of the head operated throughout Iron Age Europe (Green 1993: 242; Clarke 2002: 107; Armit 2012: 36)

Complete, partial and semi-abstract heads feature heavily in artistic representation. The prevalence of the head motif in La Tène art, coupled with the rarity of full body representation has been taken as indicative of the importance attributed to the head, and
possibly as a representation of a divinity (Megaw and Megaw 1988: 631; Fliegel 1990: 88, 95; Pearce 2003: 58). Continental representations of the head appear to have been more prolific than in Britain (see for example the sites of Entrement and Roquepertuse in France), although there are well known British examples including the handle mounts of the Aylesford (c. 75-25 BC) and Alkham buckets, the Snettisham torc (75 BC) and the anthropoid hilted swords from north Grimston (Megaw and Megaw 2005: 53) (fig. 24). In his study of the attribution of personhood to prehistoric weaponry, Pearce (2013: 55) has suggested that these anthropomorphic sword hilts may represent a divine or ‘in-dwelling’ spirit, or apotropaic forces designed to protect the owner. He drew upon Fitzpatrick’s (1996: 376) functional analysis of the swords, in which he concluded that these swords must have had a symbolic or ritual meaning, as their dimensions made it unlikely that they were used as weapons. Instead, he suggests that they may have been used as a ritual tool in human sacrifice.

Figure 24: Iron Age representations of the head, including: the Snettisham torc (left). Image from the British Museum. The Aysleford bucket mount (centre). Image from the Werner Forman Archive / Bridgeman Images. The North Grimston sword mount (right). Image from Hull Heritage Learning.

6.8 Stylistic Features of the Iron Age Head

Both continental and insular examples of artistic heads exhibit certain characteristic physiognomic traits and features. A central component of Iron Age artistic representation is schematism, a favouring of the reduction of features to their basic elements over realistic proportion and naturalism. Facial features commonly lay flat to the face, clustered closely together. The eyes were typically large and lentoid or almond shaped, sometimes double
lidded - and rested on a wedge shaped nose (Fliegel 1990: 93; Ross 1992: 120). Alternatively, and particularly in continental examples at Entrement, the eyes could be represented by slits, possibly indicating death or sleeping (Fliegel 1990: 89). Mouths likewise were typically denoted by a simple slit, at times furnished with a moustache, as with the Welwyn head found on the bucket of a cremation burial (50-20 BC). Moustaches are considered to have been seen as a symbol of masculinity and can frequently be found on depictions across the continent, including the head from Mšecké Žehrovice dated to the 2nd century BC (Megaw and Megaw 1988: 630). Whilst the hair was not always depicted, when present it was typically represented braided or en brosse (Fliegel 1990: 86; Megaw and Megaw 1988: 631), which would appear to match Strabo’s statement that the Celts would lime wash their hair (Ross 1992: 100). Accessories may have been included in the depiction of the head, such as torcs (from the middle La Tène period), considered a symbol of divinity, and leaf crowns, which are believed to have had similar symbolic connotations, although these largely feature on continental representations (Megaw and Megaw 1988: 630; Armit 2012: 25). A summary of these features is presented below in fig. 25, followed by a typical Iron Age head from Mšecké Žehrovice (fig.26).

Figure 25: A summary of features of Iron Age heads
The depiction of the head was not confined to metalwork, and representations of heads in stone, such as the aforementioned head from Mšecké Žehrovice have also been recovered. It has been suggested that this particular head was mounted on a pillar stone and was of ritual importance, perhaps representing a deity (Megaw and Megaw 1988: 639). Other representations, such as those featured on the Entrement pillar employ closed eye imagery, and are suggestive of death or sleeping (Kleiner 1973: 380; Armit 2012: 89-92). Also from Entrement, the bloc aux epis depicts what has been interpreted as severed heads and an ear of corn, perhaps drawing upon beliefs linking the head to fertility and the productive capacities of the land. In both cases, the head at the bottom of the pillar is upturned, perhaps suggestive of an unknown symbolism. In terms of Britain, there is a lack of stone heads that can be securely dated to the Iron Age, or even to the Roman period (Green 1993: 242; Armit 2012: 34). Whilst a collection of stone heads from Britain that display many Iron Age characteristics like their continental counterparts does exist, the majority of these are without context, and it is just as likely that they came from much later periods than they did the Iron Age or Roman period (Green 1993: 242).

Iron Age anthropomorphic representation consisted primarily of representations of the head alone. Full body representations were significantly rarer. The extent of this paucity
is revealed by a brief survey of the anthropomorphic figurines of the British Iron Age, with only seven wooden figurines and an estimated 40 chalk figurines securely dated to this period (discussed below in section 6.10). In spite of the limited nature of this evidence, it does provide a unique insight into the principles stimulating Iron Age anthropomorphic reproduction in areas of the British Isles. The body of sculpture that forms the basis of this case study of Roman-Britain is anthropomorphic, and to consider how Iron Age influence transformed Classical avatars, an analysis of Iron Age anthropomorphic representation is essential.

6.9 Wooden Figurines

It is perhaps unsurprising that with the specific conditions required for the preservation of wood, only seven figurines constructed with this material have been recovered (see fig. 27). The find sites are diverse and are located across Britain, with five figurines found in Roos Carr (radiocarbon dated to 606-509 BC), one in Ballachulish (radiocarbon dated to 728-524 BC), and the remaining one located in Kingsteignton (radiocarbon dated to 426-352 BC) (Coles 1990: 312). In spite of the broad chronological range of these figurines, they share a number of stylistic similarities. In all cases, the form of the body and individual features have been reduced to their most basic elements, with long torsos and thin, minimally detailed limbs. Most notable is the disproportionately large head again with minimal features, although in the case of the Ballachulish and Roos Carr figurines, the eyes are represented with quartzite pebbles. Alongside these broad similarities are some differences, most notably the weaponry and detachable phalli of the Roos Carr figurines, absent in the Ballachulish and Kingsteignton figures.
Figure 27: Wooden figurines, including: The Ballachulish Figure (left). Image from the National Museums of Scotland. The Roos Carr figures (centre). Image from Hull Museums. The Kingsteignton figure (right). Image from the Royal Albert Memorial Museum.

The dating of these figurines has raised important questions – particularly whether those from Roos Carr and Ballachulish can be considered La Tène. Certainly, the radiocarbon dates fall outside of conventional dates for the La Tène period, but the stylistic similarities they share with the Kingsteignton figure which is of a La Tène date does suggest the existence of some stylistic traditions which extended from the British Iron Age and earlier, and continued into the La Tène period. Also of question are the identities of the figurines. In the case of the Ballachulish figurine, Aldhouse-Green (2003: 93) has speculated that the treatment of Iron Age bog bodies was mirrored in both the representation and disposal of the figurine. Close similarities also exist between the Ballachulish figurine and a bog body from the Germanic site of Windeby in Schleswig-Holstein, where an individual was found naked, holding a wand like object and pinned down – features replicated exactly in both the treatment and representation of the Ballachulish figurine. Although no longer visible, a phallus was also held against the figure’s stomach, and similar to the detachable phalli of the Roos Carr figures, may recall the removal of the phallus as inflicted on the Rendswuhren man (Menotti 2012: 199). Such close similarities between the treatment of bog bodies and the Ballachulish figurine has led Aldhouse-Green (2003: 93) to suggest that the figurine may have been
intended to operate as a substitute for humans in ritual activities, and thus were deposited in the place of an individual. In this respect, parallels can also be drawn between these British Iron Age figurines and wooden anthropomorphic imagery from the continent, particularly those from Gaul. Over two hundred 1st century BC figurines have been recovered from the sanctuary of Sequana, the goddess of the source of the Seine near Dijon, and at Chamiliers near Clermont-Ferrand (Martin 1965; Green 1995: 480; 1998: 20). These figurines are said to have represented the pilgrims who had travelled to the shrine in search of a cure.

The choice of material may have thus been a deliberate selection in terms of the function and operation of these figurines, reflecting the transience of human existence. Unlike stone, wood can be considered as a living thing, with a life cycle similar to that of mortal humans, that these figures are believed to represent. The importance attached to cyclical transformations in the Iron Age has previously been discussed, and it is likely that the trees from which the wood was supplied operated as a highly symbolic feature in the Iron Age landscape with their cyclical periods of growth, the shedding of leaves and regeneration resonating with the human cycle of birth, growth and death. Wood may have thus reflected the movement through stages of life and ephemeral human condition, growing, living and subsequently decaying as a human would (Aldhouse-Green 2003: 97). The production and use of anthropomorphic figurines as sacrificial substitutes, or to represent an individual seeking a cure for illness may be indicative of (assertive) mimetic strategies. It is important here simply to recognise this possibility.

6.10 Stone Figurines

Although still relatively rare, figural representation in stone appears more prevalent than its wooden counterpart in Iron Age Britain. The overwhelming majority of these miniature figurines, carved in chalk and dated to the middle Iron Age, were recovered from burial sites across Yorkshire including Blealands Nook, Wetwang Slack, Garton Slack, Elmswell, Rudston and Harpham (Dent 1983: 39; 1984, Stead 1988: 9; 111; Giles 2008: 61; Megaw and Megaw 2005: 25; Cunliffe 2006: 521, see fig. 28). Due to the fragmentary nature of the collection, perhaps an indication of the deliberate damage inflicted upon them, the exact number of figurines can only be estimated, with current projects suggesting a number in the region of 40 to 50. Of these, seven are complete or near complete, the majority of
which are represented with belts, swords and scabbards carved into their torsos, as well as in some cases an erect phallus. For the most part there is a lack of any modelling of the torso, which consists of a triangular-shaped block. Whilst one particular figure, that from Withernsea, is depicted with more detailed facial features, the collection at large exhibits limited facial detailing, with small circular eyes and a simple slit mouth. The legs are omitted and small, disproportionate arms are often carved into the torso. Where the arms are featured, Giles (2008: 62) draws attention to the frequent duality of symbolism, whereby the left arm is indicative of a welcoming gesture, whilst the right arm reaching over the shoulder indicates preparedness to draw weapons held on the back.

Figure 28: Iron Age Chalk figurines from Yorkshire. Image from Hull and East Riding Museum.

Similarities in somatic representation have led to parallels being drawn between the Yorkshire figurines and an isolated find in Deal from an underground chamber (Parfitt and Green 1987: 295; Halkon 2013: 56). The Deal figurine (see fig. 29) displays an absence of any attempt to model the body and whilst more attention has been paid to the face, it too is of a schematic nature. Although of a Roman date in terms of deposition, the Deal figurine betrays no Classical influence, adhering instead to Iron Age norms of representation exhibited in the Yorkshire figurines and Kingsteignton figure. Parfitt and Green (1987: 295) recall how this figure bears a resemblance to the heads on the 3rd century BC Entremont pillar with narrow eyes, sharp cheeks and a wedge nose. Also of note here, are the stylistic similarities shared with the pre-Roman wooden figures from the Source de la Seine sanctuary (discussed above), where little attempt had been made to model the body and facial features are minimally represented (Green 1998: 20).
As with their wooden counterparts who and what these figurines represent remains uncertain. The martial aspect of the accoutrements depicted on the chalk figurines has widely led to their ascription as warriors although whether these were representations of divine, living, or ancestral warriors, or perhaps toys or talismanic charms is unknown (Dent 1983: 39; Dent 1984: 146; Stead 1988: 9; Cunliffe 2006: 521; Giles 2008: 62; Halkon 2013: 56). Cunliffe (2004: 574) has argued, owing to the recovery of a figurine from a ditch of a ritual enclosure, that it is possible that it represented a votive offering of some sort.

The armed figurines from Glauberg (5th century BC) and Hirschlanden (6th century BC) may provide an insight into the possible function and identity of these figurines (see fig. 30). The iconography of these figures, like that of the Yorkshire chalk figurines, portrays explicitly the martial capacity of these individuals, with swords, daggers and shields complementing muscular physiques. The faces are on the whole minimally detailed, although furnished with a moustache, which as discussed previously, was considered as a symbol of masculinity amongst the Iron Age inhabitants of Europe. It is also possible that these figures are represented with a similar ‘greeting and simultaneous reaching for sword’ gesture found on the Yorkshire figures.
Frey (2004: 112) has suggested that these figurines may reflect a transformation in the uses of and ideas associated with figurines, a change he attributes to Mediterranean influences. Earlier wooden and stone figures on the continent, with minimal facial details and anatomical modelling are believed to have functioned as simple grave markers. Frey (ibid. 112) suggests that the Glauberg and Hirschlanden figures however represented the heroised dead, and may thus have been venerated. The leaf headdress has been used by Frey (ibid. 112) to support his argument, suggesting that it may have been indicative of the deification of the deceased. Similarities between the Glauberg statue and the deceased in the accompanying grave, whereby a neck ring found on the deceased was also carved into the figurine does lend support to the concept that the figurines was a representation of the deceased, although whether they were venerated cannot be proved. Possible changes in artistic and ritual expression, including the veneration of the dead, has been linked to a period of close contact between the Europeans previously referred to as Celtic and the Classical world (Armit 2012: 77). It is possible that ideas, particularly those relating to the worship of the heroised dead, a prominent Greek tradition, travelled from the 6th century BC Greek colony Massalia in France. A wealth of statuary has been recovered from the sites of Entrement, Roquepertuse, Noves and Glanum – which is said to have been stimulated by the Greek presence (Kleiner 1997: 380). Of particular note are the ‘Accroupi’ sculptures, life-size statues of cross-legged individuals, frequently depicted with a torc, armour and
occasionally a sword (see fig. 31). Dated to c. 525-375 BC at Roquepertuse and c. 300 BC at Entremont, these statues have been suggested to draw upon Greek traditions of honorary statuary to represent the heroicised dead, or divinities (ibid.; Kleiner 1973: 380; Green 1997). There is an increasing body of evidence to suggest that at least some statues and reliefs came to considered to represent the divine rather than the heroicised dead (Frey 2004: 114). At Fellbach Schmiden near Stuttgart, partial wooden figurines of humans and animals have been interpreted as representations of the ‘Lord of the Beasts’, dated to the early 2nd century BC. The placement of silver coins as offerings in a fissure on the figure from Villeneuve, Switzerland, is cited as further definitive evidence of divine representation, considered to represent an offering to the divinity (ibid. 114). Metal figurines from St Maur en Chaussee, Balzars in Lichenstein and Dineault in Brittany (2nd-1st century BC) are also considered to represent warrior or hunter gods (Green 1996: 468).

Figure 31: A reconstruction of Accroupi figurines from Roquepertuse (left). Image from the musée d’archéologie méditerranéenne. An Accroupi figure from Entremont (right) dated to the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. Image from Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence.

The purpose of this foray into continental imagery has been to emphasise the possible transformations of and variability in the use and function of figural representation during the British Iron Age. The Deal figurine was recovered ‘undamaged and unworn’ from an underground chamber connected to 2.5m deep shaft. This according to Parfitt and Green (1987: 296) suggests that this was therefore a deliberate deposition rather than the disposal of a used or damaged object. It was likely to have been housed in a niche in the chamber, whose slope complemented that of the figurine allowing it to remain upright. Interred with
the figurine was a range of objects, leading Parfitt and Green (1987: 296) to suggest a divine role, whereby the figurine had protective duty over the objects. The treatment and condition of the Deal figurine contrasts sharply with that of the Yorkshire figurines, which were likely to have been deliberately damaged. This damage could have many causes; the figurine may for example have represented an individual or talismanic charm and thus was ritually destroyed upon the death of that individual when it no longer served a purpose. The contrasting beliefs and treatment with which the Deal and Yorkshire figurines were subjected to may reflect transformations to or variations in the perception of the function and identity of these figurines.

In terms of anthropomorphic representation, the Iron Age populace had a readily identifiable stylistic repertoire upon which they drew inspiration. Somewhat more ambiguous is who these figures represent. It is likely that who these figures represented and the beliefs and ideas associated with them was transformed throughout the Iron Age, a process that was perhaps accelerated through contact with the Classical world. Whilst the Yorkshire and Deal figurines exhibit stylistic similarities, their treatment is perhaps indicative of a transformation in what and who these figures came to represent, coming to functioning as representations of the divine only towards the end of the Iron Age and into the Roman period. What is important here is recognising the stylistic repertoire of anthropomorphic representation and the variability in their uses.

6.11 Zoomorphic representation

The stylistic repertoire drawn upon to depict the head, and the human body has been considered, and it is now important to turn to an equally prominent theme of Iron Age art – animals. Zoomorphic imagery features on an extensive range of Iron Age artefacts. The presence of animals on ritual paraphernalia and the deposition of animal remains in ritual contexts have been drawn upon to suggest the divine or celestial role of some animals in the British Iron Age. Like much Iron Age art, depictions of animals are often of an abstract and ambiguous nature, blending into and arising from vegetal patterns and designs. The blade of a knife from Chiswell Green in Hertfordshire (fig. 32) for example depicts highly stylised birds, with vegetal designs flowing into bird like features, so that the design could be interpreted as either/and/or birds or patterns (Megaw and Megaw 2005: 28). Other three dimensional representations, independent of flowing vegetal designs, tend to reduce
Artefacts featuring bird and animal imagery straddle both domestic and martial spheres. Bird imagery appears to have been a particularly popular motif, with the birds head of the ‘comma-cum-bird design’ employed on horse trappings, shields, swords and mirrors (Megaw and Megaw 2003). Abstract faces of owls (or cats) can be found on the Holcombe mirror where the handle joins the mirror plate (see fig. 34) as well as on the Battersea shield (350-50 BC). Although conventionally described as birds, these ambiguous designs could easily represent a stylised human face.
Figure 35: Iron Age boar imagery, including: the Witham shield (left) c. 400-300 BC. Image from the British Museum. Bronze boars from the Hounslow Hoard (right) c. 100 BC and 100 AD. Image from the British Museum

Whilst both birds and animals featured on martial equipment, it is often the imagery of the boar that is heavily drawn upon and features most prominently. The Witham shield (c. 400-300 BC, fig. 35) for example draws together such imagery, but it is a stylised boar that dominates the shield. The carnyx, a horn used in battle, was designed in the shape of a boar head, an example of which has been recovered from Deskford in Scotland, and depictions of the carnyx also feature on coins from the South East of England (Megaw and Megaw 2005: 57). Evidence of the use of the boar on martial imagery may also come in the form of the bronze boars from the Hounslow Hoard, dated between the 1st century BC and the 1st C AD which, it has been suggested, were mounted on a helmet (see fig. 35).

Aside from wild animals, a range of domestic animals featured in Iron Age artwork. Cows for example feature on bucket mounts and chariot fittings such as those from Ham hill in Somerset (Megaw and Megaw 2005: 58), often taking 3D form rather than abstract, incised designs. It is notable that many domesticated animals feature on art or artefacts related to the domestic setting, observable for example in the prevalence of cattle imagery on firedogs and buckets (Parker-Pearson 1999: 52), suggesting that this art is contextual. The animal imagery adorning Iron Age art, like anthropomorphic representation, drew upon a number of stylistic trends which made it readily recognisable. The so called ‘Disney’ style of three dimensional representations presented subjects through a reduction of form to
their most basic elements, often with an exaggerated features, such as the eyes (often lentoid shaped) or the dorsal fins and tusks of boars (See the Stanwick horse mask, fig. 33).

6.12 Animal Imagery – Its function and Purpose

The art of the Iron Age is undeniably rich in animal imagery, but what does it all mean? Without literary sources, it is impossible to state with any certainty the specific beliefs and conceptualisations zoomorphic imagery represents. As previously discussed, many of the representations of animals have been taken as indicative of Iron Age Britons ascribing animals with divine or supernatural status. It is important however not to overlook the nuances of the roles of animals in British Iron age cosmologies and religion. We should not make the assumption that because one animal was considered divine or to act in a supernatural capacity, that all animals of this species were considered in the same way. Within communities anthropologists describe as animistic, an animal or other natural features may become animate only in specific circumstances, whilst other animals of the same breed may not be animate at all (Hill 2011: 409). Whilst it is possible that one boar was considered supernatural, imbued with a specific power in the sense that it could transcend boundaries or earthly realms for example, boars in general may have been revered for their strength, ferocity and invincibility rather than any supernatural capacity. Boar imagery may thus have been employed in the Frazerian sense (see Chapter 4) in order to confer these characteristic on to individuals possessing items on which the imagery was displayed. Likewise, images of the boar may have been perceived as possessing an apotropaic quality, as their presence on military equipment and grave goods might suggest. Whilst the exact nature of the animal imagery is likely to remain elusive, it is certainly clear that animals played an important role in what was likely to be a complex and multi-faceted belief system. What is important to take away from this is great frequency with which animal imagery was employed within Iron Age art, the emphasis placed on abstract methods of representation and the prevalence of particular animal in certain contexts.
6.12.1 Semi-zoomorphism

The presence of semi-zoomorphic imagery may be able to shed further light on the particular beliefs associated with animals during the British Iron Age. Although relatively rare in Britain, there are instances whereby human and animal features are drawn together to depict one single being. A sheet bronze from Aylesford (fig. 36) for example features two horses with human feet and hind legs. The depiction of the hind legs is a subtle yet important distinction, as the forward projection of the joint is anatomically incorrect for horses, yet mirrors the human construction of the joint (Ross 1992: 407; Green 2004: 165; Green 2004: 165). A further combination of human and animals imagery relates to the addition of horns to an otherwise anthropomorphic being. Evidence of figural depictions of this phenomenon is relatively rare in Britain during the Iron Age, unlike in Europe where there are well known examples of a horned god, Cernunnos. Nonetheless coins from Britain belonging to the Catuvallauni amongst other tribes pre dating the Roman conquest do feature an antlered, anthropomorphic being (Bober 1951: 14; Green 1998: 22; 2001: 212) and horned helmets, such as the Torrs pony cap (fig. 37), suggest such combinations were not confined to the realms of figural anthropomorphic representation alone.

Figure 36: Bronze decoration from a (c.75-25 BC) wooden bucket from Aylesford. Image from the British Museum

A range of explanations for these animal-human constructions have been proposed, two of which will now be considered. The first is built upon the notion that what is represented
is a divine being, indicated by it unnatural form. In such readings, the presence of human and animal features is attributed to a process of divine evolution, whereby a divine being evolves through stages from an initial zoomorphic form until eventually realising a final anthropomorphic form (Newell 1934: 80; Bober 1951: 17). Whilst some divinities may have transitioned in such a way, this should however by no means be conceptualised as a universal process. Anne Ross’ (1990) analysis of the use of animal imagery in Iron Age art from Ireland presents archaeological evidence and vernacular tradition which stands in contrast to this evolutionary paradigm. The Donn of Cuailnge, a bull of early Irish legend is conceptualised as the reverse of such a process, where his final bovine form is the result of a transition from an anthropomorphic state. Whilst being careful not to fall back into this idea of a universal Celtic identity, and noting the issues associated with use of vernacular literature to study the Iron Age, this does at least provide new ways in which to think about and approach the art of Iron Age Britain.

The case of the above mentioned horned-god Cernunnos is also drawn upon by Ross (ibid.) to provide strong evidence to counter this evolutionary hypothesis. One would expect to witness numerous transformations in the representation of a deity transitioning from zoomorphic to anthropomorphic, with a gradual replacement and loss of zoomorphic features. From the earliest known representation of Cernunnos on a rock engraving at Val Camonica (dated to 4th century BC) to the Roman period relief at Paris, the balance between anthropomorphic and zoomorphic characteristics remains static. Although the presence Cernunnos or other horned gods was primarily confined to continental Europe throughout the Iron Age, what this serves to show is that it was perhaps the case that there was no overarching logic or evolutionary process in the representation of the divine amongst some Iron Age peoples, and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic elements may have thus constituted a complex and fluid whole, exhibited and manifest to varying extents at different times in dynamic otherworld beings.

The animalistic components of these supposed divine beings therefore should not be taken unequivocally as vestigial pieces that will eventually be discarded as a final anthropomorphic form is realised. This brings us to a second reading of this cross species imagery, whereby it is considered indicative of boundary crossing and otherness (Parker-Pearson 1999: 62; Aldhouse-Green 2001: 231). This otherness may be indicative of divinity,
or it may symbolise the ability of supernatural beings, including shamans and animals to cross otherworldly thresholds or to shape shift (Webster 1986: 36). Of particular note, are the animal species selected to feature in such cross species imagery, which in the natural world are often attributed with a liminal status (Parker-Pearson 1999: 47). In Southern England, and across the continent, dogs, pigs and horse are frequently associated with animal-human representations. According to Green (2001: 212) this may have been a deliberate choice based upon their special relationship with humans. Both the domestic pig and dog had non domestic counterparts in the boar and wolf, whilst horses were semi-wild, only broken in when needed (Hill 1995: 104; Green 2001: 204). Parker-Pearson has argued that the perception of these animals as straddling both realms of domestic and non-domestic may have afforded them a special status (Parker-Pearson 1999: 47), seen at once as both the same and other and thus tying in with concepts of boundary crossing.

Ethnographic accounts have also revealed that in some societies, the combination of animal and human imagery was used to represent shamans who were able to negotiate their way through the supernatural realms. Amongst the Yukaghir of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) for example, humans and animals were not considered as discrete, bounded entities (Hill 2011: 410). Inter-species boundaries were seen as fluid, and humans were able to take on the persona of animals and experience their world through mimicking a particular animal, often facilitated by adorning its hide or other body parts (McNiven 2010: 410; see fig. 36 for a possible example for Iron Age Britain, where flaps may indicate animal skins placed over human legs). Iron Age iconography, such as the Aysleford horses (fig. 36) and ambiguous vegetal designs may represent similar ontologies, where individuals were believed to possess the ability to transform into zoomorphic beings and transcend otherworld boundaries. The Waterloo helmet (c. 150-50 BC, fig. 37), featuring horns, may have operated within such belief systems, facilitating shape shifting processes and the movement between the natural and spirit worlds. It is interesting to note that species-crossing may not have been limited to animal-human forms but may also have encompassed cross species animal forms. The concept of fluid boundaries and the ability of certain animals to transform into others may be represented in the production of the horned Torrs pony cap, whereby a horned face masked was placed over a small horse or pony (fig. 37). Of note are additional animal combinations encompassed in this piece, with
the horn terminating in a ducks head. Water birds are strongly associated with liminality and the transcendence of boundaries: they can fly into the heavens, swim under the water and walk on the land, see Fowler (2004: 13), and the abundance of bird imagery in diverse periods and locations, from bronze helmets with beaks and rock art depictions of bodies with beaks and wings in Bronze Age Southern Scandinavia to the Sutton Hoo helmet (interpreted as featuring a duck in flight), might suggest the possible existence of broad similarities in the cosmologies of some Northern European communities across a long period of time (Chris Fowler pers. Comm.). Whilst not all imagery concerning horns and bird imagery may be linked to such cosmological principles, it is important to appreciate such possibilities and its wider implication when interpreting the presence of horns or cross species representations.

Figure 37: Iron Age horned helmets, including: the Waterloo helmet, c. 150-50 BC (left). Image from the British Museum. The Torrs pony cap, c. 300-100 BC (right). Image from the Museum of Scotland.

This review, drawing upon both insular and continental examples, has demonstrated the prevalence of representations of the human head and animals (perhaps divine) in Iron Age art. Abstract and schematic heads and animals were popularly employed on shields, belt buckles, sword hilts and a vast array of additional accoutrements. Alongside this diverse panoply of tools, weapons and accessories, images of animals and the human head frequently appeared on Iron Age coinage (see Hobbs 1996, Aldhouse-Green 2004 and Megaw and Megaw 2005 for example). This cross-over between artwork and coinage is
significant in that the animals and human heads represented on some of these coins have been constructed using similar stylistic techniques to those featured in Iron Age artwork, yet the coinage itself is derived from Classical prototypes. There is therefore great potential to use the coinage of Iron Age Britain to develop new insights into the interactions in the provinces between Rome and the indigenous population. Unfortunately, such enquiries are beyond the scope of this investigation, which focuses specifically on sculptures of the divine, which may have been perceived as embodying the essence of the deity represented, or acted as the focus of divine worship. Whilst coinage was frequently utilised in interactions with the divine world, coins were primarily used as votive offerings, rather than functioning as the focus of divine worship or as the recipient of offerings and prayers. Whilst it is therefore not possible to draw upon the potential insights that coinage may provide into provincial interactions here, that this coinage may be used to facilitate more nuanced understandings of Roman-indigenous dialogues through future research is discussed in section 10.7.

6.13 Conclusion

The intention of this brief review of the art of Iron Age Britain has been two fold – firstly, to consider the stylistic techniques that characterise Iron Age artistic representation, and secondly, to place this art in its broader social and cultural contexts. Without falling back onto the notion of a pan-Celtic identity, broad trends in artistic representation and belief spanning vast geographical entities and regional groups are observable (Armit 2012: 43). Some of these trends appear to extend to the Bronze Age and to the 'long Late Iron Age' in the areas of Northern Europe not colonized by Rome, as well as to Greece and Italy. From the repertoire of insular Iron Age iconography it is clear that Iron Age Britons, and Europeans, were not bound by notions of verism, and free from these constraints were able to use their art forms as a means to express and to think about the dynamic relationship between the natural and the supernatural worlds. Iron Age belief and ideology was complex and multi-faceted, and the resulting iconography is indicative of this nature. Iron Age representation in Britain had a range of subject matter, featuring perhaps mortals, heroes, sacrifices and animals rather than or in addition to representing divinities or supernatural beings. Due to the differing conceptualisations of the divine world of the Romans and Iron
Age Britons, it may be that some of these zoomorphic representations did represent divine beings. The iconographic traditions of schematism - the reduction of forms to their most basic and necessary elements – dominate Iron Age British representation. The affinity for such concepts has resulted in diverse forms of representation ranging from schematic anthropomorphism to semi-zoomorphism, as well as natural and abstract zoomorphism. Whilst the exact meanings of particular iconographies may remain elusive and we must accept open-ended analyses, it is clear that the Iron Age population employed a specific grammar of representation of the supernatural and non-divine, centred upon schematism and surrealism. It is essential to recognise the multivocality of these representations and the differing conceptualisation that they present. It is armed with this knowledge that we can begin to understand and to analyse the changes to iconographic representation following Roman occupation.

The Roman presence in Britain undeniably stimulated new forms of representation, whereby it was likely that the divine came to be represented anthropomorphically in stone for the first time. We should not however see the fact that the gods are represented in this manner as indicative of complete acculturation, or without the influence of indigenous tradition. The paucity of anthropomorphic statuary in Iron Age Britain should not be taken as evidence that the divine was not represented at all. It is likely that the Iron Age population not only conceptualised the divine differently to the Romans, but in terms of representation were stimulated by principles other than verism. The characteristic Iron Age style of representation, far from being absent or muted under Roman rule, continued to exert itself in subtle yet meaningful ways. The resulting ‘art’ of the province was not simply acculturative, abandoning all indigenous influence. We can clearly see an interaction between the indigenous and Roman form, with a continuation of the characteristic Iron Age emphasis on the head, schematism, animal imagery and semi-zoomorphic representation. We must look at these survivals more closely - in some cases, this continued use of Iron Age iconographic traditions in representations of Classical divinities may be indicative of assertive mimetic practices at play, specific examples of which will be considered in Chapter 8.
Chapter 7. The Stelae of Pre-Roman North Africa

7.1 Introduction

The Roman presence in the provinces stimulated a range of responses that were conditioned by the social, cultural and political traditions of indigenous groups or individuals. These varying responses are manifest both on the local and wider geographical scales - the result of varying degrees of acceptance, adaptation and rejection of Roman culture. In terms of stone relief and sculpture, the subject of this study, there are clear geographical variations in the provinces concerning the use, adoption or adaptation of Roman forms and content. The use of stone sculpture was rare in pre-Roman Britain and the Roman period statues and reliefs produced in this region were without indigenous precedent (in terms of form and content). It was for this reason that a broader approach to the art of Iron Age Britain was adopted in Chapter 6, in order to facilitate an understanding of the character of Romano-British statuary. In the Punic and to a lesser degree the Numidian city states of North Africa however, there was a long tradition of pre-Roman stone working, particularly manifest in the production of votive stelae. Thus the production of stone stelae in Roman North Africa built upon pre-existing traditions. In contrast to Britain, where it is not possible to compare pre and post-Roman sculpture, in the case of Punic North Africa, direct comparisons can be made between the stelae produced in pre and post Roman periods. This can offer a unique insight into how interaction with the Roman world impacted cultural representation within a very specific medium – the stelae. The present chapter will provide an introduction into these stelae, placing them in the context of Pre-Roman North African society with a particular focus on their iconography and function. The chapter will begin with a brief overview of the development of the Punic colonies from their parent cities in the Near East and will consider the driving force behind their foundation. It will continue with a discussion of Punic religion, addressing the concerns and shortcomings associated with the available evidence, and placing the stelae in the context of these pre-Roman belief systems. The resultant understanding of the social and religious systems in which the stelae operated will then inform an analysis of the frequently occurring imagery employed on the stelae and a discussion of what this imagery can reveal about wider Punic society, religion and belief systems. Crucially, it will allow for an appreciation of the
processes by which and the extent to which this imagery was adapted and changed in response to the Roman presence.

The stelae considered in this chapter derive from various locations from the Africa Proconsularis (see fig. 38). This region comprised a number of provinces that were either annexed following the defeat of Carthage in the Third Punic War (149-146 BC), or over a century later following the defeat of the Numidian King Juba (Fage 1979: 200; Moore 2000: 2). Carthage was a settlement of Phoenician origin and came to exercise hegemony over the vast network of Phoenician cities established in the western Mediterranean (Moscati 1968: 99, 117; Aubet 1993: 4; van Dommelen 1997: 396; Miles 2011, 113; van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran 2013: 279; Lopez-Bertran 2016). Its defeat at the hands of Rome saw the network of Phoenician settlements fall under Roman control. The Numidian settlements incorporated into the empire almost a century later, whilst not of Phoenician origin shared a number of broad cultural similarities with the Punic states as a result of centuries of interaction – including the use of Punic languages and particular elements of material culture such as stelae. The North African cities incorporated into the Roman Empire were thus the product of centuries of cultural interaction, and it is this which makes the region both a unique and an important case study. The implications of this cultural interactivity and the contexts in which it arose will form the basis of a general overview of Pre-Roman North Africa, before using this context to consider the production of North African stelae.
7.2 The Phoenician Origins of Punic North Africa

Phoenicia was a collective of independent, thalassocratic city states occupying the coastal area that roughly corresponds to modern day Lebanon, Syria and northern Israel. These early Bronze Age (3100 BC-2300 BC) city states became the centre of hugely successful mercantile enterprises for over two millennia, acting as intermediaries between the interior and the Mediterranean (Aubet 1993: 16; Fage 1979: 88). Moscati (2001: 17-18) cites 1200 BC as formative period in the region that marked the transition from a Canaanite
Bronze Age to the Phoenician Iron Age. This phenomenon was attributed to changes stimulated by the invasion of the Sea Peoples, whereby the Phoenicians emerged from their broad Syrian identities as independent people (see also Markoe 1990: 13; Aubet 1993: 11; Bondi 2001: 35).

The term Phoenician was employed by the Greeks to refer to these major trading coastal cities of the Levant - an adaptation of the word Phoinikes which referred to the purple dye famously produced and traded by these peoples (Aubet 1993: 5; Schmitz 2013: 205; Doak 2015: 8). The Phoenician ethnic moniker was not employed by the people that came to be known as Phoenician, who referred to themselves Canaanite (Aubet 1993: 5; Brett 1997; Doak 2015: 8). The Canaanite people shared broad cultural traditions, including language, culture and religion, yet it is important not to mistake these shared traditions as evidence of a cultural homogeneity that stretched across the Levant. The Phoenician states, as they have come to be known, were not a united political entity, but a disparate group of states that operated autonomously under the rule of a local king, with their own traditions, feasts and localised pantheons (Aubet 1993: 16).

From the 12th century BC, Phoenician traders from the coastal cities of the Levant established colonies across the North African littoral and western Mediterranean. Settlements were established at Utica, Lepcis (Tripolitania), Hadrumetum (Tunisia), Carthage (Tunisia), Hippo (Bizerta) and Lixus (Morocco) on the North African coast; on the islands of Ischia, Sicily, and Sardinia, as well as the Balearic Islands and Iberian peninsula (Moscati 1968: 99, Fage 1979: 118; Brett 1997; Hodos 2006: 159; van Dommelen 2012: 395 Schmitz 2013: 206; see fig. 39). These outposts served primarily as trading posts and victualling stations to facilitate the trade in silver and other luxury goods between the Mediterranean and Near East. Although strong ties with the mother city were maintained, these settlements were established as independent city states, rather than as subjects of their founding city (Fage 1979: 88). These Phoenician outposts have conventionally been labelled Punic; a term denoting Phoenician culture in the Western Mediterranean (Raven 1993: xxiii). The label is a recognition that Phoenician culture was not directly transplanted or reproduced in the west, but was transformed through various cultural interactions and the experiences of the settler populations (van Dommelen 2008: 2). The importance of this recognition will be discussed in section 7.4.
7.3 The Rise and Fall of the Phoenician States

In the Bronze Age Mediterranean, mastery of the sea was a route to great wealth and power. Luxury goods and raw materials, particularly precious metals, were in huge demand - the keystone of Near Eastern power and diplomacy. Whilst the Phoenicians excelled in sea travel, their neighbours, including the Egyptians, were unable to emulate their success. Lacking the technical capabilities to rival the Phoenician trade monopoly, the land powers of the Near East were forced to rely on the Phoenician states for the supply of luxury goods (Miles 2011: 39). Phoenicia’s pivotal role as trading middle men was to have significant consequences in terms of power dynamics in the region. When the Assyrian empire swept over the Levant in the 9th century BC, the Phoenician states were afforded a degree of political and economic autonomy. This apparent lenience was less an act of benevolence, and more an act of self-preservation. The Assyrians required vast wealth to maintain their empire and key to this wealth was the trade in luxury goods. Fearing that annexation could have a detrimental impact upon trade supplies, and perhaps wary of entrusting the more rebellious northern Syrians, the Phoenician states escaped total subjection, instead paying large tribute whilst continuing to conduct trade (Hodos 2006: 38).
When the states of northern Syria were absorbed into the Babylonian Empire in the 8th century BC, the remaining Phoenician states were left to shoulder the burden of supply – operating as the main supplier of raw material to the Assyrian Empire (ibid. 26). It was perhaps this pressure, coupled with an awareness of the consequences of failure that accelerated the development of Phoenician colonies in the Mediterranean (Hodos 2006, 26; 2009: 229; Miles 2011: 39). Phoenician independence was predicated upon its role in trade – but what had once been Phoenicia’s lifeline, was eventually to become its downfall. By the 6th century BC, silver had been oversupplied to the Near East, resulting in its devaluation and the collapse of trade routes (Miles 2011: 75). The encroaching Babylonian Empire had depended upon Tyre to conduct its lucrative trade in silver, and when the value of silver collapsed, Tyre was absorbed into the burgeoning Babylonian Empire in 572 BC following a 13 year siege (Aubet 1993: 49).

The troubles that had afflicted the Phoenician cities had left many of its colonies unscathed, largely because they were able to focus on trade in the Aegean (Miles 2011, 76). The demise of their mother cities at the hands of Babylonian overlords not only allowed colonial outposts to flourish but for one in particular – Carthage – to pave its ascent to superpower status (van Dommelen 1997: 310). The rise of Carthage and its role in Mediterranean and North African affairs is crucial to understanding the North African Iron Age milieu, and it is this that will now be considered.

7.4 Carthaginian Colonialism and Punic North Africa

Phoenician settlers, primarily from Tyre, founded up to 50 Punic settlements across North Africa (Aubet 1993: 4, 27). From the outset however, the city of Carthage, or 'Qart Hadash' meaning 'New City', was set apart from the others (Brett 1997; Mazza 2001). Rather than being established solely as a trading colony, Carthage was, according to Greek sources, founded by political dissidents led by Queen Elissa (Dido) fleeing the tyrannical King Pygmalion of Tyre (Aubet 1993: 40; Bondi 2001: 154). The foundation of Carthage following the purchase of land from indigenous Libyans is conventionally given as 814-13 BC based upon numerous classical sources including Philo of Byblos, Dionysius of Helicarnassus and Velleius Paterculus (Moscati 1968: 115; Aubet 1993: 136; Lancel 1995: 3). The actual date of
Carthage’s foundation however remains contentious. Whilst it is generally held that the earliest archaeological evidence in the form of ceramics and urns from the tophet of Carthage date to no earlier than the 8th century BC, Lancel (1995: 35) suggests that these may in fact be earlier than credited, correlating with the date contained within Classical sources (Aubet 1993: 137; Quinn 2010).

From its early colonial foundations, Carthage became the centre of a vast empire, exerting control over the existing Punic settlements and establishing new foundations in North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia and Spain (Aubet 1993: 4; Moscati 2001: 22; van Dommelen 1997: 310; 2007: 6; Miles 2011: 113; Pilkington 2013: 2; van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran 2013: 279). Moscati (1973: 117) attributes the growing Greek presence and aggression in the Western Mediterranean as pivotal in the ‘convergence of the scattered Phoenician colonies under the aegis of Carthage’. With the strongest navy in the Mediterranean (Fage 1979), Carthage had the means and ability to protect the often small and scattered Punic settlements. Vulnerable in the face of Greek and native aggression, and deprived of the assistance of their parent cities struggling under Babylonian domination, an alliance with Carthage would have likely been an obvious and increasingly attractive choice (Moscati 1973 [1968]: 117). In return for the taxes, customs duties and a supply of soldiers to the Carthaginian army, Carthage took up the mantle against Greek aggression. With the pace of involvement accelerating from the 5th century BC, the Battle of Himera (480 BC) on Sicily marked the beginning of three centuries punctuated with violence and conflict as both the Greeks and Carthaginians sought to protect their maritime interests and establish their dominance in the region (Aubet 1993: 4; Lancel 1995: 78, 91; Miles 2011: 120).

In addition to its growing influence over pre-existing Punic cities, Carthage broadened its interest in the region through the establishment a number of colonies (Aubet 1993: 196; Tusa 2001: 231; van Dommelen 2007: 6; see fig. 40). Carthage’s first colonial foundation, Ebesos (Ibiza) was established in 654 BC, 160 years after the foundation of Carthage (Moscati 1973: 118; Lancel 1995: 82; van Dommelen 2007: 6), and roughly contemporaneous with this was the relocation of Carthaginians to Sardinia and Sicily. In some cases, the Carthaginian migrants settled in pre-existing Punic towns, whilst in other cases they established new colonial foundations. Alongside expansionism in the Mediterranean, the Carthaginians also looked towards the African hinterland and expanded
into the Maghreb (Lancel 1995: 94). It is often difficult to distinguish between settlements
that were initially Phoenician and later fell under the sway of Carthage (no doubt
accelerated by the arrival of Carthaginian settlers), and those that were directly founded by
Carthage (Moscati 1968: 118; Lancel 1995: 81). Nevertheless, this process of founding new
colonies together with implanting Carthaginian settlers in pre-existing settlements both
bolstered Carthaginian power and influence in the region and cemented its primacy
amongst the Punic states. Classical authors such as Polybius and Justin (see Lancel 1995: 86;
vandommelen 2007: 310) detail Carthaginian militarily involvement in Sicily and Sardinia, as
well as the ratification of treaties with Rome, to indicate the strength of Carthaginian
domination.

Limited historical and archaeological data means that it is often difficult to ascertain the
exact nature of Carthaginian colonialism (van Dommelen 1997: 310). It appears likely that
the role of Carthage and the nature of its colonial policy varied from region to region.
Conventionally, Carthaginian colonies in North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia and Spain have been
considered in terms of what van Dommelen (1997: 310) refers to as territorial colonialism,
typified by large settlements and strong ties to Carthage. Recent archaeological work
appears to corroborate this phenomenon in Sardina, North Africa and Sicily, yet Spain
appears to have consisted of more independent settlements that only came to rely more
heavily on Carthage during the Punic Wars (van Dommelen 2007: 310).
The scale of Carthaginian involvement in Sardinia, which was a vital supplier of Carthage's food supplies, providing over 50% of its imports, is demonstrated in Carthage's imposition upon the island of agricultural schemes to meet the demands of Carthage. Carthage dictated which crops were harvested on Sardinia, ordering the destruction of fruit trees which did not serve its needs (Bondi 1987; van Dommelen 1997: 310). As a result of this increasing intervention, strong political and economic ties were forged, emphasised by the bestowal of honorary citizenships (Miles 2011: 113). In the Cape Bon peninsula east of Carthage, the Libyan occupants were evicted, and the land passed into private Carthaginian ownership. Here the wealthy Carthaginians developed large estates using slave labour, on which they practised mixed farming – cereals, olives, figs, pomegranates, cattle, sheep, horses and bee-keeping. Elsewhere, the Libyans were left in possession of their land, but subjected to heavy taxation (The British Museum n.d.)

7.5 The Cultural Milieu of the Iron Age North Africa: The Carthaginians and Libyans

The indigenous inhabitants of North Africa were known to the Greeks as Libyans. This was derived from the word Libu, a name given to one tribal group by the Egyptians. Whilst the term Libyan came to be applied as a catch all term for the indigenous populations of North Africa, the cultural reality in North Africa was very different, comprising of distinct cultural groups who were unlikely to have shared any notions of cultural unity (Fage 1979: 141). The Numidians occupied the area to the west of Carthage and consisted of several distinct tribes with widely differing cultures. It appears that in some regions the Numidians
were practicing agriculture prior to the arrival of the Phoenicians – although most of this agriculturally rich region was brought under Carthaginian control after the 5th century BC (Fage 1979: 140), whilst in other regions the Numidians were largely nomadic and pastoral – a trend that dominated until the reign of king Massinissa between 201-148 BC and the turn towards urbanism and agriculture.

The arrival of the Phoenicians in North Africa brought them into contact with these indigenous populations variously called Libyan, Numidian and Berber (Moore 2000), creating a complex series of interactions between settlers, the indigenous population and wider Mediterranean. The terminology associated with defining North African cultures is somewhat confusing and contested. The term Libyphoenician has conventionally been employed to denote cultural interaction in the Tripolitanian cities where the number of indigenous inhabitants was large, yet Fentress (2006) argues that the term Punic should be employed in a wider cultural sense, to apply to all inhabitants of North Africa who practiced Punic or Carthaginian traditions, not just the ‘real’ Punic states. Traditionally, a distinction has been made between the ‘real’ Punic inhabitants of North Africa who originated from Phoenicia and lived in colonial settlements, and indigenous populations who adopted Punic cultural traditions, referred to as ‘Libyphoenicians’ in classical literature (Brett and Fentress 1996: 24-49; Fentress 2006). Whether the term Punic or Libyphoenician is employed, what is important to take away is that Phoenician and indigenous cultural traditions had a lasting impact on each other in terms of long term interaction in North Africa, and the indigenous element should not be overlooked or considered to have been supplanted by an incoming Phoenician culture. Over the course of 650 years, the co-existence of Phoenician and indigenous populations stimulated complex cultural interchanges and a symbiosis of indigenous and Eastern components (Millar 1968: 126; Lancel 1995: 94; Mattingly and Hitchner 1995: 206). The resultant Punic culture was thus diverse and eclectic, drawing upon and incorporating indigenous African traditions as well as those from the wider Mediterranean. It was not simply the continuation of a Phoenician culture that was transplanted in the Mediterranean. The diverse inhabitants of Iron Age North Africa were not oppositional, bounded groups that inhabited ‘separate cultural worlds’, but interacted in complex ways, to producing a characteristic, cosmopolitan culture (Fentress 2006: 5; see also Quinn 2012). The shaft tombs of North Africa serve to emphasise this interactivity –
whilst conventionally considered a tradition of Phoenician settlers, the presence of Libyan names and inscriptions reveal the interconnected and widespread nature of traditions in North Africa that spanned and incorporated the traditions of different cultural groups (Lancel 1995, 98).

This brings us to an important point regarding cultural interaction more generally and the deconstruction of essentialist notions of culture. There has, in the past, been a tradition of squeezing artefacts into distinct cultural categories, built upon the notion that cultures were monolithic and unchanging. There is however a growing recognition of the fluid and creative processes through which cultures come into being and evolve, and this has set an important academic precedent, one upon which this enquiry builds. Far from being static, cultural groups have continually borrowed and adapted traditions from others, as with the Phoenician’s and the wider western Mediterranean community. This does not reflect a lack of originality, passive adoption or even the desire to be ‘other’ but instead complex processes of interaction and identity formation. Whilst it is important to recognise that cultures have interacted and borrowed from each other over the course of thousands of years, it is equally as important to recognise that these cultural interactions and borrowings have taken place in very different contexts, with different outcomes and different motivations. It is therefore vital that cross cultural interactions are understood in more nuanced ways, and it is this that lies at heart of this thesis. This enquiry encapsulates a very specific focus on the processes of cultural interaction within the context of Roman imperialism and the specific conditions that this created, with a recognition that whilst all cultures borrow and adapt from others, the reasons for doing so and its manifestations can be hugely divergent. Whilst Punic culture has continually evolved and borrowed from others, the context, motivations and outcome in which this has occurred has varied greatly. The Phoenicians may therefore have adopted Greek, Egyptian and North African forms for very different reasons and in very different ways to Roman forms and each phenomenon should be studied in its own context.

If we return to Punic material culture specifically, it can be said that both the Phoenician and indigenous populations exerted considerable cultural influence over one another. The Numidian Kingdoms of Africa, by nature of their proximity and relationship to the Punic states, became increasingly exposed to Punic culture, eventually adopting Punic as
their official language. This exposure came in many forms, from inter-marriage between Numidian and Carthaginian families, to the service of African mercenaries in the Carthaginian army and education of Numidian royals at Carthage (Fage 1979: 184). The Numidian king Massinissa for example was educated at Carthage and Hiempsal II used the Punic language to write historical works. It appears that indigenous power structures operated in close correspondence to the Phoenician model, with the title of Sufet, a Carthaginian title somewhat similar to a magistrate, held by a Numidian named Zilalsan in 2nd century BC. This process of interaction was accelerated following the defeat of Carthage during the Second Punic War, when Punic towns under Carthaginian rule were absorbed by Numidia (including Lepcis, Thugga and Sicca). Punic stelae, one of the most prominent symbols of Punic culture have been found throughout Numidian cities, including Cirta (Fage 1979: 123). The symbology and iconography of the stelae were likely to have developed within the milieu of close cultural interaction between the Punic and Numidian states – with for example the possible Libyan origin of Tanit and symbols used in African rock art being drawn upon in the stelae to create a truly diverse tradition.

The Carthaginian colonial foundation of Kerkouane on the Cap Bon peninsula provides a unique insight into this web of interaction that bound Numidia, the Phoenician settlements and the wider Mediterranean world. Kerkouane was established by the Carthaginians in North Africa, and was abandoned in the 3rd century BC (Lancel 1995: 94, 281). The use of Carthaginian cultural forms is manifest in the architectural design and layout of the city; the worship of Carthaginian divinities (Melqart, Sid and Tanit) and the use of Punic language. Alongside these Carthaginian cultural forms however, elements of indigenous Libyan culture are visible, most notably in terms of burial practice. Greek cultural forms, particularly pottery and architectural features also frequent the city, again emphasising its globalised nature (Miles 2011: 80). Similarly, in Tipasa monuments and funerary objects are decidedly Phoenician in origin, whilst burial rites, positions and the use of funerary make up represent indigenous traditions (Lancel 1995: 98). This Punic influence continued well after the fall of Carthage, particularly concerning the production of votive stelae. What the Roman world thus came into contact with were strong Punic traditions, resulting from the Carthaginian influence that extended over the Maghreb littoral (Lancel 1995: 99).
The intention of this brief overview into the cultural environment of North Africa is to place the stelae in the cultural context in which they operated. To understand the multicultural setting of North Africa it is essential to recognise the balance between adoption and adaptation of novel cultural forms, and an underlying adherence to indigenous traditions. Within the Punic states, the adoption of new cultural forms was carefully balanced with the maintenance of core traditions that were central to Punic identity. This Punic culture and identity was intricate and complex. Aside from the globalised Mediterranean in which it came to develop, whereby it both exerted and was subject to external influence, the Phoenician culture of its homeland was central to Punic identity. The broad linguistic, cultural and religious traditions of Phoenicia made the journey across the Mediterranean, forming the basis of Punic identity, yet these were transformed by interactions across the Mediterranean and with the indigenous African populations.

7.6 Religion in the Punic North Africa

Having considered Punic culture in a broad sense, in order to ground our understandings of the context in which votive stelae operated, it is necessary to consider Punic religion in more depth. A deficiency of primary source material has constrained an understanding of religion in Punic North Africa. The absence of any extant religious doctrine or mythology has forced a reliance on the numerous inscriptions which, other than providing the names of the divinities that were worshipped and perhaps what was sacrificed to them, reveal little else concerning the nature and beliefs of Punic religion (Moscati 1968: 136). This list of divinities worshipped in the Punic colonies is however useful in that it reveals a broad connection between Phoenician and Punic pantheons – something perhaps to be expected in light of the Phoenician origins of the Punic cities. The strength of the religious links between Carthage and Tyre is evidenced by the annual tithe sent by the Carthaginians to the temple of Melqart in Tyre, yet as with many aspects of Punic culture, Phoenician religion did not survive the journey across the Mediterranean entirely unchanged (Aubet 1993: 131; Lancel 1995: 36; Shaw 2007: 10; Hoyos 2010: 94; Miles 2011: 18). If we take Carthage as an example, many of the deities worshipped there appear to owe their origins to the Levant, yet the inscriptions recovered from Carthage reveal a reorientation of the pantheon as well as a transformation under Libyan and Mediterranean
influences (Moscati 1968: 137). The localised pantheons of the Punic world should not come as a surprise, as the Phoenician states themselves did not share a homogeneous pantheon (ibid. 137). What can be shown however, are broad underlying structures to these pantheons – demonstrated for example in the universality of a divine triad, consisting of a supreme god, a fertility goddess and a god of death and resurrection (Doak 2015: 96). Whilst Phoenician and Punic pantheons may share this phenomenon, the gods that made up these triads varied from region to region. Take for example the god of death and resurrection: at Sidon this was Eshmun; at Byblos, Adonis, and at Tyre, Melqart. This differentiation in dying and rising gods reflected the wider tendency of each city to develop and organise their own distinct pantheon. It was common for each city to elect their own chief deity or deities such as Melqart at Tyre and Ashtart and Eshmun at Sidon. Naturally, with variations in divine authority, came variations in emphasis on feasts and celebrations, and in particular in the development of new practices.

In the Punic colonies, and particularly evident at Carthage, the Phoenician pantheons were re-orientated and transformed through the Libyan and Mediterranean influences. The prominent god Melqart of Tyre, whilst undoubtedly worshipped at Carthage, was superseded by Baal Hammon and Tanit. The identity and the origins of these deities has been subject to intense debate, swinging between those proclaiming a Levantine heritage and those who argue that they were the result of interactions between the belief systems of the Phoenician settlers and indigenous Libyan populations. Arguments for the latter have drawn upon Herodotus’ statement that the Libyans worshipped only the sun and the moon, suggesting that the most popular form of the sun deity was the ram headed god Ammon, who came to be adopted by both the Greeks and Phoenicians (Fage 1979: 186). Evidence of the worship of Ammon has been found throughout Africa, with his cult centre in the Oasis of Siwa, and widespread cases of rock engravings depicting a ram with a sun disc which is believed to represent Ammon (Fage 1979: 146; Hodos 2006: 182). Whilst Moscati (1968: 139) and Lancel (1995: 197) lean towards Eastern origins citing an inscription to Baal Hammon which means lord of the perfume altar from 9th century BC Zincirli, both accept that Baal Hammon may have been later identified with the Libyan god Ammon. Fage (1979: 186) has also suggested that the moon goddess may have been Tanit, who became a prominent goddess amongst the Punic settlers, although Lancel (1995: 197) argues that a 7th
century BC inscription to Tanit from Phoenician Sarepta rules out African origin. Tanit appears in Carthage from the 6th century BC, and an inscription that refers to Tanit as BLBNN – ‘of Lebanon’ has been cited as evidence of her Phoenician heritage. Moscati (1968: 138) argues however that there are numerous ways in which this statement could be interpreted and it should not be taken as definitive evidence of Tanit’s origins. The possibility that the name itself is indicative of her Libyan origins has been suggested by Fage (1979: 146) although there is little evidence to prove conclusively either way.

The pantheon over which Baal Hammon and Tanit may have ruled can be further elucidated by the treaty signed by Hannibal of Carthage and Philip IV of Macedon during the second Punic War, during which the divine were called upon as witnesses. The treaty concluded in 215 BC was reproduced by the Greek historian Polybius, and may reveal not only the most extensive list of divinities worshipped in Carthage, but the worship of natural features including the sun, moon, earth and rivers (Clifford 1990: 62). There are however significant barriers to using the treaty to understand the Carthaginian pantheon. As the product of a Greek historian, the divinities are represented by their Greek names or equivalents (Lancel 1995: 208). With only the Greek names given however, there is little consensus on their Carthaginian identity of the divine (Moscati 1968: 36). On the subject of Greek divinities, it appears that the Punic populations were receptive to the deities of alternative belief systems, with the official adoption of the Greek cult of Demeter and Kore in Carthage in 396 BC (Lancel 1995: 193; van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran 2003: 274). Similarly, amulets depicting the Egyptian gods Horus, Bes, Thot and Isis amongst others have been found in abundance in Carthage (Moscati 1973: 141). It is important to state however that this adoption of divinities should not be considered as a benign process of accommodation but as a process intimately linked to power, identity and politics. The cult of Demeter and Kore for example was adopted following conflict between the Carthaginians and Sicilians, during which Carthaginian troops sacked the Sicilian temple of Demeter and Kore. The cult was adopted as a state sponsored religions to atone for the aforementioned acts of sacrilege and to propitiate these divinities, believed to have been responsible for the outbreak of the plague amongst Carthaginian troops following the sack of the temple. The adoption of this cult was thus not a passive, benign act, but ultimately linked to sphere of war and the politics of power.
Like in Iron Age Britain, it appears that there was little desire in Phoenicia and the Punic states to represent the divine anthropomorphically. Greek sources reveal that many Punic sanctuaries did not contain images of the divine (Moscati 1973: 128). Eshmun, who was worshipped at Carthage for example, does not appear to have been depicted anthropomorphically. This was also the case for Tanit (although the supposed symbol of Tanit, discussed below in section 7.8, did become increasingly anthropomorphic). Aniconic symbols appear to have been preferred over anthropomorphic representation, particularly the Betyl. The tapering pillars or cones, known as betyls were said to symbolise the presence of a divinity – their name translated to ‘home of the god’ (Markoe 2000: 122). The pillar was often placed in the centre of a sanctuary and may have stood alone, as one of a pair or one of three. Measuring up to 1.5 metres in height, betyls were frequently depicted on a range of material culture including coins and stelae (ibid. 122).

Although rare, a number of examples of anthropomorphic representation, which have been argued to represent the divine are known. A 9th century BC stele (see fig. 41) from just outside Aleppo features Melqart, and the iconography is somewhat revealing. This image is a composite, drawing upon Egyptian, Syro-Hittite and neo-Hittite influences. It reflects the tendency of the Phoenicians to draw upon and incorporate varying stylistic techniques to create their own unique style. The deity is depicted with decorative cobras of Egyptian influence, which became widely employed in Phoenician iconography, and whilst the identification of the object in the divinity’s right hand is uncertain, Pitard (1988) suggests that it represents an Egyptian ankh. The crescentic axe in the god’s hands and conical hat are on the other hand notably Phoenician in style. The size of the head has also been the subject of discussion, with Winter (1981: 103-4, and Doak 2015: 54) suggesting that its size in relation to the rest of the body (1:4.5) conforms more closely to Phoenician tradition, where the ratio is c.1:5, rather than to Syrian tradition (1:3.5). The incorporation of non-Phoenician styles and techniques, rather than a passive adoption, was part of a wider process whereby Phoenician craftsmen, notable for their ability to draw upon different cultural inspirations, created a unique cosmopolitan Phoenician style (Doak 2015: 95, also see the discussion above on cultural fluidity).
7.7 Cosmology, Religious beliefs and Mythology

Having discussed the pantheons of the Punic states, it is valuable to consider some of the wider religious beliefs and cosmologies of Punic religions. Archaeological investigation has thus yielded little in terms of cosmological expression in the Punic world, although a recent paper by Lopez-Bertran (2016) considers how terracotta bottle figurines may have been used by Punic populations to ‘understand and negotiate their own world’ (ibid. 413). According to Lope-Bertran (ibid. 414), human-bird hybrid vessels may have reflected Punic cosmologies relating to the soul, specifically its duality. It was argued that upon death, the nefesh component of the soul remained in the tomb, whilst the ruah travelled through the air to the spirit world. Birds or winged beings such as the hybrid bottles may therefore represent the journey of the ruah to the spirit world.

Whilst literary evidence in terms of mythologies or liturgies is sparse, slightly more evidence is available in terms of Phoenician belief systems and cosmologies, but we must be careful not to assume a direct translation of belief systems between Phoenician and Punic
states. What studies in Phoenician cosmology may do however, it provide a general background into some of the beliefs which may have been common to the religions practiced by Phoenician and Punic individuals. What this evidence consists of, what it reveals, and its validity in understanding Phoenician belief systems will now be considered.

The Phoenicians practiced a Semitic religion that was a branch of a broader Canaanite tradition (Wright 2013: 131). The Ugarit texts, recovered from Ras Shamra in Syria, comprise the largest collection of documents recovered from the Canaanite region. The tablets cover a range of subjects, but are particularly revealing in terms of religion, encompassing myths, prayers, hymns, votive texts, sacrificial lists and lists of gods (Clifford 1990: 55; Ribichini 2001: 120; Wright 2013: 131). Philo of Byblos’ The Phoenician History, composed in the 1st - 2nd centuries AD and reproduced in the work of Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (4th century AD) is the most extensive extant Greek source. Philo claims to have translated the 12th century BC work of the Phoenician author Sanchuniathon, which details creation stories and the history of the gods (Aubet 1993: 24).

From the fragmented literary sources then, we are able to glimpse the complexity of Phoenician religions, where regional variation stemmed from an overarching Canaanite belief system (Schmitz 2013: 222). Semitic religions were polytheistic, entailing the worship of a number of deities. These deities played an integral role in the lives of individuals and were believed to convene in assemblies to decide upon matters concerning human affairs (Clifford 1990: 56; Doak 2015: 17). These council were given various regional titles, including ‘the assembly of the holy gods of Byblos’ or ‘the whole family of divine children’ (Ribichini 2001: 122). The perceived role and influence of the divine in everyday life is presented through a number of inscriptions from Ugarit, Sidon, Tyre and Carthage where Reshef appears to have been propitiated to prevent the affliction of war, plague and lightening, each of which was at his disposal (Ribichini 2001: 124). Many Semitic deities reveal strong links to natural sites and phenomena such as mountains, springs and storms - a feature that is often reflected in their name (Moscati 1973: 122). Natural features or place names were often used as epithets, for example in the case of Baal Saphon (the storm god) or Baal Lebanon (god of the mountain) (Clifford 1990: 57).

Much of what is known in terms of Phoenician mythology, worship, ideology and the nature of the divine has been drawn from indirect sources, such as the Bible and a range of
Greek authors, many of which were hostile to the Phoenician or Punic states (Ribichini 2001: 120; Wright 201: 130). The Ugarit texts produced between 1300 and 1200 BC have often been cited as limited in use with regards to Phoenician religion, falling outside of the dates and geographical region of Phoenician civilisation. Holst (2008) has however convincedly argued for the likelihood that Phoenician civilizations flourished much earlier than previously believed, which would make them contemporary with the Ugarit texts, and demonstrated the broad cultural and religious similarities that marked Syria and the Levant. The caveat of using the Ugarit texts to aid the understanding of Phoenician religion should not necessarily be that they fall outside of the dates of Phoenician civilization, but, firstly, that out of a broad Canaanite belief system, a range of indigenous gods and feasts were worshipped and celebrated, with an indigenous determination of the importance of particular gods and feasts - it thus cannot be said with any certainty the extent to which the practices recorded in the texts were employed throughout the region. Secondly, we cannot assume that Canaanite religion, including the nature of the divine, remained unchanged throughout its history (Moscati 1973: 124; Ribichini 2001: 124). Whilst a divinity in the Ugarit texts may also feature in Punic or Phoenician epigraphy, Ribchini (2001: 124) warns against assuming a straightforward evolution or continuation of Canaanite religion. The invasion of the Sea Peoples in the Levant c.1200 BC is often cited as the catalyst for religious variation, stimulating new forms of worship and the reorganisation and development of indigenous pantheons. As a result, a new deity may be added to the pantheon or a named deity may have been subject to a number of local evolutions, so that so that over a given period of time, localised perceptions of a single named deity may be radically divergent from an original and neighbouring conceptualisation. As such, without additional evidence, broad temporal and geographical references to a particular deity should not be assumed to imply a single, standardised conceptualisation of the divine (Ribchini 2001). Likewise, the text of Philo of Byblos was initially considered limited in its usefulness, inspired by the desire of Eusebius to denigrate Phoenician religion by presenting it as euhemeristic (Doak 2015: 14). The surviving text maintained that Sanchuniathon based his work upon secret, sacred texts, revealing how Phoenician myths concealed a core truth. One of the main concerns in basing any understandings of Phoenician religion on Philo’s text, is that it is often difficult to ascertain where Philo or Eusebius project their own opinions, and when they cite Sanchuniathon. Whether or not the text was in fact a Hellenic invention, it was in the least
subject to Hellenic interpretation, presenting the Phoenician religion as seen by the Greeks, evident for example in the names of the gods often given as their supposed Greek equivalents. Clifford (1990: 55) and Ribichini (2001: 121) reiterate the difficulties of establishing what is fact, and what has been interpreted, exaggerated or falsified by and for a Greek audience. In spite of these limitations, it does appear however that within it are genuine insights into Semitic religion, as continuities can be found within the later recovered documents from the region (Ribichini 2001) and can provide a basic insight into some of the belief systems of the Phoenicians, some of which may have been continued or transformed in the Punic states. From this general overview of Phoenician and Punic religion, it is possible to consider one of its most famous aspects in more depth – the tophet.

7.8 The Tophet

The tophet was an open air sanctuary found throughout the Punic colonies; from Carthage and Hadrumetum in Africa as well as Sulcis, Nora, Tarros, and Monte Sirai on Sardinia; Mozia on Sicily and Rabat on Malta (Aubet 1993: 207; Lancel 1995: 228; Moore 2000: 5; Festuccia and Mori 2012: 177). In these tophets, the cremated remains of young children and animals were buried and commemorated with stone stelae (Lancel 1995: 29). The exact nature these sites has been widely debated, with Classical Greek authors and the Bible fuelling the idea that these sanctuaries were the foci of child sacrifice. Plutarch (Moralia: 13.5) for example wrote:

...‘they [Carthaginians] themselves offered up their own children, and those who had no children would buy little ones from poor people and cut their throats as if they were so many lambs or young birds; meanwhile the mother stood by without a tear or moan; but should she utter a single moan or let fall a single tear, she had to forfeit the money, and her child was sacrificed nevertheless.’

The veracity of such accounts is difficult to verify – they were after all produced primarily by individuals hostile towards Carthage and the Punic states. This is not to say that the accounts should be entirely discredited, and indeed archaeological evidence may shed some light on whether there was an element of truth to these tales of sacrifice. The
existence of the tophets themselves - sites exclusively housing the cremated remains of children and animals - is not itself conclusive evidence for human sacrifice, but could result from the practice of child sacrifice. The iconography and epigraphy of the stelae in tophets is also revealing, with one for example featuring what appears to be a priest holding a child in one hand whilst raising the other in supplication (see fig. 42). Below this was the inscription MLK, meaning gift or sacrifice (Miles 2011: 70), which together is suggestive of sacrificial activity.

Figure 42: Stelae from the tophet at Carthage depicting a priest and young child. Image from Markoe (2000:47)

Recent scholarship has however rejected the notion of Carthaginian child sacrifice, suggesting that hostile Greek sources fabricated accounts that masked the true function of the tophet as an infant cemetery (Moscati 1987; Ribichini 1988: 120-123). The reality perhaps lies in between these two extremes, where child sacrifice was practiced in the Punic states in a limited capacity, exercised only in times of struggle and hardship – indeed the Ugarit texts allude to the sacrifice of firstborns in times of war or great danger in an attempt to propitiate the gods (Aubet 1993: 208). Osteoarchaeological analysis of cremated remains from tophets may reveal this patterning. A significant number of the early cremations are likely to have been the result of natural death, as the majority are stillborn or newborn infants (ibid. 215). Infant mortality rates have been calculated at 30-40%, and a lack of infant burials in Punic cemeteries (100 out of 2000 in Carthage) could suggest that the tophet functioned as a dedicated cemetery for infants, who owing to their young age or liminal
status, were denied burial in community cemeteries. Their bodies may have thus been used as substitutions for living victims, and when no human substitutes were available, birds and animals were used instead (Miles 2011: 71). The concept of sacrifice has been tied strongly to the presence of the word Mk on the stelae, meaning gift or sacrifice. We cannot however rule out that Mk was an initiation rite designed to introduce the deceased to the divine world. It may be the case that the term was fluid – used variably as an initiation rite of the deceased and as a sacrificial rite. A belief in the resurrecive properties of fire can be found in the Ugarit texts, and these connotations of fire may have played an integral role in rites concerning infant mortality (Aubet 1993: 128). On the flip side however it could also have represented the sacrifice of individuals through fire for the good of the community – a theme found in the foundation myth of Carthage (Aubet 1993: 208). The presence of inscriptions similar to the following also appear more explicit in terms of sacrificial activity:

‘It was to the Lady Tanit Face of Baal and to Baal Hammon that Bomilcar son of Hanno, grandson of Milkiathon, vowed this son of his own flesh. Bless him you.’
(Quinn 2010: 396)

Both the archaeological and literary evidence thus suggests that although perhaps not as prevalent as the Classical sources suggest, the Punic states did perform child sacrifice. This was most likely confined to periods of extreme hardship, exercised as a last resort when animal, or infants deceased from natural causes were not considered a sufficient substitutes to appease the divine (Lancel 1995: 198; Miles 2011: 72). It is however possible that during the neo-Punic period a change occurred whereby the stele itself replaced the urn and its contents as a dedication (Moore 2000: 4).

Whilst their function and operation remains disputed, tophets were clearly sites that were invested with great importance. They were key features of the Punic cultural landscape, and whilst their presence was largely restricted to more affluent settlements, the rites performed in them were highly likely to have been considered as integral to the maintenance of the well being of the community. It is probable that the tophets were managed and maintained by public bodies, as suggested by extensive work including resurfacing (Quinn 2010: 390). This communal nature is further emphasised by inscriptions in the tophet stating ‘by decree of the people of Carthage’ (Aubet 1993: 216; Quinn 2010: 141)


390). Like many other Punic traditions and cultural traits, the tophet had its roots in the Levant, yet was subject to a degree of reconstruction or reorientation. The tophets of Western Phoenician cities demonstrate the strong ties of attachment between these cities and the East, which included an annual tithe sent from Carthage to Tyre (Quinn 2010: 390). Quinn suggests that the tophet and its associated rites may have been an Eastern tradition brought to the West by Phoenician colonists, constituting an ‘important part in the ongoing construction of the relationship between the colony and the mother city’.

7.9 The Stelae of the Tophet

The votive stelae found throughout the Punic world and Numidian city states, were intimately linked to, and a central component of the tophet, placed over urns and perhaps in some cases entirely replacing them as offerings. As a commemoration of a votive act, the iconography of the stelae provide a lens through which to view not only the Punic tradition of vows and offerings in the wider context of Punic religion and society, but also the impact and degree of interaction with broader cultural traditions in the Mediterranean and North Africa. This iconography, its changing form and the various interpretations of it will form the body of the following discussion, drawing heavily upon although not limited to the stelae from Carthage and North Africa. The tophet at Carthage fell out of use soon after defeat in the third Punic War, yet its vast collection of over 10,000 stelae provides fertile ground through which to explore the imagery of the tophets. The iconography of the Carthaginian stelae has a wide currency throughout the Punic world, and appears to reflect wider Punic trends, although it is important to acknowledge the co-existence of indigenous trends in stelae production. Whilst many of the stelae that come from North African regions outside of Carthage are without provenance or context they too provide a useful layer to the understanding of tophet imagery across North Africa.

The tophet at Carthage was subject to four phases of use, extending from c.800 BC to c.146/125 AD. The first stelae appear from the 5th century BC, replacing sandstone blocks, cippi and naiskoi (Brett 1997; Moscati 2001, 366). Whilst epigraphic evidence suggests that in its earliest use the tophet was the preserve of elite sections of the population, by the 4th century BC it appears that the tophet was becoming more inclusive in its use, housing
dedications from craftsmen and slaves (Aubet 1993: 215). The stelae produced between the 5th and 2nd centuries BC form the basis of the present investigation, and have been labelled by Moore (2000) as Punic stelae, with the proceeding stelae designated as Neo-Punic. These Punic stelae tend to be significantly smaller in width than their neo-Punic successors (13.5cm versus 31 cm in the British Museum collection for example), and frequently bear an inscription to one or two gods – usually Tanit and Baal Hammon - in fulfilment of a vow. These inscriptions generally follow a standard form, which begins ‘To the lady to Tanit face of Baal and to the Lord to Baal Hammon’ (The British Museum n.d.: 5; Moore 2000: 25). The inscriptions featured alongside a range of iconography, which unlike on the later neo-Punic stelae, was incised rather than in relief. Extensive analyses of these earlier monuments and stelae have been undertaken by Bartoloni (1976) – who analysed the earliest material (phases 1 to 3) - and Brown (1991), who covered the later phases (3 and 4). Drawing together this research, Quinn (2011) revealed the shifting trends in tophet iconography and the fluidity of its imagery. Shifts in popularity, which witnessed the increasing use of the symbol of Tanit (48% in Brown versus 5.5% in Bartoloni) and the crescent-disk combination (27% in Brown versus 5% in Bartoloni) which were accompanied by the introduction of new symbols, such as the hand and caduceus (featuring on 31% and 35% respectively of the stelae analysed by Brown). A selection of the most commonly featured symbols and iconography (other than Tanit, discussed below) of Punic stelae is presented below.

![Figure 43: Various symbols featuring on the La Ghorfa stelae at the British Museum – left to right: caduceus, raised hand and disc and crescent. Images from the British Museum. Images from the British Museum.](image)

The stone markers of the Punic tophet that have been dated to between the 7th and 4th centuries BC draw upon many of the symbols and traditions featured in the East, although as noted by Quinn (2010), the symbols were rarely employed in a ‘straightforward manner’.
Whilst just over 50 stelae have been recovered from Eastern Phoenician burial sites, a number dwarfed by the thousands recovered from western Phoenician tophets, these Eastern Punic stelae provide a useful starting point to consider the development and meaning of the symbology and iconography drawn upon in Punic stelae. It should be noted however that the stelae recovered from the East are funerary rather than votive, the category to which the Punic stelae belong. Nevertheless they can provide an important insight into the imagery employed which finds parallels on both the funerary and votive stelae. An in depth analysis of these Eastern stelae can be found in Sader’s (1995) *Iron Age Stelae from Lebanon*, for the purpose of this enquiry I will draw out only some of the key findings of Sader’s research. Many of the discussions and analyses of these stelae focus on the symbols and iconography employed, largely in isolation from its wider contexts (see Limam 2008 and Ahmed 1998 for example), yet a consideration of how these stelae operated can facilitate more nuanced understandings of the iconography. As such, the following discussion will relate the iconography and the symbols employed on the stelae to their possible role and function in Phoenician society.

The dearth of textual evidence relating to Phoenician funerary practice and cosmology has contributed to the general lack of understanding of these stelae and their associated iconography (Sader 1995: 20). It is perhaps most likely that these stelae came to operate in a complex web of meanings, with multiple functions including - perhaps the original function - of indicating a burial site; as well as to establish a link between the world of the living and that of the dead; to commemorate the dead, and finally, to operate in a cult capacity. Sader (1995: 33) draws upon an excavation at Akhziv to emphasise this religious and cult capacity, where a stele recovered above a tomb was interpreted by the excavator as evidence that the stelae was used as a place at which the family would pray and perform funerary rituals. Sader (1995: 33) argues that stelae with niches, in which divine images were placed, likewise served a religious purpose. It is perhaps this religious function that the symbols and iconography of the stelae express, presenting a range of beliefs and phenomena, from deities, to protecting the deceased.

A range of symbols can be found on both Phoenician and Punic stelae, including the crescent moon and disc, the palmette and lotus, anthropomorphic figures, architectural motifs and geometric shapes. Egyptian symbols and hieroglyphs also feature heavily in Punic
and Phoenician stelae, which reflect the wider Phoenician tradition of drawing upon and incorporating stylistic traditions from a range of cultures. Conventionally, the Phoenicians have been derided by critics (See Miles 2011 and Brown 1992 for a discussion), who consider Phoenician art as the result of a passive ventriloquism, where the symbols of others were often employed incorrectly. This was argued to show that the Phoenicians lacked an original culture of their own. More recently, a number of scholars have taken issue with such interpretations, arguing that it is unjust to consider the Phoenicians as without an original culture, when it has been increasingly recognised that no culture is pure, and that every culture is fluid and ultimately derived from a variety of sources (see Hingley 2005: 50-56 for example and section 7.5). Such attestations can be summarised by Doak (2015: 92) who wrote that if we deny the label ‘Phoenician’ for all iconographies with mixed motifs or clear international influence, then we deny the Phoenicians most of their (apparently) ‘indigenous’ imagery. This indigenous imagery, he argues is Phoenician, precisely because it has been adopted in the style of the Phoenicians and thus made Phoenician. This brings us to an important point regarding the use and adaptation of non-indigenous symbols and stylistic techniques, previously discussed in section 7.5. It is important to emphasise once more the crucial difference between identification with and identification as; that drawing upon the symbols and stylistic repertoire of others does not necessarily represent a proclamation of or a desire to be considered the same (Sader 1995: 115; Quinn 2011: 390). The Phoenicians, it came to be argued, were conscious of the cultural or religious connotations of these symbols and employed them as such, combining them with indigenous symbols to express their own needs and beliefs. It is these symbols and the current interpretations of them that I will now turn. Whilst a comprehensive analysis of these symbols can be found in a number of publications (see Brown 1991; Sader 1995; Mendleson 2003) it is important to provide a brief overview of the current interpretation and composition of these symbols here.

7.9.1 The Caduceus

The caduceus (fig. 43) is a poorly understood symbol of Punic stelae. Whilst comparisons have been drawn between the Greek and Punic caduceus, it is unlikely that the Punic caduceus owes its origins to Greek form – stylistically or symbolically. Instead it may
draw upon 9th century BC precedents from the Levant. The Punic caduceus consists of a shaft and two circles, the lower one closed and the upper open. Examples whereby the upper circle is replaced by a crescent are also known, and may suggest links with a lunar deity. Rather than following the Greek tradition of entwined serpents, the Punic caduceus instead features flowing ribbons. The Punic caduceus often appears in conjunction with other symbols (British Museum n.d. 7), including the sign of Tanit, although as Moore (2000: 27) states, it is unlikely that it was an attribute of Tanit, as it frequently appears independent of this deity. In her analysis of the Punic caduceus, Moore (2000: 27-29) draws upon the work of Brown and Lipinski which emphasise its religious connotations, proposing ceremonial uses and its use in a sanctuary, possibly even as a stylised incense burner.

7.9.2 The Raised Hand

The raised hand (fig. 43), with the palm facing outwards has conventionally been interpreted as either indicative of a blessing or prayer – it is not possible to discern which. This motif, like those previously discussed, has been widely agreed to have its origins in the Bronze Age Near East, where its use is not confined to stelae but adorns a range of objects. What should be noted however is the presence of this motif in Libyan cave art. This widespread use of stelae throughout Numidian cities in North Africa is a warning not to simply overlook this symbol as purely having meaning only in the Phoenician-Punic sense – we must recognise that it may have had multiple connotations.

7.9.3 The Crescent Moon and Disc

The crescent moon and disc symbol (fig. 43), frequently employed on Punic and Phoenician stelae, has its origins in the Near East, with examples from Mesopotamia dating to the 3rd millennium BC, and those from the Levant to the 2nd Millennium BC. In terms of the Crescent moon, Theuer (referenced in Sader 1995: 117) suggests that it represents a Moon divinity, drawing upon examples from both Mesopotamia and Canaan whereby a moon divinity is predominantly represented by a crescent or a crescent and full moon together as opposed to a solar disc. Sader (1995: 115) suggests that the disc represents the sun, drawing upon Egyptian beliefs whereby the sun symbolises regeneration. In funerary
contexts, the deceased individual was said to identify themselves with the sun so that they too, like the sun, would be regenerated in the afterlife. As with many of the symbols adorning Phoenician and Punic stelae however, there has been significant debate regarding the identification and meaning of the crescent and disc symbol. Opposing Sader’s (1995) proposal, Mendleson (2003: 8) argues that the crescent represents the new moon, and the disc the full moon, acknowledging this may have come to represent the sun only at a later date, whilst Kaizer (2013) suggests more broadly that the crescent and disc combination was used to represent the ‘cosmic settings of the divine world’. Wilson (2003: 403) however argues that the symbols were employed as aniconic representations of the divine, with the crescent moon signifying the deity Baal Hammon. Astral symbols do frequently appear on stelae dedicated to Baal Hammon which may provide support for such an assertion (Jimenez 2004: 231). The presence of these symbols on Punic stelae is often accompanied by dedications to Baal Hammon and Tanit, leading to the suggestion that it is these deities that are represented aniconically. Picard (1976: 82) however argued that the disc and crescent rather than representing divinities served to signify immortality. Brown (1986: 136-137) has provided a more balanced argument, suggesting that this symbol most likely signified a wide variety of concepts to different people.

7.9.4 The Betyl and the Sign of Tanit

This aniconic representation of divinities brings us to an important discussion concerning the representation of Punic/Phoenician divinities. The evidence suggests that the Phoenicians favoured aniconic representation, that is, they primarily employed non-figural techniques to represent the divine. One particularly prominent form of aniconic representation was the Betyl, attested since the 3rd millennium B.C. in Syria (Doak 2015: 83; Sader 1995: 133). Betylts continuously featured on Punic stelae from the 6th century B.C. to the fall of Carthage (Bisi 1967: 219). In discussing the worship of aniconic stones, Sader (1995: 123) draws upon the work of Mettinger (1995: 9) who highlighted the near absence of anthropomorphifc representation of central Phoenician gods such as Melqart and Eshmun, suggesting instead that they were represented as betyls or columns. Punic stelae, which have groups of two or three betyls, indicates however that more than one god or goddess may have been involved in the funerary cult (Sader 1995: 138).
Sader (1995) has suggested that the betyl came to be combined with the Egyptian symbol the ankh to produce the infamous sign of Tanit. This symbol makes its first appearance at Carthage in the 6th century BC, and is a composite of three geometric elements; a circle resting upon a rectangular bar which itself rests upon the apex of a triangle. This symbol has provoked extensive debate, and the meaning and origin of the symbol has been discussed extensively in Brown (1991), Sader (1995) and Moore (2000). The following serves as a summary of their analyses, beginning with the association of the symbol with the eponymous goddess Tanit. The outline of a female form that the composite symbols produce and its increasing anthropomorphism was used as evidence to support the argument that the symbol represented a female divinity (see fig. 44 for the anthropomorphic evolution of the sign of Tanit). The frequent association of the symbol on stelae with inscriptions dedicated to Tanit subsequently led to the ascription of the sign as a representation of Tanit. This concept has however not been without opposition. Sader (1995: 129) draws attention to Garbini’s (1980: 179) study, whereby he argued that the so-called sign of Tanit was a combination of both the Egyptian ankh, a symbol of life, and an isosceles triangle, representing fertility. This finds support from in The Dictionnaire de le Civilisation Phénicienne et Punique (quoted by Moore 2000: 27), which likewise suggests that it was a general symbol for life and fertility. Whilst noting the merits of such an interpretation, Sader (1995: 129) is critical of its failure to account for later variations of the symbol. To explain such phenomena, Sader (ibid.) suggests that the symbol had a dual function, combining the ankh as a symbol of life and the betly as a religious symbol. In developing her argument, Sader (ibid.) draws upon the Egyptian tradition of modifying hieroglyphs, pointing to the case of a vase from the tomb of Tutankhamen where crossbar of an ankh is depicted as arms which touch the other signs. It was argued that like the Egyptians, the Phoenicians modified and represented hieroglyphs in such a way to represent anthropomorphic beings or objects. Such an interpretation, it was argued, accounts for each of the known variants of the sign of Tanit. The curved or linear lines extending from the crossbar, frequently interpreted as a representation of raised arms could represent the throne, altar or stool upon which the betyl was placed. Sader (1995) also notes that, in accordance with the popular presumption that the extensions represent arms, this phenomenon may reflect the anthropomorphism of the ankh hieroglyph, and the subsequently the increasing anthropomorphism of the sign. To further support her
argument, Sader (1995) recalls the tendency of the circular component of the symbol (representing an omphalos stone) to be replaced with various accoutrements, ranging from a pomegranate at Medeina stele (Bisi 1967, Fig. 791); a rosette (Picard 1957: Cb-424 and Cb-68 5) or a Crescent moon and sun-disc (Bisi 1967, Fig. 82). This she argues, suggests that the spherical component of the symbol represents the deity, so that a betyl for example could be replaced by an associated symbol.

The exact nature, origin and meaning of the symbol continues to be contested and whilst Magee (2008: 148) proposes that the symbol reflects the union of the terrestrial and celestial worlds – that through the sign, individuals were able to receive divine power, he also concedes that the meaning of the symbol most likely varied and evolved over time, encapsulated varying ideas and beliefs. It may be the case that the sign was imbued with multiple meanings; an apotropaic function originating from the original hieroglyphic ankh, and a religious function through its association with the betyl and thus representation of a divinity.

Figure 44: The sign of Tanit from a stele at Carthage (left) and various manifestations of the symbol on the La Ghorfa stelae at the British Museum (right). Images from the British Museum
The increasing anthropomorphism of the sign of Tanit brings us to consider anthropomorphism more generally. Whilst there may have been a reluctance to depict the divine anthropomorphically, representations of human figures have been found on Phoenician and Punic funerary stelae. Whilst the subject of this enquiry is the votive stelae, funerary stelae can provide important insights into the stylistic principles that guided anthropomorphic representation in pre-Roman North Africa, principles that may have ultimately contributed to the anthropomorphic representations of Graeco-Roman divinities. Close parallels can be drawn between the stelae depicted in fig. 45 – one from Lebanon and the other from Carthage. Both feature a pointed chin, a wedge shaped nose, slit mouth and large round eyes.

Figure 45: A Phoenician (left) and 5th-4th century BC Punic stelae (right) carved with a human figure. Images from Sader (1995: 33)

Sader (1995: 134) draws comparisons between these stele and the anthropomorphic Phoenician funerary masks. These masks, also of stone, are believed to have operated in an apotropaic capacity, providing a substitute for the decomposing face of the deceased, allowing them access to the afterlife, whilst simultaneously protecting the living from demonic powers that an individual may acquire after death. The use of similar representations of the head on the stelae may thus have been employed to operated in a similar manner by preventing malevolent spirits or forces arising from a burial site (Sader 1995: 134).

Whilst parallels can also be drawn here to the Punic stelae from Monte Sirai and Motya, generally anthropomorphic traditions on the stelae from the Punic cities, both votive and
funerary are rather different from their Phoenician counterparts. The Punic tomb markers depicted below (fig. 46) and dating from the 4th-2nd centuries BC are typical of those found in Carthage. They depict a figure standing in a niche, possibly a deity but most likely the deceased, with the right arm raised in blessing or prayer. The hand is notably large and similar to the raised hand symbol commonly featuring on the votive Punic stelae and may operate in terms of similar ideologies (Mendleson 2003: 7). There has been little attempt to model the body, and the torsos generally consist of un-worked cylindrical blocks. The heads are large, featuring large, lentoid eyes and the hair is intricately patterned.

Figure 46: Funerary markers from Carthage, dated c.4th-2nd BC. Image from the British Museum

From these funerary stelae, I now wish to return to its votive counterpart, and the female representations that appear on 6% of the sandstone markers of the tophet. In nine cases, the individual holds a disk at her chest (see fig. 47) – a phenomenon with Mesopotamian origins, appearing from the first millennium BC in Palestine, and in Cyprus from the 6th century BC. Perhaps the most striking aspect of these representations are their schematism and the minimal modelling of the body, somewhat similar to the funerary stelae. Comparisons can be drawn here to the stelae from Carthage dated between the 4th and 2nd century BC (seen in fig. 45). Like the female disc holders, the figure in this stele is highly schematic, only this time holding what may be an ankh or a sign of Tanit. There is a notable lack of modelling of the body, and the figure has a large head with minimal facial
features. The eyes are large and lentoid, sitting under a prominent brow ridge. The mouth is small and the nose a large, wedge shape. The body is largely schematic, with little effort to depict the limbs and torso.

![Figure 47: Various anthropomorphic representations on Punic stelae. Left to right: an individual holding an ankh from La Ghorfa, a women holding a disc to her chest, from carthage, and a further individual from Carthage from the 4th century BC. Images from the British Museum (left and centre) and Picard (2011: 129) (right)](image)

It appears then that many of the symbols and iconography that feature on Roman period stelae were well established in the Punic cities prior to their absorption into the Roman Empire. There was however a notable change in the Roman period stelae from its predecessors, the result of the absorption and amalgamation of Roman stylistic techniques with Punic and Mediterranean. Indigenous features were not discarded, but continued to co-exist alongside new features and designs. Anthropomorphic representation became increasingly prominent, particularly in terms of divine representation. However, as with the Phoenician utilisation of Egyptian symbols, the increasing anthropomorphism of the divine as well as the representation of Graeco-Roman divinities should not be considered simply as a passive adoption of Graeco-Roman culture, religion and stylistic techniques. In many cases, stelae of the Roman period display a distinct lack of engagement with Roman culture and religion, featuring neither Roman divinities nor individuals addressed in Roman attire. What they do show, is a distinct indigenous tradition of anthropomorphic representation building upon past Punic precedents. The most prominent features of these representations are their schematism, a large almost elliptical shaped head with large, double lidded lentoid eyes, wedge nose, small, slit mouth and striated hair (see fig. 48, dated to the 2nd century AD). The existence of long standing indigenous traditions in statuary can also be seen in the Ghirza tombs (see Mattingly 2003: 165)
7.10 Anthropomorphic Representation

Whilst the anthropomorphic representation featuring on Punic stelae have been discussed, it will be beneficial to consider the broader stylistic repertoire of anthropomorphic representation within Punic art. A necessary starting point of this analysis is recognition of both the eclectic nature of Punic art which defies description as a discrete, monolithic art form, and the Phoenician heritage of Punic art (see section 7.5). This Phoenician heritage has been widely acknowledged (Moscati 1973: 145; Markoe 2000: 145; Doak, 2015: 42) yet what specifically constitutes Phoenician art has proven notoriously difficult to pin down. To really understand Punic art and its Phoenician heritage, this is where we must begin.

The Phoenician material culture of the Bronze Age is widely held as part of a broader Syro-Palestine cultural tradition. It is to this broader culture that Iron Age Phoenician art is believed to owe its origins (Markoe 1990). Phoenician Iron Age art developed in the context of a multicultural society with extensive trading contacts - a phenomenon reflected in its diversity. Assyrian, Greek, Syrian, Cypriot and Egyptian forms were drawn upon to varying degrees, which has conditioned a proliferation of epithets in the naming of Punic art, from ‘Egyptianizing’, ‘Assyrianizing’, ‘Cypro-Phoenician’ or ‘Syrianizing/Syro-Phoenician’ (Brown
The influence of Egyptian cultural forms has been popularly cited as perhaps the most prominent external factor in the development of Phoenician material culture, yet it is important not to oversimplify, or overstate Egyptian influence. The Egyptian influence was not constant or accumulative, but rather came in cycles of peaks and troughs, most notably peaking in the 14th, 8th, late 6th and 5th centuries B.C (Markoe 1990: 18). Markoe (ibid.) suggests that the power dynamics of the Levant may have played a crucial role in the adoption of particular cultural forms, and notes the prominence of Assyrian cultural forms in the Punic west when Assyria was in the ascendency in the 8th century BC. This variable use of cultural traditions may not only have reflected the desire of individuals to use symbols of power associated with states in the ascendency, but the desire of Phoenician traders to cater to buoyant foreign markets.

The ivories of the Levant provide an interesting case study, and I will to draw upon these for numerous reasons. They not only emphasise the dangers of overlooking the fluidity of artistic tradition at the expense of producing neat, monolithic conceptual categories of regional art, but they can demonstrate the extensive repertoire of artistic representation that the Phoenicians may have drawn upon in terms of anthropomorphic representation. Thousands of ivories have been recovered across Neo-Assyrian sites including the royal buildings of Nimrud and Arslan Tash in Syria (Barnett 1957; Gansell et al. 2014;). Conventionally, these ivories have been divided into three traditions based upon art-historical approaches: Phoenician, North Syrian and South Syrian. The presence of Phoenician ivories outside of Phoenician territories was a result of both trade and their appropriation as war booty (Uberti 2001: 458). These particular ivories were designated as Phoenician as they closely emulated Egyptian traditions, with ‘poised forms, spatially balanced tableaux, and openwork designs’ (ibid.). The North Syrian figures were identified on the basis of large eyes and noses, round faces and high receding foreheads, little or no chin, a small mouth and stocky bodies (Winter 1976: 3), whilst the Syrian/South Syrian traditions were said to be characterised as a hybrid of Phoenician and North Syrian forms. The problem with this is the assumption that the Egyptian influence in Phoenician ivories was constant and ever present, and that they remained immune to other cultural influence – including those from Syria. As previously discussed, Phoenician art drew upon a range of cultural traditions, not Egyptian exclusively, and the use of Egyptian forms came in waves.
(Brown 1992: 6; Scigliuzzo 2005). Wicke (2009 in Gansell et al 2014) has suggested some of those ivories previously designated as Syrian/South Syrian may instead be Phoenician, a recognition of the diversity and eclecticism of Phoenician art.

A recent analysis by Gassell et al (2014) has highlighted the questionable nature of the stylistic categories, concluding that some ivories lie between particular categories, whilst others ‘demonstrate relationships to more than one group’. The results of their investigation demonstrated the close relationship between Syrian/South Syrian objects and Phoenician objects, as well as the possibility of a Phoenician subtype that was influenced by Syrian/South Syrian and/or North Syrian style, or a North Syrian style emulating the Phoenician tradition. What this reminds us, is that we must be aware of and appreciate the varying and diverse stylistic trends upon which Phoenician art draws – using various stylistic components and to varying extents, including Syrian techniques. Ivories from the Punic colonies such as Carthage, Samos, Malta, Southern Spain include combs, mirror handles, plaques and small boxes (Uberti 2001: 456). They exhibit highly decorative incisions and surface decoration, with for example clothing indicated delicately incised patterning (winter 1976: 2), and show a combination of Egyptian and Syrian styles, including large, almond shaped eyes and wig bearing females (Lancel 1995: 75 see figs. 49 and 50). Picard (1968:164) also noted the customary features of Punic anthropomorphic representation as featuring hooked noses, almond shaped eyes and fleshy lips.

Figure 49: A female head from nimrud (8th century BC) (left) and a plaquette of the woman in the window from nimrud (8th century BC) (right). Images from Uberti (2001: 246-71)
The last examples that I wish to draw upon are Terracotta masks, found in Carthage and throughout the Punic colonies (Markoe 2000: 160). One particular variety of Phoenician Iron Age mask found throughout Punic North Africa is characterised by the use of incision to depict hair and or facial hair (*ibid*.). As seen in fig. 51, a series of incised circles denote the beard. Small circles were frequently employed as decorative features throughout the Punic world, featuring on hair, beards, veils and clothing (Moore 2000: 65). In the case of female masks, striated, Egyptian wigs may be used to represent the hair, and correlate with the broader trend of the prolific surface markings and texture in Punic and Phoenician art (Markoe 2000: 168). These masks frequently feature elongated, oval eyes, double spool shaped ears and a low forehead, features also commonly depicted on the anthropomorphic representations of the stelae (Moscati 1968).
7.11 Conclusion

When the first Phoenicians settled in the coastal cities of the Mediterranean, the culture that they brought with them was rich and diverse, drawing upon and absorbing influences from Egypt and the wider Levant (Lancel 1995: 303; Doak 2015: 93). This eclectic culture remained open to new interactions in the colonial settlements, drawing upon North African and Mediterranean traditions. This investigation is underpinned by a recognition of the diverse responses to cultural encounters and North Africa provides a particularly interesting case study, as it is here that Rome came to colonise a region that was had previously been colonised. The material culture of pre-Roman North Africa was diverse and eclectic, indicative of dynamic processes of cultural interaction rather than acculturation and uniformity. The material culture of North Africa was a composite of Phoenician, Mediterranean and Indigenous African forms – but crucially the interaction of these cultures has been increasingly framed in terms of adoption and adaptation, rather than a passive ventriloquism linked to notions of emulating a superior culture, something also seen in assertive mimetic strategies. The North African populations have traditionally drawn upon non-indigenous traditions, adapting this to suit indigenous needs and desires, and the intention of this investigation is to consider how and why Roman forms may have been drawn upon by these indigenous populations in the production of votive stelae.
The stelae of the tophet commemorated votive acts which were an integral part of Punic social and religious life. The early Punic stelae draw upon a limited range of motifs of an abstract nature, whose symbolism is often poorly understood. What it does reveal, is the importance attached to and the strength of the ties between Punic states, Phoenician homeland and North African traditions. The iconography was not static and provides a lens through which to consider the increasing influence of new Mediterranean cultures on Punic populations. The practices of the tophet and dedication of stelae were an integral part of Punic identity, and whilst open to new cultural influence, it never lost sight of its Phoenician heritage. The core symbolism remained Punic and was of considerable antiquity, undoubtedly an expression of Phoenician cosmology and religious beliefs. The adherence to specific motifs and the abstract nature of these motifs existed in sharp contrast to the more naturalised techniques of the Romans, and offer a window through which to consider the ways in which Roman influence was adopted, adapted and rejected in the production of the stelae.
Chapter 8. Romano-British Sculpture through the Mimetic Lens

8.1 Introduction

The religious statuary of Roman Britain is diverse, ranging from artefacts which wholly conform to Classical ideals of representation to those which radically diverge from it. Following the postcolonial turn in Roman archaeology, it has been widely accepted that these divergences were deliberate and intentional and that some of these so called ‘low quality’ sculptures looked exactly as they were intended; that is, they are not entirely bound to Roman ideals of representation (see section 3.4). Building upon this postcolonial foundation, the purpose of the present chapter is to consider if and how a specific concept of mimesis may have operated in the production of statuary in Roman Britain. It may be recalled from Chapter 4 that this form of mimesis denotes ‘the faculty to copy, to imitate’ whereby ‘the making and existence of the artefact that portrays something gives one power over that which is portrayed’ (Taussig 1993: 13). An analysis of how this specific mimetic strategy may have operated can provide a unique insight into the ways in which the divine world was drawn into the complex processes of adoption and adaptation that typified colonial interactions. In the present chapter then, I will draw upon a body of statuary from Roman Britain, conventionally interpreted as poor imitations of Classical avatars, to consider if they can be shown to have operated in an assertive mimetic capacity.

8.2 The Religious statuary of Roman Britain

The statuary considered in this chapter has been drawn from the Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani series (CSIR). This series catalogues reliefs and sculptures from Roman Britain over ten volumes according to their geographical location. The regions covered include Hadrian’s Wall East of the Tyne and Corbridge (HWE) (Phillips 1977); Bath and Wessex (BWE) (Cunliffe and Fulford 1982); Yorkshire (YOR) (Tufi 1983); Scotland (SCO) (Keppie and Arnold 1984); Wales (WAL) (Brewer 1986); Hadrian’s Wall West of the Tyne and Carlisle (HWW) (Coulston and Phillips 1988); the Cotswolds, Devon and Cornwall (CDC) (Henig et al 1993), Eastern England (EE) (Huskinson 1994); the North West Midlands (NWM) (Henig et al 2004) and London and the South East (LSE) (Coombe, et al. 2015). The statuary drawn from these CSIR volumes will be scrutinised to consider the strength of the argument.
that their form and appearance were the result of assertive mimetic strategies. This will require an analysis of the specific stylistic techniques employed to represent a particular divinity, and in particular the representation of clothing, facial features and the presence of divine attributes or attendants. The hallmarks of assertive mimetic strategies demonstrated in the previously cited case studies (Chapter 4) will inform my effort to isolate and select cases whereby Classical deities are depicted in ways that diverge from Graeco-Roman norms of representation. That is to say, where a Graeco-Roman deity is depicted in such a manner that parallels can be drawn with the stylistic traditions of Iron Age Britain discussed in Chapter 6, representing an indigenous engagement with these deities.

The first examples to be considered will be representations of single Graeco-Roman divinities. These have been recorded in a database (see Appendix C) providing a photographic record alongside details concerning provenance, date, material and measurements. Larger photographs can also be found in Appendix G and details of excavations and contexts can be found in appendix H. Many of these statues and reliefs were found reused in buildings or roads (see for example figs RBr 4, 21, 40), in wells (figs. RBr 11, 12, 25) or in contexts which are reported either minimally, or not at all (figs. RBr 1,2, 5, 13, 18, 28, 29, 33, 35, 42, 50). Very few are discussed in detailed excavation reports. The second group to be considered will consist of representations featuring paired divinities; most often an indigenous or Gallic female alongside a male Roman counterpart. These are also catalogued in Appendix C. I will give detailed consideration to the significance of these pairings, and ask whether the assertive mimetic strategies employed in the context of pairings operate in a slightly different way to those employed in the case of single divine representations. The purpose of the investigation is not to provide an exhaustive compilation of statuary from Roman Britain, simply to consider if assertive mimetic practices can be shown to have operated in the production of religious statuary. This preliminary section focuses on providing a brief presentation and introduction to the sculptures and reliefs. This will be followed by a discussion and analysis that addresses a number of key issues relating to the identification of different mimetic strategies, the impact of and the motivation behind employing these different strategies and what the practice of assertive mimesis may reveal about provincial society.
8.3 Category 1

The divinities that feature in the following discussion have in the vast majority of cases been explicitly identified by various CSIR authors as Graeco-Roman gods according to the conventions of Graeco-Roman representation – that is, by the presence of attendants and attributes frequently depicted in Graeco-Roman representations of a particular divinity, and on rare occasions by an inscription (see Appendix C for relevant identifications and comments). These representations are not however straightforward reproductions of a Classical model: even though the attributes commonly featured in Graeco-Roman representations of the god are present, there are clear, deliberate divergences from Graeco-Roman forms. These divergences primarily relate to the ways in which the face and body of the god are presented: these changes do not inhibit identification of the deity in terms of Graeco-Roman norms, but are, I suggest, a critical component of the postcolonial negotiations taking place in the provinces and the construction of belief systems. The relevance of this and what it can reveal about religious and wider cultural interactions in Roman Britain will be discussed in section 8.3. For now, it is appropriate to simply introduce the collection of sculptures and reliefs and consider in more detail the ways in which their representations diverge from the norms of Graeco-Roman representation. Rather than maintaining the strict geographical divisions of the CSIR volumes, nationwide representations of a particular divinity have been grouped together. Summary tables, which also include the number of representations of a divinity from a particular region that can be considered as Classical, have been provided so that geographical trends from the CSIR volumes can be considered. The order in which the divinities are represented is based upon the total number of representations across Britain, beginning with the most prevalent.

1. Mercury

Geographical Distribution

<table>
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<th>Location</th>
<th>HWE</th>
<th>SCO</th>
<th>BWE</th>
<th>CDC</th>
<th>YOR</th>
<th>HWW</th>
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</table>
ID number: RBr 1 (also see Appendix G fig. 55)

Provenance: Corbridge (Corstopitum)

Phillips (1977: 8) has identified the figure as Mercury. This identity is supported by the presence of particular Classical attributes conventionally associated with Mercury (see Chapter 2 and Appendix A), in this case the money bag in the right hand of the figure. However, the large head, schematic body and striated hairstyle appear to conform to Iron Age styles of representation rather than drawing upon the Classical repertoire.

ID number: RBr 2 (also see Appendix G fig. 56)

Provenance: Corbridge (Corstopitum)

This relief has been identified as Mercury by Phillips (1977: 9), a finding supported by the presence of a number of attributes typically linked to the divinity in Graeco-Roman traditions, including a winged petasos, caduceus and money bag. Contrasting with these Classical conventions however are the large head with typically Iron Age features such as lentoid eyes and a large, wedge shaped nose, as well as a lack of attention to bodily proportions and the ratio of limbs.
ID number: RBr 3 (also see Appendix G fig. 57)

Provenance: Corbridge (Corstopitum)

This particular relief, identified as Mercury by Phillips (1977: 9) features a caduceus – frequently associated with Mercury in Classical representations. Whilst the content may be Classical, the stylistic representation is less so, with disproportionate hips and thighs and what in spite of damage appears to have been a considerably large head, typical of Iron Age stylistic techniques.

ID number: RBr 4 (also see Appendix G fig. 58)

Provenance: Corbridge (Corstopitum)

The image follows the Classical convention of depicting Mercury with wings (in this case sprouting directly from the head), a cloak over the left shoulder and a caduceus, and supports Phillips’ (1977: 9) identification of the figure as Mercury. However a number of Iron Age stylistic traditions are apparent here too. The head is large and triangular shaped, featuring large, lentoid eyes, a broad, wedge nose and a small, slit mouth.

ID number: RBr 5 (also see Appendix G fig. 59)

Provenance: Halton Chesters (Onnum)

Identified by Phillips (1977: 69) as Mercury, the presence of wings, a money bag and caduceus, closely match the conventional attributes of this Classical deity. This relief nevertheless displays clear divergences from Classical norms of representation. The head is large and triangular shaped and little attention is given to bodily proportion and ratio.
ID number: RBr 6 (also see Appendix G fig. 60)

Provenance: High Rochester (Bremenium)

According to Phillips (1977: 69), the deity represented is Mercury. The presence of a money bag in the right hand of the figure supports this identification according to Classical traditions. The large head with pointed chin, wedge shaped nose, lentoid eyes and small slit mouth however appear to conform to Iron Age conventions rather than Classical traditions. Likewise, small arms and a lack of attention to bodily compositions are typical features of Iron Age anthropomorphic representation.

ID number: RBr 7 (also see Appendix G fig. 61)

Provenance: High Rochester (Bremenium)

Whilst the condition of the relief makes analysis difficult, it is possible that a money bag is held in the figure’s right hand. Whilst (Phillips 1977: 117) suggests the individual may be Silvanus or Pan, it may be suggested that wings are also represented on the head of the figure. Should this be the case, it is possible to identify the figure as Mercury according to Classical conventions. Like many of the images discussed here, whilst Classical in content, the subject is presented in a style that more closely conforms to Iron Age precedents of anthropomorphic representation than Classical. This can be seen here in the large head and pointed chin, stick like arms and typically Iron Age British facial features including a large, wedge shaped nose and small, slit mouth.
ID number: RBr 8 (also see Appendix G fig. 62)

Provenance: Unknown

Whilst the presence of a caduceus in the left hand corner has been used to identify the individual as Mercury, the representation radically diverges from the Classical avatars of Mercury (Phillips 1977: 123). The naturalistic and evenly proportioned Classical representations of Mercury have been replaced by an individual with a large, triangular shaped head and a torso that lacks modelling.

ID number: RBr 9 (also see Appendix G fig. 63)

Provenance: The temple of Mercury Uley, West Hill, Gloucestershire.

Henig et al (1993: 25) have identified the figure as Mercury. With a money bag in the right hand, caduceus in the left hand, chlamys over the left arm and ram and cockerel attendants, the relief features several attributes conventionally associated with Mercury in Classical traditions. Unlike conventional Classical representations of Mercury however, this example shows little interest in presenting the human form in a naturalised, well proportioned manner. Whilst the facial features are badly weathered, the head is large, perhaps reflecting indigenous British Iron Age traditions.
ID number: RBr 10 (also see Appendix G fig. 64)

Provenance: Staunton-on-Arrow, north-west Hertfordshire

The caduceus, presence of wings and a legend reading ‘DEO ME(rcurio)’, means that there can be little doubt that we are dealing with a representation of Mercury (Henig et al 1993: 25). Barring the presence of Mercury’s Classical attributes and the inscription however, this particular representation of Mercury is far removed from Classical models. A large head with pointed chin, equally large eyes and a small mouth sits atop a bell shaped body. Little attention is paid to the modelling and ratio of the limbs suggesting a strong adherence to the Iron Age artistic traditions of Britain.

ID number: RBr 11 (also see Appendix G fig. 65)

Provenance: Farnworth gravel pit, Gloucestershire.

The figure depicted has been identified as Mercury by Henig et al (1993: 26), which is supported by the presence of a ram – commonly depicted as an attendant of Mercury in the Classical world. Contrasting with the naturalism and realism of Classical statuary, what is depicted here finds closer parallels with Iron Age representations in Britain, characterised by schematism, disproportionate limbs, a large head with a pointed chin, large eyes and a small mouth.

ID number: RBr 12 (also see Appendix G fig. 66)

Provenance: Emberton, Buckinghamshire.

With a money bag in the right hand, a caduceus in the left and wings projecting directly from the head, the figure shares a number of Classical attributes with Mercury, and has been identified as such by Henig et al (1993: 26). The large, oval head and disproportionate torso however are suggestive of a native British Iron Age style.
ID number: RBr 13 (also see Appendix G fig. 67)

Provenance: probably York (Eburacum)

Tufi (1983: 4) has identified this deity as Mercury, and the relief is rich in divine attributes commonly associated with this deity in the Classical world: a money bag, caduceus and goat and rooster attendants. This identity is confirmed by an inscription on the altar reading: ‘Deo Mer(curio)’. This representation of Mercury is however far from Classical. The head is large with a pointed chin, and although weathered, large, lentoid eyes, a wedge shaped nose and small slit mouth can be made out – hallmarks of Iron Age anthropomorphic representation in Britain. Likewise, the schematic representation of the body and stick like arms does not find parallels in Classical representation but rather appear to reflect native Iron Age British stylistic techniques.

ID number: RBr 14 (also see Appendix G fig. 68)

Provenance: Chester (Cilurnum)

The figure has been identified by Coulston and Phillips (1988: 29) as Mercury, and the presence of caduceus and a money bag supporting this identification according to Classical traditions. Unlike conventional Classical representation of Mercury, this figure has a schematic torso, disproportionate and incorrectly positioned incised nipples and stick like, disproportionate arms. Although badly weathered, it does appear that the head was notably large, tapering to form a pointed chin. Such characteristics are typical of the stylistic techniques employed during the British Iron Age.
ID number: RBr 15 (also see Appendix G fig. 69)

Provenance: Great Chesters (Aesica),

Coulston and Phillips (1988: 30) have identified this figure as Mercury. A schematically represented money bag, caduceus and wings, support this identification based upon Classical representations of Mercury. Unlike these Classical representations however, this figure is composed of stick limbs and an irregular shaped, broad torso. The large head is minimally detailed, with large circular eyes and a slit mouth which conform more closely to Iron Age British stylistic techniques rather than Classical. Three incised circles represent the nipples and naval, whilst three horizontal lines represent the abdomen.

ID number: RBr 16 (also see Appendix G fig. 70)

Provenance: Stanwix (Petriana)

The money bag, wings and caduceus, featured in this relief are conventional Classical attributes of Mercury, and Coulston and Phillips (1988: 31) have identified this figure as such. The large head and disproportionate arms, legs and torso however diverge from the Classical style.

ID number: RBr 17 (also see Appendix G fig. 71)

Provenance: Caernarfon (Segontium), Gwynedd

Brewer (1986: 9) has identified the subject of this relief as Mercury. Indeed, wings protruding directly from the head and the caduceus are conventionally associated with Mercury in Classical iconography. Unlike Classical representations of Mercury however, the large, spherical head with large lentoid eyes and a small, gaping mouth suggest closer parallels with anthropomorphic representation in Iron Age Britain. Also suggestive of this is the schematic nature of the body, with little attention paid to the proportion of the limbs and torso.
2. Mars

<table>
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ID number: RBr 18 (also see Appendix G fig. 72)

Provenance: South Shield (Arbeia),

Phillips (1977: 66) has suggested that the figure represented here is Mars. This is supported by the presence of particular attributes that regularly feature in Classical representations of Mars, including a cuirass and a plume (found nearby and assumed to belong to this representation). Whilst the content is Classical in origin, the stylistic representation is less so, with the large head and treatment of facial features typical of stylistic techniques employed in Iron Age Britain. Adherence to these Iron Age stylistic trends can be observed particularly in the large, lentoid eyes, small mouth and the striated hair and beard. Also of note is the cylindrical like body with little modelling, reminiscent of anthropomorphic representation in Iron Age Britain. As Phillips (1977: 66) notes, the recovery of this statuette from the parade ground of a fort would lend support to the idea that it is Mars that is represented.

ID number: RBr 19 (also see Appendix G fig. 73)

Provenance: Balmuilty, Lanarkshire

Keppie and Arnold (1984: 48) have identified the deity featured in this relief as Mars. An inscription reading Dio / [Ma]r[ti s], alongside the presence of a crested helmet and cloak (conventional Classical attributes of the deity) supports this identification. Close parallels with Iron Age stylistic techniques of representation can however be observed in the large head with pointed chin, large lentoid eyes, small, slit mouth and schematic representation of the body.
ID number: RBr 20 (also see Appendix G fig. 74)

Provenance: Hazelwood, Gloucestershire

A figure holding a spear in the right hand, a shield in the left and wearing a long tunic and crested helmet has been identified as Mars by Henig et al (1993: 19). This identification is supported by the presence of attributes typically featured in Classical representations of Mars. Like many of the statues and reliefs in this collection, whilst drawing upon Classical themes, the content diverges from Classical forms of representation in a number of respects. Contrasting with the Classical obsession with idealised naturalism and the use of accurate ratios and proportion to depict the body is the large head, small stick like legs and long thin arms which find closer parallels in Iron Age expression in Britain.

ID number: RBr 21 (also see Appendix G fig. 75)

Provenance: Bisley-with-Lypiatt, Gloucestershire

Henig et al (1993: 41) suggest that Mars may be represented in this relief, a statement supported by the presence of a sword and targe. Whilst featuring many of the attributes of Classical representations of Mars, the schematic nature of representation and lentoid eyes share closer parallels with the art of Iron Age Britain.

ID number: RBr 22 (also see Appendix G fig. 76)

Provenance: Stone-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire

The crested helmet, sword and shield are attributes conventionally associated with Mars in Classical representations, and as such the figure has been tentatively identified by Henig et al (1993: 43) as Mars. This representation radically diverges from the Classical avatars of Mars however. The naturalistic and evenly proportioned Classical Mars has been replaced by an individual with a large, spherical head with minimal features and schematic, rectangular torso.
ID number: RBr 23 (also see Appendix G fig. 77)

Provenance: Housesteads (Vercovivium)

This nude figure has been identified by Coulston and Phillips (1988: 28) as Mars. Indeed a spear, shield and crested helmet are conventionally associated with Mars in Classical representations. This relief however is presented in a manner that conflicts with conventional Classical representations. The small head, large chest and disproportionate limbs disobey the Classical preference for naturalistic, idealised forms. Whilst the generalised schematic nature of the figure finds parallels in Iron Age precedents, the small head is harder to decipher, with no direct parallels in Iron Age Britain.

ID number: RBr 24 (also see Appendix G fig. 78)

Provenance: Caernarfon (Segontium), Gwynedd

With a crested helmet, spear and leather pteruges on the upper part of the left arm, this figure shares a number of attributes with Classical representations of Mars, and has been identified as such by Brewer (1986: 9). Unlike Classical representations of Mars however, the figure has a large head and pointed chin, with large, lentoid eyes, a long, wedge shaped nose, small slit mouth and short hair indicated by incised lines – typical of anthropomorphic representation in Iron Age Britain.
3. Genius

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ID number: RBr 25 (also see Appendix G fig. 79)

Provenance: Tre Owen, Newtown, Powys

An incised outline of a warrior figure holds a sword and shield, imagery conventionally associated with Classical representations of Mars. The figure is highly schematic, with arms and legs indicated by single lines. The eyes are represented by small dots and the mouth and nose by small grooves. Above the shield, an inscription potentially identifies the individual as Mars (see appendix C), yet this representation radically diverges from Classical representations of Mars.

ID number: RBr 26 (also see Appendix G fig. 80)

Provenance: Kirby Underdale

Whilst Tufi (1983: 19) tentatively proposes an identity of Mercury or a local divinity, it is possible that the figure wears a mural and holds a patera and cornucopia. According to Classical conventions this would identify the individual as a genius. Whilst the exact identity of this figure may be ambiguous, it is most likely that it is Classically inspired – being either Mercury or a genius. The execution is somewhat less Classical – with a large, triangular shaped head and large eyes resting on a schematic body with disproportionate limbs. As such, parallels can be drawn to the stylistic traditions of Iron Age Britain.
ID number: RBr 27 (also see Appendix G fig. 81)
Provenance: Housesteads (Vercovicium)
Coulston and Phillips (1988: 9-10) argue that the position of the right arm is suggestive of the holding of a patera, and have identified the individual as a Genius. Along with the depiction of a cornucopia, the figure features a number of Classical attributes typically associated with the Genius. Unlike Classical representation however, with their emphasis on naturalism and perfection of form, this relief is dominated by schematism – featuring a rectangular torso, thick, disproportionate arms and a notably large head. Parallels can thus be drawn with the stylistic traditions of the British Iron Age.

ID number: RBr 28 (also see Appendix G fig. 82)
Provenance: Chesterholm (Vindolanda)
Coulston and Phillips (1988: 10) have identified the figure as a Genius. Although weathered, it is possible to discern a patera and cornucopia held by the figure, which supports this identification based upon typical Classical representations of the Genius. The neck and head are however large, and the legs small. Parallels with the schematic appearance of this figure can be seen in the anthropomorphic representation in the British Iron Age.

ID number: RBr 29 (also see Appendix G fig. 83)
Provenance: Carlisle (Luguvalium)
This figure has been identified by Coulston and Phillips (1988: 156) as a Genius, an identification supported by the presence of a cornucopia, patera and mural crown – features typically present in conventional Classical representations of the Genius. Whilst Classical in content however, there are a number of stylistic features which defy Classical norms of representation. The head is disproportionately large and features large, lentoid eyes. The disproportionate body and limbs, alongside the patterning of the hair show closer parallels to anthropomorphic representation in the British Iron Age than Classical Rome. The inscription reads: Geni[o cent]uria[e] / [c]enturia] Bassi[li] Cresce[ntis] / don[o d]onavit.
ID number: RBr 30 (also see Appendix G fig. 84)

Provenance: Carlisle (Luguvalium)

With a cornucopia in the left hand and patera in the right, the figure shares a number of attributes with conventional Classical representations of the Genius, and has been identified by Coulston and Phillips (1988: 156) as such. Unlike Classical representations however, the figure has a large head, with incised hair and a blocky, schematic torso – features which conform more closely to Iron Age British stylistic techniques rather than Classical. As the author states, this piece has been carefully designed, with detailed attributes, tunic and boots.

ID number: RBr 31 (also see Appendix G fig. 85)

Provenance: Wall (Letocetum), Staffs

Henig et al (2004: 52) have tentatively identified the figure as a Genius, based upon the assumption that a patera is held in the right hand over an altar. Diverging from the Classical conventions of representation however, this genius has a large, triangular shaped head, and small, schematic body with disproportionate limbs. Of note is the tête coupée, an overtly ‘Celtic’ symbol.
4. Fortuna

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ID number: RBr 32 (also see Appendix G fig. 86)

Provenance: Newcastle upon Tyne (Pons Aelius)

A female figure has been identified as Fortuna by Phillips (1977: 59) and the presence of a cornucopia and what appears to be a patera supports this identification based upon Classical representation of this divinity. Whilst Classical in content, the large head and schematic body suggest a native form of representation, drawing upon precedents of representation in Iron Age Britain.

ID number: RBr 33 (also see Appendix G fig. 87)

Provenance: Risingham (Habitancum)

The presence of a cornucopia in the left hand links the figure to Fortuna based upon Classical conventions, and Phillips (1977: 187) identifies this figure as such. Unlike conventional Classical representations of Fortuna, this particular representation features a long tunic incised with a diamond pattern. Whilst this cannot be explicitly linked to a particular stylistic technique of Iron Age Britain (although it is reminiscent of the abstract and richly patterned La Tène decorative techniques), such patterning was not a convention of Classical representations of Fortuna.
ID number: RBr 34 (also see Appendix G fig. 88)

Provenance: Castlecary, Stirlingshire (in a niche in one of the rooms of the fort bathhouse)

Keppie and Arnold (1984: 30) have identified the subject of this relief as Fortuna. The relief features a number of attributes conventionally associated Fortuna in Classical imagery, including a cornucopia, wheel and rudder, which supports this identification. Unlike the Classical imagery of Fortuna however, this particular representation displays a number of features that contradict Classical stylistic preferences. This includes a disproportionate and schematic torso and limbs, and an unusual toga. The toga is presented in such a manner that it almost appears as trousers. This may have been an intentional design, the motivation behind which will be discussed in section 10.4.

ID number: RBr 35 (also see Appendix G fig. 89)

Provenance: Netherby (Castra Exploratum)

Coulston and Phillips (1988: 9) suggest that this female head, with centre parted hair arranged in double rolls belonged to a representation of Fortuna. To the right of the head is a protuberance, likely to be a cornucopia – which makes it likely that this represents Fortuna according to Classical conventions. British Iron Age stylistic influences are however apparent in the shape of the eyes, the upper edges of which slope downwards more to the sides of the face than to the centre.
5. Hercules

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<tr>
<td>Coulston and Phillips (1988: 159) identify the individual represented in this relief a Hercules. This identification is supported by the presence of a bow, quiver and club, which typically feature in Classical representations of Hercules. The torso however is schematic, with little modelling and long, disproportionate limbs. Such stylistic features diverge from Classical norms of representation and appear to conform more closely to the stylistic techniques employed in Iron Age Britain.</td>
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| Provenance: Castlesteads (Uxellodunum)               |     |     |     |     |     |     |    |     |     |     |
| This naked figure has been identified as Hercules by Coulston and Phillips (1988: 120). The presence of a club and the apples of Hesperides, which are typical attributes of Hercules in Classical imagery, support this identification. This figure however is depicted with a large, circular head, large lentoid eyes and a wedge shaped nose. Such stylistic features diverge from Classical norms of representation and conform more closely to the stylistic techniques employed in Iron Age Britain. |
6. Sol

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ID number: RBr 38 (also see Appendix G fig. 92)
Provenance: Carlisle (Luguvalium) Annetwell Street

Coulston and Phillips (1988: 121) suggest that the individual featured in this relief may be Sol, an association supported by the radiate crown and whip which feature in Classical representations of this deity. The triangular face with pointed chin and large, lentoid eyes however are stylistic characteristic of the British Iron Age rather than Classical statuary.

ID number: RBr 39 (also see Appendix G fig. 93)
Provenance: Chesterholm (Vindolanda)

This individual featured with nimbus ray and whip has been identified as Sol by Coulston and Phillips (1988: 52). Although featuring the conventional Classical attributes of Sol, unlike conventional Classical representation, the rays of the nimbus do not taper to points. The head is large and roughly shaped, as are the eyes, the left of which has a more pronounced lentoid shape, stylistic techniques which appear to conform more closely to Iron Age Britain than Classical Rome.
7. Victory

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ID number: RBr 40 (also see Appendix G fig. 94)

Provenance: Camelon, Stirlingshire

This winged figure with a foot atop of a globe and holding a palm branch has been identified as Victory by Keppie and Arnold (1984: 62). This identification is supported by the presence of attributes conventionally associated with Victory in Classical representations. A tunic or chiton falls to the knee, although it has been suggested that figure is naked above the waist (see Appendix C). Unlike conventional Classical representations of Victory however, this figure is schematically represented, with a large head. Such characteristics are typical of the stylistic techniques employed during the British Iron Age.

ID number: RBr 41 (also see Appendix G fig. 95)

Provenance: Castlesteads (Uxellodunum)

The content of this relief is Classically inspired – featuring an individual with attributes such as a wreath, palm branch and globe which are typically associated with Victory in Classical representations. An inscription reading ‘Vict(oria) / Aug(usti)’ further supports the identification of this figure as Victory (Coulston and Phillips 1988: 38). Less Classical however is the style of representation – particularly the facial features which appear typical of the style of Iron Age Britain, and the unusual texturing of the tunic.
8. Minerva

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ID number: RBr 42 (also see Appendix G fig. 96)

Bath (Aqua Sulis), Avon, in Great Baths

The helmet, spear, gorgon medallion and owl attendant featured in this relief are attributes conventionally associated with Minerva in Classical traditions, and Cunliffe and Fulford (1982: 9) have identified the individual as such. Unlike Classical representations of Minerva however, little attention is paid to the proportion of the torso and limbs. The gorgon medallion is particularly interesting, consisting of a large, spherical head with large, lentoid eyes and a slit mouth – indicative of the stylistic techniques employed in Iron Age anthropomorphic representation in Britain.

9. Triton

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ID number: RBr 43 (also see Appendix G fig. 97)

Provenance: York (Eburacum), near Bootham Bar,

With a conch shell raised to his mouth, a fish tail body and lobster claws arising from the hair, this individual has been identified by Tufi (1983: 50) as Triton. Whilst such attributes typically feature in Classical representations of Triton, the schematic and disproportionate torso, with exceptionally long arms, the patterning of the hair and the large head with lentoid eyes all find parallels in anthropomorphic representation in Iron Age Britain.
10. Venus

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ID number: RBr 44 (also see Appendix G fig. 98)

Provenance: High Rochester (Bremenium) (inside a water tank in front of the headquarters building of the fort)

This relief of Venus (centre, accompanied by two nymphs) is a reproduction of the famous 3rd century BC statue of the crouching Aphrodite by Deodalses (Phillips 1977: 75). As is the case in many Classical depictions of Venus, a pitcher is also depicted – either symbolic of a water front location or as a bathing instrument. Whilst the subject is clearly Classically inspired, the presentation owes more to the stylistic techniques employed during the British Iron Age. The large heads, featuring lentoid eyes, a wedge nose and slit mouth, as well as the incised patterning of the hair are reminiscent of Iron Age stylistic techniques, rather than the Classical form.
11. Vulcan

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ID number: RBr 45 (also see Appendix G fig. 99)

Provenance: Duns Tew, Oxfordshire

Henig *et al* (1993: 30) have identified the subject of this relief as Vulcan. This identification is supported by the presence of a hammer and tongs which feature in Classical representations of Vulcan. Unlike Classical representations of Vulcan however, the large, spherical head suggests closer parallels with anthropomorphic representation in Iron Age Britain. Also suggestive of this is the schematic nature of the body, with little attention paid to the proportion of the limbs and cylindrical shape of the upper torso.

8.3.1 Category 1 Summary

The subjects of the statues and reliefs described above have been identified as Graeco-Roman divinities based upon the presence of divine attributes or attendants conventionally associated with a particular divinity in the Classical world. Less frequently some have been identified by accompanying inscriptions. In spite of this, each of the featured representations exhibits clear divergences from the Classical norms of representation for a particular divinity. Whilst the content is clearly Classical in nature, and it is indeed this content that permits the identification of the individual in question, the stylistic techniques adopted and the overall representation suggest closer parallels with anthropomorphic
representation in Iron Age Britain than with the Classical world. The stylistic repertoire of Iron Age Britain has been discussed at length in Chapter 6 and some of the strategies identified there are manifest in the featured representations of Graeco-Roman divinities. In particular, the Iron Age tendency to produce schematic, disproportionate torsos and limbs, and large, triangular shaped or spherical heads with minimal facial features appears to have been replicated in these representations. The authors of the CSIR volumes in which these sculptures and reliefs are catalogued state that the subject of the reliefs are ‘Classical’ based on the presence of Classical attributes, yet when it comes to the clear Iron Age British style of representation, this is often simply noted, with little consideration given to possible reasons why indigenous forms were drawn upon and reproduced in representations of Classical gods. Clearly, the synthetic volumes are not appropriate forums to discuss such practices, yet there has been little scholarly effort elsewhere to discuss this phenomenon, particularly with reference to assertive mimesis. To truly break free from the Romanisation paradigm and the pejorative connotations so often inherent in discussions of non-classical forms, we need to shift the trajectory from simply noting the presence and use of Iron Age styles in representations of Classical divinities to considering why the indigenous style was employed and what its use was intended to achieve.

It should be noted here that there is an added difficulty when analysing representations of Mars and in particular positively identifying this deity. As I have previously stated, the identification of the subject of the sculpture or reliefs usually hinges on the presence of attributes conventionally associated with a particular divinity in Classical representations. A problem that arises in the case of Mars is that the attributes conventionally associated with this divinity – the spear, shield and helmet - are also the attributes of a generic warrior or arms baring individual and are frequently used in such representations. Without the presence of an inscription to positively identify the individual, it is impossible to say if the subject is an indigenous warrior god/warrior, or a representation of Mars. This makes identifying assertive mimetic strategies increasingly difficult – without an inscription we cannot be certain that it was Mars who was represented.

Before discussing at length the significance of the use of assertive mimetic strategies, it is appropriate to introduce the second body of statuary. Whilst it is important to recognise that this category differs from category 1 in terms of content and the fact that multiple
deities are represented together, through comparing and contrasting the two we are able to gain an insight into not only the foundational tenets of assertive mimetic strategies – that is, what we might expect to see in most cases of assertive mimesis in operation – but also the nuances of mimetic reproduction, the variability of religious beliefs and the impact that this had on the interactions between indigenous and Graeco-Roman divinities. A more detailed discussion and analysis of assertive mimesis drawing, upon both categories 1 and 2 will follow in section 8.4.

8.4 Category 2

In contrast to the previous category that featured isolated divine representations – the following group consists of paired divinities (and in one case a triplicate): usually one male, one female; one Graeco-Roman, one ostensibly indigenous. In terms of the way in which the Classical divinity is represented, clear similarities can be observed with their divine counterparts in category 1: the attendants and attributes commonly featured in Graeco-Roman representations of the god are present - yet there are clear, deliberate divergences from Graeco-Roman forms, primarily related to the ways in which the face and body of the god are presented. It is likely this was intended to achieve the same outcome as with ‘single’ divinities (see discussion below) but it is important to consider why some divinities may have been paired in such a way. The overall significance of this act in terms of assertive mimesis will be discussed following the presentation of these examples.

ID number: RBr 46 (also see Appendix G fig. 100)

Provenance: Gloucester

Henig et al (1993: 26) have suggested that these figures are Mercury and Romerta (or Maia), an identification (in terms of Mercury) supported by the presence of attributes that are typically associated with Mercury in Classical imagery. These attributes include a petasus, cloak, caduceus and money bag. A cockerel, a conventional attendant of Mercury in Classical traditions also stands in front of the caduceus. Mercury’s consort is clad in a tunic, belted at the waist. In her left hand is a sceptre surmounted by a pelta and in her right is a dipper held above a tub or bucket. In Classical mythology Mercury is associated with his mother Maia, but it is likely here that the consort is Rosmerta, a representative of plenty (Henig et al 1993; 26).
ID number: RBr 47 (also see Appendix G fig. 101)

Provenance: Gloucester

A male individual is represented with a paenula, money bag and caduceus. Such attributes are conventionally associated with Mercury in Classical imagery, and Henig et al 1993: 27) have identified the figure as such. Unlike Classical conventions of representation however, the head of this figure is large and little attention is paid to the modelling of the body. It has been suggested that his consort was Rosmerta or Maia, who appears to hold a large bag or tankard in her left and possibly a jug in her right (ibid.). Again the head is large, even more so than Mercury’s, with lentoid eyes and striated hair – typical feature of Iron Age representation in Britain.

ID number: RBr 48 (also see Appendix G fig. 102)

Provenance: Gloucester

The figure on the left has been identified as Mercury and the figure on the right as Fortuna (Henig et al 1993: 27). This identification is supported by the presence of attributes conventionally associated with these Graeco-Roman deities in Classical representations. The figure in the middle has been identified as Rosmerta (ibid.). Whilst two of the deities may be Classical in origin, their presentation is less so, being of a schematic nature with disproportionate limbs. As such, parallels can be drawn with the stylistic techniques of Iron Age Britain. Both female deities supersede the male in terms of stature and the possible significance of this will be discussed in section 8.6.
ID number: RBr 49 (also see Appendix G fig. 103)

Provenance: Gloucester

Henig et al (1993: 27) have suggested that the subjects of this relief are Mercury and Romerta. The male identified as Mercury is represented with a number of attributes conventionally associated with this Graeco-Roman deity in Classical representations, a feature which supports this identification. The figure on the right has been identified as Rosmerta. Although badly weathered it is possible to make out the large heads and schematic representation of the deities which appear to conform to Iron Age forms of anthropomorphic representation rather than Classical.

ID number: RBr 50 (also see Appendix G fig. 104)

Provenance: Bath (Aqua Sulis)

The two figures represented on this relief have been subject to debate (see Cunliffe and Fulford 1982: 11). The identification of the male as Mercury is supported by the presence of attributes conventionally associated with this deity in Classical representations, including wings and a caduceus. Although badly weathered it is possible to make out the large heads and schematic representation of the deities. The female figure may represent Rosmerta or Nemetona. Also of note is the representation of the genii cuculatti and a procession with a ram.
8.4.1 Category 2 Summary

This collection of Romano-British statuary consists of a pair (or triplicate) of divinities represented together, most often a (reputedly) indigenous female alongside a male Roman counterpart. The two deities most frequently presented in such a manner are Rosmerta, considered an indigenous deity and Mercury, a Graeco-Roman god. The origins of Rosmerta have been contested, and whilst Yeates (2008) argues that she was an indigenous British goddess, there has been a growing argument in favour of this deity’s Gallic origins (Green 1998: 27, Webster 2015: 139-141). Zoll (1994) has drawn upon a range of epigraphic evidence to suggest that both non-Roman and name paired divinities were introduced to Britain from the continent. 5 of the 10 known cases of deity name pairing in Scotland, and 5 of the 12 known male pairings in the south of England have continental parallels for either the non-Roman deity or the pair itself. Zoll (ibid.) suggests that in such cases, the ‘indigenous’ deity was brought from the continent already associated with a Roman counterpart. It is likely that many Gallic deities, and indeed deities from further afield were introduced to Britain by pre-Roman trade and contact or by Roman soldiers originating from outside of Rome – in the 2nd century AD less than 1% of serving soldiers were born in Rome. Some of the sculptures produced may have been the work of migrant soldiers or merchants, or alternatively may reflect that these divinities were accepted into the indigenous belief systems of Britain much like Classical divinities were by other indigenous populations. It is not possible to discuss this phenomenon at any length here, and a more in depth consideration of this can be found in section 8.5.

Such instances of divine pairing, often referred to as a divine marriage, were previously taken as indicative of the laissez-faire syncretism that constituted polytheistic religions – a benign willingness to accommodate one another’s gods (see chapters 3 and 5). More recently, the process and the existence of divine marriage has become increasingly problematised. As the examples in category 2 show (as with category 1), Classical divinities were represented using the stylistic techniques of Iron Age Britain. This phenomenon is often overlooked in the CSIR volumes – but an analysis of the motivations behind it may provide important new understandings of the process of religious interaction in Roman
Britain. There is one relief in particular, RBr 46, which appears to conform more closely to Classical ideals of representation, but the reason that it has been included is two-fold. It is widely accepted that many of the statues and reliefs of the provinces were deliberately ambiguous, crafted to speak different things to different people. In many cases, there are subtle nuances which can change entirely the way that the statue can be read. Relief RBr 46 provides a useful means through which this can be explored. The individual identified as Mercury appears to have wings sprouting directly from the head, but these could equally be interpreted as horns. This raises an important issue in terms of what such representations may mean or signify, and crucially, if such strategies better fit the description of (assertive) mimetic or Creole. This relief can thus provide the starting point through which to explore the relationship between assertive and mimetic and Creole strategies, and the wider impact that this may have on our understanding of the processes of cultural interaction (see section 8.6).

8.5 Analysis and Discussion

It is now possible to return to the statuary that is the focus of this investigation. To begin this discussion, it is perhaps most useful to return to Taussig’s definition of (assertive) mimesis as ‘the faculty to copy, to imitate’ whereby ‘the making and existence of the artefact that portrays something gives one power over that which is portrayed’ (Taussig 1993: 13). Based upon this definition immediate questions may arise concerning the general notion that to copy something is to gain power over it. Surely then, the Romano-British sculptures of Classical divinities that have been so highly praised as pieces mastering the Classical form should be considered mimetic? In short, yes, but mimesis can operate on many different levels and in many different forms – as for example acculturative mimesis and as assertive mimesis (see Chapter 4). The crucial question is what type of mimesis was in operation in the production of these statues and reliefs. Acculturative mimesis in terms of perfect emulation has long been seen as a key example of the successes of ‘Romanisation’, but perhaps nothing quite so clearly demonstrates the diverse responses to the Roman presence as the ways in which mimetic strategies were variously employed by different sections of the population. All too often however, the various mimetic strategies in operation beyond the direct, perfect emulation of a Roman avatar have been overlooked.
The production of ‘perfect’ Classical emulations of Roman deities relates to a very specific mimetic strategy – namely acculturative mimesis. The indigenous individuals who commissioned or imported such works may have desired access to the Roman gods - to propitiate them and to receive divine favour - as an aspiring Roman. What should not be overlooked is that not everyone had the means, the desire or the opportunity to actively engage so fully in a Roman way of life. The population of Iron Age Britain was diverse, and the Roman presence stimulated varying responses according to the social, political and cultural standings of groups or individuals (see Chapter 3). Members of the indigenous population, with little opportunity or desire to participate fully in the Roman way of life may have copied the Classical gods for very different reasons. It is owing to these different desires and different motivations that various mimetic strategies may come in to play. These individuals may have desired access to a new divine world without completely abandoning indigenous traditions. The statues and reliefs presented above, featuring indigenous stylistic traditions, are perhaps not the result of a straightforward desire to copy a Roman god but represent an indigenous engagement with these deities and the desire to access new divine powers. There is arguably a huge difference between copying something to express identification as a Roman, and copying something to access the power of a new divine world. Whilst an individual may not have sought to abandon all indigenous cultural traditions and religions, adopting its Roman counterpart instead, it is likely that the Roman gods were considered highly powerful and effective – after all, the Romans had conquered vast swathes of Europe and the Near East, a feat they themselves attributed to divine favour and the power of their gods. It is entirely reasonable to suggest that indigenous populations would desire access to these powerful divinities, without entirely abandoning indigenous traditions and religion. Parallels can be drawn here with Ravenhill’s observations of the Baule and the production of statuettes in colonial attire (1980, 2000; also see Chapter 4). Following extensive anthropological investigation, Ravenhill (ibid.) noted that the Baule figurines came to be represented with European attributes not because of an indigenous desire to be European, but as an attempt to acquire the power of the Europeans who had managed to conquer and control vast tracts of Africa.

If we can accept that indigenous populations desired access to the Classical pantheon, without necessarily abandoning their indigenous religion, we must abandon the notion that
such individuals will have aspired to produce direct emulations of the Classical gods. We must consider the possibility that as a direct result of the indigenous desire to tap into the divine power of the Roman world to enhance the indigenous pantheon, the Classical gods came to be expressed using conventions of the British Iron Age. If we do accept that this was the case, we are however left with a number of issues related to the concept of assertive mimesis that may undermine the very reason for the use of the mimetic strategy itself. If to copy is to control, how exact does the copy have to be to attain this control? If a Classical deity is deliberately altered, could it then be said that this ‘copy’ is no longer a Classical deity but something else – and therefore the power of or access to the Classical deity cannot be harnessed? To begin to answer such questions, it is useful to revisit the anthropological case studies presented in Chapter 4 which address the importance attached to the degree of faithfulness between a copy and an original.

As will be recalled from Stoller’s (1995) investigation, the Owerri Igbo of Nigeria created a panoply of sculptures constructed from mud, placing these in specialised mbari houses. Within this collection of sculptures, were representations of British colonial officials. According to Stoller, the production of these sculptures was motivated by the desire of the Owerri Igbo to acquire and control the colonists. As a means to copy and control then, assertive mimetic strategies were at the heart of the production of these sculptures – their raison d’être. Yet even a cursory glance at these sculptures reveals that far from accurately depicting colonial officials in a naturalised, realistic manner, they mockingly depicted their colonial overseers (Stoller 1995: 87; Huggan 1997: 94; Carvalho 2002). Similar divergences from accurate or naturalised representations can also be observed in the production of the Cuna curing figurines (section 4.5.1) and post-mortem statuary in the Cacheu Region in Guinea-Bissau (section 4.5.4). What these examples show is that at the heart of some forms of mimesis, namely here assertive mimesis, are mechanisms of adaptation and interculturatisation - not simply acculturation - whereby the symbols or ‘cultural signifiers’ of the coloniser are translated and reproduced in an indigenous system (Huggan 1997: 101). Symbols of new powers are perhaps drawn together and combined with traditional elements as a means to acquire and control this power. This is clearly manifest in the funerary statuary of Cacheu, where non-naturalised representations of Europeans are carved into funerary sticks that constituted a long indigenous funerary tradition. What this
demonstrates is an indigenous engagement with these new symbols of power, whereby these symbols are drawn into indigenous contexts. With this point in mind, perhaps we should not be surprised to see elements of Iron Age British styles featuring in some of the statuary of Roman Britain (see numbers RBr 1-45, 47-50).

Whilst recognising the importance of indigenous traditions in assertive mimetic expression – either through the use of new symbols (incorporated into longstanding indigenous traditions such as the funerary statuary of Cacheu) or the reproduction of new symbols (such as combining elements as in Romano-British religious statuary such as the addition of horns to Mercury), we are still left with the issue of whether these figurines would be effective in terms of assertive mimesis. We can begin to deconstruct the notion of faithfulness by drawing upon Taussig’s (1993: 129) understanding of the role of accuracy in creating an effective copy. He notes:

‘...mimesis registers both sameness and difference, of being like, and of being Other. Creating stability from this instability is no small task, yet all identity formation is engaged in this habitually bracing activity, in which the issue is not so much staying the same, but maintaining sameness through alterity.’

This sameness and difference is manifest in the sculptures produced by the Cuna, Regulos of Cacheu and Owerro Igbo – specifically through the integration of non-indigenous symbols and indigenous traditional elements as previously discussed. This combination of indigenous and non-indigenous is often assumed to result in a lack of realism or accuracy, as a result of the non-indigenous element. It is this lack of realism that lies behind what Taussig (1993: 50) refers to as the paradox of mimesis – ‘the copy, magically effective as it is, is not a copy, not a copy in the sense of what we might mean by a faithful copy’. Modern concepts of the magical copy have become inseparably linked to Frazer’s (1935) Law of Similarity (Chapter 4) which states that like produces like and that an effect is produced by imitating it. Yet this would suggest that a magical copy is only so if it is an accurate rendition of the original. Taussig (1993: 50), drawing upon his own investigations and those of Mauss and Hubert, demonstrates that images can however be mimetically effective (in the sense that they can obtain the power of an original) without faithfully reproducing an original. The effectiveness of the copy, he argues may be more to do with Frazer’s second law, the Law of Contagiousness or Contact, often overlooked in the consideration of an assertive mimetic
copy (Chapter 4). This states that an object can exert an effect on another once the two have been in contact. This ‘contact’ can include simply citing the name of a person, or deity. A belief in the efficacy of this process can be seen in Stoller’s (1995) report on the Songhay of Niger, where individuals have been known to reproduce the bow and arrow of a particular divinity. As they release the arrow, they whisper the name of an individual. Whilst the physical replica of the arrow lands without causing harm, it is believed that a spiritual counterpart of the arrow continues on its journey, striking the named victim (who may live in another village) and ultimately causing their death if a cure is not sought or obtained. It is such laws and principles which compensate for, and indeed negate the need for accurate and faithful reproductions. Together, the not completely faithful physical reproduction and what Taussig refers to as the ‘referential’ or ‘non tangible qualities’ combine to make a mimetically effective copy. Such a phenomenon may be observed in RBr 10 and 13 where an inscription identifies an individual as Mercury; RBr 19 which features an inscription to Mars; RBr 29 which refers to a Genius and RBr 41 with an inscription featuring Victory, yet the representation of these deities are far from reproducing Classical norms. What we must take away from this, is the need to move beyond the obsession solely with the visual aspect of the assertive mimetic object to think about the integral role played by these less visible aspects.

The ‘less tangible qualities’ referred to by Taussig (1993: 55) brings us to an important point concerning Classical conceptualisations of divine statuary, and the statuary that constitutes the case study material of this enquiry. Speaking of indigenous attempts to control or gain access to the divine world of the Romans through assertive mimetic strategies raises an important issue concerning the role and beliefs associated with such statuary. How exactly could copying these statues and reliefs provide the indigenous population with access to the divine world? Was there an inherent power to these statues that could be harnessed? An analysis of the role and conceptualisation of divine statuary is dealt with in depth in Chapter 2, but it is important to draw upon some of these ideas here to consider how and why assertive mimetic strategies might have operated.

Any attempt to define how religious imagery operated or was perceived in the Roman world is hindered by the nature of Roman religion. Unlike many of the world religions of today, Roman religion comprised of a loose set of beliefs and approaches to the divine (King
2003). As such, individuals were not required to prescribe or conform to a certain view of how religious statues operated, and were free to form their own views and interpretations. As a result, the attitudes towards, the beliefs associated with and the interactions with religious imagery in the Roman world was hugely diverse (Weddle 2010: 24). Within this diversity of beliefs and interactions that permeated the Roman world, the nature of the statue as a physical manifestation of the divine stimulated much debate. Whilst not without its detractors, the idea that a statue was synonymous with a deity appears to have been deeply ingrained and widespread (Chapter 2).

According to such beliefs, some statues of divinities were not treated as inert, lifeless objects, but contained the essence of the divine. The idea that a divine presence was contained within a statue is important as it suggests a power that can be accessed and harnessed through assertive mimetic strategies. It is important to clarify here that the views discussed are those belonging to Romans, and that not all Romans shared this view. It is not possible to state, due to a lack of evidence, if the indigenous population of Britain came to conceptualise the statue in the same way. There is, as of yet, no firm evidence to suggest that Iron Age Britons represented the divine anthropomorphically which would suggest that no such views existed prior to Roman occupation; but it is possible that the idea of a divine presence in statuary was introduced by the Romans along with the anthropomorphic representation of the divine. Whilst there may be a dearth of Iron Age evidence regarding the presence of and thus the beliefs associated with anthropomorphic statuary in Iron Age Britain, we may still be able to detect the existence of beliefs concerning spiritual counterparts or spirit forces residing in particular objects. Pearce (2013: 55) draws upon the imagery represented on Bronze and Iron Age weaponry, suggesting that it is shows that these were conceived of as having a ‘spiritual persona’, and an ‘in-dwelling spirit...with their own specific agency, intention and volition’. Pearce’s conclusions may not provide definitive evidence of such beliefs – it is after all notoriously hard to uncover individuals’ thoughts and perceptions, particularly in an illiterate society - but the possibility that such beliefs may have existed is important. Beliefs regarding the in-dwelling spirits of objects in the British Iron Age would have resonated closely with fundamental principles of the Roman concept of the divine essence of a statue – a spiritual or divine counterpart to a material object. The extension of beliefs from the spiritual presence of an object in Iron Age Britain to the
spiritual presence of an anthropomorphic statue in Roman Britain would thus not appear to be incongruous – it was perhaps such Iron Age beliefs that conditioned the acceptance of beliefs regarding divine anthropomorphic representation in the Classical world.

The practice of assertive mimetic strategies in Roman Britain was not necessarily born out of contact with and absorption into the Roman world, but may have built upon pre-existing traditions. Returning again to the anthropological case studies presented in Chapter 4, it is clear that assertive mimetic strategies formed an integral component of indigenous belief systems and strategies prior to European contact. Assertive mimetic strategies were not born out of colonial encounters, but were responses that drew upon pre-existing indigenous traditions to negotiate these encounters. Evidence of the belief in or the practice of assertive mimetic strategies in Iron Age Britain is again scarce – there may be acts which we can consider assertive mimetic, but again we lack written evidence to conclusively prove that such concepts were linked to specific acts of reproduction. One of the instances in which we can speculate about the possibility of underlying assertive mimetic strategies is the production of Iron Age weaponry (see fig. 35; see also section 6.9 on the possible use of wooden figurines as human substitutes). The boar was commonly depicted on Iron Age weaponry, and is believed to have been revered for its strength and ferocity. The inclusion of boar imagery on shields, swords and helmets may have functioned as a means for an individual to acquire or share in the properties of the boar - thus giving an advantage on the battlefield through assertive mimetic practices. The use of mimetic strategies linked specifically to the sphere of war and hunting is a recurring theme in many of the societies known to practice assertive mimesis. Animals whose skills and characteristics are considered desirable for hunting or combat are often the focus of assertive mimetic practices, in the hope that these skills and characteristics would be acquired by an individual or individuals. In British New Guinea for example, Frazer (1935) reported that during the construction of a spear, a beetle was placed into the spear shaft before a spear head was fitted. This was said to have been done in the belief that it would cause the spear stick to the prey just as a beetle sticks to human skin when it bites. Additionally, we may turn to the importance that Iron Age communities placed on the human head for further support regarding the practice of sympathetic magic; it may be that the representations and perceptions of the head in the Iron Age were bound up with such practices. The stylistic techniques employed, as discussed
in section 6.7, suggest a strong association between the head and concepts of power, prophecy, fertility and perhaps even magical qualities. A collection of medieval Celtic myths likewise reveal the extent to which the head was considered to possess magical properties, and scholars such as Ann Ross (1992) have drawn upon these myths to draw parallels with Iron Age beliefs. One such myth, detailed by Ann Ross (1992: 141) recalls the life and exploits of St. Melor of Cornwall and Brittany. In this tale, St. Melor was murdered and subsequently decapitated. Whilst carrying the head, his assassin became weak and cried out for help. He was told by the head to fix his staff to the ground, whereupon it turned into a tree, and a fountain appeared. The site subsequently became a popular healing well. Whilst this legend centres on the general magical properties of the head, others reveal an explicitly apotropaic function. In a medieval Welsh tale, the head of Bran, a mythological figure was buried in London after being taken by followers to accompany them on their travels. It was said that no plague would ever cross the sea as long as the head remained concealed. It stands therefore, that representations of the head in the Iron Age may reflect the reproduction or enactment of sympathetic beliefs, whereby the depiction of a head provided access to the powers or apotropaic functions associated with the head. Whilst medieval Celtic myths may contribute to our understanding of the ways in which Iron Age peoples conceptualised the head, one must exercise caution in assuming that the beliefs regarding the head remained entirely static over the course of a millennia, or that medieval myths can provide direct parallels to Iron Age conceptualisations (see Webster 2015: 138-146 for a discussion of the concerns in using Medieval texts to develop interpretations of the Iron Age).

So far, alongside the possibility of pre-existing mimetic traditions in Iron Age Britain, I have addressed the concept of the copy, and how an ‘inaccurate’ copy may be mimetically effective. Through re-emphasising the role of ‘contagiousness’ or ‘contact’ and reorienting the levels of importance attached to the Laws of Similarity and Contagiousness, we are able to break free from the constraining ascription that all divergences from Classical norms were unintentional and the work of inept craftsmen. These statues did not look Classical perhaps because they were never intended to, and crucially because they did not have to. A copy, in accordance with the Laws of Contagiousness, did not have to be an accurate copy to be assertive mimetically effective. What was important was contact, and as has been
established, this could be accomplished through naming alone. The use of indigenous techniques to portray Classical gods may have thus been hugely symbolic, a powerful statement of an indigenous engagement with the Classical pantheon and resistance to total acculturation. This statement of independence did not hinder the access of the indigenous population to the divine, which was accomplished through ‘contagious’ practices in conjunction with the Laws of similarity in that divine attributes, arguably the locus of power, were more often than not accurately reproduced. Central to this argument is the idea that Classical models were known and rejected – and it is important here to address concerns relating to the extent to which provincial populations were indeed aware of these Classical models. The location and context of these finds is thus an important facet of this discussion. The majority of the statues and reliefs appear to have originated in urban centres, such as York, Chester, Wroxeter, Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath (see Figs. RBr 9, 11, 12, 16, 25, 32) or from or in close proximity to military sites and vici (see figs RBr 3-6, 15, 17, 18, 19, 24, 28, 29, 31, 34, 36, 38, 39-42, 44 45; see appendix H for further details). In many of these regions, there are known examples of statues that closely conform to Classical models (see for example the tables in section 8.2), which suggests that the Classical form was known to at least some of those producing the featured sculptures and reliefs. Whilst statuary is the focus of this investigation, we as archaeologists do not, nor did the inhabitants of Roman Britain, have to rely solely upon stone sculpture for an awareness of the Classical preference for the naturalised and idealised form and representation of divinities. Coins, jewellery, utensils, and an array of accoutrements featured individuals and deities represented according to Classical ideals, whilst the presence of epigraphy, Latin names and Roman attributes suggests a wider awareness of the Classical forms and traditions. Furthermore, an awareness of particular artistic pieces may have been obtained not through sight of an original, but through descriptions or sketches. Lindsay Allason-Jones (n.d) for example has suggested that fig. RBr 44 of Venus and two nymphs, a reproduction of the work of Deodalses, may have been reproduced from a sketch. This may indicate that the divergence of these statues and reliefs from their Classical counterparts was a deliberate strategy, not simply a lack of awareness of the Classical form.

This brings us to an important question: who made these statues and reliefs? Unfortunately, for the most part we are left without any clues as to the artists of statuary in
Roman Britain, there are however a number of exceptions. From Bath, the names of a number craftsmen are known; Priscus of Toutius, a lapidary from near Chartres, whose work exhibited a Gallic influence, and Sulinus, son of Brucetus, whose name suggests that he was indigenous to Britain. Inscriptions by Sulinus indicate his veneration of the Suleviae, who appear to have been mother goddesses and demonstrate the continued influence of indigenous religious traditions. An altar recovered from Uley also bears an inscription which names the sculptor as Searigillius son of Searix and the dedicator as Loverniius, both held to have been indigenous (Henig 1996: 111), so we can assume that at least some of the reliefs drawn upon in this research were produced by indigenous artisans. The sculptors Sulinus and Searigillius may have operated out of workshops, and Henig (ibid.) suggests that there are likely to have been workshops at Gloucestershire, Cirencester and Bath producing sculpture which closely conformed to Classical ideals, most likely serving patrons with surplus money. However, it may not have always been the case that a dedicant turned to a professional craftsman. Many of the reliefs and sculptures which diverge from Classical norms may have been the work of the dedicators themselves rather than professional craftsmen, something particularly likely in a military setting (Henig 1996; Kampen 2006). Whilst discussing this phenomenon, Henig (1996: 111) employed the phrase ‘low quality art’, with the implicit assumption that less skilled, amateur craftsmen failed to reproduce Classical norms of representation; this however raises an equally pressing issue, linked to the above regarding knowledge of the Classical form. If the Classical form was indeed known, did work which diverged from Classical norms represent the work of an artist that aspired but failed to reproduce the Classical form? This is a dangerous assumption, which is based upon the imposition of modern notions of what constitutes ‘good’ art onto the art of Roman Britain, and takes us into the realms of subjectivity (see Stewart 2010: 6). Here we are asked to accept that all provincials will have accepted and preferred the Classical form, yet it is perhaps unlikely to that indigenous stylistic techniques were so readily abandoned. Rather, it is likely that indigenous techniques were used as a means to express a local distinctiveness (see also section 2.2, and Bandinelli’s argument that a Plebeian art existed alongside Classical art). An interesting example here is the Uley Mercury (see fig. RBr 9). This votive was part of a wider collection of cult objects featuring Mercury, and was found in close proximity to a statue of Mercury that conformed closely to conventional Classical representations (Woodward and Leach 1993). On this phenomenon, Stewart (2010, 31)
remarked that ‘these altars are not looking to Rome; they are not even simply looking to other Romano-British sculptures: they are satellites of the cult statue itself.’ What this suggests, is that the depiction of Mercury in RBr fig. 9 was a deliberate choice, and that in spite of an awareness of the Classical form, this model was rejected. A number of reliefs drawn upon in this analysis appear, like the Uley Mercury, to have formed part of a wider collection of votive objects from ritual complexes (see RBr 30, 46-49), and Toynbee (1964: 157) has argued that the recovery of the three reliefs RBr 47-49 from the same street in Gloucester is likely to indicate the presence of a shrine to Mercury. As with the Uley Mercury however, these reliefs do not replicate the Classical representations of Mercury, but display a provincial style of representation.

Returning to the original discussion on naming, knowledge of a divine name may then be an integral component in the efficacy of assertive mimesis, and so we are left to question if or why the Romans would allow knowledge of divine names to be transmitted to the indigenous population. The Romans themselves clearly attached importance to the knowledge of divinity’s name – for fear of enemy attempts to lure the deity away, the name of Rome’s tutelary deity was not public knowledge (Ferri 2006: 204; Holland 2011). It is impossible to know if the Iron Age population of Britain shared such thoughts concerning the importance of divine knowledge, but even if such ideas did not exist prior to Roman contact, it is possible that an awareness of the Roman beliefs became known and may have been adopted following the conquest. Whilst some sculptures provided here may have been private reproductions, others, such as RBr 34, 41 and 44, were clearly publicly displayed in Roman military sites and thus known to the Romans. To consider why such representations were tolerated by the Romans, it is helpful to return to the concept of Evocatio. The Romans considered the gods to be concerned primarily with displays of piety and respect. At the heart of Evocatio was the ability to lure a foreign deity to Rome with the promise of greater honours, sacrifice and piety (Ferri 2006: 205). Considering themselves the most pious, it was most likely considered that it was impossible for others to surpass Roman piety – and divine allegiance to Rome was thus secure. The protection of the identity of Rome’s tutelary deity was perhaps simply an extreme precaution that did not extend to their remaining pantheon, precisely because they did not fear being superseded in terms of piety. Whilst the Romans were thus cautious in terms of knowledge of divine names, this has less to do with
controlling through assertive mimesis and more to do with access. Here access to the divine is not synonymous with control, as the divine still had to be won over – it may have been this that gave the Romans little concern with others accessing their divine. Some indigenous Britons may not have shared this view however, and attempted to gain favour of the divine in this way. Furthermore, the Romans may have overlooked indigenous divergences, believing from the responses of the indigenous elite that the whole population desired to become Roman, that they were worshipping Roman gods as an aspiring Roman, which itself fostered a sense of unity. The Romans desired that their divinities were worshipped and propitiated to ensure the continued success of the Empire, and so it is unlikely that knowledge of and access to the Classical gods would have been restricted. Indeed it was quite the opposite, with the persecution of religious groups who refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods. It is perhaps most likely that the expression of Classical divinities using Iron Age stylistic techniques was interpreted simply by the Romans as the result of naïve, incompetent, indigenous artists – not an expression of resistance or indigenous identity and thus was not a cause for concern for the Romans (see for example Woolf (2011) on Britain as a ‘barbarian theme park’ and the casting of indigenous peoples as savages). Alternatively, the Romans may have welcomed the worship of their gods in any form.

It may have been that the worship of Classical gods had quite different meanings for the Roman and indigenous populations respectively. The Romans were primarily concerned with the maintenance of the empire and sought to accomplish this on both the earthly and divine plane – through legionary forces and propitiating the divine. In terms of the divine, the Romans attributed their success to divine favour, and believed this could only be maintained through continued sacrifice and expressions of piety – including by provincial populations (Lytleton and Forman 1985). Whilst the Romans may have considered the worship of Roman gods as a unifying force, fostering a sense of identity and serving to maintain the empire through maintaining the good will of the gods, it is possible that the indigenous population were saw divine worship in more singular terms – as a way to improve their own lives. This is not to say that the two were mutually exclusive – it is well known that Romans worshipped the divine both to petition for individual divine favour as well as for the emperor and empire – but it is more likely that indigenous individuals who benefitted little from Roman rule focused more upon divine intervention for their own
cause, rather than for the maintenance of the Empire. Many of the reliefs and statues featured in this case study were produced in the 2nd and 3rd centuries BC – whilst not implying that the whole population will at this point have willingly fully accepted Roman domination or desired to become wholly Roman, it was perhaps the case that armed resistance was seen as increasingly futile or unnecessary. Resistance to total acculturation may thus have centred upon the maintenance of aspects of an indigenous identity, of using Iron Age traditions to present the Classical gods and invoking the Classical gods to serve indigenous needs, where the end result is the creation of new identities (see Woolf 2000). Divine petitions most likely concerned matters of everyday life – health, harvests, wealth – nothing that outwardly appeared a threat to the Romans and their presence but enhanced an individual’s life. Concerned primarily with piety and the correct performance of rituals, it was unlikely that Graeco-Roman gods would be considered to discriminate against ethnicity – numerous divinities were after all not strictly Roman divinities in that they were drawn from across the globe – either subject to Evocatio or simply adopted by the Romans. This variability of approaches to and perceptions of divine statuary emphasises the polyvocality of these statues – how one statue can signify and embody different meanings, approaches and attitudes.

From the sculptures presented above, it is clear that the expression of indigenous stylistic techniques exists on a spectrum – some like RBr 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31 and 40 feature only the attributes of the Roman divinity, otherwise being wholly schematic in nature. Other statues, such as RBr 29, 30, 34, and 37 exhibit closer parallels with the Roman model, primarily exhibiting indigenous styles through the facial features but presented in an overall more naturalistic manner (the relative number of Classical and non-Classical features for of each relief can be found in the database - Appendix C). This may have been due to cost, as the level of detail and inscription of RBr 29 compared to RBr 30 suggests that it was produced at a greater expense. What is important however is that whatever the level of detail in terms of schematism versus naturalism, key stylistic elements of Iron Age Britain remain clearly visible. For example, the facial features of statue RBr 29 are much more clearly defined than statue number 30, yet in both cases they are clearly based upon Iron Age stylistic traditions of facial representation. This would suggest then that the expression and balance of Iron Age and Classical stylistic
elements might have existed on a spectrum, but at the heart of it was an attempt to maintain an element of indigenous identity. Local limestone and sandstone were used in the production of these statues and reliefs – typically medium or coarse grained. Undeniably of a lower quality than marble, these media present a great difficulty in producing highly detailed work (Stewart 2010, 19). I would argue however, that this feature is not alone responsible for divergences from Classical models. There is arguably a huge difference between coarse material being unable to hold small detail and an entirely schematic depiction where there has been no attempt to model the body. Whilst it may be argued that the statues and reliefs may have been painted over, with examples such as Mercury in RBr. 15 it is very hard to see how such an image could have been painted to depict an idealised, naturalised human body typical of the Classical form. This relief may reflect the desire to engage with the Classical form in a non-acculturative capacity, and once again we are left with important questions regarding the individuals producing such reliefs. As many of the examples presented in this research appear to have originated on or near military sites or large towns (see appendix H), far from indicating a uniform process of Romanisation throughout the province, they appear to demonstrate the multiple, diverse processes of negotiation, adoption and adaptations occurring in Roman Britain. This phenomenon will be discussed further in section 10.2.

8.5 Mimesis and the Creole Spectrum

The analysis thus far has dealt with the statues and reliefs largely in isolation from Romano-British religion as a whole. The intention of the present discussion is to place these statues and reliefs back into the context of Romano-British religion, to reflect on what further insights they can reveal when situated within the broader context of cultural and religious interaction. Drawing upon Webster’s (2001) analysis, it is arguably most useful to conceptualise Romano-British religion in terms of Creolisation. It is necessary to return here to the caveats of using different terms of cultural mixing as synonyms addressed in Chapter 5. The confusion and difficulty that arises out of using terms denoting cultural mixing as synonyms is that there is no universal definition of a specific term. As a result, individual authors often employ nuanced definitions, without defining specifically what is meant by a term. In terms of Creolisation, what is encapsulated by this process is hugely variable according to different authors (see Palmie 2006 and Knorr 2010 for example). What
specifically constitutes a Creole religion requires further explanation, and it is most fruitful to begin with Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert’s (2011: 9) conceptualisation, which draws upon the work of Bastide and Desmangles and their discussion of various forms of religious syncretism. Many definitions of syncretism are centred upon the notion of equivalence, that for example an equivalent god exists in culture A and culture B and that when these two cultures come into contact, this equivalence is recognised. The problem with this conceptualisation of syncretism however, is the often implicit assumption that one cultural form takes precedence over the other – an essentially acculturative paradigm. Bastide’s conceptualisation of syncretism is rather different, encapsulating cultural creativity and interculturation rather than espousing acculturation. In this specific conceptualisation that recognises the multiple processes and practices that result in cultural creativity, it is possible to use syncretism and Creolisation as synonyms. Due to the Eurocentric biases associated with the term syncretism, Creolisation will remain the preferred term of use to encapsulate the various processes of the formation of new cultures and cultural creativity which take place in the context of unequal power relations.

Returning back to Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert’s (2011: 9) classifications, which are as follows, we are provided with as useful starting point to consider the various strategies and processes that together encapsulate the development of Creole religions:

1. Mosaic – which consists of the juxtaposing and co-existence of elements from different religious systems, for example, altars of the Regla de Ocha where Catholic saints are placed alongside Orisha related paraphernalia.

2. Institutional – whereby the religious observances of differing belief systems are combined through reconciling liturgical calendars

3. Correspondence – whereby two deities of varying religions are considered the same and identified as one.

Together, these varying categories provide a useful framework from which to hang an analysis not only of Creole religions, but to consider where assertive mimetic strategies may operate within such processes. Conventionally, the majority of the statues and reliefs drawn upon in this investigation have been interpreted as resulting from a recognition of equivalence - that is that a particular Roman and a particular indigenous deity were
considered the same or equivalent. Whilst this would appear to fall under what Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert (2011: 9) categorise as a Correspondence process – there is one major caveat. Rather than envisioning these statues as the result of creative processes, the interpretations of these statues and reliefs were dominated by acculturative paradigms – whereby the Roman names, forms and myths took precedence over the indigenous equivalents. Such sentiments are expressed by Henig (1984: 59) during his discussion of an altar dedicated by a Roman centurion to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Taranus. Henig (ibid.) argues that Taranus would not have been considered as a different, ‘barbarian’ god, but was simply an indigenous epithet for Jupiter. It is similarly apparent from a number of Classical texts that a number of Romans prescribed to such beliefs. In Germania, Tacitus (42.23-4) describes two German gods as being like Castor and Pollux, according to the Roman interpretation, and in De Bello Gallico, in describing the gods of the Gauls, Caesar (6.17-18) equated them to Roan divinities.

The process of interpretatio has been increasingly scrutinised (see Chapter 3) and is now considered by scholars such as Webster (1995: 156) as a process implemented and directed by the Romans rather than a benign, universal phenomenon. Here, it was argued that notions of equivalence between an indigenous and Classical deity were founded upon often poorly informed, superficial Roman readings of an indigenous belief system (Webster 1995: 156). Reinterpretations of Interpretatio in light of the post-conquest context in which it operated have thus increasingly emphasised its one sided nature - the preserve of high ranking military official and indigenous elites rather than a universal phenomenon. The localised nature of Iron Age religion in Britain, centred upon the worship of local, natural features might suggest a reluctance to draw direct equivalence with the universal deities of the Roman pantheon. This is not to deny the possible existence of an Iron Age deity or deities that were worshipped across vast geographical locations. Webster (1986) after all argued that the Iron Age population had universal deities but placed more reliance on the spirits which occupied the rivers, lakes, springs and other natural features. Whilst not dismissing the concept of universal Iron Age deities, Webster (ibid.) emphasised the importance of exercising caution in assuming that the acknowledgement of a deity across large areas of Britain equates to the universal worship of that deity. What this may reflect in reality is the presence of multiple cults. James (1993: 88) offers the example of Teutates,
often cited as a universal deity worshipped across Iron Age Britain, suggesting that instead Teutates was a common title denoting the god of a particular tribe, thus rather than the name of one specific divinity it was a title of many different divinities. If sections of the indigenous population did resist engaging with processes of syncretism (in this very particular sense on Romanisation/interpretatio Romana), we must consider the alternative ways in which they engaged with the Roman divine world. What we must appreciate, and what the sculptures and reliefs presented here may reflect, is an assertive mimetic strategy operating in a specific capacity – specifically as a means of divine and spiritual expansion, a means for indigenous populations to share in and access the power of Classical divinities that were distinct from indigenous divine powers, and had no indigenous counterpart. Here, assertive mimesis may provide the means to share in the power of these new deities and expand the indigenous spiritual repertoire. It may operate as a discrete category that should not be confused as a passive consumption or desire to become Roman and abandon all elements of indigenous identity as it has so often been, but reflects the need to go beyond fleeting aesthetic judgements grounded in the concept of Romanisation and the superiority of Classical forms.

If such a phenomenon is reflected in this statuary – that is that Classical gods, without indigenous equivalents, were incorporated by indigenous peoples as a means to enhance their spiritual repertoire – this would take them out of the correspondence category and into the mosaic category that consists of the co-existence and juxtaposing of elements from different religious systems. This is not to say that correspondence approaches were absent in the development of Romano-British religion (indeed, see section 8.7), but that these statues and reliefs (RBr 1-45) were perhaps not the result of such correspondence processes. In shifting the trajectory of analysis to focus on the way in which Classical divinities were incorporated into indigenous belief systems as new entities, we are provided with new avenues through which to explore the religious interaction of the Roman provinces. It is important to clarify that the co-existence of different religious elements in this discussion is not considered synonymous with the increasingly problematised notion of a benign willingness of polytheistic religions to accommodate one another’s gods. This co-existence marks a culturally creative process that reflects the power dynamics of the prevailing situation – where these statues represent an indigenous engagement with
Classical deities and an attempt to negotiate new identities and draw these deities into indigenous frameworks through assertive mimetic strategies. To consider the mechanism and power strategies at play in these processes I will once again return to the case study of Santerian religion.

The case study of Santerian religion (see Chapter 5), and specifically the interaction between the African Orishas and Catholic saints can provide an insight into the motivations behind the juxtaposing or co-existence of new religious elements – as well as the difficulties arising from blurring of different categories of Creole processes. On Santerian shrines, lithographs and statuettes of Catholic saints jostle with an array of accoutrements associated with Orishas. A Yoruban altar to Chango is centred around his sacred stone (otan) housed in a decorated wooden bowl, whilst a cloth and range of accessories associated with Chango complete the altar (Murphy 2011: 146). On a Creole Chango altar, an image of Saint Barbara can often be found (Brody 1993: 8).

According to the definition of what constitutes a mosaic interaction – that is the co-existence or juxtaposing of difference religious elements – it can be reasonably stated that this Santerian altar is the result of mosaic processes. The problem, and where confusion arises, is that a number of interpretations of Santerian religion consider Saint Barbara and Chango as direct equivalents – the same as one another. Such parallels were drawn based upon a number of perceived similarities – their association with lightning, retribution and protection against injustice (Murphy 2011: 147). Such interpretations of these divinities fall into the correspondence category rather than the mosaic category. Implicit in this reading is the assumption that in light of religious persecution, the Saints operated simply as a mask to allow the continued worship of Yoruban Orishas. This placement of these two deities simply into the correspondence category alone however risks over simplification. It is an important reminder that the multiple strategies constituting Creole processes should not be seen as mutually exclusive but at times co-existed and facilitated and stimulated additional responses. Certainly circumventing religious persecution was important, but it is not to say that this was the only factor influencing divine association. A more nuanced analysis of the Santerian religion can reveal crucial insights into the interactions of the two religions, and crucially, these deities.
In Yoruban religion, varying knowledge of the divine world was restricted to initiates of a particular level. This knowledge concerned multiple levels of understanding and so called religious paradoxes (Murphy 2011: 162). One such paradox was the way in which Catholic saints could be Orishas – but at the same time they were different. Their association ‘became a way to distinguish between their social and cultural identities as well as to connect them’ (ibid.). Whilst a saint and Orisha may have shared some common characteristics, the worship of Saint Barbara for example in Santerian religion was not acculturative nor simply a survival strategy, but as Murphy (ibid.) states ‘a recognition of the spiritual potential of other belief systems’. Saint Barbara was maintained as a distinct identity, linked to the Orisha Chango as an aspect of him, but never lost her own identity. It is this process that may draw upon assertive mimetic principles, so that the power of a non-indigenous deity or spirit, in this case Saint Barbara, is incorporated and accessed in the context of an indigenous belief system. Murphy’s discussion of levels of knowledge is important, as it emphasises that adherents of the same religion can have different understandings and perceptions of the divine. For some followers of Santeria, the saints and Orishas were the same, for others they were framed in the context of the religious paradox, that they were both the same and different.

I drew upon this case study as a means to emphasise that the worship of foreign deities was not always simply the result of a passive accommodation (that for example may be manifest in the production of statuary that wholly conforms to Classical models) but a deliberate strategy to gain access to and share in the power of a new belief system. It is crucial that this is seen in the context of the power dynamics that shaped colonial encounters – that it was a way for indigenous populations to maintain elements of their own identity or to create a new identity under Roman rule that draws upon indigenous and Roman elements. Crucially, as I have argued, assertive mimesis may have provided the means through which this access and control new, powerful divinities, and as such is manifest in the production of statues and reliefs such as RBr 1-45 . This case study has however also served the dual function to introduce the notion that two divinities from different belief systems may be at once the same and different. Such a concept provides an interesting new approach to all of the statuary presented above, and particularly the divine pairings (see RBr 46-50).
8.6 Divine pairing

The discussion this far has dealt with representations of a deity, and specifically Classical deities represented using stylistic traditions of the British Iron Age. In addition to isolated representations of Classical divinities, I have also provided examples whereby a pair of divinities are represented together, most often an indigenous or Gallic female alongside a male Roman counterpart (Webster 2001; Green 2004: 65) – and it is to this sculpture that I will now turn my attention. The insights gained from drawing upon various case studies related to Santerian religion may prove equally as valuable in stimulating new ways to conceptualise these divine pairings as it has been in terms of singular deities. During the discussion of the representation of deities in general, I argued that Classical divinities were incorporated into an indigenous divine belief system – not necessarily juxtaposed in the literal sense of divine pairings – but that they were drawn into and co-existed in an indigenous belief system, without replacing or supplanting that belief system itself. It is here that it is important to distinguish between juxtaposing and co-existence in relation to Mosaic approaches. In the case of divine pairings, multiple deities – often one indigenous and one non-indigenous – are juxtaposed in the very literal sense of being placed side by side, rather than conceptually co-existing in a divine belief system. This literal juxtaposing may reveal nuanced approaches, perceptions and strategies of indigenous populations that differed from representations of single divinities. If we begin to dissect the meaning behind divine pairings in Roman Britain by drawing upon the insights of other religions in which divinities were juxtaposed, we are provided with new avenues through which to explore the intentions and outcomes of religious interaction – what insights may be revealed will now be considered.

The interpretation of paired divinities, often referred to as a divine marriage, has recently been subject to postcolonial revisionism, most notably by Webster (2001; 2015) and Green (2003; 2012 see also Chapter 3). The idea that divine pairings represented a
benign willingness of polytheistic religions to accommodate one another’s gods was criticised in these accounts for failing to recognise and account for the power asymmetries that marked the encounter between Rome and Britain. In recognising these power dynamics, I have previously argued (see section 8.5) that the indigenous adoption of Graeco-Roman gods was not and should not always be considered as a benign act of accommodation, but a strategy to gain access to the powerful Graeco-Roman gods by drawing them in to indigenous belief systems. The adoption of Graeco-Roman divinities was in some instances stimulated by the power asymmetries that marked Roman Britain – not as an expression of a desire to be Roman, but as a means for members of the indigenous population, excluded from but also with little desire to participate fully in the Roman way of life (and entirely abandon indigenous identity), to gain access to powerful divine forces.

The deconstruction of the idea that divine pairings reflected a benign process devoid of power imbalances provides a crucial foundation in which new readings of these statues can be grounded. There is an increasing acceptance that far from being static images, as I have argued above with the Orishas and Saints, these pairings were deliberately ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations. The iconography was presented in a way that meaning was actively interpreted and conditioned by the social status and lived experiences of a group or individual. As such one image, perhaps deliberately, was able to communicate very different, even paradoxical messages to its audiences – ranging from Roman domination to indigenous resistance (Webster, 2015). If we deal first with this idea of Roman domination, it is perhaps most obvious to begin with gender ascription and the tendency to present the male of the pair as a Roman divinity and the female as indigenous. Such imagery can be read as a ‘marriage’ between Rome and a subject state, with the conquering, paternalistic male representing Rome and the passive female representing the indigenous population subject to Roman domination (Green 2004: 65). This particular interpretation of the imagery of divine marriage is perhaps reflective of the wider visual vocabulary of Rome, where in triumphal imagery for example a male emperor typically humiliates a female that symbolises a defeated country. It is likely that the visual codes of Roman imagery conditioned this particular perception of divine marriage amongst many Romans, and in particular the Roman army – of a dominant and paternalistic Roman and the subjective female – a reality they believed was mirrored both on the divine and mortal plane. What we
must remember is that these were the visual codes of Rome and were not necessarily shared by the Iron Age population of Britain (although some may have come to share in this idea following the Roman conquest). The presence of a indigenous, female divinity and male Roman divinity may have symbolised something very different to indigenous audiences - something other than male/Roman domination. It is here that we can begin to appreciate the alternative ways in which a single image may be interpreted. In a number of these so called divine marriages, the presence of divine attributes is mirrored, so that both male and female counterparts are depicted with the same divine symbols. In RBr 50 for example, both Mercury and Rosmerta hold a caduceus. It is entirely possible that this was a deliberate stylistic feature employed as a means to symbolise balance and equality, something that Green (2003: 97) argues is also evidenced in the lack of gender dimorphism – presenting both male and female as equal in terms of size and stature. Here, the notion of Roman superiority is replaced with equality. This deconstruction of Roman supremacy has been taken even further by Green (ibid.), who suggests the possibility that female deities rather than male occupied a position of supremacy during the Iron Age – a notion that subverts the dominant-subject status of the male-female divinities. The typical imagery associated with the female counterpart concerns notions of fertility and abundance – imagery that Green (ibid.) suggests may represent dominance, with the female divinity the personification of the land.

Against this recognition of polyvocality and ambiguity, we can return to the concept of assertive mimesis, to consider the specific ways in which it may have operated in the production of such statuary, providing more nuanced insights into the religious interaction in the provinces. We can begin by noting the similarities between cases of divine pairings and the reproduction of the individual, isolated depictions of divinities discussed in section 8.5 – in that the desire to gain control of and access to these Graeco-Roman divinities through assertive mimesis lies at the heart of their production. Where differences arise however, is on the notion of equivalence or similarity. As will be recalled from section 8.5, I argued that we should not assume that a direct Iron Age equivalent of a Graeco-Roman divinity existed. Assertive mimesis may have thus operated as a strategy of divine and spiritual expansion, a means for indigenous populations to share in and access the power of Classical divinities that were distinct from indigenous divine powers and had no indigenous
counterpart. In terms of divine marriage however, it may be argued that rather than perceived of as existing as entirely distinct from indigenous deities, a number of parallels or similarities may have been drawn between an indigenous and Classical deity. This suggestion that similarities may have been drawn between an indigenous and Classical deity should in no way be taken to embody the notions of equivalence encapsulated in the processes of interpretatio or syncretism (in the Romanisation sense). Similarity as used here should not be seen as equivalence in the sense that two divinities from different regions are considered one and the same – simply that two different divinities may share some similarities. To consider specifically what is meant by this idea of ‘the same but different’, it is helpful to return once again to the religion of Santeria.

Santerian altars symbolise the cultural creativity arising from religious interactions – with images of Catholic saints placed alongside the symbols and attributes of an Orisha. Murphy (2011: 158) attributes the juxtaposing of these two belief systems on one altar as the means to reflect ‘a complex religious world where Orishas and saints could be seen as both the same and different’. Their association was a way to simultaneously differentiate and connect two very different religious and cultural systems. The saint-Orisha associations were far from random, they were thoughtful and selective, and have continued as an integral part of Santerian religion today (Murphy ibid.). How and why a saint and orisha could be seen as both the same and different is due, according to Murphy (ibid.), to the very nature of religion and religious expression:

‘...religious symbols are irruptions of the sacred realm onto that of the profane, the world of absolute being into the temporal and conditioned world we live in. To express this extraordinary coming together, religious people use paradox in an attempt to capture and experience the ineffable transcendence of the sacred world. The results are meaningful but non-rational, even impossible juxtapositions.’

These impossible juxtapositions are evident in Santerian religion, in that Saints can be Orishas for example, whilst maintaining their distinct identities (ibid). The presence and the significance of these juxtapositions forms part of a body of knowledge that becomes increasingly available to religious adherents following initiation. Followers of the religion are introduced to hidden meanings and different levels of knowledge depending upon their level of initiation. Murphy (2011: 160) thus links the different aspects of divinities to particular social and spiritual standings, suggesting that ‘Saint Barbara is the outer level, the
outer face of Chango, appropriate to public, Catholic levels of discourse’. Chango, on the other hand ‘is inner knowledge appropriate to the more intimate world of Lucumi ceremony and aspiration’ (2011: 160). Murphy’s discussion is important as it addresses the fact that for some, the saints may have genuinely operated as a mask for Orisha worship, whilst alternatively or in addition, for others, depending on their initiate status and knowledge, the saints were seen more as aspects of an Orisha whilst maintaining individual identities. This is an important reminder of the flexibility of interpretation of the divine and multiple approaches to religious interaction – it is within such frameworks that we must consider Romano-British religion, and particularly divine pairings. With this in mind, it is not a huge leap to suggest that assertive mimetic strategies may have been in operation in Roman Britain – that it was desirable for a divinity of a new religion – that was considered both the same and different – to be drawn into the indigenous divine world as a means to strengthen and expand it – and that this was or could be achieved through assertive mimesis.

The distinguishing factor here is the existence of a notion of equivalence between an indigenous and foreign deity, alongside an equally important recognition of difference. It is this difference that assertive mimetic strategies in the case of divine marriage are perhaps employed to access – as new ways to access a particular power, as well as providing access to a new power. As discussed in Chapter 6, it is unlikely that Iron Age divinities or spirits were conceived of in the same way as Graeco-Roman gods – that is of single sex and form. Iron Age conceptualisations were likely to have been based upon the fluidity of the divine who were able to transcend gender and species boundaries – taking different forms and guises in different contexts. The fact that the divine were not bound by notions of gender and sexuality may be reflected in the lack of gender ascription in Iron Age figurines such as the chalk figure from Kent (see Green 2003: 98). Such fluid conceptualisations of the divine would appear to be compatible with the concept that one particular deity or representation of a deity may operate as an aspect of another – providing new ways to access a particular power shared with other divinities, as well new powers that were not possessed other divinities. Mercury for example, frequently depicted in divine pairings (see RBr 46-50), could have been considered as an aspect of Rosmerta – the male guise of this divinity that operated in particular contexts. It may be that both Mercury and Rosmerta both provided protection to flocks for example – but aside from this they had separate fields of influence.
and power. This recognition of sameness and difference is important in the context of the power dynamics of the colonial encounter as it both connected and distinguished various divinities. Assertive mimesis may therefore have offered a way for indigenous populations to both maintain and enhance their divine world by drawing upon the power of the Classical gods. The representation of Classical divinities using stylistic techniques of the British Iron Age may thus be the result of assertive mimetic strategies – a means to gain access to the Classical deities. It may be useful to consider these multiple aspects of a deity in the same way that a single Roman god had multiple epithets.

The existence of Graeco-Roman divine epithets has provoked considerable debate, centred upon the conflicting notions of the epithet as signalling distinct or separate deities, and the epithet as signalling one form of a particular, singular, divine identity (Wallensten 2008). King (2013: 291) arguing for the latter, suggests that the Romans believed that divinities had multiple aspects and possessed more than one form – operating in particular contexts under particular names. Thus the god worshipped in one particular context under a particular name, was the same god that could be worshipped in a different context using a difference name. Juno Lucina, the goddess of childbirth, was thus the same as Juno Sospita, who operated in a martial capacity (Rives 2006: 15). We should see this as no different to Iron Age divinities as comprising of multiple aspects – simply that these aspects extended across gender and perhaps species boundaries. What is crucial is that the new Classical divinities which may have come to be seen as aspects of indigenous gods – will have simultaneously been recognised as different. Therefore by accessing this Classical god through assertive mimetic strategies, indigenous populations have both new ways to access the same power, as well as access to new powers.

Murphy’s (2011) recognition of differing responses to and perceptions of new divinities is important here. It is crucial to remember that responses to new religions were multifaceted – whilst some individuals may have seen Graeco-Roman gods as completely novel and may thus have employed strategies similar to those discussed in section 8.4, others may have built their responses on notions of similarity and difference – resulting in a slightly different manifestation of mimetic strategies – namely divine pairing. Unlike modern religions, individuals were free to pursue their own beliefs and ideas about the divine world. As a result, it would be equally likely for an individual to draw similarities between an

212
indigenous and Classical god (in spite of the highly localised nature of Iron Age religion) as it would for another individual to see them as completely distinct. It would thus not appear unusual to see both strategies employed together in Roman Britain.

The seemingly deliberate and intentional polyvocality and ambiguity of these representations brings us to the final discussion point of this chapter – where does the representation of a new Graeco-Roman deity using indigenous stylistic techniques end and correspondence Creolisation begin? By correspondence Creolisation, it is important to re-emphasise that am referring to a process whereby notions of similarity exist between two different divinities, but rather than acculturative process where one form of divine expression – the myths, stories and representation of a divinity from one culture – replaces those of another culture, I consider the process to culturally creative – where these varying forms and myths interact to produce something new. From the previous discussion, it can be said that divine pairings may operate in this capacity, based upon a degree of recognisable similarity. This is one very specific form of representation and recognition of equivalence however, and I wish to look at the varying ways that this could be expressed and will refer specifically to examples from category 1.

In the accompanying discussion of these representations, I drew upon the tendency of the statues to conform to Graeco-Roman representations in terms of the iconography and attributes of the divinity, yet to be presented in a manner that conformed more closely to Iron Age styles of representation. This usually concerned the production of schematic, disproportionate torsos and limbs, and large, triangular shaped or spherical heads with minimal facial features. The Graeco-Roman deity was not altered beyond recognition; they were simply expressed in indigenous terms. This phenomenon, in the associated discussion, was attributed to the desire to access the power of the Graeco-Roman pantheon, a highly symbolic action that whilst indicative of this desire, simultaneously allowed an individual to maintain elements of their indigenous identity and religion. This was centred upon the suggestion that some individuals would have conceptualised Graeco-Roman divinities as new entities that were distinct from indigenous deities. As such what the Graeco-Roman deity conceptualised, its powers and its essential representation was not altered or ‘tinkered’ with – it was simply expressed in accordance with indigenous stylistic techniques. But where do we draw the line between expressing a Graeco-Roman deity in indigenous
terms – in the sense that the deity in question was conceptualised as a new entity – and the expression of equivalence between an indigenous and Graeco-Roman deity resulting in a syncretic representation. To provide an example of what I specifically mean by this, I will return to RBr 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 15 and 17.

These representations have conventionally been viewed as featuring wings sprouting from the head, which conforms to standardised Graeco-Roman representations of Mercury. Yet it can be argued that horns rather than wings are depicted. If this is the case, we are left with an interesting set of questions. Could this for example simply be an additional technique to represent the deity in an indigenous manner – the same way that a large head and schematic body did? Or did they represent something different – perhaps an expression of a perceived equivalence between Mercury and an indigenous deity who was conceptualised as bearing horns. It may be recalled from section 6.12 that Iron Age deities, such as Cernunnos were represented with horns, a reflection of wider beliefs relating to the semi-zoomorphic nature or shape shifting abilities of some divinities. In this case, the image could be seen as syncretic in the Creole sense, combining indigenous and Graeco-Roman conventions for conceptualising a particular divinity or divinities that shared particular powers. Here we can also return to Mercury from the divine pairing in RBr 46, where it is equally as ambiguous as to whether Mercury is depicted with wings or horns

There is no definite way to decipher what the representation included – that is either horns or wings, and it is perhaps the case that there was never meant to be just one answer. The polyvocality and deliberately ambiguous nature of divine representations has been repeatedly emphasised throughout this discussion – and this phenomenon is perhaps a further strand of this ambiguity. It was, as has been discussed, equally likely for an individual to draw similarities between an indigenous and Classical god as it was for another individual to see them as completely distinct – driven by individual beliefs and ways of seeing the world. Two individuals could thus have looked at this statue and seen two very different things – a winged Mercury that was drawn into an indigenous pantheon, or a horned divinity that represented the similarities of a Graeco-Roman and indigenous god. In the latter scenario, where assertive mimetic strategies come in to play is somewhat more complex. It can for example be stated that assertive mimetic strategies were at play in the general sense that to copy something is to control it, and thus the statue provided access to
a divinity – but we must ask further questions about the nature of this divinity and the motivations for representing it in such a manner – particularly in terms of the power asymmetries that marked this colonial encounter. Was it for example similar to divine pairings that expressed both similarities and differences between indigenous and Graeco-Roman divinities – that this deity was both Mercury and an indigenous divinity? In this way, the Graeco-Roman counterpart perhaps became part of an assertive mimetic strategy to expand the spiritual repertoire and draw upon new forms and ways to access divine power. Alternatively, it may have expressed notions of a direct equivalence and the imagery was simply blended to represent what was essentially the same divinity. It is likely that all such perceptions were present in the production and consumption of this strategy, and we should not seek singular, homogenous readings from these statues.

A statue from Corbridge is worthy of mention here (fig. 52). Whilst it has not been included in the database of possible assertive mimetic statuary as it was deemed to fall outside of the criteria of what constitutes assertive mimetic statuary, it is an example of one of the difficulties faced when deciding where to draw the line between when something is Creole syncretic (as in an indigenous and non-indigenous deity are considered the same) and when it has been subject to assertive mimetic strategies. Unlike the horns/wings of Mercury which are ambiguous and subject to individual interpretation (which is what led to their inclusion in the database), the hermaphroditic representation of Jupiter is less ambiguous in the sense that the representation of female genitalia is unequivocal. The significance of this is more difficult to ascertain. Phillips (1977: 85) identified the statue as that of Jupiter due to the presence of thunderbolt and the likelihood that a sceptre was held in the now damaged right hand. Whilst noting that the treatment of the statue is ‘purely Celtic’, there is no reference to the presence of female genitalia. This important feature has been completely overlooked, and what this may represent is a Creole syncretic process, where similarities were drawn between Jupiter and an indigenous deity which was either female or perhaps more likely gender fluid. As such, it may have been an attempt to portray British Iron Age beliefs in the gender fluid nature of a chief divinity. Alternatively it may have marked an indigenous attempt to draw upon the power of Jupiter as an aspect of an indigenous divinity in a process similar to that discussed of divine parings.
Figure 52: A relief of Jupiter from Corbridge with female genitalia, image from Phillips (1977) fig. 10.

An equally exciting avenue of enquiry relates to fragmentation theory, drawn upon by scholars such as Croxford (2003). Croxford suggested that images of the divine may have been deliberately damaged in the belief that the fragments were imbued with the same essence, magic and divine power as possessed by the whole statue. This raises important questions regarding not only the use and deposition of religious statuary, but specifically the concept of the statue as possessing the spirit or essence of the deity that it represents, something that been discussed in Chapter 2 and section 8.5. Whilst the deliberate fragmentation and ritualised deposition of statuary provided an intriguing development in our understanding of the production, reception, perception and use of statuary, there is an important caveat in that Croxford (2003: 85) excluded reliefs from his analysis based upon the ease through which they could be and were reused. It may be therefore that the limited numbers of fragmented reliefs from this analysis simply reflect this process of reuse. Fragmentation theory nonetheless offers an exciting prospect for future investigation. Whilst it is important to acknowledge that the idea that these reliefs perhaps contained the essence of divinity could have far reaching impact on its use, perception and disposal,
including its deliberate fragmentation, an in-depth consideration of this is unfortunately beyond the scope of this study.

8.7 Summary

The Roman presence in Britain undeniably stimulated new forms of representation, whereby the divine came to be represented anthropomorphically in stone for the first time. We should not however see the fact that the gods are represented in this manner as indicative of complete acculturation, or without the influence of indigenous tradition. The paucity of anthropomorphic statuary in Iron Age Britain should not be taken as evidence that the divine was not represented at all. It is likely that the Iron Age population not only conceptualised the divine differently to the Romans, but in terms of representation were stimulated by principles other than verism. The characteristic Iron Age style of representation, far from being absent or muted under Roman rule, continued to exert itself in subtle yet meaningful ways. The resulting ‘art’ of the province was not simply acculturative, abandoning all indigenous influence. We can clearly see an interaction between the indigenous and Roman form, with a continuation of the characteristic Iron Age emphasis on the head, schematism, and semi-zoomorphic representation.

Rather than framing all provincial interactions with Roman culture in terms of acculturation, this analysis was built upon the recognition that the responses to the Roman presence were diverse and Roman culture was engaged with in culturally creative ways. Some members of the indigenous population may have engaged with and drawn upon Roman deities not in an acculturative capacity to replace indigenous divinities or to ‘Romanise’, but as a means of divine and spiritual expansion, so that indigenous populations could share in and access the power of Roman divinities that were likely to have been considered highly powerful and effective. Assertive mimesis, it has been demonstrated, may have provided a viable strategy through which this could be achieved, leading to the construction of new identities and religions which drew upon indigenous and Roman elements. What it is important to take away from this discussion is the fluid and wide-ranging nature of mimetic strategies - that we should not confine our conceptualisations of mimesis as a discrete or distinct category – but as a phenomenon that can operate an
integral component of various strategies of cultural and religious interaction. The similarities and differences in the mobilisation of assertive mimetic strategies in Britain and North Africa will be discussed in Chapter 10, following a discussion and analysis of the statues and reliefs from Roman North Africa.
Chapter 9. Roman North Africa: Religious Sculpture through the Mimetic Lens

9.1: Introduction

The previous chapter drew upon a collection of Romano-British statuary to consider the extent to which assertive mimetic strategies may have operated in the production of statuary in Roman Britain. The present chapter provides an equivalent investigation into the Roman provinces of North Africa. The reliefs that comprise the African component of this case study differ from those of Roman Britain in key respects, a phenomenon which reflects the diversity of the provinces. The use of stone sculpture was rare in pre-Roman Britain and the Roman period sculpture and reliefs produced in this region were without precedent in terms of form and content. The stone stelae from North Africa however were an integral part of Punic customs predating Roman rule, and their use continued into the Roman period. These stelae drew upon a repertoire of iconography related to their function as votive pieces. The iconographic traditions were variable, some were of great antiquity and remained in constant use, others came to be discarded in favour of new forms that were adopted and adapted over the centuries, including Roman iconography. As these stelae were produced over the course of a millennia it is hardly surprising that change ensued. These changes may however reveal a great deal more than has previously been appreciated, particularly concerning the transition to Roman rule and absorption of the province into the Roman Empire. They may provide insights into indigenous beliefs and strategies, and suggest ways in which power and identity were negotiated in a much changed world. In order to gain these insights however, we must develop new models of interpretation and find new ways of looking at and approaching these objects. It is necessary to unlock their complex and multifaceted meanings, rather than judging them simply in terms of aesthetics and as pieces of art. One avenue through which the stelae can be explored is to consider the possible use of assertive mimetic strategies, and this will form the basis of the present investigation. Specifically, the stelae will be scrutinised to consider the strength of the argument that the techniques used to represent the divine are indicative of the exercise of assertive mimetic strategies. Referring back to hallmarks of mimetic strategies demonstrated elsewhere in this thesis (Chapter 4), the present chapter will seek to identify
cases whereby Classical deities are depicted in ways that diverge from Graeco-Roman norms of representation. That is to say, cases where Graeco-Roman deities are depicted in such a manner that parallels can be drawn with the stylistic traditions of Punic Africa discussed in Chapter 7. These stelae have been recorded in a database (see Appendix D) alongside a photographic record, their provenance, date, material, measurements and record of stylistic features.

9.1 The Stelae: Introduction

The stelae have been drawn from the British Museum’s ‘La Ghorfa’ collection and from Leglay’s corpus *Saturne Africain*, which catalogues Roman period stelae from across North Africa that supposedly feature the Graeco-Roman deity Saturn. The ‘La Ghorfa’ stelae have been subject to a number of investigations, notably as the subject of Jennifer Moore’s doctoral thesis *Cultural Identity in Roman Africa* (2000) and as one of the British Museum’s occasional papers *Catalogue of Punic Stelae in the British Museum* (2003) (see also Moore 1999). These stelae embody cultural diversity, drawing upon African, Punic and Roman influences. As an expression of this multiculturalism, the stelae have amassed a number of names and epithets including Berbero-Punic and Punico-Numidian. They have been described, as catalogued by Moore (2000: 10) as exhibiting ‘Roman influence but still retaining an essential Phoenician core’, as a ‘very slightly Romanized native tradition’ and as a ‘result of the mixing of Berber, Punic and Graeco-Roman beliefs’. This cultural diversity is frequently demonstrated in the co-existence of Punic and Graeco-Roman divinities on Punic stelae, the latter being identified according to the conventions of Graeco-Roman representation – that is by the attendants and attributes frequently depicted in Graeco-Roman representations of a particular divinity. As with the collection of Romano-British sculpture however (discussed in Chapter 8), these representations of Graeco-Roman divinities are not straightforward reproductions of a Classical model. The attributes commonly featured in Graeco-Roman representations of the god are present yet there are clear, deliberate divergences from Graeco-Roman forms. What did it mean when Graeco-Roman divinities were represented using indigenous traditions? Whilst the cultural diversity of these stelae has long been recognised, little consideration has been given to this question, or to the significance of these deliberate divergences. In the present chapter, the stelae will be analysed to consider the extent to which and specific ways in which Graeco-Roman
deities are represented according to indigenous traditions. The significance of this phenomenon will be discussed in section 9.5.

Whilst thousands of stelae have been recovered from across North Africa, the Leglay (1961) and ‘La Ghorfa’ collections were selected as the focus of this investigation based upon a number of criteria, including the ease of access to publications and the availability of higher quality photographs. As there are no surviving excavation records for the stelae selected for this investigation, their context, dating and original location remain unknown, although an in depth analysis of the possible origins of the La Ghorfa stelae can be found in Moore’s (1999) thesis. The La Ghorfa stelae, dated to the late 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. (Moore 1999: 32) were recovered from Tunisia in 1842. The name of the stelae derives from a theory concerning their origin that is now largely discredited. Whilst their origin remains unknown, it is now widely held that they were produced in Maktar (Mactaris), a region known for its Numidian, Punic, and Roman interactions. The stelae from Leglay’s collection cover diverse locations across North Africa and their analysis will allow for a consideration of how assertive mimetic strategies may have been adopted in different regions and workshops. Furthermore, drawing upon both collections will provide an insight into the range of deities that were drawn upon and represented on North Africa stelae; whilst Leglay’s collection may be invaluable in demonstrating the ways in which representations of a Graeco-Roman divinity on North African stelae diverged from Classical norms, his corpus is limited to stelae that feature Saturn. The ‘La Ghorfa’ stelae also feature representations of Saturn (and incidentally feature in Leglay’s corpus), but this corpus also includes representations of other Graeco-Roman deities, enabling an investigation into the range of Graeco-Roman divinities that many have been subject to assertive mimetic strategies. Additionally the inscriptions on the stelae likely indicate that whilst the dedicants of these stelae did have disposable wealth; they were largely outside of the elite groups said to have been courted by Rome. As such, they can provide an insight into how non-elite groups responded to the Roman presence

Before presenting the stelae, it is worth noting the general composition and content of North African, Neo-Punic stelae. These stelae are conventionally divided into three registers which contain particular iconographic themes (Moore 2000; Mendleson 2003, see fig. 53). The upper register is reserved for divine figures and symbols including the
sign of Tanit and the disc and crescent, and it is here that an array of Graeco-Roman divinities may also be found. The intermediate register features a portrait of an individual, presumably the dedicant whilst the lower register, the most variable in terms of content, often depicts a bull or bull sacrifice or alternative mythological and religious scenes. Moore (2000) has noted that a number of these lower scenes however lack both a Punic or Roman precedent. The tripartite structure of the stelae have been interpreted as representing the heavens, world and subterranean (Picard 1962; Leglay 1966, Moore 2000). It is the upper, celestial zone which is the focus of this investigation, although the presentation of the dedicant may provide crucial clues as to their identity and their possible motivations for doing using assertive mimetic strategies.

Figure 53: The tripartite construction of a stele from La Ghorfa. Image from the British Museum

A number of the Graeco-Roman deities on the ‘La Ghorfa’ stelae are not readily identifiable, and their identification has provoked considerable debate. Whilst their Classical origins are without doubt, who exactly these figures represent has proved more difficult,
owing largely to the lack of divine attributes and the similar style of representation of a number of Graeco-Roman deities (see Moore 2000; Mendleson 2003). The ‘youthful Hellenistic-type’ figure frequently depicted on the ‘La Ghorfa’ stelae provides a clear example of the confusion evoked over identification. Based upon the conventional imagery of Bacchus/Dionysus in the Graeco-Roman world, one would be forgiven for identifying the ‘youthful’ figure on the stelae as Bacchus/Dionysus. Moore (2000: 53) however refutes such an identification, pointing to the near complete absence of references to Bacchus/Dionysus in North African epigraphy, compared to over 100 inscriptions related to the Roman God Liber Pater. Moore (ibid.) suggests that Liber Pater ‘shared not only his appearance with [Bacchus]/Dionysus, but also some of his functions’, and crucially was associated with more civilised behaviour than Dionysus/Bacchus in North Africa. Liber Pater, considered as god of the vine, fertility and life is thus a convincing candidate for the identity of the individual depicted on the ‘La Ghorfa’ stelae with a wreath of grapes, wine cup, vegetation and animals. For the purpose of this investigation then, based upon the apparent popularity of the divinity in North Africa, such representations will be identified as Liber Pater rather than Bacchus.

The identity of the female deity accompanying Liber Pater has proven equally problematic. Whilst Liber Pater is often paired with a female attendant in North African inscriptions, there is not one goddess with whom he is invariably paired. The iconography of the female individual is often suggestive of Venus, and in a number of examples on the ‘La Ghorfa’ stelae the presence of a dove, an attendant of Venus, would appear to confirm her identity. Further strengthening the case for Venus is the existence of a shared temple of Venus and Liber Pater at Henchir Mest (Moore 2000: 53). Whilst Libera has been linked with Liber Pater in six inscriptions, the presence of Cupid - the son of Venus – on a number of the stelae further strengthens the case for identifying the figure as Venus in such cases. For this reason, such female figures, when accompanied by Cupid, featured on the ‘La Ghorfa’ stelae will be considered as Venus. In other cases, without the presence of Cupid, it is perhaps more likely that Libera, the Roman goddess of wine and fertility is represented.

On a number of stelae, we find a male individual – sometimes seated or reclining, other times represented simply a bust – flanked by two individuals holding horses. These figures have been identified as Saturn and the Dioscuri, owing to the conventional Graeco-Roman
representations of these individuals and the presence of particular attributes. In such cases, the Dioscuri are believed to ‘emphasise the cosmic significance’ of Saturn (Moore 2000: 60). On other occasions, busts of Sol and Luna are linked strongly with radiant or crescent crowns. Whilst the range of Graeco-Roman divinities drawn upon on these stelae is narrow, each share a strong association with fecundity and reproduction, which appears appropriate to a province so dependent for its wealth upon farming and agriculture (Shaw 2007). Having identified the deities frequently presented on this collection of stelae and addressed issues of identification, it is now possible to consider specifically the particular stylistic techniques employed to represent these deities and how these diverge from Graeco-Roman norms of representation.
9.2 The Stelae

ID number: RNA 1 (also see Appendix G fig. 105)

Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

Two figures are depicted either side of a dedicant. Whilst the figure on the left is badly weathered, the figure on the right may be identified as Victory based upon the presence of wings, a wreath and palm branch, which typically feature in Classical representations of Victory. Whilst Classical in content, Victory is represented in a manner that diverges from Classical norms of representation and instead exhibits Punic stylistic techniques. The large, round head sits on a thick neck and features large, ringed eyes. The tunic and wings are richly textured, a recognisable characteristic of Punic representation. The anatomy is stiff and the schematic, particularly the arms and hands. The goddess is presented in a frontal view, typical of Punic stelae. The dedicant wears a stylised tunic and mantle and a disc shaped pendent. The lower register is damaged but appears to depict two figures with a wreath and branch.

ID number: RNA 2 (also see Appendix G fig. 106)

Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

Two winged figures depicted either side of a dedicant have been identified by Mendleson (2003: 42) as Victories. This identification is supported by presence of wings, a wreath and palm branch – which conventionally feature in Classical representation of Victory. Whilst Classical in content, the Victory figures are represented in a manner that diverges from Classical norms of representation and instead exhibit Punic stylistic techniques. The large, round heads are set on thick necks and the ringed eyes are huge, particularly on the Victory to the right. The tunics are richly textured, a recognisable characteristic of Punic representation. Stylistic parallels can be drawn between the dedicant in the niche and conventional anthropomorphic representations on Punic funerary stelae, whilst the lower register is missing.
ID number: RNA 3 (also see Appendix G fig. 107)
Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

A male figure to the left of a dedicant has been identified as Dionysus (Bacchus) by Mendleson (2003: 42; see section 9.1 for the interchangability of Dionyus (Bacchus) and Liber pater). The male wears a grape-laden wreath and holds a wine cup, which conforms to Classical representations of Dionysus/Bacchus/Liber Pater. The naked female may be identified as Venus due to her association with Liber Pater (see section 9.1) and the Graeco-Roman convention of presenting Venus nude. Whilst Classical in content, both deities are represented in a manner that diverges from Classical norms of representation and instead exhibits Punic stylistic techniques. Both feature large, round heads with large, ringed eyes. The chlamys of Liber Pater is heavily textured, again typical of Punic representation. The anatomy is stiff and the schematic, particularly the arms and hands and both are presented in a frontal view, typical of Punic stelae. The female dedicant wears a Severan hairstyle, tunic and mantle.

ID number: RNA 4 (also see Appendix G fig. 108)
Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

Standing atop of a pediment, a winged figure has been identified as Cupid by Mendleson (2003: 42). The two figures flanking Cupid are, according to Mendleson (ibid.) Venus (right) and Dionysus/Bacchus/Liber Pater (left). This identification is supported by the presence of attributes conventionally associated with these deities in Classical imagery, such as the thyrsus, vine wreath and jug of Dionyus/Bacchus/Liber Pater. Whilst the typical Graeco-Roman conventions of representation are adhered to in terms of content and have thus been used to identify the deities, the style of representation is more closely aligned to Punic stylistic techniques. Each deity is depicted with a large, round head featuring large, ringed eyes. The chlamys of Liber Pater is heavily textured, typical of Punic representation. The anatomy is stiff and schematic, particularly the arms and hands and both are presented in a frontal view, typical of Punic stelae. The dedicant wears a tunic and mantle, and the lower register depicts a sacrificial ritual.
ID number: RNA 5 (also see Appendix G fig. 109)

Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

In a similar thematic complex to no. 4, a winged figure holding a wreath has been identified as Cupid by Mendleson (2003: 43). The figure to the right has been identified as Venus (ibid.), which is supported by the nude pose and the addition of a dove resting on her arm – an attendant conventionally associated with Venus in Classical representations. To the left, an individual identified as Dionysus (Bacchus)/Liber Pater (ibid.) holds a thyrsus and jug. On his head, although damaged, it is possible to make out a vine wreath with fruit clusters. Whilst Classical in content, the style of representation exhibited belongs to the Punic tradition. Venus and Liber Pater are depicted with a large, round head featuring large, ringed eyes – the head of cupid has been damaged. The chlamys of Liber Pater is heavily textured, typical of Punic representation. The anatomy is stiff and schematic, with little attention given to the ratio and proportion of the limbs. The dedicant wears a tunic and mantle, although stylistic parallels can be drawn with anthropomorphomorphic representations of Punic funerary stelae.

ID number: RNA 6 (also see Appendix G fig. 110)

Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

Next to the dedicant is a figure that has been identified by Mendleson (2003: 43) as Victory, which is supported by the presence of wings and a wreath held in the right hand – common attributes of the goddess in conventional Classical representations. Above the dedicant Mendleson (ibid.) has identified the figure to the right as Venus, and the figure to the left with a thyrsus, kantharos and vine wreath as Dionysus (Bacchus). Whilst these figures have been recognised as Graeco-Roman divinities according to the presence of attributes traditionally associated with these divinities in Classical representations, they are presented in a manner that is heavily influenced by Punic traditions. Each of the figures is depicted with a large, round head featuring large, ringed eyes. The eyes of Liber Pater are notably large, covering over half of the face. The limbs are disproportionate and little attention paid to the modelling of the body. The lower register is missing.
ID number: RNA 7 (also see Appendix G fig. 111)
Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

Above the dedicant are two figures that have been identified as the Graeco-Roman gods Venus and Dionysus (Bacchus)/Liber Pater (Mendleson 2003: 44). This identification is supported by similarities to conventional Classical representations of these deities in terms of their attributes – the male figure wears a vine wreath with clusters of grapes adorning each side, whilst the nudity and association with Liber Pater is taken to indicate Venus. Whilst these figures have been recognised as Graeco-Roman divinities according to their attributes, they are presented in a manner that is heavily influenced by Punic traditions. Each of the figures is depicted with a large, round head featuring large, ringed eyes covering almost half of the face. The figures are rigid and lack the hallmark naturalism of Classical representation. Whilst damaged below the neck, parallels can be drawn between the stylistic representation of the dedicants face and Punic funerary stelae.

ID number: RNA 8 (also see Appendix G fig. 112)
Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

The two figures flanking the acroteria have been identified as the Classical gods Venus and Dionysus (Bacchus) by Mendleson (2003: 44). The presence of attributes typically associated with these divinities in Classical imagery supports this identification. The male figure for example wears a vine wreath and holds a kantharos cup, a typical attribute of Dionysus (Bacchus)/Liber Pater, whilst the nudity of the female figure is indicative of Venus in Classical imagery. Interestingly the figure holds a wreath, an unusual attribute for Venus in Classical representations, and in this case Libera may be represented (see section 9.1). Whilst these figures have been recognised as Classical divinities according to their attributes, they are presented in a manner that is heavily influenced by Punic traditions. Each of the figures is depicted with a large, round head although the features are too badly weathered to discern. The torsos are schematic and lack the hallmark naturalism of Graeco-Roman representation. The dedicant wears a Graeco-Roman tunic and mantle, yet the blocky, schematic torso, large head and facial features are similar to representations on Punic stelae. Also of note is the torc worn around the neck.
ID number: RNA 9 (also see Appendix G fig. 113)

Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

The nude female figure has been identified by Mendleson (2003: 44) as Venus, and parallels can be drawn between this figure and conventional Graeco-Roman representations of Venus, particularly the nudity. Whilst this figure has been recognised as a Graeco-Roman divinity it is presented in a manner that diverges from conventional Graeco-Roman forms. The hair is depicted in a striated manner, and the eyes are large and ringed. Little attention is paid to the modelling of the body and the limbs are disproportionate and as such parallels can be drawn to Punic stylistic techniques. The intermediate and lower zones of the stele are absent.

ID number: RNA 10 (also see Appendix G fig. 114)

Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

To the right of the pediment stands a male figure holding a thyrsus and kantharos, wearing a vine wreath with hanging grapes. Mendleson (2003: 45) has identified this individual as Dionysus (Bacchus), which is supported by the presence of attributes, typically represented in the Classical imagery of Dionysus (Bacchus). The nude female figure has been identified as Venus (ibid.). It may however be the case that the figure is Libera, as indicated by the wreath, which is not a usual attribute of Venus. The figure also wears anklets and a necklace with a central disc and crescent and a headdress of vine leaves. Placed in the pediment is a winged cupid (ibid.) holding a fig or vine leaf in each hand. Whilst these figures have been recognised as Graeco-Roman divinities, they are presented in a manner that diverges from conventional Graeco-Roman forms and adhere more closely to Punic traditions. The hair is depicted in a striated manner, and the eyes are large and ringed. Little attention is paid to the modelling of the body and the limbs are stiff and disproportionate. The intermediate and lower zones of the stele are absent.
ID number: RNA 11 (also see Appendix G fig. 115)

Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

Above the figure in a niche, a reclining individual has been identified as Saturn by Mendleson (2003: 46). This identification is supported by the bare chested and bearded representation of the figure, imagery which is traditionally associated with Saturn in Classical representations. Unlike conventional forms of Graeco-Roman representation however, Saturn is represented using a number of stylistic techniques that exhibit close similarities to Punic traditions. This includes depicting the hair and beard in a striated manner, and large, ringed eyes. Little attention is paid to the modelling of the body and the limbs are stiff and disproportionate. The dedicant wears a tunic and mantle with stylised folds and large head and facial features are similar to representations on Punic stelae. The lower zone is absent.

ID number: RNA 12 (also see Appendix G fig. 116)

Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

In the top register of the stele, a veiled head has been identified as that of Saturn by Mendleson (2003: 46). To the right is a cornucopia, emphasising the fertility aspects of the deity, and to the left a casket and falx used to cut vine leaves. This representation of Saturn draws upon a number of stylistic techniques that belong to the Punic traditions perhaps most notably the intricate patterning of the hair and beard. Also of Punic tradition are the large, ringed eyes. The dedicant wears a stylised, richly patterned tunic and necklaces, and parallels can be drawn between the facial features and Punic stylistic traditions.
ID number: RNA 13 (also see Appendix G fig. 117)

Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

In the top register of the stele, a reclining, veiled figure has been identified as Saturn by Mendleson (2003: 47). This figure is accompanied by two individuals in military dress with horses, who Mendleson (ibid.) has identified as the Dioscuri, who are frequently associated with Saturn. Whilst Classical in content, the representation diverges from Graeco-Roman norms in key respects. The beard and hair are intricately patterned, and the eyes are large and ringed. Little attention has been given to the modelling of the body – the limbs are disproportionate and poses are rigid. Such stylistic techniques find closer parallels with Punic traditions than they do with Graeco-Roman styles. The dedicants wear highly stylised tunics, and stylistic parallels can be drawn with Punic funerary stelae concerning the columnar bodies and facial features. The lower scene depicts a sacrificial rite.

ID number: RNA 14 (also see Appendix G fig. 118)

Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

In the top register stand three figures. The middle figure has been identified as Saturn by Mendleson (2003: 47). This identification is supported by the presence of a veil, bare chest and a falx which typically feature in Classical representations of Saturn. Saturn is flanked by what has been identified by Mendleson (ibid.) as the Dioscuri – owing to their military dress and horses. Whilst Classical in content, the representation diverges from Graeco-Roman norms in key respects. The beard and hair of Saturn are intricately patterned – the beard with circles, and the eyes are large and ringed. The himation of Saturn, covering only the lower body is richly textured. Little attention has been given to the modelling of the body – the limbs are disproportionate and poses are rigid. Such stylistic techniques find closer parallels with Punic traditions than they do with Graeco-Roman styles. The dedicants wear highly stylised tunics which do not appear to have Roman parallels, nor does the horned, tapering altar next to which they stand. The facial features of the dedicants share parallels with anthropomorphic funerary representation. The lower zone perhaps depicts a religious ritual.
ID number: RNA 15 (also see Appendix G fig. 119)

Provenance: Pagus Thuscae

The three figures in the top register have been identified as Saturn (centre) and the Dioscuri (Mendleson 2003: 47). These identifications are supported by the presence of attributes associated with these deities in Classical imagery such as the veil, bare chest and a falc of Saturn, and the military dress of the Dioscuri. Whilst Classical in content, the representation diverges from Graeco-Roman norms in key respects. The head of Saturn is particularly large and the beard and hair are intricately patterned. The eyes of Saturn, the Dioscuri and the horses are large and ringed. The himations of Saturn and the Dioscuri are richly textured. Little attention has been given to the modelling of the body – the limbs are disproportionately and poses are rigid. Such stylistic techniques find closer parallels with Punic traditions than they do with Graeco-Roman styles. The two dedicants wear highly stylised tunics which do not appear to have Roman parallels. The large head and facial features reflect Punic traditions. In the third register a man is accompanied by a bull, and in the lower register three figures support the ceiling. Again parallels can be drawn between the stylistic representation of these individuals and Punic traditions.
ID number: RNA 16 (also see Appendix G fig. 120)

Provenance: La Mohammedia

In the top register, a bearded, male head has been identified by Leglay (1961: 76) as Saturn. This identification is supported by the presence of a falx and pine cone which typically feature in Classical imagery of Saturn. Whilst Classical in content, the representation diverges from Graeco-Roman norms in key respects. The head of Saturn is particularly large and the beard and hair are intricately patterned. The eyes are ringed – the brow line follows the curve of the eyes and leads in to the nose. Such stylistic techniques find closer parallels with Punic traditions than they do with Graeco-Roman styles.

ID number: RNA 17 (also see Appendix G fig. 121)

Provenance: Sbeitla

In the top register stands a figure that has been identified as Saturn by Leglay (1961: 322). He is veiled, bare chested, his left arm supports his head and in his right hand he holds a falx, and as such, parallels can be drawn with Classical representations of Saturn. He is flanked by two horses that are presumed to belong to Dioscuri. Whilst the scene may be classically inspired, close parallels can be drawn with Punic traditions of representation. The head of Saturn is particularly large and the beard and hair are intricately patterned. His eyes are large and ringed and his mantle richly textured. Little attention has been given to the modelling of the body – the limbs are disproportionate and poses are rigid.
ID number: RNA 18 (also see Appendix G fig. 122)

Provenance: NA

In the niche, a bearded, veiled male is seated on a throne with animal arm rests, considered to be rams. A pleated tunic covers only the lower body, leaving the chest bare. The veil is held in his left hand. According to Leglay (1961: 330) the individual represented is Saturn. Whilst Classical in content, featuring the iconography typically associated with Saturn in Graeco-Roman representations, this relief diverges from Graeco-Roman norms in key respects. The head is particularly large and the beard and hair are intricately patterned. The eyes are large and ringed – the brow line follows the curve of the eyes and leads in to the nose. The Tunic is richly patterned. Saturn’s consort has been identified as Caelestis by Leglay (ibid.). Again the tunic is richly textured, and little attention is given to the modelling of the body or the proportion of the limbs. Such stylistic techniques find closer parallels with Punic traditions than they do with Graeco-Roman styles.

ID number: RNA 19 (also see Appendix G fig. 123)

Provenance: Lambese

In the top register above a niche are the busts of three figures. The middle figure, bearded and veiled has been identified as Saturn by Leglay (1961: 88), which is supported by the presence of attributes typically associated with Saturn in Classical imagery. He is flanked by Luna to the right, who wears a small crescent on her head and Sol on the left who wears a seven rayed crown (ibid.). Whilst Classical in content, there is a clear use of Punic stylistic techniques. The head of Saturn is particularly large and the beard and hair are intricately patterned. The eyes of Saturn, Sol and Luna are large and ringed. The clothing, much like Saturn’s beard is richly textured. The dedicant wears a highly decorative tunic and is depicted with striated hair.
ID number: RNA 20 (also see Appendix G fig. 124)
Provenance: Lambese

Above a central niche, a bearded, male head has been identified as Saturn (Leglay 1961: 95). Parallels can be drawn between this and Classical representation of Saturn, namely that the figure is veiled and associated with symbols of fertility, here, the vine leaf. Whilst Classical in content, the representation diverges from Graeco-Roman norms in key respects. The head of Saturn is particularly large and the beard and hair are intricately patterned. The eyes are ringed – the brow line follows the curve of the eyes and leads in to the nose. Such stylistic techniques find closer parallels with Punic traditions than they do with Graeco-Roman styles.

ID number: RNA 21 (also see Appendix G fig. 125)
Provenance: Lambafundi

In the top register above a niche are the busts of three figures. The middle, bearded and bare chested figure has been identified as Saturn (Leglay 1961: 119), although the presence of a crown adorned with flowers is unusual and replaces a veil. To the right is a radiate sol and to the left luna with a crescent. The head of Saturn is particularly large and the beard and hair are intricately patterned. The eyes of Saturn, Sol and Luna are large and ringed. The clothing, much like Saturn’s beard is richly textured. Such stylistic techniques find closer parallels with Punic traditions than they do with Graeco-Roman styles.
ID number: RNA 22 (also see Appendix G fig. 126)

Provenance: Ksar-El-Haimeur

In the top register above a niche is a veiled figure, wearing a toga and holding a falx to his left. The figure has been identified as Saturn by Leglay (1961: 183), which is supported by the presence of attributes which traditionally feature in Classical representations of Saturn. Below the figure are two pine cones and rosettes, emblems of fertility. The head of Saturn is particularly large, and the beard and hair are intricately patterned. The eyes are extremely large and ringed, covering almost half of the face. The toga, much like the beard is richly textured. Whilst classical in content, this representation diverges from Graeco-Roman norms and finds closer parallels with Punic traditions.

ID number: RNA 23 (also see Appendix G fig. 127)

Provenance: Khenchela

Accompanied by grazing goats, a veiled figure is seated in the top register. A veil is held in the left hand, and in the right is a harpe. Such attributes are conventionally drawn upon in Classical representations of Saturn, and Leglay (1961: 168) has identified the figure as such. Unlike conventional Graeco-Roman representations of Saturn however, this representation features a number of stylistic techniques characteristic of Punic traditions. These include the intricate patterning and richly textured tunic and beard and the extremely large, ringed eyes.
ID number: RNA 24 (also see Appendix G fig. 128)

Provenance: Sillegue

In the top register, a male figure has been identified as Saturn by Leglay (1961: 248). The presence of a veil, beard and falx, attributes which typically feature in Classical representations of Saturn, supports this identification. The head of Saturn is particularly large and the beard and hair are intricately patterned. Although badly damaged, it appears as though the eyes were large. The hair, beard and tunic are richly patterned. Such stylistic techniques find closer parallels with Punic-African traditions than they do with Graeco-Roman styles. An unusual attribute of note is the presence of honey cake in the left hand.

9.2.1 Summary

There is a clear and undeniable Punic influence in the Roman period stelae of North Africa. This is reflected not only in the continuation of Punic traditions - the representation of indigenous deities and the use of symmetry and frontal representation for example - but also in the use of Punic-African stylistic techniques to present foreign traditions or cultural traits, not least in the depiction of Graeco-Roman gods. The stelae have evoked considerable interest because of their unique cultural combinations, yet little attention has been paid as to why such combinations were employed and what this signified. The stelae draw upon a limited repertoire of Graeco-Roman deities – Liber Pater, Venus/Liberia, Cupid, Victory, Saturn, Sol, Luna and the Dioscuri, and whilst these deities have been identified
according to Graeco-Roman conventions, they are represented in a manner that diverges from Graeco-Roman conventions. Indigenous artists continued to work in the realms of their own traditions, presenting these foreign deities according to indigenous conventions. The Graeco-Roman obsession with naturalism and perfection of form is replaced with schematicism and a lack of concern with bodily proportion and ratio. Rather than idealised, naturalised features, the Graeco-Roman divinities are depicted with large heads and wide necks, schematic torsos and richly patterned textiles. The eyes, although varying in shape are exceptionally large, in some cases covering more than half of the face. They are often ringed, with a brow ridge following their shape and leading into the nose. The bodies exhibit little modelling, the limbs are disproportionate and the arms in particular are often elongated. On female figures, the breasts are indicated by small circles, whilst a curved line is used to indicate the male chest. The clear emphasis on symmetry and the abstract use of space also point to the continuation of indigenous traditions.

Whilst it is now widely accepted amongst Roman archaeologists that the divergence from Classical norms is not necessarily the result of bad artistry, there has been little investigation into the significance of these deliberate divergence. The inhabitants of North Africa were clearly skilled craftsmen; they were able to adopt and adapt styles and were famous for mastering and replicating new forms and styles to suit foreign tastes and markets (Miles 2011; Markoe 1990: 13-26; Gansell et al 2014; Brown 1992). The conscious decision to present Graeco-Roman gods using indigenous stylistic techniques was clearly meaningful. The purpose of the discussion below is to consider why African artisans depicted Graeco-Roman gods in a manner that deliberately contravened Classical conventions. Specifically this enquiry will be framed within the context of assertive mimesis, to consider the possible role of assertive mimetic strategies in stimulating and guiding the production of such divine representation.

9.3 Discussion – Introduction

The stelae from North Africa form a body of evidence that sits alongside a parallel collection of statuary and reliefs from Roman Britain. These very different provinces were deliberately selected as the focus of this investigation to provide depth to the analysis, so
that alongside a consideration of whether assertive mimetic strategies may have been employed, it is possible to draw out similarities and differences across different geographical locations. The chapter concerning the analysis of the statuary and reliefs from Roman Britain (Chapter 8) contained an over arching discussion of assertive mimesis itself: of what separated assertive mimesis from acculturative mimesis; of the laws and principles governing assertive mimesis and the means by which it was effective, and finally of the specific conceptualisations of religious statuary that made it compatible with the operation of assertive mimetic strategies. This discussion was integral to developing a working knowledge of assertive mimesis, so that it was possible to understand exactly how assertive mimesis may have been a viable strategy in provincial Britain and to consider how such strategies were manifest in the material record. The discussion of these over arching principles was used to frame an analysis of the British material, yet central to this discussion was the recognition of the fluid nature of assertive mimesis; the idea that general principles could be mobilised in variable indigenous contexts, resulting in multiple nuanced manifestations (see for example divine pairings and single representations in Chapter 8). I have made a conscious effort, both in the previous and present chapter, to avoid constraining indigenous contexts at the expense of producing a neat, monolithic conceptualisation of assertive mimeses that manifests itself in the material record without variation; a key purpose of this investigation after all is to investigate this possible variation and nuanced manifestations of assertive mimesis in and amongst the provinces. These overarching principles of assertive mimesis will be drawn upon once again to provide a framework of analysis for the North African stelae; so that they can be placed one again in their indigenous context, facilitating a comparison of how these general principles may have been mobilised in a similar manner, or as the case may be, differently. It is for this reason that will be a degree of overlap in content between the present and the preceding chapter, although every attempt will be made to eliminate unnecessary repetition. Where possible, and where the integrity of the present chapter is not diminished, references to the previous discussions of chapter 8 will be provided rather that reproducing some of the explanations of the general principles of assertive mimetic strategies.
9.4 Recognising Diversity in Mimetic Strategies

I will begin this discussion by returning to the central issue upon which this investigation is based – assertive mimesis – and place this in the context of the study of Roman art in general. Mimesis, it will be recalled denotes ‘the faculty to copy, to imitate’ whereby ‘the making and existence of the artefact that portrays something gives one power over that which is portrayed’ (Taussig 1993: 13). As highlighted in the preceding chapter, there has been a tendency particularly within Roman archaeology in the early 20th century to consider all engagement with the Roman form in terms of acculturation. In this sense mimesis, whilst a term not employed directly, was implicit in the acculturative readings of cultural change in the provinces. This restricted concept of mimesis is largely a product of the Romanisation paradigm that dominated Roman archaeology for almost a century, and has been as pervasive in the study of North African statuary as it has for its British counterpart. In North Africa as in Britain, there are numerous examples of statuary interpreted as evidence for acculturative mimesis, that is, of sculptures that closely emulate the ‘perfect’ Roman form. These statues and reliefs have tended to dominate the study and display of Roman statuary in North Africa – far less attention has been paid to those which can be argued to have deliberately diverged from Graeco-Roman forms of divine representation. The intention of this investigation is thus twofold – to demonstrate the diversity of mimetic strategies, and to apply these alternative conceptualisations of mimesis to the reliefs from Roman North Africa that have conventionally been interpreted as the work of bad artists. By doing so, it may reveal new insights into a body of statuary that has been typically overlooked.

It is important to clarify again here that my intention is not to deny that mimesis operated in an acculturative capacity, but to recognise the many facets of mimetic strategies. As part of the deconstruction of the ‘Romanisation’ paradigm, it was argued that provincial elites were either courted by Rome in the hope that the adoption of Roman cultural values in the provinces would contribute to the stability and maintenance of the empire, or spontaneously adopted Roman material culture of their own accord (Millet 1990; Mattingly 1997: 22; Webster 2001: 210). Whichever process it may have been, perhaps even a combination of two, elites groups were considered to have been motivated to participate
in and adopt the Roman way of life, including the worship of the Roman gods, by the offer
of power and wealth that this brought. The opportunities for advancement afforded by
Rome to those who adopted a Roman identity is perhaps no more evident than in the case
of Septimius Severus, an African born in Lepcis Magna who went on to become emperor of
the Roman Empire (Canter 1940: 204). The adoption of a Roman identity and world view
undoubtedly brought substantial benefits and power to those willing or able to participate
in the Roman way of life, but it has become increasingly recognised that those with the
desire and opportunity were confined primarily to the elite sections of society. These elites
constituted only a fraction of provincial populations, leaving a significant majority that were
unlikely to have had the opportunity or the desire to participate in or engage so fully in the
Roman way of life (see section 3.3). Whilst it has been increasingly accepted that
acculturative strategies in general were confined to elite sections of the population that had
both the means and the desire to adopt a Roma identity, this has had little impact on the
dominant conceptualisation of mimesis.

If we accept that acculturative processes were largely confined to the upper classes, it is
no longer possible to work on the assumption that mimesis operated exclusively in an
acculturative capacity. Elite indigenous individuals may have commissioned or imported
Classical replicas to facilitate access to the Roman gods, to propitiate them and to receive
divine favour as an aspiring Roman, but would lower social groups excluded from the
opportunities offered by Rome be so willing to abandon an indigenous religion and worship
the Roman gods as a Roman? To answer this, it is important to begin by deconstructing the
simplistic acculturative model that considers the acceptance and worship of Roman gods as
synonymous with an expression of Roman identity. Members of the indigenous population,
with little opportunity or desire to participate in the Roman way of life (or completely
abandon indigenous traditions) may have copied the Classical gods for very different
reasons to those who assumed a Roman identity and wanted to be seen as Roman. These
individuals may have desired access to a new divine pantheon whilst being unwilling to
entirely abandon their indigenous religion and religious customs. As I have previously
argued in the case of Roman Britain, the reliefs presented above are perhaps not the result
of a straightforward desire to copy a Roman god, in the sense of wanting to express a
Roman identity; they were about accessing the power of the divine world. Whilst an
individual may not have sought to become or identify as Roman in an acculturative sense, it is likely that the Roman gods were considered highly powerful and effective – they offered a way to expand and to enhance the indigenous pantheon without compromising indigenous identity.

Again, as with Roman Britain, if we can accept that indigenous populations desired access to the Classical pantheon, without abandoning their indigenous identity and ‘Romanising’ – we must abandon the notion that such individuals will have aspired to produce simple copies of the Classical gods. We must consider the possibility that as a result of the desire to tap into the divine power of the Roman world whilst retaining or creating a new indigenous identity, the Classical gods came to be expressed using conventions of pre-Roman North Africa. It may be recalled from the previous discussion that conceptualising the deliberate attempt to represent a non-indigenous deity according to indigenous traditions as an assertive mimetic strategy may justifiably raise a number of concerns based upon the very concept of assertive mimesis itself – namely, if to copy is to control, how exact does the copy have to be to attain this control? This was discussed in chapter 8, and there is no need to reiterate it here in any depth. It is simply necessary to state that the ability to harness power of something or to control it is not dictated by or dependent solely upon producing an aesthetically perfect copy. It was shown that an image could be mimetically effective in the sense that they could obtain the power of an original without faithfully reproducing the original; effectiveness in the case of non-faithful reproductions is achieved through that Law of Contagiousness or Contact. This states that an object can to exert an effect on another once they have been in contact, and crucially, this ‘contact’ can include simply citing the name of a person, or deity.

When speaking of the ability to harness the power of something by producing a copy, and specifically in this case accessing the power of a deity through statuary, it raises an important issue concerning the role and beliefs associated with such statuary. How exactly could copying these statues and reliefs provide the indigenous population with access to the divine world? Was there an inherent power to these statues that could be harnessed? In the case of Iron Age Britain, it may be recalled that there is a lack of evidence to suggest the presence of and thus the beliefs associated with anthropomorphic statuary in this region. What I argued however, alongside the possibility that the Roman beliefs associated with
divine statuary were adopted by indigenous populations, was that it was possible to detect the existence of beliefs concerning spiritual counterparts or spirit forces residing in other objects. Such beliefs regarding the in-dwelling spirits of objects would likely share fundamental principles with the Roman concept of the divine essence of a statue, essentially the existence of a spiritual or divine counterpart to a material object. The presence of such beliefs is important, as they concern an inherent power that can be accessed and harnessed through assertive mimetic strategies. In pre-Roman North Africa, we can find evidence of similar beliefs, particular in the form of the aniconic cult of the betyl. As may be recalled from Chapter 7, the betyl featured prominently in Punic religious contexts – on stelae, coins and temples. Philo of Byblos, writing in the 2nd century AD, provided an insight into the perception of these betyls, commenting that these stones were invested with life (see Millar 1995: 13). The production of amulets frequently found in burials and other sacred places in Punic North Africa may also be indicative of such beliefs. These amulets frequently consist of a stylised human form, which Bonnano (2012: 12) suggests ‘represent spiritual agents intended to protect the individual from the opposite evil forces’. The presence of beliefs concerning the spiritual persona of particular objects in pre-Roman North Africa may thus have equally applied to divine representations featured on the stelae.

Whilst the performance of mimetic strategies in terms of assertive mimesis is predicated upon the idea that a spirit residing within an object which can be accessed and harnessed, the presence of such beliefs regarding the presence of in dwelling spirits does not necessarily precondition or presuppose a belief in and thus the practice of mimetic strategies. Additional evidence is therefore required to support the existence of beliefs regarding mimetic strategies in North Africa. Although there is a lack of indigenous textual evidence concerning the existence of mimetic beliefs, the rite of the egersis may also be indicative of use of mimetic strategies (Moscati 1973; Miles 2010: 32; Doak 2015: 17). During this rite, an effigy of the god Melqart was burned, symbolising renewal through fire. The king and his chief consort played the role of Melqart and his consort Astarte and performed a ritual marriage ceremony to guarantee well being and affinity. This bears the hallmarks of mimetic strategies, and in particular sympathetic magic, where like produces like, and thus the ritual marriage was mirrored in the spiritual realm, securing the well being
of the earth world. A further instance in which we can speculate about the possibility of underlying assertive mimetic strategies is the presence of decorated ostrich egg shells in funerary contexts. The occurrence of eggshells in Punic tombs dates back to the 7th century BC and constitutes one of the most frequently found funerary objects in the Punic world. These eggshells may take the form of a mask, featuring large, exaggerated eyes similar to those observed on the stelae, or of a receptacle decorated with vegetation as a symbol of fecundity. Moscati (2001: 508) links their presence to the belief in mimetic strategies, and again specifically sympathetic magic, arguing that ‘since the dawn of history, man has always identified the egg with the principle of life, the continuity of generations, and by ‘sympathetic magic’, its deposition in a tomb was a sure promise of the seed of life’ (Bonanno 2012). Noble (2011: 102) similarly links the practice of child sacrifice at Carthage to sympathetic magic, suggesting that to ensure the life giving properties and return of the sun, life was given to Baal through sacrifice. An additional source of evidence is derived from a Virgil’s Aeneid. In book 4, Virgil claims Dido of Carthage had constructed a pyre under pretext of using sympathetic magic to allow her to either win back or to be free from Aeneas, by burning an effigy of him, as well as his belongings and the bed that they had shared (Panoussi 2009: 52). Panoussi suggests that the presence of a wax effigy, Aeneas’s sword and belongings and the use of element of ritual sacrifice, such as mola salsa indicate a defixio, or curse ceremony was being performed, or at least was the pretext of constructing the pyre. It is here that parallels can be drawn with the concept of contagiousness and sympathetic magic, where objects belonging to an individual were subject to ritual uses to cause harm or exert influence over those that they had been in contact with or belonged to (see section 4.4). Whilst this may provide further evidence of the practice of mimetic strategies in North Africa, what should not be overlooked is that this is the work of a Roman author, produced centuries after the said event which itself has been argued to have been a work of fiction. We must therefore exercise caution in assuming that this reflects genuine North African beliefs and practices.

9.4 Mimesis and the Creole Spectrum

So far, alongside the possibility of pre-existing mimetic traditions in Punic North Africa, I have addressed the concept of the copy, and argued that the representations of Graeco-Roman divinities on North African stelae did not look Classical because they were never
intended to, and crucially because they did not have to. The use of indigenous techniques to portray Classical gods should rather be seen as a symbolic act, a powerful statement of a pre-existing or new identity that was likely to have developed out of pre-existing and Roman beliefs and ideas. What it is now important to consider is the impact that this insight may have on our own understanding and interpretation of religious interaction in the Roman provinces, of where this sits amongst the general theories of cultural mixing and in particular the concept of Creolisation. As I have previously stated, it is arguably most useful to conceptualise religion in the provinces in terms of creolisation and the following discussion will consider specifically how and where assertive mimesis operates in terms of the creolisation model. In the previous chapter, I presented the three strategies that constitute Creole processes and for the purpose of this discussion it is useful to reintroduce them here:

1. Mosaic – which consists of the juxtaposing and co-existence of elements from different religious systems, for example, altars of the Regla de Ocha where Catholic saints are placed alongside Orisha related paraphernalia.

2. Institutional – whereby the religious observances of differing belief systems are combined through reconciling liturgical calendars

3. Correspondence – whereby two deities of varying religions are considered the same and identified as one.

The Graeco-Roman divinities that feature on North African stelae have conventionally been understood in terms of Interpretatio or as the result of a benign willingness common to all polytheistic religions to accommodate one another’s gods. Saturn in particular has been generally understood within an interpretatio context; his role as the equivalent to and successor of Baal Hammon has been widely discussed in scholarly literature (Leglay 1966; Moore 2002; Wilson 2003; Shaw 2007). As the correspondence category is described as the process whereby two deities of two different religions are considered the same, it can be said that the conventional understanding in Roman archaeology of the relationship between Baal Hammon and Saturn is one of correspondence. What this reading overlooks however, is the huge variance in the way that notions of divine similarity are believed to have been expressed. Interpretatio/syncretism in terms of Roman archaeology has often been
considered as synonymous with the process of Romanisation (see Chapter 3), where the Roman names, forms and myths took precedence over and eventually replaced the indigenous equivalents. As may be recalled from Chapter 3 (see section 3.3.1), interpretatio/syncretism is now considered by some as a process implemented and directed by the Romans rather than a benign, universal phenomenon. It has, as such been increasingly interpreted as a process that established equivalences between indigenous and Classical deities built upon poorly informed, superficial Roman readings of an indigenous belief system, where indigenous deities were ‘squeezed...into imported conceptual moulds’ (Webster 1995: 156). This reconsideration of interpretatio/syncretism, which recognises its post-conquest context, replaces its universality with exclusivity, namely as the preserve of high ranking military officials and indigenous elites.

Interpretatio/syncretism, in the sense that Roman forms replaced indigenous equivalents (see Chapter 3), may thus have been limited in practice to elite groups, yet we must not deny the possibility that other members of the indigenous population could or would draw similarities between indigenous and Graeco-Roman gods – the crucial difference however is what was made of these similarities and how this is expressed. A recognition of similarity between an indigenous and non-indigenous deity may evoke a number of responses, including a belief that the deities are the equivalent of one another; that whilst the deities share overlapping functions they remained distinct entities, or alternatively that the deities were at once the same and different, operating as aspects of one another. Each of these requires further consideration, and I will begin with the concept of equivalence.

In Olmios and Pravisni’s (2011) reading of correspondence, the acculturative process synonymous with interpretatio/syncretism discussed in Chapter 3 is replaced by cultural creativity, where different elements are blended together, and this is an important reminder of the multiple possible responses conditioned by correspondence approaches. There are a number of representations of Saturn on these stelae that may be indicative of such culturally creative processes. The deities featuring on these stelae have been identified as Saturn based upon conventional Graeco-Roman representations of this divinity. The usual attributes of Saturn are present, and he is depicted bearded and with a bare chest. In a number of cases however (see RNA 11, 16 and 18) the beard is particularly noteworthy,
looking almost like a lion’s mane. In pre-Roman North Africa, there is evidence that an indigenous sun deity was represented as a lion with a fiery mane (Robin 2009: 21), as representations of the sun with such beard have frequently been found in burial chambers and on standing stones in North Africa. The lion like mane featuring on a number of North African representations of Saturn may then be the result of an expression of equivalence between Saturn and this sun deity, and the cross-cultural blending of representation that ensued, drawing upon both indigenous and Graeco-Roman forms of representation. As parallels can be drawn between the divine functions of Saturn, considered a solar god, and an indigenous sun god, it is possible to see why equivalences may have been drawn. Similar processes of recognition between a Graeco-Roman God and an indigenous deity may also be evident in the representation of Venus/Libera with a wreath, anklet and/or necklace in RNA 4, 7 and 10 (which may have been an attribute or tool of representation of indigenous female divinities), and through the presence of Classically unconventional attributes such as a crown of flowers depicted on Saturn (see RNA 21), as well as honey cake offerings and unusual circular objects (RNA 24).

Most conventionally, Saturn is considered as the Roman equivalent of Baal Hammon, primarily due to the presence of Saturn on later Punic stelae, considered as the replacement of Baal Hammon. Certainly parallels can be drawn between Baal Hammon as the recipient of child sacrifice and Saturn who devoured his own children. Few representations of Baal Hammon are known, although a scene showing the Cult of Baal Hammon in the Sanctuary of Hadrumetum on a 5th-3rd century BC stele depicts this divinity wearing an ankle length robe and a high, pointed tiara with ribbons. He has long, flowing hair and is bearded. The palm of his right hand faces outwards in a sign of benediction, whilst in his left hand is a staff mounted with an ear of corn. Behind the god’s right hand is an object that has been interpreted as a pine cone, a motif frequently appearing on Punic amulets. A similar depiction is seen on a gold ring found in a tomb in a necropolis at Utica, dated to the 5th century B.C., and the same elements can also be found on a statuette from the Punic sanctuary at Cape Bell near Siagu, northeast of Bir Bell Rekba. These attributes symbolise the celestial and solar nature of Baal Hammon, as well as his fertility and reproductive aspects. A number of parallels can thus be drawn between the functions and representations of Baal Hammon and Saturn, and such similarities have been used to
support the case for interpretatio/syncretism, whilst at the same time making the process of deciphering the aspects of cultural creativity more difficult, although not impossible. Whilst the two divinities share a number of attributes the pine cone, beard and flowing hair for example - they also possess a number of different attributes. Baal Hammon is depicted with a staff that is surmounted by an ear of corn, an attribute lacking in the imagery of Saturn. Saturn likewise wears a veil rather than tiara, and usually has his chest exposed rather than covered as in the case of Baal Hammon. In a number of examples, such as RNA 22-24 we see a number of these attributes combined; most often an individual represented with a veil (Saturn) and full length robe (Baal Hammon) which may be indicative of cultural blending. Specifically, what this may represent is a form of cross-cultural creativity, whereby the forms of representation of the two deities are blended together in recognition of their equivalence. What should not be overlooked however, are the multiple ways in which such imagery can be read. Rather than indicative of equivalence, it is perhaps equally likely that this imagery was perceived by some viewers simply as the result of the use of indigenous stylistic techniques to present Saturn. Likewise, the lion-like beard previously discussed may be viewed either as expression of equivalence between Saturn and an indigenous solar deity or simply as a general, stylistic technique used to represent a beard.

The possibility that the use of indigenous stylistic techniques to represent Saturn did not necessarily reflect the equation of Saturn with an indigenous deity requires further discussion. Although Baal Hammon and Saturn were at times represented in a similar manner, and appeared to share similar functions, it should not be assumed that they were automatically and universally equated with one another. On the assimilation of Baal Hammon and Saturn, Moore’s (2000: 37) concluded that:

‘not all Roman Africans translated Baal into Saturn. In the region of Maktar as a whole, Saturn apparently did not succeed Baal Hammon, who had received hundreds of Neo-Punic inscriptions there.

Similarly, at Hadrumetum, the worship of Baal Hammon seems to have continued at least into the Augustan period, as attested to by coinage and statuettes. This serves to show that simply because parallels may have existed between indigenous and Roman gods, we should not assume that these parallels were universally equated to equivalence. It is important to recognise the multiple responses to the existence of similarities between an indigenous and
foreign deity, and that for a significant number of individuals, similarities will have remained insufficient to establish notions of equivalence between two deities. In such cases, the deities may remain distinct, in spite of sharing overlapping functions, or be perceived to be both the same yet different, operating as aspects of one another. In the Roman pantheon, there are a number of deities with overlapping functions; Juno and Diana for example are both associated with childbirth. These overlapping functions have not in any way resulted in the assimilation of these deities, whereby they are considered as the same or as equivalents of each other, and this serves as an important lesson. Many Roman deities shared overlapping functions, yet retained their own identity, simply because as well as these overlapping functions they operated in a diverse range of other capacities. Here we can observe an unwillingness of the Romans themselves to establish notions of equivalence based upon superficial or limited similarities within their own pantheon. Whilst this concerns the domestic Roman pantheon rather than perceptions of indigenous and foreign deities in the provinces, it is important in that it emphasises the notion that similarity was not always universally equated with equivalence. Interpretatio/syncretism, whether acculturative or creative was simply one of the many varied responses to interpreting the divine world.

Van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran (2013: 276) provide an invaluable insight into new approaches to cross-cultural interactions by drawing upon the cult of Demeter. In the cave of Es Culleram in Ibiza, over one thousand figurines were recovered, alongside a dedication to Tanit and Reshef-Melqart. The figurines were divided into categories: winged figures wearing a headdress, and depicted with a caduceus, lotus flower and solar disc were conventionally said to represent Tanit; those with a veil and headdress, featured holding a piglet and torch were said to represent Demeter. Accompanying these depictions were a range of incense burners. Prior to van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran’s investigations, it was widely accepted that the cave was originally dedicated to Tanit, but was gradually replaced by the cult of Demeter, although some scholars have interpreted the site as indicative of ritual and ideological continuity rather than replacement. The problem with such interpretations is that it assumes either the Greek or indigenous cult ritual retained their original meanings. Van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran (ibid.) argued that such interpretations were too simplistic and failed to address the combination of features
displayed in the figurines, such as the headdress common to both. They argued that the presence of this cult in Punic cities was not the result of Hellenisation and a one way process of cultural change but that specific elements of the Greek cult were adopted for indigenous reasons and integrated with indigenous traditions.

A stele from Aïn Nechma (fig. 54) may provide an insight into a relationship between Baal Hammon and Saturn that was not predicated upon equivalence but rather co-existence, as expressed in the case of Es Culleram presented above. The anthropomorphic representations of Baal Hammon discussed previously are considerably rare, and it appears that there was a marked preference to represent Baal Hammon symbolically as a crescent or crescent and disc. This stele from Aïn Nechma features an inscription and dedication to Saturn, whilst also featuring a crescent which can be seen to symbolically represent Baal Hammon. Many of the pre-Roman stelae include a dedication to Baal Hammon that is accompanied by the sign of Tanit, indicating that stelae could be dedicated to multiple deities, represented either symbolically or through an inscription. The stelae from Aïn Nechma may represent a similar phenomenon, where both Baal Hammon - represented symbolically, and Saturn - featured in the inscription, were the recipients of the dedication. What this may reveal is the co-existence of Baal Hammon and Saturn rather than the replacement of Baal Hammon with Saturn. It shows capacity of two deities to share similarities yet retain their distinct identities. This may be taken further to suggest a relationship between the two deities, considered both the same and different, and thus perhaps operating as an aspect of each other. In the context of North Africa, it is particularly interesting to note the presence of dedications on pre-Roman stelae that refer to ‘Tnt pn B’il, which translates to ‘Tanit face of Baal’. This may indicate the presence of beliefs regarding the capacity of divinities to operate and function as an aspect of another. The process by which indigenous and non-indigenous deities were juxtaposed, considered both the same in that they shared a number of overlapping functions, and yet were also considered different, maintaining their own identities has been discussed in chapter 8. Stelae such as those presented below (fig. 54), may be indicative of such responses that simultaneously provide new ways to access a particular power through assertive mimesis, as well as providing access to a new power.
Figure 54: A Roman period stele from Ain Nechma featuring a disc and crescent and dedication to Saturn, image from Wilson (2003: 405)

Rather than being seen as an aspect of one another, that is at once both the same and different, it is possible that an additional belief existed, that is that whilst sharing a number of functions, an indigenous and non-indigenous deity were considered to exist as completely separate identities. The representation of a non-indigenous deity, such as Venus and Liber Pater may thus reflect a strategy employed to access the powers of this new deity, which, without indigenous equivalents was represented using indigenous stylistic techniques and drawn into an indigenous pantheon to provide new ways to access a particular power through assertive mimesis and to expand and enhance the indigenous pantheon (see for example RNA 1-10). Drawing upon the few representations of Baal Hammon that do exist, it is hard to explain a number of representations of Saturn on these stelae as resulting from the blending of varying cross-cultural elements of both North African and Graeco-Roman origin (such as RNA 12, 13, 15, 19 and 21). The reason for this, it can be argued, is precisely because these stelae are not examples of or indicative of a correspondence phenomenon. As has been increasingly emphasised following the deconstruction of interpretatio, we should not assume that all societies, and all members of one society, were equally as willing to identify gods as the same based upon vague similarities. What I believe these specific cases presented represent, is an assertive mimetic strategy operating specifically as a means of divine and spiritual expansion, a means for indigenous populations to share in and access the power of Classical divinities that were distinct from indigenous divine powers and had no indigenous counterpart. Here, assertive mimesis provides the means to share in the power of these new deities and expand the
indigenous spiritual repertoire. It perhaps operates as a discrete category that should not be confused as a passive consumption, a benign willingness to accommodate the gods or the desire to become Roman as it has so often been, but a powerful statement of indigenous identity.

If such a phenomenon is reflected in North African statuary presented above – that is that Classical gods, without indigenous equivalents, were incorporated in to indigenous panthea as a means to enhance the indigenous spiritual repertoires – this would take the images in question out of the Creole correspondence category (above) and into the mosaic category that consists of the co-existence and juxtaposing of elements from different religious systems. In shifting the trajectory of analysis to focus on the way in which Classical divinities were incorporated into indigenous belief systems as new entities, we are provided with new avenues through which to explore the religious interaction in Roman North Africa. In the previous chapter I drew upon the case study of Santeria to emphasise that the worship of foreign deities was not simply the result of a passive accommodation but a deliberate strategy to gain access to the power of a new belief system. Such strategies may have a long tradition in pre-Roman North Africa, whose populations appear to have been open to divine expansionism and acceptance of foreign cults, having officially adopted the Greek cult of Demeter and Kore in 396 BC (Lancel 1995: 193; van Dommelen and Lopez-Bertran 2003: 274). The adoption of these foreign divinities should not be not interpreted simply an expression of a Greek identity or the desire to be Greek, as tellingly, it came at a time when conflict between Greek and Carthage was at its greatest. What this arguably reveals is how the divine world could be drawn into complex matters of identity, conflict and power struggles, and manipulated to serve the needs of the indigenous population. On the basis of this acceptance of a foreign cult, it would not appear incongruous that the same populations were open to accepting other Graeco-Roman gods, without assuming or desiring a Graeco-Roman identity in an acculturative sense.

The above discussion emphasises the diversity of responses, and the ambiguity and polyvocal nature of these North African stelae. Central to this discussion was the question of where we draw the line between depicting a Graeco-Roman deity in indigenous terms – in the sense that the deity in question was conceptualised as a new entity – and the expression
of equivalence between an indigenous and Graeco-Roman deity resulting in a (Creole) syncretic, cross-cultural representation. There was perhaps more of an opportunity to draw similarities between some divinities North African and Graeco-Roman divinities based upon the similarities between the North African and Roman divine world - which shared for example the concept of Universal deities – but responses to these similarities, may have been hugely variable. Whether intentional or unintentional, it is clear that these reliefs and statues could read in multiple ways, so that individual could read what they wanted to from the reliefs. Individuals were free to pursue their own beliefs – and whilst some may have drawn equivalences between Saturn and an indigenous sun deity or Baal Hammon, for example, it is equally likely that others considered Saturn to be a completely new entity. As such, the population was free to interpret the stelae as they saw fit, to correspond with their own beliefs and approaches to the divine.

An important aspect that requires addressing is the adoption and representation of Graeco-Roman divinities in pre-existing indigenous traditions. In Punic cities, the stelae have a long history of production, and operated as an integral component of group identity. The fact that non-indigenous deities were incorporated into these stelae is important – it shows their adoption and accommodation by indigenous populations, but wholly refutes the idea of acculturation, in terms of the loss and replacement indigenous traditions and deities. The Graeco-Roman gods at times feature alongside indigenous deities and symbols (see RNA 1-4, 6-10), and even when appearing alone, it can be argued that their inclusion on stelae, a demonstrably non-Roman tradition, is a strong declaration and continuation of indigenous identities and traditions. As discussed previously, Punic culture was diverse, drawing upon and incorporating a range of different traditions and stylistic techniques. Perhaps the depiction of Graeco-Roman deities on stelae, which were so strongly associated with indigenous identity, was in itself enough to portray an indigenous identity and in such cases, the stylistic representation of the divinities was less important. This brings us back to an important point regarding the representation of Graeco-Roman deities. At the centre of my argument is that Graeco-Roman divinities were engaged with and drawn into non indigenous belief systems in a non-acculturative capacity, and the use of indigenous stylistic techniques was symbolic of this. In North Africa, we have an interesting context, in that the stelae themselves have strong indigenous connotations, and thus the adoption of Graeco-
Roman on them was perhaps itself symbolic enough to show that indigenous people were engaging with Graeco-Roman divinities on their own terms – to enhance, compliment their indigenous belief systems. What should be considered even in the case of so called perfect representations of Graeco-Roman gods on these stelae, is the possible use of assertive mimetic strategies, indicated not by the stylistic representation of the gods, but by their very presence on the highly localised stelae. There is an important point to address here, which truly emphasises the fluidity and diversity of assertive mimetic strategies. It has been suggested that elite groups were courted by Rome, and were aware of the opportunities that conforming to Roman cultural norms would bring. Some may however, have been reluctant to completely abandon their indigenous religion. Religion is a conservative phenomenon, and whilst there were universal Punic deities, there were also more localised deities tied to the land and natural features – it appears unlikely that individuals would have so willingly abandoned such deities which tied them to their land. The decision to conform to Graeco-Roman stylistic techniques of divine representation and to continue to worship indigenous deities may have been a strategic decision to straddle both worlds, to draw upon the power of Classical deities whilst retaining ties to indigenous traditions. Simply because these artefacts have previously been considered as inferior works of art based upon modern concepts of aesthetics (something now disputed) does not mean that people of moderate wealth will not have commissioned or desired such works and it is an important reminder to see this statuary in terms of the politics of power.

One notable feature of the stelae aside from their iconography that is perhaps important in terms of this analysis is epigraphy. Of the entire La Ghorfa collection analysed by Moore (2000: 35), only 11 stelae have inscriptions, 9 of which are in Latin. The inclusion of a divine name is rare, which is atypical of Punic stelae. Of the 400 inscriptions analysed from El-Hofra and Constantine for example, 90% include the name of a divinity in Latin, Punic or both (Moore 1999: 35). What this may indicate is a deliberate strategy that allowed an individual to interpret the divinity represented in accordance with their own beliefs. It is likely that many of these stelae were not made to order, and this would fit with an individual being able to ascribe the identity that they wished to a particular representation. A number of the stelae from Leglay’s catalogue also feature inscriptions which reveal that some of these dedicant were priests and or individuals that possessed a tria nomina (see
RNA 16, 22, 23, 24). This is an important reminder that we cannot continue to see the provinces simply in terms of ‘Romans’ and ‘indigenous peoples’. The diverse interactions that took place in the provinces created a new culture and new religion that was neither Roman nor indigenous, but drew upon these two elements to varying degrees dependent upon the individuals that produced it (similar to what has been argued by Woolf 1997).

9.5 The dedicant

The purpose of this investigation has been to analyse the depiction of Graeco-Roman gods, yet the representation of the dedicant in the intermediate zone may provide an additional insight into the responses of the indigenous population to the Roman presence. The clothing, hairstyle and accessories of the dedicant range from primarily Roman (see RNA 20 for example) to primarily indigenous (see RNA 19 for example), with many images appearing to draw upon both Roman and indigenous trends. In RNA 3 and 4 for example, both dedicants are depicted with a Severan sausage curl hairstyle favoured in Rome, but also wear Jewellery which appears to be of an indigenous origin, including a bracelet with an unusual motif (RNA 3). Where Roman clothing is depicted, it often only loosely follows the Roman form and is highly stylised and textured (see RNA 5, 12, 15, 21, 22 and 24 for example). This phenomenon is also reflected in the representation of the clothing of some of the Graeco-Roman gods, (see RNA 1 and 11) which are depicted with highly textured and stylised clothing, as well as with anklets and necklaces which are not of the Classical tradition (RNA 10 - the significance of which was discussed in section 9.3). Indigenous hairstyles and accessories including torcs and large earrings can be found on the persons of a number of dedicants (see RNA 1-3, 6,7, 12, 15 and 19 for example). The dedicants thus appear to have adopted aspects of Roman culture that appealed to them – almost in a similar fashion to adopting Graeco-Roman deities. The clothing, like the stelae are arguably the result of Creole processes, where the Roman form was not necessarily engaged with in an acculturative capacity but in culturally creative ways and where it was blended with indigenous traditions. It is important to remember here that indigenous populations continually redefined their positions by drawing upon new contexts, and an indigenous engagement with Roman material or religious culture does not imply a complete abandonment of indigenous identity. As Freeman (1993: 443) and Hingley (2005: 44) have
argued, the adoption of Roman material and cultural traditions is not necessarily reflective of a desire to be seen as 'Roman' but has more to do with the arrival of new technologies and practices. Whilst we must be careful to avoid the assumption that Roman culture was universally perceived as ‘technologically better’, the availability of new material and forms would have likely proved attractive, and the use of Roman styles should not necessarily be taken as reflective of the desire to become Roman. Their use does not automatically signify the abandonment of indigenous identity and this is manifest in adapted forms to express indigenous styles and tastes as demonstrated above. It is this which is perhaps mirrored in the approach to the divine world – the adoption of new forms whilst maintaining an indigenous identity.

9.6 Dating

Before bringing this chapter to a close, it is worth noting the issues that have arisen with dating these stelae. As with the British collection, the dating of the stelae has proved challenging, as again many are without context. In most cases, the stelae have been dated through comparisons with stelae from sanctuaries that were in operation for a minimum of two centuries, and span the period from Punic to Roman domination. This is not without problem, and perhaps the most pressing issue is that the symbols and iconography featured on these stelae have been judged subjectively, as even for the stelae found in situ, precise contextual information is lacking. This process of dating via iconography is made all the more challenging in that the production of stone reliefs are rare outside of the stelae, resulting in limited opportunities for comparison. Whilst a number of stelae are inscribed, these inscriptions often yield little in terms of dating evidence. Consequently, the dating of these stelae is predicated on the subjective analysis of the content and stylistic techniques employed to produce the stelae (Moore 2000: 22). This is particularly relevant in the case of Leglay’s analyses which are based upon how ‘primitive’ the stelae appear. The huge caveat of this is the assumption that an increasing move towards naturalism and idealism signifies more developed artistry and thus must be later in date. As Green (2012) has argued, the assumption that only realistic, Classical art is good art is entirely problematic. Many societies were not bound to naturalised ideals of representation, but used a range of techniques in unison, from naturalism to schematism to present different ideas. In this
sense, art was a way to think about and to represent relationships with the natural and spirit world and were thus free from the constraints of what modern viewers consider good art. To therefore use increasing naturalism as an indicator of date is problematic and most likely inaccurate. So problematic is the issue of dating the ‘La Ghorfa’ stelae, Moore (2000: 42) goes no further than assigning broad dates that cover one or two centuries.

9.7 Conclusion

The intention of this investigation has been to consider the diversity of assertive mimetic strategies, the multiple ways that these may be manifest in material culture and the underlying motivations for employing such strategies. The stelae from Roman North Africa provide a unique opportunity to explore these ideas, and crucially, a way to shift the focus away from acculturative mimesis as a strategy of the elite, to consider how alternative social groups responded to the Roman presence and the strategies that they employed. One of the problems faced by archaeologists studying the thoughts and beliefs non-elite groups is their limited literary or architectural expression as a result of high levels of illiteracy and limited financial resources. These stelae however were dedicated by individuals from across the social spectrum, including those from lower social groups who as Moore (2000: 3) and Quinn (2010) record, almost never occupied a position of notable administrative or military rank. As such, they provide a unique opportunity to explore the means by which lower social classes may have attempted to draw upon the divine power of the Roman world.

The analysis and discussion of these stelae has revealed their polyvocal nature and ambiguity, an intentional or perhaps unintentional strategy that allowed individuals to read what they wanted from the reliefs according to their own beliefs. The responses to the Roman presence, and specifically here to the Roman divine world were diverse. The ambiguity of the stelae meant that they could simultaneously speak to various people with differing beliefs and approaches to the Roman divinities. The responses ranged from conceptualising a Roman divinity as a new entity that was drawn into the indigenous pantheon, to recognitions of similarity and equivalence between an indigenous and a Graeco-Roman divinity. A recognition of similarity between two deities did not necessarily condition a belief in their equivalence – the deities may have remained as distinct entities or
considered to have operated as aspects of one another, as both the same and different. At the centre of many of these diverse responses to non-indigenous divinities were assertive mimetic strategies, which facilitated the incorporation of these deities into the indigenous pantheon, as a means to enhance the spiritual repertoire. It is likely that the Roman gods were considered particularly powerful – Rome after all attributed their success to their gods – and that indigenous peoples desired access to such powerful divine forces. Divine petitions most likely concerned matters of everyday life – health, harvests, and wealth – the fact that the Graeco-Roman gods featuring on the stelae are strongly connected with fertility and reproduction speaks volumes in an area of the world so dependent on good harvests. Assertive mimetic strategies may have provided access to these gods, without a total abandonment of indigenous belief systems and tradition. This new approach to interpreting the imagery of provincial reliefs emphasises the importance and the insights that can be gained by going beyond fleeting aesthetic judgements grounded in the concept of Romanisation and the superiority of Classical forms. In the following and final chapter, the varying ways that mimetic strategies have been mobilised in the two provinces of Britain and North Africa will be considered, drawing together the implications for our understanding of mimesis as employed during cultural interactions and the further avenues of research that this may lead.
Chapter 10. Mimetic Practice in the Production of Provincial Religious Sculpture: A Summary and Concluding Thoughts

10.1 Introduction

The purpose of this investigation has been to develop new approaches to the religious statuary and reliefs of the Roman provinces, and specifically examples diverging from Classical norms. Whilst it is now increasingly accepted that some of these divergences were deliberate and intentional (see for example Webster 2001; Mattingly 2003 and Green 2012) there remains huge scope to consider what such divergences may have signified and how these statues operated in new provincial societies. Following an analysis of a body of statuary from the provinces of Roman Britain and North Africa (see chapters 8 and 9), it is clear that indigenous artists continued to work in the realms of their own traditions, presenting foreign, Graeco-Roman deities according to indigenous conventions. As conceptualised in postcolonial theory, assertive mimesis has provided an exciting avenue through which to explore the continuation of indigenous traditions in the representation of Graeco-Roman deities and to consider what this continuity may have signified; what purpose it served; and what it was intended to achieve. This final chapter draws together some of the central themes and conclusions arising from this thesis, and considers the impact that an assertive mimetic model may have on our understanding of the processes of religious interaction and identity formation in the Roman provinces. Central to the discussion in this chapter is an overarching consideration of assertive mimesis as a model of cultural interaction – of where it sits in relation to other models of cultural mixing and how it may be mobilised in nuanced fashions according to indigenous contexts. I will begin with an overview of the specific understanding of assertive mimesis upon which the present enquiry has been based, and I will summarise the indicators pointing to the use of this strategy, and my own understanding of what the practice of mimetic strategies may symbolise, before moving on to discuss the nuanced ways in which mimetic strategies may have been mobilised in differing indigenous contexts.

10.2 Review: Mimetic Theory in Roman Archaeology

Whilst there has been a lack of sustained engagement by Roman scholars with mimetic theory, the panoply of anthropological work demonstrates how mimetic theory can be used to provide more nuanced understandings of colonial and imperial encounters. An
analysis of modern anthropological case studies (Chapter 4) revealed general principles related to the purpose, efficacy and manifestation of assertive mimetic strategies. Mimesis in this capacity has been defined throughout as the capacity ‘to copy, to imitate’ whereby ‘the making and existence of the artefact that portrays something gives one power over that which is portrayed’ (Taussig 1993: 13). As explored in Chapter 4, assertive mimetic strategies were shown to be founded upon the concept of sympathetic magic; that is, that things ‘act on each other at a distance through a secret sympathy, the impulse being transmitted from one to the other by means of what we may conceive as a kind of invisible ether’ (Frazer 1935: 11). Sympathetic magic involved two differing but linked strategies, relating to the Laws of Similarity (that is, like produces like) and the Laws of Contagiousness (which states that things that have been in contact can continue to exert an influence on each other at a distance). Crucially, I have argued (Chapter 8) that equal prominence should be placed upon the two constituent components of sympathetic magic: that is to say, a copy did not have to be aesthetically accurate to be mimetically effective. In the case studies presented in Chapter 4, there was a clear, observable tendency by indigenous populations to engage with and represent new, foreign symbols of power according to indigenous norms, drawing these symbols into indigenous traditions. Such acts were considered by the authors of the case studies presented in Chapter 4 to reflect an attempt to draw upon this power to serve the indigenous population, through the mobilisation of assertive mimetic strategies.

This particular conceptualisation of mimesis, which I have termed assertive mimesis, has largely been overlooked in Roman archaeology, although there have been a number of sophisticated postcolonial analyses upon which this enquiry is built (see for example Webster 1997; 2001; 2015, Jimenez 2010, and van Dommelen 1997; 2011; 2012). The intention of this thesis was to consider the possibility that assertive mimetic strategies were employed in the production of provincial religious imagery, and to consider what this could reveal about the processes of cultural (and specifically religious) interaction. A series of statues and reliefs drawn from the provinces of Britain (Chapter 8) and North Africa (Chapter 9) was scrutinised in order to consider the strength of the argument that their form and appearance was the result of assertive mimetic strategies. This entailed an analysis of the specific stylistic techniques employed to represent a particular divinity, and
in particular the representation of clothing, facial features and the presence of divine attributes or attendants. Based upon the hallmarks of assertive mimetic strategies demonstrated in the previously cited case studies (Chapter 4), the intention was to look specifically for cases whereby Classical deities were depicted in ways that diverge from Graeco-Roman norms of representation and where parallels could be drawn with the stylistic traditions of Iron Age Britain or North Africa.

My analysis demonstrated that in both the provinces of Britain and North Africa certain Graeco-Roman gods were being represented according to indigenous stylistic traditions. In Roman Britain, indigenous traditions informed the production of schematic, disproportionate torsos and limbs, and large, triangular shaped or spherical heads with minimal facial features. In Roman North Africa, the Graeco-Roman obsession with naturalism and perfection of form was replaced with schematicism and a lack of concern with bodily proportion and ratio. Rather than having idealised, naturalised features, Graeco-Roman divinities were depicted with large heads and wide necks, schematic torsos and richly patterned textiles. The eyes, although varying in shape were exceptionally large, at times covering more than half of the face. They were often ringed, with a brow ridge following their shape and leading into the nose. It was notable that in both provinces, there was a particular focus on the head, which may relate to the intimate relationship between the head and identity – with the head considered as the primary and most prominent form of identification and recognition.

I have argued, based upon the analysis of anthropological case studies in Chapter 4, that this deliberate use of indigenous, stylistic traditions to represent Graeco-Roman deities indicated the mobilisation of assertive mimetic strategies. It should be noted here that it is impossible without documentary evidence to conclude with any certainty that such statuary is the result of assertive mimetic strategies; it is only possible to state that the behaviours I have identified are those one would expect to see if assertive mimetic strategies were being employed. Having established the possible use of assertive mimetic strategies in provincial religious statuary, I went on to consider what this may reveal about the interactions that marked the encounters between Rome and the provinces. Drawing upon anthropological case studies and an array of archaeological evidence from the respective provinces, I argued that assertive mimetic strategies were employed by indigenous populations as a means to
access the power of the Classical pantheon, without entirely abandoning indigenous religions and traditions. The subsequent analysis was centred upon the recognition that Roman imperial culture was not uniform; it drew upon Roman and non-Roman traditions to varying degrees to create something new – and the presence of Roman elements, for example in religious statuary, should thus not be seen simply as indicative of acculturation.

Rather than framing all provincial interactions with Roman culture in terms of acculturation, the approach adopted in this thesis is built upon the recognition that responses to the Roman presence were diverse and that Roman culture was engaged with in culturally creative ways. Some members of indigenous populations may have engaged with and drawn upon Roman deities not in an acculturative capacity (to replace indigenous divinities), but as a means of divine and spiritual repertoire expansion, enabling indigenous populations to share in and access the power of Roman divinities that were likely to have been considered powerful and effective. This attempt to harness the power of new deities should not be considered as a benign accommodation of new divinities, but as a political, social and cultural act: a negotiated encounter with Rome.

(Assertive) mimesis, as demonstrated by Frazer (1935), may have an expansive chronological and geological reach, yet it risks becoming a monolithic, ineffective model if we overlook the nuances of its mobilisation and manifestation. The presence of Graeco-Roman deities depicted according to indigenous stylistic techniques is common to the religious statuary of both Roman Britain and North Africa, and it appears that both provinces utilised assertive mimetic strategies to gain access to the Roman divine world. These two provinces were however diverse, with different belief systems and conceptualisations of the divine world. It should therefore be expected that subtle differences would have existed in the way that assertive mimetic strategies were employed and materialised. This point was touched upon in the discussion of similarity and equivalence in Chapter 9, where I suggested that the more universal characteristics of the North African belief system perhaps facilitated and conditioned notions of similarity with Roman deities, whereas the British belief system was more heavily grounded in localised deities and natural features. Differences in the conceptualisation of the divine world may also be reflected in beliefs, and consequently in the stelae and reliefs, concerning divine hierarchies. Whilst in both Roman Britain and North Africa the use of assertive mimetic
strategies may have arisen from an overarching desire to access the Classical pantheon, the mobilisation of mimetic strategies was not simply the result of one specific response to the introduction or awareness of foreign divinities. I have suggested, in this context, that in both Roman Britain and Africa there were multiple, nuanced responses to non-indigenous deities that are attributable to varying indigenous religious contexts, roughly corresponding to the levels of similarity perceived to exist between an indigenous and non-indigenous deity. The diversity of these responses and the nuanced use of assertive mimetic strategies will form the focus of the present discussion. First, the varying responses will be considered more generally, followed by a specific consideration of Britain and North Africa. These interactions have also been summarised in diagrammatic form (see Appendices E and F).

10.3 Response One: Absence of Divine Similarity

One possible response amongst indigenous populations to the presence of a Graeco-Roman deity was to interpret this deity as an entirely new entity. Such responses, I have argued (see sections 8.5 and 9.4), were based upon a perceived lack of observable similarities between the Graeco-Roman deity and any indigenous divinity. In such cases, I have suggested (sections 8.5 and 9.4) that assertive mimetic strategies were employed to draw this Graeco-Roman divinity into the indigenous belief system as a means to enhance the spiritual repertoire through a process of spiritual expansion, and represented an indigenous engagement with the Roman pantheon. The use of indigenous stylistic techniques to represent Graeco-Roman deities falling into this group was crucial to this particular conceptualisation of assertive mimesis, and was built upon the idea that indigenous populations desired access to the Classical pantheon, without entirely abandoning their indigenous identity or belief system. As a direct result of the desire to tap into the divine power of the Roman world whilst retaining an indigenous identity to some degree, the Classical gods came to be expressed using indigenous conventions (see for example RBr 1-45 and RNA 1-24). This reading of the assertive mimetic process raised a number of issues, as may be recalled from Chapter 8, related to the concept of mimesis. Specifically: if to copy is to control, how exact did the copy have to be to attain this control? Drawing upon a range of anthropological investigations (Chapter 4), it was shown that images could be mimetically effective (in the sense that they can obtain the power of an
original) without faithfully reproducing an original. This effectiveness lies in the Law of Contagiousness or Contact, which states that an object can exert an effect on another once the two have been in contact. This ‘contact’ can include simply citing the name of a person, or deity. On this basis, I have suggested that some statues and reliefs did not look Classical because they were never intended to, and crucially because they did not have to: in accordance with the Laws of Contagiousness a copy did not need to be an accurate copy to be mimetically effective. What was important was contact, and as has been established, this could be accomplished through naming alone. The use of indigenous techniques to portray Classical gods was thus potentially a powerful statement of indigenous identity and resistance to total acculturation. Assertive mimesis may have operated in this context as a strategy for divine and spiritual expansion; a means for indigenous populations to share in and access the power of Classical divinities that were distinct from indigenous divine powers and had no indigenous counterpart.

10.4 Response Two: The Presence of Divine Similarity

Alternatively, it was possible that an individual or community perceived there to be a similarity or similarities between an indigenous and non-indigenous deity (sections 8.5 and 9.4). This recognition of similarity could result in two diverging responses. The first concerns the belief that in spite of these similarities, the two divinities (one indigenous and one Graeco-Roman) remained distinct entities. I have argued in this context that the presence of similarities between two divinities did not automatically precondition notions of equivalence. The process of establishing equivalences is central to the increasingly problematised concept of Interpretatio/syncretism, and whilst Interpretatio/syncretism may have operated as a popular tool of cultural imposition amongst Roman elites, it is probable that amongst indigenous populations there was a refusal to ‘squeeze their deities into conceptual moulds’ (Webster 1995: 156) based on vague similarities. In this sense, in spite of similarities, an indigenous and non-indigenous deity remained distinct. I have suggested in sections 8.5 and 9.4 that in such cases the non-indigenous divinity may well have been subject to the same treatment presented in response one (see section 10.2 above); that is, it was drawn into the indigenous belief system through assertive mimetic strategies to serve the indigenous population.
An alternate response to the presence of similarities between an indigenous and non-indigenous divinity was to consider these deities as equivalents. Rather than conceptualising notions of equivalence in terms of Romanisation however, I have argued above that it is more beneficial and appropriate to consider this as a culturally creative process, where the attributes and style of presentation used to represent these deities were blended together. In this case we may expect to see forms of representation similar to those of Mercury from Britain (RBr 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 15), which have been argued to bear horns instead of wings, depictions of Venus with unusual attributes such as wreaths and necklaces/anklets (RNA 7 and 10) and representations of Saturn such as RNA 11, 16 and 18 with a Leonine beard. As I have suggested, the intention here may have been to represent an expression of a perceived equivalence between Mercury and an indigenous deity who was conceptualised as bearing horns, or Saturn and an indigenous equivalent. Horn bearing yet otherwise anthropomorphic deities, such as Cernunnos, are well attested throughout Iron Age Europe. In this case, the image could be seen as syncretic, combining indigenous and Graeco-Roman conventions for conceptualising a particular divinity or divinities that shared certain powers.

These two responses operate at the extreme scales of the spectrum, and it is probable that an additional response may fall in between the two – where the two deities are considered both the same and different. This phenomenon was discussed in both Chapters 8 and 9, with particular reference to Santerian religion. Central to this discussion was the so called paradox of Santeria, whereby Catholic saints could be Orishas – but at the same time they were different to the saints. The association of a saint and Orisha was argued to have been ‘a way to distinguish between the social and cultural identities [of the two] as well as to connect them’ (Murphy 2011: 168). Whilst a saint and Orisha may have shared some common characteristics, the worship of a Catholic saint was not acculturative nor simply a survival strategy, but as Murphy states comprised ‘a recognition of the spiritual potential of other belief systems’. Saint Barbara for example was maintained as a distinct identity, linked to the Orisha Chango as an aspect of him, but never losing her own identity. It is this process that may draw upon assertive mimetic principles, so that the power of a non-indigenous deity, in this case Saint Barbara, is incorporated and accessed in the context of an indigenous belief system, providing new ways to gain access to a particular power, as well as elements of a new power.
This concept of simultaneous similarity and difference between an indigenous and non-indigenous deity is argued above (and in section 8.6) to have found expression in Roman Britain in what has conventionally been termed divine marriage. Divine marriages involved a pair of divinities; conventionally a male, Roman deity and an indigenous female divinity. I have suggested that the pairing of these divinities may have been symbolic of their perceived similarities. Crucially, however, in spite of these similarities, the gods also maintained their own identity; they were at once both the same and different. It is this difference that assertive mimetic strategies were perhaps employed to control – to provide new ways to access a particular power, as well as providing access to new powers different to those of indigenous deities. It was here that important points were raised regarding the importance of local context, and I have suggested (section 8.5) that it was unlikely that British Iron Age gods were conceived of in the same way as Graeco-Roman gods – that is of single sex and form. Iron Age conceptualisations were likely to have been based upon the fluidity of divinities who were able to transcend gender and species boundaries and took different forms and guises in different contexts. The fact that the gods were not bound by notions of gender and sexuality may be reflected in the lack of gender ascription in Iron Age as suggested by figurines such as the chalk figure from Kent (Green 2003: 98). Such fluid conceptualisations of the divine would appear to be compatible with the concept that one particular deity or representation of a deity may operate as an aspect of another; providing access to the same power whilst remaining distinct. The use of assertive mimetic strategies was thus arguably a way to both maintain and enhance the familiar divine world by drawing upon the power of the Classical gods. It is interesting to note that Romanserta, considered to represent the British aspect of the divine marriage, was likely to have been introduced to Britain through Gaul (something Yeates 2008 refutes, also see Chapter 5). The pairing of Romanserta and Graeco-Roman deity may have been a deliberate strategy, as a means to draw together two non-indigenous deities so that they could be conceptualised in terms of indigenous belief systems (for example as two individuals that together constituted a dual gendered powers).

This brings us to an important point concerning the recognition and appreciation of indigenous contexts. Divine marriage is largely absent in North Africa (although may perhaps be represented in RNA 18), but we do see Roman deities drawn into hierarchies, where they
appear to serve subservient positions to indigenous deities. There is a distinct possibility that these divine hierarchies operated in a similar way to divine marriages - in the sense that the deities represented were considered both the same and different and perhaps as aspects of one another, reflecting the manifestation of general principles of religious interaction mobilised in indigenous contexts and in the context of indigenous belief systems. Alternatively, the co-existence of indigenous and Graeco-Roman deities may have reflected a different, indigenous belief, such as the distinct identity of these divinities that were in no way related. This point brings us to an important discussion of variation, and it is to this that I will now turn in considering the concept of hierarchy in more detail.

As may be recalled from Chapter 7, it appears unlikely that the Iron Age inhabitants of Britain conceived of their gods as structured by any form of hierarchy. This absence of a hierarchical structure appears to be reflected in the statuary that forms the basis of this investigation. The pre-Roman North African pantheon does however appear to have possessed a more organised and hierarchical structure (Miles 2011: 32). At the head of the pantheon were El and Asherah, whilst other divinities played a subordinate but more active role in day-to-day life. This notion of hierarchy finds expression in some of the stelae that form the basis of Chapter 9 and is particularly visible on the stelae that feature the indigenous goddess Tanit accompanied by Graeco-Roman divinities Liber Pater, Venus and Cupid. Their positioning suggests a deliberate attempt to depict hierarchy, with Tanit invariably assuming primacy of position and the Graeco-Roman deities depicted beneath this goddess. This deliberate positioning of deities may have been a concerted effort to address the fact that whilst Graeco-Roman deities may have been drawn into the indigenous pantheon, they were regarded as subservient to the supreme indigenous goddess (see Moore 2000: 52).

Moore (2000: 201) suggests that the associations of the Graeco-Roman divinities with concepts of life, regeneration and fertility emphasise the nature of the superior god or goddess above them – in these cases either Tanit or Baal Hammon. Moore’s statement raises an important issue regarding the concept of correspondence and identification of an indigenous and non-indigenous deity as the same. Both Tanit and the Graeco-Roman divinities appear to share overlapping functions, with associations with fertility and rebirth, yet their co-existence on the stelae suggests that they are resistant to this process of being
equated. That divinities may share overlapping functions or operate as aspects of one another may not be a foreign concept to the inhabitants of North Africa. As discussed in section 7.8, inscriptions referring to ‘Tanit the face of Baal’ may reflect such beliefs on the nature of the divine. The co-existence of indigenous and Graeco-Roman divinities may represent the process discussed previously, where Graeco-Roman divinities, even if somewhat similar to indigenous ones, were conceptualised as new, discrete entities and incorporated through assertive mimesis into the indigenous pantheon. Alternatively, it may have been the case that based upon notions of similarity, these divinities were considered as aspects of one another: at once the same and different (or that they were considered entirely separate entities). This phenomenon was discussed in the context of Roman Britain with specific reference to divine marriage (section 8.6), which itself is largely absent in North Africa (barring one possible example: see no. 18). Yet a number of parallels can be drawn between divine marriage in Britain and the North African stelae. Both feature ‘paired’ indigenous and non-indigenous deities, consisting of male and female individuals. In the cases from Roman Britain, little is known of the identity and function of the indigenous (often female) deity. In the case of North Africa, slightly more is known about the indigenous deity, and it is interesting to note the similarities between the function of the indigenous and Graeco-Roman deities. Here similarities can be observed with Santerian religion (section 8.6), where juxtaposed indigenous and non-indigenous deities were considered both the same in that they shared a number of overlapping functions, and yet different, maintaining their own identities. Whilst in Roman Britain we tend to see divine pairings rather than the multiple groupings of deities seen in North Africa, it is possible that these pairings reflect and are built upon similar concepts, and are the outcome of a strategy employed to provide new ways to access, and control, a particular power.

A key feature of the statuary presented in Chapters 8 and 9 was ambiguity, and crucially perhaps deliberate ambiguity. Whilst it is difficult to establish if Graeco-Roman divinities were considered as distinct entities different and unrelated to indigenous deities, or as the same as or aspects of indigenous divinities, it is possible that this ambiguity was deliberate, so that individuals with different views could read what they wanted to from the reliefs. Individuals in the provinces were free to pursue their own beliefs, and as a result it was important to recognise that assertive mimetic strategies could be mobilised in diverse
responses to the introduction to foreign deities. In the case of both Roman Britain and Africa, I have suggested that the possibility of individuals drawing equivalences between an indigenous and non-indigenous deity was equally as likely as others considering Graeco-Roman divinities to be a completely new entity. It is highly likely that these reliefs are intentionally polyvocal and ambiguous, open to multiple interpretations according to the viewer’s own beliefs, or were simply interpreted in such ways in spite of the intentions of the artist. The iconography was thus presented in such a way that meaning could be actively interpreted and conditioned by the social status and lived experiences of a group or individual.

There is a striking difference in the deities most prominently subject to mimetic strategies in the two provinces selected for this study. In provincial Africa, a number of key deities are drawn upon. The most prolific are Liber Pater (RNA 3-8, 10), Venus/Libera (RNA 3-10), Cupid (RNA 4, 5 and 10), Victory (RNA 1, 2 and 6) Saturn (RNA 11-24) and the Dioscuri (RNA 13-15, 17). It is notable that each has strong links with fecundity and reproduction which was likely at the forefront of minds in a region that was so dependent upon agriculture and favourable weather conditions. In Britain, Mercury (RBr 1-17) is the most prominent god, followed by Mars (RBr 18-25). Where female deities are concerned they appear include abstract principles, such as Fortuna (RBR 32-35) and Victory (RBr 40 and 41) as well as Venus (RBr 44) and Minerva (RBr 42). The popularity of female deities associated with abstract principles would perhaps be more fitting and compatible with the indigenous belief systems of Britain which were highly localised and prominently featured the worship of localised, natural features. The varying popularity of Graeco-Roman gods in Roman Britain and North Africa demonstrates the diversity of responses to the Roman cultural presence, and demonstrates how Roman religion was adapted to suit indigenous contexts and conditions.

An important element that reflects indigenous diversity and emphasises the need to appreciate this diversity is the specific content and layout of the statuary. The statuary from Britain is rather decontextualised, often featuring an isolated divinity, sometimes multiple divinities in the case of divine marriage for example, but rarely depicting a scene. Quite the opposite is true in North Africa, where the stelae depict very specific scenes, and specifically the rite which the stelae commemorates – that of sacrifice. The differing content of the
reliefs emphasises the importance of reading these reliefs according to indigenous contexts. In chapters 8 and 9, I discussed the importance of incorporating Graeco-Roman divinities into pre-existing traditions, and their representation on the stelae may alone have been considered symbolic enough of an expression of indigenous identity. As established earlier (see section 8.4) imagery could be mimetically effective without being an aesthetically perfect copy. Perhaps in some cases, the very presence of Graeco-Roman divinities on North African stelae was considered in itself to be representative of their absorption into an indigenous belief system.

What I hope to have demonstrated in the preceding discussion is the importance of resisting the desire of overlooking or downplaying the diversity of indigenous contexts at the expense of producing a neat, monolithic conceptualisation of mimesis that manifests itself in the material record without variation. Central to this investigation has been the recognition of the fluid nature of assertive mimesis; the idea that general principles could be mobilised in variable indigenous contexts, resulting in multiple nuanced manifestations (see for example divine pairings and divine hierarchies in Britain and North Africa, and the Graeco-Roman deities subject to assertive mimetic strategies). This recognition of nuanced conceptualisations and manifestations of Graeco-Roman divinities, conditioned by individual or indigenous beliefs, is important in the context of the fluid nature of movement in the Roman Empire, and in the following discussion I will touch upon issues relating to how concepts of the divine travelled across the Empire, with particular reference to the Roman army and its diversity.

Through the interactions between the frontier zones and hinterland, the provinces became the site of complex processes of adoption, adaptation and sharing (Wells 2010: 197). Such processes were undoubtedly accelerated in Britain during the 3rd century following increased civilian development around Roman military forts – a phenomenon attributed by Lindgren (1980: 27), in part, to the right of soldiers to marry and access land grants. Whilst Roman Britain accounted for 4% of the Empire’s geographical expanse, it is estimated to have housed 10-12% of the Roman army. This concentration of military units undoubtedly had a significant impact on the interactions and characteristics of the province – both in terms of military and civilian communities (Mattingly 220; Haynes 1999). The soldiers in Britain appear to have been drawn primarily from Germany (over 30 units), Gaul
(25 units), Spain (10 units), with smaller numbers from the eastern provinces, Africa and the Danube (Mattingly 2006: 167; a record of the ala and cohorts recorded at the sites featured in this study and their origins can be found in appendix I). Whilst often cited as the ambassadors of Rome and of Roman culture (Mattingly 2006: 167), the army was far from a ‘mini model of Rome’ (Haynes 2013: 21). The frontier zones were dynamic areas, where multiple ethnic identities, and many gods, converged. Soldiers brought with them the gods of Rome (including Jupiter and Mars): but often too it seems, new cultures, identities, religious beliefs and ways of visualising these deities. There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that indigenous beliefs were not entirely abandoned upon membership of the Roman army, but that soldiers maintained a dual identity. The existence of dual identities has been addressed by Ian Haynes who draws upon the altars dedicated by cohors II Tungrorum equitata, stationed in Birrens. Of note, was a dedication to the divinity Ricagambeda by soldiers from Germania (RIB 2107) and an altar to Viradecthis (RIB 2108) dedicated by the pagus Concustis militans (Haynes 2009: 10), taken, perhaps, as indicative of a strong desire to maintain indigenous cultural traditions within the Roman army. Alongside epigraphic evidence for the continuation of indigenous traditions, Kampen (2003) has similarly argued that examples of divergences from Classical norms in iconography from military sites likewise represents a desire for more localised identities in the army.

The continuation of imported indigenous traditions may have resulted in the production of a relief of Fortuna from a fort bath house in Stirlingshire (RBr 34). Here Fortuna is depicted with the attributes conventionally associated with this goddess in Graeco-Roman imagery, yet there are also clear divergences from her conventional Classical form. Most notable is the trouser-like garment, which Tacitus notes was a fashion of Germania (Tacitus, Germania, 17.4-7). Perhaps a Germanic auxiliary stationed in Stirlingshire was responsible for its production? If so, his action may reflect the mobilisation of assertive mimetic strategies according to the stylistic techniques and beliefs familiar to a Germanic soldier. There are a number of additional sculptures, such as RBr 3-6, 15-19, 24, 29, 31, 34, 41 and 44 from Britain that were also recovered from or in close proximity to Roman military sites or Vici. One particular representation of Mars (RBr 18) is believed to have been displayed on the parade ground of a fort: a context which led Phillips (1977: 66) to conclude that it is likely that it was Mars that was represented rather than an indigenous god, despite the fact
that ‘the detailing is Celtic’. This brings us back to an important point touched upon in section 8.5 regarding the production of these statues. Would these reliefs look different if they were made by an indigenous inhabitant of England or a soldier of the army?

The diversity of the Roman army serving in Britain has been discussed, with a particular emphasis on the Gallic and Germanic origins of many soldiers in Roman Britain. So it may be that we are seeing works belonging to people not indigenous to Britain but also not indigenous to Rome – and this is an important point. It demonstrates that people from across the empire did not necessarily engage with Roman material culture in an acculturative capacity, but maintained their indigenous traditions wherever they went. As many artistic strategies cut across Iron Age Europe as discussed in Chapter 6, many of the strategies used to represent divinities by indigenous Britons may have been shared by many of the troops originating from the provinces, particularly those from Gaul and Germania.

Although a high proportion of units in British garrisons continued to come from Gaul and Germany well in to the mid 3rd C AD (Mattingly 2007: 127), it is dangerous to assume that the Roman army in Britain was entirely devoid of British soldiers. On the contrary, it is most likely that the number of British soldiers serving in Britain increased over time. As the military community became more dependent on British troops, it is possible that indigenous British responses to anthropomorphie imagery will have become more visible on military sites. This is perhaps increasingly likely, considering that many of sculptures drawn upon likely date from this time period (Mattingly 2006: 123; 2010: 92). As touched upon above, broad artistic similarities stretched across Iron Age Europe, and it may be in some cases that assertive mimetic statuary produced by indigenous Britons is indistinguishable from that produced by soldiers from Gaul and Germania.

It is also important that we recognise that at sites such as Vindolanda and further afield in the province as well as the empire, there is growing evidence of women and children being in regular attendance at the forts, alongside craftsmen, merchants, slaves and servants. These may have been indigenous people, or they may have originated from diverse areas of the provinces (Mattingly 1996: 170). Tablets from the Swiss fortress at Vindonissa indicate the presence of female residents within military installations – associated not only with officers but with rank-and-file soldiers (Haynes 2013: 157). Whether residing inside the fortress, or in the towns closely associated with military sites,
there was a significant blurring of boundaries between civilians and soldiers (Mattingly 2006: 171; James 2001:78, 88; Birley 2010:290-294; Allison 2015: 121). The population of these civilian settlements most likely consisted of diverse groups: the wives, families or slaves of soldiers; retired soldiers, or traders and craftsmen serving the fort and its occupants. The nomenclature from epigraphic sources alludes to the possible Gallic and Germanic origins of some of the inhabitants of these sites (Mattingly 2006: 173-4), whilst the presence of indigenous Britons in the settlements has become an increasingly popular assertion. Like the serving soldiers of the army then, caution should be exercised not only in the case of Roman Britain, but across the empire, in considering the towns closely associated with Roman military sites, or civilians living in forts as fully Romanised, whereby there was a universal desire to faithfully reproduce Classical statuary (see also Haynes 2013: 156).

10.5 Mimesis as a concept of cultural interaction

Through the body of work presented in the preceding chapters and summarised above, I have sought to situate assertive mimesis as a strategy employed to negotiate colonial encounters, with specific reference to the absorption of the provinces into the Roman Empire. It is important at this point to address where assertive mimesis sits in relation to other concepts of cultural mixing. Central to my argument is that whilst it is an independent strategy, assertive mimesis also operates as an integral component of the process of religious Creolisation. As may be recalled from Chapter 8 (section 8.5), I argued that it is most appropriate to conceptualise provincial religion in terms of Creolisation. The scholarship on Creole religions is however constantly shifting and evolving, and it is important to clarify the specific understanding of creolisation upon which this investigation ultimately rests.

The conventional model of Creolisation has its origins in linguistics, yet the model has been adopted and expanded by scholars in diverse fields, from anthropologists, to historians, literary scholars and social scientists. As a result, Creolisation has become a metaphor for diverse cross-cultural phenomena and we need to adapt the model of Creolisation employed depending on what aspect we are considering such as linguistics,
religion or material culture, rather than treating it as a monolithic, essentialist model. Creolisation should not be viewed as a static model, but an overarching set of principles mobilised in different contexts to meet the demands of specific contexts. The model of Creolisation that I have employed to frame the investigation undertaken herein is thus drawn from the work of Olmos and Paravisini-Gebert (2011: 9) on religious Creolisation, encompassing processes of adaptation, assimilation and syncretism. Central to this conceptualisation of Creolisation is the recognition of multiple categories. These consist of:

1. Mosaic – which consists of the juxtaposing and co-existence of elements from different religious systems, for example, altars of the Regla de Ocha where Catholic saints are placed alongside Orisha-related paraphernalia.

2. Institutional – whereby the religious observances of differing belief systems are combined through reconciling liturgical calendars.

3. Correspondence – whereby two deities of varying religions are considered the same and identified as one.

Together, these varying categories provide a useful framework for considering where mimetic strategies may operate within the context of religious interaction. The focus of this thesis has been upon mosaic and correspondence approaches, as these relate specifically to the interactions arising from the introduction of a new divinity and are arguably visible in the statuary on which this investigation has focused. There were a range of possible responses to the introduction to or awareness of a non-indigenous, foreign deity as previously discussed, and it may is possible to consider these responses in terms of Creole processes.

- **Response one: absence of divine similarity**

It may be recalled that this was described as a strategy of divine and spiritual expansion, a means for indigenous populations to share in and access the power of classical divinities that were distinct from indigenous divine powers and had no indigenous counterpart. In terms of creolisation, this would constitute a mosaic approach involving the co-existence and juxtaposing of elements from different religious systems. It is important to
clarify that the co-existence of divinities is not considered synonymous with the notion of a benign willingness of polytheistic religions to accommodate one another’s gods. This co-existence marks a culturally creative process and an indigenous engagement with foreign cultures that reflects the power dynamics of colonial encounters – where classical gods were adopted in indigenous belief systems to serve indigenous individuals. The worship of foreign deities was not simply the result of a passive accommodation but a deliberate strategy to gain access to the power of a new belief system. In the context of the power dynamics that shaped colonial encounters, co-existence enabled indigenous populations to maintain aspects of their own belief system whilst accessing the new powerful divine forces of the colonisers.

Response two: the presence of divine similarity

Again, it may be recalled that there were a range of responses elicited by the recognition of similarity. I will deal specifically here with the concepts of equivalence and the idea that two divinities may be simultaneously the same and different. I will begin with the concept of equivalence and mention this only briefly, as this does not appear to draw upon specific assertive mimetic strategies. It is a culturally creative process where two forms of representation are blended as the result of a recognised equivalence. Where assertive mimesis is more likely to have been mobilised is in the case of the same but different. Both of these instances fall in the correspondence category, yet assertive mimesis is only mobilised in the case of the same but different. This is because mimetic strategies allow and provide access to a new power. The crucial emphasis here is on difference.

This investigation has been built upon the recognition of the fluidity and diversity of mimetic strategies, as well as the dynamic contexts in which these strategies operate. Whilst assertive mimesis may operate as a distinct strategy outside of instances of cultural mixing (see below), it may also operate in the context of cross-cultural interaction, and as I have argued, as in integral component of Creole processes. The intimate relationship between Creole processes and assertive mimesis has formed the basis of this investigation, based upon the idea that mimetic strategies, and specifically assertive mimesis, provide a mechanism through which Creole processes are effective. This is not to say however that assertive mimesis is mobilised in every Creole process. As I have argued for example, it does not appear to have operated in cases of cross-cultural creativity arising from a recognition of
equivalence, which should rather be conceptualised as a syncretic Creole process. Just as it is important to appreciate the diversity of mimesis, it is also important to appreciate is that Creole religions are the result of multiple processes which encapsulate a variety of responses and approaches. We must consider the categories of Creolisation as fluid and overlapping rather than distinct and mutually exclusive, as summarised in Appendices E and F where assertive mimesis operates in some but not all strategies. This fluidity can be best expressed in terms of the overlapping nature of mosaic and correspondence approaches. It may be recalled that the correspondence approach is built upon a recognition of similarity between two deities and encapsulates diverging responses arising from this identification of similarity. These responses range from similar but discrete entities, to similar but different or similar and the equivalent. The overlap arises from this idea of the same but different, where it was argued that mimetic strategies were employed to access the power arising from these differences between an indigenous and non-indigenous deity. Similarities can be drawn with mosaic strategies, where assertive mimesis is used to draw upon and access new forms of power.

Mimesis is an incredibly diverse phenomenon, taking many different guises in different contexts. Whilst the focus of this investigation has been upon how assertive mimesis operates as a strategy of cultural interaction and specifically as a component of Creole processes, it is important not to overlook the fact that mimetic strategies also operate independently outside of process of cultural interaction. The intention has not to replace one version of mimesis with another, simply to demonstrate the diversity of mimetic strategies. Whilst there is a lack of textual evidence concerning the belief in or the practice of mimetic strategies in Iron Age Britain and North Africa, I have argued (see sections 8.5 and 9.3) that there may be evidence in the archaeological record indicating the practice of assertive mimetic strategies, from the production of Iron Age weaponry in Britain to the use of decorated eggshells in Punic funerary contexts. Such evidence is important as it shows a possible precedence for the use of assertive mimetic strategies in pre-Roman Britain and North Africa. Whilst assertive mimetic strategies may not have been employed in these earlier examples as a strategy of cultural interaction, it is important in that it shows not only the existence of such beliefs, but that these share fundamental principles based upon the concept of sympathetic magic.
What I hope to have accomplished through this investigation is to have demonstrated not only the diversity of the mimetic concept, which can operate in a number of capacities, but the potential of this concept to enhance our understanding and provide new insights into cultural interaction within the Roman provinces. Assertive mimetic strategies, as manifested in religious statuary, show a marked persistence, continuing well after absorption of the two case study regions into the Roman Empire. Whilst we are lacking exact dating for both the British and North African collections, the majority are attributable to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. This date is interesting as it suggests that indigenous traditions were maintained and persisted over centuries. It was perhaps the case that interactions centred upon both the maintenance of indigenous deities and the adoption of Classical deities, whereby indigenous traditions were drawn upon to represent the Classical gods. Far from being acculturative, indigenous engagements with Roman material and religious culture were culturally creative, where indigenous traditions were used to signify the adoption and adaptation of Classical gods in an indigenous belief system. This suggests that successive generations sought to maintain a nuanced identity that built upon indigenous and Roman traditions, an important phenomenon in terms of deconstructing the Romanisation paradigm.

10.6 Conclusion

The religious statuary of Roman Britain and North Africa, whilst conventionally conceptualised in terms of emulation, can be understood as the manifestation of complex processes of religious and cultural interaction in the Roman provinces. The purpose of this investigation has been to draw upon the nuanced insights that these statues can provide into the processes of identity formation and negotiation, which have yet to be fully capitalised on. It is only when essentialised notions of culture have been abandoned that the diversity and complexity of this statuary can begin to be appreciated.

Whilst the purpose of this enquiry has been to identify indigenous cultural markers in the representation of Classical divinities, this task marked the beginning, not the limit, of analysis. The thesis then went on to consider the ways in which indigenous and Classical traditions were actively and deliberately drawn upon to construct new cultural forms - as
opposed to being passively blended - and to ask what this revealed about power and identity negotiation in the provinces. These sculptures were taken not simply as the expression of cultural identity, but as the tool through which individuals negotiated and constructed the world around them.

Rather than representing failed attempts to emulate the Roman form, I have argued that these statues and reliefs should be reconsidered as the result of a deliberate attempt to draw Classical deities into indigenous frameworks through the power of assertive mimesis. To consider them in this light shifts the trajectory of study away from interpretations dominated by concepts of either complete acculturation on the one hand, or total rejection on the other. Rather than framing all provincial interactions with Roman culture in terms of acculturation, this approach is built upon the recognition that the responses to the Roman presence were diverse and that Roman culture was engaged with in culturally creative ways. Some members of an indigenous population may have engaged with and drawn upon Roman deities not in an acculturative capacity to replace indigenous divinities or to ‘Romanise’, but as a means of divine and spiritual expansion, enabling indigenous populations harness the power of Roman divinities that were likely to have been considered highly powerful and effective. This should not be considered as a benign accommodation of new divinities, but as a political, social and cultural act employed to negotiate the encounter with Rome.

Assertive mimesis, as conceptualised in anthropological investigations of modern colonial encounters, provides a tool through which to explore and understand some of the statuary of the Roman provinces. In broadening the Classical conceptualisation of mimesis beyond its acculturative roots, statuary can begin to be interpreted within new frameworks that recognise and account for the culturally creative processes arising from cultural interaction. Statues diverging from a classical prototype should not be regarded as the work of poorly skilled artists. Through the mobilisation of assertive mimetic strategies, these statues may represent something entirely different than a failed attempt to emulate the Roman form – a form of resistance perhaps, and a means by which indigenous people were able to gain access to the Roman pantheon. The incorporation of Roman deities or symbols was perhaps a means through which indigenous populations were able to contest and construct their own identity in a much changed world, drawing upon the Graeco-Roman
pantheon to serve their own needs. The incorporation into the Roman Empire Rome brought a new world context, where power and identity in the provinces was restructured and subject to intense pressure. Assertive mimesis may have provided a way to navigate these encounters, providing a means to actively produce, new, complex and culturally creative cultures and identities.

The strength of the assertive mimetic model is that, unlike many models of cultural interaction, it goes beyond simply identifying an object as the passive result of cross-cultural interaction and recognises that it was created for a purpose. It allows for an investigation and exploration of what it meant for something to be cross-cultural and inverts the notion of passive acceptance, thereby recognising active interpretation. With reference to religious statuary, the benefits of this approach are two-fold. First, it contributes to the deconstruction of the simplistic and restrictive concept of non-Classical art as a failed attempt at emulation. Second, it provides more nuanced understandings of how complex cultural interactions extended into the divine sphere. The divine world was a powerful tool; an instrument of political power, conflict, subversion and identity formation. This point is often overlooked in analysing cross-cultural interactions. The analysis of provincial religious statuary from Roman Britain and North Africa in terms of assertive mimetic strategies has provided an insight into the nuanced understandings that can be gained from such models. This thesis has demonstrated the potential of this model as a flexible analytical tool of which can provide nuanced insights into multiple responses to the Roman presence throughout the Roman Empire.

10.7 Future Research

This investigation into indigenous responses to the Roman presence in the provinces has created exciting new avenues for exploration. Whilst developing new understandings of belief in the Roman provinces, time constraints permitted a focus upon ‘indigenous’ responses to Roman religion within only two provinces, yet it was recognised that at the edges of the Empire, on frontiers like Hadrian’s Wall (constructed AD 122), multiple ethnic identities, and many gods, converged. Less than 1% of the ‘Roman’ army originated from Rome itself, and the frontier units were drawn from an Empire stretching from North Africa to Britain and from Syria to the Danube. Soldiers brought with them the gods of Rome but introduced their own gods too, often visualising these deities using imported sculptural
traditions. The result might appear to be divine chaos, but was it? Drawing on the contribution of this investigation to Creolisation theory, and alongside recent developments in diaspora theory, future research could consider precisely how the varied beliefs and representational traditions brought to the frontiers by soldiers intersected. It could also consider whether the gods themselves were transformed in that process. At a time when so many people moved extensively around the world, carrying their beliefs with them, an analysis of a distant religious diaspora would shed important light on the intersection between belief, place and ethnicity in the past.

There is also great scope to consider the representation of deities in alternative media. This enquiry was centred upon stone statuary and reliefs, yet it is highly probable that assertive mimetic strategies were drawn upon in a range of media, including bronzes (such as the British Museum collection of bronzes) and pipe clay figurines which conform to some extent to pre-Roman Iron Age stylistic techniques (Fittock 2015). 109 pipe clay divinities have been recorded in Britain, including Venus, Dea Nutrix, Minerva, Luna/Diana Lucifera and Juno and it is possible that assertive mimetic strategies were employed in their production. Similarly, the representation of Graeco-Roman deities, as well as animals and the human head on Romano-British coinage may offer important insights into the way that identity was negotiated in the provinces. The coinage of Iron Age and Roman Britain was based upon Classical exemplars yet as with the statuary featured in this research, the Classical form was not always replicated in a straightforward fashion. The coinage of the Classical world typically featured the head of a king, ruler, or a patron deity on the obverse, and a range of symbols, including deities and animals on the reverse. Whilst these iconographic traditions were typically replicated on the coinage of Iron Age and Roman Britain, a significant number of coins did so in a manner that draws upon pre-Roman stylistic traditions. In some instances, Classical deities were represented according to indigenous stylistic traditions, similar to the sculpture featured in this thesis, whilst others featured indigenous deities such as Cernunnos, or schematic heads and animals, similar to those featured on the Aylesford bucket for example. A consideration of the various ways in which Classical prototypes were adopted and adapted, both in terms of representing Classical deities according to indigenous techniques as well as the representation of indigenous deities and symbols on something that is overtly Classical in origin and concept, may provide
valuable new insights into the diversity of responses to the Roman presence and the multiple ways that identity was formed and negotiated in the provinces.
### Appendix A: Gods of the Roman Pantheon and their Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deity</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Common symbols and attributes</th>
<th>Example of common Classical form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jupiter</td>
<td>Supreme god of Roman pantheon; god of thunder and sky</td>
<td>Eagle, Thunderbolt, Sceptre, Bull, Oak, Draped toga with naked torso</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juno</td>
<td>Goddess of women, childbirth and marriage; Queen of the gods</td>
<td>Peacock, Cow, Pomegranate, Goat skin coat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minerva</td>
<td>Goddess of wisdom, warfare, medicine and crafts</td>
<td>Helmet, Spear, Owl, Olive branch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>Messenger God of commerce, athletics, travellers</td>
<td>Chlamys, Winged sandals, Caduceus, Petasus, Money bag, Goat, Cockerel, Lyre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mars</td>
<td>God of warfare and bloodshed</td>
<td>Spear, Shield, Vulture, Burning torch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Apollo** | God of the sun, truth, prophecy, archery and the arts | Lyre  
Bow and arrow  
Sun  
Swans  
Laurel wreath  
Raven | ![Image](image1.png) |
| **Venus** | Goddess of love and beauty | Myrtles  
Doves  
Sparrows  
Swans | ![Image](image2.png) |
| **Hercules** | Divine protector of mankind | Lion-skin cape  
Club  
Apples of Hesperides | ![Image](image3.png) |
| **Fortuna** | Personification of fortune and good luck; wealth, destiny, success and abundance | Wheel  
Cornucopia  
Rudder  
Globe | ![Image](image4.png) |
| **Victory** | Personification of victory | Wings  
Wreath | ![Image](image5.png) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Attributes and Symbols</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diana</strong></td>
<td>Goddess of the hunt, moon, birthing, wild animals and woodland</td>
<td>Bow and quiver Hounds Snake Spear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vulcan</strong></td>
<td>God of fire, volcanoes, blacksmiths, craftsmen and metallurgy</td>
<td>Hammer Anvil Tongs Fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genius</strong></td>
<td>Spirits of a given place</td>
<td>Cornucopia Patera held over an altar Crown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saturn</strong></td>
<td>God of Plenty, wealth, agriculture, sowing, seeds, periodic renewal and liberation</td>
<td>Scythe sickle Veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bacchus/Liber Pater</strong></td>
<td>God of wine, viticulture, fertility and freedom</td>
<td>Thyrsus Vine wreath Kantharos cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Triton** | King of the Sea | Fish tail  
|            |                | Conch shell  
|            |                | Crab claw horns |
| **Dioscuri** | Gods of sailing, favourable winds, horsemanship, guests and travellers | Horse  
|            |                | Spear  
|            |                | Wide brimmed hat |
Appendix B: Responses to Cultural Interaction: Spectrum of Possibilities

![Diagram showing the spectrum of cultural responses from acceptance to contestation. The diagram includes categories such as acculturation, accommodation, creolisation, and rejection. Each category is represented by images and numerical values 1 to 4.](image-url)
Acculturation and Accommodation:

The featured reliefs can be interpreted as the outcome of acculturative processes, primarily due to the adoption of Classical forms of representation. These reliefs have traditionally been interpreted as Mercury due to the presence of divine attributes conventionally associated with this deity in Classical representations. The levels at which these reliefs conform the Classical ideals varies greatly, with reliefs 2 and 4 adhering more closely to Classical ideals of representation that reliefs 1 and 3. Whilst reliefs 1 and 3 diverge from Classical statuary in key respects (including schematism and the representations of facial features which exhibit closer parallels to Iron Age stylistic techniques than the Classical form), reliefs 2 and 4 may also display subtle variations to Classical representations of Mercury through the representation of horns rather than wings. Acculturative approaches however either overlook entirely the existence (in the case of horns) or the significance of these divergences, attributing them to the work of a poor artist who desired but failed to reproduce the Classical form (see Chapters 3 and 5).

The acculturative process can be subdivided to include accommodation, a recognition that whilst built upon an assumed desire to reproduce the Classical form, acculturative responses can be predicated either upon a belief that a particular classical and non-classical deity were the same or equivalent (acculturation), or the belief that even if similarities can be drawn between a Roman and indigenous deity, they remain distinct entities (accommodation). Whilst acculturation assumes the indigenous adoption of classical conventions of representation and religious cult, where Roman myths, forms and names took precedence, replacing the indigenous counterparts, central to accommodation is the adoption of Classical forms of representation and Classical deities and that are considered as separate entities to indigenous deities. Both processes have conventionally been conceptualised as a laissez-faire phenomenon, reflecting the desire of polytheistic peoples to accommodate each other’s gods, and both have become synonymous with the term Romanisation, where indigenous populations not only adopted the religion of Rome but the conventions of Roman religious representation. Whilst it is often impossible to ascertain definitively which process of acculturation or accommodation a relief may have represented, as both are based upon the desired reproduction of the Classical form, it is
important to acknowledge that both nuanced processes can offered as interpretations of these reliefs.

**Creolisation:**

As opposed to the acculturative approaches and the assumed indigenous adoption of classical conventions of representation and religious cult they embody, the reliefs of Mercury can also be interpreted as the result of Creole strategies. Creolisation denotes a process by which elements from both indigenous religion and coloniser religions are embraced. Reliefs 1-3 for example may be interpreted as bearing horns rather than wings (which are conventional in Classical representations). Rather than being considered as the work of a poor artist however (as in acculturative models), these wings could be interpreted as indicative the result of Creole strategies where an indigenous deity envisioned as horn bearing is equated to Mercury and consequently their imagery is blended together. Additionally, relief 4, featuring the Roman god Mercury and an assumed indigenous deity Rosmerta may according to Creole interpretations represent the co-existence of indigenous and Roman beliefs and deities, and thus the blending of two belief systems (see Chapters 8-10). Rather than acculturative models then, the Creole model encapsulates cultural creativity and co-existence.
Appendix C: Database of Statuary and Reliefs from Roman Britain

See attached digital media
Appendix D: Database of Statuary and Reliefs from Roman Britain

See attached digital media
Appendix E: Religious Interaction in the Roman Provinces: Flow Chart

Introduction of a foreign deity

Foreign deity exhibits similarities to a native deity

Belief that a native and non-native deity are the same or equivalent
Name pairing
Syncretic/Creole hybrid – Correspondence combining native and non-native myths, conventions and representations of a deity
Acculturative Mimesis / Mimesis / Romanisation – Adoption of non-native myths, conventions and representations of a deity – Replaces native myths, conventions and representations

Belief that in spite of the similarities exhibited, the deities are distinct entities

Same but different

Foreign deity is unrecognisable in a native belief system

Assertive Mimesis (Creole): A replica of a non-native deity is produced, representing a local engagement with non-local deities
Acculturative Mimesis/ passive syncretism – Incorporation of a foreign deity into the native pantheon – Deity represented using non-local conventions – Represents a laissez-faire desire to accommodate foreign deities

Non-native deity reproduced according to local traditions

Divine marriage

= strategies which present in a similar way
### Appendix F: Religious Interaction: Spectrum of Possibilities: Revised

#### Religious Interaction: Spectrum of Possibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Passive Syncretism</th>
<th>Active Syncretism</th>
<th>Contestation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acculturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Figure 1" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Figure 2" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Figure 3" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Figure 4" /></td>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Figure 5" /></td>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Figure 6" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Figure 7" /></td>
<td><img src="image8.png" alt="Figure 8" /></td>
<td><img src="image9.png" alt="Figure 9" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><img src="image10.png" alt="Figure 10" /></td>
<td><img src="image11.png" alt="Figure 11" /></td>
<td><img src="image12.png" alt="Figure 12" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acculturative Accommodation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creole-Correspondence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creole-Mosaic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rejection</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commentary

The purpose of this diagram is to demonstrate the multiple ways that religious imagery from the provinces can be interpreted. To explain this diagram, I will provide an example of the multiple analyses that relief one can be subject to.

Acculturative:

The subject of this relief is the Graeco-Roman deity, Mercury. One possible reading of this relief is that it represents the process by which indigenous populations drew equivalences between an indigenous divinity and Mercury, whereby the Roman conventions of representation took precedence, thus representing an acculturative process. Within such readings, the divergences of the relief from Classical norms (the large head for example) represent a lack of ability of a provincial artist who simply failed to accurately reproduce a Classical avatar.

Acculturative Accommodation:

Alternatively, rather than drawing equivalences between an indigenous deity and Mercury, Mercury may have been conceptualised as a new and entirely distinct entity. Similar to acculturative readings, this process could be understood as resulting from a passive acceptance of Graeco-Roman deities into an indigenous belief system, whereby the Graeco-Roman conventions are used to represent the deity. As above divergences of the relief from Classical norms in such accounts is attributed to a lack of ability of provincial artists. Whilst such readings have been increasingly problematised, this is not to say that they were entirely absent in the provinces.

Creole-correspondence

Moving away from passive, syncretic processes, it is also possible to read this relief as the result of a Creole-correspondence approach, where similarities are drawn between an indigenous and non-indigenous deity, here Mercury, but rather than a passive, acculturative process whereby the deity is represented according to Graeco-Roman conventions, the result is a culturally creative process whereby both indigenous and Graeco-Roman conventions are drawn upon. Here for example, the wings sprouting from the head of Mercury could be interpreted as horns, which would represent the use of indigenous stylistic techniques, and perhaps the equation of Mercury with an indigenous, horned deity.

Creole-Mosaic

Without indigenous parallels, the Graeco-Roman Mercury may have been considered as a new, discrete entity, yet to access this divinity and draw it into indigenous belief systems (see the discussion on assertive mimesis in Chapter 4, 8-10), Mercury was represented using indigenous stylistic traditions. Within such readings, the divergences of the relief from Classical avatars (the large head and lentoid eyes for example) is not attributed to a lack of ability of a provincial artist but is considered a deliberate act.

This diagram is an evolution of a previous diagram (see appendix 2), and represents the development of ideas and models related to the processes of religious interaction, so for example the process of Creolisation has been subdivided, representing the diversity of this model and the multiple responses that it encompasses. A discussion of this development can be found throughout chapters 8 to 10.
Appendix G: Enlarged Photographs of Statues and Reliefs and Roman Britain and North Africa

Figure 55: Relief ID RBr 1, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 21
Figure 56: Relief ID RBr 2, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 24
Figure 57: Relief ID RBr 3, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 25
Figure 58: Relief ID RBr 4, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 27
Figure 59: Relief ID RBr 5, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 206
Figure 60: Relief ID RBr 6, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 207
Figure 61: Relied ID RBr 7, Mercury: Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 325
Figure 62: Relief ID RBr 8, Mercury. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 338
Figure 63: Relief ID RBr 9, Mercury. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 72
Figure 64: Relief ID RBr 10, Mercury. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 75
Figure 65: Relief ID RBr 11, Mercury. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 76
Figure 66: Relief ID RBr 12, Mercury. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 77
Figure 67: Relief ID RBr 13, Mercury. Image from Tufi (1983), fig. 7
Figure 68: Relief ID RBr 14, Mercury. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 76
Figure 69: Relief ID RBr 15, Mercury. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988) fig. 81
Figure 70: Relief ID RBr 16, Mercury. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 83
Figure 71: Relief ID RBr 17, Mercury. Image from Brewer (1986), fig. 10
Figure 72: Relief ID RBr 18, Mars. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 199
Figure 73: Relief ID RBr 19, Mars. Image from Keppie and Arnold (1984), fig. 130
Figure 74: Relief ID RBr 20, Mars. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 52
Figure 75: Relied ID RBr 21, Mars. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 123
Figure 76: Relief ID RBr 22, Mars. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 130
Figure 77: Relief ID RBr 23, Mars. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 72
Figure 78: Relief ID RBr 24, Mars. Image from Brewer (1986), fig. 9
Figure 79: Relief ID RBr 25, Mars. Image from Brewer (1986), fig. 15
Figure 80: Relief ID RBr 26, Genius. Image from Tufi (1983), fig.19
Figure 81: Relief ID RBr 27, Genius. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 22
Figure 82: Relief ID RBr 28, Genius. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 25
Figure 83: Relief ID RBr 29, Genius. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 469
Figure 84: Relief ID RBr 30, Genius. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 470
Figure 85: Relief ID RBr 31, Genius. Image from Henig et al (2004), fig. 161
Figure 86: Relief ID RBr 32, Fortuna. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 183
Figure 87: Relief ID RBr 33, Fortuna. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 187
Figure 88: Relief ID RBr 34, Fortuna. Image from Keppie and Arnold (1984), fig. 76
Figure 89: Relief ID RBr 35, Fortuna. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 19
Figure 90: Relief ID RBr 36, Hercules. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 479
Figure 91: Relief ID RBr 37, Hercules. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 317
Figure 92: Relief ID RBr 38, Sol. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 484
Figure 93: Relief ID RBr 39, Sol. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 131
Figure 94: Relief ID RBr 40, Victory. Image from Keppie and Arnold (1984), fig. 164
Figure 95: Relief ID RBr 41, Victory. Image from Coulston and Phillips (1988), fig. 103
Figure 96: Relief ID RBr 42, Minerva. Image from Cunliffe and Fulford (1982), fig. 25
Figure 97: Relief ID RBr 43, Triton. Image from Tufi (1983), fig. 80
Figure 98: Relief ID RBr 44, Venus. Image from Phillips (1977), fig. 218
Figure 99: Relief ID RBr 45, Vulcan. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 90
Figure 100: Relief ID RBr 46, Mercury and Rosmerta. Image from Henig et al. (1993), fig. 78
Figure 101: Relief ID RBr 47, Mercury and Rosmerta. Image from Henig et al. (1993), fig. 79
Figure 102: Relief ID RBr 48, Mercury, Rosmerta and Fortuna. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 80
Figure 103: Relief ID RBr 49, Mercury and Rosmerta. Image from Henig et al (1993), fig. 81
Figure 104: Relief ID RBr 50, Mercury and Rosmerta. Image from Cunliffe and Fulford (1982), fig. 39
Figure 105: Stele ID RNA 1, Victory. Image from Mendleson (2003: 103)
Figure 106: Stele ID RNA 2, Victories. Image from Mendleson (2003: 103)
Figure 107: Stele ID RNA 3, Venus and Liber Pater. Image from Mendleson (2003: 104)
Figure 108: Stele ID RNA 4, Cupid, Venus and Liber Pater. Image from Mendleson (2003: 104)
Figure 109: Stele ID RNA 5, Cupid, Venus and Liber Pater. Image from Mendleson (2003: 104)
Figure 110: Stele ID RNA 6, Victory, Venus and Liber Pater. Image from Mendleson (2003: 105)
Figure 111: Stele ID RNA 7, Venus and Liber Pater. Image from Mendleson (2003: 106)
Figure 112: Stele ID RNA 8, Venus and Liber Pater. Image from Mendleson (2003: 106)
Figure 113: Stele ID RNA 9, Venus. Image from Mendleson (2003: 106)
Figure 114: Stele ID RNA 10, Venus, Cupid, Liber Pater and Sol. Image from Mendleson (2003: 107)
Figure 115: Stele ID RNA 11, Saturn. Image from Mendleson (2003: 109)
Figure 116: Stele ID RNA 12, Saturn. Image from Mendelson (2003: 109)
Figure 117: Stele ID RNA 13, Saturn and the Dioscuri. Image from Mendleson (2003: 109)
Figure 118: Stele ID RNA 14, Saturn and the Dioscuri. Image from Mendleson (2003: 110)
Figure 119: Stele ID RNA 15, Saturn and the Dioscuri. Image from Mendleson (2003: 110)
Figure 120: Stele ID RNA 16, Saturn. Image from Leglay (1961), plate II
Figure 121: Stele ID RNA 17, Saturn. Image from Leglay (1961), plate XI
Figure 122: Stele ID RNA 18, Saturn. Image from Leglay (1961), plate XIII
Figure 123: Stele ID RNA 19, Saturn. Image from Leglay (1961), plate XXIII
Figure 124: Stele ID RNA 20, Saturn. Image from Leglay (1961), plate XXIV
Figure 125: Stele ID RNA 21, Saturn. Image from Leglay (1961), plate XXV
Figure 126: Stele ID RNA 22, Saturn. Image from Leglay (1961), plate XXIX
Figure 127: Stele ID RNA 23, Saturn. Image from Leglay (1961), plate XXIX
Figure 128: Stele ID RNA 24, Saturn. Image from Leglay (1961), plate XXXVI
Appendix H: Summary of Excavation Data and Reports for the Religious statuary of Roman Britain drawn upon in this Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sculpture/ Relief Number (RBr)</th>
<th>Excavation Data and Reports - Source</th>
<th>Site/Context summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Haverfield, F. J. (1914) <em>Northumberland County History Vol. X</em>, London: Andrew Reid and Company Ltd p. 512</td>
<td>No provision of archaeology data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Haverfield, F. J. (1914) *Northumberland County History Vol. X*, London: Andrew Reid and Company Ltd p 512. | Found walled in 'over a door' at Corbridge 'in the front of a house in Middle Street'. |
<p>| 6                             | Bruce J.C. (1875) <em>Lapidarium Septentrionale or, A description of the monuments of Roman rule in the north of England</em> 1870-75 p 305 | Found at High Rochester. Precise find spot not recorded. No stratigraphic information provided. |
| 7                             | Bruce J.C. (1875) <em>Lapidarium Septentrionale or, A description of the monuments of Roman rule in the north of England</em> 1870-75 p 305 | Found at High Rochester Precise find spot not recorded. No stratigraphic information provided. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>Provenance unknown</th>
<th>-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>O’Neil, H. E. and Toynbee, J. M. C. (1958) ‘Sculptures from a Romano-British Well in Gloucestershire’, <em>The Journal of Roman Studies</em> 48: 49-55</td>
<td>Found in a well in Farnworth Gravel Pit, Great Chessells, Lower Slaughter, Gloucestershire. Three altars and five pieces of sculptures were recovered from the well in total. The well is one of five found in the gravel pit, alongside coins and other objects of a Romano-British date. See <a href="#">link</a> for sectional plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Wallis Budge, E. A. (1903) <em>An account of the Roman antiquities preserved in the museum at Chesters, Northumberland</em>, London: Gilbert and Rivington 5</td>
<td>Find spot unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Gibson, J. P. (1903) ‘Excavations on the Line of the Roman Wall, Great Chesters (Aesica)’ <em>Archaeologia Aeliana</em> (2) 24: 19-64, p 62</td>
<td>Recovered to the south of an altar and funerary stones, from a block of buildings next to the praetorium For a general site plan of Bremenium see p11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bruce J.C. (1875) <em>Lapidarium</em></td>
<td>Found at Stanwix, just where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Septentronale or, A description of the monuments of Roman rule in the north of England</em> P258</td>
<td>the Scotch and Newcastle roads join. No stratigraphic information provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornborrow, J. W. (1959) <em>Report on excavations at Beacon Street, South Shields, 1959</em> <em>South Shields Archaeological and Historical Society Papers</em> (1) 7: 23</td>
<td>Found in Beacon Street, just over 60 m north-east of the north-east corner of the fort and close to a stone foundation about 2m². Believed to have been originally located on the parade ground of the fort. No stratigraphic information provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provenance unknown</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallis Budge, E. A. (1903) <em>An account of the Roman antiquities preserved in the museum at Chester</em>, Northumberland p136</td>
<td>Find spot unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Publication Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Wallis Budge, E. A. (1903)</td>
<td><em>An account of the Roman antiquities preserved in the museum at Chester</em>, <em>Northumberland</em> p205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>McKie, H. (1860)</td>
<td><em>Archaeological Journal</em>, 17: 158-187 p 159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Bruce, J.C. (1857)</td>
<td><em>‘Catalogue of the inscribed and Sculpted Roman stones in</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Possession of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle, <em>Archaeologia Aeliana</em>, (2) 1: 221-270, p234</td>
<td>No stratigraphic information provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Roy, W. (1793) <em>The military antiquities of the Romans in Britain</em>, London: W. Bulmer and Co. p. 201</td>
<td>Found in a niche in one of the rooms of the fort bath house, close to an altar of Fortuna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Haverfield, F. (1899) <em>Catalogue of the Roman inscribed and sculptured stones in the Carlisle Museum, Tullie House</em>, Kendal: Titus Wilson and Sons, p51</td>
<td>Found in Annetwell Street, which is positioned inside the Roman Fort. Precise find spot unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Horsley, J. (1732) <em>Britannia Romana: or the Roman antiquities of Britain: in three books</em>, London: John Osborn and Thomas Longman, p261</td>
<td>At Castlesteads together with a relief of similar size of a Pegasus and Capricorn. No stratigraphic information provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Cunliffe, B. W. and Fulford, M. G. (1982) <em>Bath and the rest of Wessex</em>, Oxford</td>
<td>Found in or around the baths. Precise find spot not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td>-----------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wellbeloved, C. (1842) <em>Eburacum: or York under the Romans</em>, York: Sunter &amp; Sotheran p51</td>
<td>Found near what is expected to have been one of the gates of Eburacum. No stratigraphic information provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce, J. C. (1858) <em>Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute at Newcastle 1852</em>, London: Bell and Daldy, p 141, 148</td>
<td>Found inside a water tank in front of the headquarters of the fort at Bremenium. Precise find spot not recorded. No stratigraphic information provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban, S. (1862) <em>Gentlemans magazine</em>, London: John Henry and James Parker p568</td>
<td>Found in meadowland at the foot of Ilbury Camp, c. 18 inches below the ground. Its presence may indicate a temple or shrine in the region. Found with it were stones and pottery, and nearby a coin, two jars, one Roman and the 'other sun-baked and apparently British'.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilton, J. P., Dancey C. H. and Mills J. (1888) ‘Catalogue of exhibits in the temporary museum’, <em>Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society</em>” XIII: 72-85</td>
<td>Found outside the North Gate during excavations at the Shakespeare Inn, North Street in 1857. It is believed that a shrine of Mercury was situated in this area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Toynbee, J. M.C (1964) <em>Art In Britain Under The Romans</em>, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p157-8</td>
<td>Found on Northgate Street, Nursery Site, before 1862. No stratigraphic information provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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### Appendix I: Known Military Units in Britain at Sculpture find sites and their Origins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Military unit(s)</th>
<th>Origins</th>
<th>Database number(s) of sculpture from this region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corbridge (corstopitum)</td>
<td>Legio II Augusta</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>RBr 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legio VI Victrix</td>
<td>Cisalpine Gaul</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legio XX Valeria Victrix</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halton Chesters (Onnum)</td>
<td>Ala I Pannoniorum Sabiniana</td>
<td>Pannonia (Balkans)</td>
<td>RBr 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Rochester (Bremenium)</td>
<td>Cohors I Lingonum</td>
<td>Gallia Lugdunensis, northern Bourgogne region of Central Gaul</td>
<td>RBr 6-7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohors I Dacorum</td>
<td>Dacia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohors I Fida Vardullorum civium Romanorum equitata milliaria</td>
<td>Hispania Terraconensis</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucestershire (Glevum)</td>
<td>Legio XX Valeria Victrix</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>RBr9, 11</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohors VI Thracum</td>
<td>Thrace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York (Eburacum)</td>
<td>Legio IX Hispana</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>RBr13</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Location</td>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chesters (Cilurnum)</td>
<td>Cohors I Vangionum</td>
<td>Upper Rhine</td>
<td>RBr 14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ala Augusta ob virtutem appellata</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cohors I Dalmatarum</td>
<td>Delmatae of Dalmatia</td>
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<td>Legio VI Victrix</td>
<td>Cisalpine Gaul</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ala II Asturum</td>
<td>Asturian region of Hispania</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Chesters (Aesica)</td>
<td>Legio XX Valeria Victrix</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>Legio VI Victrix</td>
<td>Cisalpine Gaul</td>
<td>RBr15</td>
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<td>Cohors II Gallorum</td>
<td>Central and Northern Gaul</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohors VI Nerviorum</td>
<td>The Nervii tribe, Belgica</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohors VI Raetorum</td>
<td>Raetia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vexillatio Gaesatorum et Raetorum</td>
<td>Gaul and Raetia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohors I Pannoniorum</td>
<td>Pannonia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohors II Asturum</td>
<td>Asturian region of Hispania</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanwix (Petriana)</td>
<td>Ala Petriana</td>
<td>Central Gaul</td>
<td>RBr16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caernarfon (Segontium)</td>
<td>Cohors I Sunicorum</td>
<td>The Sunici of the Rhine</td>
<td>RBr17</td>
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376
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<th>Location</th>
<th>Unit Name 1</th>
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<th>Unit Name 2</th>
<th>Region/Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>South Shields (Arbeia)</td>
<td>Ala I Pannoniorum Sabiniana</td>
<td>Pannonia</td>
<td>ALS V Gallorum</td>
<td>Central Gaul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ala I Asturum</td>
<td>Asturian region of Hispania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balmuildy, Lanarkshire</td>
<td>Legio II Augusta</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Legio VI Victrix</td>
<td>Cisalpine Gaul</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Legio VI Victrix</td>
<td>Cisalpine Gaul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housesteads (Vercovivium)</td>
<td>Legio II Augusta</td>
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<td>Cisalpine Gaul</td>
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<td>Legio VI Victrix</td>
<td>Cisalpine Gaul</td>
<td>Cohors I Tungratorum Milliaria</td>
<td>The Tungri tribe of eastern Belgica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohors I Hamiorum Saggitariorum</td>
<td>The Hamian tribe of Syria</td>
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<td>Cuneus Frisiorum</td>
<td>The Frisiavones tribe of Lower Germany</td>
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<td>Numerus Hnaufridi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chesterholm (Vindolanda)</td>
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<td>Legio VI Victrix</td>
<td>Cisalpine Gaul</td>
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<td>Cohors I Tungratorum</td>
<td>The Tungri tribe of eastern Belgica</td>
<td>Cohors II Nerviorum</td>
<td>The Nervii tribe, Belgica</td>
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377
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohors IV Gallorum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle (Luguvalium)</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Legio IX Hispana</td>
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<td>Ala Petriana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wall (Letocetum)</td>
<td>Legio XIV Gemina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Cohors I Thracum</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cohors I Cornoviorum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newcastle upon Tyne (Pons Aelius)</td>
<td>Cohors IV Gallorum</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cohors I Vangionum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risingham (Habitancum)</td>
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<td>Cohors I Batavorum</td>
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<td>Netherby (Castra Exploratum)</td>
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<td>Legio VI Victrix</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cohors I Nervanorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Cohors I Aelii Hispanorum Milliaria Equitata</td>
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<td>Castlesteads (Uxellodunum)</td>
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<td>Camelon</td>
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<td>Cirencester</td>
<td>Ala Gallorum Indiana</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Key

- Gaul
- Hispania
- Dalmatia and Pannonia
- Thrace
- Rhine/Germany
- Britainia
- Syria


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